

## CHAPTER LIV.

### WHICH DEALS WITH MATTERS RELATING TO THIS HISTORY AND NO OTHER

The duke and duchess resolved that the challenge Don Quixote had, for the reason already mentioned, given their vassal, should be proceeded with; and as the young man was in Flanders, whither he had fled to escape having Dona Rodriguez for a mother-in-law, they arranged to substitute for him a Gascon lacquey, named Tosilos, first of all carefully instructing him in all he had to do. Two days later the duke told Don Quixote that in four days from that time his opponent would present himself on the field of battle armed as a knight, and would maintain that the damsel lied by half a beard, nay a whole beard, if she affirmed that he had given her a promise of marriage. Don Quixote was greatly pleased at the news, and promised himself to do wonders in the lists, and reckoned it rare good fortune that an opportunity should have offered for letting his noble hosts see what the might of his strong arm was capable of; and so in high spirits and satisfaction he awaited the expiration of the four days, which measured by his impatience seemed spinning themselves out into four hundred ages. Let us leave them to pass as we do other things, and go and bear Sancho company, as mounted on Dapple, half glad, half sad, he paced along on his road to join his master, in whose society he was happier than in being governor of all the islands in the world. Well then, it so happened that before he had gone a great way from the island of his government (and whether it was island, city, town, or

village that he governed he never troubled himself to inquire) he saw coming along the road he was travelling six pilgrims with staves, foreigners of that sort that beg for alms singing; who as they drew near arranged themselves in a line and lifting up their voices all together began to sing in their own language something that Sancho could not with the exception of one word which sounded plainly "alms," from which he gathered that it was alms they asked for in their song; and being, as Cide Hamete says, remarkably charitable, he took out of his alforias the half loaf and half cheese he had been provided with, and gave them to them, explaining to them by signs that he had nothing else to give them. They received them very gladly, but exclaimed, "Geld! Geld!"

"I don't understand what you want of me, good people," said Sancho.

On this one of them took a purse out of his bosom and showed it to Sancho, by which he comprehended they were asking for money, and putting his thumb to his throat and spreading his hand upwards he gave them to understand that he had not the sign of a coin about him, and urging Dapple forward he broke through them. But as he was passing, one of them who had been examining him very closely rushed towards him, and flinging his arms round him exclaimed in a loud voice and good Spanish, "God bless me! What's this I see? Is it possible that I hold in my arms my dear friend, my good neighbour Sancho Panza? But there's no doubt about it, for I'm not asleep, nor am I drunk just now."

Sancho was surprised to hear himself called by his name and find himself

embraced by a foreign pilgrim, and after regarding him steadily without speaking he was still unable to recognise him; but the pilgrim perceiving his perplexity cried, "What! and is it possible, Sancho Panza, that thou dost not know thy neighbour Ricote, the Morisco shopkeeper of thy village?"

Sancho upon this looking at him more carefully began to recall his features, and at last recognised him perfectly, and without getting off the ass threw his arms round his neck saying, "Who the devil could have known thee, Ricote, in this mummer's dress thou art in? Tell me, who has frenchified thee, and how dost thou dare to return to Spain, where if they catch thee and recognise thee it will go hard enough with thee?"

"If thou dost not betray me, Sancho," said the pilgrim, "I am safe; for in this dress no one will recognise me; but let us turn aside out of the road into that grove there where my comrades are going to eat and rest, and thou shalt eat with them there, for they are very good fellows; I'll have time enough to tell thee then all that has happened me since I left our village in obedience to his Majesty's edict that threatened such severities against the unfortunate people of my nation, as thou hast heard."

Sancho complied, and Ricote having spoken to the other pilgrims they withdrew to the grove they saw, turning a considerable distance out of the road. They threw down their staves, took off their pilgrim's cloaks and remained in their under-clothing; they were all good-looking young

fellows, except Ricote, who was a man somewhat advanced in years. They carried alforjas all of them, and all apparently well filled, at least with things provocative of thirst, such as would summon it from two leagues off. They stretched themselves on the ground, and making a tablecloth of the grass they spread upon it bread, salt, knives, walnut, scraps of cheese, and well-picked ham-bones which if they were past gnawing were not past sucking. They also put down a black dainty called, they say, caviar, and made of the eggs of fish, a great thirst-wakener. Nor was there any lack of olives, dry, it is true, and without any seasoning, but for all that toothsome and pleasant. But what made the best show in the field of the banquet was half a dozen botas of wine, for each of them produced his own from his alforjas; even the good Ricote, who from a Morisco had transformed himself into a German or Dutchman, took out his, which in size might have vied with the five others. They then began to eat with very great relish and very leisurely, making the most of each morsel--very small ones of everything--they took up on the point of the knife; and then all at the same moment raised their arms and botas aloft, the mouths placed in their mouths, and all eyes fixed on heaven just as if they were taking aim at it; and in this attitude they remained ever so long, wagging their heads from side to side as if in acknowledgment of the pleasure they were enjoying while they decanted the bowels of the bottles into their own stomachs.

Sancho beheld all, "and nothing gave him pain;" so far from that, acting on the proverb he knew so well, "when thou art at Rome do as thou seest," he asked Ricote for his bota and took aim like the rest of them, and with

not less enjoyment. Four times did the botas bear being uplifted, but the fifth it was all in vain, for they were drier and more sapless than a rush by that time, which made the jollity that had been kept up so far begin to flag.

Every now and then some one of them would grasp Sancho's right hand in his own saying, "Espanoli y Tudesqui tuto uno: bon compano;" and Sancho would answer, "Bon compano, jur a Di!" and then go off into a fit of laughter that lasted an hour, without a thought for the moment of anything that had befallen him in his government; for cares have very little sway over us while we are eating and drinking. At length, the wine having come to an end with them, drowsiness began to come over them, and they dropped asleep on their very table and tablecloth. Ricote and Sancho alone remained awake, for they had eaten more and drunk less, and Ricote drawing Sancho aside, they seated themselves at the foot of a beech, leaving the pilgrims buried in sweet sleep; and without once falling into his own Morisco tongue Ricote spoke as follows in pure Castilian:

"Thou knowest well, neighbour and friend Sancho Panza, how the proclamation or edict his Majesty commanded to be issued against those of my nation filled us all with terror and dismay; me at least it did, insomuch that I think before the time granted us for quitting Spain was out, the full force of the penalty had already fallen upon me and upon my children. I decided, then, and I think wisely (just like one who knows that at a certain date the house he lives in will be taken from him, and looks out beforehand for another to change into), I decided, I say, to

leave the town myself, alone and without my family, and go to seek out some place to remove them to comfortably and not in the hurried way in which the others took their departure; for I saw very plainly, and so did all the older men among us, that the proclamations were not mere threats, as some said, but positive enactments which would be enforced at the appointed time; and what made me believe this was what I knew of the base and extravagant designs which our people harboured, designs of such a nature that I think it was a divine inspiration that moved his Majesty to carry out a resolution so spirited; not that we were all guilty, for some there were true and steadfast Christians; but they were so few that they could make no head against those who were not; and it was not prudent to cherish a viper in the bosom by having enemies in the house. In short it was with just cause that we were visited with the penalty of banishment, a mild and lenient one in the eyes of some, but to us the most terrible that could be inflicted upon us. Wherever we are we weep for Spain; for after all we were born there and it is our natural fatherland. Nowhere do we find the reception our unhappy condition needs; and in Barbary and all the parts of Africa where we counted upon being received, succoured, and welcomed, it is there they insult and ill-treat us most. We knew not our good fortune until we lost it; and such is the longing we almost all of us have to return to Spain, that most of those who like myself know the language, and there are many who do, come back to it and leave their wives and children forsaken yonder, so great is their love for it; and now I know by experience the meaning of the saying, sweet is the love of one's country.

"I left our village, as I said, and went to France, but though they gave us a kind reception there I was anxious to see all I could. I crossed into Italy, and reached Germany, and there it seemed to me we might live with more freedom, as the inhabitants do not pay any attention to trifling points; everyone lives as he likes, for in most parts they enjoy liberty of conscience. I took a house in a town near Augsburg, and then joined these pilgrims, who are in the habit of coming to Spain in great numbers every year to visit the shrines there, which they look upon as their Indies and a sure and certain source of gain. They travel nearly all over it, and there is no town out of which they do not go full up of meat and drink, as the saying is, and with a real, at least, in money, and they come off at the end of their travels with more than a hundred crowns saved, which, changed into gold, they smuggle out of the kingdom either in the hollow of their staves or in the patches of their pilgrim's cloaks or by some device of their own, and carry to their own country in spite of the guards at the posts and passes where they are searched. Now my purpose is, Sancho, to carry away the treasure that I left buried, which, as it is outside the town, I shall be able to do without risk, and to write, or cross over from Valencia, to my daughter and wife, who I know are at Algiers, and find some means of bringing them to some French port and thence to Germany, there to await what it may be God's will to do with us; for, after all, Sancho, I know well that Ricota my daughter and Francisca Ricota my wife are Catholic Christians, and though I am not so much so, still I am more of a Christian than a Moor, and it is always my prayer to God that he will open the eyes of my understanding and show me how I am to serve him; but what amazes me and I cannot understand is

why my wife and daughter should have gone to Barbary rather than to France, where they could live as Christians."

To this Sancho replied, "Remember, Ricote, that may not have been open to them, for Juan Tiopieyo thy wife's brother took them, and being a true Moor he went where he could go most easily; and another thing I can tell thee, it is my belief thou art going in vain to look for what thou hast left buried, for we heard they took from thy brother-in-law and thy wife a great quantity of pearls and money in gold which they brought to be passed."

"That may be," said Ricote; "but I know they did not touch my hoard, for I did not tell them where it was, for fear of accidents; and so, if thou wilt come with me, Sancho, and help me to take it away and conceal it, I will give thee two hundred crowns wherewith thou mayest relieve thy necessities, and, as thou knowest, I know they are many."

"I would do it," said Sancho; "but I am not at all covetous, for I gave up an office this morning in which, if I was, I might have made the walls of my house of gold and dined off silver plates before six months were over; and so for this reason, and because I feel I would be guilty of treason to my king if I helped his enemies, I would not go with thee if instead of promising me two hundred crowns thou wert to give me four hundred here in hand."

"And what office is this thou hast given up, Sancho?" asked Ricote.



"I have given up being governor of an island," said Sancho, "and such a one, faith, as you won't find the like of easily."

"And where is this island?" said Ricote.

"Where?" said Sancho; "two leagues from here, and it is called the island of Barataria."

"Nonsense! Sancho," said Ricote; "islands are away out in the sea; there are no islands on the mainland."

"What? No islands!" said Sancho; "I tell thee, friend Ricote, I left it this morning, and yesterday I was governing there as I pleased like a sagittarius; but for all that I gave it up, for it seemed to me a dangerous office, a governor's."

"And what hast thou gained by the government?" asked Ricote.

"I have gained," said Sancho, "the knowledge that I am no good for governing, unless it is a drove of cattle, and that the riches that are to be got by these governments are got at the cost of one's rest and sleep, ay and even one's food; for in islands the governors must eat little, especially if they have doctors to look after their health."

"I don't understand thee, Sancho," said Ricote; "but it seems to me all

nonsense thou art talking. Who would give thee islands to govern? Is there any scarcity in the world of cleverer men than thou art for governors? Hold thy peace, Sancho, and come back to thy senses, and consider whether thou wilt come with me as I said to help me to take away treasure I left buried (for indeed it may be called a treasure, it is so large), and I will give thee wherewithal to keep thee, as I told thee."

"And I have told thee already, Ricote, that I will not," said Sancho; "let it content thee that by me thou shalt not be betrayed, and go thy way in God's name and let me go mine; for I know that well-gotten gain may be lost, but ill-gotten gain is lost, itself and its owner likewise."

"I will not press thee, Sancho," said Ricote; "but tell me, wert thou in our village when my wife and daughter and brother-in-law left it?"

"I was so," said Sancho; "and I can tell thee thy daughter left it looking so lovely that all the village turned out to see her, and everybody said she was the fairest creature in the world. She wept as she went, and embraced all her friends and acquaintances and those who came out to see her, and she begged them all to commend her to God and Our Lady his mother, and this in such a touching way that it made me weep myself, though I'm not much given to tears commonly; and, faith, many a one would have liked to hide her, or go out and carry her off on the road; but the fear of going against the king's command kept them back. The one who showed himself most moved was Don Pedro Gregorio, the rich young heir thou knowest of, and they say he was deep in love with her;

and since she left he has not been seen in our village again, and we all suspect he has gone after her to steal her away, but so far nothing has been heard of it."

"I always had a suspicion that gentleman had a passion for my daughter," said Ricote; "but as I felt sure of my Ricota's virtue it gave me no uneasiness to know that he loved her; for thou must have heard it said, Sancho, that the Morisco women seldom or never engage in amours with the old Christians; and my daughter, who I fancy thought more of being a Christian than of lovemaking, would not trouble herself about the attentions of this heir."

"God grant it," said Sancho, "for it would be a bad business for both of them; but now let me be off, friend Ricote, for I want to reach where my master Don Quixote is to-night."

"God be with thee, brother Sancho," said Ricote; "my comrades are beginning to stir, and it is time, too, for us to continue our journey;" and then they both embraced, and Sancho mounted Dapple, and Ricote leant upon his staff, and so they parted.