

## CHAPTER XLIII

THE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH DON QUIXOTE GAVE  
SANCHO PANZA BEFORE HE WENT TO THE  
GOVERNMENT OF HIS ISLAND, WITH OTHER  
MATTERS OF MOMENT

THE satisfaction which the duke and duchess received by the happy success of the adventure of the Disconsolate Matron, encouraged them to carry on some other pleasant project, since they could, with so much ease, impose upon the credulity of Don Quixote and his squire. Having therefore given instructions to their servants and vassals how to behave themselves towards Sancho in his government, the day after the scene of the wooden horse, the duke bid Sancho prepare, and be in readiness to take possession of his government; for now his islanders wished as heartily for him, as they did for rain in a dry summer. Sancho made a humble bow, and, looking demurely on the duke, "Sir," quoth he, "since I came down from heaven, whence I saw the earth so very small, I am not half so hot as I was for

being a governor. For what greatness can there be in being at the head of a puny dominion, that is but a little nook of a tiny mustard-seed? and what dignity and power can a man be reckoned to have, in governing half-a-dozen men no bigger than hazle-nuts? For I could not think there were any more in the whole world. No, if your grace would throw away upon me never so little a corner in heaven, though it were but half a league, or so, I would take it with better will than I would the largest island on earth."—"Friend Sancho," answered the Duke, "I cannot dispose of an inch of heaven; for that is the province of God alone: but what I am able to bestow I give you; that is, an island tight and clever, round and well proportioned, fertile and plentiful to such a degree, that if you have but the art and understanding to manage things right, you may hoard there both of the treasures of this world, and the next."

"Well then," quoth Sancho, "let me have this island, and I will do my best to be such a governor, that, in spite of rogues, I shall not want a small nook in heaven one day or other. It is not out of covetousness neither, that I would leave my little cot, and set up for somebody, but merely to know what kind of thing

it is to be a governor.”—“Oh! Sancho,” said the duke, “when once you have had a taste of it, you will never leave licking your fingers, it is so sweet and bewitching a thing to command and be obeyed. I am confident, when your master comes to be an emperor (as he cannot fail to be, according to the course of his affairs) he will never, by any consideration, be persuaded to abdicate; his only grief will be, that he was one no sooner.”

“Troth, sir,” replied Sancho, “I am of your mind; it is a dainty thing to command, though it were but a flock of sheep.”—“Oh! Sancho,” cried the duke, “let me live and die with thee: For thou hast an insight into everything. I hope thou wilt prove as good a governor as thy wisdom bespeaks thee. But no more at this time,—to-morrow, without further delay, you set forward to your island, and shall be furnished this afternoon with equipage and dress answerable to your post, and all other necessaries for your journey.”

“Let them dress me as they will,” quoth Sancho, “I shall be the same Sancho Panza still.”—“That is true,” said the duke, “yet every man ought to wear clothes suitable to his place and dignity; for a lawyer should not go dressed like a soldier, nor a soldier like a priest.

As for you, Sancho, you are to wear the habit both of a captain and a civil magistrate; so your dress shall be a compound of those two; for in the government that I bestow on you, arms are as necessary as learning, and a man of letters as requisite as a swordsman.”—“Nay, as for letters,” quoth Sancho, “I cannot say much for myself: For as yet I scarce know my A, B, C; but yet, if I can but remember my Christ’s-cross,\* it is enough to make me a good governor: As for my arms, I will not quit my weapon as long as I can stand, and so heaven be our guard!”—“Sancho cannot do amiss,” said the duke, “while he remembers these things.”

By this time Don Quixote arrived, and hearing how suddenly Sancho was to go to his government, with the duke’s permission, he took him aside to give him some good instructions for his conduct in the discharge of his office.

Being entered Don Quixote’s chamber, and the door shut, he almost forcibly obliged Sancho to sit by him; and then, with a grave and deliberate voice, he thus began:

“I give heaven infinite thanks, friend Sancho,

\* He means the Christ-cross-row; so called from the cross being put at the beginning of the A, B, C.

that, before I have the happiness of being put in possession of my hopes, I can see thine already crowned: Fortune hastening to meet thee with thy wishes. I, who had assigned the reward of thy services upon my happy success, am yet but on the way to preferment; and thou, beyond all reasonable expectation, art arrived at the aim and end of thy desires. Some are assiduous, solicitous, importunate, rise early, bribe, entreat, press, will take no denial, obstinately persist in their suit, and yet at last never obtain it. Another comes on, and, by a lucky hit or chance, bears away the prize, and jumps into the preferment which so many had pursued in vain; which verifies the saying,

‘The happy have their days, and those they choose;  
The unhappy have but hours, and those they lose.’

Thou, who seemest to me a very blockhead, without sitting up late, or rising early, or any manner of fatigue or trouble, only the air of knight-errantry being breathed on thee, art advanced to the government of an island in a trice, as if it were a thing of no moment, a very trifle. I speak this, my dear Sancho, not to upbraid thee, nor out of envy, but only to let thee know, thou art not to attribute all this success to thy own merit, while it is entirely

owing to the kind heavenly Disposer of human affairs, to whom thy thanks ought to be returned. But, next to Heaven, thou art to ascribe thy happiness to the greatness of the profession of knight-errantry, which includes within itself such stores of honour and preferment.

“Being convinced of what I have already said, be yet attentive, O my son, to what I, thy Cato, have further to say: Listen, I say, to my admonitions, and I will be thy north star, and pilot to steer and bring thee safe into the port of honour, out of the tempestuous ocean, into which thou art just going to launch; for offices and great employments are no better than profound gulphs of confusion.

“First of all, O my son, fear God; for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and wisdom will never let thee go astray.

“Secondly, consider what thou wert, and make it thy business to know thyself, which is the most difficult lesson in the world. Yet from this lesson thou wilt learn to avoid the frog’s foolish ambition of swelling to rival the bigness of the ox; else the consideration of your having been a hog-driver, will be, to the wheel of your fortune, like the peacock’s ugly feet.”

“True,” quoth Sancho, “but I was then but

a little boy; for when I grew up to be somewhat bigger, I drove geese, and not hogs; but methinks that is nothing to the purpose, for all governors cannot come from kings and princes."

"Very true," pursued Don Quixote, "therefore those who want a noble descent, must allay the severity of their office with mildness and civility, which, directed by wisdom, may secure them from the murmurs and malice, from which no state nor condition is exempt.

"Be well pleased with the meanness of thy family, Sancho, nor think it a disgrace to own thyself derived from labouring men; for, if thou art not ashamed of thyself, nobody else will strive to make thee so. Endeavour rather to be esteemed humble and virtuous, than proud and vicious. The number is almost infinite of those who, from low and vulgar births, have been raised to the highest dignities, to the papal chair, and the imperial throne; and this I could prove by examples enough to tire thy patience.

"Make virtue the medium of all thy actions, and thou wilt have no cause to envy those whose birth gives them the titles of great men, and princes; for nobility is inherited, but virtue acquired: And virtue is worth more in itself, than nobleness of birth.

"If any of thy poor relations come to see thee, never reject nor affront them; but, on the contrary, receive and entertain them with marks of favour; in this thou wilt display a generosity of nature, and please Heaven, that would have nobody to despise what it has made.

"If thou sendest for thy wife, as it is not fit a man in thy station should be long without his wife, and she ought to partake of her husband's good fortune, teach her, instruct her, polish her the best thou canst, till her native rusticity is refined to a handsomer behaviour; for often an ill-bred wife throws down all that a good and discreet husband can build up.

"Shouldst thou come to be a widower, (which is not impossible) and thy post recommend thee to a bride of a higher degree, take not one that shall, like a fishing-rod, only serve to catch bribes. For, take it from me, the judge must, at the general and last court of judicature, give a strict account of the discharge of his duty, and must pay severely at his dying-day for what he has suffered his wife to take.

"Let never obstinate self-conceit be thy guide; it is the vice of the ignorant, who vainly presume on their understanding.

"Let the tears of the poor find more com-

passion, though not more justice, than the informations of the rich.

“Be equally solicitous to find out the truth, where the offers and presents of the rich, and the sobs and importunities of the poor, are in the way.

“Wherever equity should, or may take place, let not the extent or rigour of the law bear too much on the delinquent; for it is not a better character in a judge to be rigorous, than to be indulgent.

“When the severity of the law is to be softened, let pity, not bribes, be the motive.

“If thy enemy have a cause before thee, turn away thy eyes from thy prejudices, and fix them on the matter of fact.

“In another man’s cause be not blinded by thy own passions, for those errors are almost without remedy; or their cure will prove expensive to thy wealth and reputation.

“When a beautiful woman comes before thee, turn away thy eyes from her tears, and thy ears from her lamentations; and take time to consider sedately her petition, if thou wouldst not have thy reason and honesty lost in her sighs and tears.

“Reville not with words those whom their crimes oblige thee to punish in deed: for the

punishment is enough to the wretches, without the addition of ill language.

“In the trial of criminals, consider as much as thou canst, without prejudice to the plaintiff, how defenceless and open the miserable are to the temptations of our corrupt and depraved nature, and so far shew thyself full of pity and clemency; for though God’s attributes are equal, yet his mercy is more attractive and pleasing in our eyes, than his justice.

“If thou observest these rules, Sancho, thy days shall be long, thy fame eternal, thy recompense full, and thy felicity unspeakable. Thou shalt marry thy children and grandchildren to thy heart’s desire; they shall want no titles: Beloved of all men, thy life shall be peaceable, thy death in a good and venerable old age, and the offspring of thy grandchildren, with their soft youthful hands, shall close thy eyes.

“The precepts I have hitherto given thee regard the good and ornament of thy mind; now give attention to those directions that relate to the adorning of thy body.”