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## "THE FOOL'S PENCE."

SEVERAL years ago, in a handsomely furnished parlor which opened out of that noted London gin-shop, called "The Punch-bowl;" sat its mistress, the gaudily dressed Mrs. Crowder, conversing with an obsequious neighbour.

"Why, Mrs. Crowder, I really must say you have things in the first style! What elegant paperings! what noble chairs! what a pair of fire-screens!—all so bright and fresh. Then, the elegant stone copings to your windows, and those beautiful French window-frames! And you have been sending your daughters to the genteel boarding-school; your shop is the best furnished, and your cellars are the best filled in all this part of London. Where can you find the needful for all these grand things? Dear Mrs. Crowder, how do you manage?"

Mrs. Crowder simpered, and cast a look of smiling contempt through the half-open door, into the shop filled with drouthy customers. "The fool's pence!—'tis the FOOL'S PENCE that does it for us," she said. And her voice rose more shrill and loud than usual, with the triumph she felt.

Her words reached the ear of one customer, George Manly, the carpenter, who stood near the counter. Turning his eyes upon those around him, he saw pale, sunken cheeks, inflamed eyes, and ragged garments. He then turned them upon the stately apartment; he