

best Canaries, and give me your good help to drink it.'

'Nay, you are but in your accideence yet, Sir Traveller, if you call on your host for help for such a sipping matter as a quart of sack—were it a gallon, you might lack some neighbourly aid at my hand, and yet call yourself a toper.'

'Fear me not,' said the guest; 'I will do my devoir as becomes a man who finds himself within five miles of Oxford; for I am not come from the field of Mars to discredit myself amongst the followers of Minerva.'

As he spoke thus, the landlord, with much semblance of hearty welcome, ushered his guest into a large low chamber, where several persons were seated together in different parties; some drinking, some playing at cards, some conversing, and some, whose business called them to be early risers on the morning, concluding their evening meal, and conferring with the chamberlain about their night's quarters.

The entrance of a stranger procured him that general and careless sort of attention which is usually paid on such occasions, from which the following results were deduced:—The guest was one of those who, with a well-made person, and features not in themselves unpleasing, are nevertheless so far from handsome, that, whether from the expression of their features, or the tone of their voice, or from their gait and manner, there arises, on the whole, a disinclination to their society. The stranger's address was bold, without being frank, and seemed eagerly and hastily to claim for him a degree of attention and deference, which he feared would be refused, if not instantly vindicated as his right. His attire was a riding-cloak, which, when open, displayed a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, and belted with a buff girdle, which sustained a broadsword and a pair of pistols.

'You ride well provided, sir,' said the host, looking at the weapons as he placed on the table the mulled sack which the traveller had ordered.

'Yes, mine host; I have found the use on't in dangerous times, and I do not, like your modern grandeens, turn off my followers the instant they are useless.'

'Ay, sir?' said Giles Gosling; 'then you are from the Low Countries, the land of pike and caliver?'

'I have been high and low, my friend, broad and wide, far and near: but here is to thee in a cup of thy sack—fill thyself another to pledge me; and if it is less than superlative, e'en drink as you have browsed.'

'Less than superlative?' said Giles Gosling, drinking off the cup, and smacking his lips with an air of ineffable relish.—'I know nothing of superlative, nor is there such a wine at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, to my knowledge; but if you find better sack than that in the Sheres, or in the Canaries either, I would I may never touch either pot or penny more. Why, hold it up betwixt you and the light, you shall see the little motes dance in the golden liquor like dust in the sunbeam. But I would rather draw wine for ten clowns than one traveller.—I trust your honour likes the wine?'

'It is neat and comfortable, mine host; but to know good liquor, you should drink where the

vino grows. Trust me, your Spaniard is too wise a man to send you the very soul of the grape. Why, this now, which you account so choice, were counted but as a cup of bastard at the Groyne, or at Port Saint Mary's. You should travel, mine host, if you would be deep in the mysteries of the butt and pottle-pot.'

'In troth, Signior Guest,' said Giles Gosling, 'if I were to travel only that I might be discontented with that which I can get at home, methinks I should go but on a fool's errand. Besides, I warrant you, there is many a fool can turn his nose up at good drink without ever having been out of the smoke of Old England; and so ever gramercy mine own fireside.'

'This is but a mean mind of yours, mine host,' said the stranger; 'I warrant me, all your town's folk do not think so basely. You have gallants among you, I dare undertake, that have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries at least. Come, cudgel your memory. Have you no friends in foreign parts that you would gladly have tidings of?'

'Troth, sir, not I,' answered the host, 'since ranting Robin of Drysandford was shot at the siege of the Brill. The devil take the caliver that fired the ball, for a blither had never filled a cup at midnight. But he is dead and gone, and I know not a soldier, or a traveller, who is a soldier's mate, that I would give a peeled codling for.'

'By the mass, that is strange. What! so many of our brave English hearts are abroad, and you, who seem to be a man of mark, have no friend, no kinsman, among them!'

'Nay, if you speak of kinsmen,' answered Gosling, 'I have one wild slip of a kinsman, who left us in the last year of Queen Mary; but he is better lost than found.'

'Do not say so, friend, unless you have heard ill of him lately. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble steed.—His name, I pray you?'

'Michael Lambourne,' answered the landlord of the Black Bear; 'a son of my sister's—there is little pleasure in recollecting either the name or the connection.'

'Michael Lambourne!' said the stranger, as if endeavouring to recollect himself—'what, no relation to Michael Lambourne, the gallant cavalier who behaved so bravely at the siege of Venlo, that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army! Men said he was an English cavalier, and of no high extraction.'

'It could scarcely be my nephew,' said Giles Gosling, 'for he had not the courage of a hen-partridge for aught but mischief.'

'O, many a man finds courage in the wars,' replied the stranger.

'It may be,' said the landlord; 'but I would have thought our Mike more likely to lose the little he had.'

'The Michael Lambourne whom I knew,' continued the traveller, 'was a likely fellow—went always gay and well attired, and had a hawk's eye after a pretty wench.'

'Our Michael,' replied the host, 'had the look of a dog with a bottle at its tail, and wore a coat, every rag of which was bidding good day to the rest.'

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