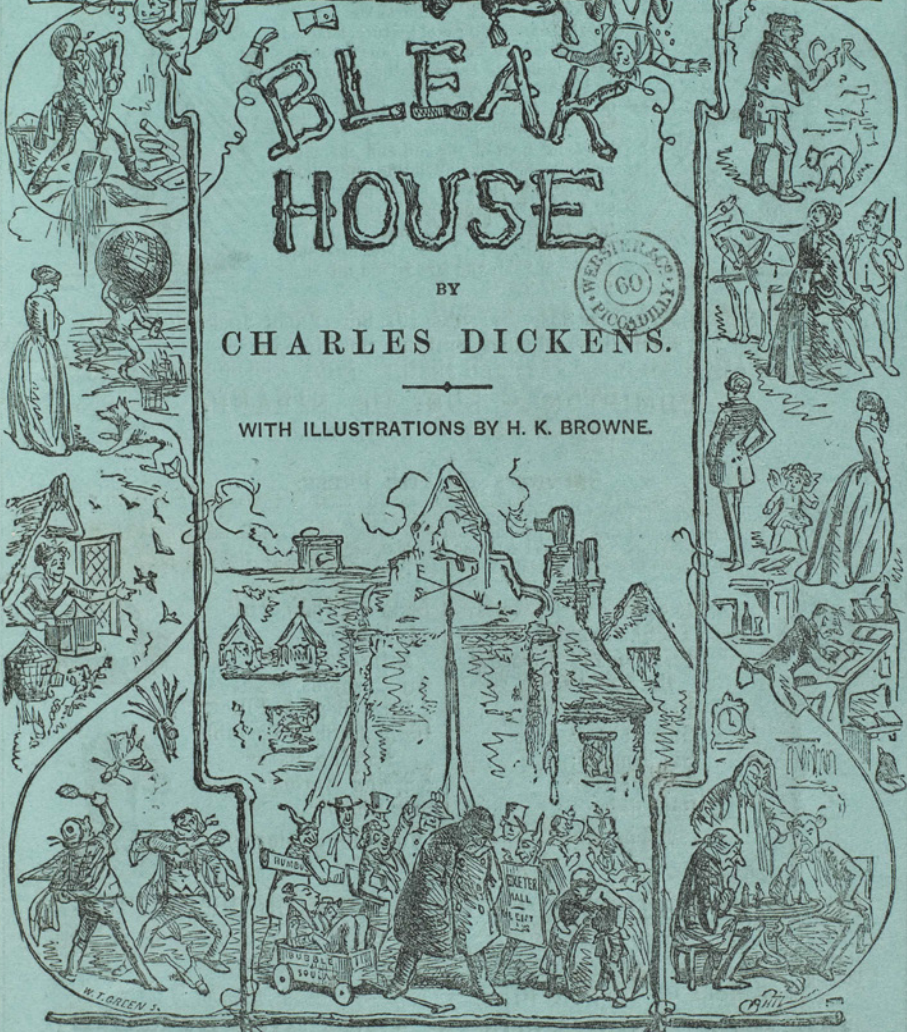




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Allsopp's Strong (the Old Burton) Ale, in imperial pints	.....	6s. 6d.

But there is something more that I can do for the public good. It ought to be more generally known to families, that there is a great advantage in having the Ale fresh—of the year's brewing, as the tonic properties and fragrant bitterness of the hop are best elicited in the fresh state of draught from the cask. I am therefore prepared to supply "Allsopp's Pale and Bitter Ales" at once in casks, as follows:—

Allsopp's Pale Ale, 18-gallon casks	.....	30s.
Allsopp's Mild Ale, 18-gallon casks	.....	33s.
Allsopp's Strong (the Old Burton) Ale 18-gallon casks	.....	45s.

I wish it to be distinctly understood by the public, once for all, that whenever my name appears on cask or bottle, the measure is full, true, and imperial, the Ale of the finest, and the Brewers, Messrs. Allsopp and Sons only.

HARRINGTON PARKER, Beer-merchant,  
5 $\frac{1}{2}$ , Pall-Mall.

### CITY OF LONDON LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.

2, ROYAL EXCHANGE BUILDINGS, LONDON.

Subscribed Capital, A Quarter of a Million.

TRUSTEES.

Mr. Commissioner West, Leeds.

The Hon. W. F. Campbell, Stratheden House.

John Thomas, Esq., Bishops' Stortford.

This Society embraces every advantage of existing Life Offices, viz., the Mutual System, without its risks and liabilities; the Proprietary, with its security, simplicity, and economy; the Accumulative System, introduced by this Society, uniting Life with the convenience of a Deposit Bank; Self-Protecting Policies also introduced by this Society, embracing by one Policy and one rate of premium a Life Assurance, an Endowment, and a Deferred Annuity; "no Forfeitures"; Loans with commensurate Assurance. Bonus recently declared, 20 per cent.

EDW. FRED. LEEKS, Secretary.



### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT! METALLIC PEN MAKER TO THE QUEEN. BY ROYAL COMMAND.

**JOSEPH GILLOTT** most respectfully begs to inform the Commercial World, Scholastic Institutions, and the Public generally, that by a novel application of his unrivalled Machinery for making Steel Pens, and in accordance with the scientific spirit of the times, he has introduced a new series of his useful productions, which for excellence of temper, quality of material, and, above all, cheapness in price, he believes will ensure universal approbation, and defy competition. Each pen bears the impress of his name as a guarantee of quality; and they are put up in the usual style of Boxes, containing One Gross each, with Label outside, and fac-simile of his signature.

Victoria Works, Graham-street, Birmingham,  
April 20th, 1853.

### ALBANY LAMP AND CANDLE-MANUFACTORY — CLARKE'S Russian Wax

Candles, 1s. per lb., burn superior to all others. Best Albany Composite Candles, 8d. per lb., do not require snuffing; for ordinary purposes the Cheapest Candles that can be used. Moulds, 7d., Store Candles, 6d. per lb.; Express Pale Soap, very old and dry, 54s. per cwt.; Good Yellow, 50s. and 44s.; Best Mottled, 56s.; Honey Soap, 1s.; Old Brown Windsor, 2s.; all other Scented Soaps, 1s. 6d. per lb.; Patent Albany Oil, 4s. 6d. per gallon, superior to Spem; CLARKE'S Refined Oil for French Lamps, 4s. per gallon; Solar, 3s. 6d. Italian goods of the finest quality at the Wholesale Price; Lamps of every description manufactured on the premises, for cash only.

SAMUEL CLARKE, Albany Lamp and Candle Manufactory, 55, Albany-street, Regent's-park, London, within two minutes' walk of the Colosseum.

N.B. Country Orders, amounting to £10 or upwards, Carriage Free.

### HOLLOWAY'S PILLS.

**HOLLOWAY'S PILLS.**—Extraordinary CURE of PALPITATION of the HEART.—Mr. John Baker, of Wordsley, states, in a letter to Professor Holloway, that a few years ago he was under medical treatment in the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, for Palpitation of the Heart, without deriving any benefit. He then tried Holloway's Pills, which gave him immediate relief, and in a short period his health was so much improved as to enable him to resume his employment. A short time since, however, he was seized with violent sickness and vomiting of blood, from which he has entirely recovered by having recourse to these invaluable Pills; and he now enjoys excellent health.—Sold by all Druggists and at Professor Holloway's Establishment, 244, Strand, London.



# CLERICAL, MEDICAL, AND GENERAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.

ESTABLISHED 1824.

EMPOWERED BY SPECIAL ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

## ADVANTAGES.

**EXTENSION OF LIMITS OF RESIDENCE.**—The Assured can reside in any part of Europe, the Holy Land, Egypt, Madeira, the Cape, Australia, New Zealand, and in most parts of North and South America, without extra charge.

## MUTUAL SYSTEM WITHOUT THE RISK OF PARTNERSHIP.

The small share of Profit divisible in future among the Shareholders being now provided for, the Assured will hereafter derive all the benefits obtainable from a Mutual Office, with, at the same time, complete freedom from liability—thus combining in the same office all the advantages of both systems.

The Assurance Fund already invested amounts to £840,000, and the Income exceeds £136,000 per annum.

**CREDIT SYSTEM.**—On Policies for the whole of Life, one half of the Annual Premiums for the first five years may remain on credit, and may either continue as a debt on the Policy, or may be paid off at any time.

**LOANS.**—Loans are advanced on Policies which have been in existence five years and upwards to the extent of nine-tenths of their value.

**BONUSES.**—FIVE BONUSES have been declared: at the last, in January, 1852, the sum of £131,125 was added to the Policies, producing a Bonus varying with the different ages from 24½ to 55 per cent. on the Premiums paid during the five years, or from £5 to £12 10s. per cent. on the Sum Assured.

**PARTICIPATION IN PROFITS.**—Policies participate in the Profits in proportion to the number and amount of the Premiums paid between every division, so that if only one year's Premium be received prior to the books being closed for any division, the Policy on which it was paid will obtain its due share. The books close for the next division on 30th June, 1856, therefore those who effect Policies before the 30th June next, will be entitled to one year's additional share of Profits over later assurers.

**APPLICATION OF BONUSES.**—The next and future Bonuses may be either received in Cash, or

applied at the option of the assured in any other way.

**NON-PARTICIPATION IN PROFITS.**—Assurances may be effected for a Fixed Sum at considerably reduced rates, and the Premiums for term Policies are lower than at most other safe Offices.

**PROMPT SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS.**—Claims paid thirty days after proof of death, and all Policies are *Indisputable* except in cases of fraud.

**INVALID LIVES** may be assured at rates proportioned to the increased risk.

**POLICIES** are granted on the lives of persons in any station, and of every age, and for any sum on one life from £50 to £10,000.

**PREMIUMS** may be paid yearly, half-yearly, or quarterly, but if a payment be omitted from any cause, the Policy can be revived within fourteen Months.

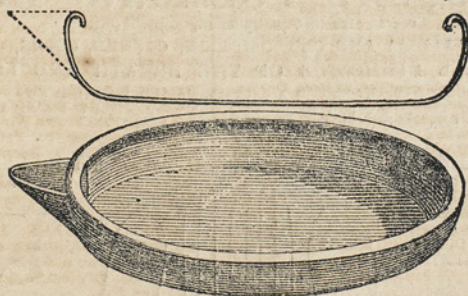
The Accounts and Balance Sheets are at all times open to the inspection of the Assured, or of *Persons desirous to assure.*

Tables of Rates and Forms of Proposal can be obtained of any of the Society's Agents, or of

GEORGE H. PINCKARD, Resident Secretary,  
99, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY,  
LONDON.

# THE VICTORIA REGIA SPONGING BATH.

Registered according to Act of Parliament, 6 & 7 Vic., c. 65.



THE peculiar advantage this Bath possesses over all other Sparging Baths is this,—the water cannot be splashed over its sides, the edge of the rim curls over inwards, after the manner of the magnificent leaf of the Victoria Regia, forming a hollow channel or groove all round, which effectually checks the water from dashing over. This bath will prove a desideratum long sought for, and by the moderation of price and great utility, must entirely supersede all others of the kind.

Sizes 27 — 30 — 33 — 36 inches diameter.  
Prices 16s. 19s. 22s. 26s.

Securely packed, and forwarded carriage paid to any Railway Station in England, upon receipt of a Post Office Order, including 2s. extra, payable to WILLIAM S. ADAMS & SON, at Charing Cross.

BATHS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE PRICES.

WILLIAM S. ADAMS & SON,  
FURNISHING IRONMONGERS, 57, HAYMARKET, LONDON.

## SUMMER.

THE recurrence of the summer solstice invites the full display of Female Beauty—adorning the Fashionable Promenade, the ride, and drive; in all cases, *fervid heat*, and its concomitant, *dust*, materially injure the skin, producing *Sunburn, Tan, Freckles*, and *Discolorations*, of an almost indelible character. To obviate and eradicate these baneful results, recourse may with confidence be had to

### ROWLAND'S KALYDOR

A preparation of vital importance to the sustainment of Female Beauty. It exerts the most *soothing, gentle, cooling*, and *purifying* action on the skin, and by its agency on the pores and minute secretory vessels, dispels all impurities from the surface, allays every tendency to inflammation, and thus effectually dissipates all *Redness, Tan, Pimples, Spots, Freckles*, and other cutaneous visitations. Its constant use will transform the *bilious and clouded COMPLEXION* to one of *clear and spotless white*; while it invests the *NECK, HANDS, and ARMS*, with *delicacy and fairness*, and perpetuates the charms which it bestows to the most advanced period of life. Sold in bottles, at 4s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. each.

CAUTION!—The words "ROWLAND'S KALYDOR" are on the wrapper of each. Sold by A. ROWLAND & SONS, 20, Hatton Garden, London, and by all Chemists and Perfumers.

## THE ROYAL TURKISH TOWELS.

UNDER the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen, and which received the Prize Medal at the Great Exhibition. The brown Linen combines the advantages of a flesh-brush with the qualities most desirable in a Towel. The white cotton is the softest Towel ever made, and absorbs moisture without the necessity of using friction. To be had of all respectable Linendrapers.

## DR. LOCOCK'S COSMETIC,

A delightfully fragrant preparation

FOR IMPROVING AND BEAUTIFYING THE COMPLEXION,

Rendering the Skin clear, soft, and transparent, removing all ERUPTIONS, FRECKLES, SUNBURN, TAN, PIMPLES, and ROUGHNESS.—Curing GWAT BITES and the STINGS OF INSECTS generally. In the process of Shaving, it allays all smarting, and renders the Skin soft and smooth.

Sold in Bottles, with full directions, at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. each.

BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS.—Observe the name in the Government Stamp OUTSIDE the Wrapper.

Prepared only at the WHOLESALE WAREHOUSE for

## DR. LOCOCK'S PULMONIC WAFERS,

Which give Instant Relief and a Rapid Cure of

ASTHMA AND CONSUMPTION, COUGHS, COLDS,

AND ALL DISORDERS OF THE BREATH AND LUNGS.

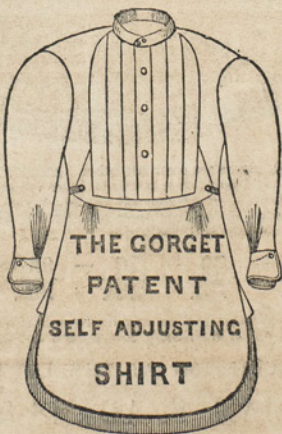
TO SINGERS AND PUBLIC SPEAKERS they are invaluable, as in a few hours they remove all hoarseness, and wonderfully increase the power and flexibility of the voice. THEY HAVE A PLEASANT TASTE. Price 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 11s. per box. Sold by all respectable Chemists.

### THE ELLIPTIC COLLAR, TO FASTEN AT THE BACK,



#### WITH PATENT ELASTIC FASTENING.

A most perfect and easy-fitting Shirt, and by a simple invention of the Patentee, adjusts itself to all movements of the body, both back and front, either walking, sitting, or riding. Price, including the REGISTEERED ELLIPTIC WRISTBAND, 42s. the half-dozen. The Elliptic Collar, quite unique, in all shapes, with Patent Elastic Fastenings, 12s. the dozen. The Patent Elastic Collar Fastening can be attached to any Collar, opening back or front. Six sent by post on receipt of 13 Postage Stamps.



### THE ELLIPTIC COLLAR, TO FASTEN IN FRONT.



#### WITH PATENT ELASTIC FASTENING.

Directions for Self Measurement.

1. Round the Chest, tight over the Shirt.
2. Round the Waist, tight over the Shirt.
3. Round the Neck, taken about the middle of the Throat.
4. Round the Wrist.
5. The length of Coat Sleeve, from the centre of Back, down the seam of Sleeve to bottom of cuff.
6. The length of Shirt at Back. Say if the Shirts are to open back or front. If with Collars attached (3s. the half-dozen extra).

PATENTEES,

COOPER & FRYER,

Removed next door to the

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

**PRIZE MEDAL.**

**WATHERSTON & BROGDEN'S  
GOLD CHAINS.**

By Troy Weight, at realisable value; and the Workmanship at Wholesale Manufacturers' Prices.



**T**HE Great Exhibition having established the Advantage of Purchasing from the Wholesale Manufacturer, wherever it can be accomplished, and thereby dispensing with an intermediate profit, WATHERSTON & BROGDEN beg to announce that, in obedience to the numerous calls made upon them, they have thrown open their Manufactory to the Public at the same prices they have been in the habit (for the last half century) of charging to the Trade in London, India, and the Colonies.

WATHERSTON & BROGDEN beg to caution the Public against the **Electro-Gold Chains, and Polished Zinc Gold**, so extensively put forth in the present day, under the titles of "**Pure Gold**" and "**Fine Gold**," and to call attention to the genuine Gold Chains made from their own ingots, and sold by Troy Weight at its bullion or realisable value.

The system of Weighing Chains against Sovereigns being one of the greatest frauds ever practised on the Public, WATHERSTON & BROGDEN guarantee the Gold in their Chains, and will re-purchase it at the price charged; the workmanship, according to the intricacy or simplicity of the pattern.

**EXAMPLE.**—Intrinsic value of a Chain of 15-Carat Gold, weighing 2 Ounces ..... £5 6 2  
Supposing the workmanship to be ..... 2 0 0

Total ..... £7 6 2

By this arrangement, the purchaser will see at a glance the proportion charged for labour compared with the Bullion in a Gold Chain, and being always able to realise the one, will have only to decide on the value of the other.

*An extensive assortment of Jewellery, of the first quality, all made at their Manufactory,*  
**16, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.**

ESTABLISHED A.D. 1798.

N.B. Australian and Californian Gold made into articles of Jewellery at a moderate charge for the workmanship.

**SOYER'S RELISH.**

"To describe the Sauce would be to make our readers hungry,—rich, savoury, exotic, it infuses an ambrosial flavour into the substance on which it is poured."—*Bell's Life.*

**T**HIS JUSTLY CELEBRATED SAUCE is now in universal use throughout the world. The great renown acquired by M. SOYER, having induced the introduction of several imitations of his Relish, purchasers are requested particularly to observe that every genuine bottle bears his portrait on the label, accompanied by the names of his wholesale Agents,

**CROSSE AND BLACKWELL, 21, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON,**

of whom also may be had his Original Sauces for Ladies and Gentlemen.

GORE HOUSE, KENSINGTON.

**DO YOU KEEP LIVERY SERVANTS**

**DOUDNEYS' LIVERIES PLEASE MASTERS & SERVANTS.**

Footman's Suit, £3 3s. Groom's Suit, £3 10s. Coachman's Suit, £3 18s. 6d.

ALL THE BEST QUALITY.

Patronized by the QUEEN, PRINCE ALBERT, and the Nobility.

SEE THEIR FIVE SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS AND PATRONAGE BOOK.

**ESTD 1784 DOUDNEYS 25, BURLINGTON ARCADE**

**17, OLD BOND ST AND 49, LOMBARD ST**

All Gentlemen who take exercise, or are weakly, should wear DOUDNEYS' OLYMPIC GIRTH, Superior to all other Belts for Spinal and Abdominal support, and upward pressure.

**CHILDREN'S FROCKS, COATS, & PELISSES**

of every description,

LONG AND SHORT ROBES. WITH EVERY  
OTHER REQUISITE FOR A YOUNG FAMILY.  
IN FULL DRESS.  
WALKING AND SCHOOL WEAR.

SEVERAL HUNDREDS CONSTANTLY ON  
VIEW,

**AT SHEARMAN'S, 5, FINSBURY PAVEMENT,**

BETWEEN THE BANK AND FINSBURY SQUARE.

INFANTS' DRESSES, CLOAKS, HOODS,  
HATS, BONNETS, ROBES, CAPS, GOWNS, OPEN  
SHIRTS, ROBE BLANKETS,  
BOYS' AND GIRLS' OVER GARMENTS,  
WITH EVERY OTHER ARTICLE IN CLOTHING  
REQUIRED FOR A YOUNG FAMILY.



BABY LINEN IN COMPLETE SETS OR OTHERWISE.  
TRIMMED BASSINET BASKETS AND CUSHIONS.

An ILLUSTRATED PAMPHLET, affording additional  
information, sent free on receipt of a paid letter.

**MOTHERS! MOTHERS!! MOTHERS!!!**

**THE BEST MEDICINE IN THE WORLD FOR INFANTS**  
AND YOUNG CHILDREN IS ATKINSON AND BARKER'S ROYAL INFANTS'  
PRESERVATIVE.—Under the Patronage of the Queen.—The high and universal  
celebrity which this medicine continues to maintain for the prevention and cure of those  
disorders incident to infants; affording instant relief in convulsions, flatulency, affections of the bowels,  
difficult teething, the thrush, rickets, measles, whooping-cough, cow-pox, or vaccine inoculation, and may be  
given with safety immediately after birth. It is no misnomer cordial!—no stupefactive, deadly narcotic!—  
but a veritable preserver of infants! Mothers would do well in always keeping it in the nursery. Many  
thousands of children are annually saved by this much-esteemed medicine, which is an immediate remedy,  
and the infants rather like it than otherwise.

Prepared only by ROBERT BARKER, Ollerenshaw Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, late of Manchester,  
(Chemist to Her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria), in bottles at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s. each.  
Sold by all druggists and medicine vendors throughout the United Kingdom.

CAUTION.—Observe the name of "ATKINSON & BARKER," on the Government Stamp. Established in  
the year 1793.

**RIMMEL'S TOILET**

VINEGAR (as exhibited in the Foun-  
tain at the Crystal Palace) is far superior to  
Eau-de-Cologne as a Tonic and Refreshing  
Lotion for the Toilet or Bath; a reviving Per-  
fume, a pleasant Dentifrice, and a powerful  
Disinfectant for Apartments and Sick Rooms.  
Its numerous useful and sanitary properties  
render it an indispensable requisite in all  
families.

Price 2s. 6d. and 5s.

**RIMMEL'S HAIR DYE im-**

parts instantaneously to the Hair,  
Whiskers, &c., a natural and permanent  
Black or Brown Shade, without the trouble  
or danger attending other Dyes.—Price 5s. 6d.

RIMMEL'S Guards' Bouquet, Jockey Club  
Bouquet, and other fashionable perfumes.  
RIMMEL'S Odontine for the Teeth, Nutritive  
Cream for the Hair, &c., are also highly re-  
commended.—Beware of counterfeits.

Sold by all Perfumers and Chemists, and by  
E. RIMMEL, 39, Gerard-street, Soho, London.

**"THE BEST IS THE CHEAPEST."**

The Best Congou Tea	- - - - -	3s. 8d. per lb.
The Best Imperial Souchong Tea	- - - - -	4s. "
The Best Moyune Gunpowder	- - - - -	5s. "
The Best Plantation Coffee	- - - - -	1s. "
The Best Mocha Coffee	- - - - -	1s. 4d. "

Tea or Coffee to the value of 40s. or upwards sent, Carriage Free, to any part of England, by

**PHILLIPS & COMPANY,**  
TEA MERCHANTS,  
8, KING WILLIAM STREET, CITY, LONDON.

# OPERA GLASSES.

THE attention of the Nobility, Gentry, and Subscribers to the Royal Italian Opera is respectfully directed to THOMAS HARRIS & SON's Newly improved Opera Glasses.

The acme of perfection is attained in these Glasses, viz.—great magnifying power, with a clear and much extended range of view; they are now offered at lower prices than is usually charged for those made on the old principle.

A large Assortment of every description of Opera Glasses from 10 Shillings each.

	£ s. d.
THOMAS HARRIS & SON's celebrated RACE GLASS, with Patent Leather Case	. 4 10 0
A powerful Waistcoat Pocket Glass (defines clearly 1½ miles)	. 0 12 0
Keeper's Pocket Telescopes	. 1 0 0

*Yachting and Deer Stalking Glasses on a new construction.*

THOMAS HARRIS & SON,  
OPTICIANS TO THE ROYAL FAMILY,  
52, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
OPPOSITE THE BRITISH MUSEUM ENTRANCE.  
ESTABLISHED 70 YEARS.

CAUTION.—Number 52, is directly facing the New Entrance Gate to the Museum. Recollect this, and you will avoid mistaking the house; there being a person in the same street who displays the words "late with HARRIS & SON." designed to cause mistakes.

52, OPPOSITE THE BRITISH MUSEUM GATES, 52.

## BREIDENBACH'S REAL EAU DE COLOGNE,

10s. A CASE OF SIX.

2s. SINGLE BOTTLES.

REMOVED FROM 88, PARK STREET,

TO

157, NEW BOND STREET.

### THE GENTLEMAN'S REAL HEAD OF HAIR, OR INVISIBLE

PERUKE.—The principle upon which this Peruke is made is so superior to everything yet produced, that the Manufacturer invites the honour of a visit from the Sceptic and the Connoisseur, that one may be convinced, and the other gratified, by inspecting this and other novel and beautiful specimens of the Perruquean Art, at the Establishment of the Sole Inventor, F. BROWNE, 47, FENCHURCH-STREET.

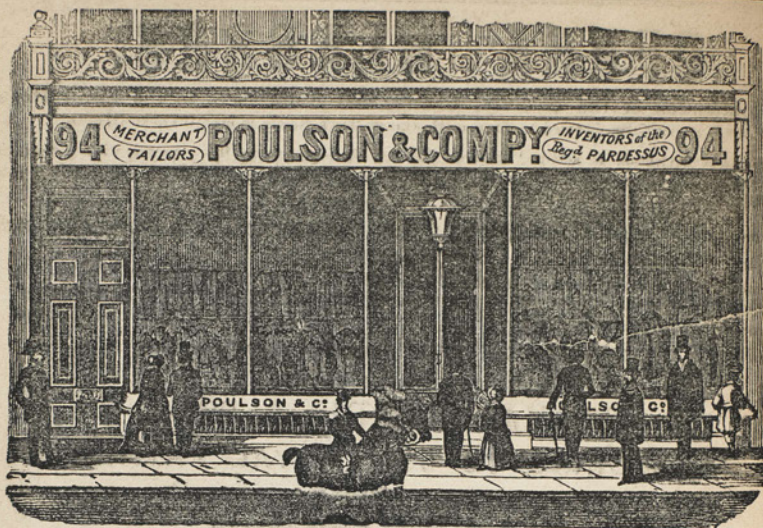
F. BROWNE'S INFALLIBLE MODE OF MEASURING THE HEAD.

	As dotted	Inches.	Eighths.
Round the Head in manner of a fillet, leaving the Ears loose . . . . .	1 to 1.		
From the Forehead over to the poll, as deep each way as required . . . . .	2 to 2.		
From one Temple to the other, across the rise or Crown of the Head to where the Hair grows	As marked 3 to 3.		



THE CHARGE FOR THIS UNIQUE HEAD OF HAIR,  
ONLY £1 10s.

94, REGENT STREET, LONDON,



AND 7, GREAT VINE STREET.

**Messrs. POULSON & Co.'s REGISTERED PARDESSUS,**  
OF FINE AUSTRALIAN and LLAMA WOOLS, (6TH & 7TH VICTORIA, CAP. 65),  
**FOR WALKING OR RIDING.**

THIS is an improved style of Coat for Spring use, of a light convenient form, which admits of its being worn either over or without the ordinary coat. It is neatly and handsomely made, care being bestowed in its construction to impart to it that graceful and appropriate character which, since its first introduction, has so greatly recommended it to public favour; it is produced in all colours with silk sleeve linings, at the very moderate price of TWO GUINEAS. THE PARDESSUS D'ETE, for hot weather, ONE GUINEA. This comfort-promoting garment has been truthfully pronounced by a leading Journal as *Cheap, Elegant, and Durable*. THE IMPROVED ELASTIC SUMMER GUINEA TROUSERS are also ready for selection from a choice variety of patterns.

In London only at the Sole Patentees and Manufacturers, B. POULSON & CO.'s, Court, Clerical, Naval and Military Tailors, 94, REGENT STREET, and in the country and colonies of their recognised Agents.

## PARASOLS.



W. & J. SANGSTER respectfully solicit an inspection of their Stock of PARASOLS for this Season, comprising the richest Brocaded Silks from Lyons and Spitalfields.

W. & J. S. also beg to offer for notice their China Crape Parasols, so universally admired last Season; China Crape being a material both for its beauty of texture and durability peculiarly fitted for a Parasol.

Parasols in Moiré Antique, from 10s.; and of every other description, whether for the Fête, Promenade, or Sea-side.

Ladies' Umbrellas made on Fox's Patent Paragon Frames, stronger and lighter than any others offered to the Public.

## W. AND J. SANGSTER,

140, Regent Street.  
94, Fleet Street.

10, Royal Exchange.  
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Sea-side.

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W. H. W.





*Shadow.*

THE HOUSEHOLD WORDS

A Weekly Journal, conducted by CHARLES DICKENS

Published in London, at No. 25, Abchurch Lane, in the City.

THE HOUSEHOLD NARRATIVE OF CURRENT EVENTS

OFFICE: No. 25, ABCHURCH LANE, LONDON, E.C. 4.

Subscription price, 6s. per annum in advance.

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1852  
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## CHAPTER L.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

*In Weekly Numbers, price 2d., or stamped for post, 3d. ; in Monthly Parts, and in Half-yearly Volumes,*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

A Weekly Journal, conducted by **CHARLES DICKENS.**

DESIGNED FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT OF ALL CLASSES OF READERS, AND TO ASSIST  
IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE SOCIAL QUESTIONS OF THE TIME.

SIX VOLUMES are published, price 5s. 6d. each, in cloth boards, and are always on sale.

*Also, published at the end of every Month, at the same Office, price 2d., or stamped for post, 3d.,*

## THE HOUSEHOLD NARRATIVE OF CURRENT EVENTS;

Which being declared, by the Judgment of the Court of Exchequer, a Legal Publication, not coming within the provisions of the Stamp Act, will be regularly continued and much improved.

\* \* The First, Second, and Third Volumes, being a Record of the Public Events of 1850, 1851, and 1852, may always be had, price 3s. each, neatly bound in cloth. Each Volume contains a copious Index.

OFFICE, No. '6, WELLINGTON STREET NORTH. Sold by all Booksellers and Newsmen.

It was a very easy journey; for I had only to rise a little earlier in the morning, and keep my accounts, and attend to house-keeping matters before leaving home. But when I had made these three visits, my guardian said to me, on my return at night:

"Now, little woman, little woman, this will never do. Constant dropping will wear away a stone, and constant coaching will wear out a Dame Durden. We will go to London for a while, and take possession of our old lodgings."

"Not for me, dear guardian," said I, "for I never feel tired;" which was strictly true. I was only too happy to be in such request.

As this is a new and improved edition of the  
HORSBOLD WORDS  
A Weekly Journal, compiled by CHARLES DIXON  
It is the intention of the publisher to add to the  
number of subscribers and to increase the circulation  
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## CHAPTER L.

## ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

It happened that when I came home from Deal, I found a note from Caddy Jellyby (as we always continued to call her), informing me that her health, which had been for some time very delicate, was worse, and that she would be more glad than she could tell me if I would go to see her. It was a note of a few lines, written from the couch on which she lay, and inclosed to me in another from her husband, in which he seconded her entreaty with much solicitude. Caddy was now the mother, and I the godmother, of such a poor little baby—such a tiny old-faced mite, with a countenance that seemed to be scarcely anything but cap-border, and a little, lean, long-fingered hand, always clenched under its chin. It would lie in this attitude all day, with its bright specks of eyes open, wondering (as I used to imagine) how it came to be so small and weak. Whenever it was moved, it cried; but at all other times it was so patient, that the sole desire of its life appeared to be, to lie quiet and think. It had curious little dark veins in its face, and curious little dark marks under its eyes, like faint remembrances of poor Caddy's inky days; and altogether, to those who were not used to it, it was quite a piteous little sight.

But it was enough for Caddy that *she* was used to it. The projects with which she beguiled her illness, for little Esther's education, and little Esther's marriage, and even for her own old age as the grandmother of little Esther's little Esthers, were so prettily expressive of devotion to this pride of her life, that I should be tempted to recall some of them, but for the timely remembrance that I am getting on irregularly as it is.

To return to the letter. Caddy had a superstition about me, which had been strengthening in her mind ever since that night long ago, when she had lain asleep with her head in my lap. She almost—I think I must say quite—believed that I did her good whenever I was near her. Now, although this was such a fancy of the affectionate girl's, that I am almost ashamed to mention it, still it might have all the force of a fact when she was really ill. Therefore I set off to Caddy, with my guardian's consent, post-haste; and she and Prince made so much of me, that there never was anything like it.

Next day I went again to sit with her, and next day I went again. It was a very easy journey; for I had only to rise a little earlier in the morning, and keep my accounts, and attend to house-keeping matters before leaving home. But when I had made these three visits, my guardian said to me, on my return at night:

"Now, little woman, little woman, this will never do. Constant dropping will wear away a stone, and constant coaching will wear out a Dame Durden. We will go to London for a while, and take possession of our old lodgings."

"Not for me, dear guardian," said I, "for I never feel tired;" which was strictly true. I was only too happy to be in such request.

"For me then," returned my guardian; "or for Ada, or for both of us. It is somebody's birthday to-morrow, I think."

"Truly I think it is," said I, kissing my darling, who would be twenty-one to-morrow.

"Well," observed my guardian, half pleasantly, half seriously, "that's a great occasion, and will give my fair cousin some necessary business to transact in assertion of her independence, and will make London a more convenient place for all of us. So to London we will go. That being settled, there is another thing,—how have you left Caddy?"

"Very unwell, guardian. I fear it will be some time before she regains her health and strength."

"What do you call some time, now?" asked my guardian, thoughtfully.

"Some weeks, I am afraid."

"Ah!" He began to walk about the room with his hands in his pockets, showing that he had been thinking as much. "Now what do you say about her doctor? Is he a good doctor, my love?"

I felt obliged to confess that I knew nothing to the contrary; but that Prince and I had agreed only that evening, that we would like his opinion to be confirmed by some one.

"Well, you know!" returned my guardian, quickly, "there's Woodcourt."

I had not meant that, and was rather taken by surprise. For a moment, all that I had had in my mind in connexion with Mr. Woodcourt seemed to come back and confuse me.

"You don't object to him, little woman?"

"Object to him, guardian? Oh no!"

"And you don't think the patient would object to him?"

So far from that, I had no doubt of her being prepared to have a great reliance on him, and to like him very much. I said that he was no stranger to her personally, for she had seen him often in his kind attendance on Miss Flite."

"Very good," said my guardian. "He has been here to-day, my dear, and I will see him about it to-morrow."

I felt, in this short conversation—though I did not know how, for she was quiet, and we interchanged no look—that my dear girl well remembered how merrily she had clasped me round the waist, when no other hands than Caddy's had brought me the little parting token. This caused me to feel that I ought to tell her, and Caddy too, that I was going to be the mistress of Bleak House; and that if I avoided that disclosure any longer, I might become less worthy in my own eyes of its master's love. Therefore, when we went up-stairs, and had waited listening until the clocks struck twelve, in order that only I might be the first to wish my darling all good wishes on her birthday, and to take her to my heart, I set before her, just as I had set before myself, the goodness and honor of her cousin John, and the happy life that was in store for me. If ever my darling were fonder of me at one time than at another in all our intercourse, she was surely fondest of me that night. And I was so rejoiced to know it, and so comforted by the sense of having done right, in casting this last idle reservation away, that I was ten times happier than I had been before. I had scarcely thought it a reservation a few hours ago; but now that it was gone, I felt as if I understood its nature better.

Next day we went to London. We found our old lodging vacant, and in half an hour were quietly established there, as if we had never gone away. Mr. Woodcourt dined with us, to celebrate my darling's birthday; and we were as pleasant as we could be with the great blank among us that Richard's absence naturally made on such an occasion. After that day I was for some weeks—eight or nine as I remember—very much with Caddy; and thus it fell out that I saw less of Ada at this time than any other since we had first come together, except the time of my own illness. She often came to Caddy's; but our function there was to amuse and cheer her, and we did not talk in our usual confidential manner. Whenever I went home at night, we were together; but Caddy's rest was broken by pain, and I often remained to nurse her.

With her husband and her poor little mite of a baby to love, and their home to strive for, what a good creature Caddy was! So self-denying, so uncomplaining, so anxious to get well on their account, so afraid of giving trouble, and so thoughtful of the unassisted labours of her husband and the comforts of old Mr. Turveydrop; I had never known the best of her until now. And it seemed so curious that her pale face and helpless figure should be lying there day after day, where dancing was the business of life; where the kit and the apprentices began early every morning in the ball-room, and where the untidy little boy waltzed by himself in the kitchen all the afternoon.

At Caddy's request, I took the supreme direction of her apartment, trimmed it up, and pushed her, couch and all, into a lighter and more airy and more cheerful corner than she had yet occupied; then, every day, when we were in our neatest array, I used to lay my small small namesake in her arms, and sit down to chat or work, or read to her. It was at one of the first of these quiet times that I told Caddy about Bleak House.

We had other visitors besides Ada. First of all, we had Prince, who in his hurried intervals of teaching used to come softly in and sit softly down, with a face of loving anxiety for Caddy and the very little child. Whatever Caddy's condition really was, she never failed to declare to Prince that she was all but well—which I, Heaven forgive me, never failed to confirm. This would put Prince in such good spirits, that he would sometimes take the kit from his pocket and play a chord or two to astonish the baby—which I never knew it to do in the least degree, for my tiny namesake never noticed it at all.

Then there was Mrs. Jellyby. She would come occasionally, with her usual distraught manner, and sit calmly looking miles beyond her grandchild, as if her attention were absorbed by a young Borriboolan on its native shores. As bright-eyed as ever, as serene, and as untidy, she would say, "Well, Caddy, child, and how do you do to-day?" And then would sit amiably smiling, and taking no notice of the reply; or would sweetly glide off into a calculation of the number of letters she had lately received and answered, or of the coffee-bearing power of Borriboola Gha. This she would always do with a serene contempt for our limited sphere of action, not to be disguised.

Then there was old Mr. Turveydrop, who was from morning to night and from night to morning the subject of innumerable precautions. If the baby cried, it was nearly stifled lest the noise should make him

uncomfortable. If the fire wanted stirring in the night, it was surreptitiously done lest his rest should be broken. If Caddy required any little comfort that the house contained, she first carefully discussed whether he was likely to require it too. In return for this consideration, he would come into the room once a day, all but blessing it—showing a condescension, and a patronage, and a grace of manner, in dispensing the light of his high-shouldered presence, from which I might have supposed him (if I had not known better) to have been the benefactor of Caddy's life.

"My Caroline," he would say, making the nearest approach that he could to bending over her. "Tell me that you are better to-day."

"O much better, thank you, Mr. Turveydrop," Caddy would reply.

"Delighted! Enchanted! And our dear Miss Summerson. She is not quite prostrated by fatigue?" Here he would crease up his eyelids, and kiss his fingers to me; though I am happy to say he had ceased to be particular in his attentions, since I had been so altered.

"Not at all," I would assure him.

"Charming! We must take care of our dear Caroline, Miss Summerson. We must spare nothing that will restore her. We must nourish her. My dear Caroline;" he would turn to his daughter-in-law with infinite generosity and protection; "want for nothing, my love. Frame a wish and gratify it, my daughter. Everything this house contains, everything my room contains, is at your service, my dear. Do not," he would sometimes add, in a burst of Department, "even allow my simple requirements to be considered, if they should at any time interfere with your own, my Caroline. Your necessities are greater than mine."

He had established such a long prescriptive right to this Department (his son's inheritance from his mother), that I several times knew both Caddy and her husband to be melted to tears by these affectionate self-sacrifices.

"Nay, my dears," he would remonstrate; and when I saw Caddy's thin arm about his fat neck as he said it, I would be melted too, though not by the same process; "Nay, nay! I have promised never to leave ye. Be dutiful and affectionate towards me, and I ask no other return. Now, bless ye! I am going to the Park."

He would take the air there, presently, and get an appetite for his hotel dinner. I hope I do old Mr. Turveydrop no wrong; but I never saw any better traits in him than these I faithfully record, except that he certainly conceived a liking for Peepy, and would take the child out walking with great pomp—always, on those occasions, sending him home before he went to dinner himself, and occasionally with a halfpenny in his pocket. But, even this disinterestedness was attended with no inconsiderable cost, to my knowledge; for before Peepy was sufficiently decorated to walk hand in hand with the professor of Department, he had to be newly dressed, at the expence of Caddy and her husband, from top to toe.

Last of our visitors, there was Mr. Jellyby. Really when he used to come in of an evening, and ask Caddy in his meek voice how she was, and then sit down with his head against the wall, and make no attempt to say anything more, I liked him very much. If he found me bustling about, doing any little thing, he sometimes half took his coat off, as if with an intention of helping by a great exertion; but he never got any



further. His sole occupation was to sit with his head against the wall, looking hard at the thoughtful baby; and I could not quite divest my mind of a fancy that they understood one another.

I have not counted Mr. Woodcourt among our visitors, because he was now Caddy's regular attendant. She soon began to improve under his care; but he was so gentle, so skilful, so unwearying in the pains he took, that it is not to be wondered at, I am sure. I saw a good deal of Mr. Woodcourt during this time, though not so much as might be supposed; for, knowing Caddy to be safe in his hands, I often slipped home at about the hours when he was expected. We frequently met, notwithstanding. I was quite reconciled to myself now; but I still felt glad to think that he was sorry for me, and he still *was* sorry for me I believed. He helped Mr. Badger in his professional engagements, which were numerous; and had as yet no settled projects for the future.

It was when Caddy began to recover, that I began to notice a change in my dear girl. I cannot say how it first presented itself to me; because I observed it in many slight particulars, which were nothing in themselves, and only became something when they were pieced together. But I made out, by putting them together, that Ada was not so frankly cheerful with me as she used to be. Her tenderness for me was as loving and true as ever; I did not for a moment doubt that; but there was a quiet sorrow about her which she did not confide to me, and in which I traced some hidden regret.

Now I could not understand this; and I was so anxious for the happiness of my own pet, that it caused me some uneasiness, and set me thinking often. At length, feeling sure that Ada suppressed this something from me, lest it should make me unhappy too, it came into my head that she was a little grieved—for me—by what I had told her about Bleak House.

How I persuaded myself that this was likely, I don't know. I had no idea that there was any selfish reference in my doing so. I was not grieved for myself: I was quite contented and quite happy. Still, that Ada might be thinking—for me, though I had abandoned all such thoughts—of what once was, but was now all changed, seemed so easy to believe, that I believed it.

What could I do to reassure my darling (I considered then) and show her that I had no such feelings? Well! I could only be as brisk and busy as possible; and that, I had tried to be all along. However, as Caddy's illness had certainly interfered, more or less, with my home duties—though I had always been there in the morning to make my guardian's breakfast, and he had a hundred times laughed, and said there must be two little women, for his little woman was never missing—I resolved to be doubly diligent and gay. So I went about the house, humming all the tunes I knew; and I sat working and working in a desperate manner, and I talked and talked, morning noon and night.

And still there was the same shade between me and my darling.

"So, Dame Trot," observed my guardian shutting up his book, one night when we were all three together; "so, Woodcourt has restored Caddy Jellyby to the full enjoyment of life again?"

"Yes," I said; "and to be repaid by such gratitude as hers, is to be made rich, guardian."

"I wish it was," he returned, "with all my heart."

So did I too, for that matter. I said so.

"Aye! We would make him as rich as a Jew, if we knew how. Would we not, little woman?"

I laughed as I worked, and replied that I was not sure about that, for it might spoil him, and he might not be so useful, and there might be many who could ill spare him. As, Miss Flite, and Caddy herself, and many others.

"True," said my guardian. "I had forgotten that. But we would agree to make him rich enough to live, I suppose? Rich enough to work with tolerable peace of mind? Rich enough to have his own happy home, and his own household gods—and household goddess too, perhaps?"

That was quite another thing, I said. We must all agree in that.

"To be sure," said my guardian. "All of us. I have a great regard for Woodcourt, a high esteem for him; and I have been sounding him delicately about his plans. It is difficult to offer aid to an independent man, with that just kind of pride which he possesses. And yet I would be glad to do it if I might, or if I knew how. He seems half inclined for another voyage. But that appears like casting such a man away."

"It might open a new world to him," said I.

"So it might, little woman," my guardian assented. "I doubt if he expects much of the old world. Do you know I have fancied that he sometimes feels some particular disappointment, or misfortune, encountered in it. You never heard of anything of that sort?"

I shook my head.

"Humph," said my guardian. "I am mistaken, I dare say."

As there was a little pause here, which I thought, for my dear girl's satisfaction, had better be filled up, I hummed an air as I worked which was a favorite with my guardian.

"And do you think Mr. Woodcourt will make another voyage?" I asked him, when I had hummed it quietly all through.

"I don't quite know what to think, my dear, but I should say it was likely at present that he will give a long trial to another country."

"I am sure he will take the best wishes of all our hearts with him wherever he goes," said I; "and though they are not riches, he will never be the poorer for them, guardian, at least."

"Never, little woman," he replied.

I was sitting in my usual place, which was now beside my guardian's chair. That had not been my usual place before the letter, but it was now. I looked up at Ada, who was sitting opposite; and I saw, as she looked at me, that her eyes were filled with tears, and that tears were falling down her face. I felt that I had only to be placid and merry, once for all to undeceive my dear, and set her loving heart at rest. I really was so, and I had nothing to do but to be myself.

So I made my sweet girl lean upon my shoulder—how little thinking what was heavy on her mind!—and I said she was not quite well, and put my arm about her, and took her up-stairs. When we were in our own room, and when she might perhaps have told me what I was so unprepared to hear, I gave her no encouragement to confide in me; I never thought she stood in need of it.

"O my dear good Esther," said Ada, "if I could only make up my mind to speak to you and my cousin John, when you are together!"

"Why, my love!" I remonstrated. "Ada? why should you not speak to us!"

Ada only drooped her head and pressed me closer to her heart.

"You surely don't forget, my beauty," said I, smiling, "what quiet old-fashioned people we are, and how I have settled down to be the discreetest of dames? You don't forget how happily and peacefully my life is all marked out for me, and by whom? I am certain that you don't forget by what a noble character, Ada. That can never be."

"No, never, Esther."

"Why, then, my dear," said I, "there can be nothing amiss—and why should you not speak to us!"

"Nothing amiss, Esther?" returned Ada. "O when I think of all these years, and of his fatherly care and kindness, and of the old relations among us, and of you, what shall I do, what shall I do!"

I looked at my child in some wonder, but I thought it better not to answer, otherwise than by cheering her; and so I turned off into many little recollections of our life together, and prevented her from saying more. When she lay down to sleep, and not before, I returned to my guardian to say good night; and then I came back to Ada, and sat near her for a little while.

She was asleep, and I thought as I looked at her that she was a little changed. I had thought so, more than once lately. I could not decide, even looking at her while she was unconscious, how she was changed; but something in the familiar beauty of her face looked different to me. My guardian's old hopes of her and Richard arose sorrowfully in my mind, and I said to myself, "she has been anxious about him," and I wondered how that love would end.

When I had come home from Caddy's while she was ill, I had often found Ada at work, and she had always put her work away, and I had never known what it was. Some of it now lay in a drawer near her, which was not quite closed. I did not open the drawer; but I still rather wondered what the work could be, for it was evidently nothing for herself.

And I noticed as I kissed my dear, that she lay with one hand under her pillow so that it was hidden.

How much less amiable I must have been than they thought me, how much less amiable than I thought myself, to be so pre-occupied with my own cheerfulness and contentment, as to think that it only rested with me to put my dear girl right, and set her mind at peace!

But I lay down, self-deceived, in that belief. And I awoke in it next day, to find that there was still the same shade between me and my darling.

## CHAPTER LI.

## ENLIGHTENED.

WHEN Mr. Woodcourt arrived in London, he went, that very same day, to Mr. Vholes's in Symond's Inn. For he never once, from the moment when I entreated him to be a friend to Richard, neglected or forgot his promise. He had told me that he accepted the charge as a sacred trust, and he was ever true to it in that spirit.

He found Mr. Vholes in his office, and informed Mr. Vholes of his agreement with Richard, that he should call there to learn his address.

"Just so, sir," said Mr. Vholes. "Mr. C's address is not a hundred miles from here, sir, Mr. C's address is not a hundred miles from here. Would you take a seat, sir?"

Mr. Woodcourt thanked Mr. Vholes, but he had no business with him beyond what he had mentioned.

"Just so, sir. I believe, sir," said Mr. Vholes, still quietly insisting on the seat by not giving the address, "that you have influence with Mr. C. Indeed I am aware that you have."

"I was not aware of it myself," returned Mr. Woodcourt; "but I suppose you know best."

"Sir," rejoined Mr. Vholes, self-contained, as usual, voice and all, "it is a part of my professional duty to know best. It is a part of my professional duty, to study and to understand a gentleman who confides his interests to me. In my professional duty I shall not be wanting, sir, if I know it. I may, with the best intentions, be wanting in it without knowing it; but not if I know it, sir."

Mr. Woodcourt again mentioned the address.

"Give me leave, sir," said Mr. Vholes. "Bear with me for a moment. Sir, Mr. C is playing for a considerable stake, and cannot play without—need I say what?"

"Money, I presume?"

"Sir," said Mr. Vholes, "to be honest with you (honesty being my golden rule, whether I gain by it or lose, and I find that I generally lose), money is the word. Now, sir, upon the chances of Mr. C's game I express to you no opinion, *no* opinion. It might be highly impolitic in Mr. C, after playing so long and so high, to leave off; it might be the reverse. I say nothing. No, sir," said Mr. Vholes, bringing his hand flat down upon his desk, in a positive manner, "nothing."

"You seem to forget," returned Mr. Woodcourt, "that I ask you to say nothing, and have no interest in anything you say."

"Pardon me, sir!" retorted Mr. Vholes, "you do yourself an injustice. No, sir! Pardon me! You shall not—shall not in my office, if I know it—do yourself an injustice. You are interested in anything, and in everything, that relates to your friend. I know human nature much better, sir, than to admit for an instant that a gentleman of your appearance is not interested in whatever concerns his friend."

"Well," replied Mr. Woodcourt, "that may be. I am particularly interested in his address."

"(The number, sir,)" said Mr. Vholes, parenthetically, ("I believe I have already mentioned.) If Mr. C is to continue to play for this considerable stake, sir, he must have funds. Understand me! There are funds in hand at present. I ask for nothing; there are funds in hand. But, for the onward play, more funds must be provided; unless Mr. C is to throw away what he has already ventured—which is wholly and solely a point for his consideration. This, sir, I take the opportunity of stating openly to you, as the friend of Mr. C. Without funds, I shall always be happy to appear and act for Mr. C, to the extent of all such costs as are safe to be allowed out of the estate: not beyond that. I could not go beyond that, sir, without wronging some one. I must either wrong my three dear girls; or my venerable father, who is entirely dependent on me—in the Vale of Taunton; or some one. Whereas, sir, my resolution is (call it weakness or folly if you please) to wrong no one."

Mr. Woodcourt rather sternly rejoined that he was glad to hear it.

"I wish, sir," said Mr. Vholes, "to leave a good name behind me. Therefore, I take every opportunity of openly stating to a friend of Mr. C, how Mr. C is situated. As to myself, sir, the labourer is worthy of his hire. If I undertake to put my shoulder to the wheel, I do it, and I earn what I get. I am here for that purpose. My name is painted on the door outside, with that object."

"And Mr. Carstone's address, Mr. Vholes?"

"Sir," returned Mr. Vholes, "as I believe I have already mentioned, it is next door. On the second story you will find Mr. C's apartments. Mr. C desires to be near his professional adviser; and I am far from objecting, for I court inquiry."

Upon this, Mr. Woodcourt wished Mr. Vholes good day, and went in search of Richard, the change in whose appearance he began to understand now but too well.

He found him in a dull room, fadedly furnished; much as I had found him in his barrack-room but a little while before, except that he was not writing, but was sitting with a book before him, from which his eyes and thoughts were far astray. As the door chanced to be standing open, Mr. Woodcourt was in his presence for some moments without being perceived; and he told me that he never could forget the haggardness of his face, and the dejection of his manner, before he was aroused from his dream.

"Woodcourt, my dear fellow!" cried Richard, starting up with extended hands, "you come upon my vision like a ghost."

"A friendly one," he replied, "and only waiting, as they say ghosts do, to be addressed. How does the mortal world go?" They were seated now, near together.

"Badly enough, and slowly enough," said Richard; "speaking at least for my part of it."

"What part is that?"

"The Chancery part."

"I never heard," returned Mr. Woodcourt, shaking his head, "of its going well yet."

"Nor I," said Richard, moodily. "Who ever did?"

He brightened again in a moment, and said, with his natural openness:

"Woodcourt, I should be sorry to be misunderstood by you, even if I gained by it in your estimation. You must know that I have done no good this long time. I have not intended to do much harm, but I seem to have been capable of nothing else. It may be that I should have done better by keeping out of the net into which my destiny has worked me; but I think not, though I dare say you will soon hear, if you have not already heard, a very different opinion. To make short of a long story, I am afraid I have wanted an object; but I have an object now—or it has me—and it is too late to discuss it. Take me as I am, and make the best of me."

"A bargain," said Mr. Woodcourt. "Do as much by me in return."

"Oh! You," returned Richard, "you can pursue your art for its own sake; and can put your hand upon the plough, and never turn; and can strike a purpose out of anything. You, and I, are very different creatures."

He spoke regretfully, and lapsed for a moment into his weary condition.

"Well, well!" he cried, shaking it off, "everything has an end. We shall see! So you will take me as I am, and make the best of me?"

"Aye! indeed I will." They shook hands upon it laughingly, but in deep earnestness. I can answer, for one of them, with my heart of hearts.

"You come as a godsend," said Richard, "for I have seen nobody here yet but Vholes. Woodcourt, there is one subject I should like to mention, for once and for all, in the beginning of our treaty. You can hardly make the best of me if I don't. You know, I dare say, that I have an attachment to my cousin Ada?"

Mr. Woodcourt replied that I had hinted as much to him.

"Now pray," returned Richard, "don't think me a heap of selfishness. Don't suppose that I am splitting my head and half breaking my heart over this miserable Chancery suit, for my own rights and interests alone. Ada's are bound up with mine; they can't be separated; Vholes works for both of us. Do think of that!"

He was so very solicitous on this head, that Mr. Woodcourt gave him the strongest assurances that he did him no injustice.

"You see," said Richard, with something pathetic in his manner of lingering on the point, though it was off-hand and unstudied, "to an upright fellow like you, bringing a friendly face like yours here, I cannot bear the thought of appearing selfish and mean. I want to see Ada righted, Woodcourt, as well as myself; I want to do my utmost to right her, as well as myself; I venture what I can scrape together to extricate her, as well as myself. Do, I beseech you, think of that!"

Afterwards, when Mr. Woodcourt came to reflect on what had passed, he was so very much impressed by the strength of Richard's anxiety on this point, that in telling me generally of his first visit to Symond's Inn, he particularly dwelt upon it. It revived a fear I had had before, that my dear girl's little property would be absorbed by Mr. Vholes, and that Richard's justification to himself would be sincerely this. It was just as I began to take care of Caddy, that the interview took place; and I

now return to the time when Caddy had recovered, and the shade was still between me and my darling.

I proposed to Ada, that morning, that we should go and see Richard. It a little surprised me to find that she hesitated, and was not so radiantly willing as I had expected.

"My dear," said I, "you have not had any difference with Richard since I have been so much away?"

"No, Esther."

"Not heard of him, perhaps?" said I.

"Yes, I have heard of him," said Ada.

Such tears in her eyes, and such love in her face. I could not make my darling out. Should I go to Richard's by myself, I said? No, Ada thought I had better not go by myself. Would she go with me? Yes, Ada thought she had better go with me. Should we go now? Yes, let us go now. Well, I could not understand my darling, with the tears in her eyes and the love in her face!

We were soon equipped, and went out. It was a sombre day, and drops of chill rain fell at intervals. It was one of those colorless days when everything looks heavy and harsh. The houses frowned at us, the dust rose at us, the smoke swooped at us, nothing made any compromise about itself, or wore a softened aspect. I fancied my beautiful girl quite out of place in the rugged streets; and I thought there were more funerals passing along the dismal pavements, than I had ever seen before.

We had first to find out Symond's Inn. We were going to inquire in a shop, when Ada said she thought it was near Chancery Lane. "We are not likely to be far out, my love, if we go in that direction," said I. So to Chancery Lane we went; and there, sure enough, we saw it written up. Symond's Inn.

We had next to find out the number. "Or Mr. Vholes's office will do," I recollected, "for Mr. Vholes's office is next door." Upon which Ada said, perhaps that was Mr. Vholes's office in the corner there. And it really was.

Then came the question, which of the two next doors? I was for going to the one, and my darling was for going to the other; and my darling was right again. So, up we went to the second story, where we came to Richard's name in great white letters on a hearse-like panel.

I should have knocked, but Ada said perhaps we had better turn the handle and go in. Thus we came to Richard, poring over a table covered with dusty bundles of papers which seemed to me like dusty mirrors reflecting his own mind. Wherever I looked, I saw the ominous words that ran in it, repeated. Jarndyce and Jarndyce.

He received us very affectionately, and we sat down. "If you had come a little earlier," he said, "you would have found Woodcourt here. There never was such a good fellow as Woodcourt is. He finds time to look in between whiles, when anybody else with half his work to do would be thinking about not being able to come. And he is so cheery, so fresh, so sensible, so earnest, so—everything that I am not, that the place brightens whenever he comes, and darkens whenever he goes again."

"God bless him," I thought, "for his truth to me!"

"He is not so sanguine, Ada," continued Richard, casting his dejected look over the bundles of papers, "as Vholes and I are usually; but he is only an outsider, and is not in the mysteries. We have gone into them, and he has not. He can't be expected to know much of such a labyrinth."

As his look wandered over the papers again, and he passed his two hands over his head, I noticed how sunken and how large his eyes appeared, how dry his lips were, and how his finger-nails were all bitten away.

"Is this a healthy place to live in, Richard, do you think?" said I.

"Why, my dear Minerva," answered Richard, with his old gay laugh, "it is neither a rural nor a cheerful place; and when the sun shines here, you may lay a pretty heavy wager that it is shining brightly in an open spot. But it's well enough for the time. It's near the offices, and near Vholes."

"Perhaps," I hinted, "a change from both——"

"—Might do me good?" said Richard, forcing a laugh as he finished the sentence. "I shouldn't wonder! But it can only come in one way now—in one of two ways, I should rather say. Either the suit must be ended, Esther, or the suitor. But it shall be the suit, the suit, my dear girl!"

These latter words were addressed to Ada, who was sitting nearest to him. Her face being turned away from me and towards him, I could not see it.

"We are doing very well," pursued Richard. "Vholes will tell you so. We are really spinning along. Ask Vholes. We are giving them no rest. Vholes knows all their windings and turnings, and we are upon them everywhere. We have astonished them already. We shall rouse up that nest of sleepers, mark my words!"

His hopefulness had long been more painful to me than his despondency; it was so unlike hopefulness, had something so fierce in its determination to be it, was so hungry and eager, and yet so conscious of being forced and unsustainable, that it had long touched me to the heart. But the commentary upon it now indelibly written in his handsome face, made it far more distressing than it used to be. I say indelibly; for I felt persuaded that if the fatal cause could have been for ever terminated, according to his brightest visions, in that same hour, the traces of the premature anxiety, self-reproach, and disappointment it had occasioned him, would have remained upon his features to the hour of his death.

"The sight of our dear little woman," said Richard: Ada still remaining silent and quiet: "is so natural to me, and her compassionate face is so like the face of old days——"

Ah! No, no. I smiled and shook my head.

"—So exactly like the face of old days," said Richard in his cordial voice, and taking my hand with the brotherly regard which nothing ever changed, "that I can't make pretences with her. I fluctuate a little; that's the truth. Sometimes I hope, my dear, and sometimes I—don't quite despair, but nearly. I get," said Richard, relinquishing my hand gently, and walking across the room, "so tired!"

He took a few turns up and down, and sunk upon the sofa.



"I get," he repeated gloomily, "so tired. It is such weary weary work!"

He was leaning on his arm, saying these words in a meditative voice, and looking at the ground, when my darling rose, put off her bonnet, kneeled down beside him with her golden hair falling like sunlight on his head, clasped her two arms round his neck, and turned her face to me. O, what a loving and devoted face I saw!

"Esther, dear," she said very quietly, "I am not going home again."

A light shone in upon me all at once.

"Never any more. I am going to stay with my dear husband. We have been married above two months. Go home without me, my own Esther; I shall never go home any more!" With those words my darling drew his head down on her breast, and held it there. And if ever in my life I saw a love that nothing but death could change, I saw it then before me.

"Speak to Esther, my dearest," said Richard, breaking the silence presently. "Tell her how it was."

I met her before she could come to me, and folded her in my arms. We neither of us spoke; but with her cheek against my own, I wanted to hear nothing. "My pet," said I. "My love. My poor, poor girl!" I pitied her so much. I was very fond of Richard, but the impulse that I had upon me was to pity her so much.

"Esther, will you forgive me? Will my cousin John forgive me?"

"My dear," said I, "to doubt it for a moment, is to do him a great wrong. And as to me!"—why, as to me, what had I to forgive!

I dried my sobbing darling's eyes, and sat beside her on the sofa, and Richard sat on my other side; and while I was reminded of that so different night when they had first taken me into their confidence and had gone on in their own wild happy way, they told me between them how it was.

"All I had, was Richard's," Ada said; "and Richard would not take it, Esther, and what could I do but be his wife when I loved him dearly!"

"And you were so fully and so kindly occupied, excellent Dame Durden," said Richard, "that how could we speak to you at such a time! And besides, it was not a long-considered step. We went out one morning, and were married."

"And when it was done, Esther," said my darling, "I was always thinking how to tell you, and what to do for the best. And sometimes I thought you ought to know it directly; and sometimes I thought you ought not to know it, and keep it from my cousin John; and I could not tell what to do, and I fretted very much.

How selfish I must have been, not to have thought of this before! I don't know what I said now. I was so sorry, and yet I was so fond of them, and so glad that they were fond of me; I pitied them so much, and yet I felt a kind of pride in their loving one another. I never had experienced such painful and pleasurable emotion at one time; and in my own heart I did not know which predominated. But I was not there to darken their way; I did not do that.

When I was less foolish and more composed, my darling took her wedding ring from her bosom, and kissed it, and put it on. Then I remembered last night, and told Richard that ever since her marriage she had worn it at night when there was no one to see. Then Ada blushing

asked me how did I know that, my dear? Then I told Ada how I had seen her hand concealed under her pillow, and had little thought why, my dear. Then they began telling me how it was, all over again; and I began to be sorry and glad again, and foolish again, and to hide my plain old face as much as I could, lest I should put them out of heart.

Thus the time went on, until it became necessary for me to think of returning. When that time arrived it was the worst of all, for then my darling completely broke down. She clung round my neck, calling me by every dear name she could think of, and saying what should she do without me! Nor was Richard much better; and as for me I should have been the worst of the three, if I had not severely said to myself, "Now, Esther, if you do, I'll never speak to you again!"

"Why, I declare," said I, "I never saw such a wife. I don't think she loves her husband at all. Here, Richard, take my child, for goodness' sake." But I held her tight all the while, and could have wept over her I don't know how long.

"I give this dear young couple notice," said I, "that I am only going away to come back to-morrow; and that I shall be always coming backwards and forwards, until Symond's Inn is tired of the sight of me. So I shall not say good bye, Richard. For what would be the use of that, you know, when I am coming back so soon!"

I had given my darling to him now, and I meant to go; but I lingered for one more look of the precious face, which it seemed to rive my heart to turn from.

So I said (in a merry, bustling manner) that unless they gave me some encouragement to come back, I was not sure that I could take that liberty; upon which my dear girl looked up, faintly smiling through her tears, and I folded her lovely face between my hands, and gave it one last kiss, and laughed, and ran away.

And when I got down-stairs, O how I cried! It almost seemed to me that I had lost my Ada for ever. I was so lonely, and so blank without her, and it was so desolate to be going home with no hope of seeing her there, that I could get no comfort for a little while, as I walked up and down in a dim corner, sobbing and crying.

I came to myself by-and-by, after a little scolding, and took a coach home. The poor boy whom I had found at St. Albans had reappeared a short time before, and was lying at the point of death; indeed, was then dead, though I did not know it. My guardian had gone out to inquire about him, and did not return to dinner. Being quite alone, I cried a little again; though, on the whole, I don't think I behaved so very, very ill.

It was only natural that I should not be quite accustomed to the loss of my darling yet. Three or four hours were not a long time, after years. But my mind dwelt so much upon the uncongenial scene in which I had left her, and I pictured it as such an overshadowed stony-hearted one, and I so longed to be near her, and taking some sort of care of her, that I determined to go back in the evening, only to look up at her windows.

It was foolish, I dare say; but it did not then seem at all so to me, and it does not seem quite so even now. I took Charley into my confidence, and we went out at dusk. It was dark when we came to the

new strange home of my dear girl, and there was a light behind the yellow blinds. We walked past cautiously three or four times, looking up; and narrowly missed encountering Mr. Vholes, who came out of his office while we were there, and turned his head to look up too before going home. The sight of his lank black figure, and the lonesome air of that nook in the dark, were favourable to the state of my mind. I thought of the youth and love and beauty of my dear girl, shut up in such an ill-assorted refuge, almost as if it were a cruel place.

It was very solitary and very dull, and I did not doubt that I might safely steal up-stairs. I left Charley below, and went up with a light foot, not distressed by any glare from the feeble oil lanterns on the way. I listened for a few moments; and in the musty rotting silence of the house, believed that I could hear the murmur of their young voices. I put my lips to the hearse-like panel of the door, as a kiss for my dear, and came quietly down again, thinking that one of these days I would confess to the visit.

And it really did me good; for, though nobody but Charley and I knew anything about it, I somehow felt as if it had diminished the separation between Ada and me, and had brought us together again for those moments. I went back, not quite accustomed yet to the change, but all the better for that hovering about my darling.

My guardian had come home, and was standing thoughtfully by the dark window. When I went in, his face cleared and he came to his seat; but he caught the light upon my face, as I took mine.

"Little woman," said he. "You have been crying."

"Why, yes, guardian," said I, "I am afraid I have been, a little. Ada has been in such distress, and is so very sorry, guardian."

I put my arm on the back of his chair; and I saw in his glance that my words, and my look at her empty place, had prepared him.

"Is she married, my dear?"

I told him all about it, and how her first entreaties had referred to his forgiveness.

"She has no need of it," said he. "Heaven bless her, and her husband!" But just as my first impulse had been to pity her, so was his. "Poor girl, poor girl! Poor Rick! Poor Ada!"

Neither of us spoke after that; until he said, with a sigh, "Well, well, my dear! Bleak House is thinning fast."

"But its mistress remains, guardian." Though I was timid about saying it, I ventured because of the sorrowful tone in which he had spoken. "She will do all she can to make it happy," said I.

"She will succeed, my love!"

The letter had made no difference between us, except that the seat by his side had come to be mine; it made none now. He turned his old bright fatherly look upon me, laid his hand on my hand in his old way, and said again, "She will succeed, my dear. Nevertheless, Bleak House is thinning fast, O little woman!"

I was sorry presently that this was all we said about that. I was rather disappointed. I feared I might not quite have been all I had meant to be, since the letter and the answer.

## CHAPTER LII.

## OBSTINACY.

BUT one other day had intervened, when, early in the morning as we were going to breakfast, Mr. Woodcourt came in haste with the astounding news that a terrible murder had been committed, for which Mr. George had been apprehended and was in custody. When he told us that a large reward was offered by Sir Leicester Dedlock for the murderer's apprehension, I did not in my first consternation understand why; but a few more words explained to me that the murdered person was Sir Leicester's lawyer, and immediately my mother's dread of him rushed into my remembrance.

This unforeseen and violent removal of one whom she had long watched and distrusted, and who had long watched and distrusted her; one for whom she could have had few intervals of kindness, always dreading in him a dangerous and secret enemy; appeared so awful, that my first thoughts were of her. How appalling to hear of such a death, and be able to feel no pity! How dreadful to remember, perhaps, that she had sometimes even wished the old man away, who was so swiftly hurried out of life!

Such crowding reflections, increasing the distress and fear I always felt when the name was mentioned, made me so agitated that I could scarcely hold my place at the table. I was quite unable to follow the conversation, until I had had a little time to recover. But when I came to myself, and saw how shocked my guardian was; and found that they were earnestly speaking of the suspected man, and recalling every favorable impression we had formed of him, out of the good we had known of him; my interest and my fears were so strongly aroused in his behalf that I was quite set up again.

"Guardian, you don't think it possible that he is justly accused?"

"My dear, I *can't* think so. This man whom we have seen so open-hearted and compassionate; who, with the might of a giant, has the gentleness of a child; who looks as brave a fellow as ever lived, and is so simple and quiet with it; this man justly accused of such a crime? I can't believe it. It's not that I don't or I won't. I can't!"

"And I can't," said Mr. Woodcourt. "Still, whatever we believe or know of him, we had better not forget that some appearances are against him. He bore an animosity towards the deceased gentleman. He has openly mentioned it in many places. He is said to have expressed himself violently towards him, and he certainly did about him, to my knowledge. He admits that he was alone, on the scene of the murder, within a few minutes of its commission. I sincerely believe him to be as innocent of any participation in it, as I am; but these are all reasons for suspicion falling upon him."

"True," said my guardian; and he added, turning to me, "it would be doing him a very bad service, my dear, to shut our eyes to the truth in any of these respects."

I felt, of course, that we must admit, not only to ourselves but to others, the full force of the circumstances against him. Yet I knew withal (I could not help saying) that their weight would not induce us to desert him in his need.

"Heaven forbid!" returned my guardian. "We will stand by him, as he himself stood by the two poor creatures who are gone." He meant Mr. Gridley and the boy, to both of whom Mr. George had given shelter.

Mr. Woodcourt then told us that the trooper's man had been with him before day, after wandering about the streets all night like a distracted creature. That one of the trooper's first anxieties was that we should not suppose him guilty. That he had charged his messenger to represent his perfect innocence, with every solemn assurance he could send us. That Mr. Woodcourt had only quieted the man by undertaking to come to our house very early in the morning, with these representations. He added that he was now upon his way to see the prisoner himself.

My guardian said, directly, he would go too. Now, besides that I liked the retired soldier very much, and that he liked me, I had that secret interest in what had happened, which was only known to my guardian. I felt as if it came close and near to me. It seemed to become personally important to myself that the truth should be discovered, and that no innocent people should be suspected; for suspicion, once run wild, might run wilder.

In a word, I felt as if it were my duty and obligation to go with them. My guardian did not seek to dissuade me, and I went.

It was a large prison, with many courts and passages so like one another, and so uniformly paved, that I seemed to gain a new comprehension, as I passed along, of the fondness that solitary prisoners, shut up among the same staring walls from year to year, have had—as I have read—for a weed, or a stray blade of grass. In an arched room by himself, like a cellar up-stairs: with walls so glaringly white, that they made the massive iron window-bars and iron-bound door even more profoundly black than they were: we found the trooper standing in a corner. He had been sitting on a bench there, and had risen when he heard the locks and bolts turn.

When he saw us, he came forward a step with his usual heavy tread, and there stopped and made a slight bow. But as I still advanced, putting out my hand to him, he understood us in a moment.

"This is a load off my mind, I do assure you, miss and gentlemen," said he, saluting us with great heartiness, and drawing a long breath. "And now I don't so much care how it ends."

He scarcely seemed to be the prisoner. What with his coolness and his soldierly bearing, he looked far more like the prison guard.

"This is even a rougher place than my gallery to receive a lady in," said Mr. George, "but I know Miss Summerson will make the best of it." As he handed me to the bench on which he had been sitting, I sat down; which seemed to give him great satisfaction.

"I thank you, miss," said he.

"Now, George," observed my guardian, "as we require no new assurances on your part, so I believe we need give you none on ours."

"Not at all, sir. I thank you with all my heart. If I was not innocent of this crime, I couldn't look at you and keep my secret to myself, under the condescension of the present visit. I feel the present visit very much. I am not one of the eloquent sort, but I feel it, Miss Summerson and gentlemen, deeply."

He laid his hand for a moment on his broad chest, and bent his head to us. Although he squared himself again directly, he expressed a great amount of natural emotion by these simple means.

"First," said my guardian, "can we do anything for your personal comfort, George?"

"For which, sir?" he inquired, clearing his throat.

"For your personal comfort. Is there anything you want, that would lessen the hardship of this confinement?"

"Well, sir," replied Mr. George, after a little cogitation, "I am equally obliged to you; but tobacco being against the rules, I can't say that there is."

"You will think of many little things perhaps, by-and-by. Whenever you do, George, let us know."

"Thank you, sir. Howsoever," observed Mr. George, with one of his sunburnt smiles, "a man who has been knocking about the world in a vagabond kind of a way as long as I have, gets on well enough in a place like the present, so far as that goes."

"Next, as to your case," observed my guardian.

"Exactly so, sir," returned Mr. George, folding his arms upon his breast with perfect self-possession and a little curiosity.

"How does it stand now?"

"Why, sir, it is under remand at present. Bucket gives me to understand that he will probably apply for a series of remands from time to time, until the case is more complete. How it is to be made more complete, I don't myself see; but I dare say Bucket will manage it somehow."

"Why, Heaven save us, man!" exclaimed my guardian, surprised into his old oddity and vehemence, "you talk of yourself as if you were somebody else!"

"No offence, sir," said Mr. George. "I am very sensible of your kindness. But I don't see how an innocent man is to make up his mind to this kind of thing without knocking his head against the walls, unless he takes it in that point of view."

"That is true enough, to a certain extent," returned my guardian, softened. "But my good fellow, even an innocent man must take ordinary precautions to defend himself."

"Certainly, sir. And I have done so. I have stated to the magistrates, 'Gentlemen, I am as innocent of this charge as yourselves; what has been stated against me in the way of facts, is perfectly true; I know no more about it.' I intend to continue stating that, sir. What more can I do? It's the truth."

"But the mere truth won't do," rejoined my guardian.

"Won't it, indeed, sir? Rather a bad look-out for me!" Mr. George good-humoredly observed.

"You must have a lawyer," pursued my guardian. "We must engage a good one for you."

"I ask your pardon, sir," said Mr. George, with a step backward. "I am equally obliged. But I must decidedly beg to be excused from anything of that sort."

"You won't have a lawyer?"

"No, sir." Mr. George shook his head in the most emphatic manner. "I thank you all the same, sir, but—no lawyer!"

"Why not?"

"I don't take kindly to the breed," said Mr. George. "Gridley didn't. And—if you'll excuse my saying so much—I should hardly have thought you did yourself, sir."

"That's Equity," my guardian explained, a little at a loss; "that's Equity, George."

"Is it indeed, sir?" returned the trooper, in his off-hand manner. "I am not acquainted with those shades of names myself, but in a general way I object to the breed."

Unfolding his arms, and changing his position, he stood with one massive hand upon the table, and the other on his hip, as complete a picture of a man who was not to be moved from a fixed purpose as ever I saw. It was in vain that we all three talked to him, and endeavoured to persuade him; he listened with that gentleness which went so well with his bluff bearing, but was evidently no more shaken by our representations than his place of confinement was.

"Pray think, once more, Mr. George," said I. "Have you no wish, in reference to your case?"

"I certainly could wish it to be tried, miss," he returned, "by court-martial; but that is out of the question, as I am well aware. If you will be so good as to favour me with your attention for a couple of minutes, miss, not more, I'll endeavour to explain myself as clearly as I can."

He looked at us all three in turn, shook his head a little as if he were adjusting it in the stock and collar of a tight uniform, and after a moment's reflection went on.

"You see, miss, I have been hand-cuffed and taken into custody, and brought here. I am a marked and disgraced man, and here I am. My shooting-gallery is rummaged, high and low, by Bucket; such property as I have—'tis small—is turned this way and that, till it don't know itself; and (as aforesaid) here I am! I don't particular complain of that. Though I am in these present quarters through no immediately preceding fault of mine, I can very well understand that if I hadn't gone into the vagabond way in my youth, this wouldn't have happened. It *has* happened. Then comes the question, how to meet it."

He rubbed his swarthy forehead for a moment, with a good-humored look, and said apologetically, "I am such a short-winded talker that I must think a bit." Having thought a bit, he looked up again, and resumed.

"How to meet it. Now, the unfortunate deceased was himself a

lawyer, and had a pretty tight hold of me. I don't wish to rake up his ashes, but he had, what I should call if he was living, a Devil of a tight hold of me. I don't like his trade the better for that. If I had kept clear of his trade, I should have kept outside this place. But that's not what I mean. Now, suppose I had killed him. Suppose I really had discharged into his body any one of those pistols recently fired off, that Bucket has found at my place, and, dear me! might have found there any day since it has been my place. What should I have done as soon as I was hard and fast here? Got a lawyer."

He stopped on hearing some one at the locks and bolts, and did not resume until the door had been opened and was shut again. For what purpose opened, I will mention presently.

"I should have got a lawyer, and he would have said (as I have often read in the newspapers), 'my client says nothing, my client reserves his defence—my client this, that, and t'other.' Well! 'tis not the custom of that breed to go straight, according to my opinion, or to think that other men do. Say, I am innocent, and I get a lawyer. He would be as likely to believe me guilty as not; perhaps more. What would he do, whether or no? Act as if I was;—shut my mouth up, tell me not to commit myself, keep circumstances back, chop the evidence small, quibble, and get me off perhaps! But, Miss Summerson, do I care for getting off in that way; or would I rather be hanged in my own way—if you'll excuse my mentioning anything so disagreeable to a lady?"

He had warmed into his subject now, and was under no further necessity to wait a bit.

"I would rather be hanged in my own way. And I mean to be! I don't intend to say," looking round upon us, with his powerful arms akimbo and his dark eyebrows raised, "that I am more partial to being hanged than another man. What I say is, I must come off clear and full, or not at all. Therefore, when I hear stated against me what is true, I say it's true; and when they tell me, 'whatever you say will be used,' I tell them I don't mind that; I mean it to be used. If they can't make me innocent out of the whole truth, they are not likely to do it out of anything less, or anything else. And if they are, it's worth nothing to me."

Taking a pace or two over the stone floor, he came back to the table, and finished what he had to say.

"I thank you, miss, and gentlemen both, many times for your attention, and many times more for your interest. That's the plain state of the matter, as it points itself out to a mere trooper with a blunt broadsword kind of a mind. I have never done well in life, beyond my duty as a soldier; and if the worst comes after all, I shall reap pretty much as I have sown. When I got over the first crash of being seized as a murderer—it don't take a rover, who has knocked about so much as myself, so very long to recover from a crash—I worked my way round to what you find me now. As such, I shall remain. No relations will be disgraced by me, or made unhappy for me, and—and that's all I've got to say."

The door had been opened to admit another soldier-looking man of



less prepossessing appearance at first sight, and a weather-tanned bright-eyed wholesome woman with a basket, who, from her entrance, had been exceedingly attentive to all Mr. George had said. Mr. George had received them with a familiar nod and a friendly look, but without any more particular greeting in the midst of his address. He now shook them cordially by the hand, and said, "Miss Summerson and gentlemen, this is an old comrade of mine, Joseph Bagnet. And this is his wife, Mrs. Bagnet."

Mr. Bagnet made us a stiff military bow, and Mrs. Bagnet dropped us a curtsey.

"Real good friends of mine they are," said Mr. George. "It was at their house I was taken."

"With a second-hand violinceller," Mr. Bagnet put in, twitching his head angrily. "Of a good tone. For a friend. That money was no object to."

"Mat," said Mr. George, "you have heard pretty well all I have been saying to this lady and these two gentlemen. I know it meets your approval?"

Mr. Bagnet, after considering, referred the point to his wife. "Old girl," said he. "Tell him. Whether or not. It meets my approval."

"Why, George," exclaimed Mrs. Bagnet, who had been unpacking her basket, in which there was a piece of cold pickled pork, a little tea and sugar, and a brown loaf, "you ought to know it don't. You ought to know it's enough to drive a person wild to hear you. You won't be got off this way, and you won't be got off that way—what do you mean by such picking and choosing? It's stuff and nonsense, George."

"Don't be severe upon me in my misfortunes, Mrs. Bagnet," said the trooper, lightly.

"Oh! Bother your misfortunes!" cried Mrs. Bagnet, "if they don't make you more reasonable than that comes to. I never was so ashamed in my life to hear a man talk folly, as I have been to hear you talk this day to the present company. Lawyers? Why, what but too many cooks should hinder you from having a dozen lawyers, if the gentleman recommended them to you?"

"This is a very sensible woman," said my guardian. "I hope you will persuade him, Mrs. Bagnet."

"Persuade him, sir?" she returned. "Lord bless you, no. You don't know George. Now, there!" Mrs. Bagnet left her basket to point him out with both her bare brown hands. "There he stands! As self-willed and as determined a man, in the wrong way, as ever put a human creature under Heaven, out of patience! You could as soon take up and shoulder an eight-and-forty pounder by your own strength, as turn that man, when he has got a thing into his head, and fixed it there. Why, don't I know him!" cried Mrs. Bagnet. "Don't I know you, George! You don't mean to set up for a new character with me, after all these years, I hope?"

Her friendly indignation had an exemplary effect upon her husband, who shook his head at the trooper several times, as a silent recommendation to him to yield. Betweenwhiles, Mrs. Bagnet looked at me;

and I understood, from the play of her eyes, that she wished me to do something, though I did not comprehend what.

"But I have given up talking to you, old fellow, years and years," said Mrs. Bagnet, as she blew a little dust off the pickled pork, looking at me again; "and when ladies and gentlemen know you as well as I do, they'll give up talking to you too. If you are not too headstrong to accept of a bit of dinner, here it is."

"I accept it, with many thanks," returned the trooper.

"Do you though, indeed?" said Mrs. Bagnet, continuing to grumble on good-humoredly. "I'm sure I'm surprised at that. I wonder you don't starve in your own way also. It would only be like you. Perhaps you'll set your mind upon *that*, next." Here she again looked at me; and I now perceived, from her glances at the door and at me, by turns, that she wished us to retire, and to await her following us, outside the prison. Communicating this by similar means to my guardian, and Mr. Woodcourt, I rose.

"We hope you will think better of it, Mr. George," said I; "and we shall come to see you again, trusting to find you more reasonable."

"More grateful, Miss Summerson, you can't find me," he returned.

"But more persuadable we can, I hope," said I. "And let me entreat you to consider that the clearing up of this mystery, and the discovery of the real perpetrator of this deed, may be of the last importance to others besides yourself."

He heard me respectfully, but without much heeding these words, which I spoke, a little turned from him, already on my way to the door; he was observing (this they afterwards told me) my height and figure, which seemed to catch his attention all at once.

"'Tis curious," said he. "And yet I thought so at the time!"

My guardian asked him what he meant.

"Why, sir," he answered, "when my ill-fortune took me to the dead man's staircase on the night of his murder, I saw a shape so like Miss Summerson's go by me in the dark, that I had half a mind to speak to it."

For an instant, I felt such a shudder as I never felt before or since, and hope I shall never feel again.

"It came down-stairs as I went up," said the trooper, "and crossed the moonlighted window with a loose black mantle on; I noticed a deep fringe to it. However, it has nothing to do with the present subject, excepting that Miss Summerson looked so like it at the moment, that it came into my head."

I cannot separate and define the feelings that arose in me after this: it is enough that the vague duty and obligation I had felt upon me from the first of following the investigation, was, without my distinctly daring to ask myself any question, increased; and that I was indignantly sure of there being no possibility of a reason for my being afraid.

We three went out of the prison, and walked up and down at some short distance from the gate, which was in a retired place. We had not waited long, when Mr. and Mrs. Bagnet came out too, and quickly joined us.

There was a tear in each of Mrs. Bagnet's eyes, and her face was flushed and hurried. "I didn't let George see what I thought about it, you know, miss," was her first remark when she came up; "but he's in a bad way, poor old fellow!"

"Not with care and prudence, and good help," said my guardian.

"A gentleman like you ought to know best, sir," returned Mrs. Bagnet, hurriedly drying her eyes on the hem of her grey cloak; "but I am uneasy for him. He has been so careless, and said so much that he never meant. The gentlemen of the juries might not understand him as Lignum and me do. And then such a number of circumstances have happened bad for him, and such a number of people will be brought forward to speak against him, and Bucket is so deep."

"With a second-hand violinceller. And said he played the fife. When a boy." Mr. Bagnet added, with great solemnity.

"Now, I tell you, miss," said Mrs. Bagnet; "and when I say miss, I mean all! Just come into the corner of the wall, and I'll tell you!"

Mrs. Bagnet hurried us into a more secluded place, and was at first too breathless to proceed; occasioning Mr. Bagnet to say, "Old girl! Tell 'em!"

"Why, then, miss," the old girl proceeded, untying the strings of her bonnet for more air, "you could as soon move Dover Castle as move George on this point, unless you had got a new power to move him with. And I have got it!"

"You are a jewel of a woman," said my guardian. "Go on!"

"Now, I tell you, miss," she proceeded, clapping her hands in her hurry and agitation a dozen times in every sentence, "that what he says concerning no relations is all bosh. They don't know of him, but he does know of them. He has said more to me at odd times than to anybody else, and it warn't for nothing that he once spoke to my Woolwich about whitening and wrinkling mother's heads. For fifty pounds he had seen his mother that day. She's alive, and must be brought here straight!"

Instantly Mrs. Bagnet put some pins into her mouth, and began pinning up her skirts all round, a little higher than the level of her grey cloak; which she accomplished with surprising dispatch and dexterity.

"Lignum," said Mrs. Bagnet, "you take care of the children, old man, and give me the umbrella! I'm away to Lincolnshire, to bring that old lady here."

"But, bless the woman!" cried my guardian with his hand in his pocket, "how is she going? What money has she got?"

Mrs. Bagnet made another application to her skirts, and brought forth a leathern purse in which she hastily counted over a few shillings, and which she then shut up with perfect satisfaction.

"Never you mind for me, miss. I'm a soldier's wife, and accustomed to travelling in my own way. Lignum, old boy," kissing him, "one for yourself; three for the children. Now, I'm away into Lincolnshire after George's mother!"

And she actually set off while we three stood looking at one another

lost in amazement. She actually trudged away in her grey cloak at a sturdy pace, and turned the corner, and was gone.

"Mr. Bagnet," said my guardian. "Do you mean to let her go in that way?"

"Can't help it," he returned. "Made her way home once. From another quarter of the world. With the same grey cloak. And same umbrella. Whatever the old girl says, do. Do it! Whenever the old girl says, I'll do it. She does it."

"Then she is as honest and genuine as she looks," rejoined my guardian, "and it is impossible to say more for her."

"She's Color-Serjeant of the Nonpareil battalion," said Mr. Bagnet, looking at us over his shoulder, as he went his way also. "And there's not such another. But I never own to it before her. Discipline must be maintained."

## CHAPTER LIII.

### THE TRACK.

MR. BUCKET and his fat forefinger are much in consultation together under existing circumstances. When Mr. Bucket has a matter of this pressing interest under his consideration, the fat forefinger seems to rise to the dignity of a familiar demon. He puts it to his ears, and it whispers information; he puts it to his lips, and it enjoins him to secrecy; he rubs it over his nose, and it sharpens his scent; he shakes it before a guilty man, and it charms him to his destruction. The Augurs of the Detective Temple invariably predict, that when Mr. Bucket and that finger are much in conference, a terrible avenger will be heard of before long.

Otherwise mildly studious in his observation of human nature, on the whole a benignant philosopher not disposed to be severe upon the follies of mankind, Mr. Bucket pervades a vast number of houses, and strolls about an infinity of streets: to outward appearance rather languishing for want of an object. He is in the friendliest condition towards his species, and will drink with most of them. He is free with his money, affable in his manners, innocent in his conversation—but, through the placid stream of his life, there glides an under-current of forefinger.

Time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket. Like man in the abstract, he is here to-day and gone to-morrow—but, very unlike man indeed, he is here again the next day. This evening he will be casually looking into the iron extinguishers at the door of Sir Leicester Dedlock's house in town; and to-morrow morning he will be walking on the leads at Chesney Wold, where erst the old man walked whose ghost is propitiated with a hundred guineas. Drawers, desks, pockets, all things belonging to him, Mr. Bucket examines. A few hours afterwards, he and the Koman will be alone together, comparing forefingers.

It is likely that these occupations are irreconcilable with home enjoy-

ment, but it is certain that Mr. Bucket at present does not go home. Though in general he highly appreciates the society of Mrs. Bucket—a lady of a natural detective genius, which if it had been improved by professional exercise, might have done great things, but which has paused at the level of a clever amateur—he holds himself aloof from that dear solace. Mrs. Bucket is dependent on their lodger (fortunately an amiable lady in whom she takes an interest) for companionship and conversation.

A great crowd assembles in Lincoln's Inn Fields on the day of the funeral. Sir Leicester Dedlock attends the ceremony in person; strictly speaking, there are only three other human followers, that is to say, Lord Doodle, William Buffy, and the debilitated cousin (thrown in as a make-weight), but the amount of inconsolable carriages is immense. The Peerage contributes more four-wheeled affliction than has ever been seen in that neighbourhood. Such is the assemblage of armorial bearings on coach panels, that the Heralds' College might be supposed to have lost its father and mother at a blow. The Duke of Foodle sends a splendid pile of dust and ashes, with silver wheel-boxes, patent axles, all the last improvements, and three bereaved worms, six feet high, holding on behind, in a bunch of woe. All the state coachmen in London seem plunged into mourning; and if that dead old man of the rusty garb, be not beyond a taste in horseflesh (which appears impossible), it must be highly gratified this day.

Quiet among the undertakers and the equipages, and the calves of so many legs all steeped in grief, Mr. Bucket sits concealed in one of the inconsolable carriages, and at his ease surveys the crowd through the lattice blinds. He has a keen eye for a crowd—as for what not?—and looking here and there, now from this side of the carriage, now from the other, now up at the house windows, now along the people's heads, nothing escapes him.

"And there you are, my partner, eh?" says Mr. Bucket to himself, apostrophising Mrs. Bucket, stationed, by his favor, on the steps of the deceased's house. "And so you are. And so you are! And very well indeed you are looking, Mrs. Bucket!"

The procession has not started yet, but is waiting for the cause of its assemblage to be brought out. Mr. Bucket, in the foremost emblazoned carriage, uses his two fat forefingers to hold the lattice a hair's breadth open while he looks.

And it says a great deal for his attachment, as a husband, that he is still occupied with Mrs. B. "There you are, my partner, eh?" he murmuringly repeats. "And our lodger with you. I'm taking notice of you, Mrs. Bucket; I hope you're all right in your health, my dear!"

Not another word does Mr. Bucket say; but sits with most attentive eyes, until the sacked depository of noble secrets is brought down—Where are all those secrets now? Does he keep them yet? Did they fly with him on that sudden journey?—and until the procession moves, and Mr. Bucket's view is changed. After which, he composes himself for an easy ride; and takes note of the fittings of the carriage, in case he should ever find such knowledge useful.

Contrast enough between Mr. Tulkinghorn shut up in his dark carriage, and Mr. Bucket shut up in *his*. Between the immeasurable track of space beyond the little wound that has thrown the one into the fixed sleep which jolts so heavily over the stones of the streets, and the narrow track of blood which keeps the other in the watchful state expressed in every hair of his head! But it is all one to both; neither is troubled about that.

Mr. Bucket sits out the procession, in his own easy manner, and glides from the carriage when the opportunity he has settled with himself arrives. He makes for Sir Leicester Dedlock's, which is at present a sort of home to him, where he comes and goes as he likes at all hours, where he is always welcome and made much of, where he knows the whole establishment, and walks in an atmosphere of mysterious greatness.

No knocking or ringing for Mr. Bucket. He has caused himself to be provided with a key, and can pass in at his pleasure. As he is crossing the hall, Mercury informs him, "Here's another letter for you, Mr. Bucket, come by post," and gives it him.

"Another one, eh?" says Mr. Bucket.

If Mercury should chance to be possessed by any lingering curiosity as to Mr. Bucket's letters, that wary person is not the man to gratify it. Mr. Bucket looks at him, as if his face were a vista of some miles in length, and he were leisurely contemplating the same.

"Do you happen to carry a box?" says Mr. Bucket.

Unfortunately Mercury is no snuff-taker.

"Could you fetch me a pinch from anywheres?" says Mr. Bucket.

"Thankee. It don't matter what it is; I'm not particular as to the kind. Thankee!"

Having leisurely helped himself from a canister borrowed from somebody down-stairs for the purpose, and having made a considerable show of tasting it, first with one side of his nose and then with the other, Mr. Bucket, with much deliberation, pronounces it of the right sort, and goes on, letter in hand.

Now, although Mr. Bucket walks up-stairs to the little library within the larger one, with the face of a man who receives some scores of letters every day, it happens that much correspondence is not incidental to his life. He is no great scribe; rather handling his pen like the pocket-staff he carries about with him always convenient to his grasp; and discourages correspondence with himself in others, as being too artless and direct a way of doing delicate business. Further, he often sees damaging letters produced in evidence, and has occasion to reflect that it was a green thing to write them. For these reasons he has very little to do with letters, either as sender or receiver. And yet he has received a round half dozen, within the last twenty-four hours.

"And this," says Mr. Bucket, spreading it out on the table, "is in the same hand, and consists of the same two words."

What two words?

He turns the key in the door, ungirdles his black pocket-book (book of fate to many), lays another letter by it, and reads, boldly written in each, "LADY DEDLOCK."

"Yes, yes," says Mr. Bucket. "But I could have made the money without this anonymous information."

Having put the letters in his book of Fate, and girdled it up again, he unlocks the door just in time to admit his dinner, which is brought upon a goody tray, with a decanter of sherry. Mr. Bucket frequently observes, in friendly circles where there is no restraint, that he likes a toothful of your fine old brown East Inder sherry better than anything you can offer him. Consequently he fills and empties his glass, with a smack of his lips; and is proceeding with his refreshment, when an idea enters his mind.

Mr. Bucket softly opens the door of communication between that room and the next, and looks in. The library is deserted, and the fire is sinking low. Mr. Bucket's eye, after taking a pigeon-flight round the room, alights upon a table where letters are usually put as they arrive. Several letters for Sir Leicester are upon it. Mr. Bucket draws near, and examines the directions. "No," he says, "there's none in that hand. It's only me as is written to. I can break it to Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, to-morrow."

With that, he returns to finish his dinner with a good appetite; and, after a light nap, is summoned into the drawing-room. Sir Leicester has received him there these several evenings past, to know whether he has anything to report. The debilitated cousin (much exhausted by the funeral), and Volumnia, are in attendance.

Mr. Bucket makes three distinctly different bows to these three people. A bow of homage to Sir Leicester, a bow of gallantry to Volumnia, and a bow of recognition to the debilitated cousin; to whom it airily says, "You are a swell about town, and you know me, and I know you." Having distributed these little specimens of his tact, Mr. Bucket rubs his hands.

"Have you anything new to communicate, officer?" inquires Sir Leicester. "Do you wish to hold any conversation with me in private?"

"Why—not to-night, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet."

"Because my time," pursues Sir Leicester, "is wholly at your disposal, with a view to the vindication of the outraged majesty of the law."

Mr. Bucket coughs, and glances at Volumnia, rouged and necklaced, as though he would respectfully observe, "I do assure you, you're a pretty creetur. I've seen hundreds worse-looking at your time of life, I have indeed."

The fair Volumnia not quite unconscious perhaps of the humanising influence of her charms, pauses in the writing of cocked-hat notes, and meditatively adjusts the pearl necklace. Mr. Bucket prices that decoration in his mind, and thinks it as likely as not that Volumnia is writing poetry.

"If I have not," pursues Sir Leicester, "in the most emphatic manner, adjured you, officer, to exercise your utmost skill in this atrocious case, I particularly desire to take the present opportunity of rectifying any omission I may have made. Let no expense be a consideration. I am prepared to defray all charges. You can incur none, in pursuit of the

object you have undertaken, that I shall hesitate for a moment to bear."

Mr. Bucket makes Sir Leicester's bow again, as a response to this liberality.

"My mind," Sir Leicester adds, with generous warmth, "has not, as may be easily supposed, recovered its tone since the late diabolical occurrence. It is not likely ever to recover its tone. But it is full of indignation to-night, after undergoing the ordeal of consigning to the tomb the remains of a faithful, a zealous, a devoted adherent."

Sir Leicester's voice trembles, and his grey hair stirs upon his head. Tears are in his eyes; the best part of his nature is aroused.

"I declare," he says, "I solemnly declare that until this crime is discovered and, in the course of justice, punished, I almost feel as if there were a stain upon my name. A gentleman who has devoted a large portion of his life to me, a gentleman who has devoted the last day of his life to me, a gentleman who has constantly sat at my table and slept under my roof, goes from my house to his own, and is struck down within an hour of his leaving my house. I cannot say but that he may have been followed from my house, watched at my house, even first marked because of his association with my house—which may have suggested his possessing greater wealth, and being altogether of greater importance than his own retiring demeanour would have indicated. If I cannot with my means, and my influence, and my position, bring all the perpetrators of such a crime to light, I fail in the assertion of my respect for that gentleman's memory, and of my fidelity towards one who was ever faithful to me."

While he makes this protestation with great emotion and earnestness, looking round the room as if he were addressing an assembly, Mr. Bucket glances at him with an observant gravity in which there might be, but for the audacity of the thought, a touch of compassion.

"The ceremony of to-day," continues Sir Leicester, "strikingly illustrative of the respect in which my deceased friend;" he lays a stress upon the word, for death levels all distinctions; "was held by the flower of the land, has, I say, aggravated the shock I have received from this most horrible and audacious crime. If it were my brother who had committed it, I would not spare him."

Mr. Bucket looks very grave. Volumnia remarks of the deceased that he was the truest and dearest person!

"You must feel it as a deprivation to you, miss," replies Mr. Bucket, soothingly, "no doubt. He was calculated to be a deprivation, I'm sure he was."

Volumnia gives Mr. Bucket to understand, in reply, that her sensitive mind is fully made up never to get the better of it as long as she lives; that her nerves are unstrung for ever; and that she has not the least expectation of smiling again. Meanwhile she folds up a cocked-hat for that redoubtable old general at Bath, descriptive of her melancholy condition.

"It gives a start to a delicate female," says Mr. Bucket, sympathetically, "but it'll wear off."

Volumnia wishes of all things to know what is doing? Whether



they are going to convict, or whatever it is, that dreadful soldier? Whether he had any accomplices, or whatever the thing is called, in the law? And a great deal more to the like artless purpose.

"Why you see, miss," returns Mr. Bucket, bringing the finger into persuasive action—and such is his natural gallantry, that he had almost said, my dear; "it ain't easy to answer those questions at the present moment. Not at the present moment. I've kept myself on this case, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," whom Mr. Bucket takes into the conversation in right of his importance, "morning, noon, and night. But for a glass or two of sherry, I don't think I could have had my mind so much upon the stretch as it has been. I *could* answer your questions, miss, but duty forbids it. Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, will very soon be made acquainted with all that has been traced. And I hope that he may find it;" Mr. Bucket again looks grave; "to his satisfaction."

The debilitated cousin only hopes some fler'll be executed—zample. Thinks more interest's wanted—get man hanged presentime—than get man place ten thousand a year. Hasn't a doubt—zample—far better hang wrong fler than no fler.

"*You* know life, you know, sir," says Mr. Bucket, with a complimentary twinkle of his eye and crook of his finger, "and you can confirm what I've mentioned to this lady. *You* don't want to be told, that, from information I have received, I have gone to work. You're up to what a lady can't be expected to be up to. Lord! especially in your elevated station of society, miss," says Mr. Bucket, quite reddening at another narrow escape from my dear.

"The officer, Volumnia," observes Sir Leicester, "is faithful to his duty, and perfectly right."

Mr. Bucket murmurs, "Glad to have the honor of your approbation, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet."

"In fact, Volumnia," proceeds Sir Leicester, "it is not holding up a good model for imitation, to ask the officer any such questions as you have put to him. He is the best judge of his own responsibility; he acts upon his responsibility. And it does not become us, who assist in making the laws, to impede or interfere with those who carry them into execution. Or," says Sir Leicester, somewhat sternly, for Volumnia was going to cut in before he had rounded his sentence; "or who vindicate their outraged majesty."

Volumnia with all humility explains that she has not merely the plea of curiosity to urge (in common with the giddy youth of her sex in general), but that she is perfectly dying with regret and interest for the darling man whose loss they all deplore.

"Very well, Volumnia," returns Sir Leicester. "Then you cannot be too discreet."

Mr. Bucket takes the opportunity of a pause to be heard again.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I have no objections to telling this lady, with your leave and among ourselves, that I look upon the case as pretty well complete. It is a beautiful case—a beautiful case—and what little is wanting to complete it, I expect to be able to supply in a few hours."

"I am very glad indeed to hear it," says Sir Leicester. "Highly creditable to you."

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," returns Mr. Bucket, very seriously, "I hope it may at one and the same time do me credit, and prove satisfactory to all. When I depict it as a beautiful case, you see, miss," Mr. Bucket goes on, glancing gravely at Sir Leicester, "I mean from my point of view. As considered from other points of view, such cases will always involve more or less unpleasantness. Very strange things comes to our knowledge in families, miss; bless your heart, what you would think to be phenomonons, quite!"

Volumnia, with her innocent little scream, supposes so.

"Aye, and even in gen-teel families, in high families, in great families," says Mr. Bucket, again gravely eyeing Sir Leicester aside. "I have had the honor of being employed in high families before; and you have no idea—come, I'll go so far as to say not even *you* have any idea, sir," this to the debilitated cousin, "what games goes on!"

The cousin, who has been casting sofa-pillows on his head, in a prostration of boredom, yawns, "Vayli"—being the used-up for "very likely."

Sir Leicester, deeming it time to dismiss the officer, here majestically interposes with the words, "Very good. Thank you!" and also with a wave of his hand, implying not only that there is an end of the discourse, but that if high families fall into low habits they must take the consequences. "You will not forget, officer," he adds, with condescension, "that I am at your disposal when you please."

Mr. Bucket (still grave) inquires if to-morrow morning, now, would suit, in case he should be as for'ard as he expects to be? Sir Leicester replies, "All times are alike to me." Mr. Bucket makes his three bows, and is withdrawing, when a forgotten point occurs to him.

"Might I ask, by-the-bye," he says, in a low voice, cautiously returning "who posted the Reward-bill on the staircase?"

"I ordered it to be put up there," replies Sir Leicester.

"Would it be considered a liberty, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, if I was to ask you why?"

"Not at all. I chose it as a conspicuous part of the house. I think it cannot be too prominently kept before the whole establishment. I wish my people to be impressed with the enormity of the crime, the determination to punish it, and the hopelessness of escape. At the same time, officer, if you in your better knowledge of the subject see any objection——"

Mr. Bucket sees none now; the bill having been put up, had better not be taken down. Repeating his three bows he withdraws: closing the door on Volumnia's little scream, which is a preliminary to her remarking that that charmingly horrible person is a perfect Blue Chamber.

In his fondness for society, and his adaptability to all grades, Mr. Bucket is presently standing before the hall-fire—bright and warm on the early winter night—admiring Mercury.

"Why, you're six foot two, I suppose?" says Mr. Bucket.

"Three," says Mercury.

"Are you so much? But then, you see, you're broad in proportion, and don't look it. You're not one of the weak-legged ones, you ain't.

Was you ever modelled now?" Mr. Bucket asks, conveying the expression of an artist into the turn of his eye and head.

Mercury never was modelled.

"Then you ought to be, you know," says Mr. Bucket; "and a friend of mine that you'll hear of one day as a Royal Academy Sculptor, would stand something handsome to make a drawing of your proportions for the marble. My Lady's out, ain't she?"

"Out to dinner."

"Goes out pretty well every day, don't she?"

"Yes."

"Not to be wondered at!" says Mr. Bucket. "Such a fine woman as her, so handsome and so graceful and so elegant, is like a fresh lemon on a dinner-table, ornamental wherever she goes. Was your father in the same way of life as yourself?"

Answer in the negative.

"Mine was," says Mr. Bucket. "My father was first a page, then a footman, then a butler, then a steward, then an innkeeper. Lived universally respected, and died lamented. Said with his last breath that he considered service the most honorable part of his career, and so it was. I've a brother in service, and a brother-in-law. My Lady a good temper?"

Mercury replies, "As good as you can expect."

"Ah!" says Mr. Bucket, "a little spoiled? A little capricious? Lord! What can you anticipate when they're so handsome as that? And we like 'em all the better for it, don't we?"

Mercury, with his hands in the pockets of his bright peach-blossom small-clothes, stretches his symmetrical silk legs with the air of a man of gallantry, and can't deny it. Come the roll of wheels and a violent ringing at the bell. "Talk of the angels," says Mr. Bucket. "Here she is!"

The doors are thrown open, and she passes through the hall. Still very pale, she is dressed in slight mourning, and wears two beautiful bracelets. Either their beauty, or the beauty of her arms, is particularly attractive to Mr. Bucket. He looks at them with an eager eye, and rattles something in his pocket—halfpence perhaps.

Noticing him at his distance, she turns an inquiring look on the other Mercury who has brought her home.

"Mr. Bucket, my Lady."

Mr. Bucket makes a leg, and comes forward, passing his familiar demon over the region of his mouth.

"Are you waiting to see Sir Leicester?"

"No, my Lady, I've seen him!"

"Have you anything to say to me?"

"Not just at present, my Lady."

"Have you made any new discoveries?"

"A few, my Lady."

This is merely in passing. She scarcely makes a stop, and sweeps upstairs alone. Mr. Bucket, moving towards the staircase-foot, watches her as she goes up the steps the old man came down to his grave; past murderous groups of statuary, repeated with their shadowy weapons

on the wall; past the printed bill, which she looks at going by; out of view.

"She's a lovely woman, too, she really is," says Mr. Bucket, coming back to Mercury. "Don't look quite healthy though."

Is not quite healthy, Mercury informs him. Suffers much from headaches.

Really? That's a pity! Walking, Mr. Bucket would recommend for that. Well, she tries walking, Mercury rejoins. Walks sometimes for two hours, when she has them bad. By night, too.

"Are you sure you're quite so much as six foot three?" asks Mr. Bucket, "begging your pardon for interrupting you a moment?"

Not a doubt about it.

"You're so well put together that I shouldn't have thought it. But the household troops, though considered fine men, are built so straggling.—Walks by night, does she? When it's moonlight, though?"

O yes. When it's moonlight! Of course. O, of course! Conversational and acquiescent on both sides.

"I suppose you ain't in the habit of walking, yourself?" says Mr. Bucket. "Not much time for it I should say?"

Besides which, Mercury don't like it. Prefers carriage exercise.

"To be sure," says Mr. Bucket. "That makes a difference. Now I think of it," says Mr. Bucket, warming his hands, and looking pleasantly at the blaze, "she went out walking, the very night of this business."

"To be sure she did! I let her into the garden over the way."

"And left her there. Certainly you did. I saw you doing it."

"I didn't see *you*," says Mercury.

"I was rather in a hurry," returns Mr. Bucket, "for I was going to visit a aunt of mine that lives at Chelsea—next door but two to the old original Bun House—ninety year old the old lady is, a single woman, and got a little property. Yes, I chanced to be passing at the time. Let's see. What time might it be? It wasn't ten."

"Half-past nine."

"You're right. So it was. And if I don't deceive myself, my Lady was muffled in a loose black mantle, with a deep fringe to it?"

"Of course she was."

Of course she was. Mr. Bucket must return to a little work he has to get on with up-stairs; but he must shake hands with Mercury in acknowledgment of his agreeable conversation, and will he—this is all he asks—will he, when he has a leisure half-hour, think of bestowing it on that Royal Academy sculptor, for the advantage of both parties?

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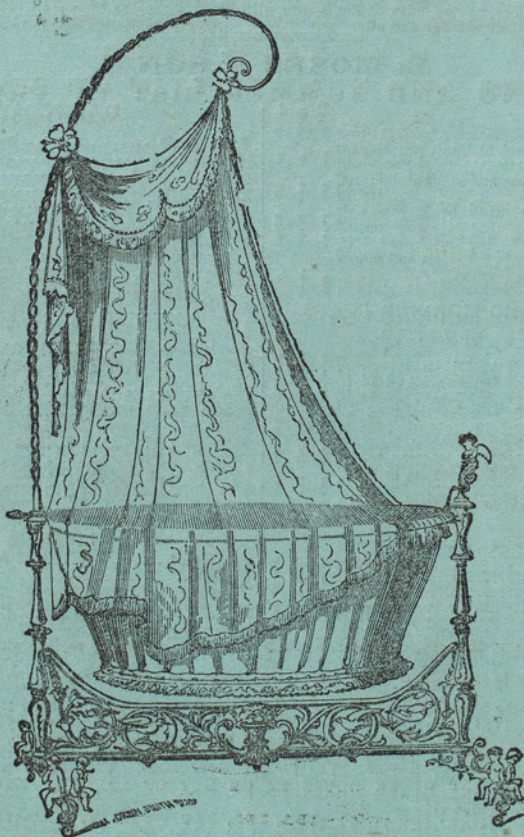
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