

We censure thieves who into houses break,
To rob their neighbours whilst they are asleep,—
'Tho' bad the thieves, the drunkard if we view,
Is surely one of that degenerate crew.
He robs his wife and children of their right,
'To purchase poison in the flowing bowl
Which brings them all to abject misery,
And loads with guilt the never-dying soul. E.

For the Visitor.

FOOL'S PENNIES.

The Town of B——, situated on the borders of the Counties of Lancaster and York, was a small, insignificant village a hundred years ago. The inhabitants were principally coal miners, rude and ignorant. Their chief amusements consisted in fighting dogs, baiting bulls, and other brutal sports. Their sports would frequently end in drunkenness, and fights amongst themselves. Like many other Towns in the same Counties, B—— owes its present importance to the fertile genius of Arkwright and Watt—the former the inventor of the Cotton Spinning Frame, and the latter the inventor of the Steam Engine. The vicinity of B—— was rich in coal and iron ore; capital was invested in buildings, machinery, and raw cotton; houses were built for workmen, and in a short time the cold, bleak, barren district, was transformed into green fields, beautiful parks, handsome villas; and the mud huts of the former inhabitants into streets of neat, substantial stores and dwelling houses. In most parts of England, and in the manufacturing districts especially, malt beer is a common beverage. To meet the growing wants of this class of consumers, the Duke of Wellington, in 1838, brought a Bill into Parliament to allow any person to sell malt beer, either in a store or private house, who could shew a good character to the Magistrates in Quarter Sessions assembled. No sooner had the Bill passed into the law of the land, than "beer shops" were opened in every part of the Kingdom. The Town of B—— had a large number of these cheap beer shops; there were the "Weaver's Arms," for the Weavers; the "Spinner's Arms," for the Spinners, the "Mechanic's Arms," for the Mechanics, and various other houses of accommodation. The "Mechanic's Arms" was kept by Mrs. G——, who got the name of *Mother G——*, from her keeping a kind of open house, when she commenced the business of selling beer. Her house was in high repute amongst that class of persons whose interest her sign professed to represent. Amongst those who frequented on Saturday nights, the "Mechanic's Arms," was John D——; he had a wife and three children, a snug little cottage, very neatly and comfortably furnished;—a good trade, and a good master, by whom he was highly valued for his skill and integrity. At first, John limited himself to one glass of ale, as he went more to hear and to read the news of the week. By and bye, however, he would take *two*, just to hear a spouter of politics lay down plans for the benefit of the Country. Sometimes an old shop-mate would step in, call for a pot of ale, and insist upon John taking a *sup* with him, for old acquaintance sake. This done, John must call for another pot to treat his friend with. Old *Mother G——*, watching the opportunity, as soon as the second pot was drunk, would invite them to take a little supper in the kitchen. When they had done this,

they would have another pot of ale, to make the house a penny; for it would look so shabby to eat *Mother G——*'s mutton chops, fried ham, or roast beef, and not make the house a penny. *Mother G——*'s seeming good nature, and plan of walking into those who could earn plenty of money, answered beyond her most sanguine expectations; the more she gave, the more she made by those to whom she gave; for they would frequently go on calling for pot after pot, till they were all beastly drunk.

Such, then, is the way in which John D—— became a drunkard. He neglected his business—he lost the respect of his best friends—he saw his comfortable house broken up for debt—and his wife and family reduced to beggary. All their clothing, of any value, was pledged at the pawnbroker's for money to buy bread for the hungry children. In his sober moments, his conscience would frequently smite him, especially when his children would cry for bread, and there was none in the house to give them. On one occasion they cried so hard for bread, and affected him to such a degree, that he made a firm resolve to reform his conduct. He worked steadily at his business for six weeks, and did not spend a single penny on beer. He left part of his wages in the hands of his master every week to pay off the pawnbroker, who had sent him word that he should sell their clothes, if they were not speedily redeemed. On the Saturday night ending the six weeks, he had five pounds to draw of his master. On his way home he met with an old shop-mate who pressed him to go to *Mother G——*'s, to take a single glass of ale; he went, and glass followed glass, till he got deadly drunk. He was put to bed by some one, and when he came to himself, on the following day, (Sunday) he felt such remorse of conscience that he resolved to stifle it, by getting drunk again. He went into the bar, and drank glass after glass, and never was sober till the Friday following. Upon feeling in his pockets, he found that he had only one shilling left. He felt very hungry, and went into the kitchen to ask for something to eat; *Mother G——* happened to come in at the same time, but not knowing that John was sober, she said to the servant, "there is nothing in the house for him to eat, but that leg of mutton which is roasting, and I'm sure he shan't have any of it." John seemed to take no notice of what was passing, and, taking up his hat, he walked out of the kitchen into the passage leading to the bar; he stood there for some time, turning over in his mind what he had heard in the kitchen. *Mother G——* came along the passage, just as he seemed to awake up out of his reverie, and, turning into a side room, the door of which she unlocked, she said, "John, come tell me what you think of my parlour since it was fitted up." John stepped into the room, and expressed himself much pleased with the new carpet which appeared to the foot as soft as velvet; the large looking glass in a splendid gilt frame; the handsome mahogany sideboard; the silk curtains; the patent seated sofa, and nicely polished tables and chairs; and the pretty paintings that were hung about the room. After he had praised the taste of *Mother G——*, he said to her, "*where did you get these fine things, Mother?*" "Get them, John," said she, "why I'll tell you in a secret I got them out of *fool's pennies*." *Mother G——* now stepped out of the room to wait upon her customers, and John, put on his hat and walked out of the house, saying to himself, "*fool's pennies, fool's pennies, fool's pennies; yes, I*