

person of whom that story treats. If it be well written, faithful, and authentic, it will live ages; but, if it be bad, it will have a quick journey from its birth to the grave of oblivion." Altisidora was then going to renew her expostulations and complaints against Don Quixote, had he not thus interrupted her: "I have often cautioned you, madam," said he, "of fixing your affections upon a man who is absolutely incapable of making a suitable return. It grieves me to have a heart obtruded upon me, when I have no better entertainment to give it than bare, cold thanks. I was only born for Dulcinea del Toboso; and to her alone the Destinies (if such there be) have devoted my affection! So, it is presumption for any other beauty to imagine she can displace her, or but share the possession she holds in my soul. This, I hope, may suffice to take away all foundation from your hopes, to recal your modesty, and reinstate it in its proper bounds; for impossibilities are not to be expected from any creature upon earth."

At hearing of this, "Death of my life!" cried Altisidora, putting on a violent passion, "thou lump of lead, who hast a soul of mortar, and a heart as little and as hard as the stone of an olive, more stubborn than a common plough-

jobber, or a carrier's horse, that will never go out of his road, I have a good mind to tear your eyes out, as deep as they are in your head. Why, thou beaten swash-buckler, thou rib-roasted knight of the cudgel, hast thou the impudence to think that I died for love of thy lantern-jaws? No, no, Sir Tiffany, all that you have seen this night has been counterfeit, for I would not suffer the pain of a flea-bite, much less that of dying, for such a dromedary as thou art."—"Troth, lass, I believe thee," quoth Sancho; "for all these stories of people dying for love are mere tales of a roasted horse. They tell you they will die for love, but the devil a bit. Trust to that, and be laughed at."

Their discourse was interrupted by the coming in of the harper, singer, and composer of the stanzas that were performed in the court the night before. "Sir Knight," said he to Don Quixote, making a profound obeisance, "let me beg the favour of being numbered among your most humble servants; it is an honour which I have long been ambitious to receive, in regard of your great renown, and the value of your achievements."—"Pray, sir," said Don Quixote, "let me know who you are, that I may proportion my respects to

your merits." The spark gave him to understand, he was the person that made and sung the verses he heard the last night. "Truly, sir," said Don Quixote, "you have an excellent voice; but I think your poetry was little to the purpose; for, what relation, pray, have the stanzas of Garcilasso to this lady's death?"—"Oh, sir, never wonder at that," replied the musician; "I do but as other brothers of the quill: All the upstart poets of the age do the same, and every one writes what he pleases, how he pleases, and steals from whom he pleases, whether it be to the purpose or no; for, let them write and set to music what they will, though never so impertinent and absurd, there is a thing, called poetical licence, that is our warrant, and a safeguard and refuge for nonsense, among all the men of jingle and metre."

Don Quixote was going to answer, but was interrupted by the coming in of the duke and duchess, who, improving the conversation, made it very pleasant for some hours; and Sancho was so full of his odd conceits and arch wiles, that the duke and duchess were at a stand which to admire most, his wit or his simplicity. After that, Don Quixote begged leave for his departure that very day,

alleging, that knights, in his unhappy circumstances, were rather fitter to inhabit a humble cottage, than a kingly palace. They freely complied with his request; and the duchess desired to know if Altisidora had yet attained to any share of his favour. "Madam," answered Don Quixote, "I must freely tell your grace, that I am confident all this damsel's disease proceeds from nothing else in the world but idleness; so nothing in nature can be better physic for her distemper, than to be continually employed in some innocent and decent things. She has been pleased to inform me, that bone-lace is much worn in hell; and since, without doubt, she knows how to make it, let that be her task; and I will engage, the tumbling of her bobbins to and again will soon toss her love out of her head. Now, this is my opinion, madam, and my advice."—"And mine, too," quoth Sancho, "for I never knew any of your bone-lace-makers die for love, nor any other young wench that had any thing else to do. I know it by myself: When I am hard at work, with a spade in my hand, I no more think of pig'snyes (my own dear wife I mean) than I do of my dead cow, though I love her as the apple of my eye."—"You say well, Sancho," answered the

duchess; "and I will take care that Altisidora shall not want employment for the future; she understands her needle, and I am resolved she shall make use of it."—"Madam," said Altisidora, "I shall have no occasion for any remedy of that nature; for the sense of the severity and ill-usage that I have met with from that vagabond monster, will, without any other means, soon raze him out of my memory. In the mean time, I beg your grace's leave to retire, that I may no longer behold, I will not say his woeful figure, but his ugly and abominable countenance."—"These words," said the duke, "put me in mind of the proverb, After railing comes forgiving." Altisidora, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, as it were to dry her tears, and then making her honours to the duke and duchess, went out of the room. "Alack-a-day! poor girl," cried Sancho, "I know what will be the end of thee, since thou art fallen into the hands of that sad soul, that merciless master of mine, with a crab-tree heart, as tough as any oak. Woe be to thee, a-faith! hadst thou fallen in love with this sweet face of mine, body of me! thou hadst met with a cock of the game." The discourse ended here. Don Quixote dressed, dined with the duke and duchess, and departed that afternoon.

## CHAPTER LXXI

WHAT HAPPENED TO DON QUIXOTE AND HIS SQUIRE  
ON THEIR WAY HOME

THE vanquished knight-errant continued his journey, equally divided between grief and joy; the thought of his overthrow sometimes sunk his spirits, but then the assurance he had of the virtue lodged in Sancho, by Altisidora's resurrection, raised them up again; and yet, after all, he had much ado to persuade himself that the amorous damsel was really dead. As for Sancho, his thoughts were not at all of the pleasing kind; on the contrary, he was mightily upon the sullen, because Altisidora had bilked him of the smocks she promised him; and his head running upon that, "Faith and troth, sir," quoth he, "I have the worst luck of any physician under the cope of heaven; other doctors kill their patients, and are paid for it too, and yet they are at no further trouble than scrawling two or three cramp words for some physical slip-slop, which the apothecaries are at all the pains to make