

"You are Andrew Mossingill, I think; you have been here a good many years."

A sort of puzzled look of recognition passed over the landlord's round face at being thus addressed

"Yes, sir," he replied, "that is my name sure enough. I was born here, sir, and my father too, for that matter. He came from somewhere up in the north, Cumberland way I've heerd tell. I seem to have seen you somewhere too, sir; where I can't quite make out. Have you been here before, sir?"

"It was many years ago, ten or eleven I should say, when I last saw this house, Mossingill," said the guest, "but you see I remember you. Yes, I am rather sharp-set; bring me what you like, anything, and see to it that I give as little trouble as possible."

Still wearing that troubled expression the landlord retired. "Jane," he said, upon meeting his wife near the bar, "the gentleman will take supper, just a snack of cold mutton or anything, in the parlor." Then, lowering his voice, he continued: "Wife, can the dead walk? Hush! not a word: make believe you want to stir the fire and take a look at him."

Andrew's manner made a deep impression on his wife, for the good innkeeper, though sometimes a trifle surly, was seldom so weightily impressive, and after running to the kitchen to order the necessary preparations to be made she followed her husband's counsel to the letter.

"The nights are chilly a little yet, sir," she said, stirring the fire vigorously and looking at the stranger with a penetrating eye.

"Thank you, I am not cold," was the reply; "I am sorry to trouble you so late after so busy a day as I hear you have had."

"No trouble at all, sir," said the landlady, "it is our business. But it has been a busy day, sir, leastwise for us quiet country folks. Did you see the match, sir?"

"I have only just come to the village," returned the guest, "I walked from Watton."

"From Watton, sir? why you must be a good walker, but the road is a good one, though you might have lost your way a mile or two beyond where the crossroads are."

"I could scarcely lose my way about here," said the man, "although I have not been here for some years. The match was on the old ground, I suppose, east of the Priory? They used to call it the Spinney Meadow."

The landlady's answer was interrupted by the entrance of a maidservant with a shoulder of cold mutton and various other accessories to a goodly supper. Rejoining her goodman in the large kitchen Mrs. Mossingill at once began to question him.

"Andrew," she said, twisting the corner of her apron and spoiling its appearance in her excitement, "I have lived in this house forty years as maid and wife, but never yet have I seen anything to beat this. You never kept a secret from me long, Andrew, so don't try to keep this one. Who is it? What does he come here for?"

"Jane," said the husband, "I don't know from Adam, but I have my suspicions. A man's thoughts are his own, wife, but I never heerd that a man was bound to tell all his thoughts. Mebbe 'tis his ghost, though, his ghost."

"Pshaw! you fool, do ghosts eat cold mutton and wash it down with Burton ale? tell me that, Andrew Mossingill."

"Mebbe they don't, Jane, mebbe they don't; not but what they would if they could, my gell, no doubt, 'cept 'twas the ghost of a teetotaller. Ten years sin',—eleven come harvest,—he were standin' in yon room; the squire were away up in Lunnon at th' time. 'Mossingill,' he sez, 'I'm tired o' this confounded place and o' old Summerford wi' his Latin and mathew-maddix, and now that dad's in town I'm goin' on a spree all alone. I've got ma's consent,' he sez, which he 'adn't, for she was up to Lunnon too, 'and I'm agoin.' 'Whatever you do be careful, Master Randall,' sez I, and he laughed gaily. A