

neared the inn, his distrust grew stronger, and he would gladly have passed it by. But the jaded condition of his horse and his own keen longing for something hot and strong and a soft bed thereafter caused him to curse himself for a timid fool and to thrust away from his mind the hostler's warning.

He rode up then boldly to the great inn at Rantowles, a huge frame building of two stories, with a great wide piazza in front on the lower floor, and an enormous sign hanging out from the middle hall of the upper floor, being a bewigged head that had done duty for Mr. Pitt before the British occupation, then for Lord North, and now it was supposed to represent John Rutledge, but the paint was thin and the old lettering showed through, and it would have been hard for a stranger to have decided who the worthy was.

Basmorne, the innkeeper, came out, at sound of the horse's footfall, to greet the coming guest. "Here, Bill!" he called in a burly voice to a tall negro fellow who was sauntering over from the stables, which were a little to the rear on the left within the same enclosure as the inn. "Hurry up there boy, and take the gentleman's horse. Move a little faster, damn you! Curry him down well, then water him and feed him, and put him in the stall next the barn."

By this time the stranger had dismounted. Taking the holsters from the front of the saddle and throwing them over one arm, and using the same precaution with the saddle bags behind the saddle and disposing of them over his other arm, he advanced to the low steps of the inn.

"Your honor is very welcome," said Basmorne, bowing low, and offering to relieve him of his burdens. "Let me have your things, your honor, and come you into supper. Your honor must be heartily tired and also somewhat the worst for scant garnishing of the hollow regions after so long a ride. We have Madeira of the twenties and good Santa Cruz and Hollands of the best, that will help to wash down fine rope sausage, cheese of Cheshire and of Limonsin, blood