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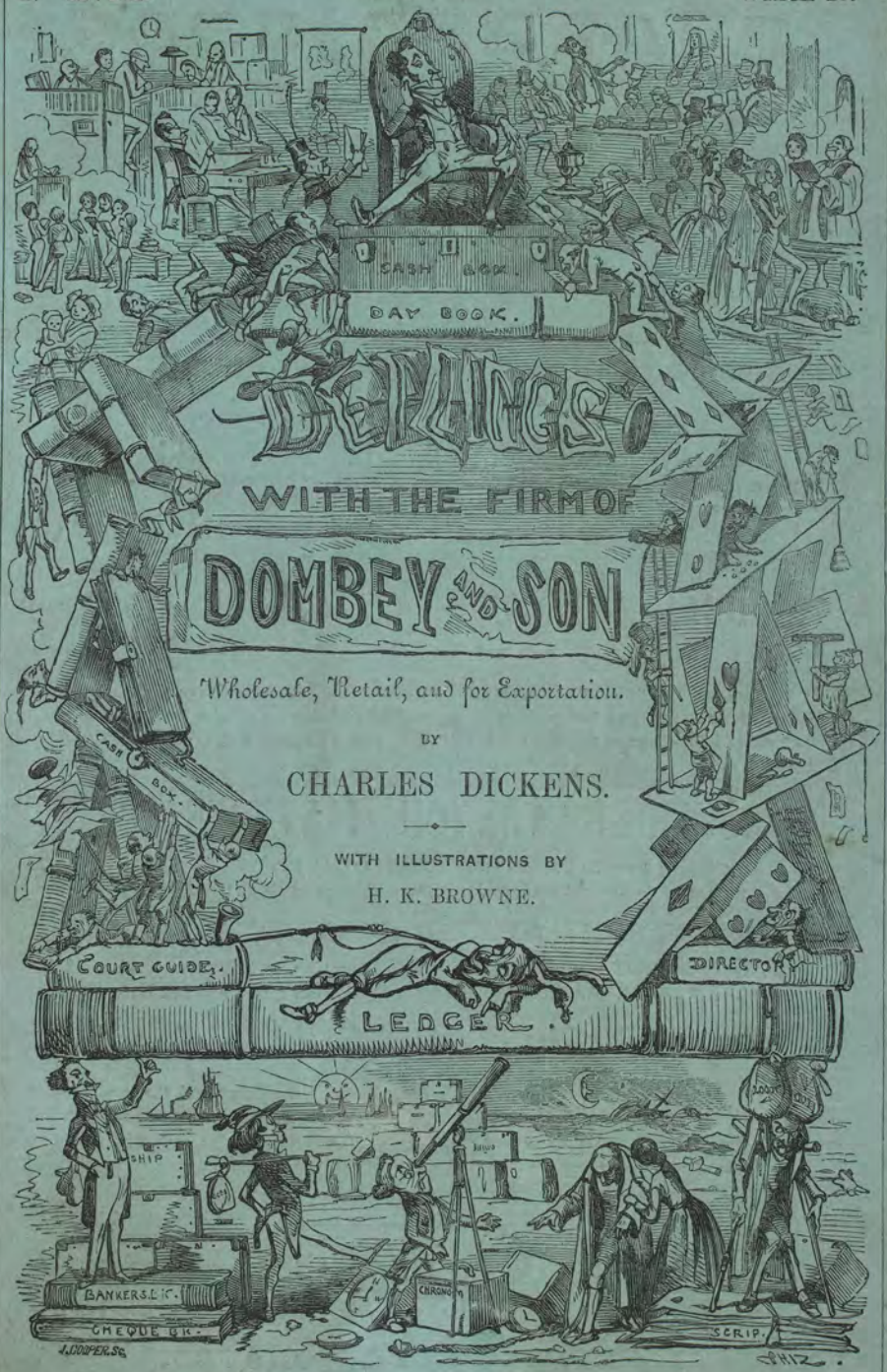

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PURIFIED BY STEAM.

HEAL AND SON

Have just completed the erection of Machinery for the purifying of Feathers on a new principle, by which the offensive properties of the quill are evaporated and carried off in steam; thereby not only are the impurities of the feather itself removed, but they are rendered quite free from the unpleasant smell of the stove, which all new feathers are subject to that are dressed in the ordinary way.

Old Beds re-dressed by this process are perfectly freed from all impurities, and, by expanding the feathers, the bulk is greatly increased, and consequently the bed rendered much softer, at 3*d.* per lb.

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	Per lb. s.	d.		Per lb. s.	d.
Mixed	1	0	Best Foreign Grey Goose	2	0
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Sent free, by Post.

It contains full particulars of WEIGHTS, SIZES, and PRICES, of every description of Bedding, and is so arranged that purchasers are enabled to judge the articles best suited to make a comfortable Bed, either as regular *English Bedding* with a Feather Bed, or as *French Bedding* with their

SUPERIOR FRENCH MATTRESSES,

of which they, having been the Original Introducers, are enabled to make them of the very finest material, (quite equal to the best made in Paris,) at a lower price than any other House. Also,

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These, HEAL and SON have succeeded in greatly improving, and they can recommend one of these, with a FRENCH MATTRESS upon the top, as a most elastic and soft Bed.

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Round the Head in manner of a fillet, leaving the Ears loose	As dotted 1 to 1.		
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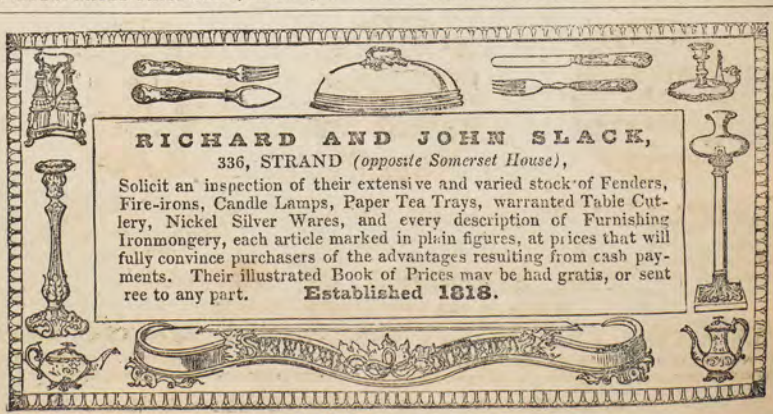

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		Number.	Amount.		
15	£3000	6	£315 0 6	£164 16 8	£52 6 6
25	£5000	7	£775 16 8	£347 13 4	£44 16 3
35	£2500	6	£431 17 6	£183 18 0	£42 11 8
45	£2000	6	£464 0 0	£172 6 7	£37 2 10

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Brown, 4*s.* 6*d.* per bottle.
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10*s.* per doz. large bottles.
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THE PATENT BRANDY, AND THE GENUINE SELTERS WATER, protected by the Patent Metallic Capsule, the only sure and self-evident safeguard against adulteration, can be obtained throughout the Kingdom at the respective prices above mentioned, or at

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EXTRACT FROM "THE PATENT JOURNAL" OF THE 11TH OF DECEMBER, 1847.

"PATENTS RECENTLY GRANTED.—TO WILLIAM DAKIN, of NUMBER

STITCHED IN A NEAT WRAPPER, PRICE ONE SHILLING THE SET.

This day is published (with the approbation of MR. CHARLES DICKENS, *and uniform with* "DOMBEY & SON"),

THE FOUR PORTRAITS

OF

EDITH, ALICE, FLORENCE, & LITTLE PAUL.

ENGRAVED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF

H. K. BROWNE, AND R. YOUNG.

FROM DESIGNS BY

HABLOT K. BROWNE.

A few Proofs will be taken off on India paper, at One Shilling each Plate.

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, 186, STRAND.

Under the above title, and for the purposes declared, DAKIN and COMPY. take this early opportunity of informing the Public that the extensive Engines and Machinery for carrying out the Patent are being got ready with every possible despatch; and on completion, the Firm will be in a position to bring this extraordinary and highly-important invention prominently before the Public—an invention which by the adoption of a simple scientific principle, altogether supersedes every other plan introduced, developing in coffee a *richness, purity,* and *delicacy* of flavour, not hitherto considered as belonging to this berry.

EXTRACT FROM "THE PATENT JOURNAL" OF THE 11TH OF DECEMBER, 1847.

"PATENTS RECENTLY GRANTED.—TO WILLIAM DAKIN, of NUMBER "ONE, SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, 'for Improvements in "Cleaning and Roasting Coffee, in the Apparatus and Machinery to be "used therein; and also in the Apparatus for making Infusions and "Decoctions of Coffee.'"

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WILLIAM DAKIN,

OF NUMBER ONE ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON,

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DAKIN, of NUMB

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ARLES DICKENS, and

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Shilling each Plate.

STRAND.

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On the dark Road

An arrival

CHAPTER LV.

ROB THE GRINDER LOSES HIS PLACE.

THE porter at the iron gate which shut the court-yard from the street, had left the little wicket of his house open, and was gone away; no doubt to mingle in the distant noise at the door on the great staircase. Lifting the latch softly, Carker crept out, and shutting the jangling gate after him with as little noise as possible, hurried off.

In the fever of his mortification and unavailing rage, the panic that had seized upon him mastered him completely. It rose to such a height that he would have blindly encountered almost any risk, rather than meet the man of whom, two hours ago, he had been utterly regardless. His fierce arrival, which he had never expected; the sound of his voice; their having been so near a meeting, face to face; he would have braved out this, after the first momentary shock of alarm, and would have put as bold a front upon his guilt as any villain. But the springing of his mine upon himself, seemed to have rent and shivered all his hardihood and self-reliance. Spurned like any reptile; entrapped and mocked; turned upon, and trodden down by the proud woman whose mind he had slowly poisoned, as he thought, until she had sunk into the mere creature of his pleasure; undeceived in his deceit, and with his fox's hide stripped off, he sneaked away, abashed, degraded, and afraid.

Some other terror came upon him quite removed from this of being pursued, suddenly, like an electric shock, as he was creeping through the streets. Some visionary terror, unintelligible and inexplicable, associated with a trembling of the ground,—a rush and sweep of something through the air, like Death upon the wing. He shrunk, as if to let the thing go by. It was not gone, it never had been there, yet what a startling horror it had left behind.

He raised his wicked face, so full of trouble, to the night sky where the stars, so full of peace, were shining on him as they had been when he first stole out into the air; and stopped to think what he should do. The dread of being hunted in a strange remote place, where the laws might not protect him—the novelty of the feeling that it *was* strange and remote, originating in his being left alone so suddenly amid the ruins of his plans—his greater dread of seeking refuge now, in Italy or in Sicily, where men might be hired to assassinate him, he thought, at any dark street corner—the waywardness of guilt and fear—perhaps some sympathy of action with the turning back of all his schemes—impelled him to turn back too, and go to England.

"I am safer there, in any case. If I should not decide," he thought, "to give this fool a meeting, I am less likely to be traced there, than abroad here, now. And if I should (this cursed fit being over), at least I shall not be alone, without a soul to speak to, or advise with, or stand by me. I shall not be run in upon and worried like a rat."

He muttered Edith's name, and clenched his hand. As he crept along,

in the shadow of the massive buildings, he set his teeth, and muttered dreadful imprecations on her head, and looked from side to side, as if in search of her. Thus, he stole on to the gate of an inn-yard. The people were a-bed; but his ringing at the bell soon produced a man with a lantern, in company with whom he was presently in a dim coach-house, bargaining for the hire of an old phaeton, to Paris.

The bargain was a short one; and the horses were soon sent for. Leaving word that the carriage was to follow him when they came, he stole away again, beyond the town, past the old ramparts, out on the open road, which seemed to glide away along the dark plain, like a stream!

Whither did it flow? What was the end of it? As he paused, with some such suggestion within him, looking over the gloomy flat where the slender trees marked out the way, again that flight of Death came rushing up, again went on, impetuous and resistless, again was nothing but a horror in his mind, dark as the scene and undefined as its remotest verge.

There was no wind; there was no passing shadow on the deep shade of the night; there was no noise. The city lay behind him, lighted here and there, and starry worlds were hidden by the masonry of spire and roof that hardly made out any shapes against the sky. Dark and lonely distance lay around him everywhere, and the clocks were faintly striking two.

He went forward for what appeared a long time, and a long way; often stopping to listen. At last the ringing of horses' bells greeted his anxious ears. Now softer, and now louder, now inaudible, now ringing very slowly over bad ground, now brisk and merry, it came on; until with a loud shouting and lashing, a shadowy postilion muffled to the eyes, checked his four struggling horses at his side.

"Who goes there! Monsieur?"

"Yes."

"Monsieur has walked a long way in the dark midnight."

"No matter. Every one to his taste. Were there any other horses ordered at the Post-house?"

"A thousand devils!—and pardons! other horses? at this hour? No."

"Listen, my friend. I am much hurried. Let us see how fast we can travel! The faster, the more money there will be to drink. Off we go then! Quick!"

"Halloa! whoop! Halloa! Hi!" Away, at a gallop, over the black landscape, scattering the dust and dirt like spray!

The clatter and commotion echoed to the hurry and discordance of the fugitive's ideas. Nothing clear without, and nothing clear within. Objects flitting past, merging into one another, dimly descried, confusedly lost sight of, gone! Beyond the changing scraps of fence and cottage immediately upon the road, a lowering waste. Beyond the shifting images that rose up in his mind and vanished as they showed themselves, a black expanse of dread and rage and baffled villany. Occasionally, a sigh of mountain air came from the distant Jura, fading along the plain. Sometimes that rush which was so furious and horrible, again came sweeping through his fancy, passed away, and left a chill upon his blood.

The lamps, gleaming on the medley of horses' heads, jumbled with the shadowy driver, and the fluttering of his cloak, made a thousand indistinct shapes, answering to his thoughts. Shadows of familiar people, stooping

at their desks and books, in their remembered attitudes; strange apparitions of the man whom he was flying from, or of Edith; repetitions in the ringing bells and rolling wheels, of words that had been spoken; confusions of time and place, making last night a month ago, a month ago last night—home now distant beyond hope, now instantly accessible; commotion, discord, hurry, darkness and confusion in his mind, and all around him.—Hallo! Hi! away at a gallop over the black landscape; dust and dirt flying like spray, the smoking horses snorting and plunging as if each of them were ridden by a demon, away in a frantic triumph on the dark road—whither!

Again the nameless shock comes speeding up, and as it passes, the bells ring in his ears "whither?" The wheels roar in his ears "whither?" All the noise and rattle shapes itself into that cry. The lights and shadows dance upon the horses' heads like imps. No stopping now: no slackening! On, on! Away with him upon the dark road wildly!

He could not think to any purpose. He could not separate one subject of reflection from another, sufficiently to dwell upon it, by itself, for a minute at a time. The crash of his project for the gaining of a voluptuous compensation for past restraint; the overthrow of his treachery to one who had been true and generous to him, but whose least proud word and look he had treasured up, at interest, for years—for false and subtle men will always secretly despise and dislike the object upon which they fawn, and always resent the payment and receipt of homage that they know to be worthless; these were the themes uppermost in his mind. A lurking rage against the woman who had so entrapped him and avenged herself, was always there; crude and mis-shapen schemes of retaliation upon her, floated in his brain; but nothing was distinct. A hurry and contradiction pervaded all his thoughts. Even while he was so busy with this fevered, ineffectual thinking, his one constant idea was, that he would postpone reflection until some indefinite time.

Then, the old days before the second marriage rose up in his remembrance. He thought how jealous he had been of the boy, how jealous he had been of the girl, how artfully he had kept intruders at a distance, and drawn a circle round his dupe that none but himself should cross; and then he thought, had he done all this to be flying now, like a scared thief, from only the poor dupe?

He could have laid hands upon himself for his cowardice, but it was the very shadow of his defeat, and could not be separated from it. To have his confidence in his own knavery so shattered at a blow—to be within his own knowledge such a miserable tool—was like being paralysed. With an impotent ferocity he raged at Edith, and hated Mr. Dombey and hated himself, but still he fled, and could do nothing else.

Again and again he listened for the sound of wheels behind. Again and again his fancy heard it, coming on louder and louder. At last he was so persuaded of this, that he cried out, "Stop!" preferring even the loss of ground to such uncertainty.

The word soon brought carriage, horses, driver, all in a heap together, across the road.

"The devil!" cried the driver, looking over his shoulder, "what 's the matter!"

"Hark! What 's that?"

"What?"

"That noise."

"Ah Heaven, be quiet, cursed brigand!" to a horse who shook his bells. "What noise?"

"Behind. Is it not another carriage at a gallop? There! what 's that?"

"Miscreant with a pig's head, stand still!" to another horse, who bit another, who frightened the other two, who plunged and backed. "There is nothing coming."

"Nothing?"

"No, nothing but the day yonder."

"You are right, I think. I hear nothing now, indeed. Go on!"

The entangled equipage, half hidden in the reeking cloud from the horses, goes on slowly at first, for the driver, checked unnecessarily in his progress, sulkily takes out a pocket knife, and puts a new lash to his whip. Then "Hallo, whoop! Hallo, hi!" Away once more, savagely.

And now the stars faded, and the day glimmered, and standing in the carriage, looking back, he could discern the track by which he had come, and see that there was no traveller within view, on all the heavy expanse. And soon it was broad day, and the sun began to shine on corn-fields and vineyards; and solitary labourers, risen from little temporary huts by heaps of stones upon the road, were, here and there, at work repairing the highway, or eating bread. By and by, there were peasants going to their daily labour, or to market, or lounging at the doors of poor cottages, gazing idly at him as he passed. And then there was a postyard, ankle-deep in mud, with steaming dunghills and vast outhouses half ruined; and looking on this dainty prospect, an immense, old, shadeless, glaring, stone chateau, with half its windows blinded, and green damp crawling lazily over it, from the balustraded terrace to the taper tips of the extinguishers upon the turrets.

Gathered up moodily in a corner of the carriage, and only intent on going fast—except when he stood up, for a mile together, and looked back; which he would do whenever there was a piece of open country—he went on, still postponing thought indefinitely, and still always tormented with thinking to no purpose.

Shame, disappointment, and discomfiture gnawed at his heart; a constant apprehension of being overtaken, or met—for he was groundlessly afraid even of travellers, who came towards him by the way he was going—oppressed him heavily. The same intolerable awe and dread that had come upon him in the night, returned unweakened in the day. The monotonous ringing of the bells and tramping of the horses; the monotony of his anxiety, and useless rage; the monotonous wheel of fear, regret, and passion, he kept turning round and round; made the journey like a vision, in which nothing was quite real but his own torment.

It was a vision of long roads, that stretched away to an horizon, always receding and never gained; of ill-paved towns, up hill and down, where faces came to dark doors and ill-glazed windows, and where rows of mud-bespattered cows and oxen were tied up for sale in the long narrow streets, butting and lowing, and receiving blows on their blunt heads from bludgeons that might have beaten them in; of bridges, crosses, churches, postyards, new

horses being put in against their wills, and the horses of the last stage reeking, panting, and laying their drooping heads together dolefully at stable doors; of little cemeteries with black crosses settled sideways in the graves, and withered wreaths upon them dropping away; again of long, long roads, dragging themselves out, up hill and down, to the treacherous horizon.

Of morning, noon, and sunset; night, and the rising of an early moon. Of long roads temporarily left behind, and a rough pavement reached; of battering and clattering over it, and looking up, among house-roofs, at a great church-tower; of getting out and eating hastily, and drinking draughts of wine that had no cheering influence; of coming forth afoot, among a host of beggars—blind men with quivering eyelids, led by old women holding candles to their faces; idiot girls; the lame, the epileptic, and the palsied—of passing through the clamour, and looking from his seat at the upturned countenances and outstretched hands, with a hurried dread of recognising some pursuer pressing forward—of galloping away again, upon the long, long road, gathered up, dull and stunned, in his corner, or rising to see where the moon shone faintly on a patch of the same endless road miles away, or looking back to see who followed.

Of never sleeping, but sometimes dozing with unclosed eyes, and springing up with a start, and a reply aloud to an imaginary voice. Of cursing himself for being there, for having fled, for having let her go, for not having confronted and defied him. Of having a deadly quarrel with the whole world, but chiefly with himself. Of blighting everything with his black mood as he was carried on and away.

It was a fevered vision of things past and present all confounded together; of his life and journey blended into one. Of being madly hurried somewhere, whither he must go. Of old scenes starting up among the novelties through which he travelled. Of musing and brooding over what was past and distant, and seeming to take no notice of the actual objects he encountered, but with a wearisome exhausting consciousness of being bewildered by them, and having their images all crowded in his hot brain after they were gone.

A vision of change upon change, and still the same monotony of bells and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest. Of town and country, post-yards, horses, drivers, hill and valley, light and darkness, road and pavement, height and hollow, wet weather and dry, and still the same monotony of bells and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest. A vision of tending on at last, towards the distant capital, by busier roads, and sweeping round, by old cathedrals, and dashing through small towns and villages, less thinly scattered on the road than formerly, and sitting shrouded in his corner, with his cloak up to his face, as people passing by looked at him.

Of rolling on and on, always postponing thought, and always racked with thinking; of being unable to reckon up the hours he had been upon the road, or to comprehend the points of time and place in his journey. Of being parched and giddy, and half mad. Of pressing on, in spite of all, as if he could not stop, and coming into Paris, where the turbid river held its swift course undisturbed, between two brawling streams of life and motion.

A troubled vision, then, of bridges, quays, interminable streets; of

wine-shops, water-carriers, great crowds of people, soldiers, coaches, military drums, arcades. Of the monotony of bells and wheels and horses' feet being at length lost in the universal din and uproar. Of the gradual subsidence of that noise as he passed out in another carriage, by a different barrier from that by which he had entered. Of the restoration, as he travelled on towards the sea-coast, of the monotony of bells, and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest.

Of sunset once again, and nightfall. Of long roads again, and dead of night, and feeble lights in windows by the road-side; and still the old monotony of bells, and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest. Of dawn, and daybreak, and the rising of the sun. Of toiling slowly up a hill, and feeling on its top the fresh sea-breeze; and seeing the morning light upon the edges of the distant waves. Of coming down into a harbour when the tide was at its full, and seeing fishing-boats float in, and glad women and children waiting for them. Of nets and seaman's clothes spread out to dry upon the shore; of busy sailors, and their voices high among ships' masts and rigging; of the buoyancy and brightness of the water, and the universal sparkling.

Of receding from the coast, and looking back upon it from the deck when it was a haze upon the water, with here and there a little opening of bright land where the Sun struck. Of the swell, and flash, and murmur of the calm sea. Of another grey line on the ocean, on the vessel's track, fast growing clearer and higher. Of cliffs, and buildings, and a windmill, and a church, becoming more and more visible upon it. Of steaming on at last into smooth water, and mooring to a pier whence groups of people looked down, greeting friends on board. Of disembarking, passing among them quickly, shunning every one; and of being at last again in England.

He had thought, in his dream, of going down into a remote Country-place he knew, and lying quiet there, while he secretly informed himself of what transpired, and determined how to act. Still in the same stunned condition, he remembered a certain station on the railway, where he would have to branch off to his place of destination, and where there was a quiet Inn. Here, he indistinctly resolved to tarry and rest.

With this purpose he slunk into a railway carriage as quickly as he could, and lying there wrapped in his cloak as if he were asleep, was soon borne far away from the sea, and deep into the inland green. Arrived at his destination he looked out, and surveyed it carefully. He was not mistaken in his impression of the place. It was a retired spot, on the borders of a little wood. Only one house, newly-built or altered for the purpose, stood there, surrounded by its neat garden; the small town that was nearest, was some miles away. Here he alighted then; and going straight into the tavern, unobserved by any one, secured two rooms up-stairs communicating with each other, and sufficiently retired.

His object was, to rest, and recover the command of himself, and the balance of his mind. Imbecile discomfiture and rage—so that, as he walked about his room, he ground his teeth—had complete possession of him. His thoughts, not to be stopped or directed, still wandered where they would, and dragged him after them. He was stupified, and he was wearied to death.

But, as if there were a curse upon him that he should never rest again, his drowsy senses would not lose their consciousness. He had no more influence with them, in this regard, than if they had been another man's. It was not that they forced him to take note of present sounds and objects, but that they would not be diverted from the whole hurried vision of his journey. It was constantly before him all at once. She stood there, with her dark disdainful eyes again upon him; and he was riding on nevertheless, through town and country, light and darkness, wet weather and dry, over road and pavement, hill and valley, height and hollow, jaded and scared by the monotony of bells, and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest.

"What day is this?" he asked of the waiter, who was making preparations for his dinner.

"Day, Sir?"

"Is it Wednesday?"

"Wednesday, Sir! No, Sir. Thursday, Sir."

"I forgot. How goes the time? My watch is unwound."

"Wants a few minutes of five o'clock, Sir. Been travelling a long time, Sir, perhaps?"

"Yes."

"By rail, Sir?"

"Yes."

"Very confusing, Sir. Not much in the habit of travelling by rail myself, Sir, but gentlemen frequently say so."

"Do many gentlemen come here?"

"Pretty well, Sir, in general. Nobody here at present. Rather slack just now, Sir. Everything *is* slack, Sir."

He made no answer; but had risen into a sitting posture on the sofa where he had been lying, and leaned forward, with an arm on each knee, staring at the ground. He could not master his own attention for a minute together. It rushed away where it would, but it never, for an instant, lost itself in sleep.

He drank a quantity of wine after dinner, in vain. No such artificial means would bring sleep to his eyes. His thoughts, more incoherent, dragged him more unmercifully after them—as if a wretch, condemned to such expiation, were drawn at the heels of wild horses. No oblivion, and no rest.

How long he sat, drinking and brooding, and being dragged in imagination hither and thither, no one could have told less correctly than he. But he knew that he had been sitting a long time by candle-light, when he started up and listened, in a sudden terror.

For now, indeed, it was no fancy. The ground shook, the house rattled, the fierce impetuous rush was in the air! He felt it come up, and go darting by; and even when he had hurried to the window, and saw what it was, he stood, shrinking from it, as if it were not safe to look.

A curse upon the fiery devil, thundering along so smoothly, tracked through the distant valley by a glare of light and lurid smoke, and gone! He felt as if he had been plucked out of its path, and saved from being torn asunder. It made him shrink and shudder even now, when its

faintest hum was hushed, and when the lines of iron road he could trace in the moonlight, running to a point, were as empty and as silent as a desert.

Unable to rest, and irresistibly attracted—or he thought so—to this road, he went out, and lounged on the brink of it, marking the way the train had gone, by the yet smoking cinders that were lying in its track. After a lounge of some half-hour in the direction by which it had disappeared, he turned and walked the other way—still keeping to the brink of the road—past the inn garden, and a long way down; looking curiously at the bridges, signals, lamps, and wondering when another Devil would come by.

A trembling of the ground, and quick vibration in his ears; a distant shriek; a dull light advancing, quickly changed to two red eyes, and a fierce fire, dropping glowing coals; an irresistible bearing on of a great roaring and dilating mass; a high wind, and a rattle—another come and gone, and he holding to a gate, as if to save himself!

He waited for another, and for another. He walked back to his former point, and back again to that, and still, through the wearisome vision of his journey, looked for these approaching monsters. He loitered about the station, waiting until one should stay to call there; and when one did, and was detached for water, he stood parallel with it, watching its heavy wheels and brazen front, and thinking what a cruel power and might it had. Ugh! To see the great wheels slowly turning, and to think of being run down and crushed!

Disordered with wine and want of rest—that want which nothing, although he was so weary, would appease—these ideas and objects assumed a diseased importance in his thoughts. When he went back to his room, which was not until near midnight, they still haunted him, and he sat listening for the coming of another.

So in his bed, whither he repaired with no hope of sleep. He still lay listening; and when he felt the trembling and vibration, got up and went to the window, to watch (as he could from its position) the dull light changing to the two red eyes, and the fierce fire dropping glowing coals, and the rush of the giant as it fled past, and the track of glare and smoke along the valley. Then he would glance in the direction by which he intended to depart at sunrise, as there was no rest for him there; and would lie down again, to be troubled by the vision of his journey, and the old monotony of bells and wheels and horses' feet, until another came. This lasted all night. So far from resuming the mastery of himself, he seemed, if possible, to lose it more and more, as the night crept on. When the dawn appeared, he was still tormented with thinking, still postponing thought until he should be in a better state; the past, present, and future all floated confusedly before him, and he had lost all power of looking steadily at any one of them.

"At what time," he asked the man who had waited on him over-night, now entering with a candle, "do I leave here, did you say?"

"About a quarter after four, Sir. Express comes through at four, Sir.—Don't stop."

He passed his hand across his throbbing head, and looked at his watch. Nearly half-past three.

"Nobody going with you, Sir, probably," observed the man. "Two gentlemen here, Sir, but they 're waiting for the train to London."

"I thought you said there was nobody here," said Carker, turning upon him with the ghost of his old smile, when he was angry or suspicious.

"Not then, Sir. Two gentlemen came in the night by the short train that stops here, Sir. Warm water, Sir?"

"No; and take away the candle. There 's day enough for me."

Having thrown himself upon the bed, half-dressed, he was at the window as the man left the room. The cold light of morning had succeeded to night, and there was, already, in the sky, the red suffusion of the coming sun. He bathed his head and face with water—there was no cooling influence in it for him—hurriedly put on his clothes, paid what he owed, and went out.

The air struck chill and comfortless as it breathed upon him. There was a heavy dew; and, hot as he was, it made him shiver. After a glance at the place where he had walked last night, and at the signal-lights burning feebly in the morning, and bereft of their significance, he turned to where the sun was rising, and beheld it, in its glory, as it broke upon the scene.

So awful, so transcendent in its beauty, so divinely solemn. As he cast his faded eyes upon it, where it rose, tranquil and serene, unmoved by all the wrong and wickedness on which its beams had shone since the beginning of the world, who shall say that some weak sense of virtue upon Earth, and its reward in Heaven, did not manifest itself, even to him? If ever he remembered sister or brother with a touch of tenderness and remorse, who shall say it was not then?

He needed some such touch then. Death was on him. He was marked off from the living world, and going down into his grave.

He paid the money for his journey to the country-place he had thought of; and was walking to and fro, alone, looking along the lines of iron, across the valley in one direction, and towards a dark bridge near at hand in the other; when, turning in his walk, where it was bounded by one end of the wooden stage on which he paced up and down, he saw the man from whom he had fled, emerging from the door by which he himself had entered there. And their eyes met.

In the quick unsteadiness of the surprise, he staggered, and slipped on to the road below him. But recovering his feet immediately, he stepped back a pace or two upon that road, to interpose some wider space between them, and looked at his pursuer, breathing short and quick.

He heard a shout—another—saw the face change from its vindictive passion to a faint sickness and terror—felt the earth tremble—knew in a moment that the rush was come—uttered a shriek—looked round—saw the red eyes, bleared and dim, in the daylight, close upon him—was beaten down, caught up, and whirled away upon a jagged mill, that spun him round and round, and struck him limb from limb, and licked his stream of life up with its fiery heat, and cast his mutilated fragments in the air.

When the traveller who had been recognised, recovered from a swoon, he saw them bringing from a distance something covered, that lay heavy and still, upon a board, between four men, and saw that others drove some dogs away that sniffed upon the road, and soaked his blood up, with a train of ashes.

CHAPTER LVI.

SEVERAL PEOPLE DELIGHTED, AND THE GAME CHICKEN DISGUSTED.

THE Midshipman was all alive. Mr. Toots and Susan had arrived at last. Susan had run up stairs like a young woman bereft of her senses, and Mr. Toots and the Chicken had gone into the parlour.

"Oh my own pretty darling sweet Miss Floy!" cried the Nipper, running into Florence's room, "to think that it should come to this and I should find you here my own dear dove with nobody to wait upon you and no home to call your own but never, never will I go away again Miss Floy for though I may not gather moss I'm not a rolling stone nor is my heart a stone or else it wouldn't bust as it is busting now oh dear oh dear!"

Pouring out these words, without the faintest indication of a stop, of any sort, Miss Nipper, on her knees beside her Mistress, hugged her close.

"Oh love!" cried Susan, "I know all that's past, I know it all my tender pet and I'm a choking give me air!"

"Susan, dear good Susan!" said Florence.

"Oh bless her! I that was her little maid when she was a little child! and is she really, really truly going to be married!" exclaimed Susan, in a burst of pain and pleasure, pride and grief, and Heaven knows how many other conflicting feelings.

"Who told you so?" said Florence.

"Oh gracious me! that innocentest creetur Toots" returned Susan hysterically. "I knew he must be right my dear, because he took on so. He's the devotedest and innocentest infant! And is my darling," pursued Susan, with another close embrace and burst of tears, "really, really going to be married!"

The mixture of compassion, pleasure, tenderness, protection, and regret with which the Nipper constantly recurred to this subject, and at every such recurrence, raised her head to look in the young face and kiss it, and then laid her head again upon her mistress's shoulder, caressing her and sobbing, was as womanly and good a thing, in its way, as ever was seen in the world.

"There, there!" said the soothing voice of Florence presently. "Now you're quite yourself, dear Susan!"

Miss Nipper, sitting down upon the floor, at her mistress's feet, laughing and sobbing, holding her pocket-handkerchief to her eyes with one hand, and patting Diogenes with the other as he licked her face, confessed to being more composed, and laughed and cried a little more in proof of it.

"I—I—I never did see such a creetur as that Toots," said Susan, "in all my born days, never!"

"So kind," suggested Florence.

"And so comic!" Susan sobbed. "The way he's been going on inside with me, with that disrespectable Chicken on the box!"

"About what Susan?" inquired Florence, timidly.

"Oh about Lieutenant Walters, and Captain Gills, and you my dear Miss Floy, and the silent tomb," said Susan.

"The silent tomb!" repeated Florence.

"He says," here Susan burst into a violent hysterical laugh, "that he'll go down into it now, immediately and quite comfortable, but bless your heart my dear Miss Floy he won't, he's a great deal too happy in seeing other people happy for that, he may not be a Solomon," pursued the Nipper, with her usual volubility, "nor do I say he is, but this I do say, a less selfish human creature human nature never knew!"

Miss Nipper being still hysterical, laughed immoderately after making this energetic declaration, and then informed Florence that he was waiting below to see her; which would be a rich repayment for the trouble he had had in his late expedition.

Florence entreated Susan to beg of Mr. Toots as a favour that she might have the pleasure of thanking him for his kindness; and Susan, in a few moments, produced that young gentleman, still very much dishevelled in appearance, and stammering exceedingly.

"Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots. "To be again permitted to—to—gaze—at least, not to gaze, but—I don't exactly know what I was going to say, but it 's of no consequence."

"I have to thank you so often," returned Florence, giving him both her hands, with all her innocent gratitude beaming in her face, "that I have no words left, and don't know how to do it."

"Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots, in an awful voice, "if it was possible that you could, consistently with your angelic nature, Curse me, you would—if I may be allowed to say so—floor me infinitely less, than by these undeserved expressions of kindness. Their effect upon me—is—but," said Mr. Toots, abruptly, "this is a digression, and 's of no consequence at all."

As there seemed to be no means of replying to this, but by thanking him again, Florence thanked him again.

"I could wish," said Mr. Toots, "to take this opportunity, Miss Dombey, if I might, of entering into a word of explanation. I should have had the pleasure of—of returning with Susan at an earlier period; but, in the first place, we didn't know the name of the relation to whose house she had gone, and, in the second, as she had left that relation's and gone to another at a distance, I think that scarcely anything short of the sagacity of the Chicken, would have found her out in the time."

Florence was sure of it.

"This, however," said Mr. Toots, "is not the point. The company of Susan has been, I assure you, Miss Dombey, a consolation and satisfaction to me, in my state of mind, more easily conceived, than described. The journey has been its own reward. That, however, still, is not the point. Miss Dombey, I have before observed that I know I am not what is considered a quick person. I am perfectly aware of that. I don't think anybody could be better acquainted with his own—if it was not too strong an expression, I should say with the thickness of his own head—than myself. But, Miss Dombey, I do, notwithstanding, perceive the state of

—of things—with Lieutenant Walters. Whatever agony that state of things may have caused me (which is of no consequence at all), I am bound to say, that Lieutenant Walters is a person who appears to be worthy of the blessing that has fallen on his—on his brow. May he wear it long, and appreciate it, as a very different, and very unworthy individual, that it is of no consequence to name, would have done! That, however, still, is not the point. Miss Dombey, Captain Gills is a friend of mine; and during the interval that is now elapsing, I believe it would afford Captain Gills pleasure to see me occasionally coming backwards and forwards here. It would afford me pleasure so to come. But I cannot forget that I once committed myself, fatally, at the corner of the Square at Brighton; and if my presence will be, in the least degree, unpleasant to you, I only ask you to name it to me now, and assure you that I shall perfectly understand you. I shall not consider it at all unkind, and shall only be too delighted and happy to be honoured with your confidence."

"Mr. Toots," returned Florence, "if you, who are so old and true a friend of mine, were to stay away from this house now, you would make me very unhappy. It can never, never, give me any feeling but pleasure to see you."

"Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots, taking out his pocket-handkerchief, "if I shed a tear, it is a tear of joy. It is of no consequence, and I am very much obliged to you. I may be allowed to remark, after what you have so kindly said, that it is not my intention to neglect my person any longer."

Florence received this intimation with the prettiest expression of perplexity possible.

"I mean," said Mr. Toots, "that I shall consider it my duty as a fellow-creature generally, until I am claimed by the silent tomb, to make the best of myself, and to—to have my boots as brightly polished, as—as circumstances will admit of. This is the last time, Miss Dombey, of my intruding any observation of a private and personal nature. I thank you very much indeed. If I am not, in a general way, as sensible as my friends could wish me to be, or as I could wish myself, I really am, upon my word and honour, particularly sensible of what is considerate and kind. I feel," said Mr. Toots, in an impassioned tone, "as if I could express my feelings, at the present moment, in a most remarkable manner, if—if—I could only get a start."

Appearing not to get it, after waiting a minute or two to see if it would come, Mr. Toots took a hasty leave, and went below to seek the Captain, whom he found in the shop.

"Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "what is now to take place between us, takes place under the sacred seal of confidence. It is the sequel, Captain Gills, of what has taken place between myself and Miss Dombey, upstairs."

"Alow and aloft, eh, my lad?" murmured the Captain.

"Exactly so, Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, whose fervour of acquiescence was greatly heightened by his entire ignorance of the Captain's meaning. "Miss Dombey, I believe, Captain Gills, is to be shortly united to Lieutenant Walters?"

"Why, aye, my lad. We're all shipmets here,—Wal'r and sweetheart will be jined together in the house of bondage, as soon as the askings is over," whispered Captain Cuttle, in his ear.

"The askings, Captain Gills!" repeated Mr. Toots.

"In the church, down yonder," said the Captain, pointing his thumb over his shoulder.

"Oh! Yes!" returned Mr. Toots.

"And then," said the Captain, in his hoarse whisper, and tapping Mr. Toots on the chest with the back of his hand, and falling from him with a look of infinite admiration, "what follers? That there pretty creetur, as delicately brought up as a foreign bird, goes away upon the roaring main with Wal'r on a woyage to China!"

"Lord, Captain Gills!" said Mr. Toots.

"Aye!" nodded the Captain. "The ship as took him up, when he was wrecked in the hurricane that had drove her clean out of her course, was a China trader, and Wal'r made the woyage, and got into favour, aboard and ashore—being as smart and good a lad as ever stepped—and so, the supercargo dying at Canton, he got made (having acted as clerk afore), and now he's supercargo aboard another ship, same owners. And so, you see," repeated the Captain, thoughtfully, "the pretty creetur goes away upon the roaring main with Wal'r, on a woyage to China."

Mr. Toots and Captain Cuttle heaved a sigh in concert.

"What then?" said the Captain. "She loves him true. He loves her, true. Them as should have loved and fended of her, treated of her like the beasts as perish. When she, cast out of home, come here to me, and dropped upon them planks, her wownded heart was broke. I know it! I, Ed'ard Cuttle, see it. There's nowt but true, kind, steady love, as can ever piece it up again. If so be I didn't know that, and didn't know as Wal'r was her true love, brother, and she his, I'd have these here blue arms and legs chopped off, afore I'd let her go. But I *do* know it, and what then? Why, then, I say, Heaven go with 'em both, and so it will! Amen!"

"Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "let me have the pleasure of shaking hands. You've a way of saying things, that gives me an agreeable warmth, all up my back. *I* say Amen. You are aware, Captain Gills, that I, too, have adored Miss Dombey."

"Cheer up!" said the Captain, laying his hand on Mr. Toots's shoulder. "Stand by, boy!"

"It is my intention, Captain Gills," returned the spirited Mr. Toots, "*to* cheer up. Also to stand by, as much as possible. When the silent tomb shall yawn, Captain Gills, I shall be ready for burial; not before. But not being certain, just at present, of my power over myself, what I wish to say to you, and what I shall take it as a particular favour if you will mention to Lieutenant Walters, is as follows."

"Is as follers," echoed the Captain. "Steady!"

"Miss Dombey being so inexpressibly kind," continued Mr. Toots with watery eyes, "as to say that my presence is the reverse of disagreeable to her, and you and everybody here being no less forbearing and tolerant towards one who—who certainly" said Mr. Toots, with momentary dejection, "*would* appear to have been born by mistake, I

shall come backwards and forwards of an evening, during the short time we can all be together. But what I ask is this. If, at any moment, I find that I cannot endure the contemplation of Lieutenant Walters's bliss, and should rush out, I hope, Captain Gills, that you and he will both consider it as my misfortune and not my fault, or the want of inward conflict. That you 'll feel convinced I bear no malice to any living creature —least of all to Lieutenant Walters himself—and that you 'll casually remark that I have gone out for a walk, or probably to see what o'clock it is by the Royal Exchange. Captain Gills, if you could enter into this arrangement, and could answer for Lieutenant Walters, it would be a relief to my feelings that I should think cheap at the sacrifice of a considerable portion of my property."

"My lad," returned the Captain, "say no more. There ain't a colour you can run up, as won't be made out, and answered to, by Wal'r and self."

"Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots, "my mind is greatly relieved. I wish to preserve the good opinion of all here. I—I—mean well, upon my honour, however badly I may show it. You know," said Mr. Toots, "it 's exactly as if Burgess and Co. wished to oblige a customer with a most extraordinary pair of trousers, and *could not* cut out what they had in their minds."

With this apposite illustration, of which he seemed a little proud, Mr. Toots gave Captain Cuttle his blessing and departed.

The honest Captain, with his Heart's Delight in the house, and Susan tending her, was a beaming and a happy man. As the days flew by, he grew more beaming and more happy, every day. After some conferences with Susan (for whose wisdom the Captain had a profound respect, and whose valiant precipitation of herself on Mrs. Mac Stinger he could never forget), he proposed to Florence that the daughter of the elderly lady who usually sat under the blue umbrella in Leadenhall Market, should, for prudential reasons and considerations of privacy, be superseded in the temporary discharge of the household duties, by some one who was not unknown to them, and in whom they could safely confide. Susan, being present, then named, in furtherance of a suggestion she had previously offered to the Captain, Mrs. Richards. Florence brightened at the name. And Susan, setting off that very afternoon to the Toodle domicile, to sound Mrs. Richards, returned in triumph the same evening, accompanied by the identical rosy-cheeked, apple-faced Polly, whose demonstrations, when brought into Florence's presence, were hardly less affectionate than those of Susan Nipper herself.

This piece of generalship accomplished; from which the Captain derived uncommon satisfaction, as he did, indeed, from everything else that was done, whatever it happened to be; Florence had next to prepare Susan for their approaching separation. This was a much more difficult task, as Miss Nipper was of a resolute disposition, and had fully made up her mind that she had come back never to be parted from her old mistress any more.

"As to wages dear Miss Floy" she said, "you would'nt hint and wrong me so as think of naming them, for I 've put money by and wouldn't sell my love and duty at a time like this even if the Savings' Banks and me were total strangers or the Banks were broke to pieces, but you 've never been without me darling from the time your poor dear Ma

was took away, and though I 'm nothing to be boasted of you 're used to me and oh my own dear mistress through so many years don't think of going anywhere without me, for it mustn't and can't be!"

"Dear Susan, I am going on a long, long voyage."

"Well Miss Floy, and what of that? the more you'll want me. Lengths of voyages ain 't an object in my eyes, thank God!" said the impetuous Susan Nipper.

"But Susan, I am going with Walter, and I would go with Walter anywhere—everywhere! Walter is poor, and I am very poor, and I must learn, now, both to help myself, and help him."

"Dear Miss Floy!" cried Susan, bursting out afresh, and shaking her head violently, "it 's nothing new to you to help yourself and others too and be the patientest and truest of noble hearts, but let me talk to Mr. Walter Gay and settle it with him, for suffer you to go away across the world alone I cannot, and I won't."

"Alone, Susan?" returned Florence. "Alone? and Walter taking me with him!" Ah, what a bright, amazed, enraptured smile was on her face! —He should have seen it. "I am sure you will not speak to Walter if I ask you not," she added tenderly; "and pray don't, dear."

Susan sobbed "why not, Miss Floy?"

"Because," said Florence, "I am going to be his wife, to give him up my whole heart, and to live with him and die with him. He might think, if you said to him what you have said to me, that I am afraid of what is before me, or that you have some cause to be afraid for me. Why, Susan dear, I love him!"

Miss Nipper was so much affected by the quiet fervour of these words, and the simple, heartfelt, all-pervading earnestness expressed in them, and making the speaker's face more beautiful and pure than ever, that she could only cling to her again, crying Was her little mistress really, really going to be married, and pitying, caressing, and protecting her, as she had done before.

But the Nipper, though susceptible of womanly weaknesses, was almost as capable of putting constraint upon herself as of attacking the redoubtable Mac Stinger. From that time, she never returned to the subject, but was always cheerful, active, bustling, and hopeful. She did, indeed, inform Mr. Toots privately, that she was only "keeping up," for the time, and that when it was all over, and Miss Dombey was gone, she might be expected to become a spectacle distressful; and Mr. Toots did also express that it was his case too, and that they would mingle their tears together; but she never otherwise indulged her private feelings in the presence of Florence, or within the precincts of the Midshipman.

Limited and plain as Florence's wardrobe was—what a contrast to that prepared for the last marriage in which she had taken part!—there was a good deal to do in getting it ready, and Susan Nipper worked away at her side, all day, with the concentrated zeal of fifty sempstresses. The wonderful contributions Captain Cuttle would have made to this branch of the outfit, if he had been permitted—as pink parasols, tinted silk stockings, blue shoes, and other articles no less necessary on shipboard—would occupy some space in the recital. He was induced, however, by various fraudulent representations, to limit his contributions to a workbox and

dressing-case, of each of which he purchased the very largest specimen that could be got for money. For ten days or a fortnight afterwards, he generally sat, during the greater part of the day, gazing at these boxes; divided between extreme admiration of them, and dejected misgivings that they were not gorgeous enough, and frequently diving out into the street to purchase some wild article that he deemed necessary to their completeness. But his master stroke was, the bearing of them both off, suddenly, one morning, and getting the two words FLORENCE GAY engraved upon a brass heart inlaid over the lid of each. After this, he smoked four pipes successively in the little parlour by himself, and was discovered chuckling, at the expiration of as many hours.

Walter was busy and away all day, but came there every morning early to see Florence, and always passed the evening with her. Florence never left her high rooms but to steal down stairs to wait for him when it was his time to come, or, sheltered by his proud, encircling arm, to bear him company to the door again, and sometimes peep into the street. In the twilight they were always together. Oh blessed time! Oh wandering heart at rest! Oh deep, exhaustless, mighty, well of love, in which so much was sunk!

The cruel mark was on her bosom yet. It rose against her father with the breath she drew, it lay between her and her lover when he pressed her to his heart. But she forgot it. In the beating of that heart for her, and in the beating of her own for him, all harsher music was unheard, all stern unloving hearts forgotten. Fragile and delicate she was, but with a might of love within her that could, and did, create a world to fly to, and to rest in, out of his one image.

How often did the great house, and the old days, come before her in the twilight time, when she was sheltered by the arm, so proud, so fond, and, creeping closer to him, shrunk within it at the recollection! How often, from remembering the night when she went down to that room and met the never to be forgotten look, did she raise her eyes to those that watched her with such loving earnestness, and weep with happiness in such a refuge! The more she clung to it, the more the dear dead child was in her thoughts: but as if the last time she had seen her father, had been when he was sleeping and she kissed his face, she always left him so, and never, in her fancy, passed that hour.

"Walter, dear," said Florence one evening, when it was almost dark. "Do you know what I have been thinking to-day?"

"Thinking how the time is flying on, and how soon we shall be upon the sea, sweet Florence?"

"I don't mean that, Walter, though I think of that too. I have been thinking what a charge I am to you."

"A precious, sacred, charge, dear heart! Why, *I* think that sometimes."

"You are laughing, Walter. I know that 's much more in your thoughts than mine. But I mean a cost."

"A cost, my own?"

"In money, dear. All these preparations that Susan and I are so busy with—I have been able to purchase very little for myself. You were poor before. But how much poorer I shall make you, Walter!"

"And how much richer, Florence!"

Florence laughed, and shook her head.

"Besides," said Walter, "long ago—before I went to sea—I had a little purse presented to me, dearest, which had money in it."

"Ah!" returned Florence laughing sorrowfully, "very little! Very little, Walter! But, you must not think," and here she laid her light hand on his shoulder, and looked into his face, "that I regret to be this burden on you. No, dear love, I am glad of it. I am happy in it. I wouldn't have it otherwise, for all the world!"

"Nor I, indeed, dear Florence."

"Aye! But Walter, you can never feel it as I do. I am so proud of you! It makes my heart swell with such delight to know that those who speak of you must say you married a poor disowned girl, who had taken shelter here; who had no other home, no other friends; who had nothing —nothing! Oh Walter, if I could have brought you millions, I never could have been so happy for your sake, as I am!"

"And you dear Florence? are you nothing?" he returned.

"No, nothing, Walter. Nothing but your wife." The light hand stole about his neck, and the voice came nearer—nearer. "I am nothing any more, that is not you. I have no earthly hope any more, that is not you. I have nothing dear to me any more, that is not you."

Oh! well might Mr. Toots leave the little company that evening, and twice go out to correct his watch by the Royal Exchange, and once to keep an appointment with a banker which he suddenly remembered, and once to take a little turn to Aldgate Pump and back!

But before he went upon these expeditions, or indeed before he came, and before lights were brought, Walter said:

"Florence love, the lading of our ship is nearly finished, and probably on the very day of our marriage she will drop down the river. Shall we go away that morning, and stay in Kent until we go on board at Gravesend within a week?"

"If you please, Walter. I shall be happy anywhere. But——."

"Yes, my life?"

"You know," said Florence, "that we shall have no marriage party, and that nobody will distinguish us by our dress from other people. As we leave the same day, will you—will you take me somewhere that morning Walter—early—before we go to church?"

Walter seemed to understand her, as so true a lover so truly loved should, and confirmed his ready promise with a kiss—with more than one perhaps, or two or three, or five or six; and in the grave, calm, peaceful evening, Florence was very happy.

Then into the quiet room came Susan Nipper and the candles; shortly afterwards, the tea, the Captain, and the excursive Mr. Toots, who, as above mentioned, was frequently on the move afterwards, and passed but a restless evening. This, however, was not his habit: for he generally got on very well, by dint of playing at cribbage with the Captain under the advice and guidance of Miss Nipper, and distracting his mind with the calculations incidental to the game; which he found to be a very effectual means of utterly confounding himself.

The Captain's visage on these occasions presented one of the finest

examples of combination and succession of expression ever observed. His instinctive delicacy and his chivalrous feeling towards Florence, taught him that it was not a time for any boisterous jollity, or violent display of satisfaction. Certain floating reminiscences of Lovely Peg, on the other hand, were constantly struggling for a vent, and urging the Captain to commit himself by some irreparable demonstration. Anon, his admiration of Florence and Walter—well-matched truly, and full of grace and interest in their youth, and love, and good looks, as they sat apart—would take such complete possession of him, that he would lay down his cards, and beam upon them, dabbing his head all over with his pocket-handkerchief; until warned, perhaps, by the sudden rushing forth of Mr. Toots, that he had unconsciously been very instrumental indeed, in making that gentleman miserable. This reflection would make the Captain profoundly melancholy, until the return of Mr. Toots; when he would fall to his cards again, with many side winks and nods, and polite waves of his hook at Miss Nipper, importing that he wasn't going to do so any more. The state that ensued on this, was, perhaps, his best; for then, endeavouring to discharge all expression from his face, he would sit staring round the room, with all these expressions conveyed into it at once, and each wrestling with the other. Delighted admiration of Florence and Walter always overthrew the rest, and remained victorious and undisguised, unless Mr. Toots made another rush into the air, and then the Captain would sit, like a remorseful culprit, until he came back again, occasionally calling upon himself, in a low reproachful voice, to "Stand by!" or growling some remonstrance to "Ed'ard Cuttle my lad," on the want of caution observable in his behaviour.

One of Mr. Toots's hardest trials, however, was of his own seeking. On the approach of the Sunday which was to witness the last of those askings in church of which the Captain had spoken, Mr. Toots thus stated his feelings to Susan Nipper.

"Susan," said Mr. Toots, "I am drawn towards the building. The words which cut me off from Miss Dombey for ever, will strike upon my ears like a knell you know, but upon my word and honour, I feel that I must hear them. Therefore," said Mr. Toots, "will you accompany me to-morrow, to the sacred edifice?"

Miss Nipper expressed her readiness to do so, if that would be any satisfaction to Mr. Toots, but besought him to abandon his idea of going.

"Susan," returned Mr. Toots, with much solemnity, "before my whiskers began to be observed by anybody but myself, I adored Miss Dombey. While yet a victim to the thraldom of Blimber, I adored Miss Dombey. When I could no longer be kept out of my property, in a legal point of view, and—and accordingly came into it—I adored Miss Dombey. The banns which consign her to Lieutenant Walters, and me to—to Gloom, you know," said Mr. Toots, after hesitating for a strong expression, "may be dreadful, *will* be dreadful; but I feel that I should wish to hear them spoken. I feel that I should wish to know that the ground was certainly cut from under me, and that I had'nt a hope to cherish, or a—or a leg, in short, to—to go upon."

Susan Nipper could only commiserate Mr. Toots's unfortunate condition,

and agree, under these circumstances, to accompany him; which she did next morning.

The church Walter had chosen for the purpose, was a mouldy old church in a yard, hemmed in by a labyrinth of back streets and courts, with a little burying-ground round it, and itself buried in a kind of vault, formed by the neighbouring houses, and paved with echoing stones. It was a great dim, shabby pile, with high old oaken pews, among which about a score of people lost themselves every Sunday; while the clergyman's voice drowsily resounded through the emptiness, and the organ rumbled and rolled as if the church had got the colic, for want of a congregation to keep the wind and damp out. But so far was this city church from languishing for the company of other churches, that spires were clustered round it, as the masts of shipping cluster on the river. It would have been hard to count them from its steeple-top, they were so many. In almost every yard and blind-place near, there was a church. The confusion of bells when Susan and Mr. Toots betook themselves towards it on the Sunday morning, was deafening. There were twenty churches close together, clamouring for people to come in.

The two stray sheep in question were penned by a beadle in a commodious pew, and, being early, sat for some time counting the congregation, listening to the disappointed bell high up in the tower, or looking at a shabby little old man in the porch behind the screen, who was ringing the same, like the Bull in Cock Robin, with his foot in a stirrup. Mr. Toots, after a lengthened survey of the large books on the reading-desk, whispered Miss Nipper that he wondered where the banns were kept, but that young lady merely shook her head and frowned; repelling for the time all approaches of a temporal nature.

Mr. Toots, however, appearing unable to keep his thoughts from the banns, was evidently looking out for them during the whole preliminary portion of the service. As the time for reading them approached, the poor young gentleman manifested great anxiety and trepidation, which was not diminished by the unexpected apparition of the Captain in the front row of the gallery. When the clerk handed up a list to the clergyman, Mr. Toots, being then seated, held on by the seat of the pew; but when the names of Walter Gay and Florence Dombey were read aloud as being in the third and last stage of that association, he was so entirely conquered by his feelings as to rush from the church without his hat, followed by the beadle and pew-opener, and two gentlemen of the medical profession, who happened to be present; of whom the first-named presently returned for that article, informing Miss Nipper in a whisper that she was not to make herself uneasy about the gentleman, as the gentleman said his indisposition was of no consequence.

Miss Nipper, feeling that the eyes of that integral portion of Europe which lost itself weekly among the high-backed pews, were upon her, would have been sufficiently embarrassed by this incident, though it had terminated here; the more so, as the Captain in the front row of the gallery, was in a state of unmitigated consciousness which could hardly fail to express to the congregation that he had some mysterious connexion with it. But the extreme restlessness of Mr. Toots painfully increased and protracted the delicacy of her situation. That young gentleman, incapable, in his state

of mind, of remaining alone in the churchyard, a prey to solitary meditation, and also desirous, no doubt, of testifying his respect for the offices he had in some measure interrupted, suddenly returned—not coming back to the pew, but stationing himself on a free seat in the aisle, between two elderly females who were in the habit of receiving their portion of a weekly dole of bread then set forth on a shelf in the porch. In this conjunction Mr. Toots remained, greatly disturbing the congregation, who felt it impossible to avoid looking at him, until his feelings overcame him again, when he departed silently and suddenly. Not venturing to trust himself in the church any more, and yet wishing to have some social participation in what was going on there, Mr. Toots was, after this, seen from time to time, looking in, with a lorn aspect, at one or other of the windows; and as there were several windows accessible to him from without, and as his restlessness was very great, it not only became difficult to conceive at which window he would appear next, but likewise became necessary, as it were, for the whole congregation to speculate upon the chances of the different windows, during the comparative leisure afforded them by the sermon. Mr. Toots's movements in the churchyard were so eccentric, that he seemed generally to defeat all calculation, and to appear, like the conjuror's figure, where he was least expected; and the effect of these mysterious presentations was much increased by its being difficult to him to see in, and easy to everybody else to see out: which occasioned his remaining, every time, longer than might have been expected, with his face close to the glass, until he all at once became aware that all eyes were upon him, and vanished.

These proceedings on the part of Mr. Toots, and the strong individual consciousness of them that was exhibited by the Captain, rendered Miss Nipper's position so responsible a one, that she was mightily relieved by the conclusion of the service; and was hardly so affable to Mr. Toots as usual, when he informed her and the Captain, on the way back, that now he was sure he had no hope, you know, he felt more comfortable—at least not exactly more comfortable, but more comfortably and completely miserable.

Swiftly now, indeed, the time flew by, until it was the evening before the day appointed for the marriage. They were all assembled in the upper room at the Midshipman's, and had no fear of interruption; for there were no lodgers in the house now, and the Midshipman had it all to himself. They were grave and quiet in the prospect of to-morrow, but moderately cheerful too. Florence, with Walter close beside her, was finishing a little piece of work intended as a parting gift to the Captain. The Captain was playing cribbage with Mr. Toots. Mr. Toots was taking counsel as to his hand, of Susan Nipper. Miss Nipper was giving it, with all due secrecy and circumspection. Diogenes was listening, and occasionally breaking out into a gruff, half-smothered fragment of a bark, of which he afterwards seemed half-ashamed, as if he doubted having any reason for it.

"Steady, steady!" said the Captain to Diogenes, "what's amiss with you? You don't seem easy in your mind to-night, my boy!"

Diogenes wagged his tail, but pricked up his ears immediately afterwards, and gave utterance to another fragment of a bark; for which he apologised to the Captain, by again wagging his tail.

"It's my opinion, Di," said the Captain, looking thoughtfully at his cards, and stroking his chin with his hook, "as you have your doubts of Mrs. Richards; but if you're the animal I take you to be, you'll think better o' that; for her looks is her commission. Now, Brother:" to Mr. Toots: "if so be as you're ready, heave ahead."

The Captain spoke with all composure and attention to the game, but suddenly his cards dropped out of his hand, his mouth and eyes opened wide, his legs drew themselves up and stuck out in front of his chair, and he sat staring at the door with blank amazement. Looking round upon the company, and seeing that none of them observed him or the cause of his astonishment, the Captain recovered himself with a great gasp, struck the table a tremendous blow, cried in a stentorian roar, "Sol Gills ahoy!" and tumbled into the arms of a weather-beaten pea-coat that had come with Polly into the room.

In another moment, Walter was in the arms of the weather-beaten pea-coat. In another moment, Florence was in the arms of the weather-beaten pea-coat. In another moment, Captain Cuttle had embraced Mrs. Richards and Miss Nipper, and was violently shaking hands with Mr. Toots, exclaiming, as he waved his hook above his head, "Hooroar, my lad, hooroar!" To which Mr. Toots, wholly at a loss to account for these proceedings, replied with great politeness, "Certainly, Captain Gills, whatever you think proper!"

The weather-beaten pea-coat, and a no less weather-beaten cap and comforter belonging to it, turned from the Captain and from Florence back to Walter, and sounds came from the weather-beaten pea-coat, cap, and comforter, as of an old man sobbing underneath them; while the shaggy sleeves clasped Walter tight. During this pause, there was an universal silence, and the Captain polished his nose with great diligence. But when the pea-coat, cap, and comforter lifted themselves up again, Florence gently moved towards them; and she and Walter taking them off, disclosed the old Instrument Maker, a little thinner and more care-worn than of old, in his old Welsh wig and his old coffee-coloured coat and basket buttons, with his old infallible chronometer ticking away in his pocket.

"Chock full o' science," said the radiant Captain, "as ever he was! Sol Gills, Sol Gills, what have you been up to, for this many a long day, my ould boy?"

"I'm half blind, Ned," said the old man, "and almost deaf and dumb with joy."

"His wery woice," said the Captain, looking round with an exultation to which even his face could hardly render justice—"his wery woice as chock full o' science as ever it was! Sol Gills, lay to, my lad, upon your own wines and fig-trees, like a taut ould patriark as you are, and overhaul them there adwentures o' yourn, in your own formilior woice. 'Tis *the* woice," said the Captain, impressively, and announcing a quotation with his hook, "of the sluggard, I heerd him com-plain, you have woke me too soon, I must slumber again. Scatter his ene-mies, and make 'em fall!"

The Captain sat down with the air of a man who had happily expressed the feeling of everybody present, and immediately rose again to present Mr. Toots, who was much disconcerted by the arrival of anybody, appearing to prefer a claim to the name of Gills.

"Although," stammered Mr. Toots, "I had not the pleasure of your acquaintance, Sir, before you were—you were—"

"Lost to sight, to memory dear," suggested the Captain, in a low voice.

"Exactly so, Captain Gills!" assented Mr. Toots. "Although I had not the pleasure of your acquaintance, Mr.—Mr. Sols," said Toots, hitting on that name in the inspiration of a bright idea, "before that happened, I have the greatest pleasure, I assure you, in—you know, in knowing you. I hope," said Mr. Toots, "that you're as well as can be expected."

With these courteous words, Mr. Toots sat down blushing and chuckling.

The old Instrument Maker, seated in a corner between Walter and Florence, and nodding at Polly, who was looking on, all smiles and delight, answered the Captain thus:

"Ned Cuttle, my dear boy, although I have heard something of the changes of events here, from my pleasant friend there—what a pleasant face she has to be sure, to welcome a wanderer home!" said the old man, breaking off, and rubbing his hands in his old dreamy way.

"Hear him!" cried the Captain gravely. "'Tis woman as seduces all mankind. For which," aside to Mr. Toots, "you'll overhaul your Adam and Eve, brother."

"I shall make a point of doing so, Captain Gills," said Mr. Toots.

"Although I have heard something of the changes of events, from her," resumed the Instrument Maker, taking his old spectacles from his pocket, and putting them on his forehead in his old manner, "they are so great and unexpected, and I am so overpowered by the sight of my dear boy, and by the "—glancing at the downcast eyes of Florence, and not attempting to finish the sentence—"that I—I can't say much to-night. But my dear Ned Cuttle, why didn't you write?" '

The astonishment depicted in the Captain's features positively frightened Mr. Toots, whose eyes were quite fixed by it, so that he could not withdraw them from his face.

"Write!" echoed the Captain. "Write, Sol Gills!"

"Aye," said the old man, "either to Barbados, or Jamaica, or Demerara. That was what I asked."

"What you asked, Sol Gills!" repeated the Captain.

"Aye," said the old man. "Don't you know, Ned? Sure you have not forgotten? Every time I wrote to you."

The Captain took off his glazed hat, hung it on his hook, and smoothing his hair from behind with his hand, sat gazing at the groupe around him: a perfect image of wondering resignation.

"You don't appear to understand me, Ned!" observed old Sol.

"Sol Gills," returned the Captain, after staring at him and the rest for a long time, without speaking, "I'm gone about and adrift. Pay out a word or two respecting them adwenturs, will you! Can't I bring up, nohows? nohows?" said the Captain ruminating, and staring all round.

"You know, Ned," said Sol Gills, "why I left here. Did you open my packet, Ned?"

"Why, aye, aye," said the Captain. "To be sure, I opened the packet."

"And read it?" said the old man.

"And read it," answered the Captain, eyeing him attentively, and proceeding to quote it from memory. "'My dear Ned Cuttle, when I left home for the West Indies in forlorn search of intelligence of my dear—' There he sits! There 's Wal'r!" said the Captain, as if he were relieved by getting hold of anything that was real and indisputable.

"Well, Ned. Now attend a moment!" said the old man. "When I wrote first—that was from Barbados—I said that though you would receive that letter long before the year was out, I should be glad if you would open the packet, as it explained the reason of my going away. Very good, Ned. When I wrote the second, third, and perhaps the fourth times—that was from Jamaica—I said I was in just the same state, couldn't rest, and could'nt come away from that part of the world, without knowing that my boy was lost or saved. When I wrote next—that, I think, was from Demerara, wasn't it?"

"That he thinks was from Demerara, warn't it!" said the Captain, looking hopelessly round.

"—I said," proceeded old Sol, "that still there was no certain information got yet. That I found many captains and others, in that part of the world, who had known me for years, and who assisted me with a passage here and there, and for whom I was able, now and then, to do a little in return, in my own craft. That every one was sorry for me, and seemed to take a sort of interest in my wanderings; and that I began to think it would be my fate to cruise about in search of tidings of my boy, until I died."

"Began to think as how he was a scientific flying Dutchman!" said the Captain, as before, and with great seriousness.

"But when the news came one day, Ned,—that was to Barbados, after I got back there,—that a China trader home'ard bound had been spoke, that had my boy aboard, then, Ned, I took passage in the next ship and came home; and arrived at home to-night to find it true, thank God!" said the old man, devoutly.

The Captain, after bowing his head with great reverence, stared all round the circle, beginning with Mr. Toots, and ending with the Instrument Maker: then gravely said:

"Sol Gills! The observation as I 'm a-going to make is calc'lated to blow every stitch of sail as you can carry, clean out of the bolt-ropes, and bring you on your beam ends with a lurch. Not one of them letters was ever delivered to Ed'ard Cuttle. Not one o' them letters," repeated the Captain, to make his declaration the more solemn and impressive, "was ever delivered unto Ed'ard Cuttle, Mariner, of England, as lives at home at ease, and doth improve each shining hour!"

"And posted by my own hand! And directed by my own hand, Number nine Brig Place!" exclaimed Old Sol.

The colour all went out of the Captain's face, and all came back again in a glow.

"What do you mean, Sol Gills, my friend, by Number nine Brig Place?" inquired the Captain.

"Mean? Your lodgings, Ned," returned the old man. "Mrs. what 's-her-name! I shall forget my own name next, but I am behind the present time—I always was, you recollect—and very much confused. Mrs. —"

"Sol Gills!" said the Captain, as if he were putting the most improbable case in the world, "it ain't the name of Mac Stinger as you're a trying to remember?"

"Of course it is!" exclaimed the Instrument Maker. "To be sure Ned. Mrs. Mac Stinger!"

Captain Cuttle, whose eyes were now as wide open as they could be, and the knobs upon whose face were perfectly luminous, gave a long shrill whistle of a most melancholy sound, and stood gazing at everybody in a state of speechlessness.

"Overhaul that there again, Sol Gills, will you be so kind?" he said at last.

"All these letters," returned Uncle Sol, beating time with the forefinger of his right hand upon the palm of his left, with a steadiness and distinctness that might have done honour, even to the infallible chronometer in his pocket, "I posted with my own hand, and directed with my own hand, to Captain Cuttle, at Mrs. Mac Stinger's, Number nine Brig Place."

The Captain took his glazed hat off his hook, looked into it, put it on, and sat down.

"Why, friends all," said the Captain, staring round in the last state of discomfiture, "I cut and run from there!"

"And no one knew where you were gone, Captain Cuttle?" cried Walter, hastily.

"Bless your heart, Wal'r," said the Captain, shaking his head, "she 'd never have allowed o' my coming to take charge o' this here property. Nothing could be done but cut and run. Lord love you, Wal'r!" said the Captain, "you 've only seen her in a calm! But see her when her angry passions rise—and make a note on!"

"*I* 'd give it her!" remarked the Nipper, softly.

"Would you, do you think, my dear?" returned the Captain, with feeble admiration. "Well, my dear, it does you credit. But there ain't no wild animal I wouldn't sooner face myself. I only got my chest away by means of a friend as nobody 's a match for. It was no good sending any letter there. *She* wouldn't take in any letter, bless you," said the Captain, "under them circumstarnces! Why, you could hardly make it worth a man's while to be the postman!"

"Then it 's pretty clear, Captain Cuttle, that all of us, and you and Uncle Sol especially," said Walter, "may thank Mrs. Mac Stinger for no small anxiety."

The general obligation in this wise to the determined relict of the late Mr. Mac Stinger, was so apparent, that the Captain did not contest the point; but being in some measure ashamed of his position, though nobody dwelt upon the subject, and Walter especially avoided it, remembering the last conversation he and the Captain had held together respecting it, he remained under a cloud for nearly five minutes—an extraordinary period for him—when that sun, his face, broke out once more, shining on all beholders with extraordinary brilliancy; and he fell into a fit of shaking hands with everybody over and over again.

An an early hour, but not before Uncle Sol and Walter had questioned each other at some length about their voyages and dangers, they all, except Walter, vacated Florence's room, and went down to the parlour.

Here they were soon afterwards joined by Walter, who told them Florence was a little sorrowful and heavy-hearted, and had gone to bed. Though they could not have disturbed her with their voices down there, they all spoke in a whisper after this: and each, in his different way, felt very lovingly and gently towards Walter's fair young bride; and a long explanation there was of everything relating to her, for the satisfaction of Uncle Sol; and very sensible Mr. Toots was of the delicacy with which Walter made his name and services important, and his presence necessary to their little council.

"Mr. Toots," said Walter, on parting with him at the house door. "We shall see each other to-morrow morning?"

"Lieutenant Walters," returned Mr. Toots, grasping his hand fervently, "I shall certainly be present."

"This is the last night we shall meet for a long time—the last night we may ever meet," said Walter. "Such a noble heart as yours, must feel, I think, when another heart is bound to it. I hope you know that I am very grateful to you?"

"Walters," replied Mr. Toots, quite touched, "I should be glad to feel that you had reason to be so."

"Florence," said Walter, "on this last night of her bearing her own name, has made me promise—it was only just now, when you left us together—that I would tell you, with her dear love—"

Mr. Toots laid his hand upon the doorpost, and his eyes upon his hand.

—"with her dear love," said Walter, "that she can never have a friend whom she will value above you. That the recollection of your true consideration for her always, can never be forgotten by her. That she remembers you in her prayers to-night, and hopes that you will think of her when she is far away. Shall I say anything for you?"

"Say, Walters," replied Mr. Toots indistinctly, "that I shall think of her every day, but never without feeling happy to know that she is married to the man she loves, and who loves her. Say, if you please, that I am sure her husband deserves her—even her!—and that I am glad of her choice."

Mr. Toots got more distinct as he came to these last words, and raising his eyes from the doorpost said them stoutly. He then shook Walter's hand again with a fervour that Walter was not slow to return, and started homeward.

Mr. Toots was accompanied by the Chicken, whom he had of late brought with him every evening, and left in the shop, with an idea that unforeseen circumstances might arise from without, in which the prowess of that distinguished character would be of service to the Midshipman. The Chicken did not appear to be in a particularly good humour, on this occasion. Either the gas-lamps were treacherous, or he cocked his eye in a hideous manner, and likewise distorted his nose, when Mr. Toots, crossing the road, looked back over his shoulder at the room where Florence slept. On the road home, he was more demonstrative of aggressive intentions against the other foot passengers, than comported with a professor of the peaceful art of self-defence. Arrived at home, instead of leaving Mr. Toots in his apartments when he had escorted him thither, he remained before him weighing his white hat in both hands by the brim, and twitching his head and nose (both of which had been many times broken, and but indifferently repaired), with an air of decided disrespect.

His patron being much engaged with his own thoughts, did not observe this for some time, nor indeed until the Chicken, determined not to be overlooked, had made divers clicking sounds with his tongue and teeth, to attract attention.

"Now Master," said the Chicken, doggedly, when he, at length, caught Mr. Toots's eye, "I want to know whether this here gammon is to finish it, or whether you 're a going in to win?"

"Chicken," returned Mr. Toots, "explain yourself."

"Why, then, here 's all about it, Master," said the Chicken. "I ain't a cove to chuck a word away. Here 's wot it is. Are any on 'em to be doubled up?"

When the Chicken put this question he dropped his hat, made a dodge and a feint with his left hand, hit a supposed enemy a violent blow with his right, shook his head smartly, and recovered himself.

"Come, Master," said the Chicken. "Is it to be gammon or pluck? Which?"

"Chicken," returned Mr. Toots, "your expressions are coarse, and your meaning is obscure."

"Why, then, I tell you what, Master," said the Chicken. "This is where it is. It 's mean."

"What is mean, Chicken?" asked Mr. Toots.

"*It* is," said the Chicken, with a frightful corrugation of his broken nose. "There! Now, Master! Wot! Wen you could go and blow on this here match to the stiff 'un;" by which depreciatory appellation it has been since supposed that the Game One intended to signify Mr. Dombey; "and when you could knock the winner and all the kit of 'em dead out o' wind and time, are you going to give in? To *give in?*" said the Chicken, with contemptuous emphasis. "Wy, its mean!"

"Chicken," said Mr. Toots, severely, "you 're a perfect Vulture! Your sentiments are atrocious."

"My sentiments is Game and Fancy, Master," returned the Chicken. "That 's wot my sentiments is. I can't abear a meanness. I'm afore the public, I 'm to be heerd on at the bar of the Little Helephant, and no Gov'ner o' mine mustn't go and do wot 's mean. Wy, it 's mean," said the Chicken, with increased expression. "That 's where it is. It 's mean."

"Chicken!" said Mr. Toots, "you disgust me."

"Master," returned the Chicken, putting on his hat, "there 's a pair on us, then. Come! Here 's a offer! You've spoke to me more than once't or twice't about the public line. Never mind! Give me a fi'typunnote to-morrow, and let me go."

"Chicken," returned Mr. Toots, "after the odious sentiments you have expressed, I shall be glad to part on such terms."

"Done, then!" said the Chicken. "It 's a bargain. This here conduct o' yourn, won't suit *my* book, Master. Wy, it 's mean," said the Chicken; who seemed equally unable to get beyond that point, and to stop short of it. "That 's where it is; it 's mean!"

So Mr. Toots and the Chicken agreed to part on this incompatibility of moral perception; and Mr. Toots lying down to sleep, dreamed happily of Florence, who had thought of him as her friend upon the last night of her maiden life, and sent him her dear love.

CHAPTER LVII.

ANOTHER WEDDING.

Mr. Sownds the Beadle, and Mrs. Miff the pew-opener, are early at their posts in the fine church where Mr. Dombey was married. A yellow-faced old gentleman from India, is going to take unto himself a young wife this morning, and six carriages full of company are expected, and Mrs. Miff has been informed that the yellow-faced old gentleman could pave the road to church with diamonds and hardly miss them. The nuptial benediction is to be a superior one, proceeding from a very reverend, a dean, and the lady is to be given away, as an extraordinary present, by somebody who comes express from the Horse Guards.

Mrs. Miff is more intolerant of common people this morning, than she generally is; and she has always strong opinions on that subject, for it is associated with free sittings. Mrs. Miff is not a student of political economy (she thinks the science is connected with dissenters; "Baptists or Wesleyans, or some o' them," she says), but she can never understand what business your common folks have to be married. "Drat 'em," says Mrs. Miff, "you read the same things over 'em, and instead of sovereigns get sixpences!"

Mr. Sownds the beadle is more liberal than Mrs. Miff—but then he is not a pew-opener. "It must be done, Ma'am," he says. "We must marry 'em. We must have our national schools to walk at the head of, and we must have our standing armies. We must marry 'em, Ma'am," says Mr. Sownds, "and keep the country going."

Mr. Sownds is sitting on the steps and Mrs. Miff is dusting in the church, when a young couple, plainly dressed, come in. The mortified bonnet of Mrs. Miff is sharply turned towards them, for she espies in this early visit indications of a runaway match. But they don't want to be married—"Only," says the gentleman, "to walk round the church." And as he slips a genteel compliment into the palm of Mrs. Miff, her vinegary face relaxes, and her mortified bonnet and her spare dry figure dip and crackle.

Mrs. Miff resumes her dusting and plumps up her cushions—for the yellow-faced old gentleman is reported to have tender knees—but keeps her glazed, pew-opening eye on the young couple who are walking round the church. "Ahem," coughs Mrs. Miff, whose cough is dryer than the hay in any hassock in her charge, "you 'll come to us one of these mornings, my dears, unless I 'm much mistaken!"

They are looking at a tablet on the wall, erected to the memory of some one dead. They are a long way off from Mrs. Miff, but Mrs. Miff can see with half an eye how she is leaning on his arm, and how his head is bent down over her. "Well, well," says Mrs. Miff, "you might do worse. For you 're a tidy pair!"

There is nothing personal in Mrs. Miff's remark. She merely speaks of stock in trade. She is hardly more curious in couples than in coffins.

She is such a spare, straight, dry old lady—such a pew of a woman—that you should find as many individual sympathies in a chip. Mr. Sownds, now, who is fleshy, and has scarlet in his coat, is of a different temperament. He says, as they stand upon the steps watching the young couple away, that she has a pretty figure, hasn't she, and as well as he could see (for she held her head down coming out), an uncommon pretty face. "Altogether, Mrs. Miff," says Mr. Sownds with a relish, "she is what you may call a rosebud."

Mrs. Miff assents with a spare nod of her mortified bonnet; but approves of this so little, that she inwardly resolves she wouldn't be the wife of Mr. Sownds for any money he could give her, Beadle as he is.

And what are the young couple saying as they leave the church, and go out at the gate?

"Dear Walter, thank you! I can go away now, happy."

"And when we come back, Florence, we will come and see his grave again."

Florence lifts her eyes, so bright with tears, to his kind face; and clasps her disengaged hand on that other modest little hand which clasps his arm.

"It is very early, Walter, and the streets are almost empty yet. Let us walk."

"But you will be so tired, my love."

"Oh no! I was very tired the first time that we ever walked together, but I shall not be so to-day."

And thus—not much changed—she, as innocent and earnest-hearted—he, as frank, as hopeful, and more proud of her—Florence and Walter, on their bridal morning, walk through the streets together.

Not even in that childish walk of long ago, were they so far removed from all the world about them as to-day. The childish feet of long ago, did not tread such enchanted ground as theirs do now. The confidence and love of children may be given many times, and will spring up in many places; but the woman's heart of Florence, with its undivided treasure, can be yielded only once, and under slight or change, can only droop and die.

They take the streets that are the quietest, and do not go near that in which her old home stands. It is a fair, warm summer morning, and the sun shines on them, as they walk towards the darkening mist that overspreads the city. Riches are uncovering in shops; jewels, gold, and silver, flash in the goldsmith's sunny windows; and great houses cast a stately shade upon them as they pass. But through the light, and through the shade, they go on lovingly together, lost to everything around; thinking of no other riches, and no prouder home, than they have now in one another.

Gradually they come into the darker, narrower streets, where the sun, now yellow, and now red, is seen through the mist, only at street corners, and in small open spaces where there is a tree, or one of the innumerable churches, or a paved way and a flight of steps, or a curious little patch of garden, or a burying-ground, where the few tombs and tomb-stones are almost black. Lovingly and trustfully, through all the narrow yards and alleys and the shady streets, Florence goes, clinging to his arm, to be his wife.

Her heart beats quicker now, for Walter tells her that their church is

very near. They pass a few great stacks of warehouses, with waggons at the doors, and busy carmen stopping up the way—but Florence does not see or hear them—and then the air is quiet, and the day is darkened, and she is trembling in a church which has a strange smell like a cellar.

The shabby little old man, ringer of the disappointed bell, is standing in the porch, and has put his hat in the font—for he is quite at home there, being sexton. He ushers them into an old, brown, panelled, dusty vestry, like a corner-cupboard with the shelves taken out; where the wormy registers diffuse a smell like faded snuff, which has set the tearful Nipper sneezing.

Youthful, and how beautiful, the young bride looks, in this old dusty place, with no kindred object near her but her husband. There is a dusty old clerk, who keeps a sort of evaporated news shop underneath an archway opposite, behind a perfect fortification of posts. There is a dusty old pew-opener who only keeps herself, and finds that quite enough to do. There is a dusty old beadle (these are Mr. Toots's beadle and pew-opener of last Sunday), who has something to do with a Worshipful Company who have got a Hall in the next yard, with a stained glass window in it that no mortal ever saw. There are dusty wooden ledges and cornices poked in and out over the altar, and over the screen and round the gallery, and over the inscription about what the Master and Wardens of the Worshipful Company did in one thousand six hundred and ninety-four. There are dusty old sounding-boards over the pulpit and reading-desk, looking like lids to be let down on the officiating ministers in case of their giving offence. There is every possible provision for the accommodation of dust, except in the church-yard, where the facilities in that respect are very limited.

The Captain, Uncle Sol, and Mr. Toots, are come; the clergyman is putting on his surplice in the vestry, while the clerk walks round him, blowing the dust off it; and the bride and bridegroom stand before the altar. There is no bridesmaid, unless Susan Nipper is one; and no better father than Captain Cuttle. A man with a wooden leg, chewing a faint apple and carrying a blue bag in his hand, looks in to see what is going on; but finding it nothing entertaining, stumps off again, and pegs his way among the echoes out of doors.

No gracious ray of light is seen to fall on Florence, kneeling at the altar with her timid head bowed down. The morning luminary is built out, and don't shine there. There is a meagre tree outside, where the sparrows are chirping a little; and there is a blackbird in an eyelet-hole of sun in a dyer's garret, over against the window, who whistles loudly whilst the service is performing; and there is the man with the wooden leg stumping away. The amens of the dusty clerk appear, like Macbeth's, to stick in his throat a little; but Captain Cuttle helps him out, and does it with so much good-will that he interpolates three entirely new responses of that word, never introduced into the service before.

They are married, and have signed their names in one of the old sneezy registers, and the clergyman's surplice is restored to the dust, and the clergyman is gone home. In a dark corner of the dark church, Florence has turned to Susan Nipper, and is weeping in her arms. Mr. Toots's eyes are red. The Captain lubricates his nose. Uncle Sol has pulled down his spectacles from his forehead, and walked out to the door.

"God bless you, Susan; dearest Susan! If you ever can bear witness to the love I have for Walter, and the reason that I have to love him, do it for his sake. Good bye! Good bye!"

They have thought it better not to go back to the Midshipman, but to part so; a coach is waiting for them, near at hand.

Miss Nipper cannot speak; she only sobs and chokes, and hugs her mistress. Mr. Toots advances, urges her to cheer up, and takes charge of her. Florence gives him her hand—gives him, in the fulness of her heart, her lips—kisses Uncle Sol, and Captain Cuttle, and is borne away by her young husband.

But Susan cannot bear that Florence should go away with a mournful recollection of her. She had meant to be so different, that she reproaches herself bitterly. Intent on making one last effort to redeem her character, she breaks from Mr. Toots and runs away to find the coach, and show a parting smile. The Captain, divining her object, sets off after her; for he feels it his duty also, to dismiss them with a cheer, if possible. Uncle Sol and Mr. Toots are left behind together, outside the church, to wait for them.

The coach is gone, but the street is steep, and narrow, and blocked up, and Susan can see it at a stand-still in the distance, she is sure. Captain Cuttle follows her as she flies down the hill, and waves his glazed hat as a general signal, which may attract the right coach and may not.

Susan outstrips the Captain, and comes up with it. She looks in at the window, sees Walter, with the gentle face beside him, and claps her hands and screams:

"Miss Floy, my darling! look at me! We are all so happy now, dear! One more good bye, my precious, one more!"

How Susan does it, she don't know, but she reaches to the window, kisses her, and has her arms about her neck, in a moment.

"We are all so—so happy now, my dear Miss Floy!" says Susan, with a suspicious catching in her breath. "You, you won't be angry with me, now. Now *will* you?"

"Angry, Susan!"

"No, no; I am sure you won't. I say you won't my pet, my dearest!" exclaims Susan; "and here 's the Captain, too—your friend the Captain, you know—to say good bye once more!"

"Hooroar, my Heart's Delight!" vociferates the Captain, with a countenance of strong emotion. "Hooroar, Wal'r my lad! Hooroar! Hooroar!"

What with the young husband at one window, and the young wife at the other; the Captain hanging on at this door, and Susan Nipper holding fast by that; the coach obliged to go on whether it will or no, and all the other carts and coaches turbulent because it hesitates; there never was so much confusion on four wheels. But Susan Nipper gallantly maintains her point. She keeps a smiling face upon her mistress, smiling through her tears, until the last. Even when she is left behind, the Captain continues to appear and disappear at the door crying "Hooroar my lad! Hooroar my Heart's Delight!" with his shirt collar in a violent state of agitation, until it is hopeless to attempt to keep up with the coach any longer. Finally, when the coach is gone, Susan Nipper, being rejoined by the

Captain, falls into a state of insensibility, and is taken into a baker's shop to recover.

Uncle Sol and Mr. Toots wait patiently in the churchyard, sitting on the coping-stone of the railings, until Captain Cuttle and Susan come back. Neither being at all desirous to speak, or to be spoken to, they are excellent company, and quite satisfied. When they all arrive again at the little Midshipman, and sit down to breakfast, nobody can touch a morsel. Captain Cuttle makes a feint of being voracious about toast, but gives it up as a swindle. Mr. Toots says, after breakfast, he will come back in the evening; and goes wandering about the town all day, with a vague sensation upon him as if he hadn't been to bed for a fortnight.

There is a strange charm in the house, and in the room, in which they have been used to be together, and out of which so much is gone. It aggravates, and yet it soothes, the sorrow of the separation. Mr. Toots tells Susan Nipper when he comes at night, that he hasn't been so wretched all day long, and yet he likes it. He confides in Susan Nipper, being alone with her, and tells her what his feelings were when she gave him that candid opinion as to the probability of Miss Dombey's ever loving him. In the vein of confidence engendered by these common recollections, and their tears, Mr. Toots proposes that they shall go out together, and buy something for supper. Miss Nipper assenting, they buy a good many little things; and, with the aid of Mrs. Richards, set the supper out quite showily before the Captain and Old Sol came home.

The Captain and Old Sol have been on board the ship, and have established Di there, and have seen the chests put aboard. They have much to tell about the popularity of Walter, and the comforts he will have about him, and the quiet way in which it seems he has been working early and late, to make his cabin what the Captain calls "a picter," to surprise his little wife. "A admiral's cabin, mind you," says the Captain, "ain't more trim."

But one of the Captain's chief delights is, that he knows the big watch, and the sugar-tongs, and tea-spoons, are on board; and again and again he murmurs to himself, "Ed'ard Cuttle, my lad, you never shaped a better course in your life, than when you made that there little property over jintly. *You* see how the land bore, Ed'ard," says the Captain, "and it does you credit, my lad."

The old Instrument Maker is more distraught and misty than he used to be, and takes the marriage and the parting very much to heart. But he is greatly comforted by having his old ally, Ned Cuttle, at his side; and he sits down to supper with a grateful and contented face.

"My boy has been preserved and thrives," says old Sol Gills, rubbing his hands. "What right have I to be otherwise than thankful and happy!"

The Captain, who has not yet taken his seat at the table, but who has been fidgetting about for some time, and now stands hesitating in his place, looks doubtfully at Mr. Gills, and says:

"Sol! There 's the last bottle of the old Madeira down below. Would you wish to have it up to-night, my boy, and drink to Wal'r and his wife?"

The Instrument Maker, looking wistfully at the Captain, puts his hand into the breast-pocket of his coffee-coloured coat, brings forth his pocket-book, and takes a letter out.

"To Mr. Dombey," says the old man. "From Walter. To be sent in three weeks' time. I'll read it."

"'Sir. I am married to your daughter. She is gone with me upon a distant voyage. To be devoted to her is to have no claim on her or you, but God knows that I am.

"'Why, loving her beyond all earthly things, I have yet, without remorse, united her to the uncertainties and dangers of my life, I will not say to you. You know why, and you are her father.

"'Do not reproach her. She has never reproached you.

"'I do not think or hope that you will ever forgive me. There is nothing I expect less. But if an hour should come when it will comfort you to believe that Florence has some one ever near her, the great charge of whose life is to cancel her remembrance of past sorrow, I solemnly assure you, you may, in that hour, rest in that belief.'"

Solomon puts back the letter carefully in his pocket-book, and puts back his pocket-book in his coat.

"We won't drink the last bottle of the old Madeira yet, Ned," says the old man, thoughtfully. "Not yet."

"Not yet," assents the Captain. "No. Not yet."

Susan and Mr. Toots are of the same opinion. After a silence they all sit down to supper, and drink to the young husband and wife in something else; and the last bottle of the old Madeira still remains among its dust and cobwebs, undisturbed.

A few days have elapsed, and a stately ship is out at sea, spreading its white wings to the favouring wind.

Upon the deck, image to the roughest man on board of something that is graceful, beautiful, and harmless—something that it is good and pleasant to have there, and that should make the voyage prosperous—is Florence. It is night, and she and Walter sit alone, watching the solemn path of light upon the sea between them and the moon.

At length she cannot see it plainly, for the tears that fill her eyes; and then she lays her head down on his breast, and puts her arms around his neck, saying, "Oh Walter, dearest love, I am so happy!"

Her husband holds her to his heart, and they are very quiet, and the stately ship goes on serenely.

"As I hear the sea," says Florence, "and sit watching it, it brings so many days into my mind. It makes me think so much——."

"Of Paul, my love. I know it does."

Of Paul and Walter. And the voices in the waves are always whispering to Florence, in their ceaseless murmuring, of love—of love, eternal and illimitable, not bounded by the confines of this world, or by the end of time, but ranging still, beyond the sea, beyond the sky, to the invisible country far away!

"What can't be cured,
Must be endured."

DR. RADCLIFFE'S ALLEVIATORS,

FOR

ARTHRIC AND CHRONIC DISEASES.

Radcliffe's Medicated Pads and Cushions

Will be found of inestimable value by those afflicted with incipient or habitual fits of the

GOUT.

They consist of highly medicated Cushion Down, with coverings, in the form of Pads, Boots, Slippers, Gloves, or Hoods, insuring that great essential, *warmth without pressure*, in a very superior degree to what can be effected by fleecy hosiery, or flannel.

Avoiding all attempt at repelling the disease, to the danger of the patient, the effect of this specific—free from Mercury, and quite innoxious—is to induce and absorb a gentle perspiration. It is administered in an unique form, so as to be adopted with perfect safety, and will not be objected to by the most fastidious. The combination of materials (of themselves conducive to relief, on account of their superior warmth and lightness) so admirably suited to the purpose, cannot fail to obtain such a favourable reception on the part of those afflicted as must insure its general adoption.

Being designed for the nobility and gentry, these Alleviators are prepared of costly materials, and range in prices as follows :—

GOUT BOOTS of full size, with Down Cushions complete, three guineas each; SLIPPERS, GLOVES, and HOODS, with Down Cushions complete, two guineas each; PADS, with Down Cushions complete, 10*s*. 6*d*., 21*s*., 33*s*., and 42*s*. each, according to size.

These will, with care, last for years, and may be cleaned, repaired, and re-medicated for a small charge, if transmitted to the principal Depôt for that purpose.

Boots, Slippers, Gloves, Hoods, and Pads, of an inferior material, at two-thirds the above prices.

The MEDICATED DOWN CUSHION is sold in Boxes at 4*s*. 6*d*. and 6*s*. 6*d*. each, and sent Free by Post from the Depôt.

The Down Cushion may be used apart, or in combination with the Boot, Slipper, Glove, or Pad. When used without, it should be covered with the ordinary flannel, or fleecy hose.

GOUT ALLEVIATORS sold by Messrs. Hannay, 63, Oxford Street; Johnston's, 68, Cornhill; and at Radcliffe's Alleviator Depôt, 4, Fenchurch Buildings, London; from whom a Gout Pad and Cushion of the first quality, smallest size, will be forwarded Free, on receipt of a Post-Office Order for 11*s*., and of second quality ditto, ditto, for 9*s*. Post-office orders must be made payable to Thomas Miles.

The TRADE SUPPLIED, Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation.

Alleviators packed in Tin Cases, warranted to preserve their medicated properties in all climates.

[*Over.*]

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Must be endured."

DR. RADCLIFFE'S ALLEVIATORS,

FOR

ARTHRIC AND CHRONIC DISEASES.

Radcliffe's Medicated Pads and Cushions,

Without professing to *cure* GOUT, LUMBAGO, and RHEUMATISM, will afford all the relief of which these diseases are susceptible, and while greatly *alleviating* the pain, will shorten the duration of the fit, and make it more *endurable,* than can be effected by any other means hitherto discovered.

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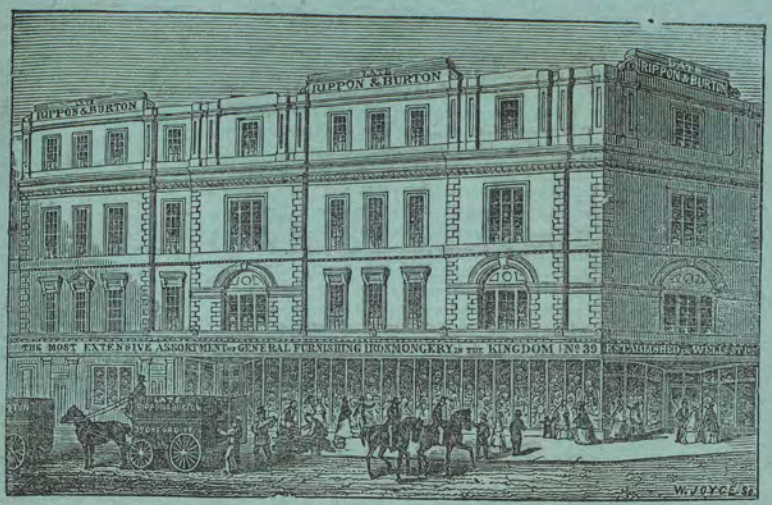

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Walk through the fields, and mark the budding trees,
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All is delightful, wheresoe'er we range,
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A pleasing glorious change the vision meets ;
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The Mart of MOSES now begins to show
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MOSES and SON, at each succeeding Spring,
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