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"For why, then, Job Smith?"

"He wouldn't have been so frightened if you had, knowing he worn't in much danger," replied the irrepressible Job.

This reflection on his skill was too much for the keeper's temper; he sprang up as if about to take prompt revenge, whereupon Job, deeming discretion the better part of valour, seized his "evil" and slipped out of the door. The keeper for a moment seemed inclined to follow him, but thinking better of it, sat down and glowered at the company. Two or three, who had been laughing, hid their faces in their mugs, but Harry Ellis, who happened not to have one at that moment, as the landlord was just refilling it, was obliged to complain of a violent twinge of toothache, which, he said, made him screw his face up all manner of ways. Stevens eyed him darkly, but made no remark.

"Don't 'ee take no notice of that there Jobie, keeper," said a jovial-looking farmer. "He's always carrying on his jokes wi' someone. Us all know you can shoot proper, and it wouldn't be vitty to kill every shot, or there'd be nought left for a bit of sport) come Kirsmass. Tell about jokes, I heard one this forenoon which nearly made me bust. Farmer Muggins and I were standing on the big road a-telling together; and he can tell, too, like an engine, there's no stopping of 'un. He thinks he knoweth more'n all the parish put together, but us all know he isn't 'exactly'. Well, while he was a-yammelling on, Carrier Jim come along from Ooreton with hes wagon properly loaded up, and a gurt cloam oven 'pin top. Just as he come alongzide of us he stopped to pit on his overcoat, 'cause it wor raining a bit."

"Better git in thiccy oven, Jim," zaith Farmer Muggins.

"Better if you'd a-bide in a bit 'fore they tooked 'ee, maiste," zaith Jim. "Farmer didn't know which way for looky; he turned right round and waint off home wi'out never a word to Jim

This story caused great amusement, and loud and long was the laughter which greeted it. Perhaps I ought to explain that the point of the joke lay in the Devonshire custom of calling a man who is not very hard in the head (not "ezactly," as we say), half-baked, or, that he was taken out of the oven too soon.

Farmer Muggins did not seem to be held in high estimation by his neigh-I gathered from the conversation which followed, that he had only lately taken a farm in the parish, and that, like many new-comers, he thought he could teach the old inhabitants a better method of farming than that which lifelong experience and practical knowledge of the soil and climate had taught them was the best.

The company at the "Ring of Bells" discussed him pretty freely, and criticised his system of farming unmercifully.

"Clever as he thinks himzel', I got a rise out of 'un the other day,' said one of them. "He come to my farm to zee zome pigs. I zold 'un a couple for more than any of you would ha' gi' me, and tho' he got telling about my sheep, which I showed 'un. He said I ought ta get a different breed; and when he

saw five black ones I've a-got, he saith, Whatever do you keep they ugly things for? Their meat be all stringy and tough, and their wool bain't worth

"They don't eat near so much as my white sheep, and bain't so expensive to keep," I told 'un. "Geddout," he saith, "they eat all so

"I tell 'ee they don't; not by a lot,"

says I. "How do you know?" says he.

"Because I've got thirty white sheep, and only five black ones," I told 'un. He got quite niffy wi' me, and said I was making a fool of 'un. "I couldn't," says I, very polite; but he lookied to me zo grum as any tiger, and wouldn't make no answer when I said "good morning."

"I've a-took a sight of volks in wi" that there riddle about black and white sheep," said the old man-who had hitherto taken little part in the conversation-knocking the ashes out of his long clay pipe, and fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for a fresh supply tobacco.

"There's more in thee haid than on 'un,' laughed the gamekeeper. "You'm getting so bald as a haig, Granfer Daw."

"A man can't grow hair and brains, too," replied the old man in self defence; then, carrying the war into the enemy's country, he added, "Fine thatch thee'st got on thee haid, though, thick as a mat."

"I zim there must be summat wrong wi' the soil where no crops won't grow, said Foxie Jack, once more coming to his friend's rescue.

Just then the landlady came into the kitchen and announced that it was nearly ten o'clock, which is closing time for public houses in the country districts; whereupon the customers finished their half-empty mugs, and with friendly good nights all round, betook themselves to their various homes.

I have endeavored to repeat the homely conversation in language as near to that which they used as I can, but it is impossible to reproduce the rich westcountry burr, the curious inflection and intonation of the words, and the soft pronunciation which they give to the letter "un." I have seen words in which it occurs spelt in various ways in the attempt to give its sound, but the attempt is never successful. Take the word "due," for instance. They don't pronounce it "doo," and if you spell it 'dew'' (as I have seen it done), it only brings us back to the same sound; and though misspelt words may look funny on paper, they fail in giving us an accurate reproduction of a conversation. To spell cat with a "k," or me with two "ee's" may be very witty, but it does not alter the pronunciation of the words. The Dovonshine nounce "u" as do the French; and ramount of misspelling will make it clearer.-Chas. Garvice, in "A Farm in Creamland," a tale of the Devon coun-

#### GOSSIP.

Aberdeen - Angus cattle and Dorset sheep are still the specialties in purebred stock at the well-known stock farm of A. S. Forster, at Oakville, Ont., where every year shows an improvement in the quality of the stock, due to the care exercised in the selection of herd- and flock-headers, this year, more than ever in evidence, Mr. Foster made a happy selection for chief stock bull when he selected the big, level, Mayflower-bred bull, Royal Chief of Penzance 4711, as his get are remarkably uniform, and leave little to be desired in the excellence of their breed type. To use on the daughters of this bull, the level, even bull, Middlebrook Warrior 2nd 5231, a Favorite-bred son of the Toronto champion, Hundred, has been recently purchased. The breeding females of the herd are principally of the Dewdrop and Caroline tribes, which, coupled with this young bull, should surely prove a success. At the head of the big flock of Dorset sheep is a son of the many-times champion, Imp. Romulus. He is breeding exceptionally well, his get showing great strength and breed character. Write Mr. your wants to Oakdale P. O., Ont.

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