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| As dotted | Inches. | Eighths |
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| 1 to 1.   |         |         |

From the Forehead over to the poll, as deep each way as required .....

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| As dotted |  |  |
| 2 to 2.   |  |  |

From one Temple to the other, across the rise or Crown of the head to where the Hair grows

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|-----------|--|--|
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"PATENTS RECENTLY GRANTED.—TO WILLIAM DAKIN, of NUMBER  
"ONE, SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, 'for Improvements in  
"Cleaning and Roasting Coffee, in the Apparatus and Machinery to be  
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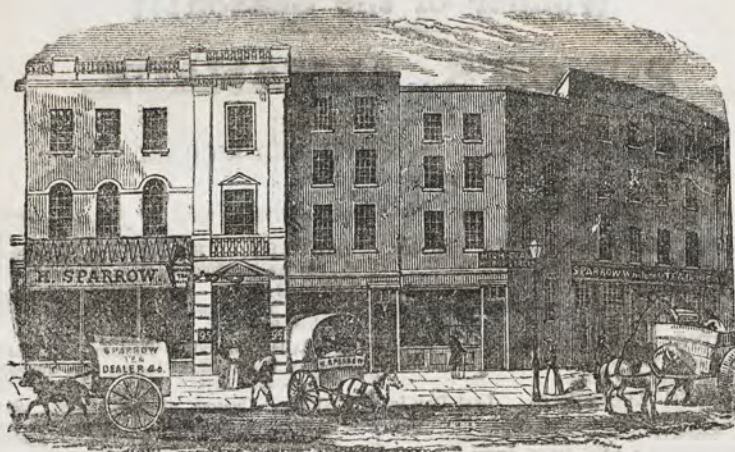
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be in a position to bring this extraordinary and highly-important invention  
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adopting a simple scientific principle for the production of essential improve-  
ments in the preparation of Coffee.

It is a fact  
the coffee  
first, and  
secondly  
thirdly  
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sixthly  
seventhly  
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twenty-fourthly  
twenty-fifthly  
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twenty-seventhly  
twenty-eighthly  
twenty-ninthly  
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## CHAPTER XLIX.

## THE MIDSHIPMAN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

It was long before Florence awoke. The day was in its prime, the day was in its wane, and still, uneasy in mind and body, she slept on; unconscious of her strange bed, of the noise and turmoil in the street, and of the light that shone outside the shaded window. Perfect unconsciousness of what had happened in the home that existed no more, even the deep slumber of exhaustion could not produce. Some undefined and mournful recollection of it, dozing uneasily but never sleeping, pervaded all her rest. A dull sorrow, like a half-lulled sense of pain, was always present to her; and her pale cheek was oftener wet with tears than the honest Captain, softly putting in his head from time to time at the half-closed door, could have desired to see it.

The sun was getting low in the west, and, glancing out of a red mist, pierced with its rays opposite loop-holes and pieces of fret-work in the spires of city churches, as if with golden arrows that struck through and through them—and far away athwart the river and its flat banks, it was gleaming like a path of fire—and out at sea it was irradiating sails of ships—and, looked towards, from quiet churchyards, upon hill-tops in the country, it was steeping distant prospects in a flush and glow that seemed to mingle earth and sky together in one glorious suffusion—when Florence, opening her heavy eyes, lay at first, looking without interest or recognition at the unfamiliar walls around her, and listening in the same regardless manner to the noises in the street. But presently she started up upon her couch, gazed round with a surprised and vacant look, and recollected all.

“My pretty,” said the Captain, knocking at the door, “what cheer!”

“Dear friend,” cried Florence, hurrying to him, “Is it you?”

The Captain felt so much pride in the name, and was so pleased by the gleam of pleasure in her face when she saw him, that he kissed his hook, by way of reply, in speechless gratification.

“What cheer, bright di’mond!” said the Captain.

“I have surely slept very long,” returned Florence. “When did I come here? Yesterday?”

“This here blessed day, my lady lass,” replied the Captain.

“Has there been no night? Is it still day?” asked Florence.

“Getting on for evening now, my pretty,” said the Captain, drawing back the curtain of the window. “See!”

Florence, with her hand upon the Captain’s arm, so sorrowful and timid, and the Captain with his rough face and burly figure, so quietly protective of her, stood in the rosy light of the bright evening sky, without saying a word. However strange the form of speech into which he might have fashioned the feeling, if he had had to give it utterance, the

Captain felt, as sensibly as the most eloquent of men could have done, that there was something in the tranquil time and in its softened beauty that would make the wounded heart of Florence overflow; and that it was better that such tears should have their way. So not a word spake Captain Cuttle. But when he felt his arm clasped closer, and when he felt the lonely head come nearer to it, and lay itself against his homely coarse blue sleeve, he pressed it gently with his rugged hand, and understood it, and was understood.

"Better now, my pretty!" said the Captain. "Cheerily, cheerily; I'll go down below, and get some dinner ready. Will you come down of your own self, arterwards, pretty, or shall Ed'ard Cuttle come and fetch you?"

As Florence assured him that she was quite able to walk down stairs, the Captain, though evidently doubtful of his own hospitality in permitting it, left her to do so, and immediately set about roasting a fowl at the fire in the little parlour. To achieve his cookery with the greater skill, he pulled off his coat, tucked up his wristbands, and put on his glazed hat, without which assistant he never applied himself to any nice or difficult undertaking.

After cooling her aching head and burning face in the fresh water which the Captain's care had provided for her while she slept, Florence went to the little mirror to bind up her disordered hair. Then she knew—in a moment, for she shunned it instantly—that on her breast there was the darkening mark of an angry hand.

Her tears burst forth afresh at the sight; she was ashamed and afraid of it; but it moved her to no anger against him. Homeless and fatherless, she forgave him everything; hardly thought that she had need to forgive him, or that she did; but she fled from the idea of him as she had fled from the reality, and he was utterly gone and lost. There was no such Being in the world.

What to do, or where to live, Florence—poor, inexperienced girl!—could not yet consider. She had indistinct dreams of finding, a long way off, some little sisters to instruct, who would be gentle with her, and to whom, under some feigned name, she might attach herself, and who would grow up in their happy home, and marry, and be good to their old governess, and perhaps intrust her, in time, with the education of their own daughters. And she thought how strange and sorrowful it would be, thus to become a grey-haired woman, carrying her secret to the grave, when Florence Dombey was forgotten. But it was all dim and clouded to her now. She only knew that she had no Father upon earth, and she said so, many times, with her suppliant head hidden from all, but her Father who was in Heaven.

Her little stock of money amounted to but a few guineas. With a part of this, it would be necessary to buy some clothes, for she had none but those she wore. She was too desolate to think how soon her money would be gone—too much a child in worldly matters to be greatly troubled on that score yet, even if her other trouble had been less. She tried to calm her thoughts and stay her tears; to quiet the hurry in her throbbing head, and bring herself to believe that what had happened were but the events of a few hours ago, instead of weeks or months, as they appeared; and went down to her kind protector.

The Captain had spread the cloth with great care, and was making some egg-sauce in a little saucepan: basting the fowl from time to time during the process with a strong interest, as it turned and browned on a string before the fire. Having propped Florence up with cushions on the sofa, which was already wheeled into a warm corner for her greater comfort, the Captain pursued his cooking with extraordinary skill, making hot gravy in a second little saucepan, boiling a handful of potatoes in a third, never forgetting the egg-sauce in the first, and making an impartial round of basting and stirring with the most useful of spoons every minute. Besides these cares, the Captain had to keep his eye on a diminutive frying-pan, in which some sausages were hissing and bubbling in a most musical manner; and there was never such a radiant cook as the Captain looked, in the height and heat of these functions: it being impossible to say whether his face or his glazed hat shone the brighter.

The dinner being at length quite ready, Captain Cuttle dished and served it up, with no less dexterity than he had cooked it. He then dressed for dinner, by taking off his glazed hat and putting on his coat. That done, he wheeled the table close against Florence on the sofa, said grace, unscrewed his hook, screwed his fork into its place, and did the honours of the table.

"My lady lass," said the Captain, "cheer up, and try to eat a deal. Stand by, my deary! Liver wing it is. Sarse it is. Sassage it is. And potato!" all of which the Captain ranged symmetrically on a plate, and, pouring hot gravy on the whole with the useful spoon, set before his cherished guest.

"The whole row o' dead lights is up, for'ard, lady lass," observed the Captain, encouragingly, "and everythink is made snug. 'Try and pick a bit, my pretty. If Wal'r was here—"

"Ah! If I had him for my brother now!" cried Florence.

"Don't! don't take on, my pretty!" said the Captain, "awast, to obleege me! He *was* your nat'ral born friend like, warn't he Pet?"

Florence had no words to answer with. She only said, "Oh dear, dear Paul! oh Walter!"

"The wery planks she walked on," murmured the Captain, looking at her drooping face, "was as high esteemed by Wal'r, as the water brooks is by the hart which never rejices! I see him now, the wery day as he was rated on them Dombey books, a speaking of her with his face a glistening with doo—leastways with his modest sentiments—like a new blowed rose, at dinner. Well, well! If our poor Wal'r was here, my lady lass—or if he could be—for he's drowned, an't he?"

Florence shook her head.

"Yes, yes; drowned," said the Captain, soothingly; "as I was saying, if he could be here he'd beg and pray of you, my precious, to pick a leetle bit, with a look-out for your own sweet health. Whereby, hold your own, my lady lass, as if it was for Wal'r's sake, and lay your pretty head to the wind."

Florence essayed to eat a morsel, for the Captain's pleasure. The Captain, meanwhile, who seemed to have quite forgotten his own dinner, laid down his knife and fork, and drew his chair to the sofa.

"Wal'r was a trim lad, warn't he, precious?" said the Captain, after

sitting for some time silently rubbing his chin, with his eyes fixed upon her, "and a brave lad, and a good lad?"

Florence tearfully assented.

"And he's drowned, Beauty, an't he?" said the Captain, in a soothing voice.

Florence could not but assent again.

"He was older than you, my lady lass," pursued the Captain, "but you was like two children together, at first; warn't you?"

Florence answered "Yes."

"And Wal'r's drowned," said the Captain. "An't he?"

The repetition of this inquiry was a curious source of consolation, but it seemed to be one to Captain Cuttle, for he came back to it again and again. Florence, fain to push from her her untasted dinner, and to lie back on her sofa, gave him her hand, feeling that she had disappointed him, though truly wishing to have pleased him after all his trouble, but he held it in his own (which shook as he held it), and, appearing to have quite forgotten all about the dinner and her want of appetite, went on growling at intervals, in a ruminating tone of sympathy, "Poor Wal'r. Aye, aye! Drowned. An't he?" And always waited for her answer, in which the great point of these singular reflections appeared to consist.

The fowl and sausages were cold, and the gravy and the egg-sauce stagnant, before the Captain remembered that they were on the board, and fell to with the assistance of Diogenes, whose united efforts quickly dispatched the banquet. The Captain's delight and wonder at the quiet housewifery of Florence in assisting to clear the table, arrange the parlour, and sweep up the hearth—only to be equalled by the fervency of his protest when she began to assist him—were gradually raised to that degree, that at last he could not choose but do nothing himself, and stand looking at her as if she were some Fairy, daintily performing these offices for him; the red rim on his forehead glowing again, in his unspeakable admiration.

But when Florence, taking down his pipe from the mantel-shelf gave it into his hand, and entreated him to smoke it, the good Captain was so bewildered by her attention that he held it as if he had never held a pipe, in all his life. Likewise, when Florence, looking into the little cupboard, took out the case-bottle and mixed a perfect glass of grog for him, unasked, and set it at his elbow, his ruddy nose turned pale, he felt himself so graced and honoured. When he had filled his pipe in an absolute reverie of satisfaction, Florence lighted it for him—the Captain having no power to object, or to prevent her—and resuming her place on the old sofa, looked at him with a smile so loving and so grateful, a smile that showed him so plainly how her forlorn heart turned to him, as her face did, through grief, that the smoke of the pipe got into the Captain's throat and made him cough, and got into the Captain's eyes, and made them blink and water.

The manner in which the Captain tried to make believe that the cause of these effects lay hidden in the pipe itself, and the way in which he looked into the bowl for it, and not finding it there, pretended to blow it out of the stem, was wonderfully pleasant. The pipe soon getting into

better condition, he fell into that state of repose becoming a good smoker; but sat with his eyes fixed on Florence, and, with a beaming placidity not to be described, and stopping every now and then to discharge a little cloud from his lips, slowly puffed it forth, as if it were a scroll coming out of his mouth, bearing the legend "Poor Wal'r, aye, aye. Drowned, an't he?" after which he would resume his smoking with infinite gentleness.

Unlike as they were externally—and there could scarcely be a more decided contrast than between Florence in her delicate youth and beauty, and Captain Cuttle with his knobby face, his great broad weather-beaten person, and his gruff voice—in simple innocence of the world's ways and the world's perplexities and dangers, they were nearly on a level. No child could have surpassed Captain Cuttle in inexperience of everything but wind and weather; in simplicity, credulity, and generous trustfulness. Faith, hope, and charity, shared his whole nature among them. An odd sort of romance, perfectly unimaginative, yet perfectly unreal, and subject to no considerations of worldly prudence or practicability, was the only partner they had in his character. As the Captain sat, and smoked, and looked at Florence, God knows what impossible pictures, in which she was the principal figure, presented themselves to his mind. Equally vague and uncertain, though not so sanguine, were her own thoughts of the life before her; and even as her tears made prismatic colours in the light she gazed at, so, through her new and heavy grief, she already saw a rainbow faintly shining in the far-off sky. A wandering princess and a good monster in a story-book might have sat by the fire-side, and talked as Captain Cuttle and poor Florence thought—and not have looked very much unlike them.

The Captain was not troubled with the faintest idea of any difficulty in retaining Florence, or of any responsibility thereby incurred. Having put up the shutters and locked the door, he was quite satisfied on this head. If she had been a Ward in Chancery, it would have made no difference at all to Captain Cuttle. He was the last man in the world to be troubled by any such considerations.

So the Captain smoked his pipe very comfortably, and Florence and he meditated after their own manner. When the pipe was out, they had some tea; and then Florence entreated him to take her to some neighbouring shop, where she could buy the few necessaries she immediately wanted. It being quite dark, the Captain consented: peeping carefully out first, as he had been wont to do in his time of hiding from Mrs. MacStinger; and arming himself with his large stick, in case of an appeal to arms being rendered necessary by any unforeseen circumstance.

The pride Captain Cuttle had, in giving his arm to Florence, and escorting her some two or three hundred yards, keeping a bright look-out all the time, and attracting the attention of every one who passed them, by his great vigilance and numerous precautions, was extreme. Arrived at the shop, the Captain felt it a point of delicacy to retire during the making of the purchases, as they were to consist of wearing apparel; but he previously deposited his tin canister on the counter, and informing the young lady of the establishment that it contained fourteen pound two, requested her, in case that amount of property should not be sufficient to defray the expenses of his niece's little outfit—at the word "niece," he

bestowed a most significant look on Florence, accompanied with pantomime, expressive of sagacity and mystery—to have the goodness to “sing out,” and he would make up the difference from his pocket. Casually consulting his big watch, as a deep means of dazzling the establishment and impressing it with a sense of property, the Captain then kissed his hook to his niece, and retired outside the window, where it was a choice sight to see his great face looking in from time to time, among the silks and ribbons, with an obvious misgiving that Florence had been spirited away by a back door.

“Dear Captain Cuttle,” said Florence, when she came out with a parcel, the size of which greatly disappointed the Captain, who had expected to see a porter following with a bale of goods, “I don’t want this money, indeed. I have not spent any of it. I have money of my own.”

“My lady lass,” returned the baffled Captain, looking straight down the street before them, “take care on it for me, will you be so good, till such time as I ask ye for it?”

“May I put it back in its usual place,” said Florence, “and keep it there?”

The Captain was not at all gratified by this proposal, but he answered, “Aye, aye, put it anywheres, my lady lass, so long as you know where to find it again. It an’t o’ no use to *me*,” said the Captain. “I wonder I haven’t chucked it away afore now.”

The Captain was quite disheartened for the moment, but he revived at the first touch of Florence’s arm, and they returned with the same precautions as they had come; the Captain opening the door of the little Midshipman’s berth, and diving in, with a suddenness which his great practice only could have taught him. During Florence’s slumber in the morning, he had engaged the daughter of an elderly lady who usually sat under a blue umbrella in Leadenhall-market, selling poultry, to come and put her room in order, and render her any little services she required; and this damsel now appearing, Florence found everything about her as convenient and orderly, if not as handsome, as in the terrible dream she had once called Home.

When they were alone again, the Captain insisted on her eating a slice of dry toast, and drinking a glass of spiced negus (which he made to perfection); and, encouraging her with every kind word and inconsequential quotation he could possibly think of, led her upstairs to her bed-room. But he too had something on his mind, and was not easy in his manner.

“Good night, dear heart,” said Captain Cuttle to her at her chamber-door.

Florence raised her lips to his face, and kissed him.

At any other time the Captain would have been overbalanced by such a token of her affection and gratitude; but now, although he was very sensible of it, he looked in her face with even more uneasiness than he had testified before, and seemed unwilling to leave her.

“Poor Wal’r!” said the Captain.

“Poor, poor Walter!” sighed Florence.

“Drownded, an’t he?” said the Captain.

Florence shook her head, and sighed.

“Good night, my lady lass!” said Captain Cuttle, putting out his hand.

"God bless you, dear, kind friend!"

But the Captain lingered still.

"Is anything the matter, dear Captain Cuttle?" said Florence, easily alarmed in her then state of mind. "Have you anything to tell me?"

"To tell you, lady lass!" replied the Captain, meeting her eyes in confusion. "No, no; what should I have to tell you, pretty! You don't expect as I've got anything good to tell you, sure?"

"No!" said Florence, shaking her head.

The Captain looked at her wistfully, and repeated "No,"—still lingering, and still showing embarrassment.

"Poor Wal'r!" said the Captain. "My Wal'r, as I used to call you! Old Sol Gills's nevy! Welcome to all as knowed you, as the flowers in May! Where are you got to, brave boy! Drowned, an't he?"

Concluding his apostrophe with this abrupt appeal to Florence, the Captain bade her good night, and descended the stairs, while Florence remained at the top, holding the candle out to light him down. He was lost in the obscurity, and, judging from the sound of his receding footsteps, was in the act of turning into the little parlour, when his head and shoulders unexpectedly emerged again, as from the deep, apparently for no other purpose than to repeat, "Drowned, an't he, pretty?" For when he had said that in a tone of tender condolence, he disappeared.

Florence was very sorry that she should unwittingly, though naturally, have awakened these associations in the mind of her protector, by taking refuge there; and sitting down before the little table where the Captain had arranged the telescope and song-book, and those other rarities, thought of Walter, and of all that was connected with him in the past, until she could have almost wished to lie down on her bed and fade away. But in her lonely yearning to the dead whom she had loved, no thought of home—no possibility of going back—no presentation of it as yet existing, or as sheltering her father—once entered her thoughts. She had seen the murder done. In the last lingering natural aspect in which she had cherished him through so much, he had been torn out of her heart, defaced, and slain. The thought of it was so appalling to her, that she covered her eyes, and shrunk trembling from the least remembrance of the deed, or of the cruel hand that did it. If her fond heart could have held his image after that, it must have broken; but it could not; and the void was filled with a wild dread that fled from all confronting with its shattered fragments—with such a dread as could have risen out of nothing but the depths of such a love, so wronged.

She dared not look into the glass; for the sight of the darkening mark upon her bosom made her afraid of herself, as if she bore about her something wicked. She covered it up, with a hasty, faltering hand, and in the dark; and laid her weary head down, weeping.

The Captain did not go to bed for a long time. He walked to and fro in the shop and in the little parlour, for a full hour, and, appearing to have composed himself by that exercise, sat down with a grave and thoughtful face, and read out of a Prayer-book the forms of prayer appointed to be used at sea. These were not easily disposed of; the good Captain being a mighty slow, gruff reader, and frequently stopping at a hard word to give himself such encouragement as "Now, my lad! With a will!" or, "Steady,

Ed'ard Cuttle, steady!" which had a great effect in helping him out of any difficulty. Moreover, his spectacles greatly interfered with his powers of vision. But notwithstanding these drawbacks, the Captain, being heartily in earnest, read the service to the very last line, and with genuine feeling too; and approving of it very much when he had done, turned in, under the counter (but not before he had been upstairs, and listened at Florence's door), with a serene breast, and a most benevolent visage.

The Captain turned out several times in the course of the night, to assure himself that his charge was resting quietly; and once, at daybreak, found that she was awake: for she called to know if it were he, on hearing footsteps near her door.

"Yes, my lady lass," replied the Captain, in a growling whisper. "Are you all right, di'mond?"

Florence thanked him, and said "Yes."

The Captain could not lose so favourable an opportunity of applying his mouth to the keyhole, and calling through it, like a hoarse breeze, "Poor Wal'r! Drownded, an't he?" After which he withdrew, and turning in again, slept till seven o'clock.

Nor was he free from his uneasy and embarrassed manner all that day; though Florence, being busy with her needle in the little parlour, was more calm and tranquil than she had been on the day preceding. Almost always when she raised her eyes from her work, she observed the Captain looking at her, and thoughtfully stroking his chin; and he so often hitched his arm-chair close to her, as if he were going to say something very confidential, and hitched it away again, as not being able to make up his mind how to begin, that in the course of the day he cruized completely round the parlour in that frail bark, and more than once went ashore against the wainscoat or the closet door, in a very distressed condition.

It was not until the twilight that Captain Cuttle, fairly dropping anchor, at last, by the side of Florence, began to talk at all connectedly. But when the light of the fire was shining on the walls and ceiling of the little room, and on the tea-board and the cups and saucers that were ranged upon the table, and on her calm face turned towards the flame, and reflecting it in the tears that filled her eyes, the Captain broke a long silence thus:

"You never was at sea, my own?"

"No," replied Florence.

"Aye," said the Captain, reverentially; "it's a almighty element. There's wonders in the deep, my pretty. Think on it when the winds is roaring and the waves is rowling. Think on it when the stormy nights is so pitch dark," said the Captain, solemnly holding up his hook, "as you can't see your hand afore you, excepting when the wiwid lightning reveals the same; and when you drive, drive, drive through the storm and dark, as if you was a driving, head on, to the world without end, evermore, amen, and when found making a note of. Them's the times, my beauty, when a man may say to his messmate (previously a overhauling of the wollume), 'A stiff nor-wester's blowing, Bill; hark, don't you hear it roar now! Lord help 'em, how I pitys all unhappy folks ashore now!'" Which quotation, as particularly applicable to the terrors of the ocean, the Captain delivered in a most impressive manner, concluding with a sonorous "Stand by!"



"Were you ever in a dreadful storm?" asked Florence.

"Why aye, my lady lass, I've seen my share of bad weather," said the Captain, tremulously wiping his head, "and I've had my share of knocking about; but—but it an't of myself as I was a meaning to speak. Our dear boy," drawing closer to her, "Wal'r, darling, as was drowned."

The Captain spoke in such a trembling voice, and looked at Florence with a face so pale and agitated, that she clung to his hand in affright.

"Your face is changed," cried Florence. "You are altered in a moment. What is it? Dear Captain Cuttle, it turns me cold to see you!"

"What! Lady lass," returned the Captain, supporting her with his hand, "don't be took aback. No, no! All's well, all's well, my dear. As I was a saying—Wal'r—he's—he's drowned. An't he?"

Florence looked at him intently; her colour came and went; and she laid her hand upon her breast.

"There's perils and dangers on the deep, my beauty," said the Captain; "and over many a brave ship, and many and many a bould heart, the secret waters has closed up, and never told no tales. But there's escapes upon the deep, too, and sometimes one man out of a score,—ah! may be out of a hundred, pretty,—has been saved by the mercy of God, and come home after being give over for dead, and told of all hands lost. I—I know a story, Heart's Delight," stammered the Captain, "o' this natur, as was told to me once; and being on this here tack, and you and me sitting alone by the fire, maybe you'd like to hear me tell it. Would you, deary?"

Florence, trembling with an agitation which she could not control or understand, involuntarily followed his glance, which went behind her into the shop, where a lamp was burning. The instant that she turned her head, the Captain sprung out of his chair, and interposed his hand.

"There's nothing there, my beauty," said the Captain. "Don't look there!"

"Why not?" asked Florence.

The Captain murmured something about its being dull that way, and about the fire being cheerful. He drew the door ajar, which had been standing open until now, and resumed his seat. Florence followed him with her eyes, and looked intently in his face.

"The story was about a ship, my lady lass," began the Captain, "as sailed out of the Port of London, with a fair wind and in fair weather, bound for—don't be took aback, my lady lass, she was only out'ard bound, pretty, only out'ard bound!"

The expression on Florence's face alarmed the Captain, who was himself very hot and flurried, and showed scarcely less agitation than she did.

"Shall I go on, Beauty?" said the Captain.

"Yes, yes, pray!" cried Florence.

The Captain made a gulp as if to get down something that was sticking in his throat, and nervously proceeded:

"That there unfort'nate ship met with such foul weather, out at sea, as don't blow once in twenty year, my darling. There was hurricanes ashore as tore up forests and blowed down towns, and there was gales at sea in them latitudes, as not the stoutest wessel ever launched could live in. Day arter day that there unfort'nate ship behaved noble, I'm told, and

did her duty brave, my pretty, but at one blow a'most her bulwarks was stove in, her masts and rudder carried away, her best men swept overboard, and she left to the mercy of the storm as had no mercy but blowed harder and harder yet, while the waves dashed over her, and beat her in, and every time they come a thundering at her, broke her like a shell. Every black spot in every mountain of water that rolled away was a bit o' the ship's life or a living man, and so she went to pieces, Beauty, and no grass will never grow upon the graves of them as manned that ship."

"They were not all lost!" cried Florence. "Some were saved!—Was one?"

"Aboard o' that there unfort'nate wessel," said the Captain, rising from his chair, and clenching his hand with prodigious energy and exultation, "was a lad, a gallant lad—as I've heerd tell—that had loved, when he was a boy, to read and talk about brave actions in shipwrecks—I've heerd him! I've heerd him!—and he remembered of 'em in his hour of need; for when the stoutest hearts and oldest hands was hove down, he was firm and cheery. It warn't the want of objects to like and love ashore that gave him courage, it was his nat'ral mind. I've seen it in his face, when he was no more than a child—aye, many a time!—and when I thought it nothing but his good looks, bless him!"

"And was he saved!" cried Florence. "Was he saved!"

"That brave lad," said the Captain,—"look at me, pretty! Don't look round—"

Florence had hardly power to repeat, "Why not?"

"Because there's nothing there, my deary," said the Captain. "Don't be took aback, pretty creetur! Don't, for the sake of Wal'r, as was dear to all on us! That there lad," said the Captain, "arter working with the best, and standing by the faint-hearted, and never making no complaint nor sign of fear, and keeping up a spirit in all hands that made 'em honour him as if he'd been a admiral—that lad, along with the second-mate and one seaman, was left, of all the beatin' hearts that went aboard that ship, the only living creeturs—lashed to a fragment of the wreck, and driftin' on the stormy sea."

"Were they saved!" cried Florence.

"Days and nights they drifted on them endless waters," said the Captain, "until at last—No! Don't look that way, pretty!—a sail bore down upon 'em, and they was, by the Lord's mercy, took aboard: two living, and one dead."

"Which of them was dead?" cried Florence.

"Not the lad I speak on," said the Captain.

"Thank God! oh thank God!"

"Amen!" returned the Captain hurriedly. "Don't be took aback! A minute more, my lady lass! with a good heart!—aboard that ship, they went a long voyage, right away across the chart (for there warn't no touching nowhere), and on that voyage the seaman as was picked up with him died. But he was spared, and——"

The Captain, without knowing what he did, had cut a slice of bread from the loaf, and put it on his hook (which was his usual toasting-fork), on which he now held it to the fire; looking behind Florence with great emotion in his face, and suffering the bread to blaze and burn like fuel.

"Was spared," repeated Florence, "and——?"

"And come home in that ship," said the Captain, still looking in the same direction, "and—don't be frightened, pretty—and landed; and one morning come cautiously to his own door to take a obserwation, knowing that his friends would think him drowned, when he sheered off at the unexpected——"

"At the unexpected barking of a dog?" cried Florence, quickly.

"Yes," roared the Captain. "Steady, darling! courage! Don't look round yet. See there! upon the wall!"

There was the shadow of a man upon the wall close to her. She started up, looked round, and, with a piercing cry, saw Walter Gay behind her!

She had no thought of him but as a brother, a brother rescued from the grave; a shipwrecked brother saved and at her side; and rushed into his arms. In all the world, he seemed to be her hope, her comfort, refuge, natural protector. "Take care of Walter, I was fond of Walter!" The dear remembrance of the plaintive voice that said so, rushed upon her soul, like music in the night. "Oh welcome home, dear Walter! Welcome to this stricken breast!" She felt the words, although she could not utter them, and held him in her pure embrace.

Captain Cuttle, in a fit of delirium, attempted to wipe his head with the blackened toast upon his hook; and finding it an uncongenial substance for the purpose, put it into the crown of his glazed hat, put his glazed hat on with some difficulty, essayed to sing a verse of Lovely Peg, broke down at the first word, and retired into the shop, whence he presently came back, express, with a face all flushed and besmeared, and the starch completely taken out of his shirt-collar, to say these words:

"Wal'r, my lad, here is a little bit of property as I should wish to make over, jintly!"

The Captain hastily produced the big watch, the tea-spoons, the sugar-tongs, and the canister, and laying them on the table, swept them with his great hand into Walter's hat; but in handing that singular strong box to Walter, he was so overcome again, that he was fain to make another retreat into the shop, and absent himself for a longer space of time than on his first retirement.

But Walter sought him out, and brought him back; and then the Captain's great apprehension was, that Florence would suffer from this new shock. He felt it so earnestly, that he turned quite rational, and positively interdicted any further allusion to Walter's adventures for some days to come. Captain Cuttle then became sufficiently composed to relieve himself of the toast in his hat, and to take his place at the tea-board; but finding Walter's grasp upon his shoulder, on one side, and Florence whispering her tearful congratulations on the other, the Captain suddenly bolted again, and was missing for a good ten minutes.

But never in all his life had the Captain's face so shone and glistened, as when, at last, he sat stationary at the tea-board, looking from Florence to Walter, and from Walter to Florence. Nor was this effect produced or at all heightened by the immense quantity of polishing he had administered to his face with his coat-sleeve during the last half-hour. It was solely the effect of his internal emotions. There was a glory and delight

within the Captain that spread itself over his whole visage, and made a perfect illumination there.

The pride with which the Captain looked upon the bronzed cheek and the courageous eyes of his recovered boy: with which he saw the generous fervour of his youth, and all its frank and hopeful qualities, shining once more, in the fresh, wholesome manner, and the ardent face: would have kindled something of this light in his countenance. The admiration and sympathy with which he turned his eyes on Florence, whose beauty, grace, and innocence could have won no truer or more zealous champion than himself, would have had an equal influence upon him. But the fulness of the glow he shed around him could only have been engendered in his contemplation of the two together, and in all the fancies springing out of that association, that came sparkling and beaming into his head, and danced about it.

How they talked of poor old Uncle Sol, and dwelt on every little circumstance relating to his disappearance; how their joy was moderated by the old man's absence and by the misfortunes of Florence; how they released Diogenes, whom the Captain had decoyed upstairs some time before, lest he should bark again; the Captain, though he was in one continual flutter, and made many more short plunges into the shop, fully comprehended. But he no more dreamed that Walter looked on Florence, as it were, from a new and far-off place; that while his eyes often sought the lovely face, they seldom met its open glance of sisterly affection, but withdrew themselves when hers were raised towards him; than he believed that it was Walter's ghost who sat beside him. He saw them there together in their youth and beauty, and he knew the story of their younger days, and he had no inch of room beneath his great blue waistcoat for anything save admiration of such a pair, and gratitude for their being re-united.

They sat thus, until it grew late. The Captain would have been content to sit so, for a week. But Walter rose, to take leave for the night.

"Going Walter!" said Florence. "Where?"

"He slings his hammock for the present, lady lass," said Captain Cuttle, "round at Brogley's. Within hail, Heart's Delight."

"I am the cause of your going away, Walter," said Florence. "There is a houseless sister in your place."

"Dear Miss Dombey," replied Walter, hesitating—"if it is not too bold, to call you so! —"

"— Walter!" she exclaimed, surprised.

"If anything could make me happier in being allowed to see and speak to you, would it not be the discovery that I had any means on earth of doing you a moment's service! Where would I not go, what would I not do, for your sake!"

She smiled, and called him brother.

"You are so changed," said Walter —

"I changed!" she interrupted.

"— To me," said Walter, softly, as if he were thinking aloud, "changed to me. I left you such a child, and find you—oh! something so different —"

"But your sister, Walter. You have not forgotten what we promised to each other, when we parted?"

"Forgotten!" But he said no more.

"And if you had—if suffering and danger had driven it from your thoughts—which it has not—you would remember it now, Walter, when you find me poor and abandoned, with no home but this, and no friends but the two who hear me speak!"

"I would! Heaven knows I would!" said Walter.

"Oh Walter!" exclaimed Florence, through her sobs and tears. "Dear brother! Show me some way through the world—some humble path that I may take alone, and labour in, and sometimes think of you as one who will protect and care for me as for a sister! Oh, help me Walter, for I need help so much!"

"Miss Dombey! Florence! I would die to help you. But your friends are proud and rich. Your father——"

"No, no! Walter!" She shrieked, and put her hands up to her head, in an attitude of terror that transfixed him where he stood. "Don't say that word!"

He never, from that hour, forgot the voice and look with which she stopped him at the name. He felt that if he were to live a hundred years, he never could forget it.

Somewhere—anywhere—but never home! All past, all gone, all lost, and broken up! The whole history of her untold slight and suffering was in the cry and look; and he felt he never could forget it, and he never did.

She laid her gentle face upon the Captain's shoulder, and related how and why she had fled. If every sorrowing tear she shed in doing so, had been a curse upon the head of him she never named or blamed, it would have been better for him, Walter thought, with awe, than to be renounced out of such a strength and might of love.

"There, precious!" said the Captain, when she ceased; and deep attention the Captain had paid to her while she spoke; listening, with his glazed hat all awry, and his mouth wide open. "Awast, awast, my eyes! Wal'r, dear lad, sheer off for to-night, and leave the pretty one to me!"

Walter took her hand in both of his, and put it to his lips, and kissed it. He knew now that she was, indeed, a homeless wandering fugitive; but, richer to him so, than in all the wealth and pride of her right station, she seemed farther off than even on the height that had made him giddy in his boyish dreams.

Captain Cuttle, perplexed by no such meditations, guarded Florence to her room, and watched at intervals upon the charmed ground outside her door—for such it truly was to him—until he felt sufficiently easy in his mind about her, to turn in under the counter. On abandoning his watch for that purpose, he could not help calling once, rapturously, through the keyhole, "Drowned. An't he, pretty?"—or, when he got down stairs, making another trial at that verse of Lovely Peg. But it stuck in his throat somehow, and he could make nothing of it; so he went to bed, and dreamed that old Sol Gills was married to Mrs. MacStinger, and kept prisoner by that lady in a secret chamber on a short allowance of victuals.

## CHAPTER L.

## MR. TOOTS'S COMPLAINT.

THERE was an empty room downstairs at the Wooden Midshipman's, which, in days of yore, had been Walter's bed-room. Walter, rousing up the Captain betimes in the morning, proposed that they should carry thither such furniture out of the little parlour, as would grace it best, so that Florence might take possession of it when she rose. As nothing could be more agreeable to Captain Cuttle than making himself very red and short of breath in such a cause, he turned to (as he himself said) with a will; and, in a couple of hours, this garret was transformed into a species of land-cabin, adorned with all the choicest moveables out of the parlour, inclusive even of the Tartar frigate, which the Captain hung up over the chimney-piece with such extreme delight, that he could do nothing for half-an-hour afterwards but walk backward from it, lost in admiration.

The Captain could be induced by no persuasion of Walter's to wind up the big watch, or to take back the canister, or to touch the sugar-tongs and tea-spoons. "No, no, my lad;" was the Captain's invariable reply to any solicitation of the kind, "I've made that there little property over, jintly." These words he repeated with great unction and gravity, evidently believing that they had the virtue of an Act of Parliament, and that unless he committed himself by some new admission of ownership, no flaw could be found in such a form of conveyance.

It was an advantage of the new arrangement, that besides the greater seclusion it afforded Florence, it admitted of the Midshipman being restored to his usual post of observation, and also of the shop shutters being taken down. The latter ceremony, however little importance the unconscious Captain attached to it, was not wholly superfluous; for, on the previous day, so much excitement had been occasioned in the neighbourhood, by the shutters remaining unopened, that the Instrument Maker's house had been honoured with an unusual share of public observation, and had been intently stared at from the opposite side of the way, by groups of hungry gazers, at any time between sunrise and sunset. The idlers and vagabonds had been particularly interested in the Captain's fate; constantly grovelling in the mud to apply their eyes to the cellar-grating, under the shop-window, and delighting their imaginations with the fancy that they could see a piece of his coat as he hung in a corner; though this settlement of him was stoutly disputed by an opposite faction, who were of opinion that he lay murdered with a hammer, on the stairs. It was not without exciting some discontent, therefore, that the subject of these rumours was seen early in the morning standing at his shop-door as hale and hearty as if nothing had happened; and the Beadle of that quarter, a man of an ambitious character, who had expected to have the distinction of being present at the breaking open of the door, and of giving evidence in full uniform before the coroner, went so far as to say to an opposite neighbour, that the chap in the glazed hat had better not try it on there—

without more particularly mentioning what—and further, that he, the Beadle, would keep his eye upon him.

“Captain Cuttle,” said Walter, musing, when they stood resting from their labours at the shop-door, looking down the old familiar street; it being still early in the morning; “nothing at all of Uncle Sol, in all that time!”

“Nothing at all, my lad,” replied the Captain, shaking his head.

“Gone in search of me, dear, kind, old man,” said Walter; “yet never write to you! But why not? He says, in effect, in this packet that you gave me,” taking the paper from his pocket, which had been opened in the presence of the enlightened Bunsby, “that if you never hear from him before opening it, you may believe him dead. Heaven forbid! But you would have heard of him, even if he *were* dead! Some one would have written, surely, by his desire, if he could not; and have said, ‘on such a day, there died in my house,’ or ‘under my care,’ or so forth, ‘Mr. Solomon Gills of London, who left this last remembrance and this last request to you.’”

The Captain, who had never climbed to such a clear height of probability before, was greatly impressed by the wide prospect it opened, and answered, with a thoughtful shake of his head, “Well said, my lad; very well said.”

“I have been thinking of this, or, at least,” said Walter, colouring, “I have been thinking of one thing and another, all through a sleepless night, and I cannot believe, Captain Cuttle, but that my Uncle Sol (Lord bless him!) is alive, and will return. I don’t so much wonder at his going away, because, leaving out of consideration that spice of the marvellous which was always in his character, and his great affection for me, before which every other consideration of his life became nothing, as no one ought to know so well as I who had the best of fathers in him,”—Walter’s voice was indistinct and husky here, and he looked away, along the street,—“leaving that out of consideration, I say, I have often read and heard of people who, having some near and dear relative, who was supposed to be shipwrecked at sea, have gone down to live on that part of the sea-shore where any tidings of the missing ship might be expected to arrive, though only an hour or two sooner than elsewhere, or have even gone upon her track to the place whither she was bound, as if their going would create intelligence. I think I should do such a thing myself, as soon as another, or sooner than many, perhaps. But why my uncle shouldn’t write to you, when he so clearly intended to do so, or how he should die abroad, and you not know it through some other hand, I cannot make out.”

Captain Cuttle observed, with a shake of his head, that Jack Bunsby himself hadn’t made it out, and that he was a man as could give a pretty taut opinion too.

“If my uncle had been a heedless young man, likely to be entrapped by jovial company to some drinking-place, where he was to be got rid of for the sake of what money he might have about him,” said Walter; “or if he had been a reckless sailor, going ashore with two or three months’ pay in his pocket, I could understand his disappearing, and leaving no trace behind. But, being what he was—and is, I hope—I can’t believe it.”

“Wal’r my lad,” inquired the Captain, wistfully eyeing him as he pondered and pondered, “what do you make of it, then?”

"Captain Cuttle," returned Walter, "I don't know what to make of it. I suppose he never *has* written? There is no doubt about that?"

"If so be as Sol Gills wrote, my lad," replied the Captain, argumentatively, "where's his dispatch?"

"Say that he intrusted it to some private hand," suggested Walter, "and that it has been forgotten, or carelessly thrown aside, or lost. Even that is more probable to me, than the other event. In short, I not only cannot bear to contemplate that other event, Captain Cuttle, but I can't, and won't."

"Hope, you see, Wal'r," said the Captain, sagely, "Hope. It's that as animates you. Hope is a buoy, for which you overhaul your Little Warbler, sentimental division, but Lord, my lad, like any other buoy, it only floats; it can't be steered nowhere. Along with the figure-head of Hope," said the Captain, "there's a anchor; but what's the good of my having a anchor, if I can't find no bottom to let it go in?"

Captain Cuttle said this rather in his character of a sagacious citizen and householder, bound to impart a morsel from his stores of wisdom to an inexperienced youth, than in his own proper person. Indeed, his face was quite luminous as he spoke, with new hope, caught from Walter; and he appropriately concluded by slapping him on the back; and saying, with enthusiasm, "Hooroar, my lad! Individually, I'm o' your opinion."

Walter, with his cheerful laugh, returned the salutation, and said:

"Only one word more about my uncle at present, Captain Cuttle. I suppose it is impossible that he can have written in the ordinary course—by mail packet, or ship letter, you understand—"

"Aye, aye, my lad," said the Captain, approvingly.

"—And that you have missed the letter, anyhow?"

"Why, Wal'r," said the Captain, turning his eyes upon him with a faint approach to a severe expression, "an't I been on the look-out for any tidings of that man o' science, old Sol Gills, your uncle, day and night, ever since I lost him? An't my heart been heavy and watchful always, along of him and you? Sleeping and waking, an't I been upon my post, and wouldn't I have scorned to quit it while this here Midshipman held together!"

"Yes, Captain Cuttle," replied Walter, grasping his hand, "I know you would, and I know how faithful and earnest all you say and feel is. I am sure of it. You don't doubt that I am as sure of it, as I am that my foot is again upon this door-step, or that I again have hold of this true hand. Do you?"

"No, no, Wal'r," returned the Captain, with his beaming face.

"I'll hazard no more conjectures," said Walter, fervently shaking the hard hand of the Captain, who shook his with no less good will. "All I will add is, Heaven forbid that I should touch my uncle's possessions, Captain Cuttle! Everything that he left here, shall remain in the care of the truest of stewards and kindest of men—and if his name is not Cuttle, he has no name! Now, best of friends, about—Miss Dombey."

There was a change in Walter's manner, as he came to these two words; and when he uttered them, all his confidence and cheerfulness appeared to have deserted him.



"I thought, before Miss Dombey stopped me when I spoke of her father last night," said Walter "—you remember how?"

The Captain well remembered, and shook his head.

"I thought," said Walter, "before that, that we had but one hard duty to perform, and that it was, to prevail upon her to communicate with her friends, and to return home."

The Captain muttered a feeble "Awast!" or a "Stand by!" or something or other, equally pertinent to the occasion; but it was rendered so extremely feeble by the total discomfiture with which he received this announcement, that what it was, is mere matter of conjecture.

"But," said Walter, "that is over. I think so, no longer. I would sooner be put back again upon that piece of wreck, on which I have so often floated, since my preservation, in my dreams, and there left to drift, and drive, and die!"

"Hooroar my lad!" exclaimed the Captain, in a burst of uncontrollable satisfaction. "Hooroar! Hooroar! Hooroar!"

"To think that she, so young, so good, and beautiful," said Walter, "so delicately brought up, and born to such a different fortune, should strive with the rough world!—But we have seen the gulf that cuts off all behind her, though no one but herself can know how deep it is; and there is no return."

Captain Cuttle, without quite understanding this, greatly approved of it, and observed, in a tone of strong corroboration, that the wind was right abaft.

"She ought not to be alone here; ought she, Captain Cuttle?" said Walter, anxiously.

"Well my lad," replied the Captain, after a little sagacious consideration. "I don't know. You being here to keep her company, you see, and you too being jintly—"

"Dear Captain Cuttle!" remonstrated Walter. "I being here! Miss Dombey, in her guileless innocent heart, regards me as her adopted brother; but what would the guile and guilt of *my* heart be, if I pretended to believe that I had any right to approach her, familiarly, in that character—if I pretended to forget that I am bound, in honour, not to do it!"

"Wal'r my lad," hinted the Captain, with some revival of his discomfiture, "an't there no other character as—"

"Oh!" returned Walter, "would you have me die in her esteem—in such esteem as hers—and put a veil between myself and her angel's face for ever, by taking advantage of her being here for refuge, so trusting and so unprotected, to endeavour to exalt myself into her lover! What do I say? There is no one in the world who would be more opposed to me if I could do so, than you."

"Wal'r my lad," said the Captain, drooping more and more, "prowiding as there is any just cause or impediment why two persons should not be jined together in the house of bondage, for which you'll overhaul the place and make a note, I hope I should declare it as promised and wowed in the banns. So there an't no other character; an't there, my lad?"

Walter briskly waved his hand in the negative.

"Well, my lad," growled the Captain slowly, "I won't deny but what

I find myself wery much down by the head, along o' this here, or but what I've gone clean about. But as to Lady-lass, Wal'r, mind you, wot's respect and duty to her, is respect and duty in my articles, howsumever disapinting; and therefore I follows in your wake, my lad, and feel as you are, no doubt, acting up to yourself. And there an't *no* other character, an't there!" said the Captain, musing over the ruins of his fallen castle, with a very despondent face.

"Now, Captain Cuttle," said Walter, starting a fresh point with a gayer air, to cheer the Captain up—but nothing could do that; he was too much concerned—"I think we should exert ourselves to find some one who will be a proper attendant for Miss Dombey while she remains here, and who may be trusted. None of her relations may. It's clear Miss Dombey feels that they are all subservient to her father. What has become of Susan?"

"The young woman?" returned the Captain. "It's my belief as she was sent away again the will of Heart's Delight. I made a signal for her when Lady-lass first come, and she rated of her wery high, and said she had been gone a long time."

"Then," said Walter, "do you ask Miss Dombey where she's gone, and we'll try to find her. The morning's getting on, and Miss Dombey will soon be rising. You are her best friend. Wait for her up stairs, and leave me to take care of all down here."

The Captain, very crest-fallen indeed, echoed the sigh with which Walter said this, and complied. Florence was delighted with her new room, anxious to see Walter, and overjoyed at the prospect of greeting her old friend Susan. But Florence could not say where Susan was gone, except that it was in Essex, and no one could say, she remembered, unless it were Mr. Toots.

With this information the melancholy Captain returned to Walter, and gave him to understand that Mr. Toots was the young gentleman whom he had encountered on the door-step, and that he was a friend of his, and that he was a young gentleman of property, and that he hopelessly adored Miss Dombey. The Captain also related how the intelligence of Walter's supposed fate had first made him acquainted with Mr. Toots, and how there was solemn treaty and compact between them, that Mr. Toots should be mute upon the subject of his love.

The question then was, whether Florencé could trust Mr. Toots; and Florence saying, with a smile, "Oh, yes, with her whole heart!" it became important to find out where Mr. Toots lived. This, Florence didn't know, and the Captain had forgotten; and the Captain was telling Walter, in the little parlour, that Mr. Toots was sure to be there soon, when in came Mr. Toots himself.

"Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, rushing into the parlour without any ceremony, "I'm in a state of mind bordering on distraction!"

Mr. Toots had discharged those words, as from a mortar, before he observed Walter, whom he recognised with what may be described as a chuckle of misery.

"You'll excuse me, Sir," said Mr. Toots, holding his forehead, "but I'm at present in that state that my brain is going, if not gone, and anything

approaching to politeness in an individual so situated, would be a hollow mockery. Captain Gills, I beg to request the favour of a private interview."

"Why, Brother," returned the Captain, taking him by the hand, "you are the man as we was on the look-out for."

"Oh Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "what a look-out that must be, of which *I* am the object! I haven't dared to shave, I'm in that rash state. I haven't had my clothes brushed. My hair is matted together. I told the Chicken that if he offered to clean my boots, I'd stretch him a Corpse before me!"

All these indications of a disordered mind were verified in Mr. Toots's appearance, which was wild and savage.

"See here, Brother," said the Captain. "This here's old Sol Gills's nevy Wal'r. Him as was supposed to have perished at sea."

Mr. Toots took his hand from his forehead, and stared at Walter.

"Good gracious me!" stammered Mr. Toots. "What a complication of misery! How-de-do? I—I—I'm afraid you must have got very wet. Captain Gills, will you allow me a word in the shop?"

He took the Captain by the coat, and going out with him whispered:

"That then, Captain Gills, is the party you spoke of, when you said that he and Miss Dombey were made for one another?"

"Why, aye, my lad," replied the disconsolate Captain; "I was of that mind once."

"And at this time!" exclaimed Mr. Toots, with his hand to his forehead again. "Of all others!—a hated rival! At least, he an't a hated rival," said Mr. Toots, stopping short, on second thoughts, and taking away his hand; "what should I hate him for? No. If my affection has been truly disinterested, Captain Gills, let me prove it now!"

Mr. Toots shot back abruptly into the parlour, and said, wringing Walter by the hand:

"How-de-do? I hope you didn't take any cold. I—I shall be very glad if you'll give me the pleasure of your acquaintance. I wish you many happy returns of the day. Upon my word and honour," said Mr. Toots, warming as he became better acquainted with Walter's face and figure, "I'm very glad to see you!"

"Thank you, heartily," said Walter. "I couldn't desire a more genuine and genial welcome."

"Couldn't you, though?" said Mr. Toots, still shaking his hand. "It's very kind of you. I'm much obliged to you. How-de-do? I hope you left everybody quite well over the—that is, upon the—I mean wherever you came from last, you know."

All these good wishes, and better intentions, Walter responded to manfully.

Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "I should wish to be strictly honourable; but I trust I may be allowed now, to allude to a certain subject that—"

"Aye, aye, my lad," returned the Captain. "Freely, freely."

"Then Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots,—“and Lieutenant Walters—are you aware that the most dreadful circumstances have been happening at Mr. Dombey's house, and that Miss Dombey herself has left her father,

who, in my opinion," said Mr. Toots, with great excitement, "is a Brute, that it would be a flattery to call a— a marble monument, or a bird of prey,—and that she is not to be found, and has gone no one knows where?"

"May I ask how you heard this?" inquired Walter.

"Lieutenant Walters," said Mr. Toots, who had arrived at that appellation by a process peculiar to himself; probably by jumbling up his Christian name with the seafaring profession, and supposing some relationship between him and the Captain, which would extend, as a matter of course, to their titles; "Lieutenant Walters, I can have no objection to make a straightforward reply. The fact is, that feeling extremely interested in everything that relates to Miss Dombey—not for any selfish reason, Lieutenant Walters, for I am well aware that the most agreeable thing I could do for all parties would be to put an end to my existence, which can only be regarded as an inconvenience—I have been in the habit of bestowing a trifle now and then upon a footman; a most respectable young man, of the name of Towlinson, who has lived in the family some time; and Towlinson informed me, yesterday evening, that this was the state of things. Since which, Captain Gills—and Lieutenant Walters—I have been perfectly frantic, and have been lying down on the sofa all night, the Ruin you behold."

"Mr. Toots," said Walter, "I am happy to be able to relieve your mind. Pray calm yourself. Miss Dombey is safe and well."

"Sir!" cried Mr. Toots, starting from his chair and shaking hands with him anew, "the relief is so excessive, and unspeakable, that if you were to tell me now that Miss Dombey was married even, I could smile. Yes, Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, appealing to him, "upon my soul and body, I really think, whatever I might do to myself immediately afterwards, that I could smile, I am so relieved."

"It will be a greater relief and delight still, to such a generous mind as your's," said Walter, not at all slow in returning his greeting, "to find that you can render service to Miss Dombey. Captain Cuttle, will you have the kindness to take Mr. Toots up stairs?"

The Captain beckoned to Mr. Toots, who followed him with a bewildered countenance, and ascending to the top of the house, was introduced, without a word of preparation from his conductor, into Florence's new retreat.

Poor Mr. Toots's amazement and pleasure at sight of her were such, that they could find a vent in nothing but extravagance. He ran up to her, seized her hand, kissed it, dropped it, seized it again, fell upon one knee, shed tears, chuckled, and was quite regardless of his danger of being pinned by Diogenes, who, inspired by the belief that there was something hostile to his mistress in these demonstrations, worked round and round him, as if only undecided at what particular point to go in for the assault, but quite resolved to do him a fearful mischief.

"Oh Di, you bad, forgetful dog! Dear Mr. Toots, I am so rejoiced to see you!"

"Thankee," said Mr. Toots, "I am pretty well, I'm much obliged to you, Miss Dombey. I hope all the family are the same."

Mr. Toots said this without the least notion of what he was talking

about, and sat down on a chair, staring at Florence with the liveliest contention of delight and despair going on in his face that any face could exhibit.

"Captain Gills and Lieutenant Walters have mentioned, Miss Dombey," gasped Mr. Toots, "that I can do you some service. If I could by any means wash out the remembrance of that day at Brighton, when I conducted myself—much more like a Parricide than a person of independent property," said Mr. Toots, with severe self-accusation, "I should sink into the silent tomb with a gleam of joy."

"Pray Mr. Toots," said Florence, "do not wish me to forget anything in our acquaintance. I never can, believe me. You have been far too kind and good to me, always."

"Miss Dombey," returned Mr. Toots, "your consideration for my feelings is a part of your angelic character. Thank you a thousand times. It's of no consequence at all."

"What we thought of asking you," said Florence, "is, whether you remember where Susan, whom you were so kind as to accompany to the coach-office when she left me, is to be found."

"Why I do not certainly, Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots, after a little consideration, "remember the exact name of the place that was on the coach; and I do recollect that she said she was not going to stop there, but was going farther on. But Miss Dombey, if your object is to find her, and to have her here, myself and the Chicken will produce her with every dispatch that devotion on my part, and great intelligence on the Chicken's, can insure."

Mr. Toots was so manifestly delighted and revived by the prospect of being useful, and the disinterested sincerity of his devotion was so unquestionable, that it would have been cruel to refuse him. Florence, with an instinctive delicacy, forbore to urge the least obstacle, though she did not forbear to overpower him with thanks; and Mr. Toots proudly took the commission upon himself for immediate execution.

"Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots, touching her proffered hand, with a pang of hopeless love visibly shooting through him, and flashing out in his face, "Good bye! Allow me to take the liberty of saying, that your misfortunes make me perfectly wretched, and that you may trust me, next to Captain Gills himself. I am quite aware, Miss Dombey, of my own deficiencies—they're not of the least consequence, thank you—but I am entirely to be relied upon, I do assure you, Miss Dombey."

With that Mr. Toots came out of the room, again accompanied by the Captain, who, standing at a little distance, holding his hat under his arm and arranging his scattered locks with his hook, had been a not uninterested witness of what passed. And when the door closed behind them, the light of Mr. Toots's life was darkly clouded again.

"Captain Gills," said that gentleman, stopping near the bottom of the stairs, and turning round, "to tell you the truth, I am not in a frame of mind at the present moment, in which I could see Lieutenant Walters with that entirely friendly feeling towards him that I should wish to harbour in my breast. We cannot always command our feelings, Captain Gills, and I should take it as a particular favour if you'd let me out at the private door."

Brother," returned the Captain, "you shall shape your own course. Wotever course you take, is plain and seamanlike, I'm very sure."

"Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "you're extremely kind. Your good opinion is a consolation to me. There is one thing," said Mr. Toots, standing in the passage, behind the half-opened door, "that I hope you'll bear in mind, Captain Gills, and that I should wish Lieutenant Walters to be made acquainted with. I have quite come into my property now, you know, and I don't know what to do with it. If I could be at all useful in a pecuniary point of view, I should glide into the silent tomb with ease and smoothness."

Mr. Toots said no more, but slipped out quietly and shut the door upon himself, to cut the Captain off from any reply.

Florence thought of this good creature, long after he had left her, with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure. He was so honest and warm-hearted, that to see him again and be assured of his truth to her in her distress, was a joy and comfort beyond all price; but for that very reason, it was so affecting to think that she caused him a moment's unhappiness, or ruffled, by a breath, the harmless current of his life, that her eyes filled with tears, and her bosom overflowed with pity. Captain Cuttle, in his different way, thought much of Mr. Toots too; and so did Walter; and when the evening came, and they were all sitting together in Florence's new room, Walter praised him in a most impassioned manner, and told Florence what he had said on leaving the house, with every graceful setting-off in the way of comment and appreciation that his own honesty and sympathy could surround it with.

Mr. Toots did not return upon the next day, or the next, or for several days; and in the meanwhile Florence, without any new alarm, lived like a quiet bird in a cage, at the top of the old Instrument-maker's house. But Florence drooped and hung her head more and more plainly, as the days went on; and the expression that had been seen in the face of the dead child, was often turned to the sky from her high window, as if it sought his angel out, on the bright shore of which he had spoken: lying on his little bed.

Florence had been weak and delicate of late, and the agitation she had undergone was not without its influences on her health. But it was no bodily illness that affected her now. She was distressed in mind; and the cause of her distress was Walter.

Interested in her, anxious for her, proud and glad to serve her, and showing all this with the enthusiasm and ardour of his character, Florence saw that he avoided her. All the long day through, he seldom approached her room. If she asked for him, he came, again for the moment as earnest and as bright as she remembered him when she was a lost child in the staring streets; but he soon became constrained—her quick affection was too watchful not to know it—and uneasy, and soon left her. Unsought, he never came, all day, between the morning and the night. When the evening closed in, he was always there, and that was her happiest time, for then she half believed that the old Walter of her childhood was not changed. But, even then, some trivial word, look, or circumstance would show her that there was an indefinable division between them which could not be passed.

And she could not but see that these revelations of a great alteration in Walter manifested themselves in despite of his utmost efforts to hide them. In his consideration for her, she thought, and in the earnestness of his desire to spare her any wound from his kind hand, he resorted to innumerable little artifices and disguises. So much the more did Florence feel the greatness of the alteration in him; so much the oftener did she weep at this estrangement of her brother.

The good Captain—her untiring, tender, ever zealous friend—saw it, too, Florence thought, and it pained him. He was less cheerful and hopeful than he had been at first, and would steal looks at her and Walter, by turns, when they were all three together of an evening, with quite a sad face.

Florence resolved, at last, to speak to Walter. She believed she knew now what the cause of his estrangement was, and she thought it would be a relief to her full heart, and would set him more at ease, if she told him she had found it out, and quite submitted to it, and did not reproach him.

It was on a certain Sunday afternoon, that Florence took this resolution. The faithful Captain, in an amazing shirt-collar, was sitting by her, reading with his spectacles on, and she asked him where Walter was.

"I think he's down below, my lady lass," returned the Captain.

"I should like to speak to him," said Florence, rising hurriedly as if to go down stairs.

"I'll rouse him up here, Beauty," said the Captain, "in a trice."

Thereupon the Captain, with much alacrity, shouldered his book—for he made it a point of duty to read none but very large books on a Sunday, as having a more staid appearance: and had bargained, years ago, for a prodigious volume at a book-stall, five lines of which utterly confounded him at any time, insomuch that he had not yet ascertained of what subject it treated—and withdrew. Walter soon appeared.

"Captain Cuttle tells me, Miss Dombey,"—he eagerly began on coming in—but stopped when he saw her face.

"You are not so well to-day. You look distressed. You have been weeping."

He spoke so kindly, and with such a fervent tremor in his voice, that the tears gushed into her eyes at the sound of his words.

"Walter," said Florence, gently, "I am not quite well, and I have been weeping. I want to speak to you."

He sat down opposite to her, looking at her beautiful and innocent face; and his own turned pale, and his lips trembled.

"You said, upon the night when I knew that you were saved—and oh! dear Walter what I felt that night, and what I hoped!"—

He put his trembling hand upon the table between them, and sat looking at her.

—"that I was changed. I was surprised to hear you say so, but I understand, now, that I am. Don't be angry with me, Walter. I was too much overjoyed to think of it, then."

She seemed a child to him again. It was the ingenuous, confiding, loving child he saw and heard. Not the dear woman, at whose feet he would have laid the riches of the earth.

"You remember the last time I saw you, Walter, before you went away?"

He put his hand into his breast, and took out a little purse.

"I have always worn it round my neck! If I had gone down in the deep, it would have been with me at the bottom of the sea."

"And you will wear it still, Walter, for my old sake?"

"Until I die!"

She laid her hand on his, as fearlessly and simply, as if not a day had intervened since she gave him the little token of remembrance.

"I am glad of that. I shall be always glad to think so, Walter. Do you recollect that a thought of this change seemed to come into our minds at the same time that evening, when we were talking together?"

"No!" he answered, in a wondering tone.

"Yes, Walter. I had been the means of injuring your hopes and prospects even then. I feared to think so, then, but I know it now. If you were able, then, in your generosity, to hide from me that you knew it too, you cannot do so now, although you try as generously as before. You do. I thank you for it, Walter, deeply, truly; but you cannot succeed. You have suffered too much in your own hardships, and in those of your dearest relation, quite to overlook the innocent cause of all the peril and affliction that has befallen you. You cannot quite forget me in that character, and we can be brother and sister no longer. But, dear Walter, do not think that I complain of you in this. I might have known it—ought to have known it—but forgot it in my joy. All I hope is that you may think of me less irksomely when this feeling is no more a secret one; and all I ask is, Walter, in the name of the poor child who was your sister once, that you will not struggle with yourself, and pain yourself, for my sake, now that I know all!"

Walter had looked upon her while she said this, with a face so full of wonder and amazement that it had room for nothing else. Now he caught up the hand that touched his, so entreatingly, and held it between his own.

"Oh, Miss Dombey," he said, "is it possible that while I have been suffering so much, in striving with my sense of what is due to you, and must be rendered to you, I have made you suffer what your words disclose to me. Never, never, before Heaven, have I thought of you but as the single, bright, pure, blessed recollection of my boyhood and my youth. Never have I from the first, and never shall I to the last, regard your part in my life, but as something sacred, never to be lightly thought of, never to be esteemed enough, never, until death, to be forgotten. Again to see you look, and hear you speak, as you did on that night when we parted, is happiness to me that there are no words to utter; and to be loved and trusted as your brother, is the next great gift I could receive and prize!"

"Walter," said Florence, looking at him earnestly, but with a changing face, "what is that which is due to me, and must be rendered to me, at the sacrifice of all this?"

"Respect," said Walter, in a low tone. "Reverence."

The colour dawned in her face, and she timidly and thoughtfully withdrew her hand; still looking at him with unabated earnestness.

"I have not a brother's right," said Walter. "I have not a brother's claim. I left a child. I find a woman."



The colour overspread her face. She made a gesture as if of entreaty that he would say no more, and her face dropped upon her hands.

They were both silent for a time; she weeping.

"I owe it to a heart so trusting, pure, and good," said Walter, "even to tear myself from it, though I rend my own. How dare I say it is my sister's!"

She was weeping still.

"If you had been happy; surrounded as you should be by loving and admiring friends, and by all that makes the station you were born to, enviable," said Walter; "and if you had called me brother, then, in your affectionate remembrance of the past, I could have answered to the name from my distant place, with no inward assurance that I wronged your spotless truth by doing so. But here—and now!"

"Oh thank you, thank you, Walter! Forgive my having wronged you so much. I had no one to advise me. I am quite alone."

"Florence!" said Walter, passionately, "I am hurried on to say, what I thought, but a few moments ago, nothing could have forced from my lips. If I had been prosperous; if I had any means or hope of being one day able to restore you to a station near your own; I would have told you that there was one name you might bestow upon me—a right above all others, to protect and cherish you—that I was worthy of in nothing but the love and honour that I bore you, and in my whole heart being yours. I would have told you that it was the only claim that you could give me to defend and guard you, which I dare accept and dare assert; but that if I had that right, I would regard it as a trust so precious and so priceless, that the undivided truth and fervor of my life would poorly acknowledge its worth."

The head was still bent down, the tears still falling, and the bosom swelling with its sobs.

"Dear Florence! Dearest Florence! whom I called so in my thoughts before I could consider how presumptuous and wild it was. One last time let me call you by your own dear name, and touch this gentle hand in token of your sisterly forgetfulness of what I have said."

She raised her head, and spoke to him with such a solemn sweetness in her eyes; with such a calm, bright, placid smile shining on him through her tears; with such a low, soft tremble in her frame and voice; that the innermost chords of his heart were touched, and his sight was dim as he listened.

"No Walter, I cannot forget it. I would not forget it, for the world. Are you—are you very poor?"

"I am but a wanderer," said Walter, "making voyages to live, across the sea. That is my calling now."

"Are you soon going away again, Walter?"

"Very soon."

She sat looking at him for a moment; then timidly put her trembling hand in his.

"If you will take me for your wife, Walter, I will love you dearly. If you will let me go with you, Walter, I will go to the world's end without fear. I can give up nothing for you—I have nothing to resign, and no one to forsake; but all my love and life shall be devoted to you, and with

my last breath I will breathe your name to God if I have sense and memory left."

He caught her to his heart, and laid her cheek against his own, and now, no more repulsed, no more forlorn, she wept indeed, upon the breast of her dear lover.

Blessed Sunday Bells, ringing so tranquilly in their entranced and happy ears! Blessed Sunday peace and quiet, harmonising with the calmness in their souls, and making holy air around them! Blessed twilight stealing on, and shading her so soothingly and gravely, as she falls asleep, like a hushed child, upon the bosom she has clung to!

Oh load of love and trustfulness that lies so lightly there! Aye, look down on the closed eyes, Walter, with a proudly tender gaze; for in all the wide wide world they seek but thee now—only thee!

The Captain remained in the little parlour until it was quite dark. He took the chair on which Walter had been sitting, and looked up at the skylight, until the day, by little and little, faded away, and the stars peeped down. He lighted a candle, lighted a pipe, smoked it out, and wondered what on earth was going on upstairs, and why they didn't call him to tea.

Florence came to his side while he was in the height of his wonderment.

"Aye! lady lass!" cried the Captain. "Why, you and Wal'r have had a long spell o' talk, my beauty."

Florence put her little hand round one of the great buttons of his coat, and said, looking down into his face:

"Dear Captain, I want to tell you something, if you please."

The Captain raised his head pretty smartly, to hear what it was. Catching by this means a more distinct view of Florence, he pushed back his chair, and himself with it, as far as they could go.

"What! Heart's Delight!" cried the Captain, suddenly elated. "Is it that?"

"Yes!" said Florence, eagerly.

"Wal'r! Husband! THAT?" roared the Captain, tossing up his glazed hat into the skylight.

"Yes!" cried Florence, laughing and crying together.

The Captain immediately hugged her; and then, picking up the glazed hat and putting it on, drew her arm through his, and conducted her upstairs again; where he felt that the great joke of his life was now to be made.

"What, Wal'r my lad!" said the Captain, looking in at the door, with his face like an amiable warming-pan. "So there ain't no other character, ain't there?"

He had like to have suffocated himself with this pleasantry, which he repeated at least forty times during tea; polishing his radiant face with the sleeve of his coat, and dabbing his head all over with his pocket-handkerchief, in the intervals. But he was not without a graver source of enjoyment to fall back upon, when so disposed, for he was repeatedly heard to say in an under tone, as he looked with ineffable delight at Walter and Florence:

"Ed'ard Cuttle, my lad, you never shaped a better course in your life, than when you made that there little property over, jintly!"

## CHAPTER LI.

## MR. DOMBEY AND THE WORLD.

WHAT is the proud man doing, while the days go by? Does he ever think of his daughter, or wonder where she is gone? Does he suppose she has come home, and is leading her old life in the weary house? No one can answer for him. He has never uttered her name, since. His household dread him too much to approach a subject on which he is resolutely dumb; and the only person who dare question him, he silences immediately.

"My dear Paul!" murmurs his sister, sidling into the room, on the day of Florence's departure, "your wife! that upstart woman! Is it possible that what I hear confusedly, is true, and that this is her return for your unparalleled devotion to her; extending, I am sure, even to the sacrifice of your own relations, to her caprices and haughtiness! My poor brother!"

With this speech, feelingly reminiscent of her not having been asked to dinner on the day of the first party, Mrs. Chick makes great use of her pocket handkerchief, and falls on Mr. Dombey's neck. But Mr. Dombey frigidly lifts her off, and hands her to a chair.

"I thank you, Louisa," he says, "for this mark of your affection; but desire that our conversation may refer to any other subject. When I bewail my fate, Louisa, or express myself as being in want of consolation, you can offer it, if you will have the goodness."

"My dear Paul," rejoins his sister, with her handkerchief to her face, and shaking her head, "I know your great spirit, and will say no more upon a theme so painful and revolting;" on the heads of which two adjectives, Mrs. Chick visits scathing indignation; "but pray let me ask you—though I dread to hear something that will shock and distress me—that unfortunate child Florence—"

Louisa!" says her brother sternly, "silence! Not another word of this!"

Mrs. Chick can only shake her head, and use her handkerchief, and moan over degenerate Dombey's, who are no Dombey's. But whether Florence has been inculcated in the flight of Edith, or has followed her, or has done too much, or too little, or anything, or nothing, she has not the least idea.

He goes on, without deviation, keeping his thoughts and feelings close within his own breast, and imparting them to no one. He makes no search for his daughter. He may think that she is with his sister, or that she is under his own roof. He may think of her constantly, or he may never think about her. It is all one for any sign he makes.

But this is sure; he does *not* think that he has lost her. He has no suspicion of the truth. He has lived too long shut up in his towering supremacy, seeing her, a patient gentle creature, in the path below it, to have any fear of that. Shaken as he is by his disgrace, he is not yet humbled

to the level earth. The root is broad and deep, and in the course of years its fibres have spread out and gathered nourishment from everything around it. The tree is struck, but not down.

Though he hide the world within him from the world without—which he believes has but one purpose for the time, and that, to watch him eagerly wherever he goes—he cannot hide those rebel traces of it, which escape in hollow eyes and cheeks, a haggard forehead, and a moody, brooding air. Impenetrable as before, he is still an altered man; and, proud as ever, he is humbled, or those marks would not be there.

The world. What the world thinks of him, how it looks at him, what it sees in him, and what it says—this is the haunting demon of his mind. It is everywhere where he is; and, worse than that, it is everywhere where he is not. It comes out with him among his servants, and yet he leaves it whispering behind; he sees it pointing after him in the street; it is waiting for him in his counting-house; it leers over the shoulders of rich men among the merchants; it goes beckoning and babbling among the crowd; it always anticipates him, in every place; and is always busiest, he knows, when he has gone away. When he is shut up in his room at night, it is in his house, outside it, audible in footsteps on the pavement, visible in print upon the table, steaming to and fro on railroads and in ships; restless and busy everywhere, with nothing else but him.

It is not a phantom of his imagination. It is as active in other people's minds as in his. Witness Cousin Feenix, who comes from Baden-Baden, purposely to talk to him. Witness Major Bagstock, who accompanies Cousin Feenix on that friendly mission.

Mr. Dombey receives them with his usual dignity, and stands erect, in his old attitude, before the fire. He feels that the world is looking at him out of their eyes. That it is in the stare of the pictures. That Mr. Pitt, upon the book-case, represents it. That there are eyes in its own map, hanging on the wall.

"An unusually cold spring," says Mr. Dombey—to deceive the world.

"Damme, Sir," says the Major, in the warmth of friendship, "Joseph Bagstock is a bad hand at a counterfeit. If you want to hold your friends off, Dombey, and to give them the cold shoulder, J. B. is not the man for your purpose. Joe is rough and tough, Sir; blunt, Sir, blunt, is Joe. His Royal Highness the late Duke of York did me the honour to say, deservedly or undeservedly—never mind that—'If there is a man in the service on whom I can depend for coming to the point, that man is Joe—Joe Bagstock.'"

Mr. Dombey intimates his acquiescence.

"Now, Dombey," says the Major, "I am a man of the world. Our friend Feenix—if I may presume to—"

"Honoured, I am sure," says Cousin Feenix.

"—is," proceeds the Major, with a wag of his head, "also a man of the world. Dombey, *you* are a man of the world. Now, when three men of the world meet together, and are friends—as I believe"—again appealing to Cousin Feenix.

"I am sure," says Cousin Feenix, "most friendly."

"—and are friends," resumes the Major, "Old Joe's opinion is (J may be wrong), that the opinion of the world on any particular subject, is very easily got at."

"Undoubtedly," says Cousin Feenix. "In point of fact, it's quite a self-evident sort of thing. I am extremely anxious, Major, that my friend Dombey should hear me express my very great astonishment and regret, that my lovely and accomplished relative, who was possessed of every qualification to make a man happy, should have so far forgotten what was due to—in point of fact, to the world—as to commit herself in such a very extraordinary manner. I have been in a devilish state of depression ever since; and said indeed to Long Saxby last night—man of six foot ten, with whom my friend Dombey is probably acquainted—that it had upset me in a confounded way, and made me bilious. It induces a man to reflect, this kind of fatal catastrophe," says Cousin Feenix, "that events do occur in quite a Providential manner; for if my Aunt had been living at the time, I think the effect upon a devilish lively woman like herself, would have been prostration, and that she would have fallen, in point of fact, a victim."

"Now, Dombey!—" says the Major, resuming his discourse with great energy.

"I beg your pardon," interposes Cousin Feenix. "Allow me another word. My friend Dombey will permit me to say, that if any circumstance could have added to the most infernal state of pain in which I find myself on this occasion, it would be the natural amazement of the world at my lovely and accomplished relative (as I must still beg leave to call her) being supposed to have so committed herself with a person—man with white teeth, in point of fact—of very inferior station to her husband. But while I must, rather peremptorily, request my friend Dombey not to criminate my lovely and accomplished relative until her criminality is perfectly established, I beg to assure my friend Dombey that the family I represent, and which is now almost extinct (devilish sad reflection for a man), will interpose no obstacle in his way, and will be happy to assent to any honourable course of proceeding, with a view to the future, that he may point out. I trust my friend Dombey will give me credit for the intentions by which I am animated in this very melancholy affair, and—a—in point of fact, I am not aware that I need trouble my friend Dombey with any further observations."

Mr. Dombey bows, without raising his eyes, and is silent.

"Now, Dombey," says the Major, "our friend Feenix having, with an amount of eloquence that old Joe B. has never heard surpassed—no, by the Lord, Sir! never!"—says the Major, very blue, indeed, and grasping his cane in the middle—"stated the case as regards the lady, I shall presume upon our friendship, Dombey, to offer a word on another aspect of it. Sir," says the Major, with the horse's cough, "the world in these things has opinions, which must be satisfied."

"I know it," rejoins Mr. Dombey.

"Of course you know it, Dombey," says the Major. "Damme, Sir, I know you know it. A man of your calibre is not likely to be ignorant of it."

"I hope not," replies Mr. Dombey.

"Dombey!" says the Major, "you will guess the rest. I speak out—prematurely, perhaps—because the Bagstock breed have always spoken out. Little, Sir, have they ever got by doing it; but it's in the Bagstock blood. A shot is to be taken at this man. You have J. B. at your elbow. He claims the name of friend. God bless you!"

"Major," returns Mr. Dombey, "I am obliged. I shall put myself in your hands when the time comes. The time not being come, I have forborne to speak to you."

"Where is the fellow, Dombey?" inquires the Major, after gasping and looking at him, for a minute.

"I don't know."

"Any intelligence of him?" asks the Major.

"Yes."

"Dombey, I am rejoiced to hear it," says the Major. "I congratulate you."

"You will excuse—even you, Major," replies Mr. Dombey, "my entering into any further detail at present. The intelligence is of a singular kind, and singularly obtained. It may turn out to be valueless; it may turn out to be true. I cannot say, at present. My explanation must stop here."

Although this is but a dry reply to the Major's purple enthusiasm, the Major receives it graciously, and is delighted to think that the world has such a fair prospect of soon receiving its due. Cousin Feenix is then presented with his meed of acknowledgment by the husband of his lovely and accomplished relative, and Cousin Feenix and Major Bagstock retire, leaving that husband to the world again, and to ponder at leisure on their representation of its state of mind concerning his affairs, and on its just and reasonable expectations.

But who sits in the housekeeper's room, shedding tears, and talking to Mrs. Pipchin in a low tone, with uplifted hands? It is a lady with her face concealed in a very close black bonnet, which appears not to belong to her. It is Miss Tox, who has borrowed this disguise from her servant, and comes from Princess's Place, thus secretly, to revive her old acquaintance with Mrs. Pipchin, in order to get certain information of the state of Mr. Dombey.

"How does he bear it, my dear creature?" asks Miss Tox.

"Well," says Mrs. Pipchin, in her snappish way, "he's pretty much as usual."

"Externally," suggests Miss Tox. "But what he feels within!"

Mrs. Pipchin's hard grey eye looks doubtful as she answers, in three distinct jerks, "Ah! Perhaps. I suppose so."

"To tell you my mind Lucretia," says Mrs. Pipchin; she still calls Miss Tox Lucretia, on account of having made her first experiments in the child-quelling-line of business on that lady, when an unfortunate and weazen little girl of tender years; "to tell you my mind, Lucretia, I think it's a good riddance. I don't want any of your brazen faces here, myself!"

"Brazen indeed! Well may you say brazen, Mrs. Pipchin!" returns Miss Tox. "To leave him! Such a noble figure of a man!" And here Miss Tox is overcome.

"I don't know about noble, I'm sure," observes Mrs. Pipchin, irascibly rubbing her nose. "But I know this—that when people meet with trials, they must bear 'em. Hoity, toity! I have had enough to bear myself, in my time! What a fuss there is! She's gone, and well got rid of. Nobody wants her back, I should think!"

This hint of the Peruvian Mines, causes Miss Tox to rise to go away; when Mrs. Pipchin rings the bell for Towlinson to show her out. Mr. Towlinson, not having seen Miss Tox for ages, grins, and hopes she's well; observing that he didn't know her at first, in that bonnet.

"Pretty well, Towlinson, I thank you," says Miss Tox. "I beg you'll have the goodness, when you happen to see me here, not to mention it. My visits are merely to Mrs. Pipchin."

"Very good, Miss," says Towlinson.

"Shocking circumstances occur, Towlinson," says Miss Tox.

"Very much so indeed, Miss," rejoins Towlinson.

"I hope, Towlinson," says Miss Tox, who in her instruction of the Toodle family, has acquired an admonitorial tone, and a habit of improving passing occasions, "that what has happened here, will be a warning to you, Towlinson."

"Thank you, Miss, I'm sure," says Towlinson.

He appears to be falling into a consideration of the manner in which this warning ought to operate in his particular case, when the vinegary Mrs. Pipchin, suddenly stirring him up with a "What are you doing! Why don't you show the lady to the door!" he ushers Miss Tox forth. As she passes Mr. Dombey's room, she shrinks into the inmost depths of the black bonnet, and walks on tiptoe; and there is not another atom in the world which haunts him so, that feels such sorrow and solicitude about him, as Miss Tox takes out under the black bonnet into the street, and tries to carry home shadowed from the newly-lighted lamps.

But Miss Tox is not a part of Mr. Dombey's world. She comes back every evening at dusk; adding clogs and an umbrella to the bonnet on wet nights; and bears the grins of Towlinson, and the huffs and rebuffs of Mrs. Pipchin, and all to ask how he does, and how he bears his misfortune: but she has nothing to do with Mr. Dombey's world. Exacting and harassing as ever, it goes on without her; and she, a by no means bright or particular star, moves in her little orbit in the corner of another system, and knows it quite well, and comes, and cries, and goes away, and is satisfied. Verily Miss Tox is easier of satisfaction than the world that troubles Mr. Dombey so much!

At the Counting House, the clerks discuss the great disaster in all its lights and shades, but chiefly wonder who will get Mr. Carker's place. They are generally of opinion that it will be shorn of some of its emoluments, and made uncomfortable by newly devised checks and restrictions; and those who are beyond all hope of it are quite sure they would rather not have it, and don't at all envy the person for whom it may prove to be reserved. Nothing like the prevailing sensation has existed in the Counting House since Mr. Dombey's little son died; but all such excitements there, take a social, not to say jovial turn, and lead to the cultivation of good fellowship. A reconciliation is established on this propitious occasion between the acknowledged wit of the Counting House and an aspiring rival, with whom he has been at deadly feud for months; and a little dinner being proposed, in commemoration of their happily restored amity, takes place at a neighbouring tavern; the wit in the chair; the rival acting as Vice-President. The orations following the removal of the cloth are opened by the Chair, who says, Gentlemen, he can't disguise from

himself that this is not a time for private dissensions. Recent occurrences to which he need not more particularly allude, but which have not been altogether without notice in some Sunday Papers, and in a daily paper which he need not name (here every other member of the company names it in an audible murmur), have caused him to reflect; and he feels that for him and Robinson to have any personal differences at such a moment, would be for ever to deny that good feeling in the general cause, for which he has reason to think and hope that the gentlemen in Dombey's House have always been distinguished. Robinson replies to this like a man and a brother; and one gentleman who has been in the office three years, under continual notice to quit on account of lapses in his arithmetic, appears in a perfectly new light, suddenly bursting out with a thrilling speech, in which he says, May their respected chief never again know the desolation which has fallen on his hearth! and says a great variety of things, beginning with "May he never again," which are received with thunders of applause. In short, a most delightful evening is passed, only interrupted by a difference between two juniors, who, quarrelling about the probable amount of Mr. Carker's late receipts per annum, defy each other with decanters, and are taken out greatly excited. Soda water is in general request at the office next day, and most of the party deem the bill an imposition.

As to Perch, the messenger, he is in a fair way of being ruined for life. He finds himself again, constantly in bars of public houses, being treated, and lying dreadfully. It appears that he met every body concerned in the late transaction, everywhere, and said to them, "Sir," or "Madam," as the case was, "why do you look so pale?" at which each shuddered from head to foot, and said, "Oh Perch!" and ran away. Either the consciousness of these enormities, or the reaction consequent on liquor, reduces Mr. Perch to an extreme state of low spirits at that hour of the evening when he usually seeks consolation in the society of Mrs. Perch at Ball's Pond; and Mrs. Perch frets a good deal, for she fears his confidence in woman is shaken now, and that he half expects on coming home at night to find her gone off with some Viscount.

Mr. Dombey's servants are becoming, at the same time, quite dissipated, and unfit for other service. They have hot suppers every night, and "talk it over" with smoking drinks upon the board. Mr. Towlinson is always maudlin after half-past ten, and frequently begs to know whether he didn't say that no good would ever come of living in a corner house? They whisper about Miss Florence, and wonder where she is; but agree that if Mr. Dombey don't know, Mrs. Dombey does. This brings them to the latter, of whom Cook says, She had a stately way though, hadn't she? But she was too high! They all agree that she was too high; and Mr. Towlinson's old flame the housemaid (who is very virtuous) entreats that you will never talk to her any more, about people who holds their heads up, as if the ground wasn't good enough for 'em.

Everything that is said and done about it except by Mr. Dombey, is done in chorus. Mr. Dombey and the world are alone together.



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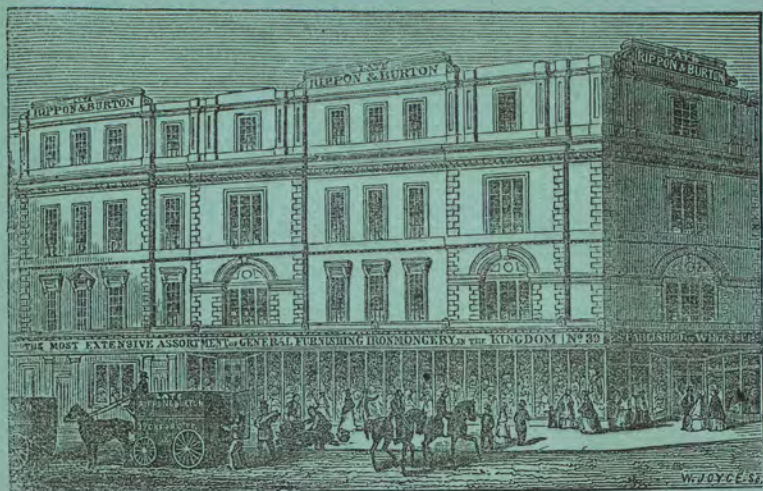
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