a pleasing form; an object, highly useful to society, because it connects utility with entertainment. Pleasure occupies the mind, fixes the attention of the reader, and compels him to receive instruction with complacency under the mask of fiction. And the marvellous and ridiculous, well conducted, both agitate and embellish the mind by exciting its stronger energies; and lay it open to the reception of useful and moral information. Whence it follows, that the object of a fable should be so managed as to give pleasure to the reader, that the author may succeed in instructing. The object, too, of a fable is the basis, on which the whole is founded; the rule, by which every thing is regulated.

The human mind is naturally curious, inconstant, yet indolent. In order to please it, it is necessary to excite its curiosity, to prevent its inconstancy, and still to indulge its indolence. Every thing, that is rare, extraordinary, new, and of doubtful continuation, rouses its curiosity, diversity and variety arrest its inconstancy, simplicity and unity assimilate with its indolence. Hence, to please mankind, it is necessary to unite these three qualities in the object, which is presented to them. These reflections furnish a standard, by which to judge of the merit of a fable. An author must choose a subject, that is adapted to delight the reader, and to lead him to the proposed end. This subject should be simple

and complete, of a proportionate duration to excite curiosity, yet so varied by subordinate actions, and appropriate episodes, as not to tire, or wear out the attention. The different characters should each preserve their different modifications. The narration of the principal action should be dramatic and consistent; and the style should be pure, energetic, and accommodated to the nature of the story. From hence will arise a production, calculated to excite the curiosity of the reader, varied yet uniform, amusing yet instructive; and capable of impressing the moral, which is the primary object of it. From the novelty of the subject arises its originality, from the propriety of its moral its utility, and from the accurate delineation of character, combined with the other circumstances, its pleasantness.

Let us then apply these observations to the Quixote, and the merit of Cèrvantes will be conspicuous. But this application must be confined to the more prominent features of the work, or the detail would be voluminous, if not tedious. A short account, however, of that curious system of tournaments and chivalry, which existed in full vigour during the reign of Charlemagne, will not be improper, previous to an inquiry into the merits of this work, which gave the death-wound to those numerous romances, which were the consequences of it, and for some centuries overrun almost all Europe. And in doing this

no better account can be followed than is given in an excellent note of Mr. Ellis in Mr. Way's translation of the "Fabliaux of Le Grand."

"It seems to be generally admitted, that tourneys, or tournaments, are of French invention, and that the earliest exhibitions of this kind were celebrated by Preville, a little before the time of the first crusade. We hear, indeed, of combats between Knights, which were exhibited at Strasburg, in honour of the reconciliation that took place there in the middle of the ninth century, between Charles the Bold and his brother Louis; but these were probably nothing more than a kind of review, in imitation of those equestrian exercises, which were common among the Arabians, and are still in use among the Turks and various Tartar nations. As our ancient cavalry was not formed into squadrons, its strength depended on the address of each individual, which could only be acquired by exercises, that probably took place in public; but this does not amount to a regular show, or tournament.

"Some time before the intended exhibition of a tournament took place, heralds were dispatched through the country, and into the neighbouring kingdoms, to invite all brave Knights and squires to come and contend for prizes, and to merit the affections of their mistresses. If the tournament took place in a town, the mayor and municipal officers were charged with the accommodation of

the strangers; if under the walls of a castle, an encampment was formed for their reception. None could be admitted to a tourney, but such as were without stain or reproach.

"The place of combat was a large space of ground, surrounded by ropes, and covered with tapestry; or with double rows of railing, with intervals of about four feet. Within this interval were placed the minstrels, the heralds, and kings at arms, to regulate the order of combat, and the attendants on the Knights, to assist their masters, when unhorsed or disabled. The people stood on the outside. An amphitheatre was erected for the kings, queens, ladies, judges of the tournament, and ancient knights.

"In general, the arms of the combatants were lances and swords, whose points and edges were blunted; these were called *courteous arms*. Sometimes, indeed, sharp weapons were used, but in this case, the blows were numbered. In either kind of combat it was forbidden to thrust with the point of the sword, or to strike at the limbs, these being but seldom perfectly defended.

"There were two sorts of tournaments. In the one the combatants were ranged in two opposite lines, as in war, and charged each other with their lances; but a double boarded railing was sometimes extended along the lists from end to end, dividing the whole area into two equal parts. The shock of the horses was, by this con-

trivance, prevented, while the riders could nevertheless overthrow each other with their spears, and unhorsed combatants ran much less risk of being trampled to death. The other sort of tournament was perfectly irregular; every combatant attacked his neighbour indiscriminately; and on these occasions it required great attention to the several armorial devices on the shield and surcoats to judge, who had performed the most extraordinary feats, and merited the prize. In this species of tournament the offensive weapons were the sword, the hatchet, and the mace, but not the lance. Each day ended by the exploits of some champions, who undertook to break a certain number of lances in honour of the ladies.

"The general superintendant of the tournament, who was called the Knight of Honour, and was invested with the power of terminating all differences, was chosen by the ladies, who presented to him some article of female dress, which he bore on his lance as the badge of his office. At the approach, or touch, of this sacred badge, the most exasperated combatants dropped their weapons, and the conflict and confusion ceased in an instant.

"Notwithstanding these precautions, however, accidents of the most fatal kind were not unfrequent. At a tournament given at Nuits in 1240, sixty Knights and squires lost their lives, either from the wounds they had received, or

from the trampling of the horses, or from suffocation: hence the many excommunications thundered out against tournaments."

These tournaments, and this system of chivalry, were the foundation of all the romances of the ages, prior to Cervantes; in which the authors were not satisfied with recounting the events of their heroes as they happened, but blended the most extravagant fictions and improbable adventures, by the introduction of the whole machinery of enchanters. And if, without the drudgery of toiling through such a mass of old romances, any one would wish to become acquainted with that style, he will find in the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto, the most interesting work of that sort, a very good elucidation of the Quixote; as a knowledge of many of the customs, and, at least, the general genius of chivalry, may be acquired from it.

The object of Cervantes was the correction of one fault. It was too a fault, highly valued by the common people, who were infatuated with the false point of honour, that Knight-errantry instils, and with those pernicious histories of the wonderful actions of its imaginary heroes. For this purpose his fertile imagination suggested to him a method quite novel, and hitherto unattempted. His object was to excite the laughter, and promote the diversion of his readers, by delineating a Knight-errant so wild and extravagant,

that his very name, when repeated, might render Knight-errantry both ridiculous and despicable. How well he succeeded is universally known. The vulgar were ashamed of their error, and forsook their idol. The means, our Author used, were plain, popular, and well adapted to the mass of mankind. All men, perhaps, possess a propensity to satire and ridicule, and are also inclined to imitation and mimicry. Self-love too, that ruling passion in the heart of man, induces us imperceptibly to believe ourselves superior to the rest of our species, and consequently to pass over our own faults, and point out those of others. No delineation, therefore, of character or situation is more calculated to please than a well-drawn satiric representation, or burlesque and ridiculous imitation of some vice; and this becomes still stronger if attached to any individual. Two species of pleasure arise from it. We see vice placed in a ridiculous point of view, and see it also applied to a distinct object. This fixes our attention to the representation, impresses its circumstances on our minds, and excites us to remove from ourselves that ridicule, which has provoked our laughter in others. Those few also, whom their self-love may suffer to feel themselves addicted to that particular vice, endeavour to discontinue and avoid it with care, from the fear of becoming objects of laughter to others. This burlesque and ridiculous perso-

nification of vice and folly, therefore, became a source of almost general pleasure, and more general amusement. Cervantes applied this remedy most skilfully: and those, who resisted argument and authority, yielded to ridicule and laughter.

The action of the Quixote too is well chosen. It is the madness of the Knight. Our Author very properly has not narrated his whole life, but that part only, which is appropriate to his end. He commences with his mania, not his birth. The action too is complete, and proportionate to its duration. Don Quixote's madness is traced from the beginning to its end. Its duration rouses the attention, but neither confuses, nor tires, the mind.

Cervantes deserves equal praise for the propriety, with which he has managed the ridiculous; rendering it, as it were, palpable; and drawing it from various objects, in which his genius alone could discover it. As the action of the fable is the madness of Don Quixote in wishing to revive chivalry, it was necessary, that this hero should sally forth into the country. Knights-errant encountered some adventure at every step; and those adventures formed the subjects of the histories, which Cervantes wished to ridicule, and Don Quixote to imitate. Thus the design of the Author, as well as the hero, required that the action should consist of a continued series of

adventures, all proceeding from the madness of the actor, and connected with it.

The episodes, also, of the Quixote are a strong proof of the genius and imagination of Cervantes. Most of them naturally arise from the action, are interwoven with it, and lead the way for the events, which follow. Such is the scrutiny of Don Quixote's library, the object of which is to criticise the works of Knight-errantry. This episode, which is so closely connected with the subject itself, and so entertaining from the review of all the histories of chivalry, appears at first quite hostile to the continuation of the fable, because with the destruction of those histories, and the disappearance of the room where they were, the principal cause of the Knight's madness is taken from him. But it is this very circumstance, that evinces the ability of Cervantes. In order to satisfy Don Quixote, when looking for his books, it was necessary to make some excuse that would satisfy him; and as none was so likely to have that effect, which had not some allusion to his madness, he was made to believe, that an enchanter had taken away his books, room and all. This answer, which should have satisfied, and perhaps cured him, by gradually obliterating those ideas, which could not be renewed by reading, had, on the contrary, the effect of inflaming his extravagance, and adding fire to his madness. He immediately persuaded

himself, that as he had a powerful enchanter for his declared enemy, he must, without doubt, be as famous a Knight as those, whom he proposed to imitate; and in whose histories enchanters are constantly introduced. From this circumstance he deduced all the consequences, that could confirm him in his senseless determination; and as he afterwards proved, attributing all the misfortunes, which were in fact the effects of his madness, to the implacability of this powerful enemy. Here may we observe, that from the solution of this episode there arose a contrary effect from that, which the actors in it proposed.

That the action of a fable may correspond with the object of it, it is not sufficient that it should possess in itself all the qualities, we have ascribed to the Quixote; the persons also should be properly connected with it; because all the interest and probability of the action depends upon the characters being appropriate and conformable to it. Let us now, therefore, consider this hero, and the personages, who surround him. In this too is the invention of Cervantes equally apparent: his characters as well as his subject are all his own.

Don Quixote is a gentleman naturally discreet, rational, and well informed; who speaks and acts as such, except when he speaks of Knight-errantry. Sancho is an interested country la-

bourer, naturally cunning; yet simple from his education and condition: so that each of these two persons hold a double character, which varies the dialogue and fable, and pleasantly entertains the reader by representing Don Quixote sometimes sensible, and at others mad; and by showing Sancho successively ingenuous and cunning. These characters are always well supported. Don Quixote, even in the height of his madness, preserves some traces of his knowledge; and in the different events, that happen, he always draws the subject of his discourse from his mania, or leads it to end in that.

It is impossible to read the Quixote, without perceiving that agreeable variety, which the principal character possesses. The description, which Don Quixote gives of the two flocks of sheep, that he took for armies, and the conversation, in which he recounts to Sancho all that was to happen to them, when they presented themselves at the court of a monarch, are circumstances, corresponding with his madness, yet related with great discretion. The discourse on the golden age, on the preference of arms to letters, on the vicissitudes of families and their ancestry, although indifferent in themselves, are nevertheless connected with the madness of the Knight, which is the source of some, and the termination of other adventures. This is sufficient to show, that our Author observed with strictness and propriety

the customs and manners incident to the character, in which he had drawn his hero.

The double character of Don Quixote, that is, the particular mania and general rationality, produces another effect, and arrests the attention of the reader. The hero of any fable should always be amiable, that the reader may be interested in his actions. If the madness of Don Quixote were without any interval, it would be tedious and unpleasant. But his rationality and good qualities render him amiable, even when he acts like a madman.

Sancho is almost always swayed by interest. When he thinks himself on the safe side, he believes with the greatest simplicity all the follies of his master, serves him willingly, and obeys him implicitly; but, when he fancies he shall not profit from his sallies, he becomes disgusted, he feels all the inconveniences of a wandering life; and the sorrow of losing those advantages, which he had fully expected, renders him sour and ill-natured. We need only observe his manners throughout the whole work, and particularly in the adventure of the supposed Princess Micomicona, and also in the disenchantment of Dulcinea, to be convinced that this is the true character of Sancho. All his words and actions in these adventures show, that his principal aim is interest. This sometimes lulls his simplicity; at others awakens his cunning, and occasionally

renders him firm and intrepid, notwithstanding his natural cowardice. Cervantes also has managed the character of Sancho, and the incidents relating to him, so well, that he always either keeps him in suspense with hope, or delights him with gain: and for this purpose he makes him reject the honour of eating with his master, and beg to exchange it for something more profitable. Hence also arises his joy at being excused from paying the bill at the inn, on account of the treatment he had received. Here, then, the character of Sancho is neither that of simplicity nor of acuteness, of courage nor of cowardice, but of interest, which produces as great a variety in him as there occur temptations for him to indulge in it. And the apparent want of connexion in Sancho's conduct, with which our Author has been accused, is done away, when viewed in this light. If the interested character of Sancho, which is so prominent, arose from a vicious principle, it would be unamiable, and not calculated to please. Of this Cervantes was aware, and he therefore introduces the incident of the Moor, Ricotè, who was banished from Spain. The latter confides the secret concerning his treasure to Sancho, and offers him two hundred crowns, at a time when he had just lost his government, and all hopes of riches, if he will assist him. Sancho, like a good subject, prefers his allegiance to his interest; but, to show his honour, he voluntarily

promises not to discover him. This surely proves, that the interestedness of Sancho does not proceed from an inordinate desire of riches, but merely from the wish of obtaining a competency. In short, the characters both of Don Quixote and Sancho are appropriate, well drawn, and better sustained. When either speaks or acts, it is in a way peculiar to himself; and the difference is discoverable in the very outset.

This, too, is the case with respect to the other characters. Cervantes increased and varied them with an inimitable and wonderful profusion, still connecting them with the principal action in a manner the most dependant and necessary. These are almost all seen in two distinct points of view; first, as true, that is, as the reader beholds them; secondly, as they appear to Don Quixote, whose curious flights of imagination not only amuse in themselves, but also by the different degrees of surprise and astonishment, which his unknown madness produces in the rest of the characters. The Barbers, the Innkeeper, Maritornes, Master Peter, in short, all are most excellently drawn, and appear rather as individual portraits than fictitious representations. Many of the principal characters may, also, be considered in another way: as they are really drawn, and as they are represented to Don Quixote. And we cannot help noticing more particularly the character of Dorothea in this point of view. When Cervantes

represents her in her natural character, as a fugitive, in love, unhappy, and inconsolable, her misfortunes create an emotion as powerful as the pleasure we afterwards experience from her change of fortune, and the happy conclusion of her story. When he represents her as a princess, who comes from a distant country to seek Don Quixote, by whose valour she is to be relieved from her persecution, and to regain her kingdom, we are pleased with the propriety with which she performs her part, and the conformity of her discourse and actions with her assumed character, which diverts the reader, while it astonishes Sancho and his master. The cause too of this change of character in Dorothea is appropriate and just; namely, the cure of Don Quixote: to effect which she appears sufficiently well read in romances and books of chivalry to make the Knight believe her; still, however, making such mistakes as are natural for a girl in her original situation. These blunders render her relation probable to the reader, while the interpretations and explanations of the Curate make it credible to Don Quixote.

The character of the Canon of Toledo is also peculiarly well drawn, and exhibits an ecclesiastic of that age in a very favourable light. He is mild, serious, and well informed. He attempts to undeceive Don Quixote by solid reasoning, blended with prudence, mildness, and courtesy.

The Curate goes farther, as being more interested in his recovery, and better acquainted with the singularity of his madness: he quietly follows his humour, and tries to find the most favourable and proper means of inducing him to return home. The Canon desists from his endeavours, as soon as he is convinced of the inflexibility of Don Quixote; and accompanies him, till necessity obliges him to take his leave. In all his discourse with Don Quixote the greatest decorum, and even dignity, is visible. In his argument on the object and design of plays and works of chivalry, he points out their defects, shows the method of correcting them, acknowledges the utility they may be of, and both pleases and convinces the reader, because he attacks their errors and bad taste with reason and urbanity. The serious accusations against books of chivalry, in a moral view, were put by Cervantes into the mouths of the Canon and Curate, that their characters might have more weight and authority.

It is the very essence of Knight-errantry to be in love, and for Knights to ascribe every perfection to their mistresses; and in an humorous satire it is equally necessary to introduce the ridiculous into so principal a character. In Dulcinea our Author has happily succeeded in both: he makes Don Quixote paint her as a model of perfection, "beautiful without spot, grave without

'pride, amorous with modesty, amiable because courteous, courteous because well educated, and, lastly, exalted by lineage." This picture, as drawn by the Knight, may serve as an example to her sex. Though thus perfect in the eyes of Don Quixote, she becomes an object for laughter when seen in her own form, or under the pleasant transformation of Sancho. The variety of aspects this character presents in the imaginations of Sancho and his master, the confusion she gives rise to, and the adventures, which result from her pretended enchantment, afford an infinite fund of entertainment.

The narration and detail of a work is, perhaps, as difficult of execution as the conception of its characters. An author may invent characters, and create incidents, and yet be unable to form a complete work. To do this he must place every character in its appropriate situation, bring forward the principal, and keep the subordinate ones in the back ground. In this Cervantes has most happily succeeded, and you no where find a character brought forward in an offensive manner. Each of them, also, tends to carry on the action even by the very mode, as has been before observed, that they expect to cure the Knight, and which consequently would conclude the work. Thus the means, which the Curate uses to diminish the madness of Don Quixote, are such as serve to increase it. The condition, too,

that Cardenio made at the beginning of his story, that he should not be interrupted, though apparently a mode of shortening this episode, not only lengthens, but connects it with the subject. The same happens, when the Curate prevents Sancho's journey to Dulcinea, that he might intercept that pleasant letter, which is the origin of her transformation, enchantment, and all the occurrences that arise from it. The descent into the cave, the introduction into the Duke's house, and many others, all concur in carrying on the principal story.

Whoever reads the adventure of Mambrino's helmet, and contemplates the Knight with his head covered with a barber's basin, will readily acknowledge the genius of Cervantes; but every one will not discover the art with which, from the very beginning, he was preparing for this event. The arms of Don Quixote, besides being ancient, rusty, and covered with dust, were deficient in a helmet, or casque; he was therefore obliged to seek some mode of remedying this defect. He first made a sort of half-helmet with paper, which broke on the first trial. He made another, and strengthened it with small iron bars. This also was broken in his battle with the Biscainer. Remaining thus partially unarmed and wounded, he swore he would not rest, till he had acquired by force of arms the helmet of Mambrino, or some other of equal

temper. Sancho also contributed to this by representing, that his subsequent misfortunes arose from not having fulfilled his oath. All these circumstances prepare for the introduction of the adventure of the basin, which Don Quixote took for Mambrino's helmet: and to make it the more probable, Cervantes has explained why it shone, why the barber carried it on his head, and his reason for passing that road.

The developement of the action, and winding up of the plot, is also prepared for in the third sally of Don Quixote; and the introduction of the Bachelor Sampson Carrasco, who is one of the most useful and well-imagined characters of the work. Cervantes introduced him so as to carry on the story, and bring it to a natural conclusion. The Housekeeper entreats his interference to prevent her master's second sally by his good advice. He promises to do so, but acts directly opposite, both hastening his departure, and offering to serve him as squire. The reader, indeed, is not surprised at this change in the Bachelor, because he is aware of his intention of adopting another mode of cure: and with this idea he is anxious to know what plan he will pursue; and is astonished, when he discovers in the Knight of the Mirrors his friend the Bachelor, who hoped to cure Don Quixote by conquering him, but who, in fact, only augments his mania by his own defeat. This catastrophe overcomes

the irresolution of Sancho, stimulates the madness of the Knight, entertains the reader with fresh discourse between the two Knights and their squires, and renders the continuation of the action more probable, at the same time that it prepares for the conclusion of it. Had Sampson Carrasco overcome Don Quixote, as he wished, or had he dissuaded him from sallying forth, as the Housekeeper desired, the action must immediately have finished.

All the singular and wonderful events of the Quixote are equally well managed. The disenchantment of Dulcinea is entwined with great art throughout the whole. The judgment and disposition of Sancho during his government, which, at first, appear improbable, and superior to his talents and capacity, were previously prepared by Cervantes in the conversation of the Canon of Toledo, who, when talking with Sancho on the best modes of governing, assures him that the principal point is to endeavour to ascertain the facts, "for thus God helps the good design of the simple, and obstructs the bad one of the more informed." The stratagem, by which they induce him to quit his government, is also probable, because he is previously prepared by the letter from the Duke. The curious mania also, which assailed Don Quixote, of turning shepherd when he was obliged to quit chivalry, was prepared for so far back as in the scrutiny of the li-

brary, when his Niece requested the Curate to burn all the pastoral poems, as well as books of Knight-errantry, lest, by curing her uncle of one malady, it might bring on another. These examples are sufficient to show the order, as well as nature, with which Cervantes disposed and blended the occurrences in his work.

The variety of our Author's descriptions and situations is equally well regulated. They embellish without confusing, and diversify without embarrassing the work. Throughout the whole we find them distributed with the nicest precision. The studies, the amours, the misfortunes, of Chrysostom, the disdain and situation of Marcella, the description of morning, of night, of sleep, of the wind, and of the tremendous noise of the fulling-hammers, are all beautiful and appropriate, as well as the descriptions and adventures of chivalry, which are occasionally introduced, such as Don Quixote and his imaginary army, the shepherdesses who were hunting, the disenchantment announced by Merlin in the wood, which, for its magnificence, may be compared to the enchanted grove of Tasso.

The situation, too, of the various subjects enhances the beauty of the narration by the contrast and diversity, with which Cervantes introduces them. The two principal characters are never presented in an uniform situation; almost every event changes the state of their fortune. When

they are flattering themselves with a prosperous adventure, some misfortune occurs to cast them down; that again is immediately followed by some favourable opportunity, which encourages them to pursue their designs. Yet even in these common vicissitudes our Author almost always contrives to vary the situation of each with respect to the other. Sancho remains in safety, when his master is wounded or conquered; and when Sancho is beaten, the Knight is out of danger. The ridiculous misfortunes of Don Quixote and his squire excite our laughter. Their prosperous adventures confirm them in their fantastic projects; and the different success, which attends the same adventure, makes each exclaim in a way adapted to his character: hence arises the animation of the dialogue.

The excellence, that results from this order, yet intricacy and variety of circumstances, is still more heightened, when the Author unexpectedly presents a rare and extraordinary event. The sudden appearance of Marcella at the end of the episode of Chrysostom, is a species of incident, at once singular and agreeable, because it satisfies the curiosity, and affords Don Quixote an opportunity of acting conformably to his insanity. Her speech, too, is one of the finest pieces of composition possible.

Cervantes observes the same order throughout the whole work. First Don Quixote sallies forth

alone; then he goes accompanied by a squire, and shows himself in some adventures: after that his fame increases by the extraordinary adventure at the inn, and of his enchantment. In the third sally he becomes proud of the publication of his history, and of being rendered famous by it in foreign countries. He engages in greater deeds, overcomes Knights, attacks lions, traverses provinces, visits cities, is invited to noble houses, and gradually augments his fame and his madness.

The principal subject of the Quixote is the madness of the hero, yet others are not wanting, when they can be introduced with propriety; such as love, compassion, and sorrow, in the adventures of Cardenio, Dorothea, and Basilius: terror, in the death of Chrysostom and Tosillos; surprise, in the appearance of Marcella, in the adventure of Merlin, and in the resurrection of Altisidora. In short, the whole story abounds in various passions naturally expressed and happily introduced.

Of the language of the original little need be said in a translation; yet it is always allowed, that Cervantes purified the style, and added to the richness, of his native language by a variety of terms, which have been taken from his work: and the names even of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, Maritornes, and Rozinante, still express, in Spain, a redresser of wrongs, a simple talker,

a clumsy woman, and a lean horse. Nor have we scrupled to adopt and naturalize some of these terms into the English language.

As the object of Cervantes was rather to satirize the follies of his age than to write an entertaining book, we must, in order to understand the true merit of his work, follow him through all its intricacies, in which, frequently, the most delicate touches of satire are contained. The first and greatest folly he wished to correct was the prevailing taste for Knight-errantry, and the host of absurd romances, that were founded upon it, but more particularly the last, both of which were carried to the greatest possible extravagance. In order to correct this spirit for chivalry, Cervantes aimed to render it criminal, as in the conversation between Don Quixote and Vivaldo, in which the latter clearly proves, that it was utterly inconsistent with Christianity. Those, who practised it, considered themselves as exempt from the laws, superior to the magistrates, and bound to release all criminals and delinquents. This false generosity is exposed in the incident of Don Quixote's releasing the galley-slaves; and the folly of those, who attempted such actions, is drawn in strong colours, in the opinion, which Sancho gives his master, when he mentions his intention; also in the ill-treatment and insult he receives from the slaves themselves.

As it often happened, that a Knight made a

person more unhappy by his unfortunate protection, our Author does not neglect this point; and makes Don Quixote begin his adventures, by liberating a boy from the supposed unjust punishment of his master. Having succeeded, he rejoices at the prosperous commencement of his career. But meeting some time afterwards with the same boy, and again indulging his vanity with the recital of his success, he is at once abashed, by hearing, that his protection had only increased the boy's punishment. The natural and simple reflection of the boy, and the disappointment of Don Quixote, form a proper correction for those, who undertake the relief of others, when they can only add to their misfortunes.

From the unfortunate termination of all the adventures of Don Quixote, many have inferred, that Cervantes intended to write a satire on the Spanish nation only; and some authors have taken occasion to ridicule the gravity of the Spaniards, flattering themselves that they paint with colours from the pallet of Cervantes. But the truth is, that the spirit of Knight-errantry at that time invaded almost all Europe; and our Author is the more worthy of commendation, for having sacrificed the pride of his country to the desire of correcting this universal failing.

There were three causes, that principally gave rise to chivalry in Europe: the legislature of the

eastern nations, the nature of the feudal government, and the emulation excited by the crusades. All disputes were referred to single combat, for the regulation of which certain laws were enacted, wise perhaps in themselves, but absurdly applied to all trifling quarrels. In the time of feudal government, in those ages, when force alone was law, the redresser of wrongs might be a useful member of society. A Knight-errant was then considered as the defender of widows and of orphans, and the protector of all, who were unjustly persecuted. But Cervantes wrote in an age, when humanity was firmly established, when laws were enacted for the correction of disorders in a state, and magistrates were appointed to enforce their observance. Knight-errantry was then only productive of mischief, by overthrowing all legal authority, and tending to encourage confusion. Every one, who was noble and powerful, fancied himself entitled to bear arms; and even kings have thought it necessary to secure their good will, in order to ensure the safety of their thrones.

The distinctions and prerogatives of chivalry, induced many to follow the military profession, which in ages of comparative barbarism, when the mind is enlightened with hardly a ray of knowledge, is ever deemed the most, if not the only, honourable employment. Cervantes had sense enough to observe, that the reverence, paid to

Knight-errantry, arose from the monstrous and incredible histories of heroes, which were then not only universally read, but almost as universally believed; and the advantages, obtained by the superiority of highly tempered and well-wrought arms, made the vulgar believe them to be the result of enchantment. His object, therefore, was to do away this idea, and, by rendering such histories and romances ridiculous, to destroy their estimation. The spirit of chivalry, not content with attributing the performance of wonderful deeds to its chimerical heroes, has introduced some of its favourite fictions into history, and so disfigured the actions of Spanish commanders, as to make the accounts of their valour more absurd than commendable. For instance, Moses Diego de Valera relates, that while the Cid, who returned to refresh himself with sleep on the day of his daughter's nuptials, was reposing, a lion jumped into the hall and alarmed them all. He awaking, called them all cowards, and immediately bound the lion. Cervantes, probably, had this story in view, when he related the adventure of the lions, in which, as in others, he ridiculed the absurd tales of chivalry, that could only be admired by fools and imitated by madmen.

These excesses, which prevailed as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries almost all over Europe, and the extravagant and bombastic accounts given of them, formed the first object of

the moral of the Quixote; and Cervantes endeavoured to repress this rage for them by satire. It would be tedious to point out every instance, in which he has indulged his favourite object. A few remarks, however, may better enable the reader to discern the force of his wit: for example; the act of regarding as sacred the arms of a Knight, which none other but a Knight dared to touch, is well ridiculed in the adventure of the muleteers going to water their beasts; and in the madness of Don Quixote, who insisted, that the damsels, that tied on his sword, should henceforth be styled "Donna:" the extravagance of the Knight in extorting a confession from some men, who were passing, that the beauty of Dulcinea, though they had never seen her, or even knew who she was, surpassed that of all others; and also the curious menaces, used by him on the road to Saragossa, to all, who did not choose to allow, that the nymphs, who inhabited those woods and fields, were more beautiful and courteous than all others, except the lady of his soul. It might be supposed, that such ideas existed only in the imagination of a poet, yet some old histories afford us examples of such folly. The famous Fernando del Pulgar, in his account of Spanish heroes, gives several instances of Knights, who attacked all that would fight with them, merely to obtain fame.

From such originals Cervantes copied the ri-

diculous menaces of Don Quixote, in which he preserved their character, yet exposed the folly of those, who used them. It is from passages such as these, that many have ventured to assert, that the design of the Quixote is to destroy all ideas of true honour, and to extinguish the martial ardour, which characterized the Spanish nation. But Cervantes, who had passed his life in the true school of honour, and who, glorying in his wounds, said, that a soldier dead in the field of battle, looked better than alive and at liberty by flight, well knew, that true honour is nourished by reason; and, that he does not merit the name of an hero, who does not guide his actions by the principles of justice.

As it was supposed, that no Knight could be a true hero without having one enchanter for his friend, and another for his enemy, who had adopted some other Knight, Cervantes did not omit this circumstance; and introduced the learned Freston to persecute Don Quixote. He it was, as the Knight supposed, who carried him away in the enchanted boat, and prevented the accomplishment of that adventure.

Cervantes, being also sensible of the ill effects, arising to young women from reading books of chivalry, by giving them flattering pictures of love and gallantry, and creating by it that passion, which, from the mode of education in Spain, too frequently gave rise to misfortunes, that ter-

minated only with their lives, endeavoured to counteract that pernicious tendency by introducing love-tales in his work, all of which may easily be perceived to have that object in view. In Don Quixote's attachment to Dulcinea, our Author ridicules the common idea that every Knight should be in love; for Don Quixote had no other reason for his passion but custom, which he thought it necessary to follow, as he shows in his conversation with Vivaldo. It was then, also, usually supposed, that any one, who was in love, ought in justice to expect a return: the consequences of this erroneous principle are admirably displayed in the love of Chrysostom for Marcella, and her answer. The histories of chivalry constantly created ideas of the most romantic nature in the female breast, and encouraged them to the most desperate actions; of this we have an example in Lucinda, who had hidden a dagger to kill herself on the night of her marriage with Don Fernando; and another in Dorothea, who went in search of the same Fernando to revenge herself of his inconstancy. Both these damsels are said to have read many books of chivalry, and to have had their minds filled with the most romantic notions.

Cervantes does not confine himself to the extravagances of Knight-errantry alone; his satire is directed to the vices of mankind in general, and no station in life is passed over, where an

opportunity offers either to reprehend its follies, or commend its virtues.

In the adventure of the prophetic monkey, our Author shows the absurdity of the custom, at that time so prevalent, of placing any faith in augury. The story, that Don Quixote relates of one, who foretold the colour of some puppies, which a bitch was to produce, is a pleasant satire on that kind of divination, and on the ignorance of those, who gave credit to it.

From the extreme ignorance, as well as superstition, of the common people at that period, those, who had any influence over them, easily made them believe, that science was a gift from Heaven. The friars, consequently, monopolized this acquisition, and it was supposed, that none but an ecclesiastic could be the author of any literary production. This is well satirized in the romance, that Antonio sung of his love to Olalia, which had been written by an ecclesiastic, his uncle. The few, who then wrote verses, were led away by a bad taste, and sought more to surprise by tricks and difficulties, than to please by good poetry. The precepts, which Don Quixote gives in his conversation with Don Diego and his son, are excellent; and in the acrostic on the name of Dulcinea, which he asks of the Bachelor, our Author exposes the prevailing bad taste of such compositions.

But if, after all, any one takes up the Quixote,