

CHAPTER LVII

HOW DON QUIXOTE TOOK HIS LEAVE OF THE DUKE,
AND WHAT PASSED BETWEEN HIM AND THE
WITTY, WANTON, ALTISIDORA, THE DUCHESS'S
DAMSEL

DON QUIXOTE thought it now time to leave the idle life he had led in the castle, believing it a mighty fault thus to shut himself up, and indulge his sensual appetite among the tempting varieties of dainties and delights, which the lord and lady of the place provided for his entertainment as a knight-errant; and he thought he was to give a strict account to Heaven for a course of life so opposite to his active profession. Accordingly, one day he acquainted the duke and duchess with his sentiments, and begged their leave to depart. They both seemed very unwilling to part with him, but yet at last yielded to his entreaties. The duchess gave Sancho his wife's letters, which he could not hear read without weeping. "Who would have thought," cried he, "that all the mighty hopes with which my wife

swelled herself up at the news of my preferment, should come to this at last, and how I should be reduced again to trot after my master Don Quixote de la Mancha, in search of hunger and broken bones! However, I am glad to see my Teresa was like herself, in sending the duchess the acorns, which, if she had not done, she had shewed herself a dirty ungrateful sow, and I should have been confounded mad with her. My comfort is, that no man can say the present was a bribe, for I had my government before she sent it; and it is fit those who have a kindness done them should shew themselves grateful, though it be with a small matter. In short, naked I came into the government, and naked I went out of it; and so I may say, for my comfort, with a safe conscience, naked I came into the world, and naked I am still: I neither won nor lost; that is no easy matter, as times go, let me tell you." These were Sancho's sentiments at his departure.

Don Quixote, having taken his solemn leave of the duke and duchess over night, left his apartment the next morning, and appeared in his armour in the court-yard, the galleries all round about being filled at the same time, with the people of the house; the duke and duchess being also got thither to see him. Sancho was

upon his Dapple, with his cloak-bag, his wallet, and his provision, very brisk and cheerful; for the steward that acted the part of Trifaldi had given him a purse, with two hundred crowns in gold, to defray expenses, which was more than Don Quixote knew at that time. And now, when every body looked to see them set forward, on a sudden, the arch and witty Altisidora started from the rest of the duchess's damsels and attendants, that stood by among the rest, and, in a doleful tone, addressed herself to him in the following doggerel rhymes.

THE MOCK FAREWELL.

I.

"Stay, cruel Don,
Do not be gone,
Nor give thy horse the rowels;
For every jag
Thou giv'st thy nag,
Does prick me to the bowels.

"Thou dost not shun
Some butter'd bun,
Or drab without a rag on:
Alas! I am
A very lamb,
Yet love like any dragon.

"Thou didst deceive,
And now dost leave
A lass, as tight as any
That ever stood
In hill or wood,
Near Venus and Diana.

"Since thou, false fiend,
When nymph's thy friend,
Æneas-like dost bob her,
Go, rot and die,
Boil, roast, or fry,
With Barrabas the robber.

II.

"Thou tak'st thy flight,
Like ravenous kite,
That holds within his pounces
A tender bit,
A poor tom-tit,
Then whist! away he flounces.

"The heart of me,
And night-coifs three,
With garters twain you plunder,
From legs of hue,
White, black, and blue,
So marbled o'er, you'd wonder.

"Two thousand groans,
And warm ahones,
Are stuff'd within thy pillion,
The least of which,
Like flaming pitch,
Might have burned down old Ilion.

"Since thou, false fiend,
When nymph's thy friend,
Æneas-like dost bob her,
Go, rot and die,
Boil, roast, or fry,
With Barrabas the robber.

III.

"As sour as crab,
Against thy drab,
May be thy Sancho's gizzard:
And he ne'er thrum
His brawny bum,
To free her from the wizard.

"May all thy flouts,
And sullen doubts,
Be scored upon thy dowdy;
And she ne'er freed,
For thy misdeed,
From rusty phiz, and cloudy.

"May fortune's curse,
From bad to worse,
Turn all thy best adventures;
Thy joys to dumps,
Thy brags to thumps,
And thy best hopes to banter.

"Since thou, false fiend,
When nymph's thy friend
Æneas-like dost bob her,
Go, rot and die,
Boil, roast, or fry,
With Barrabas the robber.

IV.

"May'st thou incog,
Sneak like a dog,
And o'er the mountains trudge it;
From Spain to Cales,*
From Usk to Wales,
Without a cross in budget.

"If thou'rt so brisk
To play at whisk,
In hopes of winning riches;
For want of strump
Stir even thy rump,
And lose thy very breeches.

"May thy corns ache,
Then pen-knife take,
And cut thee to the raw-bone:
With tooth-ache mad,
No ease be had,
Though quacks pull out thy jaw-bone.

* Good Spanish geography.

"Since thou, false fiend,
When nymph's thy friend,
Æneas-like dost bob her;
Go, rot and die,
Boil, roast, or fry,
With Barrabas the robber."

Thus Altisidora expressed her resentments, and Don Quixote, who looked on her seriously all the while, would not answer a word; but, turning to Sancho, "Dear Sancho," said he, "by the memory of thy fore-fathers, I conjure thee to tell me one truth: say, hast thou any night-coifs, or garters, that belong to this love-sick damsel?"—"The three night-coifs I have," quoth Sancho; "but, as for the garters, I know no more of them than the man in the moon." The duchess being wholly a stranger to this part of Altisidora's frolic, was amazed to see her proceed so far in it, though she knew her to be of an arch and merry disposition. But the duke, being pleased with the humour, resolved to carry it on. Thereupon, addressing himself to Don Quixote, "Truly, Sir Knight," said he, "I do not take it kindly, that, after such civil entertainment as you have had here in my castle, you should offer to carry away three night-coifs, if not a pair of garters besides, the proper goods and chattels of this damsel here present. This was not done like a gentleman,

and does not make good the character you would maintain in the world; therefore, restore her garters, or I challenge you to a mortal combat, without being afraid that your evil-minded enchanters should alter my face, as they did my footman's."—"Heaven forbid," said Don Quixote, "that I should draw my sword against your most illustrious person, to whom I stand indebted for so many favours. No, my lord; as for the night-coifs, I will cause them to be restored, for Sancho tells me he has them; but, as for the garters, it is impossible, for neither he nor I ever had them; and, if this damsel of yours will look carefully among her things, I dare say she will find them. I never was a pilferer, my lord; and, while Heaven forsakes me not, I never shall be guilty of such baseness. But this damsel, as you may perceive, talks like one that is in love, and accuses me of that whereof I am innocent; so that, not regarding her little revenge, I have no need to ask pardon either of her or your grace. I only beg you will be pleased to entertain a better opinion of me, and once more permit me to depart."—"Farewell, noble Don Quixote," said the duchess, "may Providence so direct your course, that we may always be blessed with the good news of your exploits; and so

Heaven be with you, for, the longer you stay, the more you increase the flames in the hearts of the damsels that gaze on you. As for this young, indiscreet creature, I will take her to task so severely, she shall not misbehave herself so much as in a word or look for the future."—"One word more, I beseech you, O valorous Don Quixote!" cried Altisidora; "I beg your pardon for saying you had stolen my garters, for, on my conscience, I have them on: But my thoughts ran a wool-gathering; and I did like the countryman, who looked for his ass while he was mounted on his back."—"Marry come up," cried Sancho, "whom did they take me for, trow? a concealer of stolen goods? No, indeed, had I been given that way, I might have had opportunities enough in my government."

Then Don Quixote bowed his head, and, after he had made a low obeisance to the duke, the duchess, and all the company, he turned about with Rozinante; and Sancho following him on Dapple, they left the castle, and took the road for Saragossa.