"TALES FROM DICKENS"

BY

MAJOR T. F. O'DONNELL, M. C., B. A.

PRINCIPAL, AGRA COLLEGE

AGRA

RAM PRASAD & BROS.

PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS

1920

Re. 1 Ans. 4

PREFACE

To compare small things with great, the present little volume attempts to follow the precedent laid down by Charles Lamb in his "Tales from Shakespeare." To many a one have the "Tales from Shakespeare" proved a temptation and enticement to proceed to the original for fuller details and particulars. This also is the object of the present work. At the present day especially in India, too much stress is undoubtedly laid on the study of individual and isolated masterpieces. The detailed study of a single classic in a foreign language has its advantages, but a simple introduction to the most important works of a famous author does not only possess all these advantages and more but at the same time the process is far easier and certainly more interesting, whilst the results will undoubtedly be more far-reaching.

The book is primarily meant for schools but it will also be found a source of benefit and improvement in the Intermediate classes.

Agra College. T. F. O'DONNELL

INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens was born on the 7th of February 1812 in Landport near Portsea. Like Sir Walter Scott he was not very strong in his infancy, and thus at an early age he was thrown back on the companionship of books. His reading was wide and vast, and Fielding, Smollet, Lesage and Cervantes were amongst his favourites. Quite early too he visited theatres, and began to acquire a taste for the stage which lasted throughout his life.

Owing to his father becoming involved in pecuniary difficulties, the education of Dickens was spasmodic and desultory. He had to perform all kinds of menial duties in his own family, and eventually he was placed in a blacking warehouse, where his chief occupation was the sticking of labels on bottles. He received the rudiments of education from his mother, and when his father's financial position became more secure he was sent for two years to the Wellington House Academy, Hampstead Road. After a short interval spent at another school he became a clerk in an attorney's office, during which time he read frequently in the British Museum and also became a skilful writer of shorthand. He obtained the post of reporter for the " True Sun " in the gallery of the House of Commons and in 1835 he transferred himself to the " Morning Chronicle ", the managers of which soon learned to appreciate his remarkable skill and quickness. From reporting he soon turned to original work. " Sketches by Boz " appeared in the " Monthly

Magazine ", and he also about this time wrote in a small way for the stage. The turning point in Dickens's career came with the publication of " The Pickwick Papers." Their success was enormous and his fortune was now practically made. Then appeared in due order " Oliver Twist ", " Nicholas Nickleby." " The Old Curiosity Shop " and " Barnaby Rudge."

In 1842 Dickens visited America for the first time where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The publication however of " American Notes," and especially of " Martin Chuzzlewit " provoked a storm of resentment against his merciless satire of a large number of American characteristics and institutions. From July 1844 to June 1845 Dickens spent the greater part of his time in Italy and in 1846 he settled at Lausanne where he began " Dombey and Son." This was followed hy " David Copperfield," and in a weekly magazine of his own establishment appeared " Bleak House ", " Hard Times " and a " Little Dorrit." His literary activity was enormous. Not content with his various publications he was able to find time not only to take an active part in politics, but he also occupied himself with theatrical performances in London and the great provincial towns as actor, stage manager and occasionally as playwright.

In 1858 Dickens gave his first public reading, and thenceforward he devoted a large part of his time to this form of entertainment, which proved highly profitable to his finances, though it seriously impaired his health and strength. " A Tale of Two Cities " appeared in 1859 and

was followed by "Great Expectations" in 1860, and by "Our Mutual Friend" in 1864. In 1867 he returned to America, where his readings had a magnificent success. His health was gradually giving way and on the 8th of June 1870 after working at his last book, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" he had a sudden stroke and died on the following day. He was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 14th of June 1870.

What is the secret of Dickens's popularity, considering that he depended so much for his force and interest on accidents that had passed away almost before he ceased to write? The secret lies in the extraordinary sympathy and insight with which he imagined his characters. Sarah Gamp for example no longer nurses: but apart from nursing the great tribe of Gamp still flourishes, with all the humour, the inverted tenderness and the indifference to mortality and its sufferings that distinguished its founder. All his characters remain as true to life in a broad sense as they were when Dickens dragged them forth from this natural obscurity Again Dickens had lived among the common people. He knew their habits and their modes of speech, and so rendered them with the faithful accuracy of genius. Moreover early in his youth he had determined that if ever the chance came to him he would strike a blow against injustice oppression and hypocrisy in high places, and against all the pain and wretchedness that they brought upon innocent creatures. This undoubtedly struck a sympathetic chord with his readers. Last of all he was sincere. He felt what he

wrote, and if at times his sincerity laid him open to the charge of exaggerated emotion, it must be remembered that exaggeration is the essence of good fiction.

The general style of Dickens's writing was virile and direct. He had a full command of nervous English and he used it with a joyous sort of vigour to give flesh and blood to the shapes that filled his memory and to the creatures of his imagination. Reinforced as it was by sympathy and humour, by a drollery as refreshing as it was unexpected, and by a fierce indignation against wrong, this power became irresistible. As long as humour, wit and drollery give pleasure to the majority of mankind, as long as there exists sympathy with innocent suffering and indignation against unjust and cruel oppression, so long will the words of Dickens be read with avidity and pleasure by succeeding generations.

CONTENTS

1.	Preface	1
2.	Introduction	i—iv
3.	The Pickwick Papers	1
4.	Oliver Twist	15
5.	Nicholas Nickleby	31
6.	The Old Curiosity Shop	45
7.	Martin Chuzzlewit	58
8.	Dombey and Son	72
9.	David Copperfield	86
10.	Hard Times	104
11.	Little Dorrit	119
12.	A Tale of Two Cities	133
13.	Great Expectations	150
14.	Our Mutual Friend	165
15.	Notes—Critical and Literary ...	178

"THE PICKWICK PAPERS"

Mr. Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street were of a very neat and comfortable description, peculiarly adapted for a man of his genius and observation, and importance as General chairman of the world-famed Pickwick club.

His landlady, Mrs. Bardell was a comely woman of bustling manners and agreeable appearance, with a natural gift for cooking. Cleanliness and quiet reigned throughout the house, and in it Mr. Pickwick's will was law.

To any one acquainted with these things and with Mr. Pickwick's admirably regulated mind, his conduct on the morning previous to his setting out for Eatanswill seemed most mysterious and unaccountable. He paced the room, popped his head out of the window, and constantly referred to his watch. It was evident to Mrs. Bardell, who was dusting the apartment, that something of importance was in contemplation.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick at last, "your little boy is a very long time gone."

"Why, it's a good long way to the Borough sir!" remonstrated Mrs. Bardell.

"Very true; so it is. Mrs. Bardell, do you think it's a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?"

"La, Mr. Pickwick!" said Mrs. Bardell colouring, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle

in the eyes of her lodger. "La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!"

"Well, but do you?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"That depends," said Mrs. Bardell, "a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick! and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir."

"That's very true," said Mr. Pickwick! "but the person I have in my eye (here he looked very hard at Mrs. Bardell) I think possesses these qualities. To tell you the truth, I have made up my mind. You'll think it very strange now that I never consulted you about this matter till I sent your little boy out this morning, eh?"

Mrs. Bardell had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, and now she thought he was going to propose. A deliberate plan, too—sent her little boy to the Borough to get him out of the way! How thoughtful! How considerate!

"It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?" said Mr. Pickwick. "And when I am in town you'll always have somebody to sit with you" Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

"I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman," said Mrs. Bardell; trembling with agitation. "Oh, you kind, good playful dear!" And without more ado, she flung her arms around Mr. Pickwick's neck.

"Bless my soul!" cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick. "Mrs. Bardell, my good woman! Dear me! what a situation! Pray consider if any body should come!"

"Oh, let them come!" exclaimed Mr. Bardell frantically. "I'll never leave you, dear, kind soul!" And she clung the tighter.

"Mercy upon me," said Mr. Pickwick, struggling; "I hear somebody coming upstairs! Don't, there's a good creature, don't!" But Mrs. Bardell had fainted in his arms and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, followed by Mr. Pickwick's friends Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

"What is the matter?" Said the three Pickwickians.

"I don't know!" replied Mr. Pickwick: while the ever gallant Mr. Tupman led Mrs. Bardell, who said she was better downstairs." I cannot conceive what has been the matter with the woman. I merely told her of my intention of keeping a manservant, when she fell into an extraordinary paroxysm. Very remarkable thing."

"Very," said his three friends.

"There's a man in the passage now," said Mr. Tupman.

"It's the man I've sent for from the Borough," said Mr. Pickwick. "Have the goodness to call him up."

Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself, having previously deposited his old white hat on the landing outside.

"Ta'nt a wery good 'un to look at," said Sam, "but it's an astonishin" 'un to wear. And afore the brim went it was a wery handsome tile."

"Now, with regard to the matter on which I sent for you," said Mr. Pickwick.

"That's the point, sir! out vith it, as the father said to the child ven he swallowed a farden."

"We want to know in the first place," said Mr. Pickwick, "whether you are discontented with your present situation?"

"Afore I answers that 'ere question," replied Mr. Weller, "I should like to know whether you've a goin' to purwide me with a better."

Mr. Pickwick smiled benevolently, as he said: "I have half made up my mind to engage you myself."

"Have you though?" said Sam. "Wages?"

"Twelve pounds a year."

"Clothes?"

"Two suits."

"Work?"

"To attend upon me, and travel about with me and these gentlemen here."

"Take the bill down," said Sam emphatically. "I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon. If the clothes fit me half as well as the place, they 'll do."

Unfortunately for Mr. Pickwick it wasn't such an easy matter to settle with Mrs. Bardell as it was with Sam Weller. Acting on the advice of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, solicitors, Mrs. Bardell brought an action for breach of promise of marriage against Mr. Pickwick, and the damages were laid at £1.500. February 14, was the day fixed on for the memorable trial.

Sergeant Buzfuz opened the case for the plaintiff, and when he had finished Elizabeth Cluppins was called.

"Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "do you recollect being in Mrs. Bardell's back room on one

particular morning last July, when she was dusting Pickwick's apartment ?"

"Yes my lord and jury. I do," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

"What were you doing in the back room, ma'am ? enquired the little judge.

"My lord and jury" said Mrs. Cluppins, "I will not deceive you."

"You had better not ma'am," said the little judge.

"I was there," resumed Mrs. Cluppins, "unbeknown to Mrs. Bardell ! I had been out with a little basket, gentlemen to buy three pounds of red kidney pertaties, which was tuppence ha penny when I see Mrs. Bardell's street-door on the jar."

"On the what ? " exclaimed the little judge.

"Partly open, my lord."

"She said on the jar," said the little judge with a cunning look

"I walked in, gentlemen, just to say Good-mornin', and went in a permiscuous manner upstairs, and into the back room. There was a sound of voices in the front room, very loud, and forced themselves upon my ear."

Mrs. Cluppins then related the conversation we have already heard between Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell.

The next witness was Mr. Winkle, and after him came Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass, all of whom appeared on subpoena by the plaintiff's lawyers.

Sergeant Buzfuz then rose and said with considerable importance, "Call Samuel Weller."

It was quite unnecessary to call him, for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced.

"What's your name, sir?" inquired the judge.

"Sam Weller, my lord."

"Do you spell it with a 'V' or a 'W'?" inquired the judge.

"That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my lord" replied Sam, "but I spells it with a 'V'."

Here a voice in the gallery exclaimed aloud, "Quite right too, Samivel! quite right. Put it down as a we, my lord, put it down a we."

"Who is that that dares to address the Court?" said the little judge looking up.

"I raythor suspect it was my father, my lord," replied Sam.

"Do you see him here now?" said the judge.

"No, I don't my lord," replied Sam, staring right up in the roof of the court.

"If you could have pointed him out, I would have committed him instantly," said the judge.

Sam bowed his acknowledgments.

"Now Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick! speak up if you please."

"I mean to speak up, sir" replied Sam. "I am in the service o' that 'ere gentl'man and a very good service it is."

"Little to do, and plenty to get, I suppose?" said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Oh quite enough to get sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes," replied Sam.

"You must not tell us what the soldier said," interposed the judge, "it's not evidence?"

"Wery good, my lord."

"Now, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "do you recollect anything particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant?"

"Yes, I do sir. I had a reg'lar new fit out o' clothes that mornin' and that was a wery partickler and uncommon circumstance vith me in those days."

"Do you mean to tell me Mr. Weller, that you saw nothing of the fainting of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant?"

"Certainly not! I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady wasn't there."

"Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?"

"Yes, that's just it," replied Sam. If they was a pair o' patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power, p'raps I might be able to see through a flight o' stairs and a deal door, but bein' only eyes, you see, my wision's limited."

"Do you remember going up to Mr. Bardell's house one night last November? I suppose you went to have a little talk about this trial, eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz looking knowingly at the jury.

"I went up to pay the rent," said Sam:" but the ladies gets into a wery great state of admiration at the honourable conduct o' Mr. Dodson and Fogg and said what a wery gen'rous thing it was o' them to have taken up the case on spec., and to have charged nothing at all for costs, unless they got 'em out of Mr. Pickwick."

At this very unexpected reply the spectators tittered, and Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz said curtly, "Stand down sir."

Sergeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant, and after that Mr. Justice Shareleigh summed up.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the jury brought in a verdict for the plaintiff with £ 750 damages.

In the court-room Mr. Pickwick encountered Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, rubbing their hands with satisfaction.

"Not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get out of me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtor's prison," said Mr. Pickwick.

"We shall see about that" said Mr. Fogg grinning.

"But surely, my dear sir," said Perker to his client the following morning, "you don't really mean seriously now, that you won't pay these costs and damages ?"

"Not one halfpenny," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hooroar for the principal, as the money-lender said ven he vouldn't renew the bill" observed Mr. Samuel Weller.

Two months later Mr. Pickwick was arrested for the non-payment of costs and damages and taken to the Fleet Prison.

And so for the first time in his life Mr. Pickwick found himself within the walls of a debtor's prison.

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" enquired Mr. Pickwick of the turnkey, and after some discussion it was discovered there was a bed to let.

"It ain't a large 'an but it's an out-and-outer to sleep in This way, sir" said the turnkey.

Mr. Pickwick accompanied by Sam Weller, followed his guide up a staircase and along a gallery : at the end of this was an apartment containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable when he was left alone, and he went slowly to bed. He was awakened from his slumbers by the noise of his bed follows, one of whom, wearing grey cotton stockings, was performing a hornpipe : while another evidently very drunk, was warbling as much as he could recollect of a comic song ; the third, a man with thick, bushy whiskers, was applauding both performers.

"My name is Smangle, sir" said the man with the whiskers to Mr. Pickwick.

"Mine is Mivins," said the man in the stockings.

"Well ! but come," said Mr. Smangle, after assuring Mr. Pickwick a great many times that he entertained a very high respect for the feelings of a gentleman, "this is but dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burnt sherry ! the last-comer shall stand it. Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That is a fair and gentleman-like division of labour, any how."

Mr. Pickwick, unwilling to hazard a quarrel, gladly assented to the proposition.

When Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object on which they rested was Samuel Weeler, seated upon a small black portmanteau.

He soon learnt that money was at the Fleet just what money was out of it : and that if he wished it he could have a room to himself, if he was willing to pay for it.

" There's a capital room up in the coffee-room flight that belongs to a chancery prisoner," said the turnkey. " It'll stand you in a pound a week. Lord ! Why did not you say at first that you was willing to come down handsome ?"

The matter was soon arranged and in a short time the room was furnished.

" Sam " said Mr. Pickwick when his servant had done his best to make the apartment comfortable, and was now inspecting the arrangements, " I have felt from the first that this is not the place to bring a young man to."

" Nor an old ' un neither sir."

" You're quite right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

" But old men may come here through their own heedlessness and unsuspicion. Do you understand me Sam ?"

" Vell, Sir," rejoined Sam, after a pause, " I think I see your drift and it's my ' pinion that you're a-comin' it a great deal too strong, as the mail-coachman said to the snow-storm ven it overlook him."

"For the time that I remain here," said Mr. Pickwick, "you must leave me, Sam."

"Now, I tell you vat it is," said Mr. Weller, in a grave and solemn voice. "This here sort o' thing won't do at all, so don't let's hear no more about it."

"I am serious I am," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You air, air you sir?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Wery good, sir. Then, so am I."

With that Mr. Weller fixed his hat on his head with great precision and left the room. Having found his father, Sam explained to the elder Mr. Weller that Mr. Pickwick must not be left alone in the fleet.

"Vy, they'll eat him up alive, Sammy!" exclaimed the elder Mr. Weller. "Stop there by himself, poor creatur, without nobody to take his part! It can't be done, Samivel, it can't be done."

"O' course it can't," asserted Sam. "Well, then, I tell you wat it is. I'll trouble you for the loan of five-and-twenty pound. P'raps you may ask for it five minits avtervards, p'raps I may say I von't pay, and cut up rough. You von't think o' arresting your own son for the money, and sending him off to the Fleet, will you, you unnat'ral wagabone?"

The elder Mr. Weller, having grasped the idea, laughed till he was purple.

In the course of the day Sam was duly arrested at the suit of his father, and Sam having been formally delivered into the warder's custody, passed at once into the prison, and went straight to his master's room.

"I'm a pris'ner sir" said Sam. "I was arrested this here very avternoon for debt, and the man as pat me in 'ull never let me out till you go yourself."

"Bless my heart and soul!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick. What do you mean?"

"Wot I say, sir," rejoined Sam. "If it's forty year to come, I shall be a pris'ner, and I'm very glad on it. He's a malicious, bad desposed, vordly-minded, windictive creetur wot's put me in, with a hard heart as there ain't no soft'nin,' as the wirtuous clergyman remarked of the old Gen'l'm'n with a dropsy, ven he said that upon the whole he thought he'd rather leave his property to his wife than build a chapel with it."

In vain Mr. Pickwick remonstrated.

"I take my determination on principle, sir," remarked Sam. "and you takes yours on the same ground! vich puts me in mind o' the man as killed hisself on principle."

Evidently Messrs. Dodson and Fogg acted on principle also, for when they saw no chance of obtaining damages from Mr. Pickwick, they sued Mrs. Bardell for the costs.

Some time later Mr. Pickwick was taking his evening walk in the grounds of the Fleet when Mrs. Bardell was brought in and Sam Weller, seeing the lady, took off his hat in mock reverence, Mr. Pickwick turned indignantly away.

"Don't bother the woman" said the turnkey to Weller! "She's just come in."

"A pris'ner!" said Sam. Who's the plaintives? What for? Speak up old feller!'

"Dodson and Fogg," replied the man.

"Here Job, Job!" shouted Sam, dashing into the passage, and calling for a man who went errands for the prisoners "Run to Mr. Perker's, Job! I want him directly. I see some good in this. Here's a game! Hooray!"

Mr. Perker was in Mr. Pickwick's room betimes next morning.

"Well now, my dear Sir" said Perker, "the first question I have to ask is whether this woman is to remain here? It rests solely and wholly and entirely with you."

"With me!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick.

"Nobody but you can rescue her from this den of wretchedness, to which no man, and still more no woman, should ever be consigned if I had my will," resumed Mr. Perker. "I have seen the woman this morning. By paying the costs, you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages! and further, a voluntary statement, under her hand, that this business was from the very first fomented and encouraged by these men, Dodson and Fogg. She entreats me to intercede with you, and implores your pardon."

Before Mr. Pickwick could reply, there was a low murmuring of voices outside, and a hesitating knock at the door! and Mr. Winkle, Mr. Tupman, and Mr. Snodgrass entering most opportunely, at last, by their united pleadings, Mr. Pickwick was fairly argued out of his resolutions. At three o'clock that afternoon Mr. Pickwick took a last look at his little room, and made his way as well as he could

through the throng of debtors who pressed eagerly forward to shake him by the hand, until he reached the lodge steps. He turned here to look about him, and his eye brightened as he did so. In all the crowd of wan emaciated faces, he saw not one which was not the happier for his sympathy and charity.

As for Sam Weller, having dispatched Job Trotter to procure his formal discharge, his next proceeding was to invest his whole stock of ready money in the purchase of five-and-twenty gallons of mild porter, which he himself dispensed on the racket-ground to every body who would partake of it. This done, he hurra'd in divers parts of the building until he lost his voice, and then quietly relapsed into his usual collected and philosophical condition, and followed his master out of the prison.

OLIVER TWIST

Oliver was born in the workhouse, and his mother died the same night. Not even a promised reward of £ 10 could produce any information as to the boy's father or the mother's name. The woman was young, frail and delicate—a stranger to the parish.

"How comes he to have any name at all, then?" said Mrs. Mann (who was responsible for the early bringing up of the workhouse children) to Mr. Bumble the parish beadle.

The beadle drew himself up with great pride, and said, "I invented it. We name our foundlings in alphabetical order. The last was a S: Swubble I named him. This was a T: Twist I named him. I have got names ready made to the end of the alphabet, and all the way through it again, when we come to Z."

"Why, you're quite a literary character, sir," said Mrs. Mann.

Oliver, being now nine years old, was removed from the tender mercies of Mrs. Mann, in whose wretched home not one kind word or look had ever lighted the gloom of his infant years, and was taken into the workhouse.

Now the members of the board, who were long-headed men, had just established the rule that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. All relief was inseparable from the workhouse, and the thin gruel issued three times a day to its inmates.

The system was in full operation for the first six months after Oliver Twist's admission, and boys having generally excellent appetites, Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation. Each boy had one porringer of gruel and no more. At last the boys got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook's shop), hinted darkly to his companions that unless he had another basin of gruel per diem he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild hungry look, and they implicitly believed him. A council was held, lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening and ask for more, and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived, the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper to ladle out the gruel; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him, the gruel was served out, and a long grace was said over the short commons.

The gruel disappeared, the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own timidity, "Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then said, "What!"

" Please, sir " replied Oliver, " I want some more." The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board were sitting in solemn conclave when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing a gentleman in a high chair, said, " Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir : Oliver Twist has asked for more !"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

" For more ?" said the chairman, " Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary ?"

" He did, sir " replied Bumble.

" That boy will be hung," said a gentleman in a white waistcoat. I know that boy will be hung."

Nobody disputed the opinion. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement, and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the workhouse gate, offering a reward of five pounds to any body who would take Oliver Twist off their hands. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Mr. Gamfield, the chimney sweep was the first to respond to this offer.

" It's a nasty trade," said the chairman of the board.

"Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now," said another member.

"That's because they damped the straw afore they lit it in the chimbley to make 'em come down again," said Gamfield. "That's all smoke and no blaze: vereas smoke only sinds him to sleep, and that ain't no use in making a boy come down. Boys is wery obstinate and wery lazy, Gen'l'men, and there's nothing like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down with a run. It's humane too, gen'l'men because even if they've stuck in the chimney, roasting their feet makes 'em struggle to hextricate theirselves."

The board consented to hand over Oliver to the chimney-sweeper (the premium being reduced to 3£. 10s.) but the magistrates declined to sanction the indentures, and it was Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, who finally relieved the board of their responsibility.

Mr. Sowerberry's ill-treatment drove Oliver to flight. He left the house in the early morning before anyone was stirring, struck across the fields, and gained the high road outside the town. A milestone intimated that it was seventy miles to London. In London he would be beyond the reach of Mr. Bumble: to London he would trudge.

It was on the seventh morning after he had left his native place that Oliver limped slowly into the town of Barnet. Tired and hungry he sat down on a doorstep, and presently was roused by the question "Hallo, my covey, what's the row?"

The boy who addressed this inquiry to the young wayfarer was about his own age, but one of the queerest looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was short for his age, and dirty, and he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He wore a man's coat which reached nearly to his heels, and he had turned the cuffs back halfway up his arm to get his hands out of the sleeves. Altogether he was as roystering and swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six in his bluchers.

"You want grub," said this strange boy, helping Oliver to rise!" "And you shall have it. I'm at low-water mark myself, only one bob and a magpie! but as far as it goes I'll fork out and stump."

"Going to London?" said the strange boy, while they sat and finished a meal in a small public-house.

"Yes."

"Got any lodgings?"

"No."

"Money?"

"No."

The strange boy whistled.

"I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you? Well, I've got to be in London to-night, and I know a 'spectable old gentleman as lives there, wat'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change—that is if any gentleman he knows interduces you."

This unexpected offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted, and on the way to London, where they arrived at nightfall, Oliver learnt that this friend's name was Jack Dawkins, but that he was known among his intimates as "The Artful Dodger."

In Field Lane, in the slums of Saffron Hill, the dodger pushed open the door of a house, and drew Oliver within.

"Now, then" cried a voice, in reply to his whistle.

"Plummy and slam," said the dodger.

This seemed to be a watchword, for a man at once appeared with a candle.

"There's two on you," said the man, "who's the other one, and where does he come from?"

"A new pal from Greenland," replied Jack Dawkins, "Is Fagin upstairs?"

"Yes, he's sortin the wipes. Up with you."

The room that Oliver was taken into was black with age and dirt. Several rough beds, made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys none older than the dodger smoking long clay pipes and drinking spirits with the air of middle-aged men. An old shrivelled Jew, of repulsive face, was standing over the five, dividing his attention between a frying-pan, and a clothes-horse full of silk handkerchiefs.

The dodger whispered a few words to the Jew, and then said aloud, "This is him, Fagin, my friend Oliver Twist."

The Jew grinned. We are very glad to see you, Oliver—very."

A good supper Oliver had that night, and a heavy sleep, and a hearty breakfast next morning.

When the breakfast was cleared away, Fagin, who was quite a merry old gentleman, and the dodger and another boy named Charley Bates, played at a very curious game. The merry old gentleman, placing a snuff-box in one pocket of his trousers, a note-book in the other, and a watch in his waist-coat pocket, and sticking a mock diamond pin in his shirt, and spectacle-case and handkerchief in his coat-pocket, trotted up and down the room in imitation of the manner in which old gentlemen walk about the streets: while the dodger and Charley Bates had to get all these things out of the pockets without being observed. It was so very funny that Oliver laughed till the tears ran down his face.

A few days later, and he understand the full meaning of the game.

The dodger and Charley Bates had taken Oliver out for a walk, and after sauntering along, they suddenly pulled up short on Clerkenwell Green, at the sight of an old gentleman reading at a bookstall. So intent was he over his book that he might have been sitting in an easy chair in his study.

To Oliver's horror, the dodger plunged his hand into the gentleman's pocket, drew out a handkerchief, and

handed it to Bates. Then both boys ran away around the corner at full speed. Oliver frightened at what he had seen, ran off too! the old gentleman at the same moment missing his handkerchief, and seeing Oliver scudding off, concluded he was the thief, and gave chase, still holding his book in his hand.

The cry of "Stop thief," was raised. Oliver was knocked down, captured, and taken to the police-station by a constable.

The magistrate was still sitting, and Oliver would have been convicted there and then but for the arrival of the bookseller.

"Stop, stop! don't take him away! I saw it all: I keep the bookstall," cried the man. "I saw three boys, two others and the prisoner here. The robbery was committed by another boy. I saw that this one was amazed by it."

Oliver was acquitted. But he had fainted. Mr. Brownlow, for that was the name of the old gentleman, shocked and moved at the boy's deathly whiteness, straightway carried the boy off in a cab to his own house in a quiet, shady street near, Pentonville.

For many days Oliver remained insensible to the goodness of his new friends. But all that careful nursing could do was done, and he slowly and surely recovered. Mr. Brownlow, a kind-hearted old bachelor, took the greatest interest in his protegé, and Oliver implored him to turn him out of doors to wander in the streets.

"My dear child," said the old-gentleman, moved by the warmth of Oliver's appeal, "you need not be afraid of my deserting you. I have been deceived before in people. I have endeavoured to benefit, but I feel strongly disposed to trust you nevertheless ; and I am more interested in your behalf than I can well account for. Let me hear your story ; speak the truth to me, and you shall not be friendless while I am alive."

A certain unmistakable likeness in Oliver to a lady's portrait that was on the wall of the room struck Mr. Brownlow. What connection could there be between the original of the portrait, and this poor child ?

But before Mr. Brownlow had heard Oliver's story, he had lost the boy. For Fagin, horribly uneasy lest Oliver should be the means of betraying his late companions resolved to get him back as quickly as possible. To accomplish his evil purpose Nancy, a young woman who belonged to Fagin's gang, and who had seen Oliver, was prevailed upon to undertake the commission.

Now, the very evening before Oliver was to tell his story to Mr. Brownlow, the boy, anxious to prove his honesty, had set out with some books on an errand to the bookseller at Clerkenwell Green.

"You are to say," said Mr. Brownlow, "that you have brought these books back, and that you have come to pay the four pound ten I owe him. This is a five-pound note, so you will have to bring me back ten shillings change."

" I won't be ten minutes, sir," replied Oliver eagerly.

He was walking briskly along, thinking how happy and contented he ought to feel, when he was startled by a young woman screaming out very loud, " Oh my dear brother!" He had hardly looked up when he was stopped by having a pair of arms thrown tight round his neck.

" Don't," cried Oliver struggling. " Let go of me. Who is it ? What are you stopping me for ?"

The only reply to this was a great number of loud lamentations from the young woman who had embraced him.

" I've found him ! Oh, Oliver, Oliver ! Oh, you naughty boy to make me suffer such distress on your account ! Come home, dear, come. Oh, I've found him ! Thank gracious goodness heavens, I've found him !"

The young woman burst out crying, and a couple of women standing by asked what was the matter.

" Oh, ma'am," replied the young woman " he ran away from his parents, and went and joined a set of thieves and bad characters, and almost broke his mother's heart."

" Young wretch !" said one woman.

" Go home, do you little brute," said the other. " I'm not," replied Oliver, greatly alarmed. " I don't know her. I haven't any sister or father or mother. I'm an orphan ! I live at Pentonville."

" Oh, only hear him, how he braves it out," cried the young woman. " Make him come home or he'll kill his dear mother and father and break my heart !"

"What the devil's this?" said a man, bursting out of a beer-shop, with a white dog at his heels. "Young Oliver! come home to your poor mother, you young dog!"

"I don't belong to them. I don't know them! Help, help!" cried Oliver, struggling in the man's powerful grasp.

"Help!" repeated the man. "Yes, I'll help you, you young rascal! What books are these? You've been a-stealin' 'em, have you? Give 'em here!"

With these words the man tore the volumes from his grasp, and struck him on the head. Weak with recent illness, stupefied by the blows and the suddenness of the attack, terrified by the brutality of the man—who was none other than Bill Sikes, the roughest of all Fagin's pupils what could one poor child do? Darkness had set in; it was a low neighbourhood, resistance was useless. Sikes and Nancy hurried the boy on between them through courts and alleys till, once more he was within the dreadful house where the dodger had first brought him. Long after the gas lamps were lighted, Mr. Brownlow sat waiting in his parlour. The servant had run up the street twenty times to see if there were any traces of Oliver. The housekeeper had waited anxiously at the open door. But no Oliver returned.

Of course it was impossible for Oliver to return. He was now closely watched and guarded, and at times compelled to take part in the nefarious schemes plotted and carried out by the desperate gang.

Mr. Bill Sikes having an important house-breaking engagement with his fellow-robber, Mr. Tony Cracket, at Shepperton, decided that Oliver must accompany him.

It was a detached house and the night was dark as pitch when Sikes and Cracket, dragging Oliver along, climbed the wall and approached a narrow, shuttered window. In vain Oliver implored them to let him go.

"Listen, you young limb," whispered Sikes, when a crowbar had overcome the shutter, and the latter had been opened. "I'm going to put you through there." Drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, he added. "Take this light, go softly up the steps straight afore you, and along the hall to the street door: unfasten it, and let us in."

The boy was put through the window, and Sikes, pointing to the door with his pistol, told him if he faltered he would shoot him.

Hardly had Oliver advanced a few yards before Sikes called out, "Back! back!"

Startled the boy dropped the lantern, uncertain whether to advance or fly.

The cry was repeated—a light appeared—a vision of two terrified, half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes—a flash a loud noise—and he staggered back.

Sikes got him out of the window before the smoke cleared away, and fired his pistol after the men, who were already in retreat.

" Clasp your arm lighter " said Sikes. " Give me a shawl there. They've hit him. Quick ! The boy is bleeding."

Then came the load ringing of a bell, and the shouts of men, and the sensation if being carried over uneven ground at a rapid pace. And then the noises grew confused in the distance, and Oliver saw and heard no more. Sikes finding the chase too hot, was compelled to leave Oliver in a ditch and make his escape with his friend Cracket.

It was morning when Oliver awoke. His left arm was rudely bandaged in a shawl, and the bandage was saturated with blood. Weak and dizzy, he yet felt that if he remained where he was he would surely die, and so he staggered to his feet. The only house in sight was the one he had entered a few hours earlier, and he bent his steps towards it. He pushed against the garden-gate—it was unlocked. He tottered across the lawn climbed the steps, knocked faintly at the door and his whole strength failing him, sank down against the little portico.

Mr. Giles, the butler and general steward of the house, who had fired the shot and led the pursuit, was just explaining the exciting events of the night to his fellow-servants of the kitchen when Oliver's knock was heard. With considerable reluctance the door was opened, and then the group, peeping timorously over each other's shoulders, beheld no more formidable object than poor little Oliver Twist, speechless and exhausted.

" Here he is !" bawled Giles. " Here's one of the thieves, ma'am ! Wounded, miss ! I shot him."

They lugged the fainting boy into the hall, and then in the midst of all the noise and commotion, there was heard a sweet and gentle voice from the stairhead. "Hush! You frighten my aunt as much as the thieves did. Is the poor creature much hurt?" "Wounded desperate, miss," replied Giles.

After a hastyconsultation with her aunt, the same gentle speaker bade them carry the wounded person upstairs, and send to Chertsey at all speed for a constable and a doctor. The latter arrived when the young lady and the aunt, Mrs. Maylie, were at breakfast, and his visit to the sick-room changed the state of affairs. On his return he begged Mrs. Maylie and her niece to accompany him upstairs.

In lieu of the dogged, black-visaged ruffian they had expected to see, there lay a mere child, sunk in a deep sleep.

The ladies could not believe this delicate boy was a criminal, and when, on waking up, he told them his simple history, they were determined to prevent his arrest.

The doctor undertook to save the boy, and to that end entered the kitchen where Mr. Giles, Brittles his assistant, and the constable were regaling themselves with ale.

"How is the patient, sir?" asked Giles.

"So So," returned the doctor. "I'm afraid you've got yourself into a scrape there, Mr. Giles. Are you a Protestant? And what are you?" turning sharply on Brittles.

"Yes, sir! I hope so," faltered Mrs. Giles turning very pale, for the doctor spoke with strange severity.

"I'm the same as Mr. Giles, sir," said Brittles, starting violently.

"Then tell me this, both of you," said the doctor. "Are you going to take upon yourselves to swear that that boy upstairs is the boy that was put through the little window last night? Come, out with it! Pay attention to the reply, constable. Here's a house broken into, and a couple of men catch a moment's glimpse of a boy in the midst of gunpowder smoke, and in all the distraction of alarm and darkness. Here's a boy comes to that very same house next morning, and because he happens to have his arm tied up, these men lay violent hands upon him, place his life in danger, and swear he is the thief. "I ask you again," thundered the doctor, "are you, on your solemn oaths, able to identify that boy?"

Of course under these circumstances, as Mr. Giles and Brittles could'nt identify the boy, the constable retired and the attempted robbery was followed by no arrests.

Oliver Twist grew up in the peaceful and happy home of Mrs. Maylie, under the tender affection of two good women. Later on, Mr. Brownlow was found, and Oliver's character restored. It was proved too, that the portrait Mr. Brownlow possessed was that of Oliver's mother, whom its owner had once esteemed dearly. Betrayed by fate, the unhappy woman had sought refuge in the workhouse, only to die in giving birth to a son.

In that same workhouse, where his authority had formerly been so considerable, Mr. Bumble came—as a pauper—to die.

Tragic was the fate of poor Nancy. Suspected by Fagin of plotting against her accomplices, the Jew so worked on Sikes that the savage housebreaker murdered her.

But neither Fagin nor Sikes escaped.

For the Jew was taken and condemned to death, and in the condemned cell came the recollection to him of all the men he had known who had died upon the scaffold, some of them through his means.

Sikes when the news of Nancy's murder got abroad, was hunted by a furious crowd. He had taken refuge in an old disreputable, uninhabited house, known to his accomplices, which stood right over the Thames, in Jacob's island, not far from Dockhead; but the pursuit was hot, and the only chance of safety lay in getting to the river.

At the very moment when the crowd was forcing its way into the house, Sikes made a running noose to slip beneath his armpits, and so lower himself to a ditch beneath. He was out on the roof, and then when the loop was over his head, the face of the murdered girl seemed to stare at him. "The eyes again!" he cried in an unearthly screech, and threw up his arms in horror.

Staggering, as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance, and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was on his neck. It ran up with his weight, tight as a bow string. He fell for five and thirty feet, and then after a sudden jerk, and a terrible convulsion of the limbs, swung lifeless against the wall

"NICHOLAS NICKLEBY."

Mr. Nickleby, a country gentleman of small estate, having endeavoured to increase his scanty fortune by speculation, found himself ruined; he took to his bed (apparently resolved to keep that, at all events), and after embracing his wife and children, very soon departed this life. So Mrs. Nickleby went to London to wait upon her brother-in-law, Mr. Ralph Nickleby, and with her two children, Nicholas, then nineteen, and Kate a year or two younger, took lodgings in the Strand.

It was to these apartments that Ralph Nickleby, a hard unscrupulous, cunning money-lender, came on receipt of the widow's note.

"Are you willing to work, sir?" said Ralph, frowning at his nephew.

"Of course I am," replied Nicholas haughtily.

"Then see here," said his uncle. "This caught my eye this morning, and you may thank your stars' for it."

With that Mr. Ralph Nickleby took a newspaper from his pocket and read the following advertisement.

"Education—at Mr. Wackford Squeers' academy,

Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys in Yorkshire, youths are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, instructed in all languages living or dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, trigonometry,

the use of the globes, algebra, single-stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classic literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum.

No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled. Mr. Squeers is in town, attends daily from one till four, at the Saracen's head Snow Hill. N. B.—An able assistant wanted. Annual salary, £5. A Master of Arts would be preferred."

"There!" said Ralph, folding the paper again.

"Let him get that situation and his fortune's made. If he don't like that, let him get one for himself."

"I am ready to as any thing you wish me," said Nicholas, starting gaily up. "Let us try our fortune with Mr. Squeers at once: he can but refuse."

"He won't do that," said Ralph. "He will be glad to have you on my recommendation. Make yourself of use to him, and you'll rise to be a partner in the establishment in no time."

Nicholas, having taken down the address of Mr. Wackford Squeers, the uncle and nephew at once went forth in quest of that accomplished gentleman.

"Perhaps you recollect me," said Ralph, looking narrowly at the schoolmaster, at the Saracen's Head.

"You paid me a small account at each of my half-yearly visits to town for some years, I think, sir," replied Squeers, "for the parents of a boy who, unfortunately—"

"Unfortunately died at Dotheboys Hall," said Ralph, finishing the sentence. "And now let us come to business.

You have advertised for an able assistant. Do you really want one ?" " Certainly," answered Squeers.

" Here he is !" said Ralph. " My nephew Nicholas, hot from school, is just the man you want."

" I am afraid," said Squeers, perplexed with such an application from a youth of Nicholas's figure—" I am afraid the young man won't suit me."

" I fear, sir," said Nicholas, " that you object to my youth, and to my not being a Master of Arts ?"

" The absence of the college degree is an objection," replied Squeers, considerably puzzled by the contrast between the simplicity of the nephew and the shrewdness of the uncle.

" Let me have two words with you," said Ralph. The two words were had apart; in a couple of minutes Mr. Wackford Squeers announced that Mr. Nicholas Nickleby was from that moment installed in the office of first assistant master at Dotheboy's Hall.

" At eight o'clock to-morrow morning, Mr. Nickleby " said Squeers, " the coach starts. You must be here at a quarter before, as we take some boys with us."

" And your fare down, I have paid," growled Ralph. " So you'll have nothing to do but keep yourself warm."

Nicholas's first impressions of Dotheboys Hall were not of the best. On the very first morning after arrival about seven o'clock he was greeted by Squeers as follows :—

" Come, tumble up. Here's a pretty go, the pump's froze. You can't wash yourself this morning, so you must

be content with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and can get a bucketful out for the boys."

Nicholas huddled on his clothes and followed Squeers across a yard to the schoolroom.

"There," said the schoolmaster, as they stepped in together, "this is our shop."

It was a bare and dirty room, the windows mostly stopped up with old copy books and paper, and Nicholas looked with dismay at the old rickety desks and forms.

But the pupils!

Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long and meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies. Faces that told of young lives which from infancy had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. Little faces that should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering. And yet, painful as the scene was, it had its grotesque features.

Mrs. Squeers, wearing a beaver bonnet of some antiquity on top of a nightcap, stood at the desk, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle. The compound she administered to each boy in succession, using an enormous wooden spoon for the purpose.

"We purify the boys' blood now and then, Nickleby," said Squeers, when the operation was over.

A meagre breakfast followed; and then Mr. Squeers made his way to his desk and called up the first class.

"This is the first class in English speelling and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "Now then, where's the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window."

"So he is, to be sure," replied Squeers. "We go upon the practial mode of teaching, Nickleby: the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb, active, to make bright. W-i-n, win: d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it. Where's the second boy?"

"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden."

"So he is," said Squeers. B-o-t, bot: t-i-n, tin, bottin: n-e-y, ney, bottiney, noun, substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottiney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby. Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," replied Squeers. "a horse is a quadruped and a quadruped's Latin for beast, as every body that's gone through the grammar knows. As you're perfect in that, go and look after my horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing dog tomorrow, and they want the coppers filled."

The deficiencies of Mr. Squeers' scholastic methods were made up by lavish punishments, and Nicholas was compelled to stand by every day and see the unfortunate pupils of

Dotheboys Hall beaten without mercy and know that he could do nothing to alleviate their misery.

In particular the plight of one poor boy, older than the rest, called Smike, a drudge whom starvation and ill-treatment had rendered dull and slow-witted, aroused all Nichalas's pity.

It was Smike who was the cause of Nicholas leaving Yorkshire.

Nicholas could endure the coarse and brutal language of Squeers, the displeasure of Mrs Squeers (who decided that the new usher was "a proud, haughty, consequential, turned-up-nose peacock", and that "she'd bring his pride down") and the petty indignities this lady could inflict upon him. He bore with the bad food, dirty lodging, and daily round of squalid misery in the school.

But there came a day when Smike unable to face his tormentors any longer, ran away. He was taken within twenty-four hours, and brought back, bedabbled with mud and rain, haggard and worn—to all appearance more dead than alive.

The work this unhappy drudge performed would have cost the establishment some ten or twelve shillings a week in the way of wages, and Squeers, who, as a matter of policy, made severe examples of all runaways from Dotheboy's Hall prepared to take full vengeance on Smike.

At the first blow Smike uttered a shriek of pain, and Nicholas Nickleby started up from his desk, and cried "Stop!" in a furious voice.

" Touch that boy at your peril. I will not stand by and see it done."

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent outbreak of wrath, spat upon him, and struck him across the face with his cane.

All Nicholas's feeling's of rage, scorn and indignation, were concentrated into that moment, and, smarting at the blow, he sprang upon the schoolmaster, wrested the weapon from him, and, pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy.

Mrs. Squeers, with many shrieks for aid, hung on to the tail of her partner's coat, and tried to drag him from his infuriated adversary. With the result that when Nicholas, having thrown all his remaining strength into half a dozen finishing cuts, flung the schoolmaster from him with all the force he could muster, Mrs. Squeers was precipitated over an adjacent form ; and Squeers striking his head against it in his descent, lay at full length on the ground, stunned and motionless.

Nicholas, assured that Squeers was only stunned, and not dead, left the room, packed up his few clothes in a small leathern valise, marched boldly out by the front door, and struck into the road for London.

After many adventures in quest of fortune, Nicholas, who had spurned all further connection with his uncle, stood one day outside a registry office in London and as he stood there looking at the various placards in the window, an old

gentleman, a sturdy old fellow in a broad skirted blue coat, happened to stoop too.

Nicholas caught the old gentleman's eye, and began to wonder whether the stranger could by any possibility be looking for a clerk or secretary.

As the old gentleman moved away he noticed that Nicholas was about to speak, and good-naturedly stood still.

"I was only going to say," said Nicholas, "that I hoped you had some object in consulting those advertisements in the window."

"Ay, ay.' What object now?" returned the old gentleman. "did you think I wanted a situation now, eh? I thought the same of you, at first, upon my word I did."

"If you had thought so at last, too, sir, you would not have been far from the truth," rejoined Nicholas. "The kindness of your face and manner—both so unlike any I have ever seen—tempt me to speak in a way I should never dream of doing to a stranger in this wilderness of London."

"Wilderness! Yes it is! it is. It was a wilderness to me once. I came here barefoot—I have never forgotten it. What's the matter, how did it all come about?" said the old man laying his hand on the shoulder of Nicholas, and walking him up the street. "In mourning, too, eh," laying his finger on the sleeve of his black coat.

"My father," replied Nicholas.

"Bad thing for a young man to lose his father. Widowed mother, perhaps?"

Nicholas nodded.

" Brothers and sisters too, eh ?"

" One sister."

" Poor thing, poor thing ! You're a scholar too, I dare say. Education's a great thing. I never had any. I admire it the more in others. A very fine thing. Tell me more of your history, all of it. No impertinent curiosity—no no !"

There was something so earnest and guileless in the way this was said that Nicholas could not resist it. So he told his story, and, at the end, the old gentleman carried him straight off to the city, where they emerged in a greet shady square. The old gentleman led the way into some business premises, which had the inscription, " Cheeryble Brothers," on the doorpost, and stopped to speak to an elderly, large-faced clerk in the counting house.

" Is my brother in his room, Tim ? said Mr. Cheeryble.

" Yes, he is sir," said the clerk.

What was the amazement of Nicholas when his conductor took him into a room and presented him to another old gentleman the very type and model of himself—the same face and figure, the same clothes. Nobody could have doubted their being twin brothers.

" Brother Ned," said Nicholas's friend, "here is a young friend of mine that we must assist." Then brother Charles related what Nicholas had told him. And, after that, and some conversation between the brothers, Tim Linkinwater

was called in, and brother Ned whispered a few words in his ear.

" Tim," said brother Charles, " you understand that we have an intention of taking this young gentleman into the counting-house."

Brother Ned remarked that Tim quite approved of it, and Tim having nodded said, with resolution, ' But I'm not coming an hour later in the morning, you know. I'm not going to the country either. It's forty-four years since I first kept the books of Cheeryble Brothers. I've opened the safe all that time every morning at nine, and I've never slept out of the back attic one single night. This ain't the first time you've talked about superannuating me, Mr. Edwin and Mr. Charles : but, if you please, we'll make it the last, and drop the subjects for evermore."

With which words Tim Linkinwater stalked out, with the air of a man who was thoroughly resolved not to be put down.

The brothers coughed.

" He must be done something with, brother Ned, we must disregard his scruples ; he must be made a partner."

" Quite right, quite right brother Charles. If he won't listen to reason, we must do it against his will. But, in the meantime, we are keeping our young friend, and the poor lady and her daughter will be anxious for his return. So let us say good-bye for the present." And at that the brothers harried Nicholas out of the office, shaking hands with him all the way.

That was the beginning of brighter days for Nicholas and for Mrs. Nickleby and Kate. The Brothers Cheeryble not only took Nicholas into their office, but a small Cottage at Bow, then quite out in the country, was found for the widow and her children.

As for Nicholas's work in the counting-house, Tim Linkinwater was satisfied with the young man the very first day.

Tim turned pale and stood watching with breathless anxiety when Nicholas made his first entry in the books of Cheeryble Brothers, while the two brothers looked on with smiling faces.

Presently the old clerk nodded his head, signifying "He'll do." But when Nicholas stopped to refer to some other page, Tim Linkinwater, unable to restrain his satisfaction any longer, descended from his stool, and caught him rapturously by the hand.

"He has done it!" said Tim, looking round triumphantly at his employers. "His capital 'B's' and 'D's' are exactly like mine! he dot's all his small 'i's' and crosses every 't.' There ain't such a young man in all London. The city can't produce his equal! I challenge the city to do it.

In course of time the brothers Cheeryble in their frequent visits to the cottage at Bow, often took with them their nephew Frank: and it also happened that Miss Madeline Bray a ward of the brothers, was taken to the cottage to recover from a serious illness.

Nicholas from the first time he had seen Madeline in the office of Cheeryble Brothers had fallen in love with her ; but he decided as an honourable man no word of love must pass his lips. While Kate Nickleby, had been equally firm in declining to listen to any proposal from Frank.

It was some time after Madeline had left the cottage, and Nicholas and Kate had begun to try in good earnest to stifle their own regrets, and to live for each other and for their mother, when there came one evening, per favour of Mr. Linkinwater, an invitation from the brothers to dinner on the next day but one.

"You may depend upon it that this means something besides dinner," said Mrs. Nickleby solemnly.

When the great day arrived who should be there at the house of the brothers but Frank and Madeline.

"Young men," said brother Charles 'shake hands."

"I need no bidding to do that," said Nicholas.

"Nor I," rejoined Frank, and the two young men clasped hands heartily.

The old gentleman took them aside.

"I wish to see you friends—close and firm friends. Frank look here! Mr. Nickleby, will you come on the other side ? This is a copy of the will of Madeline's grandfather, bequeathing her the sum of £12,000. Frank you were largely instrumental in recovering this document. The fortune is but a small one, but we love Madeline. Will you become a suitor to her for her hand ?"

" No, sir. I interested myself in the recovery of that instrument believing that her hand was already pledged elsewhere. In this, it seems, I pledged hastily."

" As you always do, sir !" cried brother Charles.

" How dare you think, Frank that we could have you marry for money ? How dared you go and make love to Mr. Nickleby's sister without telling us first, and letting us speak for you. Mr. Nickleby, sir, Frank judged hastily, but he judged, for once, correctly. Medeline's heart is occupied —give me your hand—it is occupied by you and worthily. She chooses you, Mr. Nickleby, as we, her dearest friends would have her choose. Frank chooses as we would have him choose. He should have your sister's little hand, sir, if she had refused it a score of times—ay, he should and he shall ! What ? You are the children of a worthy gentleman. The time was, sir, when my brother Ned and I were two poor, simple-hearted boys, wandering almost barefoot, to seek our fortunes. Oh ! Ned, Ned, Ned, what a happy day this is for you and me ! If our poor mother had only lived to see us now, Ned, how proud it would have made her dear heart at last !"

So Madeline gave her hand and her fortune to Nicholas, and, on the same day, and at the same time, Kate became Mrs. Frank Cheeryble. Madeline's money was invested in the firm of Cheeryble Brothers, in which Nicholas had become a partner, and before many years elapsed the business was carried on in the names of " Cheeryble and Nickleby."

Tim Linkinwater condescended, after much entreating and brow-beating, to accept a share in the house: but he could never be prevailed upon to suffer the publication of his name as partner, and always persisted in the punctual and regular discharge of his clerkly duties.

The twin brothers retired. Who needs to be told that they were happy?

The first act of Nicholas, when he became a rich and prosperous merchant, was to buy his father's old house. As time crept on, and there came gradually about him a group of lovely children, it was altered and enlarged: but no tree was rooted up, nothing with which there was any association of bygone times was ever removed or changed. Mr. Squeers having come within the meshes of the law over some nefarious scheme of Ralph Nickleby's, suffered transportation beyond the seas, and with his disappearance Dotheboys Hall was broken up for good.

"THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP"

The shop was one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in odd corners of London. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour, rusty weapons of various kinds, tapestry, and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams.

The haggard aspect of a little old man, with long grey hair, who stood within, was wonderfully suited to the place. Nothing in the whole collection looked older or more worn than he.

Confronting the old man was a young man of dissipated appearance, and high words were taking place.

"I tell you again I want to see my sister," said the younger man, "you can't change the relationship, you know. If you could, you'd have done it long ago. But as I may have to wait some time, I'll call in a friend of mine, with your leave."

At this he brought in a companion of even more dissolute appearance than himself.

"There, it's Dick Swiveller," said the young fellow pushing him in.

"But is the old min agreeable?" said Mr. Swiveller in an undertone. "What is the odds so long as the fire of soul is kindled at the taper of conviviality, and the wing of

friendship never moults a feather! But only one little whisper, Fred—is the old min friendly?"

Mr. Swiveller then leaned back in his chair and relapsed into silence: only to break it by observing, "Gentlemen how does the case stand? Here is a jolly old grandfather, and here is a wild young grandson. The jolly old grandfather says to the wild young grandson, I have brought you up and educated you, Fred: you have bolted a little out of the course and you shall never have another chance?

The wild young grandson makes answer, 'you're as rich as rich can be, why can't you stand a little trifle for your grown-up relation?' Then the plain question is, as ain't it a pity this state of things should continue, and how much better it would be for the old gentleman to hand over a reasonable amount of tin, and make it all right and comfortable."

"Why do you persecute me?" said the old man, turning to his grandson. "Why do you bring your profligate companious here? I am poor. You have chosen your own path, follow it. Leave Nell and me to toil and work."

"Nell will be a woman soon," returned the other! "She'll forget her brother unless he shows himself sometimes."

The door opened, and the child herself appeared, followed by an elderly man so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf, though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant.

Mr. Swiveller turned to the dwarf and stooping down, whispered audibly in her ear.

"The watchword to the old man is—fork."

"Is what?" demanded Quilp, for that—Daniel Quilp—was the dwarf's name.

"Is fork, sir fork," replied Mr. Swiveller, slapping his pocket "You are awake, sir?"

The dwarf nodded; the grandson having announced his intention of repeating his visit, left the house accompanied by his friend.

"So much for dear relations," said Quilp, with a sour look. He put his hand into his breast, and pulled out a bag.

"Here, I brought it myself, as, being in gold, it was too large and heavy for Nell to carry. I would I knew in what good investment all these supplies are sunk. But you are a deep man, and keep your secret close."

"My secret!" said the old man, with a haggard look. "Yes, you're right—I keep it close—very close."

He said no more, but taking the money, locked it in an iron safe.

That night, as on many a night previous Nell's grandfather went out, leaving the child in the strange house alone, to return in the early morning.

Quilp, to whom the old man had again applied for money, learnt of these nocturnal expeditions, and sent no answer, but came in person to the old curiosity shop.

The old man was feverish and excited as he impatiently addressed the dwarf.

"Have you brought me any money?"

"No," returned Quilp.

"Then," said the old man, clenching his hands, "the child and I are lost. No recompense for the time any money lost."

"Neighbour," said Quilp, "you have no secret from me now. I know that all those sums of money you have had from me have found their way to the gaming-cable."

"I never played for gain of mine, or love of play," cried the old man fiercely. "My winnings would have been bestowed to the last farthing on a young sinless child, whose life they would have sweetened and make happy. But I never won."

"Dear me!" said Quilp. "The last advance was £70 and it went in one night. And so it comes to pass that I hold every security you could scrape together, and a bill of sale upon the stock and property."

So saying, he nodded deaf to all entreaties for further loans, and took his leave.

The house was no longer theirs. Mr. Quilp encamped on the premises, and the goods were sold. A day was fixed for their removal.

"Grandfather, let us begone from this place," said little Nell; "let us wander barefoot through the world, rather than linger here."

"We will," answered the old man. "We will travel afoot through the fields and woods, and by the side of rivers trust ourselves to God. Thou and I together Nell, may be cheerful and happy yet, and learn to forget this time, as if it had never been.

The sun was setting when little Nell and her grandfather who had been wandering many days, reached the wicket-gate of a country churchyard.

Two men were seated in easy attitudes on the grass by the church—two men of the class of itinerant showmen, exhibitors of the freaks of Punch—and they had come there to make needful repairs in the stage arrangements; for one was engaged in binding together a small gallows with thread, while the other was fixing a new black wig upon the head of a puppet.

"Are you going to show 'em to night? Are you?" said the old man.

"That's the intention governor, and unless I'm much mistaken, my partner, Tommy Codlin, is a-calculating at this minute what we've lost through you're coming upon us. Cheer up, Tommy, it can't be much."

To this Mr. Codlin replied in a surly, grumbling manner, "I don't care if we haven't lost a fardin, but you're too free. If you stood in front of the curtain, and see the public's faces as I do, you'd know human natur better."

"Oh! it's been the spoiling of you, Tommy your taking to that branch," rejoined his companion. "When you played

the ghost in the reg'lar drama in the fairs, you believed in every thing—except ghosts. But now you're a universal mistruster."

"Never mind," said Mr. Codlin, with the air of a discontented philosopher! "I know better now, and p'r'aps I'm sorry for it. Look here, here's all this Judy's clothes falling to pieces again."

The child seeing they were at a loss for a needle and thread, timidly proposed to mend it for them and even Mr. Codlin had nothing to urge against a proposal so reasonable.

"If you're wanting a place to stop at," said Short, "I should advise you to take up at the same house with us. That's it, the long, low, white house there. It's very cheap."

The public house was kept by a fat old landlord, who made no objection to receiving their new guests, but praised Nelly's beauty, and were at once prepossessed in her behalf.

"We're going on to the races," said Short, next morning to the two travellers. "If that's your way, and you'd like to have us for company, let us go together. If you prefer going alone, only say the word, and we shan't trouble you.

"We'll go with you," said the old man, "Nell—with them, with them."

They stopped that night at an ancient roadside inn called the Jolly Sandboys, and supper being in preparation, Nelly and her grandfather had not long taken their seats, by the kitchen fire before they fell asleep.

"Who are they?" whispered the landlord.

"No good, I suppose," said Mr. Codlin.

"They're no harm," said Short, "defend upon that. It's very plain besides, that they're not used to this way of life. Don't tell me that handsome child has been in the habit of prowling about as she's done these last two or three days. I know better. The old man ain't in his right mind. Haven't you noticed how anxious he is always to get on—furder away, furder away? Mind what I say, he has given his friends the slip, and persuaded this delicate young creatur all along of her fondness for him to be his guide—where to, he knows no more than the man in the moon. I'm not a-going to stand that."

"You're not a-going to stand that!" cried Mr. Codlin, glancing at the clock, and counting the minutes to supper time.

"I" repeated short emphatically and slowly, am not a-going to stand it. I am not a-going to see this fair young child a-falling into bad hands. Therefore, when they develop an intention of parting company from us, I shall take measures for detaining of 'em and restoring 'em to their friends, who I dare say, have had their disconsolation pasted up on every wall in London by this time."

"Short," said Mr. Codlin, looking up with eager eyes, "it's possible there may be uncommon good sense in what you've said. If there should be a reward, Short, remember that we're partners in every thing."

Before Nell retired to bed in her poor garret, she was a little startled by the appearance of Mr. Thomas Codlin at her door.

"Nothing's the matter, my dear, only I'm your friend. Perhaps you haven't thought so, but it's me that's your friend—not him. I'm the real, open-hearted man. Short's very well, and seems kind but he overdoes it. Now, I don't."

The child was puzzled and could not tell what to say.

"Take my advice! as long as you travel with us, keep as near me as you can. Recollect the friend. Codlin's the friend, not Short. Short's very well as far as he goes, but the real friend is Codlin—not Short.

Codlin and Short stuck so close to Nell and her grandfather that the child grew frightened, especially at the unwonted attentions of Mr. Thomas Codlin. The bustle of the race course enabled them to escape, and once more the travellers were alone.

It was a few days later when, as the afternoon was wearing away, they came upon a caravan drawn up by the roadside. It was a smart little house upon wheels, not a gipsy caravan, for at the open door sat a Christian lady, stout and comfortable, taking her tea upon a drum covered with a white napkin.

"Hey!" cried the lady of the caravan, seeing the old man and the child walking slowly by. "Yes, to be sure, I saw you there with my own eyes! And very sorry I was to

see you in company with a Punch ; a low, practical, wulgar wretch that people should scorn to look at."

" I was not there by choice," returned the child. " We didn't know our way, and the two men were very kind to us, and let us travel with them. Do you know them ma'am ?"

" Know 'em child ! know 'em ! But you're young and inexperienced. Do I look as if I knowed 'em ? Does this caravan look as if it knowed 'em ?"

" No, ma'am no. I beg your pardon."

It was granted immediately. And then the lady of the caravan, finding the travellers were hungry, handed them a tea-tray with bread and butter, and a knuckle of ham ; and finding they were tired, took them into the caravan, which was bound to the nearest town, some eight miles off.

As the caravan moved slowly along, its owner began to talk to Nell, and presently pulled out a large roll of canvas. " There child," she said, read that !"

Nell read aloud the inscription. " Jarley's Waxwork." " That's me !" said the lady complacently.

" I never saw any waxwork ma'am," said Nell. Is it funnier than Punch ?"

" Funnier !" said Mrs. Jarley in a shrill voice. " It is not funny at all ! It's calm and—what's that word again—critical ? No—classical, that's it,—it's calm and classical."

In the course of the journey Mrs. Jarley was so taken with the child that she proposed to engage her, and as Nell would not be separated from her grandfather, he was included in the agreement.

"What I want your grand-daughter for," said Mrs. Jarley "is to point 'em out to the company, for she has a way with her that people wouldn't think unpleasant. It's not a common offer, bear in mind; it's Jarley's Waxwork. The duty's very light and genteel, the exhibition takes place in assembly rooms or town halls. There is none of your open-air wagrancy about Jarley's remember. And the price of admission is only sixpence."

"We are very much obliged to you ma'am," said Nell, speaking for her grandfather. "and thankfully accept your offer."

"And you'll never be sorry for it," returned Mrs. Jarley. "So, as that's all settled, let us have a bit of supper."

The next morning, the caravan having arrived at the town, and the waxworks having been unpacked in the town hall, Mrs. Jarley sat down in an armchair in the centre of the room, and began to instruct Nell in her duty.

"That," said Mrs. Jarley in her exhibition tone, "is an unfortunate maid of honour in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who died from pricking her finger in consequence of working on a Sunday. Observe the blood which is trickling from her finger, also the gold-eyed needle of the period, with which she is at work.

Nell found in the lady of the caravan a kind and considerable person, who had not only a peculiar relish for being comfortable herself, but for making every body about her comfortable also.

But the child noticed that her grandfather grew more and more listless and vacant, and soon a greater sorrow was to come. The passion for gambling revived in the old man one evening, when he and Nell, out-walking in the country, took passing shelter from a storm in a small public-house. He saw men playing cards, and, allowed to join them lost. The next night he went off alone, and Nell, finding him gone, followed. Her grandfather was with the card-players near an encampment of gipsies, and, to her horror, he promised to bring more money.

Flight was now the only thing possible, before her grandfather should steal. How else could he get the money?

Flight by water! For two days they travelled on a barge, Nell sitting with her grandfather in the boat. Ragged and noisy fellows were the bargemen, and quite brutal among themselves, though civil enough to their passengers. The barge floated into the wharf to which it belonged, and now came flight by land through a strange unfriendly town. The travellers were penniless, and at nightfall took refuge in a deep doorway.

A man, miserably clad and begrimed with smoke, found them here and learning they were homeless promised them shelter by the fire of a great furnace.

A dark and blackened region was this they were in. On every side tall chimneys poured out their plague of smoke, and at night the smoke was changed to fire, and chimneys sported flame. Struggling vegetation sickened and sank

under the hot breath of kiln and furnace. The people—men, women, and children—wan in their looks and ragged in their attire, tended the engines, or scowled, half-naked, from the doorless houses.

That night Nell and her grandfather lay down with nothing between them and the sky. A penny loaf was all they had that day, and very weak and spent the child felt.

With morning she was weaker still, and a loathing of food prevented her sharing the loaf bought with their last penny. Still she dragged her weary feet on, and only at the very end of the town fell senseless to the ground.

Once in their earlier wanderings they had made friends with a village schoolmaster, and now when all hope seemed gone, it was this schoolmaster who brought the travellers into a peaceful haven. For it was he who passed along when little Nell fell fainting to the ground, and it was he who carried her into a small inn hard by. A day's rest brought some recovery to the child and in the evening she was able to sit up.

"I have made my fortune since I saw you last," said the schoolmaster. "I have been appointed clerk and schoolmaster to a village a long way from here at five-and-thirty pounds a year."

Then the schoolmaster insisted they must come with him and make the journey by waggons, and that when they reached the village some occupation should be found by which they could subsist.

They agreed to go, and when the village was reached the efforts of the good schoolmaster procured a post for Nell. Someone was wanted to keep the keys of the church and show it to strangers, and the old clergyman yielded to the schoolmaster's petition.

"But an old church is a dull and gloomy place for one so young as you, my child," said the old clergyman laying his hand upon her head and smiling sadly. "I would rather see her dancing on the green at nights than have her sitting in the shadow of our mouldering arches!

It was very peaceful in the old church, and the village children soon grew to love little Nell. At last Nell and her grandfather were beyond the need of flight.

But the child's strength was failing, and in the winter came her death. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. The traces of her early cares, her sufferings and fatigues were gone. She had died with her arms round her grandfather's neck and "God bless you," on her lips.

The old man never realised that she was dead. "She is asleep," he said. "She will come to morrow."

And thenceforth every day, and all day long, he waited at her grave. And people would hear him whisper, "Lord, let her come to-morrow."

The last time was on a genial day in spring. He did not return at the usual hour, and they went to seek him and found him lying dead upon the stone.

"MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT"

Mr. Pecksniff lived in a little Wiltshire village within an easy journey of Salisbury.

The larger plate upon his door bore the inscription, "Pecksniff, Architect," to which Mr. Pecksniff, on his cards of business, added, "and Land Surveyor." Of his architectural doings nothing was clearly known, except that he had never designed or built anything.

Mr. Pecksniff's professional engagements, indeed, were almost, if not entirely, confined to the reception of pupils. His genius lay in ensnaring parents and guardians and pocketing premiums. Mr. Pecksniff was a moral man. Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff, especially in his conversation and correspondence. Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to place and never goes there; but these were his enemies.

Into Mr. Pecksniff's house came young Martin Chuzzlewit, a relation of the architect's. Tom Pinch, Mr. Pecksniff's assistant, had driven over to Salisbury for the new pupil, and had already discoursed to Martin on Mr. Pecksniff and his family (for Mr. Pecksniff had two daughters—Mercy and Charity), in whose good qualities he had a profound and pathetic belief.

Festive preparations on a rather extensive scale were already completed for Martin's benefit on the night of hi

arrival. There were two bottles of currant wine, white and red, a dish of sandwiches, very long and very slim : another of apples, another of captain's biscuits ; a plate of oranges, cut up small and gritty with powdered sugar. And a highly geological home-made cake. The magnitude of these preparations quite took away Tom Pinch's breath, for though the new pupils were usually let down softly, particularly in the wine department, still this was a banquet, a sort of lord Mayor's feast in private life, a something to think of, and hold on by afterwards.

To this entertainment Mr. Pecksniff besought the company to do full justice.

"Martin," he said addressing his daughters, will seat himself between you two, my dears, and Mr. Pinch will come by me. This is a mingling that repays one for much disappointment and vexation. Let us be merry. Here he took a captain's biscuit. "It is a poor heart that never rejoices ; and our hearts are not poor. No !"

The following morning Mr. Pecksniff announced that he must go to London, "On professional business, my dear Martin : strictly on professional business ; and I promised my girls long ago that they should accompany me. We shall go forth to-night by the heavy coach—like the dove of old, my dear Martin—and it will be a week before we again deposit our olive-branches in the passage. When I say olive-branches, " observed Mr. Pecksniff, in explanation, "I mean our unpretending luggage." "And now let me

see," said Mr. Pecksniff presently, how you can best emplo yourself Martin, while I am absent. Suppose you wer to give me your idea of monument to a Lord Mayor o London, or a tomb for a sheriff, or your notion of a cow house to be erected in a nobleman's park. A pump is very chaste practice. I have found that a lamp-post is cal culated to refine the mind, and give it a classical tendency An ornamental turnpike has a remarkable effect upon th imagination. What do you say to beginning with an orna mental turnpike ?"

"Whatever Mr. Pecksniff pleased," said Martin doubt fully.

"Stay," said that gentleman, "come ! as you're ambitious and are a very neat draughtsman, you shall try your han on these proposals for a grammar-school. When your min requires to be refreshed by change of occupation, Thoma Pinch will instruct you in the art of surveying the back garden, or in ascertaining the dead level of the road betwee this house and the finger-post, or in any other practica and pleasing pursuit. There is a cart-load of loose bricks and a score or two of old flower-pots in the back-yard. If yo could pile them up, my dear Martin, into any form whic would remind me on my return, say, of St. Peter's at Rome or the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, it would b at once improving to you and agreeable to my feelings.

The coach having rolled away, with the olive-branche in the boot and the family of doves inside, Martin Chuzzlewi

and Tom Pinch were left together. Now, there was something in the very simplicity of Pinch that invited confidences, and young Martin could not refrain from telling his story.

"I must talk openly to somebody," he began. "I'll talk openly to you. You must know, then, that I have been bred up from childhood with great expectations, and have always been taught to believe that one day I should be very rich. Certain things, however, have led to my being disinherited.

"By your father ?" inquired Tom.

"By my grandfather. I have no parents these many years. Now my grandfather has a great many good points, but he has two very great faults, which are the staple of his bad side. He has the most confirmed obstinacy of character, and he is most abominably selfish. I have heard that there are failings of our family, and I have to be very thankful that they haven't descended to me. Now I come to the cream of my story, and the occasion of my being here. I am in love, Pinch. I am in love with one of the most beautiful girls the sun ever shone upon. But she is wholly and entirely dependent upon the pleasure of my grandfather, and if he were to know that she favoured my passion, she would lose her home and everything she possesses in the world. My grandfather, although I had conducted myself from the first with the utmost circumspection, is full of jealousy and mistrust, and suspected me of loving her. He said nothing to me but attracted her in private, and charged me with designing to corrupt the fidelity to himself—observe his

selfishness—of a young creature who was his only disinterested and faithful companion. The upshot of it was that I was to renounce her or be renounced by him. Of course, I was not going to yield to him, and here I am."

Mr. Pinch, after staring at the fire, said "Pecksniff, of course, you knew before?"

"Only by name. My grandfather kept not only himself, but me, aloof from all his relations. But our separation took place in a town in the neighbouring county. I saw Pecksniff's advertisement in the paper when I was at Salisbury, and answered it, having always had some natural taste in the matters to which it referred. I was doubly bent on coming to him, if possible, on account of his being"—

"Such an excellent man," said Tom, rubbing his hands.

"Why, not so much on that account" returned Martin, "as because my grandfather has an inviterate dislike to him, and after the old man's arbitrary treatment of me, I had a natural desire to run as directly counter to all his opinions as I could."

Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters took up their lodging in London at Mrs. Todger's Commercial Boarding House, and it was at that favoured abode that old Martin Chuzzlewit, whose grandson had just entered Mr. Pecksniff's home, sought him out.

"I very much regret," said old Martin, "that you and I held such a conversation as we did when we met awhile

since. The intentions that I bear towards you now are of another kind. Deserted by all in whom I have ever trusted: hoodwinked and beset by all who should help and sustain me, I fly to you for refuge. I confide in you to be my ally: to attach yourself to me by ties of interest and expectations. I regret having been severed from you so long."

Mr. Pecksniff looked up to the ceiling, and clasped his hands in rapture.

"I fear you don't know what an old man's humours are" resumed old Martin. "You don't know what it is to be required to court his likings and dislikings: to do his bidding, be it what it may. You have a new inmate in your house. He must quit it."

"For-for yours?" asked Mr. Pecksniff.

"For any shelter he can find. He has deceived you."

"I hope not," said Mr. Pecksniff eagerly. "I trust not. I have been extremely well disposed towards that young man. Deceit—deceit, my dear Mr. Chuzzlewit, would be final. I should hold myself bound, on proof of deceit, to renounce him instantly."

"Of course, you know that he has made his matrimonial choice?"

"Surely not without his grandfather's consent and approbation, my dear sir?" cried Mr. Pecksniff. "Don't tell me that. For the honour of human nature say you're not about to tell me that!"

"I thought he had suppressed it."

The indignation felt by Mr. Pecksniff at this terrible disclosure was only to be equalled by the kindling anger of his daughters. What, had they taken to their hearth and home a secretly contracted serpent? Horrible!

Old Martin then went on to inquire when they would be returning home: and, after relieving Mr. Pecksniff's unexpressed anxiety by mentioning that Mary Graham, the young lady whom the old man had adopted, would receive nothing at his death, announced that they might expect to see him before long.

With a hearty farewell, the old man left the house, followed to the door by Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters. A few days later the Pecksniff set out for home.

Tom Pinch and Martin were both out in the lane to meet the coach, but Mr. Pecksniff pointedly ignored Martin's presence, even when the house had been reached; and it was not till Martin sharply demanded an explanation that he addressed him.

"You have deceived me," said Mrs. Pecksniff, "you have imposed upon a nature which you knew to be confiding and unsuspicious. This lowly roof sir, must not be contaminated by the presence of one who has, further, deceived—and cruelly deceived—an honourable and venerable gentleman, and who wisely suppressed that deceit from me when he sought my protection. I weep for your depravity, I mourn over your corruption, but I cannot have a leper and a serpent for an inmate! "Go forth!" said Mr. Pecksniff, stretching out his hand, "go forth, young man! Like all who know you, I renounce you."

Martin made a stride forward at these words, and Mr. Pecksniff stepped back so hastily that he missed his footing, tumbled over a chair, and fell in a sitting posture on the ground, where he remained, perhaps considering it the safest place.

"Look at him, Pinch," said Martin, "as he lies there—a cloth for dirty hands, a mat for dirty feet, a lying, fawning servile hound! And mark me, Pinch, the day will come when even you will find him out!"

He pointed at him as he spoke with unutterable contempt, and flinging his hat upon his head, walked from the house. He went on so rapidly that he was clear of the village before Tom Pinch overlook him.

"Are you going?" cried Tom.

"Yes," he answered sternly. "I am."

"Where?" asked Tom.

"I don't know. Yes, I do—to America."

But Martin did not go to America alone for Mark Tapley, formerly of the Blue dragon, an inn in the village where Mr. Pecksniff resided, insisted on accompanying him.

"Now, sir, here am I, without a sitivation," Mr. Tapley put it, "without any want of wages for a year to come—for I saved up (I didn't mean to do it, but I couldn't help it) at the dragon! here am I with a liking for what's wentersome, and a liking for you, and a wish to come out strong under circumstances as would keep other men down—and will you take me, or will you leave me?"

Once landed in the United States, the question of what to do arose, and Martin decided to invest his savings in buying land in the rising township of New Eden.

"Mark, you shall be a partner in the business," said Martin (Mark having invested £37 to Martin's £8); an equal partner with myself. We are no longer master and servant. I will put in, as my additional capital, my professional knowledge, and half the annual profits, as long as it is carried on, shall be yours. Our business shall be commenced, as soon as we get to New Eden, under the name of Chuzzlewit and Tapley."

"Lord love you, sir" cried Mark, don't have my name in it! I must be 'Co', I must."

"You shall have your own way, Mark."

"Thank' ee sir! If any country gentleman thereabouts in the public way wanted such a thing as a skittle-ground made, I could take that part of the bis'ness sir."

It was a long steam-boat journey, but at last they stopped at Eden. The waters of the deluge might have left it but a week ago, so choked with slime and matted growth was the hideous swamp which bore that name.

A man advanced towards them when they handed, walking slowly, leaning on a stick. "Strangers!" he exclaimed.

"The very same," said Mark. "How are you, sir?" "I've had the fever very bad" he answered faintly. "I haven't stood upright these many weeks. My eldest son has a chill upon him. My youngest died last week."

"I'm sorry for it, governor, with all my heart!" said Mark. "The goods is safe enough," he added, turning to Mark, and pointing to their boxes. "There ain't many people about to make away with 'em. What a comfort that is!"

"No," cried the man! "we're buried most of 'em. The rest have gone away. Them that we have here don't come out at night."

"The night air ain't quite wholesome, I suppose?" said Mark.

"It's deadly poison," was the answer.

Mark showed no more uneasiness than if it had been commended to him as ambrosia; but he gave the man his arm, and as they went along explained the nature of their purchase, and inquired where it lay. Close to his own log-house, he said.

It was a miserable cabin rudely constructed of the trunks of trees, the door of which had either fallen down or been carried away. When they had brought up their chest; Martin gave way, and lay down in the ground and wept aloud.

"Lord love you, sir" cried Mr. Tapley. "Don't do that. Any thing but that! It never helped man, woman or child over the lowest fence. Yet sir, and it never will."

Mark stole out gently in the morning while his companion slept, and took a rough survey of the settlement. There were not above a score of cabins in the whole, and half of these appeared untenanted. Their own land was

mere forest. He went down to the landing-place, where they had left their goods. and there he found some half a dozen men, wan and forlorn, who helped him to carry them to the log-house.

Martin was by this time stirring, but he had greatly changed, even in one night. He was very pale and languid. and spoke of pains and weakness.

" Don't give in. sir" said Mr. Tapley. " Why, you must be ill. Wait half a minute, till I run up to one of our neighbours and find out what's best to be took."

Martin was soon dangerously ill, very near his death. Mark, fatigued in mind and body, working all the day and sitting up at night, worn by hard living, surrounded by dismal and discouraging circumstances, never complained or yielded in the least degree. And then, when Martin was better, Mark was taken ill. He fought against it: but the malady fought harder, and his efforts were vain.

" Floored for the present, sir, " he said one morning, sinking back upon his bed, " but jolly."

And now it was Martin's turn to work and sit beside the bed and watch, and listen through the long, long, nights to every sound in the gloomy wilderness.

Martin's reflections in those days slowly showed him his own selfishness, and when Mark Tapley recovered, he found a singular alteration in his companion.

" I don't know what to make of him," he thought one night. He don't think of himself half as much as he did.

It's a swindle. There 'll be no credit in being jolly with him !"

The settlement was deserted. The only thing to be done was to return to England.

Old Martin Chuzzlewit had for some time taken up his residence at Mr. Pecksniff's and Martin and Mark Tapley went to the Blue dragon on their return.

Martin at once sought out his grandfather, and marched into the house resolved on reconciliation. The old man listened to his appeal in silence ; but Mr. Pecksniff spoke for him and bade the young man begone.

But old Martin was awake to Pecksniff's character, and resolved to set Mr. Pecksniff right, and Mr. Pecksniff's victims, too.

Mark Tapley was the first person old Martin invited to see him. The old man had gone to London, and his grandson, Mary Graham and Tom Pinch were all summoned to wait on him at a certain hour.

From Mark, old Martin learnt that his grandson was an altered man.

"There was always a deal of good in him," said Mr. Tapley, "but a little of it got crusted over somehow. I can't say who rolled the paste, but—well I think it may have been you sir."

"So you think," said Martin, "that his old faults are in some degree of my creation.

"Well, sir, I'm very sorry, but I can't unsay it. I don't believe that neither of you gave the other a fair chance.

Presently came a knock at the door, and young Martin entered. The old man pointed to a distant chair. Then came Tom Pinch and Mary Graham.

The last appointed footstep sounded now upon the stairs. They all knew it. It was Mr. Pecksniff's; and Mr. Pecksniff was in a hurry, too, for he came bounding up with such uncommon expedition that he stumbled once or twice.

"Where is my venerable friend?" he cried upon the upper landing. And then, darting in and catching sight of old Martin, "My venerable friend is well?"

Mr. Pecksniff looked round upon the assembled group, and shook his head reproachfully.

"Off, vermin!" said Mr. Pecksniff. "Oh, bloodsuckers! Horde of unnatural plunderers and robbers! Leave him! Leave him! I say! Begone! Abscond! You had better be off! Wander over the face of the earth, young sirs, and do not presume to remain in a spot which is hollowed by the grey hairs of the patriarchal gentleman to whose tottering limbs I have the honour to act as an unworthy, but I hope an unassuming, prop and staff."

He advanced with outstretched arms, to take the old man's hand; but he had not seen how the hand clasped and clutched the stick within his grasp. As he came smiling on, and got within his reach, old Martin, burning with indignation, rose up and struck him to the ground.

"Drag him away! Take him out of my reach!" said Martin and Mr. Tapley did actually drag him away, and

stuck him up on the floor with his back against the opposite wall.

"Hear me, rascal!" said Mr. Chuzzlewit. "I have summoned you here to witness your own work. Come hither, my dear Martin! Why did we ever part? How could you fly from me to him? The fault was mine no less than yours. Mark has told me so, and I have known it long. Mary, my love, come here."

She trembled, and was very pale! but he sat her in his own chair, and stood beside it holding her hand, Martin standing by him.

"The curse of our house," said the old man, looking kindly down upon her, "has been the love of self—has ever been the love of self." He drew one hand through Martin's arm, and standing so, between them, proceeded, "What's this? Her hand is trembling strangely. See if you can hold it."

Hold it! If he clasped it half as tightly as he did her waist—well, well!

But it was good in him that even then, in high fortune and happiness, he had still a hand left to stretch out to Tom Pinch.

DOMBEY AND SON

Dombey sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great armchair by the bedside, and son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age; son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome, well made man, too stern and pompous in appearance to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect, as yet.

"The house will once again, Mrs. Dombey," said Mr. Dombey, "be not only in name, but in fact, Dombey and Son! Dombey and Son! He will be christened Paul, Mrs. Dombey, of course!"

The sick lady feebly echoed, "of course", and closed her eyes again.

"His father's name, Mr. Dombey, and his grandfather's. I wish his grandfather were alive this day." And again he said "Dombey and Son" in exactly the same tone as before, and then went downstairs to learn what that fashionable physician, Dr. Parker Peps had to say, for Mrs. Dombey lay very weak and still.

"Dombey and Son"—these three words conveyed the idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the firm. Of those years he had been married ten—married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him. But such idle talk never reached the ears of Mr. Dombey. Dombey and Son often dealt in hides, never in hearts. Mr. Dombey would have reasoned that an alliance with himself must, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of common sense.

One drawback only could be admitted. Until this present day there had been no issue—to speak of. There had been a girl some six years before, a child who now crouched by her mother's bed, unobserved. But what was a girl to Dombey and Son?

"Nature must be called upon to make a vigorous effort in this instance!" said Doctor Parker Peps, referring to Mrs. Dombey.

Mrs. Chick, Mr. Dombey's sister emphasised this opinion.

"Now, my dear Paul, said Mrs. Chick, "you may rest assured that there is nothing wanting but an effort on Fanny's part."

They returned to the sick-room and its stillness. In vain Mrs. Chick exhorted her sister-in law to make an effort; no sound came in answer but the loud ticking of Mr. Dombey's watch and Doctor Parker Peps's watch which seemed in the silence to be running a race.

"Fanny!" said Mrs. Chick. "Only look at me. Only open your eyes to show me that you hear and understand me."

Still no answer. Mrs. Dombey lay motionless clasping her little daughter to her breast. "Mamma!" cried the child, sobbing aloud. "Oh, dear mamma!"

Thus, clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

Mr. Dombey, in the days to come, could not forget that closing scene—that he had had no part in it. That he had stood a mere spectator while those two figures lay clasped in each other's arms. His previous feelings of indifference towards his little daughter Florence changed into an uneasiness of an extraordinary kind. He had never conceived an aversion to her: it had not been worth his while or in his honour. But now he was ill at ease about her. He read nothing in her glance, when he saw her later in the solemn house, of the passionate desire to run clinging to him, and the dread of a repulse. The pitiable need in which she stood of some assurance and encouragement. He saw nothing of this.

In spite of his early promise, all the vigilance and care bestowed upon him could not make little Paul a thriving boy. There was something wan and wistful in his look, and he had a strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way of sitting brooding in his miniature arm-chair.

The medical practitioner recommended sea-air and Mrs. Pipchin, who conducted an infantile boarding-house of a very select description at Brighton, and whose scale of charges was high, was entrusted with the care of Paul's health when he was little more than five years old.

Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, with a mottled face like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye. It was generally said that Mrs. Pipchin was a woman of system with children, and no doubt she was. Certainly the wild ones went home tame enough, after sojourning for a few months beneath her hospitable roof.

At this exemplary old lady Paul would sit staring in his arm-chair by the fire for any length of time. He was not fond of her, he was not afraid of her.

Once she asked him, when they were alone, what he was thinking about.

"You" said Paul, without the least reserve "I'm thinking how old you must be."

"You musn't say such things as that young gentleman," returned the dame.

"Why not?" asked Paul.

"Because it's not polite!" said Mrs. Pipchin on appeally.

"Not polite?" said Paul.

"No! and remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions!"

"If the bull was mad," said Paul "how did he know that the boy had asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don't believe that story."

"You don't believe it sir?"

"No", said Paul.

"Not of it should happen to have been a tame bull you little infidel?" said Mrs. Pipchin.

As Paul had not considered the subject in that light, he allowed himself to be put down for the present.

Mr. Dombey came down to Brighton every Sunday, and Florence was her brother's constant companion.

At first, Paul got no stronger, and a little carriage was procured for him, in which he could lie at his ease and be wheeled down to the sea side; there he would sit or lie for hours together; never so distressed as by the company of children—Florence alone excepted always.

"Go away, if you please" he would say to any child who came up to him. "Thank you, but I don't want you. I think you had better go and play, if you please."

His favourite spot was quite a lonely one, far away from most loungers; and with Florence sitting by his side, and the wind blowing on his face, and the water near the wheels of his bed, he wanted nothing more.

"I want to know what it says," he said once, looking steadily in her face. "The sea, Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?"

She told him that it was only the noise of the rolling waves.

"Yes, yes," he said. "But I know that they are always saying something. Always the same thing. What place is over there?" He rose up, looking eagerly at the horizon.

She told him that there was another country opposite, but he said he didn't mean that: he meant farther away, farther away.

Very often afterwards in the midst of their talk, he would break off, to try to understand what it was that the waves were always saying, and would rise up on his couch to look at that invisible region far away.

At the end of twelve months at Mrs. Pipchin's, Paul had grown strong enough to dispense with his little carriage, though he still looked thin and delicate.

Mr. Dombey therefore decided to remove him, not from Brighton, but to Doctor Blimber's educational establishment. "I fear," said Mr. Dombey, addressing Mrs. Pipchin, "that my son in his studies is behind many children of his age.

Now instead of being behind his peers, my son ought to be before them—far before them. There is an eminence ready for him to mount upon. The education of my son must not be delayed. It must not be left imperfect."

Doctor Blimber only undertook the charge of ten young gentlemen, and his establishment was a great hot-house, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work.

Florence would remain at Mrs. Pipchin's and for the first six months Paul would return there for the Sunday.

"Now, Paul" said Mr. Dombey exultingly, when they stood on the doctor's doorsteps. "This is the way, indeed, to be Dombey and Son, and have money. You are almost a man already."

"Almost," returned the child.

The doctor was a portly gentleman in a suit of black, with strings at his knees, and stockings below them. He had a bald head, highly polished, a deep voice, and a chin so very double that it was a wonder how he ever managed to shove into the creases.

Mrs. Blimber was not learned herself, but she pretended to be, and that did quite as well.

As to Miss Blimber, there was no light nonsense about her. She was dry and sandy with working in the groves of dead languages.

Mr. Feeder, B. A., Dr. Blimber's assistant was a kind of human barrel-organ, with a list of tunes at which he was continually working, over and over again, without any variation.

Under the forcing system at Dr. Blimber's, a young gentleman usually took leave of spirits in three weeks, he had all the cares of the world in his head in three months, and he conceived bitter sentiments against his parents or guardians in four.

The doctor was sitting in his study when Mr. Dombey and Paul arrived. "And how do you do sir?" he said to Mr. Dombey. "And how is my little friend?" It seemed to Paul as if the great clock in the hall took this up and

went on saying, "how is my little friend? how is my little friend?" over and over again.

Paul was handed over to Miss Blimber at once to be "brought on."

"Cornelia" said the Doctor, "Dombey will be your charge at first. "Bring him on, Cornelia bring him on."

It was hard work for no sooner had Paul mastered subject A, than he was immediately provided with subject B, from which he passed to C and even D. Often he felt giddy and confused, and drowsy and dull.

But there were always the Saturdays when Florence came at noon to fetch him, and never would she, in any weather, stay away. Florence brought the school-books he was studying, and every Saturday night would patiently assist him through so much as they could anticipate together of his next week's work. And this saved him, possibly, from sinking underneath the burden which the fair Cornelia Blimber piled upon his back.

It was not that Miss Blimber meant to be too hard on him, or that Dr. Blimber meant to bear too heavily on the young gentlemen in general. But when Dr. Blimber said that Paul made great progress, and was naturally clever, Mr. Dombey was more bent than ever on his being forced and crammed.

Such spirits as he had at the outset Paul soon lost, of course. But he retained all that was strange, and odd and thoughtful in his character; and Mrs. Blimber thought him

"odd", and whispered that he was "old fashioned" and that was all.

Between little Paul Dombey the youngest, and Mr. Toots, the oldest of Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen, a strong attachment existed. Toots had "gone through" so much that he had left off growing, and was free to pursue his own course of study, which was chiefly to write long letters to himself from persons of distinction, addressed "P. Toots, Esquire, Brighton," to preserve them in his desk with great care. "How are you?" Toots would say to Paul, fifty times a day.

"Quite well, sir, thank you," Paul would answer.

"Shake hands," would be Toots's next advance. Which Paul of course would immediately do.

"I say!" cried Toots one evening, finding Paul looking out of the window. I say, what do you think about?"

"Oh! I think about a great many things," replied Paul.

"Do you, though?" said Toots, appearing to consider that fact in itself surprising.

"If you had to die," said Paul, "don't you think you would rather die on a moonlight night, when the sky is quite clear, and the wind blowing as it did last night?"

Mrs. Toots looking doubtfully at Paul, said he didn't know that.

"It was a beautiful night," said Paul, "There was a boat over there, in the full light of the moon, a boat with a sail."

Mr. Toots feeling called upon to say something, suggested "Smugglers," and then added, "or Preventive."

"A boat with a sail," repeated Paul. It went away into the distance, and what do you think it seemed to do as it moved with the waves?"

"Pitch!" said Mr. Toots.

"It seemed to beckon," said the child; "to beckon me to come."

Certainly people found him an "old-fashioned" child. At the end of the term Dr. and Mrs. Blimber gave an early party to their pupils, and their parents and guardians, and it was a day or two before this event that Paul was taken ill. This illness released him from his books, and made him think the more of Florence.

They all loved "Dombey's sister" at that party, and Paul, sitting in a cushioned corner, heard her praises constantly. There was a half intelligible sentiment, too, diffused around, referring to Florence and himself, and breathing sympathy for both, that soothed and touched him. He did not know why, but it seemed to have something to do with his "old-fashioned" reputation.

The time arrived for taking leave.

"Good-bye Doctor Blimber" said Paul, stretching out his hand.

"Good-bye, my little friend," returned the doctor. "Dombey, Dombey you have always been my favourite pupil."

"God bless you!" said Cornelia taking both Paul's hands in hers. And it showed Paul thought, how easily one might do injustice to a person, for Miss Blimber meant it—though she was a Forcer—and felt it.

There was a general move after Paul and Florence down the staircase, in which the whole Blimber family were included. Such a circumstance, Mr. Feeder said aloud, as had never happened in the case of any former young gentleman within his experience.

The servants with the butler—a stern man—at their head had all an interest in seeing little Dombey go: while the young gentlemen pressed to shake hands with him saying individually "Dombey, don't forget me!"

Once for a last look, Paul turned and gazed upon the faces addressed to him, and from that time whenever he thought of Dr. Blimber's it came back as he had seen it in this last view; and it never seemed to be a real place, but always a dream full of faces.

From the night they brought him home from Dr. Blimber's Paul had never risen from his little bed. He lay there, listening to the noises in the street, quite tranquilly, not caring much how the time went, but watching it, and watching every thing about him with observing eyes.

When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on.

By little and little he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of carriages and carts, and people passing and

repassing ; and would fall asleep or be troubled with a restless and uneasy sense of a rushing river. " Why will it never stop Floy ?" he would sometimes ask her. It is bearing me away, I think."

But Floy could always soothe him.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors, and the room was so quiet, and Paul was so observant of them, that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches. But his interest centred in Sir Parker Peps; for Paul had heard them say long ago that that gentleman had been with his mamma when she clasped Florence in her arms and died and he could not forget it now. He liked him for it. He was not afraid.

The people in the room were always changing, and in the night-time Paul began to wonder languidly who the figure was with its head upon its hand, that returned so often and remained so long.

" Floy," he said, " what is that—there at the bottom of the bed ?"

" There's nothing there except papa."

The figure lifted up its head and rose, and said, " My own boy ! don't you know me ?"

Paul looked it in the face and thought, was that his father. The next time he observed the figure at the bottom of the bed, he called to it.

" Don't be sorry for me, dear papa. Indeed I am quite happy."

That was the beginning of his always saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced upon the wall, how many times the dark, dark river rolled towards the sea, Paul never counted, never sought to know.

One night he had been thinking of his mother, and her picture in the drawing-room downstairs.

"Floy, did I ever see mamma?"

"No, darling."

The river was running very fast now, and confusing his mind. Paul fell asleep, and when he awoke the sun was high.

"Floy, come close to me, and let me see you."

Sister and brother wound their arms round each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them locked together.

How fast the river runs between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But it's very near the sea. I hear the waves. They always said so."

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest now the boat was out at sea but gliding—smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank?

He put his hands together as he had been used to do at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it, but they saw him fold them so behind her neck.

"Mamma is like you, Floy, I know her by the face! The light about her head is shining on me as I go."

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first parents, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion—death.

The stonemason to whom Mr. Dombey gave his order for a tablet in the church, in memory of little Paul, called his attention to the inscription "Beloved and only child," and said. "It should be 'son' I think, sir?'

"You are right of course. Make the correction."

And there came a time when it was to Florence, and Florence only, that Mr. Dombey turned. For the great house of Dombey and Son fell, and in the crash its proud head became a ruined man, ruined beyond recovery.

Bankrupt in purse, his personal pride was yet further humbled. For Mr. Dombey had married again, a loveless match, and his wife deserted him. In the hour when he discovered that desertion he had driven his daughter Florence from the house.

He was fallen now never to be raised up any more. For the night of his wordly ruin there was no to-morrow's sun, for the strain of his domestic shame there was no purification.

In his pride—for he was proud yet—he let the world go from him, freely. As it fell away, he shook it off. He knew, now, what it was to be rejected and deserted. Dombey and Son was no more—his children no more.

His daughter Florence had married—married a young sailor once a boy in the office of Dombey and Son—and thinking of her, Dombey in the solitude of his dismantled home, remembered that she had never changed to him through all those years; and the mist through which he had seen her cleared, and showed him her true self.

He wandered through the rooms and thought of suicide: a guilty hand was grasping what was in his breast.

It was arrested by a cry—a wild, loud, loving rapturous cry, and he saw his daughter.

"Papa! dearest papa!"

She unchanged still. Of all the world unchanged.

He tottered to his chair. He felt her draw his arms about her neck, he felt her kisses on his face, he felt—oh how deeply:—all that he had done.

She laid his face, now covered with his hands, against the heart that he had almost broken, and said sobbing, "Papa, love, I am a mother. Papa, dear, oh, say God bless me and my little child!"

This head, now grey, was encircled by her arm, and, he groaned to think that never, never had it rested so before.

"My little child was born at sea, papa. I prayed to God to spare me that I might come. The moment I could land I came to you. Never let us be parted any more papa!"

He kissed her on her lips, and lifting up his eyes said, "Oh, my God, forgive me, for I need it very much!"

"DAVID COPPERFIELD"

I was born on a Friday at twelve o'clock at night, at Blunderstone in Suffolk. I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had been closed upon the light of the world six months when mine opened upon it. Miss Betsey Trotwood, an aunt of my father's and consequently a great aunt of mine arrived on the afternoon of the day I was born, and explained to my mother that she meant to provide for her child, which was to be a girl.

My aunt said never a word when she learnt that it was a boy, and not a girl, but took her bonnet by the strings in the manner of a sling, aimed a blow at the doctor's head with it, put it on bent, walked out and never came back. She vanished like a discontented fairy.

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back into the blank of my infancy, are my mother, with her pretty air and youthful shape, and Peggotty my old nurse, with no shape at all, and with cheeks and arms so red and hard that I wondered the birds didn't peck in preference to apples.

I remember a few years later, a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers walking home from church on Sunday with us; and somehow I didn't like him and his deep voice, and I was jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me—which it did.

It must have been about this time that, waking up from an uncomfortable doze one night, I found Peggotty and my mother both in tears, and both talking.

"Not such a one as this Mr. Copperfield wouldn't have liked," said Peggotty. "That I say, that I swear!"

"Good heavens!" cried my mother. "You'll drive me mad! How can you have the heart to say such better things to me, when you are well aware that out of this place I haven't a single friend to turn to?"

But the following Sunday I saw the gentleman with the black whiskers again, and he walked home from church with us, and gradually I became used to seeing him and knowing him as Mr. Murdstone. I liked him no better than at first, and had the same uneasy jealousy of him.

It was on my return from a visit to Yarmouth, where I went with Peggotty to spend a fortnight at her brother's, that I found my mother married to Mr. Murdstone. They were sitting by the fire in the best parlour when I came in.

I gave him my hand. After a moment of suspense, I went and kissed my mother. I could not look at her, I could not look at him; I knew quite well he was looking at us both. As soon as I could creep away, I crept upstairs and cried my self to sleep.

A word of encouragement, of pity for my childish ignorance, of welcome home, of reassurance to me that it was home, might have made me dutiful to him in my heart henceforth, instead of in my hypocritical outside, and might have made me respect instead of hating him.

Miss Murdstone arrived next day. She was dark, like her brother, and greatly resembled him in face and voice. Firmness was the grand quality on which both of them took their stand.

I soon fell into disgrace over my lessons. I never could do them with my mother satisfactorily with the Murdstone's sitting by! This influence upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird.

One dreadful morning, when the lessons had turned out even more badly than usual, Mr. Murdstone seized hold of me and twisted my head under his arm preparatory to beating me with a cane. At the first stroke I caught the hand with which he held me, in my mouth, between my teeth, and bit it through He beat me then as if he would have beaten me to death. And when he had gone. I was kept a close prisoner in my room, and was not allowed to see my mother, and was only permitted to walk in the garden for half an hour every day. Miss Murdstone acted as gaoler, and after five days of this confinement, she told me I was to be sent away to school—to Salem House School, Blackheath.

I saw my mother before I left. They had persuaded her I was a wicked fellow, and she was more sorry for that, than for my going.

I was doing my second term at school when I was told that my mother was dead, and that I was to go home to the funeral.

I never returned to Salem House. Mr. Murdstone and his sister left me to myself, and I could see that Mr. Murdstone liked me less than ever. At odd times I speculated on the possibility of not being taught any more, or cared for any more, and growing up to be a shabby, moody man, lounging an idle life away about the village.

Peggotty was under notice to quit, and thought of going to live with her brother at Yarmouth ; but, as it turned out, she didn't do this, but married the old carrier Barkis.

"Young or old, Davy dear, as long as I am alive, and have this house over my head," said Peggotty to me on the day she was married, "you shall find it as if I expected you here directly. I shall keep it every day, as I used to keep your own little room, my darling."

The solitary condition I now fell into for some weeks was ended one day by Mr. Murdstone telling me that I was to be put into the business of Murdstone and Grinby.

"You will earn enough to provide for your eating and drinking and pocket money," said Mr. Murdstone "Your lodging, which I have arranged for, will be paid by me. So will your washing and your clothes will be looked after for you, too. You are now going to London, David to begin the world on your own account."

"In short, you are provided for," observed his sister, "and will please to do your duty."

So I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.

Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse was at the water-side, down in Blackfriars, and an important branch of their trade was the supply of wines and spirits to certain packet-ships. A great many empty bottles were one of the consequences of this traffic, and a certain number of men and boys, of whom I was one, were employed to rinse and wash them. When the empty bottles ran short, there were lables to be pasted on full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, or finished bottles to be packed in casks.

There were three or four boys counting me. Mick Waller was the name of the oldest: he wore a ragged apron and a paper cap. The next boy was introduced to me under the extraordinary name of Mealy Potatoes, which had been bestowed upon him on account of his complexion, which was pale or mealy.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, and compared these associates with those of my happier childhood, with the boys at Salem House. Often in the early morning, when I was alone, I mingled my tears with the water in which I was washing the bottles, and sobbed as if there were a flaw in my breast, and it were in danger of bursting.

My salary was six or seven shillings a week—I think it was six at first, and seven afterwards—and I had to support myself on that money all the week. My breakfast was a penny loaf, and a penny worth of milk, and I kept another small loaf and a modicum of cheese to make my supper on at night.

I was so young and childish, and so little qualified to take the whole charge of my existence that often of a morning I could not resist the stale pastry put out for sale at half price at the pastry-cook's doors, and spent on that the money I should have kept for my dinner. On those days I either went without my dinner, or bought a roll or a slice of pudding.

I was such a child, and so little, that frequently when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to moisten what I had for dinner, they were afraid to give it me.

I know I do not exaggerate the scantiness of my resources or the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling were given me at any time, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked from morning until night, a shabby child, and that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

Arrangements had been made by Mr. Murdstone for my lodging with Mr. Micawber—who took orders on commission for Murdstone and Grinby—and Mr. Micauber himself escorted me to his house in Windsor Terrace, City Road.

Mr. Micawber was a stoutish, middle aged person, in a brown surtout, with no more hair upon his head than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face. His clothes were shabby, but he wore an imposing shirt-collar. He carried a jaunty sort of stick, with a large pair of rusty

tassels to it! And an eyeglass hung outside his coat—for ornament, I afterwards found, as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see any thing when he did.

Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace—which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could—he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young.

"I never thought," said Mrs. Micawber, as she showed me my room at the top of the house at the back, before I was married that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way."

I said. "Yes, ma'am."

"Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelming just at present, "said Mrs. Micawber," and whether it's possible to bring him through I don't know. If Mr. Micawber's creditors will not give him time, they must take the consequences."

In my forlorn state. I soon became quite attached to the family, and when Mr. Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis and he was arrested and carried to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough, and Mrs. Micawber shortly afterwards followed him, I hired a little room in the neighbourhood of that institution.

Mr. Micawber was in due time released under the Insolvent Debtors' Act, and it was decided that he should go down to Plymouth, where Mrs. Micawber held that her family had influence.

My own mind was now made up. I had resolved to run away—to go by some means or other down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt. Miss Betsey. I knew from Peggotty that Miss Betsey lived near Dover, but whether at Dover itself, at Hythe, Sandgate or Folkestone she could not say. One of our men, however, informing me on my asking him about these places that they were all close together, I deemed this enough for my object: and after seeing the Micawbers off at the coach, I set off.

It was on the sixth day of my flight that I reached the wide downs near Dover and set foot in the town.

I had walked every step of the way, sleeping under haystocks at night. Fortunately, it was summer weather, for I was obliged to part with coat and waistcoat to buy food. My shoes were in a woeful condition, and my hat —which had served me for a nightcap, too—was so crushed and bent that no old battered saucepan on the dung hill need have been ashamed to vie with it. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept, might have frightened the birds from my aunt's garden as I stood at the gate. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. In this plight I waited to introduce myself to my formidable aunt.

As I stood there, a lady came out of the house, with a handkerchief over her cap, a pair of gardening gloves on her hands and carrying a great knife. I was sure she must be Miss Betsey from her walk, for my mother had often

described the way my aunt came to the house when I was born.

"Go away!" said Miss Betsey, shaking her head. "Go along! No boys here!"

I watched her as she marched to a corner of the garden, and then in desperation, I went softly and stood beside her.

"If you please ma'am—if you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh Lord!" said my aunt and sat flat down in the garden path.

"I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone in Suffolk, where you came when I was borne. I have been very unhappy since my mother died. I have been taught nothing and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you, and I have walked all the way, and have never slept in bed since I began the journey,"

Here my self-support gave way all at once, and I broke into a passion of crying.

Thereupon, my aunt got up in a great hurry, collared me, and took me into the parlour.

The first thing my aunt did was to pour the contents of several bottles down my throat. I think they must have been taken out at random, for I am sure I tasted aniseed water, anchovy sauce, and salad dressing. Then she put me on the sofa, and, acting on the advice of a pleasant-looking grey-headed gentleman whom she called "Mr. Dick," heated a bath for me. After that I was enrobed in a shirt and

trousers belonging to Mr. Dick, tied up in two or three great shawls, and fell asleep.

That was the beginning of my aunt's adoption of me. She wrote to Mr. Murdstone, and he and his sister arrived a few days later, and were routed by my aunt.

Mr. Murdstone said, finally, he would only take me back unconditionally, and that if I did not return there and then his door would be shut against me henceforth.

"And what does the boy say?" said my aunt. "Are you ready to go David?"

I answered "No," and entreated her not to let me go. I begged and prayed my aunt to befriend and protect me, for my father's sakes.

"Mr. Dick" said my aunt "what shall I do with this child?"

Mr. Dick considered, hesitated, brightened and replied, "Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly?"

"Mr. Dick" said my aunt "give me your hand for you commonsense is invaluable." She pulled me towards her, and said to Mr. Murdstone, "you can go when you like: I'll take my chance with the boy!"

When they had gone my aunt announced that Mr. Dick would be joint guardian of me, with herself, and that I should be called Trotwoot Copperfield.

Thus I began my new life, in a new name, and with everything new about me.

My aunt sent me to school at Canterbury, and, there being no room at the school for boarders, settled that I should board with her old lawyer, Mr. Wickfield.

My aunt was as happy as I was in this arrangement. For Mr. Wickfield's house was quiet and still and Mr. Wickfield's little housekeeper was his only daughter, Agnes, a child of about my own age, whose face so bright and happy, was the child likeness of a woman's portrait that was on the staircase. There was a tranquillity about the house, and about Agnes a good calm, spirit, that I have never forgotten and never shall.

The school I now went to was better in every way than Salem House. It seemed to me so long however, since I had been among any companions of my own age, except Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes, that I felt very strange at first. Whatever I had learnt had so slipped away from me that when I was examined about what I knew, I knew nothing, and was put in the lowest form of the school.

But I got a little the better of my uneasiness when I went to school next day, and a good deal the better the day after, and so shook it off, by degrees, that in less than a fortnight I was quite at home, and happy among my new companions.

"Trot", said my aunt when she left me at Mr. Wickfield's, "be a credit to yourself, to me and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you! Never be mean in anything never be false: never be cruel. Avoid these vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you. And now the pony is at the door and I am off!"

She embraced me hastily, and went out of the house, shutting the door after her. When I looked into the street

I noticed how dejectedly she got into the chaise and that she drove away without looking up.

I first saw Uriah Heep on the day my aunt introduced me to Mr. Wickfield's house. He was then a red-haired youth of fifteen, but looking much older, whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble : eyelashes, and eyes of a red brown. He was high-shouldered and bony ; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of neck cloth ; buttoned up to the throat : and had a long lank skeleton hand.

Heep was Mr. Wickfield's clerk, and I often saw him of an evening in the little round office reading, and from time to time stayed in to talk to him.

He told me, one night he was not doing office work, but was improving his legal knowledge.

" I suppose you are quite a great lawyer ?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

" Me, Master Copperfield ?" said Uriah. " Oh, no ! I'm a very 'umble person. I am well aware that I am the 'umblest person going, let the other be where he may.

My mother is likewise a very 'umble person. We live in a 'umble abode Master Copperfield, but have much to be thankful for. My father's former calling was 'umble : he was a sexton."

" What is he now ?" I asked.

" He is a partaker of glory at present, Master Copperfield," said Uriah Heep. " But we have much to be thankful for. How much have I to be thankful for, in living with Mr. Wickfield !"

I asked Uriah if he had been with Mr. Wickfield long.

"I have been with him going on four years, Master Copperfield," said Uriah. "Since a year after my father's death. How much have I to be thankful for in that! How much have I to be thankful for in Mr. Wickfield's kind intention to give me my articles which would otherwise not lay within the 'umble means of mother and self!"

"Perhaps, when you've a regular lawyer, you'll be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business one of these days," I said to make my self agreeable; "and it will be Wickfield and Heep, or Heep late Wickfield."

"Oh, no, Master Copperfield returned Uriah shaking his head, "I am much too 'umble for that!"

It must have been five or six years later when I was in London that Uriah recalled my prophecy to me.

Agnes had noticed as I had noticed, long before this, a gradual alteration in Mr. Wickfield. He sat longer and longer over his wine, and it was at such times, when his hands trembled, and his speech was not plain, that Uriah was most certain to want him on some business.

So it came about that Agnes had to tell me that Uriah had made himself indispensable to her father.

"He is subtle and watchful" she said. "He has mastered papa's weaknesses, fostered them and taken advantage of them until papa is afraid of him."

If I was indignant to hear that Uriah had wormed himself into such promotion, I restrained my feelings when we

met, for Agnes had bidden me not repel him for her father's sake and for her own.

"What a prophet you have shown yourself, Master Copperfield!" said Uriah, reminding me of my early words. "You may not recollect it; but when a person is 'umble, a person treasures such things up. But the 'umblest persons, Master Copperfield, may be instruments of good. I am glad to think I have been the instrument of good to Mr. Wickfield, and that I may be more so. Oh, what a worthy man he is! but how imprudent he has been!"

When the rascal went on to tell me confidentially that he "loved the ground his Agnes walked on," and that he thought she might come to be kind to him, knowing his usefulness to her father, I had a delirious idea of seizing the red-hot poker out of the fire, and running him through with it. However I thought of Agnes, and could say nothing. In the end all the evil machinations of Uriah Heep were frustrated by my old friend Mr. Micawber, who visiting Canterbury on the chance of something suitable turning up, and meeting me in Heep's company, was subsequently engaged by Heep as a clerk at twenty-two and sixpence per week.

It was only after Micawber had found that Uriah Heep had forged Mr. Wickfield's name to various documents, and had fraudulently speculated with moneys entrusted by my aunt, amongst others, to his partner, that he turned upon him, and denounced him, and accomplished what he called "the final pulverisation of Heep."

Mr. Micawber being once more "in pecuniary shackles" my aunt, so grateful, as we all were, for the services he had rendered suggested emigration to Australia to him; he at once responded to the idea.

"The climate, I believe is healthy" said Mrs. Micawber. "Then the question arises. Now are the circumstances of the country such that a man of Mr. Micawber's abilities would have a fair chance of rising?—I will not say at present, to be governor or anything of that sort; but would there be a reasonable opening for his talents to develop themselves? If so, it is evident to me that Australia is the legitimate sphere of action for Mr. Micawber." "I entertain the conviction," said Mr. Micawber, that it is under existing circumstances, the land, the only land, for myself and my family; and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up on that shore."

But the defeat of Heep and Micawber's departure belong to the days of my manhood. Let me look back at the intervening years.

My school-days! The silent gliding on of my existence—the unseen, unfelt progress of my life—from childhood up to youth!

Time has stolen on me unobserved, and I am the head-boy now in the school, and look down on the line of boys below me with a condescending interest in such of them as bring to my mind the boy I was myself when I first came there. That little fellow seems to be no part of me. I

remember him as something left behind upon the road of life, and almost think of him as some one else.

And the little girl I saw on that first day at Mr. Wickfield's where is she? Gone also. In her stead the perfect likeness of the picture, a child likeness no more, moves about the house; and Agnes—my sweet sister, as I call her in my thoughts, my counsellor and friend—the better angel of all who come within her calm, good, self-denying influence is quite a woman.

It is time for me to have a profession, and my aunt proposes that I should be a proctor in doctors' commons. I learn that the proctors are a sort of solicitors, and that the doctors' commons is a faded court held near St. Paul's Churchyard, where people's marriages and wills are disposed of and disputes about ships and boats are settled.

So I am articled, and later, when my aunt has lost her money, through no fault of her own, but through the rascality of Uriah Heep, and I seek Mr. Spenlow to know if it is possible for my articles to be cancelled, it is, I am assured, Mr. Jorkins who is inexorable.

The years pass.

I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the dignity of twenty-one. Let me think what I have achieved.

Determined to do something to bring in money, I have mastered the savage mystery of shorthand, and make a respectable income by reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper. Night after night I record

predictions that never come to pass, professions that are never fulfilled, explanations that are only meant to mystify.

I have come out in another way. I have taken, with fear and trembling to authorship. I wrote a little something in secret, and sent it to a magazine, and it was published. Since then I have taken heart to write a good many trifling pieces.

My record is nearly finished.

Peggotty, a widow, is with my aunt, and Mr. Dick is in the room.

"Goodness me!" said my aunt, "who is this you are bringing home?"

"Agnes" said I.

We were to be married within a fortnight. It was not till I had told Agnes of my love that I learnt from her, as she laid her gentle hands upon my shoulders and looked calmly in my face, that she had loved me all my life.

"HARD TIMES"

Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of facts and calculations. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to.

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance or to the public in general. In such terms Thomas Gradgrind presented himself to the schoolmaster and children before him. It was his school and he intended it to be a model.

"Now, what I want is facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to facts, sir."

Mr. Gradgrind having waited to hear a model lesson delivered by the schoolmaster, walked home in a considerable state of satisfaction.

There were five young Gradgrinds, and they were models every one. They had been lectured at from their tenderest years; coursed, like little hares, almost as soon as they could run, they had been moved to run to their lecture-room.

To his matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr. Gradgrind directed his steps. The house was situated

on a moor, within a mile or two of a great town, called Coketown.

On the outskirts of this town a travelling circus had pitched its tent, and to his amazement, Mr. Gradgrind observed his two eldest children trying to obtain a peep, at the back of the booth, of the hidden glories within.

Mr. Gradgrind laid his hand upon the shoulder of each erring child and said, " Louisa ! Thomas!"

" I wanted to see what it was like " said Louisa shortly. " I brought him. I was tired, father. I have been tired a long time."

" Tired." Of what ? " asked the astonished father. " I donot know of what—of every thing I think." They walked on in silence for some half a mile before Mr. Gradgrind gravely broke out with, " what would your best friends say Louisa ? What would Mr. Bounderby say ?"

All the way to Stone Lodge he repeated at intervals, " What would Mr. Bounderby say ?"

Mr. Bounderby was at Stone Lodge when they arrived. He stood before the fire on the hearthrug delivering some observations to Mrs. Gradgrind on the circumstances of its being his birth-day. It was a commanding position from which to subdue Mrs. Gradgrind.

He stopped in his harangue, which was entirely concerned with the story of his early disadvantages, at the entrance of his eminently practical friend and the two young culprits.

" Well ! " blustered Mr. Bounderby, " What's the matter ? What is young Thomas in the dumps about ?"

He spoke of young Thomas but he looked at Louisa.

" We were peeping at the circus," muttered Louisa haughtily ; " and father caught us."

"And Mr. Gradgrind " said her husband in a lofty manner, " I should as soon have expected to find my children reading poetry."

" Dear me ", whimpered Mrs. Gradgrind. " How can you, Louisa and Thomas ? I wonder at you. I declare you 're enough to make one regret ever having a family at all. I have a great mind to say I wish I hadn't. Then what would you have done I'd like to know. As if, with my head in its present throbbing state, you couldn't go and look at the shells and minerals and things provided for you instead of circuses. I'm sure you have enough to do if that's what you want. With my head in its present state I couldn't remember the mere names of half the facts you have got to attend to. " That's the reason " pouted Louisa.

" Don't tell me that's the reason, because it can be nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Gradgrind. " Go and be something ological directly."

Mrs. Gradgrind, not being a scientific character, usually dismissed her children to their studies with the general injunction that they were to choose their own pursuit.

Mr. Josiah Bounderby was as near being Mr. Gradgrind's bosom friend as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can be to another man perfectly devoid of sentiment.

He was a rich man—banker, merchant, manufacturer and what not. A big loud man, with a stone and a metallic laugh.

A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself, a self-model man. A man who was always proclaiming through that brassy speaking trumpet of a voice of his, his early ignorance and poverty. A man who was the bully of humility.

He was fond of telling, was Mr. Bounderby, how he was born in a ditch and abandoned by his mother, how he ran away from his grandmother, who starved and ill-used him, and so became a vagabond. "I pulled through it," he would say, "though nobody threw me out a rope. Vagabond errand-boy labourer, porter, clerk, chief manager, small partner—Josiah Bounderby of Coketown!"

This myth of his early life was dissipated later; and it turned out that his mother, a respectable old woman, whom Bounderby pensioned off with thirty pounds a year on condition she never came near him, had pinched herself to help him out in life, and put him as apprentice to a trade. From this apprenticeship he had steadily risen to riches.

Mr. Bounderby held strong views about the people who worked for him, the "hands" he called them; and found, whenever they complained of any thing, that they always expected to be set up in a coach and six, and to be fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon.

As time went on, and young Thomas Gradgrind became old enough to go into Bounderby's bank, Bounderby decided that Lousia was old enough to be married.

Mr. Gradgrind now member of parliament for Coketown, mentioned the matter to his daughter.

" Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me."

He waited, as if he would have been glad that she had said something. Strange to relate, Mr. Gradgrind was not at this moment as collected as his daughter was.

" I have undertaken to let you know that—in short, that Mr. Bounderby has long hoped that the time might arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. That time has now come, and Mr. Bounderby has made his proposal to me, and has entreated me to make it known to you."

" Father ", said Louisa, " do you think I love Mr. Bounderby ?"

Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by the unexpected question. " Well, my child," he returned, " I—really cannot take upon myself to say."

" Father " pursued Louisa, in exactly the same voice as before, " do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?"

" My dear Louisa, no. No, I ask nothing " " Father, does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him ?"

" Really, my dear, it is difficult to answer your question. Because the reply depends so materially Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Mr. Bounderby does not pretend to any thing sentimental. Now, I should advise you to consider this question simply as one of fact. Now what are the facts of the case ? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age. Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and position there

is none ; on the contrary there is a great suitability. Confining yourself to fact, the questions of fact are ; 'Does Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him ?' 'Yes, he does.' And, 'shall I marry him ?'" "Shall I marry him ?" repeated Louisa with great deliberation.

There was silence between the two before Louisa spoke again. The thought of the shortness of life, of how her brother Tom had said it would be a good thing for him, if she made up her mind to do—she knew what.

"While it lasts, she said aloud, "I would like to do the little I can, and the little I am fit for. What does it matter? Mr. Bounderby asks me to marry him. Let it be so. Since Mr. Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal. Tell him, father, as soon as you please, that this was my answer. Repeat it word for word, if you can, because I should wish him to know what I said."

"It is quite right, my dear", retorted her father approvingly, "to be exact. I will observe your very proper request. Have you any wish in reference to the period of your marriage my child ?"

"None, father. What does it matter ?"

They went into the drawing-room, and Mr. Gradgrind presented Louisa to his wife as Mrs. Bounderby.

"Oh ; " said Mrs. Gradgrind. "So you have settled it. I am sure. I give you joy, my dear, and I hope you may turn all your ological studies to good account. And now, you see, I shall be worrying myself morning, noon and night to know what I am to call him !"

"Mrs. Gradgrind," said her husband solemnly, "what do you mean?"

"Whatever am I to call him when he is married to Louisa? I must call him something. It's impossible to be constantly addressing him and never giving him a name. I cannot call him Josiah, for the name is insupportable to me. You yourself wouldn't hear of Joe, you very well know. Am I to call my own son-in-law 'Mister'? I believe not, unless the time has arrived when I am to be trampled upon by my relations. Then, what am I to call him?"

There being no answer to the conundrum, Mr. Gradgrind retired to bed.

The day of the marriage came, and after the wedding-breakfast the bridegroom addressed the company—an improving party, there was no nonsense about any of them—in the following terms.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown. Since you have done my wife and myself the honour of drinking our healths and happiness, I suppose, I must acknowledge the same. If you want a speech, my friend and father-in-law, Tom Gradgrind, is a member of parliament, and you know where to get it. Now, you have mentioned that I am this day married to Tom Gradgrind's daughter. I am very glad to be so, I have watched her bringing up, and I believe she is worthy of me. At the same time I believe I am worthy of her. So I thank you for the goodwill you have shown towards us.

Shortly after this oration, as they were going on a nuptial trip to Lyons, in order that Mr. Bounderby might see how the hands got on in these parts, and whether they too required to be fed with gold spoons, the happy pair departed for the railroad. As the bride passed downstairs her brother Tom whispered to her, "What a game girl you are, to be such a first rate sister, too!"

She clung to him as she would have clung to some better nature that day, and was shaken in her composure for the first time.

The Gradgrind party wanting assistance in the House of Commons, Mr. James Harthouse, who was of good family and appearance, and had tried most things and found them a bore, was sent down to Coketown to study the neighbourhood, with a view to entering parliament.

Mr. Bounderby at once pounced upon him, and James Harthouse was introduced to Mr. Bounderby and her brother. Tom Gradgrind junior, brought up under a continuous system of restraint was a hypocrite, a thief, and to Mr. James Harthouse, a whelp.

Yet the visitor saw at once, that the whelp was the only creature Mrs. Bounderby cared for, and it occurred to him as time went on that to win Mrs. Bounderby's affections (for he made no secret of his contempt for politics) he must devote himself to the whelp.

Mr. Bounderby was proud to have Mr. James Harthouse under his roof, proud to show off his greatness and self-importance to this gentleman from London.

"You r'e a gentleman, and I don't pretend to be one. You're a man of family. I am a bit of dirty riff-raff, and a genuine scrap of rag, tag and bob-tail," said Mr. Bounderby.

At the same time Mr. Bounderby blustered at his wife, and bullied his hands, so that Mr. Harthouse might understand his independence.

One of these hands, Stephen Blackpool, an old steady faithful workman, who had been boycotted by his fellows for refusing to join a trade union, was summoned to Mr. Bounderby's presence in order that Harthouse might see a specimen of the people that had to be dealt with.

Blackpool said he had nought to say about the trade union; he had given a promise not to join, that was all.

"Not to me, you know!" said Bounderby.

"Oh no, sir: not to you."

"Here's a gentleman from London present," Mr. Bounderby said, pointing at Harthouse. "A Parliament gentleman. Now, what do you complain of?"

"I ha' not come here, sir, to complain. I were sent for. Indeed, we are in a muddle, sir. Look round town—so rich as 'tis. Look how we live, an' where we live, an' in what numbers; and look how the mills is always a-goin', and how they never work us no nigher to any distant object, 'cepting always death. Sir, I cannot, wi' my little learning, tell the gentleman what will better this; though some working men of this town could. But the strong hand will never do it. Ratin' us as so much power, and reg' latin' us as if we was figures in a sum, will never do it."

"Now, it is clear to me" said Mr. Bounderby, "that you are one of those chaps who have always got a grievance. And you are such a raspish, ill-conditioned chap that even your own union—the men who know you best—will have nothing to do with you. And I tell you what, I go so far along with them for a novelty, that I'll have nothing to do with you either. You can finish off what you 're at and then go elsewhere."

Thus James Harthouse learnt how Mr. Bounderby dealt with hands.

Mr. Harthouse, however, only felt bored, and took the earliest opportunity to explain to Mrs. Bounderby that he really had no opinions, and that he was going in for her father's opinions, because he might as well back them as anything else.

"The side that can prove anything in a line of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands, Mrs. Bounderby, seems to me to afford the most fun and to give a man the best chance. I am quite ready to go in for it to the same extent as if I believed it. And what more could I possibly do if I did believe it?"

"You are a singular politician," said Louisa.

"Pardon me; I have not even that merit. We are the largest party in the state, I assure you, if we all fell out of our adopted ranks and were reviewed together."

The more Mr. Harthouse's interest waned in politics, the greater became his interest in Mrs. Bounderby. And he cultivated the whelp, cultivated him earnestly, and by so

doing learnt from the graceless youth that "she had never cared anything for old Bounderby," and had married him to please her brother.

Gradually, bit by bit, James Harthouse established a confidence with the whelp's sister from which her husband was excluded. He established a confidence with her that absolutely turned upon her indifference towards her husband, and the absence at all times of any congeniality between them. He had artfully, but plainly assured her that he knew her heart in its last most delicate recesses, and the barrier behind which she lived had melted away.

And yet he had not, even now, any earnest wickedness of purpose in him. So drifting icebergs, setting with the current, wreck the ships.

Mrs. Gradgrind died while her husband was up in London, and Louisa was with her mother when death came.

"You learnt a great deal, Louisa, and so did your brother," said Mrs. Gradgrind, when she was dying. Ologies of all kinds from morning to night. But there is something —not ology at all—that your father has missed, or forgotten. I do not know what it is. I shall never get its name now. But your father may. It makes me restless. I want to write to him to find out for God's sake what it is."

It was shortly after Mrs. Gradgrind's death that Mr. Bounderby was called away from home on business for a few days; and Mr. James Harthouse, still not sure at times of his purpose, found himself alone with Mrs. Bounderby.

They were in the Garden, and Harthouse implored her to accept him as her lover. She urged him to go away, she commanded him to go away ; but she neither turned her face to him nor raised it, but sat as still as though she were a statue.

Harthouse declared that she was the stake for which he ardently desired to play away all that he had in life ; that the objects he had lately pursued turned worthless beside her; the success that was almost within his grasp he flung away from him, like the dirt it was, compared with her.

All this, and more, he said, and pleaded for a further meeting.

" Not here ", Louisa said calmly.

They parted at the beginning of a heavy shower of rain, and the face James Harthouse had ridden for was averted.

Mrs. Bounderby left her husband's house, left it for good ; not to share Mr. Harthouse's life, but to return to her father.

Mr. Gradgrind, released from parliament for a time, was alone in his study, when his eldest daughter entered.

" What is the matter, Louisa ?"

" Father, I want to speak to you. You have trained me from my cradle ?"

" Yes, Louisa."

" I curse the hour in which I was born to such a destiny. How could you give me life, and take from me all the things that raise it from the state of conscious death ? Now, hear what I have come to say. With a huuger and a thirst

upon me, father, which have never been for a moment appeased, in a condition where it seemed nothing could be worth the pain and trouble of a contest, you proposed my husband to me.

" I never knew you were unhappy, my child ;"

" I took him. I never made a pretence to him or to you that I loved him. I knew, and father, you knew, and he knew that I never did. I was not wholly indifferent, for I had a hope of being pleasant and useful to Tom. But Tom had been the subject of all the little tenderness of my life, perhaps he became so because I knew so well how to pity him. It matters little now, except as it may dispose you to think more leniently of his errors."

" What can I do child ? Ask me what you will."

" I am coming to it. Father, chance has thrown into my way a new acquaintance ; a man such as I had had no experience of—light, polished, easy. I only wondered it should be worth his while, who cared for nothing else, to care so much for me. It matters little how he gained my confidence. Father he did gain it. What you know of the story of my marriage he soon knew just as well.

Her father's face was ashy white.

" I have done no worse : I have not disgraced you. This night, my husband being away, he has been with me. This minute he expects me, for I could release myself of his presence by no other means. I do not know that I am sorry or ashamed. All that I know is, your philosophy and your

teaching will not save me. Father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means."

She fell insensible, and he saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying at his feet. And it came to Thomas Gradgrind that night and on the morrow when he sat beside his daughter's bed that there was a wisdom of the heart, no less than a wisdom of the head ; and that in supposing the latter to be all sufficient, he had erred.

But no such change of mind took place in Mr. Bounderby. Finding his wife absent, he went at once to Stone Lodge, and blustered in his usual way.

Mr. Gradgrind tried to make him understand that the best thing to do was to leave things as they were for a time, and that Louisa who had been so tired, should stay on a visit to her father, and be treated with tenderness and consideration. It was all wasted on Bounderby.

"Now, I don't want to quarrel with you Tom Gradgrind ;" he retorted. "If your daughter, whom I made Loo Bounderby, and might have done better by leaving Loo Gradgrind, don't come home at noon to-morrow, I shall understand that she prefers to stay away, and you'll take charge of her in future. What I shall say to people in general of the incompatiblity that led to my so laying down the law will be this ; I am Josiah Bounderby, she's the daughter of Tom Gradgrind ; and the two horses wouldn't pull together. I am pretty well known to be rather an uncommon man, and most people will understand that it must be a woman rather out of the common who would come up to my mark. I have got no more to say. Good night !"

At five minute's past twelve next day Mr. Bounderby directed his wife's property to be carefully packed up and sent to Tom Gradgrind's and then resumed a bachelor's life.

Mr. James Harthouse, learning from Louisa's maid—a young woman greatly attached to her mistress—that his attentions were altogether undesirable, and that he would never see Mrs. Bounderby again, decided to throw of politics and leave Coketown at once. Which he did.

Into how much of futurity did Mr. Bounderby see, as he sat alone ? Had he any prescience of the day, five years to come, when Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown, was to die in a fit in the Coketown street ? Could he foresee Mr. Gradgrind, a white, haired man, making his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope and Charity, and no longer trying to grind that heavenly trio in his dusty little mills ? These things were to be.

Could Louisa, sitting alone in her father's house, and gazing into the fire, foresee the children years before her ? Could she picture a lonely brother, flying from England after robbery, and dying in a strange land ; conscious of his want of love and penitent ? These things were to be. Herself again a wife—a mother—lovingly watchful of her children, ever careful that they should have a childhood of the mind no less than a childhood of the body, as knowing it to be an even more beautiful thing, and a possession any hoarded scrap of which is a blessing and happiness to the wisest ? Such a thing was never to be.

"LITTLE DORRIT"

Thirty years ago there stood, a few doors short of the church of Saint George, in the Borough of Southwark, on the left-hand side of the way going southward, the Marshalsea Prison. It had stood there many years before, and it remained there some years afterwards; but it is gone now, and the world is none the worse without it.

A debtor had been taken to the Marshalsea Prison, a very amiable and very helpless middle aged gentleman, who was perfectly clear—like all the rest of them, the turnkey on the lock had said—that he was going out again directly.

The affairs of this debtor, a shy, retiring man, with a mild voice and irresolute hands, were perplexed by a partnership, of which he knew no more than that he had invested money in it.

"Out?" said the turnkey. "He'll never get out unless his creditors take him by shoulders, and shake him out!"

The next day the debtor's wife came to the Marshalsea, bringing with her a little boy of three, and a little girl of two.

"Two children," the turnkey observed to himself.

"And you another, which makes three; and your wife another, which makes four."

Six months later a little girl was born to the debtor, and when this child was eight years old, her mother, who had long been languishing died.

The debtor had long grown accustomed to the place. Crushed at first by his imprisonment, he had soon found a dull relief in it. His elder children played regularly about the yard. If he had been a man with strength of purpose, he might have broken the net that held him, or broken his heart : but being what he was, he slipped easily into this smooth descent, and never more took one step upward.

The shabby old debtor with the soft manners and the white hair became the father of the Marshalsea. And he grew to be proud of the title. All newcomers were presented to him. He was punctilious in the exaction of the ceremony. They were welcome to the Marshalsea, he would tell them.

It became a not unsual occurrence for letters to be put under his door at night, enclosing half-a-crown, two half-crowns, now and then, at long intervals, even half a sovereign, for the father of the Marshalsea. "With the compliments of a collegian taking leave." He received the gifts as tributes to a public character.

Later he established the custom of attending collegians of a certain standing to the gate, and taking leave of them there. The collegian under treatment would often wrap up something in a paper and give it to him, "for the father of the Marshalsea."

The youngest child of the father of the Marshalsea, born within the jail, was a very little creature indeed when she gained the knowledge that while her own light steps were free to pass beyond the prison gate her father's feet must never cross that line.

At thirteen she could read and keep accounts—that is could put down in words and figures how much the bare necessaries would cost, and how much less they had to buy them with. From the first she was inspired to be something which was not what the rest were, and to be that something for the sake of the rest. Recognised as useful even indispensable, she took the place of the eldest of the three, in all but precedence was the head of the fallen family, and bore on her own heart, its anxieties and shames. She had been, by snatches of a few weeks at a time, to an evening school outside, and got her sister and brother sent to day schools by desultory starts, during three or four years. There was no instruction for any of them at home ; but she knew well —no one better—that a man so broken as to be the Father of the Marshalsea, could be no father to his own children.

To these scanty means of improvement she added others. Her sister Fanny, having a great desire to learn dancing, the child of the Marshalsea persuaded a dancing-master, detained for a short line, to teach her. And Fanny became a dancer.

There was a ruined uncle in the family group, ruined by his brother, the Father of the Marshalsea, and knowing no

more how than his ruiner did, on whom Fanny's protection devolved. Naturally a retired and simple man, he had shown no particular sense of being ruined, further than that he left off working, when the shock was announced, and never took to that luxury any more. Having been a very indifferent musical amateur in his better days, when he fell with his brother he resorted for support to playing a clarionet in a small theatre orchestra. It was the theatre in which his niece became a dancer, and he accepted the task of serving as her escort and guardian.

To get her brother—christened Edward but called Tip—out of the prison was a more difficult task. Every post she obtained for him he always gave up, returning with the announcement that he was tired of it and had cut it.

One day he came back, and said he was in for good, that he had been taken for forty pounds odd. For the first time in all these years she sank under her cares. It was so hard to make Tip understand that the Father of the Marshalsea must not know the truth about his son.

For, the Father of Marshalsea, as he grew more dependent on the contributions of his changing family, made the greater stand by his forlorn gentility. So the pretence had to be kept up that neither of his daughters earned their bread.

The child of the Marshalsea learned needle-work of an insolvent milliner, and went out daily to work for a Mrs. Clenman.

This was the life and this the history of the child of the Marshalsea at twenty-two. Wordly wise in hard but poor necessities, she was innocent in all things else. This was the life, and this the history of Little Dorrit, now going home upon a dull September evening, and observed at a distance by Arthur Clenman. Arthur Clenman had returned to his mother's house—a dark and gloomy place—from the Far East they had noticed that Little Dorrit appeared at eight, and left at eight. She let herself out to do needlework, he was told. What became of her between the two eights was a mystery.

It was not easy for Arthur Clenman to make out Little Dorrit's face, she plied her needle in such retired corners. But it seemed to be a pale, transparent face. Quick in expression, though not beautiful in feature. A delicately bent head, a tiny form, a quick little pair of busy hands, and a shabby dress—shabby but very neat—was Little Dorrit as she sat at work.

Arthur Clenman watched Little Dorrit disappear within the outer gate of the Marshalsea, and presently stopped an old man to ask what place it was.

"This is the Marshalsea, sir."

"Can any one go in here ?"

"Anyone can go in" replied the old man, plainly implying "but it is not everyone who can go out."

"Pardon me once more. I am not impertinently curious. But are you familiar with the place ? Do you know the name of Dorrit here ?"

"My name sir" replied the old man, "is Dorrit."

Clenman explained that he had seen a young woman working at his mother's, spoken of as Little Dorrit, but had noticed he came in here, and that he was sincerely interested in her, and wanted to know something about her.

"I know very little of the world, sir," replied the old man, "it would not be worth while to mislead me. The young woman whom you saw go in is my brother's child. You say you have seen her at you mother's and have felt an interest in her, and wish to know what she does here. Come and see."

Arthur Clenman followed his guide to the room of the Father of the Marshalsea.

"I found this Gentleman," said the uncle—Mr. Clenman, William, son of Amy's friend—at the outer gate, wishful, as he was going by, of paying his respects. This is my brother William, Sir."

"Mr. Clenman" said William Dorrit, "you are welcome sir; pray sit down. I have welcomed many visitors here."

The Father of the Marshalsea went on to mention that he had been gratified by the testimonials of his visitors—"the very acceptable testimonials."

When Clenman left he presented his testimonial, and the next morning found him there again. He went out with Little Dorrit alone; asked her of she had ever heard his mother's name before.

"No, sir."

"I am not asking from any reason that can cause you anxiety. You think that at no time of your father's life was my name of Clenman ever familiar to him?"

"No, sir. And I hope you will not misunderstand my father; don't judge him, sir, as you would judge others outside the gates. He has been there so long."

They had walked some way before they returned. She was not working at Mrs. Clenman's that day.

The courtyard received them at last, and there he said good-bye to Little Dorrit. Little as she had always looked, she looked less than ever when he saw her going into the Marshalsea Lodge passage. Aware that his mother might have once averted the ruin of the Dorrit family, Clenman returned more than once to the Marshalsea. No word of love crossed his lips: he told Little Dorrit to think of him as an old man, old enough to be her father, and he besought her only to let him know, if at any time he could do her service. I press for no confidence now. I only ask you to repose unhesitating trust in me," he said.

"Can I do less than that when you are so good?"

"Then you will trust me fully? Will have no secret unhappiness or anxiety concealed from me?"

"Almost none."

But if Arthur Clenman kept silent, Little Dorrit was not without a lover. Years ago young John Chivery, the sentimental son of the turnkey, had eyed her with admiring wonder. There seemed to young John a fitness in the attachment. She, the child of the Marshalsea; he, the lock-keeper. Every Sunday young John presented cigars to the Father of the Marshalsea—who was glad to get them

—and one particular Sunday afternoon he mustered up courage to urge his suit.

Little Dorrit was out, walking in the Iron Bridge, when young John found her.

"Miss Amy" he stammered, "I have had for a long time—ages they seem to me—a heart-cherished wish to say something to you. May I say it? May I Miss Amy? I but ask the question humbly—may I say it? I know very well your family is far above mine. It were vain to conceal it. I know very well that your high-souled brother, and likewise your spirited sister spurn me from a height."

"If you please, John Chivery," Little Dorrit answered in a quiet way, "since you are so considerate as to ask me whether you shall say any more—if you please no."

"Never, Miss Amy?"

"No, if you please. Never."

"Oh, Lord;" gasped young John.

"When you think of us, John—I mean, my brother and sister and me—don't think of us as being any different from the rest; for whatever we once were we ceased to be long ago, and never can be any more. And good-bye, John I hope you will have a good wife one day; and be a happy man. I am sure you will deserve to be happy, and you will be John."

"Good-bye, Miss Amy, good-bye."

It turned out that Mr. Dorrit, being of the Dorrits of Dorsetshire, was heir-at-law to a great fortune. Inquiries and investigations confirmed it.

Arthur Clenman broke the news to Little Dorrit and together they went to the Marshalsea. William Dorrit was sitting in his old grey gown and his old black cap in the sunlight by the window when they entered. "Father, Mr. Clenman has brought me such joyful and wonderful intelligence about you ;"

Her agitation was great, and the old man put his hand suddenly to his heart, and looked at Clenman.

"Tell me, Mr. Dorrit, what surprise would be the most unlooked for and the most acceptable to you. Do not be afraid to imagine it, or say what it would be."

He looked steadfastly to Clenman, and, so looking at him, seemed to change into a very old haggard man. The sun was bright upon the wall beyond the window, and on the spikes at the top. He slowly stretched out the hand that had been on his heart, and pointed at the wall.

"It is down ; said Clenman. "Gone ! And in its place are the means to possess and enjoy the utmost that they have so long shut out. Mr. Dorrit, there is not the smallest doubt that within a few days you will be free and highly prosperous."

They had to fetch wine for the old man, and when he had swallowed a little he leaned back in his chair and cried. But he quickly recovered, and announced that everybody concerned should be nobly rewarded.

"No one, my dear sir, shall say that he has an unsatisfied claim against me. Everybody shall be remembered. I

will not go away from here in anybody's debt. I particularly wish to act me munificently, Mr. Clenman."

Clenman's offer of money for present contingencies was at once accepted.

"I am obliged to you for the temporary accommodation, sir. Exceedingly temporary, but well-timed—well-timed. Be so kind, sir, as to add the amount to former advances."

He grew more composed presently, and then when he seemed to be falling asleep unexpectedly sat up and said, Mr. Clenman, am I to understand, my dear sir, that I could pass through the lodge at his moment, and take a walk ?"

I think not, Mr. Dorrit," was the unwilling reply. "There are certain forms to be completed. It is but a few hours now."

"A few hours, sir ;" he returned in a sudden passion. "You talk very easily of hours sir ; How long do you suppose, sir, that an hour is to a man who is choking for want of air ?"

It was his last demonstration for that time, but in the interval before the day of his departure he was very imperious with the lawyers concerned in his release, and a good deal of business was transacted.

Mr. Arthur Clenman received a cheque for £24-9s.-8d. from the solicitors of Edward Dorrit Esq.—once "Tip"—with a note that the favour of the advance now repaid had not been asked of him.

To the applictaions made by the collegians within the so-soon-to-be-orphaned Marshalsea for small sums of money

Mr. Dorrit responded with the greatest liberality. He also invited the whole college to a comprehensive entertainment in the yard, and went about among the company on that occasion and took notice of individuals, like a baron of the olden time, in a rare good humour.

" And now the final hour arrived when he and his family were to leave the prison for ever. The carriage was reported ready in the outer courtyard. Mr. Dorrit and his brother proceed arm-in-arm. Edward Dorrit Esq. and his sister Fanny followed also arm-in-arm.

There was not a collegian within doors, nor a turnkey absent, as they crossed the yard. Mr. Dorrit—whose meat and drink had often been bought with money presented by some of those who stood to watch him go—yielding to the vast speculation of how the poor creatures were to get on without him, was great and sad but not absorbed—he petted children on the head like Sir Roger de Coverley going to church, spoke to the people in the background by their Christian names, and condescended to all present.

At last three honest cheers announced that he had passed the gate, and that the Marshalsea was an orphan.

Only when the family had got into their carriage, and not before, Miss Fanny exclaimed, " Good gracious ! Where is Amy ?"

Her father had thought she was with her sister. Her sister had thought she was " somewhere or other." They had all trusted to finding her, as they had always done quietly at the right place at the right moment. This going away

was perhaps the very first action of their joint lives that they had just got through without her.

" Now I do say, Pa ", cried Miss Fanny flushed and indignant, " that this is disgraceful ! Here is that child Amy in her ugly old shabby dress. Disgracing us at the last moment by being carried out in that dress after all. And by that Mr. Clenman too ; "

Clenman appeared at the carriage door, bearing the little insensible figure in his arms.

" She has been forgotten," he said. " I ran up to her room and found the door open, and that she had fainted on the floor."

They received her in the carriage, and the attendant getting between Clenman and the carriage door, with a sharp " By your leave, sir ;" bundled up the steps, and drove away.

The Dorrit family travelled abroad in handsome style, and in due time Miss Fanny married.

A sudden seizure carried off old Mr. Dorrit, and he died thinking himself back in the Marshalsea. His brother Frederick, stricken with grief, did not long survive him.

Arthur Clenman who had gone into partnership with a friend named Doyce, unfortunately invested his money in the financial schemes of Mr. Merdle, the greatest swindler of the day ; and when the crash came, and Merdle committed suicide, Clenman with hundreds of other innocent persons was involved in the general ruin.

Doyce was working at the time in Germany, and it was some weeks before he could be found; in the meantime, Clenman, being insolvent, was taken to the Marshalsea.

Mr. Chivery was on the lock, and young John was in the lodge when the Marshalsea was reached. The elder Mr. Chivery shook hands with him in a shame-faced kind of way, and said, "I don't call to mind, sir, as I was ever less glad to see you."

The prisoner followed young John up the old staircase into the old room. "I thought you'd like the room, and here it is for you," said young John.

Young John waited upon him; and it was young John who explained that he did this not on the ground of the prisoner's merits, but because of the merits of another, of one who loved the prisoner. Clenman tried to argue to himself the improbability of Little Dorrit loving him but he wasn't altogether successful.

He fell ill, and it was Little Dorrit whose living presence first cheered him when he returned from the world of feverish dreams and shadows.

He did his best to dissuade her from coming. He was a ruined man and the time when Little Dorrit and the prison had anything in common had long gone by.

But still she came and often read to him. And one day she told him that all her money had gone as his had gone, lost in the Merdle whirlpool, and that her sister Fanny's was lost, too, in the same way.

"I have nothing in the world. I am as poor as when I lived here. When papa came over to England, just before his death, he confided everything he had to the same hands, and it is all swept away. Oh, my dearest and best, are you quite sure you will not share my fortune with me?"

Locked in his arms, held to his heart, she drew the slight hand round his neck, and clasped it in its fellow-hand.

Of course when Doyce who was a thoroughly good fellow, and successful to boot, found out his partner's plight, he came back and put things right, and the business was soon set going again.

And on the very day of his release, Arthur Clenman and Little Dorrit went into the neighbouring church of St. George, and were married.

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES"

A large cask of wine had been dropped and broken in the street. All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. Some kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and tried to sip before the wine had all run out between their fingers. Others dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women's heads. A shrill sound of laughter resounded in the street while this wine game lasted.

The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet and many wooden shoes. One tall joker so besmirched scrawled upon a wall, with his finger dipped in muddy wine lees, "Blood."

And now that the cloud settled on saint Antoine, which a momentary gleam had driven from his sacred countenance, the darkness of it was heavy—cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, and want were the lords in waiting on the saintly presence. The children had ancient faces and grave voices; and upon them and upon the grown faces, and ploughed into every furrow of age, and coming up afresh, was the sign—Hunger.

The master of the wine-shop outside of which the cask had been broken turned back to his shop when the struggle

for the wine was ended. Monsieur Defarge was a dark bull-necked man, good-humoured looking on the whole, but implacable-looking too. Three men who had been drinking at the counter paid for their wine and left. An elderly gentleman, who had been sitting in a corner with a young lady, advanced, introduced himself as Mr. Jarvis Lorry, of Tellson's Bank, London, and begged the favour of a word.

The conference was very short, but very decided. It had not lasted a minute, when Monsieur Defarge nodded and went out, follwed by Mr. Lorry and the young lady.

He led them through a stinking little black courtyard, and up a staircase to a dim garret, where a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping and very busy, making shoes.

"You are still hard at work. I see" said Monsieur Defarge.

A pair of haggard eyes looked at the questioner, and a very faint voice replied, "Yes, I am working."

"Here is a visitor. Show him that shoe and tell him the maker's name."

There was a long pause and the shoemaker asked, "What did you say ?"

Defarge repeated his words.

"It is a lady's shoe", answered the shoemaker.

"And the maker's name ?"

"One Hundred and Five, North Tower."

" Dr. Manette," said Mr. Lorry, looking steadfastly at him, " do you remember nothing of me ? Do you remember nothing of Defarge—your old servant ?"

As the Bastille captive of many years gazed at them, marks of intelligence forced themselves through the mist that had fallen on him. They were fainter ; they were gone, but they had been there. The young lady moved forward, with tears streaming from her eyes, and kissed him. He took up her golden hair and looked at it ; then drew from his breast a folded rag, and opened it carefully. It contained a little quantity of hair. He took the girl's hair into his hand again.

" It is the same. How can it be ? She had a fear of my going that night. Was it you ?" He turned upon her with a frightful suddenness. But his vigour swiftly died out, and he gloomily shook his head. " No, no, no ; It can't be."

She fell on her knees and clasped his neck. " If you hear in my voice any resemblance to a voice that was once sweet music in your ears, weep for it—weep for it ; Thank God " she cried. " I feel his sacred tears upon my face ; leave us here," she said. And, as the darkness closed in, they left father and daughter together.

They came back at night. A coach stood outside the courtyard, and the lately released prisoner, in scared, blank wonder, began the journey that was to end in England and rest.

In the dimly-lighted passages of the old Bailey, Dr. Manette, his daughter and Mr. Lorry stood by Mr. Charles Darnay—just acquitted on charge of high treason—congratulating him on his escape from death.

It was difficult to recognise in Dr. Manette, intellectual of face and upright in bearing, the shoemaker of the Garret in Paris. He and his daughter had been unwilling witnesses for the prosecution, called to give evidence that might be distorted into corroboration of a paid spy's falsehoods as to Darnay's dealings with the French King.

Darnay kissed Lucy Manette's hand fervently and gratefully, and warmly thanked his counsel Mr. Stryver. As he watched them go, a person who had been leaning against the wall, slipped up to him, It was Mr. Carton, a barrister, who had sat throughout the trial with his whole attention seemingly concentrated upon the ceiling of the court. Every body had been struck with the extraordinary resemblance, cleverly used by the defending counsel to confound a witness, between Mr. Carton and Mr. Darnay. Mr. Carton was shabbily dressed, and did not appear to be quite sober.

"This must be a strange night to you," said Carton with a laugh.

"I hardly seem yet," returned Dornay, "to belong to this world again."

"Then why the devil don't you dine ?"

He led him to a tavern where Darnay recruited his trength with a good plain dinner. Carton drank, but ate nothing.

"Now your dinner is done," said Carton "why don't you give your toast?"

"What toast?"

"Why, it's on the tip of your tongue."

"Miss Manette then!"

Carton drank the toast, and flung his glass over his shoulder against the wall, where it shivered in pieces.

After Darnay had gone, Carton drank and slept till ten o'clock, and then walked to the chambers of Mr. Stryver, Mr. Stryver was a glib man, and an unscrupulous and a bold, and was fast shouldering his way to a lucrative practice; but it had been noted that he had not the striking and necessary faculty of extracting evidence from a heap of statements. A remarkable improvement, however, came upon him as to this. Sydney Carton, idlest and most unpromising of men, was his great ally. What the two drank together would have floated a King's ship.

Stryver never had a case in hand but what Carton was there, with his hands in his pockets, staring at the ceiling. At last it began to get about that, although Sydney Carton would never be a lion, he was an amazingly good jackal, and that he rendered service to Stryver in that humble capacity. Folding wet towels on his head in a manner hideous to behold, the jackal began the "boiling down" of cases, while Stryver reclined before the fire. Each had bottles and glasses ready to his hand. The work was not done until the clocks were striking three.

Climbing to a high chamber in a well of houses, Carton threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed. Sadly, sadly, the sun rose. It rose upon no sadder sight than the man of good ability and good emotions, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight upon him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away.

" Dear Dr. Manette " said Charles Darnay, " I love your daughter fondly, devotedly. If ever there were love in the world I love her."

Dr. Manette turned towards him in his chair, but did not look at him or raise her eyes.

" Have you spoken to Lucie ?" he asked.

" No."

The doctor looked up : a struggle was evidently in his face—a struggle with that look he still sometimes wore with a tendency in it to dark doubt and dread.

" If Lucie should ever tell me " he said, " that you are essential to her perfect happiness, I will give her to you."

" Your confidence in me ", answered Darnay, relieved, ought to be returned with full confidence on my part. I am, as you know, like yourself, a voluntary exile from France. The name I bear at present is not my own. I wish to tell you what that is, and why I am in England.

" Stop ;"

The doctor laid his two hands on Darnay's lips.

" Tell me when I ask you, not now. Go ! God bless you !"

On a day shortly before the marriage, while Lucie was sitting at her work alone, Sydney Carton entered.

" I fear you are not well, Mr. Carton," she said looking up at him.

" No ; but the life I lead is not conducive to health."

" Is it not—forgive me—a pity to live no better life ?"

" It is too late for that." He covered his eyes with his hand. " Will you hear me ?" he continued. " Since I have known you, I have been troubled by a remorse that I thought would never reproach me again. A dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing ; but let me carry through the rest of my misdirected life the remembrance that I opened my heart to you, last of all the world."

" Mr. Carton " she answeverd, after an agitated pause, " I promise to respect your secret."

" God bless you : My last application is this, that you will believe that for you, and for any dear to you I would do anything. Oh, Miss Manette, think now and then that there is a man who would give his life to keep a life you love beside you."

He said " farewell " and left her.

A wonderful corner for echoes was the quiet street-corner near Soho Square where Dr. Manette lived with his daughter and her husband. But Lucie heard in the echoes none but pleasing and soothing sounds. Her husband's step was strong and prosperous among them ; her father's firm and equal. The time came when a little Lucie lay on her

bosom. But there were other echoes that rumbled menacingly in the distance, with a sound as of a great storm in France, with a dreadful sea rising.

It was August of the year 1792, Charles Darnay talked in a low voice with Mr. Lorry in Tellson's Bank. The bank had a branch in Paris, and the London establishment was the headquarters of the aristocratic emigrants who had fled from France.

"And do you really go to Paris to-night?" Asked Darnay.

"I do. You can have no conception of the peril in which our books and papers over yonder are involved, and the getting them out of harm's way is in the power of scarcely any one but myself."

As Mr. Lorry spoke a letter was laid before him. Darnay saw the direction—it was to himself. "To Monsieur heretofore the Marquis St. Evrémonde." Horrified at the oppression and cruelty of his family towards the people, Darnay had left his native country and had never used the title that had, some years before, fallen to him by inheritance. He had told his secret to Dr. Manette on the wedding morning and to none other.

"I know the man," he said.

"Will you take charge of the title and deliver it?" asked Mr. Lorry.

"I will."

When alone; Darnay opened the letter. It was from the steward of his French estate. The man had been

charged with acting for an emigrant against the people. It was in vain he had urged that by the Marquis's instructions he had acted for the people—had remitted all rents and imports. The only response was that he had acted for an emigrant. Nothing but the Marquis's personal testimony could save him from execution.

Could he resist his old servant's appeal ? He knew the peril of it, but his honour was at stake ; he must go. That evening he wrote two letters explaining his purpose, one to Lucie, one to the doctor. On the next night he went out, pretending he would be back by-and-by. The two letters he left with a trusty porter to be delivered before midnight ; and with a heavy heart, leaving all that was dear on earth behind him, he journeyed on—drawn, like the mariner in the old story, to the Lodestone Rock.

In the buildings of Tellson's Bank in Paris Mr. Lorry sat by a wood fire (it was early September, but the blighted year was prematurely cold), and on his honest face there was a deeper shade than the pendant lamp could throw—a shade of horror. By him sat Dr. Manette ; Lucie and his child were in an inner room. They had hastened after Darnay to Paris. Dr. Manette knew that as a Bastille prisoner he bore a charmed life in revolutionary France, and that if Darnay was in danger, he could help him. Darnay was indeed in danger. He had been arrested as an aristocrat and an enemy of the republic.

From the streets there came the usual night hum of the city, with now and then an indescribable ring in it, weird

and unearthly, as if some unwonted sounds of a terrible nature were going up to heaven.

A loud noise of feet and voices came pouring into the courtyard. Mr. Lorry put his hand on the doctor's arm and they looked out.

A throng of men and women crowded round a grindstone. Turning madly at its double handle were two men, whose faces were more horrible and cruel than the visages of the wildest savages. The eye could not detect one creature in the surrounding group free from the smear of blood. Shouldering one another to get next, at the sharpening-stone were men with the stain all over their limbs and bodies; hatchets, knives, bayonets, swords, all were red with it.

"They are murdering the prisoners," whispered Mr. Lorry.

Dr. Manette hastened out of the room and down into the courtyard. There was a pause, a murmur, and the sound of his voice. Then Mr. Lorry saw him surrounded by all; hurried out with cries of "Live the Bastille prisoner! Help for the Bastille prisoner's kindred in La Force!"

It was long ere he returned. He had presented himself at the prison before the self-appointed tribunal that was consigning the prisoners to massacre, and had announced himself as a victim of the Bastille. One member of the tribunal had identified him; the member was Defarge. He had pleaded hard for his son-in-law's life, and had been informed that the prisoner must remain in custody; but should for the doctor's sake he held in safe custody.

For fifteen months Charles Darnay remained in prison. During all that time Lucie was never sure but that her husband's neck would be struck off next day. When at length arraigned as an emigrant whose life was forfeit to the republic he pleaded that he had come back to save a citizen's life. That night he sat by the fire with his family, a free man. Lucie at last was at ease.

" What is that ?" she cried suddenly.

There was a knock at the door ; for armed men in red caps entered the room.

" Evrémonde " said the first, " you are again the prisoner of the republic."

" Why ?" he asked with his wife and child clinging to him.

" You will know to-morrow."

" One word," entreated the doctor, " who has denounced him ?"

" The citizen Defarge, and another."

" What other ?"

" Citizen " said the man with a strange look, " you will be answered to-morrow."

The news that Darnay had been again arrested was brought to Mr. Lorry later in the evening, and the man who brought it was Sydney Carton. He had come to Paris, he said, on business ; his business was now completed, he was about to return, and he had obtained his leave to pass.

" Darnay," he said, " cannot escape condemnation this time."

" I fear not," answered Mr. Lorry.

" I have found," continued Carton, " that the old Bailey spy who charged Darnay with high treason years ago is now in the service of the Republic and is a turnkey at the prison of the Conciergerie where Darnay is confined. By threatening to denounce him as a spy of Pitt I have secured that I shall gain access to Darnay in prison if the trial should go against him.

" But access to him ", said Mr. Lorry ; " will not save him."

" I never said it would."

" Mr. Lorry looked at him mystified, and once more noted his strong resemblance to the man whose fate was to be decided on the morrow.

Carton stood next day in an obscure corner among the crowd when Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay appeared again before the judges.

" Who denounces the accused ?" asked the president.

" Ernest Defarge, wine-vendor."

" Good."

" Alexandre Manette, physician."

" President," cried the doctor pale and trembling, " I indignantly protest to you."

" Citizen Manette, be silent ; call citizen Defarge."

Rapidly Defarge told his story. He had been among the leaders in the taking of the Bastille. When the citadel had fallen, he had gone to the cell One Hundred and Five, North

Tower, and had searched it. In a hole in the chimney he had found a paper in the handwriting of Dr. Manette.

" Let it be read " said the president.

In this paper Dr. Manette had written the history of his imprisonment. In the year 1757 he had been taken secretly by two nobles to visit two poor people who were on the point of death. One was a woman whom one of the nobles had forcibly carried off from her husband : the other, her brother, whom the seducer had mortally wounded. The doctor had come too late ; both the woman and her brother died. The doctor refused a fee, and, to relieve his mind, wrote privately to the government stating the circumstances of the crime. One night he was called out of his home on a false pretext, and taken to the Bastille.

The nobles were the Marquis de St. Evrémonde and his brother ; and the Marquis was the father of Charles Darnay. A terrible sound arose in the court when the reading was done. The voting of the jury was unanimous, and at every vote there was a roar. Death in twenty-four hours !

That night Carton again came to Mr. Lorry. Between the two men as they spoke, a figure on a chair rocked itself to and fro moaning. It was Dr. Manette.

" He and Lucie and her child must leave Paris to-morrow," said Carton. " They are in danger of being denounced. It is a capital crime to mourn for, or sympathise with a victim of the guillotine. Be ready to start at two o'clock to-morrow afternoon. See them into their seats ;

take your own seat. The moment I come to you, take me in and drive away.

" It shall be done."

Carton turned to the couch where Lucie lay unconscious, prostrated with utter grief.

He bent down, touched her face with his lips, and muttered some words. Little Lucie told them afterwards that she heard him say.

" A life you love."

In the black prison of the Conciergerie, the doomed of the day awaited their fate. Fifty-two persons that afternoon were to roll on the life tide of the city to the boundless, everlasting sea.

The hours went on as Darnay walked to and fro in his cell and the clocks struck the numbers he would never hear again. The final hour he knew was Three, and he expected to be summoned at two. The clocks struck one. " There is but another now " he thought.

He heard footsteps. The door was opened, and there stood before him, quiet, intent, and smiling Sydney Carton.

" Darnay " he said, " I bring you a request from your wife."

" What is it ?"

" There is no time—you must comply. Take off your boots and coat, and put on mine."

" Carton, there is no escaping from this place. It is madness."

" Do I ask you to escape ?" said Carton, forcing the changes upon him.

" Now sit at the table and write what I dictate.

" To whom do I address it ?"

" To no one "

" If you remember " said Carton dictating, " the words that passed between us long ago, you will comprehend this when you see it. I am thankful that the time has come when I can prove them." Carton's hand was withdrawn from his breast, and slowly and softly moved down the writer's face. For a few seconds Darnay struggled faintly, Carton's hand held firmly at his nostrils ; then he fell senseless to the ground.

Carton called quietly to the turnkey, who looked in and went again as Carton was putting the paper in Darnay's breast. He came back with two men. They raised the unconscious figure and carried it away.

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote suspicion or alarm. There was none. Presently his door opened, and a gaoler looked in, merely saying, " Follow me," whereupon Carton followed him into a dark room. As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, a young woman, with a slight girlish figure, came to speak to him.

" Citizen Evrémonde ", she said, " I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force."

He murmured an answer.

"I heard you were released."

"I was, and was taken again and condemned."

"If I may ride with you, will you let me hold your hand?"

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them.

"Are you dying for him?" she whispered. "Oh, you will let me hold your hand?"

"Hush; yes, my poor sister; to the last."

That afternoon a coach going out of Paris drove up to the Barrier. "Papers!" demanded the guard. The papers are handed out and read.

"Alexandre Manette, Lucie Manette, her child, Jarvis, Lorry, banker, English, Sydney Carton, advocate, English. Which is he?"

"He lies here, in a corner, apparently in a swoon. He is in bad health.

"Behold your papers, countersigned."

"One can depart, citizen?"

"One can depart."

The ministers of Sainte Guillotine are robed and ready. Crash!—and the women who sit with their knitting in front of the guillotine count one, Crash!—and the women count two.

The supposed Evrémonde descends with the seamstress from the tumbril, and joins the fast-thinning throng of victims before the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls. The spare hand does not tremble as he grasps it. She

goes next before him—is gone. The knitting women count twenty-two.

The murmuring of many voices, the pressing on of many footsteps on the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-three.

They said of him about the city that night that it was the peacefullest man's face ever beheld there. Had he given utterance to his thoughts at the front of the scaffold, they would have been these !

" It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done : it is a far, far better rest than I go to that I have ever known."

"GREAT EXPECTATIONS"

My father's family name being Pirrip and my Christian name Phillip, I called myself with my infant tongue Pip, and came to be called Pip.

My first most vivid impression of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon, one Christmas Eve. Ours was the marsh country, down the river within twenty miles of the sea ; and I had wandered into a bleak place overgrown with nettles called a churchyard.

"Hold your noise" cried a terrible voice as a man started up from the groves by the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man who had been soaked in water and smothered in mud, and cut by stones ; who limped and shivered and glared and growled.

"Oh! don't cut my throat, sir" I pleaded in terror, "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name ; Quick."

"Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man.

"Point out the place. Who d'ye live with?"

I pointed to where our village was and said, "with my sister, sir—Mrs. Joe Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir."

" Blacksmith, eh ? " said he, and looked down at his leg. Then he took me by the arms. " Now lookee here. You know what a file is ?"

" Yes, sir."

" And you know what wittles is ?"

" Yes, sir."

" You get me a file, and you get me wittles. You bring 'em both to me, or I'll have your heart and liver out. You bring the lot to me to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me at the old battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word concerning your having seen me, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partikler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate. Now what do you say ?"

I said I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

As soon as the darkness outside my little window was shot with grey, I got up and went downstairs. I stole some bread some rind of cheese, about half a jar of mincemeat (which I tied up in my pocket handkerchief), some brandy from a stone bottle (which I decanted into a glass bottle I had used for Spanish liquorice water up in my room) a meat bone with very little on it, and a beautiful round pork pie.

There was a door in the kitchen communicating with the forge ; I unlocked and unbolted that door, got a file from

among Joe's tools, put the fastenings as I had found them, and ran for the marshes.

It was a rainy morning and very damp. I knew my way to the Battery, for I had been down there on a Sunday with Joe, and had just scrambled up the mound beyond the ditch when I saw the man sitting before me—with his back towards me.

I touched him on the shoulder, and he instantly jumped up and it was not the same man but another man—dressed in coarse grey, too, with a great iron on his leg.

He aimed a blow at me and then ran into the mist, stumbling as he went, and I lost him.

I was soon at the battery after that, and there was the right man waiting for me. He was awfully cold. And his eyes looked awfully hangry.

He devoured the food, music-meat, meat-bone, bread cheese, and pork-pie all at once—more like a man who was putting it away somewhere in a violent hurry, than a man who was eating it, only stopping from time to time to listen.

"You 're not a deceiving imp? You brought no one with you?"

"No, sir; No."

"Well," said he, "I believe you. You'd be but a fierce young hound indeed if at your time of life you could help to hunt a wretched warmint hunted as near death and dung hill as this poor wretched warmint is."

While he was eating I mentioned that I had just seen another man dressed like him, and with a badly bruised face.

"Not here!" he exclaimed, striking his left cheek.

"Yes, there!"

He swore he would pull him down like a bloodbound, and then crammed what little food was left into the breast of his grey jacket, and began to file at the iron like a madman. So I thought the best thing I could do was to slip off home.

I must have been about ten years old when I went to Miss Havishman's and first met Estella.

My uncle Pumblechook who kept a cornchandler's shop in the high street of the town, took me to the large old dismal house, which had all its windows barred. For miles round everyone had heard of Miss Havisham as an immensely rich and grim lady, who led a life of seclusion; and every body soon knew that Mr. Pumblechook had been commissioned to bring her a boy.

He left me at the courtyard and a young lady, who was very pretty and seemed very proud, let me in, and I noticed that the passages were all dark, and that there was a candle burning. My guide who called me "boy", but was really about my own age, was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and twenty and a queen. She led me to Miss Havisham's room, and there in an armchair, with her elbow resting on the table, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or ever shall see.

She was dressed in rich materials—satins, and lace and silks—all of white—or rather, which had been white, but like all else in the room were now faded yellow. Her shoes were white, and she had a long white veil dependent from her hair ; but her hair was white. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress.

" Who is it ?" said the lady at the table.

" Pip ma'am, Mr. Pumblechook's boy."

" Come nearer : let me look at you, come close you are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born ?"

" No, ma'am."

" Do you know what I touch here ?" she said, laying her hands one upon the other, on her left side.

" Yes ma'am, your heart."

" Broken !" She was silent for a little while, and then added. " I am tired ; I want diversion."

" Play, play, play !"

What was an unfortunate boy to do ? I did'nt know how to play.

" Call Estella," said the lady. " Call Estella, at the door."

It was a dreadful thing to be bawling " Estella " to a scornful young lady in a mysterious passage in an unknown house, but I had to do it. And Estella came, and I heard her say in answer to Miss Havisham " Play with this boy ; why, he is a common labouring boy !"

I thought I overheard Miss Havisham answer, " Well ! You can break his heart."

We played at beggar my neighbour, and before the game was out, Estella said disdainfully, "he calls the knaves Jacks, this boy ; and what coarse hands he has ; and what thick boots!"

I was very glad to get away. My coarse hands and my common boats had never troubled me before ; but they troubled me now, and I determined to ask Joe why he had taught me to call those picture cards jacks which ought to be called knaves.

For a long time I went once a week to this strange gloomy house—it was called satis house—and once Estella told me I might kiss her.

And then Miss Havisham decided I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and gave him £ 25 for the purpose ; and I left off going to see her, and helped Joe in the forge. But I didn't like Joe's trade, and I was afflicted by that most miserable thing—to feel ashamed of home.

I couldn't resist paying Miss Havisham a visit ; and. not seeing Estella, stammered that I hoped she was well.

"Abroad", said Miss Havisham ; "educating for a lady ; far out of reach ; prettier then ever ; admired by all who see her, do you feel that you have lost her ?"

I was spared the trouble of answering by being dismissed, and went home dissatisfied and uncomfortable, thinking myself coarse and common, and wanting to be a gentleman.

It was in the fourth year of my apprenticeship when, one Saturday night, Joe and I were up at the Three Jolly Bargemen, according to our custom.

A stranger, who did not recognise me ; but whom I recognised as a gentleman I had met on the stairs at Miss Havisham's, was in the room : and on his asking for a blacksmith named Gargery and his apprentice named Pip, and being answered, said he wanted to have a private conference with us two.

Joe took him home, and the stranger told us his name was Jaggers, and that he was a lawyer in London.

"Now, Joseph Gargery, I am the bearer of an offer to relieve you of this young fellow, your apprentice. You would not object to cancel his indentures at his request and for his good ?"

"No", said Joe.

"The communication I have got to make to this young fellow is that he has great expectations."

Joe and I gasped and looked at one another.

"I am instructed to tell him," said Mr. Jaggers, "that he will come into a handsome property. Further, it is the desire of the present possessor of that property that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life, and be brought up as a gentleman, and that he always bear the name of Pip. Now, you are to understand that the name of the person who is your liberal benefactor remains a profound secret, until the person chooses to reveal it, and you are most positively prohibited from making any inquiry on this head. If you have a suspicion, keep it in your own breast."

Mr. Jaggers went on to say that if I accepted the expectations on these terms, there was already money in hand for my education and maintenance. and that one Mr. Matthew Pocket, in London (whom I knew to be a relation of Miss Havisham's) could be my tutor if I was willing to go to him, say in a week's time. Of course I accepted this wonderful good fortune, and had no doubt in my own mind that Miss Havisham was my benefactress.

When Mr. Jaggers asked Joe whether he desired any compensation, Joe laid his hand upon my shoulder with the touch of a woman. " Pip is that dearly welcome " said Joe, " to go free with his services. to honour and fortune, as no words can tell him. But if you think as money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child— what come to the forge—and ever the best of friends ;" He scooped his eyes with his desengaged hand but said not another word.

I went to London, and studied with Mr. Matthew Pocket, and shared rooms with his son Herbert (who, knowing my earlier life, decided to call me Handel) first in Barnard's Inn and later in the Temple.

On my twenty-first birthday I received £500, and this (unknown to Herbert) I managed to make over to my friend to secure him a managership in a business house.

My studies were not directed in any professional channel, but were pursued with a view to my being equal to any emergencey when my expectations, which I had been told to look forward to were fulfiilled.

Estella was often in London, and I met her at many houses, and was desperately on love with her. But though she treated me with friendship, she was proud and capricious as ever, and a few years later married a man whom I knew and detested—a Mr. Bently Drummle, a bully and a scoundrel.

When I was three-and-twenty, I happened to be alone one night in our chambers reading, for I had a taste for books. Herbert was away at Marseilles on a business journey.

The clocks had struck eleven, and I closed my books. I was still listening to the clocks, when I heard a footstep on the staircase, and started. The staircase lights were blown out by the wind, and I took my reading lamp and went out to see who it was.

"There is someone there, is there not ?"

I called out. "What floor do you want ?"

"The top—Mr. Pip."

"That is my name. There is nothing the matter ?"

"Nothing the matter ", said the voice. And the man came on.

I made out that the man was roughly but substantially dressed ; that he had iron-grey hair ; that his age was about sixty ; that he was a muscular man, hardened by exposure to weather. I saw nothing that in the least explained him, but I saw that he was holding out both his hands to me.

I could not recall a single feature, but I knew him. No need to take a file from his pocket and show it to me. I

knew my convict, in spite of the intervening years, as distinctly as I knew him in the churchyard when we first stood face to face.

He sat down on a chair that stood before the fine, and covered his forehead with his large brown hands.

"You acted nobly, my boy," said he.

I told him that I hoped he had mended his way of life, and was doing well.

"I've done wonderful well," he said. And then he asked me if I was doing well. And when I mentioned that I had been chosen to succeed to some property, he asked whose property? And, after that, if my lawyer—guardian's name began with "J."

All the truth of my position came flashing on me, and quickly I understood that Miss Havisham's intentions towards me were all a mere dream.

"Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman on you; It's me wot has done it; I swore that time, sure as ever I earned a guniea, that guniea should go to you. I swore afterwards, sure as ever I speculated and got rich, that you should get rich. Look'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son—more to me nor any son. I've put away money, only for you to spend. You ain't looked sowly forward to this as I have. You wasn't prepared for this as Iwas. It wasn't easy, Pip, for me to leave them parts, nor it was'nt safe. Look'ee here, dear boy; caution is necessary."

"How do you mean?" I said. "Caution?"

"I was sent for life. It's death to come back. There's been overmuch coming back of late years, and I should of a certainty be hanged if took."

As Herbert was away I put the man in the spare room, and gave out that he was my uncle.

He told me something of his story next day, and when Herbert came back, and we had found a bed-room for our visitor in Essex-street, he told us all of it. His name was Magwitch—Abel Magwitch—he called himself Provis now—and he had been left by a travelling tinker to grow up alone. "In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail—that's my life pretty much, down to such times as I got shipped off, arter Pip stood my friend." But there was a man who "set up for a gentleman, named Compeyson," and this Compeyson's business was swindling, forging, and stolen banknote passing. Magwitch became his servant, and when both men were arrested, Compeyson turned round on the man whom he had employed, and got off with seven years to Magwitch's fourteen. Compeyson was the second convict of my childhood.

On consideration of the case, and after consultation with Mr. Jaggers who corroborated the statement that a colonist named Abel Magwitch, of New South Wales, was my benefactor, and admitted that a Mr. Provis had written to him on behalf of Magwitch, concerning my address, we decided that the best thing to be done was to take a lodging for Mr. Provis on the riverside below the Pool, at Mill Pond Bank.

It was out of the way, and in case of danger it would be easy to get away by a packet steamer.

The only danger was from Compeyson—for he had gone in terror of his life, and feared the vengeance of the man he had betrayed.

We were soon warned that Compeyson was aware of the return of his enemy, and that flight was necessary. Both Herbert and I noticed how quickly Provis had become softened and on the night when we were to take him on board a Hamburg steamer he was very gentle.

We were out in mid-stream in a small rowing-boat, moving quietly with the tide, when, just as the Hamburg steamer came in sight, a four-oared galley ran aboard of us, and the man who held the lines in it called out, "You have a returned transport there. That's the man wrapped in the cloak. His name is Abel Magwitch—otherwise Provis. I call upon him to surrender, and you to assist."

At once there was great confusion. The steamer was right upon us, and I heard the order given to stop the paddles. In the same moment I saw the steersman of the galley lay his hand upon the prisoner's shoulder, and the prisoner start up, lean across his captor, and pull the cloak from a shrinking man in the galley. Still in the same moment I saw that the face disclosed was the face of the other convict of long ago, and white terror was on it. Then I heard a cry and a loud splash in the water, and for an instant I seemed to struggle with a thousand mill-weirs ; the instant past, I was taken on board the galley. Herbert was there but our boat was

gone, and the two convicts were gone. Presently we saw a man swimming but not swimming easily, and knew him to be Magwitch. He was taken on board, and instantly manacled at the wrists and ankles.

It was not till we had pulled up and had landed at the riverside, that I could get some comforts for Magwitch, who had received injury in the chest, and a deep cut in the head. He told me that he believed himself to have gone under the keel of the steamer, and to have been struck on the head in the rising. The injury to his chest he thought he had received against the side of the galley. He added that Compeyson, in the moment of his laying his hand on his cloak to identify him, had staggered up and back, and they had both gone overboard together, locked in each other's arms. He had desengaged himself under water, and swam away.

He was taken to the police-court next day, and committed for trial at the next session, which would come on in a month.

" Dear boy," he said. " Lookee here, It's best as a gentleman should not be knowed to belong to me now."

" I will never stir from your side", said I, when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me ;"

When the sessions came round, the trial was very short, and very clear, and the capital sentence was pronounced. But the prisoner was very ill. Two of his ribs had been

broken and one of his lungs seriously injured, and ten days before the date fixed for his execution death set him free.

" Dear boy," he said, as I sat down by his bed on the last day, " I thought you was late. But I knowed you couldn't be that, You've never deserted me, dear boy."

I pressed his hand in silence.

" And what's the best of all," he said, " You've been more comfortable along of me since I was under a dark cloud than when the sun shone. That's best of all."

He had spoken his last word, and holding my hand in his passed away.

And with his death ended my expectations, for the pocket-book containing his wealth went to the crown.

Herbert took me into his business, and I became a clerk, and afterwards went abroad to take charge of the eastern branch, and when many a year had gone round, became a partner.

It was eleven years later when I was down in the marshes again. I had been to see Joe Gargery, who was as friendly as ever, and had strolled on to where Salem House once stood. I had been told of Miss Havisham's death, and also of the death of Estella's husband.

Nothing was left of the old house but the garden wall, and as I stood looking along the desolate garden walk a solitary figure came up. I saw it stop and half turn away, and then let me come up to it. It faltered as if much surprised, and uttered my name, and I cried out, " Estella."

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place ; and as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

"OUR MUTUAL FRIEND"

It was at a dinner-party that Mortimer Lightwood, Solicitor, at the request of Lady Tippins told the story of the man from somewhere.

"Upon my life," says Mortimer languidly, "I can't fix him with a local habitation; but he comes from the place, the name of which escapes me, where they make the wine.

"The man", Mortimer goes on, "whose name is Harmon, was the only son of a tremendous old rascal, who made his money by dust, as a dust contractor. This venerable parent, displeased with his son, turns him out of doors. The boy takes flight, gets aboard ship, turns up on dry land among the cape wine; small proprietor, farmer, grower,—whatever you like to call it. Venerable parent dies. His will is found. It leaves the lowest of a range of dust mountains, with a dwelling-house, to an old servant who is sole executor. And that's all except that the son's inheritance is made conditional on his marrying a girl, at the date of the will a child of four or five years old, who is now a marriageable young woman. Advertisement and inquiry discovered the son in the Man from somewhere, and he is now on his way home, after fourteen years' absence, to succeed to a very large fortune, and to take a wife."

Mortimer, being asked what would become of the fortune in the event of the marriage condition not being fulfilled, replies that by a clause in the will it would then go to the

old servant above-mentioned, passing over and excluding the son ; also, that if the son had not been living, the same old servant would have been sole residuary legatee.

It is just when the ladies are retiring that Mortimer receives a note from the butler.

"This really arrives in an extraordinarily opportune manner," says Mortimer, after reading the paper presented to him. "This is the conclusion of the story of the identical man. Man's drowned."

The dinner being over, Mortimer Lightwood and his friend Eugene Wrayburn interviewed the boy who had brought the note, and then set out in a cab to the riverside quarter of Wapping.

The cab dismissed, a little winding through some muddy alleys brings them to the bright lamp of a police-station, where they find the night-inspector. He takes a bull's-eye and Mortimer and Eugene follow him to a cool grot at the end of the yard. They quickly come out again.

"No clue, gentlemen", says the inspector, "As to how the body came into the river, very often no clue. Steward of ship, on which gentleman came home passenger, had been round to view, and could swear to identity. Likewise could swear to clothes. Inquest to-morrow, and no doubt open verdict."

A stranger who had entered the station with Lightwood and Wrayburn attracts Mr. Inspector's attention.

"Turned you faint, sir ? You expected to identify ?"

"It's a horrible sight," says the stranger. "No, I can't identify."

"You missed a friend, you know ; or you missed a foe, or you wouldn't have come here, you know. Well, then, ain't it reasonable to ask, who was it ?" Thus Mr. Inspector, "At least, you won't object to write down your name and address ?"

The stranger took the pen and wrote down, "Mr. Julius Handford, Exchequer, Coffee House, Police Yard, Westminster."

At the coroner's inquest next day. Mr. Mortimer Lightwood watched the proceedings on behalf of the representative of the deceased ; and Mr. Julius Handford having given his right address, had no summons to appear.

Upon the evidence before them, the jury found that Mr. John Harmon had come by his death under suspicious circumstances, though by whose act there was no evidence to show. Within eight-and-forty hours a reward of one hundred pounds was proclaimed by the Home Office, and for a time public interest in the Harmon Murder as it came to be called, ran high.

Mr. Boffin a brood, round-shouldered one-sided old fellow in mourning, dressed in a pea over-coat, and wearing thick leather gaiters, and gloves like a hedger's, came ambling towards the street corner, where Silas Wegg sat at his stall. A few small lots of fruits and sweets, and a choice collection of halfpenny ballads, comprised Mr. Wegg's stock, and

assuredly it was the hardest little stall of all the sterile little stalls on London.

"Morning, morning!" said the old fellow.

"Good-morning to you, sir;" said Mr. Wegg.

The old fellow paused and then startled Mr. Wegg with the question, "How did you get your wooden leg?"

"In an accident."

"Do you like it?"

"Well, I haven't got to keep it warm," Mr. Wegg answered desperately.

"Did you ever hear of the name of Boffin? And do you like it?"

"Why no," said Mr. Wegg growing restive; "I can't say that I do."

"My name's Boffin," said the old fellow smiling "But there's another chance for you. Do you like the name of Nicodemus? Think it over. Nick or Noddy. Noddy Boffin, that's my name."

"It is not, sir," said Mr. Wegg, in a tone of resignation. "a name as I could wish anyone to call me by, but there may be persons that would not view it with the same objections. Silas Wegg is my name. I don't know why Silas, and I don't know why Wegg."

"Now, Wegg" said Mr. Boffin, "I came by here one morning and heard you reading through your ballads to a butcher boy. I thought to myself, 'there's a literary man with a wooden leg, and all print is open to 'him! And here am I without a wooden leg and all print is shut to me'."

" I believe you couldn't show me the piece of English rint that I wouldn't be equal to collaring and throwing ", Ir. Wegg admitted modestly.

" Now I want some reading, and I must pay a man so uch an hour to come and do it for me. Say two hours a ight at twopence - halfpenny. Half-a-crown a week. What o you think of the terms Wegg ? "

" Mr. Boffin I never did 'aggle, and I never will aggle. I meet you at once free and fair with—done, for ouble the money !"

From that night Silas Wegg came to need at Boffin's ower—or Harmony Jail as the house was formerly called -and he soon learnt his employer was no other than the heritor of old Harmon's property, and that he was known the Golden Dustman.

It was not long after Silas Wegg's appointment that Mr. offin was accosted by a strange gentleman, who gave his ime as John Rokesmith, and proposed his services as Pri- ate Secretary. Mr. Rokesmith mentioned that he lodged one Mr. Wilfer's in Holloway. Mr. Boffin stared.

" Father of Miss Bella Wilfer ?"

" My landlord has a daughter named Bella."

" Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know what to say," id Mr. Boffin ; but call at the Bower, though I don't know at I shall ever be in want of a secretary."

So to the Bower came Mr. John Rokesmith, but not fore the Boffins had called at the Wilfers' and seen the ung lady destined by old Harmon for the son's bride."

" Noddy ", said Mr. Boffin, " I have been thinking early and late of that girl, Bella Wilfer, who was so cruelly disappointed both of her husband and his riches. Don't you think we might do something for her." Have her to live with us ? And, Noddy, I tell you what I want—I want society. We have come into a great fortune and we must act up to it. It's never been acted up to, and consequently no good has come of it."

It was agreed that they should move into a good house in a good neighbourhood, and that a visit should be paid to Mr. Wilfer at once. Mrs. Wilfer received them with a tragic air.

" Mrs. Boffin and me, ma'am," said Mr. Boffin, " are plain people and we make this call to say we shall be glad to have the honour and pleasure of your daughter's acquaintance, and that we shall be rejoiced if your daughter will come to consider our house in the light of her home equally with this."

" I am much obliged to you, I am sure " said Mis Bella, coldly shaking her cures. " but I doubt if I have the inclination to go out at all."

" Bella ", Mrs. Wilfer admonished her solemnly, " you must conquer this !"

" Yes, do what your ma says, and conquer it my dear," urged Mrs. Boffin, because we shall be glad to have you, and because you are much too pretty to keep yourself shut up."

With that Mrs. Boffin gave her a kiss, which Bella frankly returned ; and it was settled that Bella should be sent for as soon as they were ready to receive her.

" By the bye, ma'am," said Mr. Boffin, as he was leaving, " you have a lodger ?"

" A gentleman," Mrs. Wilfer answered, undoubtedly occupies our first floor.

" I may call him our mutual friend," said Mr. Boffin, " what sort of fellow is our mutual friend now ? Do you like him ?"

Mr. Rokesmith is very punctual, very quiet—a very eligible inmate.

The Boffins drove away, and Mr. Rokesmith, coming to the Bower, extricated Mr. Boffin from a mass of disordered papers, and gave such satisfaction that his services were accepted, and he took up the secretaryship.

Miss Bella Wilfer was conscious that she was growing mercenary. She admitted as much to her father. There were several other secrets she had to impart beyond her own lack of improvement.

Mr. Rokesmith has made an offer to me, pa, and I told him I thought it a betrayal of trust on his part, and an affront to me. Mrs. Boffin has herself told me, with her own kind lips, that they wish to see me well married ; and that when I marry, with their consent, they will portion me most handsomely. That is another secret. And now there's only one more, and it is very hard to tell it. But Mr. Boffin is being spoilt by prosperity, and is changing for the

worse every day. Not to me—he is always the same to me —but to others about him, he grows suspicious, hard and unjust. If ever a good man were ruined by good fortune, it is my benefactor."

Bella parted from her father, and returned to the Boffins, to find fresh proofs of the deterioration of the Golden Dustman.

"Now, Rokesmith," Mr. Boffin was saying, "it's time to settle about your wages. A man of property like me is bound to consider the market price. If I pay for a sheep, I buy it out and out. Similarly, if I pay for a secretary, I buy him out and out. It's convenient to have you at all times ready on the premises.

The secretary bowed and withdrew. Bella's eyes followed him to the door. She felt that Mrs. Boffin was uncomfortable.

"Noddy," said Mrs. Boffin thoughtfully, "haven't you been a little strict with Mr. Rokesmith to-night? Haven't you been just a little not quite like your own self?"

"Why, old woman, I hope so," said Mr. Boffin cheerfully. "Our old selves wouldn't do here, old lady. Our old selves would be fit for nothing but to be imposed upon. Our old selves weren't people of fortune. Our new selves are. It's a great difference.

Very uncomfortable was Bella that night, and very uneasy was she as the days went by, for Mr. Boffin made a point of hunting up old books that gave the lives of misers,

and the more enjoyment he seemed to get out of this literature, the harder he became to the secretary. Somehow, the worse Mr. Boffin treated his secretary, the more Bella felt drawn to the man whose offer of marriage she had refused. The crisis came one morning when the Golden Dustman's bearing towards Rokesmith was even more arrogant and offensive then it had been before. Mrs. Boffin was seated on a sofa, and Mr. Boffin had Bella an his arm.

" Don't be alarmed, my dear ", he said gently. " I'm going to see you righted."

Then he turned to his secretary.

" Now, sir, look at this young lady. How dare you come out of your station, to pester this young lady with your impudent addresses."

Bella hung her head and Mrs. Boffin broke out crying.

" This Rokesmith is a needy young man ", Mr. Boffin went on unmoved. " He gets acquainted with my affairs and gets to know that I mean to settle a sum of money upon this young lady."

" I indignantly deny it ;" said the secretary quietly. " But our connection being at an end, it matters little what I say."

" I discharge you," Mr. Boffin retorted. " There's your money."

" Mrs. Boffin," said Rokesmith, " for your unvarying kindness I thank you with the warmest gratitude. Miss Wilfer, good-bye."

" Oh, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella in her tears, " hear one word from me before you go. I am deeply sorry for the reproaches you have borne on my account. Out of the depths of my heart I beg your pardon."

She gave him her hand, and he put in to his lips and said, " God bless you :"

" There was a time when I deserved to be ' righted ', as Mr. Boffin has done," Bella went on, " but I hope that I shall never deserve it again."

Once more John Rokesmith put her hand to her lips, and then relinquished it, and left the room.

Bella threw her arms round Mrs. Boffin's neck, " He has been most shamefully abused and driven away, and I am the cause of it. I must go home. I am very grateful for all you have done for me, but I can't stay here."

" Now, Bella," said Mr. Boffin, " look before you leap. Go away, and you can never come back. And you mustn't expect that I'm a-going to settle money on you if you leave me like this because I'm not—Not one brass farthing."

" No power on earth could make me take it now," said Bella haughtily.

Then she broke into sobs saying good-bye to Mrs. Boffin, said a last word to Mr. Boffin, and ran upstairs few minutes later she went out of the house.

" That was well done," said Bella when she was in the street, " and now Ill go and see my dear, darling pa in the city."

Bella found her way to her father's office in the city. It was after hours and the little man was alone, having tea on a small cottage loaf and a penny worth of milk, for R. Wilfer was but a clerk on a small income. He immediately fetched another loaf and another pennyworth of milk and then before she could tell him she had left the Boffins, who should come along but John Rokesmith. And John Rokesmith not only came in, but he caught Bella in his arms, and she was content to leave her head on his breast as if that were her head's chosen and lasting resting place.

" I knew you would come to him, and I followed you," said Rokesmith. You are mine."

" Yes, I am yours if you think me worth taking," Bella responded.

Then Bella's father had to hear what had happened, and said his daughter had done well.

" To think ", said Wilfer looking round the office, " that any thing of a tender nature should come off here is what tickles me."

A few weeks later and Bella and her father went out early one morning and took the steamer to Greenwich. And at Greenwich there was John Rokesmith, and presently in a church John and Bella were joined together in wedlock.

They had been married a year, and lived in a little house at Blackheath. John Rokesmith went up to the city every

day, and explained that he was "in a china house." From time to time he would ask her, "would you like to be rich now, my darling?" and got for answer, "Dear John, am I not rich?"

But for all that a change came in their affairs. For Mortimer Lightwood who had met Bella at the Boffins', seeing her walking with her husband, recognised him as Julius Handford: and as Mr. Inspector had never discovered what had become of Mr. Julius Handford, he must needs pay Mr. Rokesmith a visit; and then it turned out that John Rokesmith was not only Julius Handford, but John Harmon himself, much to Mr. Inspector's astonishment.

More surprises were to fellow, for when John came home next day he told Bella that he had left the china house, and was better off.

"We must have our headquarters in London now my dear, and there's a house ready for us."

And the house which John and Bella visited next day was none other than the Boffin's and when they arrived, there were Mr. and Mrs. Boffin beaming at them. Mrs. Boffin told Bella that John Rokesmith was John Harmon, and how, remembering him as a small boy, she had guessed it quite early. Then Mrs. Boffin admitted that John, despairing of winning Bella's heart and determined that there should be no question of money in the marriage, was for going away, and that Noddy said he would prove that she loved him. "We was all of us in it my beauty," Mrs Boffin concluded, "and when you was married there was we hid up in the church

organ by this husband of yours, for he wouldn't let us out with it then, as was first meant. But it was Noddy who said that he would prove you had a true heart of gold. 'If she was to stand up for you when you was slighted, he said to John, 'and if she was to do that against her own interest, how would that do? 'Do? says John, it would raise me to the skies.' 'Then' says Noddy, 'get ready for the ascent, John, for up you go. Look out for being slighted and oppressed. And then he began. And now he did begin, didn't he?"

"It looks as if old Harmon's spirit had found a rest at last, and as if his money had turned bright again after a long rust in the dark." said Mrs. Boffin to her husband that night.

"Yes, old lady."

The mystery of the Harmon murder is yet to be explained. John Harmon, going on shore with a fellow passenger, who greatly resembled him, was drugged and robbed of his money in a house near the river by this man. But the robber, who had taken Harmon's clothes was himself robbed and thrown into the waters, and Harmon recovered consciousness and made his escape just at the time when the body of his assailant was recovered. In this state of strange excitement he turned up at the police station, and unwilling to revive his identity at the moment, passed himself off as Julius Handford.

NOTES

These notes are mainly critical and literary. There is no attempt made to do any paraphrasing or explaining difficult passages, as the language has been intentionally simplified. Few if any allusions are required. The chief object is to create a lively interest in the various characters, and so cultivate a taste for one of the greatest masters in English Literature.

"THE PICKWICK PAPERS"

"The Pickwick Papers" were published in 1836. They are frankly humorous. Two of the most delightful characters in fiction are Mr. Pickwick, and his servant Sam Welter.

Dickens was a great social reformer. Here he holds up to ridicule the legal malpractices of the day, and also the laws relating to imprisonment for debt. His writings had the desired effect, as within a short time legal reforms were introduced and the Fleet Prison pulled down.

"OLIVER TWIST"

The Adventures of Oliver Twist were published between 1837 and 1839. Here again we are brought face to face with the rottenness of the Poor Law administration of the time as well as the fearful and criminal state of the submerged tenth.

Perhaps we have the trials and sorrows of Dicken's own youth sketched in Oliver Twist, and again touched in Pip, and David Copperfield. In the three cases mentioned, as it

was also in the case of Dickens himself, the sorrowful beginning is fortunately more or less obscured by the happy ending.

" NICHOLAS NICKLEBY "

" Nicholas Nickleby " was began in 1838 and finished in 1839. Squeers and his wretched school are held up to well-deserved contempt, and the picture throws a lurid light on the possible evils of a system of voluntary education. The story is relieved by the characters of the Brothers Cheeryble, who are the essence of simplicity, honesty, good-nature, and cordiality.

" THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP "

The Old Curiosity Shop" was commenced in 1840. The moral of the story of course is obvious—the evils of gambling. The whole interest of the story however centres in Little Nell, who according to Mr. Swinburne is equal to any character in fiction.

Dickens is a master of pathos. In fact some of his critics blame him for laying on the colours too thickly. It would be difficult however to find two more really pathetic figures than Little Nell, and Paul in Dombey and Son.

" MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT"

"Martin Chuzzlewit" was published on monthly instalments in 1843 and 1844. American Characteristics and institutions are held up to ridicale, and also the drunken nurses of the

period (Mrs. Gamp—the nurse in question—is not introduced in this short sketch, as she is only a minor character in the development of the story). Especially he attacks the Pecksniffian type of human being which stands for all that is servile, obsequious, and insincere.

There is a similarity in a lot of the characters of Dickens, and the hard lines in old Martin Chuzzlewit are again in evidence in Dombey and Gradgrind.

"DOMBEY AND SON"

"Dombey and Son" was commenced in 1846 and completed in 1848. Paul shares with Little Nell the reputation of being the most pathetic character in the works of Dickens. Dombey's character is realistic, and would be repulsive were it not for the change at the end, mainly brought about through the influence of his daughter Florence. There is a distinct resemblance between Dombey and Thomas Gradgrind. Both find out almost too late the inestimable value of true love, affection and sympathy.

"DAVID COPPERFIELD"

"David Copperfield" was published in 1849-50. It is remarkable for its universal and lasting popularity, and also for the autobiographical element, not only on the wretched days of his childhood, but also in the short-hand reporting in the House of Commons.

The child-wife is an object of pathetic interest, whilst Snobbery is again railed at in the person of Steersforth and his relations. Micawber is a delightful character, and we are

pleased to find him in the end meeting with the success he deserves. Uriah Heep is a scoundrel, Mr. Wickfield an object of compassion and pity, and his daughter Agnes a truly lovable character.

"HARD TIMES"

"Hard Times" was published in 1854. It is a fierce attack on the early Victorian school of political economists, and will always be valuable as a study in the sound and industrial life in England in the manufacturing districts.

The story of Louisa is pathetic on the extreme, all the more pathetic since her love and affection are wasted on her blackguard brother. Bounderby is a monster, and meets with a monster's end.

"LITTLE DORRIT"

"Little Dorrit" was completed in 1857. It is a pathetic story of the debtor's prison—the Marshalsea. It is difficult to decide which aroused the more compassion or pity—Little Dorrit or the Father of the Marshalsea. The canvas is painted in sombre and gloomy colour, and even the marriage of Little Dorrit at the end only succeds in arousing a kind of melancholy pleasure.

"A TALE OF TWO CITES"

"A Tale of Two Cities" was published in 1859. It is one of Dicken's greatest works. It is a lurid picture of the French Revolution, and perhaps no work in English Literature brings home to us more the passion, the cruelty and the horror of it all.

Jeremiah Cruncher is the only enlivening feature but his enlivening only leads us to body-snatching. Dr. Manette is luridly pathetic, and Sydney Carton, despite or perhaps because of his human weaknesses, is one of the most lovable characters in fiction. Our love changes to admiration in the end, and his last words reach the innermost portion if our hearts :—

" It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done ; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

" GREAT EXPECTATIONS "

" Great Expectations " was published in 1861. There again we have in Pip the picture of discontented youth, but the manly form of Joe Gargery stands out from the canvas as a man's man. Miss Havisham and Estella are almost impossible characters, but the pathos of the ex-convict's return is as great, deep and abiding as any scene or incident depicted by the author.

" OUR MUTUAL FRIEND"

Our Mutual Friend was published in 1864-66. Here too we have an attack on the Poor Law Administration begun in Oliver Twist. Critics have objected to the peculiarity of Harmon's wire, but truth is always stranger than fiction, which after all is only the portrayal of the probable possibility. Boffin is a lovable character, and Bella improves on acquaintance.

Printed by RAMZAN ALI SHAH at the National Press, Allahabad.