

board from top to bottom, and another whirl down the dismantled chimney scattered the embers on the hearth. The fury of the wind seemed to remind the men anew of the damage that they had one and all sustained. Nerves could not have endured to sit quietly and think of it; and suddenly a man broke out into a song. Soon the songs and choruses in the kitchen drowned much of the noise outside, and even Wilson was fain to occupy his imagination with any diversion. Slowly the resolute look passed from Jaques' face, and in its place appeared the old complaisant look of the boon companion. He was flushed and now and then he giggled a little. Wade, now uproarious, shouted that "that was the Robert they kenned."

"Ken? And we'll ye should ken him," Jaques replied, flattered and giggling anew. "There ha-na such a spirit set foot i' th' 'Hermit' sin' Robert were here last, eh, James? For fun and divilment, James, eh?"

His eyes shone brilliantly with the double light of the fire and brandy. For a moment he fumbled with the handkerchief on his wrist, then he swayed a little. The regaining of his balance seemed to occupy him, and when he was upright again he had forgotten whatever he had to remember.

"Him," the landlord cried, "him that was always that ready wi' a jest or a answer! Nay, Robert, ye ha' used us shameful. Let's fine him, lads!"

"Ay, I were a rum one," Jaques chuckled to himself; "no milk then, Christopher, what?"

"Milk!" Wade said scornfully,—"Let's try him, lads, an' see what he has to say for himself; that would ha' been sport wi' th' old Robert. Come, I'll be th' judge; you'll be th' dock where he's sitting. James shall prosecute, and Thompson shall defend him."

"Let's fill up first." The jest took hold of the company, and Jaques sat, his head wagging slowly and heavily, his eyes now cloudy with sleep and his hurt, now bright with the unaccustomed liquor. One heavy

arm hung over the back of his chair, and his head was sank on his chest. His money lay on the table before him, and he offered wagers. His pipe went out constantly, and he burned his fingers lighting it again. When James described his comfort in exaggerated terms, he made weak little noises of delight, and when Thompson defended him, he dozed. Christopher Wade in the judge's chair, was sound asleep having begun his potations earlier than the rest; and outside the storm howled monotonously.

"Ay, he shall ha' a chance to speak. Waken the judge up, James."

The landlord was wakened, shook himself crossly, and immediately went to sleep again, breaking into a high snore that continued thenceforward. Jaques lifted himself up, swayed, and began to speak.

"O, aye," he said with a hiccough, "'th' prisoner always has a chance to speak—I'll all courts th' prisoner maun ha' a chance to speak; eh, Wilson? . . . They canna tell me anght about courts; I ha' served o' a grand jury twice. . . . A crown, now, not a man here can say as much. . . . Where am I? I ken. . . . James called me a 'gallus deserter' he-he-he! I thought o' summat to say o' that. . . . I ha' th' handkerchief to think me on, an' all. . . . He-be! Robert's th' lad for a bit o' fun yet."

The drunken man lurched forward, steadied himself against the sleeping landlord, bent forward with a grotesque gesture to listen to his snoring, and winked two or three times at the company.

"I'll ha' a bit o' fun wi' him while he's asleep. We maun let it go any further if I tell ye. . . . Stephen Tait called him a thickhead, he-he! And he said. . . . did Christopher. . . . Hear it blaw! . . . He were blown over th' Scar, were Stephen. Who says he weren't? who says he weren't? Where were Robert Jaques at th' time? Let em tell me that. . . . Robert kens more than any o' em. . . . I'm drunken, but I ken courts—grand jury twice. . . . we're all friends here. If anybody wants to bet a crown I'll tell ye the joke. Let him