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MRS. BROWN ON THE NEW LIQUOR LAW

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MRS. BROWN
ON
THE NEW LIQUOR LAW.

BY
ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN PAPERS," "MRS. BROWN'S 'OLLIDAY OUTIN'S,"
"MRS. BROWN IN AMERICA," ETC.



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PREFACE.



IN course we all knows as drink is a bad thing, if you goes into too deep, the same as any a-fallin' overboard into water, and there is some as will let it carry them away like into their graves, even tho' they 'ave took the pledge, and then kep' sober three days, and been in liquor ever after, the same as Mrs. Bidwell, and a nice end she come to; but that's a werry different thing from shettin' up a public-'ouse at them 'ours, as you can't get a drop of beer of a Sunday night for love or money, as the sayin' is, partikler arter bein' out for the day, and got into our street just as the "Blue Lion" were closed in our werry faces, as were that aggrawatin', with not even a bottle of Allsop in the 'ouse, and don't 'old with sperrits and water for a draught when you're that parched, as only dries up the mouth, 'owever weak, let alone not a-relishin' your wittles like a drop of beer; and must say as I were

put out with the gal not 'avin' the thought for to fetch it five minutes afore the time, as wouldn't 'ave got dead in that time; not with a bit of bread put in it, and then poured out with a 'ead, as I'd as lief take a black draught myself as beer with no 'ead to it.

Well, as I were a-sayin', drink is drink, and a real blessin' to mothers, as a many 'ave brought up fine families on public-'ouse porter afore now; not as I 'old with more than two pints a day, with a extra arf pint as the infant might pine for in the dogs days, or them as 'ave to stand at the wash-tub or a day's ironin', as takes it out of any one, and don't believe as beer ever drove any one to drinkin', as troubles will; and whose fault I should like to know? as I don't believe poor Mrs. Bidwell never wouldn't if he'd been a true man, and not 'ave deserted 'er under the doctor's 'ands, as flew to 'er 'ead, and the fust time as I went to see 'er felt sure as them medsins was a deal too stimilatin', as that there salverlatterly ain't nothink but sperrits arter all, and if took habityeral, is jest the same as the bar of a public-'ouse, with a two-out glass constant in your 'and, like Mrs. Summers, as were 'er ruin, and broke up 'is 'ome; not as that were any excuse for 'im a-goin' off to the Cape of Good 'Ope to look for dimons with another man's wife, cos he couldn't say as 'is own wife's 'abits 'a

drove 'im to take any one else's, and was both drowned afore they got out of the Channel, thro' collusion with a steamer as were coalin', and sunk 'em like a lump of lead in the night, without any one a-'earin' not even so much as a scream, least-ways accordin' to wot the steamer said, or a ripple visible when mornin' broke, with fishin'-boats all round, as they marked with a floatin' boy, as a warnin' to others.

But as to poor Mrs. Bidwell, I knowed 'er well when Miss Priddin, as were never good-lookin' thro' a squat figger and a cast in the eye, as not all 'er curls couldn't conceal; and as to 'im, he were 'ansom', no doubt, with 'is flowin' whiskers and curly 'air; but 'ansom' is as 'ansom' does, is my motter; and to marry 'er on the sly, and be forgiven by the family, and then be'ave that outrageous within the year, a-comin' in at all 'ours, and never sober; and shall never forget Mrs. Meddow, as nussed 'er with 'er fust, a-tellin' me about 'im a-comin' into the room with the infant three days old at four in the mornin', and a-dancin' a sailor's 'ornpipe over the fire-irons on the floor, as he threatened he'd brain Mrs. Meddow with if she interfered, and ended by a-lockin' 'er up nearly stifled in a linen-press till the milk come jest on seven, as the gal took in, and flew to the poor mother's 'ead, and found 'im a-snorin' on the 'arth-

rug with the babby, as 'ad never woke all night, safe and sound in the bassinet, tho' Mrs. Meddow 'ad give it up for lost, and 'adn't dared to kick agin the door for fear of the mother.

I used werry often to see that poor Mrs. Bidwell, for she lost 'er little gal with 'er teeth afore six months, and did take on wonderful; as to that beast, he never come near, but sent a five-pound note in a antelope without a word, as went to 'er 'art, and were the fust time as ever I smelt 'er of sperrits, as she'd been and took ether for to 'ide it from the breath; so knowed as it were all Dickey with 'er, as the sayin' is.

But she were that quiet in 'er ways like, and 'ad come back to 'er father's roof, as were a minister, that when the servant come to fetch me, a-sayin' as she'd been took with a fit on the stairs, I went over with my misgivens afore eight in the mornin', with a strange doctor a-standin' by the sofy, as they'd laid 'er on in the front parlour, thro' 'er father and mother bein' away.

So the doctor he says to me, "It's all over."

I says, "Wotever do you mean?"

He says, "Pison is my werdick."

I couldn't believe my senses, but sends the gal for the perlice, and telegrafts to 'er parents, as got there by twelve o'clock, for she'd done it a-gettin' up in the mornin' with prussic hacid, and

then made a rush down stairs, thro' bein' praps afeard, but didn't get no further than the top stair, and it were all over.

I couldn't stop with 'em, poor souls, for I 'ad partikler business along with Mrs. Padwick, as 'ad got 'er troubles on thro' an only son, as she'd put 'er 'and to a bill as was pertested, and I'd got to take the money and take it up, so it was the same thing as life and death.

I stopped till I'd see 'er laid quiet on 'er bed, for they said she weren't to be touched till the jury 'ad been and viewed 'er; and it certingly did give me a turn to think of any one a-darin' to do sich a thing, and not to wait till they was summonsed out of this world.

She looked werry peaceful, and I 'opes she may be forgiven; but I says, "Wotever will become of 'im as 'ave been the cause on it, as I daresay is a-leadin' of wot he calls a jolly life, little dreamin' of wot's to come, as will be a 'eavy day for 'im."

The same as poor Jane Hillyard, as were treated certingly shameful by the baker, as died of drink in Bermondsey Workus in strong colwulsions, as she wouldn't never believe, but always thought 'erself 'is lawful wife till they come to berry 'im, and two widders in weeds come to 'is grave, as that upset 'er that she took to drink, tho' not open like, but on the quiet, and lost 'er place thro' bein'

took bad in the delirious trimens; leastways so the parish doctor said, tho' she always denied, and got believed thro' 'im bein' only a young beginner.

But, law! that young man were right; it were them trimens as she'd got that time and many a time arter, and well treated in the 'ospital, and 'ad plenty of wine and sperrits too give 'er while a-comin' round, and promised faithful as she'd never touch another drop, but were found in the Regency Canal without 'er bonnet, and 'ad even took 'er boots off afore she throwed 'erself in.

It were sing'ler enuf as that werry day as that awful thing 'appened with poor Mrs. Bidwell, thro' me a-goin' on that business to see Mrs. Padwick, as were busy thro' new lodgers a-comin' in; but she says to me, "Martha, I won't take 'em without a proper reference, as the party as promised before two o'clock, as they're comin' in this evenin', if satisfactory."

We'd jest been a-talkin' over that bill as I'd took up, and 'ardly done our bit of dinner, when there come a tap at the door, and the gal come in and said as the gent 'ad come about the lodgin's.

I thought I knowed the woice in the passage as he come to the door, as were Bidwell's, among a thousand, a-sayin' as he were werry sorry as the reference 'ad not come, and couldn't till the mornin'; but he says, "I suppose you'll let us

come in' this evenin', and this will satisfy you till the post in the mornin'," a-showin' a five-pound note.

I were a-settin' a bit behind the door, so he couldn't see me till he ketched sight on me in the glass oppersite.

I jumps up and says, "Oh, Mr. Bidwell, is your good lady a-comin' 'ere with you to lodge, then?"

He says, "Oh yes."

I says, "Indeed! Pray, when did you see 'er last?"

He says, "Only an 'our ago," and were turnin' to go.

I says, "Stop; did you see 'er alive and well, or did you see 'er in 'er coffin?"

He jumps back and says, "Wot do you mean?"

I says, "Wot I've said, as your lawful wife's a-layin' dead thro' pison, as you've drove her to, you wile, wicked wretch!"

He turned away to go; I follers to the door; and there in a cab set a youngish-lookin' woman, as he 'urries up to; so I says, "Yes, go and look at your murdered wife, you willin'; go and see 'er as I 'ave, a-waitin' for a coroner's inquest;" and I says to the young woman, "If you trusts 'im, he'll bring you to as bad an end."

She jumps out, and runs to me and says, "Oh, it can't be true!"

I says, "It is gospel true."

"Oh," she says, "tell me all about it."

He says, "Come away, Matty; don't listen to that lyin' old cat."

I says, "You ought to be a judge of lyin', you ought, as don't know what truth is; but," I says to the young woman, "if you don't believe me, go to where 'is wife is layin' dead at 'er own father's. I'll give you the address."

He turns on me and says, "Curse you!"

I says, "Curse away. Curses is like chickens; they comes 'ome to roost, and so will your bad be-'aviour come 'ome to you, as will die on a dunghill, and serve you right."

He tried to take that young woman's 'and, but she wouldn't let 'im, and says, "May I come in?"

Says Mrs. Padwick, "Yes, by all means." So in she come, and I took and shet the door in that feller's face, as jumped into the cab, and drove off.

That poor young woman's story were soon told, as were only a milliner's gal, as that willin 'ad been and married at the Register Office that werry day, and only called in to see if it was all right with the lodgin's, as they was a-goin' to Roshewell for the day.

It come 'ome to that feller, tho', as I said it

would, within a month, too; for he was run over and nearly killed thro' intostication, close agin St. Pancras Church, as they took 'im into the perlice station, and were found dead in one of the cells, as they never could make out whether it were drink or fits, but were 'eard a-moanin' a good deal in the night, as were a melancholy end for anyone as 'ad been brought up respectable, and might 'ave kep' so if he'd only been common decent in 'is be'aviour, as were 'is dooty; so always sets my face agin drink, tho', in course, in moderation, it 'ave saved many a life, with champagne and brandy dropped down the throat when insensible, jest to keep life and soul together in a one-and-twenty days' fever, as were Mr. 'Ardin's eldest dorter, all thro' openin' of a drain as nobody didn't know anythink about, tho' 'er father were a builder, and run under both kitchen floors, and the rats 'ad made a reg'lar thorrerfare thro', till they growed that owdacious as they'd take the werry candle out of the socket under the cook's nose; and nearly cost the family their lives, as all took it, and every man Jack on 'em forced to 'ave their 'eads shaved, and settled in the grandfather's limbs, poor old man! as 'ad always been shaky on 'is pins, as the sayin' is, and never went out agin without a Bath-chair, as is to be looked for in the course of nature at eighty-four.

But there's a many as drinks on the sly, and

that deep as never to be found out for years, as were jest like our minister's mother-in-law, as 'ad a chapel three doors off, and lived oppersite, and that slight figger as you wouldn't 'ave thought of such a thing, partikler thro' the minister bein' a teatotaler, so, in course, a-settin' of 'is face constant agin drink of all sorts and sizes.

The moment as I see 'er a-lookin' over the parlour-blind, two days arter they'd moved in, as there weren't much of 'er face wisible but 'er nose, I says to myself, "I should say as you was a reg'lar snipe for suction, as the sayin' is;" and kep' my thoughts to myself, thro' a-knowin' 'ow things gets about thro' servants a-tattlin', partikler over the back wall, as is a thing I never will allow, nor never would; as is 'ow Mrs. Parmley's character were took away in the Bow Road, all thro' 'er gal a-tellin' things over the wall, as proved a base fabrication, as the sayin' is, without no foundation, and come down on the 'eads of them as got it up, and 'ad to pay the lawyer's bill with a printed 'polegy.

But I'm sure I never breathed a word over it, tho' I did see the old lady once or twice myself in a bus, and a-noddin' werry much, but never suspected nothink till she dropped 'er redicule, and then the smell of gin were enuf to knock you over, as made parties titter, as wouldn't own to the redicule at fust, when it were 'anded to 'er, but obli-

gated in the end, thro' 'avin' of 'er money in it, as were soaked thro' and thro', as she said were scourin'-drops for to take the grease out of silks, and fetch the colour up, as a stout party a-settin' oppersite give a wink, and said it were a fust-rate thing for fetchin' up colour, as certingly that old lady's nose could prove; not as it's a rule, neither, for I knowed a party myself, as were Miss Grimsley, as never went beyond 'er fourpenny ale and 'er tea, and 'ad a nose as swelled like a sheep's kidney, as were all brought on by poorness of blood a-settlin' there, as, in course, were that weak as, when it got into the nose, it 'adn't the strength for to flow back, so I never will lay a red nose to drink myself.

It were weeks arter that there bottle were broke in the bus, as I 'eard a loud screamin' in the street, about nine o'clock one foggy night, just as I were expectin' Brown in to supper, and in come the gal, as white as a sheet, a-sayin' as a lady 'ad been and throwed 'erself out of the winder oppersite.

I throwed a shawl over my 'ead, and runs out of the street-door, and run across to the minister's 'ouse; and there, in the front gardin, were a perliceman, and the servant-gal, and one or two nighbours, thro' bein' a quiet street, and the old woman with the red nose a-settin' on the door-step.

So I says, "Whichever winder did she fall from?"

“Oh!” says the perliceman, “she were only a-standin’ on the sell of the parlour-winder, and dropped jest as I come up, as ain’t three feet, and there wasn’t no call for this gal to kick up sich a row.”

“Well,” I says, “get the old lady into the ’ouse, or she may ’ave them door-steps strike to ’er.”

But, law! she wouldn’t get up, but kep’ a-gaspin’ like; so me and the perlice, with a naybour, took and picked ’er up, and pushed and pulled ’er into the parlour, and then she took and turned insensible on the sofy.

So I says, “Go for a doctor,” for I see as she couldn’t get ’er breath, as she were fightin’ ’ard for, even arter I’d been and undone ’er.

She smelt very strong of somethink as were not sperrits perceptible to the nose.

The perliceman he didn’t say nothink, and one of the naybours as set under ’er son-in-law kep’ on a sayin’ as she were a bright and shinin’ light.

I says, “Wherever is ’er dorter?”

“Oh,” she says, “along with ’er ’usban’, as is gone to a serous evening at Mr. Chinbald, as ’as ’em every Toosday, and should ’ave gone myself but for my cold, with a ’ot supper, and won’t be in till ten.”

I says, “It’s gettin’ on for that now.”

Jest then the gal come back, a-sayin' as she couldn't find no doctor at 'ome, so both them naybours went off; and the perliceman went to 'is beat a-sayin' as he must report this case.

Well, that old woman she kep' a-gaspin' and a-groanin', and I were 'arf afraid as she'd pisoned 'erself, and were a-thinkin' as I'd send the gal for to tell the doctor as he'd better bring the stomich pump in 'is 'at, for I 'ave know'd it save life at a pinch, and did know a party as were off 'er chump, as the sayin' is, and wouldn't eat; why, she were kep' alive thro' bein' fed with the stomich pump, as nothink else wouldn't keep down, so will always speak as I've found.

It seemed as tho' that doctor never would be found as come at last, and glad I were to see 'im, tho' a stranger to me, and smelt werry strong of backy, as is a thing as I don't 'old with in a sick room, tho' I'm sure is 'cusable in a parish doctor, when you thinks where they do 'ave to go, and call'd up at all 'ours of the night, and nothink but abuse for their pains, as is miserable pay.

Well, that doctor he give the old lady a good look over, and asks wot she'd been a-eatin', as the gal said weren't nothink since tea, as she'd not eat a bit; she never did, and not enough to keep a mouse alive at no time.

So I shakes my 'ead internal to myself, but

didn't say a word, not to give that doctor no sort of an 'int.

Says he, "We'd better get 'er to bed."

"Well," I says, "that's wot I were a-thinkin' ;" for in course he wanted to esamine and see if there was any internal brooses about 'er, for there was no marks wisible ; and as to the winder it wasn't no more than child's play, as the sayin' is, and yet we couldn't get 'er undressed proper, not on that there black 'orse-'air sofy, thro' bein' too narrer, as they'd been and laid her on to in the front parlour.

Well, move 'er we could not, for she were quite stiff, and that doctor, as were a young man, he stooped down over, and then he looks at me with a knowin' sort of a leer, as I didn't take not at fust thro' not a-'oldin' with some young doctors as 'ave free ways with 'em as they've picked up in 'ospital ; but I never won't allow, not at no price, as the sayin' is, for I always consider sickness too serious for any larks.

So I says to 'im, "Speak out, if you please ; is it fits ?"

He says, a-whisperin' to me, "D. T."

I says, "Wot ?"

Jest then in come both that minister and 'is good lady, as 'ad been fetched out away from supper, and certingly was a couple of figger-'eads, as the sayin' is.

Says the minister, a-speakin' solemn like, in the name of Arpright, "Is there any danger?"

"Oh!" says the doctor, "she'll get thro' this attack, but can you keep her from it?"

"Keep her from wot?" says his good lady.

"Why," says that young man, "from the drink."

"'Ow dare you insiniwate it's drink," say's old Arpright, a-glarin'; "get out of my 'ouse."

"You insultin' wretch," says 'is wife; "be off with you. 'Ow dare Mr. Peckerin' send sich a low person."

"I'll have you punished for deformation, the lot of you," says the minister.

"Oh! go on," says the young doctor, "and tell me if it ain't drink. Wot's the meanin' of this, then;" and he shows a empty bottle as were aperiently brandy.

"Where did you find it?" says the minister.

"Why," says the doctor, "it rolled out from 'er pocket when we was tryin' to move 'er."

"Who called you in?"

"I were comin' out of my own 'ouse when I were asked to step in; but," he says, "as you don't want me I'll say good day."

"Don't leave 'er like this," I says.

"Oh!" says the young man, "here's Mr. Peckerin', he'll tell you more about it," and out of

the room he walked, jest as Mr. Peckerin', as he were 'sistant to, walked in, and arter a bit says it certingly is drink, and no mistake.

If you'd 'eard that minister go on, a-sayin' as we was all set on by Satin to say such things; and so both them doctors walks off and says they'd send the perlice, in case she should die.

So I says to the minister's good lady, "Escuse me, mum, but she did not ought to be left like this."

Says the minister, a-turnin' on me, "Get out of my 'ouse, this moment."

"Oh!" I says, "I'm a-goin'; but, if she should die, I'll do my best to 'ave you both transported."

He says, "Leave the room, you accuser! Go, sarpint!" and I do believe as he were a little bit on 'isself. So 'ome I goes, and it's just as well I did, for that gal would 'ave let the bit of minced weal as we 'ad for supper dry up to a chip, and 'adn't put the sausages in the oven; but it were all right by the time as Brown come in, as weren't till 'arf-past ten; and I didn't tell 'im nothink as 'ad 'appened, cos he'd 'ave said, "Whyever don't you let the naybours alone?" Tho', in course, I never can nor will stand by quiet, and see any naybour pitch out of a winder, even tho' the ground-floor, whether in licker or not, as I shouldn't con-

sider actin' like a Christian, nor yet doin' as you'd be done by.

I made inquiries of the perlice about the old woman, as told me the minister said as she were a-walkin' in 'er sleep, as she'd done from a child upwards, and it's a mussy as it were not the second floor back.

So, in course, I didn't say a single word, tho' I never set eyes on the old lady's nose no more over the blind, as the servant told my gal 'ad gone to live with 'er son somewheres down in the country, as is the same thing, to my mind, as bein' dead and berried, and I'm sure would drive me to drinkin', as the sayin' is; tho' some do say as it's country folks as comes to town as takes to drink that wio-lent, thro' a-missin' of the fresh hair, as a drop of sperrits seem to take the place on.

But, law! I don't know; it's all the same, whether town or country with them as don't know when they've 'ad enuf, tho' any one may be overtook jest the same as I once were, a-tastin' wine at the Docks, as were that careful, and as sober as a judge all the time I were there, and never can remember anythink arter comin' out of that cellar, till I woke up in a strange place about nine o'clock at night, as were Mrs. Blundil's bed, as let lodgin's off the Minories, as 'ad brought me there by two o'clock in the day straight from the Docks in a cab.

Not as ever I will believe Mrs. Blundil speaks truth in sayin' as I set on a old anchor by the Dock gates a-singin', "'Ome! sweet 'Ome!" and wanted to dance the "Reel of Bogie," as were taught me when quite a child by Mrs. Bethel, as took care of a empty 'ouse, and 'ad me to keep 'er company; but certingly my 'ead were splittin', as is no doubt the foul air in them cellars as infected my breath, and them cobwebs over 'ead made me that giddy; but as to takin' too much wine, why, 'ow could I? when I spit out best part of seven or eight glasses as they give me to taste; as is wot they said was the rules, so as you mightn't take too much out of the Docks without payin' the dooty, tho' I'm sure I paid dear enuf for wot I took, as 'ad to pay for the cab, as Mrs. Blundil said were 'arf-a-crown, and my gownd stained all down the front with wine, and my welwet jacket all over sticky thro' me a-leanin' agin a sugar-cask; leastways, that's wot Mrs. Blundil said, as is, in my opinion, a mask of false'ood; for I found out arterwards as she never 'ad no cab for me, but brought me 'ome to 'er 'ouse on a truck, as, if it were to reach Brown's ears, would go in for a diworce, I do believe; and, in my opinion, it were all a plant, as the sayin' is, for to get rid on me, for I'm certain it never weren't 'ole-some wine as they give me in them cellars, or the smell on it wouldn't never 'ave took away my senses

like that, as it's a downright mussy as ever I got 'ome agin, for I lost my redicule, with both my pockets turned out, and a brooch as belonged to my Aunt Tetberry, as 'ad 'er two 'usbands' 'air in it, as she begged me never on no account to part with. So no more Docks for me; and if they wants to stop parties being overtook unawares in licker, let 'em shet up them wine-waults, and not the public-'ouses, as is all open and above-board, as is wot I 'olds with, and not drinkin' on the sly in a cellar, as is a thing I won't never stoop to no more, whether it's in the Docks or out of the Docks, as is wot a many 'as come to thro' drink with the gallus in the end; but that's no reason as anyone else shouldn't 'ave a pint o' beer at their suppers, nor yet a drop of somethink 'ot the last thing, as you may not 'ave in the 'ouse, and didn't, pre'aps, give it a thought in goin' out, or else, in course, would 'ave ordered it, or even brought it in under my shawl; not as I can abear to see a servant-gal, nor yet a chair-woman, comin' in with a bottle under 'er ap'on, and don't like a-sendin' a young gal to a public-'ouse as a rule; not as I minds our gal a-goin', for I'm sure she might stand at a 'underd thousand bars all 'er life, without anyone a-noticin' of 'er, and as to askin' to take anythink, I don't believe as even a City Misshunary would ask 'er to drink, escept out of charity, as wouldn't, in course, be

noyeau, nor yet cloves, as is both slow pison in their way, and not so easy found out as peppermint, as will tell a tale, and which way the wind blows, the same as a straw throwed up; but, for my part, wouldn't keep any servant as done it, for the bar of a public-'ouse ain't no place for fieldmales to be a-'angin' about, escept jest when waitin' to be served, as, in course, must wait your turn, as is only fair play, even if you 'ave got your own jug, as is full measure.

MRS. BROWN ON THE LIQUOR LAW.

It's all werry fine to say as Brittins never shall be slaves, as the sayin' is; but, as I says to Mrs. Bewlay, 'owever can you prove it, with a public-'ouse door shet slap in your face, even with your foot inside it, as if you was a dog, without thinkin' of your corns, and don't want your corns reg'lar pulverized, and only wantin' a glass of arf-and-arf; leastways in the pewter, if you please, for I can't abear anythink in the way of porter out of a glass; and there ain't nothink as brings me round sooner than a good draught of it, when not too much watered down, nor yet with Spanish lickeriss in it, as you can taste quite aperient, as some says they puts in treacle and salt for to make you feel thusty agin all the sooner.

But, as I says, there's good 'olesome beer to be 'ad in the world, thank goodness, for even them Germans 'as took to beer; not as it can 'old a candle to ourn, and don't seem to 'ave the same

froth to it like, but is a deal more like scum on the top on it, as is wot they drinks over in Merryker in the name of Larger, as larther would be a deal more like wot it looks like.

But, as I were a-sayin', talk of robbin' a poor man of 'is beer, why, it's downright robbin' man, woman, and child of their beers; and as to not allowin' 'em to serve a child, why, 'owever is a woman to 'ave 'er 'usband's dinner ready to the minnit, with only a quarter of a 'our to eat it in, and pre'aps the infant a-screemin', and not knowin' which way to turn with 'er 'ands full, and in course might send a child of nine or ten to fetch it, as wouldn't drop the jug, as might be a tin can for safety, nor yet keep on takin' sips, if brought up proper.

As I says, it's all worry fine for them as makes the laws, as is all swells, to talk about children not a-doin' this and not a-doin' the other, a-thinkin' nat'ral of their own, as is brought up with servants and guvernesses, and all manner like that, and in course ain't no consumption 'ow poor people 'as to manage with their children, a-sendin' on 'em errands and a-mindin' the infant, and a-takin' it to the mother, as is out for a day's work, or else got to send 'em with the father's dinner, as in course no Members of Parlyment don't know nothink about, tho' pre'aps some of their grand-

mothers, if livin', could tell 'em about, for I know as there's one or two real live lords as their grandfathers 'ave worked in the mills and swep' out the ware'ouse afore now; but they wouldn't own to it now, and in course don't pretend to know nothink about their poor ways now, as they're up in the world, as the sayin' is; but I'm sure the only way for to get anythink done for the poor would be to let one or two real poor men into Parlyment, as would put the others up to a thing or two about the poor as would be worth knowin'.

Not as I should 'ave minded so much about myself bein' cut off from my beer, if it 'adn't been for wisitors, as I considers Mrs. Bewlay, thro' a-offerin' of 'er a bed; and it's a mussy as I did, or should 'ave 'ad them Finlays on my 'ands, as is a couple of 'owlin' ippercrits, and 'avin' got a married dorter in the Wandsworth Road, 'ad better go and stop with 'er; but in course thro' 'im bein' Mrs. Bewlay's fust cousin, I couldn't say nay to 'em a-goin' about with us, tho' a great noosance, thro' bein' total abstainers, and a thinkin' it a sin for to enter a wine waults even at the jug and bottle entrance, as no one needn't be ashamed on.

So when they talked of Win'sor Castle, I didn't quite jump at it, but said as I'd see, thro' 'avin' only jest got 'ome from the Continong, as me and Erown 'ad been to 'Olland, and all over them parts,

little dreamin' as Parlyment 'ad been a-tamperin' with my beer while my back were turned, as certingly did put my blood up a-comin' on sudden like that, for I'm sure I went out in the mornin' like a lamb, never givin' the supper beer a thought, a-thinkin' of 'avin' it reg'lar, as is never later than ten in a gen'ral way.

So when Win'sor were talked on over night; Mrs. Finlay 'says, a-supp'in' with us, "I daresay Mrs. Brown don't care about seein' Win'sor, thro' pre'aps not ever 'avin' 'eard speak on it, thro' not bein' in the 'art of London, as is wot she knows most about."

So I says, "I certingly do know London blind-fold, tho' I 'ave lost my way in a fog; but," I says, "you'll escuse me, Mrs. Finlay," I says, "but I 'ave 'eard speak of Win'sor Castle often and often; why, in course I 'ave; for didn't my dear mother know a lady as she lived with as 'ad been wot they calls woman-up-the-backstairs to Queen Charlotte's bedchamber; and plenty of backstair-work there were to 'do in that castle, the same as there is in all pallises, as you can see by a-goin' thro' 'em, with all them grand rooms a-openin' one out of the other, as in course it wouldn't do to 'ave a 'ousemaid a-comin' thro' constant with 'er pails and brooms, and a-wantin' to fill the jugs with kings and queens a-settin' there; for in course them

women of the bedchamber, tho' born ladies, 'as in course to stoop for to take up the flew under the beds twice a week, jest the same as any one else as does a bedroom; not as I believe they can 'ave the strength for to give the beds a good shakin', as they did ought to, like a reg'lar 'ard-workin' servant; and that's why, no doubt, them spring mattresses is all the go now-a-days, as requires no shakin'; not as I considers 'em safe, thro' well a-knowin' Mr. Portlock in the gout, as in tossin' about was reg'lar jerked out of bed by the force of them springs, and was a-layin' on the floor all night a-roarin' like a bull, thro' not a-makin' nobody 'ear till the sweeps come next door in the mornin', and 'eard 'is 'owls up the chimbly, as were jest on seven o'clock."

But, as I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Finlay, Win'sor Castle I knows werry well is one of the most old ancientest places in England, as is well beknown thro' King George the Third a-livin' there, as walked on the terris with the Queen and all the royal family of a Sunday arternoon, a-listenin' to the band, as always played.

I've 'eard say as George the Fourth died there quite neglected when the breath were out of 'is body, for all them waggerbones as 'ad been a-livin' on 'im cut and run, and there he was for the werry kitchen-maid to come and look at, as certingly

don't much matter, when 'once you're dead and gone, who looks at you, and only shows 'ow it come 'ome to 'im; as if he'd been a good 'usband and father like Queen Wictoria he'd 'ave died 'onored and respected the same as Prince Halbert, as they do say Win'sor never agreed with 'im thro' the drains, as is the way with some, as they can't live on a 'ill, as is too bracin' for 'em.

I never 'eard tell who it were as built it, tho' I remembers as there were a book, as my Lizzy read to me, as were wrote by a party in the name of Anderson Aintworth, all about Erne the 'Unter, as 'ad some 'and in it, and must 'ave been the old gentleman 'isself as Old 'Arry did used to talk to out on the terris in a tremenjous storm.

So I say, "Under them circumstances, I should certingly like to go if Brown's agreeable, partikler since it ain't often as we goes out together."

"Well," says Brown, "I'm agreeable;" and so it were settled for the next day; and when we was alone, he says, "Wotever you do, don't you go a-tellin' a lot of them yarns of yourn to Mrs. Finlay, as is goin' along with 'er 'usban', and, tho' deaf, thro' bein' from the country, likes to 'ear and see heverythink."

I says, "Mum's the word; she don't get nothink out of me, as can 'ear, see, and say nothink with any woman of my age alive."

We was only five on us for Win'sor, as we started for in good time, and Brown in one of 'is good 'umours as is a cheerful sperrit; as to Mrs. Bewlay she's a reglar good sort, but likes 'er wittles and drink; and Finlay ain't a bad sort either; but of all the dismal fieldmales as ever I did meet, it's that Mrs. Finlay, as is a Plymouth Brother, and always a-waitin' for the millinium, as is to be the end of the world.

As 'er 'usband don't 'old with, thro' bein' a Swedinborgyun, as believes as you'll be in the next world wotever you've been in this, as is a bad look-out for a good many, I should say, partikler cab 'orses and donkeys, and them as is in the workus, let alone them as 'ave to work 'ard for their bit of bread; but in course it weren't nothink to me wot neither on 'em believed or didn't believe, but wasn't a-goin' to be bothered with talkin' about them subjics, as in my opinion the least said the soonest mended, as the sayin' is.

We went by the Waterloo train 'cos of the Bewlays' a-jinin' us at Clappem Junction, and it's wonderful to think 'ow times is changed, when it used to take you over three 'ours from London to Win'sor, as my dear mother did used to go when a gal thro' Egham, Staines, and Datchet, and there we was, under a 'our, a-walkin' up to the Castle gates as fresh as if we'd only jest left 'ome, as is the reason, no doubt, as Queen Wictoria don't live

more in London thro' bein' that close to it as she can send up for everythink down to arf a ounce of tea if she run short, as many a one 'ave done a-livin' out of town, with friends a-droppin' in, as in course she 'ave constant, with the rail that 'andy.

That's 'ow it is as she gets up to Scotland in no time, and can jest slip away without no luggage to speak on, as in course never wants to wear 'er crown and spectre, nor yet 'er royal robes to 'ang over the back of 'er chair up there, and saves a deal of trouble, not to 'ave that old Gladstone a-comin' down a-worretin' 'er to know whether he may charge a 'apenny a box more for matches, as in course she said no to in a instant, through well a-knowin' the way as servants uses them, as must come to a pretty penny every year in Win'sor Castle, let alone cigar lights as the Prince of Wales uses by the bushel, I've 'eard say, thro' never a cigar out of 'is mouth; as in course is the way as he learnt among them Germans.

I must say as that there terris at Win'sor is very fine, with a splendid view when not a fog, as there were that day; not as I considers it myself as fine as the Crystshal Pallis, as they do say you can see the cliffs at Dover from on a clear day; leastways, in old times they did used to know wot were a-goin' on abroad at Win'sor afore anywheres else; as is 'ow King George come to know as they'd won the

battle of Waterloo, a-walkin' about there on Sunday arternoon afore it were over.

It were werry lucky as Queen Wictoria 'appened not for to be at 'ome that time as we went to Win'sor, or else we couldn't 'ave seen them apartments, as in course is never showed when she's there; not but wot she's that afferble as would let me see anythink in reason, I do believe; but I shouldn't wish her for to be disturbed the same as Mrs. Padwick's own sister, as were 'ousekeeper to one of them noblemen as lives in a old anshent castle as they shows to the public; and 'ave knowed the family to 'ave to jump up in the middle of lunch, and run out of the room with their plates in their laps, thro' a lot of parties bein' showed in to see the rooms, as is a thing as Queen Wictoria wouldn't never allow.

Not but wot she can't always keep parties out; as we all remembers that there young sweep as took and 'id 'isself under the sofy in Buckinem Pallis, and 'eard all as the Queen said when she were a-givin' one of them ministers warnin' and a good blowin' up into the bargin; not as that boy ever lived to tell the tale, as were sent to sea and floundered off the Cape; the same as that free-mason in Bermonsey as took and let out the secret as he'd swore to keep over a red 'ot poker; as 'is body were found a-floatin' over them falls of

Niagerer, close agin Merryker, as only show 'ow far them masons will carry their revenge, as is a desperate lot when roused, tho' mild as lambs not ruffled; and to see 'em at one of them fates as they gives, you'd never believe as they'd 'arm a fly; nor in course they wouldn't, only but for fear of that poker a-'angin' constant over their 'eads.

As is why I never would let Brown belong to 'em, thro' bein' one as I've know'd 'im talk in 'is sleep after toasted cheese; and couldn't rest quiet knowin' as a red-'ot poker were 'angin' over 'is 'ead constant; and that's 'ow they do say as that Bermonsey butcher let the secret out, as 'is wife divulged over the palins to 'er next-door naybour, a-knowin' it were certing death; and a-wishin' for to marry the foreman, as she did, within three months, tho' none such a life on it till the day of 'er death; for she never weren't certing as he mightn't turn up; and that foreman beat 'er like a stock-fish, broke up the 'ome, and drunk 'isself to death within the year; as I see 'er myself in the City of London Union, as were 'er parish, thro' 'er father 'avin' took up 'is freedom, as I always considers a judgment myself.

Mrs. Finlay, she's one of them as says as she thinks a good deal, and 'ad a black-leather little bag with 'er as I took natrally for refreshments, but turned out tracks, as she werry kindly give

away to them as showed the Castle, as they didn't take thro' not bein' allowed no perquisites from strangers, as in course Queen Wictoria wouldn't allow with all the nice pickin's they must get, as the kitchen-stuff alone must be a fortune, and think of wot the old clothes must be, not as you can call 'em old as is never wore but once by all the royal fam'ly, not as I should care myself to 'ave on everythink new from top to toe every day, and as to wearin' new boots every day, I'd a precious deal sooner go barefoot or carpet slippers, as is the wust of bein' a queen, you can't go about as you likes and wear your things out in a natral way; not as I'd ever wear a darned stockin' if I were a queen, nor yet cleaned gloves, as I considers beastly.

Mrs. Finlay she walked thro' the rooms in a werry dejected way, low sperrited like as she said the sight of a earthly pallis always made 'er, and begun a-talkin' tracks.

So I says to 'er, "Mum, I've come 'ere a purpose to see a earthly pallis, and as to any other that is far above me, and I'd rather think of one thing at a time as is as much as my 'ead will 'old."

Mr. Finlay he said a somethink about 'is ways, and so I says to 'im as I thought as any one as were a king and queen and lived in Win'sor Castle might 'ope as 'is way were right about the next world bein'

jest like this over agin; not I says as sorrers can be shet out from 'ere as we all knows, and I don't know as any one would care to live for ever not even in a pallis.

“Ah!” says Mrs. Finlay a-cuttin' in, “that's wot I always tells you, Finlay, as yourn is a carnal way of thinkin'.”

Well, that put 'im out, as took and sneered at 'er way as was for a-sharin' of everythink with everybody.

“Ah!” I says, “you're likely to get a good many to agree to that with a hook, as I should like to see all them lords and dukes with their millions upon millions a-sharin' of it with labourin' men and sich like as wouldn't do 'em no good, but only take to drinkin' and idle ways, as the best thing for is plenty of work and good wages so as they can live respectable and bring up their families decent, as a tidy wife will always do, that's bein' the workin' man's friend with no cant nor 'umbug,” and on I walks a-talkin' to Mrs. Bewlay, not a-wishin' to get to no words over it.

I must say as Win'sor Castle is a grand place, and looks fit for a king to live in, and kep' beautiful clean; and well it may be with all that Brown Win'sor soap made a purpose, as in course is 'ighly scented so as to 'ave the place kep' sweet and clean constant.

The picters is lovely, not as ever I should care for to set in a room 'ung round with all them dead people as large as life, as their eyes seems to foller you all over the place and give me quite a turn, the same as Lady Wittles' grandmother did used to as were painted a shepherdess in a werry low-necked gownd, and 'ung in the 'ousekeeper's room, with a yaller button come right thro' the end of 'er nose, as the waggerbone as painted 'er 'ad been and used a old canvass as there'd been a man in a blue coat and metal buttons on, as he 'adn't scraped off proper, so come thro' and spilte the picter.

Not as my lady were ever proud on 'er, for they do say she were in the tripe and trotter line and wheeled 'er own barrer about Clerkenwell, and rode in 'er own carridge afore she died, as shows wot it is not to be above your busyness.

In course you can't see Queen Wictoria's own private rooms, as wouldn't like people to be a pryin' into 'er drawers, and pre'aps left a bit of work about, or even 'er spectacles as any one might do goin' out in a 'urry; and I'm sure if I were badgered about like 'er from post to piller, as the sayin' is, I should go crazy, fust bein' dragged off to Osbun, then to Win'sor, then to the 'Ighlands, then back agin to Win'sor, then to the 'Ighlands, then to Claremont, then to London. Why it's a wonder as she ever can feel at 'ome anywheres,

and I'm sure would shake me to shivers, as ain't a bad 'and at travellin' neither, but must 'ave my own 'ome to go to at last. Not as kings and queens ever 'as 'omes or anythink else of their own, as is only jest lent 'em like to live in the same as the crown and all the other jewels, as might as well be sold for all the use they are now, cos in course Queen Wictoria can't wear 'er crown over 'er weeds, poor thing, as even a bonnet on the top on don't look well; leastways unless only a rooshin' tacked in, as ain't reglar weeds as she 'ave wowed never to forsake not in sickness, nor in 'ealth, as the sayin' is, as is wot I calls a true ooman.

King George he were werry fond of Win'sor all I've 'eard say, as lived a werry quiet life, poor soul, partikler at the end as were a padded room, a sad sad sight, poor old man, quite blind and all 'is other senses gone, tho' they do say as he 'ad a lucid interful, poor fellow, and said 'is prayers and asked to be forgiven all 'is sins, as let's 'ope were granted, as all on us stands in need on.

That's a noble old chapel as stands close by where them knights did use to 'ang up their arms with their garters as nobody wasn't ashamed on in them days, thro' a-wearin' on 'em outside.

I don't think as ever I were more tired when we got to the place in the park where we took our refreshments, thro' 'avin' took purwishuns with us as

we couldn't eat on the grass in the park, thro' bein' late in the year, as werry lovely, tho' I says to Mrs. Bewlay, some of them deers looks at you werry wild, not as Queen Wictoria would let 'em be there if dangerous; and I'm sure poor dear she must 'ave been frightened to death when she 'eard about the Prince of Wales a-goin' out a-shootin' wild bulls, as I never knowed there was any in England, tho' I 'ave 'eard speak on 'em in Ireland.

It give me quite a turn a-readin' about it, as must 'ave been dreadfully dangerous, for we knows as even a cow will turn on you sometimes, as one did on me in the Curting Road, and sent me over a apple stall into a 'eap of mud jest quietly a-crossin', tho' in course she couldn't tell, poor thing, as I 'adn't been a over-drivin' 'er, and proggin' 'er with my umbreller like a drover.

All as I've got to say is, if Brown were to go wild bull 'untin', he wouldn't get me for to come out a-smilin' to meet 'im like the Princess of Wales, but should give 'im it 'ot for a-riskin' of 'is life with a young family a-dependin' on 'im, as I'm sure Queen Wictoria 'ad quite trouble enuf with a-takin' care on 'em in 'is illness, and as to 'avin' of 'im fotty graffed with that wild bull a-layin' dead at 'is feet, I shouldn't care about it.

When we was in the park Mrs. Bewlay's a short tempered woman with a tender foot, so she werry

soon turned back, a-leavin' of me to look out for a dry spot, where we could set and eat our wittles, and see them noble trees and that long walk.

Well, I looks about me and didn't see no place as were suitable, and were jest a-turnin' round some trees when I 'eard a snort, and comes full but upon one of them deers.

I didn't think nothink of 'im a-pawin' the ground, and weren't no more afeard on 'im than a goat, tho' I did know a old Billy once, as stood on 'is 'ind legs when quite a gal, and knocked me over the pailins into the pig-stye, but in another hinstant that there deer he drops 'is 'ead and I see meant mischief, so I puts up my umbreller slap in 'is face and took to my 'eels.

But law bless you, it wasn't no use my runnin' agin a deer, so I makes for a place where they was diggin', 'opin' to find some one at work, as proved for to be a drain as they was makin'.

I didn't stop to think, for I could 'ear that deer a-blowin' at my 'eels, and felt as 'is 'orns would be between my bladebones, and in a jiffey, so into the drain I jumps, and there I creeped along with that 'orned beast a-standin' over me.

I must 'ave been there ever so long, and it were a-gettin' dark, when I 'eard woices, and then give a scream for 'elp, as were some men goin' 'ome from work as drove the hanimal away, and 'elped

me out of the drain, a nice figger I were and not fit to be seen by daylight, and then, thro' not a-findin' the rest, I 'ad to walk into Win'sor, and at last met Brown as 'ad been lookin' for me all about, and said they 'ad took the purwishuns to a coffee-shop thro' Mrs. Finlay a-refusin' to go anywheres in the public line.

They'd all done tea long ago but Brown, as couldn't be easy, so come to look arter me, as they didn't want 'im to, all thro' that Mrs. Bewlay a-sayin' as she were sure I were gone to see a friend in the Castle as I'd been braggin' about knowin'.

I says, "Bless your'art, the party as I were illudin' to died long afore my dear mother married, as were jest about King George's jubilee.

"Well," she says, "you never said that, but I natral thought you 'ad friends all over the place."

I didn't say nothink, but were glad of a cup of tea, and the way as old Finlay 'ad cut up that weal and 'am pie were a disgrace, and nearly every bit of the cold tung gone but the tip and kernely part as I can't abear, and then found out as Mrs. Finlay 'ad been a-givin' it away to the woman as waited, on 'er Christian principles, as I told her were no better than thievin'.

We 'adn't time for me to get dried and brushed proper, when we 'ad to 'urry for to ketch the train, and when we was fairly started, I says, "Brown,

give me up that basket, please, on the seat," for I was reglar done up, and thought as a glass of stout would make a woman of me, but when I got the basket open I couldn't see no beer, tho' I'd put in six bottles and a bottle of sherry wine.

So I says, "Brown, wherever is the bottles?"

He says, "I don't know."

Says Mrs. Finlay, "Oh, dear friends! lay not your 'arts on 'em."

I says, "I 'ope as nobody ain't laid their 'ands on 'em."

Says Finlay, "They are deadly pison."

I says, "Oh, bother that rubbish; where are they?"

He says, "My wife and I agreed as they was pison, so thought it best to make away with them; and so we threw them out of winder jest as we crossed the bridge."

I don't think as ever I were so wild with any one, and do think if I 'adn't lost my umbreller, I should 'ave struck that old man.

So I says, "'Ow dare you steal my property, you canting old thief?"

"Hallo, Martha!" says Brown, "draw it mild."

"Draw it mild, indeed. I ain't got nothink to draw mild or strong; for if these two old fools ain't been and made away with my property, as I considers stealin'."

They both began a-talkin' good.

So I says, "'Old your tungs, and never dare to speak to me agin, and never persume to darken my door agin."

It wasn't no use Brown a-tryin' to stop me, for stopped I would not be. And as to Mrs. Bewlay, she'd got 'er mouth made up for a draught of beer, so in course took my part on the quiet.

I was thankful when we got to Clappem Junction, where them old fools of Finlays got out, as I would not wish 'em good-night, but only told 'em plump and plain, as I 'oped never to set eyes on either of them agin; as went off a-talkin' some of their cant, a-sayin' I should think better on it in the mornin'.

So I says, "No, I shan't; and don't you come a-sneakin' over to me for your wittles, for I'll shet the door in your faces."

I must say as Brown be'aved werry well over it, for he never said a word; and when they was gone, and I said as I meant it, he says, "Well, Martha, you're missus in your own 'ouse, and do as you like."

I were nearly parched, as were no doubt thro' me bein' that escited over that beer, and that angry with them Finlays for throwin' of it away.

Not as anythink could 'ave made me more thirsty, as were that parched thro' 'avin' took some cold 'am with my tea at Win'sor, and no time to

take nothink arter it for fear of missin' the train, as were the last, so 'urried to ketch it.

When we got to Waterloo, if it 'adn't turned to rain, and not a cab nor a bus to be 'ad; so 'ad to walk all the way 'ome to Edgware Road. I might 'ave got plenty of drink on the road, if it 'ad been as Mrs. Bewlay wouldn't go into a public-'ouse, for fear of 'er naybours a-seein' 'er, as she said might be a-passin', as weren't werry likely, thro' 'er a-livin' in a little willage somewheres out Yorkshire way, as wasn't likely to be a-walkin' down the Woxall Road at that time of night.

So I 'ad to toil on like a slave, with no umbreller up, and got 'ome jest too late for to get any beer at the public. And as to Mrs. Padwick, it weren't no use sendin' to 'er at twelve o'clock at night, as would be all in bed and asleep, for she didn't care to go to Win'sor with us, and I shouldn't 'ave went myself, only thro' Mrs. Bewlay a-wishin' it, as rather put me out, thro' a-sayin' over night, "Preaps, Mrs. Brown, you do not care to see it, thro' never'avin' 'eard speak on it.

As is 'ow I come to allude to that lady as 'ad been about the Court there, and can take my solemn davy, as the sayin' is, that I never mentioned Queen Wictoria's name, and only talked about Queen Charlotte; except one time in that there Waterloo Gallery, when old Finlay said as Queen Wictoria

did ought to 'ave 'er crown took off for incuragin' of the Pope, and 'avin of 'is likeness a-'angin' there.

So Brown, he couldn't stand that, and says, "It weren't the present Pope," as I knowed in a minit, thro' 'avin' see 'im score of times in Rome.

So I says to Mrs. Bewlay, "In course the Pope 'ave a right to be 'ere along with the rest as won the Battle of Waterloo; cos in course it's 'is dooty for to put down all thieves and waggerbones; and wotever else were Old Boney, as went about everywhere a-stealin' of everythink as he could lay 'is 'ands on, and would 'ave made short work with them crown jewels of ourn in the Tower, and stole all our grand picters and statues, like the Dook of Wellin'ton at 'Igh Park Corner, and the South Ken-sin'ton Museum, and might 'ave took away the Dook of York's Column, as well as King George in Cockspur Street, and Lord Nelson, if he could 'ave got at 'im, to say nothink of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, and the Tems Tunnel, as did used to be thought the world on in them days, but ain't nothink since railways come in, partikler now as they've been and made one over the Alps.

I can't abear sperrits and water with wittles, so there was nothink for it but to 'ave tea. And it's a mussy as I'd got that canned milk in the 'ouse, as ain't bad for makin' a puddin'; but whether it were the milk, or whether it were the tea, didn't hardly

ever close a eye all night, and when I did, kep' a-dreamin' as old Finlay were that stag a-standin' over me, and a-buttin' at me with bottled porter bottles.

The werry next day if them old Finlays didn't 'ave the cheek to come.

So I says, "If they've come to see you, Mrs. Bewlay, well and good; pray make yourself at 'ome, and send for mutton chops, but I'm a-goin' to spend the day with Mrs. Padwick, and shall wait there till the gal comes over to say they've gone," and out of the room I walks, jest as they was at the foot of the stairs, and must 'ave seen me quite plain a-walkin' into my own bed-room.

Cos in course if they're a-goin' to 'ave them strick laws agin drunkenness why not agin other wices as is quite as bad, if not wuss; and as to sayin' as drunkenness brings the others it ain't true, cos it's thro' idleness and takin' to politics, as men gets a-drinkin', and women too, for that matter, for I never knew a 'ard workin' couple as did it, but them as likes to be about the streets a-gossipin'; and there's another thing as does it, and that's parties bein' that poor and gettin' down in the world, and ain't got no self-respect, and don't care if they do rot on a dung-hill, as the sayin' is; and them as is industrious won't never come to that I'm sure.

It's sich rubbish a-talkin' about every man bein' edicated, and this ere age of enlightenment, as they calls it, and then go and make laws as if we was all a lot of naughty children.

No, wot I says is, punish them as gets drunk, not them as keeps sober, and in course we shall werry soon 'ave the perlice a-breakin' into our own 'ouses, and a-treatin' us as they did that Christmas when they bust open Mrs. Gulpin's front door, a-pretendin' it were fire, that night as she give a party, and Gulpin come back in the middle on it, and she considered were as good as dead, thro' 'avin' been transported for life thro' a-settin' of 'is 'ouse a-fire for to defraud the Royal Eschange, as persecuted 'im for it, and would 'ave been 'anged if they 'adn't altered the law.

But certingly if your own 'ouse ain't your castle whose is ; and 'owever I got thro' that night I can't never tell ; but found myself a-settin' on a door-step close agin Connort Place jest on the stroke of four, and got to Mrs. Padwick's more dead than alive with cold and fear, as the perlice all said I were sober as a judge, and I'm sure of it too, thro' rememberin' wot I'd took.

I must say as nobody don't enjoy theirselves more than me at Christmas time, and can take my glass in moderation, whether public or private life ; not as ever I did 'old with them rompin' and

rumpagin' ways like a pantermine, as I considers that there clown always a-goin' a deal too far, and that owdacious to everybody as I wonder as all the rest didn't take and put 'im down, as they most certingly did try to thro' a 'ole; but, bless your 'art, he weren't no sooner down oné 'ole than he come up another, so it weren't no use a-tryin' to keep 'im under.

But I must say as that weren't no escuse for that young Sloman, at Mrs. Gulpin's party, as 'ad been and see all the pantermine, and so got a-givin' in to all them hantics, a-pretendin' to be clown, and give old Mr. Corder sich a kick in the stomich as sent 'im back'ard into the fender, and pretty nigh finished 'im up, with the back of 'is 'ead agin the bars of the grate, as would 'ave scorched 'im frightful if it 'adn't been for 'is Welsh wig as he's wore for years, but got it that burnt as he were obligated to set in 'is white cotton night-cap all the evenin', as is a thing I can't a-bear the sight on myself, thro' once a-seein' a man 'ung, leastways a-bein' made ready, tho' I did shet my eyes tight till I could turn away, so got Brown for to give up a-wearin' 'is'n afore we married.

But, as I were a-sayin', tho' them Christmas parties often ends bad, that ain't no reason for the law to interfere. I have known myself a dance prove fatal, the same as Mrs. Friswell's birthday,

when the plugs was up, and the main sewer bust into 'er back kitchen, as was 'arf up your leg, and every one thought would 'ave brought the 'ouse down with a run, as the sayin' is, thro' the foundation bein' undermined, as ended in dry rot a-settin' in, as smelt jest like apples, tho' some said it were the rats, as certingly is werry destructive, tho' no doubt useful, for I'm sure there's some parties that dirty, and leaves their dust-'oles that frightful neglected as would breed a pestilence but for the rats a-carryin' of it off, and I'm sure there was old Mrs. Gabbidge, as didn't used to mind 'em in 'er kitchen, and would come out that tame jest like kittens, and gnawed everythink down to the dusters dreadful, and a cat no more use than a rabbit about the place for ketchin' 'em, thro' bein' that well fed as in course made 'er lazy, like the rest of the world as 'ave got their bread made for 'em, as in course wouldn't work if they could get along without it.

But no, not if you was to crown me Queen on the spot, would you ever ketch me agin at Mrs. Gulpin's, for of all the evenin's as ever I did pass, that beats 'em 'oller, as the sayin' is; not as she's a bad sort, nor yet her brother, as is Mr. Corder, as 'ave the parlours under 'er, as he lent for to 'ave tea and supper in; but wotever right 'ad she to give that party, with sich a thing 'angin' over 'er 'ead, as she were well aware on, for 'is own sister as

married in the rope and twine line down Lime'us way, wrote for to tell 'er that he'd been seen twice at a sailors' lodgin'-'ouse out by Blackwall, as would 'ave been my death on the spot I'm sure, if Brown was to take to sich ways, as is all werry well for Malays and sich like outcasts.

In course a man as 'ave been transported over twenty years ain't no better than a 'eathen as don't repent, partikler for arson, as is murder in my opinion, specially in a narrer street like that, with a old party bedridden on the top back attic, as were 'is own aunt by marriage, and pretended to keep 'er, poor soul, and only allowed 'er 'arf-a-crown a quarter, and would 'ave sent 'er to the workus all but for 'is wife sayin' it were a disgrace, as he'd been and borrered over five 'underd pounds of 'er 'usban', as would 'ave been a trifle for 'er, poor soul, in the hevenin' of 'er days, as the sayin' is.

But little did he think as there were over eighty pounds sowed up in 'er pillar, as she were a-clutchin' constant and never would part with, till in dyin' she give it to Mrs. Gulpins' own 'ands, tho' not the strength to say more in a gasp than "Somethink in it for you," as give the clue to cuttin' of it open with a dinner-knife, and there was the bank-notes, as was just when he'd been lagged, as the sayin' is, over six months, and only shows 'ow a good action ain't never lost, and were berried in plumes at

Nun'ead Simmetry, with the 'andsomest mournin' for 'er as ever I did see under a widder as Mrs. Gulpins put on for to show 'er respect, as were 'ighly becomin', and made many to think as she'd berried Gulpins, thro' not a-readin' the papers as he were tried in; and I'm sure some of them trials is best let alone, as is dreadful 'orrers, tho' when there's war a-goin' on a single murder don't seem nothink more than mere child's play, as the sayin' is.

Well, as I were a-sayin', 'ow Mrs. Gulpins could think of givin' a party I can't think, a-knowin' he might turn up any day, and 'adn't asked me thro' a-knowin' as I set my face agin it, as the sayin' is; but, as bad luck would 'ave it, thro' not a-'earin' from 'er, and a-thinkin' fully as the party'd been and blowed over, and the weather a-givin' a little, I went to see 'er that werry arternoon, as is a good step from the Bow Road to Nottin' 'Ill, altho' one bus will do it within a werry few minits, as don't seem no time when you can sleep thro' it, as is my 'abits in the furthest corner.

The moment I got to the door I smelt the toastin' goin' on that strong I know'd as she weren't alone, tho' I thought preaps only a friend, as might be 'er landlady and 'er dorter, as is both werry friendly, tho' 'umpbacked; leastways the dorter, as 'er mother said were thro' the stay

business, but in my opinion born to it like, and that fond of me as the moment I spoke run out in the passage, and said, "Oh! you dear old soul, come in; won't Mrs. Gulpins be glad to see you," and smelt werry strong of sperrits as she kissed me like a old friend, as I ain't over fond on, for I thinks as them as is that fond on you may turn on you agin like Whittin'ton, as the sayin' is.

When I got in the parlors and see the tea laid, I knowed as it weren't only friendly, for there was cups and sarsers for over twelve as I counted at a glance, with water-creases, s'rimps, cold 'am, and a plum-cake all laid out.

So I says to Miss Plummer, as were that young woman's name, and said 'ow glad she were I'd come, "Law, bless you! I wouldn't stay for the world, as shall 'ave to set in my bonnet thro' not a-comin' to stop, and 'ad my 'air tacked into it for to save it from slippin' over my eyes, as the shakin' of the bus will often do; and that's 'ow it were as I were taken ever so far beyond the part as I wanted to go that time as I was a-goin' to see poor Mrs. Telford, as 'ad broke 'er arm in two places thro' a-pitchin' out of bed, and never will believe as lick'er 'ad anythink to do with it, but over-reached 'erself in a-tryin' to get at the toast and water, as were always on a chair by the bedside, thro' bein' a feverish subject at the best.

So I says to Miss Plummer, "Let me go, that's a dear, and tell Mrs. Gulpins as I'll come early next week, as'll be quite 'andy thro' a-stoppin' with Mrs. Padwick then."

She ollers out, "Oh! Mrs. Gulpins, do come and stop Mrs. Brown, as wants for to go away agin thro' a-findin' as you've got a party."

Up comes Mrs. Gulpins with a face a-flarin' like a north-east moon, as the sayin' is, and says, "Oh! you old toad, give me a kiss, and take off your bonnet this very hinstant," and begun for to pull at it.

I says, "For mussy sake, don't, for you'll pull my 'ead all to bits, as didn't come to stop more than a 'our, and 'aven't got my cap nor nothink to wear."

She says, "You may 'ave one of my caps, as 'Melia Plummer will fit on to you beautiful; won't you, dear?"

"That I will," she says, "with pleasure."

"No," I says, "if I stays it must be in my bonnet, "for I wasn't a-goin' to let that young ooman know 'ow I'd fixed in my 'air.

I should not 'ave stayed if I knowed as we was in Mr. Corder's rooms, thro' 'im and me bein' cut one another dead, as the sayin' is, ever since the time as he lived next door to me out by Stepney, as always were a fidgety old touch, and

always a-botherin' about somethink, and would 'ave it as preaps a silver tea-spoon as he'd lost had got into our water-butt, jest outside the back door.

Well, it so 'appened as that water-butt 'ad give me a deal of trouble to keep it shet up thro' bein' the rain-water, as is that soft for washin' the 'ands, tho' that black and sooty as no one couldn't drink, as draws the tea beautiful; but what could you expect from the top of the 'ouse, so always kep' the lead on myself. But when that gal come and told me as she were sure the cat 'ad been and dropped 'er kitten into it thro' the 'ole for to 'ide it, I 'ad the steps out in a minit, and up I gets to try and see if I couldn't fish it out with the rake, not as I valued the kitten, but wouldn't be pleasant if left to petrify there in the water.

I got on the steps, as I told the gal to 'old tight, and were a-lookin' in that steadfast, a-forgettin' all about my silver spectacles, as I'd put off my eyes jest over my 'air, as I valued partikler thro' a-belongin' to Mrs. Gilson, as give 'em me with 'er own 'ands, a-sayin', "You've been a kind soul to me in sickness, and keep 'em for my sake," as I do believe were the ruin of my eyesight, thro' a-takin' to 'em at forty-seven, as were meant for 'er at eighty-three.

Well, in tryin' to ketch sight of that kitten, I

stoops my 'ead down and into the water-butt, and if my glasses didn't take and fall slap in.

In course, thro' bein' silver, I could see 'em a-shinin' at the bottom, and calls to the gal, and says, "Bring me the kitchen tongs, and I'll soon fish 'em up."

Out comes old Corder next door in a bustle, as 'ad been a-standin' on 'is back-door step a-listenin', and says, "I should like to look into your water-butt, for I'm pretty sure as that servant of mine must have throwed that silver tea-spoon out of the winder, with the water as she'd washed up the tea-things."

I says, "And a nasty slovenly trick too; but," I says, "your tea-spoon never went into this butt, thro' me a-keepin' of it constant covered."

"Well," he says, "there's no 'arm me a-lookin'," and he gets up a pair of steps, and comes up 'is side of the wall to peep in.

I says, "Look in and welcome, only do 'ave some one to 'old them steps steady for you."

"Oh!" he says, "they're werry steady, thank you," with a sneery sort of way, as tho' he thought as I didn't want 'im to look; and he bobs 'is 'ead over the wall, and says, "There they are! I can see 'em a-shinin'."

I says, "Escuse me. Wot you sees a-shinin' is my silver spectacles, as I've jest let fall in."

He says, "We'll see;" and reaches over; and, in 'is heagerness, give them steps a shove from under 'im, and away they went.

He ketched 'old of me for to save 'isself, by gettin' on to the wall, and as near as a toucher sent me a-flyin' back'ards, as made me give a grab at 'im, as were only 'is black welwet skull-cap as he wore over 'is wig, as I knocked all the lot off into the water-butt in tryin' to save myself, as the steps went over with, and might 'ave been dashed to the werry hearth, only fell across the clothes-lines, as caught me, thro' the gal not 'avin' took 'em in, as luck would 'ave it, and let me down gentle.

I've 'eard a deal of bad langwidge in my time, by sea and by land, but nothink to come near old Corder's caths, as is ser'ous inclined, and a Partikler Baptist, tho' never been thro' the pool, I've 'eard 'im say; and of all the foul epitaphs as he 'eaped on me, I don't believe as no navvy couldn't beat 'im for low-lived abuse.

That old Corder got 'old of the tongs as I'd let drop into the water-butt, fished up 'is wig and skull cap, and then throwed them tongs at me, a-layin' on my back on that middle border, as the tulips was jest a-comin' up beautiful.

It's a mussy as them tongs missed me, and ketched old Filby across the back, as were a-doin' one of the borders, and seein' old Corder on the

top of the wall, and thinkin' 'im a thief, give a rush at 'im with a clothes-prop, and sent 'im a-flyin' back'ards into 'is own premises; and it's lucky as the dust-'ole as he fell into 'adn't got the lead on, or he'd 'ave broke 'is back.

In course I 'ad 'is wig and cap dried afore I sent 'em in and got my spectacles, but never spoke to old Corder no more; and as to 'is silver teaspoons, the servant 'ad pawned 'em for drink, and the cat 'adn't never dreamt of droppin' the kitten into the water-butt, thro' bein' a good mother and a clean creetur, with all 'er faults, tho' the greatest thief I ever did know, not as she stole anythink at 'ome, but would bring in things from the naybours, as one time was a sole, all egged and crumbed, and ready for fryin', and another a pigeon all ready for a pie; as, in my opinion, 'ad been trained to it, like some dogs, as will go into a butcher's shop and collar a leg of mutton, as were 'ow old Mr. Powlin got maimed for life, as always wore shorts, thro' the butcher a-throwin' 'is knife arter the dog, and stickin' into 'is calf just in passin', as might 'ave bled to death but for a doctor's shop bein' close at 'and, as strapped 'im up, tho' deadly faint, a-goin' 'ome in a cab, and always walked with a limp arterwards, in leather gaiters, as he wore for a purtection.

Well, in course, I didn't want nothink unplea-

sant, so made Mr. Corder a bend when fust he come in, and got thro' the evenin' all werry well till supper-time, tho' there was too many pranks for to please me, and, indeed, wanted to get away early, thro' 'avin' fixed as I'd sleep at Mrs. Padwick's that night.

We 'ad supper at nine o'clock, in old Corder's room, and werry nice everythink were, I will say; and then, arter that, we went up to the fust floor, and Mr. Corder he brewed a bowl of punch, as certingly were like drinking nectarins, as the sayin' is, and made everyone quite pleasant; and as to old Corder, he got that frisky, a-wantin to kiss me under the missletoe, a-sayin' I were a old sweet-'art of 'is'n, as that I'm sure I never were.

Well, arter a bit, they got a-playin' forfeits, and then was a-goin' on at "'Unt the Slipper," when the gal come in and said as a party wanted to see Mrs. Gulpins immediate.

She was all of a fluster, and says to me, across the room, "Jest see who it is for me, that's a dear," thro' me bein' a-settin' near the door.

So out I slips, and there, in the passage, stood Gulpins, a-lookin' like a ghost for whiteness. I give a start and a stagger, and he ketches my 'and, a-sayin' in a whisper, "Martha Brown, 'ide me somewhere!"

I says, "Come in 'ere," and takes 'im into the

back parlour, as Corder slep' in; and then I says, "Wotever's brought you back afore your time?" a-knowin' he'd got a lifer.

He says, "I got away two year ago, and 'ave wandered 'ome at last. But," he says, "I dursn't come near 'er; and only come to-night, and met my bitterest enemy in 'Igh Street, Kensin'ton, as I'm sure will track me."

"Well," I says, "then why come 'ere?"

He says, "I ain't got no money and no grub."

I says, "That's bad;" but I knowed 'is wife didn't want to see 'im.

So I says, "I'll get you some wittles, and give you a trifle, if you'll go; but," I says, "keep quiet;" and out of the room I goes, and gets Mrs. Gulpin out into the passage, and tells 'er in a whisper.

"Oh," she says, "give 'im five poun's to go, and tell 'im, if he don't I'll send for the perlice."

I says, "For shame! Your own 'usban'."

She says, "Don't call 'im my 'usban'. I won't see 'im. Tell 'im to go."

Well, a-seein' as the punch 'ad flushed up into 'er face, I says, "I'll try and manage it, and do you go back into the parlor." And then I put up some cold meat in a bit of newspaper, and give it 'im with five shillins.

"Wot!" he says, "won't 'Melia see me?"

“ Well,” I says, “ not to-night. But,” I says, “ write and say where you’re to be found. But go now, there’s a good soul, do.”

He looked at me werry ’ard, and says, “ Shake ’ands. Tell ’er I forgive ’er. I know I’ve been a bad lot; but I did care for ’er.” And out of the place he walked.

I went back in the room, as the smell of the punch made me feel quite ’ot and giddy, and they was all a-goin’ on too rampajious a deal to please me. And as to Mrs. Gulpins, she was more than ’arf the seas over, as the sayin’ is, and all the rest was, I should say, a little on, for they was a-dancin’ to old Corder’s singin’. When all of a suddin there came wiolent ’ammerin’ at the door, as made me think as Gulpin ’ad turned rusty, and come back.

I run out on the landin’ to listen to the gal a-answerin’ on it, and then smelt fire, and ’eard a crash, as was the kitchen winder broke in.

I ’urries down, and was soon drove back by the smoke. And the street door bust in, and there was the perlice and the ingin a-sayin’ the kitchen were in flames.

I never see sich screams and confusions in my life; for it were true. Some’ow, firemen got in and dragged the old woman as ’ad come to ’elp out from under the grate; and as to the gal, she’d run

into the coal-cellar and 'id herself, and when brought out said the old lady 'ad done it thro' bein' as tight as a drum, and would shake the table-cloth into the fender, as caught light agin the bars.

I didn't know wotever to do, for Mrs. Gulpins she were that intosticated as she would keep on a-screamin' as it were that willin Gulpins' doin's; and as I'd let 'im in. And it was as much as me and them Plummers mother and dorter could do to get 'er to bed. And as to old Corder, he 'ad a fit, or somethink, in 'is back parlor, and all the things was eat and drunk by them as put the fire out. And, as I says, I never got 'ome to Mrs. Padwick's till jest on five, and shouldn't 'ave disturbed 'em till the milk, only one of 'er lodgers come in werry much screwed with 'is latch-key, so let me in, bein' that far gone as he thought we'd been out together.

So, as I always will say, there's as much drinkin' done in private as in the public life, and in course this 'ere New Licker Law will put that down, and it'll be as much as your life is worth to give a friend a glass, without a perliceman a-listenin' at the key-'ole, or a-peepin' over the blind, as if I ketches 'em at I'll teach 'em 'ow to spy on me, as is always a despicable character, the same as Mrs. Scringer, as were always a pryin' body, and got me into a nice mess that time as the Elkinse was in trouble

thro' the brokers in the 'ouse, as certingly were brought on by drink. But that's no reason as she should go a-pokin' 'er nose into it when not wanted. Not as that were any reason for parties to use a siringe thro' the key-'ole, and all over the wrong party, as 'ad took that interest, and 'ad no end of a row with them brokers, as is in the gen'ral way a 'ateful lot, tho' mostly ebrers in their perswashuns.

I'd been very anxshus over poor Mrs. Elkins, thro' 'er a-promisin' to let me know wot it were as she'd got a 'angin' over 'er. So couldn't stand it no longer, but went across to see 'er, as 'ad lived oppersite over three year, and always a pullin' the devil by the tail, as the sayin' is, poor thing, and often 'ad to borrar a trifle, even down to wood aud coals.

Well, over I goes, arter waitin' three days, and not 'earin' nothink on 'er, as always were a true ooman to 'er word, even if she couldn't pay back wot she borrered to the day.

So over I goes to see 'er; for I was sure there was a somethink wrong, for I was kep' a-ringin' at that bell ever so long. I thought as there wasn't nobody in the house, when a dirty-faced chap looked out of the parlor winder thro' a-pullin' aside the blind.

So when I sees 'im I rings agin, as brought 'im to the door.

He says, "What's your pleasure?"

I says, "Well, it ain't no pleasure to be kep' 'ere a-standin' at this gate, with the east wind a-blowin' thro' you, as is enough for to cut the soul out of your body, as the sayin' is."

He says, "Who did you want for to see? Cos," he says, "if it's about the goods, I don't know nothink; but Mr. Boddy is the broker, as lives at the corner of Prospect Place."

I says, "I don't want none of your Boddys. I wants to see Mrs. Elkins, as I've heerd is in trouble."

He says, "She's down in the kitchen, and won't come out, along with the children; and I don't know how they've lived, but all as I've had is what my old woman brought me, as am entitled to three shillin's a day, and the best of everythink, by law."

"Well, then," I says, "whyever don't the law get it for you?"

He says, "Bless you, these sticks o' things won't never cover the landlord and taxes, as'll come first."

I thinks to myself as he was right, for I'd been and walked into the parlor, as I know'd weren't nothing but a Kidderminster, and them old black horsehair chairs, with a sofy to match, as is only dustholders, in my opinion. And as to the side-

board, it was old-fashioned like the pianer, as reached to the ceilin', with its blue silk doors.

I didn't much like for to go a-breakin' in on Mrs. Elkins in the back-kitchen, so I asks the party as was in position, as he called it, for to go and say, with my respects, as I were there, as he did accordin', and come up a-sayin' would I step down.

I never see anythink like them kitchen stairs for darkness, and me not bein' over firm in my footin' give a slip, and it's a mercy as they wasn't many, for down I come with a run, as brought Mrs. Elkins out, a-sayin' as she took me for a earthquake.

Poor soul, she did look that dreadful as give me a turn, and says, "I'm ashamed for to look you in the face, Mrs. Brown."

I says, "Go along. But wherever is your good gentleman, as did ought to stand by you in your troubles, as for richer nor poorer, he's took you solemn?"

"Oh," she says, "he's in prison, thro' a bill as he put 'is name to unawares, and was seized and took off to the spongy-'ouse, and is now in White-cross Street; for, bless yer heart, he couldn't stop there in that spongy 'ouse, the charges was that frightful."

"But," I says, "he'll get thro' it all right, I 'opes."

Says she, "They'll take the bed from under me, and wotever am I to do with these poor girls?"

I says, "Where's your eldest?"

"She's gone to her aunt, as we wasn't friends with. And that old wretch upstairs wouldn't let 'er even 'ave 'er box."

I says, "It's 'is dooty for to see as nothink don't leave the premises; for tho' I'm thankful for to says as I never know'd trouble like that myself, yet my own sister were sold up down to the fixtures as never 'eld up 'er 'ead agin, thro' a-takin' it to 'art, with a bad cold as settled in the lungs, and never see forty, tho' as fine a ooman as ever trod shoe-leather, and the mother o' nine; and 'im married agin, and all gone for to settle in the Shetlan' Iles, and doin' well, though I always says none of your emigrants for me."

Says Mrs. Elkins, "Shetlan' Iles ain't far to go."

I says, "Not far! Well, I thinks five months at sea enough for anybody."

"Why," she says, "Shetlan' Iles is Scotland; you must mean the Sandwich Iles."

I says, "I don't know nothink more than wot I've 'eard Brown say, as is a man as knows wot he's a-talkin' about in the gen'ral way, as the sayin' is."

She says, "Oh, indeed;" and there it dropped, for I says, "I've come in to ask if there's anythink as I can do for you."

She's says, "No, I'm obleeged," and said as her brother-in-law were a-comin' for to see 'er righted, and get that man out of the 'ouse.

"Well," I says, "he may be a-comin', and I 'ope he is; but them young gals o' yourn looks very faint and done." They was a-lollin' about as if they 'adn't no strength left.

So she says as they was a little faint thro' not takin' their meals reg'lar.

I was a-gettin' downright savage with 'er airs, for I see famine a-starin' in them children's faces; and that wasn't no time for pride, tho' in course she feels like a lady thro' bein' born over in Portlan' Barricks, where 'er father were a sarjint-major. But then she didn't ought to 'ave married Elkins, as were a idle drunkin feller from the werry fust, and would 'ave 'im, tho' she know'd 'is private character, thro' 'avin' inlisted in 'er father's riggy-mint, as he were sold out on thro' debt, as is the way with them 'orse guards werry often, I've 'eard say, when young and thoughtless. So she's only got 'erself to thank for it arter all.

So I says, "Mrs. Elkins, if you're a-goin' to talk rubbish, I'm a-goin'. I come for to see if I could serve you in any way; but if I can't, good evenin'."

I see 'er a-givin' way, and if she didn't bust out sudden, and tell me as they 'adn't none on 'em

broke their fast that day, and just on five o'clock, and only 'ad tea the day before.

Just then I 'eard a ring, and if it wasn't the man upstairs' wife come with 'is tea.

So I ups and gives 'er 'arf-a-crown for to fetch some tea and sugar, a quartern loaf, and some butter, and goes over to my place myself, and fetched a bit o' cold meat-pie as I 'ad in the 'ouse.

If ever you see anyone eat, it was them poor gals; tho' the mother didn't get on till she'd 'ad a cup of tea, with jest one spoonful in it, as I brought myself, for to warm her.

The kittle was a long time a-bilin', as there wasn't 'ardly no coals; but, as luck would 'ave it, some logs o' wood as they'd forgot in the cellar.

We give the man and his old lady a 'ot cup o' tea, as made 'em more agreeabler in their ways, as was part owin' to me a-tellin' of 'er to keep the change, as might 'ave run to fourpence.

Well, by the time as they'd 'ad their teas, I was jest a-thinkin' as I must go, and Mrs. Elkins she asks me to step upstairs into 'er room, as she wished for to speak to me.

When we was alone she says, "I'm a-goin' to ask a favour of you, Mrs. Brown."

I says, "Wot is it?"

She says, "I've got 'arf-a-dozen tea-spoons, as was my mother's, and a silver mug as belonged to

my fust little boy as I buried, and I don't like for to 'ave 'em took."

"Well," I says, "it's 'ard to part with things like that; but what can you do?"

She says, "Would you mind a-puttin' of them into your pocket, and keepin' em for me?"

I says, "That ain't lawful, I'm sure; I've know'd parties punished heavy for doin' on it." I says, "If you owes the money, pay it; let 'em take the bit of silver, only don't do nothink underhand; for," I says, "we can buy 'em in, and," I says, "be able for to look anyone in the face and say, 'I'm a honest woman.'"

I was afraid as I'd 'urt 'er feelin's a-refusin' of 'er; but she said, "You're right, Mrs. Brown, they don't belong to me; but I can't a-bear to part with them; nor the Bible, where all the children's names is wrote down."

I says, "I'm sorry I can't help you; but," I says, "you let them two gals of yours come and spend the day with me to-morrow; and if you wants a bed for a night or two you're welcome to it;" and so I says, "Good-night," and was a-goin' 'ome satisfied, knowin' as they'd got a breakfast for the mornin'.

I goes downstairs, and was got into the passage, Mr. Elkins 'oldin' the light, when the parlor door was open'd and out bounc'd a dirty lookin'

wagabone, as says, "Alloo! you stop; what 'ave you got there?"

I says, "Who are you a-talkin' to?"

He says, "You, to be sure."

"You ain't a-goin' carryin' nothink out of this 'ouse; as are reg'lar stuff'd up with things, I can see."

I says, "You let me pass."

He says, "Not till I've searched you."

"What," I says, "you dare to lay a finger on me at your peril."

"Bill," says he, a-hollerin' into the parlour, "fetch a perliceman; this old gal's a-tryin' it on, but it won't do."

I was took a-back, but wouldn't give in; for Mrs. Elkins begun a-sheddin' tears, and the gals was a-'owlin' on the stairs.

I soon started them back to the kitchen; and by that time the old feller as was in position had fetched a bobby.

So I says, "Policeman, who is this 'ere grubby indiwiddle, as the baths and wash'uses would be the best place for?"

I never see sich dirty linen, with nails and hair to match.

So says he, "My name is John Boddy; I holds a warrant for these goods, and you're a-takin' things away."

I says, "John Boddy, prove it."

Well, he went on a-talkin' a deal of bounce; but the perliceman wouldn't do nothink, and walks off; and I was a-follerin', when if that little dirty Boddy didn't try to ketch 'old on me, as I'm sure had been a-drinkin'.

Jest then I see Brown come up to the door for to look arter me, and see that little wagabone seize 'old me.

I says, "Help," natural; and if you'd seen the kick as Brown give that Boddy, as sent 'im flyin' down the steps, it would 'ave done your 'eart good.

He says, "I'll 'ave the law of you;" says Brown, "Will you; touch that lady agin, and see 'ow I'il serve you."

"Lady," says the dirty little wretch, "I say she's a thief."

If Brown didn't ketch 'old on 'im by the collar, and give 'im that thrashin' as you could 'ear 'is teeth a-chatterin', and sent 'im a-spinnin' into the road.

So off we walks home; and Brown says to me, "I hopes as it's all square, Martha, and you ain't got nothin'."

I says, "All right, Brown; I'm not one to go a-committin' no mistakes like that; but," I says, "I'd a good mind for to 'ave give it to that

old Boddy well over the 'ead with my umbreller, as would 'ave made 'im feel."

Says Brown, " You keep your umbreller to yourself, or it may be as you'll get seven days, as won't suit your figger, I can tell you."

That next mornin' them gals never come over, nor yet no message, nor nothink; so I was in a bit of a fidget, and over I goes, and knocks and rings, and couldn't get no anser; so at last I puts my eye to the key'ole to see if there was anythink a-movin' in the 'ouse; and jest as I did so, I got a shot in the eye as sent me back'ards with a crash, as might 'ave proved my death, only Mrs. Elkins ketched me in 'er harms, as were a-comin' up the steps; and if I wasn't drenched all about the 'ead and face, as were all a mistake as it turned out; for Mrs. Elkins' brother 'ad come over late at night and paid the brokers out, and took Mrs. Elkins and the gals away with 'im, and 'ad sent over 'is two boys to sleep in the 'ouse, as 'ad took and squirted at me with the garding siringe, a-fancyin' as I were that Mrs. Scringer as lived next door, and 'ad been set on as a spy by that there Boddy, the broker.

Poor Mrs. Elkins were dreadful put out a-seein' me so treated, as 'ad 'urried over to tell me all about it arter seein' 'er 'usban' in Whitecross; as all emigrated arterwards, as is over five year ago; so that's why I can't a-bear none of them

spyin' ways, as comes on your own 'ead, and serve you right too.

So in course, 'avin' seen all them sorrers and miseries thro' drink, I ain't one for to 'old with it; but that's a werry different thing to a pint of beer at your meals, or even a little somethin' 'ot when you've got a chill, or arter pork or a goose, or even goin' to bed, partikler if subjic to cold feet, as shows you ain't got a good circulation, and will fly to the 'ead; as there's no one livin' as ain't liable to, and I'm sure might 'appen to Queen Wictoria 'erself up in them Scotland Ighlands, as blows werry keen under the door jest to ketch your feet, as it's always best to 'ave them carpet slippers 'andy, as no doubt Queen Wictoria do.

But wot puts me most out with this 'ere Licker Law is its a-bein' one thing in town and another in the country, so ketches you both ways even in distress, the same as I were cort, all thro' a-goin' to 'Ampton Court, as is a place as you may go to and enjoy yourselves of a Sunday like 'uman bein's.

Not as I 'olds with a-openin' shops, like Paris, of a Sunday, and parties at work, jest as if it was Saturday or Monday; but that's werry different from a-goin' out for a little change; and as to its bein' wicked to use a 'orse, that's all rubbish, as is werry well for the Jews, as wasn't allowed nothink but a donkey; and in course nobody wouldn't go out

a-pleasurin' on, escept preaps Black'eath or 'Amstead at Easter or Whitsuntide.

Mrs. Bewlay she did ought to 'ave went with us, but throwed me over at the last on to the Prattins', as is 'er relations; but I never knowed 'em, and tried to get out on it thro' Brown bein' away, but they said as I 'ad said I should go, so couldn't say Mr. Prattin nay, as 'is mother and Mrs. Bewlay was a-goin', when he come over late on the Saturday evenin', a-wantin' to take me down to sleep over-night, a-sayin' I could 'ave 'arf of 'is mother-in-law's bed, as is a thing I don't care for, partikler when you don't know parties' 'abits, as may kick or snore, and break your night's rest, as is as good as board and lodgin' to me, as the sayin' is.

So I were up betimes in the mornin', and Mr. Britten, the butcher, as married Mrs. Bewlay's niece as died with 'er fust, a-offerin' to drive me down to Prattin's in 'is shay cart, as 'ave got a 'igh-steppin' mare, as in course were the front seat for Mrs. Bewlay, and two chairs for me and old Mrs. Prattin up behind, as ain't a way I likes to set, partikler thro' Britten a-smokin' all the way, as carried the smoke into my face, but would rather 'ave busted myself corfin' than say a word, cos in course you can't look a gift cart in the face, as the sayin' is.

We was all right in startin', and tho' Mrs.

Prattin bein' a winegar-wisaged old thing, yet I kep' on a-talkin' away to 'er cheerful, tho' she never give a ghost of a smile all the way.

So, as I says to Mrs. Prattin, "It ain't like a reg'lar 'ollyday a-goin' to 'Ampton Court, is it?"

She says, "And pray why not?"

"Oh," I says, "cos it's a place as you may see any day, thro' bein' throwed open to the public, as in course it did ought to be, cos there ain't nothink left there worth seein', and all the best picters and things took away to Win'sor Castle afore ever the public was let go into them apartments, as ain't all on 'em showed now, thro' a good many bein' given to the broke-down nobility, as did used to be called the Haristocracy Work'us; and werry right too as they should 'ave one, for in course poverty ain't no sin, leastways so they say, tho' I'm sure it's treated like one, as may overtake a duke as well as dustman, as it 'ave done afore now, as is proved by [sich a many on 'em, poor things, bein' obligated for to go thro' the 'oop, as the sayin' is."

"What do you mean?" says Mrs. Prattin.

"Why," I says, "only the other day one of them lords could only pay two shillin's in the pound, poor feller! and not long ago there was a duke's things seized for rent, and sold off, as shows as there may be a deal of sufferin' in them upper

classes, as in course is too proud for to own as they're poor, and so comes to starve in their 'omes, as they sells up at last, and in course would rather do anythink than a poor tradesman shouldn't be paid."

"Tho' I'm sure it's downright dreadful to think about them grand shopkeepers, as is pretty nearly all ruined at the West-end thro' a-'avin' to give that long credit, and many on 'em, I'm told, don't keep more than one carridge, and obligated to give up 'untin', as is a 'ardship for them as requires hexercise, thro' bein' confined that constant behind their counters, tho' nothink to wot their fathers and grandfathers did used to do, a-livin' over the shop, and no 'ollydays but Sundays; and now-a-days, wot with early closin's and Saturday 'arf-'ollydays, keepin' a shop's mere child's-play, as the sayin' is."

"It's a pity," says Mrs. Prattin, "as there ain't more business a-doin' at the West-end?"

"Yes," I says, "as some parties thinks is thro' Queen Wictoria not a-comin' to town more oftener, as no doubt makes a difference, cos, in course, when she did used for to give them balls and drorin'-rooms, parties was obligated to go when asked, as don't care about 'er sons and dorters, as is werry well in their ways, but is that common thro' sich lots of fotygraphts, as nobody don't see no difference between them and Miss Jones and Mr. Tomkins."

Says Mrs. Prattin, "Didn't one on 'em get a 'eap of money from a dook?"

I says, "I never did believe that story about the old Dook of Wellin'ton a-givin' that box to Prince Arthur, tho' there is a picter as I've seen of 'im a-doin' it, as weren't to be opened till he were of hage, as ain't likely as Queen Wictoria would 'ave stood sich impidence even from a dook a-dictatin' to 'er, but would 'ave took and opened it afore 'is face, cos in course there weren't no fear of its a-esplodin', nor nothink like that, as 'ave been done in them old times when they was a-blowin' one another up that constant, as made 'em quite used to it; not as King Charles ever got over the blowin'-up as he got from Guy Fox, as in course we all knows nothink can't put your 'ead on agin."

That's why I did wish for to go to 'Ampton Court, as is where I've 'eard say that there Crumwell died, as were carried away in a 'igh wind, like old Bonyparty, in the same night, as only shows 'ow things comes 'ome to parties, Boney or no Boney; for I'm sure it were a judgment on old Ducket, as he should come to false imprisonment 'isself, and obligated to get Brown to bail 'im out, a-bein' suspected of harson in a-tryin' to set fire to 'is new-furnished 'ouse, as no doubt he'd learnt over in Merryker, as is werry common; and that's

why they won't insure a Jew, as is a shame, cos in course a Jew will burn like a Christian ; and in my opinion Ducket meant to do it, as were always a schemin' waggerbone, and 'adn't made 'arf of the money in Merryker as he said he 'ad, but enuf for to replace 'is wife's bit of property, as was put in the stocks ; so they can't starve, as is fifty pounds a year, without 'im a-'avin' no power over it.

Jest as we got near Prattin's 'ouse, old Mrs. Prattin says to Mrs. Bewlay, "Remember, Hanner Marier, if that old fish-fag is in the 'ouse, I don't cross the threshold, and Jem 'ave promised to take me on to 'Ampton Court along with you, as we shall meet the Sholderses."

I says, "Take me too."

"No," says Mrs. Bewlay, "for peace' sake do go with the Prattins, as it is a neat four-wheel shay."

So as we drove up to the gate, Old Mrs. Prattin says, "Ah ! there she is, I can see 'er old brandy nose agin the shetter."

Down jumps Britten, a-sayin' as the mare wouldn't stand, and afore I could say Jack Robinson he'd got me out of the cart like a feather, a-sayin' he were used to handlin' carcasses, and were into the cart and off they went, a-leavin' me a-standin' at the Prattins' gate.

As I didn't care about goin' into thro' 'im bein' a reg'lar blower about 'is new 'ouse, as 'ad made

'is money over in Merryker thro' blown glass, as is wonderful to think 'ow it can be done, and not more than seven years over there, as were owin' to the war; not as I can think as they could use much blown glass in the wars, as is a brittle thing, and tho' it ansers the purpose, and wot they makes of it is in gen'ral them sugar basons and a lot more such as flower-glasses, and them sort of showy things to look at, yet no blown glass in this world ain't nothink like old-fashioned cut, as is like dimons in the sun."

It were all thro' Mrs. Bewlay botherin' me, as I come to go, for says she, "They've got a new 'ouse, them Prattins, out somewheres Kingston way, as will be a more easy drive to 'Ampton Court, in 'is four wheel shay, as he don't do nothink but talk about, tho' he only got it second-'and, and a rickety thing in my opinion."

I certingly should not 'ave went to see 'em but to please Brown, thro' bein' only acquainted quite recent, and Brown a-promisin' and 'avin' busyness with 'em, as I don't never 'old with a-mixin' up with pleasure myself, partikler since the time as Mrs. Malchin come to spend a day or two at puttin' up my bed, as stopped a 'ole week, and never so much as even 'emmed the wallance, and not satisfied with five shillin's, as 'er keep alone I'm sure were over a pound, espectin' a 'ot supper every

night, and always sperrits and water twice a day, besides 'er beer as she took four times, and always a stitch in 'er side if she set at work above a 'our, as nothink but gin and peppermint wouldn't get rid on; and then went off in a reg'lar 'uff that Saturday evenin', a-bangin' the door off the hinges, cos I told 'er as it wouldn't suit me to 'ave 'er the next week, as would 'ave took a month to make up that bed, and then not 'ave done it; as I'm sure took away my best cuttin' out scissors with 'er, and used pins enuf to 'ave set a dozen bed-'eads.

I certingly did go to 'Ampton Court agin the grain, as the sayin' is, for I'd 'ad to start that early to git to the Prattins' betimes, and certingly if ever any one did dress theirselves the lady in this world it was me, with a clean musling, and only a little sprig of blue and yaller a-runnin' over it, as I got quite a bargain thro' Miss Mims, as is in the ready-made line, with lovely things to dispose on, and not a sile on 'em, as this werry dress proved, thro' bein' made for a weddin' as the lady never went to, thro' bein' took ill when dressed to get into the carridge, as weren't nothink but a wiolent bilious attack, as ain't ketchin', or in course I wouldn't 'ave bought it, as is wot I always says about second-'and beddin', as I wouldn't 'ave at a gift myself, as were I'm sure the way as all them Portlocks got the measles, as appeared werry awk'ard, with the drains up and

the painters in the 'ouse; and 'er fault as always were mad after bargins, so bought things as was seized for rent, as would go agin me.

I'd got a werry nice drab cloth jacket, with a neat fringe, as set to the figger, as were quite equal to new; and as to my bonnet, I wore my own shape, for I can't a-bear them new fangled 'ats, as ain't no purtection agin nothink, set on the top of a pile of 'air the same as Mrs. Mouncey, the butcher's lady wore at Maria Sanders's weddin', as all the lot come off in church thro' her a-sneezin' at the werry halter, as made even the minister smile; as in course weren't properly fastened on and top-'eavy, as I told 'er it would be, and wanted 'er to tie it under her chin, as were like a porter's knot for weight on 'er 'ead, as she couldn't balance proper.

When I got to Mrs. Prattin's, there was a werry nice lunch laid out, as we was to take afore startin', and come 'ome to a 'eavy tea, as they calls it, as in my opinion's a mistake, thro' bein' neither dinner nor tea; but a reg'lar mixture like, as don't suit me.

There wasn't no enjoyin' that lunch, thro' Prattin a-fidgetin' so, and as to 'er mother, as is Mrs. Sinfil, as is wot they calls a wet Quaker, why, she would talk tests all the time, leastways between the mouthfuls, for I never see a woman eat more 'arty, as is the Quaker way, and the only thing as

she'd stuck to, for as to dress she were a reg'lar peacock, tho' not anything on really 'andsome; and I'm pretty sure that silk jacket of 'ern she'd bought ready made, at one of the Cheap Jack shops.

Young Mrs. Prattin she were in a grey silk, with a pink cheyney crape shawl; and as to their two children as is eleven and thirteen, their frocks as was pink musling-de-laine and all flounces, 'ardly below the knee, with pink silk stockin's, white boots, gipsy 'ats, with wreaths of roses, they didn't look no better than a couple of gals as dances on stilts at a fair.

Of all the children to ask questions as ever I see, them gals beat 'em, a-worretin' to know everythink as their pa meant, as ain't the gentleman in my opinion, to talk about all manner, and then wink at me with 'is rubbish, as I didn't give in to, but looked as grave as a judge, as the sayin' is, tho' there's some judges as ain't grave; for I'm sure that time as I were at the Old Bailey, all three judges larfed right out, when that there counsel took and asked me 'ow old I were, and I says, "As old as my tung, and a little older than my teeth."

In course Prattin were all agog to show me 'is new 'ouse, but, I says, "Escuse me, as am one as stairs do not suit, partikler with a long day before me, as I'd rather see when we comes 'ome, if not too tired," As he said werry well to, partikler as

them two gals was up in the shay a-ready, both a-sittin' on their grandma's knee, with Prattin a-drivin', and me and young Mrs. Prattin up behind.

The 'orse were a werry large boned creatur, and a-sheddin' of 'is coat as were white, and flew all over us, as ain't pleasant, and, as to Prattin, 'is drivin' were the wildest as ever I see, and the jolts as that 'orse give me and Mrs. Prattin, it's lucky as we was wedged in that tight into that back seat, or out we should 'ave come, and the way as the mud flew off the wheels reg'lar bedaubed me, partikler my gownd, as the bottom on 'ung over the side and brushed that wheel all the way.

I must say as I were not sorry when we was got to 'Ampton Court, and 'ad a glass of ale, where the 'orse were put up, as is a old-fashioned place, and were no doubt a quiet willage enuf once on a time, afore ever that there pallis were built as belonged to Alderman Wolsey, as is beautiful gardings, and I've 'eard say a grape wine as King William brought from 'Olland, and bears a thousand bunches a day in the season, as was the fust as ever were planted, as is a refreshin' fruit, partikler in illness, and a deal of nourishment in 'em too; not as I believe what Prattin said about a-makin' port and sherry wine of 'em, as is werry different to the grape wine as ever I tasted, as goes off like ginger beer, and of all the stuff to intosticate as ever I knowed, it's the werry wust.

And I'm sure the liker law did ought to put that down, tho' not so bad as 'ome made ginger, as I always think is owin' to usin' that strong foot sugar as will burn like brandy; not but wot I've knowed old Welsh ale do that when throwed in the fire, and I'm sure were the reason of Old Wadden's red nose, as sipped it by the gallon, and wore a Welsh wig, with roomatic gout in both feet, and 'is legs done up in flannin, as kep 'im in 'is chair over nine years afore he died, tho' full four score and seven, thro' bein' my grandfather's 'arf brother, when a boy in the navy, as werry nigh went down in the "Royal George," only 'ad stopped ashore without leave, and it's lucky for 'im as that wessel did go down or he'd 'ave 'ad a taste of the cat-o-nine tails for 'is pains.

I should say as 'Ampton Court were a dull place at the best of times, and no doubt for a pallis in gin'ral must be deadly lively with Kings and Queens a-settin' there with their crown on all day that solemn, a-signin' of death-warrants as they did used to do, and parties on their knees afore 'em as is reg'lar bowin' down to a graven image, I considers, like that Old 'Arry.

Not as Queen Wictoria would suffer any one for to grovel like that afore 'er, tho' I've 'eard say as parties jest bends the knee for to kiss 'er royal 'and, as in course is werry proper, and 'ave got

some about 'er as presumes on 'er bein' that good natured lady as she is, like that there feller up in Scotland as took and 'ad the impidence for to go and fix Good Friday for a dinner and a ball for them royal servants without ever askin' 'er leave, as in course will get the sack as the sayin' is, and serve 'im right too, a unbelievin' Jew as he must be, or a hignorant feller not to know the meanin' of Good Friday bein' kep'; partikler bein' about Queen Wictoria as is that strict every year about keepin' the day as 'er dear 'usband died, as is werry proper in a wife.

I think it's a pity as she can't bring 'erself for to see that statue on 'im unwailed, as in course would be 'onorin' 'is memory, the same as she did that time over in Germany, as made that Prince Christshun fret so, and bust into tears that wiolent, as were the reason they do say as he married that princess of ourn, thro' a showin' sich a feelin' 'eart, as in course were pleasin' to the family, and made 'er take to 'im as any good dorter would.

In course 'Ampton Court ain't nothink to compare to Wursales, over in France, but it would be a werry fine thing if we 'ad all them grand wictories of ourn, and all about our Kings and Queens painted up somewhere like the French 'as 'em, cos them as ain't got the time nor the patience to read them 'istory books, might learn a deal from picters ;

jest like the 'Lustrated News, as you can know all about everythink thro' jest a-lookin' at them cuts, all as is goin' on in the world, and a deal more besides, as is werry instructive, partikler for the young, leastways them as will be learnt by their holders, and not a couple of pert forward chits like them two Prattin girls as kep' a-askin' me questions, and then bust out larfin' when they got a proper anser, as I knows 'ow to give one to my junerers, as ain't lived nearly sixty years in the world for nothink, as I said to 'em, and knowed my 'istory like my cattykism back'ards from a child.

In course it is werry puzzlin' to tell all about them Kings and Queens as always reminds me of Aunt Sally, for they seem stuck up like for every one to 'ave a shy at 'em; I says to them Prattin children, "Kings and Queens 'as their faults, but 'owever bad, is a deal better than them there waggerbones of red Republicans, as is a disgrace to 'uman natur, and did ought to be 'ung."

Jest as I were a-sayin' so a smock-faced, shabby-genteel feller takes and chimes in, and says to me, "Is that your ways of pisonin' the young agin the sacred cause of liberty?"

"Oh!" I says, "go on with your rubbish," I says, "liberty indeed, as means parties as ain't got a rag to their backs, and is too idle to earn 'em, wants to grab 'old on wot belongs to their betters."

He says, "I ain't got no betters."

I says, "Ain't you; well, then, I'm sorry for you."

He says, "Tyrants as would trample 'onest industry under foot, and tear the 'ard earned wages from the workin' man."

"Yes," I says, "a parcel of idle waggerbones as won't work theirselves, and then 'umbugs the workin' man out of 'is money, a-pretendin' they're a-goin' for to redress 'is wrongs, and so lives on 'im."

"And so they shall be redressed," says he, "and the people shall 'ave the pallises as kings and priests 'as kep' 'em out on."

"Ah!" I says "it's all werry fine a-talkin', but we ain't sich fools as them French for to set down quiet and let the roughs get 'old of heverythink, and bully us like they've been a-doin' over in Paris. I should jest like to see 'em try it on over here, as would get it a deal 'otter nor wot they did that 10th of April when the Chartists got that smashed as they never dared show their faces agin."

Says that party, "We will be heard."

I says, "That you will at the Old Bailey, no doubt; and be werry soon turned out if you kicks up any of your rows 'ere."

"Yes," he says, "tyrants would crush us, but never shall."

I says, "Rubbish, no one wants to crush you; but don't come a-talkin' your foolishness in public places, but keep it to yourselves in your low pot-'ouses; set there and idle your time, and when you can't get anythink more by it, then sneak away to the work'us, and let 'ard-workin' 'onest men be taxed to support you," I says; "and you talk about kings a-robbin' and priests a-deceivin' people to live on 'em! pray wot are you a-doin', but cadgin' for a livin' by tellin' lies, and a-tryin' to bring ruin and bloodshed on to them as is foolish enuf to listen to you." I says, "There's a-many bad things goin' on in the world, no doubt, but it ain't sich as you as 'll set it right."

So he turns away a-mutterin' about it bein' 'opeless for to try and reason with a woman, as I didn't mind 'is callin' me, as I knows as them radicals don't mean that as insults.

Them Prattins was gone on a-wanderin' thro' them rooms, and I set about a-thinkin' all about the past.

But, law, it's sing'ler when you comes to think of the parties as 'ave lived and died at 'Ampton Court, as is all a-'angin' on them walls as a many on 'em deserved it, from that Old 'Arry down'ards, but the one as I can't a-bear is that Dutch Queen Mary, as they calls 'er, as the book calls a hexcellent princess, as certingly did a deal of needlework there, but

were a wicked wretch to take and turn agin 'er own father, as is agin the Commandments, and 'elp turn 'im out of 'is place along with that there Dutchman as she'd been and married.

But, law, no good never come to neither on 'em as died childless, as the sayin' is, and I'm sure no child couldn't thrive in such a place as that. I should 'ave died of the 'orrors myself in some of them back-rooms, as is 'ow that there Oliver Cromwell died, as is a party with a red warty face as I never could a-bear.

I considers them gardins as you sees thro' the winders werry formal, and as to all them rooms a-leadin' one out of the other, as is werry inconvenient when you wants to see them, and is that dreadful fatiguin' to keep walkin' thro', and glad I were to take and set in a winder seat and rest myself from time to time, and 'ad bought a book all about it, but thro' a-leavin' of my eyes at 'ome, leastways my glasses I should say, I couldn't read it, and shouldn't 'ave knowed 'arf wot I do about the place but for a old gentleman as were werry kind in explainin' a lot of things to me.

He said as he didn't 'old with Dutch Bill as built it, nor yet 'is unnat'ral wife, as he said introduced gin drinkin' into England, as is a Dutch 'abit, and we all knows as some gin is called 'Ollands, and that gentleman said as that there Dutch King and

Queen was good 'ands at the glass, and as to Queen Ann, she weren't 'ardly ever sober.

I'm sure to 'ave to live at 'Ampton Court's enuf to drive any one to drinkin', and I do say as Queen Wictoria is right not to live in sich a dismal 'ole, not but wot she's too much of the lady to take to drinkin' anywheres; besides I'm sure the crowds of them 'ollyday folks would be a great nuisance to 'er; tho' she is so fond of 'er people as she ain't never 'appy but when she's with 'em, and that's why she's that fond of Scotland, cos she can go among 'em and not be mobbed to death.

I must say as a butcher's must 'ave been a good trade in them old times, if a butcher's son could build sich a pallis as that, the old gent told me, tho' I'm sure that Old 'Arry weren't no better than a butcher 'isself, and that's why he took to it, and so did that there Oliver Crumwell, and King William, as was all in the butcherin' line, the willins.

I was a-tellin' them Prattin gals, as come back for me, a deal of wot that old gentleman 'ad been a-tellin' me, but they says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, do come on, we wants to get thro' these rooms and go out to see the Maze and Bushey Park."

I says, "All right, my dears, I'm a-comin'," so on I goes, and jest gives a look at them old bedsteads as them Kings and Queens 'ad slep' in, as I'm sure I shouldn't care to, with all them picters a-

starin' at me, and as to one room as were full of all them 'ussies as they calls King Charles's beauties, I'd 'ave 'ad 'em all turned with their faces to the wall, the bold creeturs; as it's a shame to 'ang 'em up along with 'onest women, not as you meets with many of them in 'Ampton Court Pallis, and so I were a-sayin', a-talkin' to that old gentleman.

A nasty couple of dressed-up things as was a-standin' by, took it up and asked me wot I meant.

I says, "I were not addressin' of my remarks to you," but I says, "if the cap fits, wear it, as the sayin' is."

"Well," says one, "if the cap don't fit no better than your bonnet, we needn't mind, Mother Brown," and goes off a-gigglin' like mad up to a stout party as 'ad 'er back to me, and when she turned 'er 'ead, who should it be but Mrs. Sholders, as I 'adn't spoke to for over two years, thro' Miss Pilkinton a-makin' mischief between us, as were sister-in-law to Prattin's fust wife, and I knowed 'ad been once daggers drawn, as the sayin' is, but 'ad made it up thro' a quarrel over the father's will; as they do say died by foul play, as the sayin' is.

She turns full on me, that party, and says to 'er dorders, them two dressed up gals as 'ad quite growed out of knowledge, and says, "I desires as you don't go near that fieldmale, as is always a-forgettin' 'erself, and if she insults you agin I'll

give 'er in charge, for I see 'er a-puttin' a flat bottle to 'er lips jest now on the sly in the winder there, as is agin the law."

I don't think as ever I were took more by surprise, for I certingly 'ad brought jest a somethink for to keep off that faintness as I'm subject to.

So I weren't a-goin' to be set upon like that, and says, "I'm sure I never insulted your dorters, as I didn't know, and don't want to, for I 'ope they won't come near me, as ain't parties as I should care for to be seen with, thro' a-likin' my friends for to look respectable."

"Oh! indeed," says Mrs. Sholders, with a sneer, "and that's why you've come out in a four-wheel shay with them as looks like tinkers, and is little better than receivers of stolen goods."

I says, "I'll make you prove your words;" jest then in comes Prattin and 'is wife a-lookin' for me.

So I says, "I'm glad you've come jest in time to anser for yourselves."

That Mrs. Sholders, as soon as she see 'em, was a-'urryin' out of the room, but I stands in the doorway and stops 'er, a-sayin', "No, you don't go till you've said to their faces wot you've said behind their backs."

Says Mrs. Sholders, "If you don't let me pass, I'll 'ave you locked up, as is 'igh treason for to kick up a row in the Queen's pallis," and so she passes by

me with a rush, and the two gals arter 'er as nearly upset me, and up comes Mr. and Mrs. Prattin, and she says, "Mrs. Brown, 'owever could you be seen a-speakin' to that awful character?"

Round turns Mrs. Sholders at them words, and says, "I could transport the lot of you for thieves."

Says Mrs. Prattin, "We could 'ang you any day for murder."

Up comes the party as looks arter the rooms, and says, "You're all a-talkin' a deal too loud; if you've anything to say, you'd better settle it outside."

If that Mrs. Prattin didn't say to 'im, a-turnin' to me, "It's only our friend here, as is fond of her joke," and that man, he looked at me and give a smile, as to Mr. Prattin he walked off in the contrary way to Mrs. Sholders, a-pretendin' to look at the picters, as I could see he were afraid on, tho' she didn't dare to turn upon 'im, and as to Mrs. Prattin, she follered 'er up, a-meanin' a row outside.

I were werry much flurried at bein' made that conspicuous, and sat down in the winder-seat agin for a bit, a-knowin' as everythink gets in the papers now-a-days, and as 'ow as Queen Wictoria might read as I'd been a-kickin' up a row in one of 'er royal pallises, as is the furthest from my thoughts, I'm sure.

As I set there, a good many come by, and some stared at me 'ard, and I could see was a-touchin' one another to call attentions to me, as in course wasn't ladies, tho' in a pallis; but wot can you expect when places is made that public; so I thought as I'd walk on a bit.

Jest then one of them Prattin gals come back, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, your 'air's been and parted from your bonnet, as is 'arf off your 'ead."

I says, "My dear, my bonnet is all right, tho' I thought it were all wrong myself jest now; it's them lookin'-glasses as makes you think so, as is all askew, as I suppose were done a-purpose, thro' Kings and Queens not a-likin' to see theirselves as they really is."

Says the gal, "Look in that little glass next you, as 'll show you all right," and so I did, and if my bonnet 'adn't got away from my front, as I'd pinned it to, and showed a large bit of my 'ead all bare, as don't look well.

I managed for to pull it on pretty well, and then I walked on, and ketched up that old gentleman agin, as I give 'im my best thanks, and goes down in them gardins dreadful tired, but afraid for to set down along with the Prattins, thro' the grass a-bein' that damp with constant showers.

The birds were a-singin' werry pleasant as we

walks along, and I asks Prattin wot a place were as 'ave got all nets like over the winders.

He says, "The racquet court."

I says, "Oh! indeed, where they did used to put 'em to them rackets."

I says, "Yes."

"Ah!" I says, "awful doin's, my dears," a-turnin' back to them young gals, "and did ought to make us thankful as we lives in a Christshun country, and not 'ave to stand the racket like them poor souls, as werry often 'adn't done nothink, and were that tortered as in their hagonies they confessed to, tho' false, and then 'ung, drawn, and quartered for bein' innercent, like Queen 'Lizabeth did to Mary Queen of Scots."

If one of them gals didn't say "Rubbish" to my werry face, and the other bust out a-larfin', and run to tell 'er grandma wot I'd said, as I 'eard 'er say, "Don't mind 'er, as is as ignorant as dirt."

I couldn't stand that, so I says, "Mrs. Sinfil, mum, I don't consider you no lady, not as I cares about your a-stickin' up for Queen 'Lizabeth, but don't abuse me."

She says, "I don't stick up for Queen 'Lizabeth, but all as I means is, you'd better know wot rackets means afore you talks about 'em."

I says, "Mum, I do, thro' 'avin' seen 'em myself in the Tower along with the thumb-screws," so I

says, "don't you try to teach your betters," and on I 'urries to a seat as were wacant, and drops into it with my limbs a-tremblin', and my feet a-throbbin' like daggers drivin' into 'em.

I set there ever so long, and were 'arf a mind to 'ave 'ad a cup of tea, as I see were to be got close by, when one of Prattin's children comes up and says, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, pa's sent me back for to fetch you to see the Maze."

I says, "I never knowed as it were growed in this country, as 'ave seen lots on it in Merryker, as they makes corn-cake on."

"No," she says, "it ain't fit to eat."

Says a lady a-settin' next me, "It are a labe-rinth, Mum; the same as Fair Rosimun were shet up in."

"Oh!" I says, "I must see that as I've read about, poor things; for tho' in course she done wrong, one can't 'elp a-pityin' her untimely end, as the sayin' is."

That Prattin gal begun a-askin' me lots of questions all about it, as I says, "My dear, you'll read all about it when you grows up, or preaps your ma may tell you;" and up I gets and follers the gal to where the Maze was, as we paid a penny to go in, and a werry nice gentleman showed me the way in.

When I'd got in a little way, I see it were jest like that place as I were lost in at Rosherwille, and

see as them Prattins meant to 'ave the larf agin me. So on I walks, well a-knowin' as I should get out all right agin; but jest as I were about the middle, down come a shower that sharp that it would 'ave wetted me thro' but for my umbreller, as I'd 'ad the presence of mind to bring; and that party as looks arter the place he stood up on some steps, and called to me which way to turn, and so got me out quick, as were werry perlite on 'im.

When I got to the gate they was all waitin' for me, and Prattin said as we'd go 'ome thro' Bushey Park, as the 'orse-chesnuts was werry fine in blossom in the spring, but the leaves was now a-fallin'.

Jest as we was a-startin', I see Mrs. Bewlay and Old Mrs. Prattin a-settin' at the winder of a 'otel close by at tea with them Sholders', as I'd 'ave give the world for a cup.

Old Mrs. Sinfil she were that disagreeable all the way as we was a-goin' 'ome, a-jeerin' at me, a-sayin', "Mrs. Brown, as you knows heverythink, pray who lives 'ere?" and "whose 'ouse is this?" till I got downright mad with her, and give one of my sharp ansers as shet 'er up, for I says, "Next time as you comes out, mum, I'd advise you to bring your manners with you, as is a werry bad esample to your grandchildren," as made Mrs. Prattin take it up, and Prattin 'ad to blow 'is wife and 'is mother-in-law both up afore we was friends

agin, and not afore I'd asked 'im to set me down at the railway, thro' not a-wishin' to go back to their place:

That seemed to bring Mrs. Prattin to 'er senses, as turned quite civil, and Mrs. Sinfil said as she didn't mean nothink, over the back of the shay.

I were dreadful tired when we got back to Mr. Prattin's, and reglarly a-dyin' for a cup of tea; but, law, there ain't no peace nor quiet to be 'ad with that man, as says the moment we was in the 'ouse, "Now, Mrs. Brown, go and take your bonnet off, and I'll show you all over the 'ouse while tea's a-gettin' ready, as I've 'ad fitted up my own way, as is perfection."

Well, certingly the 'ouse were not so bad, and the kitchens werry nice, with a fust-rate range, a fitted up with 'ot-water pipes all over, I must say; and capital keepin' places and cellars as that man dragged me all over and about; and then says, "Now, I'll show you the top of the 'ouse."

"Well," I says, "I think I'd rather rest a bit."

"Oh!" he says, "the stairs is that easy you won't feel 'em, and we can't 'ave tea for 'arf a hour, for there's somethink gone wrong about the water as supplies itself to the biler."

So, as we 'ad to wait, I thought I might as well see all over the place, as would make the time pass more quicker like.

Mrs. Prattin's room was a good size, and so were the spare room, and two other rooms on a floor; but wot were Prattin's pride in partikler were the top of the 'ouse, as he 'ad 'ot and cold water throwed up enuf, he said, for to flood the place in case of fire, as were 'is constant terrors.

He'd got a bath-room as weren't finished, tho' the bath were in, and a good size for depth, tho' I considered it full narrer.

He were a-showin' me 'ow he could 'ave a bath in a minnit, and really I were that dead beat as I set down on the hedge of that bath for a rest, thro' not bein' a chair in the room.

He says to me, "When it's finished, you can 'ave a 'ot bath, and a cold bath, and a shower bath, all at once."

I says, "Ain't it full narrer?"

"Law bless you," says he, "no. Why, look 'ere," and into it he takes and jumps, and lays down full length; and jest then they calls upstairs as tea were ready, as I jumps up glad to 'ear, leastways were a-goin' to, when Prattin, in 'is 'urry to get out of the bath, ketches 'old of me, as 'ad got both my legs off the ground, as 'ad been a-settin' on the hedge of the bath, and if he didn't take and tip me back'ards on to 'im into that bath, as it's a Providence were that narrer as I couldn't sink in it,

or he'd never 'ave see the light of day agin in this world.

I were so took aback at bein' seized that sudden, that in tryin' to save myself I ketched 'old of a string as were 'angin' down, and in a instant there come down a deluge, as took my breath away and my eyesight too, for I never 'ad such a shock ; and wot with Prattin a-kickin' and strugglin' under me, and my shrieks a-minglin' with 'is bad langwidge, there was a row.

'Ow they got me out of that bath I don't know ; all as I remember, when I come to, was a-settin' on the floor drenched, and Mrs. Prattin and Mrs. Sinfil a 'elpin Prattin out of the bath a drowned rat, as said he were scalded to death, as in 'is struggles he'd been and turned the 'ot-water tap, as I 'ad felt on my back, but never give it a thought in my flurry.

Mrs. Prattin and 'er mother got 'im to 'er bed-room, and there I were left a regular sop, so I 'ollers out arter 'er, " Wherever am I to go."

Says Mrs. Prattin to the gal " Do go and dry that old woman, for she'll come a-drippin' all down the new stair-carpets."

Well, the gal says to me, " Law, mum, you're sopped to the skin ; the best thing as you can do will be to come down to the kitchen fire, as tho' not much will dry your clothes, only let me wring you

out fust, afore you goes downstairs, or missis will make such a row as ain't no friend to you, for I 'eard 'er say as she shouldn't 'ave cared if you'd 'ave broke your neck, or been drowneded like a dog in that bath."

I says, "Elp me downstairs, and let me get into a bed atween the blankets, for as to dryin' my clothes on my back afore a fire would be my certing death, as I feels a-creepin' down my back as it is."

So she were wringin' out my gownd when 'er missis called to 'er like mad, and away she ran, so downstairs I goes arter 'er and into that spare room, and slips off my clothes, and into bed I gets, as I took and pulled the sheets off, and waited for that gal to come and take away my things.

I did think as Mrs. Prattin would 'ave done the civil thing and come to look arter me; but, no, there I kep' a-layin' with no one near me but them two beasts of children, as come a-peepin' in, but I put my 'ead under the clothes thro' not a-wantin' them to see me with my 'air all off.

Presently that gal come in for my things as I asked to bring me up a cup of tea when she come with my things, and kep' a-waitin' and a-waitin' till I got drowsy like, and were a-droppin' off when I 'eard a sudden bang as made me jump up like a lamp-lighter as the sayin' is, a-makin' sure it were the powder mills gone off.

I 'uddles them blankets all round me and opens the door and could only 'ear a deal of maggin' a-goin' on downstairs, so know'd as every body wasn't killed.

I goes back into the room, and lookin' round finds a-angin' behind the door there was a printed flannin gownd and one or two things about the room as I put on, with a blanket round my shoulders and a towel over my 'ead, for my 'air were sopped thro', with a pair of carpet slippers, and down stairs I 'urries to see whatever were up.

I walks slap into the kitchin ; if you'd 'ave 'eard the shouts of larfture as there was when they see me, any one would 'ave thought it were a merry-makin' instead of the kitchen range a-layin' slap on the floor, in front of the fireplace, and a mussy as both them servants wasn't scalded to death, for they'd been and turned the wrong taps, as sent the 'ot water where the cold did ought to 'ave went, as in course esploded like a thunderbolt ; as might 'ave sent 'em all a-flyin' thro' the roof.

So I says, " When you've quite done a-larfin' as did ought to be thankful as you're not a-layin' in atoms all over the place, preaps you'll give me my things, as I 'opes may be dry by this time."

They pints to a 'eap of rubbish on a chair, and never in this world did you see such rack and ruin, as my clothes as wasn't 'arf dry, and scorched

dreadful into 'oles, and as to my 'air it were all among the ashes and the bricks and mortar, as 'ad been tore out with the grate.

I stood like anythink putrified in the middle of that kitchen, and could 'ave bore all, but that old cat Mrs. Sinfil's impidence, as come down just then in a nice rage, and says, "You good for nothink old pickpocket, 'ow dare you go into my room, a-gettin' into my bed, and then a-darin' for to rummage my drawers and put on my clothes?"

I says, "You must be a regular flinty 'eart to turn on any one in their misfortins like that;" but I says, a-turnin' to the cook, as were a stout woman with 'er harm all scalded, "if you'll lend me some clothes jest to go 'ome in, I'll pay you 'ansom, and never set foot agin in this 'ouse no more."

Prattin he comes up to me and says, "Mrs. Prattin is that frightened she's obliged to go to bed."

Says Mrs. Sinfil, "Prattin 'ow can you talk to that old woman in that state as ain't fit to be seen?"

I says, "Mum, it's jest like a fire, as parties don't mind wot they looks like;" but I says "I'm a-goin'," and follers the cook up to 'er room, as lent me clothes, and her bonnet and wail, so as I were able for to go out of the 'ouse, as I did, and when I got outside the 'ouse I took and stag-

gered along the road to get a drop of something 'ot.

I'd 'eard the clock a-strikin' wot I knowed must be ten, but never give it a thought till I got up to the public-'ouse door, and found it shet as tight as wax, as the sayin' is.

I 'ammered away, never a-believin' as I couldn't be served, when a winder were opened upstairs, and a voice says, "Go away; we're closed by New Hact."

A party as were a-passin' come up, and says, "You can't be gettin' nothink more to-night by the Licker Law."

I says, "Why, surely it ain't been and struck eleven unbeknown instead of ten?"

He says, "Why, they closes at ten in the country and eleven in town."

"Well," I says, "I never did 'ear the like. Wotever's that for? Do you mean to say as they cuts parties in the country off from their drink a 'our earlier than up in town? Why," I says, "it might be murder, and 'owever Queen Wictoria can allow it I can't think, a-livin', as she does, best part of 'er time out of town, and might be took with suddin spavins 'erself, and not a drop of brandy in the 'ouse, as will 'appen in the best-reg'lated Royal Families, as 'ave been known to save life afore now; and I'm sure I don't know 'owever I can get 'ome without it, for I'm pretty near death's door."

Says that party, "Then, why not knock up a doctor?"

I says, "There ain't anythink as a doctor could give me as would do me good, escept, preaps, cardymums, or a dose of Daffy's, as 'ave saved my life twice in the plum-season, so will always speak as I find, as the sayin' is."

That party he wished me well thro' it, and walked on; and I got to the railway more dead than alive, and when up to town, as luck would 'ave it, got a cab, tho' the feller wouldn't take me not till I give 'im 'is fare and somethink over; and certingly I were a reg'lar disreputable figger, and that's 'ow it were as a perliceman wouldn't let me go into the refreshment-bar at the railway, as were the only place open, a-sayin', "Now, you go 'ome, that's a good soul, for I can see you've 'ad as much as you can carry."

I were that wore out as anser 'im I couldn't, but got into the cab more dead than alive; and, when I did get 'ome, the gal wouldn't let me in for ever so long, thro' not a-knowin' me, and it's a mussy as I'd somethink in the 'ouse, or I shouldn't never 'ave seen mornin' light.

When Brown got 'ome, he told me as that Pratin 'ad a objec' in bein' that civil, thro' 'avin' overbuilt 'isself, and wantin' advances from parties as Brown knowed. "Well, then," I says, "don't

trust 'im, as is a double-faced wiper, for I'm sure he were a-jinin' them others in their jeers agin me behind my back ; but as to 'Ampton Court, it's all werry well for a 'scursion for the day, preaps, thro' bein' a easy distance, but if I 'ad to live there, all I've got to say is, give me the Whitechapel Road, with all its faults, afore it."

Not but wot it's a noble 'All as that there Alderman Wolsey built, but none of the other rooms ain't much account ; and as to that there Wolsey, they do say he 'ad a dreadful fall there 'isself, and no wonder, for them floors is werry slippy, and it were thro' a fall there as that King William met 'is death, but that were a-ridin' in the Park ; as ain't the fust as 'ave come to their end that way and won't be the last, as shows as Kings is but mortals arter all, as the sayin' is.

But I won't go to 'Ampton Court nor nowhere else, to be treated like that over my beer, and cut off from a drop of sperrits, as might 'ave cost me my life ; and all I 'opes is that some night that there Gladstin may be a-comin' 'ome late, and every public shet, and 'is good lady gone to bed, and took the keys upstairs, as, in course, wouldn't disturb 'er, as would give it 'im 'ot, an never believe as he'd been out on business till that 'our in the mornin'.

And even Queen Wictoria, tho' I'm sure I don't

wish 'er no 'arm, she might mislay the key of the cellaret, thro' one of them grandchildren of 'ern a-gettin' a-playin' with it, and be put to it for even a lickure of cognac, as they calls it, and wot I feels is that if the rich might suffer, in course the poor must.

Wot I says is, it's a-interferin' with the rights of the subjec', as did ought to use their reasons, and not be ordered about and sent to bed like children cos they're 'ard-workin' people, while the Lord Mare and all them swells may set up a-swillin' all night at their clubs, while I ain't allowed not even to swaller a oyster, leastways a crust of bread and cheese, as I've paid for arter twelve o'clock in a oyster shop, as 'appened to me and Mrs. Padwick and her nephew Tom, as went to see them Germans at the Gallery of Ulceration, in Regency Street, as is werry amusin'; and I were that pleased for to find as I could understand 'em so well thro' bein' Germans, as were a nice-lookin' lady, as kep' a-dressin' up different; and I'm sure if all Germans was like 'er, there wouldn't 'ave been no war, nor yet no other troubles; and as for me, I never thought of goin' when Mrs. Padwick said she were goin' along with Tom to 'ear the Germans read.

I [says, "I never did 'ear 'em read; but when they talks they jabbers enuf, as I don't care about, thro' not understandin' their yah yah ways."

“ Oh,” she says, “ these is Germans of the right sort, as you’ll understand.”

So I says, “ Well, I’ll go ;” and the moment I see that lady, I see she were a reg’lar German, as is many on ’em that fair, and every one seemed for to take to ’er, and a werry nice family all round ’er, tho’ some on ’em seemed for to change, and be old and young by turns, as is werry confusin’.

It’s my opinion as she’s a German as don’t ’old with that there Beastmark, so ’ave come over ’ere jest the same as the Royal Family ; and it’s a pity as that lady don’t jest go over to Germany for a bit, as ’er pleasant ways would soon set things to rights ; and I do believe if she was to talk to that old King of Proosher she’d soon get ’im out of ’is nasty temper, and then there’d be a end of all troubles ; but she mustn’t go to France, cos if she was to, the French would be that fond on ’er as they wouldn’t never let ’er go away agin

Well, she acted and sung delightful, she did, and so did a old gentleman, as were a deal too old, I should say, to be a-actin’ out of ’is bed that late, tho’ Tom Appleton, as is Mrs. Padwick’s nephew, he wanted to stand me out as he were quite young all the time.

Well, that old gent he were a ’asty temper, and if he didn’t accuse that German lady of drinkin ! as was gross insults.

Then there was a Merrykin lady as were dressed that beautiful, jest as I should like to be if Queen

Victoria was to ask me to tea, and a remarkable fine-growed young man, as were a dootiful son, always a-goin' to meet 'is ma.

'Then there was a footman as looked werry 'ansom' in 'is calves, and as nice a young lady's maid as ever I see, tho' I couldn't esactually make out 'ow it was they all sung in the dark round a party in a 'at and feather, as come 'ome late from a ball that screwed, as the sayin' is, as he couldn't strike a light.

I was werry much pleased with their singin's and goin's on, and should 'ave made it all out easy enuf, if it 'adn't been as one of them orgin-grinder fellers as goes about come and got into the place, and would keep on a-playin', as in course they couldn't send 'im away, cos there wasn't nobody ill in the 'ouse, tho' 'owever he dared come up the stairs I can't think; but that's the wust of bein' in the public line, as can't shet the door in any one's face, unless arter eleven, or in licker.

Arter that, them Germans all dressed up as charity gals, as was werry amusin', tho' Tom Appleton did say as I were asleep all the time, as is like 'is impidence, like all young people now-a-days, for that young feller he cuts 'is aunt that short, and tells 'is own mother to shet up; and I'm sure when I took tea there, afore goin' on to them Germans, it did put me out to 'ear the way as he snubbed mother, aunt, and all, and said as we

was all old-fashioned in our ways, and all like that.

So I says, "Ah! young people thinks old ones fools; but old people knows as young ones is."

"Ah," he says, "I should say you was a good judge of fools, old and young," and bust out a-larfin' at 'is own wit, as is a reg'lar fool's trick; and then, cos 'is mother corrected 'im, were that rude to 'er as made my 'ands itch for to box 'is ears.

But then he took and turned sulky, and 'is mother she begun a-coaxin' of 'im for to 'ave some marmalade and muffins, like a fool for 'er pains; and if I'd been Mrs. Padwick, I wouldn't 'ave went out with 'im; but it wasn't no busyness of mine, as 'ad only jined on like, and 'adn't nothink to do with it; so, when 'im and 'is mother 'ad words, I set by a-listenin' to 'em, werry much put out; but I never said a word, for I 'ad enuf of interferin' the week afore.

Tho' I can't think what's come to young people now-a-days, for of all the bold forward lots as ever I met with, there never wasn't nothing like them, for I'm sure them young Ellick's the way as they goes on with their mother makes my blood bile, and my fingers itch to be at them, tho' it don't escuse their father's wiolence.

I was a-takin' a cūp of tea with her friendly, only last week, as I've know'd a many years, and

tho' never partikler fond on, thro' considerin' 'er a 'oller 'eart, as wears a mask, as the sayin' is.

Yet, law bless me, when you comes to think one has one fault and another another, so it ain't no use a-dwellin' on them things, tho' I must say I was put out with Mrs. Ellicks when I first got there; for 'er boy Tommy he come a-bustin' into the room and hollars out, "Mother says you've come early enuf any'ow."

I didn't take no notice tho' I did think as his mother were wrong a-correctin' him with the 'arth broom over 'is back, for if you speak before children what can you expect, and no doubt them was 'er words, not as I think children did ought to repeat everything or anything as they hears, yet it don't seem fair to pitch into 'em unless disobedient, as is what I never will put up with myself in no child of mine, not if he was a hundred.

If there is a thing as I don't 'old with it's smoky tea, and I'm sure the lid of that kettle couldn't never 'ave been shet down close, for there was wolumes had got in, and I always drinks my tea mixed, as give rise to vulgar joke about my mixing my liquors as Mrs. Ellicks give in to; and if 'er Teddy as was a-settin' opposite me didn't bust out a-larfin', with his mouth full of bread and butter, and a-drinkin' at the same time, as is a 'abit I wouldn't never allow in my family; and I didn't

agree with Mrs. Ellicks a-sayin' it was only a accident, and a-pattin' 'im that wiolent on the back as made him splutter all over the place—as made it werry unpleasant for me with 'is splashes.

We was a-talkin' friendly arter tea, when in comes 'er Fred, as is about eighteen, with whiskers a-shootin', and in 'er eyes a reg'lar beauty, tho' to my mind plain all over, but in course every crow thinks her own bird the whitest, as the sayin' is; and why not, if it makes a mother 'appy; but if he was as lovely as a hangel, he never should anser me, and order me about as he did 'er, a-sayin' as he wanted fresh tea made, as I certainly did think as what we'd left wasn't good for much, but then he must have his boots cleaned, and slapped 'is little brother's 'ead cos he sulked about doin' on 'em, as was nat'ral in the boy, thro' bein' cleaned up 'issel' for company.

When that young feller come down dressed out, he was a sight for dress and 'air oil to make you sick, and I'm sure a little soap and water bestowed on his neck wouldn't have been throwed away on it; but what with his ring in 'is 'ankercher and 'is gold chain, I never see anythink like it for a lad on eight shillin's a-week in a wholesale stationer's.

When he come into the room his mother says
“ Fred, you're a-goin' to wear your over coat, I

'ope, for the night is cold and you've got your cough on you still."

He says, "That I ain't ; a shabby old thing."

I says, "Never desert a old friend, Fred, as may stick by you."

Says 'is mother, "Where are you goin' to ?"

He says, "Oh ! somewhere, and you'd better put the key under the scraper."

Says his mother, "It's more than I dare do, for if your father was to find it out, he'd take and raze the 'ouse down."

Well, if that bit of a boy didn't take and speak that insolent about 'is father as quite put me out.

So I says, "You did ought to listen to reason, Fred, as the scraper is not the place for a door key, as might be easy took away by some tramp, and who knows what might 'appen, and sorry you'd be for to come 'ome and find them all a-swelterin' in their gore."

So he says, "Rubbish, who'd 'urt them or think of comin' 'ere when there's nothing to be got."

Says 'is mother, "I'm sure there's things about as I wouldn't lose was it ever so."

Well, there he sat, a-gobblin' up 'is tea, and a-sulkin' over the key ; and then he says, "Well, if you don't choose to leave the key you may set up for me, that's all."

She says, "You know, Fred, as your father won't 'ave it, thro' espectin' you in at eleven."

I says, "A werry good 'our to; why, when I was a gal, we did use to think as ten were late; besides," I says, "Fred," a-jokin' like, "you must 'ave your beauty's sleep as you requires."

Well, that put 'im out, thro' a-thinkin' as I meant to say as he wasn't no beauty.

So he turns on me like a wiper in its den, as the sayin' is, and says, "I'm sure that's a sleep as you never got."

"Well," I says, "there's no occasion for no rudeness over it; for I'm sure if beauty's a sin, neither you nor me ain't got much to answer for."

He turned as red as a turkey-cock, and banged out of the place; and we 'eard 'im a-pitchin' into 'is brother Tommy, as 'ad been and trod on 'is boots as 'is mother 'ad jest blacked with 'er own 'ands, thro' Joe a-refusin' to.

Jest then, in who should come but Ellicks 'isself, as is a reg'lar blue beard all over; a man as I can't a-bear the sight on, and only come to tea thro' 'er a-sayin' as he was out for the evenin'.

So he only says, "'Ow are you, Mrs. Brown," quite short.

I says, "Nicely, I thank you," as short as 'im.

He says, "Mother when you have parties to tea

you might keep them boys of yours quieter;”
“but,” he says, “I’ll soon settle ’em.”

I see ’er turn pale as she says, “Oh! I’ll go;” and ’urries out of the room for to stop ’is goin’.

When the door was opened, there was Fred in the passage a-goin’ out on the quiet.

“’Allo, you sir,” says Ellicks, “where are you off to?”

“Going out,” says Fred.

“I knows that,” says the father, “but where to?”

“Only for a bit of a walk,” says the boy.

“None of your lies,” roars out Ellicks, like a brazen bull, as the sayin’ is.

“Well, then, I’m a-goin’ to the play,” says the boy, a-pluckin’ up a sperrit.

“No, you’re not,” says ’is father.

“Why not,” says the boy.

“Cos I won’t have you goin’ out with that young Jarvis, as is waitin’ at the corner of the street for you. I’ve told you as I won’t ’ave it; he’s a bad lot, as will bring you to ruin, and ’imself too.”

“So,” says he, “now you go and take off your fine clothes, and stop at ’ome.”

I says, “Law, Mr. Ellicks, we was young ourselves once; and the play now and then for young

people is nat'ral; leastways, mine did used to be occasional fond on."

He says, "You bring up your family your way, and leave me to do as I likes with mine."

I says, "By all means, as am werry sorry as I spoke."

Well, the boy he never moved a peg; and 'is mother, she come in and says, "Oh! Ellicks, do let him go this once."

He roars out, "'Old your tongue; and you go and take your things off directly, as I tell you, or I'll ave 'em off pretty quick."

"I shan't," says the boy, "and touch me if you dare."

In a instant that man took up the poker and give a blow at the boy as might 'ave injured 'im for life; but the boy, he ducked, and got to the door; poor Mrs. Ellicks, like a ghost for paleness, she got between 'er 'usban' and Fred.

"Stand out of the way," he says, "I'll break ever'y bone in 'is skin."

She says, a-screamin' out, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, 'old 'is coat-tails, or there'll be murder."

I jest laid my 'and on 'is coat-tails, when whiz they went, crack and split right up the back of 'is coat; he turned round on me, and I do believe were a-goin' to use the poker; but a-thinkin' better on it, dropped it on my foot, and says, "Now you

walk out of my 'ouse, and never dare set your foot in it agin."

I says, "There ain't no fear of that, as is a reg'lar bear garding, as the sayin' is, and not fit for decent people to wisit, partikler with corns like mine, with your poker on 'em."

"Who wants your wisits," says Mrs. Ellicks, "you gossipin' old toad."

"Yes," says Ellicks, "and the next time you wants your tea and your drop of licker, don't come sneakin' 'ere for it."

So I didn't say a word, but walked downstairs, a-feelin' as I was only a-lowerin' of myself, as the sayin' is, by such company; and when I got out of the 'ouse, and were in the next street, that boy Fred come up a-smokin' of a cigar, and says, "It's all your fault, you mischief-makin' old thing; it was only seein' you, as father can't a-bear the sight on, as put 'im out of temper; and as to mother, she says as you're a reg'lar old fool; and so I tells you to your face. So good night, and mind you gets 'ome sober, Mother Brown."

I did think as drop I must, with my legs a-reg'lar tremblin' under me, with sich insults, partikler as that ooman owed me over five pounds borrered money; but I got a bus, and 'ome I went, a-feelin' as the world were 'oller, and friends all my eye; and won't never lend no more money, nor yet

take no notice of them hobidy-hoys, as they calls 'em, neither a man nor boy, as is full of hairs and himpidence.

So when we come out from 'earin' them German Reads, I give in to that young Tom, as perposed a-goin' to 'ave a oyster, thro' sayin' tho' dear he knowed a place as was Welsh natives, and only eighteenpence the dozen, as six is as much as I can manage, even with a pint of stout, as they certingly do relish, and some says did ought to be took with them, for to kill 'em all the sooner.

So I didn't make no objections, but went with 'im and 'is aunt, as were a good step past eleven by the time as we got there.

There was a good many as 'ad to be served in a back-room, and the young ooman as waited she asked us if we'd like any beer.

So I says a pot of stout, as she asked for the money for, and certingly when she brought it was first rate, and a pretty good 'ole we made in it afore ever the oysters was brought, as they couldn't open fast enuf.

So when she did come, I says to the young ooman, "Another pot, if you please."

I do not blame 'er, poor thing, as were bein' called every where at once, but certingly she were a jolly long time a-gettin' that beer, and when she did bring it we 'ad some bread and cheese for to settle the oysters.

I'd only got the porter up to my mouth, when in comes a perlice, and says, a-layin' 'is 'and on my arm, sudden, "This 'ere won't do."

I werry nigh choked thro' bein' checked in my draft, as is a thing I can't a-bear, besides a-spillin' the beer all down me, so I says to 'im, "Wotever do you mean?"

He says, "It's gone twelve, and you mustn't set a-swillin' 'ere."

I says, "Surely we may finish our bread and cheese and beer as we've paid for?"

"No," he says, "you mustn't."

"But I say I will," says I.

"Then I'll take you to the station-'ouse," says he.

I says, "Dare to."

He says, "Then come quiet."

I says, "I will," and up I gets.

Mrs. Padwick she turned pale, and as to Tom he were a-goin' to cheek the perlice, but I says, "Tom, if it's law, it's law, and we did ought to obey it;" but I says, "it's my opinion as this 'ere perlice is a esceedin' of 'is dooty, as will 'ave this pint settled."

Says the perlice, "You don't settle no more pints nor yet 'arf pints to-night 'ere, so come to the station-'ouse, and you'll see whose right and whose wrong."

I says, "I means to, and if you don't rue this day my name ain't Martha, as shall reach Queen Victoria's ears, as I am sure won't never allow respectable parties to be cut off from their bread and cheese and beer, as is things a-comin' to a pretty pass."

Says the perlice, "I didn't make the laws as is 'ard on us, for we dursn't take a glass of beer on dooty, unless we've got a sarjint with us."

"Well then," I says, "why don't you all get made sarjints and do as you please, and wotever is a sarjint, as he should make any difference over a pint of beer?"

So off we went up to the perlice station, tho' I don't think as that perlice would 'ave pressed the charge; but I says to Mrs. Padwick, "I won't give in till I sees wot the law is, cos I never won't believe as it's unlegal to eat a bit of bread and cheese arter twelve o'clock as you've paid for; but," I says, "do you and Tom go 'ome, as ain't been a-breakin' of the law, and I'll get a cab and foller in no time," for I were afraid as she might 'ave 'er cramps set in as nothink but brandy won't touch in this world.

I don't think as Master Tom he relished it much, and says, "Oh! yes, aunt, let's go, for it's late, and mother'll set up for me."

So I see tho' he were werry brave, a-cheekin' of 'is mother, he didn't much care about the station-'ouse,

and soon dropped 'is cheek when the perlice told 'im as he could lock 'im up all night.

I did my uttermost to try and get Mrs. Padwick 'ome, for she's far from strong, and if took with the sterricks it would take three at the least to 'old 'er.

But she wouldn't 'ear on it, so we goes to the station-'ouse together, as the inspector took our names and addresses for to appear in the mornin', and I certingly ain't got nothink to complain on in them perlice, as treated me jest like a lady, cos in course they knows as it's a bad law, and one as might 'appen to Queen Wictoria 'erself in travellin', and in course if they'd 'ave told me I should 'ave 'urried with my bit of bread and cheese, and not 'ave 'ad that beer throwed all over me, tho' I owns it were quite a axcidence.

That inspector at the station-'ouse be'aved the nobleman all over, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, your name and address is all we requires, as will be summonsed accordin' to law."

"Well," I says, "it's a nice law certingly, and one as John Bull won't never submit to, I should say, not for all the Parlyments in the world, as might as well be under that old Beastmark for to bully us, as is a downright tyrant, and nothink better, to stop your beer like that.

As is wot 'ave made John Bull the man he is, as is

equal to any six forriners as ever was born, as the sayin' is, but cut down 'is beer and wot is he, why, nothink no more than any other 'uman bein', and will get as lean as a Merrykin, and come to be trampled under foot like a Frenchman by them beastly Germins.

I didn't 'ear no more about that there oyster-shop not for two or three days, but got my summons sure enuf afore the week were out, and 'ad to go up to the magistracy over it, and when he'd 'eard it he says, "Then you're fined in the mitigated penalty of ten shillin's, as it's your first offence."

I says, "Wotever do you mean? why I shouldn't 'ave 'ad to pay but five shillin's if found intosticated, and now you wants ten shillin's for only eatin' my bit of bread and cheese as I'd paid for; well," I says, "if Queen Wictorier don't 'ear of this as is downright shameful."

Says the magistracy, "Stand up 'ere agin. I'm surprised at you as 'ave got off that easy and now is insolent."

I says, "Me insolent, you'll escuse me, that I never were."

He says, "'Old your tung and listen to me. You didn't ought at your time of life to go a-larkin' about at oyster shops at night."

"Who says I were a-larkin'," says I.

"'Old your tung," says he, "and listen. Now,

if ever you're brought up on a charge like this agin I shall not be so merciful. Now pay the fine and go, and think yourself lucky as I can say as you leaves the court without a stain on your character."

"Well," I says, "that's more than I can say of my welweteen jacket, as is stained all down with the porter; but I say if this 'ere law ain't put down precious quick, it shan't be my fault, as is a disgrace to a Christian country," and says, "I suppose we shall soon be left to perish for a drop of brandy, tho' a doctor may order it over and over agin, and it's all werry fine for teatotallers to talk, but life 'ave been knowed to 'ang on 'arf a quartern took in three doses, and the werry fust brought the colour back in the face, and if any one says as I'm one for to say as tipplin' is right, it's a gross falsity, tho' always one to fly to the bottle when any one is took sudden afore the doctor can be got, tho' I'm sure I've shed tears over them as 'ave brought themselves to a untimely grave, as the sayin' is, thro' them 'abits, as I'm sure you wouldn't never 'ave dreamt of that young ooman next door to us as 'adn't been married but two years, and a good 'usband tho' much away thro' bein' a commershal, and I'd see 'er servant as were a elderly party, go in and out with a bottle, and I says to Brown, 'That old ooman next door is given to drink.'"

He says, "Ah! most old women is."

I says, "I considers that remark brutal, Mr. Brown, but never mind; but I certingly shall warn that young ooman, as may be burnt in 'er bed thro' that tipsy old faggit."

He says, "You'd better mind your own business, and let your neighbours alone."

I didn't say no more, but two days arter I called in on that lady, and 'appened to mention what I'd see in the way of bottles a-goin' in.

She did thank me, and would give me a kiss, with 'er mouth full of cloves, as she said was 'er teeth that bad.

I says, "Cloves is bad for the teeth, I've 'eard say, as there's a-many remedies for now-a-days; tho', for my part, I don't believe in nothink but the steel balsam, as the sayin' is."

Afore we parted, she made me 'ave a glass of sherry wine, and told me she were a-goin' to part with that old party, as domineered over 'er.

So I says, "That's right; always be missis in your own 'ouse." And away I went.

It wasn't more than a week arter as the old servant came in and asked me to step in; "for," she says, "she's gone ravin' mad."

I 'urries in, and never see sich a sight in my life, for there she set on the floor a-screamin' and tearin' of 'er things and 'er 'air.

So I sent my gal for the doctor at once, and me and the old party'eld 'er down in bed till he come, and, when he did, 'ad to put 'er in a straight wainscoat.

When the poor 'usband come in, it were werry nigh the death on 'im, for she didn't know 'im, and only raved and tore, till at last she got insensible, and never rallied, but sunk quite gradual, as they called it brain-fever, but were nothink but licker; and that old devil as fetched it for 'er did ought to be 'ung, a wicked old wretch.

As owned to it all when the doctor and me accused 'er on it, but never told the poor 'usband, as were broken-'arted, and went away to Canader for to 'ide 'is sorrers; and I 'eard arterwards as that young creetur took to drinkin' thro' disappointment in love, as will often turn anyone's 'ead.

So a-knowin' as I do all them evils of drink, I think as I am one to speak, and speak I will, as 'ave 'eard them as was reg'lar scolards afore now say as the abuse of a thing weren't no argyments agin its use.

I'm sure there's many a one as only take's enuf to keep off wuss things, partikler in openin' a drain, or the painters about, as we all knows will kill a bird, thro' a-settlin' on 'is water, as shows 'ow bad it is for to drink water under them circumstances, as always takes the glass out of the cage myself if they're only a-doin' the winder-sells and frames.

Never shall I forget seein' one party in the

painters' colic, poor feller ! as were all thro' a leaden cistern. So, if sperrits is pison, so is water if took improper, and some say did all ought to be filtered, or a lump of charcoal in it.

I'm glad to see as doctors 'ave took it up, a-sayin' as they must give Alkerole in 'Ospitals, as is, in course, full of foul hair and all manner, and if the patients don't want it, the nusses do, as must 'ave it, too ; tho' I never would allow but one glass to anyone a-settin' up, and that arter supper ; and, if they wants anythink thro' a chill in the night then I says let it be a cup of tea.

But any nuss as is a nuss, and knows 'er dooty, won't give in to sperrits, nor yet more than 'arf-a-pint of beer with 'er supper ; and, for my part, it's often and often as I've only took a bason of gruel, with not a drop more than two table-spoons in it, as won't never 'urt any one in this world, I'm sure, and is a dooty as you owes yourself, with a long night afore you.

But as to them tipplin' old wretches as they calls Gamps, why, I'd 'ave 'em tied up with a round dozen, as is a disgrace to their sect, and deserves to be 'anged if the baby's overlaid, or anythink goes wrong with the mother, as requires a deal of watchin', and not a old 'arf-drunken wretch a-snorin' all night, with the infant a-cryin', and the poor mother not the strength to wake 'er, and in a 'igh fever by daylight.

But a fust-rate nuss knows 'er dooty, and wot to take and wot to leave, thro' takin' a pride in both mother and child, as is anxshus work, I considers, for ten days at least, and sometimes a fortnight, as will never take 'er clothes off, nor put 'er legs up the fust three nights, or else ain't doin' 'er dooty 'onest, not as she'd be done by, in my opinion.

I don't believe as the Prince of Wales will ever give in to this 'ere Licker Law, arter goin' thro' wot he 'ave, and bein' brought from death's door, as the sayin' is, by a glass o' beer. And suppose he'd been and fancied it arter ten o'clock of a Sunday night, thro' bein' in the country, might 'ave died for want of it, and then where would them parties be as made sich a law ?

Besides, as I were only a-sayin' it's a true born Britten's rights, and 'owever is every Jack to 'ave 'is gill, as the sayin' is, if the door's to be slammed in 'is face when goin' in for a quartern, not as ever I should care to see any son of mine at a public-ouse bar for a frequency, but shouldn't think none the wuss on 'im for treatin' a friend.

But all as I've got to say is as them as made sich a law is tyrants, and tho' I always says law is law and don't break it, nor yet go a-smashin' Gladstin's winders, nor yet the Clubs, where parties may set a-drinkin' till all is blue ruin 'round; but I do say as workin'-men did ought to get up a parti-

tion agin it. Cos all as I says is, that I ain't a-goin' to be told when I'm to 'ave a pint o' beer, or a drop of anythink, as long as I've got the money to pay for it in moderation.

I know wot it will be, I shall be obligated to go and talk to Queen Wictorier myself, as 'ave been a nussin' mother 'erself, and would feel for any one under them circumstances, as is even allowed porter in the workus. And in course I respects them tea-totallers, as is all werry well in their way; but let 'em keep out of mine, for I ain't a-goin' to pour beer nor yet sperrits down their throats. But don't let 'em try to dose me with their tea-leaves, as no one don't relish two cups more than me; but as to swillin' tea all day long, why it's a-washin' of you inside out. And some do say as tea ain't nothink better than sloe pison.

Not as I believes it, for when tired it's that refreshin' as nothink ain't like it, tho' sometimes a-requirin' jest a little somethink for to correct it, tho' not as a rule. But we all knows as there's no rule without a deception, and I have know'd parties as 'ave made the teapot a reg'lar cloak for sperrits, and old Mrs. Malchin she always measured brandy into 'er tea over the back of the spoon; but that ain't no reason as any one shouldn't take jest a couple fair measure, or even a little whiskey, as I 'ave done myself in Scotlan', when wet thro' with

that mountain doo, as whiskey is the only thing as will make it 'olesome.

Tho' this 'ere's a land of liberty, why should any one take the liberty to interfere with my drink, as the next thing will be allowancin' your meat and tea and sugar.

No, as I should say to Queen Wictoria 'erself, "Wotever you do, don't go for to tamper with any one's licker, as is next to your wital hair," and I knows as she'd listen to me pre'aps more than to them as is always a-teasin' 'er with their advice, as is a thing you can get plenty on any day.

But, as I were a-sayin', the doctors now is all a-givin' stimmylants, and tho' some may overdo it, yet it won't do to 'ave a public-'ouse shet in your face when you're a-goin' for it in the way of doctors' stuff, as you can get any time, night or day, and even of Sundays, by ringin' of a bell as I've see it 'rote up myself; so I ain't no doubt but wot the law will be changed when it's been brought in manslorter once or twice, as is wot it did ought to be, with a 'eavy punishment, the same as a railway guard as don't attend to 'is pints, and then a dreadful collusion like the Batavier, as I never did 'old with them Dutch ways, as is a deal too fond of slushin' the place with water to please me, as don't care about bein' in a constant pool myself, as ain't wot I calls cleanliness.

But as to alkerole in sickness doctors 'ave rote to the papers, as I were a-sayin', to say as it were a downright necessary in sickness, and I'm sure from wot I've seen myself in a 'ospital, I'm sure in a bad illness there ain't nothink like a 'ospital, so always says, "If anythink like that should 'appen to me, take me to a 'ospital, but one where stimmy-lants is allowed in reason;" not as I were illudin' to Old Atkin's carbuncle, as didn't ought to 'ave been touched in my opinion, but to Mrs. Malin's ribs, as she stove in thro' a-pitchin' sideways agin the hedge of the dust-'ole, and were took there on a shetter.

Not as I went to see 'er, but a poor gal as I knowed in the name of Stivers, and it certingly were as clean as you might eat off the boards as the sayin' is, that you might, tho' I certainly were a little put out at the porter's lodge, a-wantin' to look into my redicule, and then say as a bit of tea and sugar wern't allowed, as I thought the poor gal might fancy, but in course laws is laws, and the nuss told me it were wonderful the things as friends would take and try to bring in and give on the sly, and was certain death if indulged in.

As well I know myself thro' poor Mrs. Walters, as was that bad, and a friend come in for to see 'er as was 'er sister-in-law, and says, "You're a cup too low, dear; and I see what'll do you good," and takes and sends out for a gill of red port wine,

as she give 'er mulled with spice and sugar, and tho' only took half a glass, was a corpse before mornin', thro' inflammation a-settin' in, as wouldn't never 'ave 'appened if she'd been in the 'ospital, where they don't allow such goin's on.

So, I says to that porter, "I wants for to see Sarah Stivers, if you please," as 'ad lived with me near a twelve month, and left thro' a housemaid's knee ; not a bad-lookin' gal, tho' a squint as made you never know whether she was a-lookin' at you or not.

I always will speak as I find, and a more 'ard-workin' gal never come into a 'ouse till she got to know that fellow, as was only a journeyman brick-layer, as I warned 'er against, thro' 'is bein' constant out of work and on the strike ; but law, they won't take no warnin', them gals, so you may as well spare your breath.

When I 'eard thro' the milkman as she was a-dyin' in the 'ospital, and wished for to see me, I says, "I'll certingly go," as is what I 'olds to be a duty, if it was a dog, let alone a Christian, as 'ad broke your bread.

So Wednesday bein' the day as visitors is let in, off I went to the 'ospital, after a bit of early dinner, and certainly it was rather a journey for me.

As I were a-sayin', the place were beautiful clean, and all as I've got to say agin them wards it was them all a-layin' in bed of a row, as must impress

the spirits werry much if not well yourself, a-seein' others a-sufferin', tho' p'raps it's a comfort when you sees others is worse nor wot you are yourself.

I soon found out that poor gal's bed, and she a-layin' there as pale as a ghost, as I know'd in a minnit by the squint.

When she see me fust she begun for to fret, a-sayin', "If she'd a-listened to me things might have been different."

So I says, "Don't take on like that, Sarah Ann," for the nuss told me as she was that low as nothink wouldn't keep 'er up, not even constant brandy, as was necessary, for she'd come in with 'er bad knee broke out agin, and the doctors said as the legs must come off, only she wasn't fit for it, not as she know'd it; thro' its bein' a white swellin' as was brought on as I ain't no doubt thro' a-kneelin' constant at their work, and won't 'ave a mat if you was to pay 'em for it.

When I look'd in that gal's face I see ill usage in every line, as I heard say was a fellow to kick 'er with 'is nail boots, and tear 'er 'air out in 'andfuls in 'er situation, as I'd soon settle; for in my opinion the best plan would be to give such willians the cat-o'nine tails, as would soon cure their kickin', jest the same as the grotters.

So I says to 'er, "'As your mother been here to-day?"

She bust out a-cryin', a-sayin' as she 'adn't 'ad the 'eart to let 'er know what she was come to.

I says, "That's downright rubbish; who so fit to come to you as your own mother?"

She says, "Mrs. Brown, mum, my mother 'ave swore a solemn oath as she never would see me no more if I didn't break off with Jacob, as I couldn't make up my mind to, tho' I know'd as he were wild; but not the bad lot as he proved to me arterwards, for I've 'ad to work 'ard to keep 'im, and been treated shameful; but," she says "I don't bear 'im no malice; and if he was 'ere I'd say to 'im, 'Jacob, I forgives you, tho' you've been my death;' as my knee is caused by a kick as he give me, when my baby wasn't six week old, and 'im a-comin' 'ome and findin' nothin' to eat in the 'ouse; as 'ow could he expect it, 'avin' been out of work nearly seven weeks, and not brought me a farthin'; and then to fly in that wilent passion, as he nearly killed me in 'is rage; and would 'ave, but for a Hirishman in the parlour as bust open the door and dragged 'im away, thro' the perlice havin' no right for to interfere inside of a 'ouse; and as to dinner, I 'adn't 'ad nothink myself all day but a cup of tea and a bit of bread-and-drippin', as that 'Hirishman's wife give me, tho' almost starvin' 'erself."

I says, "Wherever is your babby?"

Says she, "In heaven, as was only two months, thro' convulsions."

So I says to the nuss on the quiet, "It strikes me as this young woman is very bad," not in 'er 'earin' in course; but through a-pretendin' to look round the ward, as they calls it.

She says, "It's my opinion as it's 'ours, for there's mortification."

"Well, then," I says, "that means death, as we all knows."

"Well," she says, "the doctors was afraid of operatin' a week ago, and that is a bad sign."

I says, "She 'ave got a mother, as did ought to see her; can she come in 'ere out of 'ours?"

So, says the nuss, "If you speaks to the 'ouse surgeon it will be all right any time."

So I says, "Oh! indeed;" and I goes back to the poor gal's bedside, and says, "now, don't you think, Sarah, as I'd better let your mother know as you're 'ere?"

"Oh!" she says, "the names as mother called me last time as I met 'er accidental; and my father, as is a reg'lar one to 'is chapel, went down on 'is knees for to curse me."

"Then," I says, "more shame for 'im; but," I says, "where do they live?"

So she tells me as it was jest by the New Cut; but she says, "Don't let 'em come 'ere for to go on at me as they did last time; I wouldn't 'ave it afore all the ward was it ever sò."

"Now," I says, "my dear, you lay quiet;" for

I see she was gettin' all of a work, "and I'll come and see you agin by-and-by."

So the nuss went with me to the doctor, as agreed as the gal were that low as she'd better see 'er parents, as might be admitted arter 'ours.

I got a cab, and off I went to Oakley Street, as wasn't far, and there I found Mrs. Stivers, as I knowed afore.

The moment she see me, she says, "If you've come, Mrs. Brown, mum, anythink about that 'ussy of a gal of mine, please for to stop it; for 'ave 'er 'ere I won't."

I says, "Mrs. Stivers, mum, are you a woman, or are you not? because if you are, do not be flint stones agin your own flesh and blood."

She says, "I tell you agin she's no child of mine; both 'er father and me 'as turned our backs on 'er for ever."

Jest then the father come in, as is a tailor by trade; and as soon as he 'eard me tell about 'is dorter, begun a-ravin' like a idjiot, as he is, and a-talkin' Scripture in vain, as the sayin' is, and 'is wife too.

So when they stopped for a moment to take breath, I gets up quite slow and quiet like, and says, "I wishes you both a good day, as you're not fit to be talked to; but," I says, "if that's religion, give me Turks, with all their wives; or even Mormons, as will listen to reason."

Says the father, "We are ready to listen to reason, if you'll talk it."

"Then," I says, "your daughter Sarah is a-layin' a-dyin' in Bartholomew Hospital."

They give one another a look. Says the father, "How do you know it?"

I says, "Cos I've been to see 'er; and in my opinion she won't see mornin' light."

If you'd 'eard that Mrs. Stivers give a scream, it would 'ave pierced you thro', as it did me.

"Oh," she says, "let me see 'er! I must see 'er! Oh, Stivers, don't you stop me!"

Well, there stood that old feller all of a tremble, a-lookin' the colour of candles.

He didn't say nothink, so I says to 'er, "Get your bonnet and shawl, and come with me this moment;" and I says to 'im, "If you'll do your duty, you'll come too."

"Oh," says he, "it is the sinner's doom as 'ave come 'ome to 'er."

I says, "If your so fond of doomin' sinners, 'adn't you hetter look at 'ome? Ain't you got no sins?"

He says, "That gal was well brought up."

"Oh yes," I says, "I knows; dosed with chapel and prayers, till you made 'er sick on it, and never taught 'er not to tell a lie nor act deceitful, poor thing!" as was her ways, and made me part with 'er; for apart from 'er bad knee, the

truth she wasn't capable on, not in the least things ; and I says to 'im, "If you was to talk goodness less, and act it more, you'd never turn your back on your dyin' child."

By this time Mrs. Stivers were ready, and I see the old chap take up 'is 'at.

I says, "Now, before we goes to that 'ospital, none of your judgments, and that sort of talk, to that poor gal, cos," I says, "if you comes that gammon, out they'll turn you in a jiffy, as the sayin' is;" for I didn't much like 'is looks, tho' I see the mother was all right.

So she up and spoke to 'im, and he seemed to give in ; as praps wasn't a bad man, only so precious fond of settin' others right, as to get all wrong hisself.

When we got to the 'ospital I let 'em go and see 'er without me, and waited with the nuss till old Stivers come to look for me.

I see by his looks as 'is pride was brought down, for 'is eyes was drowned in tears as he said to me, "She 'ave spoke that proper, Mrs. Brown, a-askin' of 'er mother and me to forgive 'er, as 'ave broke both our 'arts pretty nigh."

So I went back to the bed with 'im, and she was settin' up, lookin' quite beautiful ; and she says to me, "Give me a kiss, dear Mrs. Brown."

I says, "With pleasure, my dear."

She says, "You've been a true friend to me."

There set 'er mother, a-sobbin' fit to break 'er 'art, and a-'oldin' of 'er 'and; and then the nuss come with the doctor, as give 'er a little brandy-and-water, as seemed to pick 'er up a little bit; but I see clear as a change were a-comin', and so did the nuss.

Well, we sat and watched 'er till about ten o'clock, for she seemed drowsy like; then she woke up sudden, and says to 'er mother, "Tell 'im I forgive 'im, and love 'im to the last, and so I do you, dear mother and father; let me 'ear you say once more as you forgives me."

I thought as them two poor creatures would 'ave broke their 'arts; and then she wished us all good-bye; and 'er last words were "Bless you all!" and then she dozed on for about arf an hour, and at last went off without a struggle.

No doubt as she acted wrong, poor thing; but all I 'opes is, that when I comes to die myself, I may be as sorry for all my wrong-doin's as that poor gal was in the 'ospital, as is the reason as I always will speak up for 'em as knows when and where stimmylants did ought to be give.

But I certingly will 'ave the law agin Mrs. Garstone, if she goes about sayin' as I'm a reg'lar old woodcock as lives on suction; and a pity I don't imitate forriners, for goodness knows I've

a good happytite for my meals, tho' never a 'eavy feeder, as the sayin' is; and as to forriners bein' sober, why, I've seen 'em in licker, both sects, a-reelin' in the werry streets—a well-dressed woman, too—in Paris, and another in a fur tippet, as was downright disgustin' in a bus thro' drink, and were turned out by the conductor; and when Brown's own niece took and married a glove-maker over in Paris, I found out wot drinkin' really did mean, as is raw sperrits, as they calls absence; but he never 'ad the glass 'ardly away from 'is lips, as he were always a-goin' to one of them caffys for.

I'm sure nobody wouldn't 'ave believed it of 'im to look at 'im, as if butter wouldn't melt in 'is mouth, as the sayin' is, for tho' it's my opinion as forriners is a deceitful race, and never would I 'ave give my consent if she'd been a child of mine, as I'd rather 'ave follered to the 'awnin' grave, as the sayin' is, but that was always the wust with poor Carry as was Brown's own sister, her no wasn't no nor 'er yes yes.

So in course the gal took advantage and talked her over, and they was married all on the quiet, and went away without so much as good-bye to nobody.

I must say as I felt 'urt over it thro' 'avin' dressed that gal a hinfant when 'er own mother wasn't equal to it.

She 'adn't been gone six months when 'er mother died ; 'er last words to me was, "Martha, I 'ope as you'll be a mother to my poor gal over there when I'm gone."

So I said as I would, and my word is my bond, and when Brown told me as Paris was 'is destiny, I says, "Then I'll go with you, for I've 'eard as poor Anna Maria is very delicate, and mayn't ever be a long lived ooman."

He says, "Come along in welcome, for my pass will take two," and so we went off.

I must say as the journey were a deal too jolty for me, let alone the sea, as is as treacherous as tigers a-layin' in wait for to bust out sudden on you, as I can't abear, and must be a strain on the constitution, I should say.

I never shall forget what my feelin's was when I first see that poor gal in Paris with a babby ten days old, sich a place as she lived, and only a 'ole to sleep in.

I says, "My dear, you never can and never shall be 'ere, as ain't a place for a cat to be confined in."

She said as she'd got 'a lodgin' where she was goin' to be till she got strong 'agin.

"But," I says, "you won't never get strong a-livin' on this," for she was a-takin' of some greasy water with bread sopped in it, water as 'ad 'ad a

bit of meat dropped into it and pulled out directly, I should say.

“Oh,” she says, “I like it.”

I says, “Do you, then it won’t like you I should say ;” as to stoppin’ with ’er I couldn’t, for there wasn’t ’ardly a place to set down on, and as to that fellow as they called Peer, he was a reg’lar ruffian to look at, with a short pipe in ’is mouth and ’ad a mother as were a jabberin’ old cat as never washed ’er face from ’ear’s end to ’ear’s end, and wore a black petticoat with a night jacket and carpet slippers, and a-nettin’ stockin’s from mornin’ to night, and to ’ear ’er shriek out that lingo on ’ern enuf to distract a whirlwind.

I was very nigh losin’ my temper when fust I got to the place where they was all a-livin’ together in, as was a bit of a room full of them ’ags as I calls ’em, reg’lar witches, a-talkin’ about the poor gal and the infant.

So I hollars out at ’em, “Do ’old your row, do,” and if one on ’em didn’t take and jump up and kiss me.

I could ’ave sent ’er a-flyin’ only didn’t wish to make unpleasantness with no one, and that poor thing was so bad in ’er ’ead as she couldn’t ’ardly bear ’erself.

If them old fish-fags wasn’t tryin’ to persuade ’er to eat a lot of that there sop I could see went

agin 'er, and was enuf to turn your stomich to look at.

So I says, "Bother your poultice," and takes it away from 'er, a-sayin', "Nong, nong," and a-shakin' of my head at 'er, and then I gets some boilin' water in a pipkin and made 'er some tea as I'd brought in my pocket, but law there wasn't nothink to make it in, and if one on 'em wasn't goin' to give it 'er in a brothy basin as smelt of onions enuf to pisen you.

I was glad of one thing, that there wasn't one of the lot as would touch a drop of tea as wasn't a bit like mothers in their ways.

So I says, "My dear, if these old scarecrows keeps up this jabberin', you'll be distracted; jest you tell me the French for get out, and I'll pretty soon start 'em."

"Oh," she says, "never mind, aunt dear."

I says, "But I do mind, my love, and I ain't a-goin' to 'ave you worrited to death like this."

She says, "I'm used to it."

I says, "Where's your 'usband?"

She says, "I don't know."

I says, "Don't you expect 'im 'ere soon?"

She says, "Law, no."

"Then," I says, "he did ought to be ashamed of 'isself."

"Oh," she says, "he 'ates children."

“Does he,” says I, “and pray what would ’ave become of ’im if every one else ’ated children when he were born?”

She only smiled.

I says, “I ain’t no patience with sich ways, as if people feels like that they didn’t ought to let it out, as is a outrage on ’uman nature, and worse than the beasts as perishes, as I’m sure our cat would blush for to be thought like.”

Well, jest as I was a-talkin’ in comes Mr. Peer, and begins to jabber away.

So I says to ’er, “Wotever is he a-sayin’?”

“Oh,” she says, “never mind ’im, aunt.”

So he turns round with ’is break-jaw talk, and says, “Me say, why it not dead.”

I says, “Wot you mean?”

He says, “The bibby,” a meanin’ of the infant.

I was put out. I could ’a tore ’is eyes out.

I says, “You black ’earted French beast. You’re a outrage. You as is worse than the uncle in the ‘Babes in the Wood,’ as wasn’t their father, and I thinks as crooked-back Dick was a angel to. You call yourself a father? Why you deserves a cuss on you.”

He busts out a-larfin’, as put my temper worse out, and then I see as he was in licker.

Them old gals all cleared out as soon as he

come in, and he turned on 'is mother with abuse as brought on frightful words, and I thought as they'd be the death of that poor gal among 'em.

So I says to 'er, "I tell you what it is. You mustn't stop 'ere, or you'll never get round. Do you think he'll let you come along with me," for tho' a risk to move 'er, anythink were better nor that.

She says, "Oh, he won't object."

So I says, "All right ;" and I come back that werry evenin', and found 'is old mother a-snorin', and if I didn't 'ave a cab, and take 'er off bodily, as the sayin' is, to where we was a-lodgin'.

As to the infant, it didn't live the week out ; and when that poor gal got over it, she told me wot a life she'd 'ad with that feller, and 'is absence. And it certingly ain't absence as makes the 'art grow fonder, as the sayin' is, for he never even asked arter 'er, and died six months arter in the 'ospital of 'is inside burnt out with them ardent sperrits, as we 'eard, when 'is poor wife 'ad been a-workin' over four months in a milliner's in London, as put on black for 'im, but no weeds, as the French never does, and were a bad lot, so let's a-draw a wail over 'im, as the sayin' is. And she's that clever at 'er needle, as she'll never want, tho' it's quite as well she ain't a child to support.

So don't let any one talk to me about French

soberness, as 'ave got no licker laws over there, nor yet a pint of decent beer for that matter ; but 'ave 'eard say as all them cabmen and waiters, as well as sojers, kills theirselves by the score with their absence, as smells like fennel, and ain't a disagreeable taste ; and some days, in moderation, a fine thing for the stomich, if took in a little ice-water afore dinner ; but I don't 'old with none of them things for to give you a appetite, like oysters, as would take away mine I'm werry sure.

But as I were a-sayin', two blacks don't make a white, as the sayin' is ; and if all the world was to get drunk that's no reason for any one else to foller their esample ; but never will set down quiet under sich a amputation myself, so let them as says it of me look out, as must be a born fool to take to drinkin' without bein' drove to it, thro' a bad 'usban' or any other illness.

I'm sure as I could pass fifty public-'ouses, and no plate glass front, nor yet fifty thousand gas lights wouldn't 'tice me into, cos I always says there's no place like 'ome, if it's ever so 'umble, as a pint of beer with your supper is better than gilded wice, as will 'ave their shampain, as we all knows will bring real pain in the end, tho' it might cost three shillin's a bottle.

Not as I 'olds with cheap wines, for I'm sure as no grocer can't sell neither port nor sherry wine

at fourteen shillin's the dozen with the bottles in, and make a profit; and yet I 'ave knowed them as liked it, and always give it their friends, as is wot I think give me the staggers arter supper at old Pockleton's, as I reeled away from 'is door slap into the middle of the road, and set down with a flop; and never remembered a thing about it, not even in the mornin', when Mrs. Padwick tried for to make me understand 'ow it were as my things was all sopped thro'.

Yet I can take my solemn davy, as the sayin' is, that I didn't finish my second glass, and 'ad only 'ad ale with my supper, as were barely two small glasses, with sweetbreads and stewed eels, so must 'ave been the port wine negus, as we took 'ot thro' a-goin' to turn out in the cold; as were a November night as 'adn't ceased rainin' for pretty nigh a week, and the roads in that state of slush as were ankle deep; so in course I never felt the fall thro' comin' down soft; but London mud is downright distruction to everythink, and I will say as that is not grounds enuf for that Mrs. Garstone, as is old Polkington's niece, to go about a-sayin' as I drinks, as I've seen too much on, goodness knows, through a-watchin' them as 'ave give into it, the same as the last lodger as ever I 'ad.

I'm sure this 'ere licker law reg'lar sticks in my throat; and if there ain't no riots over it like Lord George Gordon, as were the year as my grandmother

married, and see the flames from 'er father's back door, as lived out in the fields close agin' Battle Bridge, as were burnin' Newgate in flames.

Not but wot riots is oughrageous, and did ought to be put down with a 'igh 'and, as the sayin' is ; and that's 'ow it were as King George said to the Lord Mare, "Mind you pepper 'em ;" yet poor people didn't ought to be put upon and aggrawated out of their beer, as we all know thust will drive you mad.

And I'm told as some places in the country they shets 'em all up at 'arf-past nine of a Sunday, as is a nice look-out, partikler when you knows as them as made the laws can be a-settin' toastin' of their toes over their wine and sperrits all the evenin', while a poor creetur' as 'ave perhaps come off a journey, must go to bed without a drop of anythink to cheer 'im up.

It's all the fault of them as makes the laws jest only a-troublin' their 'eads with wot don't concern 'em ; let 'em put down drunkenness, and punish them as does wrong thro' drink, and not let that feller off as murdered the woman and boy in Bermonsey cos he were mad thro' drink.

I'd 'ave 'ung the feller if he'd fifty necks, cos that ain't reg'lar madness, as comes on any one unawares, and they can't 'elp it ; but they've been and made theirselves mad, and if they ain't to be punished, why, all as a feller's got to do as 'ave got

a spite agin' 'is wife or any one, is to set to and drink till he's mad, and then murder 'em.

And as to parties a-sayin, as he'll be kep' in prison all 'is life, it's rubbish; he'll be let out when he's cured, like others 'as been as killed their own children, afore now; cos in course they can't keep any one in a mad-'ouse as is cured, and they can't keep in prison arterwards if he were mad when he done it.

And as to the judge a-sayin' as they're to be kep' in prison durin' Her Majesty's pleasure, why, wotever pleasure can Queen Wictoria, as is a kind-'arted lady as ever stepped, and would write me a letter, I'm sure, if anythink were to 'appen to Brown, wotever pleasure, I say, could she 'ave in keepin' a lot of poor wretches in prison?

It ain't thro' publics bein' open, as is a great conwenience to them as 'ave only tuppence or thrip-pence to spend over drink, and can't do like their betters, get tick of a wine merchant, and then smash and never pay 'im, with wine, and sperrits, and beer on the table every day, as is a werry different thing to your beer at meals, as you pays over the counter for, and pre'aps now and then a pint of gin among five arter supper.

No, no; it won't never wash for me to be denied a drop of drink at a decent 'our, as I calls up to twelve o'clock, and even one for them as is

'ard at work, like printers, cos parties takes and drinks theirselves mad, as shettin' the door at eleven o'clock won't stop 'em, as will be sure to get the drink all day, as they'll 'ave plenty of time to do it in.

But I wants to know, is drink sinful altogether, and is it every one's ruin as goes into a public-'ouse, tho' it may be only 'arf a pint of mild ale, as I've took myself with a biscuit ?

Cos if that's wrong, as they gives for a reason, why shet up all publics, and a-don't let nobody 'ave no wine, nor sperrits, nor beer in the 'ouse, for fear as the cook should break open the cellar with the coal 'ammer, the same as the Cullens, as come 'ome from a dinner party, and found all the lot, with their follerers, unsensible under the kitchen dresser, reg'lar a-wallerin' in licker.

I don't old with a-pryin' into no private 'ouses ; but the public is the poor man's cellar, as he've a right to go to ; and if he will make a beast of 'isself, as the sayin' is, well then be down on 'im, and give it 'im 'ot as pitch, as the sayin' is, for abusin' 'is blessin's, as a pint of beer is to a many as is wore out with 'ard work, and washes down a bit of bread and cheese with a relish, as a many don't get out of their turtles nor wenison for all the iced punch as they drinks to cool their tungs.

It's all overbearin', interferin' selfishness with them as 'ave every luxury and in plenty, and I

should like to know 'ow many of 'em goes to bed werry far gone, and 'ave eat and drunk at one meenuf to keep many a family a month.

Cos we all knows as them as goes in for a 'eavy feed spends a little fortin over it, as I've 'eard say as one of them swell dinners costs over three pounds a 'ead, as is what I calls wicked waste, without a-reckonin' the gout pills and the doctor's bills as comes of over-loadin' the stomich.

We all knows as it's a beastly 'abit to git drunk; but I'd rather see a man over-drink 'isself than over-eat 'isself, as may take a glass too much in good company; but as for those guttlin' old wipers as'll go and get a rich lick of a greasy chinned dinner, as the sayin' is, and leave the wife and family to short commons at 'ome; why, he's quite as bad as any drunkard as ever lived, and can get it all done and over by nine o'clock, so don't want the 'ouse kep' open late for that.

It's a over-worked man as is obligated to drive 'is meals off all day, as wants 'is bit of supper and glass of somethink at night; and I do wish as them as 'ave got up this 'ere bill may feel the want of a public once or twice, and they'll precious soon get the licker law repealed jest like the Union.

As is wot the Irish can't a-bear to be forced to, as is where I'd send all them drunken wretches; but not to idle about, but to be kep' 'ard at their

work, and even give them a drop of beer and 'ole-some food if they'd work, but bread and water for them as is idle, as would soon wake 'em up.

For we all knows as dry bread is a poor substitute for the stomich, as some never touches from year's end to year's end, as the sayin' is, and some poor souls can't earn a 'onest crust.

Not as I'm one as believes as parties in gen'ral comes to that their misery without no fault of their own; for when they tells me as they ain't got a friend in the world, I always says, "'Ow come you to lose 'em all?"

Cos in course some may, thro' a wessel goin' down, like the Royal George, with everyone aboard, or a powder maggyseen, as may send a 'ole town sky-'igh; or a coal mine esplodin'; but then it ain't likely as every friend they 'ad in the world would be a-board a ship, nor yet down in a coal mine when esplodin'.

No doubt there's some fault in them as is left that destitoot, and werry often the public-'ouse at the bottom on it; but, law! for that matter, I knowed a cabman, as big a willin as ever crawled, as robbed a poor serwant of 'er wages, cheated every one, and died on a dung-'ill, as the sayin' is; and that waggerbone never touched a drop of drink, as shows as it ain't that as is always a man's ruin.

In my opinion, there is parties as did ought to

be locked up when drinks about; for I knowed a young gent once as a glass of wine sent 'im reg'lar mad, and beat 'is mother over the 'ead with a boot-jack, and 'er a born lady, as were a disease, and so they took and sent 'im to live with a doctor, as cured 'im, and lived to outgrow it, and can take it now in moderation, like a Christshun should.

Not but wot I've knowed Jews as was wonderful small drinkers, tho' partial to srub, as is a thing I can't a-bear, partikler took weak in water, as is their drinks at the Passover, when they eats them thin biscuits as big as a pancake instead of bread, and some of their dishes werry tasty, tho' too fond of ile and garlic for me.

Not but what I could drink the sea dry, as the sayin' is, if I was to eat them things, like some Christshuns will, for to encourage thust, like a devilled biskit or a bit of 'addock, as is no better than wastin' good licker, cos, in course, wot you drinks more than you wants is waste, and 'ad far better go down the sink than your throat, as it won't do no 'arm to the drains, but will give you many a twinge as you'll be sorry for.

For I well remembers a old aunt of Lady Wittles as doated on 'er shampain, but were doubled up with cramps before mornin' if she took it, as the doctor give 'er solemn warnin' would be 'er end, in my 'earin'; but you might as well try

to keep a fly from treacle as that old lady from it, and died accordin'; and I'm sure there was a woman as never was in a public-'ouse in 'er life, nor yet sent there for a drop of beer or sperrits, as only shows as it ain't got nothink to do with it.

For I'm sure there were 'Melia Mellis's mother, as married a publickin, she were never knowed to esceed 'er 'arf pint at the two meals, and couldn't a-bear the smell of sperrits, not even in servin' a customer, partikler rum, as will give the 'art-burn even standin' over the Christmas puddin', as I always puts a pint into the lot, and far better than all the brandy as ever were born or thought on, as the sayin' is.

Brown he goes a-charfin' of me over this 'ere Licker Law, tho' he must allow as I'm right, and wants me to go to the bar of the 'Ouse, and argue it along with the Speaker; so I says to 'im, "I'm aware as they do 'ave a bar, and a smokin'-room too, down at the 'Ouse, for to refresh them Members, as in course is necessary; but I wants to know if it's shet up punctual every night at twelve o'clock.

Cos it would be 'ard on some on 'em not to get a drain with their throats that parched with jawin', or that tired, as they must be of them long speeches as they're obligated to listen to.

Not as Gladstin nor the rest would touch a

drop of anythink arter twelve, of course cos they ain't that mean lot as to make laws agin a poor man's comfort, and then go and break 'em for their own.

Oh, dear no ; but it will go hard with them poor ministers next year if this bill ain't done away, for they'll 'ave to go 'ome without a drop of nothink, tho' it may be two or three in the mornin' as they're turned out, and serve 'em right, for I do 'old with that old song as my own godfather used to sing, as says—

“ Bother your eyes,
If ever you tries
To rob a poor man of his beer.”

THE END.



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