

and carrot, though there were a good spitchcocked eels on the board as well as were taken out of the Isis.

Honest Giles, therefore, satisfied himself that his guest was no Roman, and with all comely courtesy besought the stranger to pledge him in a draught of the cool tankard, and honour with his attention a small collation which he was giving to his nephew, in honour of his return, and, as he verily hoped, of his reformation. The stranger at first shook his head, as if declining the courtesy; but mine host proceeded to urge him with arguments founded on the credit of his house, and the construction which the good people of Cumnor might put upon such an unsocial humour.

'By my faith, sir,' he said, 'it touches my reputation that men should be merry in my house, and we have ill tongues amongst us at Cumnor (as where be there not?) who put an evil mark on men who pull their hat over their brows as if they were looking back to the days that are gone, instead of enjoying the blithe sunny weather which God hath sent us in the sweet looks of our sovereign mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom Heaven long bless and preserve!'

'Why, mine host,' answered the stranger, 'there is no treason, sure, in a man's enjoying his own thoughts, under the shadow of his own bonnet? You have lived in the world twice as long as I have, and you must know there are thoughts that will haunt us in spite of ourselves, and to which it is in vain to say, begone, and let me be merry.'

'By my sooth,' answered Giles Gosling, 'if such troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, and will not get them gone for plain English, we will have one of Father Bacon's pupils from Oxford, to conjure them away with logic and with Hebrew—Or, what say you to laying them in a glorious red sea of claret, my noble guest? Come, sir, excuse my freedom. I am an old host, and must have my talk. This peevish humour of melancholy sits ill upon you—it suits not with a sleek boot, a hat of a trim block, a fresh cloak, and a full purse—A pize on it, send it off to those who have their legs swathed with a hay-wisp, their heads thatched with a felt bonnet, their jerkin as thin as a colwbel, and their pouch without ever a cross to keep the fiend Melancholy from dancing in it. Cheer up, sir! or by this good liquor we will banish thee from the joys of blithesome company into the mists of melancholy and the land of little-ease. Here be a set of good fellows willing to be merry, do not scowl on them like the devil looking over Lincoln.'

'You say well, my worthy host,' said the guest, with a melancholy smile, which, melancholy as it was, gave a very pleasant expression to his countenance—'You say well, my jovial friend; and they that are moody like myself, should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy—I will drink a round with your guests with all my heart, rather than be termed a mar-feast.'

So saying, he arose and joined the company, who, encouraged by the precept and example of Michael Lambourne, and consisting chiefly of

persons much disposed to profit by the opportunity of a merry meal at the expense of their landlord, had already made some inroads upon the limits of temperance, as was evident from the tone in which Michael inquired after his old acquaintances in the town, and the bursts of laughter with which each answer was received. Giles Gosling himself was somewhat scandalised at the obstreperous nature of their mirth, especially as he involuntarily felt some respect for his unknown guest. He paused, therefore, at some distance from the table occupied by these noisy revellers, and began to make a sort of apology for their licence.

'You would think,' he said, 'to hear these fellows talk, that there was not one of them who had not been bred to live by Stand and Deliver; and yet to-morrow you will find them a set of as painstaking mechanics, and so forth, as ever cut an inch short of measure, or paid a letter of change in light crowns over a counter. The mercer there wears his hat awry, over a shagged head of hair, that looks like a curly water-dog's back, goes unbraced, wears his cloak on one side, and affects a rudely vapouring humour—when in his shop at Abingdon, he is, from his flat cap to his glistening shoes, as precise in his apparel as if he was named for mayor. He talks of breaking parks, and taking the highway, in such fashion that you would think he haunted every night betwixt Hounslow and London; when in fact he may be found sound asleep on his feather-bed, with a candle placed beside him on one side, and a Bible on the other, to fright away the goblins.'

'And your nephew, mine host, this same Michael Lambourne, who is lord of the feast—is he, too, such a would-be ruffler as the rest of them?'

'Why, there you push me hard,' said the host; 'my nephew is my nephew, and though he was a desperate Dick of yore, yet Mike may have mended like other folks, you wot—And I would not have you think all I said of him, even now, was strict gospel—I knew the wag all the while, and wished to pluck his plumes from him—And now, sir, by what name shall I present my worshipful guest to these gallants?'

'Marry, mine host,' replied the stranger, 'you may call me Tressilian.'

'Tressilian?' answered my host of the Bear; 'a worthy name; and, as I think, of Cornish lineage; for what says the south proverb—

"By Pol, Tre, and Pen,
You may know the Cornish men."

Shall I say the worthy Master Tressilian of Cornwall?'

'Say no more than I have given you warrant for, mine host, and so shall you be sure you speak no more than is true. A man may have one of those honourable prefixes to his name, yet be born far from Saint Michael's Mount.'

Mine host pushed his curiosity no further, but presented Master Tressilian to his nephew's company, who, after exchange of salutations, and drinking to the health of their new companion, pursued the conversation in which he found them engaged, seasoning it with many an intervening pledge.