Gil Blas finds means to make a considerable fortune in a very short time, and gives himself great airs accordingly.

This affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense, had enriched himself by books of knight-errantry. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats he obtained, through my means,
a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the minister, properly speaking, had no business with this affair, his excellency, at my request, was so good as to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two-thirds of the lading belonged to a merchant of Lisbon, who having reclaimed it in vain, came to court in quest of a patron, who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles, for my protection.

Methinks I hear the reader cry in this place, Bravo, Monsieur de Santillane, put hay into your boots; you are in a fine road; push your fortune!—Oh! that I will, I warrant you!—I see, if I am not mistaken; my valet coming with a new prize, which he has grappled. Right: it is Scipio—let us hear him. "Signor (said he), allow me to introduce this famous operator to you. He wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclusive of all others, during the space of ten years, in all the cities under the dominion of Spain; that is, all persons of his profession shall be prohibited from settling in the place or places where he resides; and he will pay, as an acknowledgment, two hundred pistoles to
any person who will procure for him the said privilege." I said to the mountebank, assuming the patron, "Well, friend, your business shall be done." Sure enough, in a very few days, I dispatched him with patents, which entitled him to cheat the people exclusively, through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had obtained of his excellency the four favours I had asked so easily, that I never hesitated in requesting a fifth; which was the government of the city of Vera, on the confines of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava*. who promised me a thousand pistoles for the place. The minister laughed to see me so hot on the game: "Egad, Gil Blas (said he), you go on at a rare rate: you must be furiously inclined to oblige your neighbours. Hark'ee, I shall not stand upon trifles with you: but when you demand governments, and other considerable favours, you shall, if you please, be contented with one half of the profit, and be accountable for the other to me.

* Calatrava, a military order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the year 1158, during the reign of Sancho the Third, king of Castile. This society has formerly signalised its zeal and courage, in many battles against the infidels, and is still possessed of fifty-six commanderies, and sixteen priories. The habit of the order is a large white mantle, with a red cross on the left side, powdered with flowers de luce. The knights make a vow of poverty, obedience, and conjugal fidelity; and take an oath to maintain the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin.
'You can't imagine (added he), what expense I am obliged to be at, or how many resources I must have to support the dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the disinterested appearance I assume, I confess I am not imprudent enough to disorder my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly."

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those whose who wanted favours at court should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another at the same price, for a knight of St. Jago*. I was not contented with making governors only; I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent. I was also willing that the clergy should feel my benevolence: I bestowed

* St. Jago, or St. James. This is the highest order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the twelfth century. They take an oath to defend the pilgrims that visit the tomb of St. James, at Compostella, from the insults of the Moors. They bear for arms, a sword gules; the handle is in form of a cross, powdered with flowers de luce; and their motto is, Sanguine Arabum.
small benefices, canonships, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishoprics and archbishoprics, they were all in the gift of Don Rodrigo de Calderón, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders and viceroys. A plain proof that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts, of which we made such an honourable traffic, were not always the best qualified, or most regular. We knew very well, that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we resembled those misers, who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates has reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of a prime minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner; bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation and now wanted to get rid of it by the advice of his baker. I engaged a coachman; and, as it is but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple honour of my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what put the finishing stroke to my pride, was the minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgment that remained: and I
became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, when they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and well nigh believed myself the Duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it into my head, that I should pass for such, or perhaps, for one of his bastards; a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his Excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose, I ordered Scipio to look out for a skilful cook; and he found one, who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanus*, of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines, and, after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening, some of the principal clerks of the minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side (for it was like master, like man), kept table also, in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintances at my expense. But, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides,

* Lucius Cassius Nomentanus, a famous epicure, that lived in the Augustan age, and ate up a vast fortune. He is upon honourable record in many places of Horace, for his nice taste in sensuality.
I looked upon this profusion like a young man, and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason also, for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grits to the mill; and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had, for once, drove a nail in the wheel of Fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my vanity, but to make Fabricio an eye-witness of my pomp. I did not doubt that he was returned from Andalusia, and that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing, that a Sicilian nobleman, of his acquaintance, expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nunnez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him to supper. "Yes, friend (said I to him), this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides."—"Is it possible (cried he, with great vivacity), that I find thee again in such opulence how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galiano! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless (added he), followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy conduct; for it is by such prudent measures only, that the stewards in great families become so rich."
I let Fabricio applaud himself as much as he pleased, for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano: after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service: but perceiving that my poet, while I made the detail, sung his recantation within myself, I said to him, "I forgive the Sicilian—between you and me, I have more cause to rejoice than be sorry at his behaviour towards me. If the Count had not used me ill, I should have followed him to Sicily, where I should now be a servant in expectation of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not be confidant to the Duke of Lerma." Nunnez was so struck with these last words, that he continued, some minutes, incapable of uttering one syllable. Then breaking silence, all of a sudden; "Did I understand you aright? (cried he); what! have you the confidence of the prime minister?"—"I share it (I replied) with Don Rodrigo de Calderona, and, in all appearance, I shall make great progress."—"Truly, Signor de Santillane (said he), I look upon you with admiration! you are capable of filling all sorts of employments. What taients you are master of! you have (to use the expression of our tennis court) the universal tool: that is to say, you are qualified for every thing. Finally, Signor, (added he), I am overjoyed at your worship's prosperity."—"O the devil! (said I, interrupting
him), Mr. Nunnez, truce with Signor and your worship: let us banish these terms, and live familiarly together."—"Thou art in the right (he replied), I ought not to look upon thee otherwise than usual, although thou art become rich. I will confess my weakness: I was dazzled when I understood thy happy fate. But that prejudice is over, and I now behold thee again as my old friend Gil Blas."

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. "Gentlemen (said I to them, presenting Nunnez), you shall sup with Signor Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of king Numa *, and writes in prose like a prodigy." Unluckily, I spoke to people who regarded poetry so little, that our author suffered on account of his profession. Scarce would they deign to favour him with a look. It was to no purpose that he said witty things in order to attract their attention: they did not perceive the beauty of his sallies: and he was so much piqued at their want of taste, that he made use of his poetical licence, and cunningly withdrawing from the company, disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to table, without so much as asking what was become of him.

Just as I had done dressing next morning, and

* The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests, in their processions, were composed by Numa.
was going abroad, the poet of the Asturias entered my chamber, saying, "I ask pardon (my friend) for having so abruptly left thy clerks last night; but truly, I was so much out of my element among them, that I could no longer endure my situation. A parcel of insolent fellows, with their self-sufficient starched airs! I can't comprehend how thou, who hast an acuteness of understanding, can't accommodate thyself to such stupid guests; this very day (added he) I will bring hither fellows of wit and spirit."—"I shall be obliged to thee (answered I), and will entirely depend upon thy taste in the choice of them."—"Thou art in the right (said he), I promise thee superior geniuses, of the most entertaining characters. I will go this instant to a coffee-house where they meet, and bespeak them before they engage themselves elsewhere; for, happy is the man who can have their company at dinner or supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humour."

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me one after another, characterising each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that those wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works (as he said) deserved to be engraved in letters of gold. I received those gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vain-glorious. Though I had
not laid my injunctions on Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee; my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One, with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a whit less arrogant. In the middle of supper they worried me with verse and prose, each, in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writings; one regaled me with a sonnet, another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read a criticism upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavouring, in his turn, to give us an ode of Anacreon translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation denied his assertion; and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives: the debate still continued; until becoming furious, they got up and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lacqueys, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which when
we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public-house, without making the least apology for their impolite behaviour.

Nunnez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. "Well, friend (said I to him), will you still extol your fellow-guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither à villainous set. I will henceforth keep to my clerks; don't talk to me of authors."—"I will bring no more such (answered he), thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe."

CHAP. X.

The morals of Gil Blas are entirely corrupted at court. He is charged with a commission by the Count de Lemos, and engages in an intrigue with that nobleman.

As soon as I was known to be in favour with the Duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning my antechamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my levee. Two kinds of company came thither; one, to buy my interest with the minister for favours; and the other, to move me by supplications, to obtain for them what
they wanted gratis. The first were sure of being heard and assisted; but with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long, that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint. Of consequence, I cured myself of my friendship also, and stript myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behaviour to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and after having expressed a great deal of friendship for me, as he always did when we met, desired me to ask of the Duke of Lerma a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me, that the cavalier in whose behalf he solicited was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence: "I don't at all doubt (added-Joseph) that, kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honour in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me, for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity." This was plainly telling me that he expected it for nothing; and though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to do what he desired. "I am charmed (answered I to Na-
varro) that I have it in my power to shew my lively gratitude for all the favours which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for any one, is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon for him, depend upon it; the affair is now no longer your's but mine.''

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured it for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats, which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgment I might have expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said (with an air of mortification) when next we met: "Ah! my dear Navarro, you were too late in speaking to me; I was prevented by Calderona, who has given away that same post; and I am quite in despair that I have no better news to entertain you with."

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever; but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For, besides my being burdened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman,
whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him two thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more by order of the Duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his Excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day: he told me that he had at last gained his end, and entirely possessed the good graces of the Prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was: he then gave me charge of a very honourable commission which he had already prepared for me. "Friend Santillane (said he), now is the time to be doing: spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who should be worthy to amuse that gallant prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me." I promised to neglect nothing in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people live by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of inquiry; but not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private: "Child, I am going to entrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know that in the midst of fortune's favours I find I want something?"—"I can easily guess what that is (said he, interrupting me before I could proceed) you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and ex
hilarate your spirits; and, truly, it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave grey-beards cannot dispense with such recreation."—"I admire thy penetration (answered I, with a smile); yes, a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I must warn thee before-hand, that I am very delicate in these matters. I expect a lady of beauty and good morals."—"What you require (replied Scipio), is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair."

Sure enough, in three days he said, "I have discovered a treasure; a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honourable manner on their fortune, which is but small; they are served by a chambermaid of my acquaintance, who has assured me, that though their door is shut to every body at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing to avoid scandal, by going in at night, without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier, who deserved to find the door unlated; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place."—"That's well (I replied), but I am afraid the chambermaid
imposes upon thee."—"No, no (said he), I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interro-
gated the neighbours, and conclude from what
they say, that Signora Catalina is a Danaë, on
whom you may descend like another Jupiter, in a
shower of gold." Prejudiced as I was against
intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once;
and, as the chambermaid came next day, and told
Scipio, that, if I pleased, I might be introduced
that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither
between eleven and twelve. The maid receiving
me in the dark, took me by the hand, and led me
into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the
ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches.
As soon as they perceived me, they got up, and
saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took
them for persons of quality. The aunt (whose
name was Signora Mencia), though still agree-
able, did not attract my attention, which was
entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a
goddess. To examine her minutely; however; she
could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had
such graces, together with a tempting luscious
air, as hindered the eye to perceive her defects.
Accordingly, I was disturbed at sight of her.
I forgot that I came thither to perform the office
of procurer; spoke in my own favour, and ex-
pressed myself like a man inspired by the most
violent passion. The young lady, in whom I found
three times more wit than she really had (so cour-
tious did she seem), quite enchanted me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner: "Signor de Santillane, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favour, by standing on ceremony; but don't imagine yourself the nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate."

This well-aimed shot frightened away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed made me recollect myself. I became again, all of a sudden, the faithful agent of the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, replied to Signora Mencia, "Madam, I am pleased with your frankness, which I intend to imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain." - "Your refusal of my niece (replied the aunt coldly) was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of rail-
lery."—"I don't rally, indeed, madam, (cried I,) nothing is more serious; I have orders to find out a lady who deserves to be honoured with the private visits of the Prince of Spain; I find such a one in your house, and mark it for the scene accordingly."

Signora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner: "If I was disposed to credit literally what you say, you must know that I am not of such a character, as to rejoice in the infamous honour of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue disapproves"—"What a saint you are with your virtue! (said I, interrupting her,) you talk like one bred among silly citizens. Sure you joke, in pretending to consider things in a moral point of view? that would be stripping them of all their beauty: they must be surveyed with a carnal eye. Behold the heir apparent of Spain at the feet of the happy Catalina, adoring and loading her with presents; and remember, that from her perhaps will spring a hero, who will render his mother's name immortal as his own."

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the Prince already in her chains, affected great indifference; so that I was obliged to invest the place a-new,
until at length, Signora Mencia seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the chameleon, and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles:—Imprimis, if the Prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina’s charms, shall be inflamed, and determine to honour her with a nocturnal visit, I shall take care to apprise the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose.—Item, The Prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury in chief.

After this conversation, the aunt and niece shewed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behaviour, in consequence of which I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the courtiers of gallantry and the women who want their service. Had people observed me leave this house with such marks of favour, they might have said, with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The Count de Lemos was overjoyed; when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He
told the ladies, he did not at all doubt that the Prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress which I had chosen for him, and that she on her part would have cause to be contented with such a lover: that the young Prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper; in short, he assured them, that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendance. This nobleman afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage, in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he set me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new started adventure, and to desire he would send him a thousand pistoles to ensure his success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed; concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio, but took to myself the honour of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. "Mr. Gil Blas, (said the minister to me, with an air of raillery), I am ravished to find, that with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties; when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you." — "My lord (I replied in
the same tone), I thank your grace for intending me the preference; but give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous of serving your excellency in that manner. Signor Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it." The Duke smiled at my answer; then changing the discourse, asked if his nephew did not want money for his adventure? "Pardon me" (said I), he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles." "Very well (replied the minister), carry them to him; bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the Prince shall propose."

CHAP. XI.

The private visits and presents which the Prince of Spain made to Catalina.

I went that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who told me, "You could not come in better season. I have spoke to the Prince: he has bit at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, in order to visit her. It is a thing determined, and our measures are taken accordingly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and give them that
money which you have brought: for it is right to let them see that he is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive: besides, the bounty of princes ought to precede their intrigues. As you will accompany him, together with me (added he), be sure of being at his couchée this evening. Your coach also (for I think it is proper we should use it) must wait for us near the palace about midnight."

I immediately repaired to the house, but did not see Catalina, who (they told me) was a-bed: so that I could only speak with Signora Mencia, to whom I said, "Madam, pray excuse me for appearing in your house by day; but it is not in my power to do otherwise, for I must give you notice, that the Prince of Spain will be here this night; and here (added I, putting the bag of money in her hand) is an offering which he sends to the temple of Cytherea, to render the divinities of the place propitious. You see I have not engaged you in a bad affair." "I am very much obliged to you (she replied); but tell me, Signor de Santillane, does the Prince love music?" "He loves it (answered I) to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delightfully touched."

"So much the better (cried she in a transport of joy)! you give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration; she like-
wise dances perfectly well." "Heavens! (cried I
in my turn) what perfections, my good aunt! so
many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune;
one of these talents is sufficient for the purpose."

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the
hour of the Prince's couchee; then giving orders
to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos,
who told me that the Prince, to get rid of his com-
pany the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition,
and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of
his being sick, but that he would rise again in an
hour, and, by a back door, gain a private stair
that led into the court-yard.

When he had informed me of what they had con-
certed together, he posted me in a place through
which he assured me they would pass; and there I
danced attendance so long, that I began to think
our gallant had taken another road, or lost his de-
sire of seeing Catalina; as if princes usually drop
these sort of whims before they have satisfied them.
In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether,
when two men accosted me, whom having discerned
to be those I expected, I conducted them to my
coach, in which they seated themselves, while I
got upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom
I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house.
I then handed the Prince and his companion out
of the coach, and we walked towards the place for
which we were bound. The gate opened at our
approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.
At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though by way of distinction there was a small lamp fixed on the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay dishabille, so artfully disposed, that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our Prince would have been very well satisfied with Signora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to choose; but the charms of young Catalina, as they deserved, had the preference. "Well, my Prince (said the Count de Lemos), was it possible for us to procure your Highness the pleasure of seeing two ladies more handsome than these?" "I am ravished with them both! (replied the Prince) and I shall never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail."

After this compliment so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honourable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with the intention of adding fuel to the fire, I told the gallant,
that his nymph sung and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung in such an affecting manner, that the Prince dropt down at her feet, in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture, and only observe that during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house because of the day’s approach. We the gentlemen undertakers carried him back to his apartment with great dispatch, and then went to our different homes, as well satisfied in having fitted him with a she-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounted this adventure to the Duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, "The Prince of Spain is so much ingrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he proposes to visit her often, and attach himself to her alone. He wanted to send to her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. "My dear Lemos (said he), you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well that
I incommode, nay, exhaust you, but my heart retains the obligation; and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude, otherwise than in thought, for all your friendship, you shall not repent for having laid me under an obligation. 'My prince (said I, leaving him that instant), I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want.'

'It is not difficult to satisfy his demand (said the Duke to his nephew). Santillane, go fetch the money: or, if you please, he will purchase the jewels, for he is a perfect connoisseur in stones, especially rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas?' (added he, looking at me with a satirical smile). "Your grace is very severe (I replied): I see that you want to make Monsieur the Count merry at my expense." 'This happened accordingly. The nephew asked what mystery there was in his words. "Nothing (answered the Duke laughing), only Santillane one day thought proper to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found that he had gained neither honour nor profit by the bargain.'

I should have thought myself easily quit, if the minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging, and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His excellency, after having enjoyed his joke, ordered me
to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's house where we chose jewels, which we shewed to the Prince for his approbation; and which being afterwards entrusted to me, in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the Duke's money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies, when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of a handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of earrings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the Prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a mere gipsy to our great monarch's son; but that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine masterpiece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.
CHAP XII.

Catalina's real character. The perplexity and uneasiness of Gil Blas. The precaution he was obliged to take for his own quiet.

Just as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and inquiring into the cause, was told, Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sung full throat, and frequently broke out in loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the seven wise men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to the company, "Gentlemen, it is only my master come home: be not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I will go and speak two words to him, and rejoin you in a twinkling." So saying, he came to my apartment. "What a hubbub is this (said I)! what sort of people are those you entertain below? are they poets?"—"No, indeed, Sir, if you please (he replied), it were pity to bestow your wine on such company. I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very rich young fellow, who wants for his money an employment by your interest, and for him alone I give this entertainment: at every draught he drinks, I raise the
gratification you are to receive ten pistoles, and will make him drink till day."—"If that be the case (I replied), go back to thy friends, and don't spare the wine in my cellar."

I did not think this a proper season to talk with him about Catalina; but next morning when I got up I spoke to him in this manner: "Friend Scipio, thou knowest how we live together; I treat thee more like a comrade than a domestic; and of consequence thou wilt be to blame in deceiving me as a master. Let us then lay aside all reserve with one another. I will tell thee something that will surprise thee, and thou shalt disclose to me thy real sentiments of these two women with whom thou hast made me acquainted. Between thee and me, I suspect them to be two artful pusses, cunning in proportion to the simplicity which they affect. If my opinion does them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be well pleased with me: for I confess it was for him that I wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried him to Catalina's house, and he is become passionately fond of her."—"Signor (answered Scipio), I am too well used by you, to be wanting in sincerity to my master. I had yesterday a private conversation with the maid of the two princesses, and she related their history, which to me seemed very diverting. You shall hear it in two words.

Catalina is daughter to a poor gentleman of Arragon; and finding herself, at the age of fifteen,
an orphan, as handsome as poor, listened to an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having served as a parent rather than a husband to her. She secured his fortune, consisting of some moveables, and three hundred pistoles in ready money, then joined herself to Signora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though already in the wane. These two good friends lived together, and began to behave so as to attract the notice of justice; at which the ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned Toledo through vexation, and settled in Madrid, where they had lived about two years without visiting any person in the neighbourhood. But the best circumstance of the story is this—they have hired two small houses, separated only by a wall, having in the cellar a stair of communication from the one to the other. Signora Mencia lives with a young maid-servant in one of these houses, and the commander's widow possesses the other, with an old duenna who passes for her grandmother; so that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a pupil under the wings of her grandaunt. When she acts the niece, she is called Catalina; and when she plays the grandchild, her name is Sirena.

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and interrupting Scipio, said, "What do I hear! alas! I am afraid that this cursed Arragonian is no other
than the mistress of Calderona."—"Truly (he replied), it is the same. I thought this piece of news would have given you pleasure."—"Thou art very much mistaken (answered I), I have more cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it; dost thou not see the consequences?"—"No, in faith (resumed Scipio), what mischief can it produce? you are not sure that Don Rodrigo will discover what passes; and if you are afraid of his getting information, you have nothing to do but prepossess the minister in your favour, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if after this Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, he will perceive that his sole design is to injure you out of a spirit of revenge."

Scipio, by this discourse, banished my fear; and, resolving to follow his advice, I informed the Duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I've even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the Prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favourite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on in my old way, saying, that after all it was glorious for Calderona to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of Spain, and to be as well received by her as his Highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me
of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his grace.

Imagining that by this precaution I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous shelves that environed it, my fears vanished. I still accompanied the Prince to the house of Catalina, alias the fair Sirena, who was artful enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

CHAP. XIII.

*Gil Blas continues to act the man of consequence.*

*Hears news of his family, which make but small impression upon him, and quarrels with Fabricius.*

I have already observed, that in the morning my antechamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals, but I would not receive them *vivâ voce*; and, according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to each solicitor, "Give in a memorial." I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who
came to put me in mind of a year's rent being due. As for my butcher and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memorials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don't intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of the grandes, as if I had been a man in their sphere. If, (for example), I had occasion to mention the Duke of Alva, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them without ceremony, "Alva, and Medina Sidonia." In a word, I became so vain and haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas! poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as inquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Asturias! I did not even think of you! The court is like the river Lethe in making us forget our parents and friends, when they are under misfortunes.

I no longer, therefore, remembered my family, when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a plebeian, I asked what he wanted with me? "How! Signor Gil Blas, (said he), don't you remember me?" In vain I considered him attentively: I was obliged
to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. "I am (he replied) one of your old school-fellows, a native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer, your uncle the canon's neighbour. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at Gallina Ciega*.'" "I have (said I) but a confused idea of the amusements of my infancy: the business in which I have been engaged since that time, has effaced them from my memory." "I am come (he resumed) to Madrid, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent: and I heard it said that you was on a good footing at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on your good fortune; and will, at my return into the country, overwhelm your family with joy, by telling them such an agreeable piece of news."

I could not, in common decency, forbear asking in what situation he had left my father, mother, and uncle: but this piece of duty I performed so coldly, that the grocer had no great reason to admire the force of blood. He seemed shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and being a plain, vulgar young fellow, said bluntly, "I thought you had more tenderness and sensibility for your relations. How coldly do you inquire into their circumstances!"

* Blind-man's buff.
Know, that your father and mother are still at service; and the good canon Gil Peres, burthened with old age and infirmities, draws near his end. People ought to have some natural affection; and since you are in a condition to assist your parents, I advise you, as a friend, to send two hundred pistoles yearly for their support: by which means you will make their life easy and happy, without any inconvenience to yourself.’’ Instead of being moved by the picture which he drew of my family, I was disgusted at the liberty which he took in advising me, without being desired so to do. With a little more address, perhaps, he might have persuaded me; but his freedom had a contrary effect. He perceived my displeasure by my silence; and continuing his exhortation with more malice than charity, made me lose my patience entirely. ‘‘Oh, this is too much! (cried I in a passion) go, Mr. Muscada, and meddle with your own concerns: it becomes you well, indeed, to prescribe to me: I know my duty, on this occasion, better than you can teach me.’’ So saying, I pushed the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, however, did not fail of having some effect: I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and was melted accordingly. I recalled the care they had taken of my infancy and education: I considered the duty I owed to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some transports of acknow-
ledgment, which, however, came to nothing: they were soon stifled by my ingratitude, and succeeded by profound oblivion. There are many parents who have children of the same stamp.

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and thoughtful; in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricio, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying, "Truly, Gil Blas, thou art grown out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present, thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and freedom of behaviour, which are the soul of friendship; on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealest from me thy secret views: nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew."

"You joke sure (said I, with an air of indifference), I can't perceive any change in myself."

"Thy own eyes are no judges (answered he), they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend,
Do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to knock at thy door in the morning, thou cam'\textsuperscript{st} in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now behold the difference! Thou art attended by half a score of lacqueys.—I am obliged to wait in thy anti-chamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received? with a forced politeness, and air of importance: so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee on the footing of a comrade? No, Santillane, no, I can't put up with it. Farewell. Let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who censures thy behaviour, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself.''

I felt myself more irritated than reclaimed by his reproaches, and let him go, without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion, at that time the friendship of a poet was not of such value, as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it: I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the King, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a similitude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I know not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing
to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the King, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectable personages. O fortune! how are thy favours usually dispensed! The stoic Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion, who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.
Scipio advises Gil Blas to marry, proposes the daughter of a rich and noted goldsmith for his wife; the steps which were taken in consequence of this advice.

One evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day? "A masterpiece (he replied): I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance."—"The daughter of a goldsmith! (cried I with an air of disdain), hast thou lost thy senses? How canst thou propose a wife from the city? One who has certainly merit, and is on a sure footing at court, ought to entertain more elevated
views, methinks."—"How, Sir? (replied Scipio), sure you are not in earnest: consider that the male alone ennobles; and be not more delicate than a thousand noblemen, whose names I can mention. Do you know that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats? Is not this a fine morsel of plate?" When I heard him talk of such a round sum, I became more tractable. "I yield (said I to my secretary); the dowry determines me; when shall I touch it?"—"Softly, Sir (he replied), a little patience: I must first communicate the proposal to the father, and obtain his consent."—"Good! (said I, laughing heartily): are you still thereabouts? I find the marriage is far advanced."—"Farther than you imagine (answered he); I want only an hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and will answer for his consent. But before we proceed, let us come to a composition if you please. Suppose I procure for you those hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?"—"Twenty thousand," (I replied). "Heaven be praised! (said he): I limit the acknowledgment to ten thousand: for once, you are more generous than I. To-morrow I will set this negociation on foot; and you may depend upon its success: otherwise, I am but an ass." In effect, two days after, he said, "I have spoke to Signor Gabriel Salero the goldsmith; and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you
for a son-in-law; and you shall have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear that you are in favour with the minister."—"If that be the case (answered I to Scipio), I shall be married very soon: but a-propos, hast thou seen the girl? Is she handsome?"

"Not so handsome as the dowry (said he); between you and me, this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature: but, luckily, that you don't mind."—

"No, faith, my child! (said I), we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying, and look for beauty no where but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to centre in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect."

"This is not all (resumed Scipio). Signor Gabriel invites you to supper to-night; and we have agreed that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only, as simple guest: and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this you may see that he wants to study your temper, before he proceeds: so that you must be on your guard before him."—"Zooks! (said I, with an air of confidence), let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I shall lose nothing by his scrutiny."

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another
several times. He was an honest citizen, polite *hasta porfiar*, as the saying is. He introduced me to Signora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments, without infringing the treaty. I said a great many things, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowry, I know not. What a fine house did Signor Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru: that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honour to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night, I treated our goldsmith in my turn; and as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different

* Even to obstinacy.
kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, and who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mortal man in comparison of these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a middling fortune; twenty thousand ducats a-year, or so. Upon which, these greedy hunters of honour and riches cried, I was in the wrong; and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the prime-minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and asked if he was pleased with my behaviour: "I am charmed with it! (replied the citizen), the young man has won my heart. But Signor Scipio (added he), I conjure you, by our old acquaintance, to speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know; tell me that of Signor de Santillane: is he a gamester? is he a rake? what is his vicious inclination? Pray don't conceal it."—"You affront me, Signor Gabriel, by asking such a question (replied the mediator):
I am not so much in my master's interest as in your's. If he had any bad quality capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law? No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But between you and me, I know no other fault in him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man."—"So much the better (cried the goldsmith); I am glad of it. Go, friend, assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I would bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the minister."

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation than I hastened to Salcro's house, to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their behaviour towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His excellency received him very courteously, and assured him that he was very glad he had chosen for a son-in-law a man for whom he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed, that the tears stood in his eye: he clasped me in his arms at
parting, and said, "My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married in eight days at farthest."

CHAP. II.

*Gil Blas, by accident, remembers Don Alphonso de Leyva, and does him a piece of service out of vanity.*

The order of my history requires that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the services which I did to Don Alphonso, my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now, and I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant, and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I reflected, that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honour. Addressing myself therefore to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son; and that having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the government of
Valencia for either the one or the other. The minister answered, "With all my heart, Gil Blas! I love to see thee grateful and generous. Besides, I esteem the family thou speakest of: the Leyvas have been always good servants to the king, and well deserve that place. Thou mayest dispose of it at thy own pleasure: I give it thee for a nuptial present."

Ravished with my success, I went without loss of time, and desired Calderona to make out letters patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending in respectful silence, until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened, and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderona heard in their turns. His different behaviour to different people was very remarkable: he received some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honoured with a bow, and conducted them to his closet door. He put (to use the expression) different shades of consideration in the civilities he shewed. On one hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I
made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship, that surprised me not a little. "Ah! my dear colleague (cried he), what affair procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? is there any thing in which I can serve you?" I told him the cause of my visit; and he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done by the same hour next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of the anti-chamber, whither he never used to go, except with grandees, and there embraced me anew.

What is the meaning of all this civility? (said I to myself, going out), what can it forebode? Sure Calderona meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous of gaining my friendship; or feeling his favour on the decline, cultivates me with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf. I did not know which of these conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True, indeed, he bated a great deal of that politeness, in his recep-
tion of other people, who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and disobliging to every body. But all of them were sufficiently revenged, by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, and for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man in very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did not even look at the cavalier, said to him, in a surly tone, "What is your name, friend?"—"I was called Francillo in my infancy (replied the cavalier, very coolly); since that time, I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zuniga*, and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedroso." Calderona, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavoured to excuse himself. "Signor (said he to the Count), I beg pardon, if not knowing you—"—"I want none of thy excuses (said Francillo, with disdain), I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayest, if thou wilt, be vain enough to look upon

* Zuniga, one of the most ancient families of Castile.
thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet."

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke, and resolved to take care how I behaved to people, in giving audience and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it, by an express, to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which his excellency informed him, that the king had named him to the government of Valencia*. I took no notice of the share I had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing myself with the hope of telling him by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his employment.

* Valencia, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same name, is situated on the banks of the Guadalaviar, about half a league from the sea. It is the see of an archbishop, and seat of an university, a place of great trade, and, on the whole, so agreeable as to have obtained the name of Valencia la hermosa, Valencia the beautiful. This country was formerly in possession of the Moors, from whom the city was taken, about the end of the eleventh century, by the famous Ruy Diaz, surnamed the Cid.
CHAP. III.

The preparations for the marriage of Gil Blas, and the great event that renders them useless.

Let us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony: Salero bought rich clothes for the bride; and I hired a chamber-maid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of an hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I shewed great respect to the goldsmith and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and cit-like observations I patiently listened. Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed
into a great hall, where we were regaled with a
concert of vocal and instrumental music, which
was not ill executed, although they had not chosen
the best hands of Madrid. Several gay airs, with
which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us
all in such good humour, that we began to form
country dances. God knows how we performed,
since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore;
though I had no other principles of that art, than
two or three lessons, which I received from a cox-
comb of a dancing-master, who came to teach the
pages, when I lived with the Marchioness of
Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted our-
selves, it being time for each to think of retiring,
I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. "Adieu,
my son (said Salero, embracing me), I will wait on
you to-morrow morning, with the dowry, in good
gold."—"My dear father (I replied), you shall
be very welcome." Then wishing the family good
night, I got into the coach that waited for me at
the gate, and drove homewards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Signor
Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some
on horseback, others on foot, armed with swords
and carbines, surrounded the coach, and stopped
it, crying, "In the King's name!" They made
me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-
chaise, where the chief of these cavaliers mounting
along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia.
I soon guessed that my fellow-traveller was an
honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen, that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me anything of the matter. I observed that perhaps he might be mistaken in the man. "No, no (said he), I know my business better. You are Signor de Santillane; and you I have orders to conduct to the place for which we are bound." Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night, along Mancaranez, in profound silence; changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia*, where I was locked up in the tower.

* Segovia, a city of New Castile, about twelve leagues from Madrid; famous for its woollen manufacture; the tower that was built by the Moors; the mint, which surpasses all work of the same kind in Europe; and an aqueduct, built by the emperor Trajan, which remains entire to this day, and is looked upon as one of the finest monuments of antiquity. It extends three thousand paces from one mountain to another; and is supported by one hundred and seventy-seven arches in two tiers, forming as it were a double bridge. This edifice is built of large hewn stones, so artfully joined without mortar or cement, that it remains undamaged to the present age: whereas the little improvements that are occasionally made upon it for the public use seldom last longer than fifteen or twenty years.
CHAP. IV.

The treatment of Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and the manner in which he learned the cause of his imprisonment.

They began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploiring my condition, for, as yet, I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderona; nevertheless, though I suspected that he had discovered the whole, I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Sometimes I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his excellency; and sometimes I thought that he himself was the cause of my misfortunes, for some political reasons that often induce ministers to use their favourites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated by these different conjectures, when the light of day, penetrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two sources of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity
rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned myself to my sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, gaoler as he was, felt an emotion of pity. "Signor prisoner (said he), don't despair. You must not be so sensible of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Meanwhile, eat the King's allowance with a good grace."

My comforter went out, when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer, but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honour to my provision, which, to me, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the King's bounty, as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than assuage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the mean time, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in his hand, approached me, saying, "Signor Gil Blas, behold one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrea de Tordesillas, who lived with you at Grenada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, while you were in favour with that prelate. You desired him, if you remember, to employ his credit in my behalf; and by his interest, I was named for an
employment in Mexico: but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the city of Alicant, where I married the daughter of him who commanded the castle, and by a train of adventures which I shall recount to you by and by, I am now become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders to keep you from the speech of every living soul, to make you lie upon straw, and live upon bread and water only. But I have too much humanity not to pity your misfortunes: besides, you have done me service; and my gratitude prevails over the orders which I have received. Far from being the instrument of that cruelty which they would exercise upon you, I intend to soften the rigour of your fate. Get up, and follow me."

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my thanks, my understanding was so much disturbed, that I could not answer one word. I did not fail, however, to follow him through a court, and up a narrow stair, to a small room, quite a-top of the tower. I was not a little surprised, when I entered this chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. "The victuals will be presently brought (said Tordesillas), and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see, from your window, the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the moun-
tains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca.
I know that at first you will not be very sensible
of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of
your grief shall be mellowed, by time, into a soft
melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an
excursion with your eyes over such agreeable
objects. Besides, you may be assured of being
well provided in linen, and other necessaries befit-
ting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover,
you shall have a good bed, comfortable diet, and
be furnished with as many books as you choose to
read. In a word, you shall be as well treated as
a prisoner can be.”

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging
offers, I took courage, gave my gaoler a thousand
thanks, told him that he recalled me to life by his
generous behaviour, and that I wished I might
ever again have an opportunity of shewing my
gratitude. “And why not have an opportunity?
(he replied) do you think you have lost your liberty
for ever? You are mistaken; and I dare assure
you, that you will be quit for a few months of im-
prisonment.”—“What say you, Signor Don An-
dres? (cried I) it seems then you know the cause
of my misfortune.”—“I confess (said he) I am
not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil, who
brought you hither, imparted the secret to me;
and I shall now reveal it.”

He told me that the King, being informed of
your having, in concert with the Count de Lemos,
carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady, had, to punish you both, exiled the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the rigour which you have experienced since your arrival.”—“And how (said I) did this affair come to the knowledge of the King? it is that circumstance, in particular, of which I want to be informed.”—“And that circumstance (he replied), is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who, in all likelihood, is himself ignorant of the matter.”

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron; an olla podrida* in another; and the third contained a turkey pot on a marmalade of berengena†. When Tordesillas saw that we had every thing we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse, and having locked the door, we sat down at table, opposite to one another. “Let us begin (said he) with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite, after a fast of two days.” So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half-starved;

* Olla podrida, a dish composed of all sorts of food.
† Berengena, a kind of fruit growing like a cucumber, and eaten, like French beans, with mutton, &c.
and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I baulked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel images which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper in vain exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellence of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I should have drank it without pleasure, at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such absence of thought, that when it was ended, I could not have repeated one word of what he said. He concluded that he undertook too much, in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying, "Signor de Santillane, I will leave you to your repose, or rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the King is naturally good: when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished." So saying, Mr. Keeper went down stairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off every thing, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.
'CHAP. V.

His reflections before he went to sleep, and an account of the noise that waked him.

I spent two hours at least in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. I am confined here, then, said I to myself, for having contributed to the pleasures of the heir apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that kind, to so young a prince: for his tender years alone make me guilty. Had he been in a more advanced age, the King would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the Prince, or that of the Duke of Lerma; who will doubtless revenge his nephew the Count de Lemos? How then has the King discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.

Hither my doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects had been abandoned. My strong box! cried I, my dear riches; what has become of you, into whose hands are you fallen? alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were
amassed! I painted to myself the disorder that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favourable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this, the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapours of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep, and, probably, the day would have surprised me in this condition, had I not been waked, all of a sudden, by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and hearing no more, believed it was a dream: but, in a moment, my ear was struck again with the sound of the instrument, and the same voice, which sung the following verses:—

Ay de mi! un ano felice  
Parece un soplo ligero;  
Ferò sin dicha un instante  
Es un siglo de tormento*.

My sorrow was increased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. I have but too well experienced the truth of these words (said I); methinks the season of my pros-

* Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze; but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.
perity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison. I relapsed into a terrible reverie, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the task. My lamentations, however, ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room, by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said; the Erema, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus; appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing to my view, but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably, I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already half dressed, when Tordesillas came in, followed by an old woman servant who brought shirts and towels for my use. "Signor Gil Blas (said he), here is linen: don't be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well (added he), how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?" "I should have slept, perhaps, till now (answered I), had I not been awaked by a voice, accompanied
by a guitar." "The cavalier who has disturbed your repose (said he) is a state prisoner, whose chamber is contiguous to your's. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one another. You will find a mutual consolation in each other's acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both."

I assured Don Andrea, that I was extremely sensible of his kindness in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day; and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprised me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold the most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by shewing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add to this that nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of understanding and valour; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sung in the night for fear of incommoding me, notwithstanding my entreaties that he would not con-
strain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance, and became stronger and stronger every day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since by our discourse we aided one another, reciprocally, to bear our misfortunes with patience.

One afternoon entering his room, just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he, placing himself on his bed’s feet, played a very moving air; and sung words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him, with a smile, "Signor Knight, these are words which you were never obliged to employ in your amours; you are too well qualified to find the women cruel."

"You have too good an opinion of me (he replied); I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften a heart which I believe harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who treated me with extreme rigour. I must entertain you with that story, by which you will also learn the cause of my misfortune."
CHAP. VI.

The history of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo.

Not much less than four years ago, I set out from Madrid for Coria, to visit Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I am. I was no sooner arrived at her house, than love began to invade my repose. The windows of my apartment faced the lattices of a lady, who lived opposite to my aunt's house; and I could easily perceive her, by the assistance of the width of her grates, and the narrowness of the street. I did not neglect the opportunity; and found my neighbour so handsome, that I was enchanted at once. I expressed my passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she could not be mistaken. She perceived it accordingly; but was not at all disposed to pride herself in her observation, and still less to answer my coquetries.

I made inquiries about this dangerous person, who captivated hearts so suddenly; and learned that her name was Donna Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, who possessed a rich manor a few leagues from Coria; that many matches had been in her offer; but her father rejected them all, because he was resolved
to give her in marriage to his nephew Don Augustin de Olighera; who, in the mean time, had the privilege of seeing and conversing with his cousin every day. I was not discouraged by this piece of information: on the contrary, it inflamed my passion; and the proud pleasure of supplanting a beloved rival excited me, perhaps even more than my love, to pursue my point. I continued then to address Helena with the most passionate looks: I supplicated her maid Felicia in the same language, in order to implore her assistance. I even talked on my fingers. But these gallantries were of no use. I made as little impression on the maid as on her mistress: they seemed equally cruel and inaccessible.

Since they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters; and set people to work, to discover what acquaintances Felicia had in town. They got notice that an old gentlewoman, called Theodora, was her best friend, and that they often visited one another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I went to Theodora in person, and by presents engaged her in my interests. She espoused my cause, promised to procure for me a private conversation with her friend, at her house, and kept her promise the very next day. "I am no longer unhappy (said I to Felicia), since my misfortunes have excited your compassion. How much am I indebted to your friend, for having prevailed upon you to grant me the satisfac-
tion of an interview!" "Signor (answered she), Theodora can do any thing with me: she has engaged me in your behalf; and if it be in my power to make you happy, you shall soon enjoy your wish; but with all my good will, I don't know that I can give you much assistance: for, not to flatter you, you have never formed a more difficult enterprise. You are in love with a lady, who is prepossessed in favour of another cavalier: and what sort of a lady! one so full of pride and dissimulation, that if, by dint of perseverance and assiduity, you should succeed so far as to cost her some sighs, don't imagine that her pride will give you the pleasure of hearing them." "Ah! my dear Felicia! (cried I, in a transport of grief), why do you describe the obstacles which I have to surmount! I am assassinated by your information! deceive me rather than drive me to despair!" So saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it to mine, put upon her finger a diamond worth three hundred pistoles, accompanied with such moving expressions, as brought the tears into her eyes.

She was too much affected by my discourse, and too well satisfied with my behaviour, to leave me altogether without consolation. She began to smooth the difficulties a little, saying, "Signor, what I have represented ought not to deprive you of hope. Your rival, it is true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come and visit his cousin, and talk to her whenever he pleases; and this is a circumstance
favourable for you. Their being accustomed to see
one another every day, renders their conversation
a little languid: they seem to part without pain,
and meet again without pleasure: one would think
they were already married. In a word, I don't per-
ceive that my mistress has a violent passion for
Don Augustin: besides, as to personal qualifica-
tions, there is a difference between you and him
that must turn to your account, in the eyes of such
a delicate young lady as Donna Helena. Be not
discouraged, therefore; continue your gallantry,
which I will second; and I will not let slip one
opportunity of making every thing you do to please
her tend to your advantage with my mistress. In
vain shall she attempt to disguise her sentiments.
I will soon discover them, in spite of her dissimu-
lation."

After this conversation, Felicia and I parted,
very well satisfied with one another. I prepared
anew to ogle Don George's daughter, whom I
treated with a serenade, in which the verses you
have heard were sung by a fine voice, which I had
provided for the purpose. After the concert, the
maid, in order to sound her, mistress, asked how
she had been entertained?" "The voice (said
Donna Helena) gave me pleasure." "And were
not the words which were sung very moving?"
(replied the maid). "I paid no attention to them
(said the lady); I listened to the tune only; I took
no notice of the verses, neither do I desire to know
who gave the serenade." "If that be the case (cried the waiting woman), poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his reckoning, and not very wise in spending his time in 'looking at our lattices.' "Perhaps it may not be he (said the mistress, coldly), but some other cavalier, who has declared his passion for me by this concert." "Pardon me, madam (replied Felicia), it is no other but Don Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me this morning in the street, and begged me to tell you, that he adores you, in spite of the rigour with which you repay his love; and that, in short, he would think himself the happiest of mankind, if you would allow him to manifest his passion in the usual course of gallantry. This discourse (added she) sufficiently proves that I am not mistaken."

Don George's daughter changed countenance all of a sudden, and darting a severe look at her maid: "You might have dispensed (said she) with repeating that impertinent conversation to me. 'Let me have no such reports for the future if you please: and if that rash youth shall have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to make his addresses to one who will regard his gallantry more than I do, and to chuse a more honourable pastime than that of being all day long at his windows, to observe what I do in my apartment.'

All this was faithfully reported to me, in a second interview with Felicia, who pretending that
I must not take the words of her mistress in a literal sense, would have persuaded me that the affair went on swimmingly. But I, who was ignorant of finesse, and did not believe that the text could be explained in my favour, distrusted the commentary she made. She laughed at my diffidence, called for paper and ink, and said: "Signor Knight, write immediately to Donna Helena in the style of a desponding lover. Paint your sufferings in the most passionate colours, and, in particular complain of her prohibiting you to appear at your windows. . . Promise to obey her, but at the same time assure her, that it will cost you your life. Put this into such expressions as you gentlemen are so well skilled in, and leave the rest to me. I hope, the event will do more honour to my penetration than you imagine."

Had I neglected this, I should have been the first lover who did not take the advantage of such an opportunity to write to his mistress. I composed a most pathetic letter, and before I sealed it, shewed it to Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a smile, "that if women have the art of captivating the men, these last, in return, know very well how to cajole the women." The waiting-maid took my letter, then laying strong injunctions on me to keep my windows shut for a few days, returned to the house of Don George.

"Madam" (said she to Donna Helena, when she went home), I met Don Gaston, who did not fail
to make up to me, and endeavoured to soothe me with flattering expressions. He asked with a faltering voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had delivered his message to you. Then I, faithful and ready to execute your orders, cut him short with a vengeance; inveighed against him, loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street confounded at my petulance. "I am over-joyed (replied Donna Helena) that you have rid me of that importunate young fellow; but there was no occasion to speak rudely to him. A young woman ought always to be gentle in her behaviour."

"Madam (said the maid), a passionate lover is not to be banished by words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay, this is seldom accomplished by indignation and rage. Don Gaston, for example, was not repulsed. After having loaded him with reproaches (as I have said) I went to the house of your relation, whither you sent me; and that lady unfortunately detained me too long: I say too long, because, on my return, I found my man again, whom, I assure you, I did not expect to see. I was so much disturbed at sight of him, that my tongue, which never failed me before, could not furnish me with one syllable. In the mean time, what does he? He slipt a paper into my hand, which I kept without knowing what I did, and then disappeared in an instant."

So saying, she pulled my letter out of her bosom, and gave it, by way of joke, to her mistress, who,
taking it as for diversion, read it over, and then affected reserve. "Truly, Felicia (said she, with a serious air), you are a fool and a mad creature to receive this billet. What will Don Gaston think of it? and what must I believe? Your conduct gives me cause to distrust your fidelity; and may make him suspect that I am pleased with his passion. Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this instant, that I peruse with pleasure the characters which he has wrote. You see to what shame you have exposed my pride,"—"O! not at all, Madam (replied the maid), he can entertain no such thoughts; and suppose he did, he shall not preserve them long. I will tell him, when I next see him, that I have shewn his letter to you; that you looked at it with indifference: and, in short, without reading it, tore it with the most mortifying contempt."

"You may safely swear that I have not read it (said Donna Helena). I should be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single words of it." Don George's daughter was not contented with talking in this manner; she tore my billet, and forbid her woman to talk to me for the future.

As I promised to play the gallant no more at my windows, since the sight of me gave offence, I kept them shut several days, to render my obedience more affecting; but to supply those looks of which I was abridged, I prepared new serenades for my cruel Helen. One night I repaired under her balcony with musicians, and the guitars were already
struck up, when a cavalier came sword in hand, and disturbed the concert, laying about him at a furious rate among the performers, who immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage which animated that bold intruder awaked mine: I advanced to punish him, and an obstinate combat began. Donna Helena and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries: these, as well as several people in the neighbourhood, came running to part the combatants, but they arrived too late, and found nobody on the field of battle but a cavalier, almost without life, weltering in his own blood; and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Every body pitied my fate, and Donna Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning with her maid, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustin de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a
dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions, without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favoured my flame, had committed this action, to shew that he was not quite so passive as she believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon forgotten, by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life; but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustin as a man whom perhaps he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies to be a new comers in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love, and obtained of Signor Don George the permission of
speaking to his daughter, in presence of her maid. What a delightful conversation this was! I entreated, I pressed the lady in such a manner, to tell me if her father, in yielding her to my tenderness, had done any violence to her inclination, that she owned I was not beholden to her obedience alone. After this charming confession, my whole study was to please her, and contrive entertainments, until the day of our nuptials, which were to be celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighbourhood intended to appear.

I gave a grand entertainment to Don George and his daughter, with all his relations and friends, at a superb country-house which my aunt had without the town, on the side of Manroi. Here a concert of vocal and instrumental music was prepared by my order, together with a company of strollers to represent a comedy. In the middle of the feast, one came and whispered to me, that there was a man in the hall who wanted to speak with me. I got up from table to see who it was, and found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and who presented to me a letter, which I opened, and read these words:—

"If you have a regard for your honour, as every knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to be to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi, where you will find a cavalier ready to give
satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and to put you, if he can, out of condition to espouse Donna Helena.

"Don Augustin de Olighera."

If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don Augustin kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the feast, and said to the man who brought the letter, "Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning before sun-rise at the appointed place."

Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared during the rest of the day as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town, in the same manner as he had come out. As for my part, I staid in the country-house, on pretence of taking the air next morning: but the true reason was, that I might be the sooner
at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I waited with impatience for day, which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone, as if I intended to take a ride in the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered in the plain a man on horseback, coming towards me at full speed; upon which I put spurs to my horse, to save him one-half of the way. We soon met, and I found it was my rival. "Knight (said he in an insolent tone), it is with regret that I come to blows with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have renounced Don George's daughter with a good grace; or at least have concluded, that you would not be so easily quit if you persisted in your addresses to her."—"You are too proud (answered I) of an advantage which perhaps you owed more to the darkness of the night than to your superior skill. You don't consider that the success of these renencounters depends often on accident."—"It is never accidental with me (said he with an arrogant air), and I will now shew you, that by day as well as night I know how to punish those audacious knights who interfere with me."

I made no reply to this haughty speech, but alighted instantly. Don Augustin did the same; we tied our horses to a tree, and began to fight with equal vigour. I will frankly own, that I had to do with an enemy who pushed much better than I, although I had been two years at school. He
was a complete fencer: I could not possibly have exposed my life to greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens that the strongest is vanquished by the weakest, my rival, in spite of all his skill, received a thrust that went through his heart, and fell stone dead in an instant.

I returned immediately to the country-house, where I informed a valet de chambre, whom I could trust, of what had happened, and said to him, “Dear Ramira, before justice can take cognizance of this event, take a good horse, and give my aunt notice of the adventure. Ask of her some money and jewels, and bring them to me at Plazencia, where thou wilt find me in the first inn you come to as you enter the city.”

Ramira acquitted himself of his commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Plazencia three hours after me. He told me, that Donna Eleonora was more pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel that revenged the affront which I had received in the first; and that she had sent me all her ready money and jewels, to enable me to travel agreeably in foreign countries, until she should get the affair accommodated.

To pass over superfluous circumstances, I will only inform you, that I crossed New Castile to the kingdom of Valencia, in order to embark at Denia, from whence I took passage for Italy, where I put myself in a condition to visit different countries, and appear in a suitable character.
While, far from my Helen, I endeavoured as much as in me lay to beguile my love and sorrows, she mourned my absence in secret at Coria. Instead of approving of the prosecution that her family set on foot against me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that all enmity might cease, and my return be hastened by a speedy accommodation. Six months had already elapsed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have still triumphed over time, had she had nothing else but time to combat: but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western side of Gallicia, came to Coria to take possession of a rich estate which had been in vain disputed by his cousin Don Minguel de Caprara; and he settled in that country, finding it more agreeable than his own. Combados was well made, had an agreeable polite behaviour, and was one of the most insinuating men in this world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity: he longed to see such a formidable lady: for this purpose, he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law; gave him admittance to his house, and
the liberty of speaking in his presence to Donna Helena. The Gallician soon fell in love with her. That was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his proposal; but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia however was in the interest of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chambermaid by his remonstrances: but nevertheless, all their efforts, during a whole year, could only torment Donna Helena, without shaking her constancy in the least.

Combados seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves for him in vain, proposed an expedient to overcome the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as she was. "This (said he) is what I have contrived: we will suppose that a merchant of Coria has received a letter from an Italian factor, in which, after a detail of things concerning commerce, are the following words:—

"A Spanish cavalier, whose name is Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He calls himself nephew and sole heir
of a rich widow who lives at Coria, under the name of Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. He has demanded the daughter of a powerful nobleman in marriage, but will not succeed until the truth is known. I am desired to apply to you for this purpose: pray let me know then if you are acquainted with this Don Gaston, and in what the riches of his aunt consist; for your answer will decide the marriage.

"Parma, &c."

The old man looked upon this trick as a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in love; and the waiting woman, still less scrupulous than her master, approved of it very much. The invention seemed to them the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and, to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father, in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena, "Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustin into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your
fidelity to him: he is a fickle perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter, which a merchant of Coria has received from Italy." Helena, trembling, took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunder-struck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears; but soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father in a resolute tone, "Signor, you have been witness of my weakness, bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. It is done.... I now despise Don Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of mankind. But let us talk no more about him. Come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar; let my marriage precede that of the perfidious man who has so ill repaid my love." Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter, applauded her vigorous resolution, and, glad of the happy success of his stratagem, made haste to complete the wishes of my rival.

Donna Helena was thus ravished from me. She yielded herself suddenly to Combados; without listening to love, which at the bottom of her heart spoke in my behalf, or even doubting a moment of a piece of news which might have been suspected in a lover of less credulity. The haughty maid listeped to nothing but her pride, and the resentment of the injury which she thought her beauty had received prevailed over the interest of her
tenderness. A few days after her marriage, however, she felt some remorse for having been so precipitate. She reflected that the merchant's letter might have been feigned, and that suspicion gave her some uneasiness; but the amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her repose. His sole study was to amuse her; and in this he succeeded by a continual succession of various pleasures, which he had art enough to invent.

She seemed very well satisfied with such a gallant husband, and they lived together in perfect harmony, when my aunt accommodated my affair with the relations of Don Augustin; and wrote immediately to Italy, to advertise me of her success. Being then at Reggio, in the farthest part of Calabria, I went over into Sicily, from thence to Spain, and at length repaired to Coria on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora, who had not in her letter mentioned the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival; and observing that I was afflicted at the news, "You are in the wrong, nephew (said she), to be so much grieved at the loss of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice, and banish from your memory a person unworthy of possessing a place in it."

As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit which had been practised on Donna Helena, she was in the right to talk in this manner, and could not have
given me a more prudent advice; which therefore I promised to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I should find myself incapable of vanquishing my passion. I could not, however, resist my curiosity to know how this marriage had been made; and to be informed of all the particulars, I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend Dame Theodora, whom I have mentioned before. I went to her house, and there by accident found Felicia, who, expecting nothing less than to see me, was confounded, and endeavoured to go away, that she might avoid an explanation which she concluded I would demand. I stopst her, saying, "Why do you fly me? Is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman, of having refused me the hearing?"

"Signor (answered the waiting-woman), I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again, without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accomplice in seducing her."—"O heaven! (cried I), have you the presumption to tell me so? Explain yourself immediately." Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to give
me some consolation: she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigour of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

I pass over the infinite contradictions she underwent, before she could prevail upon Donna Helena to see me. This, however, she accomplished; and it was concerted between them, that I should be privately admitted into the house of Don Blas, the first time he should go to an estate, where he usually spent a day or two in hunting. The design was soon put in execution: the husband set out for the country; I was informed of the occasion, and one night introduced into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation with reproaches; but my mouth was stopped. "It is in vain to recall what is past (said the lady); the business here is not a fond reconciliation; and you are mistaken if you believe me disposed to flatter your inclination. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my own motive for giving my consent to this private interview, in consequence of the pressing instances which have been made, is to tell you from my own mouth, that henceforth you must study to forget me altogether. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate, had it been joined to your's; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, I cheerfully submit to its decrees."
"How, madam! (answered I), is it not enough that I have lost you, and see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I am capable of loving! must I also banish you from my thoughts! You would deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only blessing that now remains. Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possible for any man whom you have once charmed to retrieve his heart? Know yourself better, and cease exhorting me in vain to chase your idea from my remembrance."—"Well then (she replied with precipitation), do you also cease to hope that I will favour your love with any return. I have but one word to say: the wife of Don Blas shall never be the lover of Don Gaston. Take your measures accordingly; fly from this place; and let us put a speedy end to a conversation, with which I upbraid myself, in spite of the purity of my intentions; and which I shall think myself guilty in prolonging."

At these words, which deprived me of the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet: I addressed her in the most pathetic manner; I even employed tears to melt her: but all this served only to excite, perhaps, some sentiments of pity, which she was careful of concealing, and which were sacrificed to her duty. After having to no purpose exhausted all my moving expressions, by prayers and tears, my tenderness changed of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my sword, to stab myself before the
eyes of the inexorable Helena; who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me, to prevent the consequence. "Hold, Cogollos (said she), is it thus you consult my reputation? In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonour, and make my husband pass for an assassin."

I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavour was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid, to save me from my own fatal design; and without doubt I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who, having been apprised of our interview, instead of going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry, to overhear our conversation, had not come and joined us with all expedition. "Don Gaston (cried he, holding my arms), recal your scattered reason; and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you."

"Is it your business (said I, interrupting Don Blas), to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your own hand, to plunge a poniard in my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprise me at night, in your wife's apartment? Is there more required to rouse your revenge? Stab me at once, and rid yourself of a man who cannot cease adoring Donna Helena, until he ceases to live."—"In vain (answered Don Blas) you endeavours.
vour to interest my honour so far as to give you death: you are sufficiently punished by your rashness: and I am so well pleased with the virtuous sentiments of my wife, that I pardon the occasion which she took to shew them. 'Take my advice, Cogollos (added he); do not despair like a weak lover, but submit to necessity with courage.'”

The prudent Gallician, by such discourse, calmed my rage a little, and waked my virtue: I retired with a design of removing far from Helena, and the place that she inhabited; and in two days returned to Madrid, where resolving to employ myself wholly in making my fortune, I appeared at court, and there began to make friends; but was so unlucky as to attach myself in particular to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman, who, being suspected of a design to deliver Portugal from the dominion of Spain, was imprisoned in the castle of Alicant, where he now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew that an intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and me, he caused me to be arrested also, and conducted to this place: that minister believes that I am capable of being an accomplice in such a scheme; and he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said, “Signor cavalier, your honour can receive no stain from this disgrace, which will, doubtless, in the end, turn to your advantage.
When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment, in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.'

CHAP. VII.

Scipio finds Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and tells him a great deal of news.

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who, coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms: "Signor Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison gate, and asked if you were not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. 'Noble captain (said he, with tears in his eyes), don't reject the humble request I make, to know if Signor de Santillane is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a charitable action in allowing me to see him. You are looked upon in Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity; and I hope you will not refuse me the favour of conversing a moment with my dear master, who is not so guilty as unfortunate.' In short (continued Don. Andrea), the young man expressed such a
desire of seeing you, that I have promised to give him that satisfaction at night.'

I assured Tordesillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure than to admit a young man, who probably had something to communicate which it imported me very much to know. I waited with impatience for the moment that was to offer my faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not doubt that it was he; and I was not mistaken. He was introduced into the tower in the evening; and his joy, which mine alone could equal, broke forth in extraordinary transports when he saw me. For my part, I was so much overjoyed at sight of him, that I held out my arms, and he hugged me in his, without ceremony: the distinction between master and secretary was lost in this embrace; so glad were they to see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I interrogated Scipio about the condition in which he left my house. "You have no house (he replied); and to spare you the trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I will tell you, in two words, what passed at home. Your effects were pillaged, as well by the soldiers as by your own servants, who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid themselves their own wages with what they could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the address to save from their talons two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong box, and secured, by putting them into the custody of Salero, who
will re-deliver them as soon as you shall be released from this tower, where I believe you will not be long boarded at his majesty's expense; because you were apprehended without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma."

I asked how he came to know that his excellency had no hand in my misfortune. "O! as for that (said he), I took care to be well informed: a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke d'Uzeda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment. 'Calderona (said he) having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Signora Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night-time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Signor de Santillane, resolved to be revenged upon them as well as upon his mistress. With this view, he went privately to the Duke d'Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The Duke, ravished at having in his hand such an opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to use it: he informed the King of what he had heard, and represented to him with great zeal the perils to which the Prince had been exposed. This piece of news roused the indignation of his majesty, who immediately ordered Sirena to be shut up in the house of correction, banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.' This (added Scipio) is what my friend told me; by which you see that your mis-
fortune is the work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or rather of Calderona."

From this information, I imagined that my affairs might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew's exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court: and I flattered myself, that I should not be forgotten by his excellency. What a fine thing hope is! It consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of my effects, which had been stolen; and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode, where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means that fortune had used to raise me to some great post; for I reasoned with myself in this manner: The partisans for the prime-minister are Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and, in particular, Brother Lewis d'Aliaga, who owes to his interest the place he at present possesses at court. With the assistance of these powerful friends, his excellency will demolish all his foes; or perhaps the state will soon alter its appearance: his majesty is very sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more, the Prince his son will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me from this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favours. Thus, already elevated with future pleasures, I scarce felt my present misfortune: but I believe the two bags of doubloons,
which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed, as much as this hope, to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and integrity of Scipio, to be silent on that subject: I offered him the half of the money which he had preserved from the pillage; but this he refused: "I expect (said he) another mark of acknowledgment." As much surprised at his discourse as at his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. "Don't let us part, (answered he); allow me to attach my fortune to your's: I have a friendship for you which I never felt for any other master."

"And I can assure thee, child (said I), there is no love lost; the very first moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance or Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the society thou hast proposed; and will begin it, by entreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower."—"Nothing can give me more pleasure (cried he): you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favour of him: your company is dearer to me than liberty itself: I will only sometimes go to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favourable to you: so that in me you will enjoy at once a confidant, courier, and spy."
These advantages were too considerable to be rejected: I therefore kept along with me a person so useful, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

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CHAP. VIII.


If it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, it must likewise be owned, that when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremony; they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gaiety in Scipio's conversation; he might have been justly surnamed the good-humoured lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profited by his advice. "Friend (said I to him one day), methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the Duke of Lerma: this could produce no bad effect: what is thy opinion
of the matter?" "Yes; but (answered he), the
great are so different from themselves, at different
times, that I don't know how your letter will be
received: nevertheless, I am of opinion that you
should write. In the mean time, although the mi-
nister loves you, you must not trust to his friend-
ship for being remembered by him: these kind of
patrons easily forget those who are out of sight or
hearing."

Although this was but too true, I replied, "I
judge more favourably of my patron, to whose
kindness for me I am no stranger: I am persuaded
that he pities my affliction, which incessantly pre-
sents itself to his mind: he, probably, waits until
the King's wrath shall subside, before he takes me
out of prison."—"In good time! (he resumed) I
wish your opinion of his excellency may be right:
implore his assistance then by a very moving letter,
which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver
it into his own hand."

I immediately called for paper and ink, and
composed a morsel of eloquence, which Scipio
thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred
even to the homilies of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would
be moved with compassion, in reading the melan-
choly account which I gave him of the miserable
condition in which I was, and in that confi-
dence dispatched my courier: who no sooner
arrived at Madrid, than he went to the minister's
house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. "My lord, (said Scipio, presenting to his excellency the packet with which he was entrusted), one of your most faithful servants, stretched upon straw, in a dismal dungeon of the tower of Segovia, most humbly entreats your grace to read this letter, which a turnkey, out of pity, gave him liberty and means to write." The minister opened and perused the letter: but although he beheld in it a picture capable of melting the most obdurate soul, far from seeming affected at my distress, he raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several persons present, said to the courier with a furious air,—"Friend, tell Santillane, that he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me, after the unworthy action he has committed, and for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must not depend upon my protection; for I abandon him to the resentment of the King."

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding his confusion, endeavoured to intercede for me. "My lord (he resumed), the poor prisoner will die of grief when he hears the answer of your excellency." The Duke made no reply to my mediator, but by a stern look, and turned his back upon him. It was thus the minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had in the amorous intrigue of
the Prince of Spain: and this ought to be a warning to all little agents, whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was plunged into the dire abyss of despondency in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage sunk apace, and, notwithstanding all that they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me, by degrees, into a most violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who, by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers of the goddess Libitina*. "Signor Gil Blas (said he, presenting them to me), here are two Hippocrates' come to see you; they will set you afoot again in a little time." I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should have certainly given them a very bad reception, had I been in the least desirous of living; but at that time I felt myself so much tired of life, that I was glad Tordesillas had put me into their hands.

* The goddess who presides over funerals.
"Signor cavalier (said one of these doctors to me), in the first place, you must repose an entire confidence in our skill."—"I have a most perfect dependence on it (answered I): with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers."—"Yes (he replied), with God's help, you shall: at least, we will do our endeavour for that purpose." These gentlemen actually behaved to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to the other world. Don Andrea, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar, to prepare me for my end. The good father, having done his duty, had already retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bed side. "My dear friend (said I to him, with a faint voice, so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken, and the bleedings I had undergone), I leave to thee one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it, if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude: the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my hard-heartedness has, perhaps, occasioned their death. If heaven hath preserved them, in spite of the indifference with which I requited their affection, give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them, from me, to pardon my unnatural be-
haviour. If they are no more, I charge thee to employ the money in causing prayers to be put up for the repose of their souls and mine." So saying, I stretched out my hand, which he bathed with his tears, without being able to answer one word; so much was the poor young man afflicted at the prospect of losing me. This proves that the tears of an heir are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit; but I was baulked. My doctors, having abandoned me, left the field free to nature. I was saved by their desertion. The fever, which, according to their prognostic, was to carry me off, quitted me immediately, as if it intended to give them the lie. I recovered gradually; and, by the greatest good luck in the world, a perfect tranquillity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I then had no need of consolation: I entertained for riches and honour all the contempt which the opinion of approaching death had made me conceive: and now restored, as it were, to myself, blessed my misfortune. I thanked heaven for it, as for a particular favour, and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recal me. I proposed rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design, and told me, that, in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at
Madrid. "There is a thing come into my head (added he); I know a person who can serve you. She is the favourite waiting-woman of the Prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt everything to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison, notwithstanding the good treatment you receive in it."—"Thou art in the right (answered I): go, my friend, and begin this negociation without loss of time. Would to heaven we were already in our retreat!"

CHAP. IX.

Scipio returns to Madrid, and procures the enlargement of Gil Blas, on certain conditions. What course they steer together when they leave the tower of Segovia, and the conversation that passes between them.

Scipio set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a literati. I loved, in particular, good works of morality, because I found in them, every moment,
passages that flattered my aversion for the court, and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me with a gay air, "This time, Signor de Santillane, I bring good news. Madam the nurse interest herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my entreaty, in consideration of a hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask it of the King his father. I am come hither in a hurry to apprise you of it, and shall return immediately to put the finishing stroke to the work." So saying, he left me, and went back to court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me, that the Prince had, not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying, "My dear Gil Blas, thank Heaven, you are free! the gates of this prison are open to you; but upon two conditions, which, perhaps, will give you a great deal of pain, and which I am obliged to inform you of, though not without regret. His majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to quit the kingdom of Castile in a month. I am very much mortified that you are
prohibited from going to court.”—“And I am overjoyed at it (I replied): God knows what my opinion of it is. I expected but one favour from the king, and I have received two.”

Being assured that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollo, and returned a thousand thanks to Tordesillas for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Signor Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way, “If we are not rich enough to buy a magnificent estate, we can, at least, purchase a commodious one.”—“So we had a little hut (answered I), I should be satisfied with my condition: for, though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend, for the future, to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Me-thinks I already behold the enameled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in hunting, and sometimes in fishing. Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is the best. A morsel of bread may satisfy
us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centres wholly in ourselves; and this is so true, that the most delicious of my meals are not those in which the greatest delicacy and abundance reign. Frugality is a source of delight, and wonderfully conducive to health."

"By your leave, Signor Gil Blas (said my secretary, interrupting me), I am not altogether of your opinion, with regard to the pretended frugality you praise so much. Why should we live like Diogenes? If we indulge our appetites a little, we shall not find ourselves a bit the worse for it. Take my advice, and since we have, thank God, wherewithal to render our retreat agreeable, let us not make it the habitation of hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall have got possession of our land, we must fortify our house with good wines and all other provisions suitable to people of taste, who did not quit the commerce of mankind with a view of renouncing the conveniences of life; but rather to enjoy them with more tranquillity. "That which a man has in his house (says Hesiod) never hurts him: whereas that which he has not, may. It is better (adds the same author) for a man to have all things necessary in his possession, than in his wish only."

"How the devil! Mr. Scipio (cried I), came
you to know the Greek poets? Ha! where did you pick up acquaintance with Hesiod?"—"In the house of a learned man (he replied): I served a pedant of Salamanca some time. He was a great commentator, and would toss you up a large volume in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from books in his library, and translated into the Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuensis, I retained in my memory a great number of sentences, as remarkable as that which I repeated."—"If that be the case (said I), your memory is well garnished. But, to return to your scheme, in what kingdom of Spain do you think we shall establish our philosophical residence?"—"I vote for Arragon (replied my confidant); we shall there find charming spots, where we may lead a delicious life."—"Well (said I), be it so. Let us fix in Arragon. I consent to the proposal; and I wish we may, there find a place of abode, that will afford all those pleasures with which I feast my imagination."
CHAP. X.

Their behaviour at Madrid. Gil Blas meets a certain person in the street. The consequence of that meeting.

When we arrived at Madrid, we alighted at a small house, where Scipio had lodged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did, was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. "I protest to you (said he), I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain: and therefore gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant."—"You were in the right (answered I): for besides that this match is more solid, a citizen who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with monsieur his son-in-law."

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the purpose, "Signor Gabriel (added I), be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles, which—" "Your money is ready for you, (said the goldsmith, interrupting me; and conduct-
ing us into his closet, shewed us the two bags with notes upon them, containing these words: 'These bags of doubloons belong to Signor Gil Blas de Santillane.' There they are, (said he), just as they were committed to my care."

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me: and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home, where we began to examine our double pistoles. The tale was just, after having deducted about fifty which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided ourselves with clothes and linen. While I going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron Steinbach, that officer of the German guards in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted that cavalier, who, knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. "I am extremely glad (said I to him) to see your lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva."—"I can give you a certain account of them both (answered he), for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago they came to town to thank his majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received, in consideration of the ser-
vices which his ancestors had done the state. He is made governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired any body to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous: and this shews that our monarch delights in recompensing valour."

Though I knew much better than the Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know any thing of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that, in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with me immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or no he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the baroness; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head within his arms, saying, with marks of real joy, "Santillane, have I found you again! I am overjoyed at meeting with you! It was not my fault that ever we parted: for I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. You had no regard to my request; but I am far from being angry with you on that account. I am even beholden to you for the motive of your retreat. But, since that time, you ought to have let me heard from you, and spared me the trouble of sending in vain to find you at Grenada, where
Don Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote me you was.'

After this gentle reproach, he continued,—
"Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here! Be assured, that I share as much as ever in what concerns you." "Signor (answered I), something less than four months ago I filled a pretty considerable post at court; having had the honour to be secretary and confidential to the Duke of Lerma."

"Is it possible (cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment)! what! was you in the confidence of the prime minister?" "I gained his favour (said I), and lost it in the manner you shall hear." I then recounted the whole story, and ended my narration with the resolution I had taken to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Cesar, having listened very attentively, replied, "My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of Fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate, which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm, which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place, and it is a present which we are in a condition of making, without incommending ourselves in the least. I
dare answer for my father's consent, and know that it will give great pleasure to Seraphina."

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and, more charmed with the goodness of his heart than with the value of his favour, "Signor (said I), your behaviour enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you: and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgment." My governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pretended service was. I told him; and the information redoubled his surprise. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by my interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity, "Gil Blas (said he), since I owe my post to you, I don't intend to confine my gratitude to the little farm of Lirias; I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly."

"Halt there, Signor Alphonso (said I, interrupting him), don't awake my avarice. I have too well experienced, that riches served only to corrupt my morals. I accept, with all my heart, your farm of Lirias, where I will live comfortably with the money which I have already in my possession. But that is sufficient; and far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the
superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden to one in retirement, who seeks only to enjoy quiet."

While we conversed in this manner, Don Cæsar coming in, expressed as much joy at seeing me as his son had done before; and when he understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary's house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer their's, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to the house of Baron de Steinbach; and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. "How much (said he), may this small dominion be worth?"—"Five hundred ducats per annum (I replied); and I can assure thee it is a lovely solitude, which I know perfectly well, having been there several times, in quality of steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalaviar, in a hamlet of five or six houses, and in the midst of a charming country."
"What pleases me still more in it (cried Scipio), is, that we shall have fine venison, with wine of Benicarlo, and excellent Muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage."—"I long as much as thou dost to be there (I replied), but I must first make a tour to the Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum, on purpose to receive them, and would punish me, if I failed in my duty." Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. Let us lose no time (said he); I have already secured a chaise; let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo."—"Yes, my friend (I replied), let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my being. Our journey will not be long. We shall soon see ourselves settled in our hamlet; where, when I arrive, I will write over the door of my house these two Latin verses in letters of gold:

Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valet:
Sat me lusistis, ludite nunc alios.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK.