

pieces the shepherd agreed to perform a cure. The circumstances resembled those in the former case, with one exception, the window was prudentially opened, and a glazier's bill saved. But now the evil spirit struck at higher game, and he took full and undisturbed possession of the monarch.

As might be expected, people were not one half so wise for experience, and the usual allopathic, homœopathic, and ecclesiastical systems were tasked to recover the King, and proved, as every one knew would be the case, a failure. Then they sent for the shepherd, but he refused to come. They sent again, and offered a room full of gold dust, but he persisted in his refusal, remembering the spirit's warning. The Prime Minister now ordered out a regiment of horse, and had the shepherd-exorcist brought will-he nil-he. In vain did the poor man protest his inability to cure the King; the Prime Minister insisted, and the Chancellor threatened to put the law in force, which required that the bird which could sing and wouldn't sing, should be made to sing. Cowed by this threat the shepherd determined to do his best.

He entered the regal apartment. The King was howling and frothing at the mouth and looked desperate. "Halloo!" roared the spirit, within; "you here, shepherd? did not I warn you not to attempt to cast me out of his Majesty?"

"Steady," said the shepherd, putting on an expression of awe; and, stealing on tip-toe across the room, with his hand to his mouth, he whispered—"Do you think me such a fool as to attempt anything of the kind? I'm only come to tell you, dear friend, that—that—**KATTIE IS OUT OF THE POND, AND IS INQUIRING AFTER YOU!**"

"Kattie!" gasped the devil; "Then I'm off!" and away he flew. S. B. G.

IN JEOPARDY.

I'M a bricklayer, I am; and, what's more, down in the country, where people ain't so particular about keeping trades distinct as they are in the great towns. This may be seen any day in a general shop, where, as one might say, you can get anything, from half a quarter of butter up to a horn lantern; and down again to a hundred of short-cut brads—well, down in the country I've done a bit of a job now and then as a mason; and not so badly neither, I should suppose, for I got pretty well paid considering, and didn't hear more than the usual amount of growlin' arter it was done—which is saying a deal. Ours ain't the most agreeable of lives, and if it warn't for recollecting a little about the dignity of labour, and such-like, one would often grumble more than one does.

Some time ago, it don't matter to you, nor me, nor yet anybody else, just when it was, work was precious slack down our way—all things considered, I ain't a-going to tell you where our way is. A day's work a week had been all I'd been able to get for quite two months; so Mary, that's my wife, used to pinch and screw, and screw and pinch, and keep on squeezing shilling arter shilling out of the long stocking, till at last it got so tight, that one morning she lets it fall upon the table, where, instead of coming down with a good hearty sjang, it fell softly and just like a piece of cotton that was empty. And then, poor lass, she hangs on to my neck, and burst out a-crying that pitiful, that I'm blest if I didn't want my nose blowing about every quarter of a minute. I hadn't minded the screwing and pinching; not a bit of it. First week we went without our puddings. Well, that wasn't much. Second week we stopped my half-pints o' beer. Third week I put my pipe out. Mary kep' on saying that things must look up soon, and then I should have an ounce of the best to make up for it. But things didn't look up; and, in spite of all the screwing, we got down to the bottom of the stocking, as I said jest now.

I hadn't much cared for the pinching, but it was my poor lass as got pinched the most, and she was a-getting paler and thinner every day, till I couldn't bear to see it. I run out o' the house, and down to Jenkins's yard, where I'd

been at work last. I soon found Jenkins; and I says to him, "Governor," I says, "this won't do, you know; a man can't live upon wind."

"True for you, Bill Stock," he says.

"And a man can't keep his wife upon wind," I says.

"Right you are, Bill," he says; and he went on and spoke as fair as a man could speak; and said he hadn't a job he could put me on, or he would have done it in a minute. "I'm werry sorry, Bill," he says, "but if times don't mend, I tell you what I'm a-going to do."

"What's that?" I says.

"Go up to London," he says; "and if I was a young man like you, I wouldn't stop starvin' down here, when they're giving first class wages up there, and when there's building going on all round, as thick as thick, and good big jobs too: hotels, and railways, and bridges, and all sorts."

I faces round sharp, and walks off home; for when a feller's hungry and close up, it lays hold on his temper as well as his stumick, morespecially when there's somebody belonging to him in the same fix. So I walks off home, where I finds Mary a lookin' werry red-eyed; and I makes no more ado but I gets my pipe, and empties the bit o' dust there was in the bottom o' the jar into it, lights up, and sits down aside o' Mary, and puts my arm round her, jest as I used in old courting times; and then begins smoking an' thinking. Werry slow as to the fust, and werry fast as to the second; as smokin' costs money, and the dust was dry; whereas thinking came cheap jest then—and it's sur-prising how yer can think on a empty inside. I suppose it is because there's plenty o' room for the thoughts to work in.

"Well, I hadn't been settin' above a minute like this, when my lass lays her head on my shoulder, and though she wouldn't let me see it, I knowed she was a-giving way; but I didn't take no notice. Perhaps I held her a little bit tighter; and there I sat thinking and watching the thin smoke, till I could see buildings, and scaffolds, and heaps o' bricks, and blocks o' stone, and could almost hear the ring o' the trowels, and the "sar-jar" o' the big stone saws, and there was the men a-running up and down the ladders, and the gangers a-giving their orders, and all seemed so plain, that I began to grow warm. And I keeps on smoking till it seemed as though I was one of a great crowd o' men standing round a little square wooden office place, and being called in one at a time; and there I could see them a-takin' their six-and-thirty shillings and two pounds apiece, as fast as a clerk could book it. And then all at once it seemed to fade away like a fog in the sun; and I kep' on drawing, but nothing come, and I found as my pipe was out, and there was nothing left to light agen. So I knocks the ashes out—what there was on 'em—and then I breaks the pipe up, bit by bit, and puts all the pieces in my pocket—right-hand trousers-pocket.

"What for?" says you.

Nothin' at all, as I knows on; but that's what I did; and I am a-telling you what happened. Perhaps it was because I felt uncomfortable with nothing to rattle in my pocket. Howsomever, my mind was made up, and brightening up, and looking as cheerful as if I'd six-and-thirty shillings to take on Saturday, I says to her as was by my side:

"Polly, my lass, I am a-going up to London!"

"Going where?" she says, lifting up her head.

"London," I says; and then I began to think about what going to London meant. For, mind yer, it didn't mean a chap in a rough jacket making up a bundle in a clean blue handkercher, and then shorin' his stick through the knot and sticking it over his shoulder, and then stuffing his hands in his pockets, and taking the road upwards, whistlin' like a blackbird. No; it meant something else. It meant breaking up a tidy little home as two young folks—common people, in course—had been a saving up for years, to make snug; it meant half breaking a poor simple lass's heart to part with this little thing and that little thing; tearing up the nest that took so long a-building, and was allus so snug arter a cold day's work. I looked at the clean little winders, and then at the bright kettle on the shiny black hob, and then at the werry small

fire as there was, and then fust at one thing, and then at another, all so clean and neat and homely, and all showing how proud my lass was o' 'em all, and then I thought a little more of what going up to London really did mean, and I suppose it must have been through feeling low and faint and poorly, and I'm almost ashamed to tell it, for I'm such a big strong chap; but truth's truth. Well, somehow a blind seemed to come over my eyes, and my head went down upon my knees, and I cried like a schoolboy. But it went off, for my lass was kneeling aside me in a minute, and got my thick old head upon her shoulder, and began a-doing all she could to make believe it was all right, and she wouldn't mind a bit, but we'd get on wonderful well up there; and so we talked it over for long enough, while she made believe to be so cheerful, and knelt at my side, a-ciphering away—a putting down nought for herself, and a-carrying I don't know how much for me—till I glowed up, under the discovery that whether work was plenty, or whether work was slack, I, Bill Stock—christened William—was rich in my good wife.

That was something like a thought, that was, and seemed to stiffen me up, and put bone and muscle into a fellow till he felt strong as a lion; so we set to talking over the arrangements; and two days arter, Polly and I was in a lodging in London.

Nex morning I was up at five, and made myself smart; not fine, but clean, and looking as if I warn't afraid of work; and I finds my way to one o' the big workshops, where the bell was a-ringing for six o'clock, and the men was a-scutfling in; while a chap with a book was on the look-out to time the late ones, for stopping on pay-day out of their wages—which is but fair, yer know, for if two hundred men lost a quarter of an hour apiece in a week, it would come to something stiff in a year. Well, there was a couple more chaps like me standing at the gate, come to see if they could get took on, and one o' 'em slips in, and comes out again directly a-swearin' and growling like anything, and then t'other goes in, and he comes out a-swearin' too, and then I feels my heart go sinkin' down ever so low. So I says to the fust.

"Any chance of a job?"

"Go to—!" somewhere, says, cutting up rough; so I asks t'other one.

"Any chance of a job?" I says.

"Not a ha'porth," he says, turning his back, and going off with the fust one; and I must say as they looked a pretty pair of blacks.

So I stood there for quite five minutes wondering what to do; whether I should go in and ask for myself, or go and try somewhere else. I didn't like to try, arter seeing two men refused. All at once a tall sharp-eyed man comes out of a side place and looks at me quite fierce.

"Now, my man," he says, "what's your business? What do you want?"

"Job, sir," says I.

"Then why didn't you come in and ask?" he says.

"Saw two turned back," I says.

"Oh! we don't want such as them here," he says, "but there's plenty of work for men who mean it;" and then he looks through me a'most.

"I suppose you do mean it, eh?"

"Give us hold of a trowel," says I spittin' in both hands.

"Bricklayer?" says he smilin'.

"Right," says I.

"From the country?" says he.

"Yes," says I.

"Work slack there?" says he.

"Awful," says I.

"You'll do," says he. "Here, Jones, put this fellow in number four lot."

If you'll believe me, I could have taken hold of him and hugged him; but I didn't, for I kep' it for Polly.

Well—I wonder how many times I've said well, since I begun—I was in work now, and I meant to keep it. Didn't I make the bricks and mortar fly! My hodman did his day's work that day, if he never did it afore. Then some of the men began to take it up, and got to chaffing; one says there'd soon be no work left; and another says, I'd better have a couple o' Paddies