

“The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes
His Fortunes and Adversities”

Tetsuo Hanamura

“La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades” appeared anonymously. The story was first published in 1554 in Burgos, Alcalá and Antwerp and was immediately successful, but was probably written earlier. Five years later it was banned by the Inquisition, but it nevertheless continued to be reprinted, with some expurgations in Spain, and in its entirety in other countries. As successive editions appeared, the little book worked itself permanently into the literature not only of Spain but of the rest of the world.

As to the authorship nothing positive is known. We can only infer that the author was a man of scant culture and considerable common sense, a sincere reformer, keenly alive to abuses within church and state. He seems to have lived in Toledo and to have sympathized with a group of Erastians who strove to reform the church within. He probably concealed his identity in order to avoid any punishment that might be meted out by the Inquisition.

The picaresque novel is a contribution of Spain. It is true that there had appeared works somewhat similar in nature in other countries satirizing the social classes. The animal epic, represented by the *Roman de Renard* was highly realistic in its presentation of human foibles. *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment* furnished many examples of sudden shifts of fortune and suggested various picaresque elements. So are some of the works of Henry Fielding, T. George Smollett and Le

Sage. But it was reserved for Spain to produce the first great rogue novel. It had been foreshadowed in *the libro de buen amor* of Juan Ruiz and reached its full bloom in *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

The Lazarillo marked the first official appearance of the picaresque novel and hero. Then what is the picaresque novel? It is a novel whose characters are drawn from that particular class of people, of low birth or fallen in station, who have at another's expense, deliberately placed themselves beyond the pale of social convention and law, and keep themselves alive by sheer trickery, by the fertility of an unscrupulous imagination. Such adventurers are in Spain, *Picaro*. In other words, this style of narration is an satirical survey of society presented in an autobiographic form. According to the Webster's New World Dictionary, a picaresque novel deals with deep-witted vagabonds and their roguish adventures, and designates a style of fiction originating in Spain and having a roguish hero.

The word "picaresque" was scarcely known before the second half of the sixteenth century. The *Lazarillo* itself does not contain it. In spite of that, the novel preserves for us the most complete account of the picaresque world.

This genre of literature can exist only in a society that is in an unsatisfactory moral and economic state. As a result of the incessant warfare, Spain of the sixteenth century was poor, in spite of the riches that came from beyond the seas. In addition to this poverty, the maladministration brought out a profound disturbance in social conditions. This state of affairs increased the number of loafers and criminals.

The immediate cause for the composition of this important rogue romance remains obscure, but we can easily imagine that the *Lazarillo* clearly sprang from this morally and economically sick society, many of

the evils of which it reflects with striking vividness.

The story is divided into seven *tratados* or chapters. The Lazarillo relates his birth, his childhood and his stay with the different masters' whom he served ; the blind man, the clergyman of Maqueda, the poor hidalgo, the Mercenarian friar, the seller of bulls, the chaplain and the bailiff. The third chapter is the gem of the whole novel, because the character "escudero" or squire peculiar to the sixteenth-century Spain is vividly depicted. The four final chapters are suspiciously short and reveal the hand of the pruner.

This work is ironic and sarcastic in tone, rather than didactic or moralizing. What made this work win such popularity? This is because the tale was unfolded in the first person singular, then a novel device; it depicted the weakness of human nature which few dared utter and satirizes each of the social classes with whom Lazarro came into contact; the characters are so vividly depicted as to make us almost see and hear them.

His personages live and convey an impression or reality unequalled in any Spanish novels other than *Celestina* or *Don Quixote*.

Some maintain that *Lazarillo* has the alert simplicity of style, but I think it is clumsy and obscure, and there are several passages on which scholars have never been in agreement as to the exact meaning. I have tried to interpret as best I could on these ambiguous points. Moreover, this work is one of the Spanish Classics, the sentences compared with Modern Spanish, are in most cases lengthy due to the frequent use of the conjunction. However, I have translated verbatim in order to be faithful to the original at the sacrifice of the brevity which is characteristic of the English Language.

In case the pun perishes in translation, it is because I have

rendered it into English freely. I hope my present translation retains at least some of the flavour of the original.

PROLOGUE

I consider it fitting that anything remarkable - perhaps never before heard of nor seen - should come to the knowledge of many and not be buried in the sepulcher of oblivion, for it is possible that somebody who reads it may find something to please him and those who do not scrutinize keenly may be delighted.

And in this connection, Pliny says that there is no book, however bad it may be, but has something of profit. Especially, all men's tastes are not the same; what one does not want to eat, others may have irresistible passion for. And so we see that many things scorned by some are not so regarded by others. My opinion is simply that nothing should be destroyed or discarded, but that it ought to be imparted to everybody, especially since something fruitful may be obtained from it and that without any injury.

If it were not so, very few would try to please only one person, since one does not write without effort; and they want, when they have been through it, to be rewarded not with money but by having their works seen and read, and if there be any cause, to be praised. Tulio's comment in this respect is "Honour breeds the arts".

Who thinks that the soldier who is first to go up a ladder has an abhorrence of living? Of course not; rather it is the desire for praise that impels him to run the risk. And so it goes in the arts and in literature. A theological student who is about to receive his degree preaches very well, and let us assume that he is a sincere man who craves for the benefit of souls; but just ask him whether he feels

unpleasant to hear his listeners exclaim, "Oh, how marvelously your Reverence has done it!" Mr. So-and-so jousted very wretchedly in a tournament on horseback and gave his coat of arms to the wag because the latter has praised him for having handled lances very well. What would the knight have done if the wag had told him the truth?

Everything goes in this manner, since I confess that I am no more saintly than my fellow writers; therefore I should feel no unpleasantness if all those who find something pleasurable in this trifle of a book, written in such a crude style, would read it with enjoyment and learn that there lives a man of such fortunes, dangers and adversities.

I beg you to accept this poor piece of work from the hand of one who would have produced a nicer work if his ability and desire had been on a higher level. And since you have requested me to write you and relate about my case in detail, it seemed best to me not to begin at the middle, but at the beginning so that you may have the intimate knowledge of my character. Also, let those who have inherited handsome property, but are unable to enjoy their riches brood about the way Fortune has mistreated them and consider how much more those have done who, although Fortune was not in their favor, reached a safe port by dint of rowing hard and skilfully.

CHAPTER ONE

Lazaro Tells the Story of His Life and Birth

Well then, I want you to know first of all that they call me Lazaro de Tormes, the son of Tome Gonzales and of Antona Perez, who were natives of Tejares, a village near Salamanca. My birth took place in the river Tormes, from which I took my surname. This is how it occurred. My father - may God forgive his sins - made it his job

to look after the milling in a water mill which stands on the bank of that river, where he worked for more than fifteen years as miller. One night when my mother was in the water mill, beingn pregant with me, she felt labour-pains, and gave birth to me. So I can say with confidence that I was born in the river.

Well, when I was a boy of eight years, they accused my father of pilfering the bags of those who brought them there to have their grain ground. On this charge he was arrested; he confessed and did not deny the blame, suffering persecution for righteousness' sake. I pray to God that he is in Glory, since the gospel tells us, "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake". On that occasion a certain expedition against the Moors was made, and since at that time my fathev was banished because of the misfortune already mentioned he took part in it as muleteer for a gentleman who had joined the expedition, and as a faithful servant, he ended his life beside his master.

My widowed mother, being without husband and protection, decided to associate herself with good people as she was one of them herself. So she came to the city to live, rented a small house and began to do the cooking for certain students and washing the clothes of certain grooms of the knight commander of La Magdalena. Accordingly she often visited the stables.

She and a tawny man, one of those that took care of the beasts, became acquainted. This fellow would often come to our house and go back in the morning. Sometimes he would come to the door under the pretext of buying eggs and would enter the house. When he first came, I disliked him and was frightened by his color and bad taste. But when I saw that with his arrival the fare improved, I began to like

him well, for he always brought bread, pieces of meat and in winter firewood with which we warmed ourselves.

Therefore as the intimacy with each other continued, my mother finally gave me a cute and dark little negro whom I used to dandle and help to warm. And I remember that when my stepfather was playing with the baby, seeing that my mother and I were white and his father was not, he ran away from him to my mother. Pointing with the finger at him, he said, "Mama, bugaboo!" He answered laughing, "Son-of-harlot"

Though I was quite a boy, my little brother's utterance of that word deeply moved me and I said to myself, "How many people there must be who run away from others because they can't see themselves!"

Unfortunately the misconduct with Zaide, for that he was called, reached the ears of the steward who, when an investigation had been made, found that about half of the barley given him for the horse was stolen by him; and he pretended that bran, firewood, currycombs, aprons, blankets and horse-covers were lost. And when no other thing could be found to steal, he unshod the horses. With all these he hastened to my mother to bring up my little brother.

It is hardly to be wondered that a priest will steal from the poor, or a friar will steal from other houses for his female devotees in order to help his companion, considering the fact that even a poor slave is driven to this extreme.

All I have said was proved and even more, because they questioned me with threats and like a child I answered; I disclosed everything I knew from fear - even about certain horseshoes which I had sold to a blacksmith at my mother's bidding.

They whipped and scalded my poor stepfather with boiling fat.

As for mother, they imposed penalty for justice's sake, in addition to the usual hundred lashes, that he could not be allowed to enter the house of the above-mentioned knight commander, nor was she to receive pitiful Zaide at her house. Not to have a run of ill luck, the sad woman braced herself and accepted the verdict. To avoid danger and gossip, she went to work for those who were living at that time at an inn called Solana. There undergoing all sorts of troubles, she managed to bring up my little brother to the point where he knew how to walk and me to a young lad who would go after wine and candles for the guests who were staying at the inn or whatever else they might order.

At this time a blindman came to stop at the inn. As he thought me suitable for his guide, he asked my mother for me and she left me in his hands, saying that I was the son of a good man who, in order to propagate the Faith, had died in the battle of Gelves, and that she trusted to God that I should not become worse than my father. So she implored the blind man to treat me well and look after me, for I was an orphan. He replied that he would do so and would take me not for his servant but his son. Thus I began to serve and guide my newly acquired old master.

When we had been in Salamanca for several days, my master, having found that he could not get gains enough to satisfy him, determined to go away. On the day of my departure, I went to see my mother, and both of us weeping, she gave me the blessing and said, "My son, I know that I shall see you no more. Try to be good and may God guide you. I have brought you up until today and provided you with a good master. Good-bye."

Thus I went to my master who was waiting for me.

We left Salamanca and came to the bridge, at the entrance of which

there was an stone carved animal having almost the appearance of a bull. The blindman ordered me to go near the animal and when I did, he said to me, "Lazaro, put your ear to the bull and you will hear a great noise inside it: I naively went up to it, believing that it must be so. When he got scent that I had my head close to the stone, clenching the fist tightly he gave my head such a harsh blow against the devilish bull that the pain of the blow lasted me for more than three days. He said to me, "You dunce, remember this; A blindman's boy must be a little bit wiser than the devil, and he laughed at the jest.

It seemed to me at that moment I awoke from the simplicity in which I had been sleeping as a child. I said to myself, "This fellow is right, because he awakened me, opened my eyes and enlightened me to be on the alert and to consider how I shall be able to take care of myself since I am alone. We began to go on our way and in a few days he taught me thieves' cant. Finding that I was bright, he was much delighted and said to me, "I can give you neither gold nor silver, but I will teach you a lot of hints for living.

And it proved exactly so, for next to God he gave me life; and although he is blind he opened my mind's eye and guided me how to get on in the world.

I am glad to tell you about these trivial affairs in order to show how much virtue is in men knowing how to rise when they are down, and how vicious it is to allow themselves to sink when they are exalted.

Well, to return to my good blind man, I should like you to know that, by giving an account of his affairs, he has never made a more astute or more sagacious man since God created the world. He was an eagle at his pursuit. He learnt by heart a hundred prayers and more.

He had a low tone of voice, calm and very resonant that made the church where he was praying resound ; when he was praying he assumed a dignified attitude and wore a humble and devout look without making gestures or grimaces with his eyes and mouth as others usually do.

Besides this, he had a thousand other means and ways of taking money out of people. He said he knew many effective prayers for women who had no experience of pregnancy ; for those who were in travail ; for unhappy married women to make their husbands love them more. He would devine for the the pregnant women whether she was carrying a son or a daughter. As to medicine, he said that even Galen did not know the half of what he knew about molars, faintings and female ills. In brief, nobody told him that he was suffering from any illness without being told "Do this, or do that, get this or that herb, take such and such a root".

For this reason everybody followed him, especially women, and believed all he told them. From them he sweated a great deal of money with the devices which I have mentioned and made a larger profit in a month than a hundred blindmen would in a year.

I wish also you to know that, with all that he obtained and set aside, I have never seen so avaricious and niggardly a fellow before - so much so that he almost starved me to death, yet not share me what I wanted. This is downright true, and if I had not known how to make up for it with my subtlety and dexterous feats, I should have died of hunger many times. But in spite of all his wits and shrewdness I outwitted him in such a way that always or most of the time, the biggest and best part of the food might come to my hands. For this I played wicked jokes on him, not in all cases without harm to

myself. Some of them I shall tell you.

He always carried bread and all other things in a linen bag the mouth of which was fastened with a large iron ring secured by padlock and key. And in taking these things in and out, he was so careful and counted so well that nobody in the world could have been able to steal even a crumb. I used to eat but the mere pittance he gave me, which I finished in less than two mouthfuls.

Ascertaining that he had locked the padlock and was careless, thinking that I was attending to other things, through a little seam on one side of the bag, which I ripped open and sewed again, I would pilfer the covetable bag, taking out bread, not measured quantities, but large pieces, batches of bacon and sausage. In this way I waited for a good opportunity to make good not the point in the game of *pelota* but the devilish want which the wicked blindman caused me to suffer.

All that I could filch and rob was kept in half *blancas*^{*(1)}

When he was requested to pray he was given a *blanca* as a reward. As he was deprived of eyesight, it was no sooner proffered than I threw it into my mouth and a half *blanca* ready instead. So that however quickly he held out his hand, his remuneration was already reduced by my money changing to half its value. The bad blindman complained because he knew later by the touch that it was not a whole *blanca* and he would say, "What the deuce is this? Since you have been with me, they have given me only half-*blancas*, while before they paid me in full *blanca* and often a *maravedi*^{*(2)}. This ill luck is attributable to you."

So he would skip over the prayer and did not perform half of

(1) A Spanish coin of the period, of very small value.

(2) an old Spanish coin

it, because he had ordered me that when the person went away who had asked him to pray, to pull the tail of his hooded cloak. And so I would do. Soon he would begin shouting, saying, "Who would like to have me say such and such a prayer?-as they are wont to say.

He used to put a small jug of wine near him when he ate. I would quickly grasp it, kiss a couple of times and return it to its place silently. But this state did not last long, since before long he became aware of the shortage made by my sips, and after that in order to keep his wine safe never let the jug go of him; on the contrary he grasped it tightly on the handle. But no magnet has ever attracted so strongly as a long rye straw which I had made for that purpose. I put it into the mouth of the jug and suck up the wine to a fare-well. The traitor, however, was so astute that he must have found my trick. From then on, he changed his tactics: Setting the jug between his legs, he covered it with the hand and in this way drank in safety. As I was wholly given up to the taste of wine, I was dying for it. Seeing that the evil design with the straw would no longer be of avail, I finally thought of making a little drain in the bottom of the jug, to be covered skillfully with a very small cake of wax. At mealtime, pretending to be cold, I crept between the legs of this poor blindman to warm myself at the faint fire that we had. The heat of the fire soon melted the wax, because it was a little piece, and the little drain began to drip into my mouth, which I held in such a posture that not a blessed drop was lost. When the poor blind began to drink, there was nothing left in it.

He was quite astonished: cursed, uttered damned words to the jug and the wine; he did not know what to do.

"Don't you say, uncle, that I am the one who has been drinking",.

I said, "because you did not let go your hand.

After passing his fingers over it again and again, he found the hole and saw the point - Nevertheless, he pretended as if he had never noticed it. Then the very next day I sat down to sup off my jug as usual, unaware of the danger that awaited me, not realizing that the old blindman knew. While I was having those sweet sippings with my head back and with my eyes a little closed for lasting a delicious liquor, the desperate blindman thought it high time for him to revenge. With all his might, lifting that sweet yet bitter jug with both of his hands, he let it fall down upon my mouth. Consequently poor Lazaro, I was least expected of his and, as on other occasions, was carelessly given to the good taste of the liquor. Truly it seemed to me the heaven with all in it had fallen down on me. The gentle little blow was such that it dazed and knocked me senseless and the blow with a jug was so large that the pieces of the jug got into my face, cutting me in many places and breaking my teeth. I am toothless until today for that.

From that time I hated that bad blindman and although he liked me, treated me kindly and cured me, clearly did I see that he had been delighted with the cruel punishment. He washed with wine the wound which he had inflicted on me with the pieces of the jug and said smiling, "What is your opinion, Lazaro? The very thing that made you sick heals you and restores your health." - and others witty remarks which were not to my taste.

After I was half recovered from my black flogging and wales, I knew that a few more such blows would put an end to me; so I decided to run away from him, but not so soon, for I wanted to do so without more harm to myself and to my advantage. Although I wanted to soften my feelings and pardon his blow with a jug, that was

impossible considering the ill treatment he has done me since that time. He maltreated me without any cause or reason, giving bumps on my head and pulling my hair. If someone asked him why he treated me so badly, he would then tell about the incident of the jug and say, "I wonder if you think this boy of mine an innocent one? Then listen to me and see if you think this sort of evil scheme could be designed even by the devil.

Those who heard the story would cross themselves and say; "Look! who would think out such a small boy as this so ruined?" And they would laugh at the artifice and press him, "Punish him, for you will get your reward from Heaven".

Truly he did nothing but on their advice. In regard for his cruel act, I would take him intentionally on the worst roads in order to distress him; if there were stones, over them; if there was mud, through the deepest part, although I did not go through the driest part myself. It pleased me to smash one eye of my own in order that I might further injure his two blind ones. Thereupon he would touch with the end of his cane on the back of my head, which came to be always full of bumps and nearly hair was nearly pulled out by his hands. And although I swore that I acted, not out of spite but only because I could not find a better road, my oaths did me no good and he did not trust me, such was the intuition and sharp understanding of the rascal.

In order that you may understand how sagacious this this astute blindman was, I shall relate you one example out of many that happened to him and me, which I think will reveal his cunning. When we left Salamanca, his intention was to go to Toledo, because he said that people were richer, although not very charitable. He relied upon this proverb: "The hard of heart give more than the naked." We

went on our way to Toledo for our job via the best places. We stopped where we were welcomed and could get a good income; where we could not, we moved away on the third day.

It happened that we came to a place called Almorox when they were gathering grapes and the vintager gave the blindman a bunch of grapes as alms. As the grapes in the basket were usually roughly handled and all the more because they were very ripe at the time, the bunch fell apart in his hand, and spoiled whatever they came in contact with. He resolved, therefore, to have a feast not only because he could not carry it, but also because he wished to please me, for that day he had assailed me with kicks and blows. We sat on a wall, and he said, "Now, I want to show a little liberality toward you. We are both going to eat this bunch of grapes, and I want you to have as large a share as I have. We shall divide it in this way: You will pick one time, and I shall pick another, provided you promise me not to take more than one grape at a time. I shall do the same until we finish them and in this way there will be no deceit."

Thus the agreement was made, and we began. But on his second turn, this villain changed his plan and began to pick two by two, thinking that I must be doing the same. When I saw that he broke the agreement, I was not content to eat at an even pace with him, but I hurried to get ahead of him, eating two, three by three as fast as I could. When we had finished, he remained a little while with the stem in his hand; and moving his hand, he said to me, "Lazaro, you have deceived me. I swear on the Testament that you ate the grapes three by three."

"I didn't," said I. "But why do you suspect that?"

Answered the very shrewed blindman. "Do you know how I know

that you had eaten them three by three? While I ate them two by two, you did not complain."

I laughed to myself and although I was a child, I was surprised to notice what a shrewed observation the blindman had.

In order not to become diffuse, I refrained from relating you many episodes both funny and worthy of note that happened while I acted in concert with this first master of mine. But I want to tell you how I bade farewell to him and with that make an end of his story.

We were at a tavern in the village of the Duke of Escalona. The blindman had given me a piece of sausage to roast for him; as soon as the sausage was basted and done, he sopped the drippings with a chunk of bread and ate them. presently he took a *maravedi* from his purse and told me to go for wine. The rascal devised an situation, they say, which would tempt me to thief and put it just before my eyes. This situation appeared near the fire in the form of a small turnip. It was so long and withered that it must have been thrown away because it was unsuitable for stew.

At that moment only he and I were in the room. My appetite had sharpened when I tasted the flavor of the savory sausage; which taste I knew would be all that I would be permitted to enjoy. So eager was I to satisfy my appetite, I lay aside all fear which might possibly seize me later on. While the blindman was taking money out of the purse, I snatched the sausage and very quickly put the above-mentioned turnip on the spit. My master gave me money for wine, and took the turnip and began to turn round and round over the fire, trying to roast the one which had escaped being stewed because it was worthless.

I lost no time in eating it off on my way for wine. When I

returned, I found that the blind rascal had put the turnip between two slices of bread, which he had not yet noticed because he had not felt it by his hands. When he took the slices of bread and munched them, thinking that a part of the sausage must be inserted, he found that he had received a cold deal in the form of the cold turnip. He got angry and said, "What is this, Lazaro?" "Wretched me!" - I said, "I wonder if you wish to blame me for something. Haven't I just come back from an errand for wine? Somebody was there and probably have done this as a joke."

"No, no," he said, "because the spit has not been out of my hand, it's impossible."

I repeated swearing and swearing falsely that I was not guilty of the exchange, but my false swearing had no effect, for we could hide nothing from the cursed astute blindman. He got up, seized me by the head, and came to smell me. He felt it necessary to sniff my breath in the manner of a hound in order to verify the truth. Keeping a lot of anguish in his heart, he took my jaws in his hand and opened my mouth far wider than it ought to go. Then he inconsiderably thrust his nose. He had a long and pointed nose and his anger in that instant had made it a palm longer. He poked the end of it all the way down my gullet.

All that was done in a moment, I was very much frightened, the cursed sausage had not yet had time to settle in my stomach; more important still, I was alarmed at the intrusion of the huge nose which almost choked me. All these things combined and caused the exposure of my exploit and gluttony and the return to the owner of what was his. So before the blindman could pull out his trumpet of a nose. I felt sick at the stomach and threw up all the stolen goods in his face;

consequently his nose and that ill-digested black sausage left my mouth at the same time.

Oh holy God! Would that I had been buried at that time! In fact I ought to have been dead. The wrath of the wicked blindman was such that if a crowd had not hastened to the spot, he would not have allowed me to live. They pulled me out of his clutch, leaving his hands full of what little hair I had then. I had my face scratched and my neck and throat lacerated. I well deserved to be treated like this because of my bad conducts, but I had suffered so many persecutions.

The wicked blindman related all my misfortunes to all the people who had crowded there, telling them once and again about the accounts of the jug, the grapes, as well as about that of the present happening. Their laughter was so loud that the people passing by in the street entered to join the feast. However, the blindman related my pranks with so much grace and witticism that, it seemed to me that I was not doing justice not to join in their laughter.

When this was over, it came to my mind that I had been guilty of cowardice and weakness. I was chagrined that I had left him with a nose when I had such a rare opportunity to bite his nose off. Indeed half of the job was already done. If only I had pressed my teeth together it would have remained in my mouth. And because it belonged to that fiend, my stomach might have been more welcome to his nose than to that sausage. Once the nose had departed, it would have been possible to deny the claim. Then since he would never be able to produce the lost nose for evidence, I could have denied the claim. Would to Heaven that I had done so, for that would have been a pretty good idea.

The hostess and those who had been there made peace between us.

and they washed my throat and face with the wine which I had brought for him to drink. The wicked blindman cracked jokes at this scene, saying, "In truth, I use more wine in one year to wash this urchin than I can drink in two. At least, Lazaro, you are more indebted to wine than to your father: he gave you life only once, and wine had given you your life a thousand times." And he would tell how often he had bruised and scratched my face and had cured me with wine.

"I tell you," he said, "if any man in the world is probably blessed with wine, it must be you."

At his words many who were washing me with wine roared with laughter although I cursed angrily. But the prediction of that blindman's did not prove to be untrue. Since then I have often called to mind that fellow who must have been gifted with prediction and I have regretted the displeasures that I caused him, even though I paid dearly for them. As you will understand later, his remark that day predicted so accurately the future course of my life.

In view of this and the bad jests the blindman played on me, I made up my mind to take leave of him once and for all. It had been on my mind and had been my desire to do so for a long time, and with this last prank of his, I confirmed my decision.

So the next day we went out through the village to ask alms. It had rained hard the previous night and that day was also rainy, so went along praying under some doorways where we could avoid getting wet. But as night came on and the rain continued, the blindman said to me, "Lazaro, this rain is very relentless; the more the night advances the heavier it rains. Let's seek shelter in the inn.

In order to go there, we had to cross a channel which was

overflowing with water. I said to him, "Uncle, the channel is very wide but I know a place where, if you wish, we can cross it more quickly without getting wet; it becomes much narrower over there, and we can jump across dryshod.

This seemed to him a good advice, and he told me, "You are very prudent, and I like you for that. Take me to the place where the channel becomes narrow. It is winter now and water is harmful, not to speak of wetting our feet."

Perceiving that my scheme worked well as I had hoped, I took him out under the portico and left him in front of a stone pillar, one of those that supported the projecting arch of those houses at the square. Then I told him, "Uncle, this is the narrowest crossing in the channel". It was raining hard, the unfortunate fellow was wet and we were frantic for shelter from the rain which was falling on us, but chiefly God had blinded his reason at that instant in order that I might take revenge on him who believed me.

"Place me in the right position," he ordered me; "now jump over the ditch."

I placed him right in front of the pillar, jumped across, and put myself behind the column, like a matador waiting for the attack of the bull.

"Go on!" I cried out to him. "Jump as as far as you can to reach this side of the water!"

Hardly had I said this when the poor blindman, going back a little for a running start, threw himself forward like an old goat and struck his head against the pillar, making a sound as though a huge gourd had been struck violently against a stone. The blindman bounced back half dead with his skull split.

Well, well! How is it you smelled sausage, but not the pillar? How do you like its fragrance?

Leaving him in the care of a crowd who had come to help him, I reached the gate of the town with one trot, and then before nightfall I found myself in Torrijos. I never learned what became of him and did not care to know.

CHAPTEH TWO

How Lazaro entered the service of a clergyman and things that happened to him there.

The next day, since I did not feel safer there, I went to a place called Maqueda, where my sins made me encounter a clergyman. When I approached him to ask for alms, he asked me if I knew how to help at the Mass. I told him I did, which was the truth; for though that sinner of a blindman had treated me badly, a thousand things had he told me, and one of them was this. Finally, the clergyman took me into his service.

I had fled from the thunder only to be struck by lightening, because, as I had told you before, compared with this fellow, the blindman, even though he was the incarnation of avarice, was a real Alexander the Great. All the stinginess in the world was embodied in the clergyman. I do not know whether this trait was of his own invention or assumed when he put on his clerical robes.

He had an old chest locked with a key which he kept fastened on the leather string of a cassock. When the holy bread came from the church, he would thrust it afterward in this chest and lock it again. Nothing eatable was to be had in the whole house, contrary to the way there usually is in others. - some bacon hanging in the chimmney, a

wedge of cheese put in back of the board or in the cupboard, or a small basket with a few pieces of bread left over from the table. Though I knew that I could taste nothing of these, I felt that just feasting my eyes at them would have been a consolation to me.

There was only a string of onion kept in the room on the top floor of the house. One of these I was given for my ration of one every four days. When I ask him for the key to go for the onion, if someone else was present, he would put his hand into his pocket, and with great deliberateness unfasten the key, give it to me and say, "Take this and return it to me soon, and don't only gorge dainties, as if I could have all the goodies in Valencia by the help of this key, when in fact there was not another cursed thing in the said room, as I have told you, except the onions hanging from a nail. He kept so accurate an account of them that if because of my wicket sins I had indulged in more than my allotment, I would have paid dearly for the misconduct.

At last I was dying of hunger. For though he bestowed little charity on me, he himself ate a sumptuous meal'. Five *blanca's* worth of meat was his usual portion for dinner and supper. It is true that he shared the broth with me. As for the meat, I could only look at it and I was given only a little bread. Would to Heaven that he had given me half enough of that.

On Sundays they eat the heads of sheep and he would send me out for one costing three *maravedis*, which he would cook and eat the eyes, the tongue, the brains, the neck, the brain, and the meat attached to the jaws; then he would give me all the well-sucked licked bones, putting them on my plate and saying, "Take them, eat, cheer up; for you the world exists. You lead a better life than the Pope"

"May God grant you such a life", I would murmur to myself.

At the end of three weeks I spent with him, I was so debilitated out of sheer hunger that I could not stand on my feet. I clearly saw that I might have been in the grave if God and my wits should not have saved me. I had no chance to use my skill, because I had no opportunity to steal from him. And even if I had, I could not have made him blind as was my old master (may God forgive his sins, if that blow on his head finished him). Although the blindman was shrewed, I had been able to deprive him only because he had lost the most precious sense. But nobody else ever had such sharp sight as he.

When we were taking offertory not a single *blanca* fell in the shell without being noticed by him. He cast one eye on the people and the other on my hands. His eyes danced in his skull as if they were made of quicksilver. He always counted all the *blancas* that had been offered. And when the offering was over he would quickly take the bowl from me and put it on the altar. I could not steal even a *blanca* during my life with him, and instead rather lead the life of starvation. I never brought a *blanca's* worth of wine from the tavern for him, but what little offering he got he would put in his chest and measured out to himself so stingily that it might last him all week. In order to conceal his niggardliness he would say to me, "You see, boy, priests must be very temperate in their eating and drinking, and for this reason I don't indulge myself as others do" But the wretch told a monstrous lie, because at the meetings of the brotherhood and the funeral services where we officiated, he ate like a wolf at the expense of others and drank more than *salamandor**

I spoke about funerals, and I prayed to God that he would

* *salamandor* = a quack doctor who pretended to cure by spitting.

forgive me, as I was never an enemy of human beings except during that period. And this was because I could eat a lot to my heart's content at funeral services. I wished and even prayed to God that He could call unto Himself one of His own. When we administered the sacrament to an invalid, especially the extreme unction, and when the priest had ordered those who were present to pray, I was never behind others in prayer and prayed to God with all my best heart and sincerity that not other than His will be done, as we usually say when we offer prayers, but I also prayed that He would take away the invalid from this world.

And when one of these escaped death, God forgive me, I swore at him a thousand times, while those departed were given words of my blessings. While I was there, which must have been almost about six months, only twenty persons died and I firmly believe that I killed them all, or rather that they died at my request. For when God saw my furious and continuous hunger which almost drove me to the grave, I think that He was pleased to do away with them in place of my life. But I could find no remedy for the suffering I had at that time, for on the days when we buried somebody I would live, but when there was no funeral and I resumed my daily famine, I suffered all the more after getting accustomed to eating to my heart's content. Consequently I could find no rest except that of death, for which I sometimes craved both for myself and those others. I could not, however, encounter death, although I was always in the grip of Death.

Many times I thought of running away from that miserly master, but I gave up for two reasons. Firstly I did not trust my legs, for I was afraid of the feebleness which had resulted from the sheer hunger. Secondly, I thought over the situation and said, "I have had two masters; the first made me stand on the verge of starvation and when

I left him, I came across this other one who has put me in the grave with hunger. But if I take leave of this fellow and come upon a worse one, what will happen but that I shall die? So I didn't dare stir. I was convinced that all the degrees I might come into contact with in future would be descending ones. To descend one more step would put an end to Lazaro, and no more would be heard of him in this world.

Well, I was in such a grief - may it please the God to rescue all the faithful Christians from it. I did not know what advice to give myself, and I was going from bad to worse. One day when my careworn, ruined wretched fellow of a master had been out, there came to my door perhaps a tinker, who, I believed, was an angel in those robes sent to me by the hand of God. He asked me if I had anything to be repaired.

"With me you would have plenty to do and it would be no small trouble if you could repair me." I said in so low a voice that he did not hear me. But this was no time for crackiug jokes, so inspired by the Holy Ghost, I told him, "Uncle, I have lost the key to this chest and I fear my mother will flog me. For goodness' sake, please see if one of these keys you carry there will fit the lock. I shall pay you for the trouble.

The angelic tinker began to try one key after another from the large bunch that he carried, while I began to help him, with my feeble prayers. When I little expected it, I saw, as they say, in the chest the face of God in the form of the bread.

I said to him opening it, "I have no money to pay you for the key, but take anything from the chest in place of the money." He took out the holy bread which seemed to be best of all the loaves and

went away quite satisfied, leaving me even more so. But I touched nothing at all at that time, because I felt that so long as I could have the chance of using this treasure at any time I like, hunger would never dare to come near me. My niggardly master returned, but thanks to God he did not miss the oblation that angel had carried away.

The next day when he left the house, I opened the paradise of bread and took a loaf of holy bread between my hands and teeth and dispatched it in a jiffy, not forgetting the open chest. And I began to sweep the house cheerfully, for it seemed to me that I had found the means of making up for the rest of my lonely life. In this way, I spent the day and still a second merrily. But it was not my luck that that rest should last long, because on the third day the genuine tertian fever attacked me.

This is how it happened. At an unreasonable hour I saw the man, a man who was starving me to death, standing over our chest turning the loaves over and over again, and counting them many times. I pretended not to notice what he was doing and with my secret prayers and devotions and supplications I said, "St. John come and blind him!

After spending quite a long time figuring out on his fingers, he said, "If I did not keep this chest so well closed, I should say that somebody had stolen some of the loaves, but from today, to close the door to suspicion, I want to keep a strict account of them. There remains nine and a half.

"May God give you nine trials." I murmured. At his words I thought he had pierced my heart with an hunting arrow and my stomach began to feel the gnawing of hunger, remembering the rich repast I had enjoyed before.

He went out of the house. In order to console myself I opened

the chest and when I found bread I began to adore it, not daring to eat it. I counted in case the wretch by good fortune should have made a mistake, but I found his calculation more accurate than I should have liked. All I could do was to give them a thousand kisses and from the broken loaf I broke off a little piece where it was broken. With this I spent that day not so cheerfully as before.

My hunger, however, was whetted, especially because my stomach had grown accustomed to getting more bread during the past two or three days. I was dying a horrible death, so that I could do nothing whenever I found myself alone but open and close the chest and contemplate - "the face of God," as children say. But the same God who helps those in affliction puts one in mind of little measures. Thinking inwardly, I said, "This huge chest is old and broken in some places even if the holes are little. It is conceivable that mice might get in and do damage to this bread. To take out bread whole would not be desirable, because he who causes so much shortage will easily notice the missing of the bread. This it will easily stand.

I began to break off crumbs on some cheap tablecloths which were in the chest and I would take one loaf and another and finally I crumbled its respective bit off three or four loaves. After that I ate as if it were bon-bons and I felt a little satisfied. When he came back to eat and open the chest, he saw the bad work and easily believed that mice had done the damage, for it was dexterously counterfeited to resemble the way mice would do it. He examined the chest from one end to another and found some holes through which he suspected that mice had entered. He called me and said, "Lazaro! Look! What a great harm was done to our bread last night!

I pretended to be surprised and asked him.

"What do you suppose it is!" said he. By what? It was mice; they shall no longer live.

We began to eat and thanks to God, things went well with me, for he took out a knife and shaved off all that he thought the mice had nibbled and told me, "Eat this because a mouse is a clean creature"

And so, on that day, by the labor of my hands or rather my fingers I ate larger quantities of allotment than usual. Of course hardly had I began to eat before it was gone. Soon I had another shock. I saw him going around earnestly pulling nails off the walls and looking for small boards, with which he nailed down and filled up all the holes in the chest.

"Oh, my lord!" I said then, "how much misery and risk and disaster we mortals suffer and what a short time the pleasures of our tiresome life last!" Here I was expecting by this poor and sorrowful means to relieve and put away my misery, and I was rather joyous and in good luck. But my misfortune did not so will it. This wicked master of mine had become aware of this and became even more cautious than he was by nature (since misers for the most part never lack this trait). Now that he has plugged the holes in the chest, the door to my pleasure has been closed and my troubles have begun instead.

So I grieved; in the meantime my diligent carpenter furnished his work using many nails and small boards. He said, "Now Messrs. Mice, you had better change the scheme, because you have nothing but very hard wood to nibble."

No sooner had he left the house than I went to examine the work and found that he had not left a hole, through which not even a mosquito could enter. I opened the chest with my useless key without any hope of getting profit. I saw two or three loaves that were partly

eaten, the ones that my master had thought nibbled by mice, and I shaved a little more off them, touching very lightly in the manner of a skillfull fencer.

Necessity is a great teacher and since I had so much necessity, I kept on thinking day and night how to find out the means to sustain my life. And in orddr to find these black remedies, hunger was certainly a light to me, since it is said that a person's wits become sharpened by hunger; the contray is caused by satiety and it was certainly the case with me.

Well then, one night I was sleepless thinking over these thoughts; that is, thinking how I could take care of myself and put the chest into use, I noticed that my master was sleeping, which was clear from the snoring and the loud snorts that he always made when he slept. I got up very quietly. During the day, I had planed what I ought to do, and had left an old knife that lay in the house in the place where I could find it easily. I went up to the poor chest and after examining the place where it was weakest, I began to attack with the knife in the same way I use a gimlet. And this old chest, because it was old, neither the strength nor the heart was found in it—rather it was so soft and worm-eaten that it soon yielded to me and through my efforts consented me to have a good hole in its side. This done, I opened very quietly the slashed chest and by feeling the loaf which had been broken, I did as I have described before.

Somewhat consoled after this, I locked the chest again and returned to my straw mattress, where I lay down and slept well, setting it down to not getting food. And that was probably so, for at that time even the order of the king of France should not have awakened me from sleeping. The next day my master saw the damage to the bread

as well as to the hole that I had made. He began to curse the mice and say, "What on earth is this? Never have we noticed mice in this house till now!"

Undoubtedly what he said was true, for if there was a house in the kingdom justly privileged to be free of mice, it must surely have been his, because mice do not stay where they can find no food. He again began to look for nails and small boards on the walls of the house in order to cover the holes. When night came and he took his rest, I would get up at once with my usual tool in hand, and rip all the holes he had patched at night.

It went along in this way, and we made such haste in our work that no doubt, we must depict this state of things by the following proverb "Whenever one door is locked, another is unlocked." Finally we seemed to have Penelope's web as our job, for what he wove during the night, I unraveled at night. In a few days and nights we had the poor chest in such a miserable shape that anyone wishing to describe it properly would have rather called it an old carcass of former times than a chest because of the nail work and patches it had.

When he saw that he could find no way of repairing, he said, "This chest is such a wreck and the wood is so old and rotten that it will not be able to stand the attack of the mice. Such being the case, if we continue to use it, it will give us no protection at all. And yet the worst part of it is that although it provides little defense, it is better than nothing. Instead I shall have to pay three or four *reales*. The best way I can think of, since the means we have used until now has been of no use, is to set a trap inside the chest for these confounded mice"

Then borrowing a mousetrap and some pieces of rind from his

neighbors, he set the trap inside the chest. But this was quite a stroke of good luck for me. Because although I did not need lots of appetizer, I was delighted to have the cheese rinds, which I took from the trap; moreover I did not neglect nibbling at the holy bread.

When he found the bread nibbled and cheese eaten, and yet the mice which have eaten it un entrapped he cursed. He asked the neighbors "How can a mouse eat the cheese, take it off the mousetrap and not be caught and remain in the trap notwithstanding it was sprung? The neighbors agreed that it was not a mouse that had done the damage because it could not help being caught some time. One neighbor said to him, "I remember a snake used to creep in your house and this must be true. It is reaonable that since the snake is long, it could take the bait and even if the trap should fall down on it, it could run gway again inasmuch as it did not put its whole body in.

What that fellow said pleased them all, and it upset my master who from then on did not sleep so soundly. Whenever the worm in the wood makes a noise at night, he thought the snake was gnawing. Then he would stand up and with a cudgel he had kept at the head of his bed since they told him about the snake he would whack violently on the poor chest, trying to frighten it. He aroused the neighbors with the noise he made and left me sleepless. He would come to my straw mattress and upset it - and me together with it, thinkiug that the snake might make for me and coil itself in my straw mattress or in my coat. It was because they had told him that these animals sometimes go to the cradles looking for warmth, and do harm by even biting them. Most of the time I pretended to be asleep and in the morning he would say, "Last night, boy, didn't you hear any-

thing? I ran after the snake and still I think it must have gone toward you in the bed, for they are very cold and search for warmth”

“May it please the Lord that it doesn't bite me,” I said; I am very much afraid of it”

In this manner he was so much distracted and wakeful that, upon my word, the snake did not dare to get up and go to the chest to gnaw. But during the day while he was at the church or out in the village, I would make a robbery. He saw the damage and finding no proper steps to be taken, he walked about at night, as I have mentioned, like a goblin.

I was afraid that with all this zeal he might run against my key, which I kept underneath my mattress; so it seemed safer to put in my mouth at night. Because since my life with the blindman I had it converted to such an extent into a purse that I could keep from twelve to fifteen *maravedis* in it, all in half-*blancas*, without disturbing my eating. Otherwise I could not keep a blanca without that wicked blindman's finding it; there was never a man nor a patch of my clothes that did not undergo his frequent examination. Then as I say, every night I would put the key in the mouth and asleep without fear that my fiendish master would come upon it. But when the ill luck is to come, no care is of any use.

My destiny, or to be exact, my sins gave rise to the following happenings: one night I was sleeping with my mouth open and the key was put into such a position that my breath as I slept came out through the hollow of the key, which was like a tube.

Unfortunately it made such a loud uttering sound that it surely must have seemed like the hissing of the snake .

He got up very quietly with the cudgel in his hand and by

groping toward the sound of the snake approached me very quietly not to be scented by the snake. When he came nearer, he thought that the snake had come for warmth to the place about where I lay on the mattress. Thinking the snake must be lying directly below, he swang the stick up and intending to give a hard blow enough to kill it, he gave me such a good thrashing on the head that it left me senseless and bruised.

He told me later that when he knew that he had hit me, for I must have made a great outcry at the violent blow, he came to me and tried to bring to my senses by giving a loud scream and calling me. But when he touched me with his hands, he touched the great deal of blood that was running from me and realized that he had inflicted an injury on me. And he hastened to fetch a fire. When he returned with it, he found me moaning, still with the key in my mouth, for I had never abandoned it; it having been half out of my mouth just as when I had been making a hissing sound with it.

The snake-killer was astounded and wondering what the key could be, he took it completely from my mouth, examined it, and saw the whole circumstances, because the wards of my key were not a bit different from those of his own. He at once went to compare this key with his own and thereby he proved my evil deed. The cruel hunter must have said, "I have found the mouse and the snake that has been waging war on me and eating me out of the house and home.

I cannot give a certified account of what happened the next three days, for I spent there in the whale's belly. But as for what I have told you so far, I learned after I regained consciousness, from the accounts of the incident I heard my master give in detail to all who came to the house.

At the end of three days, I came round to myself and found myself stretched out on the straw mattress with my head all plastered up and oils and ointments applied all over. Astounded at this, I asked, "What is the matter?"

The cruel priest answered, "I have only driven out the mice and snakes out which were doing me harm."

I looked myself over and found I had been so ill-treated that I soon suspected my trouble.

At this moment there entered the neighbors and an old woman who was a healer. They began to take the rags off my head and nurse the wound made by the blow of the cudgel. When they learned that I came to my senses, they were delighted and said, "Well, he has regained his senses now. By the grace of God, it is probably nothing serious."

Then they again began to tell of my mishaps and laughed, while I, poor sinner, wept. After this they gave me something to eat, for I was almost starved to death and they could not half satisfy me. In this way, I regained my health little by little and in fifteen days I got out of bed. Though in a state of half recovery, I was out of danger but not out of hunger.

The very next day after I got up, my master took me by the hand, took me out of the door, and put me out into the street. He said to me, "Lazaro, from now on you are your own master and no longer my servant. Look for an other master. God be with you. I don't like to have so diligent a servant as my partner. You must have been a blindman's boy."

Crossing himself as a protection against me as if I were possessed with the devil, he went into the house again and shut the door.

CHAPTER THREE

How Lazaro entered the service of a Squire and what happened to him.

Thus I had to draw strength from weakness. Little by little, with the help of the good people, I arrived in this illustrious city of Toledo, where by the grace of God, my wound healed in fifteen days. While I was ill, they always gave me alms, but after I was well again, they all said to me, "You are a rogue and a vagabond. Look for a master to serve."

"And I wonder where he can be found" I said to myself, "What if God does not create another again now as he created the world?"

Wandering thus from door to door with very little help, because charity had ascended to heaven, thanks to divine will, I ran against a squire who was walking along the street, decently dressed, well groomed, his walk and bearing orderly. We looked at each other and he said, "Boy, are you looking for a master? I answered him, "Yes, sir." "Then come with me," he replied, for it is by divine mercy that we could thus meet each other. You must have offered good prayers today.

I followed him, thanking God for what he said and also because he seemed, according to his clothes and countenance, to be the very man I needed.

It was in the morning when I came across this third master of mine. He took me after him through a large part of the city. We passed through the public square where bread and other provisions were on sale. I thought and even wanted to carry on my back what was on sale there, because it was the suitable time when people are accustomed to buy their necessary goods. But he went past there

things at a lively gait.

“Perhaps he doesn't see anything to his satisfaction here” I said.
“Probably he wants us to do the shopping at other quarter.

In this city we walked until it struck eleven. Then he entered the cathedral and I followed after him. He very devoutly heard Mass and other divine services, until everything was over and the congregation had departed. Then we went out of the church.

At a good round pace, we began to go down the street. I was the happiest man in this world when I saw that we had not busied ourselves about food. I certainly thought that my new master be a a man who provided himself with his provisions in bulk, and that the meal for which I longed and needed would be ready for us.

Just at that moment it struck one in the afternoon and we came to a house, in front of which my master stopped. Throwing the end of the cape back to the left side, he took a key out of his wallet and opened the door. We entered the house. The entrance was so obscure and dismal that it gave the impression that those who entered it might be seized with fear. Inside, however, were a small inner court and nice rooms.

As soon as we came in, he took off his cape, and asking me if my hands were clean, had me brush it and fold it; he carefully dusted off the stone bench near by and put the cape on it. After this, he sat down beside the cape and asked me in detail where I came from and how I came to that city.

I told him longer than I should have liked, for it seemed a more convenient time for him to order me to set the table and dish out the stew than to ask me questions. In spite of this I gratified him about myself by telling him a pack of lies. Moreover I only mentioned my

good points and kept silent about the rest because I thought they were not fitting. And as he kept on this way for a while, I soon saw a bad sign, because it was now almost two o'clock and I did not see in him any more desire to eat than a dead man would have.

After this, I thought over his keeping the door locked and my not hearing above or below any sound of the steps of a living soul throughout the house. All that I had seen were walls, and chairs, no meat block, no bench, not even a chest such as my previous master used to have long ago. In short, it seemed to be an enchanted house. As I was sunk in these meditations, he said, "You, boy, have you eaten? "No, sir," I said" for it had not struck eight when I met you". "Well then, although it was early I had already eaten breakfast, and when I eat something that way, I want you to know that until night I do without food. So get along the best you can and we shall have supper later. You may believe that when I heard this I was nearly dropped in a faint not so much from hunger as from the absolute recognition that Fortune did not favor me. Then my hardships presented themselves to me again, and I shed tears over my trouble. I also recollected the thought which had come to my mind when I was thinking about running away from the priest, which was that, though this priest was unfortunate and mean, perhaps I might come across a worse one. At last I lamented my past toilsome life and my approaching death. In spite of this, concealing my feelings as best I could, I told him, "Sir, fortunately I am a boy who does not concern myself about food As to food, I can boast among my equals as being the most abstemious and have been praised for this by my masters whom I have served until now.

"That is a virtue" said he, "and I become fond of you for it. To

stuff oneself is the way of a pig and to eat regularly is that of a gentleman.

"I completely understand you!" I said to myself. Confounded all these masters of mine who prescribe hunger as a cure for everything and make a virtue of starvation." I went to the end of the portico and took a few pieces of bread out of the bosom which remained of those which I had begged. When he saw this, I went and showed him the bread. He took one of the three pieces I had - the best and biggest. He told me, "Upon my life, this looks like good bread"

"Yes, indeed! Does it really look tasty to you, sir?"

"Yes, really" he said, "Where did you get it? Was it kneaded by clean hands?"

"I don't know about that," I said, "but the taste of it doesn't make me nauseate"

"Would to God that it is clean," said my poor master. And carrying it to the mouth, he began to take in it with as violent bites as I did."

"God be praised, this bread is awfully delicious", he said.

As I knew what his desire was, I ate hastily, because I could see that if he finished before I did, he would be kind enough to help me with what was remained of mine. We, therefore, finished almost at the same time. With his hands he began to shake to shake off a few crumbs and yet the extremely minute ones that had remained on his breast. He entered the small room near by and took out a mouthless jug which was not a new one. As soon as he finished drinking, he treated me to it. Trying to show I am holding back from too much food, I said, "Sir, I don't drink wine"

"He answered me," It's water. You can drink".

Then I took the jug and drank. I didn't take much, because my affliction was not that of thirst.

In this way we stayed until night talking. He asked me many questions, which I answered as best I could. Then, taking me to the room where the jug from which we drank had been put, he said, "Boy, place yourself over there and see how we make a bed so that you may do it from this time on." I stood at one end and he at the other, and we made a dirty bed. We had not much to do, because it was a reed framework on some small benches, over which were spread the unclean mattress. From not being washed very often, the mattress had not retained its original appearance. There was no doubt, however, that it was used as such, although it had a whole lot less wool in it than it needed. We stretched it, trying to soften it, which was impossible, since one can hardly mard a thing soften. The wretched saddle-pad had a devil of a thing inside. With everything on top of the framework the reeds were visible, so that it looked like a swine of a very thin pig, Over that starved mattress, there was a cover of the same kind. I could not tell which color it was. When the bed was made, night closed in. He said to me, "Lazaro, it is late already and is quite far from here. In the city there are also many robbers who will steal another's cloak as soon as it is night. Let's get through as best we can, and tomorrow, when it gets light, God will have mercy on us. I have been living alone and have not a stock of provisions now. I have been eating out these days, but we shall have to change the manner of making food.

"Sir," I said. "Don't be anxious about me, because I know well how to spend a night, and still more, if necessary, without eating."

"You will be able to live long and be healthy," he answered me,

“for as we were saying today, there is no better way for longevity than light eating.”

“If this is true,” I murmured, “I shall never die, for I have been under compulsion to conform to the rule; on the contrary I shall possibly be obliged to observe the rule throughout my life.

He put the breeches and jacket at the head of the bed, and turned in. He ordered me to kneel at his feet, which I did. But what a wakeful night I passed! The reeds and my projecting bones never stopped quarrelling and fighting all night long. As a result of all my afflictions, evils and my hunger, I doubt even a pound of flesh was put on my entire boy. Moreover, as I had eaten almost nothing the day before, I was mad with hunger, with which slumber was not on friendly terms. I lay there and cursed myself (may God forgive me) and my ruinous fortune a thousand times throughout most of the night; worst of all, not daring to turn over in my sleep for fear of awakening him, I begged God many times to let me die.

When morning came we got up and he began to clean and brush away his breeches, jacket, his coat and cape, while I helped him as an idle assistant. He leisurely put on his clothes with great relish. I poured water on his hands. He then combed his hair and wore the sword on his sword-belt. When he did this, he said to me, “Oh, if you only knew my boy what a splendid piece of blade this is! I would never part with this for any weight of gold. None of the blades of Antonio ever had such sharp edges as this one”

He unsheathed his sword and touched it with his fingers. He said to me, “Can you see this? I shall attempt to pare a flake of wool with my sword.”

I said to myself, “And I should try a four-pound loaf of bread.

with my teeth, though mine are not made of steel."

He put the sword back into the sheath again and fastened it and a string of big beads to his sword-belt. Then with a calm step and an upright body, swaying his head and body in a genteel way, he threw the tail of his cape over his shoulder, leaving it partly under his arm. He placed his right hand on his flank and went through the door, saying, "Lazaro, examine the house while I go to hear Mass. Make the bed and go to the river just below here for a pitcher of water. Lock the door so that they may not steal anything from us, and put the key under the hinge so that I can get in when I came back.

And he went up the street with such a genteel visage and manner that anyone who did not know would think he was a relative of the Count of Arcos, or at least the valet who helped him dress.

"Blessed be God" I said. Thou brings on an illness and gives help. Who that might meet this master of mine would but think, judging by his manner of self-content, that he had supped well the night before and slept in a good bed? Who would not suppose he had breakfasted well, although it is still early in the morning? Deep are the secrets that Thou hast, Oh God, and many are those which the people do not know! Who would not be deceived by that good appearance of his and by that decent cape and coat? And who would imagine that genteel man tided over all of yesterday only on the crumb of bread which his servant Lazaro had kept for a day and night in his pocket in which he could not have kept it clean? Would anyone know that when he washed his hands and face today, he used the shirt of the blouse because he had not a towel? Of course nobody would suspect it. Oh God, how many of those who would bear thus coolly, hast Thou scattered all over the world for the wretched sake of what they call honor, and

how many saffer thus for Thy sake?"

In this way I was at the door, watching and meditating over these things, until my master went out of sight up the long and narrow street. I hurried back into the house and in a jiffy I walked all through it, upstairs and down stairs, neither halting nor finding any reason to halt. I made the dirty, hard bed, took the jug and went to the river. There in the vegetable garden I saw my master earnestly seducing two veiled women, who were apparently the indispensable adjuncts of this locality. Now I mast say that during summer many of them are in the habit of going in the very early morning to the river bank to get the cool air and to have breakfast. They usually go without taking along any sort of food, expecting that someone will gladly give it to them. This practice, according to the women, is said to have been formed by those noblemen of the vicinity.

As I have said, sandwiched between these women, he told them like a Macias sweeter nothings than Ovid ever wrote. When they discerned that he was fairly softened, they felt no shame in asking him for breakfast as the usual price.

Feeling as cold in his purse as he was hot in his bosom, he felt such a chill that it took the color from his face; so becomeng confused in conversation, began to make ineffective excuses. Perceiving what his condion was they, who must hve been trained in these sort of things, deserted him for what he was.

I have eaten several cabbage stalks for my breakfast and returned home paying much attention, as a new boy usually does, not to be seen by my master. I thought I would sweep some part of the house, because it was very necessary. But I didn't find the wherewithal. I began to think of what to do and it seemed better for me to wait for

master until noon to see if he might possibly bring something to eat for us two. My expectation, however, was in vain.

Although it has had already struck two, he did not come back and I was so much afflicted with hunger that I locked the door and put the key where he had told me and again returned to my trade. In a low and feeble voice, my hands crossed on the breast, with God floating before my eyes and His name on my tongue. I started begging for bread at the doors and houses which looked large. As I had learned this business at a very early age under a great master, the blindman, and had become an skillful disciple, I made good use of my wits. Consequently even if there was no charity in the town and that year the crop had not been very abundant, before the clock struck four, I had already stuffed my stomach with four and two more in my sleeve and wallet.

I passed by a meat market on my way home. When I begged from one of the women clerks, she gave me a piece of cow's heel and a few quantities of cooked tripe.

When I returned home, my good master was already there, sauntering about the courtyard, his cape folded and put on the stone bench. When I entered, he came toward me. I thought he would scold me for my delay, but God willed it all right. He asked me where I had been. I murmured, "Sir, I stayed here until two o'clock and when I found that you had not come back, I went to the city to recommend myself to the good people there. Look! These are what they gave me.

I showed him the bread and the tripe put in the tail of my coat, at which he made a cheerful look. He said, "Well then, I refrained from eating, waiting for you, but since you did not come back I ate. But you acted like an honest man, for it is better to beg than to steal.

It is only right and proper to think as such because god has helped me through you. I urge you not to let the people know we are living together, because it concerns my honor although I don't think the secret will leak out in view of the few acquaintances I have in this town; I hope not.

"Don't be anxious about that, sir" I told him, "for nobody gives a hoot about asking me that question nor do I care to answer it."

"Come on! eat, you sinner. God willing we shall soon want for nothing although I tell you plainly that ever since I have lived in this house, everything has gone wrong with me. This must be due to the bad earth. There are unlucky and ill-placed houses, and after those who live in them misfortune always runs. This must be one of those kinds of houses. But I promise you that I shall move within a month, even if I can possess this house for nothing.

I sat down on the end of the stone bench and did not refer to the light lunch I had already eaten, taking care not to be mistaken for a glutton. I began to snap my tripe and bread for lunch, secretly casting my eyes on the unfortunate master of mine, who never averted his eyes from my shirt which I used as a plate at that time. May God take as much pity on me as I took on him, for I had felt what he was feeling. This is because I had undergone such experiences many times and still more many days. I thought it would be good for me to treat him, but I feared that he would not accept my invitation, seeing that he told me he had already eaten. At last I wanted to help that poor fellow out of his trouble by these fruits of mine, and satisfy his hunger as I had done the day before. Fortunately it was a good opportunity for him; the food was rich and my appetite was not keen. I think God willed to gratify my wish and also that of his

own. When I commenced to eat, he who was walking back and forth came to me and said, "Indeed, Lazaro, when you eat you have the best manners that I have ever seen in anyone, so nobody can see you at it without your giving him a desire to eat, even though he has no appetite at all."

"It is because you are hungry that my manner of eating seems graceful to you"

Nevertheless, it seemed best to help him, since he assisted me in clearing the way. I said to him, "Sir, a good tool makes a good artisan" This bread is most tasty, and this cow's heel is so well cooked and seasoned that there would be no one who would not have his appetite provoked by its flavor.

"What, cow's feet?"

"Yes, sir"

"Really that is the most delicious morsel in the world and not even the pleasantest tastes so good to me".

"Then try it, sir and you will find how it tastes"

I put the cow's heel and three or four pieces of the whitest bread in his hand. He sat down beside me and began to eat, as he was ravenously hungry, gnawing each little bone better than his greyhound could have done.

"If I put garlic sauce on this dish, this would be splendid food"

"Your hunger is a better sauce than that," I said to myself.

"For God's sake, it tasted as good as if I had not eaten a morsel all day"

"Many happy years will surely come to me for this," I murmured.

He asked me for a jug of water and I gave it to him, it being as

full as when I had brought it from the river. When he was not in need of water, it was a sign that my master had not had too much to eat. We drank and went to bed quite as satisfied as on the night before.

To make a long story short, we passed eight or ten days in this city. My wretched master would go out in the morning with that contented and measured step to take the air in the streets, handling poor Lazaro as a dupe.

I considered many times my misfortune; I have escaped from the degrading masters I had served up to this time and in spite of my efforts to find a better one, I have come to enter the service of a third who has no ability to support me, but who let me support him. Nevertheless I liked him, seeing that he had nothing and could do no better. I had sympathy for him rather than hatred. Many times I had a hard time of it in order to bring enough food to provide for him.

One morning the poor fellow got up in a shirt and went up to the garret to take care of a certain necessity; in the meantime in order to clear my suspicions, I unfolded the jacket and breeches what had been put at the head of the bed. I found a small, plain velvet purse folded a hundred times. Not a cursed *blanca* was in it, nor was there any trace left that it had had any money in it for a long time.

"This man," I said, "is poor" and nobody gives him what he has not." But the avaricious blindman and the unhappy niggardly priest, even though God had provided for them both, one through his hand-kissing and the other through a ready tongue, kept me almost starved to death. It is only right and proper for me to hate those two and be sorry for this fellow.

As God bears witness to me, today when I come across any one of

his kind, with that gait and affected attitude, I feel sorry for him and wonder if he is suffering what I saw this one suffer. However poor he may be, I should be gladder to serve him than serve the others for the reason that I have told you. He had only one drawback: I wished he would not be so presuming but diminish his conceit a little with the rise of his necessity. But in my opinion, it is a rule among these people and is observed, that even if they haven't a copper coin, they must put on a good appearance. May the Lord remedy it, for it will soon ruin them.

Well, I was leading a life in such a state as I have said, but my unfortunate fate (which was not satisfied enough to persecute me) was not willing to endure this laborious and shameful life. We have had a short crop of wheat this year in this vicinity, so the town council agreed that all the poor strangers shall leave this city with the proclamation that any one found from that day on should be lashed. Thus the law was enforced, and from the days after the proclamation I saw that they were leading a procession of paupers through the Plaza of the Four Streets and beating them. The sight made me so frightened that I didn't dare to beg for it by going out to beg again.

Whoever could look, might see the abstinence of our house. And also sadness and silence of the tenants. So much so that we went for days without a bite or saying a word. Some women spinners near by saved my life by giving me a little something out of the mere pittance they earned from spinning cotton and making bonnets and on this I could make shift for a while.

I did not feel as sorry for myself as I did for my pitiful master who had not even a morsel to eat in eight days. At least for a long time we did not eat at home. I don't know how or where he wandered,

nor what he ate. And to see him come down the street with his body stretched and more slender than a greyhound of good breed! For the sake of the wretched thing they call honor, he would take a straw—these were not even enough of these in the house—and went out of the door picking nothing from between his teeth, complaining as ever of that unlucky location of the house. He said to me, “It is bad to see how the ill-luck of this house causes evil. As you see, it is gloomy, sad and dark. As long as we stay here, we must suffer. I wish this month would soon pass so that we might leave this house.”

We were thus in this afflicted and starved state, when one day, I don't know by what chance or good luck, there fell into the hands of my master a *real**. He came home with it as proud as if he had the treasure of Venice and he gave it to me with a very cheerful and smiling face. “Take it, Lazaro. God has opened his hand. Go to the market to buy bread, wine and meat. Let's put the devil's eye out. And I have something else to tell you which pleases you: I have rented another house, and in this ill-fated house we need not remain until the end of this month. To the devil with it and whoever laid the first tile! A needless deed made me to move to this house. I swear to God that all the time I have been living here I haven't had a fragrant of meat nor a drop of wine, nor have I any rest at all. But, what a dirty, dark appearance it has! Go and come back soon, and let's eat like counts. I took my *real* and jug and calling on my legs to make haste, began to go up the street cheerfully toward the market place. What use is it to me if I am destined that no pleasure shall come to me unaccompanied by anxiety? And so it was this time. I

* *real* = a silver coin

went up the street, calculating how I would use it so that it might be best and most advantageously spent, and also expressing my heartfelt thanks to God who had made my master wealthy. At this unreasonable time, I saw a dead man coming this way carried on a stretcher by many priests and people.

I leaned against the wall to make room for them. Soon after the corpse passed, there came several women walking close to the litter. One of them must have been the wife of the dead man, she was in deep mourning. She cried in a loud voice and said, "Oh, my husband and master! Where are they carrying you? To the sad and unfortunate house, to the dismal and dark house dwelling, to the place where they never eat nor drink!

Hearing her say that, I thought that heaven and the earth had come together.

"Oh, how unfortunate I am! They are carrying this dead man to my house!"

Reversing my direction, I pushed myself into the crowd and ran back down the street toward my house at top speed. The moment I got in, I closed the door very hastily and called upon my master for help and favor, embracing him and asking him to come and help me check the entrance. He was a little disturbed thinking something had happened. "What's the matter, boy? What are you shouting about? What have you done? Why did you close the door so furiously?"

"Oh, sir," I cried, "Come here quickly They are carrying a corpse here!"

What's that? he asked.

I met him just up the street, and his wife said, "Oh, my husband and master! Where are they carrying you? To the sad and unfortunate

house, to the dismal and dark house dwelling, to the place where they never eat nor drink!" To this very house they are bringing him.

As a matter of course when my master heard this, although he had no special reason to be amused, he laughed so hard that he could not speak for a long time. Meanwhile I had fastened the door with a bar and had pressed my shoulder against it with every possible precaution. The funeral procession passed by my house, but I was still fearful that they were going to marry him in our house. My good master, having indulged more generously in laughter than in food, said to me, "Lazaro, the truth is that you were right in thinking what you thought, in consideration of what the widow said. But God has settled as He thought fit, and they are going past my house. Open the door and go to buy something to eat"

"Sir, let me stay until they have disappeared from this street," I begged.

At last my master came to the door facing the street and opened it vigorously, because the door was so securely bolted. Then I set out again.

Although we ate luxuriously that day, I did not enjoy the meal nor did I get my color for three days. Whenever my master remembered my misunderstanding about the funeral procession, he smiled.

In this way, while I lived with this third master of mine who was a poverty-stricken souire, I had been wondering about his reasons for coming to live in this part of the country, because since I entered the service of my master I had known that he was a stranger owing to the limited circle of friends he had here.

At last my wish was realized and I found out what I wanted to know. One day when we had a comparatively good meal and he was

somewhat satisfied he told me his life story; he said that he was from Old Castille, and that he had left his native country just to avoid taking off his cap to the knight who was his neighbor.

"Sir," I said, "if he was a knight as you say and richer than you, were you not mistaken in not taking it off to him first? Besides, you said that he also took his cap off to you".

"Yes, he was a knight and richer than I. Moreover he took his cap off to me, but many times I raised mine first. You ought to have saluted me for once and be the first yourself I told him."

"It seems to me, sir, that such a thing doesn't get on my nerves, especially with my betters and those who have more."

He answered me, "You are only a child, and cannot understand a point of honor which is a matter of concern to honest people in this day and age. I want you to know that I am, as you see, a squire upon my word if I meet the count in the street and if he does not take his hat completely off to me, the next time he comes I will pretend before he comes near me, to enter a house on some business or wander into a by-road, if there is one, in order not to take my hat off to him. A nobleman owes nothing except to God and the king. Moreover, it is not right for a respectable person to injure his self-respect.

"I remember one day I insulted an official and nearly resorted to force all because every time I met him, he said, 'God preserve you' 'Your wretched peasant!' I said to him, 'why were you not wellbred? Do you have to say "God preserve you" to me as if I were nobody? From that time on, and everywhere, he took off his cap and spoke to me as he should"

"And to address him 'God preserve you' is that not a good way

of saluting?

“Look, confoundy ou!” he said. “They say so to the people of low breeding, but to those of higher breeding such as me, they should say at least, ‘I kiss your hands, sir,’ if the man who addresses me is a knight. Thus I could not bear that dolt from my country who kept sufferiug me with maintenance, nor would I endure, nor will I endure any one in the world, from the king on down, that says ‘God preserve you!’”

“Poor sinner that I am” I said to myself, “that is why God does not worry about maintaining you, because you do not allow anyone to ask Him.

“Especially,” he went on, “since I am not so poor that I do not have in my country, sixteen leagues from where I was born, on that slope of Valladolid the ground for building a house, which if it were standing and well constructed, would be worth more than two hundred thousand *maravedis*, according to how large and magnificent it was built. And I have a pigeon house which, if it were not dilapidated as it is now would breed more than two hundred pigeons every year. Of the other things to which I do not refer, I left them behind for the sake of honor.

“I came to the city to find a good job, but it has not turned out as I had expected. I have found many canons and other men of the church, but they are so frugal that nobody in the world could get them out of their slow step. Lesser nobles also have asked for my service but to serve them is a very difficult job; you must change from a man into a ‘joker’ and if you are not willing to do so, they tell you ‘Good-bye’. Generally the pay is given extending over a long period of time and most often the pay for your service is the food you eat. And

when they want to salve their conscience and repay you for your labor, you are paid off from their wardrobe with a sweaty jacket or a threadbare cape or blouse. Now when a man enters the service of a gentleman having some title, his misery will be gone. Then do I still not have any capacity for serving and pleasing these noble set? For God's sake, if I could come across with one, I think I should be his very great favourite. I could do him a thousand services and please him wonderfully well, knowing as well as the next fellow how to lie to him. I should laugh loudly at his witty remarks and manner, even if they might not be the best in the world. I should never say anything that would offend him, although it would be very good for him. I should be careful in my speech and behaviour. I should not exert myself to do well what he would never see. I should begin to scold the servants where he could hear me so as to let him know that I was much interested in his affairs. If he scolded some servant of his, I should mention some sharp things of little importance that would seem to take part with him and to excite his anger. Speak to him favorably of what might be to his liking, and on the contrary I should be malicious, and mocker and slander others in the household and outside it, and try to investigate the living conditions of others. I should make up many other special treats of this sort which are nowadays in fashion in palaces and which pleases the gentlemen there. They don't like to have virtuous men in their houses; on the contrary they abhor and scorn and call them dunces. So neither men of business nor a man with whom a master can entrust a task can be found. As I say, these are the means that the astute ones use these days as I should. But unfortunately I cannot find a nobleman like that."

Thus my master would lament his adverse fortune, telling me how

useful he is.

At this moment an old woman and a man came in by the door. The man asked for the house rent, and the woman demanded the rent for the bed. They made calculation, and for two months they tried to collect from him an amount that he would not earn in a year. I think it was twelve or thirteen *reales*. He gave them a very clever answer that he would go to the market to change a doubloon and that he would come back in the afternoon. But he didn't come back after all.

Therefore in the afternoon they came back, but it was too late. I told them that he had not come back yet. Night came, but he didn't return. As I was afraid to stay in the house alone, I went to the house of the women in the neighbourhood, I told them the state of affairs and slept there. The next day the creditors came to the house of the neighboring men and asked about him, but they were told to try next door. The women told them, "Here is his boy who has the key to the door". They asked me about him, and I told them that I did not know where he was and nor had he come back since he went out to get some change. I added also that he had run away with the change from you and me.

When they heard that I said, they went for a bailiff and a notary. They came back with them soon, took the key, called me, summoned witness, opened the door and entered in order to attach my master's property until the debts were cleared off. They walked all over the house and found it as empty as I have told you.

He asked me, "What has become of your master's property such as chests, wall hangings and house furnishings?"

"I don't know about them," I answered.

"No doubt he cleared away all his furniture and removed it to

some other place last night," they said. "Mr. Bailiff, arrest this boy who knows his whereabouts"

Hereupon the bailiff came and took me by the coat collar and said, "You will be answerable if you don't tell us where your master's furniture is."

I had never seen myself in a similar situation before. (The truth is that I had been seized by the collar many times, but the seizure had been so gentle that I could show the road to one who was blind). I was very much afraid and sobbing out the answers to any question he might ask me.

"That's good," they said, say what you know and don't be frightened."

The notary sat on a bench to write an inventory and asked me what my master had.

"Gentlemen," I said, "according to what he has told me, his property is the ground for building houses and a demolished pigeon-house"

"That's fine," they said. "However little these may be worth, these will be enough to pay the debt. And in what part of the city does he have this property? they asked.

"In his native country", I answered them.

"By Jove, this is a fine business," they said. "And where is his native place?"

"He is from Old Castile, so he told me." The bailiff and the notary had a good laugh and said, "This boy's statement is enough to collect your debt, perhaps better!"

The women in the neighborhood who were present, said, "Gentlemen, the child is innocent; he has been only a few days with that

squire and does not know more about him than you do. Besides the little rascal has been coming to our house and we give him food as much as we can out of charity and at night he has been going back to the squire's house to sleep."

Thinking that my innocence was proved, they let me go. The bailiff and the notary demanded a reward of the man and the woman for their services. This request provoked a tremendous quarrel among them. The one maintained that he were not obliged to pay, since there was nothing to pay there because the property had not been levied on. The other said that in order to come here she had given up another job which was more important.

Finally, after shouting a great deal, they put the old woman's bedding on the shoulder of the bailiff, but the burden was not so heavy. Then all five of them went away, shouting at each other. I don't know whether the matter was settled. I believe the wretched old bedding would be worth enough to pay for their wants. We must say that his bedding was made the most of, for at an age when it should have taken rest from its past service, it was going about for rent.

As I have told you, this is how my poor, tired master left me. In this way, as I have told you, I was forsaken by this poor, third master of mine and thus I came to realize vividly how disastrous my Fortune could be. She had shown herself as contrary to me as she could, and everything I did had gone wrong with me. So, contrary to the usual fashion in which masters are deserted by their servants, my master not only left me, but he himself fled from me.

CHAPTER FOUR

How Lazaro entered the service of a Friar of La

Merced, and of the things which happened to him there.

I had to look for my fourth master, a friend of La Merced, one of the women I have mentioned directed me to him, saying that he was a relative of hers. He had an aversion to the choirs and the food served in the monastery, and was madly fond of going out and of worldly affairs. So I think he wore out more shoes than all the others in the monastery. This man gave me my first pair of shoes, but they did not last me eight days. Nor could I hold out his trot any longer, and for this reason and other trifles which I shall not mention, I took leave of him.

CHAPTER FIVE

How Lazaro entered the service of a distributor of papal bulls and what happened to him.

I met by chance my fifth master who happened to be a distributor of bulls. He was the most unrestrained, impudent seller of bulls and was the greatest hand at disposing of them that I - or anybody else - ever saw or hope to see. For he had various means and skillful tricks, and always thought of subtle inventions.

When he entered a village where he was to offer the bulls, the first thing he did was to present the priests or curate some trifles, neither very expensive nor substantial; a head of Murcian lettuce, if it was in season, a couple of limes or oranges, a clingstone peach or a pair of freestone peaches and greenish peas for each one of them. In this way he would have them well in hand for rendering help to his business and get them to call their parishioners together to take the

bulls.

While the priests were giving thanks to him, he could get information about their ability. If they said they could understand Latin, he would never speak a word of it in order not to make a blunder, but would use a graceful, short and smooth Spanish. If he could know that the said priests were of the revereneds who were ordained not with letters but with money, he set himself up for a true St. Thomas among those priests and spoke for two hours in Latin. At least that is what it resembled, although it was not actually so.

When the people would not buy his intelligences willingly, he sought to distribute them by some foul means. For that he would give the village people a lot of trouble, and sometimes he would concoct an crafty plot. Since it would take too long to relate all the artifices to which I saw him resort, only one, a very subtle and amusing one, will I relate by which you will know how skillful he was.

In a certain place in Sagra de Toledo he had preached for two or three days, with his usual assiduity and the people had not bought the bulls, nor in my opinion did they seem to have any intention of buying them. He was cursing himself because of that and thinking out what to do, he made up his mind to gather the village people the next morning to sell indulgence.

That night after dinner he and the bailiff began to lay a wager on the dessert, but they started a quarrel over the game and to abuse each other in foul languages. He called the bailiff a thief, and the latter called him a falsifier. Then my master the pardoner took the lance which was in the portico where they were playing, and the bariliff laid a hand to the sword he wore.

Hearing the noise and shouting that we all made, the boarders and neighbors hastened to the spot and wedged in the two. As they were very angry, each tried to free himself from those in the middle in order to kill his antagonist. However, so many people had been drawn to the commotion that the house was full of them; therefore they could not attack each other with their weapons and could do nothing but shout out all manner of abuse. In the middle of this quarrel, the bailiff said that my master was a swindler and asserted that the bulls he hawked were false.

At last the people saw that the two could not be reconciled, and decided to take the bailiff away from the inn to some other place. Thus my master remained at home in anger, but after the boarders and the neighbors had asked him to pacify his anger and go to bed, he decided unwillingly to do so. So did we all.

When morning came, my master went to the church and ordered them to let the parishioners know the Mass and his sermon by ringing a bell so as to distribute the indulgences. The people assembled, complaining about the bulls, muttering that they were false and that even bailiff himself had seen through their falsity, so that they were not only reluctant to take the indulgences but also hated the idea heartily. The pardoner went up to the pulpit and began to preach a sermon and encourage the people not to do without such blessings and remission of sins as these sacred bulls would bring.

When the sermon reached its climax, the bailiff came in through the door of the church. He offered a prayer, stood up, and began to speak prudently in a loud, slow voice. "My good people, hear one word from me, and after that you may listen to anything you like. I came here with this sharper who is preaching to you now. He deceived

me into helping him in this business on the understanding that he would share the profits with me. And now, after seeing the harm it would do to my conscience and to your property. I have repented of what I have done. I declare to you plainly that the bulls which he is going to palm off on you are false. Don't, therefore, believe him and don't buy the indulgences. I assert that I am not in the least concerned in this matter, either directly or indirectly, so from now on, I shall part with this wand and throw it on the ground. And if at some time this man is punished for his falsehood, all of you will be my witness that I am not in conspiracy with him and not rendering him assistance. On the contrary I am enlightening and pointing out his wickedness."

Thus he finished his statement.

Some honest men who were there stood up and tried to throw the bailiff out of the church in order to avoid a scandal. But my master had stopped them and ordered everybody, under penalty of excommunication, not to interfere with him, but to have him say what he liked. Then my master himself was silent while the bailiff said all that I have told.

When he held his tongue, my master told him that if he had anything further to say, he had better say it.

"I have a lot of things to tell about you and your falsity, but for the present that is enough".

The commissary knelt down in the pulpit with his hands folded, looking up heavenward, said: "Oh, God, from whom nothing is hidden, but to whom everything is manifest; for whom nothing is impossible, but for whom everything is possible; Thou knowest the truth and knowest how unjustly I am attacked. So far as I am concerned, I

pardon him because Thou forgiveth me. Don't be concerned with this man who doesn't know what he does nor what he says. But for the injury done to Thee, I pray Thee and beg of Thee in the cause of justice not to overlook it, lest some one here who 'wanted perhaps to take these sacred pardons should stop doing so, believing that man's false words. And since his is such a grievous sin against his neighbors, I entreat Thee not to overlook it; but show us here at once a miracle and let it be thus; If what this man says is true, if I do wrong and tell a falsehood, then let this pulpit sink with me seven fathoms underground, from where neither shall come up again; but if what I say is true, and he was misled by an evil spirit, and tells a lie in order to deprive those who ate present of their great benefit, let him be punished also and his viciousness be known to all."

Hardly had my devout master finished his payer when the dismal bailiff fell full length and struck floor so hard that the sound rang throughout the church. He began to roar, and froth at his twisted mouth and to make faces, struggling and kicking and rolling around on the floor from one side to the other.

The people made such a great uproar that they could not hear each other. Some were seized with terror; some went on saying, "The Lord save and protect him!" Others, "That is the deserved punishment for his false statement"

Finally some who happened to be present there, approached him (not without considerable terror, it seemed to me) and grabbed him by the arm, with which he kept giving a blow to everybody near him. Others pulled him by the legs and held him down with all their might, for there was never an untrustworthy mule in the world that could kick any harder. They pinned him down in that way for a long time,

because more than fifteen men were upon him with a united efforts. If they were off their guard, he would box them on their snouts.

Meanwhile my master remained kneeling in the pulpit with his hands and eyes heavenwards, and he was so enrapt at the holy essence that the uproar and the noise and the shouting inside the church could not separate from his religious contemplation.

Those good men moved on toward him and awakened him with shouts and asked him to help that poor man who was dying. They begged him to overlook his past crimes and offensive language: "He has already atoned for them, and if you can in any way end his danger and suffering, then please do it out of charity. We clearly knew the culprit's guilt and your own truth and kindness, for the Lord did not defer the punishment granting your petition"

The pardoner, like one who awakens from a sweet dream, looked at them, looked at the culprit, then at the people around him, and said to them very slowly. "My good people, you ought not to say prayers for a man to whom God has shown so markedly His influence. However, as He commands us not to return evil for evil, but to forgive all the crimes, we may ask Him with confidence to grant what He commanded us to do and also to forgive this man who has offended God by throwing an obstacle in the path of His saintly faith. Let's all pray for him.

With this he descended from the pulpit and urged them to entreat God devoutly that He should willingly forgive that sinner, restore him to health and right mind and exorcise evil spirits from him, if God caused him to be possessed of devil.

Everybody knelt in front of the altar with the clergymen and began to chant the litany in a low voice. After he had prayed for

him, my master came to the culprit with the cross and holy water. Then with his hands raised and his eyes cast, until only the whites of them could be seen, toward heaven, he began a long and sincere prayer, which made all the people weep (just as they are used to do during my Holy Week sermons with a devout preacher and audience). He entreated our Lord that this sinner, who hath been tempted by the devil and led into death and sin, should be forgiven and restored to health and life so that he may repent and confess sins, inasmuch as He does not desire the death of the sinner but rather desires that he live and repent.

When he had finished the prayer, he ordered them to bring papal bulls and put one of them on his head. Soon the wicked bailiff began to get better little by little and to recover consciousness. When he had completely come round to himself, he threw himself at the pardoner's feet and begged to be pardoned. He confessed that he had been cajoled and ordered by the devil to say these things for two motives. One was to do harm to the papal bull distributed and revenge myself on him; the other, more important still, is that the devil suffered a great pain over the good that would result from the distribution of the bulls in the village.

My master pardoned him, and, they made peace with each other, so the demand for indulgences was so active that hardly a living soul in the village remained without one - husbands and wives, sons, and daughters, man-servants and maid-servants.

The news of the occurrence spread to the neighboring places and when we reached them, it was not necessary to preach a sermon or go to the church, because to the inn they came to buy the indulgences as if they were the pears to be given away. In this way in ten or twelve

adjacent villages we visited, he sold ten or twelve thousand intelligences without preaching a sermon.

When he staged out this "show" I confess that I was amazed and believed that I had seen a genuine miracle, as many others did. But when I saw later how my master and the bailiff laughed and liked over this mischievous deception, I knew that it had been plotted by the industrious and trickery master of mine.

And although I was only a child then, I was very much pleased with this trick and murmured; "I wonder how often these tricksters cheat these innocent people with these sorts of conspiracy. In all I stayed with the fifth master of mine some four months, during which I also went through many hardship of life.

CHAPTER SIX

How Lazaro entered the service of a Chaplain and what happened to him.

After this I worked under a drmm painter. I ground colors for him, but I underwent all sorts of troubles.

By this time I was quite grown up. One day I entered the cathedral and a chaplain took me into his service. He handed me a good donkey, four large pitchers, and a lash and I began to sell water through the city. This was the first time that I ascended to get a good living, for my belly was full. On week days I gave my master thirty *mravedis* out of my daily earnings; on Saturdays I earned for myself and the other days of the week all that exceeded thirty *maravedis*.

This business was so prosperous that at the end of the four years, by watching my earnings very carefully, I saved enough to dress

myself very respectably even if the clothes are old. With these earnings I bought an old fustian jacket, a threadbare blouse with braided sleeve, a cape with the nap worn off and one of the oldest swords made by Cuellar in the early stage. As soon as I dressed myself like a gentleman, I told my master that he could have his donkey and that I did not want to continue that job any longer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

How Lazaro entered the service of a bailiff, and what happened to him.

After parting from the chaplain, I worked under a bailiff as a judicial officer. But I did not live long with him, because the occupation seemed to me dangerous. Especially one night some culprits ran after my master and me with stones and clubs. They treated my master who was waiting to suppress them badly, but they were not able to catch up with me. Therefore I resigned the job.

While I was thinking over the kind of occupation I should follow in order to have rest and to hoard money against my old age, God was kind enough to enlighten my mind and lead me to a profitable road. By the kind assistance of my friends and gentlemen, all my efforts and hardships were completely compensated by what I acquired then. It was a position appointed by the government, for nobody prospers except those who work for the government.

Even today I still work in this position and live rendering services to God and you. That is to say, it lies with me to cry out the wines that are sold in this city; I also announce auctions and lost articles, and go along with those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake and make their crimes known in a loud voice. To

put it plainly in good Romance language, I was a town crier.

Everything fell into my lap and I have been so prompt in my occupation that everything has to do with this office passes through my hands. Therefore anybody in all the city who expects to sell wine or anything else cannot count on a profit unless Lazaro de Tormes is concerned in it.

At this time your friend and servant, the Archpriest of Salvador, whose wines I hauled, learned of my talents and character and skillful way of living. He arranged for me to marry his maid-servant, and since nothing but profit and advantage could come to me from such a person, I resolved to accept the proposal.

Thus I married her, and to this day I have never repented, for besides the fact that she is a very good, hardworking and obliging woman, I am given every favor and assistance by my master the archpriest. During the year he gives her from time to time about one loaf of wheat, on church holidays and now and then a couple of holy bread, and old breeches he has discarded. He rented a little house for us close to his own. On Sundays and holidays we usually dine in his house.

However, there have been and always will be malicious tongues and they never let us live in peace. They say I do not know, but I do know, about my wife's going to the archpriest's house to make his bed and cook his meals. But it would be much happier for them to be loved by God than to tell such truths as this. But she is not a woman who pockets these insults. Moreover, my master has promised me, and I think he will perform it. One day he told me at great length before her. "Lazaro de Tormes, whoever minds the malicious gossip of others will never prosper. I say this because I don't care a straw if someone

should talk about seeing your wife come to my house and leave it. That she enters my house is an honor to herself and to you. I assure you. So don't mind whatever others may say, but concern yourself with what would be to your advantage.

"Sir," I said to him, "I determined to rely on the good people. The truth is that some of my friends have said something like that to me, nay more, more than three times people assured me that my wife gave birth three times before she married me. I mention this sort of thing to you because she is present here.

Then my wife began to swear such a terrible oath that I thought the house would cave in the ground with us. Then she began weeping and cursing the man who had arranged a match with us. I thought I had rather die than utter these words unwittingly. With me on one side and the archpriest on the other, we cajoled her and assumed so conciliatory an attitude that she stopped weeping. I swore her that never again in my life would I refer to the matter nor have I the least objection to her entering and leaving his house, day and night, for I am sure of her virtue. Thus the three of us reached a complete mutual understanding.

Up to the present, no one has ever heard us touch on it. Moreover, whenever some one is going to say something about her, I cut him short and say, "Mind you, if you are my friend, don't say anything to me that will cause me pain, for I don't want to have anyone as my friend who grieves me - especially if he tries to set me at odds with my wife. She is the thing in the world that I love most of all, and I love her more than myself. God has been merciful in marrying her to me and she is more of a woman than I can deserve. I will swear by the consecrated Host that she is as good as any woman who lives

within the doors of Toledo. I will fight him who tells me otherwise.

In this way they say nothing to me, and I have peace in my house.

This was the same year in which our victorious emperor entered this illustrious city of Toledo and organized the Cortes, and a great festival was held, as, you have heard.

At this time I was prosperous and at the peak of all good fortune.