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THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS

BY

RENÉ LE SAGE

This Edition of René Le Sage's "Asmodeus or The Devil on Two Sticks" has been printed from the rare translation published by William Strange in 1841.

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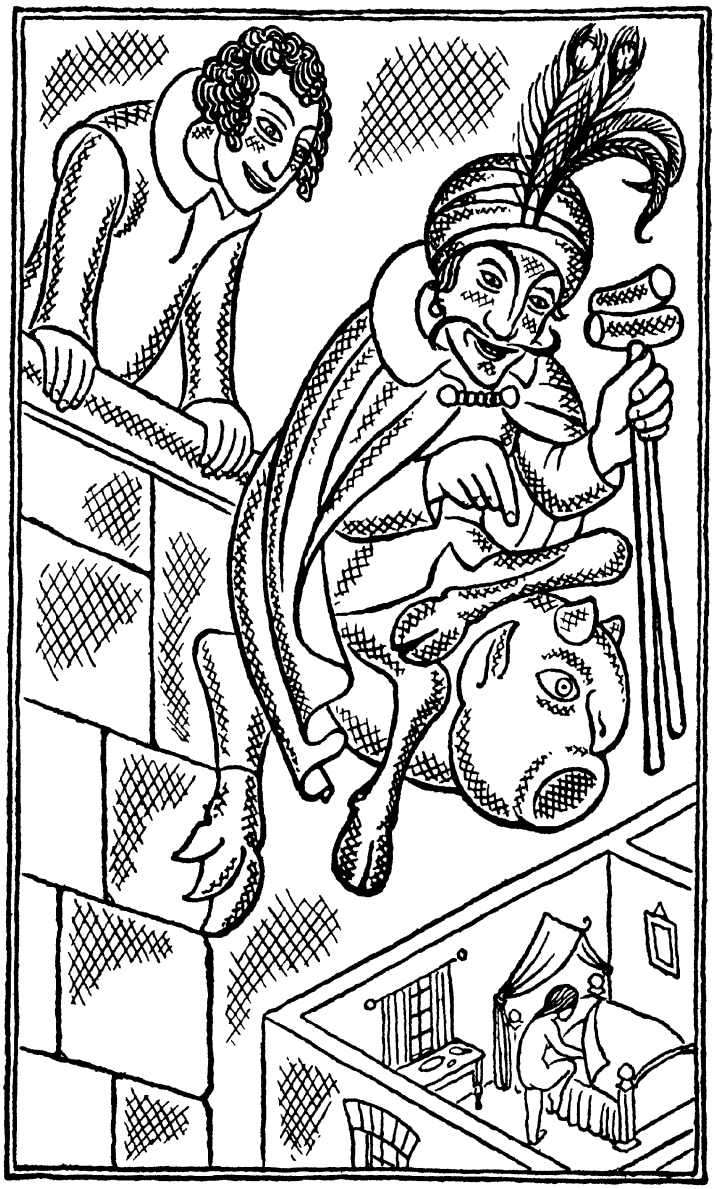

ASMODEUS AND CLEOFAS

THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS

BY

RENÉ LE SAGE

A NEW EDITION WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY

ARTHUR SYMONS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
AND DECORATIONS BY

PHILIP HAGREEN

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INTRODUCTION

I

WHEN I was wandering over Brittany, in June 1925, it occurred to me that as Alain-René Le Sage was born at Sarzeau, in the peninsula of Rhuys, between Morbihan and the sea, on the 6th May 1668 (he died on the 17th November 1747, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, at the age of eighty), I might as well spend a day there. It is a sad village, right on the coast, and the waves hurl themselves on the black rocks. At the end of the gulf I saw two surprising masses: the feudal fortress of Sacinio, which was built in 1260 by John the Red, Duke of Brittany, and the Abbaye de Saint Gildas de Rhuys. This abbey derives its fame from the residence of Pierre Abélard, who was born near Nantes in 1079, and died at Chalons in 1142. He, after his passionate liaison with Héloïse, known for her learning, who lived with Canon Fulbert within the precincts of Notre Dame, eloped with her into Brittany, where she bore him a son, where they were privately married. She having deserted him, Fulbert, enraged at her husband's connivance, caused him to be castrated. Villon, born at Paris in 1431, brings these famous lovers into his great ballad, *The Ballad of Dead Ladies*:

Where's Héloïse, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abélard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on ?
(From Love he won such dule and teen !)

In the centre of the village, Rue Bécherel, near a stone Calvary called Le Croix-Pirin, I saw the house in which Le Sage was born. It is a lovely old house situated between a courtyard and a garden, flanked with an elegant turret, and there are vineyards near it. The date over the door is 1599. There are two small windows on the ground floor, a larger one above them, a smaller one above, which covers some of the lower part of the slanting roof. And in the courtyard there is one thin withered tree, which the wind from the sea torments.

Le Sage, who belonged to an old family of lawyers—he had lost his parents when he was fourteen—was sent to the college of the Jesuits in Vannes, and from there to the university in Paris, where he took his degree as a lawyer. He lived in the Latin Quarter, and then took rooms in that steep street, Rue Saint-Jacques (where Verlaine lived for many years), and on 28th September 1694 he married, at Saint Sulpice, Elizabeth Hayard, the daughter of André Hayard, whose wife was a Spaniard named Maria Carlos, who, I imagine, began to initiate Le Sage into the mysteries of the Spanish language. He made the acquaintance, in 1649, of the Abbé de Lyonne, who became his protector, and bestowed on him an annuity of 600 livres, allowing him, at the same time, to read all

the books, many of them in Spanish, which were in his library. Le Sage began by translating some of the plays of Lope de Vega and Rojas. Vega Carpio, born at Madrid in 1562, who died in 1635, is, after Tirso de Molina and Calderon, the greatest and the most prolific of Spanish dramatists.

In *La Vida es Sueño* of Calderon, Sigismondo is not one who starts at the shadow of a leaf. His senses are more solemnly perturbed, and by the whole illusion of the universe. With Hamlet and Faust he makes the third philosophical thinker among dramatic heroes; there is no fourth. His thoughts would bear as much commenting as those of Hamlet or of Faust. For the almost equally fine *Auoto Sacramental* of the same name Calderon has developed, under another more didactic form, the ideas which in the play he has concentrated on about this strange, ardent, and melancholy symbol of humanity. In his first unregenerate state he seems a prophecy of the *Uebermensch*, whom Nietzsche is to create for modern admiration out of whatever is strongest and subtlest in the human animal. At the end a touch of that pity which is a part of wisdom comes to him out of his deep, convicted sense of that drama which, he realizes, no longer absorbed in it, is life. Knowing so well from his own experience,

> Que toda la vida es sueño
> Y los sueños sueño son,

he learns that mutual forbearance must needs be a part of those blind scufflings in the dark, which our

ambitions and the following of our desires are. On the way, at every stage of his surprise before a new mockery of the illusion of things, he has uttered some of the most profound philosophy which has ever expressed itself in poetry. The philosophy is struck out of him, as if he were the first man thinking for the first time, by the mere ingenuity of his fate. Stepping from the prison to the throne, and from the throne back to the prison, he discovers for himself, with not less astonishment than external things, the elementary meanings of them : the meaning of power, the meaning of human relations, the meaning and the limitation of free-will. We see, in the mirror of his perfectly sincere consciousness, the natural workings of what is obscure and inevitable in ourselves. Each of us is entangled in just such a dream, just so helpless to escape from it, and with an equal chance of playing the drama out nobly.

And this play, in which symbolism has created a world out of shadows, or turned a whole world of flesh and blood into something shadowy and elusive, is full of poignant, dramatic interest, with a *mise en scène* almost frankly taken out of *The Arabian Nights*. It is absorbing, almost as an actual dream is, and with the same confusing sense of those tricks which identity lies in wait to play us. In so elaborate a reduplication of the plane of being we become dreamers who watch a dreamer dreaming that he dreams. Nothing ever acted on the stage went so far through reality, gave so visionary an aspect to human existence as this

play, full of trumpets, and the clanking of chains, and the embroidered language of courts.

Tirso de Molina, born in 1571, died in 1648. He spent many years in the Confessional, where he must have acquired an enormous amount of knowledge of the sins and shames and follies and lusts of that world which was Spain. In Spain, certainly, it is mostly the women who confess. Even the basest of them who live the most degraded lives are Catholics, and after sinning repent, and after repenting sin. And yet Tirso, being a monk, must have heard confessions from nobles, gipsies, peasants, *cigaritas*, matadors, women of every kind, girls confessing their first sin ; and who that has lived in Seville knows how many others. Behind that *grille* he must have heard tragedies and comedies (the tragedy of broken hearts, the comedy of folly confessing folly) which, stored in his wonderful memory, would turn imaginatively into his creations in these two forms of his genius. Whether his life had been wild and wanton and scandalous (which one can imagine), or that it had been, in another sense, pious and regular—all this has, for us, no importance. The creative artist creates out of his own life, and fashions his creations to his fancy. And, out of Tirso's innumerable plays, comedies, subtle and ingenious, with their delightful men and women, lovely and bewildering, which remain in their greatness great, there are two dramas which stand out from the rest. These are *Condenado por Desconfiado* (*The Double Damned*)

and *El Burlador de Sevilla Y Convidado de Piedra* (*The Jester of Spain and the Guest of Stone*). The first is decidedly the work of the monk: it has in it the hermit; the devil who tempts him in the very act of praying for salvation, who ruins his life, gives him no chance of escape from his destiny, allows him certain vain minutes of repentance, then seizes him body and soul, damned by himself, since damnation had been foreseen in his birth. And its chief quality (which I find in these two tragedies), that quality which defines it, is, in Browning's words: "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth studying."

El Burlador de Sevilla, corrupt as the text may be, and interwoven by pastoral aspects which have scarcely even a faint charm, is certainly one of the greatest dramas ever written. Tirso created Don Juan. Whatever legends there may have been of an actual Don Juan Tenorio, they remain in the void. This creature of flesh and bones, of passion and desire, disdain and insolence, grand without shame, splendid in his sense of himself, implacable against the powers of earth or of Heaven, remains, in no sense an ordinary seducer of women, the inevitable Don Juan (even in Molière's *Festin de Pierre*, essentially French), who ends, in the wonderful verses of Baudelaire, an elemental type, not less haunted by the imaginations of earlier writers, but revealed by the imagination of Tirso, haunted by some vision, or by some secret

uttered to him in the Confessional. As for the women, they are nothing; they are not actual creations. The father comes in once and fills the tragic stage with the pity and wonder of his vain appeal to his son in the name of God. Catalinon is the jester, the Sancho Panza transformed, made comic and serious. He is the man to whom Don Juan betrays his secrets, the man always with him who urges him to repent. He is a shameless, shuddering creature, who connives with Don Juan's plans; yet always with certain touches of grotesque humour in the midst of omens, the gradually increasing sense of suspense, of impending vengeance, of God's justice at the last. At the end Don Juan goes to the chapel, sits at table with the statue, where horrible food is offered to him; and, in the midst of the singing outside, the hour of vengeance has arrived. Both rise, take each other's hands: Don Juan's hand burns with fire. Proud, defiant, implacable, he dies. The end is tremendous:

Don Juan. Que me abraso? No me aprietis.
Con la daga he de matarte.
Mas, ay, que me canso en vano
De tirar golpes al aire!
A tu hija no ofendi;
Que vió mis engaños ántes.
Don Gonzalo. No importa, que ya pesiste
Tu intento.
Don Juan. Deja que llame
Quien me confiese y absuelva.

Don Gonzalo. No hay lugar, ya acuerdas tarde.
Don Juan. Que me quemo ! Que me abraso ! Muerto soy.

He falls dead. There is only one drama comparable with this drama, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus.* Lamb wrote : " The growing horrors of Faustus are awfully marked by the hours and half hours as they expire and bring him nearer and nearer to the exactment of the dire compact. It is indeed an agony and bloody sweat." This tragedy of Tirso has an iniquitous and infernal splendour. To have created a universal type, to have imposed such a character on the world and to have outlived all possible rivalry, to have achieved in words what Mozart alone, the most divine and passionate and perfect of all musicians, whose *Don Giovanni* is filled with rapturous and nervous and infernal music, has alone expressed in music, is to rank among the great creators of all time.

Spain, like the rest of the world, borrows freely, but, with the course of time, the position is reversed. Molière, the two Corneilles, Rotrou, Scarron and Le Sage, to mention but a few eminent names at hazard, readjusted the balance in favour of Spain. Juan Manuel was an innovator in Castilian prose : in his hands Castilian prose acquires a new dignity and finish, and his subjects are such that dramatists of genius have stooped to borrow from him. From him Calderon took not merely the title of a play —*Count Lucanor*—but the famous apologue in the first act of *La Vida es Sueño.* Pilferings by Le Sage

are things of course, and *Gil Blas* benefits by its author's reading. To those who have read it—translations apart—*Count Lucanor* is one of the books of the world. It is by his *Marcor de Obregon* (1618) that Viconte Espinal is best known. Voltaire alleges that *Gil Blas* was a mere translation of *Marcor de Obregon*, but the only foundation for this pretty exercise in fancy is that Le Sage borrowed a few incidents from Espinal, as he borrowed from Vilez de Guevara and others. There is the much-debated question of Le Sage's plagiarism, which does not need much discussion. Juan Francesco de Isla, born in 1703 at Vidannes, was a famous humorist, and late in life, having sworn he had not read *Gil Blas*, took it into his head to translate it. He invented a story that Le Sage (who had never been in Spain) had been in Madrid, where he met a Spanish advocate, who gave him the MS. of the novel. On his title page he put: "Stolen from Spain, and restored to its country and native language by a jealous Spaniard who will not allow his nation to be made game of." Isla, it has been said, was an incorrigible wag, who had become a fashionable preacher; and he used to speak of "the divine Adonis, Christ, enamoured of that singular Psyche, Mary." The suggestion that Le Sage merely plagiarized a Spanish original is due, as I have said, to Voltaire, who made it, for spiteful reasons of his own, in the famous *Siècle de Louis XIV.* (1751). As some twenty episodes are unquestionably borrowed from Espinal and others, it was not unnatural that Spaniards

should (rather late in the day) take Voltaire at his word. None the less the character of Gil Blas is as purely French as may be, and Le Sage vindicates his originality by his distinguished treatment of borrowed materials. Therefore there remains this unanswerable fact, that the originality of Le Sage is as certain as that of any great writer in the world, and that he is a great master of French style, and that in this case only he follows in the tradition of men of such unique genius as Pascal, Rabelais and Montaigne.

Now this brings me to another question. Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza was the son of the Marquis of Mondejar by Francesca Pacheco, daughter of the Duke of Escalona, and was born within the walls of the Alhambra, which looks across the valley of the Duro to the Albacain, in 1503. He died in Madrid in April 1575, aged seventy-two. He wrote *Lazarillo de Tormes* at Salamanca: it was published at Burgos in 1554. This is a work of genius, unlike anything that had preceded it, its main object being to satirize all classes of society; and it is written in a very rich and rare idiom which is purely Castilian. Nothing more spirited or more amusing or more entertaining can be conceived than such adventures as one finds in these pages. Fitzmaurice Kelly wrote: "Written in the most debonair, idiomatic Castilian, *Lazarillo de Tormes* condenses into nine chapters the cynicism, the wit, and the resources of a writer of genius. After three hundred years it survives all its rivals, and may be read with as much edification and amusement as

on the day of its first appearance. It set a fashion, but few of its successors match it in sceptical humour, and none approach it in pregnant concision, where no word is superfluous, and where every word tells with consummate effect. The writer freed from the type of the comic prose epic as rendered by the needy, and he did in such wise as to defy all competition." The Prologue begins: "I hold it to be good that such remarkable things as have happened to me, perhaps never seen or heard of, should not be buried in the tomb of oblivion." The narrative begins: "Well! Your Honour must know, before anything else, that they call me Lazarillo de Tormes, and that I am the son of Tormes Goncales and Antonia Perez, natives of Tijares, a village near Salamanca. My birth was in the River Tormes, for which reason I have the river for a surname." Lazarillo finally marries a servant-girl who had lived in the house of the Archpriest of St Saviour in Toledo; it was rumoured that she had been the archpriest's mistress. Lazarillo says: "I love her and may God show favour to her. She is a far better wife than I deserve, and I swear before the consecrated Host that she is as good a woman as can be found within the gates of Toledo. This was in the same year that our virtuous Emperor entered into this famous city of Toledo and held the Cortes here, and there were great rejoicings here, as your Worship will have heard. At this time I was prosperous and at the summit of good fortune."

I am certain that this book was the initiative in

regard to Le Sage's conception of the novel of adventures. There had been nothing like it before: there has been nothing like it since. Besides this there was the influence of the Picaroon monks and that of Prévost and Marivaux. Marivaux had, indeed, seemed to suggest the novel of analysis, but in a style which has christened a whole manner of writing, that preciosity which is best suited to the writing of fiction. In his novels he prepared the way for Richardson and for Rousseau. Following after Laclos, Marivaux, Crébillon Fils, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Restif de la Bretonne, comes suddenly, like some wonderful growth of the earth in travail, an absolute masterpiece, the Abbé Prévost's one great story, *Manon Lescaut*, which brought for once a purely objective story, of an incomparable simplicity, into the midst of these analyses of difficult souls.

Restif de la Bretonne, who was born at Sacy, in the Department of the Loire, which is only seven leagues from Auxerre, on 22nd November 1734, died in Paris, February 1806, at the age of seventy-two. When I was in Auxerre I found in the streets of that mediæval town a kind of unholy magic, that magic which Walter Pater divined there before he created *Denys l'Auxerrois*, the most wonderful of his *Imaginary Portraits*—for it is for once not the study of a soul, but of a myth. And I came to find there, as Restif must have found, a surprising originality, a fascination which is not due to the rich soil but to something obscure in regard to its genius: just as in Clermont-Ferrand the only trace I found

of genius was in the mountainous soul of Pascal, who was born there; and in Pascal it is what is Celtic that bursts through rock and stone like a volcanic fire.

This lewd Burgundian evinced a passion for women at an early age. When he was fifteen he composed an erotic poem on his twelve mistresses, and, sure sign of perversity, he was attracted by women's feet and by their shoes: "Ce goût qui ne l'abandonner jamais devint plus tard une passion chez lui." He went to Paris in 1755 and entered a printer's shop. He married an English adventuress, Henriette Kircher, who left him at the end of three months. In 1760 he married Agnès Lebègue, with whom he lived in continual warfare. His vitality was immense, and he exaggerated his love affairs. At the age of thirty-three, going about in rags, returning to his house, he found the Devil seated on its threshold. He entered, and set himself to work on a novel, which he dedicated *Aux Beautés*. All his life was there: women, literature, grandeur, and decadence. Later on it occurred to him to attempt to reform the world—his part of it—women, theatres, religion; and he wrote *Le Pornagraphie*, 1769, which was the first cause of the universal hue and cry which never ceased to pursue him. *Le Paysan Perverti*, 1775, is a novel that has no precedent in French literature. Its roots go deep down into the heart of humanity: it is cynical, stifling, intoxicating; and the peasant confesses: "Les soirées, après souper, quand il ne fait pas bon sortir, et comme je ne connais

personne, je prends un livre et je lis tout haut des tragédies à le cuisinière." Restif observes in their nakedness the most shameless intrigues which take place in Paris ; for this perverted creature drinks in iniquity and tries to find pure pleasures in turpitude, and, fallen to the last degree of vice, he buries therein his body and soul. And one imagines an exaggeration of criminal forces, the combat of pride with destiny, and, in one word, the eternal rebellion of the symbolic Lucifer. *Les Nuits de Paris* is written with immense violence : the night-watch knew Restif and never arrested this so-called Don Quixote of the midnight. And what is surprising is that in one sense he anticipates Proust. Monselet wrote in 1868 : " A cette heure, où il semble que le roman va forcer toutes barrières, voici que l'action s'arrête brusquement pour faire place à des savantes discussions d'art et de belles lettres, pendant près de cent pages."

II

Crispin and Turcaret show Le Sage's genius : one in an amazing farce and one in a tragi-comedy. He had an immense admiration for Molière, and he followed, as far as he could, in that master's footsteps. To have seen Coquelin in Molière was to have seen the greatest of comic actors at his best, whose art might be compared with that of Sarah Bernhardt, for its infinite care in the training of nature. He had a touching vehemence, a passionate humour, and he made himself seem less a divine

machine than Sarah and a much more delightfully faulty person. I have always wished that Molière had written all his plays in prose: he was aware that he was not a poet. How infinitely finer as prose is the prose of his two masterpieces, *La Festin de Pierre* and *L'Avare*, than the verse *Tartuffe* as verse! When he wrote the most Shakespearean of his tragedies in prose, "le même préjugé," Voltaire tells us, "qui fait tomber, *Le Festin de Pierre*, parcequ'il était en prose, nuisit au succès de *L'Avare*. Cependant le public qui, à la longue, se rend toujours au bon, finit par donner à cet ouvrage les applaudissements qu'il mérite. On comprit alors qu'il peut y avoir de fort bonnes comédies en prose." His worldly wisdom, his active and overflowing genius, his ardent and impassioned imagination, the certainty of his creation, makes him, in the true sense of the word, an absolute master of his own art. His humour is immortally delightful. When I speak of M. Jourdain I hardly know whether I am speaking of the character of Molière or of the character of Coquelin, who, as Mascarille, in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, becomes delicate and extravagant, a scented whirlwind. In *Tartuffe* we get a form of comedy which is almost tragic, the horribly serious comedy of the hypocrite. In that play I have seen Coquelin stand rigid and motionless for five minutes at a time, and yet nothing could be more expressive than his face at such moments. He had the movements of a great slug putting out its head and drawing it back into its shell. The face waits and plots, with a sleepy immobility covering an

indomitable will. It is like a drawing of Darmier. I suppose that this method, which he used, of moulding a part, as if in wet clay, and then allowing it to take hard and final form, is the method natural to the comedian, his right method ; while the tragic actor, on the contrary, has to deal with the continually shifting stuff of the soul and of the passions.

Turcaret gives an astonishing revelation of these characters—most of which were taken from living men, such as the financiers—that must have held audiences breathless. Turcaret is utterly knavish, dissolute, degraded, ruthless, ferocious. Madame Pascarel is simply appalling ! The baroness, whom he promises to marry—an absolute coquette, lively if not lovable—is seized in the nets of the Chevalier, who gives her a diamond and then " un billet de dix mille écus pour payer ses dettes de jeu." We assist at what I can only call a spectacle of this depraved and vitiated society, where most of the characters deserve hanging. All at once there fall from the clouds two women, who, gazing on one another and all around them, utter shrill cries and disappear in different directions. As for the plot, after a series of scenes in which the rapacity and the stupidity of the financier are unveiled, Turcaret is unmasked at a reception given by his friend the baroness. A marquis recognizes Turcaret as having been the lackey of his grandfather ; he comes face to face with his own sister, who is an old-clothes woman ; and, finally, he is confronted by his wife, whose existence he has carefully hidden. It ends

with a general *débâcle*. Turcaret is chased off the stage some time before he is imprisoned for an abuse of confidence ; this fiendish confederacy of knaves is disintegrated, and over the scattered heaps rises the sinister silhouette of Frontin, whose pockets are obviously crammed full of gold, and who cries in triumph : " Voilà le règne de M. Turcaret fini ; le mien va commencer ! "

III

In regard to the question of the jinns in Arabian lore, Asmodeus is perhaps to be identified with the Persian Aîshma Dacîva, who in the *Avesta* is next to Angromainyus, the chief of the evil spirits. In Hebrew, Aschmedai, the Destroyer, is mentioned as a demon. In the Book of Tobit he is said to have loved Sara, daughter of Raquel, and as having, in the form of a succubus, destroyed in succession her seven husbands. In the Talmud Asmodeus is described as the Prince of Demons, and is said to have driven Solomon from his kingdom.

To each of us appears his own image of his own world : art is the shadow of that perhaps illusory image. Who knows if there is any such thing as " real life " ? For there is a world in which nothing extraordinary happens, and in which love and death and pity and wrongdoing come and go under dim masks and soiling disguises. It annoys me very much, this inclination, which most people have, to explain away the wonder and the mystery out of

everything. To Le Sage it was the mystery and the wonder which gives its meaning to life, and to paint life without them was like painting nature without atmosphere: and yet he has no atmosphere. But when, under the Devil's own promptings, he must direct his imps as if they were marionettes, and must let us see the wires jerking, he is often at the pains of destroying his own illusion.

Joubert, that subtle and delicate writer, said of *Gil Blas*: "On peut dire des romans de Lesage qu'ils ont l'air d'avoir été écrite dans un café par un joueur de dominos, en sortant de la comédie." He said: "In the style of poetry every word reverberates with the sound of a well-tuned lyre, and leaves after it innumerable undulations." He said once and for all the significant thing: "Nothing is poetry which does not transport: the lyre is, in a sense, a winged instrument." Prose is the speech of what we call real life, and it is only in prose that an illusion of external reality can be given. In the best prose of Le Sage I find that he has carried out this requirement. His prose is original, subtle, simple, utterly natural, epigrammatic, satirical, humorous, sardonic; it is flexible and sinuous; it has in it much of the colour and passion of life itself as it passes in masquerade or as it exhibits the Puppets of its Illusions. Meredith wrote:

> My crime is that, the puppet of a dream,
> I plotted to be worthy of the world.

Then hangeth all on one tremendous If :—
If she does choose between them ? She does
choose :
And takes her husband, like a proper wife.
Unnatural ? My dear, these things are life :
And life, they say, is worthy of the Muse.

It seems to me that, considering the suspense of Le Sage's narratives, which do make us hold our breath as we read them, certain of the adventures he invents hang on some tremendous If, and that he is aware that

Passions spin the plot :
We are betrayed by what is false within.

He has to a point of intensity the dramatic touch, which makes so immensely living the creatures of his conceptions who exist before us—practically as they did in his own period—and with real life-blood in their veins. And he has an amazing faculty of invention. And I think he learnt something from Crébillon, whose longer works, including *Le Sopha*, with their conventional paraphernalia of Eastern fable, are extremely tedious ; but in two short pieces, *Le Nuit et le Moment* and *Le Hasard au Coin du Feu*, he created a model of witty, naughty, deplorable, natural comedy, which to this day is one of the most characteristic French forms of fiction. And in certain of the chapters of Le Sage there is a resemblance to a canvas which is covered ; or, it might be, a tapestry into which are woven some airy and unsubstantial threads, intermixed with

others twisted out of the commonest stuff of human existence. And it is exactly out of this stuff—as common as it is elemental—that he begins to create. The actual experience of even the most ordinary life is full of events that never explain themselves, either as regards their tendency or their origin. And it is in *Le Diable Boiteux* that he designed the story and the characters to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere that some laws and prepossessions of their own should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged. If Gray imagined that to remain idly on a sofa and to read novels gave him an idea of the joys of Paradise, might not this joy be augmented were one to take the pains to read both these books in all the luxury he suggested?

The Devil on Two Sticks is confessedly imitated from a Spanish book, *El Diablo Cojuelo*, by Luiz Velez de Guevara (1570-1644), which was printed in 1646. *El Diablo Cojuelo* is divided into two *autos* or strides. This describes observations taken during a flight through the air by a student who releases the Lame Devil from a flask, and is repaid by glimpses of life in courts and slums and stews. Le Sage, in *Le Diable Boiteux*, has greatly improved upon the first conception; but the original is of excellent humour, and the style is as idiomatic as the best Castilian can be. In the Dedication of Le Sage one reads: "C'est à vous, Seigneur de Guevara, que j'ai dédié cet

ouvrage dans sa nouveauté. J'ai déjà déclaré, et je déclaré encore publiquement, que votre *Diablo Cojuelo* m'en a fourné le titre et l'idée. Ainsi, je vous cède l'honneur de l'invention, sans vouloir approfondir si quelque auteur grec, Latin ou Italien ne pourrait pas justement vous le disputer. J'ai été obligé de m'écarter du texte, ou, pour mieux dire, j'ai un ouvrage nouveau sur le même plan. Je l'ai refondu et augmenté d'un volume que les sottises humaines m'ont aisément fourni." The original, when compared with the imitation, seems to me a kind of time-serving pamphlet, which covers one hundred and thirty pages, and which is absolutely destitute of the wit and humour of *Asmodeus*, which, taken on its own merits, is as perfect an epical romance as exists; and, in addition to this, it preserves—what is rare—all the unities of time and place; and it connects the chief characters with all the episodes which are woven into the narrative. And it is amusing to mention that on its appearance the first two editions were disposed of in eight days, and that two noblemen, sword in hand, entered the shop and demanded the last two copies. Now that is exactly what should have occurred in Spain. Essentially this romance is more French than Spanish, and yet how wonderfully the writer has woven together the immensity of the adventures which crowd upon one another's heels. Having contented himself with making one stride with Guevara he adds, greatly to the advantage of the book, in the edition of 1726, certain adventures, suppressing certain

others which had lost their salt and savour. How many times does he not forget that he has hoisted Asmodeus and Cleofas on to the tower of St Saviour in Madrid rather than on to the towers of Notre Dame.

Le Sage, by way of contrast, intersects his narrative with Spanish stories—and as I read them I seem to breathe over again what I drank in when I lived in Spain: its macabre gaieties, its insane follies, its intense terrors and nervous fears; for Spain, which was once made infamous for its Inquisition, owes much of its fascination, not only to those primitive races whose blood is mixed, but to the wonder of its cathedrals, of the Prado, of the Sierras Morenas, of *La Corrida de Toros*, of the music-halls, where the clash of the castanets acts on one's nerves, where all that subtle and animal rhythm excites one; where, in Seville, girls of eleven dance till midnight, learned in all the contortions of the gipsy dances, who sit on one's knees in their tawdry finery, smiling out of their little painted faces with an excited weariness. Is there not a cruelty to them, also, in the perverse sentiment which requires their aid in one's own amusement? Nor have I forgotten one of the most expressive gipsy dances, danced by two children in trailing dresses, inside which, as inside some fantastic, close prison or cage, they hopped and leaped and writhed, like puppets or living tops, to the stupefying rattle of castanets, parodying the acts of physical desire, the coquetry

of the animal, as if it were the most amusing, the most excitable, of games.

All these living and excitable beings—lustful, passionate, cruel, morbid, abnormal, absurd, odious, humorous, scornful, despairing, delirious puppets of Le Sage's creation—are not the mere children of his imagination ; for Asmodeus, one of the pawns of the Devil and of Belial, is just as literally as these, and just as inevitably, a piece of blood and flesh, endowed with infernal qualities that work for evil only, caustic and satirical and diabolical in his wit, subjected from the Fall onward (like other unseen powers which have some governance over our own blood and which we cannot put aside) to superhuman agencies which are connected with his veritable or legendary existence. He who belongs to the lower world is no more inhuman than one's conception of Satan the Incarnate Fiend ; nor is he without faint traces of sympathy with those evils that are incurable and with those follies which are the laughing-stocks of humanity. Found by Don Cleofas Leandro Perez Zambullo, a young wanton student of Alcala, imprisoned in a glass phial in the room of an absent astrologer, whom he releases, the dialogue between them is as amazing as his later confessions ; for has he not introduced into the world debauchery, luxury, games of chance, carousals, forms of dancing, forms of plays, and all the new French fashions? So just as Mephistopheles offered Faustus everlasting knowledge and an existence of twenty-four years in which nothing could even be denied him, he being visible or invisible,

he who evokes the spirit of Helen of Troy, he who is doomed to eternal damnation, which he has to share with the lost spirits that abide in hell; to whom the tempter says:

> Why this is hell, nor am I out of it:
> Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God
> And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
> In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

so in what might be called an infinitesimal length of time—only one night's adventure—Asmodeus, having perched Cleofas on one of the highest steeples in Madrid (might one not conjecture that Le Sage conceived this idea from the Bible, where Satan takes Christ to the height of a mountain, from which He surveys the world, offering all this to Him on the one condition: "Fall down and worship me!"), extends his right hand, "and in an instant all the roofs of the houses seemed removed, so that the student saw the insides of them as plainly as if it had been noonday; or, as Louis Velez de Guevara says, 'as plainly as you see into a pie whose top is taken off.' The view thus afforded was too surprising not to employ all Cleofas's attention. His eyes ran through all parts of the city, and the variety that surrounded him was sufficient to engage his curiosity for a long time." And the demon says, and he keeps his promise: "Signor Student, the confusion of objects you survey with so much pleasure affords really a very charming aspect; but in order to furnish you with a perfect knowledge of

human life it is necessary to explain to you what all the people are doing. I will disclose to you the springs of their actions and their most secret thoughts." It seems to me that the conception and creation of this book is one of the most extraordinary feats of the imagination—in this particular kind of work—that has ever been effected. Nor can I imagine how the writer could have invented anything so surprising as the sudden lifting off of all the roofs in Madrid and its inevitable results—that of setting naked not only all those bodies, but of revealing what none of them would have dared reveal: the mainsprings of their passions and lusts and raptures, and, what is more incredible than anything, for all that to have taken place—as far as possible—in the hours between sleeping and waking, when one is least aware of one's perishable existence. And I am inclined to think that Asmodeus, who, finding that the astrologer has discovered his flight, and that he means to recall him by those formidable injunctions he cannot resist, and who may, out of gratitude, give him his liberty, does escape from the clutches of the evil magician; for, as he says, and with much certainty: "If that should happen, as I hope, depend upon it that I will soon be with you, upon condition that you reveal to no living soul what has this night passed between us."

There have been countless imitations of these two books, and all these are singularly inferior to the originals. In France, Marcel Schwob and André Gide, and in England, Richard Garnett, in

The Twilight of the Gods, have done certain things comparable in their way with these learned inventions, these ironic creations of life, these irreverent classical burlesques, in which religion, morality, learning, and every convention of civilization are turned topsy-turvy, and presented in the ridiculousness of their unaccustomed attitude. Neither Gide nor Schwob has heaped mockery—not the infernal mockery used by Asmodeus—so high as in *Abdellah the Adite* and remained so sure a master of all the reticences of art and manners. This learned mockery—I refer to that of Le Sage, so sane, so rational, dancing in the fetters of artful pedantry—makes a marvellous show of the comedy of civilization ; and it has a quality, macabre, diabolical, which I find in no other writer, and a witchcraft all its own.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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CHAPTER I

What sort of devil the Devil on Two Sticks was; and where and how Don Cleofas Leandro Perez Zambullo became acquainted with him

ONE night in October, when thick darkness had overspread the famous city of Madrid, and the weary inhabitants, having retired to their respective homes, had left the streets free to those restless lovers whose nightly care it is to sing their pains or pleasures beneath the balconies of their mistresses, and the busy instruments had already roused the care of fathers, and alarmed the jealousy of husbands—in short, when it was almost midnight—Don Cleofas Leandro Perez Zambullo, a young student of Alcala, very nimbly darted from the garret-window of a house, into which the indiscreet son of the Cytherean goddess had enticed him, and endeavoured to preserve his life and honour by flying from three or four hired assassins, who followed close at his heels, threatening to kill or force him to marry a lady with whom they had just before surprised him.

Though alone, he yet bravely defended himself for some time against such odds, and had still maintained his ground if they had not wrested his sword from him in the fight. They followed him for some time over the roofs ; but, favoured by darkness, he at length got clear of them, and, stealing along from one house-top [1] to another, he made towards a light which he perceived at some distance, and which, feeble as it was, yet served him for a lantern in that dangerous extremity. After more than once running the risk of breaking his neck, he reached the garret whence its rays proceeded, and entered by a window, as much transported with joy as is a pilot when he finds himself and his ship safe in harbour after a narrow escape at sea from the terrors of a tempest.

He immediately looked around him, and much wondered that he should meet with no one in an apartment which seemed so strangely furnished. He examined it with great attention. There was a copper lamp hanging from the ceiling, books and papers in confusion on the table, spheres and a compass on the one side, phials and quadrants on the other ; all which made him conclude that under this roof lived an astrologer, and that this was the place in which he usually made his observations. He reflected on the dangers he had by good fortune escaped, and was considering what course was most proper for him to take, when he was interrupted by a deep sigh that broke forth

[1] The tops of the houses in Spain are flat.

very near him. He at first took it for a nocturnal illusion, or imaginary phantom, proceeding from the disturbed state he was in, and as the interruption ceased, he continued his reflections. But being interrupted a second time in the same manner, he believed it to be something real; and, though he saw no one in the room, he could not help exclaiming: "Who is it that sighs here?"

"It is me, Signor Student," answered a voice, which had something very extraordinary in it. "I have been six months enclosed in one of these glass phials. In this house lives a skilful astrologer and magician, who, by the power of his art, has confined me in this close prison."

"You are then a spirit?" said Cleofas, somewhat alarmed at this uncommon adventure.

"I am a demon," replied the voice, "and you are come very opportunely to deliver me from a slavery where I languish in idleness, though I am the most active and indefatigable devil alive."

Cleofas was somewhat affrighted at these words; but being naturally courageous he soon recovered his confidence, and, in a resolute tone, thus addressed the spirit: "Signor Demon, pray inform me by what character you are distinguished amongst your brethren. Are you a devil of quality, or an ordinary devil?"

"I am," replied the voice, "a very considerable devil, and am more esteemed in this and in the other world than any other."

"Perhaps," replied Cleofas, "you may be he whom we call Lucifer?"

"No," replied the spirit; "he is the mountebanks' devil."

"Are you then Uriel?" returned the student.

"Fie!" hastily interrupted the voice, "you should learn to be more courteous. Uriel is the patron of traders, tailors, butchers, bakers, and other third-rate thieves."

"It may be then you are Beelzebub?" said Leandro.

"You mistake again," answered the spirit; "he is the demon of duennas, of gentlemen-ushers, and waiting-men."

"This surprises me," said the student; "I have always imagined Beelzebub to be one of the greatest of your number."

"He is one of the least," replied the demon; "you have no true notion of our realm."

"You must, then," replied Don Cleofas, "be either Leviathan, Belphegor, or Ashtaroth?"

"Nay," said the voice; "those three are devils of the first order, genuine court-spirits, entering into the councils of princes, animating their ministers, forming leagues, stirring up insurrection in states, and lighting the torches of war, and not such boobies as those you first named."

"Indeed!" said the student; "pray tell me, what post has Flagel?"

"He is the soul of the law, and the life of the Bar," replied the devil. "It is he who makes out the attorneys' and bailiffs' writs; he inspires the pleaders, prompts the counsel, and guides the judges.

"But my occupation lies another way. I make ridiculous matches, and marry old greybeards to raw girls under age, masters to their maids, ladies of slender fortunes to lovers who have none. It is I that have introduced into the world luxury, debauchery, games of hazard, and chemistry. I am the inventor of carousals, dancing, music, plays, and all new French fashions. In a word, I am the celebrated 'Asmodeus,' surnamed 'The Devil on Two Sticks.'"

"Ah, what!" cried Don Cleofas, "you are then the powerful demon of whom there is such glorious mention in Agrippa and in the Clavicula Salomonis? Really, you cannot have told me all your amusements; you must have forgotten the best of them. I know that you sometimes divert yourself with assuaging the pangs of unfortunate lovers: for an instance, it was by your assistance that a young gentleman, a friend of mine, crept into the good graces of the lady of a graduate of the University of Alcala."

"True," said the spirit; "I reserved that till the last. I am the demon of luxury, or, to express it in more honourable phrase, the god Cupid!—for the poets have bestowed on me that fine name, and, indeed, painted me in very glowing colours: they describe me with gilded wings, a fillet bound over my eyes, a bow in my hand, a quiver of arrows on my shoulders, and an exquisitely beautiful face. What sort of face it is you shall immediately see, if you will be pleased to set me at liberty."

"Signor Asmodeus," replied Don Cleofas, "you know that I have long been your sincere devotee. Of the truth of this the dangers I just now ran are sufficient evidence. I should be ambitious of an opportunity of serving you, but the vessel in which you are hidden is undoubtedly enchanted, and all my endeavours to unstop or break it will be vain; I cannot therefore distinctly see which way to release you from prison. I am not much used to these sort of deliverances; and, betwixt you and I, if such a subtle devil as you are cannot make your way out, how can a wretched mortal like me effect it?"

"It is in your power to do it," answered the demon: "the phial in which I am enclosed is merely a plain glass bottle which is easily broken; you need only throw it on the ground and I shall immediately appear in human shape."

"If so," said the student, "it is easier than I imagined. Tell me then in which phial you are, for I see so many alike that I am not able to distinguish it."

"It is the fourth from the window," replied the spirit; "and although there is a magical seal on the cork, yet the bottle will nevertheless easily break."

"It is enough, Signor Asmodeus," returned Don Cleofas; "there is now but one small difficulty which deters me. When I have done you this service, will you not make me pay dearly for the broken glass?"

"No harm shall befall you," answered the demon; "but, on the contrary, you will be

pleased with my acquaintance. I will teach you whatever you may be desirous of knowing, inform you of all things which happen in the world, and discover to you all the faults of mankind. I will be your tutelary spirit; you shall find me much more intelligent than that of Socrates, and I will make you far surpass that philosopher in wisdom. In a word, I will bestow myself on you, with my good and bad qualities, the latter of which shall not be less advantageous to you than the former."

"These are fine promises," replied the student; "but you gentlemen-devils are accused of not being very religious observers of your words towards mankind."

"It is not a groundless charge," replied Asmodeus: "some of my brethren, indeed, make no scruple of breaking their word; for myself (not to mention the service you are about to do me, which I can never repay), I am a slave to mine, and I swear by all that renders our oaths inviolable that I will not deceive you. Depend on my assurances. I promise you withal that you shall revenge yourself this night on Donna Thomasa—that perfidious lady who had secreted four ruffians in her house to surprise and force you to marry her—a circumstance that should please you."

Young Zambullo, charmed above all with this last promise, to hasten its accomplishment immediately took the phial and, without reflecting what might be the event of it, threw it hard against the ground. It broke into a thousand pieces and overflowed the floor with a blackish liquor, which

by little and little evaporated, and was converted into thick smoke, which, suddenly dissipating, revealed to the amazed student the figure of a man in a cloak, about two feet and a half high, resting on crutches. This diminutive lame monster had goat's legs, a long visage, sharp chin, a yellow and black complexion, and a very flat nose ; his eyes, which seemed very small, resembled two lighted coals ; his mouth was extremely wide, above which were two wretched red moustaches, edged with a pair of unparalleled lips.

This charming Cupid's head was wrapped in a sort of turban of red crape, adorned with a plume of cocks' and peacocks' feathers. About his neck he wore a yellow linen collar, on which were drawn several patterns of necklaces and ear-rings. He was dressed in a short white satin vest, girt about with a girdle of white parchment, marked with talismanic characters. On the vest were painted several pairs of women's stays, very advantageously adapted for the display of their bosoms ; scarfs, parti-coloured aprons, and new-fashioned head-dresses of various sorts, each more extravagant than the other.

But all these were nothing compared with his mantle, the ground of which also was of white satin. On this, with Indian ink, were drawn an infinite number of figures, with so much freedom and such masterly expression that it was natural enough to think the devil had a hand in it. On one side appeared a Spanish lady covered with her veil, ogling a stranger on the promenade ; and

on the other a French coquette, practising new airs in her glass, in order to try them on a young patched and painted abbé, who appeared at her chamber door. Here a parcel of Italian cavaliers were singing and playing on the guitar under their mistresses' balconies; and there a company of Germans, all in confusion and unbuttoned, more intoxicated with wine and begrimed with snuff than your conceited French fops, surrounded a table overflowing with the filthy remains of their debauch. In one place was a Mahometan bashaw coming out of the bath, encompassed by the women of his seraglio, officiously crowding to tender him their services; in another an English gentleman very gallantly presenting a pipe and a pot of beer to his mistress.

There the gamesters were also wonderfully well represented; some of them, animated by sprightly joy, heaping up pieces of gold and silver in their hats; and others, broken and reduced to play upon honour, casting up their sacrilegious eyes to heaven, and gnawing their cards in despair. To conclude, there were as many curious things to be seen on it as on the admirable buckler of the son of Peleus, which exhausted all Vulcan's art; with this difference betwixt the performance of the two cripples, that the figures on his shield had no relation to the exploits of Achilles, while those on the cloak were so many lively representations of whatever was done in the world by the power and influence of Asmodeus.

CHAPTER II

In which the story of Asmodeus's deliverance is continued

THE demon, observing that his appearance did not very agreeably prepossess the student in his favour, smiling, said: "Well, Signor Don Cleofas Leandro Perez Zambullo, you now see the charming god of love, the sovereign ruler of hearts. What do you think of my beauty and air? Do you not take the poets for excellent painters?"

"Why, really," answered Cleofas, "they do flatter a little. You did not, I suppose, appear in this shape to Psyche?"

"Doubtless, no," replied Asmodeus; "I borrowed the appearance of a little French marquis, to make her dote on me. Vice must always be covered with a fair exterior, without which it will never please. I assume whatever shape I will, and could have shown myself to you in a finer imaginary body, but, designing to lay myself open to you without any disguise, I was willing that you should see me in a shape best suited to the opinion which the world entertains of me and of my functions."

"I am not surprised," said the student, "that you are somewhat ugly: pardon, if you please,

the harshness of the term ; the conversation which we have had together may admit of some freedom. Your features are very well proportioned to the idea I have of you ; but pray tell me how you came to be a cripple."

" My lameness," answered the devil, " is owing to a quarrel I once had in France with Pillardoc, the devil of interest, about one Manceau, a man of business, and one of the farmers of the revenues. He being very rich we warmly contested who should have the possession of him, and fought it out in the middle region of the air, whence Pillardoc (being the stronger of the two) threw me down to the earth, as, according to the poets, Jupiter did Vulcan ; and so, from the resemblance of our adventures, my comrades called me 'the lame devil,' or 'the devil on two sticks' ; and that nickname, which they gave me in raillery, has stuck by me ever since. Though a cripple, however, I can yet go pretty nimbly. You shall be a witness of my agility.

" But," added he, " let us end this discourse and make haste from the garret. It will not be long before the alchemist comes up to labour in securing the immortality of a beautiful sylph who nightly visits him ; and if he should surprise us he would not fail to recommit me to the bottle whence you have just released me, nor to confine you to a similar one. Let us therefore, in the first place, throw away all the pieces of the broken phial, that the enchanter may not discover my enlargement."

"If he should find it out after our departure," said Cleofas, "what would then be the event?"

"What would be the event?" answered the demon. "I find you have not read the treatise concerning Compulsions. Alas! were I concealed at the extremity of the earth, or hidden in the region where the fiery salamanders dwell; should I descend to the shades below, or to the bottom of the deepest sea, I should not be secured from his resentment. His invocations are so powerful that all the devils tremble at them. In short, I cannot resist his arbitrary commands, but shall be forced, much against my will, to appear before him and submit to whatever pains he pleases to inflict on me."

"If so," replied the student, "I much fear that our friendship will be of no long duration. This dreadful necromancer will soon discover your flight."

"I do not know that," replied the spirit, "for we cannot tell what may happen."

"What!" said Leandro Perez; "are you not acquainted with futurity?"

"No, indeed," replied the devil, "we know nothing of that matter; but those who depend upon our assistance are finely bubbled; and, indeed, to this opinion are to be ascribed all the fooleries which are imposed on women of quality by astrologers and fortune-tellers of both sexes when they are consulted on future events. We know only the past and the present. I cannot divine, therefore, whether the magician will soon

discover my absence or otherwise, but hope not; for, here being several phials very like that in which I was enclosed, he may perhaps not miss a single one. I am much in the same condition in his laboratory as a law-book in the library of a man of business. He never thinks of me, and when he does he never does me the honour of conversing with me. He is the most insolent magician that I know, for during the whole time that I was his prisoner he did not once vouchsafe to speak to me."

"What sort of fellow is this," replied Don Cleofas, "or what have you done to draw his hatred upon you?"

"I crossed one of his designs," replied Asmodeus. "There was a place in an academy void, which he proposed to obtain for a friend of his, but I was resolved it should be given to another. The sorcerer prepared a talisman composed of the most powerful characters of the Cabala; but I placed my man in the service of a great minister, and his name accordingly carried it from all competitors."

At these words the demon gathered up all the pieces of the broken phial, and after having thrown them out of the window—"Come, then," said he to the student, "let us make the best of our way: take hold of the end of my cloak and fear nothing." However dangerous the offer appeared to Don Cleofas he chose rather to accept it than expose himself to the resentment of the magician; wherefore he took as good hold as he could of the devil's garment, and was carried with all expedition out of the window.

CHAPTER III

Whither the Devil carried Don Cleofas, and what he first showed him

ASMODEUS was not in the wrong when he boasted his agility; he cleft the air with as much rapidity as an arrow from a bow, and in a few minutes was perched on St Saviour's steeple. When he had gotten on his feet he said to Don Cleofas: "Well, Signor Leandro, when men are in a very uneasy, rickety coach, and cry out, 'This is a coach for the devil!' do you now think they do us justice?"

"I think nothing can be more unreasonable," answered Cleofas politely, "and am ready to affirm, from experience, that the devil's conveyance is not only easier than a chair, but also so expeditious that nobody can be tired on the road."

"Very well," replied the demon; "but you do not know why I brought you hither. I intend from this high place to show you whatever is at present doing in Madrid. By the supernatural power I possess I will penetrate the roofs of the

houses, and, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, clearly expose to your view whatever is now beneath them." At these words he merely extended his right hand, and in an instant all the roofs of the houses seemed removed, so that the student saw the insides of them as plainly as if it had been noonday; or, as Louis Velez de Guevara says, "as plainly as you see into a pie whose top is taken off."

The view thus afforded was too surprising not to employ all Cleofas's attention. His eyes ran through all parts of the city, and the variety that surrounded him was sufficient to engage his curiosity for a long time.

"Signor Student," said the demon, "the confusion of objects you survey with so much pleasure affords really a very charming prospect; but in order to furnish you with a perfect knowledge of human life it is necessary to explain to you what all the people you see are doing. I will disclose to you the springs of their actions and their most secret thoughts.

"Where shall we begin? Let us observe, first of all, in the house on the right end, that old wretch telling his gold and silver. He is a rich, covetous citizen. His coach, which he had for almost nothing at the auction of an alcade of the Court, is drawn by two lean mules that are in the stable, and which he feeds according to the laws of the twelve tables — that is, each with a pound of barley a day. He uses them as the Romans did their slaves. It is about two years since he returned

from the Indies[1] laden with a vast quantity of bars of gold, which he turned into ready money. Do but admire with what an air of pleasure the fool surveys his riches. He is never satisfied with looking at them. But at the same time, see what is going forward in the adjoining chamber. Do you not see two young fellows with an old woman?"

"Yes," answered Don Cleofas. "I suppose they are his children?"

"No," replied the devil; "they are his nephews and heirs, who, being impatient to divide his spoils, are consulting a witch to know when he will die.

"In the next house there are a couple of pleasant pictures enough. One is a superannuated coquette going to bed after leaving her hair, eyebrows, and teeth on her toilet. The other is an amorous dotard of sixty, just come from making love. He has already laid down his eye, his false whiskers, and the peruke which hid his bald pate, and now waits for his man to take off his wooden arm and leg, to go to bed with the rest."

"If I may trust my eyes," said Zambullo, "in yonder house I see a beautiful tall young girl that would make a fine picture. What a charming air she has."

"True," replied the cripple. "That beautiful young creature whom you are so charmed with is elder sister to the gallant that is going to bed. One may say she is the counterpart of that old coquette who lodges with her. Her shape, which

[1] South America is here meant.

you admire, is a machine, in the adjusting of which all the art of the ablest mechanics has been exhausted: her breasts are artificial, and not long since she dropped her hips at church in the midst of the sermon. Yet, as she gives herself girlish airs, she has two young fellows that strive to be in her good graces! Nay, they have even proceeded to blows for her. The fools! methinks I see two dogs fighting for a bone!

"Prithee laugh with me at the concert begun after a family supper in a citizen's house hard by there. They are singing cantatas; an old counsellor composed the music, and the words are a bailiff's, who sets up for making love—a coxcomb that makes verses for his own diversion, but for the punishment of others. The symphony consists of a bagpipe and a spinnet; an old ungainly chorister with a squeaking pipe sings the treble, and a young girl with a very deep voice the bass."

"Very pleasant indeed!" cried Don Cleofas, laughing. "Had they intended to have made a jest of all music they could not have succeeded better."

"Cast your eyes on that magnificent palace," pursued the devil; "you will there see a great lord laid in a splendid apartment, with a casket full of *billets-doux*, which he is reading to lull him asleep more voluptuously. They come from a lady whom he adores, and who puts him to such expense that he will soon be reduced to solicit a viceroy's appointment to support himself.

"If everybody is at rest in that palace, and all be hushed and still there, to make amends,

everything seems to be in motion in the next house, on the left hand. Do you not distinguish a lady in a red damask bed? She is a woman of quality, Donna Fabula, who has just sent for a midwife, and is going to present her old husband, Don Torribio, whom you see by her, with an heir. Are you not charmed with the gentleman's good nature? The cries of his dearest moiety pierce his soul; he is penetrated with grief and suffers as much as she. With what care and earnestness does he strive to help her!"

"Really," said Leandro, "the man is in a great fluster; but I discern another, who seems to sleep very sound in the same house without being concerned at the success of the affair."

"And yet he should have some concern," replied the cripple, "since that domestic is the first cause of all the pains his lady suffers.

"Carry your eye a little farther," continued he, "and observe that hypocrite, in a low room, rubbing himself with coach grease, in order to go to a meeting of sorcerers to-night between St Sebastian's and Fontarabia. I would carry you thither this minute, to oblige you with such a pleasant diversion, if I were not afraid of being known by the devil who personates the goat there."

"That devil and you, then," said the student, "are not very good friends?"

"No, I think not indeed," answered Asmodeus: "why, it is the very same Pillardoc I was mentioning just now! The rascal would most certainly betray me, and inform our magician of my flight."

"You have besides, perhaps, had some squabble with this same Pillardoc?"

"I have so," replied the demon. "About two years ago we had a fresh dispute about a gentleman's son at Paris who had some thoughts of settling in the world. We both assumed a right to dispose of him. Pillardoc would have made him a factor, and I would fain have had him a smart fellow, and made his fortune among the women; but our comrades, to end the dispute, made a rascally monk of him. They then reconciled us, we embraced—and from that time became mortal foes."

"Let us have done with this *belle assemblée*," said Don Cleofas, "for I have no manner of curiosity to be at it; but let us rather pursue our examination of what is before us. Pray tell me what mean the sparks of fire issuing from that cellar?"

"It is," replied the devil, "one of the most foolish amongst all the works of men. The grave personage you see in that cellar, at the flaming furnace, is an alchemist, whose rich patrimony the fire will consume by degrees, and he will never find what he spends it in search of—for, between you and I, the philosopher's stone is no better than a fine chimera I myself forged to divert myself with human understanding, ever striving as it is to pass the bounds prescribed to it.

"This alchemist's neighbour is an honest apothecary, who is not yet gone to bed. You see him at work in his shop with his decrepit wife and apprentice. Do you know what they are doing? The master is preparing a prolific pill for an old

advocate that is to be married to-morrow; the man is making a laxative decoction and the woman is beating astringent drugs in a mortar."

"In the house over against the apothecary's," said Zambullo, "I see a man getting out of bed and dressing in all haste."

"Right," answered the spirit; "it is a physician rising upon a very pressing occasion. He is sent for to a prelate, who coughed twice or thrice after he was gone to bed.

"Turn your eyes a little farther to the right and try whether, by the dull lamp in that garret, you can distinguish a man stalking in his shirt."

"Yes, yes, I am right!" cried the student, "by the same token that I would venture to draw you up an inventory of the furniture in it. There is nothing but a wretched bed, a sorry stool, a table, and the dirty walls are all over as black as soot."

"That lofty-minded person," replied Asmodeus, "is a poet; and what seems black to you are tragic verses of his own composition, with which he has adorned his chamber, for the want of paper forces him to write his poems on the walls."

"By the hurried and busy air of his gait," said Don Cleofas, "I should conclude that he was composing some piece of very great importance."

"You are not in the wrong to think so," said the cripple; "he yesterday gave the finishing stroke to a tragedy, entitled *The Universal Deluge*. He cannot be reproached with neglecting the unity of place, since all the scenes are laid in Noah's Ark.

"I assure you it is an excellent piece, for all the beasts are there introduced talking as learnedly as so many doctors. He intends to dedicate it, and has already spent six hours in working up the epistle dedicatory, and is at this moment about the last line. It may justly be called a masterpiece, for not one of the moral or political virtues, nor one of the topics of praise that can possibly be bestowed on a man whom ancestry, or his own merit, has rendered illustrious, are spared; never was author so prodigally lavish of his flatteries."

"To whom does he design to address so magnificent an eulogy?" replied the student.

"He knows nothing of that yet," answered the devil; "he has left a blank for the name, and is in quest of some rich lord more generous than the patrons to whom he has dedicated his former pieces. But people that pay for dedications are nowadays very scarce. Men of quality have amended that fault, and thereby done an acceptable service to the public, which before was continually pestered with wretched performances, the greater number of books being written for the lucre of their dedications.

"Now we are upon the subject of dedications," added the demon, "I must relate to you a very extraordinary circumstance. A lady at Court, having allowed an author to dedicate his works to her, resolved to see the dedication before it was printed; and not thinking it came up to her perfections, took the pains to compose one of her own, which she sent to the author to place before his works."

"I fancy," cried Leandro, "I see thieves breaking into a house over a balcony yonder!"

"You are not mistaken," said Asmodeus; "they are house-breakers getting into a banker's. Let us watch them and see what they will do. They are examining the counting-house and rummaging everywhere. But the banker has been beforehand with them; he yesterday made the best of his way to Holland with all the riches in his coffers."

"Sure," said Zambullo, "there is another thief near the same spot on a silk ladder getting into a balcony."

"No, he is not what you take him to be," answered the cripple. "It is a marquis scaling the chamber of a maiden who is very willing to be rid of that name. He made her some superficial promises of marriage, and she, not in the least distrusting his oaths, has yielded; and no wonder, for, on love's exchange, your marquises are merchants of very great reputation."

"I should be glad to know," said the student, "what that man in the nightgown and cap is doing. He is writing very hard, and his hand the while is guided by a little black figure that stands at his elbow."

"The man who is writing," answered the devil, "is clerk or registrar of a court, who, to oblige a guardian that will return the favour, is altering a decree pronounced in favour of his pupil; and the little black figure that guides his hand is Griffael, the clerk's devil."

"But this Griffael," replied Don Cleofas, "I suppose, supplies this place only as deputy, since the registrars seem directly subject to the direction of Flagel, the spirit of the Bar."

"No," replied Asmodeus. "The registrars were thought a body considerable enough to have a devil of their own; and I assure you he has more upon his hands than he can compass.

"In a citizen's house next door to the registrar observe a young lady on the first floor; she is a widow, and the man you see with her is her uncle, who lives on the second. The bashfulness of that young widow deserves your admiration. She scruples at receiving her chemise before her uncle, but retires into her closet to put it on in the presence of her gallant, whom she has hidden there.

"With the registrar lives a relation of his, a huge, greasy, lame graduate, who for joking has not his fellow in the world. Voluminus, so cried up by Cicero for his smart, witty repartees, did not rally more agreeably. This bachelor, called at Madrid the graduate 'Donoso,'[1] by way of excellence, is flattered and invited by all the Court and city that give entertainments. Everyone strives who shall have him: he has a peculiar knack of making the guests merry, and is the very soul and delight of the company; so that he every day dines at some great man's table, and never returns till two in the morning. He is now at the Marquis of Alcaniza's, a circumstance which happened purely by chance."

[1] *Donoso* in the Spanish means facetious.

"How by chance?" interrupted Leandro.

"I will explain myself," answered the devil. "About noon to-day there were five or six coaches at the graduate's door from different noblemen that all sent for him. He ordered their pages to be sent up to him, and, taking a pack of cards, told them that since he could not oblige all their masters, and was resolved not to give any preference, those cards should decide the matter, and that he would dine with the King of Clubs.

"Let us give a look into that new building divided into two separate wings. In the first lives the owner of it, that old gentleman who sometimes walks about the room and sometimes sinks into his easy-chair."

"Sure," said Zambullo, "his head must be taken up with some project of importance. Who can this man be? To judge by the splendour and riches of his apartments he must be some grandee of the highest rank."

"He is no more than a *contador*,[1] however," answered the devil, "but is grown old in places of great profit. His estate is worth about four millions,[2] but his conscience suggested some uneasy reflections upon the manner of his acquiring it, and, finding he must shortly make up his accounts in the other world, he has grown scrupulous, and is thinking of building a monastery, flattering himself that, after so good a work, his mind will be at rest. He has already obtained

[1] *Contador*, steward or agent.

[2] Livres, or francs of tenpence each.

permission to found a convent ; but being firmly resolved not to place any monks in it, in whom the virtues of chastity, sobriety, and humility do not eminently shine, he is very much puzzled to choose the objects of his bounty.

" In the second wing lives a fair lady, who, after bathing in milk, has just stepped into bed. This voluptuous creature is widow to a knight of the Order of St Jaques, whose empty title was all the riches he left her. But, by good fortune, two counsellors of the Council of Castile are her gallants, who equally contribute to the expenses of her house."

" Alas ! " cried the student, " the air resounds with shrieks and lamentations. Some sad accident must have happened."

" It is this," said the spirit. " Two young gentlemen were playing at cards in the gaming-house, where you see so many lamps and candles lighted up ; they grew warm upon their game, drew their swords and mortally wounded each other. The elder of them is married, the younger an only son, and they are both expiring. The wife of the one and the father of the other, informed of the sad disaster, are just come to them, and they fill the neighbourhood with their exclamations. ' Unfortunate child,' said the father, addressing himself to his son, who was past hearing him, ' how often have I advised thee to leave off play ? How often have I foretold thee that it would cost thee thy life ? If thou diest thus unfortunately I here call Heaven to witness it is not my fault.' As for

the poor wife, she is running mad. Though her husband, by his gaming, has lost all the fortune she brought him, though he has sold all her jewels, and even her very clothes, she is inconsolable for the loss of him. She is cursing cards, which have been the cause of it; she is cursing him that invented them; she is cursing the gaming-house, and all that live in it."

"I extremely pity people that are raving mad for play," said Don Cleofas; "their minds are often in a horrid situation. Thank Heaven, I have nothing to answer for upon account of that vice."

"But you have another, fully as bad," replied the devil. "Think you it is at all more excusable to give yourself up to common prostitutes? And were you not this very night in danger of being killed by bullies? Really, I admire the folly of mankind, whose own faults seem trifles to them, while they look at those of others through a microscope.

"Let me present you with some more melancholy images," continued Asmodeus. "Observe the body of that corpulent man stretched upon a bed in a house adjoining the gaming-house. It is that of an unfortunate canon who was just now attacked by apoplexy. His nephew and niece, far from affording him any assistance, suffered him to die for want of aid, and are seizing his best effects, to convey to a receiver of stolen goods; after which they will be wholly at leisure to mourn and lament.

"A little beyond you see two men who are

about to be buried; they are two brothers, and were both sick of the same disease, but took different measures. One of them relied with entire confidence on his physician; the other let Nature take her course, yet they are both dead: the former from taking all the physic the doctor ordered, and the latter because he would take nothing."

"This is very perplexing," said Leandro. "Alas! what, then, must a poor sick man do?"

"That is more than I can tell you," replied the devil. "I know very well that there are such things as good remedies, but cannot say whether or not there are any good physicians.

"Let us change the scene," continued he; "I will show you something more diverting. Do you not hear a frightful din in the street? A widow of sixty has this morning married a young fellow of seventeen, upon which all the merry fellows of that quarter are met together to celebrate the wedding, with a jangling concert of pots, frying-pans, and kettles."

"You told me," interrupted the student, "that the making of ridiculous matches was your province; yet you appear to have had no hand in this."

"No, truly," replied the cripple; "I was far from having any hand in it, for I was confined. But even had I been at liberty I would not have meddled with this. The widow had a scrupulous conscience and married only to enjoy her darling pleasures without remorse. I never make such marriages: I have a much greater pleasure in troubling consciences than in setting them at rest."

"Notwithstanding the din of this burlesque serenade," said Zambullo, "I fancy I hear another noise."

"Yes," answered the cripple, "it comes from a tavern, where a fat, oily Dutch captain, a French chorister, and a German officer of the Guards are singing a trio. They have been at it ever since eight this morning, and each of them fancies it is for the honour of his country to make the two others drunk.

"Throw your eyes a moment across the way, to that house which stands by itself over against the canon's; you will see three famous courtesans making a debauch with three great lords of the Court."

"Ah, how exceeding pretty they are!" exclaimed Don Cleofas. "I do not wonder that men of quality are so mad after them! See how they embrace! They must certainly be deeply in love with them."

"You are young and inexperienced," said the spirit, "and do not know this sort of ladies; their hearts are more deceptive than their faces. Whatever marks of tenderness they express, they have not the least grain of it for those lords. They caress the one for protection and the two others for settlements. It is so with all coquettes. And though men very fairly ruin themselves for such, they are not the more loved by them, but, on the contrary, whoever pays for love is treated like a husband. This is a law in amorous intrigues, which I myself have established. But let us leave those lords to

taste the pleasures they so dearly purchase, whilst their footmen, who wait for them in the street, comfort themselves with the pleasing expectation of enjoying the same favours gratis."

"What can be the design of yon cavalier," said Don Cleofas, "who is sitting at the door on the other side of the way? Does he wait for the chambermaid's letting him in?"

"No, no," answered Asmodeus; "he is a young Castilian practising your sublime love in form. He has a mind, out of a pure spirit of gallantry, in imitation of lovers of former days, to pass the night at his mistress's door. Every now and then he thrums upon a miserable guitar, accompanying it with ditties of his own composing; but his Dulcinea, who lies on the second floor, whilst she is listening to his music, is all the while bewailing the absence of his rival."

"Pray do me the favour," interrupted Leandro Perez, "to explain another picture that presents itself before me. Everybody is still up in that great house on the left. What is the meaning that some are laughing ready to burst and others dancing? It must be some great festival, sure."

"It is a wedding," answered the cripple. "All the servants are making merry; but within less than three days that very palace, which you see at present the scene of so much joy, was a house of the utmost mourning. That is a story I must relate to you. It is somewhat long, but I hope you will not think it tedious."

Thus premising, Asmodeus began as follows:—

CHAPTER IV

History of the amours of the Count de Belflor and of Leonora de Cespides

"THE Count de Belflor, one of the most influential noblemen of the Court, loved young Leonora de Cespides to distraction, but never intended to marry her. The daughter of a private gentleman did not seem a match of sufficient distinction for him, for which reason he proposed only to make a mistress of her.

"It was with this design that he pursued her wherever she went, and lost no opportunity of discovering his love by the extraordinary respect he paid her ; but he could neither speak nor write to her, she being perpetually guarded by a severe and vigilant duenna, whose name was Madame Marcella. This drove Belflor to despair, and, feeling his desires increased by the difficulty of gratifying them, he was continually projecting ways to deceive the Argus who guarded this Io. On the other side, Leonora, perceiving the Count's regard for her, could not help being touched with tenderness for him, a feeling which insensibly formed itself into a passion in her heart, and at last grew to be extremely violent. I did not augment it by common temptations, because the magician, who kept me prisoner, denied me the use of all

my functions; but Nature, no less dangerous than myself, engaged in it, and that was enough. Indeed all the difference there is betwixt Nature and me is that she corrupts hearts by slow degrees, whilst I seduce them expeditiously.

"Affairs were in this posture when Leonora, with her perpetual governante, going one morning to church, met an old woman with one of the largest strings of beads that ever hypocrisy yet made. Accosting them with a pleasant, smiling air, she thus addressed herself to the duenna: 'The good God preserve you!' said she, 'the holy peace be with you! Give me leave to ask whether you are not Madame Marcella, the chaste widow of the late Signor Martin Rosetta?' The governante having answered 'Yes'—'You are luckily met, then,' replied the old woman. 'I am to acquaint you that I have at home an old relation of mine, who is very desirous to speak with you. He is lately arrived from Flanders, was your husband's most intimate friend, and has some particulars of the utmost importance to communicate to you. He would have waited on you, but has been prevented by a fit of sickness, which has reduced him to the point of death. I live not half a stone's-throw from hence. I beseech you to take the trouble of following me.'

"The governante, who wanted not prudence and good sense, being afraid of a false step, knew not what to resolve on; but the old woman, guessing the reason of her uneasiness, said to her: 'Dear Madame Marcella, you may securely rely on me.

My name is La Chicona ; the licentiate Marcos de Figueroa and the curate Mira of Mesqua will answer for me as soon as for their grandmothers. I do not desire you to come to my house for anything but your own good. My relation is willing to restore you a sum of money which he borrowed of your husband.'

"The very thoughts of restitution engaged Marcella on her side. 'Come, girl,' said she to Leonora, 'let us see this good lady's relation ; to visit the sick is an act of charity.' They soon reached La Chicona's house, and were led into a lower room, where they found a greybearded man in bed, and if he were not really very sick he at least effectually feigned to be so.

"'Cousin,' said the old woman, presenting to him the governante, 'here is the lady you desired to speak with, Madame Marcella, the widow of your friend, Signor Martin Rosetta.'

"At these words the old man, lifting up his head a little, saluted the duenna, and, making signs for her to come nearer the bedside, said in a feeble tone : 'I thank Heaven, dear Madame Marcella, for prolonging my life to this moment, which was the only thing I desired. I feared I should have died without the satisfaction of seeing you and putting into your hand a hundred ducats which my intimate friend, your late husband, lent me to help me out of an honourable quarrel I was formerly engaged in at Bruges. Did he never acquaint you with that adventure ?'

"'Alas, no !' answered Madame Marcella, 'he

never mentioned it. God rest his soul! He was generous enough to forget the services he did his friends; and, very unlike those boasters who brag of what they never did, he never told when he obliged any person.'

"'He certainly had a very beneficent soul,' replied the old man; 'a truth which I am more firmly engaged to believe than any man else. And to prove it to you, you must give me leave to relate the affair out of which I was so happily extricated by his assistance; but having something to disclose of the utmost importance with regard to the memory of the deceased, I should be glad of an opportunity of revealing it to his discreet widow alone.'

"'Very well,' said La Chicona, 'that you may have the better opportunity of discoursing with her in private, this young lady and I will retire into my closet.' At these words she left the duenna with the sick man and conducted Leonora into another chamber, where, without any circumlocution, she said: 'Fair Leonora, the moments are too precious to be misspent. You know the Count de Belflor by sight; he has long loved you, and languishes to death for an opportunity to tell you so. The vigilance and severity of your governante have always hitherto hindered him from enjoying that satisfaction. In this despair he had recourse to my industry, which I have made use of for him. The old man whom you have just now seen is the Count's *valet-de-chambre*, and all that has been done is only a trick to deceive your governante and draw you hither.'

"These words were no sooner ended than the Count, who was concealed behind the hangings, appeared, and throwing himself at Leonora's feet —'Madam,' said he, 'pardon the stratagem of a lover who could no longer live without speaking to you. If this obliging matron had not procured me this private opportunity I should have abandoned myself to despair.'

"These words, expressed with an air of entreaty by a person not at all disagreeable to her, highly perplexed Leonora. She continued for some time in doubt what answer she ought to make; but at last, recovering herself, and looking displeased at the Count, said: 'Perhaps you believe yourself very much obliged to this officious lady, who has so well served your purpose, but her designs to assist you shall prove ineffectual.'

"Thus saying, she made several steps to get out of the room; but the Count stopped her, saying: 'Stay, adorable Leonora, hear me a moment: my passion is so pure that it ought not to alarm you! I own you have some grounds to be offended with the artifice which I have made use of to converse with you; but have I not till this day in vain endeavoured to speak to you? I have followed you these six months to the churches, walks, and all public places. I have long in vain watched for an opportunity of telling you how you have charmed me. Your cruel, your merciless governante has continually frustrated my designs. Alas, then, instead of turning the stratagem, which I have been forced to employ, into a crime, com-

miserate, fair Leonora, all the tortures of such tedious expectation, and judge, by your charms, the mortal pangs they have occasioned me to suffer.'

"Belflor did not forget to reinforce his words with all the airs of persuasion which gallant men are used to practise with success, accompanying his words with some tears, with which Leonora began to be touched; and, in despite of her resolution, some tender, compassionate emotions at length arose in her heart. But far from yielding to them, the more she perceived them to grow the more she pressed him to be gone. 'Count,' said she, 'all your words are in vain; I will not hear you. Do not detain me longer, but let me go out of a house in which my virtue is rudely attacked, or by my cries I will alarm the neighbourhood and expose your audacity to the public.' This she uttered in such a resolute tone that La Chicona, who was obliged to stand in awe of the magistracy, begged the Count not to push things any farther. Upon which he forbore opposing Leonora's intention, who got out of his hands, and—what had never before happened to anyone in similar circumstances in the same place—quitted the closet as pure as when she entered it.

"She immediately flew to her governante: 'Come, good matron,' said she, 'leave off your foolish dialogue; we are cheated. Let us quit this dangerous house.'

"'What is the matter, child?' answered Madame Marcella, with amazement; 'what is the reason of your so hasty departure?'

"'I will inform you,' replied Leonora; 'but let us fly, for every minute I stay here gives me fresh uneasiness.'

"However earnest the duenna was to know the cause of this hasty departure, she could not then be satisfied, but was obliged to yield to the urgency of Leonora. They both therefore departed in a hurry, leaving La Chicona, the Count, and his *valet-de-chambre* in as great confusion as a company of players obliged to act a piece that has already been damned by the critics.

"When Leonora got into the street, with a great deal of inward disturbance she began to tell her governante what had passed in La Chicona's closet. Madame Marcella was very attentive, and when they had reached their own house—'I protest, my daughter,' said she. 'I am extremely mortified at the thought of what you have just informed me. How was it possible for me to be deluded by that old woman? At first I made a difficulty of following her. O that I had continued in the same opinion! I ought to have mistrusted her wheedling flatteries. I have committed a folly not to be forgiven in a person of my experience. Ah, why did not you discover this plot whilst I was at La Chicona's house! I would have scratched out her eyes, called the Count de Belflor by all the names I could have thought on, and torn off the beard of the counterfeit old man who told me so many lies. But I will this minute return with the money which I received as a real restitution of what I supposed my husband had lent, and

if I find them together they shall not lose by staying for me.' These words ended, she put on her veil, which she had already laid by, flew out, and made the best of her way to La Chicona's house.

"The Count was still there, and by the ill success of his stratagem was reduced almost to despair. Another would have quitted the pursuit; but he was not discouraged, for, with a thousand good qualities, he had one very bad one, which was the suffering himself to be hurried on by his amorous inclinations. Whenever he loved a lady he was too warm in the pursuit of her favours; and, though naturally an honest man, he made no scruple of violating the most sacred laws to accomplish his desires. Considering, then, that it was impossible for him to gain his end without the assistance of Madame Marcella, he resolved to leave no means unattempted to engage her in his interests. He concluded that this duenna, how severe soever she appeared, was not proof against a considerable present; and indeed his opinion was not unjust, for if there are such things as trusty governantes, the only reason is that the gallants are not rich enough to make sufficient presents.

"Madame Marcella no sooner arrived than, finding those she wished for, she commenced in a very outrageous manner, loading the Count and La Chicona with a million of hard names, and made the restitution sum fly at the head of the *valet-de-chambre*. The Count patiently attempted to appease the storm, and throwing himself at the

duenna's feet, to render the scene more affecting, he pressed her to take the purse again, and offered her a thousand pistoles besides, conjuring her to have pity on him. Her compassion had never before been so powerfully solicited, and she did not prove inexorable. She soon quitted her invectives, and comparing the offered sum with the mean recompense she expected from Don Lewis, she easily found it was more for her interest to draw Leonora from her duty than to preserve her from infringing it; which engaged her, after a few complimentary refusals, to take up the purse again, accept the offer of the thousand pistoles, promise to be subservient to the Count's passion, and immediately prepare for the performance of her promise.

"Knowing Leonora to be a virtuous young lady, she very carefully avoided giving her the least suspicion of her correspondence with the Count, for fear she should discover it to Don Lewis, her father; and, being resolved on more subtle measures to ruin her, she thus addressed her charge at her return: 'Leonora, I have just now satisfied my enraged mind. I found the three villainous deceivers confounded at your courageous retreat. I threatened La Chicona with your father's resentment and the most rigorous severity of the law. I called the Count de Belflor all the ill names which rage could suggest, and hope that nobleman will be no more guilty of any such attempts, and that his intrigues will no more exercise my vigilance. I thank Heaven that, by

your resolution, you have escaped the net which was spread for you. I weep for joy. I am delighted to think he has not been able to gain any advantage over you by this stratagem; for great lords make it their diversion to seduce young ladies. Most of those who value themselves on preserving the strictest degree of probity are not scrupulous on this head, as though the dishonouring of families were no ill act. I do not absolutely say that the Count is a man of this character, nor that he aims at deceiving you; we must not always judge ill of our neighbours. Perhaps his designs are honourable. Though his rank and fortune entitle him to the best match at Court, your beauty may yet have resolved him to marry you. I remember also that in the answers he made to the hard words I gave him he hinted as much to me.'

"'What is it you say, good governante?' interrupted Leonora. 'If he had any such intention he would before now have asked me of my father, who would never have denied a man of his quality.'

"'What you say is very just,' replied the duenna; 'I am of your mind. The course which the Count took is suspicious; or rather his intentions were ill. I am almost in the mind to return to him and scold at him afresh.'

"'Nay, good Madame,' replied Leonora, 'it is better to forget what is past and avenge it by contempt.'

"'True,' said Marcella, 'I think that is the best way; you are wiser than I. But, on the other side, let us not judge amiss of the Count's sentiments.

How do we know but that he took the course he did as the most refined way of discovering his passion? Before obtaining your father's consent perhaps he was desirous of obtaining your favour, and securing your heart by long services, that your union might thereby be rendered more charming. If so, my daughter, would it be a great crime to hearken to him? Unbosom yourself; you know my tender affection for you. Are you sensible of any alteration in favour of the Count, or would you, if it were put to you, refuse to marry him?'

"At this malicious question the too sincere Leonora cast down her eyes and, blushing, owned that she had no aversion for the Count; but modesty preventing her further discovering herself the duenna pressed her afresh to hide nothing from him. The lady, overpowered by her governante's tender professions, went on. 'Good Marcella,' said she, 'since you would have me talk to you as my confidante, know that I think Belflor deserves to be loved. I like his mien so well, and withal have heard such an advantageous character of him, that I could not help being touched with his addresses. The indefatigable care which you always took to oppose them has frequently given me great uneasiness; and I own that I have silently deplored, and in some measure repaid with my tears, the pains your vigilance has forced me to endure. I will further own to you that at this very moment, instead of hating him after his rash attempt, my heart, against my will, excuses him, and throws the blame on your severity.'

"'Daughter,' replied the governante, 'since you give me leave to suppose that his addresses will be agreeable to you, I will manage this lover for you.'

"'I am very sensible,' answered Leonora, in a tenderer tone, 'of the service you are willing to render me. If the Count were not one of the grandees of the first rank at Court, were he a mere private gentleman, I should prefer him to all men; but let us not flatter ourselves. Belflor is a nobleman of the highest distinction, and, doubtless, is designed for one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom. Do not let us expect that he will ever descend to marry Don Lewis's daughter, who has but a mean fortune to offer him. No, no,' added she, 'he has no such favourable thought towards me. He does not think me worthy to bear his name, and pursues me only to dishonour me.'

"'Ah, wherefore,' said the duenna, 'will you think he does not love you well enough to marry you? Love daily works greater miracles than that. You seem to imagine that Heaven has set an infinite distance betwixt the Count and you. Do yourself more justice, Leonora. It would not degrade him to join his fortune to yours; you are of an ancient, noble family, and your alliance could never cause him a blush. Since you have some inclinations towards him,' continued she, 'I must talk with him. I will examine his intentions, and if I find them such as they ought to be I will encourage them with some hopes.'

"'Oh, take care how you do that!' replied

Leonora. 'I am of opinion that you ought not to go in search of him; if he should suspect my having any hand in it he would cease to value me.'

"'I am a woman of more address than you imagine,' replied Marcella. 'I will begin with accusing him of a design to seduce you; upon which he will not fail to justify himself. I will hear him and shall see the event. In short, my daughter, leave it to me: I will guard your honour as cautiously as if it were my own.'

"The duenna went out soon after dusk in the evening. She found Belflor near Don Lewis's house, and gave him an account of her discourse with her mistress, not forgetting to value herself on her conduct in the discovery of the lady's passion for him. Nothing could gratify the Count more than this news, which made him express his thanks to Marcella in the most sensible manner —that is, he promised to give her the thousand pistoles the next day, on assuring himself of the success of his enterprise, well knowing that a woman prepossessed is half seduced. They then parted, very well satisfied with each other, and the duenna returned home.

"Leonora, who impatiently expected her, no sooner saw her arrive than she asked what news she had brought. 'The best that you could ever hear,' answered the governante; 'all things succeed agreeably to your utmost wishes. I have seen the Count. I can tell you that his intentions are not ill; he has no other design than to marry you. This he swore to me by all that is sacred

among men. You may perhaps imagine that I yielded to him upon this, but I assure you I did not. "If you are thus resolved," said I, "why don't you make the usual application to Don Lewis?" "Ah, dear Marcella," answered he, without appearing disturbed at this question, "could you think it proper for me to obtain her father's good will before I was assured how she stood inclined towards me, and, considering nothing but the transports of a blind passion, endeavour tyrannically to obtain her of her father! No; her ease is dearer to me than my own desires, and I am too much a man of honour to build my happiness on her misfortunes."

"'During these expressions of his,' continued the duenna, 'I observed him with the utmost attention, and employed all my experience to discover by his eyes whether his love was as sincere as he represented it. What shall I say? He seemed to be devoured with a real passion, and I with a joy which, without much difficulty, I could not conceal. Being then satisfied with his sincerity I thought it not improper to glance at your sentiments with regard to him, in order to secure you such a considerable lover. "My lord," said I to him, "Leonora is not averse to you, and, as far as I can judge, your addresses are not insupportable to her." "Great God!" he exclaimed then, enraptured, "what do I hear! Is it possible that the charming Leonora should entertain favourable thoughts of me? How much am I indebted to you, most obliging Marcella, for having rid me of

such a tedious uncertainty; you who, by continual opposition, have loaded me with so many torments. But, dear Marcella, complete my bliss by obliging me with an opportunity of speaking with the divine Leonora. I solemnly promise and swear before you that I will never be any other's but hers."

"'To this,' pursued the governante, 'he added yet more moving asseverations—in short, daughter, he entreated me in such a pressing manner to procure him a private opportunity of speaking to you that I could not avoid promising to accomplish it.'

"'Ah, why did you promise him that?' replied Leonora, somewhat disturbed. 'With how much care have you inculcated this doctrine into me, that a prudent maiden ought industriously to shun all dangerous conversations?'

"'I agree with what you say,' replied the duenna, 'and affirm it to be a very good maxim; but you may lawfully dispense with it on this occasion, since you may look on the Count as your husband.'

"'He is not so yet, however,' replied Leonora, 'and I ought not to see him before my father permits his suit.'

"Madame Marcella now began to repent of the good education she had bestowed on the young lady, since she found it so difficult to subdue her virtue; she resolved, notwithstanding, to compass her end, let it cost what it might. 'My dear Leonora,' said she, 'I applaud myself when I see you so reserved. O happy fruit of my cares! You

have profited by all the rules I have taught you! I am charmed with my own work. But, my daughter, you exaggerate what I have taught; you strain my morals too severely, and your virtue is indeed a little too harsh. Though I am fond of strict severity, yet I cannot approve of a churlish, ill-mannered caution, indistinguishably and indifferently levelled against guilt and innocence. A virgin does not abandon her virtue by affording her ear to a lover of the purity of whose desires she is satisfied. In that case it is no more criminal to respond to his passion than it is to be sensible of it. Depend upon me, Leonora; I have too much experience, and am too deeply engaged in your interests, to draw you into any measures prejudicial to you.'

"'Alas! where would you have me speak with the Count?' asked Leonora.

"'In your own apartment,' replied the duenna; 'for that is the safest place. I will introduce him to-morrow night.'

"'Good Marcella,' replied Leonora, 'shall I then admit a man——'

"'Yes, you must admit him,' interrupted the duenna. 'It is no such extraordinary thing as you imagine; it is done every day; and I send up my wishes to Heaven that the maidens who receive such visits may be fortified with as good intentions as yours. Besides, what have you to fear? Shall not I be with you?'

"'If my father should surprise us!' replied Leonora.

"'Never disturb yourself in the least about that,' returned Marcella. 'Your father is perfectly satisfied with your conduct, knows my fidelity, and reposes entire confidence in me.' Upon this Leonora, being so violently pressed by the duenna, and inwardly incited by her love, was no longer able to hold out, but yielded to Marcella's proposal.

"The Count was immediately informed of the result, and so joyfully received the news that he instantly presented his female agent with five hundred pistoles and a ring of the same value; and she accordingly, finding him such a strict observer of his word, resolved not to fail in the performance of her promise. Accordingly, next night, as soon as she imagined the family asleep, she fastened to the balcony a silken ladder which the Count had given her, and by that means introduced the impatient lover into his mistress's apartment.

"In the meantime the young lady was wholly engrossed by a series of melancholy reflections, which very much disturbed her. Notwithstanding her inclination for the Count, and whatever her governante could say, she blamed her easy consent to a visit that would violate her duty. The alleged purity of his intentions did not make her easy. To receive a man into her chamber by night, of whose real sentiments she was ignorant, and withal without her father's knowledge, seemed to her not only criminal, but also what might render her contemptible in her lover's eyes. It was this

last reflection which most tormented her, and she was extremely full of it when the Count entered.

" He immediately fell on his knees to thank her for the favour she had conferred on him. He appeared thoroughly humbled by love and gratitude, and assured her of his intention to marry her. But not expressing himself so satisfactorily on that head as she desired—' Count,' said she, ' I am willing to believe that you have no other design than what you have told me of ; but whatever assurances you can give me, I shall always suspect your intentions till they are authorized by my father's consent.'

" ' Madam,' answered Belflor, ' I had long since asked that, if I had not feared to obtain it at the expense of your repose.'

" ' I do not blame you for not having yet done it,' replied Leonora, ' but even approve these more refined punctilios of your love ; but nothing at present hinders you, and you must speak to my father as soon as possible, or resolve never to see me more.'

" ' Ah ! why never see you more, charming Leonora ? ' replied the Count. ' How little sensible are you of the pleasures of love ! If you knew as well as I what it was to love, you would be pleased with my disclosing my pains in secret, and at least conceal them for some time from your father's knowledge. Oh, how great are the charms of such a private correspondence betwixt two hearts firmly united ! '

" ' They may be so to you,' said Leonora, ' but

they can be no other than torments to me. Such subtle distinctions of tenderness very ill become a virtuous maiden. Boast, therefore, no more of the delights of a secret commerce, which, if you valued me, you would not have proposed. And if your intentions are really such as you would persuade me they are, you ought, from the bottom of your soul, to blame my hearing such offers so patiently. But, alas!' added she, letting fall some tears, 'it is to my weakness alone that this crime ought to be imputed. I have, indeed, deserved it, by doing what I have done for you.'

"'Adorable Leonora,' cried the Count, 'you wrong me extremely! Your too scrupulous virtue takes false alarms. Why should you fear that, because I have been so happy as to prevail on you to favour my love, I should cease to value you? How unjust is this! No, madam, I am fully sensible of the value of your favours; they can never deprive you of my esteem. I am, therefore, ready to do what you expect of me, and will speak to Signor Don Lewis to-morrow. I will use my utmost endeavours to obtain his consent to my happiness; but I must not omit telling you that I see but small hopes of it.'

"'How!' replied Leonora, extremely surprised. 'Can my father possibly refuse his consent to a man of your character and station at Court?'

"'It is my rank and character which make me fear a denial. You are surprised at what I say; but I will explain it to you.

"'Some days past the King declared he was

resolved to bestow me in marriage. He has not yet named the lady he designs for me, but has given me to understand that she is one of the best matches at Court, and that he is firmly bent upon it. Not knowing at that time what sentiments you might have with regard to me (for you well know that your rigorous severity never before allowed me an opportunity of discovering myself) I did not show any reluctance to obey his will. After this, judge, madam, whether Don Lewis would run the risk of the King's displeasure by accepting me for his son-in-law.'

"'No, doubtless,' said Leonora. 'I know my father: how great soever the advantages of your alliance might prove, he would choose rather to renounce them than expose himself to the King's displeasure. But if my father should not oppose our union we should not be the happier, for, in short, Count, how can you give me a hand which the King has engaged elsewhere?'

"'Madam,' answered Belflor, 'I own sincerely that I at present labour under great difficulties on that subject, but hope that, by even and prudent conduct with regard to His Majesty, I shall so well manage his favours and friendship for me as to discover a way to avoid the misfortune with which I am so unexpectedly threatened. You yourself, beautiful Leonora, may assist me in this if you think me worth assistance.'

"'Ah! in what manner,' said she, 'can I contribute to the breaking off the match which the King has proposed to you?'

"'Madam,' replied he, in passionate tones, 'if you please to receive my troth, which I offer to plight to you, I can preserve myself for you, without incurring the King's displeasure.

"'Permit me, adorable Leonora,' he added, kneeling, 'to espouse you in the presence of Madame Marcella, and let her be witness to the sanctity of our engagement. By this means I shall easily escape that miserable knot which is preparing for me: for after that, whenever the King presses me to accept the lady he designs for me, I have nothing to do but to prostrate myself at the feet of my prince and inform him that I have long loved and secretly married you. However desirous he may be to marry me to another, he is yet too gracious to snatch me from her whom I adore, and too just to offer this affront to your family.

"'What think you, discreet Marcella?' he continued, turning to the governante. 'What is your opinion of this project, with which love has this minute inspired me?'

"'I am charmed with it,' said the duenna; 'it must indeed be owned that love is very ingenious.'

"'And you, charming Leonora,' resumed the Count, 'what do you say to it? Can your heart, though armed with distrust, refuse its approbation?'

"'No,' returned Leonora, "provided you will let my father into the secret, who, I doubt not, will subscribe to what you would have him.'

"'We ought to be very careful how we entrust this affair to him,' interrupted the wicked duenna.

'You do not know Don Lewis; he is too nice in punctilios of honour to connive at secret amours. The very proposal of a private marriage would offend him. Besides, his prudence would not fail to make him afraid of the consequences of a union which seems to thwart the King's designs. By this indiscreet step you would fill him with suspicions; his eyes would continually be upon all your actions, and he would deprive you of all opportunities to meet again.'

"'Ah! then I shall die with grief,' cried the courtier. 'But, Madame Marcella,' pursued he, affecting a melancholy tone, 'do you really believe that Don Lewis would reject the offer of a private marriage?'

"'I do not doubt it in the least,' answered the governante. 'But, granting that he should accept it, he is so scrupulously religious that he would never yield to the omission of any of the ceremonies of the Church, and if they were all performed in your marriage it would soon be published.'

"'Ah, my dear Leonora,' then said the Count, tenderly locking his mistress's hand in his own, 'must we, to satisfy a false notion of decorum, expose ourselves to the terrible danger of being separated for ever, when there is no occasion for anybody but you to dispose of yourself to me? The consent of a father would, perhaps, spare you some uneasy thoughts; but since Madame Marcella has shown us the impossibility of obtaining it, yield yourself to my innocent desires. Receive my heart and hand, and when the proper time shall

arrive to inform Don Lewis of our engagement we will acquaint him also why we concealed it.'

"'Well, Count,' said Leonora, 'I consent then that you do not so soon speak to my father, but first sound the King's mind. Before I receive your hand in private, speak to your prince; tell him you have privately married me. Let us endeavour by this false confidence——'

"'Oh, no, madam,' replied Belflor; 'I am too great a hater of a lie to dare to maintain this feint; I cannot thus dissemble. Besides, I know that the King, if he should once discover I had deceived him, would never pardon me so long as he lived.'

"I should never have done, Signor Cleofas," continued the devil, "if I were to repeat verbatim all the expressions which Belflor made use of to seduce this young lady. I shall only tell you, therefore, that he employed all the passionate language which I usually suggest to men on the like occasions; but it was in vain. He swore he would as soon as possible publicly confirm the promise which he had made in secret; it was in vain. He called Heaven to witness his oaths; but he could not triumph over Leonora's virtue. And day at last being ready to appear, he was forced, against his will, to depart.

"Next day the duenna, believing her honour, or rather her interest, engaged not to abandon her enterprise, said to Don Lewis's daughter: 'Leonora, I do not know what to say further to you. I find you oppose the Count's passion, as though it had no other aim than mere gallantry. Have

you observed anything in his person that disgusts you?'

"'No, good Marcella,' answered Leonora. 'On the contrary, he never appeared so amiable, and his discourse discovered new charms to me.'

"'If so,' replied the governante, 'I do not comprehend you. You are prepossessed with a violent inclination for him, and yet refuse to yield to a course the necessity of which has already been demonstrated to you.'

"'My good Madame,' replied the daughter of Don Lewis, 'you have had more prudence and experience than I; but have you considered thoroughly the consequences which may result from a marriage contracted without my father's knowledge?'

"'Yes, yes,' answered the duenna, 'I have made due reflection on that, and am very sorry to see you so obstinately resist the glorious settlement with which fortune has presented you. Have a care that your obduracy does not weary and disgust your lover, and be cautious lest he should cast his eyes on his interest and fortune, which the violence of his passion has made him neglect. Since he offers to give you his faith, accept it without further deliberation. His word, than which nothing is more sacred to a man of honour, binds him. Besides, I am witness that he acknowledges you for his wife. Do you not know that such important evidence as mine is sufficient to condemn, in a court of justice, that lover who should dare to perjure himself?'

"It was by such language as this that the perfidious Marcella gradually undermined the virtuous intentions of Leonora; who, suffering all reflections of the danger that threatened her to wear off, in a few days, abandoned herself to the Count's wicked intentions. The duenna introduced him every night by the balcony into his mistress's apartment and let him out before day.

"One night, having warned him somewhat later than ordinary to depart, when Aurora was beginning to break through the darkness, he hastily endeavoured to slide into the street, but, by mischance, succeeded so ill that he got a very severe fall.

"Don Lewis de Cespides, whose bedchamber was under that of his daughter, happening that morning to rise very early for the dispatch of some pressing affairs, heard the Count's fall, and opening his window to see what was the occasion of the noise, perceived a man just rising from the ground with great difficulty, and Marcella in his daughter's balcony, busy in drawing up the silken ladder, which the Count had not made so good use of in descending as in his ascent. Don Lewis rubbed his eyes, and at first took this spectacle for an illusion; but after having considered it, he concluded that nothing was more real, and that the daylight, imperfect as it yet was, did but too truly discover his disgrace.

"Confused at the fatal sight, and transported by a just rage, he flew, in his nightgown, to Leonora's apartment, with a sword in one hand and a taper

in the other. He went in quest of his daughter and her governante, in order to sacrifice them both to his resentment. He knocked at their chamber door and commanded them to open it. They knew his voice, and tremblingly obeyed. He entered with a furious air, and discovering his naked sword to their amazed eyes—'I come,' said he, 'to wash away with her blood the infamous affront that wretched girl has thrown upon her father, and at the same time to punish the villainous governante who has betrayed the trust I reposed in her.'

"They both fell upon their knees, and the duenna began: 'Signor,' said she, 'before we receive the chastisement which you have threatened, vouchsafe to hear us one moment.'

"'Well, wretch,' replied the old gentleman, 'I consent to suspend my vengeance for a minute. Speak: inform me of all the circumstances of my misfortune. But why do I talk of the circumstances? I know them all but one, and that is, the name of the scoundrel who has dishonoured my family.'

"'Signor,' replied Madame Marcella, 'the Count de Belflor is the gentleman who has done it.'

"'The Count de Belflor!' exclaimed Don Lewis. 'Where has he seen my daughter? By what means has he seduced her? Conceal nothing from me.'

"'Signor,' replied the governante, 'I will repeat the whole story to you with all the sincerity of which I am capable.'

"She then, with an infinite deal of art, recited all the expressions which she had made Leonora believe the Count had uttered with regard to her. She painted him in the most lively colours as a tender, scrupulous, and sincere lover. But not being able to elude the discovery of the whole truth, she was obliged to tell it, enlarging, as she proceeded, on the reasons that induced them to conceal the secret marriage, and gave to the whole adventure such a specious turn as appeased Don Lewis's rage. This Marcella was not slow to discern; and in order completely to soften the old man—'Signor,' said she, 'this is what you desired to know. Punish us this minute; plunge your sword into Leonora's breast. But what do I say? Leonora is innocent. She has only followed the counsel of a woman whom you entrusted with her conduct; it is therefore against me alone that your sword should point. It is I who have introduced the Count into your daughter's apartment, and I alone who have tied the knot wherewith she is bound. It is I who have winked at all irregularities in a contract that was not backed by your authority, in order to secure you a son-in-law whose interest you know to be the channel through which all Court favours at present pass. I had no other aim than Leonora's happiness and the advantage your family may reap by such an important alliance. Indeed nothing less than an excess of zeal to serve your house could have drawn me into measures that carry with them such an appearance of treachery.'

"While the subtle Marcella was thus cajoling the old gentleman her mistress shed no tears, but displayed such a sensible grief as he could not resist. He grew tender, his rage turned into compassion, he dropped his sword, and abandoning the air of an angry father—'Ah, my daughter,' said he, with tears in his eyes, 'what a fatal passion is love! Alas you are not sensible of all the reasons you have to afflict yourself! The shame that results alone from the presence of a father, who has surprised you, must unavoidably draw tears from you! But you do not yet foresee all the anxieties your lover may perhaps prepare for you. And you, imprudent Marcella, to what a precipice has your indiscreet zeal for my family brought you? I acknowledge that such an alliance as that of the Count might dazzle your eyes, and it is that alone which excuses you in my sight; but, unfortunate woman that you are, ought you not to have distrusted a lover of his high quality? The more interest and favour he can pretend to, the more you ought to have guarded yourself against him. Should he make no scruple of breaking his faith with Leonora, what course can I take? If I implore the assistance of the laws, a person of his influence would easily be able to shelter himself from their severity. And I wish that, continuing just to his oaths, he may prove willing to keep his word with my daughter; for if the King, as you say, designs to oblige him to marry another lady, it is much to be feared his Majesty will force him to it by virtue of his authority.'

"'Oh, sir,' interrupted Leonora, 'that ought not to alarm you. The Count has confidently assured us that the King will not commit such violence towards his passion.'

"'I am persuaded,' said Marcella, 'that his Majesty is too fond of his favourite to exercise such tyranny over him, and also that he is too generous to plunge into fatal grief Don Lewis de Cespides, who has spent all his best days in the service of the public.'

"'Pray Heaven it prove so,' replied the old gentleman, sighing, 'and that my fears may be vain! I will go to the Count and desire him to explain this affair. A father's eyes are piercing, and I shall discover the deepest recesses of his soul. If I find him in the disposition which I wish I will pardon what is past; but,' added he, in a more resolute tone, 'if, by his discourse, I discover a perfidious heart, you shall both with tears bewail your imprudence in a melancholy retirement for the remainder of your days.' At these words he put up his sword and, leaving them to the frightful thoughts he had raised in them, returned to his apartment to dress."

In this part of his narrative Asmodeus was interrupted by the student. "However affecting may be the story you are telling me," said Cleofas, "something which I have my eyes upon prevents me from hearing you so attentively as I could wish. I see a very genteel woman between a young man and an old one; they are all three, I suppose, drinking exquisite liqueurs, and whilst the fond

dotard is embracing her the baggage slips her hand behind him into that of a young cavalier, who is probably her spark."

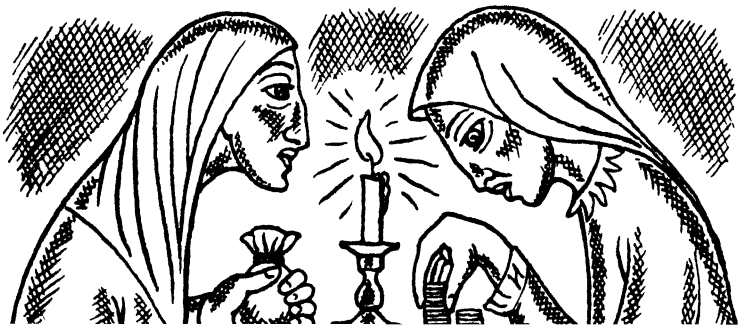
"Quite the contrary," answered the cripple. "The young man is her husband and the other her lover. The old man is a person of consequence, a commander of the military Order of Calatrava, and is ruining himself for that lady, whose husband has a small post at Court; she caresses her old lover for interest and favours, her husband from inclination."

"It is a fine picture," replied Zambullo. "But is not the husband a Frenchman?"

"No," answered the devil, "he is a Spaniard."

"Oh, then, the good city of Madrid," exclaimed Leandro, "has within its walls good-natured husbands too? But they do not swarm here as at Paris, which, without dispute, is the most fruitful city of the world in such inhabitants. Pardon me, Signor Asmodeus," continued Don Cleofas, "for breaking in upon the thread of Leonora's story. Proceed with it, I beg of you, for it pleases me infinitely; there is such an artful variety in the account of the seduction of this young lady that I am transported with it."

Asmodeus accordingly continued his narrative.



CHAPTER V

Conclusion of the history of the Count and Leonora

"THE early visit paid by Don Lewis to the Count very much surprised him, as he did not suspect that he had been discovered; he stepped forward to meet him, however, at his entrance, and after having almost stifled him with embraces—'How great is my joy,' said he, 'to see Don Lewis here! Does he come to offer me an opportunity of serving him?'

"'My lord,' answered Don Lewis, 'command, if you please, that we be alone.'

"Belflor did what was requested, and they both sat down, when the old man thus began: 'My lord,' said he, 'my honour and repose require an explanation, which I come to seek of you. I saw you this morning go out of my daughter's apartment. She has confessed all. She has told me——'

"'She has told you that I love her!' interrupted the Count, to avoid a discourse which he did not desire to hear; 'yet she has but feebly expressed all that I feel for her. I am enchanted. She is a

lady altogether adorable; she has wit, beauty, virtue, no perfection wanting. I have been told likewise that you have a son at the University of Alcala. Is he like his sister? If he has her beauty, and resembles you in other excellences, he must be a complete gentleman. I die with desire to see him, and offer you all my interest to serve him.'

"'I am indebted to you for the offer,' said Don Lewis gravely. 'But to come to——'

"'He ought to be entered in the service immediately,' interrupted the Count again. 'I charge myself with the care of his fortune. I assure you he shall not wait amongst the crowd of subaltern officers.'

"'Answer me, Count,' replied the old gentleman hastily, 'and leave off your interruption. Do you design to keep your promise?'

"'Yes, without doubt,' interrupted Belflor the third time; 'I will keep the word which I have given you to stand by your son with all my interest. Depend upon me, I am a sincere man.'

"'This is too much!' cried Cespides, rising. 'After having seduced my daughter you dare insult me! But know that I am a gentleman, and the injury you have done me shall not remain unpunished.' Having uttered these words he turned away, with a heart full of resentment, contriving a hundred projects to compass his revenge. As soon as he came home he told Leonora and Marcella very angrily that it was not without good reason that he suspected the Count. 'He is a traitor,' said he, 'on whom I will be avenged!

And as for you two, you shall to-morrow enter a convent. You have nothing to do but prepare yourselves, and thank Heaven my rage contents itself with that chastisement.' He then went and locked himself up in his closet to deliberate what course he should take in such a nice conjuncture.

"How great was Leonora's grief when she heard that Belflor was perfidious! She remained some time without motion; a mortal paleness covered her face, her spirits fled, and she fell motionless into the arms of her governante, who, fearing that she was dying, used all her endeavours to recover her. She at last succeeded. And Leonora, resuming the use of her senses, and seeing her governante very officiously helping her—'How barbarous are you!' said she, with a deep sigh. 'Why did you force me out of the happy state in which I was? I was not then sensible of the misery of my situation. Why did you not let me die? You, who well know all the tormenting griefs which must disturb the repose of my life, wherefore did you keep me alive?'

"Marcella endeavoured to comfort her, but her efforts only increased her mistress's affliction.

"'All your talk is superfluous,' cried Don Lewis's daughter; 'I will hear nothing. Do not lose your time in attempting to abate my despair; you ought rather to raise it—you who have plunged me into the abyss of misery in which I now am. It was you who vouched for the Count's sincerity; without you I should never have yielded to my inclination for him, which I should by degrees

have conquered, or if not he would never have been able to gain the least advantage over me. But I will not,' continued she, 'charge my misery on you. I accuse nobody but myself. I ought not to have followed your advice in accepting a man's troth without consulting my father. How dazzling soever the Count's address might appear to me, I ought to have despised rather than surrendered to it at the expense of my honour. In short, I ought to have distrusted him, you, and myself. Since I have been so weak as to yield to his perfidious oaths, and seeing the affliction which I have brought upon Don Lewis, and the dishonour I have done my family, I hate myself, and am so far from fearing the retirement with which I am threatened that I shall be glad to hide my shame in the most dismal retreat in the world.'

"These passionate words were not only accompanied with abundance of tears, but Leonora rent her clothes, and revenged the injustice of her lover on her beautiful hair. The duenna, to suit herself to her mistress's grief, did not spare grimaces and distorted features. She dropped some of those tears which she had always at command; she imprecated a thousand curses on mankind in general, and the Count in particular. 'Is it possible,' exclaimed she, 'that Belflor, who seemed so full of justice and probity, should prove such a villain as to deceive us both! I cannot extricate myself from this surprise; or, rather, I cannot yet persuade myself that we know the truth.'

"'Really,' said Leonora, 'when, as in fancy, I

see him at my knees, what maiden would not have trusted his tender, engaging airs, relied on oaths which he so audaciously invoked Heaven to witness, and believed the genuineness of those transports which he incessantly repeated? Besides, his eyes discovered more love than his mouth expressed, and the very sight of me seemed to charm him. No, he could not intend to deceive me; I cannot think it. My father must not have talked with him so discreetly as he ought; they both grew warm, and the Count answered less like a lover than a grandee. But, alas, perhaps I flatter myself! What shall I do to rid myself of this uncertainty? I will write to Belflor and tell him that I expect him here to-night. I am resolved he shall either secure my alarmed heart or confirm his treachery.'

"Marcella applauded the design, and was not herself without hope that the Count, ambitious as he was, yet touched by Leonora's tears, might fall from his resolution in this interview and determine to marry her.

"In the meantime Belflor, having rid himself of honest Don Lewis, continued in his apartment, reflecting on the consequences which might result from the reception he had just given him. He firmly concluded that the whole family of the Cespides, enraged at the injury done to their house, would study revenge. But that did not much disturb him: the interest of his love much more employed his thoughts. He imagined that Leonora would be put into a convent, or at least

that she would be kept so strictly watched that in all probability he should never see her more. This thought afflicted him; and he was contriving how to escape the threatened misfortune when his *valet-de-chambre* brought him a letter, which Marcella had just put into his hands. It was a billet from Leonora, the contents of which were as follows :—

"'I am to-morrow to quit the world, and in solitary retirement have the horror of seeing myself dishonoured, and of reflecting that my name is odious to my family and myself. This is the deplorable condition to which I am reduced by believing you. I expect you once more, this night. In my despair I hunt after new torments. Come and confess to me that your heart had no part in any of the oaths which your lips swore to me, or justify their sincerity by a conduct which alone can soften the rigour of my fate. Perhaps this meeting may be attended with some danger after what has passed betwixt you and my father: take care, therefore, that you be accompanied by a friend. Though you have occasioned all the miseries of my life, I yet feel myself concerned for yours.

'LEONORA.'

"The Count read this letter twice or thrice over, and, deeming Leonora in the condition which she described, he melted into compassion. He now seriously reflected on what he had done: justice, probity, and honour, all the laws which his passion had hurried him on to violate, began to resume

their empire over him. He suddenly found his blindness dissipated, and, like a man just recovered from a violent fever, blushed at the extravagant words and actions which had escaped him: he was ashamed of all the base artifices he had used to satisfy his desires.

"'Wretch that I am,' cried he, 'what have I done? What demon possessed me? I promised to marry Leonora; I called Heaven to witness it; I feigned that the King proposed a match to me; I have made use of lies, perfidy, and sacrilege to corrupt her innocence. What madness has seized me? How much better had it become me to have suppressed my passion instead of satisfying it in so criminal a manner? I have seduced an innocent lady, and now abandon her to the resentment of her relations, whom I have equally dishonoured, and so return the happiness she has conferred on me with a load of miseries. How barbarous is such ingratitude! Ought I not rather to repair the disgrace and infamy I have done her? Yes, I ought; and by marrying her I will discharge the promise I made her. Who is there can oppose so just an intention? Ought her tenderness to me to prejudice me against her virtue? No. I know how much her resistance cost me to conquer it; and she yielded only to my sworn faith and not to my amorous transports. But, on the other side, if I confine myself to this choice, I shall be a considerable sufferer. I, who may pretend to the noblest and richest heiress in the kingdom, shall I content myself with the daughter of a private gentleman

of moderate fortune? What will the Court think of me? They will say I have married ridiculously.'

"Belflor, thus divided betwixt love and ambition, knew not to which to incline; but, though he was not yet resolved whether he would marry Leonora or not, he at least determined to go to her that evening.

"Don Lewis, on the other hand, passed the day in contriving the best means of removing the stain from his honour and of avenging his disgrace. The circumstances were delicate: to have recourse to the laws would be to publish his dishonour; besides, he much feared that justice might be on one side and the judges on the other. He durst not throw himself at the King's feet, for, believing that prince designed to bestow another lady on the Count, he was afraid it would be in vain. No satisfaction was then left besides that of arms, and to this he resolved to have recourse.

"In the heat of his resentment he was tempted to send a challenge; but beginning to consider that he was too old and feeble to rely on his own arm, he determined rather to put it into the hands of his son, whose youth and skill might prove more fortunate and successful. Upon this conclusion he sent a footman to Alcala with a letter for his son, in which he commanded him to come immediately to Madrid, to revenge an injury done to the family of Cespides.

"Don Pedro, the son, was eighteen years of age, perfectly handsome, and so brave that he passed at Alcala for the most valiant of all the students

in that university. But you know him," added the demon, "and therefore it is needless for me to enlarge further on his character."

"It is true," said Cleofas; "he has all the valour and merit which can possibly centre in a young man."

"He was not then at Alcala, as his father supposed," replied Asmodeus, "for the desire of seeing a lady whom he loved had brought him to Madrid. The last time he had been there to see his relations he made his conquest on the Prado. He did not yet know her name, for she had insisted on his using no means to inform himself thereof—a cruel necessity to which he submitted, though with great difficulty. It was a woman of quality who had conceived a passion for him, and, believing she ought to distrust the discretion and constancy of a student, she thought fit to try him before she discovered herself.

"This unknown fair engaged more of his thoughts than Aristotle's philosophy, and Alcala being situate so near to the city he, as you have done, often played truant; with this only difference, that it was for the sake of an object much more worthy than your Donna Thomasa. To conceal the knowledge of his amorous journeys from Don Lewis, his father, he used to lodge at an inn in the suburbs, where he carefully sheltered himself under a borrowed name. He never went out but at a certain hour in the morning, when he was obliged to go to a house where the lady who occasioned this neglect of his studies was so kind

as to come, accompanied by a chambermaid. He then lived locked up in his inn for the rest of the day; but, in requital, at night he walked all over the city.

"It happened one night, as he crossed a by-street, he heard the sound of several voices and instruments, which seemed worth his attention. He stopped, and found it to be a serenade given by a gentleman who was drunk and, naturally, extremely rude, and who had no sooner discerned Don Pedro than he immediately ran to him and, without other prelude—'Friend,' said he, in a hasty tone, 'go about your business; I do not love inquisitive people.'

"'I might have withdrawn,' answered Don Pedro, irritated by these words, 'if you had desired me in a civiller manner; but I will now stay to teach you better language.'

"'We will see, then,' said the master of the concert, drawing his sword, 'which of us shall yield place to the other.'

"Don Pedro also drew his sword, and they began to engage. Though the master of the serenade acquitted himself with great dexterity he could not parry a mortal thrust, upon the receipt of which he fell dead upon the spot. All the actors of the concert, who had by this time quitted their music and were drawing their swords to assist their leader, now rushed forward to avenge his death. They fell all at once upon Don Pedro, who, on this occasion, showed his utmost skill; for, besides parrying with surprising dexterity all the

passes made at him, he himself made very vigorous ones, and kept all his enemies employed.

"But they obstinately persisting, and their number being so great, able fencer as he was, he could not have escaped alive if the Count de Belflor, who happened just then to be passing, had not taken his part. The Count, wanting neither courage nor a large share of generosity, could not see so many swords drawn on one man without immediately engaging on his side. He drew and, joining with Don Pedro, pushed so briskly at the serenaders that they all fled, some wounded and others from fear.

"After their retreat the student began to thank the Count for his assistance, but Belflor, interrupting him—'No more of that,' said he. 'Are you not wounded?'

"'No,' replied Don Pedro.

"'Let us get from this place,' said the Count. 'I see you have killed a man. It is dangerous to stay longer in this street; you may perhaps be seized.' Upon which they immediately, making the best of their way, got into another street; and when they were advanced a good distance from the place where they fought they stopped.

"Don Pedro, sensibly influenced by just and grateful sentiments, entreated the Count not to conceal from him the name of a gentleman to whom he was so much obliged. Belflor made no scruple of telling it, and also desired to know his. But the student, unwilling to discover himself, said his name was Don Juan de Matos, and assured

the Count that he would never forget what he had done for him.

" ' I will frankly and willingly,' said the Count, ' present you with an opportunity of discharging your obligation to me this very night. I have an appointment not wholly free from danger, and was going in search of a friend to accompany me. I am sensible of your valour, and therefore, Don Juan, desire your friendship.'

" ' Your seeming to doubt it renders me somewhat uneasy,' replied the student. ' I do not know how to employ the life which you have saved better than exposing it for you. Let us make haste; I am ready to follow you.' Belflor then conducted Don Pedro to Don Lewis's house, and by the balcony they both entered Leonora's apartments."

Don Cleofas interrupted the devil here. " Signor Asmodeus," said he, " how was it possible Don Pedro should not know his father's house ? "

" He could not have known it," replied the demon, " for Don Lewis had not removed to his house above eight days ; which I designed to have told you had not you interrupted me. You are too hasty, and have got an ill custom of breaking the thread of other people's discourse. Pray correct that fault for the future.

" Don Pedro," continued the devil, " did not so much as suspect that he was at his father's house, nor think that she who introduced him was Madame Marcella, for she received him in the dark, in an antechamber, where Belflor entreated his companion to stay as long as he should remain with

the lady; to which the student consented, and sat down with his naked sword in his hand for fear of a surprise. His thoughts were occupied with the favours which he concluded love was showering on Belflor, and he wished himself as happy as his companion; for though he was not ill-treated by his unknown mistress, she had not all the tenderness for him which Leonora had for the Count.

"While engaged in making what reflections on this adventure were likely to occur to the mind of a passionate lover, he heard a person softly endeavouring to open another door beside that of the lovers, and discerned a glimmering light through the keyhole. He hastily arose, made towards the door that opened, and presented the point of his naked sword to the breast of his father —for it was he who was going to Leonora's apartment to see whether the Count were not there. The good old gentleman did not believe, after what had passed, that his daughter and Marcella would again venture to admit him, which alone prevented his lodging them in another apartment. But still he conceived that, before their entrance into the convent on the morrow, they would be anxious to take their last leave.

"'Whoever thou art,' said the student, 'do not enter this room on peril of your life.' At these words Don Lewis looked at Don Pedro, whose eyes were fixed on him with equal attention, so that they soon knew each other.

"'Ah, my son,' said the old gentleman, 'with what impatience have I expected you! Why did

not you inform me of your arrival? Were you afraid of breaking my rest? Alas! I am incapable of any repose in the miserable condition to which I am at present reduced.'

"'Oh, my father,' said Don Pedro, in confusion, 'is it you that I see? Are not my eyes deceived by a false likeness?'

"'Whence proceeds this surprise?' replied Don Lewis. 'Are you not in your father's house? Did I not acquaint you by my letter that eight days since I removed hither?'

"'Just Heaven,' replied the student, 'what do I hear? I am then at present on the threshold of my sister's apartment.'

"At these words the Count, who had heard the noise, and supposed that his guard was attacked, came out of Leonora's chamber with his sword in his hand. The old gentleman, distracted at this sight, and showing him to his son, cried out: 'This is the audacious villain who has robbed me of my rest and cast a fatal stain upon the honour of our house! Let us then revenge ourselves; let us instantly punish the traitor.' These words were no sooner uttered than he drew the sword he had under his nightgown and began to attack the Count. But Don Pedro restrained him. 'Stay, father,' said he, 'I beg you to moderate the transports of your rage.'

"'What do you mean, my son?' answered the old man; 'why do you hold my arm? You doubtless think it is too weak to avenge us. Well, then, take satisfaction yourself for the affront put

upon our family, which is the only reason why I sent for you to Madrid. If you fall my arm shall do us justice: the Count must perish by our hands, or, after having robbed us of our honour, he must deprive us both of life.'

"'Father,' replied Don Pedro, 'I cannot yield to what your impatience leads you to desire of me. I am so far from seeking to attempt the Count's life that I came hither to defend it; my word is passed for his safety and my honour demands it. Let us then retire, my lord,' continued he, addressing himself to Belflor.

"'Ha, base wretch!' interrupted Don Lewis, looking on Pedro with an angry countenance; 'dost thou thyself oppose the execution of a vengeance wherein all thy force ought to have been employed? My son, my own son, is leagued with the perfidious wretch who has seduced my daughter. But do not think to escape my resentment. I will call up my domestics, who shall requite him for his treachery and remedy our cowardice.'

"'Sir,' replied Don Pedro, 'be more just to your son, and do not call him a coward, for he never deserved that hateful name. The Count has saved my life this night. He proposed to me to accompany him, whither I knew not, but on a certain appointment. I offered to share the dangers he might encounter, without ever suspecting that my gratitude would imprudently engage my arm against the honour of my family. My word, however, obliges me to defend his life here, and in so doing I shall discharge it. Not that I am less

sensibly touched with the injury he has done our family; and to-morrow you shall see me as eager to shed his blood as you now see me zealous to preserve his life.'

"The Count, who had hitherto remained silent, being thoroughly struck with the amazing circumstances of this adventure, now spoke. 'Perhaps,' said he, addressing himself to Don Pedro, 'you may meet with but indifferent success in revenging this injury by force of arms. I will offer you a surer way of re-establishing your honour. I freely own to you that till this day I never designed to marry Leonora; but I this morning received a letter from her, with which I was sensibly affected. Her tears have just completed the work, and the happiness of being her husband is at present the utmost of my desires.'

"'If the King designs you another wife,' said Don Lewis, 'how will you dispense with——'

"'The King never proposed any match to me,' interrupted Belflor, blushing. 'Pray pardon that fiction in a man whose reason was overpowered by love. It is a crime which the violence of my passion hurried me to commit, and which I desire to expiate by confession and repentance.'

"'My lord,' replied the old gentleman, 'after an acknowledgment so characteristic of a great mind I no longer doubt your sincerity. I see you are resolved effectually to repair the injury we have received, and my anger yields to the assurances you have given me; permit me then to forget my resentment in your arms.' At these words

he ran towards the Count, who flew to meet him. They mutually embraced several times, when Belflor, turning to Don Pedro—'And you, the counterfeit Don Juan,' said he, 'you have gained my esteem by your unparalleled valour and noble mind; allow me to vow a sincere fraternal friendship to you.' He then embraced Don Pedro, who, receiving his caresses with a submissive and respectful air, thus answered him: 'My lord, in promising me such a valuable friendship you engage mine, and I entreat you that you would always conclude me one who will continue devoted to you to the end of my life.'

"In the meantime Leonora, who was listening all the while at the chamber door, did not lose one word of all they said. She was at first tempted to throw herself between the swords, without knowing why; but Marcella prevented her. And when that dexterous duenna perceived all things likely to end so amicably she concluded that her presence, and that of her mistress, would not prejudice the accommodation; whereupon they both appeared with their handkerchiefs in their hands, and, weeping, ran to prostrate themselves at Don Lewis's feet. They feared, and not without reason, after their being surprised last night, that the old gentleman's anger might return; but, raising Leonora, he said: 'Daughter, dry your tears; I will not blame you any more. Since your lover has resolved to keep the faith which he has sworn to you, I consent to forget what is past.'

"'Yes, Don Lewis,' said the Count, 'I will

marry Leonora; and still more effectually to repair the injury I have done you, to give you entire satisfaction, and your son a pledge of my friendship for him, I offer him my sister Eugenia.'

"'Ah, my lord,' cried Don Lewis, in raptures, 'how sensible am I of the honour you do my son! What father was ever happier? You now shower as much joy on me as before you loaded me with sorrow.'

"Though the old man was charmed with the Count's offer, Don Pedro seemed to entertain no such feeling on the occasion; but, being wholly occupied with the thought of his unknown lady, he was so disturbed and confused that he could not say a word. Belflor, however, without regarding his friend's uneasiness, departed, telling the family that he would order all the necessary preparations to be made for this double union, and assuring them that he was impatient till he was united to them by the strictest bonds of alliance.

"After his departure Don Lewis left Leonora in her apartment and went into his own with Don Pedro, who, with all the frankness of a young student, said: 'Sir, I beg you would dispense with my marrying the Count's sister: it is enough that he marry Leonora; that will be sufficient to retrieve the honour of our family.'

"'What, son!' replied the old man; 'can you refuse the Count's sister?'

"'Yes, father,' replied Don Pedro; 'that union would merely prove a cruel torment to me, the cause of which I will not conceal. It is now

six months since I first loved, or rather adored, a charming lady who returns my passion ; she alone can render my life happy.'

"'How miserable is the state of a father!' said Don Lewis. 'He scarcely ever finds his children disposed to what he desires. But who, then, is this lady that has made such a violent impression on you?'

"'I do not yet know,' answered Don Pedro. 'She has promised to inform me of her name when she shall be fully satisfied of my discretion and constancy. Nor do I doubt but she is one of the best families in Spain.'

"'And do you fancy,' replied the old man, changing his tone, 'that I will be so complaisant as to approve of your romantic love that I will suffer you to quit the most glorious establishment that fortune can offer you to keep you constant to a person of whom you do not know so much as the name? Stifle rather these sentiments for an object who, perhaps, may be unworthy of them, and think of nothing but deserving the honour which the Count has offered to confer on you.'

"'All this discourse is in vain, father,' replied the student. 'I feel it impossible for me ever to forget my adored unknown. Nothing can disengage me from her. Should the Infanta herself be offered me——'

"'Hold!' cried the father hastily; 'it is too insolent to boast a constancy which raises my anger. Begone! And never let me see you again until you have resolved to obey my wishes.'

"Don Pedro durst not reply to these words, for

fear of drawing on himself something more severe. He retired to his chamber, where he passed the rest of the night in reflections at once melancholy and agreeable. He considered with grief that he was about to quarrel with his family in refusing to marry the Count's sister; but he was perfectly comforted when he represented to himself how his unknown lady must value him for such a sacrifice. He flattered himself that, after such an exemplary proof of his fidelity, she would not fail to discover her rank, which he imagined little inferior to that of Eugenia's.

"With these hopes, as soon as it was day, he went to take a walk on the Prado, expecting at the appointed hour to go to the apartment of Donna Juana, for that was the name of the lady in whose lodgings he used to meet his mistress every morning. He waited for the happy moment with great impatience, and when it came flew to the place of rendezvous.

"He found that his unknown charmer had come thither sooner than ordinary, but touched with such grief as expressed itself to Donna Juana in showers of tears. This was a cheerless spectacle for her lover! All in confusion he approached her, and flinging himself at her knees—'Madam,' he said, "what must I think of the condition in which I see you?'

"'Doubtless,' answered she, 'you do not expect the fatal blow which I bring you. Cruel fortune is about to separate us for ever. We are never to see each other more.' She accompanied these words with so many sighs that I do not know whether

Don Pedro was more touched with what she said or with the grief she discovered in uttering it.

"'Just Heaven!' cried he, with an excess of rage which he could not restrain, 'is it possible for you to suffer the breaking of our union, the innocence of which you know? But, madam,' added he, 'perhaps you have taken a false alarm. Is it certain that you will be torn from the most faithful lover that ever existed? Must I really be the most miserable of all men?'

"'Our evil destiny is but too certain,' answered the unknown fair. 'My brother, on whom I depend, will marry me this day, as he has but a few minutes since declared to me.'

"'Ah, who is the happy bridegroom?' very hastily inquired Don Pedro; 'name him to me, madam. In my despair——'

"'I do not yet know his name," interrupted the lady; 'my brother would not acquaint me with it. He told me that he desired I should first see the gentleman.'

"'But, madam,' said Don Pedro, 'will you submit to a brother's will without resistance? Will you suffer yourself to be dragged to the altar without complaining of the cruelty of the sacrifice? Will you make no attempt in my favour? Alas, I was not afraid of exposing myself to my father's rage to reserve myself entirely for you. His threats could not shake my fidelity; and, with what rigour soever he may treat me, I would not marry the lady he proposes were the match even more advantageous than it is.'

"'And who is the lady with whom it was sought to unite you?' asked the unknown beauty.

"'It is the Count de Belflor's sister,' replied the student.

"'Ah, Don Pedro,' replied she, discovering extreme surprise, 'you doubtlessly mistake; it cannot be as you say. Is it really Eugenia de Belflor who is proposed to you?'

"'Yes, madam,' replied Don Pedro; 'the Count himself made me the offer.'

"'How!' cried she; 'is it possible that you should be the cavalier for whom my brother designs me?'

"'What do I hear?' cried Don Pedro, in his turn; 'is my unknown angel, then, Eugenia de Belflor?'

"'Yes, Don Pedro,' replied she. 'But I can scarcely believe myself at this moment to be any longer so, so hard is it for me to persuade myself of the reality of the happiness of which you assure me.'

"At these words Don Pedro fell on his knees, seized one of her hands with all the raptures that a lover, suddenly removed from the extreme of pain to excess of joy, could possibly feel. Whilst he thus abandoned himself to the emotions of his love, Eugenia, on her part, gave him a thousand proofs of her affection, which she accompanied with the most tender and engaging expressions. 'What racking pains,' said she, 'would my brother have spared me had he but named the husband for whom he designed me! What an aversion had I already conceived for my spouse! Ah, my dear Don Pedro, how much did I hate you!'

"'Bright Eugenia,' answered the now happy

lover, 'how charming is that hatred to me! I will deserve it by adoring you all my life.'

"After each had given the other the most convincing testimonies of their mutual tenderness Eugenia desired to know how the student could have gained her brother's friendship. Don Pedro did not conceal from her the amours of the Count and his sister, but related to her all that had passed during the last night. She was infinitely pleased to hear that her brother was to marry her lover's sister; and Donna Juana had too great a stake in her friend's welfare not to be moved at the happy result. She testified her joy to the young lady as well as to Don Pedro, who at last left Eugenia, after they had mutually resolved not to seem to know one another when they appeared before the Count.

"Don Pedro returned to his father, who, finding him perfectly disposed to obedience, was the better pleased, because he ascribed it to his absolute manner of deporting himself towards his son at their last meeting. They received at that moment a letter from the Count, which advised them that he had just obtained the King's consent to his marriage, and to that also of his sister, with the addition of a considerable post for Don Pedro; and that on the morrow both nuptials might be celebrated, his orders having been so diligently executed that all the preparations were already far advanced. He came in the afternoon to confirm what he had written and to present to them Eugenia.

"Don Lewis showed that lady all imaginable civility, and Leonora did not neglect tenderly

to embrace her. As for Don Pedro, by whatsoever emotions of love and joy he was agitated, he yet sufficiently restrained himself to avoid the Count's having any suspicion of their former correspondence.

"Belflor, particularly applying himself to the observation of his sister, thought he could discover, notwithstanding the constraint she imposed upon herself, that she did not dislike Don Pedro. But the better to assure himself of the truth of his conjecture he took her aside for a moment and made her own that she was extremely well pleased with her cavalier. He then told her his name and family, which he had before concealed, lest the inequality of their conditions should have prejudiced her against him; all which she pretended to hear as though previously utterly ignorant of it.

"At last, after the exchange of a multitude of civilities on both sides, it was resolved that the wedding should be kept at Don Lewis's house. The nuptial festivities are this night acting, but are not finished, and that is the reason of the great rejoicing in yonder house, in which all the company unanimously join except Marcella, who has no share in it. She cries whilst the rest laugh, for the Count de Belflor, after his marriage, confessed the whole story to Don Lewis, who has ordered her to be sent to the Monasterio de los Arrepentidas,[1] where the thousand pistoles which she received to seduce Leonora will serve to support her while doing penance for the remainder of her life."

[1] A penitentiary convent for females of ill-fame.

CHAPTER VI

Other particulars which the student saw, and the manner of his being revenged on Donna Thomasa

"WE will just turn to the other side," continued Asmodeus, "and glance at some new objects. Cast your eyes on the house directly beneath us, where you will see something extraordinary. It is a man who, notwithstanding an accumulation of heavy debts, is in a profound sleep."

"He must then be a person of quality," said Leandro.

"You have guessed rightly," answered the demon. "It is a marquis whose rents amount to a hundred thousand ducats a year, and yet his expenses exceed his revenue. His table and his mistresses oblige him to run considerably in debt, but that does not break his rest. On the contrary, when he has a mind to patronize a tradesman, he fancies that he is conferring an obligation. 'It is with you,' said he the other day to a draper, 'it is with you that for the future I intend to deal upon credit, and I give you the preference.'

"Whilst the marquis is tranquilly enjoying that repose of which he is robbing his creditors, observe the man yonder who——"

"Stay, Signor Asmodeus," hastily interrupted

Don Cleofas, "I perceive a coach in the street, which I cannot suffer to pass without asking who is in it."

"Hush!" said the cripple, lowering his voice, as if he were afraid of being overheard, "you must know there is in that coach one of the gravest persons of the realm in disguise. He is a president going to make merry with an old Asturian lady who is subservient to his pleasures. That he may not be known he has taken Caligula's precaution, who, on a similar occasion, put on a peruke to disguise himself.

"Let us return to the scene I was about to disclose to you when you interrupted me. Observe, in the uppermost part of the marquis's palace, a man busily employed in a cabinet which is full of books and manuscripts."

"Perhaps," said Zambullo, "it is the marquis's steward engaged in contriving means to pay his master's debts."

"Good!" replied the demon; "as though that must needs be what stewards of such families amuse themselves with! Their business is rather to take advantage of the derangement of their masters' affairs than to extricate them from confusion. It is not a steward you see there, but an author. The marquis has lodged him in his palace to obtain a reputation for patronizing men of letters."

"This author, then," replied Don Cleofas, "is a man of some note?"

"You shall judge of that yourself," answered the demon. "He is surrounded by a thousand

volumes, and is compiling one in which there will not be a line of his own. He pilfers from all the books and manuscripts which you see, and, though he only methodizes and connects his thefts, yet he has a larger share of vanity than a genuine author.

"You do not know," continued Asmodeus, "who lives within three doors of that palace. It is La Chicona, of whom I have already made such honourable mention in the story of Count de Belflor."

"Ah, how I am enraptured at the sight of her!" exclaimed the student. "The good woman so serviceable to young people is doubtless one of those two old women whom I see in that room. The one is leaning with her elbows on the table, earnestly watching the other, who is counting money. Which of the two is La Chicona?"

"She," said the demon, "who is leaning on her elbows. The other is called La Pebrada, who is an honourable lady of the same profession. They are partners, and at this moment are dividing the profits of an adventure which they have just now brought to an end.

"La Pebrada has the best trade and deals with several rich widows, to whom she carries her list to read every day."

"What do you mean by her list?" interrupted the student.

"It is," replied Asmodeus, "a catalogue of all the handsome foreigners who come to Madrid, especially French. As soon as La Pebrada hears that any fresh ones are arrived she runs to their inns and adroitly obtains information of their

birth, figure, air, and age. She then makes her report to the widows, who, after consulting their inclinations, either obtain speech of the strangers, through the agency of La Pebrada, or wait till they find others more to their taste."

"This is not only very convenient," replied Zambullo, "but in a manner lawful; for without these good ladies and their agents young strangers who have no acquaintance here would be compelled to lose much time in making some. But pray tell me, are there any of this sort of widows and procuresses in other countries?"

"A pretty question, indeed, whether there are!" answered the cripple. "Do you doubt it? I should very ill acquit myself of my office if I neglected to supply all great cities with them.

"Give your attention a little to a neighbour of La Chicona, to that printer working alone in his printing-house. His servants have been in bed these three hours, and he is about to spend the night in printing a book secretly."

"How! What is the work, then?" asked Leandro.

"It is a libel," answered the demon, "written to prove that religion is preferable to points of honour; and that it is better to forgive than revenge an affront."

"What a rascal!" cried the student. "He does well to print his infamous book in secret; nor would I advise the author to own it, for I should be one of the first to cane him. What! Does religion forbid the preservation of our honour?"

"Do not let us enter upon that dispute," interrupted Asmodeus, with a satirical smile. "It seems you have profited greatly by the lessons of morality you have received at Alcala. I congratulate you on your improvement."

"You may say what you please," interrupted Don Cleofas in his turn, "but if in that ridiculous work the author's arguments should be the most clear and convincing that could be invented, I should laugh at them. I am a Spaniard, and nothing to me seems so sweet as revenge. And since you have promised me to punish my perfidious mistress, I now call on you to keep your word."

"I yield with pleasure to the transports which agitate you," said the demon. "I love those bold spirits who pursue their impulsive passions without scruple! I will this moment satisfy you; the time of your vengeance is at hand. But I would first show you something that will divert you exceedingly. Carry your eye beyond the printing-house and observe well what is passing in an apartment tapestried with crimson cloth."

"I see five or six women," answered Leandro, "crowding on each other to thrust glass bottles into the hands of a sort of valet, and they all appear to be violently agitated."

"These," replied the cripple, "are devout ladies, who have great reason for their uneasiness, for in the adjoining apartment is a sick inquisitor. This venerable person, who is about five-and-thirty, is attended in his chamber by two of his

favourite penitents. One is employed in making him broths, and the other at his pillow is keeping his head warm and covering his chest with a stomacher made of fifty lambs' skins."

"What is his malady, then?" inquired Zambullo.

"A little cold in his head," replied the demon, "and it is to be feared the rheum may descend to his chest.

"The other devotees whom you see in his antechamber are ladies who, on the first news of his indisposition, ran hither in all haste with medicines. One has brought, for his cough, syrups of jujubes, marshmallows, coral, and colt's-foot; another, to preserve his reverence's lungs, is laden with nostrums, syrup of long-life, of veronica, of immortality, and elixir-proprietatis; another, to fortify his brain and stomach, has brought balm, cinnamon, and treacle-water, besides divine water, and the essences of nutmegs and ambergris; this comes to offer him anacardine and bezoardic confections; and that, tincture of clove-gillyflowers, of coral milleflorum, of the sun, and of emeralds. All these penitents are boasting the efficacy of their several medicines to the inquisitor's valet. They take him aside one after another, and each, clapping a ducat in his hand, thus whispers in his ear: 'Laurence, dear Laurence, I entreat you not to fail in giving my medicine preference to all the rest.'"

"Bless me," cried Don Cleofas, "what happy mortals are these inquisitors!"

"Indeed they are," replied Asmodeus. "I myself almost envy their happiness; and, as

Alexander once said that, were he not Alexander, he could wish to be Diogenes, so I might well say that, 'Were I not a devil, I would be an inquisitor.'

"Come, Signor Student," added he, "now let us go and punish that perfidious woman who so ill returned your tenderness." Zambullo then seized the end of Asmodeus's mantle, and the demon, cleaving the air with him a second time, sat him down on Donna Thomasa's house.

The wanton was at table with the four assassins who had pursued the student over the tiles. He trembled with excessive resentment to see them eat a brace of partridges and a rabbit, and empty several bottles of wine, for which he had paid, and which he had sent thither. To crown his vexation he saw that nothing but joy reigned during the repast; and by the demonstrations made by Donna Thomasa he found that the company of these wretches was more agreeable to that abandoned creature than his own. "Ah, scoundrels," cried he, inflamed with rage, "how deliciously they fare at my expense! What mortification for me!"

"I confess," said the demon, "that the spectacle is not very pleasant for you; but they who will make love to such light ladies must expect adventures of this kind. They happen every day in France to abbés, to gentlemen of the long robe, and rich farmers of the revenue."

"Had I a sword," replied Don Cleofas, "I would break in upon the villains and disturb their entertainment."

"You would be overmatched," replied the cripple, "were you to attack them singly. Leave your revenge to me; I will compass it better than you. I will this moment set them together by the ears, by inspiring them with a lascivious passion, and they shall draw their swords upon each other. You will see a fine uproar presently."

At these words he blew, and from his mouth there issued a violet-coloured vapour, which descended in serpentine coils, like a squib, spreading itself over Donna Thomasa's table. One of the guests, immediately feeling the effect of the blast, approached the lady and passionately embraced her; but the others, inspired by the fumes of the same vapour, endeavoured to tear her from his arms. Each claimed the preference. A dispute commenced, and jealous rage possessed all their minds. Eventually they came to blows, drew their swords, and began a sharp and rough engagement. Meanwhile Donna Thomasa uttered the most horrible cries, and the neighbourhood, being alarmed, immediately called for the officers of justice, who, speedily arriving, broke open the courtesan's doors, found two of the ruffians dead on the floor, seized the others, and conveyed them, with Donna Thomasa, to prison. The now unhappy beauty wept, tore her hair, and gave way to despair; but her conductors were not more affected than Zambullo, who, with Asmodeus, laughed very heartily at the sight.

"Well," said the demon to the student, "are you satisfied?"

"No," replied Don Cleofas. "If you would give me entire satisfaction, show me the prison, and let me have the exquisite pleasure of seeing that wretch, who made a jest of my passion, shut up in her cell! I find that I now hate her more than I before loved her."

"With all my heart!" replied Asmodeus. "You shall always find me ready to oblige you, even though it were against my inclination and interest, so it were for your good or gratification."

In a moment they reached the prison, where, soon after, the two assassins were brought and immediately lodged in a dark dungeon. For Thomasa, she was put into a cell littered with straw, with three or four other women of ill-fame who had been taken up on the same day, and who, on the morrow, were to be transferred to the place appointed for such creatures.

"Now I am satisfied!" said Zambullo. "I have had the pleasure of a full revenge. My friend Thomasa will not pass the night so agreeably as she expected. I am ready to accompany you for the purpose of continuing our observations wherever you please."

"This is a very proper place for them," answered the spirit: "there are in this prison a great number of guilty and innocent people. It is an abode wherein commences the punishment of the one and the purification of the virtues of the others. I will show you some prisoners of each kind and tell you why they are kept in fetters."

CHAPTER VII

Of the prisoners

"I WISH you to observe, before I enter into detail, the gaolers at the entrance of these horrid places. The poets of antiquity represented but one Cerberus at the gates of hell, but here you see is a far greater number. These gaolers are villains who have lost all feelings of humanity. The wickedest of my brethren could hardly supply the place of one. But I find," added he, "that you look with horror on these rooms, in which all the furniture is a wretched bed ; and those frightful dungeons appear to you like so many graves. It is not without reason that you are astonished at the misery you observe, and pity the condition of the unhappy wretches whom the law detains here. Yet they do not all deserve the same compassion ; their merits, therefore, shall be the subject of our examination.

"First, then, in that large chamber on the right, are four men lying on the two miserable mattresses which you see. One is a vintner accused of poisoning

a stranger, who the other day dropped down dead in his tavern. It is pretended that the quality of the wine killed the deceased; but the vintner alleges it was the quantity, and will be believed at his trial, for the stranger was a German."

"And which of them is in the right, the vintner or his prosecutors?" asked Cleofas.

"The affair is problematical," answered the devil. "It is true the wine was adulterated, but, on my conscience, the German had drank so largely that the judges might safely set the tavern-keeper at liberty.

"The second prisoner is an assassin by profession, one of those cut-throats called Valientes,[1] who, for four or five pistoles, are ever ready to oblige with the use of their arms those who will be at sufficient expense to be privately rid of an enemy. The third is a foppish dancing-master who scandalized his vocation by teaching one of his female pupils a false step. The fourth is a gallant caught by the watch as he was scaling the balcony of a woman of his acquaintance whose husband was absent. It is his own fault that he is not liberated, which he could be by declaring that his design was purely amorous; but he had rather pass for a thief, and run the risk of his life, than compromise his mistress's honour."

"A very discreet lover indeed!" said the student; "it must be admitted that our nation outvies all others in point of gallantry. I dare venture a wager that there is not a Frenchman, for example,

[1] Valientes, in Spanish, signifies bravos or ruffians.

in the world who would suffer himself to be hanged for his discretion."

"No, I assure you," said Asmodeus, "a Frenchman would sooner clamber over a balcony to dishonour a woman that should show him any favour.

"In the closet next to those four men," continued he, "is a famous witch, who has the reputation of being able to do impossibilities. By her art, it is reported, old dowagers find young gallants that return them love for love, husbands are rendered true to their wives, and coquettes really become enamoured of the rich gallants that keep them. But nothing is more false: she is mistress of no other secret than that of persuading the world that she is so, and of living handsomely on that opinion. This poor creature is claimed by the Inquisition, and she will very probably be burnt at the first *auto-da-fé*.

"Under the closet there is a dark dungeon that serves for a lodging to a young tavern-keeper."

"What! Mine host again?" cried Leandro. "Sure these people have a mind to poison all the world."

"This man's is not the same case," replied Asmodeus; "he was seized yesterday, and is likewise claimed by the Inquisition. I will in a few words relate to you the cause of his detention.

"An old soldier, by his courage, or rather by his patience, having attained the post of a sergeant in his company, came to raise recruits in this city. He inquired for a lodging at an inn, where he was answered that they had indeed empty rooms, but

that they could not recommend any of them to him, because the house was haunted every night by a spirit, which treated all strangers very ill that were rash enough to lodge there. This did not at all balk our sergeant. 'Put me in what chamber you please,' said he, 'so you give me a candle, some wine, pipes, and tobacco. And as for the spirit, never trouble yourself about that; ghosts have a respect for soldiers who have grown grey in the service.'

"As he seemed so resolute he was shown into a chamber, where all that he desired was brought to him. He fell to drinking and smoking till midnight, and as no spirit had then disturbed the profound silence that reigned in the house, one would have imagined that it feared this new guest; but betwixt one and two the sergeant, on a sudden, heard a terrible noise, like the rattling of old iron, and, looking steadfastly, saw an apparition entering his chamber, clothed in black and heavily laden all round with fetters. Our smoker, not in the least affrighted at what he saw, drew his sword, advanced towards the spirit, and with the flat side of his weapon gave it a very severe blow on the head.

"The phantom, not much accustomed to meet with such bold guests, cried out, and, perceiving the soldier about to renew his blow, most humbly prostrated itself at his feet. 'Mr Sergeant,' said the figure, 'for God's sake do not give me any more, but have mercy on a poor devil that casts himself at your feet to implore your clemency! I

conjure you by St James, who, like you, was a great swordsman.'

" ' If you are willing to save your life,' answered the soldier, ' you must tell me, without the least prevarication, who you are, or this moment I will cleave you in two, as your knights of old were used to serve the giants they encountered.' At these words the ghost, finding what sort of person he had to deal with, resolved to acknowledge the whole affair.

" ' I am,' said the pretended spirit, ' the principal servant of this tavern : my name is William. I am in love with my master's only daughter, Juanilla, and she does not dislike me ; but as the father and mother have a better match in view, in order to compel them to make me their son-in-law the damsel and I have agreed that I should every night enact the part in which you have detected me. I wrap myself up in a long black mantle and hang the jack-chain about my neck ; thus equipped I run up and down the house, from the cellar to the garret, and make the noise which you have heard. When I am at my master's and mistress's chamber door I stop and cry out : " Do not hope that I will ever permit you to rest until you marry Juanilla to your principal tapster."

" ' After having pronounced these words with a hoarse, broken voice I continue my noise, and enter the window of the closet where Juanilla lies alone, to give her an account of what I have done. Mr Sergeant,' continued William, ' that is the whole truth. I know that after this confession

you may ruin me by discovering it to my master; but if you please to serve instead of injuring me, I swear that my acknowledgments——'

"'Alas, what service can I do thee?' interrupted the soldier.

"'You need do no more,' returned William, 'than to say to-morrow that you have seen the spirit, that it so terribly affrighted you——'

"'How! Terribly affrighted!' interrupted the soldier. 'Would you have Sergeant Annibal Antonio Quebrantador own that he had been subjected to fear? I had rather a hundred thousand devils should——'

"'That is not absolutely necessary,' interrupted the tapster; 'and after all it is not much matter what you say, provided you second my design. When I have married Juanilla, and am settled, I promise to regale every day, for nothing, you and all your friends.'

"'You are a very tempting personage, Master William,' said the soldier. 'You propose to me to support a trick. It is a serious affair, which requires mature deliberation; but the humour of the thing hurries me on. Go, continue your noise, give your account to Juanilla, and I will take care of the rest.'

"Accordingly, next morning, he said to his landlord and landlady: 'I have seen and talked to the spirit. It is a very reasonable phantom. "I am," said he, "the great-grandfather of the master of this house. I had a daughter whom I promised to the father of the grandfather of this tapster.

However, neglecting the word I had given him, I married her to another, and soon afterwards died; ever since which I am tormented in punishment of my perjury, and shall never be at rest till one of my family marries one of William's. It is for this reason that I walk here every night. Yet it is to no purpose that I bid them marry Juanilla to their head tapster. The son of my grandson and his wife turn deaf ears to all I can say. But tell them, if you please, Mr Sergeant, that unless they immediately comply with my desires I shall proceed to action, and will torment them both in an extraordinary way." '

"The host, being somewhat of a simpleton, was terrified at this discourse; but the hostess, yet more silly than her husband, fancying that the spirit was always at her heels, consented to the match, and William married Juanilla the next day, and set up in another part of the town. Sergeant Quebrantador did not fail to visit him often; and he, in acknowledgment of the service he had done him, gave him as much wine as he chose, which so pleased the soldier that he brought thither not only all his friends, but listed his men there and made all his recruits drunk.

"At last, however, William, grown weary of satiating such a crew of drunkards, told the soldier his mind, who, without thinking that he had exceeded the agreement, was so unjust as to call William a little ungrateful rascal. The host answered; the sergeant replied; and the dialogue ended with the soldier's giving William several strokes with the flat side of his sword. Some

persons who were passing by took the vintner's part; the sergeant wounded three or four, but was suddenly pounced upon by a crowd of alguazils, who seized him as a disturber of the public peace and carried him to prison. He there declared all that I have told you, and, upon his deposition, the officers have seized William also. The father-in-law now requires the annulling of the marriage, and the Holy Inquisition having been informed that William is rich it has thought proper to take cognizance of the affair."

"As I hope to be saved," said Don Cleofas, "this same Holy Inquisition is very alert. The moment it sees the least glimpse of available profit——"

"Softly," interrupted the cripple; "have a care what freedom you take with this tribunal, for it has its spies everywhere, and makes discoveries even of things that were never spoken. I myself can scarcely speak of it without trembling.

"Above the dungeon of the unfortunate William, in the first room on the left, are two men that deserve your pity. One of them is a young *valet-de-chambre*, regarded by his master's wife as her lover. One day the husband surprised them together; the woman immediately cried out for help, and accused the *valet-de-chambre* of an assault. The unfortunate fellow was seized, and will in all probability become a sacrifice to his mistress's reputation.

"The companion of the *valet-de-chambre*, still less guilty, is on the point of losing his life. He is squire to a duchess, who, being robbed of a large

diamond, has accused him of the theft. He will to-morrow be put to the torture till he confess a crime which was in truth committed by an old waiting-woman, whom no one dare suspect."

"Ah, Signor Asmodeus," said Leandro, "let me entreat you to help this young gentleman; I feel interested on behalf of his innocence. Shield him, by your power, from the cruel tortures that threaten him; his virtue deserves——"

"You do not consider what it is you ask, Sir Student," interrupted the devil. "Can you desire me to oppose an unjust action and hinder the destruction of an innocent man? You might as well beg of an attorney not to ruin a widow or orphan.

"Pray, if you please, do not ask anything of me contrary to my interest, unless it be of greater advantage to yourself. Besides, if I were inclined to deliver that honest man out of prison, do you think it is in my power?"

"How!" replied Zambullo. "Have you not power to fetch a man out of prison?"

"No, really," replied the cripple. "If you had read the *Enchiridion*, or Albertus Magnus, you would know that I cannot, any more than my brethren, set a prisoner at liberty. Should I myself have the misfortune to fall into the clutches of justice, I could not extricate myself by any other means than money.

"In the next room is a surgeon convicted of having, from jealousy, sent his wife out of the world the same way that Seneca went. He was this day tortured, and, after confessing the crime

with which he was charged, owned besides that he had for ten years made use of a new way to create practice. He was in the habit of wounding passengers in the street at night with a bayonet, and nimbly made his escape by running into his own house at a back door. The wounded person, meanwhile, having by his groans drawn the neighbours to his assistance, the surgeon came among the crowd, and, finding a wounded man deluged in his blood, he caused him to be carried into his shop, where he dressed him with the same hand which had given the wound.

"Though the barbarous surgeon has made this confession, and deserves a thousand deaths, yet he flatters himself with a pardon, and may possibly obtain it, for he is related to one of the princess's dressers; and, besides, I must tell you that he makes a wonderful medicinal water, for which he only has the receipt. This incomparable water has power to whiten the skin and make an old wrinkled face as smooth as that of an infant; so that three ladies of the Court, who make use of it as their 'fountain of youth,' have united their influence to save him. And he reckons so much upon their interest, or rather, if you please, upon the virtues of his water, that he is gone quietly to sleep, expecting, when he awakes, to receive the agreeable news of his intended liberation."

"In the same chamber," said the student, "I think I perceive another man also fast asleep upon an old bed. Surely the offence for which he has been committed cannot be a very bad one."

"It is an extremely delicate affair," answered the demon. "He is a Biscayan gentleman, grown rich by the discharge of a gun, the particulars of which are as follows. As he was shooting about a fortnight ago, with his elder brother, who possessed a very considerable estate, he unfortunately killed the latter by a shot aimed at some young partridges."

"A lucky mistake that for a younger brother," cried Don Cleofas, smiling.

"True," said Asmodeus; "but those next to him in succession, being greedy of the deceased's estate, are prosecuting the young gentleman, whom they accuse of committing this crime in order to be sole heir of the family. He has voluntarily surrendered himself, however, and seems so afflicted at his brother's death that it is impossible to imagine he killed him designedly."

"And has he really nothing to reproach himself with but his awkwardness at shooting?" replied Leandro.

"No," answered the cripple, "he had no ill design. But whenever an elder brother is master of all the estate of a family, I would advise him not to go shooting with the younger brother who is to succeed him.

"Pray take especial notice of those two youths in the next room to the Biscayan, who are entertaining themselves as merrily as if they were at liberty. They are two staunch villains, one of whom may some time or other present the public with an account of his rogueries, for he may pass for a second Guzman d'Alfarache. I mean him in

the brown velvet waistcoat, with a plume of feathers in his hat.

"It is hardly three months since he was one of the Count d'Onate's pages at Madrid—and would still have been in the service of the same master but for a piece of roguery which has brought him hither, the particulars of which I will tell you.

"This youth, whose name is Domingo, happened one day to receive a sound whipping from the squire of the hall, or governor of the Count's pages, for some unlucky prank he had committed, which deserved such chastisement. He said nothing for a long while, but resolved to be revenged. He had more than once observed that Signor Don Cosmo (for that was the squire's name) washed his hands in orange-flower water and afterwards rubbed them with a paste made of pinks and jasmine; that he took more care of his person than an old coquette—in short, that he was one of those infatuated fops who imagine that a woman cannot look upon them without falling instantly in love. This observation furnished him with an idea for revenging himself, which he communicated to a young girl who was a chambermaid in the neighbourhood, whose assistance he wanted to enable him to put his designs in execution, and with whom he was on such terms of intimacy that he could not possibly have a greater advantage.

"The wench, whose name was Florella, in order to converse with him with the greater freedom, made him pass for her cousin at the house of her mistress, Donna Luziana, whose father was then

absent. The malicious Domingo, having instructed his pretended cousin in what she was to do, went one morning into the chamber of Don Cosmo whilst he was trying on a new suit of clothes and complacently regarding himself in the mirror, charmed with the figure he saw there. The page, pretending to admire this Narcissus, said to him, with an affectation of transport: 'Really, Signor Don Cosmo, you have the air of a prince. Though I every day see grandees superbly dressed, yet, notwithstanding all the magnificence of their habits, they want your mien. I know not whether, being your humble servant so much as I am, I look on you with eyes too much prejudiced in your favour; but in my opinion there is not a cavalier at Court who can expect to be taken notice of when you are by.'

"The squire smiled at this wheedling, which so agreeably tickled his vanity, and assuming a languishing air—'You flatter me, friend,' answered he, 'or you must really love me, and your friendship induces you to array me with the graces which nature has denied me.'

"'I do not think so,' replied the page, still cajoling him, 'for there is nobody but speaks of you in the same manner as I do. I wish you had heard what a cousin of mine, who is maid to a lady of fashion, said of you yesterday.'

"Don Cosmo did not fail to ask what this attendant had said. 'Said!' replied the page. 'She enlarged upon the beauty of your distinguishable shape and the charms of your whole person;

and, what is still better, she told me in confidence that Luziana, her mistress, took pleasure in gazing upon you every time you passed their house.'

"'Who can that be,' said the squire, 'or where does she live?'

"'What!' answered Domingo, 'do you not know that she is the only daughter of General Don Ferdinand, our neighbour?'

"'Ah, now I recollect,' replied Don Cosmo, 'I remember having heard the wealth and beauty of this Luziana much talked of. She has a large fortune. Is it possible that I can be so happy as to have induced her to take notice of me?'

"'Most certainly!' said the page. 'My cousin told me so; and, though a lady's woman, she is no liar, and I would answer for her as soon as for myself.'

"'If it be indeed so,' said the squire, 'I would have a little private discourse with thy cousin, and bring her over to my interest by a present or two, according to custom; and if she advise me to make my court to her mistress I will try my fortune. And indeed why should I not? I admit that there is some distance between me and Don Ferdinand; but still, I am a gentleman, and have five hundred good ducats a year. Matches more extraordinary than this happen every day.'

"The page backed Don Cosmo in his resolution, and procured him a meeting with his cousin, who, finding the squire ready to swallow any bait, assured him that her mistress had an inclination for him. 'She has often inquired of me concerning

you,' said she, 'and my answers have not been to your disadvantage. In short, sir, you may reasonably presume that Donna Luziana secretly loves you. Boldly declare your honourable designs therefore: show her you are one of the most gallant cavaliers in Madrid, as you are one of the handsomest and best made of Spanish gentlemen; but above all things give her a serenade, which is what she is passionately fond of. For me, I will take care to extol your gallantry, and I hope my good offices will not be in vain.'

"Don Cosmo, transported with joy to see the maid take his part with such warmth, almost stifled her with embraces, and, putting a diamond ring upon her finger, which he had purposely bought to present her with—'Dear Florella,' said he, 'I give you this trifle only for the sake of your acquaintance. I design to acknowledge the services you intend me by something more solid and considerable.'

"It was impossible to be more pleased than he was with this conversation with the chambermaid. He not only thanked Domingo, therefore, for procuring him the gratification, but rewarded him with a pair of silk stockings and some lace shirts, promising that he would let slip no opportunity of serving him. Then, consulting him upon the measures he should take—'My friend,' said he, 'dost thou advise me to break the ice by a sublimely passionate letter to Donna Luziana?'

"'Indeed I do!' answered the page. 'Send her a declaration of love in the most eloquent style, for something tells me it will not be ill received.'

"'I fancy so too,' replied the squire. 'However, at all events, that shall be the mode of commencing.'

"He then immediately put pen to paper, and, after having torn about twenty spoiled copies of *billets-doux* which he had made, he at last hit upon one which he resolved should go. This he read over to Domingo, who, having testified strong signs of admiration while he heard it, undertook to carry it immediately to his cousin. The following are the florid and magniloquent terms in which it was couched:—

"'It is now long since, my adorable Luziana, that, attracted by fame, which everywhere publishes your manifold perfections, I have been irresistibly inflamed with an ardent love for you. But, notwithstanding the fires that consume me, I have not hitherto dared to venture upon any disclosure of my passion. As I am informed, however, that you vouchsafe to turn the brightness of your eyes upon me as I pass by your window—your window, which deprives mankind of the light of your celestial beauty—and that, by the influence of your stars—an influence most fortunate for me—you are inclined to pity him who languishes for your presence, I take the liberty of imploring your permission to consecrate myself to your service. If I am fortunate enough to obtain this favour I will bid adieu to all other ladies, past, present, and to come.

"'Don Cosmo de la Higuera.'

"The page and his sham cousin did not fail to make themselves exceedingly merry at Don Cosmo's expense, and to divert themselves with his letter. But that was not all; they drew up between them a kind letter, which the chamber-maid transcribed, and Domingo carried next day to the squire as Donna Luziana's answer. It ran thus:

"'I know not who it is that can so truly have informed you of my secret sentiments; somebody must certainly have betrayed me: but I pardon it, since it has been the means of convincing me that you love me. Of all the cavaliers that pass through our street you are the person I take most pleasure in beholding; and I would fain have you become my lover. Perhaps I ought not to wish this, much less to say it; but if it be a crime, it is one which your great merit must find an excuse for.

"'DONNA LUZIANA.'

"Though this answer was a little too explicit for a general's daughter (for the writers had not been perfectly consistent as to that), the vain Don Cosmo did not at all doubt that it was genuine. He had a sufficiently good opinion of himself to imagine that a lady might lay aside the severity of decorum a little for his sake. 'Ah, Domingo,' cried he, with an air of triumph, after reading aloud the pretended letter, 'thou seest, my friend, that our neighbour has been caught! I shall be Don Ferdinand's son-in-law, as sure as I am Don Cosmo de la Higuera.'

" ' There is no doubt of that,' said his roguish confidant ; ' you have made a terrible impression upon his daughter. But it has just occurred to me,' he continued, ' to remember that my cousin charged me to tell you it was absolutely necessary for you, to-morrow at farthest, to give your mistress a serenade, in order to make her run quite distracted for you.'

" ' With all my heart ! ' said the squire. ' And thou mayest assure thy cousin that I will follow her advice. To-morrow, about midnight, Luziana shall, without fail, hear in her street one of the finest concerts that was ever heard in Madrid.'

" And to keep his word in this respect he forthwith went to an excellent music-master, and, having engaged him in his design, entrusted to him the execution of it.

" Whilst he was busied about his serenade, Florella, whom the page had instructed to that end, seeing her mistress in good humour, said to her : ' Madam, I am preparing you a very agreeable diversion.' Luziana asked her what it was. ' Oh, really,' replied the maid, laughing boisterously all the while, ' I have a budget full of news for you ! An original, whose name is Don Cosmo, governor to the Count de Onate's pages, has taken it into his head to choose you for the sovereign lady of his affections ; and, that you may not be ignorant of it, is to-morrow night to regale you with a fine concert of vocal and instrumental music.' Donna Luziana, who was naturally gay, and thought the squire's gallantries could be productive of no ill

consequences with regard to herself, far from assuming a serious air, pleased herself beforehand with the thought of hearing the concert ; so that, without being aware, she helped to confirm Don Cosmo in an error which, had she known, she would have been very angry at.

" In short, on the night of the following day there appeared before Luziana's balcony two coaches, out of which alighted the gallant squire and his confidant, accompanied by six men, some of whom sung, and others played, and began the concert. The entertainment lasted a considerable time. The musicians played a great number of new airs and sang several songs, all of which had reference to the power of love in uniting hearts of unequal condition ; and at the end of every song, which the General's daughter applied to herself, she laughed in the most violent manner.

" When the serenade was over Don Cosmo sent back the music in the same coaches in which they had come, and stayed in the street with Domingo till such curious people as his music had brought about them were gone. He then drew near the balcony, from whence the maid, by her mistress's permission, said to him through a small window :

" ' Is it you, Signor Don Cosmo ? '

" ' Who is it that asks me such a question ? ' answered he, in a languishing tone.

" ' It is Donna Luziana,' replied the maid, ' who wishes to be informed whether this concert be the effect of your gallantry ? '

" ' It is no more than a slight shadow of the

entertainments my love is preparing for this wonder of our age,' replied he, 'if she will vouchsafe to receive them from a lover who is being consumed upon the altar of her beauty.'

"At this metaphor the lady had a strong inclination to laugh; she smothered it, however, and placing herself at another window—'Signor Don Cosmo,' said she, as gravely as she possibly could to the squire, 'it is very plain you are no novice in gallantry. Lovers who would please their mistresses must be taught by you; I am delighted with your serenade, and thank you for it. But I would have you now retire,' added she, 'for we may be heard. Another time we will have a longer conversation.' At these words she shut the window, leaving the squire in extravagant raptures at the favour she had just done him, and the page as greatly astonished to see her take a part in the extraordinary comedy.

"This little entertainment, reckoning the charge of the coaches and of the vast quantity of wine drank by the performers, cost Don Cosmo not less than a hundred ducats; yet two days afterwards his confidant had the skill to engage him in a fresh expense. Having heard that Florella was, on the Eve of St John (an eve so celebrated in this city), to go with some other damsels of the same class to the Fiesto del Sotillo,[1] he undertook to give them a magnificent breakfast at the squire's cost.

"'Signor Don Cosmo,' said he, 'do you know

[1] Sort of dance peculiar to the Spaniards.

that to-morrow is the Festival of St John? Allow me to acquaint you beforehand that Donna Luziana purposes to be by daybreak on the banks of the Mansanarez to see the Sotilla. I suppose I need say no more to the flower of all gallant cavaliers; nor are you a man that will disregard so fair an opportunity. I am persuaded that your mistress and her company will be handsomely treated to-morrow.'

"'You may depend on me,' said his governor, 'and you shall see that I know how to embrace the occasion.'

"Accordingly, very early the next morning, four of his master's footmen, conducted by Domingo, and loaded with all sorts of cold meat dressed in every variety of way, a number of small loaves, and some bottles of the best wine, arrived on the banks of the Mansanarez, where Florella and her companions were dancing like so many nymphs at the rising of Aurora.

"They were not a little pleased at the page's coming to interrupt their dancing with the offer of a magnificent breakfast from Signor Don Cosmo. They sat down on the grass, and soon began to do honour to the feast, laughing immoderately the while at the fool who gave it; for the charitable cousin of Domingo had taken care to let them into the secret.

"As they were at the height of their mirth they saw the squire approach, richly dressed and mounted on a pad from the Count's stables. He went direct to his confidant and then saluted the

company, who got up to receive him with the greatest politeness, and to thank him for his generosity. He looked with all the eyes he possessed among these damsels for Donna Luziana, designing to make his addresses to her in a fine compliment which he had studied by the way; but Florella, taking him aside, told him that sudden indisposition had prevented her lady's appearing at the entertainment. Don Cosmo showed himself greatly concerned at this news, and asked what his dear Luziana's illness was. 'She has caught a sad cold,' said the maid, 'by passing the night on which you gave the serenade in the balcony without her veil, talking to you.' The squire, flattered by the thought of an accident proceeding from such a cause, begged her to continue towards him her good offices with her mistress, and returned home applauding himself more and more, and rejoicing in his good fortune.

"About this time Don Cosmo had a bill of exchange sent him, and received a thousand crowns in gold from Andalusia as his share of an estate left him by an uncle at Seville. He counted over the sum and put it into a chest before Domingo, who eyed it covetously, and, being tempted to get such a handsome sum into his possession, he resolved to run away with them to Portugal. He informed Florella of his purpose, and went so far as to propose to her to accompany him. Though the proposal deserved mature consideration the wench, as wicked as the page, accepted it without hesitation. One night therefore, whilst the squire was

shut up in his closet, busied in inditing a passionate letter to his mistress, Domingo found means to open the chest where the money lay and to carry it off. He immediately made the best of his way into the street with his booty, and, having got under Luziana's balcony, began to imitate the noise of a cat. The chambermaid, at this signal, which they had agreed upon, did not make him wait long, but, being ready to follow him to any part of the world, departed from Madrid with him at once.

"They had calculated upon having time enough to reach Portugal before they should be overtaken, but unluckily Don Cosmo, perceiving that very night that he was robbed, and that his confidant had run away, had immediate recourse to a magistrate, who instantly dispatched his officers in pursuit of the thief, and took him and his nymph near Zebreros; they were both therefore brought back, and the maid sent to Los Arrepentidas, and Domingo hither."

"Doubtless, then," said the student, "the squire will not lose his money, but it will be returned him."

"Not so, neither," answered the demon. "Those gold pieces are proofs of the robbery, and the officers of justice will not part with them. Hence Don Cosmo, whose story is spread all over the city, remains not only plundered, but laughed at by everybody.

"Domingo and that other prisoner at play with him," continued the cripple, "have a young

Castilian for their neighbour, who has been brought hither for having given his father a blow in the presence of credible witnesses."

"Good heaven!" cried Leandro, "what do you tell me? However wicked a son be, yet surely he cannot lift up his hand against his father?"

"Nay," said the demon, "this is not without a parallel: I will give you a very remarkable one. In the reign of Peter the First, surnamed the Just and the Cruel, the eighth King of Portugal, a young fellow of about twenty was put into the hands of justice for the same offence. Don Pedro, like you, surprised at the novelty of the case, resolved to examine the criminal's mother, and did it with so much art as to make her confess that she had that child by a right reverend prelate. In the same manner, were the judges of this Castilian to examine his mother as artfully, they might probably force the same confession from her.

"Carry your eye to that large dungeon under the three prisoners I have just showed you and let us consider what is passing there. Those are highwaymen. See, they are breaking out, by the help of a smooth file brought them in a loaf; they have already filed through the large bar of a window, whence they may slip into a court that communicates with the street. They have been here more than ten months, and should have received the public reward due to their exploits above eight months ago; but, thanks to the tedious proceedings of the law, they are going again to their old vocation of murdering travellers.

" Follow me into that low hall, where you will see twenty or thirty prisoners lying upon straw ; they are all pickpockets, shoplifters, and the very lowest sort of felons. Do you observe five or six of them worrying a kind of handicraft tradesman brought in to-day for wounding an alguazil with a stone ? "

" But why do they beat the poor fellow ? " said Zambullo.

" It is," answered Asmodeus, " because he has not paid his garnish. But," added he, " let us leave those rogues and get as far as we can from this wretched place, that we may employ our time upon objects that are more agreeable."

CHAPTER VIII

Asmodeus shows Don Cleofas several persons, and discloses to him what they have been doing that day

SOARING from the roof of the prison they flew towards another quarter, and lighted upon a large house, where the demon thus addressed the student: "I have a great mind to tell you what all the people living round this mansion have this day been doing, and possibly it may divert you."

"I make no doubt of it," answered Leandro, "and I wish you would begin with that captain who is drawing on his boots."

"He is about to quit Madrid," said Asmodeus; "his horses wait for him at the gate. He is commanded to Portugal to join his regiment.

"Having no money to make the campaign he yesterday applied to an usurer: 'Signor Sanguisuela,' said he, 'cannot you lend me a thousand pieces of eight?'

"'Captain,' answered the moneylender, in very courteous terms, 'I have not so much by me, but I will do my best to find you a man that shall lend you the sum—that is, who shall give you four hundred down, provided you give your note for a thousand; and out of that four hundred please

to take notice that I expect sixty for procuration. Money is so very scarce at this time——'

"'What hellish extortion is this,' interrupted the officer hastily, 'to ask six hundred and sixty patacoons for the use of three hundred and forty! What horrid cheat is this? Such unconscionable rascals deserve hanging!'

"'Do not be in a passion, captain,' replied the usurer, with great coolness; 'try at another place. Of what do you complain? Do I force you to take the three hundred and forty patacoons? You are at liberty to take them or let them alone.' The captain went away without returning any answer; but, after considering that he must go to his regiment, that his time was short, and that he could do nothing without money, he returned the next morning to the usurer, whom he met at his door in a black cloak, collar-band, his hair short, and with beads in his hand. 'Signor Sanguisuela,' said he, 'I am content to accept your three hundred and forty patacoons; my extreme want of money has forced me to it.'

"'I am going to Mass,' answered the usurer very gravely; 'at my return come again and you shall have the sum.'

"'No, no,' replied the captain, 'go in again; this affair will not take you up two minutes. Pray dispatch me immediately, for I am in the utmost haste.'

"'I really cannot,' replied the usurer. 'I every day hear Mass before doing any manner of business; it is my constant rule, which I

am resolved to observe most religiously for the remainder of my life.'

" However impatient the captain was to receive his money he was forced to submit to pious Sanguisuela's strict rules, and, as if he had been afraid he should miss the patacoons, he followed the usurer to church and stayed till the Mass was concluded with him ; after which he prepared to leave the church, when Sanguisuela whispered in his ear that one of the ablest preachers in Madrid was going to mount the pulpit : 'And I will not, on any account,' said he, 'lose the sermon.'

" The officer, who thought the Mass insupportably tedious, was almost distracted at this further delay, yet he was compelled to wait the sermon out. The preacher appeared, and preached against usury, at which the captain was infinitely pleased, and observing Sanguisuela's looks he said to himself : 'If this Jew should be touched with this discourse, should he now give me six hundred patacoons, how happy it would be !' After the sermon the usurer went out of the church. 'Well, Signor Sanguisuela,' said the captain, joining him, 'what do you think of this preacher ? Was not the sermon very pathetic ? For my part, I own it sensibly moved me.'

" ' I am entirely of your opinion,' answered the extortioner ; 'he has handled his subject perfectly well. He is a learned man, and has discharged the duty of his calling admirably ; let us go and do the same in ours.' "

" Pray who are those two ladies a-bed together,

who laugh so loudly?" cried Don Cleofas. "They seem to be very merry."

"They," answered Asmodeus, "are a couple of young ladies that have this day buried their father, who was a whimsical humorist, and had such an aversion for matrimony, or rather such a reluctance to give portions to his daughters, that he would never permit them to marry, how advantageous soever the matches might be that were offered. The character of their deceased father is the perpetual subject of their discourse. 'He is dead at last,' says the elder—'our unnatural father, who took a barbarous pleasure in preventing our marriage. He will now no more cross our desires.'

"'For my part,' returns the younger, 'I am for a rich husband, though a fool, and the fat Don Blanco shall be my man.'

"'Hold, sister,' replies the elder; 'do not let us be too hasty in the choice of husbands. Let us marry those the powers above may have destined for us, for our marriages are registered in Heaven's book.'

"'So much the worse, dear sister,' says the younger, 'for I am afraid my father will tear out the leaf.' At this the elder can refrain no longer from an extravagant fit of laughter, in which the younger, equally tickled, as heartily joins.

"In the house next to that of these two sisters lives, in a ready-furnished chamber, a young Aragonian lady, who is upon the look-out to catch some rich bubble. I see she is consulting her glass instead of going to bed, and complimenting her

charms on the important conquest they have made this day. She is likewise contriving new airs, and has already hit on two which to-morrow are to be employed in gaining her a new lover, who is such a promising spark that she cannot be too sedulous in the conquest of him. One of her creditors coming not long since to dun her—'Honest friend,' said she, 'come again in a few days and you shall be paid; I am just upon terms of agreement with one of the chief officers of the treasury.'"

"I need not," said Don Cleofas, "ask you what that gentleman, whom I see, has been doing this whole day; he must, of necessity, have spent it in writing letters. What a prodigious quantity do I see on his table!"

"What is most comical," answered the demon, "is that all these letters are precisely alike. This cavalier has written to all his absent friends the relation of an adventure which happened to him to-day after dinner, and which is as follows.

"He loved a beautiful, discreet widow of thirty. He paid his addresses to her; she did not slight him; he proposed to marry her, and she accepted the offer. While the nuptial preparations were making he had free leave to visit her at her own house, which he accordingly did daily. He had been there to-day, and happening to meet with none of the family to ask where she was he entered the lady's apartment, where he surprised her asleep on a couch in wanton *déshabillé*, or, to speak more correctly, almost undressed. He approached her softly and stole a kiss, at which she awoke,

and, sighing, said: 'Ah, pray, Ambrosio, let me sleep!' The cavalier, like a well-bred man, very civilly took his leave at that instant and quitted her apartment. He met Ambrosio at the door. 'Ambrosio,' said he, 'your mistress begs that you would not wake her.'

"Two doors beyond this cavalier I discover a small house where lives an original of a husband, who snores while his wife is reproaching him for having stayed out the whole day; and she would be much more exasperated if she knew how he had been employing himself."

"In some intrigue, I warrant you," said Zambullo.

"You are right," replied Asmodeus, "and I will tell you the particulars.

"This man is a citizen, whose name is Patricio, one of those loose husbands who live without thinking, as if they had neither wives nor children. Yet he has a beautiful, modest wife, two daughters and a son, all very young. He went out this morning without asking whether there was bread for his family, who frequently want it. He passed by the great square, drawn thither by the preparations for the bull-feasts which are to take place to-day. There were platforms built all round, and such as were the most eager to satisfy their curiosity had already begun to take their places.

"Whilst he was gazing at them he happened to cast an eye upon a lady of good figure and neatly dressed, who, in coming down from one of the galleries, showed a fine well-turned leg, with

a pink-coloured silk stocking and silver garter. There needed no more to set our tindery citizen in a flame, who, advancing up to the lady, with whom was another of her sex, that plainly enough discovered by her air that they were both seeking whom they might ensnare—'Ladies,' said he to them, 'if I can be of service to you in any way, pray command me, for I am quite at your disposal.'

"'Sir,' answered the nymph with the pink-coloured stockings, 'your offer is too obliging to be rejected. We had already taken our places, but have just left them to go to breakfast, for we have been so silly as to come out this morning without drinking our chocolate. Since you, however, are so gallant as to offer us your service, we will trouble you to accompany us to some place where we may procure a breakfast. But let it be where we may not be seen; for you know young ladies cannot be too careful of their reputation.'

"At these words Patricio, becoming much more polite and well-bred than the occasion required, carried his princesses to a tavern in the suburbs, where he called for breakfast. 'Sir,' said the man of the house, 'what would you please to have? I have still by me the remains of a great entertainment made at my house yesterday: crammed chickens, partridges of Leon, pigeons of Old Castile, and more than half a ham of Estramadura.'

"'That is more than we shall want,' said the gentleman-usher of the vestals. 'Ladies, you need only choose; which do you prefer?'

"'Whatever you please,' answered they; 'your taste shall be ours.' Whereupon our citizen ordered a brace of young partridges, two cold chickens, and a private room, seeing that he was with ladies who stood so much upon their modesty.

"They showed him and his company into a small closet-like apartment, whither in a moment was brought what he had bespoke, with bread and wine. Our Lucretias, like ladies somewhat sharp-set, fell voraciously upon the meat, while the dupe who was to pay the reckoning amused himself with contemplating the beauty of his Luisita, for so was the lady of his affections called. He admired the whiteness of her hands, on which sparkled a large ring which she had gained by her practice. He called her a star, a sun, and a thousand such fine names, and was unable to eat for thinking on his good luck in meeting with her. He asked his goddess if she were married. To which she answered no, but that she was under a brother's care—if she had added, on Adam's side, she would have spoken the truth.

"Meanwhile the two harpies not only devoured each her chicken, but drank proportionably too. The wine was soon out, and our gallant himself ran to fetch more, that they might have it the sooner; but he was hardly out of the room when Jacintha, Luisita's companion, laid violent hands upon the partridges that remained in the dish and crammed them into a linen pocket she wore under her petticoat. Presently their Adonis returned with more wine, and observing that the victuals were gone,

asked his Venus whether she would not eat something more. 'Let us have,' said she, 'some of those pigeons our host was mentioning, provided they be exceedingly fine; if not, a piece of the ham will do.' She had scarcely spoken when Patricio went back to the larder and ordered three pigeons and a large slice of the ham. The two birds of prey began to peck again, and whilst their purveyor was obliged a third time to disappear for bread they sent a brace of the pigeons to keep company with the prisoners in their pocket.

"After the repast, which concluded with fruits proper to the season, the amorous Patricio pressed Luisita to make him those returns which he expected from her gratitude, but which the lady refused to grant, giving him some hopes, however, at the same time, by telling him there was a season for everything, and that she thought a tavern a very unfit place to testify her gratitude for the obligation she felt under to him. Upon this, hearing it strike one, she put on an air of uneasiness, saying to her companion: 'Dear Jacintha, we are very unfortunate; we shall meet with no place to see the bull-fight.'

"'Pardon me,' answered Jacintha, 'this gentleman has no more to do than to accompany us back to the place where he first accosted us with so much politeness: we need have no apprehension for the rest.'

"Before they quitted the tavern there was a necessity for paying the vintner, whose bill

amounted to fifty reales. The citizen put his hand into his pocket, where, finding but thirty reales, he was forced to pawn his beads garnished with silver medals for the rest. He then waited on his adventurers to the place where he met them, and placed them in a very convenient seat in one of the galleries, for which the proprietor, a friend of his, gave him credit.

"They were hardly seated ere they asked for something to drink. 'I am fainting with thirst,' cried one; 'the ham has terribly parched my throat.' 'And I too,' cried the other, 'could drink a glass of lemonade with pleasure.'

"Patricio, who understood but too well what all this meant, immediately left them in order to go for refreshments; but, stopping short, said he to himself: 'Where art thou going, madman? Methinks thou shouldst have a hundred pistoles either in thy pocket or at home, and yet thou hast not a cross. What shall I do?' continued he. 'Shall I return to the lady without what she desires? No, that will never do. On the other hand, shall I stop short in an affair that is so far advanced? I can never think of that.'

"In this perplexity he perceived one of his friends in the crowd who had often made him offers of friendship, which, out of pride, he had always refused. Laying aside all shame at this moment he made up to his friend in all haste and borrowed a double pistole of him; then, taking heart at this fortunate accident, flew to a chocolate-house and there bought so many liquors cooled in

ice, so many biscuits and dried sweetmeats, that the doubloon would scarcely cover the expense.

" In short, the feast concluded with the day, and our gallant waited on his ladies home, hoping there to be repaid for his entertainment. But when they were before a house, where she said she lived, a sort of maid came out to Luisita, and speaking with some concern—' Madam,' said she, ' where have you been so late? Your brother, Signor Don Jasper Herridor, has been at home these two hours storming and swearing like a madman.' Upon which the sister, pretending to be in a fright, turned to our gallant and, squeezing his hand, said in a low voice: ' My brother is terribly passionate, but it is soon over. Stay a little in the street and do not be impatient; we will go in and quiet him. But as he every night sups in the city, the moment he goes out Jacintha shall come and inform you, and let you in.'

" The gallant, comforted by this promise, kissed with transport the hand of Luisita, who bestowed on him a few caresses to keep him in hopes, and then went in with Jacintha and the maid. Patricio very contentedly sat himself down on a stone that was near the door and waited a good while, without thinking they could possibly have any design to trick him. Nothing surprised him but that he did not see Don Jasper come out, which made him fear that this cursed brother would not sup in the city.

" In the meantime he heard it strike ten, eleven, twelve. Then his confidence began to abate, and he was at first disposed to suspect his lady's

sincerity. He went up to the door and groped his way in through a dark alley, in the midst of which he found a staircase. However, he dared not venture to go up, but listened attentively, and his ear was saluted with the disagreeable concert of a dog barking, a cat mewing, and a child crying. At last he began to believe he had been imposed upon; and what fully convinced him was that, endeavouring to get to the end of the alley, he found himself in a different street to that where he had so long waited.

"Then he regretted the loss of his money, and returned home, cursing the pink-coloured stockings. He knocked, and his wife opened the door, with her beads in her hand and tears in her eyes, saying, with a moving air: 'Ah, Patricio, can you thus abandon your home and take so little care of your wife and children? What have you been doing ever since six o'clock this morning, when you went out?' The husband, not knowing what answer to make, and ashamed besides of being fooled by a couple of jilting baggages, undressed and went to bed without speaking a word. The wife, in a humour for moralizing, is now giving him a lecture, which, however, being accustomed to, has some time since lulled him to sleep.

"Cast your eye," pursued Asmodeus, "on the great house beyond that of the gentleman who is writing to his friends the account of breaking off his marriage with his mistress. Do you see that young lady in the rose-coloured satin bed embroidered with gold?"

"Yes," answered Don Cleofas, "I discern a fine woman in a profound sleep, and I think also there is a book on her bolster."

"You are right," replied Asmodeus. "That lady is a gay, witty young countess, who being indisposed, and not having been able to sleep for a week, she this day resolved to send for one of the gravest physicians in Madrid. He came, she consulted him, and he ordered her a remedy mentioned in Hippocrates. The lady began to jest at his prescription, but the physician, being a peevish animal, was disgusted at her humour, and replied with his doctorial gravity: 'Hippocrates, madam, is not a proper man to be ridiculed.'

"'God forbid, doctor,' answered the countess, with the most serious air that it was possible for her to put on, 'God forbid that I should laugh at such a famous and learned author! I have such a high value for him that I am fully persuaded the reading of some of his tracts only would cure my waking distemper. I have his works translated by the learned Azero, which is the best translation extant.' She accordingly tried the experiment, and at the third page fell asleep.

"In the countess's stables there is a poor one-armed soldier whom the grooms, out of charity, allow to lie every night on the straw. He begs in the daytime and has just now had a pleasant conversation with another beggar that lives near Buenretiro, in a passage leading to the court. This last has made a good hand of it, is a warm old fellow, and has a daughter marriageable, who

passes among these people for a rich heiress. The soldier, accosting the old gentleman, said to him : 'Signor Mendigo, you see I have lost my right arm. I can no longer serve His Majesty and am reduced, as you are, to depend on the civility of passengers for a subsistence. But of all trades, I know very well this is one that best maintains those that follow it, and that all it wants is to be a little more honourable.'

"'If it were honourable,' answered the other, 'it would be worth next to nothing, for then so many would take it up.'

"'You say right,' replied the soldier. 'Well, then, I am one of your brethren and would fain be related to you. You shall give me your daughter.'

"'You are quite mistaken,' answered the rich old fellow; 'she must have a better match. You are not half lame enough for my son-in-law. I would have a man in a condition to draw compassion from an usurer.'

"'Good God!' said the soldier, 'is not my condition deplorable enough?'

"'Fie!' answered the other hastily, 'you have lost only an arm, and yet you pretend to my daughter. Do you know, sir, that I have already refused her to a fellow so lame that he goes with the nether end of his galligaskins in a bowl?'

"But we must not pass by the house next to the countess's, where lives a drunken painter and a poet. The painter went out at seven this morning, with intent to fetch a confessor to his wife, who is

at the point of death; but meeting with a friend, that dragged him to the tavern, he never returned till ten at night. The poet, who, if he be not belied, has sometimes met with a melancholy reward for his satires, said just now in a coffee-house, with a swaggering air, speaking of a man who was absent: 'That is a rascal to whom I must give a good drubbing.' An arch fellow present replied: 'That you may very easily do, for you have a good stock by you.'

"I must not forget a scene worth your hearing that has passed to-day at a banker's in this street, who has lately set up in the city. It is not two months since he returned from Peru laden with riches. His father is an honest cobbler in a small village about twelve leagues from hence, where he lived thoroughly contented with his condition and his wife, who is much about the same age with himself—that is, sixty.

"It is a long time since this banker left his parents to go to the Indies in quest of a better fortune than they could expect to leave him; so that within the compass of twenty rolling years they had not seen him. They frequently talked of him, and continually prayed that Heaven would please not to forsake him; and the curate being their friend, they never failed to obtain the public prayers of the congregation for him. As for the banker, he had not forgotten them; but as soon as he was settled he resolved to inform himself of their condition. For this purpose, after having ordered his domestics not to expect him, he

mounted on horseback and went alone to the village.

"It was ten at night before he arrived, and the honest cobbler was a-bed with his wife, in a sound sleep, when their son knocked at the door. They then awoke and asked who was there. 'Open the door,' said the banker; 'it is your son Francillo.'

"'Make others believe that if you can,' cried the old man. 'You thieving rogue, go about your business, for here is nothing for you! Francillo, if not dead, is now in the Indies.'

"'He is no longer there, he has returned home from Peru,' replied the banker, 'and it is he that now speaks to you. Open your door and receive him.'

"'Jacobo, let us rise then,' said the woman, 'for I really believe it is Francillo; I think I know his voice.'

"They both rose immediately. The father lighted a candle, and the mother, after putting on her clothes with the utmost haste, opened the door. She earnestly looked on Francillo and could no longer doubt his being her son; she flung her arms about his neck and clasped him close to her. Jacobo, also touched by the same sentiments as his wife, did not fail to embrace his son in his turn; and all three, transported with the sight of each other after so long an absence, could not satisfy themselves with expressing the utmost tenderness.

"After these pleasing transports the banker unsaddled and unbridled his horse and put him into the stable, where he found an old milch cow,

FRANCILLO

the ancient nurse of the whole family. He then gave the old folks an account of his voyage, and of all the riches that he had brought from Peru. The particulars were long and would tire any disinterested auditors; but a son that unbosomed himself in the relation of his adventures could not tire the attention of a father and mother. They eagerly listened to him, and the very least circumstance that he related made in them a sensible impression either of grief or joy.

"As soon as he had ended the story of his fortunes he told them that he came to offer them part of his wealth, and begged of his father not to work any longer. 'No, my son,' said Jacobo, 'I love my trade, and will not quit it.'

"'Why,' inquired the banker, 'is it not now high time for you to give it over and take your ease? I do not propose for you to come and live with me at Madrid; I know very well that a city life would not please you. I would not disturb your quiet way of living; but at least give over your hard labour and pass your days as easily as you can.'

"The mother seconded her son, and Jacobo yielded. 'Very well, Francillo,' said he, 'to please you I will not work any more for the public, but will mend only my own shoes and those of my good friend the curate of the parish.' After this agreement the banker, fatigued with his day's journey, ate a couple of poached eggs, and lay down to sleep beside his father, with a pleasure which only the most dutiful and best-natured children to their parents can imagine.

"Next morning the banker, leaving them a purse of three hundred ducats, returned to Madrid; but yesterday he was very much surprised to see his father, Jacobo, unexpectedly arrive at his house. 'My dear father,' said he, 'what brought you hither?'

"'Francillo,' answered the honest man, 'I have brought your purse. Take your money again, I desire to live by my trade. I have been ready to die with uneasiness ever since I left off working.'

"'Well, then, father,' replied the banker, 'since you prefer it, return to your village, work at your trade sufficiently to divert yourself, but no more. Carry back the purse with you, and pray do not spare it.'

"'Alas, what would you have me do with so much money?' replied Jacobo.

"'Comfort the poor with it,' returned Francillo; 'bestow it as your curate shall advise you.'

"The cobbler, satisfied with this answer, returned that same day to his village."

Don Cleofas could not hear Francillo's story without much pleasure, and was ready to burst forth into praises of the honest-hearted banker, when just at that moment a very shrill cry called off his attention. "Signor Asmodeus," cried he, "what is that I hear? What confused noise strikes my ear?"

"Those are madmen," answered Asmodeus, "who are tearing their throats with roaring out songs; we are not far from the place where they are shut up."

"Indeed!" said Don Cleofas; "then pray do me the favour to show me them, and give me an account wherefore they went mad."

"I will immediately do so, as it will afford you diversion," answered the devil. These words were scarcely spoken ere the student was transported to the top of the Casa de los Locos.[1]

[1] The madhouse, or bedlam.

CHAPTER IX

Of the confined mad people

"HERE, you see, are lunatics of both sexes, merry and melancholy, old and young," said Asmodeus, when Zambullo had concluded a brief scrutiny of the apartments, and observed the mad men and women that were in them; "but I must now tell you what has turned their brains. We will take them in due succession, beginning with the men.

"He that is raving in the first room is a newsmonger of Castile, born in the heart of Madrid, a haughty citizen, and more jealous of the honour of his country than an old Roman. This man is melancholy mad, in consequence of reading in the gazette that twenty Spaniards had suffered themselves to be beaten by a party of fifty Portuguese.

"His neighbour is a licentiate, who has played the hypocrite at Court for these ten years merely in order to obtain a benefice; and seeing himself continually forgotten in the list of promotions,

despair has at last turned his head. But a lucky circumstance for him is that he fancies himself Archbishop of Toledo, and if he really be not so, he has the pleasure of believing the illusion. He is happy, therefore, and the more so that his madness gives him golden dreams in which he is likely to continue during his life, without the misfortune of having to account in the next world for the manner in which he has employed the revenues of his bishopric in this.

"The next is an orphan, whom his guardian has made to pass for distracted, that he might seize his estate; and the poor youth is really become so at last, out of pure grief at finding himself shut up here. Next to him is a schoolmaster, who lost his wits in search of the *paulo post futurum* of a Greek verb; and the other is a merchant, whose reason could not support the news of a shipwreck, after having had the courage to bear up against the misfortune of two bankruptcies.

"He whom you see beyond him is old Captain Zanubio, a Neapolitan gentleman, who came to settle at Madrid and ran mad with jealousy. His story runs thus:

"He had a young wife, whose name was Aurora, and whom he kept out of sight. His house was inaccessible to all men. Aurora never went out but to Mass, and was then always accompanied by her old Tithon, who sometimes took her to an estate which he had near Alcantara. Notwithstanding all his vigilant care, however, a certain gentleman, whose name was Don Garcia Pucheco, having

seen her at church, conceived a violent passion for her. He was a bold young gallant and worthy the regard of a handsome woman ill married.

"The difficulty of introducing himself to Zanubio did not remove his hopes; but his beard being not yet grown, and being a fine handsome youth, he dressed himself in girl's clothes, took a purse of a hundred pistoles and went to Zanubio's estate, where he had been informed on good authority that the captain and his wife would very soon arrive. He addressed himself to the gardener's wife, and, in a romantic, heroic strain, said to her: 'I come to throw myself under your protection; take pity on me. I am of Toledo, born of a good family and to a good fortune. My parents resolve to marry me to a man I hate, and I have this night escaped their tyranny and at present want a shelter from their rage. They will never come to look for me here. Permit me to stay with you therefore, till my relations exhibit more kindly sentiments with regard to me. Here is my purse,' added he, giving it to her: 'take it; it is all I can at present offer you. But I hope that I shall one day be able more suitably to acknowledge any service you may do me.'

"The gardener's wife, touched with his appeal, more especially with its conclusion, answered: 'My daughter, I will serve you. I know several young women who are sacrificed to old men, and know also that they are not contented with their fortune. Alas, I feel so much for them that their griefs seem partly my own. You could not have

addressed a more proper person than myself; I will place you in a small private chamber, where you shall be secure.'

"Don Garcia passed several days here very impatiently, expecting the arrival of Aurora, who at last came, accompanied by her husband. According to his custom the jealous old man searched all the apartments, closets, cellars, and garrets, to see if he could discover any man concealed there. The gardener's wife, knowing him thoroughly, prevented his searching Don Garcia's chamber by telling him in what manner the pretended lady had desired a refuge.

"Zanubio, though extremely distrustful, had not the least suspicion of the deceit. He was desirous of seeing the unknown lady, who, to be excused from the discovery of her name, pretended that she owed that concealment to her family, which she had somewhat disgraced by her sudden flight. She then told her romantic tale so artlessly that the captain was charmed with it, and began to feel a growing inclination for the fair unknown. He offered her his services, and, flattering himself that this might prove a lucky adventure, placed her with his wife.

"As soon as Aurora saw Don Garcia she blushed, and, without knowing why, grew disturbed. He perceived it, and, believing that she had observed him in the church where he had seen her, wished to satisfy himself. He watched an opportunity, therefore, to speak to her alone, and said: 'Madam, I have a brother who has often mentioned you to

me. He saw you for a moment at church ; ever since which time he has called upon your name a thousand times a day, and is in a condition which indeed deserves your pity.'

" At these words Aurora looked on Don Garcia more intently than she had previously done, and answered : ' You too much resemble that brother for me to be any longer deluded by your artifice ; I see clearly enough that you are a cavalier in disguise. I remember that one day, when I was hearing Mass, my veil suddenly flew open and you saw me. I observed you from curiosity and found your eyes always fixed upon me. When I went away I believe you did not fail to follow me, to discover in what street I lived and who I was. I believe, I say, because I durst not turn my head to observe you, fearful that my husband, who was with me, would have been alarmed, and construed it into a great crime. The next and the following days I went to the same church, where I saw you again, and took so much notice of your face that, notwithstanding your disguise, I know it again.'

" ' Madam,' replied Don Garcia, ' I must unmask then. I confess that I am a man, ensnared by your charms. It is Don Garcia Pucheco whom love has introduced to you thus disguised.'

" ' And you hope, without doubt,' said she, ' that, approving your passoin, I should favour this stratagem, and contribute to keep my husband in the error under which he now lies ; but you are deceived. I will immediately discover the whole to

him. I am glad of such a handsome opportunity of convincing him that his vigilance is less secure than my virtue, and that, jealous and distrustful as he is, it is more difficult to surprise me than him.'

"She had scarcely ended these words before the captain appeared. 'What are you talking of, ladies?' said he. To which Aurora immediately answered: 'We are speaking of those young cavaliers that attempt to win the affections of young women who have old husbands; and I was saying that if any such presumptuous persons should venture to introduce themselves to you under any disguise, I would severely punish their impudence.'

"'And you, madam,' said Zanubio, turning towards Don Garcia, 'how would you treat a young cavalier on the same occasion?' Don Garcia was so agitated and confused that he was utterly at a loss what answer to make to the captain, who would have perceived the perplexity he was in if a footman had not at that moment entered to tell him that a person was come from Madrid to speak with him.

"He immediately went to see what the messenger's business was, when Don Garcia threw himself at Aurora's feet. 'Ah, madam,' said he, 'what pleasure do you take in tormenting me! Will you really be so barbarous as to deliver me to the resentment of an enraged husband?'

"'No, Pucheco,' answered she, smiling; 'young women who have old jealous husbands

are not so cruel. Resume your courage. I was willing to divert myself by putting you into a little fright, but that shall be all ; it is not making you pay too dearly for my complaisance in suffering you to stay here.' At these comforting words Don Garcia's fears vanished, and he conceived hopes, which Aurora was not long ere she converted into realities.

" One day, when the lovers were mutually exchanging marks of their good understanding in Zanubio's apartment, the captain surprised them. Even had he not been the most jealous man in the world, he saw enough to induce him to believe, with good reason, that his fair unknown was a cavalier disguised. Enraged to the highest degree at what he had witnessed, he ran to his closet to fetch his pistols ; but meanwhile Don Garcia and Aurora escaped, double-locking all the doors after them, and carrying off the keys. They reached a neighbouring village, where Garcia had left his *valet-de-chambre* and two horses. There he abandoned his feminine attire, took Aurora behind him, and, conducting her to a convent, desired her to enter, assuring her of shelter, the abbess being his aunt. This done, he returned to Madrid to await the issue of his adventure.

" In the interim, Zanubio, finding himself locked in, loudly called on the several members of his household. A footman, hearing his voice, ran towards him, but the doors being locked he was unable to gain access. The captain endeavoured to break them open, but not being able to get out

quickly enough that way, yielding to his rage, he hastily flung himself out of a window with the pistols in his hands. He fell upon his back, hurt his head, and remained senseless on the ground. His domestics came and carried him into the hall on a couch : they threw water into his face, and, after greatly tormenting him, aroused him from his fainting fit ; but, with his senses, his rage returned. He called for his wife. The servants informed him that they had seen her and the strange lady go out at the little garden door. He commanded them to give him his pistols immediately, and they reluctantly obeyed him. He caused a horse to be saddled, and mounted it, without thinking of his wounds ; but, happening to take a different road from that which the lovers went, he passed the whole day in a vain chase, and at night, stopping at an inn in a village to repose himself, his fatigue, and the blood which he had lost, threw him into a fever and delirium which had almost carried him off.

" To tell you the rest in few words : he lay fifteen days sick in that village, after which he returned to his estate, where, continually harassed with the thought of his misfortunes, he by degrees lost his wits. Aurora's friends were no sooner informed of this than they brought him to Madrid and shut him up in the madhouse ; and his wife is yet in a nunnery, where they have resolved she shall stay some years, as a punishment for her indiscretion, though in reality it is a fault for which they deserve most blame.

"Next to Zanubio is Signor Don Blaz Desdichado, a gentleman of great merit. His wife's death has occasioned his being in the sad condition in which you see him."

"Indeed, that surprises me!" said Don Cleofas. "What! A husband run mad for the death of a wife? I did not think conjugal love had sufficient strength to produce such an effect."

"Not so fast," interrupted Asmodeus. "Don Blaz did not run mad with grief for the loss of his wife, but for being forced to restore fifty thousand ducats to his wife's relations, according to the marriage articles, which contained that stipulation in case they had no children. This has caused that poor gentleman's misfortune."

"Oh, that alters the affair," said Leandro. "I am now no longer surprised at it. But pray tell me, who is that young man in the next room, capering about like a playful kid, and stopping now and then, bursting into a laugh and holding his sides the while?"

"He is indeed a merry madman," replied the cripple, "and his madness was caused by excess of joy. He was porter to a person of quality; but hearing one day of the death of a rich contador, whose only heir he was, he was not proof against so joyful a piece of news, and accordingly his head turned.

"Behold now that tall youth who plays upon the guitar and sings to himself. He is a melancholy madman, a lover, whom the severities of his mistress have reduced to that condition."

"Ah, how I pity him!" cried the student: "allow me to deplore his misfortune; it may be every honest gentleman's case. If I should be smitten by a cruel beauty I do not myself know whether I should not lose my wits."

"By this sentiment you prove yourself to be a true Castilian; one must be born in the very centre of Castile to be capable of running melancholy mad at being unable to please. The French are not so tender; and if you will know the difference betwixt a Frenchman and a Spaniard on this head I need only repeat the song which that madman sings, and which he has but this minute composed:

"'Ardo y lloro sin sossiego:
Llorando y ardiendo tanto,
Que ni el llanto apaga el fuego;
Ni el fuego consumo el llanto.'

["I burn and weep incessantly, yet my tears do not quench the flames within me, nor do my flames dry up my tears."]

"Thus sings the Spanish cavalier when his mistress has treated him with disdain. On a similar occasion a Frenchman, a few days since, thus expressed himself:

"'The ungrateful object of my love
Is deaf to all my prayers:
Her cruel heart no sighs can move,
Nor is she touched by tears.

Was ever man so cursed as I?
The light and ever-glorious sun
Henceforth abandoned will I shun,
And in the grave with Payen lie.'"

"Payen is probably a vintner," said Don Cleofas.

"You have guessed rightly," replied Asmodeus. "But let us go on and examine the rest."

"No," said Leandro, "let us rather proceed to the women, for I am impatient to see them."

"I will comply with your impatience presently," replied the spirit; "but there are two or three unfortunate people that I shall be glad to show you first; perhaps you may be edified by their misfortunes.

"In the next room to that in which the man is playing on the guitar you may perceive a pale, meagre-faced person grinding his teeth and looking as if he intended to swallow the iron bars at his window. That is an honest fellow, born under so unlucky a planet that, with all the merit in the world, and after twenty years' endeavours, he had not been able to secure himself bread. He ran mad at seeing a little insignificant drudge of his acquaintance mount in a single day to the top of Fortune's wheel, by no other qualification than his knowledge of arithmetic.

"His next neighbour is an old secretary, whose cranium is cracked through the ingratitude of a courtier whom he had served for sixty years. He was a servant whose zeal and fidelity can never be

sufficiently commended. He never asked anything, but was satisfied with letting his attention and services speak for him. Yet his master, a very different kind of person from Archelaus, King of Macedon, who denied favours when asked and bestowed them unasked, is dead, without having made him any recompense, and left him just enough to pass his days in misery and among madmen.

"One more, and I have done. Look at him who is leaning with his elbows on the window, buried in profound meditation. He is the Signor Hidalgo of Tafalla, a small town in Navarre. He removed to Madrid and employed his money to a strange purpose; for he was mad enough to form an acquaintance with all the wits and diners-out about town, and to treat them constantly with luxuries. Every day was a day of entertainment at his house; and though the authors, an ungrateful and churlish tribe, laughed at whilst they were consuming him, yet he would never rest till he had spent all his little fortune upon them."

"No doubt," said Zambullo, "he has gone mad with vexation at having ruined himself so foolishly."

"On the contrary," replied Asmodeus, "it is to find that he is no longer in a condition to continue the same prodigality.

"Let us now go to the women."

"How happens it," said the student, "that I see but seven or eight? There are fewer mad women than I thought."

"All of them are not here," replied the demon, smiling; "but in another part of the city there is a great house quite full of them. I will carry you thither this minute, if you please."

"That is needless," answered Don Cleofas. "I will content myself with those before us."

"You are in the right," replied the cripple, "for they are almost all ladies of distinction. You may judge by the neatness of their apartments, indeed, that they cannot be ordinary women. But let me inform you of the causes of their distraction.

"The first is a corregidor's lady, whose head was turned by the outrageous passion she fell into at being called a citizen's wife by a Court signora. The second is wife to the Treasurer-General of the Council of the Indies, and she went mad with vexation at being obliged to turn her coach in a narrow street to make way for that of the Duchess of Medina Coeli. The third is a merchant's widow, out of her senses from spite at losing a magnifico, whom she hoped to marry; and the fourth is a damsel of quality, named Donna Beatrice, whose misfortune I must recount to you at greater length.

"This lady had a friend called Donna Mencia, whom she saw every day. A Knight of the Order of St Jago, a handsome, gallant young fellow, became acquainted with them, and soon made them rivals, for they both vigorously disputed possession of his heart; but he preferred Donna Mencia, who was accordingly in a short time married to him.

"Donna Beatrice, jealous of the power of her

charms, conceived a mortal enmity against her faithless lover when she found that he had chosen her rival; and, like a true Spaniard, entertained a violent desire to be revenged. She received a letter from Don Jacintho de Romarate, another lover of Donna Mencia's, wherein he told her that, being as much mortified at his mistress's wedding as she herself was, he had resolved to fight the cavalier who had robbed him of her charms.

"This was very agreeable intelligence for Donna Beatrice, who, desiring only the death of the offender, wished for nothing more than that Don Jacintho should take away his rival's life; but, whilst she was impatiently waiting for so Christian-like a satisfaction, it happened that her brother having accidentally quarrelled with Don Jacintho, they fought, and her relative received two wounds, of which he died. It was Donna Beatrice's duty to bring the murderer to justice, which, however, she neglected, in order to give him an opportunity of attacking the Knight of St Jago; thus affording proof that a woman holds no consideration so dear as that of her beauty. It was in this manner that Pallas behaved to Ajax, after the abduction of Cassandra; for the goddess did not immediately punish the sacrilegious Greek who had just been profaning her temple, but resolved that he should become an instrument in revenging her for the judgment of Paris. But, alas! Donna Beatrice, less fortunate than Minerva, did not taste the pleasure of being revenged; for Romarate perished in his encounter with the

knight, and the lady's chagrin, that an affront which had been offered to her should go unpunished, has turned her brain.

"The two mad women in the next cell are an attorney's grandmother and an old marchioness. The first, having sufficiently plagued her grandson by her ill-nature, has been at last shut up here, as the only means of getting rid of her. The other is a lady who has all her lifetime been worshipping her own beauty. Instead of growing old with a good grace, she was perpetually bemoaning the decay of her charms, and recently, happening to look into a glass that did not flatter, she lost her senses."

"As for the old marchioness," said Leandro, "I think it a lucky accident that her mind is disordered, as perhaps she is no longer conscious that time has made any alteration in her person."

"No, certainly," replied the demon. "Far from seeing anything like age in her face, her complexion seems to her a mixture of lilies and roses: the loves and graces appear at her side; and, in short, she fancies herself as captivating as the goddess Venus."

"Well, then," replied the student, "is she not happier in her madness than if she could see herself as she really is?"

"Doubtless she is," said Asmodeus. "But, hold; we have one more lady; she is in the farthest room, and has just fallen into a deep sleep after three days and nights of incessant raving. It is Donna Emerenciana. Observe her well. What say you to her?"

"I think her perfectly handsome," answered Zambullo; "how grievous it is that so charming a creature should be mad! By what accident has she been reduced to so deplorable a condition?"

"Listen attentively," replied the cripple, "and you shall hear the story of her misfortune:

"History of Donna Emerenciana

"Donna Emerenciana was the only daughter of Don Guillem Stephani, and lived in a state which might have been accounted perfectly happy, at her father's house in Siguença, till Don Ximenes de Lizana disturbed the quiet of her spirit by the gallantries he put in practice to please her. She was not only sensible of the cavalier's assiduities, but was weak enough to forward the stratagems he employed to obtain an interview with her, and soon received his troth in exchange for her own.

"The lovers were of equal rank; but the lady might have passed for one of the best fortunes in Spain, whereas Don Ximenes was no more than a younger brother. There was still another obstacle to their union. Don Guillem hated the family of Lizana, which he showed but too plainly by his discourse whenever that family was the subject of conversation. He seemed even to have a greater aversion for Don Ximenes than for the rest of his race. Emerenciana, extremely afflicted to find that such was her father's disposition, took it as an ill omen to her love. However, she did not scruple to indulge her inclinations and to converse privately

with Lizana, who was introduced to her from time to time at night by the assistance of her attendant.

"On one of those nights it happened that Don Guillem, who by chance awoke just as the lover was being introduced, thought he heard something in his daughter's apartment, which was not far from his own. There needed no more to make so distrustful a parent uneasy. However, suspicious as he was, Emerenciana's conduct had been so artful that he had never suspected her correspondence with Don Ximenes. But not being one of that sort of men who carry their confidence too far, he got up as noiselessly as possible, went and opened a window that overlooked the road, and had patience to stay there till he saw Lizana, whom he knew by the light of the moon, go down by a rope-ladder from the window of his daughter's apartment.

"What a sight was this for Stephani, one of the most revengeful and severe men that Sicily, the place of his birth, ever produced! He did not immediately yield to the dictates of his passion, but carefully avoided making any noise, which might have deprived him of the principal victim of his resentment. He put a constraint upon himself, and waited till his daughter was up next morning before he went into her apartment. There, finding himself alone with her, and looking at her with eyes sparkling with rage—'Wretch,' said he, 'who, notwithstanding thy noble blood, art not ashamed to be guilty of the most infamous actions,

prepare to suffer the punishment thou hast deserved. This steel,' he added, drawing a poniard from his bosom, 'this steel shall rob thee of life if thou dost not confess the truth. Tell me the name of the audacious villain who came hither last night to dishonour my house.'

"Emerenciana remained quite speechless, and was so confounded at her father's threats that she could not utter a word. 'Ah, wretch,' continued her father, 'thy silence and confusion are but too certain evidences of thy guilt! And dost thou imagine, unworthy girl, that I have yet to learn what has passed? Last night I saw the audacious villain: it is Don Ximenes. It was not enough to admit a cavalier into thy apartment at night, but he must be my mortal enemy too. But come, inform me how far I am injured. Speak without disguise; for it is by sincerity alone that thou canst preserve thy life.'

"The lady, at these words, entertaining hopes of escape from the dismal fate that threatened her, recovered in some measure from her fright and answered Don Guillem thus: 'My lord, I could not help hearing Lizana, but Heaven is witness of the purity of his sentiments. As he knows that you hate his family he has not yet dared to ask your consent; and it was only to confer together about the means of obtaining it that I sometimes granted him admission.'

"'And of whom did you both make use as messengers,' replied Stephani, 'to convey your letters to each other?'

" ' One of your pages,' answered the lady, ' did us that service.'

" ' That is all I desire to know,' replied the father. ' Now for my design.'

" Having said these words, with the dagger still in his hand, he made her take pen and ink and write her lover the following letter, which he dictated himself:

" ' My betrothed, only joy of my life, I hasten to tell you that my father has just gone into the country, whence he will not return till to-morrow. Make use of the opportunity. I flatter myself that you will wait for night with as much impatience as I shall.

" ' EMERENCIANA.'

" When Emerenciana had written and sealed this perfidious billet, Don Guillem bade her call the page who had so well acquitted himself of the previous missions he had been charged with and order him to carry that letter to Don Ximenes. ' But do not hope to deceive me,' added he, ' for I will lie concealed hereabouts and observe thee narrowly when thou givest it to him; and if thou sayest a word, or givest him the least sign, that may make him suspect the message, I will immediately plunge this dagger in thy heart.'

" Emerenciana knew her father's temper too well to dare venture an attempt at disobedience. She therefore gave the billet into the page's hands as usual.

" Stephani then put up his poniard, but did not

leave his daughter a moment during the day ; he would not suffer her to speak to anybody out of his sight, and managed so well that Lizana could receive no information of the snare that was laid for him. The young gentleman was punctual to the appointment. Scarcely, however, had he got within the house when he found himself immediately laid hold of by three lusty fellows, who, without giving him an opportunity of defending himself, disarmed and gagged him, for fear of his crying out, and tied his hands behind him. The moment they had accomplished this they put him into a coach, that had been prepared for the purpose ; and all three, to make sure of the cavalier, accompanied him, and carried him to Stephani's country seat, situated at the village of Miedes, about four short leagues from Siguença. Shortly afterwards Don Guillem set out in another coach with his daughter, two maids, and an old ill-natured duenna, whom he had hired that afternoon. He also took with him the rest of his household, except an old domestic, who knew nothing of the forcible restraint put upon Don Lizana.

" Before daybreak they all arrived at Miedes. Stephani's first care was to see that Don Ximenes was secured in a dungeon, which let in a small glimmering of light by a hole too narrow for a man to get through. He then ordered Julio, a servant acquainted with his designs, to give him no other nourishment than bread and water, nor any other bed than straw, and to say to him every time he carried him his allowance : ' Here, base seducer, it

is thus Don Guillem treats those who dare to injure him.' The cruel Sicilian used his daughter with no less severity; he shut her up in a room that had no external window, removed her woman, and gave her the duenna whom he had chosen for her gaoler —a duenna that could not be paralleled in the world for tormenting the young ladies committed to her charge.

"In this manner he disposed of the two lovers. But his intention was not to stop there. He had resolved to rid himself of Don Ximenes; but still he fain would have committed that crime with impunity, which it, however, seemed somewhat difficult to effect. As he had made use of his own servants to carry off the cavalier, he could not hope that a fact known to so many would perpetually remain a secret. What, then, was to be done to escape the pursuit of justice? He determined upon an expedient which exhibited him as a complete villain. He called together his accomplices into a small house apart from the castle; he told them how pleased he was with their zeal, and, in acknowledgment, promised them a large reward after he had entertained them. He made them sit down to table, and, in the midst of the entertainment, Julio, by his order, poisoned them. Then the master and the man set fire to the house; and before the flames could bring the inhabitants of the village about him they assassinated Emerenciana's two maids and the little page, whom I before mentioned, and then threw their bodies among the rest. In a short time the house was

burnt to the ground, notwithstanding all that the neighbouring peasants could do to extinguish it. During this time the Sicilian was to be seen showing signs of most immoderate grief. He appeared, indeed, inconsolable at the loss of his servants.

"Having in this manner made sure of the discretion of those in whose power it was to have betrayed him, he thus addressed himself to his confidant: 'Dear Julio, now I am at rest, and may take away Don Ximenes' life whenever I please. But before I sacrifice him to my honour I will enjoy the delicious pleasure of seeing him suffer. The misery and horror of a long imprisonment will be more cruel to him than death.' And indeed Lizana was continually bewailing his ill fortune, and, being persuaded that he should never escape from his dungeon, he wished to be freed from his sufferings by a sudden death.

"But it was in vain that Stephani hoped his mind would be at rest after such an exploit. In three days a fresh uneasiness came upon him. He was apprehensive that Julio, when he carried the prisoner his food, might be gained over by promises to become his partisan; and that fear made him determine to hasten the death of the one and afterwards to destroy the other. Julio, too, on his side, was not without his fears; and judging that his master, after ridding himself of Don Ximenes, might very probably sacrifice him to his own safety, formed the design of making his escape on the first opportunity, with everything in the house that could be conveniently carried off.

"These were the separate contrivances of those two good men, the scheme of each being unknown to the other, when they were both surprised one day, about a hundred paces from the castle, by fifteen or twenty archers of the holy brotherhood, who surrounded them, crying out as they did so: 'By order of the King, and of justice!' At this adventure Don Guillem turned pale and was confounded; but, putting a good face upon the matter, he asked the commandant what and with whom was his business. 'With yourself,' answered the officer. 'You are charged with carrying away Don Ximenes de Lizana. I am ordered to make a strict search for that gentleman throughout your castle, and to secure your person.' Stephani, being convinced by this answer that he was undone, fell into a violent rage. He drew from his belt a pair of pistols, swore that he would not suffer his house to be searched, and threatened to shoot the commandant if he did not immediately draw off with his men. The captain, despising his threats, advanced upon the Sicilian, who instantly discharged a pistol at him and wounded him in the face. But that wound cost the rash man that gave it his life; for two or three archers fired upon him that instant, and, to revenge their officer, laid him dead upon the spot. As for Julio, he surrendered himself without attempting resistance, and did not give them the trouble of asking whether Don Ximenes was in the castle, but confessed everything; and, availing himself of his wretched master's death, he naturally enough threw all the villainy on him.

"This done, he took the commandant and his archers to the dungeon, where they found Lizana fast bound, lying upon straw. The poor gentleman, who had long lived in continual expectation of death, thought that so many men in arms were not come thither for any other purpose than to kill him; but was agreeably surprised to find that they whom he took for his executioners were his deliverers. When they had unbound and brought him out of the dungeon he thanked them for his deliverance, and asked them how they came to know he was a prisoner there. 'That is,' said the commandant, 'what, in a few words, I am about to tell you.

"'On the night that you were carried off one of the persons concerned in it, who had a mistress that lived a few doors from Stephani, going to take leave of her before he set out, was so indiscreet as to discover to her Stephani's project. The woman kept the affair secret for two or three days, but as the report of the fire at Miedes began to spread over Siguença, and as it seemed strange to everybody that the Sicilian's servants should all perish in it, she bethought herself that it might be the handiwork of Don Guillem. So, to revenge her lover, she went to Don Felix, your father, and told him all she knew. Don Felix, frightened to learn that you were at the mercy of a man capable of anything, carried the woman before the corregidor, who, having examined her, did not doubt but Stephani intended that you should suffer the longest and most cruel torments, nor that he was

the horrid contriver of the fire ; and, resolving to go to the bottom of the affair, he sent me an order to Retortillo, where I live, to mount and hasten hither with my brigade, in order to search for you, and bring back Don Guillem alive or dead. I have performed my commission, in what relates to you, with success ; but I am exceedingly sorry to say that it is out of my power to carry the criminal to Siguença alive, for, by the resistance he made, he put us to the necessity of killing him.'

"The officer, having ended his story, said further to Don Ximenes : 'Signor Cavalier, I am going to draw up a report of all that has happened here ; after which we will set out, in order to relieve you from the anxiety you must feel to ease your family of the agitation they are in on your account.'

"'Sir,' cried Julio, 'I will furnish you with fresh matter to enlarge your information. You have yet another prisoner to set at liberty. Donna Emerenciana is shut up in a dark room, where a merciless duenna is continually mortifying her, never allowing her a moment's rest!'

"'O Heaven!' cried Lizana. 'The cruel Stephani, then, was not satisfied with exercising his barbarity upon me alone! Pray let us go this moment and deliver that unhappy lady from the tyranny of her governante.'

"Thereupon Julio conducted the commandant and Don Ximenes, with five or six archers, to the chamber in which Don Guillem's daughter was imprisoned. They knocked at the door, and

the duenna opened it. You may easily guess the pleasure that Lizana experienced at the sight of his mistress, after he had despaired of ever seeing her again. He felt his hopes revive, or rather he could not doubt of his happiness, since the only person that had authority to oppose it was dead. As soon as he saw Emerenciana he ran and threw himself at her feet; but who can express his grief when, instead of meeting with a mistress ready to receive his transports, he found only a lady bereft of understanding. In short, she had been so tormented by the duenna that she had gone mad. She continued for some time in deep thought, then, on a sudden, imagining she was the fair Angelica, besieged by the Tartars in the fortress of Albraca, she fancied all the men that were in the room to be so many Paladins come to her assistance. She took the captain of the holy brotherhood for Orlando, Lizana for Brandismart, Julio for Hubert of the Lion, and the archers for Antifort, Clarion, Adrian, and the two sons of the Marquis Oliver. She received them with great politeness, saying: 'Brave knights, I no longer fear the Emperor Agrican, nor Queen Marquisa: your valour is able to defend me against all the force of the universe.'

"At this extravagant discourse the officer and archers could not help laughing. But it was far otherwise with Don Ximenes, who, sensibly afflicted to see his mistress in so sad a condition for his sake, was, in turn, near losing his senses. However, he still flattered himself that she might

be brought to reason, and in this hope, 'My dear Emerenciana,' said he, with a tender air, 'behold your Lizana! Re-collect your wandering thoughts. Know that our misfortunes are at an end. Heaven would not permit two hearts which it had united to be separated; and the inhuman parent who has used us both so ill can now no longer thwart our wishes.'

"The self-constituted daughter of King Galafron's answer to this was a discourse addressed to the valiant defenders of Albraca, who for once forbore laughing. The commandant himself, though naturally far from being tender-hearted, felt some touches of compassion, and said to Don Ximenes, whom he saw borne down by his grief: 'Signor Cavalier, do not despair of your mistress's recovery. You have physicians at Siguença who, by their skill, may accomplish it. But do not let us stay here any longer. You, Lord Hubert of the Lion,' added he, speaking to Julio, 'you know where the stables of the castle are: take with you Antifort and the two sons of the Marquis Oliver. Choose the best steeds there and put them into the princess's chariot. In the meantime I will draw up my documents.'

"Upon this he took from his pocket an inkhorn and paper, and, having written what he thought proper, presented his hand to Angelica to assist her in getting down to the courtyard, where, by the care of the Paladins, they found a coach with four mules ready to set out. He put the lady and Don Ximenes into it, and then went in himself;

he took the duenna with him too, whose deposition he thought the corregidor would be glad of. Nor was that all. By the captain of the brigade's order Julio was loaded with irons and put into another coach with Don Guillem's corpse. The archers then remounted their horses, and they all set out for Siguença.

"During their journey Stephani's daughter said a thousand extravagant things, which were so many daggers to her lover. He could not look on the duenna without falling into a passion. 'It is you, cruel old hag,' said he, 'it is you that have harassed Emerenciana by your cruel treatment and turned her brain!'

The governante excused herself with a hypocritical air and threw all the blame on the deceased. 'It is to Don Guillem alone,' answered she, 'that this misfortune is owing. That too severe parent came every day and terrified his daughter with his menaces, which at last drove her distracted.'

"As soon as the commandant arrived at Siguença he went and gave an account of his commission to the corregidor, who, upon the spot, interrogated Julio and the duenna, and sent them to prisons in the city, where they still remain. He also examined Lizana, who then took his leave and went home to his father's, where his presence converted the sorrow and uneasiness of his family into joy. As for Donna Emerenciana, the corregidor took care to send her to Madrid, where she had an uncle by her mother's side. This good relation, who only wanted to have the administration

of his niece's estate, could not handsomely avoid appearing to desire her recovery, and applied to the most celebrated physicians. Nor had he any occasion to repent it; for, after considerable pains had been thrown away, they pronounced her incurable. Upon this decision the guardian immediately shut up his charge here, where, according to all probability, she will spend the rest of her days."

"Cruel destiny!" cried Don Cleofas. "I am sincerely grieved for her. Donna Emerenciana deserved a better fate. But what is become of Don Ximenes?" inquired he. "I should be glad to know what resolution he has taken."

"A very reasonable one," replied Asmodeus. "When he saw that the evil was without remedy he set out for New Spain, and he hopes that his American travels will, by degrees, erase from his mind the remembrance of a lady whom his reason and repose require him to forget. But," pursued the demon, "having shown you the mad folks who are confined, I must let you see those who deserve to be so."

CHAPTER X

Containing matter which is inexhaustible

"TURN your eyes towards the city, and as I discover any subjects worthy to be placed amongst those that are here I will give you their respective characters. I already see one which I will not suffer to escape. It is a newly married man, who eight days since was told of the coquetries of a jilt whom he loved. Enraged, he went to her, broke part of her furniture, threw the rest out of the window, and the next day married her."

"Such a man," said Don Cleofas, "certainly deserves the first vacancy in this asylum."

"He has a neighbour not much wiser than himself," replied Asmodeus, "a bachelor of forty-five, who has sufficient to live on, and yet would enter a nobleman's service. I see a lawyer's widow, a good woman, who is above sixty; her husband is just dead, and she is going to retire to a convent in order to preserve her reputation, as she says, from scandal.

"I discern also a couple of maidens, or at least two damsels, of above fifty, each offering their prayers to Heaven to take their father, who keeps them as closely locked up as though they were under age. They hope, after the old gentleman's

death, to find handsome men who will marry them for love."

"And why not?" said the student; "there are men in the world of a taste sufficiently whimsical for that."

"I grant," replied the devil, "that it is not impossible for them to find husbands, but they ought not to flatter themselves with such hopes; it is in this that their folly consists.

"There is no country in the world where the women tell their age truly. About a month since a maid of forty-eight and a wife of sixty-nine went before a commissary to testify for a widow of their acquaintance, whose virtue was questioned. The commissary first interrogated the married woman as to her age, and though it was as plainly expressed in her forehead as in the church register, yet she boldly ventured to say she was but forty. He next interrogated the maiden. 'And you, madam,' said he, 'how old are you?'

"'Let us pass on to the other questions, sir,' answered she, 'for these are improper ones to be put to us.'

"'You do not consider what you say, madam,' replied the commissary; 'do you not know that in judicial cases the truth ought always to be told?'

"'No law obliges us to do so,' answered the maiden hastily.

"'But I cannot take your deposition,' said he, 'if your age be not to it, for that is a material circumstance.'

"'If it be absolutely necessary,' replied she,

'look upon me intently and put my age down according to your conscience.'

"The commissary looked in her face, and was polite enough to set her down as twenty-eight. He then asked whether she had long known the widow.

"'I knew her before her marriage,' said she.

"'Then I have mistaken your age,' replied he, 'in setting you down at but twenty-eight, for it is twenty-nine years since the widow was married.'

"'Well, sir,' returned the maiden, 'write me down thirty, then. I might at a year old know the widow.'

"'That will scarcely be regular,' replied he; 'let us add a dozen.'

"'No, indeed,' interrupted she; 'all that I can possibly afford is to add one year more, and I would not put an additional month if it were to save my reputation.'

"When these two ladies were gone from the commissary's the married woman said to the other: 'I wonder that impertinent fellow should take us for such fools as to tell our ages truly. Is it not enough indeed that they are registered in the parish books? But the rude fellow would have them upon his papers, that all the world may be informed of the matter! Would it not be admirable to hear it bawled out in court: 'Mrs Richards, aged so many years, and Mrs Perinelle, aged forty-five, depose so and so?' Well, I bantered him sufficiently. I sunk a good round twenty

years upon him; and you have done very well in suppressing so many.'

"'Pray what do you call so many?' answered the maiden rather tartly; 'you rally me who am at most but five-and-thirty.'

"'Ha!' replied the other, with an angry air, 'whom do you tell that to? Was I not present at your birth! It is a long time since indeed. I remember also to have seen your father, who when he died was not young, and that is now above forty years since.'

"'Oh, my father, my father,' hastily interrupted the virgin, enraged at the other's freedom; 'betwixt you and I, when my father married my mother he was too old to be the father of a family.'

"I observe in the same house," continued the spirit, "two men who are not overwise. One is the only son of the family, who can neither keep any money nor be happy without it. When he has cash he buys books, and when his purse begins to be empty he sells them for half what they cost him. The other is a foreign painter, who draws ladies' portraits. He is a great artist. He paints well, draws correctly, and hits a likeness extraordinary well, but does not flatter, and yet is so weak as to think he ought to be crowded with business. *Inter stultos referatur.*"

"How," said the student, "you speak Latin to a miracle!"

"Ought you to wonder at that?" said the devil. "I speak all languages in perfection, even not excepting that of Athens, which I speak a

hundred times better than a certain set of men who at present value themselves on speaking well, and yet I am neither the greater fool nor the vainer for it.

"Cast your eye into that great house on the left, wherein is a sick lady surrounded by several women who watch with her. It is the widow of a famous rich architect, who is consumed with an affectation of nobility. She has this day made her will, by which she bequeaths her immense riches wholly to persons of the highest rank; not that she so much as knows any one of them, but only for the sake of their great titles. She was asked whether she would not leave something to a certain person who had done her considerable services. 'Alas, no,' answered she, 'and yet I am concerned for him. I am not so ungrateful as not to own that I have obligations to him; but he is only a yeoman, and his name would disgrace my will.'"

"Signor Asmodeus," interrupted Don Cleofas, "I beg you would inform me whether that old man, whom I see reading so intently in a closet, may not perhaps merit to be placed here."

"He deserves it beyond dispute," answered the demon. "He is an old licentiate in divinity and is reading a proof-sheet of a book he has in the press."

"The subject must certainly be moral or divine," said the student.

"No," replied the demon, "it is a miscellany of lewd poems which he has written. Instead of burning them, or at least suffering them to die with their author, he prints them in his lifetime,

for fear his heirs should not be inclined to publish them after his death, or, out of regard to his character, should deprive them of their peculiar gust and spirit.

" I should do wrong to pass over a little woman who lives with the licentiate. She sets so high a value on her very limited powers of attraction that she is drawing up a list of her lovers, in which she inserts almost all men who ever spoke to her.

" But let us come to a rich canon that I discern about two paces farther, tainted with a very objectionable folly. He lives frugally, though it is neither from mortification nor sobriety, but to amass riches. For what? To distribute in alms? No. He buys pictures, rich furniture, jewels, china, and baubles — not to enjoy the use of them during his life, but merely that they may figure in the inventory of his effects."

" What you tell me is unnatural and forced," interrupted Don Cleofas. " Is there really a man in the world of this character? "

" Yes, there is indeed," replied the demon; " he is one of that kind of madmen. If, for instance, he buys a very fine cabinet, he causes it to be packed up neatly and locked in his garret, that it may appear perfectly new to the brokers who are likely to buy it after his death. In short, he pleases himself with the thought that the catalogue of his goods will be admired.

" Let us proceed to one of his neighbours, whom you will think quite as mad. He is a bachelor, lately arrived at Madrid from the Philippine

Islands, and is owner of a vast estate, left him by his father, who was auditor of the Court of Manila. His conduct is very extraordinary, for he is to be seen passing the whole day in the antechamber of the King or of the chief Minister. Not that he has the ambition to solicit any great post. No, he neither desires nor asks any. How, then, say you, does he go thither purely to make his court? You are farther off still: he never speaks to the Minister, neither is he known to him, nor does he desire to be so. What, then, can his motive be? Why this: he wishes to make the world believe that he has an interest there."

"A very diverting original," cried the student, bursting into a laugh. "But this is giving oneself a great deal of trouble to very little purpose; and I think you are right to rank him amongst the mad people that ought to be confined."

"Oh, as to that," replied Asmodeus, "I can show you a great many more, whom it would be a great error to think a whit more in their senses. For example, do but look into that great house where you see so many wax tapers lighted up, and three men and two ladies round a table. Now these people have just supped, and are at present sitting down to cards, in order to spend the rest of the night, after which they will part. They meet regularly every night and part at daybreak to go to sleep till darkness has banished the sight of the sun and of the beauties of nature; and this is the life these gentlemen and ladies lead. Would you not say, to see them in the midst of so many candles,

that they are so many dead people waiting for the last office to be done them?"

"Well, then," said Don Cleofas, "there is no occasion for shutting up these fools; they are shut up already."

"I see in the arms of sleep," replied the cripple, "a man whom I love, and who has a particular affection for me—a man moulded according to my heart's desire. He is an old graduate, who idolizes the fair sex. You cannot mention a pretty girl to him but you find he listens to you with extraordinary pleasure. If you tell him she has a small mouth, red lips, ivory teeth, or a complexion of alabaster—in a word, if you are the least particular in your description—he sighs at every feature, turns up his eyes, and dissolves in raptures. It is but two days since, that, passing by a shoemaker's shop in the street of Alcala, he stopped short to admire a very small slipper which he saw there; and, having surveyed it with much more attention than it deserved, he said, with a languishing air, to a gentleman who was with him: 'Ah, my dear friend, there is a slipper that enchants me! What a pretty, charming foot it must be that it was made for! But let us begone, for I am so much pleased with it that it is dangerous to me to pass through, much less remain, in this street.'

"We must mark this graduate with black," said Leandro Perez.

"Right," replied the devil, "we must so. Nor must his neighbour be marked with white; an original of an auditor who, because he has an

equipage, blushes with shame whenever he is obliged to make use of a hackney-coach. And I think we may place in the same rank one of his relations, a licentiate, who, though he is a dignitary, and has a vast revenue in a church at Madrid, yet almost perpetually goes in a hackney-coach to save two very neat carriages and four fine mules of his own that he has in the stable.

"In the neighbourhood of the worthy graduate and auditor I perceive a man who must not be denied the justice of being placed amongst the mad folks, a cavalier of sixty making love to a young girl. He sees her every day, and thinks to make himself agreeable by entertaining her with a narrative of all the conquests he made in his younger days, and would have her esteem him for his having formerly been handsome.

"In the same category with this gentleman let us place another who is asleep about ten paces from us, a French count, who is come to Madrid to see the Spanish Court. This old nobleman is upwards of seventy, and in his youth made a figure at the Court of his own king. All the world at that time admired his shape and gallant air, and his taste and manner of dress charmed all who saw him.

"Now this gentleman has preserved all his clothes, and worn them these fifty years, in spite of the mode, which in his country changes every day. But the most amusing circumstance is that he imagines he has the same graces at this day which were admired in him in his youth."

"We need not reflect long upon this matter," said Don Cleofas. "Let this French lord go into the number of those that ought to be boarders at the Casa de los Locos."

"I keep a room there," replied the demon, "for a lady that lives in a garret on one side of the count's palace. She is an elderly widow who, out of a mistaken tenderness for her children, has made over all her estate to them, excepting a very small allowance to subsist on, which her children have engaged to make her, and which, from the excess of their gratitude, they take great care not to pay.

"I must likewise send thither an old bachelor of a good family, who no sooner has a ducat in his pocket than it is gone; and yet, not being able to support the want of money, he will do anything to acquire it. About a fortnight ago his laundress, to whom he owed thirty pistoles, came and desired him to pay her, telling him she wanted it in order to be married to a *valet-de-chambre* who courted her. 'You must have other money then,' said he, 'for what poor devil of a *valet-de-chambre* would have you with only thirty pistoles?'

"'Oh dear, yes, sir,' said she, 'I have two hundred ducats besides.'

"'Two hundred ducats!' said he eagerly. 'Gadso! Then you have nothing to do but to give them to me and I will marry you; so we shall be even.'

"His laundress took him at his word and is now his wife.

"Let us keep three places for those three men just come from supper in the city, who are now stepping into that house on the right, where they live. One of them is a count, who sets up for a lover of polite learning. The other is his brother, a licentiate; and the third is a wit that depends on them. They are inseparable, and never visit except together. The count's sole business is to praise himself; that of the licentiate to praise his elder brother and himself; and the wit's business is of still greater extent: he praises both of the brothers, intermixing his own commendations with theirs.

"Two more places must be reserved: one for an old citizen, a great florist, who, having scarcely enough to subsist on, is for keeping a gardener and his wife to look after a dozen of flowers in his garden; the other is an actor, who, complaining of the disadvantages incident to his mode of life, said the other day to some of his companions: 'Indeed, gentlemen, I am so tired of this profession that I would even rather be an insignificant country gentleman of a thousand ducats a year.'

"Let me turn on which side I will," continued the spirit, "I meet with nothing but people disordered in their senses. There is a knight of Calatrava, so proud and vain of private conversations with the daughter of a grandee that he thinks himself upon an equality with the highest personages at Court. He is like Villius, who fancied himself Sylla's son-in-law because he was esteemed a

friend by the dictator's daughter. The comparison is the more pat, as this knight, like the Roman, has a Longarenus, a good-for-nothing fellow of a rival, who stands higher in her good graces than himself.

"One would be apt to say that the same men from time to time spring up again, only with different features, for in that Minister's secretary one may discover Bolanus, who kept no measures with anybody, and affronted every man whose countenance did not please him. In that old president one sees Fufidius over again, who used to lend his money at five per cent. per month. And Marsæus, who gave his family seat to the comedian Origo, lives again in that heir of the family, who is wasting in debauchery with an actress the money he received for a country house he has near the Escurial."

Asmodeus was going on, when on a sudden he heard the tuning of instruments, upon which he broke off and said to Don Cleofas:

"At the corner of this street there are some musicians going to serenade the daughter of an alcalde of the Court, and if you have a mind to be nearer the diversion you need only speak."

"I love these concerts mightily," answered Zambullo. "Let us go nearer to the musicians; perhaps there may be some good voices amongst them."

He had scarcely spoken when he found himself upon the house adjoining that of the alcalde.

The instruments began the concert with several

Italian airs, after which the following couplets were sung, by two voices, alternately :

Si de tu hermosura quieres
Una copia con mil gracias ;
Escucha, porque pretendo
El pintar la.

II

Es tu frente toda nieve
Y el albastro, batallas
Offreciò al amor, haziendo
En ella vaya.

III

Amor labrò de tus cejas
Dos arcos para su aljava ;
Y debaxo ha descubierto
Quien le mata.

IV

Eres duena de el lugar
Vandolera de las almas,
Iman de los alvedrios,
Linda alhaja.

Un rasgo de tu hermosura
Quisiera yo retratarla,
Que es estrella, es cielo, es sol ;
No es sino el alva.

Which, being translated, would read thus :

I

If you would hear a description of your charms, and of your beauty, listen to me, for I am going to depict them.

II

Your face, pure as snow, and clear as alabaster, has bidden Love, who made it, defiance.

III

Love has made of your eyebrows two bows for his quiver ; but he has discovered that death lurks beneath them.

IV

You are the sovereign of my home, the stealer of hearts, the fanner of desires, a pleasant bijou.

V

I would fain, with one stroke, describe your beauty. It is a star, a heaven, a sun : no, it is the dawn of a delicious morning.

" These couplets are gallant and delicate," said the student.

" That is because you are a Spaniard," replied the demon ; " translated into French they would not be much admired. Readers of that nation would not approve of the figurative expressions, but would discover in them signs of a too ardent imagination, which would set them laughing.

Every nation is prepossessed in favour of its own taste and genius. But to have done with those couplets," continued he, " you shall hear another kind of music.

" Turn your eyes upon those four men who have suddenly appeared in the street. See, they fall upon the serenaders, who make use of their instruments to defend themselves; but not being able to withstand the force of the blows, the instruments fly into a thousand splinters. Behold two gentlemen come to their assistance, one of whom is the patron of the serenade. See with what fury they charge the aggressors, who, being of equal courage and address, receive them with good grace. What fire flashes from their swords! One of the defenders of the concert falls! It is he who gave it. He is mortally wounded. His companion, who perceives his mischance, takes to his heels; the aggressors also make off, and the musicians disappear. The poor unfortunate cavalier alone, whose serenade has cost him his life, remains on the spot. Observe at the same time the daughter of the alcalde, whom vanity has brought to her window to observe all that is passing; and, though a plain, ordinary creature, she is so mistakenly proud of her beauty that, instead of deploring the sad effect of her charms, the cruel wretch is delighted with the mischief she has occasioned, and thinks herself upon that account the more amiable.

" Yet that is not all," added Asmodeus. " Behold another gentleman, who, coming up to him

that lies drowned in his own blood, endeavours as far as possible to help him ; but while he is employed in that charitable office you see that he is seized by the watch, who pounce upon him and drag him to prison, where he is doomed to remain a long time : nor will he suffer less than if he had been really the murderer."

" Heavens ! " exclaimed Zambullo, " how many misfortunes have happened this night ! "

" Yet," replied the demon, " those you have witnessed will not be the last. At this moment, if you could present yourself at the gate of the sun, you would be startled at a sight already prepared there. By the carelessness of a servant a fire has arisen in a large house, and already reduced a great many valuable things to ashes. But whatever precious effects it may consume, Don Pedro de Escolano, whose magnificent residence it was, will not regret the loss of them if he can save his only daughter, Seraphina, who is in danger of being burnt."

Don Cleofas instantly desired to be an eye-witness of the fire, and the cripple flew that instant with him to a large house directly opposite that in which the fire had broken out.

CHAPTER XI

Of the fire, and what Asmodeus did on that occasion from friendship to Don Cleofas

THEY immediately heard a confused noise of people, some crying out "Fire!" and others calling for water, and presently saw the grand staircase leading to the principal apartments of Don Pedro's house in flames; after which, in a minute, volumes of fire and smoke burst from the windows.

"The fire rages," said the demon; "it has already mounted to the roof, and begins to make a passage there, and to fill the air with sparks. It has reached such a height, indeed, that although people flock from all parts to extinguish it they can do no more than stand by as spectators. You may distinguish amongst the crowd an old gentleman in a *robe de chambre*; he is Signor de Escolano. Listen to his cries and lamentations! He is addressing himself to the people that are about him, and conjuring them to rescue his daughter. But it is to no purpose that he promises a large

reward, for nobody will expose his own life to save the lady, though she is but sixteen years of age, and of incomparable beauty. Seeing his prayers and entreaties for assistance are in vain he tears his hair and moustachios, beats his breast, and, from excess of grief, behaves like a madman. In the meantime Seraphina, abandoned by her women, has swooned with fright in her apartment, and will in a short time be stifled with the thick smoke, for no mortal man has power to help her."

"Ah, Signor Asmodeus," cried Leandro Perez, moved by generous compassion, "yield, I pray you, to the emotions of pity which I feel, and reject not my entreaties to save that lady from impending death. It is the only recompense I ask for the service I have rendered you. Do not oppose my desire as you did just now, for if you refuse me I shall die of grief."

The demon smiled to hear the student talk thus. "Signor Zambullo," he said, "you have all the qualifications of a true knight-errant: you have bravery, compassion for the sufferings of others, and zealous promptitude for the service of young and distressed ladies. Have you not a mind to throw yourself into the midst of those flames, like an Amadis, in order to deliver Seraphina and restore her safe and sound to her father?"

"Would to Heaven the thing were possible!" answered Don Cleofas. "I would undertake it without a moment's hesitation."

"Aye," replied the cripple, "though death should be the reward of your fine exploit. I have

already told you that human valour can avail nothing, and if the matter be meddled with at all it must be by myself. I will undertake it to content you. See how I go about it; observe all my operations."

He had hardly uttered these words when, assuming the likeness of Leandro Perez, to the student's great amazement, he glided in among the crowd, pressed through, and darted into the midst of the flames, as into his proper element, in the sight of the spectators, who were terror-stricken by the action, and expressed their feelings by a loud shriek.

"What madman is this?" exclaimed one. "Can avarice have so far blinded him? Were he not a perfect idiot the promised reward could have been no temptation to him."

"This rash young fellow," said another, "must certainly be a lover of Don Pedro's daughter, who, urged by excess of grief, has resolved to rescue his mistress, or perish with her."

In short, they anticipated nothing less than that he would experience the fate of Empedocles,[1] when, in a moment, they saw him emerge from the flames with Seraphina in his arms. The air rang with the acclamations of the multitude, who could not sufficiently praise the bold cavalier who had performed so brave an act; for, when rashness is crowned with success, it finds none to blame it, and though it was in reality a prodigy, it appeared

[1] A poet and philosopher of Sicily, who threw himself into the flames of Mount Etna.

merely as the natural consequence of Spanish courage.

As the lady was still in a swoon her father dared not give himself up to joy, being afraid that after she had been so happily snatched from the flames she might die in his sight, by the terrible impression which the danger she had encountered must have left on her brain. But he was soon relieved of his fears, for, by the care that was taken of her, she soon came to herself, and, casting her eyes on the old gentleman with an air of tenderness, said:

"Sir, I should be more afflicted than rejoiced to find my life preserved if yours were not also saved."

"Ah, my dear child," answered he, embracing her, "since you are safe I am indifferent to anything else. Let us return our thanks," continued he, at the same time presenting the counterfeit Don Cleofas to her, 'let us both return our thanks to this young gentleman, your deliverer. It is to him you owe your life. We cannot be sufficiently grateful to him; nor is the promised reward sufficient to release us from the debt due to him."

Here the demon took up the discourse, and with a polite air said to Don Pedro:

"My lord, the reward you proposed had no temptation to induce the service which I have had the happiness to render you. I am of noble birth, and a Castilian. The pleasure of drying your tears, and of preserving from the flames the charming object they were about to consume, is a recompense more than sufficient for me."

The disinterestedness and generosity of their deliverer inspired Signor de Escolano with great esteem for him. He invited him to his house, and desired his friendship in return for his own. After many compliments on both sides the old gentleman and his daughter retired to a small apartment at the end of the garden; upon which the demon went back to the student, who, seeing him return in his original form, said:

"Sir Demon, either my eyes deceived me, or you were just now in my likeness."

"Pardon me," said the cripple, "and I will acquaint you with the reasons for that metamorphosis. I have formed a great design, for I intend that you shall marry Seraphina, and, under your form, I have inspired her with a violent passion for your lordship. Don Pedro, too, is well pleased with you, because I told him that my only view in rescuing his daughter was the pleasure of obliging him and her, and that the honour of bringing so perilous an adventure to a happy issue was sufficient recompense for a gentleman and a Spaniard. The good man, who has a noble mind, will not be outdone in generosity, and I must tell you he is at this moment considering whether he shall not make you his son-in-law, in order that his gratitude may keep pace with the obligation which he thinks he has incurred to you.

"Whilst he is determining I will carry you to a more favourable place for continuing your observations."

CHAPTER XII

The lovers

"I MUST confess," said Cleofas, "that the observations you have already made are very instructive, but they tend to things for which a man of my age and complexion can have but little relish. You must remember that it was a love adventure which brought me the honour of your acquaintance; and, dear Cupid, since you preside over amours, confine your discourse to what you are master of. Show me, then, the joys and anxieties, the policy and follies of lovers, if you would impart to me useful knowledge."

"I should be loth," said the demon, "to give you that information, for fear of losing a votary, did I not know that it is inseparable from lovers to see and yet indulge their misery and weakness; for which reason I am under no apprehension of your growing wiser from the folly of others."

"But, prithee," quoth the student, "before you proceed further, let me know that gentleman who is striking fire at his tinder-box. Do you observe how he appears and vanishes as the sparks fly about him?"

"That vigilant person," replied Asmodeus, "is a lover who has been this evening in his mistress's company. She, in her discourse on different things,

prefaced two or three remarks with a customary phrase: 'There are some people in the world.' This he took no notice of at the time she uttered it; but on second thoughts, in his own lodgings, he wisely discovered that she must have meant him by that ambiguous expression. After taking several turns in his chamber he called for pen, ink and paper, kicked his footman downstairs, and resolved to tell his mistress plainly that he knew whom she aimed at in her late reflections. He had scarcely written the first line of his letter, however, before he paused to consider attentively the whole circumstances of the case. A sudden thought set all right again, and convinced him that not only were his suspicions groundless, but that he was still in her good graces. He immediately became one of the most satisfied men in the world, went to bed in the height of good humour, gave his servant a crown, and bade him good-night."

"What disaster," asked Cleofas, "can have befallen him since? He seems now to blow his tinder in an unusual hurry. See how his cheeks swell and his eyes glare! It is the most dreadful night-piece I ever saw."

"You must know," said the demon, "that he had composed himself with great tranquillity for half-an-hour, and was just falling asleep, when he started and bethought himself: 'If she did not mean me, who could she mean?' This threw him into so great a ferment that he jumped out of bed, with a resolution to do something, which, as yet, neither he nor I can divine."

"I heartily pity the poor fellow," said Cleofas, "for I find he loves in earnest."

"Had he not," replied the demon, "she had been his own before now; but it is the frailty of the sex to prefer an affected to a real passion."

"That is a frailty," answered the student, "into which they may naturally fall. A personated lover can assume all the graces and avoid all the imperfections of the passion. Disquietudes, jealousies and expostulations always accompany, but very ill recommend, a heart thoroughly enamoured. But look! the man has lighted his candle and blown it out again."

"Aye," said the demon, "he was quieted the very moment he had lighted it by calling to mind that he had one day heard his mistress say nothing was so graceful in a man as a high forehead, which you may observe he has, to the apparent detriment of his chin, cheeks and eyes."

"On how slight a foundation depends the happiness and misery of lovers!" cried Cleofas. "Perhaps she who creates all this disorder is in perfect tranquillity."

"That you shall see immediately," said Asmodeus. "Cast your eyes on the great house at the corner of the same street. A watch-light will discover to you a lady lying half out of bed, talking to her servant, who sits by her side. You must understand, by the way, that the waiting-woman of a lady in love never goes to bed till four in the morning. As soon as she has undressed and laid her mistress on her pillow the business of putting

the latter to rest is but begun; for then the poor lady's-maid must sit down by her, hear her thoughts concerning the loved one, and confute all her suspicions of his infidelity or want of love. And by the time the good lady is ten times thoroughly convinced, and her maid as often perjured, in hopes to be dismissed, the story has to begin again. The present anguish of our wakeful vestal is occasioned by a merry tale that the gentleman in his shirt told her in their last conversation, which diverted her so much that she is afraid he who could talk with so much humour is not sufficiently sentimental. This gives her a thousand fears that he has broken his fetters; but she now receives comfort, her maid having almost persuaded her that the person for whom her ladyship has so much tenderness left the house with a sigh, and, in all probability, is at this moment upon the rack."

"I know by experience," said the student, "that there is nothing so disagreeable to one in her ladyship's condition as a state of indifference; your true lover must be always giving either pleasure or pain. But who is that pretty creature yonder, sighing before her glass at this time of night? Why does she bite her lips, glance around, and examine her face on so many different points?"

"You know," said Asmodeus, "the custom among you young fellows of publishing a list every winter of the beauties who are to be the tyrants of the year, and to have their healths

drank by crowds of second-hand lovers who never saw them, but are to be enamoured by hearsay, and die for them because it is the fashion. The lady before us, after a reign of three years, was left out in yesterday's nomination, which is the reason of her present contemplation. She appeals to her glass against the injustice of the electors. To be revenged on the town she now resolves to marry a faithful lover she has long laughed at, and spend the remainder of her life in devotion; but, upon surveying herself more narrowly, she fancies that things are not come to such an extremity, and intends to dress, and try the fortune of her features in all public places for another year, in order to revive her pretensions against the next election. But we must not dwell so long on particulars.

"Yonder is a young lady getting out of a window to run away with her father's footman; and at that corner is a lord with a coach-and-six, waiting to steal a mantua-maker's journeywoman. The gentleman you see in the porch has made an assignation to meet his mistress in that place at seven o'clock in the morning, and, in order to be in time, took his station at ten last night."

"Excuse interruption," said the student, "but pray tell me the circumstances of the person yonder who lies on his back with uplifted hands and head erect, like a figure on a tomb; he seems falling asleep in an act of devotion. It is the only person I have seen piously employed; he is taken up much better than in the vanities which occupy his neighbours."

"Perhaps not," answered the demon. "He lies motionless, as you see, that a plate of lead on his forehead may have its due effect in preserving its smoothness. His hands are tied up that they may be white in the morning, and his waist braced up with an iron bodice to preserve his shape. In this extraordinary posture he is calling upon cruel Belinda; and, amidst a thousand cutting reflections on the ill success of his passion, it is no small mortification to him that, by the itching on the left side of his nose, he feels that he shall have a pimple there before morning."

"Pray tell me," said Cleofas, "the history of the studious gentleman who stands in his night-gown, rapt in thought and gazing upon his candle. He rubs his head as if it teemed with some extraordinary project."

"Ha, my friend Leandro," said the demon, "are you there? This gentleman, about fifteen years ago, fell in love with a young widow, who did not discourage his addresses. He is a good-natured, sensible fellow, and excessively fond of his fair idol, but at the same time so remarkably modest that he cannot find courage to reveal his passion and ask the widow's consent. She has given him a thousand opportunities of breaking the matter to her, and he has made as many resolutions of doing it the next time he sees her; but they are no sooner left together than he falls into confusions and palpitations, looks like an ass, and wishes somebody would come into the room to disembarrass him and spoil an opportunity that

perhaps he has been longing for for several months before. She took him yesterday into the fields. The lover, who would have given half his estate for so favourable an occasion, began praising the prospect, and, after a great many efforts to enter on the grand affair, finally resolved to put it off till another time.

"His passion began in the year 1692, and in 1695 was in a fair way for success, had he pressed it. Ever since that time he has been endeavouring to communicate his feelings, but his heart fails him, and it is very probable his fire may consume itself to cinders before he has courage to kindle it into a blaze."

"This would have been a rare fellow to have made love before the Deluge," said Cleofas. "A man might then have languished a hundred years for a girl, and afterwards, upon her disdain, have had two or three centuries of youth for other courtships. But at present love, marriage, and repentance are drawn into a span. We must settle our amours as soon as possible, if we intend to taste the sweets of them."

"But," replied Asmodeus, "commend me to that busy gentleman whom you see in a pensive posture, writing. He is a passionate—that is, an angry—lover; an honest soul, who shows his sincerity to his mistress by never disguising his resentments. This morning he took the innocent freedom of shaking her by the shoulder and calling her an unworthy baggage; upon which, after having deliberated whether he ought to

hang himself or beg her pardon, he has just written to her a penitential letter, wherein he subscribes himself the vilest of men and most miserable of lovers."

"Unhappy wretch! Let him go to sleep if he can," said the student. "But I grow sick with looking upon fools so like myself. Show me now the weakness of the enemy, and let me see whether, with all these disadvantages, we are not equal to the sex we have to deal with."

"There is hardly one of them," said the demon, "who does not destroy, by her insolence, the passion she raises by her beauty.

"If you had as good ears as I you would hear that lady, who frisks to and fro in her apartment with so much uneasiness, cry, 'Coxcomb! Fop! Clown! Novice!' at every little stop she makes in her walk. The cause of her misery is that, according to form, she told a homely fellow with a good estate, who proposed to her, that she wondered he could make her such an offer, and solemnly protested she could never like him. The swain believed her and is gone to his country-seat; upon which she is now deliberating on the best means of explaining to the rustic the nature of fashionable gallantry, and making him understand that a man's profession of love and a woman's refusal, in this refined age, are equally mere words."

"But I observe a lady who, of all that I have yet seen," said Cleofas, "inspires me with the greatest compassion. Her streaming eyes and

dishevelled hair bespeak her a perfect Magdalen. What can be her distress? Who could have caused affliction to a creature made up of so much gentleness?"

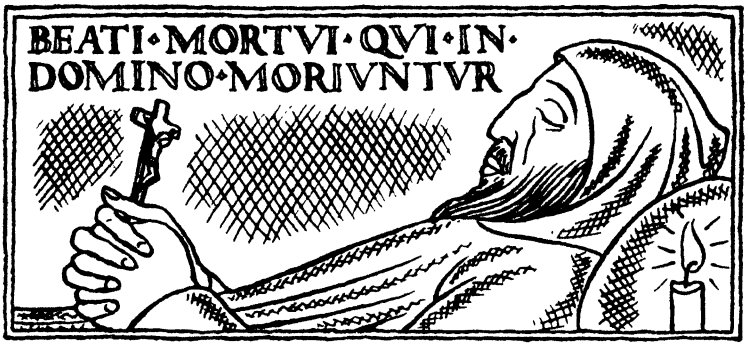
"That disconsolate lady," answered Asmodeus, "was three hours ago one of the greatest coquettes in Madrid, and is breaking her heart now for want of knowing the truth time enough. She had loved a gentleman of merit, but played with his passion and her own till he grew tired of the chase, and yesterday disposed of himself to another. It is for this reason that she this night abandons herself to prayer and hartshorn, and intends to-morrow to shut herself up in a nunnery for ever. But it would be an endless task to show you the vanities of the sex; all their thoughts, words, and actions tend to display and ostentation, for which they sacrifice their liberty, their pleasures, and even their lives. Look at the sumptuous apartment in yon palace, and the wrought bed that reaches to its roof. Do you not see in it an old man who has just fallen asleep, and by his side a beautiful young lady admiring a picture in miniature? The avarice of her mother tore her from the gallant whose figure she is contemplating, to bury her in the embraces of one she loathes. All the hopes she has now left are to lay her shrivelled adorer in a winding-sheet and one day or other to resign herself to the arms of her first lover. At the next house is a more diverting sight. The brute who staggers into the chamber is reeling to the bed of that delicate creature, whom her prudent parent prostituted to

his embraces. The sot was rival to a man of excellent character; their fortunes were equal, but I dare say you will laugh at the merit which occasioned the preference of this worthy by the provident mother. He had a pigeon-house upon his estate, which the other wanted; this turned the balance in his favour and determined the fate of that unfortunate lady."

"If you can show only unhappy effects of this passion," said Cleofas, "I had rather be entertained with another set of objects."

"Do not be discouraged," answered the demon, "at the pictures I have placed before you. There are in life some pleasing amours and happy marriages, though these are not to be found in Madrid. To give you a sight of connubial happiness I should transport you to solitude and retirement, where love is a stranger to gallantry, and lives amidst its own genial sweets—complacency, mutual esteem, and eternal constancy—without being diverted by false appearances, which, under pretence of advancing its enjoyments, vitiate the true relish for them. It is when spirits like me behold mortals in this condition that we suffer our greatest pangs of envy, and wish for flesh and blood to taste the gratification bestowed upon them."

Having thus spoken, Asmodeus conveyed the student to the roof of a high church, filled with magnificent monuments, erected in honour of the illustrious dead.



CHAPTER XIII

Of tombs, spectres, and death

"WITHHOLD your reflections on the living," said the demon, "and let us for a few minutes disturb the repose of the dead buried within this church. Let us examine these tombs, lay open what they conceal, and see wherefore they were erected.

"The first of those which you see on the right hand contains the remains of a general officer, who, like another Agamemnon, at his return from the army, found an Ægisthus in his house. In the second is a young cavalier of noble family, who, being desirous of displaying his address and vigour before his mistress at a bullfight, was cruelly torn to pieces by one of the beasts which he encountered. And in the third lies an old prelate, too soon hurried out of the world in consequence of making his will in perfect health, and reading it to his domestics, to whom, like a good master, he had bequeathed legacies. His cook was unable to wait.

"In the fourth mausoleum rests the body of a courtier, who never gave himself any trouble but to make his court. For sixty years he was daily seen at the levée, dinner, and supper of the King, who loaded him with favours as the reward of his assiduity."

"But, really," said Don Cleofas, "was this man good for anything else?"

"For no kind of thing," answered the demon. "He was lavish of his offers of service, but never in his lifetime kept his word."

"The wretch!" replied Leandro. "Were superfluous members to be cut off from civilized society, this sort of courtiers ought to be the first."

"The fifth tomb," pursued Asmodeus, "contains the mortal remains of a nobleman, whose zeal for his country's service and his sovereign's glory was ever uppermost in his heart. His whole life was spent in embassies to Rome, France, England, and Portugal; and he so fairly ruined himself by them that when he died he had not enough to bury him. The King, therefore, was at that expense, in gratitude for his services.

"Let us go to the monuments on the other side. The first is the sepulchre of a rich trader, who left his children an immense fortune; but, fearing that their wealth might make them forget their origin, he had his name and profession engraved upon his tomb, which his present descendants are not very well pleased with.

"The next mausoleum, which surpasses all the

rest in magnificence as a work of art, is looked upon with admiration by all travellers."

"Why, really," said Zambullo, "I think it deserves to be so looked on! But I am, above all, charmed with those two figures kneeling; they seem so admirably finished. The sculptor that wrought them must have been an able workman. But pray tell me what the persons they represent might have been in their lifetime."

"You see," replied the cripple, "a duke and his consort; he was grand butler to the King, and filled his post with great reputation, while his wife lived in strict devotion. I must acquaint you with a circumstance of this good duchess's life, which, I fancy, you will think whimsical enough in one who professed so much devotion. It was this:

"The lady had long retained as her confessor a monk of the Order of Mercy, named Don Jerome d'Aguilar, a good man and famous for his preaching, with whom she was very well pleased, till a Dominican appeared at Madrid, who preached in such a manner as to enchant all who heard him. This new orator was called Father Placide. People flocked to hear him as much as to hear the sermons of Cardinal Ximenes. And the Court, having been pleased, upon his great reputation, to go to hear him, was even more pleased with him than the city had been.

"Our duchess at first made it a point of honour to hold out against the preacher's renown, and to resist the curiosity that inclined her to go and judge for herself of Father Placide's eloquence.

She behaved in this manner in order to show her spiritual director that, like a delicate and sensible penitent, she partook of those feelings of anger and jealousy which this new-comer might have given him. Yet there was no possibility of her always holding out against him. The Dominican made so much noise in the city that she at last yielded to the temptation of seeing him; and not only saw him, heard him preach, liked him, and followed him, but at last the little inconstant creature formed a design to make him her confessor.

"Her first step was to get rid of the monk of La Mercy—not a very easy task, for a spiritual guide is not to be cast off like a lover. A devotee would not willingly pass for fickle, nor lose the esteem of the confessor she is abandoning. What then did our duchess, think you? She went to Don Jerome and said to him, with as melancholy an air as if she had been really afflicted: 'Father, I am in despair; you have amazed, grieved, and inconceivably perplexed my mind.'

"'In what manner, madam?' answered d'Aguilar.

"'Would you believe it,' replied she, 'my husband, who always reposed entire confidence in my virtue, after having seen me so long under your direction, without showing the least disquietude at my conduct, has suddenly become suspicious and jealous, and will not suffer you longer to be my confessor. Did you ever hear of such caprice? I told him that he not only insulted

me, but a man of profound piety, and one who was free from the tyranny of passion. But my arguments were vainly urged. I only increased his mistrust by defending you.'

"Don Jerome, notwithstanding all his good sense, believed this story, though indeed she had told it with an air that would have deceived all the world. He was vexed to lose a penitent of such importance, yet nevertheless exhorted her to obey her husband's will. But his reverence's eyes were opened, and he discovered the whole trick, upon hearing that the lady had chosen Father Placide for her future confessor.

"Next to this grand butler and his cunning spouse," continued the demon, "a plainer tomb conceals the ridiculous conjunction of an aged dean of the Council of the Indies with a young wife. This old fellow, in his grand climacteric, married a girl of twenty. He had two children by a former wife, and was just on the point of disinheriting them when apoplexy carried him off, and his young wife died four-and-twenty hours after, with vexation that he did not live three days longer.

"We now come to the most sacred monument in this church. The Spaniards have as much veneration for it as the Romans had for that of Romulus."

"Of what great man does it contain the ashes?" asked Leandro Perez.

"Of a first minister of the Court of Spain," answered Asmodeus. "Never will the kingdom,

perhaps, behold his equal. The King threw all the cares of government on this great man, who so well discharged his trust that both the King and his subjects were very well pleased with him. The State, under his administration, was always flourishing, and the people happy. In short, this able minister was a man of great religion and humanity; yet, notwithstanding that he had nothing to reproach himself with on his death-bed, he could not help trembling to think of the delicacy of the position he had occupied.

"A little beyond this minister, whose loss deserves to be for ever regretted, you may distinguish, in a corner, a black marble tablet fixed to one of the pillars. Shall I open you the sepulchre beneath it and show you the remains of a citizen's daughter, who died in the flower of her age, and whose beauty charmed all eyes? Now she is nothing but dust, though, whilst living, she was so lovely that her father was under continual uneasiness lest some lover should run away with her, and, had she lived a little longer, such a thing might have happened. Three cavaliers, who idolized her, were inconsolable at the loss of her, and all killed themselves to signalize their despair. Their tragical story is written in letters of gold on that marble tablet, where three small figures represent the three despairing gallants, who are going to make an end of themselves. One of them is swallowing a glass of poison, the second falls upon his sword, and the third is putting a cord about his neck, in order to hang himself."

The demon seeing the student at this moment laugh very heartily, and please himself at the sight of the maiden's epitaph adorned with those three figures, said to him :

" Since this fancy so delights you, I can hardly forbear transporting you this instant to the banks of the Tagus, in order to show you the monument which a dramatic author caused to be built in the church of a village near Almaraz, whither he retired after leading a long and joyous life at Madrid. This author had given to the theatre a great number of comedies full of witty obscenities ; but having repented before his death, and being resolved to atone for the scandal his pieces had caused, he ordered a sort of funeral pyre to be engraved upon his tomb, made of books, representing some of the pieces he had written, with Modesty setting fire to them with a lighted torch.

" Besides the dead interred in the tombs I have shown you there are a vast number of others buried in a plainer manner. I see all their spectres wandering about, continually passing and repassing each other in their walk, without disturbing the profound silence that reigns in that holy place. They do not indeed discourse together ; but, though they are silent, I can read all their thoughts."

" What a mortification it is to me," cried Don Cleofas, " not to be able to enjoy the pleasure of seeing them as you do ! "

" I can give you that satisfaction," said Asmodeus, " with the greatest ease." At the same

time the demon laid his hands on his eyes, and, by an illusion, made him see a great number of phantoms clothed in white.

At the apparition of so many spectres Zambullo shuddered.

"How!" said the devil. "Do you tremble? Are you afraid of these shadows? Do not let their dress scare you; accustom yourself to it betimes, for it is what you in your turn must wear, and is the livery of the departed. Reassure yourself therefore, and fear nothing. Can you, who could bear the sight of me, want courage now? These people are not half so mischievous as I."

The student, at these words, recalling all his firmness, looked boldly upon the phantoms.

"Observe these shadows attentively," said the demon; "those who have superb mausoleums are, without distinction, confounded with those whose monuments are no more than a pitiful coffin. The adventitious circumstances which distinguished them one from the other are now at an end. The grand butler and the first minister are now no more valued than the meanest citizen buried in this church. The grandeur of those noble manes finished with their lives, as that of stage heroes concludes with the play."

"I observe one thing," said Leandro: "a melancholy spectre walking by himself and seeming to shun the company of his brethren."

"Say, rather, that the rest shun his," answered the demon, "and you will be right. Know you whose that shadow is? It is that of an old notary

who had the vanity to be buried in a leaden coffin, which has so shocked all his plebeian companions, whose bodies were more modestly laid in the ground, that, to mortify him, they will not suffer his shade to mix among them."

"I have just observed another circumstance," replied Don Cleofas: "two of the phantoms, as they passed, stopped a moment to look at each other and then retired."

"They are," answered the devil, "those of two intimate friends, one of whom was a painter, and the other a music-master, both a little given to drinking, else very honest fellows. They died in the same year, and when they met just now, struck with the remembrance of their old pleasures, they failed not to say, though each preserved a melancholy silence: 'Ah, friend, our drinking days are over.'"

"Bless me!" cried the student, "what is that which has just caught my sight? At the end of the church there are two spectres walking together; but how ill they are matched! Their shape and gait are very different. One is unreasonably tall, and walks with all imaginable gravity, and the other is very short, and seems to be flying into the air."

"The tall one," replied the cripple, "is a German, who lost his life in a debauch by drinking three healths with tobacco in his glass; and the short one, a Frenchman, who, following the gallant spirit of his nation, took it into his head to present a young lady with holy water at her entrance into

the church, and as he was going home on the same day was stretched on the earth by a blunderbuss, as the reward of his politeness.

"I, in my turn," said Asmodeus, "am observing three remarkable phantoms whom I distinguish from amongst the crowd, and I must tell you in what manner they were separated from their corporeal dust. They once animated the gay and pretty bodies of three actresses, who, in their time, made as much noise at Madrid as Origo, Cytheris, and Arbuscula made at Rome in theirs; and who, as well as they, possessed, in the greatest perfection, the art of diverting men in public and ruining them in private. But mark the end of these three celebrated Spanish actresses. One died suddenly of envy on hearing the plaudits of the pit on the evening when a young actress came on the stage; the other found, in excess of good eating and drinking, the death that is its infallible consequence; and the third, overheating herself in playing the part of a vestal, died of a premature labour behind the scenes.

"But let us leave all these shadows at peace," continued the demon; "we have seen enough of them. I intend to present to your view an object that ought to make a stronger impression upon you, and will, by the help of the same power that enabled you to perceive the phantoms, make Death visible to you. You shall contemplate this cruel enemy of mankind, who is incessantly hovering unperceived over man, and who, in the twinkling of an eye, flies from the uttermost parts

of the earth and, in the same moment, makes all the nations that inhabit it feel the vast extent of his power.

"Look towards the east: behold, he there offers himself to your view! A numerous troop of birds of ill omen fly before him with terror, and proclaim his approach by dismal cries. His indefatigable hand is armed with a terrible scythe, under which fall successively all generations. On one of his wings are painted war, pestilence, famine, shipwreck, and conflagration, with the other sad accidents which every instant furnish him with a new prey. On his other wing are to be seen young physicians taking their doctor's degree in the presence of Death, who invests them with the cap, after they have sworn never to dispense medicine otherwise than according to the present practice."

Though Don Cleofas was persuaded that there was nothing real in all that he saw, and that it was merely to amuse him that the demon exhibited to him Death under that form, yet he could not look on it without shuddering. Becoming reassured, however, he said to the demon:

"Will this frightful figure be content to pass over Madrid? Without doubt he will leave some signs of his passage."

"Certainly," replied the cripple; "he does not come hither for nothing. And, if you have any inclination to do so, you may be witness of his operations."

"I take you at your word," replied the student.

"Let us follow him and see upon what unhappy families his fury will fall. Alas, how many tears are to be shed!"

"Doubtless," answered Asmodeus, "and a great many among them counterfeit ones; for Death, notwithstanding the horror that accompanies him, causes as much of joy as of sorrow."

Our two spectators took their flight, in order to follow and observe Death. The first place he entered was a citizen's house, where the master was in the last extremity. Death touched him with his scythe, and the good man expired in the midst of his family, which was immediately dissolved in tears.

"Here," said the demon, "is no counterfeiting; the wife and children of this citizen loved him tenderly, and, independently of their affection, they required his services, for he was their sole means of support. Hence, in their tears, there is no dissimulation.

"It is the reverse, however, in the scene passing in the next house, where you see Death striking an old man in bed. He is a counsellor, who has lived miserably and continued a bachelor in order to amass vast riches for three nephews, who flew to his house the moment they heard he was drawing near his end. They have played their parts extremely well, by counterfeiting deep sorrow. But see, they are throwing off the mask, preparing to behave as heirs; after playing the grimace of relatives they are going to rifle everywhere. What heaps of gold and silver will they find! 'Oh, the

pleasure!' said one of his heirs just now to the others; 'oh, the delight reserved for nephews who have stingy old uncles that renounce all the pleasures of life merely that their successors may enjoy them!'"

"A fine funeral oration, truly," said Leandro Perez.

"On my word," replied the demon, "there are few long-lived rich fathers who ought to expect better, even from their own children.

"Whilst these young heirs, swimming in joy, are in search of the treasures of the deceased, Death is stealing towards a sumptuous palace, where lies a young grandee, sick of the small-pox. This nobleman, one of the most amiable of the Court, is about to be cut off in his prime, notwithstanding the celebrated physician who has him under his care; or perhaps, rather, because he has him under his care.

"Observe with what rapidity Death performs his operations. He has already determined the period of that young magnate's life, and is ready for another expedition. He stops over a convent, descends into one of the cells, falls upon an honest friar, and cuts the thread of a penitent and mortified life, which he has led for forty years. Death, all terrible as he is, has not alarmed this last victim; but, in return, he is entering a palace which he will fill with alarm, for he is making his approaches to a licentiate of quality, lately nominated to the bishopric of Albarazin. That prelate thinks of nothing but the preparations in progress for his

going down to his diocese with all the pomp and splendour which nowadays are inseparable from dignitaries of the Church, and death is, of all things, the farthest from his thoughts. Yet he is this moment beginning his journey to the other world, where he will arrive with as thin a train as the poor friar, and I question whether he will be so favourably received."

"Good Heaven!" cried Zambullo. "See, Death is about to pass over the King's palace, and I am afraid the barbarian, with one stroke of his scythe, will put all Spain in consternation!"

"You have reason to tremble," said the cripple, "for he has no more respect for kings than for footmen. But," added he, a moment after, "take courage: he has nothing to say at present to the monarch, but is busy with one of the courtiers, one of that sort of creatures whose only employment is to follow and make their court to him. They are easily spared, their places are so soon filled up."

"But, methinks," replied the student, "Death is not content with taking off that courtier. Look, he makes another pause on the Queen's apartment."

"He does so," answered the devil, "and to do her a very good turn too. He is determined to slit the windpipe of a wicked old woman, whose pleasure consists in sowing dissensions in the Queen's Court, and who fell sick with vexation at seeing two ladies, whom she had set together by the ears, sincerely reconciled.

"Listen; you will hear some very piercing

cries," continued the demon. "Death has just entered that splendid house to the left, where one of the most melancholy scenes that ever was represented on the theatre of the world is going to be acted. Fix your eyes on that deplorable spectacle."

"I see," said Don Cleofas, "a lady who tears her hair and struggles in her female attendant's arms. Why does she appear so afflicted?"

"Look into the opposite apartment," answered the demon, "and you will see the cause. Observe the man who lies on that stately bed; it is her husband, expiring, and she is, therefore, inconsolable. Their story is affecting, and deserves to be written. I have a great mind to tell it you."

"You will oblige me," replied Leandro. "I am not less sensible to objects of compassion than diverted by those of ridicule."

"It is somewhat long," answered Asmodeus, "but too full of incident to be tiresome. Besides, to tell you the truth, devil as I am, I am tired with running after Death! So let us leave him in search of fresh victims."

"With all my heart!" said Zambullo. "I should be better pleased to hear this history, with which you have promised to entertain me, than to see the whole race of man perishing one after another."

Thus enjoined, the devil, having set the student upon one of the highest houses in Alcala Street, began the relation in the following terms:—

CHAPTER XIV

The power of friendship

"A YOUNG cavalier of Toledo, accompanied by his *valet-de-chambre*, travelled by long journeys from his native country to avoid the consequences of a tragical adventure. He was scarcely two leagues from Valencia when, at the entrance of a wood, he saw a lady hastily descending from her coach. No veil covered her face, wherein the most perfect beauty shone. This charming lady seemed so greatly agitated that the cavalier, conceiving she wanted assistance, did not fail to tender his devoir, as became a good knight.

"'Generous unknown,' said the lady, 'I embrace your offer. Heaven seems to have sent you to my assistance, and to avert the misfortune which I dread. Two cavaliers are met by hostile appointment in this wood; scarcely a minute ago I saw them enter. I can tell you no more, but, if you please to follow me, you shall know the whole.'

"Having uttered these words she hastened into the wood, and the Toledan, leaving the care of his horse to his man, made after her as fast as he could.

"They had hardly advanced a hundred paces ere they heard the clashing of swords, and soon discovered two men furiously engaged. The

Toledan hastened to separate them, which having done, partly by force and partly by entreaty, he inquired the cause of their quarrel. 'Brave unknown,' said one of the cavaliers, 'my name is Don Fadrique de Mendoça, and my adversary is Don Alvaro Ponce; we both love Donna Theodora, the lady whom you accompany. She has always slighted our attentions, and, notwithstanding all the gallantry that love could suggest for her pleasure, the obdurate fair one would never treat us with more kindness. As for me, I designed to continue her slave, in spite of her indifference; but my rival, instead of taking the same resolution, has thought proper to send me a challenge.'

"'It is true,' interrupted Don Alvaro. 'I concluded that if I had no rival Donna Theodora might look on me, and therefore I sought to take the life of Don Fadrique, in order to rid myself of a man that stood in the way of my happiness.'

"'Gentlemen,' said the Toledan, 'I do not approve of your combat; it is an insult to Donna Theodora. It will soon be known throughout Valencia that you have fought on her account; and your mistress's honour ought to be dearer to you than either your repose or your lives. Besides, what could the vanquisher gain even from victory? After making light of his mistress's reputation, could he expect that she would look on him with a more favourable eye? What blindness! Take my advice: make a noble effort to control your passions; prove more worthy of the names which you bear; repress these furious transports, and,

by an inviolable oath, engage yourselves to subscribe the articles of accommodation which I shall propose to you. Then your quarrel shall end without bloodshed.'

"'Ha! How?' asked Don Alvaro.

"'This lady must declare,' replied the Toledan, 'whether she prefers Don Fadrique or you; and the unfortunate lover, instead of arming against his rival, must leave to him an open field.'

"'I consent,' said Don Alvaro, 'and swear by all that is most sacred to acquiesce in her choice, whether she determine in favour of me or of my rival; for even that preference will be more supportable than the miserable uncertainty under which I now labour.'

"'And,' said Don Fadrique in his turn, 'I call Heaven to witness that if the divine object which I adore does not pronounce in my favour, I will remove myself far from the sight of her charms; and, if I cannot forget her, at least I will see her no more.'

"The Toledan then, turning towards Theodora, said: 'Madam, it is in your power, with a word, to disarm these two rivals; you need only declare whose constancy you will reward.'

"'Sir,' answered the lady, 'seek some other expedient to reconcile them. Why should I be the victim of their misunderstandings or agreements? I have a high esteem for both Don Fadrique and Don Alvaro, but I do not love either of them; and it is unjust that, to avoid the shame their duelling might cast upon my honour, I

should be obliged to give hopes which my heart will never permit me to realize.'

"'It is too late to dissemble, madam,' replied the Toledan; 'you must declare your decision. Both these cavaliers are equally handsome, and I am certain you have more inclination for one than the other. Remember the mortal agony in which I first saw you.'

"'You misinterpret my fears,' replied Donna Theodora. 'The loss of either of these gentlemen would sensibly affect me, and I should never cease to blame myself on their account, even though only the innocent cause; but if you saw me alarmed, it was for my own reputation, which I knew must unavoidably suffer through their rashness.'

"Don Alvaro Ponce, who was naturally ferocious, at these words lost all patience. 'It is enough!' said he warmly. 'Since the lady refuses to end this dispute amicably, the sword shall immediately decide it.' Saying which, he made a pass at Don Fadrique, who was prepared to receive it.

"The lady, rather affrighted by this action than determined by inclination, cried out in amazement: 'Hold, gentlemen! I will satisfy you. If there be no other way to end an engagement in which my honour is concerned, I declare that I give the preference to Don Fadrique de Mendoça.'

"She had no sooner ended these words than the discarded Ponce, without uttering a syllable,

hastened to loosen his horse, which was fastened to a tree, and, retiring, cast a look of fury on both his rival and his mistress. The happy Mendoça, on the contrary, was overwhelmed with joy, at one moment falling on his knees before Donna Theodora, at another embracing the Toledan, utterly unable to find expressions of sufficient force adequately to convey the sentiments of gratitude which affected him.

"In the meantime the lady, becoming more tranquil after the departure of Alvaro, began to reflect what anxiety she had incurred by accepting the addresses of a lover, whose merit though she esteemed, yet in whose favour her heart had never been prepossessed.

"'Signor Don Fadrique,' said she, 'I hope you will not abuse the preference which I have given you. You are indebted solely to the necessity to which I was reduced to decide betwixt you and Don Alvaro—not but that I value you more than him, and know that he has not all the good qualities which you have; and at the same time I shall but do you justice in saying that you are the most perfect cavalier in Valencia. I will even further own to you that the addresses of one like yourself might flatter any woman's vanity. But how enviable soever it may be for me, I must tell you that I look upon them with so little pleasure that you are really to be pitied for loving me so sincerely as you appear to do. I will not yet deprive you of all hopes of touching my heart. My indifference, perhaps, may be only the effect of the yet remaining

grief which seized me a year since for the loss of Don Andrea de Cifuentes, my husband. Though we did not live long together, and he was of an advanced age when my parents, dazzled with his riches, obliged me to marry him, yet was I greatly afflicted at his death, and shall continue to regret it all my life.

" ' And, indeed, did he not deserve my sorrow ? He was not one of those jealous, ill-natured old men who, never being able to persuade themselves that a woman can be discreet enough to forget their decaying health and manhood, continually watch all her motions, or entrust that charge to a duenna devoted to their tyranny. Alas ! he had such entire confidence in my virtue as even a young husband, though adored, is scarcely capable of. Besides, his compliances were endless. I dare venture to say that his sole care was to prevent my having a single desire ungratified. Such was Don Andrea de Cifuentes. You may easily judge, then, Mendoça, that it is not easy to forget a man of so amiable a character. He is always present in my thoughts, which does not a little contribute, doubtless, to divert my attention from whatever is done to please me.'

" Don Fadrique could not help here interrupting Donna Theodora. ' Ah, madam,' cried he, ' how happy am I to learn from your own mouth that it was not aversion to my person that induced you to despise my addresses ! I hope you will one day yield to my constancy.'

" ' It will not be my fault if that day does not

arrive,' replied the lady, 'since I allow you to visit me, and sometimes even to speak of your love. Inspire me with a taste for your gallantries; use all your efforts to make me love you. I will never conceal from you any favourable sentiments which I may entertain for you. But if, after all your endeavours, you cannot gain my heart, remember, Mendoça, that you will have no reason to reproach me.'

"Don Fadrique would have replied, but had not time, for the lady took the Toledan by the hand and hastily turned towards her carriage. He loosened his horse, which was tied to a tree, and, leading him by the bridle, followed Donna Theodora, who entered her carriage with as much precipitation as she had before left it, though the occasion was utterly different. The Toledan and Don Fadrique accompanied her on horseback to the gates of Valencia, where they parted — she going to her own house, and Don Fadrique with the Toledan to his.

"Fadrique made his companion sit down, and, after having well entertained him, he asked what circumstances brought him to Valencia, and whether he thought of making a long stay there.

"'I shall continue here as short a time as possible,' answered the Toledan. 'I came this way only to go towards the seaside, to embark in the first vessel which sails from the coast of Spain; for I care not much in what part of the world I finish the course of an unfortunate life, provided it be far distant from these fatal shores.'

" ' What is it can have set you thus against your country,' replied Don Fadrique, surprised at the Toledan's discourse, ' and make you hate what all men naturally love ? '

" ' After what has happened,' returned the Toledan, ' my country is odious to me, and I desire nothing in the world but the means of quitting it for ever.'

" ' Ah, sir,' said Mendoça, touched with compassionate anxiety, ' how impatient am I to know your misfortunes ! If I cannot relieve I will share your pains with you. Your air and countenance have prepossessed me in your favour, your deportment charms me, and I feel deeply interested in your fortune.'

" ' It is the greatest consolation I am capable of receiving, Don Fadrique,' answered the Toledan ; ' and, in some measure to acknowledge the kindness you have manifested towards me, I must also tell you that, when I saw you with Don Alvaro Ponce, my inclinations declared on your side. A spontaneous emotion, of which I was never before sensible at first sight of any person, made me fear lest Donna Theodora should prefer your rival, and I was much delighted when she determined in your favour. You have since strengthened that first impression so much that, instead of hiding the cause of my uneasiness, I earnestly desire to reveal it to you, and shall find a secret pleasure in unbosoming myself to you. Attend, then, to the relation of my misfortunes.

" ' Toledo is my native city, and Don Juan de

Zarate my name. Almost in my infancy I lost those who gave me life, so that I began betimes to enjoy an annual estate of four thousand ducats, which they left me. My heart and hand being at my own disposal, and believing myself rich enough not to consult anything but my inclination in the choice of a wife, I married a young lady, perfectly beautiful, without reflecting on the small fortune she possessed, or the inequality of our conditions. I was charmed with my happiness, and, to give the greater zest to the pleasure of possessing her I loved, a few days after my marriage I carried her to an estate which I have some leagues from Toledo.

"'We lived there in most agreeable union, when the Duke of Naxera, whose seat adjoins my estate, came one day, when he was hunting, to refresh himself at my house. He saw my wife and was enamoured of her; at least, I suspected so. And what fully convinced me of the fact was that he immediately became extremely urgent to obtain my friendship, upon which he never before set any value. He introduced me to his hunting friends, forced me to accept several presents, and made me many pressing offers of his service.

"'Being very much alarmed by his passion, I determined to return to Toledo with my wife. And doubtless that thought was inspired by Heaven, for had I wholly deprived the Duke of all opportunities of seeing her I should have avoided those misfortunes which have befallen me; but my confident reliance on her virtue

deceived me. I thought it impossible for a woman whom I had married without fortune, and raised from humble condition, to be so ungrateful as to forget my favours. Alas, into what an error of judgment did I fall! Ambition and vanity, those two vices natural to the sex, were her great faults.

" ' As soon as the Duke had gained an opportunity to discover his sentiments she was secretly pleased at such an important conquest. The passion of a man adorned with the title of " Excellency " tickled her pride and filled her mind with extravagant chimeras: whence she began to value him more and me less; and all that I had done for her, instead of exciting her gratitude, served but to render me more contemptible in her eyes. She looked on me as a husband unworthy of her beauty, and fancied that if this grandee, who was now conquered by her charms, had seen her before she became a wife, he would certainly have married her. Intoxicated by these vain imaginations, and seduced by some valuable presents, she yielded to the Duke's secret and urgent importunities.

" ' They frequently wrote to each other without my even suspecting their correspondence; but at last I was unhappy enough to be cured of my blindness. One day, returning from hunting sooner than usual, I went into the apartment of my wife, who did not expect me so early. She had just received a billet from the Duke, which she was preparing to answer. She could not conceal from me her confusion. I trembled, and, finding

pen, ink, and paper ready on a table, I concluded that she had betrayed me. I pressed her to show me what she was writing, which she so resolutely refused that I was obliged to use violence to satisfy my jealous anxiety ; and, notwithstanding all her resistance, I tore from her bosom a letter containing these words :

" ' " Shall I for ever languish in expectation of a second interview ? How cruel are you to give me the most enchanting hopes, yet so long delay their fulfilment ! Don Juan goes every day hunting, or to Toledo. Should we not make use of these opportunities ? Have more regard to the ardent fires which consume me. Pity me, madam : consider that, if it be a pleasure to obtain the fulfilment of our desires, it is deep torment to wait long for their enjoyment."

" ' I could not read through this letter without the utmost transports of rage. I clasped my dagger, and at first was tempted to take the life of that faithless wife, who had deprived me of my honour ; but considering that this would only be to revenge myself by halves, and that my resentment required yet another victim, I conquered my rage, dissembled, and said to my wife, with as little disturbance as possible : " Madam, you were to blame to hearken to the Duke ; the lustre of his high birth and rank ought not to have dazzled your eyes ; but young women are fond of pompous titles. I am willing to believe that this is all that has yet passed between you, and that you have not yet done me the last injury. I will

excuse your indiscretion, provided you return to your duty and, becoming truly sensible of my tenderness, promise to think of nothing more than to deserve it."

" ' After these words I retired to my apartment, as well to leave her to regain her tranquillity as because I wanted to recover from and cool my rage, which had sufficiently inflamed me. If I could not regain my temper I at least put on an easy air for two days ; and on the third, pretending to have business of the greatest consequence at Toledo, I told my wife that I was obliged to leave her for some time, and entreated her to guard and preserve her honour during my absence.

" ' I left her, but, instead of going to Toledo, I privately returned home at the beginning of the night and concealed myself in the chamber of a faithful domestic, where I could see whoever entered my house. I did not doubt of the Duke's being informed of my departure, and concluded he would not neglect the opportunity. I hoped to surprise them together, and promised to gratify myself with entire vengeance.

" ' But I was deceived in my expectations, for, instead of finding my house preparing for the reception of a lover, I saw, on the contrary, the doors closely shut at their time. And three days passing without the appearance of the Duke, or even any of his servants, I persuaded myself that my spouse had repented of her fault and broken off all manner of communication with the Duke.

" ' Possessed with this opinion I discarded all

desire of revenge, and, yielding to the emotions of a love which angry resentment had suspended, I flew to my wife's apartment, embraced her with transporting raptures, and said: "Madam, I restore you all my esteem and tenderness. I have not been to Toledo; I pretended that journey only to try you. You ought to pardon a snare laid by a husband whose jealousy was not groundless. I feared that your mind, seduced by splendid illusions, was not capable of undeceiving itself. But, thanks to Heaven, you are sensible of your error, and I hope nothing for the future will ever disturb our mutual felicity."

"'My wife seemed touched by these words, and letting fall some tears—"How unhappy am I," said she, "to have given you reason to suspect my virtue! Though I have to the last degree abhorred that fault which so justly irritated you against me, my eyes have in vain kept from closing these two days to make way for my tears; yet, for all my grief and remorse, I shall never regain your entire confidence in me."

"'"I restore it to you, madam," said I, perfectly softened by the sorrow which she expressed. "I will no more remember what is past, since you so sincerely repent."

"'Accordingly, from that moment, I had the same regard for her as before, and began again to relish those pleasures which had been so cruelly interrupted. The zest of them, indeed, was heightened; for my wife, as though she had resolved to efface from my mind all marks of the

injury she had done me, was much more solicitous to please me than ever. I found her caresses more tender, and almost rejoiced at the discontent which had occasioned this happy change.

" ' I then fell ill, and, though my disease was not dangerous, it is not to be imagined what fears my wife discovered. She stayed all day with me, and during the night, I being in a separate apartment, she constantly came two or three times to satisfy herself how I was. She seemed extremely solicitous to anticipate all my wants, and her life seemed to have become dependent on mine. On my side, I was so sensible of all the marks of tenderness which she showed me that I could never sufficiently testify my acknowledgments to her ; and yet, Mendoça, they were not so sincere as I believed.

" ' One night, when I began to recover, my *valet-de-chambre* awoke me. " My lord," said he, in great confusion, " I am obliged to disturb your repose, as I am too faithful to conceal what is now acting in your house. The Duke of Naxera is with my lady."

" ' I was so stupefied at this news that for some time I looked on the fellow without being able to speak. The more I thought of what he told me the less I believed it. " No, Fabio," cried I, " it is impossible that my wife should be guilty of such perfidy ! You cannot have ascertained the truth of what you say."

" ' " My lord," replied Fabio, " would to Heaven it were possible for me to doubt it ! But I have

not been deceived by false appearances. Ever since your indisposition I have suspected the Duke of being nightly introduced into my lady's apartment. To-night I hid myself to remove my suspicions, and am now but too well convinced that they are just."

" ' At these words I arose, distracted with rage, took my night-gown and sword, and went straight to my wife's apartment, accompanied by Fabio, who lighted me. At the noise of our entrance the Duke, who sat on the bed, arose, and, snatching a pistol from his girdle, fired at me, but with such confusion and precipitation that he missed me. I then rushed violently upon him and ran my sword through his heart. I next addressed myself to my wife, who was more dead than alive. " And thou," said I, " infamous woman, receive the reward of thy treachery and crimes ! " At these words I plunged my sword, yet reeking in her lover's blood, into her breast.

" ' I condemn my passion, Don Fadrique, and own that I might have sufficiently punished a perfidious wife without taking away her life. But what man could retain the control of his reason under such circumstances ? Picture to yourself the demonstrations of concern this false woman exhibited at my illness, the thousand nameless attentions to deceive me, the enormity of the treason, and judge whether a husband, fired with just rage, ought not to be pardoned for her death.

" ' To conclude so tragical a story in few words. After having fully satiated my vengeance I dressed

with the utmost haste, concluding that I had no time to lose, that the Duke's relations would seek for me throughout Spain, and that, the interest of my family not being sufficient to balance theirs, I should never be safe till I had reached a foreign country. I therefore selected two of my best horses, and, with all the money and jewels I had, left my house before day, followed by the servant who had so well proved his fidelity. I chose the road to Valencia, designing to put myself on board the first vessel bound for Italy; and this day, passing near the wood where you were, I met Donna Theodora, who entreated me to follow her and endeavour to part you.'

"When the Toledan had ended, Don Fadrique said: 'Don Juan, your revenge on the Duke of Naxera was just; do not, therefore, disturb yourself at the pursuit his relations may make. You shall, if you please, stay with me until an occasion offers to embark for Italy. My uncle is Governor of Valencia, and you will be safer here than anywhere else, and will, besides, be with a man who desires for the future to be engaged to you by the strictest ties of friendship.'

"Zarate answered Mendoça in terms full of acknowledgment and accepted the offered refuge. The power of sympathy is very surprising, Don Cleofas," pursued Asmodeus. "These two young cavaliers were touched with such mutual affection that in a few days it created a friendship between them as perfect as that of Orestes and Pylades. Besides the equality of their merit there was such

harmony in their humours that whatever pleased Don Fadrique the other could not dislike. The two made up but one character, and they learned to love one another. Don Fadrique, who, above all, was enchanted with the deportment of his friend, could not forbear boasting of it every moment to Theodora.

"They frequently visited that lady, who continued to look on Mendoça's addresses with indifference; at which he was extremely mortified, and complained of it to his friend; who told him, to comfort him, that the most insensible women suffer themselves to be touched at last; that nothing was wanting to lovers but patience to wait the favourable time; that he should not be discouraged; and that his lady, sooner or later, would favourably regard his services. This advice, though founded on experience, did not encourage the faint-hearted Mendoça, who greatly feared that he should never be able to please the widow Cifuentes; and this fear threw him into such a languishing condition as excited pity in Don Juan, who, however, was soon after in a more deplorable state himself.

"What reason soever the Toledan had to be disgusted with wives, after the horrible falsehood of his own, yet he could not help loving Donna Theodora; though he was so far from abandoning himself to a passion which would have injured his friend that he thought of nothing but struggling against it, and, fully persuaded that he could not conquer it better than by keeping at a

distance from those eyes which occasioned it, he resolved never to see the widow Cifuentes again. Accordingly, whenever Mendoça would have taken him with him, he always found some pretext to excuse it.

" But Don Fadrique never made one visit to the lady that she did not ask why Don Juan had ceased to accompany him. One day, when she put that question, he answered smilingly that his friend had his reasons.

" ' Ha ! what reasons can he have to avoid me ? ' asked Donna Theodora eagerly.

" ' Madam,' returned Mendoça, ' when I desired him to come with me to-day, and expressed some surprise at his refusal, he told me in confidence what I am obliged to reveal to you to excuse him : it was that he had gained a mistress, and that, not having long to stay in this city, his moments were precious.'

" ' I cannot be satisfied with this excuse,' replied the widow Cifuentes, blushing ; ' lovers are not allowed to abandon their friends.'

" Don Fadrique could not fail to observe the flush on Donna Theodora's cheek and brow, but attributed it solely to her vanity, and believed that vexation to see herself neglected for another was the cause. But his conjecture was wrong. A more violent impulse than that of vanity occasioned the emotions which she betrayed ; but, in order to avoid discovering her sentiments, she turned the discourse, and affected a gaiety during the rest of their conversation which would have thrown

much blame on his discernment if he had not soon perceived the alteration.

" As soon as the widow Cifuentes was alone she fell into a profound reverie. She then felt the full force of her passion for Don Juan, and imagining herself worse recompensed than she really was—'How cruel and unjust,' said she, sighing, 'is that power which delights to inflame discordant hearts! I do not love Don Fadrique and he adores me; while I burn for Don Juan, whose thoughts are occupied by another! Ah, Mendoça, no more reproach my indifference; thy friend has sufficiently avenged it.'

" At these words, struck with a quick sense of grief and jealousy, she dropped several tears; but hope, which usually administers balm to the pangs of lovers, soon presented various flattering images to her mind. It suggested to her that perhaps her rival might not be dangerous; that Don Juan was, perhaps, less engaged by her charms than amused by her favours, and that it would be no difficult matter to snap such feeble ties. But to enable her to judge for herself what she ought to believe of the Toledan she was resolved to speak with him in private. She therefore sent for him. He came. And when they were alone Donna Theodora thus addressed him:

" 'I should never have thought that love could make a man of gallantry forget his complaisance to the ladies; and yet, Don Juan, since you have been in love, you avoid my house, for which I think I have reason to complain. But I am willing

to believe that it is not of your own accord that you shun me ; perhaps your lady may have forbidden your seeing me. Confess to me, Don Juan, and I will absolve you. I know lovers' actions are not free ; they dare not disobey their mistresses.'

" ' Madam,' answered the Toledan, ' I grant that my conduct is such as ought to surprise you, but let me beg of you not to compel me to justify it. Satisfy yourself with knowing that I have reason to avoid you.'

" ' Whatever that reason may be,' replied Donna Theodora, with the utmost emotion, ' I insist upon your telling me.'

" ' Well, madam,' replied Don Juan, ' you must be obeyed, but I shall not pity you if you hear more than you desire to know.

" ' Don Fadrique,' added he, ' has related to you the adventure which obliged me to quit Castile. In travelling to Toledo, with a heart full of resentment against women, I defied the whole sex ever again to surprise me. With this settled disposition I approached Valencia. I met you, and, what perhaps no other man has been able to do, I sustained the first sight of you without being moved. I even looked on you again afterwards with impunity ; but, alas, I have dearly paid for a few days of resolution ! You have, in short, conquered my resistance. Your beauty, your wit, your charms have been exercised on a rebel. And now I entertain for you all the love which you are capable of inspiring.

" ' This, madam, is what has kept me from your

presence. The lady who you were told engrossed my thoughts is but an imaginary mistress, and I only feigned to make Mendoça my confidant to prevent raising in him any suspicions by my refusing to continue with him my visits to your house.'

"This discourse, which Donna Theodora had little expected, filled her with such extraordinary joy that she could not conceal her feelings. It is true, perhaps, that she took no extraordinary pains to conceal them; but instead of feigning severity, and looking on the Toledan as one who had offended, she regarded him with the tenderness of one confident in her love being returned, and said: 'Having told me your secret, Don Juan, I will now also discover mine to you. Listen to me.

"'Insensible to the sighs of Don Alvaro Ponce, little moved by the attachment of Mendoça, I led an easy, undisturbed life till chance brought you near the wood where we first met. Notwithstanding the agitation I was then in, I yet observed that you offered me your assistance with the utmost grace; and the manner in which you separated the furious rivals, who had quarrelled for what neither possessed, gave me an advantageous opinion of your valour and address. But the means you proposed to reconcile them displeased me. I could not, without difficulty, resolve on the choice of either. In short, not to conceal anything from you, I believe it was yourself who had then the least share of my repugnance; for at the very

moment that my mouth, forced by necessity, named Don Fadrique, I felt my heart declare for the unknown cavalier. From that day, which I may call happy, since you have confessed your passion, your merit has augmented my esteem for you.

"'To you,' continued she, 'I will make no mystery of my sentiments, but impart them with the same frankness that I told Mendoça I did not love him. A woman who has the misfortune to conceive a passion for one who can never love her has a right to restrain herself, and at least avenge her weakness by eternal silence; but I think that I may, without scruple, discover an innocent affection for a man whose views and intentions are honourable. Yes, I am enraptured to find that you love me, and for that blessing I render thanks to Heaven, which doubtless destined us for each other.'

"Having said this with a tone of mingled energy and deep emotion the lady remained silent, in order to afford Don Juan an opportunity to pour out in sparkling eloquence the transports of joy and gratitude with which she believed she had inspired him; but, instead of appearing enchanted with what he had heard, Zarate stood before her silent and dejected, with thoughtful brow and melancholy demeanour.

"'What means this, Don Juan?' resumed Theodora, with earnest accents. 'The fortune I voluntarily offer to you another might envy, and I forgo the pride of my sex and disclose to

you the secrets of a soul over which you have triumphed. Can you repress the joy which my declaration was meant to inspire? You preserve a frigid silence. Nay, I even observe that grief is in your eyes. Ah, Don Juan, what strange feelings and remembrances have my words awakened?'

"'Alas! what other feelings, madam,' said the Toledan, interrupting her with a sigh, 'could they have produced in a heart like mine? The greater the passion you discover for me, so much the more miserable must I be. You are not ignorant what Mendoça has done for me, and you know also the sacred bonds of friendship by which we are united. Can I, then, base my happiness on the ruin of his best and dearest hopes?'

"'You regard this too seriously,' said Donna Theodora. 'I never promised Don Fadrique anything which should hinder me from plighting my faith to you, without censure or reproach from him, or calling forth self-condemnation in you. I admit that the pangs of an unhappy friend may reasonably give you some uneasiness; but, Don Juan, can that—ought it—to obstruct the happiness which awaits us?'

"'Madam,' replied he, with fervour, 'such a friend as Mendoça has more power over me than you can conceive. If you could imagine the full extent and fidelity of our friendship you would pity me. Can—ought—I thus to treat Don Fadrique, who has hidden nothing from me? My interests have become his, and the least matter that interests

or concerns me has never escaped his vigilant care. In a word, I share his soul even with you.

"'Alas! had I been destined for the good fortune to which you have opened the prospect, I should have known it before I had entered into such strict bonds of friendship. Then, charmed with the happiness of pleasing you, I should have looked on Mendoça with no other eyes than those of a rival. My heart, guarded against the affection he might have expressed for me, would not have returned it, and I should not have incurred the obligations which at present bind me to him. But, madam, it is now too late. I have received all the services he could render me. I have followed the attachment I had for him, and gratitude and affection restrain me so closely that I am reduced to the cruel necessity of renouncing the glorious fortune which you place within my reach.'

"At these words Donna Theodora, whose eyes were filled with tears, dried them with her handkerchief. This disturbed the resolution of the Toledan, and his firmness was beginning to give way. In short, he saw that if he continued to listen to her allurements the consequences would soon be beyond his control. He therefore, mustering all his self-command, exclaimed: 'Adieu, madam! I must fly in order to preserve my friendship for Don Fadrique. Your tears have rendered you too irresistible. I tear myself away from you for ever, and go to deplore at a distance the loss of charms which other ties compel me to relinquish.'

" Having uttered these words he hastily retired, while yet he could retain any remnant of constancy and fidelity.

" On the departure of Zarate, Donna Theodora was agitated by a thousand conflicting emotions. She was humiliated at the thought of having declared her passion to a man whom she had no power to find. Yet unable to doubt that his love equalled hers, and that the interest of his friend alone induced him to refuse the hand she tendered, she was sufficiently reasonable to admire so rare an instance of friendship, instead of being offended at it. But notwithstanding this, as we cannot avoid being afflicted when things do not succeed as we would have them, she resolved to retire into the country on the following day, in order to divert, or rather to augment, her melancholy; for solitude tends to strengthen much more than to weaken love.

" Don Juan, on his part, not finding Mendoça at his return in his apartment, locked himself up in his own, abandoning himself wholly to grief; for, after what he had sacrificed for his friend, he thought he might be allowed at least to indulge a sigh. But Don Fadrique soon came to interrupt his reflections, and concluding, by his pallid countenance, that he was indisposed, he discovered so much concern that Don Juan, to remove it, was compelled to assure him he wanted nothing but rest. Mendoça instantly left him to his repose, but with such an air of affliction as rendered the Toledan more sensible of his misfortune. ' O

Heaven!' he exclaimed to himself, 'why must the most tender friendship in the world be the cause of embittering my existence?'

"On the following day, before Don Fadrique had risen, word was brought him that Donna Theodora and her whole family were gone to her seat at Villa Real, from whence it was not probable they would soon return. This news disturbed him less on account of the anxiety he knew he should suffer from a protracted separation from the object of his devotion than because her departure was made a secret to him. Without knowing precisely what to think on the subject he registered it in his mind for an ill presage.

"He speedily arose to visit his friend, as well to talk with him concerning what had just transpired as to inquire after his health. But he was scarcely dressed before Don Juan entered his chamber, saying: 'I come myself to remove the uneasiness I gave you. I am well to-day.'

"'That good news,' answered Mendoça, 'a little consoles me after the less welcome intelligence I have received.'

"The Toledan asked what that was, and Don Fadrique, after sending away his servants, said: 'Donna Theodora is this morning gone into the country, where it is believed she intends to make a long stay. I am much surprised at this sudden absence, and more so to guess why she should hide the cause from me. What think you of it, Don Juan? Have not I reason to be alarmed at it?'

"Zarate carefully avoided telling him his real

sentiments, and endeavoured to persuade him that Donna Theodora might go out of town without his having cause for alarm. But Mendoça, very little satisfied with the reasons which his friend gave to console him, interrupted him thus: 'All this discourse cannot remove the jealousy I have conceived. Perhaps I have imprudently done something which may have displeased Donna Theodora, and, to punish it, she leaves me without condescending even to let me know my offence.

"'However it is, I cannot live in this uncertain condition. Don Juan, let us follow her; my horse shall be ready instantly.'

"'I advise you,' said the Toledan, 'to take no one with you. This explanation of her conduct ought to be without witnesses.'

"'Don Juan will not be accounted an intruder,' replied Don Fadrique. 'Donna Theodora is not ignorant that you know all that passes in my heart. She esteems you, and, far from being an obstacle, you will assist in restoring me to her favour.'

"'No, Don Fadrique,' replied Juan; 'my presence cannot be serviceable to you. I therefore conjure you to go alone.'

"'No, no, dear Don Juan,' returned Mendoça, 'we will go together. I expect this complaisance from your friendship.'

"'That is tyrannical!' cried the Toledan, with an air of grief; 'do not exact from my friendship what it ought not to grant you.'

"These words, which Don Fadrique did not

comprehend, and the warmth with which they were uttered, strangely surprised him. He looked intently on his friend. 'Don Juan,' said he, 'what is the meaning of the words I have just heard? What fearful suspicion overclouds my mind? Ah, you afflict me too greatly by your too great constraint! Speak! What is the cause of that unwillingness to go with me, which you have just expressed?'

"'I would willingly conceal it from you,' answered the Toledan, 'but since you yourself force me to reveal it I must no longer be silent. Let us never more, Don Fadrique, applaud the sympathy of our affections; it is but too perfect. The beauty which has wounded you has not spared your friend. Donna Theodora——'

"'You, then, will be my rival!' interrupted Mendoça, turning pale.

"'Nay, ever since I discerned my love,' returned Don Juan, 'I have struggled to repress it. I have constantly avoided the sight of the widow Cifuentes. To this you can yourself bear testimony, for you have blamed my reserve. I triumphed at least over my passion, though I could not destroy it.

"'Yesterday, however, Donna Theodora sent to desire my presence at her house. I went. She asked why I seemed to avoid her. I invented excuses. She rejected them. And at last I was compelled to discover the true cause, believing that after that declaration she would approve my intention of shunning the sight of her for the future.

But by some fantastic turn of my ill stars—— Shall I tell you?'

"'Yes, Zarate.'

"'Well, I found that Donna Theodora entertained as strong a passion for me as I for her.'

"Though Don Fadrique was one of the best-natured and most reasonable men on earth, he could not refrain from being in a passion at these words; so, interrupting his friend, he said: 'Hold, Don Juan! Rather pierce my breast than pursue this fatal recital. Not content with avowing yourself my rival you also inform me that she loves you in return. Just Heaven! what is it that you venture to impart to me? You put our friendship to too severe a test. But wherefore do I say our friendship? You have long since violated it by encouraging the perfidious sentiments you have now declared to me.

"'How much was I mistaken! I believed you to be generous and magnanimous, but I find you faithless, since you are capable of entertaining a passion which outrages my friendship. I shall sink under this unexpected blow, which I feel the heavier for being given by a hand——'

"'In the name of Heaven do me more justice, Mendoça,' interrupted the Toledan, in his turn, 'and allow yourself a moment's patience! I am not a false friend. Hear me, and you will regret having used towards me that odious name.'

"He then related what had passed between the widow Cifuentes and him: the frank avowal of her passion and the blandishments by which she

had nearly won him to yield without scruple to the dictates of his affection. He repeated his answer; and as he advanced in the relation, and discovered with what disinterested friendship he had acted, Don Fadrique's anger gradually gave way. 'At last,' added Don Juan, 'friendship conquered love, and I refused to pledge my faith to Donna Theodora. She wept with anger and mortification, but, great God! what bitter feelings did her tears call forth in me. I can never remember them without trembling anew at the danger I ran. I began to believe that I was indeed barbarous, and for some moments, Mendoça, my heart became unfaithful to you. I did not, however, yield to my weakness, but escaped from the tears of the enchantress by a hasty flight. It is not enough, however, to have avoided this danger; a repetition of it ought to be guarded against for the future. I must hasten my departure. I will no longer expose myself to the dangerous influence of Theodora's eyes. After all this, will Don Fadrique still accuse me of ingratitude and perfidiousness?'

"'No,' replied Mendoça, embracing him, 'I will do justice to your disinterestedness. I perceive the truth. Pardon my unjust reproaches and impute them to the first transports of a lover whose hopes were just snatched from him. Alas, I ought not to have thought that Donna Theodora could see you long without loving you, or without rendering to your good qualities the tribute of admiration which I have been myself compelled to yield. You are a true friend. I will no longer

impute my misery to anything but fortune, and, far from hating you, I feel my regard for you increased. Shall I then ask you to renounce the possession of Donna Theodora—to offer up to friendship such a sacrifice? Shall you be required to conquer your love and I not make an effort to restrain mine? I will at least equal you in generosity. Don Juan, pursue the passion which draws you; marry the widow Cifuentes. For my heart, if it will, let it break. Mendoça entreats this.'

"'Nay, you urge me in vain,' replied Zarate. 'I confess that I have a violent passion for her, but your repose is dearer to me than my own happiness.'

"'But the repose of Donna Theodora,' answered Don Fadrique—'can that be indifferent to you? Let us not flatter ourselves; the preference she gives to you has decided my fate. Though you should banish yourself from her sight, though, to yield her to me, you should spend a life of anguish in far distant countries, I could never be the better for it, since, as I never yet could win her affections, I am convinced that my case is hopeless. Heaven has reserved her for you alone. She loved you from the first moment she saw you; she was attracted towards you by the mysterious sympathy of nature—in a word, she cannot be happy without you. Accept, then, the hand which she offers you; accomplish your own and her desires. Leave me to all my ill-fortune, and do not make three miserable when one may exhaust all the rigour of destiny.'"

Asmodeus was here interrupted in his discourse by the student, who said :

" What you tell me is very surprising. Are there really any people in the world of such extraordinary character ? I have met with no friends who do not quarrel—I do not say for such mistresses as Theodora, but even for arrant coquettes. Can a lover renounce the object he adores, and by whom he is beloved in return, for the sake of a friend ? I never believed that possible, except in a romance, the nature of which is to exhibit men as they ought to be, not as they are."

" I agree with you," answered the devil, " it is very uncommon ; but it is not only to be found in romances, but in the better nature of man. Since the Deluge I have known two instances similar to this. But to return to our story.

" The two friends continued to sacrifice their passion, and as the one resolved not to yield in point of generosity to the other, they remained suspended, as to any ulterior proceedings, for some days. They ceased to speak of Donna Theodora ; they did not even venture to mention her name. But whilst Friendship thus triumphed over Love in the city of Valencia, Love, as if to revenge himself, reigned elsewhere with tyrannic sway, and insisted on the more slavish obedience.

" Donna Theodora, at her mansion of Villa Real, situate near the sea, abandoned herself to the mingled feelings of love, hope, and despair, which had so long tortured her. She incessantly thought of Don Juan, and could not but hope to

be his, though she had so little reason to expect such a happy result after the sentiments of friendship which he had discovered for Don Fadrique.

"One day, after sunset, as she walked by the seaside with one of her attendants, she perceived a small shallop which had just gained the shore. At first sight there seemed to be on board seven or eight ill-looking fellows; but after having observed them more nearly, and with greater attention, she found that she had mistaken masks for faces. They were, indeed, really masked, and armed with swords and bayonets.

"She trembled at their aspect, and thence, fearing that the descent they were evidently preparing to make boded her no good, she returned hastily towards her house. She looked back from time to time to observe them, and perceiving that they had landed, and were pursuing her, she ran as fast as she could; but not being so nimble-footed as Atalanta, and the masked men being strong and swift, they overtook her at her own door and there seized her.

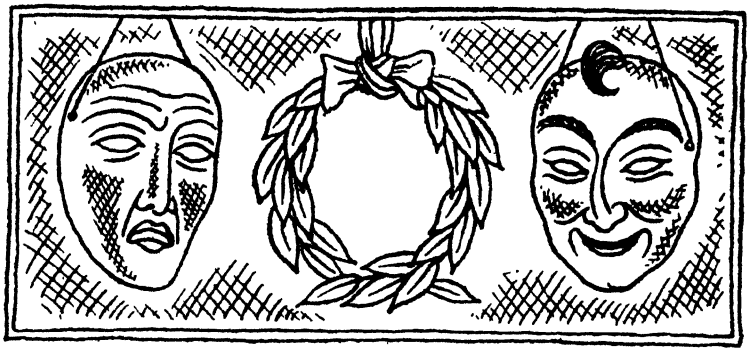
"The lady and her maiden shrieked so loudly that they drew some of the domestics thither, who speedily alarmed the whole house and hastened to rescue Donna Theodora, armed with forks and clubs. Meanwhile two of the lustiest of the masked gang, after having seized in their arms the mistress and the maid, carried them to the shallop, notwithstanding all their resistance; while the remainder made head against the family, who began to press hard upon them. The fight was long; but

at last the maskers succeeded in their enterprise and regained their shallop, fighting as they retreated. It was time that they retired, for they were not embarked ere they saw coming from the Valencia road four or five cavaliers, who rode full speed that way, and seemed to fly to the relief of Donna Theodora. At this sight they made so much haste to get out to sea that all the cavaliers' endeavours were in vain.

"These cavaliers were Don Fadrique and Don Juan. The first had received a letter informing him that it was reported by good hands that Don Alvaro Ponce was at the Isle of Majorca, that he had equipped a small coasting vessel and, assisted by twenty men of desperate fortunes, had designed to seize and carry off the widow Cifuentes the first time she should be at her country-seat. On this news the Toledan and he, with their *valet-de-chambre*, instantly set out to acquaint Donna Theodora with her danger. At a considerable distance they observed a great number of people on the seashore who seemed engaged in fighting against one another, and, not doubting but that it was as they feared, they spurred their horses full speed to oppose Don Alvaro's project. But, whatever haste they could make, they arrived only soon enough to be witnesses of the outrage which they designed to have prevented.

"During this time Alvaro Ponce, trusting to the success of his audacious attempt, made from the coast with his prey, and his shallop reached a small armed vessel which awaited him out at sea.

It would be impossible to feel a greater sorrow than that which Mendoça and Don Juan felt. They poured forth a thousand imprecations against Alvaro, and filled the air with complaints as lamentable as they were vain. The domestics of Donna Theodora, animated by such excellent examples, did not spare their tears. The shore resounded with mournful cries; rage, despair, and desolation reigned on the melancholy strand. Nor did the rape of Helen occasion greater consternation in the Spartan Court than that of Donna Theodora in the bosoms of Don Fadrique and of Juan de Zarate."



CHAPTER XV

Concerning a quarrel between a tragic and a comic poet

THE student here, interrupting the demon, said :

" Signor Asmodeus, though the story you are telling is extremely affecting, yet I am not able to resist an earnest desire to know the meaning of what I see yonder. I discern two men in their shirts in a chamber, pulling each other by the throat and tearing one another's hair, while several men in their night-gowns are endeavouring to part them. Pray tell me what all that bustle means."

Asmodeus, who endeavoured to oblige him in everything, instantly satisfied his request by the following relation.

" The persons whom you perceive fighting in their shirts are two French authors, and those who are parting them are two Germans, a Dutchman, and an Italian, lodgers in the same inn, which is frequented by none but foreigners. One of these authors is a writer of tragedies, the other of

comedies. The first, having met with some disgust in France, thrust himself into the French Ambassador's retinue; and the other, discontented with his circumstances at Paris, came to Madrid in quest of a better fortune.

"The tragic writer is a vain, presumptuous fellow, who, in spite of the more sensible part of the public, has gained great reputation in his own country. To keep his muse in breath he writes every day. To-night, not being able to sleep, he began a play, the plot of which is derived from Homer's *Iliad*. He had finished but one scene, and his least fault being that of other poets—an impertinent inclination to pester other people with their performances—he jumped out of bed, and went in his shirt and knocked rudely at the chamber door of the comic author, who, making a better use of his time, had sunk into a sound sleep.

"Awaking at the noise, the slumberer opened the door to the other, who, with the air of one possessed, said, as he entered the room: 'Fall down, my friend, fall at my feet, and adore a genius which Melpomene has honoured. I have just brought forth some verses—but why do I say I have done it? It was Apollo himself who dictated them to me. If I were at Paris I would this day read them from house to house, and I wait only for daylight to charm monsieur the Ambassador and all the French at Madrid with them. But before I show them to any other I will repeat them to you.'

"'I thank you for the preference,' answered the comic author, with an involuntary yawn; 'but the worst of it is that you have chosen an unseasonable time, for I went to bed so late that I am overpowered by sleep, and cannot promise to hear all the verses you have to repeat without nodding.'

"'Oh, I will answer for that,' replied the tragic author. 'Though you were dying, the scene which I have just now written would revive you. My versification is not a rhapsody of stale, common thoughts and trivial expressions, sustained by rhyme alone; it is a noble masculine poem, which moves the heart and astonishes the intellect. I am none of those poetasters whose wretched modern compositions pass over the stage like so many ghosts, and then go to Utica to divert the Africans. All my pieces are worthy to be consecrated with my statue in the library of Apollo Palatinus, and the theatres are crowded down to the thirtieth night. But let us,' added our modest poet, 'come to the verses of which I intend to give you a sample.

"'My tragedy is *The Death of Patroclus.* Scene the first: Briseïs and others of Achilles' captives appear tearing their hair and beating their breasts, to express their grief for the death of Patroclus. Wholly unable to support themselves, utterly dispirited by despair, they fall down on the stage. This, you will say, is a bold stroke; but it is what I intended to strike. Let your small wits and little geniuses keep within the bounds of imitation, without daring to go an inch out of the

common road. With all my heart! Their fearfulness is prudence. But for me, I love novelty, and, in my opinion, in order to move and transport spectators, one must not only present them with new but with utterly unexpected incidents.

"'Well, the captives are upon the ground. Phœnix, Achilles' governor, is with them, to help them one after another to rise, and, having done so, he opens the drama with these lines:

"'Priam will lose his Hector and his Troy;
The Greeks have sworn to avenge Achilles' friend.
Fierce Agamemnon, the divine Camelus,
The god-like Nestor, and the brave Eumelus,
Leontes, who the whirring javelin throws,
Smooth-tongued Ulysses, valiant Diomede,
Achilles' self prepares! Behold the hero,
Urging towards Ilium his immortal steeds,
Which, swifter than the lightning, cleave the air,
And the strained eye toils after them in vain;
Hark to his shout—"Brave Xanthus, Balius, on!
And when with carnage we are satiate,
And vanquished Trojans seek their walls for safety,
Regain our camp, but not without Achilles."
Arching his neck, fleet Xanthus thus replies:
"Your faithful horses, Prince, your will obey,
Your chariot wheels shall plough the plain in triumph;
But know—your fatal moment is approaching":
So Juno had ordained that he should speak.

And now the heavenly coursers seem to fly ;
The exulting Greeks behold, and cries of joy
Shake Troy's proud towers, and fright the neighbouring sea.
The prince, arrayed in arms by Vulcan forged,
Arose as bright as does the morning star,
Or as the sun emerging from the east,
To fill the heavens with light, and earth with joy ;
He blazed and shone afar, like festal fires
Kindled on mountain tops by village swains.

" ' I pause here,' continued the tragic author, ' to give you a moment's breathing space ; for if I should repeat the whole scene at once the too great multiplicity of shining passages and sublime thoughts would overcome you. Observe the beauty and the truth of that comparison :

" ' He blazed and shone afar, like festal fires
Kindled on mountain tops by village swains.

" ' Everybody will not discern it ; but you, who have wit and sense—you, I say, who have thought and judgment—ought to be charmed with it.'

" ' I am so, doubtless,' answered the comic poet, with a malicious smile. ' Nothing can be finer ; and I hope you will not forget, in your tragedy, the care which Thetis took to drive away the flies from Patroclus' body.'

" ' Do not think to make a jest of it,' replied the tragic poet. ' A skilful writer may venture on anything. The passage to which you allude is,

perhaps, of the whole piece, that which is capable of affording the finest verses, and I assure you I shall not omit it.

" ' All my words,' added he, ' are, as you see, stamped with the image of venerable antiquity ; and when I read them, think how they will be applauded ! I shall stop at every verse to receive due praise. I remember one day reading a tragedy in a house at Paris, where the *beaux-esprits* go to dine when they can afford a dinner, and where, if I may say so without vanity, I do not pass for a Pradon. The old Countess of Vieille-Brune was there, who has an admirable and a critical taste. I am her favourite poet. She wept heartily at the first scene ; called for a fresh handkerchief for the second Act ; did nothing but sob at the third ; grew ill at the fourth ; and at the catastrophe it was thought she would have expired with the hero of the piece.'

" At these words the merry comic author, however desirous of preserving his gravity, could not refrain from bursting into a laugh. ' Aye,' said he, ' I well remember that Countess's humour. She is a woman who cannot bear comedy ; she has such an utter aversion for it that she runs out of the box as soon as the music has done to vent all her grief. Tragedy is her favourite passion. Let the play be good or bad, provided there be unhappy lovers in it, you are sure of that lady's company. And to tell you the truth, therefore, if I wrote serious poems I should be glad of other applauders than her ladyship.'

" ' Oh, I have others also,' answered the tragic poet. ' I have the approbation of a thousand persons of rank and fashion of both sexes.'

" ' I should greatly distrust the applause of such people,' interrupted the comic writer. ' I should be cautious of relying much upon their judgments ; and I will tell you wherefore. Such sort of spectators are generally absent while a piece is reading, and are taken merely by the beauty of a verse or a fine sentiment. This is enough to procure their commendation of a whole work otherwise very imperfect. On the other hand, a few tame dull verses shock them, and there needs no more than that to make them pass condemnation upon an excellent piece.'

" ' Well, then,' resumed the grave author, ' since you would have me distrust such judges, you will at least allow me to trust to the applause of the pit.'

" ' Pray, if you please,' replied the other, ' do not talk to me of your pit ; it is too fantastical in its decisions. It is sometimes so grossly mistaken at the playing of new pieces that its visitors will continue for two whole months together enchained with a bad play. Indeed, so palpably and egregiously are they sometimes prejudiced that not infrequently, when the scales are removed from their eyes by the publication of the piece, they arise in a body and, notwithstanding the most flattering original applause, agree to damn the author who has cajoled them.'

" ' That is a misfortune I am in no danger of

encountering,' said the tragic writer; 'my works pass through as many editions as representations. I own, indeed, it is not so with respect to comedies, they being but trifles, wretched feeble productions of wit——'

"'Not so fast, good sir,' interrupted the other author. 'Stop a little, if you please; you do not perceive that you grow warm. I beseech you to speak of comedy with a little less contempt. Do you believe a comic piece less difficult to write than a tragedy, or that it is easier to make well-bred people laugh than cry? Undeceive yourself at once, and be assured that an ingenious subject which turns on the manners of men does not cost less pains than the finest heroic poem.'

"'Egad,' said the tragic poet, with an air of raillery, 'I am surprised to hear you express yourself thus! But, Monsieur Calidas, to avoid all dispute, I will for the future esteem your works, though I have hitherto despised them.'

"'I do not value your contempt, Monsieur Giblet,' hastily returned the comic author; 'and to answer your insolent airs I will now tell you, in my turn, what I think of the verses you have just recited. They are ridiculous, and the thoughts, though stolen from Homer, are nevertheless overstrained. Achilles talks to his horses, and his horses answer him; that is a mean, low image, as well as the comparison of the fire which the peasants made on a mountain. To pillage the ancients in this manner is not to do them honour. They indeed abound with beauties; but it requires

more sense, and a better taste than you have, to make a happy selection from them for the stage.'

"'Since your genius is not sufficiently elevated,' replied Giblet, 'to discern the beauties of my poem, and to punish your rashness in presuming to criticize my scene, you shall not hear a line more of it.'

"'I have been too severely punished,' returned Calidas, 'in being compelled to hear the beginning. It becomes you indeed to despise my comedies! Know that the worst I could ever write will always be far superior to your best pieces, and assure yourself that it is much easier to take a flight and soar on lofty subjects than to hit upon a delicate piece of raillery.'

"'Thanks to my stars,' cried the serious writer disdainfully, 'if I have the misfortune not to be approved by you, I need not be uneasy under it. The Court thinks more favourably of me than of you, and the pension it vouchsafed——'

"'Do not think to dazzle me with your Court pensions,' interrupted Calidas. 'I know too well how they are obtained to value your works the more for that. And to prove that I am convinced of its being easier to write tragedies, when I return to France, if I do not succeed in comedies, I will descend to the writing of tragedy.'

"'For a farce-scribbler,' interrupted the grave author, 'you have indeed a great deal of vanity.'

"'For a most wretched versifier,' said the comic

author, 'you have really an extravagant opinion of yourself.'

"'You are an insolent fellow,' replied the other. 'I tell you, diminutive Monsieur Calidas, if I were not in your chamber the catastrophe of this adventure should teach you how to respect the buskin.'

"'Oh, let not that consideration withhold you, great Monsieur Giblet,' answered Calidas. 'If you have a mind to fight I will engage you here as readily as anywhere else.'

"At these words they seized each other by the throat and hair, and both boxed very warmly, without sparing each other. An Italian who lay in the next room, having heard the whole dialogue, concluded, from the noise of the blows, that they were fighting, arose, and, out of compassion for them, alarmed the house. The Dutchman and two Germans whom you see in morning-gowns have come with the Italian to part the combatants."

"This is a very pleasant fray," said Don Cleofas, "but, by what I see, it is plain that the French tragic authors think themselves much greater men than those who write comedy."

"Undoubtedly," answered Asmodeus; "the former imagine themselves as much above the latter as the heroes of their tragedies are above the footmen in the comic plays."

"Upon what pretence can they found their arrogance?" inquired the student. "Is it that it is really more difficult to write a tragedy than a comedy?"

"Your question," answered the devil, "has been a hundred times debated, and is still discussed every day. My decision, without offence to such as are of a different opinion, is this: that to form an excellent plot for a comedy does not require a less effort of genius than to lay the finest plan in the world for a tragedy; for, if the latter were the more difficult, we must then conclude that a writer of tragedies would be more capable of making a comedy than the best comic author; which would not agree with experience. These two kinds of poems require a different genius, but equal skill.

"Let us conclude this digression," continued the demon, "and I will resume the thread of my story, which you interrupted."

CHAPTER XVI

Conclusion of the story of the power of friendship

"THOUGH Donna Theodora's servants could not prevent her being forced away, they nevertheless courageously opposed it, and their resistance was fatal to some of Alvaro's men; amongst whom they wounded one so dangerously that, unable to follow his comrades, he remained almost dead upon the sand.

"This unfortunate wretch was known to be one of Don Alvaro's footmen; and Donna Theodora's servants, perceiving that he yet breathed, carried him to her house, where they spared nothing that could contribute to the recovery of his senses, in which, after many efforts, they succeeded, though the great quantity of blood which he had lost rendered him extremely feeble. To induce him to speak, they promised to grant him his life, and not to deliver him up to justice, provided he would tell where his master had designed to carry Donna Theodora.

"Influenced by this promise, though in his condition there appeared but small hopes of his ever deriving any benefit from it, he collected his remaining strength and, in a feeble tone, confirmed the intelligence which Don Fadrique had before received, adding that Don Alvaro's design

was to carry the widow Cifuentes to Sassari, in the island of Sardinia, where he had a relation possessing great interest and authority, who, he knew, would certainly protect him.

"This confession somewhat abated the despair of Mendoça and of the Toledan. They left the wounded man in the house, where he died some hours afterwards, and, returning to Valencia, consulted what measures were best to be pursued. They finally resolved to follow their common enemy to the place of his retreat, and accordingly they both embarked almost immediately at Denia, for Port Mahon, not doubting that they should meet with an opportunity there of obtaining a passage to Sardinia. Their hopes proved correct, for they were no sooner arrived at Mahon than they were informed that a vessel, freighted for Cagliari, was just ready to sail, and they both embraced the chance with alacrity.

"The ship put off with the most favourable wind that could be desired; but in the course of five or six hours they were perfectly becalmed, and at night, the wind veering directly contrary, they were obliged to steer from one side to the other, without hope of its changing. They steered thus for three days, and on the fourth, at two o'clock in the afternoon, they discovered a vessel making all possible sail towards them. They at first took it for a merchantman, but, observing that it came within cannon-shot of them without showing any colours, they did not doubt but that it was a pirate.

"They were not deceived; it was a ship from Tunis, the commander of which believed that the Christians would yield without fighting. But when they perceived the object of the enemy they cleared their ship and, preparing their guns, got ready in earnest for an engagement. The pirates then slackened sail, and they also prepared for battle.

"The two ships began to fire, and the Christians seemed to have some advantage; but an Algerine, larger, and provided with more guns than both the others, coming up in the midst of the action, and taking the part of the Tunis ship, made full sail to the Spaniard, and obliged him to sustain the fire of both vessels.

"At this sight the Christians began to despair, and, resolving not to continue an engagement which was now become too unequal, gave over firing, when there appeared on the poop of the Algerine a slave, who cried out to them in Spanish that if they expected quarter they must surrender to the Algerine. At these words a Turk displayed the Algerine green taffety flag, with silver crescents. The Christians, considering that all resistance would be vain, no longer thought of defending themselves, but yielded, with all the grief which the horrible idea of slavery could occasion to freemen; and the master of the vessel, fearing that a longer delay might irritate the barbarous conquerors, struck the colours from the poop, threw himself into the pinnace with some of the sailors, and went on board the Algerine.

"That pirate sent a number of soldiers to

plunder the Spanish ship, and he of Tunis likewise gave the same order to some of his crew, so that all the passengers were in an instant disarmed and searched, and sent on board the Algerine, where the two pirates divided their prey by lot.

"It had been at least a consolation for both Mendoça and his friend to have fallen into the hands of the same pirate. Their chains would have been lighter if they could have joined in bearing them, but Fortune, having resolved that they should experience all her severity, subjected Don Fadrique to the Tunis robber and Don Juan to the Algerine. Imagine the despair that seized these friends when they found themselves about to be parted. They threw themselves at the pirates' feet, and conjured them not to separate them. But these savage villains, whose barbarity is proof against any consideration, could not be moved; but on the contrary, concluding their captives to be men of wealth and consequence, who could pay a large ransom, they resolved to keep them as they were, divided.

"Mendoça and Zarate, seeing that they could not soften these merciless wretches, cast their eyes on each other, and by their looks expressed the excess of their affliction. But when the whole booty was divided, and the Tunis pirate was going to return on board his own ship with his slaves, the two friends were ready to expire with grief. Mendoça ran to the Toledan, and, clasping him in his arms, said: 'We must separate, then, oh, terrible necessity! Is it not enough that the

audacious villainy of a ravisher remains unpunished, but must we be rendered incapable of uniting our complaints and sorrows? Ah, Don Juan, in what have we offended Heaven, that we must, in such a cruel manner, experience its displeasure?'

"'It is to me,' answered Don Juan, 'that our misfortunes ought only to be imputed. The death of the two persons whom I sacrificed, though excusable in men's eyes, must undoubtedly have irritated Heaven, which punishes you for having engaged in friendship with a miserable wretch whom justice pursues.'

"At these words they both showered down tears in abundance, and sighed with such violence that the other slaves were not less touched with their grief than with their own misfortunes. The Tunisian soldiers, yet more barbarous than their master, observing that Mendoça did not hasten to the vessel, brutally dragged him from the Toledan's arms and forced him with them, loading him with blows. 'Adieu, dear friend,' cried he, 'I shall never see you more! Donna Theodora is not yet avenged. The ills which I expect from these cruel men will therefore be easier to be borne than the sufferings of my slavery.'

"Don Juan could not reply to these words; the treatment which he saw his friend receive threw him into a state that rendered him speechless.

"The order of the story requires us to follow the Toledan. We will, therefore, leave Don Fadrique on board the Tunisian ship.

"The Algerine returned to his country, where,

being arrived, he carried the new slaves to the Pacha, and thence to the public slave-market. An officer belonging to the Dey, Mezzomorto, bought Don Juan for his master, and set him to work in the garden attached to Mezzomorto's harem.[1] Though this employment must needs prove painful to a gentleman, yet the solitude with which it was accompanied rendered it agreeable, for, in his present circumstances, nothing could more divert his mind than reflecting on his misfortunes, on which his thoughts ran incessantly; and he was so far from endeavouring to dispel these afflicting images that he seemed to take pleasure only in the remembrance of them.

"One day, not perceiving the Dey, who was walking in the garden, he sang a melancholy song as he was working. Mezzomorto stopped to listen to it, and, being well pleased with the voice, came up to him and asked him his name. The Toledan told him it was Alvaro; for when he was sold to the Dey he thought fit, according to the usual practice of slaves, to change his name, and hit upon that first, from the circumstance that the abduction of Theodora by Alvaro Ponce was continually in his mind. Mezzomorto, who understood Spanish tolerably well, put several questions to him concerning the customs of Spain, and particularly concerning the manners the men adopted to render themselves agreeable to the women, to

[1] Harem is the name given to all private persons' seraglios, none but that of the Grand Signior being properly called the seraglio.

all of which Don Juan returned such answers as satisfied the Dey.

"'Alvaro,' said the latter to his slave, 'you seem not to want sense, and indeed I do not consider you a common man; but, whatever you are, you have the good fortune to please me, and I will honour you so far as to make you my confidant.'

"Don Juan at these words prostrated himself at the Dey's feet, and taking up the lowest border of his robe touched with it his eyes, mouth, and head.

"'To begin with giving you some marks of my esteem,' resumed Mezzomorto, 'I will tell you that I have in my seraglio some of the most beautiful women in Europe, and among them one who is beyond comparison. I do not believe that the Grand Signior himself is possessor of a more perfect beauty, though his ships continually bring him women from all parts of the world. Her countenance seems to be the reflected sun, and her form is as graceful and well proportioned as that of the rose-tree in the garden of Eram: you may see that I am enchanted.

"'But this miracle of nature, though enriched with such rare beauty, resigns herself wholly to a fatal grief, which neither time nor my love can dissipate; and though fortune has subjected her to my desires, I have not yet gratified them. I have constantly refrained; and, contrary to the common custom of men in my circumstances, who aim at nothing but sensual pleasures, I have

endeavoured to gain her heart by such concessions and profound respect as the meanest Mussulman would be ashamed of yielding to a Christian slave.

"'Yet my tenderness only increases her melancholy, and her obstinacy begins at last to tire me. The horror of slavery is not graven so deeply in others, and all the despair I ever witnessed was soon effaced by favourable treatment. This tedious grief fatigues my patience, but, before I yield to the transports of love which agitate me, I must make one effort more, in which I would use your assistance. The slave, being a Christian, and of your nation, may make you her confidant, and you may better persuade her to my purpose than another. Speak to her of my rank and riches; tell her that I will distinguish her from all my slaves; engage her to consider, if necessary, that she may one day aspire to the honour of becoming the wife of Mezzomorto; and assure her that I shall always entertain for her a greater regard than for a sultana, whose hand His Highness himself might tender me.'

"Don Juan a second time prostrated himself before the Dey, and, though not very well pleased with his commission, assured him that he would do his best satisfactorily to acquit himself in the performance.

"'It is enough,' replied Mezzomorto; 'leave your work and follow me. I will give orders for you to speak with this beautiful slave alone; but have a care that you abuse not the trust which

MEZZOMORTO AND THE SLAVE

I confide in you, otherwise your rashness shall be punished by tortures unknown even to the Turks themselves. Endeavour to overcome your melancholy, and know that your liberty depends on the end of my sufferings.'

"Don Juan, ceasing his labour, followed the Dey, who went before to dispose his afflicted captive to receive his agent.

"She was in company with two old slaves, who retired at the approach of Mezzomorto. The charming slave saluted her master with respect, but could not help trembling at every visit he made, apprehensive of what might happen. The Dey perceived it, and, to dissipate her fears, said: 'Fair captive, I am come at present for no other reason than to tell you that I have a Spaniard among my slaves, with whose conversation you may probably not be displeased. If you desire to see him I will leave you to speak with him, and that without witnesses.'

"The beautiful slave answered that she most earnestly desired it.

"'I will immediately send him to you,' replied Mezzomorto, 'hoping that his discourse will assuage your grief.'

"These words ended, he ordered the two old slaves, whom he had appointed to serve her, to quit the apartment, and then, retiring, whispered to the Toledan: 'You may enter, and after you have talked with the fair slave come to my apartment and give me an account of your success.'

"Don Juan entered the chamber, and saluted

the slave, but without fixing his eyes upon her. She received his salutation without looking very intently upon him. Beginning, however, to regard each other more earnestly, they mutually burst into tears of surprise and joy. 'O God,' cried the Toledan, approaching her, 'am I not deluded by a phantom? Is it really Donna Theodora whom I see?'

"'Ah, Don Juan,' cried the fair slave, 'is it you who speak to me?'

"'Yes, madam,' answered he, tenderly kissing one of her hands, 'it is Don Juan himself. You may know me by the tears which my eyes, charmed with the happiness of seeing you again, cannot restrain. At the transports of joy which your presence only is capable of exciting I have done murmuring at Fortune, since she has restored you to my wishes. But whither does my immoderate joy hurry me? Alas, I had forgotten that you are a captive! What strange caprice of Fortune brought you hither? How did you escape Don Alvaro's lawless passion? Ah, what alarm does that thought give me, and how much do I fear that Heaven has not sufficiently protected you!'

"'Heaven,' said Donna Theodora, 'has avenged me of Alvaro Ponce. If I had time to tell you——'

"'You have enough,' interrupted Don Juan. 'The Dey has permitted me to be with you, and, what may surprise you, to talk with you alone. Let us make the best use of these happy moments, and pray acquaint me with all that has happened

to you from the time of your seizure to this instant.'

"'Ah, who told you that it was Don Alvaro that seized me?'

"'I know it but too well,' returned Don Juan. Then he succinctly related how he had been informed of it, and how Mendoça and he had embarked in search of the ravisher, and were taken by pirates. After which Donna Theodora immediately began the recital of her adventures in these words:

"'It is needless to tell you that I was surprised at finding myself seized by a troop of masked men. I swooned in the arms of him who carried me off, and when I recovered, which doubtless was not till some time after, I found myself alone with Inez, one of my women, at sea, in the cabin of a vessel under sail.

"'Inez exhorted me to patience, and by her discourse excited my suspicions that she had a correspondence with my ravisher, who then presumed to show himself, and, throwing himself at my feet, said: "Madam, pardon the way in which Don Alvaro has possessed himself of you. You know what tender addresses I formerly made, and with what constancy I disputed your heart with Don Fadrique, to the time that you gave him the preference. If my passion for you had been only a common one I should have conquered it, and comforted myself under the misfortune; but I am destined to adore your charms, and, scorned though I am, I cannot free myself from their

power. Do not fear, however, that my love will lead me to offer you violence. I did not make this attempt on your liberty to overcome you by base means. All I pretend to seek in the retirement whither I am conveying you is that an eternal and sacred knot may bind our destinies."

" ' He said several other things which I cannot well remember, but tending to hint that he thought, in forcing me to marry him, he did not tyrannize, and that I ought rather to look upon him as a passionate lover than an insolent ravisher. Whilst he spake I did nothing but weep and despair. Without losing time in endeavours to persuade me, therefore, he left me ; but, at his retiring, he made a sign to Inez, which I discerned was his order to her to reinforce with address the arguments with which he designed to dazzle my reason.

" ' She acted her part to the full : she suggested to me that, after the noise of an abduction, I must of necessity be forced to accept Don Alvaro's offer, how great soever might be my aversion for him—that my reputation demanded this sacrifice of my inclinations. But seeking to lay on me the necessity for such a hideous marriage was not the best way to dry up my tears, and I remained inconsolable. Inez knew not what further to say to me, when on a sudden we heard a great noise on the deck, which engaged our entire attention.

" ' This was occasioned by the alarm of Don Alvaro's men at the sight of a large vessel crowding all sail towards us. Our ship not being so good a sailer as the strange one, it was impossible

for us to escape. It soon came up with us, and immediately afterwards we heard a cry: "To windward! To windward!"

"'But Alvaro Ponce and his men, choosing rather to die than yield, ventured to dispute their liberty with the enemy. The action was sharp. I cannot enter into particulars, but will merely acquaint you that Don Alvaro and all his men were killed, after having fought with the utmost desperation. As for us, we were conducted into the great ship, which belonged to Mezzomorto, and was commanded by Abn Ali Osman, one of his officers.

"'Abn Ali earnestly looked at me for a long time, and, knowing by my dress that I was a Spaniard, he said to me in the Castilian tongue: "Moderate your grief at having fallen into slavery; it is a misfortune which was inevitable. But why do I call it a misfortune? It is an advantage, for which you ought to applaud your happy stars. You are too charming to have been intended to receive only the homage of Christians. Heaven never formed you for those miserable creatures. You deserve the adoration of the masters of the world, and none but Mussulmans are worthy to enjoy you. I will," added he, "return to Algiers. Though I have taken no other prize, I am persuaded that the Dey, my master, will be pleased with this expedition. Nor can I fear his blaming my impatience to put into his hands a beauty that will afford him such delicious pleasure and be the best ornament of his harem."

"'At these words, which revealed to me what I had to expect, my tears redoubled. Abn Ali, who looked on the cause of my fright with a different eye to mine, only laughed, and made all the sail he could towards Algiers. I meanwhile afflicted myself beyond all bounds, sometimes directing my sighs to Heaven and imploring its assistance, at others wishing that some Christian ship would attack us, or that the waves would swallow us. And, finally, I prayed that my grief and tears might render me so hideous that the very sight of me might strike the Dey with horror. Vain desires, alas, resulting from the fears with which I had been impressed! We arrived at the port. I was conducted to the palace, and shown to Mezzomorto.

"'I do not know what Abn Ali said when he presented me to his master, nor what were his answers, because they spoke in Turkish, but I fancied I could discover, by the gestures and looks of the Dey, that I had the misfortune to please him; and what he afterwards said to me in Spanish perfected my despair by confirming me in that opinion.

"'I in vain threw myself at his feet and promised a large sum for my ransom. I sought to tempt his avarice by the offer of all my estate, but he told me that he valued me above all the riches in the world. He caused this apartment, the most magnificent in his palace, to be prepared for me, and has left no means untried to dispel the grief which overwhelms me. He brought before me all his

slaves, of both sexes, that could either sing or play on any instrument; he removed from me Inez, my maid, believing that she only fed my melancholy, and I am waited on by old slaves, who incessantly entreat me to favour their master's love and accept the pleasures reserved for me.

"'But all that has been done to divert me serves only to augment my sorrows; nothing can comfort me. Captive as I am in this detestable place, which every day resounds with the cries of oppressed innocence, I suffer less from the loss of my liberty than from the terror with which the Dey's odious passion inspires me. For though I have hitherto been treated by him rather with the gallantry of a complaisant lover than as the slave of a Moslem, I am not the less afraid that, abandoning the respect which has hitherto restrained him, he will not long hesitate to resort to the violence his power allows. I am continually afflicted by this dreadful reflection, and every moment of my life is one of fresh torment.'

"Donna Theodora concluded with a shower of tears, which sunk deeply into Don Juan's heart. 'It is not without reason, madam,' he said, 'that you form such a terrible idea of what may happen to you. I am as much grieved at it as you. The Dey's respect is nearer its declension than you imagine. This submissive lover has already resolved to throw off his feigned complaisance. I know it but too well, and know all the danger that encompasses you.

"'But,' continued he, changing his tone, 'I

will not tamely witness what I would relinquish the mastery of the world to prevent. Slave as I am, my despair shall be fearful. Before Mezzomorto shall compel you to yield to his embraces I will plunge into his breast——'

"'Ah, Don Juan,' interrupted Donna Theodora, 'what dangerous project would you venture on? Let it not, I entreat you, be put in execution. What unheard-of cruelties, great God, would be the consequences of his death! Would the Turks, think you, leave it unavenged? The most dreadful torments—the most remorseless barbarities: I cannot think of them without trembling. Believe me, it would but expose you to unnecessary danger. Can you, by killing the Dey, restore me to liberty? Alas, perhaps I may be sold to some villainous wretch, who may have even less regard for me than Mezzomorto has. O Heaven, I implore Thee for justice. The Dey's brutal desires are known to Thee; why, then, are the use of poison and the sword forbidden? Does it not belong to Thee to prevent what Thou hast named as a crime?'

"'Yes, madam,' replied Don Juan, 'Heaven will prevent it; I perceive that it inspires me. What at present occurs to my mind is, doubtless, suggested to me from thence. The Dey gave me permission to see you for no other reason than to incline you to yield to his passion. I am charged to give him an account of our conversation. I must deceive him. I will tell him that you are not inconsolable; that his generous conduct with

regard to you begins to assuage your griefs ; and that, if he continues to pursue the same course, he ought to hope for the fulfilment of his wishes. When he comes to see you again, therefore, let him find you less melancholy than ordinary, and do you feign to be in some measure pleased with his discourse.'

" ' Oh, horrible constraint ! ' interrupted Donna Theodora. ' How can a frank and sincere mind betray itself to that extent, and what advantage will result from such painful dissimulation ? '

" ' The Dey,' answered Juan, ' will please himself with this alteration, and resolve to gain you wholly by complaisance. In the interim I will endeavour to obtain your liberty. The task, I admit, is difficult ; but I am acquainted with a slave whose superior address and great industry may not be unserviceable to us.

" ' I leave you,' continued he ; ' the affair requires diligence and circumspection, and we shall see each other again. I go now to the Dey, whose impetuous flame I will endeavour to feed by false intelligence ; and you, madam, must prepare to receive him. Dissemble ; constrain your gentle nature. Though his presence offend your eyes, yet disarm them of severity and hatred. Prevail on those beautiful lips, which so eloquently bewail your misfortunes, to assume a flattering tone ; and do not fear showing too much favour. You must promise everything, in order to grant nothing.'

" ' It is enough,' replied Donna Theodora ; ' I

will follow your directions, since the fatality which threatens me imposes on me this cruel necessity. Go, Don Juan ; employ all your talent in putting an end to my slavery. It will be a great addition to the pleasure of regaining my liberty to owe it to you.'

" The Toledan, agreeably to his orders, waited on Mezzomorto, who, with the utmost concern, said : ' Well, Alvaro, what news do you bring me from the fair slave ? Have you induced her to hearken to me ? If you tell me that I ought not to flatter myself with the hopes of ever subduing her cruel grief, I swear by the head of the Grand Signior, my master, that I will this day seize by force what she has hitherto refused to yield to my supplications ! '

" ' Sir,' answered Don Juan, ' that inviolable oath is needless ; you will not be forced to use violence to satisfy your love. The slave is a young lady who never yet loved ; she is so proud that she has rejected the addresses of the greatest men in Spain. She lived like a sovereign princess in her own country, and is a captive here. A haughty mind long resents the great difference between these conditions ; yet, sir, this proud Spanish lady will by degrees grow familiar with slavery, and I dare venture to tell you that already her chains begin to appear lighter. The great deference you have always shown to her, and your respectful cares, which she did not expect, have somewhat abated her sorrow, and by little and little you will not fail to conquer her pride. Soothe

this favourable disposition, and complete the conquest of this fair slave by fresh marks of respect. You will soon find her yield to your wishes, and lose the love of liberty in loving you.'

"'Your words enchant me,' replied the Dey. 'The hopes which you have given me are sufficient to engage me to undertake anything. Yes, I will restrain my impatient desires, in order the better to satisfy them. But do not deceive me, else thou art thyself deceived! I will instantly go talk with her, and see whether I can discover in her eyes those flattering appearances which you have observed.'

"Thus saying, he went to Donna Theodora, and Don Juan returned to the garden, where he met the gardener, the dexterous slave through whose genius he flattered himself he should be able to set the widow Cifuentes at liberty.

"The gardener, whose name was Francisco, was a native of Navarre. He knew Algiers perfectly, having served several owners before he had been purchased by the Dey. 'Friend Francisco,' said Don Juan, approaching him, 'I am extremely afflicted at what I have seen. There is in this palace a young lady of the highest rank, from Valencia. She has entreated Mezzomorto to set his own price on her ransom, but, because he loves her, he will not part with her.'

"'Alas, why does that trouble you so much?' asked Francisco.

"'Because I am of the same city,' replied the Toledan. 'Her relations and mine are intimate

friends, and there is nothing I would not undertake to contribute to her deliverance.'

"'Though it is no very easy thing,' replied Francisco, 'I dare engage to accomplish it, if this lady's relations will be pleased to pay well for such a piece of service.'

"'Do not doubt it in the least,' returned Don Juan. 'I will be responsible for their acknowledgments, but more especially for her gratitude. Her name is Donna Theodora; she is the widow of a man who left her a large estate, and she is as generous as rich. I am a Spanish gentleman, and my word ought to satisfy you.'

"'Well,' replied the gardener, 'I will depend on your promises, and go look for a renegade Catalonian of my acquaintance, and propose it to him.'

"'What say you?' interrupted the Toledan quickly, in some astonishment. 'Can you think of relying on a wretch who has not been ashamed to abandon his religion for——'

"'Though a renegade,' interrupted Francisco, in turn, 'he is yet an honest man, who deserves rather to be pitied than hated; and if his crime can admit of any excuse I should indeed be willing to think him excusable. I will in a few words tell you his story.

"'He is a native of Barcelona and an apothecary by profession. Perceiving that his practice was unsuccessful in his native place he resolved to settle at Carthagena, hoping that he might thrive better by removing. He embarked therefore,

with his mother, for Carthagena, but they met an Algerine pirate, who took and brought them hither. They were sold, his mother to a Moor, and he to a Turk, who used him so ill that he turned Mahometan, in order to end his cruel slavery, as well as to procure the liberty of his mother, who was rigorously treated by the Moor, her master. Then, entering himself in the pay of the Pacha, as a rover, he made several voyages, and got four hundred patacoons, part of which he employed in the ransom of his mother ; and, to improve it, he intended to rob on the sea on his own account.

" ' He became a captain, and bought a small vessel without deck, and with this and a crew of Turks, who willingly joined him, he went to cruise between Carthagena and Alicant, and returned laden with booty. He went out again, and his voyage succeeded so well that at last he fitted out a larger vessel, with which he took several considerable prizes. But one day, on venturing to attack an English frigate, his good fortune failed him, and his ship was so shattered that he could scarcely regain the port of Algiers. As the people of this country judge of the merit of pirates by the success of their enterprises, the renegade now began to be despised by the Turks ; and, growing uneasy and melancholy, he sold his ship, retired to a house out of town, and has ever since lived, with his mother and several slaves, on the estate he had left at the conclusion of his adventures.

" ' I frequently visit him, for we lived together

with the same owner, and are familiar friends. He has disclosed to me his most secret thoughts, and within these three days he told me, with tears in his eyes, that his mind has never been at rest since he renounced his faith ; and that, to appease the remorse which incessantly racked his mind, he was sometimes inclined to quit the turban, and hazard being burnt alive, in order to repair, by a public acknowledgment of his penitence, the scandal he had cast on the Christians.

" ' This is the renegade to whom I design to address myself,' continued Francisco ; ' such a man as this you ought not to suspect. Under pretence of going to the bagnio [1] I will proceed to his house, and suggest to him that, instead of consuming himself with grief for withdrawing from the bosom of the Church, he ought to think of means of returning to it : that to execute this design he need only equip a ship, on pretence that, weary of an idle life, he intends to return to his old trade of cruising ; and with this ship we may gain the coast of Valencia, where Donna Theodora should give him enough to pass the rest of his days agreeably at Barcelona.'

" ' Yes, dear Francisco,' cried Don Juan, transported with the hopes which the Navarrese slave had given him, ' you may promise the renegade everything ; you and he shall be sure to be rewarded. But do you believe this project really practicable, according to the manner in which you have formed it ? '

[1] Baths, where the slaves usually meet.

"'It may meet with some difficulties which I do not foresee,' replied Francisco, 'but the renegade and I will endeavour to remove them. Alvaro,' added he, as he was leaving Zarate, 'I have a good opinion of our enterprise, and hope at my return to bring you pleasant news.'

"It was not without anxiety that Don Juan waited for Francisco, who returned in three or four hours. 'I have spoken with the renegade,' said he, 'and proposed our design to him; and, after mature deliberation, we have agreed that he shall buy a small ship ready fitted to go out; and, being allowed to make use of slaves for sailors, he will man the vessel with his own; but, to prevent suspicion, he will engage twelve Turkish soldiers, as though he really intended to go out to cruise. Two days, however, before that assigned for his departure he will embark in the night with his slaves, weigh anchor without noise, and come to fetch us on board with his skiff, from a little door of this garden near the sea. This is the plan of our enterprise, of which you may inform the captive lady, and assure her that, within fifteen days at furthest, she shall be freed from her slavery.'

"How inexpressible was Zarate's joy that he had such an assurance to carry to Donna Theodora! To obtain permission to see her he next day sought for Mezzomorto, and, having found him, said: 'Pardon me, my lord, if I presume to ask how you found the beautiful slave. Are you better satisfied?'

"'I am charmed!' interrupted the Dey. 'Her

eyes did not turn away from my tenderest addresses; her discourse, which always before consisted only of endless reflections on her condition, was not intermixed with complaints; but she even seemed to listen to the recital of my passion with obliging attention.

"'It is to your efforts, Alvaro, that I owe this change. I see you know your own countrywomen. I will have you talk with her again. Finish what you have so happily begun. Exhaust your wit and address to hasten my felicity, and I will then break your chains. I swear by the soul of our great Prophet that I will send you home to your own country so richly laden with presents that the Christians, when they see you, will not believe that you have returned from slavery.'

"The Toledan did not fail to flatter Mezzomorto's error. He feigned to be extremely grateful for his promises; and, under pretence of hastening the accomplishment of the Dey's joys, he repaired to the apartment of the fair slave, whom he found alone in her chamber, the old women who attended her being accidentally or by design employed elsewhere. He told her what the Navarrese slave and the renegade had contrived, on the credit of the promises which he had made to them.

"It was no small consolation to Donna Theodora to hear that such excellent measures had been taken for her deliverance. 'Is it possible,' said she, in the excess of her joy, 'that I may yet hope to see Valencia, my dear country, again? How transporting will be the bliss, after so many perils

and alarms, to be permitted to enjoy a life of tranquillity with you! Ah, Don Juan, how charming is that thought! Do you partake the pleasure with me? Have you ever dreamed that she whom you seek to deliver from the Dey is your own, your beloved, your wife? Tell me, Juan!'

"'Alas,' answered Zarate, with a profound sigh, 'those endearing words would charm me if the remembrance of an unhappy friend did not throw into the intoxicating cup a bitter drug that overpowers its sweetness. Pardon me, madam, this delicacy, and confess also that Mendoça deserves your pity. It was for your sake that he went from Valencia and lost his liberty; and I doubt not that at Tunis he is less oppressed by the weight of his fetters than by despair at being unable to avenge your sufferings.'

"'He doubtless deserved a better fate,' interrupted Donna Theodora, 'and I call Heaven to witness that I am thoroughly sensible of what he has done for me. I share with him the sufferings which I have caused; but, by the cruel malignity of the stars, my heart can never be yielded to him as the reward of his services.'

"The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of the two old women who usually waited on Donna Theodora, when Don Juan adroitly turned the discourse, and, acting as the Dey's confidant—'Yes, charming slave,' said he, 'you have deprived him of liberty who holds you in his chains. Mezzomorto, your master and mine, the most engaging and most amiable of all the

Turks, is well pleased with you. Continue to treat him favourably and you will soon see an end of your griefs.'

"Having uttered these words, he left Donna Theodora, who did not comprehend their true sense.

"Affairs remained during eight days in this posture at the Dey's palace, while the renegade Catalonian bought a small vessel almost wholly fitted for sailing, and prepared for his departure. Six days before he was ready to put to sea, however, Don Juan experienced the greatest alarm for his own and the widow Cifuentes' safety.

"Mezzomorto sent for him, and when Zarate had entered his closet—'Alvaro,' said he, 'you are free. You may return to Spain whenever you please. The presents which I promised you are ready. I saw the fair slave to-day, and, oh, how vastly different does she appear from the same person whose griefs have given me so much pain! The sense of her captivity every day wears off. I found her so charming that I have this moment resolved to marry her. She shall be my wife within the space of two days.'

"At these words the Toledan changed colour, and, notwithstanding all the restraint he had laid on himself, he could not hide his disturbance and surprise from the Dey, who asked him the cause of his sudden indisposition.

"'My lord,' answered Don Juan, in great confusion, 'I am, doubtless, much amazed to think that one of the greatest lords of the Ottoman

Empire should so debase himself as to marry a slave! I well know that it is not unprecedented among you; but for the illustrious Mezzomorto, who may pretend to the daughter of one of the principal officers of the Porte——'

"'I admit what you say,' interrupted the Dey. 'With my rank I might aspire to the Grand Vizier's daughter, and flatter myself with the hopes of succeeding my father-in-law; but I have an immense estate, and am not very ambitious. I prefer the repose and pleasure which I enjoy here in my Pachalick to that dangerous honour; to which we are no sooner raised than the fears of the Sultan and the jealousy of those near him, who envy us, precipitate us into the lowest abyss of misery. Besides, I love my slave, and her beauty renders her worthy of the dignity to which my affection invites her.

"'But,' added he, 'in order to deserve the honours I design for her, she must this day change her religion. Do you believe that any ridiculous prejudices will prevail on her to despise my offers?'

"'No, signor,' returned the Toledan. 'I am persuaded that she will sacrifice all to obtain so high a rank. But permit me to say that you ought not to marry her so hastily. Do nothing rashly. It is not to be doubted but that the thoughts of abandoning the religion imbibed with her mother's milk will startle her at first. Give her, then, time to consider of it. When she represents to herself that, instead of dishonouring, and afterwards

suffering her to grow old and neglected amongst the rest of your captives, you join her to yourself by such a glorious marriage, her gratitude and vanity will conspire to remove her scruples. Defer, therefore, the execution of your design for eight days only.'

" The Dey continued for some time in a reverie. He did not at all like the delay proposed by his confidant, whose advice, however, finally appeared too reasonable to be rejected. 'I yield to your suggestion,' interrupted the Dey. 'Though so impatient to wed my beauteous slave I will yet wait eight days. Go immediately to her and engage her to comply with my desires at the expiration of that time. And I request that the same Alvaro, who has so faithfully discharged his duty with regard to her, may have the honour of offering her my matrimonial pledge.'

" Don Juan flew to the apartment of Donna Theodora, and informed her of what had passed betwixt Mezzomorto and him, that she might regulate her conduct accordingly. He also told her that the renegade's ship would be ready in six days. But she informing him that she was in great pain to know how she should get out of her apartment, since all the doors of the chambers through which she was obliged to pass to reach the stairs were kept closely shut—'You need not give yourself much trouble on that account, madam,' said Don Juan; 'one of your closet windows opens into the garden, and from thence you may descend by a ladder, which I will provide for you.'

"At length, the six days being expired, Francisco informed the Toledan that the renegade was preparing to depart on the next night, which was expected with great impatience. The time came at last, and what rendered it yet more lucky was that it grew very dark. When the moment destined for the execution of their enterprise arrived, Don Juan raised the ladder to Donna Theodora's closet window, and no sooner did she see it than she descended with the utmost haste and intrepidity, and, leaning on the pretended Alvaro, she was conducted to the little garden door which opened towards the sea.

"They used all possible expedition, and seemed to taste in anticipation the pleasures of being freed from slavery. But Fortune, who was by no means reconciled to the lovers, threw in their way a more cruel adventure than any they had hitherto encountered, and which they could not have foreseen.

"They had passed beyond the garden gate, and were hastening to the seaside to reach the boat which waited for them, when a man, whom they took for one of their crew, and whom they did not at all mistrust, came directly to Don Juan with a naked sword, and, running it into his breast—'Perfidious Alvaro Ponce,' he cried, 'it is thus that Don Fadrique de Mendoça is obliged to punish a villainous ravisher! You are unworthy that I should attack you like a man of honour.'

"Don Juan could not withstand the force of the thrust, which threw him down; and at the same

moment Donna Theodora, whom he was supporting, being seized at once with amazement, grief, and fright, swooned away beside him. 'Ah, Mendoça,' said the Toledan, 'what have you done? It is Don Juan that you have wounded!'

"'Just Heaven!' replied Don Fadrique. 'Is it possible that I should assassinate——'

"'I forgive you my death,' returned Zarate. 'Fate alone is to be blamed, or rather it was designed thus to put an end to our miseries. Yes, my dear Mendoça, I die contented, since I place in your hands the beautiful Theodora, who can assure you that my friendship for you has never swerved.'

"'Too generous friend,' exclaimed Don Fadrique, seized with violent despair, 'you shall not die alone; the same sword which was thus cruelly plunged into your breast shall punish your murderer. Though my mistake may excuse my crime, it cannot comfort me.'

"At these words he turned the point of his sword to his own breast, ran it up to the hilt, and fell upon Don Juan, who fainted, less enfeebled by his own wound than with the desperate act committed by his friend.

"Francisco and the renegade, who were not above ten paces off, and who had reasons which detained them from running to the assistance of the slave Alvaro, were extremely astonished to hear Don Fadrique's words, and to see his last action. They then found their mistake, and that the wounded men were two friends and not

mortal enemies, as they had thought. They ran to their assistance, but finding them, as well as Donna Theodora, who yet remained in her swoon, senseless, they were at some loss what measures to adopt. Francisco was of opinion that they ought to content themselves with carrying off the lady and leave the gentlemen on the shore, where, according to all appearance, they would immediately die, if they were not yet dead. But the renegade was not of that opinion. He decided they ought not to be left—that their wounds might perhaps not be mortal, and that he could dress them on board, where he had all the instruments of his former trade, which he had not yet forgotten. Francisco, when he had heard this opinion, instantly fell in with it.

"As he was not ignorant of what importance it was to be expeditious, the renegade and he, by the assistance of some slaves, carried into their skiff the unhappy widow Cifuentes and her two lovers, both of them much more unfortunate than her, and in a few minutes they all reached the ship. As soon as they were gotten on board some of the sailors spread the sails, whilst others, on their knees on the deck, implored the assistance of Heaven, by the most fervent petitions which the fear of being pursued by Mezzomorto's ships could inspire.

"The renegade, after having charged with the management of the ship a French slave who perfectly understood it, applied himself first to Donna Theodora, whom he speedily recovered from her

swoon, and then took such successful care of Don Fadrique and the Toledan that they also recovered their senses. The widow Cifuentes, who fainted at the sight of Don Juan's wound, was greatly surprised to find Mendoça there; and though, from his appearance, she really believed that he had fallen on his own sword for grief at having wounded his friend, yet she could not look on him otherwise than as the murderer of the man she loved.

"It was certainly the most affecting scene ever witnessed to see these three persons restored to their senses; and the condition from which they had been recovered, though resembling death, did not more deserve pity. Donna Theodora earnestly looked on Don Juan, with eyes in which were painted, in lively colours, all the emotions of a soul overwhelmed with grief and despair; and the two friends fixed on her their dying eyes, feebly uttering the most profound sighs.

"After having for some time kept a silence equally tender and afflicting, Don Fadrique thus broke it, by addressing himself to the widow Cifuentes: 'Madam,' said he, 'before I die I have yet the satisfaction to see you delivered from slavery; would to Heaven that you had been indebted to me for your liberty! But it has been ordained that you should owe that obligation to the man you love. I love that rival too well to murmur at it, and wish that the wound which I have been so unhappy as to inflict may not prevent his receiving the full enjoyment of your grateful acknowledgments.'

"The lady made no answer to these words, but, far from being then sensible of the melancholy fate of Don Fadrique, she was only influenced by the increased aversion to him which the present condition of the Toledan had inspired.

"In the meantime the surgeon prepared to examine and probe the wounds. He began with that of Don Juan, and did not find it dangerous, as the sword had only glanced below the left breast and had not touched any vital part. This report considerably abated Donna Theodora's affliction, and equally rejoiced Don Fadrique, who, turning towards that lady, said: 'I am satisfied. I leave this life without regret, since my friend is out of danger. I shall not now die burthened with your hate.'

"These words were uttered in such a moving tone and manner that Theodora was touched by them, and as her fears for Don Juan became less her hatred for Don Fadrique diminished, and she no longer looked on him otherwise than as a man who deserved her pity. 'Ah, Mendoça,' cried she, influenced by a generous transport, 'let your wound be dressed; it is not, perhaps, more dangerous than that of your friend. Oh, yield to our care for your life, and if I cannot make you happy, at least I will not bestow that felicity on another, but, from compassion and tenderness towards you, I will withhold the hand which I designed to give Don Juan and offer you on my part the same sacrifice which he has made.'

"Don Fadrique was about to reply, but the

surgeon, afraid that speaking might injure him, obliged him to keep silence, and, searching his wound, judged it to be mortal, the sword having pierced the upper part of his lungs, as he concluded from his excessive flux of blood, the consequence of which was much to be feared. As soon as he had dressed the gentlemen he caused them to be carried to his own cabin, that they might repose on two beds, one next the other; and he conducted thither Donna Theodora also, whose presence he thought would not be prejudicial to either of them.

"Notwithstanding all this care, Mendoça soon fell into a fever, and towards night the effusion of blood augmented. The surgeon then told him he was incurable, and informed him that if he had anything to say to his friend, or to Donna Theodora, he had no time to lose. This news strangely afflicted the Toledan, but Don Fadrique received it with indifference. He sent for the widow Cifuentes, who came to him in a condition much easier to be imagined than described.

"Her face was covered with tears, and she sobbed with so much violence that she disturbed Mendoça. 'Madam,' said he, 'I am unworthy of the precious tears which you shed; restrain them, I entreat, for a moment. I ask the same of you, dear Zarate,' added he, observing the insupportable grief which his friend exhibited. 'I know that this separation will greatly afflict you. I am too well acquainted with your friendship to doubt it. But I beseech you to reserve these tears, nor

honour my death with so many marks of tenderness and pity. Suspend your grief till I am no more, since that afflicts me more than the approaching loss of life. I must acquaint you through what meanders of fate I was conducted to this fatal shore, where I have tainted myself with my friend's blood and with my own. You must be anxious to know how I could mistake Don Juan for Don Alvaro, but I will immediately inform you, if my short remainder of life will allow me to make that melancholy recital.

" ' Some hours after the ship into which I was put on our capture had quitted that wherein I left Don Juan, we met a French privateer, which attacked and took the Tunisian ship, and set us on shore at Alicant. I was no sooner at liberty than I thought of ransoming Don Juan, to which end I went to Valencia and raised money. And on receiving information that at Barcelona there were several monks, belonging to an Order instituted for the redemption of slaves, ready to set out for Algiers, I resolved not to lose the opportunity, but to accompany them. Before I left Valencia, however, I entreated Don Francisco de Mendoça, my uncle, to use all his interest at the Court of Spain to obtain a pardon for my friend, because my design was to bring him back with me and to re-establish him in his estate, which had been confiscated after the death of the Duke of Naxera.

" ' As soon as we arrived at Algiers I went to the places frequented by slaves, but, having gone through all of them, I did not find him I searched

for. I met the Catalonian renegade to whom this vessel belongs, and who I remembered formerly to have been in my uncle's service. I told him the occasion of my voyage, and desired him to make a strict search for my friend. "I am sorry, sir," said he, "I cannot serve you. I am to leave Algiers to-night with a lady of Valencia, who is a slave to the Dey."

"'"Pray, what is the lady's name?" said I.

"'"Her name," replied he, "is Theodora."

"'My surprise at hearing this was sufficient to let the renegade see that I was concerned for that lady. He discovered to me the design he had laid to release her from her chains, and as he mentioned one Alvaro in his story I did not doubt but that it was Alvaro Ponce himself. "Assist my resentment!" cried I, transported, to the renegade. "Help me to avenge myself on my enemy."

"'"You shall soon be satisfied," answered he; "but first let me know your cause of complaint against Alvaro." Upon this I told him our whole story; and he, having heard it—"It is enough!" cried he. "You need only accompany me on the night chosen for our departure, where you will see your enemy; and after you have punished him you shall take his place and join with us in conducting Donna Theodora to Valencia."

"'Yet this impatience did not retard my search after Don Juan; but, unsuccessful, and despairing to hear any news of him, I left money for his ransom in the hands of an Italian merchant, named Francisco Capati, who resided at Algiers,

and undertook to effect his ransom if he could ever find him.

" ' At last the night appointed for our departure and my revenge came, when I went to the renegade, who led me to that part of the seashore upon which the back of Mezzomorto's gardens project. We stopped at a little door, that was soon opened, whence came forth a man, who made directly up to us, pointing with his finger to a man and woman who were coming after him. " Those who follow me," said he, " are Alvaro and Donna Theodora."

" ' At this sight, enraged in the highest degree, I drew my sword, ran to the unfortunate Alvaro, and, persuaded that it was my hateful rival whom I was approaching, I wounded that faithful friend, whose uncertain destiny was the cause of all my disturbance. But, thank Heaven,' continued he in a softer tone, ' my mistake will neither cost him his life nor cause the eternal tears of Donna Theodora.'

" ' Ah, Mendoça,' interrupted the lady, ' you injure my affliction. I shall never comfort myself for the loss of you ; for though I should even marry your friend, it would be only uniting our griefs. Your love, your friendship, and your misfortunes would be constantly the subject of our discourse.'

" ' It is too much, madam,' replied Don Fadrique. ' I am not worthy of being long mourned for. Allow, I conjure you, Zarate to marry you, after he shall have avenged you of Alvaro Ponce.'

" ' Don Alvaro is no more,' replied the widow

Cifuentes; 'the same day that he seized me he was killed by the pirate who captured his vessel, and who thus obtained possession of me.'

"'Madam,' said Mendoça, 'this news gives me pleasure; my friend will the sooner be happy. Follow without restraint the guidance of your mutual love. I see with joy the moment approaching which will remove the obstacle your compassion and his generosity have raised to prevent your happiness. May all your days be spent in a repose and union which the jealousy of fortune may not dare to disturb! Adieu, madam! Adieu, Don Juan! Vouchsafe both of you sometimes to remember a man who never loved any so well as you.'

"The lady and the Toledan, instead of answering, redoubled their tears. Don Fadrique, who perceived it, and who felt that his end was approaching, thus continued: 'I grow too weak. Death has already surrounded me, and I neglect to supplicate the Divine Goodness to pardon my having shortened a life which it alone ought to have disposed of.'

"At these words he lifted up his eyes to Heaven with all the signs of sincere repentance, and the flow of blood immediately occasioned a suffocation, which carried him off.

"Then Don Juan, excited by despair, tore off his bandages, and would have rendered his wound incurable but that Francisco and the renegade threw themselves upon him and opposed his distraction. And Donna Theodora, affrighted at this

furious transport, assisted them in diverting Don Juan from his design. She besought him with such winning grace and gentle affection that, returning to himself, he suffered his wound to be again bound up. And at last the interest of a lover, by slow degrees, abated the rage of a friend. But if he recovered his reason it served only to prevent the distracted effects of his grief, and not to diminish his sense of it.

" The renegade, who, amongst the other things he had brought with him from Spain, had some excellent Arabian balsam and precious perfumes, embalmed Mendoça's body, at the request of the lady and Don Juan, who resolved, on their arrival at Valencia, that they would perform all the honours of his sepulture. The two lovers passionately indulged their grief during the whole time they were on board ; but the rest were more cheerful, and the wind being favourable, they were not long before they discerned the coast of Spain.

" At that sight all the slaves yielded themselves up to excess of joy, and when the vessel happily arrived at the port of Denia everyone took a different course. The widow Cifuentes and the Toledan sent a courtier to Valencia with letters for the governor and for Donna Theodora's family. The news of that lady's return was received with all possible expressions of joy by her relations ; but Don Francisco de Mendoça was extremely afflicted at the loss of his nephew. He discovered this unreservedly when he accompanied the widow

Cifuentes' relations to Denia, where he had desired to see the body of the unfortunate Don Fadrique. The good old man then melted into tears, and uttered such melancholy complaints as sensibly touched all the spectators. He inquired by what adventure his nephew fell.

"'I will tell you, my lord,' said the Toledan. 'Far from desiring to blot it from my memory I take a melancholy pleasure in continually calling him to mind and feeding my sorrows.'

"He then related to the uncle the whole of the circumstances which had preceded and led to the sad accident; and the recital of his story drawing fresh tears from him, redoubled those of Don Francisco. As for Donna Theodora, her relations expressed their great joy at seeing her again, and felicitated her on the miraculous manner of her delivery from the tyranny of Mezzomorto.

"After a full relation of all particulars, Don Fadrique's corpse was put into a coach and carried to Valencia, but not buried there; because Don Francisco de Mendoça, preparing to live at Madrid, resolved to have his nephew's body carried to that city.

"While every preparation was making for their journey, the widow Cifuentes loaded Francisco and the renegade with presents equal to their wishes. Francisco went to Navarre, and the renegade immediately returned with his mother to Barcelona, where, having renounced his errors and reconciled himself to the Church, he lives in a reputable manner at this present time.

" In the meantime, also, Don Francisco received a packet from the Court, wherein was Don Juan's pardon, which the King, notwithstanding the great esteem he had for the house of Naxera, could not refuse the Mendoças, who all joined in soliciting it. This news was the more agreeable to the Toledan because it procured him the liberty of accompanying the remains of his friend, which he durst not have done without it.

" At last they all set forward, accompanied by a great number of persons of rank, and as soon as they arrived at Madrid they buried the corpse of Don Fadrique in a church, where Zarate and Donna Theodora raised a noble monument over his grave. They did not stop here, but wore deep mourning for their friend for the space of a whole year, to testify at once their grief and friendship.

" After having given such signal marks of their tenderness for Mendoça they married ; but, by an inconceivable effect of the power of friendship, Don Juan long retained his melancholy for his friend, which nothing was able to remove. His dear friend Fadrique was ever present to his thoughts ; he saw him every night in his dreams, and generally just as he had seen him while breathing his last. But by degrees his reason began to dispel these melancholy phantoms, and Donna Theodora's charms, with which he was captivated, could not fail, with time, to triumph over the sad remembrance of Mendoça. At length, having apparently surmounted the long train of griefs and ictions with which his life had been chequered,

a brighter day seemed to have dawned for Don Juan, and he calculated upon passing the remainder of his life happily. A few days since, however, he fell from his horse as he was hunting, and fractured part of his skull, inflicting such a wound as defied the art of surgery to cure. He is just dead, and Theodora, the lady whom you see in the arms of two women, who are watching her distraction, will, in all probability, soon follow him."

CHAPTER XVII

Of dreams

WHEN Asmodeus had finished the recital of that story, Don Cleofas said to him: "This is a fine picture of friendship, but it is rare to find two men who love one another like Don Juan and Don Fadrique; and I believe it would be still more difficult to meet with two ladies preserving for each other similar attachment, and reciprocally disposed to make as generous a sacrifice of their lovers to each other."

"Without doubt," answered the devil. "What you speak of is what has not been yet, and perhaps never will be seen in this world; women are not so indulgent to one another. Suppose two ladies loved each other in an unusual degree: their friendship might be tender and sincere, and they might even forbear to speak ill of each other in absence. Such good friends as this they might be—and that, I assure you, is a great deal—yet if you meet with them, and incline more to the one than the other, rage presently seizes the fair one who is slighted;

not that she loves you, but that she is desirous, for the gratification of her vanity, to be preferred before all others. This is the nature of all women. They are too jealous one of another to be capable of feeling, or even estimating, disinterested friendship."

"The story of these unparalleled friends," remarked Leandro Perez, "is a little romantic, and has occupied us too long. The night is already far advanced, and we shall presently see the first rays of the dayspring; nevertheless I expect further entertainment from you. I see abundance of people asleep, and should be glad to know what they are dreaming about."

"With all my heart!" answered the demon. "I see you love variety, and, as I have power to do so, I will oblige you."

"I fancy," said Zambullo, "I shall hear a great many very ridiculous dreams."

"Why so?" answered the cripple. "You, who are master of Ovid, must know what the poet says: that it is towards daybreak that dreams are truest, because at that time the soul is disengaged from the vapours arising from digestion."

"For my part," replied the student, "whatever Ovid may have been pleased to say on this matter, I have no faith in dreams."

"You are in the wrong, then," answered Asmodeus; "one should neither believe them all nor treat them all as chimerical, for they are a sort of liars that sometimes speak truth. The Emperor Augustus, whose head was surely as good as a student's, despised no dreams in which he found

himself personally concerned. At the battle of Philippi he was very near leaving his tent upon the recital of a dream relating to him. I could give a thousand instances to convince you of your rashness if it were worth while, but I shall pass them over, in order at once to oblige you in this new inclination you so much desire to have satisfied.

"Let us begin with that fine house on the right. The master of it, whom you see sleeping in that splendidly furnished apartment, is a gay and wealthy count, who makes pleasure, or rather excitement, the sole business of his life. He is dreaming that he is at the theatre, that he is listening to the singing of a young actress, and is captivated by the voice of the siren.

"In the next apartment lies the countess, his wife, who loves play to madness. She is dreaming that she has no money and is pawning her diamonds to a jeweller, who lends her three hundred pistoles on them at common interest.

"In the next house, on the same side of the street, lives a marquis, who is in love with a famous coquette. He dreams that he has borrowed a considerable sum of money to make her a present; and his steward, who lies in the little attic, a storey higher, fancies that he is growing rich as his master grows poor. What think you, Signor, of these two dreams? Do they appear extravagant?"

"No, really," replied Don Cleofas. "I think Ovid was in the right. But I would fain know what spark that is who is asleep with his moustaches *en papillotes*, like a schoolgirl, and who in his sleep

has an air of gravity, which persuades me he is no vulgar cavalier."

"That is a country gentleman," replied Asmodeus, "a viscount of Aragon, proud and vain, whose soul is at this moment swimming in joy, for he dreams that he is with a grandee of the Court, who gives him precedence at a public ceremony.

"But in the same house I see two brothers, physicians, whose thoughts are occupied in very mortifying dreams. One thinks that there is a law made forbidding anyone to give a physician a fee unless the patient be cured; and his brother, that there is an order published requiring all doctors to go into mourning for every patient that dies under their hands."

"Would to God," quoth the student, "that this last order were made, and that every doctor was obliged to attend the funerals of his patients, as the criminal-lieutenant in France is bound to be present at the execution of the malefactors he has condemned!"

"The comparison is just," replied the devil; "all the difference is, that the latter may be said to see his sentence put into execution, whereas the other has already executed his."

Here Don Cleofas interrupted the demon, crying: "See! See! Who is that gentleman yonder that rubs his eyes and gets up so hastily?"

"He is a courtier," replied the demon, "who is soliciting for a government in New Spain; a terrible dream has awoke him. He fancied that the first minister had looked coldly on him. I see,

too, a young creature that seems also just awaked, and not very well pleased with her dream. She is a young lady of good family, one as prudent as she is beautiful; but she is besieged by two lovers. She had great tenderness for the one and a rooted aversion for the other. She saw just now, in her dream, the gallant she detests at her feet, and he evinced so much love, was so passionate, and so pressing, that, had she not waked, she was going to show him more kindness than she had ever exhibited for the other, whom she loves; for during sleep nature throws off the restraints of reason and virtue.

"Turn your eyes to that house at the corner of the street, where lives an attorney. See, he is a-bed with his wife, in a chamber hung with old tapestry hangings, ornamented with antique figures. He dreams that he is about to pay a visit to one of his clients in the almshouse, and gives him charity out of his own pocket; while his wife is alarmed with the notion her husband has turned a young clerk, of whom he was jealous, out of doors."

"I hear somebody snore," said the student, "and believe it is the fat fellow who is in the little room on the left hand of us."

"The very same," replied Asmodeus. "He is a prebend, dreaming that he is uttering a *Benedicité*.

"Next to him is a mercer, who sells very dear bargains to people of quality, but all upon credit. He has above ten thousand crowns owing him. He dreams that his debtors are bringing him his money, and his creditors are dreaming that he is on the point of breaking."

"These two dreams," said the student, "did not come out of the temple of sleep by the same gate."

"No, I assure you," replied the demon; "the first, for certain, came out of the ivory gate, and the second at that of horn.

"In the house next to that of the mercer lives a famous bookseller. A short time since he published a book that had great success. When he bought it he promised to give the author fifty pistoles on a second edition, and he dreams now of actually reprinting the work without giving the writer the slightest notice."

"Ah! Does he so?" said Cleofas. "I need not ask out of which gate this dream came, and I do not doubt but it will prove one of the truest that ever he had in his life. I am acquainted with those worthy gentlemen, the booksellers; they make not the slightest scruple or hesitation at cheating their authors."

The demon answered: "Very true; but you should speak what you know of those worthy gentlemen the authors, too. Upon my word, they have no more conscience than the booksellers. A little adventure that happened not a hundred years ago at Madrid will convince you of the fact.

"Three booksellers were supping together at a tavern; the conversation turned upon the scarcity of good modern books, upon which one of them said: 'As you are my friends, I will tell you in confidence what a bargain I had some days ago. I bought a copyright; it was a little dear, indeed, but written by such a hand! It is as valuable as old

gold!' Another of them then took up the discourse, telling them what a bargain he had the day before. 'And I too, gentlemen,' cried the third, in his turn, 'will be as communicative as either of you. I have a jewel of a manuscript to show you, and it was but this very day I had the luck to obtain it.' At the same time each drew out of his pocket the valuable copy he had been talking of, when, lo! it appeared to be a new piece for the stage, called *The Wandering Jew*, and they were in amazement to see that the same work had been sold separately to all three.

"In another house," continued Asmodeus, "I see a timorous, respectful lover, who is just awake. He is in love with a handsome and lively young widow, and dreamed that he had her in the middle of a wood, where he was saying abundance of tender things to her, and she to him; as, for instance: 'Ah, there's no resisting you, you are so seductive; you would certainly persuade me to yield to you if I were not on my guard against all mankind. They are so false I dare not trust them upon their words; I desire actions.'

"'What actions, madam,' replied the lover, 'do you require of me? Must I undertake the twelve labours of Hercules to show my love?'

"'No, no, Don Nicasio,' exclaimed the lady, 'I do not demand of you any such thing. I only——' And thereupon he awoke."

"Pray," cried the student, "tell me why the man who is asleep in yonder bed, with brown-coloured hangings, talks to himself as if he were possessed."

Asmodeus answered: "Oh, that is a notable licentiate, who is in a dream that puts him in terrible agitation. It is no less than this, that he is in dispute, and maintaining the immortality of the soul against a little doctor of physic, who is about as good a Catholic as a physician. On the second floor with the licentiate lives a gentleman of Estramadura, named Baltazzor Fanfarronico, who is come post to Court to demand a reward for having killed a Portuguese with a blunderbuss. Would you guess what he is dreaming of? Why, that they have given him the government of Antequèra, and yet he is not satisfied; he thinks he deserves a viceroyalty.

"I see two persons of consequence yonder, in furnished longings, dreaming very disagreeably. One of them, the governor of a fort, dreams that he is besieged in it, and, after a weak resistance, he is obliged to surrender himself and his garrison prisoners of war. The other is the Bishop of Murcia. This eloquent prelate has orders to preach a sermon at the funeral of a princess, which is to take place in two days' time. He dreams that he is in the pulpit and that he breaks down at the very commencement of his discourse."

"It is not impossible," said Don Cleofas, "for such an unlucky accident really to happen."

"No, indeed," replied Asmodeus; "and it is not long since it did happen in good earnest to his lordship on just such an occasion.

"Would you desire that I should exhibit to you a somnambulist? Look into the stables belonging to this house and tell me what you see there."

"I discern," said Leandro Perez, "a man in his shirt with a curry-comb in his hand."

"Right," replied Asmodeus. "It is a groom sleeping, who every night rises from his bed and curries his horses in his sleep and then goes to bed again. The people of the house, unable otherwise to account for this nightly labour, think that it is performed by some whimsical spirit, and the groom himself is of their mind.

"In the great house over the way lives an old Knight of the Golden Fleece, who was formerly Viceroy of Mexico. He is fallen sick, and as he apprehends he shall die, his viceroyalty begins to make him uneasy. Indeed his conduct in it has been enough to make him so. The records of New Spain will never make honourable mention of him. He has just had a dream, the horror of which is not yet quite over, and probably it may speed his journey into the other world."

"This dream, then," said Zambullo, "must be very extraordinary."

"You shall hear it," replied Asmodeus; "it has at least something odd in it. This lord just now dreamed that he was in the regions of the dead, where all the Mexicans who have been the victims of his injustice and cruelty came around him, loading him with injurious and reproachful language, and would even have torn him to pieces but that he took to flight, and thus escaped their fury. He afterwards found himself in a great hall hung with black cloth, where were his father and grandfather sitting at a table with three covers

on it. These two mournful guests made signs to him to come near them, and his father said, with the gravity natural to the deceased: 'We have long expected you: come and take your place amongst us.'"

"The villain is mad!" cried the student. "We must pardon a sick man if he be light-headed."

"In contrast," said the cripple, "his niece, who lies in the apartment over him, is passing the night most deliciously. Her slumbers furnish her with the most agreeable ideas. She is between twenty and thirty, ugly, and ill-made. She is dreaming that her uncle, whose sole heiress she is, is dead, and that a crowd of young and gallant noblemen are flocking about her, and contending who shall have the glory of basking most complacently in the sunshine of her smiles."

"If I am not mistaken," said Don Cleofas, "I hear somebody laugh behind us."

"You are not mistaken," replied Asmodeus; "it is a woman hard by, laughing in her sleep. She is a widow, who sets herself up for a prude, and whose darling pleasure is scandal. She dreams that she is talking with a devout old lady, whose conversation delights her infinitely.

"I must laugh in my turn too," continued the devil, "at that honest citizen in the room under the window, who can scarce live tolerably on what he has. He dreams of picking up pieces of gold and silver, and that the more he picks up the more remains on the ground. He has already filled a great chest with them."

"Poor soul!" said Leandro. "He will not long enjoy his treasure."

"No," replied the cripple. "When he wakes he will be in the same condition as a rich man on his death-bed—he will behold all his wealth disappear.

"If you have any curiosity to know the dreams of those two actresses I will let you into them. One is dreaming that she is catching birds with a bird-call, and that still as she takes them she strips off their feathers and throws them to be devoured by a fine large tom-cat she is fond of, and who is the only gainer by them. The other fancies she is turning a pack of greyhounds and Danish dogs, which she used to admire, out of her house, and that she intends to keep only one fine sleek lap-dog, which she has taken into favour."

"Two very odd dreams!" cried the student. "I fancy if we had interpreters of dreams at Madrid, as they formerly had at Rome, the learned would be horribly perplexed to explain them."

"Not so much as you think," answered the devil. "A very little insight as to what passes among those gentry of the stage would give one a very plain interpretation of them."

"For my part," observed Don Cleofas, "I neither understand nor trouble my head about them. I had much rather know who that lady is asleep in the rich bed of yellow velvet fringed with silver, beside whom there is a stand with a candle and book on it."

"She is a lady of title," replied the demon,

"who has a very excellent equipage and suite of servants, all of whom she is resolved shall consist of tall smart fellows. One of her customs is to read in bed, without which she is unable to close her eyelids during the night. Yester-even she took Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to bed with her, and her reading that, is the occasion of the extravagant dream with which she is occupied at present. She is fancying that Jupiter has fallen in love with her, and that he is proffering to her his services in the form of a tall, well-formed page.

"Now we are upon metamorphoses, here is another more pleasant one. I discern a player, who is, in his sleep, enjoying the pleasure of a dream that flatters him very agreeably. This actor is so old that there is not a soul in Madrid who can say they saw the first of him. He has been upon the stage so long that one may say he is theatrified. He has genius, but is so proud and vain of it that he imagines he is something above the ordinary run of mankind. Would you know what this mock hero is dreaming of? That he is dying, and sees all the deities of Olympus met together to decide what they shall do with a mortal of his importance. He hears Mercury telling the council of the gods that so celebrated a comedian, after acting the part of Jupiter, and the rest of the chief divinities, so often, ought not to undergo the common fate of mortals, but that he ought to be received amongst themselves. Momus applauds Mercury's opinion; but some of the other gods and goddesses being opposed to so new an apotheosis, Jupiter, to avoid disputes,

turned the old comedian into a decorative figure, such as we see in theatrical prosceniums——"

The demon was going on, when Zambullo interrupted him: "Hold," said he, "Signor Asmodeus; you do not perceive that it is day. I am afraid we may be discovered on this house. If the rabble should once have a view of your lordship's figure they will never have done shouting."

"I will warrant they shall never see us," answered the demon. "I have the same power as those fabulous divinities we have been talking of; and as the amorous son of Saturn hid himself in a cloud on Mount Ida, that they might not see him caress his dear consort, Juno, so will I raise a mist that the sight of man shall not be able to penetrate, and which shall not hinder your seeing whatever I intend to show you."

No sooner was this said than done: a thick vapour immediately encompassed them, yet, dark as it was, it veiled nothing from the student's eyes.

"Let us return to our dreams," continued the cripple. "But I neglect to consider," added he, "that the manner in which I have made you pass the night must have tired you. I think I must carry you home and let you sleep for two or three hours. Meanwhile, I will take a turn over the four quarters of the world and play some of my pranks; after which I will come and take you up, and we will divert ourselves afresh."

"I am neither sleepy nor tired," answered Don Cleofas. "Instead of leaving me, I pray you to

oblige me by revealing to me the various designs of the people that I see up and going out. What business calls them forth so early?"

"What you would know," replied the demon, "is worth your observation. I am about to exhibit to you a picture of the cares, emotions, and pains with which poor mortals trouble themselves in this life, in order to fill up the brief space between their cradles and their graves as agreeably as they can.

CHAPTER XVIII

In which may be seen several originals, which are not without their similitude

"IN the first place, observe that group of beggars already in the street. They are so many debauchees, most of them of good family, who live in a community like monks, and pass almost every night in debauchery in their own house, where there is always ample provision of bread, meat, and wine. See, they are now parting, in order to proceed to their several churches, to enact the different parts which have been assigned to them, and at night they will meet and drink the health of those well-disposed Christians who piously contribute towards their expenses. Do but watch the ingenious contrivances of those rogues to disguise themselves and to move people's pity. No coquette better knows how to dress herself in order to ensnare a coxcomb.

"Examine narrowly the three that are together on the same side of the way. He on crutches, who trembles all over, and seems to walk with such difficulty that you would think he would be upon his nose at every step he takes, though he has on a long grey beard, and looks so decrepit, is a young, hale fellow, so nimble and light that he would outrun a stag. The other, who has assumed the appearance

of a wounded head, is as handsome a youth as you would desire to see. His crown is covered with a skin that hides a head of hair worthy of a Court page. And the other, sliding along in a bowl, is a comical dog, who has the art of fetching such lamentable sounds from the bottom of his chest that, at his dismal accents, there is not an old woman but will come down four pair of stairs to give him a maravedi.

"Whilst these lazy rogues, under pretence of poverty, are picking the pockets of the public, I observe a crowd of artisans, who, though Spaniards, are industrious, and are preparing to get their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. On all sides you may perceive men rising and dressing themselves, in order to go to their several employments. How many designs formed this night will, before the next, be executed, or dispersed, like morning mist, into the air! What various projects are interest, love, and ambition racking men's minds upon!"

"What is that I see in the street?" interrupted Don Cleofas. "Who is that woman loaded with medals and being led in so much haste by a footman? Her business must surely be pressing."

"Yes, certainly," answered Asmodeus; "she is a venerable matron, trotting to a house where they desire her services. She is going to an actress, who has been suddenly seized with the pangs of maternity, and has two cavaliers with her that seem to be overwhelmed with troubles. One is her husband and the other a man of rank, both concerned in what is going forward; for an actress's

children are like Alcmena's, owing filial duty and affection at once to a Jupiter and an Amphitryon.

"Would not one say, to see that gentleman on horseback with his gun, that he was going to make war upon all the hares and partridges about Madrid? And yet that diversion is the farthest from his thoughts; he is occupied with another design. He is going to a little village, where he will disguise himself like a peasant, and in that dress be introduced to a farmer, where his mistress lives, under the care of a severe and vigilant mother.

"That young graduate you see taking such hasty strides goes every morning to make court to an old uncle of his, whose prebendal stall he has an eye upon. Fix your eyes on that house opposite to us; you see a man putting on his cloak and preparing to go out. He is an honest, rich citizen, whose rest is disturbed by very weighty business. He has an only daughter to dispose of. He does not know whether he shall bestow her upon a young attorney that sues for her, or a haughty Hidalgo who demands her. He is going to consult his friends about it, and really it is a very perplexing business. He is afraid, if he should choose the gentleman, that he may have a son-in-law to despise him; while on the other hand, if he should take the attorney, he is apprehensive that he might take a worm into his family, to eat up all their goods.

"Pray observe a neighbour of this perplexed father, a man in a night-gown of red brocade, flowered with gold, in yonder house, so magnificently furnished. He is a wit, who sets up for a

man of quality in spite of his mean birth. It is not ten years since he was not worth a groat, and at present he has ten thousand ducats a year. He has a very pretty equipage, but he maintains it by keeping a scantily supplied table, the frugality of which is so great that he generally eats his tit-bit by himself. Not but that, out of ostentation, he sometimes entertains people of rank, and has to-day invited several counsellors of state to dine with him. To this end he has just now sent for a cook, and is going to haggle with him for an odd farthing in his hire; after which he will write down on cards the several courses and dishes they may agree upon."

"The fellow you are talking of must be a confounded miser," said Zambullo.

"Why," answered Asmodeus, "all beggars that vault into estates turn misers or prodigals. It is the rule."

"Pray tell me," said the student, "who is that fair lady I see at her toilet, entertaining a very handsome young fellow?"

"Oh, really," replied the cripple, "what you see there well deserves your observation. The lady is a German widow, who lives upon her jointure at Madrid, and keeps very good company; and the gentleman with her is a young nobleman, whose name is Don Antonio de Monsalva.

"Though of one of the best families in Spain, yet he has promised the widow to marry her, and has to that end given her a promissory note for three thousand pistoles. But he is crossed in this affair by his relations, who have threatened to confine him

if he does not break off all correspondence with the lady, whom they look upon as a designing creature. The gallant, mortified to see them all oppose his inclination, came last night to pay his mistress a visit, who, seeing him uneasy, asked him the reason. He told her the facts, at the same time assuring her that all the opposition he could suffer from his family should never shake his constancy. The lady appeared charmed with his resolution, and they parted about midnight, well pleased with each other.

"Monsalva came again this morning, and, finding his widow at her toilet, began to entertain her again upon the subject of his passion. While they were chatting the lady took off the papers from her hair, and the cavalier, without reflection, took up one of them that was unpinned, when, seeing his own handwriting—'How, madam,' said he, smiling, 'is this the use to which you put your *billets-doux*?'

"'Yes, Monsalva,' answered she; 'you see to what use I put the promises that young gentlemen make who would have me against the consent of their families. I convert them into *papillotes*.'

"When Monsalva found that it was really his note of hand the lady had torn, he could not help admiring her disinterestedness, and again swore to her eternal constancy.

"Cast your eye," pursued the devil, "upon that tall lean fellow walking just below us, with a large commonplace-book under his arm, an inkhorn at his button, and a guitar upon his back."

"The man," said the student, "makes but a ridiculous figure, and, I warrant, is an original."

"Assuredly," replied Asmodeus, "he is an odd mortal; but there are cynic philosophers in Spain, and he is one. He is going to a meadow near Buen Retiro, where there is a clear spring, whose limpid water forms a stream that meanders among the flowers. He will stay there the whole day contemplating the rich beauties of nature, playing upon the guitar, and writing his reflections in his commonplace-book. He has the food he generally lives on in his pocket—that is, a few onions and a slice of bread. This is the sober and abstemious life he has lived for these ten years; and if any Aristippus was to tell him, as he did Diogenes, 'If thou knewest how to make thy court to the great thou wouldst not eat onions,' our modern philosopher would answer: 'I could make my court to the great as well as thou if I would debase one man so low as to make him cringe to another.'

"And, indeed, this philosopher was formerly very assiduous in his addresses to great men, who, in effect, made his fortune; but, finding that their service was nothing more than honourable slavery, he broke off all correspondence with them. He kept a coach, which he relinquished because he saw the bespattered men that were better than himself. Nay, he has gone so far as to give away almost all his estate amongst his friends who wanted it, and has only reserved a subsistence in the way he lives; for he thinks it as dishonourable for a philosopher to beg of the common people as of the grandees.

"Pity the cavalier who is walking after the philosopher with a dog; he may boast of being descended from one of the best families in Castile. He was rich, but ruined himself, like Lucian's Timon, by treating his friends every day, especially by making grand entertainments upon the birthdays or marriages of princes and princesses: in a word, on every occasion when Spain has had to make rejoicings. But the moment his parasitical friends saw his reverse of fortune they disappeared, and abandoned him. None but his dog continued faithful to him."

"Tell me, Signor Demon," cried Leandro Perez, "what means all that noise?"

"It is," answered the cripple, "one of the ladies you lately saw round a table at cards, affrighted at the disagreeable sight of day. She is come home, and it is her footman who is thundering at her door. You see she has alighted from her coach, got within doors, and has sat down; she has just lost five hundred livres and cannot go to bed till her maid has brought her a pack of cards. She is going to wake her husband, to show him how she lost the game. She will then fall into a passion, go raving to bed, and rail at the good man for not getting a place at Court, to enable him to support her extravagance."

"By what you inform me," interrupted the student, "the good man must have a pleasant time of it to be tied to a baggage who, not content with running through his fortune, must arraign his conduct, and rob him of his rest besides."

"Oh," replied the cripple, "you do not know the artifices of women. She has merely begun first, for fear of having the tables turned upon her."

"Very ingenious, upon my word," answered the student, laughing. "But methinks I see another equipage in the same street."

"Yes," replied the demon; "it belongs to a rich contador, who every morning comes to a house hard by, where resides, under the care of this sinner of Moorish race, a bona-roba, whom he loves to distraction. Last night he heard that she had been playing him a trick, upon the news of which he fell into a rage and wrote her a letter full of threats and reproaches. You will hardly guess the stratagem which our coquette resolved upon. Instead of having the assurance to deny the fact, she has this morning sent him word that his provocations are just; that he ought for the future to look on her with contempt, since she could have the baseness to wrong so gallant a man; that she acknowledges and detests her fault, and that, to punish herself for it, she has already cut off her fine hair, which he knows she dotes on: in short, that she is determined to go to expiate her crime in a monastery, and there pass the rest of her days in repentance and prayer.

"But the old dotard is not able to endure the separation with which he is threatened, in consequence of his mistress's pretended remorse, and he has got up thus early to pay her a visit. He has found her in tears; and the comedian has played her part so well that he has just pardoned her for

what is past, and, to comfort her for the loss of her hair, he is this moment promising to make her lady of a manor, by buying her a beautiful and large estate, which is actually to be sold in the country, near the Escurial."

"I do not know what recompense he can make her for the next trick she plays him," interrupted the student, "unless he marries her. But, pray, who is that pretty woman yonder, so earnestly talking to her maid? Some good housewife, surely, by her being up so early."

"You are mistaken," answered Asmodeus; "she has not yet been a-bed, but she is going, and is giving her maid orders not to let in her husband till she has called her up to rate him for making her sit up so late."

"Rather early," said the student.

"True," answered the demon. "But pray look into that tavern; there is the good fellow calling for another bottle, because he is afraid of going home at this time of day, and is therefore bottling up all the courage he can to stand his wife's thunder."

"All the shops are open," said the student, "and I discern a cavalier going into a cook's."

"He is," replied the demon, "a young fellow of good family, who is infected with *cacoethes scribendi*, and is absolutely resolved to set up for an author. Not that he wants wit—nay, he has sufficient to criticize such pieces as appear upon the stage, but not enough to write a tolerable one himself. He is going into the cook's to order a great dinner, for

on this very day he treats four players whom he would fain engage to support a scurvy piece of his, which he is going to bring into their house.

"Now we are upon the subject of authors," continued he, "there are two who are met in the street. Observe with what a sneer they salute. They despise each other, and very justly. The one writes as easily as the poet Crispinus, whom Horace compares to a smith's bellows; and the other ruins a vast deal of time in cool, insipid compositions."

"Who is that little man coming out of his coach at that church porch?" asked Zambullo.

"He," answered the cripple, "is a person well worth your observation. It is not ten years since he quitted the office of a notary, in which he was head clerk, to go bury himself in a monastery of Carthusians, at Saragossa. He had not passed six months of his noviciate before he bade adieu to his convent and appeared again at Madrid. His acquaintances were surprised to see him all at once jump into the place of one of the principal members of the Council of the Indies, and his sudden rise is still the subject of conversation. Some say he has sold himself to the devil; others, that he is in the good graces of some rich dowager; and others, in short, that he has found a treasure."

"But you know the truth of it?" interrupted Don Cleofas.

"Oh, as to that, certainly I do," replied the demon, "and will unravel the mystery to you.

"During our monk's noviciate it happened one day, whilst he was digging a deep hole in his garden,

to plant a tree there, that he cast his eye upon a brass casket, which he opened, and within it found a gold box, which had in it about thirty exceedingly fine diamonds. Though he had no judgment in jewels he could not help thinking that he had met with a good booty; and immediately coming to the same resolution as judge Gripus, in one of Plautus's comedies, who, having found a treasure, gave over the trade of a fisherman, he threw off the gown, and through the agency of a jeweller, who was his friend, converted his precious stones into pieces of gold, and his pieces of gold into a post, which has enabled him to make a figure in civil society."

CHAPTER XIX

Further observations made by Asmodeus and Don Cleofas

"I MUST," pursued Asmodeus, "divert you with a passage concerning that man going into a chocolate-house. He is a physician of Biscay, and is going to drink a dish of chocolate, after which he will pass the whole day at chess.

"Be not in fear for his patients the while; he has none, and, if he had, the moments he spends at his beloved game would not be the most unhappy for them. He never fails nightly to visit a rich and handsome widow, whom he would fain marry, and towards whom he pretends a vast passion. Whilst he is with her a rogue of a footman, who is the only servant he has, and is let into the affair, brings him a pretended list of names of several people of rank who have sent for him. The widow takes all this for gospel, and our chess-player is upon the point of winning his game.

"But let us stop a moment at that fine house over against us. I must not go on without showing you

the people that live there. Examine the apartments. What do you see in them ?"

"I see some ladies there," answered the student, "and am dazzled with their beauty. Some of them I see rising, and others already up. What charms they discover to my eyes ! I fancy I see so many of Diana's nymphs as they are described to us by the poets."

"If the women you so much admire," replied the cripple, "have the charms of Diana's nymphs, it is too certain that they have not their chastity. They are four or five ladies of pleasure, who live together upon a general stock. Their dangerous charms draw heedless young fellows in to their ruin, like those fair damsels who, by their allurements, caused such knights as passed by the castles they inhabited in the days of chivalry to stop. Woe to such as suffer themselves to be wheedled by them ! To let passengers know the danger they are in there should be a mark set upon such houses, in the same manner as posts are placed along a river, to show passengers what places are and what are not fordable."

"I do not ask you," said Leandro Perez, "where those noblemen are going in their coaches ; it is sufficiently certain they are going to the King's levee."

"You are right," answered Asmodeus ; "and if you have a mind to go thither too I will carry you. We shall meet with something diverting there."

"You could have proposed nothing more

agreeable," replied Zambullo. "It is so great a pleasure that I seem to taste it beforehand."

Upon this the demon, ready to obey all Don Cleofas's notions, flew with him towards the King's palace; but, before they got thither, the student, perceiving some men at work upon a very lofty gate, asked the devil if it were not the gate of a church they were building.

"No," answered Asmodeus; "it is the gate of a new market, and is very grand, as you see. Yet, were they to carry it up to the clouds, it will never come up to the two excellent Latin verses that are designed for an inscription to it."

"What is that you tell me?" cried Leandro, "or what idea would you give me of those verses? I long to hear them."

"They are these," replied the demon. "Prepare yourself to admire them:

"'Quam bene Mercurius nunc merces vendit opimas,
Momus ubi fatuos vendidit ante sales!'

"There is one of the prettiest puns in the world in these two verses."

"I cannot find out all the beauty of them," said the student. "I do not well understand what 'fatuos sales' means."

"You do not know, then," answered the demon, "that on the ground where this market is building stood a college of monks that devoted their time to teaching. The masters used to make their scholars act plays! But such insipid pieces, so strangely

larded with interludes that even the preterperfect tenses and supines of verbs were not excused dancing."

"Oh, pray, no more of them!" interrupted Zambullo. "I know but too well what stuff those college performances are! The inscription is admirable!"

Scarcely were Asmodeus and the student got upon the staircase leading to the King's apartments when they saw several courtiers going up, and still, as any of those noblemen passed them, the devil played the part of a nomenclator. "See there," said he to Leandro Perez, pointing to them with his finger one after another, "that is Count Villafonsa, of the family of Puebla d'Ellerena; this is the Marquis of Castro Fuestes; that is Don Lopez de los Rios, First Lord of the Treasury; this is the Count de Villa Hombrosa."

Nor did he tell their names only, but described also their characters, always maliciously adding some stroke of satire, by which every one was duly honoured.

"This lord," said he of one of them, "is affable and obliging; he listens to you with an air of condescension. If you want his protection he grants it you generously, and, besides, offers you his interest. It is a pity a man who so much loves to oblige has so short a memory that in a quarter of an hour after you have been talking with him he forgets all that you have been saying.

"That duke," speaking of another, "is one of the most agreeable characters that are to be met

with at Court. He is not changing every quarter of an hour, like the rest of his brethren; he has no caprice, no inequality in his humour. Nor is he ungrateful to such as show affection for his person or do him any service; but, unluckily, he is a little too tardy in acknowledging them. He lets people wait so long for any favour they expect that, when they have obtained it, they think they have paid very dearly for it."

The demon, having acquainted the student with the good and ill qualities of a great number of those noblemen, carried him into a hall, where were people of all kinds and degrees, and amongst them so many knights that Don Cleofas cried out: "Bless me, what a number of knights are here! Surely there must be a great many in Spain!"

"That there are, indeed," replied the cripple; "nor ought it to be thought surprising, since, to be a Knight of St Jago, or of Calatrava, it is not necessary, as it formerly was at Rome, to have five-and-twenty thousand crowns' inheritance. And indeed you see they are a very sophisticated kind of a commodity.

"Observe that mean-looking man behind you."

"Speak lower," interrupted Zambullo; "the man hears you."

"No, no," answered Asmodeus; "the same charm that makes us invisible prevents our being heard. Look upon him: he is a Catalonian, just come from the Philippine Islands, where he has been privateering. To look at him would you imagine him to be such a thunderbolt of war? Yet

he has performed prodigious actions by his bravery. He is going this morning to present a petition to the King, wherein he asks a particular post as the reward of his services; but I much doubt whether he will obtain it, because he did not first apply to the Prime Minister."

"At his right hand," said Leandro Perez, "there is a tall bulky man, who seems to be giving himself airs of consequence. Were one to judge of him by his haughty air, he would be set down as some rich nobleman."

"Far from it," replied Asmodeus. "He is merely an Hidalgo, and wretchedly poor too, his subsistence being derived from a gaming-house, which he keeps, under the protection of a grandee.

"But there is a licentiate who richly deserves to be pointed out to you—he at the first window, in deep discourse with a cavalier in light grey velvet. They are talking of an affair that was yesterday decided by the King. I will give you the particulars of it.

"About two months since, this licenciado, who is a member of the Academy of Toledo, published a book of morality, which shocked all the old Castilian authors. They found it full of bold expressions and new-coined words. Presently they entered into a confederacy against this very singular production. They met, and drew up a petition, which they presented to the King, soliciting him to condemn the book as contrary to the purity and perspicuity of the Spanish tongue.

"The petition was thought worthy of His

Majesty's consideration, who named a committee of three to examine the work. They reported that the style was really faulty, and so much the more dangerous as it was brilliant; and thus the King decreed upon that report: 'That, under pain of his displeasure, two members of the same university, who write in the licentiate's manner and in a style conformable to his, shall not compose any books for the future; and likewise, for the better preserving of the Castilian tongue, that the places of those academicians, upon their demise, shall be filled with persons of the best families only.'"

"A wonderful decision!" cried Zambullo, laughing. "The partisans of the vulgar Castilian have now nothing to fear."

"Pardon me," replied the demon, "writers who are enemies to the noble simplicity which charms sensible readers are not all of the Academy of Toledo."

Don Cleofas was next desirous to know who the cavalier in light grey velvet was, whom he saw engaged in conversation with the licentiate. "He," said the cripple, "is a Castilian, a younger brother, and an officer of the Spanish Guard, and, I assure you, a man of infinite wit. But to make you a judge of that I will tell you a repartee he made yesterday to a lady in very good company. For the better understanding it you must know he has a brother, whose name is Don André de Prada, who was for some years an officer in the same corps he is now in.

"A rich farmer of the King's revenues one day came up to Don André and, accosting him, said:

'Signor Don Prada, I bear the same name as you, but our families are different. I know you are of one of the best in Catalonia, and at the same time that you are not rich; for me, I am rich, but of obscure birth. Could there be no way of sharing between us the advantage which each of us enjoys separately? Can you get at your patent of nobility?'

"'Yes,' said Don André.

"'Well, then,' replied the farmer, 'if you will give me a share in it I will put it into the hands of an able genealogist, who shall set to work upon it, and make us cousins in spite of our ancestors; on which consideration I will, by way of acknowledgment, present you with thirty thousand pistoles. Is it a bargain?'

"Don André was tempted by the sum, accepted the proposal, put his musty records into the farmer's hands, and, with the money he received, bought a considerable estate in Catalonia, where he has ever since lived.

"Now the younger brother of that gentleman, who had no advantage by the bargain, was yesterday at dinner, where by chance this Signor de Prada, the farmer of the King's revenues, happened to be talked of; and thereupon a lady in the company, addressing herself to this young officer, asked him if he was not a relation of his. 'No, really, madam,' answered he, 'I have not the honour of relationship with him; though my brother has.'"

The student, vastly pleased with so diverting a repartee, burst into a loud laugh; but suddenly, seeing a little man running after a courtier, he cried

out: "Good God! How many bows that little man, following the nobleman, is making to him! Certainly he has some favour to ask."

"What you are remarking upon there," said the demon, "well deserves the trouble of telling you the occasion of so many civilities. That little man is an honest citizen, who has a pretty neat box near Madrid, at a place where there are mineral waters in some esteem. This house he lent, without any expectations, to that lord for three months, who went thither to drink the waters. The citizen is at this instant most heartily entreating him to serve him on an occasion that offers, and the nobleman is very politely refusing him.

"I must not let that cavalier of plebeian race escape me, who is pressing through the crowd and giving himself the airs of a noble. He has lately grown excessively rich in a short time, by the science of numbers. He keeps as many domestics as a grandee, and his table, for delicacy and abundance, exceeds that of the Prime Minister. He has one equipage for himself, one for his wife, and another for his children. The finest horses and mules in the world are to be seen in his stables. And the other day he bought, and paid ready money for, a rich set of harness, which the Prince of Spain cheapened and thought too dear."

"Insolence!" said Leandro. "Were a Turk to see this merry fellow flaunting it thus, he would be apt to think that his good fortune was just going to give him the slip."

"As for what may happen, I know not," said

Asmodeus, "but I cannot help thinking like a Turk.

"Bless me, what do I see!" continued the demon, with astonishment. "I can hardly believe my eyes! I see in the hall a poet, who certainly should not be here. How dare he venture hither, after having lampooned several of the chief of the Spanish nobility! Surely he can only expect to be despised by them.

"Consider attentively that honourable person who comes in, leaning upon a squire; see how everybody falls back to make way for him. It is Signor Don Jose de Reynaste, and Ayala, recorder of the city. He is come to give an account of what happened last night in Madrid. Pray do but watch the old gentleman."

"Really," said Zambullo, "he has the look of an honest, good man."

"It were to be wished," replied the cripple, "that every corregidor would choose him for their pattern. He is not one of those turbulent spirits that do everything from mere humour or passion. He will not commit a man upon the single evidence of a bailiff or clerk. He knows too well that such people generally are mercenary and capable of committing the basest actions under his name and authority. Therefore, when a man is to be committed, he sifts the affair till he has found out the truth. And, indeed, he never sends an innocent man to gaol; the guilty only are committed by him. Nor does he leave even them to the barbarity that is exercised in such places. He visits those

unfortunate people himself, and takes care that no inhumanity shall be added to the just severities of the law."

"What a charming character is this," cried Leandro, "and what an amiable man must he be! I should be glad to hear him talk to the King."

"I am extremely sorry," answered the devil, "that I am obliged to tell you I cannot comply with your desire without laying myself open to be insulted. I am not allowed access to crowned heads; that would be encroaching on the rights of Leviathan, Belphegor, and Ashtaroth. I have already told you that those three spirits are in possession of the privilege of engrossing the undivided attention of all sovereigns. Other demons are forbidden to appear in courts; and I do not know what I was thinking about when it came into my head to bring you hither. I own it was taking a very rash step. If those three devils should perceive me they would fall upon me most furiously; and, between you and I, I should have much the worst of it."

"Since we are in such ticklish circumstances," replied the student, "our best way will be to make off as soon as we can. I should be mortally grieved to see you ill-used by your brethren without being able to assist you; for, were I to take your part, I fancy you would be little the better for me."

"No, without doubt," replied Asmodeus, "they would not feel your blows, and you would sink under theirs.

"But," added he, "to make up for not being able to introduce you into your monarch's closet, I will give you a satisfaction which is well worth that which you must lose."

At these words he took Don Cleofas by the hand and darted through the air with him towards the Monastery de la Merci.

CHAPTER XX

The captives

THEY both alighted upon a house near the monastery, at the gate of which was a vast concourse of persons of both sexes. "What a world of people are here!" said Leandro Perez. "What ceremony has brought all these folks together?"

"It is," answered the demon, "a ceremony you have never seen, though it is what happens every now and then at Madrid. Three hundred slaves, all of them subjects to the King of Spain, will be here in a moment. They have come back from Algiers, whence the Fathers of the Redemption have ransomed them. All the streets they are to pass through will immediately be crowded with spectators."

"Indeed," replied Zambullo, "it is a sight I have never yet been very fond of seeing; and if that be what your lordship reserves for me, I must tell you plainly you should not have cried it up so highly."

"I know you too well," answered the demon, "to believe that the sight of the unfortunate will be an agreeable amusement to you. But when I tell you, at the same time that I show them to you, I design to acquaint you with such remarkable incidents

as occur in the captivity of some of them, and the perplexity in which others will find themselves at their return home, I am persuaded you will not be sorry that I have given you this diversion."

"Oh, no, if the matter be as you represent it!" cried the student. "What you tell me alters the case, and you will oblige me by keeping your promise."

While they were thus talking they heard a great shout, which came from the mob at the sight of the captives, who advanced in this order: they marched two and two in their slaves' habits, with their chains about their necks. A great many monks de la Merci, who had been to meet them, went before, mounted upon mules, with housings of black serge, as if they were heading a funeral procession, and one of these good fathers carried the standard of the Redemption. Then came the captives, the youngest first, the most aged followed, and behind them brought up the rear a monk, of the same Order as the first, mounted upon a small horse; and this reverend friar had altogether the air of a prophet. Indeed he was the head of the mission, and attracted the eyes of the spectators by his gravity, as well as by a long grey beard, which helped to give him the venerable look that he bore. On the countenance of this Spanish Moses was to be read the inexpressible joy he felt at bringing back so many Christians to their own country.

"These captives," continued the cripple, "are not all equally delighted at recovering their liberty, and if there are some amongst them who are re-

joiced at being so near seeing their relations again, there are others who are afraid lest, during their absence, something may have happened in their families more afflicting to them than slavery itself.

"The two, for example, that walk foremost are in the latter case. One of them, a native of the little village of Velilla, in the kingdom of Aragon, after having been ten years a slave amongst the Turks, without hearing anything of his wife, will find her married to a second husband, and mother of five children which are none of his. The other, the son of a clothier of Segovia, was carried off by a corsair nearly sixteen years ago. He is afraid, after so many years, that the affairs of his family may be very much altered; and his fears are not without foundation, for his father and mother are dead, and his brothers, who have divided the estate, have, by their ill-conduct since, spent it."

"I am examining the face of a slave," said the student, "who, by his air, seems charmed at being no longer exposed to the bastinado."

"The captive you are looking at," answered the demon, "has great reason to be rejoiced at his deliverance, for he knows that an old aunt, whose sole heir he is, is just dead, and that he is going to enjoy a splendid fortune. This is the circumstance which so agreeably occupies his thoughts, and gives him the air of satisfaction which you observe in him.

"But it is not so with the unfortunate cavalier next to him. A cruel uneasiness incessantly torments him, and this is the cause of it. At the time

he was taken by a pirate of Algiers, in passing from Spain to Italy, he loved, and was beloved by, a fair lady, whose fidelity he suspects was not proof against the impatience and uncertainty of his return."

"And has he been long a slave?" asked Zambullo.

"Eighteen months," replied Asmodeus.

"Why, then," said Leandro, "I fancy this lover gives way too much to unnecessary and unjust fear. He has not put his lady's constancy to sufficient proof to be excusable for thus alarming himself."

"Nay, you are mistaken," replied the cripple; "for his princess had no sooner heard that he was a slave in Barbary than she provided herself with another gallant.

"Would you think," continued the demon, "that the man walking next the two we have been talking of, and whose thick red beard renders him frightful to look at—would you, I say, suppose that man to have ever been a fine handsome fellow? Yet nothing is more certain, nor that under that hideous figure you see a hero, whose story is so uncommon that I will give it you.

"That tall youth's name is Fabricio. Scarcely was he fifteen when his father, a rich husbandman of Cinquello, a great market-town in the kingdom of Leon, died, and shortly afterwards was followed by his mother, so that, being the only son, he remained master of a considerable estate, which was entrusted to the administration of an uncle, a man of probity. Fabricio finished his studies, which he had

then already begun, at Salamanca, and afterwards learned riding, fencing, and, in short, neglected nothing that could contribute to make him appear amiable in the eyes of Donna Hippolita, the sister of a pretty gentleman, whose cottage was about two musket-shots from Cinquello.

"The lady was perfectly handsome and much about the same age as Fabricio, who, being used to see her from his infancy, had, as it were, sucked in his love for her with his milk. Hippolita, too, had eyes to see that he was not ugly; but, knowing him to be the son of a husbandman, she disdained to look on him with much attention. She was insufferably proud, as well as her brother, Don Thomaso de Xaral, who, perhaps, had not his equal in all Spain for poverty and the pride with which he was puffed up on account of his nobility.

"This haughty country gentleman dwelt in a house which he called his castle, but which, to give it its due, was no more than a heap of rubbish. It was, in fact, nearly falling upon his head. Yet, though his estate would not allow him to repair it, and though it was as much as he could possibly do to make both ends meet, still he must have a valet to wait on him, and his sister a negro woman besides.

"It was a diverting circumstance to see Don Thomaso make his appearance at the town, on Sundays and holidays, dressed in a suit of crimson velvet, the pile of which was quite worn off, and a little hat with a rusty yellow plume of feathers in it, which he kept by him during the rest of the week as carefully as relics. Tricked up in these

tatters, which he looked upon as so many proofs of his nobility, he strutted like a lord, and thought he sufficiently repaid the low bows that were made him by a look or a nod. His sister was not less conceited and vain of the antiquity of her family, to which folly she added that of being so unconscionably proud of her beauty as to live in continual expectation of being demanded for a wife by some grandee.

" These were the characters of Don Thomaso and Donna Hippolita. Fabricio was well acquainted with it, and, in order to insinuate himself into the good graces of such vainglorious persons, resolved to flatter their vanity by a show of respect, which he did with so much art that the brother and sister at last condescended to allow him, from time to time, to come and pay his obeisance. Being as well acquainted with their poverty as with their arrogance, he often longed to make Thomaso an offer of his purse ; but this he was deterred from by the fear of shocking the family's pride, and thereby making both brother and sister his enemies. However, his ingenious generosity found means to assist them without making them blush. ' Signor,' said he one day to our gentleman, ' I have two thousand ducats which I would deposit in some friend's hands ; be so good as to keep them for me, and you will oblige me vastly.'

" You need not ask whether Xaral consented. Besides that his own purse was but scantily stocked, he had the right conscience for a trustee. He readily took the sum, and as soon as he got it into his hands,

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without ceremony employed great part of it in repairing his cottage and providing himself with all manner of necessaries. A new suit of very fine blue velvet was taken up and made at Salamanca, and a green feather was bought there likewise, which robbed the old yellow plume of the glory which it had enjoyed from time immemorial, of decorating the *os frontis* of the noble Don Thomaso. The fair Hippolita had her geegaws too, and was entirely new clothed from top to toe. It was thus Xaral ran out the sum he was entrusted with, without once considering that it was not his, and that he should never be able to repay it. That was a scruple that never disturbed him. Nay, he even thought it but reasonable that a plebeian should pay for the honour of a gentleman's acquaintance.

"But Fabricio had foreseen and expected all this. He imagined, indeed, that this ready money might soften Don Thomaso into greater familiarity, and that Hippolita, by degrees accustoming herself to bear his assiduities, might at last pardon him the boldness of lifting his thoughts so high as to her alliance. It must be added that his generosity obtained him freer access than before, and that Thomaso and his sister showed him more civility than they used to do. But a man who is rich is always well received by the great, whenever he will make himself their milch cow. Xaral and his sister, who before had never known anything more of riches than its name, no sooner found how useful it was than they were of opinion that such a man as Fabricio deserved a little complaisance. They

treated him with a respect and attention which charmed him. He thought his person was now not disagreeable to them, and that they had assuredly reflected that gentlemen, to keep up their nobility, were every day obliged to have recourse to alliances with mean families. This thought, which flattered his passion, made him determine to ask Hippolita in marriage.

"The first favourable moment he could find for speaking to Don Thomaso he told him how passionately he desired to be his brother-in-law, and that, in order to enjoy this honour, he would not only relinquish his right to the deposit, but would, besides, make him a present of a thousand pistoles. The haughty Xaral reddened at this proposal, which awakened his pride, and in his first impulse of passion he could hardly forbear discovering all the contempt he entertained for the son of a husbandman. Yet, how much soever he resented the rash attempt of Fabricio, he smothered it, and, without any signs of scorn, answered that he could not immediately determine such an affair upon the spot; that it was proper Hippolita should be consulted upon it, and that there should be a meeting of relations.

"He sent the lover home with this answer, and, in fact, called a diet, composed of a few Hidalgoes of his neighbourhood who were related to him, and whose brains, like his, were turned with their fondness for the Hidalguia. He held a council with them, not to ask their opinions whether he should grant his sister to Fabricio, but to contrive how they

should punish this young insolent fellow, who, notwithstanding his mean birth, had dared to aspire to the possession of a young lady of Hippolita's quality.

"When he had laid before the assembly the circumstances of this daring action, at the bare name of Fabricio, of a husbandman's son, you might have seen the eyes of all these nobles sparkle with rage. Each man vomited fire and flame at the audacious mortal. They were all unanimously of opinion that he ought to breathe his last under the bastinado, to expiate the affront he had done their family by the proposal of so shameful a match. However, upon mature deliberation, the result of this important diet was that the criminal should be suffered to live; but to teach him not to forget himself for the future they should play him a trick which he might have cause to remember while he lived.

"Several mean, rascally expedients were proposed, and at last this obtained the sanction of the majority: that Hippolita should pretend to favour Fabricio's addresses, and that, under colour of softening the lover's pain for Don Thomaso's refusal, she should make him an appointment to come one night to the castle, where, at the moment of his being let in by the negro woman, people posted there on purpose should surprise him with that wench and force him to marry her.

"The sister of Xaral at first gave in to this villainous contrivance without reluctance. She thought her pride was concerned to look upon the suit of a

man so vastly inferior to her in birth as an outrage done to her rank and beauty. But this haughty disposition soon gave way to emotions of pity: indeed I ought to say that Love at one blow made himself master of the proud Hippolita.

"From that moment she considered things with another eye. She looked upon the obscurity of Fabricio's birth as amply made up by the shining qualities he possessed, and saw in him a cavalier who deserved her tenderest affections. Observe and admire," continued the demon, "the prodigious alteration that love is able to produce. This same young creature, who imagined that a prince scarcely deserved her, in an instant grew fond of this son of a husbandman, and thinks herself blessed in being the object of his devotion, after having deemed herself dishonoured by it.

"She gave herself up to the inclination that hurried her away, and, far from submitting to become an instrument of her brother's resentment, she carried on a secret correspondence with Fabricio by means of the negro woman, who sometimes introduced him into the cottage. But Don Thomaso had some suspicion of what was passing. He began to suspect his sister; he watched her, and was convinced by his own eyes that, instead of complying with the intentions of the family, she betrayed them. He immediately informed two of his cousins of it, who, taking fire at the news, began to cry out: 'Vengeance! Don Thomaso, vengeance!' Xaral, who wanted no prompting to demand satisfaction for an offence of this kind, answered them with

Spanish modesty that they should see the use he could make of his sword when his honour was to be avenged. He then desired them to be at his house on a night which he appointed to receive them.

"They were faithful to their appointment. He conducted them in and concealed them in a small room, without being perceived by any of the family. He then left them, saying he would come and let them know so soon as the gallant should have set his foot within the castle, provided he should think fit to come that night; which did not fail to happen, the unlucky planet of our lovers decreeing that they should choose this very night for an interview.

"Already was Fabricio with his dear Hippolita; and they had begun to converse upon a topic which they had gone through a hundred times, and yet, though repeated without intermission, had still always the charms of novelty, when they were disagreeably interrupted by those cavaliers that were upon the watch in order to surprise them. Don Thomaso and his two cousins came all three courageously upon Fabricio, who had but just time to draw, and who, judging by this action of theirs that they intended to murder him, fought like one in despair. He wounded them all three, and still presenting the point of his sword was so lucky as to gain the door and get off.

"Upon this, Xaral, finding his enemy had escaped him after, as he represented it, dishonouring his family unrevenged, turned his fury against

the unfortunate Hippolita, and plunged his sword into her heart. His two relations, mortified to the last degree with the ill-success of their designs, each of them went home to dress their wounds and cherish their desire for vengeance.

"Let us break off here," continued Asmodeus. "When we have seen all the captives go by I will make an end of my story, and inform you how, after the law had seized upon all his estate on account of this melancholy accident, Fabricio had the misfortune, in a voyage, to be made a slave."

"While you were in your story," said Don Cleofas, "I could not help taking notice of one of these unfortunate people, a young fellow, who looks so dejected, so languishing, that it was as much as I could do to forbear interrupting you to inquire into the cause of it."

"Nor will you lose your labour," answered the demon, "for I can satisfy your curiosity. That slave, whose melancholy struck you, is the only heir of a good family at Valladolid. He has been two years in captivity with a patron who has an exceedingly pretty wife; and his wife was violently in love with her slave, who returned her love with a very tender passion. The patron, suspecting something, made haste to sell the Christian, for fear his residence at his house might end in the increase of Turkish subjects. The tender-hearted Castilian has ever since, without ceasing, bewailed the loss of his mistress, and his liberty is not deemed by him a sufficient compensation for the sacrifice."

"An old gentleman with a very good aspect

attracts my eyes towards him," said Leandro Perez; "pray who may he be?"

"It is a barber of Guipuscoa," answered the cripple, "who is returning to Biscay, after a forty years' captivity. At the time he fell into a corsair's hands in a voyage from Valencia to the island of Sardinia he had a wife, two sons, and a daughter, of whom he has now only one son left, who, more fortunate than his father, has been to Peru, and is returned with immense riches to his own country, where he has bought two fine estates."

"What satisfaction!" exclaimed the student. "What transport it must be to that son to behold his father again, and to be in a condition to make his last days happy and easy!"

"You talk like a tender, affectionate child," replied the demon; "but the Biscayan barber's son is of tougher constitution. The unexpected arrival of his father will give him more uneasiness than pleasure; and, instead of taking him home into his house at Guipuscoa, and sparing nothing to show how overjoyed he is at recovering him, he may perhaps make him one of his gamekeepers.

"Behind the barber is a little Aragonian physician, as like an ape as one drop of water to another. He has not been a fortnight at Algiers, for, as soon as the Turks learned his profession, they refused to let him stay amongst them, and chose rather to give him up, without any ransom, to the Fathers of the Redemption, who were far from intending to redeem him, and have, sore against their will, brought him back to Spain."

"For goodness sake tell me," said the student, "who that very odd, sour-looking man is, who walks by himself, with a shambling gait, and has his hat slouched over his eyes."

"He," answered Asmodeus, "is a very singular fellow indeed, and the ill-nature of his countenance proceeds from his having nobody to talk to. He is one of those disagreeable people whom Horace has distinguished by the name of question-askers, or praters. Not content with the produce of his own brains, he is eternally upon the scent after the affairs of other people, as it is in the power of novelty alone to administer ease to that restless, inquisitive humour which is so shocking to the rest of mankind. And this fellow is so signally unfortunate that an eighteen months' slavery of his own, together with that of the whole ship's crew, is owing to his very silly habit of asking impertinent questions. While he was inquiring of the pilot the longitude and latitude of several places, the knowledge of which could never be of the least use to him, the pilot, diverted from his observations by the young man's impertinence, suffered the ship to run upon a bank of sand, which gave an Algerine rover time to come up with and make a seizure of her crew, passengers, and cargo. While you live," continued he, "avoid such company. Trifling at best, they are good for nothing but to disturb the pleasure and repose of society; and if they happen, for the plague of mankind, to have ill-nature joined with their curiosity, there is no mischief they are not capable of doing."

"You need not fear but that I shall profit by this piece of advice," replied the student, "for my own sake at least."

"It is well," said the demon. "Let us resume the thread of our observations, which that good-for-nothing creature has interrupted. Observe that slave, the one with a little brown cap upon his bald pate. You that have such tender feeling for others' misfortunes, alas! how much would you pity him did you know the sufferings he has undergone during a twelve years' slavery at Algiers, under an English renegade, to whose lot he fell."

"And who is that poor captive?" asked Zambullo.

"He is a cordelier of Navarre," answered the demon. "I must confess that I am not at all sorry he has suffered like a wretch as he is, since, by his discourses of morality, he hindered above a hundred Christian slaves from taking the turban."

"And I with the same freedom must tell you," replied Don Cleofas, "that I am sorry the good father has been so long at the mercy of a barbarian."

"You are as much in the wrong to be afflicted as I to rejoice at it," answered Asmodeus, "for this friar has so greatly improved by his twelve years' sufferings that it is much better for him to have passed that time in torments than in his cell, to combat temptations of which he would not always have got the better."

"The captive that comes immediately after the cordelier," said Leandro Perez, "looks very composed and cool, for a man just redeemed from

slavery. My curiosity is excited to know who he is."

"You are beforehand with me," replied the cripple. "I was going to point him out to you. In him you see a citizen of Salamanca, an unhappy father, a poor mortal grown insensible to misfortunes, in consequence of having experienced so many. I am going to relate to you his sad story, and there leave the rest of the captives. And, indeed, after him there are few whose adventures deserve reciting."

The student, already tired with seeing so many sad figures, answered that he desired nothing better. The demon thereupon immediately began the story contained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

The last story told by Asmodeus, who, as he was making an end of it, was suddenly interrupted; with the disagreeable mode in which he and Don Cleofas were parted

"THE son of an alcalde of a small town in Old Castile, Pablos de Bahabon, after having divided between himself, one brother and a sister a small inheritance which their father, though a covetous man, had left them, set out for Salamanca, with design to increase the great number of students who then crowded the halls of that university. He was of good figure, had wit, and was then in the twenty-third year of his age.

"With a good thousand of ducats, and a strong predisposition to spend them in good cheer, he did not long fail to be talked of in the city. All the young people strove for a share of the friendship and entertainments which Don Pablos every day gave. I say Don, for he had assumed that title in order to support his pretensions to familiarity with students, whose nobility might otherwise have

rendered it necessary for him to behave with greater reserve. But so much did he love diversion and good company, and so little did he exercise proper management over his purse, that at fifteen months' end his money failed him. However, he still made a shift to rub on, as well by the means of credit, which was freely given him, as of a few pistoles that he borrowed. But these resources could not last long, and he soon found himself separated from his last penny.

"Upon this, his friends, finding him unable to live as he had done, forbore their visits, and his creditors began to annoy him; and though he assured the latter that in a few days he expected bills of exchange from his own country, yet some of them grew impatient, and pursued him so closely with bailiffs that he narrowly escaped being arrested, when, as he was walking by the side of the river de Tormes, he met an acquaintance, who accosted him thus: 'Signor Don Pablos, take care of yourself, for I must tell you there are several bailiffs in pursuit of you, and they intend to lay hold of you the moment you set your feet within the town.'

"Bahabon, terrified with this intelligence, which but too well agreed with the state of his affairs, immediately made off towards Corita; but was cautious enough to leave the highroad to enter a wood that was within view, in which he soon contrived to shelter himself, resolving to lie concealed there till Night should befriend him with her darkness and enable him to pursue his journey with more security. It was a season when the forests

were adorned with all their foliage. Pablos chose the most umbrageous cork-tree, and, climbing into it, sat there upon its branches, the leaves of which entirely hid him from sight.

"Thinking himself safe here, the fear of bailiffs soon vanished; and as men acquire the capacity of making the finest reflections in the world when their faults have been committed, so he recalled all his ill-conduct, and resolved, if ever he should see himself rich again, to make a better use of his money. But, above all, he inwardly swore never more to be the bubble of those false friends who draw young fellows into debauchery and whose friendship expires with the fumes of their wine.

"While he was thus entertaining himself with thoughts of divers kinds that crowded into his mind, one after another, night came on. Then, disengaging himself from the branches and leaves that covered him, he was preparing to get down, when, by the feeble light of the then new moon, he thought he discerned, lurking near the spot, the form of a man. At sight of this his former fear returned, and he fancied it was a bailiff, who, having traced him, was looking for him in this wood; and his fear increased upon seeing the man sit down at the foot of the tree where he was, after going two or three times round it."

The Devil on Two Sticks stopped short in his story here. "Signor Zambullo," said he to Don Cleofas, "give me leave for a few moments to divert myself with the perplexity which I perceive I have put you into. You are in much pain to know

who the mortal could be that came so unluckily thither, and what could have brought him. That is what I am going this moment to inform you. I will not abuse your patience.

" The man, after sitting down at the foot of the tree, whose thick foliage had hidden Don Pablos from him, rested himself for a few minutes. He then began to dig the earth with a poniard, and made a large hole, wherein he buried a leathern bag. He next filled up the hole, covered it carefully with moss, and went away. Bahabon, who had observed all this with the greatest attention, and whose fears were changed into transports of joy, waited for the man's being at a distance, that he might come down from his tree and dig up the bag, in which he did not doubt but he should find either gold or silver. To this end he made use of his knife ; but had he had none, he was so eager for the work that with his hands alone he would have penetrated to the very centre of the earth.

" The moment he had the bag in his hands he began to sound it, and, being persuaded there was money in it, he hastened out of the wood with his booty, not so much then fearing to meet a bailiff as the man who owned the bag. Transported as our student was with so lucky an occurrence, he walked nimbly all night long, without keeping to any road, and without feeling any fatigue or inconvenience from the burthen with which he was loaded. But as soon as day glimmered he stopped under some trees, at no great distance from the town of Molorido, not so much indeed to rest

himself as at last to satisfy the curiosity he had to examine the contents of his bag. He untied it with that agreeable trembling which most men feel upon the approach of any great anticipated pleasure. He found a parcel of good double pistoles, and, to crown his joy, counted to the tune of two hundred and fifty.

"Having contemplated his treasure with excessive satisfaction, he began to bethink him very seriously what course he should take, and when he had formed his resolution he fastened up his doubloons in his pocket, threw away the bag, and went to Molorido. He inquired for an inn, where, while his breakfast was preparing, he hired a mule, and that very day returned to Salamanca.

"He perceived plainly, by the surprise everybody showed at seeing him again, that the reason of his disappearing was no secret; but he had his story ready. He told them that, having occasion for money, and receiving none from his own country, though he had written for it twenty times, he had resolved to take a turn thither himself; and that the day before, just as he got into Molorido, he had met his steward with money. So that he now found it was in his power to undeceive those who thought him a man who had no fortune. He added that he intended to show his creditors they were in the wrong to drive an honest man to extremities, who would long ago have paid them had his steward been more punctual in remitting him his rents.

"In reality, the next day he sent for all his

creditors, and paid them to the last farthing. The same friends who had deserted him in his want no sooner knew he had a fresh supply of money than they came again flocking around him, and once more began to flatter him, hoping yet to divert themselves at his expense. But he in his turn laughed at them and, religiously observing the oath he had sworn in the wood, sent them abruptly away. Instead of following his former course of life he turned his thoughts towards making a progress in the science of the laws, and study became his sole employment.

"You will say, however, that he was all this while very conscientiously spending double pistoles which did not belong to him. I agree with you, but must add, moreover, that he was doing only what four parts in five of mankind would do in the like case. Yet he intended some time or other to restore them, if by chance he should discover who owned them. But, relying upon his good intentions, he spent them without scruple, and patiently waited till he should find their loser, which he did about a year afterwards.

"The report soon spread about Salamanca that a man of that town, called Ambrosio Piquillo, going to a wood to fetch a bag full of pieces of gold which he had buried, had found nothing but the hole where he had taken it into his head to bury them, and that the poor man was thereby reduced to beggary.

"I must say, in praise of Bahabon, that the secret reproaches of his conscience at hearing this were

not thrown away. He inquired where Ambrosio lived, and made him a visit in a little mean habitation, where all the furniture was one chair and a wretched bed. 'Friend,' said he, with an hypocritical air, 'I have heard from common fame of the sad accident which has befallen you, and, charity obliging us all to help one another as far as we can, I am come to bring you some small assistance. But I should be glad to hear your unfortunate adventure from your own mouth.'

"'Sir,' answered Piquillo, 'I will tell you in few words. I had a son who used to rob me. I perceived it, and fearing he might lay his hands upon a leathern bag, in which I had two hundred and fifty good doubloons, I thought I could not do better than bury them in this same wood, whither I accordingly had the folly to carry them. Since that unlucky day my son took all that I had and ran away with a woman whom he had seduced. Finding myself in a deplorable condition, by the debaucheries of this wicked young man, or rather by my foolish tenderness for him, I had recourse to my leathern bag. But, alas! the only hopes of subsistence which were left me were cruelly torn from me.'

"The poor man could not utter these words without finding his affliction renewed and shedding abundance of tears. Don Pablos relented at so moving a scene, and said to him: 'My dear Ambrosio, we must not take the crosses we meet with too much to heart. Your tears are of no avail; they will not fetch back your money, which, if it

be fallen into the hands of any rascal, is really lost to you. But who knows? Your double pistoles may have happened to get into an honest man's hands, who will be sure to restore them as soon as he knows they belong to you. Come, perhaps you may get them again. At all events, do not despair. And meanwhile,' added he, at the same time giving him ten of those very doubloons that came out of the leathern bag, 'take these, and come to me in eight days.' Having spoken thus to him, he told him his name, and where he lived, and went out of the room quite confounded at the blessings and acknowledgments Ambrosio bestowed upon him. Such are, for the most part, all generous actions; which we should not so frequently admire could we see into their true motives.

"At the eight days' end Piquillo, who had not forgotten Don Pablos' commands, went and made him a visit. Bahabon treated him with great kindness, and said to him very affectionately: 'Friend, after the good character I have had of you I am resolved to contribute my utmost towards your re-establishment. I will employ for you both my credit and my purse.

"'As a beginning,' continued he, 'do you know what I have done? I am acquainted with some persons of distinction, who are extremely charitable. I have been with them, and have moved them to pity you so much that I have procured of them two hundred crowns for you.' At the same time he went into his closet, whence he came out again in a moment, bringing with him the sum named

in silver, and not in doubloons, lest the man might suspect the truth of the matter by receiving so many double pistoles. By this artifice he obtained his end with more security, which was to make restitution in such a manner as might reconcile his conscience with his reputation.

"And indeed poor Ambrosio was far from thinking those crowns a restitution. He sincerely took them for a contribution made for him and, having again humbly thanked Don Pablos, returned to his little cottage, blessing Heaven all the way for finding a gentleman so good as to take all this trouble to serve him.

"The next day he met a friend in the street, whose affairs were not at all in a better posture than his own, and who said to him: 'In two days I am going to Cadiz, in order to embark on board a ship that is shortly to sail for New Spain. I do not like the life I have lately led here, and my mind tells me that I shall succeed better at Mexico. I would advise you to go with me, if you can raise only a hundred crowns.'

"'I can raise two hundred,' answered Piquillo, 'without any trouble, and would willingly undertake this voyage were I sure of a livelihood in the Indies.' Upon this his friend boasted of the fertility of New Spain, and laid before him so many ways of growing rich that Ambrosio acceded to his friend's views, and thought of nothing but of preparing to set out for Cadiz. But before he left Salamanca he took care to have a letter left with Bahabon, wherein he told him that, having met

with a very good opportunity of going to the Indies, he had a mind to make use of it, in order to try whether Fortune would be kinder to him in a new country than she had been in his own; that he took the liberty of informing him of it, and of assuring him he would never forget his great favours.

"Ambrosio's departure a little vexed Don Pablos, who thereby saw the scheme he had laid, by little and little to discharge his conscience, quite disconcerted. But, considering that in a few years the good old man might return to Salamanca, he insensibly grew easy, and applied himself more than ever to the civil and canon laws, and made so prodigious a progress, as well by his application as the quickness of his parts, that he became the most shining member of the university, and was at last chosen rector of it. He was not contented with supporting that honour by his profound learning, but took such infinite pains with himself as to acquire all the qualities of a man of honour and integrity.

"While he was rector he heard that a young fellow of Salamanca had been committed to prison upon an accusation for abduction, and was upon the point of being executed. Bahabon, upon this, remembering that Piquillo's son had carried off a woman, inquired who the prisoner was, and, being informed it was this very son of Piquillo, undertook his defence. One admirable circumstance in the science of law is that it furnishes arguments on both sides; and as our rector was a complete master of

it he made an excellent use of it in defence of the criminal. It is true he joined to it the credit of his friends and the strongest solicitation; and these, to tell you a truth, did more than all the rest.

"The criminal, through the influence exercised on his behalf, came off whiter than snow. He went to thank his deliverer, who said thus to him: 'I have served you, but it was from regard to your father, whom I love; and to give you a fresh instance of it, if you have any thoughts of continuing here and living honestly, I will undertake to make a man of you. If, on the contrary, you, like your father, have a mind to take a trip to the Indies, you may be sure of fifty pistoles. I engage my word for them.' Young Piquillo made him this answer: 'Since I have the honour of your lordship's protection, I should act very wrong to leave a place where I enjoy so great an advantage. No, my lord, I will remain at Salamanca, and henceforth protest to you that my conduct shall be such as shall please you.' Upon these assurances the rector put twenty pistoles into his hands, saying: 'Here, friend, take these: attach yourself to some honest profession, employ your time well, and rest assured that I will not desert you.'

"About two months afterwards it happened that Piquillo, who from time to time used to make his court to Don Pablos, one day appeared before him in tears. 'What is the matter with you?' asked Bahabon. 'Sir,' answered the son of Ambrosio, 'I have just heard a piece of news that goes nigh to break my heart. My father has been taken by an

Algerine rover, and is actually in chains. An old man of this town, who is returned from Algiers after ten years of slavery, whom the Fathers of Mercy have lately redeemed, just now told me he left him there a captive. Alas,' added he, beating his breast and tearing his hair, 'wretch that I am, it was my debaucheries that forced my father to hide his money and banish himself from his country! It is I who have delivered him up to a barbarian, who is loading him with fetters! Ah, Signor Don Pablos, why did you rescue me from the hands of justice? Since you loved my father you should have been his avenger, and suffered me, by my death, to have expiated the horrible crime of having caused all his calamities.'

"At this discourse, which exhibited the true repentance of the prodigal son, the rector was moved with the grief which the young Piquillo testified. 'My child,' said he, 'it is with pleasure I see that you repent of your faults. But dry up your tears. It is sufficient that I know what is become of Ambrosio to assure you that you shall see him again. His liberty is to be purchased with a ransom, and that I take upon myself. Whatever he may have suffered, I am persuaded that, finding in you a discreet, affectionate son at his return, he will no more complain of his ill-fortune.'

"Don Pablos eased the mind of Ambrosio's son by this promise, and three or four days afterwards set out for Madrid, where, upon his arrival, he put into the hands of the Fathers of Mercy a purse of one hundred pistoles, with a little label containing

these words: 'This sum is given to the Brotherhood of the Redemption for the ransom of a poor citizen of Salamanca, named Ambrosio Piquillo, a captive at Algiers.' Those good fathers, in their last voyage to Algiers, have punctually fulfilled the rector's intention. They have redeemed Ambrosio, who is the slave whose composed air attracted so much of your attention."

"But methinks," said Don Cleofas, "Bahabon is now not at all in the citizen's debt."

"Don Pablos is not of your opinion," answered Asmodeus. "He intends to return both principal and interest. His nice conscience is even scrupulous of enjoying the wealth he has acquired during his rectorship. And when he sees Piquillo he intends to say thus to him: 'My dear friend Ambrosio, no longer look on me as a benefactor; in me you only see a rascal who dug up the money you hid in the wood. It is not sufficient for me to restore you your two hundred and fifty doubloons, since I made use of it to attain the rank I hold in life; whatever I have is yours. I will keep no more than you shall judge necessary to——'"

Here the Devil on Two Sticks stopped short. He was suddenly seized with an aguish shivering and changed colour.

"What is the matter?" inquired the student; "what extraordinary emotion makes you tremble and pause?"

"Ah, Signor Leandro," cried the demon, with a terrified voice, "how unfortunate am I! The conjurer, who kept me in the bottle in his

laboratory, has discovered my flight. He is going to recall me by such forcible conjurations as I cannot resist."

"What a mortification is this to me!" said Don Cleofas, quite softened with compassion; "and what a loss am I going to suffer! Alas, are we going to part for ever?"

"I do not think so," answered Asmodeus. "The magician may want my assistance, and if I have the good fortune to render him any service, perhaps, out of gratitude, he may give me my liberty. If that should happen, as I hope, depend upon it I will soon be with you, upon condition that you reveal to no soul living what has this night passed between us; for should you be so indiscreet as to impart it to anybody, I tell you beforehand that you will never see me more.

"What makes my leaving you a little easier to me," pursued he, "is that, at the worst, I have made your fortune. You will marry the fair Seraphina, whom I have made dotingly fond of you. Signor Don Pedro de Escolano, her father, is resolved to marry her to you. Do not let slip so fine an opportunity to obtain a settlement. But, bless me!" added he, "I already hear the magician call me. The whole of the lower domain of spirits rings with the terrible words pronounced by this formidable cabalist. I cannot stay longer with you, Signor. Adieu, dear Zambullo, till I see you again!"

At these words, he embraced Don Cleofas, and, having conveyed him safely to his apartment, disappeared.

CHAPTER XXII

Containing an account of what Don Cleofas did after the Devil had left him; and how the author of this work thought fit to end it

ASMODEUS had no sooner departed than the student, finding himself fatigued with having been all night on his legs, bestirring himself, undressed, and went to bed to take a little rest. His spirits were so agitated that he could hardly get to sleep; but at last, paying Morpheus that tribute which all mortals owe, without usury, he fell into a profound slumber, in which he continued during the whole of that day and the following night, dreaming of the adventures through which he had so recently passed.

In this condition he had remained four-and-twenty hours, when Don Luis de Lujana, a young gentleman of his acquaintance, came into his chamber, crying as loud as he could: "So ho, Signor Don Cleofas, up, up!" At this noise Zambullo awoke. "Do you know," said Don Luis, "that you have been a-bed ever since yesterday morning?"

"That is impossible!" answered Leandro.

"Nothing is more true," replied his friend. "You have slept the clock twice round. Everybody in the house has assured me it is a fact."

The student, astonished at having had so long a nap, was at first afraid that this adventure with the Devil on Two Sticks was no more than a dream. Yet he could not think so either; and when he recalled some particular circumstances he no longer doubted but what he had seen was real. However, to ease his doubts, he got up, dressed with all haste, and went out with Don Luis, whom he carried towards the gate of the sun, without telling him wherefore. When they were there, and Don Cleofas had found that Don Pedro's house was really almost burnt to the ground, he pretended to be surprised. "What is this I see?" he exclaimed. "What sad work the fire has made here! Whose was this unfortunate house? Is it long since it was burnt?"

Don Luis de Lujana answered his two questions, and thus pursued his discourse: "The vast damage of this fire makes less noise in the city than a circumstance I am going to tell you of. Signor Don Pedro de Escolano has an only daughter, beautiful as the day. They say she was in a room filled with fire and smoke, where she must inevitably have perished, and that she was rescued, notwithstanding, by a young gentleman whose name I have not yet learned. It is the common topic of every conversation at Madrid. The cavalier's bravery is cried up to the skies; and it is believed that, though he be nothing more than a private gentleman, he may very well obtain the daughter of Don Pedro, as the reward of so glorious an achievement."

Leandro Perez listened to Don Luis without showing that he was in the least concerned in what he

was talking of; and, disengaging himself upon a feigned excuse, he went to the Prado, and sitting down under some trees fell into a deep reverie. Immediately the Devil on Two Sticks came into his mind. "I cannot," said he, "too much regret my dear Asmodeus. He would, in a short time, have carried me all over the world, and I should have made that tour without any of the inconveniences that travelling subjects one to. Doubtless I have sustained a great loss; but," presently subjoined he, "perhaps it is not irreparable. Why should I despair of seeing him again? It may happen, as he himself said, that the conjurer may immediately give him his liberty." Then, thinking of Don Pedro and his daughter, he resolved to make the grandee a visit, urged on solely by the curiosity of seeing the fair Seraphina.

The moment he appeared before Don Pedro that nobleman ran and embraced him with open arms, crying: "Welcome, generous cavalier! I began to be angry with you. 'How,' said I, 'after the pressing invitation I gave Don Cleofas to come and see me, is he still absent from my eyes? How ill does he return the impatience I feel to testify the esteem and friendship I have for him!'"

Zambullo hung down his head, out of respect, at so flattering a reproach, and excused himself to the old gentleman by telling him he feared he should have been troublesome in the confusion in which he judged he must have been the day before.

"That excuse will not satisfy me," replied Don Pedro; "you could never be troublesome in a

house where, had it not been for you, a greater sadness would have reigned. But," added he, "be pleased to follow me; you have other thanks to receive than mine." At these words he took him by the hand and led him into Seraphina's apartment.

That lady had just returned from prayers. "Daughter," said her father, "I am come to present the gentleman to you who so bravely saved your life. Show him how sensible you are of the great favour he did you, since the condition you were in the day before yesterday would not permit you to do it then."

Hereupon Signora Seraphina, opening a mouth of roses, addressed herself to him in a compliment that would charm all my readers could I repeat it word for word; but, as it has not been handed down to me exactly, I choose rather to pass it over in silence than spoil it.

I shall only say that Don Cleofas imagined it was a divinity he saw and heard, and that he was at once captivated through the eyes and the ears. He immediately felt a violent passion for her. But, far from considering her as one he was sure of marrying, he doubted, notwithstanding all that the demon had said, whether so glorious a reward was to be the recompense of a service they imagined he had done them. The more charming she appeared to him the less did he dare to flatter himself with the happiness of gaining her.

What confirmed him in his uncertainty of obtaining so great a blessing was that Don Pedro, during the long conversation he had with him, never once

touched upon that string, and had only loaded him with civilities, without hinting the least desire to be his father-in-law. Seraphina too, on her side, as polite as her father, turned the discourse wholly upon gratitude, without making use of any expression that could give Zambullo room to think that she loved him. So that he took his leave of Signor Escolano with a great deal of love and very little hope.

"Friend Asmodeus," said he, on his way home, as if he had still been with the devil, "when you assured me that Don Pedro was inclined to make me his son-in-law, and that Seraphina indulged a lively passion with which you had inspired her for me, you must have intended to divert yourself at my expense, or else you must own that you know as little of the present as of the future."

Our student was now sorry that he had visited the lady, and, looking upon his passion for her as an ill-fated love which he ought to conquer, he resolved to spare no pains to accomplish it. He went farther: he reproached himself with his eagerness in pushing his design, supposing he had found the father inclined to grant him his daughter, and he looked upon it as shameful to owe his happiness to an artifice.

He was still full of these reflections when Don Pedro, having sent for him the next day, began thus: "Signor Leandro Perez, it is time for me to prove by my actions that when you obliged me you did not do a good office to one of those courtiers who, were he in my place, would con-

tent himself with returning it with a little Court holy water. But I intend that Seraphina herself shall be the reward of the danger you ran upon her account. I must tell you, too, that I have found her to be my own daughter, in the proposal I made to her of marrying her deliverer. She showed her joy by a transport which has convinced me that her gratitude equals my own. It is, then, resolved on that you shall have my daughter."

At these words the good Signor de Escolano, who expected Don Cleofas would have returned his most humble thanks for so great a favour, was surprised to see him stand speechless and confounded. "Speak, Zambullo," said he. "What am I to think of the disorder into which my proposal has thrown you? What can have set you against her? Ought a private gentleman to refuse an alliance by which a grandee would think himself honoured? Has the nobility of my family any blemish that I am a stranger to?"

"My lord," answered Leandro, "I am but too sensible of the distance which Heaven has placed between us."

"Wherefore, then," replied Don Pedro, "do you seem so little pleased at a marriage that does you so much honour? Come, be ingenuous, Don Cleofas: you are in love with some other lady, to whom you have given your faith; and it is she whose interest, at this time, stands as a bar to your advancement."

"Had I a mistress to whom I might have engaged myself by any oath," answered the student,

" without doubt no reason should induce me to be false to her. But it is not that which prevents my accepting your favours. The nice notion I entertain of honour commands me to forgo the glorious establishment you have designed for me, and, far from intending to make an ill use of the error you labour under, I am going to undeceive you. I am not Seraphina's deliverer."

" What do I hear ! " cried the old gentleman, in amazement. " Was it not you who rescued her from the flames that were about to devour her ? Was it not you who performed so gallant an action ? "

" No, my lord," answered Zambullo. " Vain had been that attempt to any mortal man, and, I will plainly tell you, it was a demon that saved your daughter."

These words increased Don Pedro's surprise, who, thinking he ought not to understand them in a literal sense, desired the student to speak plainer. Upon this, Leandro, without giving himself any pain for Asmodeus' friendship, told him all that had passed between the cripple and him. The old gentleman then resumed the discourse, and said to Don Cleofas: " The confidence you have now reposed in me confirms me in my design of giving you my daughter. You are originally her deliverer. Had not you interceded with the Devil on Two Sticks to snatch her from impending death, he had infallibly suffered her to perish. It is you, therefore, who have preserved Seraphina's days. In a word, you have deserved her, and I offer her to you, with half my estate."

Leandro Perez, at these words, which removed all scruple, threw himself at the feet of Don Pedro, to thank him for his great goodness. The wedding of Cleofas and Seraphina was shortly afterwards celebrated, with a magnificence suitable to the rank and wealth of the heiress of Signor Escolano, and to the great satisfaction of the friends of our student; Leandro being thus well rewarded for the few hours of liberty which he had procured for THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS.

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