

MIGUEL DE SAAVEDRA

THE HISTORY OF DON
QUIXOTE, VOLUME 2,
PART 36

Мигель де Сервантес Сааведра

**The History of Don
Quixote, Volume 2, Part 36**

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CHAPTER LX. OF WHAT HAPPENED DON QUIXOTE ON HIS WAY TO BARCELONA

It was a fresh morning giving promise of a cool day as Don Quixote quitted the inn, first of all taking care to ascertain the most direct road to Barcelona without touching upon Saragossa; so anxious was he to make out this new historian, who they said abused him so, to be a liar. Well, as it fell out, nothing worthy of being recorded happened him for six days, at the end of which, having turned aside out of the road, he was overtaken by night in a thicket of oak or cork trees; for on this point Cide Hamete is not as precise as he usually is on other matters.

Master and man dismounted from their beasts, and as soon as they had settled themselves at the foot of the trees, Sancho, who had had a good noontide meal that day, let himself, without more ado, pass the gates of sleep. But Don Quixote, whom his thoughts, far more than hunger, kept awake, could not close an eye, and roamed in fancy to and fro through all sorts of places. At one moment it seemed to him that he was in the cave of Montesinos and saw Dulcinea, transformed into a country wench, skipping and mounting upon her she-ass; again that the words of the sage Merlin were sounding in his ears, setting forth the conditions to be observed and the exertions to be made for the disenchantment of Dulcinea. He lost all patience when he considered the laziness and want of charity of his squire Sancho; for to the best of his belief he had only given himself five lashes, a number paltry and disproportioned to the vast number required. At this thought he felt such vexation and anger that he reasoned the matter thus: "If Alexander the Great cut the Gordian knot, saying, 'To cut comes to the same thing as to untie,' and yet did not fail to become lord paramount of all Asia, neither more nor less could happen now in Dulcinea's disenchantment if I scourge Sancho against his will; for, if it is the condition of the remedy that Sancho shall receive three thousand and odd lashes, what does it matter to me whether he inflicts them himself, or some one else inflicts them, when the essential point is that he receives them, let them come from whatever quarter they may?"

With this idea he went over to Sancho, having first taken Rocinante's reins and arranged them so as to be able to flog him with them, and began to untie the points (the common belief is he had but one in front) by which his breeches were held up; but the instant he approached him Sancho woke up in his full senses and cried out, "What is this? Who is touching me and untrussing me?"

"It is I," said Don Quixote, "and I come to make good thy shortcomings and relieve my own distresses; I come to whip thee, Sancho, and wipe off some portion of the debt thou hast undertaken. Dulcinea is perishing, thou art living on regardless, I am dying of hope deferred; therefore untruss thyself with a good will, for mine it is, here, in this retired spot, to give thee at least two thousand lashes."

"Not a bit of it," said Sancho; "let your worship keep quiet, or else by the living God the deaf shall hear us; the lashes I pledged myself to must be voluntary and not forced upon me, and just now I have no fancy to whip myself; it is enough if I give you my word to flog and flap myself when I have a mind."

"It will not do to leave it to thy courtesy, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for thou art hard of heart and, though a clown, tender of flesh;" and at the same time he strove and struggled to untie him.

Seeing this Sancho got up, and grappling with his master he gripped him with all his might in his arms, giving him a trip with the heel stretched him on the ground on his back, and pressing his right knee on his chest held his hands in his own so that he could neither move nor breathe.

"How now, traitor!" exclaimed Don Quixote. "Dost thou revolt against thy master and natural lord? Dost thou rise against him who gives thee his bread?"

"I neither put down king, nor set up king," said Sancho; "I only stand up for myself who am my own lord; if your worship promises me to be quiet, and not to offer to whip me now, I'll let you go free and unhindered; if not —

Traitor and Dona Sancha's foe,
Thou diest on the spot."

Don Quixote gave his promise, and swore by the life of his thoughts not to touch so much as a hair of his garments, and to leave him entirely free and to his own discretion to whip himself whenever he pleased.

Sancho rose and removed some distance from the spot, but as he was about to place himself leaning against another tree he felt something touch his head, and putting up his hands encountered somebody's two feet with shoes and stockings on them. He trembled with fear and made for another tree, where the very same thing happened to him, and he fell a-shouting, calling upon Don Quixote to come and protect him. Don Quixote did so, and asked him what had happened to him, and what he was afraid of. Sancho replied that all the trees were full of men's feet and legs. Don Quixote felt them, and guessed at once what it was, and said to Sancho, "Thou hast nothing to be afraid of, for these feet and legs that thou feelest but canst not see belong no doubt to some outlaws and freebooters that have been hanged on these trees; for the authorities in these parts are wont to hang them up by twenties and thirties when they catch them; whereby I conjecture that I must be near Barcelona;" and it was, in fact, as he supposed; with the first light they looked up and saw that the fruit hanging on those trees were freebooters' bodies.

And now day dawned; and if the dead freebooters had scared them, their hearts were no less troubled by upwards of forty living ones, who all of a sudden surrounded them, and in the Catalan tongue bade them stand and wait until their captain came up. Don Quixote was on foot with his horse unbridled and his lance leaning against a tree, and in short completely defenceless; he thought it best therefore to fold his arms and bow his head and reserve himself for a more favourable occasion and opportunity. The robbers made haste to search Dapple, and did not leave him a single thing of all he carried in the alforjas and in the valise; and lucky it was for Sancho that the duke's crowns and those he brought from home were in a girdle that he wore round him; but for all that these good folk would have stripped him, and even looked to see what he had hidden between the skin and flesh, but for the arrival at that moment of their captain, who was about thirty-four years of age apparently, strongly built, above the middle height, of stern aspect and swarthy complexion. He was mounted upon a powerful horse, and had on a coat of mail, with four of the pistols they call petronels in that country at his waist. He saw that his squires (for so they call those who follow that trade) were about to rifle Sancho Panza, but he ordered them to desist and was at once obeyed, so the girdle escaped. He wondered to see the lance leaning against the tree, the shield on the ground, and Don Quixote in armour and dejected, with the saddest and most melancholy face that sadness itself could produce; and going up to him he said, "Be not so cast down, good man, for you have not fallen into the hands of any inhuman Busiris, but into Roque Guinart's, which are more merciful than cruel."

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