

Nc. VII.]

[PRICE 1s.

THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES  
OF

# NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

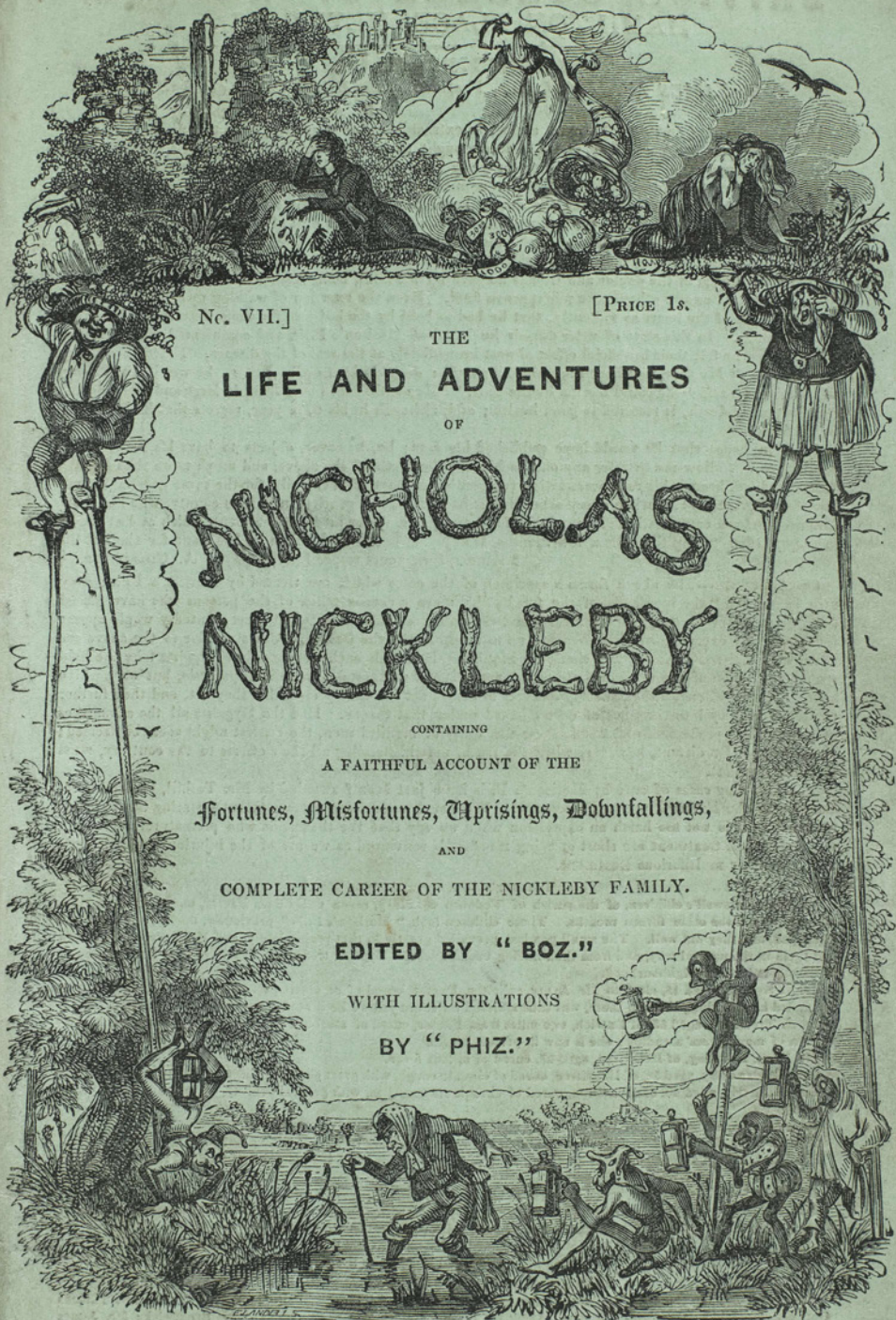
CONTAINING

A FAITHFUL ACCOUNT OF THE  
Fortunes, Misfortunes, Uprisings, Downtfallings,  
AND  
COMPLETE CAREER OF THE NICKLEBY FAMILY.

EDITED BY "BOZ."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
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# BRITISH COLLEGE OF HEALTH, HAMILTON PLACE, NEW ROAD.

## MORISON'S PILLS.

To JAMES MORISON, Esq., President of the British College of Health.

St. Andrews, Norwich, Aug. 25, 1838.

Sir—Having lately witnessed a cure, almost as extraordinary as your own, from the use of Morison's Pills, I send you the particulars, which I think ought to be made public. The party I allude to is a respectable farmer; he had been suffering for years with violent palpitation of the heart, which, under medical treatment, got worse, and was at last pronounced to be an incurable case of ossification of the heart. To complete his despair of any relief, the doctor lent him a medical work, referring him to a part which pronounced his case beyond the reach of medicine. His own brother died of a similar complaint; and a gentleman in the same neighbourhood, under medical treatment, also died, who was opened, and from his case it was said that nothing that medical skill could devise would cure ossification of the heart.

Under the advice of the doctor and friends he gave up his farm, being assured that the least excitement from his servants or any other cause might prove fatal. Even the exertion of walking up stairs brought on the palpitation of the heart so violently, that he had to hold by the bed-post for some time before he could get his breath. In this state of utter despair he heard of Morison's Pills, and commenced with them in small doses; he felt their beneficial effect almost immediately at the seat of the disease. Notwithstanding, his wife said, "My dear, you hear the pills kill people; do give them up." But, as he was left to die by the doctors, he said "he could but die by the pills." He continued to take them in large and small doses, and, instead of death, is restored to good health; and, although in his 67th year, regrets that he has given up his farm.

I was in hopes that he would have published his case; he, however, objects to have his name made public, but will allow me to refer any one to him for the truth of the above, and much more than I have here stated. Through his recommendation two gentlemen have tried the pills for the same complaint, and have found great benefit, when every other means had failed. A gentleman in this county, who has been suffering under a complication of complaints for many years, under medical treatment, which at last ended in dropsy, after taking the pills a few months, is enjoying better health than he has done for the last 20 years.

I remain, Sirs, yours respectfully, A. CHARLWOOD.

OBSERVATIONS.—The above forms a specimen of the cases which are treated by Morison's Pills; they may be termed "the incurables of the faculty." Were a census taken of the persons who have placed themselves under the Hygeian treatment, and the nature of their diseases, it most assuredly would appear that 99 out of every 100 had been given up as incurable by the faculty. Cases similar to the above are undeniable and convincing—they challenge inquiry. It is with such weapons that Hygeists take the field against the whole of the medical fraternity; not relying, as they do, on vain hypothesis, but on positive facts. They challenge the medical profession to contradict the theory on which they act, and they further challenge inquiry into the cases of cure effected under that theory. Had the Hygeists all the advantages of the medical profession, and was fairness the order of medical men, the contest might soon be decided; the day is not far distant, however, when the truth, notwithstanding all their efforts to the contrary, must be made manifest.

The following cases of cure by Morison's Pills have just been forwarded by Mr. Tothill, of Heavitree, Surgeon to the Exeter Hygeian Dispensary. With such undeniable facts constantly staring medical men in the face, it is not too harsh an expression when we say that the thousands who prematurely die every day under their treatment are short of being murdered, convinced as we are of the injurious and poisonous nature of their multifarious treatment.

### MR. TOTHILL'S CASES FOR AUGUST 1838.

Mr. Wm. Kerswell's children, of the parish of Tedburn St. Mary, seven miles from Exeter, one aged three years and a half, and the other fifteen months. These children took "Morison's Pills" previously, during, and after the small pox, and they did well. The small pox has prevailed greatly in that parish lately, and Mr. Kerswell's children had them in the natural way, and from their having been under the Hygeian treatment they have done better than any of the others in that neighbourhood.

James Sanders, aged 15, clerk to Mr. Avory, solicitor, Exeter, cured of an obstruction of the nostrils, which totally precluded his breathing through them, was thus afflicted for seven years; he is now in every respect in perfect health.

Sarah Trevillian, aged 55, of Exwick, two miles from Exeter, cured of scorbutic humour, with erysipelatous inflammation of many years' standing; she is now in perfect health.

Mr. Thos. Downing, of Heavitree, aged 27, cured of bilious fever.

Jane Goldsworthy, aged 52, of Heavitree, cured of chronic cough, with great general debility, of many years' standing. Mary Hatterly, aged 45, of Heavitree, cured of chronic rheumatism, with general debility, of upwards of six years' standing.

John London, of the parish of Whimble, is a mail horse keeper, cured of consumption.

The Rev. Mr. Moxley, of Heavitree, cured of an ulcerated leg, other treatment having failed.

Mr. Thos. Tuboy, Exeter, cured of quotidian ague of long standing, after the most skillful medical treatment having failed.

Mr. P. H. Wrighton, Exeter, cured of a severe bilious fever.

Mrs. Massis, Exeter, cured of chronic hepatitis, accompanied with general deranged state of the whole system, of many years' standing, after having been under the most skillful medical treatment.

(Signed)

RICHARD TOTHILL, M.R.C.S.,

And Surgeon to the Exeter Hygeian Dispensary, August 1838.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

MADAME MANTALINI FINDS HERSELF IN A SITUATION OF SOME DIFFICULTY, AND MISS NICKLEBY FINDS HERSELF IN NO SITUATION AT ALL.

THE agitation she had undergone rendered Kate Nickleby unable to resume her duties at the dress-maker's for three days, at the expiration of which interval she betook herself at the accustomed hour, and with languid steps, to the temple of fashion where Madame Mantalini reigned paramount and supreme.

The ill will of Miss Knag had lost nothing of its virulence in the interval, for the young ladies still scrupulously shrank from all companionship with their denounced associate; and when that exemplary female arrived a few minutes afterwards, she was at no pains to conceal the displeasure with which she regarded Kate's return.

"Upon my word!" said Miss Knag, as the satellites flocked round to relieve her of her bonnet and shawl; "I should have thought some people would have had spirit enough to stop away altogether, when they know what an incumbrance their presence is to right-minded persons. But it's a queer world; oh! it's a queer world!"

Miss Knag having passed this comment on the world, in the tone in which most people do pass comments on the world when they are out of temper, that is to say, as if they by no means belonged to it, concluded by heaving a sigh, wherewith she seemed meekly to compassionate the wickedness of mankind.

The attendants were not slow to echo the sigh, and Miss Knag was apparently on the eve of favouring them with some further moral reflections, when the voice of Madame Mantalini, conveyed through the speaking-tube, ordered Miss Nickleby up stairs to assist in the arrangement of the show-room; a distinction which caused Miss Knag to toss her head so much, and bite her lips so hard, that her powers of conversation were for the time annihilated.

"Well, Miss Nickleby, child," said Madame Mantalini, when Kate presented herself; "are you quite well again?"

"A great deal better, thank you," replied Kate.

"I wish I could say the same," remarked Madame Mantalini, seating herself with an air of weariness.

"Are you ill?" asked Kate. "I am very sorry for that."

"Not exactly ill, but worried, child—worried," rejoined Madame.

"I am still more sorry to hear that," said Kate, gently. "Bodily illness is more easy to bear than mental."

"Ah! and it's much easier to talk than to bear either," said Madame, rubbing her nose with much irritability of manner. "There, get to your work, child, and put the things in order, do."

While Kate was wondering within herself what these symptoms of

unusual vexation portended, Mr. Mantalini put the tips of his whiskers, and by degrees his head, through the half-opened door, and cried in a soft voice—

“Is my life and soul there?”

“No,” replied his wife.

“How can it say so, when it is blooming in the front room like a little rose in a demnition flower-pot?” urged Mantalini. “May its poppet come in and talk?”

“Certainly not,” replied Madame; “you know I never allow you here. Go along.”

The poppet, however, encouraged perhaps by the relenting tone of this reply, ventured to rebel, and, stealing into the room, made towards Madame Mantalini on tiptoe, blowing her a kiss as he came along.

“Why will it vex itself, and twist its little face into bewitching nut-crackers?” said Mantalini, putting his left arm round the waist of his life and soul, and drawing her towards him with his right.

“Oh! I can’t bear you,” replied his wife.

“Not—eh, not bear *me!*” exclaimed Mantalini. “Fibs, fibs. It couldn’t be. There’s not a woman alive that could tell me such a thing to my face—to my own face.” Mr. Mantalini stroked his chin as he said this, and glanced complacently at an opposite mirror.

“Such destructive extravagance,” reasoned his wife, in a low tone.

“All in its joy at having gained such a lovely creature, such a little Venus, such a demd enchanting, bewitching, engrossing, captivating little Venus,” said Mantalini.

“See what a situation you have placed me in!” urged Madame.

“No harm will come, no harm shall come to its own darling,” rejoined Mr. Mantalini. “It is all over, there will be nothing the matter; money shall be got in, and if it don’t come in fast enough, old Nickleby shall stump up again, or have his jugular separated if he dares to vex and hurt the little—”

“Hush!” interposed Madame. “Don’t you see?”

Mr. Mantalini, who, in his eagerness to make up matters with his wife, had overlooked, or feigned to overlook Miss Nickleby hitherto, took the hint, and laying his finger on his lip, sunk his voice still lower. There was then a great deal of whispering, during which Madame Mantalini appeared to make reference more than once to certain debts incurred by Mr. Mantalini previous to her coverture; and also to an unexpected outlay of money in payment of the aforesaid debts; and furthermore, to certain agreeable weaknesses on that gentleman’s part, such as gaming, wasting, idling, and a tendency to horseflesh; each of which matters of accusation Mr. Mantalini disposed of by one kiss or more, as its relative importance demanded, and the upshot of it all was, that Madame Mantalini was in raptures with him, and that they went up stairs to breakfast.

Kate busied herself in what she had to do, and was silently arranging the various articles of decoration in the best taste she could display, when she started to hear a strange man’s voice in the room; and started again to observe, on looking round, that a white hat, and a red necker-



chief, and a broad round face, and a large head, and part of a green coat, were in the room too.

"Don't alarm yourself, Miss," said the proprietor of these appearances. "I say; this here's the mantic-making con-sarn, a'n't it?"

"Yes," rejoined Kate, greatly astonished. "What did you want?"

The stranger answered not; but first looking back, as though to beckon to some unseen person outside, came very deliberately into the room and was closely followed by a little man in brown, very much the worse for wear, who brought with him a mingled fumigation of stale tobacco and fresh onions. The clothes of this gentleman were much bespeckled with flue; and his shoes, stockings, and nether garments, from his heels to the waist buttons of his coat inclusive, were profusely embroidered with splashes of mud, caught a fortnight previous—before the setting-in of the fine weather.

Kate's very natural impression was, that these engaging individuals had called with the view of possessing themselves unlawfully of any portable articles that chanced to strike their fancy. She did not attempt to disguise her apprehensions, and made a move towards the door.

"Wait a minnit," said the man in the green coat, closing it softly, and standing with his back against it. "This is a unpleasant bisness. Vere's your governor?"

"My what—did you say?" asked Kate, trembling; for she thought 'governor' might be slang for watch or money.

"Mister Muntlehiney," said the man. "Wot's come of him? Is he at home?"

"He is above stairs, I believe," replied Kate, a little reassured by this inquiry. "Do you want him?"

"No," replied the visitor. "I don't ezactly want him, if it's made a favour on. You can jist give him that 'ere card, and tell him if he wants to speak to *me*, and save trouble, here I am, that's all."

With these words the stranger put a thick square card into Kate's hand, and turning to his friend remarked, with an easy air, "that the rooms was a good high pitch;" to which the friend assented, adding, by way of illustration, "that there was lots of room for a little boy to grow up a man in either on 'em, without much fear of his ever bringing his head into contract vith the ceiling."

After ringing the bell which would summon Madame Mantalini, Kate glanced at the card, and saw that it displayed the name of "Scaley," together with some other information to which she had not had time to refer, when her attention was attracted by Mr. Scaley himself, who, walking up to one of the cheval glasses, gave it a hard poke in the centre with his stick, as coolly as if it had been made of cast iron.

"Good plate this here, Tix," said Mr. Scaley to his friend.

"Ah!" rejoined Mr. Tix, placing the marks of his four fingers, and a duplicate impression of his thumb on a piece of sky-blue silk; "and this here article warn't made for nothing, mind you."

From the silk Mr. Tix transferred his admiration to some elegant

articles of wearing apparel, while Mr. Scaley adjusted his neckcloth at leisure before the glass, and afterwards, aided by its reflection, proceeded to the minute consideration of a pimple on his chin: in which absorbing occupation he was yet engaged when Madame Mantalini entering the room, uttered an exclamation of surprise which roused him.

"Oh! Is this the missis?" inquired Scaley.

"It is Madame Mantalini," said Kate.

"Then," said Mr. Scaley, producing a small document from his pocket and unfolding it very slowly, "this is a writ of execution, and if it's not convenient to settle we'll go over the house at wunst, please, and take the inventory."

Poor Madame Mantalini wrung her hands for grief, and rung the bell for her husband; which done, she fell into a chair and a fainting fit simultaneously. The professional gentlemen, however, were not at all discomposed by this event, for Mr. Scaley, leaning upon a stand on which a handsome dress was displayed (so that his shoulders appeared above it in nearly the same manner as the shoulders of the lady for whom it was designed would have done if she had had it on), pushed his hat on one side and scratched his head with perfect unconcern, while his friend Mr. Tix, taking that opportunity for a general survey of the apartment preparatory to entering upon business, stood with his inventory-book under his arm and his hat in his hand, mentally occupied in putting a price upon every object within his range of vision.

Such was the posture of affairs when Mr. Mantalini hurried in, and as that distinguished specimen had had a pretty extensive intercourse with Mr. Scaley's fraternity in his bachelor days, and was, besides, very far from being taken by surprise on the present agitating occasion, he merely shrugged his shoulders, thrust his hands down to the bottom of his pockets, elevated his eyebrows, whistled a bar or two, swore an oath or two, and, sitting astride upon a chair, put the best face upon the matter with great composure and decency.

"What's the demd total?" was the first question he asked.

"Fifteen hundred and twenty-seven pound, four and ninepence ha'penny," replied Mr. Scaley, without moving a limb.

"The halfpenny be demd," said Mr. Mantalini, impatiently.

"By all means if you vish it," retorted Mr. Scaley; "and the ninepence too."

"It don't matter to us if the fifteen hundred and twenty-seven pound went along with it, that I know on," observed Mr. Tix.

"Not a button," said Scaley.

"Well;" said the same gentleman, after a pause, "Wot's to be done—anythink? Is it only a small crack, or a out-and-out smash? A break-up of the constitoon is it—werry good. Then Mr. Tom Tix, esk-vire, you must inform your angel wife and lovely family as you won't sleep at home for three nights to come, along of being in possession here. Wot's the good of the lady a fretting herself?" continued Mr. Scaley, as Madame Mantalini sobbed. "A good half of wot's here isn't paid for I des-say, and wot a consolation oughn't that to be to her feelings!"

With these remarks, combining great pleasantry with sound moral encouragement under difficulties, Mr. Scaley proceeded to take the inventory, in which delicate task he was materially assisted by the uncommon tact and experience of Mr. Tix, the broker.

"My cup of happiness's sweetener," said Mantalini, approaching his wife with a penitent air; "will you listen to me for two minutes?"

"Oh! don't speak to me," replied his wife, sobbing. "You have ruined me, and that's enough."

Mr. Mantalini, who had doubtless well considered his part, no sooner heard these words pronounced in a tone of grief and severity, than he recoiled several paces, assumed an expression of consuming mental agony, rushed headlong from the room, and was soon afterwards heard to slam the door of an up-stairs dressing-room with great violence.

"Miss Nickleby," cried Madame Mantalini, when this sound met her ear, "make haste for Heaven's sake, he will destroy himself! I spoke unkindly to him, and he cannot bear it from me. Alfred, my darling Alfred."

With such exclamations she hurried up stairs, followed by Kate; who, although she did not quite participate in the fond wife's apprehensions, was a little flurried nevertheless. The dressing-room door being hastily flung open, Mr. Mantalini was disclosed to view with his shirt-collar symmetrically thrown back, putting a fine edge to a breakfast knife by means of his razor strop.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Mantalini, "interrupted!" and whisk went the breakfast knife into Mr. Mantalini's dressing-gown pocket, while Mr. Mantalini's eyes rolled wildly, and his hair floating in wild disorder, mingled with his whiskers.

"Alfred," cried his wife, flinging her arms about him, "I didn't mean to say it, I didn't mean to say it."

"Ruined!" cried Mr. Mantalini. "Have I brought ruin upon the best and purest creature that ever blessed a demnition vagabond! Demmit, let me go." At this crisis of his ravings Mr. Mantalini made a pluck at the breakfast knife, and being restrained by his wife's grasp, attempted to dash his head against the wall—taking very good care to be at least six feet from it, however.

"Compose yourself, my own angel," said Madame. "It was nobody's fault; it was mine as much as yours, we shall do very well yet. Come, Alfred, come."

Mr. Mantalini did not think proper to come to all at once; but after calling several times for poison, and requesting some lady or gentleman to blow his brains out, gentler feelings came upon him, and he wept pathetically. In this softened frame of mind he did not oppose the capture of the knife—which, to tell the truth, he was rather glad to be rid of, as an inconvenient and dangerous article for a skirt pocket—and finally he suffered himself to be led away by his affectionate partner.

After a delay of two or three hours, the young ladies were informed that their services would be dispensed with until further notice, and at the expiration of two days the name of Mantalini appeared in the list of bankrupts: Miss Nickleby receiving an intimation per post on

the same morning, that the business would be in future carried on under the name of Miss Knag, and that her assistance would no longer be required—a piece of intelligence with which Mrs. Nickleby was no sooner made acquainted, than that good lady declared she had expected it all along, and cited divers unknown occasions on which she had prophesied to that precise effect.

“And I say again,” remarked Mrs. Nickleby (who, it is scarcely necessary to observe, had never said so before), “I say again, that a milliner’s and dress-maker’s is the very last description of business, Kate, that you should have thought of attaching yourself to. I don’t make it a reproach to you, my love; but still I will say, that if you had consulted your own mother——”

“Well, well, mama,” said Kate, mildly; “what would you recommend now?”

“Recommend!” cried Mrs. Nickleby, “isn’t it obvious, my dear, that of all occupations in this world for a young lady situated as you are, that of companion to some amiable lady is the very thing for which your education, and manners, and personal appearance, and everything else, exactly qualify you? Did you never hear your poor dear papa speak of the young lady who was the daughter of the old lady who boarded in the same house that he boarded in once, when he was a bachelor—what was her name again? I know it began with a B, and ended with a g, but whether it was Waters or—no it couldn’t have been that either; but whatever her name was, don’t you know that that young lady went as companion to a married lady who died soon afterwards, and that she married the husband, and had one of the finest little boys that the medical man had ever seen—all within eighteen months?”

Kate knew perfectly well that this torrent of favourable recollection was occasioned by some opening, real or imaginary, which her mother had discovered in the companionship walk of life. She therefore waited very patiently until all reminiscences and anecdotes, bearing or not bearing upon the subject, had been exhausted, and at last ventured to inquire what discovery had been made. The truth then came out. Mrs. Nickleby had that morning had a yesterday newspaper of the very first respectability from the public-house where the porter came from, and in this yesterday’s newspaper was an advertisement, couched in the purest and most grammatical English, announcing that a married lady was in want of a genteel young person as companion, and that the married lady’s name and address were to be known on application at a certain library at the west end of the town, therein mentioned.

“And I say,” exclaimed Mrs. Nickleby, laying the paper down in triumph, “that if your uncle don’t object, it’s well worth the trial.”

Kate was too sick at heart, after the rough jostling she had already had with the world, and really cared too little at the moment what fate was reserved for her, to make any objection. Mr. Ralph Nickleby offered none, but on the contrary highly approved of the suggestion; neither did he express any great surprise at Madame Mantalini’s sudden failure, indeed it would have been strange if he had, inasmuch as it

had been procured and brought about chiefly by himself. So the name and address were obtained without loss of time, and Miss Nickleby and her mama went off in quest of Mrs. Witterly, of Cadogan Place, Sloane Street, that same forenoon.

Cadogan Place is the one slight bond that joins two great extremes; it is the connecting link between the aristocratic pavements of Belgrave Square and the barbarism of Chelsea. It is in Sloane Street, but not of it. The people in Cadogan Place look down upon Sloane Street, and think Brompton low. They affect fashion too, and wonder where the New Road is. Not that they claim to be on precisely the same footing as the high folks of Belgrave Square and Grosvenor Place, but that they stand with reference to them rather in the light of those illegitimate children of the great who are content to boast of their connexions, although their connexions disavow them. Wearing as much as they can of the airs and semblances of loftiest rank, the people of Cadogan Place have the realities of middle station. It is the conductor which communicates to the inhabitants of regions beyond its limit, the shock of pride of birth and rank, which it has not within itself, but derives from a fountain-head beyond; or, like the ligament which unites the Siamese twins, it contains something of the life and essence of two distinct bodies, and yet belongs to neither.

Upon this doubtful ground lived Mrs. Witterly, and at Mrs. Witterly's door Kate Nickleby knocked with trembling hand. The door was opened by a big footman with his head floured, or chalked, or painted in some way (it didn't look genuine powder), and the big footman, receiving the card of introduction, gave it to a little page; so little indeed that his body would not hold, in ordinary array, the number of small buttons which are indispensable to a page's costume, and they were consequently obliged to be stuck on four abreast. This young gentleman took the card up-stairs on a salver, and pending his return, Kate and her mother were shown into a dining-room of rather dirty and shabby aspect, and so comfortably arranged as to be adapted to almost any purpose except eating and drinking.

Now, in the ordinary course of things and according to all authentic descriptions of high life, as set forth in books, Mrs. Witterly ought to have been in her *boudoir*, but whether it was that Mr. Witterly was at that moment shaving himself in the *boudoir* or what not, certain it is that Mrs. Witterly gave audience in the drawing-room, where was everything proper and necessary, including curtains and furniture coverings of a roseate hue, to shed a delicate bloom on Mrs. Witterly's complexion, and a little dog to snap at strangers' legs for Mrs. Witterly's amusement, and the afore-mentioned page, to hand chocolate for Mrs. Witterly's refreshment.

The lady had an air of sweet insipidity, and a face of engaging paleness; there was a faded look about her, and about the furniture, and about the house altogether. She was reclining on a sofa in such a very unstudied attitude, that she might have been taken for an actress all ready for the first scene in a ballet, and only waiting for the drop curtain to go up.

"Place chairs."

The page placed them.

"Leave the room, Alphonse."

The page left it; but if ever there were an Alphonse who carried plain Bill in his face and figure, that page was the boy.

"I have ventured to call, ma'am," said Kate, after a few seconds of awkward silence, "from having seen your advertisement."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Witterly, "one of my people put it in the paper.—Yes."

"I thought, perhaps," said Kate, modestly, "that if you had not already made a final choice, you would forgive my troubling you with an application."

"Yes," drawled Mrs. Witterly again.

"If you have already made a selection——"

"Oh dear no," interrupted the lady, "I am not so easily suited. I really don't know what to say. You have never been a companion before, have you?"

Mrs. Nickleby, who had been eagerly watching her opportunity, came dexterously in before Kate could reply. "Not to any stranger, ma'am," said the good lady; "but she has been a companion to me for some years. I am her mother, ma'am."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Witterly, "I apprehend you."

"I assure you, ma'am," said Mrs. Nickleby, "that I very little thought at one time that it would be necessary for my daughter to go out into the world at all, for her poor dear papa was an independent gentleman, and would have been at this moment if he had but listened in time to my constant entreaties and——"

"Dear mama," said Kate, in a low voice.

"My dear Kate, if you will allow me to speak," said Mrs. Nickleby, "I shall take the liberty of explaining to this lady——"

"I think it is almost unnecessary, mama."

And notwithstanding all the frowns and winks with which Mrs. Nickleby intimated that she was going to say something which would clench the business at once, Kate maintained her point by an expressive look, and for once Mrs. Nickleby was stopped upon the very brink of an oration.

"What are your accomplishments?" asked Mrs. Witterly, with her eyes shut.

Kate blushed as she mentioned her principal acquirements, and Mrs. Nickleby checked them all off, one by one, on her fingers, having calculated the number before she came out. Luckily the two calculations agreed, so Mrs. Nickleby had no excuse for talking.

"You are a good temper?" asked Mrs. Witterly, opening her eyes for an instant, and shutting them again.

"I hope so," rejoined Kate.

"And have a highly respectable reference for everything, have you?"

Kate replied that she had, and laid her uncle's card upon the table.

"Have the goodness to draw your chair a little nearer, and let me look at you," said Mrs. Witterly; "I am so very near-sighted that I can't quite discern your features."

Kate complied, though not without some embarrassment, with this request, and Mrs. Witterly took a languid survey of her countenance, which lasted some two or three minutes.

"I like your appearance," said that lady, ringing a little bell. "Alphonse, request your master to come here."

The page disappeared on this errand, and after a short interval, during which not a word was spoken on either side, opened the door for an important gentleman of about eight-and-thirty, of rather plebeian countenance and with a very light head of hair, who leant over Mrs. Witterly for a little time, and conversed with her in whispers.

"Oh!" he said, turning round, "yes. This is a most important matter. Mrs. Witterly is of a very excitable nature, very delicate, very fragile; a hothouse plant, an exotic."

"Oh! Henry, my dear," interposed Mrs. Witterly.

"You are my love, you know you are; one breath—" said Mr. W., blowing an imaginary feather away. "Pho! you're gone."

The lady sighed.

"Your soul is too large for your body," said Mr. Witterly. "Your intellect wears you out; all the medical men say so; you know that there is not a physician who is not proud of being called in to you. What is their unanimous declaration? 'My dear doctor,' said I to Sir Tumley Snuffin, in this very room, the very last time he came. 'My dear doctor, what is my wife's complaint? Tell me all. I can bear it. Is it nerves?' 'My dear fellow,' he said, 'be proud of that woman; make much of her; she is an ornament to the fashionable world, and to you. Her complaint is soul. It swells, expands, dilates—the blood fires, the pulse quickens, the excitement increases—Whew!'" Here Mr. Witterly, who, in the ardour of his description, had flourished his right hand to within something less than an inch of Mrs. Nickleby's bonnet, drew it hastily back again, and blew his nose as fiercely as if it had been done by some violent machinery.

"You make me out worse than I am, Henry," said Mrs. Witterly, with a faint smile.

"I do not, Julia, I do not," said Mr. W. "The society in which you move—necessarily move, from your station, connexion, and endowments—is one vortex and whirlpool of the most frightful excitement. Bless my heart and body, can I ever forget the night you danced with the baronet's nephew, at the election ball, at Exeter! It was tremendous."

"I always suffer for these triumphs afterwards," said Mrs. Witterly.

"And for that very reason," rejoined her husband, "you must have a companion, in whom there is great gentleness, great sweetness, excessive sympathy, and perfect repose."

Here both Mr. and Mrs. Witterly, who had talked rather at the Nicklebys than to each other, left off speaking, and looked at their two hearers, with an expression of countenance which seemed to say "What do you think of all that!"

"Mrs. Witterly," said her husband, addressing himself to Mrs. Nickleby, "is sought after and courted by glittering crowds, and bril-

liant circles. She is excited by the opera, the drama, the fine arts, the—the—the—

“The nobility, my love,” interposed Mrs. Witterly.

“The nobility, of course,” said Mr. Witterly. “And the military. She forms and expresses an immense variety of opinions, on an immense variety of subjects. If some people in public life were acquainted with Mrs. Witterly’s real opinion of them, they would not hold their heads perhaps quite as high as they do.”

“Hush, Henry,” said the lady; “this is scarcely fair.”

“I mention no names, Julia,” replied Mr. Witterly; “and nobody is injured. I merely mention the circumstance to show that you are no ordinary person; that there is a constant friction perpetually going on between your mind and your body; and that you must be soothed and tended. Now let me hear dispassionately and calmly, what are this young lady’s qualifications for the office.”

In obedience to this request, the qualifications were all gone through again, with the addition of many interruptions and cross-questionings from Mr. Witterly. It was finally arranged that inquiries should be made, and a decisive answer addressed to Miss Nickleby, under cover to her uncle, within two days. These conditions agreed upon, the page showed them down as far as the staircase window, and the big footman relieving guard at that point piloted them in perfect safety to the street-door.

“They are very distinguished people, evidently,” said Mrs. Nickleby, as she took her daughter’s arm. “What a superior person Mrs. Witterly is!”

“Do you think so, mama?” was all Kate’s reply.

“Why who can help thinking so, Kate, my love?” rejoined her mother. “She is pale, though, and looks much exhausted. I hope she may not be wearing herself out, but I am very much afraid.”

These considerations led the deep-sighted lady into a calculation of the probable duration of Mrs. Witterly’s life, and the chances of the disconsolate widower bestowing his hand on her daughter. Before reaching home, she had freed Mrs. Witterly’s soul from all bodily restraint, married Kate with great splendour at Saint George’s Hanover Square; and only left undecided the minor question whether a splendid French-polished mahogany bedstead should be erected for herself in the two-pair back of the house in Cadogan Place, or in the three-pair front, between which apartments she could not quite balance the advantages, and therefore adjusted the question at last, by determining to leave it to the decision of her son-in-law.!

The inquiries were made. The answer—not to Kate’s very great joy—was favourable; and at the expiration of a week she betook herself, with all her moveables and valuables, to Mrs. Witterly’s mansion, where for the present we will leave her.



## CHAPTER XXII.

NICHOLAS, ACCOMPANIED BY SMIKE, SALLIES FORTH TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE. HE ENCOUNTERS MR. VINCENT CRUMMLES; AND WHO HE WAS IS HEREIN MADE MANIFEST.

THE whole capital which Nicholas found himself entitled to, either in possession, reversion, remainder, or expectancy, after paying his rent and settling with the broker from whom he had hired his poor furniture, did not exceed by more than a few halfpence the sum of twenty shillings. And yet he hailed the morning on which he had resolved to quit London with a light heart, and sprang from his bed with an elasticity of spirit which is happily the lot of young persons, or the world would never be stocked with old ones.

It was a cold, dry, foggy morning in early spring; a few meagre shadows flitted to and fro in the misty streets, and occasionally there loomed through the dull vapour the heavy outline of some hackney-coach wending homewards, which drawing slowly nearer, rolled jangling by, scattering the thin crust of frost from its whitened roof, and soon was lost again in the cloud. At intervals were heard the tread of slipshod feet, and the chilly cry of the poor sweep as he crept shivering to his early toil; the heavy footfall of the official watcher of the night pacing slowly up and down and cursing the tardy hours that still intervened between him and sleep: the rumbling of ponderous carts and waggons, the roll of the lighter vehicles which carried buyers and sellers to the different markets: the sound of ineffectual knocking at the doors of heavy sleepers—all these noises fell upon the ear from time to time, but all seemed muffled by the fog, and to be rendered almost as indistinct to the ear as was every object to the sight. The sluggish darkness thickened as the day came on; and those who had the courage to rise and peep at the gloomy street from their curtained windows, crept back to bed again, and coiled themselves up to sleep.

Before even these indications of approaching morning were rife in busy London, Nicholas had made his way alone to the city, and stood beneath the windows of his mother's house. It was dull and bare to see, but it had light and life for him; for there was at least one heart within its old walls to which insult or dishonour would bring the same blood rushing that flowed in his own veins.

He crossed the road, and raised his eyes to the window of the room where he knew his sister slept. It was closed and dark. "Poor girl," thought Nicholas, "she little thinks who lingers here!"

He looked again, and felt for the moment almost vexed that Kate was not there to exchange one word at parting. "Good God!" he thought, suddenly correcting himself, "what a boy I am!"

"It is better as it is," said Nicholas, after he had lounged on a few

paces and returned to the same spot. "When I left them before, and could have said good bye a thousand times if I had chosen, I spared them the pain of leave-taking, and why not now?" As he spoke, some fancied motion of the curtain almost persuaded him, for the instant, that Kate was at the window, and by one of those strange contradictions of feeling which are common to us all, he shrunk involuntarily into a door-way, that she might not see him. He smiled at his own weakness; said "God bless them!" and walked away with a lighter step.

Smike was anxiously expecting him when he reached his old lodgings, and so was Newman, who had expended a day's income in a can of rum and milk to prepare them for the journey. They had tied up the luggage, Smike shouldered it, and away they went, with Newman Noggs in company, for he had insisted on walking as far as he could with them, over-night.

"Which way?" asked Newman, wistfully.

"To Kingston first," replied Nicholas.

"And where afterwards?" asked Newman. "Why won't you tell me?"

"Because I scarcely know myself, good friend," rejoined Nicholas, laying his hand upon his shoulder; "and if I did, I have neither plan nor prospect yet, and might shift my quarters a hundred times before you could possibly communicate with me."

"I am afraid you have some deep scheme in your head," said Newman, doubtfully.

"So deep," replied his young friend, "that even I can't fathom it. Whatever I resolve upon, depend upon it I will write you soon."

"You won't forget?" said Newman.

"I am not very likely to," rejoined Nicholas. "I have not so many friends that I shall grow confused among the number, and forget my best one."

Occupied in such discourse as this they walked on for a couple of hours, as they might have done for a couple of days if Nicholas had not sat himself down on a stone by the way-side, and resolutely declared his intention of not moving another step until Newman Noggs turned back. Having pleaded ineffectually first for another half mile, and afterwards for another quarter, Newman was fain to comply, and to shape his course towards Golden Square, after interchanging many hearty and affectionate farewells, and many times turning back to wave his hat to the two wayfarers when they had become mere specks in the distance.

"Now listen to me, Smike," said Nicholas, as they trudged with stout hearts onwards. "We are bound for Portsmouth."

Smike nodded his head and smiled, but expressed no other emotion; for whether they had been bound for Portsmouth or Port Royal would have been alike to him, so they had been bound together.

"I don't know much of these matters," resumed Nicholas; "but Portsmouth is a sea-port town, and if no other employment is to be obtained, I should think we might get on board of some ship. I am young and active, and could be useful in many ways. So could you."

"I hope so," replied Smike. "When I was at that—you know where I mean?"

"Yes, I know," said Nicholas. "You needn't name the place."

"Well, when I was there," resumed Smike; his eyes sparkling at the prospect of displaying his abilities; "I could milk a cow, and groom a horse with anybody."

"Ha!" said Nicholas, gravely. "I am afraid they don't usually keep many animals of either kind on board ship, and even when they have horses, that they are not very particular about rubbing them down; still you can learn to do something else, you know. Where there's a will, there's a way."

"And I am very willing," said Smike, brightening up again.

"God knows you are," rejoined Nicholas; "and if you fail, it shall go hard but I'll do enough for us both."

"Do we go all the way to-day?" asked Smike, after a short silence.

"That would be too severe a trial, even for your willing legs," said Nicholas, with a good-humoured smile. "No. Godalming is some thirty and odd miles from London—as I found from a map I borrowed—and I purpose to rest there. We must push on again to-morrow, for we are not rich enough to loiter. Let me relieve you of that bundle, come."

"No, no," rejoined Smike, falling back a few steps. "Don't ask me to give it up to you."

"Why not?" asked Nicholas.

"Let me do something for you, at least," said Smike. "You will never let me serve you as I ought. You will never know how I think, day and night, of ways to please you."

"You are a foolish fellow to say it, for I know it well, and see it, or I should be a blind and senseless beast," rejoined Nicholas. "Let me ask you a question while I think of it, and there is no one by," he added, looking him steadily in the face. "Have you a good memory?"

"I don't know," said Smike, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I think I had once; but it's all gone now—all gone."

"Why do you think you had once?" asked Nicholas, turning quickly upon him as though the answer in some way helped out the purport of his question.

"Because I could remember when I was a child," said Smike, "but that is very, very long ago, or at least it seems so. I was always confused and giddy at that place you took me from; and could never remember, and sometimes couldn't even understand what they said to me. I—let me see—let me see."

"You are wandering now," said Nicholas, touching him on the arm.

"No," replied his companion, with a vacant look. "I was only thinking how——" He shivered involuntarily as he spoke.

"Think no more of that place, for it is all over," retorted Nicholas, fixing his eye full upon that of his companion, which was fast settling into an unmeaning stupified gaze, once habitual to him, and common even then. "What of the first day you went to Yorkshire?"

"Eh!" cried the lad.

"That was before you began to lose your recollection, you know," said Nicholas quietly. "Was the weather hot or cold?"

"Wet," replied the boy. "Very wet. I have always said when it rained hard that it was like the night I came: and they used to crowd round and laugh to see me cry when the rain fell heavily. It was like a child they said, and that made me think of it more. I turned cold all over sometimes, for I could see myself as I was then, coming in at the very same door."

"As you were then," repeated Nicholas, with assumed carelessness; "How was that?"

"Such a little creature," said Smike, "that they might have had pity and mercy upon me, only to remember it."

"You didn't find your way there alone!" remarked Nicholas.

"No," rejoined Smike, "oh no."

"Who was with you?"

"A man—a dark withered man; I have heard them say so at the school, and I remembered that before. I was glad to leave him, I was afraid of him; but they made me more afraid of them, and used me harder too."

"Look at me," said Nicholas, wishing to attract his full attention. "There; don't turn away. Do you remember no woman, no kind gentle woman, who hung over you once, and kissed your lips, and called you her child?"

"No," said the poor creature, shaking his head, "no, never."

"Nor any house but that house in Yorkshire?"

"No," rejoined the youth, with a melancholy look: "a room—I remember I slept in a room, a large lonesome room at the top of a house, where there was a trap-door in the ceiling. I have covered my head with the clothes often, not to see it, for it frightened me, a young child with no one near at night, and I used to wonder what was on the other side. There was a clock too, an old clock, in one corner. I remember that. I have never forgotten that room, for when I have terrible dreams, it comes back just as it was. I see things and people in it that I had never seen then, but there is the room just as it used to be; *that* never changes."

"Will you let me take the bundle now?" asked Nicholas, abruptly changing the theme.

"No," said Smike, "no. Come, let us walk on."

He quickened his pace as he said this, apparently under the impression that they had been standing still during the whole of the previous dialogue. Nicholas marked him closely, and every word of this conversation remained indelibly fastened in his memory.

It was by this time within an hour of noon, and although a dense vapour still enveloped the city they had left as if the very breath of its busy people hung over their schemes of gain and profit and found greater attraction there than in the quiet region above, in the open country it was clear and fair. Occasionally in some low spots they came upon patches of mist which the sun had not yet driven from their strongholds; but these were soon passed, and as they laboured up the

hills beyond, it was pleasant to look down and see how the sluggish mass rolled heavily off before the cheering influence of day. A broad fine honest sun lighted up the green pastures and dimpled water with the semblance of summer, while it left the travellers all the invigorating freshness of that early time of year. The ground seemed elastic under their feet; the sheep-bells were music to their ears; and exhilarated by exercise, and stimulated by hope, they pushed onwards with the strength of lions.

The day wore on, and all these bright colours subsided, and assumed a quieter tint, like young hopes softened down by time, or youthful features by degrees resolving into the calm and serenity of age. But they were scarcely less beautiful in their slow decline than they had been in their prime; for nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own, and from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy, that we can scarcely mark their progress.

To Godalming they came at last, and here they bargained for two humble beds, and slept soundly. In the morning they were astir, though not quite so early as the sun, and again afoot; if not with all the freshness of yesterday, still with enough of hope and spirit to bear them cheerily on.

It was a harder day's journey than that they had already performed, for there were long and weary hills to climb; and in journeys, as in life, it is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. However, they kept on with unabated perseverance, and the hill has not yet lifted its face to heaven that perseverance will not gain the summit of at last.

They walked upon the rim of the Devil's Punch Bowl, and Smike listened with greedy interest as Nicholas read the inscription upon the stone which, reared upon that wild spot, tells of a foul and treacherous murder committed there by night. The grass on which they stood had once been dyed with gore, and the blood of the murdered man had run down, drop by drop, into the hollow which gives the place its name. "The Devil's Bowl," thought Nicholas, as he looked into the void, "never held fitter liquor than that!"

Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs, with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here, there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep, as to be hardly accessible to any but the sheep and goats that fed upon its sides, and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations shapely and uncouth, smooth and rugged, graceful and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the view in each direction; while frequently, with unexpected noise, there arose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling round the nearest hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself.

By degrees the prospect receded more and more on either hand, and as they had been shut out from rich and extensive scenery, so they emerged once again upon the open country. The knowledge that they were drawing near their place of destination, gave them fresh courage to proceed; but the way had been difficult, and they had loitered on the road, and Smike was tired. Thus twilight had already closed in, when they turned off the path to the door of a road-side inn, yet twelve miles short of Portsmouth.

"Twelve miles," said Nicholas, leaning with both hands on his stick, and looking doubtfully at Smike.

"Twelve long miles," repeated the landlord.

"Is it a good road?" inquired Nicholas.

"Very bad," said the landlord. As of course, being a landlord, he would say.

"I want to get on," observed Nicholas, hesitating. "I scarcely know what to do."

"Don't let me influence you," rejoined the landlord. "I wouldn't go on if it was me."

"Wouldn't you?" asked Nicholas, with the same uncertainty.

"Not if I knew when I was well off," said the landlord. And having said it he pulled up his apron, put his hands into his pockets, and taking a step or two outside the door, looked down the dark road with an assumption of great indifference.

A glance at the toil-worn face of Smike determined Nicholas, so without any further consideration he made up his mind to stay where he was.

The landlord led them into the kitchen, and as there was a good fire he remarked that it was very cold. If there had happened to be a bad one he would have observed that it was very warm.

"What can you give us for supper?" was Nicholas's natural question.

"Why—what would you like?" was the landlord's no less natural answer.

Nicholas suggested cold meat, but there was no cold meat—poached eggs, but there were no eggs—mutton chops, but there wasn't a mutton chop within three miles, though there had been more last week than they knew what to do with, and would be an extraordinary supply the day after to-morrow.

"Then," said Nicholas, "I must leave it entirely to you, as I would have done at first if you had allowed me."

"Why, then I'll tell you what," rejoined the landlord. "There's a gentleman in the parlour that's ordered a hot beef-steak pudding and potatoes at nine. There's more of it than he can manage, and I have very little doubt that if I ask leave, you can sup with him. I'll do that in a minute."

"No, no," said Nicholas, detaining him. "I would rather not. I—at least—pshaw! why cannot I speak out. Here; you see that I am travelling in a very humble manner, and have made my way hither on foot. It is more than probable, I think, that the gentleman may not

relish my company; and although I am the dusty figure you see, I am too proud to thrust myself into his."

"Lord love you," said the landlord, "it's only Mr. Crummies; he isn't particular."

"Is he not?" asked Nicholas, on whose mind, to tell the truth, the prospect of the savoury pudding was making some impression.

"Not he," replied the landlord. "He'll like your way of talking, I know. But we'll soon see all about that. Just wait a minute."

The landlord hurried into the parlour without staying for further permission, nor did Nicholas strive to prevent him: wisely considering that supper under the circumstances was too serious a matter to trifle with. It was not long before the host returned in a condition of much excitement.

"All right," he said in a low voice. "I knew he would. You'll see something rather worth seeing in there. Ecod, how they are a going of it!"

There was no time to inquire to what this exclamation, which was delivered in a very rapturous tone, referred, for he had already thrown open the door of the room; into which Nicholas, followed by Smike with the bundle on his shoulder (he carried it about with him as vigilantly as if it had been a purse of gold), straightway repaired.

Nicholas was prepared for something odd, but not for something quite so odd as the sight he encountered. At the upper end of the room were a couple of boys, one of them very tall and the other very short, both dressed as sailors—or at least as theatrical sailors, with belts, buckles, pigtails, and pistols complete—fighting what is called in play-bills a terrific combat with two of those short broad-swords with basket hilts which are commonly used at our minor theatres. The short boy had gained a great advantage over the tall boy, who was reduced to mortal strait, and both were overlooked by a large heavy man, perched against the corner of a table, who emphatically adjured them to strike a little more fire out of the swords, and they couldn't fail to bring the house down on the very first night.

"Mr. Vincent Crummies," said the landlord with an air of great deference. "This is the young gentleman."

Mr. Vincent Crummies received Nicholas with an inclination of the head, something between the courtesy of a Roman emperor and the nod of a pot companion; and bade the landlord shut the door and begone.

"There's a picture," said Mr. Crummies, motioning Nicholas not to advance and spoil it. "The little 'un has him; if the big 'un doesn't knock under in three seconds he's a dead man. Do that again, boys."

The two combatants went to work afresh, and chopped away until the swords emitted a shower of sparks, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Crummies, who appeared to consider this a very great point indeed. The engagement commenced with about two hundred chops administered by the short sailor and the tall sailor alternately, without producing any particular result until the short sailor was chopped down on one knee, but this was nothing to him, for he worked himself about

on the one knee with the assistance of his left hand, and fought most desperately until the tall sailor chopped his sword out of his grasp. Now the inference was, that the short sailor, reduced to this extremity, would give in at once and cry quarter, but instead of that he all of a sudden drew a large pistol from his belt and presented it at the face of the tall sailor, who was so overcome at this (not expecting it) that he let the short sailor pick up his sword and begin again. Then the chopping recommenced, and a variety of fancy chops were administered on both sides, such as chops dealt with the left hand and under the leg and over the right shoulder and over the left, and when the short sailor made a vigorous cut at the tall sailor's legs, which would have shaved them clean off if it had taken effect, the tall sailor jumped over the short sailor's sword, wherefore to balance the matter and make it all fair, the tall sailor administered the same cut and the short sailor jumped over *his* sword. After this there was a good deal of dodging about and hitching up of the inexpressibles in the absence of braces, and then the short sailor (who was the moral character evidently, for he always had the best of it) made a violent demonstration and closed with the tall sailor, who, after a few unavailing struggles, went down and expired in great torture as the short sailor put his foot upon his breast and bored a hole in him through and through.

"That'll be a double *encore* if you take care, boys," said Mr. Crummles. "You had better get your wind now, and change your clothes."

Having addressed these words to the combatants, he saluted Nicholas, who then observed that the face of Mr. Crummles was quite proportionate in size to his body; that he had a very full under-lip, a hoarse voice, as though he were in the habit of shouting very much, and very short black hair, shaved off nearly to the crown of his head—to admit (as he afterwards learnt) of his more easily wearing character wigs of any shape or pattern.

"What did you think of that, Sir?" inquired Mr. Crummles.

"Very good, indeed—capital," answered Nicholas.

"You won't see such boys as those very often, I think," said Mr. Crummles.

Nicholas assented—observing, that if they were a little better match—

"Match!" cried Mr. Crummles.

"I mean if they were a little more of a size," said Nicholas, explaining himself.

"Size!" repeated Mr. Crummles; "why, it's the very essence of the combat that there should be a foot or two between them. How are you to get up the sympathies of the audience in a legitimate manner, if there isn't a little man contending against a great one—unless there's at least five to one, and we haven't hands enough for that business in our company."

"I see," replied Nicholas. "I beg your pardon. That didn't occur to me, I confess."

"It's the main point," said Mr. Crummles. "I open at Portsmouth the day after to-morrow. If you're going there, look into the theatre, and see how that'll tell."



Nicholas promised to do so if he could, and drawing a chair near the fire, fell into conversation with the manager at once. He was very talkative and communicative, stimulated perhaps not only by his natural disposition, but by the spirits and water he sipped very plentifully, or the snuff which he took in large quantities from a piece of whitey-brown paper in his waistcoat pocket. He laid open his affairs without the smallest reserve, and descanted at some length upon the merits of his company, and the acquirements of his family, of both of which the two broad-sword boys formed an honourable portion. There was to be a gathering it seemed of the different ladies and gentlemen at Portsmouth on the morrow, whither the father and sons were proceeding (not for the regular season, but in the course of a wandering speculation), after fulfilling an engagement at Guildford with the greatest applause.

"You are going that way?" asked the manager.

"Ye-yes," said Nicholas. "Yes, I am."

"Do you know the town at all?" inquired the manager, who seemed to consider himself entitled to the same confidence as he had himself exhibited.

"No," replied Nicholas.

"Never there?"

"Never."

Mr. Vincent Crummles gave a short dry cough, as much as to say, "If you won't be communicative, you won't;" and took so many pinches of snuff from the piece of paper, one after another, that Nicholas quite wondered where it all went to.

While he was thus engaged, Mr. Crummles looked from time to time with great interest at Smike, with whom he had appeared considerably struck from the first. He had now fallen asleep, and was nodding in his chair.

"Excuse my saying so," said the manager, leaning over to Nicholas, and sinking his voice, "but—what a capital countenance your friend has got!"

"Poor fellow!" said Nicholas, with a half smile, "I wish it were a little more plump and less haggard."

"Plump!" exclaimed the manager, quite horrified, "you'd spoil it for ever."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so, sir! Why, as he is now," said the manager, striking his knee emphatically; "without a pad upon his body, and hardly a touch of paint upon his face, he'd make such an actor for the starved business as was never seen in this country. Only let him be tolerably well up in the Apothecary in Romeo and Juliet with the slightest possible dab of red on the tip of his nose, and he'd be certain of three rounds the moment he put his head out of the practicable door in the front grooves O. P."

"You view him with a professional eye," said Nicholas, laughing.

"And well I may," rejoined the manager, "I never saw a young fellow so regularly cut out for that line since I've been in the profession, and I played the heavy children when I was eighteen months old."

The appearance of the beef-steak pudding, which came in simultaneously with the junior Vincent Crummleses, turned the conversation to other matters, and indeed for a time stopped it altogether. These two young gentlemen wielded their knives and forks with scarcely less address than their broad-swords, and as the whole party were quite as sharp set as either class of weapons, there was no time for talking until the supper had been disposed of.

The master Crummleses had no sooner swallowed the last procurable morsel of food than they evinced, by various half-suppressed yawns and stretchings of their limbs, an obvious inclination to retire for the night, which Snike had betrayed still more strongly: he having, in the course of the meal, fallen asleep several times while in the very act of eating. Nicholas therefore proposed that they should break up at once, but the manager would by no means hear of it, vowing that he had promised himself the pleasure of inviting his new acquaintance to share a bowl of punch, and that if he declined, he should deem it very unhandsome behaviour.

"Let them go," said Mr. Vincent Crummles, "and we'll have it snugly and cosily together by the fire."

Nicholas was not much disposed to sleep, being in truth too anxious, so after a little demur he accepted the offer, and having exchanged a shake of the hand with the young Crummleses, and the manager having on his part bestowed a most affectionate benediction on Snike, he sat himself down opposite to that gentleman by the fire-side to assist in emptying the bowl, which soon afterwards appeared, steaming in a manner which was quite exhilarating to behold, and sending forth a most grateful and inviting fragrance.

But, despite the punch and the manager, who told a variety of stories, and smoked tobacco from a pipe, and inhaled it in the shape of snuff, with a most astonishing power, Nicholas was absent and dispirited. His thoughts were in his old home, and when they reverted to his present condition, the uncertainty of the morrow cast a gloom upon him, which his utmost efforts were unable to dispel. His attention wandered; although he heard the manager's voice, he was deaf to what he said, and when Mr. Vincent Crummles concluded the history of some long adventure with a loud laugh, and an inquiry what Nicholas would have done under the same circumstances, he was obliged to make the best apology in his power, and to confess his entire ignorance of all he had been talking about.

"Why so I saw," observed Mr. Crummles. "You're uneasy in your mind. What's the matter?"

Nicholas could not refrain from smiling at the abruptness of the question, but thinking it scarcely worth while to parry it, owned that he was under some apprehensions lest he might not succeed in the object which had brought him to that part of the country.

"And what's that?" asked the manager.

"Getting something to do which will keep me and my poor fellow-traveller in the common necessaries of life," said Nicholas. "That's the truth; you guessed it long ago, I dare say, so I may as well have the credit of telling it you with a good grace."

"What's to be got to do at Portsmouth more than anywhere else?" asked Mr. Vincent Crummles, melting the sealing-wax on the stem of his pipe in the candle, and rolling it out afresh with his little finger.

"There are many vessels leaving the port, I suppose," replied Nicholas. "I shall try for a berth in some ship or other. There is meat and drink there, at all events."

"Salt meat and new rum; pease-pudding and chaff-biscuits," said the manager, taking a whiff at his pipe to keep it alight, and returning to his work of embellishment.

"One may do worse than that," said Nicholas. "I can rough it, I believe, as well as most men of my age and previous habits."

"You need be able to," said the manager, "if you go on board ship; but you won't."

"Why not?"

"Because there's not a skipper or mate that would think you worth your salt, when he could get a practised hand," replied the manager; "and they as plentiful there as the oysters in the streets."

"What do you mean?" asked Nicholas, alarmed by this prediction, and the confident tone in which it had been uttered. "Men are not born able seamen. They must be reared, I suppose?"

Mr. Vincent Crummles nodded his head. "They must; but not at your age, or from young gentlemen like you."

There was a pause. The countenance of Nicholas fell, and he gazed ruefully at the fire.

"Does no other profession occur to you, which a young man of your figure and address could take up easily, and see the world to advantage in?" asked the manager.

"No," said Nicholas, shaking his head.

"Why, then, I'll tell you one," said Mr. Crummles, throwing his pipe into the fire, and raising his voice. "The stage."

"The stage!" cried Nicholas, in a voice almost as loud.

"The theatrical profession," said Mr. Vincent Crummles. "I am in the theatrical profession myself, my wife is in the theatrical profession, my children are in the theatrical profession. I had a dog that lived and died in it from a puppy; and my chaise-pony goes on in Timour the Tartar. I'll bring you out, and your friend too. Say the word. I want a novelty."

"I don't know anything about it," rejoined Nicholas, whose breath had been almost taken away by this sudden proposal. "I never acted a part in my life, except at school."

"There's genteel comedy in your walk and manner, juvenile tragedy in your eye, and touch-and-go farce in your laugh," said Mr. Vincent Crummles. "You'll do as well as if you had thought of nothing else but the lamps, from your birth downwards."

Nicholas thought of the small amount of small change there would remain in his pocket after paying the tavern bill: and he hesitated.

"You can be useful to us in a hundred ways," said Mr. Crummles. "Think what capital bills a man of your education could write for the shop-windows."

"Well, I think I could manage that department," said Nicholas.

"To be sure you could," replied Mr. Crummles. "'For further particulars see small hand-bills'—we might have half a volume in every one of them. Pieces too; why, you could write us a piece to bring out the whole strength of the company, whenever we wanted one."

"I am not quite so confident about that," replied Nicholas. "But I dare say I could scribble something now and then that would suit you."

"We'll have a new show-piece out directly," said the manager. "Let me see—peculiar resources of this establishment—new and splendid scenery—you must manage to introduce a real pump and two washing-tubs."

"Into the piece!" said Nicholas.

"Yes," replied the manager. "I bought 'em cheap, at a sale the other day; and they'll come in admirably. That's the London plan. They look up some dresses, and properties, and have a piece written to fit them. Most of the theatres keep an author on purpose."

"Indeed!" cried Nicholas.

"Oh yes," said the manager; "a common thing. It'll look very well in the bills in separate lines—Real pump!—Splendid tubs!—Great attraction! You don't happen to be anything of an artist, do you?"

"That is not one of my accomplishments," rejoined Nicholas.

"Ah! Then it can't be helped," said the manager. "If you had been, we might have had a large woodcut of the last scene for the posters, showing the whole depth of the stage, with the pump and tubs in the middle; but however, if you're not, it can't be helped."

"What should I get for all this?" inquired Nicholas, after a few moments' reflection. "Could I live by it?"

"Live by it!" said the manager. "Like a prince. With your own salary, and your friend's, and your writings, you'd make—ah! you'd make a pound a week!"

"You don't say so."

"I do indeed, and if we had a run of good houses, nearly double the money."

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders, but sheer destitution was before him; and if he could summon fortitude to undergo the extremes of want and hardship, for what had he rescued his helpless charge if it were only to bear as hard a fate as that from which he had wrested him? It was easy to think of seventy miles as nothing, when he was in the same town with the man who had treated him so ill and roused his bitterest thoughts; but now it seemed far enough. What if he went abroad, and his mother or Kate were to die the while?

Without more deliberation he hastily declared that it was a bargain, and gave Mr. Vincent Crummles his hand upon it.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

TREATS OF THE COMPANY OF MR. VINCENT CRUMMLES, AND OF HIS AFFAIRS, DOMESTIC AND THEATRICAL.

As Mr. Crummles had a strange four-legged animal in the inn stables, which he called a pony, and a vehicle of unknown design, on which he bestowed the appellation of a four-wheeled phaeton, Nicholas proceeded on his journey next morning with greater ease than he had expected: the manager and himself occupying the front seat, and the Master Crummles and Smike being packed together behind, in company with a wicker basket defended from wet by a stout oilskin, in which were the broad-swords, pistols, pigtails, nautical costumes, and other professional necessaries of the aforesaid young gentlemen.

The pony took his time upon the road, and—possibly in consequence of his theatrical education—evinced every now and then a strong inclination to lie down. However, Mr. Vincent Crummles kept him up pretty well, by jerking the rein, and plying the whip; and when these means failed, and the animal came to a stand, the elder Master Crummles got out and kicked him. By dint of these encouragements, he was persuaded to move from time to time, and they jogged on (as Mr. Crummles truly observed) very comfortably for all parties.

"He's a good pony at bottom," said Mr. Crummles, turning to Nicholas.

He might have been at bottom, but he certainly was not at top, seeing that his coat was of the roughest and most ill-favoured kind. So, Nicholas merely observed, that he shouldn't wonder if he was.

"Many and many is the circuit this pony has gone," said Mr. Crummles, flicking him skilfully on the eyelid for old acquaintance' sake. "He is quite one of us. His mother was on the stage."

"Was she, indeed?" rejoined Nicholas.

"She ate apple-pie at a circus for upwards of fourteen years," said the manager; "fired pistols, and went to bed in a nightcap; and, in short, took the low comedy entirely. His father was a dancer."

"Was he at all distinguished?"

"Not very," said the manager. "He was rather a low sort of pony. The fact is, that he had been originally jobbed out by the day, and he never quite got over his old habits. He was clever in melodrama too, but too broad—too broad. When the mother died, he took the port-wine business."

"The port-wine business!" cried Nicholas.

"Drinking port-wine with the clown," said the manager; "but he was greedy, and one night bit off the bowl of the glass, and choked himself, so that his vulgarity was the death of him at last."

The descendant of this ill-starred animal requiring increased attention from Mr. Crummles as he progressed in his day's work, that gentleman had very little time for conversation, and Nicholas was thus left at

leisure to entertain himself with his own thoughts until they arrived at the drawbridge at Portsmouth, when Mr. Crummles pulled up.

"We'll set down here," said the manager, "and the boys will take him round to the stable, and call at my lodgings with the luggage. You had better let yours be taken there for the present."

Thanking Mr. Vincent Crummles for his obliging offer, Nicholas jumped out, and, giving Smike his arm, accompanied the manager up High Street on their way to the theatre, feeling nervous and uncomfortable enough at the prospect of an immediate introduction to a scene so new to him.

They passed a great many bills pasted against the walls and displayed in windows, wherein the names of Mr. Vincent Crummles, Mrs. Vincent Crummles, Master Crummles, Master P. Crummles, and Miss Crummles, were printed in very large letters, and everything else in very small ones; and turning at length into an entry, in which was a strong smell of orange-peel and lamp-oil, with an under-current of sawdust, groped their way through a dark passage, and, descending a step or two, threaded a little maze of canvass screens and paint pots, and emerged upon the stage of the Portsmouth Theatre.

"Here we are," said Mr. Crummles.

It was not very light, but Nicholas found himself close to the first entrance on the prompter's side, among bare walls, dusty scenes, mildewed clouds, heavily daubed draperies, and dirty floors. He looked about him; ceiling, pit, boxes, gallery, orchestra, fittings, and decorations of every kind,—all looked coarse, cold, gloomy, and wretched.

"Is this a theatre?" whispered Smike, in amazement; "I thought it was a blaze of light and finery."

"Why, so it is," replied Nicholas, hardly less surprised; "but not by day, Smike—not by day."

The manager's voice recalled him from a more careful inspection of the building, to the opposite side of the proscenium, where, at a small mahogany table with rickety legs and of an oblong shape, sat a stout, portly female, apparently between forty and fifty, in a tarnished silk cloak, with her bonnet dangling by the strings in her hand, and her hair (of which she had a great quantity) braided in a large festoon over each temple.

"Mr. Johnson," said the manager (for Nicholas had given the name which Newman Noggs had bestowed upon him in his conversation with Mrs. Kenwigs), "let me introduce Mrs. Vincent Crummles."

"I am glad to see you, Sir," said Mrs. Vincent Crummles, in a sepulchral voice. "I am very glad to see you, and still more happy to hail you as a promising member of our corps."

The lady shook Nicholas by the hand as she addressed him in these terms; he saw it was a large one, but had not expected quite such an iron grip as that with which she honoured him.

"And this," said the lady, crossing to Smike, as tragic actresses cross when they obey a stage direction, "and this is the other. You too, are welcome, Sir."

"He'll do, I think, my dear?" said the manager, taking a pinch of snuff.

"He is admirable," replied the lady. "An acquisition, indeed."

As Mrs. Vincent Crummles re-crossed back to the table, there bounded on to the stage from some mysterious inlet, a little girl in a dirty white frock with tucks up to the knees, short trousers, sandaled shoes, white spencer, pink gauze bonnet, green veil and curl-papers, who turned a pirouette, cut twice in the air, turned another pirouette, then looking off at the opposite wing shrieked, bounded forward to within six inches of the footlights, and fell into a beautiful attitude of terror, as a shabby gentleman in an old pair of buff slippers came in at one powerful slide, and chattering his teeth, fiercely brandished a walking-stick.

"They are going through the Indian Savage and the Maiden," said Mrs. Crummles.

"Oh!" said the manager, "the little ballet interlude. Very good, go on. A little this way, if you please, Mr. Johnson. That'll do. Now."

The manager clapped his hands as a signal to proceed, and the Savage, becoming ferocious, made a slide towards the maiden, but the maiden avoided him in six twirls, and came down at the end of the last one upon the very points of her toes. This seemed to make some impression upon the savage, for, after a little more ferocity and chasing of the maiden into corners, he began to relent, and stroked his face several times with his right thumb and four fingers, thereby intimating that he was struck with admiration of the maiden's beauty. Acting upon the impulse of this passion, he (the savage) began to hit himself severe thumps in the chest, and to exhibit other indications of being desperately in love, which being rather a prosy proceeding, was very likely the cause of the maiden's falling asleep; whether it was or not, asleep she did fall, sound as a church, on a sloping bank, and the savage perceiving it, leant his left ear on his left hand, and nodded sideways, to intimate to all whom it might concern that she *was* asleep, and no shamming. Being left to himself, the savage had a dance, all alone, and just as he left off the maiden woke up, rubbed her eyes, got off the bank, and had a dance all alone too—such a dance that the savage looked on in ecstasy all the while, and when it was done, plucked from a neighbouring tree some botanical curiosity, resembling a small pickled cabbage, and offered it to the maiden, who at first wouldn't have it, but on the savage shedding tears relented. Then the savage jumped for joy; then the maiden jumped for rapture at the sweet smell of the pickled cabbage. Then the savage and the maiden danced violently together, and, finally, the savage dropped down on one knee, and the maiden stood on one leg upon his other knee; thus concluding the ballet, and leaving the spectators in a state of pleasing uncertainty, whether she would ultimately marry the savage, or return to her friends.

"Very well indeed," said Mr. Crummles; "bravo!"

"Bravo!" cried Nicholas, resolved to make the best of everything. "Beautiful!"

"This, Sir," said Mr. Vincent Crummles, bringing the maiden forward, "this is the infant phenomenon—Miss Ninetta Crummles."

"Your daughter?" inquired Nicholas.

"My daughter—my daughter," replied Mr. Vincent Crummles; "the idol of every place we go into, Sir. We have had complimentary letters about this girl, Sir, from the nobility and gentry of almost every town in England."

"I am not surprised at that," said Nicholas; "she must be quite a natural genius."

"Quite a ——!" Mr. Crummles stopped; language was not powerful enough to describe the infant phenomenon. "I'll tell you what, Sir," he said; "the talent of this child is not to be imagined. She must be seen, Sir—seen—to be ever so faintly appreciated. There; go to your mother, my dear."

"May I ask how old she is?" inquired Nicholas.

"You may, Sir," replied Mr. Crummles, looking steadily in his questioner's face as some men do when they have doubts about being implicitly believed in what they are going to say. "She is ten years of age, Sir."

"Not more!"

"Not a day."

"Dear me!" said Nicholas, "it's extraordinary."

It was; for the infant phenomenon, though of short stature, had a comparatively aged countenance, and had moreover been precisely the same age—not perhaps to the full extent of the memory of the oldest inhabitant, but certainly for five good years. But she had been kept up late every night, and put upon an unlimited allowance of gin and water from infancy, to prevent her growing tall, and perhaps this system of training had produced in the infant phenomenon these additional phenomena.

While this short dialogue was going on, the gentleman who had enacted the savage came up, with his walking-shoes on his feet, and his slippers in his hand, to within a few paces, as if desirous to join in the conversation, and deeming this a good opportunity he put in his word.

"Talent there, Sir," said the savage, nodding towards Miss Crummles.

Nicholas assented.

"Ah!" said the actor, setting his teeth together, and drawing in his breath with a hissing sound, "she oughtn't to be in the provinces, she oughtn't."

"What do you mean?" asked the manager.

"I mean to say," replied the other, warmly, "that she is too good for country boards, and that she ought to be in one of the large houses in London, or nowhere; and I tell you more, without mincing the matter, that if it wasn't for envy and jealousy in some quarter that you know of, she would be. Perhaps you'll introduce me here, Mr. Crummles."

"Mr. Folair," said the manager, presenting him to Nicholas.

"Happy to know you, Sir." Mr. Folair touched the brim of his hat with his forefinger, and then shook hands. "A recruit, Sir, I understand?"

"An unworthy one," replied Nicholas.



"Did you ever see such a set-out as that?" whispered the actor, drawing him away, as Crummles left them to speak to his wife.

"As what?"

Mr. Folair made a funny face from his pantomime collection, and pointed over his shoulder.

"You don't mean the infant phenomenon?"

"Infant humbug, Sir," replied Mr. Folair. "There isn't a female child of common sharpness in a charity school that couldn't do better than that. She may thank her stars she was born a manager's daughter."

"You seem to take it to heart," observed Nicholas, with a smile.

"Yes, by Jove, and well I may," said Mr. Folair, drawing his arm through his, and walking him up and down the stage. "Isn't it enough to make a man crusty to see that little sprawler put up in the best business every night, and actually keeping money out of the house, by being forced down the people's throats, while other people are passed over? Isn't it extraordinary to see a man's confounded family conceit blinding him even to his own interest? Why I *know* of fifteen and sixpence that came to Southampton one night last month to see me dance the Highland Fling, and what's the consequence? I've never been put up in it since—never once—while the 'infant phenomenon' has been grinning through artificial flowers at five people and a baby in the pit, and two boys in the gallery, every night."

"If I may judge from what I have seen of you," said Nicholas, "you must be a valuable member of the company."

"Oh!" replied Mr. Folair, beating his slippers together, to knock the dust out; "I *can* come it pretty well—nobody better perhaps in my own line—but having such business as one gets here, is like putting lead on one's feet instead of chalk, and dancing in fetters without the credit of it. Holloa, old fellow, how are you?"

The gentleman addressed in these latter words was a dark-complexioned man, inclining indeed to sallow, with long thick black hair, and very evident indications (although he was close shaved) of a stiff beard, and whiskers of the same deep shade. His age did not appear to exceed thirty, although many at first sight would have considered him much older, as his face was long and very pale, from the constant application of stage paint. He wore a checked shirt, an old green coat with new gilt buttons, a neckerchief of broad red and green stripes, and full blue trousers; he carried too a common ash walking-stick, apparently more for show than use, as he flourished it about with the hooked end downwards, except when he raised it for a few seconds, and throwing himself into a fencing attitude, made a pass or two at the side-scenes, or at any other object, animate or inanimate, that chanced to afford him a pretty good mark at the moment.

"Well, Tommy," said this gentleman, making a thrust at his friend, who parried it dexterously with his slipper, "what's the news?"

"A new appearance, that's all," replied Mr. Folair, looking at Nicholas.

"Do the honours, Tommy, do the honours," said the other gentleman, tapping him reproachfully on the crown of the hat with his stick.

"This is Mr. Lenville, who does our first tragedy, Mr. Johnson," said the pantomimist.

"Except when old bricks and mortar takes it into his head to do it himself, you should add, Tommy," remarked Mr. Lenville. "You know who bricks and mortar is, I suppose, Sir?"

"I do not, indeed," replied Nicholas.

"We call Crummles that, because his style of acting is rather in the heavy and ponderous way," said Mr. Lenville. "I mustn't be cracking jokes though, for I've got a part of twelve lengths here which I must be up in to-morrow night, and I haven't had time to look at it yet; I'm a confounded quick study, that's one comfort."

Consoling himself with this reflection, Mr. Lenville drew from his coat-pocket a greasy and crumpled manuscript, and having made another pass at his friend proceeded to walk to and fro, conning it to himself, and indulging occasionally in such appropriate action as his imagination and the text suggested.

A pretty general muster of the company had by this time taken place; for besides Mr. Lenville and his friend Tommy, there was present a slim young gentleman with weak eyes, who played the low-spirited lovers and sang tenor songs, and who had come arm-in-arm with the comic countryman—a man with a turned-up nose, large mouth, broad face, and staring eyes. Making himself very amiable to the infant phenomenon, was an inebriated elderly gentleman in the last depths of shabbiness, who played the calm and virtuous old men; and paying especial court to Mrs. Crummles was another elderly gentleman, a shade more respectable, who played the irascible old men—those funny fellows who have nephews in the army, and perpetually run about with thick sticks to compel them to marry heiresses. Besides these, there was a roving-looking person in a rough great-coat, who strode up and down in front of the lamps, flourishing a dress cane, and rattling away in an undertone with great vivacity for the amusement of an ideal audience. He was not quite so young as he had been, and his figure was rather running to seed; but there was an air of exaggerated gentility about him, which bespoke the hero of swaggering comedy. There was also a little group of three or four young men, with lantern jaws and thick eyebrows, who were conversing in one corner; but they seemed to be of secondary importance, and laughed and talked together without attracting any very marked attention.

The ladies were gathered in a little knot by themselves round the rickety table before mentioned. There was Miss Snellicci, who could do anything from a medley dance to Lady Macbeth, and always played some part in blue silk knee-smalls at her benefit, glancing from the depths of her coal-scuttle straw bonnet at Nicholas, and affecting to be absorbed in the recital of a diverting story to her friend Miss Ledrook, who had brought her work, and was making up a ruff in the most natural manner possible. There was Miss Belvawney, who seldom aspired to speaking parts, and usually went on as a page in white silk hose, to stand with one leg bent and contemplate the audience, or to go in and out after Mr. Crummles in stately tragedy, twisting up the ringlets of the beautiful Miss Bravassa, who had once had her like-

ness taken "in character" by an engraver's apprentice, whereof impressions were hung up for sale in the pastry-cook's window, and the green-grocer's, and at the circulating library, and the box-office, whenever the announce bills came out for her annual night. There was Mrs. Lenville in a very limp bonnet and veil, decidedly in that way in which she would wish to be if she truly loved Mr. Lenville; there was Miss Gazingi, with an imitation ermine boa tied in a loose knot round her neck, flogging Mr. Crummles, junior, with both ends in fun. Lastly, there was Mrs. Grudden in a brown cloth pelisse and a beaver bonnet, who assisted Mrs. Crummles in her domestic affairs, and took money at the doors, and dressed the ladies, and swept the house, and held the prompt book when everybody else was on for the last scene, and acted any kind of part on any emergency without ever learning it, and was put down in the bills under any name or names whatever that occurred to Mr. Crummles as looking well in print.

Mr. Folair having obligingly confided these particulars to Nicholas, left him to mingle with his fellows; the work of personal introduction was completed by Mr. Vincent Crummles, who publicly heralded the new actor as a prodigy of genius and learning.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Snevellicci, sidling towards Nicholas, "but did you ever play at Canterbury?"

"I never did," replied Nicholas.

"I recollect meeting a gentleman at Canterbury," said Miss Snevellicci, "only for a few moments, for I was leaving the company as he joined it, so like you that I felt almost certain it was the same."

"I see you now for the first time," rejoined Nicholas with all due gallantry. "I am sure I never saw you before; I couldn't have forgotten it."

"Oh, I'm sure—it's very flattering of you to say so," retorted Miss Snevellicci with a graceful bend. "Now I look at you again, I see that the gentleman at Canterbury hadn't the same eyes as you—you'll think me very foolish for taking notice of such things, won't you?"

"Not at all," said Nicholas. "How can I feel otherwise than flattered by your notice in any way?"

"Oh! you men, you are such vain creatures!" cried Miss Snevellicci. Whereupon she became charmingly confused, and, pulling out her pocket handkerchief from a faded pink silk reticule with a gilt clasp, called to Miss Ledrook—

"Led, my dear," said Miss Snevellicci.

"Well, what is the matter?" said Miss Ledrook.

"It's not the same."

"Not the same what?"

"Canterbury—you know what I mean. Come here, I want to speak to you."

But Miss Ledrook wouldn't come to Miss Snevellicci, so Miss Snevellicci was obliged to go to Miss Ledrook, which she did in a skipping manner that was quite fascinating, and Miss Ledrook evidently joked Miss Snevellicci about being struck with Nicholas, for, after some playful whispering, Miss Snevellicci hit Miss Ledrook very

hard on the backs of her hands, and retired up, in a state of pleasing confusion.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Vincent Crummles, who had been writing on a piece of paper, "we'll call the *Mortal Struggle* to-morrow at ten; everybody for the procession. *Intrigue*, and *Ways and Means*, you're all up in, so we shall only want one rehearsal. Everybody at ten, if you please."

"Everybody at ten," repeated Mrs. Grudden, looking about her.

"On Monday morning we shall read a new piece," said Mr. Crummles; "the name's not known yet, but everybody will have a good part. Mr. Johnson will take care of that."

"Hallo!" said Nicholas, starting, "I——"

"On Monday morning," repeated Mr. Crummles, raising his voice, to drown the unfortunate Mr. Johnson's remonstrance; "that'll do, ladies and gentlemen."

The ladies and gentlemen required no second notice to quit, and in a few minutes the theatre was deserted, save by the Crummles' family, Nicholas, and Smike.

"Upon my word," said Nicholas, taking the manager aside, "I don't think I can be ready by Monday."

"Pooh, pooh," replied Mr. Crummles.

"But really I can't," returned Nicholas; "my invention is not accustomed to these demands, or possibly I might produce ——"

"Invention! what the devil's that got to do with it!" cried the manager, hastily.

"Everything, my dear Sir."

"Nothing, my dear Sir," retorted the manager, with evident impatience. "Do you understand French?"

"Perfectly well."

"Very good," said the manager, opening the table-drawer, and giving a roll of paper from it to Nicholas. "There, just turn that into English, and put your name on the title-page. Damn me," said Mr. Crummles, angrily, "if I haven't often said that I wouldn't have a man or woman in my company that wasn't master of the language, so that they might learn it from the original, and play it in English, and by that means save all this trouble and expense."

Nicholas smiled, and pocketed the play.

"What are you going to do about your lodgings?" said Mr. Crummles.

Nicholas could not help thinking that for the first week it would be an uncommon convenience to have a turn-up bedstead in the pit, but he merely remarked that he had not turned his thoughts that way.

"Come home with me then," said Mr. Crummles, "and my boys shall go with you after dinner, and show you the most likely place."

The offer was not to be refused: Nicholas and Mr. Crummles gave Mrs. Crummles an arm each, and walked up the street in stately array. Smike, the boys, and the phenomenon, went home by a shorter cut, and Mrs. Grudden remained behind to take some cold Irish stew and a pint of porter in the box-office.

Mrs. Crummles trod the pavement as if she were going to immediate execution with an animating consciousness of innocence and that heroic fortitude which virtue alone inspires. Mr. Crummles, on the other hand, assumed the look and gait of a hardened despot; but they both attracted some notice from many of the passers-by, and when they heard a whisper of "Mr. and Mrs. Crummles," or saw a little boy run back to stare them in the face, the severe expression of their countenances relaxed, for they felt it was popularity.

Mr. Crummles lived in Saint Thomas's Street, at the house of one Bulph, a pilot, who sported a boat-green door, with window-frames of the same colour, and had the little finger of a drowned man on his parlour mantel-shelf, with other maritime and natural curiosities. He displayed also a brass knocker, a brass plate, and a brass bell-handle, all very bright and shining; and had a mast, with a vane on the top of it, in his back yard.

"You are welcome," said Mrs. Crummles, turning round to Nicholas when they reached the bow-windowed front room on the first floor.

Nicholas bowed his acknowledgments, and was unfeignedly glad to see the cloth laid.

"We have but a shoulder of mutton with onion sauce," said Mrs. Crummles, in the same charnel-house voice; "but such as our dinner is, we beg you to partake of it."

"You are very good," replied Nicholas, "I shall do it ample justice."

"Vincent," said Mrs. Crummles, "what is the hour?"

"Five minutes past dinner-time," said Mr. Crummles.

Mrs. Crummles rang the bell. "Let the mutton and onion sauce appear."

The slave who attended upon Mr. Bulph's lodgers disappeared, and after a short interval re-appeared with the festive banquet. Nicholas and the infant phenomenon opposed each other at the pembroke-table, and Smike and the master Crummles dined on the sofa bedstead.

"Are they very theatrical people here?" asked Nicholas.

"No," replied Mr. Crummles, shaking his head, "far from it—far from it."

"I pity them," observed Mrs. Crummles.

"So do I," said Nicholas; "if they have no relish for theatrical entertainments, properly conducted."

"Then they have none, Sir," rejoined Mr. Crummles. "To the infant's benefit, last year, on which occasion she repeated three of her most popular characters, and also appeared in the Fairy Porcupine, as originally performed by her, there was a house of no more than four pound twelve."

"Is it possible?" cried Nicholas.

"And two pound of that was trust, pa," said the phenomenon.

"And two pound of that was trust," repeated Mr. Crummles. "Mrs. Crummles herself has played to mere handfuls."

"But they are always a taking audience, Vincent," said the manager's wife.

"Most audiences are, when they have good acting—real good acting—the real thing," replied Mr. Crummles, forcibly.

"Do you give lessons, ma'am?" inquired Nicholas.

"I do," said Mrs. Crummles.

"There is no teaching here, I suppose?"

"There has been," said Mrs. Crummles. "I have received pupils here. I imparted tuition to the daughter of a dealer in ships' provision; but it afterwards appeared that she was insane when she first came to me. It was very extraordinary that she should come, under such circumstances."

Not feeling quite so sure of that, Nicholas thought it best to hold his peace.

"Let me see," said the manager cogitating after dinner. "Would you like some nice little part with the infant?"

"You are very good," replied Nicholas hastily; "but I think perhaps it would be better if I had somebody of my own size at first, in case I should turn out awkward. I should feel more at home perhaps."

"True," said the manager. "Perhaps you would, and you could play up to the infant in time you know."

"Certainly," replied Nicholas: devoutly hoping that it would be a very long time before he was honoured with this distinction.

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do," said Mr. Crummles. "You shall study Romeo when you've done that piece—don't forget to throw the pump and tubs in by-the-bye—Juliet Miss Snellicci, old Grudden the nurse.—Yes, that'll do very well. Rover too;—you might get up Rover while you were about it, and Cassio, and Jeremy Diddler. You can easily knock them off; one part helps the other so much. Here they are, cues and all."

With these hasty general directions Mr. Crummles thrust a number of little books into the faltering hands of Nicholas, and bidding his eldest son go with him and show him where lodgings were to be had, shook him by the hand and wished him good night.

There is no lack of comfortable furnished apartments in Portsmouth, and no difficulty in finding some that are proportionate to very slender finances; but the former were too good, and the latter too bad, and they went into so many houses, and came out unsuited, that Nicholas seriously began to think he should be obliged to ask permission to spend the night in the theatre, after all.

Eventually, however, they stumbled upon two small rooms up three pair of stairs, or rather two pair and a ladder, at a tobacconist's shop, on the Common Hard, a dirty street leading down to the dockyard. These Nicholas engaged, only too happy to have escaped any request for payment of a week's rent beforehand.

"There, lay down our personal property, Smike," he said, after showing young Crummles down stairs. "We have fallen upon strange times, and God only knows the end of them; but I am tired with the events of these three days, and will postpone reflection till to-morrow—if I can."

# IMMENSE SAVING IN THE PURCHASE OF TEA.

TO FAMILIES, THE CLERGY, HOTEL KEEPERS, LARGE SCHOOLS, &c.

ON SATURDAY, THE 25TH OF AUGUST, we opened the spacious premises, **No. 8, Ludgate Hill**, for the sale of **TEAS, COFFEES, SPICES, AND REFINED SUGARS.**

The importance which the Tea Trade has of late years assumed, the enormous increase in the consumption, and the necessity there exists for purchasing so important an article of the best quality and at the cheapest rate, are ample reasons why a concern of first rate magnitude should be established.

**Ludgate Hill**, the centre of London, unquestionably one of the greatest thoroughfares in the metropolis, and through which hundreds of thousands are daily and hourly passing, is, from its situation, admirably calculated for the establishment of an extensive **Family and ready money business**; and though of late years high prices and indifferent qualities have lessened its reputation as a Tea Mart, yet we rest confident that the system which will be pursued by us, will, as our efforts are appreciated, restore it to its former influence.

The principles upon which we rest our claims for preference, are those which must be productive of confidence, and a permanent and increasing trade, viz: **Excellence in quality**, combined with **extreme moderation in price.** At our Establishment, Families in town or country, may rely upon obtaining every variety of Teas, at the lowest prices of the day.

The enormous quantity of Teas declared for the Quarterly Sale, in October, viz.: 243,019 packages, or 16,490,629 lbs. double the quantity ever disposed of at one Sale by the East India Company, has already had its effect upon the markets. Anticipating a still further reduction, we have lowered the prices of our Teas as follows:—

## BLACK TEAS.

**Genuine East India Compy's Congou** (very good and strong Tea) **3 8**

A short time since no Wholesale Dealer could purchase this Tea for less than

Four Shillings per lb.

<b>Strong very full-bodied Congou</b>	<b>4 0</b>
<b>Fine blackish leaf Congou</b> , (Pekoe kind)	<b>4 4</b>
<b>The very finest Congou</b> (Ripe Pekoe Souchong flavor)	<b>4 8</b>

This is the best Black Tea that can be obtained, and is sold by many houses at Six Shillings, and by **none, except ours**, at less than Five Shillings per pound.

Good Bohea	2 10
Good Ordinary Congou	3 0
Good Common Congou	3 4

## GREEN TEAS.

Hyson Skin and Twankay	3 6
<b>Curled and bright leaf Twankay</b> , strong	<b>3 8</b>
Fine Bloom Tea, Hyson flavor	4 0
Genuine Hyson, good flavor	4 6
<b>Fine Hyson</b> , full flavor	<b>5 0</b>
<b>Superfine Hyson</b> , rich delicate flavor	<b>6 0</b>
Young Hyson, small leaf	3 10 to 4 4
Ouchain, or Young Hyson, small wiry bright leaf	4 8 to 5 0
Imperial Gunpowder	5 0 to 5 4
Gunpowder, small close leaf	5 4 to 6 0
<b>Fine Gunpowder</b> , small pearly leaf	<b>6 6</b>
Finest Gunpowder, small bright close twisted leaf	7 0

## SIDNEY & COMPY.,

Importers of and Dealers in Tea.

**8, LUDGATE HILL,**

EIGHT DOORS FROM NEW BRIDGE STREET.

\* Goods delivered within six miles of London, by our own Vans. Country Orders, per Post or Carrier promptly executed

IMMENSE SAVING IN THE PURCHASE OF TEA.

TO FAMILIES, THE CUREGY, HOTEL-KEEPERS, LARGE SCHOOLS, &c.

On Saturday, the 25th of August, we opened the spacious premises, No. 5, Ludgate Hill, for the sale of TEA, GINGER, SPICES, AND BAKING POWDER. The honorarium which the 1st of July has assumed, the enormous increase in the cost of the necessaries of life, and the necessity of purchasing so important an article of the best quality and at the lowest price, are among the reasons why a constant supply of the best quality should be established. Ludgate Hill, the center of London, unquestionably one of the greatest thoroughfares in the metropolis, and through which hundreds of thousands are daily and hourly passing, is from its location admirably calculated for the establishment of an extensive family and ready money business; and though of late years high prices and inferior qualities have lessened its reputation as a tea mart, yet we rest confident that the system which will be pursued by us will, as our efforts are unflinchingly directed to its former influence. The principles upon which we set out claims for preference, are those which must be productive of confidence, and a permanent and increasing trade, viz: Excellence in quality, combined with extreme moderation in price. At our establishment, Families in town or country may rely upon obtaining every variety of Tea, at the lowest prices of the day.

The enormous quantity of Tea declared for the Quarterly Sale in October, viz: 2,500,000 lbs. worth, or 12,500,000 lbs., double the quantity ever disposed of at one sale by the East India Company, has already had its effect upon the market. Anticipating a still further reduction, we have lowered the price of our Teas as follows:—

BLACK TEAS.

4 0	Strong very well-brewed Congou
4 0	Fine blackish leaf Congou (Teele kind)
4 0	The very finest Congou (Ripe Teele Congou flavor)
3 10	Good black
3 0	Good ordinary Congou
2 4	Good Common Congou

GREEN TEAS.

5 0	Hyson skin and Twankay
4 0	Green and bright leaf Twankay, new
3 0	Fine Hyson Tea Hyson skin
2 0	Green Hyson, good flavor
1 0	Fine Hyson, full flavor
1 0	Superior Hyson, rich delicate flavor
1 0	Young Hyson small leaf
1 0	Green Hyson, small very bright leaf
1 0	Imperial Gunpowder
1 0	Gunpowder, small close leaf
1 0	Fine Gunpowder, small bright leaf
1 0	Imperial Gunpowder, small bright close twisted leaf

SIDNEY & COMPANY.

Importers of and Dealers in Tea, 5, LUDGATE HILL, EIGHT DOORS FROM NEW BRIDGE STREET.

Goods delivered within six miles of London, by our own vans, Country orders, per post, or carried, promptly executed.

"My permit me Jack Heads"  
"Sir" Flying Dutchman England.  
"De Alice Th foolish thin  
The ben likeness, with Engl to make



ON THE FIRST OF NOVEMBER WILL BE PUBLISHED

No. I.,

(TO BE CONTINUED MONTHLY),

OF

# HEADS OF THE PEOPLE:

PRICE ONE SHILLING.



## AN INTRODUCTION.

“My Lord Duke”—(*Listen to the Head, most gracious Reader*)—“My Lord Duke, permit me to introduce to your Grace, Jack Heads-and-tails, the Mutton-pieman. Jack Heads-and-tails, his Grace the Duke of Manystars. Good folks, be acquainted.”

“Sir Courey Normanline, allow me to offer to your notice, Brightshovel Bill, the Flying Dustman. Brightshovel Bill, Sir Courey Normanline, the oldest baronet of England. Know one another.”

“Dear Duchess of Daffodils, may I be suffered to make known to you, poor little Alice Thousandstitch, the milliner’s apprentice? Alice Thousandstitch, [*aside to her—foolish thing, don’t blush and tremble*] know the condescending Duchess of Daffodils.”

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THE benevolent purpose of the gentleman whose *vera effigies*, or true likeness, adorns the page, is—if we err not—to make Englishmen intimate with Englishmen; to bring the ends of the Town and the Country together; to make May Fair known to the New Cut; New Cut to May Fair; to

introduce the Daily Sempstress to the evening party of the Peeress; to shew and make the Duchess wonder at the three-shilling-per-week lodging of her little needle-woman.

In this goodly work, the worthy gentleman will be assisted by an Artist, as it would seem, "sent into this breathing world" for no meaner purpose than that of shewing to his countrymen the faces of each other; catching their visages in their most characteristic expression, and conveying at a glance the very "heart and mystery" of their function.

These Portraits—and their "name is Legion"—will not be Fancy Portraits. The purchaser will not be cheated with a Dustman in sugar-candy, or a Chimney-sweep in peppermint, after the modern fancy of face-making; neither will he have a Crockford in marmalade, or a Jack Ketch in barley-sugar; but true flesh and blood withal:—the stare—the squint—the leer—the eyes swimming with real innocent fun or with adulterated gin—the lips curled with pride or puckered with meanness—all is taken and will be given from *the life*; subjects of all ranks—all professions—all denominations—having unconsciously sat for the "HEADS OF THE PEOPLE."

The Work will in every respect be a National Work: and whether the Reader chance to be a Member of Parliament or a Mountebank—a Common Lawyer or a Common Thief—a Dealer in Stocks or a Dealer in other peoples' pocket-handkerchiefs—a trading Patriot or the Keeper of a *Fence*—a Cabinet Minister or a Quack Doctor—a Morality Monger or a Passer of Counterfeit Coin—a Police Magistrate or a Pantaloon—a Temperance Man of Toast-and-Water or a Man of *Twenty Goes*—a Peer who makes laws or a Peer who breaks windows—a Man with Stars and Garters or a Man with Hot Potatoes—be he one or more of these (and some of the functions might possibly be united) he will find the likeness of "*his Order*" among the "HEADS OF THE PEOPLE."

Each Number will contain four "HEADS," and a Description of the social habits and peculiarities of the subject will accompany every Portrait; this Description contributed by writers who have not studied human nature from Albums, but from beating hearts; who have not looked at life only through the plate-glass windows of a drawing-room, but have been pushed and elbowed by the living crowd:

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# CHUBB'S NEW PATENT DETECTOR LOCK.

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CHARLES CHUBB, having succeeded in simplifying the form and arrangement of the parts of his Improved Patent Detector Lock, for which new improvements his late Majesty granted his Royal Letters Patent, is enabled to manufacture his NEW PATENT LOCKS at much less cost; at the same time retaining all the security and advantages of his Improved Detector Lock, the merits of which have been so fully ascertained and appreciated by the public. The New Patent Detector Locks are made of every size, and for all purposes to which locks are applied.

The attention of Bankers, Merchants, &c. is called to the following paragraph from the *Standard* of the 6th of February last:—

"On Saturday morning, on the clerks entering the premises of Messrs. Charles Price and Co., William Street, Blackfriars, it was discovered that the offices had been burglariously entered during the night. It appears that the outside door locks had been opened with skeleton keys, nine desks in the counting-house had been forced open by a jemmy, and the lock of a large iron safe was picked. The principal object of attack, however, was another iron safe (in which all the valuable property was contained), which was fitted with one of Chubb's Patent Locks; this the thieves first attempted to pick; failing in that, they next had recourse to the formidable and hitherto destructive instrument, called 'Jack in the Box,' but with this they were equally unsuccessful, and, after the most determined attempts to open it, they were completely foiled in their efforts to get at the property."


## TESTIMONIAL OF M. J. BRUNELL, ESQ., CIVIL ENGINEER.

"In point of security, Chubb's Patent Detector Lock is superior to any I am acquainted with.

"M. J. BRUNELL."

EXTRACT FROM DR. LARDNER'S CABINET CYCLOPÆDIA, No. 42, p. 273.

"There can be no doubt but that the construction and arrangement of the parts, in Chubb's Invention, do combine the four principal requisites of a good lock, viz. Security, Simplicity, Strength, and Durability."

 The Patent Detector Locks may be fitted to Iron Safes, Chests and Doors, already in use.

## CHUBB'S PATENT COMBINATION LATCH,

FOR FRONT DOORS, COUNTING-HOUSES, &c.

These Latches are simple in their construction, low in price, and possess security far beyond any yet offered to the public.

## CHUBB'S PATENT MOVEABLE FIRE-PROOF STRONG ROOMS, CHESTS, SAFES, AND IRON DOORS,

which are perfectly secure against the force and ingenuity of the most skilful and determined burglar, and are absolutely Fire-proof, even if exposed to the most destructive fire in any situation.

The efficacy of this invention has been proved by enclosing some papers in a Patent Box made on the same principle, and exposing it in the furnace of a steam-engine, where it soon became red-hot, and remained in that state for a considerable time; when taken out, the papers were found to be uninjured.

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## PATENT MOVEABLE FIRE-PROOF STRONG ROOM,

which is so constructed that it may be taken down, removed, and put together again with little trouble. These advantages render them peculiarly applicable for Banks on the Continent and in the Colonies.

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