

cordage, and all things conforming; then clap thy warehouse of goods under hatches, put fifty good fellows on deck, with myself to command them, and so hoise topsails, and hey for the New World!

'Thou hast taught him a secret, kinsman,' said Giles Gosling, 'to decoit, an that be the word, his pound into a penny, and his webs into a thread.—Take a fool's advice, neighbour Goldthred. Tempt not the sea, for she is a devourer. Let cards and cockatrices do their worst, thy father's bales may bide a banging for a year or two, ere thou comest to the Spital; but the sea hath a bottomless appetite,—she would swallow the wealth of Lombard Street in a morning, as easily as I would a poached egg and a cup of clary;—and for my kinsman's Eldorado, never trust me if I do not believe he has found it in the pouches of some such gulls as thyself.—But take no snuff in the nose about it; fall to and welcome, for here comes the supper, and I heartily bestow it on all that will take share, in honour of my hopeful nephew's return, always trusting that he has come home another man.—In faith, kinsman, thou art as like my poor sister as ever was son to mother.'

'Not quite so like old Benedict Lambourne, her husband, though,' said the mercer, nodding and winking. 'Dost thou remember, Mike, what thou saidst when the schoolmaster's ferule was over thee for striking up thy father's crutches?—it is a wise child, saidst thou, that knows its own father. Dr. Bireham laughed till he cried again, and his crying saved yours.'

'Well, he made it up to me many a day after,' said Lambourne; 'and how is the worthy pedagogue?'

'Dead,' said Giles Gosling, 'this many a day since.'

'That he is,' said the clerk of the parish; 'I sat by his bed the whilst.—He passed away in a blessed frame, "*Morior—mortuus sum vel fui—mori*"—These were his latest words, and he just added, "my last verb is conjugated."

'Well, peace be with him,' said Mike; 'he owes me nothing.'

'No, truly,' replied Goldthred; 'and every lash which he laid on thee, he always was wont to say, he spared the hangman a labour.'

'One would have thought he left him little to do then,' said the clerk; 'and yet Goodman Thong had no sinecure of it with our friend, after all.'

'*Peto a Dios!*' exclaimed Lambourne, his patience appearing to fail him, as he snatched his broad slouched hat from the table and placed it on his head, so that the shadow gave the sinister expression of a Spanish bravo to eyes and features which naturally boded nothing pleasant. 'Harkee, my masters—all is fair among friends, and under the rose; and I have already permitted my worthy uncle here, and all of you, to use your pleasure with the frolics of my monage. But I carry sword and dagger, my good friends, and can use them lightly too upon occasion—I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honour ever since I served the Spaniard, and I would not have you provoke me to the degree of falling foul.'

'Why, what would you do?' said the clerk.

'Ay, sir, what would you do?' said the mercer, bustling up on the other side of the table.

'Slit your throat, and spoil your Sunday's quavering, Sir Clerk,' said Lambourne fiercely; 'cudgel you, my worshipful dealer in flimsy sarsenets, into one of your own bales.'

'Come, come,' said the host, interposing, 'I will have no swaggering here.—Nephew, it will become you best to show no haste to take offence; and you, gentlemen, will do well to remember that, if you are in an inn, still you are the innkeeper's guests, and should spare the honour of his family.—I protest your silly broils make me as oblivious as yourself; for yonder sits my silent guest, as I call him, who hath been my two days' inmate, and hath never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning—gives no more trouble than a very peasant—pays his shot like a prince royal—looks but at the sum-total of the reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. O, 'tis a jewel of a guest! and yet, hang-dog that I am, I have suffered him to sit by himself like a castaway in yonder obscure nook, without so much as asking him to take bite or sup along with us. It were but the right guerdon of my ineivility, were he to set off to the Hare and Tabor before the night grows older.'

With his white napkin gracefully arranged over his left arm, his velvet cap laid aside for the moment, and his best silver dragon in his right hand, mine host walked up to the solitary guest whom he mentioned, and thereby turned upon him the eyes of the assembled company.

He was a man aged between twenty-five and thirty, rather above the middle size, dressed with plainness and decency, yet bearing an air of ease, which almost amounted to dignity, and which seemed to infer that his habit was rather beneath his rank. His countenance was reserved and thoughtful, with dark hair and dark eyes—the last, upon any momentary excitement, sparkled with uncommon lustre, but on other occasions had the same meditative and tranquil cast which was exhibited by his features. The busy curiosity of the little village had been employed to discover his name and quality, as well as his business at Cumnor; but nothing had transpired on either subject which could lead to its gratification. Giles Gosling, head-borough of the place, and a steady friend to Queen Elizabeth and the Protestant religion, was at one time inclined to suspect his guest of being a Jesuit, or seminary priest, of whom Rome and Spain sent at this time so many to grace the gallows in England. But it was scarce possible to retain such a prepossession against a guest who gave so little trouble, paid his reckoning so regularly, and who proposed, as it seemed, to make a considerable stay at the bonnie Black Bear.

'Papists,' argued Giles Gosling, 'are a pinching, close-listed race, and this man would have found a lodging with the wealthy squire at Besselsey, or with the old knight at Wootton, or in some other of their Roman dens, instead of living in a house of public entertainment, as every honest man and good Christian should. Besides, on Fridays, he stuck by the salt beef

and c
cocked
of the

Hon
his g
courte
in a d
with l
was gi
turn, a
The str
ing th
urge hi
of his
good pe
unsocia

By
reputat
house,
Cumnor
evil man
brows a
that are
sunshin
the sweet
Elizabeth
serve!'

'Why
'there i
his own
bonnet?
long as
thoughts
and to v
let me be

'By n
such tro
and will
we will h

Oxford,
with Heb
in a glori
Come, sir
host, and
humour o

suits not
block, a
on it, sen
swathed w
with a fe
cobweb, a
to keep th
it. Cheer
will banis
company i
land of litt
willing to
the devil le

'You sa
guest, with
choly as it
to his cou
friend; and
should not
happy—I v
with all my
feast.'

So saying
who, encour
Michael La