

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SUBJECT OF WHICH, IS DON QUIXOTE'S ADVENTURE WITH
THE GOAT-HERDS.

WHILE the barber lay snoring, I stretched myself upon the little hillock formed by the roots of one of the trees; not to sleep, but as it is said of Don Quixote, "like a hare," with my eyes open, ruminating upon the agreeable nature of the journey I had undertaken, upon the light which such a journey throws on the pages of Cervantes, and now and then smiling at the recollection of the barber's story, and the invention of the cock's tongue, and anticipating the sequel of the history: and so the half-hour I had promised to allow the barber passed away, and another good quarter added to it. It was now time to awake my

sleeping companion, for the half-hour spent in familiar intercourse with the contents of our bag, and another half-hour consumed by the *siesta*, had left but one half-hour more for the continuation of the story; and so jogging the barber, as I had promised, and saying, "Rise, friend Sancho, let us not waste in unprofitable idleness, the precious time that God hath vouchsafed to us," he opened his eyes, which soon assumed their comical twinkle, and sat up, a new man, as every Spaniard is who has enjoyed his *siesta*.

"Mr. Barber," said I, when I perceived that he was thoroughly awake, "curiosity has been upon the rack all the time you have been asleep, to learn the issue of the experiment upon the cock's tongue, and I am all impatience to hear if your trick succeeded with the Carthusian." But the barber, who was always more occupied with Don Quixote than with any thing else, without noticing my observation, looked inquiringly around him, and particularly at the clump of trees which sheltered us from the sun, and said, "so intently have my thoughts been fixed upon the contents of the bag and the wine-

skin, that I have only this moment discovered we have selected, by mere accident, the identical spot where Don Quixote was entertained by the goat-herds. You perceive that these are not olive but ilex trees, and that one of them is a cork tree."

"I perceive that what you say is true," replied I; "but how does this prove that the cow-herds' shed stood here?"

"By the most certain evidence in the world," said the barber. "You cannot have forgotten that after Don Quixote and Sancho had, 'with keen appetite and infinite relish, solaced their stomachs' with goat's flesh, 'the herds spread upon their skins great quantities of acorns;' and that it was upon the display of these, that the Knight 'took up a handful, and after looking at them attentively,' began his famous eulogium upon the golden age—'Happy age and happy days, to which the ancients gave the name of golden:' and in the same place, we read that one of the wine-skins 'was hung upon a cork-tree.' Now," continued the barber, "it so happens, that throughout all this part of La Mancha, here, in this part alone, are

ilex trees or cork trees to be found together; and here, therefore, Cervantes must have placed the goat-herds' shed."

The barber was probably right. Scarcely anywhere on the plains of La Mancha, have I seen any other trees than olives; but the reader requires to be informed that the acorns spoken of in the translations of Don Quixote, are not the acorns of our English oak, which is rarely found in Spain, but the ilex-nut or fruit of the ilex, which is sometimes called the evergreen oak: and this name, as well as the similarity in the appearance of the two fruits, may excuse the translation into the word acorn. The goat-herds' were not singular in spreading these acorns upon their table; wherever the ilex is abundant, its fruit forms an article of sustenance for both man and beast. In all the markets of Andalusia, as well as of La Mancha, baskets full of ilex nuts are exposed for sale, and almost every peasant has a pocket half filled with them, though indeed, in the date districts, dates take the place of ilex nuts. Sancho it appears was not neglectful of the acorns, for while his master

delivered his harangue, "he kept his teeth employed upon the acorns."

And now having assented to the proof offered by the barber, that we were sitting on the spot where the Knight of La Mancha delivered his celebrated harangue; and having mused a few moments, seeing in imagination the simple goat-herds listening to the extravagant rhapsody of the knight, while Sancho, heedless of the fine speech, munched his acorns; and hearing him repeat to his sheep-skin clothed audience the distich of the ballad—

" For never sure was any knight
So served by damsel or by dame,
As Lancelot, that man of might,
When he at first from Britain came—"

I again expressed my anxiety to be made acquainted with the sequel of the barber's story; and he, without further preface or apology, took up the thread of his narrative in the following manner.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH THE BARBER CONTINUES HIS STORY, AND SHEWS
THAT A YOUNG HEAD IS NO MATCH FOR AN OLD ONE.

“ I think I broke off my relation just where my master, the cura, expressed his satisfaction at the excellence of my contrivance ; the experiment succeeded to admiration. The cura found a half-starved wretch to personate a pilgrim from Judea, and to carry the relic to the Carthusian convent ; and as for me, I was the happiest serving-boy in Castile. I already counted upon a hundred pistoles as my share of the adventure ; and continually chinked the *quartos* that lay in the bottom of my pocket, fancying them so many ounces of gold.* All this day my master treated me as if I had been

* A large gold coin, worth sixteen dollars.

a canon; his words slipped out like oil; so savoury was his stew, that it might have been prepared in the archbishop's kitchen, and the most delicate morsels found their way to my plate.

“ ‘Lazaro,’ said the cura, ‘thou art a promising young fellow; and if thy ingenuity but hold out, thou canst not exhaust it without filling thy pockets. As for thy first essay,’ continued he, ‘thou art not to blame for the avarice of the Superior of the Carthusians, who has valued the relic somewhat less highly than we expected; next time we’ll make a better bargain. Here is thy share, Lazaro,’ putting four *duros** into my palm, and closing my fingers fast upon them; ‘thou never possessed so much money in all thy life before.’

“ I had sense enough to say nothing, for just at that moment casting my eye towards the window, which looked up the *Calle de San Pasqual*, I perceived the messenger who had been sent to the Carthusian Convent with the relic, hastening towards our gate, and evidently concealing some-

* A *duro* is worth rather more than five francs French.

thing bulky under his habit. Feigning some sudden cause for absenting myself, I invented an excuse to the cura, whose eyes seemed as if they were already beginning to acknowledge the power of a surfeit; and making the best of my way down the stairs, I arrived at the gate just in time to receive the pilgrim.

“ ‘Friend,’ said I, ‘my master, who is now enjoying his *siesta*, enjoined me before he dropped asleep, that if you should return from the Carthusian Convent before he awoke, I might receive for him what you had brought, and give you one tenth part, as your recompense;’ and the pretended pilgrim, overjoyed at the hope of receiving a sum so much larger than he had any reason to expect, put into my hands a leathern purse, which he said contained twelve thousand reals in gold;* and hastily opening the purse, and counting into his hand one tenth part of that sum, I addressed him in these words. ‘Friend pilgrim,’ said I, ‘of all the money that thou hast given me in this purse, I do not intend that one *peseta* shall ever

* 120*l.* sterling.

find its way into the pocket of my master, the cura Cirillo. Now hark'ee to what I am going to tell thee! either thou or I must leave Toledo; and it depends upon thyself, whether thou remainest in Toledo to be hanged, on the strength of thy bad character, or leavest it with something even added to the round sum thou hast already got. Thou art a rogue and a cheat by profession, and too old to reform; the thing must therefore lie at thy door: here are four pieces of eight for thee, in addition to what thou hast already gotten. '*Va te con Dios,*' (go in the name of God); and so saying, I shut the convent gate and returned to my master, whom I found, as I thought, asleep; and stealing up to my own garret, I spread out before me the contents of the leathern purse, and sat down upon the floor beside my treasure, ringing one piece against another, and placing them in all sorts of positions, to please my avaricious eye. But while I thus sat contemplating my riches, and planning a thousand projects for extracting enjoyment from them, suddenly the door closed behind me, and the key was turned in the lock. The

vigilance of the cura, my master, had been too wakeful for my inexperience, and I was thus imprisoned along with my treasures. And now," said the barber, springing to his feet, "we must no longer delay our journey; there are four good leagues yet before us, and my story will be as good to-morrow as to-day:" and so tying up our provisions, and taking down our wine-skin from the cork-tree, where in imitation of Sancho, we had hung it, we went in quest of our mules, which had taken a liking to some sweet marjoram that grew in an adjoining hollow; and having mounted our beasts, we set forward upon our journey.

CHAPTER XV.

TREATING OF THE ADVENTURE WITH THE YANGUESIAN CARRIERS, AND BRINGING THE READER WITHIN SIGHT OF THE INN WHICH DON QUIXOTE MISTOOK FOR A CASTLE.

SOON after leaving this spot, we entered upon extensive olive grounds, which, when the word *wood* occurs in Don Quixote, must be substituted. A thick wood is scarcely any where to be found in La Mancha; the olive grounds are either scattered with trees, extending over a surface of several leagues, or are laid out in long straight avenues, at least a mile in length, but are nowhere in La Mancha, scarcely indeed any where in Spain, entitled to the appellation of a wood. Our path over the grass lay through these grounds, and a little rivulet which had not yet been entirely dried

up by the summer heats, wandered through the herbage; and as we trotted gently along, side by side, "it was somewhere in this wood," said the barber, "that the unlucky adventure with the Yanguesian carriers took place, when Rozinante was almost battered to death; the exact spot cannot be determined; but it was in 'a delightful spot, overgrown with verdant grass, and watered by a cool and pleasant stream,' and as these are somewhat rare in La Mancha, we cannot greatly err in laying the scene in this wood."

"That was an unlucky adventure," said I, "for the Knight and the Squire, as well as for Rozinante."

"But," said the barber, "Cervantes had his meaning in it; an unlucky adventure illustrates character as well as a more fortunate one. The affection of Sancho for his master, and of both for their dumb beasts, is well exemplified in it. Sancho is as faithful to his master, as Don Quixote is to his mistress; and the only difference between the benevolence of the Knight and the Squire is, that the benevolence of the squire is lavished upon

his ass, while that of his master spreads itself over the whole human race."

"Truly, Mr. Barber," said I, "thou art a philosopher, and fit to write a commentary upon your favourite author; but, for my part, much as I admire the moral and serious excellencies of the book, I cannot help regarding its humour as its chief distinction."

"In that opinion," said the barber, "your grace will find few persons in Spain to agree with you; the humour is only incidental. I am the only person in *Miguel Esteban* who possesses a copy; every Sunday night I read it aloud. Do not doubt that the audience is large, but no one laughs, though every one admires."

"Then," said I, "*Miguel Esteban* is a village of stoics." But I am sensible that the barber spoke the truth; the Spaniards are not a laughing people: I have already given some instances of the admiration of the Spaniards for Don Quixote, and I could easily add many more; but if they perceive humour in it, they do not look upon it as that kind of humour which ought to produce laughter. One

day, when speaking of Don Quixote to a highly-gifted and well-informed man, he said, “the point of the work consists in the opposition between the characters of the Knight and the Squire; and this opposition arises from the contrast between knowledge and ignorance: I find much in this contrast to induce reflection; but little to provoke laughter.”

We had now left the olive grounds behind us; and passing over some saffron fields, we gained the high road, in which we continued to travel leisurely until near sunset, without passing through any village, or seeing even so much as one house; for, between Puerto Lapiche and Manzanares there is no town, and only one inn, that which we now approached, and which Don Quixote mistook for a castle.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHICH MUST BE READ BY ALL WHO DESIRE TO KNOW MORE
OF THE INN WHICH DON QUIXOTE MISTOOK FOR A CASTLE;
OR WHO ARE DESIROUS OF READING THE OUTSET OF
POLINARIO'S HISTORY.

IN every particular, the Venta de Querada reminds the traveller of those scenes with which it is associated in his memory. It was in the "court-yard" of this inn that Sancho was tossed in a blanket; and it is still entered by a *yard*. The yard too had gates, for "Sancho clapped heels to his ass, and the inn *gate* being thrown open, he sallied forth;" and the yard has gates yet: it was also surrounded by a low wall; for we read, that "the valiant knight, finding the gate shut, rode round in search of some other entrance, and when he approached the yard *wall*, which was not very high,

he perceived the disagreeable joke they were practising upon his squire ;” and if at this day, the same joke were practised in the court-yard of the venta de Querada, it might still be seen outside of the wall. With such resemblances and reminiscences, it is not then to be wondered at, that when I rode into the yard, accompanied by the barber, I readily conjured up the image of the lantern-jawed knight holding grave parley with the inn-keeper, who demanded payment of his bill, and calling him “a saucy publican and a blockhead to boot,” while he was brandishing his pitchfork, and sallying out of the inn.

It so happened, too, that my reminiscences of the scenes in this inn, were more strongly awakened by the circumstance of the serving maid, who acted as groom, being an Asturian. Every one recollects *Maritornes*, whose assignation with the carrier, was the occasion of Don Quixote’s amorous address to the supposed “beauteous and high-born lady,” when he mistook her for the daughter of the governor of the castle, and which mistake led also to the belabouring of the carcasses

both of the Knight and his Squire. Cervantes describes this Maritornes as a "servant maid from the Asturias, remarkable for her capacious countenance, and somewhat short of seven hands from head to foot." Far from its being uncommon to find a servant maid from the Asturias, nothing is more usual in Castile; but this only shews, at the same time, the truth of all Cervantes' pictures, and the similitude between the usages of Spain in his days and in ours. These Asturian serving-maids are remarkable for their breadth of countenance, and their shortness and rotundity of form; and she into whose care I delivered my mule, was a fit representative of Maritornes.

The kitchen in this *venta* was not, as our last night's quarters had been, crowded with muleteers; when I entered I saw but one stranger, who stood with his back to a blazing, crackling fire, smoking his cigar. He was a magnificent specimen of a Castilian peasant; tall, finely limbed, well proportioned, and, although muscular, yet somewhat slight in his make, and combining, with an appearance of considerable strength, all the marks

of extraordinary activity. I am particular in my description of this man, because he proved to be an extraordinary and well known character,—no other than the celebrated *Polinario*, the notorious brigand; once the terror and the scourge of Spain, now a reformed character. I never in my life spent a more agreeable evening than this, which I did with *Polinario* and the barber; and while I listened to his interesting recitals, I forgot, for the first time, the chief object of my journey.

But I must endeavour to make the reader a partaker in the enjoyment of this evening. I soon perceived, that the barber, my companion, and the brigand, were not unknown to each other; and when my companion retired to look after his mules, I took an opportunity of slipping into the yard, and of requesting him to try if he could not prevail with *Polinario*, to give us some little sketch of his life, which he not only promised me that he would request, but almost promised that I should be gratified. Accordingly, when the barber returned to the kitchen, and when we had all three taken our places on a couple of low

benches, with a capacious measure of wine before us, which was briskly passed from the one to the other, "Friend," said the barber, "it is curious enough, that not twenty-four hours have elapsed since, when conversing with this Caballero, who is travelling through La Mancha that he may see with his own eyes, the spots which are immortalized by the exploits of Don Quixote, I told him, that if he should have the good fortune in our rambles, to fall in with Polinario, he could give us a history of the most singular exploits that any man had performed since the days of Don Quixote. What say'st thou friend? I am all but pledged to the Caballero for thy compliance."

"Truly," replied the brigand, "'t is not a thing I'm over fond of; past days are past and over with me: Polinario the robber, and Polinario, paid by the king to guard his mails against robbers, are different men; and Polinario that *is*, would not unwillingly forget Polinario that *was*; for the charms of the life led by Polinario that *was*, are almost strong enough temptation, to induce him that *is*, to put his neck again in jeopardy. Never-

theless, as we appear to be settled here for the next three or four hours, I'll not be niggardly: the Caballero will no doubt renew the wine measure; and before we've drained it, you'll have had more than enough of my exploits;" and so, having called for another, and more capacious measure, gave us the following curious recital.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH POLINARIO PROCEEDS WITH HIS HISTORY.

“I have not much to boast of in my pedigree. A rogue, as likely as an honest man, might spring from it; though indeed, the profession followed by my father, which was no other than that of gaoler and executioner in the city of Seville, is not a profession very favourable to the increase of rogues. It must be confessed, however, that he did not bring up the heir of his house in that strictly moral way which might have been expected from a man, whose sole business it was to keep down the number of rogues, and rid honest men of their neighbourhood. I was master of my own time, and was allowed to do whatever was

agreeable to me, so that I early learned to be wilful, the first evidence of which was seen in my determination to have no share in my father's business, which was not by any means to my liking.

“I had scarcely attained my fourteenth birthday, when one day, my father, who chanced to have just then a great press of business on his hands, and who up till that period had never concerned himself in what manner I disposed of my time, tapping me smartly on the head with the key of the gaol, from which he had just returned, said, ‘Pol boy, I have been thinking, that thou’rt an idle rogue, and don’t earn so much as thy gazpacho. Business so increases upon me, that I have need of an assistant: three rogues are to be hanged to-day, and three to-morrow; and I have just received an order to hang that notorious brigand Campo, the day after. What with looking after the prisoners, and minding my ropes, and going to mass, I’ve scarce time to eat my puchero; and I’m resolved that thou shalt never eat another, unless thou earnest it.’

“I had already sometime resolved upon leaving Seville, and pushing my fortune, for I had to suffer a good deal of unsavoury jesting in regard of my father’s profession; so that my father’s harangue made no difference in my determination, excepting only that I resolved not only to go myself from Seville, but that Campo, who would otherwise be hanged the day after the next, should accompany me; for Campo, who had been sometime in prison, amused and interested me with relating his exploits, and I determined to enter the world under the guidance of so experienced a hand.

“To all that my father said, I made answer: that nothing would be more agreeable to me, than to take some part of his duties off his hands; and that although I was not yet able to use his rope adroitly, ‘this key,’ said I, ‘I am able to turn in the lock; and if you will look after your rope, I’ll undertake to look after those for whom it is intended: so dear father, take your pleasure; eat your puchero in peace; go to mass, if so be you are inclined; never stay at home on a Monday,

when all the world's after the bull-fight; and I'll warrant you'll find all snug when you return home to your gazpacho.'

“‘I don't doubt it lad,' said my father; ‘there's a peseta for thee; I'll see the bulls this afternoon, God willing; and meanwhile look thee well after the rogues.’

“‘Trust me for that,' said I; and when my father was gone to the bull-fight, I took the key of the gaol, and went in search of Campo, who was no way loth to profit by the disguise I brought him; and we were soon trudging together, at a round pace in the direction of Cordova.

“‘Youngster,' said Campo, after we had left some leagues between us and Seville, ‘though thou hast saved me from hanging for the present, I mean that thou shalt earn thy own puchero; and I'll tell thee how to go about it.’

“‘That's all I want,' said I; ‘I long to eat a puchero of my own earning.’

“‘Thou need'st not long a great while,' said Campo; ‘judging by the state of my own stomach, thou would'st not object to sup.’

“ ‘No indeed,’ said I, ‘I want but to be shewn the way to the pot.’

“ ‘An empty pot would furnish an indifferent supper,’ said Campo; ‘what we want is something to put into it; but thou’rt yet but a simpleton: did’st thou hear any noise just now in that ilex wood on the left?’

“ ‘Nothing but some grunts,’ said I, ‘and a squeak or two.’

“ ‘That’s the noise for us,’ said Campo, rubbing his hands. ‘Come my lad, be stirring; bring hither a squeaker; thou hast done a bolder deed than that this day.’

“ As this may be considered my entrance into the world, I am particular in my relation: I had no difficulty in capturing the materials of our supper, and before another half-hour elapsed, we were in a deep hollow worn by a little brook, lying beside a blazing fire, and a steam saluting our nostrils that would have been grateful to a bishop.

“ ‘This,’ said Campo, as he stuffed one huge piece after another into his mouth, ‘this is better than hanging: what thinkest thou, little fellow?’

“‘I think,’ said I, ‘my father’s pucheros are not fit to be eaten.’

“‘Thou shalt never fare worse,’ said Campo; ‘only take this into thy account, that hanging sometimes turns out to be the *desert*; and hark’ee young one, I would rather not burden my conscience farther; it has near about as much as it can conveniently carry. I’m a man of honour, and a good Catholic; and would not return evil for good. Thou hast saved my neck for the present; and I’d rather not put thee in the way of standing my substitute. We are not yet six hours’ walk from Seville; go back to thy father; better taste a rope end, than dangle at the end of a rope; ’t will cost thee but a beating; and scarce that; for he knows Campo; and will conclude that I helped myself to the key, and am indebted to no one but myself.’

“But Campo spoke in vain. I told him I was resolved to follow him; and that I would never be of a profession that forced me to take part against honest men like him.

“‘Well well,’ said Campo, ‘if such be thy determination, here’s my hand; I’ll make a man

of thee ;' and we were soon clear of the wood, and passing quickly through the meadows that lie along the side of the Guadalquivir, Campo striding first, while I followed at a little trot.

“ We had not gone far, when Campo stopped, and said, ‘ now youngster, we must cross the river,’ and although I was a bold lad, I glanced with some uneasiness at the broad river that glided smoothly by: but Campo knew what he was about; a little boat lay close under the bank, and we were speedily transported to the other side of the river, and making all speed towards the Sierra Morena.

“ It was yet scarcely sunrise, when, having turned a defile in the mountains, I saw before me, in a deep and wide hollow, between thirty and forty horses saddled and bridled, the saddle-girths loose, and the bits covered with foam, and beside them, as many men, who appeared by their gait and dress to be so many cavaliers of distinction. No sooner did we emerge from the defile, than in reply to a signal from Campo, a loud shout of welcome resounded far and near; and Campo,

advancing, presented me to his comrades, as an honest youth who had done him a good turn, and who wished for the society of gallant men.

“I will not detail to you señores, either the particulars of my reception, or the life which I led during all the time that I was associated with the company of Don José, who took especial notice of me, and often told me that I should one day be his successor.

“‘That Don José,’ said the barber, interrupting Polinario in his narrative, ‘was a very devil.’

“‘He was not all devil,’ said Polinario; ‘I’ve known him do many generous and good deeds.’

“‘They’ve never reached my ears,’ said the barber.

“‘One just now comes to my memory,’ said Polinario, ‘and by your leave, I’ll give the memory of Don José the advantage of it.’

“‘By all means,’ said the barber.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A PASSAGE IN THE LIFE OF THE RENOWNED DON JOSÉ.

“It was not a very long while before the band of Don José was broken up, that one night, on the road between Seville and Cordova, we fell in with a caballero, well mounted, riding with extraordinary speed, and attended by three persons, mounted and armed as well as himself. Drawn up to the number of eight or ten across the high road, each of us with his carbine to his shoulder, to pass us, or to encounter us, were equally out of the question. ‘Surrender, señor, with a good grace,’ said the lieutenant, ‘and it will be better for thee; we want but thy money; after spending a night with us, thou shalt pursue thy journey.’

“ ‘For the love of God, in the name of the most blessed Virgin, and of all the saints,’ said the caballero, ‘do not detain me: I am rich; my money I will willingly give; but what can it serve thee to detain me on my journey? Do I speak with the leader?’ added he; ‘if not, I beseech thee lead me to him;’ and the lieutenant immediately conducted the stranger to Don José, who with myself and the rest of the band, had remained at a little distance.

“ ‘Señor,’ said the caballero, ‘although I address a bandit chief, I address one who has at least the reputation of sometimes doing just and kind deeds.’

“ ‘And you probably think, señor,’ said Don José, ‘that it is neither just nor kind to make free with this purse, which is none of the lightest.’

“ ‘The question of justice we shall not debate,’ said the caballero; ‘I do not complain of the loss of my purse, but of the loss of my time,—in making free with which, no advantage can accrue to Don José,—for I take it for granted, it is him whom I address.’

“ ‘Shew me,’ said our leader, ‘that time is of value to you, and I promise not to encroach upon it.’

“ ‘I have a sister,’ said the caballero, ‘young and beautiful, who is beloved by a noble of Andalusia, to whom she was once betrothed. My father disapproved of the marriage, because he wished her to marry the Captain-General of Andalusia.’

“ ‘Don Mendizabal de Zativa,’ interrupted Don José.

“ ‘The same,’ said the caballero.

“ ‘Better marry the Devil at once,’ said Don José; ‘she shall not marry the Captain-General.’

“ ‘Well, my sister chose the veil in preference; and was sent by my father to the convent of Santa Clara, at —— . This day her noviciate expires; and to-morrow she will be lost to us all. Yesterday, it was the will of God that my father should die. I am now my sister’s legal guardian; and if I am able to reach —— by sunrise to-morrow, I can assert my right, and with her own consent, claim her.’

“ ‘She shall marry the caballero yet,’ said Don José, ‘if he be worthy of her.’

“ ‘He is worthy of her,’ said the stranger.

“ ‘Does she love him?’ again demanded our chief.

“ ‘She did love him, as he deserved to be loved,’ said the caballero; ‘and though, being destined for the veil, she cannot now avow her affection, I am sure she loves him still.’

“ ‘Señor,’ said Don José, ‘I will not only permit thee to pursue thy journey, but will even assist thee in thy object.’

“ ‘I am grateful for the offer,’ said the caballero; ‘but it is unnecessary that I should accept it. All I ask is, leave to pursue my journey.’

“ ‘Thou art mistaken, friend,’ said Don José, ‘in imagining the object in view so easy of accomplishment. True it is, indeed, that as the brother of the novice, her father being dead, the right to claim her is yours; but the right extends but to the term of the noviciate. If once the vow be pronounced, it is irrevocable. Think ye, that upon your assertion that her father is dead, they

will give her up? they will say, ‘prove thy right first:’ from her, all will be concealed; and long before it be possible for thee to prove thy right;—nay, my belief is, that thou wilt hardly have left the convent gate, before thy sister will be compelled to pronounce her vows. I am resolved,’ said Don José, in his own impetuous way, ‘that she shall never take the veil; but come,—’tis already past midnight; mount, young gentleman, and do not spare the horses; ours will keep pace with them;’ and before another five minutes had elapsed, the caballero and his attendants, followed by Don José and all his troop, were on the road to ———, the ground ringing beneath the hoofs of our horses.

“The sun had some time risen, when we clattered through the village of ———, and came to a halt before the gate of the Convento de Santa Clara.

“‘Now,’ said Don José, addressing the caballero, ‘try if they will give thee up thy sister.’

“Having knocked at the gate, the caballero was admitted alone. I have no means of knowing

what followed; but a short time only had elapsed, when he returned to us.

“ ‘ Well, señor,’ said Don José, ‘ what success?’

“ ‘ As you predicted,’ said he; ‘ they refuse to give me my sister, or even so much as to allow me to see her. ‘ We have no proof,’ say they; ‘ and besides, it is with her own consent that she takes the veil; and without her consent, no one can claim her.’

“ ‘ There’s no time for anything but acting,’ said Don José; ‘ I’ll lay a duro or two, the ceremony’s already begun; and unless we make speed, we’ll have to restore thy sister shorn of her locks; come,’ added our chief, addressing me, ‘ step from thy saddle on the wall, and open the gate for us;’ and before the words were well out of his mouth, I had stepped on the wall,—dropped on the other side, and was stoutly engaged with two or three friars, who interposed themselves betwixt me and the gate; but in a trice, I was joined by several of our band, who had followed my example; and in another minute, the whole troop was drawn up within the court.

“The Abbess, a dignified old woman, now appeared on the steps that led to the inner door; and walking across the court, was beginning to address our leader, when Don José, interrupting her, said ‘Madam, I am Don José; these are my men; you have heard of me before; lead us into the convent, and conduct hither the sister of this caballero;’ but without waiting for her answer, Don José, motioning to me to follow him, walked past the abbess, and straight into the convent; and there, sure enough, we found everything as Don José had predicted. The ceremony had already begun; the novice, not yet indeed divested of her locks, and still wearing her noviciate habit, stood, ready to pronounce the oath that would have separated her from the world. The priest stood ready to administer it. It may easily be believed, that our entrance changed the face of affairs.

“‘What is thy sister’s name?’ whispered Don José to the caballero.

“‘Inez,’ replied he; and Don José, then walking straight up to the novice, and putting aside