

Essay on An Encounter with A Drunk

The moment I entered the lane behind a row of shops, I saw him. He was tottering alternately to the left and right and periodically doing a complete about-turn. He was obviously very drunk.

He would totter to one side until he looked as though he was sure to hit a wall but he would just manage to stop in time. Then he would totter to the other side and just manage not to fall into the drain. In between, he would put in a pirouette or two. Even Charlie Chaplin could not have put up a better performance. He was both funny and pitiful.

He was about sixty years old, judging from the sparse hair on his head and the withered look of his hands. Despite his age, however, he did not seem to have learned life's lessons.

For a while, I was not sure which way he was headed. Sideways motion and occasional pirouettes did not have much practical forward movements, but it seemed probable he was headed my way.

A lame man walks past the drunk. With surprising quickness, the drunk old man made a grab for the lame man. Now, the lame man had one good leg. The other one was probably the result of polio in his childhood. He had to walk with one hand pressing on the withered knee. So when the drunk grabbed hold of him, it had the effect of sending both of them tottering and pirouetting.

For a few seconds they "danced" together as the lame man desperately tried to free himself. Finally, the "dance" ended with the drunk on his hands and knees and the lame man on his bottom. I could not help but laugh for a second or two. then decided to help these two incompatible partners.

When I reached them, the lame man was already up and cursing the drunk. I helped the-drunk to his feet. He stank of liquor. His clothes were filthy and he had a shoe on one foot and a slipper on the other. What a sorry state he was in, but it did not seem to bother him.

I held him up and walked him towards a tea-stall nearby. As we passed a parked car, he made a grab for the antenna and bent it into an inverted V-shape. I then realised that I did not have the strength to keep supporting him, for he was really leaning on me. So I half-dragged him towards the side of the lane and propped him in a sitting position against the wall of a shop. it would be better to let him sleep it off He was in no condition to go anywhere or do anything.

The tea-stall babu looked at me quizzed. shrugged my shoulders and walked away. I had had enough of a drunk.