

IN THE WORKHOUSE

9

Oh, the paupers are meek and lowly
With their "Thank'ee kindly, mum's"
So long as they fill their stomachs,
What matter it whence it comes?
But one of the old men mutters,
And pushes his plate aside :
"Great God !" he cries ; "but it chokes me !
For this is the day *she* died."

The guardians gazed in horror,
The master's face went white ;
"Did a pauper refuse their pudding ?"
"Could their ears believe aright ?"
Then the ladies clutched their husbands,
Thinking the man would die,
Struck by a bolt, or something,
By the outraged One on high.

But the pauper sat for a moment,
Then rose 'mid a silence grim,
For the others had ceased to chatter
And trembled in every limb.
He looked at the guardians' ladies,
Then, eyeing their lords, he said,
"I eat not the food of villains
Whose hands are foul and red :