

ported his family on his earnings. As to Pierre Balmat, he had only a mother; but, poor woman, she was not long parted from her son. Three months after his death, she died also."

## BLEAK HOUSE.\*

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

## CHAPTER XXIII.—ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

WE came home from Mr. Boythorn's, after six pleasant weeks. We were often in the park, and in the woods, and seldom passed the Lodge where we had taken shelter without looking in to speak to the keeper's wife; but we saw no more of Lady Dedlock, except at church on Sundays. There was company at Chesney Wold; and although several beautiful faces surrounded her, her face retained the same influence on me as at first. I do not quite know, even now, whether it was painful or pleasurable; whether it drew me toward her, or made me shrink from her. I think I admired her with a kind of fear; and I know that in her presence my thoughts always wandered back, as they had done at first, to that old time of my life.

I had a fancy, on more than one of these Sundays, that what this lady so curiously was to me, I was to her—I mean that I disturbed her thoughts as she influenced mine, though in some different way. But when I stole a glance at her, and saw her so composed and distant and unapproachable, I felt this to be a foolish weakness. Indeed, I felt the whole state of my mind in reference to her to be weak and unreasonable; and I remonstrated with myself about it as much as I could.

One incident that occurred before we quitted Mr. Boythorn's house, I had better mention in this place.

I was walking in the garden with Ada, when I was told that some one wished to see me. Going into the breakfast-room where this person was waiting, I found it to be the French maid who had cast off her shoes and walked through the wet grass, on the day when it thundered and lightened.

"Mademoiselle," she began, looking fixedly at me with her too-eager eyes, though otherwise presenting an agreeable appearance, and speaking neither with boldness nor servility, "I have taken a great liberty in coming here, but you know how to excuse it, being so amiable, mademoiselle."

"No excuse is necessary," I returned, "if you wish to speak to me."

"That is my desire, mademoiselle. A thousand thanks for the permission. I have your leave to speak. Is it not?" she said, in a quick, natural way.

"Certainly," said I.

"Mademoiselle, you are so amiable! Listen, then, if you please. I have left my Lady. We could not agree. My Lady is so high; so very high. Pardon! Mademoiselle, you are right!" Her quickness anticipated what I might have said

presently, but as yet had only thought. "It is not for me to come here to complain of my Lady. But I say she is so high, so very high. I will say not a word more. All the world knows that."

"Go on, if you please," said I.

"Assuredly; mademoiselle, I am thankful for your politeness. Mademoiselle, I have an inexpressible desire to find a service with a young lady who is good, accomplished, beautiful. You are good, accomplished, and beautiful as an angel. Ah, could I have the honor of being your domestic!"

"I am sorry—" I began.

"Do not dismiss me so soon, mademoiselle!" she said, with an involuntary contraction of her fine black eyebrows. "Let me hope, a moment! Mademoiselle, I know this service would be more retired than that which I have quitted. Well! I wish that. I know this service would be less distinguished than that which I have quitted. Well! I wish that. I know that I should win less, as to wages, here. Good. I am content."

"I assure you," said I, quite embarrassed by the mere idea of having such an attendant, "that I keep no maid—"

"Ah, mademoiselle, but why not? Why not, when you can have one so devoted to you? Who would be enchanted to serve you; who would be so true, so zealous, and so faithful, every day! Mademoiselle, I wish with all my heart to serve you. Do not speak of money at present. Take me as I am. For nothing!"

She was so singularly earnest that I drew back, almost afraid of her. Without appearing to notice it, in her ardor, she still pressed herself upon me; speaking in a rapid subdued voice, though always with a certain grace and propriety.

"Mademoiselle, I come from the South country, where we are quick, and where we like and dislike very strong. My Lady was too high for me; I was too high for her. It is done—past—finished! Receive me as your domestic, and I will serve you well. I will do more for you, than you figure to yourself now. Chut! mademoiselle, I will—no matter, I will do my utmost possible, in all things. If you accept my service, you will not repent it! Mademoiselle, you will not repent it, and I will serve you well. You don't know how well!"

There was a lowering energy in her face, as she stood looking at me while I explained the impossibility of my engaging her (without thinking it necessary to say how very little I desired to do so), which seemed to bring visibly before me some woman from the streets of Paris in the reign of terror. She heard me out without interruption; and then said, with her pretty accent, and in her mildest voice:

"Hey, mademoiselle, I have received my answer! I am sorry of it. But I must go elsewhere, and seek what I have not found here. Will you graciously let me kiss your hand?"

She looked at me more intently as she took it, and seemed to take note, with her momentary touch, of every vein in it. "I fear I surprised

\* Continued from the October Number.

you, mademoiselle, on the day of the storm?" she said, with a parting courtesy.

I confessed that she had surprised us all.

"I took an oath, mademoiselle," she said, smiling, "and I wanted to stamp in on my mind, so that I might keep it faithfully. And I will! Adieu, mademoiselle!"

So ended our conference, which I was very glad to bring to a close. I supposed she went away from the village, for I saw her no more; and nothing else occurred to disturb our tranquil summer pleasures, until six weeks were out, and we returned home, as I began just now by saying.

At that time, and for a good many weeks after that time, Richard was constant in his visits. Besides coming every Saturday or Sunday, and remaining with us until Monday morning, he sometimes rode out on horseback unexpectedly, and passed the evening with us, and rode back again early next day. He was as vivacious as ever, and told us he was very industrious; but I was not easy in my mind about him. It appeared to me that his industry was all misdirected. I could not find that it led to any thing, but the formation of delusive hopes in connection with the suit, already the pernicious cause of so much sorrow and ruin. He had got at the core of that mystery now, he told us: and nothing could be plainer than that the will, under which he and Ada were to take, I don't know how many thousands of pounds, must be finally established, if there were any sense or justice in the Court of Chancery—but O, what a great *if* that sounded in my ears—and that this happy conclusion could not be much longer delayed. He proved this to himself by all the weary arguments on that side he had read, and every one of them sunk him deeper in the infatuation. He had even begun to haunt the court. He told us how he saw Miss Flite there daily; how they talked together, and he did her little kindnesses; and how, while he laughed at her, he pitied her from his heart. But he never thought—never, my poor, dear, sanguine Richard, capable of so much happiness then, and with such better things before him!—what a fatal link was riveting between his fresh youth and her faded age; between his free hopes and her caged birds, and her hungry garret, and her wandering mind!

Ada loved him too well, to mistrust him much in any thing he said or did; and my Guardian, though he frequently complained of the east wind, and read more than usual in the Growlery, preserved a strict silence on the subject. So, I thought, one day when I went to London to meet Caddy Jellyby, at her solicitation, I would ask Richard to be in waiting for me at the coach-office, that we might have a little talk together. I found him there when I arrived, and we walked away arm-in-arm.

"Well, Richard," said I, as soon as I could begin to be grave with him, "are you beginning to feel more settled now?"

"O yes, my dear!" returned Richard. "I am all right enough."

"But settled?" said I.

"How do you mean, settled?" returned Richard, with his gay laugh.

"Settled in the law," said I.

"O, ay," replied Richard, "I'm all right enough."

"You said that before, my dear Richard."

"And you don't think it's an answer, eh? Well! Perhaps it's not. Settled? You mean, do I feel as if I were settling down?"

"Yes."

"Why, no, I can't say I am settling down," said Richard, emphasizing 'down,' as if that expressed the difficulty; "because one can't settle down while this business remains in such an unsettled state. When I say this business, of course I mean the—*forbidden subject*."

"Do you think it will ever be in a settled state?" said I.

"Not the least doubt of it," answered Richard.

We walked a little way, without speaking; and presently Richard addressed me, in his frankest and most feeling manner, thus:

"My dear Esther, I understand you, and I wish to Heaven I were a more constant sort of fellow. I don't mean constant to Ada, for I love her dearly—better and better every day—but constant to myself. (Somehow, I mean something that I can't very well express, but you'll make it out.) If I were a more constant sort of fellow, I should have held on, either to Badger, or to Kenge and Carboy, like grim Death; and should have begun to be steady and systematic by this time, and shouldn't be in debt, and—"

"*Are you in debt, Richard?*"

"Yes," said Richard, "I am a little so, my dear. Also, I have taken rather too much to billiards, and that sort of thing. Now the murder's out; you despise me, Esther, don't you?"

"You know I don't," said I.

"You are kinder to me than I often am to myself," he returned. "My dear Esther, I am a very unfortunate dog not to be more settled, but how *can* I be more settled? If you lived in an unfinished house, you couldn't settle down in it; if you were condemned to leave every thing you undertook unfinished, you would find it hard to apply yourself to any thing; and yet, that's my unhappy case. I was born into this unfinished contention, with all its chances and changes, and it began to unsettle me before I quite knew the difference between a suit at law and a suit of clothes; and it has gone on unsettling me ever since; and here I am now, conscious sometimes that I am but a worthless fellow to love my confiding cousin Ada."

We were in a solitary place, and he put his hand before his eyes, and sobbed as he said the words.

"O Richard!" said I, "do not be so moved. You have a noble nature, and Ada's love may make you worthier every day."

"I know, my dear," he replied, pressing my arm, "I know all that. You mustn't mind my being a little soft now, for I have had all this

upon my mind for a long time; and have often meant to speak to you, and have sometimes wanted opportunity, and sometimes courage. I know what the thought of Ada ought to do for me, but it doesn't do it. I am too unsettled even for that. I love her most devotedly; and yet I do her wrong, in doing myself wrong, every day and hour. But it can't last forever. We shall come on for a final hearing, and get judgment in our favor; and then you and Ada shall see what I can really be!"

It had given me a pang to hear him sob, and see the tears start out between his fingers, but that was infinitely less affecting to me, than the hopeful animation with which he said these words.

"I have looked well into the papers, Esther—I have been deep in them for months"—he continued, recovering his cheerfulness in a moment, "and you may rely upon it that we shall come out triumphant. As to years of delay, there has been no want of them, Heaven knows! and there is the greater probability of our bringing the matter to a speedy close; in fact, it's on the paper now. It will be all right at last, and then you shall see!"

Recalling how he had just now placed Messrs. Kenge and Carboy in the same category with Mr. Badger, I asked him when he intended to be articulated in Lincoln's Inn?

"There again! I think not at all, Esther," he returned with an effort. "I fancy I have had enough of it. Having worked at Jarndyce and Jarndyce like a galley slave, I have slaked my thirst for the law, and satisfied myself that I shouldn't like it. Besides, I find it unsettles me more and more to be so constantly upon the scene of action. So what," continued Richard, confident again by this time, "do I naturally turn my thoughts to?"

"I can't imagine," said I.

"Don't look so serious," returned Richard, "because it's the best thing I can do, my dear Esther, I am certain. It's not as if I wanted a profession for life. These proceedings will come to a termination, and then I am provided for. No. I look upon it as a pursuit which is in its nature more or less unsettled, and therefore suited to my temporary condition—I may say, precisely suited. What is it that I naturally turn my thoughts to?"

I looked at him, and shook my head.

"What," said Richard, in a tone of perfect conviction, "but the army!"

"The army?" said I.

"The army, of course. What I have to do, is, to get a commission; and—there I am, you know!" said Richard.

And then he showed me, proved by elaborate calculations in his pocket-book, that supposing he had contracted, say two hundred pounds of debt in six months, out of the army; and that he contracted no debt at all within a corresponding period, in the army—as to which he had quite made up his mind; this step must involve a saving of

four hundred pounds in a year, or two thousand pounds in five years—which was a considerable sum. And then he spoke, so ingenuously and sincerely, of the sacrifice he made in withdrawing himself for a time from Ada, and of the earnestness with which he aspired—as in thought he always did, I know full well—to repay her love, and to insure her happiness, and to conquer what was amiss in himself, and to acquire the very soul of decision, that he made my heart ache keenly, sorely. For I thought how would this end, how could this end, when so soon and so surely all his manly qualities were touched by the fatal blight that ruined every thing it rested on!

I spoke to Richard with all the earnestness I felt, and all the hope I could not quite feel then; and implored him, for Ada's sake, not to put any trust in Chancery. To all I said, Richard readily assented; riding over the Court and every thing else in his easy way, and drawing the brightest pictures of the character he was to settle into—alas, when the grievous suit should loose its hold upon him! We had a long talk, but it always came back to that, in substance.

At last, we came to Soho Square, where Caddy Jellyby had appointed to wait for me, as a quiet place in the neighborhood of Newman Street. Caddy was in the garden in the centre, and hurried out as soon as I appeared. After a few cheerful words, Richard left us together.

"Prince has a pupil over the way, Esther," said Caddy, "and got the key for us. So, if you will walk round and round here with me, we can lock ourselves in, and I can tell you comfortably what I wanted to see your dear good face about."

"Very well, my dear," said I. "Nothing could be better." So Caddy, after affectionately squeezing the dear good face, as she called it, locked the gate, and took my arm, and we began to walk round the garden very cosily.

"You see, Esther," said Caddy, who thoroughly enjoyed a little confidence, "after you spoke to me about it's being wrong to marry without Ma's knowledge, or even to keep Ma long in the dark respecting our engagement—though I don't believe Ma cares much for me, I must say—I thought it right to mention your opinions to Prince. In the first place, because I want to profit by every thing you tell me; and in the second place, because I have no secrets from Prince."

"I hope he approved, Caddy?"

"O, my dear! I assure you he would approve of any thing you could say. You have no idea what an opinion he has of you!"

"Indeed?"

"Esther, it's enough to make any body but me jealous," said Caddy, laughing and shaking her head; "but it only makes me joyful, for you are the first friend I ever had, and the best friend I ever can have, and nobody can respect and love you too much to please me."

"Upon my word, Caddy," said I, "you are in the general conspiracy to keep me in a good humor. Well, my dear?"

"Well! I am going to tell you," replied Caddy, crossing her hands confidentially upon my arm. "So we talked a good deal about it, and so I said to Prince, 'Prince, as Miss Summerson—'"

"I hope you didn't say 'Miss Summerson.'"

"No. I didn't!" cried Caddy, greatly pleased, and with the brightest of faces. "I said, 'Esther.' I said to Prince, 'As Esther is decidedly of that opinion, Prince, and has expressed it to me, and always hints it when she writes those kind notes, which you are so fond of hearing me read to you, I am prepared to disclose the truth to Ma whenever you think proper. And I think, Prince,' said I, 'that Esther thinks that I should be in a better, and truer, and more honorable position altogether, if you did the same to your Papa.'"

"Yes, my dear," said I. "Esther certainly does think so."

"So I was right, you see!" exclaimed Caddy. "Well! this troubled Prince a good deal; not because he had the least doubt about it, but because he is so considerate of the feelings of old Mr. Turveydrop; and he had his apprehensions that old Mr. Turveydrop might break his heart, or faint away, or be very much overcome in some affecting manner or other, if he made such an announcement. He feared old Mr. Turveydrop might consider it undutiful, and might receive too great a shock. For, old Mr. Turveydrop's deportment is very beautiful you know, Esther," added Caddy; "and his feelings are extremely sensitive."

"Are they, my dear?"

"O, extremely sensitive. Prince says so. Now, this has caused my darling child—I didn't mean to use the expression to you, Esther," Caddy apologized, her face suffused with blushes, "but I generally call Prince my darling child."

I laughed; and Caddy laughed and blushed, and went on.

"This has caused him, Esther—"

"Caused whom, my dear?"

"O you tiresome thing!" said Caddy, laughing, with her pretty face on fire. "My darling child, if you insist upon it!—This has caused him weeks of uneasiness, and has made him delay, from day to day, in a very anxious manner. At last he said to me, 'Caddy, if Miss Summerson, who is a great favorite with my father, could be prevailed upon to be present when I broke the subject, I think I could do it.' So I promised I would ask you. And I made up my mind, besides," said Caddy, looking at me hopefully, but timidly, "that if you consented, I would ask you afterward to come with me to Ma. This is what I meant, when I said in my note that I had a great favor and a great assistance to beg of you. And if you thought you could grant it, Esther, we should both be very grateful."

"Let me see Caddy," said I, pretending to consider. "Really I think I could do a greater thing than that, if the need were pressing. I am at your service and the darling child's, my dear, whenever you like."

Caddy was quite transported by this reply of mine; being, I believe, as susceptible to the least kindness or encouragement as any tender heart that ever beat in this world; and after another turn or two round the garden, during which she put on an entirely new pair of gloves, and made herself as resplendent as possible that she might do no avoidable discredit to the Master of Deportment, we went to Newman Street direct.

Prince was teaching, of course. We found him engaged with a not very hopeful pupil—a stubborn little girl with a sulky forehead, a deep voice, and an inanimate dissatisfied mamma—whose case was certainly not rendered more hopeful by the confusion into which we threw her preceptor. The lesson at last came to an end, after proceeding as discordantly as possible; and when the little girl had changed her shoes, and had had her white muslin extinguished in shawls, she was taken away. After a few words of preparation, we then went in search of Mr. Turveydrop; whom we found, grouped with his hat and gloves, as a model of Deportment, on the sofa in his private apartment—the only comfortable room in the house. He appeared to have dressed at his leisure, in the intervals of a light collation; and his dressing-case, brushes, and so forth, all of quite an elegant kind, lay about.

"Father, Miss Summerson; Miss Jellyby."

"Charmed! Enchanted!" said Mr. Turveydrop, rising with his high-shouldered bow. "Permit me!" handing chairs. "Be seated!" kissing the tips of his left fingers. "Overjoyed!" shutting his eyes and rolling. "My little retreat is made a Paradise." Re-composing himself on the sofa, like the second gentleman in Europe.

"Again you find us, Miss Summerson," said he, "using our little arts to polish, polish! Again the sex stimulates us, and rewards us, by the condescension of its lovely presence. It is much in these times (and we have made an awfully degenerating business of it since the days of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent—my patron, if I may presume to say so) to experience that deportment is not wholly trodden under foot by mechanics. That it can yet bask in the smile of Beauty, my dear madam."

I said nothing, which I thought a suitable reply; and he took a pinch of snuff.

"My dear son," said Mr. Turveydrop, "you have four schools this afternoon. I would recommend a hasty sandwich."

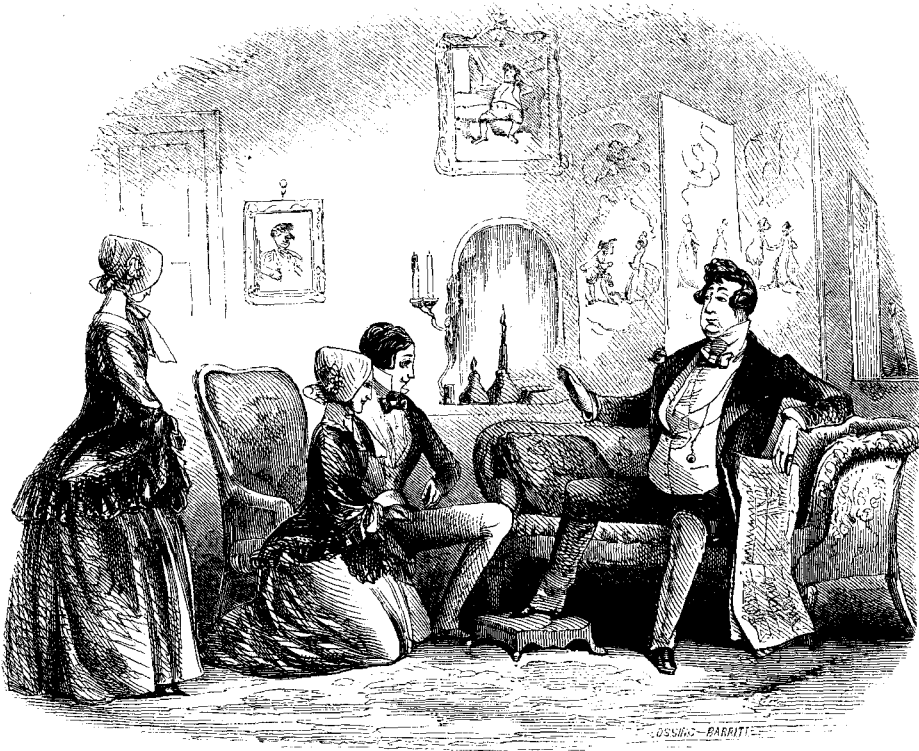
"Thank you, father," returned Prince, "I will be sure to be punctual. My dear father, may I beg you to prepare your mind for what I am going to say?"

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the Model, pale and aghast, as Prince and Caddy, hand in hand, bent down before him. "What is this? Is this lunacy! Or what is this?"

"Father," returned Prince, with great submission, "I love this young lady, and we are engaged."

"Engaged!" cried Mr. Turveydrop, reclining on the sofa, and shutting out the sight with his





A MODEL OF PARENTAL DEPORTMENT.

hand. "An arrow launched at my brain, by my own child!"

"We have been engaged for some time, father," faltered Prince; "and Miss Summerson, hearing of it, advised that we should declare the fact to you, and was so very kind as to attend on the present occasion. Miss Jellyby is a young lady who deeply respects you, father."

Mr. Turveydrop uttered a groan.

"No, pray don't! Pray don't, father," urged his son. "Miss Jellyby is a young lady who deeply respects you, and our first desire is to consider your comfort."

Mr. Turveydrop sobbed.

"No, pray don't, father!" cried his son.

"Boy," said Mr. Turveydrop, "it is well that your sainted mother is spared this pang. Strike deep, and spare not. Strike home, sir, strike home!"

"Pray, don't say so, father," implored Prince, in tears, "it goes to my heart. I do assure you, father, that our first wish and intention is to consider your comfort. Caroline and I do not forget our duty—what is my duty is Caroline's, as we have often said together—and, with your approval and consent, father, we will devote ourselves to making your life agreeable."

"Strike home," murmured Mr. Turveydrop. "Strike home!"

But he seemed to listen, I thought, too.

"My dear father," returned Prince, "we well know what little comforts you are accustomed to, and have a right to; and it will always be our study, and our pride, to provide those before any thing. If you will bless us with your approval and consent, father, we shall not think of being married until it is quite agreeable to you; and when we are married, we shall always make you—of course—our first consideration. You must ever be the Head and Master here, father; and we feel how truly unnatural it would be in us, if we failed to know it, or if we failed to exert ourselves in every possible way to please you."

Mr. Turveydrop underwent a severe internal struggle, and came upright on the sofa again, with his cheeks puffing over his stiff cravat: a perfect model of parental deportment.

"My son!" said Mr. Turveydrop. "My children! I can not resist your prayer. Be happy!"

His benignity, as he raised his future daughter-in-law and stretched out his hand to his son (who kissed it with affectionate respect and gratitude), was the most confusing sight I ever saw.

"My children," said Mr. Turveydrop, paternally encircling Caddy with his left arm as she sat beside him, and putting his right hand gracefully on his hip. "My son and daughter, your happiness shall be my care. I will watch over

you. You shall always live with me;" meaning, of course, I will always live with you; "this house is henceforth as much yours as mine; consider it your home. May you long live to share it with me!"

The power of his Deportment was such, that they really were as much overcome with thankfulness as if, instead of quartering himself upon them for the rest of his life, he were making some munificent sacrifice in their favor.

"For myself, my children," said Mr. Turveydrop, "I am falling into the sear and yellow leaf, and it is impossible to say how long the last feeble traces of gentlemanly Deportment may linger in this weaving and spinning age. But, so long, I will do my duty to society, and will show myself, as usual, about town. My wants are few and simple. My little apartment here, my few essentials for the toilet, my frugal morning meal, and my little dinner, will suffice. I charge your dutiful affection with the supply of these requirements, and I charge myself with all the rest."

They were overpowered afresh by his uncommon generosity.

"My son," said Mr. Turveydrop, "for those little points in which you are deficient—points of Deportment which are born with a man—which may be improved by cultivation, but can never be originated—you may still rely on me. I have been faithful to my post, since the days of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent; and I will not desert it now. No, my son. If you have ever contemplated your father's poor position with a feeling of pride, you may rest assured that he will do nothing to tarnish it. For yourself, Prince, whose character is different (we can not be all alike, nor is it advisable that we should), work, be industrious, earn money, and extend the connection as much as possible."

"That you may depend I will do, dear father, with all my heart," replied Prince.

"I have no doubt of it," said Mr. Turveydrop. "Your qualities are not shining, my dear child, but they are steady and useful. And to both of you, my children, I would merely observe, in the spirit of a sainted Woman on whose path I had the happiness of casting, I believe, *some* ray of light—take care of the establishment, take care of my simple wants, and bless you both!"

Old Mr. Turveydrop then became so very galling, in honor of the occasion, that I told Caddy we must really go to Thavies Inn at once if we were to go at all that day. So we took our departure, after a very loving farewell between Caddy and her betrothed; and during our walk she was so happy, and so full of old Mr. Turveydrop's praises, that I would not have said a word in his disparagement for any consideration.

The house in Thavies Inn had bills in the windows announcing that it was to let, and looked dirtier and gloomier and ghastlier than ever. The name of poor Mr. Jellyby had appeared in the list of Bankrupts, but a day or two before; and he was shut up in the dining-room with two

gentlemen, and a heap of blue bags, account-books, and papers, making the most desperate endeavors to understand his affairs. They appeared to me to be quite beyond his comprehension; for when Caddy took me into the dining-room by mistake, and we came upon Mr. Jellyby in his spectacles, forlornly fenced into a corner by the great dining-table and the two gentlemen, he seemed to have given up the whole thing, and to be speechless and insensible.

Going up-stairs to Mrs. Jellyby's room (the children were all screaming in the kitchen, and there was no servant to be seen), we found that lady in the midst of a voluminous correspondence, opening, reading, and sorting letters, with a great accumulation of torn covers on the floor. She was so pre-occupied that at first she did not know me, though she sat looking at me with that curious, bright-eyed, far-off look of hers.

"O! Miss Summerson!" she said at last. "I was thinking of something so different! I hope you are well. I am happy to see you. Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Clare quite well?"

I hoped in return that Mr. Jellyby was quite well.

"Why, not quite, my dear," said Mrs. Jellyby, in the calmest manner. "He has been unfortunate in his affairs, and is a little out of spirits. Happily for me, I am so much engaged that I have no time to think about it. We have, at the present moment, one hundred and seventy families, Miss Summerson, averaging five persons in each, either gone or going to the left bank of the Niger."

I thought of the one family so near us, who were neither gone nor going to the left bank of the Niger, and wondered how she could be so placid.

"You have brought Caddy back, I see," observed Mrs. Jellyby, with a glance at her daughter. "It has become quite a novelty to see her here. She has almost deserted her old employment, and in fact obliges me to employ a boy."

"I am sure, Ma," began Caddy—

"Now you know, Caddy," her mother mildly interposed, "that I *do* employ a boy, who is now at his dinner. What is the use of your contradicting?"

"I was not going to contradict, Ma," returned Caddy. "I was only going to say, that surely you wouldn't have me be a mere drudge all my life."

"I believe, my dear," said Mrs. Jellyby, still opening her letters, casting her bright eyes smilingly over them, and sorting them as she spoke, "that you have a business example before you in your mother. Besides. A mere drudge? If you had any sympathy with the destinies of the human race, it would raise you high above any such idea. But you have none. I have often told you, Caddy, you have no such sympathy."

"Not if it's Africa, Ma, I have not."

"Of course you have not. Now, if I were not happily so much engaged, Miss Summerson," said Mrs. Jellyby, sweetly casting her eyes for a

moment on me, and considering where to put the particular letter she had just opened, "this would distress and disappoint me. But I have so much to think of in connection with Borrioboola Gha, and it is so necessary I should concentrate myself, that there is my remedy you see."

As Caddy gave me a glance of entreaty, and as Mrs. Jellyby was looking far away into Africa straight through my bonnet and head, I thought it a good opportunity to come to the subject of my visit, and to attract Mrs. Jellyby's attention.

"Perhaps," I began, "you will wonder what has brought me here to interrupt you."

"I am always delighted to see Miss Summerson," said Mrs. Jellyby, pursuing her employment with a placid smile. "Though I wish," and she shook her head, "she was more interested in the Borrioboolan project."

"I have come with Caddy," said I, "because Caddy justly thinks she ought not to have a secret from her mother; and fancies I shall encourage and aid her (though I am sure I don't know how), in imparting one."

"Caddy," said Mrs. Jellyby, pausing for a moment in her occupation, and then serenely pursuing it after shaking her head, "you are going to tell me some nonsense."

Caddy untied the strings of her bonnet, took her bonnet off, and letting it dangle on the floor by the strings, and crying heartily, said, "Ma, I am engaged."

"O, you ridiculous child!" observed Mrs. Jellyby, with an abstracted air, as she looked over the dispatch last opened; "what a goose you are!"

"I am engaged, Ma," sobbed Caddy, "to young Mr. Turveydrop, at the Academy; and old Mr. Turveydrop (who is a very gentlemanly man indeed) has given his consent, and I beg and pray you'll give us yours, Ma, because I never could be happy without it. I never, never could!" sobbed Caddy, quite forgetful of her general complainings, and of every thing but her natural affection.

"You see again, Miss Summerson," observed Mrs. Jellyby, serenely, "what a happiness it is to be so much occupied as I am, and to have this necessity for self-concentration that I have! Here is Caddy engaged to a dancing-master's son—mixed up with people who have no more sympathy with the destinies of the human race, than she has herself! This, too, when Mr. Gusher, one of the first philanthropists of our time, has mentioned to me that he was really disposed to be interested in her!"

"Ma, I always hated and detested Mr. Gusher!" sobbed Caddy.

"Caddy, Caddy!" returned Mrs. Jellyby, opening another letter with the greatest complacency. "I have no doubt you did. How could you do otherwise, being totally destitute of the sympathies with which he overflows! Now, if my public duties were not a favorite child to me, if I were not occupied with large measures on a vast scale, these petty details might grieve me

very much, Miss Summerson! But can I permit the film of a silly proceeding on the part of Caddy (from whom I expect nothing else), to interpose between me and the great African continent? No. No!" repeated Mrs. Jellyby, in a calm, clear voice, and with an agreeable smile as she opened more letters and sorted them. "No, indeed!"

I was so unprepared for the perfect coolness of this reception, though I might have expected it, that I did not know what to say. Caddy seemed equally at a loss. Mrs. Jellyby continued to open and sort letters; and to repeat occasionally, in quite a charming tone of voice, and with a smile of perfect composure, "No, indeed!"

"I hope, Ma," sobbed poor Caddy at last, "you are not angry."

"O Caddy, you really are an absurd girl," returned Mrs. Jellyby, "to ask such questions, after what I have said of the preoccupation of my mind."

"And I hope, Ma, you give us your consent, and wish us well?" said Caddy.

"You are a nonsensical child to have done any thing of this kind," said Mrs. Jellyby; "and a degenerate child, when you might have devoted yourself to the great public measure. But the step is taken, and I have engaged a boy, and there is no more to be said. Now, pray, Caddy," said Mrs. Jellyby—for Caddy was kissing her, "don't delay me in my work, but let me clear off this heavy batch of papers before the afternoon post comes in!"

I thought I could not do better than take my leave; I was detained for a moment by Caddy's saying:

"You won't object to my bringing him to see you, Ma?"

"O dear me, Caddy," cried Mrs. Jellyby, who had relapsed into that distant contemplation, "have you begun again? Bring whom?"

"Him, Ma."

"Caddy, Caddy!" said Mrs. Jellyby, quite weary of such little matters. "Then you must bring him some evening which is not a Parent Society night, or a Branch night, or a Ramification night. You must accommodate the visit to the demands upon my time. My dear Miss Summerson, it was very kind of you to come here to help out this silly chit. Good-by! When I tell you that I have fifty-eight new letters from manufacturing families anxious to understand the details of the Native and Coffee Cultivation question this morning, I need not apologize for having very little leisure."

I was not surprised by Caddy's being in low spirits, when we went down stairs; or by her sobbing afresh on my neck, or by her saying she would far rather have been scolded than treated with such indifference, or by her confiding to me that she was so poor in clothes, that how she was ever to be married creditably she didn't know. I gradually cheered her up, by dwelling on the many things she would do for her unfor-

tunate father, and for Peepy, when she had a home of her own; and finally we went down stairs into the damp dark kitchen, where Peepy and his little brothers and sisters were groveling on the stone floor, and where we had such a game of play with them, that to prevent myself from being quite torn to pieces I was obliged to fall back on my fairy tales. From time to time I heard loud voices in the parlor overhead; and occasionally a violent tumbling about of the furniture. The last effect I am afraid was caused by poor Mr. Jellyby breaking away from the dining-table, and making rushes at the window with the intention of throwing himself into the area, whenever he made any new attempt to understand his affairs.

As I rode quietly home at night after the day's bustle, I thought a good deal of Caddy's engagement, and felt confirmed in my hopes (in spite of the elder Mr. Turveydrop), that she would be the happier and better for it. And if there seemed to be but a slender chance of her and her husband ever finding out what the model of Deportment really was, why that was all for the best, too, and who would wish them to be wiser? I did not wish them to be any wiser, and indeed was half ashamed of not entirely believing in him myself. And I looked up at the stars, and thought about travelers in distant countries and the stars *they* saw, and hoped I might always be so blest and happy as to be useful to some one in my small way.

They were so glad to see me when I got home, as they always were, that I could have sat down and cried for joy, if that had not been a method of making myself disagreeable. Every body in the house, from the lowest to the highest, showed me such a bright face of welcome, and spoke so cheerily, and was so happy to do any thing for me, that I suppose there never was such a fortunate little creature in the world.

We got into such a chatty state that night, through Ada and my Guardian drawing me out to tell them all about Caddy, that I went on prose, prose, prosing, for a length of time! At last, I got up to my own room, quite red to think how I had been holding forth; and then I heard a soft tap at my door. So I said, "Come in!" and there came in a pretty little girl, neatly dressed in mourning, who dropped a courtesy.

"If you please, miss," said the little girl, in a soft voice, "I am Charley."

"Why, so you are," said I, stooping down in astonishment, and giving her a kiss. "How glad I am to see you, Charley!"

"If you please, miss," pursued Charley, in the same soft voice, "I'm your maid."

"Charley?"

"If you please, miss, I'm a present to you, with Mr. Jarndyce's love."

I sat down with my hand on Charley's neck, and looked at Charley.

"And O, miss," says Charley, clapping her hands, with the tears starting down her dimpled cheeks, "Tom's at school, if you please, and

learning so good! And little Emma, she's with Mrs. Blinder, miss, a-being took such care of! And Tom, he would have been at school—and Emma, she would have been left with Mrs. Blinder—and me, I should have been here—all a deal sooner, miss; only Mr. Jarndyce thought that Tom and Emma and me had better get a little use to parting first, we was so small. Don't cry, if you please, miss!"

"I can't help it, Charley."

"No, miss, nor I can't help it," says Charley. "And if you please, miss, Mr. Jarndyce's love, and he thinks you'll like to teach me now and then. And if you please, Tom and Emma and me is to see each other once a month. And I'm so happy and so thankful, miss," cried Charley, with a heaving heart, "and I'll try to be such a good maid!"

"O, Charley dear, never forget who did all this!"

"No, miss, I never will. Nor Tom won't. Nor yet Emma. It was all you, miss."

"I have known nothing of it. It was Mr. Jarndyce, Charley."

"Yes, miss, but it was all done for the love of you, and that you might be my mistress. If you please, miss, I am a little present with his love, and it was all done for the love of you. Me and Tom was to be sure to remember it."

Charley dried her eyes, and entered on her functions: going in her matronly little way about and about the room, and folding up every thing she could lay her hands upon. Presently, Charley came creeping back to my side, and said:

"O, don't cry, if you please, miss."

And I said again, "I can't help it, Charley."

And Charley said again, "No, miss, nor I can't help it." And so, after all, I did cry for joy indeed, and so did she.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—AN APPEAL CASE.

As soon as Richard and I had held the conversation, of which I have given an account, Richard communicated the state of his mind to Mr. Jarndyce. I doubt if my Guardian were altogether taken by surprise, when he received the representation; though it caused him much uneasiness and disappointment. He and Richard were often closeted together, late at night and early in the morning, and passed whole days in London, and had innumerable appointments with Mr. Kenge, and labored through a quantity of disagreeable business. While they were thus employed, my Guardian, though he underwent considerable inconvenience from the state of the wind, and rubbed his head so constantly that not a single hair upon it ever rested in its right place, was as genial with Ada and me as at any other time, but maintained a steady reserve on these matters. And as our utmost endeavors could only elicit from Richard himself sweeping assurances that every thing was going on capitally, and that it really was all right at last, our anxiety was not much relieved by him.

We learnt, however, as the time went on, that



a new application was made to the Lord Chancellor on Richard's behalf, as an Infant and a Ward, and I don't know what; and that there was a quantity of talking; and that the Lord Chancellor described him, in open court, as a vexatious and capricious infant; and that the matter was adjourned and re-adjourned, and referred, and reported on, and petitioned about, until Richard began to doubt (as he told us) whether, if he entered the army at all, it would not be as a veteran of seventy or eighty years of age. At last, an appointment was made for him to see the Lord Chancellor again in his private room, and there the Lord Chancellor very seriously reproved him for trifling with time, and not knowing his mind—"a pretty good joke, I think," said Richard, "from that quarter!"—and, at last, it was settled that his application should be granted. His name was entered at the Horse Guards, as an applicant for an Ensign's commission; the purchase-money was deposited at an Agent's; and Richard, in his usual characteristic way, plunged into a violent course of military study, and got up at five o'clock every morning to practice the broadsword exercise.

Thus, vacation succeeded term, and term succeeded vacation. We sometimes heard of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, as being in the paper or out of the paper, or as being to be mentioned, or as being to be spoken to; and it came on, and it went off. Richard, who was now in a Professor's house in London, was able to be with us less frequently than before; my Guardian still maintained the same reserve; and so time passed until the commission was obtained, and Richard received directions with it to join a regiment in Ireland.

He arrived, post haste, with the intelligence one evening, and had a long conference with my Guardian. Upward of an hour elapsed before my Guardian put his head into the room where Ada and I were sitting, and said, "Come in, my dears!" We went in, and found Richard, whom we had last seen in high spirits, leaning on the chimney-piece, looking mortified and angry.

"Rick and I, Ada," said Mr. Jarndyce, "are not quite of one mind. Come, come, Rick, put a brighter face upon it!"

"You are very hard with me, sir," said Richard. "The harder, because you have been so considerate to me in all other respects, and have done me kindnesses that I can never acknowledge. I never could have been set right without you, sir."

"Well, well!" said Mr. Jarndyce, "I want to set you more right yet. I want to set you more right with yourself."

"I hope you will excuse my saying, sir," returned Richard in a fiery way, but yet respectfully, "that I think I am the best judge about myself."

"I hope you will excuse my saying, my dear Rick," observed Mr. Jarndyce with the sweetest cheerfulness and good humor, "that it's quite natural in you to think so, but I don't think so.

I must do my duty, Rick, or you could never care for me in cool blood; and I hope you will always care for me, cool and hot."

Ada had turned so pale, that he made her sit down in his reading-chair, and sat beside her.

"It's nothing, my dear," he said, "it's nothing. Rick and I have only had a friendly difference, which we must state to you, for you are the theme. Now you are afraid of what's coming."

"I am not indeed, cousin John," replied Ada, with a smile, "if it is to come from you."

"Thank you, my dear. Do you give me a minute's calm attention, without looking at Rick. And, little woman, do you likewise. My dear girl," putting his hand on hers, as it lay on the side of the easy-chair, "you recollect the talk we had, we four, when the little woman told me of a little love-affair?"

"It is not likely that either Richard or I can ever forget your kindness that day, cousin John."

"I can never forget it," said Richard.

"And I can never forget it," said Ada.

"So much the easier what I have to say, and so much the easier for us to agree," returned my Guardian, his face irradiated by the gentleness and honor of his heart. "Ada, my bird, you should know that Rick has now chosen his profession for the last time. All that he has of certainty will be expended when he is fully equipped. He has exhausted his resources, and is bound henceforward to the tree he has planted."

"Quite true that I have exhausted my present resources, and I am quite content to know it. But what I have of certainty, sir," said Richard, "is not all I have."

"Rick, Rick!" cried my Guardian, with a sudden terror in his manner, and in an altered voice, and putting up his hands as if he would have stopped his ears, "for the love of God, don't found a hope or expectation on the family curse! Whatever you do on this side the grave, never give one lingering glance toward the horrible phantom that has haunted us so many years. Better to borrow, better to beg, better to die!"

We were all startled by the fervor of this warning. Richard bit his lip and held his breath, and glanced at me, as if he felt, and knew that I felt too, how much he needed it.

"Ada, my dear," said Mr. Jarndyce, recovering his cheerfulness, "these are strong words of advice; but I live in Bleak House, and have seen a sight here. Enough of that. All Richard had, to start him in the race of life, is ventured. I recommend to him and you, for his sake and your own, that he should depart from us with the understanding that there is no sort of contract between you. I must go further. I will be plain with you both. You were to confide freely in me, and I will confide freely in you. I ask you wholly to relinquish, for the present, any tie but your relationship."

"Better to say at once, sir," returned Richard, "that you renounce all confidence in me, and that you advise Ada to do the same."

"Better to say nothing of the sort, Rick, because I don't mean it."

"You think I have begun ill, sir," retorted Richard. "I *have*, I know."

"How I hoped you would begin, and how go on, I told you when we spoke of these things last," said Mr. Jarndyce, in a cordial and encouraging manner. "You have not made that beginning yet; but there is a time for all things, and yours is not gone by—rather, it is just now fully come. Make a clear beginning altogether. You two (very young, my dears) are cousins. As yet you are nothing more. What more may come, must come of being worked out, Rick; and no sooner."

"You are very hard with me, sir," said Richard. "Harder than I could have supposed you would be."

"My dear boy," said Mr. Jarndyce, "I am harder with myself when I do any thing that gives you pain. You have your remedy in your own hands. Ada, it is better for him that he should be free, and that there should be no youthful engagement between you. Rick, it is better for her, much better; you owe it to her. Come! Each of you will do what is best for the other, if not what is best for yourselves."

"Why is it best, sir?" returned Richard, hastily. "It was not, when we opened our hearts to you. You did not say so, then."

"I have had experience since. I don't blame you, Rick—but I have had experience since."

"You mean of me, sir."

"Well! Yes, of both of you," said Mr. Jarndyce, kindly. "The time is not come for your standing pledged to one another. It is not right, and I must not recognize it. Come, come, my young cousins, begin afresh! By-gones shall be by-gones, and a new page turned for you to write your lives in."

Richard gave an anxious glance at Ada, but said nothing.

"I have avoided saying one word to either of you, or to Esther," said Mr. Jarndyce, "until now, in order that we might be open as the day, and all on equal terms. I now affectionately advise, I now most earnestly entreat you two, to part as you came here. Leave all else to time, truth, and steadfastness. If you do otherwise, you will do wrong; and you will have made me do wrong in ever bringing you together."

A long silence succeeded.

"Cousin Richard," said Ada, then, raising her blue eyes tenderly to his face, "after what our cousin John has said, I think no choice is left us. Your mind may be quite at ease about me; for you will leave me here under his care, and will be sure that I can have nothing to wish for; quite sure, if I guide myself by his advice. I—I don't doubt, cousin Richard," said Ada, a little confused, "that you are very fond of me, and I—I don't think you will fall in love with any body else. But I should like you to consider well about it, too; as I should like you to be in all things very happy. You may trust in me,

cousin Richard. I am not at all changeable; but I am not unreasonable, and should never blame you. Even cousins may be sorry to part; and in truth, I am very, very sorry, Richard, though I know it's for your welfare. I shall always think of you affectionately, and often talk of you with Esther, and—and perhaps you will sometimes think a little of me, cousin Richard. So now," said Ada, going up to him and giving him her trembling hand, "we are only cousins again, Richard—for the time perhaps—and I pray for a blessing on my dear cousin, wherever he goes!"

It was strange to me that Richard should not be able to forgive my Guardian, for entertaining the very same opinion of him which he himself had expressed of himself in much stronger terms to me. But it was certainly the case. I observed, with great regret, that from this hour he never was as free and open with Mr. Jarndyce as he had been before. He had every reason given him to be so, but he was not; and, solely on his side, an estrangement began to arise between them.

In the business of preparation and equipment he soon lost himself, and even his grief at parting from Ada, who remained in Hertfordshire, while he, Mr. Jarndyce, and I, went up to London for a week. He remembered her by fits and starts, even with bursts of tears; and at such times would confide to me the heaviest self-reproaches. But in a few minutes he would recklessly conjure up some undefinable means by which they were both to be made rich and happy forever, and would become as gay as possible.

It was a busy time, and I trotted about with him all day long, buying a variety of things, of which he stood in need. Of the things he would have bought, if he had been left to his own ways, I say nothing. He was perfectly confidential with me, and often talked so sensibly and feelingly about his faults and his vigorous resolutions, and dwelt so much upon the encouragement he derived from these conversations, that I could never have been tired if I had tried.

There used, in that week, to come backward and forward to our lodging, to fence with Richard, a person who had formerly been a cavalry soldier; he was a fine bluff-looking man, of a frank, free bearing, with whom Richard had practiced for some months. I heard so much about him, not only from Richard, but from my Guardian too, that I was purposely in the room, with my work, one morning after breakfast when he came.

"Good morning, Mr. George," said my Guardian, who happened to be alone with me. "Mr. Carstone will be here directly. Meanwhile, Miss Summerson is very happy to see you, I know. Sit down!"

He sat down, a little disconcerted by my presence, I thought; and without looking at me, drew his heavy sunburnt hand across and across his upper lip.

"You are as punctual as the sun," said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Military time, sir," he replied. "Force of

habit; a mere habit in me, sir. I am not at all business-like."

"Yet you have a large establishment, too, I am told?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Not much of a one, sir. I keep a shooting gallery, but not much of a one."

"And what kind of a shot, and what kind of a swordsman, do you make of Mr. Carstone?" said my Guardian.

"Pretty good, sir," he replied, folding his arms upon his broad chest, and looking very large. "If Mr. Carstone was to give his full mind to it, he would come out very good."

"But he don't, I suppose?" said my Guardian.

"He did at first, sir, but not afterward. Not his full mind. Perhaps he has something else upon it—some young lady, perhaps." His bright dark eyes glanced at me for the first time.

"He has not me upon his mind, I assure you, Mr. George," said I, laughing, "though you seem to suspect me."

He reddened a little through his brown, and made me a trooper's bow. "No offense, I hope, miss. I am one of the Roughs."

"Not at all," said I. "I take it as a compliment."

If he had not looked at me before, he looked at me now, in three or four quick successive glances. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said to my Guardian, with a manly kind of diffidence, "but you did me the honor to mention the young lady's name—"

"Miss Summerson."

"Miss Summerson," he repeated, and looked at me again.

"Do you know the name?" I asked.

"No, miss. To my knowledge, I never heard it. I thought I had seen you somewhere."

"I think not," I returned, raising my head from my work to look at him; and there was something so genuine in his speech and manner, that I was glad of the opportunity. "I remember faces very well."

"So do I, miss!" he returned, meeting my look with the fullness of his dark eyes and broad forehead. "Humph! What set me off, now, upon that!"

His once more reddening through his brown, and being disconcerted by his efforts to remember the association, brought my guardian to his relief.

"Have you many pupils, Mr. George?"

"They vary in their number sir. Mostly, they're but a small lot to live by."

"And what classes of chance people come to practice at your gallery?"

"All sorts, sir. Natives and foreigners. From gentlemen to prentices. I have had French women come, before now, and show themselves dabs at pistol-shooting. Mad people out of number, of course—but *they* go every where, where the doors stand open."

"People don't come with grudges, and schemes of finishing their practice with live targets, I hope?" said my Guardian smiling.

"Not much of that, sir, though that *has* happened. Mostly they come for skill—or idleness. Six of one, and half a dozen of the other. I beg your pardon," said Mr. George, sitting stiffly upright, and squaring an elbow on each knee, "but I believe you're a Chancery suitor, if I have heard correct?"

"I am sorry to say I am."

"I have had one of *your* compatriots in my time, sir."

"A Chancery suitor?" returned my guardian, "How was that?"

"Why, the man was so badgered and worried, and tortured, by being knocked about from post to pillar, and from pillar to post," said Mr. George, "that he got out of sorts. I don't believe he had any idea of taking aim at any body; but he was in that condition of resentment and violence, that he would come and pay for fifty shots, and fire away till he was red hot. One day I said to him, when there was nobody by, and he had been talking to me angrily about his wrongs, 'If this practice is a safety-valve, comrade, well and good; but I don't altogether like your being so bent upon it, in your present state of mind; I'd rather you took to something else.' I was on my guard for a blow, he was that passionate; but he received it in very good part, and left off directly. We shook hands, and struck up a sort of a friendship."

"What was that man?" asked my Guardian, in a new tone of interest.

"Why, he began by being a small Shropshire farmer, before they made a baited bull of him," said Mr. George.

"Was his name Gridley?"

"It was, sir."

Mr. George directed another succession of quick bright glances at me, as my Guardian and I exchanged a word or two of surprise at the coincidence; and I therefore explained to him how we knew the name. He made me another of his soldierly bows, in acknowledgment of what he called my condescension.

"I don't know," he said, as he looked at me, "what it is that sets me off again—but—bosh, what's my head running against!" He passed one of his heavy hands over his crisp dark hair, as if to sweep the broken thoughts out of his mind; and sat a little forward, with one arm akimbo and the other resting on his leg, looking in a brown study at the ground.

"I am sorry to learn that the same state of mind has got this Gridley into new troubles, and that he is in hiding," said my Guardian.

"So I am told, sir," returned Mr. George, still musing and looking on the ground. "So I am told."

"You don't know where?"

"No, sir," returned the trooper, lifting up his eyes and coming out of his reverie. "I can't say any thing about him. He will be worn out soon. I expect. You may file a strong man's heart away for a good many years, but it will tell all of a sudden at last."

Richard's entrance stopped the conversation. Mr. George rose, made me another of his soldierly bows, wished my Guardian a good day, and strode heavily out of the room.

This was the morning of the day appointed for Richard's departure. We had no more purchases to make now; I had completed all his packing early in the afternoon; and our time was disengaged until night, when he was to go to Liverpool for Holyhead. Jarndyce and Jarndyce being again expected to come on that day, Richard proposed to me that we should go down to the Court and hear what passed. As it was his last day, and he was eager to go, and I had never been there, I gave my consent, and we walked down to Westminster where the Court was then sitting. We beguiled the way with arrangements concerning the letters that Richard was to write to me, and the letters that I was to write to him; and with a great many hopeful projects. My Guardian knew where we were going, and therefore was not with us.

When we came to the Court, there was the Lord Chancellor—the same whom I had seen in his private room in Lincoln's Inn—sitting, in great state and gravity, on the bench; with the mace and seals on a red table below him, and an immense flat nosegay, like a little garden, which scented the whole Court. Below the table, again was a long row of solicitors, with bundles of papers on the matting at their feet; and then there were the gentlemen of the bar in wigs and gowns—some awake and some asleep, and one talking, and nobody paying much attention to what he said. The Lord Chancellor leaned back in his very easy chair, with his elbow on the cushioned arm, and his forehead resting on his hand; some of those who were present, dozed; some read the newspapers; some walked about, or whispered in groups; all seemed perfectly at their ease, by no means in a hurry, very unconcerned and extremely comfortable.

To see every thing going on so smoothly, and to think of the roughness of the suitors' lives and deaths; to see all that full dress and ceremony, and to think of the waste, and want, and beggared misery it represented; to consider that, while the sickness of hope deferred was raging in so many hearts, this polite show went calmly on from day to day, and year to year, in such good order and composure; to behold the Lord Chancellor, and the whole array of practitioners under him, looking at one another and at the spectators, as if nobody had ever heard that all over England the name in which they were assembled was a bitter jest: was held in universal horror, contempt, and indignation; was known for something so flagrant and bad, that little short of a miracle could bring any good out of it to any one: this was so curious and self-contradictory to me, who had no experience of it, that it was at first incredible, and I could not comprehend it. I sat where Richard put me, and tried to listen, and looked about me; but there seemed to be no reality in the whole scene, except poor little Miss

Flite, the madwoman, standing on a bench, and nodding at it.

Miss Flite soon espied us, and came to where we sat. She gave me a gracious welcome to her domain, and indicated, with much gratification and pride, its principal attractions. Mr. Kenge also came to speak to us, and did the honors of the place in much the same way; with the bland modesty of a proprietor. It was not a very good day for a visit, he said; he would have preferred the first day of term; but it was imposing, it was imposing!

When we had been there half an hour or so, the case in progress—if I may use a phrase so ridiculous in such a connection—seemed to die out of its own vapidness, without coming, or being by any body expected to come to any result. The Lord Chancellor then threw down a bundle of papers from his desk to the gentleman below him, and somebody said "JARNDYCE AND JARNDYCE." Upon this there was a buzz and a laugh, and a general withdrawal of the bystanders, and a bringing in of great heaps, and files, and bags and bags-full of papers.

I think it came on "for further directions"—about some bill of costs, to the best of my understanding, which was confused enough. But I counted twenty-three gentlemen in wigs, who said they were "in it;" and none of them appeared to understand it much better than I. They chatted about it with the Lord Chancellor, and contradicted and explained among themselves, and some of them said it was this way and some of them said it was that way, and some of them jocosely proposed to read huge volumes of affidavits, and there was more buzzing and laughing, and every body concerned was in a state of idle entertainment, and nothing could be made of it by any body. After an hour or so of this, and a good many speeches being begun and cut short, "it was referred back for the present," as Mr. Kenge said, and the papers were bundled up again, before the clerks had finished bringing them in.

I glanced at Richard, on the termination of these hopeless proceedings, and was shocked to see the worn look of his handsome young face. "It can't last forever, Dame Durden. Better luck next time!" was all he said.

I had seen Mr. Guppy bringing in papers, and arranging them for Mr. Kenge; and he had seen me and made me a forlorn bow, which rendered me desirous to get out of the Court. Richard had given me his arm and was taking me away, when Mr. Guppy came up.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Carstone," said he, in a whisper, "and Miss Summerson's also; but there's a lady here, a friend of mine, who knows her, and wishes to have the pleasure of shaking hands." As he spoke, I saw before me, as if she had started into bodily shape from my remembrance, Mrs. Rachael of my god-mother's house.

"How do you do, Esther?" said she. "Do you recollect me?"

I gave her my hand, and told her yes, and that she was very little altered.



"I wonder you remember those times, Esther," she returned with her old asperity. "They are changed now. Well! I am glad to see you, and glad you are not too proud to know me." But, indeed she seemed disappointed that I was not.

"Proud, Mrs. Rachael!" I remonstrated.

"I am married, Esther," she returned, coldly correcting me, "and am Mrs. Chadband. Well! I wish you good-day, and hope you'll do well."

Mr. Guppy, who had been attentive to this short dialogue, heaved a sigh in my ear, and elbowed his own and Mrs. Rachael's way through the confused little crowd of people coming in and going out, which we were in the midst of, and which the change in the business had brought together. Richard and I were making our way through it, and I was yet in the first chill of the late unexpected recognition, when I saw, coming toward us, but not seeing us, no less a person than Mr. George. He made nothing of the people about him as he tramped on, staring over their heads into the body of the Court.

"George!" said Richard, as I called his attention to him.

"You are well met, sir," he returned. "And you, miss. Could you point a person out for me, I want? I don't understand these places."

Turning as he spoke, and making an easy way for us, he stopped when we were out of the press, in a corner behind a great red curtain.

"There's a little cracked old woman," he began, "that—"

I put up my finger, for Miss Flite was close by me; having kept beside me all the time, and having called the attention of several of her legal acquaintance to me (as I had overheard to my confusion), by whispering in their ears, "Hush! Fitz-Jamdyce on my left!"

"Hem!" said Mr. George. "You remember, miss, that we passed some conversation on a certain man this morning?—Gridley," in a low whisper behind his hand.

"Yes," said I.

"He is hiding at my place. I couldn't mention it. Hadn't his authority. He is on his last march, miss, and has a whim to see her. He says they can feel for one another, and she has been almost as good as a friend to him here. I came down to look for her; for when I sat by Gridley this afternoon, I seemed to hear the roll of the muffled drums."

"Shall I tell her?" said I.

"Would you be so good?" he returned, with a glance of something like apprehension at Miss Flite. "It's a Providence I met you, miss; I doubt if I should have known how to get on with that lady." And he put one hand in his breast, and stood upright in a martial attitude, as I informed little Miss Flite, in her ear, of the purport of his kind errand.

"My angry friend from Shropshire! Almost as celebrated as myself!" she exclaimed. "Now, really! My dear, I will wait upon him with the greatest pleasure."

"He is living concealed at Mr. George's," said I. "Hush! This is Mr. George."

"In—deed!" returned Miss Flite. "Very proud to have the honor! A military man, my dear. You know, a perfect General!" she whispered to me.

Poor Miss Flite deemed it necessary to be so courtly and polite, as a mark of her respect for the army, and to courtesy so very often, that it was no easy matter to get her out of the Court. When this was at last done, and, addressing Mr. George, as "General," she gave him her arm, to the great entertainment of some idlers who were looking on, he was so discomposed, and begged me so respectfully "not to desert him," that I could not make up my mind to do it; especially as Miss Flite was always tractable with me, and as she too said, "Fitz-Jamdyce, my dear, you will accompany us, of course." As Richard seemed quite willing, and even anxious, that we should see them safely to their destination, we agreed to do so. And as Mr. George informed us that Gridley's mind had run on Mr. Jamdyce all the afternoon, after hearing of their interview in the morning, I wrote a hasty note in pencil to my Guardian to say where we were gone, and why. Mr. George sealed it at a coffee-house, that it might lead to no discovery, and we sent it off by a ticket-porter.

We then took a hackney-coach, and drove away to the neighborhood of Leicester Square. We walked through some narrow courts, for which Mr. George apologized, and soon came to the Shooting Gallery, the door of which was closed. As he pulled a bell-handle which hung by a chain to the door-post, a very respectable old gentleman with gray hair, wearing spectacles, and dressed in a black spencer and gaiters and a broad-brimmed hat, and carrying a large gold-headed cane, addressed him.

"I ask your pardon, my good friend," said he; "but is this George's Shooting Gallery?"

"It is, sir," returned Mr. George, glancing up at the great letters in which that inscription was painted on the white-washed wall.

"Oh! To be sure!" said the old gentleman, following his eyes. "Thank you. Have you rung the bell?"

"My name is George, sir, and I have rung the bell."

"Oh, indeed?" said the old gentleman. "Your name is George? Then I am here as soon as you, you see. You came for me, no doubt?"

"No, sir. You have the advantage of me."

"Oh, indeed?" said the old gentleman. "Then it was your young man who came for me. I am a physician, and was requested—five minutes ago—to come and visit a sick man, at George's Shooting Gallery."

"The muffled drums," said Mr. George, turning to Richard and me, and gravely shaking his head. "It's quite correct, sir. Will you please to walk in."

The door being at that moment opened, by a very singular-looking little man in a green baize

cap and apron, whose face and hands, and dress, were blackened all over, we passed along a dreary passage into a large building with bare brick walls; where there were targets, and guns, and swords, and other things of that kind. When we had all arrived here, the physician stopped, and, taking off his hat, appeared to vanish by magic, and to leave another and quite a different man in his place.

"Now look'ee here, George," said the man, turning quickly round upon him, and tapping him on the breast with a large forefinger. "You know me, and I know you. You're a man of the world, and I'm a man of the world. My name's Bucket, as you are aware, and I have got a peace-warrant against Gridley. You have kept him out of the way a long time, and you have been artful in it, and it does you credit."

Mr. George, looking hard at him, bit his lip and shook his head.

"Now, George," said the other, keeping close to him, "you're a sensible man, and a well-conducted man; that's what *you* are, beyond a doubt. And mind you, I don't talk to you as a common character, because you have served your country, and you know that when duty calls we must obey. Consequently, you're very far from wanting to give trouble. If I required assistance, you'd assist me; that's what *you'd* do. Phil Squod, don't you go a sidling round the gallery like that;" the dirty little man was shuffling about with his shoulder against the wall, and his eyes on the intruder, in a manner that looked threatening; "because I know you, and I won't have it."

"Phil!" said Mr. George.

"Yes, Guv'ner."

"Be quiet."

The little man with a low growl, stood still.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Bucket, "you'll excuse any thing that may appear to be disagreeable in this, for my name's Inspector Bucket of the Detective, and I have a duty to perform. George, I know where my man is, because I was on the roof last night, and saw him through the skylight, and you along with him. He is in there, you know," pointing; "that's where *he* is—on a sofa. Now I must see my man, and I must tell my man to consider himself in custody; but, you know me, and you know I don't want to take any uncomfortable measures. You give me your word, as from one man to another (and an old soldier, mind you, likewise!), that it's honorable between us two, and I'll accommodate you to the utmost of my power."

"I give it," was the reply. "But it wasn't handsome in you, Mr. Bucket."

"Gammon, George! Not handsome?" said Mr. Bucket, tapping him on his broad breast again, and shaking hands with him. "I don't say it wasn't handsome in you to keep my man so close, do I? Be equally good-tempered to me, old boy! Old William Tell! Old Shaw, the Life Guardsman! Why, he's a model of the whole British army in himself, ladies and gentle-

men. I'd give a fifty-pun' note to be such a figure of a man!"

The affair being brought to this head, Mr. George after a little consideration, proposed to go in first to his comrade (as he called him), taking Miss Flite with him. Mr. Bucket agreeing, they went away to the further end of the gallery, leaving us sitting and standing by a table covered with guns. Mr. Bucket took this opportunity of entering into a little light conversation: asking me if I were afraid of fire-arms, as most young ladies were; asking Richard if he were a good shot; asking Phil Squod which he considered the best of those rifles, and what it might be worth, first-hand; telling him, in return, that it was a pity he ever gave way to his temper, for he was naturally so amiable that he might have been a young woman; and making himself generally agreeable.

After a time he followed us to the further end of the gallery, and Richard and I were going quietly away, when Mr. George came after us. He said that if we had no objection to see his comrade, he would take a visit from us very kindly. The words had hardly passed his lips, when the bell was rung, and my Guardian appeared; "on the chance," he slightly observed, "of being able to do any little thing for a poor fellow involved in the same misfortune as himself." We all four went back together, and went into the place where Gridley was.

It was a bare room, partitioned off from the gallery with unpainted wood. As the screening was not more than eight or ten feet high, and only inclosed at the sides, not the top, the rafters of the high gallery roof were overhead, and the skylight, through which Mr. Bucket had looked down. The sun was low—near setting—and its light came redly in above, without descending to the ground. Upon a plain canvas-covered sofa lay the man from Shropshire—dressed much as we had seen him last, but so changed, that I recognized no likeness in his colorless face at first to what I recollected.

He had been still writing in his hiding-place, and dwelling on his grievances, hour after hour. A table and some shelves were covered with manuscript papers, and with worn pens, and a medley of such tokens. Touchingly and awfully drawn together, he and the little mad woman were side by side, and, as it were, alone. She sat on a chair holding his hand, and none of us went close to them.

His voice had faded, with the old expression of his face, with his strength, with his anger, with his resistance to the wrongs that had at last subdued him. The faintest shadow of an object full of form and color, is such a picture of it, as he was of the man from Shropshire whom we had spoken with before.

He inclined his head to Richard and me, and spoke to my Guardian.

"Mr. Jarndyce, it is very kind of you to come to see me. I am not long to be seen, I think. I am very glad to take your hand, sir. You are a

good man, superior to injustice, and God knows I honor you."

They shook hands earnestly, and my Guardian said some words of comfort to him.

"It may seem strange to you, sir," returned Gridley; "I should not have liked to see you, if this had been the first time of our meeting. But, you know I made a fight for it, you know I stood up with my single hand against them all, you know I told them the truth to the last, and told them what they were, and what they had done to me; so I don't mind your seeing me this wreck."

"You have been courageous with them, many and many a time," returned my Guardian.

"Sir, I have been;" with a faint smile. "I told you what would come of it, when I ceased to be so; and, see here! Look at us—look at us!" He drew the hand Miss Flite held, through her arm, and brought her something nearer to him.

"This ends it. Of all my old associations, of all my old pursuits and hopes, of all the living and the dead world, this one poor soul alone comes natural to me, and I am fit for. There is a tie of many suffering years between us two, and it is the only tie I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken.

"Accept my blessing, Gridley," said Miss Flite in tears. "Accept my blessing!"

"I thought, boastfully, that they never could break my heart, Mr. Jarndyce. I was resolved that they should not. I did believe that I could, and would, charge them with being the mockery they were, until I died of some bodily disorder. But I am worn out. How long I have been wearing out, I don't know; I seemed to break down in an hour. I hope they may never come to hear of it. I charge every body, here, to lead them to believe that I died defying them, consistently and perseveringly, as I did through so many years."

Here Mr. Bucket, who was sitting in a corner, by the door, good-naturedly offered such consolation as he could administer.

"Come, come!" he said, from his corner. "Don't go on in that way, Mr. Gridley. You are only a little low. We are all of us a little low, sometimes. I am. Hold up, hold up! You'll lose your temper with the whole round of 'em, again and again; and I shall take you on a score of warrants yet, if I have luck."

He only shook his head.

"Don't shake your head," said Mr. Bucket. "Nod it; that's what I want to see you do. Why, Lord bless your soul, what times we have had together! Haven't I seen you in the Fleet over and over again, for contempt! Haven't I come into Court, twenty afternoons, for no other purpose than to see you pin the Chancellor like a bull-dog? Don't you remember, when you first began to threaten the lawyers, and the peace was sworn against you two or three times a week? Ask the little old lady there; she has been always present. Hold up, Mr. Gridley, hold up, sir."

"What are you going to do about him?" asked George in a low voice.

"I don't know yet," said Bucket in the same tone. Then resuming his encouragement, he pursued aloud:

"Worn out, Mr. Gridley? After dodging me for all these weeks, and forcing me to climb the roof here like a Tom Cat, and to come to see you as a Doctor? That ain't like being worn out. I should think not! Now I tell you what you want. You want excitement, you know, to keep you up; that's what you want. You're used to it, and you can't do without it. I couldn't myself. Very well, then; here's this warrant, got by Mr. Tulkinghorn of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and backed into half a dozen counties since. What do you say to coming along with me, upon this warrant, and having a good angry argument before the Magistrates? It'll do you good; it'll freshen you up, and get you into training for another turn at the Chancellor. Give in? Why I am surprised to hear a man of your energy talk of giving in. You musn't do that. You're half the fun of the fair, in the Court of Chancery. George, you lend Mr. Gridley a hand, and let's see now whether he won't be better up than down."

"He is very weak," said the trooper, in a low voice.

"Is he?" returned Bucket, anxiously. "I only want to rouse him. I don't like to see an old acquaintance giving in like this. It would cheer him up more than any thing, if I could make him a little waxy with me. He's welcome to drop into me, right and left, if he likes. I shall never take advantage of it."

The roof rang with a scream from Miss Flite, which still rings in my ears.

"O no, Gridley!" she cried, as he fell heavily and calmly back from before her. "Not without my blessing! After so many years!"

The sun was down, the light had gradually stolen from the roof, and the shadow had crept upward. But, to me, the shadow of that pair, one living and one dead, fell heavier on Richard's departure than the darkness of the darkest night. And through Richard's farewell words I heard it echoed:

"Of all my old associations, of all my old pursuits and hopes, of all the living and the dead world, this one poor soul alone comes natural to me, and I am fit for. There is a tie of many suffering years between us two, and it is the only tie I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken!"

#### CHAPTER XXV.—MRS. SNAGSBY SEES IT ALL.

THERE is disquietude in Cook's Court, Curator Street. Black suspicion hides in that peaceful region. The mass of Cook's Courtiers are in their usual state of mind, no better and no worse; but Mr. Snagsby is changed, and his little woman knows it.

Tom-all-Alone's and Lincoln's Inn Fields persist in harnessing themselves, a pair of ungovern-

able coursers to the chariot of Mr. Snagsby's imagination, and Mr. Bucket drives, and the passengers are Jo and Mr. Tulkington, and the complete equipage whirls through the Law Stationery business all at wild speed round the clock. Even in the little front kitchen where the family meals are taken, it rattles away at a smoking pace from the dinner table, when Mr. Snagsby pauses in carving the first slice of the leg of mutton baked with potatoes, and stares at the kitchen wall.

Mr. Snagsby can not make out what it is that he has had to do with. Something is wrong, somewhere, but what something, may come of it, to whom, when, and from which unthought of and unheard of quarter, is the puzzle of his life. His remote impression of the robes and coronets, the stars and garters, that sparkle through the surface dust of Mr. Tulkington's chambers; his veneration for the mysteries presided over by that best and closest of his customers, whom all the Inns of Court, all Chancery Lane, and all the legal neighborhood agree to hold in awe; his remembrance of Detective Mr. Bucket with his forefinger, and his confidential manner impossible to be evaded or declined, persuade him that he is a party to some dangerous secret without knowing what it is. And it is the trying peculiarity of this condition that, at any hour of his daily life, at any opening of the shop-door, at any pull of the bell, at any entrance of a messenger, or any delivery of a letter, the secret may take air and fire, explode, and blow up—Mr. Bucket only knows whom.

For which reason, whenever a man unknown comes into the shop (as many men unknown do), and says, "Is Mr. Snagsby in?" or words to that innocent effect, Mr. Snagsby's heart knocks hard at his guilty breast. He undergoes so much from such inquiries, that when they are made by boys he revenges himself by flipping at their ears over the counter, and asking the young dogs what they mean by it, and why they can't speak out at once? More impracticable men and boys persist in walking into Mr. Snagsby's sleep, and terrifying him with unaccountable questions, so that often when the cock at the little dairy in Cursitor Street breaks out in his usual absurd way about the morning, Mr. Snagsby finds himself in a crisis of nightmare, with his little woman shaking him, and saying, "What is the matter with the man!"

The little woman herself is not the least item in his difficulty. To know that he is always keeping a secret from her; that he has, under all circumstances, to conceal and hold fast a tender double tooth which her sharpness is ever ready to twist out of his head; gives Mr. Snagsby, in her denistical presence, much of the air a dog who has a reservation from his master, and will look every where rather than meet his eye.

These various signs and tokens, marked by the little woman, are not lost upon her. They impel her to say, "Snagsby has something on his mind!" And thus suspicion gets into Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. From suspicion to jeal-

ousy Mrs. Snagsby finds the road as natural and short as from Cook's Court to Chancery Lane. And thus jealousy gets into Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. Once there (and it was always lurking thereabout) it is very active and nimble in Mrs. Snagsby's breast, prompting her to nocturnal examinations of Mr. Snagsby's pockets; to secret perusals of Mr. Snagsby's letters; to private researches in the Day Book and Ledger, till, cash-box, and iron safe; to watchings at windows, listenings behind doors, and a general putting of this and that together by the wrong end, likely to engender confusion.

Mrs. Snagsby is so perpetually on the alert that the house becomes ghostly with creaking boards and rustling garments. The 'prentices think somebody may have been murdered there in by-gone times. Guster holds at certain loose atoms of an idea (picked up at Tooting, where they were found floating among the orphans) that there is money buried underneath the cellar, guarded by an old man in a white beard, who can not get out for seven thousand years, because he said the Lord's Prayer backward.

"Who was Nimrod?" Mrs. Snagsby repeatedly inquires of herself. "Who was that lady—that creature? And who is that boy?" Now, Nimrod being as dead as the mighty hunter whose name Mrs. Snagsby has appropriated, and the lady being unproducible, she directs her mental eye, for the present, with redoubled vigilance, to the boy. "And who," quoth Mrs. Snagsby, for the thousand and first time, "is that boy? Who is that—!" And there Mrs. Snagsby is seized with an inspiration.

He has no respect for Chadband. No, to be sure, and he wouldn't have, of course. Naturally he wouldn't, under those contagious circumstances. He was invited and appointed by Mr. Chadband—why, Mrs. Snagsby heard it herself with her own ears!—to come back, and be told where he was to go to be addressed by Mr. Chadband; and he never came! Why did he never come? Because he was told not to come. Who told him not to come? Who? Ha, ha! Mrs. Snagsby sees it all.

But happily (and Mrs. Snagsby tightly shakes her head and tightly smiles) that boy was met by Mr. Chadband yesterday in the streets; and that boy, as affording a subject which Mr. Chadband desires to improve for the spiritual delight of a select congregation, was seized by Mr. Chadband and threatened with being delivered over to the police, unless he showed the reverend gentleman where he lived, and unless he entered into, and fulfilled, an undertaking to appear in Cook's Court to-morrow night—"to-mor—row—night," Mrs. Snagsby repeats for more emphasis, with another tight smile, and another tight shake of her head; and to-morrow night that boy will be here, and to-morrow night Mrs. Snagsby will have her eye upon him and upon some one else; and you may walk a long while in your secret ways (says Mrs. Snagsby, with haughtiness and scorn) but you can't blind ME!

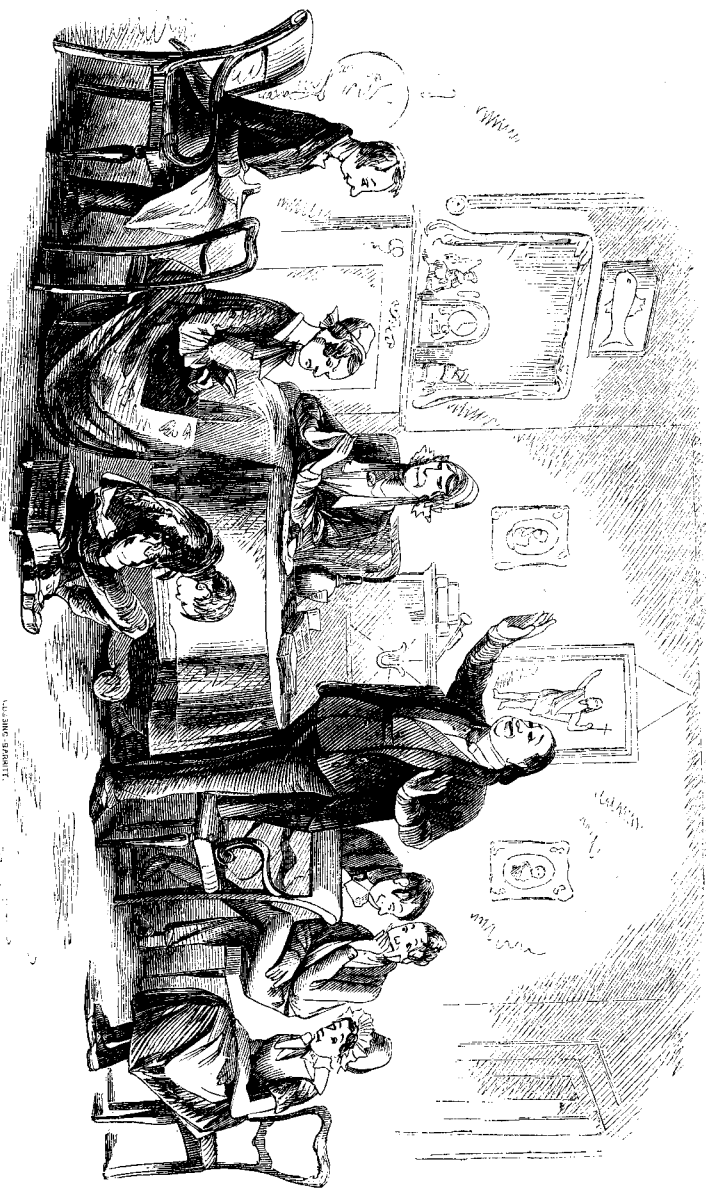


Mrs. Snagsby sounds no timbrel in any body's ears, but holds her purpose quietly, and keeps her counsel. To-morrow comes, the savory preparations for the Oil Trade come, the evening comes. Comes Mr. Snagsby in his black coat; come the Chadbands; come (when the gorging vessel is replete) the 'prentices and Guster, to be edified; comes, at last, with his slouching head, and his shuffle backward, and his shuffle forward, and his shuffle to the right, and his shuffle to the left, and his bit of fur cap in his muddy hand, which he picks as if it were some mangy bird he

had caught, and was plucking before eating raw, Jo, the very, very tough subject Mr. Chadband is to improve.

Mrs. Snagsby screws a watchful glance on Jo as he is brought into the little drawing-room by Guster, looks at Mr. Snagsby the moment he comes in. Aha! Why does he look at Mr. Snagsby? Mr. Snagsby looks at him. Why should he do that, not that Mrs. Snagsby sees it all? Why else should that look pass between them; why else should Mr. Snagsby be confused, and cough a signal cough behind his hand? It

MR. CHADBAND "IMPROVING" A TOUGH SUBJECT.



is as clear as crystal that Mr. Snagsby is that boy's father.

"Peace, my friends," says Chadband, rising, and wiping the oily exudations from his reverend visage. "Peace be with us! My friends, why with us? Because," with his fat smile, "it can not be against us, because it must be for us, because it is not hardening, because it is softening, because it does not make war like the hawk, but comes home unto us like the dove. Therefore, my friends, peace be with us! My human boy, come forward!"

Stretching forth his flabby paw, Mr. Chadband lays the same on Jo's arm, and considers where to station him. Jo, very doubtful of his reverend friend's intentions, and not at all clear but that something practical and painful is going to be done to him, mutters, "You let me alone. I never said nothink to you. You let me alone."

"No, my young friend," says Chadband, smoothly, "I will not let you alone. And why? Because I am a harvest-laborer, because I am a toiler and a molder, because you are delivered over unto me, and are become as a precious instrument in my hands. My friends, may I so employ this instrument as to use it to your advantage, to your profit, to your gain, to your welfare, to your enrichment! My young friend, sit upon this stool."

Jo, apparently, possesses an impression that the reverend gentleman wants to cut his hair, shields his head with both arms, and is got into the required position with great difficulty and every possible manifestation of reluctance.

When he is at last adjusted like a lay figure, Mr. Chadband, retiring behind the table, holds up his bear's-paw, and says, "My friends!" This is the signal for a general settlement of the audience. The 'prentices giggle internally and nudge each other. Guster falls into a staring and vacant state compounded of a stunned admiration of Mr. Chadband and pity for the friendless outcast whose condition touches her nearly; Mrs. Snagsby silently lays trains of gunpowder; Mrs. Chadband composes herself grimly by the fire and warms her knees: finding that sensation favorable to the reception of eloquence.

It happens that Mr. Chadband has a pulpit habit of fixing some member of his congregation with his eye, and fatly arguing his points with that particular person; who is understood to be expected to be moved to an occasional grunt, groan, gasp, or other audible expression of inward working; which expression of inward working being echoed by some elderly lady in the next pew, and so communicated, like a game of forfeits, through a circle of the more fermentable sinners present, serves the purpose of parliamentary cheering, and gets Mr. Chadband's steam up. From mere force of habit, Mr. Chadband, in saying, "My friends!" has rested his eye on Mr. Snagsby, and proceeds to make that ill-starred stationer, already sufficiently confused, the immediate recipient of his discourse.

"We have here among us, my friends," says Chadband, "a Gentile and a Heathen, a dweller in the tents of Tom-all-Alone's and a mover on upon the surface of the earth. We have here among us, my friends," and Mr. Chadband, untwisting the point with his dirty thumb-nail, bestows an oily smile on Mr. Snagsby, signifying that he will show him a back-fall presently if he be not already down, "a brother and a boy. Devoid of parents, devoid of relations, devoid of flocks and herds, devoid of gold, and silver, and precious stones. Now, my friends, why do I say he is devoid of these possessions? Why, why is he?" Mr. Chadband states the question as if he were propounding an entirely new riddle, of much ingenuity and merit, to Mr. Snagsby, and entreating him not to give it up.

Mr. Snagsby, greatly posed by the mysterious look he received just now from his little woman—at about the period when Mr. Chadband mentioned the word parents—is tempted into modestly remarking, "I don't know, I am sure, sir." On which interruption Mrs. Chadband glares, and Mrs. Snagsby says, "For shame!"

"I hear a voice," says Chadband; "is it a still, small voice, my friends? I fear not, though I fain would hope so—"

("Ah—h!" from Mrs. Snagsby.)

"Which says I don't know? Then I will tell you why. I say this brother present here among us is devoid of parents, devoid of relations, devoid of flocks and herds, devoid of gold, of silver, and of precious stones, because he is devoid of the light that shines in upon some of us. What is that light? What is it? I ask you what is that light?"

Mr. Chadband draws back his head and pauses. Mr. Snagsby is not to be lured on to his destruction again. Mr. Chadband, leaning forward over the table, pierces what he has got to follow, directly into Mr. Snagsby, with the thumb-nail already mentioned.

"It is," says Chadband, "the ray of rays, the sun of suns, the moon of moons, the star of stars. It is the light of Terewth."

Mr. Chadband draws himself up again, and looks triumphantly at Mr. Snagsby, as if he would be glad to know how he feels after that.

"Of Terewth," says Mr. Chadband, hitting him again. "Say not to me that it is *not* the lamp of lamps. I say to you, it is. I say to you, a million of times over, it is. It is! I say to you that I will proclaim it to you whether you like it or not; nay, that the less you like it, the more I will proclaim it to you. With a speaking-trumpet! I say to you that if you rear yourself against it, you shall fall, you shall be bruised, you shall be battered, you shall be flawed, you shall be smashed."

The present effect of this flight of oratory—much admired for its general power by Mr. Chadband's followers—being not only to make Mr. Chadband unpleasantly warm, but to represent the innocent Mr. Snagsby in the light of a determined enemy to virtue, with a forehead of

brass and a heart of adamant, that unfortunate tradesman becomes yet more disconcerted, and is in a very advanced state of low spirits and false position, when Mr. Chadband accidentally finishes him.

"My friends," he resumes, after dabbing his fat head for some time;—and it smokes to such an extent that he seems to light his pocket-handkerchief at it, which smokes, too, after every dab; "to pursue the subject we are endeavoring with our lowly gifts to improve, let us in a spirit of love inquire what is that Terewth to which I have alluded. For, my young friends," suddenly addressing the 'prentices and Guster, to their consternation, "if I am told by the doctor that calomel or castor-oil is good for me, I may naturally ask what is calomel, and what is castor-oil—I may wish to be informed of that before I dose myself with either or with both. Now, my young friends, what is this Terewth, then? Firstly (in a spirit of love), what is the common sort of Terewth—the working clothes—the every-day wear, my young friends? Is it deception?"

("Ah—h!" from Mrs. Snagsby.)

"Is it suppression?"

(A shiver in the negative from Mrs. Snagsby.)

"Is it reservation?"

(A shake of the head from Mrs. Snagsby—very long and very tight.)

"No, my friends, it is neither of these. Neither of these names belongs to it. When this young Heathen now among us—who is now, my friends, asleep, the seal of indifference and perdition being set upon his eyelids; but do not wake him, for it is right that I should have to wrestle, and to combat, and to struggle, and to conquer—when this young hardened Heathen told us a story of a Cock, and of a Bull, and of a lady, and of a sovereign, was *that* the Terewth? No. Or if it was partly, was it wholly, and entirely? No, my friends, no!"

If Mr. Snagsby could withstand his little woman's look, as it enters at his eyes the windows of his soul, and searches the whole tenement, he were other than the man he is. He cowers and droops.

"Oh, my juvenile friends," says Chadband, descending to the level of their comprehension, with a very obtrusive demonstration in his greasily meek smile, of coming a long way down stairs, "if the master of this house was to go forth into the city and there see an eel, and was to come back, and was to call untoe him the mistress of this house, and was to say, 'Sarah, rejoice with me, for I have seen an elephant!' would *that* be Terewth?"

(Mrs. Snagsby in tears.)

"Or put it, my juvenile friends, that he saw an elephant, and returning said, 'Lo, the city is barren, I have seen but an eel,' would *that* be Terewth?"

(Mrs. Snagsby sobbing loudly.)

"Or put it, my juvenile friends," says Chadband, stimulated by the sound, "that the unnatural parents of this slumbering Heathen—for

parents he had, my juvenile friends, beyond a doubt—after casting him forth to the wolves, and the vultures, and the wild dogs, and the young gazelles, and the serpents—went back to their dwellings and had their pipes, and their pots, and their flutings, and their dancings, and their malt liquors, and their butcher's meat and poultry, would *that* be Terewth?"

Mrs. Snagsby replies by delivering herself a prey to spasms. Not an unresisting prey, but a crying and a tearing one, so that Cook's Court echoes with her shrieks. Finally, becoming cataleptic, she has to be carried up the narrow staircase like a grand piano. After unspeakable suffering, productive of the utmost consternation, she is pronounced, by expresses from the bedroom, free from pain though much exhausted; in which state of affairs Mr. Snagsby, trampled and crushed in the piano-forte removal, and extremely timid and feeble, ventures to come out from behind the door in the drawing-room.

All this time Jo has been standing on the spot where he woke up, ever picking his cap, and putting bits of fur in his mouth. He spits them out with a revengeful air, for he feels that it is in his nature to be an unimprovable reprobate, and that it's no good *his* trying to keep awake, for *he* won't never know nothink; though it may be, Jo, that there is a history so interesting and affecting even to minds as near the brutes as thine, recording deeds done on this earth for common men, that if the Chadbands, removing their own persons from the light, would but show it thee in simple reverence, would but leave it unimproved, would but regard it as being eloquent enough without their modest aid—it might hold thee awake, and thou might learn from it yet.

Jo never heard of any such book. Its compilers and the Reverend Chadband are all one to him—except that he knows the Reverend Chadband, and would rather run away from him for an hour than hear him talk five minutes. "It ain't no good my waiting here no longer," thinks Jo. "Mr. Snagsby ain't a-going to say nothink to me to-night." And downstairs he shuffles.

But downstairs is the charitable Guster holding by the handrail of the kitchen stairs, and warding off a fit as yet doubtful, the same having been induced by Mrs. Snagsby's screaming. She has her own supper of bread and cheese to hand to Jo; with whom she ventures to interchange a word or so for the first time.

"Here's something to eat, boy," says Guster.

"Thank'ee, mum," says Jo.

"Are you hungry?"

"Jist," says Jo.

"What's gone of your father and your mother, eh?"

Jo stops in the middle of a bite and looks petrified. For this orphan charge of the Christian Saint whose shrine was at Tooting has patted him on the shoulder; and it is the first time in his life that any decent hand has been so laid upon him.

"I never know'd nothink about 'em," says Jo.

"No more didn't I of mine," cries Guster. She is repressing symptoms favorable to the fit, when she seems to take alarm at something, and vanishes down the stairs.

"Jo," whispered the law-stationer, softly, as the boy lingers on the step.

"Here I am, Mr. Snagsby."

"I didn't know you were gone—there's another half-crown, Jo. It was quite right of you to say nothing about the lady the other night when we were out together. It would breed trouble. You can't be too quiet, Jo."

"I am fly, master! And good-night."

A ghostly shade, frilled and nightcapped, follows the law-stationer to the room he came from, and glides higher up. And henceforth he begins, go where he will, to be attended by another shadow than his own, hardly less constant than his own, hardly less quiet than his own. And into whatsoever atmosphere of secrecy his own shadow may pass, let all concerned beware, for the watchful Mrs. Snagsby is there too—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, and shadow of his shadow.

#### THE LAST OF THE FAIRIES.

THE dew from heaven fell upon bush and upon brake, and the large pearl-drops stood on the flower leaves in the bright garden of Rosatica, and the fresh morning breeze blew over the forests, coming down from the far mountains of Estramadura. There were rose-leaves strewed about, and rose-trees all around, and the buds burst gladly in the limpid air, and the nightingale sang on high, and the music of water and wind played mellifluously around his head. 'Tis a boy lying still on a garden bank, his two hands placed under his head, his face turned upward, one knee crossed over the other, with the other foot drawn close to him, and his eye fixed on the vapory clouds as they drove swiftly and lightly along the rich and glorious sky of Spain, with its mellow tints, its orange blossoms, its groves and its gardens, a perfect Paradise, where God has done so much and man so little.

The boy was awake, and yet he was dreaming. Gaspard Mendez was an orphan. At six years old he had lost his last surviving parent, a fond mother, who had left him to the charge of an uncle. Now this uncle was a good old priest, a man of simple heart and excellent disposition, who readily undertook the charge of the succession as also of the education of the youth: this was not easy. Gaspard was a strange and fanciful boy. His mother was of Moorish origin, and had been imbued from early youth with dreams and fancies, which she had communicated to her boy. She believed in fairies, in spirits, in all the arcana of pretty beings invented by poets and old women, by dreamers and idealists, to amuse or alarm mankind. She believed each being in this world to have its good and evil genius; to be watched over from childhood by invisible hands; to be led and guided in the pathway of life, well or ill, by souls of another formation from ours. Gaspard had imbibed from

his mother all these beliefs—beliefs in ghosts, beliefs in fairies, in elves, and imps—and the effect upon Gaspard was fatal in the extreme.

Quick, sensitive, sharp, of remarkable intellectual powers, Gaspard threw all his energies into this faith in an invisible world. Poetic, he talked poetry at ten years old. His uncle, good old man, had but one passion in this life, and that was books; these were not grave works on theology, or even history, but dramas, romances, poems, even those collections of fairy tales which were current during the last century. Gaspard read the books of chivalry, delighted in the knights, in the fairy Morgana, in Merlin, and Mardicaent, and the beldam Hecate, but above all, worshiped those beneficent spirits which came in so opportunely to save men from dire extremities, and are the bright visions of the other sphere.

The consequence was natural. All the graver studies which his uncle sought to make him pursue, were neglected; he left mathematics for Merlin, Latin and Greek for Amadis of Gaul, writing and arithmetic for fairy tales; and when his uncle scolded him, and asked him how he meant to gain his living, he would reply, that he took no care of that; he had faith in the little people; and that when he was a man, they would show themselves; some good fairy would step forward and lead him by the hand to happiness and love. The old man shook his head, and told him that with such ideas he would never succeed; that he must study seriously—learn a profession.

But Gaspard Mendez could not be persuaded; he was like many persons in the world, who, with great talents, extensive capabilities, and continued opportunities, never make use of any of them, but lie still, hoping, trusting, having faith in some supernatural power which shall suddenly raise them to some unexpected and unknown elevation which they least count upon. Such persons often create for themselves a wholly imaginary future, that so wraps round and conceals from them the reality—the truth—that they never see the present, but are content to plod on through this dull world, utterly regardless of positive ills, difficulties, and dangers, because they have faith in the future, in chance, in fortune.

Gaspard was no fool, neither was he possessed of that transcendent genius which astounds the world only once in many years. But he was a very clever boy, a dreamy youth, devouring books, or wandering about the woods and fields, or tending his roses in his garden, or lying down in their midst—waiting for he knew not what.

And thus he reached the age of eighteen, in fact of nearly nineteen, and had never thought of a profession or an occupation. His parents had left him a small inheritance, one-fourth of which had sufficed for his education; the rest the good old uncle had saved. This, a house, a garden, chiefly planted with roses, close upon a highway, was all his patrimony; and here lay the boy dreaming and thinking.