

fortnit after and they found him somewhere down on the coast, his face all eaten and his poor hands clutching the weeds and marram grass. Then who be this man, Jane? tell me that."

While Andrew was speaking his wife stood twisting her apron, evidently paying slight attention to the words of her liege lord. Roused by his final question, she spoke, and with determination.

"Andrew," she said, "you must saddle the mare and ride up to the Priory at once."

"To the Priory?" exclaimed Andrew, "and at this time o' night! Why, whatever—"

"Never mind the time," she said, "if the mare can stand it to climb the hill wi' sixteen stone on her back surely you can. You must see Mr. Pilgrim and bring him to speech wi' this man to-night. You must, Andrew, you must, for my mind misgives me, my mind misgives me. And, Andrew, take a drop o' summat warm afore you go out, and be sure to ask for Mr. Pilgrim and bring him along."

Thus urged, it seemed that a portion of his wife's eagerness had been communicated to the landlord, who, hurriedly putting on his boots and draining the glass of spirits offered him by his partner, at once went off to the stable. It was nearly ten o'clock when Andrew, who preferred not to waken the lodgekeeper, tied the mare to the park fence and hoisted his own rotund body over the palings almost at the same spot where Gilbert Arderne entered the park on the evening of his return from the continent. The house was dark both in front and rear, but high up in the west wing above the old refectory there glimmered a feeble light. Mossingill knew that the major-domo slept in this part of the house, but the light was too near the roof for him to be quite sure that Pilgrim himself was in the room with it. However, there was no alternative open to him, and Andrew began throwing small pebbles from the terrace. Some time elapsed before one of these struck the casement,

but at length this feat was achieved. At first no result was manifest, but having, as it were, found the range, the innkeeper succeeded in hitting the window four or five times. Then it was that the window, a swinging lattice, was thrown open and a voice, modulated and cautious in pitch, demanded who was there. It was Abel Pilgrim, there could be no doubt of that, and the innkeeper with equal caution replied to the question.

"Me, Mr. Pilgrim, Andrew Mossingill, from the Billet. I want to see you very partic'lar, if you please."

"To see me? all right," returned Pilgrim, and once more the window was shut.

The house-steward was alone in a long, low room, evidently a lumber room, for old pictures, faded furniture, trunks and boxes were ranged along the sides of the place. In the middle of the apartment stood an antique table of unvarnished oak on which stood a small hand lamp and a metal box of about eight inches long. The lid of the box was open, revealing the contents, among which were three or four smaller boxes. These Pilgrim hurriedly took out and put in his pockets, after which he locked the larger box and deposited it in the top drawer of an old cabinet, which he also carefully locked. Then, taking the lamp, he left the room, appearing below at a side door a few minutes afterwards.

"Why, Andrew Mossingill," he said, "what are you here for at this hour? Now that the family is in town we keep good hours at the Priory: surely your business might wait till morning."

"I don't know as 'twould, Mr. Pilgrim," said the innkeeper, "but you're to judge that for yourself. We've got a stranger at the Billet, a man that you ought to see and hear."

"A stranger at the Billet! why, Mossingill, you must have got a bit slewed over the cricket match. What do you keep an inn for but to take in strangers?"

"Well, well, Mr. Pilgrim, this is no time for gabbling, and no place for't