

'O, men pick up good apparel in the wars,' replied the guest.

'Our Mike,' answered the landlord, 'was more like to pick it up in a frippery warehouse, while the broker was looking another way; and, for the hawk's eye you talk of, his was always after my stray spoons. He was tapster's boy here in this blessed house for a quarter of a year; and between misreckonings, miscarriages, mistakes, and misdemeanours, had he dwelt with me for three months longer, I might have pulled down sign, shut up house, and given the devil the key to keep.'

'You would be sorry, after all,' continued the traveller, 'were I to tell you poor Mike Lambourne was shot at the head of his regiment at the taking of a scone near Maestricht?'

'Sorry!—it would be the blithest news I ever heard of him, since it would insure me he was not hanged. But let him pass—I doubt his end will never do such credit to his friends: were it so, I should say'—(taking another cup of sack)—'Here's God rest him, with all my heart.'

'Tush, man,' replied the traveller, 'never fear but you will have credit by your nephew yet, especially if he be the Michael Lambourne whom I knew, and loved very nearly, or altogether, as well as myself. Can you tell me no mark by which I could judge whether they be the same?'

'Faith, none that I can think of,' answered Giles Gosling, 'unless that our Mike had the gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver candle-eup from Dame Snort of Hogsditch.'

'Nay, there you lie like a knave, uncle,' said the stranger, slipping aside his ruff, and turning down the sleeve of his doublet from his neck and shoulder; 'by this good day, my shoulder is as unscarred as thine own.'

'What, Mike, boy—Mike!—'—exclaimed the host;—'and is it thou in good earnest? Nay, I have judged so for this half-hour; for I knew no other person would have ta'en half the interest in thee. But, Mike, an thy shoulder be unscarred as thou sayest, thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hangman, was merciful in his office, and stamped thee with a cold iron.'

'Tush, uncle!—truce with your jests. Keep them to season your sour ale, and let us see what hearty welcome thou wilt give a kinsman who has rolled the world around for eighteen years; who has seen the sun set where it rises, and has travelled till the west has become the east.'

'Thou hast brought back one traveller's gift with thee, Mike, as I well see; and that was what thou least didst need to travel for. I remember well, among thine other qualities, there was no crediting a word which came from thy mouth.'

'Here's an unbelieving pagan for you, gentlemen!' said Michael Lambourne, turning to those who witnessed this strange interview betwixt uncle and nephew, some of whom, being natives of the village, were no strangers to his juvenile wildness. 'This may be called slaying a Cumnor fatted calf for me with a vengeance.—But, uncle, I come not from the hucks and the swine-trough, and I care not for thy welcome or no welcome; I carry that with me will make me welcome, wend where I will.'

So saying, he pulled out a purse of gold, indiffer-

ently well filled, the sight of which produced a visible effect upon the company. Some shook their heads, and whispered to each other, while one or two of the less scrupulous speedily began to recollect him as a school-companion, a townsman, or so forth. On the other hand, two or three grave, sedate-looking persons shook their heads, and left the inn, hinting that, if Giles Gosling wished to continue to thrive, he should turn his thriftless, godless nephew adrift again as soon as he could. Gosling demeaned himself as if he were much of the same opinion; for even the sight of the gold made less impression on the honest gentleman than it usually doth upon one of his calling.

'Kinsman Michael,' he said, 'put up thy purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging; and I reckon thou wilt hardly wish to stay longer where thou art e'en but too well known.'

'For that matter, uncle,' replied the traveller, 'I shall consult my own needs and conveniences. Meantime, I wish to give the supper and sleeping cup to those good townsmen, who are not too proud to remember Mike Lambourne, the tapster's boy. If you will let me have entertainment for my money, so—if not, it is but a short two minutes' walk to the Hare and Tabor, and I trust our neighbours will not grudge going thus far with me.'

'Nay, Mike,' replied his uncle, 'as eighteen years have gone over thy head, and I trust thou art somewhat amended in thy conditions, thou shalt not leave my house at this hour, and shalt e'en have whatever in reason you list to call for. But I would I knew that that purse of thine, which thou vapouredst of, were as well come by as it seems well filled.'

'Here is an infidel for you, my good neighbours,' said Lambourne, again appealing to the audience. 'Here's a fellow will rip up his kinsman's follies of a good score of years' standing—And for the gold, why, sirs, I have been where it grew, and was to be had for the gathering. In the New World have I been, man—in the Eldorado, where urclins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country wenches thread rubies for necklaces, instead of rowan-tree berries; where the pantles are made of pure gold, and the paving-stones of virgin silver.'

'By my credit, friend Mike,' said young Laurence Goldthred, the cutting mercer of Abingdon, 'that were a likely coast to trade to. And what may lawns, cypresses, and ribands fetch, where gold is so plenty?'

'O, the profit were unutterable,' replied Lambourne, 'especially when a handsome young merchant bears the pack himself; for the ladies of that clime are bona-robas, and, being themselves somewhat sunburnt, they catch fire like tinder at a fresh complexion like thine, with a head of hair inclined to be red.'

'I would I might trade thither,' said the mercer, chuckling.

'Why, and so thou mayest,' said Michael; 'that is, if thou art the same brisk boy who was partner with me at robbing the Abbot's orchard—'tis but a little touch of alchemy to decoct thy house and land into ready money, and that ready money into a tall ship, with sails, anchors,