

THE WIDOW'S PARLOUR

MR BUMBLE:

Mark my words Mrs Corney. That boy was born to be hung. I've never been so shocked in all my days.

WIDOW CORNEY:

Hush, Mr. B., you've have had quite a turn and I fnace you might enjoy a little drop of something special.

MR BUMBLE:

What is it?

WIDOW CORNEY:

Why it's what I'm obliged to keep a little of in the house to put into the blessed infants' medicine when they ain't well and I'll not deceive you Mr. B.,

(She whips off the tea cosy to reveal a gin bottle)

It's gin.

MR BUMBLE:

Well, you are a humane woman Mrs Corney. It's nice to be appreciated, Mrs Corney. These paupers in this parish they don't appreciate me. Anti-parochial they are, ma'am, ant-parochial. We have given away, Mrs Corney, a matter of twenty loaves and a cheese-and-a-half this very afternoon; and still them paupers is not contented.

WIDOW CORNEY:

Of course they're not. When would they be? Sweet, Mr. Bumble?

MR BUMBLE:

Very sweet, indeed, ma'am.

(She drops two lumps of sugar in the gin, and stirs. He spreads his pocket handkercheig over his fat knees, heaves a deep sigh and looks at the cat basket.)

You have a cat ma'am, I see... And kittens too, I declare!

WIDOW CORNEY:

I'm so fond of them you can't imagine, Mr Bumble. They're so happ, so cheerful, so frolicsome, that they are quite companions for me.

MR BUMBLE: (Loadedly)

Very nice animals indeed, ma'am, and so very domestic.

WIDOW CORNEY:

So fond of their home too, that it's really quite a pleasure, I'm sure.

MR BUMBLE:
Mrs Corney, ma'am,

(marking time with a teaspoon)

I mean to say this... that any cat... or kitten... that could live with you ma'am... and not be fond of it's home... must be an idiot, ma'am, and don't deserve to live in it.

WIDOW CORNEY:
Oh Mr Bumble!

MR BUMBLE:
It's no use disguising facts, ma'am. An idiot! I would drown myself - with pleasure!

WIDOW CORNEY:
Then you're a cruel man. And a very hardhearted man besides.

MR BUMBLE:
Hard hearted, Mrs Corney? Hard? Are you hard hearted Mrs Corney?

WIDOW CORNEY:
Dear me! What a very curious question coming from a single man. What can you want to know for, Mr B?

(MR BUMBLE drinks his gin, wipes his lips and kisses WIDOW CORNEY.)

WIDOW CORNEY:
Oh, Mr Bumble, I shall scream!