

smart commercial traveller, in whom she recognised, half with joy, half with terror, the original of the shadowy portrait. Well, there was love at first sight on his part, and what may fairly be called love at second sight on hers; and when they were married—which they soon were—they looked a very promising couple. The bridegroom resolved to pass a week or two in the village, and as he happened at the time to have about him plenty of money, which he expended with liberality, he soon became generally popular. This popularity, too, was seasoned with respect, for he was quite enough of a gentleman to be vastly superior to the rough-hewn dolts who constituted the society of the village.

As the time for returning to London approached, Betsy began to pack up a few of her valuables among which, the box containing the knife was one of the most important. It had previously been hidden in the corner of a cupboard, and as it was a curious-looking article, elaborately ornamented with fantastic scrolls of elder-pith, it at once attracted the attention of her husband. Harry—that was his name—took it up, carefully examined the curious pattern on the lid and sides, and opened it. Then, as if immediately transfixed with horror, he let it fall with all its contents to the ground.

Poor Betsy stared with all her might, and was about to inquire into the cause of this perturbation, when he stopped her short, by hastily picking up the knife, and exclaiming: "Cursed witch, where did you get this?"

Betsy, who did not exactly like to say, commenced a series of stammers and stutters, but was soon relieved from the trouble of an explanation by her husband, who, maddened with fury, shouted out:

"Wretch, on the night when I lost this knife, I was dragged, by invisible hands, through a lake of burning brimstone, and suffered tortures that the human tongue cannot describe."

Betsy was on the point of saying "La!" or "Gracious!" or "Bless me!" or some other short phrase rather indicative of surprise than intelligence, when she was stopped by her husband, who, with a frantic gesture, bounded towards her, and plunged the knife into her heart.

When the assizes came on, Harry was tried for murder; but he displayed to the court such an uncommon familiarity with demons and witches, that although he flourished in the good old hanging times, he was merely confined for life in a lunatic asylum as an incurable madman.

The disconsolate mother of Betsy, who afterwards heard from Fanny the particulars of the experimental night, resolved that the wicked books should no longer remain in her house. However, being a thrifty dame, she did not throw them into the fire; but taking advantage of a journey to London, resold them very cheap to the bookseller who had vended them very dear to the defunct cobbler, and whose name had been written on the title-page. At the same time she called him an abominable old man

vindicating this expression of opinion by telling him the story, which he afterwards retailed to me.

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The village where the events above narrated took place is not very far from London, and shortly after I had heard the bookseller's tale I paid it a visit. As I approached it, my eye fell upon an exceedingly dirty old woman, who a century or two before would certainly have been burned for a witch, and who, with a short pipe in her mouth, was busily engaged in picking up sticks and other articles of small value by the roadside. Not noticing me, she was talking to herself very hard:

"Betsy murdered, and Fanny dead from ill-usage, and I shall never get married," said the old crone; "no, I shall never get married, for I saw the coffin, and the burial-day is sure to come before the wedding."

"Why, bless me!" I cried out, in astonishment, "you must surely be Nancy!"

"Eh?" ejaculated the crone, fixing her sharp eyes upon me. "Eh? Yes, Nancy is my name. Though how you know that I don't know, and I don't care. But I hope you'll give me a trifle to get some tobacco."

I put half-a-crown in her hand, when she hobbled off as quick as she could, without uttering a word of thanks.

THE BEES OF CARLISLE.

TEN or eleven years ago, in the third volume of *Household Words*, we described the reading-rooms established among themselves by the working men of Carlisle. They were originated in the exciting months of the year 'forty-eight, when the desire of working men, as of all other classes of society, was strong to see every day's news of the rising of popular desire in arms against the despotisms of Europe. Mechanics' Institutes were even then already lost to the mechanics; tradesmen and their sons, and apprentices, with clean hands and clean coats, had ousted the men in fustian out of their committees, and at last out of the very reading-rooms. Therefore, among the working men of Carlisle, there was begun in the most natural way what we may now almost dignify by the name of a new movement. A few men who were neighbours and friends agreed to club a penny a week, to buy newspapers for common use. More than a few were eager for the news, and many pence being subscribed, a school-room was lent of evenings, in which the papers could be placed and read. After the peculiar excitement of the year had passed away, this little society was melting back into nothingness, when Dr. Elliott, a sensible Carlisle physician, and one or two other men of the middle class intervened, not as patrons, but as advisers, with a word or two of well-timed suggestions, and a trifle of substantial help in gifts of books and so forth. It needed few words to put the Carlisle working men on the right track. They soon had not one reading

room but two reading-rooms supported by their weekly pence, not situated like the Mechanics' Institution in the great central thoroughfare, but each in its own humble quarter, among the artisans who used it, and by whom exclusively it was managed. In each case it was made a fundamental rule that nobody should be on the committee of management except mechanics dependent upon receipt of weekly wages. Dukes might subscribe if they chose, and attend the reading-room if they chose, but they must sit with the men in fustian, and acquire no power whatever of taking the lead out of their hands. It would not be permitted even to a greengrocer to sit on the committee. The subscription was the weekly penny, but the member out of work from no fault of his own would be for the time on the free list, and entitled to the use of the room and the borrowing of books gratuitously till he got wages again. Little libraries of volumes that might be borrowed and taken home were formed, grew in extent, and are now furnishing, in Carlisle, thousands of readings by the working man's fireside. The idea took strong hold in the old city which contained at last eight or ten such working men's reading-rooms, two of them being large, and so well and earnestly conducted that evening schools for adults and for children had spontaneously arisen in connexion with them.

The Carlisle working men easily obtained for these proceedings the public applause of Lord Brougham and others, but it is curious that to this day they have not been imitated. We should like very much to see this Carlisle example followed. But the movement is one that can only begin with working men, and can only be sustained by them where the clergyman of the parish, or some sensible and kindly man like Dr. Elliott, is ready to give neighbourly help, by the loan of a room, the gift perhaps of a few books, or any small aid that may appear natural and wholesome, without assuming on account of friendly service any airs of patronage. What is given—if anything be given—must be in the form of a free present, justifying no more airs and interferences on the part of the donor than a Christmas hamper sent in common good will to a friend. Between the upper, middle, and working classes, there is close interdependence. The working men do, in their own way and according to their means, many a good turn to their richer neighbours; and in the social exchange of friendly offices there is no reason on earth why a more or less substantial present in aid of a good enterprise, by men of little means, should not be made by any one who can afford it, without the shadow of an idea on his side that he thereby establishes a right of meddling or dictation. The working coat shall thus never be frowned out of the company, and the member with the honest stains of work yet on him shall not be ashamed to look in on his way home to borrow a book for his evening's household entertainment.

At Carlisle they have not only thus held their ground in the right way; they have ad-

vanced so famously that a couple of months' ago one of the reading societies opened, still in its own natural district, Caldew-gate, a building of its own, for library and reading-room, in connexion with a Temperance Hall, in which working men can get a wholesome breakfast or tea at no more than the home cost for materials and cooking. It is now the main hive of these honey-bees, that know so well how to lay up provision of the sweets of toil. It is a plain brick building, of which the ground-floor supplies food to the body, and the upper-floor food to the mind. Below is a spacious hall, heated by a large stove at one end, and having at the other end fit apparatus for preparing the refreshments. There are six tables in the room, covered with white cloths, and meals may be had from eight o'clock in the morning until ten at night; on Saturdays till eleven. Tobacco, beer, wine and spirits not being allowed on the premises. Good tea, coffee, and cocoa are supplied for a penny a cup; bread, cakes, and biscuits may be had from a halfpenny-worth upwards; butter, cheese, pork pies, and so forth, are supplied also at the same natural prices. Overhead is a reading-room of equal size, well warmed and lighted, and supplied with seats and tables. It is pretty well stocked with newspapers and periodicals, and a smaller room adjoining it serves as the library.

The ground on which the building stands is worth a hundred pounds, and that was given by Messrs. Carr, the biscuit-bakers. There is also a small building debt. But since this improvement in the accommodation the number of subscribers to the reading-room has increased by seventy-two per cent. In the old room the weekly excess of income over expenditure was ninepence only, in the new room it is seven and threepence; so that the little society is six and sixpence a week richer for the change, barring its little debt, which with the friendly help it is likely to get from those who can afford to give, will soon be paid. Of the energy, indeed, of this wise thirteen-year-old action on their own behalf by the working men of Carlisle a notion may be given if we quote what Lord Brougham said when presiding over the Lancashire Union of Mechanics' Institutions. He said that, however justly Manchester might boast of its liberal supply of books and newspapers to the people, yet before it could equal Carlisle in this respect it would have to multiply its library and news-room accommodation fourteen times!

The wholesome action by and for the working men of Carlisle does not stop here. We all know how bad trade has been and is this winter in the north of England. At the first warning of the pinch there was established, in connexion with the new Temperance Hall, a steam apparatus for soup manufacture on the amplest scale; costing a hundred pounds; but, once set up, it is permanent, and it makes soup that really is palatable and nourishing food, though it can be sold for a penny a pint, and leave a trifling profit. This soup the labourer's wife in hard times can buy with no more sense of taking alms than she has when she buys her bread; or it may be eaten

hot with a pennyworth of bread in a warm and comfortable refreshment-room like the Carlisle Temperance Hall. Here is Dr. Elliott's recipe for soup that may be honestly sold, not given in charity, at prices suited to the pressure of hard times: "Suppose that to-morrow one hundred gallons of soup must be ready at eleven o'clock, or at noon. On the preceding afternoon—that is to-day, at two or three P.M.—put fifty pounds of whole white peas into cold water for fifteen hours. At ten o'clock at night, put one hundred pounds weight of beef hough, and necks, at twopence-halfpenny per pound, the bones chopped, and the meat all cut into small pieces. Put the meat and bones into the soup casks (old treacle casks will do), barely cover them with cold water, and turn on the steam through the pipe that goes into each cask. After many succussions, or cracks, which gradually get less loud, the boiling begins; and the peculiarity of this method is that the water never boils away, but actually increases by about three-fifths in ten hours; so that allowance must be made for this in the several casks. If the heat be from gas jets, the boiling might be left unheeded all night. At six in the morning the peas, after the maceration in cold water, are added; but they must be in bags, each holding twenty-five or thirty pounds of peas; sixty-five pounds of pot-barley are at the same time added, not in bags, but loose. At nine o'clock take out the peas, bruise them well (as in peas-pudding), and empty the contents of the bags into the casks. At ten o'clock add ten pounds of salt and ten ounces of black pepper, ten pounds of onions, sometimes carrots, potatoes, or oatmeal. By eleven o'clock you will have excellent soup. Twenty-five gallons of water is the measure to begin with—one hundred gallons of soup is the result; and at one penny per pint, the whole will sell for the very lawyer-like sum of three pounds six shillings and eightpence, leaving a profit."

Soup like that we can warrant without tasting. Peas and pot-barley are rich in nourishment, seasoning is not left out, the meat is handsomely remembered, and the whole nourishment out of everything used goes with the brew.

When the poor hunger, every man who has a kitchen can make of it a soup-kitchen at the cost of but few pence, by setting up a pot au feu on the French system, or stock-pot for the pot-liquor, meat cuttings, bones, scraps, and other nourishing odds and ends that find their way too commonly into the dust-hole. The rich may dine at a first-rate hotel, and get soup of which the stock is made by thus collecting shreds and leavings of the dresser and the dinner-table. A very modest household can yield out of its waste a quart or two of good soup that needs only a bit of onion, or celery, or dash of any sort of vegetable, with pepper and salt, to make it food and health to somebody who hungers. The only trouble involved in this sort of soup-making is the duty it brings with it of finding the right persons to receive the help it will

enable the soup-maker to give. But that trouble is a duty. It is only the active and thoughtful mercy that is twice blessed, or even once blessed, except now and then by a rare accident. As well curse society aloud as be a blind almsgiver.

JUDICIAL MURDER.

Of the many heavy burdens which a sovereign has to bear, the power of life and death is one of the heaviest. Pius IX. is still a sovereign who struggles hard to retain in his hands that awful responsibility; and he has lately wielded it in a manner which would make most men wretched to their dying day.

Only a little while ago, as we are all aware, poor Locatelli was relentlessly sent to his final account before a juster tribunal than that of prelates and popes, on the accusation of stabbing the pontifical gendarme Vellerti in a street row. The offence amounted to no more than homicide, as aggravated in its circumstances as you please, but not to premeditated murder. Yet the degree of his offence is a matter of comparatively trifling importance, compared with the brutally clumsy way in which he was judicially butchered. The grand question is whether he were or were not really guilty of the crime imputed to him.

The ultramontane journals state that there no longer remains a doubt about Locatelli's guilt; but the reasons for thus casting away doubt are not forthcoming; on the contrary. His trial can hardly be called a trial. It was conducted with closed doors. The accuser and the witnesses were brought in one by one, and then removed, and never confronted with him nor with each other; he was kept ignorant of what evidence was given against him, and by whom. The judges alone held the thread of the story; to everyone else it was an incomplete and tangled web, and so remains. In the official report the witnesses were only indicated by false initials, rendering it impossible to estimate the personal value of their testimony. One witness deposed that the man who struck the blow was tall and thin; another that he was short and fat; another that he was of middle height. The knife which inflicted the blow was found, in a dense crowd, at five or six paces' distance from the assumed assassin. When arrested, Locatelli's own knife was found in his pocket, closed. A French officer who saw him immediately after his arrest, declared that he was very drunk, implying thereby that he was incapable at the time of committing the act; but his evidence was pool-pooled away, on the ground that he was *only one*; as if the word of one truthful person did not carry more weight than the oaths of twenty suborned partisans.

Locatelli protested his innocence to the last, in a way which convinced his hearers of his sincerity. A man named Castrucci, when he got beyond the Roman frontier and out of the reach of the papal claws, sent word that it was *he* who inflicted the wound; he treated the affair as of