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Little Dorrit: Part 18

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Inventors and Sole Manufacturers of the
SYDENHAM TROUSERS,
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The advantage of the Sydenham Trousers over all others is the Systematical self-adjusting principle on which they are constructed.

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STOCK OF OVERCOATS
FOR THE PRESENT SEASON is worthy of inspection, combining the three requisites—quality, style, and moderate price.

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N.B.—A large assortment of every other description of Parasols in Moires, China Crapes, Irish Lace, and the best Lyons Silks.
At Mr. John Shivery's sea-table.
In the old room.
CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PUPIL OF THE MARSHALSEA.

The day was sunny, and the Marshalsea, with the hot noon striking upon it, was unwontedly quiet. Arthur Clennam dropped into a solitary arm-chair, itself as faded as any debtor in the jail, and yielded himself to his thoughts.

In the unnatural peace of having gone through the dreaded arrest, and got there,—the first change of feeling which the prison most commonly induced, and from which dangerous resting-place so many men had slipped down to the depths of degradation and disgrace, by so many ways,—he could think of some passages in his life, almost as if he were removed from them into another state of existence. Taking into account where he was, the interest that had first brought him there when he had been free to keep away, and the gentle presence that was equally inseparable from the walls and bars about him and from the impalpable remembrances of his later life which no walls nor bars could imprison, it was not remarkable that everything his memory turned upon should bring him round again to Little Dorrit. Yet it was remarkable to him; not because of the fact itself; but because of the reminder it brought with it, how much the dear little creature had influenced his better resolutions.

None of us clearly know to whom or to what we are indebted in this wise, until some marked stop in the whirling wheel of life brings the right perception with it. It comes with sickness, it comes with sorrow, it comes with the loss of the dearly loved, it is one of the most frequent uses of adversity. It came to Clennam in his adversity, strongly and tenderly. "When I first gathered myself together," he thought, "and set something like purpose before my jaded eyes, whom had I before me, toiling on, for a good object's sake, without encouragement, without notice, against ignoble obstacles that would have turned an army of received heroes and heroines? One weak girl! When I tried to conquer my misplaced love, and to be generous to the man who was more fortunate than I, though he should never know it or repay me with a gracious word, in whom had I watched patience, self-denial, self-subdual, charitable construction, the noblest generosity of the affections? In the same poor girl! If I, a man, with a man's advantages and means and energies, had slighted the whisper in my heart, that if my father had erred, it was my first duty to conceal the fault and to repair it, what youthful figure with tender feet going almost bare on the damp ground, with spare hands ever working, with its slight shape but half protected from the sharp weather, would have stood before me to put me to shame? Little Dorrit's." So always, as he sat alone in the faded chair, thinking. Always, Little Dorrit. Until
it seemed to him as if he met the reward of having wandered away from her, and suffered anything to pass between him and his remembrance of her virtues.

His door was opened, and the head of the elder Chivery was put in a very little way, without being turned towards him.

"I am off the Lock, Mr. Clennam, and going out. Can I do anything for you?"

"Many thanks. Nothing."

"You'll excuse me opening the door," said Mr. Chivery; "but I couldn't make you hear."

"Did you knock?"

"Half a dozen times."

Rousing himself, Clennam observed that the prison had awakened from its noontide doze, that the inmates were loitering about the shady yard, and that it was late in the afternoon. He had been thinking for hours.

"Your things is come," said Mr. Chivery, "and my son is going to carry 'em up. I should have sent 'em up, but for his wishing to carry 'em himself. Indeed he would have 'em himself, and so I couldn't send 'em up. Mr. Clennam, could I say a word to you?"

"Pray come in," said Arthur; for, Mr. Chivery's head was still put in at the door a very little way, and Mr. Chivery had but one ear upon him, instead of both eyes. This was native delicacy in Mr. Chivery—true politeness; though his exterior had very much of a turnkey about it, and not the least of a gentleman.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Chivery, without advancing; "it's no odds me coming in. Mr. Clennam, don't you take no notice of my son (if you'll be so good), in case you find him cut up anyways difficult. My son has a art, and my son's art is in the right place. Me and his mother knows where to find it, and we find it sittiwated correct."

With this mysterious speech, Mr. Chivery took his ear away and shut the door. He might have been gone ten minutes, when his son succeeded him.

"Here's your portmanteau," he said to Arthur, putting it carefully down.

"It's very kind of you. I am ashamed that you should have the trouble."

He was gone, before it came to that; but soon returned, saying exactly as before, "here's your black box;" which he also put down with care.

"I am very sensible of this attention. I hope we may shake hands now, Mr. John."

Young John, however, drew back, turning his right wrist in a socket made of his left thumb and middle-finger, and said, as he had said at first, "I don't know as I can. No; I find I can't!" He then stood regarding the prisoner sternly, though with a swelling humour in his eyes that looked like pity.

"Why are you angry with me," said Clennam, "and yet so ready to do me these kind services? There must be some mistake between us. If I have done anything to occasion it, I am sorry."

"No mistake, sir," returned John, turning the wrist backwards and
forwards in the socket, for which it was rather tight. "No mistake, sir, in the feelings with which my eyes behold you at the present moment! If I was at all fairly equal to your weight, Mr. Clennam—which I am not; and if you weren't under a cloud—which you are; and if it wasn't against all rules of the Marshalsea—which it is; those feelings are such, that they would stimulate me, more to having it out with you in a Round on the present spot, than to anything else I could name."

Arthur looked at him for a moment in some wonder, and some little anger. "Well, well!" he said. "A mistake, a mistake!" Turning away, he sat down, with a heavy sigh, in the faded chair again.

Young John followed him with his eyes, and, after a short pause, cried out, "I beg your pardon!"

"Freely granted," said Clennam, waving his hand, without raising his sunken head. "Say no more. I am not worth it."

"This furniture, sir," said Young John in a voice of mild and soft explanation, "belongs to me. I am in the habit of letting it out to parties without furniture, that have the room. It isn't much, but it's at your service. Free, I mean. I could not think of letting you have it on any other terms. You're welcome to it for nothing."

Arthur raised his head again, to thank him, and to say he could not accept the favor. John was still turning his wrist, and still contending with himself in his former divided manner.

"What is the matter between us?" said Arthur.

"I decline to name it, sir," returned Young John, suddenly turning loud and sharp. "Nothing's the matter."

Arthur looked at him again, in vain, for any explanation of his behaviour. After a while, Arthur turned away his head again. Young John said, presently afterwards, with the utmost mildness:

"The little round table, sir, that's nigh your elbow, was—you know whose—I needn't mention him—he died, a great gentleman. I bought it of an individual that he gave it to, and that lived here after him. But the individual wasn't any ways equal to him. Most individuals would find it hard to come up to his level."

Arthur drew the little table nearer, rested his arm upon it, and kept it there.

"Perhaps you may not be aware, sir," said Young John, "that I intruded upon him when he was over here in London. On the whole he was of opinion that it was an intrusion, though he was so good as to ask me to sit down and to inquire after father and all other old friends. Leastways humblest acquaintances. He looked, to me, a good deal changed, and I said so when I came back. I asked him if Miss Amy was well——"

"And she was?"

"I should have thought you would have known without putting the question to such as me," returned Young John, after appearing to take a large invisible pill. "Since you do put the question, I am sorry I can't answer it. But the truth is, he looked upon the enquiry as a liberty, and said, 'What was that to me?' It was then I became quite aware I was intruding; of which I had been fearful before. However, he spoke very handsome afterwards; very handsome."
They were both silent for several minutes: except that Young John remarked, at about the middle of the pause, "He both spoke and acted very handsome."

It was again Young John who broke the silence, by enquiring:

"If it's not a liberty, how long may it be your intentions, sir, to go without eating and drinking?"

"I have not felt the want of anything yet," returned Clennam.

"I have no appetite just now."

"The more reason why you should take some support, sir," urged Young John. "If you find yourself going on sitting here for hours and hours partaking of no refreshment because you have no appetite, why then you should and must partake of refreshment without an appetite. I'm going to have tea in my own apartment. If it's not a liberty, please to come and take a cup. Or I can bring a tray here, in two minutes."

Feeling that Young John would impose that trouble on himself if he refused, and also feeling anxious to show that he bore in mind both the elder Mr. Chivery's entreaty, and the younger Mr. Chivery's apology, Arthur rose and expressed his willingness to take a cup of tea in Mr. John's apartment. Young John locked his door for him as they went out, slid the key into his pocket with great dexterity, and led the way to his own residence.

It was at the top of the house nearest to the gateway. It was the room to which Clennam had hurried, on the day when the enriched family had left the prison for ever, and where he had lifted her insensible from the floor. He foresaw where they were going, as soon as their feet touched the staircase. The room was so far changed that it was papered now, and had been repainted, and was far more comfortably furnished; but, he could recollect it just as he had seen it in that single glance, when he raised her from the ground and carried her down to the carriage.

Young John looked hard at him, biting his fingers.

"I see you recollect the room, Mr. Clennam?"

"I recollect it well, Heaven bless her!"

Oblivious of the tea, Young John continued to bite his fingers and to look at his visitor, as long as his visitor continued to glance about the room. Finally, he made a start at the teapot, gustily rattled a quantity of tea into it from a cannister, and set off for the common kitchen to fill it with hot water.

The room was so eloquent to Clennam, in the changed circumstances of his return to the miserable Marshalsea; it spoke to him so mournfully of her, and of his loss of her; that it would have gone hard with him to resist it, even though he had not been alone. Alone, he did not try. He laid his hand on the insensible wall, as tenderly as if it had been herself that he touched, and pronounced her name in a low voice. He stood at the window, looking over the prison-parapet with its grim spiked border, and breathed a benediction through the summer haze towards the distant land where she was rich and prosperous.

Young John was some time absent, and, when he came back, showed that he had been outside, by bringing with him fresh butter.
in a cabbage leaf, some thin slices of boiled ham in another cabbage leaf, and a little basket of water-cresses and salad herbs. When these were arranged upon the table to his satisfaction, they sat down to tea.

Clennam tried to do honor to the meal, but unavailingly. The ham sickened him, the bread seemed to turn to sand in his mouth. He could force nothing upon himself but a cup of tea.

"Try a little something green," said Young John, handing him the basket.

He took a sprig or so of water-cress, and tried again; but, the bread turned to a heavier sand than before, and the ham (though it was good enough of itself) seemed to blow a faint simoom of ham through the whole Marshalsea.

"Try a little more something green, sir," said Young John; and again handed the basket.

It was so like handing green meat into the cage of a dull imprisoned bird, and John had so evidently bought the little basket as a handfull of fresh relief from the stale hot paving-stones and bricks of the jail, that Clennam said, with a smile, "It was very kind of you to think of putting this between the wires; but, I cannot even get this down to-day."

As if the difficulty were contagious, Young John soon pushed away his own plate, and fell to folding the cabbage-leaf that had contained the ham. When he had folded it into a number of layers, one over another, so that it was small in the palm of his hand, he began to flatten it between both his hands, and to eye Clennam attentively.

"I wonder," he at length said, compressing his green packet with some force, "that if it's not worth your while to take care of yourself for your own sake, it's not worth doing for some one else's."

"Truly," returned Arthur, with a sigh and a smile, "I don't know for whose."

"Mr. Clennam," said John, warmly, "I'm surprised that a gentleman who is capable of the straightforwardness that you are capable of, should be capable of the mean action of making me such an answer. Mr. Clennam, I am surprised that a gentleman who is capable of having a heart of his own, should be capable of the heartlessness of treating mine in that way. I am astonished at it, sir. Really and truly I am astonished!"

Having got upon his feet to emphasise his concluding words, Young John sat down again, and fell to rolling his green packet on his right leg; never taking his eyes off Clennam, but surveying him with a fixed look of indignant reproach.

"I had got over it, sir," said John. "I had conquered it, knowing that it must be conquered, and had come to the resolution to think no more about it. I shouldn't have given my mind to it again, I hope, if to this prison you had not been brought, and in an hour unfortunate for me, this day!" (In his agitation Young John adopted his mother's powerful construction of sentences.) "When you first came upon me, sir, in the Lodge, this day, more as if a Upas tree had been made a capture of than a private defendant, such mingled streams of feelings broke loose again within me that everything was for the first few minutes swept away before them, and I was going round and round in
a vortex. I got out of it. I struggled, and got out of it. If it was
the last word I had to speak, against that vortex with my utmost
powers I strove, and out of it I came. I argued that if I had been
rude, apologies was due, and those apologies without a question of
demeaning, I did make. And now, when I've been so wishful to
show that one thought is next to being a holy one with me and goes
before all others—now, after all, you dodge me when I ever so gently
hint at it, and throw me back upon myself. For, do not, sir," said
Young John, "do not be so base as to deny that dodge you do, and
thrown me back upon myself you have!"

All amazement, Arthur gazed at him, like one lost, only saying
"What is it? What do you mean, John?" But, John, being in that
state of mind in which nothing would seem to be more impossible to a
certain class of people than the giving of an answer, went ahead
blindly.

"I hadn't," John declared, "no, I hadn't and I never had, the auda-
ciousness to think. I am sure, that all was anything but lost. I hadn't,
no, why should I say I hadn't if I ever had, any hope that it was
possible to be so blest, not after the words that passed, not even if
barriers insurmountable had not been raised! But, is that a reason
why I am to have no memory, why I am to have no thoughts, why I
am to have no sacred spots, nor anything?"

"What can you mean?" cried Arthur.

"It's all very well to trample on it, sir," John went on, scouring a
very prairie of wild words, "if a person can make up his mind to be
guilty of the action. It's all very well to trample on it, but it's there.
It may be that it couldn't be trampled upon if it wasn't there. But,
that doesn't make it gentlemanly, that doesn't make it honorable, that
doesn't justify throwing a person back upon himself after he has
struggled and strived out of himself, like a butterfly. The world may
sneer at a turnkey, but he's a man—when he isn't a woman, which
among female criminals he's expected to be."

Ridiculous as the incoherence of his talk was, there was yet a truth-
fullness in Young John's simple, sentimental character, and a sense of
being wounded in some very tender respect, expressed in his burning face
and in the agitation of his voice and manner, which Arthur must
have been cruel to disregard. He turned his thoughts back to the
starting-point of this unknown injury; and in the meantime Young
John, having rolled his green packet pretty round, cut it carefully
into three pieces, and laid it on a plate as if it were some particular
delicacy.

"It seems to me just possible," said Arthur, when he had retraced
the conversation to the water-cresses and back again, "that you have
made some reference to Miss Dorrit?"

"It is just possible, sir," returned John Chivervy.

"I don't understand it. I hope I may not be so unlucky as to
make you think I mean to offend you again, for I never have meant to
offend you yet, when I say I don't understand it."

"Sir," said Young John, "will you have the perfidy to deny that
you know and long have known that I felt towards Miss Dorrit, call
it not the presumption of love, but adoration and sacrifice?"
"Indeed, John, I will not have any perfidious if I know it; why you should suspect me of it, I am at a loss to think. Did you ever hear from Mrs. Chivery, your mother, that I went to see her once?"

"No, sir," returned John, shortly. "Never heard of such a thing."

"But, I did. Can you imagine why?"

"No, sir," returned John, shortly. "I can't imagine why."

"I will tell you. I was solicitous to promote Miss Dorrit's happiness; and if I could have supposed that Miss Dorrit returned your affection——"

Poor John Chivery turned crimson to the tips of his ears. "Miss Dorrit never did, sir. I wish to be honorable and true, so far as in my humble way I can, and I would scorn to pretend for a moment that she ever did, or that she ever led me to believe she did; no, nor even that it was ever to be expected in any cool reason that she would or could. She was far above me in all respects at all times. As likewise," added John, "similarly was her gen-teel family."

His chivalrous feeling towards all that belonged to her, made him so very respectable, in spite of his small stature and his rather weak legs, and his very weak hair, and his poetical temperament, that a Goliath might have sat in his place demanding less consideration at Arthur's hands.

"You speak, John," he said with cordial admiration, "like a Man."

"Well, sir," returned John, brushing his hand across his eyes, "then I wish you'd do the same."

He was quick with this unexpected retort, and it again made Arthur regard him with a wondering expression of face.

"Leastways," said John, stretching his hand across the tea-tray, "if too strong a remark, withdrawn! But, why not, why not? When I say to you, Mr. Clennam, take care of yourself for some one else's sake, why not be open though a turnkey? Why did I get you the room which I knew you'd like best? Why did I carry up your things? Not that I found 'em heavy; I don't mention 'em on that accounts; far from it. Why have I cultivated you in the manner I have done, since the morning? On the ground of your own merits? No. They're very great, I've no doubt at all; but not on the ground of them. Another's merits have had their weight, and have had far more weight with Me. Then why not speak free!"

"Unaffectedly, John," said Clennam, "you are so good a fellow, and I have so true a respect for your character, that if I have appeared to be less sensible than I really am, of the fact that the kind services you have rendered me to-day are attributable to my having been trusted by Miss Dorrit as her friend,—I confess it to be a fault, and ask your forgiveness."

Oh! why not," John repeated with returning scorn, "why not speak free!"

"I declare to you," returned Arthur, "that I do not understand you. Look at me. Consider the trouble I have been in. Is it likely that I would wilfully add to my other self-reproaches, that of being ungrateful or treachery to you? I do not understand you."

John's incredulous face slowly softened into a face of doubt. He
rose, backed into the garret-window of the room, beckoned Arthur to come there, and stood looking at him thoughtfully.

"Mr. Clennam, do you mean to say that you don't know?"

"What, John?"

"Lord," said Young John, appealing with a gasp to the spikes on the wall. "He says, What!"

Clennam looked at the spikes, and looked at John; and looked at the spikes, and looked at John.

"He says What! And what is more," exclaimed Young John, surveying him in a doleful maze, "he appears to mean it! Do you see this window, sir?"

"Of course, I see this window."

"See this room?"

"Why, of course I see this room."

"That wall opposite, and that yard down below? They have all been witnesses of it, from day to day, from night to night, from week to week, from month to month. For, how often have I seen Miss Dorrit here, when she has not seen me!"

"Witnesses of what?" said Clennam.

"Of Miss Dorrit's love."

"For whom?"

"You!" said John. And touched him with the back of his hand upon the breast, and backed to his chair, and sat down in it with a pale face, holding the arms, and shaking his head at him.

If he had dealt Clennam a heavy blow, instead of laying that light touch upon him, its effect could not have been to shake him more. He stood amazed; his eyes looking at John; his lips parted, and seeming now and then to form the word "Me!" without uttering it; his hands dropped at his sides: his whole appearance that of a man who has been awakened from sleep, and stupified by intelligence beyond his full comprehension.

"Me!" he at length, said aloud.

"Ah!" groaned Young John. "You!"

He did what he could to muster a smile, and returned, "Your fancy. You are completely mistaken."

"I mistaken, sir!" said Young John. "I completely mistaken on that subject! No, Mr. Clennam, don't tell me so. On any other, if you like, for I don't set up to be a penetrating character, and am well aware of my own deficiencies. But, I mistaken on a point that has caused me more smart in my breast than a flight of savages' arrows could have done! I mistaken on a point that almost sent me into my grave, as I sometimes wished it would, if the grave could only have been made compatible with the tobacco-business and father and mother's feelings! I mistaken on a point that, even at the present moment, makes me take out my pocket handkerchief like a great girl, as people say: though I am sure I don't know why a great girl should be a term of reproach, for every rightly constituted male mind loves 'em great and small! Don't tell me so, don't tell me so!"

Still highly respectable at bottom, though absurd enough upon the surface, Young John took out his pocket handkerchief, with a genuine absence both of display and concealment, which is only to be seen in a
man with a great deal of good in him, when he takes out his pocket handkerchief for the purpose of wiping his eyes. Having dried them, and indulged in the harmless luxury of a sob and a sniff, he put it up again.

The touch was still in its influence so like a blow, that Arthur could not get many words together to close the subject with. He assured John Chivery when he had returned his handkerchief to his pocket, that he did all honor to his disinterestedness and to the fidelity of his remembrance of Miss Dorrit. As to the impression on his mind, of which he had just relieved it—— here John interposed, and said, "No impression! Certainty!"—as to that they might perhaps speak of it at another time, but would say no more now. Feeling low-spirited and weary, he would go back to his room, with John’s leave, and come out no more that night. John assented, and he crept back in the shadow of the wall to his own lodging.

The feeling of the blow was still so strong upon him, that when the dirty old woman was gone whom he found sitting on the stairs outside his door, waiting to make his bed, and who gave him to understand while doing it, that she had received her instructions from Mr. Chivery, “not the old ‘un but the young ‘un,” he sat down in the faded armchair, pressing his head between his hands, as if he had been stunned. Little Dorrit love him! More bewildering to him than his misery, far.

Consider the improbability. He had been accustomed to call her his child, and his dear child, and to invite her confidence by dwelling upon the difference in their respective ages, and to speak of himself as one who was turning old. Yet she might not have thought him old. Something reminded him that he had not thought himself so, until the roses had floated away upon the river.

He had her two letters among other papers in his box, and he took them out and read them. There seemed to be a sound in them like the sound of her sweet voice. It fell upon his ear with many tones of tenderness, that were not insusceptible of the new meaning. Now, it was that the quiet desolation of her answer, “No, No, No,” made to him that night in that very room—that night, when he had been shown the dawn of her altered fortune, and when other words had passed between them which he had been destined to remember, in humiliation and a prisoner—rushed into his mind.

Consider the improbability.

But, it had a preponderating tendency, when considered, to become fainter. There was another and a curious enquiry of his own heart’s that concurrently became stronger. In the reluctance he had felt to believe that she loved any one; in his desire to set that question at rest; in a half-formed consciousness he had had, that there would be a kind of nobleness in his helping her love for any one; was there no suppressed something on his own side that he had hushed as it arose? Had he ever whispered to himself that he must not think of such a thing as her loving him, that he must not take advantage of her gratitude, that he must keep his experience in remembrance as a warning and reproof; that he must regard such youthful hopes as having passed away, as his friend’s dead daughter had passed away; that he must be steady in
saying to himself that the time had gone by him, and he was too saddened and old.

He had kissed her when he raised her from the ground, on the day when she had been so consistently and expressively forgotten. Quite as he might have kissed her, if she had been conscious? No difference?

The darkness found him occupied with these thoughts. The darkness also found Mr. and Mrs. Plornish knocking at his door. They brought with them a basket, filled with choice selections from that stock in trade which met with such a quick sale and produced such a slow return. Mrs. Plornish was affected to tears. Mr. Plornish amiably growled, in his philosophical but not lucid manner, that there was ups, you see, and there was downs. It was in vain to ask why ups, why downs; there they was, you know. He had heerd it given for a truth that accordin' as the world went round, which round it did revolve undoubted, even the best of gentlemen must take his turn of standing with his ed upside down and all his air a flying the wrong way into what you might call Space. Wery well then. What Mr. Plornish said was, wery well then. That gentleman's ed would come up'ards when his turn come, that gentleman's air would be a pleasure to look upon being all smooth again, and wery well then!

It has been already stated that Mrs. Plornish, not being philosophical, wept. It further happened that Mrs. Plornish, not being philosophical, was intelligible. It may have arisen out of her softened state of mind, out of her sex's wit, out of a woman's quick association of ideas, or out of a woman's no association of ideas, but it further happened somehow that Mrs. Plornish's intelligibility displayed itself upon the very subject of Arthur's meditations.

"The way father has been talking about you, Mr. Clennam," said Mrs. Plornish, "you hardly would believe. It's made him quite poorly. As to his voice, this misfortune has took it away. You know what a sweet singer father is; but he couldn't get a note out for the children at tea, if you'll credit what I tell you."

While speaking, Mrs. Plornish shook her head, and wiped her eyes, and looked retrospectively about the room.

"As to Mr. Baptist," pursued Mrs. Plornish, "whatever he'll do when he comes to know of it, I can't conceive nor yet imagine. He'd have been here before now, you may be sure, but that he's away on confidential business of your own. The persevering manner in which he follows up that business, and gives himself no rest from it—it really do," said Mrs. Plornish, winding up in the Italian manner, "as I say to him, Mooshatonisha padrona."

Though not conceited, Mrs. Plornish felt that she had turned this Tuscan sentence with peculiar elegance. Mr. Plornish could not conceal his exultation in her accomplishments as a linguist.

"But what I say is, Mr. Clennam," the good woman went on, "there's always something to be thankful for, as I am sure you will yourself admit. Speaking in this room, it's not hard to think what the present something is. It's a thing to be thankful for, indeed, that Miss Dorrit is not here to know it."
Arthur thought she looked at him with particular expression.

"It's a thing," reiterated Mrs. Plornish, "to be thankful for, indeed, that Miss Dorrit is far away. It's to be hoped she is not likely to hear of it. If she had been here to see it, sir, it's not to be doubted that the sight of you," Mrs. Plornish repeated those words —" not to be doubted, that the sight of you—in misfortune and trouble, would have been almost too much for her affectionate heart. There's nothing I can think of, that would have touched Miss Dorrit so bad as that."

Of a certainty, Mrs. Plornish did look at him now, with a sort of quivering defiance in her friendly emotion.

"Yes!" said she. "And it shows what notice father takes, though at his time of life, that he says to me, this afternoon, which Happy Cottage knows I neither make it up nor anyways enlarge, 'Mary, it's much to be rejoiced in that Miss Dorrit is not on the spot to behold it." Those were father's words. Father's own words was, 'Much to be rejoiced in, Mary, that Miss Dorrit is not on the spot to behold it.' I says to father then, I says to him, 'Father, you are right!' That," Mrs. Plornish concluded with the air of a very precise legal witness, "is what passed betwixt father and me. And I tell you nothing but what did pass betwixt me and father."

Mr. Plornish, as being of a more laconic temperament, embraced this opportunity of interposing with the suggestion that she should now leave Mr. Clennam to himself. "For, you see," said Mr. Plornish, gravely, "I know what it is, old gal;" repeating that valuable remark several times, as if it appeared to him to include some great moral secret. Finally, the worthy couple went away arm in arm.

Little Dorrit, Little Dorrit. Again, for hours. Always Little Dorrit!

Happily, if it ever had been so, it was over, and better over. Granted, that she had loved him, and he had known it and had suffered himself to love her, what a road to have led her away upon—the road that would have brought her back to this miserable place! He ought to be much comforted by the reflection that she was quit of it for ever; that she was, or would soon be, married (vague rumours of her father's projects in that direction had reached Bleeding Heart Yard, with the news of her sister's marriage); and that the Marshalsea gate had shut for ever on all those perplexed possibilities, of a time that was gone.

Dear Little Dorrit!

Looking back upon his own poor story, she was its vanishing-point. Everything in its perspective led to her innocent figure. He had travelled thousands of miles towards it; previous unquiet hopes and doubts had worked themselves out before it; it was the centre of the interest of his life; it was the termination of everything that was good and pleasant in it; beyond there was nothing but mere waste, and darkened sky.

As ill at ease as on the first night of his lying down to sleep within those dreary walls, he wore the night out with such thoughts. What
time, Young John lay wrapt in peaceful slumber, after composing and arranging the following monumental inscription on his pillow.

**STRANGER!**

**RESPECT THE TOMB OF**

**JOHN CHIVERTY, JUNIOR,**

**WHO DIED AT AN ADVANCED AGE**

**NOT NECESSARY TO MENTION.**

**HE ENCOUNTERED HIS RIVAL, IN A DISTRESSED STATE,**

**AND FELT INCLINED**

**TO HAVE A ROUND WITH HIM;**

**BUT, FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOVED ONE,**

**CONQUERED THOSE FEELINGS OF BITTERNESS,**

**AND BECAME**

**MAGNANIMOUS.**

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**CHAPTER XXVIII.**

**AN APPEARANCE IN THE MARSHALSEA.**

The opinion of the community outside the prison gates bore hard on Clennam as time went on, and he made no friends among the community within. Too depressed to associate with the herd in the yard, who got together to forget their cares; too retiring and too unhappy to join in the poor socialities of the tavern; he kept his own room, and was held in distrust. Some said he was proud; some objected that he was sullen and reserved; some were contemptuous of him, for that he was a poor-spirited dog who pined under his debts. The whole population were shy of him on these various counts of indictment; and he soon became so confirmed in his seclusion, that his only time for walking up and down was when the evening Club were assembled at their songs and toasts and sentiments, and when the yard was nearly left to the women and children.

Imprisonment began to tell upon him. He knew that he idled and moped. After what he had known of the influences of imprisonment within the four small walls of the very room he occupied, this consciousness made him afraid of himself. Shrinking from the observation of other men, and shrinking from his own, he began to change very sensibly. Anybody might see that the shadow of the wall was dark upon him.

One day when he might have been some ten or twelve weeks in jail, and when he had been trying to read, and had not been able to release even the imaginary people of the book from the Marshalsea, a footstep stopped at his door, and a hand tapped at it. He arose and opened it, and an agreeable voice accosted him with “How do you do, Mr. Clennam? I hope I am not unwelcome in calling to see you.”
It was the sprightly young Barnacle, Ferdinand. He looked very good-natured and prepossessing, though overpoweringly gay and free, in contrast with the squalid prison.

"You are surprised to see me, Mr. Clennam," he said, taking the seat which Clennam offered him.

"I must confess to being much surprised."

"Not disagreeably, I hope?"

"By no means."

"Thank you. Frankly," said the engaging young Barnacle, "I have been excessively sorry to hear that you were under the necessity of a temporary retirement here, and I hope (of course as between two private gentlemen) that our place has had nothing to do with it?"

"Your office?"

"Our Circumlocution place."

"I cannot charge any part of my reverses upon that remarkable establishment."

"Upon my life," said the vivacious young Barnacle, "I am heartily glad to know it. It is quite a relief to me to hear you say it. I should have so exceedingly regretted our place having had anything to do with your difficulties."

Clennam again assured him that he absolved it of the responsibility.

"That's right," said Ferdinand. "I am very happy to hear it. I was rather afraid in my own mind that we might have helped to floor you, because there is no doubt that it is our misfortune to do that kind of thing now and then. We don't want to do it; but if men will be gravelled, why—we can't help it."

"Without giving an unqualified assent to what you say," returned Arthur, gloomily, "I am much obliged to you for your interest in me."

"No, but really! Our place is," said the easy Young Barnacle, "the most inoffensive place possible. You'll say we are a Humbug. I won't say we are not; but all that sort of thing is intended to be, and must be. Don't you see?"

"I do not," said Clennam.

"You don't regard it from the right point of view. It is the point of view that is the essential thing. Regard our place from the point of view that we only ask you to leave us alone, and we are as capital a Department as you'll find anywhere."

"Is your place there to be left alone?" asked Clennam.

"You exactly hit it," returned Ferdinand. "It is there with the express intention that everything shall be left alone. That is what it means. That is what it's for. No doubt there's a certain form to be kept up that it's for something else, but it's only a form. Why, good Heaven, we are nothing but forms! Think what a lot of our forms you have gone through. And you have never got any nearer to an end?"

"Never!" said Clennam.

"Look at it from the right point of view, and there you have us—official and effectual. It's like a limited game of cricket. A field of outsiders are always going in to bowl at the Public Service, and we block the balls."

Clennam asked what became of the bowlers? The airy Young
Barnacle replied that they grew tired, got dead beat, got lamed, got their backs broken, died off, gave it up, went in for other games.

"And this occasions me to congratulate myself again," he pursued, "on the circumstance that our place has had nothing to do with your temporary retirement. It very easily might have had a hand in it; because it is undeniable that we are sometimes a most unlucky place, in our effects upon people who will not leave us alone. Mr. Clennam, I am quite unreserved with you. As between yourself and myself, I know I may be. I was so, when I first saw you making the mistake of not leaving us alone; because I perceived that you were inexperienced and sanguine, and had—I hope you'll not object to my saying—some simplicity?"

"Not at all."

"Some simplicity. Therefore I felt what a pity it was, and I went out of my way to hint to you (which really was not official, but I never am official when I can help it), something to the effect that if I were you, I wouldn't bother myself. However, you did bother yourself, and you have since bothered yourself. Now, don't do it any more."

"I am not likely to have the opportunity," said Clennam. "Oh yes, you are! You'll leave here. Everybody leaves here. There are no ends of ways of leaving here. Now, don't come back to us. That entreaty is the second object of my call. Pray, don't come back to us. Upon my honor," said Ferdinand in a very friendly and confiding way, "I shall be greatly vexed if you don't take warning by the past and keep away from us."

"And the invention?" said Clennam.

"My good fellow," returned Ferdinand, "if you'll excuse the freedom of that form of address, nobody wants to know of the invention, and nobody cares twopence-halfpenny about it."

"Nobody in the Office, that is to say?"

"Nor out of it. Everybody is ready to dislike and ridicule any invention. You have no idea how many people want to be left alone. You have no idea how the Genius of the country (overlook the Parliamentary nature of the phrase, and don't be bored by it) tends to being left alone. Believe me, Mr. Clennam," said the sprightly young Barnacle, in his pleasantest manner, "our place is not a wicked Giant to be charged at full tilt; but, only a windmill showing you, as it grinds immense quantities of chaff, which way the country wind blows."

"If I could believe that," said Clennam, "it would be a dismal prospect for all of us."

"Oh! Don't say so!" returned Ferdinand. "It's all right. We must have humbug, we all like humbug, we couldn't get on without humbug. A little humbug, and a groove, and everything goes on admirably, if you leave it alone."

With this hopeful confession of his faith as the head of the rising Barnacles who were born of woman, to be followed under a variety of watchwords which they utterly repudiated and disbelieved, Ferdinand rose. Nothing could be more agreeable than his frank and courteous bearing, or adapted with a more gentlemanly instinct to the circumstances of his visit.

"Is it fair to ask," he said, as Clennam gave him his hand with a
real feeling of thankfulness for his candour and good humour, "whether it is true that our late lamented Merdle is the cause of this passing inconvenience?"

"I am one of the many he has ruined. Yes."

"He must have been an exceedingly clever fellow," said Ferdinand Barnacle.

Arthur, not being in a mood to extol the memory of the deceased, was silent.

"A consummate rascal of course," said Ferdinand, "but remarkably clever! One cannot help admiring the fellow. Must have been such a master of humbug. Knew people so well—got over them so completely—did so much with them!"

In his easy way, he was really moved to genuine admiration.

"I hope," said Arthur, "that he and his dupes may be a warning to people not to have so much done with them again."

"My dear Mr. Clennam," returned Ferdinand, laughing, "have you really such a verdant hope? The next man who has as large a capacity and as genuine a taste for swindling, will succeed as well. Pardon me, but I think you really have no idea how the human bees will swarm to the beating of any old tin kettle; in that fact lies the complete manual of governing them. When they can be got to believe that the kettle is made of the precious metals, in that fact lies the whole power of men like our late lamented. No doubt there are here and there," said Ferdinand politely, "exceptional cases, where people have been taken in for what appeared to them to be much better reasons; and I need not go far to find such a case; but, they don't invalidate the rule. Good day! I hope that when I have the pleasure of seeing you next, this passing cloud will have given place to sunshine. Don't come a step beyond the door. I know the way out perfectly. Good day!"

With those words, the best and brightest of the Barnacles went down stairs, hummed his way through the Lodge, mounted his horse in the front courtyard, and rode off to keep an appointment with his noble kinsman: who wanted a little coaching before he could triumphantly answer certain infidel Snobs, who were going to question the Nobs about their statesmanship.

He must have passed Mr. Rugg on his way out, for, a minute or two afterwards, that ruddy-headed gentleman shone in at the door, like an elderly Phoebus.

"How do you do to-day, sir?" said Mr. Rugg. "Is there any little thing I can do for you to-day, sir?"

"No, I thank you."

Mr. Rugg's enjoyment of embarrassed affairs was like a housekeeper's enjoyment in pickling and preserving, or a washerwoman's enjoyment of a heavy wash, or a dustman's enjoyment of an overflowing dust binn, or any other professional enjoyment of a mess in the way of business.

"I still look round, from time to time, sir," said Mr. Rugg, cheerfully, "to see whether any lingering Detainers are accumulating at the gate. They have fallen in pretty thick, sir; as thick as we could have expected."
He remarked upon the circumstance as if it were matter of congratulation: rubbing his hands briskly, and rolling his head a little.

"As thick," repeated Mr. Rugg, "as we could reasonably have expected. Quite a shower-bath of 'em. I don't often intrude upon you, now, when I look round, because I know you are not inclined for company, and that if you wished to see me, you would leave word in the Lodge. But I am here pretty well every day, sir. Would this be an unseasonable time, sir," asked Mr. Rugg, coaxingly, "for me to offer an observation?"

"As seasonable a time as any other."

"Hum! Public opinion, sir," said Mr. Rugg, "has been busy with you."

"I don't doubt it."

"Might it not be advisable, sir," said Mr. Rugg, more coaxingly yet, "now to make, at last and after all, a trifling concession to public opinion? We all do it in one way or another. The fact is, we must do it."

"I cannot set myself right with it, Mr. Rugg, and have no business to expect that I ever shall."

"Don't say that, sir, don't say that. The cost of being moved to the Bench is almost insignificant, and if the general feeling is strong that you ought to be there, why—really—"

"I thought you had settled, Mr. Rugg," said Arthur, "that my determination to remain here was a matter of taste."

"Well, sir, well! But is it good taste, is it good taste? That's the question." Mr. Rugg was so soothingly persuasive as to be quite pathetic. "I was almost going to say, is it good feeling? This is an extensive affair of yours; and your remaining here where a man can come for a pound or two, is remarked upon, as not in keeping. It is not in keeping. I can't tell you, sir, in how many quarters I hear it mentioned. I heard comments made upon it last night, in a Parlor frequented by what I should call, if I did not look in there now and then myself, the best legal company—I heard, there, comments on it that I was sorry to hear. They hurt me, on your account. Again, only this morning at breakfast. My daughter (but a woman, you'll say: yet still with a feeling for these things, and even with some little personal experience, as the plaintiff in Rugg and Bawkins) was expressing her great surprise; her great surprise. Now, under these circumstances, and considering that none of us can quite set ourselves above public opinion, wouldn't a trifling concession to that opinion be—Come, sir!" said Rugg, "I will put it on the lowest ground of argument, and say, Amiable?"

Arthur's thoughts had once more wandered away to Little Dorrit, and the question remained unanswered.

"As to myself, sir," said Mr. Rugg, hoping that his eloquence had reduced him to a state of indecision, "it is a principle of mine not to consider myself when a client's inclinations are in the scale. But, knowing your considerate character and general wish to oblige, I will repeat that I should prefer your being in the Bench. Your case has made a noise; it is a creditable case to be professionally concerned in; I should feel on a better standing with my connexion, if you went to the Bench. Don't let that influence you, sir. I merely state the fact.
So errant had the prisoner’s attention already grown in solitude and dejection, and so accustomed had it become to commune with only one silent figure within the ever-frowning walls, that Clennam had to shake off a kind of stupor before he could look at Mr. Rugg, recall the thread of his talk, and hurriedly say, “I am unchanged, and unchanged, in my decision. Pray, let it be; let it be!” Mr. Rugg, without concealing that he was nettled and mortified, replied:

“Oh! Beyond a doubt, sir! I have travelled out of the record, sir, I am aware, in putting the point to you. But really, when I hear it remarked in several companies and in very good company, that however worthy of a foreigner, it is not worthy of the spirit of an Englishman to remain in the Marshalsea when the glorious liberties of his island home admit of his removal to the Bench, I thought I would depart from the narrow professional line marked out to me, and mention it.Personally,” said Mr. Rugg, “I have no opinion on the topic.”

“That’s well,” returned Arthur.

“Oh! None at all, sir!” said Mr. Rugg. “If I had, I should have been unwilling, some minutes ago, to see a client of mine visited in this place by a gentleman of high family riding a saddle-horse. But it was not my business. If I had, I might have wished to be now empowered to mention to another gentleman, a gentleman of military exterior at present waiting in the Lodge, that my client had never intended to remain here, and was on the eve of removal to a superior abode. But my course as a professional machine is clear; I have nothing to do with it. Is it your good pleasure to see the gentleman, sir?”

“Who is waiting to see me, did you say?”

“I did take that unprofessional liberty, sir. Hearing that I was your professional adviser, he declined to interpose before my very limited function was performed. Happily,” said Mr. Rugg, with sarcasm, “I did not so far travel out of the record as to ask the gentleman for his name.”

“I suppose I have no resource but to see him,” sighed Clennam, weary.

“Then it is your good pleasure, sir?” retorted Rugg. “Am I honored by your instructions to mention as much to the gentleman, as I pass out? I am? Thank you, sir. I take my leave.” His leave he took, accordingly, in dudgeon.

The gentleman of military exterior had so imperfectly awakened Clennam’s curiosity, in the existing state of his mind, that a half forgetfulness of such a visitor’s having been referred to, was already creeping over it as a part of the sombre veil which almost always dimmed it now, when a heavy footstep on the stairs aroused him. It appeared to ascend them, not very promptly or spontaneously, yet with a display of stride and clatter meant to be insulting. As it paused for a moment on the landing outside his door, he could not recall his association with the peculiarity of its sound, though he thought he had one. Only a moment was given him for consideration. His door was immediately swung open by a thump, and in the doorway stood the missing Blandois, the cause of many anxieties.
“Salve, fellow jail-bird!” said he. “You want me, it seems. Here I am!”

Before Arthur could speak to him in his indignant wonder, Cavalletto followed him into the room. Mr. Pancks followed Cavalletto. Neither of the two had been there, since its present occupant had had possession of it. Mr. Pancks, breathing hard, sidled near the window, put his hat on the ground, stirred his hair up with both hands, and folded his arms, like a man who had come to a pause in a hard day’s work. Mr. Baptist, never taking his eyes from his dread Chen of old, softly sat down on the floor with his back against the door and one of his ankles in each hand: resuming the attitude (except that it was now expressive of unwinking watchfulness), in which he had sat before the same man in the deeper shade of another prison, one hot morning at Marseilles.

“I have it on the witnessing of these madmen,” said Monsieur Blandois, otherwise Lagnier, otherwise Rigaud, “that you want me, brother-bird. Here I am!”

Glancing round contemptuously at the bedstead, which was turned up by day, he leaned his back against it as a resting-place, without removing his hat from his head, and stood defiantly lounging with his hands in his pockets.

“You villain of ill-omen!” said Arthur. “You have purposely cast a dreadful suspicion upon my mother’s house. Why have you done it? What prompted you to the devilish invention?”

Monsieur Rigaud, after frowning at him for a moment, laughed.

“If I go, consequentementally,” it would have given Mrs. Plornish great concern if she could have been persuaded that his occasional lengthening of an adverb in this way, was the chief fault of his English, “first, among my countrymen. I ask them what news in London, of foreigners arrived. Then, I go among the French. Then, I go among the Germans. They all tell me. The great part of us know well the other, and they all tell me. But!—no person can tell me nothing of him, Rigaud. Fifteen times,” said Cavalletto, thrice throwing out his left hand with all its fingers spread, and doing it so rapidly that the sense of sight could hardly follow the action, “I ask of him in every place where go the foreigners; and fifteen times,” repeating the same swift performance, “they know nothing. But!”

At his significant Italian rest on the word “But,” his back-handed shake of his right forefinger came into play; a very little, and very cautiously.

“But!—After long time when I have not been able to find that he is here in London, some one tells me of a soldier with white hair—hey?—not hair like this that he carries—white—who lives retired
secrettementally, in a certain place. But!—" with another rest upon the word, "who sometimes in the after-dinner, walks, and smokes. It is necessary, as they say in Italy (and as they know, poor people), to have patience. I have patience. I ask where is this certain place. One believes it is here, one believes it is there. Eh well! It is not here, it is not there. I wait, patientissamentally. At last I find it. Then I watch; then I hide, until he walks and smokes. He is a soldier with grey hair—But!—" a very decided rest indeed, and a very vigorous play from side to side of the back-handed forefinger—"he is also this man that you see."

It was noticeable, that, in his old habit of submission to one who had been at the trouble of asserting superiority over him, he even then bestowed upon Rigaud a confused bend of his head, after thus pointing him out.

"Eh well, Signore!" he cried in conclusion, addressing Arthur again. "I waited for a good opportunity. I wrote some words to Signor Panco" an air of novelty came over Mr. Pancks with this designation, "to come and help. I showed him, Rigaud, at his window to Signor Panco, who was often the spy in the day. I slept at night near the door of the house. At last we entered, only this today, and now you see him! As he would not come up in presence of the illustrious Advocate," such was Mr. Baptist's honorable mention of Mr. Rugg, "we waited down below there, together, and Signor Panco guarded the street."

At the close of this recital, Arthur turned his eyes upon the impudent and wicked face. As it met his, the nose came down over the moustache, and the moustache went up under the nose. When nose and moustache had settled into their places again, Monsieur Rigaud loudly snapped his fingers half a dozen times; bending forward to jerk the snaps at Arthur, as if they were palpable missiles which he jerked into his face.

"Now, Philosopher!" said Rigaud. "What do you want with me?"

"I want to know," returned Arthur, without disguising his abhorrence, "how you dare direct a suspicion of murder against my mother's house?"

"Dare!" cried Rigaud. "Ho ho! Hear him! Dare? Is it dare? By Heaven, my small boy, but you are a little imprudent!"

"I want that suspicion to be cleared away," said Arthur. "You shall be taken there, and be publicly seen. I want to know, moreover, what business you had there, when I had a burning desire to fling you down stairs. Don't frown at me, man! I have seen enough of you to know that you are a bully, and coward. I need no revival of my spirits from the effects of this wretched place, to tell you so plain a fact, and one that you know so well."

White to the lips, Rigaud stroked his moustache, muttering "By Heaven, my small boy, but you are a little compromising of my lady your respectable mother"—and seemed for a minute undecided how to act. His indecision was soon gone. He sat himself down with a threatening swagger, and said:

"Give me a bottle of wine. You can buy wine here. Send one of..."
your madmen to get me a bottle of wine. I won't talk to you without wine. Come! Yes or no?"

"Fetch him what he wants, Cavalletto," said Arthur scornfully, producing the money.

"Contraband beast," added Rigaud, "bring Port wine! I'll drink nothing but Porto-Porto."

The contraband beast, however, assuring all present, with his significant finger, that he peremptorily declined to leave his post at the door, Signor Panco offered his services. He soon returned, with the bottle of wine; which, according to the custom of the place, originating in a scarcity of corkscrews among the Collegians (in common with a scarcity of much else), was already opened for use.

"Madman! A large glass," said Rigaud.

Signor Panco put a tumbler before him; not without a visible conflict of feeling on the question of throwing it at his head.

"Haha!" boasted Rigaud. "Once a gentleman, and always a gentleman. A gentleman from the beginning, and a gentleman to the end. What the Devil! A gentleman must be waited on, I hope? It's a part of my character to be waited on!"

He half filled the tumbler as he said it, and drank off the contents when he had done saying it.

"Hah!" smacking his lips. "Not a very old prisoner that! I judge by your looks, brave sir, that imprisonment will subdue your blood much sooner than it softens this hot wine. You are mellowing—losing body and color, already. I salute you!"

He tossed off another half glass: holding it up both before and afterwards, so as to display his small, white hand.

"To business," he then continued. "To conversation. You have shown yourself more free of speech than body, sir."

"I have used the freedom of telling you, what you know yourself to be. You know yourself, as we all know you, to be far worse than that."

"Add, always, a gentleman, and it's no matter. Except in that regard, we are all alike. For example; you couldn't for your life be a gentleman; I couldn't for my life be otherwise. How great the difference! Let us go on. Words, sir, never influenced the course of the cards, or the course of the dice. Do you know that? You do? I also play a game, and words are without power over it."

Now that he was confronted with Cavalletto, and knew that his story was known—whatever thin disguise he had worn, he dropped; and faced it out, with a bare face, as the infamous wretch he was.

"No, my son," he resumed, with a snap of his fingers. "I play my game to the end in spite of words; and Death of my Body and Death of my Soul! I'll win it. You want to know why I played this little trick that you have interrupted? Know then that I had, and that I have—do you understand me? have—a commodity to sell to my lady your respectable mother. I described my precious commodity, and fixed my price. Touching the bargain, your admirable mother was a little too calm, too stolid, too immovable and statue-like. In fine, your admirable mother vexed me. To make variety in my position, and to amuse myself—what! a gentleman must be amused
at somebody's expense!—I conceived the happy idea of disappearing. An idea, see you, that your characteristic mother and my Flintwinch would have been well enough pleased to execute. Ah! Bah, bah, bah, don't look as from high to low at me! I repeat it. Well enough pleased, excessively enchanted, with all their hearts ravished. How strongly will you have it?"

He threw out the lees of his glass on the ground, so that they nearly spattered Cavalletto. This seemed to draw his attention to him anew. He set down his glass and said:

"I'll not fill it. What! I am born to be served. Come then, you Cavalletto, and fill!"

The little man looked at Clennam, whose eyes were occupied with Rigaud, and, seeing no prohibition, got up from the ground, and poured out from the bottle into the glass. The blending, as he did so, of his old submission with a sense of something humorous; the striving of that with a certain smouldering ferocity, which might have flashed fire in an instant (as the born gentleman seemed to think, for he had a wary eye upon him); and the easy yielding of all, to a good-natured, careless, predominant propensity to sit down on the ground again; formed a very remarkable combination of character.

"This happy idea, brave sir," Rigaud resumed after drinking, "was a happy idea for several reasons. It amused me, it worried your dear mama and my Flintwinch, it caused you agonies (my terms for a lesson in politeness towards a gentleman), and it suggested to all the amiable persons interested that your entirely devoted is a man to fear. By Heaven, he is a man to fear! Beyond this; it might have restored her wit to my lady your mother—might, under the pressing little suspicion your wisdom has recognised, have persuaded her at last to announce, covertly, in the journals that the difficulties of a certain contract would be removed by the appearance of a certain important party to it. Perhaps yes, perhaps no. But, that you have interrupted. Now, what is it you say? What is it you want?"

Never had Clennam felt more acutely that he was a prisoner in bonds, than when he saw this man before him, and could not accompany him to his mother's house. All the undiscernible difficulties and dangers he had ever feared, were closing in, when he could not stir hand or foot.

"Perhaps, my friend, philosopher, man of virtue, Imbecile, what you will; perhaps," said Rigaud, pausing in his drink to look out of his glass with his horrible smile, "you would have done better to leave me alone?"

"No! At least," said Clennam, "you are known to be alive and unharmed. At least you cannot escape from these two witnesses; and they can produce you before any public authorities, or before hundreds of people."

"But will not produce me before one," said Rigaud, snapping his fingers again with an air of triumphant menace. "To the Devil with your witnesses! To the Devil with your produced! To the Devil with yourself! What? Do I know what I know, for that? Have I my commodity on sale, for that? Bah, poor debtor! You have interrupted my little project. Let it pass. How then? What remains?"
To you, nothing; to me, all. Produce me? Is that what you want? I will produce myself, only too quickly. Contrabandist! Give me pen, ink, and paper."

Cavalletto got up again as before, and laid them before him in his former manner. Rigaud, after some villainous thinking and smiling, wrote and read aloud as follows:

"To Mrs. Clennam.
"Wait answer.

"Prison of the Marshalsea.
"At the apartment of your son.

"Dear Madam,
"I am in despair to be informed to-day by our prisoner here (who has had the goodness to employ spies to seek me, living for political reasons in retirement), that you have had fears for my safety.

"Re-assure yourself, dear madam. I am well, I am strong and constant.

"With the greatest impatience I should fly to your house, but that I foresee it to be possible, under the circumstances, that you will not yet have quite definitively arranged the little proposition I have had the honor to submit to you. I name one week from this day, for a last final visit on my part; when you will unconditionally accept it or reject it, with its train of consequences.

"I suppress my ardor to embrace you and achieve this interesting business, in order that you may have leisure to adjust its details to our perfect mutual satisfaction.

"In the meanwhile, it is not too much to propose (our prisoner having deranged my housekeeping), that my expenses of lodging and nourishment at an hotel shall be paid by you.

"Receive, dear madam, the assurance of my highest and most distinguished consideration,

"Rigaud Blandois.

"A thousand friendships to that dear Flintwinch.
"I kiss the hands of Madame F."

When he had finished this epistle, Rigaud folded it, and tossed it with a flourish at Clennam’s feet. "Hola you! Apropos of producing, let somebody produce that at its address, and produce the answer here."

"Cavalletto," said Arthur. "Will you take this fellow’s letter?"

But, Cavalletto’s significant finger again expressing that his post was at the door to keep watch over Rigaud, now he had found him with so much trouble, and that the duty of his post was to sit on the floor backed up by the door, looking at Rigaud and holding his own ankles,—Signor Panco once more volunteered. His services being accepted, Cavalletto suffered the door to open barely wide enough to admit of his squeezing himself out, and immediately shut it on him.

"Touch me with a finger, touch me with an epithet, question my superiority as I sit here drinking my wine at my pleasure," said Rigaud, "and I follow the letter and cancel my week’s grace. You wanted me? You have got me! How do you like me?"

"You know," returned Clennam, with a bitter sense of his helplessness, "that when I sought you, I was not a prisoner."

"To Mrs. Clennam.
"Wait answer.

"Prison of the Marshalsea.
"At the apartment of your son.

"Dear Madam,
"I am in despair to be informed to-day by our prisoner here (who has had the goodness to employ spies to seek me, living for political reasons in retirement), that you have had fears for my safety.

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"You know," returned Clennam, with a bitter sense of his helplessness, "that when I sought you, I was not a prisoner."
“To the Devil with you and your prison,” retorted Rigaud, leisurely, as he took from his pocket a case containing the materials for making cigarettes, and employed his facile hands in folding a few for present use; “I care for neither of you. Contrabandist! A light.”

Again Cavalletto got up, and gave him what he wanted. There had been something dreadful in the noiseless skill of his cold, white hands, with the fingers lithely twisting about and twining one over another like serpents. Clennam could not prevent himself from shuddering inwardly, as if he had been looking on at a nest of those creatures.

“Hola, Pig!” cried Rigaud, with a noisy, stimulating cry, as if Cavalletto were an Italian horse or mule. “What! The infernal old jail was a respectable one to this. There was dignity in the bars and stones of that place. It was a prison for men. But this? Bah! A hospital for imbeciles!”

He smoked his cigarette out, with his ugly smile so fixed upon his face, that he looked as though he were smoking with his drooping beak of a nose, rather than his mouth; like a fancy in a weird picture. When he had lighted a second cigarette at the still-burning end of the first, he said to Clennam:

“One must pass the time in the madman’s absence. One must talk. One can’t drink strong wine all day long, or I would have another bottle. She’s handsome, sir. Though not exactly to my taste, still, by the Thunder and the Lightning! handsome. I felicitate you on your admiration.”

“I neither know nor ask,” said Clennam, “of whom you speak.”

“Della bella Gowana, sir, as they say in Italy. Of the Gowan, the fair Gowan.”

“Of whose husband you were the—follower, I think?”

“Sir? Follower? You are insolent. The friend.”

“Do you sell all your friends?”

Rigaud took his cigarette from his mouth, and eyed him with a momentary revelation of surprise. But, he put it between his lips again, as he answered with coolness:


Clennam turned away from him towards the window, and sat looking out at the wall.


He received no answer, but could easily discern that he had hit the mark.

“Yes!” he went on, “that handsome lady and strong spirit addresses me in the street, and I am not insensible. I respond. That handsome lady and strong spirit does me the favor to remark, in full confidence, ‘I have my curiosity, and I have my chagrin. You are not more than ordinarily honorable, perhaps?’ I announce myself, ‘Madam,
a gentleman from the birth, and a gentleman to the death; but not more than ordinarily honorable. I despise such a weak fantasy.' Thereupon she is pleased to compliment. 'The difference between you and the rest is,' she answers, 'that you say so.' For, she knows society. I accept her congratulations with gallantry and politeness. Politeness and little gallantries are inseparable from my character. She then makes a proposition, which is, in effect, that she has seen us much together; that it appears to her that I am for the passing time the cat of the house, the friend of the family; that her curiosity and her chagrin awakens the fancy to be acquainted with their movements, to know the manner of their life, how the fair Gowana is beloved, how the fair Gowana is cherished, and so on. She is not rich, but offers such and such little recompenses for the little cares and derangements of such services; and I graciously—to do everything graciously is a part of my character—consent to accept them. O yes! So goes the world. It is the mode.'

Though Clennam's back was turned while he spoke, and thenceforth to the end of the interview, he kept those glittering eyes of his that were too near together, upon him, and evidently saw in the very carriage of the head, as he passed, with his braggart recklessness, from clause to clause of what he said, that he was saying nothing which Clennam did not already know.

"'Whoof! The Fair Gowana!" he said, lighting a third cigarette with a sound as if his lightest breath could blow her away. 'Charming, but imprudent! For it was not well of the fair Gowana to make mysteries of letters from old lovers, in her bedchamber on the mountain, that her husband might not see them. No, no. That was not well. Whoof! The Gowana was mistaken there.'

"I earnestly hope," cried Arthur aloud, "that Pancks may not be long gone, for this man's presence pollutes the room.'

"Aye! But he'll flourish here, and everywhere," said Rigaud, with an exulting look and snap of his fingers. "He always has; he always will!" Stretching his body out on the only three chairs in the room besides that on which Clennam sat, he sang, smiting himself on the breast as the gallant personage of the song:

"Who passes by this road so late? Companjon de la Majolaine; Who passes by this road so late? Always gay!"

Sing the Refrain, pig! You could sing it once, in another jail. Sing it! Or, by every Saint who was stoned to death, I'll be affronted and compromising; and then some people who are not dead yet, had better have been stoned along with them!

Of all the king's knights 'tis the flower, Companjon de la Majolaine; Of all the king's knights 'tis the flower, Always gay!"

Partly in his old habit of submission, partly because his not doing it might injure his benefactor, and partly because he would as soon do it as anything else, Cavalletto took up the Refrain this time. Rigaud laughed, and fell to smoking with his eyes shut. Possibly another quarter of an hour elapsed before Mr. Pancks's
step was heard upon the stairs, but the interval seemed to Clennam insupportably long. His step was attended by another step; and, when Cavalletto opened the door, he admitted Mr. Pancks and Mr. Flintwinch. The latter was no sooner visible, than Rigaud rushed at him and embraced him boisterously.

"How do you find yourself, sir?" said Mr. Flintwinch, as soon as he could disengage himself, which he struggled to do with very little ceremony. "Thank you, no; I don't want any more." This was in reference to another menace of affection from his recovered friend. "Well, Arthur. You remember what I said to you about sleeping dogs and missing ones. It's come true, you see."

He was as imperturbable as ever, to all appearance, and nodded his head in a moralising way as he looked round the room.

"And this is the Marshalsea prison for debt!" said Mr. Flintwinch.

"Hah! You have brought your pigs to a very indifferent market, Arthur."

If Arthur had patience, Rigaud had not. He took his little Flintwinch, with fierce playfulness, by the two lappels of his coat, and cried:

"To the Devil with the Market, to the Devil with the Pigs, and to the Devil with the Pig-Driver! Now! Give me the answer to my letter."

"If you can make it convenient to let go a moment, sir," returned Mr. Flintwinch, "I'll first hand Mr. Arthur a little note that I have for him."

He did so. It was in his mother's maimed writing, on a slip of paper, and contained only these words.

"I hope it is enough that you have ruined yourself. Rest contented without more ruin. Jeremiah Flintwinch is my messenger and representative. Your affectionate M. C."

Clennam read this twice, in silence, and then tore it to pieces. Rigaud in the meanwhile stepped into a chair, and sat himself on the back, with his feet upon the seat.

"Now, Beau Flintwinch," he said, when he had closely watched the note to its destruction, "the answer to my letter?"

"Mrs. Clennam did not write it, Mr. Blandois, her hands being cramped, and she thinking it as well to send it verbally by me." Mr. Flintwinch screwed this out of himself, unwillingly and rustily. "She sends her compliments, and says she doesn't on the whole wish to term you unreasonable, and that she agrees. But without prejudicing the appointment that stands for this day week."

Monsieur Rigaud, after indulging in a fit of laughter, descended from his throne, saying "Good! I go to seek an hotel!" But, there his eyes encountered Cavalletto, who was still at his post.

"Come, Pig," he added. "I have had you for a follower against my will; now, I'll have you against yours. I tell you, my little reptiles, I am born to be served. I demand the service of this contra-bandist as my domestic, until this day week."

In answer to Cavalletto's look of enquiry, Clennam made him a sign to go; but he added aloud, "unless you are afraid of him." Cavalletto replied with a very emphatic finger-negative. "No, master, I
am not afraid of him, when I no more keep it secretmentally that he was once my comrade." Rigaud took no notice of either remark, until he had lighted his last cigarette and was quite ready for walking.

"Afraid of him," he said then, looking round upon them all. "Whoof! My children, my babies, my little dolls, you are all afraid of him. You give him his bottle of wine here; you give him meat, drink, and lodging, there; you dare not touch him with a finger or an epithet. No. It is his character to triumph! Whoof!

Of all the king's knights he's the flower,
And he's always gay!"

With this adaptation of the Refrain to himself, he stalked out of the room, closely followed by Cavalletto, whom perhaps he had pressed into his service because he tolerably well knew it would not be easy to get rid of him. Mr. Flintwinch, after scraping his chin and looking about with caustic disparagement of the Pig-Market, nodded to Arthur, and followed. Mr. Pancks, still penitent and depressed, followed too; after receiving with great attention a secret word or two of instructions from Arthur, and whispering back that he would see this affair out, and stand by it to the end. The prisoner, with the feeling that he was more despised, more scorned and repudiated, more helpless, altogether more miserable and fallen, than before, was left alone again.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PLEA IN THE MARSHALSEA.

HAGGARD anxiety and remorse are bad companions to be barred up with. Brooding all day, and resting very little indeed at night, will not arm a man against misery. Next morning, Clennam felt that his health was sinking, as his spirits had already sunk, and that the weight under which he bent was bearing him down.

Night after night, he had arisen from his bed of wretchedness at twelve or one o'clock, and had sat at his window watching the sickly lamps in the yard, and looking upward for the first wan trace of day, hours before it was possible that the sky could show it to him. Now, when the night came, he could not even persuade himself to undress.

For, a burning restlessness set in, an agonised impatience of the prison, and a conviction that he was going to break his heart and die there, which caused him indescribable suffering. His dread and hatred of the place became so intense that he felt it a labor to draw his breath in it. The sensation of being stifled, sometimes so overpowered him, that he would stand at the window holding his throat and gasping. At the same time, a longing for other air, and a yearning to be beyond the blind blank wall, made him feel as if he must go mad with the ardor of the desire.

Many other prisoners had had experience of this condition before
him, and its violence and continuity had worn themselves out in their cases, as they did in his. Two nights and a day exhausted it. It came back by fits, but those grew fainter and returned at lengthening intervals. A desolate calm succeeded; and the middle of the week found him settled down in the despondency of low, slow fever.

With Cavalletto and Pancks away, he had no visitors to fear but Mr. and Mrs. Plornish. His anxiety, in reference to that worthy pair, was that they should not come near him; for, in the morbid state of his nerves, he sought to be left alone, and spared the being seen so subdued and weak. He wrote a note to Mrs. Plornish representing himself as occupied with his affairs, and bound by the necessity of devoting himself to them, to remain for a time even without the pleasant interruption of a sight of her kind face. As to Young John, who looked in daily at a certain hour, when the Turnkeys were relieved, to ask if he could do anything for him; he always made a pretence of being engaged in writing, and to answer cheerfully in the negative. The subject of their only long conversation had never been revived between them. Through all these changes of unhappiness, however, it had never lost its hold on Clennam's mind.

The sixth day of the appointed week was a moist, hot, misty day. It seemed as though the prison's poverty, and shabbiness, and dirt, were growing, in the sultry atmosphere. With an aching head and a weary heart, Clennam had watched the miserable night out, listening to the fall of rain on the yard pavement, thinking of its softer fall upon the country earth. A blurred circle of yellow haze had risen up in the sky in lieu of sun, and he had watched the patch it put upon his wall, like a bit of the prison's raggedness. He had heard the gates open; and the badly shod feet that waited outside shuffle in; and the sweeping, and pumping, and moving about, begin, which commenced the prison morning. So ill and faint, that he was obliged to rest many times in the process of getting himself washed, he had at length crept to his chair by the open window. In it he sat dozing, while the old woman who arranged his room went through her morning's work.

Light of head with want of sleep and want of food (his appetite, and even his sense of taste, having forsaken him), he had been two or three times conscious, in the night, of going astray. He had heard fragments of tunes and songs, in the warm wind, which he knew had no existence. Now that he began to doze in exhaustion, he heard them again; and voices seemed to address him, and he answered, and started.

Dozing and dreaming, without the power of reckoning time, so that a minute might have been an hour and an hour a minute, some abiding impression of a garden stole over him—a garden of flowers, with a damp warm wind gently stirring their scents. It required such a painful effort to lift his head for the purpose of enquiring into this, or enquiring into anything, that the impression appeared to have become quite an old and importunate one when he looked round. Beside the tea-cup on his table he saw, then, a blooming nosegay: a wonderful handful of the choicest and most lovely flowers.
Nothing had ever appeared so beautiful in his sight. He took them up and inhaled their fragrance, and he lifted them to his hot head, and he put them down and opened his parched hands to them, as cold hands are opened to receive the cheering of a fire. It was not until he had delighted in them for some time, that he wondered who had sent them; and opened his door to ask the woman who must have put them there, how they had come into her hands. But, she was gone, and seemed to have been long gone; for the tea she had left for him on the table was cold. He tried to drink some, but could not bear the odour of it; so he crept back to his chair by the open window, and put the flowers on the little round table of old.

When the first faintness consequent on having moved about had left him, he subsided into his former state. One of the night-tunes was playing in the wind, when the door of his room seemed to open to a light touch, and, after a moment's pause, a quiet figure seemed to stand there, with a black mantle on it. It seemed to draw the mantle off and drop it on the ground, and then it seemed to be his Little Dorrit in her old, worn dress. It seemed to tremble, and to clasp its hands, and to smile, and to burst into tears.

He roused himself, and cried out. And then he saw, in the loving, pitying, sorrowing, dear face, as in a mirror, how changed he was; and she came towards him; and with her hands laid on his breast to keep him in his chair, and with her knees upon the floor at his feet, and with her lips raised up to kiss him, and with her tears dropping on him as the rain from Heaven had dropped upon the flowers, Little Dorrit, a living presence, called him by his name.

"O, my best friend! Dear Mr. Clennam, don't let me see you weep! Unless you weep with pleasure to see me. I hope you do. Your own poor child come back!"

So faithful, tender, and unspoiled by Fortune. In the sound of her voice, in the light of her eyes, in the touch of her hands, so Angelically comforting and true!

As he embraced her, she said to him, "They never told me you were ill," and drawing an arm softly round his neck, laid his head upon her bosom, put a hand upon his head, and resting her cheek upon that hand, nursed him as lovingly, and God knows as innocently, as she had nursed her father in that room when she had been but a baby, needing all the care from others that she took of them.

When he could speak, he said, "Is it possible that you have come to me? And in this dress?"

"I hoped you would like me better in this dress than any other. I have always kept it by me, to remind me: though I wanted no reminding. I am not alone, you see. I have brought an old friend with me."

Looking round, he saw Maggy in her big cap which had been long abandoned, with a basket on her arm as in the bygone days, chuckling rapturously.

"It was only yesterday evening that I came to London with my brother. I sent round to Mrs. Plornish almost as soon as we arrived, that I might hear of you and let you know I had come. Then I heard that you were here. Did you happen to think of me in the
night? I almost believe you must have thought of me a little. I thought of you so anxiously, and it appeared so long to morning."

"I have thought of you——" he hesitated what to call her. She perceived it in an instant.

"You have not spoken to me by my right name yet. You know what my right name always is with you."

"I have thought of you, Little Dorrit, every day, every hour, every minute, since I have been here."

"Have you? Have you?"

He saw the bright delight of her face, and the flush that kindled in it, with a feeling of shame. He, a broken, bankrupt, sick, dishonored, prisoner.

"I was here, before the gates were opened, but I was afraid to come straight to you. I should have done you more harm than good, at first; for the prison was so familiar and yet so strange, and it brought back so many remembrances of my poor father, and of you too, that at first it overpowered me. But, we went to Mr. Chivery before we came to the gate, and he brought us in, and got John's room for us—my poor old room, you know—and we waited there a little. I brought the flowers to the door, but you didn't hear me."

She looked something more womanly than when she had gone away, and the ripening touch of the Italian sun was visible upon her face. But, otherwise she was quite unchanged. The same deep, timid earnestness that he had always seen in her, and never without emotion, he saw still. If it had a new meaning that smote him to the heart, the change was in his perception, not in her.

She took off her old bonnet, hung it in the old place, and noiselessly began, with Maggy's help, to make his room as fresh and neat as it could be made, and to sprinkle it with a pleasant smelling water. When that was done, the basket which was filled with grapes and other fruit, was unpacked, and all its contents were quietly put away. When that was done, a moment's whisper dispatched Maggy to dispatch somebody else to fill the basket again; which soon came back replenished with new stores, from which a present provision of cooling drink and jelly, and a prospective supply of roast chicken and wine and water, were the first extracts. These various arrangements completed, she took out her old needlecase to make him a curtain for his window; and thus, with a quiet reigning in the room, that seemed to diffuse itself through the else noisy prison, he found himself composed in his chair with Little Dorrit working at his side.

To see the modest head again bent down over its task, and the nimble fingers busy at their old work—though she was not so absorbed in it but that her compassionate eyes were often raised to his face, and, when they drooped again, had tears in them—to be so consoled and comforted, and to believe that all the devotion of this great nature was turned to him in his adversity, to pour out its inexhaustible wealth of goodness upon him, did not steady Clennam's trembling voice or hand, or strengthen him in his weakness. Yet, it inspired him with an inward fortitude, that rose with his love. And how dearly he loved her, now, what words can tell!

As they sat side by side, in the shadow of the wall, the shadow fell
like light upon him. She would not let him speak much, and he lay back in his chair, looking at her. Now and again, she would rise and give him the glass that he might drink, or would smooth the resting-place of his head; then she would gently resume her seat by him, and bend over her work again.

The shadow moved with the sun, but she never moved from his side, except to wait upon him. The sun went down, and she was still there. She had done her work now, and her hand, faltering on the arm of his chair since its last tending of him, was hesitating there yet. He laid his hand upon it, and it clasped him with a trembling supplication.

"Dear Mr. Clennam, I must say something to you before I go. I have put it off from hour to hour, but I must say it."

"I too, dear Little Dorrit. I have put off what I must say."

She nervously moved her hand towards his lips as if to stop him; then it dropped, trembling, into its former place.

"I am not going abroad again. My brother is, but I am not. He was always attached to me, and he is so grateful to me now—so much too grateful, for it is only because I happened to be with him in his illness—that he says I shall be free to stay where I like best, and to do what I like best. He only wishes me to be happy, he says."

There was one bright star shining in the sky. She looked up at it while she spoke, as if it were the fervent purpose of her own heart shining above her.

"You will understand, I dare say, without my telling you, that my brother has come home to find my dear father's will, and to take possession of his property. He says, if there is a will, he is sure I shall be left rich; and if there is none, that he will make me so."

He would have spoken; but she put up her trembling hand again, and he stopped.

"I have no use for money, I have no wish for it. It would be of no value at all to me, but for your sake. I could not be rich, and you here. I must always be much worse than poor, with you distressed. Will you let me lend you all I have? Will you let me give it you? Will you let me show you that I never have forgotten, that I never can forget, your protection of me when this was my home? Dear Mr. Clennam, make me of all the world the happiest, by saying Yes! Make me as happy as I can be in leaving you here, by saying nothing to-night, and letting me go away with the hope that you will think of it kindly; and that for my sake—not for your's, for mine, for nobody's but mine!—you will give me the greatest joy I can experience on earth, the joy of knowing that I have been serviceable to you, and that I have paid some little of the great debt of my affection and gratitude. I can't say what I wish to say. I can't visit you here where I have lived so long, I can't think of you here where I have seen so much, and be as calm and comforting as I ought. My tears will make their way. I cannot keep them back. But pray, pray, pray, do not turn from your Little Dorrit, now, in your affliction! Pray, pray, pray, I beg you and implore you with all my grieving heart, my friend—my dear!—take all I have, and make it a Blessing to me!"

The star had shone on her face until now, when her face sank upon his hand and her own.
It had grown darker when he raised her in his encircling arm, and softly answered her.

"No, darling Little Dorrit. No, my child. I must not hear of such a sacrifice. Liberty and hope would be so dear, bought at such a price, that I could never support their weight, never bear the reproach of possessing them. But, with what ardent thankfulness and love I say this, I may call Heaven to witness!"

"And yet you will not let me be faithful to you in your affliction?"

"Say, dearest Little Dorrit, and yet I will try to be faithful to you. If, in the bygone days when this was your home and when this was your dress, I had understood myself (I speak only of myself) better, and had read the secrets of my own breast more distinctly; if, through my reserve and self-mistrust, I had discerned a light that I see brightly now when it has passed far away, and my weak footsteps can never overtake it; if I had then known, and told you that I loved and honored you, not as the poor child I used to call you, but as a woman whose true hand would raise me high above myself, and make me a far happier and better man; if I had so used the opportunity there is no recalling—as I wish I had, O I wish I had!—and if something had kept us apart then, when I was moderately thriving, and when you were poor; I might have met your noble offer of your fortune, dearest girl, with other words than these, and still have blushed to touch it. But, as it is, I must never touch it, never!"

She besought him, more pathetically and earnestly, with her little supplicatory hand, than she could have done in any words.

"I am disgraced enough, my Little Dorrit. I must not descend so low as that, and carry you—so dear, so generous, so good—down with me. God bless you, God reward you! It is past."

He took her in his arms, as if she had been his daughter.

"Always so much older, so much rougher, and so much less worthy, even what I was must be dismissed by both of us, and you must see me only as I am. I put this parting kiss upon your cheek, my child—who might have been more near to me, who never could have been more dear—a ruined man far removed from you, for ever separated from you, whose course is run, while yours is but beginning. I have not the courage to ask to be forgotten by you in my humiliation; but I ask to be remembered only as I am."

The bell began to ring, warning visitors to depart. He took her mantle from the wall, and tenderly wrapped it round her.

"One other word, my Little Dorrit. A hard one to me, but it is a necessary one. The time when you and this prison had anything in common, has long gone by. Do you understand?"

"O! you will never say to me," she cried, weeping bitterly, and holding up her clasped hands in entreaty, "that I am not to come back any more! You will surely not desert me so!"

"I would say it, if I could; but I have not the courage quite to shut out this dear face, and abandon all hope of its return. But do not come soon, do not come often! This is now a tainted place, and I well know the taint of it clings to me. You belong to much brighter and better scenes. You are not to look back here, my Little Dorrit; you are to look away to very different and much happier paths. Again, God bless you in them! God reward you!"
Maggy, who had fallen into very low spirits, here cried, “Oh get him into a hospital; do get him into a hospital, Mother! He’ll never look like his self again, if he an’t got into a hospital. And then the little woman as was always a spinning at her wheel, she can go to the cupboard with the Princess and say, what do you keep the Chicking there for? and then they can take it out and give it to him, and then all be happy!”

The interruption was reasonable, for the bell had nearly rung itself out. Again tenderly wrapping her mantle about her, and taking her on his arm (though, but for her visit, he was almost too weak to walk), Arthur led Little Dorrit down-stairs. She was the last visitor to pass out at the Lodge, and the gate jarred heavily and hopelessly upon her.

With the funeral clang that it sounded into Arthur’s heart, his sense of weakness returned. It was a toilsome journey up-stairs to his room, and he re-entered its dark solitary precincts, in unutterable misery.

When it was almost midnight, and the prison had long been quiet, a cautious creak came up the stairs, and a cautious tap of a key was given at his door. It was Young John. He glided in, in his stockings, and held the door closed, while he spoke in a whisper.

“It’s against all rules, but I don’t mind. I was determined to come through, and come to you.”

“What is the matter?”

“Nothing’s the matter, sir. I was waiting in the court-yard for Miss Dorrit when she came out. I thought you’d like some one to see that she was safe.”

“Thank you, thank you! You took her home, John?”

“I saw her to her hotel. The same that Mr. Dorrit was at. Miss Dorrit walked all the way, and talked to me so kind, it quite knocked me over. Why do you think she walked instead of riding?”

“I don’t know, John.”

“To talk about you. She said to me, ‘John, you was always honorable, and if you’ll promise me that you will take care of him, and never let him want for help and comfort when I am not there, my mind will be at rest so far.’ I promised her. And I’ll stand by you,” said John Chivery, “for ever!”

Clennam, much affected, stretched out his hand to this honest spirit.

“Before I take it,” said John, looking at it, without coming from the door, “guess what message Miss Dorrit gave me.”

Clennam shook his head.

“Tell him,” repeated John, in a distinct, though quavering voice, “that his Little Dorrit sent him her undying love.” Now it’s delivered. Have I been honorable, sir?”

“Very, very!”

“Will you tell Miss Dorrit I’ve been honorable, sir?”

“I will indeed.”

“There’s my hand, sir,” said John, “and I’ll stand by you for ever!”

After a hearty squeeze, he disappeared with the same cautious creak upon the stair, crept shoeless over the pavement of the yard, and, locking the gates behind him, passed out into the front where he had left his shoes. If the same way had been paved with burning ploughshares, it is not at all improbable that John would have traversed it with the same devotion, for the same purpose.
COD LIVER OIL,
PREPARED IN THE LOFFODEN ISLES, NORWAY:
AND PUT TO THE
TEST OF CHEMICAL ANALYSIS,
BY DR. DE JONGH,
OF THE HAGUE,
KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM,
Late Medical Officer of the Dutch Army, Corresponding Member of the "Société Médico-Pratique" of Paris, author of a treatise entitled "Disquisitio comparativa chemico-medica de tribus olei jecoris aselli speciebus" (Utrecht, 1848), and of a work entitled "L'Huile de Foie de morue envisagée sous tous les rapports comme moyen thérapeutique" (Paris, 1853), etc., etc.,

Administered with speedy and marked success in the treatment of CONSUMPTION, BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, GOUT, RHEUMATISM, SCIATICA, DIABETES, DISEASES OF THE SKIN, NEURALGIA, RICKETS, INFANTILE WASTING, GENERAL DEBILITY, AND ALL SCROFULOUS AFFECTIONS.

Dr. DE JONGH, an eminent Dutch physician, has, as is well known, devoted himself for upwards of sixteen years to a series of scientific researches into the nature and properties of Cod Liver Oil. His works, recording these investigations, have been translated into most of the European languages; by universal admission, they are regarded by the Faculty as the standard authority upon the subject; and in addition to the spontaneous approval and highly flattering testimonials from some of the most distinguished medical men and scientific chemists in Europe, they have been rewarded by his Majesty LEOPOLD I., the King of the Belgians, conferring the dignity of a Knight of the Order of Leopold, and the large Gold Medal of Merit, and by his Majesty WILLIAM II., the King of the Netherlands, with a Silver Medal specially struck for the purpose.

Dr. DE JONGH's elaborate chemical investigations and therapeutical experiments with the several kinds of Cod Liver Oils, have demonstrated the superior efficacy of this pure Light Brown Oil, which effects a cure, relieves symptoms, and alleviates suffering in a much shorter time than the Pale Oil; iodine, phosphate of lime, volatile acid, and the elements of the bile—impacting the colour to the Oil, and deemed amongst its most active and essential principles—being invariably present in larger quantities than in the Pale Oils manufactured in Great Britain and Newfoundland, which, by their mode of preparation, are in a great measure deprived of these active properties.
DISTINCTIVE PECULIARITIES AND SUPERIORITY OF
DR. DE JONGH’S OIL.

It is genuine and pure Cod Liver Oil, containing all the active and essential medi-
cinal properties that therapeutical experience has found to be most effective in the
operation of the remedy, being prepared with the greatest care solely from that species
of cod-fish which yields these in the largest quantity, and by a process which secures
their presence in the proper and fullest proportion.

Being invariably submitted to skilful and scrupulous chemical analysis by Dr. de
Jongh, its genuineness, purity, and uniform strength are ascertained and guaranteed;
and, as far as possible, a certain, regular, and uniform result may be anticipated, when
it is administered to diseases, or in similar circumstances.

In taste and odour it is not disagreeable or repulsive; it is easily taken; creates
no nausea or after-taste; is borne with facility, and not rejected by the stomach;
do not irritate or disturb the organs, but improves the functions of digestion and
assimilation; neither does it produce any constitutional derangement. Its use may
therefore be continued for a long period, and without interruption, in those critical,
obstinate, and serious cases where continuous perseverance is absolutely essential, and
until the desired object is accomplished.

Its medicinal properties are found, in practice, to be infinitely greater than those
of the ordinary Cod Liver Oil, the same quantity going three times as far, and
effecting a cure or beneficial results in a much shorter period; in many instances
affording immediate mitigation of symptoms, and arresting disease, or restoring
health, where other Oil had been long and copiously administered without any benefit.

In actual price it is not higher, nor in use so expensive as any Oil sold as genuine
by respectable chemists; whilst its active properties, more rapid effects, the smaller
doses required, and its uniform purity and certainty of operation, render it far preferable
and more really economical than that which is offered at the lowest price.

This latter consideration is particularly worthy the attention of all who, from motives of apparent cheapness, may be induced inad-
vertently to recommend or purchase an inferior or spurious
preparation.

Besides the means taken to ensure genuineness and superiority previous to exposure
for sale, further to guard against subsequent admixture or adulteration,—

This Oil is sold only in bottles; each bottle being sealed with a stamped
metallic capsule, and bearing beneath the pink outside wrapper a label with
Dr. de Jongh’s stamp and signature, fac-similes of which are subjoined.

WITHOUT THESE NONE ARE GENUINE.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE ACCOMPANY EACH BOTTLE.

CAUTION.

Dr. de Jongh’s Agents extremely regret that
information they have received compels them
solicitous to caution all purchasers against
unprincipled attempts frequently made, when
this Oil is applied for, in various unfair ways to
disparage its value, and to recommend or sub-
stitute an inferior Brown or Light Brown Oil,
described as Norwegian, as “imported fresh
from Norway”; or as of the same kind and of
equal purity and fine quality as Dr. de Jongh’s.

Extensive use and general preference for many
years on the Continent, and equally favourable
results since the introduction of this Oil into
this country, having materially diminished the
demand for the Pale or Yellow variety, ordinary
Brown Fish Oils, prepared solely for manufacturing or household purposes, can be and are very
profitably offered and supplied at a low rate of charge, although their total unfitness for medical
use not only leads to serious disappointment or Injury, but tends to detract from the high and
general reputation of a remedy, when genuine, of acknowledged and inestimable value. Where
this discrepant course is pursued, purchasers are earnestly requested to resort to another
establishment, or to apply directly to Dr. de Jongh’s Agents in London.

SOLD, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, BY

ANSAR, HARFORD, & CO., 77, STRAND, LONDON.

Dr. de Jongh’s sole accredited Consignees and Agents for the United Kingdom and the British
Possessions: and by many respectable Chemists and Druggists throughout the United Kingdom.

Half-pints (10 ounces), 2s. 6d. Pints (20 ounces), 4s. 9d. Quarts (40 ounces), 9s.

IMPERIAL MEASURE.
TESTIMONIAL DOCUMENTS

The following are selected from some of the leading testimonials in commendation of Dr. de Jongh's Light Brown Brown Cod Liver Oil:—

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR OF HOLLAND.

"I have the honour of bringing to your knowledge that it has pleased the King to grant you, by his decree of the 20th January, 1848, No. 101, a silver medal with an appropriate honorary inscription, as a testimony of His Majesty's high approbation of your efforts in securing to this country the most efficient supply of Cod Liver Oil from Norway. I have given the necessary orders for the execution of this medal.

"To Dr. de Jongh, at the Hague."

(Signed) VAN DER HEIM.

THE INTENDANT OF THE CIVIL LIST OF BELGIUM.

"Sir,—The King has charged me to return you his very particular thanks for the homage done to him, by the presentation of your most valuable researches concerning the Cod Liver Oil. As an expression of his utmost satisfaction, His Majesty has given me the order of presenting you with the accompanying large gold medal.

"I remain, with the highest regard, &c.

"To Dr. de Jongh, at the Hague."

(Signed) CONWE.

THE ROYAL SANITARY POLICE OF PRUSSIA.

"In answer to your letter of the 2nd ult., requesting permission to sell Dr. de Jongh's Cod Liver Oil in bottles, accompanied by his stamp and signature, the Royal Police of Prussia (Königlich-poliizial-Praesidium) has the honour of informing you that it has caused the Oil to be submitted to an official investigation, and that the result of such investigation has proved it to be not only the genuine Cod Liver Oil, but, still further, that it is of a kind which distinguishes itself from the Cod Liver Oil in ordinary use, alike by its taste and chemical composition. Considering, moreover, that it has come to their knowledge that physicians generally recommend the use of Dr. de Jongh's Oil in preference to the Cod Liver Oil in ordinary use, the Royal Police accedes to your request.

"Berlin, Jan. 28, 1851.

"A.M. Blume, Chemist, Berlin."

"KÖNIGLICHES POLIZEI-PRAESIDUM."

"In Anbetracht."

The late JONATHAN PEREIRA, M.D., F.R.S.E., F.L.S.,
Professor at the University of London, Author of "THE ELEMENTS OF MATERIA MEDICA AND THERAPEUTICS," &c., &c.

"My dear Sir,—I was very glad to hear from you, when I had the pleasure of seeing you in London, that you were interested commercially in Cod Liver Oil. It was fitting that the Author of the best known analyses and investigations into the properties of this Oil should himself be the Purveyor of this important medicine.

"I felicitate, however, some differences in venturing to fulfil your request, by giving you my opinion of the quality of the Oil of which you gave me a sample; because I know that no one can be better, and few so well, acquainted with the physical and chemical properties of this medicine as yourself, whom I regard as the highest authority on the subject.

"I can, however, have no hesitation about the propriety of responding to your application. The Oil which you gave me was of the very finest quality, whether considered with reference to its colour, flavour, or chemical properties; and I am satisfied that for medicinal purposes no finer Oil can be procured.

"With my best wishes for your success, believe me, my dear Sir, to be very faithfully yours,

"JONATHAN PEREIRA."

"Finanbury Square, London April 16, 1851."

ARTHUR HILL HASSALL, ESQ., M.D., F.L.S.,
Member of the Royal College of Physicians, Physician to the Royal Free Hospital, Chief Analyst of the Sanitary Commission of the "Lancet," Author of "FOOD, AND ITS ADULTERATIONS," &c., &c.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to return my acknowledgments for the copy of your Work on Cod Liver Oil, with which I have been acquainted. I was already acquainted with it, and had pronounced it a treatise previously published with considerable gratification, especially the chapter devoted to the consideration of the adulteration of Cod Liver Oil.

"I have had, as you are aware, much attention to the subject of the adulteration of drugs. Amongst the articles examined, I have not overlooked one so important as Cod Liver Oil; and this more particularly, since it is a very favourite remedy with me, and I, moreover, so liable to deterioration by admixture with other, especially inferior, Fish Oils. I may state that I have more than once, at different times, subjected your Light Brown Oil to chemical analysis—and this unknown to yourself—and I have always found it to be free from all impurity, and rich in the constituents of bile.

"So great is my confidence in the article, that I usually prescribe it in preference to any other, in order to make sure of obtaining the remedy in its purest and best condition—I remain, yours faithfully,

"ARTHUR H. HASSALL, M.D.

"Bennett Street, St. James's Street, Dec. 1, 1854."

DR. LETHEBY,
Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology in the Medical College of the London Hospital, Chemical Referee to the Corporation of London, Medical Officer of Health to the City of London, &c., &c.

"Gentlemen,—I have frequently had occasion to analyse the Cod Liver Oil which is sold at your establishment. I mean that variety which is prepared for medicinal use in the Loftedt Islands, and was sent to me gratuitously with the sanction of Dr. de Jongh, of the Hague.

"In all cases I have found it possessing the same set of properties, among which the presence of choic acid compounds and of iodine in a state of organic combination are the most remarkable: in fact, the Oil corresponds in all its characters with that named "Bude brune," and described as the best variety in the masterly treatise of Dr. de Jongh.

"It is, I believe, universally acknowledged that this description of Oil has great therapeutical power; and, from my investigations, I have no doubt of its being a pure and unadulterated article.

"HENRY LETHEBY, M.B.

"To Messrs. Anser, Harford, and Co."

"College Laboratory, London Hospital, Sept. 24, 1855."
EXTRACTS FROM SELECT MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS.

Dr. Sheridan Muspratt, F.R.S.E., M.R.I.A.
Founder and Principal of the Royal College of Chemistry, Liverpool, Member de l'Academie Nationale de France, Author of "CHEMISTRY APPLIED TO THE ARTS AND MANUFACTURES," &c., &c.

"Berzelius and other of the leading Chemists and Physicians of Europe, having testimonialised in favour of your Oil, is a proof of its superiority over all the others that have been examined. I have submitted the Oil to the usual tests; and, finding it to contain all the ingredients enumerated by you in your work, I have not the slightest hesitation in pronouncing it a genuine article, and one that is fully entitled to the confidence of the Medical Profession."—

William Allen Miller, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.
Professor of Chemistry, King's College, London, Author of "ELEMENTS OF CHEMISTRY, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL," &c., &c.

"The samples of the Oil examined were purchased by myself. I have no doubt that they are what they profess to be—genuine specimens of Cod Liver Oil, as they possess the composition of this substance, and exhibit, in a marked degree, the chemical characters by which this Oil is distinguished, and to which its medicinal qualities are attributed."—

A. B. Granville, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.

"Dr. Granville has used Dr. de Jongh's Light Brown Cod Liver Oil extensively in his practice, and has found it not only efficacious, but uniform in its qualities. He has found that this particular kind produces the desired effect in a shorter time than others, and that it does not cause the nausea and indigestion too often consequent on the administration of the Pale Newfoundland Oils."—

G. Radcliffe Hall, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.
Physician to the Western Counties Hospital for Consumption, Torquay, Author of "ESSAY ON THE BRONCHIAL TUBES," &c., &c.

"I have no hesitation in saying that I generally prefer your Cod Liver Oil for the following reasons:—I find it in general better for the digestive organs, especially in those patients who consider themselves to be bilious; it seldom causes nausea or indigestion; it is more palatable to most patients than the other kinds of Cod Liver Oil; it is stronger, and consequently a smaller dose is sufficient."—

Charles Cowan, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.S.E.,
Senior Physician to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Consulting Physician to the Reading Dispensary, Translator of "LЮIS ОN ПУТИТЬ," &c., &c.

"Dr. Cowan is glad to find that the Profession has some reasonable guarantee for a genuine article. The material now sold varies in almost every establishment where it is purchased, and a tendency to prefer a colourless and tasteless Oil, if not counteracted, will ultimately jeopardise the reputation of an unquestionable Vaccine addition to the Materia Medica. Dr. Cowan wishes Dr. de Jongh every success in his meritorious undertaking."—

Edgar Sheppard, Esq., M.D., M.R.C.S.

"Dr. Sheppard has made extensive use of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil and has great pleasure in testifying to its superiority over every other preparation to be met with in this country. It has the remarkable advantage of being burnt and assimilated by stomachs which reject the ordinary Oils. Dr. Sheppard has no hesitation in stating that he has not felt the disagreeable effects of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Oil to be of more value than an Imperial Quart of any other to be met with in London."—

Thomas Hunt, Esq., F.R.C.S.
Surgeon to the Western Dispensary for Diseases of the Skin, Author of "PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON CERTAIN DISEASES OF THE SKIN GENERALLY PROVOCED BY INJURIES," &c., &c.

"I have now prescribed Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil in about one hundred and twenty cases of skin disease. It is bare justice to him to say that the successful result of his use in dispensary practice fully satisfies me that he has not exaggerated its value. In emaciated or strumous subjects this Oil is highly useful."—

Richard Moore Lawrence, Esq., M.D.
Physician to H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe Cobourg and Gotha, Physician to the Western Counties Hospital, Author of "ON GOUT AND RHEUMATISM," &c., &c.

"I have frequently tested your Cod Liver Oil; and, so impressed was I with its superiority, that I invariably prescribe it in preference to any other, feeling assured that I am recommending a genuine article, and not a second-rate and counterfeit Cod Liver which for efficacy of this invaluable medicine is destroyed."—

William Bayes, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.P.
Physician to the Brighton Dispensary, Author of "ON NERVOUS DISEASE CONNECTED WITH DYSPHORIA," &c., &c.

"I have for many months been in the habit of ordering no other than your Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil, which appears to me to possess many advantages over the other descriptions of Oil, in being of one invariable strength, in being more palatable, and in its greater efficacy. I seldom order a larger dose than a Dessert-spoonful, and consider that a Tea-spoonful is equal in its effects to a Table-spoonful of the Pale Oil."—

The Lancet.

"Some of the deficiencies of the Pale Oil are attributable to the method of its preparation, and especially to its filtration through charcoal. In the preference of the Light-Brown over the Pale Oil we fully concur. We have carefully tested a specimen of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil. We find it to be genuine, of rich inodors and the elements of biax."—

Medical Circular.

"Much of the Pale Oil sold in the market is found to be nothing more than Skate Oil—a fact which will account for the failures which have so frequently attended the use of the so-called Cod Liver Oil. The utmost reliance may be placed on the experimental researches of Dr. de Jongh, who is one of the most eminent of European chemists. Our own experience practically confirms his judgment, and we unhesitatingly recommend Dr. de Jongh's Light Brown Cod Liver Oil as the best for medical purposes, and well deserving the confidence of the profession."—

Association Medical Journal.

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