

PARISH PERSONAGES.*

OUR BEADLE AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY ERASMUS OLDSTILE, ESQUIRE.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is not to be supposed that a watchman, of Mr. Zachary Billikens' vigilance and address, could receive the intimation which our Beadle had called upon him to impart, without betraying a commendable eagerness to place at Mr. Crummy's disposal the whole Charley force, which was expected to be at the watch-house that night.

"If," exclaimed Mr. Billikens, "if valour and vigilance can purtect a grave, you may sleep 'appy, Mr. Crummy, in the conviction that the young 'oman in whom you take such a perticler interest shall not be surprised or kidnapped by any invasion of 'artless willains."

Oily Crum was consoled and satisfied by the promise, and with a hurried "Thankee, thankee," he prepared to leave.

But in the excess of his sympathy for the fate of poor Mary, he suddenly stopped to inquire "if his services could be employed on the occasion."

"Your sarvices! and pray what good can you do?" enquired Zachary in amazement.

"Well, I thought maybe I might help you in case you should be perticlerly 'ard pressed," rejoined Mr. Crummy timidly.

"I tell you vot it is," returned Mr. Billikens majestically, "a Beadle and a Vatchman is two most uncommonly different creaturs—vun is wery well in the day light, but 'tis the t'other that's at 'ome in the darkness—vun gets his wittles by taking care of hisself, vile the t'other earns his bread by looking arter other people—vun may be wanted to keep up Parish pride, but the other is rekisite to purtect Parish property—vun makes people henwious in the day time, vile the other makes 'em feel comfortable at nights—vun is for show, t'other for sarvice—they can't 'malgamate, --leastways a Beadle ain't up to a Vatchman's business, and therefore I won't trouble you for any help, but I'm obl'ged to you for the offer."

Now it may be supposed that the Beadle did not like the view which was entertained by

Billikens of the relative merits of their respective offices, but as he had become rather notorious for the sentiment, "that every man should stick to his own trade," and as he knew that Billikens felt aggrieved at having been left out of the Jubilee Supper, he felt himself unable to answer the watchman, or justify his offer to assume any of the vested functions of the old Charley; he therefore retired without remark.

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Darkness had long enveloped the city when Billikens awoke from his slumber of preparation, and humbly exclaimed, addressing his son: (we must apologize for having omitted to inform our readers that Zachary was both a husband and a father:)

"Dick, my boy, I wish you'd run and tell Mr. Mummerglum and Mr. Quaggy that I wishes to see them afore they goes to the vachus this evening."

While Dick performs his mission we may as well state that the two worthies referred to were representatives of the physical portion of the old watch—the obese faction, so to speak,—fat, burly and inanimate; they were indebted for their appointment to the bulk of their bodies, and not to the weight of their brain; although, judging from the external circle of their craniums they possessed a prodigious phrenological development. If the efficiency of the old force depended only on the size of its members it would infallibly have been condemned, but there were a few exceptions to its usual diminutive and decrepid features, and Messrs. Mummerglum and Quaggy were those exceptions in the Parish of Allhallows. Judging by their dimensions, they might have been mistaken for the stuffed figures in a Pantomime; they were certainly big enough to overawe resistance, but then, like the figures referred to, they were incapable of exertion, and the sluggishness of their naturally slothful temperaments was sensibly increased by indulgence in gross and natural tipping. Alike incapable of mental ef-