

"Who talks of 'Black Michael' in his Highness' own burgh?"

The girl gave a little shriek, half of fright—half, I think, of amusement.

"You'll not tell of me, Johann?" she said.

"See where your chatter leads," said the old lady.

The man who had spoken came forward.

"We have company, Johann," said my hostess, and the fellow plucked off his cap. A moment later he saw me, and to my amazement he started back a step, as though he had seen something wonderful.

"What ails you, Johann?" asked the elder girl. "This is a gentleman on his travels, come to see the coronation."

The man had recovered himself, but he was staring at me with an intense, searching, almost fierce glance.

"Good-evening to you," said I.

"Good-evening, sir," he muttered, still scrutinizing me, and the merry girl began to laugh as she called: