The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby: Part 05

Charles Dickens
The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby

Containing

A Faithful Account of the Fortunes, Misfortunes, Uprisings, Downsallings,

and

Complete Career of the Nickleby Family.

Edited by "Boz."

With Illustrations by "Phiz."

London: Chapman and Hall, 186, Strand.
THE PRINCIPLES OF THE HYGEIAN THEORY, AS LAID DOWN BY JAMES MORISON, ARE CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITIONS.

I. The vital principle is contained in the blood.
II. Everything in the body is derived from the blood.
III. All constitutions are radically the same.
IV. All diseases arise from impurity of the blood, or, in other words, from scrinious humours lodged in the body.
V. This impurity, which degenerates the blood, has three sources—the maternine, the contagious, and the personal.
VI. Pain and disease have the same origin; and may therefore be considered synonymus terms.
VII. Purification by vegetables is the only effectual mode of eradicating disease.
VIII. From the intimate connexion subsisting between the mind and body, the health of the one must conduce to the serenity of the other.

In elucidation of the above propositions, the reader is referred to the Lecture delivered by Dr. Lynch at Exeter Hall, published at the Medical Dissenter Office, 368, Strand, and to be had of all regularly appointed Agents and Sub-Agents for the sale of Morison's Pills, price 6d.

BLEEDING, MERCURY, ANODYNES, SUCH AS LAUDANUM, &c., CONTRASTED WITH THE HYGEIAN TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

These agents of medical practice have proved the cause of more lamentable and fatal consequences to the health and lives of the community, than can possibly be imagined by the public, who have hitherto supposed that medical science was founded on the best basis for alleviating the sufferings of the human race.

Bleeding, though productive of momentary ease, by creating a void in the circulation, is not only an unnatural palliative, but highly injurious to the body, by abstracting that which must be considered the very stream of existence.

Mercury (the next remedy to which the medical profession pin their faith) not only lays the foundation for diseases of a chronic nature, but is creative of disease much worse, much more destructive in its ravages, than any of the maladies for which it is asserted to be a specific.

Anodynes, as Laudanum, &c.—That the whole class of remedies in our pharmacopoeias bearing these titles are to be considered as the positive enemies of health and vigour, is but using the mildest phrase. True, they are sedative in their nature, as professed, but they are also frequently so transcendently sedative as to lull the patient into “that sleep which knows no waking.”

The Hygeian treatment does not seek to abstract the stream of existence; does not administer remedies so transcendently pernicious as to be productive of diseases worse in their character than those sought to be cured; does not call to its assistance remedies which produce premature disease, and an easy exit from this world's sufferings. On the contrary, it produces depuration of the blood, by administration of vegetable and powerful purgative medicaments, and by deflection of existing impurities of the blood to the first passages, induce a restoration to health and vigour.

THE HOMOEOPATHIC AND MESMERIC, OR ANIMAL MAGNETISM QUACKERY.

Can any argument more strongly prove the miserable and degraded condition at which the art of medicine (because not founded on a certain or proper basis) has arrived in this country, than the fact of medical men of repute lending themselves to the support of the most absurd and metaphorical doctrines that ever disgraced an age of reason? If poor and ignorant persons are to be brought before a Magistrate for obtaining money as fortune-tellers and practising the art of necromancy, where lies the reason that those pursuing a similar, but much worse system, should not be dealt with accordingly? So long, therefore, it now is made apparent, as the medical profession of this or any other country does not properly systematize the art of medicine, and at once adopt one uniform practice; it will always be subject to the quackery, however gross, of this and other nations. In further illustration of the above, reference is made to the Medical Gazette of Saturday, June 30, page 587.
A TREATISE ON THE GAME OF ECARTE;

COMPRISING THE RULES OF THE GAME, AND TABLES SHOWING THE ODDS AT ANY POINT OF IT.

ALSO, EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULT HANDS,

WITH DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING THEM; TO WHICH ARE ADDED, RULES FOR CALCULATING BETS ON ANY EVENTS.

SEVENTH EDITION.

In one volume, small 8vo, price 3s. boards,

SKETCHES OF YOUNG LADIES;

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY "PHIZ."

FOURTH EDITION.

In one volume, small 8vo, price 3s. boards,

SKETCHES OF YOUNG GENTLEMEN;

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY "PHIZ."

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.
SECOND THOUSAND.

DR. MANTELL'S NEW WORK.

This day is published, in 3 vols., 8vo, with numerous illustrations, price 3s., in cloth, lettered,


London: Reffe and Fletcher, 17, Cornhill.

LADY'S BOOK OF HORSEMANSHIP.

This day is published, price 4s., 6d. 8vo, fancy binding, gilt,

THE YOUNG LADY'S EQUESTRIAN MANUAL; a complete Book of Instruction for Ladies in the Art of Riding on Horseback; with an historical introduction, and sixty picturesque and practical Illustrations.

Whitehead and Co., 76, Fleet Street.

This day is published, Dedicated, by express permission, to Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, Part 2 of

FINDEN'S FEMALE PORTRAITS of the COURT of QUEEN VICTORIA, containing The Countness of Falmouth, &c., Painted by The Lady Wilhelmina Stanhope, A.R.A., The Lady Frances Cowper, painted by J. Hayter.

The First Part contains the best Authentic Portrait of the QUEEN, drawn by R. J. Lane, A.R.A., to whom Her Majesty sat for the express purpose of its being engraved for this splendid undertaking.

The Countess of Hillsborough.

The Lady Louisa Cavendish.

India Proofs, 21s.—Plain Proofs, 15s.—Proofs, 12s.

LONDON: Published by the Proprietors, at 18 and 19, Southampton Place, Euston Square; sold also by Ackerman & Co., 56, Strand; James Fraser, 216, Regent-street; Riley and Co., 8, Regent-street; and by every respectable bookseller in the kingdom.

This day, price 4s., a New Edition, enlarged, and improved by a chapter on the Duties, &c., of Guardians.

PLAIN INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING A WILL, and a Plain Guide to Executors, Administrators, and Guardians, shewing the Duties of their Trusts, and how safely to perform them. Also, Plain Instructions for every Person to make a Will, 1s. 6d. Plain Guide to Executors, Administrators, &c., &c., 2s. 6d. Plain Advice to Landlords, Tenants, Lodging-Housekeepers, and Lodgers, 1s. Laws of Master and Servant, Apprentices, Journeymen, &c., &c., 1s.

Henry Washbourne, Salisbury Square, and all Booksellers.

FORE'S CORONATION PROCESSION.

THE ACCURATE REPRESENTATION, 50 feet long, price 31s. 6d. highly coloured, or 16s. plain, will be published in a few days by Messrs. FORES, at their SPOTTING AND ENGRAVING PRINT REPOSITORY, 41, Piccadilly, corner of Sackville-street, where a specimen may be seen. Also, a great variety of the most approved Portraits of Her Majesty, in Frames adapted to the different styles of Engraving.

For the correct view of the Exterior and Interior of the Abbey during the ceremony.

THE PICKWICK PAPERS COMPLETE.

In one volume 8vo, bound in cloth, price 11s. 12d.

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE PICKWICK CLUB.

BY "BOZ."

WITH FORTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS BY "PHIZ."

TRAVELLING AND HUNTING MAPS.

MOUNTED IN CASES ADAPTED TO THE WAISTCOAT POCKET, 1s. 6d. EACH.

MAPS OF THE ENGLISH COUNTIES.

ENGRAVED BY SYDNEY HALL.

WITH THE MAIL AND COACH ROADS CORRECTLY COLOURED.

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.
SIR GEORGE STEPHEN'S NEW WORK.
A VENTURES OF A GENTLEMAN IN SEARCH OF A HORSE. By CAYRETT EMPTON, Gent.; with numerous illustrations by Cruikshank.

"Every one interested in horses should possess this work."— Dispatch.

"It is full of the most ludicrous adventures, coupled with the most subtle advice."— Metropolis.

Also, now ready, with numerous illustrative Engravings, THE MANAGEMENT OF BEES; including a description of the Lady's Safety Hive. By SAMUEL REFor, Jun. A complete practical guide to one of the most interesting, instructive, and amusing pursuits in the whole circle of natural history.

Saunders and Otley, Public Library, Conduit Street.

Price 2s., with Illustrations.

A PORTRAIT OF RICE WINNE, Esq. (of Shrewsbury), on his favourite Horse, with Hounds; from a Painting by J. PARDEN, and Engraved in Mezzotint by W. O. GILLER.

Just published, price 5s., in an ornamental binding,

PARLOUR MAGIC:—A Juvenile Manual of novel and amusing Phenomena, and Scientific Recreations for the Family Circle, expressly calculated to enable the ingenious Youth to entertain his Friends, and, at the same time, to improve himself. With numerous illustrative Engravings on wood.

Also new Editions of

THE YOUNG LADY'S BOOK:—(The Fourth Edition, beautifully bound in embossed crimson Silk, price 2s.) forming a complete Repertory of every graceful and improving Pursuit, Exercise, and Accomplishment that contributes to the perfection of the female character, and constitutes the accomplished English gentlewoman.

THE BOY'S OWN BOOK:—(The Thirteenth Edition,) the most acceptable present ever devised for youth, embracing the sports and exercises of outdoor enjoyment,—the pastimes of a winter's fireside,—and the recreations of science. Price 8s. 6d. in ornamental boards; and 10s. 6d., handsetly bound in Arabesque embossed Morocco, with gilt edges, and embellished with upwards of 300 Engravings.

FLOWERS OF FABLE:—Culled from the best English and other Writers. The whole expressly selected for the instruction and amusement of youth, and embellished with 180 Engravings on Wood. Price 1s. 6d. in embossed cloth. (Second Edition.)

THREE COURSES AND A DESSERT:—
Comprising Three Sets of Tales: West Country, Irish, and Legal; with a Miscellaneous Desert, and Fifty-one Illustrations, the chef d'oeuvres of George Cruikshank; in one thick 8vo volume, fancy cloth, price 1s. (Third Edition.)

THE ALBUM ORNE:—In extra royal 4to, splendidly bound in Morocco and gold; with an elegant title in gold and colours, and imitative Mechlin lace facings, of exquisite fidelity of resemblance. Price 3s. 3d.; and in watered silk and gold, price 2s. 2d.; comprising several hundred varieties of ornamental borders, in gold, in colours, and perforated, for the display of drawings, Prints, &c., the reception of literary compositions, and the other usual contents of a Lady's Album.

Whitehead & Co., 76, Fleet Street.
THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

In one volume, small 8vo, price 5s., neatly bound,

A VISIT TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

CONTAINING,

A FAMILIAR DESCRIPTION OF EVERY OBJECT OF INTEREST IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THAT ESTABLISHMENT.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

""A very useful and interesting little work, containing a description of every object of interest in the various departments of the establishment."" —Sunday Times.

In one volume, square 16mo, neatly bound, price 5s. 6d.,

MORALS FROM THE CHURCHYARD,

In a Series of Cheerful Fables for the Youth of both Sexes.

BY THE REV. EDWARD CASWALL, A.M.

WITH EIGHT BEAUTIFULLY ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS ON WOOD, FROM DESIGNS BY H. K. BROWNE.

""We have been struck with the originality, beauty, and tenderness of this small quarto for young persons. It may help our readers to understand its nature, when we say, it is a book in which the spirit of Charles Lamb would have delighted. It is steeped in natural paths, and delicate imagination, and in the spirit of that religion whose first principle is love."" —Tait's Magazine.

""This neat little volume is a very pretty companion to Mrs. Austin's 'Story without an End,' written in the same agreeable style of mixed liveliness and tenderness, and illustrated with several charming engravings on wood, from designs of a very superior character. The object of the Fable is to exhibit a moral estimate of human pursuits, adapted to the minds of children, and to show that, finally, nothing can stand the test of that universal leveler, the grave, excepting virtue and religion. The manner is healthy and cheerful, as a child's book should be, and a vein of actual interest gives life and shape to the allegory."" —Examiner.

In one volume, square 16mo, price 5s., neatly bound,

THE JUVENILE BUDGET;

Or, Stories for Little Readers.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. K. BROWNE.

"These stories are chiefly collected from the 'Juvenile Forget-me-Not,' and long since received our word of commendation; but thus collected they form a very pretty and pleasant volume, and will be a most welcome present to our young friends." —Athenaeum.

SKETCHES BY "BOZ."

IN ONE VOLUME, UNIFORM WITH THE "PICKWICK PAPERS."
PUBLISHING MONTHLY, TO BE COMPLETED IN TWENTY NUMBERS, OCTAVO,

No. 10, Price One Shilling,

SKETCHES BY "BOZ."

ILLUSTRATIVE OF EVERY-DAY LIFE AND EVERY-DAY PEOPLE.

A New Edition.

COMPRISING BOTH THE SERIES, AND EMBELLISHED WITH FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY GEORGE CRUICKSHANK.

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.
TO FLUTE PLAYERS.

EIGHT-KEYED COCOA FLUTES, with Patent Head, Double Springs, Plates to the C Keys; the keys, tips, caps, sliding tube, &c., of the best silver, bl. &c.; with German silver keys, &c., only 2l. 12s. 6d. These instruments are made of the best wood, by most experienced workmen, and are warranted perfect in tune. To be had of Mr. H. Fentum, Professor of the Flute, at G, Surrey-street, Strand (private house).

N.B. A trial allowed.

STOVE-GRATE, FENDER, & FURNISHING IRONMONGERY WAREHOUSE, 134, Oxford-street (between Holles-street and Old Cavendish-street).

CHARLES VINER having commenced business in the above line, begs respectfully to solicit the attention of those who have a particular taste for art, to their new establishment. The Stoves and Fenders, which are all the newest patterns; also, every description of Furnishing Ironmongery of the best manufacture and lowest possible prices, for Cash.

C. V.'s connections, and the experience acquired in some of the first houses in the Trade, will enable him to conduct his business on the most liberal terms. It will be his object, by prompt attention and assiduity, to engage the countenance and secure the permanent support of respectable families.

Furnishing, Bell-hanging, Repairs, and all kinds of Smith's and Brazier's work, necessary to be done in families, will be superintended by C. V. in person, and performed by experienced workmen.

HARPS, PIANOFORTES, and SE-RAPHINES.—T. C. BATES solicits the attention of the public to his elegant and varied assortment of Double-Action Harps, from 42l. Cabinet, Cottages, and Square Pianofortes, warranted to suit a hot climate, particularly the Una Corda Cottage, which from its peculiar construction seldom wants Tuning, a desideratum in foreign climes, cabins of ships, &c. The Seraphine, or Portable Organ, which may be removed with facility for Divine Service on the Sunday, and for Family use during the week. Barrel Organs. Ten Psalm or Hymn Tunes, for Parochial or Infant Schools, from 15l. to 40l. Second-hand Pianofortes, of every description, from 8l. to 10l. Also may be seen the New Conductor Metronome.

Merchants and Captains will find this House the most liberal in the trade, 6, Ludgate-hill.

THE Public are requested to inspect the extensive and elegant assortment of all kinds of ORNAMENTAL HAIR at ROSS and SON'S, 119, Bishopsgate Street, particularly their newly invented ventilating Perukes and Head-Dresses, in which the use of both weaving and sewing silk is entirely superseded, thus removing them to the nearest imitation of the natural Hair of any extent. Importing their Foreign, and manufacturing on their premises all their British Perfumery, including every description of Combs and Brushes, they are enabled to offer them of the most superior quality, and at a moderate price. A visit to their grand Neapolitan Salon for cutting and arranging the Hair in, is particularly requested.

HOSIERY.

POPE and Co. have removed from 28, Friday street, to 4, Waterloo Place, Pall Mall.

THEY continue to manufacture every description of HOSIERY, in the old-fashioned substantial manner, the greatest attention being paid to Elasticity and Durability.—Orders and Patterns to be forwarded to 4, Waterloo Place, or to their manufacturing, Mount Street, Nottingham.
GOWLAND'S LOTION.

The constant effects of HEAT and relaxation upon the Texture and Colour of the Skin, visible in DIS-COLOURATIONS or Freckle, are prevented and removed by the use of this elegant preparation, which the experience of nearly a CENTURY recommends as

A PRESERVATIVE OF THE COMPLEXION;

Of uniformly SAFE and Congenial Character, and equally remarkable for its refreshing qualities, whether Tension or Langour affect the Sensibility; so essential to personal comfort: in Cutaneous affections of the Eruptive kind, all Irritability & Tension of uniformly the Mind, will, with application of the Lotion, be re-established, with the pleasing facility which renders it the most acceptable article offered for selection as a permanent appendage of the TOILET.

GOWLAND'S LOTION has the Name and Address of the Proprietor, ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, Engraved on the Government Stamp, by whom only (as Successor to the late Mrs. Vincent) this celebrated article is faithfully prepared from the original MS. Recipe of the late Doctor Gowland. The popular work, “The Theory of Beauty,” accompanies each genuine package. Prices 2s. 9d., 5s. 6d., quarts 8s. 6d.; and in Cases, from One to Five Guineas.

SHAW'S MINDORA OIL.

The valuable peculiarities of this Exotic (for general purposes) are, its native purity, fragrance, and entire freedom from CHEMICAL admixture, by which CLEANLINESS and preservation of the true COLOUR of the Hair are decidedly obtained. Mindora Oils are generally removed, and its restorative properties become speedily evident in a renewed and even growth, with the vigour which ensures the disposition to curl, so much desired by both sexes.

Prepared for the Toilet by the Proprietor, ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, in Bottles bearing his Signature on the label and wrapper at 3s., 5s. 6d., and in Stoppered Bottles at 10s. 6d. A Practical Treatise on the Hair accompanies each genuine Package. Sold as above, and generally by respectable Perfumers and Medicine Vendors.

IMPORTANT TO GENTLEMEN GOING ABROAD,

R. KIPLING,

SHIRT MAKER AND GENERAL OUTFITTER, 7, LEICESTER SQUARE,

Respectfully invites the attention of the Nobility, Gentry, and Public, to his extensive Stock of Ready-made Linen. R. K. rests his claim for patronage upon superior quality and style, at the most moderate prices.

Where despatch is required, Gentlemen can be supplied with Ready-made Linen or India Cloth Shirts, of any size or quality, washed and ready for immediate use, at the following scale of prices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India Cloth</td>
<td>2l 10 0 per doz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do. with Linen Fronts</td>
<td>3 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collars, and Wristbands</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine do.</td>
<td>3 18 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best do.</td>
<td>4 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic do.</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Shirts</td>
<td>2 2 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above articles made to order on the shortest possible notice.

An extensive assortment of every description of Woollen, Cotton, and Silk Hosiery, and Under-Clothing.

Bed and Table Linen, Flannels, Blankets, Calicoes, Linens, &c. &c.

7, LEICESTER SQUARE.—Two Doors East of Miss Linwood’s Exhibition.

TRY MECHI's MAGIC STROP

THE MECHIAN DRESSING-CASE,

The most portable ever invented, only six and three quarter inches long, three and a quarter wide, and three-fourths of an inch deep, the size of a pocket-book, contains one pair of Mech’s ivory-handle peculiar steel razors, his magic strop and comb, badger-hair shaving-brush, his patent castellated tooth-brush, and a neat nail-brush; price only 7/6. The same with hair-brush and soap-dish, 3/6. To military men, and as a steam-boat or travelling companion, this invention must prove invaluable, the articles therein being all of the first quality. An immense variety of other Dressing-Cases, for both Gentlemen and Ladies, either in fancy woods or leather, at all prices, from 20s. to 30 guineas.


SPLENDID REAL SHEFFIELD PLATE


LAMING'S EFFERVESCING CHELTENHAM SALTS,

Are recommended and personally employed by many of the Faculty, as the safest aperient known. They contain the constituents of the Cheltenham Waters, which are so advantageously used for correcting errors of Digestion and Bilious attacks during hot weather, and afford a highly agreeable leverage exactly resembling Soda Water.

"They are the invention of a surgeon of the highest respectability."

Journ. of Lite. and Science. "We know of no preparation of which we can speak more highly."-Oriental Herald. "The traveller should not fail to take them with him."—Brockedon's Italy. "They are particularly agreeable, and highly efficacious."—Lancet. "We cannot recommend a better thing than Laming's Balm."—Literary Gazette. "For free lives, bilious persons, and those troubled with indigestion, they are admirable."—Times.

Mothers of families will find this a most valuable Family Medicine, as it is quite destitute of all taste, and is equally efficient when taken in the doses marked on the labels, as any of the common aperients, and much safer.

Sold in Bottles, at 2s. 6d., 4s., and 10s., by R. E. DEAN, 89, Bishopsgate Within, and all respectable Chemists.

TENDER FEET.—Ladies and Gentlemen who have tender Feet, Corns, Bunions, or Gout, will find great relief by wearing the PANUS-CORIUM, or LEATHER-CLOTH BOOTS and SHOES.

They possess the following advantages over Shoes made of Leather, and the materials hitherto used:

1. They never pain the feet—in summer or winter; they are soft, easy, and elastic.
2. They fit well, and never press uncomfortably on corns and bunions.
3. They show a brilliant surface, high polish, and never crack.
4. In the hottest weather they do not draw the feet.

J. SPARKES HALL, 308, REGENT STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON.

N.B. Ladies and Gentlemen in the country may be fitted by sending a pattern boot or shoe. Price same as leather.

LABERN'S BOTANIC CREAM.

By appointment, patronised by her Most Gracious Majesty, celebrated for strengthening and promoting the growth of Hair, and completely freeing it from Scurf.—Sold by the Proprietor, H. Labern, Perfumer to her Majesty, 49, Judd Street, Brunswick Square, in pots, 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., and 5s. each, and by all Perfumers and Medicine Vendors. Beware of counterfeits. Ask for "Labern's Botanic Cream."

A PROOF THAT HAIR CAN BE RESTORED AGAIN.

Gentlemen,—It is with the greatest pleasure I now write to inform you, that I have been using your justly celebrated BALM OF COLUMBIA. My head was almost destitute of hair, when fortunately your Agents, Messrs. Hopper and Co., recommended your Balm, which I am proud to acknowledge had the desired effect; for in a very short time my hair was perfectly restored, and it now is as thick as it ever was in my life. I think it my duty to testify to the virtues of your inestimable Balm, and you may give this as much publicity as you please.

J. SPARKES HALL, 308, REGENT STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON.

MY NAME IS NICKELBY.
This article has been extensively and successfully used for some time past in a populous Neighbourhood, and has proved to be an Instant Cure in most cases.

The Selling Price to the Public has been fixed purposely so low as to render the

"INSTANT CURE FOR THE TOOTH-ACHE"

accessible to all Classes.

MADE BY BEAUFROY & CO. SOUTH LAMBETH, LONDON

And Sold by most Respectable Druggists and Patent Medicine Vendors in Town and Country.

The Bottles, with ample Directions for Use, Price 1s. 1½d. each, Stamp included.
Nicholas engaged as Tutor in a private family.
Madame Montalfoni introduces Kate to Miss Knag.
CHAPTER XV.

ACQUAINTS THE READER WITH THE CAUSE AND ORIGIN OF THE INTERRUPTION DESCRIBED IN THE LAST CHAPTER, AND WITH SOME OTHER MATTERS NECESSARY TO BE KNOWN.

Newman Noggs scrambled in violent haste up stairs with the steaming beverage, which he had so unceremoniously snatched from the table of Mr. Kenwigs, and indeed from the very grasp of the water-rate collector, who was eyeing the contents of the tumbler at the moment of its unexpected abstraction, with lively marks of pleasure visible in his countenance, and bore his prize straight to his own back garret, where, footsore and nearly shoeless, wet, dirty, jaded, and disfigured with every mark of fatiguing travel, sat Nicholas, and Smike, at once the cause and partner of his toil: both perfectly worn out by their unwonted and protracted exertion.

Newman’s first act was to compel Nicholas, with gentle force, to swallow half of the punch at a breath, nearly boiling as it was, and his next to pour the remainder down the throat of Smike, who, never having tasted anything stronger than aperient medicine in his whole life, exhibited various odd manifestations of surprise and delight, during the passage of the liquor down his throat, and turned up his eyes most emphatically when it was all gone.

“You are wet through,” said Newman, passing his hand hastily over the coat which Nicholas had thrown off; “and I—I—I haven’t even a change,” he added, with a wistful glance at the shabby clothes he wore himself.

“I have dry clothes, or at least such as will serve my turn well, in my bundle,” replied Nicholas. “If you look so distressed to see me, you will add to the pain I feel already, at being compelled for one night to cast myself upon your slender means for aid and shelter.”

Newman did not look the less distressed to hear Nicholas talking in this strain; but upon his young friend grasping him heartily by the hand, and assuring him that nothing but implicit confidence in the sincerity of his professions, and kindness of feeling towards himself, would have induced him, on any consideration, even to have made him acquainted with his arrival in London, Mr. Noggs brightened up again, and went about making such arrangements as were in his power for the comfort of his visitors, with extreme alacrity.

These were simple enough, poor Newman’s means halting at a very considerable distance short of his inclinations; but, slight as they were, they were not made without much bustling and running about. As Nicholas had husbanded his scanty stock of money so well that it was not yet quite expended, a supper of bread and cheese, with some cold beef from the cook’s shop, was soon placed upon the table; and these viands being flanked by a bottle of spirits and a pot of porter,
there was no ground for apprehension on the score of hunger and thirst, at all events. Such preparations as Newman had it in his power to make, for the accommodation of his guests during the night, occupied no very great time in completing; and as he had insisted, as an express preliminary, that Nicholas should change his clothes, and that Smike should invest himself in his solitary coat (which no entreaties would dissuade him from stripping off for the purpose), the travellers partook of their frugal fare, with more satisfaction than one of them at least had derived from many a better meal.

They then drew near the fire, which Newman Noggs had made up as well as he could, after the inroads of Crowl upon the fuel; and Nicholas, who had hitherto been restrained by the extreme anxiety of his friend that he should refresh himself after his journey, now pressed him with earnest questions concerning his mother and sister.

"Well," replied Newman, with his accustomed taciturnity; "both well."

"They are living in the city still?" inquired Nicholas.

"They are," said Newman.

"And my sister"—added Nicholas. "Is she still engaged in the business which she wrote to tell me she thought she should like so much?"

Newman opened his eyes rather wider than usual, but merely replied by a gasp, which, according to the action of the head that accompanied it, was interpreted by his friends as meaning yes or no. In the present instance, the pantomime consisted of a nod, and not a shake, so Nicholas took the answer as a favourable one.

"Now listen to me," said Nicholas, laying his hand on Newman's shoulder. "Before I would make an effort to see them, I deemed it expedient to come to you, lest, by gratifying my own selfish desire, I should inflict an injury upon them which I can never repair. What has my uncle heard from Yorkshire?"

Newman opened and shut his mouth several times, as though he were trying his utmost to speak, but could make nothing of it, and finally fixed his eyes on Nicholas with a grim and ghastly stare.

"What has he heard?" urged Nicholas, colouring. "You see that I am prepared to hear the very worst that malice can have suggested. Why should you conceal it from me? I must know it sooner or later; and what purpose can be gained by trifling with the matter for a few minutes, when half the time would put me in possession of all that has occurred? Tell me at once, pray."

"To-morrow morning," said Newman; "hear it to-morrow."

"What purpose would that answer?" urged Nicholas.

"You would sleep the better," replied Newman.

"I should sleep the worse," answered Nicholas, impatiently. "Sleep! Exhausted as I am, and standing in no common need of rest, I cannot hope to close my eyes all night, unless you tell me everything."

"And if I should tell you everything," said Newman, hesitating.

"Why, then you may rouse my indignation or wound my pride," rejoined Nicholas; "but you will not break my rest; for if the scene were acted over again, I could take no other part than I have taken;
...and whatever consequences may accrue to myself from it, I shall never regret doing as I have—never, if I starve or beg in consequence. What is a little poverty or suffering, to the disgrace of the basest and most inhuman cowardice! I tell you, if I had stood by, tamely and passively, I should have hated myself, and merited the contempt of every man in existence. The black-hearted sumpire!"

With this gentle allusion to the absent Mr. Squeers, Nicholas repressed his rising wrath, and relating to Newman exactly what had passed at Dotheboys Hall, entreated him to speak out without further pressing. Thus adjured, Mr. Noggs took from an old trunk a sheet of paper, which appeared to have been scrawled over in great haste; and after sundry extraordinary demonstrations of reluctance, delivered himself in the following terms:

"My dear young man, you mustn't give way to—this sort of thing will never do, you know—as to getting on in the world, if you take everybody's part that's ill-treated—Damn it, I am proud to hear of it; and would have done it myself!"

Newman accompanied this very unusual outbreak with a violent blow upon the table, as if, in the heat of the moment, he had mistaken it for the chest or ribs of Mr. Wackford Squeers; and having, by this open declaration of his feelings, quite precluded himself from offering Nicholas any cautious worldly advice (which had been his first intention), Mr. Noggs went straight to the point.

"The day before yesterday," said Newman, "your uncle received this letter. I took a hasty copy of it while he was out. Shall I read it?"

"If you please," replied Nicholas. Newman Noggs accordingly read as follows:

"Dotheboys Hall,
"Thursday Morning.

"Sir,

"My pa requests me to write to you. The doctors considering it doubtful whether he will ever recover the use of his legs which prevents his holding a pen.

"We are in a state of mind beyond everything, and my pa is one mask of broses both blue and green likewise two forms are steepled in his Goar. We were kimpelled to have him carried down into the kitchen where he now lays, You will judge from this that he has been brought very low.

"When your nevev that you recommended for a teacher had done this to my pa and jumped upon his body with his feet and also langwedge which I will not pollert my pen with describing, he assaulted my ma with dreadful violence, dashed her to the earth, and drove her back comb several inches into her head. A very little more and it must have entered her skull. We have a medical certikket that if it had, the tortershell would have affected the brain.

"Me and my brother were then the victims of his fury since which we have suffered very much which leads us to the arrowing belief that we have received some injury in our insides, especially as no marks of violence are visible externally. I am screaming out loud all
the time I write and so is my brother which takes off my attention rather, and I hope will excuse mistakes.

"The monster having satiated his thirst for blood ran away, taking with him a boy of desperate character that he had excited to rebellions, and a garnet ring belonging to my ma, and not having been apprehended by the constables is supposed to have been took up by some stagecoach. My pa begs that if he comes to you the ring may be returned, and that you will let the thief and assassin go, as if we prosecuted him he would only be transported, and if he is let go he is sure to be hung before long, which will save us trouble, and be much more satisfactory. Hoping to hear from you when convenient"

"I remain
Yours and etcrer
Fanny Squeers.

"P.S. I pity his ignorance and despise him."

A profound silence succeeded to the reading of this choice epistle, during which Newman Noggs, as he folded it up, gazed with a kind of grotesque pity at the boy of desperate character therein referred to; who, having no more distinct perception of the matter in hand, than that he had been the unfortunate cause of heaping trouble and falsehood upon Nicholas, sat mute and dispirited, with a most woe-begone and heart-stricken look.

"Mr. Noggs," said Nicholas, after a few moments' reflection, "I must go out at once."

"Go out!" cried Newman.

"Yes," said Nicholas, "to Golden Square. Nobody who knows me would believe this story of the ring; but it may suit the purpose, or gratify the hatred, of Mr. Ralph Nickleby to feign to attach credence to it. It is due—not to him, but to myself—that I should state the truth; and moreover, I have a word or two to exchange with him, which will not keep cool."

"They must," said Newman.

"They must not, indeed," rejoined Nicholas firmly, as he prepared to leave the house.

"Hear me speak," said Newman, planting himself before his impetuous young friend. "He is not there. He is away from town. He will not be back for three days; and I know that letter will not be answered before he returns."

"Are you sure of this?" asked Nicholas, chafing violently, and pacing the narrow room with rapid strides.

"Quite," rejoined Newman. "He had hardly read it when he was called away. Its contents are known to nobody but himself and us."

"Are you certain?" demanded Nicholas, precipitately; "not even to my mother or sister? If I thought that they—I will go there—I must see them. Which is the way? Where is it?"

"Now be advised by me," said Newman, speaking for the moment, in his earnestness, like any other man—"make no effort to see even them, till he comes home. I know the man. Do not seem to have been tampering with anybody. When he returns, go straight to him,
and speak as boldly as you like. Guessing at the real truth, he knows it as well as you or I. Trust him for that."

"You mean well to me, and should know him better than I can," replied Nicholas, after some further thought. "Well; let it be so."

Newman, who had stood during the foregoing conversation with his back planted against the door ready to oppose any egress from the apartment by force, if necessary, resumed his seat with much satisfaction; and as the water in the kettle was by this time boiling, made a glass-full of spirits and water for Nicholas, and a cracked mug-full for the joint accommodation of himself and Smike, of which the two partook in great harmony, while Nicholas, leaning his head upon his hand, remained buried in melancholy meditation.

Meanwhile the company below stairs, after listening attentively and not hearing any noise which would justify them in interfering for the gratification of their curiosity, returned to the chamber of the Kenwigses, and employed themselves in hazarding a great variety of conjectures relative to the cause of Mr. Noggs's sudden disappearance and detention.

"Lor, I'll tell you what," said Mrs. Kenwigs. "Suppose it should be an express sent up to say that his property has all come back again!"

"Dear me," said Mr. Kenwigs; "it's not impossible. Perhaps, in that case, we'd better send up and ask if he won't take a little more punch."

"Kenwigs," said Mr. Lillyvick, in a loud voice, "I'm surprised at you."

"What's the matter, Sir?" asked Mr. Kenwigs, with becoming submission to the collector of water rates.

"Making such a remark as that, Sir," replied Mr. Lillyvick, angrily. "He has had punch already, has he not, Sir? I consider the way in which that punch was cut off, if I may use the expression, highly disrespectful to this company; scandalous, perfectly scandalous. It may be the custom to allow such things in this house, but it's not the kind of behaviour that I've been used to see displayed, and so I don't mind telling you, Kenwigs. A gentleman has a glass of punch before him to which he is just about to set his lips, when another gentleman comes and collars that glass of punch, without a 'with your leave,' or 'by your leave,' and carries that glass of punch away. This may be good manners—I dare say it is—but I don't understand it, that's all; and what's more, I don't care if I never do. It's my way to speak my mind, Kenwigs, and that is my mind; and if you don't like it, it's past my regular time for going to bed, and I can find my way home without making it later."

Here was an untoward event. The collector had sat swelling and fuming in offended dignity for some minutes, and had now fairly burst out. The great man—the rich relation—the unmarried uncle—who had it in his power to make Morleena an heiress, and the very baby a legatee—was offended. Gracious Powers, where was this to end!

"I am very sorry, Sir," said Mr. Kenwigs, humbly.

"Don't tell me you're sorry," retorted Mr. Lillyvick, with much sharpness. "You should have prevented it, then."

The company were quite paralysed by this domestic crash. The
back parlour sat with her mouth wide open, staring vacantly at the collector in a stupor of dismay, and the other guests were scarcely less overpowered by the great man's irritation. Mr. Kenwigs not being skilful in such matters, only fanned the flame in attempting to extinguish it.

"I didn't think of it, I am sure, Sir," said that gentleman. "I didn't suppose that such a little thing as a glass of punch would have put you out of temper."

"Out of temper! What the devil do you mean by that piece of impertinence, Mr. Kenwigs?" said the collector. "Morleena, child—give me my hat."

"Oh, you're not going, Mr. Lillyvick, Sir," interposed Miss Petowker, with her most bewitching smile.

But still Mr. Lillyvick, regardless of the siren, cried obdurately, "Morleena, my hat!" upon the fourth repetition of which demand Mrs. Kenwigs sunk back in her chair, with a cry that might have softened a water-butt, not to say a water collector; while the four little girls (privately instructed to that effect) clasped their uncle's corduroy shorts in their arms, and prayed him in imperfect English to remain.

"Why should I stop here, my dears?" said Mr. Lillyvick; "I'm not wanted here."

"Oh, do not speak so cruelly, uncle," sobbed Mrs. Kenwigs, "unless you wish to kill me."

"I shouldn't wonder if some people were to say I did," replied Mr. Lillyvick, glancing angrily at Kenwigs. "Out of temper!"

"Oh! I cannot bear to see him look so at my husband," cried Mrs. Kenwigs. "It's so dreadful in families. Oh!"

"Mr. Lillyvick," said Kenwigs, "I hope, for the sake of your niece, that you won't object to be reconciled."

The collector's features relaxed, as the company added their entreaties to those of his nephew-in-law. He gave up his hat and held out his hand.

"There, Kenwigs," said Mr. Lillyvick; "and let me tell you at the same time, to show you how much out of temper I was, that if I had gone away without another word, it would have made no difference respecting that pound or two which I shall leave among your children when I die."

"Morleena Kenwigs," cried her mother, in a torrent of affection. "Go down upon your knees to your dear uncle, and beg him to love you all his life through, for he's more a angel than a man, and I've always said so."

Miss Morleena approaching to do homage in compliance with this injunction, was summarily caught up and kissed by Mr. Lillyvick, and thereupon Mrs. Kenwigs darted forward and kissed the collector, and an irrepressible murmur of applause broke from the company who had witnessed his magnanimity.

The worthy gentleman then became once more the life and soul of the society, being again reinstated in his old post of lion, from which high station the temporary distraction of their thoughts had for a moment dispossessed him. Quadruped lions are said to be savage only when
they are hungry; biped lions are rarely sulky longer than when their appetite for distinction remains unappeased. Mr. Lillyvick stood higher than ever, for he had shown his power, hinted at his property and testamentary intentions; gained great credit for disinterestedness and virtue; and in addition to all, he was finally accommodated with a much larger tumbler of punch than that which Newman Noggs had so feloniously made off with.

"I say, I beg everybody's pardon for intruding again," said Crowl, looking in at this happy juncture; "but what a queer business this is, isn't it? Noggs has lived in this house now going on for five years, and nobody has ever been to see him before within the memory of the oldest inhabitant."

"It's a strange time of night to be called away, Sir, certainly," said the collector; "and the behaviour of Mr. Noggs himself is, to say the least of it, mysterious."

"Well, so it is," rejoined Crowl; "and I'll tell you what's more—I think these two geniuses, whoever they are, have run away from somewhere."

"What makes you think that, Sir?" demanded the collector, who seemed by a tacit understanding to have been chosen and elected mouth-piece to the company. "You have no reason to suppose that they have run away from anywhere without paying the rates and taxes due, I hope?"

Mr. Crowl, with a look of some contempt, was about to enter a general protest against the payment of rates or taxes, under any circumstances, when he was checked by a timely whisper from Kenwigs, and several frowns and winks from Mrs. K., which providentially stopped him.

"Why the fact is," said Crowl, who had been listening at Newman's door, with all his might and main; "the fact is, that they have been talking so loud, that they quite disturbed me in my room, and so I couldn't help catching a word here, and a word there; and all I heard certainly seemed to refer to their having bolted from some place or other. I don't wish to alarm Mrs. Kenwigs; but I hope they haven't come from any jail or hospital, and brought away a fever or some unpleasantness of that sort, which might be catching for the children."

Mrs. Kenwigs was so overpowered by this supposition, that it needed all the tender attentions of Miss Petowker, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to restore her to anything like a state of calmness; not to mention the assiduity of Mr. Kenwigs, who held a fat smelling-bottle to his lady's nose, until it became matter of some doubt whether the tears which coursed down her face, were the result of feelings or sal volatile.

The ladies, having expressed their sympathy, singly and separately, fell, according to custom, into a little chorus of soothing expressions, among which, such condolences as "Poor dear!"—"I should feel just the same, if I was her"—"To be sure, it's a very trying thing"—and "Nobody but a mother knows what a mother's feelings is," were among the most prominent and most frequently repeated. In short, the opinion of the company was so clearly manifested, that Mr. Kenwigs
was on the point of repairing to Mr. Noggs's room, to demand an explanation; and had indeed swallowed a preparatory glass of punch, with great inflexibility and steadiness of purpose, when the attention of all present was diverted by a new and terrible surprise.

This was nothing less than the sudden pouring forth of a rapid succession of the shrillest and most piercing screams, from an upper story; and to all appearance from the very two-pair back in which the infant Kenwigs was at that moment enshrined. They were no sooner audible, than Mrs. Kenwigs, opining that a strange cat had come in, and sucked the baby's breath while the girl was asleep, made for the door, wringing her hands, and shrieking dismally; to the great consternation and confusion of the company.

"Mr. Kenwigs, see what it is; make haste!" cried the sister, laying violent hands upon Mrs. Kenwigs, and holding her back by force.

"Oh don't twist about so, dear, or I can never hold you."

"My baby, my blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed baby," screamed Mrs. Kenwigs, making every blessed louder than the last. "My own darling, sweet, innocent Lillyvick—Oh let me go to him. Let me go-o-o-o."

Pending the utterance of these frantic cries, and the wails and lamentations of the four little girls, Mr. Kenwigs rushed up stairs to the room whence the sounds proceeded, at the door of which he encountered Nicholas, with the child in his arms, who darted out with such violence, that the anxious father was thrown down six stairs, and alighted on the nearest landing-place, before he had found time to open his mouth to ask what was the matter.

"Don't be alarmed," cried Nicholas, running down; "here it is; it's all out, it's all over; pray compose yourselves; there's no harm done;" and with these, and a thousand other assurances, he delivered the baby (whom, in his hurry, he had carried upside down), to Mrs. Kenwigs, and ran back to assist Mr. Kenwigs, who was rubbing his head very hard, and looking much bewildered by his tumble.

Reassured by this cheering intelligence, the company in some degree recovered from their fears, which had been productive of some most singular instances of a total want of presence of mind; thus the bachelor friend had for a long time supported in his arms Mrs. Kenwigs's sister, instead of Mrs. Kenwigs; and the worthy Mr. Lillyvick had been actually seen, in the perturbation of his spirits, to kiss Miss Petowker several times, behind the room door, as calmly as if nothing distressing were going forward.

"It is a mere nothing," said Nicholas, returning to Mrs. Kenwigs; "the little girl, who was watching the child, being tired I suppose, fell asleep, and set her hair on fire."

"Oh you malicious little wretch!" cried Mrs. Kenwigs, impressively shaking her fore-finger at the small unfortunate, who might be thirteen years old, and was looking on with a singed head and a frightened face.

"I heard her cries," continued Nicholas, "and ran down in time to prevent her setting fire to anything else. You may depend upon it that the child is not hurt; for I took it off the bed myself, and brought it here to convince you."
This brief explanation over, the infant, who, as he was christened after the collector, rejoiced in the names of Lillyvick Kenwigs, was partially suffocated under the caresses of the audience, and squeezed to his mother’s bosom, until he roared again. The attention of the company was then directed, by a natural transition, to the little girl who had had the audacity to burn her hair off, and who, after receiving sundry small slaps and pushes from the more energetic of the ladies, was mercifully sent home; the ninepence, with which she was to have been rewarded, being escheated to the Kenwigs family.

"And whatever we are to say to you, Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Kenwigs, addressing young Lillyvick’s deliverer, "I am sure I don’t know."

"You need say nothing at all," replied Nicholas. "I have done nothing to found any very strong claim upon your eloquence, I am sure."

"He might have been burnt to death, if it hadn’t been for you, Sir," simpered Miss Petowker.

"Not very likely, I think," replied Nicholas; "for there was abundance of assistance here, which must have reached him before he had been in any danger."

"You will let us drink your health, anyvays, Sir?" said Mr. Kenwigs, motioning towards the table.

"— In my absence, by all means," rejoined Nicholas, with a smile.

"I have had a very fatiguing journey, and should be most indifferent company—a far greater check upon your merriment, than a promoter of it, even if I kept awake, which I think very doubtful. If you will allow me, I’ll return to my friend, Mr. Noggs, who went up stairs again, when he found nothing serious had occurred. Good night."

Excusing himself in these terms from joining in the festivities, Nicholas took a most winning farewell of Mrs. Kenwigs and the other ladies, and retired, after making a very extraordinary impression upon the company.

"What a delightful young man!" cried Mrs. Kenwigs.

"Uncommon gentlemanly, really," said Mr. Kenwigs. "Don’t you think so, Mr. Lillyvick?"

"Yes," said the collector, with a dubious shrug of his shoulders.

"He is gentlemanly, very gentlemanly—in appearance."

"I hope you don’t see anything against him, uncle?" inquired Mrs. Kenwigs.

"No, my dear," replied the collector, "no. I trust he may not turn out—well—no matter—my love to you, my dear, and long life to the baby."

"Your namesake," said Mrs. Kenwigs, with a sweet smile.

"And I hope a worthy namesake," observed Mr. Kenwigs, willing to propitiate the collector. "I hope a baby as will never disgrace his godfather, and as may be considered in after years of a piece with the Lillyvicks whose name he bears. I do say—and Mrs. Kenwigs is of the same sentiment, and feels it as strong as I do—that I consider his being called Lillyvick one of the greatest blessings and honours of my existence."

"The greatest blessing, Kenwigs," murmured his lady.
"The greatest blessing," said Mr. Kenwigs, correcting himself. "A blessing that I hope one of these days I may be able to deserve."

This was a politic stroke of the Kenwigses, because it made Mr. Lillyvick the great head and fountain of the baby's importance. The good gentleman felt the delicacy and dexterity of the touch, and at once proposed the health of the gentleman, name unknown, who had signalised himself that night by his coolness and alacrity.

"Who, I don't mind saying," observed Mr. Lillyvick, as a great concession, "is a good-looking young man enough, with manners that I hope his character may be equal to."

"He has a very nice face and style, really," said Mrs. Kenwigs.
"He certainly has," added Miss Petowker. "There's something in his appearance quite—dear, dear, what's that word again?"
"What word?" inquired Mr. Lillyvick.
"Why—dear me, how stupid I am," replied Miss Petowker, hesitating. "What do you call it when Lords break off door-knockers and beat policemen, and play at coaches with other people's money, and all that sort of thing?"
"Aristocratic?" suggested the collector.
"Ah! aristocratic," replied Miss Petowker; "something very aristocratic about him, isn't there?"

The gentlemen held their peace and smiled at each other, as who should say, "Well! there's no accounting for tastes;" but the ladies resolved unanimously that Nicholas had an aristocratic air, and nobody caring to dispute the position, it was established triumphantly.

The punch being by this time drunk out and the little Kenwigses (who had for some time previously held their little eyes open with their little fore-fingers) becoming fractions, and requesting rather urgently to be put to bed, the collector made a move by pulling out his watch, and acquainting the company that it was nigh two o'clock; whereat some of the guests were surprised and others shocked, and hats and bonnets being groped for under the tables, and in course of time found, their owners went away, after a vast deal of shaking of hands, and many remarks how they had never spent such a delightful evening, and how they marvelled to find it so late, expecting to have heard that it was half-past ten at the very latest, and how they wished that Mr. and Mrs. Kenwigs had a wedding-day once a week, and how they wondered by what hidden agency Mrs. Kenwigs could possibly have managed so well; and a great deal more of the same kind. To all of which flattering expressions Mr. and Mrs. Kenwigs replied, by thanking every lady and gentleman, seriatim, for the favour of their company, and hoping they might have enjoyed themselves only half as well as they said they had.

As to Nicholas, quite unconscious of the impression he had produced, he had long since fallen asleep, leaving Mr. Newman Noggs and Smike to empty the spirit bottle between them; and this office they performed with such extreme good will, that Newman was equally at a loss to determine whether he himself was quite sober, and whether he had ever seen any gentleman so heavily, drowsily, and completely intoxicated as his new acquaintance.
CHAPTER XVI.

NICHOLAS SEEKS TO EMPLOY HIMSELF IN A NEW CAPACITY, AND BEING UNSUCCESSFUL, ACCEPTS AN ENGAGEMENT AS TUTOR IN A PRIVATE FAMILY.

The first care of Nicholas next morning was, to look after some room in which, until better times dawned upon him, he could contrive to exist, without trenching upon the hospitality of Newman Noggs, who would have slept upon the stairs with pleasure, so that his young friend was accommodated.

The vacant apartment to which the bill in the parlour window bore reference, appeared on inquiry to be a small back room on the second floor, reclaimed from the leads, and overlooking a soot-bespeckled prospect of tiles and chimney-pots. For the letting of this portion of the house from week to week, on reasonable terms, the parlour lodger was empowered to treat, he being deputed by the landlord to dispose of the rooms as they became vacant, and to keep a sharp look-out that the lodgers didn’t run away. As a means of securing the punctual discharge of which last service he was permitted to live rent-free, lest he should at any time be tempted to run away himself.

Of this chamber Nicholas became the tenant; and having hired a few common articles of furniture from a neighbouring broker, and paid the first week’s hire in advance, out of a small fund raised by the conversion of some spare clothes into ready money, he sat himself down to ruminate upon his prospects, which, like that outside his window, were sufficiently confined and dingy. As they by no means improved on better acquaintance, and as familiarity breeds contempt, he resolved to banish them from his thoughts by dint of hard walking. So, taking up his hat, and leaving poor Smike to arrange and re-arrange the room with as much delight as if it had been the costliest palace, he betook himself to the streets, and mingled with the crowd which thronged them.

Although a man may lose a sense of his own importance when he is a mere unit among a busy throng, all utterly regardless of him, it by no means follows that he can dispossess himself, with equal facility, of a very strong sense of the importance and magnitude of his cares. The unhappy state of his own affairs was the one idea which occupied the brain of Nicholas, walk as fast as he would; and when he tried to dislodge it by speculating on the situation and prospects of the people who surrounded him, he caught himself in a few seconds contrasting their condition with his own, and gliding almost imperceptibly back into his old train of thought again.

Occupied in these reflections, as he was making his way along one of the great public thoroughfares of London, he chanced to raise his eyes to a blue board, whereon was inscribed in characters of gold, “General Agency Office; for places and situations of all kinds inquire within.” It was a shop-front, fitted up with a gauze blind and an inner door; and
in the window hung a long and tempting array of written placards, announcing vacant places of every grade, from a secretary's to a footboy's.

Nicholas halted instinctively before this temple of promise, and ran his eye over the capital-text openings in life which were so profusely displayed. When he had completed his survey he walked on a little way, and then back, and then on again; at length, after pausing irresolutely several times before the door of the General Agency Office, he made up his mind and stepped in.

He found himself in a little floor-clothed room, with a high desk rolled off in one corner, behind which sat a lean youth with cunning eyes and a protruding chin, whose performances in capital-text darkened the window. He had a thick ledger lying open before him, and with the fingers of his right hand inserted between the leaves, and his eyes fixed on a very fat old lady in a mob-cap—evidently the proprietress of the establishment—who was airing herself at the fire, seemed to be only waiting her directions to refer to some entries contained within its rusty clasps.

As there was a board outside, which acquainted the public that servants-of-all-work were perpetually in waiting to be hired from ten till four, Nicholas knew at once that some half-dozen strong young women, each with pattens and an umbrella, who were sitting upon a form in one corner, were in attendance for that purpose, especially as the poor things looked anxious and weary. He was not quite so certain of the callings and stations of two smart young ladies who were in conversation with the fat lady before the fire, until—having sat himself down in a corner, and remarked that he would wait until the other customers had been served—the fat lady resumed the dialogue which his entrance had interrupted.

"Cook, Tom," said the fat lady, still airing herself as aforesaid.

"Cook," said Tom, turning over some leaves of the ledger. "Well."

"Read out an easy place or two," said the fat lady.

"Pick out very light ones, if you please, young man," interposed a genteel female in shepherd's-plaid boots, who appeared to be the client.

"Mrs. Marker," said Tom, reading. "Russell Place, Russell Square; offers eighteen guineas, tea and sugar found. Two in family, and see very little company. Five servants kept. No man. No followers."

"Oh Lor!" tittered the client. "That won't do. Read another, young man, will you?"

"Mrs. Wrymug," said Tom. "Pleasant Place, Finsbury. Wages, twelve guineas. No tea, no sugar. Serious family—"

"Ali! you needn't mind reading that," interrupted the client.

"Three serious footmen," said Tom, impressively.

"Three, did you say?" asked the client, in an altered tone.

"Three serious footmen," replied Tom. "Cook, housemaid, and nursemaid; each female servant required to join the Little Bethel Congregation three times every Sunday—with a serious footman. If the cook is more serious than the footman, she will be expected to improve the footman; if the footman is more serious than the cook, he will be expected to improve the cook."
“I'll take the address of that place,” said the client; “I don't know but what it mightn't suit me pretty well.”

“Here's another,” remarked Tom, turning over the leaves; “'Family of Mr. Gallanible, M.P. Fifteen guineas, tea and sugar, and servants allowed to see male cousins, if godly. Note. Cold dinner in the kitchen on the Sabbath, Mr. Gallanible being devoted to the Observance question. No victuals whatever cooked on the Lord's Day, with the exception of dinner for Mr. and Mrs. Gallanible, which, being a work of piety and necessity, is exempted. Mr. Gallanible dines late on the day of rest, in order to prevent the sinfulness of the cook's dressing herself.'”

“I don't think that'll answer as well as the other,” said the client, after a little whispering with her friend. “I'll take the other direction, if you please, young man. I can but come back again, if it don't do.”

Tom made out the address, as requested, and the genteel client, having satisfied the fat lady with a small fee meanwhile, went away, accompanied by her friend.

As Nicholas opened his mouth, to request the young man to turn to letter S, and let him know what secretarships remained undisposed of, there came into the office an applicant, in whose favour he immediately retired, and whose appearance both surprised and interested him.

This was a young lady who could be scarcely eighteen, of very slight and delicate figure, but exquisitely shaped, who, walking timidly up to the desk, made an inquiry, in a very low tone of voice, relative to some situation as governess, or companion to a lady. She raised her veil for an instant, while she preferred the inquiry, and disclosed a countenance of most uncommon beauty, although shaded by a cloud of sadness, which in one so young was doubly remarkable. Having received a card of reference to some person on the books, she made the usual acknowledgment, and glided away.

She was neatly, but very quietly attired; so much so, indeed, that it seemed as though her dress, if it had been worn by one who imparted fewer graces of her own to it, might have looked poor and shabby. Her attendant—for she had one—was a red-faced, round-eyed, shabby girl, who, from a certain roughness about the bare arms that peeped from under her draggled shawl, and the half-washed-out traces of smut and blacklead which tattooed her countenance, was clearly of a kin with the servants-of-all-work on the form, between whom and herself there had passed various grins and glances, indicative of the freemasonry of the craft.

This girl followed her mistress; and before Nicholas had recovered from the first effects of his surprise and admiration, the young lady was gone. It is not a matter of such complete and utter improbability as some sober people may think, that he would have followed them out, had he not been restrained by what passed between the fat lady and her book-keeper.

“When is she coming again, Tom?” asked the fat lady.

“To-morrow morning,” replied Tom, mending his pen.

“Where have you sent her to?” asked the fat lady.

“Mrs. Clark's,” replied Tom.
"She'll have a nice life of it, if she goes there," observed the fat lady, taking a pinch of snuff from a tin box.

Tom made no other reply than thrusting his tongue into his cheek, and pointing the feather of his pen towards Nicholas—reminders which elicited from the fat lady an inquiry of "Now, Sir, what can we do for you?"

Nicholas briefly replied, that he wanted to know whether there was any such post as secretary or amanuensis to a gentleman to be had.

"Any such!" rejoined the mistress; "a dozen such. An't there, Tom?"

"I should think so," answered that young gentleman; and as he said it, he winked towards Nicholas, with a degree of familiarity which he no doubt intended for a rather flattering compliment, but with which Nicholas was most ungratefully disgusted.

Upon reference to the book, it appeared that the dozen secretaryships had dwindled down to one. Mr. Gregsbury, the great member of parliament, of Manchester Buildings, Westminster, wanted a young man, to keep his papers and correspondence in order; and Nicholas was exactly the sort of young man that Mr. Gregsbury wanted.

"I don't know what the terms are, as he said he'd settle them himself with the party," observed the fat lady; "but they must, be pretty good ones, because he's a member of parliament."

Inexperienced as he was, Nicholas did not feel quite assured of the force of this reasoning, or the justice of this conclusion; but without troubling himself to question it, he took down the address, and resolved to wait upon Mr. Gregsbury without delay.

"I don't know what the number is," said Tom; "but Manchester Buildings isn't a large place; and if the worst comes to the worst, it won't take you very long to knock at all the doors on both sides of the way till you find him out. I say, what a good-looking gal that was, wasn't she?"

"What girl, Sir," demanded Nicholas, sternly.

"Oh yes. I know—what gal, eh?" whispered Tom, shutting one eye, and cocking his chin in the air. "You didn't see her, you didn't—I say, don't you wish you was me, when she comes to-morrow morning?"

Nicholas looked at the ugly clerk, as if he had a mind to reward his admiration of the young lady by beating the ledger about his ears, but he refrained, and strode haughtily out of the office; setting at defiance, in his indignation, those ancient laws of chivalry, which not only made it proper and lawful for all good knights to hear the praise of the ladies to whom they were devoted, but rendered it incumbent upon them to roam about the world, and knock at head all such matter-of-fact and unpoetical characters, as declined to exalt, above all the earth, damsels whom they had never chanced to look upon or hear of—as if that were any excuse.

Thinking no longer of his own misfortunes, but wondering what could be those of the beautiful girl he had seen, Nicholas, with many wrong turns, and many inquiries, and almost as many misdirections, bent his steps towards the place whither he had been directed.
Within the precincts of the ancient city of Westminster, and within half a quarter of a mile of its ancient sanctuary, is a narrow and dirty region, the sanctuary of the smaller members of Parliament in modern days. It is all comprised in one street of gloomy lodging-houses, from whose windows in vacation time there frown long melancholy rows of bills, which say as plainly as did the countenances of their occupiers, ranged on ministerial and opposition benches in the session which slumber with its fathers, "To Let"—"To Let." In busier periods of the year these bills disappear, and the houses swarm with legislators. There are legislators in the parlours, in the first floor, in the second, in the third, in the garrets; the small apartments reek with the breath of deputations and delegates. In damp weather the place is rendered close by the steams of moist acts of parliament and frowzy petitions; general postmen grow faint as they enter its infected limits, and shabby figures in quest of franks, flit restlessly to and fro like the troubled ghosts of Complete Letter-writers departed. This is Manchester Buildings; and here, at all hours of the night, may be heard the rattling of latch-keys in their respective keyholes, with now and then—when a gust of wind sweeping across the water which washes the Buildings' feet, impels the sound towards its entrance—the weak, shrill voice of some young member practising the morrow's speech. All the live-long day there is a grinding of organs and clashing and clanging of little boxes of music, for Manchester Buildings is an eel-pot, which has no outlet but its awkward mouth—a case-bottle which has no thoroughfare, and a short and narrow neck—and in this respect it may be typical of the fate of some few among its more adventurous residents, who, after wriggling themselves into Parliament by violent efforts and contortions, find that it too is no thoroughfare for them; that, like Manchester Buildings, it leads to nothing beyond itself; and that they are fain at last to back out, no wiser, no richer, not one whit more famous, than they went in.

Into Manchester Buildings Nicholas turned, with the address of the great Mr. Gregsbury in his hand; and as there was a stream of people pouring into a shabby house not far from the entrance, he waited until they had made their way in, and then making up to the servant, ventured to inquire if he knew where Mr. Gregsbury lived.

The servant was a very pale, shabby boy, who looked as if he had slept under ground from his infancy, as very likely he had. "Mr. Gregsbury?" said he; "Mr. Gregsbury lodges here. It's all right. Come in."

Nicholas thought he might as well get in while he could, so in he walked; and he had no sooner done so, than the boy shut the door and made off.

This was odd enough, but what was more embarrassing was, that all along the narrow passage, and all along the narrow stairs, blocking up the window, and making the dark entry darker still, was a confused crowd of persons with great importance depicted in their looks; who were, to all appearance, waiting in silent expectation of some coming event; from time to time one man would whisper his neighbour, or a little group would whisper together, and then the whisperers would nod fiercely to each other, or give their heads a relentless shake, as if they
were bent upon doing something very desperate, and were determined not to be put off, whatever happened.

As a few minutes elapsed without anything occurring to explain this phenomenon, and as he felt his own position a peculiarly uncomfortable one, Nicholas was on the point of seeking some information from the man next him, when a sudden move was visible on the stairs, and a voice was heard to cry, "Now, gentlemen, have the goodness to walk up."

So far from walking up, the gentlemen on the stairs began to walk down with great alacrity, and to entreat, with extraordinary politeness, that the gentlemen nearest the street would go first; the gentlemen nearest the street retorted, with equal courtesy, that they couldn't think of such a thing on any account; but they did it without thinking of it, inasmuch as the other gentlemen pressing some half-dozen (among whom was Nicholas) forward, and closing up behind, pushed them, not merely up the stairs, but into the very sitting-room of Mr. Gregsbury, which they were thus compelled to enter with most unseemly precipitation, and without the means of retreat; the press behind them more than filling the apartment.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gregsbury, "you are welcome. I am rejoiced to see you."

For a gentleman who was rejoiced to see a body of visitors, Mr. Gregsbury looked as uncomfortable as might be; but perhaps this was occasioned by senatorial gravity, and a statesmanlike habit of keeping his feelings under control. He was a tough, burly, thick-headed gentleman, with a loud voice, a pompous manner, a tolerable command of sentences with no meaning in them, and in short every requisite for a very good member indeed.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Gregsbury, tossing a great bundle of papers into a wicker basket at his feet, and throwing himself back in his chair with his arms over the elbows, "you are dissatisfied with my conduct, I see by the newspapers."

"Yes, Mr. Gregsbury, we are," said a plump old gentleman in a violent heat, bursting out of the throng, and planting himself in the front.

"Do my eyes deceive me," said Mr. Gregsbury, looking towards the speaker, "or is that my old friend Pugstyles?"

"I am that man, and no other, Sir," replied the plump old gentleman.

"Give me your hand, my worthy friend," said Mr. Gregsbury.

"Pugstyles, my dear friend, I am very sorry to see you here."

"I am very sorry to be here, Sir," said Mr. Pugstyles; "but your conduct, Mr. Gregsbury, has rendered this deputation from your constituents imperatively necessary."

"My conduct, Pugstyles," said Mr. Gregsbury, looking round upon the deputation with gracious magnanimity—"My conduct has been, and ever will be, regulated by a sincere regard for the true and real interests of this great and happy country. Whether I look at home or abroad, whether I behold the peaceful industrious communities of our island home, her rivers covered with steam-boats, her roads with locomotives, her streets with cabs, her skies with balloons of a power and
magnitude hitherto unknown in the history of aeronautics in this or any other nation—I say, whether I look merely at home, or stretching my eyes further, contemplate the boundless prospect of conquest and possession—achieved by British perseverance and British valour—which is outspread before me, I clasp my hands, and turning my eyes to the broad expanse above my head, exclaim, 'Thank Heaven, I am a Briton!'"

The time had been when this burst of enthusiasm would have been cheered to the very echo; but now the deputation received it with chilling coldness. The general impression seemed to be, that as an explanation of Mr. Gregsbury’s political conduct, it did not enter quite enough into detail, and one gentleman in the rear did not scruple to remark aloud, that for his purpose it savoured rather too much of a "gammon" tendency.

"The meaning of that term—gammon," said Mr. Gregsbury, "is unknown to me. If it means that I grow a little too fervid, or perhaps even hyperbolical, in extolling my native land, I admit the full justice of the remark. I am proud of this free and happy country. My form dilates, my eye glistens, my breast heaves, my heart swells, my bosom burns, when I call to mind her greatness and her glory."

"We wish, Sir," remarked Mr. Pugstyles, calmly, "to ask you a few questions."

"If you please, gentlemen; my time is yours—and my country’s—and my country’s—" said Mr. Gregsbury.

This permission being conceded, Mr. Pugstyles put on his spectacles, and referred to a written paper which he drew from his pocket, whereupon nearly every other member of the deputation pulled a written paper from his pocket, to check Mr. Pugstyles off, as he read the questions.

This done, Mr. Pugstyles proceeded to business.

"Question number one.—Whether, Sir, you did not give a voluntary pledge previous to your election, that in the event of your being returned you would immediately put down the practice of coughing and groaning in the House of Commons. And whether you did not submit to be coughed and groaned down in the very first debate of the session, and have since made no effort to effect a reform in this respect? Whether you did not also pledge yourself to astonish the government, and make them shrink in their shoes. And whether you have astonished them and made them shrink in their shoes, or not?"

"Go on to the next one, my dear Pugstyles," said Mr. Gregsbury.

"Have you any explanation to offer with reference to that question, Sir?" asked Mr. Pugstyles.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Gregsbury.

The members of the deputation looked fiercely at each other, and afterwards at the member, and "dear Pugstyles" having taken a very long stare at Mr. Gregsbury over the tops of his spectacles, resumed his list of inquiries.

"Question number two.—Whether, Sir, you did not likewise give a voluntary pledge that you would support your colleague on every occasion; and whether you did not, the night before last, desert him and vote upon the other side, because the wife of a leader on that other side had invited Mrs. Gregsbury to an evening party?"
"Go on," said Mr. Gregsbury.

"Nothing to say on that, either, Sir?" asked the spokesman.

"Nothing whatever," replied Mr. Gregsbury. The deputation, who had only seen him at canvassing or election time, were struck dumb by his coolness. He didn't appear like the same man; then he was all milk and honey—now he was all starch and vinegar. But men are so different at different times!

"Question number three—and last—" said Mr. Pugstyles, emphatically. "Whether, Sir, you did not state upon the hustings, that it was your firm and determined intention to oppose everything proposed; to divide the house upon every question, to move for returns on every subject, to place a motion on the books every day, and, in short, in your own memorable words, to play the devil with everything and everybody?" With this comprehensive inquiry Mr. Pugstyles folded up his list of questions, as did all his backers.

Mr. Gregsbury reflected, blew his nose, threw himself further back in his chair, came forward again, leaning his elbows on the table, made a triangle with his two thumbs and his two forefingers, and tapping his nose with the apex thereof, replied (smiling as he said it), "I deny everything."

At this unexpected answer a hoarse murmur arose from the deputation; and the same gentleman who had expressed an opinion relative to the gammoning nature of the introductory speech, again made a monosyllabic demonstration, by growling out "Resign;" which growl being taken up by his fellows, swelled into a very earnest and general remonstrance.

"I am requested, Sir, to express a hope," said Mr. Pugstyles, with a distant bow, "that on receiving a requisition to that effect from a great majority of your constituents, you will not object at once to resign your seat in favour of some candidate whom they think they can better trust."

To which Mr. Gregsbury read the following reply, which, anticipating the request, he had composed in the form of a letter, whereof copies had been made to send round to the newspapers.

"My dear Pugstyles,

Next to the welfare of our beloved island—this great and free and happy country, whose powers and resources are, I sincerely believe, illimitable—I value that noble independence which is an Englishman's proudest boast, and which I fondly hope to bequeath to my children unshorn and unsullied. Actuated by no personal motives, but moved only by high and great constitutional considerations which I will not attempt to explain, for they are really beneath the comprehension of those who have not made themselves masters, as I have, of the intricate and arduous study of politics, I would rather keep my seat, and intend doing so.

"Will you do me the favour to present my compliments to the constituent body, and acquaint them with this circumstance?

"With great esteem,

"My dear Pugstyles, &c. &c."
"Then you will not resign, under any circumstances?" asked the spokesman.

Mr. Gregsbury smiled, and shook his head.

"Then good morning, Sir," said Pugstyles, angrily.

"God bless you," said Mr. Gregsbury. And the deputation, with many growls and scowls, filed off as quickly as the narrowness of the staircase would allow of their getting down.

The last man being gone, Mr. Gregsbury rubbed his hands and chuckled, as merry fellows will, when they think they have said or done a more than commonly good thing; he was so engrossed in this self-congratulation, that he did not observe that Nicholas had been left behind in the shadow of the window-curtains, until that young gentleman fearing he might otherwise overhear some soliloquy intended to have no listeners, coughed twice or thrice to attract the member's notice.

"What's that?" said Mr. Gregsbury, in sharp accents.

Nicholas stepped forward and bowed.

"What do you do here, Sir?" asked Mr. Gregsbury; "a spy upon my privacy! A concealed voter! You have heard my answer, Sir. Pray follow the deputation."

"I should have done so if I had belonged to it, but I do not," said Nicholas.

"Then how came you here, Sir?" was the natural inquiry of Mr. Gregsbury, M.P. "And where the devil have you come from, Sir?"

was the question which followed it.

"I brought this card from the General Agency Office, Sir," said Nicholas, "wishing to offer myself as your secretary, and understanding that you stood in need of one."

"That's all you have come for, is it?" said Mr. Gregsbury, eyeing him in some doubt.

Nicholas replied in the affirmative.

"You have no connexion with any of these rascally papers, have you?" said Mr. Gregsbury. "You didn't get into the room to hear what was going forward, and put it in print, eh?"

"I have no connexion, I am sorry to say, with anything at present," rejoined Nicholas,—politely enough, but quite at his ease.

"Oh!" said Mr. Gregsbury. "How did you find your way up here, then?"

Nicholas related how he had been forced up by the deputation.

"That was the way, was it?" said Mr. Gregsbury. "Sit down.

Nicholas took a chair, and Mr. Gregsbury stared at him for a long time, as if to make certain, before he asked any further questions, that there were no objections to his outward appearance.

"You want to be my secretary, do you?" he said at length.

"I wish to be employed in that capacity," replied Nicholas.

"Well," said Mr. Gregsbury; "Now what can you do?"

"I suppose," replied Nicholas, smiling, "that I can do what usually falls to the lot of other secretaries."

"What's that?" inquired Mr. Gregsbury.

"What is it?" replied Nicholas.
"Ah! What is it?" retorted the member, looking shrewdly at him, with his head on one side.

"A secretary's duties are rather difficult to define, perhaps," said Nicholas, considering. "They include, I presume, correspondence."

"Good," interposed Mr. Gregsbury.

"The arrangement of papers and documents—"

"Very good."

"Occasionally, perhaps, the writing from your dictation; and possibly,"—said Nicholas, with a half smile, "the copying of your speech, for some public journal, when you have made one of more than usual importance."

"Certainly," rejoined Mr. Gregsbury. "What else?"

"Really," said Nicholas, after a moment's reflection, "I am not able, at this instant, to recapitulate any other duty of a secretary, beyond the general one of making himself as agreeable and useful to his employer as he can, consistently with his own respectability, and without overstepping that line of duties which he undertakes to perform, and which the designation of his office is usually understood to imply."

Mr. Gregsbury looked fixedly at Nicholas for a short time, and then glancing warily round the room, said in a suppressed voice—

"This is all very well, Mr.—what is your name?"

"Nickleby."

"This is all very well, Mr. Nickleby, and very proper, so far as it goes—so far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. There are other duties, Mr. Nickleby, which a secretary to a parliamentary gentleman must never lose sight of. I should require to be crammed, Sir."

"I beg your pardon," interposed Nicholas, doubtful whether he had heard aright.

"To be crammed, Sir," repeated Mr. Gregsbury.

"May I beg your pardon again, if I inquire what you mean?" said Nicholas.

"My meaning, Sir, is perfectly plain," replied Mr. Gregsbury, with a solemn aspect. "My secretary would have to make himself master of the foreign policy of the world, as it is mirrored in the newspapers; to run his eye over all accounts of public meetings, all leading articles, and accounts of the proceedings of public bodies; and to make notes of anything which it appeared to him might be made a point of, in any little speech upon the question of some petition lying on the table, or anything of that kind. Do you understand?"

"I think I do, Sir," replied Nicholas.

"Then," said Mr. Gregsbury, "it would be necessary for him to make himself acquainted from day to day with newspaper paragraphs on passing events; such as 'Mysterious disappearance, and supposed suicide of a pot-boy,' or anything of that sort, upon which I might found a question to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Then he would have to copy the question, and as much as I remembered of the answer (including a little compliment about my independence and good sense); and to send the manuscript in a frank to the local paper, with perhaps half a dozen lines of leader, to the effect, that I was always to be found in my place in parliament, and never shrunk
from the discharge of my responsible and arduous duties, and so forth. You see?"

Nicholas bowed.

"Besides which," continued Mr. Gregsbury, "I should expect him now and then to go through a few figures in the printed tables, and to pick out a few results, so that I might come out pretty well on timber duty questions, and finance questions, and so on; and I should like him to get up a few little arguments about the disastrous effects of a return to cash payments and a metallic currency, with a touch now and then about the exportation of bullion, and the Emperor of Russia, and bank notes, and all that kind of thing, which it's only necessary to talk fluently about, because nobody understands it. Do you take me?"

"I think I understand," said Nicholas.

"With regard to such questions as are not political," continued Mr. Gregsbury, warming; "and which one can't be expected to care a damn about, beyond the natural care of not allowing inferior people to be as well off as ourselves, else where are our privileges? I should wish my secretary to get together a few little flourishing speeches, of a patriotic cast. For instance, if any preposterous bill were brought forward for giving poor grabbing devils of authors a right to their own property, I should like to say, that I for one would never consent to opposing an insurmountable bar to the diffusion of literature among the people,—you understand? that the creations of the pocket, being man's, might belong to one man, or one family; but that the creations of the brain, being God's, ought as a matter of course to belong to the people at large—and if I was pleasantly disposed, I should like to make a joke about posterity, and say that those who wrote for posterity, should be content to be rewarded by the approbation of posterity; it might take with the house, and could never do me any harm, because posterity can't be expected to know anything about me or my jokes either—don't you see?"

"I see that, Sir," replied Nicholas.

"You must always bear in mind, in such cases as this, where our interests are not affected," said Mr. Gregsbury, warming; "to put it very strong about the people, because it comes out very well at election-time; and you could be as funny as you liked about the authors; because I believe the greater part of them live in lodgings, and are not voters. This is a hasty outline of the chief things you'd have to do, except waiting in the lobby every night, in case I forgot anything, and should want fresh cramming; and now and then, during great debates, sitting in the front row of the gallery, and saying to the people about—You see that gentleman, with his hand to his face, and his arm twisted round the pillar—that's Mr. Gregsbury—the celebrated Mr. Gregsbury—with any other little eulogium that might strike you at the moment. And for salary," said Mr. Gregsbury, winding up with great rapidity; for he was out of breath—"And for salary, I don't mind saying at once in round numbers, to prevent any dissatisfaction—though it's more than I've been accustomed to give—fifteen shillings a week, and find yourself. There."

With this handsome offer Mr. Gregsbury once more threw himself
back in his chair, and looked like a man who has been most prodigately liberal, but is determined not to repent of it notwithstanding.

"Fifteen shillings a week is not much," said Nicholas, mildly.

"Not much! Fifteen shillings a week not much, young man?" cried Mr. Gregsbury. "Fifteen shillings a—"

"Pray do not suppose that I quarrel with the sum," replied Nicholas; "for I am not ashamed to confess, that whatever it may be in itself, to me it is a great deal. But the duties and responsibilities make the recompense small, and they are so very heavy that I fear to undertake them."

"Do you decline to undertake them, Sir?" inquired Mr. Gregsbury, with his hand on the bell-rope.

"I fear they are too great for my powers, however good my will may be," replied Nicholas.

"That is as much as to say that you had rather not accept the place, and that you consider fifteen shillings a week too little," said Mr. Gregsbury, ringing. "Do you decline it, Sir?"

"I have no alternative but to do so," replied Nicholas.

"Door, Matthews," said Mr. Gregsbury, as the boy appeared.

"I am sorry I have troubled you unnecessarily, Sir," said Nicholas.

"I am sorry you have," rejoined Mr. Gregsbury, turning his back upon him. "Door, Matthews."

"Good morning," said Nicholas.

"Door, Matthews," cried Mr. Gregsbury.

The boy beckoned Nicholas, and tumbling lazily down stairs before him, opened the door and ushered him into the street. With a sad and pensive air he retraced his steps homewards.

Smike had scraped a meal together from the remnant of last night's supper, and was anxiously awaiting his return. The occurrences of the morning had not improved Nicholas's appetite, and by him the dinner remained untouched. He was sitting in a thoughtful attitude, with the plate which the poor fellow had assiduously filled with the choicest morsels untouched, by his side, when Newman Noggs looked into the room.

"Come back?" asked Newman.

"Yes," replied Nicholas, "tired to death; and what is worse, might have remained at home for all the good I have done."

"Couldn't expect to do much in one morning," said Newman.

"May be so, but I am saugine, and did expect," said Nicholas, "and am proportionately disappointed." Saying which, he gave Newman an account of his proceedings.

"If I could do anything," said Nicholas, "anything however slight, until Ralph Nickleby returns, and I have eased my mind by confronting him, I should feel happier. I should think it no disgrace to work, Heaven knows. Lying indolently here like a half-tamed sullen beast distracts me."

"I don't know," said Newman; "small things offer—they would pay the rent, and more—but you wouldn't like them; no, you could hardly be expected to undergo it—no, no."

"What could I hardly be expected to undergo?" asked Nicholas, raising his eyes. "Show me, in this wide waste of London, any honest means by which I could even defray the weekly hire of this poor room,
and see if I shrink from resorting to them. Undergo! I have undergone too much, my friend, to feel pride or squirmishness now. Except—" added Nicholas hastily, after a short silence, "except such squirmishness as is common honesty, and so much pride as constitutes self-respect. I see little to choose, between the assistant to a brutal pedagogue, and the toad-eater of a mean and ignorant upstart, be he member or no member."

"I hardly know whether I should tell you what I heard this morning or not," said Newman.

"Has it reference to what you said just now?" asked Nicholas.

"It has."

"Then in Heaven's name, my good friend, tell it me," said Nicholas. "For God's sake consider my deplorable condition; and while I promise to take no step without taking counsel with you, give me, at least, a vote in my own behalf."

Moved by this entreaty, Newman stammered forth a variety of most unaccountable and entangled sentences, the upshot of which was, that Mrs. Kenwigs had examined him at great length that morning touching the origin of his acquaintance with, and the whole life, adventures, and pedigree of Nicholas; that Newman had parried these questions as long as he could, but being at length hard pressed and driven into a corner, had gone so far as to admit, that Nicholas was a tutor of great accomplishments, involved in some misfortunes which he was not at liberty to explain, and bearing the name of Johnson. That Mrs. Kenwigs, compelled by gratitude, or ambition, or maternal pride, or maternal love, or all four powerful motives conjointly, had taken secret conference with Mr. Kenwigs, and finally returned to propose that Mr. Johnson should instruct the four Miss Kenwigses in the French language as spoken by natives, at the weekly stipend of five shillings current coin of the realm, being at the rate of one shilling per week per each Miss Kenwigs, and one shilling over, until such time as the baby might be able to take it out in grammar.

"Which, unless I am very much mistaken," observed Mrs. Kenwigs in making the proposition, "will not be very long; for such clever children, Mr. Noggs, never were born into this world I do believe."

"There," said Newman, "that's all. It's beneath you, I know; but I thought that perhaps you might—"

"Might!" said Nicholas, with great alacrity; "of course I shall. I accept the offer at once. Tell the worthy mother so without delay, my dear fellow; and that I am ready to begin whenever she pleases."

Newman hastened with joyful steps to inform Mrs. Kenwigs of his friend's acquiescence, and soon returning, brought back word that they would be happy to see him in the first floor as soon as convenient; that Mrs. Kenwigs had upon the instant sent out to secure a second-hand French grammar and dialogues, which had long been fluttering in the sixpenny box at the book-stall round the corner; and that the family, highly excited at the prospect of this addition to their gentility, wished the initiatory lesson to come off immediately.

And here it may be observed, that Nicholas was not, in the ordinary sense of the word, a young man of high spirit. He would resent an affront to himself, or interpose to redress a wrong offered to another, as
bodily and freely as any knight that ever set lance in rest; but he lacked that peculiar excess of coolness and great-minded selfishness, which invariably distinguish gentlemen of high spirit. In truth, for our own part, we are rather disposed to look upon such gentlemen as being rather incumbrances than otherwise in rising families, happening to be acquainted with several whose spirit prevents their settling down to any grovelling occupation, and only displays itself in a tendency to cultivate mustachios, and look fierce; and although mustachios and ferosity are both very pretty things in their way, and very much to be commended, we confess to a desire to see them bred at the owner's proper cost, rather than at the expense of low-spirited people.

Nicholas, therefore, not being a high-spirited young man according to common parlance, and deeming it a greater degradation to borrow, for the supply of his necessities, from Newman Noggs, than to teach French to the little Kenwigses for five shillings a week, accepted the offer with the alacrity already described, and betook himself to the first floor with all convenient speed.

Here he was received by Mrs. Kenwigs with a genteel air, kindly intended to assure him of her protection and support; and here too he found Mr. Lillyvick and Miss Petowker: the four Miss Kenwigses on their form of audience, and the baby in a dwarf porter’s chair with a deal tray before it, amusing himself with a toy horse without a head; the said horse being composed of a small wooden cylinder supported on four crooked pegs, not unlike an Italian iron, and painted in ingenious resemblance of red wafers set in blacking.

"How do you do, Mr. Johnson?" said Mrs. Kenwigs. "Uncle—Mr. Johnson."

"How do you do, Sir?" said Mr. Lillyvick—rather sharply; for he had not known what Nicholas was, on the previous night, and it was rather an aggravating circumstance if a tax collector had been too polite to a teacher.

"Mr. Johnson is engaged as private master to the children, uncle," said Mrs. Kenwigs. "So you said just now, my dear," replied Mr. Lillyvick.

"But I hope," said Mrs. Kenwigs, drawing herself up, "that that will not make them proud; but that they will bless their own good fortune, which has born them superior to common people’s children. Do you hear, Morleena?"

"Yes, ma," replied Miss Kenwigs.

"And when you go out in the streets, or elsewhere, I desire that you don’t boast of it to the other children," said Mrs. Kenwigs; "and that if you must say anything about it, you don’t say no more than ‘We’ve got a private master comes to teach us at home, but we ain’t proud, because ma says it’s sinful.’ Do you hear, Morleena?"

"Yes, ma," replied Miss Kenwigs again.

"Then mind you recollect, and do as I tell you," said Mrs. Kenwigs.

"Shall Mr. Johnson begin, uncle?"

"I am ready to hear, if Mr. Johnson is ready to commence, my dear," said the collector, assuming the air of a profound critic. "What sort of language do you consider French, Sir?"
"How do you mean?" asked Nicholas.

"Do you consider it a good language, Sir?" said the collector; "a pretty language, a sensible language?"

"A pretty language, certainly," replied Nicholas; "and as it has a name for everything, and admits of elegant conversation about everything, I presume it is a sensible one."

"I don't know," said Mr. Lillyvick, doubtfully. "Do you call it a cheerful language, now?"

"Yes," replied Nicholas, "I should say it was, certainly."

"It's very much changed since my time, then," said the collector, "very much."

"Was it a dismal one in your time?" asked Nicholas, scarcely able to repress a smile.

"Very," replied Mr. Lillyvick, with some vehemence of manner. "It's the war time that I speak of; the last war. It may be a cheerful language. I should be sorry to contradict anybody; but I can only say that I've heard the French prisoners, who were natives, and ought to know how to speak it, talking in such a dismal manner, that it made one miserable to hear them. Ay, that I have, fifty times, Sir—fifty times."

Mr. Lillyvick was waxing so cross, that Mrs. Kenwigs thought it expedient to motion to Nicholas not to say anything; and it was not until Miss Petowker had practised several blandishments, to soften the excellent old gentleman, that he deigned to break silence, by asking,

"What's the water in French, Sir?"

"L'Eau," replied Nicholas.

"Ah!" said Mr. Lillyvick, shaking his head mournfully, "I thought as much. Lo, eh? I don't think anything of that language—nothing at all."

"I suppose the children may begin, uncle?" said Mrs. Kenwigs.

"Oh yes; they may begin, my dear," replied the collector, discontentedly. "I have no wish to prevent them."

This permission being conceded, the four Miss Kenwigses sat in a row, with their tails all one way, and Morleena at the top, while Nicholas, taking the book, began his preliminary explanations. Miss Petowker and Mrs. Kenwigs looked on, in silent admiration, broken only by the whispered assurances of the latter, that Morleena would have it all by heart in no time; and Mr. Lillyvick regarded the group with frowning and attentive eyes, lying in wait for something upon which he could open a fresh discussion on the language.  

CHAPTER XVII.

FOLLOWS THE FORTUNES OF MISS NICKLEBY.

It was with a heavy heart, and many sad forebodings which no effort could banish, that Kate Nickleby, on the morning appointed for the commencement of her engagement with Madame Mantalini, left the city when its clocks yet wanted a quarter of an hour of eight, and threaded
her way alone, amid the noise and bustle of the streets, towards the west end of London.

At this early hour many sickly girls, whose business, like that of the poor worm, is to produce with patient toil the finery that bedecks the thoughtless and luxurious, traverse our streets, making towards the scene of their daily labour, and catching, as if by stealth, in their hurried walk, the only gasp of wholesome air and glimpse of sunlight which cheers their monotonous existence during the long train of hours that make a working day. As she drew nigh to the more fashionable quarter of the town, Kate marked many of this class as they passed by, hurrying like herself to their painful occupation, and saw, in their unhealthy looks and feeble gait, but too clear an evidence that her misgivings were not wholly groundless.

She arrived at Madame Mantalini’s some minutes before the appointed hour, and after walking a few times up and down, in the hope that some other female might arrive and spare her the embarrassment of stating her business to the servant, knocked timidly at the door, which after some delay was opened by the footman, who had been putting on his striped jacket as he came up stairs, and was now intent on fastening his apron.

"Is Madame Mantalini in?" faltered Kate.

"Not often out at this time, Miss," replied the man in a tone which rendered ‘Miss,’ something more offensive than ‘My dear.’

"Can I see her?" asked Kate.

"Eh?" replied the man, holding the door in his hand, and honouring the inquirer with a stare and a broad grin, "Lord, no."

"I came by her own appointment," said Kate; "I am—I am—to be employed here."

"Oh! you should have rung the workers’ bell," said the footman, touching the handle of one in the door-post. "Let me see, though, I forgot—Miss Nickleby, is it?"

"Yes," replied Kate.

"You’re to walk up stairs then, please," said the man. "Madame Mantalini wants to see you—this way—take care of these things on the floor."

Cautiously she in these terms not to trip over a heterogeneous litter of pastry-cook’s trays, lamps, waiters full of glasses, and piles of rout seats which were strewn about the hall, plainly bespeaking a late party on the previous night, the man led the way to the second story, and ushered Kate into a back room, communicating by folding-doors with the apartment in which she had first seen the mistress of the establishment.

"If you’ll wait here a minute," said the man, "I’ll tell her presently." Having made this promise with much affability, he retired and left Kate alone.

There was not much to amuse in the room; of which the most attractive feature was, a half-length portrait in oil of Mr. Mantalini, whom the artist had depicted scratching his head in an easy manner, and thus displaying to advantage a diamond ring, the gift of Madame Mantalini before her marriage. There was, however, the sound of voices in conver-
sation in the next room; and as the conversation was loud and the partition thin, Kate could not help discovering that they belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Mantalini.

"If you will be odiously, demneably, outrageously jealous, my soul," said Mr. Mantalini, "you will be very miserable—horrid miserable—demnition miserable." And then there came a sound as though Mr. Mantalini were sipping his coffee.

"I am miserable," returned Madame Mantalini, evidently pouting.

"Then you are an ungrateful, unworthy, demd unthankful little fairy," said Mr. Mantalini.

"I am not," returned Madame, with a sob.

"Do not put itself out of humour," said Mr. Mantalini, breaking an egg. "It is a pretty bewitching little demd countenance, and it should not be out of humour, for it spoils its loveliness, and makes it cross and gloomy like a frightful, naughty, demd hobgoblin."

"I am not to be brought round in that way, always," rejoined Madame, sulky.

"It shall be brought round in any way it likes best, and not brought round at all if it likes that better," retorted Mr. Mantalini, with his egg-spoon in his mouth.

"It's very easy to talk," said Mrs. Mantalini.

"Not so easy when one is eating a demnition egg," replied Mr. Mantalini; "for the yolk runs down the waistcoat, and yolk of egg does not match any waistcoat but a yellow waistcoat, demmit."

"You were flirting with her during the whole night," said Madame Mantalini, apparently desirous to lead the conversation back to the point from which it had strayed.

"No, no, my life."

"You were," said Madame; "I had my eye upon you all the time."

"Bless the little winking twinkling eye; was it on me all the time!" cried Mantalini, in a sort of lazy rapture. "Oh, demmit!"

"And I say once more," resumed Madame, "that you ought not to waltz with anybody but your own wife; and I will not bear it, Mantalini, if I take poison first."

"She will not take poison and have horrid pains, will she?" said Mantalini; who, by the altered sound of his voice, seemed to have moved his chair and taken up his position nearer to his wife. "She will not take poison, because she had a demd fine husband who might have married two countesses and a dowager——"

"Two countesses," interposed Madame. "You told me one before!"

"Two!" cried Mantalini. "Two demd fine women, real countesses and splendid fortunes, demmit."

"And why didn't you?" asked Madame, playfully.

"Why didn't I!" replied her husband. "Had I not seen at a morning concert the demdest little fascinator in all the world, and while that little fascinator is my wife, may not all the countesses and dowagers in England be——"

Mr. Mantalini did not finish the sentence, but he gave Madame Mantalini a very loud kiss, which Madame Mantalini returned; after
which there seemed to be some more kissing mixed up with the progress of the breakfast.

"And what about the cash, my existence's jewel?" said Mantalini, when these endearments ceased. "How much have we in hand?"

"Very little indeed," replied Madame.

"We must have some more," said Mantalini; "we must have some discount out of old Nickleby to carry on the war with, demmit."

"You can't want any more just now," said Madame coaxingly.

"My life and soul," returned her husband, "there is a horse for sale at Scrubbs's, which it would be a sin and crime to lose—going, my senses' joy, for nothing."

"For nothing," cried Madame, "I am glad of that."

"For actually nothing," replied Mantalini. "A hundred guineas down will buy him; mane, and crest, and legs, and tail, all of the demddest beauty. I will ride him in the park before the very chariots of the rejected countesses. The demd old dowager will faint with grief and rage; the other two will say 'He is married, he has made away with himself, it is a demd thing, it is all up.' They will hate each other demmibly, and wish you dead and buried. Ha! ha! Demmit."

Madame Mantalini's prudence, if she had any, was not proof against these triumphal pictures; after a little jingling of keys, she observed that she would see what her desk contained, and rising for that purpose, opened the folding-door, and walked into the room where Kate was seated.

"Dear me, child!" exclaimed Madame Mantalini, recoiling in surprise. "How came you here?"

"Child!" cried Mantalini, hurrying in. "How came it—ch!—oh—demmit, how d'ye do?"

"I have been waiting here some time, ma'am," said Kate, addressing Madame Mantalini. "The man must have forgotten to let you know that I was here, I think."

"You really must see to that man," said Madame, turning to her husband. "He forgets everything."

"I will twist his demd nose off his countenance for leaving such a very pretty creature all alone by herself," said her husband.

"Mantalini," cried Madame, "you forget yourself."

"I don't forget you, my soul, and never shall, and never can," said Mantalini, kissing his wife's hand, and grimacing, aside, to Miss Nickleby, who turned contemptuously away.

Apprised by this compliment, the lady of the house took some papers from her desk, which she handed over to Mr. Mantalini, who received them with great delight. She then requested Kate to follow her, and after several feints on the part of Mr. Mantalini to attract the young lady's attention, they went away, leaving that gentleman extended at full length on the sofa, with his heels in the air and a newspaper in his hand.

Madame Mantalini led the way down a flight of stairs, and through a passage, to a large room at the back of the premises, where a number of young women employed in sewing, cutting out, making up, altering, and various other processes known only to those who are cum-
ning in the arts of millinery and dress-making. It was a close room with a sky-light, and as dull and quiet as a room could be.

On Madame Mantalini calling aloud for Miss Knag, a short, bustling, over-dressed female, full of importance, presented herself, and all the young ladies suspending their operations for the moment, whispered to each other sundry criticisms upon the make and texture of Miss Nickleby’s dress, her complexion, cast of features, and personal appearance, with as much good-breeding as could have been displayed by the very best society in a crowded ball-room.

“Oh, Miss Knag,” said Madame Mantalini, “this is the young person I spoke to you about.”

Miss Knag bestowed a reverential smile upon Madame Mantalini, which she dexterously transformed into a gracious one for Kate, and said that certainly, although it was a great deal of trouble, to have young people, who were wholly unused to the business, still she was sure the young person would try to do her best—impressed with which conviction she (Miss Knag) felt an interest in her already.

“I think that, for the present at all events, it will be better for Miss Nickleby to come into the show-room with you, and try things on for people,” said Madame Mantalini. “She will not be able for the present to be of much use in any other way; and her appearance will—”

“Suit very well with mine, Madame Mantalini,” interrupted Miss Knag. “So it will; and to be sure I might have known that you would not be long in finding that out; for you have so much taste in all those matters, that really, as I often say to the young ladies, I do not know how, when, or where, you possibly could have acquired all you know—hem—Miss Nickleby and I are quite a pair, Madam Mantalini, only I am a little darker than Miss Nickleby, and—hem—I think my foot may be a little smaller. Miss Nickleby, I am sure, will not be offended at my saying that, when she hears that our family always have been celebrated for small feet ever since—hem—ever since our family had any feet at all, indeed, I think. I had an uncle once, Madame Mantalini, who lived in Cheltenham, and had a most excellent business as a tobacconist—hem—who had such small feet, that they were no bigger than those which are usually joined to wooden legs—the most symmetrical feet, Madame Mantalini, that even you can imagine.”

“They must have had something the appearance of club feet,” said Miss Knag, as Madame.

“Well now, that is so like you,” returned Miss Knag. “Ha! ha! ha! Of club feet! Oh very good! As I often remark to the young ladies, ‘Well I must say, and I do not care who knows it, of all the ready humour—hem—I ever heard anywhere’—and I have heard a good deal; for when my dear brother was alive (I kept house for him, Miss Nickleby), we had to supper once a week two or three young men, highly celebrated in those days for their humour, Madame Mantalini—‘Of all the ready humour,’ I say to the young ladies, ‘I ever heard, Madame Mantalini’s is the most remarkable—hem. It is so gentle, so sarcastic, and yet so good-natured (as I was observing to Miss Simmonds only this morning), that how, or when, or by what means she acquired it, is to me a mystery indeed.’"
Here Miss Knag paused to take breath, and while she pauses, it may be observed—not that she was marvellously loquacious and marvelously deferential to Madame Mantalini, since these are facts which require no comment; but that every now and then she was accustomed, in the torrent of her discourse, to introduce a loud, shrill, clear "hem!" the import and meaning of which was variously interpreted by her acquaintance; some holding that Miss Knag dealt in exaggeration, and introduced the monosyllable, when any fresh invention was in course of coinage in her brain; and others, that when she wanted a word, she threw it in to gain time, and prevent anybody else from striking into the conversation. It may be further remarked, that Miss Knag still aimed at youth, though she had shot beyond it years ago; and that she was weak and vain, and one of those people who are best described by the axiom, that you may trust them as far as you can see them, and no farther.

"You'll take care that Miss Nickleby understands her hours, and so forth," said Madame Mantalini; "and so I'll leave her with you. You'll not forget my directions, Miss Knag?"

Miss Knag of course replied, that to forget anything Madame Mantalini had directed, was a moral impossibility; and that lady, dispensing a general good morning among her assistants, sailed away.

"Charming creature, isn't she, Miss Nickleby?" said Miss Knag, rubbing her hands together.

"I have seen very little of her," said Kate. "I hardly know yet."

"Have you seen Mr. Mantalini?" inquired Miss Knag.

"Yes; I have seen him twice."

"Isn't he a charming creature?"

"Indeed he does not strike me as being so, by any means," replied Kate.

"No, my dear!" cried Miss Knag, elevating her hands. "Why, goodness gracious mercy, where's your taste? Such a fine tall, full-whiskered dashing gentlemanly man, with such teeth and hair, and—hem—well now, you do astonish me."

"I dare say I am very foolish," replied Kate, laying aside her bonnet; "but as my opinion is of very little importance to him or any one else, I do not regret having formed it, and shall be slow to change it. I think."

"He is a very fine man, don't you think so?" asked one of the young ladies.

"Indeed he may be, for anything I could say to the contrary," replied Kate.

"And drives very beautiful horses, doesn't he?" inquired another.

"I dare say he may, but I never saw them," answered Kate.

"Never saw them!" interposed Miss Knag. "Oh, well, there it is at once you know; how can you possibly pronounce an opinion about a gentleman—hem—if you don't see him as he turns out altogether?"

There was so much of the world—even of the little world of the country girl—in this idea of the old milliner, that Kate, who was anxious for every reason to change the subject, made no further remark, and left Miss Knag in possession of the field.

After a short silence, during which most of the young people made
a closer inspection of Kate's appearance, and compared notes respecting it, one of them offered to help her off with her shawl, and the offer being accepted, inquired whether she did not find black very uncomfortable wear.

"I do indeed," replied Kate, with a bitter sigh.

"So dusty and hot," observed the same speaker, adjusting her dress for her.

Kate might have said, that mourning was the coldest wear which mortals can assume; that it not only chills the breasts of those it clothes, but extending its influence to summer friends, freezes up their sources of good-will and kindness, and withering all the buds of promise they once so liberally put forth, leaves nothing but bared and rotten hearts exposed. There are few who have a friend or relative constituting in life their sole dependence, who have not keenly felt this chilling influence of their sable garb. She had felt it acutely, and feeling it at the moment, could not restrain her tears.

"I am very sorry to have wounded you by my thoughtless speech," said her companion. "I did not think of it. You are in mourning for some near relation."

"For my father," answered Kate, weeping.

"For what relation, Miss Simmonds?" asked Miss Knag in an audible voice.

"Her father," replied the other softly.

"Her father, oh?" said Miss Knag, without the slightest depression of her voice. "Ah! A long illness, Miss Simmonds?"

"Hush—pray," replied the girl; "I don't know."

"Our misfortune was very sudden," said Kate, turning away, "or I might perhaps, at a time like this, be enabled to support it better."

There had existed not a little desire in the room, according to invariable custom when any new "young person" came, to know who Kate was, and what she was, and all about her; but although it might have been very naturally increased by her appearance and emotion, the knowledge that it pained her to be questioned, was sufficient to repress even this curiosity, and Miss Knag, finding it hopeless to attempt extracting any further particulars just then, reluctantly commanded silence, and bade the work proceed.

In silence, then, the tasks were plied until half-past one, when a baked leg of mutton, with potatoes to correspond, were served in the kitchen. The meal over, and the young ladies having enjoyed the additional relaxation of washing their hands, the work began again, and was again performed in silence, until the noise of carriages rattling through the streets, and of loud double knocks at doors, gave token that the day's work of the more fortunate members of society was proceeding in its turn.

One of these double knocks at Madame Mantalini's door announced the equipage of some great lady—or rather rich one, for there is occasionally a wide distinction between riches and greatness—who had come with her daughter to approve of some court-dresses which had been a long time preparing, and upon whom Kate was deputed to wait, accompanied by Miss Knag, and officered of course by Madame Mantalini.
Kate's part in the pageant was humble enough, her duties being limited to holding articles of costume until Miss Knag was ready to try them on, and now and then tying a string or fastening a hook-and-eye. She might, not unreasonably, have supposed herself beneath the reach of any arrogance, or bad humour; but it happened that the rich lady and the rich daughter were both out of temper that day, and the poor girl came in for her share of their revilings. She was awkward—her hands were cold—dirty—coarse—she could do nothing right; they wondered how Madame Mantalini could have such people about her: requested they might see some other young woman the next time they came, and so forth.

So common an occurrence would be hardly deserving of mention, but for its effect. Kate shed many bitter tears when these people were gone, and felt, for the first time, humbled by her occupation. She had, it is true, quailed at the prospect of drudgery and hard service; but she had felt no degradation in working for her bread, until she found herself exposed to insolence and the coarsest pride. Philosophy would have taught her that the degradation was on the side of those who had sunk so low as to display such passions habitually, and without cause; but she was too young for such consolation, and her honest feeling was hurt. May not the complaint, that common people are above their station, often take its rise in the fact of uncommon people being below theirs?

In such scenes and occupations the time wore on until nine o'clock, when Kate, jaded and dispirited with the occurrences of the day, hastened from the confinement of the work-room, to join her mother at the street corner, and walk home—the more sadly, from having to disguise her real feelings, and feign to participate in all the sanguine visions of her companion.

"Bless my soul, Kate," said Mrs. Nickleby; "I've been thinking all day, what a delightful thing it would be for Madame Mantalini to take you into partnership—such a likely thing too, you know. Why your poor dear papa's cousin's sister-in-law—a Miss Browndock—was taken into partnership by a lady that kept a school at Hammersmith, and made her fortune in no time at all; I forget, by the bye, whether that Miss Browndock was the same lady that got the ten thousand pounds prize in the lottery, but I think she was; indeed, now I come to think of it, I am sure she was. 'Mantalini and Nickleby,' how well it would sound!—and if Nicholas has any good fortune, you might have Doctor Nickleby, the head-master of Westminster School, living in the same street."

"Dear Nicholas!" cried Kate, taking from her reticule her brother's letter from Dotheboys Hall. "In all our misfortunes, how happy it makes me, mamma, to hear he is doing well, and to find him writing in such good spirits. It consoles me for all we may undergo, to think that he is comfortable and happy."

Poor Kate! she little thought how weak her consolation was, and how soon she would be undeceived.
STEAM NAVIGATION UP THE RHINE

BY THE

SPLENDID BOATS OF

THE COLOGNE COMPANY,

FROM

COLOGNE AS FAR AS STRASBURG, IN CONNEXION WITH THE NETHERLAND

STEAM BOAT COMPANY,

AND WITH THE BATAVIER STEAMER TO ROTTERDAM.

Travellers by the Boats of the COLOGNE COMPANY enjoy the privilege of disembarking at any place, and resuming their journey at their pleasure; and untransferable Tickets are given for the voyage, out and home, at a reduction of one-fourth from the fares, to be made use of at any time and by any of the Company's Boats, within the current year.

Passengers embark and disembark free of expense; and at the places where the Boats are changed, Luggage and Carriages are transshipped free of expense; and if the Baggage is properly directed and a list of it given to the Conductor of the Boats, he will be responsible for it.

The Batavier leaves London for Rotterdam every Sunday, and Boats start every morning from Rotterdam to Nymegen and Cologne.

The COLOGNE COMPANY have three splendid Steam Boats daily from Cologne up the Rhine. The first leaves Cologne at Seven o'clock in the morning, arrives at Coblenz the same afternoon, goes on to Mayence at half-past Six the following morning, and arrives there at Five o'clock in the evening. The second Boat starts at Nine o'clock in the morning, arrives at Coblenz the same afternoon, stops there one hour, continues the voyage during the night, and arrives at Mayence the next morning; stops there one hour, and arrives at Manheim in the afternoon, whence a Boat starts at Nine o'clock in the evening for Carlsruhe and Strasburg. The third Boat leaves Cologne as Five o'clock in the afternoon, and arrives at Coblenz in time for the passengers to proceed to Mayence with the Boats that start from Coblenz at half-past Six in the morning. In this Boat there is a separate Cabin for the Ladies during the night.

The Rhine the Boats leave Strasburg daily for Mannheim, Mayence, and Coblenz, to Cologne. The journey from Strasburg to Cologne is done in two days, and from Mannheim to Cologne in one day. Passengers leaving Cologne on Sunday, arrive at Rotterdam in time for the Batavier which leaves for London on Tuesday.

To prevent any mistake, passengers are requested to take notice that, at Cologne, the Offices for the Steamers of the COLOGNE COMPANY ARE, 26, THURMARKT STREET, AND AT THE LANDING-PLACE WHERE THE COMPANY'S BOATS ARRIVE AND DEPART.

The fares, which have, since the beginning of the year, been again considerably reduced, are now—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Out or home</th>
<th>Out and home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>Mayence</td>
<td>£0 14 6</td>
<td>£0 18 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Frankfurt</td>
<td>0 18 6</td>
<td>1 10 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Mannheim</td>
<td>0 18 6</td>
<td>1 7 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Carlsruhe</td>
<td>1 2 7</td>
<td>1 14 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Strasbourg</td>
<td>1 5 3</td>
<td>1 17 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further particulars and books containing the reduced fares and all necessary information may be obtained gratis from Mr. Wm. Max, 123, Fenchurch Street; at 61, Charing Cross; Chaplin's, Regent Circus; and 66, Haymarket; where Tickets for the whole distance from London to Strasburg, as well as for all intermediate places, may be obtained.

Inserted by order of the COLOGNE STEAM BOAT COMPANY.

26, THURMARKT STREET, COLOGNE.

30th June, 1838.
VALUABLE BOOKS

OFFERED, AT REDUCED PRICES, BY

JAMES BOHN, 12, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

LODGE'S PORTRAITS.

LODGE'S (ED.) PORTRAITS OF ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONS OF GREAT BRITAIN, with Biographical Memoirs, 4 vols. royal folio, LARGE PAPER, PROOF IMPRESSIONS ON INDIA PAPER of the 240 fine Engravings

Published at Reduced to
£ s. d. £ s. d.
182 14 0 — 45 0 0

Another Copy, WITH 20 ADDITIONAL ENGRAVERS' PROOFS INSERTED, royal folio, cloth bds.

203 14 0 — 55 0 0

These copies were reserved by Mr. Harding. Copies may be had in morocco, extra, gilt edges, by LEWIS, for £14. 14s. additional.

As a Collection of Portraits of the Illustrious Persons of our Country, the work of Lodge holds the foremost rank. The outlay of the spirited proprietors exceeded £40,000, and as the copper-plates were all destroyed, the copies cannot be multiplied. The re-impression in the small size was from steel plates, which, however they may please the multitude, cannot be said to merit a place in the library of the Amateur.

DUGDALE'S MONASTICON.


Published at Reduced to
£ s. d. £ s. d.
141 15 0 — 36 15 0

Another Copy, LARGE PAPER, 8 vols. royal folio, WITH PROOF IMPRESSIONS OF THE PLATES

228 10 0 — 55 0 0

James Bohn, being in possession of the entire stock of the above important work, reserved by Mr. Harding, the original publisher, will be glad to treat for any copies, which, owing to the death of subscribers, or other causes, still remain in an unfinished state: or should the possessors of such copies prefer completing them, he will have great pleasure in doing so at a moderate rate, according to the number of parts required.

Copies of the small paper may be had in morocco, gilt edges, by Lewis, for £20. additional, or on large paper, superbly bound by the same artist, for £29. 8s. additional.

DUGDALE'S ST. PAUL'S.

DUGDALE'S HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN LONDON, extracted out of original Records, Leiger Books, and other MSS. by Sir William Dugdale, Knt., with continuation to the present time, by Sir H. Ellis, complete in 6 parts, folio, many plates.

Published at Reduced to
£ s. d. £ s. d.
15 15 0 — 3 3 0

Another Copy, folio, plates, morocco, gilt edges

18 18 0 — 5 5 0

Another Copy, IMP. FOLIO, LARGE PAPER, PROOF IMPRESSIONS OF THE PLATES, blue morocco, SUPER EXTRA, GILT EDGES, by LEWIS

35 0 0 — 12 12 0

A few odd Parts to complete Sets.

JAMES BOHN, 12, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

BRADBURY AND EVANS.