



HE old man sat outside the Cauliflower Inn, looking crossly up the road. He was fond of conversation, but the pedestrian who had stopped to drink a mug of ale beneath the shade of the doors was not happy in his choice of subjects. He would only talk of the pernicious effects of beer on the constitutions of the aged, and he listened with ill-concealed impatience to various points which the baffled ancient opposite urged in its favour.

Conversation languished; the traveller rapped on the table and had his mug refilled. He nodded courteously to his companion and drank.

"Seems to me," said the latter, sharply, "you like it, for all your talk."

The other shook his head gently, and, leaning back, bestowed a covert wink upon the signboard. He then explained that it was the dream of his life to give up beer.

"You're another Job Brown," said the old man, irritably, "that's wot you are; another Job Brown. I've seen your kind afore."

He shifted farther along the seat, and, taking up his long clay pipe from the table, struck a match and smoked the few whiffs

which remained. Then he heard the traveller order a pint of ale with gin in it and a paper of tobacco. His dull eyes glistened, but he made a feeble attempt to express surprise when these luxuries were placed before him.

"Wot I said just now about you being like Job Brown was only in joke like," he said, anxiously, as he tasted the brew. "If Job 'ad been like you he'd ha' been a better man."

The philanthropist bowed. He also manifested a little curiosity concerning one to whom he had, for however short a time, suggested a resemblance.

"He was one o' the 'ardest drinkers in these parts," began the old man, slowly, filling his pipe.

The traveller thanked him.

Wot I meant was—said the old man, hastily—that all the time 'e was drinking 'e was talking agin beer same as you was just now, and he used to try all sorts o' ways and plans of becoming a teetotaler. He used to sit up 'ere of a night drinking 'is 'ardest and talking all the time of ways and means by which 'e could give it up. He used to talk about hissself as if 'e was somebody else 'e was trying to do good to.

The chaps about 'ere got sick of 'is talk.



They was poor men mostly, same as they are now, and they could only drink a little ale now and then; an' while they was doing of it they 'ad to sit and listen to Job Brown, who made lots o' money dealing, drinking pint arter pint o' gin and beer and calling it pison, an' saying they was killing themselves.

Sometimes 'e used to get pitiful over it, and sit shaking 'is 'ead at 'em for drowning themselves in beer, as he called it, when they ought to be giving the money to their wives and families. He sat down and cried one night over Bill Chambers's wife's toes being out of 'er boots. Bill sat struck all of a 'eap, and it might 'ave passed off, only Henery White spoke up for 'im, and said that he scarcely ever 'ad a pint but wot somebody else paid for it. There was unpleasantness all round then, and in the row somebody knocked one of Henery's teeth out.

And that wasn't the only unpleasantness, and at last some of the chaps put their 'eads together and agreed among themselves to try and help Job Brown to give up the drink. They kep' it secret from Job, but the next time 'e came in and ordered a pint Joe

Gubbins—'aving won the toss—drank it by mistake, and went straight off 'ome as 'ard as 'e could, smacking 'is lips.

He 'ad the best of it, the other chaps 'aving to 'old Job down in 'is chair, and trying their 'ardest to explain that Joe Gubbins was only doing him a kindness. He seemed to understand at last, and arter a long time 'e said as 'e could see Joe meant to do 'im a kindness, but 'e'd better not do any more.

He kept a very tight 'old o' the next pint, and as 'e set down at the table he looked round nasty like and asked 'em whether there was any more as would like to do 'im a kindness, and Henery White said there was, and he went straight off 'ome arter fust dropping a handful o' sawdust into Job's mug.

I'm an old man, an' I've seen a good many rows in my time, but I've never seen anything like the one that 'appened then. It was no good talking to Job, not a bit, he being that unreasonable that even when 'is own words was repeated to 'im he wouldn't listen. He behaved like a madman, an' the langwidge 'e used was that fearful and that

wicked that Smith the landlord said 'e wouldn't 'ave it in 'is house.

Arter that you'd ha' thought that Job Brown would 'ave left off 'is talk about being tee-totaler, but he didn't. He said they was quite right in trying to do 'im a kindness, but he didn't like the way they did it. He said there was a right way and a wrong way of doing everything, and they'd chose the wrong.

It was all very well for 'im to talk, but the chaps said 'e might drink himself to death for all they cared. And instead of seeing 'im safe 'ome as they used to when 'e was worse than



"THERE WAS UNPLEASANTNESS ALL ROUND THEN."



usual he 'ad to look arter hissself and get 'ome as best he could.

It was through that at last 'e came to offer five pounds reward to anybody as could 'elp 'im to become a teetotaler. He went off 'ome one night as usual, and arter stopping a few seconds in the parlour to pull hissself together, crept quietly upstairs for fear of waking 'is wife. He saw by the crack under the door that she'd left a candle burning, so he pulled hissself together agin and then turned the 'andle and went in and began to try an' take off 'is coat.

He 'appened to give a 'alf-look towards the bed as 'e did so, and then 'e started back and rubbed 'is eyes and told 'imsself he'd be better in a minute. Then 'e looked agin, for 'is wife was nowhere to be seen, and in the bed all fast and sound asleep and snoring their 'ardest was little Dick Weed the tailor and Mrs. Weed and the baby.

Job Brown rubbed 'is eyes agin, and then 'e drew hissself up to 'is full height, and putting one 'and on the chest o' drawers to steady hissself, stood there staring at 'em and getting madder and madder every second. Then 'e gave a nasty cough, and Dick and Mrs. Weed an' the baby all woke up and stared at 'im as though they could 'ardly believe their eyesight.

"Wot do you want?" ses Dick Weed, starting up.

"Get up," ses Job, 'ardly able to speak. "I'm surprised at you. Get up out o' my bed direckly."

"Your bed?" screams little Dick; "you're the worse for lickin, Job Brown. Can't you see you've come into the wrong house?"

"Eh?" ses Job, staring. "Wrong 'ouse? Well, where's mine, then?"

"Next door but one, same as it always was," ses Dick. "Will you go?"

"A' right," ses Job, staring. "Well, goo'-night, Dick. Goo'-night, Mrs. Weed. Goo'-night, baby."

"Good-night," ses Mrs. Weed from under the bedclothes.

"Goo'-night, baby," ses Job, agin.

"It can't talk yet," ses Dick. "Will you go?"

"Can't talk—why not?" ses Job.

Dick didn't answer him.

"Well, goo'-night, Dick," says Job, moving towards the door.

Dick didn't answer 'im.

"Goo'-night, Dick," he ses agin.

"Good-night," ses Dick from between 'is teeth.

"Goo'-night, Mrs. Weed," ses Job.

Mrs. Weed forced herself to say "good-night" agin.

"Goo'-night, baby," ses Job.

"Look 'ere," ses Dick, raving, "are you goin' to stay 'ere all night, Job-Brown?"

Job didn't answer 'im, but began to go downstairs, saying "goo'-night" as 'e went, and he'd got pretty near to the bottom when he suddenly wondered wot 'e was going downstairs for instead of up, and larfing gently at 'is foolishness for making sich a mistake 'e went upstairs agin. His surprise when 'e see Dick Weed and Mrs. Weed and the baby all in 'is bed pretty near took 'is breath away.

"Wot are you doing in my bed?" he ses.

"It's our bed," ses Dick, trembling all over with rage. "I've told you afore you've come into the wrong 'ouse."

"Wrong 'ouse?" ses Job, staring round the room. "I b'leeve you're right. Goo'-night, Dick; goo'-night, Mrs. Weed; goo'-night, baby."

Dick jumped out of bed then and tried to push 'im out of the room, but 'e was a very small man, and Job just stood there and wondered wot he was doing. Mrs. Weed and the baby both started screaming one against the other, and at last Dick pushed the window open and called out for help.

They 'ad the neighbours in then, and the trouble they 'ad to get Job downstairs wouldn't be believed. Mrs. Pottle went for 'is wife at last, and then Job went 'ome with 'er like a lamb, asking 'er where she'd been all the evening, and saying 'e'd been looking for 'er everywhere.

There was such a to-do about it in the village next morning that Job Brown was fairly scared. All the wimmen was out at their doors talking about it, and saying wot a shame it was and 'ow silly Mrs. Weed was to put up with it. Then old Mrs. Gumm, 'er grandmother, who was eighty-eight years old, stood outside Job's 'ouse nearly all day shaking 'er stick at 'im and daring of 'im to come out. Wot with Mrs. Gumm and the little crowd watching 'er all day and giving 'er good advice, which she wouldn't take, Job was afraid to show 'is nose outside the door.

He wasn't like hissself that night up at the Cauliflower. 'E sat up in the corner and wouldn't take any notice of anybody, and it was easy to see as he was thoroughly ashamed of hissself.

"Cheer up, Job," says Bill Chambers, at last; "you ain't the fust man as has made a fool of hissself."





"DARING OF 'IM TO COME OUT."

"Mind your own business," ses Job Brown, "and I'll mind mine."

"Why don't you leave 'im alone, Bill?" ses Henery White; "you can see the man is worried because the baby can't talk."

"Oh," ses Bill, "I thought 'e was worried because 'is wife could."

All the chaps, except Job, that is, laughed at that; but Job 'e got up and punched the table, and asked whether there was anybody as would like to go outside with him for five minutes. Then 'e sat down agin, and said 'ard things agin the drink, which 'ad made 'im the larfing-stock of all the fools in Claybury.

"I'm going to give it up, Smith," he ses.

"Yes, I know you are," ses Smith.

"If I could on'y lose the taste of it for a time I could give it up," ses Job, wiping 'is mouth, "and to prove I'm in earnest I'll give five pounds to anybody as'll prevent me tasting intoxicating licker for a month."

"You may as well save your breath to bid people 'good-night' with, Job," ses Bill Chambers; "you wouldn't pay up if anybody did keep you off it."

Job swore honour bright he would, but nobody believed 'im, and at last he called for pen and ink and wrote it all down on a sheet o' paper and signed it, and then he got two

other chaps to sign it as witnesses.

Bill Chambers wasn't satisfied then. He pointed out that earning the five pounds, and then getting it out o' Job Brown arterwards, was two such entirely different things, that there was no likeness between 'em at all. Then Job Brown got so mad 'e didn't know wot 'e was doing, and 'e 'anded over five pounds to Smith the landlord and wrote on the paper that he was to give it to anybody who should earn it, without consulting 'im at all. Even Bill couldn't think of anything to say agin that, but

he made a point of biting all the sovereigns.

There was quite a excitement for a few days. Henery White 'e got a 'eadache with thinking, and Joe Gubbins, 'e got a 'eadache for drinking Job Brown's beer agin. There was all sorts o' wild ways mentioned to earn that five pounds, but they didn't come to anything.

Arter a week had gone by Job Brown began to get restless like, and once or twice 'e said in Smith's hearing 'ow useful five pounds would be. Smith didn't take any notice, and at last Job told 'im there didn't seem any likelihood of the five pounds being earned, and he wanted it to buy pigs with. The way 'e went on when Smith said 'e 'adn't got the power to give it back and 'e'd got to keep it in trust for anybody as might earn it was disgraceful.

He used to ask Smith for it every night, and Smith used to give 'im the same answer, until at last Job Brown said as he'd go an' see a lawyer about it. That frightened Smith a bit, and I b'leeve he'd ha' 'anded it over, but two days arterwards Job was going upstairs so careful that he fell down to the bottom and broke 'is leg.

It was broken in two places, and the doctor said it would be a long job owing to 'is drinking habits, and 'e gave Mrs. Brown



strict orders that Job wasn't to 'ave a drop of anything even if 'e asked for it.

There was a lot o' talk about it up at the Cauliflower 'ere, and Henery White, arter a bad 'eadache, thought of a plan by

the ale up, and Bill Chambers said it was a good job Henery thought 'e was clever, because nobody else did. As for 'is 'ead-aches, he put 'em down to over-eating.

Several other chaps called to see Job, but



"THE DOCTOR SAID IT WOULD BE A LONG JOB."

which 'e and Bill Chambers could 'ave that five pounds atween 'em. The idea was that Bill Chambers was to go with Henery to see Job, and take 'im a bottle of beer, and jist as Job was going to drink it Henery should knock it out of 'is 'ands, at the same time telling Bill Chambers 'e ought to be ashamed o' hisself.

It was a good idea, and as Henery White said, if Mrs. Brown was in the room so much the better, as she'd be a witness. He made Bill swear to keep it secret for fear of other chaps doing it arterwards, and then they bought a bottle o' beer and set off up the road to Job's. The annoying part of it was, arter all their trouble and Henery White's 'eadache, Mrs. Brown wouldn't let 'em in. They begged and prayed of 'er to let 'em go up and jist 'ave a peep at 'im, but she wouldn't. She said she'd go upstairs and peep for 'em, and she came down agin and said that 'e was a little bit flushed, but sleeping like a lamb.

They went round the corner and drank

none of them was allowed to go up, and for seven weeks that unfortunate man never touched a drop of anything. The doctor tried to persuade 'im now that 'e 'ad got the start to keep to it, and 'e likewise pointed out that as 'e had been without liquor for over a month, he could go and get that five pounds back out o' Smith.

Job promised that 'e would give it up; but the fust day 'e felt able to crawl on 'is crutches he made up 'is mind to go up to the Cauliflower and see whether gin and beer tasted as good as it used to. The only thing was 'is wife might stop 'im.

"You're done up with nursing me, old gal," he ses to 'is wife.

"I am a bit tired," ses she.

"I could see it by your eyes," ses Job. "What you want is a change, Polly. Why not go and see your sister at Wickham?"

"I don't like leaving you alone," ses Mrs. Brown, "else I'd like to go. I want to do a little shopping."



"You go, my dear," ses Job. "I shall be quite 'appy sitting at the gate in the sun with a glass o' milk an' a pipe."

He persuaded 'er at last, and, in a fit o' generosity, gave 'er three shillings to go shopping with, and as soon as she was out o' sight he went off with a crutch and a stick, smiling all over 'is face. He met Dick Weed in the road, and they shook 'ands quite friendly and Job asked 'im to 'ave a drink. Then Henery White came along, and by the time they got to the Cauliflower they was as merry a party as you'd wish to see.

Every man 'ad a pint o' beer which Job paid for, not forgetting Smith 'isself, and Job closed 'is eyes with pleasure as 'e took his. Then they began to talk about 'is accident, and Job showed 'em 'is leg and described wot it felt like to be a teetotaler for seven weeks.

"And I'll trouble you for that five pounds, Smith," 'e ses, smiling. "I've been without anything stronger than milk for seven weeks. I never thought when I wrote that paper I was going to earn my own money."

"None of us did, Job," ses Smith. "D'ye think that leg'll be all right agin? As good as the other, I mean?"

"Doctor ses so," ses Job.

"It's wonderful wot they can do nowadays," ses Smith, shaking 'is 'ead.

"'Strordinary," ses Job; "where's that five pounds, Smith?"

"You don't want to put any sudden weight or anything like that on it for a time, Job," ses Smith; "don't get struggling or fighting, whatever you do, Job."

"Taint so likely," ses Job; "d'ye think I'm a fool? Where's that five pounds, Smith?"

"Ah, yes," ses Smith, looking as though

'e'd just remembered something. "I wanted to tell you about that, to see if I've done right. I'm glad you've come in."

"Eh?" ses Job Brown, staring at 'im.

"Has your wife gone shopping to-day?" ses Smith, looking at 'im very solemn.



"THEY WAS AS MERRY A PARTY AS YOU'D WISH TO SEE."

Job Brown put 'is mug down on the table and turned as pale as ashes. Then 'e got up and limped over to the bar.

"Wot d'yer mean?" he ses, choking.

"She said she thought o' doing so," ses Smith, wiping a glass; "she came in yesterday and asked for that five pounds she'd won. The doctor came in with 'er and said she'd kept you from licker for seven weeks, let alone a month; so, according to the paper, I 'ad to give it to 'er. I 'ope I done right, Job."

Job didn't answer 'im a word, good or bad. He just turned 'is back on him, and, picking up 'is crutch and 'is stick, hobbled off 'ome. Henery White tried to make 'im stop and 'ave another pint, but he wouldn't. He said he didn't want 'is wife to find 'im out when she returned.