

ry, get it on credit wherever you can, and tell them to score it to me."

"If they will," said Jerry.

"Shut the door," said Jack Ginger, in a peremptory tone, and Jerry retreated.

"That Jerry," said Jack, "is an uncommonly honest fellow, only he is the damndest rogue in London. But all this is wasting time, and time is life. Dinner is over, and the business of the evening is about to begin. So, bumpers, gentlemen, and get rid of this wine as fast as we can. Mr Vice, look to your bottles."

And on this, Jack Ginger gave a bumper toast.

CHAP. III.

HOW WE CONVERSED AT JACK GINGER'S.

This being done, every man pulled in his chair close to the table, and prepared for serious action. It was plain, that we all, like Nelson's sailors at Trafalgar, felt called upon to do our duty. The wine circulated with considerable rapidity; and there was no flinching on the part of any individual of the company. It was quite needless for our president to remind us of the necessity of bumpers, or the impropriety of leaving heel-taps. We were all too well trained to require the admonition, or to fall into the error. On the other hand, the chance of any man obtaining more than his share in the round was infinitesimally small. The Sergeant himself, celebrated as he is, could not have succeeded in obtaining a glass more than his neighbours. Just to our friends, we were also just to ourselves; and a more rigid circle of philosophers never surrounded a board.

The wine was really good, and its merits did not appear the less striking from the fact that we were not habitually wine-bibbers, our devotion generally being paid to fluids more potent or more heavy than the juice of the grape, and it soon excited our powers of conversation. Heavens! what a flow of soul! More good things were said in Jack Ginger's chambers that evening, than in the Houses of Lords and Commons for a month. We talked of everything: politics, literature, the fine arts, drama, high life, low life, the opera, the cockpit; everything, from the heavens above to the hells in St. James's-street. There was not an article in a morning, evening, or weekly paper, for the week before, which we did not repeat. It was clear that our knowledge of things in general was drawn in a great degree, from these recondite sources. In politics we were harmonious; we were Tories to a man, and defied the Radicals of all classes, ranks, and conditions. We deplored the ruin of our country, and breathed a sigh over the depression of the agricultural interest. We gave it as our opinion that Don Miguel should be King of Portugal; and that Don Carlos if he had the pluck of the most nameless of insects, could ascend the throne of Spain. We pitched Louis Philippe to that place which is never mentioned to ears polite, and drank the health of the Duchess of Berri. Opinions differed somewhat about the Emperor of Russia; some thinking that he was too hard on the Poles, others gently blaming him for not squeezing them much tighter. Anthony Harrison, who had seen the Grand Duke Constantine, when he was campaigning,

spoke with tears in his eyes of that illustrious prince, declaring him, with an oath, to have been a d—d good fellow. As for Leopold, we unanimously voted him to be a scurvy hound; and Joe Macgillicuddy was pleased to say something complimentary of the Prince of Orange, which would have, no doubt, much gratified his Royal Highness, if it had been communicated to him, but I fear it never reached his ears.

Turning to domestic policy, we gave it to the Whigs in high style. If Lord Grey had been within hearing, he must have instantly resigned; he never could have resisted the thunders of our eloquence. All the hundred and one Grèys would have been forgotten, he must have sunk before us. Had Brougham been there, he would have been converted to Toryism long before he could have got to the state of typification in which he sometimes addresses the House of Lords. There was not a topic left undiscussed. With one hand we arranged Ireland, with another put the Colonies in order. Catholic emancipation was severely condemned, and Bob Burke gave the glorious, pious, and immortal memory. The vote of £20,000,000 to the greasy blacks was much reprobated, and the opening of the China trade declared a humbug. We spoke in fact, articles that would have made the fortunes of half a hundred magazines, if the editors of those works would have had the perspicacity to insert them; and this we did with such ease to ourselves, that we never for a moment stopped the circulation of the bottle, which kept running on its round rejoicing, while we settled the affairs of the nation.

Then Anthony Harrison told us all his campaigns in the Peninsula, and that capital story how he bilked the tavernkeeper at Portsmouth. Jack Ginger entertained us with an account of his transactions in the Brazils; and as Jack's imagination far outruns his attention to matters of fact, we had them considerably improved. Bob Burke gave us all the particulars of his duel with Ensign Brady of the 48th, and how he hit him on the waistcoat pocket, which, fortunately for the Ensign, contained a five-shilling piece, (how he got it was never accounted for,) which saved him from grim death. From Joe Macgillicuddy we got multifarious narrations of steeple-chases in Tipperary, and of his hunting with the Blazers in Galway.—Tom Meggott expatiated on his college adventures in Edinburgh, which he maintained to be a far superior city to London, and repeated sundry witty sayings of the advocates in the Parliament House, who seem to be gentlemen of great facetiousness. As for me, I emptied out all Joe Miller on the company; and if old Joe could have burst his cerements in the neighbouring church-yard of St. Clement Danes, he would have been infinitely delighted with the reception which the contents of his agreeable miscellany met with. To tell the truth, my jokes were not more known to my companions than their stories were to me. Harrison's campaigns, Ginger's cruises, Burk's duel, Macgillicuddy's steeple-chases, and Tom Meggott's rows in the High-street, had been told over and over; so often, indeed, that the several elaborators begin to believe that there is some foun-

dation in fact for the wonders which they are continually repeating.

"I perceive this is the last bottle of port," said Jack Ginger; "so I suppose that there cannot be any harm in drinking bad luck to Anthony Harrison's wine-merchant, who did not make it the dozen."

"Yes," said Harrison, "the skin-flint thief would not stand more than the half, for which he merits the most infinite certainty of non-payment."

[You may depend upon it that Harrison was as good as his word, and treated the man of bottles according to his deserts.]

The port was gathered to its fathers, and potteen reigned in its stead. A most interesting discussion took place as to what was to be done with it. No doubt, indeed, existed as to its final destination; but various opinions were broached as to the manner in which it was to make its way to its appointed end. Some wished that every man should make for himself; but that Jack Ginger strenuously opposed, because, he said, it would render the drinking unsteady. The company divided into two parties on the great question of bowl or jug. The Irishmen maintained the cause of the latter. Tom Meggott, who had been reared in Glasgow, and Jack Ginger, who did not forget his sailor propensities, were in favour of the former. Much erudition was displayed on both sides, and I believe I may safely say, that every topic that either learning or experience could suggest, was exhausted. At length we called for a division, when there appeared—

<i>For the jug.</i>	<i>For the bowl.</i>
Bob Burke,	Jack Ginger,
Joe Macgillicuddy,	Humpy Harlow,
Anthony Harrison,	Tom Meggott.
Myself.	

Majority 1, in favour of the jug. I was principally moved to vote as I did, because I deferred to the Irishmen, as persons who were best acquainted with the nature of potteen; and Anthony Harrison was on the same side from former recollections of his quarterings in Ireland. Humpy Harlow said, that he made it a point always to side with the man of the house.

"It is settled," said Jack Ginger, "and, as we said of Parliamentary Reform, though we opposed it, it is now law, and must be obeyed. I'll clear away these marines, and do you Bob Burke, make the punch. I think you will find the lemons good, the sugar superb, and the water of the Temple has been famous for centuries."

"And I'll back the potteen against any that ever came from the Island of Saints," said Bob, proceeding to his duty, which all who have the honour of his acquaintance will admit him to be well qualified to perform. He made it in a couple of big blue water-jugs, observing that making punch in small jugs was nearly as great a brother as ladling from a bowl; and as he tossed the steamy fluid from jug to jug to mix it kindly, he sang the pathetic ballad of Hugger-mofane, &c.,

"I wish I had a red herring's tail," &c.

It was an agreeable picture of continued use and ornament, and reminded us strongly of the Abyssinian maid of the Platonic poetry of Coleridge.

How we finished the potteen; converted