

The History of Don Quixote, Vol. II., Part 28

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

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DON QUIXOTE

Volume II.

Part 28.

by Miguel de Cervantes

Translated by John Ormsby

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THE FAMOUS ADVENTURE OF THE ENCHANTED BARK

By stages as already described or left undescribed, two days after quitting the grove Don Quixote and Sancho reached the river Ebro, and the sight of it was a great delight to Don Quixote as he contemplated and

gazed upon the charms of its banks, the clearness of its stream, the gentleness of its current and the abundance of its crystal waters; and the pleasant view revived a thousand tender thoughts in his mind. Above all, he dwelt upon what he had seen in the cave of Montesinos; for though Master Pedro's ape had told him that of those things part was true, part false, he clung more to their truth than to their falsehood, the very reverse of Sancho, who held them all to be downright lies.

As they were thus proceeding, then, they discovered a small boat, without oars or any other gear, that lay at the water's edge tied to the stem of a tree growing on the bank. Don Quixote looked all round, and seeing nobody, at once, without more ado, dismounted from Rocinante and bade Sancho get down from Dapple and tie both beasts securely to the trunk of a poplar or willow that stood there. Sancho asked him the reason of this sudden dismounting and tying. Don Quixote made answer, "Thou must know, Sancho, that this bark is plainly, and without the possibility of any alternative, calling and inviting me to enter it, and in it go to give aid to some knight or other person of distinction in need of it, who is no doubt in some sore strait; for this is the way of the books of chivalry and of the enchanters who figure and speak in them. When a knight is involved in some difficulty from which he cannot be delivered save by the hand of another knight, though they may be at a distance of two or three thousand leagues or more one from the other, they either take him up on a cloud, or they provide a bark for him to get into, and in less than the twinkling of an eye they carry him where they will and where his help is required; and so, Sancho, this bark is placed here for the same purpose; this is as true as that it is now day, and ere this one passes tie Dapple and Rocinante together, and then in God's hand be it to guide us; for I would not hold back from embarking, though barefooted friars were to beg me."

"As that's the case," said Sancho, "and your worship chooses to give in to these--I don't know if I may call them absurdities--at every turn, there's nothing for it but to obey and bow the head, bearing in mind the proverb, 'Do as thy master bids thee, and sit down to table with him;' but for all that, for the sake of easing my conscience, I warn your worship that it is my opinion this bark is no enchanted one, but belongs to some of the fishermen of the river, for they catch the best shad in the world here."

As Sancho said this, he tied the beasts, leaving them to the care and protection of the enchanters with sorrow enough in his heart. Don Quixote bade him not be uneasy about deserting the animals, "for he who would carry themselves over such longinuous roads and regions would take care to feed them."

"I don't understand that logiquous," said Sancho, "nor have I ever heard the word all the days of my life."

"Longinuous," replied Don Quixote, "means far off; but it is no wonder thou dost not understand it, for thou art not bound to know Latin, like some who pretend to know it and don't."

"Now they are tied," said Sancho; "what are we to do next?"

"What?" said Don Quixote, "cross ourselves and weigh anchor; I mean, embark and cut the moorings by which the bark is held;" and the bark began to drift away slowly from the bank. But when Sancho saw himself somewhere about two yards out in the river, he began to tremble and give

himself up for lost; but nothing distressed him more than hearing Dapple bray and seeing Rocinante struggling to get loose, and said he to his master, "Dapple is braying in grief at our leaving him, and Rocinante is trying to escape and plunge in after us. O dear friends, peace be with you, and may this madness that is taking us away from you, turned into sober sense, bring us back to you." And with this he fell weeping so bitterly, that Don Quixote said to him, sharply and angrily, "What art thou afraid of, cowardly creature? What art thou weeping at, heart of butter-paste? Who pursues or molests thee, thou soul of a tame mouse? What dost thou want, unsatisfied in the very heart of abundance? Art thou, perchance, tramping barefoot over the Rhiphaean mountains, instead of being seated on a bench like an archduke on the tranquil stream of this pleasant river, from which in a short space we shall come out upon the broad sea? But we must have already emerged and gone seven hundred or eight hundred leagues; and if I had here an astrolabe to take the altitude of the pole, I could tell thee how many we have travelled, though either I know little, or we have already crossed or shall shortly cross the equinoctial line which parts the two opposite poles midway."

"And when we come to that line your worship speaks of," said Sancho, "how far shall we have gone?"

"Very far," said Don Quixote, "for of the three hundred and sixty degrees that this terraqueous globe contains, as computed by Ptolemy, the greatest cosmographer known, we shall have travelled one-half when we come to the line I spoke of."

"By God," said Sancho, "your worship gives me a nice authority for what you say, putrid Dolly something transmogrified, or whatever it is."

Don Quixote laughed at the interpretation Sancho put upon "computed," and the name of the cosmographer Ptolemy, and said he, "Thou must know, Sancho, that with the Spaniards and those who embark at Cadiz for the East Indies, one of the signs they have to show them when they have passed the equinoctial line I told thee of, is, that the lice die upon everybody on board the ship, and not a single one is left, or to be found in the whole vessel if they gave its weight in gold for it; so, Sancho, thou mayest as well pass thy hand down thy thigh, and if thou comest upon anything alive we shall be no longer in doubt; if not, then we have crossed."

"I don't believe a bit of it," said Sancho; "still, I'll do as your worship bids me; though I don't know what need there is for trying these experiments, for I can see with my own eyes that we have not moved five yards away from the bank, or shifted two yards from where the animals stand, for there are Rocinante and Dapple in the very same place where we left them; and watching a point, as I do now, I swear by all that's good, we are not stirring or moving at the pace of an ant."

"Try the test I told thee of, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and don't mind any other, for thou knowest nothing about colures, lines, parallels, zodiacs, ecliptics, poles, solstices, equinoxes, planets, signs, bearings, the measures of which the celestial and terrestrial spheres are composed; if thou wert acquainted with all these things, or any portion of them, thou wouldst see clearly how many parallels we have cut, what signs we have seen, and what constellations we have left behind and are now leaving behind. But again I tell thee, feel and hunt, for I am certain thou art cleaner than a sheet of smooth white paper."

Sancho felt, and passing his hand gently and carefully down to the hollow of his left knee, he looked up at his master and said, "Either the test is a false one, or we have not come to where your worship says, nor within many leagues of it."

"Why, how so?" asked Don Quixote; "hast thou come upon aught?"

"Ay, and aughts," replied Sancho; and shaking his fingers he washed his whole hand in the river along which the boat was quietly gliding in midstream, not moved by any occult intelligence or invisible enchanter, but simply by the current, just there smooth and gentle.

They now came in sight of some large water mills that stood in the middle of the river, and the instant Don Quixote saw them he cried out, "Seest thou there, my friend? there stands the castle or fortress, where there is, no doubt, some knight in durance, or ill-used queen, or infanta, or princess, in whose aid I am brought hither."

"What the devil city, fortress, or castle is your worship talking about, senor?" said Sancho; "don't you see that those are mills that stand in the river to grind corn?"

"Hold thy peace, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "though they look like mills they are not so; I have already told thee that enchantments transform things and change their proper shapes; I do not mean to say they really change them from one form into another, but that it seems as though they did, as experience proved in the transformation of Dulcinea, sole refuge of my hopes."

By this time, the boat, having reached the middle of the stream, began to move less slowly than hitherto. The millers belonging to the mills, when they saw the boat coming down the river, and on the point of being sucked in by the draught of the wheels, ran out in haste, several of them, with long poles to stop it, and being all mealy, with faces and garments covered with flour, they presented a sinister appearance. They raised loud shouts, crying, "Devils of men, where are you going to? Are you mad? Do you want to drown yourselves, or dash yourselves to pieces among these wheels?"

"Did I not tell thee, Sancho," said Don Quixote at this, "that we had reached the place where I am to show what the might of my arm can do? See what ruffians and villains come out against me; see what monsters oppose me; see what hideous countenances come to frighten us! You shall soon see, scoundrels!" And then standing up in the boat he began in a loud voice to hurl threats at the millers, exclaiming, "Ill-conditioned and worse-counselled rabble, restore to liberty and freedom the person ye hold in durance in this your fortress or prison, high or low or of whatever rank or quality he be, for I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, otherwise called the Knight of the Lions, for whom, by the disposition of heaven above, it is reserved to give a happy issue to this adventure;" and so saying he drew his sword and began making passes in the air at the millers, who, hearing but not understanding all this nonsense, strove to stop the boat, which was now getting into the rushing channel of the wheels. Sancho fell upon his knees devoutly appealing to heaven to deliver him from such imminent peril; which it did by the activity and quickness of the millers, who, pushing against the boat with their poles, stopped it, not, however, without upsetting and throwing Don Quixote and Sancho into the water; and lucky it was for Don Quixote that he could

swim like a goose, though the weight of his armour carried him twice to the bottom; and had it not been for the millers, who plunged in and hoisted them both out, it would have been Troy town with the pair of them. As soon as, more drenched than thirsty, they were landed, Sancho went down on his knees and with clasped hands and eyes raised to heaven, prayed a long and fervent prayer to God to deliver him evermore from the rash projects and attempts of his master. The fishermen, the owners of the boat, which the mill-wheels had knocked to pieces, now came up, and seeing it smashed they proceeded to strip Sancho and to demand payment for it from Don Quixote; but he with great calmness, just as if nothing had happened him, told the millers and fishermen that he would pay for the bark most cheerfully, on condition that they delivered up to him, free and unhurt, the person or persons that were in durance in that castle of theirs.

"What persons or what castle art thou talking of, madman? Art thou for carrying off the people who come to grind corn in these mills?"

"That's enough," said Don Quixote to himself, "it would be preaching in the desert to attempt by entreaties to induce this rabble to do any virtuous action. In this adventure two mighty enchanters must have encountered one another, and one frustrates what the other attempts; one provided the bark for me, and the other upset me; God help us, this world is all machinations and schemes at cross purposes one with the other. I can do no more." And then turning towards the mills he said aloud, "Friends, whoe'er ye be that are immured in that prison, forgive me that, to my misfortune and yours, I cannot deliver you from your misery; this adventure is doubtless reserved and destined for some other knight."

So saying he settled with the fishermen, and paid fifty reals for the boat, which Sancho handed to them very much against the grain, saying, "With a couple more bark businesses like this we shall have sunk our whole capital."

The fishermen and the millers stood staring in amazement at the two figures, so very different to all appearance from ordinary men, and were wholly unable to make out the drift of the observations and questions Don Quixote addressed to them; and coming to the conclusion that they were madmen, they left them and betook themselves, the millers to their mills, and the fishermen to their huts. Don Quixote and Sancho returned to their beasts, and to their life of beasts, and so ended the adventure of the enchanted bark.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF DON QUIXOTE'S ADVENTURE WITH A FAIR HUNTRESS

They reached their beasts in low spirits and bad humour enough, knight and squire, Sancho particularly, for with him what touched the stock of money touched his heart, and when any was taken from him he felt as if he was robbed of the apples of his eyes. In fine, without exchanging a word, they mounted and quitted the famous river, Don Quixote absorbed in thoughts of his love, Sancho in thinking of his advancement, which just then, it seemed to him, he was very far from securing; for, fool as he was, he saw clearly enough that his master's acts were all or most of

them utterly senseless; and he began to cast about for an opportunity of retiring from his service and going home some day, without entering into any explanations or taking any farewell of him. Fortune, however, ordered matters after a fashion very much the opposite of what he contemplated.

It so happened that the next day towards sunset, on coming out of a wood, Don Quixote cast his eyes over a green meadow, and at the far end of it observed some people, and as he drew nearer saw that it was a hawking party. Coming closer, he distinguished among them a lady of graceful mien, on a pure white palfrey or hackney caparisoned with green trappings and a silver-mounted side-saddle. The lady was also in green, and so richly and splendidly dressed that splendour itself seemed personified in her. On her left hand she bore a hawk, a proof to Don Quixote's mind that she must be some great lady and the mistress of the whole hunting party, which was the fact; so he said to Sancho, "Run Sancho, my son, and say to that lady on the palfrey with the hawk that I, the Knight of the Lions, kiss the hands of her exalted beauty, and if her excellence will grant me leave I will go and kiss them in person and place myself at her service for aught that may be in my power and her highness may command; and mind, Sancho, how thou speakest, and take care not to thrust in any of thy proverbs into thy message."

"You've got a likely one here to thrust any in!" said Sancho; "leave me alone for that! Why, this is not the first time in my life I have carried messages to high and exalted ladies."

"Except that thou didst carry to the lady Dulcinea," said Don Quixote, "I know not that thou hast carried any other, at least in my service."

"That is true," replied Sancho; "but pledges don't distress a good payer, and in a house where there's plenty supper is soon cooked; I mean there's no need of telling or warning me about anything; for I'm ready for everything and know a little of everything."

"That I believe, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "go and good luck to thee, and God speed thee."

Sancho went off at top speed, forcing Dapple out of his regular pace, and came to where the fair huntress was standing, and dismounting knelt before her and said, "Fair lady, that knight that you see there, the Knight of the Lions by name, is my master, and I am a squire of his, and at home they call me Sancho Panza. This same Knight of the Lions, who was called not long since the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, sends by me to say may it please your highness to give him leave that, with your permission, approbation, and consent, he may come and carry out his wishes, which are, as he says and I believe, to serve your exalted loftiness and beauty; and if you give it, your ladyship will do a thing which will redound to your honour, and he will receive a most distinguished favour and happiness."

"You have indeed, squire," said the lady, "delivered your message with all the formalities such messages require; rise up, for it is not right that the squire of a knight so great as he of the Rueful Countenance, of whom we have heard a great deal here, should remain on his knees; rise, my friend, and bid your master welcome to the services of myself and the duke my husband, in a country house we have here."

Sancho got up, charmed as much by the beauty of the good lady as by her high-bred air and her courtesy, but, above all, by what she had said

about having heard of his master, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance; for if she did not call him Knight of the Lions it was no doubt because he had so lately taken the name. "Tell me, brother squire," asked the duchess (whose title, however, is not known), "this master of yours, is he not one of whom there is a history extant in print, called 'The Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote of La Mancha,' who has for the lady of his heart a certain Dulcinea del Toboso?"

"He is the same, senora," replied Sancho; "and that squire of his who figures, or ought to figure, in the said history under the name of Sancho Panza, is myself, unless they have changed me in the cradle, I mean in the press."

"I am rejoiced at all this," said the duchess; "go, brother Panza, and tell your master that he is welcome to my estate, and that nothing could happen me that could give me greater pleasure."

Sancho returned to his master mightily pleased with this gratifying answer, and told him all the great lady had said to him, lauding to the skies, in his rustic phrase, her rare beauty, her graceful gaiety, and her courtesy. Don Quixote drew himself up briskly in his saddle, fixed himself in his stirrups, settled his visor, gave Rocinante the spur, and with an easy bearing advanced to kiss the hands of the duchess, who, having sent to summon the duke her husband, told him while Don Quixote was approaching all about the message; and as both of them had read the First Part of this history, and from it were aware of Don Quixote's crazy turn, they awaited him with the greatest delight and anxiety to make his acquaintance, meaning to fall in with his humour and agree with everything he said, and, so long as he stayed with them, to treat him as a knight-errant, with all the ceremonies usual in the books of chivalry they had read, for they themselves were very fond of them.

Don Quixote now came up with his visor raised, and as he seemed about to dismount Sancho made haste to go and hold his stirrup for him; but in getting down off Dapple he was so unlucky as to hitch his foot in one of the ropes of the pack-saddle in such a way that he was unable to free it, and was left hanging by it with his face and breast on the ground. Don Quixote, who was not used to dismount without having the stirrup held, fancying that Sancho had by this time come to hold it for him, threw himself off with a lurch and brought Rocinante's saddle after him, which was no doubt badly girthed, and saddle and he both came to the ground; not without discomfiture to him and abundant curses muttered between his teeth against the unlucky Sancho, who had his foot still in the shackles. The duke ordered his huntsmen to go to the help of knight and squire, and they raised Don Quixote, sorely shaken by his fall; and he, limping, advanced as best he could to kneel before the noble pair. This, however, the duke would by no means permit; on the contrary, dismounting from his horse, he went and embraced Don Quixote, saying, "I am grieved, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, that your first experience on my ground should have been such an unfortunate one as we have seen; but the carelessness of squires is often the cause of worse accidents."

"That which has happened me in meeting you, mighty prince," replied Don Quixote, "cannot be unfortunate, even if my fall had not stopped short of the depths of the bottomless pit, for the glory of having seen you would have lifted me up and delivered me from it. My squire, God's curse upon him, is better at unloosing his tongue in talking impertinence than in tightening the girths of a saddle to keep it steady; but however I may be, allen or raised up, on foot or on horseback, I shall always be at

your service and that of my lady the duchess, your worthy consort, worthy queen of beauty and paramount princess of courtesy."

"Gently, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha," said the duke; "where my lady Dona Dulcinea del Toboso is, it is not right that other beauties should be praised."

Sancho, by this time released from his entanglement, was standing by, and before his master could answer he said, "There is no denying, and it must be maintained, that my lady Dulcinea del Toboso is very beautiful; but the hare jumps up where one least expects it; and I have heard say that what we call nature is like a potter that makes vessels of clay, and he who makes one fair vessel can as well make two, or three, or a hundred; I say so because, by my faith, my lady the duchess is in no way behind my mistress the lady Dulcinea del Toboso."

Don Quixote turned to the duchess and said, "Your highness may conceive that never had knight-errant in this world a more talkative or a droller squire than I have, and he will prove the truth of what I say, if your highness is pleased to accept of my services for a few days."

To which the duchess made answer, "that worthy Sancho is droll I consider a very good thing, because it is a sign that he is shrewd; for drollery and sprightliness, Senor Don Quixote, as you very well know, do not take up their abode with dull wits; and as good Sancho is droll and sprightly I here set him down as shrewd."

"And talkative," added Don Quixote.

"So much the better," said the duke, "for many droll things cannot be said in few words; but not to lose time in talking, come, great Knight of the Rueful Countenance-

"Of the Lions, your highness must say," said Sancho, "for there is no Rueful Countenance nor any such character now."

"He of the Lions be it," continued the duke; "I say, let Sir Knight of the Lions come to a castle of mine close by, where he shall be given that reception which is due to so exalted a personage, and which the duchess and I are wont to give to all knights-errant who come there."

By this time Sancho had fixed and girthed Rocinante's saddle, and Don Quixote having got on his back and the duke mounted a fine horse, they placed the duchess in the middle and set out for the castle. The duchess desired Sancho to come to her side, for she found infinite enjoyment in listening to his shrewd remarks. Sancho required no pressing, but pushed himself in between them and the duke, who thought it rare good fortune to receive such a knight-errant and such a homely squire in their castle.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHICH TREATS OF MANY AND GREAT MATTERS

Supreme was the satisfaction that Sancho felt at seeing himself, as it seemed, an established favourite with the duchess, for he looked forward

to finding in her castle what he had found in Don Diego's house and in Basilio's; he was always fond of good living, and always seized by the forelock any opportunity of feasting himself whenever it presented itself. The history informs us, then, that before they reached the country house or castle, the duke went on in advance and instructed all his servants how they were to treat Don Quixote; and so the instant he came up to the castle gates with the duchess, two lackeys or equerries, clad in what they call morning gowns of fine crimson satin reaching to their feet, hastened out, and catching Don Quixote in their arms before he saw or heard them, said to him, "Your highness should go and take my lady the duchess off her horse."

Don Quixote obeyed, and great bandying of compliments followed between the two over the matter; but in the end the duchess's determination carried the day, and she refused to get down or dismount from her palfrey except in the arms of the duke, saying she did not consider herself worthy to impose so unnecessary a burden on so great a knight. At length the duke came out to take her down, and as they entered a spacious court two fair damsels came forward and threw over Don Quixote's shoulders a large mantle of the finest scarlet cloth, and at the same instant all the galleries of the court were lined with the men-servants and women-servants of the household, crying, "Welcome, flower and cream of knight-errantry!" while all or most of them flung pellets filled with scented water over Don Quixote and the duke and duchess; at all which Don Quixote was greatly astonished, and this was the first time that he thoroughly felt and believed himself to be a knight-errant in reality and not merely in fancy, now that he saw himself treated in the same way as he had read of such knights being treated in days of yore.

Sancho, deserting Dapple, hung on to the duchess and entered the castle, but feeling some twinges of conscience at having left the ass alone, he approached a respectable duenna who had come out with the rest to receive the duchess, and in a low voice he said to her, "Senora Gonzalez, or however your grace may be called-

"I am called Dona Rodriguez de Grijalba," replied the duenna; "what is your will, brother?" To which Sancho made answer, "I should be glad if your worship would do me the favour to go out to the castle gate, where you will find a grey ass of mine; make them, if you please, put him in the stable, or put him there yourself, for the poor little beast is rather easily frightened, and cannot bear being alone at all."

"If the master is as wise as the man," said the duenna, "we have got a fine bargain. Be off with you, brother, and bad luck to you and him who brought you here; go, look after your ass, for we, the duennas of this house, are not used to work of that sort."

"Well then, in troth," returned Sancho, "I have heard my master, who is the very treasure-finder of stories, telling the story of Lancelot when he came from Britain, say that ladies waited upon him and duennas upon his hack; and, if it comes to my ass, I wouldn't change him for Senor Lancelot's hack."

"If you are a jester, brother," said the duenna, "keep your drolleries for some place where they'll pass muster and be paid for; for you'll get nothing from me but a fig."

"At any rate, it will be a very ripe one," said Sancho, "for you won't lose the trick in years by a point too little."

"Son of a bitch," said the duenna, all aglow with anger, "whether I'm old or not, it's with God I have to reckon, not with you, you garlic-stuffed scoundrel!" and she said it so loud, that the duchess heard it, and turning round and seeing the duenna in such a state of excitement, and her eyes flaming so, asked whom she was wrangling with.

"With this good fellow here," said the duenna, "who has particularly requested me to go and put an ass of his that is at the castle gate into the stable, holding it up to me as an example that they did the same I don't know where--that some ladies waited on one Lancelot, and duennas on his hack; and what is more, to wind up with, he called me old."

"That," said the duchess, "I should have considered the greatest affront that could be offered me;" and addressing Sancho, she said to him, "You must know, friend Sancho, that Dona Rodriguez is very youthful, and that she wears that hood more for authority and custom sake than because of her years."

"May all the rest of mine be unlucky," said Sancho, "if I meant it that way; I only spoke because the affection I have for my ass is so great, and I thought I could not commend him to a more kind-hearted person than the lady Dona Rodriguez."

Don Quixote, who was listening, said to him, "Is this proper conversation for the place, Sancho?"

"Senor," replied Sancho, "every one must mention what he wants wherever he may be; I thought of Dapple here, and I spoke of him here; if I had thought of him in the stable I would have spoken there."

On which the duke observed, "Sancho is quite right, and there is no reason at all to find fault with him; Dapple shall be fed to his heart's content, and Sancho may rest easy, for he shall be treated like himself."

While this conversation, amusing to all except Don Quixote, was proceeding, they ascended the staircase and ushered Don Quixote into a chamber hung with rich cloth of gold and brocade; six damsels relieved him of his armour and waited on him like pages, all of them prepared and instructed by the duke and duchess as to what they were to do, and how they were to treat Don Quixote, so that he might see and believe they were treating him like a knight-errant. When his armour was removed, there stood Don Quixote in his tight-fitting breeches and chamois doublet, lean, lanky, and long, with cheeks that seemed to be kissing each other inside; such a figure, that if the damsels waiting on him had not taken care to check their merriment (which was one of the particular directions their master and mistress had given them), they would have burst with laughter. They asked him to let himself be stripped that they might put a shirt on him, but he would not on any account, saying that modesty became knights-errant just as much as valour. However, he said they might give the shirt to Sancho; and shutting himself in with him in a room where there was a sumptuous bed, he undressed and put on the shirt; and then, finding himself alone with Sancho, he said to him, "Tell me, thou new-fledged buffoon and old booby, dost thou think it right to offend and insult a duenna so deserving of reverence and respect as that one just now? Was that a time to bethink thee of thy Dapple, or are these noble personages likely to let the beasts fare badly when they treat their owners in such elegant style? For God's sake, Sancho, restrain thyself, and don't show the thread so as to let them see what a coarse,

boorish texture thou art of. Remember, sinner that thou art, the master is the more esteemed the more respectable and well-bred his servants are; and that one of the greatest advantages that princes have over other men is that they have servants as good as themselves to wait on them. Dost thou not see--shortsighted being that thou art, and unlucky mortal that I am!--that if they perceive thee to be a coarse clown or a dull blockhead, they will suspect me to be some impostor or swindler? Nay, nay, Sancho friend, keep clear, oh, keep clear of these stumbling-blocks; for he who falls into the way of being a chatterbox and droll, drops into a wretched buffoon the first time he trips; bridle thy tongue, consider and weigh thy words before they escape thy mouth, and bear in mind we are now in quarters whence, by God's help, and the strength of my arm, we shall come forth mightily advanced in fame and fortune."

Sancho promised him with much earnestness to keep his mouth shut, and to bite off his tongue before he uttered a word that was not altogether to the purpose and well considered, and told him he might make his mind easy on that point, for it should never be discovered through him what they were.

Don Quixote dressed himself, put on his baldric with his sword, threw the scarlet mantle over his shoulders, placed on his head a montera of green satin that the damsels had given him, and thus arrayed passed out into the large room, where he found the damsels drawn up in double file, the same number on each side, all with the appliances for washing the hands, which they presented to him with profuse obeisances and ceremonies. Then came twelve pages, together with the seneschal, to lead him to dinner, as his hosts were already waiting for him. They placed him in the midst of them, and with much pomp and stateliness they conducted him into another room, where there was a sumptuous table laid with but four covers. The duchess and the duke came out to the door of the room to receive him, and with them a grave ecclesiastic, one of those who rule noblemen's houses; one of those who, not being born magnates themselves, never know how to teach those who are how to behave as such; one of those who would have the greatness of great folk measured by their own narrowness of mind; one of those who, when they try to introduce economy into the household they rule, lead it into meanness. One of this sort, I say, must have been the grave churchman who came out with the duke and duchess to receive Don Quixote.

A vast number of polite speeches were exchanged, and at length, taking Don Quixote between them, they proceeded to sit down to table. The duke pressed Don Quixote to take the head of the table, and, though he refused, the entreaties of the duke were so urgent that he had to accept it.

The ecclesiastic took his seat opposite to him, and the duke and duchess those at the sides. All this time Sancho stood by, gaping with amazement at the honour he saw shown to his master by these illustrious persons; and observing all the ceremonious pressing that had passed between the duke and Don Quixote to induce him to take his seat at the head of the table, he said, "If your worship will give me leave I will tell you a story of what happened in my village about this matter of seats."

The moment Sancho said this Don Quixote trembled, making sure that he was about to say something foolish. Sancho glanced at him, and guessing his thoughts, said, "Don't be afraid of my going astray, senor, or saying anything that won't be pat to the purpose; I haven't forgotten the advice your worship gave me just now about talking much or little, well or ill."

"I have no recollection of anything, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "say what thou wilt, only say it quickly."

"Well then," said Sancho, "what I am going to say is so true that my master Don Quixote, who is here present, will keep me from lying."

"Lie as much as thou wilt for all I care, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for I am not going to stop thee, but consider what thou art going to say."

"I have so considered and reconsidered," said Sancho, "that the bell-ringer's in a safe berth; as will be seen by what follows."

"It would be well," said Don Quixote, "if your highnesses would order them to turn out this idiot, for he will talk a heap of nonsense."

"By the life of the duke, Sancho shall not be taken away from me for a moment," said the duchess; "I am very fond of him, for I know he is very discreet."

"Discreet be the days of your holiness," said Sancho, "for the good opinion you have of my wit, though there's none in me; but the story I want to tell is this. There was an invitation given by a gentleman of my town, a very rich one, and one of quality, for he was one of the Alamos of Medina del Campo, and married to Dona Mencia de Quinones, the daughter of Don Alonso de Maranon, Knight of the Order of Santiago, that was drowned at the Herradura--him there was that quarrel about years ago in our village, that my master Don Quixote was mixed up in, to the best of my belief, that Tomasillo the scapegrace, the son of Balbastro the smith, was wounded in.--Isn't all this true, master mine? As you live, say so, that these gentlefolk may not take me for some lying chatterer."

"So far," said the ecclesiastic, "I take you to be more a chatterer than a liar; but I don't know what I shall take you for by-and-by."

"Thou citest so many witnesses and proofs, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that I have no choice but to say thou must be telling the truth; go on, and cut the story short, for thou art taking the way not to make an end for two days to come."

"He is not to cut it short," said the duchess; "on the contrary, for my gratification, he is to tell it as he knows it, though he should not finish it these six days; and if he took so many they would be to me the pleasantest I ever spent."

"Well then, sirs, I say," continued Sancho, "that this same gentleman, whom I know as well as I do my own hands, for it's not a bowshot from my house to his, invited a poor but respectable labourer--"

"Get on, brother," said the churchman; "at the rate you are going you will not stop with your story short of the next world."

"I'll stop less than half-way, please God," said Sancho; "and so I say this labourer, coming to the house of the gentleman I spoke of that invited him--rest his soul, he is now dead; and more by token he died the death of an angel, so they say; for I was not there, for just at that time I had gone to reap at Tembleque--"

"As you live, my son," said the churchman, "make haste back from

Tembleque, and finish your story without burying the gentleman, unless you want to make more funerals."

"Well then, it so happened," said Sancho, "that as the pair of them were going to sit down to table--and I think I can see them now plainer than ever--"

Great was the enjoyment the duke and duchess derived from the irritation the worthy churchman showed at the long-winded, halting way Sancho had of telling his story, while Don Quixote was chafing with rage and vexation.

"So, as I was saying," continued Sancho, "as the pair of them were going to sit down to table, as I said, the labourer insisted upon the gentleman's taking the head of the table, and the gentleman insisted upon the labourer's taking it, as his orders should be obeyed in his house; but the labourer, who plumed himself on his politeness and good breeding, would not on any account, until the gentleman, out of patience, putting his hands on his shoulders, compelled him by force to sit down, saying, 'Sit down, you stupid lout, for wherever I sit will be the head to you; and that's the story, and, troth, I think it hasn't been brought in amiss here."

Don Quixote turned all colours, which, on his sunburnt face, mottled it till it looked like jasper. The duke and duchess suppressed their laughter so as not altogether to mortify Don Quixote, for they saw through Sancho's impertinence; and to change the conversation, and keep Sancho from uttering more absurdities, the duchess asked Don Quixote what news he had of the lady Dulcinea, and if he had sent her any presents of giants or miscreants lately, for he could not but have vanquished a good many.

To which Don Quixote replied, "Senora, my misfortunes, though they had a beginning, will never have an end. I have vanquished giants and I have sent her caitiffs and miscreants; but where are they to find her if she is enchanted and turned into the most ill-favoured peasant wench that can be imagined?"

"I don't know," said Sancho Panza; "to me she seems the fairest creature in the world; at any rate, in nimbleness and jumping she won't give in to a tumbler; by my faith, senora duchess, she leaps from the ground on to the back of an ass like a cat."

"Have you seen her enchanted, Sancho?" asked the duke.

"What, seen her!" said Sancho; "why, who the devil was it but myself that first thought of the enchantment business? She is as much enchanted as my father."

The ecclesiastic, when he heard them talking of giants and caitiffs and enchantments, began to suspect that this must be Don Quixote of La Mancha, whose story the duke was always reading; and he had himself often reproved him for it, telling him it was foolish to read such fooleries; and becoming convinced that his suspicion was correct, addressing the duke, he said very angrily to him, "Senor, your excellence will have to give account to God for what this good man does. This Don Quixote, or Don Simpleton, or whatever his name is, cannot, I imagine, be such a blockhead as your excellence would have him, holding out encouragement to him to go on with his vagaries and follies." Then turning to address Don Quixote he said, "And you, num-skull, who put it into your head that you

are a knight-errant, and vanquish giants and capture miscreants? Go your ways in a good hour, and in a good hour be it said to you. Go home and bring up your children if you have any, and attend to your business, and give over going wandering about the world, gaping and making a laughing-stock of yourself to all who know you and all who don't. Where, in heaven's name, have you discovered that there are or ever were knights-errant? Where are there giants in Spain or miscreants in La Mancha, or enchanted Dulcineas, or all the rest of the silly things they tell about you?"

Don Quixote listened attentively to the reverend gentleman's words, and as soon as he perceived he had done speaking, regardless of the presence of the duke and duchess, he sprang to his feet with angry looks and an agitated countenance, and said--But the reply deserves a chapter to itself.

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