

CHAPTER LIX

OF AN EXTRAORDINARY ACCIDENT THAT HAPPENED
TO DON QUIXOTE, WHICH MAY WELL PASS FOR
AN ADVENTURE

A CLEAR fountain, which Don Quixote and Sancho found among some verdant trees, served to refresh them, besmeared with dust, and tired as they were, after the rude encounter of the bulls. There, by the brink, leaving Rozinante and Dapple, unbridled and unhaltered, to their own liberty, the two forlorn adventurers sat down. Sancho washed his mouth, and Don Quixote his face. The squire then went to his old cupboard, the wallet, and having taken out of it what he used to call belly-timber, laid it before the knight. But Don Quixote would eat nothing for pure vexation, and Sancho durst not begin for pure good manners, expecting that he would first shew him the way. However, finding him so wrapped in his imaginations, as to have no thoughts of lifting his hand up to his mouth, the squire, without letting one

word come out of his, laid aside all kind of good breeding, and began to stuff his hungry maw with what bread and cheese he had before him. "Eat, friend Sancho," cried Don Quixote, "repair the decays of nature, and sustain life, which thou hast more reason to cherish than I; leave me to die, abandoned to my sorrows, and the violence of my misfortunes. I was born, Sancho, to live dying, and thou to die eating. And, that thou mayest be convinced I tell thee truth, do but reflect upon me, famous in histories, dignified with the honour of the press, renowned for feats of arms, courteous in behaviour, respected by princes, beloved and importuned by damsels; yet after all this, when I at last flattered myself with hopes of laurels, triumphs, and crowns, the reward merited by my valorous achievements, behold me trod under foot; trampled like the highway dirt, kicked and bruised by the hoofs of vile and filthy beasts. The thought dulls the edge of my teeth and my appetite, unhinges my jaws, benumbs my hands, and stupefies my senses; and, fearing more to live than to die, I am resolved almost to starve myself, though to die with hunger be the most cruel of all deaths."

"So that, belike," quoth Sancho, without

losing any time in chewing, "you will not make good the saying, It is good to die with a full belly? For my part, I am not so simple yet as to kill myself. No, I am like the cobbler that stretches his leather with his teeth: I am for lengthening my life by eating; and I will stretch it with my grinders as far as Heaven will let it run. Faith and troth, master, there is no greater folly in the world than for a man to despair, and throw the helve after the hatchet. Therefore, take my advice, fall to, and eat as I do, and when you have done, lie down and take a nap; the fresh grass here will do as well as a feather-bed. I daresay by the time you awake you will find yourself better in body and mind."

Don Quixote followed Sancho's counsel, for he was convinced the squire spoke good natural philosophy at that time. However, in the meanwhile, a thought coming into his mind, "Ah! Sancho," said he, "if thou wouldst but do something that I am now going to desire thee, my cares would sit more easy on me, and my comfort would be more certain. It is only this: while, according to thy advice, I try to compose my thoughts with sleep, do but step aside a little, and, exposing thy back parts bare in the open air, take the

reins of Rozinante's bridle, and give thyself some three or four hundred smart lashes, in part of the three thousand and odd thou art to receive to disenchant Dulcinea; for, in truth, it is a shame, and a very great pity, that poor lady should remain enchanted all this while, through thy carelessness and neglect."—"There is a great deal to be said as to that," quoth Sancho, "but that will keep cold; first let us go to sleep, and then come what will come. Heaven knows what will be done. Do you think, sir, it is nothing for a man to flog himself in cold blood? I would have you to know, it is a cruel thing, especially when the lashes must light upon a body so weak, and so horribly lined within as mine is. Let my lady Dulcinea have a little patience; one of these days, when she least dreams of it, she shall see my skin pinked and jagged, like a slashed doublet, with lashes. There is nothing lost that comes at last; while there is life there is hope; which is as good as to say, I live with an intent to make good my promise." Don Quixote gave him thanks, ate a little, and Sancho a great deal; and then both betook themselves to their rest, leaving those constant friends and companions, Rozinante and Dapple, to their own discretion, to repose

or feed at random on the pasture that abounded in that meadow.

The day was now far gone, when the knight and the squire waked. They mounted, and held on their journey, making the best of their way to an inn, that seemed to be about a league distant. I call it an inn, because Don Quixote himself called it so, contrary to his custom, it being a common thing with him to take inns for castles.

Being got thither, they asked the innkeeper whether he had got any lodgings. "Yes," answered he, "and as good accommodation as you could expect to find even in the city of Saragossa." They alighted, and Sancho put up his baggage in a chamber, of which the landlord gave him the key; and, after he had seen Rozinante and Dapple well provided for in the stable, he went to wait on his master, whom he found sitting upon a seat made in the wall—the squire blessing himself more than once that the knight had not taken the inn for a castle. Supper-time approaching, Don Quixote retired to his apartment, and Sancho, staying with his host, asked him what he had to give them for supper. "What you will," answered he; "you may pick and choose—fish or flesh, butchers' meat or poultry,

wild-fowl, and what not; whatever land, sea, and air afford for food, it is but ask and have; every thing is to be had in this inn."—"There is no need of all this," quoth Sancho; "a couple of roasted chickens will do our business; for my master has a nice stomach, and eats but little; and as for me, I am none of your unreasonable trenchermen."—"As for chickens," replied the innkeeper, "truly we have none, for the kites have devoured them."—"Why then," quoth Sancho, "roast us a good handsome pullet, with eggs, so it be young and tender."—"A pullet, master!" answered the host; "faith and troth, I sent above fifty yesterday to the city to sell; but, setting aside pullets, you may have any thing else."—"Why, then," quoth Sancho, "even give us a good joint of veal or kid."—"Cry you mercy!" replied the innkeeper; "now I remember me, we have none left in the house; the last company that went cleared me quite; but by next week we shall have enough, and to spare."—"We are finely holped up," quoth Sancho. "Now will I hold a good wager, all these defects must be made up with a dish of eggs and bacon."—"Hey day!" cried the host, "my guest has a rare knack at guessing, i'faith: I told him I had no hens nor pullets

in the house, and yet he would have me to have eggs! Think on something else, I beseech you, and let us talk no more of that.”—“Body of me,” cried Sancho, “let us come to something; tell me what thou hast, good Mr Landlord, and do not put me to trouble my brains any longer.”—“Why, then, do you see,” quoth the host, “to deal plainly with you, I have a delicate pair of cow-heels, that look like calves’ feet, or a pair of calves’ feet that look like cow-heels, dressed with onions, pease, and bacon—a dish for a prince; they are just ready to be taken off, and by this time they cry, ‘Come, eat me, come, eat me.’”—“Cow-heels!” cried Sancho; “I set my mark on them; let nobody touch them. I will give more for them than any other shall. There is nothing I love better.”—“Nobody else shall have them,” answered the host; “you need not fear, for all the guests I have in the house, besides yourselves, are persons of quality, that carry their steward, their cook, and their provisions along with them.”—“As for quality,” quoth Sancho, “my master is a person of as good quality as the proudest he of them all, if you go to that, but his profession allows of no larders nor butteries. We commonly clap us down in the midst of a field, and fill our

bellies with acorns or medlars.” This was the discourse that passed betwixt Sancho and the innkeeper; for, as to the host’s interrogatories concerning his master’s profession, Sancho was not then at leisure to make him any answer.

In short, supper-time came, Don Quixote went to his room, the host brought the dish of cow-heels, such as it was, and set him down fairly to supper. But at the same time, in the next room, which was divided from that where they were by a slender partition, the knight overheard somebody talking. “Dear Don Jeronimo,” said the unseen person, “I beseech you, till supper is brought in, let us read another chapter of the Second Part of Don Quixote.” The champion no sooner heard himself named, than up he started, and listened, with attentive ears, to what was said of him; and then he heard that Don Jeronimo answer, “Why would you have us read nonsense, Signor Don John? Methinks, any one that has read the First Part of Don Quixote should take but little delight in reading the second.”—“That may be,” replied Don John; “however, it may not be amiss to read it; for there is no book so bad as not to have something that is good in it. What displeases me most