

"Oh, I say, I'll treat ourselves to a cup o' tea. Ere's Maggie with the medicine; she can 'ave a sip or two out o' my cup," says Mrs. Clifford, leading the way and putting down her penny.

They all three sit down on a long wooden bench, and the two elders quietly take small sips of the grateful and comforting beverage, while Maggie removes the cork from her bottle and cautiously smells and then tastes on the tip of her tongue the physic.

"Yus," begins Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Pontifex, as they sit saucer in one hand and cup in the other, amidst the noise and movement of the department, "'e ordered 'er complete rest. Wot for 'e didn't order 'er a pint o' fruity port every day and kerridge exercise for; I don't know, 'cause she's jist as likely to have them as she is to have the complete rest. Ain't yer, my dear?" she repeats in raised tones, turning round to Maggie, and passing the half-full cup of tea for the invalid to drink from.

Maggie vouchsafes no reply, and presently the tea is finished. Mrs. Pontifex thanks Mrs. Clifford very voluminously, and says that she hopes to have the pleasure of meeting her again some day, and of then being able to do her some service in return for her kindness on the present occasion. She also hopes that Maggie's leg will soon be well and that she and her young man will "hit it orf all right," and make each other very happy. She concludes by saying—probably as part payment for the cup of tea—that she's sure Maggie has a most excellent example set her in her mother, whose company during the two and a-half hours that they have been waiting together in the hospital she has greatly enjoyed.

Mrs. Clifford expresses herself as having likewise much appreciated the improving society of Mrs. Pontifex. She heartily re-echoes the kind wish which Mrs. Pontifex had been good enough to express in saying that she hoped that they might on some future occasion have the felicity of meeting again. As for the slight services that she had happily been able to render, they need not be thought of again for a moment.

Mrs. Clifford and Maggie reach home just in time to prepare half-past five tea for Mr. Clifford and the children. One ounce of tea is made to do duty for nearly a gallon of water, for Mr. Clifford's work is dusty in the extreme, and the boys and girls will run and romp till their little red tongues are as rough and parched as that of a tired horse.

"You've been to the 'orspital, 'ave yer?" asks Mr. Clifford, leaning back in his chair, after taking a deep draught of tea and a good bite of bread and margarine.

"Now, Annie, will you leave that be!" interjects Maggie at the top of her voice, as she catches sight of the youngest girl but two surreptitiously tampering with the tin of condensed milk that has a place amidst the other articles upon the tea-table.

"Yus," answers Mrs. Clifford to her husband's inquiry, "we've been there the best part of the arfternoon."

"Ow fur is it?"

"Oh, it's a tidy stride from 'ere, the one as we went to, and a sight of people go, and you 'as to tike yer turn when yer gits inside."

"Well, wot good did yer do when yer was there?" further inquires Mr. Clifford, complacently munching on at his bread and margarine.

"We got a bottle of stuff as is as bitter as gork and a pot full of ointment," answers Mrs. Clifford, anxious to let her man know that she and her daughter had not been out so long for nothing.

"Is that all?" asks Mr. Clifford, lifting his mug to his lips.

"An' the doctor says as she's to 'ave complete rest," adds Mrs. Clifford, averting her eyes.

"Complete what!" shouts Mr. Clifford, spilling some of his hot tea from sheer emotion.

"Complete rest," says his wife again.

Mr. Clifford is obliged to believe his ears on the words being repeated. He solemnly puts down his mug, raises his eyebrows with calm sarcastic deliberation, and says:

"Well, I'm damned!"

CHARLES CUTTING.

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



At its recent meeting at Swansea, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was elected an honorary member of the British Medical Association, "not only for the honour his membership will confer on the Association, but for the distinguished services His Royal Highness has rendered to the medical profession."

The King, who is now the patron of the British Medical Association, was as Prince of Wales elected an honorary member at Ipswich in 1900.

We regret to note that the East London Children's Hospital at Shadwell does not receive the charitable support it so richly deserves. Of all the children's hospitals in London it is situated nearest to the habitations of the most destitute, and day by day ministers to their most urgent needs.

Presiding at the half-yearly meeting of Governors, Colonel Needham said that while the ordinary subscriptions and other headings had shown a small increase, they had not received a single legacy or special donation during the half-year. The result was that they had had to draw on their bankers for a sum of £2,000, a thing which had never before happened in the history of the hospital. As a consequence they had had to postpone the carrying out of several important improvements and extensions. They had

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)