

expenditure; and I found, first, that by application to labour I earned more money; that second, I used to have idle men call upon me for treats, and that these never called now, and I saved both time and money; that however careful I was, I sometimes got into a drunken row, that cost expenses before the magistrates. This last never occurred; and from *all*, my savings were considerable, which, when I looked over my bank book, spoke very emphatically, and in language I could not mistake; "Charles Hunter, you have taken the duty off malt and tobacco, and have paid nothing to the police, and are pocketing the brass."

CHAP. II.—SHOWS HOW HE GOT THE CHARTER.

The charter, the charter, and the whole charter, has been a sort of political watchword for the last eight or nine years; the meetings that have been held, the leaders that have been sacrificed, the families that have been beggared, the want that has been incurred, the letters that have been opened, the parties that have been made, the schemes that have been projected, and the charter, where is that yet? Why—just in the safe keeping of its projectors, who, while they saw an existing wrong, never believed it could be remedied without going to Parliament. It was a love of right that projected it, a love of equality that pushed it into a convention; but it failed, and continues to fail unto this day, and will fail, until men do as I, Charles Hunter, fender and parlour shovel cutter, have done. Eight years ago, and I drank beer as profusely as though it were to be my means of accomplishing all that is great and estimable in the world, and smoked tobacco as though it were to be meat, drink, washing, and lodging to me. I was to have the charter—I was to have my name enrolled as an elector; and then some morning, when I got up, I was to look out at my window, and find hot rolls well buttered, and pigs and sheep ready roasted, with knives and forks in their sides, each asking, *come and eat me*. The charter was to convert labour into all that was needed, and turn out men ready-made gentlemen, without a wish or a desire unaccomplished. I might have allowed my press to get rusty, and my own hair to grow grey, while I continued to expect all this change, however desirable; but eight years ago, as I have recorded elsewhere, I signed the teetotal pledge, threw away my pipe, and have made deposits, first in the savings' bank, and afterwards funded my money; and last quarter-day I saw a cottage advertised for sale, and a piece of land, and, upon enquiring as to price, and the nature of its title-deeds, both of which were satisfactory, I concluded my bargain; and last August I had the satisfaction of knowing I was enrolled among the electors. I had therefore procured the charter; and all this while my old companions continued to drink and smoke, and clamour for reform they were not anxious to make sacrifices to obtain. I feel, and know now from personal observation, that bad laws are not so bad as bad men, nor is poverty and wretchedness to be attributed so much to causes named, as to some unnamed. I have seen twelve cottages reared, so attractive and beautiful, that any working man might desire to live in them; I have seen inhabitants, about equal in worldly

means and ordinary success, inducted into them, and I have observed how, with but one exception, they all ruined the property in ruining themselves. The cottages each stood in a garden, a flag pavement led the way to the door; this was entered by a stone step, a trellis-work covered the way, and numerous tendrils of creeping plants trailed their lovely branches over it; the garden was laid out in parterres, and flowers and shrubs made up the whole. In three years I had occasion to visit every house, and though they all bore marks of neglect, dirt, and wilful mis-usage, yet in some this was more visible than in others; at No. 1, for instance, the stone sill, or entrance had been made a chopping-block of, and was broken; scarce a trace of the little verandah was left; the shrubs in the garden were merely the support of a piece of rope to dry rags on; the houses which had nice stoves, were certainly not robbed of them, but, loose and disjointed, they all seemed to need replacing; the walls were scratched, gnarled, and defaced; the ceiling, blackened with smoke; and unwholesome smells and dirty appearances met one at every turn; the family were all at work, with the exception of two little girls; had never suffered from sickness; in fact, no contingency, save drunkenness, had interfered with them; the family were badly clothed, ignorant, and ill off. There were some shades of difference, but not enough to admit of comment in the others, until I came to No. 12; here was a busy, clean wife, intelligent, well-behaved children, an orderly and comfortable house; the whole were sober, devout, and upright people, poorer, by an inferior wage, to all the rest, and having a lame child; yet all things here wore an inviting aspect. In the former houses there were oaths and blasphemy, discontent, and sour acrimonious recrimination; in this, there was content and peace, all were agreed to do right, and all being taught how, no one hesitated to do it. The husband and eldest daughter had emulated each other in the labour of the garden, and while the one reared the plants and the vegetables, the other cultivated the flowers, weeded the paths, and carefully tied up the stray tendrils around the windows and the trellis; all here showed the power of self-reliance, and of each doing their duty at a proper time, and in a proper place. No act of parliament imposed a different line of action, and no arbitrary power made it compulsory; yet here all helped themselves, and all were free, the tutors of society, to do right for its own sake. I am a charlatan still, but my charter is industry, sobriety, and economy. With these I hold a man may get for himself all that law or government is expected to grant to him; and as a virtuous, sober people are the least likely to be in want, they are the least likely to have an oppressive despot in government. I therefore hold that the more our people become like myself, the less will they admit of wrong being done in any quarter. The taxes are off my malt, off my tobacco; I sustain no whisky house or gin palace; and though to rule others, and save property and life from the desperate attacks of the drunken and the profligate, I am taxed to keep a police force, yet I never give these men or their magistrates any trouble about me. I'm still pocketing the brass.