

thing. The Welsh must do all the real work ; and the English be paid for sitting upon them, after they are dead.

"I never sate on a black man yet," and I won't sit on a black man now," the Crowner said, when he was sure about oats enough for his pony ; "I'll not disgrace His Majesty's writ by sitting upon damned niggers."

"Glory be to God, your Honour !" Stradling Williams cried, who had come as head of the jury ; clerk he was of Newton Church, and could get no fees unless upon a Christian burial : "we thought your Honour would hardly put so great a disgrace upon us ; but we knew not how the law lay."

"The law requires no Christian man," pronounced the Crowner, that all might hear, "to touch pitch, and defile himself. Both in body and soul, Master Clerk, to lower and defile himself."

Hereupon a high hard screech, which is all we have in Wales for the brave hurrah of Englishmen, showed that all the jury were of one accord with the Coroner ; and I was told by somebody that all had shaken hands, and sworn to strike work, rather than put up with misery of conscience.

"But your Honour," said Mr. Lewis, bailiff to Colonel Lougher, "if we hold no quest on the black men, how shall we certify anything about this terrible shipwreck ?"

"The wreck is no concern of mine," answered the Crowner, crustily, "it is not my place to sit upon planks, but upon Christian bodies. Do you attend to your own business, and leave mine to me, sir."

The bailiff being a nice quiet man, thought it best to say no more. But some of the people who were thronging from every direction to see his Honour, told him about the little white baby found among the bladder-weed. He listened to this, and then he said—

"Show me this little white infant discovered among the black men. My busi-

ness here is not with infants, but with five young smothered men. However, if there be an infant of another accident, and of Christian colour, I will take it as a separate case, and damn the county in the fees."

We assured his lordship, as every one now began to call him (in virtue of his swearing so, which no doubt was right in a man empowered to make other people swear), we did our best at any rate to convince the Crowner, that over and above all black men, there verily was a little child, and, for all one could tell, a Christian child, entitled to the churchyard, and good enough for him to sit on. And so he entered the house to see it.

But if he had sworn a little before (and more than I durst set down for him), he certainly swore a great deal now, and poured upon us a bitter heat of English indignation. All of the jury were taken aback ; and I as a witness felt most uneasy ; until we came to understand that his Honor's wrath was justly kindled on account of some marks on the baby's clothes.

"A coronet !" he cried, stamping about ; "a coronet on my young lord's pinafore, and you stupid oafs never told me !"

Nobody knew except myself (who had sailed with an earl for a captain) what the meaning of this thing was ; and when the clerk of the church was asked, rather than own his ignorance, he said it was part of the arms of the crown ; and the Crowner was bound like a seal by it.

This explanation satisfied all the people of the parish, except a few far-going Baptists, with whom it was a point of faith always to cavil and sneer at every "wind of doctrine," as they always call it—the scent of which could be traced, anyhow, to either the parson or the clerk, or even the gravedigger. But I was content to look on and say nothing, having fish to sell, at least twice a-week, and finding all customers orthodox, until they utter bad shillings.

CHAPTER XIV.—IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EVIDENCE.

There is no need for me to follow all the Crowner's doings, or all that the juries

thought and said, which was different altogether from what they meant to think