

## CHAPTER L

WHO THE ENCHANTERS AND EXECUTIONERS WERE THAT WHIPPED THE DUENNA, AND PINCHED AND SCRATCHED DON QUIXOTE; WITH THE SUCCESS OF THE PAGE THAT CARRIED SANCHO'S LETTER TO HIS WIFE, TERESA PANZA

CID HAMET, the most punctual inquirer into the minutest particles of this important history, relates, that, when Donna Rodriguez was going out of her chamber to Don Quixote's apartment, another old waiting-woman, that lay with her, perceived it; and, as one of the chief pleasures of all those female implements consists in inquiry, prying, and running their noses into every thing, she presently watched her fellow-servant's motions, and followed her so cautiously, that the good woman did not discover it. Now, Donna Rodriguez was no sooner got into the knight's chamber, than the other, lest she should forfeit her character of a true, tattling waiting-woman, flew to tell the duchess in her ear, that Donna Rodriguez was in Don Quixote's chamber. The duchess told

the duke; and, having got his leave to take Altisidora with her, and go to satisfy her curiosity about this night visit, they very silently crept along in the dark, till they came to Don Quixote's door; and, as they stood listening there, overheard very easily every word they said within; so that, when the duchess heard her leaky woman expose the fountains of her issues, she was not able to contain; nor was Altisidora less provoked. Full of rage, and greedy revenge, they rushed into the chamber, beat the duenna, and pinched the knight, as has been related. For those affronting expressions that are levelled against the beauty of women, or the good opinion of themselves, raise their anger and indignation to the highest degree, and incense them to a desire of revenge.

The duchess diverted the duke with an account of what had passed; and, having a great desire to continue the merriment which Don Quixote's extravagances afforded them, the page that acted the part of Dulcinea, when it was proposed to end her enchantment, was dispatched away to Teresa Panza, with a letter from her husband (for Sancho having his head full of his government, had quite forgotten to do it), and, at the same time, the duchess sent



another from herself, with a large costly string of coral as a present.

Now, the story tells us, that the page was a sharp and ingenious lad; and, being very desirous to please his lord and lady, made the best of his way to Sancho's village. When he came near the place, she saw a company of females washing at a brook, and asked them, whether they could inform him if there lived not in that town a woman whose name was Teresa Panza, wife to one Sancho Panza, squire to a knight called Don Quixote de la Mancha? He had no sooner asked the question, than a young wench, that was washing among the rest, stood up: "That Teresa Panza is my mother," quoth she; "that Gaffer Sancho is my own father; and that same knight our master."—"Well, then, damsel," said the page, "pray go along with me, and bring me to your mother, for I have a letter and a token here for her from your father."—"That I will with all my heart, sir," said the girl, who seemed to be about fourteen years of age, little more or less; and, with that, leaving the clothes she was washing to one of her companions, without staying to dress her head, or put on her shoes, away she sprung before the page's horse, bare-legged, and with her hair about her ears.

"Come along, if it please you," quoth she; "our house is hard by; it is but just as you come into the town, and my mother is at home, but brimful of sorrow, poor soul; for she has not heard from my father, I do not know how long."—"Well," said the page, "I bring her those tidings that will cheer her heart, I warrant her." At last, what with leaping, running, and jumping, the girl being come to the house, "Mother, mother," cried she, as loud as she could, before she went in, "come out, mother, come out! here is a gentleman has brought letters and tokens from my father." At that summons out came the mother, spinning a lock of coarse flax, with a russet petticoat about her, so short, that it looked as if it had been cut off at the placket; a waistcoat of the same, and her smock hanging loose about it. Take her otherwise, she was none of the oldest, but looked somewhat turned of forty, strong built, sinewy, hale, vigorous, and in good case. "What is the matter, girl?" quoth she, seeing her daughter with the page; "what gentleman is that?"—"A servant of your ladyship's, my Lady Teresa Panza," answered the page; and, at the same time, alighting, and throwing himself at her feet, with the most humble submission, "My noble



Lady Donna Teresa," said he, "permit me the honour to kiss your ladyship's hand, as you are the only legitimate wife of my Lord Don Sancho Panza, proper governor of the island of Barataria."—"Alack-a-day," quoth Teresa, "what do you do? By no means: I am none of your court dames, but a poor, silly, country body, a ploughman's daughter, the wife, indeed, of a squire-errant, but no governor."—"Your ladyship," replied the page, "is the most worthy wife of a thrice-worthy governor; and, for proof of what I say, be pleased to receive this letter, and this present." With that he took out of his pocket a string of coral beads set in gold, and, putting it about her neck, "This letter," said he, "is from his honour the governor; and another that I have for you, together with these beads, are from her grace the lady duchess, who sends me now to your ladyship."

Teresa stood amazed, and her daughter was transported. "Now, I will be hanged," quoth the young baggage, "if our master, Don Quixote, be not at the bottom of this. Ay, this is his doing. He has given my father that same government or earldom he has promised him so many times."—"You say right," answered the page; "it is for the Lord Don

Quixote's sake that the Lord Sancho is now governor of the island of Barataria, as the letter will inform you."—"Good sir," quoth Teresa, "read it to me, if it like your worship; for, though I can spin, I cannot read a jot."—"Nor I neither, i'fackins," cried Sanchica; "but do but stay a little, and I will go fetch one that shall, either the bachelor Sampson Carrasco, or our parson himself, who will come with all their hearts to hear news of my father."—"You may spare yourself the trouble," said the page; "for, though I cannot spin, yet I can read; and I will read it to you." With that he read the letter, which is now omitted, because it has been inserted before. That done, he pulled out another from the duchess, which runs as follows:—

"FRIEND TERESA,

"Your husband Sancho's good parts, his wit, and honesty, obliged me to desire the duke, my husband, to bestow on him the government of one of his islands. I am informed he is as sharp as a hawk in his office, for which I am very glad, as well as my lord duke, and return Heaven many thanks, that I have not been deceived in making choice of him for that preferment. For, you must know, Signora



Teresa, it is a difficult thing to meet with a good governor in this world; and may Heaven make me as good as Sancho proves in his government.

“I have sent you, my dear friend, a string of coral beads, set in gold; I could wish they were oriental pearls for your sake; but a small token may not hinder a great one. The time will come when we shall be better acquainted; and, when we have conversed together, who knows what may come to pass? Commend me to your daughter Sanchica, and bid her, from me, to be in readiness, for I design to marry her greatly when she least thinks of it.

“I understand you have fine large acorns in your town: pray send me a dozen or two of them; I shall set a greater value upon them as coming from your hands. And pray, let me have a good long letter, to let me know how you do; and, if you have occasion for any thing, it is but ask and have; I shall even know your meaning by your gaping. So Heaven preserve you.

“Your loving friend,

“THE DUCHESS.”

“From this Castle.”

“Bless me!” quoth Teresa, when she had

heard the letter, “what a good lady is this! not a bit of pride in her! Heaven grant me to be buried with such ladies, and not with such proud madams as we have in our town; who, because they are gentle-folks, forsooth, think the wind must not blow on them, but come flaunting to church as stately as if they were queens. It seems they think it scorn to look upon a poor country woman. But, la you! here is a good lady, who, though she be a duchess, calls me her friend, and uses me as if I were as high as herself. Well, may I see her as high as the highest steeple in the whole country! As for the acorns she writes for, master of mine, I will send her good ladyship a whole peck, and such swinging acorns, that every body shall come to admire them far and near.—And now, Sanchica, see that the gentleman be made welcome, and want for nothing. Take care of his horse. Run to the stable, get some eggs, cut some bacon; he shall fare like a prince: the rare news he has brought me, and his good looks, deserve no less. Meanwhile, I will among my neighbours; I cannot hold; I must run and tell them the news. Our good curate, too, shall know it, and Mr Nicholas the barber; for they have all along been thy father’s friends.”—