

CHAPTER XLIX.

WHICH TREATS OF THE SHREWD CONVERSATION WHICH SANCHO PANZA HELD WITH HIS MASTER DON QUIXOTE

"Aha, I have caught you," said Sancho; "this is what in my heart and soul I was longing to know. Come now, senor, can you deny what is commonly said around us, when a person is out of humour, 'I don't know what ails so-and-so, that he neither eats, nor drinks, nor sleeps, nor gives a proper answer to any question; one would think he was enchanted'? From which it is to be gathered that those who do not eat, or drink, or sleep, or do any of the natural acts I am speaking of-that such persons are enchanted; but not those that have the desire your worship has, and drink when drink is given them, and eat when there is anything to eat, and answer every question that is asked them."

"What thou sayest is true, Sancho," replied Don Quixote; "but I have already told thee there are many sorts of enchantments, and it may be that in the course of time they have been changed one for another, and that now it may be the way with enchanted people to do all that I do, though they did not do so before; so it is vain to argue or draw inferences against the usage of the time. I know and feel that I am enchanted, and that is enough to ease my conscience; for it would weigh heavily on it if I thought that I was not enchanted, and that in a faint-hearted and cowardly way I allowed myself to lie in this cage, defrauding multitudes of the succour I might afford to those in need and

distress, who at this very moment may be in sore want of my aid and protection."

"Still for all that," replied Sancho, "I say that, for your greater and fuller satisfaction, it would be well if your worship were to try to get out of this prison (and I promise to do all in my power to help, and even to take you out of it), and see if you could once more mount your good Rocinante, who seems to be enchanted too, he is so melancholy and dejected; and then we might try our chance in looking for adventures again; and if we have no luck there will be time enough to go back to the cage; in which, on the faith of a good and loyal squire, I promise to shut myself up along with your worship, if so be you are so unfortunate, or I so stupid, as not to be able to carry out my plan."

"I am content to do as thou sayest, brother Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and when thou seest an opportunity for effecting my release I will obey thee absolutely; but thou wilt see, Sancho, how mistaken thou art in thy conception of my misfortune."

The knight-errant and the ill-errant squire kept up their conversation till they reached the place where the curate, the canon, and the barber, who had already dismounted, were waiting for them. The carter at once unyoked the oxen and left them to roam at large about the pleasant green spot, the freshness of which seemed to invite, not enchanted people like Don Quixote, but wide-awake, sensible folk like his squire, who begged the curate to allow his master to leave the cage for a little; for if they did not let him out, the prison might not be as clean as the

propriety of such a gentleman as his master required. The curate understood him, and said he would very gladly comply with his request, only that he feared his master, finding himself at liberty, would take to his old courses and make off where nobody could ever find him again.

"I will answer for his not running away," said Sancho.

"And I also," said the canon, "especially if he gives me his word as a knight not to leave us without our consent."

Don Quixote, who was listening to all this, said, "I give it;-moreover one who is enchanted as I am cannot do as he likes with himself; for he who had enchanted him could prevent his moving from one place for three ages, and if he attempted to escape would bring him back flying."--And that being so, they might as well release him, particularly as it would be to the advantage of all; for, if they did not let him out, he protested he would be unable to avoid offending their nostrils unless they kept their distance.

The canon took his hand, tied together as they both were, and on his word and promise they unbound him, and rejoiced beyond measure he was to find himself out of the cage. The first thing he did was to stretch himself all over, and then he went to where Rocinante was standing and giving him a couple of slaps on the haunches said, "I still trust in God and in his blessed mother, O flower and mirror of steeds, that we shall soon see ourselves, both of us, as we wish to be, thou with thy master on thy back, and I mounted upon thee, following the calling for which God sent

me into the world." And so saying, accompanied by Sancho, he withdrew to a retired spot, from which he came back much relieved and more eager than ever to put his squire's scheme into execution.

The canon gazed at him, wondering at the extraordinary nature of his madness, and that in all his remarks and replies he should show such excellent sense, and only lose his stirrups, as has been already said, when the subject of chivalry was broached. And so, moved by compassion, he said to him, as they all sat on the green grass awaiting the arrival of the provisions:

"Is it possible, gentle sir, that the nauseous and idle reading of books of chivalry can have had such an effect on your worship as to upset your reason so that you fancy yourself enchanted, and the like, all as far from the truth as falsehood itself is? How can there be any human understanding that can persuade itself there ever was all that infinity of Amadis in the world, or all that multitude of famous knights, all those emperors of Trebizond, all those Felixmartes of Hircania, all those palfreys, and damsels-errant, and serpents, and monsters, and giants, and marvellous adventures, and enchantments of every kind, and battles, and prodigious encounters, splendid costumes, love-sick princesses, squires made counts, droll dwarfs, love letters, billings and cooings, swashbuckler women, and, in a word, all that nonsense the books of chivalry contain? For myself, I can only say that when I read them, so long as I do not stop to think that they are all lies and frivolity, they give me a certain amount of pleasure; but when I come to consider what they are, I fling the very best of them at the wall, and would fling it

into the fire if there were one at hand, as richly deserving such punishment as cheats and impostors out of the range of ordinary toleration, and as founders of new sects and modes of life, and teachers that lead the ignorant public to believe and accept as truth all the folly they contain. And such is their audacity, they even dare to unsettle the wits of gentlemen of birth and intelligence, as is shown plainly by the way they have served your worship, when they have brought you to such a pass that you have to be shut up in a cage and carried on an ox-cart as one would carry a lion or a tiger from place to place to make money by showing it. Come, Senor Don Quixote, have some compassion for yourself, return to the bosom of common sense, and make use of the liberal share of it that heaven has been pleased to bestow upon you, employing your abundant gifts of mind in some other reading that may serve to benefit your conscience and add to your honour. And if, still led away by your natural bent, you desire to read books of achievements and of chivalry, read the Book of Judges in the Holy Scriptures, for there you will find grand reality, and deeds as true as they are heroic. Lusitania had a Viriatus, Rome a Caesar, Carthage a Hannibal, Greece an Alexander, Castile a Count Fernan Gonzalez, Valencia a Cid, Andalusia a Gonzalo Fernandez, Estremadura a Diego Garcia de Paredes, Jerez a Garci Perez de Vargas, Toledo a Garcilaso, Seville a Don Manuel de Leon, to read of whose valiant deeds will entertain and instruct the loftiest minds and fill them with delight and wonder. Here, Senor Don Quixote, will be reading worthy of your sound understanding; from which you will rise learned in history, in love with virtue, strengthened in goodness, improved in manners, brave without rashness, prudent without cowardice; and all to the honour of God, your own advantage and the glory of La

Mancha, whence, I am informed, your worship derives your birth."

Don Quixote listened with the greatest attention to the canon's words, and when he found he had finished, after regarding him for some time, he replied to him:

"It appears to me, gentle sir, that your worship's discourse is intended to persuade me that there never were any knights-errant in the world, and that all the books of chivalry are false, lying, mischievous and useless to the State, and that I have done wrong in reading them, and worse in believing them, and still worse in imitating them, when I undertook to follow the arduous calling of knight-errantry which they set forth; for you deny that there ever were Amadis of Gaul or of Greece, or any other of the knights of whom the books are full."

"It is all exactly as you state it," said the canon; to which Don Quixote returned, "You also went on to say that books of this kind had done me much harm, inasmuch as they had upset my senses, and shut me up in a cage, and that it would be better for me to reform and change my studies, and read other truer books which would afford more pleasure and instruction."

"Just so," said the canon.

"Well then," returned Don Quixote, "to my mind it is you who are the one that is out of his wits and enchanted, as you have ventured to utter such blasphemies against a thing so universally acknowledged and accepted as

true that whoever denies it, as you do, deserves the same punishment which you say you inflict on the books that irritate you when you read them. For to try to persuade anybody that Amadis, and all the other knights-adventurers with whom the books are filled, never existed, would be like trying to persuade him that the sun does not yield light, or ice cold, or earth nourishment. What wit in the world can persuade another that the story of the Princess Floripes and Guy of Burgundy is not true, or that of Fierabras and the bridge of Mantible, which happened in the time of Charlemagne? For by all that is good it is as true as that it is daylight now; and if it be a lie, it must be a lie too that there was a Hector, or Achilles, or Trojan war, or Twelve Peers of France, or Arthur of England, who still lives changed into a raven, and is unceasingly looked for in his kingdom. One might just as well try to make out that the history of Guarino Mezquino, or of the quest of the Holy Grail, is false, or that the loves of Tristram and the Queen Yseult are apocryphal, as well as those of Guinevere and Lancelot, when there are persons who can almost remember having seen the Dame Quintanona, who was the best cupbearer in Great Britain. And so true is this, that I recollect a grandmother of mine on the father's side, whenever she saw any dame in a venerable hood, used to say to me, 'Grandson, that one is like Dame Quintanona,' from which I conclude that she must have known her, or at least had managed to see some portrait of her. Then who can deny that the story of Pierres and the fair Magalona is true, when even to this day may be seen in the king's armoury the pin with which the valiant Pierres guided the wooden horse he rode through the air, and it is a trifle bigger than the pole of a cart? And alongside of the pin is Babieca's saddle, and at Roncesvalles there is Roland's horn, as large as a large

beam; whence we may infer that there were Twelve Peers, and a Pierres, and a Cid, and other knights like them, of the sort people commonly call adventurers. Or perhaps I shall be told, too, that there was no such knight-errant as the valiant Lusitanian Juan de Merlo, who went to Burgundy and in the city of Arras fought with the famous lord of Charny, Mosen Pierres by name, and afterwards in the city of Basle with Mosen Enrique de Remesten, coming out of both encounters covered with fame and honour; or adventures and challenges achieved and delivered, also in Burgundy, by the valiant Spaniards Pedro Barba and Gutierre Quixada (of whose family I come in the direct male line), when they vanquished the sons of the Count of San Polo. I shall be told, too, that Don Fernando de Guevara did not go in quest of adventures to Germany, where he engaged in combat with Micer George, a knight of the house of the Duke of Austria. I shall be told that the jousts of Suero de Quinones, him of the 'Paso,' and the emprise of Mosen Luis de Falces against the Castilian knight, Don Gonzalo de Guzman, were mere mockeries; as well as many other achievements of Christian knights of these and foreign realms, which are so authentic and true, that, I repeat, he who denies them must be totally wanting in reason and good sense."

The canon was amazed to hear the medley of truth and fiction Don Quixote uttered, and to see how well acquainted he was with everything relating or belonging to the achievements of his knight-errantry; so he said in reply:

"I cannot deny, Senor Don Quixote, that there is some truth in what you say, especially as regards the Spanish knights-errant; and I am willing

to grant too that the Twelve Peers of France existed, but I am not disposed to believe that they did all the things that the Archbishop Turpin relates of them. For the truth of the matter is they were knights chosen by the kings of France, and called 'Peers' because they were all equal in worth, rank and prowess (at least if they were not they ought to have been), and it was a kind of religious order like those of Santiago and Calatrava in the present day, in which it is assumed that those who take it are valiant knights of distinction and good birth; and just as we say now a Knight of St. John, or of Alcantara, they used to say then a Knight of the Twelve Peers, because twelve equals were chosen for that military order. That there was a Cid, as well as a Bernardo del Carpio, there can be no doubt; but that they did the deeds people say they did, I hold to be very doubtful. In that other matter of the pin of Count Pierres that you speak of, and say is near Babieca's saddle in the Armoury, I confess my sin; for I am either so stupid or so short-sighted, that, though I have seen the saddle, I have never been able to see the pin, in spite of it being as big as your worship says it is."

"For all that it is there, without any manner of doubt," said Don Quixote; "and more by token they say it is inclosed in a sheath of cowhide to keep it from rusting."

"All that may be," replied the canon; "but, by the orders I have received, I do not remember seeing it. However, granting it is there, that is no reason why I am bound to believe the stories of all those Amadis and of all that multitude of knights they tell us about, nor is it reasonable that a man like your worship, so worthy, and with so many

good qualities, and endowed with such a good understanding, should allow himself to be persuaded that such wild crazy things as are written in those absurd books of chivalry are really true."