

THE HORTICULTURIST.

Mr. Twigg became the tenant of Mrs. Mellum under a solemn vow and covenant that he was to enjoy all the rights of a proprietor in the garden. There was a clause in the agreement that existing rights were to be respected, and the dustbin and Coldboy's dog, together with the barrel which served it for a kennel, were duly recognized.

It was evident to Mr. Twigg as he gazed round the rubbish-filled yard that there was plenty to do, and he took off his coat and vest and put them on the kennel, with a stern admonition to the dog to watch them. Later on when he had finished his day's work he relaxed his stern address and called the animal all the pet names he could think of to induce him to give up the garments which he had taken into the kennel and was using as a bed. He was so nice that Augustus put his head out of the kennel and gratefully licked his hand. Then the hopeful Mr. Twigg redoubled his attentions, and the animal who was far from clean, lay on his back on the clothes and kicked with joy, and to show that he knew how to appreciate kindness, tore off a piece of the coat and laid it at his feet. Then Mr. Twigg stooped down and patted him on the head with the pickaxe and the suddenly enlightened animal, after biting him severely for his hypocrisy, retired to bed with a bad headache.

After this mishap, Twigg let him alone and toiled steadily on at the garden with such success that by the time summer arrived it was a mass of bloom. The other lodgers seemed to appreciate it highly, and Mr. Coldboy never left home in the morning without a flower in his button hole.

Then with the suddenness of a bilious attack on Derby Day the end came. Mr. Twigg returned home one evening from business to enjoy his pipe in the garden and found his ears assailed by the murmurs of a distant multitude.

"What a noise there is in the garden, Sarah Ann," he remarked.

"Yes," said Sarah, "that's the garden party."

"The *what*," said Mr. Twigg, with great violence.

"Mr. Coldboy's garden party," replied the damsel; "didn't you know? Why, it's crowded."

Mr. Twigg said something grossly improper, and opening the back-door, stood petrified on the step. The yard was full of strangers, smoking and drinking in the highest good humor, while Coldboy, sitting on the wall, was doing the honors in famous style.

"I beg your pardon, Twigg," said Mr. Coldboy, jumping from the wall as he caught sight of the intruder, "but you can't come here—you haven't been invited, you know, and this is quite a private gathering."

"I insist upon my right of entering the garden, sir," said the other.

"Well, I'll refer to the Committee," said Mr. Coldboy—"You stay here."

Mr. Twigg by dint of great self-control stayed, and Mr. Coldboy, after a brief consultation with Captain Green and two other men, returned and told him that he must withdraw.

"You see," he explained, "the Battle of Flowers will commence in about a quarter of an hour, and we're afraid you'd be a sort of kill-joy on the proceedings if you stayed."

Mr. Twigg hoarse with emotion murmured that he'd be a kill something if they didn't mind, and casually inquired where they would procure the flowers.

"They will be provided," said Mr. Coldboy. "There's a costermonger coming with two barrow-loads."

Mr. Twigg gave him the lie direct, and after a painful scene was overpowered by numbers and retired in a frantic state to his room, overlooking the yard. Seating himself by the window he placed the coal-scuttle by his side and lit his pipe, smoking silently while the light faded slowly from the sky and hid the pewter-pots from the

eyes of their anxious owners. Then Mr. Coldboy gave the sign and the battle commenced.

There was great wonder expressed by the guests as they lay that night at the fascination exercised over some minds by flower battles. One gentleman, who went home with a black eye and his head bandaged, said he'd as soon have bricks thrown at him as flowers any day, a remark which Sarah Ann understood better when she discovered a rich vein of Wallsend in the yard next morning.

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