



33347. A Statue of Don Quixote and His Faithful Sancho Panza Commemorates the Fame of Cervantes in Madrid, Spain.

33347
DON QUIXOTE AND HIS FAITHFUL
SANCHO PANZA

It is in Madrid we find this unique monument erected to perpetuate the fame of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Spanish novelist. He was born at Alcala de Henares in 1547. The exact date is not recorded though the records do show he was baptized on the 9th of October, in 1547, in the church of Santa Maria la Mayor. Not many details of the author's early life are known. Facts about his education seem to be entirely lacking. Early in his career he joined the army and there are quite a few records of his experiences as a soldier.

He was captured in 1575 by Barbary pirates and held a prisoner for five years. Following his return to Spain he married and then began to devote himself seriously to literature. His first work is believed to have been published in 1583. These were some sonnets.

Plays and a novel followed, and the first part of the book which won his immortal fame followed. This first part of *Don Quixote* was published in 1605. It was not until ten years later that part two appeared. Though this work was favorably received, it brought Cervantes but scanty financial return. He died April 18, 1616, in Madrid where his remains lie.

Don Quixote was without doubt his best work and entitles him to rank with the greatest writers of all times. Of this work it has been said "children turn its leaves, young people read it, grown men understand it, old folks praise it." Today it is more popular than it was over three centuries ago, after it was first written.