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PUBLISH THE

POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB,

CONTAINING

A faithful Record of the Perambulations, Perils, Adventures, and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members.

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The very great demand for this humorous work has induced the publishers to prepare new editions of the First and Second Parts, which are now ready.

CONTENTS.

Chapter 1. The Pickwickians.
2. The first day's journey and the first evening's adventures, with their consequences.
3. A new acquaintance—the stroller's tale—a disagreeable interruption; and an unpleasant rencontre.
4. A field day and bivouac—more new friends and an invitation to the country.
5. A short one; showing, among other matters, how Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive, and Mr. Winkle to ride, and how they both did it.
6. An old fashioned card party; the Clergyman's verses—the story of the convict's return.
7. How Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the pigeon and killing the crow, shot at the crow and wounded the pigeon—how the Dingley Dell Cricket Club played all Muggleton, and how all Muggleton dined at the Dingley Dell expense—with other interesting and instructive matters.
8. Strongly illustrative of the position, that the course of true love is not a railway.
9. A discovery and a chase.
10. Clearing up all doubts (if any existed) of the disinterestedness of Mr. Jingle's character.
11. Involving another Journey and an antiquarian discovery, recording Mr. Pickwick's determination to be present at an election, and containing a manuscript of the old Clergyman's.
12. Descriptive of a very important proceeding on the part of Mr. Pickwick; no less an epoch in his life than in his history.
13. Some account of Eatonswill; of the state of parties therein; and of the election of a member to serve in Parliament for that ancient, loyal and patriotic borough.
14. Comprising a brief description of the company at the Peacock assembled; and a tale told by a bagman.
15. In which is given a faithful portraiture of two distinguished persons; and an accurate description of a public breakfast in their house and grounds; which public breakfast leads to the recognition of an old acquaintance, and the commencement of another chapter.
16. Too full of adventure to be briefly described.
17. Showing that an attack of rheumatism in some cases, acts as a quickener to inventive genius.
18. Briefly illustrative of two points; first, the power of hysteresis, and secondly, the force of circumstances.
19. A pleasant day, with an unpleasant termination.
20. Showing how Dodson and Fogg were men of business, and their clerks men of pleasure.
ing also what choice spirits assem-
bled at the Magpie and Stump, and
what a capital chapter the next one
will be.
21. In which the old man launch-
es forth into his favourite theme,
and relates a story about a queer
client.
22. Mr. Pickwick journeys to Ips-
wich, and meets with a romantic
adventure with a middle-aged lady
in yellow curl papers.
23. In which Mr. Samuel Weller
begins to devote his energies to the
return match between himself and
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**CONTENTS.**
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Making a Night of it. Vauxhall Gardens by Day.
Scotland Yard. Mr. Minns and his Cousin.
The New Year. Last Cab-driver and First Omnibus
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXIV.
WHEREIN MR. PETER MAGNUS GROWS JEALOUS, AND THE MIDDLE-AGED LADY APPREHENSIVE, WHICH BRINGS THE PICKWICKIANS WITHIN THE GRASP OF THE LAW, 5

CHAPTER XXV.
SHOWING, AMONG A VARIETY OF PLEASANT MATTERS, HOW MAJESTIC AND IMPARTIAL MR. NUPKINS WAS; AND HOW MR. WELLER RETURNED MR. JOB TROTTER'S SHUTTLECOCK, AS HEAVILY AS IT CAME; WITH ANOTHER MATTER, WHICH WILL BE FOUND IN ITS PLACE, 27

CHAPTER XXVI.
WHICH CONTAINS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ACTION OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK, 53

CHAPTER XXVII.
A GOOD-HUMOURED CHRISTMAS CHAPTER, CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF A WEDDING, AND SOME OTHER SPORTS BESIDE, WHICH ALTHOUGH IN THEIR WAY, EVEN AS GOOD CUSTOMS AS MARRIAGE ITSELF, ARE NOT QUITE SO RELIGIOUSLY KEPT UP, IN THESE DEGENERATE TIMES, 77

CHAPTER XXVIII.
THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A SEXTON, 106
CHAPTER XXIX.
HOW THE PICKWICKIANS MADE AND CULTIVATED THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A COUPLE OF NICE YOUNG MEN BELONGING TO ONE OF THE LIBERAL PROFFESIONS; HOW THEY DISPORTED THEMSELVES ON THE ICE; AND HOW THEIR VISIT CAME TO A CONCLUSION, 120

CHAPTER XXX.
WHICH IS ALL ABOUT THE LAW, AND SUNDY GREAT AUTHORITIES LEARNED THEREIN, 137

CHAPTER XXXI.
DESCRIBES, FAR MORE FULLY THAN THE COURT NEWS-MAN EVER DID, A BACHELOR'S PARTY, GIVEN BY MR. BOB SAwyER AT HIS LODGINGS IN THE BOROUGH, 139

CHAPTER XXXII.
IS WHOLLY DEVOTED TO A FULL AND FAITHFUL REPORT OF THE MEMORABLE TRIAL OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK, 200
CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEREIN MR. PETER MAGNUSGROWS JEALOUS, AND THE MIDDLE-AGED LADY APPREHENSIVE, WHICH BRINGS THE PICKWICKIANS WITHIN THE GRASP OF THE LAW.

When Mr. Pickwick descended to the room in which he and Mr. Peter Magnus had spent the preceding evening, he found that gentleman with the major part of the contents of the two bags, the leathern hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel, displayed to all possible advantage on his person, while he himself was pacing up and down the room in a state of the utmost excitement and agitation.

"Good morning, sir," said Mr. Peter Magnus—"What do you think of this, sir?"

"Very effective indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the garments of Mr. Peter Magus with a good-natured smile.

"Yes, I think it'll do," said Mr. Magnus. "Mr. Pickwick, sir, I have sent up my card."

"Have you?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes; and the waiter brought back word, that she would see me at eleven—at eleven, sir; it only wants a quarter now."
"Very near the time," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, it is rather near," replied Mr. Magnus, "rather too near to be pleasant—eh! Mr. Pickwick, sir?"

"Confidence is a great thing in these cases," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"I believe it is, sir," said Mr. Peter Magnus. "I am very confident, sir. Really, Mr. Pickwick, I do not see why a man should feel any fear in such a case as this, sir. What is it, sir? There's nothing to be ashamed of; it's a matter of mutual accommodation, nothing more. Husband on one side, wife on the other. That's my view of the matter, Mr. Pickwick."

"It is a very philosophical one," replied Mr. Pickwick. "But breakfast is waiting, Mr. Magnus. Come."

Down they sat to breakfast, but it was evident, notwithstanding the boasting of Mr. Peter Magnus, that he laboured under a very considerable degree of nervousness, of which loss of appetite, a propensity to upset the tea-things, a spectral attempt at drollery, and an irresistible inclination to look at the clock every other second, were among the principal symptoms.

"He—he—he," tittered Mr. Magnus, affecting cheerfulness, and gasping with agitation. "It only wants two minutes, Mr. Pickwick. Am I pale, sir?"

"Not very," replied Mr. Pickwick.

There was a brief pause.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick; but have you ever done this sort of thing in your time?" said Mr. Magnus.

"You mean proposing?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes."

"Never," said Mr. Pickwick, with great energy, never."
"You have no idea, then, how it's best to begin?" said Mr Magnus.

"Why," said Mr. Pickwick, "I may have formed some ideas upon the subject, but as I have never submitted them to the test of experience, I should be sorry if you were induced to regulate your proceedings by them."

"I should feel very much obliged to you, for any advice, sir," said Mr. Magnus, taking another look at the clock, the hand of which was verging on the five minutes past.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, with the profound solemnity with which that great man could, when he pleased, render his remarks so deeply impressive—"I should commence, sir, with a tribute to the lady's beauty and excellent qualities; from them, sir, I should diverge to my own unworthiness."

"Very good," said Mr. Magnus.

"Unworthiness for her only, mind, sir," resumed Mr. Pickwick; "for to show that I was not wholly unworthy, sir, I should take a brief review of my past life, and present condition. I should argue by analogy, that to any body else, I must be a very desirable object. I should then expatiate on the warmth of my love, and the depth of my devotion. Perhaps I might then be tempted to seize her hand."

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Magnus: "that would be a very great point."

"I should then, sir," continued Mr. Pickwick, growing warmer as the subject presented itself in more glowing colours before him—"I should then, sir, come to the plain and simple question, 'Will you have me?' I think I am justified in assuming that upon this, she would turn away her head."

"You think that may be taken for granted?" said Mr. Magnus; "because, if she did not do that at the right place, it would be embarrassing."
"I think she would," said Mr. Pickwick. "Upon this, sir, I should squeeze her hand, and I think—I think, Mr. Magnus—that after I had done that, supposing there was no refusal, I should gently draw away the handkerchief, which my slight knowledge of human nature leads me to suppose the lady would be applying to her eyes at the moment, and steal a respectful kiss. I think I should kiss her, Mr. Magnus; and at this particular point, I am decidedly of opinion that if the lady were going to take me at all, she would murmur into my ears a bashful acceptance."

Mr. Magnus started: gazed on Mr. Pickwick's intelligent face, for a short time in silence, and then (the dial pointing to the ten minutes past) shook him warmly by the hand, and rushed desperately from the room.

Mr. Pickwick had taken a few strides to and fro; and the small hand of the clock following the latter part of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half hour, when the door suddenly opened. He turned round to greet Mr. Peter Magnus, and encountered in his stead the joyous face of Mr. Tupman, the serene countenance of Mr. Winkle, and the intellectual lineaments of Mr. Snodgrass.

As Mr. Pickwick greeted them, Mr. Peter Magnus tripped into the room.

"My friends, the gentleman I was speaking of, Mr. Magnus," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Your servant, gentlemen," said Mr. Magnus, evidently in a high state of excitement; "Mr. Pickwick, allow me to speak to you one moment, sir."

As he said this, Mr. Magnus harnessed his forefinger to Mr. Pickwick's button hole, and drawing him into a window recess, said—

"Congratulate me, Mr. Pickwick; I followed your advice to the very letter."
“And it was all correct, was it?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“It was, sir—could not possibly have been better,” replied Mr. Magnus; “Mr. Pickwick, she is mine.”

“I congratulate you, with all my heart,” replied Mr. Pickwick, warmly shaking his new friend by the hand.

“You must see her, sir,” said Mr. Magnus; “this way, if you please. Excuse us for one instant, gentlemen.” And hurrying on in this way, Mr. Peter Magnus drew Mr. Pickwick from the room. He paused at the next door in the passage, and tapped gently thereat.

“Come in,” said a female voice. And in they went.

“Miss Witherfield,” said Mr. Magnus, “allow me to introduce my very particular friend, Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick, I beg to make you known to Miss Witherfield.”

The lady was at the upper end of the room, and as Mr. Pickwick bowed, he took his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, and put them on, a process which he had no sooner gone through, than, uttering an exclamation of surprise, Mr. Pickwick retreated several paces, and the lady with a half-suppressed scream, hid her face in her hands, and dropped into a chair; whereupon Mr. Peter Magnus was struck motionless on the spot, and gazed from one to the other, with a countenance expressive of the extremities of horror and surprise.

This certainly was, to all appearance, very unaccountable behaviour; but the fact was, that Mr. Pickwick no sooner put on his spectacles, than he at once recognised in the future Mrs. Magnus the lady into whose room he had so unwarrantably intruded on the previous night; and the spectacles had no sooner crossed Mr. Pickwick's nose, than the lady
at once identified the countenance which she had seen surrounded by all the horrors of a night-cap. So the lady screamed, and Mr. Pickwick started.

"Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed Mr. Magnus, lost in astonishment, "What is the meaning of this, sir? What is the meaning of it, sir?" added Mr. Magnus, in a threatening and a louder tone.

"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, somewhat indignant at the very sudden manner in which Mr. Peter Magnus had conjugated himself into the imperative mood, "I decline answering that question."

"You decline it, sir?" said Mr. Magnus.

"I do, sir, replied Mr. Pickwick; "I object to say any thing which may compromise that lady, or awaken unpleasant recollections in her breast, without her consent and permission."

"Miss Witherfield," said Mr. Peter Magnus, "do you know this person?"

"Know him!" repeated the middle-aged lady, hesitating.

"Yes, know him, ma'am, I said know him," replied Mr. Magnus, with ferocity.

"I have seen him," replied the middle-aged lady.

"Where?" inquired Mr. Magnus, "where?"

"That," said the middle-aged lady, rising from her seat, and averting her head, "that I would not reveal for worlds."

"I understand you, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "and respect your delicacy; it shall never be revealed by me, depend upon it."

"Upon my word, ma'am," said Mr. Magnus, "considering the situation in which I am placed with regard to yourself, you carry this matter off with tolerable coolness—tolerable coolness, ma'am."

"Cruel Mr. Magnus," said the middle-aged lady, and here she wept very copiously indeed.

"Address your observations to me, sir," interposed Mr. Pickwick; "I alone am to blame, if any body be."
"Oh! you alone are to blame, are you, sir?" said Mr. Magnus; "I—I—see through this, sir. You repent of your determination now, do you?"

"My determination!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Your determination, sir. Oh! don't stare at me, sir," said Mr. Magnus; "I recollect your words last night, sir. You came down here, sir, to expose the treachery and falsehood of an individual on whose truth and honour you had placed implicit reliance—eh?" Here Mr. Peter Magnus indulged in a prolonged sneer: and taking off his green spectacles—which he probably found superfluous in his fit of jealousy—rolled his little eyes about, in a manner which was frightful to behold.

"Eh?" said Mr. Magnus; and then he repeated the sneer with increased effect. "But you shall answer it, sir."

"Answer what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Never mind, sir," replied Mr. Magnus, striding up and down the room—"Never mind."

There must be something very comprehensive in this phrase of "Never mind," for we do not recollect to have ever witnessed a quarrel in the street, at the theatre, public room, or elsewhere, in which it has not been the standard reply to all belligerent inquiries, "Do you call yourself a gentleman, sir?"—"Never mind, sir." Did I offer to say any thing to the young woman, sir?"—"Never mind, sir."

"Do you want your head knocked up against that wall, sir?"—"Never mind, sir." It is observable, too, that there would appear to be some hidden taunt in this universal "Never mind," which rouses more indignation in the bosom of the individual addressed, than the most lavish abuse could possibly awaken.

We do not mean to assert that the application of this brevity to himself, struck exactly that indignation to Mr. Pickwick's soul, which it would infallibly have roused in a vulgar breast. We
merely record the fact that Mr. Pickwick opened the room door, and abruptly called out "Tupman, come here."

Mr. Tupman immediately presented himself, with a look of very considerable surprise.

"Tupman," said Mr. Pickwick, "a secret of some delicacy, in which that lady is concerned, the cause of a difference which has just arisen between this gentleman and myself. When I assure him, in your presence, that it has no relation to himself, and is not in any way connected with his affairs, I need hardly beg you to take notice that if he continues to dispute it, he expresses a doubt of my veracity, which I shall consider extremely insulting." As Mr. Pickwick said this, he looked encyclopædias at Mr. Peter Magnus.

Mr. Pickwick's upright and honourable bearing, coupled with that force and energy of speech which so eminently distinguished him, would have carried conviction to any reasonable mind; but unfortunately at that particular moment, the mind of Mr. Peter Magnus was in any thing but reasonable order. Consequently, instead of receiving Mr. Pickwick's explanation as he ought to have done, he forthwith proceeded to work himself into a red-hot scorching consuming passion, and to talk about what was due to his own feelings, and all that sort of thing, adding force to his declamation by striding to and fro, and pulling his hair, amusements which he would vary occasionally, by shaking his fist in Mr. Pickwick's philanthropic countenance.

Mr. Pickwick, in his turn, conscious of his own innocence and rectitude, and irritated by having unfortunately involved the middle-aged lady in such an unpleasant affair, was not so quietly disposed as was his wont. The consequence was, that words ran high, and voices higher, and at length Mr. Magnus told Mr. Pickwick he should hear from him, to which Mr. Pickwick replied
with laudible politeness, that the sooner he heard from him the better; whereupon the middle-aged lady rushed in terror from the room, out of which Mr. Tupman dragged Mr. Pickwick, leaving Mr. Peter Magnus to himself and meditation.

If the middle-aged lady had mingled much with the busy world, or profited at all, by the manners and customs of those who make the laws and set the fashions, she would have known that this sort of ferocity is just the most harmless thing in nature; but as she had lived for the most part in the country, and never read the parliamentary debates, she was little versed in these particular refinements of civilized life. Accordingly, when she had gained her bed-chamber, bolted herself in, and begun to meditate on the scene she had just witnessed, the most terrific pictures of slaughter and destruction presented themselves to her imagination; among which, a full-length portrait of Mr. Peter Magnus borne home by four men, with the embellishment of a whole barrel-full of bullets in his left side, was among the very least. The more the middle-aged lady meditated, the more terrified she became; and at length she determined to repair to the house of the principal magistrate of the town, and request him to secure the persons of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, without delay.

To this decision, the middle-aged lady was impelled by a variety of considerations, the chief of which, was the incontestable proof it would afford of her devotion to Mr. Peter Magnus, and her anxiety for his safety. She was too well acquainted with his jealous temperament to venture the slightest allusion to the real cause of her agitation on beholding Mr. Pickwick; and she trusted to her own influence and power of persuasion with the little man, to quell his boisterous jealousy,
supposing that Mr. Pickwick were removed, and no fresh quarrel could arise. Filled with these reflections, the middle-aged lady arrayed herself in her bonnet and shawl, and repaired to the Mayor's dwelling straightway.

Now George Nupkins, Esquire, the principal magistrate aforesaid, was about as grand a personage as the fastest walker would find out, between sunrise and sunset, on the twenty-first of June, which being, according to the almanacs, the longest day in the whole year, would naturally afford him the longest period for his search. On this particular morning, Mr. Nupkins was in a state of the utmost excitement and irritation, for there had been a rebellion in the town; all the day-scholars at the largest day-school, had conspired to break the windows of an obnoxious apple-seller, and had hooted the beadle, and pelted the constabulary—an elderly gentleman in top-boots, who had been called out to repress the tumult; and had been a peace-officer, man and boy, for half a century at least. And Mr. Nupkins was sitting in his easy chair, frowning with majesty and boiling with rage, when a lady was announced on pressing, private, and particular business. Mr. Nupkins looked calmly terrible, and commanded that the lady should be shown in, which command, like all the mandates of emperors, and magistrates, and other great potentates of the earth, was forthwith obeyed; and Miss Witherfield, interestingly agitated, was ushered in accordingly.

"Muzzle," said the magistrate.

Muzzle was under-sized footman, with a long body and short legs.

"Muzzle."

"Yes, your worship."

"Place a chair and leave the room."

"Yes, your worship."
"Now, ma'am, will you state your business?" said the magistrate.

"It is of a very painful kind, sir," said Miss Witherfield.

"Very likely, ma'am," said the magistrate.

"Compose your feelings, ma'am." Here Mr. Nupkins looked benignant. "And then tell me what legal business brings you here, ma'am." Here the magistrate triumphed over the man; and he looked stern again.

"It is very distressing to me, sir, to give this information," said Miss Withersfield; "but I fear a duel is going to be fought here."

"Here, ma'am," said the magistrate. "Where, ma'am?"

"In Ipswich."

"In Ipswich, ma'am—a duel in Ipswich," said the magistrate, perfectly aghast at the notion. "Impossible, ma'am: nothing of the kind can be contemplated in this town, I am persuaded. Bless my soul, ma'am; are you aware of the activity of our local magistracy? Do you happen to have heard, ma'am, that I rushed into a prize-ring on the fourth of May last, attended by only sixty special constables; and, at the hazard of falling a sacrifice to the angry passions of an infuriated multitude, prohibited a pugilistic contest between the Middlesex Dumpling, and the Suffolk Bantam? A duel in Ipswich, ma'am! I don't think—I do not think," said the magistrate, reasoning with himself, "that any two men can have had the hardihood to plan such a breach of the peace, in this town."

"My information is, unfortunately, but too correct," said the middle-aged lady; "I was present at the quarrel."

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said the astounded magistrate. "Muzzle."
"Yes, your worship."

"Send Mr. Jinks here, directly—instantly."

"Yes, your worship."

Muzzle retired; and a pale, sharp-nosed, half-fed, shabbily clad clerk, of middle-age, entered the room.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate—Mr. Jinks."

"Sir," said Mr. Jinks.

"This lady, Mr. Jinks, has come here to give information of an intended duel in this town."

Mr. Jinks, not exactly knowing what to do, smiled a dependant's smile.

"What are you laughing at, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate.

Mr. Jinks looked serious, instantly.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "you're a fool, sir."

Mr. Jinks looked humbly at the great man, and bit the top of his pen.

"You may see something very comical in this information, sir; but I can tell you this, Mr. Jinks, that you have very little to laugh at," said the magistrate.

The hungry-looking Jinks sighed, as if he were quite aware of the fact of his having very little, indeed, to be merry about; and, being ordered to take the lady's information, shambled to his seat, and proceeded to write it down.

"This man, Pickwick, is the principal, I understand," said the magistrate, when the statement was finished.

"He is," said the middle-aged lady.

"And the other rioter—what's his name, Mr. Jinks?"

"Tupman, sir."

"Tupman is the second?"

"Yes."
"The other principal, you say, has absconded, ma'am?"

"Yes," replied Miss Witherfield, with a short cough.

"Very well," said the magistrate. "These are two cut-throats from London, who have come down here, to destroy his majesty's population. thinking that, at this distance from the capital, the arm of the law is weak and paralyzed. They shall be made an example of. Draw up the warrants, Mr. Jinks. Muzzle."

"Yes, your worship."

"Is Grummer down stairs?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Send him up."

The obsequious Muzzle retired, and presently returned, introducing the elderly gentleman in the top boots, who was chiefly remarkable for a bottle nose, a hoarse voice, a snuff-coloured surtout, and a wandering eye.

"Grummer," said the magistrate.

"Your wash-up."

"Is the town quiet now?"

"Pretty well, your wash-up," replied Grummer. "Pop'lar feeling has in a measure subsided, consekens o' the boys having dispersed to cricket."

"Nothing but vigorous measures will do, in these times, Grummer," said the magistrate, in a determined manner. "If the authority of the king's officers is set at naught, we must have the riot act read. If the civil power cannot protect these windows, Grummer, the military must protect the civil power, and the windows too. I believe that is a maxim of the constitution, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, sir," said Jinks.

"Very good," said the magistrate, signing the
warrants. "Grummer, you will bring these persons before me, this afternoon. You will find them at the Great White Horse. You recollect the case of the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam, Grummer?"

Mr. Grummer intimated, by a retrospective shake of the head, that he should never forget it—as indeed it was not likely he would, so long as it continued to be cited daily.

"This is even more unconstitutional," said the magistrate; "this is even a greater breach of the peace, and a grosser infringement of his majesty's prerogative. I believe duelling is one of his majesty's most undoubted prerogatives, Mr. Jinks?"

"Expressly stipulated in Magna Charter, sir," said Mr. Jinks.

"One of the brightest jewels in the British crown, wrung from his majesty by the political union of barons, I believe, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate.

"Just so, sir," replied Mr. Jinks.

"Very well," said the magistrate, drawing himself up proudly, "it shall not be violated in this portion of his dominions. Grummer, procure assistance, and execute these warrants with as little delay as possible. Muzzle."

"Yes, your worship."

"Show the lady out."

"Miss Witherfield retired, deeply impressed with the magistrate's learning and research; Mr. Nupkins retired to lunch; Mr. Jinks retired within himself—that being the only retirement he had, except the sofa-bedstead in the small parlour which was occupied by his landlady's family in the day-time—and Mr. Grummer retired, to wash out, by his mode of discharging his present commission, the insult which had been fastened upon himself, and the other representative of his majesty—the beadle—in the course of the morning.
While these resolute and determined preparations for the conservation of the king's peace were pending, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, wholly unconscious of the mighty events in progress, had sat quietly down to dinner; and very talkative and companionable they all were; Mr. Pickwick was in the very act of relating his adventure of the preceding night, to the great amusement of his followers, Mr. Tupman especially, when the door opened, and a somewhat forbidding countenance peeped into the room. The eyes in the forbidding countenance looked very earnestly at Mr. Pickwick, for several seconds, and were, to all appearance, satisfied with their investigation for the body to which the forbidding countenance belonged, slowly brought itself into the apartment, and presented the form of an elderly individual in top-boots—not to keep the reader any longer in suspense, in short, the eyes were the wandering eyes of Mr. Grummer, and the body was the body of the same gentleman.

Mr. Grummer's mode of proceeding was professional, but peculiar. His first act was to bolt the door on the inside; his second, to polish his head and countenance very carefully with a cotton handkerchief; his third, to place his hat, with the cotton handkerchief in it, on the nearest chair; and his fourth to produce, from the breast-pocket of his coat, a short truncheon surmounted by a brazen crown, with which he beckoned to Mr. Pickwick with a grave and ghost-like air.

Mr. Snodgrass was the first to break the astonished silence. He looked steadily at Mr. Grummer for a brief space, and then said, emphatically—"This is a private room, sir—a private room."

Mr. Grummer shook his head, and replied—"No room's private to his majesty, when the street door's once passed. That's law. Some people
maintains that an Englishman’s house is his castle. That’s gammon.”

"Which is Mr. Tupman?" inquired Mr. Grummer. He had an intuitive perception of Mr. Pickwick; he knew him at once.

"My name’s Tupman," said that gentleman.

"My name’s Law," said Mr. Grummer.

"What?" said Mr. Tupman.

"Law," replied Mr. Grummer, "law, civil power, and executive; them’s my titles; here’s my authority. Blank Tupman, blank Pickwick—against the peace of our sufferin’ Lord the King—stattit in that case made and provided—and all regular. I apprehend you Pickwick, Tupman—the aforesaid."

"What do you mean by this insolence?" said Mr. Tupman, starting up—"Leave the room, leave the room."

"Halloo," said Mr. Grummer, retreating very expeditiously to the door, and opening it an inch or two, "Dubbley."

"Well," said a deep voice from the passage.

"Come for’ard, Dubbley," said Mr. Grummer.

At the word of command, a dirty-faced man, something over six feet high, and stout in proportion, squeezed himself through the half-open door, making his face very red in the process, and entered the room.

"Is the other specials outside, Dubbley?" inquired Mr. Grummer.

"Mr. Dubbley, who was a man of few words, nodded assent.

"Order in the division under your charge, Dubbley," said Mr. Grummer.

Mr. Dubbley did as he was desired; and half-a-dozen men, each with a short truncheon and a
brass crown, flocked into the room. Mr. Grummer pocketed his staff and looked at Mr. Dubbley, Mr. Dubbley pocketed his staff and looked at the division; and the division pocketed their staves and looked at Messrs. Tupman and Pickwick.

Mr. Pickwick and his followers, rose as one man.

"What is the meaning of this atrocious intrusion upon my privacy?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Who dares apprehend me?" said Mr. Tupman.

"What do you want here, scoundrels?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Winkle said nothing, but he fixed his eyes on Grummer, and bestowed a look upon him, which, if he had had any feeling, must have pierced his brain, and come out on the other side. As it was however, it had no visible effect upon him whatever.

When the executive perceived that Mr. Pickwick and his friends were disposed to resist the authority of the law, they very significantly turned up their coat sleeves, as if knocking them down in the first instance, and taking them up afterwards, were a mere professional act which had only to be thought of, to be done, as a matter of course. This demonstration was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He conferred a few moments with Mr. Tupman apart, and then signified his readiness to proceed to the mayor's residence, merely begging the parties then and there assembled, to take notice, that it was his firm intention to resent this monstrous invasion of his privileges as an Englishman, the instant he was at liberty, whereat the parties then and there assembled, laughed very heartily, with the single exception of Mr. Grummer, who seemed to consider that any slight cast
upon the divine right of magistrates, was a species of blasphemy not to be tolerated.

But when Mr. Pickwick had signified his readiness to bow to the laws of his country, and just when the waiters, and hostlers, and chambermaids, and postboys, who had anticipated a delightful commotion from his threatened obstinacy, began to turn away disappointed and disgusted, a difficulty arose which had not been foreseen. With every sentiment of veneration for the constituted authorities, Mr. Pickwick resolutely protested against making his appearance in the public streets, surrounded and guarded by the officers of justice, like a common criminal. Mr. Grummer, in the then disturbed state of public feeling (for it was half-holiday, and the boys had not yet gone home,) as resolutely protested against walking on the opposite side of the way, and taking Mr. Pickwick's parole that he would go straight to the magistrate's; and both Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman as strenuously objected to the expense of a post-coach, which was the only respectable conveyance that could be obtained. The dispute ran high, and the dilemma lasted long; and just as the executive were on the point of overcoming Mr. Pickwick's objection to walking to the magistrate's by the trite expedient of carrying him thither, it was recollected that there stood in the inn yard an old sedan chair, which, having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, at least as conveniently as a modern post-chaise. The chair was hired, and brought into the hall; Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman squeezed themselves inside, and pulled down the blinds; a couple of chairmen were speedily found, and the procession started in grand order. The specials surrounded the body of the vehicle, Mr.
Grummer and Mr. Dubbley marched triumphantly in front, Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle walked arm in arm behind, and the unsoaped of Ipswich brought up the rear.

The shopkeepers of the town, although they had a very indistinct notion of the nature of the offence, could not but be much edified and gratified by this spectacle. Here was the strong arm of the law, coming down with twenty gold-beater force, upon two offenders from the metropolis itself; the mighty engine was directed by their own magistrate, and worked by their own officers; and both the criminals, by their united efforts, were securely boxed up, in the narrow compass of one sedan-chair. Many were the expressions of approval and admiration which greeted Mr. Grummer, as he headed the cavalcade, staff in hand; loud and long were the shouts which were raised by the unsoaped; and amidst these united testimonials of public approbation, the procession moved slowly and majestically along.

Mr. Weller, habited in his morning jacket with the black calico sleeves, was returning in a rather desponding state from an unsuccessful survey of the mysterious house with the green gate, when, raising his eyes, he beheld a crowd pouring down the street, surrounding an object which had very much the appearance of a sedan-chair. Willing to divert his thoughts from the failure of his enterprise, he stepped aside to see the crowd pass; and finding that they were cheering away, very much to their own satisfaction, forthwith began (just by way of raising his spirits) to cheer too, with all his might and main.

Mr. Grummer passed, and Mr. Dubbley passed, and the sedan passed, and the body-guard of specials passed, and Sam was still responding to the enthusiastic cheers of the mob, and waving his hat about as if he were in the very last extreme of the
wildest joy (though of course he had not the faintest idea of the matter in hand,) when he was suddenly stopped by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass.

“What's the row, gen'l'm'n?” cried Sam, “Who have they got in this here watch-box in mournin'?”

Both gentlemen replied together, but their words were lost in the tumult.

“Who is it?” roared Sam again.

Once more was a joint reply returned; and though the words were inaudible, Sam saw by the motion of the two pairs of lips that they had uttered the magic word "Pickwick."

This was enough. In another minute Mr. Weller had made his way through the crowd, stopped the chairmen, and confronted the portly Grummer.

“Hallo, old gen'l'm'n,” said Sam, “Who have you got in this here con-wayance?”

“Stand back,” said Mr. Grummer, whose dignity, like the dignity of a great many other men, had been wondrously augmented by a little popularity.

“Knock him down, if he don't,” said Mr. Dubbley.

“I'm werry much obliged to you, old gen'l'm'n,” replied Sam, “for consulting my convenience, and I'm still more obliged to the other gen'l'm'n who looks as if he'd just escaped from a giant's carry-wan, for his werry 'ansome suggestion; but I should prefer your givin' me a answer to my question, if it's all the same to you. How are you, sir?” This last observation was addressed with a patronising air to Mr. Pickwick, who was peeping through the front window.

Mr. Grummer, perfectly speechless with indignation, dragged the truncheon with the brass crown,
from its particular pocket, and flourished it before Sam's eyes.

"Ah," said Sam, "it's werry pretty, 'specially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one."

"Stand back," said the outraged Mr. Grummer. By way of adding force to the command, he thrust the brass emblem of royalty into Sam's neckcloth with one hand, and seized Sam's collar with the other, a compliment which Mr. Weller returned by knocking him down out of hand, having previously, with the utmost consideration, knocked down a chairman for him to lie upon.

Whether Mr. Winkle was seized with a temporary attack of that species of insanity which originates in a sense of injury, or animated by this display of Mr. Weller's valour, is uncertain; but certain it is, that he no sooner saw Mr. Grummer fall, than he made a terrific onslaught on a small boy who stood next him; whereupon Mr. Snodgrass, in a truly Christian spirit, and in order that he might take no one unawares, announced in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation. He was immediately surrounded and secured; and it is but common justice both to him and Mr. Winkle to say, that they did not make the slightest attempt to rescue either themselves or Mr. Weller, who, after a most vigorous resistance, was overpowered by numbers, and taken prisoner. The procession then re-formed, the chairmen resumed their stations, and the march was re-commenced.

Mr. Pickwick's indignation during the whole of this proceeding was beyond all bounds. He could just see Sam upsetting the specials, and flying about in every direction, and that was all he could see, for the sedan doors wouldn't open, and the blinds wouldn't pull up. At length, with the assistance
of Mr. Tupman, he managed to push open the roof; and mounting on the seat, and steadying himself as well as he could, by placing his hand on that gentleman's shoulder, Mr. Pickwick proceeded to address the multitude; to dwell upon the unjustifiable manner in which he had been treated; and to call upon them to take notice that his servant had been first assaulted. And in this order they reached the magistrate's house; the chairmen trotting, the prisoners following, Mr. Pickwick oratorising, and the crowd shouting.
CHAPTER XXV.

SHOWING, AMONG A VARIETY OF PLEASANT MATTERS, HOW MAJESTIC AND IMPARTIAL MR. NUPKINS WAS; AND HOW MR. WELLER RETURNED MR. JOB TROTTER'S SHUTTLECOCK, AS HEAVILY AS IT CAME; WITH ANOTHER MATTER, WHICH WILL BE FOUND IN ITS PLACE.

Violent was Mr. Weller's indignation as he was borne along; numerous were the allusions to the personal appearance and demeanour of Mr. Grummer and his companion: and valorous were the defiances to any six of the gentlemen present, in which he vented his dissatisfaction. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle listened with gloomy respect to the torrent of eloquence which their leader poured forth from the sedan chair, and the rapid course of which not all Mr. Tupman's earnest entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed, were able to check for an instant. But Mr. Weller's anger quickly gave way to curiosity, when the procession turned down the identical court-yard in which he had met with the runaway Job Trotter: and curiosity was exchanged for a feeling of the most gleeful astonishment, when the all-important Mr. Grummer, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps, to the very green gate from which Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-han-
dle which hung at the side thereof. The ring was answered by a very smart and pretty-faced servant-girl, who after holding up her hands in astonishment at the rebellious appearance of the prisoners, and the impassionate language of Mr. Pickwick, summoned Mr. Muzzle. Mr. Muzzle opened one-half of the carrage gate, to admit the sedan, the captured ones, and the specials; and immediately slammed it in the faces of the mob, who, indignant at being excluded, and anxious to see what followed, relieved their feelings by kicking at the gate and ringing the bell, for an hour or two afterwards. In this amusement they all took part by turns, except three or four fortunate individuals, who having discovered a grating in the gate which commanded a view of nothing, were staring through it with the same indefatigable perseverance with which people will flatten their noses against the front windows of a chemist's shop when a drunken man who has been run over by a dog-cart in the street, is undergoing a surgical inspection in the back-parlour.

At the foot of a flight of steps, leading to the house door which were guarded on either side by an American aloe in a green tub, the sedan-chair stopped; and Mr. Pickwick and his friends were conducted into the hall, from whence, having been previously announced by Muzzle, and ordered in by Mr. Nupkins, they were ushered into the worshipful presence of that public-spirited officer.

The scene was an impressive one, well calculated to strike terror to the hearts of culprits, and to impress them with an adequate idea of the stern majesty of the law. In front of a big book-case, in a big chair, behind a big table, and before a big volume, sat Mr. Nupkins, looking a full size larger than any one of them, big as they were. The table was adorned with piles of papers: and above
the farther end of it, appeared the head and shoulders of Mr. Jinks, who was busily engaged in looking as busy as possible. The party having all entered, Muzzle carefully closed the door, and placed himself behind his master’s chair, to await his orders; Mr. Nupkins threw himself back with thrilling solemnity, and scrutinized the faces of his unwilling visitors.

“How, Grummer, who is that person?” said Mr. Nupkins, pointing to Mr. Pickwick, who, as the spokesman of his friends, stood hat in hand, bowing with the utmost politeness and respect.

“This here’s Pickwick, your wash-up,” said Grummer.

“Come, none o’ that ’ere, old Strike-a-light,” interposed Mr. Weller, elbowing himself into the front rank—“Beg your pardon, sir, but this here officer o’ yours in the gambooge tops, ’ull never earn a decent livin’, as a master o’ the ceremonies any more. This here, sir,” continued Mr. Weller, thrusting Grummer aside, and addressing the magistrate with pleasant familiarity—“This here is S. Pickwick, Esquire; this here’s Mr. Tupman: that ’ere’s Mr. Snodgrass; and further on, next him on the t’other side, Mr. Winkle—all werry nice gent’m’n, sir, as you’ll be werry happy to have the acquaintance on; so the sooner you commits these here officers o’ yours to the tread-mill, for a month or two, the sooner we shall begin to be on a pleasant understanding. Business first, pleasure afterwards, as King Richard the Third said ven he stabbed the t’other king in the Tower, afore he smothered the babbies.”

At the conclusion of this address, Mr. Weller brushed his hat with his right elbow, and nodded benignly to Jinks, who had heard him throughout, with unspeakable awe.
"Who is this man, Grummer?" said the magistrate.

"Werry desp'rate character, your wash-up," replied Grummer. "He attempted to rescue the prisoners, and assaulted the officers—so we took him into custody, and brought him here."

"You did quite right," replied the magistrate. "He is evidently a desperate ruffian."

"He is my servant, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, angrily.

"Oh! he is your servant, is he?" said Mr. Nupkins. "A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, and murder its officers. Pickwick's servant. Put that down, Mr. Jinks."

Mr. Jinks did so.

"What's your name, fellow?" thundered Mr. Nupkins.

"Veller," replied Sam.

"A very good name for the Newgate Calendar," said Mr. Nupkins.

This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter for five minutes' duration.

"Put down his name, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate.

"Two L's. old feller," said Sam.

Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him instantly. It's a dangerous thing laughing at the wrong man, in these cases.

"Where do you live?" said the magistrate.

"Vare-ever I can," replied Sam.

"Put down that, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, who was fast rising into a rage.

"Score it under," said Sam.

"He is a vagabond, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate. "He is a vagabond on his own statement, is he not, Mr. Jinks?"
"Certainly, sir."
"Then I'll commit him—I'll commit him as such," said Mr. Nupkins.

"This is a werry impartial country for justice," said Sam. "There ain't a magistrate going, as don't commit himself, twice as often as he commits other people."

At this sally another special laughed, and then tried to look so supernaturally solemn, that the magistrate detected him immediately.

"Grummer," said Mr. Nupkins, reddening with passion, "how dare you select such an inefficient and disreputable person for a special constable, as that man? How dare you do it, sir?"

"I am werry sorry, your wash-up," stammered Grummer.

"Very sorry!" said the furious magistrate. "You shall repent of this neglect of duty, Mr. Grummer: you shall be made an example of. Take that fellow's staff away. He's drunk. You're drunk, fellow."

"I am not drunk, your worship," said the man.
"You are drunk," returned the magistrate. How dare you say you are not drunk, sir, when I say you are? Doesn't he smell of spirits, Grummer?"

"Horrid, your wash-up," replied Grummer, who had a vague impression that there was a smell of rum somewhere.

"I knew he did," said Mr. Nupkins. "I saw he was drunk when he first came into the room, by his excited eye. Did you observe his excited eye, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, sir."

"I haven't touched a drop of spirits this morning," said the man, who was as sober a fellow as need be.

"How dare you tell me a falsehood?" said Mr. Nupkins. "Isn't he drunk at this moment, Mr. Jinks?"
"Certainly, sir," replied Jinks.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "I shall commit that man, for contempt. Make out his committal, Mr. Jinks."

And committed the special would have been, only Jinks, who was the magistrate's adviser, having had a legal education of three years in a country attorney's office, whispered the magistrate that he thought it wouldn't do; so the magistrate made a speech, and said, that in consideration of the special's family, he would merely reprimand and discharge him. Accordingly, the special was abused vehemently for a quarter of an hour, and sent about his business: and Grummer, Dubbley, Muzzle, and all the other specials, murmured their admiration of the magnanimity of Mr. Nupkins.

"Now Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "Swear Grummer."

Grummer was sworn directly; but as Grummer wandered, and Mr. Nupkins' dinner was nearly ready, Mr. Nupkins cut the matter short, by putting leading questions to Grummer, which Grummer answered as nearly in the affirmative as he could. So the examination went off, all very smooth and comfortable; and the two assaults were proved against Mr. Weller, and a threat against Mr. Winkle, and a push against Mr. Snodgrass. And when all this was done to the magistrate's satisfaction, the magistrate and Mr. Jinks consulted in whispers.

The consultation having lasted about ten minutes, Mr. Jinks retired to his end of the table; and the magistrate, with a preparatory cough, drew himself up in his chair, and was proceeding to commence his address, when Mr. Pickwick interposed.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you," said Mr. Pickwick; "but before you proceed to express, and act upon, any opinion you may have formed on the statements which have been made
here, I must claim my right to be heard so far as I am personally concerned."

"Hold your tongue, sir," said the magistrate, peremptorily.

"I must submit to you, sir,"—said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold your tongue, sir," interposed the magistrate, "or I shall order an officer to remove you."

"You may order your officers to do whatever you please, sir," said Mr. Pickwick; "and I have no doubt, from the specimen I have had of the subordination preserved among them, that whatever you order, they will execute; but I shall take the liberty, sir, of claiming my right to be heard, until I am removed by force."

"Pickwick and principal," exclaimed Mr. Weller, in a very audible voice.

"Sam, be quiet," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Dum as a drum with a hole in it," replied Sam.

Mr. Nupkins looked at Mr. Pickwick with a gaze of intense astonishment, at his displaying such un wonted temerity; and was apparently about to return a very angry reply, when Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered something in his ear. To this the magistrate returned a half-audible answer, and then the whispering was renewed. Jinks was evidently remonstrating.

At length the magistrate, gulping down with a very bad grace his disinclination to hear anything more, turned to Mr. Pickwick, and said sharply,—

"What do you want to say?"

"First," said Mr. Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles, under which even Nupkins quailed,—"First, I wish to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?"

"Must I tell him?" whispered the magistrate to Jinks.

"I think you had better, sir," whispered Jinks to the magistrate.
"An information has been sworn before me," said the magistrate, "that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man, Tupman, is your aider and abettor in it. Therefore—eh, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Therefore, I call upon you both, to—I think that's the course, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, sir."

"To—to—what, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate, pettishly.

"To find bail, sir."

"Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both—as I was about to say when I was interrupted by my clerk—to find bail."

"Good bail," whispered Mr. Jinks.

"I shall require good bail," said the magistrate.

"Town's people," whispered Jinks.

"They must be town's people," said the magistrate.

"Fifty pounds, each," whispered Jinks, "and householders, of course."

"I shall require two sureties, of fifty pounds each," said the magistrate aloud, with great dignity, "and they must be householders, of course."

"But, bless my heart, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, who, together with Mr. Tupman, was all amusement and indignation; "we are perfect strangers in this town. I have as little knowledge of any householders here, as I have intention of fighting a duel with any body."

"I dare say," replied the magistrate, "I dare say—don't you, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Have you any thing more to say?" inquired the magistrate.

Mr. Pickwick had a great deal more to say, which he would no doubt have said, very little to
his own advantage, or the magistrate's satisfaction, if he had not, the moment he ceased speaking, been pulled by the sleeve by Mr. Weller, with whom he was immediately engaged in so earnest a conversation, that he suffered the magistrate's inquiry to pass wholly unnoticed. Mr. Nupkins was not the man to ask a question of the kind twice over; and so, with another preparatory cough, he proceeded, amidst the reverential and admiring silence of the constables, to pronounce his decision.

He should fine Weller two pounds for the first assault, and three pounds for the second. He should fine Winkle two pounds, and Snodgrass one pound, besides requiring them to enter into their own recognisances to keep the peace towards all his Majesty's subjects, and especially towards his liege servant, Daniel Grummer. Pickwick and Tupman he had already held to bail.

Immediately on the magistrate ceasing to speak, Mr. Pickwick, with a smile mantling on his again-good-humoured countenance, stepped forward, and said—

"I beg the magistrate's pardon, but may I request a few minutes' private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?"

"What!" said the magistrate.

Mr. Pickwick repeated his request.

"This is a most extraordinary request," said the magistrate—"A private interview!"

"A private interview," replied Mr. Pickwick, firmly; "only, as a part of the information which I wish to communicate is derived from my servant, I should wish him to be present."

The magistrate looked at Mr. Jinks, Mr. Jinks looked at the magistrate, and the officers looked at each other in amazement. Mr. Nupkins turned
suddenly pale. Could the man Weller, in a moment of remorse, have divulged some secret conspiracy for his assassination?" It was a dreadful thought. He was a public man; and he turned paler, as he thought of Julius Cæsar and Mr. Perceval.

The magistrate looked at Mr. Pickwick; again, and beckoned Mr. Jinks.

"What do you think of this request, Mr. Jinks?" murmured Mr. Nupkins.

Mr. Jinks, who didn't exactly know what to think of it, and was afraid he might offend, smiled feebly, after a dubious fashion, and, screwing up the corners of his mouth, shook his head slowly from side to side.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, gravely, "you are an ass, sir."

At this little expression of opinion, Mr. Jinks smiled again—rather more feebly than before—and edged himself, by degrees, back into his own corner.

Mr. Nupkins debated the matter within himself for a few seconds, and then rising from his chair; and requesting Mr. Pickwick and Sam to follow him, led the way into a small room which opened into the justice parlour. Desiring Mr. Pickwick to walk to the farther end of the little apartment, and holding his hand upon the half-closed door, that he might be able to effect an immediate escape, in case there was the least tendency to a display of hostilities, Mr. Nupkins expressed his readiness to hear the communication, whatever it might be.

"I will come to the point at once, sir," said Mr. Pickwick: "it affects yourself, and your credit, materially. I have every reason to believe, sir, that you are harbouring in your house, a gross impostor!"
“Two,” interrupted Sam, “Mulberry agin all natur’, for tears and willainy.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, “if I am to render myself intelligible to this gentleman, I must beg you to control your feelings.”

“Werry sorry, sir,” replied Mr. Weller; “but when I think o’ that ’ere Job, I can’t help opening the valve an inch or two.”

“In one word, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, “is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitzmarshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because,” added Mr. Pickwick, as he saw that Mr. Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption—“because, if he be, I know that person to be a—”

“Hush, hush,” said Mr. Nupkins, closing the door. “Know him to be what, sir?”

“An unprincipled adventurer—a dishonourable character—a man who preys upon society, and makes easily-deceived people his dupes, sir; his absurd, his foolish, his wretched dupes, sir,” said the excited Mr. Pickwick.

“Dear me,” said Mr. Nupkins, colouring up very red, and altering his whole manner directly. “Dear me, Mr.—”

“Pjckvick,” said Sam.

“Pickwick,” said the magistrate, “Dear me, Mr. Pickwick—pray take a seat—you cannot mean this? Captain Fitzmarshall?”

“Don’t call him a cap’en,” said Sam, “nor Fitzmarshall neither; he ain’t neither one nor t’other. He’s a strolling actor, he is, and his name’s Jingle; and if ever there was a wolf in a mulberry suit, that ’ere Job Trotter’s him.”

“It is very true, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, replying to the magistrate’s look of amazement; “my only business in this town, is to expose the person of whom we now speak.”
And Mr. Pickwick proceeded to pour into the horror-stricken ear of Mr. Nupkins, an abridged account of all Mr. Jingle's atrocities. He related how he had first met him, how he had eloped with Miss Wardle, how he had cheerfully resigned the lady for a pecuniary consideration, how he had entrapped him into a lady's boarding-school at midnight, and how he (Mr. Pickwick) now felt it his duty to expose his assumption of his present name and rank.

As the narrative proceeded, all the warm blood in the body of Mr. Nupkins tingled up into the very tips of his ears. He had picked up the captain at a neighbouring race-course. Charmed with his long list of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive travel, and his fashionable demeanour, Mrs. Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited Captain Fitzmarshall, and quoted Captain Fitzmarshall, and hurled Captain Fitzmarshall at the devoted heads of their select circle of acquaintance, until their bosom friends, Mrs. Porkenham and the Miss Porkenhams, and Mr. Sidney Porkenham were ready to burst with jealousy and despair. And now to hear, after all, that he was a needy adventurer, a strolling player, and if not a swindler, something so very like it, that it was hard to tell the difference! What would the Porkenhams say! What would be the triumph of Mr. Sidney Porkenham when he found that his addresses had been slighted for such a rival! How should he meet the eye of old Porkenham at the next Quarter Sessions!—and what a handle would it be for the opposition magisterial party, if the story got abroad!

"But after all," said Mr. Nupkins, brightening up for a moment, after a long pause; "after all, this is a mere statement. Captain Fitzmarshall is a man of very engaging manners,—and, I dare say, has many enemies. What proof have you, of the truth of these representations?"
“Confront me with him,” said Mr. Pickwick, “that is all I ask, and all I require. Confront him with me, and my friends here; you will want no farther proof.”

“Why,” said Mr. Nupkins, “that might be very easily done, for he will be here to-night, and then there would be no occasion to make the matter public, just—just—for the young man’s own sake, you know. I—I—should like to consult Mrs. Nupkins on the propriety of the step, in the first instance, though. At all events, Mr. Pickwick, we must despatch this legal business before we can do anything else. Pray step back into the next room.”

Into the next room they went.

“Grummer,” said the magistrate, in an awful voice.

“Your wash-up,” replied Grummer, with the smile of a favourite.

“Come, come, sir,” said the magistrate, sternly, “don’t let me see any of this levity here. It is very unbecoming, and I can assure you that you have very little to smile at. Was the account you gave me just now, strictly true? Now be careful, sir.”

“Your wash-up,” stammered Grummer, “I—”

“Oh, you are confused, are you?” said the magistrate, “Mr. Jinks, you observe his confusion?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Jinks.

“Now,” said the magistrate, “just repeat your statement, Grummer, and again I warn you to be careful. Mr. Jinks, take his words down.”

The unfortunate Grummer proceeded to restate his complaint, but what between Mr. Jinks taking down his words, and the magistrate’s taking them up; his natural tendency to rambling, and his extreme confusion, he managed to get involved, in something under three minutes, in such a mass of entanglement and contradiction, that Mr. Nup-
kins at once declared he didn't believe him. So the fines were remitted, and Mr. Jinks found a couple of bail in no time. And all these solemn proceedings having been satisfactorily concluded, Mr. Grummer was ignominiously ordered out—an awful instance of the instability of human greatness, and the uncertain tenure of great men's favour.

Mrs. Nupkins was a majestic female in a blue gauze turban and a light brown wig. Miss Nupkins possessed all her mamma's haughtiness without the turban, and all her ill-nature without the wig; and whenever the exercise of these two amiable qualities involved mother and daughter in some unpleasant dilemma, as they not unfrequently did, they both concurred in laying the blame on the shoulders of Mr. Nupkins. Accordingly, when Mr. Nupkins sought Mrs. Nupkins, and detailed the communication which had been made by Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Nupkins suddenly recollected that she had always expected something of the kind; that she had always said it would be so; that her advice was never taken; that she really did not know what Mr. Nupkins supposed she was; and so forth.

"The idea!" said Miss Nupkins, forcing a tear of very scanty proportions, into the corner of each eye, "the idea of my being made such a fool of!"

"Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear," said Mrs. Nupkins; "how I have implored and begged that man to inquire into the Captain's family connexions; how I have urged and entreated him to take some decisive step! I am quite certain nobody would believe it—quite."

"But, my dear," said Mr. Nupkins.

"Don't talk to me, you aggravating thing, don't," said Mrs. Nupkins.

"My love," said Mr. Nupkins, "you professed yourself very fond of Captain Fitzmarshal. You
have constantly asked him here, my dear, and you have lost no opportunity of introducing him elsewhere."

"Didn't I say so, Henrietta?" said Mrs. Nupkins, appealing to her daughter with the air of a much-injured female—"Didn't I say that your papa would turn round, and lay all this, at my door? Didn't I say so?" Here Mrs. Nupkins sobbed.

"Oh, pa!" remonstrated Miss Nupkins. And here she sobbed, too.

"Isn't it too much, when he has brought all this disgrace and ridicule upon us, for him to taunt me with being the cause of it?" exclaimed Mrs. Nupkins.

"How can we ever show ourselves in society!" said Miss Nupkins.

"How can we face the Porkenhams!" said Mrs. Nupkins.

"Or the Griggs's!" said Miss Nupkins.

"Or the Slummintowkens!" said Mrs. Nupkins.

"But what does your papa care! What is it to him!" At this dreadful reflection, Mrs. Nupkins wept with mental anguish, and Miss Nupkins followed on the same side.

Mrs. Nupkins's tears continued to gush forth, with great velocity, until she had gained a little time to think the matter over, when she decided in her own mind that the best thing to do, would be to ask Mr. Pickwick and his friends to remain until the Captain's arrival, and then to give Mr. Pickwick the opportunity he sought. If it appeared that he had spoken truly, the Captain could be turned out of the house withoutnoising the matter abroad, and they could easily account to the Porkenhams for his disappearance, by saying that he had been appointed, through the Court influence of his family, to the Governor-Generalship of Sierra
Leone, or Sangur Point, or any other of those salubrious climates which enchant Europeans so much, that when they once get there, they can hardly ever prevail upon themselves to come back again.

When Mrs. Nupkins dried up her tears, Miss Nupkins dried up hers, and Mr. Nupkins was very glad to settle the matter as Mrs. Nupkins had proposed. So Mr. Pickwick and his friends, having washed off all marks of their late encounter, were introduced to the ladies, and soon afterwards to their dinner; and Mr. Weller, whom the magistrate with his peculiar sagacity, had discovered in half an hour to be one of the finest fellows alive, was consigned to the care and guardianship of Mr. Muzzle, who was specially enjoined to take him below, and make much of him.

"How do, sir," said Mr. Muzzle, as he conducted Mr. Weller down the kitchen stairs.

"Why, no considerable change has taken place in the state of my system, since I see you cocked up behind your governor's chair in the parlour, a little vile ago," replied Sam.

"You will excuse my not taking more notice of you then," said Mr. Muzzle. "You see, master hadn't introduced us, then. How fond he is of you, Mr. Weller, to be sure!"

"Ah," said Sam, "what a pleasant chap he is!"

"Ain't he?" replied Mr. Muzzle.

"So much humour," said Sam.

"And such a man to speak," said Mr. Muzzle.

"How his ideas flow, don't they?"

"Wonderful," replied Sam; "they comes a pouring out, knocking each other's heads so fast, that they seems to stun one another; you hardly know what he's arter, do you?"

"That's the great merit of his style of speaking," rejoined Mr. Muzzle. "Take care of the last step,
Mr. Weller. Would you like to wash your hands, sir, before we join the ladies? Here’s a sink, with the water laid on, sir, and a clean jack towel behind the door.”

“Ah, perhaps I may as vel have a rinse,” replied Mr. Weller, applying plenty of yellow soap to the towel, and rubbing away, till his face shone again.

“How many ladies are there?”

“Only two in our kitchen,” said Mr. Muzzle, “cook and ’ousemaid. We keep a boy to do the dirty work, and a gal besides, but they dine in the washus.”

“Oh, they dines in the washus, do they?” said Mr. Weller.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Muzzle, “we tried ’em at our table when they first come, but we couldn’t keep ’em. The gal’s manners is dreadful vulgar; and the boy breathes so very hard while he’s eating, that we found it impossible to sit at table with him.”

“What a young grampus!” said Mr. Weller.

“Oh, dreadful,” rejoined Mr. Muzzle; “but that is the worst of country service, Mr. Weller; the juniors is always so very savage. This way, sir, if you please—this way.”

And preceding Mr. Weller, with the utmost politeness, Mr. Muzzle conducted him into the kitchen.

“Mary,” said Mr. Muzzle to the pretty servant-girl, “this is Mr. Weller, a gentleman as master has sent down, to be made as comfortable as possible.”

“And your master’s a knowin’ hand—and has just sent me to the right place,” said Mr. Weller, with a glance of admiration at Mary. “If I was master o’ this here house, I should always find the materials for comfort vere Mary vas.”

“Why, Mr. Weller!” said Mary, blushing.

“Well, I never!” ejaculated the cook.
"Bless me, cook, I forgot you," said Mr. Muzzle.  "Mr. Weller, let me introduce you."

"How are you, ma'am," said Mr. Weller.  "Werry glad to see you, indeed; and hope our acquaintance may be a long 'un, as the gen'lm'n said to the fi' pun' note."

When this ceremony of introduction had been gone through, the cook and Mary retired into the back kitchen to titter for ten minutes; and then returning, all giggles and blushes, they sat down to dinner.

Mr. Weller's easy manner and conversational powers had such irresistible influence with his new friends, that before the dinner was half over, they were on a footing of perfect intimacy, and in possession of a full account of the delinquency of Job Trotter.

"I never could a-bear that Job," said Mary.

"No more you never ought to, my dear," replied Mr. Weller.

"Why not?" inquired Mary.

"Cos ugliness and svindlen' never ought to be formillar vith elegance and wirtew," replied Mr. Weller.  "Ought they, Mr. Muzzle?"

"Not by no means," replied that gentleman.

Here Mary laughed and said the cook had made her; and the cook laughed and said she hadn't.

"I han't got a glass," said Mary.

"Drink vith me, my dear," said Mr. Weller.  "Put your lips to this here tumbler, and then I can kiss you by deputy."

"For shame, Mr. Weller," said Mary.

"What's a shame, my dear?"

"Talkin' in that way."

"Nonsense; it ain't no 'arm its natur; ain't it, cook?"

"Don't ask me, imperence," replied the cook, in a high state of delight: and hereupon the cook and
Mary laughed again till what between the beer, the cold meat, and the laughter combined, the latter young lady was brought to the verge of choking—an alarming crisis, from which she was only recovered by sundry pats on the back, and other necessary attentions, most delicately administered by Mr. Samuel Weller.

In the midst of all this jollity and conviviality, a loud ring was heard at the garden-gate, to which the young gentleman who took his meals in the wash-house, immediately responded. Mr. Weller was in the height of his attentions to the pretty housemaid; Mr. Muzzle was busy doing the honours of the table; and the cook had just paused to laugh, in the very act of raising a huge morsel to her lips, when the kitchen-door opened, and in walked Mr. Job Trotter.

We have said in walked Mr. Job Trotter, but the statement is not distinguished by our usual scrupulous adherence to fact. The door opened, and Mr. Trotter appeared. He would have walked in, and was in the very act of doing so, indeed, when catching sight of Mr. Weller, he involuntarily shrunk back a pace or two, and stood gazing on the unexpected scene before him, perfectly motionless with amazement and terror.

"Here he is," said Sam, rising with great glee. "Why we were that werry moment a speaking o' you. How are you? Vere have you been? Come in."

And laying his hand on the mulberry collar of the unresisting Job, Mr. Weller dragged him into the kitchen; and locking the door, handed the key to Mr. Muzzle, who very coolly buttoned it up, in a side-pocket.

"Well, here's a game," cried Sam. "Only think o' my master havin' the pleasure o' meeting your'n, up stairs, and me havin' he joy of meetin' you down here. How are you gettin' on, and how..."
is the chandlery bis’nes likely to do? Vel, I am so glad to see you. How happy you look. It’s quite a treat to see you, ain’t it, Mr. Muzzle?"

"Quite," said Mr. Muzzle.

"So cheerful he is," said Sam.

"In such good spirits," said Muzzle.

"And so glad to see us—that makes it so much more comfortable," said Sam. "Sit down; sit down."

Mr. Trotter suffered himself to be forced into a chair by the fire-side. He cast his small eyes first on Mr. Weller, and then on Mr. Muzzle, but said nothing.

"Well, now," said Sam, "afore these here ladies, I should just like to ask you, as a sort of curiosity, vether you don’t con-sider yourself as nice and vell-behaved a young gen’lm’n as ever used a pink check pocket-handkerchief, and the number four collection?"

"And as was ever a-going to be married to a cook," said that lady, indignantly, "The willin!"

"And leave off his evil ways, and set up in the chandlery line, afterwards," said the house-maid.

"Now, I’ll tell you what it is, young man," said Mr. Muzzle, solemnly, enraged at the last two allusions, "this here lady (pointing to the cook) keeps company with me; and when you presume, sir, to talk of keeping chandlers’ shops with her, you injure me in one of the most delicate points in which one man can injure another. Do you understand that, sir?"

Here Mr. Muzzle, who had a great notion of his eloquence, in which he imitated his master, paused for a reply.

But Mr. Trotter made no reply. So Mr. Muzzle proceeded in a solemn manner—

"It is very probable, sir, that you won’t be wanted up stairs for several minutes, sir, because my mas-
ter is at this moment particularly engaged in settling the hash of your master, sir, and therefore you'll have leisure, sir, for a little private talk with me, sir. Do you understand that, sir?"

Mr. Muzzle again paused for a reply; and again Mr. Trotter disappointed him.

"Well, then," said Mr. Muzzle, "I'm very sorry to have to explain myself before the ladies, but the urgency of the case will be my excuse.

The back kitchen's empty, sir; if you will step in there, sir, Mr. Weller will see fair, and we can have mutual satisfaction 'till the bell rings. Follow me, sir."

As Mr. Muzzle uttered these words, he took a step or two towards the door; and by way of saving time, he began to pull off his coat as he walked along.

Now the cook no sooner heard the concluding words of this desperate challenge, and saw Mr. Muzzle about to put it into execution, than she uttered a loud and piercing shriek; and rushing on Mr. Job Trotter, who rose from his chair on the instant, tore and buffeted his large flat face, with an energy peculiar to excited females, and twining her hands in his long black hair, tore therefrom about enough to make five or six dozen of the very largest-sized mourning-rings. Having accomplished this feat with all the ardour which her devoted love for Mr. Muzzle inspired, she staggered back; and being a lady of very excitable and delicate feelings, instantly fell under the dresser, and fainted away.

At this moment the bell rang.

"That's for you, Job Trotter," said Sam; and before Mr. Trotter could offer remonstrance or reply—even before he had time to stanch the wounds inflicted by the insensible lady—Sam seized one arm and Mr. Muzzle the other; and one pulling
before, and the other pushing behind, they conveyed him up stairs, and into the parlour.

It was an impressive tableau. Alfred Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitzmarshall, was standing near the door with his hat in his hand, and a smile on his face, wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant situation. Confronting him, stood Mr. Pickwick, who had evidently been inculcating some high moral lesson, for his left hand was beneath his coat tail, and his right extended in air, as was his wont when delivering himself of an impressive address. At a little distance stood Mr. Tupman with indignant countenance, carefully held back by his two younger friends; and at the further end of the room were Mr. Nupkins, Mrs. Nupkins, and Miss Nupkins, gloomily grand, and savagely vexed.

"What prevents me?" said Mr. Nupkins, with magisterial dignity, as Job was brought in—"what prevents me from detaining these men as rogues and impostors? It is a foolish mercy. What prevents me?"

"Pride, old fellow, pride," replied Jingle, quite at his ease. "Wouldn't do—no go—caught a captain, eh?—ha! ha! very good—husband for daughter—biter bit—make it public—not for worlds—look stupid—very!"

"Wretch," said Mrs. Nupkins, "we scorn your base insinuations."

"I always hated him," added Henrietta.

"Oh, of course," said Jingle. "Tall young man—old lover—Sidney Porkenham—rich—fine fellow—not so rich as captain, though, eh?—turn him away—off with him—any thing for captain—nothing like captain any where—all the girls—raving mad—eh, Job, eh?"

Here Mr. Jingle laughed very heartily; and Job, rubbing his hands with delight, uttered the first
sound he had given vent to, since he entered the house—a low noiseless chuckle, which seemed to intimate that he enjoyed his laugh too much, to let any of it escape in sound.

"Mr. Nupkins," said the elder lady, "this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed."

"Certainly, my dear," said Mr. Nupkins. "Muzzle."

"Your worship."

"Open the front door."

"Yes, your worship."

"Leave the house," said Mr. Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled and moved towards the door.

"Stay," said Mr. Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

"I might," said Mr. Pickwick, "have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there."

Here Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

"I say," said Mr. Pickwick, growing gradually angry, "that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, sir, which I hope you will remember."

When Mr. Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity, applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

"And I have only to add, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, "that I consider you a rascal, and a—-a ruffian—and—and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except that very pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery."

"Ha! ha!" said Jingle, "good fellow Pickwick,
—fine heart—stout old boy—but must not be passionate—bad thing, very—bye, bye—see you again some day—keep up your spirits—now Job—trot."

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in his old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which, baffles 'all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Weller was following.

"Sir."

"Stay here."

Mr. Weller seemed uncertain.

"Stay here," repeated Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I polish that ere Job off, in the front garden?" said Mr. Weller.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I kick him out o' the gate, sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Not on any account," replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr. Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up, for the wily Mr. Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr. Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

"Having discharged my duty, sir," said Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Nupkins, "I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. While we thank you for such hospitality as we have received, permit me to assure you in our joint names that we should not have accepted it, or consented to extricate ourselves in this way, from our previous dilemma, had we not been impelled by a strong sense of duty.
We return to London to-morrow. Your secret is safe with us."

Having thus entered his protest against their treatment of the morning, Mr. Pickwick bowed low to the ladies; and notwithstanding the solicitations of the family, left the room with his friends.

"Get your hat, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's below stairs, sir," said Sam, and he ran down after it.

Now there was nobody in the kitchen, but the pretty housemaid; and as Sam's hat was mislaid he had to look for it, and the pretty housemaid lighted him. They had to look all over the place for the hat; and the pretty housemaid, in her anxiety to find it, went down on her knees, and turned over all the things that were heaped together in a little corner by the door. It was an awkward corner. You couldn't get at it without shutting the door first.

"Here it is," said the pretty housemaid. "This is it, ain't it?"

"Let me look," said Sam

The pretty housemaid had stood the candle on the floor; and as it gave a very dim light, Sam was obliged to go down on his knees before he could see whether it really was his own hat or not. It was a remarkably small corner, and so—it was nobody's fault but the man's who built the house—Sam and the pretty housemaid were necessarily very close together.

"Yes, this is it," said Sam. "Good bye."

"Good bye," said the pretty housemaid.

"Good bye," said Sam; and as he said it, he dropped the hat that had cost so much trouble looking for.

"How awkward you are," said the pretty housemaid. "You'll lose it again, if you don't take care."
So just to prevent his losing it again, she put it on for him.

Whether it was that the pretty housemaid's face looked prettier still, when it was raised towards Sam's, or whether it was the accidental consequence of their being so near each other, is matter of uncertainty to this day, but Sam kissed her.

"You don't mean to say you did that on purpose," said the pretty housemaid, blushing.

"No, I didn't then," said Sam; "but I will now."

So he kissed her again.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, calling over the bannisters.

"Coming, sir," replied Sam, running up stairs.

"How long you have been," said Mr. Pickwick.

"There was something behind the door, sir, which prevented our getting it open, for ever so long," replied Sam.

And this was the first passage of Mr. Weller's first love.
CHAPTER XXVI.

WHICH CONTAINS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ACTION OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK.

Having accomplished the main end and object of his journey by the exposure of Jingle, Mr. Pickwick resolved on immediately returning to London, with the view of becoming acquainted with the proceedings which had been taken against him, in the mean time, by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg. Acting upon this resolution with all the energy and decision of his character, he mounted to the back seat of the first coach, which left Ipswich on the morning after the memorable occurrences detailed at length in the two preceding chapters; and accompanied by his three friends and Mr. Samuel Weller, arrived in the metropolis in perfect health and safety, the same evening.

Here the friends for a short time separated. Messrs. Tupman, Winkle and Snodgrass, repaired to their several homes to make such preparations as might be requisite for their forthcoming visit to Dingley Dell; and Mr. Pickwick and Sam took up their present abode in very good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters, to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.

Mr. Pickwick had dined, finished his second pint
of particular port, pulled his silk handkerchief over his head, put his feet on the fender, and thrown himself back in an easy chair, when the entrance of Mr. Weller with his carpet bag, aroused him from his tranquil meditations.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Sir," said Mr. Weller.

"I have just been thinking, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "that having left a good many things at Mrs. Bardell's, in Goswell Street, I ought to arrange for taking them away, before I leave town again."

"Werry good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"I could send them to Mr. Tupman's for the present, Sam," continued Mr. Pickwick, "but, before we take them away, it is necessary that they should be looked up, and put together. I wish you would step up to Goswell Street, Sam, and arrange about it."

"At once, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"At once," replied Mr. Pickwick. "And stay, Sam," added Mr. Pickwick, pulling out his purse, "there is some rent to pay. The quarter is not due till Christmas, but you may pay it, and have done with it. A month's notice terminates my tenancy. Here it is, written out. Give it, and tell Mrs. Bardell she may put a bill up, as soon as she likes."

"Werry good, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "any thin' more, sir?"

"Nothing more, Sam."

Mr. Weller stepped slowly to the door, as if he expected something farther; slowly opened it, slowly stepped out, and had slowly closed it within a couple of inches, when Mr. Pickwick called out—

"Sam."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Weller, stepping quickly back, and closing the door behind him.
"I have no objection, Sam, to your endeavouring to ascertain how Mrs. Bardell herself seems disposed towards me, and whether it is really probable that this vile and groundless action is to be carried to extremity. I say I do not object to your doing this, if you wish it, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam gave a short nod of intelligence, and left the room. Mr. Pickwick drew the silk handkerchief once more over his head, and composed himself for a nap; Mr. Weller promptly walked forth, to execute his commission.

It was nearly nine o'clock when he reached Goswell Street. A couple of candles were burning in the little front parlour, and a couple of caps were reflected on the window-blind. Mrs. Bardell had got company.

Mr. Weller knocked at the door, and after a pretty long interval—occupied by the party without, in whistling a tune, and by the party within, in persuading a refractory flat candle to allow itself to be lighted—a pair of small boots pattered over the floor-cloth, and Master Bardell presented himself.

"Vell, young townskip," said Sam, "how's mother?"

"She's pretty well," replied Master Bardell, "so am I."

"Vell, that's a mercy," said Sam; "tell her I want to speak to her, my hinfant fernomenon."

Master Bardell, thus adjured, placed the refractory flat candle on the bottom stair, and vanished into the front parlour with his message.

The two caps reflected on the window-blind, were the respective head-dresses of a couple of Mrs. Bardell's most particular acquaintance, who had just stepped in, to have a quiet cup of tea, and a little warm supper of a couple of sets of petti-
toes and some toasted cheese. The cheese was simmering and browning away, most delightfully, in a little Dutch oven before the fire, and the petti-
toes were getting on deliciously in a little tin sauce-
pan on the hob; and Mrs. Bardell and her two friends were getting on very well, also, in a little quiet conversation about and concerning all their particular friends and acquaintance, when Master Bardell came back from answering the door, and delivered the message intrusted to him by Mr. Samuel Weller.

"Mr. Pickwick's servant!" said Mrs. Bardell, turning pale.

"Bless my soul!" said Mrs. Cluppins.

"Well, I raly would not ha' believed it, unless I had ha' happened to ha' been here!" said Mrs. Sanders.

Mrs. Cluppins was a little brisk, busy-looking woman: and Mrs. Sanders was a big, fat, heavy-faced personage; and the two were the company.

Mrs. Bardell felt it proper to be agitated; and as none of the three exactly knew whether, under existing circumstances, any communication, otherwise than through Dodson and Fogg, ought to be held with Mr. Pickwick's servant, they were all rather taken by surprise. In this state of indecision, obviously the first thing to be done, was to thump the boy for finding Mr. Weller at the door. So his mother thumped him, and he cried melodiously.

"Hold your noise—do—you naughty creatur," said Mrs. Bardell.

"Yes; don't worrit your poor mother," said Mrs. Sanders.

"She's quite enough to worrit her, as it is, without you, Tommy," said Mrs. Cluppins, with sympathizing resignation.
"Ah! worse luck, poor lamb!" said Mrs. Sanders.

At all which moral reflections, Master Bardell howled the louder.

"Now, what shall I do?" said Mrs. Bardell to Mrs. Cluppins.

"I think you ought to see him," replied Mrs. Cluppins. "But on no account without a witness."

"I think two witnesses would be more lawful," said Mrs. Sanders, who, like the other friend, was bursting with curiosity.

"Perhaps, he'd better come in here," said Mrs. Bardell.

"To be sure," replied Mrs. Cluppins, eagerly catching at the idea—"Walk in, young man; and shut the street door first, please."

Mr. Weller immediately took the hint; and presenting himself in the parlour, explained his business to Mrs. Bardell, thus—

"Werry sorry to 'casion any personal inconvenience, ma'am, as the housebreaker said to the old lady when he put her on the fire; but as me and my governor's only just come to town, and is just going away agin, it can't be helped, you see."

"Of course, the young man can't help the faults of his master," said Mrs. Cluppins, much struck by Mr. Weller's appearance and conversation.

"Certainly not," chimed in Mrs. Sanders, who, from certain wistful glances at the little tin saucepan, seemed to be engaged in a mental calculation of the probable extent of the pettitoes, in the event of Sam's being asked to stop supper.

"So all I've come about, is just this here," said Sam, disregarding the interruption—"First, to give my governor's notice—there it is. Secondly, to pay the rent—here it is. Thirdly, to say as all his things is to be put together, and given to any
body as we sends for 'em. Fourthly, that you may let the place as soon as you like—and that's all."

"Whatever has happened," said Mrs. Bardell, "I always have said and always will say, that in every respect but one, Mr. Pickwick has always behaved himself like a perfect gentleman. His money always was as good as the bank—always."

As Mrs. Bardell said this, she applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and went out of the room to get the receipt.

Sam well knew that he had only to remain quiet, and the women were sure to talk; so he looked alternately at the tin saucepan, the toasted cheese, the wall, and the ceiling, in profound silence.

"Poor dear!" said Mrs. Cluppins.

"Ah, poor thing!" replied Mrs. Sanders.

Sam said nothing. He saw they were coming to the subject.

"I raly cannot contain myself," said Mrs. Cluppins, "when I think of such perjury. I don't wish to say any thing to make you uncomfortable, young man, but your master's an old brute, and I wish I had him here to tell him so."

"I wish you had," said Sam.

"To see how dreadful she takes on, going moping about, and taking no pleasure in nothing, except when her friends comes in, out of charity, to sit with her, and make her comfortable," resumed Mrs. Cluppins, glancing at the tin saucepan and the Dutch oven, "it's shocking."

"Barbareous," said Mrs. Sanders.

"And your master, young man, a gentleman with money, as could never feel the expense of a wife, no more than nothing," continued Mrs. Cluppins, with great volubility; "why there ain't the faintest shade of an excuse for his behaviour. Why don't he marry her?"
"Ah," said Sam, "to be sure; that's the question."

"Question, indeed," retorted Mrs. Cluppins; "she'd question him, if she'd my spirit. Hows'-ever, there is law for us women, mis'ráble creeturs as they'd make us, if they could; and that your master will find out, young man, to his cost, afore he's six months older."

At this consolatory reflection, Mrs. Cluppins bridled up, and smiled at Mrs. Sanders, who smiled back again.

"The action's going on, and no mistake," thought Sam, as Mrs. Bardell re-entered with the receipt.

"Here's the receipt, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, "and here's the change, and I hope you'll take a little drop of something to keep the cold out, if it's only for old acquaintance' sake, Mr. Weller."

Sam saw the advantage he should gain, and at once acquiesced, whereupon Mrs. Bardell produced from a small closet a black bottle and a wine glass, and so great was her abstraction in her deep mental affliction, that, after filling Mr. Weller's glass, she brought out three more wine glasses, and filled them too.

"Lauk, Mrs. Bardell," said Mrs. Cluppins, "see what you've been and done."

"Well, that is a good one!" ejaculated Mrs. Sanders.

"Ah, my poor head!" said Mrs. Bardell, with a faint smile.

Sam understood all this, of course, so he said at once, that he never could drink before supper, unless a lady drank with him. A great deal of laughing ensued, and then Mrs. Sanders volunteered to humour him; so she took a slight sip out
POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF

60

Then Sam

said it must go all round,
a slight sip. Then little Mrs.
Cluppins proposed as a toast, " Success to Bardell
against Pickwick;" and then the ladies emptied
their glasses in honour of the sentiment, and got

of her glass.

so they all took

very talkative

directly.

"I suppose you've heard what's going forward,
Mr. Welter/' said Mrs. Bardell.
"I've heard something on it," replied Sam.
" It's a terrible thing to be dragged before the
public, in that way, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bar" but I see now, that it's the only thing I
dell
ought to do, and my lawyers, Mr. Dodson and
;

tell me that, with the evidence as we shall
we must succeed. I don't know what I should

Fogg,
call,

do,

Mr. Weller,

if I

didn't."

The mere

idea of Mrs. Bardell's failing in her
action, affected Mrs. Sanders so deeply, that she
was under the necessity of re-filling and re-emptying her qlass immediately; feeling, as she said afterwards, that if she hadn't had the presence of
mind to have done so, she must have dropped.
"

Ven

is

it

expected to

come on

?"

inquired

Sam.
" Either in February or

March," replied Mrs.

Bardell.
" What a

number of witnesses there'll be, won't
there?" said Mrs. Cluppins.
" Ah, won't there !" replied Mrs. Sanders.
" And won't Mr. Dodson and Fogg be wild if
the plaintiff shouldn't get it?" added Mrs. Clup!"
pins, " when they do it all on speculation
« Ah won't they !" said Mrs. Sanders.
"But the plaintiff must get it," resumed Mrs.

P

!

Cluppins.
" I hope so," said Mrs. Bardell/


"Oh, there can't be any doubt about it," rejoined Mrs. Sanders.

"Veil," said Sam, rising and setting down his glass. "All I can say is, that I wish you may get it."

"Thank'e, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, fervently.

"And of them Dodson and Fogg, as does these sort o' things on spec," continued Mr. Weller, "as well as for the other kind and gen'rous people o' the same purfession, as sets people by the ears free gratis for nothin', and sets their clerks to work to find out little disputes among their neighbours and acquaintance as vants settlin' by means o' law-suits—all I can say o' them is, that I wish they had the revard I'd give 'em."

"Ah, I wish they had the reward that every kind and generous heart would be inclined to bestow upon them," said the gratified Mrs. Bardell.

"Amen to that," replied Sam, "and a fat and happy livin' they'd get out of it. Wish you good night, ladies."

To the great relief of Mrs. Sanders, Sam was allowed to depart, without any reference on the part of the hostess to the pettitoes and toasted cheese, to which the ladies, with such juvenile assistance as Master Bardell could afford, soon afterwards rendered the amplest justice—indeed they wholly vanished, before their strenuous exertions.

Mr. Weller wended his way back to the George and Vulture, and faithfully recounted to his master, such indications of the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg, as he had contrived to pick up in his visit to Mrs. Bardell's. An interview with Mr. Perker next day, more than confirmed Mr. Weller's statement; and Mr. Pickwick was fain to prepare for his Christmas visit to Dingley Dell,
with the pleasant anticipation that some two or three months afterwards, an action brought against him for damages sustained by reason of a breach of promise of marriage, would be publicly tried in the Court of Common Pleas; the plaintiff having all the advantages derivable not only from the force of circumstances, but from the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg to boot.
CHAPTER XXVII.

SAMUEL WELLER MAKES A PILGRIMAGE TO DORKING, AND BEHOLDS HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

There still remaining an interval of two days, before the time agreed upon, for the departure of the Pickwickians to Dingley Dell, Mr. Weller sat himself down in a back room at the George and Vulture, after eating an early dinner, to muse on the best way of disposing of his time. It was a remarkably fine day; and he had not turned the matter over in his mind ten minutes, when he was suddenly struck filial and affectionate; and it occurred to him so strongly that he ought to go down to see his father, and pay his duty to his mother-in-law, that he was lost in astonishment at his own remissness in never thinking of this moral obligation before. Anxious to atone for his past neglect without another hour's delay, he straightway walked up stairs to Mr. Pickwick, and requested leave of absence for this laudable purpose.

"Certainly, Sam, certainly," said Mr. Pickwick, his eyes glistening with delight at this manifestation of good feeling, on the part of his attendant: "certainly, Sam."

Mr. Weller made a grateful bow.

"I am very glad to see that you have so high
a sense of your duties as a son, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I always had, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"That's a very gratifying reflection, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, approvingly.

"Werry, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "if ever I wanted any thin' o' my father, I always asked for it in a werry 'spectful and oblin' manner. If he didn't give it me, I took it, for fear I should be led to do any thin' wrong, through not havin' it. I saved him a world o' trouble this vay, sir."

"That's not precisely what I meant, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, shaking his head, with a slight smile.

"All good feelin', sir—the werry best intentions, as the gen'lm'n said ven he run away from his wife, 'cos she seemed unhappy with him," replied Mr. Weller.

"You may go, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller; and having made his best bow, and put on his best clothes, Sam planted himself on the top of the Arundel coach, and journeyed on to Dorking.

The Marquis of Granby, in Mrs. Weller's time, was quite a model of a road-side public-house of the better class—just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug. On the opposite side of the road was a large sign-board on a high post, representing the head and shoulders of a gentleman with an apoplectic countenance, in a red coat, with deep blue facings, and a touch of the same over his three-cornered hat, for a sky. Over that, again, were a pair of flags, and beneath the last button of his coat were a couple of cannon; and the whole formed an expressive and undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory. The bar window displayed a
choice collection of geranium plants, and a well-dusted row of spirit phials. The open shutters bore a variety of golden inscriptions, eulogistic of good beds and neat wines; and the choice group of countrymen and hostlers lounging about the stable-door and horse-trough, afforded presumptive proof of the excellent quality of the ale and spirits which were sold within. Sam Weller paused, when he dismounted from the coach, to note all these little indications of a thriving business, with the eye of an experienced traveller; and having done so, stepped in at once, highly satisfied with every thing he had observed.

"Now, then," said a shrill female voice, the instant Sam thrust in his head at the door, "what do you want, young man?"

Sam looked round in the direction whence the voice proceeded. It came from a rather stont lady of comfortable appearance, who was seated beside the fire-place in the bar, blowing the fire to make the kettle boil for tea. She was not alone, for on the other side of the fire-place, sitting bolt upright in a high-backed chair, was a man in thread-bare black clothes, with a back almost as long and stiff as that of the chair itself, who caught Sam's most particular and especial attention at once.

He was a prim-faced, red-nosed man, with a long thin countenance and a semi-rattlesnake sort of eye—rather sharp, but decidedly bad. He wore very short trousers, and black-cotton stockings, which, like the rest of his apparel, were particularly rusty. His looks were starched, but his white neckerchief was not; and its long limp ends straggled over his closely-buttoned waistcoat in a very uncouth and unpicturesque fashion. A pair of old, worn, beaver gloves, a broad-brimmed hat, and a faded green umbrella, with plenty of whale-
bone sticking through the bottom, as if to counter-
balance the want of a handle at the top, lay on a
chair beside him; and being disposed in a very tidy
and careful manner, seemed to imply that the red-
nosed man, whoever he was, had no intention of
going away in a hurry.

To do the red-nosed man justice, he would have
been very far from wise if he had entertained any
such intention, for, to judge from all appearances,
he must have been possessed of a most desirable
circle of acquaintance, if he could have reasonably
expected to be more comfortable any where else.
The fire was blazing brightly, under the influence
of the bellows, and the kettle was singing gaily,
under the influence of both. A small tray of tea-
things was arranged on the table; a plate of hot
buttered toast was gently simmering before the
fire; and the red-nosed man himself was busily en-
gaged in converting a large slice of bread, into the
same agreeable edible, through the instrumentality
of a long brass toasting-fork. Beside him, stood a
glass of reeking hot pine-apple rum and water, with
a slice of lemon in it: and every time the red-nosed
man stopped to bring the round of bread to his eye,
with the view of ascertaining how it got on, he
imbibed a drop or two of the hot pine-apple rum
and water, and smiled upon the rather stout lady,
as she blew the fire.

Sam was so lost in the contemplation of this
comfortable scene, that he suffered the first inquiry
of the rather stout lady to pass wholly unheeded. It
was not until it had been twice repeated, each
time in a shriller tone, that he became conscious
of the impropriety of his behaviour.

"Governor in?" inquired Sam, in reply to the
question.

"No, he isn't," replied Mrs. Weller, for the ra-
ther stout lady was no other than the quondam re-
lict and sole executrix of the dead-and-gone Mr. Clarke;—"No, he isn't, and I don't expect him either."

"I suppose he's a drivin' up to-day?" said Sam.

"He may be, or he may not," replied Mrs. Weller, buttering the round of toast which the red-nosed man had just finished; "I don't know, and, what's more, I don't care. Ask a blessin', Mr. Stiggins."

The red-nosed man did as he was desired, and instantly commenced on the toast with fierce voracity.

The appearance of the red-nosed man had induced Sam, at first sight, to more than half suspect that he was the deputy shepherd, of whom his estimable parent had spoken. The moment he saw him eat, all doubt on the subject was removed, and he perceived at once that if he proposed to take up his temporary quarters where he was, he must make his footing good without delay. He therefore commenced proceedings by putting his arm over the half-door of the bar, coolly unbolting it, and leisurely walking in.

"Mother-in-law," said Sam, "how are you?"

"Why, I do believe he's a Weller," said Mrs. W., raising her eyes to Sam's face, with no very gratified expression of countenance.

"I rayther think he is," said the imperturbable Sam; "and I hope this here reverend gen'lm'n 'll excuse me saying that I wish that I was the Weller as owns you, mother-in-law."

This was a double-barrel compliment: it implied that Mrs. Weller was a most agreeable female, and also that Mr. Stiggins had a clerical appearance. It made a visible impression at once; and Sam followed up his advantage by kissing his mother-in-law.
"Get along with you," said Mrs. Weller, pushing him away.

"For shame, young man," said the gentleman with the red nose.

"No offence, sir, no offence," replied Sam; "you're werry right, though; it ain't the right sort o' thing, ven mother-in-law is young and good-looking, is it, sir?"

"It's all vanity," said Mr. Stiggins.

"Ah, so it is," said Mrs. Weller setting her cap to rights.

Sam thought it was, too, but he held his peace. The deputy shepherd seemed by no means best pleased with Sam's arrival; and when the first effervescence of the compliment had subsided, even Mrs. Weller looked as if she could have spared him without the smallest inconvenience. However, there he was; and as he couldn't be decently turned out, they all three sat down to tea.

"And how's father?" said Sam.

At this inquiry Mrs. Weller raised her hands, and turned up her eyes, as if the subject were too painful to be alluded to.

Mr. Stiggins groaned.

"What's the matter with that 'ere gen'lm'n?" inquired Sam.

"He's shocked at the way your father goes on in—" replied Mrs. Weller.

"Oh, he is, is he!" said Sam.

"And with too good reason," added Mrs. Weller, gravely.

Mr. Stiggins took up a fresh piece of toast, and groaned heavily.

"He is a dreadful reprobate," said Mrs. Weller.

"A man of wrath!" exclaimed Mr. Stiggins. And he took a large semi-circular bite out of the toast, and groaned again.

Sam felt very strongly disposed to give the reve-
send Mr. Stiggins something to groan for, but he re-
pressed his inclination, and merely asked, "What's
the old 'un up to, now?"

"Up to, indeed!" said Mrs. Weller, "oh, he has
a hard heart. Night after night does this excel-
luent man—don't frown, Mr. Stiggins, I will say you
are an excellent man—come and sit here, for hours
together, and it has not the least effect upon him."

"Well, that is odd," said Sam; "It 'ud have a
werry considerable effect upon me, if I was in his
place, I know that."

"The fact is, my young friend," said Mr. Stig-
gins; solemnly, "he has an obderate bosom. Oh,
my young friend, who else could have resisted the
pleading of sixteen of our fairest sisters, and with-
stood their exhortations to subscribe to our noble
society for providing the infant negroes in the West
Indies with flannel waistcoats and moral pocket
handkerchiefs?"

"What's a moral pocket ankercher?" said Sam;
"I never see one o' them articles of furniter."

"Those which combine amusement with instruc-
tion, my young friend," replied Mr. Stiggins,
"blending select tales with wood-cuts."

"Oh, I know," said Sam, "them as hangs up in
the linen-drapers' shops with beggars' petitions and
all that 'ere upon 'em?"

Mr. Stiggins began a third round of toast, and
nodded assent.

"And he wouldn't be persuaded by the ladies,
wouldn't he?" said Sam.

"Sat and smoked his pipe, and said the infant
negroes were—what did he say the infant negroes
were?" said Mrs. Weller.

"Little humbugs," replied Mr. Stiggins, deeply
affected.

"Said the infant negroes were little humbugs,"
repeated Mrs. Weller. And they both groaned at
the atrocious conduct of the elder Mr. Samuel.
A great many more iniquities of a similar nature
might have been disclosed, only the toast being
all eat, the tea having got very weak, and Sam-
holding out no indications of meaning to go, Mr.
Stiggins suddenly recollected that he had a most
pressing appointment with the shepherd, and took
himself off accordingly.
The tea-things had been scarcely put away, and
the hearth swept up, when the London coach de-
posited Mr. Weller senior at the door, his legs de-
posited him in the bar, and his eyes showed him
his son.
"What, Sammy!" exclaimed the father.
"What, old Nobs!" ejaculated the son. And
they shook hands heartily.
"Werry glad to see you, Sammy," said the elder
Mr. Weller, "though how you've managed to get
over your mother-in-law, is a mystery to me. I
only wish you'd write me out the receipt, that's all."
"Hush!" said Sam, "she's at home, old feller."
"She ain't within hearin'," replied Mr. Weller;
"she always goes and blows up, down stairs, for a
couple of hours arter tea; so we'll just give our-
selves a damp, Sammy."
Saying this, Mr. Weller mixed two glasses of spi-
rts and water, and produced a couple of pipes;
and the father and son sitting down opposite each
other, Sam on one side the fire, in the high-backed
chair, and Mr. Weller senior on the other, in an
easy ditto, they proceeded to enjoy themselves with
all due gravity.
"Any body been here, Sammy?" asked Mr. Wel-
ler senior, drily, after a long silence.
Sam nodded an expressive assent.
"Red-nosed chap?" inquired Mr. Weller.
Sam nodded again.

"Amiable man that 'ere, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, smoking violently.

"Seems so," observed Sam.

"Good hand at accounts," said Mr. Weller.

"Is he?" said Sam.

"Borrows eighteenpence on Monday, and comes on Tuesday for a shillin' to make it up half a crown; calls again on Vensday for another half crown to make it five shillin's, and goes on doubling, till he gets it up to a five pund note in no time, like them sums in the 'rithmatic book 'bout the nails in the horse's shoes, Sammy."

Sam intimated by a nod that he recollected the problem alluded to by his parent.

"So you wouldn't subscribe to the flannel veskits?" said Sam, after another interval of smoking.

"Cert'nly not," replied Mr. Weller; "what's the good o' flannel veskits to the young niggars abroad? But I'll tell you what it is, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, lowering his voice, and bending across the fire-place, "I'd come down werry handsome towards straight veskits for some people at home."

As Mr. Weller said this, he slowly recovered his former position, and winked at his first-born, in a profound manner.

"It cert'nly seems a queer start to send out pocket ankechers to people as don't know the use on 'em," observed Sam.

"They're always a doin' some gammon of that sort, Sammy," replied his father. "'T'other Sunday I vas walkin' up the road, ven who should I see a standin' at a chapel-door, with a blue soup plate in her hand, but your mother-in-law. I werrily believe there was change for a couple o' suv'rin's in it, then, Sammy, all in ha'pence; and as the people come out, they rattled the pennies in, till you'd ha' thought that no mortal plate as ever
was baked, could ha' stood the wear and tear. What d'ye think it was all for?"

"For another tea-drinkin', perhaps," said Sam.

"Not a bit on it," replied the father; "for the shepherd's water-rate, Sammy."

"The shepherd's water-rate!" said Sam.

"Ay," replied Mr. Weller, "there was three quarters owin', and the shepherd hadn't paid a far- den, not he—perhaps it might be on account that the water warn't o' much use to him, for it's werry little o' that tap he drinks, Sammy, werry; he knows a trick worth a good half dozen of that, he does. Hows'ever, it warn't paid, and so they cuts the water off. Down goes the shepherd to chapel, gives out as he's a persecuted saint, and says he hopes the heart of the turncock as cut the water off, 'll be softened, and turned in the right vay, but he rayther thinks he's booked for somethin' uncom- fortable. Upon this, the women calls a meetin', sings a hymn, votes your mother-in-law into the chair, volunteers a collection next Sunday, and hands it all over to the shepherd. And if he ain't got enough out on 'em, Sammy, to make him free of the water company for life," said Mr. Weller, in conclusion, "I'm one Dutchman, and you're ano- ther, and that's all about it."

Mr. Weller smoked for some minutes in silence, and then resumed—

"The worst o' these here shepherds is, my boy, that they regularly turn the heads of all the young ladies, about here. Why, bless their little hearts, they thinks it's all right, and don't know no better; but they're the victims o' gammon, Samivel, they're the victims o' gammon."

"I s'pose they are," said Sam.

"Nothin' else," said Mr. Weller, shaking his head gravely; "and wot aggravates me, Samivel, is to see 'em a wastin' all their time and labour in
making clothes for copper-coloured people as don't want 'em, and taking no notice of the flesh-co- 
oured Christians as do. If I'd my vay, Samivel, 
I'd just stick some o' these here lazy shepherds be-
hind a heavy wheelbarrow, and run 'em up and 
down a fourteen-inch-wide plank all day. That 
'ud shake the nonsense out of 'em, if any thin' 
vould."

Mr. Weller having delivered his gentle recipe 
with strong emphasis, eked out by a variety of 
nods and contortions of the eye, emptied his glass 
at a draught, and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, 
with native dignity.

He was engaged in this operation, when a shrill 
voice was heard in the passage.

"Here's your dear relation, Sammy," said Mr. 
Weller; and Mrs. W. hurried into the room.

"Oh, you've come back, have you!" said Mrs. 
Weller.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Weller, filling a 
fresh pipe.

"Has Mr. Stiggins been back?" said Mrs. We-
ller.

"No, my dear, he hasn't," replied Mr. Weller, 
lighting the pipe by the ingenious process of hold-
ing to the bowl thereof, between the tongs a red-
hot coal from the adjacent fire; "and what's more, 
my dear, I shall manage to survive it, if he don't 
come back at all."

"Ugh, you wretch," said Mrs. Weller.

"Thank'ee, my love," said Mr. Weller.

"Come, come, father," said Sam, "none o' these 
little lovin's afore strangers. Here's the reverend 
gen'l'm'n a comin' in now."

At this announcement, Mrs. Weller hastily wiped 
off the tears which she had just begun to force on; 
and Mr. W. drew his chair sullenly into the chim-
ney corner.
Mr. Stiggins was easily prevailed on to take another glass of the hot pine-apple rum and water, and a second, and a third, and then to refresh himself with a slight supper, previous to beginning again. He sat on the same side as Mr. Weller senior; and every time he could contrive to do so, unseen by his wife, that gentleman indicated to his son the hidden emotions of his bosom, by shaking his fist over the deputy shepherd's head, a process which afforded his son the most unmingled delight and satisfaction, the more especially as Mr. Stiggins went on, quietly drinking the hot pine-apple rum and water, wholly unconscious of what was going forward.

The major part of the conversation was confined to Mrs. Weller and the reverend Mr. Stiggins; and the topics principally descanted on, were the virtues of the shepherd, the worthiness of his flock, and the high crimes and misdemeanors of every body beside—dissertations which the elder Mr. Weller occasionally interrupted by half-suppressed references to a gentleman of the name of Walker, and other running commentaries of the same kind.

At length Mr. Stiggins, with several most indubitable symptoms of having quite as much pine-apple rum and water about him, as he could comfortably accommodate, took his hat and his leave: and Sam was, immediately afterwards, shown to bed by his father. The respectable old gentleman wrung his hand fervently, and seemed disposed to address some observations to his son, but on Mrs. Weller advancing towards him, he appeared to relinquish his intention, and abruptly bade him good night.

Sam was up betimes next day, and having partaken of a hasty breakfast, prepared to return to London. He had scarcely set foot without the house, when his father stood before him.
"Goin', Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.
"Off at once," replied Sam.
"I wish you could muffle that 'ere Stiggins, and take him with you," said Mr. Weller.
"I am ashamed o' you, old two-for-his-heels," said Sam, reproachfully, "what do you let him show his red nose in the Markis o' Granby at all, for?"

Mr. Weller the elder fixed on his son an earnest look, and replied—"'Cause I'm a married man, Samivel, 'cause I'm a married man. Ven you're a married man, Samivel, you'll understand a good many things as you don't understand now; but vether it's worth while goin' through so much, to learn so little, as the charity-boy said ven he got to the end of the alphabet, is a matter o' taste. I rayther think it isn't."

"Well," said Sam, "good bye."
"Tar, tar, Sammy," replied his father.
"I've only got to say this here," said Sam, stopping short, "that if I was the properiator o' the Markis o' Granby, and that 'ere Stiggins came and made toast in my bar, I'd—"
"What?" interposed Mr. Weller, with great anxiety. "What?"
"—Pison his rum and water," said Sam.
"No!" said Mr. Weller, shaking his son eagerly by the hand, "would you raly, Sammy—would you, though?"
"I would," said Sam. "I wouldn't be too hard upon him, at first: I'd just drop him in the water-butt, and put the lid on; and then if I found he was insensible to kindness, I'd try the other persvation."

The elder Mr. Weller bestowed a look of deep, unspeakable admiration on his son, and, having once more grasped his hand, walked slowly away, revolving in his mind the numerous reflections to which his advice had given rise.
Sam looked after him, till he turned a corner of the road, and then set forward on his walk to London. He meditated at first on the probable consequences of his own advice, and the likelihood and unlikelihood of his father's adopting it. He dismissed the subject from his mind, however, with the consolatory reflection that time alone would show; and this is just the reflection we would impress upon the reader.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

A GOOD-HUMOURED CHRISTMAS CHAPTER, CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF A WEDDING, AND SOME OTHER SPORTS BESIDE, WHICH ALTHOUGH IN THEIR WAY, EVEN AS GOOD CUSTOMS AS MARRIAGE ITSELF, ARE NOT QUITE SO RELIGIOUSLY KEPT UP, IN THESE DEGENERATE TIMES.

As brisk as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the twenty-second day of December, in the year of grace in which these, their faithfully-recorded adventures, were undertaken and accomplished. Christmas was close at hand, in all his bluff and hearty honesty; it was the season of hospitality, merriment, and open-heartedness; the old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him, and amidst the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away. Gay and merry was the time; and right gay and merry were at least four of the numerous hearts that were gladdened by its coming.

And numerous indeed are the hearts to which Christmas brings a brief season of happiness and enjoyment. How many families whose members have been dispersed and scattered far and wide, in the restless struggles of life, are then re-united, and meet once again in that happy state of companionship and mutual good-will which is a source
of such pure and unalloyed delight, and one so incompatible with the cares and sorrows of the world, that the religious belief of the most civilized nations, and the rude traditions of the roughest savages, alike number it among the first joys of a future state of existence, provided for the blest and happy! How many old recollections, and how many dormant sympathies, does Christmas time awaken!

We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then, have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then, have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped, have grown cold; the eyes we sought, have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstance connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday. Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days, that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home!

But we are so taken up, and occupied, with the good qualities of Christmas, who, by the way, is quite a country gentleman of the old school, that we are keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold, on the outside of the Muggleton coach, which they have just attained, well wrapped up, in great coats, shawls, and comforters. The portmanteaus and carpet-bags have been stowed away, and Mr. Weller and the guard are endeavouring to insinuate into the fore-boot a huge cod.
fish several sizes too large for it, which is snugly packed up, in a long brown basket, with a layer of straw over the top, and which has been left to the last, in order that he may repose in safety on the half-dozen barrels of real native oysters, all the property of Mr. Pickwick, which have been arranged in regular order, at the bottom of the receptacle. The interest displayed in Mr. Pickwick's countenance is most intense, as Mr. Weller and the guard try to squeeze the cod-fish into the boot, first head first, and then tail first, and then top upwards, and then bottom upwards, and then side-ways, and then long-ways, all of which artifices the implacable cod-fish sturdily resists, until the guard accidentally hits him in the very middle of the basket, whereupon he suddenly disappears into the boot, and with him, the head and shoulders of the guard himself, who, not calculating upon so sudden a cessation of the passive resistance of the cod-fish, experiences a very unexpected shock, to the unsmotherable delight of all the porters and by-standers. Upon this, Mr. Pickwick smiles with great good humour, and drawing a shilling from his waistcoat pocket, begs the guard, as he picks himself out of the boot, to drink his health in a glass of hot brandy and water, at which, the guard smiles too, and Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, all smile in company. The guard and Mr. Weller disappear for five minutes, most probably to get the hot brandy and water, for they smell very strongly of it, when they return; the coachman mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs, and their shawls over their noses; the helpers pull the horse-cloths off; the coachman shouts out a cheery "All right," and away they go.

They have rumbled through the streets, and
jolted over the stones, and at length reach the wide and open country. The wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground; and the horses, bursting into a canter at a smart crack of the whip, step along the road as if the load behind them, coach, passengers, cod-fish, oyster barrels, and all, were but a feather at their heels. They have descended a gentle slope, and enter upon a level, as compact and dry as a solid block of marble, two miles long. Another crack of the whip, and on they speed, at a smart gallop, the horses tossing their heads and rattling the harness as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion, while the coachman holding whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief, and wipes his forehead, partly because he has a habit of doing it, and partly because it's as well to show the passengers how cool he is, and what an easy thing it is to drive four-in-hand, when you have had as much practice as he has. Having done this very leisurely (otherwise the effect would be materially impaired,) he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows, cracks the whip again, and on they speed, more merrily than before.

A few small houses scattered on either side of the road, betoken the entrance to some town or village. The lively notes of the guard's key bugle vibrate in the clear cold air, and wake up the old gentleman inside, who carefully letting down the window-sash half way, and standing sentry over the air, takes a short peep out, and then carefully pulling it up again, informs the other inside that they're going to change directly; on which the other inside wakes himself up, and determines to postpone his next nap until after the stoppage. Again the bugle sounds lustily forth, and rouses
the cottager's wife and children, who peep out at the house-door, and watch the coach till it turns the corner, when they once more crouch round the blazing fire, and throw on another log of wood against father comes home, while father himself, a full mile off, has just exchanged a friendly nod with the coachman, and turned round, to take a good long stare at the vehicle as it whirls away.

And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles through the ill-paved streets of a country town; and the coachman, undoing the buckle which keeps his ribands together, prepares to throw them off the moment he stops. Mr. Pickwick emerges from his coat collar, and looks about him with great curiosity; perceiving which, the coachman informs Mr. Pickwick of the name of the town, and tells him it was market-day yesterday, both which pieces of information Mr. Pickwick retails to his fellow-passengers, whereupon they emerge from their coat collars too, and look about them also. Mr. Winkle, who sits at the extreme edge, with one leg dangling in the air, is nearly precipitated into the street, as the coach twists round the sharp corner by the cheese-monger's shop, and turns into the market-place; and before Mr. Snodgrass, who sits next to him, has recovered from his alarm, they pull up at the inn yard, where the fresh horses, with cloths on, are already waiting. The coachman throws down the reins and gets down himself, and the other outside passengers drop down also, except those who have no great confidence in their ability to get up again, and they remain where they are, and stamp their feet against the coach to warm them; looking with longing eyes and red noses at the bright fire in the inn bar, and the sprigs of holly with red berries which ornament the window.

But the guard has delivered at the corn-dealer's
shop, the brown paper packet he took out of the little pouch which hangs over his shoulder by a leathern strap, and has seen the horses carefully put to, and has thrown on the pavement the saddle which was brought from London on the coach-roof, and has assisted in the conference between the coachman and the hostler about the gray mare that hurt her off-fore-leg last Tuesday, and he and Mr. Weller are all right behind, and the coachman is all right in front, and the old gentleman inside, who has kept the window down full two inches all this time, has pulled it up again, and the cloths are off, and they are all ready for starting, except the "two stout gentlemen," whom the coachman inquires after with some impatience. Hereupon the coachman, and the guard, and Sam Weller, and Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass, and all the hostlers, and every one of the idlers, who are more in number than all the others put together, shout for the missing gentlemen as loud as they can bawl. A distant response is heard from the yard, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman come running down it, quite out of breath, for they have been having a glass of ale a-piece, and Mr. Pickwick's fingers are so cold that he has been full five minutes before he could find the sixpence to pay for it. The coachman shouts an admonitory "Now, then, gen'l'm'n," the guard re-echoes it—the old gentleman inside, thinks it a very extraordinary thing that people will get down when they know there isn't time for it—Mr. Pickwick struggles up on one side, Mr. Tupman on the other; Mr. Winkle cries "All right," and off they start. Shawls are pulled up, coat collars are re-adjusted, the pavement ceases, the houses disappear; and they are once again dashing along the open road, with the fresh clear air blowing in
their faces, and gladdening their very hearts within them.

Such was the progress of Mr. Pickwick and his friends by the Muggleton Telegraph, on their way to Dingley Dell; and at three o'clock that afternoon, they all stood, high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion, having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy, to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters, and weaving its beautiful net-work upon the trees and hedges. Mr. Pickwick was busily engaged in counting the barrels of oysters, and superintending the disinterment of the cod-fish, when he felt himself gently pulled by the skirts of the coat; and looking round, he discovered that the individual who resorted to this mode of catching his attention, was no other than Mr. Wardle's favourite page, better known to the readers of this unvarnished history by the distinguishing appellation of the fat boy.

"Aha!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Aha!" said the fat boy.

And as he said it, he glanced from the cod-fish to the oyster barrels, and chuckled joyously. He was fatter than ever.

"Well, you look rosy enough, my young friend," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I've been asleep, right in front of the tap-room fire," replied the fat boy, who had heated himself to the colour of a new chimney-pot, in the course of an hour's nap. "Master sent me over with the chay-cart, to carry your luggage up to the house. He'd ha' sent some saddle horses, but he thought you'd rather walk, being a cold day."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily, for he remembered how they had travelled over nearly
the same ground on a previous occasion." "Yes, we would rather walk. Here, Sam."

"Sir," said Mr. Weller.

"Help Mr. Wardle's servant to put the packages into the cart, and then ride on with him. We will walk forward at once."

Having given this direction, and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the footpath across the fields, and walked briskly away, leaving Mr. Weller and the fat boy confronted together for the first time. Sam looked at the fat boy with great astonishment, but without saying a word; and began to stow the things rapidly away in the cart, while the fat boy stood quietly by, and seemed to think it a very interesting sort of thing to see Mr. Weller working by himself.

"There," said Sam, throwing in the last carpet bag. "There they are."

"Yes," said the fat boy, in a very satisfied tone, "there they are."

"Vell, young twenty stun," said Sam, "you're a nice specimen of a prize boy, you are."

"Thankee," said the fat boy.

"You ain't got nothin' on your mind, as makes you fret yourself, have you?" inquired Sam.

"Not as I knows on," replied the boy.

"I should rayther ha' thought, to look at you, that you was a labourin' under an unrequited attachment to some young 'ooman," said Sam.

The fat boy shook his head.

"Vell," said Sam, "I'm glad to hear it. Do you ever drink any thin'?"

"I likes eating, better," replied the boy.

"Ah," said Sam, "I should ha' s'posed that; but what I mean is, should you like a drop of any thin' as'd warm you? but I s'pose you never was cold, with all them elastic fixtures, was you?"
"Sometimes," replied the boy; "and I likes a drop of something, when it's good."

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Sam, "come this vay, then."

The Blue Lion tap was soon gained, and the fat boy swallowed a glass of liquor without so much as winking,—a feat which considerably advanced him in Mr. Weller's good opinion. Mr. Weller having transacted a similar piece of business on his own account, they got into the cart.

"Can you drive?" said the fat boy.

"I should rayther think so," replied Sam.

"There, then," said the fat boy, putting the reins in his hand, and pointing up a lane, "It's as straight as you can go; you can't miss it."

With these words the fat boy laid himself affectionately down by the side of the cod-fish, and placing an oyster-barrel under his head for a pillow, fell asleep instantaneously.

"Vell," said Sam, "of all the cool boys ever I set my eyes on, this here young gen'l'm'n is about the coolest. Come, vake up, young dropsy."

But as young dropsy evinced no symptoms of returning animation, Sam Weller sat himself down in front of the cart, and starting the old horse with a jerk of the rein, jogged steadily on towards Manor Farm.

Mean while, Mr. Pickwick and his friends having walked their blood into active circulation, proceeded cheerfully on; the paths were hard, the grass was crisp, and frosty, the air had a fine, dry, bracing coldness, and the rapid approach of the gray twilight (slate coloured is a better term in frosty weather) made them look forward with pleasant anticipation to the comforts which awaited them at their hospitable entertainer's. It was the sort of afternoon that might induce a couple of elderly gentlemen, in a lonely field, to take off their
great coats and play at leap-frog in pure lightness of heart and gaiety; and we firmly believe that had Mr. Tupman at that moment proffered a “back,” Mr. Pickwick would have accepted his offer with the utmost avidity.

However, Mr. Tupman did not volunteer any such personal accommodation, and the friends walked on, conversing merrily. As they turned into a lane which they had to cross, the sound of many voices burst upon their ears; and before they had even had time to form a guess as to whom they belonged, they walked into the very centre of the party who were expecting their arrival—a fact which was first notified to the Pickwickians, by the loud “Hurrah,” which burst from old Wardle’s lips, when they appeared in sight.

First, there was Wardle himself, looking, if that were possible, more jolly than ever; then there were Bella and her faithful Trundle; and lastly, there were Emily and some eight or ten young ladies, who had all come down to the wedding which was to take place next day, and were in as happy and important a state as young ladies usually are on such momentous occasions; and they were, one and all, startling the fields and lanes far and wide with their frolic and laughter.

The ceremony of introduction, under such circumstances, was very soon performed, or we should rather say that the introduction was soon over, without any ceremony at all; and in two minutes thereafter, Mr. Pickwick was joking with the young ladies who wouldn’t come over the stile while he looked, or who, having pretty feet and unexceptionable ankles, preferred standing on the top-rail for five minutes or so, and declaring that they were too frightened to move, with as much ease and absence of reserve or constraint, as if he had known them for life. It is worthy of remark too, that Mr. Snodgrass
offered Emily far more assistance than the absolute terrors of the stile (although it was full three feet high, and had only a couple of stepping-stones) would seem to require; while one black-eyed young lady in a very nice little pair of boots with fur round the top, was observed to scream very loudly, when Mr. Winkle offered to help her over.

All this was very snug and pleasant: and when the difficulties of the stile were at last surmounted, and they once more entered on the open field, old Wardle informed Mr. Pickwick how they had all been down in a body to inspect the furniture and fittings-up of the house, which the young couple were to tenant, after the Christmas holidays; at which communication Bella and Trundle both coloured up, as red as the fat boy after the tap-room fire; and the young lady with the black eyes and the fur round the boots, whispered something in Emily’s ear, and then glanced archly at Mr. Snodgrass, to which Emily responded that she was a foolish girl, but turned very red, notwithstanding; and Mr. Snodgrass, who was as modest as all great geniuses usually are, felt the crimson rising to the crown of his head, and devoutly wished, in the inmost recesses of his own heart, that the young lady afore-said, with her black eyes, and her archness, and her boots with the fur round the top, were all comfortably deposited in the adjacent county.

But if they were social and happy, outside the house, what was the warmth and cordiality of their reception when they reached the farm! The very servants grinned with pleasure at sight of Mr. Pickwick; and Emma bestowed a half-demure, half-impudent, and all pretty look of recognition on Mr. Tupman, which was enough to make the statue of Bonaparte in the passage, unfold his arms and clasp her within them.

The old lady was seated in customary state in
the front parlour, but she was rather cross, and by consequence, most particularly deaf. She never went out herself, and like a great many other old ladies of the same stamp, she was apt to consider it an act of domestic treason, if any body else took the liberty of doing what she couldn't. So, bless her old soul, she sat as upright as she could, in her great chair, and looked as fierce as might be—and that was benevolent, after all.

"Mother," said Wardle, "Mr. Pickwick. You recollect him."

"Never mind," replied the old lady with great dignity. "Don't trouble Mr. Pickwick about an old creetur like me. Nobody cares about me now, and it's very nat'r'al they shouldn't." Here the old lady tossed her head, and smoothed down her lavender-coloured silk dress, with trembling hands.

"Come, come, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "I can't let you cut an old friend in this way. I have come down expressly to have a long talk, and another rubber with you; and we'll show these boys and girls how to dance a minuet, before they're eight-and forty-hours older."

The old lady was rapidly giving way, but she did not like to do it all at once; so she only said, "Ah! I can't hear him."

"Nonsense, mother," said Wardle. "Come, come, don't be cross, there's a good soul. Recollect Bella; come, you must keep her spirits up, poor girl."

The good old lady heard this, for her lip quivered as her son said it. But age has its little infirmities of temper, and she was not quite brought round yet. So, she smoothed down the lavender-coloured dress again, and, turning to Mr. Pickwick, said, "Ah, Mr. Pickwick, young people was very different when I was a girl."

"No doubt of that, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick,
"and that's the reason why I would make much of the few that have any traces of the old stock,"—
and saying this, Mr. Pickwick gently pulled Bella towards him, and bestowing a kiss upon her forehead, bade her sit down on the little stool at her grandmother's feet. Whether the expression of her countenance, as it was raised towards the old lady's face, called up a thought of old times, or whether the old lady was touched by Mr. Pickwick's affectionate good nature, or whatever was the cause, she was fairly melted; so she threw herself on her grand-daughter's neck, and all the little ill-humour evaporated in a gush of silent tears.

A happy party they were, that night. Sedate and solemn were the score of rubbers in which Mr. Pickwick and the old lady played together; and uproarious was the mirth of the round table. Long after the ladies had retired, did the hot elder wine, well qualified with brandy and spice, go round and round again; and sound was the sleep, and pleasant were the dreams that followed. It is a remarkable fact, that those of Mr. Snodgrass bore constant reference to Emily Wardle; and that the principal figure in Mr. Winkle's visions, was a young lady with black eyes, an arch smile, and a pair of remarkably nice boots, with fur round the tops.

Mr. Pickwick was awakened early in the morning, by a hum of voices and pattering of feet, sufficient to rouse even the fat boy from his heavy slumbers. He sat up in bed, and listened. The female servants and female visitors were running constantly to and fro; and there were such multitudinous demands for warm water, such repeated outcries for needles and thread, and so many half-suppressed entreaties of "Oh, do come and tie me, there's a dear," that Mr. Pickwick in his innocence began to imagine that something dreadful must
have occurred, when he grew more awake, and remembered the wedding. The occasion being an important one, he dressed himself with peculiar care, and descended to the breakfast room.

There were all the female servants in a brand new uniform of pink muslin gowns with white bows in their caps, running about the house in a state of excitement and agitation, which it would be impossible to describe. The old lady was dressed out, in a brocaded gown, which had not seen the light for twenty years, saving and excepting such truant rays as had stolen through the chinks in the box in which it had been laid by, during the whole time. Mr. Trundle was in high feather and spirits, but a little nervous withal. The hearty old landlord was trying to took very cheerful and unconcerned, but failing signally in the attempt. All the girls were in tears and white muslin, except a select two or three, who were being honoured with a private view of the bride and bridesmaids, upstairs. All the Pickwickians were in the most blooming array; and there was a terrific roaring on the grass in front of the house, occasioned by all the men, and boys, and hobbledehoys attached to the farm, each of whom had got a white bow in his button hole, and all of whom were cheering with might and main: being incited thereto, and stimulated therein, by the precept and example of Mr. Samuel Weller, who had managed to become mighty popular already, and was as much at home as if he had been born on the land.

A wedding is a licensed subject to joke upon, but there really is no great joke in the matter after all; we speak merely of the ceremony, and beg it to be distinctly understood that we indulge in no hidden sarcasm upon a married life. Mixed up with the pleasure and joy of the occasion, are the many regrets at quitting home, the tears of parting
between parent and child, the consciousness of leaving the dearest and kindest friends of the happiest portion of human life, to encounter its cares and troubles with others still untried, and little known—natural feelings which we would not render this chapter mournful by describing, and which we should be still more unwilling to be supposed to ridicule.

Let us briefly say, then, that the ceremony was performed by the old clergyman, in the parish church of Dingley Dell, and that Mr. Pickwick's name is attached to the register, still preserved in the vestry thereof; that the young lady with the black eyes signed her name in a very unsteady and tremulous manner; and that Emily's signature, as the other bridesmaid, is nearly illegible; that it all went off in very admirable style; that the young ladies, generally, thought it far less shocking than they expected; and that although the owner of the black eyes, and the arch smile, informed Mr. Winkle that she could never submit to any thing so dreadful, we have the very best reasons for thinking she was mistaken. To all this we may add, that Mr. Pickwick was the first who saluted the bride: and that in so doing, he threw over her neck a rich gold watch and chain, which no mortal eyes but the jeweller's had ever beheld before. Then the old church bell rang as gaily as it could, and they all returned to breakfast.

"Vere does the mince-pies go, young opium eater?" said Mr. Weller to the fat boy, as he assisted in laying out such articles of consumption as had not been duly arranged on the previous night.

The fat boy pointed to the destination of the pies.

"Werry good," said Sam, "stick a bit o' Christmas in 'em. T'other dish opposite. There; now we look compact and comfortable, as the father
said ven he cut his little boy's head off, to cure him o' squintin'.”

As Mr. Weller made the comparison, he fell back a step or two, to give full effect to it, and surveyed the preparations with the utmost satisfaction.

“Wardle,” said Mr. Pickwick, almost as soon as they were all seated, “a glass of wine, in honour of this happy occasion!”

“I shall be delighted, my boy,” said Wardle.

“No, I ain't, sir?” replied the fat boy, starting up from a remote corner, where, like the patron saint of fat boys—the immortal Horner—he had been devouring a Christmas pie, though not with the coolness and deliberation which characterized that young gentleman's proceedings.

“Fill Mr. Pickwick's glass.”

“'Yes, sir,'”

The fat boy filled Mr. Pickwick’s glass, and then retired behind his master’s chair, from whence he watched the play of the knives and forks, and the progress of the choice morsels, from the dishes, to the mouths of the company, with a kind of dark and gloomy joy that was most impressive.

“God bless you, old fellow,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Same to you, my boy,” replied Wardle; and they pledged each other, heartily.

“Mrs. Wardle,” said Mr. Pickwick, “we old folks must have a glass of wine together, in honour of this joyful event.”

The old lady was in a state of great grandeur just then, for she was sitting at the top of the table in the brocaded gown, with her newly married daughter on one side, and Mr. Pickwick on the other, to do the carving. Mr. Pickwick had not spoken in a very loud tone, but she understood him at once, and drank off a full glass of wine to.
his long life and happiness; after which the worthy old soul launched forth into a minute and particular account of her own wedding, with a dissertation on the fashion of wearing high-heeled shoes, and some particulars concerning the life and adventures of the beautiful Lady Tollimglower, deceased, at all of which the old lady herself laughed very heartily indeed, and so did the young ladies too, for they were wondering among themselves what on earth grandma was talking about. When they laughed, the old lady laughed ten times more heartily; and said that they always had been considered capital stories, which caused them all to laugh again, and put the old lady into the very best of humours. Then the cake was cut, and passed through the ring; and the young ladies saved pieces to put under their pillows to dream of their future husbands on; and a great deal of blushing and merriment was thereby occasioned.

"Mr. Miller," said Mr. Pickwick to his old acquaintance, the hard-headed gentleman, "a glass of wine?"

"With great satisfaction Mr. Pickwick," replied the hard-headed gentleman, solemnly.

"You'll take me in?" said the benevolent old clergyman.

"And me," interposed his wife.

"And me, and me," said a couple of poor relations at the bottom of the table, who had eaten and drank very heartily, and laughed at every thing.

Mr. Pickwick expressed his heartfelt delight at every additional suggestion; and his eyes beamed with hilarity and cheerfulness.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly rising—

"Hear, hear! Hear, hear! Hear, hear!" said Mr. Weller, in the excitement of his feelings.

"Call in all the servants," cried old Wardle, in-
terposing to prevent the public rebuke which Mr. Weller would otherwise most indubitably have received from his master.

"Give them a glass of wine each, to drink the toast in. Now, Pickwick."

Amidst the silence of the company, the whispering of the women servants, and the awkward embarrassment of the men, Mr. Pickwick proceeded. "Ladies and gentlemen—no, I won't say ladies and gentlemen, I'll call you my friends, my dear friends, if the ladies will allow me to take so great a liberty"—

Here Mr. Pickwick was interrupted by immense applause from the ladies, echoed by the gentlemen, during which the owner of the eyes was distinctly heard to state that she could kiss that dear Mr. Pickwick, whereupon Mr. Winkle gallantly inquired if it couldn't be done by deputy, to which the young lady with the black eyes replied, "Go away."—and accompanied the request with a look which said as plainly as a look could do—"if you can."

"My dear friends," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "I am going to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom—God bless 'em (cheers and tears.) My young friend Trundle, I believe to be a very excellent and manly fellow; and his wife I know to be a very amiable and lovely girl, well qualified to transfer to another sphere of action the happiness which for twenty years she has diffused around her, in her father's house. (Here, the fat boy burst forth into stentorian blubberings, and was led forth by the coat collar, by Mr. Weller.) I wish," added Mr. Pickwick, "I wish I was young enough to be her sister's husband, (cheers,) but, failing that, I am happy to be old enough to be her father; for, being so, I shall not be suspected of any latent designs when I say, that I admire, esteem, and love
them both (cheers and sobs.) The bride's father, our good friend there, is a noble person, and I am proud to know him (great uproar.) He is a kind, excellent, independent-spirited, fine-hearted, hospitable, liberal man (enthusiastic shouts from the poor relations, at all the adjectives; and especially at the two last.) That his daughter may enjoy all the happiness, even he can desire; and that he may derive from the contemplation of her felicity all the gratification of heart and peace of mind which he so well deserves, is, I am persuaded, our united wish. So, let us drink their healths, and wish them prolonged life, and every blessing."

Mr. Pickwick concluded amidst a whirlwind of applause; and once more were the lungs of the supernumeraries, under Mr. Weller's command, brought into active and efficient operation. Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Pickwick proposed the old lady. Mr. Snodgrass proposed Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Snodgrass. One of the poor relations proposed Mr. Tupman, and the other poor relation proposed Mr. Winkle; and all was happiness and festivity, until the mysterious disappearance of both the poor relations beneath the table, warned the party that it was time to adjourn.

At dinner they met again, after a five and twenty mile walk, undertaken by the males at Wardle's recommendation, to get rid of the effects of the wine at breakfast; the poor relations had lain in bed all day, with the view of attaining the same happy consummation, but, as they had been unsuccessful, they stopped there. Mr. Weller kept the domestics in a state of perpetual hilarity; and the fat boy divided his time into small alternate allotments of eating and sleeping.

The dinner was as hearty an affair as the breakfast, and was quite as noisy, without the tears.
Then came the dessert and some more toasts. Then came the tea and coffee; and then, the ball.

The best sitting room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark panelled room with a high chimney piece, and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens, were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses, and on all kinds of brackets, stood massive old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burnt bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth; and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

If any thing could have added to the interest of this agreeable scene, it would have been the remarkable fact of Mr. Pickwick's appearing without his gaiters, for the first time within the memory of his oldest friends.

"You mean to dance?" said Wardle.

"Of course I do," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Don't you see I am dressed for the purpose?" and Mr. Pickwick called attention to his speckled silk stockings, and smartly tied pumps.

"You in silk stockings!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman, jocosely.

"And why not, sir—why not?" said Mr. Pickwick, turning warmly upon him.

"Oh, of course there is no reason why you shouldn't wear them," responded Mr. Tupman.

"I imagine not, sir—I imagine not," said Mr. Pickwick, in a very peremptory tone.

Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he.
found it was a serious matter; so he looked grave, and said they were a very pretty pattern.

"I hope they are," said Mr. Pickwick, fixing his eyes upon his friend. "You see nothing extraordinary in these stockings, as stockings, I trust, sir?"

"Certainly not—oh, certainly not," replied Mr. Tupman. He walked away; and Mr. Pickwick's countenance resumed its customary benign expression.

"We are all ready, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, who was stationed with the old lady at the top of the dance, and had already made four false starts, in his excessive anxiety to commence.

"Then begin at once," said Wardle. "Now."

Up struck the two fiddles and the one harp, and off went Mr. Pickwick into hands across, when there was a general clapping of hands, and a cry of "Stop, stop."

"What's the matter," said Mr. Pickwick, who was only brought to, by the fiddles and harp desisting, and could have been stopped by no earthly power, if the house had been on fire.

"Where's Arabella Allen?" said a dozen voices.

"And Winkle?" added Mr. Tupman.

"Here we are!" exclaimed that gentleman, emerging with his pretty companion from the corner; and, as he did so, it would have been hard to tell which was redder in the face, he or the young lady with the black eyes.

What an extraordinary thing it is, Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick, rather pettishly, "that you couldn't have taken your place before."

"Not at all extraordinary," said Mr. Winkle.

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, with a very expressive smile, as his eyes rested on Arabella, "well, I don't know that it was extraordinary, either, after all."

However, there was no time to think more about the matter, for the fiddles and harp began in real
earnest. Away went Mr. Pickwick—hands across, down the middle to the very end of the room, and half way up the chimney, and back again to the door—poussette every where—loud stamp on the ground—ready for the next couple—off again—all the figure over once more—another stamp to beat out the time—next couple, and the next, and the next again—never was such going; and at last, after they had reached the bottom of the dance, and full fourteen couple after the old lady had retired in an exhausted state, and the clergyman's wife had been substituted in her stead, did that gentleman, when there was no demand whatever on his exertions, keep perpetually dancing in his place, to keep time to the music, smiling on his partner all the while with a blandness of demeanour which baffles all description.

Long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly married couple had retired from the scene. There was a glorious supper down stairs, notwithstanding, and a good long sitting after it; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke, late the next morning he had a confused recollection of having, severally and confidentially, invited somewhere about five-and-forty people to dine with him at the George and Vulture, the very first time they come to London; which Mr. Pickwick rightly considered a pretty certain indication of his having taken something besides exercise on the previous night.

"And so your family has games in the kitchen to night, my dear, has they?" inquired Sam of Emma.

"Yes, Mr. Weller," replied Emma; "we always have on Christmas eve. Master wouldn't neglect to keep it up, on any account."

"Your master's a werry pretty notion of keepin' any thin' up, my dear," said Mr. Weller; "I never see such a sensible sort o' man as he is, or such a reg'lar gen'l'm'n."
"Oh, that he is!" said the fat boy, joining in the conversation; "don't he breed nice pork!" and the fat youth gave a semi-cannibalic leer at Mr. Weller, as he thought of the roast legs and gravy.

"Oh, you've woke up, at last, have you?" said Sam.

The fat boy nodded.

"I tell you what it is, young boa constructor," said Mr. Weller, impressively, "if you don't sleep a little less, and exercise a little more, ven you comes to be a man you'll lay yourself open to the same sort o' personal inconvenience as was inflicted on the old gen'l'm'n as wore the pig-tail."

"What did they do to him?" inquired the fat boy, in a faltering voice.

"I'm a goin' to tell you," replied Mr. Weller: "he was one o' the largest patterns as was ever turned out—reg'lar fat man, as hadn't caught a glimpse of his own shoes for five-and-forty years."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Emma.

"No, that he hadn't, my dear," said Mr. Weller, "and if you'd put an exact model of his own legs on the dinin' table afore him, he wouldn't ha' known 'em. Well, he always walks to his office with a werry handsom gold watch-chain hangin' out, about a foot and a half, and a gold watch in his fob pocket as was worth—I am afraid to say how much, but as much as a watch can be—a large, heavy, round manafacter, as stout for a watch, as he was for a man, and with a big face in proportion. 'You'd better not carry that 'ere watch,' says the old gen'l'm'n's friends: 'you'll be robbed on it,' says they. 'Shall I?' says he. 'Yes, will you,' says they. 'Vell,' says he, 'I should like to see the thief as could get this here watch out, for I am blessed if I ever can; it's such a tight fit,' says he, 'and venever I vant's to know what's o'clock, I am obliged to stare into
the bakers' shops,' he says. Well, then he laughs as hearty as if he was a goin' to pieces, and out he walks agin, with his powdered head and pig-tail, and rolls down the strand with the chain hangin' out furder than ever, and the great round watch almost bustin' through his gray kersey smalls. There warn't a pickpocket in all London as didn't take a pull at that chain, but the chain 'ud never break, and the watch 'ud never come out, so they soon got tired o' dragging such a heavy old gen'l'-m'n along the pavement, and he'd go home and laugh till the pig-tail wibrated like the penderlum of a Dutch clock. At last, one day the old gen'l'-m'n was rollin' along, and he sees a pickpocket as he know'd by sight, a-comin' up, arm in arm with a little boy with a werry large head. 'Here's a game,' says the old gen'l'm'n to himself: 'they're a-goin' to have another try, but it won't do.' So he begins a clucklin' werry hearty, ven, all of a sudden, the little boy leaves hold of the pickpocket's arm, and rushes head foremost straight into the old gen'l'-m'n's stomach, and for a moment doubled him right up with the pain. 'Murder!' says the old gen'l'-m'n. 'All right, sir,' says the pickpocket, a whisperin' in his ear. And ven he come straight agin, the watch and chain was gone, and what's worse than that, the old gen'l'm's digestion was all wrong ever arterwards, to the werry last day of his life; so just you look about you, young feller, and take care you don't get too fat.'

As Mr. Weller concluded this moral tale, with which the fat boy appeared much affected, they all three wended their way to the large kitchen, in which the family were by this time assembled, according to annual custom on Christmas eve, observed by old Wardle's forefathers from time immemorial.

From the centre of the ceiling of this kitchen,
old Wardle had just suspended with his own hands a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and most delightful struggling and confusion; in the midst of which Mr. Pickwick, with a gallantry which would have done honour to a descendant of Lady Tollimglower herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch, and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. The old lady submitted to this piece of practical politeness with all the dignity which befitted so important and serious a solemnity, but the younger ladies not being so thoroughly imbued with a superstitious veneration of the custom, or imagining that the value of a salute is very much enhanced if it cost a little trouble to obtain it, screamed and struggled, and ran into corners, and threatened and remonstrated, and did every thing but leave the room, until some of the less adventurous gentlemen were on the point of desisting, when they all at once found it useless to resist any longer, and submitted to be kissed with a good grace. Mr. Winkle kissed the young lady with the black eyes, and Mr. Snodgrass kissed Emily; and Mr. Weller, not being particular about the form of being under the mistletoe, kissed Emma and the other female servants, just as he caught them. As to the poor relations, they kissed every body, not even excepting the plainer portion of the young-lady visitors, who, in their confusion, ran right under the mistletoe, directly it was hung up, without knowing it! Wardle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene, with the utmost satisfaction; and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use, and summarily devouring, a particularly fine mince-pie, that had been carefully put by, for somebody else.

Now the screaming had subsided, and faces were
in a glow and curls in a tangle, and Mr. Pickwick, after kissing the old lady as before-mentioned, was standing under the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing around him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and, putting her arm around Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek; and before Mr. Pickwick distinctly knew what was the matter, he was surrounded by the whole body, and kissed by every one of them.

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the centre of the group, now pulled this way, and then that, and first kissed on the chin, and then on the nose, and then on the spectacles, and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side; but it was a still more pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick, blinded shortly afterwards with a silk handkerchief, falling up against the wall, and scrambling into corners, and going through all the mysteries of blindman's buff, with the utmost relish for the game, until at last he caught one of the poor relations; and then had to evade the blind-man himself, which he did with a nimbleness and agility that elicited the admiration and applause of all behold- ers. The poor relations caught just the people whom they thought would like it; and when the game flagged, got caught themselves. When they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snap-dragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.
“This,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. “This is, indeed, comfort.”

“Our invariable custom,” replied Mr. Wardle. “Every body sits down with us on Christmas eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait till the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and while away the time with forfeits and old stories. Trundle, my boy, rake up the fire.”

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred, and the deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow, that penetrated into the farthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face.

“Come,” said Wardle, “a song—a Christmas song. I'll give you one, in default of a better.”

“Bravo,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Fill up,” cried Wardle. “It will be two hours good, before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep rich colour of the wassail; fill up all round, and now for the song.”

Thus saying, the merry old gentleman, in a good, round, sturdy voice; commenced, without more ado,

**A Christmas Carol.**

I care not for Spring; on his fickle wing
Let the blossom and buds be borne:
He woos them amain with his treacherous rain,
And he scatters them ere the morn.
An inconstant elf, he knows not himself,
Or his own changing mind an hour,
He'll smile in your face, and with wry grimace,
He'll wither your youngest flower.

Let the summer sun to his bright home run,
He shall never be sought by me;
When he's dimmed by a cloud I can laugh aloud,
And care not how sulky he be;
For his darling child is the madness wild
That sports in fierce fever's train;
And when love is too strong, it don't last long,
As many have found to their pain.
A mild harvest night, by the tranquil light
Of the modest and gentle moon,
Has a far sweeter sheen for me, I ween,
Than the broad and unblushing noon.
But every leaf awakens my grief,
As it lieth beneath the tree;
So let Autumn air be never so fair,
It by no means agrees with me.

But my song I troll out, for Christmas stout,
The hearty, the true, and the bold.
A bumper I drain, and with might and main
Give three cheers for this Christmas old.
We'll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart,
And we'll keep him up while there's bite or sup,
And in fellowship good, we'll part.

In his fine honest pride, he scorns to hide
One jot of his hard-weather scars:
They're no disgrace, for there's much the same trace.
On the cheeks of our bravest tars.
Then again I sing 'till the roof doth ring,
And it echoes from wall to wall—
To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,
As the King of the Seasons all!

This song was tumultuously applauded, for friends
and dependants make a capital audience; and the
poor relations especially were in perfect ecstasies
of rapture. Again was the fire replenished, and
again went the wassail round.
"How it snows!" said one of the men, in a low
tone.
"Snows, does it?" said Wardle.
"Rough, cold night, sir," replied the man; "and
there's a wind got up, that drifts it across the fields,
in a thick white cloud."
"What does Jem say?" inquired the old lady.
"There ain't any thing the matter, is there?"
"No, no, mother," replied Wardle; "he says
there's a snow-drift, and a wind that's piercing cold."
I should know that, by the way it rumbles in the chimney."

"Ah!" said the old lady, "there was just such a wind, and just such a fall of snow, a good many years back, I recollect—just five years before your poor father died. It was a Christmas eve, too; and I remember that on that very night he told us the story about the goblins that carried away old Gabriel Grub."

"The story about what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, nothing—nothing," replied Wardle. "About an old sexton, that the good people down here suppose to have been carried away by goblins."

"Suppose!" ejaculated the old lady. "Is there any body hardy enough to disbelieve it? Suppose! Haven't you heard ever since you were a child, that he was carried away by the goblins, and don't you know he was?"

"Very well, mother, he was, if you like," said Wardle, laughing. "He was carried away by goblins, Pickwick; and there's an end of the matter."

"No, no," said Mr. Pickwick, "not an end of it, I assure you; for I must hear how, and why, and all about it."

Wardle smiled, as every head was bent forward to hear; and filling out the wassail with no stinted hand, nodded a health to Mr. Pickwick, and began as follows—

But bless our editorial heart, what a long chapter we have been betrayed into! We had quite forgotten all such petty restrictions as chapters, we solemnly declare. So here goes to give the goblin a fair start in a new one. A clear stage and no favour for the goblins, ladies and gentlemen, if you please.
CHAPTER XXIX:

THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A SEXTON.

"In an old abbey town, down in this part of the country, a long, long while ago—so long, that the story must be a true one, because our great grandfathers implicitly believed it—there officiated as sexton and grave-digger in the church-yard, one Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that because a man is a sexton, and constantly surrounded by emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy man; your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world, and I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who in private life, and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a devil-may-care song, without a hitch in his memory, or drained off a good stiff glass of grog without stopping for breath. But notwithstanding these precedents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow—a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself, and an old wicker bottle which fitted into his large deep waistcoat pocket; and who eyed each merry face as it passed him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, as it was difficult to meet without feeling something the worse for.
"A little before twilight one Christmas eve, Gabriel shouldered his spade, lighted his lantern, and betook himself towards the old church-yard, for he had got a grave to finish by next morning, and feeling very low, he thought it might raise his spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work at once. As he wended his way, up the ancient street, he saw the cheerful light of the blazing fires gleam through the old casements, and heard the loud laugh and the cheerful shouts of those who were assembled around them; he marked the bustling preparations for next day's good cheer, and smelt the numerous savoury odours consequent thereupon, as they steamed up from the kitchen windows in clouds. All this was gall and wormwood to the heart of Gabriel Grub; and as groups of children bounded out of the houses, tripped across the road, and were met, before they could knock at the opposite door, by half a dozen curly-headed little rascals who crowded round them as they flocked up stairs to spend the evening in their Christmas games, Gabriel smiled grimly, and clutched the handle of his spade with a firmer grasp, as he thought of measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough, and a good many other sources of consolation beside.

"In this happy frame of mind, Gabriel strode along, returning a short, sullen growl to the good-humoured greetings of such of his neighbours as now and then passed him, until he turned into the dark lane which led to the church-yard. Now Gabriel had been looking forward to reaching the dark lane, because it was, generally speaking, a nice gloomy mournful place, into which the townspeople did not much care to go, except in broad daylight, and when the sun was shining; consequently he was not a little indignant to hear a young urchin roaring out some jolly song about a merry Christ-
mas, in this very sanctuary, which had been called Coffin Lane ever since the days of the old abbey, and the time of the shaven-headed monks. As Gabriel walked on, and the voice drew nearer, he found it proceeded from a small boy, who was hurrying along, to join one of the little parties in the old street, and who, partly to keep himself company, and partly to prepare himself for the occasion, was shouting out the song at the highest pitch of his lungs. So Gabriel waited till the boy came up, and then dodged him into a corner, and rapped him over the head with his lantern five or six times, just to teach him to modulate his voice. And as the boy hurried away with his hand to his head, singing quite a different sort of tune, Gabriel Grub chuckled very heartily to himself, and entered the church-yard, locking the gate behind him.

"He took off his coat, set down his lantern, and getting into the unfinished grave, worked at it for an hour or so, with right good will. But the earth was hardened with the frost, and it was no very easy matter to break it up, and shovel it out; and although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time, these obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the boy's singing, that he took little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction, murmuring, as he gathered up his things,

Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
A few feet of cold earth, when life is done;
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat;
Rank grass over head, and damp clay around,
Brave lodgings for one, these, in holy ground!
"'Ho! ho! ' laughed Gabriel Grub, as he sat himself down on a flat tombstone which was a favourite resting-place of his; and drew forth his wicker bottle. 'A coffin at Christmas—a Christmas Box. Ho! ho! ho!' "'Ho! ho! ho!' repeated a voice which sounded close behind him.

"Gabriel paused in some alarm, in the act of raising the wicker bottle to his lips, and looked round. The bottom of the oldest grave about him, was not more still and quiet, than the churchyard in the pale moonlight. The cold hoar frost glistened on the tombstones, and sparkled like rows of gems among the stone carvings of the old church. The snow lay hard and crisp upon the ground, and spread over the thickly strewn mounds of earth, so white and smooth a cover, that it seemed as if corpses lay there, hidden only by their winding sheets. Not the faintest rustle broke the profound tranquillity of the solemn scene. Sound itself appeared to be frozen up, all was so cold and still. "'It was the echoes,' said Gabriel Grub, raising the bottle to his lips again.

"'It was not,'" said a deep voice.

"Gabriel started up, and stood rooted to the spot with astonishment and terror; for his eyes rested on a form which made his blood run cold.

"Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, whom Gabriel felt at once, was no being of this world. His long fantastic legs, which might have reached the ground, were cocked up, and crossed after a quaint, fantastic fashion; his sinewy arms were bare, and his hands rested on his knees. On his short round body he wore a close covering, ornamented with small slashes; and a short cloak dangled at his back; the collar was cut into curious peaks, which served the goblin in lieu of a ruff or neckerchief; and his
shoes curled up at the toes into long points. On his head he wore a broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered with the white frost, and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone very comfortably, for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still; his tongue was put out, as if in derision; and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up.

"'It was not the echoes,'" said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub was paralyzed, and could make no reply.

"'What do you do here on Christmas eve?'" said the goblin, sternly.

"'I came to dig a grave, sir,' stammered Gabriel Grub.

"'What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this?'" said the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round—nothing was to be seen.

"'What have you got in that bottle?' said the goblin.

"'Hollands, sir,' replied the sexton, trembling more than ever; for he had bought it of the smugglers, and he thought that perhaps his questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins.

"'Who drinks Hollands alone, and in a churchyard, on such a night as this?' said the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' exclaimed the wild voices again.

"The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed—

"'And who then, is our fair and lawful prize?'"

"To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers singing to the mighty swell of the old church
organ—a strain that seemed borne to the sexton’s ears upon a gentle wind, and to die away as its soft breath passed onward—but the burden of the reply was still the same, ‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’

“The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, ‘Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?’

“The sexton gasped for breath.

‘What do you think of this, Gabriel?’ said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street.

‘It’s—it’s—very curious, sir,’ replied the sexton, half dead with fright, ‘very curious, and very pretty, but I think I’ll go back and finish my work, sir, if you please.

‘Work!’ said the goblin, ‘what work?’

‘The grave, sir, making the grave,’ stammered the sexton.

‘Oh, the grave, eh?’ said the goblin, ‘who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?’

‘Again the mysterious voices replied, ‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’

‘I’m afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,’ said the goblin, thrusting his tongue farther into his cheek than ever—and a most astonishing tongue it was—‘I’m afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,’ said the goblin.

‘Under favour, sir,’ replied the horror-struck sexton, ‘I don’t think they can, sir; they don’t know me, sir; I don’t think the gentlemen have ever seen me, sir.’

‘Oh yes they have,’ replied the goblin; ‘we know the man with the sulky face and the grim
scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil looks at the children, and grasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man that struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry, and he could not. We know him, we know him.’

‘Here the goblin gave a loud shrill laugh, that the echoes returned twenty fold, and throwing his legs up in the air, stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone, from whence he threw a summerset with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton’s feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board.

‘I— I am afraid I must leave you, sir,’ said the sexton, making an effort to move.

‘Leave us!’ said the goblin, ‘Gabriel Grub going to leave us. Ho! ho! ho!’

‘As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed for one instant a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones, never stopping for an instant to take breath, but overing the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him; even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that while his friends were content to leap over the common-sized grave-stones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street posts.

‘At last the game reached to a most exciting
pitch; the organ played quicker and quicker, and the goblins leaped faster and faster, coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over the tombstones like foot-balls. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him, as the spirits flew before his eyes, when the goblin king suddenly darting towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sank with him through the earth.

"When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim; in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the churchyard; and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without the power of motion.

"'Cold to-night,' said the king of the goblins, 'very cold. A glass of something warm, here.'

"At this command, half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub imagined to be courtiers, on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblet of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

"'Ah!' said the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were quite transparent, as he tossed down the flame, 'This warms one, indeed: bring a bumper of the same, for Mr. Grub.'

"It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking any thing warm at night; for one of the goblins held him while another poured the blazing liquid down his throat, and the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped
away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

"'And now,' said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton's eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain—'And now, show the man of misery and gloom a few of the pictures from our own great storehouse.'

"As the goblin said this, a thick cloud which obscured the farther end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantily furnished, but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother's gown, and gambolling round her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain as if to look for some expected object; a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table, and an elbow chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door: the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy, as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments, as the children crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, stick, and gloves, with busy zeal, ran with them from the room. Then as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

"But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bed-room, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying; the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from his eye; and even as the sexton looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his
tiny hand, so cold and heavy; but they shrunk back
from its touch, and looked with awe on his infant
face; for calm and tranquil as it was, and sleeping
in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to
be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that
he was an angel looking down upon, and blessing
them, from a bright and happy heaven.

"Again the light cloud passed across the picture,
and again the subject changed. The father and
mother were old and helpless now, and the num-
ber of those about them was diminished more than
half; but content and cheerfulness sat on every
face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded
round the fireside, and told and listened to old sto-
ries of earlier and by-gone days. Slowly and
peacefully the father sank into the grave, and,
soon after, the sharer of all his cares and troubles
followed him to a place of rest and peace. The
few, who yet survived them, knelt by their tomb,
and watered the green turf which covered it with
their tears; then rose and turned away, sadly and
mournfully, but not with bitter cries, or despairing
lamentations, for they knew that they should one
day meet again; and once more they mixed with
the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness
were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture,
and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"'What do you think of that?' said the goblin,
turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

"Gabriel murmured out something about its be-
ing very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed, as
the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"'You a miserable man!' said the goblin, in a
tone of excessive contempt. 'You!' He appeared
disposed to add more, but indignation choked his
utterance, so he lifted up one of his very pliable
legs, and flourishing it above his head a little, to
ensure his aim, administered a good sound kick to
Immediately after which, all the goblins in waiting crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy, according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"'Show him some more,' said the king of the goblins.

"At these words the cloud was again dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view—there is just such another to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on, with a pleasant sound, the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves, the birds sang upon the boughs, and the lark carolled on high, her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning, the bright, balmy morning of summer; the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass, was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil; the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief but happy existence. Man walked forth, elated with the scene; and all was brightness and splendour.

"'You a miserable man!' said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish; again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton; and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

"Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who although his shoulders smarted with pain from the frequent applications of the goblin's feet thereunto,
looked on with an interest which nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour, were cheerful and happy; and that to the most ignorant, the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been delicately nurtured, and tenderly brought up, cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering, that would have crushed many of a rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment, and peace. He saw that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God's creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress; and he saw that it was because they bore in their own hearts an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotedness. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth; and setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world after all. No sooner had he formed it, than the cloud which had closed over the last picture, seemed to settle on his senses, and lull him to repose. One by one, the goblins faded from his sight, and as the last one disappeared, he sunk to sleep.

"The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke, and found himself lying at full length on the flat grave stone in the churchyard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night's frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin seated, stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked, the night before, was not far off. At first he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but
the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise, assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not ideal. He was staggered again, by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap frog with the grave-stones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance, when he remembered that being spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them. So Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could, for the pain in his back; and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

"But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments; and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

"The lantern, the spade, and the wicker bottle, were found that day in the churchyard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton's fate at first, but it was speedily determined that he had been carried away by the goblins; and there were not wanting some very credible witnesses who had distinctly seen him whisked through the air on the back of a chestnut horse blind of one eye, with the hind quarters of a lion, and the tail of a bear. At length all this was devoutly believed; and the new sexton used to exhibit to the curious for a trifling emolument, a good-sized piece of the church weathercock which had been accidentally kicked off by the aforesaid horse in his aerial flight, and picked up by himself in the churchyard, a year or two afterwards.

"Unfortunately these stories were somewhat disturbed by the unlooked-for re-appearance of Gabriel Grub himself, some ten years afterwards, a ragged, contented, rheumatic old man. He told
his story to the clergyman, and also to the mayor; and in course of time it began to be received as a matter of history, in which form it has continued down to this very day. The believers in the weathercock tale, having misplaced their confidence once, were not easily prevailed upon to part with it again, so they looked as wise as they could, shrugged their shoulders, touched their foreheads, and murmured something about Gabriel Grub's having drunk all the Hollands, and then fallen asleep on the flat tombstone; and they affected to explain what he supposed he had witnessed in the goblin's cavern, by saying that he had seen the world, and grown wiser. But this opinion, which was by no means a popular one at any time, gradually died off; and be the matter how it may, as Gabriel Grub was afflicted with rheumatism to the end of his days, this story has at least one moral, if it teach no better one—and that is, that if a man turns sulky and drinks by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it, let the spirits be ever so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof, as those which Gabriel Grub saw, in the goblin's cavern."
CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW THE PICKWICKIANS MADE AND CULTIVATED THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A COUPLE OF NICE YOUNG MEN BELONGING TO ONE OF THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS; HOW THEY DISPORTED THEMSELVES ON THE ICE; AND HOW THEIR VISIT CAME TO A CONCLUSION.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick as that favoured servitor entered his bed-chamber with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas Day, "Still frosty?"

"Water in the wash-hand basin's a mask o' ice, sir," responded Sam.

"Severe weather, Sam," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Fine time for them as is well wropped up, as the Polar Bear said to himself, ven he was practising his skaiting, replied Mr. Weller.

"I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, untying his nightcap.

"Werry good, sir," replied Sam. "There's a couple o' Sawbones down-stairs."

"A couple of what!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sitting up in bed.

"A couple o' Sawbones," said Sam.

"What's a Sawbones?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not quite certain whether it was a live animal, or something to eat.

"What! don't you know what a Sawbones is,
sir?” inquired Mr. Weller; “I thought everybody know'd as a Sawbones was a Surgeon.”

“Oh, a Surgeon, eh?” said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

“Just that sir,” replied Sam. “These here ones as is below, though, aint reg'lar thorough-bred Sawbones; they're only in trainin'.”

“In other words they're Medical Students, I suppose?” said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam Weller nodded assent.

“I am glad of it,” said Mr. Pickwick, casting his nightcap energetically on the counterpane, “They are fine fellows; very fine fellows, with judgments matured by observation and reflection; and taste refined by reading and study. I am very glad of it.

“They're a smokin' cigars by the kitchen fire,” said Sam.

“Ah!” observed Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his hands, “overflowing with kindly feelings and animal spirits. Just what I like to see!”

“And one on 'em,” said Sam, not noticing his master's interruption, “one on 'em's got his legs on the table, and 'is a drinkin' brandy neat, vile the tother one—him in the barnacles—has got a barrel o' oysters atween his knees, vich he's a openin' like steam, and as fast as he eats 'em, he takes a aim vith the shells at young dropsy, who's a settin' down fast asleep, in the chimbley corner.”

“Eccentricities of genius, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick. “You may retire.”

Sam did retire accordingly; and Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of the quarter of an hour, went down to breakfast.

“Here he is at last,” said old Wardle. “Pickwick, this is Miss Allen's brother, Mr. Benjamin Allen—Ben we call him, and so may you if you
like. This gentleman is his very particular friend, Mr. ——"

"Mr. Bob Sawyer," interposed Mr. Benjamin Allen, whereupon Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen laughed in concert.

Mr. Pickwick bowed to Bob Sawyer, and Bob Sawyer bowed to Mr. Pickwick; Bob and his very particular friend then applied themselves most assiduously to the eatables before them; and Mr. Pickwick had an opportunity of glancing at them both.

Mr. Benjamin Allen was a coarse, stout, thick-set young man, with black hair cut rather short, and a white face cut rather long. He was embellished with spectacles, and wore a white neckerchief. Below his single-breasted black surtou, which was buttoned up to his chin, appeared the usual number of pepper-and-salt coloured legs, terminating in a pair of imperfectly polished boots. Although his coat was short in the sleeves, it disclosed no vestige of a linen wristband; and although there was quite enough of his face to admit of the encroachment of a shirt collar, it was not graced by the smallest approach to that appendage. He presented altogether rather a mil-dewy appearance, and emitted a fragrant odour of full-flavoured Cubas.

Mr. Bob Sawyer, who was habited in a coarse blue coat, which, without being either a great coat or a surtout, partook of the nature and qualities of both, had about him that sort of slovenly smartness, and swaggering gait, which is peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, shout and scream in the same by night, call waiters by their Christian names, and do various other acts and deeds of an equally facetious description. He wore a pair of plaid trousers, and a large rough double-breasted waistcoat; and out of
doors, carried a thick stick with a big top. He eschewed gloves, and looked, upon the whole, something like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe.

Such were the two worthies to whom Mr. Pickwick was introduced, as he took his seat at the breakfast table on Christmas morning.

"Splendid morning, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Bob Sawyer slightly nodded his assent to the proposition, and asked Mr. Benjamin Allen for the mustard.

"Have you come far this morning, gentlemen?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Blue Lion at Muggleton," briefly responded Mr. Allen.

"You should have joined us last night," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So we should," replied Bob Sawyer, "but the brandy was too good to leave in a hurry: wasn't it, Ben?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Benjamin Allen; "and the cigars were not bad, or the pork chops either: were they, Bob?"

"Decidedly not," said Bob. And the particular friends resumed their attack upon the breakfast, more freely than before, as if the recollection of last night's supper had imparted a new relish to the meal.

"Peg away, Bob," said Mr. Allen to his companion, encouragingly.

"So I do," replied Bob Sawyer. And so, to do him justice, he did.

"Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

"By the by, Bob," said Mr. Allen, "have you finished that leg yet?"
"Nearly," replied Sawyer, helping himself to half a fowl as he spoke. "It's a very muscular one for a child's."

"Is it?" inquired Mr. Allen, carelessly.

"Very," said Bob Sawyer, with his mouth full.

"I've put my name down for an arm, at our place," said Mr. Allen. "We're clubbing for a subject, and the list is nearly full, only we can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it."

"No," replied Bob Sawyer; "can't afford expensive luxuries."

"Nonsense!" said Allen.

"Can't indeed," rejoined Bob Sawyer. "I wouldn't mind a brain, but I couldn't stand a whole head."

"Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray," said Mr. Pickwick, "I hear the ladies."

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, the ladies, gallantly escorted by Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, returned from an early walk.

"Why, Ben!" said Arabella, in a tone which expressed more surprise than pleasure at the sight of her brother.

"Come to take you home to-morrow," replied Benjamin.

Mr. Winkle turned pale.

"Don't you see Bob Sawyer, Arabella?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, somewhat reproachfully. Arabella gracefully held out her hand, in acknowledgment of Bob Sawyer's presence. A thrill of hatred struck to Mr. Winkle's heart, as Bob Sawyer inflicted on the proffered hand a perceptible squeeze.

"Ben dear!" said Arabella, blushing; "have—have—you been introduced to Mr. Winkle?"

"I have not been, but I shall be very happy to be, 'Arabella," replied her brother, gravely. Here
Mr. Allen bowed grimly to Mr. Winkle, while Mr. Winkle and Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced mutual distrust out of the corners of their eyes.

The arrival of the two new visitors, and the consequent check upon Mr. Winkle and the young lady with the fur round her boots, would in all probability have proved a very unpleasant interruption to the hilarity of the party, had not the cheerfulness of Mr. Pickwick, and the good humour of the host, been exerted to the very utmost for the common weal. Mr. Winkle gradually insinuated himself into the good graces of Mr. Benjamin Allen, and even joined in a friendly conversation with Mr. Bob Sawyer; who, enlivened with the brandy, and the breakfast, and the talking, gradually ripened into a state of extreme facetiousness, and related with much glee an agreeable anecdote, about the removal of a tumour on some gentleman's head, which he illustrated by means of an oyster-knife and a half-quartern loaf, to the great edification of the assembled company. Then the whole train went to church, where Mr. Benjamin Allen fell fast asleep; while Mr. Bob Sawyer abstracted his thoughts from worldly matters, by the ingenious process of carving his name on the seat of the pew, in corpulent letters of about four inches long.

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong-beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to; "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skait, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye—yes; oh, yes; replied Mr. Winkle. I—I—am rather out of practice."
"Oh, do skait, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is so graceful," said another young lady. A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skaits."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had got a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more, down stairs, whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller, having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skaits with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight; and inscribed upon the ice without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions, which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skaits on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skaits than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skaits were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.
"Now, then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone; "off vith you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop," said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir."

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These—these—are very awkward skaits; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's an orkard gen'lm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was any thing the matter. "Come; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming."

"Just a goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off."

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home, that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir, replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away, to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're werry good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."
Mr. Winkle, stooping forward with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank—.

"Sam!"

"Sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a callin'? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian; and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have ensured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do any thing of the kind in skaits. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle; "I'd rather not."
"What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skaits off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skaits off," repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the by-standers; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what!" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With these words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy sliding, which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a two-penny postman's knock upon it, with the other. It was a good
long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does, indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh, do, please Mr. Pickwick," cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skaitis with the impetuosity which characterized all his proceedings. "Here; I'll keep you company; come along." And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat, took two or three short runs, balked himself as often, and at last took another run and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a bilin', sir," said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr.
Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing, to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony: to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up: to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started: to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor, his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down, (which happened upon the average every third round,) it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined, to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank, with an ardour and enthusiasm which nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared, the water bubbled up over it, and Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that any body could see.
Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale, and the females fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming "Fire!" with all his might and main.

It was at this very moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer, on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice—it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

"Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant," bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

"Yes, do; let me implore you—for my sake," roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary; the probability being, that if Mr. Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for any body else's sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so, for his own.

"Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?" said Wardle.

"Yes, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. "I fell upon my back. I couldn't get on my feet at first."
The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick's coat as was yet visible, bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still farther relieved by the fat boy's suddenly recollecting that the water was no where more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

"Oh, he'll catch his death of cold," said Emily. "Dear old thing!" said Arabella. "Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick."

"Ah, that's the best thing you can do," said Wardle; "and when you've got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly."

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant; and three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller; presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr. Tupman had arrived some five minutes before, and had frightened the old lady into palpitations of the heart, by impressing her with the unalterable conviction that the kitchen chimney was on fire—a calamity which always presented itself in the most glowing colours to the old lady's mind,
when any body about her evinced the smallest agitation.

Mr. Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner; a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards, and a grand carouse held in honour of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed the chair, and Mr. Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning, there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him, which proves, as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases, and that if ever hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

The jovial party broke up next morning. Breakings up are capital things in our school days, but in after life they are painful enough. Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes, are every day breaking up many a happy group and scattering them far and wide; and the boys and girls never come back again. We do not mean to say that it was exactly the case in this particular instance; all we wish to inform the reader is, that the different members of the party dispersed to their several homes; that Mr. Pickwick and his friends once more took their seats on the top of the Muggleton coach; and that Arabella Allen repaired to her place of destination, wherever it might have been—we dare say Mr. Winkle knew, but we confess we don't—under the care and guardianship of her brother Benjamin, and his most intimate and particular friend, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Before they separated, however, that gentleman and Mr. Benjamin Allen drew Mr. Pickwick aside.
with an air of some mystery; and Mr. Bob Sawyer, thrusting his forefinger between two of Mr. Pickwick's ribs, and thereby displaying his native drollery, and his knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame, at one and the same time, inquired—

"I say, old boy, where do you hang out?"

Mr. Pickwick replied that he was at present suspended at the George and Vulture.

"I wish you'd come and see me," said Bob Sawyer.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"There's my lodgings," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, producing a card, "Lant Street Borough; it's near Guy's, and handy for me, you know. Little distance after you've passed Saint George's Church—turns out of the High Street on the right hand side the way."

"I shall find it," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Come on Thursday week, and bring the other chaps with you," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, "I'm going to have a few medical fellows that night."

Mr. Pickwick expressed the pleasure it would afford him to meet the medical fellows; and after Mr. Bob Sawyer had informed him that he meant to be very cosey, and that his friend Ben was to be one of the party, they shook hands and separated.

We feel that in this place we lay ourself open to the inquiry whether Mr. Winkle was whispering, during this brief conversation, to Arabella Allen, and if so, what he said; and furthermore, whether Mr. Snodgrass was conversing apart with Emily Wardle, and if so, what he said. To this, we reply, that whatever they might have said to the ladies, they said nothing at all to Mr. Pickwick.
or Mr. Tupman for eight-and-twenty miles, and that they sighed very often, refused ale and brandy, and looked gloomy. If our observant lady readers can deduce any satisfactory inferences from these facts, we beg them by all means to do so.
CHAPTER XXX.

WHICH IS ALL ABOUT THE LAW, AND SUNDRY GREAT AUTHORITIES LEARNED THEREIN.

Scattered about, in various holes and corners of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which, all the morning in Vacation, and half the evening too in Term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms, and protruding from their pockets, an almost uninterrupted succession of Lawyers' Clerks. There are several grades of Lawyers' Clerks. There is the Articled Clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street and another in Tavistock Square, goes out of town every Long Vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks. There is the salaried clerk—out of door, or in door, as the case may be—who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half-price to the Adelphi at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the
fashion, which expired six months ago. There is the middle-aged copying clerk, with a large family, who is always shabby, and often drunk. And there are the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, club as they go home at night, for saveloys and porter, and think there's nothing like "life." There are varieties of the genus too numerous to recapitulate, but however numerous they may be, they are all to be seen, at certain regulated business' hours, hurrying to and from the places we have just mentioned.

These sequestered nooks are the public offices of the legal profession, where writs are issued, judgments signed, declarations filed, and numerous other ingenious little machines put in motion for the torture and torment of his Majesty's liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law. They are, for the most part, low-roofed, mouldy rooms, where innumerable rolls of parchment, which have been perspiring in secret for the last century, send forth an agreeable odour, which is mingled by day with the scent of the dry rot, and by night with the various exhalations which arise from damp cloaks, festering umbrellas, and the coarsest tallow candles.

About half-past seven o'clock in the evening, some ten days or a fortnight after Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London, there hurried into one of these offices, an individual in a brown coat and brass buttons, whose long hair was scrupulously twisted round the rim of his napless hat, and whose soiled drab trousers were so tightly strapped over his Blucher boots, that his knees threatened every moment to start from their concealment. He produced from his coat pockets a long and narrow strip of parchment, on which the
presiding functionary impressed an illegible black stamp. He then drew forth four scraps of paper, of similar dimensions, each containing a printed copy of the strip of parchment with blanks for a name; and having filled up the blanks, put all the five documents in his pocket, and hurried away.

The man in the brown coat with the cabalistic documents in his pocket, was no other than our old acquaintance Mr. Jackson, of the house of Dodson and Fog, Freeman's Court, Cornhill. Instead of returning to the office from whence he came, however, he bent his steps direct to Sun Court, and walking straight into the George and Vulture, demanded to know whether one Mr. Pickwick was within.

"Call Mr. Pickwick's servant, Tom," said the bar-maid of the George and Vulture.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Mr. Jackson, "I've come on business. If you'll show me Mr. Pickwick's room, I'll step up myself."

"What name, sir?" said the waiter.

"Jackson," replied the clerk.

The waiter stepped up stairs to announce Mr. Jackson; but Mr. Jackson saved him the trouble by following close at his heels, and walking into the apartment before he could articulate a syllable.

Mr. Pickwick had that day invited his three friends to dinner; and they were all seated round the fire, drinking their wine, when Mr. Jackson presented himself, as above described.

"How de do, sir," said Mr. Jackson, nodding to Mr. Pickwick.

That gentleman bowed, and looked somewhat surprised, for the physiognomy of Mr. Jackson dwelt not in his recollection.

"I have called from Dodson and Fogg's," said Mr. Jackson, in an explanatory tone.
Mr. Pickwick roused at the name. "I refer you to my attorney, sir: Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn," said he. "Waiter, show this gentleman out."

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson, deliberately depositing his hat on the floor, and drawing from his pocket the strip of parchment. "But personal service, by clerk or agent, in these cases, you know, Mr. Pickwick—eh, sir? nothing like caution, sir, in all legal forms—eh?"

Here Mr. Jackson cast his eye on the parchment; and, resting his hands on the table, and looking round with a winning and persuasive smile, said, "Now come; don't let's have no words about such a little matter as this. Which of you gentlemen's name's Snodgrass?"

At this inquiry, Mr. Snodgrass gave such a very undisguised and palpable start, that no farther reply was needed.

"Ah! I thought so," said Mr. Jackson, more affably than before. "I've got a little something to trouble you with, sir."

"Me!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass.

"It's only a subpoena in Bardell and Pickwick on behalf of the plaintiff," replied Jackson, singling out one of the slips of paper, and producing a shilling from his waistcoat-pocket. "It'll come on, in the settens after Term; fourteenth of February, we expect; we've marked it a special jury cause, and it's only ten down the paper. That's yours, Mr. Snodgrass." As Jackson said this, he presented the parchment before the eyes of Mr. Snodgrass, and slipped the paper and the shilling into his hand.

Mr. Tupman had witnessed this process in silent astonishment, when Jackson, turning sharply upon him, said:
"I think I ain't mistaken when I say your name’s Tupman, am I?"

Mr. Tupman looked at Mr. Pickwick; but, perceiving no encouragement in that gentleman’s widely-opened eyes to deny his name, said:

"Yes, my name is Tupman, sir."

"And that other gentleman’s Mr. Winkle, I think," said Jackson.

Mr. Winkle faltered out a reply in the affirmative; and both gentlemen were forthwith invested with a slip of paper, and a shilling each, by the dexterous Mr. Jackson.

"Now," said Jackson, "I’m afraid you’ll think me rather troublesome, but I want somebody else, if it ain’t inconvenient. I have Samuel Weller’s name here, Mr. Pickwick."

"Send my servant here, waiter," said Mr. Pickwick. The waiter retired, considerably astonished, and Mr. Pickwick motioned Jackson to a seat.

There was a painful pause, which was at length broken by the innocent defendant.

"I suppose, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, his indignation rising while he spoke; "I suppose, sir, that it is the intention of your employers to seek to criminate me, upon the testimony of my own friends?"

Mr. Jackson struck his fore-finger several times against the left side of his nose, to intimate that he was not there to disclose the secrets of the prison-house, and playfully rejoined,

"Not knowin’, can’t say."

"For what other reason, sir," pursued Mr. Pickwick, "are these subpoenas served upon them, if not for this?"

"Very good plant, Mr. Pickwick," replied Jackson, slowly shaking his head. "But it won’t do.
No harm in trying, but there's little to be got out of me."

Here Mr. Jackson smiled once more upon the company; and, applying his left thumb to the tip of his nose, worked a visionary coffee-mill with his right hand, thereby performing a very graceful piece of pantomime (then much in vogue, but now, unhappily, almost obsolele) which was familiarly denominated "taking a grinder."

"No, no, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson in conclusion; "Perker's people must guess what we've served these subpoenas for. If they can't, they must wait till the action comes on, and then they'll find out."

Mr. Pickwick bestowed a look of excessive disgust on his unwelcome visitor, and would probably have hurled some tremendous anathema at the heads of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, had not Sam's entrance at the instant interrupted him.

"Samuel Weller?" said Mr. Jackson, inquiringly.

"Vun o' the truest things as you've said for many a long year," replied Sam, in a most composed manner.

"Here's a subpoena for you, Mr. Weller," said Jackson.

"What's that in English?" inquired Sam.

"Here's the original," said Jackson, declining the required explanation.

"Which?" said Sam.

"This," replied Jackson, shaking the parchment.

"Oh, that's the 'rig'nal, is it?" said Sam. Well, I'm werry glad I've seen the 'rig'nal, 'cos it's a gratifyin' sort o' thing, and eases vun's mind so much."

"And here's the shilling," said Jackson. "It's from Dodson and Fogg's."

"And it's uncommon handsome o' Dodson and
Fogg, as knows so little of me, to come down with a present," said Sam. "I feel it as a werry high compliment, sir; and it's a werry hon'rabable thing to them, as they knows how to reward merit verever they meets it. Besides vich, it's werry affectin' to one's feelin's."

As Mr. Weller said this, he inflicted a little friction on his right eye-lid, with the sleeve of his coat, after the most approved manner of actors when they are in domestic pathetics.

Mr. Jackson seemed rather puzzled by Sam's proceedings; but, as he had served the subpoenas, and had nothing more to say, he made a feint of putting on the one glove which he usually carried in his hand, for the sake of appearances; and returned to the office to report progress.

Mr. Pickwick slept little that night; his memory had received a very disagreeable refresher on the subject of Mrs. Bardell's action. He breakfasted betimes next morning; and, desiring Sam to accompany him, set forth towards Gray's Inn square.

"Sam!" said Mr. Pickwick, looking round, when they got to the end of Cheapside.

"Sir?" said Sam, stepping up to his master.

"Which way?"

"Up Newgate-street."

Mr. Pickwick did not turn round immediately, but looked vacantly in Sam's face for a few seconds, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired Sam.

"This action, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "is expected to come on, on the fourteenth of next month."

"Remarkable coincidence that 'ere, sir," replied Sam.

"Why remarkable, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.
"Valentine's day, sir," responded Sam; regular good day for a breach o' promise trial."

Mr. Weller's smile awakened no gleam of mirth in his master's countenance. Mr. Pickwick turned abruptly round, and led the way in silence.

They had walked some distance, Mr. Pickwick trotting on before, plunged in profound meditation, and Sam following behind, with a countenance expressive of the most enviable and easy defiance of everything and every body, when the latter, who was always especially anxious to impart to his master any exclusive information he possessed, quickened his pace until he was close at Mr. Pickwick's heels; and, pointing up at a house they were passing, said,

"Werry nice pork-shop that 'ere, sir."

"Yes, it seems so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Celebrated assage factory," said Sam.

"Is it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it!" reiterated Sam with some indignation; "I should rayther think it was. Why sir, bless your innocent eyebrows, that's vere the mysterious disappearace of a respectable tradesman took place, four years ago."

"You don't mean to say he was burked, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking hastily round.

"No, I don't indeed, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "I wish I did; far worse than that. He was the master o' that 'ere shop, sir, and the inwenter o' the patent-never-leavin-off assage steam 'ingine, as ud swaller up a pavin' stone if you put it too near, and grind it into assages as easy as if it was a tender young babby. Werry proud o' that machine he was, as it was nat'ral he should be; and he'd stand down in the cellar a lookin' at it, ven it was in full play, till he got quite melancholy with joy. A werry happy man he'd ha' been, sir, in the procession o' that 'ere ingine and two
more lovely hinfants besides, if it hadn’t been for his wife, who was a most ow-dacious wixen. She was always a follerin’ him about, and dinnin’ in his ears ’till at last he couldn’t stand it no longer. ‘I’ll tell you what it is, my dear,’ he says one day; ‘If you persewere in this here sort of amusement,’ he says, ‘I’m blessed if I don’t go away to ’Merriker; and that’s all about it.’ ‘You’re a idle willin’,’ says she, ‘and I wish the ’Merrikins joy of their bargain.’ Arter vich she keeps on abusin’ him for half an hour, and then runs into the little parlour behind the shop, sets to a screamin’, says he’ll be the death on her, and falls in a fit, which lasts for three good hours—one o’ them fits which is all screamin’ and kickin’. Well, next mornin’, the husband was missin’. He hadn’t taken nothin’ from the till,—hadn’t even put on his great coat, so it was quite clear he warn’t gone to ’Merriker. Didn’t come back next day, didn’t come back next week; the Missis had bills printed sayin’ that, if he’d come back, he should be forgiven everythin’; (which was very liberal, seein’ that he hadn’t done nothin’ at all,) all the canals was dragged, and for two months arterwards venever a body turned up, it was carried, as a reg’lar thing, straight off to the sassage shop. Hows’ever none on ’em answered, so they gave out that he’d run away, and she kept on the bus’ness. One Saturday night, a little thin old gen’lm’n comes into the shop in a great passion and says, ‘Are you the missis o’ this here shop?’ ‘Yes, I am,’ says she ‘Well, ma’am,’ says he, ‘then I’ve just looked in to say, that me and my family ain’t a goin’ to be choked for nothin’; and more than that, ma’am,’ he says, ‘you’ll allow me to observe, that as you don’t use the primest parts of the meat in the manafacter o’ sassages, I think you’d find beef come nearly as cheap as buttons.’ ‘Buttons, sir!’
sends she. 'Buttons, ma'am, says the little old gentleman, unfolding a bit of paper, and shewin' twenty or thirty halves o' buttons. 'Nice season in' for sassages, is trousers' buttons, ma'am.' 'They're my husband's buttons,' says the widder, beginnin' to faint. 'What!' screams the little old gen'l'm'n, turnin' werry pale. 'I see it all,' says the widder; 'in a fit of temporary insanity he rashly converted his-self into sassages!' And so he had, sir," said Mr. Weller, looking steadily into Mr. Pickwick's horror-stricken countenance, "or else he'd been draw'd into the ingine, but however that might ha' been, the little old gen'l-m'n, who had been remarkably partial to sassages all his life, rushed out o' the shop in a wild state, and was never heerd on artervards!"

The relation of this affecting incident of private life, brought master and man to Mr. Perker's chambers. Lowten, holding the door half open, was in conversation with a rustily-clad, miserable-looking man, in boots without toes, and gloves without fingers. There were traces of privation and suffering—almost of despair—in his lank and care-worn countenance; he felt his poverty, for he shrunk to the dark side of the staircase as Mr. Pickwick approached.

"It's very unfortunate," said the stranger with a sigh.

"Very," said Lowten, scribbling his name on the door post with his pen and rubbing it out again with the feather. "Will you leave a message for him?"

"When do you think he'll be back?" inquired the stranger.

"Quite uncertain," replied Lowten, winking at Mr. Pickwick, as the stranger cast his eyes towards the ground.

"You don't think it would be of any use my
waiting for him?" said the stranger looking wistfully into the office.

"Oh no, I'm sure it wouldn't," replied the clerk, moving a little more into the centre of the doorway. "He's certain not to be back this week, and it's a chance whether he will, next, for when Perker once gets out of town, he's never in a hurry to come back again."

"Out of town!" said Mr. Pickwick; "dear me, how unfortunate!"

"Don't go away, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten, "I've got a letter for you." The stranger seeming to hesitate, once more looked towards the ground, and the clerk winked slyly at Mr. Pickwick as if to intimate that some exquisite piece of humour was going forward; though what it was, Mr. Pickwick could not, for the life of him, divine.

"Step in, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten. "Well, will you leave a message, Mr. Watty, or will you call again?"

"Ask him to be so kind as to leave out word what has been done in my business," said the man; "Don't neglect it, Mr. Lowten."

"No, no; I won't forget it," replied the clerk. "Walk in, Mr. Pickwick. Good morning, Mr. Watty; it's a fine day for walking' isn't it?" And, seeing that the stranger still lingered, he beckoned Sam Weller to follow his master in, and shut the door in his face.

"There never was such a pestering bankrupt as that, since the world began, I do believe!" said Lowten, throwing down his pen with the air of an injured man. "His affairs haven't been in chancery quite four years yet, and here he comes worrying us at least twice a-week. Step this way, Mr. Pickwick. Perker is in, and he'll see you, I know. Devilish cold," he added, pettishly, "stand-
ing at that door, wasting one's time with such seedy vagabonds." And, having very vehemently stirred a particularly large fire, with a particularly small poker, the clerk led the way to his principal's private room, and announced Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, my dear sir," said little Mr. Perker, bustling up from his chair; "Well, my dear sir, and what's the news about your matter—ch? Anything more about our friends in Freeman's-court? They've not been sleeping, I know that. Ah, they're very smart fellows—very smart, indeed."

As the little man concluded, he took an emphatic pinch of snuff, as a tribute to the smartness of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg.

"They are great scoundrels," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ay, ay," said the little man; "that's a mere matter of opinion, you know, and we won't dispute about terms; because of course you can't be expected to view these subjects with a professional eye. Well, we've done every thing that's necessary. I have retained Serjeant Snubbin."

"Is he a good man?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Good man!" replied Perker; "bless your heart and soul, my dear sir, Serjeant Snubbin is at the very top of his profession. Gets treble the business of any man in court—engaged in every case. You needn't mention it abroad; but we say—we of the profession—that Serjeant Snubbin leads the court by the nose."

The little man took another pinch of snuff as he made this communication, and nodded mysteriously to Mr. Pickwick.

"They have subpoena'd my three friends," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah! of course they would," replied Perker.

"Important witnesses; saw you in a delicate situation."
"But she fainted of her own accord," said Mr. Pickwick. "She threw herself into my arms."

"Very likely, my dear sir," replied Perker; "very likely and very natural. Nothing more so, my dear sir—nothing. But who's to prove it?"

"They have subpoena'd my servant, too," said Mr. Pickwick, quitting the other point; for there Mr. Perker's question had somewhat staggered him.

"Sam?" said Perker.

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

"Of course, my dear sir; of course. I knew they would; I could have told you that, a month ago. You know, my dear sir, if you will take the management of your affairs into your own hands after intrusting them to your Solicitor, you must also take the consequences." Here Mr. Perker drew himself up with conscious dignity, and brushed some stray grains of snuff from his shirt frill.

"And what do they want him to prove?" asked Mr. Pickwick, after two or three minutes' silence.

"That you sent him up to the plaintiffs to make some offer of a compromise, I suppose," replied Perker. "It don't matter much, though I don't think many counsel could get a great deal out of him."

"I don't think they could," said Mr. Pickwick; smiling, despite his vexation, at the idea of Sam's appearance as a witness. "What course do we pursue?"

"We have only one to adopt, my dear sir," replied Perker: "cross-examine the witnesses, trust to Snubbin's eloquence, throw dust in the eyes of the judge; and ourselves on the jury."

"And suppose the verdict is against me?" said Mr. Pickwick.
Mr. Perker smiled, took a very long pinch of snuff, stirred the fire, shrugged his shoulders, and remained expressively silent.

"You mean that in that case I must pay the damages?" said Mr. Pickwick, who had watched this telegraphic answer with considerable sternness.

Perker gave the fire another very unnecessary poke, and said, "I am afraid so."

"Then I beg to announce to you, my unalterable determination to pay no damages whatever," said Mr. Pickwick most emphatically. "None, Perker. Not a pound, not a penny, of my money shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. That is my deliberate and irrevocable determination." And Mr. Pickwick gave a heavy blow on the table beside him, in confirmation of the irrevocability of his intention.

"Very well, my dear sir, very well," said Perker. "You know best, of course."

"Of course," replied Mr. Pickwick hastily. "Where does Serjeant Snubbin live?"

"In Lincoln's Inn Old Square," replied Perker.

"I should like to see him," said Mr. Pickwick. "See Serjeant Snubbin, my dear sir!" rejoined Perker, in utter amazement. "Pooh, pooh, my dear sir, impossible. See Serjeant Snubbin! Bless you, my dear sir, such a thing was never heard of, without a consultation fee being previously paid, and a consultation fixed. It couldn't be done, my dear sir; it couldn't be done."

Mr. Pickwick, however, had made up his mind not only that it could be done, but that it should be done; and the consequence was, that within ten minutes after he had received the assurance that the thing was impossible, he was conducted by his
solicitor into the outer office of the great Serjeant Snubbin himself.

It was an uncarpeted room of tolerable dimensions, with a large writing-table drawn up near the fire, the baize top of which had long since lost all claim to its original hue of green, and had gradually grown gray with dust and age, except where all traces of its natural colour were obliterated by ink-stains. Upon the table were numerous little bundles of papers tied with red tape; and behind it, sat an elderly clerk, whose sleek appearance and heavy gold watch-chain presented imposing indications of the extensive and lucrative practice of Mr. Serjeant Snubbin.

"Is the Serjeant in his room, Mr. Mallard?" inquired Perker, offering his box with all imaginable courtesy.

"Yes he is," was the reply, "but he's very busy. Look here; not an opinion given yet, on any one of these cases; and an expedition fee paid with all of them." The clerk smiled as he said this, and inhaled the pinch of snuff with a zest which seemed to be compounded of a fondness for snuff and a relish for fees.

"Something like practice, that," said Perker.

"Yes," said the barrister's clerk, producing his own box, and offering it with the greatest cordiality; "and the best of it is, that as nobody alive except myself can read the Serjeant's writing, they are obliged to wait for the opinions, when he has given them, till I have copied 'em, ha—ha—ha!"

"Which makes good for we know who, besides the Serjeant, and draws a little more out of the clients, eh?" said Perker; "Ha, ha, ha!" At this the Serjeant's clerk laughed again—not a noisy boisterous laugh, but a silent, internal chuckle, which Mr. Pickwick disliked to hear. When a
man bleeds inwardly, it is a dangerous thing for himself; but when he laughs inwardly, it bodes no good to other people.

"You haven't made me out that little list of the fees that I'm in your debt, have you?" said Perker.

"No, I have not," replied the clerk.

"I wish you would," said Perker. "Let me have them, and I'll send you a cheque. But I suppose you're too busy pocketing the ready money, to think of the debtors, eh? ha, ha, ha!" This sally seemed to tickle the clerk amazingly, and he once more enjoyed a little quiet laugh to himself.

"But, Mr. Mallard, my dear friend," said Perker, suddenly recovering his gravity, and drawing the great man's great man into a corner, by the lappel of his coat, "you must persuade the Serjeant to see me, and my client here."

"Come, come," said the clerk, "that's not bad either. See the Serjeant! come, that's too absurd." Notwithstanding the absurdity of the proposal, however, the clerk allowed himself to be gently drawn beyond the hearing of Mr. Pickwick; and after a short conversation conducted in whispers, walked softly down a little dark passage and disappeared into the legal luminary's sanctum, from whence he shortly returned on tiptoe, and informed Mr. Perker and Mr. Pickwick that the Serjeant had been prevailed upon, in violation of all his established rules and customs, to admit them at once.

Mr. Serjeant Snubbin was a lantern-faced sallow-complexioned man, of about five-and-forty, or—as the novels say—he might be fifty. He had that dull-looking boiled eye which is so often to be seen in the heads of people who have applied themselves during many years to a weary and laborious
course of study; and which would have been sufficient, without the additional eye-glass which dangled from a broad black riband round his neck, to warn a stranger that he was very near-sighted. His hair was thin and weak, which was partly attributable to his having never devoted much time to its arrangement, and partly to his having worn for five-and-twenty years the forensic wig which hung on a block beside him. The marks of hair-powder on his coat-collar, and the ill-washed and worse tied white neckerchief round his throat, showed that he had not found leisure since he left the court to make any alteration in his dress; while the slovenly style of the remainder of his costume warranted the inference that his personal appearance would not have been very much improved if he had. Books of practice, heaps of papers, and opened letters, were scattered over the table without any attempt at order or arrangement; the furniture of the room was old and rickety; the doors of the book-case were rotting in their hinges; the dust flew out from the carpet in little clouds at every step; the blinds were yellow with age and dirt; and the state of every thing in the room showed, with a clearness not to be mistaken, that Mr. Serjeant Snubbin was far too much occupied with his professional pursuits to take any great heed or regard of his personal comforts.

The Serjeant was writing when his clients entered; he bowed abstractedly when Mr. Pickwick was introduced by his solicitor; and then, motioning them to a seat, put his pen carefully in the inkstand, nursed his left leg, and waited to be spoken to.

"Mr. Pickwick is the defendant in Bardell and Pickwick, Serjeant Snubbin," said Perker.

"I am retained in that, am I?" said the Serjeant.
"You are, sir," replied Perker.

The Serjeant nodded his head, and waited for something else.

"Mr. Pickwick was anxious to call upon you, Serjeant Snubbin," said Perker, "to state to you, before you entered upon the case, that he denies there being any ground or pretence whatever for the action against him; and that unless he came into court with clean hands, and without the most conscientious conviction that he was right in resisting the plaintiff's demand, he would not be there at all. I believe I state your views correctly; do I not, my dear sir?" said the little man, turning to Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite so," replied that gentleman.

Mr. Serjeant Snubbin unfolded his glasses, raised them to his eyes; and, after looking at Mr. Pickwick for a few seconds with great curiosity, turned to Mr. Perker, and said, smiling slightly as he spoke—

"Has Mr. Pickwick a strong case?"

The attorney shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you purpose calling witnesses?"

"No."

The smile on the Serjeant's countenance became more defined; he rocked his leg with increased violence; and, throwing himself back in his easy chair, coughed dubiously.

These tokens of the Serjeant's presentiments on the subject, slight as they were, were not lost on Mr. Pickwick. He settled the spectacles, through which he had attentively regarded such demonstrations of the barrister's feeling as he had permitted himself to exhibit, more firmly on his nose; and said with great energy, and in utter disregard of all Mr. Perker's admonitory winkings and frownings—

"My wishing to wait upon you for such a pur-
pose as this, sir, appears, I have no doubt, to a
gentleman who sees so much of these matters as
you must necessarily do, a very extraordinary cir-
cumstance."

The Serjeant tried to look gravely at the fire,
but the smile came back again.

"Gentlemen of your profession, sir," continued
Mr. Pickwick, "see the worst side of human na-
ture—all its disputes, all its ill-will and bad blood,
rise up before you. You know, from your experi-
ence of juries, (I mean no disparagement to you,
or them,) how much depends upon effect; and you
are apt to attribute to others, a desire to use, for
purposes of deception and self-interest, the very
instruments which you, in pure honesty and honour
of purpose, and with a laudable desire to do your
utmost for your client, know the temper and worth
of so well, from constantly employing them your-
selves. I really believe that to this circumstance
may be attributed the vulgar but very general no-
tion of your being, as a body, suspicious, distrustful,
and over-cautious. Conscious as I am, sir, of the
disadvantage of making such a declaration to you,
under such circumstances, I have come here, be-
cause I wish you distinctly to understand, as my
friend Mr. Perker has said, that I am innocent of
the falsehood laid to my charge; and although I
am very well aware of the inestimable value of
your assistance, sir, I must beg to add, that unless
you sincerely believe this, I would rather be de-
prived of the aid of your talents than have the ad-
vantage of them."

Long before the close of this address, which we
are bound to say was of a very prosy character
for Mr. Pickwick, the Serjeant had relapsed into
a state of abstraction. After some minutes, how-
ever, during which he had resumed his pen, he
appeared to be again aware of the presence of his.
clients; and, raising his head from the paper, said, rather snappishly—

"Who's with me in this case?"

"Mr. Phunky, Serjeant Snubbin," replied the attorney.

"Phunky—Phunky," said the Serjeant; "I never heard the name before. He must be a very young man."

"Yes, he is a very young man," replied the attorney. "He was only called the other day. Let me see—oh, he hasn't been at the Bar eight years yet."

"Ah, I thought not," said the Sergeant, in that sort of pitying tone in which ordinary folks would speak of a very helpless little child. "Mr. Mallard, send round to Mr. —— Mr. ——"

"Phunky's—Holborn Court, Gray's Inn," interposed Perker—(Holborn Court, by the by, is South Square now)—"Mr. Phunky; and say I should be glad if he'd step here, a moment."

Mr. Mallard departed to execute his commission; and Serjeant Snubbin relapsed into abstraction until Mr. Phunky himself was introduced.

Although an infant barrister, he was a full-grown man. He had a very nervous manner, and a painful hesitation in his speech; it did not appear to be a natural defect, but seemed rather the result of timidity, arising from the consciousness of being "kept down" by want of means, or interest, or connexion, or imprudence, as the case might be. He was overawed by the Serjeant, and profoundly courteous to the attorney.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, Mr. Phunky," said Serjeant Snubbin, with haughty condescension.

Mr. Phunky bowed. He had had the pleasure of seeing the Serjeant, and of envying him too, with
all a poor man's envy, for eight years and a quarter.

"You are with me in this case, I understand?" said the Serjeant.

If Mr. Phunky had been a rich man, he would have instantly sent for his clerk to remind him; if he had been a wise one, he would have applied his fore-finger to his forehead, and endeavoured to recollect whether in the multiplicity of his engagements he had undertaken this one, or not; but as he was neither rich nor wise (in this sense at all events) he turned red, and bowed.

"Have you read the papers, Mr. Phunky?" inquired the Serjeant.

Here again Mr. Phunky should have professed to have forgotten all about the merits of the case; but as he had read such papers as had been laid before him, in the course of the action, and had thought of nothing else, waking or sleeping, throughout the two months during which he had been retained as Mr. Serjeant Snubbin's junior, he turned a deeper red, and bowed again.

"This is Mr. Pickwick," said the Serjeant, waving his pen in the direction in which that gentleman was standing.

Mr. Phunky bowed to Mr. Pickwick with the reverence which a first client must ever awaken; and again inclined his head towards his leader.

"Perhaps you will take Mr. Pickwick away," said the Serjeant, "and—and—and—hear anything Mr. Pickwick may wish to communicate. We shall have a consultation, of course." With this hint that he had been interrupted quite long enough, Mr. Serjeant Snubbin, who had been gradually growing more and more abstracted, applied his glass to his eyes for an instant, bowed slightly round, and was once more deeply immersed in
the case before him, which arose out of an interminable lawsuit, originating in the act of an individual, deceased a century or so ago, who had stopped up a pathway leading from some place which nobody ever came from, to some other place which nobody ever went to.

Mr. Phunky would not hear of passing through any door until Mr. Pickwick and his solicitor had passed through before him, so it was some time before they got into the Square; and when they did reach it, they walked up and down, and held a long conference, the result of which, was, that it was a very difficult matter to say how the verdict would go; that nobody could presume to calculate on the issue of an action; that it was very lucky they had prevented the other party from getting Serjeant Snubbin; and other topics of doubt and consolation, common in such a position of affairs.

Mr. Weller was then roused by his master from a sweet sleep of an hour's duration; and, bidding adieu to Lowten, they returned to the City.
CHAPTER XXXI.

DESCRIBES, FAR MORE FULLY THAN THE COURT NEWSMAN EVER DID, A BACHELOR'S PARTY, GIVEN BY MR. BOB SAWYER AT HIS LODGINGS IN THE BROUGH.

There is a repose about Lant Street, in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul. There are always a good many houses to let in the street: it is a by-street too, and its dulness is soothing. A house in Lant Street would not come within the denomination of a first-rate residence, in the strict acceptation of the term; but it is a most desirable spot nevertheless. If a man wished to abstract himself from the world; to remove himself from within the reach of temptation; to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window, we should recommend him by all means to go to Lant Street.

In this happy retreat are colonized a few clear-starchers, a sprinkling of journeymen bookbinders, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court, several small housekeepers who are employed in the Docks, a handful of mantua-makers, and a seasoning of jobbing tailors. The majority of the inhabitants either direct their energies to the letting of furnished apartments, or devote themselves to the healthful and invigorating pursuit of mang-
ling. The chief features in the still life of the street, are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates, and bell-handles; the principal specimens of animated nature, the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked-potato man. The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His Majesty's revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley, the rents are dubious, and the water communication is very frequently cut off.

Mr. Bob Sawyer embellished one side of the fire, in his first-floor front, early on the evening for which he had invited Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Ben Allen the other. The preparations for the reception of visitors appeared to be completed. The umbrellas in the passage had been heaped into the little corner outside the back-parlour door; the bonnet and shawl of the landlady's servant had been removed from the bannisters; there were not more than two pair of pattens on the street-door mat; and a kitchen candle, with a very long snuff, burnt cheerfully on the ledge of the staircase window. Mr. Bob Sawyer had himself purchased the spirits at a wine vault in High Street, and had returned home preceding the bearer thereof, to preclude the possibility of their delivery at the wrong house. The punch was ready-made in a red pan in the bed room; a little table, covered with a green baize cloth, had been borrowed from the parlour, to play at cards on; and the glasses of the establishment, together with those which had been borrowed for the occasion from the public-house, were all drawn up in a tray, which was deposited on the landing outside the door.

Notwithstanding the highly satisfactory nature of all these arrangements, there was a cloud on the countenance of Mr. Bob Sawyer, as he sat by the
fire-side. There was a sympathizing expression, too, in the features of Mr. Ben Allen, as he gazed intently on the coals; and a tone of melancholy in his voice, as he said, after a long silence—

“Well, it is unlucky that she should have taken it in her head to turn sour, just on this occasion. She might at least have waited till to-morrow.”

“That’s her malevolence; that’s her malevolence,” returned Mr. Bob Sawyer vehemently. “She says that if I can afford to give a party I ought to be able to afford to pay her confounded ‘little bill.’”

“How long has it been running?” inquired Mr. Ben Allen. A bill, by the by, is the most extraordinary locomotive engine that the genius of man ever produced. It would keep on running during the longest life-time, without ever once stopping of its own accord.

“Only a quarter, and a month or so,” replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Ben Allen coughed hopelessly, and directed a searching look between the two top bars of the stove.

“It’ll be a deuced unpleasant thing if she takes it into her head to let out, when those fellows are here, won’t it?” said Mr. Ben Allen at length.

“Horrible,” replied Bob Sawyer, “horrible.”

A low tap was heard at the room door. Mr. Bob Sawyer looked expressively at his friend, and bade the tapper come in; whereupon a dirty slipshod girl in black cotton stockings, who might have passed for the neglected daughter of a superannuated dustman in very reduced circumstances, thrust in her head, and said,

“Please, Mister Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to you.”

Before Mr. Bob Sawyer could return any answer, the girl suddenly disappeared with a jerk,
as if somebody had given her a violent pull behind; this mysterious exit was no sooner accomplished, than there was another tap at the door—a smart pointed tap, which seemed to say, “Here I am, and in I’m coming.”

Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced at his friend with a look of abject apprehension, and once more cried “Come in.”

The permission was not at all necessary, for, before Mr. Bob Sawyer had uttered the words, a little fierce woman bounced into the room, all in a tremble with passion, and pale with rage.

“Now, Mr. Sawyer,” said the little fierce woman, trying to appear very calm, “if you’ll have the kindness to settle that little bill of mine. I’ll thank you, because I’ve got my rent to pay this afternoon, and my landlord’s a waiting below now.” Here the little woman rubbed her hands and looked steadily over Mr. Bob Sawyer’s head, at the wall behind him.

“I am very sorry to put you to any inconvenience, Mrs. Raddle,” said Bob Sawyer deferentially, “but—”

“Oh, it isn’t any inconvenience,” replied the little, woman, with a shrill titter. “I didn’t want it particular before to-day; leastways, as it has to go to my landlord directly, it was as well for you to keep it as me. You promised me this afternoon, Mr. Sawyer, and every gentleman as has ever lived here has kept his word, sir, as of course any body as calls himself a gentleman, does.” And Mrs. Raddle tossed her head, bit her lips, rubbed her hands harder, and looked at the wall more steadily than ever. It was plain to see, as Mr. Bob Sawyer remarked in a style of eastern allegory on a subsequent occasion, that she was “getting the steam up.”

“I am very sorry, Mrs. Raddle,” said Bob Saw-
yer with all imaginable humility, "but the fact is, that I have been disappointed in the City to-day."

—Extraordinary place that city. We know a most astonishing number of men who always are getting disappointed there.

"Well, Mr. Sawyer," said Mrs. Raddle, planting herself firmly on a purple cauliflower in the kidderminster carpet, "and what's that to me, sir?"

"I—I—have no doubt, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob Sawyer, blinking this last question, "that before the middle of next week we shall be able to set ourselves quite square, and go on on a better system, afterwards."

This was all Mrs. Raddle wanted. She had bustled up to the apartment of the unlucky Bob Sawyer so bent upon going into a passion, that in all probability payment would have rather disappointed her than otherwise. She was in excellent order for a little relaxation of the kind, having just exchanged a few introductory compliments with Mr. R. in the front kitchen.

"Do you suppose, Mr. Sawyer," said Mrs. Raddle, elevating her voice for the information of the neighbours, "do you suppose that I'm a-going day after day to let a fellow occupy my lodgings as never thinks of paying his rent, nor even the very money laid out for the fresh butter and lump sugar that's bought for his breakfast, and the very milk that's took in, at the street door? Do you suppose a hard-working and industrious woman as has lived in this street for twenty years (ten years over the way, and nine years and three quarters in this very house) has nothing else to do, but to work herself to death after a parcel of lazy idle fellars, that are always smoking and drinking, and lounging, when they ought to be glad to turn their hands to any thing that would help 'em to pay their bills? Do you—"
"My good soul," interposed Mr. Benjamin Allen, soothingly.

"Have the goodness to keep your observashuns to yourself, sir, I beg," said Mrs. Raddle, suddenly arresting the rapid torrent of her speech, and addressing the third party with impressive slowness and solemnity. "I am not aweer, sir, that, you have any right to address your conversation to me. I don't think I let these apartments to you, sir."

"No, you certainly did not," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Very good, sir," responded Mrs. Raddle, with lofty politeness. "Then p'raps, sir, you'll confine yourself to breaking the arms and legs of the poor people in the hospitals, and keep yourself to yourself, sir, or there may be some persons here as will make you, sir."

"But you are such an unreasonable woman," remonstrated Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"I beg your parding, young man," said Mrs. Raddle, in a cold perspiration of anger. "But will you have the goodness just to call me that again, sir?"

"I didn't make use of the word in any invidious manner, ma'am," replied Mr. Benjamin Allen, growing somewhat uneasy on his own account.

"I beg your parding, young man," demanded Mrs. Raddle in a louder and more imperative tone. "But who do you call a woman? Did you make that remark to me, sir?"

"Why, bless my heart!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Did you apply that name to me, I ask of you, sir?" interrupted Mrs. Raddle with intense fierceness, throwing the door wide open.

"Why, of course I did," replied Mr. Benjamin Allen.
"Yes, of course you did," said Mrs. Raddle, backing gradually to the door, and raising her voice to its loudest pitch, for the special behoof of Mr. Raddle in the kitchen. "Yes, of course you did, and every body knows that they may safely insult me in my own ouse while my husband sits sleeping down stairs, and taking no more notice than if I was a dog in the streets. He ought to be ashamed of himself (here Mrs. Raddle sobbed) to allow his wife to be treated in this way by a parcel of young cutters and carvers of live people's bodies, that disgraces the lodgings, (another sob,) and leaving her exposed to all manner of abuse, a base faint-hearted, timorous wretch, that's afraid to come up stairs, and face the ruffly creatures—that's afraid—that's afraid to come." Mrs. Raddle paused to listen whether the repetition of the taunt had roused her better half; and, finding that it had not been successful, proceeded to descend the stairs with sobs innumerable, when there came a loud double knock at the street door: whereupon she burst into an hysterical fit of weeping, accompanied with dismal moans, which was prolonged until the knock had been repeated six times, when, in an uncontrollable burst of mental agony, she threw down all the umbrellas, and disappeared into the back parlour, closing the door after her with an awful crash.

"Does Mr. Sawyer live here?" said Mr. Pickwick, when the door was opened.

"Yes," said the girl, "first floor. It's the door straight afore you, when you gets to the top of the stairs."—Having given this instruction, the handmaid, who had been brought up among the aboriginal inhabitants of Southwark, disappeared with the candle in her hand down the kitchen stairs, perfectly satisfied that she had done every thing
that could possibly be required of her under the circumstances.

Mr. Snodgrass, who entered last, secured the street door, after several ineffectual efforts, by putting up the chain; and the friends stumbled up stairs, where they were received by Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been afraid to go down lest he should be waylaid by Mrs. Raddle.

"How are you?" said the discomfited student—"Glad to see you—take care of the glasses." This caution was addressed to Mr. Pickwick, who had put his hat in the tray.

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, "I beg your pardon."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," said Bob Sawyer, "I'm rather confined for room here, but you must put up with all that, when you come to see a young bachelor. Walk in. You've seen this gentleman before, I think?" Mr. Pickwick shook hands with Mr. Benjamin Allen, and his friends followed his example. They had scarcely taken their seats when there was another double knock.

"I hope that's Jack Hopkins!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer. "Hush, Yes, it is. Come up, Jack; come up."

A heavy footstep was heard upon the stairs, and Jack Hopkins presented himself. He wore a black velvet waistcoat, with thunder-and-lightning buttons; and a blue striped shirt, with a white false collar.

"You're late, Jack?" said Mr. Benjamin Allen. "Been detained at Bartholomew's,"—replied Hopkins.

"Any thing new?"

"No, nothing particular. Rather a good accident brought into the casualty ward."

"What was that, sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.
"Only a man fallen out of a four pair of stairs' window;—but it's a very fair case—very fair case indeed."

"Do you mean that the patient is in a fair way to recover?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"No," replied Hopkins, carelessly. "No, I should rather say he wouldn't. There must be a splendid operation though, to-morrow—magnificent sight if Slasher does it."

"You consider Mr. Slasher a good operator?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Best alive," replied Hopkins. "Took a boy's leg out of the socket last week—boy ate five apples and a gingerbread cake—exactly two minutes after it was all over, boy said he wouldn't lie there to be made game of; and he'd tell his mother if they didn't begin."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, astonished.

"Pooh! that's nothing, that ain't," said Jack Hopkins. "Is it, Bob?"

"Nothing at all," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"By the by, Bob," said Hopkins with a scarcely perceptible glance at Mr. Pickwick's attentive face, "we had a curious accident last night. A child was brought in, who had swallowed a necklace."

"Swallowed what, sir?" interrupted Mr. Pickwick.

"A necklace," replied Jack Hopkins. "Not at once, you know, that would be too much—you couldn't swallow that, if the child did—eh, Mr. Pickwick, ha! ha!"—Mr. Hopkins appeared highly gratified with his own pleasantry; and continued—"No, the way was this;—child's parents were poor people who lived in a court. Child's eldest sister bought a necklace,—common necklace, made of large black wooden beads. Child, being fond of toys, cribbed the necklace, hid it, played with it, cut the string, and swallowed a bead. Child
thought it capital fun, went back next day, and swallowed another bead.”

“Bless my heart,” said Mr. Pickwick, “what a dreadful thing! I beg your pardon, sir. Go on.”

Next day, child swallowed two beads; the day after that, he treated himself to three, and so on, till in a week’s time he had got through the necklace, five-and-twenty beads in all. The sister, who was an industrious girl, and seldom treated herself to a bit of finery, cried her eyes out, at the loss of the necklace; looked high and low for it; but I needn’t say didn’t find it. A few days afterwards, the family were at dinner—baked shoulder of mutton, and potatoes under it—the child who wasn’t hungry, was playing about the room, when suddenly there was heard a singular noise, like a small hail storm. ‘Don’t do that, my boy,’ said the father. ‘I ain’t a doin’ nothin’,’ said the child. ‘Well, don’t do it again,’ said the father. There was a short silence, and then the noise began again, worse than ever. ‘If you don’t mind what I say, my boy,’ said the father, ‘you’ll find yourself in bed, in something less than a pig’s whisper.’

He gave the child a shake to make him obedient, and such a rattling ensued as nobody ever heard before. ‘Why, it’s in the child!' said the father, ‘he’s got the croup in the wrong place!’ ‘No I haven’t, father,’ said the child, beginning to cry, ‘it’s the necklace; I swallowed it, father.’—The father caught the child up, and ran with him to the hospital: the beads in the boy’s stomach rattling all the way with the jolting; and the people looking up in the air, and down in the cellars to see where the unusual sound came from. He’s in the hospital now,” said Jack Hopkins, “and he makes such a strange noise when he walks about, that they’re obliged to muffle him in a watchman’s coat, for fear he should wake the patients!”
"That's the most extraordinary case I ever heard of," said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Jack Hopkins; "is it, Bob?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"Very singular things occur in our profession, I can assure you, sir, said Hopkins.

"So I should be disposed to imagine," replied Mr. Pickwick.

Another knock at the door, announced a large-headed young man in a black wig, who brought with him a scorbutic youth in a long stock. The next comer was a gentleman in a shirt emblazoned with pink anchors, who was closely followed by a pale youth with a plated watch-guard. The arrival of a prim personage in clean linen and cloth boots rendered the party complete. The little table with the green baize cover was wheeled out; the first instalment of punch was brought in, in a white jug; and the succeeding three hours were devoted to vingt-un at sixpence a dozen, which was only once interrupted by a slight dispute between the scorbutic youth and the gentleman with the pink anchors; in the course of which, the scorbutic youth intimated a burning desire to pull the nose of the gentleman with the emblems of hope, in reply to which, that individual expressed his decided unwillingness to accept of any "sauce" on gratuitous terms, either from the irascible young gentleman with the scorbutic countenance, or any other person who was ornamented with a head.

When the last "natural" had been declared, and the profit and loss account of fish and sixpences adjusted, to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Bob Sawyer rang for supper, and the visitors squeezed themselves into corners while it was getting ready.
It was not so easy to get ready as some people may imagine. First of all, it was necessary to awaken the girl, who had fallen asleep with her face on the kitchen table; this took a little time, and, even when she did answer the bell, another quarter of an hour was consumed in fruitless endeavours to impart to her a faint and distant glimmering of reason. The man to whom the order for the oysters had been sent, had not been told to open them; it is a very difficult thing to open an oyster with a limp knife or a two-pronged fork, and very little was done in this way. Very little of the beef was done either; and the ham (which was also from the German sausage-shop round the corner) was in a similar predicament. However, there was plenty of porter in a tin can; and the cheese went a great way, for it was very strong. So upon the whole, perhaps, the supper was quite as good as such matters usually are.

After supper another jug of punch was put upon the table, together with a paper of cigars, and a couple of bottles of spirits. Then there was an awful pause; and this awful pause was occasioned by a very common occurrence in this sort of places, but a very embarrassing one notwithstanding.

The fact is, that the girl was washing the glasses. The establishment boasted four; we do not record the circumstance as at all derogatory to Mrs. Rad- dle, for there never was a lodging-house yet, that was not short of glasses. The landlady's glasses were little thin blown glass tumblers, and those which had been borrowed from the public house were great, dropsical, bloated articles, each supported on a huge gouty leg. This would have been in itself sufficient to have possessed the company with the real state of affairs; but the young woman of all work had prevented the possibility of any misconception arising in the mind of any
gentleman upon the subject, by forcibly dragging every man's glass away, long before he had finished his beer, and audibly stating, despite the winks and interruptions of Mr. Bob Sawyer, that it was to be conveyed down stairs, and washed forthwith.

It is a very ill wind that blows nobody any good. The prim man in the cloth boots, who had been unsuccessfully attempting to make a joke during the whole time the round game lasted, saw his opportunity, and availed himself of it. The instant the glasses disappeared he commenced a long story about a great public character, whose name he had forgotten, making a particularly happy reply to another eminent and illustrious individual whom he had never been able to identify. He enlarged at some length and with great minuteness upon divers collateral circumstances, distinctly connected with the anecdote in hand, but for the life of him he couldn't recollect at that precise moment what the anecdote was, although he had been in the habit of telling the story with great applause for the last ten years.

"Dear me," said the prim man in the cloth boots, "it's a very extraordinary circumstance."

"I am sorry you have forgotten it," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, glancing eagerly at the door, as he thought he heard the noise of glasses jingling— "very sorry."

"So am I," responded the prim man, "because I know it would have afforded so much amusement. Never mind; I dare say I shall manage to recollect it, in the course of half an hour or so."

The prim man arrived at this point, just as the glasses came back, when Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been absorbed in attention during the whole time, said he should very much like to hear the end of it, for, so far as it went, it was, without exception, the very best story he had ever heard.
The sight of the tumblers restored Bob Sawyer to a degree of equanimity which he had not possessed since his interview with his landlady. His face brightened up, and he began to feel quite convivial.

"Now, Betsy," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with great suavity, and dispersing, at the same time, the tumultuous little mob of glasses that the girl had collected in the centre of the table; "now, Betsy, the warm water: be brisk, there's a good girl."

"You can't have no warm water," replied Betsy.

"No warm water!" exclaimed Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"No," said the girl, with a shake of the head which expressed a more decided negative than the most copious language could have conveyed. "Missis Raddle said you warn't to have none."

The surprise depicted on the countenances of his guests imparted new courage to the host.

"Bring up the warm water instantly—instantly!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer with desperate sternness.

"No; I can't," replied the girl; "Missis Raddle raked out the kitchen fire afore she went to bed, and locked up the kittle."

"Oh, never mind; never mind. Pray don't disturb yourself about such a trifle," said Mr. Pickwick, observing the conflict of Bob Sawyer's passions, as depicted in his countenance, "cold water will do very well."

"Oh, admirably," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"My landlady is subject to some slight attacks of mental derangement," remarked Bob Sawyer with a ghastly smile; "I fear I must give her warning."

"No, don't," said Ben Allen.

"I fear I must," said Bob with heroic firmness. "I'll pay her what I owe her, and give her warning
to-morrow morning.” Poor fellow! how devoutly he wished he could!

Mr. Bob Sawyer’s heart-sickening attempts to rally under this last blow communicated a dispiriting influence to the company, the greater part of whom, with the view of raising their spirits, attached themselves with extra cordiality to the cold brandy and water, the first perceptible effects of which were displayed in a renewal of hostilities between this scorbutic youth and the gentleman in the sanguine shirt. The belligerents vented their feelings of mutual contempt, for some time, in a variety of frownings and snortings, until at last the scorbutic youth felt it necessary to come to a more explicit understanding on the matter, when the following clear understanding took place.

“Sawyer,” said the scorbutic youth, in a loud voice.

“Well, Noddy,” replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

“I should be very sorry, Sawyer,” said Mr. Noddy, “to create any unpleasantness at any friend’s table, and much less at yours, Sawyer,—very; but I must take this opportunity of informing Mr. Gunter that he is no gentleman.”

“And I should be very sorry, Sawyer, to create any disturbance in the street in which you reside,” said Mr. Gunter, “but I am afraid I shall be under the necessity of alarming the neighbours by throwing the person who had just spoken, out o’ the window.”

“What do you mean by that, sir?” inquired Mr. Noddy.

“What I say, sir,” replied Mr. Gunter.

“I should like to see you do it, sir,” said Mr. Noddy.

“You shall feel me do it in half a minute, sir,” replied Mr. Gunter.

“I request that you’ll favour me with your card, sir,” said Mr. Noddy.
"I'll do nothing of the kind, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Why not, sir?" inquired Mr. Noddy.

"Because you'll stick it up over your chimney-piece, and delude your visitors into the false belief that a gentleman has been to see you, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Sir, a friend of mine shall wait on you in the morning," said Mr. Noddy.

"Sir, I'm very much obliged to you for the caution, and I'll leave particular directions with the servant to lock up the spoons," replied Mr. Gunter.

At this point the remainder of the guests interposed, and remonstrated with both parties on the impropriety of their conduct, on which Mr. Noddy begged to state that his father was quite as respectable as Mr. Gunter's father; to which Mr. Gunter replied, that his father was to the full as respectable as Mr. Noddy's father, and that his father's son was as good a man as Mr. Noddy, any day in the week. As this announcement seemed the prelude to a recommencement of the dispute, there was another interference on the part of the company; and a vast quantity of talking and clamouring ensued, in the course of which Mr. Noddy gradually allowed his feelings to overpower him, and professed that he had ever entertained a devoted personal attachment towards Mr. Gunter. To this Mr. Gunter replied, that upon the whole, he rather preferred Mr. Noddy to his own brother; on hearing which admission, Mr. Noddy magnanimously rose from his seat, and proffered his hand to Mr. Gunter. Mr. Gunter grasped it with affecting fervour; and everybody said that the whole dispute had been conducted in a manner which was highly honourable to both parties concerned.

"Now," said Jack Hopkins, "just to set us going again, Bob, I don't mind singing a song." And
Hopkins, incited thereto, by tumultuous applause, plunged himself at once into 'The King, God bless him,' which he sang as loud as he could, to a novel air, compounded of the 'Bay of Biscay,' and 'A Frog he would.'—The chorus was the essence of the song, and, as each gentleman sang it to the tune he knew best, the effect was very striking indeed.

It was at the end of the chorus to the first verse, that Mr. Pickwick held up his hand in a listening attitude, and said, as soon as silence was restored—

"Hush! I beg your pardon. I thought I heard somebody calling from up stairs."

A profound silence immediately ensued; and Mr. Bob Sawyer was observed to turn pale.

"I think I hear it now," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Have the goodness to open the door."

The door was no sooner opened than all doubt on the subject was removed.

"Mr. Sawyer—Mr. Sawyer"—screamed a voice from the two-pair landing.

"It's my landlady," said Bob Sawyer, looking round him with great dismay. "Yes, Mrs. Raddle."

"What do you mean by this, Mr. Sawyer?" replied the voice, with great shrillness and rapidity of utterance. "Ain't it enough to be swindled out of one's rent, and money lent out of pocket besides, and abused and insulted by your friends that dares to call themselves men, without having the house turned out of window, and noise enough made to bring the fire-engines here, at two o'clock in the morning?—Turn them wretches away."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the voice of Mr. Raddle, which appeared to proceed from beneath some distant bed-clothes.

"Ashamed of themselves!" said Mrs. Raddle, "Why don't you go down and knock 'em every one down stairs? you would, if you was a man."

"I should if I was a dozen men, my dear," re-
plied Mr. Raddle, pacifically, "but they've rather the advantage of me in numbers, my dear."

"Ugh, you coward!" replied Mrs. Raddle, with supreme contempt. "Do you mean to turn them wretches out, or not, Mr. Sawyer?"

"They're going, Mrs. Raddle, they're going," said the miserable Bob. "I am afraid you'd better go," said Mr. Bob Sawyer to his friends. "I thought you were making too much noise."

"It's a very unfortunate thing," said the prim man. "Just as we were getting so comfortable too!" The fact was, that the prim man was just beginning to have a dawning recollection of the story he had forgotten.

"It's hardly to be borne," said the prim man, looking round, "Hardly to be borne, is it?"

"Not to be endured," replied Jack Hopkins; "let's have the other verse, Bob; come, here goes."

"No, no, Jack, don't," interposed Bob Sawyer; "it's a capital song, but I am afraid we had better not have the other verse. They are very violent people, the people of the house."

"Shall I step up stairs, and pitch into the landlord?" inquired Hopkins, "or keep on ringing the bell, or go and groan on the staircase? You may command me, Bob."

"I am very much indebted to you for your friendship and good nature, Hopkins," said the wretched Mr. Bob Sawyer, "but I think the best plain to avoid any farther dispute is for us to break up at once."

"Now, Mr. Sawyer," screamed the shrill voice of Mrs. Raddle, "are them brutes going?"

"They're only looking for their hats, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob; "they are going directly."

"Going!" said Mrs. Raddle, thrusting her nightcap over the bannisters just as Mr. Pickwick, followed by Mr. Tupman, emerged from the sitting-room. "Going! What did they ever come for!"
"My dear ma'am," remonstrated Mr. Pickwick, looking up.

"Get along with you, you old wretch!" replied Mrs. Raddle, hastily withdrawing her night-cap. "Old enough to be his grandfather, you villain! You're worse than any of 'em."

Mr. Pickwick found it in vain to protest his innocence, so hurried down stairs into the street, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass. Mr. Ben Allen, who was dismally oppressed with spirits and agitation, accompanied them as far as London Bridge, and in the course of the walk confided to Mr. Winkle, as an especially sensible person to intrust the secret to, that he was resolved to cut the throat of any gentleman except Mr. Bob Sawyer who should aspire to the affections of his sister Arabella. Having expressed his determination to perform this painful duty of a brother with proper firmness, he burst into tears, knocked his hat over his eyes, and, making the best of his way back, knocked double knocks at the door of the Borough Market, and took short naps on the steps alternately, till day-break, under the firm impression that he lived there, and had forgotten the key.

The visitors having all departed, in compliance with the rather pressing request of Mrs. Raddle, the luckless Mr. Bob Sawyer was left alone, to meditate on the probable events of the morrow, and the pleasures of the evening.
CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. WELLER THE ELDER DELIVERS SOME CRITICAL SENTIMENTS RESPECTING LITERARY COMPOSITION; AND, ASSISTED BY HIS SON SAMUEL, PAYS A SMALL INSTALMENT OF RETALIATION TO THE ACCOUNT OF THE REVEREND GENTLEMAN WITH THE RED NOSE.

The morning of the thirteenth of February, which the readers of this authentic narrative know, as well as we do, to have been the day immediately preceding that which was appointed for the trial of Mrs. Bardell's action, was a busy time for Mr. Samuel Weller, who was perpetually engaged in travelling from the George and Vulture to Mr. Perker's chambers and back again, from and between the hours of nine o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon, both inclusive. Not that there was anything whatever to be done, for the consultation had taken place, and the course of proceeding to be adopted, had been finally determined on, but Mr. Pickwick being in a most extreme state of excitement, persevered in constantly sending small notes to his attorney, merely containing the inquiry, "Dear Perker—Is all going on well?" to which Mr. Perker invariably forwarded the reply, "Dear Pickwick—As well as possible;" the fact being, as we have already hinted, that
there was nothing whatever to go on, either well or ill, until the sitting of the court on the following morning.

But people who go voluntarily to law, or are taken forcibly there, for the first time, may be allowed to labour under some temporary irritation and anxiety: and Sam, with a due allowance for the frailties of human nature, obeyed all his master's behests with that imperturbable good humour and unruffled composure, which formed one of his most striking and amiable characteristics.

Sam had solaced himself with a most agreeable little dinner, and was waiting at the bar for the glass of warm mixture in which Mr. Pickwick had requested him to drown the fatigues of his morning's walks, when a young boy of about three feet high, or thereabouts, in a hairy cap and fustian overalls, whose garb bespoke a laudable ambition to attain in time the elevation of an hostler, entered the passage of the George and Vulture, and looked first up the stairs, and then along the passage, and then into the bar, as if in search of somebody to whom he bore a commission; whereupon the barmaid, conceiving it not improbable that the said commission might be directed to the tea or table spoons of the establishment, accosted the boy with,

"Now, young man, what do you want?"

"Is there any body here, named Sam?" inquired the youth, in a loud voice of treble quality.

"What's the t'other name?" said Sam Weller, looking round.

"How should I know?" briskly replied the young gentleman below the hairy cap.

"You're a sharp boy, you are," said Mr. Weller; "only I wouldn't show that werry fine edge too much, if I was you, in case any body took it off. What do you mean by comin' to a hot-el, and askin' arter Sam, vith as much politeness as a vild Indian?"
"'Cos an old gen'l'm'n told me to," replied the boy.
"What old gen'l'm'n; inquired Sam, with deep disdain.
"Him as drives a Ipswich coach, and uses our parlour"—rejoined the boy. He told me yester-day mornin' to come to the George in Wultur this artemoon, and ask for Sam."

"It's my father, my dear"—said Mr. Weller, turning with an explanatory air to the young lady in the bar; "blessed if I think he hardly knows wot my other name is. Vell, young brockiley sprout, wot then?"

"Why then," said the boy, "you was to come to him at six o'clock to our 'ouse, 'cos he wants to see you—Blue Boar, Leaden'all Markit. Shall I say you're comin'?"

"You may venture on that 'ere statement, sir," replied Sam. And thus empowered, the young gentleman walked away, awakening all the echoes in George Yard as he did so, with several chaste and extremely correct imitations of a drover's whistle, delivered in a tone of peculiar richness and volume.

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who, in his then state of excite-ment and worry was by no means displeased at being left alone, set forth long before the appointed hour; and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he paused and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assemble near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and con-fusion of the old-lady population of these realms. Having loitered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way to-wards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of by streets and courts. As he was sauntering
away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window; but without farther explanation it does appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain pictures which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modern attire, the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same, were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading therunto. A decidedly indecent young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking; a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, appeared in the distance; and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each.

"I should ha' forgot it; I should certainly ha' forgot it!" said Sam; and so saying, he at once stepped into the stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market at a good round pace, very
different from his recent lingering one. Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board on which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

"He won't be here this three quarters of an hour or more," said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar.

"Werry good, my dear," replied Sam. "Let me have nine penn'orth o' brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, will you, miss?"

The brandy and water luke and the inkstand having been carried into the little parlour, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent their blazing, and carried away the poker to preclude the possibility of the fire being stirred, without the full privity and concurrence of the Blue Boar being first had and obtained, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then, looking carefully at the pen to see that there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of bread under the paper, Sam tucked up the cuffs of his coat, squared his elbows, and composed himself to write.

To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves practically to the science of penmanship, writing a letter is no very easy task, it being always considered necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, and while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unquestionably of
the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer, and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

"Vell, Sammy, said the father.
"Vell, my Prooshan Blue," responded the son, laying down his pen. "What's the last bulletin about mother-in-law?"

"Mrs. Veller passed a werry good night, but is uncommon perverse, and unpleasant this mornin' —signed upon oath—S. Veller, Esquire, Senior. That's the last vun as was issued, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, untying his shawl.

"No better yet?" inquired Sam.

"All the symptoms aggerawated," replied Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "But wot's that, you're a doin' of—pursuit of knowledge under difficulties —eh Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam, with slight embarrassment; "I've been a writin'."

"So I see," replied Mr. Weller. "Not to any young 'ooman, I hope, Sammy."

"Why it's no use a sayin' it ain't," replied Sam, "It's a valentine."

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word.

"A valentine," replied Sam.

"Samivel, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents, "I didn't think you'd ha' done it. Arter the warnin' you're had o' your father's vicious perpensities, arter all I've said to you upon this here werry subject; arter activelly seein' and bein' in the company o' your own mother-in-law, vich I should ha' thought was a moral lesson as no
man could ever ha' forgotten to his dyin' day! I didn't think you'd ha' done it, Sammy, I didn't think you'd ha' done it." These reflections were too much for the good old man. He raised Sam's tumbler to his lips and drank off its contents.

"Wot's the matter now!" said Sam.

"Nev'r mind, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "It'll be a werry agonizin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the werry old turkey remarked ven the farmer said he was afeered he should be obliged to kill him, for the London market."

"Wot'll be a trial?" inquired Sam.

"To see you married, Sammy—to see you a dilluded victim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all werry capital," replied Mr. Weller. "It's a dreadful trial to a father's feelin's that 'ere, Sammy."

"Nonsense," said Sam. "I ain't a goin' to get married, don't you fret yourself about that; I know you're a judge o' these things. Order in your pipe, and I'll read you the letter—there."

We cannot distinctly say whether it was the prospect of the pipe, or the consolatory reflection that a fatal disposition to get married ran in the family and couldn't be helped, which calmed Mr. Weller's feelings, and caused his grief to subside. We should be rather disposed to say that the result was attained by combining the two sources of consolation, for he repeated the second in a low tone, very frequently; ringing the bell mean while, to order in the first. He then divested himself of his upper coat; and lighting the pipe and placing himself in front of the fire with his back towards it, so that he could feel its full heat, and recline against the mantel-piece at the same time, turned towards Sam, and, with a countenance greatly mollified by the softening influence of tobacco, requested him to "fire away."

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Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air.

"'Lovely ———.'"

"Stop," said Mr. Weller, ringing the bell. "A double glass o' the invariable, my dear."

"Very well, sir," replied the girl; who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared.

"They seem to know your ways here," observed Sam.

"Yes," replied his father, "I have been here before, in my time. Go on, Sammy."

"'Lovely creetur,'" repeated Sam.

"'Tain't in poetry, is it?" interposed the father.

"No, no," replied Sam.

"Werry glad to hear it," said Mr. Weller. "Poetry's unnat'ral; no man ever talked in poetry, 'cept a beadle on boxin' day, or Warran's blackin' or Rowland's oil, or some o' them low fellows; never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin again, Sammy."

Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows.

"'Lovely creetur i feel myself a dammed'—."

"That ain't proper," said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"No; it ain't damned," observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, "it's 'shamed,' there's a blot there—' I feel myself ashamed.'"

"Werry good," said Mr. Weller. "Go on."

"'Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir—' I forget wot this here word is," said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

"Why don't you look at it, then?" inquired Mr. Weller.
"So I am a lookin' at it, replied Sam, "but there's another blot: here's a 'c,' and a 'i,' and a 'd.'"

"Circumwented, p'raps," suggested Mr. Weller.

"No it ain't that," said Sam, "circumscribed, that's it."

"That ain't as good a word as circumwented, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, gravely.

"Think not?" said Sam.

"Nothin' like it," replied his father.

"But don't you think it means more?" inquired Sam.

"Vell, p'raps it is a more tenderer word," said Mr. Weller, after a few moments' reflection. "Go on, Sammy."

"Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed in a dressin' of you, for you are a nice gal and nothin' but it."

"That's a werry pretty sentiment," said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

"Yes, I think it is rayther good," observed Sam, highly flattered.

"Wot I like in that 'ere style of writin'," said the elder Mr. Weller, "is, that there ain't no callin' names in it,—no Wenuses, nor nothin' o' that kind; wot's the good o' callin' a young 'ooman a Venus or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam.

"You might jist as vell call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arms at once, which is werry vell known to be a collection o' fabulous animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on, Sammy," said Mr. Weller.

Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows; his father continuing to smoke, with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying.
"'Afore I see you I thought all women was alike.'"

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller, parenthetically.

"'But now," continued Sam, 'now I find what a reg'lar soft-headed, ink-red'lous turnip I must ha' been for there ain't nobody like you though I like you better than nothin' at all.' I thought it best to make that rayther strong," said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

"'So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen'l'm'n in difficulties did, ven he walked out of a Sunday,—to tell you that the first and only time I see you your likeness was took on my hart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (which p'r'aps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho' it does finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete with a hook at the end to hang it up by and all in two minutes and a quarter.'"

"I am afeerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, dubiously.

"'No, it don't," replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point.

"'Except of me Mary my dear as your valentine and think over what I've said.—My dear Mary I will now conclude.' That's all," said Sam.

"That's rayther a sudden pull up, ain't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll vish there was more, and that's the great art o' letter writin'."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "there's somethin' in that; and I wish your mother-in-law 'ud only conduct her conversation on the same genteel principle. Ain't you a goin' to sign it?"

"That's the difficulty," said Sam; "I don't know what to sign it."
"Sign it—Veller," said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.
"Won't do," said Sam. "Never sign a valentine with your own name."
"Sign it 'Pickwick,' then, said Mr. Weller; "it's a werry good name, and a easy one to spell."
"The werry thing," said Sam. "I could end with a verse; what do you think?"
"I don't like it, Sam," rejoined Mr. Weller. "I never know'd a respectable coachman as wrote poetry, 'cept one, as made an effectin' copy o' verses the night afore he wos hung for a highway robbery; and he wos only a cambervell man, so even that's no rule."

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter—

"Your lovesick
Pickwick."

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a down-hill direction in one corner: "To Mary, Housemaid, at Mr. Nupkin's Mayor's Ipswich, Suffolk;' and put it into his pocket, wafered, and ready for the General Post. This important business having been transacted, Mr. Weller the elder proceeded to open that, on which he had summoned his son.

"The first matter relates to your governor, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. "He's a goin' to be tried to-morrow, ain't he?"

"The trial's a comin' on," replied Sam.
"Vell," said Mr. Weller, "Now I s'pose he'll want to call some witnesses to speak to his character, or p'raps to prove a alleybi. I've been a turnin' the bus'ness over in my mind, and he may make his-self easy, Sammy. I've got some friends as'll do either for him, but my advice 'ud be this here—never mind the character, and stick to the
alleybi. Nothing like a alleybi, Sammy, nothing." Mr. Weller looked very profound as he delivered this legal opinion; and burying his nose in his tumbler, winked over the top thereof, at his astonished son.

"Why, what do you mean?" said Sam; "you don't think he's a goin' to be tried at the Old Bailey, do you?"

"That ain't no part of the present consideration, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller. "Verever he's a goin' to be tried, my boy, a alleybi's the thing to get him off. Ve got Tom Vildspark off that 'ere manslaughter, with a alleybi, ven all the big vigs to a man said as nothing couldn't save him. And my 'pinion is, Sammy, that if your governor don't prove a alleybi, he'll be what the Italians call reg'larly flummoxed, and that's all about it."

As the elder Mr. Weller entertained a firm and unalterable conviction that the Old Bailey was the supreme court of judicature in this country, and that its rules and forms of proceeding regulated and controlled the practice of all other courts of justice whatsoever, he totally disregarded the assurances and arguments of his son, tending to show that the alibi was inadmissible; and vehemently protested that Mr. Pickwick was being "vitectimized." Finding that it was of no use to discuss the matter farther, Sam changed the subject, and inquired what the second topic was, on which his revered parent wished to consult him.

"That's a pint o' domestic policy, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. "This here Stiggins—"

"Red-nosed man?" inquired Sam.

"The worry same," replied Mr. Weller. "This here red-nosed man, Sammy, visits your mother-in-law with a kindness and constancy as I never see equalled. He's sitch a friend o' the family, Sammy,
that ven he’s away from us, he can’t be comfort-
able unless he has somethin’ to remember us by.”

“And I’d give him somethin’ as ’ud turpentine
and bees’-vax his memory for the next ten years
or so, if I wos you,” interposed Sam.

“Stop a minute,” said Mr. Weller; “I was goin’
to say, he always brings now, a flat bottle as holds
about a pint and a-half, and fills it with the pine-
apple rum afore he goes away.”

“And empties it afore he comes back, I s’pose,”
said Sam.

“Clean!” replied Mr. Weller; “never leaves
nothin’ in it but the cork and the smell: trust him
for that, Sammy. Now these here fellows, my
boy, are a goin’, to-night, to get up the monthly
meetin’ o’ the Brick Lane Branch o’ the United
Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.
Your mother-in-law was a goin’, Sammy, but she’s
got the rheumatics, and can’t; and I, Sammy,—I’ve
got the the two tickets as wos sent her.” Mr.
Weller communicated this secret with great glee,
and winked so indefatigably after doing so, that
Sam began to think he must have got the tic do-
loureux in his right eye-lid.

“Well?” said that young gentleman.

“Well,” continued his progenitor, looking round
him very cautiously, “you and I’ll go punctiwal
to the time. The deputy shepherd won’t, Sammy;
the deputy shepherd won’t.” Here Mr. Weller
was seized with a paroxysm of chuckles, which
gradually terminated in as near an approach to a
choke, as an elderly gentleman can, with safety,
sustain.

“Well, I never see sitch an old ghost in all my
born days,” exclaimed Sam, rubbing the old gen-
tleman’s back, hard enough to set him on fire
with the friction. “What are you a laughin’ at,
corpulence?”

“Hush! Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, looking round
him with increased caution, and speaking in a whisper: "Two friends o' mine, as works on the Oxford Road, and is up to all kinds o' games, has got the deputy shepherd safe in tow, Sammy; and ven he does come to the Ebenezer Junction, (vich he's sure to do: for they'll see him to the door, and shove him in, if necessary) he'll be as far gone in rum and water, as ever he wos at the Markis o' Granby, Dorkin', and that's not sayin' a little either." And with this, Mr. Weller once more laughed immoderately, and once more relapsed into a state of partial suffocation in consequence.

Nothing could have been more in accordance with Sam Weller's feelings, than the projected exposure of the real propensities and qualities of the red-nosed man; and it being very near the appointed hour of meeting, the father and son took the way at once to Brick Lane: Sam not forgetting to drop his letter into a general post-office as they walked along.

The monthly meetings of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, were held in a large room, pleasantly and airily situated at the top of a safe and commodious ladder. The president was the straight-walking Mr. Anthony Humm, a converted fireman, now a schoolmaster, and occasionally an itinerant preacher; and the secretary was Mr. Jonas Mudge, chandler's shop-keeper, an enthusiastic and disinterested vessel, who sold tea to the members. Previous to the commencement of business, the ladies sat upon forms, and drank tea, till such time as they considered it expedient to leave off; and a large wooden money-box was conspicuously placed upon the green baize cloth of the business table, behind which the secretary stood, and acknowledged, with a gracious smile, every addition to the rich vein of copper which lay concealed within.
On this particular occasion the women drank tea to a most alarming extent; greatly to the horror of Mr. Weller, senior, who, utterly regardless of all Sam's admonitory nudgings, stared about him in every direction with the most undisguised astonishment.

"Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, "if some o' these here people don't want tappin' to-morrow mornin', I ain't your father, and that's wot it is. Why, this here old lady next me is a drownin' herself in tea."

"Be quiet, can't you?" murmured Sam.

"Sam," whispered Mr. Weller, a moment afterwards, in a tone of deep agitation, "mark my words, my boy: if that 'ere secretary feller keeps on for only five minutes more, he'll blow himself up with toast and water."

"Well, let him, if he likes," replied Sam; "it ain't no bis'ness o' yourn."

"If this here lasts much longer, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, in the same low voice, "I shall feel it my duty, as a human bein', to rise and address the cheer. There's a young 'ooman on the next form but two, as has drank nine breakfast cups and a half; and she's a swellin' visibly before my werry eyes."

There is little doubt that Mr. Weller would have carried his benevolent intention into immediate execution, if a great noise, occasioned by putting up the cups and saucers, had not very fortunately announced that the tea-drinking was over. The crockery having been removed, the table with the green baize cover was carried out into the centre of the room, and the business of the evening was commenced by a little emphatic man, with a bald head, and drab shorts, who suddenly rushed up the ladder, at the imminent peril of snapping the two little legs encased in the drab shorts, and said,
“Ladies and gentlemen, I move our excellent brother, Mr. Anthony Humm, into the chair.”

The ladies waved a choice collection of pocket-handkerchiefs at this proposition; and the impe- tuous little man literally moved Mr. Humm into the chair, by taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him into a mahogany frame which had once represented that article of furniture. The waving of handkerchiefs was renewed; and Mr. Humm, who was a sleek, white-faced man, in a perpetual perspiration, bowed meekly, to the great admiration of the females, and formally took his seat. Silence was then proclaimed by the little man in the drab shorts, and Mr. Humm rose and said—That, with the permission of his Brick Lane Branch brothers and sisters, then and there present, the secretary would read the report of the Brick Lane Branch committee;—a proposition which was again received with a demonstration of pocket-handkerchiefs.

The secretary having sneezed in a very impressive manner, and the cough which always seizes an assembly, when any thing particular is going to be done, having been duly performed, the following document was read:

“REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE BRICK LANE BRANCH OF THE UNITED GRAND JUNCTION EBENEZER TEMPERANCE ASSOCIATION.

“Your committee have pursued their grateful labours during the past month, and have the unspeakable pleasure of reporting the following additional cases of converts to Temperance.

“H. Walker, tailor, wife, and two children. When in better circumstances, owns to having been in the constant habit of drinking ale and beer; says he is not certain whether he did not twice a week, for twenty years, taste ‘dog’s nose,’ which
your committee find upon inquiry, to be compounded of warm porter, moist sugar, gin, and nutmeg (a groan, and 'So it is!' from an elderly female.) Is now out of work and pennyless; thinks it must be the porter (cheers) or the loss of the use of his right hand; is not certain which, but thinks it very likely that, if he had drank nothing but water all his life, his fellow workman would never have stuck a rusty needle in him, and thereby occasioned his accident (tremendous cheering.) Has nothing but cold water to drink, and never feels thirsty (great applause.)

"Betsy Martin, widow, one child and one eye. Goes out charing and washing, by the day; never had more than one eye, but knows her mother drank bottled stout, and shouldn't wonder if that caused it (immense cheering.) Thinks it not impossible that if she had always abstained from spirits, she might have had two eyes by this time (tremendous applause.) Used, at every place she went to, to have eighteen pence a day, a pint of porter, and a glass of spirits; but since she became a member of the Brick Lane Branch, has always demanded three and sixpence instead (the announcement of this most interesting fact was received with deafening enthusiasm.)

"Henry Beller was for many years toast-master at various corporation dinners, during which time he drank a great deal of foreign wine; may sometimes have carried a bottle or two home with him; is not quite certain of that, but is sure if he did, that he drank the contents. Feels very low and melancholy, is very feverish, and has a constant thirst upon him; thinks it must be the wine he used to drink (cheers.) Is out of employ now; and never touches a drop of foreign wine by any chance (tremendous plaudits.)

"Thomas Burton is purveyor of cat'smeat to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and several mem-
bers of the Common Council (the announcement of this gentleman's name was received with breathless interest.) Has a wooden leg; finds a wooden leg expensive going over the stones; used to wear second-hand wooden legs, and drink a glass of hot gin and water regularly every night—sometimes two (deep sighs.) Found the second-hand wooden legs split and rot very quickly; is firmly persuaded that their constitution was undermined by the gin and water (prolonged cheering.) Buys new wooden legs now, and drinks nothing but water and weak tea. The new legs last twice as long as the others used to do, and he attributes this solely to his temperate habits (triumphant cheers.”)

Anthony Humm now moved that the assembly do regale itself with a song. With a view to their rational and moral enjoyment, brother Mordlin had adapted the beautiful words of “Who hasn’t heard of a Jolly Young Waterman?” to the tune of the Old Hundredth, which he would request them to join him in singing (great applause.) He might take that opportunity of expressing his firm persuasion that the late Mr. Dibdin, seeing the errors of his former life, had written that song to show the advantages of abstinence. It was a Temperance song (whirlwinds of cheers.) The neatness of the interesting young man's attire, the dexterity of his feathering, the enviable state of mind which enabled him, in the beautiful words of the poet, to

"Row along thinking of nothing at all,"

all combined to prove that he must have been a water-drinker (cheers.) Oh, what a state of virtuous jollity! (rapturous cheering.) And what was the young man's reward? Let all young men present mark this:

"The maidens all flock'd to his boat so readily."
(Loud cheers, in which the ladies joined.) What a bright example! The sisterhood, the maidens, flocking round the young waterman, and urging him along the path of duty and of temperance. But, was it the maidens of humble life only, who soothed, consoled, and supported him? No!

"He was always first oars with the fine city ladies."

(Immense cheering.) The soft sex to a man—he begged pardon, to a female—rallied round the young waterman, and turned with disgust from the drinker of spirits (cheers.) The Brick Lane Branch brothers were watermen (cheers and laughter.) That room was their boat; that audience were the maidens; and he (Mr. Anthony Humm,) however unworthily, was "first-oars" (unbounded applause.)

"Wot does he mean by the soft sex, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller, in a whisper.

"The womin," said Sam, in the same tone.

"He ain't far out there, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller; "they must be a soft sex,—a werry soft sex, indeed, if they let themselves be gammoned by such fellers as him."

Any farther observations from the indignant old gentleman were cut short by the commencement of the song, which Mr. Anthony Humm gave out, two lines at a time, for the information of such of his hearers as were unacquainted with the legend. While it was being sung, the little man with the drab shorts disappeared; he returned immediately on its conclusion, and whispered Mr. Anthony Humm, with a face of the deepest importance.

"My friends," said Mr. Humm, holding up his hand in a deprecatory manner, to bespeak the silence of such of the stout old ladies as were yet a line or two behind; "my friends, a delegate from the Dorking branch of our society, Brother Stiggins, attends below."
Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs again, in greater force than ever, for Mr. Stiggins was excessively popular among the female constituency of Brick Lane.

"He may approach, I think," said Mr. Humm, looking round him, with a fat smile. "Brother Tadger, let him come forth and greet us."

"The little man in the drab shorts who answered to the name of Brother Tadger, bustled down the ladder with great speed, and was immediately afterwards heard tumbling up with the reverend Mr. Stiggins.

"He's a comin', Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, purple in the countenance with suppressed laughter.

"Don't say nothin' to me," replied Sam, "for I can't bear it. He's close to the door. I hear him a-knockin' his head again the lath and plaster now."

As Sam Weller spoke, the little door flew open, and Brother Tadger appeared, closely followed by the reverend Mr. Stiggins, who no sooner entered, than there was a great clapping of hands, and stamping of feet, and flourishing of handkerchiefs; to all of which manifestations of delight, Brother Stiggins returned no other acknowledgment than staring with a wild eye, and a fixed smile, at the extreme top of the wick of the candle on the table: swaying his body to and fro, mean while, in a very unsteady and uncertain manner.

"Are you unwell, brother Stiggins?" whispered Mr. Anthony Humm.

"I am all right, sir," replied Mr. Stiggins, in a tone in which ferocity was blended with an extreme thickness of utterance; "I am all right, sir."

"Oh, very well," rejoined Mr. Anthony Humm, retreating a few paces.

"I believe no man here has ventured to say that I am not all right, sir," said Mr. Stiggins.
"Oh, certainly not," said Mr. Humm.
"I should advise him not to, sir; I should advise him not," said Mr. Stiggins.
By this time the audience were perfectly silent, and waited with some anxiety for the resumption of business.
"Will you address the meeting, brother?" said Mr. Humm, with a smile of invitation.
"No, sir," rejoined Mr. Stiggins; "No, sir. I will not, sir."
The meeting looked at each other with raised eye-lids, and a murmur of astonishment ran through the room.
"It's my opinion, sir," said Mr. Stiggins, unbuttoning his coat, and speaking very loudly; "it's my opinion, sir, that this meeting is drunk, sir. Brother Tadger, sir," said Mr. Stiggins, suddenly increasing in ferocity, and turning sharp round on the little man in the drab shorts, "you are drunk, sir." With this, Mr. Stiggins, entertaining a praiseworthy desire to promote the sobriety of the meeting, and to exclude therefrom all improper characters, hit brother Tadger on the summit of the nose with such unerringly aim, that the drab shorts disappeared like a flash of lightning. Brother Tadger had been knocked, head first, down the ladder.
Upon this, the women set up a loud and dismal screaming; and rushing in small parties before their favourite brothers, flung their arms round them to preserve them from danger. An instance of affection, which had nearly proved fatal to Humm, who, being extremely popular, was all but suffocated by the crowd of female devotees that hung about his neck, and heaped caresses upon him; the greater part of the lights were quickly put out, and nothing but noise and confusion resounded on all sides.
"Now, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, taking off
his great coat with much deliberation, "just you step out, and fetch in a watchman."

"And wot are you a goin' to do, the while?" inquired Sam.

"Never you mind me, Sammy," replied the old gentleman; "I shall ockipy myself in havin' a small settlement with that 'ere Stiggins." And before Sam could interfere to prevent it, his heroic parent had penetrated into a remote corner of the room, and attacked the reverend Mr. Stiggins with manual dexterity.

"Come off," said Sam.

"Come on," cried Mr. Weller; and without farther invitation he gave the reverend Mr. Stiggins a preliminary tap on the head, and began dancing round him in a buoyant and cork-like manner, which, in a gentleman at his time of life, was a perfect marvel to behold.

Finding all remonstrances unavailing, Sam pulled his hat firmly on, threw his father's coat over his arm, and taking the old man round the waist, forcibly dragged him down the ladder, and into the street; never releasing his hold, or permitting him to stop, until they reached the corner.

As they gained it, they could hear the shouts of the populace, who were witnessing the removal of the reverend Mr. Stiggins to strong lodgings for the night, and hear the noise occasioned by the dispersion, in various directions, of the Members of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.
CHAPTER XXXII.


IS WHOLLY DEVOTED TO A FULL AND FAITHFUL REPORT OF THE MEMORABLE TRIAL OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK.

“I wonder what the foreman of the jury, whoever he’ll be, has got for breakfast,” said Mr. Snodgrass, by way of keeping up a conversation on the eventful morning of the fourteenth of February.

“Ah!” said Perker, “I hope he’s got a good one.”

“Why so?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“Highly important—very important, my dear sir,” replied Perker. “A good, contented, well-breakfasted jurymen, is a capital thing to get hold of. Discontented or hungry jurymen, my dear sir, always find for the plaintiff.”

“Bless my heart,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking very blank; “what do they do that for?”

“Why, I don’t know,” replied the little man, coolly; “saves time, I suppose. If it’s near dinner-time, the foreman takes out his watch when the jury have retired, and says, ‘Dear me, gentlemen, ten minutes to five, I declare! I dine at five, gentlemen.’ ‘So do I,’ says everybody else, except two men who ought to have dined at three, and seem more than half disposed to stand out in consequence. The foreman smiles, and puts up his watch:—‘Well, gentlemen, what do we say?—plaintiff or defendant, gentlemen? I rather think,
so far as I am concerned, gentlemen,—I say, I rather think,—but don't let that influence you—I rather think the plaintiff's the man.' Upon this, two or three other men are sure to say that they think so too—as of course they do; and then they get on very unanimously and comfortably. "Ten minutes past nine!" said the little man, looking at his watch. "Time we were off, my dear sir; breach of promise trial—court is generally full in such cases. You had better ring for a coach, my dear sir, or we shall be rather late."

Mr. Pickwick immediately rang the bell, and a coach having been procured, the four Pickwickians and Mr. Perker ensconced themselves therein, and drove to Guildhall; Sam Weller, Mr. Lowten, and the blue bag, following in a cab.

"Lowten," said Perker, when they reached the outer hall of the court, "put Mr. Pickwick's friends in the students' box; Mr. Pickwick himself had better sit by me. This way, my dear sir,—this way;" and taking Mr. Pickwick by the coat-sleeve, the little man led him to the low seat just beneath the desks of the King's Counsel, which is constructed for the convenience of attorneys, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel in the case, any instructions that may be necessary during the progress of the trial. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor. Of course they have their backs to both, and their faces towards the judge.

"That's the witness-box, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick, pointing to a kind of pulpit, with a brass rail, on his left hand.

"That's the witness-box, my dear sir," replied Perker, disinterring a quantity of papers from the blue bag, which Lowten had just deposited at his feet.
"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, pointing to a couple of enclosed seats on his right, "that's where the jurymen sit, is it not?"

"The identical place, my dear sir," replied Perker, tapping the lid of his snuff-box.

Mr. Pickwick stood up in a state of great agitation, and took a glance at the court. There were already a pretty large sprinkling of spectators in the gallery, and a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs in the barristers' seats, who presented, as a body, all that pleasing and extensive variety of nose and whisker for which the bar of England is so justly celebrated. Such of the gentlemen as had got a brief to carry, carried it in as conspicuous a manner as possible, and occasionally scratched their noses therewith, to impress the fact more strongly on the observation of the spectators. Other gentlemen, who had no briefs to show, carried under their arms goodly octavos, with a red label behind, and that under-done-pie-crust-coloured cover, which is technically known as "law calf." Others, who had neither briefs nor books, thrust their hands into their pockets, and looked as wise as they conveniently could; while others, again, moved here and there with great restlessness and earnestness of manner, content to awaken thereby, the admiration and astonishment of the uninitiated strangers. The whole, to the great wonderment of Mr. Pickwick, were divided into little groups, who were chatting and discussing the news of the day in the most unfeeling manner possible,—just as if no trial at all were coming on.

A bow from Mr. Phunky, as he entered, and took his seat behind the row appropriated to the King's Counsel, attracted Mr. Pickwick's attention; and he had scarcely returned it, when Mr. Sergeant Snubbin appeared, followed by Mr. Mallard, who half hid the Serjeant behind a large crimson bag, which he placed on his table, and, after
shaking hands with Perker, withdrew. Then there entered two or three more Serjeants, and among them, one with a fat body and a red face, who nodded in a friendly manner to Mr. Serjeant Snubbin, and said it was a fine morning.

"Who's that red-faced man, who said it was a fine morning, and nodded to our counsel?" whispered Mr. Pickwick.

"Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz," replied Perker. "He's opposed to us; he leads on the other side. That gentleman behind him, is Mr. Skimpin, his junior."

Mr. Pickwick was just on the point of inquiring, with great abhorrence of the man's cold-blooded villany, how Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz, who was counsel for the opposite party, dared to presume to tell Mr. Serjeant Snubbin, who was counsel for him, that it was a fine morning,—when he was interrupted by a general rising of the barristers, and a loud cry of "Silence!" from the officers of the court. Looking round, he found that this was caused by the entrance of the judge.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh (who sat in the absence of the Chief Justice, occasioned by indisposition,) was a most particularly short man, and so fat, that he seemed all face and waistcoat. He rolled in, upon two little turned legs, and having bobbed gravely to the bar, who bobbed gravely to him, put his little legs underneath his table, and his little three cornered hat upon it; and when Mr. Justice Stareleigh had done this, all you could see of him was two queer little eyes, one broad pink face, and somewhere about half of a big and very comical-looking wig.

The judge had no sooner taken his seat, than the officer on the floor of the court called out "Silence!" in a commanding tone, upon which another officer in the gallery cried "Silence!" in an angry manner, whereupon three or four more ushers shouted "Silence!" in a voice of indignant remon-
This being done, a gentleman in black, who sat below the judge, proceeded to call over the names of the jury; and after a great deal of bawling, it was discovered that only ten special jurymen were present. Upon this, Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz prayed a 


"I beg this court's pardon," said the chemist, who was a tall, thin, yellow-visaged man, "but I hope this court will excuse my attendance."

"On what grounds, sir?" said Mr. Justice Stareleigh. "I have no assistant, my lord," said the chemist. "I can't help that, sir," replied Mr. Justice Stareleigh. "You should hire one." "I can't afford it, my lord," rejoined the chemist.

"Then you ought to be able to afford it, sir," said the judge, reddening; for Mr. Justice Stareleigh's temper bordered on the irritable, and brooked not contradiction.

"I know I ought to do, if I got on as well as I deserved, but I don't, my lord," answered the chemist.

"Swear the gentleman," said the judge, peremptorily.

The officer had got no farther than the "You shall well and truly try," when he was again interrupted by the chemist.
"I am to be sworn, my lord, am I?" said the chemist.
"Certainly, sir," replied the testy little judge.
"Very well, my lord," replied the chemist in a resigned manner. "Then there'll be murder before this trial's over; that's all. Swear me if you please, sir;" and sworn the chemist was, before the judge could find words to utter.

"I merely wanted to observe, my lord," said the chemist, taking his seat with great deliberation, "that I've left nobody but an errand-boy in my shop. He is a very nice boy, my lord, but he is not much acquainted with drugs; and I know that the prevailing impression on his mind is, that Epsom salts means oxalic acid; and sirup of senna, laudanum. That's all, my lord." With this, the tall chemist composed himself into a comfortable attitude, and, assuming a pleasant expression of countenance, appeared to have prepared himself for the worst.

Mr. Pickwick was regarding the chemist with feelings of the deepest horror, when a slight sensation was perceptible in the body of the court; and immediately afterwards Mrs. Bardell, supported by Mrs. Cluppins, was led in, and placed, in a drooping state, at the other end of the seat on which Mr. Pickwick sat. An extra-sized umbrella was then handed in by Mr. Dodson, and a pair of pattens by Mr. Fogg, each of whom had prepared a most sympathizing and melancholy face for the occasion. Mrs. Sanders then appeared, leading in Master Bardell. At sight of her child, Mrs. Bardell started; suddenly recollecting herself, she kissed him in a frantic manner; and then relapsing into a state of hysterical imbecility, the good lady requested to be informed where she was. In reply to this, Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders turned their heads away and wept, while Messrs. Dodson and Fogg entreated the plaintiff to
compose herself. Serjeant Buzfuz rubbed his eyes very hard with a large white handkerchief, and gave an appealing look towards the jury, while the judge was visibly affected, and several of the beholders tried to cough down their emotions.

"Very good notion that, indeed," whispered Perker to Mr. Pickwick. "Capital fellows those Dodson and Fogg; excellent ideas of effect, my dear sir, excellent."

As Perker spoke, Mrs. Bardell began to recover by slow degrees, while Mrs. Cluppins, after a careful survey of Master Bardell's buttons and the button-holes to which they severally belonged, placed him on the floor of the court in front of his mother,—a commanding position in which he could not fail to awaken the full commiseration and sympathy of both judge and jury. This was not done without considerable opposition, and many tears on the part of the young gentleman himself, who had certain inward misgivings that the placing him within the full glare of the judge's eye was only a formal prelude to his being immediately ordered away for instant execution, or for transportation beyond the seas during the whole term of his natural life, at the very least.

"Bardell and Pickwick," cried the gentleman in black, calling on the case, which stood first on the list.

"I am for the plaintiff, my lord," said Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz.

"Who is with you, brother Buzfuz?" said the judge. Mr. Skimpin bowed, to intimate that he was.

"I appear for the defendant, my lord," said Mr. Serjeant Snubbin.

"Any body with you, brother Snubbin?" inquired the court.

"Mr. Phunky, my lord," replied Serjeant Snubbin.
"Serjeant Buzfuz and Mr. Skimpin for the plaintiff," said the judge, writing down the names in his note-book, and reading as he wrote; "for the defendant, Serjeant Snubbin and Mr. Monkey."

"Beg your lordship's pardon, Phunky."

"Oh, very good, said the judge; "I never had the pleasure of hearing the gentleman's name before." Here Mr. Phunky bowed and smiled, and the judge bowed and smiled too, and then Mr. Phunky, blushing into the very whites of his eyes, tried to look as if he didn't know that every body was gazing at him, a thing which no man ever succeeded in doing yet, and in all reasonable probability, never will.

"Go on," said the judge.

The ushers again called silence, and Mr. Skimpin proceeded to "open the case;" and the case appeared to have very little inside it when he had opened it, for he kept such particulars as he knew, completely to himself, and sat down, after a lapse of three minutes, leaving the jury in precisely the same advanced stage of wisdom as they were in before.

Serjeant Buzfuz then rose with all the majesty and dignity which the grave nature of the proceedings demanded, and having whispered to Dodson, and conferred briefly with Fogg, pulled his gown over his shoulders, settled his wig, and addressed the jury.

Serjeant Buzfuz began by saying, that never, in the whole course of his professional experience —never, from the very first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice of the law— had he approached a case with feelings of such deep emotion, or with such a heavy sense of the responsibility imposed upon him—a responsibility, he would say, which he could never have supported, were he not buoyed up and sustained by a convic-
tion so strong, that it amounted to positive cer-
tainty that the cause of truth and justice, or, in
other words, the cause of his much-injured and
most oppressed client, must prevail with the high-
minded and intelligent dozen of men whom he now
saw in that box before him.

Counsel always begin in this way, because it
puts the jury on the very best terms with them-
selves, and makes them think what sharp fellows
they must be. A visible effect was produced im-
mediately, several jurymen beginning to take vo-
luminous notes with the utmost eagerness.

"You have heard from my learned friend, gen-
tlemen,"—continued Serjeant Buzfuz, well know-
ing that, from the learned friend alluded to, the
gentlemen of the jury had heard just nothing at
all—"you have heard from my learned friend, gen-
tlemen, that this is an action for a breach of pro-
mise of marriage, in which the damages are laid
at £1500. But you have not heard from my
learned friend, inasmuch as it did not come within
my learned friend's province to tell you, what are
the facts and circumstances of the case. Those
facts and circumstances, gentlemen, you shall hear
detailed by me, and proved by the unimpeachable
female whom I will place in that box before you."

Here Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz, with a tremendous
emphasis on the word "box," smote his table with
a mighty sound, and glanced at Dodson and Fogg,
who nodded admiration of the serjeant, and indig-
nant defiance of the defendant.

"The plaintiff, gentlemen," continued Serjeant
Buzfuz, in a soft and melancholy voice, "the plain-
tiff is a widow; yes, gentlemen, a widow. The
late Mr. Bardell, after enjoying, for many years,
the esteem and confidence of his sovereign, as one
of the guardians of his royal revenues, glided al-
most imperceptibly from the world to seek else-
where for that repose and peace which a custom-
house can never afford."
At this pathetic description of the decease of Mr. Bardell, who had been knocked on the head with a quart-pot in a public-house cellar, the learned serjeant's voice faltered, and he proceeded with great emotion—

"Some time before his death, he had stamped his likeness upon a little boy. With this little boy, the only pledge of her departed exciseman, Mrs. Bardell shrunk from the world, and courted the retirement and tranquillity of Goswell-street; and here she placed in her front parlour-window a written placard, bearing this inscription—'Apartments furnished for a single gentleman. Inquire within.'" Here Serjeant Buzfuz paused, while several gentlemen of the jury took a note of the document.

"There is no date to that, is there, sir?" inquired a juror.

"There is no date, gentlemen," replied Serjeant Buzfuz; "but I am instructed to say, that it was put into the plaintiff's parlour-window just this time three years. I entreat the attention of the jury to the wording of this document—'Apartments furnished for a single gentleman!' Mrs. Bardell's opinions of the opposite sex, gentlemen, were derived from a long contemplation of the inestimable qualities of her lost husband. She had no fear—she had no distrust—she had no suspicion—all was confidence and reliance. 'Mr. Bardell,' said the widow; 'Mr. Bardell was a man of honour—Mr. Bardell was a man of his word—Mr. Bardell was no deceiver—Mr. Bardell was once a single gentleman himself; to single gentlemen I look for protection, for assistance, for comfort, and for consolation—in single gentlemen I shall perpetually see something to remind me of what Mr. Bardell was, when he first won my young and untried affections; to a single gentleman, then, shall my lodgings be let.' Actuated by this beautiful and touching impulse, (among the best impulses of..."
our imperfect nature, gentlemen,) the lonely and desolate widow dried her tears, furnished her first floor, caught her innocent boy to her maternal bosom, and put the bill up in her parlour-window. Did it remain there long? No. The serpent was on the watch, the train was laid, the mine was preparing, the sapper and miner was at work. Before the bill had been in the parlour-window three days—three days, gentlemen—a being erect upon two legs, and bearing all the outward semblance of a man, and not of a monster, knocked at the door of Mrs. Bardell's house. He inquired within; he took the lodgings; and on the very next day he entered into possession of them. This man was Pickwick—Pickwick, the defendant."

Serjeant Buzfuz, who had proceeded with such volubility that his face was perfectly crimson, here paused for breath. The silence awoke Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who immediately wrote down something with a pen without any ink in it, and looked unusually profound, to impress the jury with the belief that he always thought most deeply with his eyes shut. Serjeant Buzfuz proceeded.

"Of this man Pickwick I will say little; the subject presents but few attractions; and I, gentlemen, am not the man, nor are you, gentlemen, the men, to delight in the contemplation of revolting heartlessness, and of systematic villany."

Here Mr. Pickwick, who had been writhing in silence for some time, gave a violent start, as if some vague idea of assaulting Serjeant Buzfuz, in the august presence of justice and law, suggested itself to his mind. An admonitory gesture from Perker restrained him, and he listened to the learned gentleman's continuation with a look of indignation, which contrasted forcibly with the
admiring faces of Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders.

"I say systematic villany, gentlemen," said Serjeant Buzfuz, looking through Mr. Pickwick, and talking at him; "and when I say systematic villany, let me tell the defendant, Pickwick, if he be in court, as I am informed he is, that it would have been more decent in him, more becoming, in better judgment and in better taste, if he had stopped away. Let me tell him, gentlemen, that any gestures of dissent or disapprobation in which he may indulge in this court will not go down with you; that you will know how to value and how to appreciate them; and let me tell him farther, as my lord will tell you, gentlemen, that a counsel, in the discharge of his duty to his client, is neither to be intimidated nor bullied, nor put down; and that any attempt to do either the one or the other, or the first, or the last, will recoil on the head of the attempter, be he plaintiff or be he defendant, be his name Pickwick, or Noakes, or Stoakes, or Stiles, or Brown, or Thompson."

This little divergence from the subject in hand, had of course the intended effect of turning all eyes to Mr. Pickwick. Serjeant Buzfuz, having partially recovered from the state of moral elevation into which he had lashed himself, resumed—

"I shall show you, gentlemen, that for two years Pickwick continued to reside constantly, and without interruption or intermission, at Mrs. Bardell's house. I shall show you that Mrs. Bardell, during the whole of that time, waited on him, attended to his comforts, cooked his meals, looked out his linen for the washerwoman when it went abroad, darned, aired, and prepared it for wear, when it came home, and, in short, enjoyed his fullest trust and confidence. I shall show you that, on many occasions, he gave halfpence, and on some occasions even sixpences, to her little boy;
and I shall prove to you, by a witness whose testimony it will be impossible for my learned friend to weaken or controvert, that on one occasion he patted the boy on the head, and, after inquiring whether he had won any alley tors or commoney lately (both of which I understand to be a particular species of marbles much prized by the youth of this town,) made use of this remarkable expression—'How should you like to have another father?' I shall prove to you farther, gentlemen, that about a year ago, Pickwick suddenly began to absent himself from home, during long intervals, as if with the intention of gradually breaking off from my client; but I shall show you also, that his resolution was not at that time sufficiently strong, or that his better feelings conquered, if better feelings he has—or that the charms and accomplishments of my client prevailed over his unmanly intentions, by proving to you, that on one occasion, when he returned from the country, he distinctly and in terms offered her marriage: previously, however, taking special care that there should be no witnesses to their solemn contract; and I am in a situation to prove to you, on the testimony of three of his own friends,—most unwilling witnesses, gentlemen,—most unwilling witnesses—that on that morning he was discovered by them holding the plaintiff in his arms, and soothing her agitation by his caresses and endearments."

A visible impression was produced upon the auditors by this part of the learned serjeant's address. Drawing forth two very small scraps of paper, he proceeded—

"And now, gentlemen, but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties, letters which are admitted to be in the handwriting of the defendant, and which speak volumes indeed. These letters, too, bespeak the character of the
man. They are not open, fervent, eloquent epistles, breathing nothing but the language of affectionate attachment. They are covert, sly, underhanded communications, but, fortunately, far more conclusive than if couched in the most glowing language and the most poetical imagery—letters that must be viewed with a cautious and suspicious eye—letters that were evidently intended at the time, by Pickwick, to mislead and delude any third parties into whose hands they might fall. Let me read the first:—'Garraway's, twelve o'clock. Dear Mrs. B.—Chops and Tomata sauce. Yours, Pickwick.' Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and Tomata sauce. Yours, Pickwick! Chops! Gracious heavens! and Tomata sauce! Gentlemen, is the happiness of a sensitive and confiding female to be trifled away, by such shallow artifices as these? The next has no date whatever, which is in itself suspicious.—'Dear Mrs. B., I shall not be at home till to-morrow. Slow coach.' And then follows this very remarkable expression—'Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan.' The warming-pan! Why, gentlemen, who does trouble himself about a warming-pan? When was the peace of mind of man or woman broken or disturbed by a warming-pan, which is in itself a harmless, a useful, and, I will add, gentlemen, a comforting article of domestic furniture? Why is Mrs. Bardell so earnestly entreated not to agitate herself about this warming-pan, unless (as is no doubt the case) it is a mere cover for hidden fire—a mere substitute for some endearing word or promise, agreeably to a preconcerted system of correspondence, artfully contrived by Pickwick with a view to his contemplated desertion, and which I am not in a condition to explain? And what does this allusion to the slow coach mean? For aught I know, it may be a reference to Pickwick himself, who has most unquestionably been a crimi-
nally slow coach during the whole of this transaction, but whose speed will now be very unexpectedly accelerated, and whose wheels, gentlemen, as he will find to his cost, will very soon be greased by you!"

Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz paused in this place, to see whether the jury smiled at his joke; but as nobody took it but the green grocer, whose sensitivity on the subject was very probably occasioned by his having subjected a chaise-cart to the process in question on that identical morning, the learned serjeant considered it advisable to undergo a slight relapse into the dismal before he concluded.

"But enough of this, gentlemen," said Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz; "it is difficult to smile with aching heart; it is ill jesting when our deepest sympathies are awakened. My client's hopes and prospects are ruined, and it is no figure of speech to say that her occupation is gone indeed. The bill is down—but there is no tenant. Eligible single gentlemen pass and repass—but there is no invitation for them to inquire within, or without. All is gloom and silence in the house; even the voice of the child is hushed; his infant sports are disregarded when his mother weeps; his 'alleytors' and his 'commoneys' are alike neglected: he forgets the long-familiar cry of 'knuckle down,' and at tip-cheese, or odd and even, his hand is out. But Pickwick, gentlemen, Pickwick, the ruthless destroyer of this domestic oasis in the desert of Goswell-street—Pickwick, who has choked up the well, and thrown ashes on the sward—Pickwick, who comes before you today with his heartless tomato sauce and warming-pans—Pickwick still rears his head with unblushing effrontery, and gazes without a sigh on the ruin he has made. Damages, gentlemen—heavy damages is the only punishment with which you can visit him; the
only recompense you can award to my client. And for those damages she now appeals to an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-feeling, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathizing, a contemplative jury of her civilized countrymen.” With this beautiful peroration, Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz sat down, and Mr. Justice Stareleigh woke up.

“Call Elizabeth Cluppins,” said Serjeant Buzfuz, rising a minute afterwards, with renewed vigour.

The nearest usher called for Elizabeth Tuppins; another one, at a little distance off, demanded Elizabeth Jupkins; and a third rushed in a breathless state into King-street, and screamed for Elizabeth Muffins till he was hoarse.

Mean while Mrs. Cluppins, with the combined assistance of Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Pogg, was hoisted into the witness-box; and when she was safely perched on the top step, Mrs. Bardell stood on the bottom one, with the pocket-handkerchief and pattens in one hand, and a glass bottle that might hold about a quarter of a pint of smelling salts in the other, ready for any emergency. Mrs. Sanders, whose eyes were intently fixed on the judge’s face, planted herself close by, with the large umbrella: keeping her right thumb pressed on the spring with an earnest countenance, as if she were fully prepared to put it up at a moment’s notice.

“Mrs. Cluppins,” said Serjeant Buzfuz, “pray compose yourself, ma’am;” and, of course, directly Mrs. Cluppins was desired to compose herself: she sobbed with increased vehemence, and gave divers alarming manifestations of an approaching fainting fit, or, as she afterwards said, of her feelings being too many for her.

“Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins?” said Serjeant Buzfuz, after a few unimportant questions—“do you recollect being in Mrs. Bardell’s back one...
pair of stairs, on one particular morning in July last, when she was dusting Mr. Pickwick's apartment?"

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

"Mr. Pickwick's sitting-room was the first-floor front, I believe?"

"Yes, it were, sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

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

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

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

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

"On the what?" exclaimed the little judge.

"Partly open, my lord," said Serjeant Snubbin.

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

"It's all the same, my lord," said Serjeant Snubbin. The little judge looked doubtful, and said he'd make a note of it. Mrs. Cluppins then resumed—

"I walked in, gentlemen, just to say good mornin', and went in a permiscuous manner up stairs, and into the back room. Gentlemen, there was the sound of voices in the front room, and—"

"And you listened, I believe, Mrs. Cluppins," said Serjeant Buzfuz.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins, in a majestic manner, "I would scorn the haction. The voices was very loud, sir, and forced themselves upon my ear."
“Well, Mrs. Cluppins, you were not listening, but you heard the voices. Was one of those voices Mr. Pickwick’s?”

“Yes, it were, sir.”

And Mrs. Cluppins, after distinctly stating that Mr. Pickwick addressed himself to Mrs. Bardell, repeated by slow degrees, and by dint of many questions, the conversations with which our readers are already acquainted.

The jury looked suspicious, and Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz smiled and sat down. They looked positively awful when Serjeant Snubbin intimated that he should not cross-examine the witness, for Mr. Pickwick wished it to be distinctly stated that it was due to her to say, that her account was in substance correct.

Mrs. Cluppins having once broken the ice, thought it a very favourable opportunity of entering into a short dissertation on her own domestic affairs; so she straitway proceeded to inform the court that she was the mother of eight children at that present speaking, and that she entertained confident expectations of presenting Mr. Cluppins with a ninth, somewhere about that day six months. At this interesting point, the little judge interposed most irascibly; and the effect of the interposition was, that both the worthy lady and Mrs. Sanders were politely taken out of court, under the escort of Mr. Jackson, without farther parley.

“Nathaniel Winkle,” said Mr. Skimpin.

“Here!” replied a feeble voice. And Mr. Winkle entered the witness-box, and having been duly sworn, bowed to the judge with considerable deference.

“Don’t look at me, sir,” said the judge, sharply, in acknowledgment of the salute; “look at the jury.”

Mr. Winkle obeyed the mandate, and looked at the place where he thought it most probable the
jury might be; for seeing any thing in his then state of intellectual complication was wholly out of the question.

Mr. Winkle was then examined by Mr. Skimpin, who, being a promising young man of two or three and forty, was of course anxious to confuse a witness who was notoriously predisposed in favour of the other side, as much as he could.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "have the goodness to let his lordship and the jury know what your name is, will you?" And Mr. Skimpin inclined his head on one side to listen with great sharpness to the answer, and glanced at the jury mean while, as if to imply that he rather expected Mr. Winkle's natural taste for perjury would induce him to give some name which did not belong to him.

"Winkle," replied the witness.

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

"Nathaniel, sir."

"Daniel,—any other name?"

"Nathaniel, sir—my lord, I mean."

"Nathaniel Daniel, or Daniel Nathaniel?"

"No, my lord, only Nathaniel—not Daniel at all."

"What did you tell me it was Daniel for, then, sir?" inquired the judge.

"I didn't, my lord," replied Mr. Winkle.

"You did, sir," replied the judge, with a severe frown. "How could I have got Daniel on my notes, unless you told me so, sir?"

This argument was, of course, unanswerable.

"Mr. Winkle has rather a short memory, my lord," interposed Mr. Skimpin, with another glance at the jury. "We shall find means to refresh it before we have quite done with him, I dare say."

"You had better be careful, sir," said the little judge, with a sinister look at the witness.
Poor Mr. Winkle bowed, and endeavoured to feign an easiness of manner, which, in his then state of confusion, gave him rather the air of a disconcerted pickpocket.

"Now, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Skimpin, "attend to me, if you please, sir; and let me recommend you, for your own sake, to bear in mind his lordship's injunctions to be careful. I believe you are a particular friend of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant, are you not?"

"I have known Mr. Pickwick now, as well as I recollect at this moment, nearly—"

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do not evade the question. Are you, or are you not, a particular friend of the defendant?"

"I was just about to say, that—"

"Will you, or will you not, answer my question, sir?"

"If you don't answer the question, you'll be committed, sir," interposed the little judge, looking over his note-book.

"Come, sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "yes or no, if you please."

"Yes, I am," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Yes, you are. And why couldn't you say that at once, sir? Perhaps you know the plaintiff too—eh, Mr. Winkle?"

"I don't know her; I've seen her."

"Oh, you don't know her, but you've seen her! Now, have the goodness to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by that, Mr. Winkle."

"I mean that I am not intimate with her, but that I have seen her when I went to call on Mr. Pickwick, in Goswell-street."

"How often have you seen her, sir?"

"How often?"

"Yes, Mr. Winkle, how often? I'll repeat the question for you a dozen times, if you require it, sir." And the learned gentleman, with a firm and
steady frown, placed his hands on his hips, and smiled suspiciously to the jury.

On this question there arose the edifying brow-beating, customary on such points. First of all, Mr. Winkle said it was quite impossible for him to say how many times he had seen Mrs. Bardell. Then he was asked if he had seen her twenty times, to which he replied, "Certainly,—more than that." And then he was asked whether he hadn't seen her a hundred times—whether he couldn't swear he had seen her more than fifty times—whether he didn't know that he had seen her at least seventy-five times, and so forth; the satisfactory conclusion which was arrived at, at last, being—that he had better take care of himself, and mind what he was about. The witness having been by these means reduced to the requisite ebb of nervous perplexity, the examination was continued as follows—

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do you remember calling on the defendant Pickwick at these apartments in the plaintiff's house in Goswell-street, on one particular morning, in the month of July last?"

"Yes, I do."

"Were you accompanied on that occasion by a friend of the name of Tupman, and another of the name of Snodgrass?"

"Yes, I was?"

"Are they here?"

"Yes, they are"—replied Mr. Winkle, looking very earnestly towards the spot where his friends were stationed.

"Pray attend to me, Mr. Winkle, and never mind your friends"—said Mr. Skimpin, with another expressive look at the jury. "They must tell their stories without any previous consultation with you, if none has yet taken place (another look at the jury.) Now, sir, tell the gentlemen of the jury what you saw on entering the defendant's
room, on this particular morning. Come; out with it, sir; we must have it, sooner or later."

"The defendant, Mr. Pickwick, was holding the plaintiff in his arms, with his hands clasping her waist," replied Mr. Winkle with natural hesitation, "and the plaintiff appeared to have fainted away."

"Did you hear the defendant say anything?"

"I heard him call Mrs. Bardell a good creature, and I heard him ask her to compose herself, for what a situation it was, if any body should come, or words to that effect."

"Now, Mr. Winkle, I have only one more question to ask you, and I beg you to bear in mind his lordship's caution. Will you undertake to swear that Pickwick, the defendant, did not say on the occasion in question—'My dear Mrs. Bardell, you're a good creature; compose yourself to this situation, for to this situation you must come. or words to that effect?"

"I—I didn't understand him so, certainly," said Mr. Winkle, astounded at this ingenious dovetailing of the few words he had heard. "I was on the staircase, and couldn't hear distinctly; the impression on my mind is—"

"The gentlemen of the jury want none of the impressions on your mind, Mr. Winkle, which I fear would be of little service to honest, straightforward men," interposed Mr. Skimpin. "You were on the staircase, and didn't distinctly hear; but you will not swear that Pickwick did not make use of the expressions I have quoted? Do I understand that?"

"No, I will not," replied Mr. Winkle; and down sat Mr. Skimpin with a triumphant countenance.

Mr. Pickwick's case had not gone off in so particularly happy a manner, up to this point, that it could very well afford to have any additional sus-
picion cast upon it. But as it could afford to be placed in a rather better light, if possible, Mr. Phunky rose for the purpose of getting something important out of Mr. Winkle in cross-examination. Whether he did get any thing important out of him, will immediately appear.

"I believe, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Phunky, "that Mr. Pickwick is not a young man?"

"Oh no," replied Mr. Winkle; "old enough to be my father?"

"You have told my learned friend that you have known Mr. Pickwick a long time. Had you ever any reason to suppose or believe that he was about to be married?"

"Oh no; certainly not;" replied Mr. Winkle, with so much eagerness, that Mr. Phunky ought to have got him out of the box with all possible despatch. Lawyers hold that there are two kinds of particularly bad witnesses, a reluctant witness, and a too-willing witness; it was Mr. Winkle's fate to figure in both characters.

"I will even go farther than this, Mr. Winkle," continued Mr. Phunky in a most smooth and complacent manner. "Did you ever see any thing in Mr. Pickwick's manner and conduct towards the opposite sex to induce you to believe that he ever contemplated matrimony of late years, in any case?"

"Oh no; certainly not," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Has his behaviour, when females have been in the case, always been that of a man, who, having attained a pretty advanced period of life, content with his own occupations and amusements, treats them only as a father might his daughters?"

"Not the least doubt of it," replied Mr. Winkle, in the fulness of his heart. "That is—yes—oh yes—certainly."

"You have never known any thing in his be-
haviour towards Mrs. Bardell, or any other female, in the least degree suspicious?" said Mr. Phunky, preparing to sit down, for Serjeant Snubbin was winking at him.

"N—n—no," replied Mr. Winkle, "except on one trifling occasion, which, I have no doubt, might be easily explained."

Now, if the unfortunate Mr. Phunky had sat down when Serjeant Snubbin winked at him, or if Serjeant Buzfuz had stopped this irregular cross-examination at the outset (which he knew better than to do; observing Mr. Winkle's anxiety, and well knowing it would, in all probability, lead to something serviceable to him,) this unfortunate admission would not have been elicited. The moment the words fell from Mr. Winkle's lips, Mr. Phunky sat down, and Serjeant Snubbin rather hastily told him he might leave the box, which Mr. Winkle prepared to do with great readiness, when Serjeant Buzfuz stopped him.

"Stay, Mr. Winkle—stay," said Serjeant Buzfuz, "will your lordship have the goodness to ask him, what this one instance of suspicious beha-

"You hear what the learned counsel says, sir," observed the judge, turning to the miserable and agonized Mr. Winkle. "Describe the occasion to which you refer."

"My lord," said Mr. Winkle, trembling with anxiety, "I—I'd rather not."

"Perhaps so," said the little judge; "but you must."

Amid the profound silence of the whole court, Mr. Winkle faltered out, that the trifling circumstance of suspicion was Mr. Pickwick's being found in a lady's sleeping apartment at midnight, which had terminated, he believed, in the breaking off of the projected marriage of the lady in
question, and led, he knew, to the whole party being forcibly carried before George Nupkins, Esq., magistrate and justice of the peace, for the borough of Ipswich?"

"You may leave the box, sir," said Serjeant Snubbin. Mr. Winkle did leave the box, and rushed with delirious haste to the George and Vulture, where he was discovered some hours after, by the waiter, groaning in a hollow and dismal manner, with his head buried beneath the sofa cushions.

Tracy Tupman, and Augustus Snodgrass, were severally called into the box; both corroborated the testimony of their unhappy friend; and each was driven to the verge of desperation by excessive badgering.

Susannah Sanders was then called, and examined by Serjeant Buzfuz, and cross-examined by Serjeant Snubbin. Had always said and believed that Mr. Pickwick would marry Mrs. Bardell; knew that Mrs. Bardell's being engaged to Mr. Pickwick was the current topic of conversation in the neighbourhood, after the fainting in July; had been told it herself by Mrs. Mudberry which kept a mangle, and Mrs. Bunkin which, clear-starched, but did not see either Mrs. Mudberry or Mrs. Bunkin in court. Had heard Mr. Pickwick ask the little boy how he should like to have another father. Did not know that Mrs. Bardell was at that time keeping company with the baker, but she did know that the baker was then a single man and is now married. Couldn't swear that Mrs. Bardell was not very fond of the baker, but should think that the baker was not very fond of Mrs. Bardell, or he wouldn't have married somebody else. Thought Mrs. Bardell fainted away on the morning in July, because Mr. Pickwick asked her to name the day; knew that she (witness) fainted away stone dead when Mr. Sanders asked her to name the day, and believed that every body
as called herself a lady would do the same, under similar circumstances. Heard Mr. Pickwick ask the boy the question about the marbles, but upon her oath did not know the difference between an alley tor and a common—

By the Court—During the period of her keeping company with Mr. Sanders had received love letters, like other ladies. In the course of their correspondence Mr. Sanders had often called her a "duck," but never "chops" or "tomato sauce." He was particularly fond of ducks. Perhaps if he had been as fond of chops and tomato sauce, he might have called her that, as a term of affection.

Serjeant Buzfuz now rose with more importance than he had yet exhibited, if that were possible, and vociferated "Call Samuel Weller."

It was quite unnecessary to call Samuel Weller, for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced; and placing his hat on the floor, and his arms on the rail, took a bird's-eye view of the bar, and a comprehensive survey of the bench with a remarkably cheerful and lively aspect.

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

"Sam Weller, my lord," replied that gentleman.

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

"That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my lord," replied Sam; "I never had occasion to spell it more than once or twice in my life, but I spells it with a 'V.'"

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

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

"Yes, my lord."

"Bring that person here instantly."

"Yes, my lord."
But as the usher didn't find the person, he didn't bring him; and, after a great commotion, all the people who had got up to look for the culprit, sat down again. The little judge turned to the witness as soon as his indignation would allow him to speak, and said —

"Do you know who that was, sir?"

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

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

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

"If you could have pointed him out, I would have committed him instantly," said the judge. [Sam bowed his acknowledgments, and turned, with unimpaired cheerfulness of countenance, towards Serjeant Buzfuz.

"Now, Mr. Weller," said serjeant Buzfuz.

"Now sir," replied Sam.

"I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant in this case. Speak up, if you please, Mr. Weller."

"I mean to speak up, sir," replied Sam; "I am in the service of that 'ere gen'tl'man, and a werry good service it is,"

"Little to do, and plenty to get, I suppose?" said Serjeant Buzfuz, with jocularity.

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

"You must not tell us what the soldier, or any other man, said, sir," interposed the judge, "it's not evidence,"

"Werry good, my lord," replied Sam.

"Do you recollect anything particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant, eh, Mr. Weller?" said Serjeant Buzfuz.

"Yes, I do, sir," replied Sam.

"Have the goodness to tell the jury what it was."
"I had a reg'lar new fit out o' clothes that mornin', gen'l'men of the jury," said Sam, "and that was a werry partickler and uncommon circumstance with me in those days."

Hereupon there was a general laugh; and the little judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, "You had better be careful, sir."

"So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my lord," replied Sam, "and I was werry careful o' that er suit o' clothes; werry careful indeed, my lord."

The judge looked sternly at Sam for full two minutes; but Sam's features were so perfectly calm and serene, that he said nothing, and motioned Serjeant Buzfuz to proceed.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller," said Serjeant Buzfuz, folding his arms emphatically, and turning half round to the jury, as if in mute assurance that he would bother the witness yet—"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller, that you saw nothing of this fainting on the part of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant, which you have heard described by the witnesses?"

"Certainly not," replied Sam; "I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady was not there."

"Now attend, Mr. Weller," said Serjeant Buzfuz, dipping a large pen into the inkstand before him, for the purpose of frightening Sam, with a show of taking down his answer. "You were in the passage and yet saw nothing of what was going forward. Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?"

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

At this answer, which was delivered without the
slightest appearance of irritation, and with the most complete simplicity and equanimity of manner, the spectators tittered, the little judge smiled, and Sergeant Buzfuz looked particularly foolish. After a short consultation with Dodson and Fogg, the learned sergeant again turned towards Sam, and said, with a painful effort to conceal his vexation, "Now, Mr. Weller, I'll ask you a question on another point, if you please."

"If you please, sir," rejoined Sam, with the utmost good-humour.

"Do you remember going up to Mrs. Bardell's house, one night in November last?"

"Oh yes, werry well."

"Oh you do remember that, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, recovering his spirits, "I thought we should get at something at last."

"I rayther thought that, too, sir," replied Sam: and at this the spectators tittered again.

"Well; I suppose you went up to have a little talk about this trial—eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz, looking knowingly at the jury.

"I went up to pay the rent; but we did get talkin' about the trial," replied Sam.

"Oh you did get a talking about the trial," said Sergeant Buzfuz, brightening up with the anticipation of some important discovery. "Now what passed about the trial; will you have the goodness to tell us, Mr. Weller?"

"With all the pleasure in life, sir," replied Sam. "Arter a few unimportant observations from the two virtuous females as has been examined here to-day, the ladies gets into a very great state o' admiration at the honourable conduct of Mr. Dodson and Fogg—them two gen'l'men as is settin' near you now." This, of course, drew general attention to Dodson and Fogg, who looked as virtuous as possible.

"The attorneys for the plaintiff," said Mr. Ser-
jeant Buzfuz; well, they spoke in high praise of the honourable conduct of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, the attorneys for the plaintiff, did they?

"Yes," said Sam; "they said what a worry gen'rous thing it was o' them to have taken up the case on spec, and to charge nothin' at all for costs, unless they got' em out of Mr. Pickwick."

At this very unexpected reply, the spectators tittered again, and Dodson and Fogg, turning very red, leant over to Serjeant Buzfuz, and in a hurried manner whispered something in his ear.

"You are quite right," said Serjeant Buzfuz aloud, with affected composure. "It's perfectly useless, my lord, attempting to get at any evidence through the impenetrable stupidity of this witness. I will not trouble the court by asking him any more questions. Stand down, sir."

"Would any other gent' man like to ask me any thin'?" inquired Sam, taking up his hat, and looking round most deliberately.

"Not I, Mr. Weller, thank you," said Serjeant Snubbin, laughing.

"You may go down, sir," said Serjeant Buzfuz, waving his hand impatiently. Sam went down accordingly, after doing Messrs. Dodson and Fogg's case as much harm as he conveniently could, and saying just as little respecting Mr. Pickwick as might be, which was precisely the object he had had in view all along.

"I have no objection to admit, my lord," said Serjeant Snubbin, "if it will save the examination of another witness, that Mr. Pickwick has retired from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property."

"Very well," said Serjeant Buzfuz, putting in the two letters for the clerk to read; "Then that's my case, my lord."

Serjeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant; and a very long and a
very emphatic address he delivered, in which he bestowed the highest possible eulogiums on the conduct and character of Mr. Pickwick; but inasmuch as our readers are far better able to form a correct estimate of that gentleman's merits and deserts, than Serjeant Snubbin could possibly be, we do not feel called upon to enter at any length into the learned gentleman's observations. He attempted to show that the letters which had been exhibited, merely related to Mr. Pickwick's dinner, or to the preparations for receiving him in his apartments on his return from some country excursion. It is sufficient to add, in general terms, that he did the best he could for Mr. Pickwick; and the best, as every body knows, on the infallible authority of the old adage, could do no more.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh summed up, in the oldestablished and most approved form. He read as much of his notes to the jury as he could decipher on so short a notice, and made running comments on the evidence as he went along. If Mrs. Bardell was right, it was perfectly clear Mr. Pickwick was wrong, and if they thought the evidence of Mrs. Cluppins worthy of credence they would believe it, and, if they didn't, why they wouldn't. If they were satisfied that a breach of promise of marriage had been committed, they would find for the plaintiff with such damages as they thought proper; and if, on the other hand, it appears to them that no promise of marriage had ever been given, they would find for the defendant with no damages at all. The jury then retired to their private room to talk the matter over, and the judge retired to his private room, to refresh himself with a mutton chop and a glass of sherry.

An anxious quarter of an hour elapsed; the jury came back, and the judge was fetched in. Mr. Pickwick put on his spectacles, and gazed at the foreman with an agitated countenance and a quickly beating heart.
"Gentlemen," said the individual in black, "are you all agreed upon your verdict?"
"We are," replied the foreman.
"Do you find for the plaintiff, gentlemen, or for the defendant?"
"For the plaintiff."
"With what damages, gentlemen?"
"Seven hundred and fifty pounds."
Mr. Pickwick took off his spectacles, carefully wiped the glasses, folded them into the case, and put them in his pocket; then having drawn on his gloves with great nicety, and stared at the foreman all the while, he mechanically followed Mr. Perker and the blue bag out of court.
They stopped in a side room while Perker paid the court fees; and here Mr. Pickwick was joined by his friends. Here, too, he encountered Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, rubbing their hands with every token of outward satisfaction.
"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.
"Well, sir," said Dodson, for self and partner.
"You imagine you'll get your costs, don't you, gentlemen?" said Mr. Pickwick.
Fogg said they thought it rather probable; and Dodson smiled, and said they'd try.
"You may try, and try, and try, again, Messrs. Dodson and Fogg," said Mr. Pickwick vehemently; "but not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get from me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtor's prison."
"Ha, ha!" said Dodson, "You'll think better of that, before next term, Mr. Pickwick."
"He, he, he! we'll soon see about that, Mr. Pickwick," grinned Fogg.
Speechless with indignation, Mr. Pickwick allowed himself to be led by his solicitor and friends to the door, and was there assisted into a hackney-coach, which had been fetched for the purpose, by the ever watchful Sam Weller.
Sam had put up the steps, and was preparing to jump upon the box, when he felt himself gently touched on the shoulder; and, looking round, his father stood before him. The old gentleman's countenance wore a mournful expression, as he shook his head gravely and said, in warning accents—

"I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' business. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!"
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