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THE

PICKWICK PAPERS.

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

(BOZ.)

PHILADELPHIA:

ETZ & BUCK,
HART'S BUILDINGS.
1854.

SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.
A Highly Interesting and Humorous Book!

MODERN CHIVALRY;
Or, the Adventures of Capt. Farrago and Teague O'Regan.
BY HON. H. H. BRACKENRIDGE,
FOR SIXTEEN YEARS ONE OF THE JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

With a Biographical Notice, a Critical Disquisition on the work, and
Explanatory Notes.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DARLEY.

Extract from the Editor's Preface.—"The author of the celebrated production
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duction." "In every page of this work, the reader is astonished at the depth and variety
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hesitate to say, that the time will come, when it will be placed among the master-pieces
of human genius."

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capital satirical work with the above title, but which is now introduced anew to the public
in the second edition published since the author's death. Judge Brackenridge was one
of the most remarkable men of his time, and one of whom Pennsylvania should be proud.
His "Modern Chivalry" is not merely a work to laugh over, but there is a vast deal of
sound philosophy and practical good sense in its pages, and although written when the
Republic was young, it contains as sound and as well matured ideas on Republicanism as
can be gathered anywhere. In every page, too, we see the patriot, as contradistinguished
from the demagogue. Judge Brackenridge had a hearty scorn of all sham, clap-trap and
humbug, and he exposes these with unmerciful irony in his "Modern Chivalry." He
wrote for the past generation, but his lessons are equally well adapted to the present, and,
indeed, it is surprising to see how little change there has been in human nature, under
republican institutions, since the book was written. We could wish to see the book
universally read, not merely for the sake of its influence upon our national character, but
in order that justice might be done to one of the best writers of our country, who has been
too little read and understood. In the present edition there are some admirable
illustrations by Darley.

From "McMakin's Model American Courier."—A book of maxims and sayings
under the guise of pleasantry, with a very strong satirical undercurrent that gives the
work a pungency and a raciness rarely met with. It is a capital care-killer. The por-
traits of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan are drawn from real life, and impart a seer
to the work which cannot fail to be appreciated. The Captain's manner of treating the
beater of a challenge is a precedent that deserves to be followed. All through, the sterling
good sense and spirit which he exhibits form the staple of what may be considered the
best satire published for years.

The illustrations, both in design and execution, are calculated to render this a very
popular book.

The book, containing 381 pages, is beautifully printed on fine white
paper, with an elegant illuminated cover, price 75 cts. in paper, or
$1.00 neatly bound in cloth.

PUBLISHED BY GETZ & BUCK,
PHILADELPHIA.

Copies mailed to any address on receipt of remittance.
THE

POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

A NEW EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
GETZ & BUCK,
1854.

My dear Sir,

If I had not enjoyed the happiness of your private friendship, I should still have dedicated this work to you, as a slight and most inadequate acknowledgment of the inestimable services you are rendering to the literature of your country, and of the lasting benefits you will confer upon the authors of this and succeeding generations, by securing to them and their descendants a permanent interest in the copyright of their works.

Many a fevered head and palsied hand will gather new vigour in the hour of sickness and distress from your excellent exertions; many a widowed mother and orphan child, who would otherwise reap nothing from the fame of departed genius but its too frequent legacy of poverty and suffering, will bear, in their altered condition, higher testimony to the value of your labours than the most lavish encomiums from lip or pen could ever afford.

Beside such tributes, any avowal of feeling from me, on the question to which you have devoted the combined advantages of your eloquence, character, and genius, would be powerless indeed. Nevertheless, in thus publicly expressing my deep and grateful sense of your efforts in behalf of English literature, and of those who devote themselves to the most precarious of all pursuits, I do but imperfect justice to my own strong feelings on the subject, if I do no service to you.

Wor 20 Jun '34
DEDICATION.

These few sentences would have comprised all I should have had to say, if I had only known you in your public character. On the score of private feeling, let me add one word more.

Accept the dedication of this book, my dear Sir, as a mark of my warmest regard and esteem — as a memorial of the most gratifying friendship I have ever contracted, and of some of the pleasantest hours I have ever spent — as a token of my fervent admiration of every fine quality of your head and heart — as an assurance of the truth and sincerity with which I shall ever be.

My dear Sir,

Most faithfully and sincerely yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

38, D nephew Street,
S eptember 27, 1857.
PREFACE

The author's object in this work, was to place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents; to paint them in as vivid colours as he could command; and to render them, at the same time, life-like and amusing.

Deferring to the judgment of others in the outset of the undertaking, he adopted the machinery of the club, which was suggested as that best adapted to his purpose; but, finding that it tended rather to his embarrassment, he gradually abandoned it, considering it a matter of very little importance to the work whether strictly epic justice were awarded to the club, or not.

The publication of the book in monthly numbers, containing only thirty-two pages in each, rendered it an object of paramount importance that, while the different incidents were linked together by a chain of interest strong enough to prevent their appearing unconnected or impossible, the general design should be so simple as to sustain no injury from this detached and desultory form of publication, extending over no fewer than twenty months. In short, it was necessary—or it appeared so to the author—that every number should be complete, to a certain extent, in itself, and yet that the whole twenty numbers, when collected, should form one tolerably harmonious whole, each leading to the other by a gentle and not unnatural progress of adventure.

It is obvious that in a work published with a view to such considerations, no artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot can with reason be expected. The author ventures to express a hope that he has successfully surmounted the difficulties of his undertaking. And if it be objected to the Pickwick Papers, that they are a mere series of adventures, in which the scenes are ever changing, and the characters come and go like the men and women we encounter in the real world, he can only content himself with the reflection, that they claim to be nothing else, and that the same objection has been made to the works of some of the greatest novelists in the English language.

The following pages have been written from time to time, almost as the periodical occasion arose. Having been written for the most part in the society of a very dear young friend who is now no more, they are connected in the author's mind at once with the happiest period of his life, and with its saddest and most severe affliction.

The almost unexampled kindness and favour with which these papers have been received by the public will be a never-failing source of gratifying and pleasant recollection while their author lives. He trusts that, throughout this book, no incident or expression occurs which could call a blush into the most delicate cheek, or wound the feelings of the most sensitive person. If any of his imperfect descriptions, while they afford amusement in the perusal, should induce only one reader to think better of his fellow-men, and to look upon the brighter and more kindly side of human nature, he would indeed be happy to have led to such a result.
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A Display of the Principal Characters. Frontierpiece.

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" " Augustus Snodgrass, Esq.
" " Nathaniel Winkle, Esq.

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" " Lieutenant Tappleton,
" " Doctor Payne,
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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB

CHAPTER I.

The Pickwickians.

The first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of the public career of the immortal Pickwick would appear to be involved, is derived from the perusal of the following entry in the Transactions of the Pickwick Club, which the editor of these papers feels the highest pleasure in laying before his readers, as a proof of the careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and wise discrimination, with which his search among the multifarious documents confided to him has been conducted.

May 19, 1817. Joseph Smirrgeon, Esq., P. V. P. M. P. C.† presiding. The following resolutions unanimously agreed to.

That this Association has heard read, with feelings of unmixed satisfaction, and unequivocal approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C., entitled Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds, with Some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats; and that this Association does hereby return its warmest thanks to the said Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C., for the same.

That while this Association is deeply sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the cause of science, from the production to which they have just adverted, no less than from the untired researches of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C., in Horsey, Highgate, Brixton, and Camberwell; they cannot but entertain a lively sense of the inestimable benefits which must inevitably result from carrying the speculations of that learned man in a wider field, from extending his travels, and consequent-ly enlarging his sphere of observation; to the advancement of knowledge, and the diffusion of learning.

That with the view, just mentioned, this Association has taken into its serious consideration a proposal, emanating from the aforesaid Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C., and three other Pickwickians hereinafter named, for forming a new branch of United Pickwickians under the title of the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club.

That the said proposal has received the sanction and approval of this Association.

That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., W. P. C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M. P. C., and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M. P. C., are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same: and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations; of their observations of character and manners; and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers, to which local scenery or associations may give rise, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London.

That this Association cordially recognises the principle of every member of the Corresponding Society defraying his own travelling expenses; and

† Perpetual Vice President—Member Pickwick Club.—Esq.
‡ General Chairman—Member Pickwick Club.—Esq.
jection whatever to the members of the said society pursuing their inquiries for any length of time they please, upon the same terms.

"That the members of the aforesaid Corresponding Society, be, and are, hereby informed, that their proposals to pay the postage of their letters, and the carriage of their parcels, has been deliberated upon, by this Association. That this Association considers such proposal worthy of the great minds from which it emanated; and that it hereby signifies its perfect acquiescence therein."

A casual observer, adds the secretary, to whose notes we are indebted for the following account—a casual observer might plausibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the whole proceeding, which was entirely turned towards his (the secretary's) face during the reading of the above resolutions. To those who knew that the gigantic brain of Pickwick was working beneath that forehead, and that the benignant eyes of Pickwick were twinkling behind those glasses, the sight was indeed an interesting one. There sat the man who had traced to their source the mighty ponds of Hampstead, and agitated the scientific world with his Theory of Tittlebats; as calm and unmoved as the deep waters of the one and on a frosty day, or as a solitary specimen of the other, in the inmost recesses of an earthen jar. And how much more interesting did the spectacle become, when, starting into full life and animation, as a simultaneous cry for "Pickwick" burst from his followers, that illustrious man slowly mounted into the Windsor chair, on which he had been previously seated, and addressed the club himself had founded! What a study for an artist did that exciting scene present! The eloquent Pickwick, with one hand gracefully concealed behind his coat tails, and the other waving, and uttering his racy declamation: his elevated position revealing those tights and gaiters, which had they clothed an ordinary man, might have passed without observation, but which, when Pickwick clothed them—if we may use the expression—inspired involuntary awe and respect; surrounded by the men who had volunteered to share the peril of his travels, and who were destined to participate in the glories of his discoveries. On his right hand sat Mr. Tracy Tupman; the too susceptible Tupman, who to the wisdom and experience of mature years superadded the enthusiasm and ardour of a boy, in the most interesting and palatable of human weaknesses—love. Time and feeding had expanded that once romantic form; the black silk waistcoat had become more and more developed; in fact, had the goliath chain beneath it disappeared from within the range of Tupman's vision; and gradually had the capacious chin encroached upon the borders of the white eratet, but the soul of Tupman had known no change—admiration of the fair sex was still its ruling passion. On the left of his great leader sat the poetic Snodgrass; and dear him again the sporting Winkle, the former poetically enveloped in a mysterious blue cloak with a canine-skin collar, and the latter communicating additional lustre to a new green shooting coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely-fitted drabs.

Mr. Pickwick's oration upon this occasion, together with the debate thereon, is entered on the Transactions of the Club. Both bear a strong affinity to the discourses of other celebrated bodies; and, as it is always interesting to traces the same, we transfer the proceedings of great men, we transfer the entry to these pages.

"Mr. Pickwick observed (says the Secretary) that fame was dear to the heart of every man. Poetic fame was dear to the heart of his friend Snodgrass, the fame of conquest was equally dear to his friend Tupman; and the desire of earning fame, in the sports of the field, the air, and the water, was uppermost in the breast of his friend Winkle. He (Mr. Pickwick) would not deny that he was influenced by human passions; and human feelings, (cheers)—possibly by human weaknesses—(loud cries of "No")! but this he would say, that if ever the fire of self-importance broke out in his bosom, the desire to benefit the human race in preference, effectually quenched it. The praise of mankind was his swing; philanthropy was his insurance office. (Vehement cheering.) He had felt some pride—he acknowledged it freely; and let his enemies make the most of it—he had felt some pride when he presented his Tittlebian Theory to the world; it might be celebrated or it might not. ("It is," and great cheering.) He would take the asser-

With that honourable Pickwickian whose voice he had just heard—it was celebrated; but if the fame of that treatise were to extend to the farthest confines of the known world, the pride with which he should reflect on the authorship of that production, would be as nothing compared with the pride with which he looked around him, on this, the proudest moment of his existence. (Cheers.) He was an humble individual. (No, no.) Still he could not but feel that they had selected him for a service of great honour and of some danger. Travelling was in a troubled state, and the minds of coachmen were unsettled. Let them look abroad, and contemplate the scenes which were occurring around them. Stage-coaches were upsetting in all directions, horses were bolting.
gible point. We have no official statement of the facts, which the reader will find recorded in the next chapter, but they have been carelessly collated from letters and other MS. authorities; so unquestionably genuine, as to justify their narration in a connected form.

CHAPTER II.

The first day's journey, and the first evening's adventure, with their consequences.

That punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers; threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell-street was at his feet; Goswell-street was on his right-hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell-street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell-street was over the way. "Such," thought Mr. Pickwick, "are the narrow views of those philosophers who, content with examinling the things that lie before them, look not to the truths which are hidden beyond. As well might I be content to gaze on Goswell-street for ever, without one effort to penetrate to the hidden countries which on every side surround it." And having given vent to this beautiful reflection, Mr. Pickwick proceeded to put himself into his clothes; and his clothes into his portmanteau. Great men are seldom over-circumspect in the arrangement of their attire; the operation of shaving, dressing, and coffee-imbibing was soon performed; and in an another hour, Mr. Pickwick, with his portmanteau in his hand, his telescope in his great-coat pocket, and his note-book in his waistcoat, ready for the reception of any discoveries worthy of being noted down, had arrived at the coach-stand in Saint Martin's-le-Grand.

"Cab!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Here you are, Sir," shouted a strange specimen of the human race, in a sackcoat coat, and apron of the same, with a brass label and number round his neck, looked as if he were catalogued in some collection of rarities. This was the waterman. "Here you are, Sir. Now, then, fast cab!" And the first cab having been fetched from the public house where he had been smoking his first pipe, Mr. Pickwick and his portmanteau were thrown into the vehicle.

"Golden Cross," said Mr. Pickwick.
"Only a bob's worth, Tommy,"—cried the driver, sulkyly, for the information of friends, and the world at large, as the cab drawn off.

"How old is that horse, my friend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

"Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr. Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he nodded down the first forthwith.

"And how long do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, searching for further information.

"Two or three weeks," replied the man.

"Weeks!" said Mr. Pickwick in astonishment—and out came the note-book again.

"He lives at Pentewan when he's at home," observed the driver, coolly; "but we seldom takes him home, on account of his weakness."

"On account of his weakness;" reiterated the perplexed Mr. Pickwick.

"He always falls down, when he's took out o' the cab," continued the driver; "but when he's in it, we bears him up wary tight, and takes him in wary short, so as he can't vary well fall down, and we've got a pair o' precioso large wheels on; so when he does move, they run after him, and we must go on—he can't help it."

Mr. Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses, under trying circumstances. The entry was scarcely completed when they reached the Golden Cross. Down jumped the driver, and out got Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, who had been anxiously waiting the arrival of their illustrious leader, crowded to welcome him.

"Here's your fare," said Mr. Pickwick, holding out the shilling to the driver.

What was the learned man's astonishment, when that unaccountable person flung the money on the pavement, and requested its figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting him (Mr. Pickwick) for the amount?

"You are mad!" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Or drunk," said Mr. Winkle.

"Or both," said Mr. Tupman.

"Come on," said the cab-driver, sparring away like clock-work. "Come on—all at once.

"Here's a lark!" shouted half a dozen hackney coachmen. "Go to work, Sam," and they crowded with great glee round the party.

"What's the row, Sam?" inquired one gentleman in black clothes there.

"Row!" replied the cabman. "What did he want my number for?"

"I didn't want your number," said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"What did you take it for, then?" inquired the cabman.

"I didn't take it," said Mr. Pickwick, indignantly.

"Would any body believe," continued the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd,—"Would any body believe, as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number, but every word he says into the bargain," (a light flashed upon Mr. Pickwick—it was the note-book.) "Did he though?" inquired another cabman.

"Yes, did he," replied the first—and then after aggerawizin' me to assess him, gets three witnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've six moths for it. Come on," and the cabman dashed his hat upon the ground, with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and kusked Mr. Pickwick's spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr. Pickwick's nose, and another on Mr. Pickwick's chest, and a third in Mr. Snodgrass's eye, and a fourth, by way of variety, in Mr. Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road, and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr. Winkle's body, and all in half a dozen seconds.

"Where's an effect?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Put 'em under the pump," suggested a hot pisman.

"You shall smart for this," gasped Mr. Pickwick.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd.

"Come on," cried the cabman, who had been sparring without cessation the whole time.

The mob hitherto had been passive spectators of the scene, but as the intelligence of the Pickwickians being informers was spread among them, they began to canvass with considerable vivacity the propriety of enforcing the heated pastry-vender's proposition; and there is no saying what acts of personal aggression they might have committed, had not the affair been unexpectedly terminated by the interposition of a new comer.

"What's the fun?" said a rather tall thin young man, in a green coat, emerging suddenly from the coach-yard.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd again.
"We are not," roared Mr. Pickwick, in a tone which, to any dispassionate listener, carried conviction with it.

"A'n't you, though,—a'n't you?" said the young man, appealing to Mr. Pickwick, and making his way through the crowd, by the infernal process of elbowing the countenances of its component members.

That learned man in a few hurried words explained the real state of the case.

"Come along, then," said he of the green coat, lagging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. "Here, No. 924, take your fare and take yourself off—respectable gentleman—know hire well—none of your nonsense this way, Sir—where's your friends?—all a mistake, I see—never mind—accidents will happen—best regulated families—never say die—down upon your luck—pull him up—put that in his pipe—like the flavour—damned rascals." And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the travellers' waiting room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.

"Here, waiter," shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, "glasses round, brandy and water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty—eye damaged, Sir!" For, raw beef-steak for the gentleman's eye—nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, Sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient—damned odd standing in the open street half an hour, with your eye against a lamp-post—eh—very good—ha! ha!" And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught half a pint of the reeking brandy and water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

While his three companions were busily engaged in proffering their thanks to their new acquaintance, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to examine his costume and appearance.

He was about the middle height, but the thinness of his body, and the length of his legs, gave him the appearance of being much taller. The green coat had been a smart dress garment in the days of swallow-tails, but had evidently in those times adorned a much shorter man than the stranger, for the soiled and faded sleeves were closely reached to his wrists. It was buttoned closely up to his cold, at the imminent hazard of splitting the back; and an old jacket, without a vestige of shirt-collars, ornamented his neck. His scanty black trousers displayed here and there loose shiny patches which bespake long service, and were strapped very tightly over a pair of patched and mended shoes, as if to conceal the dirty white stockings, which were nevertheless distinctly visible. His long black hair escaped in negligent waves from beneath each side of his old-pitched-up hat; and glances of his bare wrist might be observed, between the tops of his gloves, and the cuffs of his coat-sleeves. His face was thin and haggard; but an indescribable air of jaunty assurance and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man.

Such was the individual on whom Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles, (which he had fortunately recovered,) and to whom he proceeded, when his friends had exhausted themselves, to return, in chosen terms, his warmest thanks for his recent assistance.

"Never mind," said the stranger, cutting the address very short, "said enough—no more; smart chap that amateur—handed his five well; but if I'd been your friend in the green jersey—damn me—punch his head,—cool I would,—pig's whisper—pieman too,—no gainstorm." This coherent speech was interrupted by the entrance of the Rochester coachman, to announce that "The Cosmopolite" was on the point of starting.

"Cosmopolite!" said the stranger, starting up, "my coach,—place booked,—one outside,—leave you to pay for the brandy and water,—want change for a five,—bad silver,—Brumagem buttons—won't do—no go—eh?" and he shook his head most knowingly.

Now it so happened that Mr. Pickwick and his three companions had resolved to make Rochester their first halting-place, and having accosted the new acquaintance that they were journeying to the same city, they agreed to occupy the seat at the back of the coach, where they could sit together.

"Up with you," said the stranger, assisting Mr. Pickwick on to the roof with so much precipitation, as to impair the gravity of that gentleman's deportment very materially.

"Any luggage, Sir?" inquired the coachman.

"Who—It! Brown paper parcel here that's all, other luggage gone by water—packing-cases, nailed up—big as horses—heavy, heavy, damned heavy," replied the stranger, as he forced into his pockets as much as he could of the brown paper parcel, which presented most suspicious indications of containing one shirt and a handkerchief.

"Heads, heads, take care of your heads," cried the loquacious stranger, as they crossed.
"Certainly, Sir, certainly—hundreds more anecdotes of the same animal. Fine girl, Sir?" (to Mr. Tracy Tupman, who had been bestowing sundry anti-Pickwickian glances on a young lady by the road-side.)

"Very!" said Mr. Tupman.

"English girls not so fine as Spanish—noble creatures—jet hair—black eyes—lovely forms—sweet creatures—beautiful."

"You have been in Spain, Sir?" said Mr. Tracy Tupman.

"Lived there ages."

"Many conquests, Sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Conquests! Thousands. Don Botaro Fitzgig—Grandee—only daughter—Donna Christina—splendid creature—loved me to distraction—jealous father—high-souled daughter—handsome Englishman—Donna Christina in despair—prussic acid—stomach pump in my portmanteau—operation performed—old Botaro in ecstasies—consent to our union—join hands and clouds of tears—romantic story—very."

"Is the lady in England now, Sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, on whom the description of her charms had produced a powerful impression.

"Dead, Sir—dead," said the stranger, applying to his right eye the brief remnant of a very old cambric handkerchief. "Never recovered the stomach pump—undermined constitution—fell a victim."

"And her father?" inquired the poet Snodgrass.

"Remorse and misery," replied the stranger, "sudden disappearance—talk of the whole city—search made everywhere—without success—public fountain in the great square suddenly ceased playing—weeks elapsed—still a stoppage—workmen employed to clean it—water drawn off—father-in-law discovered sticking head first in the main pipe, with a full comprehension in his right boot—took him out and the fountain played away again as well as ever."

"Will you allow me to note that little romance down, Sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass, deeply affected.

"Certainly, Sir, certainly—fifty more if you like to hear them—strange life mine—rather curious history—not extraordinary, but singular."

In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale, by way of parenthesis, when the coach changed horses, did the stranger proceed, until they reached Rochester bridge, by which time the note-books, both of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Snodgrass, were completely filled with the charming and curious history of Mr. Lambe and his gambols in the quarter so wonderful a note of: Mr. Lambe

"Glennings!" Ponto exclaimed, and shot an imploring glance at his companion before the dogs whose actions he, Mr. Tupman, so closely observed.
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

precely filled with selections from his adventures.

"Magnificent ruin!" said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervour that distinguished him, when they came in sight of the fine old castle.

"What a study for an antiquarian," were the very words which fell from Mr. Pickwick's mouth, as he applied his telescope to his eye.

"Ah! fine place," said the stranger, "glorious pile—frowning walls—towering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases—old cathedral too—earthy smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessional-like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers; those monks—Popes and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day—buff jerkins too—matchlocks—Saxon phrases—sage place—old legends too—strange stories—capital!" and the stranger continued to soliloquise until they reached the Bull Inn, in the High street, where the coach stopped.

"Do you remain here, Sir?" inquired Mr. Nathaniel Winkle.

"Here—not I—but you'd better go inside—nice beds—Wright's next house, dear—very dear—half-a-crown in the bill, if you look at the waiter—change you more if you dine at a friend's than they would if you dine in the coffee-room—runs fellows—very!"

Mr. Winkle turned to Mr. Pickwick, and murmured a few words; a whisper passed from Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Snodgrass, from Mr. Snodgrass to Mr. Tupman, and notes of assent were exchanged. Mr. Pickwick addressed the stranger.

"You rendered us a very important service this morning, Sir," said he; "will you allow us to offer a slight mark of our gratitude by begging the favour of your company at dinner?"

"Great pleasure—just presume to dictate, but broiled fowl and mushrooms—capital thing! What time?"

"Let me see," replied Mr. Pickwick, referring to his watch, "it is now nearly three. Shall we say five?"

"Dine very excellently," said the stranger, "five precisely—all then—care of yourselves?" and lifting the window-box had a few inches from his head, and carelessly replacing it very much on one side, the stranger, with half the brown paper packet sticking out of his pocket, walked briskly up the street and turned into the high street.

"Evidently a traveller in many countries, and a close observer of men and things," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I should like to see his poems," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I should like to have seen that dog," said Mr. Winkle.

Mr. Tupman said nothing; but the thought of Donna Christina, the stomach pump, and the fountains, and his eyes filled with roses.

A private sitting-room having been engaged, bed-room inspected, and dinner ordered, the party walked out to view the city, and adjoining neighbourhood.

We do not find, from a careful perusal of Mr. Pickwick's notes on the four towns—Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, and Bromley—that his impressions of their appearance differ in any material point, from those of other travellers who have gone over the same ground. His general description is easily abridged.

"The principal productions of these towns," says Mr. Pickwick, "appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chapmen, shrimpers, officers, and dock-yard men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets, are marine stores, hard-bake, apples, flat-fish, and oysters. The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military. It is truly delightful to a philanthropic mind, to see these gallant men, staggered along under the influence of an overwork, both of animal, and animated spirit; more especially when we remember that the following them about, and jesting with them, affords a cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population. Nothing (adds Mr. Pickwick) can exceed their good humour. It was the day before my arrival, that one of them had been most grossly insulted in the house of a publican. The barmaid had positively refused to draw any more liquor; in return for which he had (morely in playfulness) drawn his bayonet, and wounded the girl in the shoul-
der. And yet this fine fellow was the very first to go down to the house next morning, and express his readiness to overlook the matter, and forget what had occurred!"
"What's that?" he inquired, as the waiter removed one of the covers.

"Soles, Sir."

"Sole—ah!—capital fish—all come from London—stage-coach proprietors get up political dinners—carriage of soles—decoration of baskets—cunning fellows. Glass of wine, Sir?"

"With pleasure," said Mr. Pickwick, and the stranger took wiser; first with him, and then with Mr. Snodgrass, and then with Mr. Tupman, and then with Mr. Winkle; and then with the whole party together, almost as rapidly as he talked.

"Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter," said the stranger, "Forms going up—carpenters coming down—lamps, glasses, harps. What’s going forward?"

"Ball, Sir," said the waiter.

"Assembly—eh?"

"No, Sir. It’s not Assembly, Sir. Ball for the benefit of a charity, Sir."

"Many fine women in this town, do you know, Sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, with great interest.

"Splendid—capital. Kent, Sir—everybody knows Kent—apples, cherries, hops, and women. Glass of wine, Sir?"

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Tupman. The stranger filled, and emptied.

"I should very much like to go," said Mr. Tupman, resuming the subject of the ball, "very much."

"Tickets at the door, Sir," interposed the waiter, "half-a-guinea each, Sir."

Mr. Tupman again expressed an earnest wish to be present at the festival; but meeting with no response in the dazed eye of Mr. Snodgrass, or the abstracted gaze of Mr. Pickwick, he applied himself with great interest to the port wine and dessert which had just been placed on the table. The waiter withdrew, and the party were left to enjoy the cozy couple of hours succeeding dinner.

"Beg your pardon, Sir," said the stranger. "Bottle stands—pass it round—way of the one through the button-hole—so healthily," and he emptied his glass, which he had filled about two minutes before; and parted out another, with the air of a man who was used to it.

The wine was passed, and a fresh supply ordered. The visitor talked, the Pickwickians listened. Mr. Tupman felt every measure taken after peace; for the ball. Mr. Pickwick’s countenance glowed with an expression of universal philanthropy; and Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass, fell that asleep.

"They're beginning up stairs," said the alderman; "hear the company—fiddles coming over, the harp—there they go!"

The various sounds which found their way down staire, announced the commencement of the first quadrille.

"How I should like to go," said Mr. Tupman, again.

"So should I," said the stranger, "con-foundered luggage—heavy smak—nothing to go in—odd, a’nt it?"

Now general benevolence was one of the leading features of the Pickwickian theory, and no one was more remarkable for the zealous manner in which he observed so noble a principle, than Mr. Tracy Tupman. The number of instances rendered on the transactions of the Society, in which that excellent man referred objects of charity to the houses of other members for leftover garments, or penurious relief, is almost incredible.

"I should be very happy to lend you a change of apparel for the purpose," said Mr. Tracy Tupman; "but you are rather small, and I am—"

"Rather fat—grown-up, Bacchus—cut the leaves—dismounted from the tub, and adopted kersey, eh? not double distilled, but double milled—ha! ha!—pass the wine."

Whether Mr. Tupman was somewhat indignant at the peremptory tone in which he was desired to pass the wine which the stranger passed so quickly away; or whether he felt very properly scandalised, at an infinancial member of the Pickwick club being ignominiously compared to a dismantled Bacchus, is a fact not yet completely ascertained. He passed the wine, weighed twice, and looked at the stranger for several seconds with a stern intensity: as that individual, however, appeared perfectly collected, and quite calm under his searching glance, he gradually relaxed, and reverted to the subject of the ball.

"I was about to observe, Sir," he said, "that though my apparel would be too large, a suit of my friend Mr. Winkle’s, would, perhaps, fit you better."

The stranger took Mr. Winkle’s measure with his eye; and that feature glinted with satisfaction as he said—"Just the thing!"

Mr. Tupman looked round him. The wine which had exerted its auscultorous influence over Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, had stolen upon the senses of Mr. Pickwick. That gentleman had gradually passed through the various stages which precede the lethargy produced by dinner, and its consequences. He had undergone the ordinary transitions from the height of conviviality, to the depth of misery, and from the depth of misery to the height of conviviality. Like a gas-lamp in the street, with the wind in the pipe, he had exhibited for a moment an unnatural brilliancy; then
funk so low as to be scarcely discernible: after a short interval, he had burst out again, to enlighten for a moment, then flickered with an uncertain, staggering sort of light, and then goes out altogether. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and perpetual anorning, with a partial choke occasionally, were the only audible indications of the great man's presence.

The temptation to be present at the ball, and to form his first impressions of the beauty of the Kentish ladies, was strong upon Mr. Tupman. The temptation to take the stranger with him, was equally great. He was wholly unacquainted with the place, and its inhabitants; and the stranger seemed to possess as great a knowledge of both, as if he had lived there from his infancy. Mr. Winkle was asleep, and Mr. Tupman had had sufficient experience in such matters to know, that the moment he awoke, he would, in the ordinary course of nature, roll heavily to bed. He was undecided. "Fill your glass, and pass the wine," said the indefatigable visitor.

Mr. Tupman did as he was requested; and the additional stimulus of the last glass settled his determination.

"Winkle's bed-room is inside mine," said Mr. Tupman; "I couldn't make him understand what I wanted, if I woke him now, but I know he has a dress suit in a carpet-bag; and supposing you were it to the ball, and took it off when we returned, I could replace it without troubling him at all about the matter."

"Capital," said the stranger, "famous plan—damned odd situation—fourteen coats in the packing-cases, and obliged to wear another man's—very good notion, that—very." "We must purchase our tickets," said Mr. Tupman.

"Not worth while splitting a guinea," said the stranger, "toss who shall pay for both—I call you spin—first time—woman—woman—bewitching woman," and down came the sovereign, with the Dragon (called by courtesy a woman) uptonmost.

Mr. Tupman rang the bell, purchased the tickets, and ordered candles and chamber-candlesticks. In another quarter of an hour, the stranger was completely arrayed in a full suit of Mr. Nathaniel Winkle's.

"It is a new coat," said Mr. Tupman, as the stranger surveyed himself with great complacency in a cheval glass. "The first that's been made with our club button," said he called his companion's attention to the large gilt button which displayed a bust of Mr. Pickwick in the centre, and the letters "P. C." on either side.

"P. C." said the stranger. "Quer set out—old fellow's likeness, and 'P. C.'—what does P. C. stand for—Peculiar Count, eh?" Mr. Tupman, with rising indignation, and great importance, explained the mystic device.

"Rather short in the waist, ain't it?" said the stranger, scrutinizing himself round, to catch a glimpse in the glass of the waist-buttons, which were half-way up his back. "Like a general postman's coat— queer coats those—that's by contract—no measuring—mysterious dispensations of Providence—all the short men get long coats—all the long men short ones." Running on in this way, Mr. Tupman's new companion adjusted his dress, or rather the dress of Mr. Winkle; and, accompanied by Mr. Tupman, ascended the staircase leading to the ball-room.

"What names, Sir?" said the man at the door. Mr. Tracy Tupman was stepping forward to announce his own titles, when the stranger prevented him. "No names at all," and then he whispered Mr. Tupman. "Names won't do—not known—very good names in their way, but not great ones—capital name for a small party, but won't make an impression in public assemblies—impossible the thing—Gentlemen from London—distinguished foreigners—anything." The door was thrown open; and Mr. Tracy Tupman and the stranger entered the ball-room.

It was a long room, with crimson-covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated dais, and quadrilles were being systematically got through by two or three sets of dancers. Two card-tables were made up in the adjoining card-room, and two pair of old ladies, and a corresponding number of stout gentlemen, were executing waltz therein.

The pasando concluded, the dancers promenaded the room, and Mr. Tupman and his companion stationed themselves in a corner, to observe the company.

"Charming women," said Mr. Tupman. "Wait a minute," said the stranger, "fun presently—nobs not come yet—quer place—Dock-yard people of upper rank don't know Dock-yard people of lower rank—Dock-yard people of lower rank don't know small gentry—small gentry don't know tradespeople—Commissioner don't know any body.

"Who's that little boy with the light hair and pink eyes, in a fancy dress?" inquired Mr. Tupman; "Hush, pray—pink eyes—fancy dress—little boy—nonsense—Ensign 97th—Honourable Wilmot Snipe—great family—Snipes—very." "Sir Thomas Clubber, Liey Clubber, and Miss Clubber!" said a man.
at the door in a stentorian voice. A great sensation was created throughout the room, by the entrance of a tall gentleman in a blue coat and bright buttons, a large lady in blue satin, and two young ladies on a similar scale, in fashionably-made dresses of the same hue.

"Commissioner—head of the yard—great man, remarkable great man," whispered the stranger in Mr. Tupman's ear, as the charitable committee ushered Sir Thomas Clubber and family to the top of the room. The Honourable Wilmot Snipe, and other distinguished gentlemen, crowded to render homage to the Miss Clubbers; and Sir Thomas Clubber stood bolt upright, and looked majestically over his black neckerchief at the assembled company.

Mr. Smithie, Mrs. Smithie, and the Miss Smithies, was the next announcement.

"What's Mr. Smithie?" inquired Mr. Tracy Tupman.

"Something in the yard," replied the stranger. Mr. Smithie bowed deferentially to Sir Thomas Clubber; and Sir Thomas Clubber acknowledged the salute with conscious condescension. Lady Clubber took a telescopic view of Mrs. Smithie and family, through her eye-glass, and Mrs. Smithie sneered, in her turn, on Mrs. Somebody else, whose husband was not in the dock-yard at all.

"Colonel Bulder, Mrs. Colonel Bulder, and Miss Bulder," were the next arrivals.

"Head of the garrison," said the stranger, in reply to Mr. Tupman's inquiring look.

Miss Bulder was warmly welcomed, by the Miss Clubbers; the greeting between Mrs. Colonel Bulder and Lady Clubber, was of the most affectionate description; Colonel Bulder and Sir Thomas Clubber exchanged sniff-boxes, and looked very much like a pair of Alexander Selkirk's—"Monarchs of all they surveyed."

While the aristocracy of the place—the Bulders, and Clubbers, and Snipes—were thus preserving their dignity at the upper end of the room, the other classes of society were imitating their example in other parts of it. The less aristocratic officers of the 97th devoted themselves to the families of the less important functionaries from the dock-yard. The solicitors' wives, and the wine-merchant's wife, headed another grade, (the brewer's wife visited the Bulders;) and Mrs. Tomlinson, the post-office keeper, seemed by mutual consent to have been chosen the leader of the trade party.

One of the most popular personages, in his own circle, present, was a little fat man with a ring of upright black hair round his head, and an extensive bald, pate, on the top of it—Doctor Slammer, surgeon to the 97th. The Doctor took snuff with everybody, chatted with everybody, laughed, danced, made jokes, played whist, did everything, and was everywhere. To these pursuits, multiform as they were, the little Doctor added a more important one than any—he was indefatigable in paying the most unremittent and devoted attention to a little old widow, whose rich dress and profusion of ornaments bespoke her a most desirable addition to a limited income.

Upon the doctor, and the widow, the eyes both of Mr. Tupman and his companion had been fixed for some time, when the stranger broke silence.

"Lots of money—old girl—pompous doctor—not a bad idea—good fun," were the intelligible sentences which issued from his lips. Mr. Tupman looked inquisitively in his face.

"I'll dance with the widow," said the stranger.

"Who is she?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Don't know—never saw her in all my life—cut out the doctor—here goes." And the stranger forthwith crossed the room; and, leaning against a mantel-piece, commenced gazing with an air of respectful and melancholy admiration on the fat countenance of the little old lady. Mr. Tupman looked on in mute astonishment. The stranger progressed rapidly; the little doctor danced with another lady—the widow dropped her fan; the stranger picked it up, and presented it—a smile—a bow—a curtsey—a few words of conversation. The stranger walked boldly up to, and returned with, the master of the ceremonies; a little introductory pantomime; and the stranger and Mrs. Budger took their places in a quadrille.

The surprise of Mr. Tupman at this summary proceeding, great as it was, was immeasurably exceeded by the astonishment of the doctor. The stranger was young, and the widow was flattered. The doctor's attentions were unheeded by the widow; and the doctor's indignation was wholly lost on his imperturbable rival. Doctor Slammer was paralyzed. He, Doctor Slammer of the 97th, to be extinguished in a moment by a man whom nobody had ever seen before, and whom nobody knew even now! Doctor Slammer—Doctor Slammer of the 97th rejected! Impossible! It could not be! Yes, it was; there they were. What! Introducing his friend! Could he believe his eyes? He looked again, and was under the painful necessity of admitting the veracity of his optics; Mrs. Budger was dancing with Mr. Tracy Tum-
there; "there was nothing amusing in the feet. There was the widow before him, bounding bodily: here and there, with unwonted vigour; and Mr. Tracy Tupman hopping about, with a face expressive of the most intense solemnity, dancing (as a good many people do) as if a quadrille was not a thing to be laughed at, but a severe trial to the feelings, which is rendered infeasible occasion to encounter.

Silently and patiently did the doctor bear all this, and all the hangings of negus, and watching for glasses, and darting for biscuits, and coquetting that ensued; but, a few seconds after the stranger had disappeared—the lady Mrs. Bulwer to her carriage, he darted swiftly from the room with every particle of his liquid-bottled-up indignation efferescing from all parts of his countenance, in a perspiration of passion.

The stranger was returning, and Mr. Tupman was beside him. He spoke in a low tone, and laughed. The little doctor thirsted for his life. He was exulting. He had triumphed.

"Sir!" said the doctor in an awful voice, producing a card, and retiring into an angle of the passage, "my name is Slammer, Doctor Slammer, Sir—37th regiment—Chatham Barracks—my card, Sir, my card." He would have added more, but his indignation choked him.

"Ah!" replied the stranger, coolly, 

"Slammer—much obliged—polite attention—not ill now, Slammer—but when I am—knock you up."

"You—you're a shuffler, Sir," gasped the curious doctor, "a poltroon—a coward—a liar—a—will nothing induce you to give me your card, Sir?"

"Oh! I see," said the stranger, half aside, "negus too strong here—liberal landlord—very foolish—very—lemonade—hot rooms—elderly gentleman—suffer for it, in the morning—cruel: and he moved on a step or two.

"You are stopping in this house, Sir," said the indignant little man; "you are intoxicated now, Sir; you shall hear from me in the morning, Sir. I shall find you out."

"Rather you found me out, than found me at home," replied the unmoved stranger.

Doctor Slammer looked unnatured ferocity, as he fixed his hat on his head with an indignant knock: and the stranger and Mr. Tupman ascended to the bed-room of the latter to restore the borrowed plumage to the unconscious Winkle.

That gentleman was fast asleep; the restoration was soon made. The stranger was extremely jocose; and Mr. Tracy Tupman, having quite bewildered with wine, negus, lights, and ladies, thought the whole affair an exquisite joke. His new friends departed; and, after experiencing some slight difficulty in finding the office in his night-cap, originally intended for the reception of his head, and finally overturning his candlestick in his struggles to put it on, Mr. Tracy Tupman managed to get into bed, by a series of complicated evolutions, and shortly afterwards sank into repose.

Seven o'clock had hardly ceased striking, on the following morning, when Mr. Pickwick's comprehensive mind was aroused from the state of unconsciousness, in which slumber had plunged it, by a loud knocking, at his chamber door.

"Who's there!" said Mr. Pickwick, starting up in bed.

"Boots, Sir!"

"What do you want?"

"Please, Sir, can you tell me, which gentleman of your party wears a bright blue dress coat, with a gilt button with P.C. on it?"

"It's been given out to brush, though, Mr. Pickwick; and the man has forgotten whom it belongs to—"Mr. Winkle," he called out, "next room but two, on the right hand."

"Thank't, Sir," said the Boots, and away he went.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Tupman, as a loud knocking at his door roused him from his oblivion repose.

"Can I speak to Mr. Winkle, Sir!" replied the Boots, from the outside.

"Winkle—Winkle," shouted Mr. Tupman, calling into the inner room.

"Hallo!" replied a faint voice from within the bed-clothes.

"You're wanted—some one at the door—and having exerted himself to articulate thus much, Mr. Tracy Tupman turned round and fell fast asleep again.

"Wanted!" said Mr. Winkle, hastily, jumping out of bed, and putting up a few articles of clothing: "wanted! at this distance from town—who on earth can want me?"

"Gentleman in the coffee-room, Sir," replied the Boots, as Mr. Winkle opened the door, and confronted him; "gentleman says he'll not detain you a moment, Sir, but he can take no denials."

"Very odd!" said Mr. Winkle; "I'll be down directly."

He hurriedly wrapped himself in a travelling-shawl, and dressing-gown, and proceeded down stairs. An old woman and a couple of waiters were cleaning the coffee-room, and an officer in undress uniform was looking out of the window. He turned round as Mr. Winkle entered, and made a stiff inclination. After having enquired the attendants to receive, and closed
the door very carefully, he said, "Mr. Winkle, I presume?"
"My name is Winkle, Sir."
"You will not be surprised, Sir, when I inform you that I have called here this morning on behalf of my friend, Dr. Slammer, of the Nineteenth."
"Doctor Slammer?" said Mr. Winkle.
"Doctor Slammer. He begged me to express his opinion that your conduct of last evening was of a description which no gentleman could endure: and (he added) which no one gentleman would pursue towards another."

Mr. Winkle's astonishment was too real, and too evident to escape the observation of Dr. Slammer's friend; he therefore proceeded. "My friend, Doctor Slammer, requested me to add, that he is firmly persuaded you were intoxicated during a portion of the evening, and possibly unconscious of the extent of the insult you were guilty of. He commissioned me to say, that such be be pleaded as an excuse for your behaviour, he will consent to accept a written apology to be penned by you, from my dictation."

"A written apology!" repeated Mr. Winkle, in the most emphatic tone of amazement possible.

"Of course you know the alternative," replied the visitor coolly.

"Were you entrusted with this message to me, by name?" inquired Mr. Winkle, whose intellects were hopelessly confused by this extraordinary conversation.

"I was not present myself," replied the visitor, "and in consequence of your firm refusal to give your card to Doctor Slammer, I was desired by that gentleman to identify the wearer of a very uncommon coat—a bright blue dress coat, with a gilt button, displaying a bust, and the letters [P.D.]

Mr. Winkle actually staggered with astonishment, as he heard his own costume thus minutely described. Doctor Slammer's friend proceeded:

"From the inquiries I made at the bar, just now, I was convinced that the owner of the coat in question arrived here, with three gentlemen, yesterday afternoon. I immediately sent up to the gentleman who was described as appearing the head of the party; and he, at once, referred me to you."

If the principal tower of Rochester Castle had suddenly walked from its foundation, and stationed itself opposite the coffee-room window, Mr. Winkle’s surprise would have been as nothing, compared with the profound astonishment with which he had heard this address. His first impression was, that his coat had been stolen. "Will you allow me to detain you one moment?" said he.

"Certainly," replied the unwelcome visitor.

Mr. Winkle ran hastily up-stairs, and with a trembling hand opened the bag. There was the coat in its usual place, but exhibiting on a close inspection, evident tokens of having been worn on the preceding night.

"It must be so," said Mr. Winkle, letting the coat fall from his hands. "I took too much wine after dinner, and have a very vague recollection of walking about the streets, and smoking a cigar afterwards. The fact is, I was very drunk;—I must have changed my coat—gone somewhere—and insulted somebody—I have no doubt of it; and this message is the terrible consequence." Saying which, Mr. Winkle traced his steps in the direction of the coffee-room, with the gloomy and dreadful resolve of accepting the challenge of the warlike Doctor Slammer, and abiding by the worst consequences that might ensue.

To this determination Mr. Winkle was urged by a variety of considerations; the first of which was, his reputation with the club. He had always been looked up to as a high authority on all matters of amusement and dexterity, whether offensive, defensive, or inoffensive; and if, on this very first occasion of being put to the test, he shrank back from the trial, beneath his leader's eye, his name and standing were lost for ever. Besides, he remembered to have heard it frequently surmised by the initiated in such matters, that by an understood arrangement between the seconds, the pistols were seldom loaded with ball; and, furthermore, he reflected that if he applied to Mr. Snodgrass to act as his second, and depicted the danger in glowing terms, that gentleman might possibly communicate the intelligence to Mr. Pickwick, who would certainly lose no time in transmitting it to the local authorities, and thus prevent the killing or maiming of his follower.

Such were his thoughts when he returned to the coffee-room, and intimated his intention of accepting the Doctor's challenge.

"Will you refer me to a friend, to arrange the time and place of meeting?" said the officer.

"Quite unnecessary," replied Mr. Winkle; "name them to me, and I can procure the attendance of a friend afterwards."

"Shall we say—sunset this evening?" inquired the officer, in a careless tone.

"Very good," replied Mr. Winkle; thinking in his heart it was very bad.

"You know Fort Pitt?"

"Yes; I saw it yesterday."
"If you will take the trouble to turn into the field which borders the trench, take the foot-path to the left, when you arrive at an angle of the fortification; and keep straight on till you see me; I will proceed to a secluded place, where the affair can be conducted without fear of interruption."

"Fear of interruption!" thought Mr. Winkle.

"Nothing more to arrange, I think," said the officer.

"I am not aware of anything more," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning;
and the officer whistled a lively air, as he strode away.

That morning's breakfast passed heavily off. Mr. Tupman was not in a condition to rise; after the unwonted dissipation of the previous night; Mr. Snodgrass appeared to labour under the same depression of spirits; and even Mr. Pickwick evinced an unusual attachment to silence and soda water. Mr. Winkle eagerly watched his opportunity. It was not long wanting. Mr. Snodgrass proposed a visit to the castle, and as Mr. Winkle was the only other member of the party disposed to walk, they went out together.

"Snodgrass," said Mr. Winkle, when they had turned out of the public street;

"Snodgrass, my dear fellow, can I rely upon your secrecy?"

As he said this, he most devoutly and earnestly hoped he could not.

"You can," replied Mr. Snodgrass.

"Hear me swear!"

"No, no!" interrupted Winkle, terrified at the idea of his companion's unconsciously pledging himself not to give information;

"don't swear, don't swear! it's quite unnecessary."

Mr. Snodgrass dropped the hand which he had in the spirit of posse raised towards the dusky as he made the above appeal, and assumed an attitude of attention.

"I want your assistance, my dear fellow, in an affair of honour," said Mr. Winkle.

"You shall have it," replied Mr. Snodgrass, clasping his friend's hand.

"With a Doctor—Doctor Slinker, of the Ninety-seventh," said Mr. Winkle, wishing to make the matter appear as solemn as possible; "an affair with an officer, seconded by another officer, at sunset this evening, in a lonely field beyond Fort Pitt."

"I will attend you," said Mr. Snodgrass.

He was astonished, but by no means dismayed. It is extraordinary how cool any party but the principal can be in such cases. Mr. Winkle had forgotten this. He had judged of his friend's feelings by his own.

"The consequences may be dreadful," said Mr. Winkle.

"I hope not," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"The Doctor, I believe, is a very good shot," said Mr. Winkle.

"Most of these military men are," observed Mr. Snodgrass, calmly; "but so are you, a'nt you?"

Mr. Winkle replied in the affirmative; and perceiving that he had not alarmed his companion sufficiently, changed his ground.

"Snodgrass," he said in a voice trembling with emotion, "if I fall, you will find in a packet which I shall place in your hands, a note for my—for my father."

This attack was a failure also. Mr. Snodgrass was affected, but he undertook the delivery of the note as readily as if he had been a Twopenny Postman.

"If I fall," said Mr. Winkle, "or if the Doctor falls, you, my dear friend, will be tried as an accessory before the fact. shall I involve my friend in transportation—possibly for life?"

Mr. Snodgrass winced a little at this, but his heroism was invincible. "In the cause of friendship," he fervently exclaimed, "I would brave all dangers."

How Mr. Winkle cursed his companion's devoted friendship internally, as they walked silently along, side by side, for some minutes, each immersed in his own meditations! The morning was wearing away; he grew desperate.

"Snodgrass," he said, stopping suddenly, "do not let me be talked in this matter—do not give information to the local authorities—do not obtain the assistance of several peace officers, to take either me or Doctor Slinker, of the Ninety-seventh Regiment, at present quartered in Chatham Barracks; into custody; and thus prevent this duel; I say, do not."

Mr. Snodgrass seized his friend's hand warmly, as he enthusiastically replied, "Not for worlds!"

A thrill passed over Mr. Winkle's frame, as the conviction that he had nothing to hope from his friend's fears, and that he was destined to become an animated target, rushed fiercely upon him.

The state of the case having been formally explained to Mr. Snodgrass, and a case of satisfaction pistols, with the satisfactory accompaniments of powder, ball, and caps, having been hired from a manufacturer in Rochester, the two friends returned to their tent. Mr. Winkle to ruminate on the approaching struggle; and Mr. Snodgrass to arrange the weapons of war, and put them into proper order for immediate use.

It was a dull and heavy evening; when they again talked forth on their velocipede.
errand. Mr. Winkle was muffled up in a huge cloak to escape observation; and Mr. Snodgrass bore under his instruments of destruction.

"Have you got everyth'ing?" said Mr. Winkle, in an agitated tone.

"Everyth'ing," replied Mr. Snodgrass; "plenty of ammunition in case the shots don't take effect. There's a quarter of a pound of powder in the case, and I have got two newspapers in my pocket for the loadings."

These were instances of friendship for which any man might reasonably feel most grateful. The presumption is, that the gratitude of Mr. Winkle was too powerful for utterance, as he said nothing, but continued to walk on—rather slowly.

"We are in excellent time," said Mr. Snodgrass, as they climbed the fence of the first field, the sun is just going down." Mr. Winkle looked up at the declining orb, and painfully thought of the probability of his "going down" himself, before long.

"There's the officer," exclaimed Mr. Winkle, after a few minutes' walking.

"Where?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"There,—the gentleman in the blue cloak," Mr. Snodgrass looked in the direction indicated by the forefinger of his friend, and observed a figure muffled up, as he had described. The officer evinced his consciousness of their presence by slightly beckoning with his hand; and the two friends followed him at a little distance; as he walked away.

The evening grew more dull every moment, and a melancholy wind seemed through the deserted fields like a distant giant, whistling for his horse-dog. The sadness of the scene imparted a sombre tinge to the feelings of Mr. Winkle. He started as they passed the angle of the trench—it looked like a colossal grave.

The officer turned suddenly from the path; and after climbing a paling, and scaling a hedge, entered a secluded field. Two gentlemen were waiting in it: one was a little fat man with black hair; and the other—a portly personage in a braided surtout—was sitting with perfect equanimity on a camp-stool.

"The other party, and a surgeon, I suppose," said Mr. Snodgrass; "take a drop of brandy." Mr. Winkle seized the wicker bottle, which his friend proffered, and took a lengthened pull at the exhilarating liquid.

"My friend, Sir, Mr. Snodgrass," said Mr. Winkle, as the officer approached. Doctor Slammer's friend bowed, and produced a case similar to that which Mr. Snodgrass carried.

"We have nothing further to say, Sir, I think," he coldly remarked, as he spread the case; "an apology has been absolutely declined."

"Nothing, Sir," said Mr. Snodgrass, who began to feel rather uncomfortable himself. "Will you step forward?" said the officer.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Snodgrass. The ground was measured, and preliminaries arranged.

"You will find these better than your own," said the opposite second, producing his pistols. "You saw me load 'em. Do you object to use them?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Snodgrass. The offer relieved him from considerable embarrassment; for his previous notions of loading a pistol were rather vague and undefined.

"We may place our men, then, I think," observed the officer, with as much indifference as if the principals were cheese-men, and the seconds playing orf, and painfully thought of the probability of his "going down" himself, before long.

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Not the man!" said the gentleman
with the camp-stool in his hand.

"Certainly not," replied the little doctor.

That's not the person who insulted me
last night."

"Very extraordinary!" exclaimed the
officer.

"Very," said the gentleman with the
camp-stool. "The only question is, whether
the gentleman, being on the ground, must
not be considered, as a matter of form,
to be the individual who insulted our
friend, Doctor Slammer, yesterday evening,
whether he is really that individual or
not;" and having delivered this suggestion,
with a very sage and mysterious air, the
man with the camp-stool took a large pinch
of snuff, and looked profoundly round,
with an air of authority in such matters.

Now Mr. Winkle had opened his eyes,
and his ears too, when he heard his adversary
call out for a cessation of hostilities;
and perceiving by what he had afterwards
said, that there was, beyond all
question, some mistake in the matter, he
at once foresaw the increase of reputation
he should inevitably acquire, by concealing
the real motive for his coming out: he
therefore stepped boldly forward, and said—

"I am not the person. I know it."

"Then, that," said the man with the
camp-stool, "is an affront to Doctor
Slammer, and a sufficient reason for proceeding
immediately."

"Pray, be quiet, Payne," said the Doctor's second. "Why did you not communicate this fact to me this morning, Sir?

"To be sure, to be sure," said the man
with the camp-stool, indignantly.

"I entreat you to be quiet, Payne," said
the other. "May I repeat my question,
Sir?"

"Be calm, Sir," replied Mr. Winkle,
who had time to deliberate upon his answer.

"Because, Sir, you described an intangible
and unconfessable person as wearing a
coat, which I have the honour, not only
to wear, but to have invented—the proposed
uniform, Sir, of the Pickwick Club in
London. The honour of that uniform I
feel bound to maintain, and I therefore,
without inquiry, accepted the challenge
which you offered me."

"My dear Sir," said the good-humoured
little doctor, "and with extended
hand, "I honour your gallantry. Permit me
to say, Sir, that I highly admire your con-
duct, and extremely regret having caused
you the inconvenience of this meeting, to
no purpose."

"Ask you won't mention it, Sir," said
Mr. Winkle.

"I shall feel proud of your acquiescence,
Sir," said the little doctor.

"It was affording me the greatest pleasure
to know you, Sir," replied Mr. Winkle.

Thereupon, the Doctor and Mr. Winkle
shook hands, and then Mr. Winkle and
Lieutenant Tupman (the Doctor's sec-
cond), and then Mr. Winkle and the man
with the camp-stool, and finally, Mr.
Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass; the last-
named gentleman in an excess of admiration
at the noble example of his heroic friend.

"I think we may adjourn," said Lieu-
tenant Tupman.

"Certainly," added the Doctor.

"Unless," interposed the man with the
camp-stool, "unless Mr. Winkle feels him-
self aggrieved by the challenge: in which
case, I submit, he has a right to satisfac-
tion."

Mr. Winkle, with great self-denial,
suppressed himself quite satisfied already:

"Or possibly," said the man with the
camp-stool, "the gentleman's second may
feel himself affronted with some observa-
tions which fell from me at an early period
of this meeting; if so, I shall be happy to
give him satisfaction immediately."

Mr. Snodgrass hastily professed himself
very much obliged with the handsome offer
of the gentleman who had spoken last,
which he was only induced to decline, by
his entire contentment with the whole pro-
ceedings. The two seconds adjusted the
cases, and the whole party left the ground
in a much more lively manner than they
had proceeded to it.

"Do you remain long here?" inquired
Doctor Slammer of Mr. Winkle, as they
were walking on most amicably together.

"I think we shall leave here the day
after to-morrow," was the reply.

"I trust I shall have the pleasure of
seeing you and your friend at my room,
and of spending a pleasant evening with
you, after this awkward mistake," said
the little doctor; "are you discouraged this
evening?"

"We have some friends here," replied
Mr. Winkle, and I should not like to
leave them to-night. Perhaps you and
your friend will join us at the Bell."

"With great pleasure," said the little
doctor; "will ten o'clock be too late to
look in for half an hour?"

"Oh dear, no," said Mr. Winkle. "I
shall be most happy to introduce you to my
friends, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman."

"It will give me great pleasure, I am
sure," replied Dr. Slammer, little suspect-
ing who Mr. Tupman was.

"You will be sure to come?" said Mr.
Snodgrass.

"Oh, certainly."

By this time they had reached the road.
CHAPTER III.

A new acquaintance — The stroller’s tale — A disagreeable interruption; and an unpleasant rencontre.

Mr. Pickwick had felt some apprehensions in consequence of the unusual absence of his two friends, which their mysterious behaviour during the whole morning had by no means tended to diminish. It was, therefore, with more than ordinary pleasure that he rose to greet them when they again entered; and with more than ordinary interest that he inquired what had occurred to detain them from his society. In reply to his questions on this point, Mr. Snodgrass was about to offer an historical account of the circumstances just now detailed, when he was suddenly checked, by observing that there were present, not only Mr. Tupman and their stage-coach companion of the preceding day, but another stranger of equally singular appearance. It was a care-worn looking man, whose sallow face, and deeply sunken eyes, were rendered still more striking than nature had made them, by the straight black hair which lay in untidy disorder half down his face. His eyes were almost unnaturally bright and piercing; his cheekbones were high and prominent; and his jaws were so long and lank, that an observer would have supposed he was drawing the flesh of his face in, for a moment, by some contraction of the muscles, if his half-opened mouth and immovable expression had not announced that it was his ordinary appearance. Round his neck he wore a green shawl, with the large ends straggling over his chest, and making their appearance occasionally, beneath the worn button-holes of his old waistcoat. His upper garment was a long black surtout; and below it was the coat, the trousers, and large boots, rustling rapidly to seed.

It was on this uncouth-looking person, that Mr. Winkle’s eye rested, and it was towards him that Mr. Pickwick extended his hand, when he said, "A friend of our friend’s here. We discovered this morning that our friend was connected with the theatre in this place, though he is not desirous to have it generally known, and this gentleman is a member of the same profession. He was about to favour us with a little anecdote connected with it, when you entered."

"Lot of anecdote," said the green-coated stranger at the day before, advancing to Mr. Winkle and speaking in a low confidential tone. "Hum fellow — does the heavy business — no actor — strange man — all sorts of miseries — dismal Jenny, we call him on the circuit." Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass politely welcomed the gentleman, elegantly designated as "Dismal Jenny," and calling for brandy and water, in imitation of the remainder of the company, seated themselves at the table.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "will you oblige us by proceeding with what you were going to relate!"

The dismal individual took a dirty roll of paper from his pocket, and turning to Mr. Snodgrass, who had just taken out his note-book, said in a hollow voice, perfectly in keeping with his outward man — "Are you the poet?"

"I — I do a little in that way," replied Mr. Snodgrass, rather taken aback by the abruptness of the question.

"Ah! poetry makes life, what lights and music do the stage. Strip the one of its false embellishments, and the other of its illusions, and what is there real, in either, to live or care for?"

"Very true, Sir," replied Mr. Snodgrass.

"To be before the footlights," continued the dismal man, "is like sitting at a grand court show, and admiring the silken dresses of the gaudy throng — to be behind them, is to be the people who make that finery, uncared for and unknown, and left to sink or swim, to starve or live, as fortune wills it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Snodgrass: for the sunken eye of the dismal man rested on him, and he felt it necessary to say something.

"Go on, Jenny," said the Spanish traveller, "like black-eyed Susan — all in the Downs — no croaking — speak out — look lively."

"Will you make another glass before you begin, Sir?" said Mr. Pickwick.

The dismal man took the hint, and having mixed a glass of brandy and water, and slowly swallowed half of it, opened the roll of paper and proceeded, partly to read, and partly to relate, the following incident, which we find recorded on the Transactions of the club, as "The Stroller’s Tale."
CHAPTER IV.

The Stroller's Tale.

"There is nothing of the marvellous in what I am going to relate," said the dismal man, "there is nothing even uncommon in it. Want and sickness are too common in many stations of life, to deserve more notice than is usually bestowed on the most ordinary vicissitudes of human nature. I have thrown these few notes together, because the subject of them was well known to me for many years. I traced his progress downwards, step by step, until at last I reached that excess of desperation from which he never rose again.

"The man of whom I speak was a low pantomime actor; and, like many people of his class, an habitual drunkard. In his better days, before he had become enfeebled by dissipation and enervated by disease, he had been in the receipt of a good salary, which, if he had been careful and prudent, he might have continued to receive for some years—not many; because these men either die early, or, by unnatural taxing their bodily energies, lose, prematurely, those physical powers on which alone they can depend for subsistence. His besetting sin gained so fast upon him, however, that it was found impossible to employ him in the situations in which he really was useful to the theatre. The public-house had a fascination for him which he could not resist. Neglected disease and hopeless poverty were certain to be his portion as death itself, if he persevered in the same course; yet he did persevere, and the result may be guessed. He could obtain no engagement, and he wanted bread.

"Every body who is at all acquainted with theatrical matters, knows what a host of shabby poverty-stricken men hang about the stages of a large establishment—not regularly engaged actors, but hailie people, procession upon, tumblers, and so forth, who are taken on during the run of a pantomime or an Easter piece, and are then discharged, until the production of some heavy spectacle occasions a new demand for their services. To this mode of life the man was compelled to resort; and taking the chair every night, at some low theatrical house, he once put him in possession of a few more shillings weekly, and enabled him to gratify his old propensity. Even this resource shortly failed him; his irregularities were too great to admit of his earning the wretched pittance he might thus have prepared, and he was actually reduced to a state bordering on starvation, only preventing a trial occasionally by borrowing of some old companion, or by obtaining an appearance at one or other of the commonest of the minor theatres; and when he did earn any thing, it was spent in the old way.

"About this time, and when he had been existing for upwards of a year no one knew how, I had a short engagement at one of the theatres on the Surrey side of the water, and here I saw this man, whom I had lost sight of for some time: for I had been travelling in the provinces, and he had been skulking in the lanes and alleys of London. I was dressed to leave the house, and was crossing the stage on my way out, when he tapped me on the shoulder. Never shall I forget the repulsive sight that met my eye when I turned round. He was dressed for the pantomime, in all the absurdity of a clown's costume. The spectral figures in the Dance of Death, the most frightful shapes that the ablest painter ever portrayed on canvas, never presented an appearance half so ghastly. His bloated body and shrivelled legs, their deformity enhanced a hundred fold by the fantastic dress—the glassy eyes, contrasting fearfully with the thick white paint with which the face was besmeared: the grotesquely-ornamented head, trembling with paralytics, and the long skinny hands, rubbed with white chalk—all gave him a hideous and unnatural appearance, of which no description could convey an adequate idea, and which, to this day, I shudder to think of. His voice was hollow and tremulous, as he took me aside, and in broken words recounted a long catalogue of sickness and privations, terminating, as usual, with an urgent request for the loan of a trifling sum of money. I put a few shillings in his hand, and, as I turned away, I heard the roar of laughter which followed his first tumble on to the stage.

"A few nights afterwards, a boy put a dirty scrap of paper in my hand, on which were scrawled a few words in pencil, intimating that the man was dangerously ill, and begging me, after the performance, to see him at his lodgings in some street—I forget the name of it now,—at no great distance from the theatre. I promised to comply, as soon as I could get away; and, after the curtain fell, satiled forth on my melancholy errand.

"It was late, for I had been playing in the last piece; and, as it was a benefit night, the performances had been protracted to an unusual length. It was a dark cold night, with a chill damp wind, which blew the rain heavily against the windows and house-fronts. Pools of water had collected in the narrow and little-frequented streets, and as many of the thinly-scattered oil-lamps had been blown out, the street was
rence of the wind, the walk was not only a comfortless, but most uncertain one. I had fortunately taken the right course, however, and succeeded after a little difficulty, in finding the house to which I had been directed—a coal shed, with one story above it, in the back room of which lay the object of my search.

"A wretched-looking woman, the man's wife, met me on the stairs, and, telling me that he had just fallen into a kind of doze, led me softly in, and placed a chair for me at the bed-side. The sick man was lying with his face turned towards the wall; and as he took no heed of my presence, I had leisure to observe the place in which I found myself.

"He was lying on an old bedstead, which turned up during the day. The tattered remains of a checked curtain were drawn round the bed-skirt, to exclude the wind, which however made its way into the comfortless room through the numerous chinks in the door, and blew it to and fro every instant. There was a low cinder fire in a rusty unshod grate; and an old three-cornered stained table, with some medicine-bottles, a broken glass, and a few other domestic articles, was drawn out before it. A little child was sleeping on a temporary bed which had been made for it on the floor, and the woman sat on a chair by its side. There were a couple of shelves, with a few plates and cups and saucers; and a pair of stage shoes and a couple of foils hung beneath them. With the exception of little heaps of rags and bundles which had been carelessly thrown into the corners of the room, these were the only things in the apartment.

"I had time to note these little particulars, and to mark the heavy breathing and feverish startings of the sick man, before he was aware of my presence. In his restless attempts to procure some easy resting-place for his head, he tossed his hand out of the bed, and it fell on mine. He started up, and stared eagerly in my face.

""Mr. Hutley, John," said his wife.

""Mr. Hutley, that you sent for to-night, you know."

""Ah!" said the invalid, passing his hand across his forehead; "Hutley—Hutley—let me see." He seemed endeavouring to collect his thoughts for a few seconds, and then grasping me tightly by the wrist, said, "Don't leave me—don't leave me, old fellow. She'll murder me; I know she will."

""Has he been long so?" I said, addressing his weeping wife.

""Since yesterday night," she replied. "John; John, don't you know me?"

""Don't let her come near me," said a man, with a shudder, as she swept over him. "Drive her away! I can't bear her near me." He started wildly at her, with a look of deadly apprehension, and then whispered in my ear, "I beat her, Jim; I beat her yesterday, and many times before. I have starved her, and the boy too; and now I am weak and helpless Jim, she'll murder me for it; I know she will. If you'd seen her cry, as I have, you'd know it too. Keep her off. He relaxed his grasp, and sunk back exhausted on the pillow.

"I knew but too well what all this meant. If I could have entertained any doubt of it, for an instant, one glance at the woman's pale face and wasted form would have sufficiently explained the real state of the case. 'You had better stand aside,' said I to the poor creature. 'You can do him no good. Perhaps he will be calmer, if he does not see you.' She retired out of the man's sight. He opened his eyes, after a few seconds, and looked anxiously round.

""Is she gone?" he eagerly inquired.

""Yes—yes," said I; "she shall not hurt you."

""I'll tell you what, Jim," said the man, in a low voice, "she does hurt me. There's something in her eyes wakes such a dreadful fear in my heart, that it drives me mad. All last night, her large staring eyes and pale face were close to mine; wherever I turned, they turned; and whenever I started up from my sleep, she was at the bedside looking at me. He drew me closer to him, as he said in a deep, alarmed whisper—"Jim, she must be an evil spirit—a devil! Hush! I know she is. If she had been a woman, she would have died long ago. No woman could have borne what she has."

"I sickened at the thought of the long course of cruelty and neglect which must have occurred to produce such an impression on such a man. I could say nothing in reply; for who could offer hope, or consolation, to the object being before me?"

"I sat there for upwards of two hours, during which time he tossed about, murmuring exclamations of pain or impatience, restlessly throwing his arms here and there, and turning constantly from side to side. At length he fell into that state of partial unconsciousness, in which the mind wanders unceasingly from scene to scene, and from place to place, without the control of reason, but still, without being able to divest itself of an indescribable sense of present suffering. Finding from his incoherent wanderings that this was the case, and knowing that in all probability the fever
would not grow immediately worse, I left him, promising his miserable wife that I would repeat my visit next evening, and if necessary sit up with the patient during the night.

"I kept my promise. The last four and twenty hours had produced a frightful alteration. The eyes, though deeply sunk and heavy, shone with a lustre, frightful to behold. The lips were parched and cracked in many places: the dry hard skin glowed with a burning heat, and there was an almost unearthly air of wild anxiety in the man's face, indicating even more strongly the ravages of the disease. The fever was at its height.

"I took the seat I had occupied the night before, and there I sat for hours, listening to sounds which must strike deep to the heart of the most callous among human beings—the awful ravings of a dying man. From what I had heard of the medical attendant's opinion, I knew there was no hope for him; I was sitting by his deathbed. I saw the wasted limbs, which a few hours before had been distorted for the amusement of a boisterous gallery, writhing under the tortures of a burning fever. I heard the clown's shrill laugh, blending with the low murmuring of the dying man.

"It is a touching thing to hear the mind reverting to the ordinary occupations and pursuits of health, when the body lies before you weak and helpless; but when those occupations are of a character the most strongly opposed to anything we associate with grave or solemn ideas, the impression produced is infinitely more powerful. The theatre, and the public-house, were the chief themes of the raged upon man's wanderings. It was evening, he fancied; he had a part to play that night; it was late, and he must leave home instantly. Why did they hold him, and prevent his going—he should lose the money—he must go. No! they would not let him. He hid his face in his burning hands, and feebly beseeched his own weakness, and the cruelty of his persecutors. A short pause; and he shouted out a few doggerel rhymes—the last he had ever learned. He rose in bed; drew up his withered limbs, and rolled about in uncouth positions; he was acting—he was at the theatre. A minute's silence, and he murmured the burden of some roaring song. He had read the old house at last; how hot the room was. He had been ill, very ill, but he was well now, and happy. Fill up his glass. Who was that, that dashed it from his lips? It was the same persecutor that had followed him before. He felt back upon his pillow, and moaned aloud. A short period of oblivion, and he was wandering through a tedious maze of low arched rooms—so low, sometimes, that he must creep upon his hands and knees to make his way along; it was close and dark; and every way he turned, some obstacle impeded his progress. There were insects too, hideous crawling things, with eyes that stared upon him, and filled the very air around: glistening horribly amidst the thick darkness of the place. The walls and ceiling were alive with reptiles—the vault expanded to an enormous size—frightful figures fitted to and fro—and the faces of men he knew, rendered hideous by gibing and mocking, peered out from among them; they were searing him with heated irons, and binding his head with cords till the blood started; and he struggled madly for life.

"At the close of one of these paroxysms, when I had with great difficulty held him down in his bed, he sank into what appeared to be a slumber. Overpowered with watching and exertion, I had closed my eyes for a few minutes, when I felt a violent clutch on my shoulder. I awoke instantly. He had raised himself up, so as to seat himself in bed—a dreadful change had come over his face, but consciousness had returned, for he evidently knew me. The child, who had been long since disturbed by his ravings, rose from its little bed, and ran towards its father, screaming with fright—the mother hastily caught it in her arms, lest he should injure it in the violence of his insanity: but, terrified by the alteration of his features, stood transfixed by the bed-side. He grasped my shoulder convulsively, and, striking his breast with the other hand, made a desperate attempt to articulate. It was unavailing—he extended his arm towards them, and made another violent effort. There was a rattling noise in the throat—a glare of the eye—a short stifled groan—and he fell back—dead!"

It would afford us the highest gratification to be enabled to record Mr. Pickwick's opinion of the foregoing anecdote. We have little doubt that we should have been enabled to present it to our readers, but for a most unfortunate occurrence.

Mr. Pickwick had replaced on the table the glass which, during the last few sentences of the tale, he had retained in his hand; and had just made up his mind to speak—indeed, we have the authority of Mr. Snodgrass's note-book for stating, that he had actually opened his mouth to speak, when the waiter entered the room, and cried—"
“Some gentlemen, Sir.”

It has been conjectured that Mr. Pickwick was on the point of delivering some remarks which would have enlightened the world, if not the Thames, when he was thus interrupted: for he gazed sternly on the waiter’s countenance, and then looked round on the company generally, as if seeking for information relative to the new comer.

“Oh!” said Mr. Winkle, rising, “some friends of mine—show them in. Very pleasant fellows,” added Mr. Winkle, after the waiter had retired—“Officers of the 97th, whose acquaintance I made rather oddly this morning. You will like them very much.”

Mr. Pickwick’s equanimity was at once restored. The waiter returned, ushered three gentlemen into the room.

“Lieutenant Tappleton,” said Mr. Winkle, “Lieutenant Tappleton, Mr. Pickwick—Doctor Payne, Mr. Pickwick—Mr. Snaggo, you have seen before; my friend Mr. Tappleton, Doctor Payne—Doctor Slammer, Mr. Pickwick—Mr. Tappleton, Doctor Slammer.”

Here Mr. Winkle suddenly paused; for strong emotions were visible on the countenance both of Mr. Tappleton and the Doctor.

“I have met this gentleman before,” said the Doctor, with marked emphasis.

“Oh!” said Mr. Winkle.

“And—that person, too, if I am not mistaken,” said the Doctor, bestowing a scrutinising glance on the green-coated stranger.

“I think I gave that person a very pressing invitation last night, which he thought proper to decline,” said the Doctor, “You are bound to kick him on the spot,” murmured the owner of the camp-stool, with great importance.

“Do be quiet, Payne,” interposed the Lieutenant. “Will you allow me to ask you, Sir,” he said, addressing Mr. Pickwick, who was considerably mystified by this very unpertinently by-play—“Will you allow me to ask you, Sir, whether that person belongs to your party?”

“No, Sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick, “he is a guest of ours.”

“He is a member of your club, or I am mistaken!” said the Lieutenant, inquiring.

“Certainly not,” responded Mr. Pickwick.

“And never wore your club-button!” said the Lieutenant.

“No—never!” replied the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

Lieutenant Tappleton turned round to his friend Doctor Slammer, with a scarcely perceptible shrug of the shoulder, as if implying some doubt of the accuracy of his recollection. The little Doctor looked wrathful, but confounded; and Mr. Payne gazed with a ferocious aspect on the beaming countenance of the unconscious Pickwick.

“Sir,” said the Doctor, suddenly addressing Mr. Tappleton, in a tone which made that gentleman start as perceptibly as if a pin had been cunningly inserted in the calf of his leg—“you were at the ball here last night?”

Mr. Tappleton gasped a faint affirmative; looking very hard at Mr. Pickwick all the while.

“That person was your companion,” said the Doctor, pointing to the still unmoved stranger.

Mr. Tappleton admitted the fact.

“Now, Sir,” said the Doctor to the stranger, “I ask you once again, in the presence of these gentlemen, whether you choose to give me your card, and to receive the treatment of a gentleman; or whether you impose upon me the necessity of personally chastising you on the spot!”

“Stay, Sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, “I really cannot allow this matter to go any further without some explanation. Tappleton, recount the circumstances.”

Mr. Tappleton, thus solemnly adjured, stated the case in a few words; touched lightly on the borrowing of the coat; expatiated largely on its having been done “after dinner”; and wound up with a little penitence on his own account; and left the stranger to clear himself as he best could.

He was apprisedly about to proceed to do so, when Lieutenant Tappleton, who had been eyeing him with great curiosity, said with considerable severity—“Haven’t I seen you at the theatre, Sir?”

“Certainly,” replied the unabashed stranger.

“He is a strolling actor,” said the Lieutenant, contemptuously: turning to Doctor Slammer—“He acts in the piece that the Officers of the 52d get up at the Rochester theatre to-morrow night. You cannot proceed in this affair, Slammer—impossible!”

“Quite!” said the dignified Payne.

“Sorry to have placed you in this disagreeable situation,” said Lieutenant Tappleton, addressing Mr. Pickwick, “allow me to suggest, that the best way of avoiding a recurrence of such scenes in future, will be to be more select in the choice of your companions. Good evening, Sir!” and the Lieutenant bounded out of the room.

“And allow me to say, Sir,” said the
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Driscoll Doctor Payne, "what if I had been Tappleton, or if I had been Shammer, I would have pulled your nose, Sir, and the nose of every man in this company. I would, Sir—every man. Payne is my name, Sir—Doctor Payne of the 43d. Good evening, Sir." Having concluded this speech, and uttered the last words in a loud key, he stalked majestically after his friend, closely followed by Doctor Shammer, who said nothing, but contended himself by withering the company with a look.

Rising rage and extreme bewilderment had swelled the noble breast of Mr. Pickwick, almost to the bursting of his waistcoat, during the delivery of the above defiance. He stood transfixed to the spot, gazing on vacancy. The closing of the door recalled him to himself. He rushed forward with fury in his looks, and fire in his eye, to the look of the door; in another instant it would have been on the throat of Dr. Payne of the 43d, had not Mr. Snodgrass seized his revered leader by the coat tail, and dragged him backwards.

"Restrain him," cried Mr. Snodgrass, "Winkle, Tupman—he must not peril his distinguished life in such a cause as this."

"Let us go," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold him tight," shouted Mr. Snodgrass; and by the united efforts of the whole company, Mr. Pickwick was forced into an arm-chair.

"Leave him alone," said the green-coated stranger—"brandy and water—jelly old gentleman—lots of pluck—swallow this—all—capital stuff." Having previously tested the virtues of a bumber, which had been mixed by the dizzled man, the stranger applied the glass to Mr. Pickwick's mouth; and the remainder of its contents rapidly disappeared.

There was a short pause; the brandy and water had done its work; the amiable countenance of Mr. Pickwick was fast recovering its customary expression.

"They are not worth your notice," said the dizzled man.

"You are right, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, "they are not. I am ashamed to have been betrayed into this warth of feeling. Draw your chair up to the table, Sir."

The dizzled man readily complied; a circle was again formed round the table, and harmony once more prevailed. Some lingering irritability appeared to find a resting place in Mr. Winkle's bosom, occasioned possibly by the temporary abstraction of his coat—though it is scarcely reasonable to suppose, that so slight a circumstance can have excited even a passing feeling of anger in a Pickwickian breast.

With this exception, their good-humour was completely restored; and the evening concluded with the conviviality with which it had begun.

CHAPTER V.

A field-day and picnic—More new friends; and an invitation to the country.

Many authors entertain, not only a foolish, but a really dishonest objection, to acknowledge the sources from whence they derive much valuable information. We have no such feeling. We are merely endeavouring to discharge in an upright manner, the responsible duties of our editorial functions; and whatever ambition we might have felt under other circumstances, to lay claim to the authorship of these adventures, a regard for truth forbids us to do more; than claim the merit of their judicious arrangement, and impartial narration. The Pickwick papers are our New River Heads; and we may be compared to the New River Company. The labours of others have raised for us an immense reservoir of important facts. We merely lay them on, and communicate them, in a clear and gentle stream, through the medium of these numbers, to a world thirsting for Pickwickian knowledge.

Acting in this spirit, and resolutely proceeding on our determination to show our obligations to the authorities we have consulted, we frankly say, that to the notebook of Mr. Snodgrass are indebted for the particulars recorded in this, and the succeeding chapter—particulars, which, now that we have disburdened our conscience, we shall proceed to detail without further comment.

The whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns, rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the lines. The manoeuvres of half a dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the windows were to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung.

Mr. Pickwick was, as our readers may have gathered from the slight extract we gave from his description of Chatham, an enthusiastic admirer of the army. Nothing could have been more delightful to him—nothing could have harmonised so well with the peculiar feeling of each of his companions—as this sight. Accordingly, they rose a foot, and walking in two lines,
the scene of action, towards which crowds of people were already pouring from a variety of quarters.

The appearance of everything on the lines, denoted that the approaching ceremony was one of the utmost grandeur and importance. There were sentries posted to keep the ground for the troops, and servants on the batteries keeping places for the ladies, and sergeants running to and fro, with vellum-covered books under their arms, and Colonel Bulder, in full military uniform, on horseback, galloping first to one place and then to another, and becking his horses among the people and prancing, and curveting, and shouting in a most alarming manner, and making himself very heard in the voice, and very red in the face, without any assignable cause or reason whatever.

Officers were running backwards and forwards, first communicating with Colonel Bulder, and then ordering the sergeant, and then running away altogether; and even the very private gentlemen looked from behind their glazed stocks, with an air of mysterious solemnity, which sufficiently bespoke the special nature of the occasion.

Mr. Pickwick and his three companions stationed themselves in the front rank of the crowd, and patiently awaited the commencement of the proceedings. The throat was increasing every moment; and the efforts they were compelled to make, to retain the position they had gained, sufficiently occupied their attention during the two hours that ensued. At one time, there was a sudden pressure from behind; and then Mr. Pickwick was jerked forward for several yards, with a degree of speed and elasticity highly inconsistent with the general gravity of his demeanour; at another moment there was a request to "keep back!" from the front, and then to "sit down!" a musket was either dropped upon Mr. Pickwick's toe to remind him of the demand, or thrust into his chest to ensure its being complied with. Then some facetious gentleman on the left, after pressing sideways in a body, and squeezing Mr. Snodgrass into the very last extreme of human torture, would request to know, "were he a shovin' to," and when Mr. Winkle had done expressing his extraoridary indignation at witnessing this unprovoked assault, some person behind would knock his hat over his eyes, and beg the favour of his putting his hand in his pocket. These, and other practical witcicides, coupled with the unaccountable absence of Mr. Tupman (who had suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found), repressed their situation upon the whole rather more uncomfortable, than pleasing or desirable.

At length that low roar of many voices ran through the crowd, which usually announces the arrival of whatever they have been waiting for. All eyes were turned in the direction of the salley-port. A few moments of eager expectation, and colours were seen fluttering gaily in the air, arms glinted brightly in the sun; column after column poured on to the plain. The troops halted and formed; the word of command rang through the line, there was a general clash of muskets, as arms were presented; and the commander-in-chief attended by Colonel Bulder and numerous officers, cantered to the front. The military bands struck up altogether; the horses stood upon two legs each, cantered backwards, and whirled their tails about in all directions; the dogs barked, the mob screamed, the troops recovered, and nothing was to be seen on either side, as far as the eye could reach, but a long perspective of red coats and white trousers, fixed and motionless.

Mr. Pickwick had been so fully occupied in falling about, and disentangling himself, mirthlessly, from between the legs of horses, that he had not enjoyed sufficient leisure to observe the scene before him, until it assumed the appearance we have just described. When he was at last enabled to stand firmly on his legs, his gratification and delight were unbounded.

"Can any thing be finer or more delightful! " he inquired of Mr. Winkle.

"Nothing," replied that gentleman, who had had a short man-standing on each of his feet, for the quarter of an hour immediately preceding.

"It is indeed a noble and a brilliant sight," said Mr. Snodgrass, in whose bosom a blaze of poetry was rapidly bursting forth, "to see the gallant defenders of their country, drawn up in a brilliant array before its peaceful citizens; their faces beaming—its with wad-like serpency, but with civilised gentleness; their eyes flashing—not with the rude fire of rapine or revenge, but with the soft light of humanity and intelligence."

Mr. Pickwick fully entered into the spirit of this eulogium, but he could not exactly re-echo its terms; for the soft light of intelligence burnt rather feebly in the eyes of the warriors, inasmuch as the command "eyes front!" had been given; and all the spectators say, before him was several thousand pair of optics, staring straight forward, wholly divested of any expression whatever.

"We are in a capital situation, now," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. The crowd had gradually dispersed from their immediate vicinity, and they were nearly alone.

"Capital!" echoed both Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle.
Mr. Pickwick, adjusting his spectacles, "I—I—rather think," said Mr. Winkle, changing colours—"I rather think they're goes to fire.

"Nonsense," said Mr. Pickwick hastily, "I—I—really think they are." urged Mr. Snodgrass, somewhat alarmed.

"Impossible," replied Mr. Pickwick. He had hardly finished the word, when the whole half-dozen regiments levelled their muskets as if they had but one common object, and that object the Pickwicksians; and burst forth with the most awful and tremendous discharge that ever shook the earth to its centre, or an elderly gentleman off his.

It was in this trying situation, exposed to a geyser of ball, cartridge, and bonfire caused by the operations of the military, a fresh body of whom had begun to fall in, on the opposite side, that Mr. Pickwick displayed that perfect coolness and self-possession, which are the indispensible accompaniments of a great mind. He seized Mr. Winkle by the arm, and placing himself between that gentleman and Mr. Snodgrass, earnestly besought them to remember that beyond the possibility of being rendered deaf by the noise, there was no immediate danger to be apprehended from the firing.

"But—but—suppose some of the men should happen to have ball cartridges by mistake," reasserted Mr. Winkle, panting at the supposition he was himself conjuring up. "I heard something whistle through the air just now—so sharp—close to my ear."

"We had better throw ourselves on our faces, hadn't we?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"No, no—it's over now," said Mr. Pickwick. His lip might quiver, and his cheek might blanch, but no expression of fear or concern escaped the lips of that immortal man.

"Mr. Pickwick was right; the firing ceased; but he had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the accuracy of his opinion, when a quick movement was visible in the line: the hoarse shout of the word of command ran along it, and before either of the party could form a guess at the meaning of his new move, the whole of the half-dozen regiments, with fiery-looking men in double quick time, were up upon the very spot on which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were stationed.

Man is but mortal; and there is a point beyond which human courage cannot extend. Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles for an instant on the advancing mass; and then fairly turned his back on the wind, and swiftly, but not hastily, first, because it is an ignoble term, and, secondly, because Mr. Pickwick's figure was by no means adapted for that mode of retreat—he trotted away, as quick a rate as his legs would carry him; so quickly, indeed, that he did not perceive the awkwardness of his situation, to the full extent, until too late.

The opposite troops, whose falling in had perplexed Mr. Pickwick a few seconds before, were drawn up to repel the mimic attack of the sham besiegers of the citadel, and the consequence was that Mr. Pickwick and his two companions found themselves suddenly inclosed between two lines of great length; the one advancing at a rapid pace, and the other firmly waiting the collision in hostile array.

"Hoi!" shouted the officers of the advancing line.

"Get out of the way," cried the officers of the stationary line.

"Where are we to go?" screamed the agitated Pickwicksians.

"Hoi—hai—hoi," was the only reply.

There was a moment of intense bewilderm- ent, a heavy tramp of footsteps, a violent concussion; a smothered laugh—the half dozen regiments were half a thousand yards off; and the scales of Mr. Pickwick's boots, were elevated in air.

Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle had each performed a compulsory summerset with remarkable agility, when the first object that met the eyes of the latter, as he sat on the ground, staring with a yellow silk handkerchief the stream of life which issued from his nose, was his venerable leader at some distance off, running after his own hat, which was gambolling playfully away in perspective.

There are very few moments in a man's existence, when he experiences so much, ludicrous distress, or meets with so little charitable commiseration, as when he is in pursuit of his own hat. A vast deal of coolness, and a peculiar degree of judgment, are requisite in catching a man must not be precipitate; one runs over it; he must not rush into the opposite extreme, or he loses it altogether. The best way is to keep gently up with the object of pursuit, to be wary and cautious, to watch your opportunity well, get gradually before it, then make a rapid dive, seize it by the crown, and stick it firmly on your head; smiling pleasantly all the time, as if you thought it as good a joke as any body else.

There was a fine gentle wind, and Mr. Pickwick's hat rolled sportively before it. The wind puffed, and Mr. Pickwick puffed, and the hat rolled over and over as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide; and, on at might have rolled, far beyond Mr. Pickwick's reach, had not his course been providentially stopped just as that gentleman was on the point of resigning it to its fate.

Mr. Pickwick, we way, was completely.
exhusted, and about to give up the chase, when the hat was blown with some violence against the wheel of a carriage, which was drawn up in a line with half-a-dozen other vehicles, on the spot to which his steps had been directed. Mr. Pickwick, perceiving his advantage, darted briskly forward, secured his property, planted it on his head, and paused to take breath. He had not been stationary half a minute, when he heard his own name eagerly pronounced by a voice which he at once recognised as Mr. Tupman's, and, looking upwards, he beheld a sight which filled him with surprise and pleasure.

In an open barouche, the horses of which had been taken out, the better to accomodate it to the crowded place, stood a stout old gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corderoy breeches and top-boots, two young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a young gentleman, apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a lady of doubtful age, probably the aunt of the aforesaid, and Mr. Tupman, as easy and unconcerned as if he had belonged to the family from the first moments of his infancy. Fastened up behind the barouche was a hamper of spacious dimensions—one of those hampers which always awakens in a contemplative mind, associations connected with cold fowls, tongue, and bottles of wine—and on the box sat a fat and red-faced boy, in a state of solemnity, whom no speculative observer could have regarded for an instant without setting down as the official dispenser of the contents of the before-mentioned hamper, when the proper time for their consumption should arrive.

Mr. Pickwick had bestowed a hasty glance on these interesting objects, when he was again greeted by his faithful disciple.

"Pickwick—Pickwick," said Mr. Tupman; "come up here. Make haste."

"Come along, Sir. Pray, come up," said the stout gentleman. "The—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again. Joe, let down the steps." The fat boy rolled slowly off the box, let down the steps, and held the carriage-door invitingly open. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle came up at the moment.

"Room for you all, gentlemen," said the stout man. "Two inside, and one out. Joe, make room for one of these gentlemen on the box. Now, Sir, come along;" and the stout gentleman extended his arm, and pulled first Mr. Pickwick, and then Mr. Snodgrass, into the barouche by main force. Mr. Winkle mounted to the box, the fat boy waddled to the same perch, and fell fast asleep instantly.

"Well, gentlemen," said the stout man, "very glad to see you. Know you very well, gentlemen, though you mayn't remember me. Spent some of 'em at your club last winter—picked up my friend, Mr. Tupman here, this morning, and very glad I was to see him. Well, Sir, and how are you? You do look uncommon well, to be sure."

Mr. Pickwick acknowledged the compliment, and cordially shook hands with the stout gentleman in the top-boots.

"Well, and how are you, Sir?" said the stout gentleman, addressing Mr. Snodgrass, with parental anxiety. "Charming, eh? Well, that's right—that's right. And how are you, Sir (to Mr. Winkle)? Well, I am glad to hear you say you are well; very glad I am, to be sure. My daughter, gentlemen—my girls, these are; and that's my sister, Miss Rachel Wardle. She's a Miss, she is; and yet she ain't a Miss—eh, Sir—eh? And the stout gentleman playfully inserted his elbow between the ribs of Mr. Pickwick, and laughed very heartily.

"Lor, brother?" said Miss Wardle, with a deprecating smile.

"True, true," said the stout gentleman; "no one can deny it. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon; this is my friend Mr. Trundle. And now you all know each other; let's be comfortable and happy, and see what's going forward; that's what I say."

So the stout gentleman put on his spectacles, and Mr. Pickwick pulled out his glass, and every body stood up in the carriage, and looked over somebody else's shoulder at the evolutions of the military.

Astounding evolutions they were, one rank firing over the heads of another rank, and then running away; and then the other rank firing over the heads of another rank, and running away in their turn; and then forming squares with officers in the centre; and then descending the trench on one side with scaling-ladders, and ascending it on the other again by the same means; and knocking down barricades of baskets, and behaving in the most gallant manner possible. Then there was such a running down of the contents of enormous guns on the battery, with instruments like magnified mops; such a preparation before they were let off, and such an awful noise when they did go, that the air resounded with the screams of ladies. The young Miss Wardles were so frightened, that Mr. Trundle was actually obliged to hold one of them up in the carriage, while Mr. Snodgrass supported the others; and Mr. Wardle's sister suffered under such a dreadful state of nervous alarm, that Mr. Tupman found it indispensably necessary
to put his arm round her waist to keep her up at all. Everybody was excited except the fat boy, and he slept soundly, as if the roaring of cannon were his ordinary lullaby.

“Joe, Joe!” said the stout gentleman, when the citadel was taken, and the besiegers and besieged sat down to dinner.

“Damn that boy, he’s gone to sleep again. Be good enough to pinch him, Sir—in the leg, if you please; nothing else wakes him—thank you. Undon the hamper, Joe.”

“Joe!”

The fat boy, who had been effectually roused by the compression of a portion of his leg, between the finger and thumb of Mr. Winkle, rolled off the box once again, and proceeded to unpack the hamper, with more expedition than could have been expected from his previous inactivity.

“Now, we must sit close,” said the stout gentleman. After a great many jokes about squeezing the ladies’ sleeves, and a vast quantity of blushing and jocose proposals that the ladies should sit in the gentlemen’s laps, the whole party were stowed down in the barouche; and the stout gentleman proceeded to hand the things from the fat boy (who had mounted up behind, for the purpose), into the carriage.

“Now, Joe, knives and forks.” The knives and forks were handed in, and the ladies and gentlemen inside, and Mr. Winkle on the box, were each furnished with those useful implements.

“Plates, Joe, plates.” A similar process employed in the distribution of the crockery.

“Now, Joe, the fowls. Damn that boy; he’s gone to sleep again. Joe! Joe!” (Some flaps on the head with a stick, and the fat boy, with some difficulty, roused from his lethargy.) “Come, hand in the estables.”

There was something in the sound of the last word, which roused theunctuous boy. He jumped up; and the loaden eyes, which twinkled behind his mountainous cheeks, leered horribly upon the food as he unpacked it from the basket.

“Now, make haste,” said Mr. Wardle, for the fat boy was hanging fondly over a caper, which he seemed wholly unable to part with. The boy sighed deeply, and bestowed an ardent gaze upon its plumpness, unwillingly consigned it to his master.

“That’s right—look sharp. Now the tongue—now the pigeon-pie. Take care of that veil and ham—mind the lobsters—take the salad out of the cloth—gives me the dressing.” Such were the hurried orders which issued from the lips of Mr. Wardle, as he handed in the different articles described, and placed dishes in every body’s hands, and on every body’s knees, in endless number.

“Now, ain’t this capital?” inquired that jolly personage, when the work of destruction had commenced.

“Capital!” said Mr. Winkle, who was carrying a fowl on the box.

“Glass of wine!”

“With the greatest pleasure.”

“You’d better have a bottle to yourself, up there, hadn’t you?”

“You’re very good.”

“Joe!”

“Yes, Sir.” (He wasn’t asleep this time, having just succeeded in abstracting a veal patty.)

“Bottle of wine to the gentleman on the box. Glad to see you, Sir.”

“Thankee,” Mr. Winkle emptied his glass, and placed the bottle on the coach-box, by his side.

“Will you permit me to have the pleasure, Sir?” said Mr. Trundle to Mr. Winkle.

“With great pleasure,” replied Mr. Winkle to Mr. Trundle; and then the two gentlemen took wine, after which they took a glass of wine round, ladies and all.

“How dear Emily is flirting with the strange gentleman,” whispered the spinster aunt, with true spinster-aunt-like envy, to her brother Mr. Wardle.

“Oh! I don’t know,” said the jolly old gentleman; “all very natural, I dare say—nothing unusual. Mr. Pickwick, some wise, Sir!” Mr. Pickwick, who had been deeply investigating the interior of the pigeon-pie, readily assented.

“Emily, my dear,” said the spinster aunt, with a patronizing air, “don’t talk so loud, love.”

“Lor, aunt!”

“Aunt and the little old gentleman want to have it all to themselves, I think,” whispered Miss Isabella Wardle to her sister Emily. The young ladies laughed very heartily, and the old one tried to look amiable, but couldn’t manage it.

“Young girls have such spirits,” said Miss Wardle to Mr. Tupman, with an air of gentle commiseration, as if animal spirits were contraband, and their possession without a permit, a high crime and misdemeanour.

“Oh, they have,” replied Mr. Tupman, not exactly making the sort of reply that was expected from him. “It’s quite delightful.”

“Hem!” said Miss Wardle, rather dubiously.

“Will you permit me,” said Mr. Tupman, in his blandest manner, touching the enchanting Rachel’s wrist with one hand, and gently elevating the bottle with the other. “Will you permit me!”
"Oh, Sir!" Mr. Tupman looked most impressive; and Rachel expressed her fear that more guns were going off, in which case, of course, she would have required support again.

"Do you think my dear nieces pretty?" whispered their affectionate aunt to Mr. Tupman.

"I should, if their aunt wasn't here," replied the ready Pickwickian with a passionate glance.

"Oh, you naughty man—but really, if their complexion were a little better, don't you think they would be nice-looking girls—by candle-light?"

"Yes; I think they would," said Mr. Tupman, with an air of indifference.

"Oh, you quiz—I know what you were going to say."

"What?" inquired Mr. Tupman, who had not precisely made up his mind to say anything at all.

"You were going to say that Isabella stoops—I know you were—you men are such observers. Well, so she does; it can't be denied; and certainly if there's one thing more than another that makes a girl look ugly, it is stooping. I often tell her, that when she gets a little older, she'll be quite frightful. Well, you are a quiz!"

Mr. Tupman had no objection to earning the reputation at such a cheap a rate; so he looked very knowing, and smiled mysteriously.

"What a sarcastic smile," said the admiring Rachel; "I declare I'm quite afraid of you."

"Afraid of me!"

"Oh, you can't disguise anything from me—I know what that smile means, very well."

"What?" said Mr. Tupman; who had not the slightest notion himself.

"You mean," said the amiable aunt, sinking her voice still lower—"you mean, that you don't think Isabella's stooping is as bad as Emily's boldness. Well, she is bold! You can't think how wretched it makes me sometimes—I'm sure I cry about it for hours together—my dear brother is so good, and so suspicious, that he never sees it; if he did, I'm quite certain it would break his heart. I wish I could think it was only manner—I hope it may be—(here the affectionate relative heaved a deep sigh, and shook her head despondingly.)"

"I'm sure aunt's talking about us," whispered Miss Emily Wardle to her sister. "I'm quite certain of it, she looks so malicious."

"Is she?" replied Isabella—"Hem! aunt, dear!"

"Yes, my dear love!"

"I'm so afraid you'll catch cold, aunt—have a silk handkerchief to tie round your dear old head—you really should take care of yourself—consider your age!"

However well deserved this piece of retaliation might have been, it was as vindictive a one as could well have been resorted to. There is no guessing in what form of reply the aunt's indignation would have vented itself, had not Mr. Wardle unconsciously changed the subject, by calling emphatically for Joe.

"Damn that boy," said the old gentleman, "he's gone to sleep again."

"Very extraordinary boy, that," said Mr. Pickwick, "does he always sleep in this way?"

"Sleep!" said the old gentleman, "he's always asleep. Goes on errands fast asleep, and snores as he waits at table."

"How very odd!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah! odd indeed," returned the old gentleman; "I'm proud of that boy; wouldn't part with him on any account—damme, he's a natural curiosity! Here, Joe—Joe—take these things away, and open another bottle—d'ye hear?"

The fat boy rose, opened his eyes, swallowed the huge piece of pie he had been in the set of masticating when he last fell asleep, and slowly obeyed his master's orders—gloating languidly over the remains of the feast, as he removed the plates, and deposited them in the hamper. The fresh bottle was produced, and speedily emptied: the hamper was made fast in its old place—the fat boy once more mounted the box—the spectacles and pocket-glass were again adjusted—and the evolutions of the military recommenced. There was a great fizzing and banging of guns, and starting of ladies—and then a mine was sprung, to the gratification of every body—and when the mine had gone off, the military and the company followed its example, and went off too.

"Now, mind," said the old gentleman, as he shook hands with Mr. Pickwick at the conclusion of a conversation which had been carried on at intervals, during the conclusion of the proceedings—"we shall see you all to-morrow."}

"Most certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"You have got the address?"

"Manor Farm, Dingley Dell," said Mr Pickwick, consulting his pocket-book.

"That's it," said the old gentleman. "I don't let you off, mind, under a week; and undertake that you shall see everything worth seeing. If you've come down for a country life, come to me, and I'll give you plenty of it. Joe—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again—Joe, help Tom put in the horses."
The horses were put in—the driver mounted—the fat boy clambered up by his side—farewells were exchanged—and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again.

CHAPTER VI.

A short one—showing, among other matters, how Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive, and Mr. Winkle to ride; and how they both did it.

Bright and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leaned over the balustrades of Rochester Bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. The scene was indeed one, which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind than that to which it was presented.

On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of sea-weed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with the clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skinned away in the light of the morning sun. The river, reflecting the clear blue of the sky, glistened and sparkled as it flowed noiselessly on; and the oars of the fishermen dipped into the water with a clear and liquid sound, as their heavy but picturesque boats glided slowly down the stream.

Mr. Pickwick was roused from the agreeable reverie into which he had been led by the objects before him, by a deep sigh, and a touch on his shoulder. He turned round, and the dismal man was at his side.

"Contemplating the scene?" inquired the dismal man.

"I was," said Mr. Pickwick. "And congratulating yourself on being up so soon!"

Mr. Pickwick nodded assent. "Ah! people need to rise early, to see the sun in all his splendour, for his brightness seldom lasts the day through. The morning of day and the morning of life are but too much alike."

"You speak truly, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick. "How common the saying," continued the dismal man, "the morning's too fine to last. How well might it be applied to our every-day existence. God! what would I forfeit to have the days of my childhood restored, or be able to forget them for ever!"

"You have seen much trouble, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionately. "I have," said the dismal man, hurriedly; "I have. More than those who see me now, would believe possible." He paused for an instant, and then said abruptly, "Did it ever strike you, on such a morning as this, that drowning would be happiness and peace?"

"God bless me, no!" replied Mr. Pickwick, edging a little from the balustrade, as the possibility of the dismal man's tipping him over, by way of experiment, occurred to him rather forcibly.

"I have thought so often," said the dismal man, without noticing the action. "The calm, cool water seems to me to murmur an invitation to repose and rest. A bound, a splash, a brief struggle; there is an eddy for an instant, it gradually subsides into a gentle ripple; the waters have closed above your head, and the world has closed upon your miseries and your misfortunes for ever." The sunken eye of the dismal man flashed brightly as he spoke, but the momentary excitement quickly subsided; and he turned calmly away, as he said—"There—enough of that. I wished to see you on another subject. You invited me to read that paper, the night before last, and listened attentively while I did so."

"I did," replied Mr. Pickwick; "and I certainly thought—"

"I asked for no opinion," said the dismal man, interrupting him, "and I want none. You are travelling for amusement and instruction. Suppose I forwarded you a curious manuscript—observe not curious because wild or improbable, but curious as a leaf from the romance of real life. Would you communicate it to the club of which you have spoken so frequently?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, "if you wished it; and it would be entered on their transactions."

"You shall have it," replied Mr. Pickwick.
man. "Your address?" and Mr. Pickwick having communicated their probable route, the dismal man carefully noted it down in a greasy pocket-book, and, resisting Mr. Pickwick's pressing invitation to breakfast, left that gentleman at his inn, and walked slowly away.

Mr. Pickwick found that his three companions had risen, and were waiting his arrival to commence breakfast, which was ready laid in tempting display. They sat down to the meal; and broiled ham, eggs, tea, coffee, and sunrise began to disappear with a rapidity which at once bore testimony to the excellence of the fare, and the appetites of its consumers.

"Now, about Manor Farm," said Mr. Pickwick. "How shall we go?"

"We had better consult the waiter, perhaps," said Mr. Tupman; and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

"Dingley Dell, gentlemen—fifteen miles, gentlemen—cross-road—post-chaise, Sir!"

"Post-chaise won't hold more than two," said Mr. Pickwick.

"True, Sir—beg your pardon, Sir.—Very nice four-wheel chaise, Sir—seat for two behind—one in front for the gentleman that drives—oh! beg your pardon, Sir—that'll only hold three."

"What's to be done!" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Perhaps one of the gentlemen like to ride, Sir," suggested the waiter, looking towards Mr. Winkle; "very good saddle horses, Sir—any of Mr. Wardle's men coming to Rochester, bring 'em back, Sir."

"The very thing," said Mr. Pickwick. "Winkle, will you go on horseback?"

Now Mr. Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings in the very lowest recesses of his own heart relative to his equestrian skill; but as he would not have them even suspected on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, "Certainly. I would enjoy it, of all things."

Mr. Winkle had rushed upon his fate; there was no resource. "Let them be at the door by eleven," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very well, Sir," replied the waiter.

The waiter retired; the breakfast concluded; and the travellers ascended to their respective bed-rooms to prepare a change of clothing, to take with them on their approaching expedition.

Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready—an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.

Mr. Pickwick was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-butt for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near it, holding by the bridle another immense horse—apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise—ready saddled for Mr. Winkle.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement, while the coats were being put on. "Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that."

"Oh! you, of course," said Mr. Tupman.

"Of course," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Not the slightest fear, Sir," interposed the hostler. "Warrant him quiet, Sir; a hin-fant in arms might drive him."

"He don't shy, does he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Shy, Sir! He wouldn't shy if he was to meet a vagrin-load of monkeys, with their tails burnt off."

The last recommendation was indisputable. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr. Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his feet on a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it for that purpose.

"Now, Shiny Villiam," said the hostler to the deputy hostler, "give the gen'l'm'n the ribbins. "Shiny Villiam"—so called, probably, from his sleek hair and oily comenence—placed the reins in Mr. Pickwick's left hand; and the upper hostler thrust a whip into his right.

"Woo," cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

"Wo—o!" echoed Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass, from the bin.

"Only his playfulness, gen'l'm'n," said the head hostler, encouragingly, "just kitch hold on him, Villiam." The deputy restrained the animal's impetuousity, and the principal ran to assist Mr. Winkle in mounting.

"Other side, Sir, if you please."

"Blowed if the gen'l'm'n won't gettin' up on the wrong side," whispered a grinning post-boy, to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr. Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war. "All right!" inquired Mr. Pickwick, with an inward presiment that it was all wrong.

"All right," replied Mr. Winkle faintly. "Let 'em go," cried the hostler—"Hold him in, Sir," and away went the chaise, and the saddle horse, with Mr. Pickwick.
Poor fellow," said Mr. Winkle, soothingly,—"poor fellow—good old horse." The "poor fellow" was proof against flattery: the more Mr. Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away; and, notwithstanding all kinds of coaxing and wheedling, there were Mr. Winkle and the horse going round and round each other for ten minutes, at the end of which time each was at precisely the same distance from the other as when they first commenced—an unsatisfactory sort of thing under any circumstances, but particularly so in a lonely road, where no assistance can be procured.

"What am I to do!" shouted Mr. Winkle, after the dodging had been prolonged for a considerable time. "What am I to do? I can't get on him!"

"You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike," replied Mr. Pickwick from the chaise.

"But he won't come," roared Mr. Winkle. "Do come and hold him."

Mr. Pickwick was the very personification of kindness and humanity: he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge, lest any thing should come along the road, and stepped back to the assistance of his distressed companion, leaving Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the vehicle.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr. Pickwick advancing towards him, with the chaise-whip in his hand, than he exchanged the rotary motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement, of so very determined a character, that it at once drew Mr. Winkle, who was still at the end of the bridle, at a rather quicker rate than fast walking, in the direction from which they had just come. Mr. Pickwick ran to his assistance, but the faster Mr. Pickwick ran forward, the faster the horse ran backward. There was a great screeching of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr. Winkle's arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr. Winkle and Mr. Pickwick grinning on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

"Blows my soul!" exclaimed the agitated Mr. Pickwick, "there's the other horse running away!"

It was not too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. The result may be guessed. He was off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass...
graze in the four-wheeled chaise. The heat was a short one. Mr. Tupman threw himself into the hedge, Mr. Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body, and the bin from the perch; and finally stood stock still, to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extricate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickest—a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was, to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

An hour’s walking brought the travellers to a little road-side public-house, with two elm-trees, a horse-trough, and a sign-post, in front; one or two deformed hay-ricks behind, a kitchen-garden at the side, and rotten sheds and mouldering oat-houses, jumbled in strange confusion, all about it. A red-headed man was working in the garden; and to him Mr. Pickwick called lustily—“Hallo there!”

The red-headed man raised his body, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared, long and coquettishly at Mr. Pickwick and his companions.

“Hallo there!” repeated Mr. Pickwick.

“Hallo!” was the red-headed man’s reply.

“How far is it to Dingley Dell?”

“Better er seven mile.”

“Is it a good road?”

“No, t’ant.” Having uttered this brief reply, and apparently satisfied himself with another scrutiny, the red-headed man resumed his work.

“We want to put this horse up here,” said Mr. Pickwick; “I suppose we can’t do it?”

“Want to put that ere horse up, do ye?” repeated the red-headed man, leaning on his spade.

Of course,” replied Mr. Pickwick, who had by this time advanced, horse in hand, to the garden rails.

“Mischees”—roared the man with the red head, emerging from the garden, and looking very hard at the horse—“Mischees.”

A tall, bony woman—straight all the way down—in a coarse blue pelisse, with the waist an inch or two below her arm-pits, responded to the call.

“Can we put this horse up here, my good woman?” said Mr. Tupman, advancing, and speaking in his most seductive tones. The woman looked very hard at the whole party; and the red-headed man whispered something in her ear.

“No,” replied the woman, after a little consideration, “I’m afraid on it.”

“Afraid!” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, “what’s the woman afraid of?”

“It got us in trouble last time,” said the woman, turning into the house; “I want have nothin’ to say to ‘un.”

“Most extraordinary thing I ever met with in my life,” said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

“I—I—really believe,” whispered Mr. Winkle as his friends gathered round him, “that they think we have come by this horse in some dishonest manner.”

“What!” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, in a storm of indignation. Mr. Winkle modestly repeated his suggestion.

“Hallo, you fellow!” said the angry Mr. Pickwick, “do you think we stole this horse?”

“I’m sure ye did,” replied the red-headed man, with a grin which agitated his countenance from one auricular organ to the other. Saying which, he turned into the house, and banged the door after him.

“It’s like a dream,” ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, “a hideous dream. The idea of a man’s walking about all day, with a dreadful horse that he can’t get rid of!”

The depressed Pickwickians turned mediately away, with the tail quadrupled, for which they all felt the most unmitigated disgust, following slowly at their heels.

It was late in the afternoon, when the four friends and their four-footed companion, turned into the lane leading to Manor Farm: and even when they were so near their place of destination, the pleasure they would otherwise have experienced, was materially damped as they reflected on the singularity of their appearance, and the absurdity of their situation. Torn clothes, lacerated faces, dusty shoes, exhausted looks, and, above all, the horse. Oh, how Mr. Pickwick cursed that horse! he had eyed the noble animal from time to time with looks expressive of hatred and revenge; more than once he had calculated the probable amount of the expense he would incur by cutting his throat; and now the temptation to destroy him, or to cast him loose upon the world, rushed upon his mind with ten-fold force. He was roused from a meditation on these dire imaginings, by the sudden appearance of two figures, at a turn of the lane. It was Mr. Wardle, and his faithful attendant, the fat boy.

“Why, where have you been?” said the hospitable old gentleman. “I’ve been
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waiting for you all day. Well, you do look tired. What! Scratches! Not hurt, I hope—eh? Well, I am glad to hear that—very. So you've been spilt, eh! Never mind. Common accident in these parts. Joe—damn that boy, he's asleep again—Joe, take that horse from the gentleman, and lead it into the stable."

The fat boy sauntered heavily behind them with the animal; and the old gentleman condoling with his guests in homely phrase, on so much of the day's adventures as they thought proper to communicate, led the way to the kitchen.

"We'll have you put to rights here," said the old gentleman, "and then I'll introduce you to the people in the parlour. Emma, bring out the cherry brandy; now, Jane, a needle and thread here; 'towels and water, Mary. Come, girls, bustle about."

Three or four buxom girls speedily dispersed in search of the different articles in requisition, while a couple of large-headed, circular-skulled males rose from their seats in the chimney-corner, (for although it was a May evening, their attachment to the wood fire appeared as cordial as if it were Christmas,) and dived into some obscure recesses, from which they speedily produced a bottle of blacking, and some half-dozen brushes.

"Bustle," said the old gentleman again; but the admonition was quite unnecessary, for one of the girls poured out the cherry brandy, and another brought in the towels, and one of the men suddenly seizing Mr. Pickwick by the leg, at the imminent hazard of throwing him off his balance, brushed away at his boot, till his corns were red-hot; while the other shampoo'd Mr. Winkle with a heavy clothes-brush, indulging, during the operation, in that hissing sound, which hosts are wont to produce, when engaged in rubbing down a horse.

Mr. Snodgrass, having concluded his ablutions, took a survey of the room, while standing with his back to the fire, sipping his cherry brandy with heartfelt satisfaction. He describes it, as a large apartment, with a red brick floor, and a capacious chimney; the ceiling garnished with lamps, sides of bacon, and ropes of onions. The walls were decorated with several hunting-whips, two or three bridles, a saddle, and an old rusty blunderbuss, with an inscription below it, intimating that it was "Loaded"—as it had been, on the same authority, for half a century at least. An old eight-day clock, of solemn and sedate demeanour, ticked gravely in one corner; and a silver watch, of equal antiquity, dangled from one of the many hooks which ornamented the dresser.

"Ready!" said the old gentleman intriguingly, when his guests had been washed, mended, brushed, and brandied.

"Quite," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Come along then," and the party having traversed several dark passages, and being joined by Mr. Tupman, who had lingered behind to snatch a kiss from Emma, for which he had been duly rewarded with sundry pushings and scratchings, arrived at the parlour door.

"Welcome," said their hospitable host, throwing it open and stepping forward to announce them, "Welcome, gentlemen, to Manor Farm."

CHAPTER VII.

An old-fashioned card-party—the clergyman's verses—the story of the convict's return.

Several guests who were assembled in the old parlour, rose to greet Mr. Pickwick and his friends upon their entrance; and during the performance of the ceremony of introduction, with all due formalities, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to observe the appearance, and speculate upon the characters and pursuits, of the persons by whom he was surrounded—a habit which he in common with many other great men delighted to indulge. A very old lady, in a lofty cap and faded silk gown—no less a personage than Mr. Wardle's mother—occupied the post of honour on the right-hand corner of the chimney-piece; and various certificates of her having been brought up in the way she should go when young, and of her not having departed from it when old, ornamented the walls, in the form of samplers of ancient date, worsted landscapes of equal antiquity, and crimson silk tea-kettle holders of more modern period. The aunt, the two young ladies, and Mr. Wardle, each vying with the other in paying zealous and unremitting attentions to the old lady, crowded round her easy chair, one holding her ear-trumpet, another an orange, and a third a smelting-bottle, while a fourth was busily engaged in patting and punching the pillows, which were arranged for her support. On the opposite side sat a bald-headed old gentleman, with a good-humoured benevolent face—the clergyman of Dingley Dell; and next him sat his wife, a stout blooming old lady, who looked as if she were well skilled, not only in the art and mystery of manufacturing home-made cordials greatly to other people's satisfaction, but of tasting them occasionally very much to her own...
tipstone pipkin-faced man, was conversing
with a fat old gentleman in one corner;
and two or three more old gentlemen, and
two or three more old ladies, sat bolt-
upright and motionless on their chairs,
staring very hard at Mr. Pickwick and his
allow-voyagers.
"Mr. Pickwick, mother," said Mr. War-
le, at the very top of his voice.
"Ah!" said the old lady, shaking her
head; "I can't hear you."
"Mr. Pickwick, grandma!" screamed
both the young ladies together.
"Ah!" exclaimed the old lady. "Well;
I don't much matter. He don't care for an
old 'ooman like me, I dare say."
"I assure you, Ma'am," said Mr. Pick-
vick, grasping the old lady's hand; and
peaking so loud that the attention imparted
a crimson hue to his benevolent counte-
ance: "I assure you, Ma'am, that nothing
elights me more, than to see a lady of
our time of life heading so fine a family,
and looking so young and well."
"Ah!" said the old lady, after a short
pause; "it's all very fine, I dare say; but
I can't hear him."
"Grandma's rather put out now," said
fuss Isabella Warle, in a low tone; "but
he'll talk to you presently.
Mr. Pickwick nodded his readiness to
umour the infirmities of age, and entered
to a general conversation with the other
members of the circle.
"Delightful situation this," said Mr.
Pickwick.
"Delightful!" echoed Messrs. Snod-
rass, Tupman, and Winkle.
"Well, I think it is," said Mr. Warle.
"There ain't a better spot o' ground in
ll Kent, Sir," said the hard-headed man
with the pipkin-face; "there ain't indeed,
Sir—I'm sure there ain't, Sir!" and the
ard-headed man looked triumphantly
sup, as if he had been very much con-
cluded by somebody, but had got the
eeter of him at last.
"There ain't a better spot o' ground in
ll Kent," said the hard-headed man again,
with a pause.
"'Cept Mullins' meadows," observed
no man solemnly.
"Mullins' meadows!" ejaculated the
other, with profound contempt.
"Ah, Mullins' meadows," repeated the
man.
"Reg'lar good land that," interposed
another fat man.
"And so it is, sure-ly," said a third fat
man.
"Every body knows that," said the con-
clent host.
The hard-headed man looked dubiously
und, but finding himself in a minority,
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"Half;—impossible to have made another trick!"

"Miller ought to have trumped the diamond, oughtn't he Sir?" said the old lady. Mr. Pickwick nodded assent.

"Ought I, though?" said the unfortunate, with a doubtful appeal to his partner.

"You ought, Sir," said the fat gentleman, in an awful voice.

"Very sorry," said the crest-fallen Miller.

"Much use that," growled the fat gentleman.

"Two by honour—makes us eight," said Mr. Pickwick.

Another hand. "Can you one?" inquired the old lady.

"I can," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Double, single, and the rub."

"Never was such luck," said Mr. Miller.

"Never was such cards," said the fat gentleman.

A solemn silence; Mr. Pickwick humorous, the old lady serious, the fat gentleman captious, and Mr. Miller timorous.

"Another double," said the old lady triumphantly making a memorandum of the circumstances, by placing one sixpence and a battered halfpenny, under the candle-stick.

"A double, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite aware of the fact, Sir," replied the fat gentleman, sharply.

Another game, with a similar result, was followed by a respite from the unlucky Miller; on which the fat gentleman burst into a state of high personal excitement which lasted until the conclusion of the game, when he retired into a corner, and remained perfectly mute for one hour and twenty-seven minutes; at the end of which time, he emerged from his retirement, and offered Mr. Pickwick a pinch of snuff with the air of a man who had made up his mind to a Christian forgiveness of injuries sustained. The old lady's hearing decidedly improved, and the unlucky Miller felt as much out of his element as a dolphin in a sentry-box.

Meanwhile the round game proceeded right merrily. Isabella Wardle and Mr. Trundle "went partners," and Emily Wardle and Mr. Snodgrass did the same; and even Mr. Tupman and the spinner aunt, established a joint-stock company of fish and flattery. Old Mr. Wardle was in the very height of his jollity; and he was so funny in his management of the board, and the old ladies were so sharp after their winnings, that the whole table was in a perpetual roar of merriment and laughter.

There was one old lady who always had about half a dozen cards to pay for; at which every body laughed, regularly every round; and when the old lady looked cross at having to pay, they laughed louder than ever; on which the old lady's face gradually brightened up, till at last she laughed louder than any of them. Then, when the spinner aunt got "matrimony," the young ladies laughed afresh; and the spinner aunt seemed disposed to be petty; till, feeling Mr. Tupman squeezing her hand under the table, she brightened up too, and looked rather knowing, as if matrimony in reality was not quite so far off as some people thought for; whereupon everybody laughed again, and especially old Mr. Wardle, who enjoyed a joke as much as the youngest. As to Mr. Snodgrass, he did nothing but whisper poetical sentiments into his partner's ear, which made one old gentleman facetiously say, about partnerships at cards, and partnerships for life, and caused the aforesaid old gentleman to make some remarks thereupon, accompanied with slyer winks and chuckles, which made the company very merry, and the old gentleman's wife especially so. And Mr. Winkle came out with jokes which were very well known in town, but are not at all known in the country; and as everybody laughed at them very heartily, and said they were very capital, Mr. Winkle was in a state of great honour and glory. And the benevolent clergyman looked pleasantly on; for the happy faces which surrounded the table made the good old man feel very happy too; and though the merriment was rather boisterous, still it came from the heart and not from the lips; and this is the right sort of merriment, after all.

The evening glided swiftly away, in these cheerful recreations; and when the substantial, though homely supper had been despatched, and the little party formed a social circle round the fire, Mr. Pickwick thought he had never felt so happy in his life, and at no time so much disposed to enjoy, and make the most of, the passing moments.

"Now this," said the hospitable host, who was sitting in great state next the old lady's arm-chair, with her hand fast clasped in his—"This is just what I like—the happiest moments of my life have been passed at this old fireside: and I am attached to it; that I keep up a blazing fire here every evening, until it actually grows too hot to bear it. Why, my poor old mother, here, used to sit before this fire-place upon that little stool, when she was a girl—didn't you, mother?"

The tear which starts unbidden into the eye when the recollection of old times and the happiness of many years ago, in sudden recollected, made everyone wet.
You must excuse my talking about this old place, Mr. Pickwick," resumed the host, after a short pause—"for I love it dearly, and know no other—the old houses and old scenes like living friends to me: and so does our little church, with the ivy,—about which, by the by, our excellent friend, there, made a song when he first came amongst us. Mr. Snodgrass, have you any thing in your glass?

"Plenty, thank you," replied that gentleman, whose poetic curiosity had been greatly excited by the last observations of his entertainer. "I beg your pardon, but you were talking about the song of the Ivy.

"You must ask our friend opposite about that," said the host knowingly: indicating the clergyman by a nod of his head.

"May I say that I should like to hear you repeat it, Sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Why, really," replied the clergyman, "it's a very slight affair; and the only excuse I have for having ever perpetuated it, is, that I was a young man at the time. Such as it is, however, you shall hear it if you wish."

A murmur of curiosity was of course the reply; and the old gentleman proceeded to recite, with the aid of sundry promptings from his wife, the lines in question. "I call them," said he,

"THE IVY GREEN.

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old!
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbling, the stone decay'd,
To please his dainty whim:
And the mouldering dust that years have made,
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealtheth on, though he wares no wings,
And a staunch old heart he has.
How closely he twines, how tight he clings,
To his friend the huge oak tree!
And slyly he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously hugs and claweth round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.

Creeping where grim death has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decay'd,
And nations have scatter'd been;
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,
From its kale and hearty green.
The brave old plant, in its lonely days,
Still upborne upon the pinn'd past:
For the stateliest building man can raise
Is the Ivy's food at last.

Creeping on, where time has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

While the old gentleman repeated these lines a second time, to enable Mr. Snodgrass to note them down, Mr. Pickwick perused the lineaments of his face with an expression of great interest. The old gentleman having concluded his dictation, and Mr. Snodgrass having returned his notebook to his pocket, Mr. Pickwick said—

"Excuse me, Sir, for making the remark on so short an acquaintance; but a gentleman like yourself cannot fail, I should think, to have observed many scenes and incidents worth recording, in the course of your experience as a minister of the gospel."

"I have witnessed some certainly," replied the old gentleman; "but the incidents and characters have been of a homely and ordinary nature, my sphere of action being so very limited."

"You did make some notes, I think, about John Edmunds, did you not?" inquired Mr. Wardle, who appeared very desirous to draw his friend out for the edification of his new visitors.

The old gentleman slightly nodded his head in token of assent, and was proceeding to change the subject, when Mr. Pickwick said—

"I beg your pardon, Sir; but pray, if I may venture to inquire, who was John Edmunds?"

"The very thing I was about to ask," said Mr. Snodgrass, eagerly. "You are fairly in for it," said the jolly host. "You must satisfy the curiosity of these gentlemen, sooner or later; so you had better take advantage of this favourable opportunity, and do so at once."

The old gentleman smiled good-humouredly as he drew his chair forward;—the remainder of the party drew their chairs closer together, especially Mr. Tunman and the spinster aunt, who were possibly rather hard of hearing; and the old lady's car-trumpet having been duly adjusted, and Mr. Miller (who had fallen asleep during the recital of the verses) roused from his slumbers by an admonitory pinch, administered beneath the table by his ex-partner, the solemn fat man, the old gentleman, without further preface, commenced the following tale, to which we have taken the liberty of prefixing the title of

THE CONVICT'S RETURN.

"When I first settled in this village," said the old gentleman, "which is now just five-and-twenty years ago, the most notorious person among my parishioners, was a man of the name of Edmunds, who leased a small farm near this spot. He was a morose, savage-hearted, old man;"
idle and dissolute in his habits; cruel and ferocious in his disposition. Beyond the few lazy and reckless in habit with whom he sauntered away his time in the fields, or sotted in the ale-house, he had not a single friend or acquaintance; no one dared to speak to the man whom many feared, and every one detested — and Edmund was shunned by all.

"This man had a wife and one son, who, when I first came here, was about twelve years old. Of the acuteness of that woman's sufferings, of the gentle and enduring manner in which she bore them, of the agony of solicitude with which she reared that boy, no one can form an adequate conception. Heaven forgive me the supposition, if it be an uncharitable one, but I do firmly and in my soul believe, that the man systematically tried for many years to break her heart; but she bore it all for her child's sake, and, however strange it may seem to many, for his father's too; for brute as he was, and cruelly as he treated her, she had loved him once; and the recollection of what he had been to her, awakened feelings of forbearance and meekness under suffering in her bosom, to which all God's creatures, but women, are strangers.

"They were poor — they could not be otherwise when the man pursued such courses; but the woman's unceasing and unaverted exertions, early and late, morning, noon, and night, kept them above actual want. Those exertions were but ill-repaid. People who passed the spot in the evening — sometimes at a late hour of the night — reported that they had heard the sobs of a woman in distress, and the sound of blows: and more than once, when it was past midnight, the boy knocked softly at the door of a neighbour's house, whither he had been sent, to escape the drunken fury of his unnatural father.

"During the whole of this time, and whenever the creature often bore about her marks of ill usage and violence which she could not wholly conceal, she was a constant attendant at our little church. Regularly every Sunday, morning and afternoon, she occupied the same seat with the boy at her side; and though they were both poorly dressed — much more so than many of their neighbours who were in a lower station — they were always neat and clean. Every one had a friendly nod and a kind word for 'poor Mrs. Edmunds'; and sometimes, when she stopped to exchange a few words with a neighbour at the conclusion of the service, in the little row of elm trees which leads to the church porch, or lingered behind to goss with a mother's pride and fondness upon her healthy boy, as he escorted before her with some little encore, her care-worn face would lighten up with an expression of heartfelt gratitude; and she would look, if not cheerful and happy, at least tranquil and contented.

"Five or six years passed away; the boy had become a robust and well-grown youth. The time that had strengthened the child's slight frame and knit his weak limbs into the strength of manhood, had bowed his mother's form, and enfeebled her steps; but the arm that should have supported her was no longer locked in hers; the face that should have cheered her, no more looked upon her own. She occupied her old seat, but there was a vacant one beside her. The Bible was kept as carefully as ever, the places were found and folded down as they used to be; but there was no one to read it with her; and the tears fell thick and fast upon the book, and blotted the words from her eyes. Neighbours were as kind as they were wont to be of old, but she shunned their greetings with averted head. There was no lingering among the old elm-trees now — no cheering anticipations of happiness yet in store. The desolate woman drew her bonnet closer over her face, and walked hurriedly away.

"Shall I tell you, that the young man, who, looking back to the earliest of his childhood's days to which memory and consciousness extended, and carrying his recollection down to that moment, could remember nothing which was not in some way connected with a long series of voluntary privation suffered by his mother for his sake, with ill usage, and insult, and violence, and all endured for him; shall I tell you, that he, with a reckless disregard of her breaking heart, and a sullen willful forgetfulness of all she had done and borne for him, had linked himself with depraved and abandoned men, and was madly pursuing a handiwork career, which must bring death to him, and shame to her! Alas for human nature! You have anticipated it long since.

"The measure of the unhappy woman's misery and misfortune was about to be completed. Numerous offences had been committed in the neighbourhood; the perpetrators remained undiscovered, and their boldness increased. A robbery of a distant and aggravated nature occasioned a vigilance of pursuit, and a strictness of search, they had not calculated on. Young Edmunds was suspected, with three companions. He was apprehended — committed — tried — condemned — to die.

"The wild piercing shriek from a woman's voice, which resounded through the court when the solemn sentence was pronounced, reached my ears at this moment.
The eyes struck a terror to the culprit’s heart, which trial, condemnation—the approach of death itself had failed to awaken. The lips which had been compressed in dogged sullenness throughout, quivered and parted involuntarily; the face turned ashy pale as the cold perspiration broke forth from every pore; the sturdy limbs of the felon trembled, and he staggered in the dock.

"In the first transports of her mental anguish, the suffering mother threw herself upon her knees at my feet, and fervently besought the Almighty Being who had hitherto supported her in all her troubles, to release her from a world of woe and misery, and to spare the life of her only child. A burst of grief, and a violent struggle, such as I hope I may never have to witness again, succeeded. I knew that her heart was breaking from that hour; but I never once heard complaint or murmur escape her lips.

"It was a piteous spectacle to see that woman in the prison-yard from day to day, eagerly and fervently attempting, by affection and entreaty, to soften the hard heart of her abdurate son. It was in vain. He remained moody, obstinate, and unmoved. Not even the unlooked-for commutation of his sentence to transportation for fourteen years, softened for an instant the stony heart of his demoniac.

"But the spirit of resignation and endurance that had so long upheld her, was unable to contend against bodily weakness and infirmity. She fell sick. She dragged her tottering limbs from the bed to visit her son once more, but her strength failed her, and she sank powerless on the ground.

"And now the boasted coldness and indifference of the young man were tested indeed; and the retribution that fell heavily upon him, nearly drove him mad. A day passed away, and his mother was not there; another flew by, and she came not near him; a third evening arrived, and yet he had not seen her; and in four-and-twenty hours, he was to be separated from her—perhaps for ever. Oh! how the long-forgotten thoughts of former days rushed upon his mind, as he almost ran up and down the narrow yard—as if intelligence would arrive the sooner for his hurrying—and how bitterly a sense of his helplessness and degradation rushed upon him, when he heard the truth! His mother, the only parent he had ever known, lay ill—it might be dying—within one mile of the ground he stood on; were he free and unstained, a few minutes would place him by her side. He rushed to the gate, and, grasping the iron rails with the energy of desperation, shook it till it rang again, and threw himself against the thick wall as if to force a passageway through the stone; but the strong building mocked his feeble efforts, and he beat his hands together and wept like a child.

"I here the mother’s forgiveness and blessing to her son in prison; and I carried his solemn assurance of repentance, and his fervent supplication for pardon, to her sick bed. I heard, with pity and compassion, the repentant man devise a thousand little plans for her comfort and support, when he returned; but I knew that many months before he could reach his place of destination, his mother would be no longer of this world.

"He was removed by night. A few weeks afterwards the poor woman’s soul took its flight, I confidently hope, and solemnly believe, to a place of eternal happiness and rest. I performed the burial service over her remains. She lies in our little church-yard. There is no stone at her grave’s head. Her sorrows were known to man; her virtues to God.

"It had been arranged previously to the convict’s departure, that he should write to his mother so soon as he could obtain permission, and that the letter should be addressed to me. The father had positively refused to see his son from the moment of his apprehension; and it was a matter of indifference to him whether he lived or died. Many years passed ever without any intelligence of him; and when more than half his term of transportation had expired, and I had received no letter, I concluded him to be dead, as, indeed, I almost hoped he might be.

"Edmunds, however, had been sent a considerable distance up the country on his arrival at the settlement; and to this circumstance, perhaps, may be attributed the fact—that, though several letters were despatched, none of them ever reached my hands. He remained in the same place during the whole fourteen years. At the expiration of the term, steadily adhering to his old resolution, and the pledge he gave his mother, he made his way back to England, amidst innumerable difficulties, and returned, on foot, to his native place.

"On a fine Sunday evening, in the month of August, John Edmunds set foot in the village he had left with shame and disgrace seventeen years before. His nearest way lay through the church-yard. The man’s heart swelled as he crossed the stile. The tall old elm, through whose branches the declining sun cast huge and there a rich ray of light upon the shadowy path, awakened the associations of his earliest days. He pictured himself as he was then, clinging to his mother’s hands, and walking penitently to church. He remembered bow
he used to look up into her pale face; and how her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she gazed upon his features—tears which fell hot upon his forehead as she stooped to kiss him, and made him weep too, although he little knew what bitter tears were. He thought how often he had run merrily down that path with some childish playfellow, looking back over and again to catch his mother's smile, or hear her gentle voice; and then a veil seemed lifted from his memory, and words of kindness unrequited, and warnings despised, and promises broken, thronged upon his recollection, till his heart failed him, and he could bear it no longer.

"He entered the church. The evening service was concluded and the congregation had dispersed, but it was not yet closed. His steps sounded through the low building with a hollow sound, and he almost feared to be alone, it was so still and quiet. He looked round him. Nothing was changed. The place seemed smaller than it used to be; but there were the old monuments on which he had gazed with childish awe a thousand times; the little pulpit with its faded cushion; the Communion Table, before which he had so often repeated the Commandments he had revered as a child, and forgotten as a man. He approached the old seat; it looked cold and desolate. The cushion had been removed, and the Bible was not there. Perhaps his mother now occupied a poorer seat, or possibly she had grown infirm and could not reach the church alone. He dared not think of what he feared. A cold feeling crept over him, and he trembled violently as he turned away.

"An old man entered the porch just as he reached it. Edmunds started back, for he knew him well; many a time had he watched him digging graves in the churchyard. What would he say to the returned convict? The old man raised his eyes to the stranger's face, bid him 'good evening,' and walked slowly on. He had forgotten him.

"'He walked down the hill, and through the village. The weather was warm, and the people were sitting at their doors, or strolling in their little gardens as he passed, enjoying the serenity of the evening, and their rest from labour. Many a look was turned towards him, and many a doubtful glance he cast on either side to see whether any knew and shunned him.' There were strange faces in almost every house; in some he recognised the haggard form of some old schoolfellow—a boy when he last saw him—surrounded by a troop of merry children; in others he saw, seated in an easy-chair at the cottage-door, a feeble, and infants old man, whom he only remembered as a hale and hearty labourer; but they had all forgotten him, and he passed on unknown.

"The last soft light of the setting sun had fallen on the earth, casting a rich glow on the yellow corn-sheaves, and lengthening the shadows of the orchard trees, as he stood before the old house—the home of his infancy, to which the heart had yearned with an intensity of affection not to be described, through long and weary years of captivity and sorrow. The paling was low, though he well remembered the time, when it had seemed a high wall to him; and he looked over into the old garden. There were more weeds and gayer flowers than there used to be, but there were the old trees still—the very tree, under which he had lain a thousand times when tired with playing in the garden, and felt the sweet mild sleep of happy boyhood steal gently upon him. There were voices within the house. He listened, but they fell strangely upon his ear; he knew them not. They were merry too; and he well knew that his poor old mother could not be cheerful, and he away. The door opened, and a group of little children bounded out, shouting and romping. He followed, with a little boy in his arms, appeared at the door, and they crowded round him, clapping their tiny hands, and dragging him out, to join their joyful sports. The convict thought on the many times he had shrunk from his father's sight in that very place. He remembered how often he had buried his trembling head beneath the bed-clothes, and heard the harsh word, and the hard stripe, and his mother's wailing; and though the man sobbed aloud with agony of mind as he left the spot, his fist was clenched, and his teeth were set, in fierce and deadly passion.

"And such was the return to which he had looked through the weary perspective of many years, and for which he had undergone so much suffering. No face of welcome, no look of forgiveness, no house to receive, no hand to help him—and this too in the old village. What was his loneliness in the wild thick woods, where man was never seen, to this!

"He felt that in the distant land of his bondage and infancy, he had thought of his native place as it was when he left it—not as it would be, when he returned. The sad reality struck coldly at his heart, and his spirit sank within him. He had not courage to make inquiries, or to present himself to the only person who was likely to receive him with kindness and compassion. He walked slowly on; and shunning the road-side like a guilty man, wedged into a narrow path, he walked..."
and covering his face with his hands, threw himself upon the grass.

"He had not observed that a man was lying on the bank beside him; his garments rustled as he turned round to steal a look at the new comer: and Edmund raised his head.

"The man had moved into a sitting posture. His body was much bent, and his face was wrinkled and yellow. His dress denoted him an inmate of the workhouse; he had the appearance of being very old, but it looked more the effect of dissipation or disease, than length of years. He was staring hard at the stranger, and though his eyes were lustreless and heavy at first, they appeared to glow with an unnatural and alarmed expression after they had been fixed upon him for a short time, until they appeared to be starting from their sockets. Edmunds gradually raised himself to his knees, and looked more and more earnestly upon the old man's face. They gazed upon each other in silence.

"The old man was ghastly pale. He shuddered and tottered to his feet. Edmunds sprang to his. He stepped back a pace or two. Edmunds advanced.

"'Let me hear you speak,' said the convict in a thick broken voice.

"'Stand off,' cried the old man with a dreadful oath. The convict drew closer to him.

"'Stand off,' shrieked the old man. Furious with terror he raised his stick, and struck Edmunds a heavy blow across the face.

"'Father—devil,' murmured the convict, between his set teeth. He rushed wildly forward, and clenched the old man by the throat—but he was his father; and his arm fell powerless by his side.

"The old man uttered a loud yell which rang through the lonely fields like the howl of an evil spirit. His face turned black; the gore rushed from his mouth and nose, and dyed the grass a deep red, as he staggered and fell. He had ruptured a blood vessel: and he was a dead man before his son could raise him from that thick, sloughy, pool.

"In that corner of the church-yard," said the old gentleman, after a silence of a few moments, "in that corner of the church-yard of which I have before spoken, there lies buried a man who was in my employment for three years after this event; and who was truly contrite, penitent, and humbled, if ever man was. No one save myself knew in that man's lifetime who he was, or whence he came:—it was John Edmunds, the returned convict."

CHAPTER VIII.

How Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the pigeon and killing the crow, shot at the crow and wounded the pigeon; how the Dingley Dell Cricket Club played All Muggleton, and how All Muggleton dined at the Dingley Dell expense: with other interesting and instructive matters.

The fatiguing adventures of the day or the somniferous influence of the clergyman's tale, operated so strongly on the drowsy tendencies of Mr. Pickwick, that in less than five minutes after he had been shown to his comfortable bed-room, he fell into a sound and dreamless sleep, from which he was only awakened by the morning sun darting his bright beams reproachfully into the apartments. Mr. Pickwick was no sluggard; and he sprang like an ardent warrior from his tent—bedstead.

"Pleasant, pleasant country," sighed the enthusiastic gentleman, as he opened his lattice window. "Who could live to gaze from day to day on bricks and slates, who had once felt the influence of a scene like this! Who could continue to exist where there are no cows but the cows on the chimney-pots; nothing redolent of Pan but pantiles; no crop but stone crop! Who could bear to drag out a life in such a spot? Who, I ask, could endure it!" and, having cross-examined solitude after the most approved precedents, at considerable length, Mr. Pickwick thrust his head out of the lattice, and looked around him.

The rich, sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumers of the little flower-garden beneath scented the air around; the deep-green meadows shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the morning air; and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were to them a fountain of inspiration. Mr. Pickwick fell into an enchanting and delicious reverie.

"Hallo!" was the sound that roused him.

He looked to the right, but he saw nobody; his eyes wandered to the left, and pierced the prospect; he stared into the sky, but he wasn't wanted there; and then he did what a common mind would have done at once—looked into the garden, and there saw Mr. Wardle.

"How are you!" said that good-humoured individual, out of breath with his own anticipations of pleasure. "Beautiful morning, ain't it! Glad to see you up so early. Make haste down, and come out I'll wait for you here."

Mr. Pickwick needed no second invitation. Ten minutes sufficed for the coum-
pletion of his toilet, and at the expiration of that time he was by the old gentleman’s side.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Pickwick in his turn; seeing that his companion was armed with an gun, and that another lay ready on the grass.  "What’s going forward?"

"Why, your friend and I," replied the host, "are going out rook-shooting before breakfast. He’s a very good shot ain’t he?"

"I’ve heard him say he’s a capital one," replied Mr. Pickwick; "but I never saw him aim at any thing."

"Well," said the host, "I wish he’d come. Joe—Joe!"

The fat boy, who under the exciting influence of the morning did not appear to be more than three parts and a fraction asleep, emerged from the house.

"Go up, and call the gentleman, and tell him he’ll find me and Mr. Pickwick in the conservatory. Show the gentleman the way there; d’ye hear?"

The boy departed to execute his commission; and the host, carrying both guns like a second Robinson Crusoe, led the way from the garden.

"This is the place," said the old gentleman, pausing after a few minutes’ walking, in an avenue of trees. The information was unnecessary; for the incessant cawing of the unconscious rooks, sufficiently indicated their whereabouts.

The old gentleman laid one gun on the ground, and loaded the other.

"Here they are," said Mr. Pickwick; and as he spoke, the forms of Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle appeared in the distance. The fat boy, not being quite certain which gentleman he was directed to call, had with peculiar sagacity, and to prevent the possibility of any mistake, called them all.

"Come along," shouted the old gentlemen, addressing Mr. Winkle; "a keen hand like you ought to have been up long ago, even to such poor work as this!"

Mr. Winkle responded with a forced smile, and took up the spare gun with an expression of countenance which a metaphysical rock, impressed with a foreboding of his approaching death by violence, may be supposed to assume. It might have been keenness, but it looked remarkably like misery.

The old gentleman nodded; and two ragged boys who had been marshalled to the spot under the direction of the infant Lambert, forthwith commenced climbing up two of the trees.

"What are those lads for?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, abruptly. He was rather startled; for he was not quite certain but that the distress of the agricultural interest, about which he had often heard a great deal, might have compelled the small boys, attached to the soil, to earn a precarious and hazardous subsistence by making marks of themselves for inexperienced sportsmen.

"Only to start the game," replied Mr. Wardle, laughing.

"To what?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, in plain English, to frighten the rooks."

"Oh! Is that all!"

"You are satisfied!"

"Quite."

"Very well. Shall I begin?"

"If you please," said Mr. Winkle, glad for any respite.

"Stand aside, then. Now for it."

The boy shouted, and shook a branch with a nest on it. Half a dozen young rooks in violent conversation, flew out to seek what the matter was. The old gentleman fired by way of reply. Down fell one bird, and off flew the others.

"Take him up, Joe," said the old gentleman.

There was a smile upon the youth’s face as he advanced. Indistinct visions of rook-pie floated through his imagination. He laughed as he retured with the bird—it was a plump one.

"Now, Mr. Winkle," said the host, reloading his own gun. "Fire away."

Mr. Winkle advanced, and levelled his gun. Mr. Pickwick and his friends cowered involuntarily to escape the damage from the heavy fall of rooks, which they felt quite certain would be occasioned by the devastating barrel of their friend. There was a solemn pause—a shout—a flapping of wings—a faint click.

"Hallo!" said the old gentleman.

"Won’t it go!" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Missed fires," said Mr. Winkle, who was very pale, probably from disappointment.

"Odd," said the old gentleman, taking the gun. "Never knew one of them miss fire before. Why, I don’t see any thing of the cap."

"Bless my soul," said Mr. Winkle. "I declare I forgot the cap!"

The slight omission was rectified. Mr. Pickwick crouched again. Mr. Winkle stepped forward with an air of determination and resolution; and Mr. Tupman looked out from behind a tree. The boy shouted—four birds flew out. Mr. Winkle fired. There was a scream as of an individual—not a rook—in corporeal anguish; Mr. Tupman had saved the lives of innumerable unoffending birds, by receiving a portion of the charge in his left arm.

To describe the confusion that ensued...
would be impossible. To tell how Mr. Pickwick in the first transports of his emotion called Mr. Winkle "Wretch!" how Mr. Tupman lay prostrate on the ground; and how Mr. Winkle knelt horror-stricken beside him; how Mr. Tupman called distractedly upon some feminine Christian name, and then opened first one eye, and then the other; and then fell back and shut them both;—all this would be as difficult to describe in detail, as it would be to depict the gradual recovering of the unfortunate individual, the binding up his arm with pocket-handkerchiefs, and the conveying him back by slow degrees supported by the arms of his anxious friends.

They drew near the house. The ladies were at the garden-gate, waiting for their arrival and their breakfast. The spinster aunt appeared; she smiled, and beckoned them to walk quicker. "Twas evident she knew not of the disaster. Poor thing! There are times when ignorance is bliss indeed.

They approached nearer.

"Why, what is the matter with the little old gentleman?" said Isabella Wardle. The spinster aunt heeded not the remark; she thought it applied to Mr. Pickwick. In her eyes Tracy Tupman was a youth; she viewed his years through a diminishing glass.

"Don't be frightened," called out the old host, fearful of alarming his daughters. The little party had crowded so completely round Mr. Tupman, that they could not yet clearly discern the nature of the accident.

"Don't be frightened," said the host.

"What's the matter?" screamed the ladies.

"Mr. Tupman has met with a little accident; that's all.

The spinster aunt uttered a piercing scream, burst into an hysterical laugh, and fell backwards into the arms of her nieces.

"Throw some cold water over her," said the old gentleman.

"No, no," mumbled the spinster aunt: "I am better now. Bella, Emily—a surgeon! Is he wounded?—Is he dead?—Is he—ha, ha, ha!" Here the spinster aunt burst into fit number two, of hysterical laughter, interspersed with screams.

"Calm yourself," said Mr. Tupman, affected almost to tears by this expression of sympathy with his sufferings. "Dear, dear madam, this is the first time I have had the assurance of addressing you, and I am very little hurt, I assure you."

"Then you are not dead!" ejaculated the hysterical lady. "Oh, say you are not dead!"

"Don't be a fool, Rachel," interposed Mr. Wardle, rather more roughly than was quite consistent with the poetic nature of the scene. "What the devil's the use of his saying he isn't dead?"

"No, no, I am not," said Mr. Tupman.

"I require no assistance but yours. Let me lean on your arm," he added in a whisper, "Oh Miss Rachel!" The agitated female advanced, and offered her arm. They turned into the breakfast parlour. Mr. Tracy Tupman gently pressed her hand to his lips, and seated upon the sofa.

"Are you faint?" inquired the anxious Rachel.

"No," said Mr. Tupman. "It is nothing. I shall be better presently." He closed his eyes.

"He sleeps," murmured the spinster aunt. (His organs of vision had been closed nearly twenty seconds.) "Dear—dear—Mr. Tupman."

Mr. Tupman jumped up. "Oh, say those words again!" he exclaimed.

The lady started. "Surely you did not hear them!" she said, bashfully.

"Oh yes I did!" replied Mr. Tupman. "Repeat them. If you would have me recover, repeat them."

"Hush!" said the lady. "My brother."

"Mr. Tracy Tupman resumed his former position; and Mr. Wardle, accompanied by a surgeon, entered the room.

The arm was examined, the wound dressed, and pronounced to be a very slight one; and the minds of the company having been thus satisfied, they proceeded to satisfy their appetites with countenances to which an expression of cheerfulness was again restored. Mr. Pickwick alone was silent and reserved. Doubt and distrust were exhibited in his countenance. His confidence in Mr. Winkle had been shaken—greatly shaken—by the proceedings of the morning.

"Are you a cricketer?" inquired Mr. Wardle of the marksman.

At any other time Mr. Winkle would have replied in the affirmative. He felt the delicacy of his situation, and modestly replied: "No."

"Are you, Sir?" inquired Mr. Snodgrass.

"I was once upon a time," replied the host: "but I have given it up now. I subscribe to the club here, but I don't play."

"The grand match is played to-day, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It is," replied the host. "Of course you would like to see it."

"I, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick. "I am delighted to view any sport which may be
safely indulged in, and in which the impo-
tent efforts of weakf ul people do not endan-
ger human life." Mr. Pickwick paused, and
looked steadily on Mr. Winkle, who quail-
ed beneath his leader's searching glance.
The great man withdrew his eyes after a
few minutes, and added: "Shall we be
justified in leaving our wounded friend to
the care of the ladies?"

"You cannot leave me in better hands,"
said Mr. Tupman.

"Quite impossible," said Mr. Snodgrass.

It was therefore settled that Mr. Tupman
should be left at home in charge of the
females; and that the remainder of the
guests under the guidance of Mr. Wardle
should proceed to the spot, where was to be
held that trial of skill, which had roused all
Muggleton from its torpor, and inoculated
Dingley-Dell with a fever of excitement.

As their walk, which was not above two
miles long, lay through shady lanes, and
seasoned with cool brooks and refreshing
streams turned upon the delightful scenery
by which they were on every side surround-
ed, Mr. Pickwick was almost inclined to
regret the expedition they had used, when
he found himself in the main street of the
town of Muggleton.

Every body whose genius has a topogra-
phical bent, knows perfectly well, that
Muggleton is a corporate town, with a
mayor, burgesses, and freemen; and any
body who has consulted the addresses of the
mayor to the freemen, or the freemen to
the mayor, or both to the corporation, or all
three to Parliament, will learn from thence
what they ought to have known before,
that Muggleton is an ancient and loyal bo-
rough, mingling a zealous advocacy of
Christian principles with a devoted attach-
ment to commercial rights; in demonstra-
tion whereof, the mayor, corporation, and
other inhabitants have presented at divers
times, no fewer than one thousand four
hundred and twenty petitions against the
continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an
equal number against any interference with
the cotton system; a zealous fight for permitt-
ing the sale of benefices in the church, and
eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in
the streets.

Mr. Pickwick stood in the principal
street of this illustrious town, and gazed
with an air of curiosity not unmixed with
interest, on the objects around him. There
was an open square for the market-place;
and in the centre of it, a large inn with a
sign-post in front, displaying an object very
common in art, but rarely met with in
nature—to wit, a blue lion with three bow-
legs in the air, balancing himself on the
extreme point of the centre claw of his
fourth foot. There were, within sight, ar
sanctuary's and fire-agency office, a corn-
factor's, a linen-draper's, a saddler's, a
distiller's, a grocer's, and a shoe-shop—
the last-mentioned war-house being also
appropriated to the diffusion of hats, bon-
nets, wearing apparel, cotton umbrellas,
and useful knowledge. There was a
red brick house with a small paved court-
yard in front, which any body might have
known belonged to the attorney; and there
was, moreover, another red brick house
with Venetian blinds, and a large brass
doors-plate, with a very legible announce-
ment that it belonged to the surgeon.

A few boys were making their way to the
cricket-field; and two or three shopkeepers
who were standing at their doors, looked
as if they should like to be making their
way to the same spot, as indeed to all
appearance they might have done, without
losing any great amount of custom thereby.
Mr. Pickwick having paused to make these
observations, he, seated down at a more
convenient period, hastened to rejoin his
friends, who had turned out of the main
street, and were already within sight of the
field of battle.

The wickets were pitched, and so were
a couple of marqueses for the rest and ref-
reshment of the contending parties. The
game had not yet commenced. Two or
three Dingley-Dellers, and All-Mugge-
tonians, were amusing themselves with a
majestic air by throwing the ball careless-
ly from hand to hand; and several other gen-
tlemen, dressed like them, in straw hats,
flannel jackets, and white trousers,—a con-
tume in which they looked very much like
amateur stone-masons, were sprinkled about
the tents, towns, or one of which Mr. Wardle
conducted the party.

Several dozens of "How-are-you's!"
bailed the old gentleman's arrival; and a
general raising of the straw hats and bend-
ning forward of the flannel jackets, followed
his introduction of his guests as gentlemen
from London, who were extremely anxious
to witness the proceedings of the day, with
which, he had no doubt, they would be
greatly delighted.

"You had better step into the marquee,
I think, Sir," said one very stout gentle-
man, whose body and legs looked like half
a gigantic roll of flannel, elevated on a
couple of inflated pillow-cases.

"You'll find it much pleasanter, Sir,"
urged another stout gentleman, who strongly
resembled the other half of the roll of flan-
nel aforesaid.

"You're very good," said Mr. Pickwick.

"This way," said the first speaker;
"they notch in here—it's the best place in
the whole field;" and the cricketer, past-
ning on before, preceded them to the text.
“Capital game—smart sport—fine exercise—very,” were the words which fell upon Mr. Pickwick’s ear as he entered the tent; and the first object that met his eyes, was his green-coated friend of the Rochester coach, holding forth to the no small delight and edification of a select circle of the chosen of All-Muggleston. His dress was slightly improved, and he wore boots, but there was no mistaking him.

The stranger recognised his friends immediately; and, darting forward and seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand, dragged him to a seat, with his usual impetuosity, talking all the while as if the whole of the arrangements were under his especial patronage and direction.

“This way—this way—capital fun—lots of beer—hogsheads; rounds of beef—bullocks; mustard—cart-loads; glorious day—dear my boy, make yourself at home—glad to see you—very,”

Mr. Pickwick sat down as he was bid, and Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass also complied with the directions of their mysterious friend. Mr. Wardle looked on, in silent wonder.

“Mr. Wardle,—a friend of mine,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Friend of yours! — My dear Sir, how are you!—Friend of my friends—give me your hand, Sir”—and the stranger grasped Mr. Wardle’s hand with all the fervour of a close intimacy of many years, and then stepped back a pace or two as if to take a full survey of his face and figure, and then shook hands with him again, if possible, more warmly than before.

“Well; and how came you here?” said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile in which benevolence struggled with surprise.


Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently versed in the stranger’s system of stenography to infer from this rapid and disjointed communication that he had, somehow or other, contracted an acquaintance with the All-Muggletons, which he had converted, by a process peculiar to himself, into that extent of good fellowship on which a general invitation may be easily founded. His curiosity was therefore satisfied, and putting on his spectacles he prepared himself to watch the play which was just commencing.

All-Muggleton had the first innings; and the interest became intense when Mr. Dunkkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, but in hand, to their respective wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dunkkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder. Several players were stationed to “look out,” in different parts of the field, and each fixed himself into the proper attitude by placing one hand on each knee, and stooping very much as if he were “making a back” for some beginner at leap-frog. All the regular players do this sort of thing; indeed, it’s generally supposed that it is quite impossible to look out properly in any other position.

The umpires were stationed behind the wickets; the scorers were prepared to notch the runs; a breathless silence ensued. Mr. Luffey retired a few paces behind the wicket of the passive Podder, and applied the ball to his right eye for several seconds. Dunkkins cautiously awaited its coming, with his eyes fixed on the motions of Luffey.

“Play,” suddenly cried the bowler. The ball flew from his hand straight and swift towards the centre stump of the wicket. The wary Dunkkins was on the alert; it fell upon the tip of the bat, and bounded far away over the heads of the scouts, who had just stooped low enough to let it fly over them.

“Run—run—another,—Now, then, throw her up—up with her—stop there—another—no—yes—no—throw her up, throw her up.” Such were the shouts which followed the stroke; and, at the conclusion of which, All-Muggleton had scored two. Nor was Podder behindhand in earning laurels wherewith to garnish himself and Muggleton. He blocked the doubtful balls, missed the bad ones, took the good ones, and sent them flying to all parts of the field. The scouts were hot and tired; the bowlers were changed and bowled till their arms ached; but Dunkkins and Podder remained unconquered. Did an elderly gentleman essay to stop the progress of the ball, it rolled between his legs, or slipped between his fingers. Did a slim gentleman try to catch it, it struck him on the nose, and bounded pleasantly off with redoubled violence, while the slim gentleman’s eyes filled with water, and his form with anguish. Was it thrown straight up to the wicket, Winkle had reached it before the ball. In short, when Dunkkins was caught out, and Podder stumped out, All-Muggleton had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley-Dellers was as blank as their faces. The advantage was too great to be recovered. In vain did the eager Luffey, and the enthusiastic Struggles, do all that skill and experience could suggest, to regain the ground, Dingley...
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

Dell had lost in the contest—it was of no avail; and in an early period of the winning game Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton.

The stranger, meanwhile, had been eating, drinking, and talking, without cessation. At every good stroke he expressed his satisfaction and approval of the player in a most condescending and patronising manner, which could not fail to have been highly gratifying to the party concerned; while at every bad attempt at a catch, and every failure to stop the ball, he launched his personal displeasure at the head of the devoted individual in such denunciations as—"Ah, ah! stupid!"—"Now, butter-fingers!"—"Muff!"—"Humbug!"—and so forth— ejaculations which seemed to establish him in the opinion of all around, as a most excellent and undeniable judge of the whole art and mystery of the noble game of cricket.

"Capital game—well played—some stroke of admiral," said the stranger as both sides crowded into the tent, at the conclusion of the game.

"You have played it, Sir!" inquired Mr. Wardle, who had been much amused by his loquacity.

"Played it! Think I have—thousands of times—not here—West Indies—exciting thing—hot work—very.""It must be rather a warm pursuit in such a climate," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Warm!—red hot—scorching—glowing. Played a match once—single wicket—friend the Colonel—Sir Thomas Blazo—who should get the greatest number of runs—Won the toss—first innings—seven o'clock, A.M.—six natives to look out—went in; kept in—heat intense—natives all foamed—taken away—fresh half-dozen ordered—saw also—Blazo bowling supported by two natives—couldn't bowl me out—saw also—clear away the Colonel—wouldn't give in—faithful attendant—Quanko Samba—last man left—sun so hot, bat in blisters, ball scorched brown—five hundred and seventy runs—rather exhausted—Quanko mustered up last remaining strength—bowled me out—had a bath and went out to dinner."

"And what became of what's-his-name, Sir?" inquired an old gentleman.

"Blazo!"

"No—the other gentleman."

"Quanko Samba?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Poor Quanko—never recovered—he bowled on, on my account—bowled off, on his own—died, Sir." Here the stranger buried his countenance in a brown jug, but whether to hide his emotion or to imbibe its contents, we cannot distinctly affirm.

We only know that he paused suddenly, drew a long and deep breath, and looked anxiously on, as two of the principal members of the Dingley Dell club approached Mr. Pickwick, and said—

"We are about to partake of a plain dinner at the Blue Lion, Sir: we hope you and your friends will join us."

"Of course," said Mr. Wardle, "among our friends we include Mr.—;" and he looked towards the stranger.

"Jingle," said that versatile gentleman, taking the hint at once. "Jingle—Alfred Jingle, Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere."

"I shall be very happy, I am sure," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So shall I," said Mr. Alfred Jingle, drawing one arm through Mr. Pickwick's, and another through Mr. Wardle's, as he whispered confidentially in the ear of the former gentleman—

"Devilish good dinner—cold, but capital—peeped into the room this morning—fowls and pies, and all that sort of things—pleasant fellows, these—well behaved, too—very."

There being no further preliminaries to arrange, the company straggled into the town in little knots of twos and threes; and within a quarter of an hour were all seated in the great room of the Blue Lion Inn, Muggleton—Mr. Dumkins acting as chairman, and Mr. Luffey officiating as vice.

There was a vast deal of talking and rattling of knives and forks, and plates as great running about of three ponderous-headed waiters, and a rapid disappearance of the substantial viands on the table; to each and every of which item of confusion, the facetious Mr. Jingle lent the aid of half-a-dozen ordinary men at least. When everybody had eaten as much as they could, the cloth was removed, bottles, glasses, and dessert were placed on the table; and the waiters withdrew to "clear away," or in other words, to appropriate to their own private use and emolument, whatever remnants of the eatables and drinkables they could contrive to lay their hands on.

Amidst the general hum of mirth and conversation that ensued, there was a little man with a puffy say-nothing-to-me-or-I'l contradict-you sort of countenance, who remained very quiet; occasionally looking round him when the conversation slackened, as if he contemplated putting in something very weighty; and now and then bursting into a short enough of inexpressible grandeur. At length, during a moment of comparative silence, the little man, called out in a very loud, solemn voice.

"Mr. Luffey."

Everybody was hushed into a profound stillness as the individual addressed, replied,
“Sir,”
“I wish to address a few words to you, Sir, if you will entreat the gentlemen to fill their glasses.”

Mr. Jingle uttered a patronising “hear, hear,” to which was responded to, by the remainder of the company; and the glasses having been filled, the Vice-President assumed an air of wisdom in a state of profound attention; and said,

“Mr. Staple.”

“Sir,” said the little man, rising, “I wish to address what I have to say to you and not to our worthy chairman, because our worthy chairman is in some measure—I may say in a great degree—the subject of what I have to say, or I may say to—

“State,” suggested Mr. Jingle.

—Yes, so to state,” said the little man,

“I thank my honourable friend, if he will allow me to call him so—(four hear, and one certainly from Mr. Jingle)—for the suggestion. Sir, I am a Deller—a Dingley Deller, (cheers). I cannot lay claim to the honour of forming an item in the population of Muggleton; nor, Sir, I will frankly admit, do I covet that honour; and I will tell you why, Sir, (hear); to Muggleton I will readily concede all those honours and distinctions to which it can fairly lay claim—they are too numerous and too well known to require either or recapitulation from me. But, Sir, while we remember that Muggleton has given birth to a Dunkins and a Podder, let us never forget that Dingley Dell can boast a Luffey and a Struggles. (Vociferous cheering.) Let me not be considered as wishing to detract from the merits of the former gentlemen. Sir, I envy them the luxury of their own feelings on this occasion. (Cheers.) Every gentleman who hears me, is probably acquainted with the reply made by an individual, who—so an ordinary figure of speech—‘hang out’ in a tub, to the Emperor Alexander—If I were not Diogenes, said he, ‘I would be Alexander.’ I can well imagine these gentleness to say, ‘If I were not Dunkins I would be Luffey; if I were not Podder I would be Struggles.’ (Enthusiasm.) But, gentlemen of Muggleton, is it in cricket alone that your fellow-townsmen stand pre-eminent? Have you never heard of Dunkins and determination? Have you never been taught to associate Podder with propriety? (Great applause.) Have you never, when struggling for your rights, your liberties, and your privileges, been reduced, if only for an instant, to misgiving and despair? And when you have been thus depressed, has not the name of Dunkins laid affright within your breast, the fire which had just gone out; and has not a word from that man, lighted it again as brightly as if it had never expired? (Great cheering.) Gentlemen, I beg you to surround with a rich halo of enthusiastic cheering, the united names of ‘Dunkins and Podder.’”

Here the little man ceased, and here the company commenced a raising of voices, and thumping of tables, which lasted with little intermission during the remainder of the evening. Other toasts were drunk. Mr. Luffey and Mr. Struggles, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Jingle, were, each in his turn, the subject of unqualified eulogium; and each in due course returned thanks for the honour.

Enthusiastic as we are in the noble cause to which we have devoted ourselves, we should have felt a sensation of pride which we cannot express, and a consciousness of having done something to merit immortality of which we are now deprived, could we have laid the following outline of these addresses before our ardent readers. Mr. Snodgrass, as usual, took a great mass of notes, which would no doubt have afforded most useful and valuable information, had not the burning eloquence of the words or the feverish influence of the wine made that gentleman’s hand so extremely unsteady, as to render his writing nearly unintelligible, and his style wholly so. By dint of patient investigation, we have been enabled to trace some characters bearing a faint resemblance to the names of the speakers; and we can also discern an entry of a song (supposed to have been sung by Mr. Jingle, in which the words “bowl,” “sparkling,” “ruby,” “bright,” and “vine,” are frequently repeated at short intervals. We fancy too, that we can discern at the very end of the notes, some in distinct reference to “broiled bone;” and then the words “cold,” “without” occur: but as any hypothesis we could found upon them must necessarily rest upon mere conjecture, we are not disposed to indulge in any of the speculations to which they may give rise.

We will therefore return to Mr. Tupman; merely adding that within some few minutes before twelve o’clock that night, the convocation of worthies of Dingley Dell and Muggleton, were heard to sing with great feeling and emphasis, the beautiful and pathetic national air of

We won’t go home till morning.
We won’t go home till morning.
We won’t go home till morning.
Till day-light doth appear.
CHAPTER IX.

Strongly illustrative of the position, that the
course of true love is not a railway.

The quiet seclusion of Dingley Dell, the
presence of so many of the gentler sex, and
the solicitude and anxiety they evinced in
his behalf, were all favourable to the growth
and development of those softer feelings
which nature had implanted deep in the
bosom of Mr. Tracy Tupman, and which
now appeared destined to centre in one
lovely object. The young ladies were
pretty, their manners winning, their dis-
positions unexceptionable; but there was a
dignity in the air, a touch-me-not-inness
in the walk, a majesty in the eye of the
spinstor aunt, to which, at their time of life
they could lay no claim, which distinguish-
ed her from any female on whom Mr. Tup-
man had ever gazed. That there was
something kindred in their nature, some-
thing congenial in their souls, something
mysteriously sympathetic in their bosoms,
was evident. Her name was the first that
rose to Mr. Tupman’s lips as he lay wound-
ed on the grass; and her hysterical laughter
was the first sound that fell upon his ear,
when he was supported to the house. But
had her agitation arisen from an amiable
and feminine sensibility which would have
been equally irrepressible in any case; or
had it been called forth by a more ardent
and passionate feeling, which he, of all
men living, could alone awaken! These
were the doubts which racked his brain as
he lay extended on the sofa: these were
the doubts which he determined should be
at once and for ever resolved.

It was evening. Isabella and Emily had
strolled out with Mr. Trundle; the deaf old
lady had fallen asleep in her chair; the
snoring of the fat boy, penetrated in a low
and monotonous sound from the distant
dining-room; the buxom servants were lolling
at the side-door, enjoying the pleasantness
of the hour, and the delights of a flirtation.
on first principles, with certain unwieldy
animals attached to the farm; and there sat
the interesting pair, uncared for by all, car-
ing for none, and dreaming only of them-
elves; there they sat, in short, like a pair of
carefully folded kid-gloves—bound up in
each other.

“I have forgottn my flowers,” said the
spinstor aunt.

“Water them now,” said Mr. Tupman
in accents of persuation.

“You will take cold in the evening air,”
urged the spinster aunt, affectionately.

“No, no,” said Mr. Tupman rising; “it
will do me good. Let me accompany you.”
The lady was to adjust the sling under
which the left arm of the youth was placed;
and taking his right arm, led him to the
garden.

There was a bower at the further end,
with honeysuckle, jessamine, and creeping
plants—one of those sweet retreats, which
human men erect for the accommodation
of spiders.

The spinster aunt took up a large water-
ing-pot which lay in one corner, and was
about to leave the arbour. Mr. Tupman
detained her, and drew her to a seat beside
him.

“Miss Wardle!” said he.

The spinster aunt trembled, till some
pebbles, which had accidentally found their
way into the large watering-pot, shook like
an infantic’s rattle.

“Miss Wardle,” said Mr. Tupman, “you
are an angel.”

“Mr. Tupman!” exclaimed Rachel,
blushing as red as the watering-pot itself.

“Nay,” said the eloquent Pickwickian,
“I know it but too well.”

“All women are angels they say,” in-
quired the lady, playfully.

“Then what can you be, or to what,
without presumption, can I compare you?”
replied Mr. Tupman. “Where was the
woman ever seen, who resembled you—
Where else could I hope to find so rare a
combination of excellence and beauty—
Where else could I seek to—Oh!” Here
Mr. Tupman paused, and pressed the hand
which clasped the handle of the happy wa-
tering-pot.

The lady turned aside her head. “Men
are such deceivers,” she softly whispered.

“They are, they are,” ejaculated Mr.
Tupman; “but not all men. There lives
at least one being who can never change—
one being who would be content to devote
his whole existence to your happiness—who
lives but in your eyes—who breathe
but in your smile—who bears the heavy
burden of life itself only for you.”

“Could such an individual be found,”
said the lady—

“But he can be found,” said the address-
Mr. Tupman, interpolating. “He is found.
He is here, Miss Wardle.” And ere the
lady was aware of his intention, Mr. Tup-
man had sunk upon his knees at her feet.

“Mr. Tupman, rise,” said Rachel.

“Never!” was the vigorous reply. “Oh,
Rachel!” He seized her passive hand, and
the watering-pot fell to the ground as he
pressed it to his lips. “Oh, Rachel! say
you love me.”

“Mr. Tupman,” said the spinster aunt,
with an averted head, “I can hardly speak
the words—but—you are not wholly indis
ferent to me.”

Mr. Tupman no sooner heard this avowal,
than he proceeded to do what his enter
nastic emotions prompted, and what, for
sought we know, (for we are but little ac-
quainted with such matters,) people so cir-
cumstanced always do. He jumped up,
and, throwing his arms round the neck of
the spinster aunt, imprinted upon her lips
numerous kisses, which, after a due show
of struggling and resistance, she received
so passively, that there is no telling how
many more Mr. Tupman might have be-
stowed, if the lady had not given a very
unaffected start, and exclaimed in an af-
frighted tone,—

"Mr. Tupman, we are observed! — we
are discovered!"

Mr. Tupman looked round. There was
the fat boy, perfectly motionless, with his
large circular eyes staring into the arbour,
but without the slightest expression on his
face that the most expert physiognomist
could have referred to astonishment, cu-
diosity, or any other known passion that
agitates the human breast. Mr. Tupman
gested on the fat boy, and the fat boy stared
at him; and the longer Mr. Tupman ob-
erved the utter vacancy of the fat boy’s
countenance, the more convinced he became
that he either did not know, or did not un-
derstand any thing that had been going
forward. Under this impression, he said,
with great firmness,—

"What do you want here, Sir?"

"Supper’s ready, Sir," was the prompt
reply.

"Have you just come here, Sir?" in-
quired Mr. Tupman with a piercing look.

"Just," replied the fat boy.

Mr. Tupman looked at him very hard
again; but there was not a wink in his
eye, or a curve in his face.

Mr. Tupman took the arm of the spinster
aunt, and walked towards the house; the
fat boy followed behind.

"He knows nothing of what has hap-
pened," he whispered.

"Nothing," said the spinster aunt.

There was a sound behind them, as of
an imperfectly suppressed chuckle. Mr.
Tupman turned sharply round. No; it
could not have been the fat boy; there was
not a gleam of mirth, or any thing but
feeding in his whole visage.

"He must have been fast asleep," whis-
pered Mr. Tupman.

"I have not the least doubt of it," re-
plied the spinster aunt.

"They both laughed heartily.

Mr. Tupman was wrong. The fat boy,
for he had not been fast asleep. He was
awake—wide awake—to what had been
going forward.

The supper passed off without any at-
ttempt at a general conversation. The old
lady had gone to bed; Isabella Wardle de-
voted herself exclusively to Mr. Trundle;
the spinster aunt’s attentions were reserved
for Mr. Tupman; and Emily’s thoughts
appeared to be engrossed by some distant
object—possibly they were with the absent
Snodgrass.

Eleven—twelve—one o’clock had struck,
and the gentlemen had not arrived. Con-
sertation sat on every face. Could they
have been waylaid and robbed? Should
they send men and lanterns in every direc-
tion by which they could be supposed
likely to have travelled home? or should
they — Hark! there they were. What
could have made them so late! A strange
voice, too! To whom could it belong? They
rushed into the kitchen, whither the
trusts had repaired, and at once obtained
rather more than a glimmering of the real
state of the case.

Mr. Pickwick, with his hands in his
pockets and his hat cocked completely over
his left eye, was leaning against the dres-
ser, shaking his head from side to side,
and producing a constant succession of the
blankest and most benevolent smiles with-
out being moved thereunto by any discern-
ible cause or pretence whatsoever; old Mr.
Wardle, with a highly inflamed counte-
nance, was grasping the hand of a strange
gentleman, muttering protestations of etern-
al friendship: Mr. Winkle, supporting
himself by the eight-day clock, was feebly
invoking destruction upon the head of any
member of the family who should suggest
the propriety of his retiring for the night;
and Mr. Snodgrass had sunk into a chair,
with an expression of the most abject and
hopeless misery that the human mind can
imagine, portrayed in every lineament of
his expressive face.

"Is any thing the matter?" inquired the
three ladies.

"Nothin’ the matter," replied Mr. Pick-
wick. "We—we’re—all right—I say,
Wardle, we’re all right, aint we?"

"I should think so," replied the jolly
host.—"My dears, here’s my friend Mr.
Jingle—Mr. Pickwick’s friend, Mr. Jingle,
come ‘pon—little visit."

"Is any thing the matter with Mr. Snod-
grass, Sir?" inquired Emily, with great
anxiety.

"Nothing the matter, Ma’am," replied
the stranger. "Cricket dinner — glorious
party — capital songs — old port — claret—
good—very good—wine, Ma’am—w—ing."

"It wasn’t the wine," murmured Mr.
Snodgrass, in a broken voice. "It was the
salmon.” (Somehow or other, it never is the
wine, in these cases.)

"Hadin’t they better go to bed, Ma’am?" inquired Emma. "Two of the boys will
carry the gentlemen up stairs."
"I won't go to bed," said Mr. Winkle, seriously.

"No living boy shall carry me," said Mr. Pickwick, stoutly; and he went on smiling as before.

"Hurrah!" gasped Mr. Winkle faintly.

"Hurrah!" echoed Mr. Pickwick, taking off his hat and dash ing it on the floor, and instantly casting his spectacles into the middle of the kitchen. At this humorous fact he laughed outright.

"Let's—have—another—bottle," cried Mr. Winkle, commencing in a very loud key, and ending in a very faint one. His head dropped upon his breast; and, mastering his invincible determination not to go to his bed, and a sanguinary regret that he had not "done for old Tupman" in the morning, he fell fast asleep; in which condition he was borne to his apartment by two young giants under the personal superintendence of the fat boy, to whose protecting care, Mr. Smollett had shortly after wards confided his own person. Mr. Pickwick accepted the proffered arm of Mr. Tupman, and quietly disappeared, smiling more than ever; and Mr. Wardle after taking an affectionate leave of the whole family as if he were ordered for immediate execution, consigned to Mr. Trundle the honour of conveying him upstairs, and retired, with a very futile attempt to look impressively solemn and dignified.

"What a shocking scene!" said the spinster aunt.

"Dis-gusting!" ejaculated both the young ladies.

"Dreadful—dreadful!" said Jingle, looking very grave; he was about a bottle and a half ahead of any of his companions.

"Horrid spectacle—very—very—" whispered the spinster aunt, to Mr. Tupman.

"Good-looking, too!" whispered Emily Wardle.

"Oh, decidedly," observed the spinster aunt.

Mr. Tupman thought of the widow at Rochester: and his mind was troubled. The succeeding half-hour's conversation was not of a nature to calm his perturbed spirit. The new visitor was very talkative, and the number of his anecdotes was only to be exceeded by the extent of his politeness. Mr. Tupman felt, that as Jingle's popularity increased, he (Tupman) retired further into the shade. His laughter was forced—his merriment feigned; and when at last he laid his aching temples between the sheets, he thought, with horrid delight, on the satisfaction it would afford him to have Jingle's head at that moment between the feather-bed and the mattress.

The indefatigable stranger rose betimes next morning, and, although his companions remained in bed overpowered with the dissipation of the previous night, exerted himself most successfully to promote the hilarity of the breakfast-table. So successful were his efforts, that even the deaf old lady insisted on having one or two of his best jokes retailed through the trumpet; and even she condescended to observe to the spinster aunt, that "he" (meaning Jingle) "was an impudent young fellow," a sentiment in which all her relations then and there present thoroughly coincided.

It was the old lady's habit on the fine summer mornings to repair to the arbour in which Mr. Tupman had already signalized himself, in form and manner following: first, the fat boy fetched from a peg behind the old lady's bed-room door, a close black satin bonnet, a warm cotton shawl, and a thick stick with a capacious handle; and the old lady having put on the bonnet and shawl at her leisure, would lean one hand on the stick and the other on the fat boy's shoulder, and walk leisurely to the arbour, where the fat boy would leave her to enjoy the fresh air for the space of half an hour; at the expiration of which time he would return and conduct her back to the house.

The old lady was very precise and very particular; and as this ceremony had been observed for three successive summers without the slightest deviation from the accustomed form, she was not a little surprised on this particular morning, to see the fat boy, instead of leaving the arbour, walk a few paces out of it, looking carefully round him in every direction, and return towards her with great stealth and an air of the most profound mystery.

The old lady was timorous—most old ladies are—and her first impression was that the bleated lad was about to do her some grievous bodily harm, with the view of possessing himself of her loose coin. She would have cried for assistance, but age and infirmity had long ago deprived her of the power of screaming; she, therefore, watched his motions with feelings of intense terror, which were in no degree diminished by his coming close up to her, and shouting in her ear, in an agitated, and as it seemed to her, a threatening tone,—

"Missus!"

Now it is so happened that Mr. Jingle was walking in the garden close to the arbour at this moment. He too heard the shout of "Missus," and stopped to hear more. There were three reasons for his doing so. In the first place, he was idle and curious; secondly, he was by no means scrupulous.
thirdly, and lastly, he was concealed from view by some flowering shrubs. So there he stood, and there he listened.

"Missus," shouted the fat boy.

"Well, Joe," said the trembling old lady,

"I’m sure I have been a good mistress to your Joe. You have invariably been treated very kindly. You have never had too much to do; and you have always had enough to eat."

This last was an appeal to the fat boy’s most sensitive feelings. He seemed touched as he replied, emphatically—

"I know I has."

"Then what can you want to do now?" said the old lady, gaining courage.

"I wants to make your flesh creep," replied the boy.

This sounded like a very blood-thirsty mode of showing one’s gratitude; and as the old lady did not precisely understand the process by which such a result was to be attained, all her former horrors returned.

"What do you think I see in this very bedroom last night?" inquired the boy.

"Bless us! What?” exclaimed the old lady, alarmed at the solemn manner of the corpulent youth.

"The strange gentleman—him as had his arm hurt—a kissin’ and huggin’—"

"Who, Joe—who? None of the servants, I hope."

"Worse than that," roared the fat boy, in the old lady’s ear.

"Not one of my grand-da’aters!"

"Worse than that."

"Worse than that, Joe?" said the old lady, who had thought this the extreme limit of human atrocity. "Who was it, Joe? I insist upon knowing."

The fat boy looked cautiously round, and having concluded his survey, shouted in the old lady’s ear—

"Miss Rachel."

"What?" said the old lady, in a shrill tone. "Speak louder."

"Miss Rachel," roared the fat boy.

"My da’ater."

The train of nods which the fat boy gave by way of assent, communicated a blan-beame-like motion to his fat cheeks.

"And she suffered him!" exclaimed the old lady.

A grin stole over the fat boy’s features as he said—

"I see her kissin’ of him agin."

If Mr. Jingle from his place of concealment, could have beheld the expression which the old lady’s face assumed at this communication, the probability is that a sudden burst of laughter would have betrayed his close vicinity to the summer-house. He listened attentively. Fragments of angry sentences such as "Without my permission!—" "At her time of life!—" "Miserable old ‘ocean like me!’—" "Might have waited till I was dead, and so forth," reached his ears; and then he heard the heels of the fat boy’s boots crunching the gravel, as he retired and left the old lady alone.

It was a remarkable coincidence perhaps, but it was nevertheless a fact, that Mr. Jingle, within five minutes after his arrival at Manor Farm on the preceding night, had inwardsly resolved to lay siege to the heart of the spinster aunt, without delay. He had observation enough to see, that his off-hand manner was by no means disagreeable to the fair object of his attack; and he had more than a strong suspicion that she possessed that most desirable of all requisites, a small independence. The imperative necessity of outwitting his rival by some means or other flashed quickly upon him, and he immediately resolved to adopt certain proceedings tending to that end and object, without a moment’s delay. Fielding tells us that man is fire, and woman tow, and the Prince of Darkness sets a light to ‘em. Mr. Jingle knew that young men, to spinster aunts, are as lighted gas to gunpowder, and he determined to essay the effect of an explosion without loss of time.

Full of reflections upon this important decision, he crept from his place of concealment, and, under cover of the shrubs before mentioned, approached the house. Fortune seemed determined to favour his design. Mr. Tupman and the rest of the gentlemen left the garden by the side gate just as he obtained a view of it; and the young ladies, he knew, had walked out alone, soon after breakfast. The coast was clear.

The breakfast-parlour door was partially open. He peeped in. The spinster aunt was knitting. He coughed; she looked up and smiled. Hesitation formed no part of Mr. Alfred Jingle’s character. He laid his finger on his lips mysteriously, walked in, and closed the door.

"Miss Wardle," said Mr. Jingle, with affected earnestness, “forgive intrusion—short acquaintance—no time for ceremony—all discovered.”

"Sir!" said the spinster aunt, rather astonished by the unexpected apparition, and somewhat doubtful of Mr. Jingle’s sanity.

"Hush!" said Mr. Jingle, in a stage whisper—"large boy—dumpling face—round eyes—rascal!" Here he shook his head expressively, and the spinster aunt trembled with agitation.

"I presume you allude to Joseph, Sir?" said the lady, making an effort to appear composed.
"Yes, Ma'am—dumm that Joe!—treacher-
erous dog, Joe—told the old lady—old lady
furious—wild—raving—arbour—Tupman
—kissing and hugging—all that sort of
thing—eh, Ma'am, eh?"

"Mr. Jingle," said the spinster aunt, "if
you come here, Sir, to insult me—"

"Not at all—by no means," replied the
unabashed Mr. Jingle; "oh, overheard the
tale—came to warn you of your danger—
tender my services—prevent the hubbub.
Never mind—think it an insult—leave the
room—and he turned, as if to carry the
threat into execution.

"What shall I do!" said the poor spin-
ster, bursting into tears. "My brother will
be furious!"

"Of course he will," said Mr. Jingle,
pausing—"outrageous!"

"Oh, Mr. Jingle, what can I say!" ex-
claimed the spinster aunt, in another flood
of despair.

"Say he dreamt it," replied Mr. Jingle,
coolly.

A ray of comfort darted across the mind
of the spinster aunt at this suggestion. Mr.
Jingle perceived it, and followed up his ad-
vantage.

"Pooh, pooh!—nothing more easy—
blackguard boy—lovely woman—fat boy
horsewhipped—you believed—end of the
matter—all comfortable."

Whether the probability of escaping from
the consequences of this ill-timed discovery
was delightful to the spinster's feelings, or
whether the hearing herself described as
a "lovely woman" softened the asperity of
her grief, we know not. She blushed
slightly, and cast a grateful look on Mr.
Jingle.

That insinuating gentleman sighed deep-
ly, fixed his eyes on the spinster aunt's
face for a couple of minutes, started me-
dromatically, and suddenly withdrew.

"You seem unhappy, Mr. Jingle," said
the lady, in a plaintive voice. "May I
show my gratitude for your kind inter-
ference, by inquiring into the cause, with
a view, if possible, to its removal?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Jingle, with an-
other start—"removal! remove my un-
happiness, and your love bestowed upon a
man who is insensible to the blessing—
who even now contemplates a design upon
the affections of the niece of the creature
who—but no; he is my friend; I will not
expose his vices. Miss Wardle—fare-
well!" At the conclusion of his address,
the most consecutive he was ever known to
utter, Mr. Jingle applied to his eyes the
remnant of a handkerchief before noticed,
and turned towards the door.

"Stay, Mr. Jingle!" said the spin-
ster aunt, emphatically. "You have made an
allusion to Mr. Tupman—explain it."

"Never!" exclaimed Jingle, with a pro-
fessional (i.e. theatrical) air. "Never!
and, by way of showing that he had no de-
sire to be questioned further, he drew a
chair close to that of the spinster aunt and
sat down.

"Mr. Jingle," said the aunt, "I entreat
—I implore you, if there is any dreadful
mystery connected with Mr. Tupman, re-
veal it."

"Can I," said Mr. Jingle, fixing his eyes
on the aunt's face—"Can I see—lovely
creature—sacrificed at the shrine—heart-
less avarice!" He appeared to be strug-
gling with various conflicting emotions for
a few seconds, and then said in a low deep
voice—"Tupman only wants your money."

"The wretch!" exclaimed the spinster,
with energetic indignation. (Mr. Jingle's
doubts were resolved. She had money.)

"More than that," said Jingle—"loves
another."

"Another!" ejaculated the spinster.

"Who?"

"Short girl—black eyes—niece Emily."

There was a pause.

Now if there were one individual in the
whole world, of whom the spinster aunt
entertained a mortal and deeply-rooted
jealousy, it was this identical niece. The
colour rushed over her face and neck, and
she tossed her head in silence with an air
of ineffable contempt. At last, biting her
thin lips, and bridling up, she said—

"It can't be. I won't believe it."

"Watch 'em," said Jingle.

"I will," said the aunt.

"Watch his looks."

"I will."

"His whispers."

"I will."

"He'll sit next her at table."

"Let him."

"He'll flatter her."

"Let him."

"He'll pay her every possible attention."

"Let him."

"And he'll cut you."

"Cut me!" screamed the spinster aunt

"He cut me—will he!" and she trembled
with rage and disappointment.

"You will convince yourself!" said Jingle.

"I will."

"You'll show your spirit!"

"I will."

"You'll not have him afterwards!"

"Never."

"You'll take somebody else!"

"Yes."

"You shall."

Mr. Jingle fell on his knees, remained
think I've heard his voice for two hours at least. Emily, my dear, ring the bell."

The bell was rung, and the fat boy appeared.

"Where's Miss Rachel?" he couldn't say.

"Where's Mr. Jingle, then?" he didn't know.

Every body looked surprised. It was late—past eleven o'clock. Mr. Tupman laughed in his sleeve. He was loitering somewhere, talking about him. Ha, ha! capital notion that—funny.

"Never mind," said Wardle, after a short pause, "they'll turn up presently, I dare say. I never wait supper for any body."

"Excellent rule, that," said Mr. Pickwick, "admirable."

"Pray, sit down," said the host. "Certainly," said Mr. Pickwick: and down they sat.

There was a gigantic round of cold beef on the table, and Mr. Pickwick was supplied with a plentiful portion of it. He had raised his fork to his lips, and was on the very point of opening his mouth for the reception of a piece of beef, when the hum of many voices suddenly arose in the kitchen. He paused and laid down his fork. Mr. Wardle paused too, and insensibly released his hold of the carving-knife, which remained inserted in the beef. He looked at Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick looked at him.

Heavy footsteps were heard in the passage; the parlour door was suddenly burst open; and the man who had cleaned Mr. Pickwick's boots on his first arrival, rushed into the room, followed by the fat boy, and all the domestics.

"What the devil's the meaning of this?" exclaimed the host.

"The kitchen chimney a-fire, is it, Emma?" inquired the old lady.

"Lor, grandma! no," screamed both the young ladies.

"What's the matter?" roared the master of the house.

The man gasped for breath, and faintly ejaculated—

"They ha' gone, Mass!—gone right clean off, Sir!" (At this juncture, Mr. Tupman was observed to lay down his knife and fork, and turn very pale.)

"Who's gone?" said Mr. Wardle, fiercely.

"Mas' Jingle and Miss Rachel, in a co-chay, from Blue Lion, Magginton. I was there; but I couldn't stop 'em; so I run off to tell you.

"I paid his expenses!" said Mr. Tupman, jumping up frantically. "He's got ten pounds of mine!—stop him!—he's swindled me!—I won't bear it!—I'll have justice, Pickwick!—I won't stand it!"

and with sundry incoherent exclamations of the like nature, the unhappy gentleman spun round and round the apartment, in a transport of frenzy.

"Lord preserve us!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, eyeing the extraordinary gestures of his friend with terrified surprise.

"He's gone mad! What shall we do?"

"Do!" said the stout old host, who regarded only the last words of the sentence.

"Put the horse in the gig! I'll get a chaise at the Lion, and follow 'em instantly. Where?—he exclaimed, as the man ran out to execute the commission—"Where's that villain, Joe?"

"Here I am; but I hav'n't a willin," replied a voice. It was the fat boy's.

"Let me get at him, Pickwick!" cried Wardle, as he rushed at the ill-starred youth. "He was bribed by that scoundrel, Jingle, to put me on a wrong scent; by telling a cock-and-a-bull story of my sister and your friend Tupman!" (Here Mr. Tupman sunk into a chair.) "Let me at him!"

"Don't let him!" screamed all the women, above whose exclamations, the blubbering of the fat boy was distinctly audible.

"I won't be held!" cried the old man.

"Mr. Winkle, take your hands off! Mr. Pickwick, let me go, Sir!"

It was a beautiful sight, in that moment of turmoil and confusion, to behold the placid and philosophical expression of Mr. Pickwick's face, albeit somewhat flushed with exertion, as he stood with his arms firmly clasped round the extensive waist of their corpulent host, thus restraining the impetuousness of his passion, while the fat boy was scratched, and pulled, and pulled from the room by all the females congregated therein. He had no sooner released his hold, than the man entered to announce that the gig was ready.

"Don't let him go alone!" screamed the females. "He'll kill somebody!"

"I'll go with him," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You're a good fellow, Pickwick," said the host, grasping his hand. "Emma, give Mr. Pickwick a shawl to tie round his neck—make haste. Look after your grand-mother, girls; she's fainted away. Now then, are you ready?"

Mr. Pickwick's mouth and chin, having been hastily enveloped in a large shawl; his hat having been put on his head, and his great coat thrown over his arm, were replied in the affirmative.

They jumped into the gig. "Give her head, Tom," cried the host; and away they went, down the narrow lanes; jolting in and out of the cart-roads, and bumping..."
against the hedges on either side, as if they
would go to pieces every moment.

"How much are they ahead?" shouted
Wardle, as they drove up to the door of the
Blue Lion, round which a little crowd had
crowded, late as it was.

"Not above three-quarters of an hour," was
every body's reply.

"Chaise and four directly! — out with
'em! Put up the gig afterwards."

"Now, boys!" cried the landlord —
"chaise and four out — make haste — look
alive there!"

Away ran the hostlers, and the boys.
The lanterns glimmered, as the men ran to
and fro; the horses' hoofs clattered on the
uneven paving of the yard: the chaise rumbl-
ed as it was drawn out of the coach-house;
and all was noise and bustle.

"Now then! — is that chaise coming out
to-night?" cried Wardle.

"Coming down the yard now, Sir," re-
plied the hostler.

Our came the chaise — in went the horses
— on sprung the boys — in got the travellers.

"Mind — the seven-mile stage in less
than half an hour!" shouted Wardle.

"Off with you!"

The boys applied whip and spur, the
waiters shouted, the hostlers cheered, and
away they went, fast and furiously.

"Pretty situation," thought Mr. Pick-
wick, when he had a moment's time for
reflection. "Pretty situation for the Gen-
eral Chairman of the Pickwick Club. Damp
chaise — strange horses — fifteen miles an
hour — and twelve o'clock at night!"

For the first three or four miles, not a
word was spoken by either of the gentle-
men, each being too much immersed in his
own reflections, to address any observations
to his companion. When they had gone
over that much ground, however, and the
nerves getting thoroughly warmed began to
do their work in really good style, Mr. Pick-
wick became too much exhilarated with the
rapidity of the motion to remain any longer
perfectly quiet.

"We're sure to catch them, I think," said he.

"Hope so," replied his companion.

"Fine night," said Mr. Pickwick, look-
ing up at the moon, which was shining
brightly.

"So much the worse," returned Wardle,
"for they'll have had all the advantage of
the moonlight to get the start of us, and we
shall lose it. It will have gone down in
another hour."

"It will be rather unpleasant going at
this rate in the dark, won't it?" inquired
Mr. Pickwick.

"I dare say it will," replied his friend,
dryly.

Mr. Pickwick's temporary excitement be-
gan to sober down a little, as he reflected
upon the inconveniences and dangers of the
expedition in which he had so thoughtless-
ly embarked. He was roused by a loud
shouting of the post-boy on the leader.

"Yo — yo — yo — yo — yoe," went the first
boy.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" went the second.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" chimed in old
Wardle himself, most lustily, with his head
and half his body out of the coach-window.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" shouted Mr. Pick-
wick, taking up the burden of the try,
though he had not the slightest notion of
its meaning or object. And midst the yo-
yeing of the whole four, the chaise stopped.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr.
Pickwick.

"There's a gate here," replied old War-
dle. "We shall hear something of the fu-
gitives."

After a lapse of five minutes, consumed
in incessant knocking and shouting, an old
man in his shirt and trousers emerged from
the turnpike-house, and opened the gate.

"How long is it since a post-chaise went
through here?" inquired Mr. Wardle.

"How long?"

"Ah!"

"Why, I don't rightly know. It wasn't
a long time ago, nor it wasn't a short time
ago — just between the two, perhaps."

"Has any chaise been by at all?"

"Oh yes, there's been a chay by."

"How long ago, my friend," interposed
Mr. Pickwick, "an hour?"

"Ah, I dare say it might be," replied the
man.

"Or two hours?" inquired the post-boy
on the wheel.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if it was,"
returned the old man, doubtfully.

"Drive on boys," cried the tossy old
gentleman: "don't waste any more time
with that old idiot!"

"Idiot!" exclaimed the old man with a
grim, as he stood in the middle of the road
with the gate half closed, watching the
chaise which rapidly diminished in the in-
creasing distance. "No—not much o' that
either; you've lost ten minutes here, and
gone away as wise as you came arter all.
If every man on the line as has a guinea
give him earns it half as well, you won't
catch 'yer chay this side Mich'lenas, old
short and fat." And with another prolong-
ed grin, the old man closed the gate, re-
entered the house, and bolted the door after
him.

Meanwhile the chaise proceeded, without
any slackening of pace, towards the con-
clusion of the stage. The moon, as Wardle
had foretold, was rapidly on the wane;
large bare of dark heavy clouds which had been gradually overspreading the sky for some time past, now formed one black mass overhead; and large drops of rain which pattered every now and then against the windows of the chaise, seemed to warn the travellers of the rapid approach of a stormy night. The wind, too, which was directly against them, swept in furious gusts down the narrow road, and hurled dismally through the trees which skirted the path-way. Mr. Pickwick drew his coat closer about him, coiled himself more snugly up into the corner of the chaise, and fell into a sound sleep, from which he was only awakened by the stopping of the vehicle, the sound of the hostler’s bell, and a loud cry of “Horses on directly.”

Another accident occurred. The boys were asleep in such mysterious soundness, that it took five minutes a-piece to wake them. The hostler had somehow or other mislaid the key of the stable, and even when that was found, two sleepy helpers put the wrong harness on the wrong horses, and the whole process of harnessing had to be gone through again. Had Mr. Pickwick been alone, these multiplied obstacles would have completely put an end to the pursuit at once, but old Wardle was not to be so easily daunted; and he laid about him with such hearty good will, cuffing this man, and pushing that; strapping a buckle here, and taking in a link there, that the chaise was ready in a much shorter time than could reasonably have been expected, under so many difficulties.

They resumed their journey; and certainly the prospect before them was by no means encouraging. The stage was fifteen miles long, the night was dark, the wind high, and the rain pouring in torrents. It was impossible to make any great way against such obstacles; and it was hard upon one o’clock already; and nearly two hours were consumed in getting to the end of the stage. Here, however, an object presented itself, which re-kindled their hopes, and re-animated their drooping spirits.

“When did this chaise come in?” cried old Wardle, leaping out of his own vehicle and running rapidly with wet mud, which was standing in the yard.

“Not a quarter of an hour ago, Sir!” replied the hostler, to whom the question was addressed.

“Lady and gentleman!” inquired Wardle, almost breathless with impatience.

“Yes, Sir.”

“The gentleman—dress coat—long legs—thin body?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Elderly lady—thin face—rather skinny—eh?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“By heavens, it’s them, Pickwick,” exclaimed the old gentleman.

“Would have been here before,” said the hostler, “but they broke a trace.”

“Tis them,” said Wardle, “it is, by Jove! Chaises and four instantly. We shall catch them yet, before they reach the next stage. A guinea a-piece, boys—be alive there—bustle about—there’s good fellows.”

And with such admonitions as these, the old gentleman ran up and down the yard, and bustled to and fro, in a state of excitement which communicated itself to Mr. Pickwick also; and under the influence of which, that gentleman got himself into complicated entanglements with harness, and mixed up with horses and wheels of chaises, in the most surprising manner, firmly believing that by so doing, he was materially forwarding the preparations for their resuming their journey.

“Jump in—jump in!” cried old Wardle, climbing into the chaise, pulling up the steps, and slamming the door after him.

“Come along, make haste!” And before Mr. Pickwick knew precisely what he was about, he felt himself forced in at the other door, by one pull from the old gentleman, and one push from the hostler; and off they were again.

“Ah! we are moving now,” said the old gentleman exultingly. They were indeed, as was sufficiently testified to Mr. Pickwick, by his constant collisions either with the hard wood-work of the chaise, or the body of his companion.

“Hold up!” said the stout old Mr. Wardle, as Mr. Pickwick dived head foremost into his capacious waistcoat.

“I never did feel such a jolting in my life,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Never mind,” replied his companion, “it’ll soon be over. Steady, steady.”

Mr. Pickwick planted himself into his own corner, as firmly as he could; and on whirled the chaise faster than ever.

They had travelled in this way about three miles, when Mr. Wardle, who had been looking out of the window for two or three minutes, suddenly drew in his face, covered with splashes, and exclaimed in breathless eagerness—

“Here they are!”

Mr. Pickwick thrust his head out of his window. Yes! there was a chaise and four, a short distance before them, dashing along at full gallop.

“Go on, go on,” almost shrieked the old gentleman. “Two guineas a-piece, boys—don’t let ’em gain on us—keep it up—keep it up.”
The horses in the first chaise started out at their utmost speed; and those in Mr. Wardle's galloped furiously behind them.

"I see his head," exclaimed the choleric old man, "Damme, I see his head."

"So do I," said Mr. Pickwick; "that's he."

Mr. Pickwick was not mistaken. The countenance of Mr. Jingle, completely coated with the mud thrown up by the wheels, was plainly discernible at the window of his chaise; and the motion of his arm, which he was waving violently towards the positions, denoted that he was encouraging them to increased exertion.

The interest was intense. Fields, trees, and hedges, seemed to rush past them with the velocity of a whirlwind, so rapid was the pace at which they were along. They were close by the side of the first chaise. Jingle's voice could be plainly heard, even above the din of the wheels, urging on the boys. Old Mr. Wardle foamed with rage and excitement. He roared out scoundrels and villains by the dozen, clenched his fist and shook it expressively at the object of his indignation; but Mr. Jingle only answered with a contemptuous smile, and replied to his menaces by a shout of triumph, as his horses, answering the increased application of the whip and spur, broke into a faster gallop, and left the pursuers behind.

Mr. Pickwick had just drawn in his head, and Mr. Wardle, exhausted with shouting, had done the same, when a tremendous jolt threw them forward against the front of the vehicle. There was a sudden bump—a loud crash—away rolled a wheel, and over went the chaise.

After a very few seconds of bewilderment and confusion, in which nothing but the plunging of horses, and breaking of glass, could be made out, Mr. Pickwick felt himself violently pulled out from among the ruins of the chaise; and as soon as he had gained his feet, and extricated his head from the skirts of his great-coat, which materially impeded the usefulness of his spectacles, the full disaster of the case met his view.

Old Mr. Wardle without a hat, and his clothes torn in several places, stood by his side, and the fragments of the chaise lay scattered at their feet. The post-boys, who had succeeded in cutting the traces, were standing, disfigured with mud and disordered by hard riding, by the horses' heads.

About a hundred yards in advance was the other chaise, which had pulled up on hearing the crash. The positions, each with a broad grin convulsing his countenance, were viewing the adverse party from their saddles, and Mr. Jingle was contemplating the wreck from the coach-window, with evident satisfaction. The day was just breaking, and the whole scene was rendered perfectly visible by the grey light of the morning.

"Hallo!" shouted the shameless Jingle, "anybody damaged?—elderly gentlemen—no light weights—dangerous work—very."

"You're a rascal!" roared Wardle.

"Ha! ha!" replied Jingle; and then he added, with a knowing wink, and a jeer of the thumb towards the interior of the chaise—"I say—she's very well—wishes her compliments—begs you won't trouble yourself—loves you—won't you get behind!—drive on, boys."

The positions resumed their proper attitudes, and away rattled the chaise, Mr. Jingle fluttering in derision a white handkerchief from the coach-window.

Nothing in the whole adventure, not even the upset, had disturbed the calm and equable current of Mr. Pickwick's temper. The villany, however, which could first borrow money of his faithful follower, and then abbreviate his name to "Tuppy," was more than he could patientiy bear. He drew his breath hard, and coloured up to the very tips of his spectacles, as he said, slowly and emphatically—

"If ever I meet that man again, I'll—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Wardle, "that's all very well: but while we stand here, they'll get their license, and be married in London."

Mr. Pickwick paused, bottled up his vengeance, and corked it down.

"How far is it to the next stage?" inquired Mr. Wardle, of one of the boys.

"Six mile, aint it, Tom?"

"Rayther better."

"Rayther better nor six mile, Sir."

"Can't be helped," said Wardle, "we must walk it, Pickwick."

"No help for it," replied that truly great man.

So sending forward one of the boys on horseback, to procure a fresh chaise and horses, and leaving the other behind to take care of the broken one, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle set manfully forward on the walk, first tying their shawls round their necks, and slouching down their hats to escape as much as possible from the deluge of rain, which after a slight cessation had again begun to pour heavily down.
CHAPTER XI.

Clearing up all doubts (if any existed) of the disinterestedness of Mr. Jingle’s character.

There are in London several old inns, once the head-quarters of celebrated coaches, in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times; but which have now degenerated into little more than the abiding and booking-places of country wagons. The reader would look in vain for any of these ancient hostries, among the Golden Crosses and Bull and Mouths, which rear their stately fronts in the improved streets of London. If he would light upon any of these old places, he must betake himself to the obscure quarters of the town; and there in some secluded nooks he will find several, still standing with a kind of gloomy sturdiness, amidst the modern innovations which surround them.

In the borough especially, there still remain some half-dozen old inns, which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement, and the encroachments of private speculation. Great, rambling, queer old places they are, with galleries, and passages, and stair-cases, wide enough and antiquated enough, to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with the old London Bridge, and its adjacent neighbourhood on the Surrey side.

It was in the yard of one of these inns—of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart—that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons; drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old-white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row, he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction.

The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering wagons, each with a pile of loads beneath its ample canopy, about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard; and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bed-room galleries, with old clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart-horse, or rattling of a chain at the further end of the yard, announced to any body who cared about the matter, that the stable lay in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be, the general appearance of the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on the particular morning in question.

A loud ringing of one of the bells, was followed by the appearance of a smart chambermaid in the upper sleeping gallery, who, after tapping at one of the doors, and receiving a request from within, called over the balustrades.

"Sam?"

"Hallo," replied the man with the white hat.

"Number twenty-two wants his boots."

"Ask number twenty-two, whether he’ll have ’em now, or wait till he gets ’em," was the reply.

"Come, don’t be a fool, Sam," said the girl, coaxingly, "the gentleman wants his boots directly."

"Well, you are a nice young oman for a musical party, you are," said the boot-cleaner. "Look at these here boots—eleven pair o’ boots; and one shoe as ’longs to number six with the wooden leg. The eleven boots is to be called at half-past eight, and the shoe at nine. Who’s number twenty-two, that’s to put all the others out! No, no; reg’lar rotation, as Jack Keich said, wen he tied the men up. Sorry to keep you a-waitin’, Sir, but I’ll attend to you directly,"

Saying which, the man in the white hat set to work upon a top-boot with increased assiduity.

There was another loud ring; and the bustling old landlady of the White Hart made her appearance in the opposite gallery.

"Sam," cried the landlady, "where’s that lazy, idle—why, Sam—oh, there you are; why don’t you answer?"
"You can't be gentle to answer, 'till you've done talking," replied Sam, gruffly.

"Here, clean them shoes for number seventeen, and take 'em to private-sitting-room, number five, first floor."

The landlady flung a pair of lady's shoes into the yard, and bustled away.

"Number five," said Sam, as he picked up the shoes, and taking a piece of chalk from his pocket, made a memorandum of their destination in the soles—"Lady's shoes and private sitting-room! I suppose she didn't come in the vagin."

"She came in early this morning," cried the girl, who was still leaning over the railing of the gallery, "with a gentleman in a hackney-coach, and it's him as wants his boots, and you'd better do 'em, and that's all about it."

"'Vy didn't you say so before," said Sam, with great indignation, singling out the boots in question from the heap before him.

"For all I know'd he was one of the regular thieves. Private room! and a lady too! If he's anything of a gen'-l'm'n, he's worth a shillin' a day, let alone the arrancs."

Stimulated by this inspiring reflection, Mr. Samuel brushed away with such hearty good will, that in a few minutes the boots and shoes, with a polish which would have struck envy to the soul of the amiable Mr. Warren, (for they used Day and Martin at the White Hart) had arrived at the door of number five.

"Come in," said a man's voice, in reply to Sam's rap at the door.

Sam made his best bow, and stepped into the presence of a lady and gentleman seated at breakfast. Having officiously deposited the gentleman's boots right and left at his feet, and the lady's shoes right and left at hers, he backed towards the door.

"Boots," said the gentleman.

"Sir," said Sam, closing the door, and keeping his hand on the knob of the lock.

"Do you know—what's a name—Doctor's Commons?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Where is it?"

"Paul's Churchyard, Sir; low archway on the carriage side, book-sellers at one corner, hot-coal on the other, and two porters in the middle as tors for license."

"Tours for licenses!" said the gentleman.

"Tours for licenses," replied Sam. "Two coves in white aprons—touched their hats when you walk in—License, Sir, license! Queer sort, them, and their ma's, too, Sir—Old Bailey Proctor—and no mistake."

"What do they do?" inquired the gentleman.

"Do! Yes, Sir! That ain't the worst or it, neither. They puts things into old gen'-l'm'n heads as they never dreamed of."

My father, Sir, vos a coachman. A widower he vos, and fat enough for anything—uncommon fat, to be sure. His mistress dies, and leaves him four hundred pound. Down he goes to the Commons—to see the lawyer and draw the blunt—very smart—top-boots on—nosegay in his button-hole—broad-brimmed tile—green shawl—quite the gen'-l'm'n. Goes through the archway, thinking how he should invest the money—up comes the touter, touches his hat—"License, Sir, license!"—"What's that!" says my father.—"License, Sir," says he.—"What license?" says my father.—"Marriage license," says the touter.—"Dash my venkit," says my father, 'I never thought o' that.'—"I think you want one, Sir," says the touter. My father pulls up, and thinks a bit—"No," says he, 'damme, I'm too old, b'ides I'm a man's sizes too large,' says he.—"Not a bit on it, Sir," says the touter.—"Think not?" says my father.—"I'm sure not," says he; 'we married a gen'-l'm'n twice your size, last Monday.'—"Did you, though!" says my father.—"To be sure we did," says the touter, 'you're a bobby to him—this way, Sir—this way!'—and sure enough, my father walks arter him, like a tame monkey behind a horgan, into a little back office, vore a feller sat among dirty papers and tin boxes, making believe he was busy. 'Pray take a seat, vile I makes out the affidavit, Sir,' says the lawyer.—"Thankes, Sir," says my father, and down he sat, and stared with all his eyes, and his mouth wide open, at the names on the boxes.—"What's your name, Sir?" says the lawyer.—"Tony Weller," says my father.—"Parish!" says the lawyer.—"Bells Savage," says my father; for he stopped there when he drove up, and he know'd nothing about parishes, he didn't!—And what's the lady's name? says the lawyer. My father was struck all of a heap. 'Bless'd if I know,' says he.—"Not know!" says the lawyer.—"No more nor you do," says my father, 'can't I put that in arterwards!'—"Impossible!" says the lawyer. 'Very well,' says my father, after he'd thought a moment, 'put down Mrs. Clarke.'—"What Clarke?" says the lawyer, dipping his pen in the ink.—"Susan Clarke, Markis o' Granby, Dorking," says my father; 'she'll have me, if I ask her, I des-say—I never said nothing to her, but she'll have me, I know.' The license was made out, and she did have him, and what's more she's got him now; and I never had any of the four hundred pound, worse luck. Beg your pardon, Sir," said Sam, when he had concluded, "b' when I gets on this here grievance, I runs on like a new barrow with the wheels greased." Having said which, and having
He was yet on his way to the White Hart, when two plump gentlemen and one thin one, entered the yard, and looked round in search of some authorised person of whom they could make a few inquiries.

Mr. Samuel Weller happened to be at that moment engaged in burnishing a pair of painted tops, the personal property of a farmer, who was refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three pounds of cold beef, and a pot or two of porter, after the fatigues of the Borough market; and to him the thin gentleman straightforwardly advanced—

"My friend," said the thin gentleman.

"You're o' the advice gratis order," thought Sam, "or you wouldn't be so werry fond o' me all at once." But he only said—"Well, Sir."

"My friend," said the thin gentleman, with a conciliatory hem—"Have you got many people stopping here, now? Pretty busy. Eh?"

Sam stole a look at the inquirer. He was a little high-dried man, with a dark squeezed-up face, and small restless black eyes, that kept twinkling and twinkling on each side of his little inquisitive nose, as if they were playing a perpetual game of peep-bo with that feature. He was dressed all in black, with boots as shiny as his eyes, a low white neckcloth, and a clean shirt with a frill to it. A gold watch-chain, and seals, depended from his fob. He carried his black kid gloves in his hands, not on them; and as he spoke, thrust his wrists beneath his coat-tails, with the air of a man who was in the habit of propounding some regular powers.

"Pretty busy, eh?" said the little man.

"Oh, worry well, Sir," replied Sam, "we shan't be bankrupts, and we shan't make our fort'n. We eate our biled meat'ton without capers, and don't care for horse-radish ven we can get beef."

"Ah," said the little man, "you're a wag, ain't you?"

"My eldest brother was troubled with that complaint," said Sam, "it may be catching—I used to sleep with him."

"This is a curious old house of yours," said the little man, looking round him.

"If you'd sent word you was a coming, we'd ha' had it repaired," replied the impecunious Sam.

The little man seemed rather baffled by these several replies, and a short consultation took place between him and the two plump gentlemen. At its conclusion, the little man took a pinch of snuff from an oblong silver box, and was apparently on the point of renewing the conversation, when one of the plump gentlemen, who in addition to a benevolent countenance, possessed
a pair of spectacles, and a pair of black gaiters, interfered.

"The fact of the matter is," said the benevolent gentleman, "that my friend here (pointing to the other plump gentleman,) will give you half a guinea if you'll answer one or two—"

"Now, my dear Sir—my dear Sir," said the little man, "pray allow me—my dear Sir, the very first principle to be observed in these cases, is this: if you place a matter in the hands of a professional man, you must in no way interfere in the progress of the business; you must repose implicit confidence in him. Really, Mr. (he turned to the other plump gentleman, and said)—I forget your friend's name."

"Pickwick," said Mr. Wardle, for it was no other than that jolly personage."

"Ah, Pickwick—really, Mr. Pickwick, my dear Sir, excuse me—I shall be happy to receive any private suggestion of yours, as amicus curiae, but you must see the impropriety of your interfering with my conduct in this case, with such an ad captandum argument as the offer of half a guinea. Really, my dear Sir, really; and the little man took an argumentative pinch of snuff, and looked very profound."

"My only wish, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "was to bring this very unpleasant matter to as speedy a close as possible."

"Quite right—quite right," said the little man."

"With which view," continued Mr. Pickwick, "I made use of the argument which my experience of men has taught me is the most likely to succeed in any case."

"Ay, ay," said the little man, "very good, very good, indeed; but you should have suggested it to me. My dear Sir, I'm quite certain you cannot be ignorant of the extent of confidence which must be placed in professional men. If any authority can be necessary on such a point, my dear Sir, at me refer you to the well-known case in Barnwell, and—"

"Never mind George Barnwell," interrupted Sam, who had remained a wondering listener during this short colloquy; "every body knows what sort of a case his was, tho' it's always been my opinion, mind you, that the young 'oman deserved scragging a precious sight more than he did. How- ever, that's neither here nor there. You want me to except of half a guinea. Worry well, I'm agreeable; I can't say no fairer than that, can I, Sir? (Mr. Pickwick smiled.) Then the next question is, what the devil do you want with me, as the man said von he seed the ghost?"

"We want to know," said Mr. Wardle."

Now, my dear Sir—my dear Sir," interrupted the busy little man, Mr. Wardle shrugged his shoulders, and was silent.

"We want to know," said the little man, solemnly; "and we ask the question of you, in order that we may not awaken apprehensions inside—we want to know who you've got in this house, at present?"

"Who there is in the house!" said Sam, in whose mind the inmates were always represented by that particular article of their costume, which came under his immediate supervision. "There's a wooden leg in number six, there's a pair of Hessian's in thirteenth, there's two pair of halves in the commercial, there's these here painted tops in the snuggery inside the bar, and five more tops in the coffee-room."

"Nothing more," said the little man.

"Stop a bit," replied Sam, suddenly recollecting himself. "Yes; there's a pair of Vellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair o' lady's shoes, in number five."

"What sort of shoes?" hastily inquired Wardle, who, together with Mr. Pickwick, had been lost in bewilderment at the singular catalogue of visitors."

"Country make," replied Sam.

"Any maker's name?"

"Brown."

"Where of?"

"Muggleton."

"It is them," exclaimed Wardle. "By Heavens, we've found them."

"Hush!" said Sam. "The Vellingtons has gone to Doctors' Commons."

"No," said the little man.

"Yes, for a licence."

"We're in time," exclaimed Wardle.

"Show us the room; not a moment is to be lost."

"Pray, my dear Sir—pray," said the little man; "caution, caution." He drew from his pocket a red silk purse, and looked very hard at Sam as he drew out a sovereign.

Sam grunted expressively.

"Show us into the room at once, without announcing us," said the little man, "and it's yours."

Sam threw the painted tops into a corner, and led the way through a dark passage, and up a wide staircase. He paused at the end of a second passage, and held out his hand.

"Here it is," whispered the attorney, as he deposited the money in the hand of their guide.

The man stepped forward for a few paces, followed by the two friends and their legal adviser. He stopped at a door.

"Is this the room?" murmured the little gentleman.

Sam nodded assent.
Old Wardle opened the door; and the whole three walked into the room just as Mr. Jingle, who had that moment returned, had produced the license to the spinster aunt.

The spinster uttered a loud shriek; and, throwing herself in a chair, covered her face with her hands. Mr. Jingle crumpled up the license, and thrust it into his pocket. The unwelcome visitors advanced into the middle of the room.

"You—you are a nice rascal, aren't you?" exclaimed Wardle, breathing with passion.

"My dear Sir, my dear Sir," said the little man, laying his hat on the table. "Pray consider—pray. Scandalum magnatum, defamation of character, action for damages. Calm yourself, my dear Sir!"

"How dare you drag my sister from my house?" said the old man.

"Ay—ay—very good," said the little gentleman, "you may ask that. How dare you, Sir!—oh, Sir!"

"Who the devil are you?" inquired Mr. Jingle, in so fierce a tone, that the little gentleman involuntarily took back a step or two.

"Who is he, you scoundrel," interposed Wardle. "He's my lawyer, Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn. Perker, I'll have this fellow prosecuted—indicted. I'll—I'll—damno, I'll ruin him. And you," continued Mr. Wardle turning abruptly round to his sister, "you, Rachel, at a time of life when you ought to know better, what do you mean by running away with a vagabond, disgracing your family, and making yourself miserable. Get on your bonnet and come back. Call a hackney coach there, directly, and bring this lady's bill, d'ye hear—d'ye hear?"

"Cert'nly, Sir," replied Sam, who had answered Wardle's violent ringing of the bell with a degree of coldness, which must have appeared marvellous to any body who didn't know that his eye had been applied to the outside of the key-hole during the whole interview.


"Leave the room, Sir; no business here—lady's free to do as she pleases—more than one and twenty! More than one and twenty!" ejaculated Wardle, contemptuously. "More than one and twenty!"

"I ain't," said the spinster aunt, her indignation getting the better of her determination to faint.

"You are," replied Wardle, "you're fifty if you're an hour!"

Here the spinster aunt uttered a loud shriek, and became senseless.

"A glass of water," said the butler to Mr. Pickwick, summoning the landlady.

"A glass of water!" said the passionate Wardle. "Bring a bucket, and throw it all over her; it'll do her good, and she richly deserves it!"

"Ugh, you brute!" ejaculated the kind-hearted landlady. "Poor dear!" And with sundry ejaculations of "Come along, there's a dear—drink a little of this—it'll do you good—don't give way so—there's a love," &c. &c., the lady, assisted by a chambermaid, proceeded to "vivisection the forehead, beat the hands, titulate the nose, and unlace the stays of the spinster aunt, and to administer such other restoratives as are usually applied by compassionate females to ladies who are endeavouring to ferment themselves into hysterics.

"Cook is ready, Sir," said Sam, appearing at the door.

"Come along," cried Wardle. "I'll carry her down stairs.

At this proposition, the hysterics came on with unabated violence.

The landlady was about entering a very violent protest against this proceeding, and had already given vent to an insigntious inquiry whether Mr. Wardle considered himself a lord of the creation, when Mr. Jingle interposed—

"Boots," said he, "get me an officer."

"Stay, stay," said little Mr. Perker. "Consider, Sir, consider."

"I'll not consider," replied Jingle, "she's her own mistress—see who dare to take her away—unless she wishes it."

"I won't be taken away," murmured the spinster aunt. "I don't wish it." (Here there was a frightful relapse.)

"My dear Sir," said the little man in a low tone, taking Mr. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick apart: "my dear Sir, we're in a very awkward situation. It's a distressing case—very; if we knew one more thing; but really, my dear Sir, really, we have no power to control this lady's actions. I warned you before—" we came, my dear Sir, that there was nothing to look but a compromise."

There was a short pause.

"What kind of compromise would you recommend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, my dear Sir, our friend's in an unpleasant position—very much so. We must be content to suffer some pecuniary loss."

"I'll suffer any, rather than submit to this disgrace, and let her, fool as she is, be made miserable for life," said Wardle.

"I rather think it can be done," said the besotted little man. "Mr. Jingle, will you step with us into the next room for a moment?"
Mr. Jingle sauntered, and the quartette walked into an empty apartment.

"Now, Sir," said the little man, as he carefully closed the door, "is there no way of accommodating this matter—step this way, Sir, for a moment—into this window, Sir, where we can be alone—there, Sir, there, pray sit down, Sir. Now, my dear Sir, between you and I, we know very well, my dear Sir, that you have run off with this lady for the sake of her money. Don't frown, Sir, don't frown; I say, between you and I, we know it. We are both men of the world, and we know very well that our friends here, are not—eh?"

Mr. Jingle's face gradually relaxed; and something dimly resembling a wink, quitted for an instant in his left eye.

"Very, very good, very good," said the little man, observing the impression he had made.

"Now, the fact is, that beyond a few hundreds, the lady has little or nothing till the death of her mother—fine old lady, my dear Sir."

"Old," said Mr. Jingle, briefly but emphatically.

"Why yes," said the attorney, with a slight cough. "You are right, my dear Sir, she is rather old. She comes of an old family, though, my dear Sir; old in every sense of the word. The founder of that family came into Kent when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain:—only one member of it, since, who hasn't lived to eighty-five, and as was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is not seventy-three now, my dear Sir."

The little man paused, and took a pinch of snuff.

"Well," cried Mr. Jingle.

"Well, my dear Sir—you don't take snuff—ah! so much the better—expensive habit—well, my dear Sir, you're a fine young man, man of the world—able to push your fortune, if you had capital, eh?"

"Well," said Mr. Jingle again.

"Do you comprehend me?"

"Not quite."

"Don't you think—now my dear Sir, I put it to you, don't you think—that fifty pounds and liberty, would be better than Miss Wardle and expectation?"

"Won't do—not half enough!" said Mr. Jingle, rising.

"No, my dear Sir," remonstrated the little attorney, seizing him by the button.

"Good round sum—a man like you could treble it in no time—great deal to be done with fifty pounds, my dear Sir."

"More to be done with a hundred and fifty," replied Mr. Jingle coolly.

"Well, my dear Sir, we won't waste time, splitting hairs," resumed the little man, "say—say—seventy."

"Won't do," said Mr. Jingle.

"Don't go away, my dear Sir—pray don't hurry," said the little man. "Eighty! come; I'll write you a cheque at once."

"Won't do," said Mr. Jingle.

"Well, my dear Sir, well," said the little man, still detaining him; "just tell me what will do."

"Expensive affair," said Mr. Jingle.

"Money out of pocket—posting, nine pounds; license, three—thats twelve—compensation, a hundred—hundred and twelve—breach of honour—and loss of the lady—"

"Yes, my dear Sir, yes," said the little man, with a knowing look, "never mind the last two items. That's a hundred and twelve—say a hundred—come."

"And twenty," said Mr. Jingle.

"Come, come, I'll write you a cheque, said the little man; and down he sat at the table for that purpose.

"I'll make it payable the day after to-morrow," said the little man, with a look towards Mr. Wardle; "and we can get the lady away, meanwhile."

Mr. Wardle sullenly nodded assent.

"A hundred," said the little man.

"And twenty," said Mr. Jingle.

"My dear Sir," remonstrated the little man.

"Give it him," interposed Mr. Wardle, "and let him go."

The cheque was written by the little gentleman, and pocketed by Mr. Jingle.

"Now, leave this house instantly!" said Wardle, starting up.

"My dear Sir," urged the little man.

"And mind," said Mr. Wardle, "that nothing should have induced me to make this compromise—not even a regard for my family—if I had not known, that the moment you got any money in that pocket of yours, you'd go to the devil faster, if possible, than you would without it."

"My dear Sir," urged the little man again.

"Be quiet, Perker," resumed Wardle.

"Leave the room, Sir."

"Off directly," said the unabashed Jingle. "Bye—bye—Pickwick."

If any dispassionate spectator could have beheld the countenance of the illustrious man, whose name forms the leading feature of the title of this work, during the latter part of this conversation, he would have been almost induced to wonder that the indignant fire which flashed from his eyes, did not melt the glasses of his spectacles—so impecunious was his wrath. His nostrils dilated, and his fists clenched involuntarily, as he heard himself addressed by the villain. But he restrained himself again—he did not pulverise him.

"Here," continued the hardened tailor.
tossing the license at Mr. Pickwick's feet; "get the name altered—take home the lady—do for Tuppy,"

Mr. Pickwick was a philosopher, but philosophers are only men in armour, after all. The shaft had reached hip, penetrated through his philosophical harness, to his very heart. In the frenzy of his rage, he hurled the inkind madly forward, and followed it up himself. But Mr. Jingle had disappeared, and he found himself caught in the arms of Sam.

"Hallo," said that eccentric functionary, "furnier's cheap wear you come from. Self-facking ink, that 'ere; it's wrote your mark upon the wall, old gen'l'm'an. Hold still, Sir: what's the use o' runnin' arter a man as has made his lucky, and got to 'other end of the Borough by this time."

Mr. Pickwick's mind, like those of all truly great men, was open to conviction. He was a quick and powerful reasoner; and a moment's reflection sufficed to remind him of the impotency of his rage. It subsided as quickly as it had been roused. He panted for breath, and looked benignantly round upon his friends.

"Shall we tell the lamentations that ensued, when Miss Wardle found herself deserted by the faithless Jingle? Shall we extract Mr. Pickwick's masterly description of that heart-rending scene? His notebook, blotted with tears of sympathising humanity, lies open before us; one word, and it is in the printer's hands. But, no! we will be resolute! We will not wring the public bosom, with the delineation of such suffering!

Slowly and sadly did the two friends and the deserted lady, return next day in the Muggleton heavy coach. Dimly and darkly had the sombre shadow of a summer's night fallen upon all around, when they again reached Dingley Dell, and stood within the entrance to Manor Farm.

CHAPTER XII.

Involving another journey, and an antiquarian discovery. Recording Mr. Pickwick's determination to be present at an election; containing a manuscript of the old clergyman's:

"A wave of quiet repose in the profound silence of Dingley Dell, and an hour's breathing of its fresh and fragrant air; on the ensuing morning, completely recovered Mr. Pickwick from the effects of his late fatigue of body and anxiety of mind. That illustrious man had been separated from his friends and followers, for two whole days; and it was with a degree of pleasure and delight, which no common imagination can adequately conceive, that he stepped forward to greet Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, as he encountered those gentlemen on his return from his early walk. The pleasure was mutual; for who could ever gaze on Mr. Pickwick's beaming face without experiencing the sensation? But still a cloud seemed to hang over his companions which that great man could not but be sensible of; and was wholly at a loss to account for. There was a mysterious air about them both, as unusual as it was alarming.

"And how," said Mr. Pickwick, when he had grasped his followers by the hand, and exchanged warm salutations of welcome; "how is Tupman?"

Mr. Winkle, to whom the question was more peculiarly addressed, made no reply. He turned away his head, and appeared absorbed in melancholy reflection.

"Snodgrass," said Mr. Pickwick, earnestly, "how is our friend—he is not ill?"

"No," replied Mr. Snodgrass; and a tear trembled on his sentimental eyelid, like a rain-drop on a window-frame. "No; he is not ill."

Mr. Pickwick stopped, and gazed on each of his friends in turn.

"Winkle—Snodgrass," said Mr. Pickwick: "what does this mean? Where is our friend? What has happened? Speak—I conjure, I entreat—say, I command you, speak."

There was a solemnity—a dignity—in Mr. Pickwick's manner, not to be withstood.

"He is gone," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Gone!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Gone!" repeated Mr. Snodgrass.

"Where?" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick.

"We can only guess from that communication," replied Mr. Snodgrass, taking a letter from his pocket, and placing it in his friend's hand. "Yesterday morning, when a letter was received from Mr. Wardle, stating that you would be home with his sister at night, the melancholy which had hung over our friend during the whole day, was observed to increase. He shortly afterwards disappeared: he was missing during the whole day, and in the evening this letter was brought by the hostler from the Crown, at Muggleton. It had been left in his charge in the morning, with a strict injunction that it should not be delivered until night."

Mr. Pickwick opened the epistle. It was in his friend's handwriting, and were its contents.
POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF

"My dear Pickwick,

"You, my dear friend, are placed far beyond the reach of many mortal failings and weaknesses which ordinary people cannot overcome. You do not imagine what it is, at one blow, to be deserted by a lovely and fascinating creature, and to fall a victim to the artifices of a villain, who hid the grace of cunning, beneath the mask of friendship. I hope you never may.

"Any letter, addressed to me at the Leather Bottle, Cobham, Kent, will be forwarded— supposing I still exist. I hasten from the sight of that world, which has become odious to me. Should I hasten from it altogether, pity—forgive me. Life, my dear Pickwick, has become insupportable to me. The spirit which burns within us, is a porter's knot, on which to rest the heavy load of worldly cares and troubles; and when that spirit fails us, the burden is too heavy to be borne. We sink beneath it. You may tell Rachel—Ah, that name!

"TRACY TUPMAN."

"We must leave this place, directly," said Mr. Pickwick, as he refolded the note. "It would not have been decent for us to remain here, under any circumstances, after what has happened; and now we are bound to follow in search of our friend.

"His intention was rapidly communicated.

"The entreaties to remain were pressingly, but Mr. Pickwick was inflexible. Business, he said, required his immediate attendance.

"The old clergyman was present.

"You are not really going!" said he, taking Mr. Pickwick aside.

"Mr. Pickwick reiterated his former determination.

"Then here," said the old gentleman, "is a little manuscript, which I had hoped to have the pleasure of reading to you myself. I found it on the death of a friend of mine—a medical man, engaged in our County Lunatic Asylum—among a variety of papers, which I had the option of destroying or preserving, as I thought proper. I can hardly believe that the manuscript is genuine, though it is not in my friend's hand. However, whether it be the genuine production of a maniac, or founded upon the ravings of some unhappy being, which I think more probable, read it and judge for yourself."

Mr. Pickwick received the manuscript, and parted from the benevolent old gentleman with many expressions of good-will and esteem.

"It was a more difficult task to take leave of the inmates of Manor Farm, from whom they had received so much hospitality and kindness. Mr. Pickwick kissed the young ladies—we were going to say, if they were his own daughters, only as he might possibly have infused a little more warmth into the salutation, the comparison would not be quite appropriate—hugged the old lady with filial cordiality; and patted the rosy cheeks of the female servants in a most patriarchal manner, as he slipped into the hands of each, some more substantial expressions of his approval. The exchange of cordialities with their fine old host and Mr. Trundle, was even more hearty and prolonged; and it was not until Mr. Snodgrass had been several times called for, and at last emerged from a dark passage, followed soon after by Emily (whose bright eyes looked unusually dim), that the three friends were enabled to tear themselves from their friendly entertainers. Many a backward look they gave at the Farm, as they walked slowly away; and many a kiss did Mr. Snodgrass waft in the air, in acknowledgment of something very like a lady's handkerchief, which was waved from one of the upper windows, until a turn of the lane hid the old house from their sight.

At Muggleton they procured a conveyance to Rochester. By the time they reached the last-named place, the violence of their grief had sufficiently abated to admit of their making a very excellent early dinner; and having procured the necessary information relative to the road, the three friends set forward again in the afternoon to walk to Cobham.

A delightful walk it was: for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and the way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently ruffled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth's time. Long vistas of stately oaks and elm trees appeared on every side: large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scurried along the ground, with the speed of the shadow thrown by the light clouds which swept across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer.

"If this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking about him, "if this were the place to which all who are troubled with our friend's complaint came, I fancy their old attachment to this world would very soon return!"

"I think so too," said Mr. Winkle.
"And really," added Mr. Pickwick, after half an hour’s walking had brought them to the village, "really, for a misanthrope’s choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence, I ever met with."

In this opinion also, both Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass expressed their concurrence; and having been directed to the Leather Bottle, a clean and commodious village ale-house, the three travellers entered, and at once inquired for a gentleman of the name of Tupman.

"Show the gentlemen into the parlour, Tom," said the landlady.

A stout country lad opened a door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits and roughly coloured prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world, as possible.

On the entrance of his friends, that gentleman laid down his knife and fork, and with a mournful air advanced to meet them,

"I did not expect to see you here," he said, as he grasped Mr. Pickwick’s hand.

"It’s very kind."

"Ah!" said Mr. Pickwick, sitting down, and wiping from his forehead the perspiration which the walk had engendered. "Finish your dinner, and walk out with me. I wish to speak to you alone."

Mr. Tupman did as he was desired; and Mr. Pickwick having refreshed himself with a copious draught of ale, waited his friend’s leisure. The dinner was quickly despatched, and they walked out together.

For half an hour their forms might have been seen pacing the churey whole of deep, while Mr. Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion’s resolution. Any repetition of his arguments would be useless; for what language could convey to them that energy and force which their great originator’s manner communicated! Whether Mr. Tupman was already tired of retirement, or whether he was wholly unable to resist the eloquent appeal which was made to him, matters not; he did not resist it at last.

"It mattered little to him," he said, "where he dragged out the miserable remainder of his days: and since his friend laid so much stress upon his humble companionship, he was willing to share his adventures."

Mr. Pickwick smiled; they shook hands; and walked back to rejoin their companions.

It was at this moment that Mr. Pickwick made that immortal discovery, which has been the pride and boast of his friends, and the envy of every antiquarian in this or any other country. They had passed the door of their inn, and walked a little way down the village, before they recollected the precise spot in which it stood. As they turned back, Mr. Pickwick’s eye fell upon a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground, in front of a cottage-door. He paused.

"This is very strange," said Mr. Pickwick.

"What is strange!" inquired Mr. Tupman, staring eagerly at every object near him, but the right one. "God bless me, what’s the matter?"

This last was an ejaculation of irresistible astonishment, occasioned by seeing Mr. Pickwick, in his enthusiasm for discovery, fall on his knees before the little stone, and commence wiping the dust off it with his pocket-handkerchief.

"There is an inscription here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it possible!" said Mr. Tupman.

"I can discern," continued Mr. Pickwick, rubbing away with all his might, and gazing intently through his spectacles: "I can discern a cross, and a B, and then a T. This is important," continued Mr. Pickwick, starting up. "This is some very old inscription, existing perhaps long before the ancient stone-houses in this place. It must not be lost."

He tapped at the cottage-door. A labouring man opened it.

"Do you know how this stone came here, my friend?" inquired the benevolent Mr. Pickwick.

"No, I don’t, Sir," replied the man, civilly. "It was here long before I was born, or any on us."

Mr. Pickwick glanced triumphantly at his companion.

"You—you—are not particularly attached to it, I dare say," said Mr. Pickwick, trembling with anxiety. "You wouldn’t mind selling it, now!"

"Ah! but who’d buy it?" inquired the man, with an expression of face which he probably meant to be verymeaning.

"I’ll give you ten shillings for it, at once," said Mr. Pickwick, "if you would take it up for me."

The astonishment of the village may be easily imagined, when (the little stone having been raised with one wrench of a spade), Mr. Pickwick, by dint of great personal exertion, wore it with his warmest
to the inn, and after having carefully washed it, deposited it on the table.

The exultation and joy of the Pickwickians knew no bounds, when their patience and assiduity, their washing and scraping, were crowned with success. The stone was uneven and broken, and the letters were struggling and irregular, but the following fragment of an inscription was clearly to be deciphered:

+ B I L S T U M P S H I S M A R K

Mr. Pickwick's eyes sparkled with delight, as he sat and gloatted over the treasure he had discovered. He had attained one of the greatest objects of his ambition. In a county known to abound in remains of the early ages; in a village which there still existed some memorials of the olden time, he—he, the Chairman of the Pickwick Club—had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity, which had wholly escaped the observation of the many learned men who had preceded him. He could hardly trust the evidence of his senses.

"This—this," said he, "determines me. We return to town, to-morrow!"

"To-morrow!" exclaimed his admiring followers.

"To-morrow," said Mr. Pickwick. "This treasure must be at once deposited where it can be thoroughly investigated, and properly understood. I have another reason for this step. In a few days, an election is to take place for the borough of Balaclava, at which Mr. Parker, a gentleman whom I lately met, is the agent of one of the candidates. We will behold, and minutely examine, a scene so interesting to every Englishman."

"We will," was the animated cry of three voices.

Mr. Pickwick looked round him. The attachment and fervour of his followers lighted up a glow of enthusiasm within him. He was their leader, and he felt it.

"Let us celebrate this happy meeting, and a convivial glass," said he. This proposition, like the other, was received with unanimous applause. And having himself deposited the important stone in a small deal box, purchased from the landlady for the purpose, he placed himself in an armchair at the head of the table; and the evening was devoted to festivity and conversation.

It was past eleven o'clock—a late hour for the little village of Cobham—when Mr. Pickwick retired to the bed-room which had been prepared for his reception. He threw open the lattice-window, and setting his light upon the table, fell into a train of meditation on the hurried events of the two preceding days.

The hour and the place were both favourable to contemplation; Mr. Pickwick was roused by the chamber-clock striking twelve. The first stroke of the hour sounded solemnly in his ear, but when the bell ceased the stillness seemed insupportable;—he almost felt as if he had lost a companion. He was nervous and excited; and hastily undressing himself, and placing his light in the chimney, got into bed.

Every one has experienced that disagreeable state of mind, in which a sensation of bodily weariness in vain contends against an inability to sleep. It was Mr. Pickwick's condition at this moment: he tossed first on one side and then on the other, and perseveringly closed his eyes as if to coax himself to slumber. It was of no use. Whether it was the unuttered exertion he had undergone, or the heat, or the brandy and water, or the strange bed—whatever it was, his thoughts kept reverting very uncomfortably to the grim pictures down stairs, and the old stories to which they had given rise in the course of the evening. After half an hour's twisting about, he came to the unsatisfactory conclusion, that it was of no use trying to sleep; so he got up and partially dressed himself. Any thing; he thought, was better than lying there fancying all kinds of horrors. He looked out of the window—it was very dark. He walked about the room—it was very lonely.

He had taken a few turns from the door to the window, and from the window to the door, when the clergyman's manuscript for the first time entered his head. It was a good thought. If it failed to interest him, it might send him to sleep. He took it from his coat-pocket, and drawing a small table towards his bed-side, trimmed the light, put on his spectacles, and composed himself to read. It was a strange hand; writing, and the paper was much soiled and blotted. The title gave him a sudden start, too; and he could not avoid casting a wistful glance round the room. Reflecting on the absurdity of giving way to such feelings, however, he trimmed the light again, and read as follows:

A MADMAN'S MANUSCRIPT.

"Yes!—a madman's! How that word would have struck to my heart, many years ago! How it would have roosed the terror that used to come upon me sometimes.
sent the blood hissing and tingling through my veins, till the cold dew of fear stood in large drops upon my skin, and my knees knocked together with fright! I like it now though. It's a fine name. Show me the monarch whose angry frown was ever feared like the glare of a madman's eye—whose cord and axe, were ever half so sure as a madman's grip. Ho! ho! It's a grand thing to be mad! to be peeped at like a wild lion through the iron bars—to gnash one's teeth and howl, through the long still night, to the merry ring of a heavy chain—and to roll and twine among the straw, transported with such brave music. Hurrah for the mad-house! Oh it's a rare place!

"I remember days when I was afraid of being found; when I used to start from my sleep, and fall upon my knees, and pray to be spared from the curse of my race; when I rushed from the sight of mercy or happiness, to hide myself in some lonely place, and spend the weary hours in watching the progress of the fever that was to consume my brain. I knew that madness was mixed up with my very blood, and the marrow of my bones; that one generation had passed away without the pestilence appearing among them, and that I was the first in whom it would revive. I knew it must be so: that so it always had been, and so it ever would be; and when I cowered in some obscure corner of a crowded room, and saw men whisper, and point, and turn their eyes towards me, I knew they were telling each other of the doomed madman; and I slunk away again to mope in solitude."

"I did this for years; long, long years they were. The nights, here, are long sometimes—very long; but they are nothing to the restless nights, and dreadful dreams I had at that time. It makes me cold to remember them. Large dusky forms with sly and jeering faces crouched in the corners of the room, and beat over my bed at night, tempting me to madness. They told me in low whispers, that the floor of the old house in which my father's father died, was stained with his own blood, shed by his own hand in raging madness. I drove my fingers into my ears, but they screamed into my head till the room rang with it, that in one generation before him the madness slumbered, but that his grandfather had lived for years with his hands fettered to the ground, to prevent his tearing himself to pieces. I knew they told the truth. I knew it well. I had found it out years before, though they had tried to keep it from me. Ha! ha! I was too cunning for them, madman, as they thought me."

At last it came upon me, and I wondered how I could ever have feared it. I could go into the world now, and laugh and shout with the best among them. I knew I was mad, but they did not even suspect it.—How I used to hug myself with delight, when I thought of the fine trick I was playing them after their old pointing and leerings, when I was not mad, but only dreaming that I might one day become so! And how I used to laugh for joy when I was alone, and thought how well I kept my secret, and how quickly my kind friends would have fallen from me, if they had known the truth. I could have screamed with ecstasy when I dined alone with some fine roaring fellow, to think how pale he would have turned, and how fast he would have run, if he had known that the dear friend who sat close to him, sharpening a bright knife, was a madman with all the power, and half the will, to plunge it in his heart. Oh, it was a merry life!

"Riches became mine, wealth poured in upon me, and I riot in pleasures enhanced a thousand fold to me by the consciousness of my well-kept secret. I inherited an estate. The law—the single-eyed law itself—had been deceived, and had handed over thousands to a madman's hands. Where was the wit of the sharp-sighted men of sound mind? Where the dexterity of the lawyers, eager to discover a flaw? The madman's cunning had overreached them all.

"I had money. How I was courted! I spent it profusely. How I was praised! How those three proud overbearing brothers humbled themselves before me! The old white-headed father, too—such deference—such respect—such devoted friendship—why he worshipped me. The old man had a daughter, and the young men a sister; and all the five were poor. I was rich; and when I married the girl, I saw a smile of triumph play upon the faces of her near relatives, as they thought of their well-planned scheme, and their fine prize. It was for me to smile. To laugh outright, and tear my hair, and roll upon the ground with shrieks of merriment.—They little thought they had married her to a madman.

"Stay. If they had known it, would they have saved her? A sister's happiness, against her husband's gold. The lightest feather I blow into the air, against, the gay chain that ornaments my body!"

"In one thing I was deceived with all my cunning. If I had not been mad—for though we madmen are sharp-witted enough, we get bewildered sometimes—I should have known that the girl would neither have been placed, stiff and cold, as a dull leader's corpse, than upon an em---"
bride to my rich, glittering house. I should have known that her heart was with the dark-eyed boy whose name I once heard her breathe in her troubled sleep; and that she had been sacrificed to me, to relieve the poverty of the old white-headed man, and the haughty brothers.

"I don’t remember forms or faces now, but I know the girl was beautiful. I knew she was; for in the bright moonlight nights, when I start up from my sleep, and all is quiet about me, I see, standing still and motionless in one corner of this cell, a slight and wasted figure with long black hair, which, streaming down her back, stirs with the earthy wind, and eyes that fix their gaze on me, and never wink or close. Hush! the blood chills at my heart as I write it down—that form is her’s; the face is very pale, and the eyes are glassy bright; but I know she is well. That figure never moves; it never frowns and moans, as others do, that all this place sometimes; but it is much more dreadful to me, even than the spirits that tempted me many years ago—it comes fresh from the grave; and is so very deathlike.

"For nearly a year I saw that face grow paler; for nearly a year, I saw the tears steal down the mournful cheeks, and never knew the cause. I found it out at last, though. They could not keep it from me long. She had never liked me; I had never thought she did; she despised my wealth, and hated the splendour in which she lived;—I had not expected that. She loved another. This I had never thought of. Strange feelings came over me, and thoughts forced upon me by some secret power, whirled round and round my brain. I did not hate her, though I hated the boy she still wept for. ’I pitied,—yes, I pitied—the wretched life to which her cold and selfish rotations had doomed her. I knew that she could not live long, but the thought that before her death she might give birth to some illustrious being destined to hand down madness to its offspring determined me. I resolved to kill her.

"For many weeks I thought of poison; and then of drowning, and then of fire. A fine sight the grand house in flames, and the madman’s wife smouldering away to cinders. Think of the jest of a large reward, too, and of some sane man swinging in the wind for a deed he never did, and all through a madman’s cunning! I thought often of this, but I gave it up at last. Oh! the pleasure of stopping the razor day after day, feeling the sharp edge, and thinking of the gash on one stroke of its thin bright steel would make!

"At last the old spirits who had been with me so often before, whispered in my ear that the time was come, and thrust the open razor into my hand. I grasped it firmly, rose softly from the bed, and leaned over my sleeping wife. Her face was buried in her hands. I withdrew them softly, and they fell listlessly on her bosom. She had been weeping; for the traces of the tears were still wet upon her cheek. Her face was calm and placid; and even as I looked upon it, a tranquil smile lighted up her pale features. I laid my hand softly on her shoulder. She started—it was only a passing dream. I leaned forward again. She screamed and woke.

"One motion of my hand, and she would never again have uttered cry or sound. But I was startled and drew back. Her eyes were fixed on mine. I know not by what it was, but they cowed and frightened me; and I quitted beneath them. She rose from the bed, still gazing fixedly and steadily on me. I trembled; the razor was in my hand, but I could not move. She made towards the door. As she neared it, she turned, and withdrew her eyes from my face. The spell was broken. I bounded forward, and clutched her in my arm. Uttering shriek upon shriek, she sank upon the ground.

"Now I could have killed her without a struggle; but the house was alarmed. I heard the tread of footsteps on the stairs. I replaced the razor in its usual drawer, unfastened the door, and called loudly for assistance.

"They came, and raised her, and placed her on the bed. She lay bereft of animation for hours; and when life, look, and speech returned, her senses had deserted her, and she raved wildly and furiously.

"Doctors were called in — great men, who rolled up to my door in easy carriages, with fine horses and gaudy servants. They were at her bedside for weeks. They had a great meeting and consulted together in low and solemn voices in another room. One, the cleverest and most celebrated among them, took me aside, and bidding me prepare for the worst, told me—me, the madman!—that my wife was mad. He stood close beside me at an open window, his eyes looking in my face, and his hand laid upon my arm. With one effort I could have hurled him into the street beneath. It would have been rare sport to have done it; but my secret was at stake, and I let him go. A few days after, they told me I must place her under some restraint; I must provide a keeper for her. It? I went into the open fields where none could hear me, and laughed till the air resounded with my shouts!

"She died next day. 'The white-haired old man followed her to the grave, and the proud brothers dropped a tear over her in
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

sensible corpse of her, whose suffering they had regarded in her lifetime with muscles of iron. All this was food for my secret mirth, and I laughed behind the white handkerchief which I held up to my face, as we rode home, till the tears came into my eyes.

"But though I had carried my object and killed her, I was restless and disturbed, and felt that before long, my secret must be known. I could not hide the wild mirth and joy which boiled within me, and made me, when I was alone at home, jump up and beat my hands together, and dance round and round, and roar aloud. When I went out, and saw the busy crowds hurrying about the streets; or to the theatre, and heard the sound of music, and beheld the people dancing, I felt such gladness that I could have rushed among them, and torn them to pieces limb from limb, and howled in transport. But I ground my teeth, and stuck my feet upon the floor, and drove my sharp nails into my hands. I kept it down; and no one knew I was a madman yet.

"I remember—though it is one of the last things I can remember: for now I mix realities with my dreams, and having so much to do, and being always hurried here, have no time to separate the two, from some strange confusion in which they get involved—I remember how I let it out at last. Ha! ha! I think I see their frightened looks now, and feel the ease with which I flung them from me, and dashed my clenched fist into their white faces, and then flew like the wind, and left them screaming and shouting far behind. The strength of a giant comes upon me when I think of it. There—see how this iron bar bends beneath my furious wrench. I could snap it like a twig, only there are long galleries here with many doors—I don't think I could find my way along them: and even if I could, I know there are iron gates below which they keep and barbed. They know what a clever madman I have been; and they are proud to have me here, to show.

"Let me see:—yes, I had been out. It was late at night when I reached home, and found the proudest of the three proud brothers, waiting to see me—urgent business he said. I reflected it well. I hated that man with all a madman's hate. Many and many a time had my fingers longed to tear him. They told me he was there. I ran swiftly up stairs. He had a word to say to me. I dismissed the servants. It was late, and we were alone together—

"I kept my eyes carefully from him at first, for I knew what he little thought—and I grinned in the knowledge that the light of madness glared from them like fire. We sat in silence for a few minutes. He spoke at last. My recent dissipation, and strange remarks, made so soon after his sister's death, were an insult to her memory. Coupling together many circumstances which had at first escaped his observation, he thought I had not treated her well. He wished to know whether he was right in inferring that I meant to cast a reproach upon her memory, and a diabolical spectre upon her family. It was due to the uniform he wore, to demand this explanation.

"This man had a commission in the army—a commission, purchased with my money, and his sister's misery. This was the man who had been foremost in the plot to ensure me, and grasp my wealth. He was the man who had been the main instrument in forcing his sister to wed me; well knowing that her heart was given to that pulling boy. Dub! Due to his uniform! The livery of his degradation! I turned my eyes upon him—I could not help it—but I spoke not a word. I saw the sudden change that came upon him beneath my gaze. He was a bold man, but the colour faded from his face, and he drew back his chair. I dragged mine nearer to him; and as I laughed—

"I was very merry then—I saw him shudder. I felt the madness rising within me, He was afraid of me.

"You were very fond of your sister when she was alive," I said. Very.

"He looked uneasily round him, and I saw his hand grasp the back of his chair; but he said nothing.

"'You villain,' said I, 'I found you out; I discovered your hellish plots against me; I know her heart was fixed on some one else, before you compelled her to marry me. I know it—I know it."

"He jumped suddenly from his chair, branched it aloft, and told me stand back—for I took care to be getting closer to him off the time I spoke.

"I screamed rather than talked, for I felt tumultuous passions eddying through my veins, and the old spirits whispering and taunting me to tear his heart out."

"'Damn you,' said I, starting up, and rushing upon him; 'I killed her!' I am a madman. Down with you. Blood, blood, I will have it.'

"I turned aside with one blow the chair he hurled at me in his terror, and closed with him; and with a heavy crash, we rolled upon the floor together.

"It was a fine struggle, that, for he was a tall strong man, fighting for his life against a powerful madman, who knew no mercy.
nine, and I was right. Right, again, though a madman! His struggles grew fainter. I knelt upon his chest, and clasped his brawny throat firmly with both hands. His face grew purple; his eyes were starting from his head, and with protruded tongue it seemed to mock me. I squeezed the tighter.

"The door was suddenly burst open with a loud noise, and a crowd of people rushed forward, crying aloud to each other, to secure the madman.

"My secret was out; and my only struggle now, was for liberty and freedom. I gained my feet before a hand was on me, threw myself among my assailants, and cleared my way with my strong arm as if I bore a hatchet in my hand, and hewed them down before me. I gained the door, dropped over the balusters, and in an instant was in the street.

"Straight and swift I ran, and no one dared to stop me. I heard the noise of feet behind, and redoubled my speed. It grew fainter and fainter in the distance, and at length died away altogether; but on I bounded, through marsh and rivulet, over fence and wall, with a loud shout which was taken up by the strange beings that flocked around me on every side, and swelled the sound, till it pierced the air. I was borne upon the arms of demons who swept along upon the wind, and bore down bank and hedge before them, and spun me round and round with a rustle and a speed that made my head swim, until at last they threw me from them with a violent shock, and I fell heavily upon the earth. When I woke I found myself here — here in this gay cell where the sunlight seldom comes, and the moon steals in, in rays which only serve to show the dark shadows about me, and that silent figure in its old corner. When I lie awake, I can sometimes hear strange shrieks and cries from distant parts of this large place. What they are, I know not; but they neither come from that pale form, nor does it regard them. For from the first shades of dusk till the earliest light of morning, it still stands motionless in the same place, listening to the music of my iron chain, and watching my gambols on my straw bed."

At the end of the manuscript, was written, in another hand, this note:

"[The unhappy man whose raving are recorded above, was a melancholy instance of the baseless results of energies misdirected in early life, and excesses prolonged until their consequences could never be repaired. The thoughtless riot, dissipation, and debauchery of his ravings produced fever and delirium. The first effects of the latter, was the strange delusion founded upon a well-known medical theory, strongly contended for by some, and as strongly contested by others, that an hereditary madness existed in his family. This produced a settled gloom, which in time developed a morbid insanity, and finally terminated in raving madness. There is every reason to believe that the events he detailed, though distorted in the description by his diseased imagination, really happened. It is only matter of wonder to those who were acquainted with the vices of his early career, that his passions, when no longer controlled by reason, did not lead him to the commission of still more frightful deeds.]

Mr. Pickwick's candle was just expiring in the socket, as he concluded the perusal of the old clergyman's manuscript; and when the light went suddenly out, without any previous flicker by way of warning, it communicated a very considerable start to his excited frame. Hastily throwing off such articles of clothing as he had put on when he rose from his uneasy bed, and casting a fearful glance around, he once more scrambled hastily between the sheets, and soon fell fast asleep.

The sun was shining brilliantly into his chamber when he awoke, and the morning was far advanced. The gloom which had oppressed him on the previous night, had disappeared with the dark shadows which shrouded the landscape, and his thoughts and feelings were as light and gay as the morning itself. After a hearty breakfast, the four gentlemen sailed forth to walk to Gravesend, followed by a man bearing the stone in its deal box. They reached that town about one o'clock, (their luggage they had directed to be forwarded to the city, from Rochester) and being fortunate enough to secure places on the outside of a coach, arrived in London in sound health and spirits, on that same afternoon.

The next three or four days were occupied with the preparations which were necessary for their journey to the borough of Ratanswill. As any reference to that most important undertaking demands a separate chapter, we may devote the few lines which remain at the close of this, to narrate, with great brevity, the history of the antiquarian discovery.

It appears from the Transactions of the Club, then, that Mr. Pickwick lectured upon the discovery at a General Club Meeting, convened on the night succeeding their return, and entered into a variety of ingenious and erudite speculations on the meaning of the inscription. It also appears that a skilful artist executed a faithful delineation of the curiously, which was
engraven on stone, and presented to the Royal Antiquarian Society, and other learned bodies—that heart-burnings and jealousies without number, were created by rival controversies which were permitted upon the subject—and that Mr. Pickwick himself wrote a pamphlet, containing ninety-six pages of very small print, and twenty-seven different readings of the inscription. That three old gentlemen cut off their eldest sons with a shilling a-piece for presuming to doubt the antiquity of the fragment—and that one enthusiastic individual cut himself off prematurely, in despair at being unable to fathom its meaning. That Mr. Pickwick was elected an honorary member of seventeen native and foreign societies, for making the discovery; that none of the seventeen could make any thing of it, but that all the seventeen agreed it was very extraordinary.

Mr. Blotton, indeed—and the name will be doomed to the undying contempt of those who cultivate the mysterious and the sublime—Mr. Blotton, we say, with the doubt and cavilling peculiar to vulgar minds, presumed to state a view of the case, as degrading as ridiculous. Mr. Blotton, with a mean desire to tarnish the lustre of the immortal name of Pickwick, actually undertook a journey to Cobham in person, and on his return, sarcastically observed in an oration at the club, that he had seen the man from whom the stone was purchased; that the man presumed the stone to be ancient, but solemnly denied the antiquity of the inscription—inasmuch as he represented it to have been rudely carved by himself in an idle mood, and to display letters intended to bear neither more nor less than the simple construction of—"Bill Stumps, his mark!" and that Mr. Stumps, being little in the habit of original composition, and more accustomed to be guided by the sound of words than by the strict rules of orthography, had omitted the concluding "L" of his Christian name.

The Pickwick Club, as might have been expected from so enlightened an institution, received this statement with the contempt it deserved. Expelled the presumptuous and ill-conditioned Blotton from the society, and voted Mr. Pickwick a pair of gold spectacles, in token of their confidence and approbation; in return for which, Mr. Pickwick caused a portrait of himself to be painted, and hung up in the club-room—which portrait, by-the-bye, he did not wish to have destroyed when he grew a few years older.

Mr. Blotton was ejected, but not convinced. He also wrote a pamphlet, addressed to the seventeen learned societies, containing a repetition of the statement he had already made, and rather more than half intimating his opinion that the seventeen learned societies aforesaid, were so many "humbugs." Hereupon the virtuous indignation of the seventeen learned societies being roused, several fresh pamphlets appeared; the foreign learned societies corresponded with the native learned societies, the native learned societies translated the pamphlets of the foreign learned societies into English, the foreign learned societies translated the pamphlets of the native learned societies into all sorts of languages; and thus commenced that celebrated scientific discussion, so well known to all men as the Pickwick controversy.

But this base attempt to injure Mr. Pickwick, recoiled upon the head of its calumnious author. The seventeen learned societies unanimously voted the presumptuous Blotton an ignorant meddler; and forthwith set to work upon more treatises than ever. And to this day the stone remains an illegible monument of Mr. Pickwick's greatness, and a lasting trophy of the littleness of his enemies.

CHAPTER XIII.

Descriptive of a very important proceeding on the part of Mr. Pickwick; no less an epoch in his life, than in this history.

Mr. Pickwick's apartments in Goswell street, although on a limited scale, were not only of a very neat and comfortable description, but peculiarly adapted for the residence of a man of his genius and observation. His sitting-room was the first floor front, his bed-room the second floor front; and thus, whether he were sitting at his desk in the parlour, or standing before the dressing-glass in his dormitory, he had an equal opportunity of contemplating human nature in all the numerous phases it exhibits, in that not more populous than popular thoroughfare. His landlady, Mrs. Bardell—the relict and sole executrix of a deceased custom-house officer—was a comely woman of bustling manners and agreeable appearance, with a natural genius for cooking, improved by study and long practice into an exquisite talent. There were no children, no servants, no fowls. The only other inmates of the house were a large man and a small boy; the first a lodger, the second a production of Mrs. Bardell's. The large man was always at home precisely at ten o'clock at night, at which hour he regularly condensed himself into the limits of a dwarfish French bedstead in the back parlour; and the

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sports and gymnastic exercises of Master Bardell were exclusively confined to the neighbouring pavements and gutters. Cleanliness and quiet reigned throughout the house; and in it Mr. Pickwick's will was law.

To any one acquainted with these points of the domestic economy of the establishment, and conversant with the admirable regulation of Mr. Pickwick's mind, his appearance and behaviour on the morning previous to that which had been fixed upon for the journey to Estanswill, would have been most mysterious and unaccountable. He paced the room to and fro with hurried steps, popped his head out of the window at intervals of about three minutes each, constantly referred to his watch, and exhibited many other manifestations of impatience, very unusual with him. It was evident that something of great importance was his preoccupation, but what that something was, not even Mrs. Bardell herself had been enabled to discover.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick, at fast, as that amiable female approached the termination of a prolonged dusting of the apartment.

"Sir," said Mrs. Bardell.

"Your little boy is a very long time gone."

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

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, "very true; so it is."

Mr. Pickwick relapsed into silence, and Mrs. Bardell resumed her dusting.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of a few minutes.

"Sir," said Mrs. Bardell again.

"Do you think it's a much greater expense to keep two people, than to keep one?"

"La, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell, colouring up to the very border of her cap, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle in the eyes of her listener. "La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!"

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

"That depends,"—said Mrs. Bardell, approaching the dusty very near to Mr. Pickwick's elbow, which was planted on the table; "that depends 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; and has, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the world, and a great deal of sharpness, Mrs. Bardell; which may be of material use to me."

"La, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell; the crimson rising to her cap-border again.

"I do," said Mr. Pickwick, growing energetic, as was his wont in speaking of a subject which interested him. "I do, indeed; and to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bardell, I have made up my mind."

"Dear me, Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

"You'll think it not very strange now," said the amiable Mr. Pickwick, with a good-humoured glance at his companion, "that I never consulted you about this matter, and never mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning—oh!"

Mrs. Bardell could only reply by a look. She had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, but here she was, all at once, raised to a pinnacle to which her wildcat, and most extravagant hopes had never dared, to aspire. Mr. Pickwick was going to propose—a deliberate plan, too—sent his little boy to the Borough without him out of the way—how thoughtful—how considerate!"

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, "what do you think?"

"Oh, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell, trembling with agitation, "you're very kind, Sir."

"It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, I never thought of anything but the trouble, Sir," replied Mrs. Bardell; "and of course, I should take more trouble to please you than ever; but it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness."

"Ah, to be sure," said Mr. Pickwick; "I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will."

"I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman," said Mrs. Bardell.

"And your little boy—" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless his heart," interposed Mrs. Bardell, with a maternal sob.

"Ha, too, will have a companion," resumed Mr. Pickwick; "a lively one, who'll teem him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week, than he would ever learn in a year."

And Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

"Oh you dear—" said Mrs. Bardell.

Mr. Pickwick started.

"Oh you kind, good, playful dear," said Mrs. Bardell; and without more ado, she rose from her chair, and flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck, with a cautara of tears, and a chorus of sobs.

"Bless my soul," cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick; "Mrs. Bardell, my good woman—dear me, what a situation—pray consider. Mrs. Bardell, don't—if any body should come—"

"Oh, let them come," exclaimed Mrs.
Bardell, frantically; "I'll never leave you—dear, kind, good, soul!" and, with these words, Mrs. Bardell clung the tighter.

"Mercy upon me," said Mr. Pickwick, struggling violently, "I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't, don't, there's a good creature, don't." But entreaty and remonstrance were alike unavailing; for Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick's arms; and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, ushering in Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless. He stood with his lovely burden in his arms, gazing vacantly on the countenances of his friends, without the slightest attempt at recognition or explanation. They, in their turn, stared at him; and Master Bardell, in his turn, stared at every body.

The astonishment of the Pickwickians was so absorbing, and the perplexity of Mr. Pickwick was so extreme, that the might have remained in exactly the same relative situations until the suspended animation of the lady was restored, had it not been for a most beautiful and touching expression of the filial affection on the part of her youthful son. Chad in a tight suit of corduroy, splashed with brass buttons of a very considerable size, he at first stood at the door astounded and uncertain, but by degrees, the impression that his mother must have suffered some personal damage, pervaded his partially developed mind, and considering Mr. Pickwick as the aggressor, he set up an appalling and semi-earthly kind of howling, and butting forward with his head, commenced assailing that immortal gentleman about the back and legs, with such blows and pinches as the strength of his arm, and the violence of his excitement, allowed.

"Take this little villain away," said the agonised Mr. Pickwick, "he's mad!"

"What is the matter?" said the three tongue-tied Pickwickians.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pickwick, pettishly. "Take away the boy—(here Mr. Winkle carried the interested boy, screaming and struggling, to the farther end of the apartment.)—Now help me to lead this woman down stairs."

"Oh, I am better now," said Mrs. Bardell, faintly.

"Let me lead you down stairs," said the ever graceful Mr. Tupman.

"Thank you, Sir—thank you," exclaimed Mrs. Bardell, hysterically. And down stairs she was led accordingly, accompanied by her affectionate son.

"I cannot conceive," said Mr. Pickwick, when his friend returned—"I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant, when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing.

"Very," said his three friends.

"Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation," continued Mr. Pickwick.

"Very;" was the reply of his followers, as they coughed slightly, and looked dubiously at each other.

This behaviour was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He remarked their incredulity. They evidently suspected him.

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

"It's the man that I spoke to you about," said Mr. Pickwick, "I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass."

Mr. Snodgrass did as he was desired; and Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself.

"Oh—you remember me I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I should think so," replied Mr. Pickwick, with a patronising wink. "Queer start that 'ere, but he was one too many for you, warn't he! Up to smuff and a pinch or two o'er—ch!"

"Never mind that matter, now," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily, "I want to speak to you about something else. Sit down."

"Thank'ee, Sir," said Sam. And down he sat without further bidding, having previously deposited his old white hat on the landing outside the door. "Tu'n't a worry good 'un to look at," said Sam, "but it's an astonishin' 'un to wear; and afore the blim went, it was a very handsome tile. Hows'ever it's lighter without it, that's one thing, and every hole lets in some air, that's another—ventilation gossamer I calls it." On the delivery of this sentiment, Mr. Weller smiled agreeably upon the assembled Pickwickians.

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

"That's the pint, Sir," interposed Sam; "out with 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 have any reason to be discontented with your present situation."

"Afore I answer that 'ere question, sen'-I'm 'p'n," replied Mr. Weller, "I should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a-goin' to parwise me with a better."

A sunbeam of placid benevolence played
CHAPTER XIV.

Some account of Estanwille; of the state of parties therein; and of the election of a Member to serve in the Parliament for that ancient, loyal, and pious borough.

We will frankly acknowledge, that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick club, we had never heard of Estanwille; we will with equal candour admit, that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day. Knowing the deep reliance to be placed upon every note and statement of Mr. Pickwick's, and not presuming to set up our recollection against the recorded declarations of that great man, we have consulted every authority, bearing upon the subject, to which we could possibly refer. We have traced every name in schedules A and B, without meeting with that of Estanwille; we have minutely examined every corner of the Pocket County Maps issued for the benefit of society by our distinguished publishers, and the same result has attended our investigation. We are therefore led to believe, that Mr. Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him well know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a fictitious designation, for the real name of the place in which his observations were made. We are confirmed in this belief by a little circumstance, apparently slight and trivial in itself, but when considered in this point of view, not undeserving of notice. In Mr. Pickwick's note-book, we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach; but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated. We will not, therefore, hazard a guess upon the subject, but will at once proceed with this history; content with the materials which its characters have provided for us.

It appears, then, that the Estanwille people, like the people of many other small towns, considered themselves of the utmost and most mighty importance, and that every man in Estanwille, conscious of the weight that attached to this example, felt himself bound to unite, heart and soul, with one of the two great parties that divided the town—the Blues and the Buffs. Now the Blues lost no opportunity of opposing the Buffs, and the Buffs lost no opportunity of opposing the Blues; and the consequence was, that whenever the Buffs and Blues met to
of course it was essentially and indispensably necessary that each of these powerful parties should have its chosen organ and representative: and, accordingly, there were two newspapers in the town—the Estanswill Gazette and the Estanswill Independent; the former advocating Blue principles, and the latter conducted on grounds daemonic by Buff. Fine newspapers they were! Such leading articles, and such spirited attacks!—"Our worthless contemporary, the Gazette"—"That disgraceful and dastardly journal, the Independent."—"That false and scurrilous print, the Independent."—"That vile and slanderous calumniator, the Gazette!"—these, and other spirit-stirring denunciations, were strung plentifully over the columns of each, in every number, and excited feelings of the most intense delight and indignation in the bosoms of the townpeople.

Mr. Pickwick, with his usual foresight and sagacity, had chosen a peculiarly desirable moment for his visit to the borough. Never was such a contest known. The Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was the Blue candidate; and Horatio Fizkin, Esq., of Fizkin Lodge, near Estanswill, had been prevailed upon by his friends to stand forward on the Buff interest. The Gazette warned the electors of Estanswill that the eyes not only of England, but of the whole civilized world, were upon them; the Independent imperatively demanded to know, whether the constituency of Estanswill were the grand fellows they had always taken them for, or base and servile tools, undeserving alike of the name of Englishmen and the blessings of freedom. Never had such a commotion agitated the town before.

It was late in the evening, when Mr. Pickwick and his companions, assisted by Sam, dismounted from the roof of the Estanswill coach. Large blue silk flags were flying from the windows of the Town Arms Inn, and bills were posted in every nook, intimating, in gigantic letters, that the Honourable Samuel Slumkey's Committee sat thence daily. A crowd of people were assembled in the road, looking at a hoarse man in the balcony, who was apparently talking himself very red in the face in Mr. Slumkey's behalf; but the force and point of whose arguments were somewhat impaired by the perpetual beating of four large drums, which Mr. Fizkin's committee had stationed at the street corner. There was a busy little man beside him, though, who took off his hat at intervals and motioned to the people to cheer, which they regularly did, most enthusiastically; and as the red-faced gentleman went on talking till he was redder in the face than ever, it seemed to answer his purpose quite as well as if any body had heard him.

The Pickwrickians had no sooner dismounted, than they were surrounded by a branch mob of the honest and independent, who forthwith set up three deafening cheers, which being responded to by the main body (for it's not at all necessary for a crowd to know what they are shouting about) swallowed into a tremendous roar of triumph, which stopped even the red-faced man in the balcony.

"Hurrâh!" shouted the mob in conclusion.

"One cheer more," screamed the little agitator in the balcony; and out shouted the mob again, as if lungs were cast iron, with steel weapons.

"Slumkey for ever!" roared the honest and independent.

"Slumkey for ever!" echoed Mr. Pickwick, taking off his hat.

"No Fizkin," roared the crowd.

"Certainly not," shouted Mr. Pickwick.

"Hurrâh!" And then there was another roaring, like that of a whole menagerie when the elephant has rung the bell for the cold meat.

"Who is Slumkey?" whispered Mr. Tupman.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pickwick in the same tone. "Hush. Don't ask any questions. It's always best on these occasions to do what the mob do."

"But suppose there are two mobs!" suggested Mr. Snodgrass.

"Shout with the largest," replied Mr. Pickwick.

Volumes could not have said more.

They entered the house, the crowd opening right and left to let them pass, and cheering vociferously. The first object of consideration was to secure quarters for the night.

"Can we have beds here?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, summoning the waiter.

"Don't know, Sir," replied the man: "afraid we're full, Sir—I'll inquire, Sir." Away he went for that purpose, and pra-
nedly returned, to ask whether the gentle-
men were "Blue."

As neither Mr. Pickwick nor his com-
patriots took any vital interest in the cause
of either candidate, the question was rather
difficult one to answer. In this dilemma
Mr. Pickwick betook himself of his new
friend, Mr. Perker.

"Do you know a gentleman of the name
of Perker?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Certainly, Sir; honourable Mr. Samuel
Skimpney's agent."

"He is Blue, I think?"

"Oh yes, Sir."

"Then we are Blue," said Mr. Pickwick;
but observing that the man looked rather
doubtful at this accommodating announce-
ment, he gave him his card, and desired
him to present it to Mr. Perker forthwith,
if he should happen to be in the house.
The waiter retired; and reappearing
almost immediately with a request that Mr.
Pickwick would follow him, led the way to
a large room on the first floor, where, seated
at a long table covered with books and
papers, was Mr. Perker.

"Ah—ah, my dear Sir," said the little
man, advancing to meet him; "very happy
to see you, my dear Sir, very. Pray sit
down. So you have carried your intention
into effect. You have come down here to
seek an election—eh?"

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

"Spirited contest, my dear Sir," said the
little man.

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mr.
Pickwick, rubbing his hands, "I like to
see sturdy patriotism, on whatever side it
is called forth;—and so it's a spirited con-
test?"

"Oh yes," said the little man, "very
much so indeed. We have opened all the
public houses in the place, and left our
adversaries nothing but the beer-shops—mas-
terly stroke of policy that, my dear Sir,
eh?"—and the little man smiled complai-
tantly, and took a large pinch of snuff.

"And what are the probabilities as to
the result of the contest?" inquired Mr.
Pickwick.

"Why doubtful, my dear Sir; rather
doubtful as yet," replied the little man.

"Fizkin's people have got three-and-thirty
voters in the lock-up coach-house at the
White Hart."

"In the coach-house!" said Mr. Pick-
wick, considerably astonished by this se-
cond stroke of policy.

"They keep 'em locked up there, till
they want 'em," resumed the little man.

"The effect of that is, you see, to prevent
their getting at them; and even if we could,
it would be of no use, for they keep them
very drunk; on purpose. Smart fellow
Fizkin's agent—very smart fellow in-
deed."

Mr. Pickwick stared, but said nothing.

"We are pretty confident, though," said
Mr. Perker, sinking his voice almost to a
whisper. "We had a little tea-party here,
last night—five-and-forty women, my dear
Sir—and gave every one of 'em a green
parasol when she went away."

"A parasol!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Fact, my dear Sir, fact. Five-and-
fifty green parasols, at seven and six-
pence a-piece. All women like finery,—
extraordinary the effect of those parasols.
Secured all their husbands, and half their
brothers—beats stockings, and flannel, and
all that sort of thing hollow. My idea, my
dear Sir, entirely. Hail, rain, or sunshine,
you can't walk half a dozen yards up the
street, without encountering half a dozen
green parasols."

Here the little man indulged in a con-
versation of men, which was only checked
by the entrance of a third party.

This was a tall, thin man, with a sandy-
coloured head inclined to baldness, and a
face in which solemn importance was blend-
ed with a look of unfathomable profundity.
He was dressed in a long brown surtout
with a black cloth waistcoat, and drab-
trousers. A double eyeglass dangled at
his waistcoat; and on his head he wore a
very low-crowned hat with a broad brim.
The new comer was introduced to Mr.
Pickwick as Mr. Pott, the editor of the
Eatanswill Gazette. After a few prelimi-
nary remarks, Mr. Pott turned round to
Mr. Pickwick, and said with solemnity—

"This contest excites great interest in the
metropolis, Sir?"

"I believe it does," said Mr. Pickwick.

"To which I have reason to know," said
Pott, looking towards Mr. Perker for cor-
raboration,—"to which I have reason to
know my article of last Saturday in some
degree contributed."

"Not the least doubt of that," said the
little man.

"The press is a mighty engine, Sir,"
said Pott.

Mr. Pickwick yielded his fullest assent
to the proposition.

"But I trust, Sir," said Pott, "that I
have never abused the enormous power I
wield. I trust, Sir, that I have never point-
ed the noble instrument which is placed in
my hands, against the sacred bosom of pri-
ivate life, or the tender breast of individual
reputation;—I trust, Sir, that I have de-
voted my energies to—to endeavours—
humble they may be, humble I know they
are—to instil those principles of—which—
are—"

Here the editor of the Eatanswill Ga-
Zette, appearing to ramble, Mr. Pickwick came to his relief, and said—

"Certainly."

"And what, Sir?—said Pott—what, Sir, let me ask you as an impartial man, is the state of the public mind in London, with reference to my contest with the Independent?"

"Greatly excited, no doubt," interposed Mr. Perker, with a look of slyness which was very likely accidental.

"That contest," said Pott, "shall be protracted as long as I have health and strength, and that portion of talent with which I am gifted. From that contest, Sir, although it may unsettle men's minds and excite their feelers, and render them incapable for the discharge of the every-day duties of ordinary life; from that contest, Sir, I will never shrink, till I have set my heel upon the Eastanswill Independent. I wish the people of London, and the people of this country to know, Sir, that they may rely upon me—that I will not desert them, that I am resolved to stand by them, Sir, to the last."

"Your conduct is most noble, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick; and he grasped the hand of the magnanimous Pott.

"You are, Sir, I perceive, a man of sense and talent," said Mr. Pott, almost breathless with the vehemence of his patriotic declaration. "I am most happy, Sir, to make the acquaintance of such a man."

"And I," said Mr. Pickwick, "feel deeply honoured by this expression of your opinion. Allow me, Sir, to introduce you to my fellow travellers, the other corresponding members of the club I am proud to have founded."

"I shall be delighted," said Mr. Pott.

Mr. Pickwick withdrew, and returning with his three friends, presented them in due form to the editor of the Eastanswill Gazette.

"Now, my dear Pott," said little Mr. Perker, "the question is, what are we to do with our friends here?"

"We can stop in this house, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Not a spare bed in the house, my dear Sir—not a single bed."

"Extremely awkward," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very," said his fellow-voyagers.

"I have an idea upon this subject," said Mr. Pott, "which I think may be very successfully adopted. They have two beds at the Peacock, and I can boldly say, on behalf of Mrs. Pott, that she will be delighted to accommodate Mr. Pickwick and any one of his friends, if the other two gentlemen and their servant do not object to shifting, as they best can, at the Peacock."

After repeated pressings on the part of Mr. Pott, and repeated protestations on that of Mr. Pickwick that he could not think of incommoding or troubling his amiable wife, it was decided that this was the only feasible arrangement that could be made. So it was made; and after dining together at the Town Arms, the friends separated, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass repairing to the Peacock, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle proceeding to the mansion of Mr. Pott; it having been previously arranged that they should all re-assemble at the Town Arms in the morning, and accompany the honourable Samuel Slumkey's procession to the place of nomination.

Mr. Pott's domestic circle was limited to himself and his wife. All men whom mighty genius has raised to a proud eminence in the world, have usually some little weakness which appears the more conspicuous from the contrast it presents to their general character. If Mr. Pott had a weakness, it was, perhaps, that he was rather too submissive to the somewhat contemptuous control and sway of his wife. We do not feel justified in laying any particular stress upon the fact, because on the present occasion all Mrs. Pott's most winning ways were brought into requisition to receive the two gentlemen.

"My dear," said Mr. Pott, "Mr. Pickwick—Mr. Pickwick of London."

Mrs. Pott received Mr. Pickwick's paternal grasp of the hand with enchanting sweetness: and Mr. Winkle, who had not been announced at all, slid and bowed, unnoticed, in an obscure corner.

"P. my dear," said Mrs. Pott.

"My life," said Mr. Pott.

"Pray introduce the other gentleman."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said Mr. Pott. "Permit me—Mrs. Pott, Mr. —"

"Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Winkle," echoed Mr. Pott; and the ceremony of introduction was complete.

"We owe you many apologies, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "for disturbing your domestic arrangements at so short a notice."

"I beg you won't mention it, Sir," replied the feminine Pott, with vivacity. "It is a high treat to me, I assure you, to see any new faces; living as I do from day to day, and week to week, in this dull place, and seeing nobody."

"Nobody, my dear?" exclaimed Mr. Pott, archly.

"Nobody but you," retorted Mrs. Pott, with asperity.

"You see, Mr. Pickwick," said the host in explanation of his wife's statement. "I"
we are in some measure cut off from many enjoyments and pleasures of which we might otherwise partake. My public station, as editor of the Estanswill Gazette, the position which that paper holds in the country, my constant immersion in the vortex of politics—"

"P, my dear," interposed Mrs. Pott.

"My life—" said the editor.

"I wish, my dear, you would endeavour to find some topic of conversation in which these gentlemen might take some rational interest."

"But, my love," said Mr. Pott, with great humility, "Mr. Pickwick does take an interest in it."

"It's well for him if he can," said Mrs. Pott, emphatically; "I am wearied out of my life with your politics, and quarrels with the Independent, and nonsense. I am quite to the skies, P., at you, and seeing such an exhibition of your absurdity."

"But, my dear—" said Mr. Pott.

"Oh, nonsense, don't talk to me!" said Mrs. Pott. "Do you play écarté, Sir?"

"I shall be very happy to learn, under your tuition," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Well, then, draw that little table into this window, and let me get out of hearing of those proxy politics."

"Jane," said Mr. Pott, to the servant who brought in the candles, "go down into the office, and bring me up the file of the Gazette for eighteen hundred and twenty-eight. I'll just read you—" added the editor, turning to Mr. Pickwick, "I'll just read you a few of the leaders I wrote at that time, upon the Bux job of appointing a new tollman to the turnpike here; I rather think they'll amuse you."

"I should like to hear them very much, indeed," said Mr. Pickwick.

Up came the file, and down sat the editor, with Mr. Pickwick at his side.

We have in vain pored over the leaves of Mr. Pickwick's note-book, in the hope of meeting with a general summary of these beautiful compositions. We have every reason to believe that he was perfectly enraptured with the vigour and freshness of the style: indeed Mr. Winkle has recorded the fact that his eyes were closed, as if with excess of pleasure, during the whole time of their perusal.

The announcement of supper put a stop both to the game at écarté, and the recapitulation of the beauties of the Estanswill Gazette. Mrs. Pott was in the highest spirits and the most agreeable humour. Mr. Winkle had already made considerable progress in his good opinion, and she did not hesitate to inform him, confidentially, that Mr. Pickwick was "a delightful old dear." These terms convey a familiarity of expression, in which few of those who were intimately acquainted with that colossal-minded man, would have presumed to indulge. We have preserved them, nevertheless, as affording at once a touching and a convincing proof of the estimation in which he was held by every class of society, and the ease with which he made his way to their hearts and feelings.

It was a late hour of the night—long after Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had fallen asleep in the inmost recesses of the Peacock—when the two friends retired to rest. Slumber soon fell upon the senses of Mr. Winkle, but his feelings had been excited, and his admiration roused; and for many hours after sleep had rendered him insensible to earthly objects, the face and figure of the agreeable Mrs. Pott presented themselves again and again to his wandering imagination.

The noise and bustle which reigned in the morning, were sufficient to dispel from the mind of the most romantic visionary in existence, any associations but those which were immediately connected with the rapidly approaching election. The beating of drums, the blowing of horns and trumpets, the shouting of men, and tramping of horses, echoed and re-echoed through the streets from the earliest dawn of day; and an occasional fight between the light skirmishers of either party, at once enlivened the preparations, and agreeably diversified their character.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as his valet appeared at his bed-room door, just as he was concluding his toilet; "all alive to-day, I suppose?"

"Reg'lar game, Sir," replied Mr. Wel ler; "our people's a collecting down at the Town Arms, and they're a hollering themselves hoarse already."

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, "do they seem devoted to their party, Sam?"

"Never see such devotion in my life, Sir."

"Energetic, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Uncommon," replied Sam; "I never see men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they a'nt afeard o' bustin'."

"That's the mistaken kindness of the gentry here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Werry likely," replied Sam, briefly.

"Fine, fresh, hearty fellows they seem," said Mr. Pickwick, glancing from the window.

"Werry fresh," replied Sam; "me, and the two waiters at the Peacock, has been a pumpin' over the independent voters as supped there last night."

"Pumping over independent voters!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes," said his attendant, "every man
slept even he fell down; we dragged 'em out, one by one, this mornin', and put 'em under the pump, and they 're in reg'lar fine order, now. Shillin' a head the committee paid for that 'ere job."

"Can such things be?" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"Lord bless your heart, Sir," said Sam, "why, where was you half baptized?—that's nothin', that ain't."

"Nothing!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Nothin' at all, Sir," replied his attendant. "The night afore the last day of the last election here, the opposite party bribed the bar-maid at the Town Arms to hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpolluted electors as was a stoppin' in the house."

"What do you call 'em all to sleep till twelve hours arter the election was over. They took one man up to the booth, in a truck, fast asleep, by experiment, but it was no go—they wouldn't pull him; so they brought him back, and put him to bed again."

"Strange practices, these," said Mr. Pickwick, half speaking to himself, and half addressing Sam.

"Not half so strange as a miraculous circumstance as happened to my own father, at an election-time, in this very place, Sir," replied Sam.

"What was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, he drove a coach down here once," said Sam; "election time came on, and he was engaged by your party to bring down voters from London. Night afore he was going to drive up, committee on the side sends for him quietly, and away he goes with the messenger, who shows him where the man in the bar-maid's room looks very hard at each other. 'You don't remember me? says the gen'l'mn; 'Can't say I do,' says my father. 'Oh, I know you,' says the gen'l'mn; 'I know your face, you was a boy,' says he. 'Well, I don't remember you,' says my father. 'That's very odd,' says the gen'l'mn; 'Why,' says my father. 'You must have a bad memory, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'mn. 'Well, it is a very bad 'un,' says my father. 'I thought so,' says the gen'l'mn. So then they pours him out a glass o' wine, and gammone him about his driving, and gets him into a reg'lar good humour, and at last shoves a twenty pound note in his hand. 'It's a very bad road between this and London,' says the gen'l'mn—'Here and there it is a very heavy road,' says my father—'Specially near the canal, I think,' says the gen'l'mn—'Nasty bit, that 'ere,' says my father—'Well, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'mn, 'you're a very good whip and can do what you like with your horses we know. We're all very fond of you Mr. Weller, so in case you should have an accident when you're a bringing these here voters down, and should tip 'em over into the canal without hurtin' 'em, this is for yourself,' says the gen'l'mn. 'Very kind,' says my father, 'and I'll drink your health in another glass of wine,' says he; which he did, and then buttons up the money, and bows himself out. You wouldn't believe, Sir," continued Sam, with a look of inexpressible impudence at his master, "that on the very day as he came down with them voters, his coach was upset on that 'ere very spot, and they man on 'em was turned into the canal."

"And got out again?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"Why," replied Sam, very slowly, "I rather think that one old gentleman was missed." I know his hat was found, but I ain't quite certain whether his head was in it or not. But what I look at, is the extraordinary and wonderful coincidence, that arter what that gen'l'mn said, my father's coach should be upset, in that very place, and on that very day!"

"It is, no doubt, a very extraordinary circumstance, indeed," said Mr. Pickwick. "But brush my hat, Sam, for I hear Mr. Winkle calling me to breakfast."

With these words Mr. Pickwick descended to the parlour, where he found breakfast laid, and the family already assembled. The meal was hastily dispatched; each of the gentlemen's hats was decorated with an enormous blue favour, made up by the fair hands of Mrs. Pott herself, and as Mr. Winkle had undertaken to escort that lady to a house-top, in the immediate vicinity of the business, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Pott repaired alone to the Town Arms, from the back window of which, one of Mr. Slumkey's committee was addressing six small boys, and one girl, whom he dignified, at every second sentence, with the imposing title of "men of Eatanwill, wherein the six small boys aforesaid cheered prodigiously. The stable-yard exhibited unequivocal symptoms of the glory and strength of Eatanwill Blues. There was a regret,
army of Blue flags, some with one handle, and some with two, exhibiting appropriate devices, in golden characters four feet high, and stout in proportion. There was a grand band of trumpets, bassoons and drums, marshalled four abreast, and earning their money, if ever men did, especially the drum-beaters, who were very muscular. There were bodies of constables with blue staves, twenty committee-men with blue scarfs, and a mob of voters with blue cockades. There were electors on horseback, and electors a-foot. There was an open carriage and four, for the honourable Samuel Slumkey; and there were four carriages and pair, for his friends and supporters: and the flags were rustling, and the band was playing, and the constables were swearing, and the twenty committee-men were squabbling, and the mob were shouting, and the horses were backing, and the post-boys perspiring; and everybody, and everything, then and there assembled, was for the especial use, behalf, honour, and renown, of the honourable Samuel Slumkey of Slumkey Hall, one of the candidates for the representation of the Borough of Eastanswill, in the Commons House of Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Loud and long were the cheers, and mighty was the rustling of one of the blue flags, with "Liberty of the Press" inscribed thereon, when the sandy head of Mr. Pott was discerned in one of the windows, by the mob beneath; and tremendous was the enthusiasm when the honourable Samuel Slumkey himself, in top boots, and a blue neckerchief, advanced and seized the hand of the said Pott, and melodramatically testified by gestures to the crowd, his infeasible obligations to the Eastanswill Gazette.

"Is everything ready?" said the honourable Samuel Slumkey to Mr. Perker.

"Every thing, my dear Sir," was the little man's reply.

"Nothing has been omitted, I hope?" said the honourable Samuel Slumkey.

"Nothing has been left undone, my dear Sir—nothing whatever. There are twenty washed men at the street door for you to shake hands with; and six children in arms that you're to pat on the head, and inquire the age of; be particular about the children, my dear Sir; it always has a great effect, that sort of thing."

"I will take care," said the honourable Samuel Slumkey.

"And, perhaps, my dear Sir—" said the cautious little man, perhaps if you could—I don't mean to say it's indispensable—but if you could manage to kiss one of 'em, it would produce a very great impression on the crowd."

"Wouldn't it have as good an effect if the proposer or seconder did that?" said the honourable Samuel Slumkey.

"Why, I am afraid it wouldn't," replied the agent; "if it were done by yourself, my dear Sir, I think it would make you very popular."

"Very well," said the honourable Samuel Slumkey, with a resigned air; "then it must be done. That's all."

"Arrange the procession," cried the twenty committee-men.

Amidst the cheers of the assembled throng, the band, and the constables, and the committee-men, and the voters, and the horsemen, and the carriages, took their places—each of the two-horse vehicles being as closely packed with as many gentlemen as could manage to stand upright in it; and that assigned to Mr. Perker, containing Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and about half a dozen of the committee beside.

There was a moment of awful suspense as the procession waited for the honourable Samuel Slumkey to step into his carriage. Suddenly the crowd set up a great cheering.

"He has come out," said little Mr. Perker, greatly excited; the more so as their position did not enable them to see what was going forward.

Another cheer, much louder.

"He has shaken hands with the men," cried the little agent.

Another cheer, far more vehement.

"He has patted the babes on the head," said Mr. Perker, trembling with anxiety.

A roar of applause that rent the air.

"He has kissed one of 'em!" exclaimed the delighted little man.

A second roar.

"He has kissed another!" gasped the excited manager.

A third roar.

"He's kissing 'em all!" screamed the enthusiastic little gentleman. And hailed by the deafening shouts of the multitude, the procession moved on.

How or by what means it became mixed up with the other procession, and how it was ever extricated from the confusion consequent therewith, is more than we can undertake to describe, inasmuch as Mr. Pickwick's hat was knocked over his eyes, nose, and mouth, by one poke of a Buff flag-staff, very early in the proceedings.

He describes himself as being surrounded on every side, when he could catch a glimpse of the scene, by angry and ferocious countenances, by a vast cloud of dust, and by a dense crowd of combatants. He represents himself as being forced from the carriage by some unseen power, and being personally engaged in a pugilistic encounter; but with whom, or how, or why, he
He then felt himself forced up some wooden steps by the persons from behind: and on removing his hat, found himself surrounded by his friends, in the very front of the left-hand side of the hustings. The right was reserved for the Buff party, and the centre for the Mayor and his officers; one of whom — the fat crier of Eastanswill — was ringing an enormous bell, by way of commanding silence, while Mr. Horatio Fiskin, and the Honorable Samuel Slunkey, with their hands upon their hearts, were bowing with the utmost affability to the troubled sea of heads that inundated the open space in front; and from whence arose a storm of groans, and shouts, and yells, and hustings, that would have done honour to an earthquake.

"There's Winkle," said Mr. Tupman, pulling his friend by the sleeve.

"Where?" said Mr. Pickwick, putting on his spectacles, which he had fortunately kept in his pocket hitherto.

"There," said Mr. Tupman, "on the top of that house." And there sure enough, in the leaden gutter of a tiled roof, were Mr. Winkle and Mrs. Potts, comfortably seated in a couple of chairs, waving their handkerchiefs in token of recognition — a compliment which Mr. Pickwick returned by kissing his hand to the lady.

The proceedings had not yet commenced: and as an active crowd is generally disposed to be jovial, this very innocent action was sufficient to awaken their facetiousness.

"Oh you wicked old rascal!" cried one voice, "looking after the girls, are you?"

"Oh you wondrous sinner," cried another.

"Putting on his spectacles to look at a maraud ooman!" said a third.

"I see him a vinkin' at her, with his vicked old eye," shouted a fourth.

"Look arter your wife, Pott," bellowed a fifth; and then there was a roar of laughter.

As these taunts were accompanied with invidious comparisons between Mr. Pickwick and an aged man, and several witticisms of the like nature; and as they moreover rather tended to convey reflections upon the honour of an innocent lady, Mr. Pickwick's indignation was excessive; but as silence was proclaimed at the moment, he contented himself by scorching the mob with a look of pity for their misguided minds, at which they laughed more boisterously than ever.

"Silence," roared the Mayor's attendants.

"Whiffin, proclaim silence," said the Mayor, with an air of pomp befitting his lofty station. In obedience to this command the crier performed another concert on the bell, whereupon a gentleman in the crowd called out "muffins;" which occasioned another laugh.

"Gentlemen," said the Mayor, as he lead a pitch as he could possibly force his voice to, "Gentlemen. Brother electors of the Borough of Eastanswill. We are met here today, for the purpose of choosing a representative in the room of our late—"

Here the Mayor was interrupted by a voice in the crowd.

"Succ-cess to the Mayor!" cried the voice, "and may he never desert the nail and sarspan business, as he got his money by."

This allusion to the professional pursuits of the orator was received with a storm of delight, which, with a bell-accompaniment, rendered the remainder of his speech inaudible, with the exception of the concluding sentence, in which he thanked the meeting for the patient attention with which they had heard him throughout, an expression of gratitude which elicited another burst of mirth, of about a quarter of an hour's duration.

Next, a tall thin gentleman, in a very stiff white neckerchief, after being repeatedly desired by the crowd to "send a boy home, to ask whether he hadn't left his voice under the pillow," begged to nominate a fit and proper person to represent them in Parliament. And when he said it was Horatio Fiskin, Esquire, of Fiskin Lodge, near Eastanswill, the Fiskitales applauded, and the Slunkeyians groaned, so long, and so loudly, that both he and the secondor might have sung comic songs in lieu of speaking, without any body's being a bit the wiser.

The friends of Horatio Fiskin, Esquire, having had their innings, a little choleric, pink-faced man stood forward to propose another fit and proper person to represent the electors of Eastanswill in Parliament; and very swimmingly the pink-faced gentleman would have got on, if he had not been rather too choleric to entertain a sufficient perception of the fun of the crowd. But after a very few sentences of figurative eloquence, the pink-faced gentleman got from denouncing those who interrupted him in the mob, to exchanging defiance with the gentlemen on the hustings; whereupon arose an uproar which reduced him to the necessity of expressing his feeling by serious pantomime, which he did, and then left the stage to his secondor, who delivered a written speech of half an hour's length, and wouldn't be stopped, because he had sent it all to the Eastanswill Gazette, and the Eastanswill Gazette had printed it, every word.

Then Horatio Fiskin, Esquire, of Fiskin Lodge, near Eastanswill, presented himself.
were called upon to discharge. Fiskin expressed his readiness to do anything he was asked; Slumney, his determination to do nothing that was asked of him. Both said that the trade, the manufacturers, the commerce, the prosperity, of Eastanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object; and each had it in his power to state, with the utmost confidence, that he was the man who would eventually be returned.

There was a show of heads; the Mayor decided in favour of the honourable Samuel Slumney, of Slumney Hall. Horatio Fiskin, Esquire, of Fiskin Lodge, demanded a poll, and a poll was fixed accordingly.

Then a vote of thanks was moved to the Mayor for his able conduct in the chair; and the Mayor devoutly wishing that he had had a chair to display his able conduct in (for he had been standing during the whole proceedings), returned thanks. The precussions re-formed, the carriages rolled slowly away through the crowd, and its members screeched and shouted after them as their feelings or caprice dictated.

During the whole time of the polling, the town was in a perpetual fever of excitement. Everything was conducted on the most liberal and delightful scale. Exquisite articles were remarkably cheap at all the public houses; and spring vaga padded the streets for the accommodation of voters who were seized with any temporary dizziness in the head—an epidemic which prevailed among the electors, during the contest, to a most alarming extent, and under the influence of which, they might frequently be seen lying on the pavements in a state of utter insensibility. A small body of electors remained unperturbed on the very last day. They were calculating and reflecting persons, who had not yet been convinced by the arguments of either party, although they had had frequent conferences with each. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr. Perker solicited the honour of a private interview with those intelligent, these noble, these patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief, but satisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the honourable Samuel Slumney, of Slumney Hall, was returned also.

CHAPTER XV.

Comprising a brief description of the company at the Peacock assembled; and a tale told by a bargeman.

It is pleasant to turn from contemplating the strife and turmoil of political existence,
to the peaceful repose of private life. Although in reality no great part of either such a visit is accounted seriously, it was determined, with Mr. Pott's enthusiasm, to apply his whole time and attention to the proceedings, of which the last chapter affords a description compiled from his own memoirs. Nor while he was thus occupied was Mr. Winkle idle, his whole being devoted to pleasant walks and short country excursions with Mrs. Pott, who never failed, when such an opportunity presented itself, to seek some relief from the tedious monotony she so constantly complained of. The two gentlemen being thus completely domesticated in the editor's house, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were in a great measure cast upon their own resources. Taking but little interest in public affairs, they beguiled their time chiefly with such amusements as the Peacock afforded, which were limited to a bagatelle-board in the first floor, and a sequetated skittle-ground in the back-yard. In the science and nicety of both these recreations, which are far more abstruse than ordinary men suppose, they were gradually initiated by Mr. Weller, who possessed a perfect knowledge of such pastimes. Thus, notwithstanding that they were in a great measure deprived of the comfort and advantage of Mr. Pickwick's society, they were still enabled to beguile the time, and to prevent its hanging heavily on their hands.

It was in the evening, however, that the Peacock presented attractions which enabled the two friends to resist, even the invocations of the talented, though prosely inclined, Mr. Pott. It was in the evening that the "commercial room" was filled with a social circle, whose characters and manners it was the delight of Mr. Tupman to observe; whose sayings and doings it was the habit of Mr. Snodgrass to note down.

Most people know what sort of places commercial rooms usually are. That of the Peacock differed in no material respect from the generality of such apartments; that is to say, it was a large, bare-looking room, the furniture of which had no doubt been better when it was newer, with a spacious table in the centre, and a variety of smaller dittos in the corners: an extensive assortment of variously shaped chairs, and an old Turkey carpet, bearing about the same relative proportion to the size of the room, as a lady's pocket-handkerchief might to the floor of a watch-box. The walls were garnished with one or two large maps; and several weather-beaten rough greatcoats, with complicated capes, dangled from a long row of pegs in one corner. The mantel-shelf was ornamented with a wooden inlaid, containing one stump of a pen and a half a waistcoat, red-beds and a carpet of county history mixed the scree, and the mortal remains of a trout in a glass coffin. The atmosphere was redolent of tobacco-smoke, the fumes of which had communicated a rather dingy hue to the whole room, and more especially to the dusty red curtains which shaded the windows. On the sideboard, a variety of miscellaneous articles were huddled together, the most conspicuous of which were some very cloudy fish-sauce crusts, a couple of driving-boxes, two or three whips, and as many travelling shawls, a tray of knives and forks, and the mustard.

Here it was that Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were seated on the evening after the conclusion of the election, with several other temporary inmates of the house, smacking and drinking.

"Well, gent," said a stout, pale personage of about forty, with only one eye—a very bright, black eye, which twinkled with a reuguish expression of fun and good humour, "Our noble selves, gents. I always propose that toast to the company, and drink Mary to myself. Eh, Mary!"

"Get along with you, you wretch," said the hand-maiden, obviously not ill pleased with the compliment, however.

"Don't go away, Mary," said the black-eyed man.

"Let me alone, impertinence," said the young lady.

"Never mind," said the one-eyed man, calling after the girl as she left the room.

"I'll step out by and by, Mary. Keep your spirits up, dear." Here he went through the not very difficult process of winking upon the company with his solitary eye, to the enthusiastic delight of an elderly personage with a dirty face and a clay pipe.

"Rum creeter is women," said the dirty-faced man, after a pause.

"Ah! no mistake about that," said a very red-faced man, behind a cigar.

After this little bit of philosophy, there was another pause.

"There's summer things than women in this world though, mind you," said the man with the black eye, slowly filling a large Dutch pipe, with a most copious bowl.

"Are you married?" inquired the dirty-faced man.

"Can't say I am.

"I thought not." Here the dirty-faced man fell into ecstasies of mirth at his own retort, in which he was joined by a man of bland voices and placid countenance, who always made it a point to agree with everybody.
..."Women after all, gentlemen," said the enthusiastic Mr. Snodgrass, "are the great
enemies and comforts of our existence."
"So they are," said the placid gentleman.
"When they're in a good humour," interposed the dirty-faced man.
"And that's very true," said the placid
one.
"I repudiate that qualification," said Mr. Snodgrass, whose thoughts were fast re-
verting to Emily Wardle, "I repudiate it
with disdain—with indignation. Show me
the man who says anything against women,
as women, and I boldly declare he is not a
man." And Mr. Snodgrass took his cigar
from his mouth, and struck the table vio-
lently with his clenched fist.
"That's good sound argument," said the
placid man.
"Containing a position which I deny,
interrupted he of the dirty countenance.
"And there's certainly a very great deal
of truth in what you observe too, Sir," said
the placid gentleman.
"Your health, Sir," said the bagman
with the lonely eye, bestowing an approv-
ing nod on Mr. Snodgrass.
Mr. Snodgrass acknowledged the com-
pliment.
"I always like to hear a good argument," continued the bagman, "a sharp one, like
this; it's very improving; but this little
argument about women brought to my mind
a story I have heard an old uncle of mine
tell, the recollection of which, just now,
made me say there was rummer things than
women to be met with, sometimes."
"I should like to hear that same story," said the red-faced man with the cigar.
"Should you?" was the only reply of
the bagman, who continued to smoke with
great vehemence.
"So should I," said Mr. Tupman, speak-
ing for the first time. He was always
anxious to increase his stock of experi-
ence.
"Should you? Well then I'll tell it.
No, I won't. I know you won't believe it," said the man with the roguish eye, making
that organ look more rogust than ever.
"If you say it is true, of course I shall," said Mr. Tupman.
"Well, upon that understanding I'll tell
it," replied the traveller. "Did you ever
hear of the great commercial house of
Bilson and Slam? But it doesn't matter
though, whether you did or not, because
they retired from business long since. It's
eighty years ago, since the circumstance
happened to a traveller for that house, but
he was a particular friend of my uncle's;
and my uncle told the story to me. It's a
sheer name; but he used to call it

THE BAGMAN'S STORY,
and he used to tell it, something in this way.
"One winter's evening, about five o'clock,
just as it began to grow dusk, a man in a
big might have been seen urging his tired
horse along the road which leads across
Marlborough Downs, in the direction of
Bristol. I say he might have been seen,
and I have no doubt he would have been, if
any body but a blind man had happened to
pass that way; but the weather was so bad,
and the night so cold and wet, that nothing
was out but the water, and so the traveller
jogged along in the middle of the road,
lonesome and dreary enough. If any bag-
man of that day could have caught sight of
the little neck-or-nothing sort of gig, with
a clay-coloured body and red wheels, and
the vixenish, ill-tempered, fast-going bay
mare, that looked like a cross between a
butcher's horse and a twopenny post-office
pony, he would have known at once, that
this traveller could have been no other than
Tom Smart, of the great house of Bilson
and Slam, Cateaton Street, City. However,
as there was no bagman to look on, nobody
knew any thing at all about the matter;
and so Tom Smart and his clay-coloured
gig with the red wheels, and the vixenish
mare with the fast pace, went on together,
keeping the secret among them, and nobody
was a bit the wiser.
"There are many pleasant places even
in this dreary world, than Marlborough
Downs when it blows hard; and if you
throw in beside, a gloomy winter's even-
ing, a miry and sloppy road, and a pelting
fall of heavy rain, and try the effect, by
way of experiment, in your own proper
person, you will experience the full force
of this observation.
"The wind blew—not up the road or
down it, though that's bad enough, but
cross the road, sending the rain slanting
down like the lines they used to rule in the
copybooks at school, to make the boys
slope well. For a moment it would die
away, and the traveller would begin to de-
lude himself into the belief that, exhausted
with its previous fury, it had quietly lain
itself down to rest, when, whoo! he would
hear it growling and whistling in the dis-
tance, and on it would come rushing over
the hill-tops, and sweeping along the plain,
gathering sound and strength as 'tis drew
nearer, until it dashed with a heavy gust
against horse and man, driving the sharp
rain into their ears, and its cold damp breath
into their very bones; and past them it
would scour, far, far away, with a stunning
roar, as if in ridicule of their weakness,
and triumphant in the consciousness of its own strength and power.

The bay mare splashed away, through the mud and water, with drooping ears, now and then tossing her head as if to express her disgust at this very ungentlemensly behaviour of the elements, but keeping good pace notwithstanding, until a gust of wind more furious than any that had yet assailed them, caused her to stop suddenly, and plant her four feet firmly against the ground, to prevent her being blown over. It's a special mercy that she did this, for if she had been blown over, the vixenish mare was so light, and the gig was so light, and Tom Smart such a light weight, they must infallibly have all gone rolling over and over together, until they reached the confines of earth, or until the wind fell; and in either case the probability, was that neither the vixenish mare, nor the clay-coloured gig with the red wheels, nor Tom Smart, would ever have been fit for service again.

"Well, damn my straps and whiskers," says Tom Smart, "Tom sometimes had an unpleasant knack of swearing,;" "damn my straps and whiskers," says Tom, "is this pleasant, blow me."

"You'll very likely ask me, why, as Tom Smart had been pretty well blown already, he expressed this wish to be submitted to the same process again. I can't say—all I know is, that Tom Smart said so—or at least he always told my uncle he said so, and it's just the same thing.

"Blow me," says Tom Smart; and the mare neighed as if she were precisely of the same opinion.

"Cheer up, old girl," said Tom, petting the bay mare on the neck with the end of his whip. "It won't do pushing on such a night as this; the first house we come to we'll put up at, so the faster you go, the sooner it's over. Soho, old girl—gently—gently.

"Whether the vixenish mare was sufficiently well acquainted with the tones of Tom's voice to comprehend his meaning, or whether she found it colder standing well than moving on, of course I can't say. But I can say that Tom had no sooner finished speaking, than she pricked up her ears, and started forward at a speed which made the clay-coloured gig rattle till you would have supposed every one of the red spokes was going to fly out on the turf of Marlborough Downs; and even Tom, whip as he was, couldn't stop or check her pace, until she drew up, of her own accord, before a roadside inn, on the right-hand side of the way, about half a quarter of a mile from the end of the Downs.

"Tom cast a hasty glance at the upper part of the house, as he threw the reins to the hostler, and stacked the whip in the box. It was a strange old place, built of a kind of shingle, inlaid, as it were, with crossbeams, with gable-topped windows projecting completely over the pathway, and a low door with a dark porch, and a couple of steep steps leading down into the house, instead of the modern fashion of half a dozen shallow ones, leading up to it. It was a comfortable-looking place though, for there was a strong cheerful light in the bar-window, which shed a bright ray across the road, and even lighted up the hedge on the other side; and there was a red flickering light in the opposite window, one moment but faintly discernible, and the next gleaming strongly through the drawn curtains, which intimated that a roaring fire was blazing within. Marking these little evidences with the eye of an experienced traveller, Tom dismissed with as much agility as his half-frozen limbs would permit, and entered the house.

"In less than five minutes' time, Tom was ensconced in the room opposite the bar—the very room where he had imagined the fire blazing—before a substantial matter-of-fact, roaring fire, composed of something short of a bushel of coals, and wood enough to make half a dozen decent gooseberry-bushes, piled half-way up the chimney, and roaring and crackling with a sound that of itself would have warmed the heart of any reasonable man. This was comfortable, but this was not all, for a smartly dressed girl, with a bright eye and neat ankles, was laying a very clean white cloth on the table; and as Tom sat with his slippered feet on the fender, and his back to the open door, he saw a charming prospect of the bar reflected in the glass over the chimney-piece, with delightful rows of green bottles and gold labels, together with jars of pickles and preserves, and cheeses and boiled hams, and rounds of beef, arranged on shelves in the most tempting and delicious array. Well, this was comfortable too; but this was not all—for in the bar, seated at tea, at the nicest possible little table, drawn close up before the brightest possible little fire, was a buxom widow of somewhere about eight and forty or thereabouts, with a face as comfortable as the bar, who was evidently the landlady of the house, and the supreme ruler over all these agreeable possessions. There was only one drawback to the beauty of the whole picture, and that was a tall man—a very tall man—in a brown coat and bright basket buttons, and black whiskers, and wavy black hair, who was seated at tea with the widow, and who it required no great penetration to discover was a "dis-
way of persuading her to be a widow no longer, but to confer upon him the privilege of sitting down in that bar for and during the whole remainder of the term of his natural life.

"Tom Smart was by no means of an irritable or envious disposition, but somehow or other, the tall man with the brown coat, and the bright basket buttons, did rouse what little gnil he had in his composition, and did make him feel extremely indignant, the more especially as he could now and then observe from his seat before the glass, certain little affectionate familiarities passing between the tall man and the widow, which sufficiently denoted that the tall man was as high in favour as he was in size. Tom was fond of hot punch—I may venture to say he was very fond of hot punch—and after he had seen the widow was well fed and well lidded down, and eaten every bit of the nice little hot dinner which the widow tossed up for him with her own hands, he just ordered a tumbler of it, by way of experiment. Now if there was one thing in the whole range of domestic art, which the widow could manufacture better than another, it was his identical article; and the first tumbler was adapted to Tom Smart's taste with such peculiar nicety, that he ordered a second with the least possible delay. Hot punch is a pleasant thing, gentlemen—an extremely pleasant thing under any circumstances—but in that smug old parlor, before the roaring fire, with the wind blowing outside till every timber in the old house creaked again, Tom Smart found it perfectly delightful. He ordered another tumbler, and then another—I am not quite certain whether he didn't order another after that—but the more he drank of the hot punch the more he thought of the tall man.

"Confound his impudence," said Tom Smart to himself, "what business has he in that smug bar? Such an ugly villain too!"

"If the widow had any taste, she might surely pick up some better fellows than that." Here Tom's eye wandered from the glass on the chimney-piece, to the glass on the table, and as he felt himself becoming gradually sentimental, he emptied the fourth tumbler of punch, and ordered a fifth.

"Tom Smart, gentlemen, had always been very much attached to the public line. He had long been his ambition to stand in a bar of his own, in a green coat, knee-cords, and topee. He had a great notion of taking the chair at convivial dinners, and he had often thought how well he could preside in a room of his own, in the talking way, and what a capital example he could set to his customers in the drinking department. All these things passed rapidly through Tom's mind, as he sat drinking the hot punch by the roaring fire, and he felt very justly and properly indignant that the tall man should be in a fair way of keeping such an excellent house, while he, Tom Smart, was as far off from it as ever. So, after deliberating over the two last tumblers, whether he hadn't a perfect right to pick a quarrel with the tall man for having contrived to get into the good graces of the buxom widow. Tom Smart at last arrived at the satisfactory conclusion that he was a very ill used and persecuted individual, and had better go to bed.

"Up a wide and ancient staircase the smart girl preceded Tom, shuddering the chamber candle with her hand, to protect it from the currents of air which in such a rambling old place might have found plenty of room to disport themselves in, without blowing the candle out, but which did blow it out, nevertheless; thus affording Tom's enemies an opportunity of asserting that it was he, and not the wind, who extinguished the candle, and that while he pretended to be blowing it a-light again, he was in fact kissing the girl. Be this as it may, one other light was obtained, and Tom was conducted through a maze of rooms, and a labyrinth of passages, to the apartment which had been prepared for his reception where the girl bid him good night, and left him alone.

"It was a good large room with big closets, and a bed which might have served for a whole boarding-school, to say nothing of a couple of oaken presses that would have held the baggage of a small army; but what struck Tom's fancy most, was a strange, grim-looking, high-backed chair, carved in the most fantastic manner, with a flowered damask cushion, and the round knobs at the bottom of the legs carefully tied up in red cloth, as if it had got the gout in its toes. Of any other queer chair, Tom would only have thought it was a queer chair, and there would have been as end of the matter; but there was something about this particular chair, and yet he couldn't tell what it was, so old and so unlike any other piece of furniture he had ever seen, that it seemed to fascinate him. He sat down before the fire, and stared at the old chair for half an hour.—Damn the chair, it was such a strange old thing, he couldn't take his eyes off it." "Well," said Tom slowly undressing himself, and staring at the old chair all the while, which stood with a mysterious aspect by the bedside, "I never saw such a rum concern as that in my days. Very odd," said Tom, who had got rather snug with the hot punch. "Very odd." Tom stoop..."
his head with an air of profound wisdom, and looked at the chair again. He couldn't make any thing of it though, so he got into bed, covered himself up warm, and fell asleep.

In about half an hour, Tom woke up with a start, from a confused dream of tall men and tumblers of punch: and the first object that presented itself to his waking imagination was the queer chair.

"I won't look at it any more," said Tom to himself, and he squeezed his eyelids together, and tried to persuade himself he was going to sleep again. No use; nothing but queer chairs danced before his eyes, kicking up their legs, jumping over each other's backs, and playing all kinds of antics.

"I may as well see one real chair, as two or three complete sets of false ones," said Tom, bringing out his head from under the bed-clothes. There it was, plainly discernible by the light of the fire, looking as provoking as ever.

"Tom gazed at the chair; and, suddenly as he looked at it, a most extraordinary change seemed to come over it. The carrying of the back gradually assumed the fineaments and expression of an old shrivelled human face; the damask cushion became an antique, flapped waistcoat; the round knobs grew into a couple of feet, encased in red cloth slippers, and the whole chair looked like a very ugly old man, of the previous century, with his arms a-kinbo. Tom sat up in bed, and rubbed his eyes to dispel the illusion. No. The chair was an ugly old gentleman; and what was more, he was winking at Tom Smart.

"Tom was naturally a headlong, careless sort of dog, and he had had five tumblers of hot punch into the bargain; so, although he was a little startled at first, he began to grow rather indignant when he saw the old gentleman winking and leering at him with such an impudent air. At length he resolved that he wouldn't stand it; and as the old face still kept winking away as fast as ever, Tom said, in a very angry tone—"

"What the devil are you winking at me for?"

"Because I like it, Tom Smart," said the chair, or the old gentleman, whichever you like to call him. He stopped winking though, when Tom spoke, and began grinning like a superannuated monkey.

"How do you know my name, old nutcracker face?" inquired Tom Smart, rather staggered; though he pretended to carry it off so well.

"Come, come, Tom," said the old gentleman, "that's not the way to address solid Spanish mahogany. You can't treat me with less respect if I was veneered."

When the old gentleman said this, he looked so fierce that Tom began to grow frightened.

"I didn't mean to treat you with any disrespect, Sir," said Tom; in a much humbler tone than he had spoken in at first.

"Well, well," said the old fellow, "perhaps not—perhaps not. Tom—"

"Sir—"

"I know every thing about you, Tom; every thing. You're very poor, Tom."

"I certainly am," said Tom Smart.

"But how came you to know that?"

"Never mind that," said the old gentleman; "you're much too fond of punch, Tom."

"Tom Smart was just on the point of protesting that he hadn't tasted a drop since his last birth-day, but when his eyes encountered that of the old gentleman, he looked so knowing that Tom blushed, and was silent.

"You're the old gentleman, the widow's a fine woman—remarkably fine woman—eh, Tom? Here the old fellow screwed up his eyes, cocked up one of his wasted little legs, and looked altogether so unpleasantly amorous, that Tom was quite disgusted with the levity of his behaviour;—at his time of life, too!

"I am her guardian, Tom," said the old gentleman.

"Are you?" inquired Tom Smart.

"I knew her mother, Tom," said the old fellow; "and her grandmother. She was very fond of me—made me this waistcoat, Tom."

"Did she?" said Tom Smart.

"And these shoes," said the old fellow, lifting up one of the red-cloth mufflers; "but don't mention it, Tom. I shouldn't like to have it known that she was so much attached to me. It might occasion some unpleasantness in the family."

When the old rascal said this, he looked so extremely impatient, that, as Tom Smart afterwards declared, he could have sat upon him without remorse.

"I have been a great favourite among the women, in my time, Tom," said the profligate old debonair; "hundreds of fine women have sat in my lap for hours together. What do you think of that, you dog, eh?" The old gentleman was preceeding to recount some other exploits of his youth, when he was seized with such a violent fit of cackling that he was unable to proceed.

"Just serve you right, old boy," thought Tom Smart; but he didn't say anything.

"Ah!" said the old fellow, "I am a good deal troubled with this now. I am getting old, Tom, and have lost nearly all my nails. I have had an operation perform-
sold, too—a small piece let into my back—and I found it a severe trial, Tom.'

"'I dare say you did, Sir," said Tom Smart.

"'However,' said the old gentleman, 'that's not the point, Tom, I want you to marry the widow.'

"'Me, Sir!' said Tom.

"'You,' said the old gentleman.

"'Bless your reverend locks,' said Tom—(he had a few scattered horse-hairs left)—'bless your reverend locks, she wouldn't have me.' And Tom sighed involuntarily, as he thought of the bar.

"'Wouldn't she?' said the old gentleman, firmly.

"'No, no,' said Tom; 'there's somebody else in the wind. A tall man—a confoundedly tall man—with black whiskers.'

"'Tom,' said the old gentleman, 'she will never have him.'

"'Won't she?' said Tom. 'If you stood in the bar, old gentleman, you'd tell another story.'

"'Pooh, pooh,' said the old gentleman, 'I know all about that.'

"'About what?' said Tom.

"'The kissing behind the door, and all that sort of thing; Tom,' said the old gentleman, and here he gave another impudent look, which made Tom very wroth, because as you all know, gentlemen, to hear an old fellow, who ought to know better, talking about these things, is very unpleasant—nothing more so.

"'I know all about that, Tom,' said the old gentleman. 'I have seen it done very often in my time, Tom, between more people than I should like to mention to you; but it never came to any thing after all.'

"'You must have seen some queer things,' said Tom, with an inquisitive look.

"'You may say that, Tom,' replied the old fellow, with a very complacently wink.

"'I am the last of my family, Tom,' said the old gentleman, with a melancholy sigh.

"'Was it a large one?' inquired Tom Smart.

"'There were twelve of us, Tom,' said the old gentleman; 'fine straight-backed, handsome fellows as you'd wish to see. None of your modern abortions—all with arms, and with a degree of polish, though I say it that should not, which it would have done your heart good to behold.'

"'And what's become of the others, Sir?' asked Tom Smart.

"'The old gentleman applied his elbow to his eye as he replied, 'Gone, Tom, gone. We had hard service, Tom, and they hadn't all lay constution. They got rheumatic on the legs and arms. and went into kitchens and other hospitals; and one of them, with long service and hard usage, positively lost his senses: he got so crazy that he was obliged to be burnt. Shocking thing that, Tom.'

"'Dreadful!' said Tom Smart.

"'The old fellow paused for a few minutes, apparently struggling with his feelings of emotion, and then said,

"'However, Tom, I am wandering from the point. This tall man, Tom, is a recely adventurer. The moment he married the widow, he would sell off all the furniture, and run away. What would be the consequence? She would be deserted and reduced to ruin, and I should catch my death of cold in some broker's shop.'

"'Yes, but—'

"'Don't interrupt me,' said the old gentleman. 'Of you, Tom, I entertain a very different opinion; for I well know that if you once settled yourself in a public-house, you would never leave it, as long as there was any thing to drink within its walls.'

"'I am very much obliged to you for your good opinion, Sir,' said Tom Smart.

"'Therefore,' resumed the old gentleman, in a dictatorial tone, 'you shall have her, and he shall not.'

"'What is to prevent it?' said Tom Smart, eagerly.

"'This disclosure,' replied the old gentleman; 'he is already married.'

"'How can I prove it?' said Tom, starting half out of bed.

"The old gentleman untucked his arm from his side, and having pointed to one of the oaken presses, immediately replaced it, in its old position.

"'He little thinks,' said the old gentleman, 'that in the right-hand pocket of a pair of trousers in that press, he has left a letter, entreating him to return to his disconsolate wife, with six—mark me, Tom—six babes, and all of them small ones.'

"As the old gentleman solemnly uttered these words, his features grew less and less distinct, and his figure more shadowy. A film came over Tom Smart's eyes. The old man seemed gradually blending into the chair, the damask waistcoat to resolve into a cushion, the red slippers to shrink into little red cloth bags. The light faded gently away, and Tom Smart fell back on his pillow, and dropped asleep.

"Morning roused Tom from the lethargic slumber, into which he had fallen on the disappearance of the old man. He sat up in bed, and for some minutes vainly endeavoured to recall the events of the preceding night. Suddenly they rushed upon him. He looked at the chair: it was a fantastic and grim-looking piece of furniture, certainly, but it must have been a remarkably ingenious and lively imagination, that could
The chair remained motionless, and spoke not a word.

"Miserable morning," said Tom. No. The chair would not be drawn into conversation.

"Which press did you point to,—you can tell me that," said Tom. "Devil a word, gentlemen, the chair would say.

"It's not much trouble to open it, anyhow," said Tom, getting out of bed very deliberately. He walked up to one of the presses. The key was in the lock; he turned it, and opened the door. There was a pair of trousers there. He put his hand into the pocket, and drew forth the identical letter the old gentleman had described!

"Queer sort of thing, this," said Tom Smart, looking first at the chair, and then at the press, and then at the letter, and then at the chair again. "Very queer," said Tom. But as there was nothing in either to lessen the queerness, he thought he might as well dress himself, and settle the tall man's business at once—just to put him out of his misery.

Tom surveyed the rooms he passed through, on his way down stairs, with the scrutinising eye of a landlord: thinking it not impossible, that before long, they and their contents would be his property. The tall man was standing in the snug little bar, with his hands behind him, quite at home. He grinned vacantly at Tom. A casual observer might have supposed he did it, only to show his white teeth; but Tom Smart thought that a consciousness of triumph was passing through the piece where the tall man's mind would have been, if he had had any. Tom laughed in his face; and summoned the Landlady.

"Good morning, Ma'am," said Tom Smart, closing the door of the little parlour as the widow entered.

"Good morning, Sir," said the widow. "What will you take for breakfast, Sir?"

Tom was thinking how he could open the case. The man was worse.

"There's a very nice ham," said the widow, "and a beautiful cold larded fowl. Shall I send 'em in, Sir?"

These words roused Tom from his reflections. His admiration of the widow increased as she spoke. "Thoughtful creature! Comfortable provider!"

"Who's that gentleman in the bar, Ma'am?" inquired Tom.

"His name is Jinkins, Sir," said the widow, slightly blushing.

"He's a tall man," said Tom.

"He is a very fine man, Sir," replied the widow, "and a very nice gentleman."

"Ah!" said Tom.

"Is there anything more you want, Sir?" inquired the widow, rather puzzled by Tom's manner.

"Why, yes," said Tom. "My dear Ma'am, will you have the kindness to sit down for a moment!"

"The widow looked much amazed, but she sat down, and Tom sat down too, close beside her. I don't know how it happened, gentlemen—indeed my uncle used to tell me that Tom Smart said he didn't know how it happened either—but somehow or other the palm of Tom's hand fell upon the back of the widow's hand, and remained there while he spoke.

"My dear Ma'am," said Tom Smart—"he had always a great notion of committing the amiable—My dear Ma'am, you deserve a very excellent husband—you do indeed."

"Lor, Sir!" said the widow—as well she might; Tom's mode of commencing the conversation being rather unusual, and the custom to say startling, the fact of his never having set eyes upon her before the previous night, being taken into consideration. "Lor, Sir!"

"I scorn to flatter, my dear Ma'am," said Tom Smart. "You deserve a very admirable husband, and whoever he is, he'll be a very lucky man." As Tom said this, his eye involuntarily wandered from the widow's face to the comforts around him.

"The widow looked more puzzled than ever, and made an effort to rise. Tom gently pressed her hand, as if to detain her, and she kept her seat. Widows, gentlemen, are not usually timorous, as my uncle used to say.

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for your good opinion," said the buxom landlady, half laughing: "and if ever I marry again—"

"If?" said Tom Smart, looking very shrewdly out at the right-hand corner of his left eye. "If?"

"Well," said the widow, laughing outright this time. "When I do, I hope I shall have as good a husband as you describe.

"Jinkins, to wit," said Tom.

"Lor, Sir!" exclaimed the widow.

"Oh, don't tell me," said Tom, "I know him."

"I am sure nobody who knows him, knows anything bad of him," said the widow, bridling up at the mysterious air with which Tom had spoken.

"Humph," said Tom Smart.

"The widow began to think it was high time to cry, as she took out her handkerchief, and inquired whether Tom wished to
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Insulted her, whether he thought it like a gentleman to take away the character of another gentleman behind his back; why, if he had got any thing to say, he didn’t say it to the man, like a man, instead of terrifying a poor weak woman in that way; and so forth.

‘I’ll say it to him fast enough,’ said Tom, ‘only I want you to hear it first.’

‘What is it?’ inquired the widow, looking intently in Tom’s countenance.

‘I’ll astonish you,’ said Tom, putting his hand in his pocket.

‘If it is that he wants money,’ said the widow, ‘I know that already, and you needn’t trouble yourself.’

‘Pooh, nonsense, that’s nothing,’ said Tom Smart; ‘I want money. ’Taint that.’

‘Oh dear, what can it be?’ exclaimed the poor widow.

‘Don’t be frightened,’ said Tom Smart. He slowly drew forth the letter, and unfolded it. ‘You won’t scream?’ said Tom, doubtfully.

‘No, no,’ replied the widow; ‘let me see it.’

‘You won’t go fainting away, or any of that nonsense?’ said Tom.

‘No, no,’ returned the widow, hastily.

‘And don’t run out, and blow him up,’ said Tom, ‘because I’ll do all that for you; you had better not exert yourself.’

‘Well, well,’ said the widow, ‘let me see it.’

‘I will,’ replied Tom Smart; and with these words, he placed the letter in the widow’s hand.

‘Gentlemen, I have heard my uncle say, that Tom Smart said, the widow’s lamentations when she heard the disclosure would have pierced a heart of stone. Tom was certainly very tender-hearted, but they pierced his, to the very core. The widow rocked herself to and fro, and wrung her hands.

‘Oh, the deception and villany of the man!’ said the widow.

‘Frightful, my dear Ma’am; but compose yourself,’ said Tom Smart.

‘Oh, I can’t compose myself,’ shrieked the widow. ‘I shall never find any one else I can love so much!’

‘Oh yes, you will, my dear soul,’ said Tom Smart, letting fall a shower of the largest-sized tears, in pity for the widow’s misfortunes. Tom Smart, in the energy of his compassion, had put his arm round the widow’s waist; and the widow in a passion of grief, had clapped Tom’s hand. She looked up in Tom’s face, and smiled through her tears. Tom looked down in hers, and smiled through his.

‘I never could find out, gentlemen, wheth-
which was engraved the following inscription.

Mrs. Leo Hunter.
The Den. East实践.

"Person's a waitin'," said Sam, epigrammatically.

"Does the person want me, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"He wants you particular; and no one else 'll do, as the Devil's private secretary said, when he fetched away Doctor Faustus," replied Mr. Weller.

"He is a gentleman!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"A warny good imitation o' one, if it ain't," replied Mr. Weller.

"But this is a lady's card," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Given me by a gen'l'm'n, hows'ever," replied Sam, "and he's a waitin' in the drawing-room — said he'd rather wait all day, than not see you!"

Mr. Pickwick, on hearing this determination, descended to the drawing-room, where sat a grave man, who started up on his entrance, and said, with an air of profound respect—

"Mr. Pickwick, I presume?"

"The name."

"Allow me, Sir, the honour of grasping your hand — permit me, Sir, to shake it," said the grave man.

"Certainly," said Mr. Pickwick.

The stranger shook the extended hand, and then continued.

"We have heard of your fame, Sir. The noise of your satirical discussion has reached the ears of Mrs. Leo Hunter — my wife, Sir; I am Mr. Leo Hunter — the stranger paused, as if he expected that Mr. Pickwick would be overcome by the disclosure; but seeing that he remained perfectly calm, proceeded.

"My wife, Sir; — Mrs. Leo Hunter — is proud to number among her acquaintance, all those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents. Permit me, Sir, to place in a conspicuous part of the list, the name of Mr. Pickwick, and his brother members of the club that derives its name from him."

"I shall be extremely happy to make the acquaintance of such a lady, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"You shall make it, Sir," said the grave man. "To-morrow morning, Sir, we give a public breakfast — a fit ostentation — to a great number of those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents. Permit Mrs. Leo Hunter, Sir, to have the gratification of seeing you at the Den."

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Mrs. Leo Hunter has many of these breakfasts, Sir," resumed the new acquaintance — "Feasts of reason, Sir, and flows of soul, as somebody who wrote a sonnet to Mrs. Leo Hunter on her breakfasts, feelingly and originally observed."

"Was he celebrated for his works, and talents?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"He was, Sir," replied the grave man, "all Mrs. Leo Hunter's acquaintance are; it is her ambition, Sir, to have no other acquaintance."

"It is a very noble ambition," said Mr. Pickwick.

"When I inform Mrs. Leo Hunter, that that remark fell from your lips, Sir, she will indeed be proud," said the grave man.

"You have a gentleman in your train, who has produced some beautiful little poems, I think, Sir."

"My friend, Mr. Sneggrass, has a great taste for poetry," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"So has Mrs. Leo Hunter, Sir. She doates on poetry, Sir. She adores it; I may say that her whole soul and mind are wound up and entwined with it. She has produced some delightful pieces herself, Sir. You may have met with her 'Ode to an expiring Frog,' Sir?"

"I don't think I have," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You astonish me, Sir," said Mr. Leo Hunter. "It created an immense sensation. It was signed with an 'L' and eight stars, and appeared originally in a Lady's Magazine. It commenced—

"Can I view thee pouting, lying

On thy stomach without sighing,

Can I unmoved see thee dying,

On a log,

Expiring frog."

"Beautiful!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Fine," said Mr. Leo Hunter, "so simple."

"Very," said Mr. Pickwick.

"The next verse is still more touching. Shall I repeat it?"

"If you please," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It runs thus," said the grave man, still more gravely.

"Say, have scenes in shape of boys,

With wild hallow, and brutal noise,

Hustled thee from meek thy boys,

With a song,

Expiring frog!"

"Finely expressed," said Mr. Pickwick.

"All point, Sir, all point," said Mr. Leo Hunter, "but you shall hear Mrs. Leo Hunter repeat it. She can do justice to it.
Sir. 'She will repeat it in character, Sir, tomorrow morning.'

"In character!"

"As Minerva. But I forgot—it's a fancy dress déjeuneur."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, glancing at his own figure—"I can't possibly!"

"Can't, Sir; can't!" exclaimed Mr. Leo Hunter.

"Solomon Lucas, the Jew in the High Street, has thousands of fancy dresses. Consider, Sir, how many appropriate characters are open for your selection. Plato, Zeno, Epicurus, Pythagoras—all founders of clubs."

"I know that," said Mr. Pickwick, "but as I cannot put myself in competition with those great men, I cannot persuade to wear their dresses."

The grave man considered deeply for a few seconds, and then said,

"On reflection, Sir, I don't know whether it would not afford Mrs. Leo Hunter pleasure if her guests saw a gentleman of your celebrity in his own costume, rather than in an assumed one. I may venture to promise an exception in your case, Sir; yet, I am quite certain that on behalf of Mrs. Leo Hunter, I may venture to do so."

"In that case," said Mr. Pickwick, "I shall have great pleasure in coming."

"But I waste your time, Sir," said the grave man, as if suddenly recollecting himself. "I know its value, Sir. I will not detain you. I may tell Mrs. Leo Hunter, then, that she may confidently expect you and your distinguished friends! Good morning, Sir; I am proud to have beheld so brilliant a personage—not a step, Sir, not a word!" And without giving Mr. Pickwick time to offer remonstrance or denials, Mr. Leo Hunter stalked gravely away.

Mr. Pickwick took up his hat, and repaired to the Peacock, but Mr. Winkle had conveyed the intelligence of the fancy ball there before him.

"Mrs. Pott's going," were the first words with which he saluted his leader.

"And she?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"As Apollo," replied Mr. Winkle. "Only Pott objects to the mimic."

"He is right. He is quite right," said Mr. Pickwick, emphatically.

"Yes; so she's going to wear a white satin gown with gold epaulets."

"They'll hardly know what she's meant for; will they?" asked Mr. Snodgrass.

"Of course they will," replied Mr. Winkle, lugubriously. "They'll see her Jove, won't they?"

"I think I forgot that," said Mr. Snodgrass. "I think I forgot that," repeated Mr. Tupman.

"What!" said Mr. Pickwick, with a sudden start.

"As a bandit," repeated Mr. Tupman, mildly.

"You don't mean to say," said Mr. Pickwick, gazing with solemn sternness at his friend, "you don't mean to say, Mr. Tupman, that it is your intention to put yourself into a green velvet jacket with a two-inch tail."

"Such is my intention, Sir," replied Mr. Tupman, warmly. "And why not, Sir?"

"Because, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, considerably excited, "because you are too old, Sir."

"Too old!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman.

"And if any further ground of objection be wanting," continued Mr. Pickwick, "you are too fat, Sir."

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, his face suffused with a crimson glow, "this is an insult."

"Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick in the same tone, "it is not half the insult to you that your appearance in my presence in a green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail, would be to me."

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, "you're a fellow."

"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "you're another!"

Mr. Tupman advanced a step or two, and glanced at Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick returned the glances, concentrated into a focus by means of his spectacles, and breathed a bold defiance. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle looked on, astounded at beholding such a scene between two such men.

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, after a short pause, speaking in a low, deep voice, "you have called me out, or damned me."

"I have," said Mr. Pickwick.

"And what?"

"I refuse the charge."

"And a fellow."

"So you are!"

There was a stareful pause.

"My attachment to your person, Sir," said Mr. Tupman, speaking in a voice tremulous with emotion; and racking up his whiskers meanwhile, "is great—very great—but upon that person I must take summary vengeance."

"Come on, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick. Stimulated by the exciting nature of the dialogue, the heroic man actually threw himself into a paralytic attitude, confidently supposed by the twain by-standers to have been intended as a gesture of defiance.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass, suddenly recovering the powers of speech, but without intense excitement, and raking between the two, at the imminent hazard of receiving..."
in application to the temple from each.

"What! Mr. Pickwick, with the eyes of the world upon you! Mr. Tupman! who, in common with us all, derives a laurel from his undying name! For shame, gentlemen; for shame!"

"The unwonted lines which momentary passion had reddened Mr. Pickwick'sclear and open brow, gradually melted away, as his young friend spoke, like the marks of a blacklead pencil beneath the softening influence of India rubber. His countenance had resumed its usual benign expression as he concluded.

"I have been hasty," said Mr. Pickwick, "very hasty. Tupman; your head."

"The dark shadow passed from Mr. Tupman's face, as he warmly grasped the hand of his friend."

"I have been hasty, too," said he.

"'No, no," interrupted Mr. Pickwick, "the fault was mine. You will wear the green velvet jacket?"

"'No, no," replied Mr. Tupman.

"To oblige me you will," resumed Mr. Pickwick.

"Well, well, I will," said Mr. Tupman.

"It was accordingly settled that Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass should all wear fancy dresses. Thus Mr. Pickwick was led by the very warmth of his good feelings to give his consent to a proceeding from which his better judgment would have recoiled—a more striking illustration of his amiable character could hardly have been conceived, even if the events in these pages had been wholly imaginary.

"Mr. Leo Hunter had not exaggerated the resources of Mr. Solomon Lucas. His wardrobe was extensive—very extensive—not strictly classical, perhaps, nor quite new, nor did it contain any one garment made precisely after the fashion of any age or time, but everything was more or less spangled, and, as he was a troubadour, from the earliest ages down to the time of his final disappearance, from the face of the earth. All this was pleasant, but this was nothing compared with the shouting of the populace when the carriage drew up behind Mr. Pott's chariot which chariot itself drew up at Mr. Pott's door which door itself opened, and displayed the great Pott attended as a Roman officer of justice, with a tremendous knout in his hand—most typically of the wars."

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men, smiling and talking—ay, and talking pretty considerable nonsense too, no doubt with the benign intention of rendering themselves intelligible to the common people about them. Moreover, there was a band of music in pasteboard caps; four something-can singers in the costume of their country, and a dozen hired waiters in the costume of their country—and very dirty costume too. And above all, there was Mrs. Leo Hunter in the character of Minerva, receiving the company, and overflowing with pride and gratification at the notion of having called such distinguished individuals together.

"Mr. Pickwick, Ma'am," said a servant, as that gentleman approached the presiding goddess, with his hat in his hand, and the Brigand and Troubadour on either arm.

"What—where!" exclaimed Mrs. Leo Hunter, starting up, in an affected rapture of surprise.

"Here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it possible that I have really the gratification of beholding Mr. Pickwick himself!" ejaculated Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"No other, Ma'am," replied Mr. Pickwick, bowing very low. "Permit me to introduce my friends—Mr. Tupman—Mr. Winkle—Mr. Snodgrass— to the authors of 'The Expiring Frog.'"

Very few people but those who have tried it, know what a difficult process it is, to bow in green velvet sash, and a tight jacket and high-crowned hat; or in blue satin trunks and white silks, or knee-cords and top-boots that were never made for the wearer, and have been fixed upon him without the remotest reference to the comparative dimensions of himself and the suit.

Nor were such distortions as Mr. Tupman's frame underwent in his efforts to appear easy and graceful—never was such ingenious posturing, as his fancy-dressed friends exhibited.

"Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Leo Hunter, "I must make you promise not to slir from my side the whole day. There are hundreds of people here, that I must positively introduce you to."

"You are very kind, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick.

"In the first place, here are my little girls; I had almost forgotten them," said Minerva, carelessly pointing towards a couple of full-grown young ladies, of whom one might be about twenty, and the other a year or two older, and who were dressed in very juvenile costumes—whether to make them look young, or their mamma younger, Mr. Pickwick does not distinctly inform us.

"They are very beautiful," said Mrs,
Pickwick, as the juveniles turned away, after being presented.

"They are very like their mamma, Sir," said Mr. Pott, majestically.

"Oh! you naughty man," exclaimed Mrs. Leo Hunter, playfully tapping the editor’s arm with her fan (Minerva with a fan!)

"Why now, my dear Mrs. Hunter," said Mr. Pott, who was trumpeter in ordinary at the Den, "you know that when your picture was in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, last year, everybody inquired whether it was intended for you, or your youngest daughter; for you were so much alike that there was no telling the difference between you."

"Well, and if they did, why need you repeat it, before strangers!" said Mrs. Leo Hunter, bestowing another tap on the slumbering lion of the Entwistle Gazette.

"Count, Count," screamed Mrs. Leo Hunter to a well-whiskered individual in a foreign uniform, who was passing by.

"Ah! you want me!" said the Count, turning back.

"I want to introduce two very clever people to each other," said Mrs. Leo Hunter, "Mr. Pickwick, I have great pleasure in introducing you to Count Smolrork." She added in a hurried whisper to Mr. Pickwick — the famous foreigner-gathering materials for his great work on England — here! — Count Smolrork, Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Pickwick saluted the Count with all the reverence due to so great a man, and the Count drew forth a set of tablets.

"What you say, Mrs. Hunt?" inquired the Count, smiling graciously on the graffted Mrs. Leo Hunter, "Pig Vig or Big Vig — what you call — Lawyer — eh? I see — that is it. Big Vig!" and the Count was proceeding to enter Mr. Pickwick in his tablets, as a gentleman of the long-robe, who derived his name from the profession to which he belonged, when Mrs. Leo Hunter interposed.

"No, no, Count," said the lady, "Pickwick."

"Ah, ah, I see," replied the Count.

"Pig — Christian name; Weeks — surname; good, very good. Peek Weeks. How you do, Weeks?"

"Quite well, I thank you," replied Mr. Pickwick, with all his usual affability.

"Have you been long in England?"

"Long — very long time — fortnight more."

"Do you stay here long?"

"One week."

"You will have enough to do," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling, "to gather all the materials you want, in that time."

"Eh, they are gathered," said the Count.

"Indeed?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"They are here," added the Count, tapping his forehead significantly. "Large book at home — full of notes — music, picture, science, poetry, polite; all things."

"The word politics, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "comprises, in itself, a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude."

"Ah!" said the Count, drawing out the tablets again, "very good — fine words to begin a chapter. Chapter forty-seven. Politics. The word polite surprises by itself —" And down went Mr. Pickwick’s remark, in Count Smolrork’s tablets, with such variations and additions as the Count’s exuberant fancy suggested, or his imperfect knowledge of the language occasioned.

"Count," said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"Mrs. Hunt," replied the Count.

"This is Mr. Snodgrass, a friend of Mr. Pickwick’s, and a poet."

"Stop," exclaimed the Count, bringing out the tablets once more. "Head, poetry — chapter, literary friends — name, Snodgrass; ver good. Introduced to Snodgrass — great poet, friend of Peek Weeks — by Mrs. Hunt, which wrote other sweet poem — what is that name? — Fogg — Perspiring Frog — ver good — ver good indeed." And the Count put up his tablets, and with sun-dry bows and acknowledgments walked away, thoroughly satisfied that he had made the most important and valuable additions to his stock of information.

"Wonderful man, Count Smolrork," said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"Sound philosopher," said Pott.

"Clear-headed, strong-minded person," added Mr. Snodgrass.

A chorus of by-standers took up the shout of Count Smolrork’s praise, shook their heads sagely, and unanimously cried "Very!"

As the enthusiasm in Count Smolrork’s favour ran very high, his praises might have been sung until the end of the festivities, if the four something-ean singers had not ranged themselves in front of a small apple-tree, to look picturesque, and commenced singing their national songs, which appeared by no means difficult of execution, inasmuch as the grand secret seemed to be, that three of the something-ean singers should grunt, while the fourth bowled. This interesting performance having concluded amidst the loud plaudits of the whole company, a boy forthwith proceeded to entangle himself with the rails of a chair, and to jump over it, and crawl under it, and fall down with it, and do every thing but sit upon it, and then to make a cravat of his legs, and to round his neck, and then to disappear.
ease with which a human being can be made to look like a magnified toad—all which feats yielded high delight and satisfaction to the assembled spectators. After which, the voice of Mrs. Pott was heard to chirp faintly forth, something which courtesy interpreted into a song, which was all very classical, and strictly in character, because Apollo was himself a composer, and composers can very seldom sing their own music or any body else’s either. This was succeeded by Mrs. Leo Hunter’s recitation of her far-famed ode to an Expiring Frog, which was encored once, and would have been encored twice, if the major part of the guests, who thought it was high time to get something to eat, had not said that it was perfectly shameful to take advantage of Mrs. Hunter’s good nature. So although Mrs. Leo Hunter professed her perfect willingness to recite the ode again, her kind and considerate friends wouldn’t hear of it on any account; and the refreshment-room being thrown open, all the people who had ever been there before, scrambled in with all possible despatch: Mrs. Leo Hunter’s usual course of proceeding, being, to issue cards for a hundred, and breakfast for fifty, or in other words to feed only the very particular lions, and let the smaller animals take care of themselves.

“Where is Mr. Pott?” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, as she placed the aforesaid lions around her.

“Here I am,” said the editor, from the very furthest end of the room; far beyond all hope of food, unless something was done for him by the hostess.

“Won’t you come up here?”

“O, no, pray don’t mind him,” said Mrs. Pott, in the most obliging voice. “If you give yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble, Mrs. Hunter. You’ll do very well there, won’t you—dear?”

“Certainly—love,” replied the unhappy Pott, with a grim smile. Alas, for the knout! The nervous arm, that wielded it with such gigantic force upon public characters, was paralysed beneath the glance of the imperious Mrs. Pott.

Mrs. Leo Hunter looked round her, in triumph. Count Smortkoff was busily engaged in taking notes of the contents of the dishes; Mr. Tupman was doing the honours of the lobster salad to several lionsesses, with a degree of grace which no brigand ever exhibited before; Mr. Snodgrass having cut out the young gentleman with the cut-up books for the Eatanawill (tassettive) regale; in a word, Smortkoff had an argument with the young lady who did the poetry; and Mr. Pickwick was making himself universally agreeable. Nothing seemed wanting to render the select circle complete, when Mr. Leo Hunter—whose department on these occasions was to stand about in doorways, and talk to the less important people—suddenly called out—

“My dear; here’s Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.”

“Oh, dear,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, “how anxiously I have been expecting him. Pray make room to let Mr. Fitz-Marshall pass. Tell Mr. Fitz-Marshall, my dear, to come up to me directly, to be accorded for coming so late.”

“Coming, my dear Ma’am,” cried a voice, “as quick as I can—crowds of people—full room—hard work—very.”

Mr. Pickwick’s knife and fork fell from his hand. He stared across the table at Mr. Tupman, who had dropped his knife and fork, and was looking as if he were about to sink into the ground without further notice.

“Ah!” cried the voice, as its owner pushed his way among the last five-and-twenty Turks, officers, cavaliers, and Charles the Seconds, that remained between him and the table, “regular mangle—Baker’s patent—not a crease in my coat, after all this squeezing—might have got up my linen, as I came along—ha! ha! not a bad idea, that—quarer thing to have it mangled when it’s upon one, though—trying process—very.”

With these broken words a young man dressed as a naval officer made his way up to the table, and presented to the astonished Pickwickians, the identical form and features of Mr. Alfred Jingle.

The offender had barely time to take Mrs. Leo Hunter’s proffered hand, when his eyes encountered the ignignant orbs of Mr. Pickwick.

“Hallo!” said Jingle. “Quite forgot—no directions to postillion—give ‘em at once—back in a minute.”

“The servant, or Mr. Hunter, will do it in a moment, Mr. Fitz-Marshall,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

“No, no—I’ll do it—she ain’t be-long—back in no time,” replied Jingle. With these words he disappeared among the crowd.

“Will you allow me to ask you, Ma’am,” said the excited Mr. Pickwick, rising from his seat, “who that young man is, and where he resides?”

“He is a gentleman of fortune, Mr. Pickwick,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, “to whom I very much want to introduce you. The Count will be pleased with him.”

“Yes; yes,” said Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

“His residence—”

“Is at present at the Angel, at Bury.”

“At Bury?”
"At Bury St. Edmunds, not many miles from here. But dear me, Mr. Pickwick, you are not going to leave us; surely Mr. Pickwick you cannot think of going so soon."

But long before Mrs. Leo Hunter had finished speaking, Mr. Pickwick had plunged through the throng, and reached the garden, whither he was shortly afterwards joined by Mr. Tupman, who had followed his friend closely.

"It's of no use," said Mr. Tupman. "He's gone."

"I know it," said Mr. Pickwick, "and I will follow him."

"Follow him? Where?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"To the Angel, at Bury," replied Mr. Pickwick, speaking very quickly. "How do we know whom he is deceiving there? He deceived a worthy man once, and we were the innocent cause. He shall not do it again, if I can help it; I'll expose him. Sam! Where's my servant!"

"Here you are, Sir," said Mr. Weller, emerging from a sequestered spot, where he had been engaged in discussing a bottle of Madeira, which he had abstracted from the breakfast table, an hour or two before.

"Here's your servant, Sir. Proud o' the title, as the Living Skellington said, ven they show'd him."

"Follow me instantly," said Mr. Pickwick. "Tupman, if I stay at Bury, you can join me there, when I write. Till then, good-by."

Remonstrances were useless. Mr. Pickwick was roused, and his mind was made up. Mr. Tupman returned to his companions; and in another hour had drowned all present recollection of Mr. Alfred Jingle, or Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall, in an exhilarating quadrille and a bottle of champagne. By that time, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, perched on the outside of a stage-coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds.

CHAPTER XVII.

Too full of adventure to be briefly described.

"There is no month in the whole year, in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charm of this time of year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers,—when the recollection of snow and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our minds as completely as they have disappeared from the earth,—and yet what a pleasant time it is! Orchards and corn-fields ring with the hum of labour; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wood the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very wagon, whose slow motion across the well-roped field, is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.

As the coach rolls swiftly past the fields and orchards which skirt the road, groups of women and children, piling the fruit in sheaves, or gathering the scattered ears of corn, pause for an instant from their labour, and shading the sun-burnt face with a shaded browner hand, gaze upon the passengers with curious eyes, while some stout urchin, too small to work, but too mischievous to be left at home, scrambles over the side of the basket in which he has been deposited for security, and kicks and screams with delight. The reaper stops in his work, and stands with folded arms looking at the vehicle as it whirls past; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach team, which says, as plaintively as a horse's glance can, "It's all very fine to look at, but slow going over a heavy field, is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road, after all." You cast a look behind you, as you turn a corner of the road. The women and children have resumed their labour, the reaper once more stoops to his work, the cart-horses have moved on, and all are again in motion.

The influence of a scene like this, was not lost upon the well-regulated mind of Mr. Pickwick. Intent upon the resolution he had formed, of exposing the real character of the nefarious Jingle, in any quarter in which he might be pursuing his fraudulent designs, he sat at first taciturn and contemplative, brooding over the means by which his purpose could be best attained. By degrees his attention grew more and more attracted by the objects around him; and at last he derived as much enjoyment from the ride, as if it had been undertaken for the pleasantest reason in the world.

"Delightful prospect, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Beats the chimbley pots, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat.
"I suppose you have hardly seen any thing but chimney-pots and bricks and mortar, all your life, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

"I worn't always a boots, Sir," said Mr. Weller, with a shake of the head. "I was a vagrins's boy, once."

"When was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"When I was first pitched neck and crop into the world, to play at leap-frog with its troubles," replied Sam. "I was a carrier's boy at startin': then a vagriny's, then a beggar, then a boots. Now I'm a goot'n'm'n's servant. I shall be a gen'n'm'n myself one of these days, perhaps, with a pipe in my mouth out of a summer-house in the back garden. Who knows? I shouldn't be surprised, for one."

"You are quite a philosopher, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It runs in the family, I believe, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "My father's very much in that line, now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out and gets another. Then she screams very loud, and falls into 'stericks; and he smokes very comfortably till she comes to again. That's philosophy, Sir, isn't it?"

"A very good substitute for it, at all events," replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing. "It must have been of great service to you, in the course of your rambling life, Sam."

"Service, Sir," exclaimed Sam. "You may say that. Arter I run away from the carrier, and afore I took up with the vaginer, I had unfurnished lodgings for a fortnight."

"Unfurnished lodgings!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes — the dry arches of Waterloo-Bridge. Fine sleeping-place — within ten minutes' walk of all the public offices — only if there is any objection to it, it is that the situation's rather too airy. I see some queer sights there."

"Ah, I suppose you did," said Mr. Pickwick, with an air of considerable interest.

"Sights, Sir," resumed Mr. Weller, "as I penetrated your benevolent heart, and came down the other side. You don't see the regular waggons there; trust 'em, they knows better than that. Young beggars, male and female, as hasn't made a rise in their profession, takes up their quarters there sometimes; but it's generally the worn-out, starving, houseless creatures as rules themselves up in the dark corners o' them lonesome places — poor creatures as aint up to the twopenny rope."

"And pray, Sam, what is the twopenny rope?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"The twopenny rope, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, "is just a sheepi' lodgin', droese, vere the beds is twopenny a night."

"What do they call a bed a rope for?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your innocence, Sir, that unint," replied Sam. "You the lady and gen'l'm'n as keeps the Hot-el, first begun business, they used to make the beds on the floor; but this wouldn't do at no price, 'coz, instead o' taking a moderate twopenni'orth o' sleep, the lodgers used to lay there half the day. So now they has two ropes, 'bout six foot apart, and three from the floor, which goes right down the room; and the beds are made of slips of coarse making, stretched across 'em."

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "the advanta- ge of the plan's hobious. At six o'clock ev'ry mornin', they lets go the ropes at one end, and down falls all the lodgers. 'Consequence is, that being thoroughly waked, they get up very quietly, and walk away! — Beg your pardon, Sir," said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his lequa-rious discourse. "Is this Bury Saint Ed- munds!"

"It is," replied Mr. Pickwick.

The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old Abbey.

"And this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel. We alight here, Sam. But some caution is necessary. Order a private room, and do not mention my name. You understand."

"Right as a trivet, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, with a wink of intelligence; and having dragged Mr. Pickwick's portmanteau from the hind boot, into which it had been hastily thrown when they joined the coach at Estanswill, Mr. Weller disappeared on his errand. A private room was speedily engaged; and into it Mr. Pickwick was ushered without delay.

"Now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "the first thing to be done is to —""

"Order dinner, Sir," interpolated Mr. Weller. "It's very late, Sir."

"Ah, so it is," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at his watch. "You are right, Sam."

"And if I might advise, Sir," added Mr. Weller, "I'd just have a good night's rest afterwards, and not begin inquiring after this here deep un'llill mornin'. These's nothin' so refreshin' as sleep, Sir, as the servant-girl said afore she drank the egg- cup full o' laudanum."

"I think you are right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "But I must first ascertain that he is in the house, and not likely to go away."
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

"Leave that to me, Sir," said Sam. "Let me order you a snug little dinner, and make my inquiries while it's getting ready; I could worm every secret out of the boot's heart, in five minutes."

"Do so," said Mr. Pickwick: and Mr. Weller at once retired.

In half an hour, Mr. Pickwick was seated at a very satisfactory dinner, and in three-quarters Mr. Weller returned with the intelligence that Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall had ordered his private room to be retained for him, until further notice. He was going to spend the evening at some private house in the neighbourhood, and ordered the boots to sit up until his return, and had taken his servant with him.

"Now, Sir," argued Mr. Weller, when he had concluded his report, "if I can get a talk with this here servant in the mornin', he'll tell me all his master's concerns."

"How do you know that?" interposed Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your heart, Sir, servants always do," replied Mr. Weller.

"Oh, ah, I forgot that," said Mr. Pickwick. "Well."

"Then you can arrange what's best to be done, Sir, and we can act accordingly."

As it appeared that this was the best arrangement that could be made, it was finally agreed upon. Mr. Weller, by his master's permission, retired to spend the evening in his own way; and was shortly afterwards elected, by the unanimous voice of the assembled company, into the tap-room chair, in which honourable post he acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen-frequenters, that their roars of laughter and approbation penetrated to Mr. Pickwick's bed-room, and shortened the term of his natural rest, by at least three hours.

Early on the ensuing morning, Mr. Weller was dispeppling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a half-penny shower-bath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable-department, by the offer of that coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored,) when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-coloured livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book, with an air of deep abstraction, but who occasionally stole a glance at the individual under the pump, as if he took some interest in his proceedings, nevertheless.

"You're a run 'un to look at, you are," thought Mr. Weller the first time his eyes encountered the glance of the stranger in the mulberry-coloured suit, who had a large, hollow, ugly face; very sunken eyes, and a gigantic head, from which depended a quantity of lank black hair. "You're a run 'un," thought Mr. Weller; and thinking this, he went on washing himself, and thought no more about him.

Still the man kept glancing from his hymn-book to Sam, and from Sam to his hymn-book, as if he wanted to open a conversation. So at last, Sam, by way of giving him an opportunity, said, with a familiar nod:

"How are you, governor?"

"I am happy to say, I am pretty well, Sir," said the man, speaking with great deliberation, and closing the book. "I hope you are the same, Sir?"

"Why, if I felt less like a walking brandy-bottle, I shouldn't be quite so staggered this mornin'," replied Sam. "Are you stoppin' in this house, old 'un?"

The mulberry man replied in the affirmative.

"How was it, you won't one of us, last night?" inquired Sam, scrubbing his face with the towel. "You seem one of the jolly sort—looks as conivial as a live trout in a lime-basket," added Mr. Weller, in an under tone.

"I was out last night, with my master," replied the stranger.

"What's his name?" inquired Mr. Weller, colouring up very red with sudden excitement, and the friction of the towel combined.

"Fitz-Marshall," said the mulberry man.

"Give us your hand," said Mr. Weller, advancing: "I should like to know you. I like your appearance, old fellow."

"Well, that is very strange," said the mulberry man, with great simplicity of manner. "I like yours so much, that I wanted to speak to you, from the very first moment I saw you under the pump."

"Did you, though?"

"Upon my word. Now isn't that curious?"

"Werry singular," said Sam, inwardly congratulating himself upon the softness of the stranger. "What's your name, my patriarch?"

"Job."

"And a very good name it is; only one I know, that ain't got a nickname to it. What's the other name?"

"Trotter," said the stranger. "What is yours?"

Sam bore in mind his master's caution, and replied,

"My name's Walker; my master's name's Wilkins. Will you take a drop of somethin' this mornin', Mr. Trotter?"

Mr. Trotter acquiesced in this agreeable proposal; and having disposed of the mood...
his coat-pocket, accompanied Mr. Weller to the tap, where they were soon occupied in discussing an exhilarating compound, formed by mixing together, in a pewter basin, certain quantities of British Hollands, and the fragrant essence of the clove.

"And what sort of a place have you got?" inquired Sam, as he filled his companion's glass, for the second time.

"Well," said Job, smacking his lips, "very bad."

"You don't mean that," said Sam.

"I do, indeed. Worse than that, my master's going to be married."

"No."

"Yes; and worse than that, too, he's going to run away with an immense rich heiress, from bearding-school."

"What a dragon," said Sam, refill his companion's glass. "It's some bearding-school, in this town, I suppose, ain't it?"

Now, although this question was put in the most careless tone imaginable, Mr. Job Trotter plainly showed, by gestures, that he perceived his new friend's anxiety to draw forth an answer to it. He emptied his glass, looked mysteriously at his companion, winked both of his small eyes, one after the other, and finally made a motion with his arm, as if he were working an imaginary pump-handle: thereby intimating that Mr. Trotter considered himself as undergoing the process of being pumped, by Mr. Samuel Weller.

"No, no," said Mr. Trotter, in conclusion, "that's not to be told to everybody. That is a secret—a great secret, Mr. Walker."

As the mulberry-man said this, he turned his glass upside down, by way of reminding his companion that he had nothing left wherewith to slake his thirst. Sam observed the hint; and feeling the delicate manner in which it was conveyed, ordered the pewter vessel to be refilled, whereas the small eyes of the mulberry-man glistered.

"And so it's a secret," said Sam.

"I should rather suspect it was," said the mulberry-man, snapping his liquor, with a complacent face.

"I suppose your master's very rich?" said Sam.

Mr. Trotter smiled, and holding his glass in his left hand, gave four distinct slaps on the pocket of his mulberry indescribables with his right, as if to intimate that his master might have done the same without planning any body much by the chinking of coin.

"Ah," said Sam, "that's the game, is it?"

The mulberry-man nodded significantly.

"Well, and don't you think, old fellow?" remonstrated Mr. Weller, "that if you let your master take in this here young lady, you're a precious rascal!"

"I know that," said Job Trotter, turning upon his companion a countenance of deep distension, and groaning slightly. "I know that, and that's what it is that preys upon my mind. But what am I to do?"

"Job!" said Sam; "sit down to the missis, and give up your master."

"Who'd believe me?" replied Job Trotter. "The young lady's considered the very picture of innocence and discretion. She'd deny it, and so would my master. Who'd believe me? I should lose my place, and get indicted for a conspiracy, or some such thing; that's all I should take by my motion."

"There's somethin' in that," said Sam, ruminating; "there's somethin' in that.

"If I knew any respectable gentleman who would take the matter up," continued Mr. Trotter, "I might have some hope of preventing the elopement; but there's the same difficulty, Mr. Walker, just the same. I know no gentleman in this strange place; and ten to one if I did, whether he would believe my story."

"Come this way," said Sam, suddenly jumping up; and grasping the mulberry-man by the arm. "My master's the man you want, I see."

And after a slight resistance on the part of Job Trotter, Sam led his newly-found friend to the apartments of Mr. Pickwick, to whom he presented him, together with a brief summary of the dialogue we have just repeated.

"I am very sorry to betray my master, Sir," said Job Trotter, applying to his eyes a pink cheesepocket-handkerchief of about three inches square.

"The feeling does you a great deal of honour," replied Mr. Pickwick; "but it is your duty, nevertheless."

"I know it is my duty, Sir," replied Job, with great emotion. "We should all try to discharge our duty, Sir, and I humbly endeavour to discharge mine, Sir; but it is a hard trial to betray a master, Sir, whose clothes you wear, and whose bread you eat, even though he is a second-rate, Sir."

"You are a very good fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, much affected; "an honest fellow."

"Come, come," interposed Sam, who had witnessed Mr. Trotter's tears with considerable impudence, "blow this here water-cart his beard. It won't do no good, this won't."

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, reproachfully, "I am sorry to find that you have so little respect for this young man's feelings."

"His feelings is all very well, Sir," re-
"Why," replied Mr. Trotter, "my master and I, being in the confidence of the two servants, will be secreted in the kitchen at ten o'clock. When the family have retired to rest, we shall come out of the kitchen, and the young lady out of her bed-room. A post-chaise will be waiting, and away we go."

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well, Sir, I have been thinking that if you were waiting in the garden alone—"

"Alone," said Mr. Pickwick. "Why alone?"

"I thought it very natural," replied Job, "that the old lady wouldn't like such an unpleasant discovery to be made before more persons than can possibly be helped. The young lady too, Sir—consider her feelings."

"You are very right," said Mr. Pickwick. "The consideration evinces great delicacy of feeling. Go on. You are very right."

"Well Sir, I was thinking that if you were waiting in the back garden alone, and I was to let you in, at the door which opens into it, from the end of the passage, at exactly half-past eleven o'clock, you would be just in the very moment of time, to assist me in frustrating the designs of this bad man, by whom I have been unfortunately ensnared." Here Mr. Trotter sighed deeply.

"Don't distress yourself on that account," said Mr. Pickwick, "if he had one grain of delicacy of feeling which distinguishes you, humble as your station is, I should have some hopes of him."

Job Trotter bowed low; and in spite of Mr. Weller's previous remonstrance, the tears again rose to his eyes.

"I never see such a sufferer," said Sam; "Bless'd if I don't think he's got a stain in his head as is always turned on."

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "with great severity. "Hold your tongue."

"Very well, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "I don't like this plan," said Mr. Pickwick, after deep meditation. "Why cannot I communicate with the young lady's friends?"

"Because they live one hundred miles from here, Sir," responded Job Trotter. "That's a clincher," said Mr. Weller, aside.

"Then this garden," resumed Mr. Pickwick. "How am I to get into it?"

"The wall is very low, Sir, and your servant will give you a leg up."

"My servant will give me a leg up? repeated Mr. Pickwick, meekly. "Now will be time to be near that door, does your speech end?"
"You cannot mistake it, Sir; it's the only one that opens into the garden. Tap at it, when you hear the clock strike, and I will open it instantly."

"I don't like the plan," said Mr. Pickwick; "but as I see no other, and as the happiness of this young lady's whole life is at stake, I adopt it. I shall be sure to be there."

Thus, for the second time, did Mr. Pickwick's innate good feeling involve him in an enterprise, from which he would most willingly have stood aloof.

"What is the name of the house?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Westgate House, Sir. You turn a little to the right when you get to the end of the town; it stands by itself some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate."

"I know it," said Mr. Pickwick. "I observed it once before, when I was in this town. You may depend upon me."

Mr. Trotter made another bow, and turned to depart, when Mr. Pickwick thrust a guinea into his hand.

"You're a fine fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, "and I admire your goodness of heart. No thanks. Remember—eleven o'clock."

"There is no fear of my forgetting it, Sir," replied Job Trotter. With these words he left the room, followed by Sam.

"I say," said the latter, "not a bad notion this here crying. I'd cry like a rain-water spout in a shower, on such good terms. How do you do it?"

"It comes from the heart, Mr. Walker," replied Job, solemnly. "Good morning, Sir."

"You're a soft customer, you are;—we've got it all out o' you, any how," thought Mr. Weller, as Job walked away.

We cannot state the precise nature of the thoughts which passed Mr. Trotter's mind, because we don't know what they were.

The day wore on, evening came, and at a little before ten o'clock Sam Weller reported that Mr. Jingle and Job had gone out together, that their luggage was packed up, and that they had ordered a chaise. The plot was evidently in execution as Mr. Trotter had foretold.

Half-past ten o'clock arrived, and it was time for Mr. Pickwick to issue forth on his delicate errand. Resisting Sam's tender of his great coat, in order that he might have no inclusions in scaling the wall, he set forth, followed by his attendant.

There was a bright moon, but it was behind the clouds. It was a fine dry night, but it was most uncommonly dark. Paths, hedges, fields, houses, and trees, were enveloped in one deep shade. The atmosphere was hot and sultry, the summer lightning quivered faintly on the verge of the horizon, and was the only sight that varied the dull gloom in which everything was wrapped—sound there was none, except the distant barking of some restless house-dog.

They found the house, read the brass plate, walked round the wall, and stopped at that portion of it which divided them from the bottom of the garden.

"You will return to the inn, Sam, when you have assisted me over," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very well, Sir."

"And you will sit up, till I return."

"Certainly, Sir."

"Take hold of my leg; and when I say 'Over,' raise me gently."

"All right, Sir."

Having settled these preliminaries, Mr. Pickwick grasped the top of the wall, and gave the word "Over," which was very literally obeyed. Whether his body parceled in some degree of the elasticity of his mind, or whether Mr. Weller's notions of a gentle push were of a somewhat rougher description than Mr. Pickwick's, the immediate effect of his assistance was to jerk that immortal gentleman completely over the wall on to the bed beneath, where, after crushing three gooseberry-bushes and a rose-tree, he finally aighted at full length.

"You haven't hurt yourself, I hope, Sir," said Sam, in a loud whisper, as soon as he recovered from the surprise consequent upon the mysterious disappearance of his master.

"I have not hurt myself, Sam, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, from the other side of the wall, "but I rather think that you have hurt me."

"I hope not, Sir," said Sam.

"Never mind," said Mr. Pickwick, rising, "it's nothing but a few scratches. Go away, or we shall be overheard."

"Good-bye, Sir."

"Good-bye."

With stealthy steps, Sam Weller departed, leaving Mr. Pickwick alone in the garden.

Lights occasionally appeared in the different windows of the house, or glanced from the staircases, as if the inmates were retiring to rest. Not caring to go too near the door, until the appointed time, Mr. Pickwick crouched into an angle of the wall, and awaited its arrival.

It was a situation which might well have depressed the spirits of many a man. Mr. Pickwick, however, felt neither depression nor misgiving. He knew that his purpose was in the main a good one, and he placed implicit reliance on the high-minded Job.
It was dull, certainly; not to say, dreary, but a contemplative man can always employ himself in meditation. Mr. Pickwick had meditated himself into a doze, when he was roused by the chimes of the neighbouring church ringing out the hour—half-past eleven.

"That's the time," thought Mr. Pickwick, getting cautiously on his feet. He looked up at the house. The lights had disappeared, and the shutters were closed—all in bed, no doubt. He walked on tip-toe to the door, and gave a gentle tap. Two or three minutes passing without any reply, he gave another tap rather louder, and then another rather louder than that.

At length the sound of feet was audible upon the stairs, and then the light of a candle shone through the key-hole of the door. There was a good deal of unchaining and unholting, and the door was slowly opened.

Now the door opened outwards; and as the door opened wider and wider, Mr. Pickwick receded behind it more and more. What was his astonishment, when he just peeped out, by way of caution, to see that the person who had opened it was—not Job Trotter, but a servant-girl with a candle in her hand! Mr. Pickwick drew in his head again, with the swiftness displayed by that admirable melo-dramatic performer, Punch, when he lies in wait for the flat-headed comedian, with the tin box of music.

"It must have been the cat, Sarah," said the girl, addressing herself to some one in the house. "Pass, pass, pass—tit, tit, tit, tit."

But no animal being decoyed by these blandishments, the girl slowly closed the door, and refastened it; leaving Mr. Pickwick drawn up straight against the wall.

"This is very curious," thought Mr. Pickwick. "They are sitting up beyond their usual hour, I suppose. Extremely unfortunate, that they should have chosen this night, of all others, for such a purpose—exceedingly." And with these thoughts, Mr. Pickwick cautiously retired to the angle of the wall in which he had been before ensconced; waiting for such time as he might deem it safe to repeat the signal.

He had not been here five minutes, when a vivid flash of lightning was followed by a loud peal of thunder, that crashed and rolled away in the distance with terrific noise—and then came another flash of lightning, brighter than the other; and a second peal of thunder-louder than the first; and then down came the rain, with a force and fury that swept everything before it.

"Mr. Pickwick was perfectly aware that a tree is a very dangerous neighbour in a thunder-storm. He had a tree on his right, a tree on his left, a third before him, and a fourth behind. If he remained where he was, he might fall the victim of an accident; if he showed himself in the centre of the garden, he might be consigned to a constable;—once or twice he tried to scale the wall, but having no other legs this time than those with which nature had furnished him, the only effect of his struggling was to inflict a variety of very unpleasant gratings on his knees and shins, and to throw him into a state of the most profligate perspiration.

"What a dreadful situation," said Mr. Pickwick, pausing to wipe his brow after this exercise. He looked up at the house—all was darkly. They must be gone to bed now. He would try the signal again.

He walked on tip-toe across the moist gravel, and tapped at the door. He held his breath, and listened at the key-hole. No reply: very odd. Another knock. He listened again. There was a low whispering inside, and then a voice cried—

"Who's there!"

"That's not Job," thought Mr. Pickwick, hastily drawing himself straight up against the wall again. "It's a woman."

He had scarcely had time to form this conclusion, when a window above stairs was thrown up, and three or four female voices repeated the query—"Who's there!"

Mr. Pickwick dared not move hand nor foot. It was clear that the whole establishment was roused. He made up his mind to remain where he was, until the alarm had subsided: and then to make a supernatural effort, and get over the wall, or perish in the attempt.

Like all Mr. Pickwick's determinations, this was the best that could be made under the circumstances; but, unfortunately, it was founded upon the assumption that they would not venture to open the door again. What was his discomfiture, when he heard the chain and bolts withdrawn, and saw the door slowly opening, wider and wider! He retreated into the corner, step by step; but do what he would, the interposition of his own person prevented its being opened to its utmost width.

"Who's there!" screamed a numerous chorus of treble voices from the staircases inside, consisting of the spinster lady of the establishment, three teachers, five female servants, and thirty boarders, all half-dressed, and in a forest of curl-papers.

Of course, Mr. Pickwick didn't say who was there; and then the burden of the chorus changed into—"Loo! I am so frightened."

"Cook," said the lady above, with a
Here there was a general scream.

"Ring the alarm-bell, somebody!" cried a dozen voices.

"Don't—don't," shouted Mr. Pickwick.

"Look at me. Do I look like a robber? My dear ladies—you may bind me hand and leg, or lock me up in a closet, if you like. Only hear what I have got to say—only hear me."

"How did you come in our garden?" faltered the house-maid.

"Call the lady of the house, and I'll tell her everything—everything," said Mr. Pickwick, exerting his lungs to the utmost pitch. "Call her—only be quiet, and call her, and you shall hear everything."

It might have been Mr. Pickwick's appearance, or it might have been his manner, or it might have been the temptation—so irresistible to the feminine mind—of hearing something at present enveloped in mystery, that reduced the more reasonable position of the establishment (some four individuals) to a state of comparative quiet. By them it was proposed, as a test of Mr. Pickwick's sincerity, that he should immediately submit to personal restraint; and that gentleman having consented to hold a conference with Miss Tompkins, from the interior of a closet in which the day-boarders hung their bonnets and sandwich-bags, he at once stepped into it, of his own accord, and was securely locked in. This revived the others; and Miss Tompkins having been brought to, and brought down; the conference began.

"What did you do in my garden, man?" said Miss Tompkins, in a faint voice.

"I came to warn you, that one of your young ladies was going to escape tonight," replied Mr. Pickwick, from the interior of the closet.

"Help!" exclaimed Miss Tompkins, the three teachers, the thirty boarders, and the five servants. "Who with?"

"Your friend, Mr. Charles Fit-Malcolm.

"My friend! I don't know any such person."

"Well; Mr. Jingle, then."

"I never heard the name in my life."

"There, I have been deceived, and denounced," said Mr. Pickwick. "I have been the victim of a conspiracy—a foul and base conspiracy. Send to the Angel, my dear Ma'am, if you don't believe me. Send to the Angel for Mr. Pickwick's miss-servant, I implore you, Ma'am."

"He must be respectable—he keeps a man-servant," said Miss Tompkins to the writing and ciphering governess.

"It's my opinion, Miss Tompkins," said the writing and ciphering governess, the
Mr. Pickwick's explanation having been already partially made, was soon concluded.

But neither in the course of his walk home with his friends, nor afterwards when seated before a blazing fire at the supper he so much needed, could a single observation be drawn from him. He seemed bewildered and amazed. Once, and only once, he turned round to Mr. Wardle, and said—

"How did you come here?"

"Trundle and I came down here, for some good shooting on the first," replied Wardle. "We arrived to-night, and were astonished to hear from your servant that you were here too. But I am glad you are," said the jolly old fellow, slapping him on the back. "I am glad you are. We shall have a jolly party on the first, and we'll give Winkle another chance—eh, old boy?"

Mr. Pickwick made no reply; he did not even ask after his old friends at Dingley Dell, and shortly afterwards retired for the night, desiring Sam to fetch his candle when he rang.

The bell did ring in due course, and Mr. Wardle presented himself.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, looking out from under the bed-clothes.

"Sir," said Mr. Waller.

Mr. Pickwick paused, and Mr. Waller snuffed the candle.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick again, as if with a desperate effort.

"Sir," said Mr. Waller, once more.

"Where is that Trotter?"

"Job, Sir?"

"Yes."

"Guns, Sir."

"With his master, I suppose."

"Friend or master, or whatever he is, he's gone with him," replied Mr. Waller.

"There's a pair on 'em, Sir."

"Jingle suspected my design, and set that fellow on you, with this story, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick, half choking.

"Just that, Sir," replied Mr. Waller.

"It was all false, of course!"

"All, Sir," replied Mr. Waller. "Regret it do, Sir; artful rogue."

"I don't think he'll escape so quite so easily the next time, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"I don't think he will, Sir."

"Whenever I meet that Jingle again, wherever it is," said Mr. Pickwick, raising himself in bed, and indenting his pillow with a tremendous blow, "I'll inflict personal chastisement on him, in addition to the exposure he so richly merits."

"Well, or my name is not Pickwick," said Mr. Pickwick.

"And moreover, I catch hold of that snare, melancholy chump with the black..."
CHAPTER XVIII.

Showing that an attack of rheumatism, in some cases, acts as a quickener to inventive genius.

The condition of Mr. Pickwick, though able to sustain a very considerable amount of exertion and fatigue, was not proof against such a combination of attacks as he had undergone on the memorable night recorded in the last chapter. The process of being washed in the night air, and rough-dried in a close closet, is as dangerous as it is peculiar. Mr. Pickwick was laid up with an attack of rheumatism.

But although the bodily powers of the great man were thus impaired, his mental energies retained their pristine vigour. His spirits were elastic; his good-humour was restored. Even the vexation consequent upon his recent adventure had vanished from his mind; and he could join in the hearty laughter which any allusion to it excited in Mr. Wardle, without anger and without embarrassment. Nay, more. During the two days Mr. Pickwick was confined to his bed, Sam was his constant attendant. On the first, he endeavoured to amuse his master by anecdote and conversation; on the second, Mr. Pickwick demanded his writing-desk, and pen and ink, and was deeply engaged during the whole day. On the third, being able to sit up in his bed-chamber, he despatched his valet with a message to Mr. Wardle and Mr. Trundle, intimating that if they would take their wine there, that evening, they would greatly oblige him. The invitation was most willingly accepted; and when they were seated over their wine, Mr. Pickwick, with saucy blushing, produced the following little tale, as having been "edited" by himself, during his recent indisposition, from his notes of Mr. Weller's unsophisticated recital.

"THE PARISH CLERK—A TALE OF TRUE LOVE.

"Once upon a time, in a very small country town, at a considerable distance from London, there lived a little man named Nathaniel Pipkin, who was the parish clerk of the little town, and lived in a little house in the little high street, within ten minutes' walk of the little church; and who was to be found every day from nine till four, teaching a little learning to the little boys. Nathaniel Pipkin was a harmless, inoffensive, good-natured being, with a turned-up nose, and rather turned-up corner of a cast in his eye, and a half in his gait; and he divided his time between the church and the school, verily believing that there existed not, on the face of the earth, so clever a man as the curate, so imposing an apartment as the vestry-room, or so well-ordered a seminary as his own. Once, and only once, in his life, Nathaniel Pipkin had seen a bishop—a real bishop, with his arms in lawn sleeves, and his head in a wig. He had seen him walk, and heard him talk at a confirmation, on which momentous occasion Nathaniel Pipkin was so overcome with reverence and awe, when the aforesaid bishop laid his hand on his head, that he fainted right clean away, and was borne out of church in the arms of the beardie.

"This was a great event, a tremendous era, in Nathaniel Pipkin's life, and it was about the only one that had ever occurred to ruffle the smooth current of his quiet existence, when happening one fine afternoon, in a fit of mental abstraction, to raise his eyes from the slate on which he was devising some tremendous problem in compound addition for an offending urchin to solve, they suddenly rested on the blooming countenance of Maria Lobbs, the only daughter of old Lobbs the great saddler over the way. Now, the eyes of Mr. Pipkins had rested on the pretty face of Maria Lobbs many a time and oft before, at church and elsewhere; but the eyes of Maria Lobbs had never looked so bright, the cheeks of Maria Lobbs had never looked so ruddy, as upon this particular occasion. No wonder then that Nathaniel Pipkin was unable to take his eyes from the countenance of Miss Lobbs; no wonder that Miss Lobbs, finding herself stared at by a young man, withdrew her head from the window out of which she had been peeping, and what the casement, and pulled down the blind; no wonder that Nathaniel Pipkin, immediately thereafter, fell upon the young urchin who had previously offended, anduffed and knocked him to his heart's content. All this was very natural, and there's nothing at all to wonder at about it."

"It is matter of wonder, though, that any one of Mr. Nathaniel Pipkin's retiring disposition, nervous temperament, and most particularly diminutive income, should from this day forth, have dared to aspire to the hand and heart of the only daughter of the fiery old Lobbs—of old Lobbs the great saddler, who could have bought up the whole village at one stroke of his pen, and never felt the outlay—old Lobbs, who was well known to have heaps of money, for
vested in the built at the nearest market
down—who was reported to have countless
and inexhaustible treasures, boarded up in
the little iron safe with the big key-hole,
over the chimney-piece in the back par-
toon—who, it was well known, on festi-
tive occasions garnished his board with a
real silver tea-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-
basin, which he was wont, in the pride of
his heart, to boast should be his daughter's
property when she found a man to her
mind. I repeat it, to be matter of profound
astonishment and intense wonder, that Na-
thaniel Pipkin should have had the teme-
tory to cast his eyes in this direction. But
love is blind, and Nathaniel had a cast in
his eye: and perhaps these two circum-
stances, taken together, prevented his see-
ing the matter in its proper light.

"Now, if old Lobbs had entertained the
most remote or distant idea of the state of
the affections of Nathaniel Pipkin, he
would not be heard of in the school-room
on the ground, or exterminated its master
from the surface of the earth, or committed
some other outrage and atrocity of an
equally ferocious and violent description;
for he was a terror old fellow, that Lobbs,
when his pride was injured or his blood
was up. Swear! Such trains of exactions
would come rolling and pouring over the
way, sometimes, when he was destressing
the idleness of the bony apprentices with the
thin legs, that Nathaniel Pipkin would
shake in his shoes with horror, and the
hair of the pupils' heads would stand on
end with fright.

"Well, day after day, when school was
over, and the pupils gone, did Nathaniel
Pipkin sit himself down at the front win-
dow, and while he flapped to be read a
book, throw sidelong glances over the way
in search of the bright eyes of Maria Lobbs;
and he didn't set there many days,
before the bright eyes appeared at an up-
per window, apparently deeply engaged in
reading too. This was delightful, and
pladdening to the heart of Nathaniel Pip-
kin. It was something to sit there for
hours together, and look upon that pretty
face when the eyes were cast down; but
when Maria Lobbs began to turn her eyes
from her book, and dart their rays in the
direction of Nathaniel Pipkins, his delight
and admiration were perfectly boundless.
At last, one day when his new old Lobbe
was out, Nathaniel Pipkin had the teme-
tory to run to Maria Lobbes and Maria
Lobbs, instead of shutting the window,
and pulling down the blind, kissed her to
him, and smiled. Upon which,
Nathaniel Pipkin determined, that some
what might he would develop the state of
his feelings, without further delay.
evening air—without seeming to disturb it, though; it had such a pleasant sound—and the wicked little cousin laughed more immediately than before, and Nathaniel Pipkin blushed deeper than ever. At length, Maria Lobbs being more sternly urged by the love-worn little man, turned away her head, and whispered her cousin to say, or as all events Kate did say, that she felt much honoured by Mr. Pipkin's addresses, that her hand and heart were at her father's disposal, but that nobody could be insensible to Mr. Pipkin's merit. As all this was said with much gravity, and as Nathaniel Pipkin walked home with Maria Lobbs, and struggled for a kiss at parting, he went to bed a happy man, and dreamed all night long, of softening old Lobbs, opening the strong box, and marrying Maria.

"The next day, Nathaniel Pipkin saw old Lobbs go out upon his old grey pony, and after a great many signs at the window from the wicked little cousin, the object and meaning of which he could by no means understand, the bony apprentice with the thin legs came over to say that his master wasn't coming home all night, and that the ladies expected Mr. Pipkin to tea, at six o'clock precisely. How the lessons were got through that day, neither Nathaniel Pipkin nor his pupils knew any more than you do; but they were got through somehow, and, after the boys had gone, Nathaniel Pipkin took till full six o'clock to dress himself to his satisfaction: not that it took long to select the garments he should wear, inasmuch as he had no choice about the matter, but the putting them on to the best advantage, and touching them up previously, was a task of no inconsiderable difficulty or importance.

"There was a very snug little party, consisting of Maria Lobbs and her cousin Kate, and three or four romping, good-natured, rosy-cheeked girls. Nathaniel Pipkin had ocular demonstration of the fact, that even the rumours of old Lobbs's treasures were not exaggerated. There were the real solid silver tea-pot, cream-saucer, and sugar-basin, on the table, and real silver spoons to stir the tea with, and real china cups to drink it out of, and platters of the same, to hold the cakes and toast in. The only eyesore in the whole place, was another cousin of Maria Lobbs's, and brother of Kate, whom Maria Lobbs called 'Henry,' and who seemed to keep Maria Lobbs all to himself up in one corner of the table. It's a delightful thing to see affection in families, but it may be carried rather too far, and Nathaniel Pipkin could not help thinking that Maria Lobbs must be very particularly fond of her relations, if she paid such attention to all of them as to this individual cousin. After tea, too, when the wicked little cousin possessed a game at blind man's buff, it somehow or other happened that Nathaniel Pipkin was nearly always blind, and whenever he laid his hand upon the male cousin, he was sure to find that Maria Lobbs was not far off. And though the wicked little cousin and the other girls pinched him, and pulled his hair, and pushed chairs in his way, and all sorts of things, Maria Lobbs never seemed to come near him at all; and once—once—Nathaniel Pipkin could have sworn he heard the sound of a kiss, followed by a faint remonstrance from Maria Lobbs, and a half-suppressed laugh from her female friends. All this was odd—very odd—and there is no saying what Nathaniel Pipkin might or might not have done, in consequence, if his thoughts had not been suddenly directed into a new channel. "The circumstance which directed his thoughts into a new channel was a loud knocking at the street door, and the person who made this loud knocking at the street door, was no other than old Lobbs himself, who had unexpectedly returned, and was hammering away, like a coffin-maker: for he wanted his supper. The alarming intelligence was no sooner communicated by the bony apprentice with the thin legs, than the girls tripped up stairs to Maria Lobbs's bed-room, and the male cousin and Nathaniel Pipkin were thrust into a couple of closets in the sitting-room, for want of any better places of concealment; and when Maria Lobbs and the wicked little cousin had stowed them away, and put the room to rights, they opened the street door to old Lobbs, who had never left off knocking since he first began.

"Now it did unfortunately happen that old Lobbs being very hungry was monstrous cross. Nathaniel Pipkin could hear him growling away like an old mastiff with a sore throat; and whenever the unfortunate apprentice with the thin legs came into the room, so surely did old Lobbs commence swearing at him in a most Sarasotic and ferocious manner, though apparently with no other end or object than that of easing his bosom by the discharge of a few superfluous oaths. At length some supper, which had been warming up, was placed on the table, and then old Lobbs fell to, in regular style; and, having made clear work of it in no time, kissed his daughter and demanded his pipe.

"Nature had placed Nathaniel Pipkin's knees in very close junta-position, but when he heard old Lobbs demand his pipe, they knocked together, as if they were going to reduce each other to powder; for, depend
ing from a couple of hooks, in the very closet in which he stood, was a large brown-stained silver-bowled pipe, which pipe he himself had seen in the mouth of old Lobbs, regularly every afternoon and evening, for the last five years. The two girls went down stairs for the pipe, and up stairs for the pipe, and everywhere but where they knew the pipe was, and old Lobbs stormed away meanwhile, in the most wonderful manner. At last he thought of the closet, and walked up to it. It was of no use a little man like Nathaniel Pipkin pulling the door inwards, when a great strong fellow like old Lobbs was pulling it outwards. Old Lobbs just gave it one tug, and open it flew, disclosing Nathaniel Pipkin standing bolt upright inside, and shaking with apprehension from head to foot. Bless us! what an appallingly look old Lobbs gave him, as he dragged him out by the collar, and held him at arm's length.

"Why, what the devil do you want here?" said old Lobbs, in a fearful voice.

"Nathaniel Pipkin could make no reply, so old Lobbs shook him backwards and forwards, for two or three minutes, by way of arranging his ideas for him.

"What do you want here?" roared Lobbs. "I suppose you have come after my daughter, now."

"Old Lobbs merely said this as a sneer: for he did not believe that mortal presumption could have carried Nathaniel Pipkin so far. What was his indignation, when that poor man replied—

"Yes, I did, Mr. Lobbs— I did come after your daughter. I love her, Mr. Lobbs."

"Why, you uninviting, wry-faced little villain," gasped old Lobbs, paralysed at the atrocious confession; "what do you mean by that? Say this to my face! Dame, I'll throttle you."

"It is by no means improbable that old Lobbs would have carried this threat into execution, in the excess of his rage, if his arm had not been stayed by a very unexpected apparition, to wit, the male cousin, who, stepping out of his closet, and walking up to old Lobbs, said—"

"I cannot allow this harmless person, Sir, who has been asked here, in some girlish frolic, to take upon himself, in so very noble manner, the fault (if fault it is) which I am guilty of, and ready to avow. I love your daughter, Sir; and I came here for the purpose of meeting her."

"Old Lobbs opened his eyes very wide at this, but not wider than Nathaniel Pipkin.

"You did?" said Lobbs, at last finding breath to speak.

"I did."

"And I forbade you this house, long ago."

"You did, or I should not have been here, clandestinely, to-night."

"I am sorry to record it of old Lobbs, but I think he would have struck the cousin, if his pretty daughter, with her bright eyes swimming in tears, had not clung to his arm.

"Don't stop him, Maria," said the young man: "if he has the will to strike me, let him. I would not hurt a hair of his grey head, for the riches of the world."

"The old man cast down his eyes at this reproof, and they met those of his daughter. I have hinted once or twice before, that they were very black eyes, and, though they were tearful now, their influence was by no means lessened. Old Lobbs turned his head away, as if to avoid being persuaded by them, when, as fortune would have it, he encountered the face of the wicked little cousin, who, half afraid for her brother, and half laughing at Nathaniel Pipkin, presented as bewitching an expression of countenance, with a touch of slyness in it too, as any man, old or young, need look upon. She drew her arm coaxingly through the old man's, and whispered something in his ear; and do what he would, old Lobbs couldn't help breaking out into a smile, while a tear stole down his cheek, at the same time.

"Five minutes after this, the girls were brought down from the bed-room with a great deal of giggling and modesty; and while the young people were making themselves perfectly happy, old Lobbs got down the pipe, and smoked it: and it was a remarkable circumstance about that particular pipe of tobacco, that it was the most soothing and delightful one he ever smoked."

"Nathaniel Pipkin thought it best to keep his own counsel, and by so doing gradually rose into high favour with old Lobbs, who taught him to smoke in time; and they used to sit out in the garden on the fine evenings for many years afterwards, smoking and drinking in great state. He soon recovered the effects of his attachment, for we find him in the parish register, as a witness to the marriage of Maria Lobbs to her cousin; and it also appears, by reference to other documents, that on the night of the wedding, he was incarcerated in the village cage, for having, in a state of extreme intoxication, committed sundry excesses in the streets, in all of which he was aided and abetted by the bony apprentice with the thin legs."

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CHAPTER XIX.

Briefly illustrative of two points;—first, the power of hystericism, and, secondly, the force of circumstances.

For two days after the déjéuné at Mrs. Hunter’s the Pickwickians remained at Epsom, anxiously awaiting the arrival of some intelligence from their revered leader. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were once again left to their own means of amusement; for Mr. Winkle, in compliance with a most pressing invitation, continued to reside at Mr. Pott’s house, and to devote his time to the companionship of that amiable lady. Nor was the occasional society of Mr. Pott himself, waiting to complete their felicity. Deeply immersed in the intensity of his speculations for the public weal, and the destruction of the Independent, it was not the habit of that great man to descend from his mental pinnacle to the humble level of ordinary minds. On this occasion, however, and as if expressly in compliment to any follower of Mr. Pickwick’s, he unbit, relaxed, stepped down from his pedestal, and walked upon the ground: benignly adapting his remarks to the comprehension of the herd, and seeming in outward form, if not in spirit, to be one of them.

Such having been the demeanour of this celebrated public character towards Mr. Winkle, it will be readily imagined that considerable surprise was depicted on the countenance of the latter gentleman, when, as he was sitting alone in the breakfast-room, the door was hastily thrown open, and as hastily closed, on the entrance of Mr. Pott, who, stalking majestically towards him, and thrusting aside his professed hand, ground his teeth, as if to put a sharper edge on what he was about to utter, and exclaimed, in a saw-like voice,—

"Serpent!"

"Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Winkle, starting from his chair.

"Serpent, Sir," repeated Mr. Pott, raising his voice, and then suddenly depressing it; "I said Serpent, Sir.—make the most of it."

Now, when you have parted with a man at two o’clock in the morning, on terms of the utmost good fellowship, and he meets you again, at half-past nine, and greets you as a serpent, it is not unreasonable to conclude that something of an unpleasant nature has occurred; meanwhile, so Mr. Winkle thought. He returned Mr. Pott’s gaze of hate, and in compliance with that gentleman’s request, proceeded to make the most he could of the ‘serpent.” The most, however, was just nothing at all; so, after a profound silence of some minutes’ duration, he said,—

"Serpent, Sir!—Serpent, Mr. Pott!—What can you mean, Sir!—this is parsimony."

"Pleasant, Sir!" exclaimed Pott, with a motion of the hand, indicative of a strong desire to hurl the Britannia metal tea-pot at the head of his visitor. "Pleasant, Sir!—but no, I will be calm; I will be calm, Sir;" and in proof of his calmness Mr. Pott flung himself into a chair, and fumed at the mouth.

"My dear Sir," interposed Mr. Winkle.

"Dear Sir!" replied Pott. "How dare you address me, as dear Sir, Sir? How dare you look me in the face and do it?"

"Well, Sir, if you come to that," responded Mr. Winkle, "how dare you look me in the face, and call me a serpent, Sir?"

"Because you are one," replied Mr. Pott.

"Prove it, Sir," said Mr. Winkle, warmly. "Prove it."

A malignant scowl passed over the profound face of the editor, as he drew from his pocket, the Independent of that morning; and laying his finger on a particular paragraph, threw the journal across the table to Mr. Winkle.

That gentleman took it up, and read as follows:—

"Our obscure and filthy contemporary, in some disgusting observations on the recent election of this borough, has presumed to violate the hallowed sanctity of private life, and to refer, in a manner not to be misunderstood, to the personal affairs of our late candidate—ay, and notwithstanding his base defeat, we will add our future member, Mr. Fitzkin. What does our dastardly contemporary mean? What would the ruffian say? If we, setting at naught, like him, the decencies of social intercourse, were to raise the curtain which happily conceals his private life from general execration! What, if we were even to point out, and comment on, facts and circumstances which are publicly notorious, and beheld by every one, but our mole-eyed contemporary—what if we were to print the following effusion, which we received while we were writing the commencement of this article from a talented fellow-townsmen and correspondent:

"‘LINES TO A BRASS POT."

"Oh Pott! if you’d known
How false she’d have grown,
When you heard the marriage-bells tinkle;
You’d have done then, I vow,
What you cannot help, now,
And handed her over to W

“What,” said Mr. Pott, solemnly—

“What rhymes to ‘tinkle,’ villain?"
What rhymes to ‘tinkle!’ said Mrs. Pott, whose entrance at the moment forestalled the reply. "What rhymes to tinkle! Why, Winkle, I should conceive:" and saying this, Mrs. Pott smiled sweetly on the distracted Pickwickian, and extended her hand towards him. The agitated young man would have accepted it, in his confusion, had not Pott indignantly interposed.

"Back, Ma’am—back," said the editor.

"Take his hand before my very face!"

"Mr. P."

"said his astonished lady.

"Wretched woman, look here," exclaimed the husband. "Look here, Ma’am—Lines to a brass Pot, Ma’am—Brass Pot, that’s me, Ma’am. False she’d have grown; that’s you, Ma’am—you." With this outburst of rage, which was not unaccompanied with something like a tremble, at the expression of his wife’s face, Mr. Pott dashed the current number of the Ratman’s Hill Independent at her feet.

"Upon my word, Sir," said the astonished Mrs. Pott, stooping to pick up the paper.

"Upon my word, Sir."

Mr. Pott winced beneath the contumacious gaze of his wife. He had made a desperate struggle to screw up his courage; but it was fast coming unscrewed again.

There appears nothing very tremendous in this little sentence, "Upon my word, Sir," when it comes to be read; but the tone of voice in which it was delivered; and the look that accompanied it, both seeming to bear reference to some revenge to be thereafter wreaked upon the head of Pott, produced their full effect upon him. The most unskilful observer could have detected in his troubled countenance, a readiness to resign his Wellington boots to any efficient substitute who would have consented to stand in them at that moment.

Mrs. Pott read the paragraph, uttered a loud shriek, and threw herself at full length on the hearth-rug, screaming, and tiping it with the heels of her shoes, in a manner which could leave no doubt of the propriety of her feelings on the occasion.

"He has said an unkind Pott,—’I didn’t say I believed it;—I’ but the unfortunate man’s voice was drowned in the screaming of his partner.

"Mrs. Pott, let me entreat you, my dear Ma’am, to compose yourself," said Mr. Winkle; but the shrieks and tappings were louder, and more frequent than ever.

"My dear," said Mr. Pott, "I am very sorry. If you won’t consider your own health, consider me, my dear; We shall have a crowd round the house.” But the more strenuously Mr. Pott entreated, the more vehemently the screams poured forth.

Very fortunately, however, attached to Mr. Pott’s person was a body-guard of one—a young lady whose engaging employment was to preside over her toilet, but who rendered herself useful in a variety of ways, and in none more so than in the particular department of constant attendance and abetting her mistress in every wish and inclination opposed to the desires of the unhappy Pott. The screams reached this young lady’s ears in due course; and brought her to the room with a speed which threatened to derange materially the very exquisite arrangement of her cap and ruffles.

"Oh, my dear, dear mistress!" exclaimed the body-guard, kneeling franticly by the side of the prostrate Mrs. Pott. "Oh, my dear mistress, what is the matter?"

"Your master—your brutal master," murmured the patient. Pott was evidently giving way.

"It’s a shame," said the body-guard, reproachfully. "I know he’ll be the death on you, Ma’am—Poor dear thing!"

He gave way more. The opposite party followed up the attack.

"Oh, don’t leave me—don’t leave me; Goodwin," murmured Mrs. Pott, clutching at the wrists of the said Goodwin, an hysterical jerk. "You’re the only person that’s kind to me; Goodwin."

At this affecting appeal, Goodwin got up a little domestic tragedy of her own, shed tears copiously.

"Never, Ma’am—never," said Goodwin.

"Oh, Sir, you should be careful—you should, indeed; you don’t know what harm you may do Missis; you’ll be sorry for it one day, I know—I’ve always said so..."

The unlucky Pott looked dimly on, but said nothing.

"Goodwin," said Mrs. Pott, in a low voice.

"Ma’am," said Goodwin.

"If you only knew how I have loved that man—"

"Don’t distress yourself by recollecting it, Ma’am," said the body-guard.

"I flirted very frightened. It was time for a clergyman."

"And now," sobbed Mrs. Pott—"now, after all, to be treated in this way; to be reproached and insulted in the presence of a third party, and that party almost a stranger. But I will not submit to it. Goodwin continued Mrs. Pott, raising herself in the arms of her attendant. "My brother, the Lieutenant, shall interfere. I’ll be supported, Goodwin."

"It would certainly serve him right, Ma’am," said Goodwin.

Whatever thoughts the threat of a separation might have awakened in Mr. Pott’s mind, he forbore to give utterance to them.
and contented himself by saying, with great
sweating.

"My dear, will you hear me?"
A fresh train of sobs was the only reply,
as Mrs. Pott grew more hysterical, request-
ed to be informed why she was ever born,
and required sundry other pieces of infor-
mation of a similar description.

"My dear," remonstrated Mr. Pott, "do
not give way to these sensitive feelings... I
never believed that the paragraph had any
foundation, my dear—impossible. I was
only angry, my dear—I may say outrageous
—with the Independent people for daring to
insert it; that's all!" and Mr. Pott cast an
improving look at the innocent cause of the
mischief, as if to entreat him to say nothing
about the serpent.

"And what steps, Sir, do you mean to
take to obtain redress?" inquired Mr. Winkle,
gaining courage as he saw Pott losing
it.

"Oh, Goodwin," observed Mrs. Pott,
"does he mean to horsewhip the editor of
the Independent—does he, Goodwin?"

"Hush, hush, ma'am; pray keep your-
self quiet," replied the body-guard. "I
dare say he will, if you wish it, ma'am."

"Certainly," said Pott, as his wife
srowned decided symptoms of going off
again—"of course I shall."

"When, Goodwin,—when?" said Mrs.
Pott, still undecided about the going off.

"Immediately, of course," said Mr. Pott;
"before the day is out."

"Oh, Goodwin," resumed Mrs. Pott,
"it's the only way of meeting the slander,
and setting me right with the world."

"Certainly, ma'am," replied Goodwin,
"no man as is a man, ma'am, could refuse
to do it."

So as the hysterics were still hovering
about, Mr. Pott said once more, that he
would do it; but Mrs. Pott was so over-
come at the bare idea of ever having been
suspected, that she was half-a-dozen times
on the very verge of a relapse, and most
unquestionably would have gone off, had it
not been for the indefatigable efforts of the
assiduous Goodwin, and repeated enter-
tises for pardon from the conquered Pott;
and finally, that unhappy individual
had been frightened and snubbed down to his
proper level, Mrs. Pott recovered, and they
went to breakfast.

"You will not allow this base newspaper
slander to shorten your stay here, Mr. Winkle?" said Mrs. Pott, smiling through the
traces of her tears.

"I hope not," said Mr. Pott, actuated as
be spoke by an internal wish that his visitor
would choke himself with the morsel of
dry toast which he was raising to his lips.

at the moment; and so terminate his stay
effectually.

"I hope not."

"You are very good," said Mr. Winkle;
"but a letter has been received from Mr.
Pickwick—so I learn by a note from Mr.
Tupman, which was brought up to my bed-
room door, this morning— in which he re-
quests us to join him at Bury, to-day; and
we are to leave by the coach at noon."

"But you will come back?" said Mrs.
Pott.

"Oh, certainly," replied Mr. Winkle.
"You are quite sure?" said Mrs. Pott,
stalking a tender look at her visitor.

"Quite," responded Mr. Winkle.
The breakfast passed off in silence, for
each member of the party was brooding
over his, or her, own personal grievances;
Mrs. Pott was regretting the loss of a beau;
Mr. Pott his rash pledge to horsewhip the
Independent; and Mr. Winkle his having
placed himself in so awkward a situation.
Noon approached, and after many adieux
and promises to return, he tore himself
away.

"If he ever comes back, I'll poison him,"
thought Mr. Pott, as he turned into the lit-
tle back office where he prepared his thun-
derbolts.

"If I ever do come back, and mix myself
up with these people again," thought Mr.
Winkle, as he waved his way to the Pea-
cock, "I shall deserve to be horsewhipped
myself—that's all."

His friends were ready, the coach was
nearly so, and in half an hour they were
proceeding on their journey, along the road
over which Mr. Pickwick and Sam had so
recently travelled, and of which, as we
have already said something, we do not feel
called upon to extract Mr. Snodgrass's po-
etical and beautiful description.

Mr. Weller was standing at the door
of the Angel, ready to receive them, and by
that gentleman they were ushered to the
apartment of Mr. Pickwick, where, to the
no small surprise of Mr. Winkle and Mr.
Snodgrass, and to the no small embarrass-
ment of Mr. Tupman, they found old Ward-
all and Trundle.

"How are you?" said the old man,
grasping Mr. Tupman's hand. "Don't hang
back, or look sentimental about it; it can't
be helped, old fellow. For her sake, I wish
you'd had her; for your own, I'm very
glad you have not. A young fellow like
you will do better one of these days—eh?"

With this consolation, old Wardall slapped
Mr. Tupman on the back, and laughed
heartily.

"Well, and how are you, my fine fel-
lows?" said the old gentleman, shaking
hands with Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.
at the same time. "I have just been telling Pickwick that we must have you all down at Christmas. We're going to have a wedding—a real wedding this time."

"A wedding!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass, turning very pale.

"Yes, a wedding. But don't be frightened," said the good-humoured old man; "it's only Trundle there, and Bella."

"Oh, is that all?" said Mr. Snodgrass, relieved from a painful doubt which had fallen heavily on his breast. "Give you joy, Sir. How is Joe?"

"Oh, he—very well," replied the old gentleman. "Sleepy as ever."

"And your mother, and the clergyman, and all of 'em?"

"Quite well."

"Where," said Mr. Tupman, with an effort—"where is—she, Sir?" and he turned away his head, and covered his eyes with his hand.

"She!" said the old gentleman, with a knowing shake of the head. "Do you mean my single relative—oh?"

Mr. Tupman, by a nod, intimated that his question applied to the disappointed Rachel.

"Oh, she's gone away," said the old gentleman. "She's living at a relation's, far enough off. She couldn't bear to see the girls, so I let her go. But come, here's the dinner. You must be hungry after your ride. I am, without any ride at all: so let us fall to."

Ample justice was done to the meal; and when they were seated round the table, after it had been disposed of, Mr. Pickwick, to the intense horror and indignation of his followers, related the adventure he had undergone, and the success which had attended the base artefact of the diabolical Jingle.

"And the attack of rheumatism which I caught in that garden," said Mr. Pickwick, in conclusion, "renders me lame at this moment."

"I, too, have had something of an adventure," said Mr. Winkle, with a smile; and at the request of Mr. Pickwick, he detailed the malicious libel of the Eatsamssil Independent, and the consequent excitement of their friend, the editor.

Mr. Pickwick's brow darkened, during the recital. His friends observed it, and, when Mr. Winkle had concluded, maintained a profound silence. Mr. Pickwick struck the table emphatically with his clenched fist; and spoke as follows:—

"Is it not a wonderful circumstance," said Mr. Pickwick, "that we seem destined to enter no man's house, without involving him in some degree of trouble! Does it not, I ask, bespeak the indiscernition, or, worse than that, the blackness of heart—that I should say so!—of my followers, that, beneath whatever roof they locate, they disturb the peace of mind and happiness of some confiding female? Is it not, I say?"

Mr. Pickwick would in all probability have gone on for some time, had not the entrance of Sam with a letter, caused him to break off in his eloquent discourse. He passed his handkerchief across his forehead, took off his spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again; and his voice had recovered its wonted softness of tone, when he said,—

"What have you there, Sam?"

"Called at the post-office, just now, and found this here letter as has laid there for two days," replied Mr. Weller. "It's sealed with a wafer, and directed in round hand."

"I don't know this hand," said Mr. Pickwick, opening the letter. "Mercy on us! what's this! It must be a jest; it—can't be true."

"What's the matter?" was the general inquiry.

"Nobody dead, is there?" said Wardle, alarmed at the horror in Mr. Pickwick's countenance.

Mr. Pickwick made no reply, but pushing the letter across the table, and desiring Mr. Tupman to read it aloud, fell back in his chair with a look of vacant astonishment quite startling to behold.

Mr. Tupman, with a trembling voice, read the letter, of which the following is a copy:

Freeman's Court, Cornwall, August 29th, 1830.

Mr. Bardell against Pickwick.

Sir,

Having been instructed by Mrs. Martha Bardell, to commence an action against you, for a breach of promise of marriage, for which the plaintiff lays her damages at fifteen hundred pounds, we beg to inform you that a writ has been issued against you in this suit, in the Court of Common Pleas, and request to know, by return of post, the name of your attorney in London, who will accept service thereof.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

Dobson and Fogg.

Mr. Samuel Pickwick.

There was something so impressive in the mute astonishment with which each man regarded his neighbour, and every man regarded Mr. Pickwick, that all seemed afraid to speak. "The silence was at length broken by Mr. Tupman."

"Dobson and Fogg," he repeated, mechanically.
"Bardell and Pickwick," said Mr. Snodgrass, musing.

"Peace of mind and happiness of confiding females," murmured Mr. Winkle, with an air of abstraction.

"It's a conspiracy," said Mr. Pickwick, at length recovering the power of speech;—"a base conspiracy between these two grasping attorneys, Dodson and Fogg. Mrs. Bardell would never do it;—she hasn't the heart to do it;—she hasn't the case to do it. Ridiculous—ridiculous."

"Of her heart," said Wardle, with a smile, "you should certainly be the best judge. I don't wish to discourage you, but I should certainly say, that, of her case, Dodson and Fogg are far better judges than any of us can be."

"It's a vile attempt to extort money," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I hope it is," said Wardle, with a short, dry laugh.

"Whoever heard me address her in any way but that in which a lodger would address his landlady?" continued Mr. Pickwick, with great vehemence. "Whoever saw me with her? Not even my friends here."

"Except on one occasion," said Mr. Tupman.

Mr. Pickwick changed colour.

"Ah!" said Wardle. "Well, that's important. There was nothing suspicious then, I suppose?"

Mr. Tupman glanced sidelong at his leader. "Why," he said, "there was nothing suspicious; but—I don't know how it happened, mind—she certainly was reclining in his arms."

"Gracious powers!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, as the recollection of the scene in question struck forcibly upon him;—"what a dreadful instance of the force of circumstances! So she was—so she was."

"And our friend was soothing her anguish," said Mr. Winkle, rather maliciously.

"So I was," said Mr. Pickwick. "I won't deny it. So I was."

"Hallo!" said Wardle; "for a case in which there's nothing suspicious, this looks rather queer—eh, Pickwick—eh? Ah, sly dog—sly dog!" and he laughed till the glasses on the sideboard rang again.

"What a dreadful conjunction of appearances!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, resting his chin upon his hands. "Winkle—Tupman—I beg your pardon for the observation—" and he readjusted the vicissitudes of circumstances, and I the greatest."

With this apology, Mr. Pickwick buried his head in his hands, and ruminated; while Wardle measured out a regular circle of nods and winks, addressed to the other members of the company.

"I'll have it explained, though," said Mr. Pickwick, raising his head and hammering the table. "I'll see this Dodson and Fogg. I'll go to London to-morrow!"

"Not to-morrow," said Wardle; "you're too lame."

"Well then, next day."

"Next day is the first of September, and you're pledged to ride out with us as far as Sir Geoffrey Manning's grounds, at all events, and to meet us at lunch, if you don't take the field."

"Well then, the day after," said Mr. Pickwick; "Thursday—Sam."

"Sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Take two places outside to London, on Thursday morning, for yourself and me."

"Very well, Sir."

Mr. Weller left the room, and departed slowly on his errand, with his hands in his pocket, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Rum feller, the hemperor," said Mr. Weller, as he walked slowly up the street. "Think of his makin' up to that ere Mrs. Bardell—with a little boy, too! Always the way with these here old 'uns howa'ever, as is such stoody goers to look at. I didn't think he'd ha' done it, though—I didn't think he'd ha' done it." And musing on the steps towards the looking-office.

CHAPTER XX.

A pleasant day, with an unpleasant termination.

The birds, who, happily for their own peace of mind, and personal comfort, were in blissful ignorance of the preparations which had been making to astonish them, on the first of September, hailed it no doubt, as one of the pleasantest mornings they had seen that season. Many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble with all the finicking coxcombry of youth, and many an older one who watched his leviety out of his little round eye, with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and a few hours afterwards were laid low upon the earth. But we grow affecting: let us proceed.

In plain common-place matter-of-fact, then, it was a fine morning—so fine that you would scarcely have believed that the few months of an English summer had yet flown by. Hedgerows, fields, and trees, hill and moorland, presented to the eye their ever-varying shades of deep rich green;
sagen a leaf had fallen; scarce a sprinkle of yellow, mingled with the hues of summer, warned you that autumn had begun. The sky was cloudless; the sun shone out bright and warm; the song of birds, and hum of myriads of summer insects, filled the air; and the cottage gardens, crowded with flowers of every rich and beautiful tint, sparkled in the heavy dew, like beds of glittering jewels. Every thing here bore the stamp of summer, and none of its beautiful colours had yet faded from the dye.

Such was the morning, when an open carriage, in which were three Pickwicks, (Mr. Snodgrass having preferred to remain at home,) Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Trundle, with Sam Weller on the box beside the driver, pulled up by a gate at the road-side, before which stood a tall, raw-boned gamekeeper, and a half-booted, leather-legged boy; each bearing a bag of capacious dimension, and accompanied by a brace of pointers.

"I say," whispered Mr. Winkle to Wardle, as the man let down the steps, "they don't suppose we’re going to kill game enough to fill those bags, do they?"

"Fill them!" exclaimed old Wardle. "Bless you, yes! You shall fill one, and I the other; and when we’re done with them; the pockets of our shooting-jackets will hold as much more."

Mr. Winkle dismounted without saying any thing in reply to this observation; but he thought within himself, that if the party remained in the open air, till he had filled one of the bags, they stood a considerable chance of catching tolerable cads in the head.

"Hi, Juno, tase — hi, old girl; down, Daph, down," said Wardle, caressing the dogs. "Sir Geoffrey still in Scotland, of course, Martin?"

The tall gamekeeper replied in the affirmative, and looked with some surprise from Mr. Winkle, who was holding his gun, as if he wished his coat-packet to save him the trouble of pulling the trigger, to Mr. Tupman, who was holding his, as if he were afraid of it — as there is no earthly reason to doubt that he really was.

"My friends are not much in the way of this sort of thing yet, Martin," said Wardle, noticing the look. "Live and learn, you know. They'll be good shots one of these days. I beg my friend Winkle’s pardon, though; he has had some practice."

Mr. Winkle smiled feebly over his blue neckerchief in acknowledgment of the compliment, and got himself so mysteriously entangled with his gun, in his modest confusion, that if the piece had been loaded, he must inevitably have shot himself dead upon the spot.

"You mustn’t handle your piece in that carew eye, when you come to have the charge in it, Sir," said the tall gamekeeper, gravely, "or I’m damned if you won’t make said meat of some one us."

Mr. Winkle, thus admonished, abruptly altered his position, and in so doing, succeeded in bringing the barrel into proper short contact with Mr. Weller’s head.

"Hallo!" said Sam, picking up his hat, which had been knocked off, and rubbing his temple. "Hallo, Sir, if you comes it this way, you’ll fill one o’ them bags, and something to spare, at one fire."

Here the leather-legged boy laughed very heartily, and then tried to look as if it was somebody else, whereas Mr. Weller frowned majestically.

"Where did you tell the boy to meet us with the snack, Martin?" inquired Wardle.

"Side of one tree hill, near we’re o’clock, Sir."

"That’s not Sir Geoffrey’s land, is it?"

"No, Sir; but it’s close by it. It’s Captain Boldwig’s land; but there’ll be nobody to interrupt us, and there’s a fine bit of turf there."

"Very well," said old Wardle. "Now the sooner we’re off the better. Will you join us at twelve, then, Pickwick?"

Mr. Pickwick was particularly desirous to view the sport, the more especially as he was rather anxious in respect of Mr. Winkle’s life and limbs. On so inviting a morning, too, it was very tantalizing to turn back, and leave his friends to enjoy themselves. It was, therefore, with a very rueful air that he replied —

"Why, I suppose I must."

"An’t the gentleman a shot, Sir?" inquired the long gamekeeper.

"No," replied Weller; "and he’s lame besides."

"I should very much like to go," said Mr. Pickwick — "very much."

There was a short pause of consideration.

"There’s a barrow t’other side of the hedge," said the boy. "If the gentleman’s servant would wheel along the paths, he could keep nigh to us, and we could hit ’em over the stiles and that."

"The worry thing," said Mr. Weller, who was a party interested, insomuch as he ardently longed to see the sport. "The worry thing. Well said, Small-check; I’ll have it out, in a minute."

But here a difficulty arose. The long gamekeeper resolutely protested against the introduction into a shooting party of a gentleman in a barrow, as a gross vi-
It was a great objection, but not an insurmountable one. The gamekeeper having been coaxed and fed, and having, moreover, eased his mind by "punching the head of the inventious youth who had first suggested the use of the machine, Mr. Pickwick was placed in it, and off the party set; Wardle and the long gamekeeper leading the way, and Mr. Pickwick in the barrow, propelled by Sam, bringing up the rear.

"Stop, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when they had got half across the first field.

"What's the matter now!" said Wardle.

"I won't suffer this barrow to be moved another step," said Mr. Pickwick, absolutely, "unless Winkle carries that gun of his in a different manner."

"How am I to carry it!" said the wretched Winkle.

"Carry it with the muzzle of it to the ground," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"It's so unsportsman-like," reasoned Winkle.

"I don't care whether it's unsportsman-like or not," replied Mr. Pickwick; "I am not going to be shot in a wheelbarrow, for the sake of appearances, to please any body."

"I know the gentleman; 'Il put that ere charge into somebody afore he's done," growled the long man.

"Well, well—I don't mind," said poor Winkle, turning his gun stock uppermost; "there."

"Any thin' for a quiet life," said Mr. Weller; and on they went again.

"Stop," said Mr. Pickwick, after they had gone a few yards further.

"What now?" said Wardle.

"That gun of Tupman's is not safe: I know it isn't," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh! What! Not safe!" said Mr. Tupman, in a tone of great alarm.

"Not as you are carrying it," said Mr. Pickwick. "I am very sorry to make any further objections, but I cannot consent to go on, unless you carry it as Winkle does his."

"I think you had better, Sir," said the long gamekeeper, "or you're quite as likely to lodge the charge into your own vestcoat as in any body else's."

Mr. Tupman, with the most obliterating haste, placed his piece in the position required, and the party moved on again; the two amateurs marching with reversed arms, like a couple of privates at a royal funeral.

The dogs came suddenly to a dead stop, and the party advancing stealthily at a single pace, stopped too.

"What's the matter with the dogs' legs!" whispered Mr. Winkle. "How queer they're standing."

"Hush, can't you!" replied Wardle, softly. "Don't you see they're making a point!"

"Making a point!" said Mr. Winkle, staring about him, as if he expected to discover some particular beauty in the landscape, which the sagacious animals were calling special attention to. "Making a point! What are they pointing at!"

"Keep your eyes open," said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. "Now then."

There was a sharp whirring noise, that made Mr. Winkle start back as if he had been shot himself. Bang, bang, went a couple of guns—the smoke swept quickly away over the field, and curled into the air.

"Where are they!" said Mr. Winkle, in a state of the highest excitement, turning round and round in all directions. "Where are they? Tell me when to fire. Where are they—where are they?"

"Where are they!" said Wardle, taking up a brace of birds which the dogs had deposited at his feet. "Where are they? Why, here they are."

"No, no; I mean the others," said the bewildered Winkle.

"Far enough off, by this time," replied Wardle, coolly reloading his gun.

"We shall very likely be up with another covey in five minutes," said the long gamekeeper. "If the gentleman begins to fire now, perhaps he'll just get the shot out of the barrel by the time they rise."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Weller. "Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionating his follower's confusion and embarrassment.

"Sir."

"Don't laugh!"

"Certainly not, Sir."

"By way of indemnification, Mr. Weller contorted his features from behind the wheelbarrow, for the exclusive amusement of the boy with the leggings, who thereupon burst into a boisterous laugh, and was summarily cuff'd by the long gamekeeper, who wasted a pretext for turning round, to hide his own merriment."

"Bravo, old fellow!" said Wardle to Mr. Tupman; "you fired that time, at all events."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Tupman, with conscious pride. "I let it off."

"Well done. You'll hit something next time, if you look sharp. Very easy, an't it?"

"Yes, it's very easy," said Mr. Tupman.

"How it hurts one's shoulder, though. It
nearly knocked me backwards. I had no idea these small fire-arms kicked so."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, smiling;
"You'll get used to it, in time. Now, then— all ready—all right with the barrow there?"

"All right, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.
"Come along then."

"Hold hard, Sir," said Sam, raising the barrow.

"Ay, ay," replied Mr. Pickwick; and on they went, as briskly as need be.

"Keep that barrow back now," cried Wardle, when he had been hoisted over a stile into another field, and Mr. Pickwick had been deposited in it once more.

"All right Sir," replied Mr. Weller, pausing.

"Now, Winkle," said the old gentleman, "follow me softly, and don't be too late this time."

"Never fear," said Mr. Winkle. "Are they pointing?"

"No, no; not now. Quietly now, quietly."

On they crept, and very quietly they would have advanced, if Mr. Winkle, in the performance of some very intricate evolutions with his gun, had not accidentally fired, at the most critical moment, over the boy's head, exactly in the very spot where the tall man's brain would have been, had he been there instead.

"Why, what on earth did you do that for?" said old Wardle, as the birds flew unharmed away.

"I never saw such a gun in my life," replied poor Winkle, looking at the lock, as if that would do any good. "It goes off, of its own accord. It will do it."

"Will do it!" echoed Wardle, with something of irritation in his manner. "I wish it would kill something of its own accord!"

"It will do that afore long, Sir," observed the tall man, in a low, prophetic voice.

"What do you mean by that observation, Sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, angrily.

"Never mind, Sir—never mind," replied the long gamekeeper;— "I've no family myself, Sir; and this here boy's mother will get something handsome from Sir Geoffrey, if he's killed on his land."

Load again, Sir—load again."

"Take away his gun," cried Mr. Pickwick from the barrow, horror-stricken at the long man's dark insinuations. "Take away his gun, do you hear, somebody?"

Nobody, however, volunteered to obey the command; and Mr. Winkle, after darting a rebellious glance at Mr. Pickwick, reloaded his gun, and proceeded onwards with the rest.

We are bound, on the authority of Mr. Pickwick, to state that Mr. Tupman's mode of proceeding evinced far more of prudence and deliberation, than that adopted by Mr. Winkle. Still, this by no means detracts from the great authority of the latter gentleman, on all matters connected with the field; because, as Mr. Pickwick beautifully observes, it has somehow or other happened, from time immemorial, that many of the best and ablest philosophers, who have been perfect lights of science in matters of theory, have been wholly unable to reduce them to practice.

Mr. Tupman's process, like many of our most sublime discoveries, was extremely simple. With the quickness and penetration of a man of genius, he had at once observed that the two great points to be attained were—first, to discharge his piece without injury to himself, and, secondly, to do so, without danger to the by-standers;—obviously, the best thing to do, after surmounting the difficulty of firing at all, was to shut his eyes firmly, and fire into the air.

On one occasion, after performing this feat, Mr. Tupman, on opening his eyes, beheld a plump partridge in the very act of falling wounded to the ground. He was just on the point of congratulating Wardle on his invariable success, when that gentleman advanced towards him, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

"Tupman," said the old gentleman, "you singled out that particular bird!"

"No," said Mr. Tupman—"no."

"You did," said Wardle. "I saw you do it—I observed you pick him out—I noticed you as you raised your piece to take aim; and I will say this, that the best shot in existence could not have done it more beautifully. You are an older hand at this, than I thought you, Tupman—you have been out before."

It was in vain for Mr. Tupman to protest, with a smile of self-denial, that he never had. The very smile was taken as evidence to the contrary; and from that time forth, his reputation was established. It is not the only reputation that has been acquired as easily, nor are such fortunate circumstances confined to partridge-shooting.

Meanwhile, Mr. Winkle, flushed, and blazed, and smoked away, without producing any material results worthy of being noted down; sometimes expending his charge in mid-air, and at others sending it skimming along so near the surface of the ground, as to place the lives of the two dogs on a rather uncertain and precarious tenure. As a display of fancy-shooting, it was extremely varied and curious, an exhibition of firing with any precise object, it was, upon the whole, perhaps a failure. It is an established axiom, that "every but-
but how its billy?" If it apply in an equal
degree to shots, those of Mr. Winkle were
unfortunate foundlings, deprived of their
natural rights, cast loose upon the world,
and billeted nowhere.

"Woll," said Wardle, walking up to the
side of the barrow, and wiping the streams
of perspiration from his jolly red face;
smoking day, isn't it?"

"It is indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"The sun is tremendously hot, even to me.
I don't know how you must feel it."

"Why," said the old gentleman, "pretty
hot. It's past twelve, though. You see
that green hill there?"

"Certainly."

"That's the place where we are to lunch;
and, by Jove, there's the boy with the bas-
et, punctual as clock-work."

"So he is," said Mr. Pickwick, bright-
ening up. "Good boy, that. I'll give him
a skilling, presently. Now, then, Sam,
wheel away."

"Hold on, Sir," said Mr. Weller, invig-
orated with the prospect of refreshments.

"Out of the way, young leatherists. If you
would my precious life don't upset me, as
the gent'men said to the driver, when they
was a carryin' him to Tyburn." And,
quickening his pace to a sharp run, Mr. Weller
wheel'd his master to the green hill,
shot him dexterously out by the very side
of the basket, and proceeded to unpack it
with the utmost despatch.

"Weal pie," said Mr. Weller, soliloqui-
zing, as he arranged the estables on the grass.

"Very good thing is a weal pie, when
you know the lady as made it; and is quite
sure it ain't kittens; and after all though,
where's the odds, when they're so like weal
that the very piemmen themselves don't know
the difference!"

"Don't they, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"They they, Sir," replied Mr. Weller,
touching his hat. "I lodged in the same
house with a plotman once, Sir, and a very
nice man he was—reglar clever chap, too
—and makes pies o' any thing, he could.

"What a number o' cats you keep, Mr.
Brooks," says I, when I'd got intimate with
him. "Ah," says he, "I do—a good many,"
says he: 'You must be very fond o' cats,'
says I. "Oh, other people is," says he, a wink
in me; 'they ain't in season till the winter
though," says he: "Not in season!" says I. "No," says he, 'fruits in, cats
in out.' Why, what do you mean?" says I.
"Mean?" says he. 'That I'll never be's party to the combination o' the butch-
ers to keep up the prices o' meat," says he.

"Mr. Weller," says he, squeezing my hand
warm hard; and whispering in my ear—
'don't mention what I've seen, but it's the
rest of us as does it. They're all mad o'
tip of a post, and practise at it, beginning at a short distance, and lengthening it by degrees. I understand it’s a capital prac-
tice.”

“T’m a know a gent’man, Sir,” said Mr. Wellar, “as did that, and begun at two yards; but he never tried it on again; for he blew the bird right clean away at the first fire, and nobody ever seed a feather on him afterwards.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Sir,” replied Mr. Wellar.

“Have the goodness to reserve your anecdotes, till they are called for.”

“Certainly, Sir.”

Here Mr. Wellar winked the eye which was not concealed by the beer-can he was raising to his lips, with such exquisite facetiousness, that the two boys went into spontaneous convulsions, and even the long fangs of the smiling.

“Well, that certainly is most capital cock-punch,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking earnestly at the boys; “and the day is extremely warm, and—Tupman, my dear friend, a glass of punch?”

“With the greatest delight,” replied Mr. Tupman; and having drunk that glass, Mr. Pickwick took another, just to see whether there was any orange-peel in the punch, because orange-peel always disagreed with him; and finding that there was none, Mr. Pickwick took another glass to the health of their absent friend, and then felt himself imperatively called upon to propose another in honour of the punch-comounder, unknown.

This constant succession of glasses produced considerable effect upon Mr. Pickwick; his countenance beam’d with the most sunny smiles, laughter played around his lips, and good-humoured merriment twinkled in his eye. Yielding by degrees to the influence of the exciting liquid, rendered more so by the heat, Mr. Pickwick expressed a strong desire to recollect a song which he had heard in his infancy, and the attempt proving abortive, sought to stimulate his memory with more glasses of punch, which appeared to have a quite con-
nuous effect: for, from forgetting the words of the song, he began to forget how to articulate any words at all; and finally, 

The basket having been re-packed, and it being found perfectly impossible to awaken Mr. Pickwick from his torpor, some discus-
tion took place whether it would be better for Mr. Wellar to wheel his master back again, or to leave him where he was, until they should be all ready to return. The latter course was, at length, decided on; and as their further expedition was not to exceed an hour’s duration, and as Mr. Wel-

That Mr. Pickwick would have continued to snore in the shade until his friends came back, or in default thereof, until the shades of evening had fallen on the landscape, there appears no reasonable cause to doubt; always supposing that he had been suffered to remain there, in peace. But he was not suffered to remain there in peace. And this is what prevented him.

Captain Boldwig was a little fierce man in a stiff black neckerchief and blue suit, who, when he did descend to walk about his property, did it in company with a thick rattan stick with a brass ferrule, and a gardener, and sub-gardener with rack faces, to whom (the gardener, not the stick) Captain Boldwig gave his orders with all due grandeur and ferocity: for Captain Boldwig’s wife’s sister had married a Marquis, and the Captain’s house was a villa, and his land “grounds,” and it was all very high, and mighty, and great.

Mr. Pickwick had not been asleep an hour, when little Captain Boldwig, followed by the two gardeners, came stumbling along as fast as his size and importance would let him; and when he came near the oak-tree, Captain Boldwig paused, and drew a long breath, and looked at the prospect, as if he thought the prospect ought to be highly gratified at having him to take notice of it; and then he struck the ground emphatically with his stick, and summoned the head-gardener.

“Hunt,” said Captain Boldwig.

“Yes, Sir,” said the gardener.

“Roll this place to-morrow morning—do you hear, Hunt?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And take care that you keep me this place in good order—do you hear, Hunt?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And remind me to have a board dont about trespassers, and spring-guns, and all that sort of thing, to keep the common people out. Do you hear, Hunt; do you hear?”

“I’ll not forget it, Sir.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” said the other man, advancing, with his hand to his hat. "Well, Wilkins, what’s the matter with you?” said Captain Boldwig.

“I beg your pardon, Sir—but I think there have been trespassers here to-day.”

“Ha!” said the Captain, scowling around him.
"Yes, Sir—they have been dining here, I think, Sir."  
"Why, damn their audacity, so they have," said Captain Boldewig, as the crumbs and fragments that were strewn upon the grass, met his eye. "They have been actually devouring their food here. I wish I had the vagabonds here!" said the Captain clenching the thick stick. 
"I wish I had the vagabonds here," said the Captain, wrathfully. 
"Beg your pardon, Sir," said Wilkins, "but—"  
"But what! Eh!" roared the Captain; and following the timid glance of Wilkins, his eyes encountered the wheelbarrow and Mr. Pickwick.  
"Who are you, you rascal!" said the Captain, administering several pokes to Mr. Pickwick's body with the thick stick.  
"What's your name?"  
"Cold punch," murmured Mr. Pickwick, as he sunk to sleep again.  
"What!" demanded Captain Boldewig.  
No reply.  
"What did he say his name was?" asked the Captain.  
"Punch, I think, Sir," replied Wilkins.  
"That's his impudence—that's his confined impudence," said Captain Boldewig.  
"He's only feigning to be asleep now," said the Captain, in a high passion. "He's drunk; he's a drunken plebeian. Wheel him away, Wilkins, wheel him away directly."  
"Where shall I wheel him to, Sir?" inquired Wilkins, with great timidity.  
"Wheel him to the Devil," replied Captain Boldewig.  
"Very well, Sir," said Wilkins.  
"Stay," said the Captain.  
Wilkins stopped accordingly.  
"Wheel him," said the Captain, "wheel him to the pound; and let us see whether he calls himself Punch, when he comes to himself. He shall not bully me—he shall not bully me. Wheel him away."  
Away Mr. Pickwick was wheeled in compliance with this imperious mandate; and the great Captain Boldewig, swelling with indignation, proceeded on his walk.  
Inexpressible was the astonishment of the little party when they returned, to find that Mr. Pickwick had disappeared, and taken the wheelbarrow with him. It was the most mysterious and unaccountable thing that was ever heard of. For a lame man to have got upon his legs without any previous notice, and walked off, would have been most extraordinary; but when it came to his wheeling a heavy barrow before him, by way of amusement, it grew positively miraculous. They searched every nook and corner round, together and separately; they shouted, whistled, laughed, called—and all with the same result. Mr. Pickwick was not to be found; and after some hours of fruitless search, they arrived at the unwelcome conclusion, that they must go home without him.  
Meanwhile Mr. Pickwick had been wheeled to the pound, and safely deposited therein, fast asleep in the wheelbarrow, to the immeasurable delight and satisfaction, not only of all the boys in the village, but three-fourths of the whole population, who had gathered round in expectation of his waking. If their most intense gratification had been awakened by seeing him wheeled in, how many hundred-fold was their joy increased when, after a few indistinct cries of "Sam!" he sat up in the barrow, and gazed with indescribable astonishment on the faces before him.  
A general shout was of course the signal of his having woke up; and his involuntary inquiry of "What's the matter?" occasioned another, louder than the first, if possible.  
"Here's a game," roared the populace.  
"Where am I?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.  
"In the pound," replied the mob.  
"How came I here? What was I doing? Where was I brought from?"  
"Boldewig—Captain Boldewig," was the only reply.  
"Let me out," cried Mr. Pickwick.  
"Where's my servant? Where are my friends?"  
"You ain't got no friends. Hurrah!"  
And then there came a turnip, and then a potatoe, and then an egg, with a few other little tokens of the playful disposition of the many-headed.  
How long this scene might have lasted, or how much Mr. Pickwick might have suffered, no one can tell, had not a carriage which was driving swiftly by, suddenly pulled up, from whence there descended old Wardle and Sam Weller, the former of whom, in far less time than it takes to write it, if not to read it, had made his way to Mr. Pickwick's side, and placed him in the vehicle, just as the latter had concluded the third and last round of a single combat with the town-beadle.  
"Run to the Justice's," cried a dozen of voices.  
"Ah, run away," said Mr. Weller, jumping up on the box. "Give my compliments—Mr. Weller's compliments—to the Justice, and tell him I've spoiled his beard, and that if he'll swear in a new 'un, I'll come back again to-morrow and spoil him Drive on, old fellow."  
"I'll give directions for the commencement of an action for false imprisonment.
against this Captain Boldwig, directly I get to London," said Mr. Pickwick, as soon as the carriage turned out of the town.

"We were trespassing, it seems," said Wardle.

"I don't care," said Mr. Pickwick, "I'll bring the action."

"No, you won't," said Wardle.

"I will by —" but as there was a humorous expression in Wardle's face, Mr. Pickwick checked himself, and said —

"Why not?"

"Because," said old Wardle, half bursting with laughter, "because they might turn round on some of us, and say we had taken too much cold punch."

Do what he would, a smile would come into Mr. Pickwick's face; the smile extended into a laugh, the laugh into a roar, and the roar became general. So, to keep up their good-humour, they stopped at the first road-side tavern they came to, and ordered a glass of brandy and water all round, with a magnum of extra strength, for Mr. Samuel Weller.

CHAPTER XXI.

Showing how Dodson and Fogg were men of business, and their clerks men of pleasure; showing also, what choice spirits assembled at the Magpie and Stump, and what a capital chapter the next one will be.

In the ground-floor front of a dingy house, at the very furthest end of Freeman's Court, Cornhill, sat the four clerks of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, two of his Majesty's Attorneys of the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Westminster, and solicitors of the High Court of Chancery: the aforesaid clerks catching about as favourable glimpses of Heaven's light and Heaven's sun, in the course of their daily labours, as a man might hope to do, were he placed at the bottom of a reasonably deep well; and without the opportunity of perceiving the stars in the day-time, which the latter sequestered situation affords.

The clerk's office of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg was a dark, mouldy, earthy-smelling room, with a high wainscoted partition to screen the clerks from the vulgar gaze: a couple of old wooden chairs, a very loud-ticking clock, an almanack, an umbrella-stand, a row of hat-pegs, and a few shelves, on which were deposited several ticketed bundles of dirty papers, some old deal boxes, with paper labels, and sundry decayed stone ink bottles of various shapes and sizes. There was a glass door leading into the passage which formed the entrance to the court, and on the outer side of this glass door, Mr. Pickwick, closely followed by Sam Weller, presented himself on the Friday morning succeeding the occurrence, of which a faithful narration is given in the last chapter.

"Come in, can't you," cried a voice from behind the partition, in reply to Mr. Pickwick's gentle tap at the door. And Mr. Pickwick and Sam entered accordingly.

"Mr. Dodson or Mr. Fogg at home, Sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, gently, advancing, hat in hand, toward the partition.

"Mr. Dodson ain't at home, and Mr. Fogg's particularly engaged," replied the voice; and at the same time the head to which the voice belonged, with a pen behind its ear, looked over the partition, and at Mr. Pickwick.

It was a ragged head, the sandy hair of which, scrupulously parted on one side, and fastened down with pomatum, was twisted into little semicircular tails round a flat face ornamented with a pair of small eyes, and garnished with a very dirty shirt-collar, and a rusty black stock.

"Mr. Dodson ain't at home, and Mr. Fogg's particularly engaged," said the man to whom the head belonged.

"When will Mr. Dodson be back, Sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Can't say."

"Will it be long before Mr. Fogg is disengaged, Sir?"

"Don't know."

Here the man proceeded to mend his pen with great deliberation, while another clerk, who was mixing a Seidlitz-powder under cover of the lid of the desk, laughed approvingly.

"I think I 'll wait," said Mr. Pickwick.

There was no reply; so Mr. Pickwick sat down unbidden, and listened to the loud ticking of the clock, and the murmured conversation of the clerks.

"That was a game, wasn't it?" said one of the gentlemen, in a brown coat and brass buttons, inky 'drabs, and bluchers, at the conclusion of some insalubrious relation of his previous evening's adventures.

"Devilish good — devilish good," said the Seidlitz-powder man.

"Tom Cummins was in the chair," said the man with the brown coat: "it was half-past four when I got to Somers Town, and then I was so precious drunk, that I couldn't find the place where the latch-key went in, and was obliged to knock up the old 'boman. I say, I wonder what old Fogg 'ud say, if he knew I should get the sack, I suppose — eh?"

At this humorous notion, all the clerks laughed in concert.

"There was such a game with Fogg.
best, this mornin'" said the man in the brown coat. "while Jack was up-stairs, sorting the papers, and you two were gone to the stamp-office. Fogg was down here opening the letter when that chap as we sued the writ against in Camberwell, you know, came in—what's his name again?"

"Ramsey," said the clerk who had spoken to Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, Ramsey—a precious seedy-looking customer. "Well, Sir," says old Fogg, looking at him very fiercely—you know his way—well, Sir, have you come to settle?"

"Yes, I have, Sir," said Ramsey, putting his hand in his pocket, and bringing out the money, the debt's two pound ten, and the costs three pound five, and here it is, Sir; and he sighed like bricks, as he lugged out the money, done up in a bit of blotting-paper. Old Fogg looked first at the money, and then at him, and then he coughed in his run way, so that I knew something was wrong. "You don't know there's a declaration filed, which increases the costs materially, I suppose!" said Fogg.

"You don't say that, Sir," said Ramsey, starting back; "the time was only out, last night, Sir."

"I do say it though," said Fogg, "my clerk's just gone to file it. Shan't Mr. Jackson come to file that declaration in Bullman and Ramsey, Mr. Wicks?" Of course I said yes, and then Fogg coughed again, and looked at Ramsey. "My God!" said Ramsey; "and here have I nearly driven myself mad, scraping this money together, and all to no purpose."

"None at all," said Fogg, coolly; "so you had better go back and scrape some more together, and bring it here in time."

"I can't get it, by God," said Ramsey, sticking the book with his fist. "Don't bully me, Sir," said Fogg, getting into a passion on purpose. "I am not bullying you, Sir," said Ramsey. "You are," said Fogg; "get out, Sir; get out of this office, Sir, and some back, Sir, when you know how to behave yourself." Well, Ramsey tried to speak, but Fogg wouldn't let him, so he put the money in his pocket, and sneaked out. The door was severely shut, when old Fogg turned round to me, with a sweet smile on his face, and drew the declaration out of his coat-pocket. "Here, Wicks," says Fogg, "take a cab, and go down to the Temple as quick as you can, and file that. The costs are quite safe, for he's a steady man with a large family, at a salary of five-and-twenty shillings a week, and if he gives us a warrant of attorney, as he must in the end, I know his employers will see it paid; so we may as well get all we can out of him, Mr. Wicks; it's a Christian act to do it, Mr. Wicks; for with his large family and small income, he'll be all the better for a good lesson against getting into debt,—won't he, Mr. Wicks, won't he?"—and he smiled so good-naturedly as he went away, that it was delightful to see him.

He is a capital man of business," said Wicks, in a tone of the deepest admiration, "capital, isn't he?"

The other three cordially subscribed to this opinion, and the anecdote afforded the most unlimited satisfaction.

"Nice men these here, Sir," whispered Mr. Weller to his master; "very nice notion of fun they has, Sir.

Mr. Pickwick nodded assent, and coughed to attract the attention of the young gentlemen behind the partition, who, having now relieved their minds by a little conversation among themselves, condescended to take some notice of the stranger.

"I wonder whether Fogg's disengaged now?" said Jackson.

"I'll see," said Mr. Wicks, dismounting leisurely from his stool. "What name shall I tell Mr. Fogg?"

"Pickwick," replied the illustrious subject of these memoirs.

Mr. Jackson departed up stairs on his errand, and immediately returned with a message that Mr. Fogg would see Mr. Pickwick in five minutes; and having delivered it, returned again to his desk.

"What did he say his name was?" whispered Wicks.

"Pickwick," replied Jackson; "it's the defendant in Bardell and Pickwick."

A sudden scraping of feet, mingled with the sound of suppressed laughter, was heard from behind the partition.

"They're a twiggin' you, Sir," whispered Mr. Weller.

"Twiggin' me, Sam?" replied Mr. Pickwick; "what do you mean by twiggin' me?"

Mr. Weller replied by pointing with his thumb over his shoulder: and Mr. Pickwick, on looking up, became sensible of the pleasing fact, that all the four clerks, with countenances expressive of the utmost amusement, and their heads thrust over the wooden screen, were minutely inspecting the figure and general appearance of the supposed trier with female hearts, and disturber of female happiness. On his looking up, the row of heads suddenly disappeared, and the sound of pens travelling at a furious rate over paper immediately succeeded.

A sudden ring at the bell which hung in the office, summoned Mr. Jackson to the apartments of Fogg, from whence he came back to say that he (Fogg) was ready to see Mr. Pickwick if he would step up stairs. Up stairs Mr. Pickwick did step accordingly, leaving Sam Weller below. The
room door of the one pair back, bore, inscribed in legible characters, the imposing words "Mr. Fogg;" and, having tapped thereto, and been desired to come in, Jackson ushered Mr. Pickwick into the presence of the justice.

"Is Mr. Dodson in?" inquired Mr. Fogg.
"Just come in, Sir," replied Jackson.
"Ask him to step here."
"Yes, Sir." Exit Jackson.

"Take a seat, Sir," said Fogg; "there is the paper, Sir: my partner will be here directly, and we can converse about this matter, Sir."

Mr. Pickwick took a seat and the paper, but instead of reading the latter, peeped over the top of it, and took a survey of the man of business, who was an elderly, pimple-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in a black coat, dark mixture trousers, and small black gaiters; a kind of being who seemed to be an essential part of the desk at which he was writing, and to have about as much thought or feeling.

After a few minutes' silence, Mr. Dodson, a plump, portly, stern-looking man, with a loud voice, appeared; and the conversation commenced.

"This is Mr. Pickwick," said Fogg.
"Ah! You are the defendant, Sir, in Bardell and Pickwick!" said Dodson.
"I am, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick.
"Well, Sir," said Dodson, "and what do you propose?"

"Ah!" said Fogg, thrusting his hands into his trousers' pockets, and throwing himself back in his chair, "what do you propose, Mr. Pickwick?"

"Hush, Fogg," said Dodson, "let me hear what Mr. Pickwick has to say!"

"I came, gentlemen," replied Mr. Pickwick—going quickly on the two partners, "I came here, gentlemen, to express the surprise with which I received your letter of the other day, and to inquire what grounds of action you can have against me."

"Grounds of?"—Fogg had ejaculated thus much, when he was stopped by Dodson.

"Mr. Fogg," said Dodson, "I am going to speak."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Dodson," said Fogg.

"For the ground of action, Sir," continued Dodson, with moral elevation in his air, "you will consult your own conscience and your own feelings. We, Sir, we, are guided entirely by the statement of our client. That statement, Sir, may be true, or it may be false; it may be credible, or it may be incredible; but, if it be true, and if it be credible, I do not hesitate to say, Sir, that our grounds of action, Sir, are strong, and not to be shaken. You may be an unfortunate man, Sir, or you may be a designing one; but if I were called upon as a juryman upon my oath, Sir, to express an opinion of your conduct, Sir, I do not hesitate to assert that I should have but one opinion about it." Here Dodson drew himself up, with an air of offended virtue, and looked at Fogg, who thrust his hands further in his pockets, and nodding his head sagely, said, in a tone of the fullest concurrence, "Most certainly."

"Well, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable pain depicted in his countenance, "you will permit me to assure you, that I am a most unfortunate man, so far as this case is concerned."

"I hope you are, Sir," replied Dodson.
"I trust you may be, Sir. If you are really innocent of what is laid to your charge, you are more unfortunate than I had believed any man could possibly be. What do you say, Mr. Fogg?"

"I say precisely what you say," replied Fogg, with a smile of incredulity.

"The writ, Sir, which commences the action," continued Dodson, "was issued regularly, Mr. Fogg, where is the process book?"

"Here it is," said Fogg, handing over a square book, with a parchment cover.

"Here is the entry," resumed Dodson.

"Middlesex, Capias Martha Bardell, widow, v. Samuel Pickwick. Damages, £1500. Dodson and Fogg for the plaintiff. Sept. 28, 1830." All regular, Sir, perfectly. And Dodson coughed and looked at Fogg, who said, "Perfectly," also. And then they both looked at Mr. Pickwick.

"I am to understand, then," said Mr. Pickwick, "that it really is your intention to proceed with this action."

"Understand, Sir!—that you certainly may," replied Dodson, with something as near a smile as his importance would allow.

"And that the damages are actually laid at fifteen hundred pounds!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"To which understanding you may add my assurance, that if we could have prevailed upon our client, they would have been laid at treble the amount, Sir," replied Dodson.

"I believe Mrs. Bardell specially said, however," observed Fogg, glancing at Dodson, "that she would not compromise for a farthing less."

"Unquestionably," replied Dodson sternly. For the action was only just begun, and it wouldn't have done to let Mr. Pickwick compromise it then, even if he had been so disposed.

"As you offer no terms, Sir," said Dod.
son, displaying a clip of parchment in his right hand, and affectionately pressing a paper copy of it, on Mr. Pickwick with his left, "I have written you with a copy of this writ, Sir. Here is the original, Sir."

"Very well, gentlemen, very well," said Mr. Weller, rising in person and wrath at the same time; "you shall hear from my solicitor, gentlemen."

"We shall be very happy to do so," said Fogg, rubbing his hands.

"Very," said Dobson, opening the door.

"And before I go, gentlemen," said the excited Mr. Pickwick, turning round on the landing, "permit me to say, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings—"

"Stay, Sir, stay," interposed Dobson with great politeness. "Mr. Jackson—Mr. Wicks."

"Sir," said the two clerks, appearing at the bottom of the stairs.

"I just want you to hear what this gentleman says," replied Dobson. "Pray, go on, Sir—disgraceful and rascally proceedings, I think you said."

"I did," said Mr. Pickwick, thoroughly roused. "I said, Sir, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings that ever were attempted, this is the most so. I repeat it, Sir."

"You hear that, Mr. Wicks?" said Dobson.

"You won't forget these expressions, Mr. Jackson?" said Fogg.

"Perhaps you would like to call us swindlers, Sir," said Dobson. "Pray do, Sir, if you feel disposed—not pray do, Sir."

"I do," said Mr. Pickwick. "You are swindlers."

"Very good," said Dobson. "You can hear down there, I hope, Mr. Wicks."

"Oh yes, Sir," said Wicks.

"You had better come up a step or two higher, if you can," added Mr. Fogg.

"Go on, Sir; do go on. You had better call us thieves, Sir; or perhaps you would like to assault one of us. Pray do it, Sir, if you would; we will not make the smallest resistance. Pray do it, Sir."

As Fogg put himself very temptingly within the reach of Mr. Pickwick's clenched fist, there is little doubt that that gentleman would have complied with his earnest entreaty, but for the interposition of Sam, who, hearing the dispute, emerged from the office, mounted the stairs, and seized his master by the arm.

"You just come away," said Mr. Weller.

Battledore and shuttle-cock's a warny good game, when you aren't the shuttle-cock and two groats the battledore, in which case it's too exciting to be pleasant.

Come away, Sir. If you want to ease your mind by blowing up somebody, come out into the court and blow up me; but it's rather too expensive work to be carried on here."

And without the slightest ceremony, Mr. Weller hauls his master down the stairs, and down the court, and having safely deposited him in Cornhill, fell behind, prepared to follow whithersoever he should lead.

Mr. Pickwick walked on abstractedly, crossed opposite the Mansion House, and bent his steps up Cheapside. Sam began to wonder where they were going, when his master turned round, and said—

"Sam, I will go immediately to Mr. Perker's."

"That's just exactly the very place were you ought to have gone last night," replied Mr. Weller.

"I think it is, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I know it is," said Mr. Weller.

"Well, well, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, "we will go there at once, but first, as I have been rather ruffled, I should like a glass of brandy and water warm, Sam. Where can I have it, Sam?"

Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar. He replied, without the slightest consideration—

"Second court on the right-hand side—last house but one on the same side the way—take the box as stands in the first fireplace, 'cos there ain't no leg in the middle o' table, which all the others has, and it's very inconvenient."

Mr. Pickwick observed his valet's directions implicitly, and bidding Sam follow him, entered the tavern he had pointed out, where the hot brandy and water was speedily placed before him; while Mr. Weller, seated at a respectful distance, though at the same table with his master, was accommodated with a pint of porter.

The room was one of a very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage-coachmen: for several gentlemen who had all the appearance of belonging to that learned profession, were drinking and smoking in the different boxes. Among the number was one stout red-faced, elderly man in particular, seated in an opposite box, who attracted Mr. Pickwick's attention. The stout man was smoking with great vehemence, but between every half-dozen puffs, he took his pipe from his mouth, and looked first at Mr. Weller and then at Mr. Pickwick. Then he would bury in a quiet pot, as much of his countenance as the dimensions of the quant pot admitted of its receiving, and
wick. Then he would take another half-dozen puffs with an air of profound meditation, and look at them again. At last the stout man, putting up his legs on the seat, and leaning his back against the wall, began to puff at his pipe without leaving off at all, and to stare through the smoke at the new-comers, as if he had made up his mind to see the most he could of them.

At first the evolutions of the stout man had escaped Mr. Weller’s observation, but by degrees he saw Mr. Pickwick’s eyes every now and then turning towards him, he began to gaze in the same direction, at the same time shading his eyes with his hand, as if he partially recognised the object before him, and wished to make quite sure of its identity. His doubts were speedily dispelled, however; for the stout man had blown a thick cloud of his pipe upon the faces, and a strange effort of ventriloquism, emeaued from beneath the copious shawls which muffled his throat and chest, and slowly uttered those sounds—‘Vy, Sammy.’

‘Who’s that, Sam?’ inquired Mr. Pickwick.

‘Why, I wouldn’t ha’ believed it, Sir,’ replied Mr. Weller, with astonished eyes.

‘It’s the old man.’

‘Old man?’ said Mr. Pickwick. ‘What old one?’

‘My father, Sir,’ replied Mr. Weller.

‘How are you, my ancient?’ And with this beautiful embellishment of filial affection, Mr. Weller made room on the seat beside him, for the stout man, who advanced pipe in mouth and pot in hand, so great him.

‘Vy, Sammy,’ said the father, ‘I haven’t seen you for two years and better.’

‘No more you have, old codger,’ replied the son. ‘How’s your mother-in-law?’

‘Vy, I’ll tell you what, Sammy,’ said Mr. Weller, senior, with much solemnity in his manner, ‘there never was a nicer woman as a widder, than that there second yeast o’ mine—she was a sweet crea’tur she was, Sammy, and all I can say on her now, is, that she was such an uncommon pleasant widder, it’s a great pity she ever changed her condition; she don’t act as a wife, Sammy.’

‘Don’t she though?’ inquired Mr. Weller, junior.

The elder Mr. Weller shook his head, as he replied with a sigh. ‘I’ve done it once too often, Sammy; I’ve done it once too often. Take example by your father, my boy, and be wary careful o’ widders all your life, specially if they’ve kept a public house, Sammy; and having delivered this parental advice with great pathos, Mr. Weller, senior, refilled his pipe from a tin box he carried in his pocket; and, lighting his fresh pipe from the ashes of the old one, commenced smoking at a great rate.

‘Beg your pardon, Sir,’ he said, knowing the subject, and addressing Mr. Pickwick, after a considerable pause, ‘nothin’ personal, I hope, Sir; I hope you ha’n’t got a widder, Sir.’

‘Not I,’ replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing; and while Mr. Pickwick laughed, Sam Weller informed his parent in a whisper, of the relation in which he stood towards that gentleman.

‘Beg your pardon, Sir,’ said Mr. Weller, senior, taking off his hat, ‘I hope you’ve no fault to find with Sammey, Sir.’

‘None whatever,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Wery glad to hear it, Sir,’ replied the old man; ‘I took a good deal o’ pains with his education, Sir; let him run the streets when he was wery young, and shift for hisself. It’s the only way to make a boy sharp, Sir.’

‘Rather a dangerous process, I should imagine,’ said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

‘And not a wery sure one, neither,’ added Mr. Weller; ‘I got regularly done the other day.’

‘No!’ said the father.

‘I did,’ said the son; and he proceeded to relate in as few words as possible, how he had fallen a ready dupe to the stratagem of Job Trotter.

Mr. Weller, senior, listened to the tale with the most profound attention, and, at its termination, said—

‘Worn’t one o’ these chaps slim and tall, with long hair, and the gift o’ the gab wery gallepin’?’

Mr. Pickwick did not quite understand the last item of description, but, comprehending the first, said ‘Yes,’ at a venture.

‘T’other’s a black-haired chap in mulberry livery, with a wery large head?’

‘Yes, yes, he is,’ said Mr. Pickwick and Sam, with great earnestness.

‘Then I know where they are, and that’s all about it,’ said Mr. Weller; ‘they’re at Ipswich, safe enough, them two.’

‘Ne!’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Fact,’ said Mr. Weller, ‘and I’ll tell you how I know it. I work an Ipswich coach now and then for a friend o’ mine. I worked down the wery day arter the night as you caught the rheumatism, and at the Black Boy at Chelmsford—the wery place they’d come to—I took ’em up, right through to Ipswich, where the man-servant—him in the mulberries— told me they was a goin’ to put up for a long time.’

‘I’ll follow him,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘we may as well see Ipswich as any other place. I’ll follow him.’

‘You’re quite certain it was them, governor?’ inquired Mr. Weller, junior.
"Quite, Sammy, quite," replied the father, "for their appearance is very singular; besides they 're, I wondered to see the gent 'in a so familiar with his servant; and, more than that, as they sat in front, right behind the box; I heard 'em laughing, and saying how they 'd done old Fireworks."

"Old who?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Old Fireworks, Sir, by which I've no doubt they meant you, Sir."

There is nothing positively rife or atrocious in the appellation of "old Fireworks," but still it is by no means a respectable or flattering designation. The recollection of all the wrongs he had sustained at Jingle's hands, had crowded on Mr. Pickwick's mind, the moment Mr. Weller began to speak; it wanted but a feather to turn the scales, and "old Fireworks" did it.

"I'll follow him," said Mr. Pickwick, with the most serious countenance.

"I shall work down to Ipswich the day after to-morrow, Sir," said Mr. Weller, the elder, "from the Bell in Whitechapel; and if you really mean to go, you'd better go with me."

"So we had," said Mr. Pickwick; "very true; I can write to Bury, and tell them to meet me at Ipswich. We'll go with you. But don't hurry away; Mr. Weller, won't you take anything?"

"You're very good, Sir," replied Mr. W., stopping short, "perhaps a small glass of brandy to drink your health, and success to Sammy, Sir, wouldn't be amiss."

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"A glass of brandy here."

The brandy was brought, and Mr. Weller, after pulling his hair to Mr. Pickwick, and nodding to Sam, jerked it down his capacious throat as if it had been a small thimble-full.

"Well done, father," said Sam, "take care, old fellow, or you'll have a touch of your old complaint, the gout."

"I've found a sov'rin cure for that, Sam," replied Mr. Weller, setting down the glass.

"A sovereign cure for the gout," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily producing his notebook, "what is it?"

"The gout, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, "is a complaint as arises from too much ease and comfort. If ever you're attacked with the gout, Sir, jist you marry a widders as has got a good loud voice, with a decent notion of usin' it, and you'll never have the gout again. It's a capital prescription, Sir. It takes it regular, and I can warrant it to drive away any illness as is caused by too much jollity."

"Having imparted this valuable secret, Mr. Weller drained his glass once more, produced a laboured wink, sighed deeply, and slowly retired.

"Well, what do you think of what you, father says, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick with a smile.

"Think, Sir?" replied Mr. Weller. "why, I think he's the wisest o' em all, by Jove! He募n's domestic chaplain said, with a tear of pity, ven he buried him."

There was no replying to this very apposite conclusion, and, therefore, Mr. Pickwick, after settling the reckoning, resumed his walk to Grey's Inn. By the time he reached its secluded groves, however, eight o'clock had struck, and the unbroken stream of gentlemen in muddy high-lows, soiled white hats, and rusty apparel, who were pouring towards the different avenues of pleasure, warned him that the majority of the offices had closed for that day.

After climbing two pairs of sheep and dirty stairs, Mr. Weller's anticipations were realised. Mr. Perker's "outer door" was closed; and the dead silence which followed Mr. Weller's repeated "kicks thence, announced that the officials had retired from business for the night.

"This is pleasant, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "I shouldn't lose an hour in seeing him; I shall not be able to get the wink of sleep to-night, I know, unless I have the satisfaction of reflecting that I have confided this matter to a professional man."

"Here's an old woman coming up stairs, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "p'parts she knows where we can find somebody.Hallo, old lady, ve're Mr. Perker's people?"

"Mr. Perker's people," said a thin, miserable-looking old woman, stooping to recover breath after the ascent of the stairs, "Mr. Perker's people, as you say, and I'm a goin' to do the office out."

"Are you Mr. Perker's servant?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I am Mr. Perker's laundress," replied the old woman.

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, half remote to Sam, "it's a serious circumstance, Sam, that they call the old women in those fums, hundredes: I wonder what that's for."

"Cos they has a mortal aversion to washing any thin', I suppose, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at the old woman, whose appearance as well as the condition of the office, which she had by this time opened indicated a rooted antipathy to the application of soap and water; "do you know where I can find Mr. Perker, my good woman?"

"No I don't," replied the old woman, gruffly; "he's out o' town now."

"That's unfortunate," said Mr. Pickwick; "where's his clerk—do you know?"
"Yes, he is, Sir," replied the landlady. "Here, Charley, show the gentleman in, to Mr. Lowten."

"The gen'lm'n can't go in, just now," said a stammering pot-boy, with a red head, "cos Mr. Lowten's a singin' a comic song, and he'll put him out. He'll be done directly, Sir."

The red-headed pot-boy had scarcely finished speaking, when a most unanimous hammering of tables, and jingling of glasses, announced that the song had that instant terminated; and Mr. Pickwick, after desiring Sam to secure himself in the tap, suffered himself to be conducted into the presence of Mr. Lowten.

At the announcement of "a gentleman to speak to you, Sir," a puffy-faced young man who filled the chair at the head of the table, looked with some surprise in the direction from whence the voice proceeded: and the surprise seemed to be by no means diminished when his eyes rested on an individual whom he had never seen before.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "I am very sorry to disturb the other gentlemen, too; but I come on very particular business; and if you will suffer me to detain you at this end of the room for five minutes, I shall be very much obliged to you."

The puffy-faced young man rose, and drawing a chair close to Mr. Pickwick in an obscure corner of the room, listened attentively to his tale of woe.

"Ah," he said, when Mr. Pickwick had concluded, "Dodson and Fogg—sharp practice their's;—capital men of business is Dodson and Fogg, Sir."

Mr. Pickwick admitted the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg, and Lowten resumed.

"Parker ain't in town, and he won't be neither, before the end of next week; but if you want this action defended, and will leave the copy with me, I can do all that's needful till he comes back."

"That's exactly what I come here for," said Mr. Pickwick, handing over the document. "If any thing particular occurs, you can write to me at the post-office, Ipswich."

"That's all right," replied Mr. Parker's clerk; and then seeing Mr. Pickwick's eye wandering curiously towards the table, he added, "Will you join us, for half-an-hour or so? We are capital company here to-night. There's Sampkin and Green's managing clerk, and Smithers and Price's chancery, and Plunkin and Thomas's out o' door—sings a capital song, he does—and Jack Bamber, and ever so many more. You're come out of the country, I suppose. Would you like to join us?"
Mr. Pickwick could not resist so tempting an opportunity of studying human nature. He suffered himself to be led to the table, where, after having been introduced to the company in due form, he was accommodated with a seat near the chairman, and called for a glass of his favourite beverage.

A profound silence, quite contrary to Mr. Pickwick's expectation, succeeded.

"You don't find this sort of thing disagreeable, I hope, Sir!" said his right-hand neighbour, a gentleman in a checked shirt and Mosaic studs, with a cigar in his mouth.

"Not in the least," replied Mr. Pickwick, "I like it very much, although I am no smoker myself."

"I should be very sorry to say I wasn't," interposed another gentleman on the opposite side of the table, "It's board and lodging to me is smoke."

Mr. Pickwick glanced at the speaker, and then thought that if it were washing too, it would be all the better.

Here there was another pause. Mr. Pickwick was a stranger, and his coming had evidently cast a damper upon the party.

"Mr. Grundy's going to oblige the company with a song," said the chairman.

"No he ain't," said Mr. Grundy.

"Why not!" said the chairman.

"Because I can't," said Mr. Grundy.

"You had better say you won't," replied the chairman.

"Well, then, I won't," retorted Mr. Grundy. Mr. Grundy's positive refusal to gratify the company occasioned another silence.

"Won't any body enliven us!" said the chairman, deprecatingly.

"Why don't you enliven us yourself, Mr. Chairman?" said a young man with a whisker, a squint, and an open shirt-collar (dirty) from the bottom of the table.

"Hear! hear!" said the smoking gentleman, in the Mosaic jewellery.

"Because I only know one song, and I have sung it already, and it's a fine of 'glasses round' to sing the same song twice in a night," replied the chairman.

This was an unanswerable reply, and silence prevailed again.

"I have been to-night, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick, hoping to start a subject which all the company would take part in discussing, "I have been to-night in a place which you all know very well, doubtless, but which I have not been in before, for some years, and know very little of; I mean Gray's Inn, Gentlemen. Curious little nooks in a great place, like London, these old Inns are!"

"By Jove!" said the chairman, whispering across the table to Mr. Pickwick; "you have hit upon something that one of us, at least, would talk upon for ever. You'll draw old Jack Bamber out; he was never heard to talk about anything else but the Inns, and he has lived alone in them; till he's a half crazy."

The individual to whom Jack Bamber alluded, was a little yellow high-shouldered man, whose countenance, from his habit of steeping forward when silent, Mr. Pickwick had not observed before. He wondered though, when the old man raised his sunbeamed face, and bent his bright grey eye upon him, with a keen inquiring look, that such remarkable features could have escaped his attention for a moment. There was a fixed grim smile perpetually on his countenance; he leaned his chin on a long shaggy hand, with nails of extraordinary length; and as he inclined his head to one side, and looked keenly out from beneath his ragged grey eyebrows, there was a strange, wild slyness in his leer, quite repulsive to behold.

This was the figure that now started forward, and burst into an animated torrent of words. As the chapter has been a long one, however, and as the old man was a remarkable personage, it will be more respectful to him, and more convenient to us, to let him speak for himself in a fresh one.

CHAPTER XXII.

In which the old man launches forth into his favourite theme, and relates a story about a queer cheat.

"Aha!" said the old man, a brief description of whose manner and appearance concluded the last chapter, "Aha! Who was talking about the Inns?"

"I was, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I was observing what singular old places they are."

"You!" said the old man, contemptuously— "What do you know of the time when young men shut themselves up in those lonely rooms, and read and read, hour after hour, and night after night, till their reason wandered beneath their midnight studies; till their mental powers were exhausted; till morning's light brought no freshness or health to them; and they sank beneath the unnatural devotion of their youthful energies to their dry old books?" Coming down to a later time, and a very different day, what do you know of the gradual sinking beneath consumption in
the quick wasting of fever—the grand result of life and dissipation—which men have undergone in those same rooms! How many vain pleaders for mercy, do you think, have turned away heart-felt from the lawyer’s office to find a resting-place in the Tenants, or a refuge in the jail? They are no ordinary houses, these. There is not a panel in the old wainscoting, but what, if it were endowed with the power of speech and memory, could start from the wall, and tell its tale of horror—the romance of life, Sir, the romance of life. Common-place as they may seem now, I tell you they are strange old places, and I would rather hear many a legend with a terrific-sounding name, than the true history of one old set of chambers.

There was something so odd in the old man’s sudden energy, and the subject which had called it forth, that Mr. Pickwick was prepared with no observation in reply; and the old man checking his impetuosity, and resuming the leer, which had disappeared during his previous excitement, said—

“Look at them in another light; their most common-place and least romantic: what fine places of slow torture they are! Think of the needy man who has spent his all, beggar himself, and pinched his friends, to enter the profession, which is destined never to yield a morsel of bread to him. The waiting—the hope—the disappointment—the fear—the misery—the poverty—the blight on his hopes, and end to his career—the suicide, perhaps, or better still, the shabby, slip-shod drunkard. Am I not right about them, eh?” And the old man rubbed his hands and leered as if in delight at having found another point of view in which to place his favourite subject.

Mr. Pickwick eyed the old man with great curiosity, and the remainder of the company smiled and looked on in silence.

“Talk of your German universities,” said the little old man—“Pooh, pooh! there’s romance enough at home, without going half a mile for it; only people never think of it.”

“I never thought of the romance of this particular subject before, certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick, laughing.

“To be sure you didn’t,” said the little old man, “of course not. As a friend of mine used to say to me, ‘What is there in chambers, in particular?’ ‘Queer old places,’ said I. ‘Not at all,’ said he. ‘Lonely,’ said I. ‘Not a bit of it,’ said he. He died one morning of apoplexy, as he was going to open his outer door. Fell with his head in his own letter-box and there he lay for eighteen months. Everybody thought he’d gone out of town.

“And how was he found at last?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“The benchers determined to break his door open, as he hadn’t paid any rent for two years. So they did. Forced the lock; and a very dusty skeleton in a blue coat, black knee-shorts, and slillas, fell forward in the arms of the porter who opened the door. Queer, that. Rather, perhaps; rather, eh?” And the little old man put his head more on one side, and rubbed his hands with unaccountable glee.

“I know another case,” said the little old man, when his chuckles had in some degree subsided—”it occurred in Clifford’s Inn. Tenant of a top set—bad character—shot himself up in his bed-room closet, and took a dose of arsenic. The steward thought he had run away: opened the door; and put a bill up. Another man came, took the chambers, furnished them, and went to live there. Somehow or other he couldn’t sleep—always restless and uncomfortable. ‘Odd,’ says he. ‘I’ll make the other room my bed-chamber, and this my sitting-room.’ He made the change, and slept very well at night, but suddenly found that somehow he couldn’t read in the evening; he got nervous and uncomfortable, and used to be always snuffing his candles and staring about him. ‘I can’t make this out,’ said he, when he came home from the play one night, and was drinking a glass of grog, with his back to the wall, in order that he mightn’t be able to fancy there was any one behind him—‘I can’t make it out,’ said he; and just then his eyes rested on the little closet that had always been locked up, and a shudder ran through his whole frame from top to toe. ‘I have felt this strange feeling before,’ said he—‘I cannot help thinking there’s something wrong about this closet.’ He made a strong effort, plucked up his courage, shivered the lock with a blow or two of the poker, opened the door, and there, sure enough, standing bolt upright in the corner, was the last tenant, with a little bottle clasped firmly in his hand, and his face livid with the hue of a painful death.” As the little old man concluded, he looked round on the attentive faces of his wondering auditory with a smile of grim delight.

“What strange things these are you tell us of, Sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, minutely scanning the old man’s countenance, by the aid of his glasses.

“Strange!” said the little old man—“Nonsense; you think them strange because you know nothing about it. They are funny, but not uncommon.”
"Funny!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, involuntarily.

"Yes, funny, are they not?" replied the little old man, with a diabolical leer; and then, without pausing for an answer, he continued—

"I knew another man—let me see—it's forty years ago now—who took an old, damp, rotten set of chambers, in one of the most ancient Inns, that had been shut up and empty for years and years before. There were lots of old women's stories about the place, and it certainly was very far from being a cheerful one; but he was poor, and the rooms were cheap, and that would have been quite a sufficient reason for him, if they had been ten times worse than they really were. He was obliged to take some moulder ing fixtures that were on the place, and, among the rest, was a great lumbering wooden press for papers, with large glass doors, and a green curtain inside; a pretty nice thing for him, for he had no papers to put in it; and as to his clothes, he carried them about with him, and that wasn't very hard work either. Well, he had moved in all his furniture—it wasn't quite a truckful—and sprinkled it about the room, so as to make the four chairs look as much like a dozen as possible, and was sitting down before the fire at night, drinking the first glass of two gallons of whiskey he had ordered on credit, wondering whether it would ever be paid for, and if so, in how many years' time, when his eyes encountered the glass doors of the wooden press. 'Ah!' says he—if I hadn't been obliged to take that ugly article at the old broker's valuation, I might have got something comfortable for the money. I'll tell you what it is, old fellow," he said, speaking aloud to the press, just because he had got nothing else to speak to—if it wouldn't cost more to break up your old carcass, than it would ever be worth afterwards, I'd have a fire out of you, in less than no time." He had hardly spoken the words, when a sound resembling a faint groan, appeared to issue from the interior of the case. It startled him at first, but thinking, on a moment's reflection, that it must be some young fellow in the next chambers, who had been dining out, he put his feet on the fender, and raised the poker to stir the fire. At that moment, the sound was repeated: and one of the glass doors slowly opening, disclosed a yale and emaciated figure in soiled and stern apparel, standing erect in the press. The figure was tall and thin, and the countenance expressive of care and anxiety; but there was something in the hue of the skin, and sweat and discoloration appearance of the whole form, which no being of this world was ever seen to wear. "Who are you?" said the new tenant, turning very pale, pointing the poker in his hand, however, and taking a very decent aim at the countenance of the figure—"who are you?"

"Don't throw that poker at me," replied the form—if you hurled it with ever so sure an aim, it would pass through me without resistance, and expunge its force on the wood behind. I am a spirit." And, pray, what do you want here?" faltered the tenant. "In this room," replied the apparition, "my worldly ruin was worked, and I and my children beggared. In this press, the papers in a long, long suit, which accumulated for years, were deposited. In this room, when I had died of grief, and long-deferred hope, two wily hampers divided the wealth for which I had contended during a wretched existence, and of which, at last, not one farthing was left for my unhappy descendants. I terrified them from the spot, and since that day have prowled by night—the only period at which I can revisit the earth—about the scenes of my long-protracted misery. This apartment is mine: leave it to me." "If you insist upon making your appearance here," said the tenant, who had had time to collect his presence of mind during this proxy statement of the ghost's—"I shall give up possession with the greatest pleasure; but I should like to ask you one question, if you will allow me." "Say on," said the apparition, sternly. "Well," said the tenant, "I don't apply the observation personally to you, because it is equally applicable to all the ghosts I ever heard of; but it does appear to me somewhat inconsistent; that when you have an opportunity of visiting the fairest spot on earth—for I suppose space is nothing to you—you should always return exactly to the very places where you have been most miserable." "Egad, that's very true; I never thought of that before," said the ghost. "You see, Sir," pursued the tenant, "this is a very uncomfortable room. From the appearance of that press, I should be disposed to say that it is not wholly free from bugs; and I really think you might find much more comfortable quarters: to say nothing of the climate of London, which is extremely disagreeable." "You are very right, Sir," said the ghost, politely, "it never struck me till now; I'll try change of air directly"—and, in fact, he began to vanish as he spoke. His legs, indeed, had quite disappeared, and if Sir, said the tenant, calling after him, "if you should have the idea to suggest to the other ladies and gentlemen who are now engaged in haunting old empty houses, that they might the much more comfortable elsewhere, you will con-
for a very great benefit on society. "I will," replied the ghost; "we must be dull fellows—very dull fellows, indeed; I can't imagine how we can have been so stupid. With these words, the spirit disappeared, and what is rather remarkable," added the old man, with a shrewd look round the table, "he never came back again."

"That ain't bad, if it's true," said the man in the Mosiac suit, lighting a fresh cigar.

"If!" exclaimed the old man, with a look of excessive contempt. "I suppose," he added, turning to Lowten, "he'll say next, that my story about the queer client we had, when I was in an attorney's office, is not true, either—I shouldn't wonder!"

"I shan't venture to say anything at all about it, seeing that I never heard the story," observed the owner of the Mosiac decorations.

"I wish you would repeat it, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, do," said Lowten, "nobody has heard it but me, and I have nearly forgotten it."

The old man looked round the table, and leered more horribly than ever, as if in triumph, at the attention which was depicted in every face. Then rubbing his chin with his hand, and looking up to the ceiling as if to recall the circumstances to his memory, he began as follows:

THE OLD MAN'S TALE ABOUT THE QUEER CLIENT.

"It matters little," said the old man, "where, or how, I picked up this brief history. If I were to relate it in the order in which it reached me, I should commence in the middle, and when I had arrived at the conclusion, go back for a beginning. It is enough for me to say that some of its circumstances passed before my own eyes; for the remainder, I know them to have happened, and there are some persons yet living, who will remember them too well."

"In the Borough High Street, near Saint George's Church, and on the same side of the way, stands, as most people know, the smallest of our debtors' prisons—the Marshalsea. Although in later times it has been a very different place from the sink of filth and dirt it once was, even its improved condition holds out but little temptation to the extravagant or consolation to the improvident. The condemned felon has as good a yard for air and exercise in Newgate, as the insolvent debtor in the Marshalsea Prison. "It may be my fancy, or it may be that I am not separate from the old recollections associated with it, but this part of London I cannot bear. The street is broad, the shops are spacious, the noise of passing vehicles, the footsteps of a perpetually stream of people—all the busy sounds of traffic, resound in it. From morn to midnight, but the streets sound are never so close; poverty and debauchery lie festering in the crowded alleys, want and misfortune are pent up in the narrow prisons; an air of gloom and dreariness oozes, in my eyes at least, to hang about the scene, and to impart to it a squalid and sickly hue."

"Many eyes, that have long since been closed in the grave, have looked round upon that scene lightly enough, when entering the gates of the Marshalsea Prison for the first time: for scarcely seldom comes with the first severe shock of misfortune. A man has confidence in trusted friends; he remembers the many offers of service so freely made by his boon companions when he wasted them not; he has hopes—the hope of happy inexperience—and however he may bend beneath the first shock, it springs up in his bosom, and flowers there for a brief space, until it droops beneath the blight of disappointment and neglect. How soon have those same eyes deeply sunk in the head, glazed from faces wasted with famine, and sallow from confinement, in days when it was no figure of speech to say that debtors rotted in prison, with no hope of release, and no prospect of liberty! The atrocity in its full extent no longer exists; but there is enough of it left, to give rise to occurrences that make the heart bleed."

"Twenty years ago, that pavement was worn with the footsteps of a mother and child, who, day by day, as surely as the morning came, presented themselves at the prison gate; often after a night of restless misery and anxious thoughts, were they there, a full hour too soon, and then the young mother turned more and more away, would lead the child to the old bridge, and missing him in her arms to show him the ghastly water, tinted with the light of the morning's sun, and stirring with all the bustling preparations for business and pleasure that the river presents at that early hour, endeavor to interest his thoughts in the objects before him. Her she would quickly set him down, and hiding her face in her shawl, give vent to the tears that blinded her, for no expression of interest or amusement lighted up his thin and sickly face. His recollections were few enough, but they were all of one kind—all connected with the poverty and misery of his parents. Hour after hour, had he sat on his mother's knees, and what childish sympathy watched the tears that stole down her face? How eagerly he crept away into some dark corner, and sobbed himself to sleep. The hard realities of the world, with many of its worst privations—hunger and thirst, and cold and wet—are
all come home to him from the first drawings of reason; and though the form of childhood was there, its light heart, its merry laugh, and sparkling eyes were wanting.

"The father and mother looked on upon this, and upon each other with thoughts of agony they dared not breathe in words. The healthy, strong man who could have borne almost any fatigue of active exertion, was wasting beneath the close confinement and unhealthy atmosphere of a crowded prison. The slight and delicate woman was sinking beneath the combined effects of bodily and mental illness; the child's young heart was breaking.

"Winter came, and with it weeks of cold and heavy rain. The poor girl had removed to a wretched apartment close to the spot of her husband's imprisonment; and though the change had been necessary by their increasing poverty, she was happier now, for she was nearer him. For two months, she and her little companion watched the opening of the gate as usual. One day she failed to come for the first time. Another morning arrived, and she came alone. The child was dead.

"They little know, who coldly talk of the poor man's bereavements, as a happy release from pain to the departed, and a merciful relief from expense to the survivor—they little know, I say, what the agony of those bereavements is. A silent look of affection and regret when all other eyes are turned coldly away—the consciousness that we possess the sympathy and affection of one being when all others have deserted us—is a hold, a stay, a comfort in the deepest affliction, which no wealth could purchase, or power bestow. The child had sat at his parents' feet for hours together, with his little hands patiently folded in each other, and his thin face raised towards them. They had seen him pine away, from day to day; and though his brief existence had been a joyless one, and he was now removed to that peace and rest which, child as he was, he had never known in this world, they were his parents, and his loss sank deep into their souls.

"It was plain to those who looked upon the mother's altered face, that death must soon close the scene of her adversity and trial. Her husband's fellow prisoners shrank from obtruding on his grief and misery, and left to himself alone, the small room he had previously occupied in common with two companions. She shared it with him: and lingering on without pain, but without hope, her life ebbed away. Her eyes were bloodshot and heavy, her face deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had biten his under lip nearly

the open window; to revive her with the air, when the light of the moon falling full upon her face, showed him a change upon her features, which made him shudder beneath her weight, like a helpless infant.

""Set me down, George,' she said, faintly. He did so, and seating himself beside her, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

""It is very hard to leave you; George,' she said, 'but it's God's will, and you must bear it for my sake. Oh! how I thank him for having taken our boy! He is happy, and in heaven now. What would he have done here, without his mother?"

""You shall not die, Mary, you shall not die,' said the husband, starting up. He paced hurriedly to and fro, striking his head with his clenched fists; then reseating himself beside her, and supporting her in his arms, added more calmly, 'Rouse yourself, my dear girl—pray, pray do. You will revive yet.'

""Never again, George; never again,' said the dying woman. 'Let them lay me by my poor boy, now, but promise me, that if ever you leave this dreadful place, and should grow rich, you will have us removed to some quiet country church-yard, a long, long way off—very far from here, where we can rest in peace. Dear George, promise me you will.'

"I do, I do—said the man, throwing himself passionately on his knees before her. 'Speak to me, Mary, another word; one look—but one—'

"He ceased to speak: for the arm that clasped his neck, grew stiff and heavy. A deep sigh escaped from the wasted form before him; the lips moved, and a smile played upon the face, but the lips were pallid, and the whole face fixed into a rigid and ghastly stare. He was alone in the world.

"That night, in the silence and desolation of his miserable room, the wretched man knelt down by the dead body of his wife, and called on God to witness a dreadful oath, that from that hour, he devoted himself to revenge her death and that of his child; that from thenceforth to the last moment of his life, his whole energies should be directed to this one object; that his revenge should be protracted and terrible; that his hatred should be undying and unextinguishable; and should hunt its object through the world.

"The deepest despair, and passion scarcely human, had made such fierce ravages on his face and form, in that one night, that his companions in misfortune shrank as frightened from him as he passed by. His eyes were bloodshot and heavy, his face deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had bitten his under lip nearly
through the violence of his mental suffering, and the blood which had flowed from the wound had trickled down his chin, and stained his shirt and neckcloth.

No tear, or sound of complaint escaped him; but the unuttered look, and disordered haste with which he paced up and down the yard, denoted the fever which was burning within.

"It was necessary that his wife's body should be removed from the prison, without delay. He received the communication with perfect calmness, and acquiesced in its propriety. Nearly all the inmates of the prison had assembled to witness its removal; they fell back on either side when the widower appeared; he walked hurriedly forward, and stationed himself, alone, in a little railed area close to the lodge gate, from whence the crowd, with an instinctive feeling of delinquency, had retired. The rude coffin was borne slowly forward on men's shoulders. A dead silence prevailed in the throng, broken only by the audible lamentations of the women, and the shuffling steps of the bearers on the stone pavement. They reached the spot where the beweared husband stood; and stopped. He laid his hand upon the coffin, and mechanically adjusting the pall with which it was covered, motioned them onwards. The turnkeys in the prison lobby took off their hats as it passed through, and in another moment the heavy gate closed behind it. He looked vacantly upon the crowd, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Although for many weeks after this he was watched night and day, in the wildest ravings of fever, neither the consciousness of his loss, nor the recollection of the vow he had made, ever left him for a moment. Scenes changed before his eyes, place succeeded place, and event followed event, in all the hurry of delirium; but they were all connected in some way with the great object of his mind. He was sailing over a boundless expanse of sea, with a blood-red sky above, and the angry waters lashed into fury beneath, boiling and eddying up on every side. There was another vessel before them, toiling and labouring in the howling storm; her canvas fluttering in ribands from the mast, and her deck thronged with figures who were lashed to the sides, over which huge waves every instant burst, sweeping away some devoted creatures into the surging sea. Onward they bore, amidst the roaring mass of water, with a speed and force which nothing could resist; and sinking the stern of the vessel, crushed near beneath their keel. From the huge whirlpool which the sinking wreck opened, arose a shriek so loud and shrill —the death-cry of a thousand drowning wretches, blended into one fierce yell—that it rang far above the war-cry of the elements, and echoed, and resounded till it seemed to pierce air, sky, and ocean. But what was that — that old grey head that rose above the water's surface, and with looks of woe, and screams for aid, buffetted with the waves! One look, and he had sprung from the vessel's side, and with vigorous strokes was swimming towards it. He reached it; he was close upon it. They were his features. The old man saw him coming; and vainly strove to elude his grasp. But he clamped him tight, and dragged him beneath the water. Down, down with him fifty fathoms deep; his struggles grew fainter and fainter, until they wholly ceased. He was dead; he had killed him, and had kept his oath.

"He was traversing the scorching sands of a mighty desert, barefooted and alone. The sun shone, and blinded him; its fierce thin glare entered the very pores of his skin, and irritated him almost to madness. Gigantic masses of the same material, carried forward by the wind, and shot through by the burning sun, stalked in the distance like pillars of living fire. The bones of men, who had perished in the dreary waste, lay scattered at his feet; a fearful light fell on every thing around; and so far the eye could reach, nothing but objects of dread and horror presented themselves. Vainly striving to utter a cry of terror with his tongue cleaving to his mouth, he rushed madly forward. Armed with supernatural strength, he waded through the sand, until exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he fell senseless on the earth. What fragrant coolness revived him! what gushing sound was that! Water! It was indeed a well; and the clear fresh stream was running at his feet. He drank deeply of it, and throwing his aching limbs upon the bank, sunk into a delicious trance. The sound of approaching footsteps roused him. An old grey-headed man tottered forward to alake his burning thirst. It was he again. He wound his arms round the old man's body, and held him back. He struggled in powerful convulsions, and shrieked for water—for but one drop of water to save his life. But he held the old man firmly, and watched his agonies with greedy eyes; and when his lifeless head fell forward on his bosom, he rolled the corpse from him with his feet.

"When the fever left him, and consciousness returned, he awaked to find himself self-rich and free: to hear that the parents who would have let him die in jail would! who had let those who were far dearer to him than his own existence, were
ofwent and the sickness of heart that
medicine cannot cure—had been found dead
in his bed of pain. He had all the heart
and life he knew to give his poor friend, and
of his health and strength, he had put off
till it was too late, and now might
mash his teeth in the other world, at the
thought of the wealth his remissness had
left him. He woke to this, and he woke to
more. To recollect the purpose for which he
lived, and to remember that his enemy
was his wife's own father—the man who
had cast him into prison, and who, when
this daughter and her child stood at his feet
after mercy, had spurned them from his door.
Oh, how he cursed the weakness that pre-
vented him from being up, and active, in his
scheme of vengeance!

"He caused himself to be carried from
the scene of his loss and misery, and con-
voyed to a quiet residence on the seacoast—
not in the hope of recovering his peace of
mind or happiness, for both were fled
forever; but to restore his prostrate ener-
gies, and meditate on his darling object.
And here, some evil spirit cast in his way
the opportunity for his first, most horrible
revenge.

"It was summer time; and wrapped in
his solitary thoughts, he would issue from
his solitary lodgings early in the evening,
and wandering along a narrow path be-
neath the cliffs to a wild and lonely spot
that had struck his fancy in his ramblings,
seat himself on some fallen fragments of
the rock, and burying his face in his hands,
remain there for hours—sometimes until
night had completely closed in, and the
long shadows of the overhanging cliffs above
his head, cast a thick black darkness on
every object near him.

"He was seated here, one calm evening
in his old position, now and then raising
his head, to watch the flight of a seagull,
or carry his eye along the glorious crimson
path, which, commencing in the middle of
the ocean, seemed to lead to its very verge
where the sun was setting, when the pro-
found stillness of the spot was broken by a
loud cry for help; he listened, doubtful of
his having heard aright, when the cry was
repeated with even greater vehemence than
before, and, starting to his feet, he hastened
in the direction from whence it proceeded.

"The tale told itself at once: some
scattered garments lay on the beach; a hu-
man head was just visible above the waves
at a little distance from the shore; and an
old man, writhing from hands in agony, was
running to and fro, shrieking for assistance.
The invalid, whose strength was now suf-
ciently restored, threw off his coat, and
washed towards the sea, with the intention
of plunging in, and dragging the drowning
man ashore.

"Hasten here, Sir, in God's name; help,
help, Sir, for the love of Heaven. He is
my son, Sir, my only son," said the old
man, frantically, as he appeared to address
him. "My only son, Sir, and he is dying
before his father's eyes."

"At the first word the old man uttered,
the stranger checked himself in his career,
and folding his arms, stood perfectly mo-
tionless.

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man,
recalling,—'Hayling!'

"The stranger smiled, and was silent.

"'Hayling!' said the old man, wildly—
'my boy, Hayling, my dear boy, look,
look,' and, grasping for breath, the miser-
able father pointed to the spot where the
young man was struggling for life.

"'Hark!' said the old man—'He cries
once more. He is alive yet. Hayling,
save him, save him.'

"The stranger smiled again, and re-
mained immovable as a statue.

"'I have wronged you,' shrieked the
old man, falling on his knees, and clasping
his hands together—'be revenged; take
my all, my life; cast me into the water at
your feet, and, if human nature can repress
a struggle, I will die, without stirring hand
or foot. Do it, Hayling, do it, but save my
boy; he is so young; Hayling, so young to
die.'

"'Listen,' said the stranger, grasping
the old man fiercely by the wrist—'I will
have life for life, and here is one. My
child died before his father's eyes, a far
more agonizing and painful death than that
young wanderer of his sister's worth is
meeting while I speak. You laughed—
laughed in your daughter's face, when
death had already set his hand—at our suf-
ferings. What think you of them now? See
there, see there.'

"As the stranger spoke, he pointed to
the sea. A faint cry died away upon its
surface: the last powerful struggle of the
dying man agitated the rippling waves for
a few seconds; and the spot where he had
gone down into his early grave, was undis-
tinguishable from the surrounding water.

"Three days had elapsed, when a gentle-
man alighted from a private carriage at the
door of a London attorney, then well known
to the public as a man of no great name in
his professional dealings, and requested a
private interview on business of importance.
Although evidently not past the prime of
life, his face was gaunt, and deject-
ed; and it did not require the acute per-
cision of the man of business, to discern
at a glance, that disease or suffering had
dose more to work a change in his appearance, than the mere hand of time could have accomplished in twice the period of his whole life.

"I wish you to undertake some legal business for me," said the stranger.

"The attorney bowed obsequiously, and glanced at a large packet which the gentleman carried in his hand. His visitor observed the look, and proceeded.

"'It is no common business," said he; 'not have these papers reached my hands without long trouble and great expense.'

"The attorney cast a still more anxious look at the packet; and his visitor, uniting the string that bound it, disclosed a quantity of promissory notes, with some copies of deeds, and other documents.

"'Upon these papers," said the client, 'the sums whose names they bear, has raised, as you will see, large sums of money, for some years past. There was a trust understanding between him and the men into whose hands they originally went—and from whom I have by degrees purchased the whole, for treble and quadruple their nominal value—that these loans should be from time to time renewed, until a given period had elapsed. Such an understanding is nowhere expressed. He has sustained many losses of late; and these obligations accumulating upon him at once, would crush him to the earth.'

"'The whole amount is some thousands of pounds,' said the attorney, looking over the papers.

"'It is," said the client.

"'What are we to do?' inquired the man of business.

"'Do!' replied the client, with sudden vehemence. 'Put every engine of the law in force, every trick that ingenuity can devise and versatility execute; fair means and foul; the open oppression of the law, aided by all the craft of its most ingenious practitioners. I would have him die a harrowing and lingering death. Ruin him, seize all his lands and goods, drive him from house to house, and drag him forth a beggar in his old age, to die in a common jail.'

"'But the costs, my dear Sir, the costs of all this," reasoned the attorney, 'when he had recovered from his momentary surprise—'

"'If the defendant be a man of straw, who is to pay the costs, Sir?'

"'Name any sum,' said the stranger, 'his hand trembling as violently with excitement, that he could scarcely hold the pen he seized at his words. 'Any sum,' and he said this with a look of terror. 'Don't be afraid to name it, man. I shall not think it dear, if you gain my object.'

"The attorney named a large sum, at hazard, as the advance he should require to secure himself against the possibility of loss; but more with the view of ascertaining how far his client was really disposed to go, than with any idea that he would comply with the demand. The stranger wrote a cheque upon his banker for the whole amount, and left him.

"'The draft was duly honoured, and the attorney, finding that his strange client might be safely relied upon, commenced his work in earnest. For more than two years afterwards, Mr. Heyling would sit whole days together, in the office, poring over the papers as they accumulated, and reading again and again, his eyes gleaming with joy, the letters of remonstrance, the prayers for a little delay, the representations of the certain ruin in which the opposite party must be involved, which poured in, as suit after suit, and process after process, were commenced. To all applications for a brief indulgence, there was but one reply—the money must be paid. Land, house, furniture, each in its turn, was taken under some one of the numerous executions which were issued; and the old man himself would have been immersed in prison had he not escaped the vigilance of the officers, and fled.

"The implacable animosity of Heyling, so far from being satisfied by the success of his persecution, increased a hundred-fold with the ruin he inflicted. On being informed of the old man's flight, his fury was unbounded. He gnashed his teeth with rage, tore the hair from his head, and asailed with horrid imprecations the men who had been entrusted with the writ. He was only restored to comparative calmness by repeated assurances of the certainty of discovering the fugitive. Agents were sent in quest of him, in all directions; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to, for the purpose of discovering his place of retreat; but it was all in vain. Half a year had passed over, and he was still undiscovered.

"At length, late one night, Heyling, of whom nothing had been seen for many weeks before, appeared at his attorney's private residence, and sent up word—that a gentleman wished to see him instantly. Before the attorney, who had recognised his voice from above stairs, could order the servant to admit him, he had rushed up the staircase, and entered the drawing-room pale and breathless. Having glanced the door, to prevent being overheard, he snatched into a chair, and said with a low voice—'

"'Hush! I have found him at last.'

"'No!' said the attorney. 'Well done my dear Sir; well done.'
He lies concealed in a wretched lodging in Camden Town," said Heyling.

"Perhaps it is as well, we did lose sight of him, for he has been living alone there, in the most abject misery, all the time, and he is poor—very poor."

"Very good," said the attorney—"You will have the caption made to-morrow, of course!"

"Yes," replied Heyling. "Stay! No! The next day. You are surprised at my wishing to postpone it; he added, with a ghastly smile; but I had forgotten. The next day is an anniversary in his life: let it be done then."

"Very good," said the attorney—"Will you give me your own instructions for the officer?"

"No; let him meet me here, at eight in the evening, and I will accompany him myself."

"They met on the appointed night, and, hiring a hackney-coach, directed the driver to stop at that corner of the old Pancras road, at which stands the parish workhouse. By the time they alighted there, it was quite dark; and, proceeding by the dead wall in front of the Veterinary Hospital, they entered a small by-street, which is, or was at that time, called Little College Street, and which, whatever it may be now, was in those days a desolate place enough, surrounded by little else than fields and ditches.

"Having drawn the travelling-cap he had on half over his face, and muffled himself in his cloak, Heyling stopped before the nearest-looking house in the street, and knocked gently at the door. It was at once opened by a woman, who dropped a courtesy of recognition; and Heyling, whispering the officer to remain below, crept gently up stairs, and, opening the door of the front room, entered at once.

"The object of his search and his unremitting animosity, now a decrepit old man, was seated at a bare deal table, on which stood a miserable candle. He started on the entrance of the stranger, and rose feebly to his feet.

"What now, what now?" said the old man—"What do you want here?"

"A word with you," replied Heyling. As he spoke, he seated himself at the other end of the table, and, throwing off his cloak and cap, disclosed his features.

"The old man seemed instantly deprived of the power of speech. He fell backward in his chair, and, clasping his hands together, gazed on the apparatus with a mangled look of astonishment and fear.

"This day six years," said Heyling. "I claimed the life you owed me for my child's. Beside the lifelong fear of your daughter, old man, I swore to live a life of revenge. I have never swerved from my purpose for a moment's space; but if I had, one thought of her uncomplaining, suffering look, as she drooped away, or of the starving face of our innocent child, would have nerved me to my task. My first act of requital you well remember; this is my last.

"The old man shivered, and his hands dropped powerless by his side.

"I leave England to-morrow," said Heyling, after a moment's pause. "Tonight I consign you to the living death to which you devoted her—a hopeless prison."

"He raised his eyes to the old man's countenance, and paused. He lifted the light to his face, set it gently down, and left the apartment."

"You had better see the old man," he said to the woman, as he opened the door, and motioned the officer to follow him into the street. "I think he is ill." The woman closed the door, ran hastily up stairs, and found him lifeless. He had died in a fit.

"Beneath a plain grave-stone, in one of the most peaceful and secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England, lie the bones of the young mother and her gentle child. But the ashes of the father do not mingle with theirs; nor from that night forward, did the attorney ever gain the remotest clue to the subsequent history of his queer client."

As the old man described his tale, he advanced to a peg in one corner, and taking down his hat and coat, put them on with great deliberation; and, without saying another word, walked slowly away. As the gentlemen with the Mosaic sticks had fallen asleep, and the major part of the company were deeply occupied in the humorous process of dropping melted tallow-grease into his brandy and water, Mr. Pickwick departed unnoticed, and having settled his own score, and that of Mr. Weble, he issued forth, in company with that gentleman, thence beneath the portal of the Magpie and Stump.
CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. Pickwick journeys to Ipswich, and meets with a romantic adventure with a middle-aged lady in yellow curl papers.

"That 'ere your governor's luggage, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller, senior, of his affectionate son, as he entered the yard of the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, with a travelling-bag and a small portmanteau.

"You might ha' made a worse guess than that, old feller," replied Mr. Weller the younger, setting down his burden in the yard, and sitting himself down upon it afterwards. "The governor his-self'll be down here presently."

"He's a cabbin' it, I suppose?" said the father.

"Yes, he's a havin' two mile o' danger at eight o'clock," responded the son. "How's your mother-in-law this mornin'?

"Quer, Sammy, quer," replied the elder Mr. Weller, with impressive gravity.

"She's been gettin' rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy; and she's uncomman' pious, to be sure. She's too good a creature for me, Sammy—I feel I don't deserve her."

"Ah," said Mr. Samuel, "that's very self-denying o' you."

"Wery," replied his parent, with a sigh.

"She's got hold o' some invention for grown-up people being born again, Sammy—the new birth, I think they calls it. I should very much like to see that system in action, Sammy. I should very much like to see your mother-in-law born again. Wouldn't I put her out to nurse?"

"What do you think them women does to other day," continued Mr. Weller, after a short pause, during which he had significantly struck the side of his nose with his forefinger, some half-dozen times. "What do you think they does, tother day, Sammy?"

"Don't know," replied Sam, "what?"

"Go's and gets up a grand tea-drinkin' for a feller they calls their shepherd," said Mr. Weller. "I was a standing starin' in, at the pictur shop down at our place, when I sees a little bill about it; tickets half-a-crown. All applications to be made to the committee. Secretary, Mrs. Weller; and when I goes home, there was the committee a sitin' in our back parlour—fourteen women; I wish you could ha' heard 'em, Sammy. There was, a passin' resolutions, and votin' supplies, and all sorts o' games. Well, what with your mother-in-law a worrying me to go, and what with my lookin' for to seecin' some queer starts if I did, I put my name down for a ticket; at six o'clock on the Friday even-

in' I dress myself out, wery smart, and off I goes with the old 'ooman, and up we walks into a fast door where there was teashings for thirty, and a whole lot o' women as begins whisperin' to one another, and lookin' at me, as if they'd never reen rayther a stout gen'l'm'n of eight-and-fifty afore. By-and-by, there comes a great jumble down stairs, and a lanky chap with a red nose and white neckcloth rushes up, and sings out, 'Here's the shepherd a coming to visit his faithful flock;' and in comes a fat chap in black, with a great white face, a smilin' away like clock-work. Such goin's on, Sammy. 'The kiss of peace,' says the shepherd; and then he kissed the women all round, and ven he'd done, the man with the red nose began. I was just a thinkin' whether I hadn't better begin too—"especially as there was a very nice lady a sittin' next me—ven in comes the tea, and your mother-in-law, as had been makin' the kettle boil, down stairs. At it they went, tooth and nail. Such a precious loud hymn, Sammy, while the tea was a brewin'; such a grace, such eatin' and drinkin'. I wish you could ha' seen the shepherd walkin' into the ham and muffins. I never see such a chap to eat and drink—never. The red-nosed man warn't by no means the sort of person you'd like to grub by contract, but he was nothin' to the shepherd. Well, arter the tea was over, they sung another hymn, and then the shepherd began to preachen; and wery well he did it, considerin' how heavy them muffins must have lied on his chest. Presently he pulls up all of a sudden, and hollers out 'Where is the sinner; where is the mis'rable sinner?' upon which all the women looked at me, and began to groan as if they was dyin'. I thought it was rather sing'lar, but hors'ever, I says nothing. Presently he pulls up again, and lookin' very hard at me, says, 'Where is the sinner; where is the mis'rable sinner?' and all the women groans again, ten times louder than afore. I got rather savage at this, so I takes a step or two for'ard, and says, 'My friend,' says I, 'did you apply that 'ere observation to me?'—'Stead of beggin' my pardon as any gen't'm'n would ha' done, he got more abusive than ever: called me a wessel, Sammy—a wessel of wrath—and all sorts of names. So my blood being 'reg'larly up, I first gave him two or three for himself, and then two or three more to hand over to the man with the red nose, and walked off. I wish you could ha' heard how the women screamed, Sammy, ven they picked up the shepherd from under the table. Hallo! here's the governor, the sise of life."

As Mr. Weller spoke, Mr. Pickwick
"A very good,  ... Mr. Pickwick, wholly unable to repress a smile.

"Yes, I think it is," resumed Mr. Magnus.

"There's a good name before it, too you will observe. Permit me, Sir—if you hold the card a little slanting, this way  ... Here—Peter Magnus—sounds well, I think, Sir."

"Very," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Curious circumstance about these initials, Sir," said Mr. Magnus. "You will observe—P. M.—post meridian. In hasty notes to intimate acquaintance, I sometimes sign myself 'Afternoon.' It amuses my friends very much, Mr. Pickwick."

"It is calculated to afford them the highest gratification, I should conceive," said Mr. Pickwick, rather evading the cases with which Mr. Magnus's friends was entertained.

"Now, gentlemen," said the hoster, "coach is ready if you please."

"Is all my luggage in?" inquired Mr. Magnus.

"All right, Sir."

"Is the red bag in?"

"All right, Sir."

"And the stripped bag?"

"Fore boot, Sir."

"And the brown-paper parcel?"

"Under the seat, Sir."

"And the leathern hat-box?"

"They're all in, Sir."

"Now, will you get up?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Excuse me," replied Magnus, standing on the wheel. "Excuse me, Mr. Pickwick. I cannot consent to get up in this state of uncertainty. I am quite satisfied from that man's manner, that that leathern hat-box is not in."

The solemn protestations of the hostler being wholly unavailing, the leather hat-box was obliged to be raked up from the lowest depth of the boot, to satisfy him that it had been safely packed; and after he had been assured on this head, he felt a solemn presentiment, first, that the red bag was mislaid, and next that the stripped bag had been stolen, and then that the brown paper parcel had "come untied." At length when he had received ocular demonstration of the groundless nature of each and every of these suspicions, he consented to climb up to the roof of the coach, observing that now he had taken everything off his mind, he felt quite comfortable and happy.

"You're given to nervousness, ain't you, Sir?" inquired Mr. Weller, senior, eyesing the stranger askance, as he mounted to his place.

"Yes; I always am rather, about these
little mystery, said the stranger, "but I am all right now—quite right."

"Well, that's a blessing," said Mr. Weller. "Sonny, help your master up to the box: t'other leg, Sir, that's it! give us your hand, Sir. Up with you. You was a lighter weight when you was a boy, Sir."

"True enough, that, Mr. Weller," said the breathless Mr. Pickwick, good-humouredly, as he took his seat on the box beside him. "Jump up in front, Sonny," said Mr. Weller. "Now, Villam, run 'em out. Take care o' the archway, gen'l'm'n. 'Heads,' as the plienam says. That'll do, Villam. Let 'em alone." And away went the coach up Whitechapel, to the admiration of the whole population of that pretty densely-populated quarter.

"Not a very nice neighbourhood this, Sir," said Sam, with the touch of the hat which always preceded his entering into conversation with his master.

"It is not indeed, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the crowded and filthy street through which they were passing.

"It's a very remarkable circumstance, Sir," said Sam, "that poverty and oysters always seems to go together."

"I don't understand you, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"What I mean, Sir," said Sam, "is, that the poorer a place is, the greater call there seems to be for oysters. Look here, Sir; here's a oyster stall to every half-dozen houses—the street's lined with 'em. Blessed if I don't think that ven a man's very poor, he rushes out of his lodgings, and eats oysters in regular desperation."

"To be sure he does," said Mr. Weller, senior, "and it's just the same with pickled salmon!"

"Those are two very remarkable facts, which never occurred to me before," said Mr. Pickwick. "The very first place we stop at, I'll make a note of them."

By this time they had reached the turnpike at Mile End; a profound silence prevailed, until they had got two or three miles further on, when Mr. Weller senior turning suddenly to Mr. Pickwick said—

"Very queer life is a pike-keeper's, Sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"A pike-keeper."

"What do you mean by a pike-keeper?" inquired Mr. Peter Magnus.

"The old 'un means a turnpike-keeper, gen'l'm'n," observed Mr. Weller, in explanation.

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick, "I see. Yes; very curious life. Very uncomfortable."

"They're all on 'em, mea as has met with some disappointment in life," said Mr. Weller, senior.

"Ay, ay!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes. Consequence of which, they retire from the world, and shuts themselves up in pikes; partly with the view of being solitary, and partly to re-engage themselves on mankind, by takin' tolls."

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, "I never knew that before."

"Fact, Sir," said Mr. Weller, "if they was gen'l'm'n you'd call 'em misanthropes, but as it is they only takes to pike-keepin'."

With such conversation, possessing the inestimable charm of blending amusement with instruction, did Mr. Weller beguile the tediousness of the journey, during the greater part of the day. Topics of conversation were never wanting, for even when any pause occurred in Mr. Weller's loquacity, it was abundantly supplied by the desire evinced by Mr. Magnus to make himself acquainted with the whole of the personal history of his fellow-travellers, and his loudly-expressed anxiety at every stage, respecting the safety and well-being of the two bags, the leather hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel.

In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of "The Great White Horse," rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rambunctious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an immense cart-horse, which is elevated above the principal door.

The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbourhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or a county-paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, badly-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse at Ipswich.

It was at the door of this overgrown tavern, that the London coach stopped, at the same hour every evening; and it was from this same London coach, that Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Mr. Peter Magnus dismounted, on the particular evening to which this chapter of our history bears reference.

"Do you stop here, Sir?" inquired Mr. Peter Magnus, when the striped bag, and the red bag, and the brown-paper parcel, and the leather hat-box, had all been de posed in the passage. "Do you stop here, Sir?"

"I do," said Mr. Pickwick.
"Dear me," said Mr. Magnus, "I never knew any thing like these extraordinary coincidences. Why, I stop here too. I hope we dine together!"

"With pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I am not quite certain whether I have any friends here or not, though. Is there any gentleman of the name of Tupman here, waiter?"

A corpulent man, with a fortnight's napkin under his arm, and coeval stockings on his legs, slowly descended from his occupation of staring down the street, on this question being put to him by Mr. Pickwick; and, after minutely inspecting that gentleman's appearance, from the crown of his hat to the lowest button of his gaiters, replied emphatically—

"No."

"Nor any gentleman of the name of Snodgrass?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"No!"

"Nor Winkle?"

"No!"

"My friends have not arrived to-day, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick. "We will dine alone, then. Show us a private room, waiter."

On this request being preferred, the corpulent man descended to order the boots to bring in the gentlemen's luggage, and proceed them down a long dark passage, toward them into a large, badly-furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak, were served up to the travellers; and when the dinner was cleared away, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Peter Magnus drew their chairs up to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.

Mr. Peter Magnus was naturally of a very communicative disposition, and the brandy and water operated with wonderful effect in warmed into life the deepest hidden secrets of his bosom. After sundry accounts of himself, his family, his connexions, his friends, his jokes, his business, and his brothers (most talkative men having a great deal to say about their brothers), Mr. Peter Magnus took a blue view of Mr. Pickwick through his coloured spectacles for several minutes, and then said, with an air of modesty—

"And what do you think—what do you think, Mr. Pickwick—I have come down here for!"

"Upon my word," said Mr. Pickwick, "it is wholly impossible for me to guess; on business, perhaps."

"Partly right, Sir," replied Mr. Peter Magnus, "but partly wrong, at the same time: try again, Mr. Pickwick."

"Really," said Mr. Pickwick, "I must throw myself on your mercy, to tell me or not, as you may think best; for I should never guess, if I were to try all night."

"Why, then, ho—ho—he!" said Mr. Peter Magnus, with a bashful titter. "What should you think, Mr. Pickwick, if I had come down here, to make a proposal, Sir, oh! He—ho—he!"

"Think! that you are very likely to succeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, with one of his most beaming smiles.

"Ah!" said Mr. Magnus, "but do you really think so, Mr. Pickwick? Do you think I?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No; but you're joking, though."

"I am not, indeed."

"Why then," said Mr. Magnus, "to let you into a little secret, I think so too. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Pickwick, although I'm dreadful jealous by nature—horrid—that the lady is in this hotel."

Here Mr. Magnus took off his spectacles, on purpose to wink, and then put them on again.

"That's where you were running out of the room for, before dinner, then, so often," said Mr. Pickwick, archly.

"Hush—you, you're right, that was it; not such a fool as to see her, though."

"No!"

"No; wouldn't do, you know; after having just come off a journey. Wait till to-morrow, Sir; double the chance then."

Mr. Pickwick, Sir, there is a suit of clothes in that bag, and a hat in that box, which I expect, in the effect they will produce, will be invaluable to me, Sir."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes; you must have observed my anxiety about them to-day. I do not believe that such another suit of clothes, and such a hat, could be bought for money, Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Pickwick congratulated the fortunate owner of the irresistible garments; on their acquisition; and Mr. Peter Magnus remained for a few moments, apparently absorbed in contemplation.

"She's a fine creature," said Mr. Magnus.

"Is she!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very," said Mr. Magnus, "very. She lives about twenty miles from here, Mr. Pickwick. I heard she would be here to-night and all to-morrow forenoon, and came down to seize the opportunity. I think an inn is a good sort of place to propose to a
single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation, in travelling, perhaps, than she would be at home. What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?"

"I think it very probable," replied that gentleman.

"I beg your pardon," Mr. Pickwick," said Mr. Peter Magnus, "but I am naturally rather curious; what may you have come down here for?"

"On a far less pleasant errand, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, the colour mounting to his face at the recollection—"I have come down here, Sir, to expose the treachery and falsehood of an individual, upon whose truth and honour I placed implicit reliance."

"Dear me," said Mr. Peter Magnus, "that's very unpleasant. It is a lady, I presume? Eh! ah! Sly, Mr. Pickwick, sly. Well, Mr. Pickwick, Sir, I wouldn't probe your feelings for the world. Painful subjects, these, Sir, very painful. Don't mind me, Mr. Pickwick, if you wish to give vent to your feelings. I know what it is to be jilted, Sir; I have endured that sort of thing three or four times."

"I am much obliged to you for your condolence on what you presume to be my melancholy case," said Mr. Pickwick, winding up his watch, and laying it on the table, "but—"

"No, no," said Mr. Peter Magnus, "not a word more; it's a painful subject, I see, I see. What's the time, Mr. Pickwick?"

"Past twelve."

"Dear me, it's time to go to bed. It will never do, sitting here. I shall be pale to-morrow, Mr. Pickwick!"

At the bare notion of such a calamity, Mr. Peter Magnus rang the bell for the chamber-maid; and the striped bag, the red bag, the leather hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel, having been conveyed to his bed-room, he retired in company with a japanned candlestick to one side of the house, while Mr. Pickwick, and another japanned candlestick, were conducted through a multitude of tortuous windings, to another. "This is your room, Sir," said the chamber-maid.

"Very well," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. It was a tolerably large double-bedded room, with a fire; upon the whole, a more comfortable-looking apartment than Mr. Pickwick's short experience of the accommodations of the Great White Horse had led him to expect.

"Nobody sleeps in the other bed, of course," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, no, Sir."

"Very good. Tell my servant to bring me up some hot water at half-past eight in the morning; and that I shall not want him any more this night."

"Yes, Sir." And bidding Mr. Pickwick good night, the chamber-maid retired, and left him alone.

Mr. Pickwick sat himself down in a chair before the fire, and fell into a train of rambling meditations. First he thought of his friends, and wondered when they would join him; then his mind reverted to Mrs. Martha Bardell; and from that lady it wandered, by a natural process, to the dingy counting-house of Dodson and Fogg. From Dodson and Fogg's it flew off at a tangent, to the very centre of the history of the queer client: and then it came back to the Great White Horse at Ipswich, with sufficient clearness to convince Mr. Pickwick that he was falling asleep; so he roused himself, and began to undress, when he recollected he had left his watch on the table down stairs.

Now this watch was a special favourite with Mr. Pickwick, having been carried about, beneath the shadow of his waistcoat, for a greater number of years than we feel called upon to state, at present. The possibility of going to sleep, unless it were tickling gently beneath his pillow, or in his watch-pocket over his head, had never entered Mr. Pickwick's brain. So as it was pretty late now, and he was unwilling to ring his bell at that hour of the night, he slipped on his coat, of which he had just divested himself, and taking the japanned candlestick in his hand, walked quietly down stairs.

The more stairs Mr. Pickwick went down, the more stairs there seemed to be to descend, and again and again, when Mr. Pickwick got into some narrow passages, and began to congratulate himself on having gained the ground-floor, another flight of stairs appeared before his astonished eyes. At last he reached a stone hall, which he remembered to have seen when he entered the house. Passage after passage did he explore; room after room did he perp into, at length, just as he was on the point of giving up the search in despair, he opened the door of the identical room in which he had spent the evening, and beheld his missing property on the table.

Mr. Pickwick seized the watch in triumph, and proceeded to retrace his steps to his bed-chamber. If his progress downwards had been attended with difficulties and uncertainty, his journey back was infinitely more perplexing. Rows of doors, garnished with busts of every shape, size, branched off in every possible direction. A dozen times did he softly turn the handle of some bed-room door, which resembled his own, when a loud cry reso
within, of "Who the devil's that?" or "What do you want here?" caused him to steal away, on tiptoe, with a perfectly marvellous celerity. He was reduced to the verge of despair, when an open door attracted his attention. He peeped in—right at last. There were the two beds, whose situation he perfectly remembered, and the fire still burning. His candle, not a long one when he first received it, had flickered away in the drafts of air through which he had passed, and sunk into the socket, just as he closed the door after him. "No matter," said Mr. Pickwick, "I can undress myself just as well, by the light of the fire."

The bedstead stood, one on each side of the door; and on the inner side of each was a lamp, raised in a rush-bottomed chair, just wide enough to admit of a person's getting into or out of bed, on that side, if he or she thought proper. Having carefully drawn the curtains of his bed on the outside, Mr. Pickwick sat down on the rush-bottomed chair, and leisurely divested himself of his shoes and gaiters. He then took off and folded up his coat, waistcoat and neckcloth, and slowly drawing on his tasseled night-cap, secured it firmly on his head, by tying beneath his chin, the strings which he had always attached to that article of dress. It was at this moment that the absurdity of his recent bewilderment struck upon his mind; and throwing himself back in the rush-bottomed chair, Mr. Pickwick laughed to himself so heartily, that it would have been quite delightful to any man of well-constituted mind to have watched the smiles which expanded his amiable features as they shone forth, from beneath the night-cap.

"It is the best idea," said Mr. Pickwick to himself, "smiling till he almost cracked the night-cap strings." It is the best idea, my Lord, my Lord, said he to himself, and wondering about those stairs, that I ever heard of. Droll, droll, very droll." Here Mr. Pickwick smiled again, a broader smile than before, and was about to continue the process of undressing, in the best possible humour, when he was suddenly stopped by a most unexpected interruption; to wit, the entrance into the room of some person with a candle, after locking the door, advanced to the dressing-table, and set down the light upon it.

The smile that played on Mr. Pickwick's features, was instantaneously lost in a look of the most unbounded and wonder-stricken surprise. The person, whoever it was, had come in so suddenly and with so little noise that Mr. Pickwick had no time to call out, or oppose the entrance. Who could it be? A robber! Some evil-minded person who had seen him come up stairs with a handsome watch in his hand, perhaps. What was he to do?

The only way in which Mr. Pickwick could catch a glimpse of his mysterious visitor with the least danger of being seen himself, was by creeping on to the bed, and peeping out from between the curtains on the opposite side. To this manoeuvre he accordingly resorted. Keeping the curtains carefully closed with his hand, so that nothing more of him could be seen than his face and night-cap, and putting on his spectacles, he mustered up courage, and looked out.

Mr. Pickwick almost fainted with horror and dismay. Standing before the dressing glass was a middle-aged lady in yellow curl-papers, bunched up in brushing what ladies call their "back hair." However the unconscious middle-aged lady came into that room, it was quite clear that she contemplated remaining there for the night; for she had brought a rushlight and shade with her, which, with praiseworthy precaution against fire, she had stationed in a basin on the floor, where it was glimmering away, like a gigantic lighthouse, in a particularly small piece of water.

"Bless my soul," thought Mr. Pickwick, "what a dreadful thing?" "Hem!" said the lady; and in went Mr Pickwick's head with automaton-like rapidity.

"I never met with anything so awful as this,"—thought poor Mr. Pickwick, the cold perspiration starting in drops upon his night-cap. "Never. This is fearful.

It was quite impossible to resist the urgent desire to see what was going forward. So out went Mr. Pickwick's head again. The prospect was worse than before. The middle-aged lady had finished arranging her hair; and carefully enveloped it, in a muslin night-cap with a small plaited border, and was gazing pensively on the fire.

"This matter is growing alarming"—reasoned Mr. Pickwick with himself. "I can't allow things to go on in this way. By the self-possession of that lady, it's clear to me that I must have come into the wrong room. If I call out, she'll alarm the house, but if I remain here, the consequence will be still more frightful." Mr. Pickwick, it is quite necessary to say, was one of the most modest and delicately-minded of mortals. The very idea of exhibiting his night-cap to a lady, over-powered him, but he had tied these confined strings in a knot, and did what he would, he couldn't get it off. The disclosure must be made. There was only one way of doing it. He shrunk between the curtains, and called out very loudly:

"Ha—hum."
That the lady started at this unexpected sound was evident, by her falling up against the rush-light shade; that she persuaded herself it must have been the effect of imagination was equally clear, for when Mr. Pickwick, under the impression that she had fainted away, stone-dead from fright, ventured to peep out again, she was gazing pensively on the fire as before.

"Most extraordinary female this," thought Mr. Pickwick, popping in again. "Hahum."

These last sounds, so like those in which, as legends inform us, the ferocious giant Blunderbore was in the habit of expressing his opinion that it was time to lay the cloth, were too distinctly audible to be again mistaken for the workings of fancy.

"Gracious Heaven!" said the middle-aged lady, "what's that?"

"It's—it's—only a gentleman, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick from behind the curtains.

"A gentleman!" said the lady with a terrific scream.

"It's all over," thought Mr. Pickwick.

"A strange man," shrieked the lady. Another instant and the house would be alarmed. Her garments rustled as she rushed towards the door.

"Ma'am!"—said Mr. Pickwick, thrusting out his head, in the extremity of his desolation, "Ma'am."

Now although Mr. Pickwick was not actuated by any definite object in putting out his head, it was instantaneous and productive of a good effect. The lady, as we have already stated, was near the door. She must pass it to reach the staircase, and she would most undoubtedly have done so, by this time, had not the sudden apparition of Mr. Pickwick's night-cap driven her back, into the remotest corner of the apartment, where she stood staring wildly at Mr. Pickwick, while Mr. Pickwick in his turn stared wildly at her.

"Wretch!"—said the lady, covering her eyes with her hands, "what do you want here!"

"Nothing, Ma'am—nothing whatever, Ma'am!" said Mr. Pickwick earnestly.

"Nothing!" said the lady, looking up.

"Nothing, Ma'am, upon my honour," said Mr. Pickwick, nodding his head so energetically, that the tassel of his night-cap danced again. "I am almost ready to sink, Ma'am, beneath the confusion of addressing a lady in my night-cap (here the lady hastily snatched off her's) but I can't get it off, Ma'am (here Mr. Pickwick gave it a tremendous tug in proof of the statement). It is evident to me, Ma'am, now, that I have mistaken this bed-room for my own. I had not been here five minutes Ma'am, when you suddenly entered it."

"If this improbable story be really true, Sir"—said the lady, sobbing violently, "you will leave it instantly."

"I will, Ma'am, with the greatest pleasure!"—replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Instantly, Sir," said the lady.

"Certainly, Ma'am," interposed Mr. Pickwick, very quickly. "Certainly, Ma'am. I—I am very sorry, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, making his appearance at the bottom of the bed, "to have been the innocent occasion of this alarm and emotion; deeply sorry, Ma'am."

The lady pointed to the door. One excellent quality of Mr. Pickwick's character was beautifully displayed at this moment under the most trying circumstances. Although he had hastily put on his hat over his night-cap, after the manner of the old patrol; although he carried his shoes and gaiters in his hand, and his coat and waistcoat over his arm, nothing could subdue his native politeness.

"I am exceedingly sorry, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, bowing very low.

"If you are, Sir, you will at once leave the room," said the lady.

"Immediately, Ma'am; this instant, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, opening the door, and dropping both his shoes with a loud crash in so doing.

"I trust, Ma'am," resumed Mr. Pickwick, gathering up his shoes, and turning round to bow again. "I trust, Ma'am, that my unblemished character, and the devoted respect I entertain for your sex, will plead as some slight excuse for this"—but before Mr. Pickwick could conclude the sentence, the lady had thrust him into the passage, and locked and bolted the door behind him.

Whatever grounds of self-congratulation Mr. Pickwick might have, for having escaped so quietly from his late awkward situation, his present position was by no means enviable. He was alone, in an open passage, in a strange house, in the middle of the night, half dressed; it was not to be supposed that he could find his way in perfect darkness to a room which he had been wholly unable to discover with a light, and if he made the slightest noise in his fruitless attempts to do so, he stood every chance of being shot at, and perhaps killed, by some wakeful traveller. He had no resource but to remain where he was, until daylight appeared. So after groping his way a few paces down the passage, and, to his infinite alarm, stumbling over several pairs of boots in so doing, Mr. Pickwick crouched into a little recess in the wall.
wait for morning, as philosophically as he might.

"He was not detained, however, to undergo this additional trial of patience: for he had not been long encouned in his present concealment when, to his unspeakable horror, a man, bearing a light, appeared at the end of the passage. His horror was suddenly converted into joy, however, when he recognised the form of his faithful attendant. It was indeed Mr. Samuel Weller, who, after sitting up thus late, in conversation with the Boots, who was sitting up for the mail, was now about to retire to rest.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly appearing before him, "where's my bedroom?"

Mr. Weller stared at his master with the most emphatic surprise; and it was not until the question had been repeated three or four times, that he turned round, and led the way to the long-sought apartment.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick as he got into bed, "I have made one of the most extraordinary mistakes to-night, that ever was heard of!"

"Very likely, Sir," replied Mr. Weller dolefully.

"But on this I am determined, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "that if I were to stop in this house for six months, I would never trust myself about it, alone; again.

"That's the very prudentest resolution as you could come to, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "You rather want somebody to look after you, Sir, ven your judgment goes out a watchin'.'"

"What do you mean, by that, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick. He raised himself in bed, and extended his hand, as if he were about to say something more; but suddenly checking himself, turned round, and bade his valet "good night."

"Good night, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. He paused when he got outside the door—shook his head—walked on—stopped—snuffed the candle—shook his head again—and finally proceeded slowly to his chamber, apparently buried in the profoundest meditation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In which Mr. Samuel Weller begins to devote his energies to the return match between himself and Mr. Trotter.

In a small room in the vicinity of the stable-yard, began in the morning, which was ushered in by Mr. Pickwick's adventur with the middle-aged lady in the yellow curl-papers, sat Mr. Weller, senior, preparing himself for his journey to London. He was sitting in an excellent attitude for having his portrait taken.

It is very possible that at some earlier period of his career, Mr. Weller's profile might have presented a bold, and determined, outline. His face, however, had expanded under the influence of good living, and a disposition remarkable for resignation; and its bold, flashy curve had so far extended beyond the limits originally assigned them, that unless you took a full view of his countenance in front, it was difficult to distinguish more than the extreme tip of a very rubicund nose. His chin, from the same cause, had acquired the grave and imposing form which is generally described by prefixing the word "doubly" to that expressive feature, and his complexion exhibited that peculiarly motley combination of colours which is only to be seen in gentlemen of his profession, and undergoing roast-beef. Round his neck he wore a crimson travelling shawl, which merged into his chin by such imperceptible gradations, that it was difficult to distinguish the folds of the one, from the folds of the other. Over this, he mounted a long waistcoat of a broad pink-striped pattern, and over that again, a wide-skirted green coat, ornamented with large brass buttons, whereas the two which garnished the waist, were so far apart, that no man had ever beheld them both at the same time. His hair, which was short, sleek, and black, was just visible beneath the capacious brim of a low-crowned brown hat. His legs were encased in knee-cord breeches; and painted top-boots; and a copper watch-chain terminating in one seal, and a key of the same material, dangled loosely from his capacious waist-band.

We have said that Mr. Weller was engaged in preparing for his journey to London—he was taking sustenance, in fact. On the table before him stood a pot of ale, a cold round of beef, and a very respectable-looking loaf, to each of which he distributed his fancies in turn, with the moist rigidity of an imperturbable. He had just cut a mighty slice from the latter, when the footsteps of somebody entering the room caused him to raise his head; and he held his son.

"Mornin', Sammy," said the father.

The son walked up to the pot of ale, and nodding significantly to his parent, took a long draught by way of reply.

"Very good power o' sation, Sammy," said Mr. Weller the elder, looking into the pot, when his first-born had set it down half empty. "You 'd 'a' made use of.
And now, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, consulting the large double-cased silver watch that hung at the end of the copper chain. "Now it's time I was up at the office to get my way-bill, and see the coach loaded; for coaches, Sammy, is like guns—they requires to be loaded with very great care afore they go off."

At this parental and professional joke, Mr. Weller junior smiled a filial smile. His reverend parent continued in a solemn tone—

"I'm a goin' to leave you, Samivel, my boy, and there's no telling when I shall see you again. Your mother-in-law may ha' been too much for me, or a thousand things may have happened by the time you next hears any news o' the celebrated Mr. Weller o' the Bell Savage. The family name depends very much upon you, Samivel, and I hope you'll do wot's right by it. Upon all little pints o' breedin', I know I may trust you as well as if it was my own self. So I've only this here one little bit of advice to give you. If ever you gits to up'ards o' fifty, and feels disposed to go a marrying' any body—no matter who—jist you shut yourself up in your own room, if you've got one, and pison yourself off hand. Hangin' the vulgar, so don't you have nothin' to say to that. Pison yourself, Samivel, my boy, pison yourself, and you'll be glad on it afterwards." With these affecting words, Mr. Weller looked steadfastly on his son, and turning slowly upon his heel, disappeared from his sight.

In the contemplative mood which these words had awakened, Mr. Samuel Weller walked forth from the Great White Horse when his father had left him; and bending his steps towards Saint Clement's Church, endeavoured to dissipate his melancholy, by strolling among its ancient provinces. He had loitered about, for some time, when he found himself in a retired spot—a kind of court-yard of venerable appearance—which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered, He was about retracting his steps, when he was suddenly transfixed to the spot by a sudden appearance; and the mode and manner of this appearance, we now proceed to relate.

Mr. Samuel Weller had been staring up at the old brick houses; and then, in his deep abstraction, bestowing a wink upon a healthy-looking servant girl as she drew up a blind, or threw open a bedroom window, when the green gate at the garden, at the bottom of the yard, opened, and a man having emerged therefrom, closed the green gate very carefully after him, and walked briskly towards the very spot where Mr. Weller was standing.
Now taking this, as an isolated fact, unaccompanied by any attendant circumstances, there was nothing very extraordinary in it, because in many parts of the world, men do come out of gardens, close green gates after them, and even walk briskly away, without attracting any particular share of public observation. It is clear therefore, that there must have been something in the man, or in his manner, or both, to attract Mr. Weller’s particular notice. Whether there was, or not, we must leave the reader to determine, when we have faithfully recounted the behaviour of the individual in question.

When the man had shut the green gate after him, he walked, as we have said twice already, with a brisk pace up the court-yard; but he no sooner caught sight of Mr. Weller, than he faltered, and stopped as if uncertain for a moment what course to adopt. As the green gate was closed behind him, and there was no other outlet but the one in front, however, he was not long in perceiving that he must pass Mr. Samuel Weller to get away. He therefore resumed his brisk pace, and advanced, staring straight before him. The most extraordinary thing about the man was, that he was contorting his face into the most fearful and astonishing grimaces that ever were beheld. Nature’s handiwork never was disguised with such extraordinary artificial carving, as the man had overlaid his countenance with in one moment.

“Well,”—said Mr. Weller to himself, as the man approached. “This is very odd. I could ha’ swore it was him.”

Up came the man, and his face became more frightfully distorted than ever, as he drew nearer.

“I could take my oath to that ere black hair, and mulberry suit,” said Mr. Weller; “only I never see such a face as that, afore.”

As Mr. Weller said this, the man’s features assumed an unearthly twinge, perfectly hideous. He was obliged to pass very near Sam, however, and the scrutinising glance of that gentleman enabled him to detect, under all these appalling twists of feature, something too like the small eyes of Mr. Job Trotter, to be easily mistaken.

“Hallo, you Sir,” shouted Sam, fiercely. The stranger stopped.

“Hallo,” repeated Sam, still more gruffly. The man with the horrible face, looked, with the greatest surprise, up the court, and down the court, and in at the windows of the houses—every where but at Sam Weller—and took another step forward, when he was brought to again, by another shout.

“Hallo, you Sir”—said Sam, for the third time.

There was no pretending to mistake where the voice came from now, so the stranger, having no other resource, at last looked Sam Weller full in the face.

“It won’t do, Job Trotter,” said Sam. “Come, none o’ that ere nonsense. You ain’t so very ‘ansome that you can afford to throw away many o’ your good looks. Bring them ere eyes o’ your’n back into their proper places, or I’ll knock ‘em out of your head. D’ye hear?”

As Mr. Weller appeared fully disposed to act up to the spirit of this address, Mr. Trotter gradually allowed his face to resume its natural expression; and then giving a start of joy, exclaimed, “What do I see! Mr. Walker!”

“Ah,” replied Sam—“you’re very glad to see me, ain’t you?”

“Glad!” exclaimed Job Trotter—“Oh, Mr. Walker, if you had but known how I have looked forward to this meeting! It is too much, Mr. Walker; I cannot bear it, indeed I cannot.” And with these words, Mr. Trotter burst into a regular inundation of tears, and, flinging his arms round those of Mr. Weller, embraced him closely, in an ecstasy of joy.

“Get off,” cried Sam, highly indignant at this process, and vainly endeavouring to extricate himself from the grasp of his enthusiastic acquaintance—“Get off, I tell you. What are you crying over me for, you portable engine!”

“Because I am so glad to see you,” replied Job Trotter, gradually releasing Mr. Weller, as the first symptoms of his pugnacity disappeared. “Oh, Mr. Walker, this is too much.”

“Too much!” echoed Sam, “I think it is too much—rather. Now what have you got to say to me, eh?”

Mr. Trotter made no reply; for the little pink pocket-handkerchief was in full force.

“What have you got to say to me, afore I knock your head off?” repeated Mr. Weller, in a threatening manner.

“Eh!” said Mr. Trotter, with a look of virtuous surprise. “What have you got to say to me?”

“I, Mr. Walker!”

“Don’t call me Walker; my name’s Weller; you know that well enough. What have you got to say to me?”

“Blessee you, Mr. Walker—Weller I mean—a great many things, if you will come away somewhere, where we can talk comfortably. If you know how I have looked for you, Mr. Weller—"
"Very hard, indeed, I suppose?" said Sam, dryly.

"Very, very, Sir?" replied Mr. Trotter, without moving a muscle of his face.—

"But shake hands, Mr. Weller."

Sam eyed his companion for a few seconds, and then, as if actuated by a sudden impulse, complied with his request.

"How," said Job Trotter, as they walked away—"How is your dear, good master? Oh, he is a worthy gentleman, Mr. Weller. I hope he didn't catch cold that dreadful night, Sir."

There was a momentary look of deep slyness in Job Trotter’s eye, as he said this, which ran a thrill through Mr. Weller’s clenched fist, as he burnt with a desire to make a demonstration on his ribs. Sam constrained himself, however, and replied that his master was extremely well.

"Oh, I am so glad," replied Mr. Trotter, "is he here?"

"Is your 'n'?" asked Sam, by way of reply.

"Oh, yes he is here, and I grieve to say, Mr. Weller, he is going on worse than ever."

"Ah, ah!" said Sam.

"Oh, shocking—terrible."

"At a boarding-school?" said Sam.

"No, not at a boarding-school," replied Job trotter, with the same sly look which Sam had noticed before—"Not at a boarding-school."

"At the house with the green gate?" inquired Sam, eyeing his companion closely.

"No, no—eh, not there," replied Job, with a quickness very unusual to him, "not there."

"What was you a doin' there?" asked Sam, with a sharp glance—"Got inside the gate by accident, perhaps?"

"Why, Mr. Weller," replied Job, "I don't mind telling you my little secrets, because you know we look such a fancy for each other when we first met. You recollect how pleasant we were that morning?"

"Oh yes," said Sam, impatiently—"I remember. Well."

"Well," replied Job, speaking with great precision, and in the low tones of a man who communicates an important secret—"In that house with the green gate, Mr. Weller, they keep a good many servants."

"So I should think, from the look on it," interposed Sam.

"Yes," continued Mr. Trotter, "and one of them is a cook, who has saved up a little money, Mr. Weller, and is desirous, if she can establish herself in life, to open a little shop in the chandler way, you see."

"Yes,"

"Yes, Mr. Weller. Well, Sir, I must her at a chapel that I go to—a very neat little chapel in this town, Mr. Weller, where they sing the number four collection of hymns, which I generally carry about with me, in a little book, which you may perhaps have seen in my hand—and I got a little intimate with her, Mr. Weller, and from that, an acquaintance sprung up between us, and I may venture to say, Mr. Weller, that I am to be the chandler."

"Ah, and a very amiable chandler you'll make," replied Sam, eyeing Job with a side look of intense dislike.

"The great advantage of this, Mr. Weller," continued Job, his eyes filling with tears as he spoke, "will be, that I shall be able to leave my present disgraceful service with that bad man, and to devote myself to a better and more virtuous life—more like the way in which I was brought up, Mr. Weller."

"You must ha' been very nicely brought up," said Sam.

"Oh, very, Mr. Weller, very," replied Job; and at the recollection of the purity of his youthful days, Mr. Trotter pulled forth the pink handkerchief and wept copiously."

"You must ha' been an uncommon nice boy, to go to school with," said Sam.

"I was, Sir," replied Job, heaving a deep sigh. "I was the idol of the place."

"Ah," said Sam, "I don't wonder at it. What a comfort you must ha' been to your blessed mother!"

At these words, Mr. Job Trotter inserted an end of the pink handkerchief into the corner of each eye, one after the other, and began to weep copiously.

"What's the matter with the man," said Sam, indignantly. "Chelsea waterworks is nothin' to you. What are you melting with now—the consciousness of willany?"

"I cannot keep my feelings down, Mr. Weller," said Job, after a short pause. 

"To think that my master should have suspected the conversation I had with yours, and so dragged me away in a post-chaise, and after persuading the sweet young lady to say she knew nothing of him, and bribing the school-mistress to do the same, deserted her for a better specification—oh! Mr. Weller, it makes me shudder."

"Oh, that was the way, was it?" said Mr. Weller.

"To be sure it was," replied Job.

"Well," said Sam, as they had now arrived near the hotel, "I want to have a little bit o' talk with you, Job; so if you're not particular engaged, I should like to see you at the Great White Horse to-night, somewhere about eight o'clock."

"I shall be sure to come," said Job.
Yes, you'd better," replied Sam, with a very meaning look, "or else I shan't perhaps be askin' arter you, at the other side of the green gate, and then I might cut you out, you know."

"I shall be sure to be with you," said Mr. Trotter, and wringing Sam's hand with the utmost fervour, he walked away.

"Take care, Job Trotter, take care," said Sam, looking after him, "or I shan't be one too many for you this time, I shall indeed." Having uttered this soliloquy, and looked after Job till he was to be seen no more, Mr. Weller made the best of his way to his master's bed-room.

"It's all in training, Sir," said Sam.

"What's in training, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I have found 'em out, Sir," said Sam.

"Found out who?"

"That are queer customer, and the mealy-chop chap with the black hair."

"Impossible, Sam!" said Mr. Pickwick, with the greatest energy—"Where are they, Sam; where are they?"

"Hush, hush!" replied Mr. Weller, and as he assisted Mr. Pickwick to dress, he detailed the plan of action on which he proposed to enter.

"But when is this to be done, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"All in good time, Sir," replied Sam, "whether it was done in good time, or not, will be seen hereafter."

CHAPTER XXV.

Wherein Mr. Peter Magnus grows jealous, and the middling-aged lady apprehensive, which brings the Pickwickians within the grasp of the Law.

When Mr. Pickwick descended to the room in which he and Mr. Peter Magnus had spent the preceding evening, he found that gentleman with the major part of the contents of the two bags, the feather hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel, displayed to all possible advantage on his person, while he himself was pacing up and down the room in a state of the utmost excitement and agitation.

"Good morning, Sir," said Mr. Peter Magnus—"What do you think of this, Sir?"

"Very, very effective, indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the garments of Mr. Peter Magnus with a good-natured smile.

"Yes, I think it 'ud do," said Mr. Magnus. "Mr. Pickwick, Sir, I have sent up my mare."

"Have you?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, and the tailor brought back word that she would see me at eleven—oh, eleven, Sir; it only wants a quarter now," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very near the time," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, it is rather near," replied Mr. Magnus. "Rather near to be pleasant—eh? Mr. Pickwick, Sir?"

"Confidence is a great thing in these cases," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"I believe it, Sir," said Mr. Peter Magnus. "I am very confident, Sir. Really, Mr. Pickwick, I do not see why a man should feel any fear in such a case as this, Sir. What is it, Sir? There's no thing to be ashamed of, it's a matter of mutual accommodation, nothing more. Husband on one side, wife on the other. That's my view of the matter, Mr. Pickwick."

"It is a very philosophical one," replied Mr. Pickwick. "But breakfast is waiting. Mr. Magnus. Come."

Down they sat to breakfast, but it was evident, notwithstanding the mosting of Mr. Peter Magnus, that he laboured, under a very considerable degree of nervousness, of which loss of appetite, a propensity to upset the tea-things, a spectral attempt at drollery, and an irresistible inclination to look at the clock every other second, were among the principal symptoms.

"He—he—he," muttered Mr. Magnus, affecting cheerfulness, and gasping with agitation. "It only wants two minutes, Mr. Pickwick. Am I pale, Sir?"

"Not very," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick; but have you ever done this sort of thing in your time?" said Mr. Magnus.

"You mean proposing?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes?"

"Never," said Mr. Pickwick, with great energy, "never."

"You have no idea, then, how it's best to begin?" said Mr. Magnus.

"Why?" said Mr. Pickwick. "I may have formed some ideas upon the subject, but as I have never submitted them to the test of experience, I should be sorry if you were induced to regulate your proceedings by them."

"I should feel very much obliged to you, for any advice," said Mr. Magnus, taking another look at the clock, the hands of which were veering in the five minutes past. "Well, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, with the profound solemnity with which that great man could, when he pleased, render his remarks so deeply impressive—"I should commence, Sir, with a tribute to the young lady's beauty and excellent qualities; from them, Sir, I should diverge to my own unworthiness."

"Very good," said Mr. Magnus.
""Unworthiness for her only, mind, Sir,"" said Mr. Magnus. ""I must show that I was not wholly unworthy, Sir; I should take a brief review of my past life, and present condition. I should argue, by analogy, that to any body else, I must be a very desirable object. I should then expatiate on the warmth of my love, and the depth of my devotion. Perhaps I might then be tempted to seize her hand."

"Yes, I see,"" said Mr. Magnus; ""that would be a very great point."

"I should then, Sir,"" continued Mr. Pickwick, growing warmer as the subject presented itself in more glowing colours before him, ""I should then, Sir, come to the plain and simple question, 'Will you have me?' I think I am justified in assuming that upon this, she would turn away her head.

"'I know that may be taken for granted,' said Mr. Magnus; 'because if she did not do that at the right places, it would be embarrassing.'"

"I think she would,"" said Mr. Pickwick. ""Upon this, Sir, I should squeeze her hand, and I think — I think, Mr. Magnus — that after I had done that, supposing there was no refusal, I should gently draw away the handkerchief, which my slight knowledge of human nature leads me to suppose the lady would be applying to her eyes at the moment, and steal a respectful kiss. I think I should kiss her, Mr. Magnus, and at this particular point, I am decidedly of opinion that if the lady were going to take me at all, she would murmur into my ear a thankful acceptance."

Mr. Magnus started; gazed on Mr. Pickwick's intelligent face for a short time in silence, and then (after pointing to the ten minutes past) shook him warmly by the hand, and rushed desperately from the room.

Mr. Pickwick had taken a few strides to and fro; and the small hand of the clock following 'the latter part of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half hour, when the door suddenly opened. He turned round to greet Mr. Peter Magnus, and encountered in his stead the joyous face of Mr. Tupman, the serene countenance of Mr. Winkle, and the intellectual lineaments of Mr. Snodgrass.

As Mr. Pickwick greeted them, Mr. Peter Magnus tripped into the room.

"My friends, the gentleman I was speaking of, Mr. Magnus,"" said Mr. Pickwick. ""Your servant, gentleman,"" said Mr. Magnus, evidently in a high state of excitement; ""Mr. Pickwick, allow me to speak to you one moment, Sir.""

As he said this, Mr. Magnus hurried his Wellington to Mr. Pickwick's button-hole, and drawing him into a window-recess, said...

"Congratulations, Mr. Pickwick; I followed your advice to the very letter."

"And it was all correct, was it?"" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"It was, Sir; could not possibly have been better,"" replied Mr. Magnus; ""Mr. Pickwick, she is mine."

"I congratulate you, with all my heart,"" replied Mr. Pickwick, warmly shaking his new friend by the hand.

"You must see her, Sir,"" said Mr. Magnus; ""this way if you please. ""Excuse us for one instant, gentlemen."" And hurrying on in this way, Mr. Peter Magnus drew Mr. Pickwick from the room. He paused at the next door in the passage, and tapped gently thereat.

"Come in,"" said a female voice. And in they went.

"Miss Withersfield,"" said Mr. Magnus; ""allow me to introduce my very particular friend, Mr. Pickwick."" Mr. Pickwick, I beg to make you known to Miss Withersfield."

The lady was at the upper end of the room, and as Mr. Pickwick bowed, he took his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, and put them on, a process which he had no sooner got through, than, uttering an exclamation of surprise, Mr. Pickwick retraced several paces, and the lady, with a half-suppressed sneer, hid her face in her hands, and dropped into a chair; whereupon Mr. Peter Magnus was struck motionless on the spot, and gazed from one to the other, with a countenance expressive of the extremities of horror and surprise.

This certainly was, to all appearances, a very unnecessary behaviour; but the fact was, that Mr. Pickwick no sooner put on his spectacles, than he at once recognized in the future Mrs. Magnus the lady into whose room he had so unwarntomly intruded on the previous night; and the spectacles had no sooner crossed Mr. Pickwick's nose, than the lady at once identified the countenance which she had seen surrounded by all the horrors of a night-cap. So the lady screamed, and Mr. Pickwick started.

"Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed Mr. Magnus, lost in astonishment; "what is the meaning of this, Sir? What is the meaning of this?" replied Mr. Magnus, in a threatening and a louder tone.

"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, somewhat in dignam at the very sudden manner in which Mr. Peter Magnus had conjured himself into the imperative mood, "I decline answering that question.

"You decline it, Sir?" said Mr. Magnus; "I do, Sir?" replied Mr. Pickwick."
Meditate, Sir!” — “Never mind, Sir.”

"Did I offer to say any thing to the young woman, Sir?” — “Never mind, Sir.”

“Do you want your head knocked up against that wall, Sir?” — “Never mind, Sir.”

It is observable, too, that there would appear to be some hidden taunt in this universal "Never mind,” which rouses more indignation in the bosom of the individual addressed, than the most lavish abuse could possibly awaken.

We do not mean to assert that the application of this brevity to himself, struck exactly that indignation to Mr. Pickwick’s soul, which it would infallibly have roused in a vulgar breast. We merely record the fact that Mr. Pickwick opened the room door, and abruptly called out “Tupman, come here!”

Mr. Tupman immediately presented himself, with a look of very considerable surprise.

“Tupman,” said Mr. Pickwick, “a secret of some delicacy in which that lady is concerned, is the cause of a difference which has just arisen between this gentleman and myself. When I assure him, in your presence, that it has no relation to himself, and is not in any way connected with his affairs, I need hardly beg you to take notice that if he continues to dispute it, he expresses a doubt of my veracity which I shall consider extremely insulting.” As Mr. Pickwick said this, he looked encyclopedias at Mr. Peter Magnus.

Mr. Pickwick’s upright and honourable bearing, coupled with that force and energy of speech which so eminently distinguished him, would have carried conviction to any reasonable mind; but unfortunately at that particular moment, the mind of Mr. Peter Magnus was in any thing but reasonable order. Consequently, instead of receiving Mr. Pickwick’s explanation as he ought to have done, he forthwith proceeded to work himself into a red-hot scorching consuming passion, and to talk about what was due to his own feelings, and all that sort of thing, adding force to his declamation by striding to and fro, and pulling his hair, amusements which he would vary occasionally, by shaking his fist in Mr. Pickwick’s philanthropic countenance.

Mr. Pickwick, in his turn, conscious of his own innocence and rectitude, and irritated by having unfortunately involved the middle-aged lady in such an unpleasant affair, was not so quietly disposed as was his wont. The consequence was, that words ran high, and voices higher, and at length Mr. Magnus told Mr. Pickwick he should hear from him, to which Mr. Pickwick replied with laudable politeness, that the sooner he heard from him the better; where-
upon the middle-aged lady rushed in terror from the room, out of which Mr. Tupman dragged Mr. Pickwick, leaving Mr. Peter Magnus to himself and meditation.

If the middle-aged lady had mingled much with the busy world, or profited at all, by the manners and customs of those who make the laws and set the fashions, she would have known that this sort of serenity is just the most harmless thing in nature; but as she had lived for the most part in the country, and never read the parliamentary debates, she was little versed in these particular refinements of civilized life. Accordingly, when she had gained her bed-chamber, bolted herself in, and begun to meditate on the scene she had just witnessed, the most terrific pictures of slaughter and destruction presented themselves to her imagination; among which a full-length portrait of Mr. Peter Magnus borne home by four men, with the embellishment of a whole barrel-full of bullets in his left side, was among the very least. The more the middle-aged lady meditated, the more terrified she became; and at length she determined to repair to the house of the principal magistrate of the town, and request him to secure the persons of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, without delay.

To this decision the middle-aged lady was impelled by a variety of considerations, the chief of which was the incontestable proof it would afford of her devotion to Mr. Peter Magnus, and her anxiety for his safety. She was too well acquainted with his jealous temper to venture the slightest allusion to the real cause of her agitation on beholding Mr. Pickwick; and she trusted to her own influence and power of persuasion with the little man, to quell his bounteous jealousy, supposing that Mr. Pickwick were removed, and no fresh quarrel could arise. Filled with these reflections, the middle-aged lady arrayed herself in her bonnet and shawl, and repaired to the Mayor's dwelling straightway.

Now George Nupkins, Esquire, the principal magistrate aforesaid, was about as grand a personage as the fastest walker would find out between sunrise and sunset, on the twenty-first of June, which being according to the almanacs, the longest day in the whole year, would naturally afford him the longest period for his search. On this particular morning, Mr. Nupkins was in a state of the utmost excitement and irritation, for there had been a rebellion in the town; all the day-schoolers at the largest day-school, had conspired to break the windows of an obnoxious apple-seller, and had hoofed the beastie, and pelted the constabulary—an elderly gentleman in top boots, who had been called out to repress the tumult; and had been a peace officer, man and boy, for half a century at least. And Mr. Nupkins was sitting in his easy chair, frowning with majesty and boiling with rage, when a lady was announced on pressing private, and particular business. Mr. Nupkins looked calmly terrible, and commanded that the lady should be shown in, which command, like all the mandates of emperors and magistrates, and other great potentates of the earth, was forthwith obeyed; and Miss Witherfeld, interestingly agitated, was ushered in accordingly.

"Muzzle," said the magistrate.

Muzzle was an under-sized footman with a long body and short legs.

"Muzzle." "Yes, your worship." "Place a chair and leave the room." "Yes, your worship." "Now, ma'am, will you state your business?" said the magistrate.

"It is of a very painful kind, Sir," said Miss Witherfeld.

"Very likely, ma'am," said the magistrate. "Compose your feelings, ma'am." Here Mr. Nupkins looked benignant. "And then tell me what legal business brings you here, ma'am." Here the magistrate triumphed over the man; and he looked stern again.

"It is very distressing to me, Sir, to give this information," said Miss Witherfeld; "but I fear a duel is going to be fought here."

"Here ma'am," said the magistrate. "Where, ma'am?"

"In Ipswich."

"In Ipswich, ma'am—a duel in Ipswich," said the magistrate, perfectly aghast at the notion. "Impossible, ma'am: nothing of the kind can be contemplated in this town, I am persuaded. Bless my soul, ma'am; are you aware of the activity of our local magistracy? Do you happen to have heard, ma'am, that I rushed into a prize-ring on the fourth of May last, attended by only sixty special constables; and, at the hazard of falling a sacrifice to the angry passions of an infuriated multitude, prohibited a pagellatic contest between the Middlesex Dumpling, and the Suffolk Bantam! A duel in Ipswich, ma'am! I don't think—I do not think," said the magistrate, reasoning with himself, "that any two men can have the hardihood to plan such a breach of the peace, in this town."

"My information is, unfortunately, but too correct," said the middle-aged lady, "if I was present at the quarrel."

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said the astounded magistrate. "Muzzle." "Yes, your worship."
"Send Mr. Jinks there directly—instantly."

"Yes, your worship."

Muzzle retired; and a pale, sharp-nosed, bearded, shabbily clad clerk of middle age entered the room.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate—"Mr. Jinks."

"Sir," said Mr. Jinks.

"This lady, Mr. Jinks, has come here to give information of an intended duel in this town."

Mr. Jinks, not exactly knowing what to do, smiled a dependant's smile.

"What are you laughing at, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate.

Mr. Jinks looked serious, instantly.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "you're a fool, Sir."

Mr. Jinks looked humbly at the great man, and bit the top of his pen.

"You may see something very comical in this information, Sir, but I can't tell you this, Mr. Jinks, that you have very little to laugh at," said the magistrate.

The hungry-looking Jinks sighed, as if he were quite aware of the fact of his having very little, indeed, to be merry about; and, being ordered to take the lady's information, shuffled to his seat, and proceeded to write it down.

"This man, Pickwick, is the principal, I understand," said the magistrate, when the statement was finished.

"He is," said the middle-aged lady.

"And the other rascal—what's his name, Mr. Jinks?"

"Tupman, Sir."

"Tupman is the second?"

"Yes."

"The other principal, you say, has seconded, mm'am?"

"Yes," replied Miss Witherfield, with a short cough.

"Very well," said the magistrate.

"These are two cut-throats from London, who have come down here to destroy his majesty's population, thinking that, at this distance from the capital, the arm of the law is weak and paralysed. They shall be made an example of. Draw up the warrants, Mr. Jinks. Muzzle."

"Yes, your worship."

"Is Grummel down stairs?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Send him up."

The obsequious Muzzle retired, and presently returned, introducing the elderly gentleman in the top-boots, who was chiefly remarkable for a bottle nose, a coarse voice, a snuff-coloured sartout, and a wondering eye.

"Grummel," said the magistrate.

"Your wash-up."

"In the same quiet, now I."

"Pretty well, your wash-up," replied Grummel. "Pop is feeling less in a measure subsided, none of the boys having dispensed to cricket."

"Nothing but vigorous measures will do; in these times, Grummel," said the magistrate, "in a determined manner— "If the authority of the king's officers is set at naught, we must have the riot act read. If the civil power cannot protect these windows, Grummel, the military must protect the civil power, and the windows too. I believe that is a maxim of the constitution, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir," said Jinks.

"Very good," said the magistrate, signing the warrants. "Grummel, you will bring these persons before me, this afternoon. You will find them at the Great White Horse. You recollect the case of the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam, Grummel."

Mr. Grummel intimated, by a retrospect of the head, that he should never forget it—as indeed it was not very likely he would, as long as it continued to be cited daily.

"This is even more unconstitutional," said the magistrate; "this is even a greater breach of the peace, and a grosser infringement of his majesty's prerogative. I beg duel is one of his majesty's most undoubted prerogatives, Mr. Jinks?"

"Expressly stipulated in Magna Charta, Sir," said Mr. Jinks.

"One of the brightest jewels in the British crown, won from his majesty by the political union of barons, I believe, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate.

"Just so, Sir," replied Mr. Jinks.

"Very well," said the magistrate, drawing himself up, proudly, "it shall not be violated in this portion of his dominions. Grummel, procure assistance, and execute these warrants with as little delay as possible. Muzzle."

"Yes, your worship."

"Show the lady out."

Miss Witherfield retired, deeply impressed with the magistrate's learning and research; Mr. Nupkins retired to lunch; Mr. Jinks retired within himself—that being the only retirement he had, except the sofa-bedstead in the small, parlour which was occupied by his landlady's family in the daytime—and Mr. Grummel retired, to wash out, by his mode of discharging his present commission, the insult which had been fastened upon himself, and the other representative of his majesty—the beadle—in the course of the morning.

While these resolute and determined preparations for the conservation of the
king's peace—were pending, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, wholly unconscious of the mighty events in progress, had sat quietly down to dinner; and very initative and companionable they all were: Mr. Pickwick was in the midst of relating his adventure of the preceding night, to the great amusement of his followers, Mr. Tupman especially, when the door opened, and a somewhat forbidding countenance peeped into the room. The eyes in the forbidding countenance looked very earnestly at Mr. Pickwick for several seconds, and were, to all appearance, satisfied with their investigation; for the body to which the forbidding countenance belonged, slowly brought itself into the apartment, and presented the form of an elderly individual in top-boots—not to keep the reader any longer in suspense, in short, the eyes were the wandering eyes of Mr. Grumner, and the body the body of the same gentleman.

Mr. Grumner's mode of proceeding was professional, histrionic. His first act was to bolt the door on the inside; his second, to polish his head and countenance very carefully with a cotton handkerchief; his third, to place his hat, with the cotton handkerchief in it, on the nearest chair; and his fourth to produce, from the breast-pocket of his coat, a short truncheon ornamented by a brass crown, with which he beckoned to Mr. Pickwick with a grave and ghastly smile.

Mr. Snauggrass was the first to break the astonished silence. He looked astutely at Mr. Grumner for a brief space, and then said, emphatically—"This is a private room; see—a private room!"

Mr. Grumner shook his head, and replied—"No room's private to his majesty, when the steeple's dome iced. That's law. Some people maintain that an Englishman's house is his castle. That's grumner!"

The Pickwickians gazed on each other with wondermg eyes.

"Which is Mr. Tupman?" inquired Mr. Grumner. "He had an intuitive perception of Mr. Pickwick; he knew him at once."

"My name's Tupman," said that gentleman.

"My name's Law," said Mr. Grumner.

"What!" said Mr. Tupman.

"Law," replied Mr. Grumner. "Law, civil, power, and exaktive; there's my titles; here's my authority. Blank Tupman, blank Pickwick—against the peace of our suffering Lord the King—statute in that case made and provided—and all regular. I apprehend you, Pickwick, Tupman—the foresaid."

"What do you mean by this insolence?"
who seemed to consider that any slight cast upon the divine right of magistrates, was a species of blasphemy not to be tolerated.

But when Mr. Pickwick had signified his readiness to bow to the laws of his country, and just when the waiters, and hostlers, and chambermaids, and postboys, who had anticipated a delightful commotion from his threatened obstinacy, began to turn away disappointed and disgusted, a difficulty arose which had not been foreseen. With every sentiment of veneration for the constituted authorities, Mr. Pickwick resolutely protested against making his appearance in the public streets, surrounded and guarded by the officers of justice, like a common criminal. Mr. Grummmer, in the then disturbed state of public feeling (for it was half-holiday, and the boys had not yet gone home,) as resolutely protested against walking on the opposite side of the way, and taking Mr. Pickwick's parole that he would go straight to the magistrate's; and both Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman as strenuously objected to the expense of a post-coach, which was the only respectable conveyance that could be obtained. The dispute ran high, and the dilemma lasted long; and just as the executives were on the point of overcoming Mr. Pickwick's objection to walking to the magistrate's by the trite expedient of carrying him thither, it was recollected that there stood in the inn yard an old sedan-chair, which, having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, at least as conveniently as a modern post-chaise. The chair was hired, and brought into the hall; Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman squeezed themselves inside, and pulled down the blinds; a couple of chairmen were speedily found, and the procession started in grand order. The specials surrounded the body of the vehicle, Mr. Grummer and Mr. Dubbley marched triumphantly in front, Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle walked arm in arm behind, and the unsoaped of Ipswich brought up the rear.

The shopkeepers of the town, although they had a very indistinct notion of the nature of the offence, could not but be much edified and gratified by this spectacle. Here was the strong arm of the law, coming down with twenty gold-beater force, upon two offenders from the metropolis itself; the mighty engine was directed by their own magistrate, and worked by their own officers; and both the criminals, by their combined efforts, were securely boxed up, in the narrow compass of one sedan-chair. Many were the expressions of approbation and admiration which greeted Mr. Grummer, as he headed the cavalcade, staff in hand; loud and long were the shouts which were raised by the unsoaped; and amidst those united testimonials of public approbation, the procession moved slowly and majestically along.

Mr. Weller, habited in his morning jacket with the black calico sleeves, was returning in a rather desponding state from the unsuccessful survey of the mysterious house with the green gate, when, raising his eyes, he beheld a crowd pouring down the street, surrounding an object which has very much the appearance of a sedan-chair. Willing to divert his thoughts from the failure of his enterprise, he stopped and asked to see the crowd pass; and finding that they were cheering away, very much to their own satisfaction, forthwith began just by way of raising his spirits) to cheer too with all his might and main.

Mr. Grummer passed, and Mr. Dubbley passed, and the sedan passed, and the bodyguard of specials passed, and Sam was, still responding to the enthusiastic cheers of the mob, and waving his hat about as if he were in the very last extremity of the wildest joy (though of course he had not the faintest idea of the matter in hand,) when he was suddenly stopped by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass.

"What's the row, gen'l'm'n?" cried Sam. "Who have they got in this here watch-box in mourning?"

Both gentlemen replied together, but their words were lost in the tumult.

"Who is it?" roared Sam again.

Once more was a joint reply returned; and though the words were inaudible, Sam saw by the motion of the two pairs of lips that they had uttered the magic word "Pickwick."

This was enough. In another minute Mr. Weller had made his way through the crowd, stopped the chairman, and confronted the portly Grummer.

"Hallo, old gen'l'm'n," said Sam, "what have you got in this here cow-wayance?"

"Stand back," said Mr. Grummer, whose dignity, like the dignity of a great many other men, had been wondrously augmented by a little popularity.

"Knock him down, if he don't," said Mr. Dubbley.

"I'm very much obliged to you, old gen'l'm'n," replied Sam, "for consulting my convenience, and I'm still more obliged to the other gen'l'm'n, who looks as if he'd just escaped from a gin's cellar, for his very answer-like suggestion; but I should prefer your givin' me a answer to my question, if it's all the same to you. How
are you, Sir?" This last observation was addressed with a patronising air to Mr. Pickwick, who was peeping through the window.

"Mr. Grummner, perfectly speechless with indignation, dragged the transom of the brass crown, from its particular pocket, and flourished it before Sam's eyes.

"Ah," said Sam, "it's very pretty, especially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one."

"Stand back," said the outraged Mr. Grummner. By way of adding force to the command, he thrust the brass emblem of royalty into Sam's noddle with one hand, and seized Sam's collar with the other, a compliment which Mr. Weller returned by knocking him down out of hand, having previously, with the utmost consideration, knocked down a chairman for him to lie upon.

Whether Mr. Winkle was seized with a temporary attack of that species of insanity which originates in a sense of injury, or was animated by this display of Mr. Weller's valour, is uncertain; but certain it is, that he no sooner saw Mr. Grummner fall, than he made a terrific onslaught on a small boy who stood next him; whereupon Mr. Snodgrass, in a truly Christian spirit, and in order that he might take no unnecessary announcement in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation. He was immediately surrounded and secured; and it is but common justice both to him and Mr. Winkle to say, that they did not make the slightest attempt to rescue either themselves or Mr. Weller, who, after a most vigorous resistance, was overpowered by numbers, and taken prisoner. The procession then re-formed, the chairman resumed their stations, and the march was recommenced.

Mr. Pickwick's indignation during the whole of this proceeding was beyond all bounds. He could just see Sam upsetting the specials, and flying about in every direction, and that was all he could see, for the sedan chair wouldn't open, and the blinds wouldn't pull up. At length, with the assistance of Mr. Tupman, he managed to push open the roof; and mounting on the seat, and steadying himself as well as he could; by placing his hand on that gentleman's shoulder, Mr. Pickwick proceeded to address the multitude; to dwell upon the unjustifiable manner in which he had been treated; and to call upon them to take notice that his servant had been first assaulted. And in this order they reached the magistrate's house; the chairmen trotting, the prisoners following, Mr. Pickwick oratorising, and the crowd shouting.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Showing, among a variety of pleasant matters, how majestic and imperious Mr. Napkins was; and how Mr. Weller returned Mr. Job Trot- ter's shuttlecock, as heavily as it came. With another matter, which will be found in its place.

Violent was Mr. Weller's indignation as he was borne along; numerous were the allusions to the personal appearance and demeanour of Mr. Grummner and his companions; and valorous were the defiance to any six of the gentlemen present, in which he vented his dissatisfaction. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle listened with gloomy respect to the torrent of eloquence which their leader poured forth from the sedan-chair, and the rapid course of which not all Mr. Tupman's earnest entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed, were able to check for an instant. But Mr. Weller's anger quickly gave way to curiosity, when the procession turned down the identical court-yard in which he had met with the runaway Job Trotter; and curiosity was exchanged for a feeling of the most g triple astonishment, when the all-important Mr. Grummner, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps, to the very green gate from which Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-handle which hung at the side thereof. The ring was answered by a very smart and pretty-faced servant-girl, who, after holding up her hands in astonishment at the rebellious appearance of the prisoners, and the impassioned language of Mr. Pickwick, summoned Mr. Muzzle. Mr. Muzzle opened one-half of the carriage gate, to admit the sedan, the captured one, and the specials; and immediately slammed it in the faces of the mob, who, indignant at being excluded, and anxious to see what followed, relieved their feelings by kicking at the gate and ringing the bell, for an hour or two afterwards. In this amusement, they all took part by turns, except three or four fortunate individuals, who having discovered a grating in the gate which commanded a view of nothing, were staring through it with the same indefatigable perseverence with which people will fasten their noses against the front windows of a chemist's shop when a drunken man who has been run over by a dog-cart in the street, is undergoing a surgical inspection in the back-parlour.

At the foot of a flight of steps leading to the house door, which were guarded on either side by an American, one in a green coat, the sedan-chair stopped; and Mr. Pickwick and his friends were conducted into the hall, from whence, having been pro-
oubtedly announced by Muzzle, and ordered in by Mr. Nupkins, they were ushered into the worshipful presence of that public-spirited officer.

The scene was an impressive one, well calculated to strike terror to the hearts of culprits, and to impress them with an adequate idea of the stern majesty of the law. In front of a big book-case, in a big chair, behind a big table, and before a big volume, sat Mr. Nupkins, looking a full size larger than any one of them, big as they were. The table was adorned with piles of papers; and above the farther end of it appeared the head and shoulders of Mr. Jinks, who was busily engaged in looking as busy as possible. The party having all entered, Muzzle carefully closed the door, and placed himself behind his master's chair, to await his orders; Mr. Nupkins threw himself back with thrilling solemnity, and scrutinized the faces of his unwilling visitors.

"Now, Grummer, who is that person?" said Mr. Nupkins, pointing to Mr. Pickwick, who, as the spokesman of his friends, stood hat in hand, bowing with the utmost politeness and respect.

"This here's Pickwick, your wash-up," said Grummer.

"Come, none of that, ere, old Strike-a-light," interposed Mr. Weller, elbowing himself into the front rank. "Beg your pardon, Sir, but this here officer o' yours in the gamboge tops 'll never earn a decent livin' as a master o' the ceremonies any more. This here, Sir," continued Mr. Weller, thrusting Grummer aside, and addressing the magistrate with pleasant familiarity, "This here is S. Pickwick, Esquire; this here's Mr. Tupman; that here's Mr. Snodgrass; and furder on, next him on the t'other side, Mr. Winkle—all very nice gent'men. Sir, as you'll be very happy to have the acquaintance on; so the sooner you commit these here officers o' yours to the treadmill, for a month or two, the sooner we shall begin to be on a pleasant understanding. Business first, pleasure afterwards, as King Richard the Third said when he stabbed the t'other king in the Tower, afore he smothered the bobbies."

At the conclusion of this address, Mr. Weller brushed his hat with his right elbow, and nodded benignly to Jinks, who had heard him throughout with unapproachable awe.

"Who is this man, Grummer?" said the magistrate.

"Very desperate character, your worship," replied Grummer. "He attempted to rob the prisoners, and assaulted the officer—a blow too strong for him, and he's now in custody."

"And did quite right," replied the magistrate. "He is evidently a desperate ruffian."

"He is my servant, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, angrily.

"Oh! he is your servant, is he?" said Mr. Nupkins. "A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, and murder its officers. Pickwick's servant. Put that down, Sir."

"Mr. Jinks did so.

"What's your name, fellow?" thundered Mr. Nupkins.

"Veller," replied Sam.

"A very good name for the Newgate Calendar," said Mr. Nupkins.

This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter for five minutes' duration.

"Put down his name, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate.

"Two L's, old fellow," said Sam.

Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him instantly. It's a dangerous thing laughing at the wrong man in these cases.

"Where do you live?" said the magistrate.

"Vare eyes I can," replied Sam.

"Put that down, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, who was fast rising into a rage.

"Score it under," said Sam.

"He is a vagabond, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate. "He is a vagabond on his own statement, is he not, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir."

"Then I'll commit him—I'll commit him as such," said Mr. Nupkins.

"This is very impartial country for justice," said Sam. "There ain't a magistrate going, as don't commit himself twice as often as he commits other people."

At this sally another special laughed, and then tried to look so supernaturally solemn, that the magistrate detected him immediately.

"Grummer," said Mr. Nupkins, reddening with passion, "how dare you select such an inefficient and disreputable person for a special constable, as that man? How dare you do it, Sir?"

"I am very sorry, your worship," stammered Grummer.

"Very sorry!" said the furious magistrate. "You shall repeat this neglect of duty, Mr. Grummer: you shall be made an example of. Take that fellow's staff away. He's drunk. You're drunk, fellow!"

"I am not drunk, your worship," said the man.

"You are drunk," returned the magistrate. "How dare you say you are not drunk,
Sir, when I say you are! Doesn’t he smell of spirits, Grummer?

"Horrid, your wash-up," replied Grummer, who had a vague impression that there was a smell of rum somewhere.

"I knew he did," said Mr. Nupkins. "I saw he was drunk when he first came into the room, by his excited eye. Did you observe his excited eye, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir."

"I haven’t touched a drop of spirits this morning," said the man, who was as sober a fellow as need be.

"How dare you tell me falsehood?" said Mr. Nupkins. "Isn’t he drunk at this moment, Mr. Jinks?"


"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "I shall commit that man, for contempt. Make out his committal, Mr. Jinks."

And committed the special would have been, only Jinks, who was the magistrate’s adviser, having had a legal education of three years in a country attorney’s office, whispered the magistrate that he thought it wouldn’t do; so the magistrate made a speech, and said, that in consideration of the special’s family, he would merely reprimand and discharge him. Accordingly, the special was abused vehemently for a quarter of an hour, and sent about his business; and Grummer, Dubbley, Muzzle, and all the other specials, murmured their admiration of the magnanimity of Mr. Nupkins.

"Now, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "swear Grummer."

Grummer was sworn directly; but as Grummer wandered, and Mr. Nupkins’ dinner was nearly ready, Mr. Nupkins cut the matter short by putting leading questions to Grummer, which Grummer answered as nearly in the affirmative as he could. So the examination went off, all very smooth and comfortable; and the two assaults were proved against Mr. Weller, and a threat against Mr. Winkle, and a push against Mr. Snodgrass. And when all this was done to the magistrate’s satisfaction, the magistrate and Mr. Jinks consulted in whispers.

The consultation having lasted about ten minutes, Mr. Jinks retired to his end of the table; and the magistrate, with a preparatory cough, drew himself up in his chair, and was proceeding to commence his address, when Mr. Pickwick interposed.

"I beg your pardon, Sir, for interrupting you," said Mr. Pickwick, "but before you proceed to express, and act upon, any opinion you may have formed on the statements which have been made here, I must claim my right to be heard so far as I am personally concerned."

"Hold your tongue, Sir," said the magistrate, peremptorily.

"I must submit to you, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold your tongue, Sir," interposed the magistrate, "or I shall order an officer to remove you."

"You may order your officers to do whatever you please, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick; "and I have no doubt, from the specimen have had of the subordination preserved among them, that whatever you order, they will execute; but I shall take the liberty, Sir, of claiming my right to be heard, until I am removed by force."

"Pickwick and principle," exclaimed Mr. Weller, in a very audible voice.

"Sam, be quiet," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Dum as a drum with a hole in it," replied Sam.

Mr. Nupkins looked at Mr. Pickwick with a grace of intense astonishment, at his displaying such un wonted temerity; and was apparently about to return a very angry reply, when Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered something in his ear. To this the magistrate returned a half audible answer, and then the whispering was renewed. Jinks was evidently re monstrating.

At length the magistrate, gulping down with a very bad grace his disinclination to hear any thing more, turned to Mr. Pickwick, and said sharply,—"What do you want to say?"

"First," said Mr. Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles under which even Nupkins quailed,—"First, I wish to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?"

"Must I tell him?" whispered the magistrate to Jinks.

"I think you had better, Sir," whispered Jinks to the magistrate.

"An information has been sworn before me," said the magistrate,—"that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man’s name is your eldest and abetter in it. Therefore—eh, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir."

"Therefore, I call upon you both, to— I think that’s the course, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir."

"To—to—what, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate, pettishly.

"To find bail, Sir."

"Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both —as I was about to say when I was interrupted by my clerk—to find bail."

"Good bail," whispered Mr. Jinks.

"I shall require good bail," said the magistrate.

"Town’s people," whispered Mr. Jinks.
"They must be town's people," said the magistrate.
"Fifty pounds, each," whispered Jinks, "and householders, of course."
"I shall require two sureties, of fifty pounds each," said the magistrate aloud, with great dignity, "and they must be householders of course."
"But bless my heart, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, who, together with Mr. Tupman, was all amazement and indigion; "we are perfect strangers in this town. I have as little knowledge of any householders here as I have intention of fighting a duel with any body."
"I dare say," replied the magistrate, "I dare say—don't you, Mr. Jinks?"
"Certainly, Sir."
"Have you any thing more to say?" inquired the magistrate.
Mr. Pickwick had a great deal more to say, which he would no doubt have said, very little to his own advantage, or the magistrate's satisfaction, if he had not, the moment he ceased speaking, been pulled by the sleeve by Mr. Weller, with whom he was immediately engaged in so earnest a conversation, that he suffered the magistrate's inquiry to pass wholly unnoticed. Mr. Nupkins was not the man to ask a question of the kind twice over; and so, with another preparatory cough, he proceeded, amidst the reverential and admiring silence of the constables, to pronounce his decision.
He should fine Weller two pounds for the first assault, and three pounds for the second. He should fine Winkle two pounds, and Snodgrass one pound, besides requiring them to enter into their own recognisance to keep the peace towards all his majesty's subjects, and especially towards his liege servant, Daniel Grumner. Pickwick and Tupman he had already held to bail.
Immediately on the magistrate ceasing to speak, Mr. Pickwick, with a smile mantling on his again good-humoured countenance, stepped forward, and said:
"I beg the magistrate's pardon, but may I request a few minutes' private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?"
"What!" said the Magistrate.
Mr. Pickwick repeated his request.
"This is a most extraordinary request," said the magistrate — "a private interview?"
"A private interview," replied Mr. Pickwick, firmly; "only, as a part of the information which I wish to communicate is derived from my servant, I should wish him to be present."

The magistrate looked at Mr. Jinks, Mr. Jinks looked at the magistrate, and the officers looked at each other in amazement. Mr. Nupkins turned suddenly pale. Could the man Weller, in a moment of remorse, have divulged some secret conspiracy for his assassination. It was a dreadful thought. He was a public man; and he turned paler, as he thought of Julius Caesar and Mr. Peregrine.
The magistrate looked at Mr. Pickwick, again, and beckoned Mr. Jinks.
"What do you think of this request, Mr. Jinks?" murmured Mr. Nupkins.
Mr. Jinks, who didn't exactly know what to think of it, and was afraid he might offend, smiled feebly, after a dubious fashion, and, screwing up the corners of his mouth, shook his head slowly from side to side.
"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, gravely, "you are an ass, Sir."
At this little expression of opinion, Mr. Jinks smiled again — rather more feebly than before — and edged himself by degrees, back into his own corner.
Mr. Nupkins debated the matter within himself for a few seconds, and then rising from his chair, and requesting Mr. Pickwick and Sam to follow him, led the way into a small room which opened into the justice parlour. Desiring Mr. Pickwick to walk to the farther end of the little apartment, and holding his hand upon the half-closed door, that he might be able to effect an immediate escape, in case there was the least tendency to a display of hostilities, Mr. Nupkins expressed his readiness to hear the communication, whatever it might be.
"I will come to the point at once, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick: "it affects yourself, and your credit materially. I have every reason to believe, Sir, that you are harbouring in your house a gross impostor!"
"Two," interrupted Sam, "Murphy is all nature, for tears and willays."
"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "if I am to render myself intelligible to this gentleman, I must beg you to control your feelings."
"Very sorry, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "but when I think o' that 'ere Job, I can't help opening the valve an inch or two."
"In one word, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitz Marshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because," added Mr. Pickwick, as he saw that Mr. Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption — "because, if he be, I know that person to be—"
"Hush, hush," said Mr. Nupkins, closing the door. "Know him to be what Sir?"
"An unprincipled adventurer—a dis-
honourable character—a man who preys
upon society, and makes easily-deceived
people his dupes, Sir; his absurd, his
foolish, his wretched dupes, Sir," said the
excited Mr. Pickwick.

"Dear me," said Mr. Nupkins, colouring
up very red, and altering his whole man-
ner directly; "dear me, Mr.—"

"Pickwick," said Sam.

"Pickwick," said the magistrate, "Dear
me, Mr. Pickwick—pray take a seat—you
cannot mean this! Captain Fitz Mar-
shall!"

"Don't call him a cap'en," said Sam,
"nor Fitz Marshall neither; he ain't nei-
ther one nor t'other. He's a strolling ac-
tor—he is, and his name's Jingle; and if
ever there was a wolf in a mulberry sail,
that 'ere Job Trotter's him."

"It is very true, Sir," said Mr. Pick-
wick, replying to the magistrate's look of
amazement; "my only business in this
town, is to expose the person of whom we
now speak."

And Mr. Pickwick proceeded to pour
into the horror-striken ear of Mr. Nup-
kins, an abridged account of all Mr. Jin-
gle's atrocities. He related how he had
first met him, how he had eloped with Miss
Wardle, how he had cheerfully resigned
the lady for a pecuniary consideration, how
he had entrapped him into a lady's board-
ing-school at midnight, and how he, (Mr.
Pickwick) now felt it his duty to expose
his assumption of his present name and
rank.

As the narrative proceeded, all the warm
blood in the body of Mr. Nupkins tingled
up into the very tips of his ears. He had
picked up the Captain at a neighbouring
race-course. Charmed with his long list
of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive
travel, and his fashionable demeanour, Mrs.
Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited
Captain Fitz Marshall, and quoted Captain
Fitz Marshall, and hurled Captain Fitz
Marshall at the devoted heads of their se-
dant circle of acquaintance, until their bos-
om friends, Mrs. Porkenham and the Miss
Porkenham, and Mr. Sidney Porkenham
were ready to burst with jealousy and des-
pair. And now to hear, after all, that
he was a noisy adventurer, a strolling
player, and if not a swindler, something so
very like it, that it was hard to tell the dif-
ference! What would the Porkenhams
say! What would be the triumph of Mr.
Sidney Porkenham, when he found that his
addresses had been slighted for such a ri-
vial! How should he meet the eye of old
Porkenham at the next Quarter Sessions!
—and what a handle would it be for the
opposition magisterial party, if the story
got abroad!

"But after all," said Mr. Nupkins,
brightening up for a moment after a long
pause; "after all, this is a mere statement.
Captain Fitz Marshall is a man of very en-
gaging manners,—and, I dare say, has
many enemies. What proof have you, of
the truth of these representations?"

"Confront me with him," said Mr. Pick-
wick, "that is all I ask, and all I require.
Confront him with me, and my friends
here; you will want no farther proof."

"Why," said Mr. Nupkins, "that might
be very easily done, for he will be here to-
night, and then there would be no occasion
to make the matter public, just—just—for
the young man's own sake, you know. I—
I—should like to consult Mrs. Nupkins on
the propriety of the step, in the first in-
stance, though. At all events, Mr. Pick-
wick, we must despatch this legal business
before we can do anything else. Pray
step back into the next room."

Into the next room they went.

"Grummer," said the magistrate, in an
awful voice.

"Your wash-up," replied Grummer, with
the smile of a favourite.

"Come, come, Sir," said the magistrate,
 sternly, "don't let me see any of this lavi-
ery here. It is very unbecoming, and I can
assure you that you have very little to
smile at. Was the account you gave me
just now, strictly true? Now be careful,
Sir."

"Your wash-up," stammered Grummer,
"I—"

"Oh, you are confused, are you!" said
the magistrate, "Mr. Jinks, you observe
his confusion!"


"Now," said the magistrate, "just re-
peat your statement, Grummer, and again
I warn you to be careful. Mr. Jinks, take
his words down."

The unfortunate Grummer proceeded to
restate his complaint, but what between
Mr. Jinks taking down his words, and the
magistrate's taking them up; his natural
tendency to rambling, and his extreme con-
fusion, he managed to get involved, in
something under three minutes, in such a
mass of entanglement and contradiction,
that Mr. Nupkins at once declared he didn't
believe him. So the fines were remitted,
and Mr. Jinks found a couple of bail in no
time. And all these solemn proceedings
having been satisfactorily concluded, Mr.
Grummer was ignominiously ordered out,—
an awful instance of the instability of hu-
mankind, and the uncertain tenure of
great men's favour.

Mrs. Nupkins was a majestic female in
a blue gauze turban and a light brown wig. Miss Nupkins possessed all her mamma's haughtiness without the turban, and all her ill-nature without the wig; and whenever the exercise of these two amiable qualities involved mother and daughter in some unpleasant dilemma, as they did so unfrequently did, they both concurred in laying the blame on the shoulders of Mr. Nupkins. Accordingly, when Mr. Nupkins sought Mrs. Nupkins, and detailed the communication which had been made by Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Nupkins suddenly recollected that she had always expected something of the kind; that she had always said it would be so; that her advice was never taken; that she really did not know what Mr. Nupkins supposed she was; and so forth.

"The idea!" said Miss Nupkins, forcing a tear of very scanty proportions, into the corner of each eye, "the idea of my being made such a fool of!"

"Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear," said Mrs. Nupkins; "how I have implored and begged that man to inquire into the Captain's family connexions; how I have urged and entreated him to take some decisive step! I am quite certain nobody would believe it—quite."

"But, my dear," said Mr. Nupkins, "Don't talk to me, you aggravating thing, don't," said Mrs. Nupkins.

"My love," said Mr. Nupkins, "you professed yourself very fond of Captain Fitz-Marshall; you have constantly asked him here, my dear, and you have lost no opportunity of introducing him elsewhere."

"Didn't I say so, Henrietta!" said Mrs. Nupkins, appealing to her daughter with the air of a much-injured female—"Didn't I say that your papa would turn round, and lay all this at my door! Didn't I say so?" Here Mrs. Nupkins sobbed.

"Oh, pa!" remonstrated Miss Nupkins. And here she sobbed too.

"Isn't it too much when he has brought all this disgrace and ridicule upon us, for him to taunt me with being the cause of it!" exclaimed Mrs. Nupkins.

"How can we ever show ourselves in society!" said Miss Nupkins.

"How can we face the Forkenhams?" said Mr. Nupkins.

"Or the Griggs'!" said Miss Nupkins.

"Or the Slummintowkens!" said Mrs. Nupkins. "But what does your papa care! what is it to him!" At this dreadful reflection, Mrs. Nupkins wept with mental anguish, and Miss Nupkins followed on the same side.

Mrs. Nupkins's tears continued to gush forth with great velocity, until she had gained a little time to think the matter over, when she decided in her own mind that the best thing to do, would be to ask Mr. Pickwick and his friends to remain until the Captain's arrival, and then to give Mr. Pickwick the opportunity he sought. If it appeared that he had spoken truly, the Captain could be turned out of the house without noise the matter abroad; and they could easily account to the Porchenhams for his disappearance, by saying that he had been appointed through the Court influence of his family, to the Governor-Generalship of Sierra-Leone, or Sangar-Point, or any other of those salubrious climates which enchant Europeans so much, that when they once get there, they can hardly ever prevail upon themselves to come back again.

When Mrs. Nupkins dried up her tears, Miss Nupkins dried up her tears, and Mr. Nupkins was very glad to settle the matter as Mrs. Nupkins had proposed. So Mr. Pickwick and his friends, having washed off all marks of their late encounter, were introduced to the ladies, and soon afterwards to their dinner; and Mr. Weller, whom the magistrate with his peculiar sagacity, had discovered in half an hour to be one of the finest fellows alive, was consigned to the care and guardianship of Mr. Muzzle, who was specially enjoined to take him below, and make much of him.

"How de do, Sir," said Mr. Muzzle, as he conducted Mr. Weller down the kitchen stairs.

"Why, no considerable change has taken place in the state of my system, since I saw you cocked up behind your governor's chair in the parlour, a little while ago," replied Sam.

"You will excuse my not taking more notice of you than, said Mr. Muzzle. "You see Master hadn't introduced us, them. How fond he is of you, Mr. Weller, to be sure!"

"Ah," said Sam, "what a pleasant chap he is!"

"Ain't he?" replied Mr. Muzzle.

"So much humour," said Sam.

"And such a man to speak," said Mr. Muzzle. "How his ideas flow, don't they?" "Wonderful," replied Sam; "they come a pouring out, knocking each other's heads so fast, that they seem to stun one another; you hardly know what he's at, do you?"

"That's the great merit of his style of speaking," rejoined Mr. Muzzle. "Take care of the last step, Mr. Weller. Would you like to wash your hands, Sir, before we join the ladies? Here's a sink, with the water laid on, Sir, and a clean jack towel behind the door."

"Ah, perhaps I may as well have a rinse," replied Mr. Weller, applying plenty of
yellow soap to the towel, and rubbing away till his face shone again. "How many ladies are there?"

"Only two in our kitchen," said Mr. Muzzle. "cook and 'ousemaid. We keep a boy to do the dirty work, and a gal besides, but they dine in the washus."

"Oh, they dines in the washus, do they!" said Mr. Weller.

"Yes," replied Mr. Muzzle, "we tried 'em at our table when they first come, but we couldn't keep 'em. The gal's manners is dreadful vulgar; and the boy breathes so very hard while he's eating, that we found it impossible to sit at table with him."

"What a young grampus," said Mr. Weller.

"Oh, dreadful," rejoined Mr. Muzzle; "but that is the worst of country service, Mr. Weller; the juniors is always so very savage. This way, Sir, if you please—the washus."

And preceding Mr. Weller, with the utmost politeness, Mr. Muzzle conducted him into the kitchen.

"Mary," said Mr. Muzzle to the pretty servant-girl, "this is Mr. Weller, a gentleman as master has sent down, to be made as comfortable as possible."

"And your master's a knowin' hand—and has just sent me to the right place," said Mr. Weller, with a glance of admiration at Mary. "If I was master o' this here house, I should always find the materials of comfort were Mary v's.

"Why, Mr. Weller!" said Mary, blushing.

"Well, I never!" ejaculated the cook. "Bless me, cook, I forgot you," said Mr. Muzzle. "Mr. Weller, let me introduce you."

"How are you, Ma'am," said Mr. Weller.

"Very glad to see you, indeed; and hope our acquaintances may be a long 'un, as the gen'l'm'n said to the t' pul'n note."

When this ceremony of introduction had been gone through, the cook and Mary retired into the back kitchen to litter for ten minutes; and then returning, all giggles and blushes, they sat down to dinner.

Mr. Weller's easy manner and conversational powers had such irresistible influence with his new friends, that before the dinner was half over, they were on a footing of perfect intimacy, and in possession of a full account of the delinquency of Job Trotter.

"I never could bear that Job," said Mary.

"No more you never ought to, my dear," replied Mr. Weller.

"Why not?" asked Mary.

"Cos I thought I never ought to be formiller with elegance and wirtew."

replied Mr. Weller. "Ought they, Mr. Muzzle?"

"Not by no means," replied that gentleman.

Here Mary laughed and said the cook had made her; and the cook laughed and said she hadn't.

"I don't got a glass," said Mary.

"Drink with me, my dear," said Mr. Weller. "Put your lips to this here tumbler, and then I can kiss you by deputy."

"For shame, Mr. Weller," said Mary.

"What's a shame, my dear?"

"Talkin' in that way."

"Nonsense; it ain't no harm, its natur; ain't it, cook?"

"Don't ask me; impertence," replied the cook, in a high state of delight: and hereupon the cook and Mary laughed again till what between the beer, the cold meat, and the laughter combined, the latter young lady was brought to the verge of choking—an alarming crisis, from which she was only recovered by sundry pats on the back, and other necessary attentions, most delicately administered by Mr. Samuel Weller.

In the midst of all this jollity and conviviality, a loud ring was heard at the garden-gate, to which the young gentlemen who took his meals in the wash-house, immediately responded. Mr. Weller was in the height of his attentions to the pretty house-maid; Mr. Muzzle was busy doing the honours of the table; and the cook had just paused to laugh, in the very act of raising a huge morsel to her lips, when the kitchen-door opened, and in walked Mr. Job Trotter.

We have said in walked Mr. Job Trotter, but the statement is not distinguished by our usual scrupulous adherence to fact. The door opened, and Mr. Trotter appeared. He would have walked in, and was in the very act of doing so, indeed, when catching sight of Mr. Weller, he involuntarily shrunk back a pace or two, and stood gazing on the unexpected scene before him, perfectly motionless with astonishment and terror.

"Here he is," said Sam, rising with great glee. "Why we were that very moment a speaking o' you. How are you? Were haven you been? Come in."

And laying his hand on the mulberry collar of the unresisting Job, Mr. Weller dragged him into the kitchen; and becking the door, handed the key to Mr. Muzzle, who very coolly buttoned it up, in a side-pocket.

"Well, here's a game," cried Sam. "Only think o' my master havin' the pleasure o' meeting you're, up there, and the havin' the joy o' meetin' you down here
How are you, gettin' on, and how is the
chandlery business likely to do? Vel, I am
so glad to see you! How happy you look!
It's a treat to see you, ain't it, Mr. Muzzle?"

"Quite," said Mr. Muzzle.

"So cheerful he is," said Sam.

"In such good spirits," said Muzzle.

"And so glad to see us—that makes it
so much more comfortable," said Sam.

"Sit down; sit down."

Mr. Trotter suffered himself to be forced
into a chair by the fire-side. He cast his
small eyes on Mr. Weller, and then on Mr.
Muzzle, but said nothing.

"Well, now," said Sam, "afore these
here ladies, I should just like to ask you, as
a sort of curiosity, weather you don't con-
sider yourself as nice and well-behaved a
young gen'man as ever used a pink cheek
pocket-handkerchief, and the number four
collar to boot?"

"And as was ever a-going to be married
to a wench," said that lady, indignantly.

"The willain!"

"And leave off his evil ways, and set up
in the chandlery line, afterwards," said the
house-maid.

"Now, I'll tell you what it is, young
man," said Mr. Muzzle, solemnly, enraged
at the last two allusions, "this here lady
(pointing to the cook) keeps company with
me; and when you presume, Sir, to talk of
keeping chandlers' shops with her, you in-
jure me in one of the most delicate points
in which one man can injure another. Do
you understand that, Sir?"

Here Mr. Muzzle, who had a great notion
of his abstinence, in which he initiated his
master, paused for a reply.

But Mr. Trotter made no reply. So
Mr. Muzzle proceeded in a solemn man-
ner—

"It is very probable, Sir, that you won't
be wanted up stairs for several minutes,
Sir, because my master is at this moment
particularly engaged in settling the hash of
your master, Sir, and therefore you'll have
leisure, Sir, for a little private talk with
me, Sir. Do you understand that, Sir?"

Mr. Muzzle again paused for a reply;
and again Mr. Trotter disappointed him.

"Well, then," said Mr. Muzzle, "I'm
very sorry to have to explain myself before
the ladies, but the urgency of the case will
be my excuse."

"The back kitchen's empty, Sir; if you
will step in there, Sir, Mr. Weller will see
fair, and we can have mutual satisfaction
still the bell rings. Follow me, Sir."

As Mr. Muzzle uttered these words, he
strode a step or two towards the door; and
by way of saving time, he began to pull off
his coat as he walked along.

Now the cook no sooner heard the con-
cluding words of this despicably challenge,
and saw Mr. Muzzle about to put it into
execution, than she uttered a loud and
piercing shriek; and rushing on Mr. Trotter,
who rose from his chair on the instan-
tious, tore and buffeted his large flat face,
with an energy peculiar to excited females,
and turning her hands in his long black
hair, tore therefrom about enough to make
five or six dozen of the very largest-sized
mournin' rings. Having accomplished this
feat with all the ardour which her devoted
love for Mr. Muzzle inspired, she staggered
back; and being a lady of very excitable
and delicate feelings, instantly fell under
the dresser, and fainted away.

At this moment the bell rang.

"That's for you, Job Trotter," said Sam;
and before Mr. Trotter could offer remon-
strance or reply—even before he had time
to touch the wounds inflicted by the in-
sensible lady—Sam seized one arm and
Mr. Muzzle the other; and one pulling be-
fore, and the other pushing behind, they
conveyed him up stairs, and into the par-
lour.

It was an impressive tableau. Alfred
Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitz-Mar-
shall, was standing near the door with his
hat in his hand, and a smile on his face,
wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant
situation. Greeting him, stood Mr.
Pickwick, who had evidently been incul-
cating some high moral lesson, for his left
hand was beneath his coat tail, and his
right extended in air, as was his wont when
delivering himself of an impressive addres-
see. At a little distance stood Mr. Tupman
with indignant countenance, carefully held
by his two younger friends; and at the fur-
ther end of the room were Mr. Nupkins,
Mrs. Nupkins, and Miss Nupkins, gloom-
ily grand, and savagely vexed.

"What prevents me," said Mr. Nupkins,
with magisterial dignity, as Job was brought
in—"what prevents me from detaining
these men as rogues and impostors? It is
a foolish mercy. What prevents me?"

"Pride, old fellow, pride," replied Jingle,
quite at his ease. "Wouldn't do—no
no—caught a captain, eh?—ha! ha! very
shame—husband for daughter—bit of
business—make it public—not for worlds—look
stupid—very!"

"Wretch," said Mrs. Nupkins, "we
scorn your base insinuations."

"I always hated him," added Henrietta.

"Oh, of course," said Jingle. "Tell
young man—old lover—Sidney Porkenham
—rich—fine fellow—not so rich as captain,
though, eh?—turn him away—off with him
—and not for captain—nothing like cap-
train any where—all the girls—raving mad—eh, Job, eh?"

Here Mr. Jingle laughed very heartily; and Job, rubbing his hands with delight, uttered the first sound he had given vent to, since he entered the house—a low noiseless chuckle, which seemed to intimate, that he enjoyed his laugh too much to let any of it escape in sound.

"Mr. Nupkins," said the elderly lady, "this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed."

"Certainly, my dear," said Mr. Nupkins.

"Muzzle."

"Your worship."

"Open the front door."

"Yes, your worship."

"Leave the house," said Mr. Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled and moved towards the door.

"Stay," said Mr. Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

"I might," said Mr. Pickwick, "have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there."

Here Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

"I say," said Mr. Pickwick, growing gradually angry, "that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, Sir, which I hope you will remember."

When Mr. Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity, applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

"And I have only to add, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, "that I consider you a rascal—a ruffian—and—and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except that very pisous and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery."

"Ha! ha!" said Jingle, "good fellow Pickwick—fine heart—stout old boy—but must not be passionate—bad thing—very bye, bye—see you again some day—keep up your spirits—now Job—trot."

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in his old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which, bestowed all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Weller was following.

"Sir."

"Stay here."

Mr. Weller seemed uncertain.

"Stay here," repeated Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I polish that ere Job off, in the front garden!" said Mr. Weller.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I kick him out of the gate, Sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Not on any account," replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr. Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up, for the wily Mr. Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr. Jingle and his attendant down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

"Having discharged my duty, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Nupkins, "I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. While we thank you for such hospitality as we have received, permit me to assure you in our joint names that we should not have accepted it, or consented to extort ourselves in this way, from our previous dilemma, had we not been impelled by a strong sense of duty. We return to London to-morrow. Your secret is safe with us."

Having thus entered his protest against their treatment of the morning, Mr. Pickwick bowed low to the ladies, and notwithstanding the solicitations of the family, left the room with his friends.

"Get your hat—Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's below stairs, Sir," said Sam, and he ran down after it.

Now there was nobody in the kitchen, but the pretty house-maid; and as Sam's hat was mislaid he had to look for it, and the pretty house-maid lighted him. They had to look all over the place for the hat; and the pretty house-maid, in her anxiety to find it, went down on her knees, and turned over all the things that were heaped together in a little corner by the door. It was an awkward corner. You couldn't get at it without shutting the door first."

"Here it is," said the pretty house-maid.

"This is it, ain't it?"

"Let me look," said Sam.

The pretty house-maid had stood the candle on the floor; and as it gave a very dim light, Sam was obliged to go down on his knees before he could see whether it really was his own hat or not. It was a remarkably small corner, and so—it was nobody's fault but the man's who built the house—Sam and the pretty house-maid were necessarily very close together.

"Yes, this is it," said Sam. "Good bye."
"Good bye," said the pretty housemaid.
"Good bye," said Sam; and as he said it, he dropped the hat that had cost him so much trouble looking for.
"How awkward you are," said the pretty housemaid. "You'll lose it again, if you don't take care."
So just to prevent his losing it again, she put it on for him.

Whether it was that the pretty housemaid's face looked prettier still, when it was raised towards Sam's, or whether it was the accidental consequence of their being so near each other, is matter of uncertainty to this day; but Sam kissed her.
"You don't mean to say you did that on purpose," said the pretty housemaid, blushing.
"No, I didn't then," said Sam; "but I will now."
So he kissed her again.
"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, calling over the bannisters.
"Coming, Sir," replied Sam, running up stairs.
"How long you have been," said Mr. Pickwick.
"There was something behind the door, Sir, which perverted our getting it open, for ever so long," replied Sam.
And this was the first passage of Mr. Weller's first love.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Which contains a brief account of the progress of the action of Bardell against Pickwick.

Having accomplished the main end and object of his journey by the exposure of Jingle, Mr. Pickwick resolved on immediately returning to London, with the view of becoming acquainted with the proceedings which had been taken against him, in the mean time, by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg. Acting upon this resolution with all the energy and decision of his character, he mounted to the back seat of the first coach, which left Ipswich in the morning after the memorable occurrences detailed at length in the two preceding chapters; and accompanied by his three friends and Mr. Samuel Weller, arrived in the metropolis in perfect health and safety the same evening.

Here the friends for a short time separated. Messrs. Tupman, Winkle and Snodgrass, repaired to their several homes to make hasty preparations as might be requisite for their forthcoming visit to Dingley Dell; and Mr. Pickwick and Sam took up their present abode in very good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters, to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.

Mr. Pickwick had dined, finished his second pint of particular port, pulled his silk handkerchief over his head, put his feet on the fender, and thrown himself back in an easy chair, when the entrance of Mr. Weller with his carpet-bag, aroused him from his tranquil meditations.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.
"Sir," said Mr. Weller.
"I have just been thinking, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "that having left a good many things at Mrs. Bardell's, in Goswell Street, I ought to arrange for taking them away, before I leave town again."
"Wery good, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.
"I could send them to Mr. Tupman's for the present, Sam," continued Mr. Pickwick, "but, before we take them away, it is necessary that they should be looked up, and put together. I wish you would step up to Goswell Street, Sam, and arrange about it."
"At once, Sir!" inquired Mr. Weller.
"At once!" replied Mr. Pickwick. "And stay, Sam," added Mr. Pickwick, pulling out his purse, "there is some rent to pay. The quarter is not due till Christmas, but you may pay it, and have done with it. A month's notice terminates my tenancy. Here it is, written out. Give it, and tell Mrs. Bardell she may put a bill up, as soon as she likes."
"Wery good, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "any thin' more, Sir?"
"Nothing more, Sam."
Mr. Weller stepped slowly to the door, as if he expected something further; slowly opened it, slowly stepped out, and slowly closed it within a couple of inches, when Mr. Pickwick called out—
"Sam!"
"Yes, Sir," said Mr. Weller, stepping quickly back, and closing the door behind him.

"I have no objection, Sam, to your endeavouring to ascertain how Mrs. Bardell herself seems disposed towards me, and whether it is really probable that this vile and groundless action is to be carried to extremity. I say I do not object to your doing this, if you wish it; Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam gave a short nod of intelligence, and left the room. Mr. Pickwick drew the silk handkerchief once more over his head, and composed himself for a nap; Mr. Weller promptly walked forth, to execute his commission.

It was nearly nine o'clock when he reached Goswell Street. A couple of can
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"Yes; don't worry your poor mother," said Mrs. Sanders.

"She's quite enough to worry her, as it is, without you, Tommy," said Mrs. Clippins, with sympathising resignation.

"Ah! worse luck, poor lamb!" said Mrs. Sanders.

At all which moral reflections, Master Bardell howled the louder.

"Now what shall I do?" said Mrs. Bardell to Mrs. Clippins.

"I think you ought to see him," replied Mrs. Clippins. "But on no account without a witness."

"I think two witnesses would be more lawful," said Mrs. Sanders, who, like the other friend, was bursting with curiosity.

"Perhaps he'd better come in here," said Mrs. Bardell.

"To be sure," replied Mrs. Clippins, eagerly catching at the idea. "Walk in, young man; and shut the street door first, please."

Mr. Weller immediately took the hint; and presenting himself in the parlour, explained his business to Mrs. Bardell, thus:

"Very sorry to cause any personal inconvenience, ma'am; as the housebreaker said to the old lady when he put her on the fire; but as we and my governor's only just come to town, and is just going away again, it can't be helped, you see."

"Of course the young man can't help the faults of his master," said Mrs. Clippins, much struck by Mr. Weller's appearance and conversation.

"Certainly not," chimed Mrs. Sanders, who, from certain wistful glances at the little tin saucepan, seemed to be engaged in a mental calculation of the probable extent of the petitions, in the event of Sam's being asked to stop to supper.

"So all I're come about, is just this here," said Sam, disregarding the interruption—"first, to give my governor's notice—there it is. Secondly, to pay the rent—here it is. Thirdly, to say as all things is to be put together, and given to any body as we sends for 'em. Fourthly, that you may let the place as soon as you like; and that's all,"

"Whatever has happened," said Mrs. Bardell, "I always have said, and always will say, that in every respect but one, Mr. Pickwick has always behaved himself like a perfect gentleman. His money, always was as good as the bank—always."

As Mrs. Bardell said this, she applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and went out of the room to get the receipt.

Sam went knew that he had only to remain quiet, and the women were sure to talk; so he looked alternately at the tin saucepan, the toasted cheese, the wall, and the ceiling in profound silence.
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"Poor dear!" said Mrs. Clippins.

"Ah, poor thing!" replied Mrs. Sanders.

Sam said nothing. He saw they were coming to the subject.

"I raly cannot contain myself," said Mrs. Clippins, "when I think of such perjury. I don't wish to say anything to make you uncomfortable, young man, but your master's an old brute, and I wish I had him here to tell him so."

"I wish you had," said Sam.

"To see how dreadful she takes on, going mapony about, and taking no pleasure in nothing except when her friends come in, out of charity, to sit with her, and make her comfortable," resumed Mrs. Clippins, glancing at the tin saucepan and the Dutch oven, "it's shocking."

"Barbarous!" said Mrs. Sanders.

"And your master, young man, a gentleman with money, as could never feel the expense of a wife, no more than nothing," continued Mrs. Clippins, with great volubility; "why there ain't the faintest shade of an excuse for his behaviour. Why don't we marry her?"

"Ah," said Sam, "to be sure, that's the question."

"Question, indeed," returned Mrs. Clippins; "she'd question him, if she'd try spirit. However, there is law for us women, miserable creatures as they'd make us, if they could; and that your master will find out, young man, to his cost, afore he's six months older."

At this consolatory reflection, Mrs. Clippins briddled up, and smiled at Mrs. Sanders, who smiled back again.

"The action's going on, and no mistake," thought Sam, as Mrs. Bardell re-entered with the receipt.

"Here's the receipt, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, "and here's the change, and I hope you will take a little drop of something to keep the cold out. If it's only for old acquaintance sake, Mr. Weller."

Sam saw the advantage he should gain, and at once acquiesced, whereupon Mrs. Bardell produced from a small closet a black bottle and a wine-glass, and so great was her abstraction in her deep mental affliction, that, after filling Mr. Weller's glass, she brought out three more wine-glasses, and filled them too.

"Laek, Mrs. Bardell," said Mrs. Clippins, "see what you've been and done."

"Well, that is a good one!" ejaculated Mrs. Sanders.

"Ah, my poor head!" said Mrs. Bardell, with a faint smile.

Sam understood all this, of course, so he said at once, that he never could drink before supper, unless a lady drank with him.

A great deal of laughing ensued, and then Mrs. Sanders volunteered to humour him; so she took a slight sip out of her glass.

Then Sam said it must go all round, so they all took a slight sip. Then little Mrs. Clippins proposed as a toast, "Success to Bardell against Pickwick;" and then the ladies emptied their glasses in honour of the sentiment, and got very talkative directly.

"I suppose you've heard what's going on, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell.

"I've heard something on it," replied Sam.

"It's a terrible thing to be dragged before the public in that way, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, "but I see now, that it's the only thing I ought to do, and my lawyers, Mr. Dodson and Fogg, tell me that, with the evidence as we shall call, we must succeed. I don't know what I should do, Mr. Weller, if I didn't."

The mere idea of Mrs. Bardell's failing in her action, affected Mrs. Sanders so deeply, that she was under the necessity of re-filling and re-emptying her glass immediately; feeling, as she said afterwards, that if she hadn't had the presence of mind to have done so, she must have dropped.

"Ven is it expected to come on?" inquired Sam.

"Either in February or March," replied Mrs. Bardell.

"What a number of witnesses there'll be, won't there?" said Mrs. Clippins.

"Ah, won't there!" replied Mrs. Sanders.

"And won't Mr. Dodson and Fogg be wild if the plaintiff shouldn't get it?" added Mrs. Clippins, "when they'd it all on speculation!"

"Ah! won't they?" said Mrs. Sanders.

"But the plaintiff must get it," resumed Mrs. Clippins.

"I hope so," said Mrs. Bardell.

"Oh, there can't be any doubt about it," rejoined Mrs. Sanders.

"Veil," said Sam, rising and setting down his glass. "All I can say is, that I wish you may get it."

"Thank'ee, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, fervently.

"And of them Dodson and Fogg, as does these sort o' things on spec," continued Mr. Weller, "as well as for the other kind and generous people o' the same profession, as sets people by the ears free gratis for nothin', and sets their clerks to work to find out little disputes among their neighbours and acquaintances as vents settlin' by means o' lawsuits—all I can say o' them is, that I wish they had the reward I'd give 'em."

"Ah, I wish they had the reward that every kind and generous heart would be
Inclined to bestow upon them," said the gratified Mrs. Bardell.

"Amen to that," replied Sam, "and a fat and happy livin' they'd get out of it. Veh you good night, ladies."

To the great relief of Mrs. Sanders, Sam was allowed to depart, without any reference on the part of the hostesses to the petit-roles and toasted cheese, to which the ladies, with such juvenile assistance as Master Bardell could afford, soon afterwards rendered the amiable jest — indeed they wholly vanished, before their strenuous exertions.

Mr. Weller wended his way back to the George and Vulture, and faithfully recounted to his master, such indications of the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg, as he had contrived to pick up in his visit to Mrs. Bardell's. An interview with Mr. Peeker next day, more than confirmed Mr. Weller's statement; and Mr. Pickwick was fain to prepare for his Christmas visit to Dingley Dell, with the pleasant anticipation that some two or three months afterwards, an action brought against him for damages sustained by reason of a breach of promise of marriage, would be publicly tried in the Court of Common Pleas; the plaintiff having all the advantages derivable not only from the force of circumstances, but from the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg to boot.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sahmeel Weller makes a pilgrimage to Dorking, and beholds his mother-in-law.

There still remaining an interval of two days, before the time agreed upon, for the departure of the Pickwickians to Dingley Dell, Mr. Weller sat himself down in a back room at the George and Vulture, after eating an early dinner, to muse on the best way of disposing of his time. It was a remarkably fine day; and he had not turned the matter over in his mind ten minutes, when he was suddenly struck filial and affectionate; and it occurred to him so strongly that he ought to go down to see his father, and pay his duty to his mother-in-law, that he was lost in astonishment at his own remissness at never thinking of his moral obligation before. Anxious to atone for his past neglect without another hour's delay, he straightway walked up stairs, Mr. Pickwick, and requested leave of absence for this laudable purpose.

"Certainly, Sam, certainly," said Mr. Pickwick, his eyes glistening with delight at this manifestation of good feeling on the part of his attendant: "certainly, Sam."

Mr. Weller made a grateful bow.

"I am very glad to see that you have so high a sense of your duties as a son, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I always had, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "That's a very gratifying reflection, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, approvingly.

"Wory, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "if ever I wanted any thin' o' my father, I always asked for it in a very spectal and obligin' manner. If he didn't give it me, I took it, for fear I should be led to do any thin' wrong, through not havin' it. I saved him a world o' trouble this way, Sir."

"That's not precisely what I meant, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, shaking his head, with a slight smile.

"All good feelin', Sir — the werry best intentions, as the gen'l'm'n said ven he run away from his wife, 'cos she seemed unhappy with him," replied Mr. Weller.

"You may go, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Thank'ee, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; and having made his best bow, and put on his best clothes, Sam planted himself on the top of the Arundel coach, and journeyed on to Dorking.

The Marquis of Granby, in Mrs. Weller's time, was quite a model of a road-side public house of the better class — just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug. On the opposite side of the road was a large signboard on a high post, representing the head and shoulders of a gentleman with an apoplectic countenance, in a red coat, with deep blue facings, and a touch of the same over his three-cornered hat, for a sky. Over that, again, were a pair of flags, and beneath the last button of his coat were a couple of cannons; and the whole formed an expressive and undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory. The bar window displayed a choice collection of geranium plants, and a well-dusted row of spirit phials. The open shutters bore a variety of golden inscriptions, eulogistic of good beds and neat wines; and the choice group of countrymen and hostlers lounging about the stable door and horse-trough, afforded presumptive proof of the excellent quality of the ale and spirits which were sold within.

Sam Weller paused, when he disembarked from the coach, to note all these little indications of a thriving business, with the eye of an experienced traveller; and having done so, stepped in at once, highly satisfied with every thing he had observed.

"Now, then," said a shrill female voice, the instant Sam thrust in his head at the door, "wh' do you want, young man?"
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...Sam looked round in the direction whence the sound proceeded. It came from a rather back part of the dining room, where some one was seated near the fire. He took the kettle full of tea, and slowly poured it into the teapot...
The deputy shepherd seemed by no means best pleased with Sam’s arrival; and when the first effervescence of the compliment had subsided, even Mrs. Weller looked as if she could have spared him without the smallest inconvenience. However, there he was; and as he couldn’t be decently turned out, they all sat down to tea.

“And how’s father?” said Sam.

At this inquiry Mrs. Weller raised her hands, and turned up her eyes, as if the subject were too painful to be alluded to.

Mr. Stiggins groaned.

“What’s the matter with that ‘ere gen’l’m’n?” inquired Sam.

“He’s shocked at the way your father goes on in—” replied Mrs. Weller.

“Oh, he is, is he!” said Sam.

“And with too good reason,” added Mrs. Weller, gravely.

Mr. Stiggins took up a fresh piece of toast, and groaned heavily.

“He is a dreadful reprobate,” said Mrs. Weller.

“A man of wrath!” exclaimed Mr. Stiggins. And he took a large semi-circular bite out of the toast, and groaned again.

Sam felt very strongly disposed to give the reverend Mr. Stiggins something to groan for, but he repressed his inclination, and merely asked, “What’s the old ‘un up to, now?”

“Up to, indeed!” said Mrs. Weller, “oh, he has a burned heart. Night after night does this excellent man—don’t frown, Mr. Stiggins, I will say you are an excellent man—come and sit here, for hours together, and it has not the least effect upon him."

“Well, that’s odd,” said Sam. “It’d have a very considerable effect upon me, if I were in his place, I know that.”

“The fact is, my young friend,” said Mr. Stiggins, solemnly, “he has an obdurate bosom. Oh, my young friend, who else could have resisted the pleading of sixteen of our fairest sisters, and withstood their exhortations to subscribe to our noble society for providing the infant negroes in the West Indies with flannel waistcoats and moral pocket-handkerchiefs?”

“What’s a moral pocket-handkerchief?” said Sam; “I never see one of them articles of furniture.”

“Those which combine amusement with instruction, my young friend,” replied Mr. Stiggins, “blending select tales with woodcuts.”

“Oh, I know,” said Sam, “them as hangs up in the linen-drapers’ shops with beggars’ petitions and all that ‘ere upon ‘em?”

Mr. Stiggins began a third round of toast, and nodded assent.

“And he wouldn’t be persuaded by the ladies, wouldn’t he?” said Sam.

“Sat and smoked his pipe, and said the infant negroes were—what did he say the infant negroes were?” said Mrs. Weller.

“Little humbugs,” replied Mr. Stiggins, deeply affected.

“Said the infant negroes were little humbugs,” repeated Mrs. Weller. And they both groaned at the atrocious conduct of the elder Mr. Weller.

A great many more inquiries of a similar nature might have been disclosed, only the toast being all eat, the tea having got very weak, and Sam holding out no indications of meaning to go, Mr. Stiggins suddenly recollected that he had a most pressing appointment with the shepherd, and took himself off accordingly.

The tea things had been scarcely put away, and the hearth swept up, when the London coach deposited Mr. Weller, senior, at the door, his legs deposited him in the bar, and his eyes showed him his son.

“What, Sammy!” exclaimed the father.

“What, old Nobs!” ejaculated the son. And they shook hands heartily.

“Very glad to see you, Sammy,” said the elder Mr. Weller, “though how you’ve managed to get over your mother-in-law, is a mystery to me. I only wish you’d write me out the receipt, that’s all.”

“Hush!” said Sam, “she’s at home, old feller.”

“She ain’t within hearin’,” replied Mr. Weller; “she always goes and blows up, down stairs, for a couple of hours arter tea; so we’ll just give ourselves a damp, Sammy.”

Saying this, Mr. Weller mixed two glasses of spirits and water, and produced a couple of pipes; and the father and son sitting down opposite each other, Sam on one side the fire, in the high-backed chair, and Mr. Weller, senior, on the other, in an easy ditto, they proceeded to enjoy themselves with all due gravity.

“Any body been here, Sammy?” asked Mr. Weller, senior, drolly, after a long silence.

Sam nodded an expressive assent.

“Red-nosed chap!” inquired Mr. Weller.

Sam nodded again.

“Amiable man, that ‘ere, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, smoking violently.

“Seems so,” observed Sam.

“Good hand at accounts,” said Mr. Weller.

“Is he!” said Sam.

“Borrows eighteen pence on Monday, and comes on Tuesday for a shillin’.”
Mr. Weller, in conclusion, "I'm one Dutch man, and you're another, and that's all about it."

Mr. Weller smoked for some minutes in silence, and then resumed—

"The worst o' these here shepherds is, my boy, that they regularly turn the heads of all the young ladies, about here. Why, bless their little hearts, they think it's all right, and don't know no better; but they're the victuins o' gannoon, Samivel, they're the victuins o' gannoon."

"I s'pose they are," said Sam.

"Nothing else," said Mr. Weller, shaking his head gravely; "and not aggravated me, Samivel, is to see 'em a washin' all their time and labour in making clothes for copper-coloured people as don't want em, and taking no notice of the flesh-coloured Christians as do. If I'd my way, Samivel, I'd just stick some o' these here lazy shepherds behind a heavy wheelbarrow, and run 'em up and down a fourteen-inch-wide plank all day. That'd shake the nonsense out o' 'em, if any thin' would."

Mr. Weller having delivered his gentle recipe with strong emphasis, leant out by a variety of nods and contortions of the eye, emptied his glass at a draught, and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, with native dignity.

He was engaged in this operation, when a shrill voice was heard in the passage.

"Here's your dear relation, Samivel," said Mr. Weller; and Mrs. W. hurried into the room.

"Oh, you've come back, have you?" said Mrs. Weller.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Weller, filling a fresh pipe.

"Has Mr. Stiggins been back?" said Weller.

"No, my dear, he hasn't," replied Mr. Weller, lighting the pipe by the ingenious process of holding the bowels thereof, between the toes, a red-hot coal from the adjacent fire; "and what's more, my dear, I shall manage to survive it, if he don't come back at all."

"Ugh, you wretch," said Mrs. Weller.

"Thank you, my love," said Mr. Weller.

"Come, come, father," said Sam, "some of these Hole's lovers' are strangers. Here's the reverse gets in a comin' in now."

At this announcement, Mr. Weller hastily wiped off the tears which she had just begun to form on; and Mr. W. drew his chair sullenly into the chimney-corner.

Mr. Stiggins was easily prevailed on to take another glass of the hot pine-apple rum and water, and a second, and a third, and then to refresh himself with a slight supper, previous to going to bed, again, as he sat on the same side as Mr. Weller senior.
and every time he could contrive to do so, unseen by his wife, that gentleman indicated to his son the hidden emotions of his bosom, by shaking his fist over the deputy shepherd’s head, a process which afforded his son the most unsightly delight and satisfaction, the more especially as Mr. Stiggins went quietly drinking the hot pine-apple rum and water, wholly unconscious of what was going forward.

The major part of the conversation was confined to Mr. Weller and the Rev. Mr. Stiggins; and the topics principally descanted on, were the virtues of the shepherd, the worthiness of his flock, and the high crimes and misdemeanours of every body beside—unrestrained by the elder Mr. Weller occasionally interrupted by half-suppressed references to a gentleman of the name of Walker, and other running commentaries of the same kind.

At length, Mr. Stiggins, with several most indubitable symptoms of having quite as much pine-apple rum and water about him, as he could comfortably accommodate, took his hat and his leave: and Sam was, immediately afterwards, shown to bed by his father. The respectable old gentleman wrung his hand fervently, and seemed disposed to address some observations to his son, but on Mrs. Weller advancing towards him, he appeared to relinquish his intention, and abruptly bade him good night.

Sam was up betimes next day, and having taken a hasty breakfast, prepared to return to London. He had scarcely set foot without the house, when his father stood before him.

"Goin’, Sammy!" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Off at once," replied Sam.

"I wish you could muzzle that ‘ere Stiggins, and take him with you," said Mr. Weller.

"I am ashamed o’ you, old two-for-his-beards," said Sam, reproachfully; "what do you let him show his red nose in the Markis o’ Granby at all, for?"

Mr. Weller the elder fixed on his son an earnest look, and replied—"’Cause I’m a married man, Samivel, ’cause I’m a married man. Yen you’re a married man, Samivel, you’ll only get to know what good many things as you don’t understand now; but ruther it’s worth while goin’ through so much to learn so little, as the charity-boy said ven he got to the end of the alphabet, is a matter o’ taste. I ruther think it isn’t."

"Well," said Sam, "good bye.

"Yar, tar, Sammy," replied his father.

"I’ve only to say this here," said Sam, stopping short, "that if I was the proprietor o’ the Markis o’ Granby, and that ’ere Stiggins came and made toast in my bar, I’d—""
light, and one so incompatible with the
cares and sorrows of the world, that the
religious belief of the most civilized na-
tions, and the rude traditions of the rough-
est savages, alike number it among the
first joys of a future state of existence, pro-
vided for the blest and happy! How many
old recollections, and how many dormant
sympathies, does Christmas-time awaken!

We write these words now, many miles
distant from the spot at which, year after
year, we met on that day a merry and joy-
os circle. Many of the hearts that thro-
bed so gaily then, have ceased to beat;
many of the looks that shone so brightly
then, have ceased to glow; the hands we
grasped, have grown cold; the eyes we
sought, have hid their lustre in the grave;
and yet the tramp of the merry voices and
smiling faces, the jest, the laugh,
the most minute and trivial circumstance
connected with those happy meetings,
crowd upon our mind at each recurrence
of the season, as if the last assemblage had
been but yesterday. Happy, happy Christ-
mas, that can win us back to the delusions
of our childish days, that can recall to the
old man the pleasures of his youth, and
transport the sailor and the traveller, thou-
sands of miles away, back to his own fires-
side and his quiet home.

But we are so taken up, and occupied,
with the good qualities of Christmas, whom
by the way, is quite a country gentleman
of the old school, that we are keeping Mr.
Pickwick and his friends waiting in the
cold, on the outside of the Maggleton coach,
which they have just attained, well wrapt
up, in great-costa, shawls, and com-
forters. The portmanteus and carpet-bags
have been stowed away, and Mr. Weller
and the guard are endeavouring to insinu-
ate into the fore-boot a huge codfish, several
sizes too large for it, which is snugly packed
up, in a long brown basket, with a layer of
straw over the top, and which has been
left to the last, in order that he may repose
in safety on the half-dozen barrels of real
native oysters, all the property of Mr. Pick-
wick, which have been arranged in regular
order, at the bottom of the receptacle.
The interest displayed in Mr. Pickwick's coun-
tenance is most intense, as Mr. Weller and
the guard try to squeeze the cod-fish into
the boot, first head first, and then tail first,
and then top upwards, and then bottom up-
wards, and then side-ways, and then long-
ways, all of which artifices the intractable
cod-fish sturdily resists, until the guard ac-
cidentally hits him in the very middle of
the basket, whereupon he suddenly disap-
ppears into the boot, and with him, the head
and shoulders of the guard himself, who,
while calculating upon so sudden a cessation
of the passive resistance of the cod-fish, ex-
perienced a very unexpected shock, to the
unmutterable delight of all the porters and
by-standers. Upon this, Mr. Pickwick
smiles with great good-humour, and, draw-
ing a shilling from his waistcoat-pockets,
begs the guard, as he picks himself out of
the boot, to drink his health in a glass of
hot brandy and water, at which, the guard
smiles too, and Meares, Snagewise, Winkle,
and Tupman, all smile in company. The
guard and Mr. Weller disappear for five
minutes, most probably to get the hot bran-
dy and water, for they smell very strongly
of it, when they return; the coachman
mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up
behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats
round their legs, and their shawls over
their noses; then the merry voices begin

They have rambled through the streets,
and jolted over the stones, and at length
reach the wide and open country. The
wheels skim over the hard and frosty
ground; and the horses, bursting into a
canter at a smart crack of the whip, step
along the road as if the load behind them,
coach, passengers, cod-fish, oyster barrels,
and all, were but a feather at their heels.
They have descended a gentle slope, and
turned upon a level, as compact and dry as
a solid block of marble, two miles long.
Another crack of the whip, and on they
speed, at a smart gallop, the horses tossing
their heads and rattling the harness as if
in exhilaration at the rapidity of the mo-
tion, while the coachman holding whip and
reins in one hand, takes off his hat with
the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls
out his handkerchief and wipes his fore-
head, partly because he has a habit of doing
it, and partly because it's as well to show
the passengers how cool he is, and what an
easy thing it is to drive; but he, who, when
you have had as much practice as he has,
Having done this very leisurely (otherwise
the effect would be materially impaired;)
he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his
hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows,
cracks the whip again, and on they speed,
more merrily than before.

A few small houses scattered on either
side of the road, betoken the entrance to
some town or village. The lively notes of
the guard's key-bugle vibrate in the clear
cold air, and wake up the old gentleman
inside, who carefully letting down the win-
dow-sash half-way, and standing sentry
over the air, takes a short peep out, and then
carefully pulling it up again, informs the
other inside that they're going to change
direction; on which the other inside wakes
himself up, and determines to postpone his
next map until after the stoppage. Again the bugle sounds lastily forth, andounce the cottager's wife and children, who peep out at the house-door, and watch the coach till it turns the corner, when they once more crow round the blazing fire, and throw on another log of wood against father comes hence, while father himself, a full mile off, has just exchanged a friendly nod with the coachman, and turned round, to take a good long stare at the vehicle as it whirls away.

And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles through the ill-paved streets of a country town; and the coachman undoing the buckle which keeps his ribbons together, prepared to throw them off the moment he stops. Mr. Pickwick emerges from his coat collar, and looks about him with great curiosity; perceiving which, the coachman informs Mr. Pickwick of the name of the town, and tells him it was market day yesterday, both which pieces of information Mr. Pickwick relays to his fellow-passengers, whereupon they emerge from their coat collars too, and look about them also. Mr. Winkle, who sits at the extreme edge, with one leg dangling in the air, is nearly precipitated into the street, as the coach twists round the sharp corner by the cheesemonger's shop, and turns into the market-place; and before Mr. Snodgrass, who sits next to him, has recovered from his alarm, they pull up at the inn yard, where the fresh horses, with cloths on, are already waiting. The coachman throws down the reins and gets down himself, and the other outside passengers drop down also, except those who have no great confidence in their ability to get up again, and they remain where they are, and stamp their feet against the coach to warm them; looking with longing eyes and red noses at the bright fire in the inn bar, and the sprigs of holly with red berries which ornament the window.

But the guard has delivered at the cornfeeder's shop the brown paper packet he took out of the little pouch which hung over his shoulders by a leather strap, and has seen the horses carefully put to, and has thrown on the pavement the saddle which was left on the coach roof, and has assisted in the conference between the coachman and the hostler about the grey mare that hurt her off-fore-leg last Tuesday, and he and Mr. Weller are all right behind, and the coachman is all right in front, and the old gentleman inside, who has kept the window down full two inches all this time, has pulled it up again, and the clothes are set, and they are all ready for starting, except the "two stout gentlemen," whom the coachman inquires after with some impatience. Hereupon the coachman and the guard, and Sam Weller, and Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass, and all the hatters, and every one of the idlers, who are more in number than all the others put together, shout for the missing gentlemen as loud as they can bawl. A distant response is heard from the yard, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman come running down it, quite out of breath, for they have been hanging a glass of ale a-piece, and Mr. Pickwick's fingers are so cold that he has been full five minutes before he could find the sixpence to pay for it. The coachman shouts an admoritory "Now, then, gen'l'm'n," the guard re-echoes it—the old gentleman inside, thinks it a very extraordinary thing that people still get all thrown off they isn't time for it—Mr. Pickwick struggles up on one side, Mr. Tupman on the other, Mr. Winkle cries "All right," and off they start. Shawls are pulled up, coat collars are re-adjusted, the pavement cesses, the house disappears; and they are once again dashing along the open road, with the frosty clear air blowing in their faces, and gladdening their very hearts within them.

Such was the progress of Mr. Pickwick and his friends by the Muggleton Telegraph, on their way to Dingley Dell; and at three o'clock that afternoon, they all stood, high and dry, safe and sound, bare and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion, having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy, to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters, and weaving its beautiful net-work upon the trees and hedges. Mr. Pickwick was busily engaged in counting the barrels of oysters, and super-intending the disinterment of the codfish, when he felt himself gently pulled by the skirts of the coat; and looking round, he discovered that the individual who recorded to this mode of catching his attention was no other than Mr. Wardle's favourite page, better known to the readers of this unvarnished history by the distinguishing appellation of the fat boy.

"Aha!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Aha!" said the fat boy.

And as he said it, he glanced from the word-dish to the oyster basin, and chuckled joyously. He was fatter than ever.

"Well, you look rosy enough, my young friend," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I have been asleep, right in front of the tap-room fire," replied the fat boy, who had heated himself to the colour of a new chimney-pot, in the course of an hour's nap. "Master sent me over with the chops, to carry your luggage up to the house. He'd ha' sent some saddle horses, but he thought you'd rather walk, being a cold day."
"Yes, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily, for he remembered how they had travelled over nearly the same ground on a previous occasion. "Yes, we would rather walk. Here, Sam."

"Sir," said Mr. Weller.

"Help Mr. Wardle's servant to put the packages into the cart, and then ride on with him. We will walk forward at once."

Having given this direction, and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the footpath across the fields, and walked briskly away, leaving Mr. Weller and the fat boy conversed together for the first time. Sam looked at the fat boy with great astonishment, but without saying a word; and began to stow the things rapidly away in the cart, while the fat boy stood quietly by, and seemed to think it a very interesting sort of thing to see Mr. Weller working by himself.

"There," said Sam, throwing in the last carpet-bag. "There they are."

"Yes," said the fat boy, in a very satisfied tone, "there they are."

"Well, young twenty stump," said Sam, "you're a nice specimen of a prize boy, you are."

"Thank'ee," said the fat boy.

"You ain't got nothin' on your mind, as makes you feel yourself, have you!" inquired Sam.

"Not as I know on," replied the boy.

"I should rather ha' thought, to look at you, that you was a laborin' under an unrequited attachment for some young 'coonman," said Sam.

"The fat boy shook his head.

"Well," said Sam, "I'm glad to hear it. Do you ever drink any thing?"

"I like eating better," replied the boy.

"Ah," said Sam, "I should ha' supposed that; but what I mean is, should you like a drop of any thin' as'd warm you? but I suppose you never was cold, with all them elastic fixtures, was you?"

"Sometimes," replied the boy; "and I likes a drop of something, when its good."

"Oh, you do, do you!" said Sam, "come this way, then."

The corner Lion tap was soon gained, and the fat boy swallowed a glass of liqueur without so much as winking—a fact which considerably advanced him in Mr. Weller's good opinion. Mr. Weller having transmuted a smaller piece of business on his own account, they got into the cart.

"Can you drive?" said the fat boy.

"I should rather think no," replied Sam.

"Others, then," said the fat boy, putting the reins in his hand, and pointing up a farm, "it's as straight as you can go; you can't miss it."

With these words the fat boy laid his self affectionately down by the side of the cod-fish, and placing an oyster-barrel under his head for a pillow, fell asleep instantly.

"Vell!" said Sam, "of all the cool boys ever I set my eyes on, this here young gent'man is about the coolest. Come, wake up, young dropey.

But as young dropey evinced no symptoms of returning animation, Sam Weller sat himself down in front of the cart, and starting the old horse with a jerk of the reins, jogged steadily on towards Manor Farm.

Mean while, Mr. Pickwick and his friends having walked their blood into active circulation, proceeded cheerfully on; the paths were hard, the grass was crisp and frosty, the air had a fine, dry, bracing coldness, and the rapid approach of the grey twilight (slate coloured in a better term in frosty weather) made them look forward with pleasant anticipations to the comforts which awaited them at their hospitable entertainer's. It was the sort of afternoon that might induce a couple of elderly gentlemen, in a lonely field, to take off their great-coats and play at leap-frog in pure lightness of heart and gaiety; and we firmly believe that had Mr. Tupman at that moment proffered a "back," Mr. Pickwick would have accepted his offer with the utmost relish.

However, Mr. Tupman did not volunteer any such personal accommodation, and the friends walked on, conversing merrily. As they turned into a lane which they had to cross, the sound of many voices burst upon their ears; and before they even had time to form a guess as to whom they belonged, they walked into the very centre of the party who were expecting their arrival—a fact which was first notified to the Pickwickians, by the loud "Hurrah," which burst from old Wardle's lips, when they appeared in sight.

First, there was Wardle himself, looking, if that were possible, more jolly than ever; then there were Belle and her faithful Trundle; and lastly, there were Emily and some eight or ten young ladies, who had all come down to the wedding which was to take place next day, and were in as happy and important a state as young ladies usually are on such momentous occasions; and they were, one and all, starting the fields and lanes far and wide with their freckles and laughter.

The ceremony of introduction, under such circumstances, was very soon performed; and we should rather say, that the introduction was seen over, without any ceremony at all; and in two minutes there-
after, Mr. Pickwick was joking with the young ladies who wouldn’t come over the suite while he looked, or who, having pretty feet and unexceptionable ankles, preferred standing on the top-rail for five minutes or so, and declaring that they were too frightened to move, with as much ease and absence of reserve or constraint, as if he had known them for life. It is worthy of remark too, that Mr. Snodgrass offered Emily far more assistance than the absolute terror of the suite (although it was full three feet high, and had only a couple of stepping-stones) would seem to require; while one black-eyed young lady in a very nice little pair of boots with fur round the top, was observed to scream very loudly, when Mr. Winkle offered to help her over.

All this was very snug and pleasant: and when the difficulties of the suite were at last surmounted, and they once more emerged on the open field, old Wardle informed Mr. Pickwick how they had all been down in a body to inspect the furniture and fittings-up of the house, which the young couple were to tenant, after the Christmas holidays; at which communication Bella and Trundle both coloured up, as red as the fat boy after the tap-room fire; and the young lady with the black eyes and the fur round the boots, whispered something in Emily’s ear, and then glanced archly at Mr. Snodgrass, to which Emily responded that she was a foolish girl, but turned very red, notwithstanding; and Mr. Snodgrass, who was as modest as all great geniuses usually are, felt the crimson rising to the crown of his head, and devoutly wished, in the utmost recesses of his own heart, that the young lady aforesaid, with her black eyes, and her archness, and her boots with the fur round the top, were all comfortably deposited in the adjacent county.

But if they were social and happy, outside the house, what was the warmth and cordiality of their reception when they reached the farm! The very servants grinned with pleasure at sight of Mr. Pickwick; and Emma bestowed a half-demure, half-impatient, and all pretty look of recognition on Mr. Tupman, which was enough to make the statue of Bonsarte in the passage, unfold his arms and clasp her within them.

The old lady was seated in customary state in the front parlour, but she was rather cross, and by consequences, most particularly deaf. She never went out herself, and like a great many other old ladies of the same stamp, she was apt to consider it an act of domestic treason, if any body else took the liberty of doing what she couldn’t. So, bless her old soul, she sat up right as she could, in her great chair, and looked as fierce as might be—and that was benevolent, after all.

"Mother," said Wardle, "Mr. Pickwick, you recollect him?"

"Never mind," replied the old lady with great dignity. "Don’t trouble Mr. Pickwick about an old creature like me. Nobody cares about me now, and it’s very natural they shouldn’t." Here the old lady tossed her head, and smoothed down her lavender-coloured silk dress, with trembling hands.

"Come, come, ma’am," said Mr. Pickwick, "I can’t let you cut an old friend in this way. I have come down expressly to have a long talk, and another rubber with you; and we’ll show these boys and girls how to dance a minuet, before they’re eight-and-forty-hours older." The old lady was rapidly giving way, but she did not like to do it all at once; so she only said, "Ah! I can’t hear him."

"Nonsense, mother," said Wardle. "Come, come, don’t be cross, there’s a good soul. Recollect Bella; come, you must keep her spirits up, poor girl."

The good old lady heard this, for her lip quivered as her son said it. But age has its little infirmities of temper, and she was not quite brought round yet. So, she smoothed down the lavender-coloured dress again, and, turning to Mr. Pickwick, said, "Ah, Mr. Pickwick, young people was very different when I was a girl."

"No doubt of that, ma’am," said Mr. Pickwick, "and that’s the reason why I would make much of the few that have any traces of the old stock,"—and saying this, Mr. Pickwick gently pulled Bella towards him, and bestowing a kiss upon her forehead, bade her sit down on the little stool at her grandmother’s feet. Whether the expression of her countenance, as it was raised towards the old lady’s face, called up a thought of old times, or whether the old lady was touched by Mr. Pickwick’s affectionate good nature, or whatever was the cause, she was fairly melted; so she threw herself on the grand-daughter’s neck, and all the little ill-humour evaporated in a gush of silent tears.

A happy party they were, that night. Sedate and solemn were the score of rubbers in which Mr. Pickwick and the old lady played together; and uproarious was the mirth of the round table. Long after the ladies had retired, did the hot elder wine, well qualified with brandy and spices, go round and round again; and sound was the sleep, and pleasant were the dreams that followed. It is a remarkable fact, that those of Mr. Snodgrass bore constant reference to Emily Wardle; and that the
principals figure in Mr. Pickwick's visions, was a young lady with black eyes, an arch smile, and a pair of remarkably nice boots, with frills round the tops.

Mr. Pickwick was awakened early in the morning, by a hum of voices and patterning of feet sufficient to rouse even the fat boy from his heavy slumber. He sat up in bed, and listened. The female servants and female visitors were running about, to and fro; and there were such multitudinous demands for warm water, such repeated outcries for needles and thread, and so many half-suppressed entreaties of "Oh, do come and tie me, there's a dear," that Mr. Pickwick in his innocence began to imagine that something dreadful must have occurred, when he grew more awake, and remembered the wedding. The occasion being an important one, he dressed himself with peculiar care, and descended to the breakfast-room.

There were all the female servants in a brand-new uniform of pink muslin gowns, with white bows in their caps, running about the house in a state of excitement and agitation, which it would be impossible to describe. The old lady was dressed out in a brocaded gown, which had not seen the light for twenty years, saving and expeecting such truant rays as had stolen through the chinks in the box in which it had been laid by, during the whole time. Mr. Trundie was in high feather and spirits, but a little nervous withal. The hearty old landlord was trying to look very cheerful and unconcerned, but failed signally in the attempt. All the girls were in tears and white muslin, except a select two or three, who wore being honoured with a private view of the bride and bridesmaids, up stairs. All the Pickwickians were in the most blooming array; and there was a terrific roaring on the grass in front of the house, occasioned by all the men, and boys, and hobbledehoys attached to the farm, each of whom had got a white bow in his button-hole, and all of whom were cheering with might and main: being invited thereto, and stimulated therein, by the precept and example of Mr. Samuel Weller, who had managed to become mighty popular already, and was as much at home as if he had been born on the land.

A wedding is a licensed subject to joke upon, but there really is no great joke in the matter after all; we speak merely of the ceremony, and beg it to be distinctly understood that we indulge in no hidden sarcasm upon a married life. Mixed up with the pleasure and joy of the occasion, are the many regrets at quitting home, the tears of parting between parent and child, the consciousness of leaving the dearest and kindest friends of the happiest portion of human life, to encounter its cares and troubles with others still untried and little known—natural feelings, which we would not reader this chapter mournfully by describing, and which we should be still more unwilling to be supposed to ridicule.

Let us briefly say, then, that the ceremony was performed by the old clergyman, in the parish church of Dingley Dell, and that Mr. Pickwick's name is attached to the register, still preserved in the vestry thereof; that the young lady with the black eyes signed her name in a very unsteady and tremulous manner; and that Emily's signature, as the other bridesmaid, is nearly illegible; that it all went off in very admirable style; that the young ladies, generally, thought it far less shocking than they expected; and that although the owner of the black eyes, and the arch smile, informed Mr. Winkle that she could never submit to any thing so dreadful, we have the very best reasons for thinking she was mistaken. To all this we may add, that Mr. Pickwick was the first who saluted the bride: and that in so doing, he threw over her neck a rich gold watch and chain, which no mortal eyes but the jeweller's had ever beheld before. Then the old church-bell rang as gaily as it could, and they all returned to breakfast.

"Vere does the mince-pies go, young ophi-um-eater?" said Mr. Weller to the fat boy, as he assisted in laying out such articles of consumption as had not been duly arranged on the previous night. The fat boy pointed to the destination of the pies.

"Very good," said Sam, "stick a bit o' Christmas in 'em. I'other dish opposite. There; now we look compact and comfortable, as the father said yen he cut his little boy's head off, to cure him o' squintia'."

As Mr. Weller made the comparison, he fell back a step or two, to give full effect to it, and surveyed the preparations with the utmost satisfaction.

"Wardle," said Mr. Pickwick, almost as soon as they were all seated, "a glass of wine, in honour of this happy occasion!" "I shall be delighted, my boy," said Wardle. "Joe—why he's gone to sleep."

"No, I ain't, Sir," replied the fat boy, starting up from a remote corner, where, like the patron saint of fat boys—the immortal Horner—he had been devouring a Christmas pie, though not with the coolness and deliberation which characterised that young gentleman's proceedings.

"Fill Mr. Pickwick's glass."

"Yes, Sir."

The fat boy filled Mr. Pickwick's glass and then retired behind his master's chair.
from whence he watched the play of the knives and forks, and the progress of the choice morsels, from the dishes to the mouths of the company, with a kind of dark and gloomy joy that was most impressive.

"God bless you, old fellow," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Same to you, my boy," replied Wardle; and they pledged each other heartily.

"Mrs. Wardle," said Mr. Pickwick, "we old folks must have a glass of wine together, in honour of this joyful event."

The old lady was in a state of great grandeur just then, for she was sitting at the top of the table in the brocaded gown, with her newly married daughter on one side, and Mr. Pickwick on the other, to do the carving. Mr. Pickwick had not spoken in a very loud tone, but she understood him at once, and drank off a full glass of wine to his long life and happiness; after which the worthy old soul launched forth into a minute and particular account of her own wedding, with a dissertation on the fashion of wearing high-heeled shoes, and some particulars concerning the life and adventures of the beautiful Lady Tallimflower, deceased, at all of which the old lady herself laughed very heartily indeed, and so did the young ladies too, for they were wondering among themselves what on earth grandma was talking about. When they laughed, the old lady laughed ten times more heartily; and said that they always had been considered capital stories, which caused them all to laugh again, and put the old lady into the very best of humours. Then the cake was cut, and passed through the ring; and the young ladies saved pieces to put under their pillows to dream of their future husbands on; and a great deal of blushing and merriment was thereby occasioned.

"Mr. Miller," said Mr. Pickwick to his old acquaintance, the hard-headed gentleman, "a wine!"

"With great satisfaction, Mr. Pickwick," replied the hard-headed gentleman, solemnly.

"You'll take me in?" said the benevolent old clergyman.

"And me," interposed his wife.

"And me, and me," said a couple of poor relations at the bottom of the table, who had eaten and drunk very heartily, and laughed at everything;

Mr. Pickwick expressed his heartfelt delight at every additional suggestion; and his eyes beamed with hilarity and cheerfulness.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly rising—

"Hear, hear! Hear, hear! Hear, hear!" said Mr. Weller, in the excitement of his feelings.

"Call in all the servants," cried old Wardle, interposing to prevent the public rebuke which Mr. Weller would otherwise most indubitably have received from his master.

"Give them a glass of wine, each, to drink the toast in. Now, Pickwick."

Amidst the silence of the company, the whispering of the women servants, and the awkward embarrassment of the men, Mr. Pickwick proceeded.

"Ladies and gentlemen—no, I won't say ladies and gentlemen. I'll call you my friends, my dear friends, if the ladies will allow me to take so great a liberty."

Here Mr. Pickwick was interrupted by immense applause from the ladies, echoed by the gentlemen, during which the owner of the eyes was distinctly heard to state that she could kiss dear Mr. Pickwick, whereupon Mr. Winkle gallantly inquired if it couldn't be done by deputy, to which the young lady with the black eyes replied, "Go away"—and accompanied the request with a look which said as plainly as a look could do—"if you can."

"My dear friends," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "I am going to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom—God bless 'em (cheers and tears.) My young friend Trundle, I believe to be a very excellent and manly fellow; and his wife I know to be a very amiable and lovely girl, well qualified to transfer to another sphere of action the happiness which for twenty years she has diffused around her, in her father's house." (Here the fat boy burst forth into stentorian blubberings, and was led forth by the coat-collar, by Mr. Weller.) "I wish," added Mr. Pickwick, "I wish I was young enough to be her sister's husband, (cheers,) but, failing that, I am happy to be old enough to be her father; for, being so, I shall not be suspected of any latent designs when I say that I adore, esteem, and love them both (cheers and sobs.) The bride's father, our good friend there, is a noble person, and I am proud to know him (great uproar.) He is a kind, excellent, independent-spirited, fine-hearted, hospitable, liberal man (enthusiastic shouts from the poor relations, at all the adjectives; and especially at the two last.) That his daughter may enjoy all the happiness, even he can desire; and that he may derive from the contemplation of her felicity all the gratification of heart and peace of mind which he so well deserves, is, I am persuaded, our united wish. So, let us drink their healths, and wish them a prolonged life, and every blessing."

Mr. Pickwick concluded unexampled:

"..."
wind of applause; and once more were the lungs of the supernumeraries, under Mr. Welcher's command, brought into active and efficient operation. Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Pickwick proposed the old lady. Mr. Snodgrass proposed Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Snodgrass. One of the poor relations proposed Mr. Tupman, and the other poor relation proposed Mr. Winkle; and all was happiness and festivity, until the mysterious disappearance of both the poor relations beneath the table, warned the party that it was time to adjourn.

At dinner they met again, after a five-and-twenty mile walk, undertaken by the males at Wardle's recommendations, to get rid of the effects of the wine at breakfast; the poor relations had lain in bed all day, with the view of attaining the same happy consummation, but, as they had been unsuccessful, they stopped there. Mr. Welcher kept the domestics in a state of perpetual hilarity; and the fat boy divided his time into small alternate allotments of eating and sleeping.

The dinner was as hearty an affair as the breakfast, and was quite as noisy, without the tears. Then came the dessert and some more toasts. Then came the tea and coffee; and then, the ball.

The best sitting room at Manor Farm, was a good, long, dark panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bowler of honey and evergreens, were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses, and on all kinds of brackets, stood massive, old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burnt bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth; and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

If anything could have added to the interest of this agreeable scene, it would have been the remarkable fact of Mr. Pickwick's appearing without his gallant for the first time within the memory of his oldest friends.

"You mean to dance?" said Wardle.

"Of course I do," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Don't you see I am dressed for the purpose?" and Mr. Pickwick called attention to his speckled silk stockings, and smartly tied pumpes.

"You in silk stockings!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman, joyously.

"And why not, Sir—why not?" said Mr. Pickwick, turning warmly upon him.

"Oh, of course there is no reason why you shouldn't wear them," responded Mr. Tupman.

"I imagine not, Sir—I imagine not," said Mr. Pickwick, in a very peremptory tone.

Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he found it was a serious matter; so he looked grave, and said they were a very pretty pattern.

"I hope they are," said Mr. Pickwick, fixing his eyes upon his friend. "You see nothing extraordinary in these stockings, as stockings, I trust, Sir?"

"Certainly not—oh, certainly not," replied Mr. Tupman. He walked away; and Mr. Pickwick's countenance resumed its customary benign expression.

"We are all ready, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, who was stationed with the old lady at the top of the dance, and had already made four false starts, in his excessive anxiety to commence.

"Then begin at once," said Wardle.

"Now?"

Up struck the two fiddlers and the one harp, and off went Mr. Pickwick into hands across, when there was a general clapping of hands, and a cry of "Stop, stop."

"What's the matter?" said Mr. Pickwick, who was only brought to, by the fiddlers and harp desisting, and could have been stopped by no earthly power, if the house had been on fire.

"Where's Arabella Allen?" said a dozen voices.

"And Winkle?" added Mr. Tupman.

"Here we are!" exclaimed that gentleman, emerging with his pretty companion from the corner; and, as he did so, it would have been hard to tell which was redder in the face, he or the young lady with black eyes.

"What an extraordinary thing it is, Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick, rather petulantly, "that you couldn't have taken your place before."

"Not at all extraordinary," said Mr. Winkle.

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, with a very expressive smile, as his eyes rested on Arabella, "well, I don't know that it was extraordinary, either, after all."

However, there was no time to think more about the matter, for the fiddles and harp began in real earnest. Away went Mr. Pickwick—hands across, down the middle to the very end of the room, and half-way up the chimney, and back again to the door—poussette everywhere—loud stamp on the ground—ready for the next couple—off again—all the figure over once
more—another stamp to beat out the time
—next couple, and the next, and the next
again—never was such going; and at last,
after they had reached the bottom of the
dance, and full fourteen couple after the
old lady had retired in an exhausted state,
and the clergyman's wife had been substi-
tuted in her stead, did that gentleman, when
there was no demand whatever on his
exertions, keep perpetually dancing in his
place, to keep time to the music, smiling
on his partner all, the while with a bland-
ness of demeanour which baffles all de-
scription.

Long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of
dancing, the newly married couple had re-
tired from the scene. There was a glorious
supper down stairs, notwithsstanding, and
a good long sitting after it; and when Mr.
Pickwick awoke, late the next morning,
he had a confused recollection of having,
several and confidentially, invited some-
where about five-and-twenty people to dine
with him at the George and Vulture, the
very first time they came to London; which
Mr. Pickwick rightly considered a pretty
certain indication of his having taken some-
thing besides exercise on the previous night.

"And so your family has games in the
kitchen to-night, my dear, have they?" in-
quired Sam of Emma.

"Yes, Mr. Weller," replied Emma; "we
always have on Christmas eve. Master
wouldn't neglect to keep it up on any ac-
count."

"Your master's a very pretty notion of
'keepin' any thin' up, my dear," said Mr.
Weller; "I never see such a sensible sort
'o' man as he is, or such a reg'lar gen'l'm'n."

"Oh, that he is!" said the fat boy, join-
ing in the conversation; "don't he breed
dick nor pluck!" and the fat youth gave a semi-
cannibalistic leer at Mr. Weller, as be thought
of the roast legs and gravy.

"Oh, you've woke up, at last, have you?" said
Sam. The fat boy nodded.

"I tell you what it is, young box con-
structor," said Mr. Weller, impressively,
"if you don't sleep a little less and exercise
a little more, you come to be a man
you'll lay yourself open to the same sort o'
personal inconvenience as was inflicted
on the old gen'l'm'n as wore the pig-tail."

"What did they do to him?" inquired the
fat boy, in a faltering voice.

"I'm a goin' to tell you," replied Mr.
Weller: "he was one o' the largest pat-
tons as was ever turned out—reg'lar fat
man, as hadn't caught a glimpse of his own
shoehoe for five-and-twenty years."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Emma.

"No, that he hadn't, my dear," said Mr.
Weller. "and if you'd put an exact model
of his own legs on the dinner table afore
him, he wouldn't 'a' known 'em. Well, he
always walks to his office with a very
handsome gold watch-chain hangin' out,
about a foot and a half, and a gold watch in
his fob pocket as was worth—I'm afraid to
say how much, but as much as a watch can
be—a large, heavy, round manufactuer, as
stout for a watch, as he was for a man, and
with a big face in proportion. 'You'd better
not carry that 'ere watch,' says the old
gen'l'm'n's friends: 'you'll be robbed on it,'
says they. 'Shall I?' says he. 'Yes, will
you,' says they. 'Well,' says he, 'I should
like to see the thief as could get this here
watch out, for I'm blessed if I ever can;
it's such a tight fit,' says he, 'and yet ever
I wants to know what's o'clock, I am obliged
to stare into the bakers' shops,' he says.
Well, then he laughs as hearty as if he
was a goin' to pieces, and out he walks
again, with his powdered head and pig-tail,
and rolls down the Strand with the chain
hangin' out farrther than ever, and the great
round watch almost bustin' through his grey
kersey smalls. There warn't a pick-pocket
in all London as didn't take a pull at that
chain, but the chain 'ud never break, and
the watch 'ud never come out, so they soon
got tired of draggin' such a heavy old
gen'l'm'n along the pavement, and he'd go
home and laugh till the pig-tail wibrated
like the penderum of a Dutch clock. At
last, one day, the old gen'l'm'n was rollin'
along, and he sees a pick-pocket, as he
know'd by sight, a comin' up, arm in arm
with a little boy with a very large head.

'Here's a game,' says the old gen'l'm'n to
himself; 'they're a-goin' to have another
try, but it won't do.' So he begins a clock-
lin' very hearty, ven, all of a sudden, the
little boy leaves hold of the pick-pocket's
arm, and rushes head foremost straight into
the old gen'l'm'n's stomach, and for a mo-
ment doubled him, right up with the pain.

'Murder!' says the old gen'l'm'n. 'All
right, Sir,' says the pick-pocket, a whisper-
ing in his ear. And ven he comes straight
again, the watch and chain was gone, and
what's worse than that, the old gen'l'm'n's
digestion was all wrong ever afterwards, to
the very last day of his life; so just you
look about you, young fellor, and take care
that you don't get too fat.'

As Mr. Weller concluded this moral tale,
with which the fat boy appeared much af-
fected, they all three wended their way to
the large kitchen, in which the family were
by this time assembled, according to an
annual custom on Christmas eve, observed
by old Wardle's forefathers from time im-
memorial.

From the centre of the ceiling of this
kitchen, old Wardle had just suspended
with his own hands a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe insinuately grew rise to a scene of general and most delightful straggling and confusion; in the midst of this Mr. Pickwick, with a gallantry which would have done honour to a descendant of Lady Tollington, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch, and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. The old lady submitted to this piece of practical politeness with all the dignity which befits so important and serious a solemnity, but the younger ladies not being so thoroughly imbued with a superstitious veneration of the custom, or imagining that the value of a salute is very much enhanced if it costs a little trouble to obtain it, screamed and struggled, and ran into corners, and threatened and remonstrated, and did every thing but leave the room, until some of the less advanced gentilities were on the point of desisting, when they all at once found it useless to resist any longer, and submitted to be kissed with a good grace. Mr. Winkle kissed the young lady with the black eyes, and Mr. Snodgrass kissed Emily; and Mr. Weller, not being particular about the form of being under the mistletoe, kissed Emma and the other female servants, just as he caught them. As to the poor relations, they kissed everybody, not even excepting the plainer portion of the young-lady visitors, who, in their confusion, ran right under the mistletoe, directly it was hung up, without knowing it! Wardle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene, with the utmost satisfaction; and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use, and summarily devouring a particularly fine mince-pie, that had been carefully put by, for somebody else.

Now the screaming had subsided, and faces were in a glow, and curls in a tangle, and Mr. Pickwick, after kissing the old lady, as before-mentioned, was standing under the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing around him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and putting her arm around Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek; and before Mr. Pickwick distinctly knew what was the matter, he was surrounded by the whole body, and kissed by every one of them.

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the centre of the group, now pulled this way, and then that, and first kissed on the chin, and then on the nose, and then on the spectacles, and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side; but it was still a more pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick blinded shortly afterwards with a silk-handkerchief, falling up against the wall, and scrambling into corners, and going through all the mysteries of blind-man's buff, with the utmost relish for the game, until at last he caught one of the poor relations; and then had to evade the blind-man himself, which he did with a nimbleness and agility that elicited the admiration and applause of all beholders. The poor relations caught just the people whom they thought would like it; and when the game flagged, got caught themselves. When they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snap-dragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apple were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is, indeed, comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Every body sits down with us on Christmas eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we, wait till the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and while away the time with forfeits and old stories. Tyndle, my boy, rake up the fire."

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred, and the deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow that penetrated into the farthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face.

"Come," said Wardle, "a song—a Christmas song. I'll give you one in fault of a better."

"Bravo!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Fill up," cried Wardle. "It will be two hours good before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep rich colour of the wassail; fill up all round, and now for the song."

Thus saying, the merry old gentleman, in a good round sturdy voice, commenced, without more ado,

A Christmas Carol.

I care not for Spring; on his sickly wing Let the blossom and buds be borne: He woos them amain with his treacherous rain, And he scatters them ere the morn.

An inconstant elf, he knows not himself, Or his own changing mind an hour, He'll smile in your face, and with wry grimace, He'll wash your youngest flower.

Let the summer see to his bright home run, He shall never be sought by me; When he's dimmed by a cloud I can laugh aloud And care not how silly he be:
For his darling child in the madness wild
That sports in fierce fever’s train;
And when love too is strong, it don’t last long,
As many have found to their pain.

A mild harvest night, by the tranquil light
Of the modest and gentle moon,
Has a far sweeter sheen for me, I ween,
Than the broad and unblushing noon.

But every leaf awakens my grief,
As it lieth beneath the tree;
So let Autumn air be never so fair,
It by no means agrees with me.

But my song I roll out, for Christmas morn,
The hearty, the true, and the bold.
A bumper I drain, and with might and main
Give three cheers for this Christmas old.

We’ll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart,
And we’ll keep him up while there’s bite or sup,
And in fellowship well, we’ll part.

In his fine honest pride, he scorns to hide
One jot of his hard-weather’d scars;
They’re no disgrace, for there’s much the same trace
On the cheeks of our bravest sirs.

Then again I sing ‘till the roof doth ring,
And it echoes from wall to wall—
To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,
As the King of the Seasons all!

This song was tumultuously applauded,
For friends and dependents make a capital audience;
And the poor relations especially were in perfect ecstasy of rapture. Again
Was the fire replenished, and again went the Wassail round.

“How it snows!” said one of the men in a low tone.

“Snows, does it?” said Wardle.

“Rough, cold night, Sir,” replied the man; “and there’s a wind got up that
Drifts it across the fields in a thick white cloud.”

“What does Jem say?” inquired the old lady.

“There ain’t any thing the matter, is there?”

“No, no, mother,” replied Wardle; “he says there’s a snow-drift, and a wind that’s
Piercing cold. I should know that by the way it rumbles in the chimney.”

“Ah!” said the old lady, “there was just such a wind, and just such a fall of
Snow, a good many years back, I recollect—just five years before your poor father
died. It was a Christmas eve, too; and I remember that on that very night he told
us the story about the goblins that carried away old Gabriel Grubb.”

“The story about what?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Oh, nothing—nothing,” replied Wardle.

“About an old sexton that the good people down here suppose to have been carri-
Away by goblins.”

“Suppose!” ejaculated the old lady. “Is there any body hardy enough to disbelieve
it?” Suppose! Haven’t you heard ever

since you were a child, that he was carried
Away by the goblins, and don’t you know
he was?”

“Very well, mother, he was, if you like,”
said Wardle, laughing. “He was carried
Away by goblins, Pickwick; and there’s an
End of the matter.”

“No, no,” said Mr. Pickwick, “not an
End of it, I assure you; for I must hear
How, and why, and all about it.”

Wardle smiled, as every head was bent
Forward to hear; and filling out the Wassail
With no hinted hand, nodded a health to
Mr. Pickwick, and began as follows—

But bless our editorial heart, what a
Long chapter we have been betrayed into!
We had quite forgotten all such petty restric-
Tions as chapters, we solemnly declare.
So here goes to give the goblin a fair start
In a new one. A clear stage and no favour,
For the goblins, ladies and gentlemen, if you please.

CHAPTER XXX.

The story of the goblins who stole a sexton.

“In an old abbey town, down in this
Part of the country, a long, long while ago
—or long, that the story must be a true one, because our great-grandfathers implicitly believed it—there officiated as sexton
And grave-digger in the church-yard, one
Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that
Because a man is a sexton, and constantly
Surrounded by emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy
Man; your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world, and I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who, in private life, and off duty, was
As comical and jocose a little fellow as ever
Chirped out a devil-may-care song, without
A hitch in his memory, or drained off a good
Stiff glass of grog without stopping for
Breath. But notwithstanding these preced-
ents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an
Ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow
—a morose and lonely man, who, who, rolled in
With nobody but himself, and an old wicker
Bottle which fitted into his large, deep
Waistcoat pocket; and who eyed each mer-
Ry face as it passed him by, with such a
Deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, as it
Was difficult to meet without feeling some-
thing the worse for.”

“A little before twilight one Christmas
eve, Gabriel shouldered his spade, lighted
His lantern, and betook himself towards the
Old church-yard, for he had got a grave to
Finish by next morning, and feeling very
Low, he thought it might raise his spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work w
Although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time, those obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the boy's singing, that he took little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction, murmuring, as he gathered up his things,
enochief; and his shoes curled up at the toes into long points. On his head he wore a broad-brimmed, sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered with the white frost, and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone very comfortably for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still; his tongue was put out, as if in deliberation; and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up.

"It was not the echo," said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub was paralyzed, and could make no reply.

"What do you here on Christmas eve," said the goblin, sternly.

"I came to dig a grave, Sir," stammered Gabriel Grub.

"What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this?" said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!" screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round—nothing was to be seen.

"What have you got in that bottle?" said the goblin.

"Hollands, Sir," replied the sexton, trembling more than ever; for he had bought it of the smugglers, and he thought that perhaps the questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins.

"Who drinks Hollands alone, and in a church-yard, on such a night as this?" said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!" exclaimed the wild voices again.

"The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed—

"And who, then, is our fair and lawful prize?"

"To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers singing to the mighty swell of the old church organ—a strain that seemed borne to the sexton's ears upon a gentle wind, and to die away as its soft breath passed onward—but the burden of the reply was still the same, 'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!'

"The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, 'Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?'

"The sexton gasped for breath.

"What do you think of this, Gabriel? said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street.

"It's—it's—very curious, Sir," replied the sexton, half dead with fright, 'very curious, and very pretty, but I think I'll go back and finish my work, Sir, if you please.'

"'Work!' said the goblin, 'what work?'

"The grave, Sir,—making the grave,' stammered the sexton.

"Oh, the grave, eh!" said the goblin, 'who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?'

"Again the mysterious voices replied, "Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!"

"I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel," said the goblin, thrusting his tongue farther into his cheek than ever—and a most astonishing tongue it was—'I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel," said the goblin.

"Under favour, Sir," replied the horror-struck sexton, 'I don't think they can, Sir; they don't know me, Sir; I don't think the gentlemen have ever seen me, Sir.'

"Oh yes they have," replied the goblin; 'we know the man with the sallow face and the grim scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil looks at the children, and grasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man that struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry, and he could not. We know him, we know him.'

"Here the goblin gave a loud shrill laugh, that the echoes returned twenty fold, and throwing his legs up in the air, stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone, from whence he threw a summerseet with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton's feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board.

"I—I am afraid I must leave you, Sir," said the sexton, making an effort to move.

"Leave us," said the goblin, "Gabriel Grub going to leave us. Ho! ho! ho!" As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed for one instant a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones, never stopping for an instant to take breath, but overrunning the highest amongst them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him; even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that whilst he
friends were content to leap over the common-sized gravestones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street-posts.

"At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch; the organ played quicker and quicker, and the goblins leaped faster and faster, coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over the tombstones like footballs. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him, as the spirits flew before his eyes, when the goblin king suddenly darted towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sank with him through the earth.

"When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim; in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the churchyard; and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without the power of motion.

"Cold to-night," said the king of the goblins, "very cold. A glass of something warm, here."

"At this command, half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub imagined to be courtiers, on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblin of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

"Ah! said the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were quite transparent, as he tossed down the flame, 'this warms one, indeed: bring a bumper of the same for Mr. Grub.'

"It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking any thing warm at night; for one of the goblins held him while another poured the blazing liquid down his throat, and the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

"And now," said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton's eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain — 'And now show the man of misery and gloom a few of the pictures from our own great store-house.'

"As the goblin said this, a thick cloud, which had obscured the further end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantly furnished, but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother's gown, and gazing round her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain as if to look for some expected object; a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table, and an elbow-chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door: the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy, as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments, as the children crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, sick and gloves, with busy zeal, ran with them from the room. Then as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

"But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bed-room, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying; the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from his eye; and even as the sexton looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his tiny hand, so cold and heavy; but they shrank back from its touch, and looked with awe on his infant face; for calm and tranquil as it was, and sleeping in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that he was an angel looking down upon, and blessing them, from a bright and happy heaven.

"Again the light cloud passed across the picture, and again the subject changed. The father and mother were old and helpless now, and the number of those about them was diminished more than half; but comfort and cheerfulness sat on every face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded round the fireside, and told and listened to old stories of earlier and by-gone days. Slowly and peacefully the father sank into the grave, and, soon after, the sharer of all his cares and troubles followed him to a place of rest and peace. The few, who yet survived them, knelt by their tomb, and watered the green turf, which covered it with their tears; then rose and turned away, sadly and mournfully, but not with bitter cries, or despairing lamentations, for they knew that they should one day meet again: and once more they mixed with the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture, and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"What do you think of that?" said the
goblin, turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

"Gabriel murmured out something about its being very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed, as the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"'You a miserable man!' said the goblin, in a tone of excessive contempt. 'You!' He appeared disposed to add more, but indignation choked his utterance, so he lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and, flourishing it above his head a little, to ensure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub; immediately after which, all the goblins in waiting crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy, according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"Show him some more,' said the king of the goblins.

"At these words the cloud was again dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view — there is just such another to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on, with a pleasant sound, the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves, the birds sang upon the boughs, and the lark carolled on high her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning — the bright, balmy morning of summer; the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass, was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil, the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief, but happy existence. Men walked forth, elated with the scene; and all was brightness and splendour.

"'You a miserable man!' said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish — again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton; and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

"Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who, although his shoulders smarted with pain, from the frequent application of the goblin's feet the sexton looked on with an inward which nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked very hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour, were cheerful and happy; and that to the most ignorant the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been deftly caught, and tenderly brought up, cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering, that would have crushed many of rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment, and peace. He saw that women — the tenderest and most fragile of all God’s creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress; and he saw that it was because they bore in their own hearts an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotedness. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth; and, setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world, after all. No sooner had he formed it, than the cloud which had closed over the last picture seemed to settle on his senses, and lull him to repose. One by one, the goblins faded from his sight, and as the last one disappeared, he sunk to sleep.

"The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke, and found himself lying at full length on the flat grave-stone in the churchyard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night’s frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin sat, on, stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked, the night before, was not far off. At first he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise, assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not ideal. He was staggered again, by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap-frog with the grave-stones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance, when he remembered that being spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them. So Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could, for the pain in his back; and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

"But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments; and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

"The lantern, the spade, and the wicker bottle, were found that day in the churchyard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton’s fate at first, but it was speedily determined that he was dead.
CHAPTER XXXI.

How the Pickwickians made and cultivated the acquaintance of a couple of nice young men belonging to one of the liberal professions; how they disported themselves on the ice; and how their visit came to a conclusion.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as that favored servitor entered his bed-chamber with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas day, "Still frosty!"

"Water in the wash-hand basin's a mask, Sir," responded Sam.

"Severe weather, Sam," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Fine time for them as is well wrapped up, as the Polar Bear said to himself, ven he was practising his skating," replied Mr. Weller.

"I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, untying his night-cap.

"Wery good, Sir," replied Sam. "There's a couple o' Sawbones down stairs."

"A couple of what?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sitting up in bed.

"A couple o' Sawbones," said Sam.

"What's a Sawbones?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not quite certain whether it was a live animal, or something eaten.

"What! don't you know what a Sawbones is, Sir?" inquired Mr. Weller; "I thought every body know'd as a Sawbones was a Surgeon."

"Oh, a Surgeon, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"Just that, Sir," replied Sam. "These here ones as is below, though, ain't regular thoroughbred Sawbones; they're only a trainin'."

"In other words they're Medical Students, I suppose!" said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam Weller nodded assent.

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Pickwick, casting his night-cap energetically on the counpane. "They are fine fellows; with judgments matured by observation and reflection; and taste refined by reading and study. I am very glad of it."

"They're a smokin' cigars by the kitchen fire," said Sam.

"Ah!" observed Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his hands, "overflowing with kindly feelings and animal spirits. Just what I like to see!"

"And one on 'em," said Sam, not noticing his master's interruptions, "one as 'em's got his legs on the table, and is a drinkin' brandy neat, vil the 'other one—him in the barnacles—has got a barrel o' oysters between his knees, vich he's a openin' like steam, and as fast as he eats 'em, he takes a'm with the shells at young drop-y, who's a sittin' down fast asleep, in the chimney-corner."

"Eccentricities of genius, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "You may retire."

Sam did retire accordingly; and Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of the quarter of an hour, went down to breakfast.

"Here he is at last," said old Wardle, "Pickwick, this is Miss Allen's brother, Mr. Benjamin Allen—Ben we call him, and so may you if you like. This gentle-
man is my very particular friend, Mr."

"Mr. Bob Sawyer," interposed Mr. Ben-
Jemin Allen, whose sports Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen laughed in concert.

Mr. Pickwick bowed to Bob Sawyer, and Bob Sawyer bowed to Mr. Pickwick. Bob and his very particular friend then applied themselves most assiduously to the eatables before them; and Mr. Pickwick had an opportunity of glancing at them both.

Mr. Benjamin Allen was a coarse, stout, thick-set young man, with black hair cut rather short, and a white face cut rather long. He was emblazoned with spectacles, and wore a white neckerchief. Below his single-breasted black surtout, which was buttoned up to his chin, appeared the usual number of pepper-and-salt-coloured legs, terminating in a pair of imperiously polished boots. Although his coat was short in the sleeves, it disclosed no vestige of a linen wristband; and although there was quite enough of his face to admit of the encroachment of a shirt-collar, it was not graced by the smallest approach to that appendage. He presented altogether rather a mid Dewy appearance, and emitted a fragrant odour of full-flavoured Cubas.

Mr. Bob Sawyer, who was habited in a coarse blue coat, which, without being either a great-coat or a surtout, partook of the nature and qualities of both, had about him that sort of slovenly smartness, and swaggering gait, which is peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, shout and scream in the same by night, call waiters by their Christian names, and do various other acts and deeds of an equally facetious description. He wore a pair of plaid trousers, and a large rough double-breasted waistcoat; and out of doors carried a thick stick with a big top. He eschewed gloves, and looked, upon the whole, something like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe.

Such were the two worthies to whom Mr. Pickwick was introduced, as he took his seat at the breakfast-table on Christmas morning.

"Splendid morning, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Bob Sawyer slightly nodded his assent to the proposition, and asked Mr. Benjamin Allen for the mustard.

"Have you come far this morning, gentlemen?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Blue Lion at Muggleton," briefly responded Mr. Allen.

"You should have joined us last night," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So we should," replied Bob Sawyer, but the brandy was too good to leave in a hurry, wasn't it, Ben?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Benjamin Allen; and the cigars were not bad, or the pork chops either: were they, Bob?"

"Decidedly not," said Bob. And the particular friends resumed their attack upon the breakfast more freely than before, as if the recollection of the last night's supper had imparted a new relish to the meal.

"Peg away, Bob," said Mr. Allen to his companion, encouragingly.

"So I do," replied Bob Sawyer. And so, to do him justice, he did.

"Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

"By-the-by, Bob," said Mr. Allen, "have you finished that leg yet?"

"Nearly," replied Mr. Sawyer, helping himself to half a bowl as he spoke. "It's a very muscular one for a child's."

"Is it?" inquired Mr. Allen, carelessly.

"Very," said Bob Sawyer, with his mouth full.

"I've put my name down for an arm, at our place," said Mr. Allen. "We're clubbing for a subject, and the list is nearly full, only we can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it."

"No," replied Bob Sawyer; "can't afford expensive luxuries."

"Nonsense!" said Allen.

"Can't indeed," rejoined Bob Sawyer.

"I wouldn't mind a brain, but I couldn't stand a whole head."

"Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray," said Mr. Pickwick. "I hear the ladies."

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, the ladies, gallantly escorted by Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, returned from an early walk.

"Why, Ben!" said Arabella, in a tone which expressed more surprise than pleasure at the sight of her brother.

"Come to take you home to-morrow," replied Benjamin.

Mr. Winkle turned pale.

"Don't you see Bob Sawyer, Arabella?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, somewhat reproachfully. Arabella gracefully held out her hand, in acknowledgment of Bob Sawyer's presence. A thrill of hatred struck to Mr. Winkle's heart, as Bob Sawyer inflicted on the professed hand a perceptible squeeze.

"Ben, dear!" said Arabella, blushing: "have—have—you been introduced to Mr. Winkle?"

"I have not been, but I shall be very happy to be, Arabella," replied her brother, gravely. Here Mr. Allen bowed grimly to Mr. Winkle, while Mr. Winkle and Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced mutual distrust out of the corners of their eyes.

The arrival of the two new visitors, 17
the consequent check upon Mr. Winkle and the young lady with the fair round her hues, would in all probability have proved a very unpleasant interruption to the hilarity of the party, had not the cheerfulness of Mr. Pickwick, and the good-humour of the host, been exerted to the very utmost for the common weal. Mr. Winkle gradually insinuated himself into the good graces of Mr. Benjamin Allen, and even joined in a friendly conversation with Mr. Bob Sawyer; who, enlivened with the brandy, and the breakfast, and the talking, gradually ripened into a state of extreme facetiousness, and related with much glee an agreeable anecdote, about the removal of a tumour on some gentleman's head, which he illustrated by means of an oyster-knife and a half-quarter loaf, to the great edification of the assembled company. Then the whole train went to church, where Mr. Benjamin Allen fell fast asleep; while Mr. Bob Sawyer abstracted his thoughts from worldly matters, by the ingenious process of carving his name on the seat of the pew, in coprulent letters of 'about four inches long.

"Now," said Wadlow, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to: "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time.

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skait, of course, Winkle?" said Wadlow.

"Ye—yes; oh, yes," replied Mr. Winkle.

"I—I—is rather off the plaster.

"Oh, do skait, Mr. Winkle," said Ambrose; "I like to see it so much.

"Oh! it's so graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like.

"I should be very happy; I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skaites.

This objection was at once overruled. Trotter had got a couple of pairs, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more, down stairs, wherein Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wadlow led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice, and the fat boy and Mr. Wellfer, having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skaites with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle were perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight; and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devises, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardie and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions, which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skaites on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skaites than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skaites were firmly screwed and strapped on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, Sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone; "off with you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop," said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arm with the grasp of a drowning man.

"How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, Sir."

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore no reference to a demonstration. Mr. Winkle made no instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet up the air; and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These—are—these—are very awkward skaites, ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I am afraid there is an oath about, gin'lan's in 'em, Sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was any thing the matter. "Come, the ladies are all anxiety.

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming.

"Just a goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself. "Now, Sir, start off."

"Stop and instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I had I've got a couple of costs of a horse, that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank ye, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind the horse, your bit, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away, to do that. I meant to have given you five-shilling this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're very good, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Don't hold the bit, Sam; will you?"
said Mr. Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and uncanny-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently alighted from the opposite bank—

"Sam!"

"Sir!" said Mr. Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, Sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a calling? Let go, Sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agitated Pickwickian; and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have ensured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle, hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle; "I'd rather not."

"What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"Go on, but really I think scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the by-standers; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

"You're a humbug, Sir."

"What?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, Sir. I will speak plain, if you wish it. An impostor, Sir."

With these words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends. While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feet of fancy-sliding, which is currently denounced as "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a two-penny postman's knock upon it with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise, that, doesn't it?" inquired of Wadle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indescribable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does, indeed," replied Wadle.

"Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters; when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wadle.

"Oh, do, please, Mr. Pickwick," cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense!" said Wadle, dragging off his skates with the impatience which characterized all his proceedings.

"Here; I'll keep you company; come along." And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick passed, considered, pulled off his gloves, and put them in his hat; took two or three short runs, talked himself often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a-blin'", Sir," said Sam; and down went Wadle again, and then Mr. Pickwick; and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle; and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their fires were.
pects in his depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony: to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up: to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started: to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor, his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round) it was the most invigorating sight that could possibly be imagined, to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank, with an ardour and enthusiasm which nothing could subdue.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared, the water bubbled up over it, and Mr. Pickwick’s hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale, and the females fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness; while Mr. Tupman by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any person who might be within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming “Fire!” with all his might and main.

It was at this very moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer, on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as we improved little bit of professional practice — it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

“Keep yourself up for an instant — for only one instant,” bawled Mr. Snodgrass. “Yes, do; let me implore you — for my sake,” roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary; the probability being, that if Mr. Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for any body else’s sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so for his own.

“Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?” said Wardle.

“Yes, certainly,” replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. “I fell upon my back. I couldn’t get on my feet at first.”

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick’s coat as was yet visible, bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy’s suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggle, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant situation, and once more stood on dry land.

“Oh, he’ll catch his death of cold,” said Emily. “Dear old thing!” said Arabella. “Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick.”

“Ah, that’s the best thing you can do,” said Wardle; “and when you’ve got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly.”

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant; and three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller; presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr. Tupman had arrived some five minutes before, and had frightened the old lady into palpitations of the heart, by impressing her with the unalterable conviction that the kitchen chimney was on fire—a calamity which always presented itself in the most glowing colours to the old lady’s mind, when any body about her evinced the smallest agitation.

Mr. Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner; a bowl of punch was carried up
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

afterwards, and a grand canseuse held in honour of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed, the chair, and Mr. Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning, there was not a symptom of rhematism about him, which proves as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases, and that if ever hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

The jovial party broke up next morning. Breakings up are capital things in our school days, but in after life they are painful enough. Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes, are every day breaking up many a happy group and scattering them far and wide; and the boys and girls never come back again. We do not mean to say that it was exactly the case in this particular instance; all we wish to inform the reader is, that the different members of the party dispersed to their several homes; that Mr. Pickwick and his friends once more took their seats on the top of the Muggeleton coach; and that Arabella Allen repaired to her place of destination, wherever it might have been—we dare say Mr. Winkle knew, but we confess we don't—under the care and guardianship of her brother Benjamin, and his most intimate and particular friend, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Before they separated, however, that gentleman and Mr. Benjamin Allen drew Mr. Pickwick aside with an air of some mystery; and Mr. Bob Sawyer, thrusting his forefinger between two of Mr. Pickwick's ribs, and thereby displaying his native drollery, and his knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame, at one and the same time, inquired—

"I say, old boy, where do you hang out?"

Mr. Pickwick replied that he was at present suspended at the George and Vulture.

"I wish you'd come and see me," said Bob Sawyer.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"There's my lodgings," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, producing a card, "Lant Street Borough; it's near Guy's, and handy for me, you know. Little distance after you've passed Saint George's Church—turns out of the High Street on the right-hand side the way."

"I shall find it," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Come on Thursday week, and bring the other chaps with you," said Mr. Bob Sawyer. "I'm going to have a few medical fellows that night."

Mr. Pickwick expressed the pleasure it would afford him to meet the medical fellows; and after Mr. Bob Sawyer had informed him that he meant to be very cosey, and that his friend Ben was to be one of the party, they shook hands and separated.

We feel that in this place we lay ourselves open to the inquiry whether Mr. Winkle was whispering, during this brief conversation, to Arabella Allen, and if so, what he said; and furthermore, whether Mr. Snodgrass was conversing apart with Emily Wardle, and if so, what he said. To this, we reply, that whatever they might have said to the ladies, they said nothing at all to Mr. Pickwick or Mr. Tupman for eight and twenty miles, and that they sighed very often, refused ale and brandy, and looked gloomy. If our observant lady readers can deduce any satisfactory inferences from these facts, we beg them by all means to do so.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Which is all about the law, and sundry great authorities learned therein.

Scattered about, in various holes and corners of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which, all the morning in vacation, and half the evening in term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms, and protruding from their pockets, an almost uninterrupted succession of Lawyers' Clerks. There are several grades of Lawyers' Clerks. There is the Articled Clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street and another in Tavistock Square, goes out of town every Long Vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks. There is the salaried clerk—out of door, or in door, as the case may be—who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half-price to the Adelphi at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion which expired six months ago. There is the middle-aged copying clerk, with a large family, who is always shabby, and often drunk. And then are the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, club as they go home at night,

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for savages and heathen, and think there's nothing like "life." There are varieties of the genus too numerous to recapitulate, but however numerous they may be, they are all to be seen, at certain regulated business hours, hurrying to and from the places we have just mentioned.

These sequestered nooks are the public offices of the legal profession, where writs are issued, judgments signed, declarations filed, and numerous other inglorious little machines put in motion for the torture and torment of his Majesty's liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law. They are, for the most part, low-roofed, musty rooms, where innumerable rolls of parchment, which have been perspiring in secret for the last century, send forth an agreeable odour, which is mingled by day with the scent of the dry rot, and by night with the various exhalations which arise from damp cloaks, festering umbrellas, and the coarsest tallow candles.

About half-past seven o'clock in the evening, some ten days or a fortnight after Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London, there hurried into one of these offices, an individual in a brown coat and brass buttons, whose long hair was scrupulously twisted round the rim of his napless hat, and whose soiled drab trousers were so tightly strapped over his Blucher boots, that his knees threatened every moment to start from their confinement. He produced from his coat-pockets a long and narrow strip of parchment, on which the presiding forensic Impress impressed an illegible black stamp. He then drew forth four sheets of paper, of similar dimensions, each containing a printed copy of the strip of parchment with blanks for a name; and having filled up the blanks, put all the five documents in his pocket, and hurried away.

The man in the brown coat with the escholastic documents in his pocket, was no other than our old acquaintance, Mr. Jackson, of the house of Dodson and Fogg, Freeman's Court, Cornhill. Instead of returning to the office from whence he came, however, he bent his steps direct to Sun Court; and walking straight into the George and Vulture, demanded to know whether one Mr. Pickwick was within.

"Call Mr. Pickwick's servant, Tom," said the barmaid of the George and Vulture.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Mr. Jackson, "I've come on business. If you'll show me Mr. Pickwick's room, I'll step up myself."

"What name, Sir?" asked the waiter.

"Jackson," replied the clerk.

The waiter stepped up stairs to announce Mr. Jackson; but Mr. Jackson saved him the trouble by following close at his heels, and walking into the apartment before he could articulate a syllable.

"Mr. Pickwick had that day invited his three friends to dinner; and they were all seated round the fire, drinking their wine, when Mr. Jackson presented himself, as above described.

"How do, Sir," said Mr. Jackson, addressing Mr. Pickwick.

That gentleman bowed, and looked somewhat surprised, for the physiognomy of Mr. Jackson dwelt not in his recollection.

"I have called from Dodson and Fogg's," said Mr. Jackson, in an explanatory tone.

"Mr. Pickwick roamed at the name," I refer you to my attorney, Sir: Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn," said he. "Waiter, show this gentleman out."

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson, deliberately depositing his hat on the floor, and drawing from his pocket the strip of parchment. "But personal service, by clerk or agent, in these cases, you know, Mr. Pickwick—eh, Sir! nothing like caution, Sir, in all legal forms—eh!"

Here Mr. Jackson cast his eye on the parchment; and, resting his hands on the table, and looking round with a winning and persuasive smile, said, "Now come; don't let's have no words about such a little matter as this. Which of you gentlemen's name's Snodgrass?"

At this inquiry, Mr. Snodgrass gave such a very undisguised and palpable start, that no further reply was needed.

"Ah! I thought so," said Mr. Jackson, more affably than before. "I've got a little something to trouble you with, Sir."

"Me!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass.

"It's only a, sub poena in Bandell and Pickwick on behalf of the plaintiff," replied Jackson, seizing out one of the slips of paper, and producing a shilling from his waistcoat-pocket. "It'll come on, in the sessions after Term; fourteenth of February, we expect; we've marked it a special jury cause, and it's only ten down the paper. That's your's, Mr. Snodgrass." As Jackson said this, he presented the parchment before the eyes of Mr. Snodgrass, and slipped the paper and the shilling into his hand.

Mr. Tupman had witnessed this process in silent astonishment, when Jackson, turning sharply upon him, said:

"I think I ain't mistaken when I say your name's Tupman, am I?"

Mr. Tupman looked at Mr. Pickwick; but, perceiving no encouragement in the gentleman's wholly-opposed eyes to deny his name, said:

"Yes, say, name is Tupman, Sir."
"And that other gentleman's, Mr. Winkle, I think," said Jackson.

Mr. Winkle faltered out a reply in the affirmative: and both gentlemen were forthwith invested with a slip of paper, and a shilling each, by the destitute Mr. Jackson.

"Now," said Jackson, "I'm afraid you'll think me rather troublesome, but I want somebody else, if it ain't inconvenient. I am Sam Weller's name here, Mr. Pickwick.

"Send my servant here, waiter," said Mr. Pickwick. The waiter retired, considerably astonished, and Mr. Pickwick motioned Jackson to a seat.

There was a painful pause, which was at length broken by the innocent defendant.

"I suppose, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, his indignation rising while he spoke; "I suppose, Sir, that it is the intention of your employers to seek to criminate me, upon the testimony of my own friends?

Mr. Jackson shook his fore-finger several times against the left side of his nose, to intimate that he was not there to disclose the secrets of the prison-house, and playfully rejoined,

"Not known, can't say.

"For what other reason, Sir," pursued Mr. Pickwick, "are these subpoenas served upon them, if not for this?"

"Very good point, Mr. Pickwick," replied Jackson, slowly shaking his head.

"But it won't do, no harm in trying, but there's little to be got out of me.

Here Mr. Jackson smiled once more upon the company; and applying his left thumb to the tip of his nose, worked a visionary coffee-mill, with the right hand, thereby performing a very graceful piece of pantomime (then much in vogue, but now, unhappily, almost obsolete) which was familiarly denominated "taking a grinder."

"No, no, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson in conclusion; "Perker's people must guess what we've served these subpoenas for. If they can't they must wait till the action comes on, and then they'll find out.

Mr. Pickwick bestowed a look of excessive disgust on his unwelcome visitor, and would probably have hurled some tremendous anathema at the heads of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, had not Sam's entrance at the instant interrupted him.

"Samuel Weller!" said Mr. Jackson, inquiringly.

"Un o' the truest things as you've said for many a long year," replied Sam, in a most composed manner.

"Here's a subpoena for you, Mr. Weller," said Jackson.

"What's that in English?" inquired Sam.

"Here's the original," said Jackson, declining the required explanation.

"Which I," said Sam.

"This," replied Jackson, shaking the parchment.

"Oh, that's the 'rig'nal, is it?" said Sam. "Well, I'm very glad I've seen the 'rig'nal, 'cos it's a gratifying sort o' thing, and eases a man's mind so much."

"And here's the shilling," said Jackson.

"It's from Dodson and Fogg's."

"And it's uncommon handsome o' Dodson and Fogg, as knows so little of me, to come down with a present," said Sam. "I feel it as a very high compliment, Sir; and it's a very hon'orable thing to them, as they know how to reward merit wherever they meets it. Besides which, it's very affectin' to one's feelin's."

As Mr. Weller said this, he inflicted a little friction on his right eye-lid, with the sleeve of his coat, after the most approved manner of actors when they are in domestic pathetics.

Mr. Jackson seemed rather puzzled by Sam's proceedings; but, as he had served the subpoenas, and had nothing more to say, he made a feint of putting on the one glove which he usually carried in his hand, for the sake of appearances; and returned to the office to report progress.

Mr. Pickwick slept little that night; his memory had received a very disagreeable refresher on the subject of Mrs. Bardell's action. He breakfasted betimes next morning; and, desiring Sam to accompany him, set forth towards Gray's Inn square.

"Sam!" said Mr. Pickwick, looking round, when they got to the end of Cheapside.

"Sir," said Sam, stepping up to his master.

"Which way?"

"Up Newgate-street.

Mr. Pickwick did not turn round immediately, but looked vacantly in Sam's face for a few seconds, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What's the matter, Sir?" inquired Sam.

"This action, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "is expected to come on, on the fourteenth of next month."

"Remarkable coincidence that, Sir," replied Sam.

"Why remarkable, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Valentine's day, Sir," responded Sam, "regular good day for a breach o' promise trial."

Mr. Weller's smile awakened no gleam of mirth in his master's countenance. Mr. Pickwick turned abruptly round, and led the way in silence.

They had walked some distance, Mr.
Pickwick trotting on before plunged in profound meditation, and Sam following behind, with a countenance expressive of the most enviable and easy discharge of every thing and every body, when the latter, who was always especially anxious to impart to his master any exclusive information he possessed, quickened his pace till he was close at Mr. Pickwick’s heels; and pointing up at a house they were passing, said,

"Very nice pork-shop that ‘ere, Sir."

"Yes, it seems so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Celebrated sausage factory," said Sam.

"Is it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it?" reiterated Sam with some indignation; "I should rather think it was. Why, Sir, bless your innocent eyebrows, that’s Vere the mysterious disappearance of a respectable tradesman took place, four years ago."

"You don’t mean to say he was buried, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking hastily round.

"No, I don’t indeed, Sir," replied Mr. Wellen, "I wish it did; far worse than that. He was the master o’ that ‘ere shop, Sir, and the inventor o’ the patent-never-leavin-off sausage steam ’ingine, as ‘ud swaller up a pavin’ stone if you put it too near, and grind it into sausages as easy as if it was a tender young baby. Very proud o’ that machine he was, as it was natural he should be; and he’d stand down in the cellar a lookin’ at it, ven it was in full play, till he got quite melancholy with joy. A very happy man he’d ha’ been, Sir, in the possession o’ that ‘ere ingine and two more lovely hinfants besides, if it hadn’t been for his wife, who was a most owdacious wizen. She was always a folleterin’ him about, and dinnin’ in his ears till at last he couldn’t stand it no longer. ‘I’ll tell you what it is, my dear,’ he says one day; ‘if you persuwere in this here sort of amusement, he says, ‘I’m blessed if I don’t go away to ‘Merriker, and that’s all about it.’ ‘You’re a idle willin’,” says she, and I wish the ‘Merrikins joy of their bargain.” Arter vich she keeps on abusin’ him for half an hour, and then runs into the little parlour behind the shop, sets to a screamin’, says he’ll be the death on her, and falls in a fit, which lasts for three good liquors—one o’ them fits which is all screamin’ and kickin’. Well, next mornin’, the husband was missin’. He hadn’t taken nothin’ from the till—that’d even put on his great coat, so it was quite clear he warn’t gone to ‘Merriker. Didn’t come back next day, didn’t come back next week; the Missis had bills printed sayin’ they done ‘em nicely, but, he should be forgiven every thin’, (which done was very liberal, seein’ that he hadn’t done nothin’ at all,) all the canals was dragged, and for two months afterwards venever a body turned up, it was carried, as a reg’lar thing, straight off to the sewage shop. How’s ever none on ‘em answered, so they gave out that he’d run away and she kept on the busines. One Saturday night, a little thin gen’lm’n comes into the shop in a great passion and says, ‘Are you the missis o’ this here shop? ’ ‘Yes, I am,’ says she.

“Well, Ma’am,” says he, ‘then I’ve just looked in to say, that me and my family ain’t a goin’ to be chokes for nothin’; and more than that, Ma’am,” he says, ‘you’ll allow me to observe, that as you don’t use the prime part of the meat in the masserter o’ sausages, I think you’d find beef come nearly as cheap as buttons.’ ‘Buttons, Sir!’ says she. ‘Buttons, Ma’am,” says the little old gentleman, unfolumin’ a bit of paper, and showin’ twenty or thirty halves o’ buttons. ‘Nice seasonin’ for sausages, is trousers’ buttons, Ma’am.”

“They’re my husband’s ‘buttons,’ says the widder, beginnin’ to faint. ‘What’s it concerns the little old gen’lm’n, turnin’ very pale. ‘I see it all,’ says the widder; ‘in a fit of temporary insanity he rashly converted hisself into sausages!” And so he had, Sir,” said Mr. Wellen, looking steadily into Mr. Pickwick’s horror-stricken countenance, ‘or else he’d been draw’d into the ingine; but however that might ha’ been, the little old gen’lm’n, who had been remarkably partial to sausages all his life, rushed out o’ the shop in a wild state, and was never heerd on arterdays!"

The relation of this affecting incident of private life, brought master and man to Mr. Perker’s chambers. Lowten, holding the door half open, was in a conversation with a rustily-clad, miserable-looking man, in boots without toes, and gloves without fingers. There were traces of privation and suffering—almost of despair—in his lank and care-worn countenance; he felt his poverty, for he shrank to the dark side of the staircase as Mr. Pickwick approached.

"It’s very unfortunate,” said the stranger, with a sigh.

"Very,” said Lowten, scribbling his name on the door-post with his pen, and rubbing it out again with the feather. “Will you leave a message for him?”

“When do you think he’ll be back?" inquired the stranger.

“Quite uncertain,” replied Lowten, winking at Mr. Pickwick, as the stranger cast his eyes towards the ground.

“You don’t think it would be of any use my waiting for him?” said the stranger, looking wistfully into the office.

“Oh no, I’m sure it wouldn’t,” replied the clerk, moving a little more into the cen-
The Pickwick Club.

We've done everything that's necessary. I have retained Sergeant Snubbin.

"Is he a good man?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Good man!" replied Perker; "bless your heart and soul, my dear Sir, Sergeant Snubbin is at the very top of his profession. Gets trouble the business of any man in court—engaged in every case. You needn't mention it abroad; but we say—we of the profession—that Sergeant Snubbin leads the court by the nose."

The little man took another pinch of snuff as he made this communication, and nodded mysteriously to Mr. Pickwick.

"They have subpoena'd my three friends," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah! of course they would," replied Perker. "Important witnesses; saw you in a delicate situation."

"But she fainted of her own accord," said Mr. Pickwick. "She threw herself into my arms."

"Very likely, my dear Sir," replied Perker; "very likely and very natural. Nothing more so, my dear Sir—nothing. But who's to prove it?"

"They have subpoena'd my servant, too," said Mr. Pickwick, quitting the other point; for there Mr. Perker's question had somehow staggered him.

"Sam!" said Perker.

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

"Of course, my dear Sir; of course. I knew they would; I could have told you that, a month ago. You know, my dear Sir, if you will take the management of your affairs into your own hands after instructing them to your Solicitor, you must also take the consequences." Here Mr. Perker drew himself up with conscious dignity, and brushed some stray grains of snuff from his shirt frill.

"And what do they want him to prove?" asked Mr. Pickwick, after two or three minutes' silence.

"That you sent him up to the plaintiff's to make some offer of a compromise, I suppose," replied Perker. "It don't matter much, thou gh I don't think many counsel could get a great deal out of him."

"I don't think they could," said Mr. Pickwick; smiling, despite his vexation at the idea of Sam's appearance as a witness. "What course do we pursue?"

"We have only one to adopt, my dear Sir," replied Perker: "cross-examine the witnesses, trust to Snubbin's eloquence, throw dust in the eyes of the judge; and ourselves on the jury."

"And suppose the verdict is against me?" said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Perker smiled, took a very long pinch of snuff, stirred the fire, smoothed...
his shoulders, and remained expressively silent.  
"You mean that in that case I must pay the damages?" said Mr. Pickwick, who had watched this telegraphic answer with considerable sternness.  
"Perker gave the fierce blow another very unnecessary poke, and said, "I am afraid so."

Then I beg to announce to you, my unalterable determination to pay no damages whatever," said Mr. Pickwick most emphatically. "None, Perker. Not a pound, not a penny, of my money shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. That is my deliberate and irrevocable determination." And Mr. Pickwick gave a heavy blow at the table beside him, in confirmation of the irrevocability of his intention.  
"Very well, my dear Sir, very well," said Perker. "You know best, of course."  
"Of course," replied Mr. Pickwick hastily. "Where does Sergeant Snubbin live?"

"In Lincoln's Inn, Old Square," replied Perker.  
"I should like to see him," said Mr. Pickwick.  
"See Sergeant Snubbin, my dear Sir!" rejoined Perker, in utter amazement. "Pshaw! pshaw! my dear Sir. Impossible. See Sergeant Snubbin! Bless you, my dear Sir, such a thing was never heard of, without a consultation fee being previously paid, and a consultation fixed. It couldn't be done, my dear Sir; it couldn't be done."

Mr. Pickwick, however, had made up his mind not only that it could be done, but that it should be done; and the consequence was, that within ten minutes after he had received the assurance that the thing was impossible, he was conducted by his solicitor into the outer office of the great Sergeant Snubbin himself.  
It was an uncarpeted room of tolerable dimensions, with a large writing-table drawn up near the fire, the blazing top of which had long since lost all claim to its original hue of green, and had gradually grown grey with durt and age, except where all traces of its natural colour were obliterated by ink-stains. Upon the table were numerous little bundles of papers tied with red tape; and behind it, sat an elderly clerk, whose sleek appearance and heavy gold watch-chain presented imposing indications of the extensive and lucrative practice of Mr. Sergeant Snubbin.  
"Is the Sergeant in his room; Mr. Maffard?" inquired Perker, offering his box with all imaginable courtesy.  
"Yes he is," was the reply, "but he's very busy. Look here; not an opinion given yet, on any one of them; and no expedition fee paid with any of them."

The clerk smiled as he said this, and halied the pinch of snuff with a zest which seemed to be compounded of a fondness for snuff and a relish for fees.  
"Something like practice, that," said Perker.  
"Yes," said the barrister's clerk, producing his own box, and offering it with the greatest cordiality; "and the best of it is, that nobody alive except myself can read the Sergeant's writing; they are obliged to wait for the opinions, when he has given them, till I have copied 'em, ha—ha—ha!"

"Which makes it good for us all who, besides the Sergeant, and draws a little more out of the clients, eh?" said Perker; "Ha, ha, ha!

At this the Sergeant's clerk laughed again—not a hearty, boisterous laugh, but a slight, internal chuckle, which Mr. Pickwick disliked to hear. When a man bleeds inwardly, it's a dangerous thing for himself; but when he laughs inwardly, it bodes no good to other people.  
"You haven't made me out that little list of fees that I'm in your debt, have you?" said Perker.  
"No, I have not," replied the clerk.  
"I wish you would," said Perker. "Let me have them, and I'll send you a cheque. But I suppose you're too busy pocketing the ready money, to think of the debtors, eh! ha, ha, ha!"

This silly seemed to tickle the clerk amusingly, and he once more enjoyed a little quiet laugh to himself.  
"But Mr. Maffard, my dear friend," said Perker, suddenly recovering his gravity, and drawing the great man's spectacles into the corner, by the lappet of his coat, "you must persuade the Sergeant to see me, and my client here."

"Come, come," said the clerk, "that's not bad either. See the Sergeant! That's too absurd." Notwithstanding the absurdity of the proposal, however, the clerk allowed himself to be gently drawn beyond the hearing of Mr. Pickwick; and after a short conversation conducted in whispers, walked softly down a little dark passage and disappeared into the legal luminary's sanctum, from whence he shortly returned on tiptoe, and informed Mr. Perker and Mr. Pickwick that the Sergeant had been prevailed upon, in violation of all his established rules and customs, to admit them at once.  
"Mr. Sergeant Snubbin was a lantern-faced swallow-complexioned man, of about five-and-forty, or— as the novels say—he might be fifty. He had that dull-looking blue eye which is so often to be seen in the heads of people who have applied themselves during many years to a weary and laborious course of study; and—"
would have been sufficient, without the additional eye-glass which dangled from a broad black ribbon round his neck, to warn a stranger that he was very nearsighted. His hair was thin and weak, which was partly attributable to his having never devoted much time to its arrangement, and partly to his having worn for five-and-twenty years the forensic wig which hung on a block beside him. The marks of hair-powder on his coat-collar, and the ill-washed and worse tied white neckerchief round his throat, showed that he had not found leisure since he left the court to make any alteration in his dress; while the slovenly style of the remainder of his costume warranted the inference that his personal appearance would not have been very much improved if he had. Books of practice, heaps of papers, and opened letters, were scattered over the table without any attempt at order or arrangement; the furniture of the room was old and rickety; the doors of the bookcase were rotting in their hinges; the dust flew out of the carpet in little clouds at every step; the blinds were yellow with age and dirt; and the state of everything in the room showed, with a clearness not to be mistaken, that Mr. Sergeant Snubbin was far too much occupied with his professional pursuits to take any great heed or regard of his personal comforts.

The Sergeant was writing when his clients entered; he bowed abstractedly when Mr. Pickwick was introduced by his solicitor; and then, motioning them to a seat, put his pen carefully in the inkstand, nursed his left leg, and waited to be spoken to.

"Mr. Pickwick is the defendant in Bar- dell and Pickwick, Sergeant Snubbin," said Perker.

"I am retained in that, am I?" said the Sergeant.

"You are, Sir," replied Perker.

The Sergeant nodded his head, and waited for something else.

"Mr. Pickwick was anxious to call upon you, Sergeant Snubbin," said Perker, "to state to you, before you entered upon the case, that he desires there being any ground or pretence whatever for the action against him; and that unless he came into court with clean hands, and without the most conscientious conviction that he was right in resisting the plaintiff's demand, he would not be there at all. I believe I state your views correctly; do I not, my dear Sir?" said the little man, turning to Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite so," replied that gentleman.

"Mr. Sergeant Snubbin unfolded his glasses, raised them to his eyes; and, after looking at Mr. Pickwick for a few seconds with great curiosity, turned to Mr. Perker, and said, smiling slightly as he spoke—"Has Mr. Pickwick a strong case?"

The attorney shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you purpose calling witnesses?"

"No."

The smile on the Sergeant's countenance became more defined; he rocked his leg with increased violence; and, throwing himself back in his easy chair, laughed dubiously.

"These tokens of the Sergeant's presentiments on the subject, slight as they were, were not lost on Mr. Pickwick. He settled the spectacles, through which he had attentively regarded such demonstrations of the barrister's feeling as he had permitted himself to exhibit, more firmly on his nose; and said with great energy, and in utter disregard of all Mr. Perker's sidelong winking and frownings—"My wishing to wait upon you for such a purpose as this, Sir, appears to have no doubt, to a gentleman who sees so much of these matters as you must necessarily do, a very extraordinary circumstance."

The Sergeant tried to look gravely at the fire, but the smile came back again.

"Gentlemen of your profession, Sir," continued Mr. Pickwick, "see the worst side of human nature—all its disputes, all its ill-will and bad blood, rise up before you. You know from your experience of juries, (I mean no disparagement to you or them,) how much depends upon effect; and you are apt to attribute to others, a desire to use, for purposes of deception and self-interest, the very instruments which you, in pure honesty and honour of purpose, and with a laudable desire to do your utmost for your client, know the temper and worth of so well, from constantly employing them yourselves. I really believe that to this circumstance may be attributed the vulgar, but very general notion, of your being, as a body, suspicious, distrustful, and over-cautious. Conscious as I am, Sir, of the disadvantage of making such a declaration to you, under such circumstances, I have come here, because I wish you distinctly to understand, as my friend Mr. Perker has said, that I am innocent of the falsehood laid to my charge; and although I am very well aware of the inestimable value of your assistance, Sir, I must beg to add, that unless you sincerely believe this, I would rather be deprived of the aid of your talents than have the advantage of them."

Long before the close of this address, which we are bound to say was of a very prolix character for Mr. Pickwick, the Sergeant had relapsed into a state of abstraction. After some minutes, however, during
which he had resumed his pen, he appeared to be again aware of the presence of his client; and, raising his head from the paper, said, rather snappishly—

"Who's with me in this case?"

"Mr. Phunky, Sergeant Snubbin," replied the attorney.

"Phunky—Phunky," said the Sergeant;

"I never heard the name before. He must be a very young man."

"Yes, he is a very young man," replied the attorney. "He was only called the other day. Let me see—oh, he hasn’t been at the Bar eight years yet."

"Ah, I thought not," said the Sergeant, in that sort of pitying tone in which ordinary people would have applied to a very helpless little child. "Mr. Mallard, send round to Mr. Phunky—"

"Phunky’s—Holborn Court, Gray’s Inn," interposed Perker—(Holborn Court, by the by, is South Square now)—"Mr. Phunky; and say I should be glad if he’d step here, a moment."

Mr. Mallard departed to execute his commission; and Sergeant Snubbin relapsed into abstraction until Mr. Phunky himself was introduced.

Although an infant barrister, he was a full-grown man. He had a very nervous manner, and a painful hesitation in his speech; it did not appear to be a natural defect, but seemed rather the result of timidity, arising from the consciousness of being "kept down" by want of means, or interest, or connexion, or imprudence, as the case might be. He was overawed by the Sergeant, and profoundly courteous to the attorney.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, Mr. Phunky," said Sergeant Snubbin, with haughty condescension.

"Phunky bowed. "Had had the pleasure of seeing the Sergeant, and envying him too, with all a poor man’s envy, for eight years and a quarter."

"You are with me in this case, I understand?" said the Sergeant.

If Mr. Phunky had been a rich man, he would have instantly sent for his clerk to remind him; if he had been a wise one, he would have applied his fore-finger to his forehead, and endeavoured to recollect whether, in the multiplicity of his engagements, he had undertaken this one, or not; but as he was neither rich nor wise (in this sense at all events) he turned red and bowed.

"Have you read the papers, Mr. Phunky?" inquired the Sergeant.

Here again Mr. Phunky should have professed to have scoured all about the merits of the case; but as he had read such papers as had been laid before him, in the course of the action, and had thought of nothing else, waking or sleeping, through out the two months during which he had been retained as Mr. Sergeant Snubbin’s junior he turned a deeper red, and bowed again.

"This is Mr. Pickwick," said the Sergeant, waving his pen in the direction in which that gentleman was standing.

Mr. Phunky bowed to Mr. Pickwick with the reverence which a first client must ever awaken; and again inclined his head towards his leader.

"Perhaps you will take Mr. Pickwick away," said the Sergeant, "and—and—and hear any thing Mr. Pickwick may wish to communicate. We shall have a consultation, of course." With this hint that he had been interrupted quite long enough, Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, who had been gradually growing more and more abstracted, applied his glass to his eyes for an instant, bowed slightly round, and was once more deeply immersed in the case before him, which arose out of an interminable lawsuit, originating in the act of an individual deceased a century or so ago, who had stopped up a pathway leading from some place which nobody ever came from, to some other place which nobody ever went to.

Mr. Phunky would not hear of passing through any door until Mr. Pickwick and his solicitor had passed through before him, so it was some time before they got into the Square; and when they did reach it, they walked up and down, and held a long conference, the result of which was, that it was a very difficult matter to say how the verdict would go; that nobody could presume to calculate on the issue of an action; that it was very lucky they had prevented the other party from getting Sergeant Snubbin; and other topics of doubt and consolation, common in such a position of affairs.

Mr. Weller was then roused by his master from a sweet sleep of an hour’s duration; and, bidding adieu to Lowien, they returned to the City.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Describes, far more fully than the court news man ever did, a bachelor’s party, given by Mr. Bob Sawyer at his lodgings in the Borough.

There is a repose about Lant Street, in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul. There are always a good many houses to let in the street; it is a by-street too, and its dulness is soothing. A house in Lant Street would not come within the denomination of a first-
rate residence, in the strict seclusion of the term; but it is a most desirable spot nevertheless. If a man wished to abstract himself from the world; to remove himself from within the reach of temptation; to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window, we should recommend him by all means to go to Lam Street.

In this happy retreat are colonised a few clear-starchers, a sprinkling of journeymen book-binders, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court, several small housekeepers who are employed in the Docks, a handful of mantua-makers, and a seasoning of jobbing tailors. The majority of the inhabitants either direct their energies to the letting of furnished apartments, or devote themselves to the healthful and invigorating pursuit of mangling. The chief features in the still life of the street, are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates, and bell-handles; the principal specimens of animated nature, the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked-potato man. The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His majesty’s revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley, the rents are dubious, and the water communication is very frequently cut off.

Mr. Bob Sawyer embalmed one side of the fire, in his first-floor front, early on the evening for which he had invited Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Ben Allen the other. The preparations for the reception of visitors appeared to be completed. The umbrellas in the passage had been heaped into the little corner outside the back-perilour door; the bonnet and shawl of the landlady’s servant had been removed from the bannisters; there were not more than two pairs of pattens on the street-door mat; and a kitchen candle, with a very long snuff, burned cheerfully on the ledge of the staircase window. Mr. Bob Sawyer had himself purchased the spirits at a wine-vault in High Street, and had returned home preceding the bearer thereof, to preclude the possibility of their delivery at the wrong house. The punch was ready-made in a red pan in the bed-room; a little table, covered with a napkin, barked on the ledge of the stair-case window. Mr. Bob Sawyer had borrowed from the parlour, to play at cards on; and the glasses of the establishment, together with those which had been borrowed for the occasion from the public-house, were all drawn up in a tray, which was deposited on the landing outside the door.

Notwithstanding the highly satisfactory nature of all these arrangements, there was a cloud on the countenance of Mr. Bob Sawyer, as he sat by the fire-side. There

was a sympathetic expression, too, in the features of Mr. Ben Allen, as he gazed intently on the coals; and a tone of melancholy in his voice, as he said, after a long silence—

“Well, it is unlucky that she should have taken it in her head to turn sour, just on this occasion. She might at least have waited till to-morrow.”

“That’s her malevolence; that’s her malevolence,” returned Mr. Bob Sawyer, vehemently. “She says, that if I can afford to give a party, I ought to be able to afford to pay her confounded little bill.”

“How long has it been running?” inquired Mr. Ben Allen. A bill, by the by, is the most extraordinary locomotive engine that the genius of man ever produced. It would keep on running during the longest lifetime, without ever once stopping of its own accord.

“Only a quarter, and a month or so,” replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Ben Allen coughed hopelessly, and directed a searching look between the two top bars of the stove.

“It’ll be a d—ed unpleasent thing if she takes it into her head to let out, when those fellows are here, won’t it?” said Mr. Ben Allen, at length.

“Horrible,” replied Bob Sawyer, “horrible.”

A low tap was heard at the room door. Mr. Bob Sawyer looked expressively at his friend, and bade the tapper come in; whereupon a dirty slip-shod girl in black cotton stockings, who might have passed for the neglected daughter of a superannuated dustman in very reduced circumstances, thrust in her head, and said,

“Please, Mister Sawyer, Missus Raddle wants to speak to you.”

Before Mr. Bob Sawyer could return any answer, the girl suddenly disappeared with a jerk, as if somebody had given her a violent pull behind; this mysterious exit was no sooner accomplished, than there was another tap at the door—a smart pointed tap, which seemed to say, “Here I am, and in I’m coming.”

Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced at his friend with a look of abject apprehension, and once more cried “Come in.”

The permission was not at all necessary, for, before Mr. Bob Sawyer had uttered the words, a little fierce woman bounced into the room, all in a tremble with passion, and pale with rage.

“Now, Mr. Sawyer,” said the little fierce woman, trying to appear very calm, “if you’ll have the kindness to settle that little bill of mine, I’ll thank you, because I’ve got my rent to pay this afternoon, and my landlord’s a waiting below now.”
the little woman rubbed her hands, and
looked steadily over Mr. Bob Sawyer’s
head, at the wall more steadily than
ever. It was plain to see, as Mr. Bob Sau-
wyer glanced in the mirror with the
most earnest of all the ladies in the shop,
that she was finding it a task to
get the steamer up.

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Raddle," said
Bob Sawyer, with all imaginable humility,
but the fact is, that I have been disap-
pointed in the City to-day." Extraordinary
place that city. We know a most astonish-
ing number of men who always are getting
disappointed there.

"Well, Mr. Sawyer," said Mrs. Raddle,
planting herself firmly on a purple calla-
flower in the Kidderminster carpet, "but
what’s that to me, Sir?"

"I—I—have no doubt, Mrs. Raddle,"
said Bob Sawyer, blinking this last ques-
tion, "that before the middle of next week
we shall be able to set ourselves quite square,
and go on a better system afterwards."

"This was all Mrs. Raddle wanted. She
had bustled up to the apartment of the un-
fortunate Bob Sawyer so soon upon going into
a passion, that in all probability payment
would have rather disappointed her; but
otherwise, she was in excellent order for
a little relaxation of the kind, having just
exchanged a few introductory compliments
with Mr. R. in the front kitchen.

"Do you suppose, Mr. Sawyer," said
Mrs. Raddle, elevating her voice for the in-
formation of the neighbours, "do you sup-
pose that I’m a-going day after day to let a
fellow occupy my lodgings as never thanks
of paying his rent, nor even the very money
laid out for the fresh butter and lump-sugar
on the table? No, friend, I won’t do it, and the very
milk that’s left in. at the street door! Do
you suppose a hard-working and industrious
woman as has lived in this street for twenty
years (ten years over the way, and nine
years and three quarters in this very house),
has nothing else to do, but to work herself
to death after a parcel of lazy idle fellows,
that are always smoking and drinking, and
fringing, when they ought to be glad to
turn their hands to anything that would
help ‘em to pay their bills? Do you—"

"My good aunt," interrupted Mr. Benja-
mun Allen, soothingly.

"Have the goodness to keep your obser-
vations to yourself, Sir, I beg," said Mrs.
Raddle, suddenly arresting the torrent of
her speech, and addressing the third party
with impressive smoothness and sobriety.
"I am not sure, Sir, that you have any
right to address your conversation to me. I
do not think I let these apartments to you,
Sir."

"No, you certainly did not," said Mr.
Benjamin Allen.

"Very good, Sir," responded Mrs. Rad-
dle, with lofty politeness. "Then p’taps,
Sir, you’ll combine yourself to breaking the
arms and legs of the poor people in the
hospitals, and stop to take your meals at Sir,
or there may be some persons here as will
make you, Sir."

"But you are such an unreasonable wo-
man," remonstrated Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"I beg your pardon, young man," said
Mrs. Raddle in a cold perspiration of anger.
"But will you have the goodness just to
call me that again, Sir?"

"I didn’t make use of the word in any
invincible manner, Ma’am," replied Mr.
Benjamin Allen, growing somewhat uneasy
on his own account.

"I beg your pardon, young man," de-
manded Mrs. Raddle in a louder and more
imperative tone. "But who do you call a
woman? Did you make that remark to
me, Sir?"

"Why, bless my heart!" said Mr. Ben-
jamin Allen.

"Did you apply that name to me, I ask
of you, Sir?" interrupted Mrs. Raddle with
intense fierceness, throwing the door wide
open.

"Why, of course I did," replied Mr.
Benjamin Allen.

"Yes, of course you did," said Mrs. Rad-
dle, beckoning gradually to the door, and
raising her voice to its lowest pitch, for
the special benefit of Mr. Raddle in the
kitchen. "Yes, of course you did. every
body knows that they may safely
insult me in my own house, while my hus-
band sits sleeping down stairs, and taking
me more notice than if I was a dog in the
streets. He ought to be ashamed of him-
self (here Mrs. Raddle sobbed) to allow his
wife to be treated in this way, by a parcel
of young cutters and scamps of live peo-
ple’s bodies, that disgrace the lodgings
(another sob,) and leaving her exposed to
all manner of abuse, a base faint-hearted,
timorous wretch, that’s afraid to come up,
stairs, and face the ruffians creatures
that’s afraid to open... Mrs.
Riddle paused to hear whether the repetition of the taunt had roused her better half and, finding that it had not been successful, proceeded to descend the stairs with oaths innumerable, when there came a loud double knock at the street door: whereupon she burst into a hysterical fit of weeping, accompanied with distressful moans, which was prolonged until the knock had been repeated six times, when, in an uncontrollable burst of mental agony, she threw down all the umbrellas, and disappeared into the back parlour, closing the door after her with an awful crash.

"Does Mr. Sawyer live here?" said Mr. Pickwick, when the door was opened.

"Yes," said the girl, "first floor. It's the door straight above you, when you get to the top of the stairs." Having given this instruction, the handmaid, who had been brought up among the aboriginal inhabitants of Southwark, disappeared with the candle in her hand down the kitchen stairs, perfectly satisfied that she had done everything that could possibly be required of her under the circumstances.

Mr. Snodgrass, who entered last, secured the street door, after several intellectual efforts, by putting up the chain; and the friends stumbled up stairs, where they were received by Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been afraid to go down lest he should be bewitched by Mrs. Raddick.

"How are you?" said the disappointed student. "Glad to see you—take care of the glasses." This exclamation was addressed to Mr. Pickwick, who had put his hat in the tray.

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, "I beg your pardon."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," said Bob Sawyer, "I'm rather confined for rooms here; but you must put up with all that, when you come to see a young bachelor. Well in. You've seen some genteel mansions before, I think?" Mr. Pickwick shook hands with Mr. Benjamin Allen, and his friends followed his example. They had scarcely taken their seats when there was another double knock.

"I hope that's Jack Hopkins," said Mr. Bob Sawyer. "Hush. Yes, it is. Come up, Jack; come up.

A heavy footstep was heard upon the stairs; and Jack Hopkins presented himself. He wore a black velvet waistcoat, with gold and lightning buttons; and blue striped shirt, with a white false collar.

"You're late Jack," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Been detained at Bartholomew's," replied Hopkins.

"Anything new?"

"No, nothing particular. Rather a good accident brought into the casualty ward."

"What was that, Sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Only a man fallen out of a four pair of stairs' window—but it's a very fair case—very fair case indeed."

"Do you mean that the patient is in a fair way to recover?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"No," replied Hopkins, carelessly. "No— I should rather say he wouldn't. There must be a splendid operation though; tomorrow—a magnificent sight if Slasher does it.

"You consider Mr. Slasher a good operator?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Best alive," replied Hopkins. "Took a boy's leg out of the socket last week—a boy ate five apples and a gingerbread bun—exactly two minutes after it was all over, boy said he wouldn't lie there to be made game of; and he'd tell his mother if they didn't begin.""
find it. A few days afterwards the family were at dinner—baked shoulder of mutton, and potatoes under it—the child, who wasn't hungry, was playing about the room, when suddenly there was heard a singular noise, like a small hail-storm. 'Don't do that, my boy,' said the father. 'I ain't a doin' nothin',' said the child. 'Well, don't do it again,' said the father. There was a short silence, and then the noise began again, worse than ever. 'If you don't mind what I say, my boy,' said the father, 'you'll find yourself in bed, in something less than a pig's whisper.' He gave the child a shake to make him obedient, and such a rattling ensued as nobody ever heard before. 'Why, it's in the child!' said the father; 'he's got the crow in the wrong place!' 'It'll be right,' father,' said the child, beginning to cry, 'it's the necklace; I swallowed it, father.'—The father caught the child up, and ran with him to the hospital—the beads in the boy's stomach rattling all the way with the jolting; and the people looking up in the air, and down into the cellars, to see where the unusual sound came from. He's in the hospital now,' said Jack Hopkins; 'and he makes such a strange noise when he walks about, that they're obliged to muffler him in a watchman's coat, for fear he should wake the patients!'

"That's the most extraordinary case I ever heard of," said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table. "Oh, that's nothing," said Jack Hopkins; "is it, Bob?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"Very singular things occur in our profession, I can assure you, Sir," said Hopkins.

"So I should be disposed to imagine," replied Mr. Pickwick.

Another knock at the door announced a large-headed young man in a black wig, who brought with him a scrobutic youth in a long stock. The next comer was a gentleman in a shirt emblazoned with pink anchors, who was closely followed by a pale youth with a plated watch-guard. The arrival of a prim personage in clean linen and cloth boots rendered the party complete. The table with the green-baize cover was wheeled out; the first installment of punch was brought in in a white jug; and the succeeding three hours were devoted to singing at sixpence a dozen, which was only once interrupted by a slight dispute between the scrobutic youth and the gentleman with the pink anchors; in the course of which, the scrobutic intimated a burning desire to "pull the nose of the gentleman with the emblems of hope; in reply to which, the individual expressed his decided unwillingness to accept of any:" "sauce" on gratuitous terms, either from the irascible young gentleman with the scrobutic countenance, or any other person who was ornamented with a head.

When the last "natural" had been declared, and the profit and loss account of fish and sixpences adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Bob Sawyer raas for supper, and the visitors squeezed themselves into corners while it was getting ready.

It was not so easy to get ready as some people may imagine. First of all, it was necessary to awaken the girl, who had fallen asleep with her face on the kitchen table; this took a little time, and, even when she did answer the bell, another quarter of an hour was consumed in fruitless endeavours to impart to her a faint and distant glimmering of reason. The man to whom the order for the oysters had been sent, had not been told to open them; it is a difficult thing to open an oyster with a limp knife or a two-pronged fork, and very little was done in this way. Very little of the beef was done either; and the ham (which was also from the German sausage-shop round the corner) was in a similar predicament. However, there was plenty of porter in a tin can: and the cheese was a great way, for it was very strong. So, upon the whole, perhaps, the supper was quite as good as such matters usually are.

After supper another jug of punch was put upon the table, together with a paper of cigars, and a couple of bottles of spirits. Then there was an awful pause; and this awful pause was occasioned by a very common occurrence in this sort of places, but a very embarrassing one notwithstanding.

The fact is, that the girl was washing the glasses. The establishment boasted four: we do not record the circumstance as at all derogatory to Mrs. Raddle, for there was never a lodging-house yet, that was not short of glasses. The landlady's glasses were little thin blown glass tumblers, and those which had been borrowed from the public-house were great, drooping, blistered articles, each supported on a huge gouty leg. This would have been in itself sufficient to have possessed the company with the real state of affairs; but the young woman of all work had prevented the possibility of any misconceptions arising in the mind of any gentleman upon the subject, by forcibly dragging every man's glass away, long before he had finished his beer, and audibly stating, despite the whits and interruptions of Mr. Bob Sawyer, that
it was to be conveyed down stairs and washed forthwith.

It is a very ill wind that blows nobody any good. The prim man in the sixth books, who had been unsuccessfully attempting to make a joke during the whole scene, was now all smiles; he caught the same hint, gave his opportunity, and availed himself of it. The instant the glasses disappeared, he commenced a long story about a great public character, whose name he had forgotten, making a particularly happy reply to another eminent and illustrious individual whom he had never been able to identify. He enlarged at some length and with great bitterness upon divers collateral circumstances, distinctly connected with the anecdote in hand, but for the life of him he couldn't recollect at what precise moment the anecdote was, although he had been, in the habit of telling the story with great applause for the last ten years.

"Dear sir," said the prim man in the sixth books, "is it a very extraordinary circumstance?"

"I am sorry you have forgotten it," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, glancing eagerly at the door, as he thought he heard the noise of glasses jingling. "Very sorry."

"So am I," said the prim man, "because I know it would have afforded so much amusement. Never mind; I shall manage to recollect it in the course of half an hour or so."

The prim man arrived at this point just as the glasses came back, when Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been absorbed in attention during the whole time, said he should very much like to hear the end of it, for as far as he went it, it was, without exception, the very best story he had ever heard.

The sight of the tumblers restored Bob Sawyer to a degree of equanimity which he had not possessed since his intercourse with his landlord. His face brightened up, and he began to feel quite seaworthy.

"Now, Betsy," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with great suavity, and seeing, at the same time, the humorous, little mark of glasses that the girl had collected in the corner of the table, "Now, Betsy, if you have finished washing, there is a good girl."

"You can't have any water," applied Betsy.

"No warm water," exclaimed Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"No," said the girl, with a shake of the head which expressed a more decided negative than the most copious language could have conveyed. "But Mrs. Raddle said you couldn't be without water."

The surprise displayed on the countenances of his guests imparted new elegance to the host.

"Rising up, the warm water instantly," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with deprecating manner.

"No, I can't," replied the girl. "Miss Raddle took all the kitchen fire where she went to bed, and locked up the little."

"Oh, never mind, never mind. Pray don't disturb yourself about such a trifle," said Mr. Pickwick, observing the concern of Bob Sawyer's features, as displayed in his countenance, "cold water will do well."

"Oh, admirably," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Yet I am subject to some slight attacks of mental disturbance," remarked Bob Sawyer with a ghastly smile, "although I must give you warning.

"No, don't," said Mr. Allen."

"I fear it must," said Bob with humane assurance, "if I take you what I have here and give her something to evaporate. Poor fellow! how dreadfully he wished he could!

Mr. Bob Sawyer's disconsolate attempts to rally under this last blow communicated a dispiriting influence to the company, the greater part of whom, with the view of raising their spirits, addressed themselves to the task before them; but the first scrupulous scruples of which were displayed in a more equal distribution of hospitality between the agriculturist, the host, and the gentleman in the armchair.

The bounteous nature their feelings of mutual contempt, the same time, the natural gravity of all conversation, the group of the last words in the fingers of the man seated opposite to Mr. Gyges, that he was a gentleman.

"And if I should be very merry, Sawyer," said Mr. Gyges, "to create any disturbance in the street, in which you reside," said Mr. Gyges, "at least I am afraid I shall be under the necessity of advancing the neighbours by throwing the paper which has just spoken out of the window."

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" inquired Mr. Gyges.

"What I say, Sir," replied Mr. Gyges, "I should like to see you do it, Sir," said Mr. Noddy.
"You shall not, sir, do it in half a minute, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"I request that you will favour me with your card, sir," said Mr. Noddy.

"I'll do nothing of the kind, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Why not, sir?" inquired Mr. Noddy.

"Because you'll stick it up over your chimney-piece, and delude your visitors into the false belief that a gentleman has been to see you, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Sir, a friend of mine shall wait on you in the morning," said Mr. Noddy.

"Sir, I'm very much obliged to you for the caution, and I'll leave particular directions with the servant to look up the stones," replied Mr. Gunter.

At this point the remainder of the guests interposed, and remonstrated with both parties on the impropriety of their conduct, on which Mr. Noddy begged to state that his father was quite as respectable as Mr. Gunter's father; to which Mr. Gunter replied, that his father was to the full as respectable as Mr. Noddy's father, and that his father's son was as good a man as Mr. Noddy any day in the week. As this announcement seemed to prejudice a recommencement of the dispute, there was another intercession on the part of the company, and a vast quantity of talking and clamouring ensued, in the course of which Mr. Noddy gradually allowed his feelings to over-power him, and professed that he had ever entertained a devoted, personal attachment towards Mr. Gunter. To this Mr. Gunter replied, that upon the whole, he rather preferred Mr. Noddy to his own brother; on hearing which admission, Mr. Noddy magnanimously rose from his seat, and proffered his hand to Mr. Gunter. Mr. Gunter grasped it with affecting fervour; and everybody said that the whole dispute had been conducted in a manner which was highly honourable to both parties concerned.

"Now," said Jack Hopkins, "just to set the old man right, Bob, I don't mind singing a song." And Hopkins, invited therefore by tumultuous applause, plunged himself at once into "The King, God bless him," which he sang as loud as he could, to a novel air, composed of the "Bay of Biscay," and "A Frog he would."—The cheers were the essence of the song, and, as much gentlemen sang it to the tune he knew best, the effect was very striking indeed.

It was at the end of the chorus to the first verse, that Mr. Pickwick held up his hand in a "listening" attitude, and said as "dear small voice was restored—"
afraid we had better not have the other verse. They are very violent people, the people of the house.

"Shall I step up stairs, and pitch into the landlord," inquired Hopkins, "or keep on ringing the bell, or go and groan on the staircase? You may command me, Bob."

"I am very much indebted to you for your friendship and good-nature, Hopkins," said the wretched Mr. Bob Sawyer, "but I am of opinion that the best plan to avoid any farther dispute is for us to break up at once."

"Now, Mr. Sawyer," screamed the shrill voice of Mrs. Raddle, "are them brutes going?"

"They're only looking for their hats, Mrs. Ruddle," said Bob, "they are going directly."

"Going?" said Mrs. Raddle, thrusting her night-cap over the banisters, just as Mr. Pickwick, followed by Mr. Tupman, emerged from the sitting-room. "Going! What did they ever come for?"

"My dear ma'am," remonstrated Mr. Pickwick, looking up.

"Get along with you, you old wretch!" replied Mrs. Raddle, hastily withdrawing her night-cap. "Old enough to be his grandfather, you villain! You're worse than any of 'em."

Mr. Pickwick found it in vain to protest his innocence, so hurried down stairs into the street, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass. Mr. Ben Allen, who was disarmingly depressed with spirit and agitation, accompanied them as far as London Bridge, and in the course of the walk confided to Mr. Winkle, as an especially sensible person to instruct the secret to, that he was resolved to cut the throat of any gentleman, except Mr. Bob Sawyer, who should aspire to the affections of his sister Arabella. Having expressed his determination to perform this painful duty of a brother with proper firmness, he burst into tears, knocked his hat over his eyes, and making the best of his way back, knocked double knock at the door of the Borough Market, and took short naps on the steps alternately, till day-break, under the firm impression that he lived there, and had forgotten the key.

The visitors having all departed, in compliance with the rather pressing request of Mrs. Raddle, the luckless Mr. Bob Sawyer was left alone, to meditate on the probable events of the morrow, and the pleasures of the evening.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mr. Weller the elder delivers some critical sentiments respecting literary composition; and, assisted by his son Samuel, pays a small instalment of retaliation to the account of the revenged gentleman with the red nose.

The morning of the thirteenth of February, which the readers of this authentic narrative know, as well as we do, to have been the day immediately preceding that which was appointed for the trial of Mr. Bardell's action, was a busy time for Mr. Samuel Weller, who was perpetually engaged in travelling from the George and Vulture to Mr. Pickwick's chambers, and back again, from and between the hours of nine o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon, both inclusive. Not that there was anything whatever to be done, for the consultation had taken place, and the course of proceeding to be adopted had been firmly determined on; but Mr. Pickwick, being in a most extreme state of excitement, persevered in constantly sending small notes to his attorney, merely containing the inquiry, "Dear Parker — is all going on well?" to which Mr. Parker invariably forwarded the reply, "Dear Pickwick — as well as possible;" the fact being as we have already hinted that there was nothing whatever to go on, either well or ill, until the sitting of the court on the following morning.

But people who go voluntarily to law, or are taken forcibly there, for the first time, may be allowed to labour under some temporary irritation and anxiety; and Jem, with a due allowance for the frailties of human nature, obeyed all his master's bishes with that imperturbable good-humour and unaffable composure which formed one of his most striking and amiable characteristics.

Sam had solaced himself with a most agreeable little dinner, and was waiting at the bar for the glass of warm mixture to which Mr. Pickwick had requested him to drown the fatigues of his morning's walk, when a young fellow of about three feet high, or thereabouts, in a hairy cap and flannel overall, whose garb bespoke a landlady ambition to attain in time the elevation of an hostler, entered the passage of the George and Vulture, and looked first up the stairs, and then along the passage, and then into the bar, as if in search of somebody to whom he bore a commission; whereupon the barmaid, conceiving it not improbable that the said commission might be directed
to the tea or table-spoon of the establishment, accosted the boy with:

"Young fellow! What do you want?"

"I am hungry, sir," replied the boy.

"If you have any business, step inside," said Mr. Weller.

"Which is the other name?" said Sam Weller, looking round.

"How should I know?" briskly replied the young gentleman below the hairy cap.

"You're a sharp boy, you are," said Mr. Weller; "very I wouldn't show that way or edge too much, if I was you, an' cross anybody took it off. What do you mean by coming to a hot-box, and taking after Sam, with such politeness as a rick-Jillie?"

"Con an old gent'man'told me to," replied the boy.

"What old gent'man'told me to," said Mr. Weller, turning with an explanatory air to the young lady in the hat: "Sawed if I didn't think I knew a bit or my old name at; well, being不克ley sprouts, was without.

"Why then," said the boy, "you was to come to him at six o'clock to our house, see the woman of the Blue Bear, Lendahill Market. Shall I say you're comin'?"

"You may, wanton on, that's statement. Sir," replied Sam. "And then empowered the young gentleman walked away, awakening all the echoes in George Yard as he did so, with several shouts and extremely correct imitations of a drover's whistle, delivered in a tone of peculiar vehemence and volume."

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who, in his then state of excitement and worry, was by no means disposed at being left alone, set forth long before the appointed hour; and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he passed and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assembled near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and confusion of the old lady populace of these parts. Having lingered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way towards Lendahill Market, through a variety of by-streets and courts. As he was sauntering away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's, and printer's shop, where a host of freshers or fashionables, or the like, would appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain scenes which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts interwoven together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a femaleBurne-stemmed in modern attire, the gentleman being-clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same, were approaching the mess with hungry eyes, up a serpentine path with leading-themes. A decided insinuation young; gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking, a representation of the spirit of the churchyard on Lengharn Place, appearing in the distance, and the whole formed a 'valentine,' of which, as a written inscription, in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each.

"I should ha' forgot it; I should certainly ha' forgot it," said Sam; and straying, he at once stepped into the stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best letter-paper, and a 'hard'-rubbed pen, which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked direct towards Lendahill Market at a good round pace, very different from his recent lingering one. Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board 'to which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a colossal elephant with an astringent nose in that of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Beer himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

"He won't be here three-three-trusters an hour or more," said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Beer.

"Very good, my dear," replied Sam.

"Let me have mine; same sort of brandy and water, like, and the instinct, will you, miss?"

"The brandy still water, and the instinct having been carried into the little parlour, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent their blustering, and carried away the poker.
to preclude the possibility of the first being ascribed, without the full gravity which concurrence of the Dead-Book being first had and obtained, Sam Weller cast himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then, looking meanly at the pen to see if there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of toast under the paper, Sam tucked up the tails of his coat, squared his elbows, and resumed himself to write.

"To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves particularly to the science of penmanship, writing a letter is no easy task, it being always considered, necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm, so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, and while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unconsciously of the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer, and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, scattering out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old glass, when he was tossed by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

"Vell, Sammy," said the father.

"Vell, my Prochemical Blue," replied the son, lowering down his pen. "What's the last letter before something-in-law?"

"Mrs. Veller passed a very good night, but is uncommon perverse, and displeased this morning—signed upon oath—Tony Veller, Esq. "That's the last vowel was issued, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, uttering his shawl.

"No better yet?" inquired Sam.

"But the symptoms are improved," replied Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "But that's that you're a keen of—pursuit of knowledge under difficulties—eh, Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam, with slight embarrassment. "I've been a whittin'."

"No I see," replied Mr. Weller. "Not to any young booms, I hope, Sammy."

"Why it's no use saying it ain't," replied Sam. "It's a valentine.

"A what?" exclaimed Mr. Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word.

"A valentine," replied Sam.

"Sam, Sam, Sam," said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents. "I didn't think you'd ha' done it. After the warnin' you've had of your father's vicious propensities, after
"Twain in poetry, is it?" inquired the father.

"Na, no," replied Sam.

"Wery glad to hear it," said Mr. Weller.

Poetry's unnatural; no man ever talked in poetry 'cept a handle on boxin' day, or Warren's blackin' or Rowland's oh, or some of them low fellows; never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin again, Sammy.

Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows.

"Lovely erect I feel myself a dammed one.

"That ain't proper," said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"No; it ain't; dammed," observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, "it's ashamed; there's a blot there—I feel myself ashamed,"

"Wery good," said Mr. Weller. "Go on,"

"Feel myself ashamed, and completely else—I forget what this here word is," said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

"Why don't you look at it, then?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"So I am a lookin' at it," replied Sam, "but there's another blot; here's a 'o,' and a 'i,' and a 'd.'"

"Circumvented, perhaps," suggested Mr. Weller.

"No, it ain't that," said Sam, "circumvented, that's it."

"That ain't as good a word as circumvented, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, gravely.

"Think not?" said Sam.

"Notin' like it," replied his father.

"But don't you think it means more?" inquired Sam.

"Vell, perhaps it is a more tenderer word," said Mr. Weller, after a few moments' reflection. "Go on, Sammy."

"Feel myself ashamed and completely circumvented in a damassin' you, for you are a nice gal and nothin' but it."

"That's a very pretty sentiment," said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

"Yes, I think it is rayther good," observed Sam, highly flattered.

"Wot I like in that 'ere style of writin'" said the elder Mr. Weller, "is that there ain't no callin' names in it—no Wonesus, nor nothin' o' that kind; wot's the good o' callin' a young 'oman a Wones or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam.

"You might jest as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arm at once, which is very well known to be a collection o' abelow animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows; his father continuing to smoke with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying.

"Afores I see you I thought all women was alike."

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller, parenthetically.

"But now," continued Sam, "now I find what a regular soft-headed, ink-red'less turn-up I must ha' been for there ain't nobody like you though I like you better than an'thin' at all. "I thought it best to make that rayther strong," said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

"So I take the privilege of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen'l'man in difficulties did, ven he walked out of a Sunday, to tell you that the first and only time I see you your likeness was took on my heart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was taken by the prof'me mascoot (wich p'r'haps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho' it does finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete with a hook at the end to hang it up by and all in two minutes and a quarter."

"I am aforesaid that werges on the post rival, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, dubsicly.

"No it don't," replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point.

"Except of me Mary my dear as your valentine and think ever what I've said—My dear Mary I will now conclude. That's all," said Sam.

"That's rayther a sudden pull up, ain't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll wish there was more, and that's the great art o' letter writin'."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "there's something in that; and I wish your mother-in-law 'ud only conduct her conversation on the same gen'lsel' principle. Ain't you a goin' to sign it?"

"That's the difficulty," said Sam; "I don't know what to sign it."

"Sign it—Weller," said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.

"Wan't do!" said Sam; "Never sign a valentine with your own name!"

"Sign it 'Pickwick,' then," said Mr. Weller; "it's a very good name, and a easy one to spell."

"The very thing," said Sam. "I could end with a verse: what do you think?"

"I don't like it, Sam," rejoined Mr. Weller; "I wasner know'd a respectable coach
man as wrote poetry, except one, as made an affectionate copy of verses the night afore he was hung for a highway robbery; and he was only a Camberwell man, so even that's no rule."

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter—

"Your love-sick Pickwick."

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a down-hill direction in one corner: "To Mary, House-maid, at Mr. Nupkins's Mayors, Ipswich, Suffolk;" and put it into his pocket, wafured, and ready for the General Post. This important business having been transacted, Mr. Weller the elder proceeded to open that on which he had summoned his son.

"The first matter relates to your governor, Sam'my," said Mr. Weller. "He's a goin' to be tried to-morrow, ain't he?"

"The trial's a comin' on," replied Sam. "'Well," said Mr. Weller; "now I s'pose he'll want to call some witnesses to speak to his character, or p'raps to prove a alleybi. I've been a turnin' the business over in my mind, and he may make himself easy, Sam'my. I've got some friends as I'll do either for him, but my advice 'ud be this here—never mind the character, and stick to the alleybi. Nothing like a alleybi, Sam'my, nothing." Mr. Weller looked very profound as he delivered this legal opinion; and burying his nose in his tumbler, winked over the top thereof, at his astonished son.

"Why, what do you mean?" said Sam; "you don't think he's a goin' to be tried at the Old Bailey, do you?"

"That ain't no part of the present consideration, Sam'my," replied Mr. Weller. "Ver'over he's a goin' to be tried, my boy, a alleybi's the thing to get him off. We got Tom Vilsprack off that are man-slaughter, with an alleybi, ven all the big vige to a man said as nothing couldn't save him. And my opinion is, Sam'my, that if your governor don't prove a alleybi, he'll be what the Italians call regularly hummoxed, and that's all about it."

As the elder Mr. Weller entertained a firm and unalterable conviction that the Old Bailey was the supreme court of judicature in this country, and that its rules and forms of proceeding regulated and controlled the practice of all other courts of justice whatsoever, he totally disregarded the assurances and arguments of his son, tending to show that the alibi was inadmissible; and vehemently protested that Mr. Pickwick was being "wicketised." Finding that it was of no use to discuss the matter further, Sam changed the subject, and inquired what the second topic was, on which his reverend parent wished to consult him.

"That's a pint o' domestic policy, Sam'my," said Mr. Weller. "This here Stiggins."

"Red-nosed man?" inquired Sam.

"The very same," replied Mr. Weller. "This here red-nosed man, Sam'my, visits your mother-in-law with a kindness and constancy as I never see equalled. He's a friend of the family, Sam'my, that ven he's away from us, he can't be comfortable unless he has something to remember us by."

"And I'd give him somethin' as 'ud turn up and bees'-vax his memory for the next ten years or so, if I was you," interposed Sam.

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Weller; "I was a goin' to say, he always brings now, a flat bottle as holds about a pint and a half, and fills it with the pine-apple rum afore he goes away."

"And empties it afore he comes back. I a'pose," said Sam.

"Clean!" replied Mr. Weller; "never leaves nothin' in it but the cork and the smell: trust him for that, Sam'my. Now these here fellows, my boy, are a goin', tonight, to get up the monthly meetin' o' the Brick Lane Branch o' the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association. Your mother-in-law was a goin', Sam'my, but she 's got the rheumatism, and can't; and I, Sam'my,—I've got the two tickets as was sent to her." Mr. Weller communicated this secret with great glee, and winked so indefatigably after doing so, that Sam began to think he must have got the tie doulource in his right eye-lid.

"Well!" said that young gentleman.

"Well," continued his progenitor, looking round him very cautiously, "you and I'll go, punctual to the time. The deputy shepherd won't, Sam'my; the deputy shepherd won't." Here Mr. Weller was seized with a paroxysm of chuckles, which gradually terminated in as near an approach to a choke, as an elderly gentleman can, with safety, sustain.

"Well, I never see a ghost in all my born days," exclaimed Sam, rubbing the old gentleman's back, hard enough to set him on fire with the friction. "What are you a laughin' at, corplence?"

"Hush! Sam'my," — said Mr. Weller, looking round him with increased caution, and speaking in a whisper: "Two friends o' mine, as works on the Oxford Road, and is up to all kinds o' games, has got the deputy shepherd safe in tow, Sam'my; and ven he does come to the Ebenezer Temperan-
bein', to rise and address the cheer. There's a young 'unna sted on the back, laddy! Now, as he's a swellin' widdly before any wot eyes.

There is little doubt that Mr. Weller would have carried his beneficent intention into immediate execution, if a great noise, occasioned by putting up the steps and stands, had not very fortunately announced that the tea-drinking was over. The crockery having been removed, the table 'with the green baize eider' was carried out into the centre of the room, and the business of the evening was commenced by a little emphatic man, with a bald head, and a red coat, who suddenly raised up the ladder, at the imminent peril of disturbing the two little legs ensconced in the drab, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I now acknowledge the business of the evening to be at an end."

The meeting was closed by a rich vein of copper which had concurred within.

"On this occasion the women drank tea to a most alarming extent; greatly to the horror of Mr. Weller, senior, who, utterly regardless of all Sam's admonitory nodgings, stared about him in every direction with the most undisguised astonishment.

"Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, "if any of these here people don't want tappin' to-morrow mornin', I ain't your father, and that's what it is. Why, this here old lady next me is a drowning herself in tea."

"Be quiet, can't you?" murmured Sam.

"Sam," whispered Mr. Weller, a moment afterwards, in a tone of deep agitation, "mark my words, my boy; if that there secretary feller keeps on for only five minutes more, he'll blow himself up with toast and butter."

"Well, let him, if he likes," replied Sam; "it ain't no business of yours."

"If this here lasts much longer, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, in the same low voice, "I shall feel it my duty, as a human
"The Pickwick Club"

"Anthony Humm now advanced that the assembly do regulate itself with a song. With a view to their rational and moral enjoyment, brother Mollin had adopted the beautiful words of "Who hasn't heard of a Jolly Young Waterman?" to the tune of the Old Mincoufith, which he would request them to join him in singing (great applause.) He might take that opportunity of expressing his firm persuasion that the late Mr. Dibdin, seeing the errors of his former life, had written that song to shew the advantages of abstinence. It was a Temperance song (whistle of cheers.) The neatness of the interesting young man's attire, the dexterity of his dressing, the enviable state of mind which enabled him, in the beautiful words of the poet, to all combined to prove that he must have been a water-drinker (cheers.) Oh, what a state of virtuous jollity! (rapturous cheering.) And what was the young man's reward? Let all young men present mark this: 

"The maidens all flocked to his boat so readily." (Loud cheers, in which the ladies joined.) What a bright example! The sisterhood the maidens, flocking round the young waterman, and urging him along the path of duty and of temperance. But was the maidens of humble life only, who soothed, consoled, and supported him? No!

"He was always first care with the fine city ladies." (Immense cheering.) The soft sex to a man—he begged pardon, to a female—related round the young waterman, and turned with disgust from the drinker of spirits (cheers.) The Brick Lane Branch brothers were watermen (cheers and laughter.) That room was their beat; that audience were the maidens; and he (Mr. Anthony Humm), however unworthy, was "first care," (unbounded applause.)"
and were unaccustomed with the
legend. While it was being sung, the little
man in the drab shorts disappeared; he
returned immediately on its conclusion,
and whispered Mr. Anthony Humm, with a
face of the deepest importance.

"My friends," said Mr. Humm, holding
up his hand in a depreciatory manner, to
bespeak the silence of much of the stout old
ladies as were yet a line or two behind;
"my friends, a delegate from the Dorking
branch of our society, Brother Stiggins, at-
tends below."

Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs again,
in greater force than ever, for Mr. Stiggins
was excessively popular among the female
constituents of Brick Lane.

"He may approach, I think," said Mr.
Humm, looking round him with a fat smile.
"Brother Tadger, let him come forth and
greet us."

The little man in the drab shorts, who
answered to the name of Brother Tadger,
burst down the ladder with great speed,
and was immediately afterwards heard tum-
bbling up with the reverend Mr. Stiggins.

"He's a comin', Sammy," whispered
Mr. Weller, purple in the countenance
with suppressed laughter.

"Don't say nothin' to me," replied Sam,
"for I can't bear it. He's close to the door.
I hear him a-knockin' his head again the
lath and plaster now."

As Sam Weller spoke, the little door
flew open, and Brother Tadger appeared,
closely followed by the reverend Mr. Stig-
gins, who no sooner entered than there
was a great clapping of hands, and stamping
of feet, and flourishing of handker-
chiefs; to all of which manifestations of
delight, Brother Stiggins returned no other
acknowledgment than staring with a wild
eye, and fixed smile, at the extreme top
of the wick of the candle on the table:
swaying his body to and fro, meanwhile, in
a very unsteady and uncertain manner.

"Are you unwell, Brother Stiggins?"
whispered Mr. Anthony Humm.

"I am all right, Sir," replied Mr. Stig-
gins, in a tone in which ferocity was
blended with an extreme thickness of utter-
ance; "I am all right, Sir."

"Oh, very well," rejoined Mr. Anthony
Humm, retreating a few paces.

"I believe no man here has ventured to
say that I am not all right, Sir," said Mr.
Stiggins.

"Oh, certainly not," said Mr. Humm.

"I should advise him not to, Sir; I should
advise him not," said Mr. Stiggins.

By this time the audience were perfectly
silent, and tossed with some anxiety for
the resumption of business.

"Will you address the meeting, bro-

there?" said Mr. Humm, with a smile of
invitation.

"No, Sir," rejoined Mr. Stiggins; "No,
Sir. I will not, Sir."

The meeting looked at each other with
raised eyelids, and a murmur of astonish-
ment ran through the room.

"It's my opinion, Sir," said Mr. Stig-
gins, unbuttoning his coat and speaking
very loudly; "it's my opinion, Sir, the
this meeting is drunk, Sir. Brother Tad-
ger, Sir," said Mr. Stiggins, suddenly in-
creasing in ferocity, and turning sharp
round on the little man in the drab shorts.
"you are drunk, Sir. With this, Mr.
Stiggins, entertaining a praiseworthy des-
to promote the sobriety of the meeting, and
to exclude therefrom all improper char-
ters, hit brother Tadger on the summit of
the nose with such unerring aim, that the
drab shorts disappeared like a flash of light-
ning. Brother Tadger had been knocked,
head first, down the ladder.

Upon this, the doors were set up a loud and
dismal screaming; and rushing in small
parties before their favourite brothers, flung
their arms around them to preserve them
from danger. An instance of affection,
which had nearly proved fatal to Humm,
who, being extremely popular, was all but
suffocated by the crowd of female devotees
that hung about his neck, and heaped ca-
resses upon him; the greater part of the
lights were quickly put out, and nothing
but noise and confusion resounded on all
sides.

"Now Sammy," said Mr. Weller, taking
off his great-coat with much deliberation,
"just you step out, and fetch in a watch-
man."

"And wot are you a goin' to do, the
while!" Inquired Sam.

"Never you mind me, Sammy," replied
the old gentleman; "I shall cark myself
in havin' a small settlement with that 'er
Stiggins." And before Sam could inter-
fer to prevent it, his heroic parent had
penetrated into a remote corner of the
room, and attacked the reverend Mr. Stig-
gins with manual dexterity.

"Come off," said Sam.

"Come on," cried Mr. Weller; and
without further invitation he gave the re-
verend Mr. Stiggins a preliminary tap
on the head, and began dancing round him
in a buoyant and cork-like manner, which
in a gentleman at his time of life was a per-
fec marvel to behold.

Finding all remonstrances unavailing,
Sam pulled his hat firmly on, threw his
father's coat over his arm, and taking the
old man round the waist, forcibly dragg-
him down the ladder, and into the street;
never releasing his hold, or permitting him
THE PICKWICK CLUB

CHAPTER XXXV.

Is wholly devoted to a full and faithful report of the memorable trial of Bardell against Pickwick.

"I wonder what the foreman of the jury, whoever he'll be, has got for breakfast," said Mr. Smeggins, by way of keeping up a conversation, on the eventful morning of the fourteenth of February.

"Ah!" said Perker, "I hope he's got a good one."

"Why so?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Highly important—very important, say dear Sir," replied Perker. "A good, contented, well-breasted jurymen, is a capital thing to get hold of. Discourteous or hungry jurymen, my dear Sir, always find for the plaintiff."

"Bless my heart," said Mr. Pickwick, looking very blank; "what do they do that for?"

"Why, I don't know," replied the little man, coolly; "saves time, I suppose. If it's near dinner-time, the foreman takes out his watch when the jury have retired, and says, "Dear me, gentlemen, another three minutes to five, I declare! I time at five, gentlemen! So do I," says every body else, except two men who ought to have died at three, and seem more than half disposed to stand out in consequence. The foreman smiles, and puts up his watch:—Well, gentlemen, what do we say?—plaintiff or defendant, gentlemen? I rather think, so far as I am concerned, gentlemen,—I say, I rather think,—but don't let that influence you—I rather think the plaintiff 's the man. " Upon this, two or three other men are sure to say that they think so too—as of course they do; and then they get on very unanimously and comfortably. Ten minutes past nine!" said the little man, looking at his watch, "Time we were off, my dear Sir; breach of promise trial—court is generally full in such cases. You had better ring for a coach, my dear Sir, or we shall be rather late."

Mr. Pickwick immediately rang the bell, and a coach having been procured, the four Pickwickians and Mr. Pickwick accosted themselves therein, and drove to Guildhall; Sam Weller, Mr. Lowten, and the blue bag, following in a cab.

"Lowten," said Perker, when they reached the outer hall of the court, "put Mr. Pickwick's friends in the attendants' box; Mr. Pickwick himself had better sit by me. This way, my dear Sir,—this way;" and taking Mr. Pickwick by the coat-sleeve, the little man led him to the low seat just beneath the desks of the King's Council, which is constructed for the convenience of attorneys, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel in the case, any instructions that may be necessary during the progress of the trial. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor. Of course they have their backs to both, and their faces towards the judge.

"That's the witness-box, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick, pointing to a kind of pulpit, with a brass rail, on his left hand.

"That's the witness-box, my dear Sir," replied Perker, disintering a quantity of papers from the blue bag, which Lowten had just deposited at his feet.

"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, pointing to a couple of enclosed seats on his right, "that's where the jurymen sit, is it not?"

"The identical place, my dear Sir," replied Perker, tapping the lid of his snuff-box.

Mr. Pickwick stood up in a state of great agitation, and took a glance at the court. There were already a pretty large sprinkling of spectators in the gallery, and a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs in the barristers' seats, who presented, as a body all that pleasing and extensive variety of nose and whiskers for which the bar of England is so justly celebrated. Such of the gentlemen as had got a brief to carry, carried it in as conspicuous a manner as possible, and occasionally scratched their noses therewith, to impress the fact more strongly on the observation of the spectators. Other gentlemen, who had no briefs to show, carried under their arms goodly octavos, with a red label behind, and that under-done-pie-crust-coloured cover, which is technically known as "law calf." Others, who had neither briefs nor books, thrust their hands into their pockets, and looked as wise as they conveniently could; while others, again, moved here and there with great restlessness and earnestness of manner, content to awaken thereby, the admiration and astonishment of the uninitiated strangers. The whole, to the great wonderment of Mr. Pickwick, were divided
B uzza n peeled in scarlet; the gentleman in black then proceeded to present the special jury of two of the common jurymen; and a groomsman and a chemist were called directly.

"Answer to your names, gentlemen, that you may be sworn," said the gentlemen in black. "Richard Upwich!"

"Here," said the grocer.

"Thomas Grofin!"

"Here," said the chemist.

"Take the book, gentlemen. You shall well and truly try —"

"I beg this court's pardon," said the chemist, who was a tall, thin, yellow-visaged man, "but I hope this court will excuse my attendance."

"On what grounds, Sir," said Mr. Justice Starleigh.

"I have no assistance, my Lord," said the chemist.

"I can't help that, Sir," replied Mr. Justice Starleigh. "You should hire one."

"I can't afford it, my lord," rejoined the chemist.

"Then you ought to be able to afford it, Sir," said the Judge, reddening; for Mr. Justice Starleigh's temper bordered on the irritable, and brooked no contradiction.

"I know I ought to do, if I got on as well as I deserved, but I don't my Lord," answered the chemist.

"Swear the gentleman," said the Judge, peremptorily.

The officer had got no further than the "You shall well and truly try," when he was again interrupted by the chemist.

"I am to be sworn, my Lord, am I?" said the chemist.

"Certainly, Sir," replied the rusty little Judge.

"Very well, my Lord," replied the chemist, in a resigned manner. "This there'll be murder before this trial's over; that's all. Swear me if you please, Sir," and swore the chemist was, before the Judge could find words to utter.

"I merely wanted to observe, my Lord," said the chemist, taking his seat with great deliberation, "that I've left nobody but an errand-boy in my shop. He is a very nice boy; my Lord, but he is not much acquainted with drugs; and I know that the prevailing impression on his mind is, that Epsom salts means oxalic acid; and syrup of seana, landum. That's all, my Lord." With this, the tall chemist composed himself into a comfortable attitude, and, assuming a pleasant expression of countenance, appeared to have prepared himself for the worst.

Mr. Pickwick was regarding the chemist with feelings of the deepest horror, when a slight sensation was perceptible in the

...
body of the court; and immediately afterwards Mrs. Bardell, supported by Mrs. Claptrap, was led in, and placed in a drooping state, at the other end of the seat on which Mr. Pickwick sat. An extra-sized umbrella was then handed in by Mr. Boddon, most of the persons by Mr. Fogg, each of whom had prepared a most insipid and melancholy face for the occasion. Mrs. Sanders then appeared, leading in Master Bardell. At sight of her child, Mrs. Bardell started; suddenly recollecting herself, she kissed him in a frantick manner, and then subsiding into a state of hysterical melancholy, the "good lady" requested to be informed where she was. In reply to this, Mrs. Claptrap and Mrs. Sanders turned their heads away and wept, while Messrs. Dodson and Fogg entreated the plaintiff to compose herself. Sergeant Buzfuz rubbed his eyes very hard with a large white handkerchief, and gave an appealing look towards the jury, while the Judge was visibly affected, and several of the bystanders tried to cough down their emotions.

"Very good notion that, indeed," whispered Perker to Mr. Pickwick. "Capital fellows, those Dodson and Fogg; excellent ideas of effect; my dear Sir, excellent."

As Perker spoke, Mrs. Bardell began to recover slowly degrees, while Mrs. Claptrap, after a careful survey of Master Bardell's buttons and the buttons down which they severely belonged, placed him on the floor of the court in front of his mother—a commanding position in which he could not fail to awaken the full communication and sympathy of both Judge and jury. This was done without considerable opposition, and many tears on the part of one young gentleman himself, who had certain inward misgivings that the placing him within the full glare of the Judge's eye was only a formal parade to his being immediately ushered away for instant execution, or for transportation beyond the seas during the whole term of his natural life, at the very least.

"Bardell and Pickwick," cried the gentleman in black, calling on the case, which occurred first to the list.

"I dare for the plaintiff, my Lord," said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Who is with you, brother Buzfuz?" said the Judge. "Mr. Skimpin proceeded to "open the case," and the case appeared to have very little inside it when he had opened it, for he kept such particulars as he knew, completely to himself, and sat down, after a lapse of three minutes, leaving the jury in precisely the same advanced stage of wisdom as they were in before.

Sergeant Buzfuz then rose with all the majesty and dignity which the grave nature of the proceeding demanded, and having whispered to Dodson, and conferring briefly with Fogg, pulled his gown over his shoulme, settled his wig, and addressed the jury.

Sergeant Buzfuz began by saying, that never, in the whole course of his professional experience—never, from the very first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice of the law—had he approached a case, with feelings of such deep emotion, or with such a heavy sense of the responsibility imposed upon him—a responsibility, he would say, which he could never have supported, were he not cheered up and sustained by a conviction so strong, that it amounted to positive certainty, that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much-injured and most oppressed client, must prevail with the high-minded and intelligent men whom he now saw in that box before him.

Counsel always begin in this way, he cause is put to the jury on the very best terms with themselves, and makes them think what sharp fellows they must be. A visible effect was produced immediately, several jurymen beginning to take voluminous notes with the utmost eagerness.

"You have heard from any learned friend, gentlemen"—continued Sergeant Buzfuz, well knowing that, from the learned friend alluded to, the gentlemen of the jury had heard just nothing at all—"you have heard from my learned friend, gentlemen, that this is an action for a breach of promise of marriage, in which the damages are laid at
for protection, for assistance, for comfort, and for consolation—in single gentlemen I shall perpetually see something to remind me of what Mr. Bardell was, when he first won my young and unwieldy affections; to a single gentleman, then, shall my lodgings lie? Actuated by this beautiful and touching impulse, (among the best impulses of our imperfect nature, gentlemen,) the lonely and desolate widow dried her tears, furnished her first floor, caught her innocent boy to her maternal bosom, and put the bill up in her parlour window. Did it remain there long? No. The serpent was on the watch, the train was laid, the snare was preparing, the sapper and miner was at work. Before the bill had been in the parlour window three days—three days gentlemen—a being, erect upon two legs, and bearing all the outward semblance of a man, and not of a monster, knocked at the door of Mrs. Bardell’s house. He inquired within; he took the lodgings; and on the very next day he entered into possession of them. This man was Pickwick—Pickwick, the defendant.”

Sergeant Buzfuz, who had proceeded with such velocity that his face was perfectly crimson, here paused for breath. The silence awoke Mr. Justice Steereleigh, who immediately wrote down something with a pen without any ink in it, and looked unusually profound, to impress the jury with the belief that he always thought most deeply with his eyes shut. Sergeant Buzfuz proceeded:

“Of this man Pickwick I will say little; the subject presents but few attractions; and I, gentlemen, am not the man, nor are you, gentlemen, the men to delight in the contemplation of revolting heartlessness, and of systematic villany.”

Here Mr. Pickwick, who had been writing in silence for some time, gave a violent start, as if some vague idea of assaulting Sergeant Buzfuz, in the august presence of justice and law, suggested itself to his mind. An admonitory gesture from Perker restrained him, and he listened to the learned gentleman’s continuation with a look of indigression, which contrasted forcibly with the admiring faces of Mrs. Clappins and Mrs. Sanders.

“I say systematic villany, gentlemen,” said Sergeant Buzfuz, looking through Mr. Pickwick, and talking at him; “and when I say systematic villany, let me tell the defendant, Pickwick, if he be in court, as I am informed he is, that it would have been more decent in him, more becoming, to better judgment, and in better taste, if he had stopped away. Let me tell him, gentlemen, that any gestures of dissent or dissap
precaution in which he has indulged in this matter will not go down with you; that you will know how to value and how to appreciate them; and let me tell him further, as my lord will tell you, gentlemen, that a counsellor, in his discharge of his duty to his client, is neither to be intimidated nor bullied, nor put down; and that any attempt to do either the one or the other, or the first or the last, will recoil on the head of the attempted, be he plaintiff or he defendant, be his name Pickwick, or Noakes, or Strakes, or Stiles, or Brown, or Thompson.

This little divergence from the subject in hand, had of course the intended effect of turning all eyes to Mr. Pickwick. Sergeant Buzfuz, having partially recovered from the state of moral elevation into which he had lashed himself, resumed—

"I shall show you, gentlemen, that for two reasons Pickwick was not expected to reside constantly, and without interruption or intermission, at Mrs. Bardell's house. I shall show you, that Mrs. Bardell, during the whole of that time, waited on him, attended to his comforts, cooked his meals, looked out his linen for the washerwoman when it went abroad, darned, aired, and prepared it for wear when it came home, and, in short, enjoyed his fullest trust and confidence. I shall show you that, on many occasions, he gave half-pence, and on some occasions even sixpences, to his little boy; and I shall prove to you, by a witness whose testimony it will be impossible for my learned friend to weaken or controvert, that on one occasion he patted the boy on the head, and after inquiring whether he had won any alley lora or corner money lately (both of which I understand to be a particular species of marbles much prized by the youth of this town,) made use of this remarkable expression—'How should you like to have another father?' I shall prove to you farther, gentlemen, that about a year ago, Pickwick suddenly began to absent himself from home, during long intervals, as if with the intention of gradually breaking off from my client; but I shall show you also, that his resolution was not at that time sufficiently strong, or that his better feelings conquered, if better feelings he has—or that the charms and accomplishments of my client prevailed over his unmanly intentions, by proving to you, that on one occasion, when he returned from the country, he distinctly and in terms, offered her marriage; previously, however, taking special care that there should be no witnesses to their solemn contract; and I am in a situation to prove to you, on the testimony of three of his own friends,—most unwilling witnesses, gentlemen,—most unwilling witnesses—that on that morning he was divided by them holding the plaintiff in his arms, and soothing her agitation by his caresses and endearments."

A visible impression was produced upon the auditors by this part of the learned ser-
gent's address. Drawing forth two very small scraps of paper, he proceeded—

"And now, gentlemen, but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties, letters which are admitted to be in the hand-writing of the defendant, and which speak volumes indeed. These letters, too, bespeak the character of the man. They are not open, fervent, eloquent epistles, breathing nothing but the language of affectionate attachment. They are covert, sly, underhand communications, but, fortunately, far more conclusive than if couched in the most glowing language and the most poetical imagery—letters that must be viewed with a cautious and suspici-

ous eye—letters that were evidently intended at the time, by Pickwick, to mislead and delude any third parties into whose hands they might fall. Let me read the first:—Garraway's, twelve o'clock.—Dear Mrs. B.—Chops and Tomato sauce. Yours, Pickwick.' "Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and Tomato sauce. Yours, Pickwick! Chops! Gracious heavens! and Tomato sauce! Gentlemen, is the happiness of a sensitive and confiding female to be trifled away, by such shallow artifices as these? The next has no date whatever, which is in itself suspicious.—'Dear Mrs. B., I shall not be at home to-
morrow. Slow coach.' And then follows this very remarkable expression—'Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan!' The warming-pan! Why, gentlemen, what does trouble himself about a warming-pan? When was the peace of mind of man or woman broken or disturbed by a warming-pan, which is in itself a harmless, a useful, and I will add, gentlemen, a comforting article of domestic furniture? Why is Mrs. Bardell so earnestly entreated not to agitate herself about this warming-pan, unless (as is no doubt the case) it is a mere cover for hidden fire—a mere substitute for some un

daring word or promise, agreeably to a preconcerted system of correspondence, artfully contrived by Pickwick with a view to his contemplated desertion, and which I am not in a condition to explain? And what does this allusion to the slow coach mean? For ought I know, it may be a reference to Pickwick himself, who has most unques-
tionably been a criminally slow coach during the whole of this transaction, but whose speed will now be very unexpected ly accelerated, and whose wheels, gentle-
men, as he will find to his cost, will very soon be greased by you!"

Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz paused in his speech.
to see whether the jury smiled at his joke; but as nobody took it but the green-grocer, whose sensitiveness on the subject was very probably occasioned by his having subjected a chair part to the process in question on that identical morning, the learned sergeant considered it advisable to undergo a slight relapse into the daze he before he concluded.

"But enough of this, gentlemen," said Mr. Sergeant Bupfia, "it is difficult to smile with an aching heart; it is ill jesting when our deepest sympathies are awakened. My client’s hopes and prospects are ruined, and it is no figure of speech to say that her occupation is gone indeed. The bill is due—but there is no tenant. Eligible single gentlemen pass and repass—but there is no invitation for them to inquire within, or without. All is gloom and silence in the house; even the voice of the child is hushed; his infant sports are disregarded when his mother weeps; his ‘alley torts’ and his ‘commonplaces’ are alike neglected; he forgets the long familiar cry of ‘knuckle down,’ and at tip-choosing, or odd and even, his hand is out. But Pickwick, gentlemen, Pickwick, the ruthless destroyer of this domestic oasis in the desert of Goswell-street—Pickwick, who has choked up the well, and thrown ashes on the award—Pickwick, who comes before you to-day with his heartless tomato sauce and warming-pane—Pickwick still rears his head with unblushing effrontery, and gazes without a sigh on the ruin he has made. Damages, gentlemen—heavy damages, is the only punishment with which you can visit him; the only recompense you can award to my client. And for those damages she now appeals to an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-feeling, a conscientious, a sympathetic, a sympathizing, a contemplative jury of her civilized countrymen.

With this beautiful peroration, Mr. Sergeant Bupfia sat down, and Mr. Justice Steareigh woke.

"Call Elizabeth Cluppins," said Sergeant Bupfia, rising a minute afterwards, with renewed vigour.

The nearest usher called for Elizabeth Cluppins; another, at a little distance off, demanded Elizabeth Jupkins; and a third rushed in a breathless state into King-street, and screamed for Elizabeth Muffins till he was hoarse.

Meanwhile Mrs. Cluppins, with the combined assistance of Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, Mr. Judeon and Mr. Fogg, was hoisted into the witness-box, and when she was safely seated on the stage, Mr. Bardell stood on the bottom step, with the pocket-handkerchief and pattens in one hand, and a glare, brows, that might hold about a quar.

ter of a pint of swilling sausages in the other, ready for any emergency. Mrs. Sanders, whose eyes were intensely fixed on the judge’s face, planted herself close by, with the large umbrella, keeping her right thumb pressed on the spring with an earnest countenance, as if she were fully prepared to put it up at a moment’s notice.

"Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Bupfia, "pray compose yourself, Ma’am," and of course, directly Mrs. Cluppins was deemed to compose herself, she sobbed with increased vehemence, and gave divers alarming manifestations of an approaching fainting fit, or, as she afterwards said of her feelings being too many for her.

"Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Bupfia, after a few unimportant questions—do you recollect being in Mr. Bardell’s back one pair of stairs, on one particular morning in July last, when she was dusting Mr. Pickwick’s apartment?"

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

"Mr. Pickwick’s sitting-room was the first-floor front, I believe?"

"Yes, it were, Sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

"What were you doing in the back room, Ma’am?" inquired the little Judge.

"My Lord and jury," said Mrs. Cluppins, with interesting agitation, "I will not deprecate you."

"You had better not, Ma’am," said the little Judge.

"I was there," resumed Mrs. Cluppins, "unknown to Mr. Bardell; I had been out with a little basket, gentlemen, to buy three pound of red kidney pottshakes, which was three pound tuppence ha’penny, when I saw Mrs. Bardell’s street-door on the jar."

"On the what!" exclaimed the little Judge.

"Partly open, my lord," said Sergeant Snubbin.

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

"It’s all the same, my lord," said Sergeant Snubbin. The little Judge looked doubtful, and said he’d make a note of it.

Mrs. Cluppins then resumed.

"I walked in, gentlemen, just to say good mornin’, and went in a peremptory manner up stairs; and into the back room. Gentlemen, there was the sound of voices in the front room, and—"

"And you listened, I believe, Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Bupfia.

"Beggin’ your pardon, Sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins, in a majestic manner. "I would scorn the hint, Mr. Bardell, that you have the least to do with my case, Sir; and forget them upon my part."

"Well, Mrs. Cluppins, you were not las
testing, but you heard the voices. — Was one of those voices Mr. Pickwick’s?

"Yes, it were, Sir."

And Mrs. Clappins, after distinctly stating that Mr. Pickwick addressed himself to Mrs. Bardell, repeated by slow degrees, and by dint of many questions, the conversation with which our readers are already acquainted.

The Jury looked suspicious, and Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz smiled and sat down. They looked positively awful when Sergeant Snubbin intimated that he should not cross-examine the witness, for Mr. Pickwick wished it to be distinctly stated that it was due to her to any, that her account was in substance correct.

Mrs. Clappins having once broken the ice, thought it a very favourable opportunity of entering into a short dissertation on her own domestic affairs; so she straightway proceeded to inform the court that she was the mother of eight children at that present speaking, and that she entertained confident expectations of presenting Mr. Clappins with a ninth, somewhere about that day six months. At this interesting point, the little Judge interposed most inexcusably; and the effect of the interposition was, that both the worthy lady and Mrs. Sanders were politely taken out of court, under the escort of Mr. Jackson, without further parley.

"Nathaniel Winkle," said Mr. Skimpin.

"Here!" replied a feeble voice. And Mr. Winkle entered the witness-box, and having been duly sworn, bowed to the Judge with considerable deference.

"Don’t look at me, Sir," said the Judge, sharply, in acknowledgment of the salute; "look at the jury."

Mr. Winkle obeyed the mandate, and looked at the place where he thought it most probable the jury might be; for seeing anything in his then state of intellectual complication was wholly out of the question.

Mr. Winkle was then examined by Mr. Skimpin, who, being a promising young man of two or three and forty, was of course anxious to confuse a witness, who was notoriously predisposed in favour of the other side, as much as he could.

"Now, Sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "have the goodness to let his Lordship and the jury know what your name is, will you?" And Mr. Skimpin inclined his head on one side to listen with great sharpness to the answer, and glanced at the jury meanwhile, as if to imply that he rather expected Mr. Winkle’s natural taste for perjury would induce him to give some name which did not belong to him.

"Winkle," replied the witness.

"What’s your Christian name, Sir?" angrily inquired the little Judge.

"Nathaniel, Sir."

"Daniel—any other name!"

"Nathaniel, Sir—my Lord, I mean."

"Nathaniel Daniel, or Daniel Nathaniel?"

"No, my Lord, only Nathaniel—not Daniel at all."

"What did you tell me it was Daniel for, then, Sir?" inquired the judge.

"I didn’t, my Lord," replied Mr. Winkle.

"You did, Sir," replied the judge, with a severe frown. "How could I have got Daniel on my notes, unless you told me so, Sir?"

This argument was, of course, unanswerable.

"Mr. Winkle has rather a short memory, my Lord," interpolated Mr. Skimpin, with another glance at the jury. "We shall find means to refresh it before we have quite done with him, I dare say."

"You had better be careful, Sir," said the little Judge, with a sinister look at the witness.

Poor Mr. Winkle bowed, and endeavoured to feign an easiness of manner, which, in his then state of confusion, gave him rather the air of a disconcerted pickpocket.

"Now, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Skimpin, "attend to me, if you please, Sir; and let me recommend you, for your own sake, to bear in mind his Lordship’s injunctions to be careful. I believe you are a particular friend of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant, are you not?"

"I have known Mr. Pickwick now, as well as I recollect at this moment, nearly—"

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do not evade the question. Are you, or are you not, a particular friend of the defendant’s?"

"I was just about to say, that—"

"Will you, or will you not, answer my question, Sir?"

"If you don’t answer the question, you’ll be committed, Sir," interpolated the little judge, looking over his note-book.

"Come, Sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "yes or no, if you please."

"Yes, I am," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Yes, you are. And why couldn’t you say that at once, Sir? Perhaps you know the plaintiff too—oh, Mr. Winkle?"

"I don’t know her; I’ve seen her."

"Oh, you don’t know her, but you’ve seen her? Now, have the goodness to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by that, Mr. Winkle."

"I mean that I am not intimate with her, but that I have seen her when I went to—"

"Call on Mr. Pickwick, in Goswell-street."

"How often have you seen her, Sir?"

"How often?"

"Yes, Mr. Winkle, how often? I’ll repeat the question for you. The Plaintiff—"
you require it, Sir." And the learned gentleman, with a firm and steady frown, placed his hands on his hips, and smiled suspiciously to the jury.

On this question there arose the edifying brow-beating, customary on such points. First of all, Mr. Winkle said it was quite impossible for him to say how many times he had seen Mrs. Bardell. Then he was asked if he had seen her twenty times, to which he replied, "Certainly,—more than that." And then he was asked whether he hadn't seen her a hundred times—whether he couldn't swear that he had seen her more than fifty times—whether he didn't know that he had seen her at least seventy-five times, and so forth; the satisfactory conclusion which was arrived at, at last, being—that he had better take care of himself, and mind what he was about. The witness having been by these means reduced to the requisite ebb of nervous perplexity, the examination was continued as follows—

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do you remember calling on the defendant Pickwick at these apartments in the plaintiff's house in Goswell-street, on one particular morning, in the month of July last?"

"Yes, I do."

"Were you accompanied on that occasion by a friend of the name of Tupman, and another of the name of Snodgrass?"

"Yes, I was."

"Are they here?"

"Yes, they are."—replied Mr. Winkle, looking very earnestly towards the spot where his friends were stationed.

"Pray attend to me, Mr. Winkle, and never mind your friends."—said Mr. Skimpin, with another expressive look at the jury. "They must tell their stories without any previous consultation with you, if necessary (as you are to be examined at the jury.) Now, Sir, tell the gentlemen of the jury what you saw on entering the defendant's room, on this particular morning. Come; out with it, Sir; we must have it, sooner or later."

"The defendant, Mr. Pickwick, was holding the plaintiff in his arms, with his hands clasping her waist," replied Mr. Winkle, with natural hesitation, "and the plaintiff appeared to have fainted away."

"Did you hear the defendant say any thing?"

"I heard him call Mrs. Bardell a good creature, and I heard him ask her to compose herself, for what a situation it was, if any body should come, or words to that effect."

"Now, Mr. Winkle, I have only one more question to ask you, and I beg you to keep in mind his lordship's caution. Will you undertake to swear that Pickwick, the defendant, did not say on the occasion in question,—'My dear Mrs. Bardell, you're a good creature; compose yourself to this situation, for to this situation you must come,' or words to that effect?"

"I—I didn't understand him so, certainly," said Mr. Winkle, astounded at his ingenuous dove-tailing of the few words he had heard. "I was on the staircase, and couldn't hear distinctly; the impression on my mind is—"

"The gentlemen of the jury want none of the impressions on your mind, Mr. Winkle, which I fear would be of little service to honest, straightforward men," interposed Mr. Skimpin. "You were on the staircase, and didn't distinctly hear; but you will not swear that Pickwick did not make use of the expressions I have quoted! Do I understand that?"

"No, I will not," replied Mr. Winkle; and down sat Mr. Skimpin with a triumphant countenance.

Mr. Pickwick's case had not gone off so particularly happy a manner, up to this point, that it could very well afford to have any additional suspicion cast upon it. But as it could afford to be placed in a rather better light if possible, Mr. Phunky rose for the purpose of getting something important out of Mr. Winkle in cross-examination. Whether he did get any thing important out of him, will immediately appear.

"I believe, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Phunky, "that Mr. Pickwick is not a young man?"

"Oh no," replied Mr. Winkle; "old enough to be my father."

"You have told my learned friend that you have known Mr. Pickwick a long time. Had you ever any reason to suppose or believe that he was short to be married?"

"Oh no; certainly not;" replied Mr. Winkle, with so much eagerness that Mr. Phunky ought to have got him out of the box with all possible dispatch. Lawyers hold that there are two kinds of particularly bad witnesses, a reluctant witness, and a too-willing witness; it was Mr. Winkle's fate to figure in both characters.

"I will even go farther than this, Mr. Winkle," continued Mr. Phunky, in a most smooth and complacent manner. "Did you ever see any thing in Mr. Pickwick's manner and conduct towards the opposite sex to induce you to believe that he ever contemplated matrimony of late years, in any case?"

"Oh no; certainly not," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Has his behaviour, when females have been in the case, always been that of a man,
who, having attained a pretty advanced period of life, content with his own occupations and amusements, treats them only as a father might his daughters?"

"Not the least of it," replied Mr. Winkle, in the fulness of his heart. "That is—yes—oh yes—certainly."

"You have never known any thing in his behaviour towards Mrs. Bardell, or any other female, in the least degree suspicious!" said Mr. Phunky, preparing to sit down, for Mr. Sergeant Snubbin was winking at him.

"No—no," replied Mr. Winkle, "except on one trifling occasion, which, I have no doubt, might be easily explained."

Now, if the unfortunate Mr. Phunky had sat down when Sergeant Snubbin winked at him, or if Sergeant Buzzufz had stopped this irregular cross-examination at the outset (which he knew better than to do; observing Mr. Winkle's anxiety, and well knowing it would, in all probability, lead to something serviceable to him), this unfortunate admission would not have been elicited. The moment the words fell from Mr. Winkle's lips, Mr. Phunky sat down, and Sergeant Snubbin rather hastily told him he might leave the box, which Mr. Winkle prepared to do with great readiness, when Sergeant Buzzufz stopped him.

"Stay, Mr. Winkle—stay," said Sergeant Buzzufz, "will your lordship have the goodness to ask him what this one instance of suspicious behaviour towards females on the part of this gentleman, who is old enough to be his father, was?"

"You hear what the learned counsel says, Sir," observed the judge, turning to the miserable and agonised Mr. Winkle. "Describe the occasion of which you refer."

"My lord," said Mr. Winkle, trembling with anxiety, "I—I'd rather not."

"Perhaps so," said the little judge; "but you must."

Amid the profound silence of the whole court, Mr. Winkle faltered out, that the trifling circumstance of suspicion was Mr. Pickwick's being found in a lady's sleeping apartment at midnight, which had terminated, he believed, in the breaking off of the projected marriage of the lady in question, and led, he knew, to the whole party being forcibly carried before George Nupkins, Esq., magistrate and justice of the peace, for the borough of Ipswich!

"You may leave the box, Sir," said Sergeant Snubbin. Mr. Winkle did leave the box, and rushed with delirious haste to the George and Vulture, where he was discovered some hours after by the waiter, groining in a hollow and dismal manner, with his head buried beneath the sofa cushions.

Tracy Tupman and Augustus Snodgrass were severally called into the box; both corroborated the testimony of their unhappy friend; and each was driven to the verge of desperation by excessive badgering.

Susannah Sanders was then called, and examined by Sergeant Buzzufz, and cross-examined by Sergeant Snubbin. Had always said and believed that Mr. Pickwick would marry Mrs. Bardell; knew that Mrs. Bardell's being engaged to Mr. Pickwick was the current topic of conversation in the neighbourhood, after the fainting in July; had been told it herself by Mrs. Mudberry which kept a maidservant, and Mrs. Bunkin which clear-stretched, but did not see either Mrs. Mudberry or Mrs. Bunkin in court. Had heard Mr. Pickwick ask the little boy how he should like to have another father. Did not know that Mrs. Bardell was at that time keeping company with the baker, but did know that the baker was then a single man, and he is now married. Couldn't swear that Mrs. Bardell was not very fond of the baker, but should think that the baker was not very fond of Mrs. Bardell, or he wouldn't have married somebody else. Thought Mrs. Bardell fainted away on the morning in July, because Mr. Pickwick asked her to name the day; knew that she (witness) fainted away stone dead when Mr. Sanders asked her to name the day, and believed that every body as called herself a lady would do the same under similar circumstances. Heard Mr. Pickwick ask the boy the question about the marbles, but upon her oath did not know the difference between an alley-tor and a commonkey.

By the Cock.—During the period of her keeping company with Mr. Sanders had received love-letters, like other ladies. In the course of their correspondence Mr. Sanders had often called her a "duck," but never "chops" or "tomato sauce." He was particularly fond of ducks. Perhaps if he had been as fond of chops and tomato sauce, he might have called her that; as a term of affection.

Sergeant Buzzufz now rose with more importance than he had yet exhibited, if that were possible, and vociferated "Call Samuel Weller."

It was quite unnecessary to call Samuel Weller, for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced; and placing his hat on the floor, and his arms on the rail, took a bird's-eye view of the bar, and a comprehensive survey of the bench with a remarkably cheerful and lively aspect.

"What's your name, Sir?" inquired the Judge.

"Sam Weller, my Lord," replied the gentleman.
"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; "I never had occasion to spell it more than once or twice in my life, but I spells it with a 'V.'"

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

"Who is that that dares to address the Court?" said the little Judge, looking up, "Usher."

"Yes, my Lord."

"Bring that person here instantly."

"Yes, my Lord."

But as the usher didn't find the person, he didn't bring him; and, after a great commotion, all the justices who had got up to look for the culprit, sat down again. The little Judge turned to the witness as soon as his indignation would allow him to speak, and said—

"Do you know who that was, Sir?"

"I rather 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 into the lantern 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, and turned, with unpainted cheerfulness of countenance, towards Sergeant Buzfuz.]

"Now, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Now, Sir," replied Sam.

"I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant in this case. Speak up, if you please, Mr. Weller."

"I mean to speak up, Sir," replied Sam; "I'm in the service of that 'ere gent'men, and a very good service it is."

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

"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, or any other man, said, Sir," interposed the Judge, "it's not evidence."

"Wery good, my Lord," replied Sam.

"Do you recollect any thing particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant, eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Yes, I do, Sir," replied Sam.

"Have the goodness to tell the Jury what it was."

"I had a reg'lar new fit out o' clothes that mornin', gen'l'men of the Jury," said Sam, "and that was a werry partic'ler and uncommon circumstance with me in those days."

Hereupon there was a general laugh; and the little Judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, "You had better be careful, Sir."

"So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my Lord," replied Sam, "and I was werry careful o' that 'ere suit o' clothes; werry careful indeed, my Lord."

The Judge looked sternly at Sam for full two minutes, but Sam's features were so perfectly calm and serene, that he said no thing, and motioned Sergeant Buzfuz to proceed.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, folding his arms pithically, and turning half round to the Jury, as if in mute assurance that he would be 'her the witness yet—" Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller, that you saw nothing of this fainting on the part of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant, which you have heard described by the witnesses?"

"Certainly not," replied Sam; "I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady was not there."

"Now, attend, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, dipping a large pen into the inkstand before him, for the purpose of frightening Sam with a show of taking down his answer. "You were in the passage and yet saw nothing of what was going forward. Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?"

"Yes, I have a pair of eyes," replied Sam, "and that's just it. 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 dead door; but belin' only eyes, you see, my vision's limited."

At this answer, which was delivered without the slightest appearance of irritation, and with the most complete simplicity and equanimity of manner, the spectators tittered, the little Judge smiled, and Sergeant Buzfuz looked particularly foolish. After a short consultation with Dodson and Fogg, the learned Sergeant again turned toward Sam, and said, with a painful effort to conceal his vexation, "Now, Mr. Weller, I'll ask you a question on another point, if you please."

"If you please, Sir," rejoined Sam, with the utmost good-humour.

"Do you remember going up to Mrs. Bardell's house one night in November last?"

"Oh, yes, werry well."

"Oh, you do remember that, Mr. Wel
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

"Yes," said Sergeant Buzzuz, recovering his "spirit," "I thought we should get at someth- " thing at last."

"I ruther thought that, too, Sir," re- "plied Sam; and at this the spectators titter- "ed again.

"Well; I suppose you went up to have "a little talk about this trial—eh, Mr. Wel- "ler?" said Sergeant Buzzuz, looking know- "ingly at the Jury.

"I went up to pay the rent; but we ’did "get a talkin’ about the trial," replied Sam.

"Oh you did get a talking about the "trial," said Sergeant Buzzuz, brightening up "with the anticipation of some important "discovery. "Now what passed about the "trial; will you have the goodness to tell "us, Mr. Weller?"

"Vith all the pleasure in life, Sir," re- "plied Sam. "Aften a few unimportant ob- "servations from the two virtuous females "has been taken; and to-day, the "ladies gets into a very great state of admi- "ration at the honourable conduct of Mr. "Dodson and Fogg—they two gen’l’men as "is sittin’ near you now." This, of course, "drew general attention to Dodson and Fogg, "who looked as virtuous as possible.

"The attorneys for the plaintiff," said "Mr. Sergeant Buzzuz, "well they spoke in "high praise of the honourable conduct of "Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, the attorneys "for the plaintiff; did they?"

"Yes," said Sam; "they said what a "very generous thing it was o’ them to have "taken up the case on spec, and to charge "nothin’ at all for costs, unless they got ’em "out of Mr. Pickwick."

At this very unexpected reply, the spec- "tators tittered again, and Dodson and Fogg, "turning very red, leant over to Sergeant "Buzzuz, and in a hurried manner whispered "something in his ear.

"You are quite right," said Sergeant "Buzzuz aloud, with affected composure. "It’s perfectly useless, my Lord, attempt- "ing to get at any evidence through the im- "penetrable stupidity of this witness. I will "not trouble the court by asking him any "more questions. Stand down, Sir."

"Would any other gen’l’man like to ask "me anything?" inquired Sam, taking up his "hat, and looking round most deliberately.

"Not I, Mr. Weller, thank you," said "Sergeant Snubbins, laughing.

"You may go down, Sir," said Sergeant "Buzzuz, waving his hand impatiently. Sam "went down accordingly, after doing Messrs. "Dodson and Fogg as much harm as he "could conveniently, and saying just as "little respecting Mr. Pickwick as might be, "which was precisely the object he had had "up view all along.

"I have no objection to admit, my Lord," "said Sergeant Snubbins, "if it will save the "examination of another witness, that Mr. "Pickwick has retired from business, and is a "gentleman of considerable independent "property."

"Very well," said Sergeant Buzzuz, pull- "ing in the two letters for the clerk to read, "then that’s my case, my Lord."

Sergeant Snubbins then addressed the "jury on behalf of the defendant; and a very "long and a very emphatic address he de- "livered, in which he bestowed the highest "possible eulogiums on the conduct and "character of Mr. Pickwick, but inasmuch as "our readers are far better able to form a "correct estimate of that gentleman’s merits "and deserts, than Sergeant Snubbins could "possibly be, we do not feel called upon to "enter at any length into the learned gen- "tleman’s observations. He attempted to "show that the letters which had been ex- "hibited, merely related to Mr. Pickwick’s "dinner, or to the preparations for receiving "him in his apartments on his return from "some country excursion. It is sufficient to "add in general terms, that he did the best "he could for Mr. Pickwick; and the best, "as every body knows, on the infallible au- "thority of the old adage, could do no more. "Mr. Justice Stareleigh summed up, in the "old-established and most approved form. He "read as much of his notes to the jury as he "could decipher on so short a notice, and "made running comments on the evidence "as he went along. If Mrs. Bardell was "right, it was perfectly clear Mr. Pickwick "was wrong, and if they thought the evi- "dence of Mrs. Clupins worthy of credence "they would believe it, and, if they didn’t, "why they wouldn’t. If they were satisfied "that a breach of promise of marriage had "been committed, they would find for the "plaintiff with such damages as they thought "proper; and if, on the other hand, it ap- "peared to them that no promise of marriage "had ever been given, they would find for the "defendant with no damages at all. The "jury then retired to their private room to "talk the matter over, and the judge retired "to his private room, to refresh himself with "a mutton-chop and a glass of sherry. "An anxious quarter of an hour elapsed, "the jury came back, and the judge was "fetched in. Mr. Pickwick put on his spec- "tacles, and gazed at the foreman with an "agitated countenance and a quickly beating "heart.

"Gentlemen," said the individual in "black, “are you all agreed upon your ver- "dict?"

"We are," replied the foreman.

"Do you find for the plaintiff, gentle- "men, or for the defendant?"

"For the plaintiff!"
Mr. Pickwick took off his spectacles, carefully wiped the glasses, folded them into the case, and put them in his pocket; then having drawn on his gloves with great nicety, and stared at the foreman all the while, he mechanically followed Mr. Ferry and the blue bag out of court.

They stopped in a side room while Perker paid the court fees; and here Mr. Pickwick was joined by his friends. Here, too, he encountered Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, rubbing their hands with every token of outward satisfaction.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.
"Well, Sir," said Dodson, for self and partner.
"You imagine you'll get your costs, don't you, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.
Fogg said they thought it rather probable; and Dodson smiled, and said they'd try.
"You may try, and try, and try again, Messrs. Dodson and Fogg," said Mr. Pickwick vehemently, "but not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get from me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtors' prison."
"Ha, ha!" said Dodson. "You'll think better of that before next term, Mr. Pickwick."
"He, he, he! we'll soon see about that, Mr. Pickwick," grinned Fogg.

Speechless with indignation, Mr. Pickwick allowed himself to be led by his solicitor and friends to the door, and there assisted into a hackney-coach, which had been fetched for the purpose, by the ever-watchful Sam Weller.

Sam had put up the steps, and was preparing to jump upon the box, when he felt himself gently touched on the shoulder, and looking round, his father stood before him. The old gentleman's countenance wore a mournful expression, as he shook his head gravely and said, in warning accents—

"I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' business. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

In which Mr. Pickwick thinks he had better go to Bath; and he goes accordingly.

"But surely, my dear Sir," said little Perker, as he stood in Mr. Pickwick's apartment on the morning after the trial—"surely you don't really mean—really and seriously now, and irritation apart—that you won't pay these costs and damages?"
"Not one half-penny," said Mr. Pickwick, firmly: "not one half-penny."
"Hooray for the principle, as the money-lender said ven he wouldn't renew the bill," observed Mr. Weller, who was clearing away the breakfast things.
"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "have the goodness to step down stairs."
"Cert'ly, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, and acting on Mr. Pickwick's gentle hint, Sam retired.

"No, Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, with great seriousness of manner, "my friends here, have endeavoured to dissuade me from this determination, but without avail. I shall employ myself as usual, until the opposite party have the power of issuing a legal process of execution against me; and if they are vile enough to avail themselves of it, and to arrest my person, I shall yield myself up with perfect cheerfulness and content of heart. When can they do this?"
"They can issue execution, my dear Sir, for the amount of the damages and taxed costs, next term," replied Perker, "just two months hence, my dear Sir."
"Very good," said Mr. Pickwick. "Until that time, my dear fellow, let me hear no more of the matter. And now," continued Mr. Pickwick, looking round on his friends with a good-humoured smile, and a sparkle in the eye which no spectacles could dim or conceal, "the only question is, Where shall we go to next?"

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were too much affected by their friend's heroism to offer any reply. Mr. Winkle had not yet sufficiently recovered the recollection of his evidence at the trial, to make any observation on any subject, so Mr. Pickwick paused in vain.

"Well," said that gentleman, "if you leave me to suggest our destination, I say Bath. I think none of us have ever been there."

Nobody had; and as the proposition was warmly seconded by Perker, who considered it extremely probable that if Mr. Pickwick saw a little change and gaiety he would be inclined to think better of his determination, and worse of a debtor's prison, it was carried unanimously, and Mr. Pickwick was at once despatched to the White Horse Cellar, to take five places by the half-past seven o'clock coach next morning.

There were just two places to be had inside, and just three to be had out; so Sam Weller booked for them all, and having exchanged a few compliments with the booking-office clerk on the subject of a pewter half-crown which was tendered him as a portion of his "change," walked back.
Sir!” replied a man with a dirty complexion, and a towel of the same, emerging from the kennel before mentioned.

“Some more toast.”

“Yea, Sir.”

“Buttered toast, mind,” said the gentleman, fiercely.

“Directly, Sir,” replied the waiter.

The gentleman with the whiskers hummed a tune in the same manner as before, and pending the arrival of the toast, advanced to the front of the fire, and, taking his coat tails under his arms, looked at his boots and ruminated.

“I wonder whereabouts in Bath this coach puts up,” said Mr. Pickwick, mildly addressing Mr. Winkle.

“Hum—oh—what’s that?” said the strange man.

“I made an observation to my friend, Sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick, always ready to enter into conversation. “I wondered at what house the Bath coach puts up. Perhaps you can inform me.”

“Are you going to Bath?” said the strange man.

“I am, Sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“And those other gentlemen?”

“They are going also,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Not inside—I’m damned if you’re going inside,” said the strange man.

“Not at all of us,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“No, not at all of you,” said the strange man, emphatically. “I’ve taken two places. If they try to squeeze six people into an infernal box that only holds four, I’ll take a post-chaise and bring an action. I’ve paid my fare. It won’t do; I told the clerk that it wouldn’t do. I know these things have been done. I know they are done every day, but I never was done, and I never will be. Those who know me best, best know it; crush me!” Here the fierce gentleman rang the bell with great violence, and told the waiter he’d better bring the toast in five seconds, or he’d know the reason why.

“My dear Sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, “you’ll allow me to observe that this is a very unnecessary display of excitement. I have only taken places inside, for two.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said the heroesman. “I withdraw my expressions. I tender an apology. There’s my card. Give me your acquaintance.”

“With great pleasure, Sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “We are to be fellow travellers, and I hope we shall find each other’s society mutually agreeable.”

“I hope we shall,” said the fierce gentleman. “I know we shall. I like you. Looks; they please me. Gentlemen, your hands and names. Know me.”
"Of course, an interchange of friendly salutations followed this gracious speech; and the fierce gentleman immediately proceeded to inform the friends in the same short abrupt jerking sentences, that his name was Dowler, that he was going to Bath on pleasure, that he was formerly in the army, that he had now set up in business as a gentleman, that he lived upon the profits, and that the individual for whom the second place was taken, was a personage no less illustrious than Mrs. Dowler, his lady wife.

"She's a fine woman," said Mr. Dowler. "I am proud of her. I have reason."

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of judging," said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"She shall know you. She shall esteem you. I counted her under singular circumstances. I won her through a rush vow. Thus, I saw her; I loved her; I proposed; she refused me. You love another?—Spare my blushes.—I know him.—You do. Very good, if he remains here, I'll skin him.

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick involuntarily.

"Did you skin the gentleman, Sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, with a very pale face.

"I wrote him a note. I said it was a painful thing. And so it was."

"Certainly," interposed Mr. Winkle.

"I said I had pledged my word as a gentleman to skin him. My character was at stake. I had no alternative. As an officer in His Majesty's service, I was bound to do it. I regretted the necessity, but it must be done. He was open to conviction. He saw that the rule of the service was imperative. He fled. I married her. Here's the coach. That's her head."

As Mr. Dowler concluded, he pointed to a stage which had just driven up: from the open window of which a rather pretty face in a bright blue bonnet was looking among the crowd on the pavement, most probably for the rash man himself. Mr. Dowler paid his bill and hurried out with his travelling-caps, coat, and cloak; and Mr. Pickwick and his friends followed to secure their places.

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had sat back part of the coach; Mr. Winkle had got inside; and Mr. Pickwick was preparing to follow him, when Sam Weller came up to his master, and whispering in his ear, begged to speak to him, with an air of the deepest mystery.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "what's the matter now?"

"Here's rather a sum go, Sir," replied Sam.

"What?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"This here, Sir," rejoined Sam, "I'm very much afraid, Sir, that the proprietor of this here coach is playing some impudence with us."

"How is that, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick; "aren't the names down on the way-bill?"

"The names is not only down on the way-bill, Sir," replied Sam, "but they've painted vun on 'em, on the door o' the coach."

As Sam spoke, he pointed to that part of the coach door on which the proprietor's name usually appears; and there, was enough, in gilt letters a goody size, was the magic name of Pickwick.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence; "what a very extraordinary thing!"

"Yes, but that ain't all," said Sam, again directing his master's attention to the coach door; "not content with writin' up Pickwick, they puts 'Moses' afore it, which I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said when they not only took him from his native land, but made him talk the English language afterwards."

"It's odd enough certainly, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "but if we stand talking here, we shall lose our places."

"Wot, ain't nothin' to be done in consequence, Sir?" exclaimed Sam, perfectly aghast at the coolness with which Mr. Pickwick prepared to ensconce himself inside: "Done!" said Mr. Pickwick. "What should be done?"

"Aint nobody to be whopped for takin' this here liberty, Sir?" said Mr. Weller, who had expected that at least he would have been commissioned to challenge the guard and coachman to a pugnacious encounter on the spot.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick eagerly; "not on any account. Jump up to your seat directly."

"I'm very much afraid," muttered Sam to himself, as he turned away, "that seeing this thin' queer's come over the government, or he'd never ha' stood this so quiet. I hope that he's trial hasn't broke his spirit, but it looks bad; very bad." Mr. Weller shook his head gravely; and it is worthy of remark, as an illustration of the manner in which he took this circumstance to heart, that he did not speak another word until the coach reached the Kennington turnpike, which was so long a time for him to remain taciturn, that the fact may be considered wholly unprecedented.

Nothing worthy of special mention occurred during the journey. Mr. Dowler related a variety of anecdotes, all illustrative of his own personal prowess and desperation, and appealed to Mrs. Dowler in corroborating thereof: when Mrs. Dowler invariably brought in, in the form of an appendix, some remarkable facts on circuit
Mr. Pickwick, and Mrs. Pickwick listened with breathless attention. At intervals conversed with Mrs. Dowler, who was a very agreeable and fascinating person. So, what between Mr. Dowler's stories, and Mrs. Dowler's charms, and Mr. Pickwick's good humour, and Mr. Winkle's good listening, the inside contrived to be very companionable all the way.

The outside did as outsiders always do. They were very cheerful and talkative at the beginning of every stage, and very drowsy and sleepy in the middle, and very bright and wakeful again, towards the end.

There was one young gentleman in an India-rubber cloak, who smoked cigars all they; and there was another young gentleman in a parody upon a great coat, who lighted a good many, and feeling obviously uncomfortable, flung them away when he thought nobody was looking at him. There was a third young man on the box who wished to be learned in cattle, and an old one behind, who was familiar with horses. There was a constant succession of Christian names in smock frocks and white coats, who were invited to have a "lift" by the guard, and who knew every town and hamlet on the road and off it; and there was a dinner which would have been cheaper at half-a-crown a mouth, if any number of mouths could have eaten it in the time.

At seven o'clock P. M., Mr. Pickwick and his friends, and Mr. Dowler and his wife, respectively retired to their private sitting-rooms at the White Hart hotel, opposite the great penny-post, Bath, where the waiters, from their distance, might be mistaken for Westminster boys, easily they destroy the illusion by behaving themselves so much better.

Breakfast had scarcely been cleared away on the succeeding morning, when a waiter brought in Mr. Dowler's card, with a request to be allowed permission to introduce a friend. Mr. Dowler at once followed up the delivery of the card, by bringing himself and the friend also.

This friend was a charming young man of not more than fifty, dressed in a very bright blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly-polished boots. A gold eyeglass was suspended from his neck by a short broad black ribbon; a gold snuff-box was lightly opened in his left hand, gold rings illuminated glittered on his fingers; and a large diamond pin set in gold glittered in his shirt front. He had a gold watch, and a gold watch chain with large gold seals; and he carried a plaited ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest, and stiffer; his wig of the glossiest, blackest, and curliest. His snuff was princes' mixture; his scent bouquet des reines. His features were contracted into a perpetual smile; and his teeth were in such perfect order that it was difficult at a small distance to tell the real ones from the false.

"Mr. Pickwick," said Dowler; "my friend Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C. Bantam; Mr. Pickwick. Know each other?"

"Welcome to Ba—ath, Sir. This is indeed an acquisition. Meet welcome to Ba—ath, Sir. It is long—very long, Mr. Pickwick, since you drank the waters. It appears an age, Mr. Pickwick. Re—markable!"

Such were the expressions with which Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C., took Mr. Pickwick's hand; retaining it in his meantime, and shrugging up his shoulders with a combination of bowing, as if he really could not make up his mind to the trial of letting it go again.

"It is a very long time since I drank the waters, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick; "for to the best of my knowledge, I was never here before."

"Never in Ba—ath, Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed the Grand Master, letting the hand fall in astate of inexpressibility. "Never in Ba—ath! He! he! Mr. Pickwick, you are a wag. Not bad, not bad. Good, good. Yes! he! he! Re—markable!!"

"To my shame, I must say that I am perfectly serious," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "I really never was here before."

"Oh, I see," exclaimed the Grand Master, looking extremely pleased; "yes, yes—good, good—better and better. You are the gentleman of whom we have heard. Yes; we know you. Mr. Pickwick; we knew you."

"The report of the trial in those confounded papers," thought Mr. Pickwick; "they have heard all about me."

"You are the gentleman residing at Clapham Green," resumed Bantam; "who lost the use of his limbs from inconsiderately taking cold after hot wine—who would not be moved in consequence of such suffering, and who had the water from the King's Bath bottled at one hundred and three degrees, and sent by wagon to his bed-room in town, where his bathed, soothed, and some day recovered. Very remarkable!"

Mr. Pickwick acknowledged the compliment which the supposition implied, but had the self-denial to repudiate it, notwithstanding; and taking advantage of a | moment's silence, said, "The gentleman,"
begged to introduce his friends, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass—an introduction which of course overwhelmed the M. C. with delight and honour.

"Bantam," said Mr. Dowler, "Mr. Pickwick and his friends are strangers. They must put their names down. Where's the book?"

"The register of the distinguished visitors in Ba—ath will be at the Pump Room this morning at two o'clock," replied the M. C. "Will you guide our friends to that splendid building, and enable me to procure their autographs?"

"I will," rejoined Dowler. "This is a long call. It's time to go. I shall be here again in an hour. Come."

"This is a ball-night," said the M. C. again taking Mr. Pickwick's hand, as he rose to go. "The ball-nights in Ba—ath are moments snatched from Paradise; rendered bewitching by music, beauty, elegance, fashion, etiquette, and—above all, by the absence of trades-people, who are quite inconsistent with Paradise, and who have an amalgamation of themselves at the Guildhall every fortnight, which is, to say the least, remarkable. Good bye, good bye!" and protesting all the way down stairs, that he was most satisfied, and most delighted, and most overpowered, and most flattered, Angelo-Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C., stepped into a very elegant chariot that waited at the door, and rattled off.

At the appointed hour, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, escorted by Dowler, repaired to the Assembly Rooms, and wrote their names down in the book—an instance of condescension at which Angelo Bantam was even more overpowered than before. Tickets of admission to that evening's assembly were to have been prepared for the whole party, but as they were not ready, Mr. Pickwick undertook, despite all the protestations to the contrary of Angelo Bantam, to send Sam for them at four o'clock in the afternoon, to the M. C.'s house, in Queen Square. Having taken a short walk through the city, and arrived at the unanimous conclusion that Park Street was very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, which he cannot get up for the life of him, they returned to the White Hart, and dispatched Sam on the errand to which his master had pledged him.

Sam Weller put on his hat in a very easy and graceful manner, and thrusting his hands in his waistcoat-pockets, walked with great deliberation to Queen Square, whistling as he went along, several of the most popular airs of the day, as arranged by that noble instrument the organ, either month or barrel. Arriving at the number in Queen Square to which he had been directed, he left off whistling, and gave a cheerful knock; which was instantaneous—answered by a powdered-headed footman in a gorgeous livery, and symmetrical stature.

"Is this here Mr. Bantam's, old fellow?" inquired Sam Weller, nothing abashed by the blaze of splendour which burst upon his sight in the person of the powdered-headed footman with the gorgeous livery.

"Why, young man?" was the haughty inquiry of the powdered-headed footman.

"Cos if it is, just you step into him with that ere card, and say Mr. Veller's a waitin', will you, six-foot?" said Sam. And saying it, he very coolly walked into the hall, and sat down.

The powdered-headed footman slammed the door very hard, and scowled very grumpily, but both the man and the scowl were lost upon Sam, who was regarding a mahogany umbrella stand with every outward token of critical approval.

Apperently his master's reception of the card had impressed the powdered-headed footman in Sam's favour, for when he came back from delivering it, he smiled in a friendly manner, and said that the answer would be ready directly.

"Very good," said Sam. "Tell the old gen'm'n not to put himself in a pesepation. No hurry, six-foot. I've had my dinner."

"You dine early, Sir," said the powdered-headed footman.

"I find I get on better at supper when I do," replied Sam.

"Have you been long in Bath, Sir?" inquired the powdered-headed footman. "I have not had the pleasure of hearing of you before."

"I haven't created any very surprisin' sensation here yet," rejoined Sam, "for me and the other flash nibles only come last night."

"Nice place, Sir," said the powdered-headed footman.

"Seems so," observed Sam.

"Pleasant society, Sir," remarked the powdered-headed footman. "Very agreeable servants, Sir."

"I should think they were," replied Sam.

"Affable, unaffected, say-nothin'-to-nobody sort o' fellers."

"Oh, very much so, indeed, Sir," said the powdered-headed footman, evidently taking Sam's remarks as a high compliment. "Very much so indeed. Do you do any thing in this way, Sir?" inquired the tall footman, producing a small snuff-box with a fox's head on the top of it.

"Not without assenting," replied Sam.
"Why, it is difficult, Sir, I confess," said the tall footman. "It may be done by degrees, Sir. Coffee is the best practice. I carried coffee, Sir, for a long time. It looks very like rapspee, Sir."

Here a sharp peal at the bell reduced the powdered-headed footman to the ingeniuous necessity of putting the fox's head in his pocket, and hastening with a humble countenance to Mr. Bastian's "study." By the by, we scarcely ever knew a man who never read or wrote either, who hadn't got some small back parlour which he would call a study.

"There is the answer, Sir," said the powdered-headed footman. "I am afraid you'll find it inconveniently large."

"Don't mention it," said Sam, taking a letter with a small envelope. "It's just possible as exhausted nature may manage to survive it."

"I hope we shall meet again, Sir," said the powdered-headed footman, rubbing his hands, and following Sam out to the door-step.

"You are very obligin', Sir," replied Sam. "Now don't allow yourself to be fatigued beyond your powers, there's a amiable bein'. Consider what you owe to society, and don't let yourself be injured by too much work. For the sake o' your fellor cretares keep yourself as quiet as you can; only think what a loss you would be."

With these pathetic words, Sam Walker departed.

"A very singular young man that," said the powdered-headed footman, looking after Mr. Walker with a countenance which clearly showed he could make nothing of him.

Sam said nothing at all. He winked, shook his head, smiled, winked again; and with an expression of countenance which seemed to denote that he was greatly amused with something or other, walked merrily away.

At precisely twenty minutes before eight o'clock that night, Angelo Cyrus Bastian, Esquire, the Master of the Ceremonies, emerged from his chariot at the door of the Assembly Room, in the same wig, the same teeth, the same eye-glass, the same watch and seals, the same rings, the same shirt-pin, and the same cane. The only observable alterations in his appearance, were that he wore a brighter blue coat, with a white silk lining, black tights, black silk stockings and pumps, and a white waistcoat, and was, if possible, just a thought more scented.

Thus attired, the Master of the Ceremonies, in strict discharge of the all-important office, planted himself in the rooms to receive the company.

Both being full, the company, and the sixpences for tea, poured in shoals. In the ball-room, the long card-room, the octagonal card-room, the staircases, and the passages, the hum of many voices, and the sound of many feet were perfectly bewildering. — Dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music—not of the quadrille band, for it had not yet commenced; but the music of soft tiny footsteps, with now and then a clear merry laugh, low and gentle, but very pleasant to hear in a female voice, whether in Bath or elsewhere. Brilliant eyes, lighted up with pleasurable expectation, gleamed from every side; and look where you would, some exquisite form glided gracefully through the throng, and was no sooner lost, than it was replaced by another, as dainty and bewitching.

In the tea-room, and hovering round the card-tables, were a vast number of queer old ladies and decrepit old gentlemen, discussing all the small-talk and scandal of the day, with an evident relish and gusto which sufficiently bespoke the intensity of the pleasure they derived from the occupation. Mingled with these groups were three or four match-making mammas, appearing to be wholly absorbed by the conversation in which they were taking part, but failing not from time to time to cast an anxious sidelong glance upon their daughters, who, remembering the maternal injunction to make the best use of their time, had already commenced incipient flirtations in the mislaying scarfs, putting on gloves, setting down cups, and so forth; slight matters apparently, but which may be turned to surprising good account by expert practitioners.

Lounging near the doors, and in remote corners, were various knots of silly young men, displaying every variety of posturing and stupidity; amusing all sensible people near them, with their folly and conceit, and happily thinking themselves the objects of general admiration—a wise and merciful dispensation which no good man will quarrel with.

And lastly, seated on some of the back benches, where they had already taken up their positions for the evening, were divers unmarried ladies past their grand climacterie, who, not dancing because there were no partners for them, and not playing cards lest they should be set down as irretrievably single, were in the favourable situation of being able to abuse every body without reflecting on themselves. In short, they could abuse every body, because every body was there. It was a scene of gaiety, glister, and show; of richly dressed people, handsome mirrors, chalked floors, girandoles, and wax-candles; and in all years at the same.
gilding from spot to spot in silent caro",n, bowing obeisantly to that party, nodding
similarly to that, and smiling complacently
on all, was the sprucely attired person of
Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, the Master
of the Ceremonies.

"Stop in the tea-room. Take your six-
penn'orth. They lay on hot water and call
it tea. Drink it," said Mr. Dowler, in a
fixed voice, directing Mr. Pickwick, who
advanced at the head of the little party,
with Mrs. Dowler on his arm. Into the
tea-room Mr. Pickwick turned; and catching
sight of him, Mr. Bantam corkscrewed
his way through the crowd, and welcomed
him with ecstasy.

"My dear Sin, I am highly honored.
Be—ath is favoured. Mrs. Dowler, you
embellish the rooms. I congratulate you
on your feathers. Re—markable!"

"Any body there?" inquired Dowler,
suspiciously.

"Any body! The eli de Ba—ath. Mr.
Pickwick, do you see that lady in the gown
turban?"

"The fat old lady?" inquired Mr. Pick-
wick, innocently.

"Hush, my dear Sir, nobody's fat or
old in Ba—ath. That's the Dowager Lady
Snipshapshap."

"Is it indeed?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"No less a person, I assure you," said
the Master of the Ceremonies. "Hush.
Draw a little nearer, Mr. Pickwick. You
see the splendidly dressed young man com-
ing this way?"

"The one with the long hair, and the
particularly small forehead?" inquired Mr.
Pickwick.

"The same. The richest young man in
Ba—ath at this moment. Young Lord
Mutishad."

"You don't say so?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes. You'll hear his voice in a mo-
ment, Mr. Pickwick. He'll speak to me.
The other gentleman with him, in the red
under-waistcoat and dark moustache, is the
Honourable Mr. Cruston, his besom friend.
How do you do, my Lord?"

"Veway hot, Bantam," said his Lord-
ship.

"It is very warm, my Lord," replied the
M. C.

"Confounded," assented the Honourable
Mr. Cruston.

"Have you seen his Lordship's mail-
cart, Bantam?" inquired the Honourable Mr.
Cruston, after a short pause, during which
young Lord Mutishad had been endeav-
ousing to stare Mr. Pickwick out of coun-
tenance, and Mr. Cruston had been re-
dacting what subject his Lordship could talk
about best.

"Dear me," replied the M. C. "A
mail-cart! What an excellent idea! Re-
markable!"

"Great Heaven!" said his Lord-
ship, "I thought everybody had seen the
new mail-cart; it's the neatest, prettiest,
greatest thing that ever wan upon
wheels, painted red, with a cream pic-
bled.

"With a real box for the letters, and all
complete," said the Honourable Mr. Crust-
on.

"And a little seat in rear, with an iwea
seat, for the dwiver," added his Lordship.

"I drove it over to Bwistol—after the
morning in a crimson coat, with two ser-
vants riding a quarter of a mile behind,
and cumber me if the people didn't waltz
out of their cottages, and swarm my pro-
cess to know if I wasn't the post. Ob-
vious, glorious!"

At this anecdote his Lordship laughed
very heartily, as did the listeners, of course.
Then drawing his arm through that of the
obsequious Mr. Cruston, Lord Mutishad
walked away.

"Delightful young man, his Lordship,
said the Master of the Ceremonies.

"So I should think," rejoined Mr. Pick-
wick, dryly.

The dancing having commenced, the ne-
necessary introductions having been made,
and all preliminaries arranged, Angelo Ban-
tam rejoined Mr. Pickwick, and led him
into the card-room.

Just at the very moment of their entrance,
the Dowager Lady Snipshapshap and two
other ladies of an ancient and white-lace
appearance, were hovering over an unoc-
cupied card-table; and they no sooner set
eyes upon Mr. Pickwick, under the convoy
of Angelo Bantam, than they exchanged
glances with each other, seeing that he was
precisely the very person they wanted to
make up the rubber.

"My dear Bantam," said the Dowager
Lady Snipshapshap, coquettishly, "find us
some nice creature to make up this table;
there's a good soul." Mr. Pickwick has
been told to be looking another way at the
moment; so her Ladyship nodded her head
unto him, and frowned expressively.

"My friend Mr. Pickwick, my Lady, will
be most happy, I am sure, re—markably
so," said the M. C., taking the hint. "Mr.
Pickwick, Lady Snipshapshap—Mrs. Col-
nel Wugby—Miss Bolo."

Mr. Pickwick bowed to each of the ladies,
and finding escape impossible, out. Mr.
Pickwick and Miss Bolo against Lady
Snipshapshap and Mrs. Colonel Wugby.

Just as the turn card was turned up, at
the commencement of the second deal, two
young ladies hurried into the room, and took
their stations on either side of Mrs. Colema.
Wugbsby's chair, where they waited patiently until the hand was over.

"Now, Jane," said Mrs. Colonel Wuggsby, turning to one of the girls, "what is it?"

"I came to ask, Ma, whether I might dance with the youngest Mr. Crawley," whispered the prettier and younger of the two.

"Good God, Jane, how can you think of such things!" replied the mamma, indigantly. "Haven't you repeatedly heard that his father has only eight hundred a year, which dies with him? I am ashamed of you. Not on any account."

"Ma," whispered the other, who was much older than her sister, and very insipid and artificial, "Lord Mutmhed has been introduced to me. I said I thought I wasn't engaged, Ma."

"You're a sweet pet, my love," replied Mrs. Colonel Wuggsby, tapping her daughter's cheek with her fan, "and are always to be trusted. He's immensely rich, my dear. Bless you." With these words, Mrs. Colonel Wuggsby kissed her eldest daughter most affectionately, and frowning in a warning manner upon the other, sorted her cards.

Poor Mr. Pickwick! he had never played with three thorough-paced female card-players before. They were so desperately sharp that they quite frightened him. If he played a wrong card, Miss Bolo looked a small armoury of daggers; if he stopped to consider which was the right one, Lady Shnphs-nuph would throw herself back in her chair, and smile with a mingled glance of impatience and pity to Mrs. Colonel Wuggsby, at which Mrs. Colonel Wuggsby would shrug up her shoulders, and cough, as much as to say she wondered whether he ever would begin. Then, at the end of every hand, Miss Bolo would inquire with a dismal countenance and reproachful sigh, why Mr. Pickwick had not returned that diamond, or led the club, or roughed the spade, or snubbed the heart, or led through the honour, or brought out the ace, or played up to the king, or some such thing; and in reply to all these grave charges, Mr. Pickwick would be wholly unable to plead any justification whatever; having by this time forgotten all about the game. People came and looked on, too, which made Mr. Pickwick nervous. Besides all this, there was a great deal of distracting conversation near the table, between Angelo Bantam and the two Miss Matinters, who, being single and singular, paid great court to the Master of the Ceremonies, in the hope of getting a stray partner now and then. All these things, combined with the noises and interruptions of constant comings in and goings out, made Mr. Pickwick play rather badly; the cards were against him; also, and when they left off at ten minutes past eleven, Miss Bolo rose from the table considerably agitated, and went straight home in a flood of tears, and a sedan-chair.

Being joined by his friends, who one and all protested that they had scarcely ever spent a more pleasant evening, Mr. Pickwick accompanied them to the White Hart, and having soothed his feelings with something hot, went to bed, and to sleep, almost simultaneously.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The chief feature of which will be found to be an authentic version of the Legend of Prince Bladud, and a most extraordinary calamity that befell Mr. Winkle.

As Mr. Pickwick contemplated a stay of at least two months in Bath, he deemed it advisable to take private lodgings for himself and friends for that period; and as a favourable opportunity offered for their securing, on moderate terms, the upper portion of a house in the Royal Crescent, which was larger than they required, Mr. and Mrs. Dowler offered to relieve them of a bed-room and sitting-room. This proposition was at once accepted, and in three days' time they were all located in their new abode, when Mr. Pickwick began to drink the waters with the utmost assiduity. Mr. Pickwick took them systematically. He drank a quarter of a pint before breakfast, and then walked up a hill; and another quarter of a pint after breakfast, and then walked down a hill; and after every fresh quarter of a pint, Mr. Pickwick declared, in the most solemn and emphatic terms, that he felt a great deal better, whereas his friends were very much delighted, though they had not been previously aware that there was anything the matter with him.

The great parlor-room is a spacious saloon, ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music gallery, and a Tompion clock, and a statue of Nash, and a golden inscription, to which all the water-drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity. There is a large bar with a marble vase, out of which the pumper gets the water, and a member of yellow-looking tumblers, out of which the company get it; and it is a most edifying and satisfactory sight to behold the perseverance and gravity with which they swallow it. There are baths near at hand, in which a part of the company wash themselves, and a band-plays afterwards, so condescending the remainder, on their leaving them. There is another pump-room, into which the ladies enter, and which

"is nearer the coach house."

"...and..."
wheeled, in such an astonishing variety of chairs and cushions, that any adventurous individual who goes in with the regular number of toes, is in imminent danger of coming out without them; and there is a third into which the quiet people go, for it is less noisy than either. There is an immensity of promenading, on crutches and off, with sticks and without: and a great deal of conversation, and liveliness, and pleasantry.

Every morning, the regular water-drinkers, Mr. Pickwick among the number, met each other in the pump-room, took their quarter of a pint, and walked constitutionally. At the afternoon’s promenade Lord Mutmehed and the Honourable Mr. Crad-<br>ton, the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph, Mrs. Colonel Wugby, and all the great people, and all the morning water-drinkers, met in grand assemblage. After this, they walked out, or drove out, or were pushed out in bath chairs, and met one another again. After this, the gentlemen went to the reading-rooms and met divisions of the mass. After this, they went home. If it were theatre night, perhaps they met at the theatre; if it were assembly night, they met at the rooms; and if it were neither, they met the next day—a very pleasant routine, with perhaps a slight tinge of sameness.

Mr. Pickwick was sitting up by himself, after a day spent in this manner, making entries in his journal, his friends having retired to bed, when he was roused by a gentle tap at the room door.

"Beg your pardon, Sir," said Mrs. Craddock, the landlady, peeping in: "but did you want anything more, Sir?"

"Nothing more, Ma’am," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"My young girl is gone to bed, Sir," said Mrs. Craddock; "and Mr. Dowler is good enough to say that he’ll sit up for Mrs. Dowler, as the party isn’t expected to be over till late; so I was thinking that if you wanted nothing more, Mr. Pickwick, I would go to bed."

"By all means, Ma’am," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Wish you good night, Sir," said Mrs. Craddock.

"Good night, Ma’am," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

Mrs. Craddock closed the door, and Mr. Pickwick resumed his writing.

In half an hour’s time, the entries were concluded. Mr. Pickwick carefully rubbed the last page on the blotting-paper, shut up the book, wiped his pen on the bottom of the inside of his coat-tail, and opened the drawer of the inlaid stand, and there they were folded so, that the title, which was in a good round hand, was fully disclosed to him. Seeing from this, that it was no private document; and as it seemed to relate to Bath, and was very short, Mr. Pickwick unfolded it, lighted his bed-room candle, that it might burn up well by the time he finished; and drawing his chair nearer the fire, read as follows:

The True Legend of Prince Budud.

"Less than two hundred years ago, on one of the public baths in this city, there appeared an inscription in honour of its mighty founder, the renowned Prince Budud. That inscription is now erased.

"For many hundred years before that time, there had been handed down from age to age, an old legend, that the illustrious Prince being afflicted with leprosy, on his return from reaping a rich harvest of knowledge in ancient Athens, shunned the court of his royal father, and consorted modestly with husbandmen and pigs. Among the herd (so said the legend) was a pig of grave and solemn countenance, with whom the Prince had a fellow-feeling—for he too was wise—a pig of thoughtful and reserved demeanour; an animal superior to his fellows, whose grunt was terrible, and whose bite was sharp; the young Prince sighed deeply as he looked upon the countenance of the majestic swine—he thought of his royal father, and his eyes were bedewed with tears.

"This sagacious pig was fond of bathing in rich moist mud. Not in summer as common pigs do now, to cool themselves, and did even in those distant ages (which is a proof that the light of civilisation had already begun to dawn, though feebly)—but in the old sharp days of winter. His coat was ever so sleek, and his complexion so clear, that the Prince resolved to essay the purifying qualities of the same water that his friend resorted to. He made the trial. Beneath that black mud bubbled the hot springs of Bath. He washed and was cured. Hastening to his father’s court, he paid his respects, and returning quickly hither, founded this city, and its famous baths.

"He sought the pig with all the ardour of their ancient friendship—but alas! the waters had been his death. He had imprudently taken a bath at too high a temperature, and the natural philosopher was no more! He was succeeded by Pliny, who also fell a victim to his thirst for knowledge.

"This was the legend. Listen to the true one.

"A great many centuries since, there
furnished in great state the famous and renowned Lud Hudibras, king of Britain. He was a mighty monarch. The earth shook when he walked, he was so very stout. His people basked in the light of his countenance, it was so red and glowing. He was, indeed, every inch a king. And there were a good many inches of him too, for although he was not very tall, he was a remarkable size round, and the inches that he wanted in height, he made up in circumstance. If any degenerate monarch of modern times could be in any way compared with him, I should say the venerable King Cole would be that illustrious potentate.

"This good king had a queen, who eighteen years before, had a son, who was called Bladud. He was sent to a preparatory seminary in his father's dominions, until he was ten years old, and was then dispatched in charge of a trusting messenger, to a finishing school at Athens; and as there was no extra charge for remaining during the holidays, and no notice required previous to the removal of a pupil, there he remained for eight long years, at the expiration of which time, the king his father sent the lord chamberlain over, to settle the bill, and to bring him home, which the lord chamberlain doing, was received with shouts, and pensioned immediately.

"When King Lud saw the Prince his son, and found he had grown up such a fine young man, he perceived at once what a grand thing it would be to have him married without delay, so that his children might be the means of perpetuating the glorious race of Lud down to the very latest ages of the world. With this view, he sent a special embassy, composed of great noblemen who had nothing particular to do, and wanted lucrative employment, to a neighbouring king, and demanded his fair daughter in marriage for his son, stating at the same time that he was anxious to be on the most affectionate terms with his brother and friend, but that if they couldn't agree in arranging this marriage, he should be under the unpleasant necessity of invading his kingdom, and putting his eyes out. To this, the other king (who was the weaker of the two) replied that he was very much obliged to his friend and brother for all his goodness and magnanimity, and that his daughter was quite ready to be married, whenever Prince Bladud liked to come and fetch her.

"This answer no sooner reached Britain, than the whole nation were transported with joy. Nothing was heard on all sides but the sounds of feasting and revelry,—except the chiseling of money as it was paid in by the people to the collector of the Royal Treasuries, to defray the expenses of the happy ceremony. It was upon this occasion that King Lud, seated on the top of his throne in full council, rose in the exuberance of his feelings, and commanded the lord chief justice to order in the richest wines and the court minstrels: an act of graciousness which has been, through the ignorance of traditional historians, attributed to King Cole, in those celebrated lines in which his majesty is represented as calling for his pipe, and calling for his pot, and calling for his fiddlers three.

Which is an obvious injustice to the memory of King Lud, and a dishonest exaltation of the virtues of King Cole.

"But in the midst of all this festivity and rejoicing, there was one individual present, who tasted not when the sparkling wines were poured forth, and who danced not when the minstrels played. This was no other than Prince Bladud himself, in honour of whose happiness a whole people were, at that very moment, straining alike their throats and purse-strings. The truth was, that the Prince, forgetting the unbounded right of the minister for foreign affairs to fall in love in his behalf, had, contrary to every precedent of policy and diplomacy, already fallen in love on his own account, and privately contracted himself unto the fair daughter of a noble Athenian.

"Here we have a striking example of one of the manifold advantages of civilisation and refinement. If the prince had lived in later days, he might at once have married the object of his father's choice, and then set himself seriously to work, to relieve himself of the burden which rested heavily upon him. He might have endeavoured to break her heart by a systematic course of insult and neglect; or, if the spirit of her sex, and the proud consciousness of her many wrongs had upheld her under this ill treatment, he might have sought to take her life, and so get rid of her effectually. But neither mode of relief suggested itself to Prince Bladud — so he solicited a private audience, and told his father.

"It is an old prerogative of kings to govern every thing but their passions. King Lud flew into a frightful rage, tossed his crown up to the ceiling, and caught it again — for in those days kings kept their crowns, on their heads, and not in the Tower — stamped the ground, rapped his forehead, wondered why his own flesh and blood rebelled against him, and, finally calling on his guards, ordered the Prince away to instant confinement in a lofty dungeon — a course of treatment which the kings of old very generally pursued towards their sons when their matrimonial inclinations..."
POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF

William hazed had been shut
up in the lofty turret for the greater part
of a year, with no better prospect before
his bodily eyes than a stone wall, or before
his mental vision than prolonged imprison-
ment, he naturally began to ruminate on a
plan of escape, which after months of pre-
paration he managed to accomplish; con-
siderately leaving his dinner-knife in the
heart of his gaoler, lest the poor fellow
(who had a family) should be considered
privy to his flight, and punished accord-
ingly by the infuriated king.

"The monarch was raving at the loss of
his son. He knew not on whom to vent
his grief, and he had, until fortunately be-
thinking himself of the Lord Chamberlain
who had brought him home, he struck off
his pension and his head together.

"Meanwhile the young Prince, effectu-
ally disguised, wandered on foot through
his father's dominions, cheered and sup-
pported in all his hardships by sweet
thoughts of the Athenian maid, who was
the innocent cause of his weary trials.
One day he stopped to rest in a country
village; and seeing that there were gay
scenes going forward on the green, and
gay faces passing to and fro, ventured to
inquire of a reveller who stood near him,
the reason of this rejoicing.

"Know you not, O stranger," was the
reply, 'of the recent proclamation of our
gracious king?"

"Proclamation! No. What procla-
mation?' rejoined the Prince—for he had tra-
velled along the bye and little-frequented
ways, and knew nothing of what had passed
upon the public roads, such as they were.

"Why?" replied the peasant, 'the for-
ign lady that our Prince wished to wed,
is married to a foreign noble of her own
country, and the king proclaims the fact,
and a great public festival besides; for
now, of course, Prince Bladud will come
back and marry the lady his father chose,
who they say is as beautiful as the noon-day
sun. Your health, Sir. God save the King.'

"The prince remained to hear no more.
He fled, flung and plunged into the
thickest recesses of a neighbouring
wood. On, on he wandered, night and
day, beneath the blazing sun, and the cold
dark moon; through the heat of noon, and
the damp cold of night; in the grey light
of morn, and the red glare of eve. So
her-deads was he of time or object, that
being blemished for ever, he wandered as
far out of his way as Bath.

"There was no city where Bath stands,
then. There was no vestige of human
habitation, or sign of man's resides, to beat
the name; but there was the same noble
country, the same broad expense of hill
and dale, the same beautiful channel steal-
ing on, far away; the same lofty mountains
which, like the troubles of life, viewed at
distance, and partially obscured by the
bright mist of its morning, lose their rug-
gedness and superlub, and seem all ease
and softness. Moved by the gentle beauty
of the scene, the Prince sank upon the
green turf, and bathed his swollen feet in
his tears.

"'Oh!' said the unhappy Bladud, clas-
ping his hands, and mournfully raising his
eyes towards the sky, 'would that my
wanderings might end here; would that
these grievous tears, which I now
mourn hope misplaced, and love despised,
might flow in peace for ever!'

"The wish was heard. It was in the
time of the heathen deities, who used oc-
casionally to take people at their words with
a promptness in some cases extremely aw-
ward. The ground opened beneath the
Prince's feet; he sank into the chasm, and
instantaneously it closed upon his head for
ever, save where his hot tears welled up
through the earth, and where they have con-
tinued to gush forth ever since.

"It is observable that, to this day, large
numbers of elderly ladies and gentlemen
who have been disappointed in pursuing
partners, and almost as many young ones
who are anxious to obtain them, repair se-
nually to Bath to drink the waters, from
which they derive much strength and com-
fort. This is most complimentary to the vir-
tue of Prince Bladud's tears, and strongly
corroborative of the veracity of this legend.
the more you think of this, the more your hopes of their speedy arrival decline. Clocks tick so loud, too, when you are sitting up alone, and you seem—at least we always do—as if you had got an under garment of cobwebs on. First, something tickles your right knee, and then the same sensation irritates your left. You have no sooner changed your position, than it comes again in the arm, and when you have fidgeted your limbs into all sorts of queer shapes, you have a sudden release in the nose, which you rub as if to rub it off—as there is no doubt you would if you could. Eyes, too, are mere personal inconveniences, and the wick of one candle gets an inch and a half long, while you are snuffing the other. These, and various other little nervous annoyances, when stirred up and wound up a length of time after everybody else has gone to bed, any thing but a cheerful amusement.

This was just Mr. Dowler's opinion, as he sat before the fire, and felt honestly indignant with all the intruding people at the party, who were keeping him up. He was not put into better humour either, by the reflection that he had taken into his head, early in the evening, to think he had got an ache there, and so stopped at home. At length, after several droppings asleep, and fallings forward towards the bars, and catchings backward soon enough to prevent being branded in the face, Mr. Dowler made up his mind that he would just throw himself on the bed in the back-room, and think—not sleep, of course.

"I'm a heavy sleeper," said Mr. Dowler, as he flung himself on the bed. "I must keep awake;—I suppose I shall hear a knock here. Yes. I thought so. I can hear the watchman. There he goes. Fainter now, though. A little fainter. He's turning the corner. Ah!"  When Mr. Dowler arrived at this point, he turned the corner at which he had been so long hesitating, and fell fast asleep.

Just as the clock struck three, there were blown into the crescent a sedan-chair, with Mrs. Dowler inside, borne by one short fat chairman, and one long thin one, who had much ado all their way to keep their bodies perpendicular, to say nothing of the chair; sat on that high ground, and in the crescent, was the wind swept round about as if it were going to tear the paving stones up; its fury was tremendous. They were very glad to set the chair down, and give a good round double-knock at the street door.

"They waited some time; but nobody came.

"Servants is in the arms o' Porpus, I think," said the short chairman, warming his hands at the attendant link-boy's torch.

"I wish he'd give 'em a squeeze and wake 'em," observed the long one.

"Knock again, will you, if your pleasure," cried Mrs. Dowler from the chair. "Knock two or three times, if you please."

The short man was quite willing to get the job over as soon as possible; so he stood on the step and gave four or five most startling double-knocks, of eight or ten knocks a piece, while the long man went into the road, and looked up at the windows for a light.

Nobody came. It was all as silent and as dark as ever.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Dowler. "You must knock again, if you please."

"There ain't a bell, is there, Ma'am?" said the short chairman.

"Yes, there is," interposed the link-boy, "I've been a ringing it ever so long."

"It's only a broken one," said Mrs. Dowler.

"The wire's broken."

"I wish the servants' heads were," growled the long man.

"I must trouble you to knock again, if you please," said Mrs. Dowler, with the utmost politeness.

The short man did knock again several times, without producing the smallest effect. The tall man, growing very impatient, then relieved him, and kept on peremptorily knocking double-knocks of two and three each, like an insane postman.

At length Mr. Winkle began to dream that he was at a club, and that the members being very restless, the chairman was obliged to hammer the table a good deal to preserve order; then he had a confused notion of an auction room where there were no bidders, and the auctioneer was buying every thing in; and ultimately he began to think it just within the bounds of possibility that somebody might be knocking at the street door. To make quite certain, however, he remained quiet in bed for ten minutes or so, and listened; and when he had counted twenty-three hundred and thirty knocks, he felt quite satisfied, and gave himself a great deal of credit for being so watchful.

"Tap, tap—tap, tap, tap, tap—tap—tap, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, ra!" wanted the knocker.

Mr. Winkle jumped out of bed, wondering very much what could possibly be the matter, and hastily putting on his stockings and slippers, fastened his dressing-gown round his knees, lighted a first candle from the web-light that was burning in the fire-place, and hurried down stairs.

"There's somebody comin' at last, Ma'am," said the short chairman.

"I wish I was behind him with a broad-awl," muttered the long one.

"Who's there?" cried Mr. Winkle, and doing the chair.

"Don't step to ask questions, ma'am.

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blow," replied the long man, with great dis-
gust, taking it for granted that the inquisi-
tor was a footman; "open the door."

"Come, look sharp, timber eye-lids," added the other, encouragingly.

Mr. Winkle being half asleep, obeyed the
command mechanically, opened the door a
little, and peeped out. The first thing he
saw was the red glare of the link-boy's
torch. Startled by the sudden fear that the
house might be on fire, he hastily threw the
door wide open, and holding the candle
above his head, stared eagerly before him,
not quite certain whether what he saw was
a sedan-chair or a fire-engine. At this in-
stant there came a violent gust of wind: the
light was blown out; Mr. Winkle felt him-
self irresistibly impelled on to the steps,
and the door blew to, with a loud crash.

"Well, young man, now you have done
it," said the short chairman.

Mr. Winkle catching sight of a lady's
face at the window of the sedan, turned
hastily round, pried the knocker with all his
might and main, and called frantically upon
the chairman to take the chair away again.

"Take it away, take it away," cried Mr.
Winkle. "Here's somebody coming out of
another house; put me into the chair. Hide
me—a something with me."

All this time he was shivering with cold,
and every time he raised his head to the
knocker, the wind took the dressing-gown
in a most unpleasant manner.

"The people are coming down the cas-
cement now. There are ladies with 'em! cover
me up with something. Stand before me,"
replied Mr. Winkle. But the chairmen were
too much exhausted with laughing to affor-
d him the slightest assistance, and the ladies
were every moment approaching nearer and
nearer.

Mr. Winkle gave a last hopeless knock;
the ladies were only a few doors off. He
threw away the extinguished candle which
all this time he had held above his head,
and fairly bolted into the sedan-chair where
Mrs. Dowler was.

Now, Mrs. Craddock had heard the
knocking—and the voices at last; and just
waiting to put something smarter on her
head than her night-cap, ran down into the
front drawing-room to make sure that it was
the right party; and threw up the window-
shut just as Mr. Winkle was rushing into
the chair; she so soon caught sight of what
was going forward below, that she
steered a vehemence and dismal shriek, and
impressed Mr. Dowler to get up directly, for
his wife was running away with another
gentleman.

Upon this, Mr. Dowler bounced off the
bed as abruptly as an India-rubber ball, and

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soul with one hand, while, he gently waved
the other in a condescending manner,
"How do you do, Sir?"
"Why, reasonably conwalessent," replied Sam. "How do you find yourself, my dear fellor?"
"Only so so," said Mr. John Smauker.
"Ah, you've been a workin' too hard," observed Sam. "I was fearful you would it won't do, you know; you must not give way to that 'ere uncompromisin' spirit o' your'n."
"It's not so much that, Mr. Weller," replied Mr. John Smauker, "as bad wines; I'm afraid I've been dissipating."
"Oh! that's it, is it!" said Sam; "that's a very bad complaint, that."
"And yet the temptation, you see, Mr. Weller," observed Mr. John Smauker.
"Ah, to be sure," said Sam.
"Plunged into the very vortex of society, you know Mr. Weller," said Mr. John Smauker with a sigh.
"Dreadful indeed!" rejoined Sam.
"But it's always the way," said Mr. John Smauker; "if your destiny leads you into public life, and public station, you must expect to be subjected to temptations which other people is free from, Mr. Weller."
"Precisely what my uncle said, van be went into the public line," remarked Sam, "and wery right the old gen'lm'n was, for he drank himself to death in somethin' less than a quarter."
Mr. John Smauker looked deeply indignant at any parallel being drawn between himself and the deceased gentleman in question; but as Sam's face was in the most impassive state of calmness, he thought better of it, and looked affable again.
"Perhaps we had better be walking," said Mr. Smauker, consulting a copper time-piece which dwelt at the bottom of a deep watch-pocket, and was raised to the surface by means of a black string, with a copper key at the other end.
"P'raps we had," replied Sam, "or they'll overdo the swarvy, and that'll spit it."
"Have you drank the watern, Mr. Weller?" inquired his companion, as they walked towards High Street.
"Once," replied Sam.
"What did you think of 'em, Sir?"
"I thought they was particlery unpleasant," replied Sam.
"Ah," said Mr. John Smauker, "you disliked the kilibbeate taste, perhaps!"
"I don't know much about that 'ere," said Sam. "I thought they'd a very strong flavour o' warm flat-toms."
"That is the kilibbeate, Mr. Weller," observed Mr. John Smauker, contemptuously.
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"Well, if it is, it's a very inexpensive word that's all," said Sam. "It may be, but I ain't much in the chivalrous line of myself, so I can't say." And here, to the great horror of Mr. John Smucker, Sam Weller began to whistle.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Weller," said Mr. John Smucker, agonized at the exceedingly ungenteel sound. "Will you take my arm?"

"Thank ye, you're very good, but I won't deprive you of it," replied Sam. "I've rather a way o' puttin' my hands in my pockets, if it's all the same to you." As Sam said this, he suited the action to the word, and whistled far louder than before.

"This way," said his new friend, apparently much relieved as they turned down a by-street; "we shall soon be there."

"Shall we?" said Sam, quiety unmoveable by the announcement of his close vicinity to the select footmen of Bath.

"Yes," said Mr. John Smucker. "Don't be alarmed, Mr. Weller."

"Oh no," said Sam.

"You'll see some very handsome uniforms, Mr. Weller," continued Mr. John Smucker; "and perhaps you'll find some of the gentlemen rather high at first, you know, but they'll soon come round."

"That's very kind on 'em," replied Sam.

"And you know," resumed Mr. John Smucker, with an air of sublime protection, "you know, as you're a stranger, perhaps they'll be rather hard upon you at first."

"They won't be very cruel, though, will they?" inquired Sam.

"No, no," replied Mr. John Smucker, pulling forth the sixpence, and taking a gentlemanly pinch. "There are some funny dogs among us, and they will have their jokes, you know; but you mustn't mind 'em, you mustn't mind 'em."

"I'll try and bear up against such a regular knock-down o' talent," replied Sam.

"That's right," said Mr. John Smucker, putting up the fox's head, and elevating his own. "I'll stand by you."

By this time they had reached a small green-grocer's shop, which Mr. John Smucker entered, followed by Sam, who the moment he got behind him relapsed into a series of the very broadest and most unmutilated grins, and manifested other demonstrations of being in a highly enviable state of inward merriment.

Crossing the green-grocer's shop, and putting their hats on the stairs in the little passage behind it, they walked into a small parlour; and here the full splendour of the scene burst upon Mr. Weller's view.

A couple of tables were put together in the middle of the parlour, covered with three or four cloths of different ages and dates of washing, arranged to look as much like one as the circumstances of the case would allow. Upon these, were laid knives and forks for six or eight people. Some of the knife-handles were green, others red, and a few more yellow; and as all the forks were black, the combination of colours was exceedingly striking. Plate in a corresponding manner of guessers were warming behind the fender; and the guess themselves were warming before it, the chief and most important of whom appeared to be a stoutish gentleman in a bright crimson coat with long tails, vividly red breeches, and a cocked hat, who was standing with his back to the fire, and had apparently just entered, for besides retaining his cocked hat on his head, he carried in his hand a high stick, such as gentlemen of his profession usually elevate in a sloping position over the roofs of carriages.

"Smucker, my lad—you're fine," said the gentleman with the cocked hat.

Mr. Smucker described the top joint of his right-hand little finger into that of the gentleman with the cocked hat, and said he was charmed to see him look so well.

"Well, they tell me I am looking pretty blooming," said the man with the cocked hat, "and it's a wonder, too. I've been following our old woman about two hours a-day for the last fortnight, and if a constant contemplation of the manner in which she hooks and eyes that infernal lavender coloured old gown of her's behind, isn't enough to throw any body into a low state of despondency for life, stop my quarter's salary."

At this, the assembled selections laughed very heartily; and one gentleman in a yellow waistcoat, with a coat-trimming border, whispered a neighbour in green felt smalls, that Tuckel was in spirits to-night.

"By-the-by," said Mr. Tuckel. "Smucker, my boy, you?"—The remainder of the sentence was forwarded into Mr. John Smucker's ear, by whispers.

"Oh, dear me, I quite forgot," said Mr. John Smucker. "Gentlemen, my friend Mr. Weller."

"Sorry to keep the fire off you, Weller," said Mr. Tuckel, with a familiar nod. "Hope you're not cold, Weller."

"Not by so many degrees," replied Sam.

"It'll be a very chilly subject to feel cold when you stood opposite. You'd scarce see it if they put you behind the fender in the dining-room at a public office, you would."

As this retort appeared to convey rather a personal allusion to Mr. Tuckel's crimson livery, that gentleman looked majestic for a few seconds, but gradually edging away from the fire, broke into a forced smile, and said it wasn't bad.
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"Very much obliged for your good opinion, Sir," replied Sam. "We shall get on by degrees, I desay. We'll try a better one, by-and-by."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a gentleman in orange-coloured plush, accompanied by another seconson in purple cloth, with a great extent of stocking. The new-comers having been welcomed by the old ones, Mr. Tucke put the question that supper be ordered in, which was carried unanimously. The green-grocer and his wife then arranged upon the table a boiled leg of mutton, hot, with caper sauce, turnips and potatoes. Mr. Tucke took the chair, and was supported at the other end of the board by the gentleman in orange plush. The green-grocer put on a pair of wash-leather gloves to hand the plates with, and stationed himself behind Mr. Tucke's chair.

"Harris," said Mr. Tucke, in a commanding tone.

"Sir," said the green-grocer.

"Have you got your gloves on?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Then take the kiver off."

"Yes, Sir."

The green-grocer did as he was told, with a show of great humility, and obsequiously handed Mr. Tucke the carving-knife; in doing which, he accidentally gaped.

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" said Mr. Tucke, with great asperity.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," replied the crest-fallen green-grocer, "I didn't mean to do it, Sir; I was too very last last night, Sir."

"I tell you what my opinion of you is," Harris, said Mr. Tucke, with a most impressive air; "you're a wulfar beast."

"I hope, gentlemen," said Harris, "that you won't be severe with me, gentlemen. I'm very much obliged to you indeed, gentlemen, for your patronage, and also for your recommendations, gentlemen, whenever additional assistance in waiting is required. I hope, gentlemen, I give satisfaction."

"No, you don't, Sir," said Mr. Tucke. "Very far from it, Sir."

"We consider you an inattentive resek," said the gentleman in the orange plush.

"And a low thief," added the gentleman in the green-folli smallia.

"And an unpreventable blaygard," added the gentleman in purple.

The poor green-grocer bowed very humbly while these little epithets were bestowed upon him, in the true spirit of the very smallest tyranny; and when every body had said something to show his superiority, Mr. Tucke proceeded to carve the leg of mutton, and to help the company.

This important business of the evening had hardly commenced, when the door was thrown briskly open, and another gentleman in a light-blue suit, and leaden buttons, made his appearance.

"Against the rules," said Mr. Tucke. "Too late, too late."

"No, no; positively I couldn't help it," said the gentleman in blue. "I appeal to the company—an affair of gallantry bow—an appointment at the theather."

"Oh, that indeed," said the gentleman in the orange plush.

"Yes; raly now, honour bright," said the man in blue. "I made a promise to fetch our youngest daughter at half-past ten, and she is such an unsoundly line gal, that I raly hadn't the art to disappint her. No offence to the present company, Sir, but a petticl, Sir—a petticl, Sir, is irrevocable."

"I begin to suspect there's something in that quarter," said Tucke, as the new comer took his seat next Sam. "I've remarked once or twice, that she leans very heavy on your shoulder when she gets in and out of the carriage."

"Oh raly, raly, Tucke, you shouldn't," said the man in blue. "It's not fair. I may have said to one or two friends that she was a very divine creschure, and had refused one or two offers without any cobbobus cause, but—no, no, no, indeed, Tucke—before strangers, too—it's not right—you shouldn't. Delicacy, my dear friend, delicacy. And the man in blue, pulling up his neckerchief and adjusting his coat cuffs, nodded and frowned as if there were more behind which he could say if he liked, but was bound in honour to suppress.

The man in blue being a light-haired, stiff-necked, free and easy sort of footman, with a swaggering air and pert face, had attracted Mr. Weller's especial attention at first, but when he began to come out in this way, Sam felt more than ever disposed to cultivate his acquaintance; so he launched himself into the conversation at once, with characteristic independence.

"Your health, Sir," said Sam. "I like your conversation much. I think it's very pretty."

At this the man in blue smiled as if it were a compliment he was well used to; but looked approvingly on Sam at the same time, and said he hoped he should be better acquainted with him, for without any Fatery at all he seemed to have the making of a very nice fellow about him—just the man of his own heart.

"You're very good, Sir," said Sam.

"What a lucky felier you are."

"How do you mean?" inquired the gentleman in blue.
"That 'ere young lady," replied Sam. "She knows wot's wot, she does. Ah, I see." Mr. Weller closed one eye, and shook his head from side to side in a manner which was highly gratifying to the personal vanity of the gentleman in blue. "I'm afraid you're a cunning fellow, Mr. Weller," said that individual. "No, no," said Sam. "I leave all that to you. It's a great deal more in your way than mine, as the gen'man on the right side of the garden wall said to the man on the wrong un, ven the mad bull was a cum'in' up the lane." "Well, well, Mr. Weller," said the gentleman in blue, "I think she has remarked my air and manner, Mr. Weller." "I shouldn't think she couldn't wery well be off o' that," said Sam. "Have you any little thing of that kind in hand, Sir?" inquired the favoured gentleman in blue, drawing a toothpick from his waistcoat-pocket. "Not exactly," said Sam. "There's no daughters at my place, else o' course I should ha' made up to run on 'em. As it is, I don't think I can do with any thin' under a female markis. I might take up with a young coman o' large property as hadn't a title, if she made wery fierce love to me—not else." "Of course not, Mr. Weller," said the gentleman in blue, "one can't be troubled, you know; and we know, Mr. Weller—we, who are men of the world—that a good uniform must work its way with the women, sooner or later. In fact, that's the only thing, between you and I, that makes the service worth entering into." "Just so," said Sam. "That's it, o' course." When this confidential dialogue had gone thus far, glasses were placed round, and every gentleman ordered what he liked best, before the public-house shut up. The gentleman in blue and the man in orange, who were the chief exquisites of the party, ordered "cold scrub and water," but with the others, gin and water sweet, appeared to be the favourite beverage. Sam called the green-grocer a "desperate willin,'" and ordered a large bowl of punch—two circumstances which seemed to raise him very much, in the opinion of the selections. "Gentlemen," said the man in blue, with an air of the most consummate dandyism, "I'll give you the ladies; come." "Hear, hear!" said Sam. "The young hireling." Here there was a loud cry of "Order," and Mr. John Smawker, as the gentleman who had introduced Mr. Weller into that company, begged to inform him that the word ne had just made use of, was unpatrio-

"Which word was that 'ere, Sir?" inquired Sam. "Missizes, Sir," replied Mr. John Smawker, with an alarming frown. "We don't recognise such distinctions here." "Oh, very good," said Sam; "then I'll amend the observation, and call 'em the dear creatures, if Blazes will allow me." Some doubt appeared to exist in the mind of the gentleman in the green coil smalls, whether the chairman could be legally appealed to as "Blazes," but as the company seemed more disposed to stand upon their own rights than his, the question was not raised. The man with the cocked hat breathed short, and looked long at Sam, but apparently thought it as well to say nothing, in case he should get the worst of it. After a short silence, a gentleman in an embroidered coat, reaching down to his heels, and a waistcoat of the same, which kept one half of his legs warm, stirred his gin and water with great energy, and pacing himself up and down, all at once, by a violent effort, said he was desirous of offering a few remarks to the company, whereupon the person in the cocked hat had no doubt that the company would be very happy to hear any remarks that the man in the long coat might wish to offer. "I feel a great delicacy, gentlemen, in coming for'ard," said the man in the long coat, "having the misfortune to be a coachman, and being only admitted as a hereditary member of these agreeable swards, but I do feel myself bound, gentlemen—drew into a corner, if I may use the expression—to make known an affliction circumstance which has come to my knowledge; which has happened, I may say, within the scope of my every day contemplation. Gentlemen, our friend Mr. Whiffers (every body looked at the individual in oranges) our friend Mr. Whiffers has resigned." Universal astonishment fell upon the hearers. Each gentleman looked in his neighbour's face, and then transferred his glance to the upstanding coachman. "You may be well sapparised, gentlemen," said the coachman. "I will not wenchure to state the reasons of this irre-

riageable loss to the service, but I will beg Mr. Whiffers to state them himself, for the improvement and imitation of his admiring friends." The suggestion being loudly approved of, Mr. Whiffers explained. He said he certainly could have wished to have continued to hold the appointment which he had just resigned. The uniform was extremely rich and expensive, the females of the family was most agreeable, and the duties of the situation was not, he was bound to say, too heavy; the principal service that was required of him, being that he should
look out of the hall window as much as possible, in company with another gentleman, who had also resigned. He could have wished to have spared the company the painful and disgusting detail on which he was about to enter, but, as the explanation had been demanded of him, he had no alternative but to state, boldly and distinctively, that he had been required to eat cold meat.

It is impossible to conceive the disgust which this arousal awakened in the bosoms of the hearers.真是 cried of "Shame!" mingled with groans and hisses, prevailed for a quarter of an hour at least.

Mr. Whiffen then added that he feared a portion of this outrage might be traced to his own forbearance and accommodating disposition. He had a distinct recollection of having once consented to eat salt butter, and he had, moreover, on an occasion of sudden sickness in the house, so far forgotten himself as to carry a coal- scuttle up to the second floor. He treated he had not lowered himself in the good opinion of his friends by this frank confession of his faults; and he hoped the promptness with which he had rectified the last unmanly outrage on his feelings to which he had referred, would reinstate him in their good opinion, if he had.

Mr. Whiffen's address was responded to with a shout of admiration, and the health of the interesting martyr was drunk in a most enthusiastic manner; for this the martyr returned thanks, and proposed their visitor, Mr. Weller—a gentleman whom he had not the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with, but who was the friend of Mr. John Smanker, which was a sufficient letter of recommendation to any society of gentlemen whatever, or wherever. On this account he should have been disposed to have given Mr. Weller's health with all the honours, if his friends had been drinking wine; but as they were taking spirits, just by way of a change, and as it might be inconvenient to empty a tumbler at every toast, he should propose that the honours be understood.

At the conclusion of this speech, every body took a sip out of their tumblers in honour of Sam; and Sam having ladded out, and drunk two full glasses of punch in honour of himself, returned thanks in a neat speech. "Wery snuch obliged to you, old fellers," said Sam, ladding away at the punch in the "nost unembarrassed manner possible," "for this here compliment; wich, comin' from sich a quarter is wery overwelmin'. I've heerd a good deal on you as a body, but I will say, that I never thought you was sich uncommon nice men as I find you air. I only hope you'll take care o' yourselves, and not compensate nothin' o' your dignity, which is a wery charmin' thing to see, when one's out a walkin', and has always made me wery happy to look at; ever since I was a boy about half as high as the brass-headed stick o' my wery respectable friend, Blazes, there. As to the victim of oppression in the suit o' brimstone, all I can say of him is, that I hope he'll get just as good a berth as he deserves; in wich case it's wery little cold swarry as ever he'll be troubled with again."

Here Sam sat down with a pleasant smile, and his speech having been vociferously applauded, the company broke up.

"Why, you don't mean to say you're a goin', old fellers," said Sam Weller to his friend Mr. John Smanker. "I must indeed," said Mr. Smanker; "I promised Bentam.

"O, wery well," said Sam; "that's another thing. Praps he'd resign if you disappinted him. You ain't a goin', Blazes?"

"Yes, I am," said the man with the cocked hat.

"Wot, and leave three-quarters of a bowl of punch behind ya!" said Sam; "nonsense, set down agin."

Mr. Tucke was not proof against this invitation. He laid aside the cocked hat and stick which he had just taken up, and said he would have one glass just for good fellowship's sake.

As the gentleman in blue went home the same way as Mr. Tucke, he was prevailed upon to stop too. When the punch was about half gone, Sam ordered in some ices from the green-grocer's shop; and the effect of both was so extremely exhilarating; that Mr. Tucke, dressed out with the cocked hat and stick, danced the frog hop-pipe among the shelle on the table, while the gentleman in blue played an accompaniment upon an ingenious musical instrument formed of a hair comb and curl-paper. At last, when the punch was all gone, and the night nearly so, they salied forth to see each other home. Mr. Tucke no sooner got into the open air, than he was seized with a sudden desire to lie on the curb-stone; Sam thought it would be a pity to contradict him, and so let him have his own way. As the cocked hat would have been spoilt if left there, Sam very considerately flattened it down on the head of the gentleman in blue, and putting the big stick in his hand, propped him up against his own street-door, rang the bell, and walked quietly home.

At a much earlier hour next morning than his usual time of rising, Mr. Pickwick walked down stairs completely dressed, and rang the bell.
"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when Mr. Waller appeared in reply to the summons, "shut the door."

Mr. Waller did so.

There was an unfortunate occurrence here, last night, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "which gave Mr. Winkle some cause to apprehend violence from Mr. Dowler."

"So I've heard, from the old lady down stairs, Sir," replied Sam.

"And I'm sorry to say, Sam," continued Mr. Pickwick, with a most perplexed countenance, "that in dread of this violence, Mr. Winkle has gone away."

"Gone away!" said Sam.

"Left the house early this morning without the slightest previous communication with me," replied Mr. Pickwick. "And is gone, I know not where."

"He should ha' stopped and fought it out, Sir," replied Sam consensually.

"It wouldn't take much to settle that, are you, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "I may have my doubts of his great bravery and determination, also. But however that may be, Mr. Winkle is gone. He must be found, Sam — found and brought back to me."

"And above all he won't come back, Sir," said Sam.

"He must be made, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Who's to do it, Sir?" inquired Sam, with a smile.

"You," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Very good, Sir," said Sam.

With these words Mr. Waller left the room, and immediately afterwards was heard to shut the street-door. In two hours' time he returned with as much coolness as if he had been despatched on the most ordinary message possible, and brought the information that an individual in every respect answering Mr. Winkle's description had gone over to Bristol that morning, by the branch coach from the Royal Hotel.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, grasping his hand, "you're a capital fellow; an invaluable fellow. You must follow him, Sam."

"Certainly, Sir," replied Mr. Waller.

"The instant you discover him, write to me immediately, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"If he attempts to run away from you, knock him down, or lock him up. You have my full authority, Sam."

"I'll be wary careful, Sir," rejoined Sam.

"You'll tell him," said Mr. Pickwick, "that I am highly excited, highly displeased, and naturally indignant, at the very extraordinary course he has thought proper to pursue."

"I will, Sir," replied Sam.

"You'll tell him," said Mr. Pickwick, "that if he does not come back to this very house with you, he will come back with me, for I will come and fetch him."

"I'll mention that to, Sir," rejoined Sam.

"You think you can find him, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking earnestly in his face.

"Oh, I'll find him if he's anywhere," rejoined Sam, with great confidence.

"Very well," said Mr. Pickwick. "Then the sooner you go the better."

With these instructions, Mr. Pickwick placed a sum of money in the bands of his faithful servitor; and ordered him to start for Bristol immediately, in pursuance of the fugitive.

Sam put a few necessaries in a carpet-bag, and was ready for starting. He stopped when he had got to the end of the passage, and walking quietly back, thrust his head in at the parlour-door.

"Sir," whispered Sam.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I fully understand my instructions," said Sam, "Sir?" inquired Sam.

"I hope so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's regularly understood about the knocking down is it, Sir?" inquired Sam.

"Perfectly," replied Mr. Pickwick.—"Thoroughly. Do what you think necessary. You have my orders."

Sam gave a nod of intelligence, and withdrawing his head from the door, set forth on his pilgrimage with a light heart.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

How Mr. Winkle, when he stepped out of the flying-pan, walked gently and comfortably into the fire.

The ill-starred gentleman who had been the unfortunate cause of the unusual noise and disturbance which alarmed the inhabitants of the Royal Crescent in memem; and form already described, after passing a night of great confusion and anxiety, left the room beneath which his friends still slumbered bound he knew not whither. The excellent and considerate feelings which prompted Mr. Winkle to take this step, can never be too highly appreciated or too warmly extolled. "If?"—reasoned Mr. Winkle with himself,—"if this Dowler attempts (as I have no doubt he will) to carry into execution his threat of personal violence against myself, it will be incumbent on me to call him out. He has a wife; that wife is attached to, and dependent on him. Heaven! if I should kill him in the blindness of my wrath, what would be my feelings ever.
afterwards!" This painful consideration
operated so powerfully on the feelings of
the humane young man as to cause his knees
to knock together, and his countenance to
exhibit alarming manifestations of inward
emotion. Impelled by these reflections, he
graped his carpet-bag, and, creeping stealth-
ily down stairs, shut the delectable street
door with as little noise as possible, and
walked off. Bending his steps towards the
Royal Hotel, he found a coach on the point
of starting for Bristol; and thinking Bristol
as good a place for his purpose as any other
he could go to, mounted on the box, and
reached his place of destination in such
time as the pair of horses, who went the
whole stage and back again twice a day or
more, could be reasonably supposed to
arrive there.

He took up his quarters at The Bush;
and designating to postpone any communica-
tion by letter with Mr. Pickwick until it
was probable that Mr. Dowler's wrath might
have in some degree evaporated, walked
forth to view the city, which struck him as
being a shade more dirty than any place he
had ever seen. Having inspected the docks
and shipping, and viewed the cathedral, he
inquired his way to Clifton, and being di-
rected thither, took the route which was
pointed out to him. But, as the pavements
of Bristol are not the widest or cleanest upon
earth, so its streets are not altogether the
straightest or least intricate; and Mr. Win-
kle being greatly puzzled by their manifold
windings and twistings, looked about him
for a decent shop in which he could apply
a fresh for counsel and instruction.

His eye fell upon a newly-painted ten-
ment which had been recently converted
into something between a shop and a
private house, and which a red lamp, pro-
jecting over the fan-light of the street door,
would have sufficiently announced as the
residence of a medical practitioner, even if
the word "Surgery" had not been inscribed
in golden characters on a white-scarred ground,
above the window of what, in times bygone,
had been the front parlour. Thinking this
an eligible place wherein to make his in-
quires, Mr. Winkle stepped into the little
shop where the gilt-labelled drawers and
bottles were; and, finding nobody there,
knocked with a half-crown on the counter,
to attract the attention of anybody who
might happen to be in the back-parlour,
which he judged to be the innermost and
peculiar sanctum of the establishment, from
the repetition of the word surgery on the
door—painted in white letters this time, by
way of taking off the sameness.

At the first knock, a sound as of persons
fencing with fire-irons, which had until
now been very audible, suddenly ceased;
and at the second, a studious young gentle-
man in green spectacles, with a very large
book in his hand, glided quietly into the
shop, and stepping behind the counter, re-
quested to know the visitor's pleasure.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Sir," said
Mr. Winkle, "but will you have the good-
ness to direct me to—"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the studious
young gentleman, throwing the large book
up in the air, and catching it with great
dexterity at the very moment when it
threatened to smash to atoms all the bottles
on the counter. "Here's a start!"

There was, without doubt; for Mr. Win-
kle was so very much astonished at the
extraordinary behaviour of the medical gen-
tleman, that he involuntarily retreated to-
wards the door, and looked very much
disturbed at his strange reception.

"What, don't you know me?" said the
medical gentleman.

Mr. Winkle murmured in reply, that he
had not that pleasure.

"Why, then," said the medical gentle-
man, "there are hopes for me yet; I may
attend half the old women in Bristol, if I've
decent luck. Get out, you mouldy old vil-
lain, get out!" With this adjuration, which
was addressed to the large book, the med-
ic gentleman kicked the volume with re-
markable agility to the further end of the
shop, and pulling off his green spectacles,
grinned the identical grin of Robert Saw-
yer, Esquire, formerly of Guy's Hospital
in the Borough, with a private residence in
Lant-street.

"You don't mean to say you weren't
down upon me?" said Mr. Bob Sawyer,
shaking Mr. Winkle's hand with friendly
warmth.

"Upon my word I was not," replied Mr.
Winkle, returning the pressure.

"I wonder you didn't see the name," said
Bob Sawyer, calling his friend's attention
to the outer door, on which, in the same
white paint, were traced the words, "Saw-
yer, late Nockemor!"

"It never caught my eye," returned Mr.
Winkle.

"Lord, if I had known who you were, I
should have rushed out and caught you in
my arms," said Bob Sawyer; "but upon my
life, I thought you were the King's-taxes.

"No!" said Mr. Winkle.

"I did, indeed," responded Bob Sawyer,
"and I was just going to say that I wasn't
at home, but if you'd leave a message I'd
be sure to give it to myself; for he don't
know me, no more does the Lighting and
Paving. I think the Church-rates guesses
who I am, and I know the Water-works
does, because I drew a tooth of his, when I
first came down here.—But come. a come.
in." Chattering in this way, Mr. Bob Sawyer pushed Mr. Winkle into the back room, where, amusing himself by boring his circular cavern in the chimney-piece with a red-hot poker, sat no less a person than Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Well," said Mr. Winkle, "this is indeed a pleasure that I did not expect. What a very nice place you have here!"

"Pretty well, pretty well," replied Bob Sawyer. "I passed, soon after that precious party, and my friends came down with the needful for this business; so I put on a black suit of clothes and a pair of spectacles, and came here to look as solemn as I could."

"And a very snug little business you have, no doubt!" said Mr. Winkle, knowingly.

"Very," replied Bob Sawyer. "So snug, that at the end of a few years you might put all the profits in a wine-glass, and cover 'em over with a gooseberry leaf."

"You cannot surely mean that?" said Mr. Winkle. "The stock itself—"

"Dummies, my dear boy," said Bob Sawyer; "half the drawers have got nothing in 'em, and the other half don't open."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Winkle. "Fact—honour!" repeated Bob Sawyer, stepping out into the shop, and demonstrating the veracity of the assertion by divers hard pulls at the little gilt knobs on the counterfeit drawers. "Hardly any thing real in the shop but the leeches, and they are second-hand."

"I shouldn't have thought it!" exclaimed Mr. Winkle, much surprised.

"I hope not," replied Bob Sawyer, "else where's the use of appearances, eh? But what will you take? Do as we do—that's right. Ben, my fine fellow, put your hand into the cupboard, and bring out the patent digester."

Mr. Benjamin Allen smiled his readiness, and produced from the closet at his elbow a black bottle half full of brandy.

"You don't take water, of course!" said Bob Sawyer.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle. "It's rather early: I should like to qualify it, if you have no objection."

"None in the least, if you can reconcile it to your conscience," replied Bob Sawyer; tossing off, as he spoke, a glass of the liquor with great relish.—"Ben, the pipkin."

Mr. Benjamin Allen drew forth from the same hiding-place a small brass pipkin, little circular caverns in the chimneypiece, with which Bob Sawyer observed he prided himself upon, particularly, because it looked so business-like. The water in the professional pipkin having been made to boil, in course of time, by various little shovels-full of coal, which Mr. Bob Sawyer took out of a practicable window-seat, labelled "Bob Sawyer's Water," Mr. Winkle adulterated his brandy; and the conversation was becoming general, when it was interrupted by the entrance into the shop of a boy, in a sober grey livery and a gold-laced hat, with a small covered basket under his arm, when Mr. Bob Sawyer immediately hailed with,

"Tom, you vagabond, come here!"

The boy presented himself accordingly.

"You've been stopping to over all the posts in Bristol, you idle young scamp," said Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"No, Sir, I haven't," replied the boy.

"You had better not!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with a threatening aspect. "We do not suppose will ever employ a professional man, when they see his boy playing at marbles in the gutter, or flying the garter in the horse-road?! Have you no feeling for your profession, you groveller?! Did you leave all the medicine?"

"Yes, Sir."

"The powders for the child, at the large house with the new family, and the pills to be taken four times a day at the ill-tempered old gentleman's with the gouty leg?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Then shut the door, and mind the shop."

"Come," said Mr. Winkle, as the boy retired, "things are not quite so bad as you would have me believe, either. There is some medicine to be sent out."

Mr. Bob Sawyer peeped into the shop to see that no stranger was within hearing, and leaning forward to Mr. Winkle, said, in a low tone—

"He leaves it all at the wrong houses."

Mr. Winkle looked perplexed, and Bob Sawyer and his friend laughed.

"Don't you see?" said Bob; "he goes up to a house, rings the area bell, pokies a packet of medicine without a direction into the servant's hand, and walks off. Servant takes it into the dining-parlour; maustet opens it, and reads the label, 'Draught to be taken at bedtime—pills as before—lotion as usual—the powder. From Sawyer's, late Noeksmor's. Physicians' prescriptions carefully prepared,' and all the rest of it. Shows it to his wife—she reads the label; it goes down to the servants—they read the label. Next day the boy calls: 'Very sorry—his mistake—immense business—great many parcels to deliver—Mr. Sawyer's compliments—late Noeksmor.' The name gets known, and that's the thing, my boy, in the medical way: bless your heart, old fellow, it's better than all the advertising in the world. We have got one four-ounce bottle that's been to half the houses in Bristol, and hasn't done yet"
"Dear me, I see," observed Mr. Winkle; "what an excellent plan!"

"Oh, Ben, and I have hit upon a dozen such," replied Bob Sawyer, with great glee.

"The lamp-lighter has eighteen pennies a week to pull the night-bell for ten minutes, every time he comes round; and my boy always rushes into church just before the psalms, when the people have got nothing to do but look about 'em, and calls me out, with horror and dismay depicted on his countenance. 'Bless my soul,' every body says, 'somebody taken suddenly ill! Sawyer, late Nookemoor, sent for. What a business that young man has!'

At the termination of this disclosure of some of the mysteries of medicine, Mr. Bob Sawyer and his friend, Ben Allen, threw themselves back in their respective chairs, and laughed boisterously. When they had enjoyed the joke to their heart's content, the discourse changed to topics in which Mr. Winkle was more immediately interested. We think we have hinted elsewhere, that Mr. Benjamin Allen had a way of becoming sentimental after brandy. The case is not a peculiar one, as we ourselves can testify, having, on a few occasions, had to deal with patients who had been afflicted in a similar manner. At this precise period of his existence, Mr. Benjamin Allen had perhaps a greater predisposition to maudlinness than he had ever known before; the cause of which malady was briefly this. He had been staying nearly three weeks with Mr. Bob Sawyer; Mr. Bob Sawyer was not remarkable for temperance, nor was Mr. Benjamin Allen for the ownership of a very strong head; and the consequence was, that, during the whole space of time just mentioned, Mr. Benjamin Allen had been waverung between intoxication partial, and intoxication complete.

"My dear friend," said Mr. Ben Allen, taking advantage of Mr. Bob Sawyer's temporary absence behind the counter, whether he had retired to dispense some of the second-hand leeches, previously referred to, "my dear friend, I am very miserable."

Mr. Winkle professed his heartfelt regret to hear it, and begged to know whether he could do anything to alleviate the sorrows of the suffering student.

"Nothing, my dear boy—nothing," said Ben. "You recollect Arabella, Winkle—my sister Arabella—a little girl, Winkle, with black eyes—when we were down at Wardle's? I don't know whether you happened to notice her—a nice little girl, Winkle. Perhaps my features may recall her countenance to your recollection!"

Mr. Winkle required nothing to recall the charming Arabella to his mind; and it was rather fortunate he did not, for the features of her brother Benjamin would unquestionably have proved but an indifferent refresher to his memory. He answered, with as much calmness as he could assume, that he perfectly remembered the young lady referred to, and sincerely trusted she was in good health.

"Our friend Bob is a delightful fellow. Winkle," was the only reply of Mr. Ben Allen.

"Very," said Mr. Winkle, not much relishing this close connexion of the two names.

"I designed 'em for each other; they were made for each other, sent into the world for each other, born for each other," Winkle," said Mr. Ben Allen, setting down his glass with great emphasis. "There's a special destiny in the matter, my dear Sir; there's only five years' difference between 'em, and both their birthdays are in August!"

Mr. Winkle was too anxious to hear what was to follow, to express much wonderment at this extraordinary circumstance, marvellous as it was; so Mr. Ben Allen, after a tear or two, went on to say, that, notwithstanding all his esteem and respect and veneration for his friend, Arabella had unaccountably and unduly evinced the most determined antipathy to his person.

"And I think," said Mr. Ben Allen, in conclusion, "I think there's a prior attachment.

"Have you any idea who the object of it may be?" asked Mr. Winkle, with great trepidation.

Mr. Ben Allen seized the poker, flourished it in a warlike manner above his head, indented a savage blow on an imaginary skull, and wound up by saying, in a very expressive manner, that he only wished he could guess—that was all.

"I'd show him what I thought of him," said Mr. Ben Allen. And round went the poker again, more fiercely than before.

All this was of course soothing to the feelings of Mr. Winkle, who remained silent for a few minutes; but at length muster'd up resolution to inquire whether Miss Allen was in Kent.

"No, no," said Mr. Ben Allen, laying aside the poker, and looking very cunning; "I didn't think Wardle's exactly the place for a headstrong girl; so, as I am her natural protector and guardian, our parents being dead, I have brought her down into this part of the country to spend a few months at an old aunt's, in a nice, dull, close place. I think that will cure her, my boy; and if it doesn't, I'll take her abroad for a little while, and see what that'll do."
"Oh, the aunt's is in Bristol, is it?" asked Mr. Winkle.

"No, no—not in Bristol," replied Mr. Ben Allen, jerking his thumb over his right shoulder: "over that way—down there. But, hush, here's Bob. Not a word, my dear friend—not a word."

Short as this conversation was, it roused Mr. Winkle the highest degree of excitement and anxiety. The suspected prior attachment rankled in his heart. Could he be the object of it? Could it be for him that the fair Arabella had looked scornfully on the sprightly Bob Sawyer, or had he a successful rival? He determined to see her, cost what it might; but here an insurmountable objection presented itself, for whether the expository "over that way," and "down there," of Mr. Ben Allen, meant three miles off, or thirty, or three hundred, he could in no wise guess.

But he had no opportunity of wondering over his love just then, for Bob Sawyer's return was the immediate precursor of the arrival of a meat-pie from the baker's, of which that gentleman insisted on his staying to partake. The cloth was laid by an occasional char-woman, who officiated in the capacity of Mr. Bob Sawyer's house-keeper; and a third knife and fork having been borrowed from the mother of the boy in the grey livery (for Mr. Sawyer's domestic arrangements were as yet conducted on a limited scale), they sat down to dinner; the beer being served up, as Mr. Sawyer remarked, "in its native pewter."

After dinner, Mr. Bob Sawyer ordered in the largest mortar in the shop, and proceeded to brew a reckoning jorum of rum-punch therein, stirring up and amalgamating the materials with a pestle in a very creditable and apothecary-like manner. Mr. Sawyer being a bachelor, had only one tumbler in the house, which was assigned to Mr. Winkle as a compliment to the visitor, Mr. Ben Allen being accommodated with a funnel with a cork in the narrow end, and Bob Sawyer contending himself with one of those wide-lipped crystal vessels inscribed with a variety of cabalistic characters, in which chemists are wont to measure out their liquid drugs in compounding prescriptions. These preliminaries adjusted, the punch was tasted, and pronounced excellent; and it having been arranged that Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen should be considered at liberty to fill twice to Mr. Winkle's once, they started fair, with great satisfaction, and good-fellowship.

There was no singing, because Mr. Sawyer said it wouldn't look professional; but to make amends for this deprivation there was so much talking and laughing that it might have been heard, and very likely was, at the end of the street. When conversation materially heightened the hour and improved the mind of Mr. Bob Sawyer's boy, who, instead of devoting the evening to his ordinary occupation of writing his name on the counter, and rubbing it out again, peeped through the glass door, and thus listened and looked on at the same time.

The mirth of Mr. Bob Sawyer was rapidly ripening into the furious, Mr. Ben Allen was fast relapsing into the saturnine, and the punch had well nigh disappeared altogether, when the boy hastily running in, announced that a young woman had just come over, to say that Sawyer late Nocturnal was wanted directly, a couple of streets off. This broke up the party. Mr. Bob Sawyer understanding the message after some twenty repetitions, tied a wet cloth round his head to sober himself, set having partially succeeded, put on his great spectacles and issued forth. Resisting all entreaties to stay till he came back, and finding it quite impossible to engage Mr. Ben Allen in any intelligible conversation on the subject nearest his heart, or indeed on any other, Mr. Winkle took his departure and returned to the Bush.

The anxiety of his mind, and the numerous meditations which Arabella had awakened, prevented his share of the mirth of punch producing that effect upon him it would have had, under other circumstances. So, after taking a glass of soda-water and brandy at the bar, he turned into the coffee-room, dispirited rather than elevated by the occurrences of the evening.

Sitting in front of the fire, with his back towards him, was a tallish gentleman in a great-coat: the only other occupant of the room. It was rather a cool evening for the season of the year, and the gentleman drew his chair aside to afford the new comer a sight of the fire. What were Mr. Winkle's feelings when, in so doing, he disclosed to view the face and figure of the vindictive and sanganine Dowler! Mr. Winkle's first impulse was to give a violent pull at the nearest bell-handle, but that unfortunately happened to be immediately behind Mr. Dowler's head. He had made one step towards it, before he checked himself. As he did so, Mr. Dowler very hastily drew back.

"Mr. Winkle, Sir. Be calm. Don't strike me. I won't bear it. A blow! Never," said Mr. Dowler, looking meeker than Mr. Winkle had expected in a gentleman of his ferocity.

"A blow, Sir?" stammered Mr. Winkle.


"Sir," said Mr. Winkle, trembling from head to foot, "before I consent to sit down
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

deside on opposite you, without the presence of a wave, I must be secured by some further understanding. You used a threat against me last night, Sir—a dreadful threat, Sir." Here Mr. Winkle turned very pale indeed, and stopped short.

"I did," said Dowler, with a countenance almost as white as Mr. Winkle's. "Circumstances were suspicious. They have been explained. I respect your bravery. Your feeling is upright. Conscious innocence. There's my hand. Grasp it."

"Really, Sir," said Mr. Winkle, hesitating whether to give his hand or not, and almost fearing that it was demanded in order that he might be taken at an advantage, "really, Sir. I—"

"I know what you mean," interposed Dowler. "You feel aggrieved. Very natural. So should I. I was wrong. I beg your pardon. Be friendly. Forgive me."

With this, Dowler fairly forced his hand upon Mr. Winkle, and shaking it with the utmost vehemence, declared he was a fellow of extreme spirit, and he had a higher opinion of him than ever.

"Now, said Dowler, "sit down. Relate it all. How did you find me? When did you follow? Be frank. Tell me."

"It's quite accidental," replied Mr. Winkle, greatly perplexed by the curious and unexpected nature of the interview, "quite."

"Glad of it," said Dowler. "I woke this morning. I had forgotten my threat. I laughed at the accident. I felt friendly. I said so."

"To whom?" inquired Mr. Winkle.

"To Mrs. Dowler. "You made a vow," said she. "I did," said I. "It was a rash one," said she. "It was," said I. "I'll apologize. Where is he?"

"Who?" inquired Winkle.


Mr. Winkle coughed, and beginning to see how the ground lay, assumed a look of importance.

"I left a note for you," resumed Dowler.

"I said I was sorry. So I was. Pressing business called me here. You were not satisfied. You followed. You required a verbal explanation. You were right. It's all over now. My business is finished. I go back-tomorrow. Join me."

As Dowler progressed in his explanation, Mr. Winkle's countenance grew more and more dignified. The mysterious nature of the commencement of their conversation was explained; Mr. Dowler had as great an objection to duelling as himself; in short, this blustering and awful personage was one of the most egregious cowards in existence, and interpreting Mr. Winkle's absence through the medium of his own fears, had actually taken the same step as himself, and prudently retired until all excitement of feeling should have subsided.

As the real state of the case dawned upon Mr. Winkle's mind, he looked very terrible, and said he was perfectly satisfied; but at the same time, said so, with an air that left Mr. Dowler no alternative but to infer that if he had not been, something most horrible and destructive must inevitably have occurred. Mr. Dowler appeared to be impressed with a becoming sense of Mr. Winkle's magnanimity and condescension; and the two belligerents parted for the night, with many protestations of eternal friendship.

About half-past twelve o'clock, when Mr. Winkle had been revolving some twenty minutes in the full luxury of his first sleep, he was suddenly awakened by a loud knocking at his chamber-door, which being repeated with increased vehemence, caused him to start up in bed, and inquire who was there, and what the matter was.

"Please, Sir, here's a young man which says he must see you directly," responded the voice of the chambermaid.

"A young man!" exclaimed Mr. Winkle.

"No mistake about that 'ere, Sir," replied another voice through the keyhole; "and if that very same interestin' young creatur ain't let in without delay, it's very possible as his legs will enter afore his countenance."—The young man gave a gentle kick at one of the lower panels of the door, after he had given utterance to this hint, as if to add force and point to the remark.

"Is that you, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, springing out of bed.

"Quite unpossoble to identify any gen'lm'n with any degree o' mental satisfaction, without lookin' at him, Sir," replied the voice dogmatically.

Mr. Winkle, not much doubting who the young man was, unlocked the door; which he had no sooner done, than Mr. Samuel Weller entered with great precipitation, and carefully relocking it on the inside, deliberately put the key in his waistcoat-pockets; and after surveying Mr. Winkle from head to foot, said—

"You're a very humorous young gen'. How's your news, sir, Sir?"

"What do you mean by this conduct Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, indignantly.

"Get out, Sir, this instant. What do you mean, Sir?"
POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF

"What do I mean?" retorted Sam; "come, Sir, this is myther too rich, as the young lady said who remonstrated with the pastrycake, after he'd sold her a porkpie as had nothin' but fat inside. What do I mean? Well that ain't a bad 'un, that ain't."

"Unlock that door, and leave this room immediately, Sir," said Mr. Winkle.

"I shall leave this here room, Sir, just precisely at the very same moment as you leave it," responded Sam, speaking in a forcible manner, and seating himself with perfect gravity. "If I find it necessary to carry you away, pick-a-back, o' course I shall leave it the least bit o' time possible afore you; but allow me to express a hope as you won't reduce me to extremites in saying vich, I merely quote wot the nobleman said to the frantick pennywinkley, ven he wouldn't come out of his shell by means o' a pin, and he consequently began to be afeard that he should be obliged to crack him in the party room. At the end of this address, which was unusually lengthy for him, Mr. Weller planted his hands on his knees, and looked full in Mr. Winkle's face, with an expression of countenance which showed that he had not the remotest intention of being trifled with.

"You're a amiable-disposed young man, Sir, I don't think," resumed Mr. Weller, in a tone of moral reproof, "to go involving our precious governor in all sorts o' fantasys, ven he's made up his mind to go through every think for principle. You're far worse nor Dodson, Sir; and as for Foggs, I consider him a born angel to you!" Mr. Weller having accompanied this last sentiment with an emphatic slap on each knee, folded his arms with a look of great disgust, and threw himself back in his chair, as if awaiting the criminal's defence.

"My good fellow," said Mr. Winkle, extending his hand — his teeth chattering all the time he spoke, for he had been standing during the whole of Mr. Weller's lecture in his night-gear, "my good fellow, I respect your attachment to my excellent friend, and I am very sorry indeed to have added to his causes for disquiet. There, Sam, there!"

"Well," said Sam, rather sulkily, but giving the proffered hand a respectful shake at the same time— "Well, so you ought to see, and I am very glad to find you air; for, if I can help it, I won't have him put upon by nobody, an' that's all about it." "Certainly not, Sam," said Mr. Winkle.

"Then, now go to bed, Sam, and we'll talk farther about this, in the morning."

"I'm very sorry," said Sam; "but I can't go to bed."]

"Not go to bed!" repeated Mr. Winkle.

"No," said Sam, shaking his head, "Can't be done."

"You don't mean to say you're going back to-night, Sam?" urged Mr. Winkle, greatly surprised.

"Not unless you particularly wish it," replied Sam; "but I mustn't leave this here room. The governor's orders was peremptory."

"Nonsense, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, "I must stop here two or three days; and more than that, Sam, you must stop here, too, to assist me in gaining an interview with a young lady — Miss Allen, Sam; you remember her — whom I must and will see before I leave Bristol."

But in reply to each of these positions, Sam shook his head with great firmness, and energetically replied, "It can't be done."

After a great deal of argument and representation on the part of Mr. Winkle, however, and a full disclosure of what had passed in the interview with Dowles, Sam began to waver; and at length a compromise was effected, of which the following were the main and principal conditions:

That Sam should retire, and leave Mr. Winkle in the undisturbed possession of his apartment, on condition that he had permission to lock the door on the outside, and carry off the key; provided always, that in the event of an alarm of fire, or other dangerous contingency, the door should be instantly unlocked. That a letter should be written to Mr. Pickwick early next morning, and forwarded per Dowles, requesting his consent to Sam and Mr. Winkle's remaining at Bristol, for the purpose and with the object already assigned, and begging an answer by the next coach; if favourable the aforesaid parties to remain accordingly and if not, to return to Bath immediately on the receipt thereof. And, lastly, that Mr. Winkle should be understood as distinctly pledging himself not to resort to the window, fire-place, or other surreptitious modes of escape in the meanwhile. These stipulations having been concluded, Sam locked the door and departed.

He had nearly got down stairs, when he stopped, and drew the key from his pocket. "I quite forgot about the knockin' down," said Sam, half turning back. "The governor distinctly said it was to be done; amazin' stupid o' me, that 'ere now. Never mind," said Sam, brightening up, "it's easily done to-morrow, any ways."

Apparently much consoled by this reflection, Mr. Weller once more deposited the key in his pocket, and descending the remainder of the stairs without any fresh visitations of conscience, was soon, in common with the other inmates of the house, buried in profound repose.
Mr. Winkle then recounted what had passed between himself and Mr. Ben Allen, relative to Arbella, stated that his object was to gain an interview with the young lady, and make a formal disclosure of his passion; and declared his conviction, founded on certain dark hints and mutterings of the aforesaid Ben, that, whatever she was at present immured, it was somewhere near the Downs; and this was his whole stock of knowledge or suspicion upon the subject.

With this very slight clue to guide him, it was determined that Mr. Weller should start next morning on an expedition of discovery; it was also arranged that Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle, who were less confident of their powers, should parade the town meanwhile, and accidentally drop in upon Mr. Bob Sawyer in the course of the day, in the hope of seeing or hearing something of the young lady's whereabouts.

Accordingly, next morning, Sam Weller issued forth upon his quest, in no way daunted by the very discouraging prospect before him; and away he walked, up one street and down another—we were going to say, up one hill and down another, only it's all up hill at Oxford—without meeting with any thing or any body that tended to throw the faintest light upon the matter in hand. Many were the colloquies into which Sam entered with grooms who were airing horses on roads, and nursesmaids who were airing children in lanes; but nothing could Sam elicit from either the first-mentioned or the last, which bore the slightest reference to the object of his artfully-prosecuted inquiries. There were a great many young ladies in a great many houses, the greater part whereof were shrewdly suspected by the male and female domestics to be deeply attached to somebody, or perfectly ready to become so, if opportunity offered. But as none among these young ladies was Miss Arbella Allen, the information left Sam at exactly the old point of wisdom at which he had stood before.

Sam struggled across the Downs against a good high wind, wondering whether it was always necessary to hold your hat on with both hands in that part of the country, and came to a shady by-place, about which were sprinkled several little villas of quiet and sequestered appearance. Outside a stable-door at the bottom of a long back lane without a thoroughfare, a groom in undress was idling about, apparently persuading himself that he was doing something with a spade and a wheelbarrow. We may remark, in this place, that we have scarcely ever seen a groom near a stable, in his lazy moments, who has not been to a greater or less extent, the victim of this singular delusion.

Mr. Samuel Weller, being entrusted with a mission of love, proceeds to execute it; with what success will hereinafter appear.

During the whole of next day, Sam kept Mr. Winkle steadily in sight, fully determined not to take his eyes off him for one instant, until he should receive express instructions from the fountain-head. However disagreeable Sam's very close watch and great vigilance were to Mr. Winkle, he thought it better to bear with them, than, by any act of violent opposition, to hazard being carried away by force, which Mr. Weller more than once strongly hinted was the line of conduct that a strict sense of duty prompted him to pursue. There is little reason to doubt that Sam with his very expeditiously have quieted his scruples by bearing Mr. Winkle back to Bath, bound hand and foot, had not Mr. Pickwick's prompt attention to the note, which Dowler had undertaken to deliver, forestalled any such proceeding. In short, at eight o'clock in the evening, Mr. Pickwick himself walked into the coffee-room of the Bush tavern, and told Sam, with a smile, to his very great relief, that he had done quite right, and it was unnecessary for him to mount guard any longer.

"I thought it better to come myself," said Mr. Pickwick, addressing Mr. Winkle, as Sam disencumbered him of his great-coat and travelling-shawl, "to ascertain before I gave my consent to Sam's employment in this matter, that you are quite in earnest and serious, with respect to this young lady."

"Serious, from my heart—from my soul!" returned Mr. Winkle, with great energy.

"Remember," said Mr. Pickwick, with beaming eyes, "we met her at our excellent and hospitable friend's, Winkle. It would be an ill return to tamper with her, and without due consideration, with this young lady's affections. I'll not allow that, Sir—I'll not allow it."

"I have no such intention, indeed," exclaimed Mr. Winkle, warmly. "I have considered the matter well, for a long time, and I feel that my happiness is bound up in her."

"That's we call tying it up in a small parcel, Sir," interposed Mr. Weller, with an agreeable smile.

Mr. Winkle looked somewhat stern at this interruption, and Mr. Pickwick angrily requested his attendant not to jest with one of the best feelings of our nature; to which Sam replied, "That he wouldn't, if he was aware on it; but there were so many others that he hardly know'd which was the best one we had heard 'em mention'd."
Sam thought he might as well talk to this groom as to any one else, especially as he was very tired with walking, and there was a good large stone just opposite the wheelbarrow; so he strolled down the lane, and seating himself on the stone, opened a conversation with the ease and freedom for which he was remarkable.

"Mornin', old friend," said Sam.

"Afternoon, you mean," replied the groom, flashing a sly look at Sam.

"You're very right, old friend," said Sam; "I do mean afternoon. How are you?"

"Why, I don't find myself much the better for seeing of you," replied the ill-tempered groom.

"That's very odd—that is," said Sam, "for you look so uncommon cheerful, and seated together so lively, that it does vun's heart good to see you." The surly groom looked surlier still at this, but not sufficiently so to produce any effect upon Sam, who immediately inquired, with a countenance of great anxiety, whether his master's name was not Walker.

"No, it ain't," said the groom.

"Nor Brown, I s'pose," said Sam.

"No, it ain't." "Nor Villeon?"

"No; nor that neither," said the groom.

"Well," replied Sam, "then I'm mistaken, and he hasn't got the honour o' my acquaintance, which I thought he had. Don't wait here out o' compliment to me," said Sam, as the groom wheeled in the barrow, and prepared to shut the gate. "Ease afore ceremony, old boy; I'll excuse you."

"I'd knock your head off for half-a-crown," said the surly groom, bolting half of the gate.

" Couldn't afford to have it done on those terms," rejoined Sam. "It'd be vurth a life's board wages, at least, to you, and 'd be cheap at that. Make my compliments in-doors. Tell 'em not to wait dinner for me, and say they needn't mind possin' any by, for it'll be cold afore I come in."

In reply to this, the groom, waxing very wroth, muttered a desire to damage somebody's head; but disappeared without carrying it into execution, slamming the door angrily after him, and wholly unheeding Sam's affectionate request, that he would leave him a lock of his hair, before he went.

Sam continued to sit on the large stone, meditating upon what was best to be done, and revolving in his mind a plan for knocking at all the doors within five miles of Bristol, taking them at a hundred and fifty or two hundred a day, and endeavoring to find Miss Arabella by that expedient, when

...what he might have set there for a twelve-month and yet not found without it.

Into the lane where he sat, there opened three or four garden gates, belonging to as many houses, which though detached from each other, were only separated by their gardens. As these were large and long, and well planted with trees, the houses were not only at some distance off, but the greater part of them were nearly concealed from view. Sam was sitting with his eyes fixed upon the dust-heap outside the next gate to that by which the groom had disappeared, profoundly turning over in his mind the difficulties of his present undertaking, when the gate opened, and a female servant came out into the lane to shake some bedside carpets.

Sam was very busy with his own thoughts, so that it is probable he would have taken no more notice of the young woman than if he had raised his head and remarking that she held a very neat and pretty figure, if his feelings of gallantry had not been most strongly roused by observing that she had no one to help her, and that the carpets seemed too heavy for her single strength. Mr. Weller was a gentleman of great gallantry in his own way, and he no sooner remarked this circumstance than he hastily rose from the large stone, and advanced towards her.

"My dear," said Sam, standing up, with an air of great respect, "you'll spike that very pretty figure out o' all proportion if you shake them carpets by yourself. Let me help you."

The young lady, who had been coyly expecting not to know that a gentleman was so near, turned round as Sam spoke, and doubt (indeed she said so, afterwards) declined this offer from a perfect stranger.

When instead of speaking, she started back, and uttered a half-suppressed scream. Sam was scarcely less staggered, for in the countenance of the well-shaped female servant he beheld the very features of his Valentine—the pretty house-maid from Mr. Nupkins's.

"Why, Mary my dear!" said Sam.

"Lark, Mr. Weller," said Mary, "how you do frighten one!"

Sam made no verbal answer to this complaint, nor can we precisely say what reply he did make. We merely know that after a short pause Mary said, "Lor do adun Mr. Weller," and that his hat had fallen off a few moments before—from both of which tokens we should be disposed to infer that one kisse, or more, had passed between the parties.

"Why, how did you come here?" said Mary, when the conversation, to which this interruption had been offered, was resumed.

"O' course I came to look after you, say
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"darlin,' replied Mr. Weller; for once permitting his passion to get the better of his veracity.

"And how did you know I was here?" inquired Mary. "Who could have told you that I took another service at Ipswich, and that they afterwards moved all the way here? Who could have told you that, Mr. Weller?"

"Ah, to be sure," said Sam with a cunning look, "that's the pint. Who could ha' told me?"

"It wasn't Mr. Muzzle, was it?" inquired Mary.

"Oh no," replied Sam, with a solemn shake of the head, "it warn't him.

"But you must have been the cook," said Mary.

"O' course it must," said Sam.

"Well, I never heard the like of that!" exclaimed Mary.

"No more did I," said Sam. "But Mary, my dear——" Here Sam's manners grew extremely affectionate——"Mary, my dear, I've got another affair in hand as is very pressin'. There's one of my governor's friends——Mr. Winkle—you remember him?"

"Him in the green coat?" said Mary.

"Oh yes, I remember him."

"Well," said Sam, "he's in a horrid state o' love; reg'larly comfoosed, and done over with it."

"Lor," interposed Mary.

"Yes," said Sam; "but that's nothin' if we could only find out the young 'ooman" — and here Sam, with many digressions upon the personal beauty of Mary, and the unspeakable tortures he had experienced since he last saw her, gave a faithful account of Mr. Winkle's present predicament.

"Well?" said Mary, "I never did!"

"O' course not," said Sam, "and nobody never did, nor never will neither; and here am I a warkin' about like the wanderin' Jew—a sportin' character you have perhaps heerd on, Mary, my dear, as was always doin' a match agin' time, and never vent to sleep—lookin' arter this here Miss Arabella Allen."

"Miss who?" said Mary, in great astonishment.

"Miss Arabella Allen," said Sam.

"Goodness gracious!" said Mary, pointing to the garden-door which the sulky groom had locked after him. "Why it's that very house; she's been living there these six weeks. Their upper housemaid, which is lady's maid too, told me all about it over the wash-house plains before the family was out of bed, one mornin'."

"Well, the very next door to you?" said Sam.

"The very next," replied Mary.

Mr. Weller was so deeply overcome at receiving this intelligence that he stood it absolutely necessary to cling to his fair informant for support, and divers little love passages had passed between them, before he was sufficiently collected to return to the subject.

"Vell," said Sam at length, "if this don't beat cook-fightin', nothin' never will, as the Lord Mayor said ven the chief secretary o' state proposed his missis's health arter dinner. That very next house! Wy, I've got a message to her as I've been a tryin' all day to deliver."

"Ah," said Mary, "but you can't deliver it now, because she only walks in the garden in the evening, and then only for a very little time; she never goes out, without the old lady."

Sam ruminated for a few moments, and finally hit upon the following plan of operations; that he should return just at dusk — the time at which Arabella invariably took her walk — and being admitted by Mary into the garden of the house to which she belonged, contrive to scramble up the wall, beneath the overhanging boughs of a large pear-tree, which would effectually screen him from observation; there deliver his message, and arrange, if possible, an interview on behalf of Mr. Winkle for the ensuing evening at the same hour. Having made this arrangement with great despatch, he assisted Mary in the long-deferred occupation of shaking the carpets.

It is not half as innocent a thing as it looks, that shaking little pieces of carpet—at least, there may be no great harm in the shaking, but the folding is a very insidious process. So long as the shaking lasts, and the two parties are kept the carpet's length apart, it is as innocent an amusement as can well be devised, but when the folding begins, and the distance between them gets gradually lessened, and then, if you can meet its former length to a quarter, and then to an eighth, and then to a sixteenth, and then to a thirty-second if the carpet be long enough, it becomes dangerous. We do not know to a nicety how many pieces of carpet were folded in this instance, but we can venture to state that as many pieces as there were, so many times did Sam kiss the pretty housemaid.

Mr. Weller regaled himself with moderate ration at the nearest tavern until it was nearly dusk, and then returned to the lane without the thoroughfare. Having been admitted into the garden by Mary, and received from that lady sundry admonitions concerning the safety of his limbs and neck, Sam mounted into the pear-tree, to wait until Arabella should come in sight.

He waited so long without this anxiously expected event occurring, that he began—
think it was not going to take place at all, when he heard light footsteps upon the gravel, and immediately afterwards beheld Arabella walking pensively down the garden. As soon as she came nearly below the tree, Sam began, by way of gently indicating his presence, to make sundry discolical noises, similar to those which would probably be natural to a person who had been afflicted with a combination of inflammatory sore throat, cough, and hooping cough, from his earliest infancy.

Upon this, the young lady cast a hurried glance towards the spot from whence the dreadful sounds proceeded; and her previous alarm being not at all diminished when she saw a man among the branches, she would most certainly have decamped, and alarmed the house, had not fear fortunately deprived her of the power of moving, and caused her to sink down on a garden-seat which happened by good luck to be near at hand.

"She’s a goin’ off," soliloquised Sam, in great perplexity. "Wot a thing it is, as these here young creatures will do a man. Just van they oughtn’t to. Here, young ‘oman, Miss Sawbones, Mrs. Vinkle, don’t!"

Whether it was the magic of Mr. Winkle’s name, or the coolness of the open air, or some recollection of Mr. Weller’s voice, that revived Arabella, matters not. She raised her head and languidly inquired,—

"Who’s that, and what do you want?"

"Hush," said Sam, swinging himself on to the wall, and crouching there in as small a compass as he could reduce himself to,—"only me, Miss, only me."

"Mr. Pickwick’s servant!" said Arabella, earnestly.

"The very same, Miss," replied Sam.

"Here’s Mr. Vinkle n’glarly sewed up with desperation, Miss,?"

"Ah!" said Arabella, drawing nearer the wall.

"Ah, indeed," said Sam. "Ve thought ve should ha’ been obliged to straight-vest-kit him last night; he’s been a ravil’ all day, and he says, if he can’t see you afore to-morrow night’s ev’ning, he wishes he may be somethin’ unpleasanted if he don’t drown himself."

"Oh no, no, Mr. Weller," said Arabella, clasping her hands.

"That’s wot he says, Miss," replied Sam, coolly. "He’s a man of his word, and it’s my opinion he’ll do it, Miss. He’s heard about you from the Sawbones in barndases."

"From my brother!" said Arabella, having some faint recognition of Sam’s description.

"I can’t rightly know which is your brother," replied Sam. "Is it the dirtiest van o’ the two?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Weller," returned Arabella, "go on. Make haste, pray."

"Vell, Miss," said Sam, "he’s heerd all about it from him; and it’s the gov’nor’s opinion that if you don’t see him very quick, the Sawbones as we’ve been a spek’ is’ on, ’ll get us much extra lead in his head as’ll rayther damage the development o’ the orgins if they ever put it in spirits arterwards.

"Oh, what can I do to prevent these dreadful quarrels!" exclaimed Arabella.

"It’s the suspicion of a priory ‘tachment as is the cause of it all," replied Sam.—

"You’d better see him, Miss."

"But bow!—where?" cried Arabella.—

"I dare not leave the house alone. My brother is so unkind, so unreasonable. I know how strange my talking thus to you must appear, Mr. Weller, but I am very, very unhappy,—" and here poor Arabella wept so bitterly, that Sam grew chivalrous.

"It may seem very strange talkin’ to me about these here affairs, Miss," said Sam, with great vehemence; "but all I can say is, that I’m ‘not only ready, but villin’ to do any thing’ as ’ll make matters agreeable and is chuckin’ either o’ them Sawbones out o’ winder ‘ull do it, I’m the man." And Sam Weller said this, he tucked up his wristbands, at the imminent hazard of falling off the wall in so doing, to intimated his readiness to set to work immediately.

Flattering as these professions of good feeling were, Arabella resolutely declined (most unaccountably, as Sam thought,) to avail herself of them. For some time she strenuously refused to grant Mr. Winkle the interview Sam had so pathetically requested; but at length, when the conversation threatened to be interrupted by the unwelcome arrival of a third party, she hurriedly gave him to understand, with many professions of gratitude, that it was barely possible she might be in the garden an hour later, next evening. Sam understood this perfectly well, and Arabella, bestowing upon him one of her sweetest smiles, tripped gracefully away, leaving Mr. Weller in a state of very great admiration of her charms, both personal and mental.

Having descended in safety from the wall, and not forgotten to devote a few moments to his own particular business in the same department, Mr. Weller then made the best of his way back to the Bush, where his prolonged silence had occasioned much speculation and some alarm.

"We must be careful," said Mr. Pickwick, after listening attentively to Sam’s tale, "not for our own sakes, but for that of the young lady. We must be very cautious."
"We," said Mr. Winkle, with marked emphasis.

Mr. Pickwick's momentary look of indignation at the tone of this remark, subsided into his characteristic expression of benevolence, as he replied—

"We, Sir! I shall accompany you."

"I wish," said Mr. Winkle.

"I," replied Mr. Pickwick, mildly. "In affording you this interview, the young lady has taken a natural, perhaps, but still a very imprudent step. If I am present at the meeting—a mutual friend, who is old enough to be the father of both parties—the voice of calumny can never be raised against her, hereafter.

Mr. Pickwick's eyes lightened with honest exultation at his own foresight, as he spoke thus. Mr. Winkle was touched at this little trait of his delicate respect for the young protégé of his friend, and took his hand with a feeling of regard akin to veneration.

"You shall go," said Mr. Winkle.

"I will," said Mr. Pickwick. "Sam, have the three horses shoe very ready, and order the conveyance to be at the door to-morrow evening, rather earlier than is absolutely necessary, in order that we may be in good time."

Mr. Weller touched his hat, as an earnest of his obedience, and withdrew to make all needful preparations for the expedition.

The coach was punctual to the time appointed: and Mr. Weller, after duly instal- ling Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle inside, took his seat on the box by the driver. They alighted, as had been agreed on, about a quarter of a mile from the place of rendezvous, and desiring the coachman to await their return, proceeded the remaining distance on foot.

It was at this stage of the undertaking that Mr. Pickwick, with many smiles and various other indications of great self-satisfaction, produced from one of his coat-pockets a dark lantern, with which he had specially provided himself for the occasion, and the great mechanical beauty of which, he proceeded to explain to Mr. Winkle, as they walked along, to the no small surprise of the few stragglers they met.

"I should have been the better for something of this kind, in my last garden expedition, at night; eh, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking good-humouredly round at his follower, who was trudging behind.

"Very nice things, if they're managed properly, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "but if you don't want to be seen, I think they're more useful arter the candle's gone out, than ven it's alight."

Mr. Pickwick appeared struck by Sam's remark, for he put the lantern into his pocket again, and they walked on in silence.

"Down here, Sir," said Sam. "Let me lead the way. This is the lane, Sir."

Down the lane they went, and dark enough it was. Mr. Pickwick brought out the lantern once or twice as they groped their way along, and threw a very brilliant little tunnel of light before them, about a foot in diameter. It was very pretty to look at, but seemed to have the effect of rendering surrounding objects rather darker than before.

At length they arrived at the large stone, and here Sam recommended his master and Mr. Winkle to seat themselves, while he reconnoitred, and ascertained whether Mary was yet in waiting.

After an absence of five or ten minutes, Sam returned to say that the gate was opened, and all quiet. Following him with stealthy tread, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle soon found themselves in the garden. Here every body said, "Flush!" a good many times; and that being done, no one seemed to have any very distinct apprehension of what was to be done next.

"Is Miss Allen in the garden yet, Mary?" inquired Mr. Winkle, much agitated.

"I don't know, Sir," replied the pretty housemaid. "The best thing to be done, Sir, will be for Mr. Weller to give you a hoist up into the tree, and perhaps Mr. Pickwick will have the goodness to see that nobody comes up the lane, while I watch at the other end of the garden. Goodness gracious, what's that?"

"That 'ere blessed lantern 'll be the death on us all," exclaimed Sam, peevishly. "Take care what you're a doin' on, Sir, you're a sendin' a blaze o' light, right into the back parlour window."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, turning hastily aside, "I didn't mean to do that."

"Now it's in the next house, Sir," remonstrated Sam.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, turning round again.

"Now it's in the stable, and they'll think the place is a fire," said Sam. "Shut it up, Sir, can't you?"

"It's the most extraordinary lantern I ever met with, in all my life!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, greatly bewildered by the effects he had so unintentionally produced. "I never saw such a powerful reflector."

"It'll be run too powerful for us, if you keep blazin' away in that manner, Sir," replied Sam, as Mr. Pickwick, after various unsuccessful efforts, managed to close the slide. "There's the young lady's footsteps. Now, Mr. Winkle, Sir, up with you."

"Stop, stop!" said Mr. Pickwick, "I must speak to her first. Help me up, Sam."

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"Gently, Sir," said Sam, planting his head against the wall, and making a platform of his back. "Step a top o' that 'ere flower-pot, Sir. Now, then, up with you."

"I'm afraid I shall hurt you, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Never mind me, Sir," replied Sam. "Lend him a hand, Mr. Vinkle, Sir, Steady, Sir, steady; that's the time o' day."

As Sam spoke, Mr. Pickwick, by exertions almost supernatural in a gentleman of his years and weight, contrived to get upon Sam's back; and Sam gently raising himself up, and Mr. Pickwick holding on fast by the top of the wall, while Mr. Winkle clasped him tight by the legs, they contrived by these means to bring his spectacles just above the level of the coping.

"My dear," said Mr. Pickwick, looking over the wall, and catching sight of Arabella, on the other side, "don't be frightened, my dear, 'tis only me."

"Oh, pray, go away, Mr. Pickwick," said Arabella. "Tell them all to go away, I am so dreadfully frightened. Dear, dear Mr. Pickwick, don't stop there. You'll fall down and kill yourself. I know you will."

"Now, pray, don't alarm yourself, my dear," said Mr. Pickwick, soothingly. "There is not the least cause for fear, I assure you. Stand firm, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, looking down.

"All right, Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Don't be longer than you can conveniently help, Sir. You're rather heavy."

"Only another moment, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I merely wished you to know, my dear, that I should not have allowed my young friend to see you in this clandestine way, if the situation in which you are placed had left him any alternative; and lest the impropriety of this step should cause you any uneasiness, my love, it may be a satisfaction to you to know that I am present; that's all, my dear."

"Indeed, Mr. Pickwick, I am very much obliged to you for your kindness and consideration," replied Arabella, drying her tears with her handkerchief. She would probably have said much more, had not Mr. Pickwick's head disappeared with great swiftness, in consequence of a false step on Sam's shoulder, which brought him suddenly to the ground. He was up again in an instant, however; and bidding Mr. Winkle make haste and get the interview over, ran out into the lane to keep watch, with all the courage and ardour of a youth. Mr. Winkle, himself, inspired by the occasion, was on the wall in a moment; merely passing to request Sam to be careful of his master.

"I'll take care on him, Sir," replied Sam. Leave him to me."
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wrapt in contemplations of his future greatness. The mysterious light appeared more brilliantly than before; dancing to all appearances up and down the lane, crossing from side to side, and moving in an orbit as eccentric as comets themselves.

The scientific gentleman was a bachelor. He had no wife to call in and astonish, so he rang the bell for his servant.

"Prouffe!" said the scientific gentleman, "there is something very extraordinary in the air to-night. Did you see that?" said the scientific gentleman, pointing out of the window, as the light again became visible.

"Yes I did, Sir."

"What do you think of it, Prouffe?"

"Think of it, Sir?"

"Yes. You have been bred up in the country, what should you say was the cause of those lights, now?"

The scientific gentleman smileingly anticipated Prouffe's reply, that he could assign no cause for them at all. Prouffe meditated.

"I should say it was thieves, Sir," said Prouffe at length.

"You're a fool, and may go down stairs" said the scientific gentleman.

"Thank you Sir!" said Prouffe. And down he went.

But the scientific gentleman could not rest under the idea of the ingenious treatise he had projected, being lost to the world, which must inevitably be the case, if the speculation of the ingenious Mr. Prouffe were not stifled in its birth. He put on his hat and walked quickly down the garden, determined to investigate the matter to the very bottom.

Now, shortly before the scientific gentleman walked out into the garden, Mr. Pickwick had run down the lane as fast as he could, to convey a false alarm that somebody was coming that way, occasionally drawing back the slide of the dark lantern to keep himself from the ditch. The alarm was no sooner given, than Mr. Winkle scrambled back over the wall, and Arabella ran into the house;—the garden gate was shut, and the three adventurers were making the best of their way down the lane, when they were startled by the scientific gentleman unlocking his garden gate.

"Hold hard," whispered Sam, who was of course first of the party. "Show a light for just vun second, Sir."

Mr. Pickwick did as he was desired, and Sam seeing a man's head peeping out very cautiously, within half a yard of his own, gave it a gentle tap with his clenched fist, which knocked it with a hollow sound against the gate. Having performed this feat with great suddenness and dexterity, Mr. Weller caught Mr. Pickwick up on his back, and followed Mr. Winkle down the lane at a pace which, considering the burden he carried, was perfectly astonishing.

"Have you got your vind back again, Sir?" inquired Sam, when they had reached the end.

"Quite—quite now," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Then come along, Sir," said Sam, setting his master on his feet again. "Come between us, Sir. Not half a mile to run. Think you're vinnin a cup Sir. Now for it!"

Thus encouraged, Mr. Pickwick made the very best use of his legs, and it may be confidently stated that a pair of black gaiters never got over the ground in a better style than did those of Mr. Pickwick on this memorable occasion.

The coach was waiting, the horses were fresh, the roads were good, and the driver was willing. The whole party arrived in safety at the Bush before Mr. Pickwick had recovered his breath.

"In vith you at once, Sir," said Sam, as he helped his master out. "Don't stop a second in the street, arter that 'ere exercise. Beg your pardon, Sir," continued Sam, touching his hat as Mr. Winkle descended. "Hope there wasn't a priory 'tachment, Sir."

Mr. Winkle grasped his humble friend by the hand, and whispered in his ear, "It's all right, Sam; quite right"—upon which Mr. Weller struck three distinct blows upon his nose in token of intelligence; smiled, winked, and proceeded to put the steps up with a countenance expressive of lively satisfaction. As to the scientific gentleman, he demonstrated in a masterly treatise that these wonderful lights were the effect of electricity, and clearly proved the same by detailing how a flash of fire danced before his eyes when he put his head out of the gate, and how he received a shock which stunned him for a full quarter of an hour afterwards; which demonstration delighted all the Scientific Associations beyond measure, and caused him to be considered a light of science ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XLII.

Introduces Mr. Pickwick to a new, and it is hoped not uninteresting scene, in the great drama of life.

The remainder of the period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of the stay at Bath, passed over without the occurrence of any thing material. Trinity Term commenced. On the expiration of its first week, Mr. Pickwick and his friends...
returned to London, and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.

On the third morning after their arrival, just as all the clocks in the city were striking nine individually, and somewhere about nine hundred collectively, Sam was taking the air in George Yard, when a queer sort of fresh painted vehicle drove up, out of which there jumped with great agility, throwing the reins to a stout man who sat beside him, a queer sort of gentleman, who seemed made for the vehicle, and the vehicle for him.

The vehicle was not exactly a gig, neither was it a stanhope. It was not what is currently denominated a dog-cart, neither was it a taxed cart, nor a chaise-cart, nor a guillotined cabriolet; and yet it had something of the character of each and every of these machines. It was painted a bright yellow, with the shafts and wheels picked out in black; and the driver sat in the orthodox sporting style, on cushions piled about two feet above the rail. The horse was a bay, a well-looking animal enough; but with something of a flash and dog-fighting air about him, nevertheless, which accented admirably, both with the vehicle and its master.

The master himself was a man of about forty, with black hair, and carefully combed whiskers; dressed in a particularly gorgeous manner, with plenty of articles of jewelry about him—all about three sizes larger than those which are usually worn by gentlemen—and a rough great-coat to crown the whole. Into one pocket of the greatcoat, he thrust his left hand the moment he dismounted, while from the other he drew forth, with his right, a very bright and glowering silk handkerchief, with which he whisked a speck or two of dust from his boots, and then crumpling it in his hand, swagged up the court.

It had not escaped Sam's attention that, when this person dismounted, a shabby-looking man in a brown great-coat shorn of divers buttons, who had been previously slinking about on the opposite side of the way, crossed over, and remained stationary close by. Having something more than a suspicion of the object of the gentleman's visit, Sam proceeded him to the George and Vulture, and, turning sharp round, planted himself in the centre of the doorway.

"Now, my fine fellow," said the man in the rough coat, in an imperious tone, attempting, at the same time, to push his way past.

"Now, Sir, what's the matter!" replied Sam, returning the push with compound interest.

"Come, none of this, my man; this won't do with me," said the owner of the rough coat, raising his voice, and turning very white—"Here, Smouch!"

"Well, what's amiss here!" growled the man in the brown coat, who had been gradually sneaking up the court during this short dialogue.

"Only some insolence of this young man's," said the principal, giving Sam another push.

"Come, none o' this gammon," growled Smouch, giving him another, and a harder one.

This last push had the effect which was intended by the experienced Mr. Smouch to produce, for while Sam attempted to return the compliment, was grinding that gentleman's body against the door-post, the principal crept past, and made his way to the bar, whither Sam, after bandying a few epithetical remarks with Mr. Smouch, followed at once.

"Good morning, my dear," said the principal, addressing the young lady in the bar, with Botany Bay ease, and New South Wales gentility; "which is Mr. Pickwick's room, my dear?"

"Show him up," said the bar-maid to a waiter, without deigning another look at the exquisite, in reply to his inquiry.

The waiter led the way up stairs as he was desired, and the man in the rough coat followed, with Sam behind him, who, in his progress up the staircase, indulged in sun-dry gestures indicative of supreme contempt and defiance, to the unspeakable gratification of the servants and other lookers-on. Mr. Smouch, who was troubled with a hoarse cough, remained below, and expectorated in the passage.

Mr. Pickwick was fast asleep in bed, when his early visitor, followed by Sam, entered the room. The noise they made, in so doing, awoke him.

"Shaving water, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, from within the curtains.

"Shave you directly, Mr. Pickwick," said the visitor, drawing one of them back from the bed's head. "I've got an execution against you, at the suit of Bardell. —Here's the warrant.—Common Plead. —Here's my card. I suppose you'll come over to my house." And giving Mr. Pickwick a friendly tap on the shoulder, the sheriff's officer—for such he was—threw his card on the counterpane, and pulled a gold toothpick from his waistcoat-pocket.

"Namby's the name," said the sheriff's deputy, as Mr. Pickwick took his spectacles from under the pillow, and put them on, to read the card. "Namby, Bell Alley, Coleman Street."

At this point, Sam Weller, who had his
eyes fixed belligerently on Mr. Namby's shining beaver, interfered.

"Are you a Quaker?" said Sam.

"I'll let you know who I am, before I've done with you," replied the indignant officer. "I'll teach you manners, my fine fellow, one of these fine mornings."

"Thankee," said Sam. "I'll do the same for you. Take your hat off." With this, Mr. Weller, in the most dexterous manner, knocked Mr. Namby's hat to the other side of the room with such violence that he had very nearly caused him to swallow the gold toothpick into the bargain.

"Observe this, Mr. Pickwick," said the disconcerted officer, gasping for breath. "I've been assaulted in the execution of my duty by your servant in your chamber. He is a bodely fear. I call you to witness this."

"Don't witness nothin', Sir," interposed Sam. "Shut your eyes up tight, Sir; I'd pitch him out o' winder, only he couldn't fall far enough, 'cause o' the lead outside."

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, in an angry voice, as his attendant made various demonstrations of hostility, "if you say another word, or offer the slightest interference with this person, I discharge you that instant."

"But, Sir!" said Sam. "Hold your tongue," interposed Mr. Pickwick. "Take that hat up again."

But this Sam flatly and positively refused to do; and, after he had been severely reprimanded by his master, the officer, being in a hurry, contended to pick it up himself, venting a great variety of threats against Sam meanwhile, that gentleman received with perfect composure, merely observing that if Mr. Namby would have the goodness to put his hat on again, he would knock it into the latter end of next week. Mr. Namby, perhaps thinking that such a person might be productive of inconvenience to himself, declined to offer the temptation, and soon after called up Smouch. Having informed him that the capture was made, and that he was to wait for the prisoner until he should have finished dressing, Namby then swaggered out, and drove away. Smouch requesting Mr. Pickwick, in a hurry manner, "to be as alive as he could, for it was a busy time," drew up a chair by the door, and sat there till he had finished dressing. Sam was then dispatched for a hackney-coach, and in it the triumvirate proceeded to Coleman Street.

It was fortunate the distance was short, for Mr. Smouch, besides possessing no very enchanting conversational powers, was rendered a decidedly unpleasant companion in a limited space, by the physical weakness to which we have elsewhere adverted.

The coach having turned into a very narrow and dark street, stopped before a house with iron bars to all the windows; the door-posts of which, were barred by the name and title of "Namby, Officer to the Sheriffs of London!" the inner gate having been opened by a gentleman who might have passed for a neglected twin brother of Mr. Smouch, and who was endowed with a large key for the purpose; Mr. Pickwick was shown into the 'coffee-room."

This coffee-room was a front parlour, the principal features of which, were fresh sand and stale tobacco smoke. Mr. Pickwick bowed to the three persons who were seated in it when he entered, and having dispatched Sam for Parker, withdrew into an obscure corner, and from thence looked with some curiosity upon his new companions.

One of these was a mere boy of nineteen or twenty, who, though it was yet barely ten o'clock, was drinking gin and water, and smoking a cigar; amusements to which, judging from his infused countenance, he had devoted himself pretty constantly for the last year or two of his life. Opposite him, engaged in reading a dirty book with the toe of his right boot, was a coarse, vulgar young man of about thirty, with a sallow face and harsh voice; evidently possessed of that knowledge of the world, and captivating freedom of manner which are to be acquired in public-house parlours and at low billiard tables. The third tenant of the aparment was a middle-aged man in a very old suit of black, who looked pale and haggard and paced up and down the room incessantly; stopping now and then to look with great anxiety out of the window, as if he expected somebody, and then resuming his walk.

"You'd better have the loan of my razor this morning, Mr. Aynsleigh," said the man who was stirring the fire, tipping the wink to his friend, the boy.

"Thank you, no, I shan't want it; I expect I shall be out, in the course of an hour or so," replied the other in a hurried manner. "Then walking again up to the window, and once more returning disappointed, he sighed deeply, and left the room; upon which the other two burst out into a loud laugh.

"Well, I never saw such a game as that," said the gentleman who had offered the razor, whose name appeared to be Price. "Never!" Mr. Price confirmed the assertion with an oath, and then laughed again, when of course the boy, (who thought his companion one of the most dashling fellows alive,) laughed also.

"You'd hardly think, would you now," said Price, turning towards Mr. Pickwick.
that that chap's been here a week yesterday, and never once shaved himself yet, because he feels so certain he's going out in half an hour's time, that he thinks be may as well put it off till he gets home?"

"Poor man!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Are his chances of getting out of his difficulties really so great?"

"Chances be d—d," replied Price; "he hasn't half the ghost of one. I wouldn't give that for his chance of walking about the streets this time ten years." With this, Mr. Price snapped his fingers contemptuously, and rang the bell.

"Give me a sheet of paper, Crookey," said Mr. Price to the attendant, who in dress and general appearance looked something between a bankrupt guinea, and a drover in a state of insolvency; "and a glass of brandy and water, Crookey, d'y'ee hear? I'm going to write to my father, and I must have a stimulant, or I sha'n't be able to pitch it strong enough into the old boy." At this facetious speech, the young boy, it is almost needless to say, was fairly convulsed.

"That's right," said Mr. Price. "Never say die. All fun, a'nt it?"

"Prime!" said the young gentleman.

"You've some spirit about you, you have," said Price. "You've seen something of life."

"I rather think I have!" replied the boy. He looked at it through the dirty panes of glass in a bar door.

Mr. Pickwick feeling not a little dissatisfied with this dialogue, as well as with the air and manner of the two beings by whom it had been carried on was about to inquire whether he could not be accommodated with a private sitting-room, when two or three strangers of genteel appearance entered, at right of whom the boy threw his cigar into the fire, and whispering to Mr. Price that they had come to "make it all right" for him, joined them at a table in the further end of the room.

It would appear, however, that matters were not going to be made all right quite so speedily as the young gentleman anticipated, for a very long conversation ensued, of which Mr. Pickwick could not avoid hearing certain angry fragments regarding dissolute conduct and repeated forgiveness.

At last there were very distinct allusions made by the oldest gentleman of the party to one Whitecross-street, at which the young gentleman, notwithstanding his primness and his spirit, and his knowledge of life into the bargain, reeled his head upon the table and howled dismally.

Very much satisfied with this sudden bringing down of the youth's valour, and emotional lowering of his tone, Mr. Pickwick rang the bell, and was shown at his own request into a private room furnished with a carpet, table, chairs, sideboard and sofa, and ornamented with a looking glass, and various old prints. Here he had the advantage of hearing Mr. Namby's performance on a square piano over-head, while the breakfast was getting ready; and when it came, Mr. Perker arrived also.

"Ada, my dear Sir," said the little man, "mails at last, eh? Come, come, I'm not sorry for it either, because now you'll see the absurdity of this conduct. I've noted down the amount of the taxed costs and damages for which the case was issued, and we had better settle at once, and lose no time. Namby is come home by this time, I dare say. What say you, my dear Sir, shall I draw a cheque, or will you?" The little man rubbed his hands with affected cheerfulness as he said this, but glancing at Mr. Pickwick's countenance, could not forbear at the same time casting a desponding look towards Sam Weller.

"Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, "let me hear no more of this, I beg. I see no advantage in staying here, so I shall go to prison to-night."

"You can't go to Whitecross-street, my dear Sir," said Perker. "Impossible! There are sixty beds in a ward, and the boy's been sixteen hours out of the four-and-twenty."

"I should rather go to some other place of confinement if I can," said Mr. Pickwick. "If not, I must make the best I can of that."

"You can go to the Fleet, my dear Sir, if you're determined to go somewhere," said Perker.

"That'll do," said Mr. Pickwick. "I'll go there directly I've finished my breakfast."

"Stop, stop, my dear Sir; not the least occasion for being in such a violent hurry to get into a place that most other men are eager to get out of," said the pious-natured little attorney. "We must have a heebas corpus. There'll be no judge in chambers till four o'clock this afternoon. You must wait till then."

"Very good," said Mr. Pickwick, with unmoved patience. "Then we will have a chop here, at two. See about it, Sam, and tell them to be punctual."

Mr. Pickwick remaining firm, despite all the remonstrances and arguments of Perker, the shops appeared and disappeared in due course; he was then put into another hackney-coach, and carried off to Chancery Lane; after waiting half an hour or so for Mr. Namby, who had a select dinner party, and could on no account be disturbed before.

There were two judges in attendance at Sergeant's Inn—one King's bench, and one Common Pleas, and a great deal of business appeared to be transacting before
The people that attracted his attention most, were three or four men of shabby-genteel appearance, who touched their hats to many of the attorneys who passed, and seemed to have some business there, the nature of which Mr. Pickwick could not divine. They were curious-looking fellows. One was a tall and rather lame man in rusty black, and a white neckerchief; another was a stout, burly person, dressed in the same apparel, with a great reddish-black cloth round his neck; a third was a little weazen drunken-looking body with a pimply face. They were loitering about, with their hands behind them, and now and then, with an anxious equanimity, whispered something in the ear of some of the gentlemen with papers as they hurried by. Mr. Pickwick remembered to have very often observed them lounging under the archway when he had been walking past, and his curiosity was quite excited to know to what branch of the profession these dingy-looking loungers could possibly belong.

He was just about to propound the question to Numbly, who kept close beside him sucking a large gold ring on his little finger, when Perker bustled up, and observing that there was no time to lose, led the way into the Inn. As Mr. Pickwick followed, the lame man stepped up to him, and civilly touching his hat, held out a written card, which Mr. Pickwick, not wishing to hurt the man's feelings by refusing, courteously accepted and deposited in his waistcoat-pocket.

"Now," said Perker, turning round before he entered one of the offices, to see that his companion was close behind him.

"In here, my dear Sir. Hallo, what do you want?"

This last question was addressed to the lame man, who, as observed by Mr. Pickwick, made one of the party. In reply to it, the lame man touched his hat again with all imaginable politeness, and motioned towards Mr. Pickwick.

"No, no," said Perker, with a smile.

"We don't want you, my dear friend, we don't want you."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the lame man.

"The gentleman took my card. I hope you will employ me, Sir." The gentleman nodded to me. I'll be judged by the gentleman himself. You nodded to me, Sir."

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense. You didn't nod to anybody, Pickwick! A mistake, a mistake," said Perker.

"The gentleman handed me his card," replied Mr. Pickwick, producing it from his waistcoat-pocket. "I accepted it as the gentleman seemed to wish it—in fact I had some curiosity to look at it when I should be at leisure. I—"

The little attorney burst into a loud laugh, and returning the card to the lame man, informing him it was all a mistake, whispered to Mr. Pickwick as the man turned away in dudgeon, that he was only a bail.

"A what?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.


"A bail!"

"Yes, my dear Sir, half-a-dozen of 'em here. Bail you to any amount, and only charge half-a-crown. Curious trade, isn't it?" said Perker, regaling himself with a pinch of snuff.

"What! am I to understand that these men earn a livelihood by waiting about here to perjure themselves before the judges or the land, at the rate of half-a-crown a crime!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite aghast at the disclosure.

"Why I don't exactly know about the perjury, my dear Sir," replied the little gentleman. "Harsh word, my dear Sir, very harsh word indeed. It's a legal fiction, my dear Sir, nothing more." Saying which, the attorney shrugged his shoulders, smiled, took a second pinch of snuff, and led the way into the office of the judge's clerk.

This was a room of specially dirty appearance, with a very low ceiling and old panelled walls; and so badly lighted, that although it was broad day outside, great tallow candles were burning on the desks. At one end was a door, leading to the judge's private apartment, round which were congregated a crowd of attorneys and managing clerks, who were called in, in the order in which their respective appointments stood upon the file. Every time this door was opened to let a party out, the next party made a violent effort to get in; and as in addition to the numerous dialogues which passed between two gentlemen who were waiting to see the judge, a variety of rather, personal squabbles ensued between the greater part of those who had seen him, there was as much noise as could well be raised in an apartment of such confined dimensions.

Nor were the conversations of these gentlemen the only sounds that broke upon the ear. Standing on a box, behind a wood
At another end of the room, was a clerk in spectacles, who was "taking the affidavit," large batches of which were from time to time carried into the private room by another clerk for the judge's signature. There were a large number of attorneys' clerks to be sworn, and it being a moral impossibility to swear them all at once, the struggles of these gentlemen to reach the clerk in spectacles, were like those of a crowd to get in at the pitt door of a theatre when His Most Gracious Majesty honours it with his presence. Another functionary from time to time exercised his lungs in calling over the names of those who had been sworn, for the purpose of restoring to them their affidavits after they had been signed by the judge, which gave rise to a few and all these things going on at the same time, occasioned as much bustle as the most active and excitable person could desire to behold. There were yet another class of persons—those who were waiting to attend summons their employers had had taken, which it was optional to the attorney on the opposite side to attend or not, and whose business was it from time to time to cry out the opposite attorney's name, to make certain that he was not in attendance without their knowledge.

For example. Leaning against the wall, close beside the seat Mr. Pickwick had taken, was an office lad of fourteen with a tenor voice, and near him a common-law clerk with a bass one.

"Sniggle and Blink," cried the tenor.

"Purkin and Snob," growled the bass.

"Stumpy and Deacon," said the new comer.

Nobody answered; and the next man who came in was hailed by the whole three, and he in his turn shouted for another firm, and then somebody else roared in a loud voice for another, and so forth.

All this time, the man in the spectacles was hard at work swearing the clerks; the oath being invariably administered without any effort at punctuation, and usually in the following terms:

"Take the book in your right hand this is your name and handwriting you swear that the contents of this your affidavit are true so help you God a shilling you must get change I haven't got it."

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "I suppose they are getting the habeas corpus ready."

"Yes," said Sam, "and I wish they'd bring out the hay-his-carcasse. It's very unpleasant keepin' us waitin' here. T'd ha' got half a dozen hay-his-carcasses ready, packed up and all, by this time."

"What sort of cumbersome and unmanageable machine Sam. Weller imagined a writ of habeas corpus to be does not appear, for Perker at that moment walked up, and took Mr. Pickwick away.

The usual forms having been gone through, the body of Samuel Pickwick was soon afterwards conveyed to the custody of the tipstaff, to be by him taken to the Wardens of the Fleet Prison, and there detained until the amount of the damages and costs in the action of Bardell against Pickwick was fully paid and satisfied.

"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, laughing, "will be a very long time. Sam, call another hackney-coach. Perker, my dear friend, good bye."

"I shall go with you, and see you safe there," said Perker.

"Indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, "I would rather go without any other attendant than Sam. As soon as I get settled, I will write and let you know, and I shall expect you immediately. Until then, good bye."

As Mr. Pickwick said this, he got into the coach which had by this time arrived, followed by the tipstaff. Sam having stationed himself in the box, it rolled away.

"A most extraordinary man that," said Perker, as he stopped to pull on his gloves.

"What a bankrupt he'd make, Sir," observed Mr. Lowten, who was standing near. "How he would bother the commissioners! He'd eat 'em at defiance if they talked of committing him, Sir."

The attorney did not appear very much delighted with his clerk's professional estimate of Mr. Pickwick's character, for he walked away without deigning any reply. The hackney-coach jolted along Fleet Street, as hackney coaches usually do. The horses "went better," the driver said, when they had got anything before them, (they must have gone at a most extraordinary pace when there was nothing,) and so the vehicle kept behind a cart; when the cart stopped, it stopped, and when the cart went on again, it did the same. Mr. Pickwick sat opposite the tipstaff, and the tipstaff sat with his hat between his knees, whistling a tune, and looking out of the coach-window.

"Time performs wonders, and, by the powerful old gentleman's aid, even a hackney-coach gets over half a mile of ground. They stopped at length, and Mr. Pickwick alighted at the gate of the Fleet.

The tipstaff, just looking over his shoulder to see that his charge was following close at his heels, preceded Mr. Pickwick into the prison; turning to the left, after they had entered, they passed through an open door into a lobby, from which a heavy
gate opposite to that by which they had entered, and which was guarded by a stout turnkey with the key in his hand, led at once into the interior of the prison.

Here they stopped, while the handstaff delivered his papers; and here Mr. Pickwick was apprised that he would remain until he had undergone the ceremony, known to the initiated, as "sitting for your portrait."

"Sitting for my portrait!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Having your likeness taken, Sir," replied the stout turnkey.

"We're capital hands at likenesses here. Take 'em in no time, and always exact. Walk in, Sir; and make yourself at home."

Mr. Pickwick complied with the invitation, and sat himself down, when Mr. Weller, who stationed himself at the back of the chair, whispered that the sitting was merely another term for undergoing an inspection by the different turnkeys, in order that they might know prisoners from visitors.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "then I wish the artists would come. This is rather a public place."

"They vont be long, Sir, I des-say," replied Sam. "Thers a Dutch clock, Sir."

"So I see," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"And a bird-cage, Sir," said Sam. "Veels wi thin veels, a prison in a prison. A'nt it, Sir?"

As Mr. Weller made this philosophical remark, Mr. Pickwick was aware that his sitting had commenced. The stout turnkey having been relieved from the lock, sat down, and looked at him carelessly from time to time, while a long thin man who had relieved him thrust his hands beneath his coat tails, and plantimg himself opposite, took a good long view of him. A third rather surly-looking gentleman, who had apparently been disturbed at his tea, for he was disposing of the last remnant of a crust and butter when he came in, stationed himself close to Mr. Pickwick; and, resting his hands on his hips, inspected Mr. Pickwick narrowly, while two others mixed with the group, and studied his features with the most intent and thoughtful face.

Mr. Pickwick won a good deal under the operation, and appeared to sit very uneasily in his chair: but he made no remark to anybody while it was being performed — not even to Sam, who reclined upon the back of the chair, reflecting, partly on the situation of his master, and partly on the great satisfaction it would have afforded him to make a fierce assault upon all the turnkeys there assembled, one after the other, if it were lawful and peaceable to do.

At length the likeness was completed, and Mr. Pickwick was informed, that he might now proceed into the prison.

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why don't you rightly know about to-night?" replied the stout turnkey. "You'll be chummed on somebody to-morrow, and then you'll be all snug and comfortable. The first night's generally unsettled, but you'll b set all squares to-morrow."

After some discussion, it was discovered that one of the turnkeys had a bed to let, which Mr. Pickwick could have for that night, and he gladly agreed to hire it.

"If you'll come with me, I'll show it you, at once," said the man. "It ain't a large 'un; but it's an out and outer to sleep in. This way, Sir."

They passed through the inner gate, and descended a short flight of steps. The key was turned after them, and Mr. Pickwick found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of a Debtors' Prison.

CHAPTER XLII.

What befell Mr. Pickwick when he got into the Fleet; what debtors he saw there; and how he passed the night.

Mr. Tom Roker, the gentleman who had accompanied Mr. Pickwick into the prison, turned sharp round to the right when he got to the bottom of the little flight of steps and led the way through an iron gate which stood open, and up another short flight of steps, into a long narrow gallery, dirty and low, paved with stone, and very dimly lighted by a window at each remote end.

"This," said the gentleman, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking carelessly over his shoulders to Mr. Pickwick, "this here is the hall flight."

"Oh," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking down a dark and filthy staircase, which appeared to lead to a range of damp and gloomy stone vaults beneath the ground, and those, I suppose, are the little cellars where the prisoners keep their small quantities of coals. Ah! unpleasant places to have to go down to; but very convenient, I dare say."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder if they was convenient," replied the gentleman, "seeing that a few people live there pretty snug. That's the Fair, that is."

"My friend," said Mr. Pickwick, "you don't really mean to say that human beings live down in those wretched dungeons?"

"Don't I?" replied Mr. Roker, with indignant astonishment; "why shouldn't I?"

"Live!—live down there!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.
“Live down there! yes, and die down there, too, very often!” replied Mr. Roker; “and what of that! Whose got to say any thing agin it! Live down there!—yes, and a very good place it is to live in, a’nt it?”

As Roker turned somewhat fiercely upon Mr. Pickwick in saying this, and moreover muttered, in an excited fashion, certain unpleasant invocations concerning his own eyes, limbs, and circulating fluids, the latter gentleman deemed it advisable to pursue the discourse no further. Mr. Roker then proceeded to mount another staircase, as dirty as that which led to the place which had just been the subject of discussion, in which ascent he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and Sam.

“There,” said Mr. Roker, pausing for breath, when they reached another gallery of the same dimensions as the one below, “this is the coffee-room flight: the one above’s the third, and the one above that’s the top: and the room where you’re going to sleep to-night is the warden’s room, and it’s this way—come on.” Having said all this in a breath, Mr. Roker mounted another flight of stairs, with Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller following at his heels.

These staircases received light from sun-dry windows placed at some little distance above the floor, and looking into a gravelled area bounded by a high brick wall, with iron chenoue-de-frise at the top. This area, it appeared from Mr. Roker’s statement, was the rocket-ground; and it further appeared, on the testimony of the same gentleman, that there was a smaller area in that portion of the prison which was nearest Farringdon-street, denominated and called “the Painted Ground,” from the fact of its walls having once displayed the semblances of various men-of-war in full sail, and other artistic effects, achieved in bygone times by some imprisoned draughtsmen in his leisure hours.

Having communicated this piece of information, apparently more for the purpose of discharging his bosom of an important fact, than with any specific view of enlightening Mr. Pickwick, the guide, having at length reached another gallery, led the way into a small passage at the extreme end; opened a door, and disclosed an apartment of an appearance by no means inviting, containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

“There,” said Mr. Roker, holding the door open, and looking triumphantly round at Mr. Pickwick, “There’s a room!”

Mr Pickwick’s face, however, betokened such a very trifling portion of satisfaction at the appearance of his lodging, that Mr. Roker looked for a reciprocity of feeling into the countenance of Samwel Weller, who, until now, had observed a dignified silence. “There’s a room, young man,” observed Mr. Roker.

“I see it,” replied Sam, with a placid nod of the head.

“You wouldn’t think to find such a room as this in the Farringdon Hotel, would you!” said Mr. Roker, with a complacent smile.

To this Mr. Weller replied with an easy and unstudied closing of one eye; which might be considered to mean, either that he would have thought it, or that he would not have thought it, or that he had never thought anything at all about it, just as the observer’s imagination suggested. Having executed this feat, and re-opened his eye, Mr. Weller proceeded to inquire which was the individual bedstead that Mr. Roker had so flattering described as an out-and-outer to sleep in.

“That’s it,” replied Mr. Roker, pointing to a very rusty one in a corner. “It would make any one go to sleep that bedstead would, whether they wanted to or not.”

“I should think,” said Sam, eyeing the piece of furniture in question with a look of excessive disgust, “I should think poppies was nothin’ to it.”

“Nothing at all,” said Mr. Roker.

“And I s’pose,” said Sam, with a sidelong glance at his master, as if to see whether there were any symptoms of his determination being shaken by what passed, “I s’pose the other gen’tlemen as sleeps here, are gen’tlemen.”

“Nothing but it,” said Mr. Roker. “One of them takes his twelve pints of ale a-day, and never leaves off smoking, even at his meals.”

“He must be a first-rater,” said Sam.

“A, 1,” replied Mr. Roker.

Nothing daunted, even by this intelligence, Mr. Pickwick smilingly announced his determination to test the powers of the narcotic bedstead for that night; and Mr. Roker, after informing him that he could retire to rest at whatever hour he thought proper, without any further notice or formality, walked off, leaving him standing with Sam in the gallery.

It was getting dark; that is to say, a few gas jets were kindled in this place, which was never light, by way of compliment to the evening, which had set in outside. As it was rather warm, some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand, had set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them as he passed along, with great curiosity and interest. Here, four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, were engaged in noisy and
ritous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all-fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room, some solitary tenant might be seen, poring, by the light of a feeble tallow candle, over a bundle of soiled and tattered papers, yellow with dust, and dropping to pieces from age, writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch. In a third, a man with his wife and a whole crowd of children, might be seen making up a scabby bed on the ground, or upon a few chairs, for the younger ones to pass the night in. And in a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh, the noise, and the beer, and the tobacco-smoke, and the cards, all came over again in greater force than before.

In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the staircases, there lingered a great number of people who came there. Some because their rooms were empty and awesome; others because their rooms were hot; and the greater part because they were restless and uncomfortable, and possessed of the secret of exactly knowing what to do with themselves. There were many classes of people here, from the labouring man in his flannel jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl-dressing-gown, most appropriately out at elbows; but there was the same air about them all—a kind of listless, jail-bird, careless swagger; a vagabondish who 'saids sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words; but which any man can understand in a moment, if he wishes, by just seeing foot in the nearest debtors' prison, and looking at the very first group of people he sees there, with the same interest as Mr. Pickwick did.

"It strikes me, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, leaning over the iron-rail at the stairhead, "it strikes me, Sam, that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all."

"Think not, Sir," inquired Mr. Weller.

"You see how these fellows drink, and smoke, and roar," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"It's quite impossible that they can mind it much."

"Ah, that's just the very thing, Sir," rejoined Sam, "they don't mind it; it's a regular holiday to them—all porter and ale free. It's a real holiday to them, down-hearted fellows as can't use away at the beer, nor play skittles neither; then as they'd pay if they could, and get low by being boxed up. I'll tell you when it is, Sir; them as is always a idlen' in public houses, it don't damage at all, and then as is always a workin' when they can, it damages too much. 'It's unnek,' as my father used to say when his groove won't make half-and-half—'It's unnek, and that's the fault on it.'"

"I think you're right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, after a few moments' reflection, "quite right."

"P'raps now and then, there's some honest people as likes it," observed Mr. Weller, in a ruminative tone, "but I never heerd o' one as I can call to mind, 'cept the little dirty-faced man in the brown coat, and that was force of habit."

"And who was he?" I inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"V'y, that's just the very point as nobody never know'd," replied Sam.

"But what did he do?"

"V'y he did wot many men as has been much better know'd has done in their time, Sir," replied Sam, "he run a match again the constable, and run it.

"In other words, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick, "he got into debt?"

"Just that, Sir," replied Sam, "and in course o' time he come here in consequence. It warn't much—execution for nine pound nothin', multiplied by five for costs; but hows'over here he stopped for seventeen year. If he got any wrinkles in his face, they was stopped up with the dirt, for both the dirty face and the brown coat was just the same at the end o' that time, as they was at the beginnin'. He was a very peaceful inoffendin' little creature, and was always a bustlin' about for somebody, or playin' rackets and never winnin'; till at last the turnkeys they got quite fond on him, and he was in the lodge ev'ry night, a chatterin' with 'em, and tellin' stories, and all that 'ere. Vun night he was in there as usual, alone with a very old friend of his, as was on the lock, yen he says all of a sudden, 'I ain't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says (Fleet Market was there at that time)—'I ain't seen the Market outside, Bill,' he says, 'for seventeen year.' 'I know you a'n't,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe. 'I should like to see it for a mite, Bill,' he says. 'Very probable,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe very fierce, and making believe he warn't up to wot the little man wanted. 'Bill,' says the little man, more abrupt than afore, 'I've got the fancy in my head. Let me see the public street once more afore I die; and if I ain't struck with apoplexy, I'll be back in five minutes by the clock.' And what 'ud become o' me if you was struck with apoplexy? I said the turnkey. 'V'y,' says the little creature, 'whoever found me 'ud bring me home, for I've got my card in my pok'et, Bill.' he says. "No. 20, Coffee-room.
Flight;" and that was true, sure enough, for when he wanted to make the acquaintance of any new comer, he used to pull out a little hemp card with these words on it, and nothing else: from observation of it, he was always called Number Twenty. The turnkey takes a fixed look at him, and at last he says in a solemn manner, 'Twenty,' he says, 'I'll trust you; you won't get your old friend into trouble.' "No, my boy; I hope I've somethin' better behind here," says the little man, and as he said it, he hit his little vestit very hard, and then a tear started out o' each eye, which was very extraordinary; for it was supposed as water never touched his face. He shook the turnkey by the hand; out he went—""

"And never came back again," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wrong for Succes, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, "for back he come two minutes afore the time, a him' with ruge, sayin' how he'd been near half an hour by a journey coach; that he warn't used to it, and he was blow-ed if he wouldn't write to the Lord Mayor. They got him pacified at last; and for five year arter that, he never even so much as peeped out o' the lodge-gate."

"At the expiration of that time he died, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No he didn't, Sir," replied Sam. "He got a curiosity to go and taste the beer at the new public-house over the way, on the premises; and it was such a very nice parlour, that he took it into his head to go there every night, wish he did for a long time, always comin' back regular about a quarter of an hour afore the gate shuts, which was all very snug and comfortable. At last he began to get so precious jolly, that he used to forget how the time went, or care nothin' at all about it, and he went on gettin' later and later, till van night his old friend was just a shustin' the gate—had turned the key in fast—ven he come up. 'Hold hard, Bill,' he says, 'Wot, ain't you come home yet, Twenty?' says the turnkey, 'I thought you was in long ago.' 'No I warn't,' says the little man, with a smile; 'Vell then, I'll tell you wot it is, my friend,' says the turnkey, openin' the gate very slow and sulky, 'it's my pinion you've got into bad company o' late, which I am very sorry to see. Now I don't wish to do any thing harsh,' he says, 'but if you can't confine yourself to steady circles, and find your way back at regular hours, as sure as you're a standin' there, I'll shut you out altogether.' The little man was seized with a violent fit o' tremblin', and never went outside the prison walls, afterwards!"

As Sam concluded, Mr. Pickwick slowly retraced his steps down stairs. After a few troublesome turns in the Painted Grunin, which, as it was now dark, was nearly deserted, he intimated to Mr. Weller that he thought it high time for him to withdraw for the night; requesting him to seek a bed in some adjacent o'此种, and return early in the morning, to make arrangements for the removal of his master's wardrobe from the George and Vulture. This request Mr. Samuel Weller prepared to obey, with as good a grace as he could assume, but with a very considerable show of reluctance nevertheless. He even went so far as to essay sundry ineffectual hints regarding the expediency of stretching himself on the gravel for that night; but finding Mr. Pickwick obstinately deaf to any such suggestions, finally withdrew.

There is no disguising the fact that Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable—not for lack of society, for the prison was very full, and a bottle of wine would at once have purchased the utmost good-fellowship of the choicer spirits, without any more formal ceremony of introduction; but he was alone in the coarse vulgar crowd, and felt the depression of spirit and sinking of heart, naturally consequent upon the reflection that he was cowed and caged up without a prospect of liberation. As to the idea of releasing himself by ministering to the sharpness of Dedson & Fogg, it never for an instant entered his thoughts.

In this frame of mind he turned again into the coffee-room gallery, and walked slowly to and fro. The place was intolerably dirty, and the smell of tobacco smoke perfectly suffocating. There was a perpetual slamming and banging of doors as the people went in and out, and the noise of their voices and footsteps echoed and re-echoed through the passageways constantly. A young woman, with a child in her arms, who seemed scarcely able to crawl, from exhaustion and misery, was walking up and down the passage in conversation with her husband, who had no other place to see her in. As they passed Mr. Pickwick, he could hear the female sob bitterly; and once the brute into such a passion of grief, that she was compelled to lean against the wall for support, while the man took the child in his arms, and tried to soothe her.

Mr. Pickwick's heart was really too full to bear it, and he went up stairs to bed.

Now, although the warden's room was a very uncomfortable one, being, in every point of decoration and convenience, several hundred degrees inferior to the commonest infirmary of a county gaol, it had at present the merit of being wholly deserted, save by Mr. Pickwick himself. So, he sat down at the foot of his little iron bedstead, and began to wonder how much-
year the warden made out of the dirty room. Having satisfied himself, by mathematical calculation, that the apartment was about equal in annual value to the freehold of a small street in the suburbs of London, he took to wondering what possible temptation could have induced a dingy-looking fly that was crawling over his pantaloons, to come into a close prison, when he had the choice of so many airy situations—a course of meditation which led him to the irresistible conclusion that the insect was insane. After settling this point, he began to be conscious that he was getting sleepy; whereupon he took his nightcap out of the pocket in which he had had the precaution to stow it in the morning, and, leisurely undressing himself, got into bed, and fell asleep.

"Bravo! Heel over toe—cut and shuffle—pay away at it, Zephyr! I'm soother-ed it the legs... House isn't your proper hemisphere. Keep it up. Hooray!!" These expressions, delivered in a most boisterous tone, and accompanied with loud peals of laughter, roused Mr. Pickwick from one of those sound slumbers which, lasting in reality some half hour, seem to the sleeper to have been protracted for about three weeks or a month.

The voice had no sooner ceased than the room was shaken with such violence that the windows rattled in their frames, and the bedstead trembled again. Mr. Pickwick started up, and remained for some minutes fixed in mute astonishment at the scene before him.

On the floor of the room, a man in a broad-skirted green coat, with corduroy knee-sox and grey cotton stockings, was performing the most popular steps of a hornpipe, with a slang and burlesque caricature of grace and lightness, which, combined with the very appropriate character of his costume, was inexpressibly absurd. Another man, evidently very drunk, who had probably been tumbled into bed by his companion, was sitting up between the sheets, warbling as much as he could recollect of a comic song, with the most intensely sentimental feeling and expression: while a third, seated on one of the bedsteads, was applauding both performers with the air of a profound connoisseur, and encouraging them by such ebullitions of feeling as had already roused Mr. Pickwick from his sleep.

This last man was an admirable specimen of a class of gentry which never can be seen in full perfection but in such places;—they may be met with, in an imperfect state, occasionally about stable-yards and public houses; but they never attain their full bloom except in these hot-beds, which would almost seem to be considerably pro-

vided by the Legislature for the sole purpose of rear ing them.

He was a tall fellow, with an olive complexion, long dark hair, and very thick bushy whiskers meeting under his chin. He wore no neckerchief, as he had been playing rackets all day, and his open shirt-collar displayed their full luxuriance. On his head he wore one of the common eighteenpenny French scull-caps, with a gawdy tassel dangling therefrom, very happily in keeping with a common fashion coat. His legs, which, being long, were affected with weakness, grasped a pair of Oxford mixture trousers, made to show the full symmetry of the limbs. Being somewhat negligently braced, however, and, moreover, but imperfectly buttoned, they fell in a series of not the most graceful folds over a pair of shoes sufficiently down at heel to display a pair of very soiled white stockings. There was a rakish vagabond smartness, and a kind of boastful rascality, about the whole man, that was worth a mine of gold.

This figure was the first to perceive that Mr. Pickwick was looking on; upon which he winked to the Zephyr, and entreated him, with a mock gravity, not to wake the gentleman.

"Why, bless the gentleman's honest heart and soul!" said the Zephyr, turning round and affecting the extremity of surprise; "the gentleman is awake. Hem; Shakespeare. How do you do, Sir? How is Mary and Sarah, Sir? and the dear old lady at home, Sir—eh, Sir? Will you have the kindness to put my compliments into the first little parcel you're sending that way, Sir, and say that I would have sent 'em before, only I was afraid they might be broken in the wagon, Sir!"

"Don't overwhelm the gentleman with ordinary civilities when you see he's anxious to have something to drink," said the gentleman with the whiskers, with a jocose air. "Why don't you ask the gentleman what he'll take?"

"Dear me—I quite forget," replied the other. "What will you take, Sir? Will you take port wine, Sir, or sherry wine, Sir? I can recommend the ale, Sir; or perhaps you'd like to taste the porter, Sir? Allow me to have the felicity of hanging up your nightcap, Sir."

With this, the speaker snatched the article of dress from Mr. Pickwick's head, and fixed it in a twinkling on that of the drunken man, who, firmly impressed with the belief that he was delighting a numerous assembly, continued to hammer away at the comic song in the most melancholy strain imaginable.

Taking a man's nightcap from his gro
by violent means, and adjusting it on the head of an unknown gentleman of dirty exterior, however ingenious a witticism in itself, is unquestionably one of those which come under the denomination of practical joke. Viewed in this light, Mr. Pickwick, without the slightest intimation of his purpose, sprang vigorously out of bed; struck the Zephyr so smart a blow in the chest, as to deprive him of a considerable portion of the commodity which sometimes bears his name; and then, recapturing his nightcap, boldly placed himself in an attitude of defence.

"Now," said Mr. Pickwick, gasping no less from excitement than from the expenditure of so much energy, "come on—both of you—both of you." And with this liberal invitation the worthy gentleman communicated a reviving motion to his clenched fists, by way of oppressing his antagonists with a display of science.

"I ought not to have been," said Mr. Pickwick, "so unexpected gallantry, or it might have been the complicated manner in which he had got himself out of bed, and fallen all in a mass upon the hornpipe man, that touched his adversaries. Touched they were; for, instead of them and there making an attempt to commit manslaughter, as Mr. Pickwick implicitly believed they would have done, they paused, stared at each other a short time, and finally laughed outright.

"Well; you're a trump, and I like you all the better for it," said the Zephyr. "Now jump into bed again, or you'll catch the rheumatism. No malice I hope!" said the man extending a hand about the size of the yellow clump of fingers which sometimes swings over a glove's door.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Pickwick, with great acclivity; for, now that the excitement was over, he began to feel rather cool about the legs.

"Allow me the honour, Sir!" said the gentleman with the whiskers, presenting his dexter hand, and aspirating the h.

"With much pleasure, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick; and having executed a very long and solemn shake, he got into bed again.

"My name is Smangle, Sir," said the man with the whiskers.

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick.

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

"I am delighted to hear it, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hem," coughed Mr. Smangle.

"Did you speak, Sir?" asked Mr. Pickwick.

"No, I did not, Sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"I thought you did, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

All this was very genteel and pleasant, and, to make matters still more comfortable, Mr. Smangle assured Mr. Pickwick a great many times that he entertained a very high respect for the feelings of a gentleman; which sentiment, indeed, did him infinite credit, as he could be in no way supposed to understand them.

"Are you going through the Court, Sir?" inquired Mr. Smangle.

"Through the what!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Through the Court—Portugal Street—the Court for the Relief of—you know." "Oh, no," replied Mr. Pickwick. "No, I am not."

"Going out perhaps?" suggested Mivins.

"I fear not," replied Mr. Pickwick. "I refuse to pay some damages, and am here in consequence."

"Ah," said Mr. Smangle, "paper has been my ruin."

"A stationer, I presume, Sir?" said Mr. Pickwick, innocently.

"Stationer! No, no, confound and curse me!—not so low as that. No trade. When I say paper, I mean bills."

"Oh, you use the word in that sense. I see," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Damme! a gentleman must expect reverses," said Smangle. "What of that? Here am I in the Fleet Prison. Well; good. What then? I'm none the worse for that, am I?"

"Not a bit," replied Mr. Mivins. "And he was quite right; for, so far from Mr. Smangle being any the worse for it, he was something the better, inasmuch as to qualify himself for the place, he had attained gratuitous possession of certain articles of jewelry, which, long before that, had found their way to the pawnbroker's.

"Well; but come," said Mr. Smangle; "this is dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burnt sherry; the last cup shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentlemanlike division of labour, any how—curse me!"

Unwilling to hazard another quarrel, Mr. Pickwick gladly assented to the proposition, and consigned the money to Mr. Mivins, who, as it was nearly eleven o'clock, lost no time in repairing to the coffee-room on his errand.

"I say," whispered Smangle, the moment his friend had left the room; "what did you give him?"

"Half a sovereign," said Mr. Pickwick.

"He's a devilish pleasant gentlemanly dog," said Mr. Smangle; "—'Infernal pleasant, I don't know anybody more so; but—' Here Mr. Smangle stopped short, and shook his head dubiously.
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

"You don't think there is any probability of his appropriating the money to his own use," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, no—said, I don't say that; I expressly say, that he's a devilish gentlemanly fellow," said Mr. Smangle. "But I think, perhaps, if somebody went down, just to see that he didn't drop his beak into the jug by accident, or make some confounded mistake in losing the money as he came up stairs, it would be as well. Here, you Sir, just run down stairs, and look after that gentleman, will you?"

This request was addressed to a little, timid-looking, nervous man, whose appearance bespoke great poverty, and who had been crouching on his bedstead all this while, apparently quite stupefied by the novelty of his situation.

"You know where the coffee-room is," said Smangle; "just run down and tell that gentleman you're come to help him up with the jug. Or—stop—I'll tell you what—I'll tell you how we'll do him," said Mr. Smangle, with a cunning look.

"How?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Send down word that he's to spend the change in signs. Capital thought. Run and tell him that; d'ye hear? They sha'n't be wasted," continued Smangle, turning to Mr. Pickwick. "I'll smake 'em.

This manœuvring was so exceedingly ingenious, and, withal, performed with such immoveable composure and coolness, that Mr. Pickwick would have had no wish to disturb it, even if he had had the power. In a short time Mr. Mivins returned, bearing the sherry, which Mr. Smangle dispensed in two little crooked mugs; comparatively remarking, with reference to himself, that a gentleman must not be particular under such circumstances, and, for his part, he was not too proud to drink out of the jug; in which to show his sincerity, he forthwith pledged the company in a draught which half emptied it.

An excellent understanding having been, by these means, procured, Mr. Smangle proceeded to entertain his hearers with a relation of divers romantic adventures in which he had been, from time to time engaged, involving various interesting anecdotes of a thorough-bred horse, and a magnificent Jewels, both of surpassing beauty, and much coveted by the nobility and gentrify. These themes.

Long before these elegant extracts from the biography of a gentleman were concluded, Mr. Mivins had betaken himself to bed, and set in scoring for the night; leaving the timid stranger and Mr. Pickwick to the full benefit of Mr. Smangle's experiences.

Nor were the two last-named gentlemen as much edified as they might have been by the moving passages which were narrated. Mr. Pickwick had been in a state of slumber for some time, when he had a faint perception of the drunken man busting out ariah with the comic song, and receiving from Mr. Smangle a gentle intimation, through the medium of the water-jug, that his audience were not musically disposed. He then once again dropped off to sleep, with a confused consciousness that Mr. Smangle was still engaged in relating a long story, the chief point of which appeared to be, that, on some occasion particularly stated and set forth, he had "done" a bill and a gentleman at the same time.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Illustrative, like the preceding one, of the old proverb, that adversity brings a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows. Likewise containing Mr. Pickwick's extraordinary and startling announcement to Mr. Samuel Weller.

When Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object upon which his gaze rested was Samuel Weller, seated upon a small black portmanteau, intently regarding, apparently in a condition of profound abstraction, the stately figure of the dashing Mr. Smangle, while Mr. Smangle himself, who was already partially dressed, was seated on his bedstead, occupied in the desperately hopeless attempt of staring Mr. Weller out of countenance. We say desperately hopeless, because Sam, with a comprehensive gaze, which took in Mr. Smangle's cap, feet, head, face, legs and whiskers, all at the same time, continued to look steadily on with every demonstration of lively satisfaction, but with no more regard to Mr. Smangle's personal sentiments on the subject, than he would have displayed had he been inspecting a wooden statue, or a straw-emboselled Guy Faux.

"Well; will you swear to me again," said Mr. Smangle, with a frown.

"I'd swear to you anywhere, Sir," replied Sam, cheerfully.

"Don't be impertinent to a gentleman, Sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"Not on no account," replied Sam. "If you'll tell me when he wakes, I'll be upon the very best extra-super behaviour!" This observation having a remote tendency to imply that Mr. Smangle was no gentleman, rather kindled his ire.

"Mivins!" said Mr. Smangle, with a passionate air.
"What's the office?" replied that gentleman from his couch.

"Who the devil is this fellow?"

"Gad," said Mr. Mivins, looking lazily out from under the bed-clothes, "I ought to ask you that. Hasn't he any business here?"

"No," replied Mr. Smangle.

"Then knock him down stairs, and tell him not to presume to get up till I come and kick him," rejoined Mr. Mivins; and with this prompt advice, that excellent gentleman again betook himself to slumber.

The conversation exhibiting these unequivocal symptoms of rather verging on the personal, Mr. Pickwick deemed it a fit point at which to interpose.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Sir," rejoined that gentleman.

"Has anything new occurred since last night?"

"Nothin' particular, Sir," replied Sam, glancing at Mr. Smangle's whiskers; "the late prevalence of a close and confined atmosphere has been rather favourable to the growth of veeds, of an alarming and unaccountable nature; but with that 'ere exception things is quiet enough."

"I shall get up," said Mr. Pickwick; "give me some clean things."

Whatever hostile intention Mr. Smangle might have entertained, his thoughts were speedily diverted by the unpacking of the portmanteau; the contents of which appeared to impress him at once with a most favourable opinion, not only of Mr. Pickwick, but of Sam also, who, he took an early opportunity of declaring, in a tone of voice loud enough for that eccentric personage to overhear, was a regular thorough-bred original, and consequently the very man after his own heart. As to Mr. Pickwick, the affection he conceived for him knew no bounds.

"Now is there any thing I can do for you, my dear Sir?" said Smangle.

"Nothing that I am aware of, I am obliged to you," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"No linen that you want sent to the washerwoman's! I know a delightful washerwoman outside, that comes for my things twice a week, and, by Jove!—how devilish lucky!—this is the very day she calls. Shall I put any of those little things up with mine? Don't say any thing about the trouble. Confound and curse it if the gentleman under a cloud is not to put himself a little out of the way to assist another gentleman in the same condition, what's human nature?"

Thus spake Mr. Smangle, edging himself meanwhile as near as possible to the portmanteau, and beaming forth looks of the most fervent and disinterested friendship.

"There's nothing you want to give out for the man to brush, my dear creature, is there?" resumed Smangle.

"Nothin' whatever, my fine fellow," rejoined Sam, taking the reply into his own mouth. "Perhaps we was to brush without troubling the man, it 'ud be more agreeable for all parties, as the schoolmaster said we was a young gentleman objected to being flogged by the butler."

"And there's nothing that I can send in my little box to the washerwoman's, is there?" said Smangle, turning from Sam to Mr. Pickwick, with an air of some discomfiture.

"Nothin' whatever, Sir," retorted Sam; "I'm afraid the little box must be chock full o' your own as it is."

This speech was accompanied with such a very expressive look at that particular portion of Mr. Smangle's attire, by the appearance of which the skill of lanstrides in getting up gentlemen's linens is generally tested, that he was fain to turn upon his heel, and, for the present at any rate, to give up all design on Mr. Pickwick's purse and wardrobe. He accordingly retired to his dudgeon to the mucket-ground, where he made a light and wholesome breakfast, open a couple of the cigars which had been purchased on the previous night.

Mr. Mivins, who was no smoker, and whose account for small articles of chamber had also reached down to the bottom of the slate, and been "carried over" to the other side, remained in bed, and, in his own words, "took it out in sleep."

After breakfasting in a small closet attached to the coffee-room, which bore the imposing title of the Smuggerly, the temporary inmate of which, in consideration of a small additional charge, has the unspoken advantage of overhearing all the conversation in the coffee-room elsewhere; and after despatching Mr. Waller on some necessary errands, Mr. Pickwick repaired to the Lodge, to consult Mr. Roker concerning his future accommodation.

"Accommodation, eh?" said that gentleman, consulting a large book; "Plenty of that, Mr. Pickwick. Your chummage ticket will be on twenty-seven, in the third."

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick. "My what, did you say?"

"Your chummage ticket," replied Mr. Roker; "you're up to that?"

"Not quite," replied Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"Why," said Mr. Roker, "it's as plain as Salisbury. You'll have a chummage ticket upon twenty-seven in the third, and them as is in the room will be your chums."

"Are there many of them?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, dubiously.

"Three," replied Mr. Roker.
Mr. Pickwick coughed.

"One of 'em's a pauper," said Mr. Roker, filling up a little piece of paper as he spoke, "another's a butcher!"

"A butcher," repeated Mr. Roker, giving the nib of his pen a tap on the desk to cure it of a disinclination to mark. "What a thorough-paced goer he used to be surely! You remember Tom Martin, Neddy?" said Roker, appealing to another man in the lodge, who was paring the mud off his shoes with a five-and-twenty-bladed pocket-knife.

"I should think so," replied the party addressed, with a strong emphasis on the personal pronoun.

"Bless my dear eyes," said Mr. Roker, shaking his head slowly from side to side, and gazing abstractedly out of the grated window before him, as if he were fondly recalling some peaceful scene of his early youth; "it seems but yesterday that I whistled the same ditty down Fen-under-the-Hill by the wharf there. I think I can see him now, a coming up the Strand between the two street-keepers, a little sobered by the bruising, with a patch of red winegar and brown paper over his right eyelid, and that 'ere lovely bull-dog, as planned the little boy afterwards, a following at his heels. What a rum thing time is, ain't it, Neddy?"

The gentleman to whom these observations were addressed, who appeared of a taciturn and thoughtful cast, merely echoed the inquiry; and Mr. Roker shaking off the poetical and gloomy train of thought into which he had been betrayed, descended to the common business of life, and resumed his pen.

"Do you know what the third gentleman is?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not very much gratified by this description of his future associates.

"What is that Simpson, Neddy?" said Mr. Roker, turning to his companion.

"What Simpson?" said Neddy.

"Why him in twenty-seven in the third, that young gentleman's going to be chumed on."

"Oh, him!" replied Neddy: "he's nothing exactly. He was a horse-chaser: he's a leg now."

"Ah, so I thought," rejoined Mr. Roker, closing the book, and placing the small piece of paper in Mr. Pickwick's hands—"That's the ticket."

Very much perplexed by this summary disposition of his person, Mr. Pickwick walked back into the prison, revolving in his mind what he had better do. Convinced, however, that before he took any other steps it would be advisable to see, and hold personal converse with, the three gentlemen with whom it was proposed to quarter him; he made the best of his way to the third flight.

After groping about in the gallery for some time; attempting in the dim light to decipher the numbers on the different doors, he at length appealed to a potboy, who happened to be pursuing his morning occupation of cleaning for pewter.

"Which is twenty-seven, my good fellow?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Five doors further on," replied the potboy. "There's the likeness of a man being hung, and smoking a pipe the while, chalked outside the door."

Gaited by this direction, Mr. Pickwick proceeded slowly along the gallery, until he encountered the "portrait of a gentleman," above described, upon whose countenance he tapped, with the knuckle of his fore-finger—gently at first, and then more audibly. After repeating this process several times without effect, he ventured to open the door and peep in.

There was only one man in the room, and he was leaning out of the window as far as he could without over-balancing himself, endeavouring with great perseverance to spit upon the crown of a hat of a personal friend on the parade below. As neither speaking, coughing, sneezing, knocking, nor any other ordinary mode of attracting attention, made this person aware of the presence of a visitor, Mr. Pickwick, after some delay, stepped up to the window, and pulled him gently by the coat-tail. The individual brought in his head and shoulders; with great swiftness, and surveying Mr. Pickwick from head to foot, demanded in a surly tone what the—something beginning with a capital H—he wanted.

"I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, consulting his ticket, "I believe th'irs twenty-seven in the third."

"Well?" replied the gentleman.

"I have come here in consequence of receiving this bit of paper," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

"Hand it over," said the gentleman.

Mr. Pickwick complied.

"I think Roker might have chummed you somewhere else," said Mr. Simpson (for it was the leg,) after a very discontented sort of a pause.

Mr. Pickwick thought so also; but, under all the circumstances, he considered it a matter of sound policy to be silent.

Mr. Simpson mused for a few moments after this, and then thrusting his head out of the window, gave a shrill whistle, and pronounced some word aloud several times—What the word was Mr. Pickwick could not distinguish; but he rather inferred that it must be some nickname which distin-

guished Mr. Martin, from the fact of a
...and a number of gentlemen on the ground below immediately proceeded to cry "Butcher, in imitation of the tone in which that useful class of society are wont diurnally to make their presence known at area railings.

Subsequent occurrences confirmed the accuracy of Mr. Pickwick's impression; for, in a few seconds, a gentleman, prematurely broad for his years, clothed in a professional blue jean frock, and top-boots with circular toes, entered the room nearly out of breath, closely followed by another gentleman in very shabby black, and a sailors cap. The latter gentleman, who fastened his coat all the way up to his chin by means of a pin and a button alternately, had a very coarse red face, and looked like a drunken chaplain, which, indeed, he was.

These two gentlemen having by turns possessed Mr. Pickwick's attention, the one expressed his opinion that it was "a rig," and the other his conviction that it was "a go." Having recorded their feelings in these very intelligible terms, they looked at Mr. Pickwick and each other in awkward silence.

"It's an aggravating thing, just as we got the beds so snug," said the chaplain, looking at three dirty mattresses, each rolled up in a blanket, which occupied one corner of the room during the day, and formed a kind of slab, on which were placed an old creased basin, ewer, and soap-dish, of common yellow earthenware, with a blue flower: "Very aggravating."

Mr. Martin expressed the same opinion, in rather stronger terms; Mr. Simpson, after having let a variety of expulsive adjectives loose upon society, without any substantia to accompany them, tucked up his sleeves, and began to wash the greasy dinner.

While this was going on, Mr. Pickwick had been eying the room, which was filthy dirty, and smelt intolerably close. There was no vestige of either carpet, curtain, or blind. There was not even a closet in it. Unquestionably there were but few things to put away, if there had been one; but, however few in number, or small in individual amount, still remnants of leaves, and pieces of cheese, and damp towels, and scraps of meat, and articles of wearing apparel, and mutilated crockery, and bellows without nozzles, and toasting-forks without prongs, do present something of an uncomfortable appearance when they are scattered about the floor of a small apartment, which is the common sitting and sleeping room of three idle men.

"I suppose this can be managed some how," said the butcher, after a pretty long silence. "What will you take to go out?"

"I beg your pardon," replied Mr. Pickwick. "What did you say? I hardly understand you."

"What will you take to be paid out?" said the butcher. "The regular-chu-

mage is two-and-sixpence. Will you take three bob?"

"And a brandy," suggested the clerical gentleman.

"Well, I don't mind that; it's only two

peace a-piece more," said Mr. Martin.

"What do you say now? We'll pay you out for three-and-sixpence a week. Come,"

"And stand a gallon of beer down,"

chimed in Mr. Simpson. "There."

"And drink it on the spot," said the chaplain. "Now."

"I really am so wholly ignorant of the rules of this place," returned Mr. Pickwick, "that I do not yet comprehend you. Can I live anywhere else? I thought I could not.

At this inquiry Mr. Martin looked with a countenance of excessive surprise at his two friends, and then each gentleman pointed with his right thumb over his left shoulder. This action, imperfectly described in words by the very feeble term of "over the left," when performed by any number of ladies or gentlemen who are accustomed to not in unison, has a very graceful and airy effect; its expression is one of light and playful sarcasm.

"Can you?" repeated Mr. Martin, with a smile of pity.

"Well, if I knew as little of life as that, I'd eat my hat and swallow the buckle," said the clerical gentleman.

"So would I," added the sporting one, solemnly.

After this introductory preface, the three chums informed Mr. Pickwick, in a breath, that money was, in the Fleet, just what money was out of it; that it would instantly procure him almost any thing he desired; and that, supposing he had got it, and had no objection to spend it, if he only signified his wish to have a room to himself, he might take possession of one, furnished and fitted to boot, in half an hour's time.

With this, the parties separated, very much to their mutual satisfaction; Mr. Pickwick once more retracing his steps to the lodge, and the three companions adjourning to the coffee-room, there to expend the five shillings which the clerical gentleman had, with admirable prudence and foresight, borrowed of him for the purpose.

"I knew it!" said Mr. Boker with a chuckle, when Mr. Pickwick stated the object with which he had returned. "Didn't I say so, Neddy?"
The philosophical owner of the universal penknife growled an affirmative.

"I knew you'd want a room for yourself, bless you!" said Mr. Roker. "Let me see. You'll want some furniture. You'll hire that of me, I suppose? That's the regular thing."

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"There's a capital room up in the coffee-room flight, that belongs to a Chancery prisoner," said Mr. Roker. "It'll stand you in a pound a-week. I suppose you don't mind that?"

"Not at all," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Just step there with me," said Roker, taking up his hat with great alacrity; "the matter's settled in five minutes. Lord! why didn't you say at first that you was willing to come down handsome?"

The matter was soon arranged, as the turnkey had foretold. The Chancery prisoner had been there long enough to have lost friends, fortunes, homes, and happiness, and to have acquired the right of having a room to himself. As he laboured, however, under the slight inconvenience of often wanting a morsel of bread, he eagerly listened to Mr. Pickwick's proposal to rent the apartment; and readily condescended and agreed to yield him up the sole and undisturbed possession thereof, in consideration of the weekly payment of twenty shillings; from which fund he furthermore contracted to pay out any person or persons that might be chummed upon it.

As they struck the bargain, Mr. Pickwick surveyed him with a painful interest.

He was a tall, gaunt, cadaverous man, in an old great-coat and slippers, with sunken cheeks, and a restless, eager eye. His lips were bloodless, and his bones sharp and thin. God help him! the iron teeth of confinement and privation had been slowly filing them down for twenty years.

"And where will you live meanwhile, Sir?" said Mr. Pickwick, as he laid the amount of the first week's rent in advance on the tottering table.

The man gathered up the money with a trembling hand, and replied that he didn't know yet; he must go and see where he could move his bed to.

"I am afraid, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand gently and compassionately on his arm; "I am afraid you will have to live in some noisy crowded place. Now, pray, consider this room your own when you want quiet, or when any of your friends come to see you."

"Friends!" interposed the man, in a voice which rattled in his throat. "If I lay dead at the bottom of the deepest mine in the world, tight screwed down and sod-den in my coffin, rattling in the dark and filthy dash that drags its slime along beneath the foundations of this prison, I could not be more forsaken or unmanned than I am here. I am a dead man—dead to society, without the pity they bestow on those whose souls have passed to judgment. Friends to see me! My God! I have sunk from the prime of life into old age in this place, and there is not one to raise his hand above my bed, when I lie dead upon it, and say, 'It is a blessing he is gone!'

The excitement, which had cast an unsavory light over the man's face, while he spoke, subsided as he ceased; and, pressing his withered hands together in a hasty and disordered manner, he shuffled from the room.

"Bide rather rusty," said Mr. Roker, with a smile. "Ah! they're like the elephants; they feel it now and then, and it makes 'em wild!"

Having made this deeply sympathising remark, Mr. Roker entered upon his arrangements with such expedition, that in a short time the room was furnished with a carpet, six chairs, a table, a sofa bedstead, a tea-kettle, and various other small necessities, on hire, at the very reasonable rate of seven-and-twenty shillings and sixpence per week.

"Now, is there any thing more we can do for you?" inquired Mr. Roker, looking round with great satisfaction, and gazing thinking the first week's hire in his closed fist.

"Why, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, who had been musing deeply for some time.

"Are there any people here who run on errands, and so forth?"

"Outside, do you mean?" inquired Mr. Roker.

"Yes; I mean who are able to go outside. Not prisoners."

"Yes, there is," said Roker. "There's an unfortunate devil, who has got a friend on the poor side, that's glad to do any thing of that sort. He's been running odd jobs, and that, for the last two months. Shall I send him?"

"If you please," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

"Stay;—no. The poor side, you say. I should like to see it;—I'll go to him myself."

The poor side of a debtor's prison is, as its name imports, that in which the most miserable and abject class of debtors are confined. A prisoner having declared upon the poor side, pays neither rent nor chummage. His fees, upon entering and leaving the gaol, are reduced in amount, and he becomes entitled to a share of some small quantities of food; to provide which, a few
charitable persons have, from time to time, left trifling legacies in their wills. Most of our readers will remember, that, until within a very few years past, there was a kind of iron cage in the wall of the Fleet Prison, within which was posted some man of hungry looks, who, from time to time, rattled a money-box, and exclaimed, in a mournful voice, "Pray, remember the poor debtors; pray, remember the poor debtors." The receipts of this box, when there were any, were divided among the poor prisoners, and the men on the poor side relieved each other in this degrading office.

Although this custom has been abolished, and the cage is now boarded up, the miserable and destitute condition of these unhappy persons remains the same. We no longer suffer them to appeal at the prison gates to the charity and compassion of the passers-by; but we still leave unblotted in the leaves of our statute-book, for the reverence and admiration of succeeding ages, the just and wholesome law which declares that the sturdy felon shall be fed and clothed, and that the penitent debtor shall be left to die of starvation and nakedness. This is no fiction. Not a week passes over our heads but, in every one of our prisons for debt, some of these men must inevitably expire in the slow agonies of want, if they were not relieved by their fellow-prisoners.

Turning these things in his mind, as he mounted the narrow staircase at the foot of which Roker had left him, Mr. Pickwick gradually worked himself to the boiling-over point; and so excited was he with his reflections on this subject, that he had burst into the room to which he had been directed, before he had any distinct recollection either of the place in which he was, or of the object of his visit.

The general aspect of the room recalled him to himself at once; but he had no sooner cast his eyes on the figure of a man who was brooding over the dusty fire, than, lasting his hat fall on the floor, he stood perfectly fixed and immovable with astonishment.

"Yes, in tattered garments, and without a coat; his common calico shirt yellow and in rags; his hair hanging over his face; his features changed with suffering, and pinched with famine,—there sat Mr. Alfred Jingle; his head resting upon his hand, his eyes fixed upon the fire, and his whole appearance denoting misery and dejection! Near him, leaning listlessly against the wall, stood a strong-built countryman, flicking with a worn-out hunting-whip the top-boot that adorned his right foot; his left being thrust into an old slipper. Horses, dogs, and drink had brought him there pull-mell; there was a rusty spur on the solitory boot, which he occasionally jerked into the empty air, at the same time giving the boot a smart blow, and muttering some of the sounds by which a sportsman encourages his horse. He was riding, in imagination, some desperate chase, at that moment. Poor wretch! he never rode a match on the swiftest animal in his costly study, with half the speed at which he had torn along the course that ended in the Fleet.

On the opposite side of the room an old man was seated on a small wooden box, with his eyes riveted on the floor, and his face settled into an expression of the deepest and most hopeless despair. A young girl—his little granddaughter—was hugging about him, endeavouring, with a thousand childish devices, to engage his attention; but the old man neither saw nor heard her. The voice that had been music to him, and the eyes that had been light, fell coldly on his senses. His limbs were shaking with disease, and the pulse had fastened on his mind.

There were two or three other men in the room, congregated in a little knot, and noisily talking among themselves. There was a lean and haggard woman, too—a prisoner's wife—who was watering, with great solicitude, the wretched stump of a dried-up, withered plant, which, it was plain to see, could never send forth a green leaf again;—too true an emblem, perhaps, of the office she had come here to discharge.

Such were the objects which presented themselves to Mr. Pickwick's view, as he looked round him in amazement. The noise of some one stumbling hastily into the room reached him. Turning his eyes towards the door, they encountered the new comer; and in him, through all his rags, and dirt, and misery, he recognised the familiar features of Mr. Job Trotter.

"Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed Job, aloud.

"Eh?" said Jingle, starting from his seat.

"Mr.—! So it is—queer place—strange thing—serves me right—very." And with this Mr. Jingle thrust his hands into the place where his trousers' pocket used to be, and, dropping his chin upon his breast, sunk back into his chair.

Mr. Pickwick was affected; the two men looked so very miserable. The sharp involuntary glance Jingle had cast at a small piece of raw loin of mutton, which Job had brought with him, said more of their reduced state than two hours' explanation could have done. He looked mildly at Jingle, and said:—

"I should like to speak to you in private. Will you step out for an instant?"

"Certainly," said Jingle, rising hastily.

"Can't step far—no danger of over-walk-

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ing yourself here—spike park—grounds pretty—romantic, but not extensive—open for public inspection—family always in town—housekeeper desperately careful—very."

"You have forgotten your coat," said Mr. Pickwick, as they walked out to the staircase, and closed the door after them.

"Eh!" said Jingle. "Sweet—dear relation—uncle Tom—couldn't help it—must eat, you know. Wants of nature—and all that."

"What do you mean?"

"Gone, my dear Sir—last coat—can't help it. Lived on a pair of boots—whole fortnight. Silk umbrellas—ivory handle—what a fact!—he can't see it!"

"Lived for three weeks upon a pair of boots and a silk umbrella with an ivory handle!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, who had only heard of such things in shipwrecks, or read of them in Constable's Miscellany.


"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick, much relieved by this explanation; "I understand you. You have pawning your wardrobe."

"Every thing—Job's too—all shirts gone—never mind—saves washing. Nothing soon—He in bed—starve—die—request—little housekeeper—poor prisoner—common necessities—shush it up—gentlemen of the jury—warden's tradesmen—keep it snug—natural death—coroner's order—workhouse funeral—serve him right—all over—drop the curtain."

Jingle delivered this singular summary of his prospects in life with his accustomed volubility, and with various twitches of the countenance to counterfeit smiles. Mr. Pickwick easily perceived that his recklessness was assumed, and looking him full, but not unkindly, in the face, saw that his eyes were moist with tears.

"Good fellow," said Jingle; pressing his hand, and turning his head away. "Ungrateful dog—boyish to cry—can't help it—bad fever—weak—ill—hungry. Deserved is all; but suffered much—very. Wholly unable to keep up appearances any longer, and perhaps—soon sick. By the effort he had made, the dejected stroller sat down on the stairs, and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed like a child.

"Come, come," said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable emotion, "we'll see what can be done when I know all about the matter. Here, Job; where is that fellow?"

"Here, Sir," replied Job, presenting himself on the staircase. We have described him, by-the-by, as having deeply sunken eyes in the best of times; in his present state of want and distress, he looked as if those features had gone out of town altogether.

"Here, Sir," said Job.

"Come here, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, trying to look stern with four large tears running down his waistcoat. "Take that, Sir!"

"What the? In the ordinary acceptance of such language, it should have been a blow. As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound hearty cuff; for Mr. Pickwick had been duped, deceived, and wronged by the destitute outcast who was now wholly in his power. Must we tell the truth! It was something from Mr. Pickwick's waistcoat-pocket, which chinked as it was given into Job's hand; and the giving which, somehow or other, imparted a sparkle to the eye, and a swelling to the heart of our excellent old friend, as he hurried away.

Sam had returned when Mr. Pickwick reached his own room, and was inspecting the arrangements that had been made for his comfort, with a kind of grim satisfaction which was very pleasant to look upon. Having a decided objection to his master's being there at all, Mr. Weller appeared to consider it a high moral duty not to appear too much pleased with any thing that was done, said, suggested, or proposed.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yell, Sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Pretty comfortable now, eh Sam?"

"Pretty well, Sir," responded Sam, looking round him in a disagreeing manner.

"Have you seen Mr. Tupman and our other friends?"

"Yes, I have seen 'em, Sir, and they're a comin' to-morrow, and was very much surprised to hear they wasn't to come today," replied Sam.

"You have brought the things I wanted?"

Mr. Weller in reply pointed to various packages which he had arranged as neatly as he could, in a corner of the room.

"Very well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, after a little hesitation; "listen to what I am going to say, Sam."

"Certainly, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller, "fire away, Sir."

"I have felt from the first, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, with much solemnity, "that this is not the place to bring a young man to."

"Nor an old'un neither, Sir," observed Mr. Weller.

"You're quite right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "but old men may come here through their own heedlessness and unsuspicion, and young men may be brought here by the selfishness of those they serve. It is better for those young men, in every point of view, that they should not remain here. Do you understand me, Sam?"
dirty faces in their front. These gentlemen are the Commissioners of the Insolvent Court, and the place in which they sit is the Insolvent Court itself.

It is, and has been time out of mind, the remarkable fact of this Court to be somehow or other held and understood by the general consent of all destitute shabby-genteel people in London, as their common resort, and place of daily refuge. It is always full. The steams of beer and spirits perpetually ascend to the ceiling, and being condensed by the heat, roll down the walls like rain; there are more old suits of clothes in it at one time, than will be offered for sale in all Houndsditch in a twelvemonth; and more unwashed skins and grisly beards than all the pumps and shaving-shops between Tyburn and Whitechapel could render deceit between sunrise and sunset.

It must not be supposed that any of these people have the least shadow of business in, or the remotest connexion with the place they so indefatigably attend. If they had, it would be no matter of surprise, and the singularity of the thing would cease at once. Some of them sleep during the greater part of the sitting; others carry small portable dinners wrapped in pocket-handkerchiefs or sticking out of their worn out pockets, and munch and listen with equal relish; but no one among them was ever known to have the slightest personal interest in any case that was ever brought forward. Whatever they do, they sit from the first moment to the last. When it is heavy rainy weather, they all come in wet through; and at such times the vapours of the Court are like those of a fungus-pit.

A casual visitor might suppose this place to be a temple dedicated to the Genius of Sordidness. There is not a messenger or process-server attached to it, who wears a coat that was made for him; not a tolerably fresh or wholesome-looking man in the whole establishment, except a little white-headed, apple-faced tipstaff; and even he, like an ill-conditioned, cherry preserved in brandy, seems to have artificially dried and withered up into a state of preservation, to which he can lay no natural claim. The very barristers' wigs are ill-powdered, and their curls lack crispness.

But the attorneys, who sit at a large bare table below the Commissioners, are, after all, the greatest curiosities. The professional establishment of the more elegant of these gentlemen, consists of a blue bag and a boy; generally a youth of the dupe persuasion. They have no fixed offices, their legal business being transacted in the parlours of public houses, or the yards of prisons, whether they repair in crowds, and
THE PICKWICK CLUB

canvas for customers after the manner of omnibus cabs. They are of a greasy and mildewed appearance; and if they can be said to have any vices at all, perhaps drinking and boasting are the most conspicuous among them. Their residences are usually on the outskirts of "the Rules," chiefly lying within a circle of one mile from the obelisk in St. George's Fields. Their looks are not prepossessing, and their manners are peculiar.

Mr. Solomon Pell, one of this learned body, was a flat, flabby, pale man, in a surtout which looked green one minute, and brown the next, with a velvet collar of the same camelion tints. His forehead was narrow, his face wide, his head large, and his nose all on one side, as if Nature, indignant with the propensities she observed in him in his birth, had given it an angry tweak which it had never recovered. Being short-necked and asthmatic, however, he remedied principally through this feature; so, perhaps, what it wanted in ornament it made up in usefulness.

"I'm sure to bring him through it," said Mr. Pell.

"Are you though?" replied the person to whom the assurance was pledged.

"Certain sure," replied Pell; "but if he'd gone to any irregular practitioner, mind ye, I wouldn't have answered for the consequences."

"Ah!" said the other, with open mouth.

"No, that I wouldn't," said Mr. Pell; and he pursed up his lips, frowned, and shook his head mysteriously.

Now the place where this discourse occurred, was the public-house just opposite to the Insolvent Court; and the person with whom it was held, not only, but the elder Mr. Weller, who had come there to comfort and console a friend, whose petition to be discharged under the act was to be that day heard, and whose attorney he was at that moment consulting.

"And have is George?" inquired the old gentleman.

Mr. Pell jerked his head in the direction of a back parlour, where Mr. Weller at once repairing, was immediately greeted in the warmest and most flattering manner by some half-a-dozen of his professional brethren, in token of their gratification at his arrival. The insolvent gentleman who had contracted a speculative but imprudent passion for horse racing stages, which had led to his present embarrassments, looked extremely well, and was soothing the excitement of his feelings with shrimps and porter.

The salutation between Mr. Weller and his friends was strictly confined to the Freemasonry of the craft; consisting of a jerking round of the right waist, and a tossing of the little finger into the air at the same time. We once knew two famous coachmen (they are dead now, poor fellows) who were twins, and between whom an unsevered and devoted attachment existed. They passed each other on the Dover road every day, for twenty-four years, never exchanging any other greeting than this; and yet, when one died, the other pined away, and soon afterwards followed him.

"Well, George," said Mr. Weller, senior, taking off his upper coat, and seating himself with his accustomed gravity. "How is it? All right behind, and full inside?"

"All right, old fellow," replied the embarrassed gentleman.

"Is the grey mare made over to anybody?" inquired Mr. Weller, anxiously.

George nodded in the affirmative.

"Well, that's all right," said Mr. Weller.

Coach taken care of, also?"

"Consigned in a safe quarter," replied Mr. Weller, wringing the heads off half-a-dozen shrimps, and swallowing them without any more ado.

"Very good, very good," said Mr. Weller. "Always see to the drag ven you go down hill. Is the yay-bill all clear and straight for'ld?"

"The schedule, Sir," said Pell, guessing at Mr. Weller's meaning, "the schedule is as plain and satisfactory as pen and ink can make it."

Mr. Weller nodded in a manner which bespoke his inward approval of these arrangements; and then turning to Mr. Pell, said, pointing to his friend George,—

"Ven do you take his clothes off?"

"Why," replied Mr. Pell, "he stands third on the approved list, and I should think it would be his turn in about half an hour. I told my clerk to come over and tell us when there was a chance."

Mr. Weller surveyed the attorney from head to foot with great admiration, and said emphatically,—

"What'll you take, Sir?"

"Why, really," replied Mr. Pell, "you're so very—. Upon my word and honour, I'm not in the habit of—. It's so very early in the morning, that, actually, I am almost—. Well, you may bring me three penn'orth of rum, my dear."

The officiating damsel, who had entered the order before it was given, set the glass of spirits before Pell, and retired.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Pell, looking round upon the company, "success to your friend. I don't like to boast, gentlemen, it's not my way; but I can't help saying that, if your friend hadn't been fortunate enough to fall into hands that—-but I won't say what I was going to say. Geo-
llemen, my service to you." Having emptied the glass in a twinkling, Mr. Pell samboked his lips, and looked complacently round on the assembled coshenen, who evidently regarded him as a species of divinity.

"Let me see," said the legal authority—

"What was I a-saying, gentlemen?"

"I think you were remarking, as you wouldn't have no objection to another of the same, Sir," said Mr. Weller, with grave facetiousness.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Pell. "Not bad, not bad. A professional man, too! At this time of the morning it would be rather too good a—a. Well, I don't know, my dear— you may do that again, if you please. Hem!"

This last sound was a solemn and dignified cough, in which Mr. Pell, observing an indecent tendency to mirth in some of his auditors, considered it due to himself to indulge.

"The late Lord Chancellor, gentlemen, was very fond of me," said Mr. Pell.

"And very creditable in him, too," interposed Mr. Weller.

"Hear, hear," assented Mr. Pell's client.

"Why shouldn't he be?"

"Ah—why, indeed?" said a very reduced man, who had said nothing yet, and who looked extremely unlikely to say anything more. "Why shouldn't he?"

A murmur of assent ran through the company.

"I remember, gentlemen," said Mr. Pell, "dining with him on one occasion—the was only us two, but everything as splendid as if twenty people had been expected—the great seal on a dunghill at his right hand, and a man in a bag-wig and suit of armure guarding the mace with a drawn sword and silk stockings, which is perpetually done, gentlemen, night and day; when he said, 'Pell,' he said; 'no false delicacy, Pell; you're a man of talent; you can get anybody through the Inns of Court, Pell; and your country should be proud of you.' Those were his very words. "My Lord," I said, 'you flatter me.'—'Pell,' he said, 'if I do, I'm damned.'"

"Did he say that?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"He did," replied Pell.

"Vell, then," said Mr. Weller, "I say Parliament ought to ha' taken it up; and if he'd been a poor man, they would ha' done it."

"But, my dear friend," argued Mr. Pell, "it was in confidence."

"In what?" asked Mr. Weller.

"In confidence."

"But very good," replied Mr. Weller, "after a little reflection: "if he damned his self in confidence, 'o' course that was another thing."

"Of course it was," said Mr. Pell. "The distinction is obvious, you will perceive."

"Alters the case entirely," said Mr. Weller. "Go on, Sir?"

"No; I will not go on, Sir," said Mr. Pell, in a low and serious tone. "You have reminded me, Sir, that this conversation was private—private and confidential, gentlemen. Gentlemen, I am a professional man. It may be that I am a good deal looked up to in my profession—it may be that I am not. Most people know. I say nothing. Observations have already been made, in this room, injurious to the reputation of my noble friend. You will excuse me, gentlemen; I was imprudent. I felt that I have no right to mention this matter without his concurrence. Thank you, Sir; thank you." Thus delivering himself, Mr. Pell thrust his hands into his pockets, and, frowning grimly around, rattle three-half-pence with terrible determination.

This virtuous resolution had scarcely been formed, when the boy and the blue bag, who were inseparable companions, rushed violently into the room, and said (at least the boy did; for the blue bag took no part in the announcement) that the case was coming on directly. The intelligence was no sooner received, than the whole party hurried across the street, and began to fight their way into Court—a preparatory ceremony, which has been calculated to occupy, in ordinary cases, from twenty-five minutes to thirty.

Mr. Weller, being stout, cast himself at once into the crowd, with the desperate hope of ultimately turning up in some place which would suit him. His success was not quite equal to his expectations, for having neglected to take his hat off, it was knocked over his eyes by some unseen person, upon whose toes he had alighted with considerable force. Apparently this individual regretted his impetuousity immediately afterwards, for, muttering an indistinct exclamation of surprise, he dropped the old man out into the hall, and, after a violent struggle, released his head and face.

"Samivel!" exclaimed Mr. Weller, when he was thus enabled to behold his rescuer.

Samvel nodded.

"You're a dutiful and affectionate little boy, you are, ain't you?" said Mr. Weller, "to come a bonnet! your father in his old age?"

"How should I know who you was?" responded the son. "Do you s'pose I was to tell you by the weight or your foot?"

"Vell, that's very true, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, mollified at once—"but
"O' course it can't," asserted Sam; "I know'd that afore I came."
"Vy, they'll set him up alive, Samny," exclaimed Mr. Weller.
Sam nodded his assent in the opinion.
"He goes in rayther raw, Samny," said Mr. Weller, metaphorically, "and he'll come out-done so ex-ceedin' brown, that his most familiar friends won't know him. Roast pigeon's nothin' to it, Samny."
Again Sam Weller nodded.
"It oughtn't to be, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, gravely.
"It mean't be," said Sam.
"Cert'nly not," said Mr. Weller.
"Veil now," said Sam, "you've been a prophecyn' away werly fine, like a red-faced Nixon, as the sixpenny books gives pictures on.
"Who was he, Samny?" inquired Mr. Weller.
"Never mind who he was," retorted Sam; "he wasn't a coachman, that's enough for you."
"I know'd a caterer o' that name," said Mr. Weller, meditating.
"It wasn't him," said Sam. "This here gent'l'm'n was a prophet."
"Wot's a prophet?" inquired Mr. Weller.
"Looking sternly on his son.

"Vye, a man as tells what's a goin' to happen," replied Sam.
"I wish I'd know'd him, Samny," said Mr. Weller. "P'raps he might he've threw'd a small light on that 'ere liver complaint as we was a speakin' on just now. Howe'er, if he's dead and ain't left the business to nobody, there's an end on it. Gove,' Samny," said Mr. Weller, with a sigh.
"Vell," said Sam, "you've been a prophecyin' away 'bout wot'll happen to the govr'nor if he's left alone. Don't you see any vay o' takin' cares on him?"
"No, I don't, Samny," said Mr. Weller, with a reflective visage.
"No vay at all!" inquired Sam.
"No vay," said Mr. Weller, "unless"—and a gleam of intelligence lighted up his countenance as he sunk his voice to a whisper, and applied his mout to the ear of his offspring—"unless it is getting him out in a turn-up bedstead, unbeknown to the turn-keys, Samny, or dressin' him up like an old 'oman with a green wall."

Sam Weller received both of these suggestions with unexpected contempt, and again pronounced his question.
"No," said the old gentleman; "if he won't let you stop there, I see no vay at all. It's a thoroughfare, Samny—no thoroughfare."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what it is," said

"Stop, there by himself, poor creature!" exclaimed the elder Mr. Weller, "without nobody to take his part! It can't be done, Samivel, it can't be done."

Some thoughts of the rum appeared to obtrude themselves on Mr. Weller's mind, as he said this, for he looked gloomy and thoughtful; but very shortly recovered, as was testified by a perfect alphabet of winks, in which he was only wont to indulge when particularly pleased.

"Vell now," said Sam, "about my affair. Just open them ears o' yours, and don't say nothin' till I've done." With this brief preface, Sam related, as succinctly as he could, the last memorable conversation he had with Mr. Pickwick.

"Wot are you a doin' on here! Your govern'r can't do no good here, Samny. They won't pass that wergdict; they won't pass it, Samny." And Mr. Weller shook his head with legal solemnity.

"Wot a peruser old file it is!" exclaimed Sam, "always a goin' on about wergdicts and allebias, and that. Who said any thing about the wergdict?"
Mr. Weller made no reply, but once more shook his head most learnedly.

"Leave off ratlin' that ere nob o' yours, if you don't want it to come off the springs altogether," said Sam, impatiently, "and behave reasonable. I've went all the way down to the Marks o' Granby arter you last night."

"Did you see the MarchIoness o' Granby, Samny?" inquired Mr. Weller, with a sigh.
"Yes, I did," replied Sam.
"How was the dear creature lookin'?"
"Very queer," said Sam. "I think she's a injurin' herself gradivalh vith too much of that 'ere pine-apple rum, and other strong medicines o' the same nature."

"You don't mean that, Samny?" said the senior, earnestly.

"I do, indeed," replied the junior.

Mr. Weller seized his son's hand, clasped it, and let it fall. There was an expression on his countenance in doing so—not of demny or apprehension, but partaking more of the sweet and gentle character of hope. A gleam of resignation, and even of cheerfulness, passed over his face too, as he slowly said—"I ain't quite certain, Samny; I wouldn't like to say I was altogether positive, in case of any subsequient disappointment, but I rather think, my boy—I rather think that the shepherd's got the liver complaint!"

"Does he look bad?" inquired Sam.

"He's uncommon pale," replied his father, "'cept about the nose, vic is redder than ever. His appetite is very so-so, but he imbibes wunderful."
Sam, "I'll trouble you for the loan of five-and-twenty pound."

"Wet goose 'll do that," inquired Mr. Weller.

"Never mind," replied Sam. "P'raps you may ask for it five minutes afterwards; 'p'raps I may say I won't pay, and cut up rough. You won't think o' servin' your own son for the money, and sendin' him off to the Fleet, will you, you cannot 'raul warrant?"

At this reply of Sam's, the father and son exchanged a complete code of gay telegraphic nods and gestures, after which, the elder Mr. Weller sat himself down on a stone step, and laughed till he was purple.

"Wet a old image it is!" exclaimed Sam, facetiously at this loss of time. "Wet are you a settin' down there for, cons-wentin' your face into a thing-door knocker, vs there's so much to be done. Vem's the money?"

"In the boot, Samny, in the boot," replied Mr. Weller, composing his features.

"Hold my hat, Samny."

Having divested himself of this incumbrance, Mr. Weller gave his body a sudden wrench to one side, and, by a dexterous twist, contrived to get his right hand into a most capacious pocket, from whence, after a great deal of panting and exertion, he extracted a pocket-book of the large octavo size, fastened by a huge leather strap. From thence he drew forth a couple of whip-lashes, three or four buckles, a little sample-bag of corn, and finally a small roll of very dirty bank-notes, from which he selected the required amount, which he handed over to Sam.

"And now, Samny," said the old gentleman, when the whip-lashes, and the buckles, and the sample, had been all put back, and the book once more deposited at the bottom of the same pocket, "Now, Samny, I know a gen'lm'n have, as 'll do the job o' the business for us, in no time—a limb o' the law, Samny, as has got brains like the frogs, dispersed all over his body, and reachin' to the very tips of his fingers; a friend of the Lord Chancellorship's, Samny, who'd only have to tell him what he wanted, and he'd lock you up for life, if that was all."

"I say," said Sam, "none o' that."

"None o' wet?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Wet, none o' them unconstitutionall ways o' doin' it," retorted Sam. "The have-his-carace, next to the perpetral motion, is vun o' the blessedest things as was ever made. I've read that 'ere in the newspapers verry o' en."

"Well, wet's that got to do with it?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Just this here," said Sam, "that I'll patronize the inversion; and go in, that way. No risperns to the Chancellorship—I don't like the notion. It mayn't be al together safe, with reference to the gottin' out agin."

Deferring to his son's feeling upon this point, Mr. Weller at once sought the erudite Solomon Fell, and acquainted him with his desire to issue a writ instantly for the sum of twenty-five pounds, and costs of process, to be executed without delay upon the body of one Samuel Weller; the charges thereby incurred to be paid in advance to Solomon Fell.

The attorney was in high glee, for the embarrassed coach-horse was ordered to be discharged forthwith. He highly approved of Sam's attachment to his master; declared that it strongly reminded him of his own feelings of devotion to his friend, the Chancellor; and at once led the old Mr. Weller down to the Temple, to swear the affidavit of debt, which the boy, with the assistance of the blue bag, had drawn up on the spot.

Meanwhile Sam, having been formally introduced to the white-washed gentleness and his friends, as the offspring of Mr. Weller, of the Bell and Sausage, was treated with marked distinction, and invited to regale himself with them in honour of the occasion—an invitation which he was by no means backward in accepting.

The mirth of gentlemen of this class is of a grave and quiet character usually; but the present instance was one of peculiar festivity, and they relaxed in proportion. After some rather tumultuous toasting of the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Solomon Fell, who had that day displayed such transcendent abilities, a mottled-faced gentleman in a blue shawl proposed that somebody should sing a song. The obvious suggestion was, that the mottled-faced gentleman, being anxious for a song, should sing it himself; but this the mottled-faced gentleman sturdily, and somewhat offensively, declined to do; upon which, as is not unusual in such cases, a rather angry colloquy ensued.

"Gentlemen," said the coach-horse, "rather than disturb the harmony of this delightful occasion, perhaps Mr. Samuel Weller will oblige the company."

"Ha! gentlemen," said Sam, "I'm not very much in the habit of singin' without the instrument; but any 'cht' for a quiet life, as the man said ven he took the sitration at the light-house."

With this prelude, Mr. Samuel Weller burst at once into the following wild and beautiful legend, which, under the impression that it is not generally known, we take the liberty of quoting: We would beg re
call particular attention to the monosyllable at the end of the second and fourth lines, which not only enables the singer to take breath at those points, but greatly assists the metre.

**Romance.**

I.

Bold Turpin vunce, on Bromeow Heath,
His bold mare Bees bestrode—er;
Ven there he see’d the Bishop’s coach
A-comin’ along the road—er.
So he gallops close to the orae’s legs,
And he claps his head within;
And the Bishop sayes, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here’s the bold Turpin!"

(Chorus.)

And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here’s the bold Turpin!"

II.

Says Turpin, "You shall eat your words,
With a sense of leaden bul’—let;"
So he puts a pistol to his mouth,
And he fires it down his gut—let.
The coachman he not likin’ the job,
Set off at a full gallop,
But Dick put a couple of balls in his nob,
And perused on him to stop.

(Chorus sarcastically.)

But Dick put a couple of balls in his nob,
And perused on him to stop.

"I maintain that that ‘ere song ‘s personal to the cloth," said the mottled-faced gentleman, interrupting it at this point.
"I demand the name of that coachman."
"Nobody know’d," replied Sam. "He hadn’t got his card in his pocket."
"I object to the introduction of politics," said the mottled-faced gentleman. "I submit that, in the present company, that ‘ere song’s political; and, wot’s much the same, that it isn’t true. I say that that coachman did not run away; but that he died game—game as pheasant; and I won’t hear nothin’ said to the contrary."

As the mottled-faced gentleman spoke with great energy and determination, and as the opinions of the company seemed divided on the subject, it threatened to give rise to fresh altercation, when Mr. Weller and Mr. Pell most opportunevly arrived.

"All right, Sammy," said Mr. Weller.
"The officer will be here at four o’clock," said Mr. Pell. "I suppose you won’t run away meanwhile—eh! Ha! ha!"
"P’haps my cruel pa ’ll relent afore that," replied Sam, with a broad grin.
"Not I," said the elder Mr. Weller.
"Do," said Sam.
"Not on no account," replied the inexorable creditor.
"I’ll give bills for the amount at sixpence a month," said Sam.
"I won’t take ‘em," said Mr. Weller.
"Ha, ha, ha! very good, very good," said Mr. Solomon Pell, who was making out his little bill of costs; "a very amusing incident, indeed. Benjamin, copy that."
And Mr. Pell snarled again, as he called Mr. Weller’s attention to the amount.

"Thank you, thank you," said the professional gentleman, taking up another of the greasy notes as Mr. Weller took it from the pocket-book. "Three ten and one ten in five. Much obliged to you, Mr. Weller. Your son is a most deserving young man, very much so, indeed, Sir. It’s a very pleasant trait in a young man’s character—very much so," added Mr. Pell, sniffing smoothly round, as he buttoned up the money.

"Wot a game it is!" said the elder Mr. Weller, with a chuckle. "A reg’lar prodigy son!"

"Prodigal—prodigal son, Sir," suggested Mr. Pell, mildly.
"Never mind, Sir," said Mr. Weller with dignity. "I know wot’s o’clock, Sir. Ven I don’t, I’ll ask you, Sir."

By the time the officer arrived, Sam had made himself so extremely popular, that the congreigated gentlemen determined to see him to prison in a body. So off they set; the plaintiff and defendant walking arm-in-arm, the officer in front, and eight stout coachmen bringing up the rear. At Sergeant’s Inn Coffee-house the whole party halted to refresh; and, the legal arrangements being completed, the procession moved on again.

Some little commotion was occasioned in Fleet Street by the pleasantry of the eight gentlemen in the flank, who persevered in walking four abreast; and it was also found necessary to leave the mottled-faced gentleman behind, to fight a ticket-porter, it being arranged that his friends should call for him as they went back. Nothing but these little incidents occurred on the way. When they reached the gates of the Fleet, the cavalcade, taking the time from the plaintiff, gave three tremendous cheers for the defendant; and, after having shaken hands all round, left him.

"Sam having been formally delivered into the warden’s custody, to the intense astonishment of Roker, and to the evident emotion of even the phlegmatic Neddy, passed at once into the prison, walked straight to his master’s room, and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam appeared, pulled off his hat, and smiled.

"Ah, Sam, my good lad," said Mr. Pickwick, evidently delighted to see his humble friend again; "I had no intention of hurting your feelings yesterday, my faithful fellow, by what I said. Put down your
hat, Sam, and let me explain my meaning a little more at length."

"Won't presently do, Sir!" said Sam.

"Certainly," said Mr. Pickwick; "but why not now?"

"I'd rather not now, Sir," rejoined Sam.

"Why I?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"'Cause," said Sam, hesitating.

"Because of what?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, alarmed at his follower's manner.

"Speak out, Sam."

"'Cause," rejoined Sam; "'cause I've got a little business as I want to do."

"What business?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, surprised at Sam's confused manner.

"Nobs' parties, Sir," replied Sam.

"Oh, if it's nothing particular," said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile, "you can speak with me first."

"I think I had better see arter it at once," said Sam, still hesitating.

Mr. Pickwick looked amazed, but said nothing.

"The fact is—" said Sam, stopping short.

"Well!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Speak out, Sam."

"Why, the fact is," said Sam, with a desperate effort, "I'd better see arter my bed afore I do any thin' else.

"Your bed?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, in astonishment.

"Yes, my bed, Sir," replied Sam. "I'm a prisoner. I was arrested this very afternoon for debt."

"You arrested for debt!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sinking into a chair.

"Yes, for debt, Sir," replied Sam; "and the man as put 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 prisoner, and I'm very glad on it; and if it had been Newgate, it would ha' been just the same. Now the murder's out, and, damme, there's an end on it."

With these words, which he repeated with great emphasis and violence, Sam Weller dashed his hat upon the ground, in a most unusual state of excitement; and then, folding his arms, looked firmly and fixedly in his master's face.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Tresses of divers little matters which occurred in the Fleet, and of Mr. Winkle's mysterious behaviour; and shows how the poor Chancellor Prisoner obtained his release at last.

Mr. Pickwick felt a great deal too much

touched by the warmth of Sam's attachment, to be able to exhibit any manifestation of anger or displeasure at the precipitate course he had adopted, in voluntarily consigning himself to a debtors' prison for an indefinite period. The only point on which he persevered in demanding any explanation, was, the name of Sam's detaining creditor, but this Mr. Weller as perseveringly withheld.

"It ain't o' no use, Sir," said Sam, again and again. "He's a ma-licious, bad-disposed, worldly-minded, spiteful, vindictive crookter, with a hard heart as there ain't so soft'n', as the virtuous chergyman remarked of the good man with the dropsey, when he said, that upon the whole he thought he'd rather leave his property to his vise than build a chapel with it."

"But consider, Sam," Mr. Pickwick re-monstrated, "the sum is so small that it can very easily be paid, and having made up my mind that you shall stop with me, you should recollect how much more useful you would be, if you could go outside the walls."

"Very much obliged to you, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, gravely; "but I'd rather, not."

"Rather not do what, Sam?"

"'Vy, Sir, I'd rather not let myself down to ask a favour o' this here unremorseful enemy.""

"But it is no favour asking him to take the money, Sam," reasoned Mr. Pickwick. "Beg your pardon, Sir," rejoined Sam; "but it 'ud be a very great favour to pay it, and he don't deserve none; that's vera it is, Sir."

Here Mr. Pickwick rubbing his nose with an air of some vexation, Mr. Weller thought it prudent to change the theme of the discourse.

"I takes my determination on principle, Sir," remarked Sam, "and you takes yours on the same ground; wich puts me in mind o' the man as killed his-self on principle, wich o' course you've heerd on, Sir." Mr. Weller paused when he arrived at this point, and cast a comical look at his master out of the corners of his eyes.

"There is no of course in the case, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, gradually breaking into a smile, in spite of the uneasiness which Sam's obstinacy had given him.

"The same of the gentleman in question never reached my ears."

"No, Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Weller. "You astonish me, Sir; he was a clerk in a govern'ment office, Sir."

"Was he?", said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, he was, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller; "and a very pleasant gen'l'm'n too—one o' the precise and t'fy sort, as puts their fact
he little Indian tucker fire-breakets wen its
good weather, and never has no other bosom-
friends but bare-a-skins; he saved up his
money on principle, wore a clean shirt ev'ry
day on principle, never spoke to none of his
relations on principle, 'till they should want
to borrow mony of him; and was altogether, in fact, an uncommon agreeable
character. He had his hair cut on principle
vunce a fortnight, and contracted for his
clothes on the economic principle—three
suits a year, and send back the old vuns.
Being a very regular gent, he dined ev'ry
day at the same place, were it was
one-and-ninepence to cut off the joint; and
a very good one-and-ninepence worth he
used to cut, as the landlord often said, with
the tears a tricklin' down his face, let alone
the way he used to poke the fire in the vin-
ter time, with a dead loss o' four-pence
ba'penny a day, to say nothin' at all o' the
aggravation o' seemin' him do it. So
un-
common grand with it too! 4 Post arter the
week, gent-hum, he sings out ev'ry day wen
he comes in. 5 See arter the Times, Thom-
mas; let me look at the Mornin' Herald,
wen it's out o' hand; don't forget to bespeak
the Chronicle; and just bring the 'Tizer,
vill you? and then he'd set with his eyes
fixed on the clock, and rush out just a quar-
ter o' a mint afore the time to raylay the
boy as was a comin' in with the evening-
paper, with he'd read with such intense
interest and pereverence, as worked the
other customers up to the very confines o'
derperation and insinuity, especially one i're-
dible old gentleman as the waiter was aways
obliged to keep a sharp eye on at sich times,
then he should be tempted to commit some
rush not with the carving-knife. Vell, Sir,
here he'd stand, occupyn the best place for
three hours, and never takin' nothin' arter
his dinner but sleep, and then he'd go away
in a coffee-house a few streets off, and have
a small pot o' coffee and four crumpets,
 arter which he'd walk home to Kensington
and yet to bed. One night he won took
very ill; sends for the doctor; doctor comes
in, a green fly, with a kind o' Robinson Crus-
oe set o' steps as he could let down wen
he got up on the top of him; he was he
get-in, to peruss the necessity o' the
coachman's gettin' down, and thereby un-
deciev'in the pable, by lettin' 'em see that
it was only a liver'y-cat he'd got on, and
not the trommers, to match. 'Wot's the
matter?' says the doctor. 6 'Wot, ill?' says
the patient. 'Wot have you been eatin' of?' says the doctor. ' Hess, weal,' says
the patient. 'What's the last thing you
deserved?' says the doctor. 'Crumpets,'
says the patient. 'That's it,' says the
docteur. 'I'll send you a box o' pils a-shrivly,
and don't you take no more o' them,' he says. 7 'No more o' wot?' says the pa-
tient—Pils! 8 'No; crumpets,' says the
doctor. 'Wy!' says the patient, starting
up in bed, 'I've eat four crumpets ev'ry
night for fifteen year, on principle.' 9 Vell,
then, you'd better leave 'em off on prin-
ciple,' says the doctor. 'Crumpets is not
wholesome, Sir,' says the patient. 'Crumpets is
not wholesome, Sir,' says the doctor, very
fierce. 'But they're so cheap,' says the
patient, comin' down a little, 'and so very
fillin' at the price.' They'd be dear to you
at any price; dear if you was paid to eat
'em,' says the doctor. 'Four crumpets a
night,' he says, 'will do your business in
six months!' The patient looks him full.
In the face, and turns it over in his mind
for a long time, and at last he says, 'Are
you sure o' that 'ere, Sir?' 10 'I'll make my
professional reputation on it,' says the doc-
tor. 'How many crumpets at a sittin' do
you think 'ud kill me off at once?' says the
patient. 'I don't know,' says the doctor.
'Do you think half a crown's wurr 'ud do
it?' says the patient. 'I think it might,'
says the doctor. 'Three shillins' wurr
'ud be sure to do it, I s'pose!' says the
patient. 'Certainly,' says the doctor.
'Wery good,' says the patient; 'good
night.' Next mornin' he gets up, has a
fire lit, orders in three shillins' wurr o'
crumpets, toasts 'em all, eats 'em all, and
blows his brains out.'

7 "What did he do that for?" inquired
Mr. Pickwick, abruptly; for he was consid-
ernably startled by this tragic termination of
the narrative.

8 "Wot did he do it for, Sir?" reiterated
Sam. 9 "Wy, in support of his great prin-
ciple that crumpets was wholesome, and to
show that he wouldn't be put out of his way
for nobody!"

With such like shifting and changings
of the discourse, did Mr. Weller meet his
master's questioning upon the night of his
taking up his residence in the Fleet; find-
ing all gentle remonstrance useless, Mr.
Pickwick at length yielded a reluctant con-
sent to his taking lodgings by the week,
of a bald-headed cobler, who rented a small
slip room in one of the sooner galleries. In
this humble apartment Mr. Weller moved a
musee and bedding, which he hired of
Mr. Roker; and by the time he lay down
upon it at night, was as much at home as
if he had been bred in the prison, and his
whole family had vegetated therein for
three generations.

10 "Do you always smoke arter you goes
to bed, old cock!" inquired Mr. Weller of
his landlord, when they had both retired for
the night.

11 "Yes, I does, young bantam," replied
the cobler.
"Vil you allow me to inquire vy you make up your bed under that 'ere deal table?" said Sam.

"'Cause I vos always used to a four-poster afore I come here, and I find the legs of the table answer just as well," replied the cobbler.

"You're a character, Sir," said Sam.

"I haven't got any thing of the kind belonging to me," rejoined the cobbler, shaking his head; "and if you want to meet with a good one, I'm afraid you'll find some difficulty in suitting yourself at this register office."

The above short dialogue took place as Mr. Weller lay extended on his mattress at one end of the room, and the cobbler on his at the other; the apartment being illumined by the light of a rush candle and the cobbler’s pipe, which was glowing below the table like a red-hot coal. The conversation, brief as it was, predisposed Mr. Weller strongly in his landlord’s favour, and raising himself on his elbow, he took a more lengthened survey of his appearance than he had yet had either time or inclination to make.

He was a sallow man—all coppers are; and had a strong bristly beard—all coppers have; his face was a queer, good-tempered, crooked-feature piece of workmanship, ornamented with a couple of eyes that must have worn a very joyous expression at one time, for they sparkled yet. The man was sixty by years, and Heaven knows how old by imprisonment, so that his having any look approaching to mirth or contentment, was singular enough. He was a little man, and being half doubled up as he lay in bed, looked about as long as he ought to have been without legs. He had got a great red pipe in his mouth, and was smoking and staring at the rushlight in a state of envious placidity.

"Have you been here long?" inquired Sam, breaking the silence which had lasted for some time.

"Twelve years," replied the cobbler, biting the end of his pipe as he spoke.

"Contempt!" inquired Sam.

The cobbler nodded.

"Vell, then," said Sam with some sternness, "wot do you persevere in bei’n obstruct for, wastin’ your precious life away in this here magnified pound? Vy don’t you give in, and tell the Chanceller’ship that you’re very sorry for makin’ his court contemptible, and that you won’t do so no more?"

The cobbler put his pipe in the corner of his mouth while he smiled, and then brought it back to its old places again, but said nothing.

"Vy don’t you see?" said Sam, urging his question sternly.

"Ah," said the cobbler, "you don’t quite understand these matters. What do you suppose ruined me, now?"

"Vv," said Sam, trimming the rushlight, "I s’pose the beginnin’ was, that you get into debt, eh?"

"Never owed a darden," said the cobbler; "try again.

"Vell, perhaps," said Sam, "you bought houses, vich is delicate English for goin’ mad; or took to buildin’, vich is a medical term for bei’n incurable."

The cobbler shook his head, and said—"Try again."

"You didn’t go to law, I hope!" said Sam, suspiciously.

"Never in my life," replied the cobbler.

"The fact is, I was ruined by having money left me."

"Come, come," said Sam, "that won’t do. I wish some rich enemy ‘ud try to work my destruction in that ‘ere vay. I’d let him."

"Oh, I dare say you don’t believe it," said the cobbler, quietly smoking his pipe.

"I wouldn’t if I was you; but it is true for all that."

"How went it?" inquired Sam, half induced to believe the fact already by the look the cobbler gave him.

"Just this," replied the cobbler; "an old gentleman that I worked for down in the country, and a humble relation of whose I married—she’s dead, God bless her, and thank Him for it—was seized with a fit and went off."

"Where?" inquired Sam, who was growing sleepy after the numerous events of the day.

"How should I know where he went!" said the cobbler, speaking through his nose in an intense enjoyment of his pipe. "He went off dead."

"Oh, that indeed," said Sam. "Vell!"

"Well," said the cobbler, "he left five thousand pound behind him."

"And very gen-teel in him so to do," said Sam.

"One of which," continued the cobbler, "he left to me, ’cause I married his relative you see."

"Very good," murmured Sam.

"And being surrounded by a great number of nieces and nevys, as was always quarrelling and fighting among themselves for the property, he makes me his executor and leaves the rest to me in trust, to divide it among ’em as the will provided."

"Wot do you mean by that leavin’ it in trust?" inquired Sam, waking up a little.

"If it ain’t ready money, vee’s the use on it?"
"It's a law term, that's all," said the cobbler.
"I don't think that," said Sam, slapping his head. "There's very little trust at that shop. However, go on."
"Well," said the cobbler, "when I was going to take out a probate of the will, the nieces and nephews, who was desperately disappointed at not getting all the money, eaters a caveat against it."
"That's it!" asked Sam.
"A legal instrument, which is as much as to say, it's no go," replied the cobbler.
"I see," said Sam, "a sort of brother-in-law o' the have-his-curse's. Vell!"
"But," continued the cobbler, "finding that they couldn't agree among themselves, and consequently couldn't get up a case against the will, they withdrew the caveat, and paid all the legacies. I'd hardly done it, when one new brings an action to act the will aside. The case comes on some months afterwards, before a deaf old gentleman, in a back room somewhere down by Paul's Church-yard; and after four counsel had taken a day a-piece to bother him regularly, he takes a week or two to consider and read the evidence in six volumes, and then gives his judgment that how the testator was not quite right in his head, and I must pay all the money back again, and all the costs. I appealed; the case come on before three or four very sleepy gentlemen, who had heard it all before in the other court, where they're lawyers without work; the only difference being, that these they're called doctors, and in the other place delegates, if you understood that; and they very dutifully confirmed the decision of the old gentleman below. After that we went into Chancery, where we are still, and where I shall always be. My lawyers have had all my thousand pound long ago; and what between the estate, as they call it, and the costs, I'm here for ten thousand, and shall stop here till I die, mending shoes. Some gentlemen have talked of bringing it before parliament, and I dare say would have done it, only they hadn't time to come to me, and I hadn't power to go to them; and they got tired of my long letters, and dropped the business. And this is God's truth, without one word of suppression or exaggeration, as fifty people, both in this place and out of it, very well know."

The cobbler paused to ascertain what effect his story had produced upon Sam; but finding that he had dropped asleep, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, sighed, put it down, drew the bedclothes over his head, and went to sleep too.

Mr. Pickwick was sitting at breakfast alone next morning, Sam being busily engaged in the cobbler's room, polishing his master's shoes and brushing the black gaiters, when there came a knock at the door, which, before Mr. Pickwick could cry "Come in," was followed by the appearance of a head of hair and a cotton-velvet cap, both of which articles of dress he had no difficulty in recognising as the personal property of Mr. Smangle.

"How are you?" said that worthy, accompanying the inquiry with a score or two of nods; "I say, do you expect any body this morning? Three men—devilish gentlemanly fellows—have been asking after you down stairs, and knocking at every door on the Hall flight; for which they've been most infernally blown up by the collegians that had the trouble of opening 'em."

"Dear me! how very foolish of them," said Mr. Pickwick, rising. "Yes, I have no doubt they are some friends whom I rather expected to see yesterday."

"Friends of yours!" exclaimed Smangle, seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand. "Say no more. Curse me, they're friends of mine from this minute, and friends of Mivins's too. Infernal pleasant gentlemanly dog, Mivins, ain't he?" said Smangle, with great feeling.

"I know so little of the gentleman," said Mr. Pickwick, hesitating. "That I——"

"I know you do," interposed Smangle, clasping Mr. Pickwick by the shoulder. "You shall know him better. You'll be delighted with him. That man, Sir," said Smangle, with a solemn countenance, "has comic powers that would do honour to Drury Lane Theatre."

"Has he indeed?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, by Jove he has!" replied Smangle.

"Hear him come the four cats in the wheelbarrow—for distinct cats, Sir, I pledge you my honour. Now you know that's infernal clever; damme, you can't help liking a man, when you see these sort of traits about him. He's only one fault—that little failing I mentioned to you, you know."

As Mr. Smangle shook his head, in a confidential and sympathising manner at this juncture, Mr. Pickwick felt that he was expected to say something, so he said "Ah!" and looked restlessly at the door.

"Ah!" echoed Mr. Smangle, with a long-drawn sigh. "He's delightful company, that man is, Sir—I don't know better company any where; but he has that one drawback. If the ghost of his grandfather, Sir, was to rise before him this minute, he'd ask him for the loan of his acceptance on an eighteen-penny stamp."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes," added Mr. Smangle; "and if he'd the power of raising him again, as
would in two months and three days from his time, to renew the bill!"

"These are very remarkable traits," said Mr. Pickwick; "but I'm afraid that while we are talking here, my friends may be in a state of great perplexity at not finding me."

"I'll show 'em the way," said Smangle, making for the door. "Good day, I won't disturb you while they're here, you know. By-the-bye—"

As Smangle pronounced the last three words, he stopped suddenly, reclosed the door which he had opened, and, walking softly back to Mr. Pickwick, stopped close up to him on tiptoe, and said in a very soft whisper—

"You couldn't make it convenient to lend me half-a-crown till the latter end of next week, could you?"

Mr. Pickwick could scarcely forbear smiling, but managing to preserve his gravity, he drew forth the coin, and placed it in Mr. Smangle's palm; upon which that gentleman, with many nods and winks, implying profound mystery, disappeared in quest of the three strangers, with whom he presently returned; and having coughed thrice, and nodded as many times, as an assurance to Mr. Pickwick that he should not forget to pay, he shook hands all round in an engaging manner, and at length took himself off.

"My dear friends," said Mr. Pickwick, shaking hands alternately with Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass, who were the three visitors in question, "I am delighted to see you."

The triumvirate were much affected. Mr. Tupman shook his head deploringly; Mr. Snodgrass drew forth his handkerchief with disguised emotion; and Mr. Pickwick re-tired to the window, and sniffed aloud.

"Mornin', gen'l'm'n," said Sam, entering at the moment with the shoes and gaiters; "away with melancholy, as the little boy said ven his schoolmissis died. Welcome to the college, gen'l'm'n."

"This foolish fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, tapping Sam on the head as he knelt down to button up his master's gaiters—"This foolish fellow has got himself arrested, in order to be near me."

"What!" exclaimed the three friends.

"Yes, gen'l'm'n," said Sam, "I'm standing steady, Sir, if you please—I'm a prisoner, gen'l'm'n; coo-fined, as the lady said."

"A prisoner!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, with unaccountable vehemence.

"Hallo, Sir," responded Sam, looking in Mr. Winkle's face, "what's the matter, Sir?"

"I'm afraid, Sam, that—nothing, nothing," said Mr. Winkle, precipitately.

"There was something so very abrupt and unsettled in Mr. Winkle's manner, that Mr. Pickwick involuntarily looked at his two friends for explanation.

"We don't know," said Mr. Tupman, answering this mute appeal alike. "He has been much excited for two days past, and his whole demeanour very unlike what it usually is. We feared there must be something the matter, but he resolutely denies it!"

"No, no," said Mr. Winkle, colouring beneath Mr. Pickwick's gaze; "there is really nothing. I assure you there is nothing, my dear Sir. It will be necessary for me to leave town for a short time on private business, and I had hoped to have prevailed upon you to allow Sam to accompany me."

Mr. Pickwick looked more astonished than before.

"I think," faltered Mr. Winkle, "that Sam would have had no objection to do so; but of course his being a prisoner here renders it impossible. So I must go alone." As Mr. Winkle said these words, Mr. Pickwick felt, with some astonishment, that Sam's fingers were trembling at the gaiters, as if he were rather surprised or startled. He looked up at Mr. Winkle, too, when he had finished speaking, and though the glance they exchanged was instantaneous, they seemed to understand each other.

"Do you know any thing of this, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, sharply.

"No, I don't, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, beginning to button with extraordinary assiduity.

"Are you sure, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Vy, Sir," responded Mr. Weller; "I'm sure so far, that I've never heard any thing on the subject since this moment. But I makes any guinea about it," added Sam, looking at Mr. Winkle, "I haven't got any right; to say wot it is, 'fear it should be a wrong 'un.'"

"I have no right to make any farther inquiry into the private affairs of a friend, however intimate a one," said Mr. Pickwick, after a short silence; "at present let me merely say, that I do not understand this at all. There—we have had quite enough of the subject."

Thus expressing himself, Mr. Pickwick led the conversation to different topics, and Mr. Winkle gradually appeared more at ease, though still very far from being completely so. 'They had all so much to converse about,' that the morning very quickly passed away; and when at three o'clock Mr. Weller produced upon the table, a roast leg of mutton and an enormous meat-pie, with sundry dishes of vegetables, and pot of porter, which stood upon the
chairs, or the seat-besotted, or where they could, everybody felt disposed to do justice to the meal, notwithstanding that the mess had been purchased and dressed, and the pie made and baked at the prison cookery hard by.

To these succeeded a bottle or two of very good wine, for which a messenger was despatched by Mr. Pickwick to the Horn Coffee-house, in Doctors' Commons. The bottle or two, indeed, might be more properly described as a bottle or six, for by the time it was drunk and tea over, the bell began to ring for strangers to withdraw.

But if Mr. Winkle's behaviour had been unaccountable in the morning, it became perfectly uncalled and solemn when, under the influence of his feelings, and his share of the bottle or six, he prepared to take leave of his friend. He lingered behind until Mr. Tupman and Mr. Shergold had disappeared, and then fervently clenched Mr. Pickwick's hand with an expression of face, in which deep and mighty resolve was fearfully blended with the very concentrated essences of gloom.

"Good night, my dear Sir," said Mr. Winkle, between his set teeth.

"Bless you, my dear fellow," replied the warm-hearted Mr. Pickwick, as he returned the pressure of his young friend's hand.

"Now then," cried Mr. Tupman, from the gallery.

"Yes, yes, directly," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Good night," said Mr. Pickwick.

There was another: good night, and another, and half-a-dozen more after that, and still Mr. Winkle held fast hold of his friend's hand, and was looking into his face with the same strange expression.

"Is any thing the matter?" said Mr. Pickwick, at last, when his arm was quite soggy and shaking.

"Nothing," said Mr. Winkle.

"Well then, good night," said Mr. Pickwick, attempting to disengage his hand.

"My friend, my benefactor, my honoured companion," murmured Mr. Winkle, catching at his wrist, "Do not judge me harshly; do not when you hear that driven to extremity by hopeless obstacles, I—"

"Now then," said Mr. Tupman, reappearing at the door. "Are you coming, or are we to be locked in?"

"Yes, yes, I am ready," replied Mr. Winkle. And with a violent effort he tore himself away.

As Mr. Pickwick was gazing down the passage after them in silent astonishment, Sue Weather appeared at the stair-head, and whispered for one moment in Mr. Winkle's ear.

"Oh certainly, depend upon me," said that gentleman aloud.

"Thankyou, Sir. You won't forget, Sir?" said Sam.

"Of course not," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Vish you luck, Sir," said Sam, touching his hat. "I should very much like to ha' joined you, Sir; but the govenour's course is paramount."

"It is very much to your credit that you remain here," said Mr. Winkle. With these words they disappeared down the stairs.

"Very extraordinary," said Mr. Pickwick, going back into his room, and seating himself at the table in a mussing attitude. "What can that young man be going to do?"

He sat ruminating about the matter for some time, when the voice of Roker, the turnkey, demanded whether he might come in.

"By all means," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I've brought you a supper-pillow, Sir," said Roker, "instead of the temporary one you had last night."

"Thankyou," said Mr. Pickwick. "Will you take a glass of wine?"

"You're very good, Sir," replied Mr. Roker, accepting the proffered glass—

"Yours, Sir."

"Thankyou," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I'm sorry to say that your landlord's very bad to-night, Sir," said Roker, setting down the glass, and inspecting the liming of his hat preparatory to putting it on again.

"What! The Chancery prisoner!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"He won't be a Chancery prisoner very long, Sir," replied Roker, turning his hat round so as to get the maker's name right side upwards as he looked into it.

"You make my blood run cold," said Mr. Pickwick. "What do you mean?"

"He's been consumptive for a long time, past," said Mr. Roker, "and he's taken very bad in the breath to-night. The doctor said six months ago that nothing but change of air could save him."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick; "has this man been slowly murdered by the law for six months?"

"I don't know about that, Sir," replied Roker, weighing the hat by the brim-ies in both hands. "I suppose he'd have been took the same wherever he was. He was late the infirmary this morning: the doctor says his strength is to be kept up as much as possible, and the warder's sent him wine and broth and that, from his own house. It's not the warder's fault, you know, Sir."
"Of course not," replied Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"I'm afraid however," said Rover, shaking his head, "that it's all up with him; I offered Neddy two sixpence's worth of tea upon it just now, but he wouldn't take it, and quite right. Thankee, Sir. Good night, Sir."

"Stay," said Mr. Pickwick, earnestly.

"Where is this infirmary?"

"Just over where you slept, Sir," replied Rover. "I'll show you, if you like to come." Mr. Pickwick snatched up his hat without speaking, and followed at once.

The turnkey led the way in silence, and gently raising the latch of the room-door, turned the key. The door was a large, bare, desolate room, and with a number of stump bedsteads made of iron, on one of which lay stretched the shadow of a man: wan, pale, and ghastly. His breathing was hard and thick, and he moaned painlessly as he came and went. At the bedside sat a short old man in a cobbler's apron, who by the aid of a pair of horn spectacles, was reading from the little alms-book. It was the fortunate legatees.

The sick man laid his hand upon his attendant's arm, and motioned him to stop. He closed the book, and laid it on the bed.

"Open the window," said the sick man.

He did so. The noise of carriages and cabs, the rattle of wheels, the cries of men and boys; all the busy sounds of a mighty metropolis instinct with life and occupation, blended into one deep murmur, floated into the room. Above the hoarse loud hum arose from time to time a boisterous laugh, or a scrap of some jingling song, shouted forth by one of the giddy crowd, would speak upon the ear for an instant, and then be lost amidst the roar of voices and the tramp of footsteps — the breaking of the billows of the restless sea of life that rolled heavily on, without. These are melancholy sounds to a quiet listener, at any time; but how melancholy to the watcher by the bed of death!

"There is no air here," said the sick man, faintly. "The place pollutes it; it was fresh round about, when I walked these streets an hour ago; but it grows hot and heavy in passing these walls. I cannot breathe it."

"We have breathed it together a long time," said the old man. "Come, come."

There was a short silence, during which the two spectators approached the bed. The sick man drew a hand of his old fellow prisoner towards him, and pressing it affectionately between both his own, returned it in his grasp.

"I hope," he gasped after a while — so faintly that they bent their ears close over the bed, to catch the half-formed sounds in his cold blue lips gave vent to — "I hope my merciful Judge will bear in mind my heavy punishment on earth. Twenty years, my friend, twenty years in this hideous grave. My heart broke when my child died, and I could not even kiss him in his little coffin. My loneliness since then, in all this noise and riot, has been very dreadful. May God forgive me! He has seen my solitary, lingering death."

He folded his hands, and murmuring something more they could not hear, fell into a sleep — only a sleep at first, for they saw him smile.

They whispered together for a little time, and the turnkey stooping over the pillow, drew hastily back. "He has got his discharge, by G — d!" said the man.

He had. But he had grown so like death in life, that they knew not when he died.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Descriptive of an affecting interview between Mr. Samuel Weller and a family party. Mr. Pickwick makes a tour of the diminutive world he inhabits, and resolves to mix with it in future as little as possible.

A few mornings after his incarceration, Mr. Samuel Weller, having arranged his master's room with all possible care, and seen him comfortably seated over his books and papers, withdrew to employ himself for an hour or two to come, as he best could. It was a fine morning; and it occurred to Sam that a pint of porter in the open air would lighten his next quarter of an hour or so, as well as any little amusement in which he could indulge.

Having arrived at this conclusion, he betook himself to the tap, and having purchased the beer, and obtained moreover the day-but-one-before yesterday's paper, he repaired to the skittle-ground, and seating himself on a bench, proceeded to enjoy himself in a very sedate and methodical manner.

First of all, he took a refreshing draught of the beer, and then he looked up at a window, and bestowed a Platonic wink on a young lady who was peeling potatoes thereat. Then he opened the paper, and folded it so as to get the police reports outward; and this being a vacation and difficult thing to do when there is any wind stirring, he took another draught of the beer when he had accomplished it. Then he read two lines of the paper, and stepped short to look at a couple of men who were finishing a game of rackets, which being
unconcluded, he cried out "very good!" in an
approving manner, and looked round upon
the spectators, to ascertain whether their
sentiments coincided with his own. This
involved the necessity of looking up at the
windows also; and as the young lady was
still there, it was an act of common polites-
sem to wink again, and to drink to her
good health in dumb show, in another
draught of the beer, which Sam did; and
having bowed hidously upon a small
boy, who had noted that latter proceeding
with open eyes, he threw one leg over
the other, and, holding the newspaper in
both hands, began to read in earnest.

He had hardly composed himself into
the needful state of abstraction, when he
thought he heard his own name proclaimed
in some distant passage. Nor was he mis-
taken, for it quickly passed from mouth to
mouth, and in a few seconds the air teemed
with shouts of "Weller."

"Here!" roared Sam, in a stentorian
voice. "Wot's the matter! Who wants
him! Has an express come to say that his
country-house is afire?"

"Somebody wants you in the hall," said
a man who was standing by.

"Just mind that 'ere paper and the pot,
old fellow, will you!" said Sam. "I'm a
comin'. Bless'd, if they was a callin' me
to the bar, they couldn't make no more
about it."

Accompanying these words with a gen-
tle rap on the head of the young gentleman
before noticed, who, unconscious of his close
vicinity to the person in request, was screaming
"Weller" with all his might, Sam hastened
across the ground, and ran up the
stairs into the hall. Here, the first object
that met his eyes was his beloved father
sitting on a bottom stair, with his hat in his
hand, shouting out "Weller" in his
very loudest tone, at half-minute intervals.

"Wot are you a roarin' at!" said Sam
impatiently, when the old gentleman had
discharged himself of another shout; "make
'is' yourself so precious hot that you looks
like a aggravate glass-blower. Wot's the
matter!"

"Aha!" replied the old gentleman, "I
begun to be afeard that you'd gone for a
walk round the Regency Park, Sammy."

"Come," said Sam, "none of 'em taunts
again the wretch o' avarice, and come off
that other step. We are you a suttin' down
there for! I don't live there."

"I've got sich a game for you, Sammy,"
said the elder Mr. Weller, rising.

"Stop a minute," said Sam, "you're all
vite behind."

"That's right, Sammy, rub it off," said
Mr. Weller, as his son dusted him. "It
might look personal here, if was talked
about with any vinegar on von's clothes,
eh, Sammy?"

As Mr. Weller exhibited in this piece
unequivocal symptoms of an approaching
fit of chuckling, Sam interposed to stop it.

"Keep quiet, do," said Sam, "there
never vos such an old picter-card born. Vot
are you bustin' with, now?"

"Sammy," said Mr. Weller, wiping his
forehead, "I'm afeard that von o' these
days I shall laugh myself into a appleplexy,
my boy."

"Well, then, vot do you do it for?" said
Sam. "Now, then, vot have you got to
tell!"

"Who do you think's come here with
me, Samivel?" said Mr. Weller, drawing
back a pace or two, pursing up his mouth,
and extending his eye-brows.

"Pell!" said Sam.

Mr. Weller shook his head, and bit red
cheeks expanded with the laughter that was
endeavouring to find a vent.

"Mottled-faced man, who's he?" suggested
Sam.

Again Mr. Weller shook his head.

"Who that?" asked Sam.

"Your mother-in-law," said Mr. Weller;
and it was lucky he did say it, or his
cheeks must inevitably have crinkled from
their most unnatural distension.

"Your mother-in-law, Sammy," said Mr.
Weller, "and the red-nosed man, my boy;
and the red-nosed man. Ho! ho! ho!"

With this, Mr. Weller launched into con-
volutions of laughter, while Sam regarded
him with a bread grin gradually overspreading
his whole countenance.

"They've come to have a little serious
talk with you, Samivel," said Mr. Weller,
wiping his eyes. "Don't let out nothing
about the unmaterialcreditor, Sammy."

"Wot, don't they know who it is?" in-
quired Sam.

"Not a bit on it," replied his father.

"Vere are they?" said Sam, reciproc-
ating all the old gentleman's grins.

"In the snuggery," rejoined Mr. Weller.

"Catch the red-nosed man a goin' any
vere but vere the liquor is; not he, Sam-
vel—not he. Ve'd a very pleasant ride
along the road from the Markie this morn-
in', Sammy," said Mr. Weller, when he
felt himself equal to the task of speaking
in an articulate manner. "I drove the old
piebal'd in that 'ere little shay-cart as we
longed to your mother-in-law's first win-
ter, into wich a harm-cher vos lifted for
the Shepherd; and I'm blest," said Mr.
Weller, with a look of deep scorn—"I'm
blest if they didn't bring a portable flight o'
steps out into the road a front o' our door
for him to get up by."

"You don't mean that?" said Sam.
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"I do mean that, Sammy," replied his father, "and I wish you could ha' seen how tight he held on by the sides when he did get up, as if he was afraid of being precipitated down full six foot, and dashed into a million hatoms. He tumbled in at last, however, and away we went; and I rayther think — I say I rayther think, Samivel—that he found his-sell a little jolled ven ve turned the corners."

"Wot, I s'pose you happened to drive up again a post or two?" said Sam.

"I'm afraid," replied Mr. Weller, in a capture of winks—"I'm afraid I took you or two on 'em, Sammy; he was a flyin' out o' the harm-cheer all the way."

Here the old gentleman shook his head from side to side, and was seized with a hearty internal rumbling, accompanied with a violent swelling of the countenance, and a sudden increase in the breadth of all his features—symptoms which alarmed his son not a little.

"Don't be frightened, Sammy—don't be frightened," said the old gentleman, when, by dint of much struggling, and various convulsive stamps upon the ground, he had recovered his voice. "It's only a kind o' quiet laugh as I'm a tryin' to come, Sammy."

"Vell, if that's wot it is," said Sam, "you'd better not try to come it again. You'll find it rayther a dangerous invention."

"Don't you like it, Sammy?" inquired the old gentleman.

"Not at all," replied Sam.

"Vell," said Mr. Weller, with the tears still running down his cheeks, "it 'ud ha' been a very great accommodation to me if I could ha' done it, and 'ud ha' saved a good many words between your mother-in-law and me, sometimes; but I'm afraid you're right, Sammy: it's too much in the appendix line—a deal too much, Samivel."

This conversation brought them to the door of the snuggeries, into which Sam—passing for an instant to look over his shoulder, and cast a sly leer at his respected progenitor, who was still giggling behind—at once led the way.

"Mother-in-law," said Sam, politely saluting the lady, "very much obliged to you for this here visit. Shepherd, how air you?"

"Oh, Samuel!" said Mrs. Weller. "This is dreadful."

"Not a bit on it, mum," replied Sam. "Is it, Shepherd?"

Mr. Stiggins raised his hands, and turned up his eyes, till the whites—or rather the yellow—were alone visible, but made no reply in words.

"Is this here gee-lum'n troubled with any painful complaint?" said Sam, looking to his mother-in-law for explanation.

"The good man is grieved to see you here, Samuel," replied Mrs. Weller.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Sam. I was afraid, from his manner, that he might ha' forgotten to take pepper with that 'ere last cowbutton he eat. Set down, Sir; ve make no extra charge for settin' down, as the king remarked ven he blow'd up his ministers."

"Young man," said Mr. Stiggins, ostentatiously, "I fear you are not softened by imprisonment."

"Beg your pardon, Sir," replied Sam, "wot wos you graciously pleased to ob-serve?"

"I apprehend, young man, that your nature is no sofer for this chastening," said Mr. Stiggins, in a loud voice. "Sir," replied Sam, "you're very kind to say so. I hope my nature is not a soft van, Sir. Very much obliged to you for your good opinion, Sir."

At this point of the conversation, a sound, indecorously approaching to a laugh, was heard to proceed from the chair in which the elderly Mr. Weller was seated, upon which Mrs. Weller, on a hasty consideration of all the circumstances of the case, considered it her bounden duty to become gradually hysterical.

"Weller," said Mrs. W. (the old gentleman was seated in a corner); "Weller! come forth."

"Wery much obliged to you, my dear," replied Mr. Weller; "but I'm quite comfor-able vere I am."

Upon this Mrs. Weller burst into tears.

"Wot's gone wrong, mum?" said Sam.

"Oh, Samuel!" replied Mrs. Weller;

"Your father makes me wretched. Will nothing do him good?"

"Do you hear this here?" said Sam.

"Lady wants to know whether you'll do you good."

"Wery much indebted to Mrs. Weller for her polite inquiries, Sammy," replied the old gentleman. "I think a pipe would benefit me a very deal. Could I be accommodated, Sammy?"

Here Mrs. Weller let fall some more tears, and Mr. Stiggins groaned.

"Hallo! here's this unfortunate gen'lum'n took ill again," said Sam, looking round.

"Vere do you feel it now, Sir?"

"In the same place, young man," rejoined Mr. Stiggins: "in the same place."

"Vere may that be, Sir?" inquired Sam, with great outward simplicity.

"In the buzzin', young man," replied Mr. Stiggins, placing his umbrella on his waistcoat.
At this affectionate reply, Mrs. Weller being wholly unable to suppress her feelings, sobbed aloud, and stated her conviction that the red-nosed man was a saint; whereasupon Mr. Weller, senior, ventured to suggest, in an under tone, that he must be the representative of the united parishes of Saint Simon Without and Saint Walter Within.

"I'm afraid, mum," said Sam, "that this here gen'l'm'n, with the twist in his countenance, feels rather thirsty, with the melancholy spectacle afore him. Is it the case, mum?"
The worthy lady looked at Mr. Stiggins for a reply, and that gentleman, with many rollings of the eye, clenched his throat with his right hand, and mimicked the act of swallowing, to intimate that he was athirst.

"I'm afraid, Samuel, that his feelings have made him so, indeed," said Mrs. Weller, mournfully.

"Wot's your usual tap, Sir?" replied Sam.

"Oh, my dear young friend!" replied Mr. Stiggins, "all taps is vanities.

"Too true; too true, indeed," said Mrs. Weller, murmuring a groan, and shaking her head assentingly.

"Vell," said Sam, "I des-say they may be, Sir; but rich is your particular Vanity. Rich vanity do you like the flavour on best, Sir?"

"Oh, my dear young friend," replied Mr. Stiggins, "I despise them all. If," said Mr. Stiggins, "if there is any one of them less odious than another, it is the liquor called rum—warm, my dear young friend, with three lumpes of sugar to the tumbler.

"Very sorry to say Sir," said Sam, "that they don't allow that particular vanity to be sold in this here establishment.

"Oh, the hardiness of heart of these invertebrate men!" ejaculated Mr. Stiggins. "Oh, the accursed cruelty of these inhuman persecutors!"

With these words, Mr. Stiggins again cast up his eyes, and rapped his breast with his umbrella; and it is but justice to the revered gentleman to say, that his indignation appeared very real and unsignified, indeed.

After Mrs. Weller and the red-nosed gentleman had commented on this inhuman usage in a very forcible manner, and vented a variety of pious and holy exhortations against its authors, the latter recommended a bottle of port wine, warmed with a little water, spice, and sugar, as being grateful to the stomach, and savouring less of vanity than many other compounds. It was accordingly ordered to be prepared, and pending its preparation, the red-nosed man and Mrs. Weller looked at the elder W. and groaned.

"Vell, Sam'my," said that gentleman, "I hope you'll find your spirits rose by this here lively wish. Very cheerful and improvin' conversation, ain't it, Sam'my?"

"You're a reprobat," replied Sam; "and I desire you don't address no more o' them angreless remarks to me."

So far from being edified by this very proper reply, the elder Mr. Weller at once relaxed into a broad grin; and this inexorable conduct causing the lady and Mr. Stiggins to close their eyes and rock themselves to and fro on their chairs, in a troubled manner, he furthermore indulged in several acts of pantomime indicative of a desire to pummel and wring the nose of the aforesaid Stiggins, the performance of which appeared to afford him great mental relief.

The old gentleman very narrowly escaped detection in one instance; for Mr. Stiggins happening to give a start on the arrival of the negus, brought his head in smart contact with the clenched fist with which Mr. Weller had been describing imaginary fireworks in the air, within two inches of his ear for some minutes previous.

"Wot are you a reachin' out your hand for the tumbler in that 'ere sawage way for?" said Sam with great promptitude. "Don't you see you've hit the gen'l'm'n?"

"I didn't go to do it, Sam'my," said Mr. Weller, in some degree abashed by the very unexpected occurrence of the incident.

"Try an inward application, Sir," said Sam, as the red-nosed gentleman rubbed his head with a rueful visage. "Wot do you think o' that for a go o' vanity warm, Sir?"

Mr. Stiggins made no verbal answer, but his manner was expressive. He tasted the contents of the glass which Sam had placed in his hand, put his umbrella on the floor, and tasted it again, passing his hand placidly across his stomach twice or thrice; he then drank the whole at a breath, and smacking his lips, held out the tumbler for more.

Nor was Mrs. Weller behindhand in doing justice to the composition. The good lady began by protesting that she couldn't touch a drop—then took a small drop—then a large drop—and then a great many drops; and her feelings being of the nature of those substances which are powerfully affected by the application of strong waters, she dropped a tear with every drop of negus, and so got on melting the feelings down, until at length she had arrived at a very pathetic and decent pitch of misery.

The elder Mr. Weller observed these signs and tokens with many manifestations of disgust, and when, after a second lug of
of

the same, Mr. Stiggins began to sigh in a
dismal manner, he plainly evinced his dis-
appreciation of the whole proceeding by
sumptuous incense and ruminating over the
word which frequent angry repetitions of
the word "gamin" were alone dismis-
sable to the ear.

"I'll tell you what it is, Samivel, my
boy," whispered the old gentleman into his
son's ear after a long and steadfast contem-
plation of his lady and Mr. Stiggins; "I
think there must be something wrong in
your mother-in-law's inside, as well as in
that o' the red-nosed man."

"Wot do you mean?" said Sam.

"I mean this here, Sammy," replied the
old gentleman, "that wot they drink don't
seem to nourish to 'em; it all turns to
warm water at vapoour, and comes a' pourin'
pus in their eyes. 'Pend upon it, Sammy, it's
a constitutional infinity."

Mr. Weller delivered this scientific opin-
ion with many confirmatory frowns and
nods, which Mrs. Weller remarking, and
concluding that they bore some disparaging
reference either to herself or to Mr. Stig-
gins, or to both, was on the point of becom-
ing infinitely worse, when Mr. Stiggins,
getting on his legs as well as he could,
proceeded to deliver an edifying discourse
for the benefit of the company, but more
especially of Mr. Samuel, whom he adjured,
in moving terms, to be upon his guard in
that sink of iniquity into which he was
cast; to abstain from all hypocrisy and
pride of heart; and to take in all things
exact pattern and copy by him (Stiggins),
in which case he might calculate on arriv-
ing sooner or later at the comfortable con-
clusion that, like him, he was a most esti-
mate and blameless character, and that all
his acquaintance and friends were hopelessly
abandoned and profligate wretches; which
consideration, he said, could not but afford
him the liveliest satisfaction.

He furthermore conjured him to avoid,
above all things, the vice of intoxication,
which he likened unto the filthy habits of
swine, and to those poisonous and baleful
drugs which being chewed in the mouth
are said to filch away the memory. At this
point of his discourse the reverend and red-
nosed gentleman became singularly inco-
herent, and staggering to and fro in the
excitement of his eloquence, was fain to
catch at the back of a chair to preserve his
perpendicular.

Mr. Stiggins did not desire his hearers
to be upon their guard against those false
prophets and wretched mockers of religion,
who, without sense to expound its first doc-
trine, or hearts to feel its first principles,
are more dangerous members of society
than the common criminal: imposing as
they necessarily do upon the weakest and
worst-informed natures, casting scorn and
contempt on what should be held most sa-
cred, and bringing into partial disrepute
large bodies of virtuous and well-conducted
persons of many excellent sects and per-
suasions; but as he leaned over the back of
the chair for a considerable time, and clos-
ing one eye, winked a good deal with the
other, it is presumed that he thought it all,
but kept it to himself.

During the delivery of this oration, Mrs.
Weller sobbed and wept at the end of the
paragraphs, while Sam, sitting cross-legged
on a chair, and resting his arm on the top-
rail, regarded the speaker with great sus-
vity and blandness of demeanour, occasion-
ally bestowing a look of recognition on the
old gentleman, who was delighted at the
beginning, and went to sleep about half-
way.

"Bravo! very pretty!" said Sam, when
the red-nosed man having finished, pulled
his worn gloves on, thereby thrusting his
fingers through the broken tops till the
knuckles were disclosed to view—"Very
pretty."

"I hope it may do you good, Samuel," said Mrs. Weller, solemnly.

"I think it will, mum," replied Sam.

"I wish I could hope that it would do
your father good," said Mrs. Weller.

"Thankes, my dear," said Mr. Weller,
senior. "How do you find yourself arter
it, my love?"

"Scoffer!" exclaimed Mrs. Weller.

"Benighted man!" said the reverend Mr.
Stiggins.

"If I don't get no better light than that
'ere moonshine o' your'n, my worthy cree-
tur," said the elder Mr. Weller, "it's very
likely as I shall continue to be a night
coach till I'm off the road altogether.
Now, Mrs. We, if the piebald stands at
livery much longer, he'll stand at nothin'
as we go back, and p'raps that 'ere harm
cheer'll be tipped over into some hedge
or another, with the shepherd in it."

At this supposition the reverend Mr.
Stiggins, in evident consternation, gathered
up his hat and umbrella, and proposed an
immediate departure, to which Mrs. Weller
assented. Sam walked with them to the
lodge gate, and took a dutiful leave.

"A-do, Samivel," said the old gentle-
man.

"Wot's a-do?" inquired Sam.

"Veil, good bye, then," said the old
gentleman.

"Oh, that's wot you 're a' aimin' is it?" said Sam. "Good bye, old double vicket."

"Sammey," whispered Mr. Weller, look-
ing cautiously round; "my duty to your
gov'ner, and tell him if he thinks better o'
this here bin's, to com-monoonite with me. Me and a cabinet-maker has dewised a plan for gettin' him out. A planner, Samivel—a planner!" said Mr. Weller, striking his son on the chest, with the back of his hand, and falling back a step or two.

"Wot do you mean?" said Sam.

"A planner forty, Samivel," rejoined Mr. Weller, in a still more mysterious manner, "as he can have on hire; van as won't play, Sammy."

"And wot 'ud be the goad o' that?" said Sam.

"Let him send to my friend, the cabnet-maker, to fetch it back, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller. "Are you awake, now?"

"No," rejoined Sam.

"There ain't no wurks in it," whispered his father. "It 'll hold him easy, with his hat and shoes on; and breathe through the legs, vich is holier. Have a passage ready taken for Merrick. The 'Merrick govenment will never give him up, ven wunse they finds as he's got money to spend, Sammy. Let the governer stop there till Mrs. Bardell's dead, or Mr. Dodson and Fogg's hung, vich last event I think is the most likely to happen first, Sammy; ven then let him come back and write a book about the 'Merrickins as'll pay all his expenses and more, if he blows 'em up enough."

Mr. Weller delivered this hurried abstract of his plot with great vehemence of whisper, and then, as if fearful of weakening the effect of the tempestuous communication by any further dialogue, gave the coachman's salute, and vanished.

Sam had scarcely recovered his usual composure of countenance, which had been greatly disturbed by the abrupt communications of his respected relative, when Mr. Pickwick accosted him.

"Sam," said that gentleman, "Sir," replied Mr. Weller. "I am going for a walk round the prison, and I wish you to attend me. I see a prisoner we know coming this way, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

"Vich, Sir?" inquired Mr. Weller; "the gen'm'mn vith the head o' hair, or the interestin' captive in the stockin's?"

"Neither," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "He is an older friend of yours, Sam."

"O' mine, Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Weller. "You recollect the gentleman very well, I dare say, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, "or else you are more unmindful of your old acquaintances than I think you are. Here is not a word, Sam—not a syllable. Here he is."

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, Jingle walked up. He looked less miserable than before, being clad in a half-worn suit of clothes, which, with Mr. Pickwick's assistance, had been released from the pawnbroker's. He wore clean linen, too, and had had his hair cut. He was very pale and thin, however; and, as he crept slowly up, leaning on a stick, it was easy to see that he had suffered severely from illness and want, and was still very weak. He took off his hat as Mr. Pickwick saluted him, and seemed much humbled and abashed at sight of Sam Weller.

Following close at his heels, came Mr. Job Trotter, in the catalogue of whose vices, want of faith and attachment to his companion could, at all events, find no place. He was still ragged and squallid, but his face was not quite so hollow as on his first meeting with Mr. Pickwick a few days before. As he took off his hat to our benevolent old friend, he murmured some broken expressions of gratitude, and muttered something about having been saved from starvation.

"Well, well," said Mr. Pickwick, impatiently interrupting him, "you can follow with Sam. I want to speak to you, Mr. Jingle. Can you walk without his arm?"

"Certainly, Sir—all ready—not too fas'—legs shaky—head queer—round and round—earthquaky sort of feeling—very."

"Here, give me your arm," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No, no," replied Jingle; "won't in deed—rather not."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Pickwick; "leav upon me, I desire, Sir."

Seeing that he was confused and agitated and uncertain what to do, Mr. Pickwick cut the matter short by drawing the inva-lid stroller's arm through his, and leading him away without saying another word about it.

During the whole of this time, the conse-nance of Mr. Samuel Weller had exhibited an expression of the most overwhelm-ing and absorbing astonishment that the imagination can portray. After looking from Job to Jingle, and from Jingle to Job in profound silence, he softly ejaculated the words, "Well, I am damned!" which he repeated at least a score of times, after which exertion he appeared wholly bereft of speech, and again cast his eyes, first upon the one and then upon the other, in mute perplexity and bewilderment.

"Now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, looking back.

"I'm a comin', Sir," replied Mr. Weller, mechanically following his master; and still he lifted not his eyes from Mr. Job Trotter, who walked at his side in silence.

Job kept his eyes fixed on the ground for some time, and Sam with his gazed to Job's could not see or speak against the people who
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were walking above, and felt over little children, and stumbled against steps and railings, without appearing at all sensible of it, until Job, looking stealthily up, and seeing the garden gate, exclaimed:

"How do you do, Mr. Weller?"

"It is him!" exclaimed Sam; and having established Job’s identity beyond all doubt, he smote his leg, and vented his feelings in a long shrill whistle.

"Things has altered with me, Sir," said Job.

"I should think they had," exclaimed Mr. Weller, surveying his companion’s rags with undisguised wonder. "This is rather a change for the worse, Mr. Trotter, as the gentry’s ven he got two doubtful shillin’s and sixpenn’orth o’ pocket-pieces for a good half-crown."

"It is, indeed," replied Job, shaking his head. "There is no deception now, Mr. Weller. Tears," said Job, with a look of maimed unwittiness—"tears are not the only proofs of distress, nor the best ones."

"No, they ain’t," replied Sam, expressively.

"They may be put on, Mr. Weller," said Job.

"I know they may," said Sam; "some people, indeed, has ‘em always ready laid on, and can pull out the plug whenever they like."

"Yes," replied Job; "but these sort of things are not so easily counterfeited, Mr. Weller, and it is a more painful process to get them up." As he spoke, he pointed to his sallow, sunken cheeks, and, drawing up his coat-sleeve, disclosed an arm which looked as if the bone could be broken at a touch, so sharp and brittle did it appear beneath its thin covering of flesh.

"Wot have you been a doin’ to yourself?" said Sam, recolling.

"Nothing," replied Job.

"Nothing," echoed Sam.

"I have been doing nothing for many weeks past," said Job; "and eating and drinking almost as little."

Sam took one comprehensive glance at Mr. Trotter’s thin face and wretched apparel, and then seizing him by the arm, commenced dragging him away with great violence.

"Where are you going, Mr. Weller?" said Job, vainly struggling in the powerful grasp of his old enemy.

"Come on," said Sam; "come on." He designed no further explanation till they reached the tap, and then called for a pot of porter, which was speedily produced.

"Now," said Sam, "drink that up ev’ry drop on it; and then turn the pot upside down, to let me see as you’ve took the medicine."

"But, my dear Mr. Weller," remonstrated Job.

"Down with it," said Sam, peremptorily.

Thus admonished, Mr. Trotter raised the pot to his lips; and, by gentle and almost imperceptible degrees, tilted it into the sir. He paused once, and only once, to draw a long breath, but without raising his face from the vessel, which, in a few moments thereafter he held out at arm’s length, bottom upwards. Nothing fell upon the ground but a few particles of froth, which slowly detached themselves from the rim and trickled basely down.

"Veel done," said Sam. "How do you find yourself arter it?"

"Better, Sir. I think I am better," responded Job.

"O’ course you air," said Sam, argumentatively. "It’s like puttin’ gas in a balloon; I can see with the naked eye that you gets stouter under the operation. Wot do you say to another o’ the same di-mensions?"

"I would rather not, I am much obliged to you, Sir," replied Job—"much rather not."

"Veel, then, wot do you say to some wittles?" inquired Sam.

"Thanks to your worthy governor, Sir," said Mr. Trotter, "we have half a leg of mutton, baked, at a quarter before three, with the potatoes under it, to save boil-

"Wot! Has he been a putridgin’ for you?" asked Sam, emphatically.

"He has, Sir," replied Job. "More than that, Mr. Weller; my master being very ill, he get us a room—we were in a kennel before—and paid for it, Sir; and come to look at us at night when nobody should know. Mr. Weller," said Job, with real tears in his eyes for once, "I could serve that gentleman till I fell down dead at his feet."

"I say," said Sam, "I’ll trouble you, my friend—none o’ that."

Job Trotter looked amazed.

"None o’ that, I say, young feller," repeated Sam, firmly. "No vain serves him but me. And now we’re upon it, I’ll let you into another secret besides that," said Sam, as he paid for the beer. "I never heerd, mind you, nor read of in story-books, nor see in pictures, any angel in tights and gaiters—not even in spectacles, as I remember, though that may ha’ been done for any thin’ I know to the contrary; but mark my words, Job Trotter, he’s a reg’lar thorough-bred angel for all that; and let me see the man as went up to tell me he knows a better vun."

With this defiance Mr. Weller buttoned up his change in a side pocket; and, with many confirmatory
made and gesture by the way; proceeded in search of the subject of discourse.

They found Mr. Pickwick in company with Jingle, talking very earnestly, and not bestowing a look on the groups who were congregated on the racket-ground; they were very motley groups too, and well worth the looking at, if it were only in idle curiosity.

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, as Sam and his companion draw nigh, "you will see how your health becomes, and think about it meanwhile. Make the statement out for me when you feel yourself equal to the task, and I will discuss the subject with you when I have considered it. Now go to your room. You are tired, and not strong enough to be out long."

Mr. Alfred Jingle, without one spark of his old animation—with nothing even of the diurnal gaiety which he had assumed when Mr. Pickwick first stumbled on him in his misery, bowed low without speaking, and motioning to Job not to follow him just yet, crept slowly away.

"Curious scene this, is it not, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking good-humouredly round.

"Very much so, Sir," replied Sam. "Vonders will never cease," added Sam, speaking to himself. "I'm very much mistaken if that 'ere Jingle won't a' don' somethin' in the vates-cart way!"

The area formed by the wall in that part of the Fleeet in which Mr. Pickwick stood, was just wide enough to make a good racket court, one side being formed, of course, by the wall itself, and the other by that portion of the prison which looked (or rather would have looked, but for the wall) towards St. Paul's Cathedral. Sauntering or sitting about, in every possible attitude of listless idleness, were a great number of debtors; the major part of whom were waiting in prison until their day of "going up" before the Insolvent Court should arrive, while others had been remanded for various terms, which they were idling away as they best could. Some were shabby, some were smart, many dirty, a few clean; but there they all lounged, and loitered, and slunk about, with as little spirit or purpose as the beasts in a menagerie.

Lolling from the windows which commanded a view of this promenade were a number of persons; some in noisy conversation with their acquaintance below; others playing at ball with some adventurous throwers outside; and others looking on at the racket-players, or watching the boys as they cried the game. Dirty slipshod women passed and re-passed on their way to the cooking house in one corner of the yard; children screamed, and fought, and played together, in another; the tumbling of the skittles, and the shouts of the players, mingled perpetually with these and a hundred other sounds; and all was noise and tumult—save in a little miserable shed a few yards off, where there lay, all quiet and ghastly, the body of the Chancery prisoner who had died the night before, awaiting the mockery of an inquest. The body! It is the lawyer's term for the restless whirling mass of cares and anxieties, affections, hopes, and griefs, that make up the living man. The law had his body, and there it lay, clothed in grave-clothes, an awful witness to its tender mercy.

"Would you like to see a whistling-shop, Sir?" inquired Job Trotter.

"What do you mean?" was Mr. Pickwick's counter inquiry.

"A visitin'-shop, Sir," interposed Mr. Weller.

"What is that, Sam?—A bird-fancier's?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your heart, no, Sir," replied Job; "a whistling-shop, Sir, is where they sell spirits." Mr. Job Trotter briefly explained here, that all persons being prohibited under heavy penalties from conveying spirits into debtors' prisons, and such commodities being highly prized by the ladies and gentlemen confined therein, it had occurred to some speculative turnkey to contrive, for certain lucrative considerations, at two or three prisoners retaining the favourite article of gin, for their own profit and advantage.

"This plan, you see, Sir, has been gradually introduced into all the prisons for debt," said Mr. Trotter.

"And it has this very great advantage," said Sam, "that the turnkeys takes very good care to seize hold o' ev'ry body but them as pays 'em, that attempts the wilful, and ven it gets in the papers they're applauded for their vigilance; so it cuts two ways—frightens other people from the trade, and elevates their own characters."

"Exactly so, Mr. Weller," observed Job. "Well, but are these rooms never searched to ascertain whether any spirits are concealed in them?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Cert'ny they are, Sir," replied Sam; "but the turnkeys knows beforehand, and gives the word to the vistlers, and you may vistle for it ven you go to look."

By this time, Job had tapped at a door, which was opened by a gentleman with an uncombed head, who bolted it after them when they had walked in, and grinned; upon which Job grinned, and Sam also; whereupon Mr. Pickwick, thinking it might be expected of him, kept on smiling till the end of the interview.

The gentleman with the uncombed head
appeared quite satisfied with this mute announcement of their business; and producing a large bottle, which might hold a gallon of quarts, from beneath his bedstead, he filled out three glasses of gin, which Job Trotter and Sam disposed of in a most workmanlike manner.

"Any more?" said the whistling gentleman.

"No more," replied Job Trotter.

Mr. Pickwick paid; the door was unbolted, and out they came; the uncombed gentleman bestowing a friendly nod upon Mr. Roker, who happened to be passing at the moment.

From this spot, Mr. Pickwick wandered along all the galleries, up and down all the staircases, and once again round the whole area of the yard. The great body of the prison population appeared to be Mivins and Smangle, and the parson, and the butcher, and the leg, over and over, and over again. There was the same aqualor, the same turmoil and noise, the same general characteristics in every corner; in the best and the worst alike. The whole place seemed restless and troubled; and the people were crowding and fritting to and fro, like the shadows in an uneasy dream.

"I have seen enough," said Mr. Pickwick, as he threw himself into a chair in his little apartment. "My head-saches with these scenes, and my heart too. Henceforth I will be a prisoner in my own room."

And Mr. Pickwick steadfastly adhered to this determination. For three long months he remained shut up all day, only stealing out at night to breathe the air when the greater part of his fellow-prisoners were in bed, or carousing in their rooms. His health was evidently beginning to suffer from the closeness of the confinement, but neither the often-repeated entreaties of Pecker and his friends, nor the still more frequently repeated warnings and admonitions of Mr. Samuel Weller, could induce him to alter one jot of his inflexible resolution.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Records a touching act of delicate feeling, not unmixed with pleasantry, achieved and performed by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg.

It was within a week of the close of the month of July, that a hackney cabriolet, number unrecorded, was seen to proceed at a rapid pace up Goswell-street; three people were squeezed into it besides the driver, who sat, of course, in his own particular little dickey at the side; over the apron were hung twoshawls, belonging in all appearance to two small vixenish-looking ladies under the apron, between whose compressed into a very small compass, there was twined away a gentleman of heavy and subdued demeanour, who, whenever he ventured to make an observation, was snapped up short, by one of the vixenish ladies before-mentioned. Lastly, the two vixenish ladies and the heavy gentleman were giving the driver contradictory directions, all tending to the one point, that he should stop at Mrs. Bardell’s door, which the heavy gentleman in direct opposition to, and defiance of, the vixenish ladies, contended was a green door and not a yellow one.

"Stop at the house with the green door, driver," said the heavy gentleman.

"Oh! you perverse creature!" exclaimed one of the vixenish ladies. "Drive to the ‘ouse with the yellow door, cabbin!

Upon this the cabman, who in a sudden effort to pull up at the house with the green door, had pulled the horse up so high that he nearly pulled him backwards into the cabriolet, let the animal’s fore legs down to the ground again, and paused.

"Now vere am I to pull up!" inquired the driver. "Settle it among yourselves. All I ask is, vera."

Here the contest was renewed with increased violence, and the horse being troubled with a fly on his nose, the cabman humbly employed his leisure in lashing him about the head, on the counter-irritation principle.

"Most verses carries the day," said one of the vixenish ladies at length. "The ‘ouse with the yellow, cabbin!"

But after the cabriolet had dashed up in splendid style to the house with the yellow door, "making," as one of the vixenish ladies triumphantly said, "actetally more noise than if one had come in one’s own carriage"—and after the driver had dismounted to assist the ladies in getting out, the small round head of Master Thomas Bardell was thrust out of the one pair window of a house with a red door a few numbers off.

"Aggravatin’ thing," said the vixenish lady last mentioned, darting a withering glance at the heavy gentleman.

"My dear, it’s not my fault," said the gentleman.

"Don’t talk to me, you creetur, don’t," retorted the lady. "The house with the red door, cabbin. Oh! if ever a woman was troubled with a ruffianly creetur, that takes a pride and pleasure in disgracing his wife on every possible occasion afore strangers, I am that woman."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself
“Raddles," said the other little woman, who was no other than Mrs. Clippins.

“Now have I been doing of 11 asked Mrs. Raddle.

“Don’t talk to me, don’t, you brute, for hear I should be permolled to forget my sect and strike you,” said Mrs. Raddle.

While this dialogue was going on, the driver was most ignominiously leading the horse by the bridle up to the house with the red door, which Master Bardell had already opened. Here was a mean and low way of arriving at a friend’s house!—no dusting up with all the fire and fury of the animal, no jumping down of the driver and loud knocking at the door, no opening of the sproon with a crash at the very last moment for fear of the ladies sitting in a drawing-room, and then the man handling the sproon out afterwards, as if he were a private constable. The whole edge of the thing had been taken off; it was flatter than a wriggling.

“Saw, Tommy,” said Mrs. Clippins, “how’s your poor dear mother?”

“Oh, she’s very well,” replied Master Bardell. “She’s in the front parlour—all ready. I’m ready too, I am.” Here Master Bardell put his hands into his pockets, and jumped off and on the bottom step of the door.

“Is anybody else a goin’, Tommy?” said Mrs. Clippins, arranging her pelerine.

“Mrs. Sanders is going, she is,” replied Tommy. “I’m a goin’ too, I am!”

“Dear the boys,” said little Mrs. Clippins.

“Has n’t anybody but himself. Here Tommy dear.”

“Well,” said Master Bardell.

“Who else is a goin’, lovely?” said Mrs. Clippins, in an interesting manner.

“Oh! Mrs. Rogers is a goin’,” replied Master Bardell, opening his eyes very wide as he delivered the intelligence.

“What! The lady as has taken the lodgings!” ejaculated Mrs. Clippins.

Master Bardell put his hands further down into his pockets, and nodded exactly thirty-five times, to imply that it was the lady lodger, and no other.

“Bravo us,” said Mrs. Clippins. “It’s quite a party.”

“Ah, if you knew what was in the cupboard, you’d see so,” replied Master Bardell.

“What is there, Tommy?” said Mrs. Clippins, curiously. “You’ll tell me, Tommy, I know.”

“No, I won’t,” replied Master Bardell, shaking his head, and applying himself to the bottom step again.

“Dare the child!” mumbled Mrs. Clippins. “What a prowlin’ little wretch it is! Come, Tommy, tell your dear Clippy.”

“Mother said I wasn’t to,” rejoined Master Bardell. “I’m a goin’ to have some, I am.” Cheered by this prospect, the precocious boy applied himself to his infantile tread-mill with increased vigour.

The above examination of a child of tender years, took place while Mr. and Mrs. Raddle and the cab-driver were having an altercation concerning the fire, which terminated at this point in favor of the cabman, Mrs. Raddle came up tottering.

“Look, Mary Ann! what’s the matter!” said Mrs. Clippins.

“It’s put me all over in such a tremble, Betsey,” replied Mrs. Raddle. “Raddle ain’t like a man; he leaves every thing to me.”

This was scarcely fair upon the unfortunate Mr. Raddle, who had been thrust aside by his good lady in the commencement of the dispute, and peremptorily commanded to hold his tongue. He had no opportunity of defending himself, however, for Mrs. Raddle gave unequivocal signs of fainting; which being perceived from the parlour window, Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, the lodger, and the lodger’s servant, darted precipitately out, and conveyed her into the house, all talking at the same time, and giving utterance to various expressions of pity and condolence, as if she were one of the most suffering mortals on earth.

Being conveyed into the front parlour, she was there deposited on a sofa: and the lady from the first floor, running up to the first floor, returned with a bottle of sal volatile, which, holding Mrs. Raddle tight round the neck, she applied in all womanly kindness and pity to her nose, until that lady with many plunges and struggles was fain to declare herself decidedly better.

“Ah, poor thing!” said Mrs. Rogers, “I know what her feelings is too well.”

“Ah, poor thing! so do I,” said Mrs. Sanders: and then all the ladies moaned in unison, and said they knew what it was, and they pitied her from their hearts, they did; even the lodger’s little servant, who was thirteen years old, and three feet high, murmured her sympathy.

“But what’s been the matter?” said Mrs. Bardell.

“Ah, what has decomposed you, ma’am?” inquired Mrs. Rogers.

“I have been a good deal furried,” replied Mrs. Raddle, in a reproachful manner. Thereupon the ladies cast indignant looks at Mr. Raddle.

“Why, the fact is,” said that unhappy gentleman, stepping forward, “when we alighted at the door, a dispute arose with the driver of the cabriolet——” A loud memento from his wife at the mention of this word, rendered all further explanation inaudible.
"You'd better leave us to bring her round, Raddle," said Mrs. Cluppins. "She'll never get better as long as you're here."

All the ladies concurred in this opinion; so Mr. Raddle was pushed out of the room, and requested to give himself an airing in the back yard, which he did for about a quarter of an hour, when Mrs. Bardell announced to him, with a solemn face, that he might come in now, but that he must be very careful how he behaved towards his wife. She knew he didn't mean to be unkind; but Mary Ann was very far from strong, and, if he didn't take care he might lose her when he least expected it, which would be a very dreadful reflection for him afterwards, and so on. All this, Mr. Raddle heard with great submission, and presently returned to the parlour in a most lamb-like manner.

"Well, Mrs. Rogers, Ma'am," said Mrs. Bardell, "you've never been introduced, I declare. Mr. Raddle, Ma'am; Mrs. Cluppins, Ma'am; Mrs. Raddle, Ma'am."

"Which is Mrs. Cluppins's sister," suggested Mrs. Sanders.

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Rogers graciously; — for she was the lodger, and her servant was in waiting, so she was more gracious than intimate in right of her position. "Oh, indeed."

Mrs. Raddle smiled sweetly; Mr. Raddle bowed, and Mrs. Cluppins said "she was sure she was very happy to have an opportunity of being known to a lady which she had heard so much in favour of, as Mrs. Rogers" — a compliment which the last-named lady acknowledged with grateful condescension.

"Well, Mr. Raddle," said Mrs. Bardell; "I'm sure you ought to feel very much honoured at you and Tommy being the only gentlemen to escort so many ladies all the way to the Spaniard at Hampstead. Don't you think he ought, Mrs. Rogers, Ma'am?"

"Oh, certainly, Ma'am," replied Mrs. Rogers; after whom all the other ladies responded "Oh, certainly."

"Of course I feel it, Ma'am," said Mr. Raddle, rubbing his hands, and evincing a slight tendency to brighten up a little. "Indeed, to tell you the truth, I said as we were coming along in the cabriolet."

At the recapitulation of the word which evinced so many painful recollections, Mrs. Raddle applied her handkerchief to her eyes again, and uttered a half-suppressed scream; so that Mrs. Bardell frowned upon Mr. Raddle to intimate that he had better not say any thing more; and desired Mrs. Rogers's servant, with an air, to "put the wine on."

This was the signal for displaying the hidden treasures of the closet, which were sundry plates of oranges and biscuits, and a bottle of old-cries port — that at one and pipes — with another of the celebrated East India sherry at fourteen pence, which was all produced in honour of the lodger, and afforded unlimited satisfaction to everybody. After great consternation had been excited in the mind of Mrs. Cluppins, by an attempt on the part of Tommy to recount how he, had been cross-examined regarding the spool then in action, (which was fortunately nipped in the bud by his imbibing half a glass of the old-cries "the wrong way," and thereby endangering his life for some seconds,) the party walked forth in quest of a Hampstead stage. This was soon found, and in a couple of hours they all arrived safely at the Spaniard tea-garden, where the luckless Mr. Raddle's very first act nearly occasioned his good lady a relapse, it being more than her heart to order tea for himself; whereas (as the ladies one and all remarked), what would have been easier than for Tommy to have drunk out of anybody's cup, or everybody's, if that was all, when the waiter wasn't looking, which would have saved one head of tea, and the tea just as good!

However, there was no help for it, and the tea-tray came with seven mugs and success, and bread and butter on the same scale. Mrs. Bardell was unanimously voted into the chair, and Mrs. Rogers being stationed on her right hand, and Mrs. Raddle on her left, the meal proceeded with great merriment and success.

"How sweet the country is! to be sure!" sighed Mrs. Rogers: "I almost wish I lived in it always."

"Oh, you wouldn't like that, Ma'am," replied Mrs. Bardell: rather hastily; for it was not at all advisable, with reference to the lodgings, to encourage such notions; "you wouldn't like it, Ma'am."

"Oh! I should think you was a deal too lively and sought after, to be content with the country, Ma'am," said little Mrs. Cluppins.

"Perhaps I am, Ma'am. Perhaps I am," sighed the first-floor lodger.

"For lone people as have got nobody to care for them; or take care of them, or as have been hurt in their mind, or that kind of thing," observed Mr. Raddle, plucking up a little cheerfulness and looking round, "the country is all very well. The country for a wounded spirit, they say."

Now, of all things in the world that the unfortunate man could have said, any would have been preferable to this. Of course Mrs. Bardell burst into tears, and requested to be carried from the table instantly, upon
which the affectionate child began to cry too, most dismally.

"Would anybody believe, Ma'am," exclaimed Mrs. Raddle, turning fiercely to the first-floor lodger, "that a woman could be married to such a manifest creeper, which can tamper with a woman's feelings as he does, every hour in the day, Ma'am!"

"My dear," remonstrated Mr. Raddle, "I didn't mean any thing, my dear!"

"You didn't mean, Sir?" repeated Mrs. Raddle, with great scorn and contempt. "Go away. I can't bear the sight of you, you brute!"

"You must not flatter yourself, Mary Ann," interposed Mr. Clippings. "You really must consider yourself, my dear, which you never do. Now go away, Raddle, there's a good soul, or you'll only aggravate her."

"You had better take your tea by yourself, Mr. Raddle," said Mrs. Rogers, again applauding the smelling-bottle.

Mrs. Sanders, who, according to custom, was very busy at the bread and butter, expressed the same opinion, and Mr. Raddle quietly retired.

After this there was a great hoisting up of Mr. Bardell, who was rather a large size for hugging, into his mother's arms, in which operation he got his boots in the tea-board, and occasioned some confusion among the cups and saucers. But that description of fainting fits, which is contagious among ladies, seldom lasts long, so when he had been well kissed and a little cried over, Mrs. Bardell recovered, set him down again, wondered how she could have been so foolish, and poured out some more tea.

It was at this moment that the sound of approaching wheels was heard, and that the ladies, looking up, saw a huckster's cart stop at the garden-gate.

"More company!" said Mrs. Sanders.

"It's a gentleman," said Mrs. Raddle.

"Well, if it ain't Mr. Jackson, the young man from Dodson and Fogg's," cried Mr. Bardell. "Why, gracious! Surely Mr. Pickwick can't have paid the damages!"

"Or offered marriage," said Mrs. Clippings.

"Dear me, how slow the gentleman is," exclaimed Mrs. Rogers: "why doesn't he make haste?"

At this the lady spoke these words, Mr. Jackson turned from the coach where he had been addressing some observations to a shabbily-dressed man in black leggings, who had just emerged from the vehicle with a thick ash stick in his hand, and made his way to the place where the ladies were seated; winding his hair round the brim of his hat as he came along.

"Is any thing the matter? Has any thing taken place, Mr. Jackson?" said Mrs. Bardell, eagerly.

"Nothing whatever, Ma'am," replied Mr. Jackson. "How do you, ladies? I have to ask pardon, ladies, for intruding—but the law, ladies—the law." With this apology, Mr. Jackson smiled, made a comprehensive bow, and gave his hair another wind. Mrs. Rogers whispered Mrs. Raddle that he was really an elegant young man.

"I called in Goswell street," resumed Jackson, "and hearing that you were here, from the slavey, took a coach and came on. Our people want you down in the city directly, Mrs. Bardell."

"Lor!" ejaculated that lady, starting at the sudden nature of the communication. "Yes," said Jackson, biting his lip. "It's very important and pressing business, which can't be postponed on any account. Indeed, Dodson expressly said so to me, and so did Fogg. I've kept the coach on purpose for you to go back in."

"How very strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

The ladies agreed that it was very strange, but were unanimously of opinion that it must be very important, or Dodson and Fogg would never have sent; and further, that the business being urgent, she ought to repair to Dodson and Fogg's without any delay.

There was a certain degree of pride and importance about being wanted by one's lawyers in such a monstrous hurry, that was by no means displeasing to Mrs. Bardell, especially as it might be reasonably supposed to enhance her consequence, in the eyes of the first-floor lodger. She simmered a little, affected extreme vexation and hesitation, and at last arrived at the conclusion that she supposed she must go.

"But won't you refresh yourself after your walk, Mr. Jackson?" said Mrs. Bardell persuasively.

"Why, really there ain't much time to lose," replied Jackson; "and I've got a friend here," he continued, looking towards the man with the ash stick.

"Oh, ask your friend to come here, Sir," said Mrs. Bardell. "Pray ask your friend here, Sir."

"Why thankns, I'd rather not," said Mr. Jackson, with some embarrassment of manner. "He's not much used to ladies' society, and it makes him bashful. If you'll order the master to deliver him any thing short, he won't drink it off at once, won't he?—only try him." Mr. Jackson's fingers wandered playfully round his nose at
THAT portion of his discourse, to war his
hearsers that he was speaking ironically.

The waiter was at once despatched to
the bashful gentleman, and the bashful
gentleman took something; Mr. Jackson
also took something, and the ladies took
something for hospitality's sake. Mr. Jack-
son then said that he was afraid it was time
to go; upon which Mrs. Sanders, Mrs.
Clappins, and Tommy (who it was arranged
should accompany Mrs. Bardell), leaving
the others to Mr. Raddle's protection, got
into the coach.

"Isaac," said Jackson, as Mrs. Bardell
prepared to get in: looking up at the man
with the ash stick, who was seated on the
box, smoking a cigar.

"Well."

"This is Mrs. Bardell."

"Oh, I know'd that, long ago," said the
man.

Mrs. Bardell got in, Mr. Jackson got in
after her, and away they drove. Mrs.
Bardell could not help ruminating on what
Mr. Jackson's friend had said. Shrewd
creatures, these lawyers: Lord bless us,
how they find people out!

"Sad thing about these costs of our peo-
ple's, ain't it," said Jackson, when Mrs.
Clappins and Mrs. Sanders had fallen
asleep; "your bill of costs I mean."

"I'm very sorry they can't get them,"
replied Mrs. Bardell. "But if you law
gentleman do these things on speculation,
why you must get a loss now and then, you
know."

"You gave them a cognovit for the
amount of your costs after trial, I am told,"
said Jackson.

"Yes, just as a matter of form," re-
plied Mrs. Bardell.

"Certainly," replied Jackson, drily.

"Quite a matter of form. Quite."

On they drove, and Mrs. Bardell fell
asleep. She was awakened after some
time by the stopping of the coach.

"Bless us!" said the lady, "are we at
Freeman's Court?"

"We're not quite so far," replied Jack-
son. "Have the goodness to step out."

Mrs. Bardell, not yet thoroughly awake,
complied. It was a curious place—a large
hall with a gate in the middle, and a gas-
light burning inside.

"Now, ladies," cried the man with the
ash stick, looking into the coach, and shak-
ing Mrs. Sanders to wake her, "Come.
"Reas the friend, Mrs. Sanders alighted.

Mrs. Bardell, leaning on Jackson's arm,
and leading Tommy by the hand, had al-
dready entered the porch. They followed.

The roses; they turned into, was even
more odd-looking than the porch. Such a
number of men standing about! And they
started so!

"What place is this?" inquired Mrs.
Bardell, pausing.

"Only one of our public offices," re-
piled Jackson, hurrying her through a door,
and looking round to see that the other
women were following. "Look sharp, Isaac."

"Safe and sound," replied the man with
the ash stick. The door swung heavily
after them, and they descended a small
flight of steps.

"Here we are at last. All right and
right, Mrs. Bardell!" said Jackson, looking
exultingly round.

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Bar-
dell, with a palpitating heart.

"Just this," replied Jackson, drawing
her a little on one side: "don't be fright-
ened, Mrs. Bardell. There never was a
more delicate man than Dodson, ma'am;
or a more sensible one than Fogg... It
was their duty in the way of business to
take you in execution for them costs; but
they were anxious to spare your feelings as
much as they could. What a comfort it
must be to you to think how it's been
done! This is the Fleet, ma'am. Wish
you good night, Mrs. Bardell. Good night,
Tommy."

As Jackson hurried away in company
with the man with the ash stick, another
man, with a key in his hand, who had been
looking on, led the bewildered female to a
second short flight of steps, leading to a
doorway. Mrs. Bardell screamed violently;
Tommy roared; Mrs. Clappins shrieked
within herself; and Mrs. Sanders made
off, without more ado. For these steadied the
injured Mr. Pickwick, taking his nightly
allowance of air; and beside him leaned
Samuel Weller, who, seeing Mrs. Bardell,
took off his hat in mock reverence, while
his master turned indignant on his head.

"Don't bother the woman," said the
turnkey to Weller; "she's just come in."

"A pr'sner!" said Sam, quickly replacing
his hat. "Who's the plaintives? What
for? Speak up, old fellow."

"Dodson and Fogg," replied the man;
execution on cognovit for costs.

"Here Job, Job," shouted Sam, dashing
into the passage, "run to Mr. Parker's,
Job; I want him directly. I see some
good in this. Here's a game. Hooray!
Vere's the gov'nor!"

But there was no reply to these inquiries,
for Job had started furiously off, the instan-
t he received his commission, and Mrs.
Bardell had fainted in real downright
carnes.
CHAPTER XLVIII.

Is chiefly devoted to matters of business, and the temporal advantage of Dodson and Fogg. Mr. Winkle re-appears under extraordinary circumstances; and Mr. Pickwick’s benevolence proves stronger than his obstinacy.

Jos Trotter, abating nothing of his speed, ran up Holborn, sometimes in the middle of the road, sometimes on the pavement, and sometimes in the gutter, as the chances of getting along varied with the press of men, women, children, and coaches, in each division of the thoroughfare, and, regardless of all obstacles, stopped not for an instant until he reached the gate of Gray’s Inn. Notwithstanding all the expedition he had used, however, the gate had been closed a good half hour when he reached it, and by the time he had discovered Mr. Perker’s laundress, who lived with a married daughter, who had bestowed her hand upon a non-resident waiter, and occupied the one pair of some number, in some street, closely adjoining to some brewery, somewhere behind Gray’s Inn Lane, it was within fifteen minutes of the time of closing the prison for the night. Mr. Lowten had still to be ferreted out from the back parlour of the Magpie and Stump; and Job had scarcely accomplished this object, and communicated Sam Weller’s message, than the clock struck ten.

“‘There,” said Lowten, “it’s too late now. You can’t get in to-night; you’ve got the key of the street, my friend.”

“Never mind me,” replied Job, “I can sleep anywhere. But won’t it be better to see Mr. Perker to-night so that we may be there the first thing in the morning?”

“Why,” responded Lowten, after a little consideration, “if it was in anybody else’s case, Perker wouldn’t be best pleased at my going up to his house, but as it is Mr. Pickwick’s, I think I may venture to take a cab and charge it to the office.” Deciding upon this line of conduct, Mr. Lowten took up his hat, and bemoaning the assembled company to appoint a deputy chairman during his temporary absence, led the way to the nearest coach stand, and summoning the cab of most promising appearance, directed the driver to repair to Montague Place, Russell Square.

Mr. Perker had had a dinner party that day, as was testified by the appearance of lights in the drawing-room windows, the sound of an improved grand piano, and an improved cabinet voice issuing therefrom; and a rather overpowering smell of meat which pervaded the stope and entry. In fact, a couple of very good country agencies happening to come up to town at the same time, an agreeable little party had been got together to meet them, comprising Mr. Snicks, the Life Office Secretary, Mr. Pross, the eminent counsel, three solicitors, one commissioner of bankrupts, a special pleader from the Temple, a small-eyed peremptory young gentleman, his pupil, who had written a lively book about the law of demises, with a vast quantity of marginal notes and references; and several other eminent and distinguished personages. From this society little Mr. Perker detached himself on his clerk being announced in a whisper; and repairing to the dining-room, there found Mr. Lowten and Jos Trotter looking very dim and shadowy by the light of a kitchen candle, which the gentleman who had descended to appear in plash shorts and cottons for a quarterly stipend, had, with a becoming contempt for the clerk and all things appertaining to “the office,” placed upon the table.

“Now, Lowten,” said little Mr. Perker, shutting the door, “what’s the matter? No important letter come in a parcel, is there?”

“No, Sir,” replied Lowten. “This is a messenger from Mr. Pickwick, Sir.”

“From Pickwick, oh?” said the little man, turning quickly to Job. “Well; what is it?”

“Dodson and Fogg have taken Mrs. Bardell in execution for her costs, Sir,” said Job.

“No!” exclaimed Perker, putting his hands in his pockets, and reclining against the sideboard.

“Yes,” said Job. “It seems they got a cognovit out of her for the amount of £8, directly after the trial.”

“By Jove!” said Perker, taking both hands out of his pockets and striking the knuckles of his right against the palm of his left, emphatically, “these are the cleverest scamps I ever had anything to do with!”

“The sharpest practitioners I ever knew, Sir,” observed Lowten.

“Sharp!” echoed Perker. “There’s no knowing where to have them.”

“Very true, Sir, there is not,” replied Lowten; and then both master and man pondered for a few seconds with animated countenances as if they were reflecting upon one of the most beautiful and ingenious discoveries that the intellect of man had ever made. When they had in some measure recovered from their trance of admiration, Job Trotter discharged himself of the rest of his commission. Perker nodded his head thoughtfully, and pulled out his watch.

“At ten, precisely, I will be there,” said the little man. “Sam is quite right. Tell him so. Will you take a glass of wine, Lowten?”

“No, thank you, Sir.”
..."You mean yes, I think," said the little man, turning to the sideboard for a decanter and glasses.

As Lowten did mean yes, he said no more upon the subject, but inquired of Job, in an audible whisper, whether the portrait of Perker, which hung opposite the fireplace, wasn't a wonderful likeness, to which Job of course replied that it was. The wine being by this time poured out, Lowten drank to Mrs. Perker and the children, and Job to Perker. The gentleman in the plush short and cottons considering it no part of his duty to show the people from the office out, consistently declined to answer the bell, and they showed themselves out. The attorney betook himself to his drawing-room, the clerk to the Magpie and Stump, and Job to Covent Garden Market to spend the night in a vegetable basket.

Punctually at the appointed hour next morning the good-humoured little attorney tapped at Mr. Pickwick's door, which was opened with great alacrity by Sam Weller.

"Mr. Perker, Sir," said Sam, announcing the visitor to Mr. Pickwick, who was sitting at the window in a thoughtful attitude. "Very glad you've looked in accidentally, Sir. I rather think the governess wants to have a word and a half with you, Sir."

Perker bestowed 'a look of intelligence upon Sam, intimating that he understood he was not to say he had been sent for; and beckoning him to approach, whispered briefly in his ear.

"'S' don't mean that 'ere, Sir," said Sam, starting back in excessive surprise.

Perker nodded and smiled.

"Mr. Samuel Weller looked at the little lawyer, then at Mr. Pickwick, then at the ceiling, then at Perker again; grinned, laughed outright, and finally, catching up his hat from the carpet, without further explanation disappeared.

"What does this mean?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, looking at Perker with astonishment. "What has put Sam into this most extraordinary state?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," replied Perker. "Come, my dear Sir, draw up your chair to the table. I have a good deal to say to you."

"What papers are those?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, as the little man deposited on the table a small bundle of documents tied with red tape.

"The papers in Darrell and Pickwick," replied Perker, undressing the knot with his teeth.

"Mr. Pickwick placed the legs of his chair against the ground; and throwing himself into it, folded his hands and looked sternly..."
"The lit of his snuff-box, opened it, took a great pinch, shut it up again, and repeated the words: 'With you.'"

"I say, my dear Sir," pursued the little man, with a sidelong glance for the 'snuff;' "I say that her speedy liberation or perpetual imprisonment rests with you, and with your conscience. Hear me out, my dear Sir; if you please, and do not be so very energetic; for it will only put you into a perspiration and do no good whatever."

"I say," continued Pickwick, checking off each position on a different finger, as he laid it down; "I say that nobody but you can rescue her from this den of wretchedness; and that you can only do that, by paying the costs of this suit—born of plaintiff's and defendant's into the hands of these Freeman Court sharks."

"Now, pray be quiet, my dear Sir."

"Mr. Pickwick, whose face had been undergoing most surprising changes during this speech, and who was evidently on the verge of a strong burst of indignation, clamped his wharf as well as he could; and Pickwick, strengthening his argumentative powers with another pinch of snuff, proceeded.

"I have seen the woman this morning. By paying the costs you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages; and further—this I know is a far greater object of consideration with you, my dear Sir—a voluntary statement under her hand, in the form of a letter to me, that this business was, from the very first, fomented and encouraged and brought about by these men, Dodson and Fogg; that she deeply regrets ever having been the instrument of annoyance or injury to you; and that she entreats me to intercede with you, and implore your pardon."

"If I pay her costs for her," said Mr. Pickwick, indigantly; "a valuable document, indeed!"

"No; if in the case, my dear Sir," said Perker, triumphantly. "There is the very letter I speak of. Brought to my office by another woman at nine o'clock this morning, before I had set foot in this place, or held any communication with Mrs. Bardell, upon my honour. And selecting the letter from the bundle, the little lawyer laid it at Mr. Pickwick's elbow, and took snuff for two consecutive minutes without winking.

"Is that all, you have to say to me?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, mildly.

"Not quite," replied Perker. "I cannot undertake to say at this moment, whether the wording of the cognizant, the nature of the conclusions considered, and the proof we can get together about the whole conclusion of the suit, will be sufficient to justify an indictment for conspiracy. I fear not, my dear Sir; they are too clever for that, I doubt. I do mean to say, however, that the whole facts of this case are sufficient to justify you in the minds of all reasonable men. And now, my dear Sir, I put it to you. This one hundred and fifty pounds, or whatever it may be—take it in round numbers—is nothing to you. A jury has decided against you; well, their verdict is wrong, but still they decided as they thought right, and it is against you. You have now an opportunity, on easy terms, of placing yourself in a much higher position than you ever could by remaining here; which would only be imputed by people who didn't know you to have been, dogged, wrong-headed, brutal obstinacy: nothing else, my dear Sir, believe me. Can you hesitate to avail yourself of it, when it restores you to your friends, your old pursuits, your health and amenity? It liberates your faithful and attached servant, whom you otherwise doom to imprisonment for the whole of your life! And above all, when it enables you to take the very unexampled revenge—which I know, my dear Sir, is one after your own heart—of releasing this woman from a scene of misery and debauchery, to which no man should ever be consigned, if he had my will, but the infliction of which, on any female, is frightful and barbarous. Now I ask you, my dear Sir, not only as your legal adviser, but as your very true friend, will you let slip the occasion of obtaining all these objects?"
said Mr. Pickwick. "I am engaged at this moment, Sam."

"But you must pardon, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller. "But here's a lady here, Sir, as says she's somethin' very particular to disclose."

"I can't see any lady," replied Mr. Pickwick, whose mind was filled with visions of Mrs. Bardell.

"I wouldn't make too sure o' that, Sir," urged Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "If you know'd who was near, Sir, I say ther you think you'd change your note; as the hawk remarked to himself with a cheerful laugh, ven he heard the robin redbreast a singin' round the corner."

"Who is it?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Vill you see her, Sir?" asked Mr. Weller, holding the door in his hand, as if he had got some curious live animal on the other side.

"I suppose I must," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at Perker.

"Vell, then, all in to begin," cried Sam.

"Sound the gong, draw up the curtain, and enter the two co-signators." As Sam Weller spoke, he threw the door open, and there rushed tumultuously into the room, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, leading after him by the hand the identical young lady who, at Dingley Dell, had worn the boots with the fur round the tops; and who, now a very pleasing compound of blushes and confusion, and lilac silk, and a smart hat, and a rich lace veil, looked prettier than ever.

"Miss Arabella Allen!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, rising from his chair.

"No," replied Mr. Winkle, dropping on his knees, "Mrs. Winkle. Pardon, my dear friend, pardon."

Mr. Pickwick could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses, and perhaps would not have done so, but for the corroborative testimony afforded by the smiling countenance of Perker, and the bodily presence, in the back ground, of Sam and the pretty housemaid, who appeared to contemplate the proceedings with the liveliest satisfaction.

"Oh, Mr. Pickwick," said Arabella in a low voice, as if alarmed at the silence, "can you forgive my imprudence?"

Mr. Pickwick returned no verbal response to this appeal, but he took off his spectacles in great haste, and seizing both the young lady's hands in his, kissed her a great number of times—perhaps a greater number than was absolutely necessary—and then, still retaining one of her hands, told Mr. Winkle he was an audacious young dog, and made him get up, which Mr. Winkle, who had been for some seconds scratching his nose with the brim of his hat in a penitent manner, did; whereupon, Mr. Pickwick slapped him on the back several times, and then shook hands heartily with Perker, who, not to be behindhand in the compliments of the occasion, saluted both the bride and the pretty housemaid with right good will, and having wrung Mr. Winkle's hand most cordially, wound up the demonstrations of joy, by making such enough to set any half-dozzen men, with ordinarily-constructed noses a meezing for life.

"Why, my dear girl," said Mr. Pickwick, "how has all this come about? Come, sit down, and let me hear it all. How well she looks, doesn't she, Perker?" added Mr. Pickwick, surveying Arabella's face with a look of as much pride and exultation as if she had been his own daughter.

"Delightful, my dear Sir," replied the little man. "If I were not a married man myself, I should be disposed to envy you, you dog, I should." Thus expressing himself, the little lawyer gave Mr. Winkle a poke in the chest, which that gentleman reciprocated; after which they both laughed very loudly, but not so loudly as Mr. Samuel Weller, who had just relieved his feelings by kissing the pretty housemaid under cover of the cupboard-door.

"I can never be grateful enough to you, Sam, I am sure," said Arabella, with the sweetest smile imaginable. "I shall not forget your exertions in the garden at Clifton."

"Don't say nothin' worse about it—Ma'am," replied Sam. "I only assisted natur, Ma'am; as the doctor said to the boy's mother, arter he'd bled him to death."

"Mary, my dear, sit down," said Mr. Pickwick, cutting short these compliments—"Now, then—how long have you been married, ah?"

Arabella looked bashfully at her lord and master, who replied, "Only three days."

"Only three days, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick. "And why, what have you been doing these three months?"

"Ah, to be sure," interposed Perker; "come, account for this idleness. You see Pickwick's only astonishment is, that it wasn't all over months ago."

"Why the fact is," replied Mr. Winkle, looking at his blushing young wife, "that I could not persuade Bella to run away for a long time; and when I had persuaded her, it was a long time more before we could find an opportunity. Mary had to give a month's warning, too, before she could leave her place next door, and we couldn't possibly have done it without her assistance."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mr. Pick
wick, who by this time had resumed his
spectacles, and was looking from Arabella
to Winkle, and from Winkle to Arabella
with as much delight depicted in his coun-
tenance as warm-heartedness and kindly
feeling can communicate to the human
face— upon my word! you seem to have
been very systematic in your proceedings.
And is your brother acquainted with all
this, my dear Sir?"

"Oh, no, no," replied Arabella, chang-
ing colour. "Dear Mr. Pickwick, he must
only know it from you—from your lips
alone. He is so violent, so prejudiced,
and has been so—so anxious in behalf of
his friend Mr. Sawyer," added Arabella,
looking down, "that I fear the conse-
quences dreadfully."

"Ah, to be sure," said Perker, gravely.
"You must take this matter in hand for
those of your dear Sir. These young men
will respect you when they would listen
to nobody else. You must prevent mis-
chief, my dear Sir. Hot blood—hot blood."
And the little man took a warning pinch,
and shook his head doubtfully.

"You forget, my love," said Mr. Pick-
wick, gently, "you forget that I am a
prisoner."

"No, indeed I do not, my dear Sir,"
replied Arabella. "I have never forgotten
it; never ceased to think how great your
sufferings must have been in this shocking
place, but I hoped that what no considera-
tion for yourself would induce you to do, a
regard to our happiness might. If my
brother hears of this first from you, I feel
certain we shall be reconciled. He is my
only relation in the world, Mr. Pickwick,
and unless you plead for me, I fear I have
lost even him. I have done wrong—very,
very wrong, I know." Here poor Arabella
hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept
bitterly.

Mr. Pickwick's nature was a good deal
worked upon by these same tears, but when
Mrs. Winkle, drying her eyes, took to
coozing and entreaty in the sweetest
tones of a very sweet voice, he became
particularly restless, and evidently unde-
cided how to act, as was evinced by sundry
nervous rubbings of his spectacle-glasses,
noise, fits, head, and gaiters.

Taking advantage of these symptoms of
Indecision, Mr. Perker, (to whom it ap-
ppeared the young couple had driven straight
that morning) urged with legal point and
steadfastness that Mr. Winkle, senior, was
still unacquainted with the important rise
in life's flight of steps which his son had
taken; that the future expectations of the
said son depended entirely upon the said
Winkle, senior, continuing to regard him
with undiminished feelings of affection
and attachment, which it was very unlikely
he would do if this great event were long
kept a secret from him; that Mr. Perker,
repairing to Bristol to seek Mr. Allen,
might with equal reason repair to Birming-
ham to seek Mr. Winkle, senior; lastly,
that Mr. Winkle, senior, had good right
and title to consider Mr. Pickwick as in
some degree the guardian and adviser of
his son, and that it consequently behoved
that gentleman, and was indeed due to his
personal character, to acquaint the afore-
said Winkle, senior, personally, and by
word of mouth, with the whole circuman-
tances of the case, and with the share he
had taken in the transaction.

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass arrived
most opportunely in this stage of the plead-
ings, and as it was necessary to explain to
them all that had occurred, together with the
various reasons why, the whole
of the arguments were gone over again,
after which everybody urged every argu-
ment in his own way and at his own length.
And at last Mr. Pickwick, fairly argued
and remonstrated out of all his resolutions,
and being in imminent danger of being
argued and remonstrated out of his wits,
cought Arabella in his arms, and declaring
that she was a very amiable creature, and
that he didn't know how it was, but he had
always been very fond of her from the first,
said he could never find it in his heart to
stand in the way of young people's hap-
piness, and they might do with him as they
pleased.

Mr. Waller's first act, on hearing this
concession, was to despatch Job Trotter
to the illustrious Mr. Pell, with an author-
ity to deliver to the bearer the formal discharge
which his prudent parent had had the fore-
sight to leave in the hands of that learned
gentleman, in case it should be at any time
required on an emergency; his next pro-
ceeding was to invest his whole stock of
ready money in the purchase of five-and-
twenty gallons of malmsey, which he him-
self dispensed on the racket-ground to
everybody who would partake of it; this
done, he hurried in divers parts of the build-
ing until he had lost his voice, and then
quietly relapsed into his usual collected
and philosophical condition.

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 turn-
ed here to look about him, and his eye
lightened as he did so. In all the crowd of
wan emaciated faces, he saw not one which
was not the happiest for his sympathy and charity.

"Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, beckoning one young man towards him, "this is Mr. Jingle, whom I spoke to you about."

"Very good, my dear Sir," replied Perker, looking hard at Jingle. "You will see me again, young man, to-morrow. I hope you may live to remember deeply what I shall have to communicate, Sir."

Jingle bowed respectfully, trembling very much as he took Mr. Pickwick's proffered hand, and withdrew. "Job you know, I think?" said Mr. Pickwick, presenting that gentleman. "I know the rascal," replied Perker, good-humouredly, "See after your friends, and be in the way to-morrow one. Do you hear? Now, is there any thing more?"

"Nothing," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "You have delivered the little parcel I gave you for your old landlord, Sam?"

"I have, Sir," replied Sam. "He bust a cryin', Sir, and said you was very gen'rous and thoughtful, and he only wished you could have him innoculated for a gallopin' consumption, for his old friend as had lived here so long was dead, and he'd never see to look for another."

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" said Mr. Pickwick. "God bless you, my friend!"

As Mr. Pickwick uttered this adieu, the crowd raised a loud shout, and many among them were pressing forward to shake him by the hand again, when he drew his arm through Perker's, and hurried, from the prison, far more sad and melancholy, for the moment, than when he had first entered it! Alas! how many sad and unhappy beings had he left behind! and how many of them lie caged there, still!

A happy evening was that for at least one party in the George and Vulture, and light and cheerful were two of the hearts that emerged from its hospitable door next morning; the owners thereof were Mr. Pickwick, and Sam Weller, the former of whom was speedily deposited inside a comfortable post-boat, with a little dickey behind, in which the latter mounted with great agility.

"Sir," called out Mr. Weller to his master: "Well, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, thrusting his head out of the window. "I wish them horses had been three months and better in the Fleet, Sir."

"Why, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"V'y, Sir," exclaimed Mr. Weller, rubbing his hands, how they would go if they had been!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

Relates how Mr. Pickwick, with the assistance of Samuel Weller, essayed to soften the heart of Mr. Benjamin Allen, and to modify the wrath of Mr. Robert Sawyer.

Mr. Ben Allen and Mr. Bob Sawyer sat together in the little surgery, behind the shop, discussing mincemeat and future prospects; when the discourse, not unnaturally, turned upon the practice acquired by Bob the aforesaid, and his present chances of deriving a competent independence from the honourable profession to which he had devoted himself.

"Which, I think," observed Mr. Bob Sawyer, pursuiting the thread of the subject, "which I think, are rather dubious."

"What's more dubious?" inquired Mr. Ben Allen, at the same time sharpening his intellects with a draught of beer.

"What's dubious?"

"Why the chances," responded Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"I forgot," said Mr. Ben Allen. "The beer has reminded me that I forgot, Bob—yes; they are dubious."

"It's wonderful how the poor people patronize me," said Mr. Bob Sawyer reflectively. "They knock me up at all hours of the night, take medicine to an extent which I should have conceived impossible, put on blisters and leeches with a perseverance worthy of a better cause, and make additions to their families; in a manner which is quite awful. Six of those last named little promissory notes, all due on the same day, Ben, and all entrusted to me."

"It's very gratifying, isn't it?" said Mr. Ben Allen, holding his plate for some more mincemeat.

"Oh, very," replied Bob; "only not quite so much as the confidence of patients, with a shilling or two to spare, would do. This business was capitally described in the advertisement, Ben. It is a practice, a very extensive practice—and that's all."

"Boby," said Mr. Ben Allen, laying down his knife and fork; and fixing his eyes on the visage of his friend—"Boby, I'll tell you what it is."

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You must make yourself with as little delay as possible, master of Aribella's one thousand pounds."


"Exactly so," said Ben. "She has it when she comes of age, or marries. She wants a year of coming of age, and if you
placed up in spirit she needn't want a month of being married."

"She's a very charming and delightful creature," quoth Mr. Robert Sawyer, in reply; "and has only one fault that I know of, Ben. It happens unfortunately, that that single blemish is a want of taste. She doesn't like me."

"It's my opinion that she doesn't know what she does like," said Mr. Ben Allen, contemptuously.

"Perhaps not," remarked Mr. Bob Sawyer. "But it's my opinion that she does know what she doesn't like, and that's of even more importance."

"I wish," said Mr. Ben Allen, setting his teeth together, and speaking more like a savage warrior who fed upon raw wolf's flesh which he carved with his fingers, than a peaceable young gentleman who ate minced veal with a knife and fork—"I wish I knew whether any rascal really has been tampering with her, and attempting to engage her affections. I think I should assassinate him, Bob."

"I'd put a bullet in him if I found him out," said Mr. Sawyer, stopping in the course of a long draught of beer, and looking malignantly out of the porter pot. "If that didn't do his business, I'd extract it afterwards, and kill him that way."

Mr. Benjamin Allen gazed abstractedly on his friend for some minutes in silence, and then said—

"You have never proposed to her, point-blank, Bob?"

"No. Because I saw it would be of no use," replied Mr. Robert Sawyer.

"You shall do it before you are twenty-four hours older," retorted Ben, with desperate accents. "She shall have you, or I'll know the reason why. I'll exert my authority."

"Well," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, "we shall see."

"We shall see, my friend," replied Mr. Ben Allen, fiercely. He paused for a few seconds, and added in a voice broken by emotion, "You have loved her from a child, my friend—you loved her when we were boys at school together, and even then she was wayward, and slighted your young feelings. Do you recollect, with all the eagerness of a child's love, one day pressing upon her, acceptance two small currain-way seed biscuits and one sweet apple, neatly folded into a circular parcel with the leaf of a copy-book?"

"I do," replied Bob Sawyer.

"She eloped with that, I think," said Ben Allen.

"She did," rejoined Bob. "She said I look kept the parcel so long in the pocket of my cow-corry, that the apple was unpleasantly warm."

"I remember," said Mr. Allen, gloomily. "Upon which we ate it ourselves, in alternate bites."

Bob Sawyer intimated his recollection of the circumstance last alluded to by a melancholy frown; and the two friends remained for some time absorbed, each in his own meditations.

While these observations were being exchanged between Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen, and while the boy in the grey livery, marvelling at the unwonted prolongation of the dinner, cast an anxious look from time to time towards the glass door, distracted by inward misgivings regarding the amount of minced veal which would be ultimately reserved for his individual cravings, there rolled soberly on through the streets of Minstol, a private fly, painted of a sad green colour, drawn by a chubby sort of brown horse, and driven by a surly-looking man with his legs dressed like the legs of a green, and his body adorned in the cost of a coachman. Such appearances are common to many vehicles belonging to, and maintained by, old ladies of economical habits; and in this vehicle sat an old lady who was its mistress and proprietor.

"Martin!" said the old lady, calling to the surly man out of the front window.

"Well!" said the surly man, touching his hat to the old lady."

"Mr. Sawyer's," said the old lady.

"I was going there," said the surly man.

The old lady nodded the satisfaction which this proof of the surly man's foresight imparted to her feelings; and the surly man giving a smart lash to the chubby horse, they all repairing to Mr. Bob Sawyer's together.

"Martin!" said the old lady, when the fly stopped at the door of Mr. Robert Sawyer, late Nookemor.

"Well!" said Martin.

"Ask the lad to step out and mind the house."

"I'm going to mind the house myself," said Martin, laying his whip on the roof of the fly.

"I can't permit it on any account," said the old lady; "your testimony will be very important, and I must take you into the house with me. You must not stir from my side during the whole interview. Do you hear?"

"I hear," replied Martin.

"Well; what are you stopping for?"

"Nothing," replied Martin. So saying, the surly man leisurely descended from the wheel upon which he had been resting himself on the tops of the sons of light.
foot, and having summoned the boy in the
grey livery, opened the coach-door, swung
down the steps, and thrusting in a hand
enveloped in a dark wash-leather glove,
pulled out the old lady with as much un-
concern in his manner as if she were a
bed-box.

"Dear me," exclaimed the old lady, "I
am so flurried now I have got here, Martin,
that I am all in a tremble."

Mr. Martin coughed behind the dark
wash-leather glove, but expressed no
further sympathy; so the old lady, composing
herself, trotted up Mr. Bob Sawyer's steps,
and Mr. Martin followed. Immediately
upon the old lady's entering the shop, Mr.
Benjamin Allen and Mr. Bob Sawyer, who
had been putting the spirits and water out
of sight, and upsetting nauseous drugs to
take off the smell of the tobacco-smoke,
issued hastily forth in a transport of plea-
sure and affection.

"My dear aunt," exclaimed Mr. Ben
Allen, "how kind of you to look in upon
us! Mr. Sawyer, aunt; my friend Mr.
Bob Sawyer that I have spoken to you
about, regarding—you know, aunt." And
here Mr. Ben Allen, who was not at the
moment extraordinarily sober, added the
word "Arabella," in what was meant to be
a whisper, but which was in fact an es-
specially audible and distinct tone of speech,
which nobody could avoid hearing, if any-
body was so disposed.

"My dear Benjamin," said the old lady,
struggling with a great shortness of breath,
and trembling from head to foot—"don't be
alarmed, my dear, but I think I had better
speak to Mr. Sawyer alone for a moment—
only for one moment."

"Bob," said Mr. Ben Allen, "will you
take my aunt into the surgery?"

"Certainly," responded Bob, in a most
professional voice. "Step this way, my
dear Ma'am. Don't be frightened, Ma'am.
We shall be able to set you to rights in a
very short time, I have no doubt, Ma'am.
Here, my dear Ma'am. Now then." With
this, Mr. Bob Sawyer having handed the
old lady to a chair, shut the door, drew
another chair close to her, and waited to
hear detailed the symptoms of some disor-
der from which he saw in perspective a
long train of profits and advantages.

The first thing the old lady did, was to
shake her head a great many times, and
begin to cry.

"Nervous," said Bob Sawyer, compla-
cently. "Camp-meal and water three
threes the day, and composing draught at
night."

"I don't know how to begin, Mr. Saw-
yer," said the old lady. "It is so very
painful and distressing."

"You need not begin, Ma'am," rejoiced
Mr. Bob Sawyer. "I can anticipate all
you say. The head is in fault."

"I should be very sorry to think it was
the heart," said the old lady, with a slight
groan.

"Not the slightest danger of that,
Ma'am," replied Bob Sawyer. "The stom-
ach is the primary cause."

"Mr. Sawyer!" exclaimed the old lady,
starting.

"Not the least doubt of it, Ma'am," re-
joined Bob, looking wondrous wise. "Me-
dicine, in time, my dear Ma'am, would
have prevented it all."

"Mr. Sawyer," said the old lady, more
flurried than before, "this conduct is either
great imprudence in one in my situation,
Sir, or it arises from your not understanding
the object of my visit. If it had been in
the power of medicine or any foresight I
could have used to prevent what has oc-
curred, I should certainly have done so. I
had better see my nephew at once," said
the old lady, twirling her reticule indig-
antly, and rising as she spoke.

"Stop a moment, Ma'am," said Bob
Sawyer; "I am afraid I have not under-
stood you. What is the matter, Ma'am?"

"My niece, Mr. Sawyer," said the old
lady—"your friend's sister."

"Yes, Ma'am," said Bob, all impatience;
for the old lady, although much agitated,
spoke with the most tantalising deliber-
ation, as old ladies often do. "Yes, Ma'am."

"Left my home, Mr. Sawyer, three days
ago, on a pretended visit to my sister, an-
other aunt of hers, who keeps the large
boarding-school just beyond the third mile-
stone, where there is a large laburnum tree
and an oak gate," said the old lady, stop-
ping in this place to dry her eyes.

"Oh, devil take the laburnum tree!
Ma'am," said Bob, quite forgetting his pro-
fessional dignity in his anxiety. "Get on
a little faster; put a little more steam on,
Ma'am, pray."

"This morning," said the old lady, slow-
ly, "this morning, she—"

"She came back, Ma'am, I suppose,"
said Bob, with great animation. "Did she
come back?"

"No, she did not—she wrote," replied
the old lady.

"What did she say?" inquired Bob
eagerly.

"She said, Mr. Sawyer," replied the old
lady—"and it is this I want you to pre-
pare Benjamin's mind for, gently, and by
degrees; she said that she was—I have put
the letter in my pocket. Mr. Sawyer, but
my glasses are in the carriage, and I should
only waste the time if I attempted to point.
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

sent the message to you without them; she said, in short, Mr. Sawyer, that she was married."

"What!" said, or rather shouted, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"Married," repeated the old lady.

Mr. Bob Sawyer stopped to hear no more; but darting from the surgery into the easter shop, cried in a theatrical voice, "Ben, my boy, she's bolted!"

Mr. Ben Allen, who had been slumbering behind the counter with his head half a foot or so below his knees, no sooner heard this appallng communication, than he made a precipitate rush at Mr. Martin, and twisting his hand in the noosecloth of that taciturn service, expressed an obliging intention of checking him where he stood, which intention, with a promptitude often of the effect of desperation, he at once commenced carrying into execution with much vigour and surgical skill.

Mr. Martin, who was a man of few words and possessed but little power of eloquence or persuasion, submitted to this operation with a very calm and agreeable expression of countenance, for some scceeds; finding, however, that it threatened speedily to lead to a result which would place it beyond his power to claim any wages, board or otherwise, in all times to come, he muttered an inarticulate remonstrance, and fell Mr. Benjamin Allen to the ground. As that gentleman had got his hands entangled in his creast, he had no alternative but to follow him to the floor. There they both lay struggling, when the shop-door opened, and the pesty was increased by the arrival of two most unexpected visitors, to wit, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Samuel Weller.

"The impression at once produced upon Mr. Weller's mind by what he saw was, that Mr. Martin was biased by the establishment of Sawyer late Noekemorff, to take strong medicine, or to go into fits and be experimentalised upon, or to swallow poison new and then with the view of testing the efficacy of some new antidotes, or to do something or other to promote the great science of medicine, and gratify the ardent spirit of inquiry burning in the bosoms of its two young professors. So, without presuming to interfere, Sam stood perfectly still and looked on as if he were mighty interested in the result of the then pending experiment. Not so, Mr. Pickwick. He at once threw himself upon the astonished combatants with his accustomed energy, and loudly called upon the bystanders to intervene.

This roused Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been hitherto quite paralysed by the frenzy of his companion; and with that gentleman's assistance, Mr. Pickwick raised Ben Allen to his feet. Mr. Martin finding himself alone on the floor, got up and looked about him.

"Mr. Allen," said Mr. Pickwick, "what is the matter, Sir?"

"Never mind, Sir," replied Mr. Allen, with haughty defiance.

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, looking at Bob Sawyer. "Is he unwell?"

Before Bob could reply, Mr. Ben Allen seized Mr. Pickwick by the hand, and murmured, in sorrowful accents, "My sister, my dear Sir; my sister."

"Oh, is that all?" said Mr. Pickwick. "We shall easily arrange that matter, I hope. Your sister is safe and well, and I am here, my dear Sir, to—"

"Sorry to do any thin' as may cause an interruption to such very pleasant proceedin', as the king said ven he discovered the parliament," interposed Mr. Weller, who had been peeping through the glass door; "but there's another experiment here, Sir. Here's a venerable old lady a lyin' on the carpet vatin' for dissection, or galvanism, or some other revivin' and scientific invention."

"I forgot," exclaimed Mr. Ben Allen. "It is my aunt."

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick. "Poor lady! gentle Sam, gently."

"Strange situation for one o' the family," observed Sam Weller, hoisting the aunt into a chair. "Now, deportunity Sawbones, bring out the wollatily."

The latter observation was addressed to the boy in grey, who, having handed over the fly to the care of the street-keeper, had come back to see what all the noise was about. Between the boy in grey, and Mr. Bob Sawyer, and Mr. Benjamin Allen, who having frightened his aunt into a fainting fit, was affectionately solicitous for her recovery the old lady was at length restored to consciousness; and then Mr. Ben Allen, turning with a puzzled countenance to Mr. Pickwick, asked him what he was about to say when he had been so alarmingly interrupted.

"We are all friends here, I presume!" said Mr. Pickwick, clearing his voice, and looking towards the man of few words with the surly countenance, who drove the fly with the chubby horse.

This reminded Mr. Bob Sawyer that the boy in grey was looking on, with eyes wide open and greedy. The incontinent chemist having been lifted up by his coat-collar and dropped outside the door, Bob Sawyer assured Mr. Pickwick that he might speak without reserve.

"Your sister, my dear Sir," said Mr.
Pickwick, turning to Benjamin Allen, "is in London; well and happy."

"Her happiness is no object to me, Sir," said Mr. Benjamin Allen, with a flourish of the hand.

"Her husband is an object to me, Sir," said Bob Sawyer. "He shall be an object to me, Sir, at twelve o'clock, and a very pretty object. I'll make of him, Sir—a mean-spirited second-rater!" This, as it stood, was a very pretty denunciation, and magnanimous withal; but Mr. Bob Sawyer rather weakened its effect by winding up with some general observations concerning the knocking of heads and knocking out of eyes, which were common-place by comparison.

"Stay, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick; "before you apply these epithets to the gentleman in question, consider dispassionately the extent of his fault, and above all, remember that he is a friend of mine."

"What!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"His name," cried Ben Allen. "His name."

"Mr. Nathaniel Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick, firmly.

Mr. Benjamin Allen deliberately crushed his spectacles beneath the heel of his boot, and having picked up the pieces and put them into three separate pockets, folded his arms, bit his lips, and looked in a threatening manner at the bland features of Mr. Pickwick.

"Then it's you, is it, Sir, who have encouraged and brought about this match?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, at length.

"And it's this gentleman's servant," interrupted the old lady, "who has been skulking about my house, and endeavoring to entrap my servants to conspire against their mistress. Martin!"

"Well I!" said the surly man, coming forward.

"Is that the young man you saw in the lane, whom you told me about this morning?"

Mr. Martin, who, as it has already appeared, was a man of few words, looked at Sam Weller, nodded his head, and growled forth, "That's the man." Mr. Weller, who was never proud, gave a smile of friendly recognition as his eyes encountered those of the surly gnom, and admitted in courteous terms, that he had "known him afore."

"And this is the faithless creature," exclaimed Mr. Ben Allen; "that I had nearly suffocated!" Mr. Pickwick, how date you allow your fellow to be employed in the abduction of my sister? I demand that you explain this matter, Sir."

"Explain it, Sir!" cried Bob Sawyer, angrily.

"It's a conspiracy," said Ben Allen. "A regular plot!" added Mr. Bob Sawyer, with a sneer.

"A disgraceful imposition," observed the old lady.

"Nothing but a do," remarked Martin.

"Pray hear me," urged Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Ben Allen fell into a state that patients were bled in; "I gave way to his pocket-handkerchief. I have remonstrated the assistance in this matter; beyond that of being present at one interview between the young people, which I could not prevent, and from which I conceived my presence would remove any slight colouring of impropriety that it might otherwise have had; this is the whole sum I have taken in the transaction, and I had no suspicion that so immediate marriage were even contemplated. Through mind," added Mr. Pickwick, hastily checking himself, "mind. I do not say I should have prevented it, if I had known that it was intended."

"You hear this, all of you; you hear that!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"I hope they do," mildly observed Mr. Pickwick, looking round; and, "added that gentleman, his colour mounting as he spoke. "I hope they hear this, Sir, also—that what has been uttered is true, Sir. I assert that you were by no means justified in attempting to force your sister's inclinations upon you; and that you should rather have endeavored by your kindness and forbearance to have supplied the place of other greater relations whom she has never known from a child. As regards my young friend, I must beg to add, that in every point of worldly advantage, he is at least on an equal footing with yourself; if not on a much better one; and that whereas I hear this question discussed with becoming temper and moderation, I decline hearing any more said upon the subject."

I wish to make a very few remarks in addition to what has been put forward by the honourable gentleman just given over, said Mr. Weller, stepping forth, "which is this here: an individual in company has called me a villain."

"That has nothing whatever to do with the matter, Sam," interrupted Mr. Pickwick.

"Pray hold your tongue."

"I ain't a goin' to say nothin' on that score, Sir," replied Sam, "but mostly this here: Prior to this gentleman's may think as there was a priorite temperament but there wasn't nothin' of the sort; for the young lady said in the very beginning of the keepin' company that she couldn't abide him Nobody's cut him out; and it's 'nd he been just the very same for him. If the young lady had never seen Mr. Winkle, that's what I wished to say, Sir, and I hope I've now told that poor gentleman's mind easy."

""
A short pause followed these complimentary remarks of Mr. Weller, and then Mr. Ben Allen, rising from his chair, protested that he would never pass through Arthurs's again, while Mr. Rob Sawyer, desiring Sam's flattering assurance, vowed dreadful vengeance on the happy bridegroom.

But, just when matters were at their height and threatening to remain so, Mr. Pickwick found a powerful assistant in the old lady, who, evidently much struck by the mode in which he had advocated her niece's cause, ventured to approach Mr. Benjamin Allen with a few comforting reflections, of which the chief were, that after all, perhaps, it was well as it was without; the least said the soonest mended, and upon her word she did not know that it was so very bad after all; and that much had been begun and that much could not be undone, must be endured, with various other assurances of the like nature and strengthening descriptions. To all of which, Mr. Benjamin Allen replied that he meant no disrespect to his aunt or any body else, but if it were the same to them, and they would allow him to have his own way, he would rather have the pleasure of hating his sister till death and after it.

At length, when this determination had been announced, half a hundred times, the old lady suddenly lying down and looking very majestic, wished to know what she had done that no respect was to be paid to her years or station, and that she should be obliged to beg and pray in that way of her own nephews, whom she remembered about five and twenty years before he was born, and whom she had known personally when he hadn't a tooth in his head; to say anything of her presence on the first occasion of having his hair cut, and assistance at numerous other times and ceremonies during his babyhood, of sufficient importance to found a claim upon his affection, obedience, and sympathy, for ever.

While the good lady was bestowing this oblation on Mr. Ben Allen, Bob Sawyer, and Mr. Pickwick had retired in close conversation to the inner room, where the former gentleman was observed to apply himself several times to the mouth of a black bottle under the influence of which his features gradually assumed a cheerful and even jovial expression. And at last he emerged from the room, bottle in hand, and remarking that he was very sorry to say he had been making a fool of himself, begged to propose the health and happiness of Mr. Pickwick's family, as far from envying, he would be the first to congratulate them upon. Hearing this, Mr. Benjamin Allen suddenly arose from his chair, and seizing the black bottle drank the toast so heartily, that the liquor being strong, now became nearly as black as the face of the bottle itself. Finally the black bottle went round till it was empty, and there was so much clinking of hands and interchange of compliments, that even the metal visaged Mr. Martin condescended to smile.

"And now," said Bob Sawyer, rubbing his hands, "we'll have a jolly night."

"I am sorry," said Mr. Pickwick, "that I must return to my inn. I have not been accustomed to fatigue lately, and my journey has tired me exceedingly."

"You'll take some tea, Mr. Pickwick," said the old lady, with irresistible sweetness.

"Thank you, I would rather not," replied that gentleman. The truth is, that the old lady's evidently increasing attachment was Mr. Pickwick's principal incitement for going. He thought of Mrs. Bennell, and every glance of the old lady's eyes threw him into a cold sweat.

As Mr. Pickwick could by no means be persuaded upon any proposal, it was arranged on his own proposal, that Mr. Benjamin Allen should accompany him on his journey to the elder Mr. Winkle's, and that the coach should be at the door at nine o'clock next morning. He then took his leave, and, followed by Samuel Weller, repaired to the Bush. It is worthy of remark, that Mrs. Martin's face was horribly contorted as he shook hands with Sam; at parting, and that he gave vent to a smile and an oath simultaneously, from which tokens it had been inferred by those who were best acquainted with that gentleman's peculiarities that he expressed himself much pleased with Mr. Weller's society, and requested the honours of his further acquaintance.

"Shall I order a private room, Sir?" inquired Sam, when they reached the Bush.

"Why, no, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick; "as I dined in the coffee-room, and shall go to bed soon, it is hardly worth while. See who there is the travellers', room, Sam."

Mr. Weller departed on his errand, and presently returned to say that there was only a gentleman with one eye, and the landlord, who were drinking a bowl of bishop together.

"I will join them," said Mr. Pickwick.

"He's a queer customer, the vun-eyed vun, Sir," observed Mr. Weller, as he led the way. "He's a gunnoman that 'ere landlord, he is, Sir, till he don't rightly know whose he's standing on the clogs of his boots, or the devil's of his hat!"

The individual to whom this observation referred, was sitting at the upper end of the room where Mr. Pickwick entered, and was smoking a large Dutch pipe, with the...
intently fixed upon the round face of the landlord, a jolly-looking old personage, to whom he had recently been relating some tale of wonder, as was testified by snady delirious exclamation of "Well, I never! I never! have believed it! The strangest thing I ever heard! Couldn't have supposed it possible!" and other expressions of astonishment which burst spontaneously from his lips as he returned the fixed gaze of the one-eyed man.

"Servant, Sir," said the one-eyed man to Mr. Pickwick. "Fine night, Sir."

"Very much so indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, as the waiter placed a small decanter of brandy, and some hot water, before him.

While Mr. Pickwick was mixing his brandy and water, the one-eyed man looked round at him earnestly, from time to time, and at length said—

"I think I've seen you before?"

"I don't recollect you," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

"I dare say not," said the one-eyed man. "You didn't know me, but I knew two friends of yours that were stopping at the Peacock at Estanswill, at the time of the Election."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick. "Yes," rejoined the one-eyed man. "I mentioned a little circumstance to them about a friend of mine of the name of Tom Smart. Perhaps you've heard them speak of it?"

"Often," rejoined Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

"He was your uncle, I think?"

"No, no—only a friend of my uncle's," replied the one-eyed man.

"He was a wonderful man, that uncle of yours, though," remarked the landlord, shaving his head.

"Well, I think he was; I think I may say he was," answered the one-eyed man.

"I could tell you a story about that same uncle, gentlemen, that would rather surprise you."

"Could I?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Let us hear it by all means."

The one-eyed Bagman ladled out a glass of negus from the bowl, and drank it, smoked a long whiff out of the Dutch pipe, and then calling to Sam Weller who was lingering near the door, that he needn't go away unless he wanted to, because the story was no secret, fixed his eye upon the landlord's, and proceeded in the words of the next chapter.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning the story of the Bagman's uncle.

"Mr. uncle, gentlemen," said the Bag-
I come to think of the matter, gentlemen, I feel pretty sure she wouldn't, for she died when my uncle was two years and seven months old, and I think it's very likely that even without the gravel, his top-boots would have perked up the good lady not a little, to say nothing of his jolly red face. However, there he lay, and I have heard my uncle say many a time that the man said who picked him up that he was smiling as merrily as if he had tumbled out for a treat, and that after they had bled him, the first faint glimmerings of returning animation were, his jumping up in bed, bursting out into a loud laugh, kissing the young woman who had held the basin, and demanding a meton chop and a pickled walnut instantly. He was very fond of pickled walnuts, gentlemen. He said he always found that, taken without vinegar, they relished the beer.

44 My uncle's great journey was in the fall of the leaf, at which time he collected debts and took orders in the north: going from London to Edinburgh, from Edinburgh to Glasgow, from Glasgow back to Edinburgh, and thence to London by the smack. You are to understand that this second visit to Edinburgh was for his own pleasure. He used to go back for a week, just to look up his old friends; and what with breakfasting with this one, and lunching with that, and dining with a third, and supping with another, a pretty tight week he used to make of it. I don't know whether any of you, gentlemen, ever partook of a real substantial hospitable Scotch breakfast, and then went out to a slight lunch of a bushel of oysters, a dozen or so of bottled ale, and a noggin or two of whiskey to close up with. If you ever did, you will agree with me that it requires a pretty strong head to go on to dinner and supper afterwards.

44 But bless your faces and eyebrows, all this sort of thing was nothing to my uncle. He was so well seasoned that it was mere child's play. I have heard him say that he could see the Dundee people set any day, and walk home afterwards without staggering; and yet the Dundee people have as strong heads and as strong punch, gentlemen, as you are likely to meet with between the poles. I have heard of a Glasgow man and a Dundee man drinking against each other for fifteen hours at a sitting. They were both suffocated as nearly, as could be ascertained at the same moment, but with this trifling exception, gentlemen, they were not a bit the worse for it.

44 One night, within four-and-twenty hours of the time when he had settled to take ship, my uncle stopped at the house of a very old friend of his, a Baillie Mad something, and four syllables after it, who lived in the old town of Edinburgh. There were the baillie's wife, and the baillie's three daughters, and the baillie's grown-up son, and three or four stout, bushy-eye browsed, canty old Scotch fellows that the baillie had got together to do honour to my uncle, and help to make merry. It was a glorious supper. There was kippered salmon, and Finnan haddecks, and a lamb's head, and a haggis—a celebrated Scotch dish, gentlemen, which my uncle used to say always looked to him, when it came to table, very much like a cupid's stomach—and a great many other things besides, that I forgot the names of, but very good things notwithstanding. The ladies were pretty and agreeable; the baillie's wife one of the best creatures that ever lived; and my uncle in thoroughly good case; the consequence of which was, that the young ladies uttered and giggled, and the old lady laughed out loud, and the baillie and the other old fellows roared till they were red in the face, the whole mortal time. I don't quite recollect how many tumblers of whiskey toddy each man drank after supper, but this I know, that about one o'clock in the morning, the baillie's grown-up son became insensible while attempting the first verse of 'Willie brewed a peck o' malt.' and he having been, for half an hour before, the only other man visible above the mahogany, is occurred to my uncle that it was almost time to think about going; especially as drinking had set in at seven o'clock, in order that he might get home at a decent hour. But thinking it might not be quite polite to go just then, my uncle voted himself into the chair, mixed another glass, rose to propose his own health, addressed himself in a neat and complimentary speech, and drank the toast with great enthusiasm. Still nobody woke; so my uncle took a little drop more—next time, to prevent the teddy disagreeing with him, and laying violent hands on his hat, sallied forth into the street.

44 It was a wild gusty night when my uncle closed the baillie's door; and settling his hat firmly on his head to prevent the wind from taking it, thrust his hands into his pockets, and looking upwards, took a short survey of the state of the weather. The clouds were drifting over the moon at their giddiest speed, at one time wholly obscuring her, at another, suffering her to burst forth in full splendour and shed her light on all the objects around; anon, driving over her again with increased velocity, and shrouding every thing in darkness. Really this won't do,' said my uncle, dressing himself to the weather, as if he felt himself personally offended. 'This is not all the kind of thing for my voyage
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"It will not do at any price," said my uncle, "to be very impressively; 'and' having repeated this several times, he recovered his balance with some difficulty—for he was rather giddy with looking up into the sky so long—" and walked merrily on.

"The battle's house was in the Camer-gate, and my uncle was going to the other end of Leith Walk, rather better than a mile's journey. On either side of him, there shot up against the dark sky, tall, gaunt, struggling houses, with time-stained fronts, and windows that seemed to have shared the lot of eyes in mortals; and to have grown dim and broken with age. Six, seven, eight stories high were the houses; story piled above story, as children build with cards. A cross of their dark shadows over the roughly paved road, and making the night darker. A few oil lamps were scattered, at long distances, but they only served to make the dirty entrance to some narrow close, or show where a common stair communicated, by steep and intricate windings, with the various stories above. Gazing at all these things with the eyes of a man who had seen them too often before, to think them worthy of much notice now, my uncle walked up the middle of the street with a thumb in each waistcoat pocket, indulging from time to time in various snatches of song; chanted forth with such good will and spirit, that the dull, honest folk started from their first sleep and lay trembling in bed till the sound died away. In the distance, when satisfying themselves that it was only some street washerman doing his work, finding his way home, they covered themselves up warm and fell asleep again.

"I am particular in describing how my uncle walked up the middle of the street, with his thumb in his waistcoat pockets, in the manner of a man we often used to see and with great comfort to think of an extraordinary curiosity in this story, unless you distinctly understand the beginning, that he was not by any means of a marvellous or romantic turn."

"Gentlemen, my uncle walked in with his thumb in his waistcoat pockets, taking the middle of the street to himself, and singing now and then a verse of a drinking song; and when he was tired of both, walking melodiously, until he reached the North Bridge, which at this point connects the old and new towns of Edinburgh: Here he stopped for a minute to look at the strange irregular cluster of light-piled houses above the water, and then, without paying any notice to the many, he walked on, and then, with his fingers quite stuck together, and the wind whisked away, the wind being so high that he could not hear the words, he went on into the old town, where the windows hung clean, and the houses had long since vanished, and the iron-work was rusty, and the paint worn away; and the wind was the only thing that was left.

"And while thus, brooding over the past, as Holmes budding, he noticed a variable canvas in the sky, while the old picturesque town slept heavily on in gloom and darkness below; its palace and Chapel of Holyrood guarded the day and night; as a friend of my uncle's used to say, by old Arthur's Seat, overlooking, curvy, and dark like some great genius, were the ancient city of Edinburgh, with the ancient city, which had beheld so long—" I say, gentlemen, my uncle stepped here for a minute to look about him; and then, paying a compliment to the weather which had a little cleared up, through the moon was shining, walked on again as royally as he fore, keeping the middle of the road with great dignity, and looking as if he should very much like to meet with somebody who would dispute possession of it with him. There were nobody at all disposed to contest the point, as it happened; and so he was, with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, as peaceful as a lamb.

"When my uncle reached the end of Leith Walk, he had to cross a pretty large piece of waste ground which separated him from a known street which he had to turn down to go direct to his lodging. Blow in this piece of waste ground there was at that time an enclosure belonging to some wheelwrights, who contracted with the Post-Office for the purchase of old worn-out mail-coaches; and in whose case being very fond of level roads, old; young, or middle-aged, all at once took it into his head to step out of his road for no other purpose than to peep between the palings at the scene, about a dozen of which he remembered, as there were, surrounded in a very deserted and desolate state, inside. My uncle was a very enthusiastic, emphatic sort of person; gentlemen, he found that he could not obtain a good horse by the palings, the get over them, and selecting one, quickly down on an old paling, begins to contemplate the mail-coach with a great deal of gravity.

"And these might be a dream of these, or there might be more—my uncle was never quite certain upon this point—and, being a man of very economical habits, about money, I didn't like to say—but there they stood, all huddled together in the most respectable omnibus imaginable. The doors had been thrown open, the horses and removed, the chimneys had been tipped off, only a sheet hanging here and there, and by a very nasty; the lamps were gone, the poles had long since vanished, the iron-work was rusty, the paint worn away, and the wind swirled down the road, and the wheelwrights were peering in at the window, watching the air as if they expected to find something in it.
at that time of night, they looked chill and distempered.

"My uncle rested his head upon his hands, and thought of the busy bustling people who thronged the streets before, in the old coaches, and were now as silent and changed; he thought of the numbers of people to whom one of those crazy, mouldering vehicles had borne, night after night for many years and through all weathers, the anxious expectations of intelligence, the eagerly looked-for remittances, the promised assurance of health and safety, the sudden announcement of sickness and death. The merchant, the lover, the wife, the widow, the mother, the schoolboy, the very child who tottered to the door at the postman's knock—how had they all looked forward to the arrival of the old coach. And where were they all now?

"Gentlemen, my uncle used to say that he thought all this at the time, but I rather think he thought it out more fully afterward, for he distinctly stated that he fell into a kind of doze as he sat on the old axle step, looking at the decayed mail-coaches, and that he was suddenly awakened by some deep church-bell striking two. Now, my uncle was never a fast thinker, and if he had thought all these things, I am quite certain it would have taken him till full half-past two o'clock, at the very least. I am, therefore, decidedly of opinion, gentlemen, that my uncle fell into the kind of doze without having thought about anything at all.

"Do this if may, a church-bell struck two. My uncle woke, rubbed his eyes, and jumped up in astonishment.

"In one instant, after the clock struck two, the whole of that deserted, now quiet spot had become a scene of the most extraordinary life and animation. The mail-coach doors were on their hinges, the lining was replaced, the iron-work was as good as new, the paint was restored, the lamps were slight; cushions and great coats were on every coach-box, porters were thrusting people in. Every horse's guide was bowing away letter-bags, noisily, were pushing pails of water against the jowled wheels; numbers of men were rushing about, fixing poles into every coach, passengers arrived, portmanteaus were handed up, horses were put to, and in short it was perfectly clear that every mail there was to be off directly.

"Gentlemen, my uncle opened his eyes so wide at all this, that, to the very last moment of his life, he used to wonder how it fell out that he had ever been able to shut them again.

"Now then, said a voice as my uncle laid his hand on his shoulder, 'You're booked for one inside. You'd better get in.

"'I heaved!!' said my uncle, turning round.

"'Yes, certainly.'

"'My uncle, gentlemen, could say nothing, he was so very much astonished. The queerest thing of all, was, that although there was such a crowd of persons, and although fresh faces were pouring in, every moment, there was no telling where they came from; they seemed to start up in some strange manner from the ground or the air, and to disappear, in the same way. When a porter had put his luggage in the coach and received his fare, he turned round and was gone; and before my uncle had well begun to wonder what had become of him, half-a-dozen fresh ones started up, and staggered along under the weight of parcels which seemed big enough to crush them. The passengers were all dressed, so oddly, too—large, broad-skirted, furred coats with great cuffs and no collars, and wigs, gentlemen—great formal wigs with the back in; my uncle could make nothing of it.

"'Now, are you going to get in?' said the person who had addressed my uncle before. He was dressed as a mail guard, with a wig on his head and most enormous cuffs to his coat, and had got a lantern in one hand and a huge hussars' sash in the other, which, he was going to slow away in his little arm-chair. 'Are you going to get in, Jack Martin?' said the guard, holding the lantern to my uncle's face.

"'Hallo,' said my uncle, falling back a step or two. 'That's familiar!'

"'It's so on the way-hill,' replied the guard.

"'Is there a 'Mister' before it?' said my uncle—for he felt, gentlemen, that for a guard he didn't know to call him Jack Martin, was a liberty which the Post-office wouldn't have sanctioned if they had known it.

"'No; there is not,' rejoined the guard, coolly.

"'Is the fare paid?' inquired my uncle.

"'Of course it is,' rejoined the guard.

"'It is, is it?' said my uncle, then, here goes—which coach?

"'This,' said the guard, pointing to an old-fashioned Edinburgh and London Mail, which had got the steps down, and the door open; 'Stop—here are the other passengers. Let them get in first.'

"As the guard spoke, there all at once appeared, right in front of my uncle, a young gentleman, in a powdered wig and a black-blue coat, trimmed with silver, made very full and broad in the skirts, which were lined with buckram. Tippet and Welp were in the printed, calico and waistcoat-piece line, gentlemen, so my uncle knew all the materials at once. He wore knee
brooches and a kind of leggings rolled up over his silk stockings, and shoes with buckles; he had ruffles at his wrists, a three-cornered hat on his head, and a long taper sword by his side. The flaps of his waistcoat came half-way down his thighs, and the ends of his cravat reached to his waist. He stalked graviely to the coach-door, pulled off his hat, and held it out above his head at arm's length, cocking his little finger in the air at the same time, as some affected people do when they take a cup of tea; then drew his feet together, made a low grave bow, and then put out his left hand. My uncle was just going to step forward, and shake it heartily, when he perceived that these attentions were directed, not towards him, but to a young lady, who just then appeared at the foot of the steps, attired in an old-fashioned green velvet dress, with a long waist and stomacher. She had no bonnet on her head, gentlemen, which was muffled in a black silk hood, but she looked round for an instant as she prepared to get into the coach, and such a beautiful face as she discovered, my uncle had never seen—not even in a picture. She got into the coach, holding up her dress with one hand, and as my uncle always said with a round oath when he told the story, he wouldn't have believed it possible that legs and feet could have been brought to such a state of perfection, unless he had seen them with his own eyes.

"But in this one glimpse of the beautiful face, my uncle saw that the young lady had cast an imploring look upon him, and that she appeared terrified and distressed. He noticed too, that the young fellow in the powdered wig, notwithstanding his show of gallantry, which was all very fine and grand, clasped her tight by the wrist when she got in, and followed himself immediately afterwards. An uncommonly ill-looking fellow in a close brown wig, and a plum-coloured suit, wearing a very large sword and boots up to his hips, belonged to the party; and when he sat himself down next to the young lady, who shrank into a corner at his approach, my uncle was confirmed in his original impression that something dark and mysterious was going forward, or, as he always said himself, that "there was a screw loose somewhere." It's quite surprising how quickly he made up his mind to help the lady at any peril, if she needed help.

"Death and lightning!" exclaimed the young gentleman, laying his hand upon his sword, as my uncle entered the coach. "Blood and thunder!" roared the other gentlemen. With this he whipped his sword out, and made a lunge at my uncle without further ceremony. My uncle had no weapon about him, but with great dexterity he snatched the ill-looking gentleman's three-cornered hat from his head, and receiving the point of his sword right through the crown, squeezed the sides together, and held it tight.

"Pink him behind," cried the ill-looking gentleman to his companion, as he struggled to regain his sword.

"He had better not," cried my uncle, displaying the heel of one of his shoes in a threatening manner. "I'll kick his brains out if he has any, or fracture his skull if he hasn't." Exerting all his strength at this moment, my uncle wrenched the ill-looking man's sword from his grasp, and flung it clean out of the coach-window, upon which the younger gentleman vociferated "Death and lightning!" again, and laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword in a very fierce manner, but didn't draw it. Perhaps, gentlemen, as my uncle used to say, with a smile, perhaps he was afraid of alarming the lady.

"Now, gentlemen," said my uncle, taking his seat deliberately, "I don't want to have any death with or without lightning in a lady's presence, and we have had quite blood and thundering enough for one journey; so if you please, we'll sit in our places like quiet insides—hear, guard, pick up that gentleman's carving-knife."

As quickly as my uncle said the words, the guard appeared at the coach-window with the gentleman's sword in his hand. He held up his lantern, and looked earnestly in my uncle's face as he handed it in, when by its light my uncle saw, to his great surprise, that an immense crowd of mail-coach guards swarmed round the window, every one of whom had his eyes fixed upon him too. He had never seen such a scene of white faces and red bodies, and earnest eyes, in all his born days.

"This is the strangest sort of thing I ever had any thing to do with," thought my uncle—allow me to return you your hat, Sir.

The ill-looking gentleman received his three-cornered hat in silence—looked at the hole in the middle with an inquiring air, and finally stuck it on the top of his wig, with a solemnity the effect of which was a trifle impaired by his sneezing violently at the moment, and jerking it off again.

"All right!" cried the guard with the lantern, mounting into his little seat behind. Away they went. My uncle peeped out of the coach-window as they emerged from the yard, and observed that the other mail, with coachmen, groom, horses, and passengers complete, were driving round and round in circles, at a slow trot of about
five miles an hour. My uncle burnt with
indignation, gentlemen. As a commercial
man, he felt that the mail-bags were not to be
trifled with, and he resolved to memo-
ralise the Post-office upon the subject,
the very instant he reached London.
At present, however, his thoughts were
occupied with the young lady who sat in
the furthest corner of the coach, with her
face muffled closely in her hood: the gen-
tleman with the sky-blue coat sitting op-
posite to her, and the other man in the plain-
coloured suit, by her side, and both watch-
ing her intently. If she so much as rustled
the folds of her hood, he could hear the ill-
looking man clap his hand upon his sword,
and tell by the other's breathing (it was so
dark he couldn't see his face) that he was
looking as big as if he were going to de-
verse her at a mouthful. This roused my
uncle more and more, and he resolved, come
what come might, to see the end of it. He
had a great admiration for bright eyes, and
sweet faces, and pretty legs and feet; in
short he was fond of the whole sex. It
runs in our family, gentlemen—so am I.

Many were the devices which my uncle
practised to attract the lady's attention or
at all events to engage the mysterious gen-
tlemens in conversation. They were all in
vain; the gentlemen wouldn't talk, and the
lady didn't dare. He thrust his head out of
the coach-window at intervals, and bawled
cut to know why they didn't go faster.
But he called till he was hoarse—nobody
said the least attention to him. He leaned
back in the coach, and thought of the
beautiful face, and the feet and legs. This
answered better; it whistled away the time,
and kept him from wondering where he was
going to, and how it was he found himself
in such an odd situation. Not that this
would have worried him much any way—
he was a mighty free and easy, roving,
devil-may-care sort of person, was my
uncle, gentlemen.

All of a sudden the coach stopped.
'Hello!' said my uncle. 'What's in the
wind now?'

'Alright here,' said the guard, letting
down the steps.

'Here!' cried my uncle.

'Here,' rejoined the guard.

'I'll do nothing of the sort,' said my
uncle.

'Very well—then stop where you are,'
said the guard.

'I will,' said my uncle.

'Do,' said the guard.

'The other passengers had regarded this
colloquy with great attention; and finding
that my uncle was determined not to alight,
the younger man squeezed past him, to
hand the lady out. At this moment the ill-
looking man was inspecting the hole in the
crown of his three-cornered hat. As the
young lady brushed past, she dropped one
of her gloves into my uncle's hand, and
softly whispered, with her lips so close to
his face that he felt her warm breath on his
nose, the single word, 'Help!' Gentlemen,
my uncle leaped out of the coach at once
with such violence that it rocked on the
springs again.

'Oh! you've thought better of it, have
you?' said the guard, when he saw my un-
cle standing on the ground.

'My uncle looked at the guard for a few
seconds, in some doubt whether it wouldn't
be better to wrench his blunderbuss from
him, fire it in the face of the man with the
big sword, knock the rest of the company
over the head with the stock, snatch up the
young lady, and go off in the smoke. On
second thoughts, however, he abandoned
this plan as being a shade too melo-dram-
tic in the execution, and followed the two
mysterious men, who, keeping the lady be-
tween them, were now entering an old house
in front of which the coach had stopped.
They turned into the passage, and my uncle
followed.

Of all the ruinous and desolate places my
uncle had ever beheld, this was the
most so. It looked as if it had once been
a large house of entertainment, but the roof
had fallen in, in many places, and the stairs
were steep, rugged, and broken. There
was a huge fire-place in the room into
which they walked, and the chimney was black-
ened with smoke, but no warm blaze lighted
it up now. The white feathery dust of
burst wood was still strewed over the hearth,
but the stove was cold, and all was dark
and gloomy.

'Well,' said my uncle, as he looked
about him, 'a mail travelling at the rate of
six miles and a half an hour, and stopping
for an indefinite time at such a hole as this,
is rather an irregular sort of proceeding; I
fancy. This shall be made known; I'll
write to the papers.'

'My uncle said this in a pretty loud
voice, and in an open, unreserved sort of
manner, with the view of engaging the two
strangers in conversation if he could. But
neither of them took any more notice of
him than whispering to each other, and
scowling at him as they did so. The lady
was at the further end of the room, and
once she ventured to wave her hand, as if
heeseeing my uncle's assistance.

At length the two strangers advanced
a little, and the conversation began in ear-
nest.

'You don't know this is a private room,
I suppose, fellow,' said the gentleman in
sky-blue.
"No I do not, fellow," rejoined my uncle. "Only if this is a private room especially ordered for the occasion, I should think the public room must be a very comfortable one;" with this, my uncle sat himself down in a high-backed chair, and took such an accurate measure of the gentleman with his eyes, that Tigginn and Welpin could have supplied him with printed calico for a suit, and not an inch too much or too little, from that estimate alone.

"Quit this room," said both the men together, grasping their swords.

"Eh!" said my uncle, not at all appearing to comprehend their meaning.

"Quit the room, or you are a dead man," said the ill-looking fellow with the large sword, drawing it at the same time and flourishing it in the air.

"Down with him!" said the gentleman in sky-blue, drawing his sword also, and falling back two or three yards. "Down with him!" The lady gave a loud scream.

"Now, my uncle was always remarkable for great boldness and great presence of mind. All the time that he had appeared so indifferent to what was going on, he had been looking slyly about for some missile or weapon of defence, and at the very instant when the swords were drawn, he espied standing in the chimney-corner, an old basket-hilted rapier in a rusty scabbard. At one bound, my uncle caught it in his hand, drew it, flourished it gallantly above his head, called aloud to the lady to keep out of the way, hurled the chair at the man in sky-blue, and the scabbard at the man in plum-colour, and taking advantage of the confusion, fell upon them both, peli-melli.

"Gentlemen, there is an old story—none the worse for being true—regarding a fine young Irish gentleman, who being asked if he could play the fiddle, replied he had no doubt he could, but he couldn't exactly say for certain, because he had never tried. This is not inapplicable to my uncle and his fencing. He had never had a sword in his hand before, except once when he played Richard the Third at a private theatre, upon which occasion it was arranged with Richmond that he was to be run through from behind without showing fight at all; but here he was, cutting and slashing with two experienced swordsmen, thrusting, and guarding, and poking, and slicing, and acquitting himself in the most manful and dexterous manner possible, although up to that time he had never been aware that he had the least notion of the science. It only shows how true the old saying is, that a man never knows what he can do, till he tries, gentlemen.

"The noise of the combat was terrific, each of the three combatants swearing like troopers, and their swords clashing with as much noise as if all the knives and steels in Newport market were rattling together at the same time. When it was at its very height, the lady, to encourage my uncle, most probably, withdrew her hood entirely from her face, and disclosed a countenance of such dazzling beauty, that he would have fought against fifty men to win one smile from it and die. He had done wonders before, but now he began to powder away like a raving mad giant.

"At this very moment, the gentleman in sky-blue turning round, and seeing the young lady with her face uncovered, vented an exclamation of rage and jealousy; and turning his weapon against her beautiful bosom, pointed a threat at her heart which caused my uncle to utter a cry of apprehension that made the building ring. The lady stepped lightly aside, and snatching the young man's sword from his hand before he had recovered his balance, drove him to the wall, and running it through him and the panelling up to the very hilt, pinned him there hard and fast. It was a splendid example. My uncle, with a loud shout of triumph and a strength that was irresistible, made his adversary retreat in the same direction, and plunging the old rapier into the very centre of a large red flower in the pattern of his waistcoat, nailed him beside his friend; there they both stood, gentlemen, jowling their arms and legs about in agony, like the toy-shop figures that are moved by a piece of packthread. My uncle always said afterwards, that this was one of the surest means he knew of, for disposing of an enemy; but it was liable to one objection on the ground of expense, inasmuch as it involved the loss of a sword for every man disabled.

"The mail! the mail!" cried the lady, running up to my uncle and throwing her beautiful arms round his neck; 'we may yet escape.'

"May!" said my uncle; 'why, my dear, there's nobody else to kill, is there!' My uncle was rather disappointed, gentlemen, for he thought a little quiet bit of love-making would be agreeable after the slaughtering; if it were only to change the subject.

"We have not an instant to lose here," said the young lady. 'He (pointing to the young gentleman in sky-blue) is the only son of the powerful Marquess of Filteville.'

"Well then, my dear, I'm afraid he'll never come to the title," said my uncle, looking coolly at the young gentleman as he stood fixed up against the wall, in the cock-a-hooper fashion I have described. 'You have cut off the entail, my love!'"
"I have been torn from my home and friends by these villains," said the young lady, her features glowing with indignation. "That wretch would have married me by violence in another hour."

"Confound his impudence!" said my uncle, bestowing a very contemptuous look on the dying heir of Filctoville.

"As you may guess from what I have seen," said the young lady, "the party are prepared to murder me if you appeal to say one for assistance. If their accomplices find us here, we are lost. Two minutes hence may be too late. The mail! — and with these words, overpowered by her feelings and the exertion of sticking the young Marquess of Filctoville, she sunk into my uncle's arms. My uncle caught her up, and bore her to the horse-door. There stood the mail with four long-tailed flowing-maned black horses, ready harnessed; but no coachman, no guard, no ostler even, at the horses' heads.

"Gentlemen, I hope I do no injustice to my uncle's memory, when I express my opinion, that although he was a bachelor, he had held some ladies in his arms before this time; I believe, indeed, that he had rather a habit of kissing bar-maids, and I know, that in one or two instances, he had been seen by credible witnesses, to hug a landlady in a very perceptible manner. I mention the circumstance, to show what a very uncommon sort of person this beautiful young lady must have been to have affected my uncle in the way she did; he used to say, that as her long dark hair trailed over his arm, and her beautiful dark eyes fixed themselves upon his face when she recovered, he felt so strange and nervous, that his legs trembled beneath him. But who can look in a sweet soft pair of dark eyes, without feeling queer? I can't, gentlemen. I am afraid to look at some eyes I know, and that's the truth of it.

"You will never leave me!" murmured the young lady.

"Never," said my uncle. And he meant it too.

"My dear preserve!" exclaimed the young lady. "My dear, kind, brave preserve!"

"Don't," said my uncle, interrupting her.

"Why? I inquired the young lady.

"Because your mouth looks so beautiful when you speak," rejoined my uncle, "that I am afraid I shall be rude enough to kiss it."

"The young lady put up her hand as if to caution my uncle not to do so, and said — no, she didn't say anything — she smiled. When you are looking at a pair of the most delicious lips in the world, and see them gently break into a roguish smile — if you are very near them, and nobody else by — you cannot better testify your admiration of their beautiful form and colour than by kissing them at once. My uncle did so, and I honour him for it.

"Hark!" cried the young lady, starting.

"The noise of wheels and horses."

"So it is," said my uncle, listening. He had a good ear for wheels and the trampling of hoofs, but there appeared to be so many horses and carriages rattling towards them at a distance, that it was impossible to form a guess at their number. The sound was like that of fifty breaks, with six blood cattle in each.

"We are pursued!" cried the young lady, clasping her hands. "We are pursued. I have no one but in you."

"There was such an expression of terror in her beautiful face, that my uncle made up his mind at once. He lifted her into the coach, told her not to be frightened, pressed his lips to hers once more, and then advising her to draw up the window to keep the cold air out, mounted to the box.

"Stay, love," cried the young lady.

"What's the matter?" said my uncle, from the coach-box.

"I want to speak to you," said the young lady; "only a word — only one word, dearest."

"Must I get down?" inquired my uncle. The lady made no answer, but she smiled again. Such a smile, gentlemen! — it beat the other one all to nothing. My uncle descended from his perch in a twinkling.

"What is it, my dear?" said my uncle looking in at the coach-window. The lady happened to bend forward at the same time, and my uncle thought she looked more beautiful than she had done yet. He was very close to her just then, gentlemen, so he really ought to know.

"What is it, my dear?" said my uncle.

"Will you never love any one but me — never marry anyone beside?" said the young lady.

"My uncle swore a great oath that he never would marry anybody else; and the young lady drew in her head, and pulled up the window. He jumped upon the box, squared his elbows, adjusted the ribands, seized the whip which lay on the roof, gave one flick to the off leader, and away went the four long-tailed, flowing-maned black horses, at fifteen good English miles an hour, with the old mail-coach behind them — shew! how they tore along!

"But the noise behind grew louder. The faster went the old mail, the faster came the pursuers — men, horses, dogs, were leagued in the pursuit. The noise was frightful, but above all rose the voice of
the young lady, urging my uncle on, and shrieking ‘faster! faster!’

"They whirled past the dark trees as feathers would be swept before a hurricane. Horses, gales, churches, haystacks, objects of every kind they shot by, with a velocity and noise like roaring waters suddenly let loose. But still the noise of pursuit grew louder, and still my uncle could hear the young lady wildly screaming ‘faster! faster!’

"My uncle pried whip and rein, and the horses flew onward till they were white with foam; and yet the noise behind increased, and yet the young lady cried ‘faster! faster!’ My uncle gave a loud stamp upon the boot in the energy of the moment, and—found that it was grey morning, and he was sitting in the wheelwright’s yard on the box of an old Edinburgh mail, shivering with the cold and wet, and stamping his feet to warm them! He got down, and looked eagerly inside for the beautiful young lady—why! there was neither door nor seat to the coach—it was a mere shell.

"Of course my uncle knew very well that there was some mystery in the matter, and that every thing had passed exactly as he used to relate it. He remained stung to the great oath he had sworn to the beautiful young lady; refusing several eligible landladies on her account, and died a bachelor at last. He always said what a curious thing it was that he should have found out, by such a mere accident as his alarming over the palings, that the ghosts of mail-coaches and horses, guards, coachmen, and passengers, were in the habit of making journeys regularly every night; he used to add that he believed he was the only living person who had ever been taken as a passenger on one of these excursions; and I think he was right, gentlemen—at least I never heard of any other."

"I wonder what these ghosts of mail-coaches carry in their bags," said the landlord, who had listened to the whole story with profound attention.

"The dead letters, of course," said the Bagman.

"Oh, ah—to be sure," rejoined the landlord. "I never thought of that."

CHAPTER LI.

How Mr. Pickwick sped upon his mission, and how he was reinforced in the outset by a most unexpected auxiliary.

"Our horses were put to, punctually at a quarter before nine next morning, and Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller having each taken his seat, the one inside, and the other out, the position was duly dissected to repair in the first instance to Mr. Bob Sawyer's house, for the purpose of taking up Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"It was with feelings of no small astonishment, when the carriage drew up before the door with the red lamp, and the very legible inscription of ‘Sawyer, late Nocke-mort,’ that Mr. Pickwick saw, on peeping his head out of the coach-window, the boy in the grey livery very busily employed in putting up the shutters: the which being an unusual and rather un-business-like proceeding at that hour of the morning, at once suggested to his mind two inferences—the one, that some good friend and patient of Mr. Bob Sawyer's was dead; the other, that Mr. Bob Sawyer himself was bankrupt.

"What is the matter?" said Mr. Pickwick to the boy.

"Nothing's the matter, Sir," replied the boy, expanding his mouth to the whole breadth of his countenance.

"All right, all right," cried Bob Sawyer, suddenly appearing at the door, with a small leather knapsack, limp and dirty, in one hand, and a rough coat and shawl thrown over the other arm. "I'm going, old fellow."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes," replied Bob Sawyer, "and a regular expedition we'll make of it. Here, Sam—look out!" Thus briefly bespeaking Mr. Weller's attention, Mr. Bob Sawyer jerked the leather knapsack into the dieckey, where it was immediately stowed away under the seat, by Sam, who regarded the proceeding with great admiration. This done, Mr. Bob Sawyer, with the assistance of the boy, forcibly worked himself into the rough coat, which was a few sizes too small for him, and then advancing to the coach-window, thrust in his head, and laughed boisterously.

"What's start it is—isn't it?" said Bob, wiping the tears out of his eyes, with one of the cuffs of the rough coat.

"My dear Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, with some embarrassment, "I had no idea of your accompanying me."

"No, that's just the very thing," replied Bob, seizing Mr. Pickwick by the lapel of his coat. "That's the joke."

"Oh, that's the joke, is it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Of course," replied Bob. "It's the whole point of the thing, you know—that, and leaving the business to take care of itself, as it seems to have made up its mind not to take care of me."

With this explanation of the phenomena of the shutters,
Mr. Bob Sawyer pointed to the shop, and relapsed into an ecstasy of mirth.

"Bless me, you are surely not mad enough to think of leaving your patients without anybody to attend them!" remonstrated Mr. Pickwick, in a very serious tone.

"Why not?" asked Bob, in reply. "I shall save by it, you know. None of them ever pay. Besides," said Bob, lowering his voice to a confidential whisper, "they will be all the better for it, for being nearly out of drugs, and not able to increase my account just now. I should have been obliged to give them cold tea all round, and it would have been certain to have disagreed with some of them—so it's all for the best."

There was a philosophy and a strength of reasoning about this reply, which Mr. Pickwick was not prepared for. He passed a few moments, and added, less firmly than before—

"But this chaise, my young friend—this chaise will hold only two; and I am pledged to Mr. Allen."

"Don't think of me for a minute," replied Bob. "I've arranged it all; Sam and I will share the dickey between us. Look here. This little bill is to be wafted on the shop-door: 'Sawyer, late Nookmorf. Inquire of Mrs. Cripps over the way.'—Mrs. Cripps is my boy's mother. — Mr. Sawyer's very sorry," says Mrs. Cripps, 'couldn't help it—fetched away early this morning to a consultation of the very first surgeons in the country—couldn't do without him—would have him at any price—tremendous operation.' The fact is," said Bob, in conclusion—"It'll do me more good than otherwise, I expect. If it gets into one of the local papers, it will be the making of me. Here's Ben—now then, jump in."

With these hurried words, Mr. Bob Sawyer pushed the postboy on one side, jerked his friend into the vehicle, slammed the door, put up the steps, wafted the bill on the street-door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, jumped into the dickey, gave the word for starting; and did the whole with such extraordinary precipitation, that before Mr. Pickwick had well begun to consider whether Mr. Bob Sawyer ought to go or not, they were rolling away with Mr. Bob Sawyer thoroughly established as part and parcel of the equipage.

So long as their progress was confined to the streets of Bristol, the facetious Bob kept his professional green spectacles on, and conducted himself with becoming steadiness and gravity of demeanour, merely giving utterance to divers verbal witicisms for the exclusive mirth and entertainment of Mr. Samuel Weller; but when they emerged upon the open road, he threw off his green spectacles and his gravity together, and performed a great variety of practical jokes, which were rather calculated perhaps to attract the attention of the passers-by, and to render the carriage and those it contained objects of more than ordinary curiosity; the least conscious among these feats, being a most vociferous imitation of a key-bugle, and the ostentatious display of a crimson silk pocket-handkerchief attached to a walking-stick, which was occasionally waved in the air with various gestures indicative of supremacy and defiance.

"I wonder," said Mr. Pickwick, stopping in the midst of a most sedate conversation with Ben Allen, bearing reference to the numerous good qualities of Mr. Winkle and his sister—"I wonder what all the people we pass, can see in us to make them stare so?"

"It's a neat turn-out," replied Ben Allen, with something of pride in his tone. "They're not used to see this sort of thing every day, I dare say."

"Possibly," replied Mr. Pickwick. "It may be so. Perhaps it is."

Mr. Pickwick might very probably have reasoned himself into the belief that it really was, had he not, just then happening to look out of the coach-window, observed that the looks of the passengers betokened anything but respectful astonishment; and that various telegraphic communications appeared to be passing between them and some persons outside the vehicle, whereupon it all at once occurred to him that these demonstrations might be, in some remote degree, referable to the humongous deportment of Mr. Robert Sawyer.

"I hope," said Mr. Pickwick, "that our volatile friend is committing no absurdities in that dickey behind."

"Oh dear, no," replied Ben Allen. "Except when he's elevated, Bob's the quietest creature breathing."

Here a prolonged imitation of a key-bugle broke upon the ear, succeeded by cheers and screams, all of which evidently proceeded from the throat and lungs of the quietest creature breathing, or, in plainest designation, of Mr. Bob Sawyer himself.

Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Ben Allen looked expressively at each other; and the former gentleman taking off his hat, and leaning out of the coach-window till nearly the whole of his waistcoat was outside it, was at length enabled to catch a glimpse of his facetious friend.

Mr. Bob Sawyer was seated, not in the dickey, but on the roof of the chaise, with his legs as far asunder as they would conveniently go, wearing Mr. Samuel Weller's hat on one side of his head, and
one hand a most enormous sandwich, while
in the other he supported a goodly-sized
case-bottle, to both of which he applied
himself with intense relish, varying the
monotony of the occupation by an occa-
sional howl, or the interchange of some
lively badinage with any passing stranger.
The crimson bag was carefully tied in an
erect position to the rail of the dickey, and
Mr. Samuel Weller, decorated with Bob
Sawyer's hat, was seated in the centre
thereof, discussing a twin sandwich with
an animated countenance, the expression
of which betokened his entire and perfect
approval of the whole arrangement.

This was enough to irritate a gentleman
with Mr. Pickwick's sense of propriety, but
it was not the whole extent of the ag-
gravation, for a stage-coach full, inside and
out, was meeting them at the moment, and
the astonishment of the passengers was
very palpably evinced. The congratu-
lations of an Irish family, too, who were
keeping up with the chaise, and begging
all the time, were of rather a boisterous
description; especially those of its male
head, who appeared to consider the display
as part and parcel of some political, or
other procession of triumph.

"'Mr. Sawyer,' cried Mr. Pickwick, in
a state of great excitement. "'Mr. Sawyer,
Sir!'"

"Hallo!" responded that gentleman,
looking over the side of the chaise with all
the coolness in life.

"Are you mad, Sir?" demanded Mr.
Pickwick.

"Not a bit of it," replied Bob, "only
cheerful."

"Cheerful, Sir!" ejaculated Mr. Pick-
wick. "Take down that scandalous red
handkerchief. I beg— I insist, Sir. Sam,
take it down."

Before Sam could interpose, Mr. Bob
Sawyer gracefully struck his colours, and
having put them in his pocket, nodded in a
courteous manner to Mr. Pickwick, wiped
the mouth of the case-bottle, and applied it
to his own; thereby informing him, with-
out any unnecessary waste of words, that
he devoted that draught to tasting him all
manner of happiness and prosperity. Hav-
ing done this, Bob replaced the cork with
great care, and, looking benignantly down
on Mr. Pickwick, took a large bite out of
the sandwich, and smiled.

"Come," said Mr. Pickwick, whose
momentary anger was not quite proof
against Bob's immoveable self-possession,
"pray, let us save no more of this ab-
surdity, Sir."

"No, no," replied Bob, once more ex-
changing hats with Mr. Weller; "I didn't
mean to do it, only I got so elevated with
the ride that I couldn't help it."

"Think of the look of the thing," ex-
postulated Mr. Pickwick; "have some
regard to appearances."

"Oh, certainly," said Bob, "it's not the
sort of thing at all. All over, governor."

Satisfied with this assurance, Mr. Pick-
wick once more drew his head into the
chaise and pulled up the glass; but he had
scarcely resumed the conversation which
Mr. Bob Sawyer had interrupted, when he
was somewhat startled by the apparition of
a small dark body, of an oblong form, on
the outside of the window, which gave
sundry taps against it, as if impatient of
admission.

"What's this?" exclaimed Mr. Pick-
wick.

"It looks like a case-bottle," remarked
Ben Allen, eyeing the object in question
through his spectacles with some interest
"I rather think it belongs to Bob."

The impression was perfectly accurate,
for Mr. Bob Sawyer, having attached the
case-bottle to the end of the walking-stick,
was battering the window with it in token
of his wish that his friends inside would
par take of its contents, in all good fellow-
ship and harmony.

"What's to be done?" said Mr. Pick-
wick, looking at the bottle. "This pro-
ceeding is more absurd than the other."

"I think it would be best to take it in,"
replied Mr. Ben Allen: "it would serve
him right to take it in and keep it, wouldn't
it?"

"It would," said Mr. Pickwick; "shall I?"

"I think it the most proper course we
could possibly adopt," replied Ben.

This advice quite coinciding with his own
opinion, Mr. Pickwick gently let down the
window and disengaged the bottle from the
stick; upon which the latter was drawn up,
and Mr. Bob Sawyer was heard to laugh
heartily.

"What a merry dog it is," said Mr.
Pickwick, looking round at his companion
with the bottle in his hand.

"He is," said Mr. Allen.

"You cannot possibly be angry with
him," remarked Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite out of the question," observed
Benjamin Allen.

During this short interchange of senti-
ments, Mr. Pickwick had, in an abstracted
mood, uncorked the bottle.

"What is it?" inquired Ben Allen, care-
lessly.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pickwick,
with equal carelessness. "It smells, I
think, like milk-punch."

"Oh, indeed!" said Ben.
"I think so," rejoined Mr. Pickwick, very properly guarding himself against the possibility of stating an untruth: "mind, I could not undertake to say for certain, without tasting it."

"You had better do so," said Ben; "we may as well know what it is."

"Do you think so?" replied Mr. Pickwick. "Well, if you are curious to know, of course I have no objection."

Ever willing to sacrifice his own feelings to the wishes of his friend, Mr. Pickwick at once took a pretty long taste.

"What is it?" inquired Ben Allen, interrupting him with some impatience.

"Curious," said Mr. Pickwick, smacking his lips. "I hardly know, now. Oh, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, after a second taste, "it is punch."

Mr. Ben Allen looked at Mr. Pickwick; Mr. Pickwick looked at Mr. Ben Allen. Mr. Ben Allen smiled; Mr. Pickwick did not.

"It would serve him right," said the last-named gentleman, with some severity, "it would serve him right to drink it every drop."

"The very thing that occurred to me," said Ben Allen.

"Is it indeed?" rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "Then here's his health." With these words, that excellent person took a most energetic pull at the bottle, and handed it to Ben Allen, who was not slow to imitate his example. The smiles became mutual, and the milk-punch was gradually and cheerfully disposed of.

"After all," said Mr. Pickwick, as he drained the last drop, "his pranks are really very amusing—very entertaining indeed."

"You may say that," rejoined Mr. Ben Allen. And in proof of Bob Sawyer's being one of the funniest fellows alive, he proceeded to entertain Mr. Pickwick with a long and circumstantial account how that gentleman once drank himself into a fever and got his head shaved; the relation of which pleasant and agreeable history was only stopped by the toppage of the claret at the Bell at Berkley Heath, to change horses.

"I say, we're going to dine here, aren't we?" said Bob, looking in at the window.

"Dine?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Why, we've only come nineteen miles, and more got eighty-seven and a half to go."

"Just the reason why we should take something to enable us to bear up against the fatigue," remonstrated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"Oh, it's quite impossible to dine at half-past eleven o'clock in the day," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking at his watch.

"So it is," rejoined Bob, "lunch is the very thing. Hallo, you Sir! Lunch for three directly; and keep the horses back for a quarter of an hour. Tell them to put every thing they have got cold, on the table, and some bottled ale—and let us taste your very best Madeira." Issuing these orders with monstrous importance and bustle, Mr. Bob Sawyer at once hurried into the house to superintend the arrangements; in less than five minutes he returned and declared them to be excellent.

The quality of the lunch fully justified the eulogium which Bob had pronounced, and very great justice was done to it, not only by that gentleman, but Mr. Ben Allen, and Mr. Pickwick also. Under the auspices of the three, the bottled ale and the Madeira were promptly disposed of; and when (the horses being once more put to) they resumed their seats, with the case-bottle full of the best substitute for milk-punch that could be procured on so short a notice, the key-bugle sounded and the red flag waved without the slightest opposition on Mr. Pickwick's part.

At the Hop Pole at Tewkesbury they stopped to dine; upon which occasion there was more bottled ale, with some more Madeira and some Port besides; and here the case-bottle was replenished for the fourth time. Under the influence of these combined stimulants, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Ben Allen fell fast asleep for thirty miles, while Bob and Mr. Weller sang duets in the dickey.

It was quite dark when Mr. Pickwick roused himself sufficiently to look out of the window. The straggling cottages by the road-side, the dingy hue of every object visible, the murky atmosphere, the paths of cinders and brick-dust, the deep red glow of furnaces fires in the distance, the volumes of dense smoke issuing heavily forth from high toppling chimneys, blackening and obscuring every thing around; the glare of distant lights, the ponderous wagons which toiled along the road, laden with clashing rods of iron, or piled with heavy goods—all betokened their rapid approach to the great working-town of Birmingham.

As they rattled through the narrow thoroughfares leading to the heart of the town, the sights and sounds of earnest occupation struck more forcibly on the senses. The streets were thronged with working people. The hum of labour resounded from every house; lights gleamed from the long casement windows in the attic stories, and the whirl of wheels and noise of machinery shook the trembling walls. The fires, whose lurid sullen light had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works and factories of the town. The din
of hummers, the rushing of steam, and the dead heavy clanking of the engines, was the harsh music which arose from every quarter.

The postboy was driving briskly through the open streets and past the handsome and well-lighted shops which intervene between the outskirts of the town and the old Royal Hotel, before Mr. Pickwick had begun to consider the very difficult and delicate nature of the commission which had carried him thither.

The delicate nature of this commission, and the difficulty of executing it in a satisfactory manner, were by no means lessened by the voluntary companionship of Mr. Bob Sawyer: truth to tell, Mr. Pickwick felt that his presence on the occasion, however Considerate and gratifying, was by no means an honour he would willingly have vouch'd; in fact he would cheerfully have given a reasonable sum of money to have had Mr. Bob Sawyer removed to any place of not less than fifty miles' distance without delay.

Mr. Pickwick had never held any personal communication with Mr. Winkle, senior, although he had once or twice corresponded with him by letter, and returned satisfactory answers to his inquiries concerning the moral character and behaviour of his son; he felt nervously sensible that to wait upon him for the first time attended by Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen, both slightly fuddled, was not the most ingenious and likely means that could have been hit upon to propessess him in his favour.

"However," said Mr. Pickwick, entertaining re-assurance himself, "I must do the best I can: I must see him to-night, for I faithfully promised to do so; and if they persist in accompanying me, I must make the interview as brief as possible, and be content to hope that, for their own sakes, they will not expose themselves."

As he comforted himself with these reflections, the chaise stopped at the door of the Old Royal. Ben Allen having been partially awakened from a stupendous sleep, and dragged out by the collar by Mr. Samuel Weller, Mr. Pickwick was enabled to alight. They were shown to a comfortable apartment, and Mr. Pickwick at once pronounced a question to the waiter concerning the whereabouts of Mr. Winkle's residence.

"Close by, Sir," said the waiter, "not above five hundred yards, Sir. Mr. Winkle is a wharfinger, Sir, at the canal, Sir. Private residence is not—oh dear no, Sir, not five hundred yards, Sir." Here the waiter blew a candle out and made a feint of writing it again, in order to afford Mr. Pickwick an opportunity of asking any further questions, if he felt so disposed.

"Take anything now, Sir?" said the waiter, lighting the candle in desperation at Mr. Pickwick's silence. "Tea or coffee, Sir? dinner, Sir?"

"Nothing now."

"Very good, Sir. Like to order supper Sir?"

"Not just now."

"Very good, Sir." Here he walked softly to the door, and then stopping short, turned round and said with great anxiety—

"Shall I send the chambermaid, gentlemen?"

"You may if you please," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"If you please, Sir?"

"And bring some soda-water," said Bob Sawyer.

"Soda-water, Sir? Yes, Sir."

And with his mind apparently relieved from an overwhelming weight, by having at last got an order for something, the waiter imperceptibly melted away. Waiters never walk or run. They have a peculiar and mysterious power of skimming out of rooms, which other mortals possess not.

Some slight symptoms of vitality having been awakened in Mr. Ben Allen by the soda-water, he suffered himself to be prevailed upon to wash his face and hands, and to submit to be brushed by Sam. Mr. Pickwick and Bob Sawyer having also repaired the disorder which the journey had made in their apparel, the three started forth, arm-in-arm, to Mr. Winkle's; Bob Sawyer impregnating the atmosphere with tobacocosmoke as he walked along.

About a quarter of a mile off, in a quiet, substantial-looking street, stood an old, red-brick house with three steps before the door, and a brass plate upon it, bearing in fat Roman capitals the words, "Mr. Winkle."

The steps were very white, and the bricks were very red, and the house was very clean; and here stood Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Benjamin Allen, and Mr. Bob Sawyer, as the clock struck ten.

A smart servant girl answered the knock, and started on beholding the three strangers.

"In Mr. Winkle at home, my dear?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"He is just going to supper, Sir," replied the girl.

"Give him that card, if you please," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "Say I am sorry to trouble him so late an hour; but I am anxious to see him to-night, and have only just arrived."

The girl looked timidly at Mr. Bob Sawyer, who was expressing his admiration of her personal charms by a variety of wonderful grimaces, and casting an eye at the hats
and great-coats which hung in the passage, called another girl to mind the door while she went up stairs. The sentinel was speedily relieved, for the girl returned immediately, and begging pardon of the gentlemen for leaving them in the street, ushered them into a floor-clothed back parlour, half office and half dressing-room, in which the principal useful and ornamental articles of furniture were a desk, a wash-hand stand, and shaving-glass, a boot-rack and boot-jack, a high stool, four chairs, a table, and an old eight-day clock. Over the mantel-piece were the sunken doors of an iron safe, while a couple of hanging shelves for books, an almanac, and several sheaves of dusty papers, decorated the walls.

"Very sorry to leave you standing at the door, Sir," said the girl, lighting a lamp, and addressing Mr. Pickwick with a winning smile, "but you were quite strangers to me; and we have such a many trampers that only come to see what they can lay their hands on, that really—"

"There is not the least occasion for any apology, my dear," said Mr. Pickwick, good-humouredly.

"Not the slightest, my love," said Bob Sawyer, playfully stretching forth his arms, and skipping from side to side, as if to prevent the young lady’s leaving the room.

The young lady was not at all softened by these allurements, for she at once expressed her opinion that Mr. Bob Sawyer was an "odious creature;" and, on his becoming rather more pressing in his attentions, imprinting her fair fingers upon his face, and bounced out of the room with many expressions of aversion and contempt.

Deprived of the young lady’s society, Mr. Bob Sawyer proceeded to divert himself by peeping into the desk, looking into all the table-drawers, feigning to pick the lock of the iron safe, turning the almanac with its face to the wall, trying Mr. Winkle, senior’s, boots on, over his own, and making several other humorous experiments upon the furniture, all of which afforded Mr. Pickwick unspeakable horror and agony, and yielded Mr. Bob Sawyer proportionate delight.

At length the door opened, and a little old gentleman in a smurf-coloured suit, with a head and face the precise counterpart of those belonging to Mr. Winkle, junior, excepting that he was rather bald, trotted into the room with Mr. Pickwick’s card in one hand, and a silver candlestick in the other.

"Mr. Pickwick, Sir, how do you do?" said Winkle the elder, putting down the candlestick and proffering his hand. "Hope I see you at a late hour? Go in, please you. Be seated, Mr. Pickwick, I beg, Sir. This gentleman is—"

"My friend, Mr. Sawyer," interposed Mr. Pickwick, "your son’s friend."

"Oh," said Mr. Winkle the elder, looking rather grimly at Bob, "I hope you are well, Sir."

"Right as a trivet," replied Bob Sawyer.

"This other gentleman," cried Mr. Pickwick, "is, as you will see when you have read the letter with which I am intrusted, a very near relative, or I should rather say a very particular friend of your son’s. His name is Allen."

"That gentleman!" inquired Mr. Winkle, pointing with the card towards Ben Allen, who had fallen asleep in an attitude which left nothing of him visible but his spine and his coat collar.

Mr. Pickwick was on the point of replying to the question, and reciting Mr. Benjamin Allen’s name and honourable distinctions at full length, when the sprightly Mr. Bob Sawyer, with the view of rousing his friend to a sense of his situation, inflicted a startling pinch upon the fleshy part of his arm, which caused him to jump up with a loud shriek. Suddenly aware that he was in the presence of a stranger, Mr. Ben Allen advanced, and, shaking Mr. Winkle most affectionately by both hands for about five minutes, murmured in some half-intelligible fragments of sentences the delight he felt in seeing him, and a hospitable-inquiry, whether he felt disposed to take anything after his walk, or would prefer waiting "till dinner-time," which done, he sat down and gazed about him with a petrified stare, as if he had not the remotest idea where he was, which indeed he had not.

All this was most embarrassing to Mr. Pickwick, the more especially as Mr. Winkle, senior, evinced palpable astonishment at the eccentric, not to say extraordinary—behaviour of his two companions. To bring the matter to an issue at once, he drew a letter from his pocket, and presenting it to Mr. Winkle, senior, said—

"This letter, Sir, is from your son. You will see by its contents that on your favourable and fatherly consideration of it, depend his future happiness and welfare. Will you oblige me by giving it the calmest and coolest perusal, and by discussing the subject afterwards, with me, in the tone and spirit in which alone it ought to be discussed? You may judge of the importance your decision is of, to your son, and his intense anxiety upon the subject, by my waiting upon you without any previous warning at so late an hour; and," added Mr. Pickwick, glancing slightly at his two companions, "and under such unfavourable circumstances."

With this prelude, Mr. Pickwick placed four closely-written sides of extra express
wire-wove penitence, in the hands of the astonished Mr. Winkle, senior; and re-seating himself in his chair, watched his looks and manner, anxiously it is true, but with the open front of a gentleman who feels he has taken no part which he need excuse or palliate.

The old wharfinger turned the letter over; looked at the front, back, and sides; made a microscopic examination of the fat little boy on the seal; raised his eyes to Mr. Pickwick’s face; and then, seating himself on the high stool and drawing the lamp closer to him, broke the wax, unfolded the epistle, and lifting it to the light, prepared to read.

Just at this moment, Mr. Bob Sawyer, whose wit had lain dormant for some minutes, placed his hands upon his knees and made a face after the portraits of the late Mr. Grimaldi, as clowned. It so happened that Mr. Winkle, senior, instead of being deeply engaged in reading the letter, as Mr. Bob Sawyer thought, changed to be looking over the top of it at no less a person than Mr. Bob Sawyer himself; and rightly conjecturing that the face aforesaid was made in ridicule and derision of his own person, he fixed his eyes on Bob with such expressive sternness, that the late Mr. Grimaldi’s lineaments gradually resolved themselves into a very fine expression of humility and confusion.

“Did you speak, Sir?” inquired Mr. Winkle, senior, after an awful silence.

“No, Sir,” replied Bob, with no remains of the clown about him, save and except the extreme redness of his cheeks.

“You are sure you did not, Sir?” said Mr. Winkle, senior.

“Oh dear! yes, Sir, quite,” replied Bob.

“I thought you did, Sir,” rejoined the old gentleman, with indignant emphasis.

“Perhaps you looked at me, Sir?”

“Oh, no! Sir, not at all,” replied Bob, with extreme civility.

“I am very glad to hear it, Sir,” said Mr. Winkle, senior. Having frowned upon the abashed Bob with great magnificence, the old gentleman again brought the letter to the light, and began to read it seriously.

Mr. Pickwick eyed him intently as he turned from the bottom line of the first page to the top line of the second, and from the bottom of the second to the top of the third, and from the bottom of the third to the top of the fourth; but not the slightest alteration of countenance afforded a clue to the feelings with which he received the announcement of his son’s marriage, which Mr. Pickwick knew was in the very first half-dozen lines.

He read the letter to the last word, folded it again with all the carefulness and precision of a man of business; and just when Mr. Pickwick expected some great outbreak of feeling, dipped a pen in the inkstand, and said as quietly as if he were speaking on the most ordinary counting-house topic—

“What is Nathaniel’s address, Mr. Pickwick?”

“The George and Vulture, at present,” replied that gentleman.

“George and Vulture. Where is that?”

“George Yard, Lombard Street.”

“In the City?”

“Yes.”

The old gentleman methodically inscribed the address on the back of the letter; and then placing it in the desk, which he locked, said as he got off the stool and put the bunch of keys in his pocket—

“I suppose there is nothing else which need detain us, Mr. Pickwick?”

“Nothing else, my dear Sir!” observed that warm-hearted person in indignant amazement. “Nothing else! Have you no opinion to express on this momentous event in our young friend’s life; no assurance to convey to him, through me, of the continuance of your affection and protection; nothing to say which will cheer and sustain him, and the anxious girl who looks to him for comfort and support! My dear Sir, consider.”

“I will consider,” replied the old gentleman. “I have nothing to say just now. I am a man of business, Mr. Pickwick; I never commit myself hastily in any affair, and from what I see of this, I by no means like the appearance of it. A thousand pounds is not much, Mr. Pickwick.”

“You’re very right, Sir,” interposed Ben Allen, just awake enough to know that he had spent his thousand pounds without the smallest difficulty. “You’re an intelligent man; Bob, he’s a very knowing fellow this.”

“I am very happy to find that you do me the justice to make the admission, Sir,” said Mr. Winkle, senior, looking contemptuously at Ben Allen, who was shaking his head profoundly. “The fact is, Mr. Pickwick, that when I gave my son a running licence for a year or so to see something of men and manners (which he has done under your auspices), so that he might not enter into life a mere boarding-school milk-soap to be gulled by everybody, I never bargained for this. He knows that very well, so if I withdraw my countenance from him on this account, he has no call to be surprised. He shall hear from me, Mr. Pickwick. Good night, Sir. Margaret, open the door.”

All this time Bob Sawyer had been nudging Mr. Ben Allen to say something on the
right side; and Ben accordingly now burst out, without the slightest preliminary notice, into a brief but impassioned piece of eloquence.

"Sir," said Mr. Ben Allen, staring at the old gentleman, through a pair of very dim and languid eyes, and working his right arm vehemently up and down, "you—you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"As the lady's brother, of course you are an excellent judge of the question," reported Mr. Winkle, senior, "there; that's enough. Pray say no more, Mr. Pickwick. Good night, gentlemen."

With these words the old gentleman took up the candlestick, and opening the room door, politely motioned towards the passage.

"You will regret this, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, setting his teeth close together to keep down his choler; for he felt how important the effort might prove to his young friend.

"I am at present of a different opinion," calmly replied Mr. Winkle, senior. "Once again, gentlemen, I wish you a good night."

Mr. Pickwick walked with angry strides into the street. Mr. Bob Sawyer, completely quelled by the decision of the old gentleman's manner, took the same course; Mr. Ben Allen's hat rolled down the steps immediately afterwards, and Mr. Ben Allen's body followed it directly. The whole party went silent and supperless to bed; and Mr. Pickwick thought, just before he fell asleep, that if he had known Mr. Winkle, senior, had been quite so much of a man of business, it was extremely probable he might never have waited upon him, on such an errand.

CHAPTER LII.

In which Mr. Pickwick encounters an old acquaintance, to which fortunate circumstance the reader is mainly indebted for matter of thrilling interest herein set down, concerning two great public men of might and power.

The morning which broke upon Mr. Pickwick's sight at eight o'clock was not at all calculated to elevate his spirits, or to lessen the depression which the unlooked-for result of his embassy inspired. The sky was dark and gloomy, the air damp and raw, the streets wet and sloppy. The smoke hung sluggishly above the chimney-tops as if it lacked the courage to rise, and the rain came slowly and doggedly down as if it had not even the spirit to pour. A game-cock in the stable-yard, deprived of every spark of his accustomed animation, balanced himself disdainfully on one leg in a corner; and a donkey, moping with drooping head under the narrow roof of an out-house, appeared from his meditative and miserable countenance to be contemplating suicide. In the street, umbrellas were once the only things to be seen, and the clicking of pattens and splashing of rain-drops, the only sounds to be heard.

The breakfast was interrupted by very little conversation; even Mr. Bob Sawyer felt the influence of the weather, and the previous day's excitement. In his own most expressive language, he was "dowdered." So was Mr. Ben Allen. So was Mr. Pickwick.

In protracted expectation of the weather clearing up, the last evening paper from London was read and re-read with an intensity of interest only known in cases of extreme desultion; every inch of the carpet was walked over with similar perseverance, the windows were looked out of often enough to justify the imposition of an additional duty upon them; all kinds of topics of conversation were started, and failed; and at length Mr. Pickwick, when noon had arrived without a change for the better, rang the bell resolutely and ordered out the chaise.

Although the roads were miry, and the drizzling rain came down harder than it had done yet, and although the mud and wet splashed in at the open windows of the carriage to such an extent that the discomfort was almost as great to the pair of insides as to the pair of outsides, still there was something in the very motion, and the sense of being up and doing, which was so infinitely superior to being pent in a dull room, looking at the dull rain dripping into a dull street, that they all agreed, on starting, that the change was a great improvement, and wondered how they could possibly have delayed making it as long as they had done.

When they stopped to change at Coventry, the steam ascended from the horses in such clouds as wholly to obscure the oyster, whose voice was however heard to declare from the mist, that he expected the first gold medal from the Humane Society on their next distribution of rewards, for taking the postboy's hat off; the water descending from the brim of which, the invisible gentleman declared must inevitably have drowned him (the postboy,) but for his great presence of mind in tearing it promptly from his head, and drying the gasping man's countenance with a wisp of straw.

"This is pleasant," said Bob Sawyer, turning up his coat-collar and pulling the shawl over his mouth to concentrate the fumes of a glass of brandy just swallowed.
— Posthumous Papers of SAM WELLER.

"Wery," replied Sam composedly.
"You don't seem to mind it," observed Bob.
"V'y, I don't exactly see no good my mistake's on it 'ud do, Sir," replied Sam.
"That's an unanswerable reason, anyhow," said Bob.
"Yes, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller. "What-ever is, is right, as the young nobleman sweetly remarked ven they put him down on the pension list 'cos his mother's uncle's wife's grandfather vunce lit the king's pipe with a portable tinder-box."
"Not a bad notion that, Sam," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, approvingly.
"Just wet the young nobleman—saw ev'ry quarter-day afterwards for the rest of his life," replied Mr. Weller.
"Was you ever called in," inquired Sam, glancing at the driver, after a short silence, and lowering his voice to a mysterious whisper, "was you ever called in, ven you was 'prentice to a sawbones, to visit a postboy?"
"I don't remember that I ever was," replied Bob Sawyer.
"You never see a postboy in that 'ere hospital as you walked (as they says o' the ghosts,) did you?" demanded Sam.
"No," replied Bob Sawyer. "I don't think I ever did.
"Never know'd a churchyard were there wos a postboy's tombstone, or see a dead postboy, did you?" inquired Sam, pursuing his catechism.
"No," rejoined Bob. "I never did."
"No," rejoined Sam, triumphantly.
"Nor never vill; and there's another thing that no man never see, and that's a dead donkey—no man never see a dead donkey, 'cept the gent'lm'n in the black silk smalls as 'lowd the young 'coman as kept a goat; and that wos a French donkey, so wery likely he warn't vun o' the regular breed."
"Well, what has that to do with the postboys?" asked Bob Sawyer.
"This here," replied Sam. "Without goin' so far as to as-sort, as some wery sensible people do, that postboys and donkeys is both immortal, wot I say is this; that venever they feels themselves gettin' stiff and past their vark, they just rides off together, vun postboy to a pair, in the usual way; wot becomes on 'em nobody knows, but it's wery probable as they starts away to take their pleasure in some other world, for there ain't a man alive as ever see either a donkey or a postboy a takin' his pleasure in this world."

Expatiating upon this learned and remarkable theory, and citing many curious statistical and other facts in its support, Sam Weller beguiled the time until they reached Danchurch, where a dry postboy and fresh horses were procured; the next stage was Daventry, and the next Towcester; and at the end of each stage it rained harder than it had done at the beginning.
"I say," remonstrated Bob Sawyer, looking in at the coach-window, as they pulled up before the door of the Saracen's Head, Towcester, "this won't do, you know."
"Bless me!" said Mr. Pickwick, just awakening from a nap, "I'm afraid you are wet."
"Oh you are, are you?" returned Bob. "Yes, I am, a little that way — uncomfortably damp, perhaps."

Bob did look dampish, inasmuch as the rain was streaming from his neck, elbows, cuffs, skirts and knees; and his whole apparel shone so with the wet, that it might have been mistaken for a full suit of prepared olskin.
"I am rather wet," said Bob, giving himself a shake, and casting a little hydraulic shower around to do so, like a New foundlander dog just emerged from the water.
"I think it's quite impossible to go on to-night," interposed Ben.
"Out of the question, Sir," remarked Sam Weller, coming to assist in the conversation; "it's cruelty to animals, Sir, to ask 'em to do it. There's beds here, Sir," said Sam, addressing his master, "everything clean and comfortable. Very good little dinner, Sir, they can get ready in half an hour—pair of fowls, Sir, and a real outlet; French beans, 'taters, tart and tidiness. You'd better stop were you are, Sir, if I might recommend. Take a wise, Sir, as the doctor said."

The host of the Saracen's Head opportunely appeared at this moment, to confirm Mr. Weller's statement relative to the accommodations of the establishment, and to back his entreaties with a variety of dismal conjectures regarding the state of the roads, the doubt of fresh horses being to be had at the next stage, the dead certainty of its raining all night, the equally moral certainty of its clearing up in the morning, and other topics of inducement familiar to innkeepers.

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, "but I must send a letter to London by some conveyance, so that it may be delivered the very first thing in the morning, or I must go forward at all hazards."

The landlord smiled his delight. Nothing could be easier than for the gentleman to incluse a letter in a sheet of brown paper and send it on either by the mail or the night coach from Birmingham. If the gentleman was particularly anxious to have it left as soon as possible, he might write
Outside, "To be delivered immediately," which was sure to be attended to; or "pay the bearer half-a-crown extra for instant delivery," which was surer still.

"Very well," said Mr. Pickwick, "then we will stop here."

"Lights in the Sun, John; make up the fire—the gentlemen are wet," cried the landlord. "This way, gentlemen; don't trouble yourself about the postboy now, Sir; I'll send him to you when you ring for him, Sir. Now John, the candles."

The candles were brought, the fire was stirred up, and a fresh log of wood thrown on. In ten minutes' time a waiter was laying the cloth for dinner, the curtains were drawn, the fire was blazing brightly, and everything looked (as every thing always does in all decent English inns) as if the travellers had been expected and their comforts prepared, for days beforehand.

Mr. Pickwick sat down at a side-table and hastily dictated a note to Mr. Winkle, merely informing him that he was detained by stress of weather, but would certainly be in London next day; until then he deferred any further account of his proceedings. This note was hastily made up into a parcel, and despatched to the bar per Mr. Samuel Weller.

Sam left it with the landlady, and was returning to pull his master's boots off, after drying himself by the kitchen fire, when, glancing casually through a half-opened door, he was arrested by the sight of a gentleman with a sandy head who had a large bundle of newspapers lying on the table before him, and was perusing the leading article of one with a settled sneer which curled up his nose and all his other features into a majestic expression of haughty contempt.

"Hallo!" said Sam, "I ought to know that ere head and them feature; the eye-glass, too, and the broad-brimmed 'at! Estanswill to vit, or I'm a Roman."

Sam was taken with a troublesome cough at once, for the purpose of attracting the gentleman's attention: and the gentleman starting at the sound, raised his head and his eye-glass, and disclosed to view the profound and thoughtful features of Mr. Pott, of the Estanswill Gazette.

"Beggin' your pardon, Sir," said Sam, with a bow, "my master's here, Mr. Pott.""Hush, hush!" cried Pott, drawing Sam into the room, and closing the door, with a countenance of mysterious dread and apprehension.

"What's the matter, Sir?" inquired Sam, looking vacantly about him.

"Not a whisper of my name," replied Pott—"this is a buff neighbourhood. If the excited and irritable populace knew I was here, I should be torn to pieces."

"No! would you, Sir?" inquired Sam.

"I should be a victim of their fury," replied Pott. "Now, young man, what of your master?"

"He's a stoppin' here to-night on his way to town, with a couple of friends," replied Sam.

"Is Mr. Winkle one of them?" inquired Pott, with a slight frown.

"No, Sir; Mr. Winkle stops at home now," rejoined Sam. "He's married."

"Married!" exclaimed Pott, with frightful vehemence. He stopped, smiled darkly, and added, in a low, vindictive tone, "It serves him right!"

Having given vent to this cruel ebullition of deadly malice, and cold-blooded triumph over a fallen enemy, Mr. Pott inquired whether Mr. Pickwick's friends were "blue;" receiving a most satisfactory answer in the affirmative from Sam, who knew as much about the matter as Pott himself, he consented to accompany him to Mr. Pickwick's room, where a hearty welcome awaited him, and an agreement to club their dinners together was at once made and ratified.

"And how are matters going on in Eatanswill?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, when Pott had taken a seat near the fire, and the whole party had got their wet boots off, and dry slippers on. "Is the Independent still in being?"

"The Independent, Sir," replied Pott, "is still dragging on a wretched and lingering career, abhorred and despised by even the few who are cognisant of its miserable and disgraceful existence; stifled by the very fifth it so profusely scatters: rendered deaf and blind by the exhalations of its own slime, the obscene journal, happily unconscious of its degraded state, is rapidly sinking beneath that tremendous mud which, while it seems to give it a firm standing with the low and debased classes of society, is, nevertheless, rising above its detested head, and will speedily engulf it for ever."

Having delivered this manifesto (which formed a portion of his last week's leader) with vehement articulation, the editor paused to take breath, and looked majestically at Bob Sawyer.

"You are a young man, Sir," said Pott. Mr. Bob Sawyer nodded.

"So are you, Sir," said Pott, addressing Mr. Ben Allen.

Ben admitted the soft impeachment.

"And are both deeply imbued with those blue principles, which, so long as I live, I have pledged myself to the people of these
kingdoms to support and to maintain?" suggested Pott.

"Why, I don't exactly know about that," replied Bob Sawyer, "I am—"

"Not buff, Mr. Pickwick," interrupted Pott, drawing back his chair, "your friend is not buff, Sir!"

"No, no," rejoined Bob, "I am a kind of plebe at present; a compound of all sorts of colours."

"A waverer," said Pott, solemnly, "a waverer. I should like to show you a series of eight articles, Sir, that have appeared in the Eastamswill Gazette. I think I may venture to say that you would not be long in establishing your opinions on a firm and solid basis, Sir."

"I dare say I should turn very blue, long before I got to the end of them," responded Bob.

Mr. Pott looked dubiously at Bob Sawyer for some seconds, and turning to Mr. Pickwick, said—

"You have seen the literary articles which have appeared in the Eastamswill Gazette in the course of the last three months, and which have excited such general—I may say such universal attention and admiration?"

"Why," replied Mr. Pickwick, slightly embarrassed by the question, "the fact is, I have been so much engaged in other ways, that I really have not had an opportunity of perusing them."

"You should do so, Sir," said Pott, with a severe countenance.

"I will," said Mr. Pickwick.

"They appeared in the form of a copious review of a work on Chinese metaphysics, Sir," said Pott.

"Oh," observed Mr. Pickwick—"from your pen I hope!"

"From the pen of my critic, Sir," rejoined Pott, with dignity.

"An abstruse subject, I should conceive," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very, Sir," responded Pott, looking intently sage. "He crusaded for it, to use a technical but expressive term; he read up for the subject, at my desire, in the Encyclopædia Britannica."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pickwick; "I was not aware that that valuable work contained any information respecting Chinese metaphysics."

"He read, Sir," rejoined Pott, laying his hand on Mr. Pickwick's knee, and looking round with a smile of intellectual superior-ity, "he read for metaphysics under the letter C, and for China under the letter C; and combined his information, Sir!"

Mr. Pott's features assumed so much additional grandeur at the recollection of the powers and research displayed in the learned effusions in question, that some minutes elapsed before Mr. Pickwick felt emboldened to renew the conversation; at length, as the Editor's countenance gradually relapsed into its customary expression of moral supremacy, he ventured to resume the discourse by asking—

"Is it fair to inquire what great object has brought you so far from home?"

"That object which actuates and animates me in all gigantic labours, Sir!" replied Mr. Pott, with a calm smile—"my country's good."

"I supposed it was some public mission," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, Sir," resumed Pott, "it is." Here, bending towards Mr. Pickwick, he whispered in a deep hollow voice, "a buff ball, Sir, will take place in Birmingham to-morrow evening."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, Sir, and supper," added Pott. "You don't say so!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick.

Pott nodded portentously.

Now, although Mr. Pickwick feigned to stand aghast at this disclosure, he was so little versed in local politics that he was unable to form an adequate comprehension of the importance of the dire conspiracy it referred to; observing which, Mr. Pott, drawing forth the last number of the Eastamswill Gazette, and referring to the same, delivered himself of the following paragraph:

"HOLE-AND-CORNER BUFFERY.

A reptile contemporary has recently awartered forth his black venom in the vain and hopeless attempt of sullying the fair name of our distinguished and excellent representative, the Honourable Mr. Slumkey—that Slumkey whom we, long before he gained his present noble and exalted position, predicted would one day be, as he now is, at once his county's brightest honour, and her proudest boast; alike her bold defender and her honest pride—our reptile contemporary, we say, has made himself merry at the expense of a superbly enbassed plated coal-scuttle, which has been presented to that glorious man by his enraptured constituents, and towards the purchase of which, the nameless wretch insinuates, the Honourable Mr. Slumkey himself contributed, through a confidential friend of his butcher's, more than three-fourths of the whole sum subscribed. Why, does not the crawling creature see that even if this be the fact, the Honourable Mr. Slumkey only appears in a still more amiable and radiant light than before, if that be possible? does not even his obtuseness..."
perceive that this amiable and touching des-

The landlord and waiter entering at the

The landlord slightly inclined his head.

stage-coach, outward bound, which halted
at the inn to deliver packages, requested to
know whether if he stopped short on his
journey and remained there for the night, he
could be furnished with the necessary
accommodation of a bed and bedstead.

"Certainly, Sir," replied the landlord.

"I can, can I?" inquired the stranger, who
seemed habitually suspicious in look
and manner.

"No doubt of it, Sir," replied the landlord.

"Good," said the stranger. "Coachman,
I get down here. Guard, my carpet-bag."

Bidding the other passengers good-night
in a rather snappish manner, the stranger
alighted. He was a shortish gentleman,
with very stiff black hair, cut in the per-
sonine or blacking-brush style, and standing
stiff and straight all over his head; his an-
psect was pompous and threatening; his
manner was peremptory; his eyes sharp
and restless; and his whole bearing be-
spoke a feeling of great confidence in him-
self, if, and a consciousness of immeasurable
superiority over all other people.

This gentleman was shown into the room
originally assigned to the patriotic Mr.
Pott; and the waiter remarked, in dumb
astonishment at the singular coincidence,
that he had no sooner lighted the candles
than the gentleman, diving into his hat,
drew forth a newspaper, and began to read
it with the very same expression of indig-

ment scorn which upon the majestic fea-
tures of Pott had paralyzed his energies an
hour before. The man observed too, that
whereas Mr. Pott's scorn had been roused
by a newspaper headed The Eatanwilly
Independent, this gentleman's withering con-
tempt was awakened by a newspaper enti-

tled The Eatanwilly Gazette.

"Send the landlord," said the stranger

"Yes, Sir," rejoined the waiter.

The landlord was sent, and came.

"Are you the landlord?" inquired the
gentleman.

"I am, Sir," replied the landlord.

"Do you know me?" demanded the gen-
tleman.

"I have not that pleasure, Sir," rejoined
the landlord.

"My name is Slurk," said the gentle
man.

The landlord slightly inclined his head.

"Slurk, Sir," repeated the gentleman,
haughtily. "Do you know me now, man?"

The landlord scratched his head, looked
at the ceiling, and at the stranger, and
smiled feebly.

"Do you know me, man?" inquired
the stranger, angrily.

The landlord made a strong effort, and
at length replied, "Well, Sir, I do not know
you."
"Good God!" said the stranger, dashing his clenched fist upon the table. "And this is popularity!"

The landlord took a step or two towards the door, and the stranger fixing his eyes upon him, resumed.

"This," said the stranger, "this is gratitude for years of labour and study in behalf of the masses. I slighted wet and weary; no enthusiastic crowds press forward to greet their champion, the church-bells are silent; the very name elicits no responsive feeling in their torpid bosoms. It is enough," said the agitated Mr. Slurk, pacing to and fro, "to curdle the ink in one's pen, and induce one to abandon their cause for ever."

"Did you see Brandy and water, Sir?" said the landlord, venturing a hint.

"No, Sir," said Mr. Slurk, turning fiercely upon him. "Have you got a fire anywhere?"

"We can light one directly, Sir," said the landlord.

"Which will throw out no heat till it is bed-time," interrupted Mr. Slurk. "Is there anybody in the kitchen?"

"Not a soul. There was a beautiful fire. Everybody had gone, and the door was closed for the night."

"I will drink my rum and water," said Mr. Slurk, "by the kitchen fire." So gathering up his hat and newspaper, he stalked solemnly behind the landlord to that humble apartment, and throwing himself on a settle by the fireside, resumed his countenance of scorn, and began to read and drink in silent dignity.

Now some demon of discord, flying over the Saracen's Head, at that moment, on casting down his eyes in mere idle curiosity, happened to behold Slurk established comfortably by the kitchen fire, and Pott slightly elevated with wine in another room; upon which the malicious demon darting down into the last-mentioned apartment with inconceivable rapidity, passed at once into the head of Mr. Bob Sawyer, and prompted him for his (the demon's) own evil purposes, to speak as follows.

"I say, we've let the fire out. It's uncommonly cold after the rain, isn't it?"

"It really is," replied Mr. Pickwick, shivering.

"It wouldn't be a bad notion to have a cigar by the kitchen fire, would it?" said Bob Sawyer, still prompted by the demon aforesaid.

"It would be particularly comfortable, I think," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Mr. Pott, what do you say?"

"Mr. Pott yielded a ready assent; and all four travellers, each with his glass in his hand, and their beards to the kitchen, with Sam Weller heading the procession to show them the way.

The stranger was still reading; he looked up and started. Mr. Pott started.

"What's the matter?" whispered Mr. Pickwick.

"That reptile!" replied Pott.

"What reptile?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking about him for fear he should tread on some overgrown black beetle, or bosidal spider.

"That reptile," whispered Pott, catching Mr. Pickwick by the arm, and pointing towards the stranger. "That reptile—Slurk, the Independent!"

"Perhaps we had better retire," whispered Mr. Pickwick.

"Never, Sir," rejoined Pott—pot-raviant in a double sense—"never." With these words, Mr. Pott took up his position on an opposite settle, and selecting one from a little bundle of newspapers, began to read against his enemy.

Mr. Pott, of course, read the Independent, and Mr. Slurk, of course, read the Gazette; and each gentleman audibly expressed his contempt of the other's compositions by bitter laughs and sarcastic sniffs; whence they proceeded to more open expressions of opinion, such as "absurd," "wretched," "atrocity," "humbug," "knavery," "dirt," "filth," "slime," "ditch water," and other critical remarks of the like nature.

Both Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Ben Allen had beheld these symptoms of rivalry and hatred with a degree of delight, which imparted great additional relish to the cigars at which they were puffing most vigorously. The moment they began to flag, the mischievous Mr. Bob Sawyer, addressing Slurk with great politeness, said—

"Will you allow me to look at your paper, Sir, when you have quite done with it?"

"You'll find very little to repay you for your trouble in this contemptible thing, Sir," replied Slurk, beseeching a Satanic frown on Pott.

"You shall have this presently," said Pott, looking up, pale with rage, and quivering in his speech from the same cause.

"Ha! ha! you will be amused with this fellow's audacity."

Terrific emphasis was laid upon "thing" and "fellow," and the faces of both editors began to glow with defiance.

"The ribaldry of this miserable man is desperately disgusting," said Pott, pretending to address Bob Sawyer, and scooping upon Slurk.

Here Mr. Slurk laughed very heartily, and folding the paper so as to get at a fresh column conveniently, said that the blockhead really amused him.

"What an impudent blunderer this fell
"Did you ever read any of this man's foolery, Sir?" inquired Slurk, of Bob Sawyer.

"Never," replied Bob; "is it very bad?"

"Oh, shocking! shocking!" rejoined Slurk.

"Really, dear me, this is too atrocious!" exclaimed Pott, at this juncture; still feigning to be absorbed in his reading.

"If you can wade through a few sentences of malice, meanness, falsehood, perjury, treachery, and cant," said Slurk, handing the paper to Bob, "you will, perhaps, be somewhat repaid by a laugh at the style of this ungrammatical twaddle."

"What's that you said, Sir?" inquired Pott, looking up, trembling all over with passion.

"That's that to you, Sir?" replied Slurk.

"Ungrammatical twaddle, was it, Sir?" said Pott.

"Yes, Sir, it was," replied Slurk; "and blue bore, Sir, if you like that better; ha! ha!"

Mr. Pott retorted not a word to this jest, but deliberately folding up his copy of the Independent, flattened it carefully down, crushed it beneath his boot, spat upon it with great ceremony, and flung it into the fire.

"There, Sir," said Pott, retracting from the stove, "and that's the way I would serve the viper who produces it, if I were not, fortunately for him, restrained by the laws of my country."

"Serve him so, Sir!" cried Slurk, starting up; "those laws shall never be appealed to by him, Sir, in such a case. Serve him so, Sir!"

"Hear! hear!" said Bob Sawyer.

"Nothing can be fairer," observed Mr. Ben Allen.

"Serve him so, Sir!" reiterated Slurk, in a loud voice.

Mr. Pott darted a look of contempt, which might have withered an anchor.

"Serve him so, Sir!" reiterated Slurk, in a louder voice than before.

"I will not, Sir," rejoined Pott.

"Oh, you won't! won't you, Sir?" said Mr. Slurk, in a taunting manner; "you hear this, gentlemen! He won't: not that he's afraid, oh, no! he won't. Ha! ha!"

"I consider, you, Sir," said Mr. Pott, moved by this sarcasm, "I consider you a viper. I look upon you, Sir, as a man who has placed himself beyond the pale of society, by his most audacious, disgraceful, and abominable public conduct. I view you, Sir, personally or politically, in no other light but as a most unparalleled and unmollified viper."

The indignant Independent did not wait to hear the end of this personal denunciation, for catching up his carpet-bag, which was well stuffed with movables, he swung it in the air as Pott turned away, and letting it fall with a circular sweep on his head just at that particular angle of the bag where a good thick hair-brush happened to be packed, caused a sharp crash to be heard throughout the kitchen, and brought him at once to the ground.

"Gentlemen," cried Mr. Pickwick, as Pott started up and seizing the fire-shovel, "gentlemen, consider for Heaven's sake—help—Sam—here—pray, gentlemen—interfere, somebody."

Uttering these incoherent exclamations, Mr. Pickwick rushed between the infuriated combatants just in time to receive the carpet-bag on one side of his body, and the fire-shovel on the other; whether the representatives of the public feeling of Eastanswill were blinded by animosity, or, being both acute reasoners, saw the advantage of having a third party between them to bear all the blows, certain it is that they paid not the slightest attention to Mr. Pickwick, but defying each other with great spirit, plied the carpet-bag and the fire-shovel most fearlessly. Mr. Pickwick would unquestionably have suffered severely from his humane interference, if Mr. Weller, attracted by his master's cries, had not rushed in at the moment, and, snatching up a meal-sack, effectually stopped the conflict by drawing it over the head and shoulders of the mighty Pott, and clasping him tight round the elbows.

"Take away that 'ere bag from the other madman," said Sam to Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer, who had done nothing but dodge round the group, each with a tortoise-shell lanceet in his hand, ready to bleed the first man stunned. "Give it up, you wretched little creature, or I'll smother you in it."

Awoke by these threats, and quite out of breath, the Independent suffered himself to be disarmed; and Mr. Weller, removing the extinguisher from Pott, set him free with a caution.

"You take yourself off to bed quietly," said Sam, "or I'll put you both in it, and let you fight it out with the mouth tied, as I would a dozen sibs, if they played these games. And you have the goodness to come this here way, Sir, if you please."

Thus addressing his master, Sam took him by the arm and led him off, while the rival editors were severely removed to their beds by the landlord, under the protection of Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjimin Allen; breathing, as they went away, many sanguinary threats, and making
vague appointments for mortal combat next day. When they came to think it over, however, it occurred to them that they could do it much better in print, so they recommenced deadly hostilities without delay; and all Eatonswill rang with their boldness—on paper.

They had taken themselves off in separate coaches, early next morning, before the other travellers were stirring; and the weather having now cleared up, the chaise companions once more turned their faces to London.

CHAPTER LIII.

Involving a serious change in the Weller family, and the untimely downfall of the red-nosed Mr. Biggins.

Considering it a matter of delicacy to abstain from introducing either Bob Sawyer or Ben Allen to the young couple, until they were fully prepared to expect them; and wishing to spare Arabella’s feelings as much as possible, Mr. Pickwick proposed that he and Sam should alight in the neighbourhood of the George and Vulture, and that the two young men should for the present take up their quarters elsewhere; to this they very readily agreed, and the proposition was accordingly acted upon: Mr. Ben Allen and Mr. Bob Sawyer beasting themselves to a sequestered pot-shop on the remotest confines of the borough, behind the bar-door of which their names had in other days very often appeared, at the head of long and complex calculations worked in white chalk.

"Dear me, Mr. Weller," said the pretty housemaid, meeting Sam at the door.

"Dear me, I wish it was, my dear," replied Sam, dropping behind, to let his master get out of hearing. "Wot a sweet lookin’ creature you are, Mary!"

"Lor, Mr. Weller, what nonsense you do talk!" said Mary. "Oh! don’t, Mr. Weller."

"Don’t what, my dear?" said Sam.

"Why, that," replied the pretty housemaid. "Lor, do get along with you." Thus admonishing him, the pretty housemaid smilingly pushed Sam against the wall, declaring that he had tumbled her cap, and put her hair quite out of curl.

And prevented what I was going to say, besides," added Mary. "There’s a letter been waitin’ here for you four days; you hadn’t gone away half an hour when it came; and more than that, it’s got immediate, on the outside."

"Vere is it my love?" inquired Sam.

"I took care of it for you, or I dare say it would have been lost long before this," replied Mary. "There, take it; it’s more than you deserve."

With these words, after many pretty little coquetish doubts and fears, and wishes that she might not have lost it; Mary produced the letter from behind the nicest little muslin tucker possible, and handed it to Sam, who thereupon kissed it with much gallantry and devotion.

"My goodness me!" said Mary, adjusting the tucker, and feigning unconsciousness, "you seem to have grown very fond of it all at once."

To this Mr. Weller only replied by a wink, the intense meaning of which no description could convey the faintest idea of; and, setting himself down beside Mary on a window-seat, opened the letter and glanced at the contents.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Sam, "wot’s all this?"

"Nothing the matter, I hope?" said Mary, peeping over his shoulder.

"Bless them eyes o’ yours," said Sam, looking up.

"Never mind my eyes; you had much better read your letter," said the pretty housemaid, and as she said this, she made her eyes twinkle with such slyness and beauty that they were perfectly irresistible.

Sam refreshed himself with a kiss, and read as follows:

"Martha Grose

"By doddle

"Wently.

"My dear Sammler,

"I am very sorry to have the pleasure of being a Bear of ill news your Mother in law cort cold consequent of imprudently settin’ too long on the damp grass in the rain a hearin’ of a sheepdog who wasnt able to leave off till late at night own to his harvin’ vould his self up with brandy and vater and not bein’ able to stop his self till he got a little sober which took a many hours to do the doctors, say that if she’d avallo’d vurn brandy and vater afterwards instead of afore she mightn’t have been no vus her vels was immediatly greased and everything done to set her a goin’ as could be inwented your father had hopes as she would have worked round as usual but just as she was a turnin’ the corner my boy she took the wrong road and went down hill with a veloacity you never see and notwith standin’ that the drag was put on directly by the m’derel man it worst of no use at all for she paid the last pike at twenty minutes afore six o’clock yesterday evening harvin done the journey very much under the reglar time vich prap was partly owen to her haven taken in very little luggage
Mr. Weller drew the household beauty closer to him, and entered upon a whispering conversation, which had not proceeded far when she turned her face round and condescended to look at him again. When they parted it was somehow or other indescribably necessary for her to go to her room, and arrange the cap and curls before she could think of presenting herself to her mistress; which preparatory ceremony she went off to perform, bestowing many nods and smiles on Sam over the banisters as she tripped up stairs.

"I shan't be away more than a day,—or two, Sir, at farthest," said Sam, when he had communicated to Mr. Pickwick the intelligence of his father's hose.

"As long as may be necessary, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick. "You have my full permission to remain."

Sam bowed.

"You will tell your father, Sam, that if I can be of any assistance to him in his present situation, I shall be most willing and ready to lend him any aid in my power," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Thank you, Sir," rejoined Sam. "I'll mention it, Sir."

And with some expressions of mutual good-will and interest, master and man separated.

It was just seven o'clock when Samuel Weller, alighting from the box of a stage-coach which passed through Dorking, stood within a few hundred yards of the Marquis of Granby. It was a cold dull evening: the little street looked dreary and dismal, and the mahogany countenance of the noble and gallant Marquis seemed to wear a more sad and melancholy expression than it was wont to do, as it swung to and fro, creaking mournfully in the wind. The blinds were pulled down, and the shutters partly closed; of the knot of loungers that usually collected about the door, not one was to be seen; the place was silent and desolate.

Seeing nobody of whom he could ask any preliminary questions, Sam walked softly in, and glancing round, he quickly recognised his parent in the distance.

The widower was seated at a small round table in the little room behind the bar, smoking a pipe, with his eyes intently fixed upon the fire. The funeral had evidently taken place that day, for attached to his hat which he still retained on his head, was a hat-band measuring about a yard and a half in length, which hung over the top rail of the chair and streamed negligently down. Mr. Weller was in a very abstracted and contemplative mood, for notwithstanding that Sam called him by name several times, he still continued to work...
with the same fixed and quiet countenance, and was only roused ultimately by his son’s placing the palm of his hand on his shoulder.

"Sammy," said Mr. Weller, "you’re welcome."

"I’ve been a callin’ to you half a dozen times," said Sam, hanging his hat on a peg, "but you didn’t hear me."

"No, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, again looking thoughtfully at the fire. "I was in a referee, Sammy."

"Wot about?" inquired Sam, drawing his chair up to the fire.

"In a referee, Sammy," replied the elder Mr. Weller, "regardin’ Aer, Samivel."

Here Mr. Weller jerked his head in the direction of Dorking churchyard, in mute explanation that his words referred to the late Mrs. Weller.

"I was a thinkin’, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, "eyeing his son with great earnestness, over his pipe, as to assure him that however extraordinary and incredible the declaration might appear, it was nevertheless calm and deliberately uttered, "I was a thinkin’, Sammy, that upon the whole I was very sorry she was gone.""

"Well, and so you ought to be," replied Sam.

Mr. Weller nodded his acquiescence in the sentiment, and again fastening his eyes on the fire, shrouded himself in a cloud, and mused deeply.

"Those was very sensible observations as she made, Sammy!" said Mr. Weller, driving the smoke away with his hand, after a long silence.

"Wot observations?" inquired Sam.

"Them as she made arter she was took ill," replied the old gentleman.

"Wot was they?"

"Something to this here effect. ‘Veller,’ she says, ‘I’m afraid I’ve not done by you quite wot I ought to have done; you’re a very kind hearted man, and I might ha’ made your home more comfortable. I begin to see now,’ she says, ‘ven it’s too late, that if a married ’oman wishes to be religious she should begin with dischargin’ her duties at home, and makin’ them as is about her cheerful and happy, and that vile she goes to church, or chapel, or wot not, at all proper times, she should be very careful not to con-wert this sort o’ thing into an excuse for idleness or self-indulgence of course. I have done this,’ she says, ‘and I’ve wasted time and substance on them as has done it more than me; but I hope ven I’m gone, Veller, that you’ll think on me as I was afore I knew’d them people, and as I raly was by natur.’ "Susan," says I,—I wos took up very short by him, Samivel; I won’t deny it, my boy—

"Susan," I says, ‘you’ve been a very good wife to me, altogether, don’t say nothin’ at all about it, keep a good heart my dear, and you’ll live to see me punch that ere Stiggins’s head yet.’ She smiled at this, Samivel," said the old gentleman, stifling a sigh with his pipe, "but she died arter all!"

"Vell," said Sam, venturing to offer a little homely consolation after the lapse of three or four minutes, consumed by the old gentleman in slowly shaking his head from side to side, and solemnly smoking; "vell, gov’n’r, we must all come to it, one day or another."

"So we must, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, the elder.

"There’s a providence in it all," said Sam.

"O’ course there is," replied his father, with a nod of grave approval. "Wot’ud become of the undertakers without it, Samivel?"

Lost in the immense field of conjecture opened by this reflection, the elder Mr. Weller laid his pipe on the table, and stirred the fire with a meditative visage.

While the old gentleman was thus engaged, a very buxom-looking cook, dressed in mourning, who had been bustling about in the brad, glided into the room, and bestowing many smirks of recognition upon Sam, silently stationed herself at the back of his father’s chair, and announced her presence by a slight cough, the which being disregarded, was followed by a louder one.

"Hallo!" said the elder Mr. Weller, dropping the poker as he looked round, and hastily drew his chair away. "Wot’s the matter now?"

"Have a cup of tea, there’s a good soul," replied the buxom female, coaxingly.

"I won’t," replied Mr. Weller, in a somewhat boisterous manner, "I’ll see you— Mr. Weller hastily checked himself, and added in a low tone, "furder fast."

"Oh, dear, dear; how adversity does change people!" said the lady, looking upwards.

"It’s the only thing twixt this and the doctor as shall change my condition," muttered Mr. Weller.

"I really never saw a man so cross," said the buxom female.

"Never mind—it’s all for my own good; vich is the reflection with vich the penitent schoolboy comforted his feelins ven they flogged him," rejoined the old gentleman.

The buxom female shook her head with a compassionate and sympathising air; and, appealing to Sam, enquired whether his father really ought not to make an effort
to keep up, and not to give way to that
townness of spirits.

"You see, Mr. Samuel," said the buxom
female, "as I was telling him yesterday, he
still feel lonely, he can't expect but
what he should, Sir, but he should keep up
a good heart, because, dear me, I'm sure
we all pity his loss, and are ready to do
any thing for him; and there's no situation
in life so sad, Mr. Samuel, that it can't be
meended, which is what a very worthy per-
son said to me when my husband died." Here
the speaker, putting her hand before her
mouth, coughed again, and looked af-
fectionately at the elder Mr. Weller.

"As I don't rekivre any o' your con-
versation just now, Mum, will you have
the goodness to retire?" inquired Mr. Weller,
in a grave and steady voice.

"Well, Mr. Weller," said the buxom
female, "I'm sure I only spoke to you out
of kindness."

"Very likely, Mum," replied Mr. Weller.
"Samivel, show the lady out, and shut
the door after her."

This hint was not lost on the buxom
female, for she at once left the room, and
slammed the door behind her, upon which
Mr. Weller, senior, falling back in his chair
in a violent perspiration, said—

"Sammy, if I was to stop here alone
all ev'n week—only ev'n week, my boy—that
'ere cooman 'ud marry me by force and
violence afore it was over."

"Wot, is she so very fond on you?" inquired Sam.

"Fond!" replied his father, "I can't
keep her away from me. If I was looked
up in a fire-proof chest with a patent Bra-
min she'd had means to get at me, Sam-
ner."

"Wot a thing it is to be so sought arter!" observed Sam, smiling.

"I don't take no pride out on it, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, poking the fire vehe-
mently, "it's a horrid situwation. I'm actu-
ally drove out o' house and home by it.
The breath was scarcely out of your poor
mother-in-law's body, ven voon old 'cooman
sends me a pot o' jam, and another pot o'
'jelly, and another braws a blessed large jug
o' camomile-tea, vich she brings in vith
her own hands." Mr. Weller paused with
an aspect of intense disgust, and looking
round, added in a whisper, "I 'Oys wos all
widdens, Sammy, all on 'em, 'cept the cam-
omile-tea vun, as wos a single young lady o'
fifty-three."

Sam gave a comical look in reply, and
the old gentleman having broken an obsti-
nate lump of cost, with a countenence ex-
pressive of as much earnestness and malice
as if it had been the head of one of the
widows last-mentioned, said—

"In short, Sammy, I feel that I ain't safe
any veres else but on the box."

"How are you safer there than any veres
else?" interrupted Sam.

"Cos a cooman's a privileged indivi-
dual," replied Mr. Weller, looking fixedly
at his son. "Cos a cooman may do
without suspicion wo other men may not;
'cos a cooman may be on the very amica-
blest terms with eighty mile o' females,
and yet nobody think that he ever means to
marry any vun among 'em. And wo other
man can say the same, Sammy?"

"Vell, there's somethin' in that," said Sam.

"If your gov'ner had been a cooman," reasoned Mr. Weller, "do you s'pose as
that 'ere jury 'ud ever ha' convicted him,
s'posin' it possible us the matter could ha'
gone to that extremity? They duhsn't ha'
done it."

"Vy not?" said Sam, rather disparag-
ingly.

"Vy not?" rejoined Mr. Weller; "cos
it 'ud ha' gone agin their consciences. A
regular cooman's a sort o' con-nectin'
link betwixt singleness and matrimony, and
every practicable man knows it."

"Wot, you mean they're gen'ral fav-
rates, and nobody takes advantage on 'em.
p'yaps!" said Sam.

His father nodded.

"How it ever come to that 'ere pass," resumed the parent Weller, "I can't say;
v's it is that long-stage coomans possess
such insinuations, and is always looked
up to—adoraed, I may say—by ev'ry young
'cooman in ev'ry town he works through, I
don't know; I only know that so it is; it's a
reg'lation of natur—a dispensary, as
your poor mother-in-law used to say."

"A dispensation," said Sam, correcting the
old gentleman.

"Very good, Samivel, a dispensation, if
you like it better," returned Mr. Weller;

"I call it a dispensary, and it's always writ
up so, at the places were they gives you
physic for nothin' in your own bottles;
that's all."

With these words Mr. Weller re-filled
and re-lighted his pipe, and once more sum-
morning up a meditative expression of con-
tenance, continued as follows:—

"Therefore, my boy, as I do not see the
advisability o' stoppin' here to be married
vether I want to or not, and as at the same
time I do not wish to separate from them
interests' members o' society altogether.
I have come to the determination o' drivin'
the Safety, and puttin' up vunce more a
the Bell Savage, vich is my nat'born
element, Sammy."

"And wot's to become o' the bisness?"
inquired Sam.
"The bi'sness, Samivel," replied the old gentleman, "good-vill, stock and fixtures, will be sold by private con-tact; and out of the money, two hundred pound, agreeable to a re-lease of your brother-law's to me, a little afore she died, will be invested in your name in—wot do you call them things again?"

"Wot things?" inquired Sam.

"Them things as is always going up and down in the city."

"Omnibus?" suggested Sam.

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Weller. "Them things as is always a fluctuasin', and gettin' themselves involved somehow or another with the national debt, and the chequer's bills, and all that."

"Oh! the funds," said Sam.

"Ah!" rejoined Mr. Weller, "the funds; two hundred pound of the money is to be invested for you, Samivel, in the funds; four and a half per cent., reduced annuities, Sammy!"

"Very kind o' the old lady to think o' me," said Sam, "and I'm very much obliged to her."

"The rest will be invested in my name," continued the elder Mr. Weller; "and ven I'm took off the road, it'll come to you, so take care you don't spend it all at once, my boy, and mind that no widder gets a takin' o' your fortun', or you're done."

Having delivered this warning, Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with a more serene countenance; the disclosure of these matters appearing to have eased his mind considerably.

"Somebody's a tappin' at the door," said Sam.

"Let'em tap," replied his father, with dignity.

Sam acted upon the direction; upon which there was another tap, and another, and then a long row of taps; upon which Sam inquired why the tapper was not admitted.

"Hush," whispered Mr. Weller, with apprehensive looks, "don't take no notice on 'em, Sammy; it's un o' the widder's, p'raps."

No notice being taken of the taps, the unseen visitor, after a short lapse, ventured to open the door and peep in. It was a female head that was thrust in at the partially-opened door, but the long black locks and red face of Mr. Stiggins. Mr. Weller's pipe fell from his hands.

The reverend gentleman gradually opened the door by almost imperceptible degrees, until the aperture was just wide enough to admit of the passage of his lank body, when he glided into the room and closed it after him with great care and gentleness. Turning towards Sam, and raising his hands and eyes in token of the unspeakable sorrow with which he regarded the calamity that had befal the family, he carried the high-backed chair to its old corner by the fire, and settling himself down on the very edge of the seat, drew forth a brown pocket-handkerchief, and applied the same to his optics.

While this was going forward, the elder Mr. Weller sat back in his chair with his eyes wide open, his hands planted on his knees, and his whole countenance expressive of absorbing and overwhelming astonishment. Sam sat opposite him in perfect silence, waiting with eager curiosity for the termination of the scene.

Mr. Stiggins kept the brown pocket-handkerchief before his eyes for some minutes, moaning decently meanwhile, and then, mastering his feelings by a strong effort, put it in his pocket and buttoned it up. After this he stirred the fire; after that he rubbed his hands and looked at Sam.

"Oh, my young friend," said Mr. Stiggins, breaking the silence in a very low voice, "here's a sorrowful affliction."

Sam nodded very slightly.

"For the man of wrath, too!" added Mr. Stiggins; "it makes a vessel's heart bleed!"

Mr. Weller was overheard by his son to murmur something relative to making a vessel's nose bleed; but Mr. Stiggins heard him not.

"Do you know, young man," whispered Mr. Stiggins, drawing his chair closer to Sam, "whether she has left Emanuel anything?"

"Who's he?" inquired Sam.

"The chapel," replied Mr. Stiggins; "our chapel; our fold, Mr. Samuel."?

"She hasn't left the fold nothin', nor the shepherd nothin', nor the animals nothin,'" said Sam, decisively; "nor the dogs neither."

Mr. Stiggins looked sily at Sam, glanceed at the old gentleman, who was sitting with his eyes closed, as if asleep; and drawing his chair still nearer, said,

"Nothing for me, Mr. Samuel!"

Sam shook his head.

"I think there's something," said Stiggins, turning as pale as he could turn.

"Consider, Mr. Samuel; no little token!"

"Not so much as the vurth o' that ere old umbrella o' yours," replied Sam.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Stiggins, hesitatingly, after a few moments' deep thought, "perhaps she recommended me to the care of the man of wrath, Mr. Samuel?"

"I think that's very likely, from what he said," rejoined Sam; "he wuz a speakin' about you just now."
“Wan be, though!” exclaimed Stiggins, brightening up. “Ah! He’s changed, I dare say. We might live very comfortably together now. Mr. Samuel, eh? I could take care of his property when you are away—good care, you see.”

Hearing a long-drawn sigh, Mr. Stiggins paused for a response. Sam nodded, and Mr. Weller, the elder, gave vent to an extraordinary sound, which, being neither a groan, nor a grunt, nor a gape, nor a growl, seemed to partake in some degree of the character of all four.

Mr. Stiggins, encouraged by this sound, which he understood to betoken remorse or repentance, looked about him, rubbed his hands, wept, smiled, wept again, and then, walking softly across the room to a well-remembered shelf in one corner, took down a tumbler, and, with great deliberation, put four lumps of sugar in it. Having got those far, he looked about him again and sighed grievously; with that he walked softly into the bar, and presently returning with the tumbler half full of pine-apple rum, advanced to the kettle which was singing gaily on the hob, mixed his grog, stirred it, sipped it, sat down, and taking a long and hearty pull at the rum and water, stopped for breath.

The elder Mr. Weller, who still continued to make various strange and uncouth attempts to appear sage, offered not a single word during these proceedings, but when Mr. Stiggins stopped for breath, he darted upon him, and snatching the tumbler from his hand, threw the remainder of the rum and water in his face, and the glass itself into the grate. Then, seizing the reverend gentleman firmly by the collar, he suddenly fell to kicking him most furiously, accompanying every application of his top-boot to Mr. Stiggins’s person with sundry violent and incoherent anathemas upon his limbs, eyes and body.

“Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, “put my hat on right for me.”

Sam dutifully adjusted the hat with the long hatband more firmly on his father’s head, and the old gentleman, resuming his kicking with greater agility than before, tumbled with Mr. Stiggins through the bar, and through the passage, out at the front door, and so into the street;—the kicking continuing the whole way, and increasing in vehemence rather than diminishing, every time the top-boot was lifted up:

It was a beautiful and exhilarating sight to see the red-nosed man writhing in Mr. Weller’s grasp, and his whole frame quivering with anguish as kick followed kick in rapid succession; it was a still more exciting spectacle to behold Mr. Weller, after a powerful struggle, immersing Mr. Stiggins’s head in a horse-trough full of water and holding it there, till he was all but suffocated.

“There,” said Mr. Weller, throwing all his energy into one most complicated kick, as he at length permitted Mr. Stiggins to withdraw his head from the trough, “send any vun o’ them layy shepherds here, and I’ll pound him to a jelly first, and drown him afterwards. Sammy, help me in, and fill me a small glass of brandy. I’m out o’ breath, my boy.”

CHAPTER LIV.

Comprising the final exit of Mr. Jingle and Job Trotter; with a great morning of business in Gray’s Inn Square, concluding with a double knock at Mr. Perker’s door.

When Arabella, after some gentle preparation, and many assurances that there was not the least occasion for being low-spirited, was at length made acquainted by Mr. Pickwick with the unsatisfactory result of his visit to Birmingham, she burst into tears, and sobbed aloud, lamenting in moving terms that she should have been the unhappy cause of any estrangement between a father and his son.

“My dear girl,” said Mr. Pickwick, kindly, “it is no fault of yours. It was impossible to foresee that the old gentleman would be so strongly preposessed against his son’s marriage, you know. I am sure.” added Mr. Pickwick, glancing at her pretty face, “he can have very little idea of the pleasure he denies himself.”

“Oh, my dear Mr. Pickwick,” said Arabella, “what shall we do, if he continues to be angry with us?”

“Why, wait patiently, my dear, until he thinks better of it,” replied Mr. Pickwick, cheerfully.

“But, dear Mr. Pickwick, what is to become of Nathaniel if his father withdraws his assistance!” urged Arabella.

“In that case, my love,” rejoined Mr. Pickwick, “I will venture to prophesy that he will find some other friend who will not be backward in helping him to start in the world.”

The significance of this reply was not so well disguised by Mr. Pickwick but that Arabella understood it. So throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing him affectionately, she sobbed louder than before.

“Come, come,” said Mr. Pickwick, taking her hand, “we will wait here a few days longer; and see what then he wishes us
takes any other notice of your husband's
cancellation. If not, I have thought of
half a dozen plans, any one of which would
make you happy at once. There, my dear
—there."

With these words, Mr. Pickwick gently
pressed Arabella's hand, and bade her dry
her eyes, and not distress her husband.
Upon which, Arabella, who was one of the
best little creatures alive, put her hand-
kneechief in her reticule, and, by the time
Mr. Winkle joined them, exhibited in full
ustre the same beaming smiles and spark-
ing eyes that had originally captivated
him.

"This is a distressing predicament for
these young people," thought Mr. Pick-
wick, as he dressed himself next morning.
"I'll write to Perker and consult him
about the matter."

As Mr. Pickwick was further prompted
to betake himself to Gray's Inn Square by
an anxious desire to come to a pecuniary
settlement with the kind-hearted little attor-
ney without further delay, he made a hur-
rried breakfast, and executed his intention
so speedily that ten o'clock had not struck
when he reached Gray's Inn.

It still wanted ten minutes to the hour
when he had ascended the staircase on
which Perker's chambers were. The clerks
had not arrived yet, and he beguiled the
time by looking out of the staircase win-
dow.

The healthy light of a fine October morn-
ing made even the dingy old houses brighten
up a little: some of the dusty windows
actually looking almost cheerful as the
sun's rays gleamed upon them. Clerk
after clerk hastened into the square by one
or other of the entrances, and looking up at
the Hall clock, accelerated or decreased
his rate of walking according to the time
at which his office hours nominally com-
mened. The half past nine o'clock people
suddenly becoming very brisk, and the ten
o'clock gentlemen falling into a pace of
most aristocratic slowness. The clock
struck ten, and clerks poured in faster than
ever, each one in a greater perspiration
than his predecessor. The noise of unlocking
and opening doors echoed and re-echoed
on every side, heads appeared as if by
magic in every window, the porters took
up their stations for the day, and the cabs of
laundress hurried off, the postman ran from
house to house, and the whole legal hive
was in a bustle.

"Y'm re'early, Mr. Pickwick," said a
voice behind him.

"Ah, Mr. Lowten," replied that gentle-
man, looking round, and recognising his
old acquaintance.

"Precious warm walking, isn't it?" said
Lowten, drawing a Bmamah key from his
pocket, with a small plig therein, to keep
the dust out.

"You appear to feel it so," rejoined Mr.
Pickwick, smiling at the clerk, who was,
literally red-hot.

"I've come along, rather, I can tell you," replied Lowten. "It went the half-hour as
I came through the Polygon. I'm here be-
fore him though, so I don't mind."

Comforting himself with this reflection,
Mr. Lowten extracted the plug from the
door key; having opened the door, replug-
ged and repocketed his Bmamah, and picked
up the letters which the postman had dropped
through the box, he ushered Mr. Pick-
wick into the office. Here, in the twink-
ling of an eye, he divested himself of his
cost, put on a thread-bare garmant, which
he took out of a desk, hung up his hat, pulled forth a few sheets of cartridge and
blotting paper in alternate layers, and stick-
ing a pen behind his ear, rubbed his hands
with an air of great satisfaction.

"There you see, Mr. Pickwick," he said,
"now I'm complete. I've got my office
cost on, and my pad out, and let him come
as soon as he likes. You haven't got a
pinch of pursu about you, have you?"

"No, I have not," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I'm sorry for it," said Lowten. "Ne-
ever mind—I'll run out presently and get a
bottle of soda. Don't I look rather queer
about the eyes, Mr. Pickwick?"

The individual appealed to, surveyed Mr.
Lowten's eyes from a distance, and expres-
sed his opinion that no unusual queerness
was perceptible in those features.

"I'm glad of it," said Lowten. "We
were keeping it up pretty tolerably at the
Stump last night, and I'm rather out of
sorts this morning. Perker's been about
that business of yours, by the by."

"What business?" inquired Mr. Pick-
wick—"Mrs. Bardell's costs?"

"No, I don't mean that," replied Low-
ten. "About getting that customer that we paid the ten shillings in the pound to
the bill discounter for, on your account—to
get him out of the Fleet, you know, about
getting him to Demerara."

"Oh, Mr. Jingle," said Mr. Pickwick,
haughtily, "Yes. Well?"

"Well, it's all arranged," said Lowten,
mending his pen. "The agent at Liver-
pool said he had been obliged to you many
times when you were in business, and he
would be glad to take him on your recom-
mandation."

"That's well," said Mr. Pickwick, "I
am delighted to hear it."

"But I say," resumed Lowten, stirring
the back of the pen preparatory to making
a fresh split, "what a soft chap that other is!"

"Which other?"

"Why, that servant, or friend, or whatever he is—you know; Trotter."

"Ah?" said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"I always thought him the very reverse.

"Well, and so did I, from what little I saw of him," replied Lowten, "it only shows how one may be deceived. What do you think of his going to Demerara too?"

"What!—and giving up what was offered him here!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Treating Perker's offer of eighteen bob a-week, and a rise if he behaved himself, like dirt," replied Lowten. "He said he must go along with the other one, and so they persuaded Perker to write again, and they've got him something on the same estate; not near so good, Perker says, as a convict would get in New South Wales, if he appeared at his trial in a new suit of clothes."

"Foolish fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, with glistening eyes. "Foolish fellow."

"Oh, it's worse than foolish; it's downright sneaking, you know," replied Lowten, nipping the pen with a contemptuous face. "He says that he's the only friend he ever had, and he's attached to him, and all that. Friendship's a very good thing in its way; we are all very friendly and comfortable at the Stump, for instance, over our grog, where every man pays for himself, but damn hurting yourself for anybody else, you know! No man should have more than two attachments—the first, to number one, and the second to the ladies; that's what I say! ha! ha!" Mr. Lowten concluded with a loud laugh, half in-jocularity, and half in derision, which was prematurely cut short by the sound of Perker's footsteps on the stairs, at the very first approach of which he vaulted on his stool with an agility most remarkable, and wrote hastily.

The greeting between Mr. Pickwick and his professional adviser was warm and cordial; the client was scarcely endeavoured in the attorney's arm-chair, however, when a knock was heard at the door, and a voice inquired whether Mr. Perker was within.

"Hark!" said Perker, "that's one of our vagabond friends—Jingle himself, my dear Sir. Will you see him?"

"What do you think?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, hesitating.

"Yes, I think you had better. Here, you sir, what's your name, walk in, will you?"

In compliance with this uncourteous invitation, Jingle and Job walked into the room, but, seeing Mr. Pickwick, stopped short in some confusion.

"Well," said Perker, "don't you know that gentleman?"

"Good reason to," replied Jingle, stepping forward. "Mr. Pickwick—deepest obligations—life preserver—made a man of me—you shall never repent it, Sir."

"I am happy to hear you say so," said Mr. Pickwick. "You look much better."

"Thanks to you, Sir—great change—Majesty's Fleet—unwholesome place—very," said Jingle, shaking his head. He was decently and cleanly dressed, and so was Job, who stood bolt upright behind him, staring at Mr. Pickwick with a visage of iron.

"When do they go to Liverpool?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, half aside to Perker.

"This evening, Sir, at seven o'clock," said Job, taking one step forward. "By the heavy coach from the city, Sir."

"Are your places taken?"

"They are, Sir," replied Job.

"You have fully made up your mind to go?"

"I have, Sir," answered Job.

"With regard to such an outfit as was indispensable for Jingle," said Perker, addressing Mr. Pickwick aloud, "I have taken upon myself to make an arrangement for the deduction of a small sum from his quarterly salary, which, being made for only one year, and regularly remitted, will provide for that expense. I entirely disapprove of your doing any thing for him, my dear Sir, which is not dependent on his own exertions and good conduct."


"By correspondence with his creditor, releasing his clothes from the pawnbrokers, relieving him in prison, and paying for his passage," continued Perker, without noticing Jingle's observation, "you have already lost upwards of fifty pounds."

"Not lost," said Jingle, hastily. "Pay it all—stick to business—cash up—every farthing. Yellow fever, perhaps—can't help that—if not—" Here Mr. Jingle paused, and striking the crown of his hat with great violence, passed his hand over his eyes, and sat down.

"He means to say," said Job, advancing a few paces, "that if he is not carried off by the fever, he will pay the money back again. If he lives, he will, Mr. Pickwick. I will see it done. I know he will, Sir," said Job, with great energy. "I could undertake to swear it."

"Well, well," said Mr. Pickwick, who had been bestowing a score or two of flowers upon Perker, to stop his summary of benefits conferred, which the latter accompanied —
admittedly disregarded, "you must be careful not to play any more desperate cricket matches, Mr. Jingle, or to renew your acquaintance with Sir Thomas Bissio, and I have little doubt of your preserving your health."

Mr. Jingle smiled at this sally, but looked rather foolish notwithstanding, so Mr. Pickwick changed the subject by saying, "You don't happen to know, do you, what has become of another friend of yours — a more humble one, whom I saw at Rochester?"

"Dismal Jimmy?" inquired Jingle.

"Yes."

Jingle shook his head.

"Clever rascal— queer fellow, hoaring and being Job's brother."

"Job's brother?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick. "Well, now I look at him closely, there is a likeness."

"We were always considered like each other, Sir," said Job, with a cunning look just lurking in the corners of his eyes, "only I was really of a serious nature, and he never was. He emigrated to America, Sir, in consequence of being too much sought after here, to be comfortable; and has never been heard of since."

"That accounts for my not having received the page from the romance of real life, which he promised me one morning when he appeared to be contemplating suicide on Rochester Bridge, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling. "I need not inquire whether his dismal behaviour was natural or assumed."

"He could assume anything, Sir," said Job. "You may consider yourself very fortunate in having escaped him so easily. On intimate terms he would have been even more dangerous acquaintance than—" Job looked at Jingle, hesitated, and finally added, "than — than — myself even."

"A hopeful family yours, Mr. Trotter," said Perker, sealing a letter which he had just finished writing.

"Yes, Sir," replied Job. "Very much so."

"Well," said the little man, laughing; "I hope you are going to disgrace it. Deliver this letter to the agent when you reach Liverpool, and let me advise you, gentlemen, not to be too knowing in the West Indies. If you throw away this chance, you will both richly deserve to be hanged, as I sincerely trust you will be. And now you had better leave Mr. Pickwick and me alone, for we have other matters to talk over, and time is precious."

As Perker said this, he looked towards the door with an anxious desire to read the letter as soon as possible.

It was brief enough on Mr. Jingle's part. He thanked the little attorney in a few hurried words for the kindness and promptitude with which he had rendered his assistance, and, turning to his benefactor, stood for a few seconds as if irresolute what to say or how to act. Job Trotter relieved his perplexity, for with a humble, grateful bow to Mr. Pickwick, he took his friend gently by the arm, and led him away.

"A worthy couple," said Perker, as the door closed behind them.

"I hope they may become so," replied Mr. Pickwick. "What do you think? Is there any chance of their permanent reformation?"

Perker shrugged his shoulders doubtfully, but observing Mr. Pickwick's anxious and disappointed look, rejoined:

"Of course there is a chance. I hope it may prove a good one. They are unquestionably penitent now; but then, you know, they have the recollection of very recent suffering fresh upon them. What they may become when that fades away, is a problem that neither you nor I can solve. However, my dear Sir," added Perker, laying his hand on Mr. Pickwick's shoulder, "your object is equally honourable, whatever the result is. Whether that species of benevolence which is so very common and long-sighted that it is seldom exercised at all, lest its owner should be imposed upon, and so wounded in his self-love, be real charity, or a worldly counterfeiter, I leave to wiser heads than mine to determine. But if those two fel lows were to commit a burglary to-morrow, my opinion of this action would be equally high."

With these remarks, which were delivered in a much more unadorned and earnest manner than is usual in legal gentlemen, Perker drew his chair to his desk, and listened to Mr. Pickwick's recital of old Mr. Winkle's obstinacy.

"Give him a week," said Perker, nodding his head prophetically.

"Do you think he will come round?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I think he will," rejoined Perker. "If not, we must try the young lady's persuasion; and that is what anybody but you would have done at first."

Mr. Perker was taking a pinch of snuff with various grotesque contortions of countenance, eulogistio of the persuasive powers appertaining unto young ladies, when the murmur of inquiry and answer was heard in the outer office, and Lawton tapped at the door.

"Come in," cried the little man. The clerk came in, and shut the door after him with great mystery.

"What's the matter?" inquired Perker.
"You're wanted, Sir!"

"Who wants me?"

Lownet looked at Mr. Pickwick and coughed.

"Who wants me? Can't you speak, Mr. Lownet?"

"Why, Sir," replied Lownet, "it's Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Fogg is with him."

"Bless my life!" said the little man, looking at his watch, "I appointed them to be here at half-past eleven to settle that matter of yours, Pickwick. I gave them an undertaking on which they sent down your discharge; it's very awkward, my dear Sir; what will you do? Would you like to step into the next room?"

The next room being the identical room in which Messrs. Dodson and Fogg were, Mr. Pickwick replied that he would remain where he was, the more especially as Messrs. Dodson and Fogg ought to be ashamed to look him in the face, instead of his being ashamed to see them; which latter circumstance he begged Mr. Perker to note, with a glowing countenance and many marks of indignation.

"Very well, my dear Sir, very well," replied Perker: "I can only say, that if you expect either Dodson or Fogg to exhibit any symptom of shame or confusion at having to look at you, or anybody else, in the face, you are the most turgid man in your expectations that I ever met with. Show them in, Mr. Lownet."

Mr. Lownet disappeared with a grin, and immediately returned ushering in the firm, in due form of precedence—Dodson first, and Fogg afterwards.

"You have seen Mr. Pickwick, I believe," said Perker to Dodson, inclining his pen in the direction that that gentleman was seated.

"How do you do, Mr. Pickwick?" said Dodson in a loud voice.

"Dear me," cried Fogg, "how do you do, Mr. Pickwick? I hope you are well, Sir. I thought I knew the face," said Fogg, drawing up a chair, and looking round him with a smile.

Mr. Pickwick bent his head very slightly in answer to these salutations, and, seeing Fogg pull a bundle of papers from his coat-pouch, rose, and walked to the window.

"There's no occasion for Mr. Pickwick to move," said Perker; said Fogg, unsticking the red tape which encircled the little bundle, and smiling again, more sweetly than before.

"Mr. Pickwick is pretty well acquainted with these proceedings, there are no secrets between us, I think. He! he! he!"

"Not many, I think," said Dodson.

"Ha! ha! ha!" Then both the partners laughed together—pleasantly and cheerfully as men who are going to receive money often do.

"We shall make Mr. Pickwick pay for peeping," said Fogg, with considerable native humour, as he unfolded his papers.

"The amount of the untaxed cost is one hundred and thirty-three, six and fourpence, Mr. Perker."

There was a great comparing of papers and turning over of leaves by Fogg and Perker after this statement of profit and loss, during which Dodson said in an affable manner to Mr. Pickwick—

"I don't think you are looking quite so stoop as when I had the pleasure of seeing you last, Mr. Pickwick."

"Possibly not, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, who had been flashing forth looks of fierce indignation without producing the smallest effect on either of the sharp practitioners; "I believe I am not, Sir. I have been persecuted and annoyed by squandrels of late, Sir."

Perker coughed violently, and asked Mr. Pickwick whether he wouldn't like to look at the morning paper, to which inquiry Mr. Pickwick returned a most decided negative.

"True," said Dodson, "I dare say you have been annoyed in the Fleet; there are some old gentry there. Whereabouts were your apartments, Mr. Pickwick?"

"My one room," replied that much-injured gentleman, "was on the Coffee Room floor."

"Oh, indeed!" said Dodson. "I believe that is a very pleasant part of the establishment."

"Very," replied Mr. Pickwick, dily.

There was a coolness about all this, which, to a gentleman of an excitable temperament, had, under the circumstances, rather an exasperating tendency. Mr. Pickwick restrained his wrath by gigantic efforts, but when Perker wrote a cheque for the whole amount, and Fogg deposited it in a small pocket-book, with a triumphant smile playing over his pimply features, which communicated itself likewise to the stern countenance of Dodson, he felt the blood in his cheeks tingling with indignation.

"Now Mr. Dodson," said Fogg, putting up the pocket-book, and drawing on his gloves, "I am at your service."

"Very good," said Dodson, rising, "I am quite ready."

"I am very happy," said Fogg, softened by the cheque, "to have had the pleasure of making Mr. Pickwick's acquaintance. I hope you don't think quite so badly of us, Mr. Pickwick, as when we first had the pleasure of seeing you."

"I hope not," said Dodson, with the high tone of sanctified virtue. "Mr. Pickwick now knows us better, I suppose."

"The Pickwick Club"
ever your opinion of gentlemen of our profession may be, I beg to assure you, Sir, that I bear no ill-will or vindictive feeling towards you for the sentiments you thought proper to express in our office in Freeman's Court, Cornhill, on the occasion to which my partner has alluded."

"Oh no, no; nor I," said Fogg in a most forgiving manner.

"Our conduct, Sir," said Dodson, "will speak for itself, and justify itself, I hope, upon every occasion. We have been in the profession some years, Mr. Pickwick, and have been honored with the confidence of many excellent clients. I wish you good morning, Sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Pickwick," said Fogg, and so saying he put his umbrella under his arm, drew off his right glove, and extended the hand of reconciliation to that most indignant gentleman, who thereupon thrust his hands beneath his coat-tails, and eyed the attorney with looks of scornful amusement.

"Lowten!" cried Perker at this moment, "open the door!"

"Wait one instant," said Mr. Pickwick, "Perker, I will speak."

"My dear Sir, pray let the matter rest where it is," said the little attorney, who had been in a state of nervous apprehension during the whole interview; "Mr. Pickwick,—I beg—"

"I will not be put down, Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, hastily. "Mr. Dodson, you have addressed some remarks to me."

Dodson turned round, bent his head meekly, and smiled.

"Some remarks to me," repeated Mr. Pickwick, almost breathless, "and your partner has tendered me his hand, and you have both assumed a tone of sorrifiveness and high-mindedness, which is an extent of impudence, that I was not prepared for, even in you."

"What, Sir!" exclaimed Dodson.

"What, Sir!" reiterated Fogg.

"Do you know that I have been the victim of your plots and conspiracies!" continued Mr. Pickwick. "Do you know that I am the man whom you have been imprisoning and robbing? Do you know that you were the attorneys for the plaintiff in Bandy and Pickwick!"

"Yes, Sir, we do know it," replied Dodson.

"Of course we know it, Sir," rejoined Fogg, stepping his pocket—perhaps by accident.

"I see that you recollect it with satisfaction," said Mr. Pickwick, attempting to call up a sneer for the first time in his life, and falling most ignobly in so doing. "Although I have long been anxious to tell you in plain terms what my opinion of you is, I should have let even this opportunity pass in deference to my friend Perker's wishes, but for the unwarrantable tone you have assumed, and your insolent familiarity,—I say insolent familiarity, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, turning upon Fogg with a fierce cast of gestures which caused that person to retreat towards the door with great expedition.

"Take care, Sir," said Dodson, who, although he was the biggest man of the party, had prudently intrenched himself behind Fogg, and was speaking over his head with a very pale face. "Let him assault you Mr. Fogg; don't return it on any account."

"No, no, I won't return it," said Fogg, falling back a little more as he spoke; to the evident relief of his partner, who by these means was gradually getting into the outer office.

"You are," continued Mr. Pickwick, resuming the thread of his discourse, "you are a well-matched pair of mean, rascally, pettifogging robbers."

"Well," interposed Perker, "is that all?"

"It is all summed up in that," rejoined Mr. Pickwick; "they are mean, rascally, pettifogging robbers."

"There," said Perker, in a most conciliatory tone, "my dear Sirs, he has said all he has to say: now pray go. Lowten, is that door open?"

Mr. Lowten, with a distant giggle, replied in the affirmative.

"There, there—good morning—good morning—now pray, my dear Sirs,—Mr. Lowten, the door," cried the little man, pushing Dodson and Fogg; nothing loth, out of the office, "this way, my dear Sirs,—now pray don't prolong this—dear me,—Mr. Lowten—the door, Sir, why don't you attend to it?"

"If there's law in England, Sir," said Dodson, looking towards Mr. Pickwick, as he put on his hat, "you shall smart for this."

"You are a couple of mean—"

"Remember, Sir; you pay dearly for this," said Fogg, shaking his fist.

"Rascally, pettifogging robbers!" continued Mr. Pickwick, taking not the least notion of the threats that were addressed to him.

"Robbers!" cried Mr. Pickwick, running to the stairhead as the two attorneys descended.

"Robbers!" shouted Mr. Pickwick, breaking from Lowten and Perker, and thrusting his head out of the staircase window.

"When Mr. Pickwick drew in his head
again, his countenance was smiling and placid; and, walking quietly back into the office, he declared that he had now removed a great weight from his mind, and that he felt perfectly comfortable and happy.

Perker said nothing at all until he had emptied his snuff-box and sent Lowten out to fill it, when he was seized with a fit of laughing, which lasted for five minutes, at the expiration of which time he said that he supposed he ought to be very angry, but he couldn't think of the business seriously yet—when he could, he would be.

"Well, now," said Mr. Pickwick, "let me have a settlement with you."

"Of the same kind as the last?" inquired Perker, with another laugh.

"Not exactly," rejoined Mr. Pickwick, drawing out his pocket-book, and shaking the little man heartily by the hand, "I only mean a pecuniary settlement. You have done me many acts of kindness that I can never repay, and have no wish to, for I prefer continuing the obligation."

With this preface the two friends dived into some very complicated accounts and vouchers, which having been duly displayed and gone through by Perker, were at once discharged by Mr. Pickwick, with many professions of esteem and friendship.

They had no sooner arrived at this point, than a most violent and startling knocking was heard at the door; it was not an ordinary double-knock, but a constant and uninterrupted succession of the loudest single raps, as if the knocker were endowed with the perpetual motion, or the person outside had forgotten to leave off.

"Dear me, what's that!" exclaimed Perker, starting.

"I think it is a knock at the door," said Mr. Pickwick, as if there could be the slightest doubt of the fact!

The knocker made a more energetic reply than words, could have yielded, for it continued to hammer with surprising force and noise, without a moment's cessation.

"Dear me!" said Perker, ringing his bell, "we shall alarm the Inn—Mr. Lowten, don't you hear a knock?"

"I'll answer the door in one moment, Sir," replied the clerk.

The knocker appeared to hear the response, and to assert that it was quite impossible he could wait so long. It made a stupendous uproar.

"It's quite dreadful," said Mr. Pickwick, stopping his ears.

"Make haste, Mr. Lowten," Perker called out, "we shall have the panels beaten in."

Mr. Lowten, who was washing his hands in a dark closet, hurried to the door, and turning the handle, beheld the appearance which is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER LV.

Containing some particulars relative to the double-knock, and other matters, among which, certain interesting disclosures relative to Mr. Snodgrass and a young lady, are by no means irrelevant to this history.

The object that presented itself to the eyes of the astonished clerk was a boy—a wonderfully fat boy—habited as a serving-lad, standing upright on the mat, with his eyes closed as if in sleep. He had never seen such a fat boy in or out of a travelling caravan; and this, coupled with the utter calmness and repose of his appearance, so very different from what was reasonably to have been expected of the inflicter of such knocks, smote him with wonder.

"What's the matter?" inquired the clerk.

The extraordinary boy replied not a word, but he nodded once, and seemed, to the clerk's imagination, to snore feebly.

"Where do you come from?" inquired the clerk.

The boy made no sign. He breathed heavily, but in all other respects was motionless.

The clerk repeated the question thrice, and receiving no answer, prepared to shut the door, when the boy suddenly opened his eyes, winked several times, sneezed once, and raised his hand as if to repeat the knocking. Finding the door open, he stared about him with great astonishment, and at length fixed his eyes on Mr. Lowten's face.

"What the devil do you knock in that way for!" inquired the clerk, angrily.

"What way!" said the boy in a slow sleepy voice.

"Why, like forty, hackney-coachmen," replied the clerk.

"Because master said I wasn't to leave off knocking till they opened the door, for fear I should go to sleep," said the boy.

"Well," said the clerk, "what message have you brought?"

"He's down stairs," rejoined the boy.

"Who?"

"Master. He wants to know whether you're at home."

Mr. Lowten bethought himself at this juncture of looking out of the window. Seeing an open carriage with a heavy old gentleman in it, looking up very anxiously, he ventured to beckon to him, on which the old gentleman jumped out directly.

"That's your master in the carriage, I suppose!" said Lowten.

The boy nodded.
All further inquiries were superseded by the appearance of old Wardle, who running up stairs, and just recognising Lowten, passed at once into Mr. Perker's room.

"Pickwick," said the old gentleman, "your hand, my boy; why have I never heard till the day before yesterday of your suffering yourself to be cooped up in jail! and why did you let him do it, Perker?"

"I couldn't help it, my dear Sir," replied Perker, with a smile and a pinch of snuff: "you know how obstinate he is."

"Of course I do, of course I do," replied the old gentleman, "I am heartily glad to see him, notwithstanding. I will not lose sight of him again in a hurry."

With these words, Wardle shook Mr. Pickwick's hand once more, and, having done the same to Perker, threw himself into an arm-chair, his jelly-red face shining again with smiles and health.

"Well," said Wardle, "there are pretty goings on—a pinch of your snuff, Perker, my boy—never were such times, eh?"

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Mean?" replied Wardle, "why, I think all the girls are running mad; that's no news, you'll say; perhaps it's not, but it's true, for all that."

"You have not come up to London, of all places in the world, to tell us that, my dear Sir, have you?" inquired Perker.

"No, not altogether," replied Wardle;

"Though it was the main cause of my coming. How's Arabella?"

"Very well," replied Mr. Pickwick, "and will be delighted to see you, I am sure."

"Black-eyed little bit!" replied Wardle, "I had a great idea of marrying her myself, one of these odd days. But I am glad of it too, very glad."

"How did the intelligence reach you?" asked Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, it came to my girls, of course," replied Wardle. "Arabella wrote the day before yesterday to say she had made a stolen match without her husband's father's consent, and so you had gone down to get it when his refusing it couldn't prevent the match, and all the rest of it. I thought it a very good time to say something serious to my girls, so I said what a dreadful thing it was that children should marry without their parents' consent, and so forth; but, bless your hearts, I couldn't make the least impression upon them. They thought it such a much more dreadful thing that there should have been a wedding without bridesmaids, that I might as well have preached to Joe himself,"

[Here the old gentlemen stopped to laugh; and having done so, to his heart's content, presently resumed."

"But this is not the best of it, it seems. This is only half the love-making and plotting that have been going forward. We have been walking on mines for the last six months, and they're sprung at last."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, turning pale; "no other secret marriage, I hope?"

"No, no," replied old Wardle; "not so bad as that—no."

"What then?" inquired Mr. Pickwick; "am I interested in it?"

"Shall I answer that question, Perker?" said Wardle.

"If you don't commit yourself by doing so, my dear Sir."

"Well then, you are," said Wardle.

"How?" asked Mr. Pickwick anxiously in what way?"

"Really," replied Wardle, "you're such a fiery sort of young fellow, that I am almost afraid to tell you; but, however, if Perker will sit between us to prevent mischief, I'll venture."

Having closed the room-door, and fortified himself with another application to Perker's snuff-box, the old gentleman proceeded with his great disclosure in these words:

"The fact is, that my daughter Bella—Bella, that married young Trundle, you know."

"Yes, yes, we know," said Mr. Pickwick impatiently.

"Don't alarm me at the very beginning. My daughter Bella, Emily having gone to bed with a headache after she had read Arabella's letter to me, set herself down by my side the other evening, and began to talk over this marriage affair. 'Well, pa,' she says, 'what do you think of it?'

'Why, my dear, I suppose it's all very well; I hope it's for the best,' I answered in this way because I was sitting before the fire at the time, drinking my grog rather thoughtfully, and I knew my throwing in an undecided word now and then, would induce her to continue talking. Both my girls are pictures of their dear mother, and as I grow old I like to sit with only them by me; for their voices and looks carry me back to the happiest period of my life, and make me for the moment as young as I used to be then, though not quite so light-hearted. 'It's quite a marriage of affection, pa,,' said Bella, after a short silence. 'Yes, my dear,' said I, 'but such marriages do not always turn out the happiest.'"

"I question that, mind," interposed Mr. Pickwick warmly.

"Very good," responded Wardle, "quest-
... show anything you like when it's your turn to speak, but don't interrupt me."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Granted," replied Wardle. "I am sorry to hear you express your opinion against marriages of affection, pa," said Bella, colouring a little. "I was wrong; I ought not to have said so, my dear, either," said I, putting her cheek as kindly as a rough old fellow like me could put it, "for your mother's was one, and so was yours."

"It's not that I meant, pa," said Bella. "The fact is, pa, I wanted to speak to you about Emily."

Mr. Pickwick started.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Wardle, stopping in his narrative.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Pray go on."

"I never could spin out a story," said Wardle abruptly. "It must come out sooner or later, and it'll save us all a great deal of time if it comes at once. The long and the short of it is this, then, that Bella at last mustered up courage to tell me that Emily was very unhappy; that she and your young friend Snodgrass had been in constant correspondence and communication ever since last Christmas; that she had very dutifully made up her mind to run away with him, in laudable imitation of her old friend and schoolfellow; but that having some compunctions of conscience on the subject, Iasamuch as I had always been rather kindly disposed to both of them, they had thought it better in the first instance to pay me the compliment of asking whether I would have any objection to their being married in the usual master-of-fact manner. There now, Mr. Pickwick, if you can make it convenient to reduce your eyes to their usual size again, and to let me hear what you think we ought to do, I shall feel rather obliged to you."

The testy manner in which the hearty old gentleman uttered this last sentence was not wholly unwarranted; for Mr. Pickwick's face had settled down into an expression of blank amazement and perplexity quite curious to behold.

"Snodgrass!—since last Christmas!" were the first broken words that issued from the lips of the confounded gentleman.

"Since last Christmas," replied Wardle; "there's plain enough, and very bad spectacles we must have worn, not to have discovered it before."

"I don't understand it," said Mr. Pickwick, ruminating; "I really cannot understand it."

"It's easy enough to understand," replied the choleric old gentleman. "If you had been a younger man, you would have been in the secret long ago; and besides," added Wardle after a moment's hesitation, "the truth is, that, knowing nothing of this matter, I have rather pressed Emily for four or five months past to receive favourably (if she could; I would never attempt to force a girl's inclinations) the addresses of a young gentleman down in our neighbourhood. I have no doubt that, girl-like, to enhance her own value and increase the ardour of Mr. Snodgrass, she has represented this matter in very glowing colours, and that they have both arrived at the conclusion that they are a terribly persecuted pair of unfortunates, and have no resource but clandestine matrimony or charcoal. Now the question is, what's to be done?"

"What have you done?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I?"

"I mean what did you do when your married daughter told you this?"

"Oh, I made a fool of myself of course," rejoined Wardle.

"Just so," interposed Perker, who had accompanied this dialogue with dryly twitchings of his watch-chain, vindictive rubbings of his nose, and other symptoms of impatience. "That's very natural; but how?"

"I went into a great passion and straight climbed my mother into a fit," said Wardle.

"That was judicious," remarked Perker; "and what else, my dear Sir?"

"I fretted and fumed all next day, and raised a great disturbance," rejoined the old gentleman. "At last I got tired of rendering myself unpleasant and making everybody miserable; so I hired a carriage at Muggleton, and, putting my own horses in it, came up to town, under pretence of bringing Emily to see Arabella."

"Miss Wardle is with you, then?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"To be sure, she is," replied Wardle. "She is at Osborne's hotel in the Adelphi at this moment, unless your enterprising friend has run away with her since I came out this morning."

"You are reconciled, then?" said Perker. "Not a bit of it," answered Wardle; "she has been crying and moaning ever since, except last night, between tea and supper, when she made a great parade of writing a letter that I pretended to take no notice of."

"You want my advice in this matter; I suppose?" said Perker, looking from the scowling face of Mr. Pickwick to the eager countenance of Wardle, and taking several consecutive pinches of his favourite stimulant.

"I suppose so," said Wardle, looking at Mr. Pickwick.
"Certainly!" replied that gentleman.

"Well then," said Perker, rising, and pushing his chair back, "my advice is, that you both walk away together, or ride away, or get away by some means or other, for I'm tired of you, and just talk this matter over between you. If you have not settled it by the next time I see you, I'll tell you what to do."

"This is satisfactory," said Wardle, hardly knowing whether to smile or be offended.

"Pooh, pooh, my dear Sir," returned Perker, "I know you both a great deal better than you know yourselves. You have settled it already to all intents and purposes."

Thus expressing himself, the little gentleman poked his snuff-box first into the chaps of Mr. Pickwick, and then into the waistcoat of Mr. Wardle, upon which they all three laughed, but especially the two last-named gentlemen, who at once shook hands again, without any obvious or particular reason.

"You dine with me to-day," said Wardle to Perker, as he showed them out.

"Can't promise, my dear Sir, can't promise," replied Perker. "I'll look in, in the evening at all events."

"I shall expect you at five," said Wardle.

"Now, Joe!" and Joe having been at length awakened, the two friends departed in Mr. Wardle's carriage, which in common humanity had a dickey behind for the fat boy, who, if there had been a foot-board instead, would have rolled off and killed himself in his very first nap.

Driving to the George and Vulture, they found that Arabella and her maid had sent for a hackney-coach immediately on the receipt of a short note from Emily, announcing her arrival in town, and had proceeded straight to the Adelphi. As Wardle had business to transact in the city, they sent the carriage and the fat boy to his hotel, with the information that he and Mr. Pickwick would return together to dinner at five o'clock.

Charged with this message, the fat boy returned, idly whistling, as peacefully in his dickey over the stones as if it had been a down bed on watch-springs. By some extraordinary miracle he awoke of his own accord, when the coach stopped, and giving himself a good shake to stir up his faculties, went up stairs to execute his commission.

Now, whether the shake had jumbled the fat boy's faculties together instead of arranging them in proper order, or had raised such a quantity of new ideas within him as to render him oblivious of ordinary forms and ceremonies, or (which is also possible) had proved unsuccessful in preventing his falling asleep, as he ascended the stairs, it is an undoubted fact that he walked into the sitting room without previously knocking at the door, and so beheld a gentleman with his arm clasping his young mistress's waist, sitting very lovingly by her side on a sofa, while Arabella and her pretty handmaid feigned to be absorbed in looking out of a window at the other end of the room. At sight of which phenomenon the fat boy uttered an interjection, the ladies a scream, and the gentleman an oath, almost simultaneously.

"Wretched creature, what do you want here!" said the gentleman, who it is needless to say was Mr. Snodgrass.

To this the fat boy, considerably terrified, briefly responded "Missis."

"What do you want me for!" inquired Emily, turning her head aside. "You a pid creature!"

"Master and Mr. Pickwick is a going to dine here at five," replied the fat boy.

"Leave the room," said Mr. Snodgrass, glaring upon the bewildered youth.

"No, no, no," added Emily hastily.

"Bella, dear, advise me."

Upon this, Emily and Mr. Snodgrass, and Arabella and Mary, crowded into a corner and conversed earnestly in whispers for some minutes, during which the fat boy despaired.

"Joe," said Arabella, at length, looking round with a most bewitching smile, "how do you do, Joe?"

"Joe," said Emily, "you're a very good boy; I won't forget you, Joe."

"Joe," said Mr. Snodgrass, advancing to the astonished youth, and seizing his hand, "I didn't know you before. There are five shillings for you, Joe."

"I'd owe you five, Joe," said Arabella, "for old acquaintance sake, you know, and another most captivating smile was bestowed upon the corpulent intruder.

The fat boy's perception being slow, he looked rather puzzled at first to account for this sudden possession in his favour, and stared about him in a very alarming manner. At length his broad face began to show symptoms of a grin of proportionately broad dimensions, and then thrusting half a crown into each of his pockets, and a hand and wrist after it, he burst into a horse laugh; being for the first and only time in his existence.

"He understands us, I see," said Arabella.

"He had better have something to eat immediately," remarked Emily.

The fat boy almost laughed again, when he heard this suggestion. Mary, after a
"You shan't talk to me in that way," said Mary; "you don't mean it."
"Don't, I thought I" replied the fat boy; "I say—"
"Well,"
"Are you going to come regular?"
"No," rejoined Mary, shaking her head;
"I'm going away again to-night. Why I!"
"Oh!" said the fat boy, in a tone of strong feeling; "how we should have enjoyed ourselves at meals, if you had been!"
"I might come here, sometimes, perhaps, to see you," said Mary, plaiting the table-cloth in assumed coyness, "if you would do me a favour."

The fat boy looked from the pie-dish to the steak, as if he thought a favour must be in a manner connected with something to eat; and then took out one of the half-crowns and glanced at it nervously.

"Don't you understand me!" said Mary, looking slyly in his fat face.
Again he looked at the half-crown, and said faintly, "No."

"The ladies want you not to say anything to the old gentleman about the young gentleman having been up stairs; and I want you too."

"Is that all!" said the fat boy, evidently very much relieved, as he pocketed the half-crown again. "Of course I ain't going to."

"You see," said Mary. "Mr. Squeers is very fond of Miss Emily, and Miss Emily's very fond of him, and if you want to tell about it, the old gentleman would carry you all away miles into the country, where you'd see nobody."

"No, no, I won't tell," said the fat boy, soberly.

"That's a dear," said Mary. "Now it's time I went up stairs, and got my baby ready for dinner."

"Don't go yet," urged the fat boy.

"I must," replied Mary, "good bye, for the present."

The fat boy, with elephantine playfulness, stretched out his arms to reach a kist; but as it required no great agility to elude him, his fair mislaver had vanished before he closed them again; upon which the sanguine youth ate a pound or so of steak with a sentimental countenance, and fell fast asleep.

There was so much to say up stairs, and there were so many plans to concert for repement and amends in the event of old Wardle continuing to be evil, that it wanted only half an hour to dinner when Mr. Squeers took his final adieu. The ladies ran to Emily's bedroom to dress, and the lover, taking up his hat, walked out of the room. He had scarcely got outside the door, when he heard Wardle's voice talking
Perfectly; and looking over the banisters, behold him, followed by some other gentleman, coming straight up stairs. Knowing nothing of the house, Mr. Snodgrass in his confusion stepped hastily back into the room he had just quitted; and passing from the door into a familiar apartment (Mr. Wardle's bedchamber), closed the door softly; just as the persons he had sought a glimpse of entered the sitting-room. These were Mr. Wardle, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, and Mr. Benjamin Allen, when he had no difficulty in recognizing by their voices.

"Very lucky I had the presence of mind to avoid them," thought Mr. Snodgrass; with a smile, and walking on the door-near the bedside, "this opens into the same passage, and I can walk quietly and comfortably away." He was only one obstacle to his walking quietly and comfortably away, which was, that the door was locked and the key gone.

"Let us have some of your best wine to-day," said old Wardle rubbing his hands.

"You shall have some of the very best, Sir," replied the waiter.

"Let the ladies know we have come in," said Wardle.

Devoutly and ardently did Mr. Snodgrass wish that the ladies had known he had come in; his restless desire to whisper "Waiter!" through the keyhole, but the probability of the wrong waiter coming to his relief, blunting upon his mind, together with a sense of the strong resemblance between his voice and that of another gentleman who had been recently found in a neighboring house (an account of whose misfortunes had appeared under the head of "Police" in that morning's paper), he set himself down upon a portmensteau, and trembled violently.

"We won't wait a minute for Mr. Pickwick," said Wardle, beckoning at his watch; "he is always late, you know. He will be here in time if he moves so come; and if he does not, I'll come and wake him."--Arabella?

"My sister," exclaimed Mr. Benjamin Allen, folding her in a most affectionate embrace.

"Oh, Ben, dear, how you do small of me," said Arabella, rather overpowered by this mark of affection.

"Do I," said Mr. Benjamin Allen. "Do I, Bella?"--Well, perhaps I do.

"Perhaps he did, having just left a pleasant little smoking party of twelve medical and scientific gentlemen in a sumptuous parlour with a fire blazing before me; and I--" But these are pleasant memories to me," added Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"This is," said Arabella; meaning for ward to kiss her brother; "don't take hold of me again, Ben, dear, because you tumble me so!"

As this point of the reconciliation, Mr. Ben Allen allowed his feelings and the signs and porter to overcome him; and looked round upon the beholders with stamping spectacles.

"Is nothing to be said to me?" cried Wardle, with open arms.

"A great deal," whispered Arabella, as she received the old gentleman's hearty embrace and congratulations. "You are a heartless, unfeeling, cruel monster!"

"You are a little rebel," replied Wardle, in the same tone, "and I am afraid I shall be obliged to forbid you the house. People like you, who get married in spite of everybody, ought not to be let loose on society. But come," added the old gentleman aloud, "here's the dinner; you shall sit by me, Joe; why, damn the boy, he's awake!"

To the great distress of his master, the fat boy was indeed in a state of remarkable vigilance, his eyes being wide open, and looking as if they intended to remain so.

There was an alacrity in his manner, too, which was equally unaccountable; every time his eyes met those of Emily or Arabella, he smirked and grinned; and once Wardle could have sworn he saw him wink.

This alteration in the fat boy's demeanour originated in his increased sense of his own importance, and the dignity he acquired from having been taken into the confidence of the young ladies; and the smiles and grins, and winks, were so many condescending assurances that they might depend upon his fidelity. As these tokens were rather calculated to awaken suspicion than alay it, and were somewhat embarrassing besides, they were occasionally answered by a frown or a shake of the head from Arabella, which the fat boy considering as hints to be on his guard, expressed his perfect understanding of, by smiling, grinning, and winking, with redoubled assiduity.

"Joe," said Mr. Wardle after an unsuccessful search in all his pockets, "is my snuff-box on the sofa?"

"No, Sir," replied the fat boy.

"Oh, I recollect; I laid it on my dressing table this morning," said Wardle.

"Run into the next room and fetch it.

The fat boy went into the next room, and having been absent about a minute, returned with the snuff-box and the silver plate that ever a fat boy wore.

"What is the matter with the boy," cried Wardle, turning round pitifully.

"Nothing, sir. He has been a little unwell," replied Joe, nervously.
"Were you been seeing any spirits?" inquired the old gentleman.

"Or taking any?" added Ben Allen.

"I think you're right," whispered Wardle across the table. "He is intoxicated, I'm sure."

Ben Allen replied that he thought he was; and as that gentleman had seen a good deal of the disease in question, Wardle was confirmed in an impression which had been hovering about his mind for half an hour, and at once arrived at the conclusion that the fat boy was very drunk.

"Just keep your eye upon him for a few minutes," murmured Wardle. "We shall soon find out whether he is or not."

The unfortunate youth had only exchanged a dozen words with Mr. Snodgrass, that gentleman having imposed him to make a private appeal to a friend to rescue him, and then pushed him out with the snuff-box, lest his prolonged absence should lead to a discovery. He rummaged a little with a most disturbed expression of face, and left the room in search of Mary. But Mary had gone home after dressing her mistress, and the fat boy came back again, more disturbed than before.

Wardle and Mr. Ben Allen exchanged glances.

"Joe," said Wardle.

"Yes, Sir."

"What did you go away for?"

The fat boy looked hopelessly in the face of everybody at table, and stammered out that he didn't know.

"Oh," said Wardle, "you don't know, eh? Take this cheese to Mr. Pickwick."

Now, Mr. Pickwick being in the very best health and spirits, had been making himself perfectly delightful all dinner-time, and was at this moment engaged in an energetic conversation with Emily and Mr. Winkle; bowing his head courteously in the emphasis of his discourse, gently waving his left hand to lend force to his observations, and all glowing with placid smiles. He took a piece of cheese from the plate, and was upon the point of turning round to renew the conversation, when the fat boy, stooping so as to bring his head on a level with that of Mr. Pickwick, pointed with his thumb over his shoulder and made the most horrible and hideous face that was ever seen out of pantomime.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, starting. "What a very--oh! He stopped, for the fat boy had drawn himself up, and was, or pretended to be, fast asleep.

"What is the matter?" inquired Wardle.

"This is such an extremely singular--is yours," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking suspicious at the boy. "It seems an odd thing to say, but upon my word, I am afraid that at times he is a little deranged."

"Oh! Mr. Pickwick, pray don't say so," cried Emily and Ambrosio, both at once.

"I am not certain, of course," said Mr. Pickwick, amidst profound silence, and looks of general dismay; "but his manner to me this moment was really very alarming. Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, suddenly jumping up with a short scream. "I beg your pardon, ladies, but at that moment he ran some sharp instrument into my leg. Really he is not safe."

"He's drunk," round old Wardle, passionately... "Ring the bell, call the waiter! he's drunk."

"I ain't," said the fat boy, falling on his knees as his master seized him by the collar. "I ain't drank."

"Then you're friend—that's worse. Call the waiter," said the old gentleman.

"I ain't mad; I'm sensible," rejoined the fat boy, beginning to cry.

"Then, what the devil did you run sharp instruments into Mr. Pickwick's leg for?" inquired Wardle, angrily.

"He wouldn't look at me," replied the boy. "I wanted to speak to him."

"What did you want to say?" asked half a dozen voices at once.

"He wouldn't look at me," said the fat boy, gasping again, and wiped two tears away with the knuckle of each of his nose-fingers.

"What did you want to say?" demanded Wardle, shaking him.

"Stop," said Mr. Pickwick; "allow me. What did you wish to communicate to me, my poor boy?"

"I want to whisper to you," replied the fat boy.

"You want to bite his ear off, I suppose," said Wardle. "Don't come near him, he's vicious; ring the bell, and let him be taken down stairs."

Just as Mr. Winkle caught the bell- rope in his hand, it was arrested by a general expression of astonishment; the captive lover, his face burning with confusion, and daintly walked in from the bedroom, and made a comprehensive bow to the company.

"Hallo!" cried Wardle, releasing the fat boy's collar, and staggering back.

"What's this?"

"I have been concealed in the next room, Sir, since you appeared," explained Mr. Snodgrass.

"Emily, my girl," said Wardle, reproachfully, "you detect meanness and deceit; this is unjustifiable and indecent to the highest degree. I don't deserve this at your hands, Emily, indeed."

"Dear papa," said Emily, "Ambrosio..."
Perker came out wonderfully, told various comic stories, and sang a serious song, which was almost as funny as the anecdotes. Arabella was very charming, Mr. Wardle very jovial, Mr. Pickwick very harmonious, Mr. Ben Allen very uproarious, the lovers very silent, Mr. Winkle very talkative, and all of them very happy.

CHAPTER LVI

Mr. Solomon Fell, assisted by a select committee of coachmen, arranges the affairs of the elder Mr. Weller.

"Samivel," said Mr. Weller, accosting his son on the morning after the funeral, "I've found it, Sammy. I thought it was there."

"Thought! wot wos vere?" inquired Sam.

"Your mother-in-law's will, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "in virtue o' which, them arrangements is to be made as I told you on last night respec' the furs."

"Wot, didn't she tell you wot it wos?" inquired Sam.

"Not a bit on it, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "ye vos a adjestin' our little differences, and I vos a cheerin' her spirits and bearin' her up, so that I forgot to ask any thin' about it. I don't know as I should ha' done it indeed, if I had remembered it," added Mr. Weller, "for it's a rum sort o' thing, Sammy, to go a hankerin' after anybody's property, ven you're assistin' 'em in illness. It's like helping an outside passenger up ven he's been pitched off a coach, and puttin' your hand in his pocket, vile yott ask him with a sigh how he finds his self, Sammy."

With this figurative illustration of his meaning, Mr. Weller unclasped his pocket-book, and drew forth a dirty sheet of letter paper, on which were inscribed various characters crowded together in remarkable confusion.

"This here is the dokeyment, Sammy," said Weller. "I found it in the little black teapot on the top shelf o' the bar closet. She used to keep hank-notes there afore she vos married, Samivel. I've seen her take the lid off to pay a bill, many and many a time. Poor creature, she might ha' filled all the teapots in the house with villas, and not inconvenience herself neither, for she took very little of any thin' in that way lately, 'cept on the Temperance nights, ven they just laid a foundation o' tea to put the spirits a-top on."'

"What does it say?" inquired Sam.
"Jim wat I told you, my boy," rejoined his parent. "Two hundred pounds vomh o' reduced to my son-in-law, Samivel, and all the rest o' my property o' every kind and description vouchsafe to my husband, Mr. Tony Weller, who, I appoint as my acquezzator."

"That's all, is it?" said Sam.

"That's all," replied Mr. Weller. "And I presume as it's all right and satisfactory to you and me, as is the only parties interested, ye may as well put this bit o' paper into the fire."

"Wot are you a join' on, you launzle!" said Sam, snatching the paper away, as his parent, in all innocence, stirred the fire preparatory to settling the action to the word. "You see a nice eggyskitter, you are?"

"vy not!" inquired Mr. Weller, looking sternly round, with the poker in his hand. "vy not!" exclaimed Sam—"see it must be proved, and probated, and sworn to, and all manner o' formalities."

"You don't mean that!" said Mr. Weller, laying down the poker.

Sam buttoned the will carefully in a side pocket, intimating by a look, meanwhile, that he did mean it, and very seriously too.

"Then I'll tell you wot it is," said Mr. Weller, after a short meditation, "this is a case for that 'ere confidential pal o' the Chapmenship. Poll must look into this, Sammey. He's the man for a difficult question at law. We'll have this here brought afore the Solvent Courts, directly, Sarnivel."

"I never did see such a saddle-backed old creature!" exclaimed Sam, irritably. "Old Bailey's, and Solvent Courts, and allelyiba, and every species o' gamin' always a-runnin' through his brain. You'd better get your out-o-door clothes on, and come to town about this business, than stand a presentin' there about wot you don't understand nothin' of."

"Very good, Sammey," replied Mr. Weller. "I'm quite agreeable to an'ithin' as will b'expedite business, Sammey. But mind this here, my boy, nobody but Poll—nobody but Poll as a legal adviser."

"I don't want anybody else," replied Sam. "Now, are you a-comin'?"

"Vait a minit, Sammey," replied Weller, who, having tied his shawl with the aid of a small glass that hung in the window, was now, by dint of the most wonderful exertions, struggling into his upper garments. "Vait a minit, Sammey; ven you grow as old as your father, you won't get into your vest as quiet as you do now, my boy."

"If I couldn't get into it easier than that, I'm blessed if I'd wear it all," rejoiced his son.

"You think so now," said Mr. Weller, with the gravity of age, "but you'll find that as you get vider you'll get viser. Vithd and wisdom, Sammey, always grows together."

As Mr. Weller delivered this infallible maxim—the result of many years' personal experience and observation—he contrived, by a dexterous twist of his body, to get the bottom button of his coat to perform his office. Having paused a few seconds to recover breath, he brushed his hat with his elbow, and declared himself ready.

"As four-heads is better than two, Sammey," said Mr. Weller, as they drove along the London road in the chaise-cart, "and as all this here property is a very great temptation to a legal gent'man, we'll take a couple o' friends o' mine with us, an' I'll be very soon down upon him if he comes anythin' irreg'lar; two o' them as saw you to the Fleet that day. They're the very best judges," added Mr. Weller, in a half-whisper, "the very best judges of a horse you ever knew 'd."

"And of a lawyer, too!" inquired Sam. "The man that can form a sacker judgment of a man, can form aacker judgment of anyth'in'," replied his father; so dogmatically, that Sam did not attempt to controvert the position.

In pursuance of this notable resolution, the services of the mottled-faced gentlemen and two other very fat coachmen—selected by Mr. Weller, probably, with a view to their width and consequent wisdom—were put into requisition; and this assistance having been secured, the party proceeded to the public-house in Portugal-street, whence a messenger was despatched to the Insolvent Court over the way, requiring Mr. Solomon Poll's immediate attendance.

The messenger fortunately found Mr. Solomon Poll in court, regaling himself, business being rather slack, with a cold collation of an Abernethy biscuit and a savoury. The message was so sooner whispered in his ear than he thrust them in his pocket among various professional documents, and hurried over the way with such alacrity that he reached the parlour before the messenger had even emancipated himself from the couped.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Poll, touching his hat, "my service to you all. I don't say it to flatter you, gentlemen, but there are not five other men in the world that I'd have come out of that court for, to-day."

"So busy, eh!" said Sam.

"Buay!" replied Poll; "I'm completely sewn up, as my friend the late Lord Chaz, coller used to say to me, gentlemen, when he came out from hearing appeals in the House of Lords. Poor fellow! he was very susceptible of fatigue; he used to feel
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those appeals uncommanily. I actually thought more than once that he’d have sunk under them; I did, indeed.”

Here Mr. Pell shook his head, and paused; upon which the elder Mr. Weller, nudging his neighbour, as begging him to mark the attorney’s high commonwealth, asked whether the duties in question produced any permanent ill effects on the constitution of his noble friend.

“I don’t think he ever quite recovered them,” replied Pell; “in fact I’m sure he never did. Pell,” he used to say to me many a time, “how the blaze you can stand the head-work you do, is a mystery to me.”—Well,” I used to answer, “I hardly know how I do it, upon my life.”—Pell, he’d add, sighing and looking at me with a little envy—friendly envy, you know; gentlemen, mere friendly envy; I never minded it—Pell, you’re a wonder; a wonder! Ah! you’d have liked him very much if you had known him, gentlemen. Bring me three penn’orth of rum, my dear.”

Addressing this latter remark to the waiters in a tone of subdued grief, Mr. Pell sighed, looked at his shoes and the ceiling; and, the rum having by that time arrived, drank it up.

“However,” said Pell, drawing a chair up to the table, “a professional man has no right to think of his private friendships when his legal assistance is wanted. By-the-bye, gentlemen, since I saw you here before, we have had to weep over a very melancholy occurrence.”

Mr. Pell drew out a pocket-handkerchief when he came to the word weep, but he made no further use of it than to wipe away a slight tinge of rust which hung upon his upper lip.

“I saw it in the Advertiser,” Mr. Weller, continued Pell; “Bless my soul, not more than fifty-two! dear me—only think.”

These indications of a musing spirit were addressed to the mottled-faced man, whose eyes Mr. Pell had accidentally caught; upon which the mottled-faced man, whose apprehension of matters in general was of a foggy nature, moved unceasingly in his seat, and opined that indeed, so far as that went, there was no saying how things was brought about; which observation involving one of those subtle propositions which it is difficult to encounter in argument, was controverted by nobody.

“I have heard it remarked that she was a very fine woman, Mr. Weller,” said Pell in a sympathising manner.

“Yes, Sir, she was,” replied the elder Mr. Weller, not much relishing this mode of discussing the subject, and yet thinking that the attorney, from his long habit of with the late Lord Chancellor, must know best on all matters of polite breeding.

“She was a very fine woman, Sir; ven I first know’d her. She was a widdier, Sir, at that time.”

“Now, it’s curious,” said Pell, looking round with a sorrowful smile; “Mrs. Pell was a widow.”

“That’s very extraordinary,” said the mottled-faced man.

“Well, it is a curious coincidence,” said Pell.

“Not at all,” gruffly remarked the elder Mr. Weller. “More widders is married than single virgins.”

“Very good, very good,” said Pell, “you’re quite right, Mr. Weller. Mr. Pell was a very elegant and accomplished woman; her manners were the theme of universal admiration in our neighbourhood. I was proud to see that woman dance; there was something so firm and dignified, and yet natural in her motion. Her cutting, gentlemen, was simplicity itself—ah! well, well! Excuse my asking the question, Mr. Samuel,” continued the attorney in a lower voice; “was your mother-in-law tall?”

“Not very,” replied Sam.

“Mrs. Pell was a tall figure,” said Pell, “a splendid woman, with a noble shape, and a nose, gentlemen, formed to command and he majestic. She was very much attached to me—very much—highly connected, too; her mother’s brother, gentlemen, failed for eight hundred pounds as a Law Stationer.”

“Well,” said Mr. Weller, who had grown rather restless during this discussion, “with regard to bisness.”

The word was music to Pell’s ears. He had been revolving in his mind whether any business was to be transacted, or whether he had been merely invited to partake of a glass of brandy and water, or a bowl of punch, or any similar professional compliment, and now the doubt was set at rest without his appearing at all eager for its solution. His eyes glittered as he laid his hat on the table, and said—

“What is this business upon which—am? Whether of these gentlemen wish to go through the court? We require an arrest, a friendly arrest will do, you know; we are all friends here, I suppose?”

“Give me the dockyment, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, taking the will from his son, who appeared to enjoy the interview amazingly. “Wot we tek-vire, Sir, is a probe o’ this here.”

“Probate, my dear Sir, probate,” said Pell.
It was a kind of fête occasion, and the parties were attired accordingly. Mr. Weller's togs were newly cleaned, and his dress was arranged with peculiar care; the mottled-faced gentleman wore at his button-hole a full-sized dahlia with several leaves, and the coats of his two friends were adorned with rosebuds of laurel and other evergreens. All three were habited in strict holiday costume; that is to say; they were wrapped up to the chins, and wore as many clothes as possible, which is, and has been, a stage-coachman's idea of full dress ever since stage-coaches were invented.

Mr. Pell was waiting at the usual place of meeting at the appointed time, and even he wore a pair of gloves and a clean shirt, the latter much frayed at the collar and wristbands by frequent washings.

“A quarter to two,” said Pell, looking at the parlour clock. “If we are with Mr. Flasher at a quarter past, we shall just hit the best time.”

“What should you say to a drop o' beer, gent'men?” suggested the mottled-faced man.

“And a little bit o' cold beef,” said the second coachman.

“Or a oyster,” added the third, who was a hoarse gentleman, supported by very round legs.

“Hear, hear!” said Pell; “to congratulate Mr. Weller, on his coming into possession of his property: oh! ha! ha!”

“I'm quite agreeable, gent'lemen,” answered Mr. Weller. “Sammy, pull the bell.”

Sam complied; and the porter, cold beef, and oysters being promptly produced, the lunch was done ample justice to. Where everybody took so active a part, it is almost invincible to make a distinction; but if one individual evinced greater powers than another, it was the coachman with the hoarse voice, who took an imperial pint of vinegar with his oysters, without betraying the least emotion.

“Mr. Pell, Sir,” said the elder Mr. Weller, stirring a glass of brandy and water, of which one was placed before every gentleman when the oyster-shells were removed; “Mr. Pell, Sir, it was my intention to have proposed the funs on this occasion, but Samivel has vespised to me—”

Here Mr. Samuel Weller, who had silently eaten his oysters with tranquil smiles, cried, “Hear!” in a very loud voice.

“—Has vespised to me,” resumed his father, “that it would be better to do-wote the liquor to vishin' you success and prosperity, and thankin' you for the manner in
those appeals unconsciously. I actually thought more than once that he'd have sunk
under them, I did, indeed."

Here Mr. Pell shook his head, and
paused; upon which the elder Mr. Weller,
nudging his neighbour, as begging him to
mark the attorney's high condescension, asked
whether the duties in question produc
ded any permanent ill effects on the constitut-
on of his noble friend.

"I don't think he ever quite re

turned," replied Pell; "in fact I've
never did. 'Pell,' he used to say in my
expression, "how the hell was I to stand
the hand-work you're giving me?"

"Well, I don't know how I

was going to describe how the

attorney was striking

him,

and the

self-souls,

and

it's

me with a little

very

thing

say anything that

sufficiently
gentle

men,

say or do

self-souls; and I assure you of it

memorably, gentlemen, but

I'm never going
to say anything that

sufficiently

gentlemen."

"I think such

show of confidence
to a professional

activity, and I assure you of it

memorably, gentlemen, but if I'm not here, or over the

way, that's my address. You'll find my

terminology as

economical and reasonable, and no

more attends to his clients than I do,

and I hope I know a little of my profession

besides. If you have any opportunity of

recommending me to any of your friends

gentleman, I shall be very much obliged
to you, and so will they too, when they
gone to know me. Your healths, gentle-

men."

With this expression of his feelings, Mr.

Solomon Pell hid three small written cards

before Mr. Weller's friends, and, looking at

the clock again, feared it was time to be

walking. Upon this hint Mr. Weller set

tled the bill, and, issuing forth, the execu-

tor, legatees, attorney, and umpires, directed

their steps towards the city.

The office of Wilkins Flasher, Esq.,
of the Stock Exchange, was, in a first floor

up a court behind the bank of England; the

house of Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, was at

Brixton, Surrey; the horse and stanhope

of Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, were at an ad-

jacent livery stable; the groom of Wilkins

Flasher, Esquire, was on his way to the

West End to deliver some game; the clerk

that the 'Glaucy', Flasher, had gone to

with the late Mr. Wilkins Flasher, Es-

squeer, on all sorts, 'Come in,' when

"She won't be with you, he knocked at

first long-house door.

"Good morning, Sir," said Pell, bowing

respectfully. "We want to make a little

appointment, if you please."

"Oh, just come in, will you?" said Mr.

Flasher. "Sit down a minute, I'll attend to

you directly."

"Thank you, Sir," said Pell, "there's no

hurry. Take a chair, Mr. Weller."

Mr. Weller took a chair, and Sam took

a box, and the umpires took what they could

and looked at the almanac and one or

two papers which were wafered against the

wall, with as much open-eyed reverie as if

they'd been the finest effects of the old

masters.

"Well, I'll bet you half a dozen of claret

on it; come," said Wilkins Flasher, Esq.

uire, resuming the conversation to which

Mr. Pell's entrance had caused a moment-

ary interruption.

This was addressed to a very smart young

gentleman who wore his hat on his right

whisker, and was lounging over his desk

killing flies with a ruler. Wilkins Flasher,

Esquire, was balancing himself on two legs

of an office stool; spearing a wafer-box with

a penknife, which he dropped every now

and then with great dexterity into the very

centre of a small red wafer that was stuck

outside. Both gentlemen had very open

waistcoats, and very rolling collars, and

very small boots, and very big rings, and

very little watches, and very large gold

chains, and symmetrical perfumes, and

scented pocket-handkerchiefs.

"I never bet half a dozen," said Mr. other

gentleman. "I'll take a dozen."

"Done, Simmery, done!" said Wilkins

Flasher, Esquire.

"P. P., mind," observed the other.

"Of course," replied Wilkins Flasher,

Esquire; and Wilkins Flasher, Esquire,

entered it in a little book with another

gold pencill-case, and the other gentleman entered it

also, in another little Book with another

gold pencil-case.

"I see there's a notice up this morning

about Boffer," observed Mr. Simmery.

"Poor devil, he's expelleth the house."

"I'll bet you ten guineas to five, he

cuts his throat," said Wilkins Flasher, Esq.

uire.

"Done," replied Mr. Simmery.

"Stop, bar!" said Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, thoughtfully. "Perhaps he may

hang himself."

"Very good," rejoined Mr. Simmery, pulling out the gold pencil-case again.
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

I've no objection to take you that way—makes away with himself."

"Kills himself, in fact," said Wilkins Flasher, Esquire.

"Just so," replied Mr. Simmery, putting on. "Flasher—ten guineas to five kills himself. Within what time?"

"S'bout a week," said Mr. Simmery, putting on. "Flasher—ten guineas to five kills himself. Within what time?"

"Con-found it, no;" rejoined Mr. Simmery, stopping for an instant to smash a fly with the ruler. "Say a week."

"Split the difference," said Wilkins Flasher, Esquire. "Make it ten days."

"Well; ten days," rejoined Mr. Simmery.

So, it was entered down in the little books that Boffo was to kill himself within ten days, or Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, was to hand over to Frank Simmery, Esquire, the sum of ten guineas; and that if Boffo did kill himself within that time, Frank Simmery, Esquire, would pay to Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, five guineas, instead.

"I'm very sorry he has failed," said Wilkins Flasher, Esquire. "Capital dinners he gave."

"Fine part he had too," remarked Mr. Simmery. "We are going to send our ouler to the sale to-morrow, to pick up some of that sixty-four."

"The devil you are!" said Wilkins Flasher, Esquire. "My man's going too. Five guineas my man outsides your man."

"Done."

Another entry was made in the little books, with the gold pencil-cases; and Mr. Simmery having by this time killed all the flies and taken all the bets, strooled away to the Stock Exchange to see what was going forward.

Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, now condescended to receive Mr. Solomon Pell's instructions; and having filled up some printed forms, requested the party to follow him to the Bank, where they did; Mr. Weller and his three friends standing at all they beheld in unbounded astonishment, and Sam encountering everything with a coolness, which nothing could disturb.

Crossing a court-yard, which was all noise and bustle; and passing a couple of porters who seemed dressed to match the red fire-engine which was wheeled away into a corner, they passed into an office, where their business was to be transacted, and where Pell and Mr. Flasher left them standing for a few moments, while they went up stairs into the Will Office.

"Wot place is this here?" whispered the method-faced gentleman to the elder Mr. Weller.

"Counsel's Office," replied the executor in a whisper.

"Wot are them gen'lemen a settin' behind the counters?" asked the hoarse coachman.

"Reduced counsel, I s'pose," replied Mr. Weller. " Ain't they the reduced counsel, Samivel?"

"Vy, you don't suppose the reduced counsel is alive, do you?" inquired Sam, with some disdain.

"How should I know?" retorted Mr. Weller; "I thought they looked very like it. Wot are they, then?"

"Clerks," replied Sam.

"Wot are they all a satin' hamp-swordges for?" inquired his father.

"Cos it's in their dooty, I s'pose," replied Sam, "it's a part o' the system; they're always a don' it here, all day long!"

Mr. Weller and his friends had scarcely had a moment to reflect upon this singular regulation as connected with the monetary system of the country, when they were rejoined by Pell and Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, who led them to a part of the counter above which was a round black board with a large "W" on it.

"Wot's that for, Sir?" inquired Mr. Weller, directing Pell's attention to the target in question.

"The first letter of the name of the deceased," replied Pell.

"I say," said Mr. Weller, turning round to the umpires. "There's somethin' wrong here. We's our letter—this won't do."

The referees at once gave it as their decided opinion that the business could not be legally proceeded with, under the letter "W," and in all probability it would have stood over for one day at least, had it not been for the prompt though at first sight undutiful behaviour of Sam, who seizing his father by the skirt of the coat, dragged him to the counter, and pinned him there until he had affixed his signature to a couple of instruments, which, from Mr. Weller's habit of printing, was a work of so much labour and time that the officiating clerk peeled and cut three Ripstone pippins while it was performing.

As the elder Mr. Weller insisted on selling out his portion forthwith, they proceeded from the Bank to the gate of the Stock Exchange, to which Wilkins Flasher, Esq., after a short absence, returned with a cheque on Smith, Payne, & Smith, for five hundred and thirty pounds, that being the sum of money to which Mr. Weller, at the market price of the day, was entitled.
in consideration of the balance of the second Mrs. Weller's funded savings. Sam's two hundred pounds stood transferred to his name, and Wilkins Flasher, Esq., having been paid his commission, dropped the money carelessly into his coat-pocket, and lounged back to his office.

Mr. Weller was at first obstinately determined upon cashing the check in nothing but sovereigns; but on its being represented by the ufficers that by so doing he must incur the expense of a small sack to carry them home in, he consented to receive the amount in five-pound notes.

"My son," said Mr. Weller, as they came out of the banking-house, "my son and me has a very particular engagement this afternoon, and I should like to have this here business settled out of hand, so let's jest go straight away somewheres, very, very hord the accounts."

A quiet room was soon found, and the accounts were produced and studied. Mr. Pell's bill was taxed by Sam, and some charges were disallowed by the ufficers; but, notwithstanding Mr. Pell's declaration, accompanied with many solemn asseverations that they were really too hard upon him, it was by very many degrees the best professional job he had ever had, and one on which he bearded, lodged, and washed, for six months afterwards.

The ufficers having pertained to a dram, shook hands and departed, as they had to drive out of town that night. Mr. Solomon Pell, finding that nothing more was going forward either in the eating or drinking way, took a most friendly leave; and Sam and his father were left alone.

"There," said Mr. Weller, thrusting his pocket-book in his side-pocket, "with the bills for the lease and that, there's eleven hundred and eighty pound here. Now Samuel, my boy, turn the horses' heads to the George and Wurther."

CHAPTER LVII.

An important conference takes place between Mr. Pickwick and Samuel Weller, at which his parent assist—An old gentleman in a muff-coloured suit arrives unexpectedly.

Mr. Pickwick was sitting alone, musing over many things, and thinking, among other considerations, how he could best provide for the young couple whose present unsettled condition was matter of constant regret, and anxiety to him, when Mary stepped lightly into the room, and advancing to the table, said rather hastily—

"Oh, if you please, Sir, Samuel is downstairs, and he says my father see you?"

"Surely," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Thank you, Sir," said Mary, tripping towards the door again.

"Sam has not been here long, has he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh no, Sir," replied Mary eagerly.

"He has only just come home. He is not going to ask you for any more leave, Sir, he says."

Mary might have been conscious that she had communicated this last intelligence with more warmth than seemed actually necessary, or she might have observed the good-humored smile with which Mr. Pickwick regarded her when she had finished speaking. She certainly held down her head, and examined the corner of a very smart little apron with more closeness than there appeared any absolute occasion for.

"Tell them they can come up at once, by all means," said Mr. Pickwick.

Mary, apparently much relieved, hurried away with her message.

Mr. Pickwick took two or three turns up and down the room; and rubbing his chin with his left hand as he did so, appeared lost in thought.

"Well, well," said Mr. Pickwick, at length, in a kind but somewhat melancholy tone, "it is the best way in which I could reward him for his attachment and fidelity; let it be so, in Heaven's name. It is the fate of a lonely old man, that those about him should form new and different attachments and leave him. I have no right to expect that it should be otherwise with me.

No, no," added Mr. Pickwick, more cheerfully, "it would be selfish and ungrateful. I ought to be happy to have an opportunity of providing for him so well. I am—of course I am."

Mr. Pickwick had been so absorbed in these reflections, that a knock at the door was three or four times repeated before he heard it. Hastily seating himself, and calling up his accustomed pleasant looks, he gave the required permission, and Sam Weller entered, followed by his father.

"Glad to see you back again, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "How do you do, Mr. Weller?"

"Very hearty, thank you, Sir," replied the widower; "I hope I see you well, Sir."

"Quite, I thank you," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I wanted to have a little bit of conversation with you, Sir," said Mr. Weller, "if you could spare me five minutes or so."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Sam, give your father a chair," he said to Mary.
"Thank'ee, Samivel, I've 'a' get a chear here," said Mr. Weller, bringing one forward as he spoke; "uncommon fine day it's been, Sir," added the old gentleman, laying his hat on the floor as he sat himself down.

"Remarkably so, indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Very reasonable!"

"Seasonablest weather I erer see, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller. Here the old gentleman was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which being terminated, he nodded his head, and winked, and made several suppurative and threatening gestures to his son, all of which Sam Weller steadily abstained from seeing.

Mr. Pickwick, perceiving that there was some embarrassment on the old gentleman's part, affected to be engaged in cutting the leaft of a book that lay beside him; and waited patiently until Mr. Weller should arrive at the object of his visit.

"I see no see such a beggar-wasin' boy as you are, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, looking indignantly at his son; "never in all my born days!"

"What is he doing, Mr. Weller?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"He's not begin, Sir," rejoined Mr. Weller; "he knows I ain't eek to expressin' myselven; ven there's anythin' parson-like to be done, and yet 'e'll stand and see me a settin' here takin' up your walkable time, and makin' a reg'lar spectacle of myself, rather than help me out with a syllable. It ain't full conduct, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, wiping his forehead; "very far from it."

"You said you'd speak," replied Sam; "how should I know you was done up at the very beginnin'?"

"You might've seen I warn't able to start," rejoined the father; "I'm on the wrong side of the road, and backin' into the palins, and all manner of unpleasantness; and yet you won't put out a hand to help me. I'm ashamed on you, Samivel."

"The fact is, Sir," said Sam, with a slight bow, "the gov'nor's been a drawin' his money."

"Very good, Samivel, very good," said Mr. Weller, nodding his head with a satisfied air. "I didn't mean to speak harsh to you, Samny. Very good. That's the way to begin; come to the pint at once. Very good, indeed, Samivel."

Mr. Weller nodded his head an extraordinary number of times in the excess of his gratification, and waited in a listening attitude for Sam to resume his statement.

"You may sit, down, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, apprehending that the interview was likely to prove rather longer than he had expected.

Sam bowed again, and sat down; his father looking round, he continued,

"The gov'nor, Sir, has drawn out five hundred and thirty pound."

"Reduced eounsels," interposed Mr. Weller, senior, in an undertone.

"It don't much matter whether it's reduced eounsels, or not, said Sam; "five hundred and thirty pound is the sum, ain't it?"

"All right, Samivel," replied Mr. Weller.

"To vich sum, he has added for the house and business."

"Lease, good-will, stock, and fixtures," interposed Mr. Weller.

"As much as makes it," continued Sam, "together, eleven hundred and eighty pound."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pickwick, "I am delighted to hear it. I congratulate you, Mr. Weller, on having done so well."

"Vait a minit, Sir," said Mr. Weller, raising his hand in a depreciatory manner.

"Get on, Samivel."

"This here money," said Sam, with a little hesitation, "he's anxious to put some- verses were he knows it'll be safe, and I'm very anxious, too, for if he keeps it, he'll go a lendin' it to somebody, or investin' property in horses, or droppin' his pocket-book down a airy, or makin' an Egyptian mummy of his-self in some vay or other."

"Very good, Samivel," observed Mr. Weller, in as complacent a manner as if Sam had been passing the highest eulogiums on his prudence and foresight, "very good."

"For vich reasons," continued Sam, plucking nervously at the brim of his hat; "for vich reasons he's drawn it out to-day, and come here with me to say, lessways to offer, or in other words to—"

"To say this here," said the elder Mr. Weller, impatiently, "that it ain’t o’ use to me; I'm a goin’ to work a coach regular, and he's got novices to keep it in, unless I vos to pay the guard for takin’ care on it, or to put it in vun o’ the coach-pock- eets, vich 'ud be a temptation to the inside; if you'll take care on it for me, Sir, I Shall be very much obliged to you. Prayer," said Mr. Weller, walking up to Mr. Pickwick and whispering in his ear, "prayer it'll go a little way towards the expenses o’ that here conviction. All I say is, just you keep it till I ask you for it again."

With these words, Mr. Weller placed the pocket-book in Mr. Pickwick’s hands, caught up his hat, and ran out of the room. With a
gave place to the most dignified gravity as he uttered these words.

"Wait outside a few minutes, Sam, will you?" said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam immediately withdrew.

Mr. Pickwick looked uncommonly wise and very much amazed, when Mr. Pickwick opened the discourse by saying—

"You are not an advocate for matrimony, I think, Mr. Weller?"

Mr. Weller shook his head. He was wholly unable to speak; for vague thoughts of some wicked widow—having been successful in her designs upon Mr. Pickwick—choked his utterance.

"Did you happen to see a young girl down stairs when you came in just now with your son?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes—I see a young gal," replied Mr. Weller, shortly.

"What did you think of her, now?—Candidly, Mr. Weller, what did you think of her?"

"I thought she was very plump, and very made," said Mr. Weller, with a critical air.

"So she is," said Mr. Pickwick, "as she is. What did you think of her manners, from what you saw of her?"

"Very pleasant," rejoined Mr. Weller.

"Very pleasant and communicative,"

The precise meaning which Mr. Weller attached to this last mentioned adjective did not appear, but as it was evident from the tone in which he used it, that it was a favourable expression, Mr. Pickwick was as well satisfied as if he had been the roughly enlightened on the subject.

"Take a great interest in her, Mr. Weller," said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Weller coughed.

"I mean an interest in her doing well," resumed Mr. Pickwick; "a desire that she may be comfortable and prosperous. You understand?"

"Very clearly," replied Mr. Weller, who understood nothing yet.

"That young person," said Mr. Pickwick, "is attached to your son.

"To Samivel Weller!" exclaimed the parent.

"Yes," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's natural," said Mr. Weller, after some consideration, "natural, but rather alarming. Samivel must be careful."

"How do you mean?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Very careful that he don't say nothin' to her," responded Mr. Weller. "Very careful that he a'n't led away in a innocent moment to say any thin' as may lead to a conviction for breach. You're never safe with 'em, Mr. Pickwick, ven they yunque has designs on you; there's no knowin' where a
have them, and this you're a considering of it they have you. I was married first, that very myself, Sir, and Sam and Sam was the conscience of the manœuvre."

"You give me no great encouragement to conclude what I have to say," observed Mr. Pickwick, "but I had better do so at once. This young person is not only attached to your son, Mr. Weller, but your son is attached to her."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "this here's a pretty sort of thing to come to a father's ears, this is!"

"I have observed them on several occasions," said Mr. Pickwick, making no comment on Mr. Weller's last remark; "and entertain no doubt at all about it. Supposing I were desirous of establishing them comfortably as man and wife in some little business or situation where they might hope to obtain a decent living, what should you think of it, Mr. Weller?"

At first, Mr. Weller received with very face a proposition involving the marriage of anybody in whom he took an interest, but as Mr. Pickwick argued the point with him, and laid great stress upon the fact that Mary was not a widow, he gradually became more tractable. Mr. Pickwick had great influence over him; and he had been much struck with Mary's appearance, having, in fact, bestowed several very unfavourably works upon her, already. At length, he said that it was not for him to oppose Mr. Pickwick's inclination, and that he would be very happy to yield to his advice; upon which Mr. Pickwick joyfully took him at his word and called Sam back into the room.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, clearing his throat, "your father and I have been having some conversation about you."

"About you, Samuel," said Mr. Weller, "is a patronizing and impressive voice.

"I am not so blind, Sam, as not to have seen, a long time since, that you entertain something more than a friendly feeling towards Mrs. Wrinkle's maid," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You bear this, Samuel?" said Mr. Weller in the same judicial form of speech as before.

"I hope, Sir," said Sam, addressing his master, "I hope there's no harm in a young man taking notice of a young woman as is undeniably good-looking and well-conducted."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Not by no means," acquiesced Mr. Weller, "amiss but magisterially.

"So far from thinking that there is any thing wrong in conduct so natural," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "it is in my wish to assist and promote your wishes in this respect. With this view I have had a little conversation with your father, and finding that he is of my opinion——"

"The lady not being a widow," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling, "I wish to free you from the restraint which your present position imposes upon you: and to mark my sense of your fidelity and many excellent qualities, by enabling you to marry this girl at once, and to earn an independent livelihood for yourself and family. I shall be proud, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, whose voice had faltered a little hitherto, but now resumed its customary tone, "proud and happy to make your future prospects in life my grateful and peculiar care."

"There was a profound silence for a short time, and then Sam said in a low husky sort of voice, but firmly withal——"

"I'm very much obliged to you for your goodness, Sir, as is only like yourself, but it can't be done."

"Can't be done!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick in astonishment.

"Samuel!" said Mr. Weller, with dignity.

"I say it can't be done," repeated Sam in a louder key. "Won't to become of you, Sir!"

"My good fellow," replied Mr. Pickwick, "the recent changes among my friends will alter my mode of life in future, entirely; besides I am growing older and want repose and quiet. My rambles, Sam, are over."

"How do I know that 'ere, Sir?" argued Sam; "you think so now! S'pose you was to change your mind, w'ich is not unlikely, see you've the spirit o' five-and-twenty in you still,—what 'ud become of you without me! It can't be done, Sir, it can't be done!"

"Very good, Samuel, there's a good deal in that," said Mr. Weller, encouragingly.

"I speak after long deliberation, Sam, and with the certainty that I shall keep my word," said Mr. Pickwick, shaking his head. "New scenes have closed upon me; my rambles are at an end."

"Very good," rejoined Sam. "Then that's the very best reason why you should always have somebody by you is understands you, to keep you up and make you comfortable. If you want a more polished sort of fellow, well and good, have him; but vagabonds or no vags, notice or no notice board or no board, lodgin' or no lodgin', Sam Weller, as you took from the old ins

In the Borough, strike by you, some whet
come may; and 'twas everythin' and everybodl do their verry fests, nothin' shall ever come between them.

At the close of this declaration, which Sam made with great emotion, the elder Mr. Weller rose from his chair, and forgetting all considerations of time, place, or propriety, waved his hat above his head and gave three vehement cheers.

"My good fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, when Mr. Weller had sat down again, rather abashed at his own enthusiasm, "you are bound to consider the young woman also."

"I do consider the young woman, Sir," said Sam. "I have considered the young woman, I've spoke to her, I've told her how I'm attirved, she's ready to wait till I'm ready, and I believe she will. If she don't she's not the young woman I take her for, and I give her up with readiness. You've know'd me afore, Sir. My mind's made up, and nothin' can ever alter it."

Who could combat this resolution? Not Mr. Pickwick. He derived at that moment more pride and luxury of feeling from the disinterested attachment of his humble friends than ten thousand protestations from the greatest men living could have awakened in his heart.

While this conversation was passing in Mr. Pickwick's room, a little old gentleman in a suit of smuff-coloured clothes, followed by a porter carrying a small portmanteau, presented himself below; and after securing a bed for the night, inquired of the waiter whether one Mrs. Winkle was staying there, to which question the waiter of course responded in the affirmative.

"Is she alone?" inquired the little old gentleman.

"I believe she is, Sir," replied the waiter; "I can call her own maid, Sir, if you—"

"No, I don't want her," said the old gentleman quickly. "Show me to her room without nother's own."

"Eh, Sir?" said the waiter.

"Are you deaf?" inquired the little old gentleman.

"No, Sir."

"Then listen, if you please. Can you hear me now?"

"Yes, Sir."

"That's well. Show me to Mrs. Winkle's room without announcing me."

As the little old gentleman uttered these commands, he slipped five shillings into the waiter's hand, and looked steadily at him.

"Really, Sir," said the waiter, "I don't know, Sir, whether—"

"Ah! you'll do it, I see," said the little old gentleman. "You had better do it at once. It will save time."

"There was something so very cool and collected in the gentleman's manner, that the waiter put the five shillings in his pocket, and led him upstairs without another word.

"This is the room, is it?" said the gentleman. "You may go."

The waiter complied, wondering much who the gentleman could be and what he wanted; the little old gentleman waiting till he was out of sight, tapped at the door.

"Come in," said Arabella.

"Um, a pretty voice at any rate," murmured the little old gentleman; "but that's nothing." As he said this, he opened the door and walked in. Arabella, who was sitting at work, rose on beholding a stranger—a little confused, but by no means ungraciously."

"Pray, don't rise, Ma'am," said the unknown, walking in and closing the door after him. "Mrs. Winkle, I believe."

Arabella inclined her head.

"Mrs. Nathaniel Winkle, who married the son of the old man at Birmingham," said the stranger, eyeing Arabella with visible curiosity. Again Arabella inclined her head and looked uneasily round, as if uncertain whether to call for assistance.

"I surprised you, I see, Ma'am," said the old gentleman.

"Rather, I confess," replied Arabella, wondering more and more.

"I'll take a chair, if you'll allow me, Ma'am," said the stranger.

He took one; and drawing a spectaclet-case from his pocket, leisurely pulled out a pair of spectacles, which he adjusted on his nose.

"You don't know me, Ma'am?" he said, looking so intently at Arabella, that she began to feel quite alarmed.

"No, Sir," she replied, timidly.

"No," said the gentleman, nursing his left leg; "I don't know how you should. You know my name, though, Ma'am."

"Do I!" said Arabella, trembling though she scarcely knew why. "May I ask what it is?"

"Presently, Ma'am; presently," said the stranger, not having yet removed his eyes from her countenance. "You have been recently married, Ma'am?"

"I have," replied Arabella, in a scarcely audible tone, laying under her work, and becoming greatly agitated at a thought, that had occurred to her before, struck more forcibly upon her mind.

"Without having represented to your husband the propriety of discussing his
Mr. Winkle remained silent. "You are ashamed of yourself, I hope, Sir," said the old gentleman.

Still Mr. Winkle said nothing. "Are you ashamed of yourself, Sir, or are you not?" inquired the old gentleman.

"No, Sir," replied Mr. Winkle, drawing Arabella's arm through his. "I am not ashamed of myself, or of my wife either."

"Upon my word!" cried the old gentleman, ironically.

"I am very sorry to have done anything which has lessened your affection for me, Sir," said Mr. Winkle; "but I will say at the same time, that I have no reason to be ashamed of having this lady for my wife, or you for having her for a daughter."

"Give me your hand, Nat," said the old gentleman in an altered voice. "Kiss me; my love; you are a very charming daughter-in-law, after all!"

In a few minutes' time Mr. Winkle went in search of Mr. Pickwick, and returning with that gentleman, presented him to his father, whereupon they shook hands for five minutes incessantly.

"Mr. Pickwick, I thank you most heartily for all your kindness to my son," said old Mr. Winkle, in a bluff, straightforward way. "I am a hearty fellow, and when I saw you last, I was vexed and taken by surprise. I have judged for myself now, and am more than satisfied. Shall I make any more apologies, Mr. Pickwick?"

"Not one," replied that gentleman. "You have done the only thing wanting to complete my happiness."

Hereupon there was another shaking of hands for five minutes longer, accompanied by a great number of complimentary speeches, which however being complimentary, had the additional and very novel recommendation of being sincere.

Sam had dutifully seen his father to the Belle Sauvage; when on returning, he encountered the fat boy in the court, who had been charged with the delivery of a note from Emily Winkle: "I say," said Joe, who was unusually
CHAPTER LVIII.

In which the Pickwick Club is finally dissolved, and everything concluded to the satisfaction of everybody.

For a whole week after the happy arrival of Mr. Winkle from Birmingham; Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller were from home all day long, only returning just in time for dinner, and then wearing an air of mystery and impertinence quite foreign to their natures. It was evident that very grave and eventful proceedings were on foot, but various surmises were afoot respecting their precise character. Some (among whom was Mr. Tupman) were disposed to think that Mr. Pickwick contemplated a matrimonial alliance, but this idea the ladies most strenuously repudiated; others rather inclined to the belief that he had projected some distant tour; and was at present occupied in effecting the preliminary arrangements, but this again was stoutly denied by Sam himself, who had unequivocally stated, when cross-examined by Mary, that no new journeys were to be undertaken. At length when the brains of the whole party had been racked for six long days by unwavailing speculation, it was unanimously resolved that Mr. Pickwick should be called upon to explain his conduct; and to state distinctly why he had been absent from himself the society of his admiring friends.

With this view, Mr. Wardle invited the full circle to dinner at the Adelphi; and the decanters, having been twice sent round, opened the business.

"We are all anxious to know," said the old gentleman, "what we have done to offend you, and to induce you to desert us and devote yourself to these solitary walks."

"Are you?" said Mr. Pickwick. "It is singular enough that I had intended to volunteer a full explanation this very day, so if you will give me another glass of what I will satisfy your curiosity."

The decanters passed from hand to hand with unwonted briskness; and Mr. Pickwick looking round on the faces of his friends with a cheerful smile, proceeded—

"All the changes that have taken place among us," said Mr. Pickwick, "I mean the marriage that has taken place, and the marriage that will take place, with the changes they involve, rendered it necessary for me to think soberly and at once upon my future plans. I determined on retiring to some quiet, pretty neighbourhood in the vicinity of London; I saw a house which exactly suited my fancy. I have taken it and furnished it. It is fully prepared for my reception, and I intend entering upon it at once, trusting that I may yet live to spend many quiet years in peaceful retirement; cheered through life by the society of my friends, and followed in death by their affectionate remembrance."

Here Mr. Pickwick paused, and a low murmur ran round the table.

"The house I have taken," said Mr. Pickwick, "is at Dulwich; it has a large garden, and is situated in one of the most pleasant spots near London. It has been fitted up with every attention to substantial comfort; perhaps to a little elegance besides; but of that you shall judge for yourselves. Sam accompanies me there. I have engaged, on Perker's representation, a housekeeper—a very old one—and such other servants as she thinks I shall require. I propose to consecrate this little retreat by having a ceremony, in which I take a great interest, performed there. I wish, if my friend Wardle entertain an objection, that his daughter should be married from my new house, on the day I take possession of it. The happiness of young people," said Mr. Pickwick, a little moved, "has ever been the chief pleasure of my life. It will warm my heart to witness the happiness of those friends who were dearest to me beneath my own roof."

Mr. Pickwick paused again; and Emily and Arabella sobbed audibly.

"I have communicated, both personally and by letter, with the club," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "acquainting them with my intention. During our long absences, it has suffered much from internal dissensions; and the withdrawal of my name, coupled with this and other circumstances, has occasioned its dissolution. The Pickwick Club exists no longer,

"I shall never regret," said Mr. Pickwick in a low voice—"I shall never regret having devoted the greater part of two years to mixing with different varieties and shades of human character, frivolous as my pursuit may not of novelty may have appeared to many. Nearly the whole of my previous life having been devoted to business and the pursuit
of wealth, numerous scenes, of which I had no previous conception, have damped upon me—I hope to the enlargement of my mind, and the improvement of my understanding. If I have done but little good, I trust I have done less harm, and that none of my adventures will be other than a source of amusing and pleasant recollections to me in the decline of life. "God bless you all!"

With these words, Mr. Pickwick filled and drained a bumper with a trembling hand; and his eyes moistened as his friends rose with one accord and pledged him from their hearts.

There were very few preparatory arrangements to be made for the marriage of Mr. Snodgrass. As he had neither father nor mother, and had been in his minority a ward of Mr. Pickwick's, that gentleman was perfectly well acquainted with his possessions and prospects. His account of both was quite satisfactory to Wardle—as almost any other account would have been, for the good old gentleman was overflowing with hilarity and kindness—and a handsome portion having been bestowed upon Emily, the marriage was fixed to take place on the fourth day from that time; the suddenness of which preparations reduced three dress-makers and a tailor to the extreme verge of insanity.

Getting post-horses to the carriage, old Wardle started off next day, to bring his brother up to town. Communicating his intelligence to the old lady with characteristic impetuosity, she instantly fainted away, but being promptly revived, ordered the cascaded silk gown to be packed forthwith, and proceeded to relate some circumstances of a similar nature attending the marriage of the eldest daughter of lady Tollinglowe, deceased, which occupied three hours in the society, and were unfinished at last.

Mrs. Trundle had to be informed of all the mighty preparations that were making in London; and being in a delicate state of health, was informed thereof through Mr. Trundle, lest she should be too much for her; but it was too much for her, inasmuch as she wrote off at once to Blaggeleton to order a new cap and black satin gown, and moreover avowed her determination of being present at the ceremony. Henceupon Mr. Trundle called in the doctor, and the doctor said Mrs. Trundle ought to know best how she felt herself, to which Mr. Trundle replied that she felt herself quite equal to it, and that she had made up her mind to go, upon which the doctor, who was a wise and discreet doctor, and knew what was good for himself as well as for other people, said, that perhaps if Mrs. Trundle stopped at home she might hurt herself more by fretting than by going, so perhaps she had better go. And she did go; the doctor with great attention reading in half a dozen medicines to be drunk upon the road.

In addition to these points of distraction, Wardle was entrusted with two small letters to two small young ladies who were to act as bridesmaids; upon the receipt of which, the two young ladies were driven to despair by having no "things" ready for so important an occasion, and no time to make them in—circumstances which appeared to afford the two worthy papas of the two small young ladies rather a feeling of satisfaction than otherwise. However, old frocks were trimmed, and new bonnets made, and the young ladies looked as well as could possibly have been expected of them; and as they cried at the subsequent ceremony in the proper places and trembled at the right times, they acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of all beholders.

How the two poor relations even reached London—whether they walked, or got behind coaches, or procured life in wagons, or carried each other—is uncertain, but there they were, before Wardle, and the very first people that knocked at the door of Mr. Pickwick's house on the bridal morning, were the two poor relations, all smiles and shirt-collars.

They were welcomed heartily though, for riches or poverty had no influence on Mr. Pickwick; the new servants were all alacrity and readiness: Sam in a most unrivalled state of high spirits and excitement, and Mary glowing with beauty and smart ribbons.

The bridal-room, who had been staying at the house for two or three days previously, called forth gallantry to Dulwich commerce to meet the bride, attended by Mr. Pickwick, Ben Allen, Bob Sawyer, and Mr. Tupman, with Sam Weller outside, having at his button-hole a white favour, the gift of his lady, and clad in a new and gorgeous suit of livery invented expressly for the occasion. They were met by the Wardles, and the Winkles, and the bride and bridesmaids, and the Trundles; and the ceremony having been performed, she coaches rattled back to Mr. Pickwick's to breakfast, where little Mr. Parker already awaited them.

Here, all the light clouds of the more solemn part of the proceedings were blown away; every face shone forth joyously, and nothing was to be heard but congratulations and commendations. Every thing was so beautiful! The lawn in front, the green behind, the miniature conservatory, the dining-room, the drawing-room, the bedrooms, the smoking-room, and above all the
study with its pictures and easy chairs, and odd cabinets, and queer tables, and books out of number, with a large cheerful window opening upon a pleasant lawn and commanding a pretty landscape, just dotted here and there with little houses almost hidden by the trees; and then the curtains, and the carpets, and the chairs, and the sofas! Everything was so beautiful, so compact, so neat and in such exquisite taste, said everybody, that there really was no deciding what to admire most.

And in the midst of all this, stood Mr. Pickwick, his countenance lighted up with smiles, which the heart of no man, woman, or child, could resist: himself the happiest of the group, shaking hands over and over again with the same people, and when his was not met, he was always rubbing them with pleasure; turning round in a different direction at every fresh expression of gratification or curiosity, and inspiring everybody with his looks of gladness and delight.

Breakfast is announced. Mr. Pickwick leads the old lady (who has been very eloquent on the subject of Lady Tollington's,) to the top of a long table; Wardle takes the bottom, the friends arrange themselves on either side, Sam takes his station behind his master's chair, the laughter and talking cease; Mr. Pickwick having said grace, pauses for an instant and looks round him. As he does so, the tears roll down his cheeks in the fulness of his joy.

Let us leave our old friend in one of these moments of unmixed happiness, of which, if we seek them, there are ever some to cheer our transitory existence here. There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast. Some men, like bats or owls, have better eyes for the darkness than for the light; we, who have no such optical powers, are better pleased to take our last parting look at the visionary companions of many solitary hours, when the brief sunshine of the world is blazing full upon them.

It is the fate of most men who mingle with the world and attain even the prime of life, to make many real friends, and lose them at no too early a moment. It is the fate of all authors or chroniclers to create imaginary friends, and lose them in the course of art. Nor is this the full extent of their misfortunes; for they are required to furnish an account of them besides.

In compliance with this custom—unquestionably a bad one—we subjoin a few biographical words in relation to the party at Mr. Pickwick's assembled.

Mr. and Mrs. Winkle being fully received into favour by the old gentleman, were shortly afterwards installed in a newly built house, not half a mile from Mr. Pickwick's. Mr. Winkle being engaged in the city as agent or town correspondent of his father, exchanged his old costume for the ordinary dress of Englishmen, and presented all the external appearance of a civilised Christian ever afterwards.

Mr. and Mrs. Snodgrass settled at Dingley Dell, where they purchased and cultivated a small farm, more for occupation than profit. Mr. Snodgrass, being occasionally abstracted and melancholy, is to this day reputed a great poet among his friends and acquaintance, although we do not find that he has ever written any thing to encourage the belief. We know many celebrated characters, literary, philosophical, and otherwise, who hold a high reputation on a similar tenure.

Mr. Tupman, when his friends married and Mr. Pickwick settled, took lodgings at Richmond, where he has ever since resided. He walks constantly on the Terrace during the summer months, with a youthful and jocund air, which has rendered him the admiration of the numerous elderly ladies of single condition, who reside in the vicinity. He has never proposed again.

Mr. Bob Sawyer, having previously passed through the Gazette, passed over to Bengal, accompanied by Mr. Benjamin Allen, both gentlemen having received surgical appointments from the East India Company. They each had the yellow fever fourteen times, and then resolved to try a little abstinence, since which period they have been doing well.

Mrs. Bardell let lodgings to many convivial gentlemen with great profit, but never brought any more actions for a breach of promise of marriage. Her attorneys, Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, continue in business, from which they receive a large income, and in which they are universally considered among the sharpest of the sharp.

Sam Weller kept his word, and remained unmarried for two years. The old housekeeper dying at the end of that time, Mr. Pickwick presented Mary to the situation, on condition of her marrying Mr. Weller at once, which she did without a murmur. From the circumstances of two sturdy little boys having been repeatedly seen at the gate of the brick garden, we have reason to suppose that Sam has some family.

The elder Mr. Weller drove a coach for twelve months, but being afflicted with the gout, was compelled to retire. The con-
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

Contents of the pocket-book had been so well invested for him, however, by Mr. Pickwick, that he had a handsome independence to retire on, upon which he still lives at an excellent public-house near Shooter's Hill, where he is quite revered as an oracle, boasting very much of his intimacy with Mr. Pickwick, and retaining a most unconquerable aversion to widows.

Mr. Pickwick himself continued to reside in his new house, employing his leisure hours in arranging the memoranda which he afterwards presented to the secretary of the once famous club, or in hearing Sam Weller read aloud, with such remarks as suggested themselves to his mind, which never failed to afford Mr. Pickwick great amusement. He was much troubled at first by the numerous applications which were made to him by Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Trundle, to act as godfather to their offspring, but he has become used to it now, and officiates as a matter of course. He never had occasion to regret his bounty to Mr. Jingle, for both that person and Job Trotter became in time worthy members of society, although they have always steadily objected to return to the scenes of their old haunts and temptations. He is somewhat infirm now, but he retains all his former juvenility of spirit, and may still be frequently seen contemplating the pictures in the Dulwich Gallery, or enjoying a walk about the pleasant neighbourhood on a fine day. He is known by all the poor people about, who never fail to take their hats off as he passes with great respect; the children idolise him, and so indeed does the whole neighbourhood. Every year he repairs to a large family merry-making at Mr. Wardle's; on this, as on all other occasions, he is invariably attended by the faithful Sam, between whom and his master there exists a steady and reciprocal attachment, which nothing but death will sever.

THE END.
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