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VEGETABLE OINTMENT is decidedly superior to all other Ointments for external applications; it produces an imperceptible perspiration, absorbs all inflammation, restores a healthy action, nature performs her office, and a cure is the result. It is peculiarly adapted as a sovereign remedy for Gout, Rheumatism, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, Burns, Scalds, Bruises, Boils, Scrofulous Affections, and old and inveterate Ulcers.

A FACT NOT TO BE CONTOVERTED.

"Liverpool, ship John, R. Skiddy,
" August 24, 1847.

"Dear Sir—The Green Mountain Vegetable Ointment, which you put on board our ship last voyage, through the kindness of Captain Lace (who gave me a plaster) cured me in one dressing on the passage home, of a most dangerous inflammation of the bowels, and I consider it my duty publicly to announce the fact. Wishing the proprietors every success,

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"WM. H. GARRIBRUNCE, Steward.

"To Mr. T. Hardman, druggist, Liverpool." This Ointment is consigned to Messrs. H. Preston and Sons, 94, Smithfield Bars, London; and sold by all respectable medicine vendors, in pots at 2s. 9d. each.

FOR EXPORTATION.—NIGHT LIGHTS.



THE breakage and uncertain burning of rushlights render them useless. The dirt, smoke, and smell from oil is very disagreeable. The inconvenience in not being able to move the common Mortars after being lighted, and the liability of the paper taking fire, make them extremely dangerous articles, and should not be used. All these defects are remedied in CLARKE'S PATENT MORTAR LAMPS and LAMP MORTARS, which are clean, elegant, economical, and safe, give three times the light of all Mortars with paper round them, can be carried without extinguishing the light, and have neither smell nor smoke. Persons burning night-lights should not use any other. The Lamps are made in japanned, gilt and bronze metal, plain, coloured, and beautifully painted glass, and in paper mache, from 6d. each.

Mortars, 7d. per box. May be obtained, wholesale and retail, at the Patentee's Lamp Manufactory, 55, Albany Street, Regent's Park.

A PROFITABLE AGENCY

Adapted to Chemists, Confectioners, Booksellers, Stationers, or any light business, may be obtained for the sale of the celebrated Teas and Coffees imported by the CHINA TEA COMPANY, in any Town in which a vacancy has occurred.

Nearly Eleven years of increasing public patronage has stamped these articles with a reputation, which the ephemeral establishments of the day may well envy. The Proprietors being now engaged in filling up such vacancies as have occurred from deaths, removals, &c., cannot impress too forcibly the expediency of an early application to prevent disappointment—as it is a fixed regulation to appoint only ONE AGENT in each town. The Teas and Coffees are packed in lead and sealed, in packages containing from one pound to two ounces. The employment is not only to be esteemed on account of the direct profits, which, on articles of hourly and universal consumption cannot fail to be considerable, (and whenever an alteration of the Duty shall take place must be much more so), but for the additional advantage it confers by bringing the Agent into contact with a numerous class of customers, who may thus become purchasers of other merchandise. The fullest particulars will be forwarded, free, on application, post-paid, to the China Tea Company, 106, Newgate Street, London.

KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES

Are the best remedy yet discovered for COUGHS, HOARSENESS, and all ASTHMATIC & PULMONARY COMPLAINTS. They are agreeable in flavour and safe in use.

Prepared and sold in Boxes, 1s. 1/4d., and Tins, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 10s. 6d. each, by THOMAS KEATING, Chemist, &c., No. 79, St. Paul's Church-yard, London. Sold retail by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Vendors.

IMPORTANT TESTIMONIAL.

Copy of a Letter from COLONEL HAWKER, (the well-known Author on "GUNS AND SHOOTING").

Longparish House, near Whitechurch, Hants, October 21st, 1846.

SIR,—I cannot resist informing you of the extraordinary effect that I have experienced by taking only a few of your Lozenges. I had a cough for several weeks, that defied all that had been prescribed for me; and yet I got completely rid of it by taking about half a small box of your Lozenges, which I find are the only ones that relieve the cough without deranging the stomach or digestive organs.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

P. HAWKER.

To Mr. KEATING, 79, St. Paul's Church Yard, London.

DEFORMITIES OF THE CHEST AND SPINE.

ENGLAND'S newly-invented INVISIBLE SPINE SUPPORTERS will be found well deserving the attention of the medical profession, and of persons suffering under Spinal deformity and its consequences. As any attempt at a description must needs fall short of giving a correct idea of the plan itself, Mr. ENGLAND solicits an inspection. They are beautifully simple and eminently successful, quite imperceptible, and conceal the deformity from the keenest observer. Mr. E. has the pleasure to add, that he is empowered to refer to ladies of the highest respectability as to the remedial effects produced by their use.

21, COVENTRY STREET, HAYMARKET, LONDON.

* * * Hours: 11 till 6.



STOOPING OF THE SHOULDERS & CONTRACTION OF THE CHEST

Are entirely prevented, and gently and effectually removed in Youth, and Ladies and Gentlemen, by the occasional use of the IMPROVED ELASTIC CHEST EXPANDER, which is light, simple, easily applied, either above or beneath the dress, and worn without any uncomfortable constraint or impediment to exercise. To young Persons especially it is highly beneficial, immediately producing an evident IMPROVEMENT in the FIGURE, and tending greatly to prevent the incursion of PULMONARY DISEASES; whilst to the Invalid, and those much engaged in sedentary pursuits, such as Reading or Studying, Working, Drawing, or Music, it is found to be invaluable, as it expands the Chest and affords a great support to the back. It is made in Silk; and can be forwarded, per post, by Mr. ALFRED BINYON, Sole Manufacturer and Proprietor, No. 40, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London; or full particulars, with Prices and Mode of Measurement, on receipt of a Postage Stamp.



THE GENTLEMAN'S REAL HEAD OF HAIR, or INVISIBLE PERUKE.

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

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

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



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



Brown, 4s. 6d. per bottle.
Pale, 5s. ditto.



3s. per bottle.



10s. per doz. large bottles.
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exclusive of carriage from London.

"THE STANDARD OF COGNAC,"

WHICH IS THE BEST FOREIGN BRANDY,

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 7, SMITHFIELD BARS, AND 96, ST. JOHN'S STREET, LONDON.

CHILDREN'S FROCKS, COATS, AND PELISSES,



Infant's Cloaks, Hoods, Hats, and Bonnets, Long and Short Robes, French Cambric Caps, Day and Night Gowns, Lawn and Cambric Night Caps, Robe Blankets, Nursery Baskets, Bassinets, with every other requisite in Baby Linen, at SHEARMAN'S, 5, FINSBURY PAVEMENT. Several hundred of Children's Dresses constantly on view, from the useful in-door at 11s. 1d.; Medium 5s. 6d.; 7s. 6d., 10s. 6d.; Handsome ditto, 15s., 20s., 25s., up to the richest goods made; with every other article usually required for a young family—thus completely obviating the trouble and inconvenience so long complained of in going from shop to shop, when juvenile clothing is required.—An Illustrated Pamphlet, affording additional information, sent free on receiving a paid letter.









RICHARD AND JOHN SLACK,
336, STRAND (opposite Somerset House),

Solicit an inspection of their extensive and varied stock of Fenders, Fire-irons, Candle Lamps, Paper Tea Trays, warranted Table Cutlery, Nickel Silver Wares, and every description of Furnishing Ironmongery, each article marked in plain figures, at prices that will fully convince purchasers of the advantages resulting from cash payments. Their illustrated Book of Prices may be had gratis, or sent free to any part. **Established 1818.**






SOVEREIGN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY,

No. 5, ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON.

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Assurances on the lives of persons in every station of life and every part of the world, granted on a plan which combines the utmost amount of benefit to the families of the assured at death, with every attainable advantage during life, which the system of Life Assurance is capable of affording.

Perfect security in a subscribed Capital, which guarantees the prompt settlement of every claim, with participating and non-participating rates on the lowest scale, especially for terms of years.

The Assured can anticipate or obtain the advance of the full amount of the Policy, on giving approved available security for a certain number of annual payments, as explained by the Prospectus.

Every facility afforded to persons assuring the lives of others, so as to render such Policies effectual securities. A new plan of gradual or accumulative Assurance, particularly adapted for young lives, and for such as cannot, without inconvenience, undertake the payment of a fixed premium, securing at once provision in case of premature death, and an accumulating fund, available during life, should occasion require.

ANNUITIES, ENDOWMENTS, ADVANCES, and LOANS, on liberal terms.

Detailed Prospectuses, forms of Proposal, and every information, may be had on application, either personally or by letter, at the Company's Offices.

The usual commission to Solicitors and Agents.

H. D. DAVENPORT, Secretary.

FIVE SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

The QUEEN,
 H. R. H. Prince Albert,
 Queen Adelaide,
 King Louis Philippe,
 and the
 Duchess of Kent.



WATERPROOFERS TO
 THE QUEEN.

DOUDNEYS.

GREAT COAT MAKERS TO
 PRINCE ALBERT.

The efforts of the Doudneys to overcome old fashioned prejudices having resulted in their obtaining the continued patronage and unqualified approbation of the principal Sovereigns, Royalty and Nobility of Europe; they henceforth proudly point to this fact, and say, BEHOLD THE TRIUMPH OF CASH PAYMENTS OVER THE OLD CREDIT SYSTEM! And forget not, that,—To be Cheap things must be Good.

The Queens Victoria and Adelaide, and the Royal and Noble Duchesses of Kent and Cambridge, Sutherland and Buccleuch, constantly wear Doudney's elegant **Registered Cloak**, in a variety of Waterproof materials for Winter Wraps and the Promenade.—"Every Lady should see these graceful Garments." (*Vide Morning Post, Sep. 26th.*) They surpass all others as School Cloaks for the **Sons and Daughters**.

For Gentlemen.—The Royal Registered Cloak, as made for H. R. H. Prince Albert, the Nobility, the Army, and Navy, and all who study comfort, coupled with a truly Gentlemanly exterior. These cloaks are pronounced by those who understand the matter, "**The most sensible Garment ever introduced,**" at prices to suit all customers from the Superb down to the useful Guinea Cloak.

Habit Makers by Special Appointment to Queen Victoria, and the Ladies of the Court. A Superfine Cloth Habit for 4 Guineas.

The New Patent Belt for Riding or general exercise, the only really effectual protection against rupture, the support commencing at the bottom edge of the belt, and producing an uniform upward pressure. They may be enlarged or tightened to the extent of six inches at pleasure, and never produce indigestion either in Ladies or Gentlemen. They are attached to Drawers with excellent effect. The most eminent of the Faculty are recommending these in preference to all others.

LIVERIES. Three Guineas the Plain Suit of Best Quality. *Ready Money does it!!!* and a very extensive practice among families of first distinction insures satisfactory results.

Waterproof Irish Poplin.—The **DOUDNEYS** are the sole manufacturers of this beautiful article to HER MAJESTY AND THE PRINCE CONSORT. Gentlemen's Coats, Ladies' Cloaks, and lengths for Dresses can be obtained only at their Establishments,

CELEBRATED
 FOR
 ROY'S CLOTHING

17, OLD BOND STREET,
 Extending into BURLINGTON ARCADE, (No. 25.) and at
49, LOMBARD STREET, Established **1784.**

CELEBRATED
 FOR
 SHOOTING JACKETS

Ladies and Gentlemen in the Country should send for a book of details.



**KING'S
RESPIRATORY
LOZENGES**

Have been but partially made known to the Public. It is now about four years since the Proprietors introduced them in their own locality, viz., the Towns of Derby, Sheffield, Newark, Nottingham, and their Neighbourhoods, and the immediate good resulting from their use in cases above-mentioned, rapidly obtained for them a deserved celebrity. It is a Remedy become so popular where known, that to all persons complaining of COLD, COUGH, ASTHMA, &c., &c., the listener to the complaint generally replies, "Oh, try a Box of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES, and you will soon be all right again."

The Proprietors of the LOZENGES, from having so long witnessed their beneficial effects in all cases where a fair trial has been made, have determined to give them a more extended introduction, and they feel assured that in so doing, they will afford a Remedy for some of the most distressing Complaints which afflict Humanity.

Numerous Letters have been received by the Proprietors, expressing their gratitude for the benefits the LOZENGES have afforded, and offering these Letters, in most cases, for publication, as a Testimonial of their desire to promote the extended use of a Medicine so benign. It would be impossible to publish all, or even a tithe of these Letters; a few, however, are subjoined:—

Copy of a Letter received from THOMAS CUNNINGHAM, Esq., Wisbeach.

SIRS,—I shall feel obliged by your sending me two 2s. 9d. tins of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES; they are the most valuable and effectual remedy for Coughs and Asthmas that I ever met with. If these LOZENGES were well known, I am quite sure no person would take anything else.

Yours, &c.,

THOMAS CUNNINGHAM, Sen., Builder.

Old Horse Fair, Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, April 15, 1845.
To the Proprietors of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES.

Copy of a Letter from Mrs. SARAH RAYNER, Kimberley, near Nottingham.

SIRS,—I have had a most distressing cough for two years and a half, and was under one of the first Physicians in Nottingham, for eight weeks, and given up by him uncured. So troublesome was my cough, that I disturbed the whole family during the night, and could not myself get any rest night or day, and I made up my mind to go into the Hospital, when I providentially heard of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES, and in taking one small Box I found great ease, and in taking four Boxes I was quite cured, and feel very grateful for your very valuable Medicine.

Yours, &c.,

SARAH RAYNER.

1846.
To the Proprietors of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. WILLIAM SMITH, Nottingham.

GENTLEMEN,—I had a very troublesome Cough and Hoarseness, which I could not get rid of, and spoke with great difficulty; but on taking a 1s. 1½d. Box of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES, I have the gratification to state that they relieved me immediately, and after taking a few of the second Box, the Cough and Hoarseness left me, and I feel quite well and free from the Hoarseness and Cough.

April 25, 1845.

Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM SMITH, Manufacturer, Princes-street, Sneinton Elements.

To the Proprietors of KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

All persons desirous of using KING'S RESPIRATORY LOZENGES, are requested particularly to observe the GOVERNMENT STAMP, which is pasted round each Box, and on which is engraved, in WHITE LETTERS on a RED ground, the name **GEORGE B. KING**. This is a safe guarantee of their being Genuine.

In Boxes, at 13½d., 2s. 9d., and in Tin Cases 11s., with Full Directions.

LONDON WHOLESALE AGENTS:—BARCLAY & SONS, Farringdon Street; SUTTON & Co., Bow Church-yard; EDWARDS, St. Paul's Church-yard; and SANGER, 150, Oxford Street. Sold also by all Chemists, Booksellers, and Medicine Vendors in the Kingdom.

NUMBER ONE, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.



DAKIN AND COMPY., TEA MERCHANTS.

THE very best TEAS that the Chinese have shipped to England for the space of three years have had the preference by DAKIN and COMPY., and have been

THE TEAS SUPPLIED AT "NUMBER ONE."

The prices of Black Teas vary from 3s. to 5s. 4d.; of Green Teas, from 3s. 2d. to 7s. per pound. The prices of the most favourite sorts are as follows:—

BLACK TEAS, per pound.

Rough and strong Congou, little Sou-chong flavour	3s. 6d.	} An acceptable tea to the public in general.
Very strong Congou, even black leaf	4s. 0d.	
The finest Congou Tea, full Pekoe Sou-chong flavour	4s. 4d.	} This tea will give every satisfaction.
Choice Sou-chong, now only	4s. 6d.	

This is an old-fashioned fine tea, possessing strength, richness of flavour, and excellence of quality.

GREEN TEAS, per pound.

Good Hyson Tea	4s. 0d.	} This tea will give great satisfaction.
Very fine Hyson, with strength and flavour	5s. 0d.	
Superior Hyson, or Gunpowder, with fine flavour	6s. 0d.	

Most desirable green teas, and will be greatly approved of.

Now, all these teas

ARE THE BEST OF THEIR CLASS,

and possess the three excellencies that distinguish good tea, namely, flavour, purity, and strength. Their flavour will please and delight the palate; their purity will refresh and exhilarate the spirits; and their strength will hold out to the second and even to the third cup. All who taste them are pleased with them; all who buy them, buy them with confidence; all who drink them, drink them with satisfaction; and all who purchase them, hasten to purchase them again and again. The best proof of which is to

LOOK NOW AT "NUMBER ONE,"

and to mark its rising and its growth; but three short years back, and how little a thing it was. It was even as an acorn, planted by the wayside, and suffered to grow; whilst the passer-by beheld its progress, signified his assent to it, and daily felt a greater liking for it, until at length, even now, he feels it a pleasure, and he knows it to be to his advantage, to help it to take root, so that some day he may say

"IT HAS BECOME A GOODLY TREE IN THIS GREAT FOREST OF A CITY."

He recommends it to the notice of his friends, and they effect all the saving and the intermediate saving that can be effected by purchasing their teas, at merchants' prices, from DAKIN and COMPY., Tea Merchants, Number One, St. Paul's Churchyard.

The usual overweight, being about one pound on every thirty pounds, as granted to the Trade by the Merchants and by Her Majesty's Customs, will be allowed to all purchasers of original packages.

The visitors to London are fearlessly assured, that they may save a considerable portion of their Railway expenses by purchasing their Teas and Coffees at

NUMBER ONE, SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,

which is in the very centre of England's Metropolis, and a position more easily identified than any in LONDON.

COFFEE AS IN FRANCE.



IT is a fact beyond dispute, that in order to obtain really fine COFFEE, there must be a combination of the various kinds; and to produce strength and flavour, certain proportions should be mixed, according to their different properties; thus it is we have become celebrated for our delicious COFFEE, at 1s. 8d., which is the astonishment and delight of all who have tasted it, being the produce of Four Countries, selected and mixed by rule peculiar to our Establishment, in proportions not known to any other house.

From experiments we have made on the various kinds of COFFEE, we have arrived at the fact, that no one kind possesses strength and flavour; if we select a very strong COFFEE, it is wanting in flavour, by the same rule we find the finest and most flavoured are generally wanting in strength; and as they are usually sold each kind separately, quite regardless of their various properties, the consumer is unable to obtain really fine COFFEE at any price. There is, also, another peculiar advantage which we possess over other houses—our roasting apparatus being constructed on decidedly scientific principles, whereby the strong aromatic flavour of the COFFEE is preserved, which in the ordinary process of roasting is entirely destroyed; and as we are COFFEE roasters, we are enabled to keep a full supply fresh roasted continually, after the Parisian and Continental method.

The rapid and still increasing demand for this COFFEE has caused great excitement in the trade; and several unprincipled houses have copied our papers, and profess to sell a similar article. We therefore think it right to CAUTION the Public, and to state that our superior mixture of Four Countries is a discovery of our own, and therefore the proportions are not known, nor can it be had of any other house, and that in future we shall distinguish it from all others as

SPARROW'S CONTINENTAL COFFEE, at 1s. 8d. per lb.

Packed in Tins of all sizes, perfectly air-tight, for the Country.

*** We have also Strong and Useful COFFEES, from 1s. to 1s. 4d.

TEAS of the true old-fashioned kind, as formerly imported by the East India Company, and with which the name of SPARROW has for many years been identified, at the following reduced scale of prices:—Strong and full flavoured Congou, a most economical Tea for large consumers, 3s. 8d.; Sterling Congou, of superior strength and flavour, 4s.; Finest Congou, strongly recommended, 4s. 4d.; Fine Ripe Old Pekoe, Souchong flavour, one of the finest specimens imported, 4s. 8d.; Strong Green, 3s. 8d. to 4s.; Genuine Hyson, or Young Hyson, 5s.; the Finest Cowslip Hyson, or Young Hyson, very fragrant, 6s.; Strong Gunpowder, 5s. 4d. to 6s.; and the Finest Gunpowder, heavy pearl leaf, 7s.

NO BOHEA OR INFERIOR TEAS KEPT.

Orders, by post or otherwise, containing a remittance, or respectable reference, will be dealt with in a way that will insure recommendations. The carts of this establishment deliver goods in all parts of town free of expense.

TEA ESTABLISHMENT, 95, HIGH HOLBORN,

Adjoining Day & Martin's, leading through into 22, Dean Street.

HENRY SPARROW, PROPRIETOR.

ANCE.



er to obtain

... and to produce ...
... properties; this is a ...
... enjoyment and delight of ...
... rule peculiar to our ...

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... at 1s. 8d. per ...
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... IS KEPT.
... references, will be ...
... deliver goods in all parts of ...

HOLBORN,
Dress Street,
ROW, PROPRIETORS



Mr. Dombey and his "confidential agent."



Florence parts from a very old friend

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CHAPTER XLII.

CONFIDENTIAL AND ACCIDENTAL.

ATTIRED no more in Captain Cuttle's sable slops and sou'-wester hat, but dressed in a substantial suit of brown livery, which, while it affected to be a very sober and demure livery indeed, was really as self-satisfied and confident a one as tailor need desire to make, Rob the Grinder, thus transformed as to his outer man, and all regardless within of the Captain and the Midshipman, except when he devoted a few minutes of his leisure time to crowing over those inseparable worthies, and recalling, with much applauding music from that brazen instrument, his conscience, the triumphant manner in which he had disembarrassed himself of their company, now served his patron, Mr. Carker. Inmate of Mr. Carker's house, and serving about his person, Rob kept his round eyes on the white teeth with fear and trembling, and felt that he had need to open them wider than ever.

He could not have quaked more, through his whole being, before the teeth, though he had come into the service of some powerful enchanter, and they had been his strongest spells. The boy had a sense of power and authority in this patron of his that engrossed his whole attention and exacted his most implicit submission and obedience. He hardly considered himself safe in thinking about him when he was absent, lest he should feel himself immediately taken by the throat again, as on the morning when he first became bound to him, and should see every one of the teeth finding him out, and taxing him with every fancy of his mind. Face to face with him, Rob had no more doubt that Mr. Carker read his secret thoughts, or that he could read them by the least exertion of his will if he were so inclined, than he had that Mr. Carker saw him when he looked at him. The ascendancy was so complete, and held him in such enthrallment, that, hardly daring to think at all but with his mind filled with a constantly dilating impression of his patron's irresistible command over him, and power of doing anything with him, he would stand watching his pleasure, and trying to anticipate his orders, in a state of mental suspension, as to all other things.

Rob had not informed himself perhaps—in his then state of mind it would have been an act of no common temerity to inquire—whether he yielded so completely to this influence in any part, because he had floating suspicions of his patron's being a master of certain treacherous arts in which he had himself been a poor scholar at the Grinders' School. But certainly Rob admired him, as well as feared him. Mr. Carker, perhaps, was better acquainted with the sources of his power, which lost nothing by his management of it.

On the very night when he left the Captain's service, Rob, after disposing of his pigeons, and even making a bad bargain in his hurry, had gone straight down to Mr. Carker's house, and hotly presented himself

before his new master with a glowing face that seemed to expect commendation.

"What, scapegrace!" said Mr. Carker, glancing at his bundle. "Have you left your situation and come to me?"

"Oh if you please, Sir," faltered Rob, "you said, you know, when I come here last—"

"I said," returned Mr. Carker, "what did I say?"

"If you please, Sir, you didn't say nothing at all, Sir," returned Rob, warned by the manner of this inquiry, and very much disconcerted.

His patron looked at him with a wide display of gums, and shaking his forefinger, observed:

"You'll come to an evil end, my vagabond friend, I foresee. There's ruin in store for you."

"Oh if you please, don't Sir!" cried Rob, with his legs trembling under him. "I'm sure, Sir, I only want to work for you, Sir, and to wait upon you, Sir, and to do faithful whatever I'm bid, Sir."

"You had better do faithfully whatever you are bid," returned his patron, "if you have anything to do with me."

"Yes, I know that, Sir," pleaded the submissive Rob; "I'm sure of that, Sir. If you'll only be so good as try me, Sir! And if ever you find me out, Sir, doing anything against your wishes, I give you leave to kill me."

"You dog!" said Mr. Carker, leaning back in his chair, and smiling at him serenely. "That's nothing to what I'd do to you, if you tried to deceive me."

"Yes, Sir," replied the abject Grinder, "I'm sure you would be down upon me dreadful, Sir. I wouldn't attempt for to go and do it, Sir, not if I was bribed with golden guineas."

Thoroughly checked in his expectations of commendation, the crest-fallen Grinder stood looking at his patron, and vainly endeavouring not to look at him, with the uneasiness which a cur will often manifest in a similar situation.

"So you have left your old service, and come here to ask me to take you into mine, eh?" said Mr. Carker.

"Yes, if you please, Sir," returned Rob, who, in doing so, had acted on his patron's own instructions, but dared not justify himself by the least insinuation to that effect.

"Well!" said Mr. Carker. "You know me, boy?"

"Please, Sir, yes, Sir," returned Rob, fumbling with his hat, and still fixed by Mr. Carker's eye, and fruitlessly endeavouring to unfix himself.

Mr. Carker nodded. "Take care, then!"

Rob expressed in a number of short bows his lively understanding of this caution, and was bowing himself back to the door, greatly relieved by the prospect of getting on the outside of it, when his patron stopped him.

"Halloa!" he cried, calling him roughly back. "You have been—shut that door."

Rob obeyed as if his life had depended on his alacrity.

"You have been used to eaves-dropping. Do you know what that means?"

"Listening, Sir?" Rob hazarded, after some embarrassed reflection.

His patron nodded. "And watching and so forth."

"I wouldn't do such a thing here, Sir," answered Rob; "upon my word and honour, I wouldn't, Sir, I wish I may die if I would, Sir, for anything that could be promised to me. I should consider it as much as all the world was worth, to offer to do such a thing, unless I was ordered, Sir."

"You had better not. You have been used, too, to babbling and tattling," said his patron with perfect coolness. "Beware of that here, or you're a lost rascal," and he smiled again, and again cautioned him with his forefinger.

The Grinder's breath came short and thick with consternation. He tried to protest the purity of his intentions, but could only stare at the smiling gentleman in a stupor of submission, with which the smiling gentleman seemed well enough satisfied, for he ordered him down stairs, after observing him for some moments in silence, and gave him to understand that he was retained in his employment.

This was the manner of Rob the Grinder's engagement by Mr. Carker, and his awe-stricken devotion to that gentleman had strengthened and increased, if possible, with every minute of his service.

It was a service of some months' duration, when early one morning, Rob opened the garden gate to Mr. Dombey, who was come to breakfast with his master, by appointment. At the same moment his master himself came, hurrying forth to receive the distinguished guest, and give him welcome with all his teeth.

"I never thought," said Carker, when he had assisted him to alight from his horse, "to see you here, I'm sure. This is an extraordinary day in my calendar. No occasion is very special to a man like you, who may do anything; but to a man like me, the case is widely different."

"You have a tasteful place here, Carker," said Mr. Dombey, condescending to stop upon the lawn, to look about him.

"You can afford to say so," returned Carker. "Thank you."

"Indeed," said Mr. Dombey, in his lofty patronage, "any one might say so. As far as it goes, it is a very commodious and well-arranged place—quite elegant."

"As far as it goes, truly," returned Carker, with an air of disparagement. "It wants that qualification. Well! we have said enough about it; and though you can afford to praise it, I thank you none the less. Will you walk in?"

Mr. Dombey, entering the house, noticed, as he had reason to do, the complete arrangement of the rooms, and the numerous contrivances for comfort and effect that abounded there. Mr. Carker, in his ostentation of humility, received this notice with a deferential smile, and said he understood its delicate meaning, and appreciated it, but in truth the cottage was good enough for one in his position—better, perhaps, than such a man should occupy, poor as it was.

"But perhaps to you, who are so far removed, it really does look better than it is," he said, with his false mouth distended to its fullest stretch. "Just as monarchs imagine attractions in the lives of beggars."

He directed a sharp glance and a sharp smile at Mr. Dombey as he spoke, and a sharper glance, and a sharper smile yet, when Mr. Dombey,

drawing himself up before the fire, in the attitude so often copied by his second in command, looked round at the pictures on the walls. Cursorily as his cold eye wandered over them, Carker's keen glance accompanied his, and kept pace with his, marking exactly where it went, and what it saw. As it rested on one picture in particular, Carker hardly seemed to breathe, his sidelong scrutiny was so catlike and vigilant, but the eye of his great chief passed from that, as from the others, and appeared no more impressed by it than by the rest.

Carker looked at it—it was the picture that resembled Edith—as if it were a living thing; and with a wicked, silent laugh upon his face, that seemed in part addressed to it, though it was all derisive of the great man standing so unconscious beside him. Breakfast was soon set upon the table; and, inviting Mr. Dombey to a chair which had its back towards this picture, he took his own seat opposite to it as usual.

Mr. Dombey was even graver than it was his custom to be, and quite silent. The parrot, swinging in the gilded hoop within her gaudy cage, attempted in vain to attract notice, for Carker was too observant of his visitor to heed her; and the visitor, abstracted in meditation, looked fixedly, not to say sullenly, over his stiff neckcloth, without raising his eyes from the table-cloth. As to Rob, who was in attendance, all his faculties and energies were so locked up in observation of his master, that he scarcely ventured to give shelter to the thought that the visitor was the great gentleman before whom he had been carried as a certificate of the family health, in his childhood, and to whom he had been indebted for his leather smalls.

“Allow me,” said Carker suddenly, “to ask how Mrs. Dombey is?”

He leaned forward obsequiously, as he made the inquiry, with his chin resting on his hand; and at the same time his eyes went up to the picture, as if he said to it, “Now, see, how I will lead him on!”

Mr. Dombey reddened as he answered:

“Mrs. Dombey is quite well. You remind me, Carker, of some conversation that I wish to have with you.”

“Robin, you can leave us,” said his master, at whose mild tones Robin started and disappeared, with his eyes fixed on his patron to the last. “You don't remember that boy, of course?” he added, when the immeshed Grinder was gone.

“No,” said Mr. Dombey, with magnificent indifference.

“Not likely that a man like you would. Hardly possible,” murmured Carker. “But he is one of that family from whom you took a nurse. Perhaps you may remember having generously charged yourself with his education?”

“Is it that boy?” said Mr. Dombey, with a frown. “He does little credit to his education, I believe.”

“Why, he is a young rip, I am afraid,” returned Carker, with a shrug. “He bears that character. But the truth is, I took him into my service because, being able to get no other employment, he conceived (had been taught at home, I dare say) that he had some sort of claim upon you, and was constantly trying to dog your heels with his petition. And although my defined and recognised connexion with your affairs is merely of a business character, still I have that spontaneous interest in everything belonging to you, that——”

He stopped again, as if to discover whether he had led Mr. Dombey far enough yet. And again, with his chin resting on his hand, he leered at the picture.

"Carker," said Mr. Dombey, "I am sensible that you do not limit your—"

"Service," suggested his smiling entertainer.

"No; I prefer to say your regard," observed Mr. Dombey; very sensible, as he said so, that he was paying him a handsome and flattering compliment, "to our mere business relations. Your consideration for my feelings, hopes, and disappointments, in the little instance you have just now mentioned, is an example in point. I am obliged to you, Carker."

Mr. Carker bent his head slowly, and very softly rubbed his hands, as if he were afraid by any action to disturb the current of Mr. Dombey's confidence.

"Your allusion to it is opportune," said Mr. Dombey, after a little hesitation; "for it prepares the way to what I was beginning to say to you, and reminds me that that involves no absolutely new relations between us, although it may involve more personal confidence on my part than I have hitherto—"

"Distinguished me with," suggested Carker, bending his head again: "I will not say to you how honoured I am; for a man like you well knows how much honour he has in his power to bestow at pleasure."

"Mrs. Dombey and myself," said Mr. Dombey, passing this compliment with august self-denial, "are not quite agreed upon some points. We do not appear to understand each other yet. Mrs. Dombey has something to learn."

"Mrs. Dombey is distinguished by many rare attractions; and has been accustomed, no doubt, to receive much adulation," said the smooth, sleek watcher of his slightest look and tone. "But where there is affection, duty, and respect, any little mistakes engendered by such causes are soon set right."

Mr. Dombey's thoughts instinctively flew back to the face that had looked at him in his wife's dressing-room, when an imperious hand was stretched towards the door; and remembering the affection, duty, and respect, expressed in it, he felt the blood rush to his own face quite as plainly as the watchful eyes upon him saw it there.

"Mrs. Dombey and myself," he went on to say, "had some discussion, before Mrs. Skewton's death, upon the causes of my dissatisfaction; of which you will have formed a general understanding from having been a witness of what passed between Mrs. Dombey and myself on the evening when you were at our—at my house."

"When I so much regretted being present," said the smiling Carker. "Proud as a man in my position necessarily must be of your familiar notice—though I give you no credit for it; you may do anything you please without losing caste—and honoured as I was by an early presentation to Mrs. Dombey, before she was made eminent by bearing your name, I almost regretted that night, I assure you, that I had been the object of such especial good fortune."

That any man could, under any possible circumstances, regret the being distinguished by his condescension and patronage, was a moral phenomenon

which Mr. Dombey could not comprehend. He therefore responded, with a considerable accession of dignity. "Indeed! And why, Carker?"

"I fear," returned the confidential agent, "that Mrs. Dombey, never very much disposed to regard me with favourable interest—one in my position could not expect that, from a lady naturally proud, and whose pride becomes her so well—may not easily forgive my innocent part in that conversation. Your displeasure is no light matter, you must remember; and to be visited with it before a third party——"

"Carker," said Mr. Dombey, arrogantly; "I presume that *I* am the first consideration?"

"Oh! Can there be a doubt about it?" replied the other, with the impatience of a man admitting a notorious and incontrovertible fact.

"Mrs. Dombey becomes a secondary consideration, when we are both in question, I imagine," said Mr. Dombey. "Is that so?"

"Is it so?" returned Carker. "Do you know better than any one that you have no need to ask?"

"Then I hope, Carker," said Mr. Dombey, "that your regret in the acquisition of Mrs. Dombey's displeasure, may be almost counterbalanced by your satisfaction in retaining *my* confidence and good opinion."

"I have the misfortune, I find," returned Carker, "to have incurred that displeasure. Mrs. Dombey has expressed it to you?"

"Mrs. Dombey has expressed various opinions," said Mr. Dombey, with majestic coldness and indifference, "in which I do not participate, and which I am not inclined to discuss, or to recall. I made Mrs. Dombey acquainted, some time since, as I have already told you, with certain points of domestic deference and submission on which I felt it necessary to insist. I failed to convince Mrs. Dombey of the expediency of her immediately altering her conduct in those respects, with a view to her own peace and welfare, and my dignity; and I informed Mrs. Dombey that if I should find it necessary to object or remonstrate again, I should express my opinion to her through yourself, my confidential agent."

Blended with the look that Carker bent upon him, was a devilish look at the picture over his head, that struck upon it like a flash of lightning.

"Now, Carker," said Mr. Dombey, "I do not hesitate to say to you that I *will* carry my point. I am not to be trifled with. Mrs. Dombey must understand that my will is law, and that I cannot allow of one exception to the whole rule of my life. You will have the goodness to undertake this charge, which, coming from me, is not unacceptable to you, I hope, whatever regret you may politely profess—for which I am obliged to you on behalf of Mrs. Dombey; and you will have the goodness, I am persuaded, to discharge it as exactly as any other commission."

"You know," said Mr. Carker, "that you have only to command me."

"I know," said Mr. Dombey, with a majestic indication of assent, "that I have only to command you. It is necessary that I should proceed in this. Mrs. Dombey is a lady undoubtedly highly qualified, in many respects, to——"

"To do credit even to your choice," suggested Carker, with a fawning show of teeth.

"Yes; if you please to adopt that form of words," said Mr. Dombey, in his tone of state; "and at present I do not conceive that Mrs. Dombey does that credit to it, to which it is entitled. There is a principle of opposition in Mrs. Dombey that must be eradicated; that must be overcome: Mrs. Dombey does not appear to understand," said Mr. Dombey, forcibly, "that the idea of opposition to Me is monstrous and absurd."

"We, in the City, know you better," replied Carker, with a smile from ear to ear.

"You know me better," said Mr. Dombey. "I hope so. Though, indeed, I am bound to do Mrs. Dombey the justice of saying, however inconsistent it may seem with her subsequent conduct (which remains unchanged), that on my expressing my disapprobation and determination to her, with some severity, on the occasion to which I have referred, my admonition appeared to produce a very powerful effect." Mr. Dombey delivered himself of those words with most portentous stateliness. "I wish you to have the goodness, then, to inform Mrs. Dombey, Carker, from me, that I must recall our former conversation to her remembrance, in some surprise that it has not yet had its effect. That I must insist upon her regulating her conduct by the injunctions laid upon her in that conversation. That I am not satisfied with her conduct. That I am greatly dissatisfied with it. And that I shall be under the very disagreeable necessity of making you the bearer of yet more unwelcome and explicit communications, if she has not the good sense and the proper feeling to adapt herself to my wishes, as the first Mrs. Dombey did, and, I believe I may add, as any other lady in her place would."

"The first Mrs. Dombey lived very happily," said Carker.

"The first Mrs. Dombey had great good sense," said Mr. Dombey, in a gentlemanly toleration of the dead, "and very correct feeling."

"Is Miss Dombey like her mother, do you think?" said Carker.

Swiftly and darkly, Mr. Dombey's face changed. His confidential agent eyed it keenly.

"I have approached a painful subject," he said, in a soft regretful tone of voice, irreconcilable with his eager eye. "Pray forgive me. I forget these chains of association in the interest I have. Pray forgive me."

But for all he said, his eager eye scanned Mr. Dombey's downcast face none the less closely; and then it shot a strange triumphant look at the picture, as appealing to it to bear witness how he led him on again, and what was coming.

"Carker," said Mr. Dombey, looking here and there upon the table, and speaking in a somewhat altered and more hurried voice, and with a paler lip, "there is no occasion for apology. You mistake. The association is with the matter in hand, and not with any recollection, as you suppose. I do not approve of Mrs. Dombey's behaviour towards my daughter."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Carker, "I don't quite understand."

"Understand, then," returned Mr. Dombey, "that you may make that—that you *will* make that, if you please—matter of direct objection from me to Mrs. Dombey. You will please to tell her that her show of devotion for my daughter is disagreeable to me. It is likely to be noticed.

It is likely to induce people to contrast Mrs. Dombey in her relation towards my daughter, with Mrs. Dombey in her relation towards myself. You will have the goodness to let Mrs. Dombey know, plainly, that I object to it; and that I expect her to defer, immediately, to my objection. Mrs. Dombey may be in earnest, or she may be pursuing a whim, or she may be opposing me; but I object to it in any case, and in every case. If Mrs. Dombey is in earnest, so much the less reluctant should she be to desist; for she will not serve my daughter by any such display. If my wife has any superfluous gentleness, and duty over and above her proper submission to me, she may bestow them where she pleases, perhaps; but I will have submission first!—Carker," said Mr. Dombey, checking the unusual emotion with which he had spoken, and falling into a tone more like that in which he was accustomed to assert his greatness, "you will have the goodness not to omit or slur this point, but to consider it a very important part of your instructions."

Mr. Carker bowed his head, and rising from the table, and standing thoughtfully before the fire, with his hand to his smooth chin, looked down at Mr. Dombey with the evil slyness of some monkish carving, half human and half brute; or like a leering face on an old water-spout. Mr. Dombey, recovering his composure by degrees, or cooling his emotion in his sense of having taken a high position, sat gradually stiffening again, and looking at the parrot as she swung to and fro, in her great wedding ring.

"I beg your pardon," said Carker, after a silence, suddenly resuming his chair, and drawing it opposite to Mr. Dombey's, "but let me understand. Mrs. Dombey is aware of the probability of your making me the organ of your displeasure?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Dombey. "I have said so."

"Yes," rejoined Carker, quickly; "but why?"

"Why!" Mr. Dombey repeated: not without hesitation. "Because I told her."

"Aye," replied Carker. "But why did you tell her? You see," he continued with a smile, and softly laying his velvet hand, as a cat might have laid its sheathed claws, on Mr. Dombey's arm, "if I perfectly understand what is in your mind, I am so much more likely to be useful, and to have the happiness of being effectually employed. I think I *do* understand. I have not the honour of Mrs. Dombey's good opinion. In my position, I have no reason to expect it; but I take the fact to be, that I have not got it?"

"Possibly not," said Mr. Dombey.

"Consequently," pursued Carker, "your making these communications to Mrs. Dombey through me, is sure to be particularly unpalatable to that lady?"

"It appears to me," said Mr. Dombey, with haughty reserve, and yet with some embarrassment, "that Mrs. Dombey's views upon the subject form no part of it as it presents itself to you and me, Carker. But it may be so."

"And—pardon me—do I misconceive you," said Carker, "when I think you deservy in this, a likely means of humbling Mrs. Dombey's pride—I use the word as expressive of a quality which, kept within due bounds, adorns and graces a lady so distinguished for her beauty and accomplish-

ments—and, not to say of punishing her, but of reducing her to the submission you so naturally and justly require?"

"I am not accustomed, Carker, as you know," said Mr. Dombey, "to give such close reasons for any course of conduct I think proper to adopt, but I will gainsay nothing of this. If you have any objection to found upon it, that is indeed another thing, and the mere statement that you have one will be sufficient. But I have not supposed, I confess, that any confidence I could intrust to you, would be likely to degrade you—"

"Oh! *I* degraded!" exclaimed Carker. "In *your* service!"

"—or to place you," pursued Mr. Dombey, "in a false position."

"*I* in a false position!" exclaimed Carker. "I shall be proud—delighted—to execute your trust. I could have wished, I own, to have given the lady at whose feet I would lay my humble duty and devotion—for is she not your wife!—no new cause of dislike; but a wish from you is, of course, paramount to every other consideration on earth. Besides, when Mrs. Dombey is converted from these little errors of judgment, incidental, I would presume to say, to the novelty of her situation, I shall hope that she will perceive in the slight part I take, only a grain—my removed and different sphere gives room for little more—of the respect for you, and sacrifice of all considerations to you, of which it will be her pleasure and privilege to garner up a great store every day."

Mr. Dombey seemed, at the moment, again to see her with her hand stretched out towards the door, and again to hear through the mild speech of his confidential agent an echo of the words, "Nothing can make us stranger to each other than we are henceforth!" But he shook off the fancy, and did not shake in his resolution, and said "Certainly, no doubt."

"There is nothing more?" quoth Carker, drawing his chair back to its old place—for they had taken little breakfast as yet—and pausing for an answer before he sat down.

"Nothing," said Mr. Dombey, "but this. You will be good enough to observe, Carker, that no message to Mrs. Dombey with which you are or may be charged, admits of reply. You will be good enough to bring me no reply. Mrs. Dombey is informed that it does not become me to temporise or treat upon any matter that is at issue between us, and that what I say is final."

Mr. Carker signified his understanding of these credentials, and they fell to breakfast with what appetite they might. The Grinder also, in due time re-appeared, keeping his eyes upon his master without a moment's respite, and passing the time in a reverie of worshipful terror. Breakfast concluded, Mr. Dombey's horse was ordered out again, and Mr. Carker mounting his own, they rode off for the City together.

Mr. Carker was in capital spirits, and talked much. Mr. Dombey received his conversation with the sovereign air of a man who had a right to be talked to, and occasionally condescended to throw in a few words to carry on the conversation. So they rode on characteristically enough. But Mr. Dombey, in his dignity, rode with very long stirrups, and a very loose rein, and very rarely deigned to look down to see where his horse went. In consequence of which it happened that Mr. Dombey's horse, while going at a round trot, stumbled on some loose stones, threw him, rolled over

him, and lashing out with his iron-shod feet, in his struggles to get up, kicked him.

Mr. Carker, quick of eye, steady of hand, and a good horseman, was afoot, and had the struggling animal upon his legs and by the bridle, in a moment. Otherwise that morning's confidence would have been Mr. Dombey's last. Yet even with the flush and hurry of this action red upon him, he bent over his prostrate chief with every tooth disclosed, and muttered as he stooped down, "I have given good cause of offence to Mrs. Dombey *now*, she knew it!"

Mr. Dombey being insensible, and bleeding from the head and face, was carried by certain menders of the road, under Carker's direction, to the nearest public-house, which was not far off, and where he was soon attended by divers surgeons, who arrived in quick succession from all parts, and who seemed to come by some mysterious instinct, as vultures are said to gather about a camel who dies in the desert. After being at some pains to restore him to consciousness, these gentlemen examined into the nature of his injuries. One surgeon who lived hard by was strong for a compound fracture of the leg, which was the landlord's opinion also; but two surgeons who lived at a distance, and were only in that neighbourhood by accident, combated this opinion so disinterestedly, that it was decided at last that the patient, though severely cut and bruised, had broken no bones but a lesser rib or so, and might be carefully taken home before night. His injuries being dressed and bandaged, which was a long operation, and he at length left to repose, Mr. Carker mounted his horse again, and rode away to carry the intelligence home.

Crafty and cruel as his face was at the best of times, though it was a sufficiently fair face as to form and regularity of feature, it was at its worst when he set forth on this errand; animated by the craft and cruelty of thoughts within him, suggestions of remote possibility rather than of design or plot, that made him ride as if he hunted men and women. Drawing rein at length, and slackening in his speed, as he came into the more public roads, he checked his white-legged horse into picking his way along as usual, and hid himself beneath his sleek, hushed, crouching manner, and his ivory smile, as he best could.

He rode direct to Mr. Dombey's house, alighted at the door, and begged to see Mrs. Dombey on an affair of importance. The servant who showed him to Mr. Dombey's own room, soon returned to say that it was not Mrs. Dombey's hour for receiving visitors, and that he begged pardon for not having mentioned it before.

Mr. Carker, who was quite prepared for a cold reception, wrote upon a card that he must take the liberty of pressing for an interview, and that he would not be so bold as to do so, *for the second time* (this he underlined), if he were not equally sure of the occasion being sufficient for his justification. After a trifling delay, Mrs. Dombey's maid appeared, and conducted him to a morning room up-stairs, where Edith and Florence were together.

He had never thought Edith half so beautiful before. Much as he admired the graces of her face and form, and freshly as they dwelt within his sensual remembrance, he had never thought her half so beautiful.

Her glance fell haughtily upon him in the doorway; but he looked at

Florence—though only in the act of bending his head, as he came in—with some irrepressible expression of the new power he held; and it was his triumph to see the glance droop and falter, and to see that Edith half rose up to receive him.

He was very sorry, he was deeply grieved; he couldn't say with what unwillingness he came to prepare her for the intelligence of a very slight accident. He entreated Mrs. Dombey to compose herself. Upon his sacred word of honour, there was no cause of alarm. But Mr. Dombey—

Florence uttered a sudden cry. He did not look at her, but at Edith. Edith composed and re-assured her. *She* uttered no cry of distress. No, no.

Mr. Dombey had met with an accident in riding. His horse had slipped, and he had been thrown.

Florence wildly exclaimed that he was badly hurt; that he was killed!

No. Upon his honour Mr. Dombey, though stunned at first, was soon recovered, and though certainly hurt was in no kind of danger. If this were not the truth, he, the distressed intruder, never could have had the courage to present himself before Mrs. Dombey. It was the truth indeed, he solemnly assured her.

All this he said as if he were answering Edith, and not Florence, and with his eyes and his smile fastened on Edith.

He then went on to tell her where Mr. Dombey was lying, and to request that a carriage might be placed at his disposal to bring him home.

"Mama," faltered Florence, in tears, "if I might venture to go!"

Mr. Carker, having his eyes on Edith when he heard these words, gave her a secret look and slightly shook his head. He saw how she battled with herself before she answered him with her handsome eyes, but he wrested the answer from her—he showed her that he would have it, or that he would speak and cut Florence to the heart—and she gave it to him. As he had looked at the picture in the morning, so he looked at her afterwards, when she turned her eyes away.

"I am directed to request," he said, "that the new housekeeper—Mrs. Pipchin, I think, is the name—"

Nothing escaped him. He saw, in an instant, that she was another slight of Mr. Dombey's on his wife.

"—may be informed that Mr. Dombey wishes to have his bed prepared in his own apartments down stairs, as he prefers those rooms to any other. I shall return to Mr. Dombey almost immediately. That every possible attention has been paid to his comfort, and that he is the object of every possible solicitude, I need not assure you, Madam. Let me again say, there is no cause for the least alarm. Even you may be quite at ease, believe me."

He bowed himself out, with his extremest show of deference and conciliation; and having returned to Mr. Dombey's room, and there arranged for a carriage being sent after him to the City, mounted his horse again, and rode slowly thither. He was very thoughtful as he went along, and very thoughtful there, and very thoughtful in the carriage on his way back to the place where Mr. Dombey had been left. It was only when sitting by that gentleman's couch that he was quite himself again, and conscious of his teeth.

About the time of twilight, Mr. Dombey, grievously afflicted with aches and pains, was helped into his carriage, and propped with cloaks and pillows on one side of it, while his confidential agent bore him company upon the other. As he was not to be shaken, they moved at little more than a foot pace; and hence it was quite dark when he was brought home. Mrs. Pipchin, bitter and grim, and not oblivious of the Peruvian Mines, as the establishment in general had good reason to know, received him at the door, and freshened the domestics with several little sprinklings of wordy vinegar, while they assisted in conveying him to his room. Mr. Carker remained in attendance until he was safe in bed, and then, as he declined to receive any female visitor but the excellent Ogress who presided over his household, waited on Mrs. Dombey once more, with his report on her lord's condition.

He again found Edith alone with Florence, and he again addressed the whole of his soothing speech to Edith, as if she were a prey to the liveliest and most affectionate anxieties. So earnest he was in his respectful sympathy, that, on taking leave, he ventured—with one more glance towards Florence at the moment—to take her hand, and bending over it, to touch it with his lips.

Edith did not withdraw the hand, nor did she strike his fair face with it, despite the flush upon her cheek, the bright light in her eyes, and the dilation of her whole form. But when she was alone in her own room, she struck it on the marble chimney-shelf, so that, at one blow, it was bruised, and bled; and held it from her, near the shining fire, as if she could have thrust it in and burned it.

Far into the night she sat alone, by the sinking blaze, in dark and threatening beauty, watching the murky shadows looming on the wall, as if her thoughts were tangible, and cast them there. Whatever shapes of outrage and affront, and black foreshadowings of things that might happen, flickered, indistinct and giant-like, before her, one resented figure marshalled them against her. And that figure was her husband.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT.

FLORENCE, long since awakened from her dream, mournfully observed the estrangement between her father and Edith, and saw it widen more and more, and knew that there was greater bitterness between them every day. Each day's added knowledge deepened the shade upon her love and hope, roused up the old sorrow that had slumbered for a little time, and made it even heavier to bear than it had been before.

It had been hard—how hard may none but Florence ever know!—to have the natural affection of a true and earnest nature turned to agony; and slight, or stern repulse, substituted for the tenderest protection and the dearest care. It had been hard to feel in her deep heart what she had felt, and never know the happiness of one touch of response. But

it was much more hard to be compelled to doubt either her father or Edith, so affectionate and dear to her, and to think of her love for each of them, by turns, with fear, distrust, and wonder.

Yet Florence now began to do so; and the doing of it was a task imposed upon her by the very purity of her soul, as one she could not fly from. She saw her father cold and obdurate to Edith, as to her; hard, inflexible, unyielding. Could it be, she asked herself with starting tears, that her own dear mother had been made unhappy by such treatment, and had pined away and died? Then she would think how proud and stately Edith was to every one but her, with what disdain she treated him, how distantly she kept apart from him, and what she had said on the night when she came home; and quickly it would come on Florence, almost as a crime, that she loved one who was set in opposition to her father, and that her father knowing of it, must think of her in his solitary room as the unnatural child who added this wrong to the old fault, so much wept for, of never having won his fatherly affection from her birth. The next kind word from Edith, the next kind glance, would shake these thoughts again, and make them seem like black ingratitude; for who but she had cheered the drooping heart of Florence, so lonely and so hurt, and been its best of comforters! Thus, with her gentle nature yearning to them both, feeling for the misery of both, and whispering doubts of her own duty to both, Florence in her wider and expanded love, and by the side of Edith, endured more, than when she had hoarded up her undivided secret in the mournful house, and her beautiful Mamma had never dawned upon it.

One exquisite unhappiness that would have far outweighed this, Florence was spared. She never had the least suspicion that Edith by her tenderness for her widened the separation from her father, or gave him new cause of dislike. If Florence had conceived the possibility of such an effect being wrought by such a cause, what grief she would have felt, what sacrifice she would have tried to make, poor loving girl, how fast and sure her quiet passage might have been beneath it to the presence of that higher Father who does not reject his children's love, or spurn their tried and broken hearts, Heaven knows! But it was otherwise, and that was well.

No word was ever spoken between Florence and Edith now, on these subjects. Edith had said there ought to be between them, in that wise, a division and a silence like the grave itself: and Florence felt that she was right.

In this state of affairs her father was brought home, suffering and disabled; and gloomily retired to his own rooms, where he was tended by servants, not approached by Edith, and had no friend or companion but Mr. Carker, who withdrew near midnight.

"And nice company *he* is, Miss Floy," said Susan Nipper. "Oh, he's a precious piece of goods! If ever he wants a character don't let him come to me whatever he does, that's all I tell him."

"Dear Susan," urged Florence, "don't!"

"Oh it's very well to say 'don't' Miss Floy," returned the Nipper, much exasperated; "but raly begging your pardon we're a coming to such passes that it turns all the blood in a person's body into pins and needles, with their pints all ways. Don't mistake me Miss Floy, I don't mean nothing again your ma-in-law who has always treated me as a

lady should though she is rather high I must say not that I have any right to object to that particular, but when we come to Mrs. Pipchinses and having them put over us and keeping guard at your pa's door like crocodiles (only make us thankful that they lay no eggs!) we are a growing too outrageous!"

"Papa thinks well of Mrs. Pipchin, Susan," returned Florence, "and has a right to choose his housekeeper, you know. Pray don't!"

"Well Miss Floy," returned the Nipper, "when you say don't, I never do I hope but Mrs. Pipchin acts like early gooseberries upon me Miss, and nothing less."

Susan was unusually emphatic and destitute of punctuation in her discourse on this night, which was the night of Mr. Dombey's being brought home, because, having been sent down stairs by Florence to inquire after him, she had been obliged to deliver her message to her mortal enemy Mrs. Pipchin; who, without carrying it in to Mr. Dombey, had taken upon herself to return what Miss Nipper called a huffish answer, on her own responsibility. This, Susan Nipper construed into presumption on the part of that exemplary sufferer by the Peruvian mines, and a deed of disparagement upon her young lady; that was not to be forgiven; and so far her emphatic state was special. But she had been in a condition of greatly increased suspicion and distrust, ever since the marriage; for, like most persons of her quality of mind, who form a strong and sincere attachment to one in the different station which Florence occupied, Susan was very jealous, and her jealousy naturally attached to Edith, who divided her old empire, and came between them. Proud and glad as Susan Nipper truly was, that her young mistress should be advanced towards her proper place in the scene of her old neglect, and that she should have her father's handsome wife for her companion and protectress, she could not relinquish any part of her own dominion to the handsome wife, without a grudge and a vague feeling of ill will, for which she did not fail to find a disinterested justification in her sharp perception of the pride and passion of the lady's character. From the background to which she had necessarily retired somewhat, since the marriage, Miss Nipper looked on, therefore, at domestic affairs in general, with a resolute conviction that no good would come of Mrs. Dombey: always being very careful to publish on all possible occasions, that she had nothing to say against her.

"Susan," said Florence, who was sitting thoughtfully at her table, "it is very late. I shall want nothing more to-night."

"Ah, Miss Floy!" returned the Nipper, "I'm sure I often wish for them old times when I sat up with you hours later than this and fell asleep through being tired out when you was as broad awake as spectacles, but you've ma's-in-law to come and sit with you now Miss Floy and I'm thankful for it I'm sure. I've not a word to say against 'em."

"I shall not forget who was my old companion when I had none, Susan," returned Florence, gently, "never!" And looking up, she put her arm round the neck of her humble friend, drew her face down to hers, and, bidding her good night, kissed it; which so mollified Miss Nipper that she fell a sobbing.

"Now my dear Miss Floy," said Susan, "let me go down stairs again

and see how your pa is, I know you're wretched about him, do let me go down stairs again and knock at his door my own self."

"No," said Florence, "go to bed. We shall hear more in the morning. I will inquire myself in the morning. Mamma has been down, I dare say;" Florence blushed, for she had no such hope; "or is there now, perhaps. Good night!"

Susan was too much softened to express her private opinion on the probability of Mrs. Dombey's being in attendance on her husband; and silently withdrew. Florence left alone, soon hid her head upon her hands as she had often done in other days, and did not restrain the tears from coursing down her face. The misery of this domestic discord and unhappiness; the withered hope she cherished now, if hope it could be called, of ever being taken to her father's heart; her doubts and fears between the two; the yearning of her innocent breast to both; the heavy disappointment and regret of such an end as this, to what had been a vision of bright hope and promise to her; all crowded on her mind and made her tears flow fast. Her mother and her brother dead, her father unmoved towards her, Edith opposed to him and casting him away, but loving her, and loved by her, it seemed as if her affection could never prosper, rest where it would. That weak thought was soon hushed, but the thoughts in which it had arisen were too true and strong to be dismissed with it; and they made the night desolate.

Among such reflections there rose up, as there had risen up all day, the image of her father, wounded and in pain, alone in his own room, untended by those who should be nearest to him, and passing the tardy hours in lonely suffering. A frightened thought which made her start and clasp her hands—though it was not a new one in her mind—that he might die, and never see her or pronounce her name, thrilled her whole frame. In her agitation she thought, and trembled while she thought, of once more stealing down stairs, and venturing to his door.

She listened at her own. The house was quiet, and all the lights were out. It was a long, long time, she thought, since she used to make her nightly pilgrimages to his door! It was a long, long time, she tried to think, since she had entered his room at midnight, and he had led her back to the stair-foot!

With the same child's heart within her, as of old: even with the child's sweet timid eyes and clustering hair: Florence, as strange to her father in her early maiden bloom, as in her nursery time, crept down the staircase listening as she went, and drew near to his room. No one was stirring in the house. The door was partly open to admit air; and all was so still within, that she could hear the burning of the fire, and count the ticking of the clock that stood upon the chimney-piece.

She looked in. In that room, the housekeeper wrapped in a blanket was fast asleep in an easy chair before the fire. The doors between it and the next, were partly closed, and a screen was drawn before them; but there was a light there, and it shone upon the cornice of his bed. All was so very still that she could hear from his breathing that he was asleep. This gave her courage to pass round the screen, and look into his chamber.

It was as great a start to come upon his sleeping face as if she had not

expected to see it. Florence stood arrested on the spot, and if he had awakened then, must have remained there.

There was a cut upon his forehead, and they had been wetting his hair, which lay bedabbled and entangled on the pillow. One of his arms, resting outside the bed, was bandaged up, and he was very white. But it was not this, that after the first quick glance, and first assurance of his sleeping quietly, held Florence rooted to the ground. It was something very different from this, and more than this, that made him look so solemn in her eyes.

She had never seen his face in all her life, but there had been upon it—or she fancied so—some disturbing consciousness of her. She had never seen his face in all her life, but hope had sunk within her, and her timid glance had drooped before its stern, unloving, and repelling harshness. As she looked upon it now, she saw it, for the first time, free from the cloud that had darkened her childhood. Calm, tranquil night, was reigning in its stead. He might have gone to sleep, for anything she saw there, blessing her.

Awake, unkind father! Awake, now, sullen man! The time is flitting by; the hour is coming with an angry tread. Awake!

There was no change upon his face; and as she watched it, awfully, its motionless repose recalled the faces that were gone. So they looked, so would he; so she, his weeping child, who should say when! so all the world of love and hatred and indifference around them! When that time should come, it would not be the heavier to him, for this that she was going to do; and it might fall something lighter upon her.

She stole close to the bed, and drawing in her breath, bent down, and softly kissed him on the face, and laid her own for one brief moment by its side, and put the arm, with which she dared not touch him, round about him on the pillow.

Awake, doomed man, while she is near! The time is flitting by; the hour is coming with an angry tread; its foot is in the house. Awake!

In her mind, she prayed to God to bless her father, and to soften him towards her, if it might be so; and if not, to forgive him if he was wrong, and pardon her the prayer which almost seemed impiety. And doing so, and looking back at him with blinded eyes, and stealing timidly away, passed out of his room, and crossed the other, and was gone.

He may sleep on now. He may sleep on while he may. But let him look for that slight figure when he wakes, and find it near him when the hour is come!

Sad and grieving was the heart of Florence, as she crept up stairs. The quiet house had grown more dismal since she came down. The sleep she had been looking on, in the dead of night, had the solemnity to her of death and life in one. The secrecy and silence of her own proceeding made the night secret, silent, and oppressive. She felt unwilling, almost unable, to go on to her own chamber; and turning into the drawing-rooms, where the clouded moon was shining through the blinds, looked out into the empty streets.

The wind was blowing drearily. The lamps looked pale, and shook as

if they were cold. There was a distant glimmer of something that was not quite darkness, rather than of light, in the sky; and foreboding night was shivering and restless, as the dying are who make a troubled end. Florence remembered how, as a watcher, by a sick bed, she had noted this bleak time, and felt its influence, as if in some hidden natural antipathy to it; and now it was very, very gloomy.

Her mamma had not come to her room that night, which was one cause of her having sat late out of her bed. In her general uneasiness, no less than in her ardent longing to have somebody to speak to, and to break this spell of gloom and silence, Florence directed her steps towards the chamber where she slept.

The door was not fastened within, and yielded smoothly to her hesitating hand. She was surprised to find a bright light burning; still more surprised, on looking in, to see that her mamma, but partially undressed, was sitting near the ashes of the fire, which had crumbled and dropped away. Her eyes were intently bent upon the air; and in their light, and in her face, and in her form, and in the grasp with which she held the elbows of her chair as if about to start up, Florence saw such fierce emotion that it terrified her.

"Mamma!" she cried, "what is the matter!"

Edith started; looking at her with such a strange dread in her face, that Florence was more frightened than before.

"Mamma!" said Florence, hurriedly advancing. "Dear Mamma! what is the matter!"

"I have not been well," said Edith, shaking, and still looking at her in the same strange way. "I have had bad dreams, my love."

"And not yet been to bed, Mamma?"

"No," she returned. "Half-waking dreams."

Her features gradually softened; and suffering Florence to come close to her, within her embrace, she said in a tender manner, "But what does my bird do here! What does my bird do here!"

"I have been uneasy, Mamma, in not seeing you to-night, and in not knowing how Papa was; and I——"

Florence stopped there, and said no more.

"Is it late?" asked Edith, fondly putting back the curls that mingled with her own dark hair, and strayed upon her face.

"Very late. Near day."

"Near day!" she repeated, in surprise.

"Dear Mamma, what have you done to your hand?" said Florence.

Edith drew it suddenly away, and, for a moment, looked at her with the same strange dread (there was a sort of wild avoidance in it) as before; but she presently said, "Nothing, nothing. A blow." And then she said, "My Florence!" And then her bosom heaved, and she was weeping passionately.

"Mamma!" said Florence. "Oh Mamma, what can I do, what should I do, to make us happier! Is there anything!"

"Nothing," she replied.

"Are you sure of that? Can it never be? If I speak now of what is in my thoughts, in spite of what we have agreed," said Florence, "you will not blame me, will you?"

"It is useless," she replied, "useless. I have told you, dear, that I have had bad dreams. Nothing can change them, or prevent their coming back."

"I do not understand," said Florence, gazing on her agitated face, which seemed to darken as she looked.

"I have dreamed," said Edith in a low voice, "of a pride that is all powerless for good, all powerful for evil; of a pride that has been galled and goaded, through many shameful years, and has never recoiled except upon itself; a pride that has debased its owner with the consciousness of deep humiliation, and never helped its owner boldly to resent it or avoid it, or to say 'This shall not be!' a pride that, rightly guided, might have led perhaps to better things, but which, misdirected and perverted, like all else belonging to the same possessor, has been self-contempt, mere hardihood and ruin."

She neither looked nor spoke to Florence now, but went on as if she were alone.

"I have dreamed," she said, "of such indifference and callousness, arising from this self-contempt; this wretched, inefficient, miserable pride; that it has gone on with listless steps even to the altar, yielding to the old, familiar, beckoning finger,—oh mother, oh mother!—while it spurned it; and willing to be hateful to itself for once and for all, rather than to be stung daily in some new form. Mean, poor thing!"

And now with gathering and darkening emotion, she looked as she had looked when Florence entered.

"And I have dreamed," she said, "that in a first late effort to achieve a purpose, it has been trodden on, and trodden down by a base foot, but turns and looks upon him. I have dreamed that it is wounded, hunted, set upon by dogs, but that it stands at bay, and will not yield; no, that it cannot, if it would; but that it is urged on to hate him, rise against him, and defy him!"

Her clenched hand tightened on the trembling arm she had in hers, and as she looked down on the alarmed and wondering face, her own subsided. "Oh Florence!" she said, "I think I have been nearly mad to-night!" and humbled her proud head upon her neck, and wept again.

"Don't leave me! be near me! I have no hope but in you!" These words she said a score of times.

Soon she grew calmer, and was full of pity for the tears of Florence, and for her waking at such untimely hours. And the day now dawning, Edith folded her in her arms and laid her down upon her bed, and, not lying down herself, sat by her, and bade her try to sleep.

"For you are weary, dearest, and unhappy, and should rest."

"I am indeed unhappy, dear Mamma, to-night," said Florence. "But you are weary and unhappy, too."

"Not when you lie asleep so near me, sweet."

They kissed each other, and Florence, worn out, gradually fell into a gentle slumber; but as her eyes closed on the face beside her, it was so sad to think upon the face down stairs, that her hand drew closer to Edith for some comfort; yet, even in the act, it faltered, lest it should be deserting him. So, in her sleep, she tried to reconcile the two together, and to show them that she loved them both, but could not do it, and her waking grief was part of her dreams.

Edith, sitting by, looked down at the dark eyelashes lying wet on the flushed cheeks, and looked with gentleness and pity, for she knew the truth. But no sleep hung upon her own eyes. As the day came on she still sat watching and waking, with the placid hand in hers, and sometimes whispered, as she looked at the hushed face, "Be near me, Florence. I have no hope but in you!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

A SEPARATION.

WITH the day, though not so early as the sun, uprose Miss Susan Nipper. There was a heaviness in this young maiden's exceedingly sharp black eyes, that abated somewhat of their sparkling, and suggested—which was not their usual character—the possibility of their being sometimes shut. There was likewise a swollen look about them, as if they had been crying over-night. But the Nipper, so far from being cast down, was singularly brisk and bold, and all her energies appeared to be braced up for some great feat. This was noticeable even in her dress, which was much more tight and trim than usual; and in occasional twitches of her head as she went about the house, which were mightily expressive of determination.

In a word, she had formed a determination, and an aspiring one: it being nothing less than this—to penetrate to Mr. Dombey's presence, and have speech of that gentleman alone. "I have often said I would," she remarked, in a threatening manner, to herself, that morning, with many twitches of her head, "and now I *will*!"

Spurring herself on to the accomplishment of this desperate design, with a sharpness that was peculiar to herself, Susan Nipper haunted the hall and staircase during the whole forenoon, without finding a favourable opportunity for the assault. Not at all baffled by this discomfiture, which indeed had a stimulating effect, and put her on her mettle, she diminished nothing of her vigilance; and at last discovered, towards evening, that her sworn foe Mrs. Pipchin, under pretence of having sat up all night, was dozing in her own room, and that Mr. Dombey was lying on his sofa, unattended.

With a twitch—not of her head merely, this time, but of her whole self—the Nipper went on tiptoe to Mr. Dombey's door, and knocked. "Come in!" said Mr. Dombey. Susan encouraged herself with a final twitch, and went in.

Mr. Dombey, who was eyeing the fire, gave an amazed look at his visitor, and raised himself a little on his arm. The Nipper dropped a curtsy.

"What do you want?" said Mr. Dombey.

"If you please, Sir, I wish to speak to you," said Susan.

Mr. Dombey moved his lips as if he were repeating the words, but he seemed so lost in astonishment at the presumption of the young woman as to be incapable of giving them utterance.

"I have been in your service, Sir," said Susan Nipper, with her usual rapidity, "now twelve year a waiting on Miss Floy my own young lady who couldn't speak plain when I first come here and I was old in this house when Mrs. Richards was new, I may not be Meethosalem, but I am not a child in arms."

Mr. Dombey, raised upon his arm and looking at her, offered no comment on this preparatory statement of facts.

"There never was a dearer or a blessedder young lady than is my young lady, Sir," said Susan, "and I ought to know a great deal better than some for I have seen her in her grief and I have seen her in her joy (there 's not been much of it) and I have seen her with her brother and I have seen her in her loneliness and some have never seen her, and I say to some and all—I do!" and here the black-eyed shook her head, and slightly stamped her foot; "that she 's the blessedest and dearest angel is Miss Floy that ever drew the breath of life, the more that I was torn to pieces Sir the more I 'd say it though I may not be a Fox's Martyr."

Mr. Dombey turned yet paler than his fall had made him, with indignation and astonishment; and kept his eyes upon the speaker as if he accused them, and his ears too, of playing him false.

"No one could be anything but true and faithful to Miss Floy, Sir," pursued Susan, "and I take no merit for my service of twelve year, for I love her—yes, I say to some and all I do!"—and here the black-eyed shook her head again, and slightly stamped her foot again, and checked a sob; "but true and faithful service gives me right to speak I hope and speak I must and will now, right or wrong."

"What do you mean, woman!" said Mr. Dombey, glaring at her. "How do you dare?"

"What I mean, Sir, is to speak respectful and without offence, but out, and how I dare I know not but I do!" said Susan. "Oh! you don't know my young lady Sir you don't indeed, you 'd never know so little of her, if you did."

Mr. Dombey, in a fury, put his hand out for the bell-rope; but there was no bell-rope on that side of the fire, and he could not rise and cross to the other without assistance. The quick eye of the Nipper detected his helplessness immediately, and now, as she afterwards observed, she felt she had got him.

"Miss Floy," said Susan Nipper, "is the most devoted and most patient and most dutiful and beautiful of daughters, there an't no gentleman, no Sir, though as great and rich as all the greatest and richest of England put together, but might be proud of her and would and ought. If he knew her value right, he 'd rather lose his greatness and his fortune piece by piece and beg his way in rags from door to door, I say to some and all, he would!" cried Susan Nipper, bursting into tears, "than bring the sorrow on her tender heart that I have seen it suffer in this house!"

"Woman," cried Mr. Dombey, "leave the room."

"Begging your pardon, not even if I am to leave the situation, Sir," replied the stedfast Nipper, "in which I have been so many years and seen so much—although I hope you 'd never have the heart to send me from Miss Floy for such a cause—will I go now till I have said the rest,

I may not be a Indian widow Sir and I am not and I would not so become but if I once made up my mind to burn myself alive, I'd do it! And I've made my mind up to go on."

Which was rendered no less clear by the expression of Susan Nipper's countenance, than by her words.

"There an't a person in your service, Sir," pursued the black-eyed, "that has always stood more in awe of you than me and you may think how true it is when I make so bold as say that I have hundreds and hundreds of times thought of speaking to you and never been able to make my mind up to it till last night, but last night decided of me."

Mr. Dombey, in a paroxysm of rage, made another grasp at the bell-rope that was not there, and, in its absence, pulled his hair rather than nothing.

"I have seen," said Susan Nipper, "Miss Floy strive and strive when nothing but a child so sweet and patient that the best of women might have copied from her, I've seen her sitting nights together half the night through to help her delicate brother with his learning, I've seen her helping him and watching him at other times—some well know when—I've seen her, with no encouragement and no help, grow up to be a lady, thank God! that is the grace and pride of every company she goes in, and I've always seen her cruelly neglected and keenly feeling of it—I say to some and all, I have!—and never said one word, but ordering one's self lowly and reverently towards one's betters, is not to be a worshipper of graven images, and I will and must speak!"

"Is there anybody there!" cried Mr. Dombey, calling out. "Where are the men! where are the women! Is there no one there!"

"I left my dear young lady out of bed late last night," said Susan, nothing checked, "and I knew why, for you was ill Sir and she didn't know how ill and that was enough to make her wretched as I saw it did.—I may not be a Peacock; but I have my eyes—and I sat up a little in my own room thinking she might be lonesome and might want me, and I saw her steal down stairs and come to this door as if it was a guilty thing to look at her own Pa, and then steal back again and go into them lonely drawing-rooms, a-crying so, that I could hardly bear to hear it. *I can not bear to hear it,*" said Susan Nipper, wiping her black eyes, and fixing them undauntedly on Mr. Dombey's infuriated face. "It's not the first time I have heard it, not by many and many a time you don't know your own daughter Sir, you don't know what you're doing, Sir, I say to some and all," cried Susan Nipper, in a final burst, "that it's a sinful shame!"

"Why, hoity toity!" cried the voice of Mrs. Pipchin, as the black bombazeen garments of that fair Peruvian Miner swept into the room. "What's this, indeed!"

Susan favoured Mrs. Pipchin with a look she had invented expressly for her when they first became acquainted, and resigned the reply to Mr. Dombey.

"What's this!" repeated Mr. Dombey, almost foaming. "What's this, Madam? You who are at the head of this household, and bound to keep it in order, have reason to inquire. Do you know this woman?"

"I know very little good of her, Sir," croaked Mrs. Pipchin. "How dare you come here, you hussy? Go along with you!"

But the inflexible Nipper, merely honouring Mrs. Pipchin with another look, remained.

"Do you call it managing this establishment, Madam," said Mr. Dombey, "to leave a person like this at liberty to come and talk to me! A gentleman—in his own house—in his own room—assailed with the impertinencies of women servants!"

"Well Sir," returned Mrs. Pipchin, with vengeance in her hard grey eye, "I exceedingly deplore it; nothing can be more irregular; nothing can be more out of all bounds and reason; but I regret to say Sir, that this young woman is quite beyond control. She has been spoiled by Miss Dombey, and is amenable to nobody. You know you're not," said Mrs. Pipchin, sharply, and shaking her head at Susan Nipper. "For shame, you hussy! Go along with you!"

"If you find people in my service who are not to be controlled, Mrs. Pipchin," said Mr. Dombey, turning back towards the fire, "you know what to do with them, I presume. You know what you are here for? Take her away!"

"Sir, I know what to do," retorted Mrs. Pipchin, "and of course shall do it. Susan Nipper," snapping her up particularly short, "a month's warning from this hour."

"Oh indeed!" cried Susan, loftily.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Pipchin, "and don't smile at me, you minx, or I'll know the reason why! Go along with you this minute!"

"I intend to go this minute, you may rely upon it," said the voluble Nipper. "I have been in this house waiting on my young lady a dozen year and I won't stop in it one hour under notice from a person owning to the name of Pipchin trust me, Mrs. P."

"A good riddance of bad rubbish!" said that wrathful old lady. "Get along with you, or I'll have you carried out!"

"My comfort is," said Susan, looking back at Mr. Dombey, "that I have told a piece of truth this day which ought to have been told long before and can't be told too often or too plain and that no amount of Pipchinses—I hope the number of 'em mayn't be great" (here Mrs. Pipchin uttered a very sharp "Go along with you!" and Miss Nipper repeated the look) "can unsay what I have said, though they gave a whole year full of warnings beginning at ten o'clock in the forenoon and never leaving off till twelve at night and died of the exhaustion which would be a Jubilee!"

With these words, Miss Nipper preceded her foe out of the room; and walking up stairs to her own apartment in great state, to the choking exasperation of the ireful Pipchin, sat down among her boxes and began to cry.

From this soft mood she was soon aroused, with a very wholesome and refreshing effect, by the voice of Mrs. Pipchin outside the door.

"Does that bold-faced slut," said the fell Pipchin, "intend to take her warning, or does she not?"

Miss Nipper replied from within that the person described did not inhabit that part of the house, but that her name was Pipchin, and she was to be found in the housekeeper's room.

"You saucy baggage!" retorted Mrs. Pipchin, rattling at the handle of

the door. "Go along with you this minute. Pack up your things directly! How dare you talk in this way to a gentlewoman who has seen better days?"

To which Miss Nipper rejoined from her castle, that she pitied the better days that had seen Mrs. Pipchin; and that for her part she considered the worst days in the year to be about that lady's mark, except that they were much too good for her.

"But you needn't trouble yourself to make a noise at my door," said Susan Nipper, "nor to contaminate the key-hole with your eye, I'm packing up and going you may take your affidavit."

The Dowager expressed her lively satisfaction at this intelligence, and with some general opinions upon young hussies as a race, and especially upon their demerits after being spoiled by Miss Dombey, withdrew to prepare the Nipper's wages. Susan then bestirred herself to get her trunks in order, that she might take an immediate and dignified departure; sobbing heartily all the time, as she thought of Florence.

The object of her regret was not long in coming to her, for the news soon spread over the house that Susan Nipper had had a disturbance with Mrs. Pipchin, and that they had both appealed to Mr. Dombey, and that there had been an unprecedented piece of work in Mr. Dombey's room, and that Susan was going. The latter part of this confused rumour, Florence found to be so correct, that Susan had locked the last trunk and was sitting upon it with her bonnet on, when she came into her room.

"Susan!" cried Florence. "Going to leave me! You!"

"Oh for goodness gracious sake, Miss Floy," said Susan, sobbing, "don't speak a word to me or I shall demean myself before them Pi-i-pinchinses, and I wouldn't have 'em see me cry Miss Floy for worlds!"

"Susan!" said Florence. "My dear girl, my old friend! What shall I do without you! Can you bear to go away so?"

"No-n-o-o my darling dear Miss Floy, I can't indeed," sobbed Susan. "But it can't be helped, I've done my duty Miss, I have indeed. It's no fault of mine. I am quite resigned. I couldn't stay my month or I could never leave you then my darling and I must at last as well as at first, don't speak to me Miss Floy, for though I'm pretty firm I'm not a marble doorpost, my own dear."

"What is it! Why is it?" said Florence. "Won't you tell me?" For Susan was shaking her head.

"No-n-no, my darling," returned Susan. "Don't ask me, for I mustn't, and whatever you do don't put in a word for me to stop, for it couldn't be and you'd only wrong yourself, and so God bless you my own precious and forgive me any harm I have done, or any temper I have showed in all these many years!"

With which entreaty, very heartily delivered, Susan hugged her mistress in her arms.

"My darling there's a many that may come to serve you and be glad to serve you and who'll serve you well and true," said Susan, "but there can't be one who'll serve you so affectionate as me or love you half as dearly, that's my comfort. Go-ood-bye, sweet Miss Floy!"

"Where will you go, Susan?" asked her weeping mistress.

"I've got a brother down in the country Miss—a farmer in Essex,"

said the heart-broken Nipper, "that keeps ever so many co-o-ows and pigs and I shall go down there by the coach and sto-op with him, and don't mind me, for I've got money in the Savings' Banks my dear, and needn't take another service just yet, which I couldn't, couldn't, couldn't do, my heart's own mistress!" Susan finished with a burst of sorrow, which was opportunely broken by the voice of Mrs. Pipchin talking down stairs; on hearing which, she dried her red and swollen eyes, and made a melancholy feint of calling jauntily to Mr. Towlinson to fetch a cab and carry down her boxes.

Florence, pale and hurried and distressed, but withheld from useless interference even here, by her dread of causing any new division between her father and his wife (whose stern, indignant face had been a warning to her a few moments since), and by her apprehension of being in some way unconsciously connected already with the dismissal of her old servant and friend, followed, weeping, down stairs to Edith's dressing-room, whither Susan betook herself to make her parting curtsy.

"Now, here's the cab, and here's the boxes, get along with you, do!" said Mrs. Pipchin, presenting herself at the same moment. "I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but Mr. Dombey's orders are imperative."

Edith, sitting under the hands of her maid—she was going out to dinner—preserved her haughty face, and took not the least notice.

"There's your money," said Mrs. Pipchin, who, in pursuance of her system, and in recollection of the Mines, was accustomed to rout the servants about, as she had routed her young Brighton boarders; to the everlasting acridulation of Master Bitherstone, "and the sooner this house sees your back the better."

Susan had no spirits even for the look that belonged to Mrs. Pipchin by right; so she dropped her curtsy to Mrs. Dombey (who inclined her head without one word, and whose eye avoided every one but Florence), and gave one last parting hug to her young Mistress, and received her parting embrace in return. Poor Susan's face at this crisis, in the intensity of her feelings and the determined suffocation of her sobs, lest one should become audible and be a triumph to Mrs. Pipchin, presented a series of the most extraordinary physiognomical phenomena ever witnessed.

"I beg your pardon Miss, I'm sure," said Towlinson, outside the door with the boxes, addressing Florence, "but Mr. Toots is in the dining-room, and sends his compliments, and begs to know how Diogenes and Master is."

Quick as thought, Florence glided out and hastened down stairs, where Mr. Toots, in the most splendid vestments, was breathing very hard with doubt and agitation on the subject of her coming.

"Oh, How de do, Miss Dombey," said Mr. Toots, "God bless my soul!"

This last ejaculation was occasioned by Mr. Toots's deep concern at the distress he saw in Florence's face; which caused him to stop short in a fit of chuckles, and become an image of despair.

"Dear Mr. Toots," said Florence, "you are so friendly to me, and so honest, that I am sure I may ask a favour of you."

"Miss Dombey," returned Mr. Toots, "if you'll only name one, you'll—you'll give me an appetite. To which," said Mr. Toots, with some sentiment, "I have long been a stranger."

"Susan, who is an old friend of mine, the oldest friend I have," said Florence, "is about to leave here suddenly, and quite alone, poor girl. She is going home, a little way into the country. Might I ask you to take care of her until she is in the coach?"

"Miss Dombey," returned Mr. Toots, "you really do me an honour and a kindness. This proof of your confidence, after the manner in which I was Beast enough to conduct myself at Brighton—"

"Yes," said Florence, hurriedly—"no—don't think of that. Then would you have the kindness to—to go? and to be ready to meet her when she comes out? Thank you a thousand times! You ease my mind so much. She doesn't seem so desolate. You cannot think how grateful I feel to you, or what a good friend I am sure you are!" And Florence in her earnestness thanked him again and again; and Mr. Toots, in *his* earnestness, hurried away—but backwards, that he might lose no glimpse of her.

Florence had not the courage to go out, when she saw poor Susan in the hall, with Mrs. Pipchin driving her forth, and Diogenes jumping about her, and terrifying Mrs. Pipchin to the last degree by making snaps at her bombazeen skirts, and howling with anguish at the sound of her voice—for the good duenna was the dearest and most cherished aversion of his breast. But she saw Susan shake hands with the servants all round, and turn once to look at her old home; and she saw Diogenes bound out after the cab, and want to follow it, and testify an impossibility of conviction that he had no longer any property in the fare; and the door was shut, and the hurry over, and her tears flowed fast for the loss of an old friend, whom no one could replace. No one. No one.

Mr. Toots, like the leal and trusty soul he was, stopped the cabriolet in a twinkling, and told Susan Nipper of his commission, at which she cried more than before.

"Upon my soul and body!" said Mr. Toots, taking his seat beside her, "I feel for you. Upon my word and honour I think you can hardly know your own feelings better than I imagine them. I can conceive nothing more dreadful than to have to leave Miss Dombey."

Susan abandoned herself to her grief now, and it really was touching to see her.

"I say," said Mr. Toots, "now, don't! at least I mean now do, you know!"

"Do what, Mr. Toots?" cried Susan.

"Why, come home to my place, and have some dinner before you start," said Mr. Toots. "My cook's a most respectable woman—one of the most motherly people I ever saw—and she'll be delighted to make you comfortable. Her son," said Mr. Toots, as an additional recommendation, "was educated in the Blue-coat School, and blown up in a powder mill."

Susan accepting this kind offer, Mr. Toots conducted her to his dwelling, where they were received by the Matron in question who fully justified his character of her, and by the Chicken who at first supposed, on seeing a lady in the vehicle, that Mr. Dombey had been doubled up, agreeably to his old recommendation, and Miss Dombey abducted. This gentleman awakened in Miss Nipper some considerable astonishment; for,

having been defeated by the Larkey Boy, his visage was in a state of such great dilapidation, as to be hardly presentable in society with comfort to the beholders. The Chicken himself attributed this punishment to his having had the misfortune to get into Chancery early in the proceedings, when he was severely fibbed by the Larkey one, and heavily grassed. But it appeared from the published records of that great contest that the Larkey Boy had had it all his own way from the beginning, and that the Chicken had been tapped, and bunged, and had received pepper, and had been made groggy, and had come up piping, and had endured a complication of similar strange inconveniences, until he had been gone into and finished.

After a good repast, and much hospitality, Susan set out for the coach-office in another cabriolet, with Mr. Toots inside, as before, and the Chicken on the box, who, whatever distinction he conferred on the little party by the moral weight and heroism of his character, was scarcely ornamental to it, physically speaking, on account of his plasters; which were numerous. But the Chicken had registered a vow, in secret, that he would never leave Mr. Toots (who was secretly pining to get rid of him), for any less consideration than the goodwill and fixtures of a public-house; and being ambitious to go into that line, and drink himself to death as soon as possible, he felt it his clue to make his company unacceptable.

The night-coach by which Susan was to go, was on the point of departure. Mr. Toots having put her inside, lingered by the window, irresolutely, until the driver was about to mount; when, standing on the step, and putting in a face that by the light of the lamp was anxious and confused, he said abruptly:

"I say, Susan! Miss Dombey, you know—"

"Yes, Sir."

"Do you think she could—you know—eh?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Toots," said Susan, "but I don't hear you."

"Do you think she could be brought, you know—not exactly at once, but in time—in a long time—to—to love me, you know! There!" said poor Mr. Toots.

"Oh, dear no!" returned Susan, shaking her head. "I should say, never. Ne—ver!"

"Thank'ee!" said Mr. Toots. "It's of no consequence. Good night. It's of no consequence, thank'ee!"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE TRUSTY AGENT.

EDITH went out alone that day, and returned home early. It was but a few minutes after ten o'clock, when her carriage rolled along the street in which she lived.

There was the same enforced composure on her face, that there had been when she was dressing; and the wreath upon her head encircled the

same cold and steady brow. But it would have been better to have seen its leaves and flowers reft into fragments by her passionate hand, or rendered shapeless by the fitful searches of a throbbing and bewildered brain for any resting place, than adorning such tranquillity. So obdurate, so unapproachable, so unrelenting, one would have thought that nothing could soften such a woman's nature, and that everything in life had hardened it.

Arrived at her own door, she was alighting, when some one coming quietly from the hall, and standing bareheaded, offered her his arm. The servant being thrust aside, she had no choice but to touch it; and she then knew whose arm it was.

"How is your patient, Sir?" she said, with a curled lip.

"He is better," returned Carker. "He is doing very well. I have left him for the night."

She bent her head, and was passing up the staircase, when he followed and said, speaking at the bottom:

"Madam! May I beg the favour of a minute's audience?"

She stopped and turned her eyes back. "It is an unseasonable time, Sir, and I am fatigued. Is your business urgent?"

"It is very urgent," returned Carker. "As I am so fortunate as to have met you, let me press my petition."

She looked down for a moment at his glistening mouth; and he looked up at her, standing above him in her stately dress, and thought, again, how beautiful she was.

"Where is Miss Dombey?" she asked the servant, aloud.

"In the morning room, Ma'am."

"Shew the way there!" Turning her eyes again on the attentive gentleman at the bottom of the stairs, and informing him, with a slight motion of her head, that he was at liberty to follow, she passed on.

"I beg your pardon! Madam! Mrs. Dombey!" cried the soft and nimble Carker, at her side in a moment. "May I be permitted to intreat that Miss Dombey is not present?"

She confronted him, with a quick look, but with the same self-possession and steadiness.

"I would spare Miss Dombey," said Carker in a low voice, "the knowledge of what I have to say. At least, Madam, I would leave it to you to decide whether she shall know of it or not. I owe that to you. It is my bounden duty to you. After our former interview, it would be monstrous in me if I did otherwise."

She slowly withdrew her eyes from his face, and turning to the servant, said "Some other room." He led the way to a drawing-room, which he speedily lighted up and then left them. While he remained, not a word was spoken. Edith enthroned herself upon a couch by the fire; and Mr. Carker, with his hat in his hand and his eyes bent upon the carpet, stood before her, at some little distance.

"Before I hear you, Sir," said Edith, when the door was closed, "I wish you to hear me."

"To be addressed by Mrs. Dombey," he returned, "even in accents of unmerited reproach, is an honour I so greatly esteem, that, although I

were not her servant in all things, I should defer to such a wish, most readily."

"If you are charged by the man whom you have just now left, Sir;" Mr. Carker raised his eyes, as if he were going to counterfeit surprise, but she met them, and stopped him, if such were his intention; "with any message to me, do not attempt to deliver it, for I will not receive it. I need scarcely ask you if you are come on such an errand. I have expected you some time."

"It is my misfortune," he replied, "to be here, wholly against my will, for such a purpose. Allow me to say that I am here for two purposes. That is one."

"That one, Sir," she returned, "is ended. "Or, if you return to it——"

"Can Mrs. Dombey believe," said Carker, coming nearer, "that I would return to it in the face of her prohibition? Is it possible that Mrs. Dombey, having no regard to my unfortunate position, is so determined to consider me inseparable from my instructor as to do me great and wilful injustice?"

"Sir," returned Edith, bending her dark gaze full upon him, and speaking with a rising passion that inflated her proud nostril and her swelling neck, and stirred the delicate white down upon a robe she wore, thrown loosely over shoulders that could bear its snowy neighbourhood. "Why do you present yourself to me, as you have done, and speak to me of love and duty to my husband, and pretend to think that I am happily married, and that I honour him? How dare you venture so to affront me, when you know—I do not know better, Sir: I have seen it in your every glance, and heard it in your every word—that in place of affection between us there is aversion and contempt, and that I despise him hardly less than I despise myself for being his! Injustice! If I had done justice to the torment you have made me feel, and to my sense of the insult you have put upon me, I should have slain you!"

She had asked him why he did this. Had she not been blinded by her pride and wrath, and self-humiliation,—which she was, fiercely as she bent her gaze upon him,—she would have seen the answer in his face. To bring her to this declaration.

She saw it not, and cared not whether it was there or no. She saw only the indignities and struggles she had undergone, and had to undergo, and was writhing under them. As she sat looking fixedly at them, rather than at him, she plucked the feathers from a pinion of some rare and beautiful bird, which hung from her wrist by a golden thread, to serve her as a fan, and rained them on the ground.

He did not shrink beneath her gaze, but stood, until such outward signs of her anger as had escaped her controul subsided, with the air of a man who had his sufficient reply in reserve and would presently deliver it. And he then spoke, looking straight into her kindling eyes.

"Madam," he said, "I know, and knew before to-day, that I have found no favour with you; and I knew why. Yes. I knew why. You have spoken so openly to me; I am so relieved by the possession of your confidence——"

"Confidence!" she repeated, with disdain.

He passed it over.

"—that I will make no pretence of concealment. I *did* see from the first, that there was no affection on your part, for Mr. Dombey—how could it possibly exist between such different subjects! And I *have* seen, since, that stronger feelings than indifference have been engendered in your breast—how could that possibly be otherwise, either, circumstanced as you have been. But was it for me to presume to avow this knowledge to you in so many words?"

"Was it for you, Sir," she replied, "to feign that other belief, and audaciously to thrust it on me day by day?"

"Madam, it was," he eagerly retorted. "If I had done less, if I had done anything but that, I should not be speaking to you thus; and I foresaw—who could better foresee, for who has had greater experience of Mr. Dombey than myself?—that unless your character should prove to be as yielding and obedient as that of his first submissive lady, which I did not believe ——"

A haughty smile gave him reason to observe that he might repeat this.

"I say, which I did not believe,—the time was likely to come, when such an understanding as we have now arrived at, would be serviceable."

"Serviceable to whom, Sir?" she demanded, scornfully.

"To you. I will not add to myself, as warning me to refrain even from that limited commendation of Mr. Dombey, in which I can honestly indulge, in order that I may not have the misfortune of saying anything distasteful to one whose aversion and contempt" with great expression "are so keen."

"It is honest in you, Sir," said Edith, "to confess to your 'limited commendation,' and to speak in that tone of disparagement, even of him: being his chief counsellor and flatterer!"

"Counsellor,—yes," said Carker. "Flatterer—no. A little reservation I fear I must confess to. But our interest and convenience commonly oblige many of us to make professions that we cannot feel. We have partnerships of interest and convenience, friendships of interest and convenience, dealings of interest and convenience, marriages of interest and convenience, every day."

She bit her blood-red lip; but without wavering in the dark, stern watch she kept upon him.

"Madam," said Mr. Carker, sitting down in a chair that was near her, with an air of the most profound and most considerate respect, "why should I hesitate now, being altogether devoted to your service, to speak plainly! It was natural that a lady, endowed as you are, should think it feasible to change her husband's character in some respects, and mould him to a better form."

"It was not natural to *me*, Sir," she rejoined. "I had never any expectation or intention of that kind."

The proud undaunted face showed him it was resolute to wear no mask he offered, but was set upon a reckless disclosure of itself, indifferent to any aspect in which it might present itself to such as he.

"At least it was natural," he resumed, "that you should deem it quite possible to live with Mr. Dombey as his wife, at once without submitting

to him, and without coming into such violent collision with him. But Madam, you did not know Mr. Dombey (as you have since ascertained), when you thought that. You did not know how exacting and how proud he is, or how he is, if I may say so, the slave of his own greatness, and goes yoked to his own triumphal car like a beast of burden, with no idea on earth but that it is behind him and is to be drawn on, over everything and through everything."

His teeth gleamed through his malicious relish of this conceit, as he went on talking :

"Mr. Dombey is really capable of no more true consideration for you, Madam, than for me. The comparison is an extreme one; I intend it to be so; but quite just. Mr. Dombey, in the plenitude of his power, asked me—I had it from his own lips yesterday morning—to be his go-between to you, because he knows I am not agreeable to you, and because he intends that I shall be a punishment for your contumacy; and besides that, because he really does consider, that I, his paid servant, am an ambassador whom it is derogatory to the dignity—not of the lady to whom I have the happiness of speaking; she has no existence in his mind—but of his wife, a part of himself, to receive. You may imagine how regardless of me, how obtuse to the possibility of my having any individual sentiment or opinion he is, when he tells me, openly, that I am so employed. You know how perfectly indifferent to your feelings he is, when he threatens you with such a messenger. As you, of course, have not forgotten that he did."

She watched him still attentively. But he watched her too; and he saw that this indication of a knowledge on his part, of something that had passed between herself and her husband, rankled and smarted in her haughty breast, like a poisoned arrow.

"I do not recal all this to widen the breach between yourself and Mr. Dombey, Madam—Heaven forbid! what would it profit me—but as an example of the hopelessness of impressing Mr. Dombey with a sense that anybody is to be considered when he is in question. We who are about him, have, in our various positions, done our part, I dare say, to confirm him in his way of thinking; but if we had not done so, others would—or they would not have been about him; and it has always been, from the beginning, the very staple of his life. Mr. Dombey has had to deal, in short, with none but submissive and dependent persons, who have bowed the knee, and bent the neck, before him. He has never known what it is to have angry pride and strong resentment opposed to him."

"But he will know it now!" she seemed to say; though her lips did not part, nor her eyes falter. He saw the soft down tremble once again, and he saw her lay the plumage of the beautiful bird against her bosom for a moment; and he unfolded one more ring of the coil into which he had gathered himself.

"Mr. Dombey, though a most honourable gentleman," he said, "is so prone to pervert even facts to his own view, when he is at all opposed, in consequence of the warp in his mind, that he—can I give a better instance than this!—he sincerely believes (you will excuse the folly of what I am about to say; it not being mine) that his severe expression of opinion to

his present wife, on a certain special occasion she may remember, before the lamented death of Mrs. Skewton, produced a withering effect, and for the moment quite subdued her!"

Edith laughed. How harshly and unmusically need not be described. It is enough that he was glad to hear her.

"Madam," he resumed, "I have done with this. Your own opinions are so strong, and, I am persuaded, so unalterable," he repeated those words slowly and with great emphasis, "that I am almost afraid to incur your displeasure anew, when I say that in spite of these defects and my full knowledge of them, I have become habituated to Mr. Dombey, and esteem him. But when I say so, it is not, believe me, for the mere sake of vaunting a feeling that is so utterly at variance with your own, and for which you can have no sympathy"—oh how distinct and plain, and emphasized this was! "but to give you an assurance of the zeal with which, in this unhappy matter, I am yours, and the indignation with which I regard the part I am required to fill."

She sat as if she were afraid to take her eyes from his face.

And now to unwind the last ring of the coil!

"It is growing late," said Carker, after a pause, "and you are, as you said, fatigued. But the second object of this interview, I must not forget. I must recommend you, I must entreat you in the most earnest manner, for sufficient reasons that I have, to be cautious in your demonstrations of regard for Miss Dombey."

"Cautious! What do you mean?"

"To be careful how you exhibit too much affection for that young lady."

"Too much affection, Sir!" said Edith, knitting her broad brow and rising. "Who judges my affection, or measures it out. You?"

"It is not I who do so." He was, or feigned to be, perplexed.

"Who then?"

"Can you not guess who then?"

"I do not choose to guess," she answered.

"Madam," he said after a little hesitation; meantime they had been, and still were, regarding each other as before; "I am in a difficulty here. You have told me you will receive no message, and you have forbidden me to return to that subject; but the two subjects are so closely entwined, I find, that unless you will accept this vague caution from one who has now the honour to possess your confidence, though the way to it has been through your displeasure, I must violate the injunction you have laid upon me."

"You know that you are free to do so, Sir," said Edith. "Do it."

So pale, so trembling, so impassioned! He had not miscalculated the effect, then!

"His instructions were," he said, in a low voice, "that I should inform you that your demeanour towards Miss Dombey is not agreeable to him. That it suggests comparisons to him which are not favourable to himself. That he desires it may be wholly changed; and that if you are in earnest, he is confident it will be; for your continued show of affection will not benefit its object."

"That is a threat," she said.

"That is a threat," he answered in his voiceless manner of assent: adding aloud, "but not directed against *you*."

Proud, erect, and dignified, as she stood confronting him; and looking through him, as she did, with her full bright flashing eye; and smiling, as she was, with scorn and bitterness; she sunk as if the ground had dropped beneath her, and in an instant would have fallen on the floor, but that he caught her in his arms. As instantaneously she threw him off, the moment that he touched her, and, drawing back, confronted him again, immovable, with her hand stretched out.

"Please to leave me. Say no more to-night."

"I feel the urgency of this," said Mr. Carker, "because it is impossible to say what unforeseen consequences might arise, or how soon, from your being unacquainted with his state of mind. I understand Miss Dombey is concerned, now, at the dismissal of her old servant, which is likely to have been a minor consequence in itself. You don't blame me for requesting that Miss Dombey might not be present. May I hope so?"

"I do not. Please to leave me, Sir."

"I knew that your regard for the young lady, which is very sincere and strong, I am well persuaded, would render it a great unhappiness to you, ever to be a prey to the reflection that you had injured her position and ruined her future hopes," said Carker, hurriedly, but eagerly.

"No more to-night. Leave me, if you please."

"I shall be here constantly in my attendance upon him, and in the transaction of business matters. You will allow me to see you again, and to consult what should be done, and learn your wishes?"

She motioned him towards the door.

"I cannot even decide whether to tell him I have spoken to you yet; or to lead him to suppose that I have deferred doing so, for want of opportunity, or for any other reason. It will be necessary that you should enable me to consult with you very soon."

"At any time but now," she answered.

"You will understand, when I wish to see you, that Miss Dombey is not to be present; and that I seek an interview as one who has the happiness to possess your confidence, and who comes to render you every assistance in his power, and, perhaps, on many occasions, to ward off evil from her?"

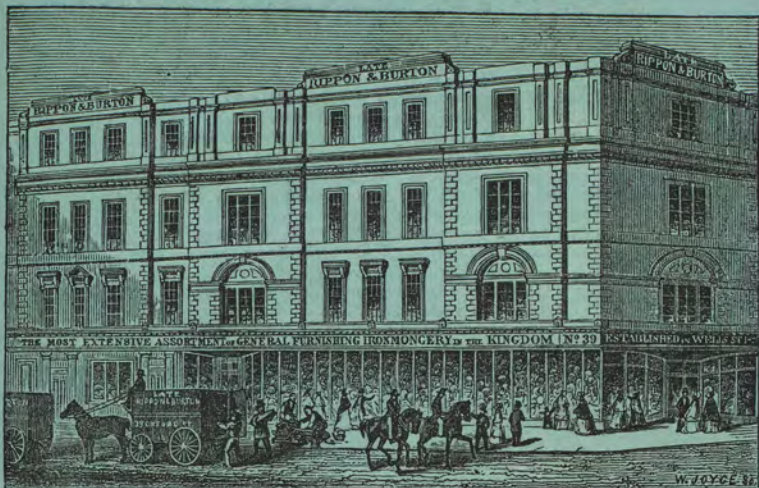
Looking at him still with the same apparent dread of releasing him for a moment from the influence of her steady gaze, whatever that might be, she answered, "Yes!" and once more bade him go.

He bowed, as if in compliance; but turning back, when he had nearly reached the door, said:

"I am forgiven, and have explained my fault. May I—for Miss Dombey's sake, and for my own—take your hand before I go?"

She gave him the gloved hand she had maimed last night. He took it in one of his, and kissed it, and withdrew. And when he had closed the door, he waved the hand with which he had taken her's, and thrust it in his breast.

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