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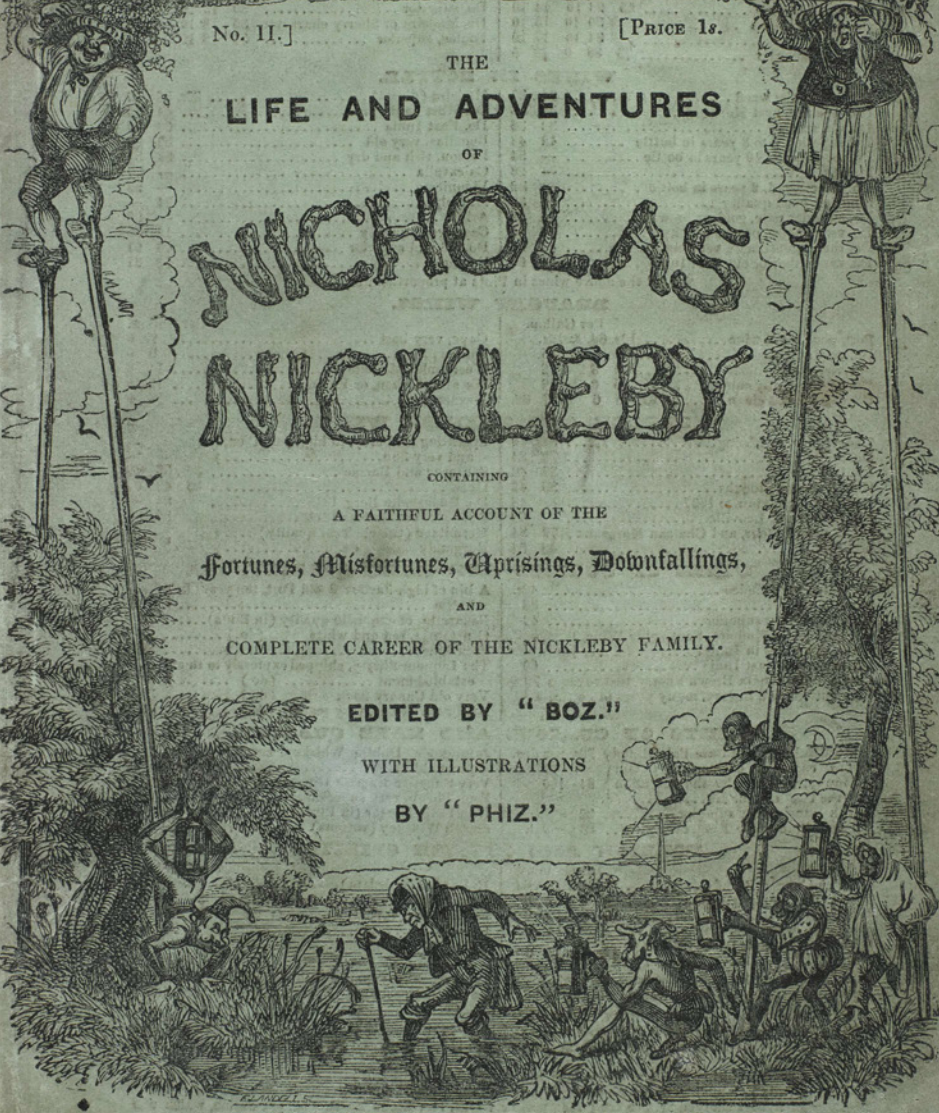
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12 Table Forks	30		7 2	10 15 0	12 Table Forks	40		7 4	14 13 4
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9 Gravy Spoons.....	10		7 2	3 11 8	2 Gravy Spoons.....	12		7 4	4 8 0
1 Soup Ladle.....	10		7 2	3 11 8	1 Soup Ladle.....	12		7 4	4 8 0
4 Sauce ditto.....	10		7 8	3 16 8	4 Sauce ditto.....	12		7 10	4 14 0
4 Salt Spoons (gilt strong)				1 0 0	4 Salt ditto (strong gilt)				2 2 0
1 Fish Slice				2 10 0	1 Fish Slice.....				3 5 0
12 Tea Spoons.....	10		7 8	3 16 8	12 Tea Spoons	14		7 10	5 9 8
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Manufacturing Silver
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KING'S PATTERN.

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Nicholas starts for Yorkshire.





The Five Sisters of York.

NICHOLAS STARTS FOR
FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

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CHAPTER V.

NICHOLAS STARTS FOR YORKSHIRE.—OF HIS LEAVE-TAKING AND HIS FELLOW-TRAVELLERS, AND WHAT BEFEL THEM ON THE ROAD.

If tears dropped into a trunk were charms to preserve its owner from sorrow and misfortune, Nicholas Nickleby would have commenced his expedition under most happy auspices. There was so much to be done, and so little time to do it in, so many kind words to be spoken, and such bitter pain in the hearts in which they rose to impede their utterance, that the little preparations for his journey were made mournfully indeed. A hundred things which the anxious care of his mother and sister deemed indispensable for his comfort, Nicholas insisted on leaving behind, as they might prove of some after use, or might be convertible into money if occasion required. A hundred affectionate contests on such points as these, took place on the sad night which preceded his departure; and, as the termination of every angerless dispute brought them nearer and nearer to the close of their slight preparations, Kate grew busier and busier, and wept more silently.

The box was packed at last, and then there came supper, with some little delicacy provided for the occasion, and as a set-off against the expense of which, Kate and her mother had feigned to dine when Nicholas was out. The poor lad nearly choked himself by attempting to partake of it, and almost suffocated himself in affecting a jest or two, and forcing a melancholy laugh. Thus they lingered on till the hour of separating for the night was long past: and then they found that they might as well have given vent to their real feelings before, for they could not suppress them, do what they would. So they let them have their way, and even that was a relief.

Nicholas slept well till six next morning; dreamed of home, or of what was home once—no matter which, for things that are changed or gone will come back as they used to be, thank God, in sleep—and rose quite brisk and gay. He wrote a few lines in pencil to say the good bye which he was afraid to pronounce himself, and laying them with half his scanty stock of money at his sister's door, shouldered his box and crept softly down stairs.

"Is that you, Hannah?" cried a voice from Miss La Creevy's sitting-room, whence shone the light of a feeble candle.

"It is I, Miss La Creevy," said Nicholas, putting down the box and looking in.

"Bless us!" exclaimed Miss La Creevy, starting and putting her hand to her curl-papers; "You're up very early, Mr. Nickleby."

"So are you," replied Nicholas.

"It's the fine arts that bring me out of bed, Mr. Nickleby," returned the lady. "I'm waiting for the light to carry out an idea."

Miss La Creevy had got up early to put a fancy nose into a miniature of an ugly little boy, destined for his grandmother in the country, who was expected to bequeath him property if he was like the family.

"To carry out an idea," repeated Miss La Creevy; "and that's the great convenience of living in a thoroughfare like the Strand. When I want a nose or an eye for any particular sitter, I have only to look out of window and wait till I get one."

"Does it take long to get a nose, now?" inquired Nicholas, smiling.

"Why, that depends in a great measure on the pattern," replied Miss La Creevy. "Snubs and romans are plentiful enough, and there are flats of all sorts and sizes when there's a meeting at Exeter Hall; but perfect aquilines, I am sorry to say, are scarce, and we generally use them for uniforms or public characters."

"Indeed!" said Nicholas. "If I should meet with any in my travels, I'll endeavour to sketch them for you."

"You don't mean to say that you are really going all the way down into Yorkshire this cold winter's weather, Mr. Nickleby?" said Miss La Creevy. "I heard something of it last night."

"I do, indeed," replied Nicholas. "Needs must, you know, when somebody drives. Necessity is my driver, and that is only another name for the same gentleman."

"Well, I am very sorry for it, that's all I can say," said Miss La Creevy; "as much on your mother's and sister's account as on yours. Your sister is a very pretty young lady, Mr. Nickleby, and that is an additional reason why she should have somebody to protect her. I persuaded her to give me a sitting or two, for the street-door case. Ah! she'll make a sweet miniature." As Miss La Creevy spoke, she held up an ivory countenance intersected with very perceptible sky-blue veins, and regarded it with so much complacency, that Nicholas quite envied her.

"If you ever have an opportunity of showing Kate some little kindness," said Nicholas, presenting his hand, "I think you will."

"Depend upon that," said the good-natured miniature painter; "and God bless you, Mr. Nickleby; and I wish you well."

It was very little that Nicholas knew of the world, but he guessed enough about its ways to think, that if he gave Miss La Creevy one little kiss, perhaps she might not be the less kindly disposed towards those he was leaving behind. So he gave her three or four with a kind of jocular gallantry, and Miss La Creevy evinced no greater symptoms of displeasure than declaring, as she adjusted her yellow turban, that she had never heard of such a thing, and couldn't have believed it possible.

Having terminated the unexpected interview in this satisfactory manner, Nicholas hastily withdrew himself from the house. By the time he had found a man to carry his box it was only seven o'clock, so he walked slowly on, a little in advance of the porter, and very probably with not half as light a heart in his breast as the man had, although he had no waistcoat to cover it with, and had evidently, from the appearance of his other garments, been spending the night in a stable, and taking his breakfast at a pump.

Regarding with no small curiosity and interest all the busy preparations for the coming day which every street and almost every house displayed; and thinking now and then that it seemed rather hard that so many people of all ranks and stations could earn a livelihood in London, and that he should be compelled to journey so far in search of one, Nicholas speedily arrived at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. Having dismissed his attendant, and seen the box safely deposited in the coach-office, he looked into the coffee-room in search of Mr. Squeers.

He found that learned gentleman sitting at breakfast, with the three little boys before noticed, and two others who had turned up by some lucky chance since the interview of the previous day, ranged in a row on the opposite seat. Mr. Squeers had before him a small measure of coffee, a plate of hot toast, and a cold round of beef; but he was at that moment intent on preparing breakfast for the little boys.

"This is twopenn'orth of milk is it, waiter?" said Mr. Squeers, looking down into a large blue mug, and slanting it gently so as to get an accurate view of the quantity of liquid contained in it.

"That's twopenn'orth, Sir," replied the waiter.

"What a rare article milk is, to be sure, in London!" said Mr. Squeers with a sigh. "Just fill that mug up with lukewarm water, William, will you?"

"To the very top, Sir?" inquired the waiter. "Why, the milk will be drowned."

"Never you mind that," replied Mr. Squeers. "Serve it right for being so dear. You ordered that thick bread and butter for three, did you?"

"Coming directly, Sir."

"You needn't hurry yourself," said Squeers; "there's plenty of time. Conquer your passions, boys, and don't be eager after vittles." As he uttered this moral precept, Mr. Squeers took a large bite out of the cold beef, and recognised Nicholas.

"Sit down, Mr. Nickleby," said Squeers. "Here we are, a breakfasting you see."

Nicholas did *not* see that anybody was breakfasting except Mr. Squeers; but he bowed with all becoming reverence, and looked as cheerful as he could.

"Oh! that's the milk and water, is it, William?" said Squeers. "Very good; don't forget the bread and butter presently."

At this fresh mention of the bread and butter, the five little boys looked very eager, and followed the waiter out with their eyes; meanwhile Mr. Squeers tasted the milk and water.

"Ah!" said that gentleman, smacking his lips, "here's richness! Think of the many beggars and orphans in the streets that would be glad of this, little boys. A shocking thing hunger is, isn't it, Mr. Nickleby?"

"Very shocking, Sir," said Nicholas.

"When I say number one," pursued Mr. Squeers, putting the mug before the children, "the boy on the left hand nearest the window may take a drink; and when I say number two the boy next him will go in,

and so till we come to number five, which is the last boy. Are you ready?"

"Yes, Sir," cried all the little boys with great eagerness.

"That's right," said Squeers, calmly getting on with his breakfast; "keep ready till I tell you to begin. Subdue your appetites, my dears, and you've conquered human nature. This is the way we inculcate strength of mind, Mr. Nickleby," said the schoolmaster, turning to Nicholas, and speaking with his mouth very full of beef and toast.

Nicholas murmured something—he knew not what—in reply, and the little boys dividing their gaze between the mug, the bread and butter (which had by this time arrived), and every morsel which Mr. Squeers took into his mouth, remained with strained eyes in torments of expectation.

"Thank God for a good breakfast," said Squeers when he had finished. "Number one may take a drink."

Number one seized the mug ravenously, and had just drunk enough to make him wish for more, when Mr. Squeers gave the signal for number two, who gave up at the same interesting moment to number three, and the process was repeated till the milk and water terminated with number five.

"And now," said the schoolmaster, dividing the bread and butter for three into as many portions as there were children, "you had better look sharp with your breakfast, for the horn will blow in a minute or two, and then every boy leaves off."

Permission being thus given to fall to, the boys began to eat voraciously, and in desperate haste, while the schoolmaster (who was in high good humour after his meal) picked his teeth with a fork and looked smilingly on. In a very short time the horn was heard.

"I thought it wouldn't be long," said Squeers, jumping up and producing a little basket from under the seat; "put what you haven't had time to eat, in here, boys! You'll want it on the road!"

Nicholas was considerably startled by these very economical arrangements, but he had no time to reflect upon them, for the little boys had to be got up to the top of the coach, and their boxes had to be brought out and put in, and Mr. Squeers's luggage was to be seen carefully deposited in the boot, and all these offices were in his department. He was in the full heat and bustle of concluding these operations, when his uncle, Mr. Ralph Nickleby, accosted him.

"Oh! here you are, Sir?" said Ralph. "Here are your mother and sister, Sir."

"Where!" cried Nicholas, looking hastily round.

"Here!" replied his uncle. "Having too much money and nothing at all to do with it, they were paying a hackney coach as I came up, Sir."

"We were afraid of being too late to see him before he went away from us," said Mrs. Nickleby, embracing her son, heedless of the unconcerned lookers-on in the coach-yard.

"Very good, ma'am," returned Ralph, "you're the best judge of course. I merely said that you were paying a hackney coach. I never

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pay a hackney coach, ma'am, I never hire one. I hav'n't been in a hackney coach of my own hiring for thirty years, and I hope I shan't be for thirty more, if I live as long."

"I should never have forgiven myself if I had not seen him," said Mrs. Nickleby. "Poor dear boy—going away without his breakfast too, because he feared to distress us."

"Mighty fine certainly," said Ralph, with great testiness. "When I first went to business, ma'am, I took a penny loaf and a ha'porth of milk for my breakfast as I walked to the city every morning; what do you say to that, ma'am? Breakfast! Pshaw!"

"Now, Nickleby," said Squeers, coming up at the moment buttoning his great-coat; "I think you'd better get up behind. I'm afraid of one of them boys falling off, and then there's twenty pound a year gone."

"Dear Nicholas," whispered Kate, touching her brother's arm, "who is that vulgar man?"

"Eh!" growled Ralph, whose quick ears had caught the inquiry. "Do you wish to be introduced to Mr. Squeers, my dear?"

"That the schoolmaster! No, uncle. Oh, no!" replied Kate, shrinking back.

"I'm sure I heard you say as much, my dear," retorted Ralph in his cold sarcastic manner. "Mr. Squeers, here's my niece, Nicholas's sister?"

"Very glad to make your acquaintance, Miss," said Squeers, raising his hat an inch or two. "I wish Mrs. Squeers took gals, and we had you for a teacher. I don't know though whether she mightn't grow jealous if we had. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

If the proprietor of Dotheboys Hall could have known what was passing in his assistant's breast at that moment, he would have discovered with some surprise, that he was as near being soundly pummelled as he had ever been in his life. Kate Nickleby having a quicker perception of her brother's emotions led him gently aside, and thus prevented Mr. Squeers from being impressed with the fact in a peculiarly disagreeable manner.

"My dear Nicholas," said the young lady, "who is this man? What kind of place can it be that you are going to?"

"I hardly know, Kate," replied Nicholas, pressing his sister's hand. "I suppose the Yorkshire folks are rather rough and uncultivated, that's all."

"But this person," urged Kate.

"Is my employer, or master, or whatever the proper name may be," replied Nicholas quickly, "and I was an ass to take his coarseness ill. They are looking this way, and it is time I was in my place. Bless you love, and good bye. Mother; look forward to our meeting again some day. Uncle, farewell! Thank you heartily for all you have done and all you mean to do. Quite ready, Sir."

With these hasty adieux, Nicholas mounted nimbly to his seat, and waved his hand as gallantly as if his heart went with it.

At this moment, when the coachman and guard were comparing

notes for the last time before starting, on the subject of the way-bill ; when porters were screwing out the last reluctant sixpences, itinerant newsmen making the last offer of a morning paper, and the horses giving the last impatient rattle to their harness, Nicholas felt somebody pulling softly at his leg. He looked down, and there stood Newman Noggs, who pushed up into his hand a dirty letter.

"What's this?" inquired Nicholas.

"Hush!" rejoined Noggs, pointing to Mr. Ralph Nickleby, who was saying a few earnest words to Squeers a short distance off. "Take it. Read it. Nobody knows. That's all."

"Stop!" cried Nicholas.

"No," replied Noggs.

Nicholas cried stop, again, but Newman Noggs was gone.

A minute's bustle, a banging of the coach doors, a swaying of the vehicle to one side, as the heavy coachman, and still heavier guard, climbed into their seats ; a cry of all right, a few notes from the horn, a hasty glance of two sorrowful faces below and the hard features of Mr. Ralph Nickleby—and the coach was gone too, and rattling over the stones of Smithfield.

The little boys' legs being too short to admit of their feet resting upon anything as they sat, and the little boys' bodies being consequently in imminent hazard of being jerked off the coach, Nicholas had enough to do to hold them on : and between the manual exertion and the mental anxiety attendant upon this task, he was not a little relieved when the coach stopped at the Peacock at Islington. He was still more relieved when a hearty-looking gentleman, with a very good-humoured face, and a very fresh colour, got up behind and proposed to take the other corner of the seat.

"If we put some of these youngsters in the middle," said the newcomer, "they'll be safer in case of their going to sleep ; eh?"

"If you'll have the goodness, Sir," replied Squeers, "that'll be the very thing. Mr. Nickleby, take three of them boys between you and the gentleman. Belling and the youngest Snawley can sit between me and the guard. Three children," said Squeers, explaining to the stranger, "books as two."

"I have not the least objection I am sure," said the fresh-coloured gentleman ; "I have a brother who wouldn't object to book his six children as two at any butcher's or baker's in the kingdom, I dare say. Far from it."

"Six children, Sir!" exclaimed Squeers.

"Yes, and all boys," replied the stranger.

"Mr. Nickleby," said Squeers, in great haste, "catch hold of that basket. Let me give you a card, Sir, of an establishment where those six boys can be brought up in an enlightened, liberal, and moral manner, with no mistake at all about it, for twenty guineas a year each—twenty guineas, Sir ; or I'd take all the boys together upon a average right through, and say a hundred pound a year for the lot."

"Oh!" said the gentleman, glancing at the card, "You are the Mr. Squeers mentioned here, I presume?"

"Yes I am, Sir," replied the worthy pedagogue; "Mr. Wackford Squeers is my name, and I'm very far from being ashamed of it. These are some of my boys, Sir; that's one of my assistants, Sir—Mr. Nickleby, a gentleman's son, and a good scholar, mathematical, classical, and commercial. We don't do things by halves at our shop. All manner of learning my boys take down, Sir; the expense is never thought of, and they get paternal treatment and washing in."

"Upon my word," said the gentleman, glancing at Nicholas with a half smile, and a more than half expression of surprise, "these are advantages indeed."

"You may say that, Sir," rejoined Squeers, thrusting his hands into his great-coat pockets. "The most unexceptionable references are given and required. I wouldn't take a reference with any boy that was not responsible for the payment of five pound five a quarter, no, not if you went down on your knees, and asked me with the tears running down your face to do it."

"Highly considerate," said the passenger.

"It's my great aim and end to be considerate, Sir," rejoined Squeers. "Snawley, junior, if you don't leave off chattering your teeth, and shaking with the cold, I'll warm you with a severe thrashing in about half a minute's time."

"Sit fast here, gentlemen," said the guard as he clambered up.

"All right behind there, Dick?" cried the coachman.

"All right," was the reply. "Off she goes." And off she did go, —if coaches be feminine—amidst a loud flourish from the guard's horn, and the calm approval of all the judges of coaches and coach-horses congregated at the Peacock, but more especially of the helpers, who stood with the cloths over their arms, watching the coach till it disappeared, and then lounged admiringly stablewards, bestowing various gruff encomiums on the beauty of the turn-out.

When the guard (who was a stout old Yorkshireman) had blown himself quite out of breath, he put the horn into a little tunnel of a basket fastened to the coach-side for the purpose, and giving himself a plentiful shower of blows on the chest and shoulders, observed it was uncommon cold, after which he demanded of every person separately whether he was going right through, and if not where he *was* going. Satisfactory replies being made to these queries, he surmised that the roads were pretty heavy arter that fall last night, and took the liberty of asking whether any of them gentlemen carried a snuff-box. It happening that nobody did, he remarked with a mysterious air that he had heard a medical gentleman as went down to Grantham last week say how that snuff-taking was bad for the eyes; but for his part he had never found it so, and what he said was, that every body should speak as they found. Nobody attempting to controvert this position, he took a small brown paper parcel out of his hat, and putting on a pair of horn spectacles (the writing being crabbed) read the direction half a dozen times over, having done which he consigned the parcel to its old place, put up his spectacles again, and stared at every body in turn. After this, he took another blow at the horn by way

of refreshment, and having now exhausted his usual topics of conversation folded his arms as well as he could in so many coats, and falling into a solemn silence, looked carelessly at the familiar objects which met his eye on every side as the coach rolled on; the only things he seemed to care for, being horses and droves of cattle, which he scrutinised with a critical air as they were passed upon the road.

The weather was intensely and bitterly cold; a great deal of snow fell from time to time, and the wind was intolerably keen. Mr. Squeers got down at almost every stage—to stretch his legs as he said, and as he always came back from such excursions with a very red nose, and composed himself to sleep directly, there is reason to suppose that he derived great benefit from the process. The little pupils having been stimulated with the remains of their breakfast, and further invigorated by sundry small sups of a curious cordial carried by Mr. Squeers, which tasted very like toast and water put into a brandy bottle by mistake, went to sleep, woke, shivered, and cried, as their feelings prompted. Nicholas and the good-tempered man found so many things to talk about, that between conversing together, and cheering up the boys, the time passed with them as rapidly as it could, under such adverse circumstances.

So the day wore on. At Eton Slocomb there was a good coach dinner, of which the box, the four front outsides, the one inside, Nicholas, the good-tempered man, and Mr. Squeers, partook; while the five little boys were put to thaw by the fire, and regaled with sandwiches. A stage or two further on, the lamps were lighted, and a great to-do occasioned by the taking up at a road-side inn of a very fastidious lady with an infinite variety of cloaks and small parcels, who loudly lamented for the behoof of the outsides the non-arrival of her own carriage which was to have taken her on, and made the guard solemnly promise to stop every green chariot he saw coming; which, as it was a dark night and he was sitting with his face the other way, that officer undertook, with many fervent asseverations, to do. Lastly, the fastidious lady, finding there was a solitary gentleman inside, had a small lamp lighted which she carried in her reticule; and being after much trouble shut in, the horses were put into a brisk canter and the coach was once more in rapid motion.

The night and the snow came on together, and dismal enough they were. There was no sound to be heard but the howling of the wind; for the noise of the wheels and the tread of the horses' feet were rendered inaudible by the thick coating of snow which covered the earth, and was fast increasing every moment. The streets of Stamford were deserted as they passed through the town, and its old churches rose frowning and dark from the whitened ground. Twenty miles further on, two of the front outside passengers wisely availing themselves of their arrival at one of the best inns in England, turned in for the night at the George at Grantham. The remainder wrapped themselves more closely in their coats and cloaks, and leaving the light and warmth of the town behind them, pillowed themselves against the luggage and pre-

ered, with many half-
blast which swept across
They were little more
way between it and
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IN WHICH THE GOOD
LAST CHAPTER, AP
TIMES TO TELL

"Wo-ho!" cried
the leaders' heads
here! Keep quiet,
"What's the mat
"Matter man,
"dang the wall-
"coach is over. H
if all my bones we
"Here!" cried
only a little abou
"Hold 'em
Hang on fir' em
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In truth, the s
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"Can you be
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"I dare say
"Then just
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As the man spe
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pared, with many half-suppressed moans, again to encounter the piercing blast which swept across the open country.

They were little more than a stage out of Grantham, or about half way between it and Newark, when Nicholas, who had been asleep for a short time, was suddenly roused by a violent jerk which nearly threw him from his seat. Grasping the rail, he found that the coach had sunk greatly on one side, though it was still dragged forward by the horses; and while—confused by their plunging and the loud screams of the lady inside—he hesitated for an instant whether to jump off or not, the vehicle turned easily over, and relieved him from all further uncertainty by flinging him into the road.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH THE OCCURRENCE OF THE ACCIDENT MENTIONED IN THE LAST CHAPTER, AFFORDS AN OPPORTUNITY TO A COUPLE OF GENTLEMEN TO TELL STORIES AGAINST EACH OTHER.

“Wo ho!” cried the guard, on his legs in a minute, and running to the leaders’ heads. “Is there any gentlemen there, as can len’ a hand here? Keep quiet, dang ye. Wo ho!”

“What’s the matter?” demanded Nicholas, looking sleepily up.

“Matther mun, matther eneaf for one neight,” replied the guard; “dang the wall-eyed bay, he’s gane mad wi’ glory I think, carse t’coorch is over. Here, can’t ye len’ a hond? Dom it, I’d ha’ dean it if all my boans were brokken.”

“Here!” cried Nicholas, staggering to his feet, “I’m ready. I’m only a little abroad, that’s all.”

“Hoold ’em toight,” cried the guard, “while ar coot treaces. Hang on tiv ’em sumhoo. Weel deame, my lad. That’s it. Let ’em goa noo. Dang ’em, they’ll gang whoam fast eneaf.”

In truth, the animals were no sooner released than they trotted back with much deliberation to the stable they had just left, which was distant not a mile behind.

“Can you blo’ a harn?” asked the guard, disengaging one of the coach-lamps.

“I dare say I can,” replied Nicholas.

“Then just blo’ away into that ’un as lies on the grund, fit to waken the decad, will’ee,” said the man, “while I stop sum o’ this here squealing inside. Cumin’, cumin’; dean’t make that noise, wooman.”

As the man spoke he proceeded to wrench open the uppermost door of the coach, while Nicholas seizing the horn, awoke the echoes far and wide with one of the most extraordinary performances on that instrument ever heard-by mortal ears. It had its effect however, not only in rousing such of the passengers as were recovering from the stunning effects of

their fall, but in summoning assistance to their relief, for lights gleamed in the distance, and the people were already astir.

In fact, a man on horseback galloped down before the passengers were well collected together, and a careful investigation being instituted it appeared that the lady inside had broken her lamp, and the gentleman his head; that the two front outsides had escaped with black eyes, the box with a bloody nose, the coachman with a contusion on the temple, Mr. Squeers with a portmanteau bruise on his back, and the remaining passengers without any injury at all—thanks to the softness of the snow-drift in which they had been overturned. These facts were no sooner thoroughly ascertained than the lady gave several indications of fainting, but being forewarned that if she did, she must be carried on some gentleman's shoulders to the nearest public-house, she prudently thought better of it, and walked back with the rest.

They found on reaching it, that it was a lonely place with no very great accommodation in the way of apartments—that portion of its resources being all comprised in one public room with a sanded floor, and a chair or two. However, a large faggot and a plentiful supply of coals being heaped upon the fire, the appearance of things was not long in mending, and by the time they had washed off all effaceable marks of the late accident, the room was warm and light, which was a most agreeable exchange for the cold and darkness out of doors.

"Well, Mr. Nickleby," said Squeers, insinuating himself into the warmest corner, "you did very right to catch hold of them horses. I should have done it myself if I had come to in time, but I am very glad you did it. You did it very well; very well."

"So well," said the merry-faced gentleman, who did not seem to approve very much of the patronising tone adopted by Squeers, "that if they had not been firmly checked when they were, you would most probably have had no brains left to teach with."

This remark called up a discourse relative to the promptitude Nicholas had displayed, and he was overwhelmed with compliments and commendations.

"I am very glad to have escaped, of course," observed Squeers; "every man is glad when he escapes from danger, but if any one of my charges had been hurt—if I had been prevented from restoring any one of these little boys to his parents whole and sound as I received him—what would have been my feelings? Why the wheel a-top of my head would have been far preferable to it."

"Are they all brothers, Sir?" inquired the lady who had carried the "Davy" or safety-lamp.

"In one sense they are, ma'am," replied Squeers, diving into his great-coat pocket for cards. "They are all under the same parental and affectionate treatment. Mrs. Squeers and myself are a mother and father to every one of 'em. Mr. Nickleby, hand the lady them cards, and offer these to the gentlemen. Perhaps they might know of some parents that would be glad to avail themselves of the establishment."

Expressing himself to this effect, Mr. Squeers, who lost no opportunity of advertising gratuitously, placed his hands upon his knees and

looked at the pupils with as much benignity as he could possibly affect, while Nicholas, blushing with shame, handed round the cards as directed.

"I hope you suffer no inconvenience from the overturn, ma'am?" said the merry-faced gentleman addressing the fastidious lady, as though he were charitably desirous to change the subject.

"No bodily inconvenience," replied the lady.

"No mental inconvenience, I hope?"

"The subject is a very painful one to my feelings, Sir," replied the lady with strong emotion; "and I beg you, as a gentleman, not to refer to it."

"Dear me," said the merry-faced gentleman, looking merrier still, "I merely intended to inquire——"

"I hope no inquiries will be made," said the lady, "or I shall be compelled to throw myself on the protection of the other gentlemen. Landlord, pray direct a boy to keep watch outside the door—and if a green chariot passes in the direction of Grantham, to stop it instantly."

The people of the house were evidently overcome by this request, and when the lady charged the boy to remember, as a means of identifying the expected green chariot, that it would have a coachman with a gold-laced hat on the box, and a footman most probably in silk stockings behind, the attentions of the good woman of the inn were redoubled. Even the box-passenger caught the infection, and growing wonderfully deferential, immediately inquired whether there was not very good society in that neighbourhood, to which the lady replied yes, there was, in a manner which sufficiently implied that she moved at the very tip-top and summit of it all.

"As the guard has gone on horseback to Grantham to get another coach," said the good-tempered gentleman when they had been all sitting round the fire for some time in silence, "and as he must be gone a couple of hours at the very least, I propose a bowl of hot punch. What say you, Sir?"

This question was addressed to the broken-headed inside, who was a man of very genteel appearance, dressed in mourning. He was not past the middle age, but his hair was grey; it seemed to have been prematurely turned by care or sorrow. He readily acceded to the proposal, and appeared to be prepossessed by the frank good-nature of the individual from whom it emanated.

This latter personage took upon himself the office of tapster when the punch was ready, and after dispensing it all round, led the conversation to the antiquities of York, with which both he and the grey-haired gentleman appeared well acquainted. When this topic flagged, he turned with a smile to the grey-headed gentleman and asked if he could sing.

"I cannot indeed," replied the gentleman, smiling in his turn.

"That's a pity," said the owner of the good-humoured countenance. "Is there nobody here who can sing a song to lighten the time?"

The passengers one and all protested that they could not; that they wished they could, that they couldn't remember the words of anything without the book, and so forth.

"Perhaps the lady would not object," said the president with great respect, and a merry twinkle in his eye. "Some little Italian thing out of the last opera brought out in town, would be most acceptable I am sure."

As the lady condescended to make no reply, but tossed her head contemptuously, and murmured some further expression of surprise regarding the absence of the green chariot, one or two voices urged upon the president himself the propriety of making an attempt for the general benefit.

"I would if I could," said he of the good-tempered face; "for I hold that in this, as in all other cases where people who are strangers to each other are thrown unexpectedly together, they should endeavour to render themselves as pleasant for the joint sake of the little community as possible."

"I wish the maxim were more generally acted on in all cases," said the grey-headed gentleman.

"I'm glad to hear it," returned the other. "Perhaps, as you can't sing, you'll tell us a story?"

"Nay. I should ask you."

"After you, I will, with pleasure."

"Indeed!" said the grey-haired gentleman, smiling. "Well, let it be so. I fear the turn of my thoughts is not calculated to lighten the time you must pass here; but you have brought this upon yourselves, and shall judge. We were speaking of York Minster just now. My story shall have some reference to it. Let us call it

THE FIVE SISTERS OF YORK.

After a murmur of approbation from the other passengers, during which the fastidious lady drank a glass of punch unobserved, the grey-headed gentleman thus went on:—

"A great many years ago—for the fifteenth century was scarce two years old at the time, and King Henry the Fourth sat upon the throne of England—there dwelt in the ancient city of York, five maiden sisters, the subjects of my tale.

"These five sisters were all of surpassing beauty. The eldest was in her twenty-third year, the second a year younger, the third a year younger than the second, and the fourth a year younger than the third. They were tall stately figures, with dark flashing eyes and hair of jet; dignity and grace were in their every movement, and the fame of their great beauty had spread through all the country round.

"But if the four elder sisters were lovely, how beautiful was the youngest, a fair creature of sixteen! The blushing tints in the soft bloom on the fruit, or the delicate painting on the flower, are not more exquisite than was the blending of the rose and lily in her gentle face, or the deep blue of her eye. The vine in all its elegant luxuriance is not more graceful, than were the clusters of rich brown hair that sported around her brow.

“If we all had hearts like those which beat so lightly in the bosoms of the young and beautiful, what a heaven this earth would be! If, while our bodies grew old and withered, our hearts could but retain their early youth and freshness, of what avail would be our sorrows and sufferings! But the faint image of Eden which is stamped upon them in childhood, chafes and rubs in our rough struggles with the world, and soon wears away: too often to leave nothing but a mournful blank remaining

“The heart of this fair girl bounded with joy and gladness. Devoted attachment to her sisters, and a fervent love of all beautiful things in nature, were its pure affections. Her gleesome voice and merry laugh were the sweetest music of their home. She was its very light and life. The brightest flowers in the garden were reared by her; the caged birds sang when they heard her voice, and pined when they missed its sweetness. Alice, dear Alice; what living thing within the sphere of her gentle witchery, could fail to love her!

“You may seek in vain, now, for the spot on which these sisters lived, for their very names have passed away, and dusty antiquaries tell of them as of a fable. But they dwelt in an old wooden house—old even in those days—with overhanging gables and balconies of rudely-carved oak, which stood within a pleasant orchard, and was surrounded by a rough stone wall, whence a stout archer might have winged an arrow to Saint Mary’s abbey. The old abbey flourished then, and the five sisters living on its fair domains, paid yearly dues to the black monks of Saint Benedict, to which fraternity it belonged.

“It was a bright and sunny morning in the pleasant time of summer when one of these black monks emerged from the abbey portal, and bent his steps towards the house of the fair sisters. Heaven above was blue, and earth beneath was green; the river glistened like a path of diamonds in the sun, the birds poured forth their songs from the shady trees, the lark soared high above the waving corn, and the deep buzz of insects filled the air. Everything looked gay and smiling; but the holy man walked gloomily on, with his eyes bent upon the ground. The beauty of the earth is but a breath, and man is but a shadow. What sympathy should a holy preacher have with either?

“With eyes bent upon the ground, then, or only raised enough to prevent his stumbling over such obstacles as lay in his way, the religious man moved slowly forward until he reached a small postern in the wall of the sisters’ orchard, through which he passed, closing it behind him. The noise of soft voices in conversation and of merry laughter fell upon his ear ere he had advanced many paces; and raising his eyes higher than was his humble wont, he descried, at no great distance, the five sisters seated on the grass, with Alice in the centre, all busily plying their customary task of embroidering.

“‘Save you, fair daughters,’ said the friar; and fair in truth they were. Even a monk might have loved them as choice master-pieces of his Maker’s hand.

“The sisters saluted the holy man with becoming reverence, and the eldest motioned him to a mossy seat beside them. But the good friar

shook his head, and bumped himself down on a very hard stone,—at which, no doubt, approving angels were gratified.

“ ‘Ye were merry daughters,’ said the monk.

“ ‘You know how light of heart sweet Alice is,’ replied the eldest sister, passing her fingers through the tresses of the smiling girl.

“ ‘And what joy and cheerfulness it wakes up within us, to see all nature beaming in brightness and sunshine, father,’ added Alice, blushing beneath the stern look of the recluse.

“The monk answered not, save by a grave inclination of the head, and the sisters pursued their task in silence.

“ ‘Still wasting the precious hours,’ said the monk at length, turning to the eldest sister as he spoke, ‘still wasting the precious hours on this vain trifling. Alas, alas! that the few bubbles on the surface of eternity—all that Heaven wills we should see of that dark deep stream—should be so lightly scattered!’

“ ‘Father,’ urged the maiden, pausing, as did each of the others, in her busy task, ‘we have prayed at matins, our daily alms have been distributed at the gate, the sick peasants have been tended,—all our morning tasks have been performed. I hope our occupation is a blameless one?’

“ ‘See here,’ said the friar, taking the frame from her hand, ‘an intricate winding of gaudy colours without purpose or object, unless it be that one day it is destined for some vain ornament, to minister to the pride of your frail and giddy sex. Day after day has been employed upon this senseless task, and yet it is not half accomplished. The shade of each departed day falls upon our graves, and the worm exults as he beholds it, to know that we are hastening thither. Daughters, is there no better way to pass the fleeting hours?’

“The four elder sisters cast down their eyes as if abashed by the holy man’s reproof, but Alice raised hers, and bent them mildly on the friar.

“ ‘Our dear mother,’ said the maiden; ‘Heaven rest her soul.’

“ ‘Amen!’ cried the Friar in a deep voice.

“ ‘Our dear mother!’ faltered the fair Alice, ‘was living when these long tasks began, and bade us, when she should be no more, ply them in all discretion and cheerfulness in our leisure hours: she said that if in harmless mirth and maidenly pursuits we passed those hours together, they would prove the happiest and most peaceful of our lives, and that if in later times we went forth into the world, and mingled with its cares and trials—if, allured by its temptations and dazzled by its glitter, we ever forgot that love and duty which should bind in holy ties the children of one loved parent—a glance at the old work of our common girlhood would awaken good thoughts of by-gone days, and soften our hearts to affection and love.’

“ ‘Alice speaks truly, father,’ said the elder sister, somewhat proudly. And so saying she resumed her work, as did the others.

“It was a kind of sampler of large size, that each sister had before her; the device was of a complex and intricate description, and the pattern and colours of all five were the same. The sisters bent

peacefully over their work,
 hands, looked from one
 “ ‘How much better,
 and changes, and in the
 to Heaven! Infallibly
 as rapidly as they could
 rolls onward to the final
 goal, avoid the cloud of
 world and deists the sen-
 ved!’
 “ ‘Never, sisters, cri-
 barren, and the fresh
 breathe upon it, for the
 blessings are the proper
 together. To die is our
 as; when our cold hearts
 let our last look be upon
 bright skies, and not on
 us live and die, if you
 the gloom and sadness
 “ ‘The tears fell fast
 and appeal, and hid
 “ ‘Take comfort,
 “ ‘The veil shall never
 you, sisters! For you
 “ ‘The sisters, as
 together, and that
 the career’s walks.
 “ ‘Father,’ said
 our final resolve.
 Saint Mary, and let
 that no constraint
 we should be free
 more of this, we
 shelter until even-
 and walked toward
 other sisters followed
 “ ‘The holy man,
 had never met with
 kind, with his eyes
 prayer. As the
 called upon them
 “ ‘Stay,’ said the
 ing an angry glance
 near from me what
 above decency, and
 like eyes. The men-
 later disappointment
 wading arrow. T

gracefully over their work, and the monk resting his chin upon his hands, looked from one to the other in silence.

“ ‘How much better,’ he said at length, ‘to shun all such thoughts and chances, and in the peaceful shelter of the church devote your lives to Heaven! Infancy, childhood, the prime of life, and old age, wither as rapidly as they crowd upon each other. Think how human dust rolls onward to the tomb, and turning your faces steadily towards that goal, avoid the cloud which takes its rise among the pleasures of the world and cheats the senses of their votaries. The veil, daughters, the veil!’

“ ‘Never, sisters,’ cried Alice. ‘Barter not the light and air of heaven, and the freshness of earth and all the beautiful things which breathe upon it, for the cold cloister and the cell. Nature’s own blessings are the proper goods of life, and we may share them sinlessly together. To die is our heavy portion, but, oh, let us die with life about us; when our cold hearts cease to beat, let warm hearts be beating near; let our last look be upon the bounds which God has set to his own bright skies, and not on stone walls and bars of iron. Dear sisters, let us live and die, if you list, in this green garden’s compass; only shun the gloom and sadness of a cloister, and we shall be happy.’

“ ‘The tears fell fast from the maiden’s eyes as she closed her impassioned appeal, and hid her face in the bosom of her sister.

“ ‘Take comfort, Alice,’ said the eldest, kissing her fair forehead. ‘The veil shall never cast its shadow on thy young brow. How say you, sisters? For yourselves you speak, and not for Alice, or for me.’

“ ‘The sisters, as with one accord, cried that their lot was cast together, and that there were dwellings for peace and virtue beyond the convent’s walls.

“ ‘Father,’ said the eldest lady, rising with dignity, ‘you hear our final resolve. The same pious care which enriched the abbey of Saint Mary, and left us, orphans, to its holy guardianship, directed that no constraint should be imposed upon our inclinations, but that we should be free to live according to our choice. Let us hear no more of this, we pray you. Sisters, it is nearly noon. Let us take shelter until evening!’ With a reverence to the Friar, the lady rose and walked towards the house hand in hand with Alice; and the other sisters followed.

“ ‘The holy man, who had often urged the same point before, but had never met with so direct a repulse, walked some little distance behind, with his eyes bent upon the earth, and his lips moving *as if* in prayer. As the sisters reached the porch, he quickened his pace and called upon them to stop.

“ ‘Stay,’ said the monk, raising his right hand in the air, and directing an angry glance by turns at Alice and the eldest sister, ‘Stay, and hear from me what these recollections are, which you would cherish above eternity, and awaken—if in mercy they slumbered—by means of idle toys. The memory of earthly things is charged in after life with bitter disappointment, affliction, and death; with dreary change and wasting sorrow. The time will one day come when a glance at those

unmeaning baubles shall tear open deep wounds in the hearts of some among you, and strike to your inmost souls. When that hour arrives—and, mark me, come it will—turn from the world to which you clung, to the refuge which you spurned. Find me the cell which shall be colder than the fire of mortals grows when dimmed by calamity and trial, and there weep for the dreams of youth. These things are Heaven's will, not mine," said the friar, subduing his voice as he looked round upon the shrinking girls. "The Virgin's blessing be upon you, daughters!"

"With these words he disappeared through the postern, and the sisters hastening into the house were seen no more that day.

"But nature will smile though priests may frown, and next day the sun shone brightly, and on the next, and the next again. And in the morning's glare and the evening's soft repose, the five sisters still walked, or worked, or beguiled the time by cheerful conversation in their quiet orchard.

"Time passed away as a tale that is told; faster indeed than many tales that are told, of which number I fear this may be one. The house of the five sisters stood where it did, and the same trees cast their pleasant shade upon the orchard grass. The sisters too were there, and lovely as at first, but a change had come over their dwelling. Sometimes there was the clash of armour, and the gleaming of the moon on caps of steel, and at others jaded coursers were spurred up to the gate, and a female form glided hurriedly forth as if eager to demand tidings of the weary messenger. A goodly train of knights and ladies lodged one night within the abbey walls, and next day rode away with two of the fair sisters among them. Then horsemen began to come less frequently, and seemed to bring bad tidings when they did, and at length they ceased to come at all, and foot-sore peasants slunk to the gate after sunset and did their errand there by stealth. Once a vassal was despatched in haste to the abbey at dead of night, and when morning came there were sounds of woe and wailing in the sisters' house; and after this a mournful silence fell upon it, and knight or lady, horse or armour, was seen about it no more.

"There was a sullen darkness in the sky, and the sun had gone angrily down, tinting the dull clouds with the last traces of his wrath, when the same black monk walked slowly on with folded arms, within a stone's-throw of the abbey. A blight had fallen on the trees and shrubs; and the wind at length beginning to break the unnatural stillness that had prevailed all day, sighed heavily from time to time, as though foretelling in grief the ravages of the coming storm. The bat skimmed in fantastic flights through the heavy air, and the ground was alive with crawling things, whose instinct brought them forth to swell and fatten in the rain.

"No longer were the friar's eyes directed to the earth; they were cast abroad, and roamed from point to point, as if the gloom and desolation of the scene found a quick response in his own bosom. Again he paused near the sisters' house, and again he entered by the postern.

"But not again did his ear encounter the sound of laughter, or his

rest upon the beauti
and deserted. The long
grass had grown long and
many, a day.
"With the infirmary
change, the monk glided
Four sisters sat there.
"whiter still, and time and
stately yet; but the flush
"And Alice—where wa
"The monk—even the
was long since these sister
blanched faces which year
silence, and murmured the
"They are here, sis
"I have never been to lo
for my weakness. What
To call up our old days
"She glanced at the five
brought forth the five
she was firm, but her ha
via the feelings of th
page-up tears made way
"The monk rose
his thing she touched
"It was," cried the
"The monk turned
"The gallant youth
very breath when first
on a plain whereof the
armour once brightly
little distinguishable
would?"
"The lady groaned
"The policy of
sisters, 'drew ye fr
splendor. The same
they men, have sent
cases. Do I speak
"The sole of the
"There is little
latter away the tim
of hopes of early p
on their heads, keep
"The sisters aske
as though the well wa
but morning came ag
tragedy and ran wil
the pass was course

eyes rest upon the beautiful figures of the five sisters. All was silent and deserted. The boughs of the trees were bent and broken, and the grass had grown long and rank. No light feet had pressed it for many, many, a day.

"With the indifference or abstraction of one well accustomed to the change, the monk glided into the house, and entered a low, dark room. Four sisters sat there. Their black garments made their pale faces whiter still, and time and sorrow had worked deep ravages. They were stately yet; but the flush and pride of beauty were gone.

"And Alice—where was she? In heaven.

"The monk—even the monk—could bear with some grief here; for it was long since these sisters had met, and there were furrows in their blanched faces which years could never plough. He took his seat in silence, and motioned them to continue their speech.

"They are here, sisters,' said the elder lady in a trembling voice. 'I have never borne to look upon them since, and now I blame myself for my weakness. What is there in her memory that we should dread? To call up our old days shall be a solemn pleasure yet.'

"She glanced at the monk as she spoke, and, opening a cabinet, brought forth the five frames of work, completed long before. Her step was firm, but her hand trembled as she produced the last one; and when the feelings of the other sisters gushed forth at sight of it, her pent-up tears made way, and she sobbed 'God bless her!'

"The monk rose and advanced towards them. 'It was almost the last thing she touched in health,' he said in a low voice.

"'It was,' cried the elder lady, weeping bitterly.

"The monk turned to the second sister.

"The gallant youth who looked into thine eyes, and hung upon thy very breath when first he saw thee intent upon this pastime, lies buried on a plain whereof the turf is red with blood. Rusty fragments of armour once brightly burnished, lie rotting on the ground, and are as little distinguishable for his, as are the bones that crumble in the mould!

"The lady groaned and wrung her hands.

"The policy [of courts,' he continued, turning to the two other sisters, 'drew ye from your peaceful home to scenes of revelry and splendour. The same policy, and the restless ambition of proud and fiery men, have sent ye back, widowed maidens, and humbled outcasts. Do I speak truly?'

"The sobs of the two sisters were their only reply.

"There is little need,' said the monk, with a meaning look, 'to fritter away the time in gewgaws which shall raise up the pale ghosts of hopes of early years. Bury them, heap penance and mortification on their heads, keep them down, and let the convent be their grave!'

"The sisters asked for three days to deliberate, and felt that night as though the veil were indeed the fitting shroud for their dead joys. But morning came again, and though the boughs of the orchard trees drooped and ran wild upon the ground, it was the same orchard still. The grass was coarse and high, but there was yet the spot on which

they had so often sat together when change and sorrow were but names. There was every walk and nook which Alice had made glad, and in the minster nave was one flat stone beneath which she slept in peace.

"And could they, remembering how her young heart had sickened at the thought of cloistered walls, look upon her grave in garbs which would chill the very ashes within it? Could they bow down in prayer, and when all Heaven turned to hear them bring the dark shade of sadness on one angel's face? No.

"They sent abroad to artists of great celebrity in those times, and having obtained the church's sanction to their work of piety, caused to be executed in five large compartments of richly stained glass a faithful copy of their old embroidery work. These were fitted into a large window until that time bare of ornament, and when the sun shone brightly, as she had so well loved to see it, the familiar patterns were reflected in their original colours, and throwing a stream of brilliant light upon the pavement, fell warmly on the name of Alice.

"For many hours in every day the sisters paced slowly up and down the nave, or knelt by the side of the flat broad stone. Only three were seen in the customary place after many years, then but two, and for a long time afterwards, but one solitary female bent with age. At length she came no more, and the stone bore five plain Christian names.

"That stone has worn away and been replaced by others, and many generations have come and gone since then. Time has softened down the colours, but the same stream of light still falls upon the forgotten tomb, of which no trace remains; and to this day the stranger is shown in York cathedral an old window called The Five Sisters."

"That's a melancholy tale," said the merry-faced gentleman, emptying his glass.

"It is a tale of life, and life is made up of such sorrows," returned the other, courteously, but in a grave and sad tone of voice.

"There are shades in all good pictures, but there are lights too, if we choose to contemplate them," said the gentleman with the merry face. "The youngest sister in your tale was always light-hearted."

"And died early," said the other, gently.

"She would have died earlier, perhaps, had she been less happy," said the first speaker, with much feeling. "Do you think the sisters who loved her so well, would have grieved the less if her life had been one of gloom and sadness? If anything could soothe the first sharp pain of a heavy loss, it would be—with me—the reflection, that those I mourned, by being innocently happy here, and loving all about them, had prepared themselves for a purer and happier world. The sun does not shine upon this fair earth to meet frowning eyes, depend upon it."

"I believe you are right," said the gentleman who had told the story.

"Believe!" retorted the other, "can anybody doubt it? Take any subject of sorrowful regret, and see with how much of pleasure it is associated. The recollection of past pleasure may become pain——"

"It does," interposed the other.

"Well; it does. is pain, but of a soft- mangled with much the bitarily repeat; still are so many little rays believe any mortal would deliberately drain his power."

"Possibly you are a titan after a short rest."

"Why, then," replied one respondent over they will. If our affe and comfort; and was between this world and

"But come; I'll be After a very brief yunch, and glancing rately apprehensive the began

THE

"The Baron

likely a young baron lived in a castle, he lived in an old cas case! There were reasonable building,

were, that when the howled among the moon shone, she to wall, and actually quite light, while of the barn's ances

a gentleman who that these miraclous I hardly know how

cession, who was having been so rare and timber which apology, and so to

"Talking of the claims to respect on one, how many and many more than as had lived in these very hard thing upon have come into the

"Well; it does. To remember happiness which cannot be restored is pain, but of a softened kind. Our recollections are unfortunately mingled with much that we deplore, and with many actions which we bitterly repent; still in the most chequered life I firmly think there are so many little rays of sunshine to look back upon, that I do not believe any mortal (unless he had put himself without the pale of hope) would deliberately drain a goblet of the waters of Lethe, if he had it in his power."

"Possibly you are correct in that belief," said the grey-haired gentleman after a short reflection. "I am inclined to think you are."

"Why, then," replied the other, "the good in this state of existence preponderates over the bad, let miscalled philosophers tell us what they will. If our affections be tried, our affections are our consolation and comfort; and memory, however sad, is the best and purest link between this world and a better."

"But come; I'll tell you a story of another kind."

After a very brief silence the merry-faced gentleman sent round the punch, and glancing slyly at the fastidious lady, who seemed desperately apprehensive that he was going to relate something improper, began

THE BARON OF GROGZWIG.

"The Baron Von Koëldwethout, of Grogzwig in Germany, was as likely a young baron as you would wish to see. I needn't say that he lived in a castle, because that's of course; neither need I say that he lived in an old castle, for what German baron ever lived in a new one? There were many strange circumstances connected with this venerable building, among which not the least startling and mysterious were, that when the wind blew, it rumbled in the chimneys, or even howled among the trees in the neighbouring forest; and that when the moon shone, she found her way through certain small loopholes in the wall, and actually made some parts of the wide halls and galleries quite light, while she left others in gloomy shadow. I believe that one of the baron's ancestors, being short of money, had inserted a dagger in a gentleman who called one night to ask his way, and it *was* supposed that these miraculous occurrences took place in consequence. And yet I hardly know how that could have been, either, because the baron's ancestor, who was an amiable man, felt very sorry afterwards for having been so rash, and laying violent hands upon a quantity of stone and timber which belonged to a weaker baron, built a chapel as an apology, and so took a receipt from Heaven in full of all demands.

"Talking of the baron's ancestor puts me in mind of the baron's great claims to respect on the score of his pedigree. I am afraid to say, I am sure, how many ancestors the baron had; but I know that he had a great many more than any other man of his time, and I only wish that he had lived in these latter days that he might have had more. It is a very hard thing upon the great men of past centuries, that they should have come into the world so soon, because a man who was born three

or four hundred years ago, cannot reasonably be expected to have had as many relations before him as a man who is born now. The last man, whoever he is—and he may be a cobbler or some low vulgar dog for aught we know—will have a longer pedigree than the greatest nobleman now alive: and I contend that this is not fair.

“Well, but the Baron Von Koëldwethout of Grogzwig—he was a fine swarthy fellow, with dark hair and large mustachios, who rode a-hunting in clothes of Lincoln green, with russet boots on his feet, and a bugle slung over his shoulder like the guard of a long stage. When he blew this bugle, four-and-twenty other gentlemen of inferior rank, in Lincoln green a little coarser, and russet boots with a little thicker soles, turned out directly, and away galloped the whole train, with spears in their hands like lackered area railings, to hunt down the boars, or perhaps encounter a bear, in which latter case the baron killed him first and greased his whiskers with him afterwards.

“This was a merry life for the Baron of Grogzwig, and a merrier still for the baron’s retainers, who drank Rhine wine every night till they fell under the table, and then had the bottles on the floor, and called for pipes. Never were such jolly, roystering, rollicking, merry-making blades, as the jovial crew of Grogzwig.

“But the pleasures of the table, or the pleasures of under the table, require a little variety; especially when the same five-and-twenty people sit daily down to the same board, to discuss the same subjects, and tell the same stories. The baron grew weary, and wanted excitement. He took to quarrelling with his gentlemen, and tried kicking two or three of them every day after dinner. This was a pleasant change at first; but it became monotonous after a week or so, and the baron fell quite out of sorts, and cast about in despair for some new amusement.

“One night, after a day’s sport in which he had outdone Nimrod or Gillingwater, and slaughtered ‘another fine bear’ and brought him home in triumph, the Baron Von Koëldwethout sat moodily at the head of his table, eyeing the smoky roof of the hall with a discontented aspect. He swallowed huge bumpers of wine, but the more he swallowed, the more he frowned: the gentlemen who had been honoured with the dangerous distinction of sitting on his right and left, imitated him to a miracle in the drinking, and frowned at each other.

“‘I will!’ cried the baron suddenly, smiting the table with his right hand, and twirling his moustache with his left. ‘Fill to the Lady of Grogzwig.’

“The four-and-twenty Lincoln greens turned pale, with the exception of their four-and-twenty noses, which were unchangeable.

“‘I said to the Lady of Grogzwig,’ repeated the baron, looking round the board.

“‘To the Lady of Grogzwig!’ shouted the Lincoln greens; and down their four-and-twenty throats went four-and-twenty imperial pints of such rare old hock, that they smacked their eight-and-forty lips, and winked again.

“‘The fair daughter of the Baron Von Swillenhansen,’ said Koëldwethout, condescending to explain. ‘We will demand her in marriage

of her father, ere
we will cut off his
“A horse m
first the hill of
significance.

“What a plea
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“Wherupon th
the baron’s feet.
“What coul

of her father, ere the sun goes down to-morrow. If he refuse our suit, we will cut off his nose.'

"A hoarse murmur arose from the company, and every man touched, first the hilt of his sword, and then the tip of his nose, with appalling significance.

"What a pleasant thing filial piety is to contemplate! If the daughter of the Baron Von Swillenhause had pleaded a pre-occupied heart, or fallen at her father's feet and corned them in tears, or only fainted away, and complimented the old gentleman in frantic ejaculations, the odds are a hundred to one, but Swillenhause castle would have been turned out at window, or rather the baron turned out at window, and the castle demolished. The damsel held her peace however when an early messenger bore the request of Von Koëldwethout next morning, and modestly retired to her chamber, from the casement of which she watched the coming of the suitor and his retinue. She was no sooner assured that the horseman with the large moustachios was her proffered husband, than she hastened to her father's presence, and expressed her readiness to sacrifice herself to secure his peace. The venerable baron caught his child to his arms, and shed a wink of joy.

"There was great feasting at the castle that day. The four-and-twenty Lincoln greens of Von Koëldwethout exchanged vows of eternal friendship with twelve Lincoln greens of Von Swillenhause, and promised the old baron that they would drink his wine 'Till all was blue'—meaning probably until their whole countenances had acquired the same tint as their noses. Everybody slapped everybody else's back when the time for parting came; and the Baron Von Koëldwethout and his followers rode gaily home.

"For six mortal weeks the bears and boars had a holiday. The houses of Koëldwethout and Swillenhause were united; the spears rusted, and the baron's bugle grew hoarse for lack of blowing.

"These were great times for the four-and-twenty; but, alas! their high and palmy days had taken boots to themselves, and were already walking off.

"'My dear,' said the baroness.

"'My love,' said the baron.

"'Those coarse, noisy men—'

"'Which, ma'am?' said the baron starting.

"The baroness pointed from the window at which they stood, to the court-yard beneath, where the unconscious Lincoln greens were taking a copious stirrup-cup preparatory to issuing forth after a boar or two.

"'My hunting train, ma'am,' said the baron.

"'Disband them, love,' murmured the baroness.

"'Disband them!' cried the baron, in amazement.

"'To please me love,' replied the baroness.

"'To please the devil ma'am,' answered the baron.

"Whereupon the baroness uttered a great cry, and swooned away at the baron's feet.

"What could the baron do? He called for the lady's maid, and

roared for the doctor; and then rushing into the yard, kicked the two Lincoln greens who were the most used to it, and cursing the others all round, bade them go to—but never mind where. I don't know the German for it, or I would put it delicately that way.

“It is not for me to say by what means or by what degrees, some wives manage to keep down some husbands as they do, although I may have my private opinion on the subject, and may think that no Member of Parliament ought to be married, inasmuch as three married members out of every four, must vote according to their wives' consciences (if there be such things), and not according to their own. All I need say just now is, that the Baroness Von Koëldwethout somehow or other acquired great control over the Baron Von Koëldwethout, and that little by little, and bit by bit, and day by day, and year by year, the baron got the worst of some disputed question, or was slyly unhorsed from some old hobby; and that by the time he was a fat hearty fellow of forty-eight or thereabouts, he had no feasting, no revelry, no hunting train, and no hunting—nothing in short that he liked, or used to have; and that although he was as fierce as a lion and as bold as brass, he was decidedly snubbed and put down by his own lady, in his own castle of Grogzwig.

“Nor was this the whole extent of the baron's misfortunes. About a year after his nuptials there came into the world a lusty young baron, in whose honour a great many fireworks were let off, and a great many dozens of wine drunk; but next year there came a young baroness, and next year another young baron, and so on every year either a baron or baroness (and one year both together), until the baron found himself the father of a small family of twelve. Upon every one of these anniversaries the venerable Baroness Von Swillenhausen was nervously sensitive for the well-being of her child the Baroness Von Koëldwethout, and although it was not found that the good lady ever did anything material towards contributing to her child's recovery, still she made it a point of duty to be as nervous as possible at the castle of Grogzwig, and to divide her time between moral observations on the baron's housekeeping, and bewailing the hard lot of her unhappy daughter. And if the Baron of Grogzwig, a little hurt and irritated at this, took heart and ventured to suggest that his wife was at least no worse off than the wives of other barons, the Baroness Von Swillenhausen begged all persons to take notice, that nobody but she sympathised with her dear daughter's sufferings; upon which her relations and friends remarked, that to be sure she did cry a great deal more than her son-in-law, and that if there was a hard-hearted brute alive, it was that Baron of Grogzwig.

“The poor baron bore it all as long as he could, and when he could bear it no longer lost his appetite and his spirits, and sat himself gloomily and dejectedly down. But there were worse troubles yet in store for him, and as they came on, his melancholy and sadness increased. Times changed. He got into debt. The Grogzwig coffers ran low, though the Swillenhausen family had looked upon them as inexhaustible, and just when the baroness was on the point of mak-

ing a thirteenth addition to the family pedigree, Von Koëldwethout discovered that he had no means of replenishing them.

“I don't see what is to be done,” said the Baron. “I think I'll kill myself.”

“This was a bright idea. The baron took an old hunting-knife from a cupboard hard by, and having sharpened it on his boot, made what boys call ‘an offer’ at his throat.

“Hem !” said the Baron, stopping short. “Perhaps it's not sharp enough.”

“The baron sharpened it again, and made another offer, when his hand was arrested by a loud screaming among the young barons and baronesses, who had a nursery in an up-stairs tower with iron bars outside the window, to prevent their tumbling out into the moat.

“If I had been a bachelor,” said the baron sighing; “I might have done it fifty times over, without being interrupted. Hallo. Put a flask of wine and the largest pipe in the little vaulted room behind the hall.”

“One of the domestics in a very kind manner executed the baron's order in the course of half an hour or so, and Von Koëldwethout being apprised thereof, strode to the vaulted room, the walls of which being of dark shining wood gleamed in the light of the blazing logs which were piled upon the hearth. The bottle and pipe were ready, and upon the whole the place looked very comfortable.

“Leave the lamp,” said the baron.

“Anything else, my lord ?” inquired the domestic.

“The room,” replied the baron. The domestic obeyed, and the baron locked the door.

“I'll smoke a last pipe,” said the baron, “and then I'll be off.” So, putting the knife upon the table till he wanted it, and tossing off a goodly measure of wine, the Lord of Grogzwick threw himself back in his chair, stretched his legs out before the fire, and puffed away.

He thought about a great many things—about his present troubles and past days of bachelorship, and about the Lincoln greens long since dispersed up and down the country no one knew whither, with the exception of two who had been unfortunately beheaded, and four who had killed themselves with drinking. His mind was running upon bears and boars, when in the process of draining his glass to the bottom he raised his eyes, and saw for the first time and with unbounded astonishment, that he was not alone.

“No, he was not ; for on the opposite side of the fire there sat with folded arms a wrinkled hideous figure, with deeply sunk and bloodshot eyes, and an immensely long cadaverous face, shadowed by jagged and matted locks of coarse black hair. He wore a kind of tunic of a dull blueish colour, which the baron observed on regarding it attentively, was clasped or ornamented down the front with coffin handles. His legs too, were encased in coffin plates as though in armour, and over his left shoulder he wore a short dusky cloak, which seemed made of a remnant of some pall. He took no notice of the baron, but was intently eyeing the fire.

“ ‘Halloa!’ said the baron, stamping his foot to attract attention.

“ ‘Halloa!’ replied the stranger, moving his eyes towards the baron, but not his face or himself. ‘What now?’

“ ‘What now!’ replied the baron, nothing daunted by his hollow voice and lustreless eyes, ‘I should ask that question. How did you get here?’

“ ‘Through the door,’ replied the figure.

“ ‘What are you?’ says the baron.

“ ‘A man,’ replied the figure.

“ ‘I don’t believe it,’ says the baron.

“ ‘Disbelieve it then,’ says the figure.

“ ‘I will,’ rejoined the baron.

“ The figure looked at the bold Baron of Grogzwig for some time, and then said familiarly,

“ ‘There’s no coming over you, I see. I’m not a man!’

“ ‘What are you then?’ asked the baron.

“ ‘A genius,’ replied the figure.

“ ‘You don’t look much like one,’ returned the Baron scornfully.

“ ‘I am the Genius of Despair and Suicide,’ said the apparition. ‘Now you know me.’

“ With these words the apparition turned towards the baron as if composing himself for a talk—and what was very remarkable was, that he threw his cloak aside, and displaying a stake which was run through the centre of his body, pulled it out with a jerk, and laid it on the table as composedly as if it had been his walking-stick.

“ ‘Now,’ said the figure, glancing at the hunting knife, ‘are you ready for me?’

“ ‘Not quite,’ rejoined the baron; ‘I must finish this pipe first.’

“ ‘Look sharp then,’ said the figure.

“ ‘You seem in a hurry,’ said the baron.

“ ‘Why, yes, I am,’ answered the figure; ‘they’re doing a pretty brisk business in my way over in England and France just now, and my time is a good deal taken up.’

“ ‘Do you drink?’ said the baron, touching the bottle with the bowl of his pipe.

“ ‘Nine times out of ten, and then very hard,’ rejoined the figure, drily.

“ ‘Never in moderation?’ asked the baron.

“ ‘Never,’ replied the figure, with a shudder, ‘that breeds cheerfulness.’

“ The baron took another look at his new friend, whom he thought an uncommonly queer customer, and at length enquired whether he took any active part in such little proceedings as that which he had in contemplation.

“ ‘No,’ replied the figure, evasively; ‘but I am always present.’

“ ‘Just to see fair, I suppose,’ said the baron.

“ ‘Just that,’ replied the figure, playing with his stake, and examining the ferrule. ‘Be as quick as you can, will you, for there’s a young gentleman who is afflicted with too much money and leisure wanting me now, I find.’

“ ‘Going to kill himself because he has too much money!’ ex-

claimed the baron, quite tickled; 'Ha! ha! that's a good one.' (This was the first time the baron had laughed for many a long day.)

"'I say,' expostulated the figure, looking very much scared; 'don't do that again.'

"'Why not?' demanded the baron.

"'Because it gives me a pain all over,' replied the figure. 'Sigh as much as you please; that does me good.'

"The baron sighed mechanically at the mention of the word, and the figure brightening up again, handed him the hunting-knife with most winning politeness.

"'It's not a bad idea though,' said the baron, feeling the edge of the weapon; 'a man killing himself because he has too much money.'

"'Pooh!' said the apparition, petulantly, 'no better than a man's killing himself because he has got none or little.'

"Whether the genius unintentionally committed himself in saying this, or whether he thought the baron's mind was so thoroughly made up that it didn't matter what he said, I have no means of knowing. I only know that the baron stopped his hand all of a sudden, opened his eyes wide, and looked as if quite a new light had come upon him for the first time.

"'Why, certainly,' said Von Koëldwethout, 'nothing is too bad to be retrieved.'

"'Except empty coffers,' cried the genius.

"'Well; but they may be one day filled again,' said the baron.

"'Scolding wives,' snarled the genius.

"'Oh! They may be made quiet,' said the baron.

"'Thirteen children,' shouted the genius.

"'Can't all go wrong, surely,' said the baron.

"The genius was evidently growing very savage with the baron for holding these opinions all at once, but he tried to laugh it off, and said if he would let him know when he had left off joking he should feel obliged to him.

"'But I am not joking; I was never farther from it,' remonstrated the baron.

"'Well, I am glad to hear that,' said the genius, looking very grim, 'because a joke, without any figure of speech, is the death of me. Come. Quit this dreary world at once.'

"'I don't know,' said the baron, playing with the knife; 'it's a dreary one certainly, but I don't think yours is much better, for you have not the appearance of being particularly comfortable. That puts me in mind—what security have I that I shall be any the better for going out of the world after all!' he cried, starting up; 'I never thought of that.'

"'Dispatch,' cried the figure, gnashing its teeth.

"'Keep off,' said the baron. 'I'll brood over miseries no longer, but put a good face on the matter, and try the fresh air and the bears again; and if that don't do, I'll talk to the baroness soundly, and cut the Von Swillenhausens dead.' With this, the baron fell into his chair and laughed so loud and boisterously, that the room rang with it.

"The figure fell back a pace or two, regarding the baron meanwhile

with a look of intense terror, and when he had ceased, caught up the stake, plunged it violently into its body, uttered a frightful howl, and disappeared.

“Von Koëldwethout never saw it again. Having once made up his mind to action, he soon brought the baroness and the Von Swillenhauens to reason, and died many years afterwards, not a rich man that I am aware of, but certainly a happy one: leaving behind him a numerous family, who had been carefully educated in bear and boar-hunting under his own personal eye. And my advice to all men is, that if ever they become hipped and melancholy from similar causes (as very many men do), they look at both sides of the question, applying a magnifying glass to the best one; and if they still feel tempted to retire without leave, that they smoke a large pipe and drink a full bottle first, and profit by the laudable example of the Baron of Grogzwig.”

“The fresh coach is ready, ladies and gentlemen, if you please,” said a new driver, looking in.

This intelligence caused the punch to be finished in a great hurry, and prevented any discussion relative to the last story. Mr. Squeers was observed to draw the grey-headed gentleman on one side and to ask a question with great apparent interest; it bore reference to the Five Sisters of York, and was in fact an enquiry whether he could inform him how much per annum the Yorkshire convents got in those days with their boarders.

The journey was then resumed. Nicholas fell asleep towards morning, and when he awoke found, with great regret, that during his nap both the Baron of Grogzwig and the grey-haired gentleman had got down and were gone. The day dragged on uncomfortably enough, and about six o'clock that night he and Mr. Squeers, and the little boys, and their united luggage, were all put down together at the George and New Inn, Greta Bridge.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. AND MRS. SQUEERS AT HOME.

MR. SQUEERS being safely landed, left Nicholas and the boys standing with the luggage in the road, to amuse themselves by looking at the coach as it changed horses, while he ran into the tavern and went through the leg-stretching process at the bar. After some minutes he returned with his legs thoroughly stretched, if the hue of his nose and a short hiccup afforded any criterion, and at the same time there came out of the yard a rusty pony-chaise and a cart, driven by two labouring men.

“Put the boys and the boxes into the cart,” said Squeers, rubbing his hands; “and this young man and me will go on in the chaise. Get in, Nickleby.”

Nicholas obeyed, and Mr. Squeers with some difficulty inducing the

pany to obey also, the
to follow at leisure.

“Are you cold, Ni-
relled some distance.

“Rather, Sir, I am
“Well, I don’t find

journey this weather.”

“Is it much further
“About three miles

call it a Hall down here
Nicholas coughed, and

“The fact is, it is
“Oh, indeed! I was

astonished.

“No,” replied Squeers,
sounds better, but the

man may call his horse
ment against that, I

“I believe not, Sir
Squeers eyed his

hope, and finding that
was disposed to vol-
laking the pony out

“Jump out,” said
“Be quick, will

While the school-
Nicholas had time

house, one story high
a barn and stable with

noise of somebody
tall lean boy, with

“Is that you, Sir
“Yes, Sir,” replied

“Then why the
“Please, Sir, I

humility.

“Fire! what
master, sharply.

“Only in the
sitting up, I must

“Your mis-
denied deal me

By this time
boy to see to it

that night, he found
he went round a

A host of
Nicholas during
doubled force with

pony to obey also, they started off, leaving the cart-load of infant misery to follow at leisure.

"Are you cold, Nickleby?" inquired Squeers, after they had travelled some distance in silence.

"Rather, Sir, I must say."

"Well, I don't find fault with that," said Squeers; "it's a long journey this weather."

"Is it much further to Dotheboys Hall, Sir?" asked Nicholas.

"About three mile from here," replied Squeers. "But you needn't call it a Hall down here."

Nicholas coughed, as if he would like to know why.

"The fact is, it ain't a Hall," observed Squeers drily.

"Oh, indeed!" said Nicholas, whom this piece of intelligence much astonished.

"No," replied Squeers. "We call it a Hall up in London, because it sounds better, but they don't know it by that name in these parts. A man may call his house an island if he likes; there's no act of Parliament against that, I believe."

"I believe not, Sir," rejoined Nicholas.

Squeers eyed his companion slyly at the conclusion of this little dialogue, and finding that he had grown thoughtful and appeared in no-wise disposed to volunteer any observations, contented himself with lashing the pony until they reached their journey's end.

"Jump out," said Squeers. "Hallo there! come and put this horse up. Be quick, will you?"

While the schoolmaster was uttering these and other impatient cries, Nicholas had time to observe that the school was a long cold-looking house, one story high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind, and a barn and stable adjoining. After the lapse of a minute or two, the noise of somebody unlocking the yard gate was heard, and presently a tall lean boy, with a lantern in his hand, issued forth.

"Is that you, Smike?" cried Squeers.

"Yes, Sir," replied the boy.

"Then why the devil didn't you come before?"

"Please, Sir, I fell asleep over the fire," answered Smike, with humility.

"Fire! what fire? Where's there a fire?" demanded the schoolmaster, sharply.

"Only in the kitchen, Sir," replied the boy. "Missus said as I was sitting up, I might go in there, for a warm."

"Your missus is a fool," retorted Squeers. "You'd have been a deuced deal more wakeful in the cold, I'll engage."

By this time Mr. Squeers had dismounted; and after ordering the boy to see to the pony, and to take care that he hadn't any more corn that night, he told Nicholas to wait at the front door a minute while he went round and let him in.

A host of unpleasant misgivings, which had been crowding upon Nicholas during the whole journey, thronged into his mind with redoubled force when he was left alone. His great distance from home

and the impossibility of reaching it, except on foot, should he feel ever so anxious to return, presented itself to him in most alarming colours; and as he looked up at the dreary house and dark windows, and upon the wild country round covered with snow, he felt a depression of heart and spirit which he had never experienced before.

"Now then," cried Squeers, poking his head out at the front door.

"Where are you, Nickleby?"

"Here, Sir?" replied Nicholas.

"Come in then," said Squeers, "the wind blows in at this door fit to knock a man off his legs."

Nicholas sighed and hurried in. Mr. Squeers having bolted the door to keep it shut, ushered him into a small parlour scantily furnished with a few chairs, a yellow map hung against the wall, and a couple of tables, one of which bore some preparations for supper; while on the other, a tutor's assistant, a Murray's grammar, half a dozen cards of terms, and a worn letter directed to Wackford Squeers, Esquire, were arranged in picturesque confusion.

They had not been in this apartment a couple of minutes when a female bounced into the room, and seizing Mr. Squeers by the throat gave him two loud kisses, one close after the other, like a postman's knock. The lady, who was of a large raw-boned figure, was about half a head taller than Mr. Squeers, and was dressed in a dimity night jacket with her hair in papers; she had also a dirty night-cap on, relieved by a yellow cotton handkerchief which tied it under the chin.

"How is my Squeery?" said this lady in a playful manner, and a very hoarse voice.

"Quite well, my love," replied Squeers. "How are the cows?"

"All right, every one of 'em," answered the lady.

"And the pigs?" said Squeers.

"As well as they were when you went away."

"Come; that's a blessing," said Squeers, pulling off his great-coat.

"The boys are all as they were, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, they're well enough," replied Mrs. Squeers, snappishly.

"That young Pitcher's had a fever."

"No!" exclaimed Squeers. "Damn that boy, he's always at something of that sort."

"Never was such a boy, I do believe," said Mrs. Squeers; "whatever he has, is always catching too. I say it's obstinacy, and nothing shall ever convince me that it isn't. I'd beat it out of him, and I told you that six months ago."

"So you did, my love," rejoined Squeers. "We'll try what can be done."

Pending these little endearments, Nicholas had stood awkwardly enough in the middle of the room, not very well knowing whether he was expected to retire into the passage, or to remain where he was. He was now relieved from his perplexity by Mr. Squeers.

"This is the new young man, my dear," said that gentleman.

"Oh," replied Mrs. Squeers, nodding her head at Nicholas, and eyeing him coldly from top to toe.

"He'll take a mean
the boys to-morrow
to-night, can't you?"
"We must manage
much mind how you
"No, indeed," replied
"That's lucky," said
considered to be chief
seemed to expect that
After some further
relative to the success
paid, and the people
servant girl brought
being set upon the table
Mr. Squeers was
different boys, and
in them. The boy got
the papers, as if with
to him. The lock was
heart at once, for it told
It induced him to
surprised to observe
lined his dress. Altho
or nineteen years
est, such is a woman
not abnormally short
his attenuated frame.
be a perfect keeping
pair of boots originally
worn by some stout fat
a beggar. God knows
the same linen which
was a tattered child
neckered. He was
the table, glanced at
and hoped, that
"What are you to
"Let the things alone."
"Yes, Sir," replied
to control by force
"Well!" said
"Have you—"
"Devil a bit."
The lad withdrew
towards the door.
"Not a word."
a pretty set of this
these years and no

"He'll take a meal with us to-night," said Squeers, "and go among the boys to-morrow morning. You can give him a shake-down here to-night, can't you?"

"We must manage it somehow," replied the lady. "You don't much mind how you sleep, I suppose, Sir?"

"No, indeed," replied Nicholas, "I am not particular."

"That's lucky," said Mrs. Squeers. And as the lady's humour was considered to lie chiefly in retort, Mr. Squeers laughed heartily, and seemed to expect that Nicholas should do the same.

After some further conversation between the master and mistress relative to the success of Mr. Squeers's trip, and the people who had paid, and the people who had made default in payment, a young servant girl brought in a Yorkshire pie and some cold beef, which being set upon the table, the boy Smike appeared with a jug of ale.

Mr. Squeers was emptying his great-coat pockets of letters to different boys, and other small documents, which he had brought down in them. The boy glanced with an anxious and timid expression at the papers, as if with a sickly hope that one among them might relate to him. The look was a very painful one, and went to Nicholas's heart at once, for it told a long and very sad history.

It induced him to consider the boy more attentively, and he was surprised to observe the extraordinary mixture of garments which formed his dress. Although he could not have been less than eighteen or nineteen years old, and was tall for that age, he wore a skeleton suit, such as is usually put upon very little boys, and which, though most absurdly short in the arms and legs, was quite wide enough for his attenuated frame. In order that the lower part of his legs might be in perfect keeping with this singular dress, he had a very large pair of boots originally made for tops, which might have been once worn by some stout farmer, but were now too patched and tattered for a beggar. God knows how long he had been there, but he still wore the same linen which he had first taken down; for round his neck was a tattered child's frill, only half concealed by a coarse man's neckerchief. He was lame; and as he feigned to be busy in arranging the table, glanced at the letters with a look so keen, and yet so dispirited and hopeless, that Nicholas could hardly bear to watch him.

"What are you bothering about there, Smike?" cried Mrs. Squeers; "let the things alone, can't you."

"Eh!" said Squeers, looking up. "Oh! it's you, is it?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the youth, pressing his hands together, as though to control by force the nervous wandering of his fingers; "Is there—"

"Well!" said Squeers.

"Have you—did anybody—has nothing been heard—about me?"

"Devil a bit," replied Squeers testily.

The lad withdrew his eyes, and putting his hand to his face moved towards the door.

"Not a word," resumed Squeers, "and never will be. Now, this is a pretty sort of thing, isn't it, that you should have been left here all these years and no money paid after the first six—nor no notice taken,

nor no clue to be got who you belong to? It's a pretty sort of thing that I should have to feed a great fellow like you, and never hope to get one penny for it, isn't it?"

The boy put his hand to his head as if he were making an effort to recollect something, and then looking vacantly at his questioner, gradually broke into a smile and limped away.

"I'll tell you what, Squeers," remarked his wife as the door closed, "I think that young chap's turning silly."

"I hope not," said the schoolmaster; "for he's a handy fellow out of doors, and worth his meat and drink any way. I should think he'd have wit enough for us though, if he was. But come; let's have supper, for I am hungry and tired, and want to get to bed."

This reminder brought in an exclusive steak for Mr. Squeers, who speedily proceeded to do it ample justice. Nicholas drew up his chair, but his appetite was effectually taken away.

"How's the steak, Squeers?" said Mrs. S.

"Tender as a lamb," replied Squeers. "Have a bit."

"I couldn't eat a morsel," replied his wife. "What'll the young man take, my dear?"

"Whatever he likes that's present," rejoined Squeers, in a most unusual burst of generosity.

"What do you say, Mr. Knuckleboy?" inquired Mrs. Squeers.

"I'll take a little of the pie, if you please," replied Nicholas. "A very little, for I'm not hungry."

"Well, it's a pity to cut the pie if you're not hungry, isn't it?" said Mrs. Squeers. "Will you try a piece of the beef?"

"Whatever you please," replied Nicholas abstractedly; "it's all the same to me."

Mrs. Squeers looked vastly gracious on receiving this reply; and nodding to Squeers, as much as to say that she was glad to find the young man knew his station, assisted Nicholas to a slice of meat with her own fair hands.

"Ale, Squeery?" inquired the lady, winking and frowning to give him to understand that the question propounded was, whether Nicholas should have ale, and not whether he (Squeers) would take any.

"Certainly," said Squeers, re-telegraphing in the same manner. "A glassful."

So Nicholas had a glassful, and being occupied with his own reflections, drank it in happy innocence of all the foregone proceedings.

"Uncommon juicy steak that," said Squeers as he laid down his knife and fork, after plying it in silence for some time.

"It's prime meat," rejoined his lady. "I bought a good large piece of it myself on purpose for——"

"For what!" exclaimed Squeers hastily. "Not for the——"

"No, no; not for them," rejoined Mrs. Squeers; "on purpose for you against you came home. Lor! you didn't think I could have made such a mistake as that."

"Upon my word, my dear, I didn't know what you were going to say," said Squeers, who had turned very pale.

"You needn't make laughing heartily. This part of the conversation in the neighborhood exposed to cruelty to the compassion the bodies of the possibly he was approached choice morsel intended for Supper being over, and hungry eye, Mrs. Squeers, safe custody the clothes of year half way up the tree, due, in consequence of with a light supper of small bedstead, to warm with something hot as not as all imposable the Mr. Squeers treated he made on the liberal half of the sugar; and his small glassful of the same few close up to the table confidentially in assistant, read the text all the figures and senseness of what he stamber. At length Mr. Squeers high time to go to bed; engaged in a small st attempt them into a c "I'll put you into said Squeers. "Let m "In Brooks's," said Eric Bolder, Grayman "So there are, nig "Fall!" thought "There's a place w it this woman call settled to-morrow. ing mind." "I shall be read "I'll come in m "You'll always fr belongs to you." Nicholas opened going away, when "I don't know, I but if you'll make

"You needn't make yourself uncomfortable," remarked his wife, laughing heartily. "To think that I should be such a noddy! Well!"

This part of the conversation was rather unintelligible; but popular rumour in the neighbourhood asserted that Mr. Squeers, being amiably opposed to cruelty to animals, not unfrequently purchased for boy consumption the bodies of horned cattle who had died a natural death, and possibly he was apprehensive of having unintentionally devoured some choice morsel intended for the young gentlemen.

Supper being over, and removed by a small servant girl with a hungry eye, Mrs. Squeers retired to lock it up, and also to take into safe custody the clothes of the five boys who had just arrived, and who were half way up the troublesome flight of steps which leads to death's door, in consequence of exposure to the cold. They were then regaled with a light supper of porridge, and stowed away side by side in a small bedstead, to warm each other and dream of a substantial meal with something hot after it if their fancies set that way, which it is not at all improbable they did.

Mr. Squeers treated himself to a stiff tumbler of brandy and water, made on the liberal half and half principle, allowing for the dissolution of the sugar; and his amiable helpmate mixed Nicholas the ghost of a small glassfull of the same compound. This done, Mr. and Mrs. Squeers drew close up to the fire, and sitting with their feet on the fender talked confidentially in whispers; while Nicholas, taking up the tutor's assistant, read the interesting legends in the miscellaneous questions, and all the figures into the bargain, with as much thought or consciousness of what he was doing, as if he had been in a magnetic slumber.

At length Mr. Squeers yawned fearfully, and opined that it was high time to go to bed; upon which signal Mrs. Squeers and the girl dragged in a small straw mattress and a couple of blankets, and arranged them into a couch for Nicholas.

"We'll put you into your regular bed-room to-morrow, Nickleby," said Squeers. "Let me see, who sleeps in Brooks's bed, my dear?"

"In Brooks's," said Mrs. Squeers, pondering. "There's Jennings, little Bolder, Graymarsh, and what's his name."

"So there are," rejoined Squeers. "Yes! Brooks is full."

"Full!" thought Nicholas, "I should think he was."

"There's a place somewhere I know," said Squeers; "but I can't at this moment call to mind where it is. However, we'll have that all settled to-morrow. Good night, Nickleby. Seven o'clock in the morning, mind."

"I shall be ready, Sir," replied Nicholas. "Good night."

"I'll come in myself and show you where the well is," said Squeers. "You'll always find a little bit of soap in the kitchen window; that belongs to you."

Nicholas opened his eyes, but not his mouth; and Squeers was again going away, when he once more turned back.

"I don't know, I am sure," he said, "whose towel to put you on; but if you'll make shift with something to-morrow morning, Mrs.

Squeers will arrange that, in the course of the day. My dear, don't forget."

"I'll take care," replied Mrs. Squeers; "and mind *you* take care, young man, and get first wash. The teacher ought always to have it; but they get the better of him if they can."

Mr. Squeers then nudged Mrs. Squeers to bring away the brandy bottle, lest Nicholas should help himself in the night; and the lady having seized it with great precipitation, they retired together.

Nicholas being left alone, took half a dozen turns up and down the room in a condition of much agitation and excitement, but growing gradually calmer, sat himself down in a chair and mentally resolved that, come what come might, he would endeavour for a time to bear whatever wretchedness might be in store for him, and that remembering the helplessness of his mother and sister, he would give his uncle no plea for deserting them in their need. Good resolutions seldom fail of producing some good effects in the mind from which they spring. He grew less desponding, and—so sanguine and buoyant is youth—even hoped that affairs at Dotheboys Hall might yet prove better than they promised.

He was preparing for bed with something like renewed cheerfulness, when a sealed letter fell from his coat pocket. In the hurry of leaving London it had escaped his attention and had not occurred to him since, but it at once brought back to him the recollection of the mysterious behaviour of Newman Noggs.

"Dear me!" said Nicholas; "what an extraordinary hand!"

It was directed to himself, was written upon very dirty paper, and in such cramped and crippled writing as to be almost illegible. After great difficulty and much puzzling, he contrived to read as follows:—

'My dear young Man.

"I know the world. Your father did not, or he would not have done me a kindness when there was no hope of return. You do not, or you would not be bound on such a journey.

"If ever you want a shelter in London, (don't be angry at this, *I* once thought I never should), they know where I live at the sign of the Crown, in Silver Street, Golden Square. It is at the corner of Silver Street and James Street, with a bar door both ways. You can come at night. Once nobody was ashamed—never mind that. It's all over.

"Excuse errors. I should forget how to wear a whole coat now. I have forgotten all my old ways. My spelling may have gone with them.

"NEWMAN NOGGS.

"P.S. If you should go near Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the King's Head. Say you know me, and I am sure they will not charge you for it. You may say *Mr.* Noggs there, for I was a gentleman then. I was indeed."

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- 3d. By punctuality, by civility, and vigilant attention to the wants of his customers, to endeavour to identify their interest with his own, and thereby merit and increase the extensive trade, patronage, and confidence with which he has already been honoured.

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2d. His celebrated Pair of Razors	7	0
Ditto, Ivory handled ditto	10	0
His Magic Razor Strop	5	0
His Magic Strop Paste	1	0

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summarise to the largest
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constant employment to
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each, either with real
masses superior to the
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ON

THE CULTIVATION OF THE DAHLIA.

By J. PAXTON, F.L.S., H.S.,

Editor of the Magazine of Botany, and Gardener & Forester to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth.

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getting that their customers have not the same interest as themselves in believing what they say.

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.. .. .	0 9 0	0 15 0
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114 Neat Ivory Handle, not balanced	1 12 0	1 4 6						
WHITE BONE HANDLES.								
183 Balance Octagon White Bone	1 1 0	0 16 6	0 4 6	2 2 0				
184 Octagon White Bone, not balanced	0 17 0	0 15 0	0 4 0	1 16 0				
REAL STAG AND BUCK HORN.								
222 Real Stag Horn	1 3 0	1 0 0	0 5 6	2 8 6				
407 Real Buck Horn	0 16 0	1 3 0	0 4 6	1 14 6				
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Squeers will arrange that, in the course of the day. My dear, don't forget."

"I'll take care," replied Mrs. Squeers; "and mind *you* take care, young man, and get first w but they get the better of I

Mr. Squeers then nudged bottle, lest Nicholas should having seized it with great

Nicholas being left alone room in a condition of m gradually calmer, sat himself that, come what come might whatever wretchedness might the helplessness of his motive plea for deserting them in producing some good effect grew less desponding, and hoped that affairs at Dotham were promised.

He was preparing for when a sealed letter fell from London it had escaped his but it at once brought back the behaviour of Newman Noggs.

"Dear me!" said Nicholas.

It was directed to him and in such cramped and After great difficulty and follows:—

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"I know the work you have done me a kindness not, or you would not be

"If ever you want a once thought I never should Crown, in Silver Street, Old Street and James Street, at night. Once nobody was

"Excuse errors. I should forget how to wear a whole coat now. I have forgotten all my old ways. My spelling may have gone with them.

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folded this letter and placed it in his pocket-book, Nicholas Nickleby's
eyes were dimmed with a moisture that might have been taken for tears.

MECHI'S REMARKS ON SHAVING.

Most gentlemen who travel (particularly in foreign parts) are desirous to be as little encumbered as possible.

The *Soap Dish* is a nuisance, and generally renders a Dressing Case inconveniently large. This may be easily dispensed with (and advantageously so) by first wetting the beard with the shaving-brush, then rubbing a cake of soap over it, and afterwards, by means of the brush and a little more water, raising a lather which, in efficacy and facility of shaving, will far surpass all others.

A small piece of Naples Soap, the size of a pea, spread on the chin will, with the assistance of the brush and a little water, produce a similar result.

Indeed, to all shavers, I recommend this, whether travelling or not, as the best means of easy shaving; for how frequently is time wasted in raising a lather in the *dish* (where it is not wanted) in lieu of doing it on the *face*, where a good deal of friction and soap is *indispensably necessary*.

One trial alone of the above plan will bring conviction to the most strenuous advocate of the *dish* system.

It may be well to remark, that to avoid having the lather thick or thin in the *extreme*, I dip my brush in water, giving it a gentle shake, which throws off the superfluity, and leaves enough to raise the soap on the face to a consistent lather.

Where the soap is glutinous, the surface of beard extensive, or the brush small, a second or even a third recourse to the basin may be necessary during the process. The cake of soap quickly rubs away on the face, the beard acting as a file.

I think I may remark that, generally speaking, there is *too much* rubbing in the *dish*, and *too little* on the face.

A GOLDEN RULE IN SHAVING.

Always rub your beard well with your naked hand, soap, and water, *before you lather*. The Spanish barbers, who are allowed to be artists in easy shaving, *invariably* do this, so do the East Indian barbers. The result is, you soften your beard, save your skin from irritation, and prevent injury to the Razor; for remember, it is much easier to cut a soaked bristle than a dry harsh one.

If you will not take the trouble of doing this, you will find your Razor *hang* against the beard, and drag (not a pleasant sensation, although a very common one). Always *strop* your Razor *after shaving* to prevent rust on the edge;

they care to press meet
applied once a month.
In using the Razor in
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THE CULTIVATION OF THE DAHLIA.

By J. PAXTON, F.L.S., H.S.,

Editor of the Magazine of Botany, and Gardener & Forester to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth.

taking care to press most on the back. Fresh Paste should be applied once a month.

In turning the Razor in stropping, be sure to keep the back down on the Strop, changing at the same time the position of your hand and arm, both of which must act freely as high as the elbow. A cramped hand does not answer for stropping a Razor properly: a light, free, brisk action far surpasses a dull heavy stroke.

When the Strop becomes notched or uneven, it is no longer fit for use. In fact, so easily are the Teeth of a good Razor disturbed, that only once stropping it on an improper position will destroy its fine edge and make it painful to shave with. If you shave from heel to point of the Razor, strop it from point to heel; but if you begin with the point, then strop from heel to point. Those who have not one of MECHT'S MAGIC STROPS, will do well before shaving to strop the Razor on the fleshy part of the hand, and then upon a small piece of dry clean wash leather (plate-leather).

A Razor that is badly tempered, can never maintain its fine edge even during one shaving. The practice of pressing on the edge of a Razor in stropping, generally rounds it; it should be directed to the back, which must never be raised from the Strop. It is hardly or carelessly; when the Razor is once in good condition a few strokes on the Strop will keep it so, with a stiff beard, but for a light and tender face, stropping once or twice a week is sufficient; but the hand or wash-leather should be used every day. If you only once put away your Razor without stropping, you must no longer expect to shave well, the soap and damp so soon rust the fine teeth. A piece of plate-leather should be always kept with the Razors.

The operation of shaving is in effect precisely that of mowing. We may compare the stiff beard to coarse grass, and the Razor to the scythe. The mower would cut but little did he not, frequently by using the stone, renovate the edge of the instrument: the same remark applies to the shaver. Experience convinces me, however, that many have never drawn the comparison, or they would not continue to labour away for years on an old disfigured Strop, from which every particle of composition must have long since been worn off, or at all events have lost its cutting properties: for the composition, which should consist of sharp cutting angles, wears away as well as the Razor. Besides, the Strop, by being frequently laid down without its case, absorbs all sorts of dust and grit (injurious in the extreme to a smooth edge), and requires occasional scraping, which may be best done by the back of a knife. Light silky beards require a keen, thin, elastic edge: stiff gristy beards, on the contrary, require a stronger edge, with but little elasticity.

NG OUT—Mr. Sabine's directions as to the of colours and size—Distance between the end rows in beds—Distance between the roots enues—Distance between the roots when for competition—Period for planting out—Transferring from pots to beds—Subsequent ion—Best time for watering—Precautions in the heat—Attendant disadvantages—On the manure water.

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Squeers will arrange that, in the course of the day. My dear, don't forget."

"I'll take care," replied Mrs. Squeers; "and mind *you* take care, young man, and get first w
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Mr. Squeers then nudged
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"Excuse errors. I should forget how to wear a whole coat now. I
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"P.S. If you should go near Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the
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eyes were dimmed with a moisture that might have been taken for tears.

13

Those who have very thin irritable skins, I recommend
to rub their beards with sweet oil before lathering, the alkali
will then act on the oil instead of the skin, and assist
in producing a more durable lather. Besides, the skin will
not then absorb the liquid part of the lather too quickly, as
otherwise does.

Never fail to well wash your beard with soap and cold
water, immediately before you apply the lather, of which
the more you use the easier you will shave. Never use
warm water, which makes a tender face. Place the Razor
(closed of course) in your pocket, or under your arm, to
warm it. In order to shave very clean, it is sometimes ne-
cessary to lather and go over your beard a second time. The
moment you leave your bed is the best time to shave; always
putting your shaving brush away with the lather on it.

The Razor (being only a very fine saw) should be moved
in a sloping or sawing direction, holding it nearly flat to
your face, care being taken to draw the skin as tight as
possible with the left hand, so as to present an even surface
and throw out the beard.

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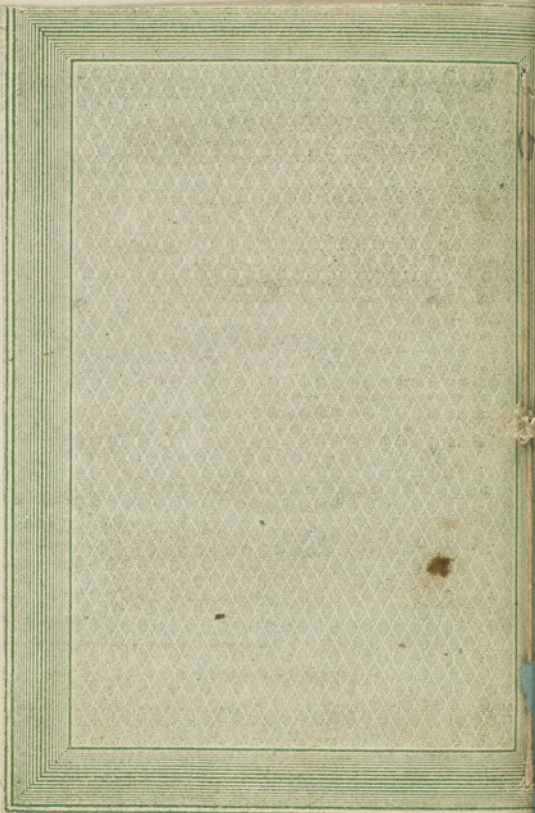
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