

affrighted vestrymen—the door flew open, and in stalked, not the monstrous looking being they had pictured in their heated imaginations, but a little good humoured lively looking personage, who, having bowed very politely to the assembly, “who,” he observed, “welcomed him in so courteous a style, on their legs”—begged them to be seated, and without waiting for an invitation, drew a chair towards the fire, and threw himself into it, with the air of a man determined to make himself perfectly at home. Whether he had so well disguised his features and general appearance, or from the dread in which he was held, they were little known to his townsmen, I am unable to say, but certain is it, there were none present who entertained the most distant idea that they were really in company of the most terrible, the most dreaded Dick Spot; for so the little gentleman turned out to be. It was certainly at first noticed that he sat with his hat on, whose broad brim completely concealed his forehead; but he apologised for not uncovering, stating his great susceptibility of cold, and which plea was readily admitted. So companionable did Dick become, that their hearts gradually warmed towards him, and confidence being quite restored to the honourable board, his intrusion was speedily overlooked, and he was invited to partake of their cheer. But being a very independent sort of a gentleman, he declined, choosing to order and pay for his own, not thinking it at all necessary the parish should be put to any expense on his account, simple man!—accordingly he ordered Bob to bring him a welsh-rabbit, and a go of gin and water, giving particular instructions that the latter was to be *cold without*. But not to be tedious, after a warm debate, in which Dick’s wrath was kindled at the treatment of the generous Vestry to the poor widow, which he had learnt, in the course of conversation with those gentlemen, he finished by declaring it to be his opinion, that instead of sixpence being too much, fourpence at least should be added to that sum, thereby increasing it to tenpence, and entreated them to make it so; but these public spirited men, who held the interests of their fellow citizens too dear, to lavish away their money to starving widows and orphans, who deserved to starve, seeing they were guilty of the crime, (for so I believe it is generally acknowledged to be) of poverty, refused to listen to the charitably disposed Doctor, who could not refrain from expressing his surprise, that persons so tenacious of the purses of their neighbours, when required for the aid of the needy, should have so little regard to it as to be themselves recipients at that very moment—but seeing his good intentions only tended to confirm the resolution of the dogmatical officials, he ceased to importune them, and the conversation gradually dying off, from the lateness of the hour, aided either by the strength of their potations, or the secret agency of Dick, the

half dozen select vestrymen were soon buried in a deep sleep. Perceiving all around so comfortably occupied, Dick rang the bell for the reckoning, which, after receiving the usual command of “stick it into him Bob,” the waiter brought him—not on a bill, but in his head.

“What’s the damage,” exclaimed the facetious Dick, as the man of all work entered.

“The damage,” muttered Bob to himself, and began scrutinizing around, but perceiving nothing broken, except an ancient china tea pot, that had been superannuated on the mantel piece for the last half century, he felt rather puzzled to know what he should say *was* damaged, until a light thought struck him, that this was very likely an odd way the gentleman had adopted for asking “what’s to pay,” at length replied, “sixpence the go, and fourpence the rabbit,” at the same time scratching his head, as though endeavouring to remember something else, and then, as if suddenly recollecting, *was* about to suggest a something to the waiter, but his eye encountering, at the moment, the worthy Doctor’s, he caught an expression that seemed to say, “you’d better not.”

I may just beg permission to inform the reader, that however small such a charge might appear to him, at the period of which I am writing, it would, in any part of Wales, have been considered enormous.

“How much?” enquired the Doctor, eyeing Bob fiercely.

But having the fear of his mistress before his eyes, Bob had no alternative, and replied, with some degree of hesitation, “sixpence for the gin and water, and fourpence the bread and cheese, and six and four are ten.” He paused.

“Humph,” said the Doctor, throwing down a shilling, “six and four are ten—bring me the change.”

Immediately Bob had quitted the room, Dick Spot rose, and drawing from his waistcoat pocket a singular looking phial, walked into the midst of the room, and with a yellow sulphury liquid, which he poured from the bottle, formed a circle large enough to contain a dozen people, repeating at the same time certain cabalistic words, which, having done, he quickly walked down, and receiving the change from Bob, pocketed the browns and walked off.

Hastening up stairs, to ascertain if the rest of the company had any further orders, Bob was utterly astonished to find them all so sympathetically engaged, and conceiving their business appeared over for the night, it was just as well they should be sleeping under their own roofs, he commenced making a noise; but finding this did not disturb the sleepers, proceeded across the room to try more effectual means, but had no sooner crossed the boundary line of the magic circle, than suddenly, and without the slightest inclination on his part, he com-