

And timidly he said, "My love, perchance, the better plan
'Twere to hie to the tinsmith's shop and bid him send
a man?"

His spouse replied indignantly: "So you would have
me then
To waste our substance upon riotous tinsmith's
journeymen?
'A penny saved is twopence earned,' rash prodigal of
pelf,
Go! false one, go! and I will black and set it up
myself."

When thus she spoke the husband knew that she had
seen his doom;
"Fill high the bowl with Samian lead and gimme
down that broom,"
He cried; then to the outhouse marched. Apart the
doors he hove
And closed in deadly conflict with his enemy, the
stove.

ROUND 1.

They faced each other; Brown, to get an opening
sparred
Adroitly. His antagonist was cautious—on his
guard.
Brown led off with his left to where a length of
stovepipe stood,
And nearly cut his fingers off. (*The stove allowed
first blood.*)

ROUND 2.

Brown came up swearing, in Græco-Roman style,
Closed with the stove, and tugged and strove at it a
weary while;
At last the leg he held gave way; flat on his back
fell Brown,
And the stove fell on top of him and claimed the
First Knock-down.

* * * The fight is done and Brown has won; his
hands are rasped and sore,
And perspiration and black-lead stream from his
every pore;
Sternly triumphant, as he gives his prisoner a shove,
He cries, "Where, my good angel, shall I put this
blessed stove?"

And calmly Mrs. Brown to him she indicates the
spot,
And bids him keep his temper, and remarks that he
looks hot,
And now comes in the sweat o' the day; the Brown
holds in his gripe

And strives to fit a six-inch joint into a five-inch
pipe;
He hammers, dinges, bends, and shakes, while his
wife scornfully
Tells him how *she* would manage if only she were he.

At last the joints are joined, they rear a pyramid in
air,
A tub upon the table, and upon the tub a chair,
And on chair and supporters are the stovepipe and
the Brown,
Like the lion and the unicorn, a-fighting for the
crown;
While Mistress Brown, she cheerily says to him, "I
expec'
'Twould be just like your clumsiness to fall and break
your neck."

Scarce were the piteous accents said before she was
aware
Of what might be called "a miscellaneous music in
the air."
And in wild crash and confusion upon the floor rained
down
Chairs, tables, tubs, and stovepipes, anathemas, and
—Brown.

There was a moment's silence—Brown had fallen on
the cat;
She was too thick for a book-mark, but too thin for
a mat;
And he was all wounds and bruises, from his head to
his foot,
And seven breadths of Brussels were ruined with the
soot.

"O wedded love, how beautiful, how sweet a thing
thou art!"
Up from her chair did Mistress Brown, as she saw
him falling, start,
And shrieked aloud as a sickening fear did her
inmost heartstrings gripe,
"Josiah Winterbotham Brown, have you gone and
smashed that pipe?"

Then fiercely starts that Mr. Brown, as one that had
been wode,
And big his bosom swelled with wrath, and red his
visage glowed;
Wild rolled his eye as he made reply (and his voice
was sharp and shrill),
"I have not, madam, but, by—by—by the nine gods,
I will!"

He swung the pipe above his head; he dashed it on
the floor,