

CHAPTER XIV

Adventures in the person of a monk.

“Fortune now placed me in the character of a younger brother of a good house, and I was in my youth sent to school; but learning was now at so low an ebb, that my master himself could hardly construe a sentence of Latin; and as for Greek, he could not read it. With very little knowledge therefore, and with altogether as little virtue, I was set apart for the church, and at the proper age commenced monk. I lived many years retired in a cell, a life very agreeable to the gloominess of my temper, which was much inclined to despise the world; that is, in other words, to envy all men of superior fortune and qualifications, and in general to hate and detest the human species. Notwithstanding which, I could, on proper occasions, submit to flatter the vilest fellow in nature, which I did one Stephen, an eunuch, a favourite of the emperor Justinian II, one of the wickedest wretches whom perhaps the world ever saw. I not only wrote a panegyric on this man, but I commended him as a pattern to all others in my sermons; by which means I so greatly ingratiated myself with him, that he introduced me to the emperor’s presence, where I prevailed so far by the same methods, that I was shortly taken from my cell, and preferred to a place at court. I was no sooner established in the favour of Justinian than I prompted him to all kind of cruelty. As I was of a sour morose temper, and hated nothing more than the symptoms of happiness appearing in any countenance, I represented all kind of diversion and amusement as the most horrid sins. I inveighed against cheerfulness as levity, and encouraged nothing but gravity, or, to confess the truth to you, hypocrisy. The unhappy emperor followed my advice, and incensed the people by such repeated barbarities, that he was at last deposed by them and banished.

“I now retired again to my cell (for historians mistake in saying I was put to death), where I remained safe from the danger of the irritated mob, whom I cursed in my own heart as much as they could curse me.

“Justinian, after three years of his banishment, returned to Constantinople in disguise, and paid me a visit. I at first affected not to know him, and without the least compunction of gratitude for his former favours, intended not to receive him, till a thought immediately suggested itself to me how I might convert him to my advantage, I pretended to recollect him; and, blaming the shortness of my memory and badness of my eyes, I sprung forward and embraced him with great affection.

“My design was to betray him to Apsimar, who, I doubted not, would generously reward such a service. I therefore very earnestly requested him to spend the whole evening with me; to which he consented. I formed an excuse for leaving him a few minutes, and ran away to the palace to acquaint Apsimar with the guest whom I had then in my cell. He presently ordered a guard to go with me and seize him; but, whether the length of my stay gave him any suspicion, or whether he changed his purpose after my departure, I know not;

for at my return we found he had given us the slip; nor could we with the most diligent search discover him.

“Apsimar, being disappointed of his prey, now raged at me; at first denouncing the most dreadful vengeance if I did not produce the deposed monarch. However, by soothing his passion when at the highest, and afterwards by canting and flattery, I made a shift to escape his fury.

“When Justinian was restored I very confidently went to wish him joy of his restoration: but it seems he had unfortunately heard of my treachery, so that he at first received me coldly, and afterwards upbraided me openly with what I had done. I persevered stoutly in denying it, as I knew no evidence could be produced against me; till, finding him irreconcilable, I betook myself to reviling him in my sermons, and on every other occasion, as an enemy to the church and good men, and as an infidel, a heretic, an atheist, a heathen, and an Arian. This I did immediately on his return, and before he gave those flagrant proofs of his inhumanity which afterwards sufficiently verified all I had said.

“Luckily I died on the same day when a great number of those forces which Justinian had sent against the Thracian Bosphorus, and who had executed such unheard-of cruelties there, perished. As every one of these was cast into the bottomless pit, Minos was so tired with condemnation, that he proclaimed that all present who had not been concerned in that bloody expedition might, if they pleased, return to the other world. I took him at his word, and, presently turning about, began my journey.”

CHAPTER XV

Julian passes into the character of a fiddler.

“Rome was now the seat of my nativity. My mother was an African, a woman of no great beauty, but a favourite, I suppose from her piety, of pope Gregory II. Who was my father I know not, but I believe no very considerable man; for after the death of that pope, who was, out of his religion, a very good friend of my mother, we fell into great distress, and were at length reduced to walk the streets of Rome; nor had either of us any other support but a fiddle, on which I played with pretty tolerable skill; for, as my genius turned naturally to music, so I had been in my youth very early instructed at the expense of the good pope. This afforded us but a very poor livelihood: for, though I had often a numerous crowd of hearers, few ever thought themselves obliged to contribute the smallest pittance to the poor starving wretch who had given them pleasure. Nay, some of the graver sort, after an hour’s attention to my music, have gone away shaking their heads, and crying it was a shame such vagabonds were suffered to stay in the city.

“To say the truth, I am confident the fiddle would not have kept us alive had we entirely depended on the generosity of my hearers. My mother therefore was forced to use her own industry; and while I was soothing the ears of the crowd, she applied to their pockets, and that generally with such good success that we now began to enjoy a very comfortable subsistence; and indeed, had we had the least prudence or forecast, might have soon acquired enough to enable us to quit this dangerous and dishonourable way of life: but I know not what is the reason that money got with labour and safety is constantly preserved, while the produce of danger and ease is commonly spent as easily, and often as wickedly, as acquired. Thus we proportioned our expenses rather by what we had than what we wanted or even desired; and on obtaining a considerable booty we have even forced nature into the most profligate extravagance, and have been wicked without inclination.

“We carried on this method of thievery for a long time without detection: but, as Fortune generally leaves persons of extraordinary ingenuity in the lurch at last, so did she us; for my poor mother was taken in the fact, and, together with myself, as her accomplice, hurried before a magistrate.

“Luckily for us, the person who was to be our judge was the greatest lover of music in the whole city, and had often sent for me to play to him, for which, as he had given me very small rewards, perhaps his gratitude now moved him: but, whatever was his motive, he browbeat the informers against us, and treated their evidence with so little favour, that their mouths were soon stopped, and we dismissed with honour; acquitted, I should rather have it said, for we were not suffered to depart till I had given the judge several tunes on the fiddle.

“We escaped the better on this occasion because the person robbed happened to be a poet; which gave the judge, who was a facetious person, many opportunities of jesting. He said poets and musicians should agree together,

seeing they had married sisters; which he afterwards explained to be the sister arts. And when the piece of gold was produced he burst into a loud laugh, and said it must be the golden age, when poets had gold in their pockets, and in that age there could be no robbers. He made many more jests of the same kind, but a small taste will suffice.

“It is a common saying that men should take warning by any signal delivery; but I cannot approve the justice of it; for to me it seems that the acquittal of a guilty person should rather inspire him with confidence, and it had this effect on us: for we now laughed at the law, and despised its punishments, which we found were to be escaped even against positive evidence. We imagined the late example was rather a warning to the accuser than the criminal, and accordingly proceeded in the most impudent and flagitious manner.

“Among other robberies, one night, being admitted by the servants into the house of an opulent priest, my mother took an opportunity, whilst the servants were dancing to my tunes, to convey away a silver vessel; this she did without the least sacrilegious intention; but it seems the cup, which was a pretty large one, was dedicated to holy uses, and only borrowed by the priest on an entertainment which he made for some of his brethren. We were immediately pursued upon this robbery (the cup being taken in our possession), and carried before the same magistrate, who had before behaved to us with so much gentleness: but his countenance was now changed, for the moment the priest appeared against us, his severity was as remarkable as his candour had been before, and we were both ordered to be stripped and whipped through the streets.

“This sentence was executed with great severity, the priest himself attending and encouraging the executioner, which he said he did for the good of our souls; but, though our backs were both flayed, neither my mother’s torments nor my own afflicted me so much as the indignity offered to my poor fiddle, which was carried in triumph before me, and treated with a contempt by the multitude, intimating a great scorn for the science I had the honour to profess; which, as it is one of the noblest inventions of men, and as I had been always in the highest degree proud of my excellence in it, I suffered so much from the ill treatment my fiddle received, that I would have given all my remainder of skin to have preserved it from this affront.

“My mother survived the whipping a very short time; and I was now reduced to great distress and misery, till a young Roman of considerable rank took a fancy to me, received me into his family, and conversed with me in the utmost familiarity. He had a violent attachment to music, and would learn to play on the fiddle; but, through want of genius for the science, he never made any considerable progress. However, I flattered his performance, and he grew extravagantly fond of me for so doing. Had I continued this behaviour I might possibly have reaped the greatest advantages from his kindness; but I had raised his own opinion of his musical abilities so high, that he now began to prefer his skill to mine, a presumption I could not bear. One day as we were playing in concert he was horribly out; nor was it possible, as he destroyed the

harmony, to avoid telling him of it. Instead of receiving my correction, he answered it was my blunder and not his, and that I had mistaken the key. Such an affront from my own scholar was beyond human patience; I flew into a violent passion, I flung down my instrument in a rage, and swore I was not to be taught music at my age. He answered, with as much warmth, nor was he to be instructed by a strolling fiddler. The dispute ended in a challenge to play a prize before judges. This wager was determined in my favour; but the purchase was a dear one, for I lost my friend by it, who now, twitting me with all his kindness, with my former ignominious punishment, and the destitute condition from which I had been by his bounty relieved, discarded me for ever.

“While I lived with this gentleman I became known, among others, to Sabina, a lady of distinction, and who valued herself much on her taste for music. She no sooner heard of my being discarded than she took me into her house, where I was extremely well clothed and fed. Notwithstanding which, my situation was far from agreeable; for I was obliged to submit to her constant reprehensions before company, which gave me the greater uneasiness because they were always wrong; nor am I certain that she did not by these provocations contribute to my death: for, as experience had taught me to give up my resentment to my bread, so my passions, for want of outward vent, preyed inwardly on my vitals, and perhaps occasioned the distemper of which I sickened.

“The lady, who, amidst all the faults she found, was very fond of me, nay, probably was the fonder of me the more faults she found, immediately called in the aid of three celebrated physicians. The doctors (being well feed) made me seven visits in three days, and two of them were at the door to visit me the eighth time, when, being acquainted that I was just dead, they shook their heads and departed.

“When I came to Minos he asked me with a smile whether I had brought my fiddle with me; and, receiving an answer in the negative, he bid me get about my business, saying it was well for me that the devil was no lover of music.”

CHAPTER XVI

The history of the wise man.

“I now returned to Rome, but in a very different character. Fortune had now allotted me a serious part to act. I had even in my infancy a grave disposition, nor was I ever seen to smile, which infused an opinion into all about me that I was a child of great solidity; some foreseeing that I should be a judge, and others a bishop. At two years old my father presented me with a rattle, which I broke to pieces with great indignation. This the good parent, being extremely wise, regarded as an eminent symptom of my wisdom, and cried out in a kind of ecstasy, ‘Well said, boy! I warrant thou makest a great man.’

“At school I could never be persuaded to play with my mates; not that I spent my hours in learning, to which I was not in the least addicted, nor indeed had I any talents for it. However, the solemnity of my carriage won so much on my master, who was a most sagacious person, that I was his chief favourite, and my example on all occasions was recommended to the other boys, which filled them with envy, and me with pleasure; but, though they envied me, they all paid me that involuntary respect which it is the curse attending this passion to bear towards its object.

“I had now obtained universally the character of a very wise young man, which I did not altogether purchase without pains; for the restraint I laid on myself in abstaining from the several diversions adapted to my years cost me many a yearning; but the pride which I inwardly enjoyed in the fancied dignity of my character made me some amends.

“Thus I passed on, without anything very memorable happening to me, till I arrived at the age of twenty-three, when unfortunately I fell acquainted with a young Neapolitan lady whose name was Ariadne. Her beauty was so exquisite that her first sight made a violent impression on me; this was again improved by her behaviour, which was most genteel, easy, and affable: lastly, her conversation completed the conquest. In this she discovered a strong and lively understanding, with the sweetest and most benign temper. This lovely creature was about eighteen when I first unhappily beheld her at Rome, on a visit to a relation with whom I had great intimacy. As our interviews at first were extremely frequent, my passions were captivated before I apprehended the least danger; and the sooner probably, as the young lady herself, to whom I consulted every method of recommendation, was not displeased with my being her admirer.

“Ariadne, having spent three months at Rome, now returned to Naples, bearing my heart with her: on the other hand, I had all the assurances consistent with the constraint under which the most perfect modesty lays a young woman, that her own heart was not entirely unaffected. I soon found her absence gave me an uneasiness not easy to be borne or to remove. I now first applied to diversions (of the graver sort, particularly to music), but in vain; they rather raised my desires and heightened my anguish. My passion at length grew

so violent, that I began to think of satisfying it. As the first step to this, I cautiously inquired into the circumstances of Ariadne's parents, with which I was hitherto unacquainted: though, indeed, I did not apprehend they were extremely great, notwithstanding the handsome appearance of their daughter at Rome. Upon examination, her fortune exceeded my expectation, but was not sufficient to justify my marriage with her, in the opinion of the wise and prudent. I had now a violent struggle between wisdom and happiness, in which, after several grievous pangs, wisdom got the better. I could by no means prevail with myself to sacrifice that character of profound wisdom, which I had with such uniform conduct obtained, and with such caution hitherto preserved. I therefore resolved to conquer my affection, whatever it cost me; and indeed it did not cost me a little.

“While I was engaged in this conflict (for it lasted a long time) Ariadne returned to Rome: her presence was a terrible enemy to my wisdom, which even in her absence had with great difficulty stood its ground. It seems (as she hath since told me in Elysium with much merriment) I had made the same impressions on her which she had made on me. Indeed, I believe my wisdom would have been totally subdued by this surprise, had it not cunningly suggested to me a method of satisfying my passion without doing any injury to my reputation. This was by engaging her privately as a mistress, which was at that time reputable enough at Rome, provided the affair was managed with an air of slyness and gravity, though the secret was known to the whole city.

“I immediately set about this project, and employed every art and engine to effect it. I had particularly bribed her priest, and an old female acquaintance and distant relation of hers, into my interest: but all was in vain; her virtue opposed the passion in her breast as strongly as wisdom had opposed it in mine. She received my proposals with the utmost disdain, and presently refused to see or hear from me anymore.

“She returned again to Naples, and left me in a worse condition than before. My days I now passed with the most irksome uneasiness, and my nights were restless and sleepless. The story of our amour was now pretty public, and the ladies talked of our match as certain; but my acquaintance denied their assent, saying, ‘No, no, he is too wise to marry so imprudently.’ This their opinion gave me, I own, very great pleasure; but, to say the truth, scarce compensated the pangs I suffered to preserve it.

“One day, while I was balancing with myself, and had almost resolved to enjoy my happiness at the price of my character, a friend brought me word that Ariadne was married. This news struck me to the soul; and though I had resolution enough to maintain my gravity before him (for which I suffered not a little the more), the moment I was alone I threw myself into the most violent fit of despair, and would willingly have parted with wisdom, fortune, and everything else, to have retrieved her; but that was impossible, and I had now nothing but time to hope a cure from. This was very tedious in performing it, and the longer as Ariadne had married a Roman cavalier, was now become my

near neighbour, and I had the mortification of seeing her make the best of wives, and of having the happiness which I had lost, every day before my eyes.

“If I suffered so much on account of my wisdom in having refused Ariadne, I was not much more obliged to it for procuring me a rich widow, who was recommended to me by an old friend as a very prudent match; and, indeed, so it was, her fortune being superior to mine in the same proportion as that of Ariadne had been inferior. I therefore embraced this proposal, and my character of wisdom soon pleaded so effectually for me with the widow, who was herself a woman of great gravity and discretion, that I soon succeeded; and as soon as decency would permit (of which this lady was the strictest observer) we were married, being the second day of the second week of the second year after her husband’s death; for she said she thought some period of time above the year had a great air of decorum.

“But, prudent as this lady was, she made me miserable. Her person was far from being lovely, but her temper was intolerable.

“During fifteen years’ habitation, I never passed a single day without heartily cursing her, and the hour in which we came together. The only comfort I received, in the midst of the highest torments, was from continually hearing the prudence of my match commended by all my acquaintance.

“Thus you see, in the affairs of love, I bought the reputation of wisdom pretty dear. In other matters I had it somewhat cheaper; not that hypocrisy, which was the price I gave for it, gives one no pain. I have refused myself a thousand little amusements with a feigned contempt, while I have really had an inclination to them. I have often almost choked myself to restrain from laughing at a jest, and (which was perhaps to myself the least hurtful of all my hypocrisy) have heartily enjoyed a book in my closet which I have spoken with detestation of in public. To sum up my history in short, as I had few adventures worth remembering, my whole life was one constant lie; and happy would it have been for me if I could as thoroughly have imposed on myself as I did on others: for reflection, at every turn, would often remind me I was not so wise as people thought me; and this considerably embittered the pleasure I received from the public commendation of my wisdom. This self-admonition, like a *memento mori* or *mortalis es*, must be, in my opinion, a very dangerous enemy to flattery: indeed, a weight sufficient to counterbalance all the false praise of the world. But whether it be that the generality of wise men do not reflect at all, or whether they have, from a constant imposition on others, contracted such a habit of deceit as to deceive themselves, I will not determine: it is, I believe, most certain that very few wise men know themselves what fools they are, more than the world doth. Good gods! could one but see what passes in the closet of wisdom! how ridiculous a sight must it be to behold the wise man, who despises gratifying his palate, devouring custard; the sober wise man with his dram bottle; or, the anti-carnalist (if I may be allowed the expression) chuckling over a b—dy book or picture, and perhaps caressing his housemaid!

“But to conclude a character in which I apprehend I made as absurd a figure as in any in which I trod the stage of earth, my wisdom at last but an end to itself, that is, occasioned my dissolution.

“A relation of mine in the eastern part of the empire disinherited his son, and left me his heir. This happened in the depth of winter, when I was in my grand climacteric, and had just recovered of a dangerous disease. As I had all the reason imaginable to apprehend the family of the deceased would conspire against me, and embezzle as much as they could, I advised with a grave and wise friend what was proper to be done; whether I should go myself, or employ a notary on this occasion, and defer my journey to the spring. To say the truth, I was most inclined to the latter; the rather as my circumstances were extremely flourishing, as I was advanced in years, and had not one person in the world to whom I should with pleasure bequeath any fortune at my death.

“My friend told me he thought my question admitted of no manner of doubt or debate; that common prudence absolutely required my immediate departure; adding, that if the same good luck had happened to him he would have been already on his journey; ‘for,’ continued he, ‘a man who knows the world so well as you, would be inexcusable to give persons such an opportunity of cheating you, who, you must be assured, will be too well inclined; and as for employing a notary, remember that excellent maxim, *Ne facias per alium, quod fieri potest per te*. I own the badness of the season and your very late recovery are unlucky circumstances; but a wise man must get over difficulties when necessity obliges him to encounter them.’

“I was immediately determined by this opinion. The duty of a wise man made an irresistible impression, and I took the necessity for granted without examination. I accordingly set forward the next morning; very tempestuous weather soon overtook me; I had not travelled three days before I relapsed into my fever, and died.

“I was now as cruelly disappointed by Minos as I had formerly been happily so. I advanced with the utmost confidence to the gate, and really imagined I should have been admitted by the wisdom of my countenance, even without any questions asked: but this was not my case; and, to my great surprise, Minos, with a menacing voice, called out to me, ‘You Mr. there, with the grave countenance, whither so fast, pray? Will you please, before you move any farther forwards, to give me a short account of your transactions below?’ I then began, and recounted to him my whole history, still expecting at the end of every period that the gate would be ordered to fly open; but I was obliged to go quite through with it, and then Minos after some little consideration spoke to me as follows:—

“You, Mr. Wiseman, stand forth if you please. Believe me, sir, a trip back again to earth will be one of the wisest steps you ever took, and really more to the honour of your wisdom than any you have hitherto taken. On the other side, nothing could be simpler than to endeavour at Elysium; for who but a fool would carry a commodity, which is of such infinite value in one place, into another

where it is of none? But, without attempting to offend your gravity with a jest, you must return to the place from whence you came, for Elysium was never designed for those who are too wise to be happy.’

“This sentence confounded me greatly, especially as it seemed to threaten me with carrying my wisdom back again to earth. I told the judge, though he would not admit me at the gate, I hoped I had committed no crime while alive which merited my being wise any longer. He answered me, I must take my chance as to that matter, and immediately we turned our backs to each other.”

CHAPTER XVII

Julian enters into the person of a king.

“I was now born at Oviedo in Spain. My father’s name was Veremond, and I was adopted by my uncle king Alfonso the Chaste.

“I don’t recollect in all the pilgrimages I have made on earth that I ever passed a more miserable infancy than now; being under the utmost confinement and restraint, and surrounded with physicians who were ever dosing me, and tutors who were continually plaguing me with their instructions; even those hours of leisure which my inclination would have spent in play were allotted to tedious pomp and ceremony, which, at an age wherein I had no ambition to enjoy the servility of courtiers, enslaved me more than it could the meanest of them. However, as I advanced towards manhood, my condition made me some amends; for the most beautiful women of their own accord threw out lures for me, and I had the happiness, which no man in an inferior degree can arrive at, of enjoying the most delicious creatures, without the previous and tiresome ceremonies of courtship, unless with the most simple, young and unexperienced. As for the court ladies, they regarded me rather as men do the most lovely of the other sex; and, though they outwardly retained some appearance of modesty, they in reality rather considered themselves as receiving than conferring favours.

“Another happiness I enjoyed was in conferring favours of another sort; for, as I was extremely good natured and generous, so I had daily opportunities of satisfying those passions. Besides my own princely allowance, which was very bountiful, and with which I did many liberal and good actions, I recommended numberless persons of merit in distress to the king’s notice, most of whom were provided for. Indeed, had I sufficiently known my blessed situation at this time, I should have grieved at nothing more than the death of Alfonso, by which the burden of government devolved upon me; but, so blindly fond is ambition, and such charms doth it fancy in the power and pomp and splendour of a crown, that, though I vehemently loved that king, and had the greatest obligations to him, the thoughts of succeeding him obliterated my regret at his loss, and the wish for my approaching coronation dried my eyes at his funeral.

“But my fondness for the name of king did not make me forgetful of those over whom I was to reign. I considered them in the light in which a tender father regards his children, as persons whose wellbeing God had intrusted to my care; and again, in that in which a prudent lord respects his tenants, as those on whose wealth and grandeur he is to build his own. Both these considerations inspired me with the greatest care for their welfare, and their good was my first and ultimate concern.

“The usurper Mauregatas had impiously obliged himself and his successors to pay to the Moors every year an infamous tribute of a hundred young virgins: from this cruel and scandalous imposition I resolved to relieve my country. Accordingly, when their emperor Abderame the Second had the audaciousness

to make this demand of me, instead of complying with it I ordered his ambassadors to be driven away with all imaginable ignominy, and would have condemned them to death, could I have done it without a manifest violation of the law of nations.

“I now raised an immense army; at the levying of which I made a speech from my throne, acquainting my subjects with the necessity and the reasons of the war in which I was going to engage: which I convinced them I had undertaken for their ease and safety, and not for satisfying any wanton ambition, or revenging any private pique of my own. They all declared unanimously that they would venture their lives and everything dear to them in my defence, and in the support of the honour of my crown. Accordingly, my levies were instantly complete, sufficient numbers being only left to till the land; churchmen, even bishops themselves, enlisting themselves under my banners.

“The armies met at Alvelda, where we were discomfited with immense loss, and nothing but the lucky intervention of the night could have saved our whole army.

“I retreated to the summit of a hill, where I abandoned myself to the highest agonies of grief, not so much for the danger in which I then saw my crown, as for the loss of those miserable wretches who had exposed their lives at my command. I could not then avoid this reflection — that, if the deaths of these people in a war undertaken absolutely for their protection could give me such concern, what horror must I have felt if, like princes greedy of dominion, I had sacrificed such numbers to my own pride, vanity, and ridiculous lust of power.

“After having vented my sorrows for some time in this manner, I began to consider by what means I might possibly endeavour to retrieve this misfortune; when, reflecting on the great number of priests I had in my army, and on the prodigious force of superstition, a thought luckily suggested itself to me, to counterfeit that St. James had appeared to me in a vision, and had promised me the victory. While I was ruminating on this the bishop of Najara came opportunely to me. As I did not intend to communicate the secret to him, I took another method, and, instead of answering anything the bishop said to me, I pretended to talk to St. James, as if he had been really present; till at length, after having spoke those things which I thought sufficient, and thanked the saint aloud for his promise of the victory, I turned about to the bishop, and, embracing him with a pleased countenance, protested I did not know he was present; and then, informing him of this supposed vision, I asked him if he had not himself seen the saint? He answered me he had; and afterwards proceeded to assure me that this appearance of St. James was entirely owing to his prayers; for that he was his tutelar saint. He added he had a vision of him a few hours before, when he promised him a victory over the infidels, and acquainted him at the same time of the vacancy of the see of Toledo. Now, this news being really true, though it had happened so lately that I had not heard of it (nor, indeed, was it well possible I should, considering the great distance of the way), when I was afterwards acquainted with it, a little staggered me, though far from

being superstitious; till being informed that the bishop had lost three horses on a late expedition, I was satisfied.

“The next morning, the bishop, at my desire, mounted the rostrum, and trumpeted forth this vision so effectually, which he said he had that evening twice seen with his own eyes, that a spirit began to be infused through the whole army which rendered them superior to almost any force: the bishop insisted that the least doubt of success was giving the lie to the saint, and a damnable sin, and he took upon him in his name to promise them victory.

“The army being drawn out, I soon experienced the effect of enthusiasm, for, having contrived another stratagem⁹ to strengthen what the bishop had said, the soldiers fought more like furies than men. My stratagem was this: I had about me a dexterous fellow, who had been formerly a pimp in my amours. Him I dressed up in a strange antic dress, with a pair of white colours in his right hand, a red cross in his left, and having disguised him so that no one could know him, I placed him on a white horse, and ordered him to ride to the head of the army, and cry out, ‘Follow St. James!’ These words were reiterated by all the troops, who attacked the enemy with such intrepidity, that, notwithstanding our inferiority of numbers, we soon obtained a complete victory.

“The bishop was come up by the time that the enemy was routed, and, acquainting us that he had met St. James by the way, and that he had informed him of what had passed, he added that he had express orders from the saint to receive a considerable sum for his use, and that a certain tax on corn and wine should be settled on his church for ever; and lastly, that a horseman’s pay should be allowed for the future to the saint himself, of which he and his successors were appointed receivers. The army received these demands with such acclamations that I was obliged to comply with them, as I could by no means discover the imposition, nor do I believe I should have gained any credit if I had.

“I had now done with the saint, but the bishop had not; for about a week afterwards lights were seen in a wood near where the battle was fought; and in a short time afterwards they discovered his tomb at the same place. Upon this the bishop made me a visit, and forced me to go thither, to build a church to him, and largely endow it. In a word, the good man so plagued me with miracle after miracle, that I was forced to make interest with the pope to convey him to Toledo, to get rid of him.

“But to proceed to other matters — there was an inferior officer, who had behaved very bravely in the battle against the Moors, and had received several wounds, who solicited me for preferment; which I was about to confer on him, when one of my ministers came to me in a fright, and told me that he had promised the post I designed for this man to the son of count Alderedo; and that the count, who was a powerful person, would be greatly disobliged at the

⁹ This silly story is told as a solemn truth (i.e., that St. James really appeared in the manner this fellow is described) by Mariana, 1.7, Section 78.

refusal, as he had sent for his son from school to take possession of it. I was obliged to agree with my minister's reasons, and at the same time recommended the wounded soldier to be preferred by him, which he faithfully promised he would; but I met the poor wretch since in Elysium, who informed me he was afterwards starved to death.

“None who hath not been himself a prince, nor any prince till his death, can conceive the impositions daily put on them by their favourites and ministers; so that princes are often blamed for the faults of others. The count of Saldagne had been long confined in prison, when his son, D. Bernard del Carpio, who had performed the greatest actions against the Moors, entreated me, as a reward for his service, to grant him his father's liberty. The old man's punishment had been so tedious, and the services of the young one so singularly eminent, that I was very inclinable to grant the request; but my ministers strongly opposed it; they told me my glory demanded revenge for the dishonour offered to my family; that so positive a demand carried with it rather the air of menace than entreaty; that the vain detail of his services, and the recompense due to them, was an injurious reproach; that to grant what had been so haughtily demanded would argue in the monarch both weakness and timidity; in a word, that to remit the punishment inflicted by my predecessors would be to condemn their judgment. Lastly, one told me in a whisper, ‘His whole family are enemies to your house.’ By these means the ministers prevailed. The young lord took the refusal so ill, that he retired from court, and abandoned himself to despair, whilst the old one languished in prison. By which means, as I have since discovered, I lost the use of two of my best subjects.

“To confess the truth, I had, by means of my ministers, conceived a very unjust opinion of my whole people, whom I fancied to be daily conspiring against me, and to entertain the most disloyal thoughts, when, in reality (as I have known since my death), they held me in universal respect and esteem. This is a trick, I believe, too often played with sovereigns, who, by such means, are prevented from that open intercourse with their subjects which, as it would greatly endear the person of the prince to the people, so might it often prove dangerous to a minister who was consulting his own interest only at the expense of both. I believe I have now recounted to you the most material passages of my life; for I assure you there are some incidents in the lives of kings not extremely worth relating. Everything which passes in their minds and families is not attended with the splendour which surrounds their throne — indeed, there are some hours wherein the naked king and the naked cobbler can scarce be distinguished from each other.

“Had it not been, however, for my ingratitude to Bernard del Carpio, I believe this would have been my last pilgrimage on earth; for, as to the story of St. James, I thought Minos would have burst his sides at it; but he was so displeased with me on the other account, that, with a frown, he cried out, ‘Get thee back again, King.’ Nor would he suffer me to say another word.”