

ly believe our eyes, knowing how poor and desolate, both of food and furniture, that old grange had always been. But presently one of us happened to guess, and Hezekiah confirmed it, that the lord of the manor had taken compassion upon his afflicted tenant, and had furnished these things in a handsome manner, from his own great house some five miles distant. But in spite of the custom of the country, I was for keeping away from it all, upon so sad an occasion. And one or two more were for holding aloof, although they cast sheep's-eyes at it.

However, the Crowner rubbed his hands, and sate down at the top of the table, and the foreman sate down also, and said that, being so much upset, he was half inclined to take a glass of something weak. He was recommended, if he felt like that, whatever he did, not to take it weak, but to think of his wife and family; for who could say what such a turn might lead to, if neglected? And this reflection had such weight, that instead of mixing for himself, he allowed a friend to mix for him.

The Crowner said, "Now, gentlemen, in the presence of such fearful trouble and heavy blows from Providence, no man has any right to give the rein to his own feelings. It is his duty, as a man, to control his sad emotions; and his duty, as a family-man, to attend to his constitution." With these words he lit a pipe, and poured himself a glass of Hollands, looking sadly upward, so that the measure quite escaped him. "Gentlemen of the jury," he continued with such authority, that the jury were almost ready to think that they must have begun to be gentlemen—till they looked at one another; "gentlemen of the jury, life is short, and trouble long. I have sate upon hundreds of poor people who destroyed themselves by nothing else than want of self-preservation. I have made it my duty officially to discourage such short-comings. Mr. Foreman, be good enough to send the lemons this way; and when ready for business, say so."

Crowner Bowles was now as pleasant as he had been grumpy in the morning; and finding him so, we did our best to keep him in that humor. Neither was it long before he expressed himself in

terms which were an honor alike to his heart and head. For he told us, in so many words—though I was not of the jury now, nevertheless I held on to them, and having been foreman just now, could not be, for a matter of form, when it came to glasses, cold-shouldered,—worthy Crowner Bowles, I say, before he had stirred many glasses of lemon, told us all, in so many words—and the more, the more we were pleased with them—that for a thoroughly honest, intelligent, and hard-working jury, commend him henceforth and as long as he held his Majesty's sign-manual to a jury made of Newton parish and of Kenfig burgesses!

We drank his health with bumpers round, every man upon his legs, and then three cheers for his lordship; until his clerk, who was rather sober, put his thumb up, and said "Stop." And from the way he went on jerking with his narrow shoulders, we saw that he would recall our thoughts to the hall that had no door to it. Then following his looks, we saw the distance of the silence.

This took us all aback so much, that we had in the witnesses—of whom I the head-man was there already—and for fear of their being nervous, and so confusing testimony, gave them a cordial after swearing. Everybody knew exactly what each one of them had to say. But it would have been very hard, and might have done them an injury, not to let them say it.

The Coroner having found no need to charge (except his rummer), left his men for a little while to deliberate their verdict.

"Visitation of God, of course it must be," Stradling Williams began to say; "visitation of Almighty God."

Some of the jury took the pipes out of their mouths and nodded at him, while they blew a ring of smoke; and others nodded without that trouble; and all seemed going pleasantly. When suddenly a little fellow, whose name was Simon Edwards, a brother of the primitive Christians, or at least of their minister, being made pugnacious by ardent spirits, rose, and holding the arm of his chair, thus delivered his sentiments; speaking, of course, in his native tongue.