

## CHAPTER LV

WHAT HAPPENED TO SANCHO BY THE WAY, WITH  
OTHER MATTERS WHICH YOU WILL HAVE NO  
MORE TO DO THAN TO SEE

SANCHO staid so long with Ricote, that the night overtook him within half a league of the duke's castle. It grew dark. However, as it was summer-time, he was not much uneasy, and chose to go out of the road, with a design to stay there till the morning. But, as ill-luck would have it, while he was seeking some place where he might rest himself, he and Dapple tumbled of a sudden into a very deep hole, which was among the ruins of some old buildings. As he was falling, he prayed with all his heart, fancying himself all the while sinking down into the bottomless pit; but he was in no such danger, for by that time he had descended somewhat lower than eighteen feet, Dapple made a full stop at the bottom, and his rider found himself still on his back, without the least hurt in the world. Presently Sancho began to consider the condition of his bones,

held his breath, and felt all about him, and finding himself sound, wind and limb, and in a whole skin, he thought he could never give Heaven sufficient thanks for his wondrous preservation; for at first he gave himself over for lost, and broken into a thousand pieces. He groped with both hands about the walls of the pit, to try if it were possible to get out without help; but he found them all so plain and so steep, that there was not the least hold or footing to get up. This grieved him to the soul; and, to increase his sorrow, Dapple began to raise his voice in a very piteous and doleful manner, which pierced his master's very heart: nor did the poor beast make such moan without reason, for, to say the truth, he was but in a woful condition. "Woe's me," cried Sancho, "what sudden and unthought-of mischances every foot befall us poor wretches that live in this miserable world! Who would have thought, that he who but yesterday saw himself seated on the throne of an island-governor, and had servants and vassals at his beck, should to-day find himself buried in a pit, without the least soul to help him, or come to his relief! Here we are likely to perish with deadly hunger, I and my ass, if we do not die before, he of his bruises, and I

of grief and anguish. At least, I shall not be so lucky as was my master Don Quixote, when he went down into the cave of the enchanter Montesinos. He found better fare there than he could have at his own house; the cloth was laid, and his bed made, and he saw nothing but pleasant visions; but I am like to see nothing here but toads and snakes. Unhappy creature that I am! What have my foolish designs and whimsies brought me to? If ever it is Heaven's blessed will that my bones be found, they will be taken out of this dismal place, bare, white, and smooth, and those of my poor Dapple with them; by which, perhaps, it will be known whose they are, at least by those who shall have taken notice, that Sancho Panza never stirred from his ass, nor his ass from Sancho Panza. Unhappy creatures that we are, I say again! Had we died at home among our friends, though we had missed of relief, we should not have wanted pity, and some to close our eyes at the last gasp.—Oh! my dear companion and friend," said he to his ass, "how ill have I requited thy faithful services! Forgive me, and pray to fortune the best thou canst to deliver us out of this plunge, and I here promise thee to set a crown of laurel on thy

head, that thou mayest be taken for no less than a poet-laureate, and thy allowance of provender shall be doubled." Thus Sancho bewailed his misfortune, and his ass hearkened to what he said, but answered not a word, so great was the grief and anguish which the poor creature endured at the same time.

At length, after a whole night's lamenting and complaining at a miserable rate, the day came on; and its light having confirmed Sancho in his doubts of the impossibility of getting out of that place without help, he set up his throat again, and made a vigorous outcry, to try whether any body might not hear him. But alas! all his calling was in vain;\* for all around, there was nobody within hearing; and then he gave himself over for dead and buried. He cast his eyes on Dapple, and seeing him extended on the ground, and sadly down in the mouth, he went to him, and tried to get him on his legs, which, with much ado, by means of his assistance, the poor beast did at last, being hardly able to stand. Then he took a luncheon of bread out of his wallet, that had run the same fortune with them, and

\* In the original, "All his cries were in the desert," *i.e.* thrown away; alluding, perhaps, to the Scripture character of John Baptist, that he was *Vox clamantis in deserto*, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, or desert."

giving it to the ass, who took it not at all amiss, and made no bones of it, "Here," said Sancho, as if the beast had understood him, "a fat sorrow is better than a lean." At length, he perceived one side of the pit a great hole, wide enough for a man to creep through stooping. He drew to it, and having crawled through on all fours, found that it led into a vault, that enlarged itself the further it extended, which he could easily perceive, the sun shining in towards the top of the concavity. Having made this discovery he went back to his ass, and, like one that knew what belonged to digging, with a stone he began to remove the earth that was about the hole, and laboured so effectually, that he soon made a passage for his companion. Then taking him by the halter, he led him along fair and softly through the cave, to try if he could not find a way to get out on the other side. Sometimes he went in the dark, and sometimes without light, but never without fear. "Heaven defend me," said he to himself, "what a heart of a chicken have I! This now, which to me is a sad disaster, to my master Don Quixote would be a rare adventure. He would look upon these caves and dungeons as lovely gardens and glorious palaces, and hope to be

led out of these dark narrow cells into some fine meadow; while I, luckless, helpless, heartless wretch that I am, every step I take, expect to sink into some deeper pit than this, and go down I do not know whither. Welcome ill luck, when it comes alone." Thus he went on, lamenting and despairing, and thought he had gone somewhat more than half a league, when, at last, he perceived a kind of confused light, like that of day, break in at some open place, but which, to poor Sancho, seemed a prospect of a passage into another world.

But here Cid Hamet Benengeli leaves him a while, and returns to Don Quixote, who entertained and pleased himself with the hopes of a speedy combat between him and the dishonourer of Donna Rodriguez's daughter, whose wrongs he designed to see redressed on the appointed day.

It happened one morning, as he was riding out to prepare and exercise against the time of battle, as he was practising with Rozinante, the horse, in the middle of his manage, pitched his feet near the brink of a deep cave; inso-much, that if Don Quixote had not used the best of his skill, he must infallibly have tumbled into it. Having escaped that danger,

he was tempted to look into the cave without alighting, and wheeling about, rode up to it. Now, while he was satisfying his curiosity, and seriously musing, he thought he heard a noise within, and thereupon listening, he could distinguish these words, which in a doleful tone, arose out of the cavern, "Ho! above there! is there no good christian that hears me, no charitable knight or gentleman, that will take pity of a sinner buried alive, a poor governor without a government!" Don Quixote fancied he heard Sancho's voice, which did not a little surprise him; and for his better satisfaction, raising his voice as much as he could, "Who is that below?" cried he; "Who is that complains?"—"Who should it be to his sorrow," cried Sancho, "but the most wretched Sancho Panza, governor, for his sins and for his unlucky errantry, of the island of Baratania, formerly squire to the famous knight Don Quixote de la Mancha?" These words redoubled Don Quixote's admiration, and increased his amazement; for he presently imagined that Sancho was dead, and that his soul was there doing penance. Possessed with that fancy, "I conjure thee," said he, "by all that can conjure thee, as I am a catholic christian, to tell me who

thou art? And, if thou art a soul in pain, let me know what thou wouldst have me to do for thee? For since my profession is to assist and succour all that are afflicted in this world, it shall also be so to relieve and help those who stand in need of it in the other, and who cannot help themselves."—"Surely, sir," answered he from below, "you that speak to me should be my master Don Quixote: By the tone of your voice it can be no man else."—"My name is Don Quixote," replied the knight, "and I think it my duty to assist not only the living but the dead in their necessities. Tell me then who thou art, for thou fillest me with astonishment: And if thou art my squire Sancho Panza, and dead, if the devil have not got thee, and through Heaven's mercy thou art in purgatory, our holy mother, the Roman Catholic church, has sufficient suffrages to redeem thee from the pains thou endurest, and I myself will solicit her on thy behalf, as far as my estate will go; therefore proceed, and tell me quickly who thou art?"—"Why then," replied the voice, "by whatever you will have me swear by, I make oath that I am Sancho Panza your squire, and that I never was dead yet in my life. But only having left my government, for reasons and causes

which I have not leisure yet to tell you, last night unluckily I fell into this cave, where I am still, and Dapple with me, that will not let me tell a lie; for, as a farther proof of what I say, he is here." Now, what is strange, immediately, as if the ass had understood what his master said, to back his evidence, he fell a-braying so obstreperously, that he made the whole cave ring again. "A worthy witness," cried Don Quixote; "I know his bray, as if I were the parent of him; and I know thy voice too, my Sancho. I find thou art my real squire; stay therefore till I go to the castle, which is hard by, and fetch more company to help thee out of the pit into which thy sins, doubtless, have thrown thee."—"Make haste, I beseech you, sir," quoth Sancho, "and, for heaven's sake, come again as fast as you can, for I can no longer endure to be here buried alive, and I am even dying with fear."

Don Quixote went with all speed to the castle, and gave the duke and duchess an account of Sancho's accident, whilst they did not a little wonder at it, though they conceived he might easily enough fall in at the mouth of the cave, which had been there time out of mind. But they were mightily surprised to hear he had abdicated his govern-

ment before they had an account of his coming away.

In short, they sent ropes and other conveniences by their servants to draw him out, and at last, with much trouble and labour, both he and his Dapple were restored from that gloomy pit to the full enjoyment of the light of the sun. At the same time, a certain scholar standing by, and seeing him hoisted up, "Just so," said he, "should all bad governors come out of their governments; just as this wretch is dragged out of this profound abyss, pale, half-starved, famished, and, as I fancy, without a cross in his pocket."—"Hark you, good Slander," replied Sancho, "it is now eight or ten days since I began to govern the island that was given me, and in all that time I never had my bellyful but once; physicians have persecuted me, enemies have trampled over me, and bruised my bones, and I have had neither leisure to take bribes, nor to receive my just dues. Now, all this considered, in my opinion I did not deserve to come out in this fashion. But man appoints, and God disappoints. Heaven knows best what is best for us all. We must take time as it comes, and our lot as it falls. Let no man say, I will drink no more of this water. Many count

their chickens before they are hatched; and where they expect bacon, meet with broken bones. Heaven knows my mind, and I say no more, though I might.”—“Never trouble thyself, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “nor mind what some will say, for then thou wilt never have done. So thy conscience be clear, let the world talk at random, as it uses to do. One may as soon tie up the winds, as the tongues of slanderers. If a governor returns rich from his government, they say he has fleeced and robbed the people; if poor, then they call him an idle fool, and ill husband.”—“Nothing so sure then,” quoth Sancho, “but this bout they will call me a shallow fool; but for a fleecer or a robber, I scorn their words, I defy all the world.” Thus discoursing as they went, with a rabble of boys and idle people about them, they at last got to the castle, where the duke and duchess waited in the gallery for the knight and squire. As for Sancho, he would not go up to see the duke, till he had seen his ass in the stable, and provided for him; for he said the poor beast had but sorry entertainment in his last night’s lodging. This done, away he went to wait on his lord and lady; and, throwing himself on his knees, “My lord and lady,” said he,

“I went to govern your island of Barataria, such being your will and pleasure, though it was your goodness more than my desert. Naked I entered into it, and naked I came away. I neither won nor lost. Whether I governed well or ill, there are those not far off can tell; and let them tell, if they please, that can tell better than I. I have resolved doubtful cases, determined law-suits, and all the while ready to die for hunger; such was the pleasure of Doctor Pedro Rezio of Tirteafuera, that physician in ordinary to island governors. Enemies set upon us in the night, and after they had put us in great danger, the people of the island say they were delivered, and had the victory by the strength of my arm; and may Heaven prosper them as they speak truth, say I. In short, in that time, I experienced all the cares and burdens this trade of governing brings along with it, and I found them too heavy for my shoulders. I was never cut out for a ruler, and I am too clumsy to meddle with edge tools; and so, before the government left me, I even resolved to leave the government. And, accordingly, yesterday morning I quitted the island as I found it, with the same streets, the same houses, and the same roofs to them, as when

I came to it. I have asked for nothing by way of loan, and have made no hoard against a rainy day. I designed, indeed, to have issued out several wholesome orders, but did not, for fear they should not be kept; in which case, it signifies no more to make them than if one made them not. So, as I said before, I came away from the island without any company but my Dapple; I fell into a cave, and went a good way through it, till this morning, by the light of the sun, I spied my way out; yet not so easy, but had not Heaven sent my master, Don Quixote, to help me, there I might have staid till doomsday. And now, my lord duke, and my lady duchess, here is your governor Sancho Panza again, who, by a ten days government, has only picked up so much experience as to know he would not give a straw to be a governor, not only of an island, but of the versal world. This being allowed, kissing your honours' hands, and doing like the boys, when they play at trusse or saille, who cry, 'Leap you, and then let me leap;' so I leap from the government to my old master's service again. For, after all, though with him I often eat my bread with bodily fear, yet still I fill my belly; and, for my part, so I have but that well stuffed, no

matter whether it be with carrots or with partridges."

Thus Sancho concluded his long speech, and Don Quixote, who all the while dreaded he would have said a thousand impertinences, thanked Heaven in his heart, finding him end with so few. The duke embraced Sancho, and told him he was very sorry he had quitted his government so soon; but that he would give him some other employment that should be less troublesome, and more profitable. The duchess was no less kind, giving order he should want for nothing, for he seemed sadly bruised and out of order.