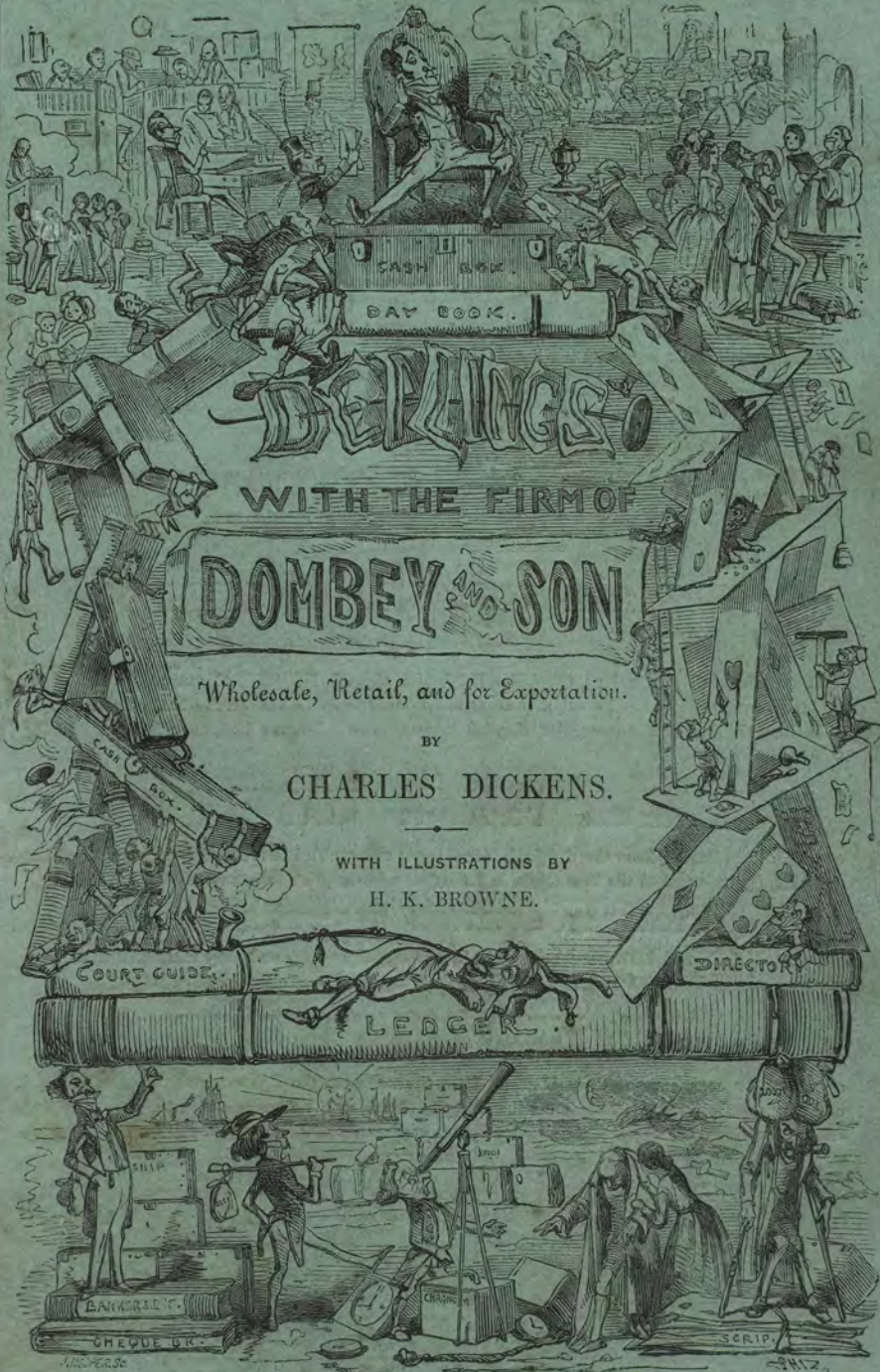


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Assurances on the lives of persons in every station of life and every part of the world, granted on a plan which combines the utmost amount of benefit to the families of the assured at death, with every attainable advantage during life, which the system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

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

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Important
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Ladies.



THE NORWICH COMPANY'S CELEBRATED 3 & 6-CORD SEWING AND NETTING COTTON.

The attention of Ladies is particularly requested to this novel article, as being of the most beautiful fabric and uniform texture of any yet produced; it is wound on elegant reels, with labels as above, in lengths of 100, 200, and 300 yards. The Six-cord is more especially adapted for Ladies who are desirous of being accomplished in that elegant and useful art NETTING. To be had of all the most respectable Silk Mercers, Linen-drappers and Haberdashers in the kingdom; and wholesale of the Proprietors, Messrs. J. L. BARBER & Co., Norwich; and of their Agent in London, Mr. W. W. TRIPP, 35, Friday Street, Cheapside.

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UMBRELLAS.



LADIES' UMBRELLAS.

Silk Umbrellas, 7s. to 8s. 6d.
Ditto 10s. to 15s.
Ditto steel ribs, 10s. 6d., to 15s.
Ditto ditto 15s. to 21s.
Portmanteau Umbrellas, of various kinds, for Tourists.

W. & J. SANCSTER,

Manufacturers to H. R. H. Prince Albert,

Beg to submit their following List of Prices:—

Cotton Umbrellas, for servants, 2s. each.
Gingham ditto, whalebone ribs, 5s. to 7s. 6d.
Ditto do. do., for carriage or chaise,
9s. 6d., to 15s.
Silk do., cane ribs, from 7s.
Ditto whalebone do. from 10s. to 16s.
Ditto do. large size, 18s. to 20s.
Ditto ditto Best quality, partridge canes, 21s.
Ditto ditto ditto ivory butts, 25s.
Ditto ditto steel frames, horn handles, 12s.
Ditto ditto ivory and pearl, do., 15s.
Ditto ditto ditto best, 21s. to 25s.
Ladies' and Gentlemen's Riding Whips, silver and gold mounted, from 7s. 6d. to 5 guineas each.

CANES FOR RIDING, HUNTING, OR WALKING, IN GREAT VARIETY.

140, REGENT STREET; 94, FLEET STREET; & 10, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

SEND EIGHT POSTAGE STAMPS,

And, by return, Post Free, you will receive a handsome Tea-spoon of

C. WATSON'S SOLID ALBATA PLATE,

which is rapidly superseding Silver for all domestic uses. This is the only SOLID substitute now sold. Unlike plated goods of any kind, there is nothing to wear off, so that the more you rub and clean it, the better it will continue to look, though in daily use for FIFTY YEARS. Do not be afraid to put it to any test, and then send your order. A full Catalogue of Prices, with patterns of every other article manufactured from this beautiful metal, for the table or the sideboard, will be enclosed with the Sample Spoon. This Metal may be engraved as silver, with crests, arms, &c.

Address, C. WATSON, 41 and 42, Barbican, and 16, Norton Folgate, London.

SMITH'S GOLD REVIVER, 1s. 6d.
 per Bottle, gives in one instant the splendour of new gilding to the most discoloured frames, by merely touching the surface. **GOLD VARNISH, 1s. 6d.**, repairs defects. May be applied by any one. **ELECTRO-PLATING LIQUID SILVER, 1s.**, puts a durable coating of pure Silver upon the Copper parts of worn plated articles. Cost and trouble less than cleaning. Sole Manufacturer, Smith, 281, Strand, (exactly opposite Norfolk Street).

MECHI'S NEW SHOW ROOMS
 for PAPIER MACHE MANUFACTURES, 4, Leadenhall Street, London. MECHI, determined to carry out his principle of being in the van, has brought out some most superb and novel specimens in PAPIER MACHE. Finding it impossible to display them advantageously in his former space, he has, at considerable expense, fitted up a splendid Show Room, to which he invites all those who are desirous of seeing the most brilliant specimens this country can produce. It is not expected that visitors will purchase, although, of course, MECHI will be quite happy to tempt his customers, and supply their wants. His principle is, and always will be, to exchange, or return the money, for any article purchased of him that may be disapproved. This binds him to quality. He has always found that his customers never leave him, because they are always satisfied. Among the recherché specimens of Papier Maché articles, will be found some decorated with admirable copies of Edwin Landseer's most popular and modern Paintings, together with some exquisite landscapes of Windsor Castle, Virginia Water, the Isle of Wight, &c. &c.

**ROWLAND'S
 UNIQUE PREPARATIONS.**

(Under the Patronage of the several Sovereigns and Courts of Europe, and universally preferred.)

ROWLAND'S MACASSAR OIL,
 For the Growth, Preservation, and for Beautifying the Human Hair.—Price 3s. 6d.—7s. Family Bottles, (equal to four small) 10s. 6d., and double that size 21s. per bottle.

ROWLAND'S KALYDOR,
 For improving and beautifying the Skin and Complexion.—Price 4s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. per bottle.

ROWLAND'S ODONTO,
 OR PEARL DENTIFRICE,
 For Preserving and Beautifying the Teeth, and Strengthening the Gums.—Price 2s. 6d. per box.

CAUTION.

UNPRINCIPLED INDIVIDUALS, for the sake of gaining a trifle more profit, vend the most SPURIOUS COMPOUNDS under the names of "MACASSAR OIL," "KALYDOR," "ODONTO," &c., some under the implied sanction of Royalty; they copy the labels, advertisements, and testimonials, (substituting fictitious names and addresses for the real), of the original preparations. It is therefore highly necessary to see that the word "**ROWLAND'S**" is on the Wrapper of each Article.

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JONES'S DEMULCENT COUGH

LOZENGES, recommended by the Faculty, being perfectly free from Opium, Morphia, or any deleterious ingredient. These lozenges will be found on trial to be the most efficacious remedy now in use for all disorders of the respiratory organs, affording almost instantaneous relief in Asthma, Consumption, difficulty of Breathing, Hooping Cough, &c., arresting the most violent paroxysm of coughing, whether arising from a chronic or recent affection. They are extremely agreeable to the palate.—Sold by the Proprietor, **PETER JONES, Operative Chemist, 11, Norton Folgate, Bishopsgate Street, London,** in boxes, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. each, and by all Chemists and Medicine Vendors. Wholesale agents, **Barclay and Sons, Farringdon Street;** and **W. Edwards, St. Paul's Churchyard,**

DEEDS not WORDS.—Every description of CLOTHES well and fashionably-made at **LUDLOW'S Establishment, 164 A, OXFORD STREET,** (seven doors from Stratford-place), London.

Experienced Cutters and first-rate Workmen employed.

The best house for good and fashionable Clothing at the West End is Ludlow's Clothing Establishment, 164 A, Oxford-street (seven doors from Stratford-place).

Juvenile Clothing and Liveries. Mourning orders executed at the shortest notice. Merchants and Captains supplied with every description of Clothing. Observe—D. Ludlow, 164 A, Oxford-street.

BERDOE'S WATERPROOF

OVER-COATS.—An extensive and superior assortment of first-rate Outside Garments, adapted to every purpose, and guaranteed to exclude any rain whatever; also of Berdoe's new and universally admired "Pallium," a LIGHT OVER COAT for ALL seasons, may now be inspected both at his West End and City Establishments. The established reputation for efficiency and respectability of W. B.'s well-known garments, obtained by ten years' extensive trial, renders (it is presumed) commendation now unnecessary. Such articles only supplied as will ensure permanent satisfaction and future confidence.—**W. BERDOE, Tailor and Over-Coat Maker, 69, Cornhill (North Side), and 96, New Bond-street, near Oxford-street** (recently opened).

BAD COUGHS AND COLDS

CURED BY HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT AND PILLS.—All coughs and colds affect more or less the lungs and other respiratory organs. Thus few remedies have any power in their cure when of long standing, for the reason that they do not reach the parts affected. Now, when there are any symptoms of asthma, or tightness of the chest, or difficulty of breathing, if night and morning Holloway's Ointment be well rubbed into the throat and chest, all fever and inflammation will be removed, the breathing become free, and the cough cease, providing a few doses of Holloway's Pills be taken according to the printed directions. Sold by all Druggists; and at Professor **HOLLOWAY'S Establishment, 244, Strand, London.**

EASE AND COMFORT IN

SHAVING.—**B. and S. COWVAN'S CANTON STROP,** or Quadrilateral Chinese Razor Sharpener, patronised by H.R.H. Prince Albert, renders shaving pleasant to a tender skin. The keenest edge may be given to the bluntest razor. Testimonials of its excellence have been received from that eminent surgeon, **Aston Key, Esq.,** as well as from other professional and scientific individuals. May be had of the inventors, **B. and S. Cowvan, 164, Finchurch Street,** and of all perfumers, &c. Prices, 5s. 6d., 7s. 6d., 9s. 6d.: Canton razor paste, 1s. per packet; vegetable shaving powder, 1s. 6d. per box, and peculiarly tempered razors, &c.

THE ATRAPILATORY, or

LIQUID HAIR DYE; the only dye that really answers for all colours, and does not require re-doing, but as the hair grows, as it never fades or acquires that unnatural red or purple tint common to all other dyes. **BOTANIC WATER and BEAR'S GREASE.**—When the hair is becoming thin and falling off, the only effectual remedy besides shaving the head is the use of the two above-named articles, applied alternately—the botanic water to cleanse the roots from scurf, and as a stimulant, and the bear's grease as a nourisher. **THE NEW TOOTH-PICK BRUSH,** thoroughly cleansing between the teeth, when used up and down, and polishing the surface when used cross-ways. The hair warranted never to come out. **THE UNION and TRIPLE HAIR BRUSHES. THE DOUBLE ANTIPRESSURE NAIL BRUSH. THE MEDIUM SHAVING BRUSH. THE RAILWAY STROP and POWDER.** The above new and elegant articles, in addition to a very extensive assortment of beautiful **PERFUMES,** are the sole **MANUFACTURES and INVENTIONS of MESSRS. ROSS and SONS, 119 and 120, Bishopsgate-street, London.**

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF ROYALTY AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE FACULTY.

KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES.

A CERTAIN REMEDY for disorders of the *Pulmonary Organs*—in Difficulty of Breathing—in Redundancy of Phlegm—in Incipient CONSUMPTION (of which COUGH is the most positive indication) they are of unerring efficacy. In ASTHMA, and in WINTER COUGH, they have never been known to fail.

Prepared and sold in Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and Tins, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 10s. 6d. each, by THOMAS KEATING Chemist, &c., No. 79, St. Paul's Church Yard, London.

Retail by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Vendors in the Kingdom.

RECENT TESTIMONIALS.

CURE OF ASTHMATIC COUGH OF TWENTY YEARS' STANDING, BY THE USE OF KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES.

Send, near Melksham, Dec. 8th, 1846.

SIR,—I was troubled with a bad Asthmatic Cough for twenty years, 'till I heard of your COUGH LOZENGES, through the News-papers, and with gratitude I send you an account of my Cure, solely by the use of them. My Cough was so bad in 1843, 4, and 5, that I was scarcely two months without being under the Doctor's care: at the end of 1845 I was so very ill with it that my Wife and friends, and even the Doctor, gave me up; I could not walk across my room, and the phlegm nearly choked me—to this statement I will, if required, give my testimony on oath; but, thanks to your valuable Cough Lozenges, they effected a complete cure; for the first night I took them I slept without coughing, and in a week I was quite well, and have not taken any other Medicine, or been laid up one day since. I wish, for the good of my fellow-sufferers, that you would publish these facts.

I remain, Sir, your obedient and grateful servant,
JOHN RANDELL.

To Mr. KEATING, 79, St. Paul's Churchyard.

N.B. To prevent spurious imitations, please to observe that the words "KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES" are engraved on the GOVERNMENT STAMP of each box.

RESTORATION OF VOICE BY KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES.

Glasgow, 12th January, 1847.

SIR.—I have great pleasure in informing you of the great good your excellent COUGH LOZENGES have done me. In December, 1845, I caught a severe cold from riding two or three miles, one very wet night, which settled in my lungs, and quite took away my voice, so that I could not speak above a whisper from that time until the beginning of December last. I tried all kinds of medicines, but they were of no avail. I was then advised to try your Lozenges, which I did only to please my friends; but before I had finished a 2s. 9d. tin, my voice, to my great joy, came back as strong as ever.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

JAMES MARTIN.

THOMAS KEATING, Esq.

PERFECT FREEDOM FROM COUGHS IN TEN MINUTES,

AND INSTANT RELIEF AND A RAPID CURE OF

ASTHMA, CONSUMPTION, COUGHS,

AND ALL DISORDERS OF THE BREATH AND LUNGS ARE INSURED BY

Dr. Locock's Pulmonic Wafers.

The extraordinary powers of this invaluable medicine are now proved by a mass of evidence and testimonials, which most convince the most sceptical, that for all disorders of the breath and lungs it is the most effectual remedy ever discovered.

Rapid cure of Asthma of 14 Years standing.

From Mr. J. E. Bignell, Holyhead-road, Wednesbury, and addressed to Mr. Ladbury, there, Sept. 16, 1846.

SIR,—When I had the first box of Dr. Locock's Wafers from you I was labouring under one of those attacks of asthma to which I have been subject now for about fourteen years. I have had the best medical advice the neighbourhood could afford, including two physicians at Birmingham, and one at Wolverhampton, but with no success. My breathing was so very difficult that I expected every inspiration to be my last; as for sleep, that was impossible, and had been so for several weeks.

The first dose (only two small wafers) gave me great relief—the second more so—in short, the first box laid the groundwork for the cure, which only four boxes have effected, and I am now quite well.

I remain, Sir, your most obliged,
J. E. BIGNELL.

The particulars of hundreds of Cures may be had from every Agent throughout the Kingdom. DR. LOCOCK'S WAFERS give instant relief, and a rapid Cure of Astmas, Consumption, Coughs, Colds, and all Disorders of the Breath and Lungs.

TO SINGERS AND PUBLIC SPEAKERS they are invaluable, as in a few hours they remove all hoarseness, and wonderfully increase the power and flexibility of the voice.

THEY HAVE A PLEASANT TASTE. Price 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 11s. per box.

AGENTS—DA SILVA & CO., 1, Bride-lane, Fleet-street, London. Sold by all Medicine Vendors.

CAUTION.—To protect the public from spurious imitations, Her Majesty's Honourable Commissioners have caused to be printed on the stamp outside each box the words "DR. LOCOCK'S WAFERS," IN WHITE LETTERS ON A RED GROUND. If purchasers will attend to this Caution they will be sure to get the genuine article.

Another rapid cure of Cough in Lynn.

From Mr. W. Harrison, Coronation-square.

Dated March 17, 1846.

SIR.—I was troubled with a severe cough for two or three years, which nothing relieved; but by taking one 2s. 9d. box of Locock's Wafers I have entirely lost it; I shall recommend them to all I know, for they cannot be too highly praised.

W. HARRISON.

Improvement of the Voice.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Morgan James, Rhymney Iron Works, near Abergavenny.

SIR,—I have tried one box of Dr. Locock's Pulmonic Wafers for my voice, and received great benefit from them, &c.

M. JAMES, Baptist Minister.

TO THE TEA-DRINKERS THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.



A GREAT deal has been said and written in "The Times," as well as in other papers, advocating a Reduction of the present high rate of the Tea Duties. Deputations from Liverpool and other places have waited upon

LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

urging him to fall the present Duty on Tea, from 2s. 2½d. to 1s. per pound; and some of the more intelligent told Lord John, that such a measure would have the effect of falling the price to 2s. 6d. per pound for good Tea. There does not exist in all the city a firm that would be more rejoiced to see this than ourselves; but, in the mean time, we will endeavour to show the present market value of

TEAS, WHICH THE PUBLIC NOW WELL KNOW,

on all descriptions, pay a duty of 2s. 2½d. upon every pound.

	Cost in China, with Expenses of Importation, &c.		British Duty.		Selling Price at "Number One."	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
BLACK.						
Congou, Mixed leaf kinds, from	11 to 13	Taels, or from	0 9½ to 0 11	2 2½	from 3 0 to 3 2	
" Blackish leaf,	14	16 Taels,	0 11½	1 1	2 2½	3 3
" Strong ditto,	18	21 Taels,	1 2	1 4	2 2½	3 6
" Pekoe flavour	23	39 Taels,	1 5	2 2	2 2½	3 9
Souchong	15	61 Taels,	1 0	3 4	2 2½	3 4
Flower Pekoe	31	84 Taels,	1 10	4 6	2 2½	4 2
Orange Pekoe	18	54 Taels,	1 2	3 0	2 2½	3 6
GREEN.						
Twankay	13	25 Taels,	0 11	1 6	2 2½	3 2
Hyson	26	71 Taels,	1 7	3 10	2 2½	3 11
Young Hyson,	20	54 Taels,	1 3	3 0	2 2½	3 7
Imperial	28	54 Taels,	1 8	3 0	2 2½	4 0
Gunpowder	35	85 Taels,	2 0	4 8	2 2½	4 4

Now these Teas

ARE ALL GOOD OF THEIR SEVERAL KINDS,

some of them exceedingly fine, and of a quality very rarely to be met with. At One Penny per pound profit, they will be supplied to the Trade, and all large consumers, in lots and quantities, to suit the most extensive demands.

As will be noticed by the above List, so it is a well-known fact that the original cost of fine Congou Tea is over 39 Taels, or 2s. 2d. per pound, which, with duty added, makes 4s. 4½d. per pound. We have ever since we began selling Teas

AT "NUMBER ONE,"

sold this description at 4s. 6d. per pound. Hundreds and thousands of people have tried it, and can vouch for its strength and richness of flavour. Nobody ever finds fault with it, and it pleases everybody, because it is both good and cheap.

WHEN GOVERNMENT FALLS THE DUTY, WE WILL FALL THE PRICE OF TEA in the same ratio, at "Number One," and publish it to the world.

It will be observed, that the Coarse Congou we quote above is that at 9½d. per pound, which, with 2s. 2½d. duty, makes the cost for common Black Tea nearly 3s. per pound. It is quite true there is a great deal of low stuff sold as Tea at less than 3s. per pound, which is not Tea at all. It is trash, and the old East India Company used to send all such rubbish to the Nore, and throw it overboard as unfit for consumption, and not worth the duty.

All orders sent by post will receive

THE GREATEST CARE AND ATTENTION,

If accompanied by a respectable reference or a Post-office order, and will be forwarded CARRIAGE FREE.

Shopkeepers and large consumers may at all times be supplied with any quantity of chests or lots of Tea; and all purchasers will be allowed one pound on every thirty pounds, as over-weight.

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

DAKIN AND COMPY., TEA MERCHANTS.

AGENTS WANTED.

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 Perruqueian 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
7s. per doz. small ditto
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.



THE LONDON GENERAL MOURNING WAREHOUSE,

Nos. 247, 249, and 251, REGENT STREET, two doors from Oxford Street.

The Proprietors of the above Establishment beg leave to call the attention of the Nobility and Ladies to its great utility. It has ever been a source of inconvenience and regret, on occasions when Mourning Attire has been required, that its purchasers have at such a time been compelled to the painful necessity of proceeding from shop to shop in search of each distinct article of dress. This may be completely obviated by a visit to the London General Mourning Warehouse, where every description of Paramatta, Alapine, Bombasin, Merino, and Crape, for Mourning Dresses, Gloves, Hosiery, and Haberdashery, can be bought on the most reasonable terms, and where everything necessary for a complete Outfit of Mourning may be had, and made up, if required, by experienced Artists, with the strictest attention to taste, elegance, and economy. Widows' and Family Mourning is always kept made up, so that Ladies may by a Note, descriptive of Mourning required (either for themselves or household), have it forwarded to them in Town or Country immediately. Silks for slight or Complimentary Mourning, Printed Muslin Dresses, Mousseline de Laines, Barèges, and Evening Dresses, in the greatest variety.

THE MILLINERY ROOMS

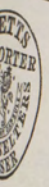
contain a beautiful assortment of Millinery, Head Dresses, Flowers, Crape and Muslin Collars, Berthes, &c. with every description of Jewellery for Mourning.

W. C. Jay & Co., 247, 249, and 251, Regent-street.

INVISIBLE PERUVIAN



ONLY £1 10s.



large bottles
small sizes
of various forms
and
C.

WATERS WATER,
guard against adulteration
& or at
DOES.



WAREHOUSE:

ord Street.
Sobility and Lafist to help
en Mourning attire has a
necessity of proceeding through
ated by a visit to the Lar
Bombasin, Mertin, and the
se most reasonable terms
made up, if requested, by
Widows' and Family Dress
required (either for church
dresses, in the greatest variety

and Maslin Collars, Berlin
Regent-street.



Profound cogitation of Captain Cattle.



Paul goes home for the holidays

When the Middle
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gentleman could
make up. They
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CHAPTER XIV.

PAUL GROWS MORE AND MORE OLD-FASHIONED, AND GOES HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

WHEN the Midsummer vacation approached, no indecent manifestations of joy were exhibited by the leaden-eyed young gentlemen assembled at Dr. Blimber's. Any such violent expression as "breaking up," would have been quite inapplicable to that polite establishment. The young gentlemen oozed away, semi-annually, to their own homes; but they never broke up. They would have scorned the action.

Tozer, who was constantly galled and tormented by a starched white cambrie neck-kerchief, which he wore at the express desire of Mrs. Tozer, his parent, who, designing him for the Church, was of opinion that he couldn't be in that forward state of preparation too soon—Tozer said, indeed, that, choosing between two evils, he thought he would rather stay where he was, than go home. However inconsistent this declaration might appear with that passage in Tozer's Essay on the subject, wherein he had observed "that the thoughts of home and all its recollections, awakened in his mind the most pleasing emotions of anticipation and delight," and had also likened himself to a Roman General, flushed with a recent victory over the Icenii, or laden with Carthaginian spoil, advancing within a few hours' march of the Capitol, presupposed, for the purposes of the simile, to be the dwelling-place of Mrs. Tozer, still it was very sincerely made. For it seemed that Tozer had a dreadful uncle, who not only volunteered examinations of him, in the holidays, on abstruse points, but twisted innocent events and things, and wrenched them to the same fell purpose. So that if this uncle took him to the Play, or, on a similar pretence of kindness, carried him to see a Giant, or a Dwarf, or a Conjuror, or anything, Tozer knew he had read up some classical allusion to the subject beforehand, and was thrown into a state of mortal apprehension: not foreseeing where he might break out, or what authority he might not quote against him.

As to Briggs, *his* father made no show of artifice about it. He never would leave him alone. So numerous and severe were the mental trials of that unfortunate youth in vacation time, that the friends of the family (then resident near Bayswater, London) seldom approached the ornamental piece of water in Kensington Gardens, without a vague expectation of seeing Master Briggs's hat floating on the surface, and an unfinished exercise lying on the bank. Briggs, therefore, was not at all sanguine on the subject of holidays; and these two sharers of little Paul's bedroom were so fair a sample of the young gentlemen in general, that the most elastic among them contemplated the arrival of those festive periods with genteel resignation.

It was far otherwise with little Paul. The end of these first holidays was to witness his separation from Florence, but who ever looked forward to the end of holidays whose beginning was not yet come! Not Paul, assuredly. As the happy time drew near, the lions and tigers

climbing up the bedroom walls, became quite tame and frolicsome. The grim sly faces in the squares and diamonds of the floor-cloth, relaxed and peeped out at him with less wicked eyes. The grave old clock had more of personal interest in the tone of its formal inquiry; and the restless sea went rolling on all night, to the sounding of a melancholy strain—yet it was pleasant too—that rose and fell with the waves, and rocked him, as it were, to sleep.

Mr. Feeder, B.A., seemed to think that he, too, would enjoy the holidays very much. Mr. Toots projected a life of holidays from that time forth; for, as he regularly informed Paul every day, it was his “last half” at Doctor Blimber’s, and he was going to begin to come into his property directly.

It was perfectly understood between Paul and Mr. Toots, that they were intimate friends, notwithstanding their distance in point of years and station. As the vacation approached, and Mr. Toots breathed harder and stared oftener in Paul’s society, than he had done before, Paul knew that he meant he was sorry they were going to lose sight of each other, and felt very much obliged to him for his patronage and good opinion.

It was even understood by Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber, as well as by the young gentlemen in general, that Toots had somehow constituted himself protector and guardian of Dombey; and the circumstance became so notorious, even to Mrs. Pipchin, that the good old creature cherished feelings of bitterness and jealousy against Toots; and, in the sanctuary of her own home, repeatedly denounced him as “a chuckleheaded noodle.” Whereas the innocent Toots had no more idea of awakening Mrs. Pipchin’s wrath, than he had of any other definite possibility or proposition. On the contrary, he was disposed to consider her rather a remarkable character, with many points of interest about her. For this reason he smiled on her with so much urbanity, and asked her how she did, so often, in the course of her visits to little Paul, that at last she one night told him plainly, she wasn’t used to it, whatever he might think; and she could not, and she would not bear it, either from himself or any other puppy then existing: at which unexpected acknowledgment of his civilities, Mr. Toots was so alarmed that he secreted himself in a retired spot, until she had gone. Nor did he ever again face the doughty Mrs. Pipchin, under Doctor Blimber’s roof.

They were within two or three weeks of the holidays, when, one day, Cornelia Blimber called Paul into her room, and said, “Dombey, I am going to send home your analysis.”

“Thank you, Ma’am,” returned Paul.

“You know what I mean, do you, Dombey?” inquired Miss Blimber, looking hard at him, through the spectacles.

“No, Ma’am,” said Paul.

“Dombey, Dombey,” said Miss Blimber, “I begin to be afraid you are a sad boy. When you don’t know the meaning of an expression, why don’t you seek for information?”

“Mrs. Pipchin told me I wasn’t to ask questions,” returned Paul.

“I must beg you not to mention Mrs. Pipchin to me, on any account, Dombey,” returned Miss Blimber. “I couldn’t think of allowing it. The course of study here, is very far removed from anything of that sort.

A repetition of such allusions would make it necessary for me to request to hear, without a mistake, before breakfast-time to-morrow morning, from *Verbum personale* down to *simillima cygno*."

"I didn't mean, Ma'am," began little Paul.

"I must trouble you not to tell me that you didn't mean, if you please, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, who preserved an awful politeness in her admonitions. "That is a line of argument, I couldn't dream of permitting."

Paul felt it safest to say nothing at all, so he only looked at Miss Blimber's spectacles. Miss Blimber having shaken her head at him gravely, referred to a paper lying before her.

"'Analysis' of the character of P. Dombey." If my recollection serves me," said Miss Blimber breaking off, "the word analysis as opposed to synthesis, is thus defined by Walker. 'The resolution of an object, whether of the senses or of the intellect, into its first elements.' As opposed to synthesis, you observe. Now you know what analysis is, Dombey."

Dombey didn't seem to be absolutely blinded by the light let in upon his intellect, but he made Miss Blimber a little bow.

"'Analysis,' resumed Miss Blimber, casting her eye over the paper, 'of the character of P. Dombey.' I find that the natural capacity of Dombey is extremely good; and that his general disposition to study may be stated in an equal ratio. Thus, taking eight as our standard and highest number, I find these qualities in Dombey stated each at six three-fourths!"

Miss Blimber paused to see how Paul received this news. Being undecided whether six three-fourths, meant six pounds fifteen, or sixpence three farthings, or six foot three, or three quarters past six, or six some-things that he hadn't learnt yet, with three unknown something elses over, Paul rubbed his hands and looked straight at Miss Blimber. It happened to answer as well as anything else he could have done; and Cornelia proceeded.

"'Violence two. Selfishness two. Inclination to low company, as evinced in the case of a person named Glubb, originally seven, but since reduced. Gentlemanly demeanour four, and improving with advancing years.' Now what I particularly wish to call your attention to, Dombey, is the general observation at the close of this analysis."

Paul set himself to follow it with great care.

"'It may be generally observed of Dombey,'" said Miss Blimber, reading in a loud voice, and at every second word directing her spectacles towards the little figure before her: "'that his abilities and inclinations are good, and that he has made as much progress as under the circumstances could have been expected. But it is to be lamented of this young gentleman that he is singular (what is usually termed old-fashioned) in his character and conduct, and that, without presenting anything in either which distinctly calls for reprobation, he is often very unlike other young gentlemen of his age and social position.'" Now Dombey," said Miss Blimber, laying down the paper, "do you understand that?"

"I think I do, Ma'am," said Paul.

"This analysis, you see, Dombey," Miss Blimber continued, "is going to be sent home to your respected parent. It will naturally be very

painful to him to find that you are singular in your character and conduct. It is naturally painful to us; for we can't like you, you know, Dombey, as well as we could wish."

She touched the child upon a tender point. He had secretly become more and more solicitous from day to day, as the time of his departure drew more near, that all the house should like him. For some hidden reason, very imperfectly understood by himself—if understood at all—he felt a gradually increasing impulse of affection, towards almost everything and everybody in the place. He could not bear to think that they would be quite indifferent to him when he was gone. He wanted them to remember him kindly; and he had made it his business even to conciliate a great hoarse shaggy dog, chained up at the back of the house, who had previously been the terror of his life: that even he might miss him when he was no longer there.

Little thinking that in this, he only showed again the difference between himself and his compeers, poor tiny Paul set it forth to Miss Blimber as well as he could, and begged her, in despite of the official analysis, to have the goodness to try and like him. To Mrs. Blimber, who had joined them, he preferred the same petition: and when that lady could not forbear, even in his presence, from giving utterance to her often-repeated opinion, that he was an odd child, Paul told her that he was sure she was quite right; that he thought it must be his bones, but he didn't know; and that he hoped she would overlook it, for he was fond of them all.

"Not so fond," said Paul, with a mixture of timidity and perfect frankness, which was one of the most peculiar and most engaging qualities of the child, "not so fond as I am of Florence, of course; that could never be. You couldn't expect that, could you, Ma'am?"

"Oh! the old-fashioned little soul!" cried Mrs. Blimber, in a whisper.

"But I like everybody here very much," pursued Paul, "and I should grieve to go away, and think that any one was glad that I was gone, or didn't care."

Mrs. Blimber was now quite sure that Paul was the oddest child in the world; and when she told the Doctor what had passed, the Doctor did not controvert his wife's opinion. But he said, as he had said before, when Paul first came, that study would do much; and he also said, as he had said on that occasion, "Bring him on, Cornelia! Bring him on!"

Cornelia had always brought him on as vigorously as she could; and Paul had had a hard life of it. But over and above the getting through his tasks, he had long had another purpose always present to him, and to which he still held fast. It was, to be a gentle, useful, quiet little fellow, always striving to secure the love and attachment of the rest; and though he was yet often to be seen at his old post on the stairs, or watching the waves and clouds from his solitary window, he was oftener found, too, among the other boys, modestly rendering them some little voluntary service. Thus it came to pass, that even among those rigid and absorbed young anchorites, who mortified themselves beneath the roof of Dr. Blimber, Paul was an object of general interest; a fragile little plaything that they all liked, and that no one would have thought of treating roughly. But he could not change his nature, or re-write the analysis; and so they all agreed that Dombey was old-fashioned.

There were some immunities, however, attaching to the character enjoyed by no one else. They could have better spared a newer-fashioned child, and that alone was much. When the others only bowed to Doctor Blimber and family on retiring for the night, Paul would stretch out his morsel of a hand, and boldly shake the Doctor's; also Mrs. Blimber's; also Cornelia's. If anybody was to be begged off from impending punishment, Paul was always the delegate. The weak-eyed young man himself had once consulted him, in reference to a little breakage of glass and china. And it was darkly rumoured that the butler, regarding him with favour such as that stern man had never shown before to mortal boy, had sometimes mingled porter with his table-beer to make him strong.

Over and above these extensive privileges, Paul had free right of entry to Mr. Feeder's room, from which apartment he had twice led Mr. Toots into the open air in a state of faintness, consequent on an unsuccessful attempt to smoke a very blunt cigar: one of a bundle which that young gentleman had covertly purchased on the shingle from a most desperate smuggler, who had acknowledged, in confidence, that two hundred pounds was the price set upon his head, dead or alive, by the Custom House. It was a snug room, Mr. Feeder's, with his bed in another little room inside of it; and a flute, which Mr. Feeder couldn't play yet, but was going to make a point of learning, he said, hanging up over the fireplace. There were some books in it, too, and a fishing-rod; for Mr. Feeder said he should certainly make a point of learning to fish, when he could find time. Mr. Feeder had amassed, with similar intentions, a beautiful little curly second-hand key-bugle, a chess-board and men, a Spanish Grammar, a set of sketching materials, and a pair of boxing-gloves. The art of self-defence Mr. Feeder said he should undoubtedly make a point of learning, as he considered it the duty of every man to do: for it might lead to the protection of a female in distress.

But Mr. Feeder's great possession was a large green jar of snuff, which Mr. Toots had brought down as a present, at the close of the last vacation; and for which he had paid a high price, as having been the genuine property of the Prince Regent. Neither Mr. Toots nor Mr. Feeder could partake of this or any other snuff, even in the most stinted and moderate degree, without being seized with convulsions of sneezing. Nevertheless it was their great delight to moisten a box-full with cold tea, stir it up on a piece of parchment with a paper-knife, and devote themselves to its consumption then and there. In the course of which cramming of their noses, they endured surprising torments, with the constancy of martyrs: and, drinking table-beer at intervals, felt all the glories of dissipation.

To little Paul sitting silent in their company, and by the side of his chief patron, Mr. Toots, there was a dread charm in these reckless occasions; and when Mr. Feeder spoke of the dark mysteries of London, and told Mr. Toots that he was going to observe it himself closely in all its ramifications in the approaching holidays, and for that purpose had made arrangements to board with two old maiden ladies at Peckham, Paul regarded him as if he were the hero of some book of travels or wild adventure, and was almost afraid of such a slashing person.

Going into this room one evening, when the holidays were very near

Paul found Mr. Feeder filling up the blanks in some printed letters, while some others, already filled up and strewn before him, were being folded and sealed by Mr. Toots. Mr. Feeder said, "Aha, Dombey, there you are, are you?"—for they were always kind to him, and glad to see him—and then said, tossing one of the letters towards him, "And *there* you are, too, Dombey. That's yours."

"Mine, Sir?" said Paul.

"Your invitation," returned Mr. Feeder.

Paul, looking at it, found, in copper-plate print, with the exception of his own name and the date, which were in Mr. Feeder's penmanship, that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber requested the pleasure of Mr. P. Dombey's company at an early party on Wednesday Evening the Seventeenth Instant; and that the hour was half-past seven o'clock; and that the object was Quadrilles. Mr. Toots also showed him, by holding up a companion sheet of paper, that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber requested the pleasure of Mr. Toots's company at an early party on Wednesday Evening the Seventeenth Instant, when the hour was half-past seven o'clock, and when the object was Quadrilles. He also found, on glancing at the table where Mr. Feeder sat, that the pleasure of Mr. Briggs's company, and of Mr. Tozer's company, and of every young gentleman's company, was requested by Doctor and Mrs. Blimber on the same genteel occasion.

Mr. Feeder then told him, to his great joy, that his sister was invited, and that it was a half-yearly event, and that, as the holidays began that day, he could go away with his sister, after the party, if he liked, which Paul interrupted him to say he *would* like, very much. Mr. Feeder then gave him to understand that he would be expected to inform Doctor and Mrs. Blimber, in superfine small-hand, that Mr. P. Dombey would be happy to have the honour of waiting on them, in accordance with their polite invitation. Lastly, Mr. Feeder said, he had better not refer to the festive occasion, in the hearing of Doctor and Mrs. Blimber; as these preliminaries, and the whole of the arrangements, were conducted on principles of classicality and high breeding; and that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber on the one hand, and the young gentlemen on the other, were supposed, in their scholastic capacities, not to have the least idea of what was in the wind.

Paul thanked Mr. Feeder for these hints, and pocketing his invitation, sat down on a stool by the side of Mr. Toots, as usual. But Paul's head, which had long been ailing more or less, and was sometimes very heavy and painful, felt so uneasy that night, that he was obliged to support it on his hand. And yet it drooped so, that by little and little it sunk on Mr. Toots's knee, and rested there, as if it had no care to be ever lifted up again.

That was no reason why he should be deaf; but he must have been, he thought, for, by and by, he heard Mr. Feeder calling in his ear, and gently shaking him to rouse his attention. And when he raised his head, quite scared, and looked about him, he found that Doctor Blimber had come into the room; and that the window was open, and that his forehead was wet with sprinkled water; though how all this had been done without his knowledge, was very curious indeed.

"Ah! Come, come! That's well! How is my little friend now?" said Doctor Blimber, encouragingly.

"Oh, quite well, thank you Sir," said Paul.

But there seemed to be something the matter with the floor, for he couldn't stand upon it steadily; and with the walls too, for they were inclined to turn round and round, and could only be stopped by being looked at very hard indeed. Mr. Toots's head had the appearance of being at once bigger and farther off than was quite natural; and when he took Paul in his arms, to carry him up-stairs, Paul observed with astonishment that the door was in quite a different place from that in which he had expected to find it, and almost thought, at first, that Mr. Toots was going to walk straight up the chimney.

It was very kind of Mr. Toots to carry him to the top of the house so tenderly; and Paul told him that it was. But Mr. Toots said, he would do a great deal more than that, if he could; and indeed he did more as it was: for he helped Paul to undress, and helped him to bed, in the kindest manner possible, and then sat down by the bedside and chuckled very much; while Mr. Feeder, B.A., leaning over the bottom of the bedstead, set all the little bristles on his head bolt upright with his boney hands, and then made believe to spar at Paul with great science, on account of his being all right again, which was so uncommonly facetious, and kind too in Mr. Feeder, that Paul, not being able to make up his mind whether it was best to laugh or cry at him, did both at once.

How Mr. Toots melted away, and Mr. Feeder changed into Mrs. Pipchin, Paul never thought of asking; neither was he at all curious to know; but when he saw Mrs. Pipchin standing at the bottom of the bed, instead of Mr. Feeder, he cried out, "Mrs. Pipchin, don't tell Florence!"

"Don't tell Florence what, my little Paul?" said Mrs. Pipchin, coming round to the bedside, and sitting down in the chair.

"About me," said Paul.

"No, no," said Mrs. Pipchin.

"What do you think I mean to do when I grow up, Mrs. Pipchin?" inquired Paul, turning his face towards her on his pillow, and resting his chin wistfully on his folded hands.

Mrs. Pipchin couldn't guess.

"I mean," said Paul, "to put my money all together in one Bank, never try to get any more, go away into the country with my darling Florence, have a beautiful garden, fields, and woods, and live there with her all my life!"

"Indeed?" cried Mrs. Pipchin.

"Yes," said Paul. "That's what I mean to do, when I—" He stopped, and pondered for a moment.

Mrs. Pipchin's grey eye scanned his thoughtful face.

"If I grow up," said Paul. Then he went on immediately to tell Mrs. Pipchin all about the party, about Florence's invitation, about the pride he would have in the admiration that would be felt for her by all the boys, about their being so kind to him and fond of him, about his being so fond of them, and about his being so glad of it. Then he told Mrs. Pipchin about the analysis, and about his being certainly old-fashioned, and took Mrs. Pipchin's opinion on that point, and whether she knew why it was, and what it meant. Mrs. Pipchin denied the fact altogether, as the shortest way of getting out of the difficulty; but Paul was far from satisfied with that reply, and looked so searchingly at Mrs. Pipchin for a truer answer, that she was obliged to get up and look out of the window to avoid his eyes.

There was a certain calm Apothecary, who attended at the establishment when any of the young gentlemen were ill, and somehow *he* got into the room and appeared at the bedside, with Mrs. Blimber. How they came there, or how long they had been there, Paul didn't know; but when he saw them, he sat up in bed, and answered all the Apothecary's questions at full length, and whispered to him that Florence was not to know anything about it, if he pleased, and that he had set his mind upon her coming to the party. He was very chatty with the Apothecary, and they parted excellent friends. Lying down again with his eyes shut, he heard the Apothecary say, out of the room and quite a long way off—or he dreamed it—that there was a want of vital power (what was that, Paul wondered!) and great constitutional weakness. That as the little fellow had set his heart on parting with his schoolmates on the seventeenth, it would be better to indulge the fancy if he grew no worse. That he was glad to hear from Mrs. Pipchin, that the little fellow would go to his friends in London on the eighteenth. That he would write to Mr. Dombey, when he should have gained a better knowledge of the case, and before that day. That there was no immediate cause for—what? Paul lost that word. And that the little fellow had a fine mind, but was an old-fashioned boy.

What old fashion could that be, Paul wondered with a palpitating heart, that was so visibly expressed in him; so plainly seen by so many people!

He could neither make it out, nor trouble himself long with the effort. Mrs. Pipchin was again beside him, if she had ever been away (he thought she had gone out with the Doctor, but it was all a dream perhaps), and presently a bottle and glass got into her hands magically, and she poured out the contents for him. After that, he had some real good jelly, which Mrs. Blimber brought to him herself; and then he was so well, that Mrs. Pipchin went home, at his urgent solicitation, and Briggs and Tozer came to bed. Poor Briggs grumbled terribly about his own analysis, which could hardly have discomposed him more if it had been a chemical process; but he was very good to Paul, and so was Tozer, and so were all the rest, for they every one looked in before going to bed, and said, "How are you now, Dombey?" "Cheer up, little Dombey!" and so forth. After Briggs had got into bed, he lay awake for a long time, still bemoaning his analysis, and saying he knew it was all wrong, and they couldn't have analysed a murderer worse, and—how would Doctor Blimber like it if his pocket-money depended on it? It was very easy, Briggs said, to make a galley-slave of a boy all the half-year, and then score him up idle; and to crib two dinners a-week out of his board, and then score him up greedy; but that wasn't going to be submitted to, he believed, was it? Oh! Ah!

Before the weak-eyed young man performed on the gong next morning, he came up stairs to Paul and told him he was to lie still, which Paul very gladly did. Mrs. Pipchin reappeared a little before the Apothecary, and a little after the good young woman whom Paul had seen cleaning the stove on that first morning (how long ago it seemed now!) had brought him his breakfast. There was another consultation a long way off, or else Paul dreamed it again; and then the Apothecary, coming back with Doctor and Mrs. Blimber, said:

"Yes, I think, Doctor Blimber, we may release this young gentleman from his books just now; the vacation being so very near at hand."

"By all means," said Doctor Blimber. "My love, you will inform Cornelia, if you please."

"Assuredly," said Mrs. Blimber.

The Apothecary bending down, looked closely into Paul's eyes, and felt his head, and his pulse, and his heart, with so much interest and care, that Paul said "Thank you, sir."

"Our little friend," observed Doctor Blimber, "has never complained."

"Oh no!" replied the Apothecary. "He was not likely to complain."

"You find him greatly better?" said Doctor Blimber.

"Oh! He is greatly better, sir," returned the Apothecary.

Paul had begun to speculate, in his own odd way, on the subject that might occupy the Apothecary's mind just at that moment; so musingly had he answered the two questions of Doctor Blimber. But the Apothecary happening to meet his little patient's eyes, as the latter set off on that mental expedition, and coming instantly out of his abstraction with a cheerful smile, Paul smiled in return and abandoned it.

He lay in bed all that day, dozing and dreaming, and looking at Mr. Toots; but got up on the next, and went down stairs. Lo and behold, there was something the matter with the great clock; and a workman on a pair of steps had taken its face off, and was poking instruments into the works by the light of a candle! This was a great event for Paul, who sat down on the bottom stair, and watched the operation attentively: now and then glancing at the clock face, leaning all askew, against the wall hard by, and feeling a little confused by a suspicion that it was ogling him.

The workman on the steps was very civil; and as he said, when he observed Paul, "How do you do, sir?" Paul got into conversation with him, and told him he hadn't been quite well lately. The ice being thus broken, Paul asked him a multitude of questions about chimes and clocks: as, whether peopled watched up in the lonely church steeples by night to make them strike, and how the bells were rung when people died, and whether those were different bells from wedding bells, or only sounded dismal in the fancies of the living. Finding that his new acquaintance was not very well informed on the subject of the Curfew Bell of ancient days, Paul gave him an account of that institution; and also asked him, as a practical man, what he thought about King Alfred's idea of measuring time by the burning of candles; to which the workman replied, that he thought it would be the ruin of the clock trade if it was to come up again. In fine, Paul looked on, until the clock had quite recovered its familiar aspect, and resumed its sedate inquiry; when the workman, putting away his tools in a long basket, bade him good day, and went away. Though not before he had whispered something, on the door-mat, to the footman, in which there was the phrase "old-fashioned"—for Paul heard it.

What could that old fashion be, that seemed to make the people sorry! What could it be!

Having nothing to learn now, he thought of this frequently; though not so often as he might have done, if he had had fewer things to think of. But he had a great many; and was always thinking, all day long.

First, there was Florence coming to the party. Florence would see that the boys were fond of him; and that would make her happy. This was his great theme. Let Florence once be sure that they were gentle and good to him, and that he had become a little favourite among them,

and then she would always think of the time he had passed there, without being very sorry. Florence might be all the happier too for that, perhaps, when he came back.

When he came back! Fifty times a-day, his noiseless little feet went up the stairs to his own room, as he collected every book, and scrap, and trifle that belonged to him, and put them all together there, down to the minutest thing, for taking home! There was no shade of coming back on little Paul; no preparation for it, or other reference to it, grew out of anything he thought or did, except this slight one in connexion with his sister. On the contrary, he had to think of everything familiar to him, in his contemplative moods and in his wanderings about the house, as being to be parted with; and hence the many things he had to think of, all day long.

He had to peep into those rooms up-stairs, and think how solitary they would be when he was gone, and wonder through how many silent days, weeks, months, and years, they would continue just as grave and undisturbed. He had to think—would any other child (old-fashioned, like himself) stray there at any time, to whom the same grotesque distortions of pattern and furniture would manifest themselves; and would anybody tell that boy of little Dombey, who had been there once.

He had to think of a portrait on the stairs, which always looked earnestly after him as he went away, eyeing it over his shoulder; and which, when he passed it in the company of any one, still seemed to gaze at him, and not at his companion. He had much to think of, in association with a print that hung up in another place, where, in the centre of a wondering group, one figure that he knew, a figure with a light about its head—benignant, mild, and merciful—stood pointing upward.

At his own bedroom window, there were crowds of thoughts that mixed with these, and came on, one upon another, one upon another, like the rolling waves. Where those wild birds lived, that were always hovering out at sea in troubled weather; where the clouds rose, and first began; whence the wind issued on its rushing flight, and where it stopped; whether the spot where he and Florence had so often sat, and watched, and talked about these things, could ever be exactly as it used to be without them; whether it could ever be the same to Florence, if he were in some distant place, and she were sitting there alone.

He had to think, too, of Mr. Toots, and Mr. Feeder, B. A.; of all the boys; and of Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber; of home, and of his aunt and Miss Tox; of his father, Dombey and Son, Walter with the poor old uncle who had got the money he wanted, and that gruff-voiced Captain with the iron hand. Besides all this, he had a number of little visits to pay, in the course of the day; to the school-room, to Doctor Blimber's study, to Mrs. Blimber's private apartment, to Miss Blimber's, and to the dog. For he was free of the whole house now, to range it as he chose; and, in his desire to part with everybody on affectionate terms, he attended, in his way, to them all. Sometimes he found places in books for Briggs, who was always losing them; sometimes he looked up words in dictionaries for other young gentlemen who were in extremity; sometimes he held skeins of silk for Mrs. Blimber to wind; sometimes he put Cornelia's desk to rights; sometimes he would even creep into the Doctor's study, and, sitting on the carpet near his learned

feet, turn the globes softly, and go round the world, or take a flight among the far-off stars.

In those days immediately before the holidays, in short, when the other young gentlemen were labouring for dear life through a general resumption of the studies of the whole half year, Paul was such a privileged pupil as had never been seen in that house before. He could hardly believe it himself; but his liberty lasted from hour to hour, and from day to day; and little Dombey was caressed by every one. Doctor Blimber was so particular about him, that he requested Johnson to retire from the dinner-table one day, for having thoughtlessly spoken to him as "poor little Dombey;" which Paul thought rather hard and severe, though he had flushed at the moment, and wondered why Johnson should pity him. It was the more questionable justice, Paul thought, in the Doctor, from his having certainly overheard that great authority give his assent on the previous evening, to the proposition (stated by Mrs. Blimber) that poor dear little Dombey was more old-fashioned than ever. And now it was that Paul began to think it must surely be old-fashioned, to be very thin, and light, and easily tired, and soon disposed to lie down anywhere and rest; for he couldn't help feeling that these were more and more his habits every day.

At last the party-day arrived; and Doctor Blimber said at breakfast, "Gentlemen, we will resume our studies on the twenty-fifth of next month." Mr. Toots immediately threw off his allegiance, and put on his ring; and mentioning the Doctor in casual conversation shortly afterwards, spoke of him as "Blimber"! This act of freedom inspired the older pupils with admiration and envy; but the younger spirits were appalled, and seemed to marvel that no beam fell down and crushed him.

Not the least allusion was made to the ceremonies of the evening, either at breakfast or at dinner; but there was a bustle in the house all day, and in the course of his perambulations, Paul made acquaintance with various strange benches and candlesticks, and met a harp in a green great-coat standing on the landing outside the drawing-room door. There was something queer, too, about Mrs. Blimber's head at dinner-time, as if she had screwed her hair up too tight; and though Miss Blimber showed a graceful bunch of plaited hair on each temple, she seemed to have her own little curls in paper underneath, and in a playbill too; for Paul read "Theatre Royal" over one of her sparkling spectacles, and "Brighton" over the other.

There was a grand array of white waistcoats and cravats in the young gentlemen's bedrooms as evening approached; and such a smell of singed hair, that Doctor Blimber sent up the footman with his compliments, and wished to know if the house was on fire. But it was only the hair-dresser curling the young gentlemen, and over-heating his tongs in the ardour of business.

When Paul was dressed—which was very soon done, for he felt unwell and drowsy, and was not able to stand about it very long—he went down into the drawing-room; where he found Doctor Blimber pacing up and down the room full dressed, but with a dignified and unconcerned demeanour, as if he thought it barely possible that one or two people might drop in by and bye. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Blimber appeared, looking lovely, Paul thought; and attired in such a number of skirts that

it was quite an excursion to walk round her. Miss Blimber came down soon after her mamma; a little squeezed in appearance, but very charming.

Mr. Toots and Mr. Feeder were the next arrivals. Each of these gentlemen brought his hat in his hand, as if he lived somewhere else; and when they were announced by the butler, Doctor Blimber said, "Aye, aye, aye! God bless my soul!" and seemed extremely glad to see them. Mr. Toots was one blaze of jewellery and buttons; and he felt the circumstance so strongly, that when he had shaken hands with the Doctor, and had bowed to Mrs. Blimber and Miss Blimber, he took Paul aside, and said "What do you think of this, Dombey!"

But notwithstanding this modest confidence in himself, Mr. Toots appeared to be involved in a good deal of uncertainty whether, on the whole, it was judicious to button the bottom button of his waistcoat, and whether, on a calm revision of all the circumstances, it was best to wear his wristbands turned up or turned down. Observing that Mr. Feeder's were turned up, Mr. Toots turned his up; but the wristbands of the next arrival being turned down, Mr. Toots turned his down. The differences in point of waistcoat-buttoning, not only at the bottom, but at the top too, became so numerous and complicated as the arrivals thickened, that Mr. Toots was continually fingering that article of dress, as if he were performing on some instrument; and appeared to find the incessant execution it demanded, quite bewildering.

All the young gentlemen tightly cravatted, curled, and pumped, and with their best hats in their hands, having been at different times announced and introduced, Mr. Baps, the dancing-master, came, accompanied by Mrs. Baps, to whom Mrs. Blimber was extremely kind and condescending. Mr. Baps was a very grave gentleman, with a slow and measured manner of speaking; and before he had stood under the lamp five minutes, he began to talk to Toots (who had been silently comparing pumps with him) about what you were to do with your raw materials when they came into your ports in return for your drain of gold. Mr. Toots, to whom the question seemed perplexing, suggested "Cook 'em." But Mr. Baps did not appear to think that would do.

Paul now slipped away from the cushioned corner of a sofa, which had been his post of observation, and went down-stairs into the tea room to be ready for Florence, whom he had not seen for nearly a fortnight, as he had remained at Doctor Blimber's on the previous Saturday and Sunday, lest he should take cold. Presently she came: looking so beautiful in her simple ball dress, with her fresh flowers in her hand, that when she knelt down on the ground to take Paul round the neck and kiss him (for there was no one there, but his friend and another young woman waiting to serve out the tea), he could hardly make up his mind to let her go again, or take away her bright and loving eyes from his face.

"But what is the matter, Floy?" asked Paul, almost sure that he saw a tear there.

"Nothing, darling; nothing," returned Florence.

Paul touched her cheek gently with his finger—and it *was* a tear!

"Why, Floy!" said he.

"We'll go home together, and I'll nurse you, love," said Florence.

"Nurse me!" echoed Paul.

Paul couldn't understand what that had to do with it, nor why the two

young women looked on so seriously, nor why Florence turned away her face for a moment, and then turned it back, lighted up again with smiles.

"Floy," said Paul, holding a ringlet of her dark hair in his hand. "Tell me, dear. Do *you* think I have grown old-fashioned?"

His sister laughed, and fondled him, and told him "No."

"Because I know they say so," returned Paul, "and I want to know what they mean, Floy."

But a loud double knock coming at the door, and Florence hurrying to the table, there was no more said between them. Paul wondered again when he saw his friend whisper to Florence, as if she were comforting her; but a new arrival put that out of his head speedily.

It was Sir Barnet Skettles, Lady Skettles, and Master Skettles. Master Skettles was to be a new boy after the vacation, and Fame had been busy, in Mr. Feeder's room, with his father, who was in the House of Commons, and of whom Mr. Feeder had said that when he *did* catch the Speaker's eye (which he had been expected to do for three or four years), it was anticipated that he would rather touch up the Radicals.

"And what room is this now, for instance?" said Lady Skettles to Paul's friend, 'Melia.

"Doctor Blimber's study, Ma'am," was the reply.

Lady Skettles took a panoramic survey of it through her glass, and said to Sir Barnet Skettles, with a nod of approval, "Very good." Sir Barnet assented, but Master Skettles looked suspicious and doubtful.

"And this little creature, now," said Lady Skettles, turning to Paul.

"Is he one of the?"—

"Young gentlemen, Ma'am; yes, Ma'am," said Paul's friend.

"And what is your name, my pale child?" said Lady Skettles.

"Dombey," answered Paul.

Sir Barnet Skettles immediately interposed, and said that he had had the honour of meeting Paul's father at a public dinner, and that he hoped he was very well. Then Paul heard him say to Lady Skettles, "City—very rich—most respectable—Doctor mentioned it." And then he said to Paul, "Will you tell your good Papa that Sir Barnet Skettles rejoiced to hear that he was very well, and sent him his best compliments?"

"Yes, sir," answered Paul.

"That is my brave boy," said Sir Barnet Skettles. "Barnet," to Master Skettles, who was revenging himself for the studies to come, on the plum-cake, "this is a young gentleman you ought to know. This is a young gentleman you *may* know, Barnet," said Sir Barnet Skettles, with an emphasis on the permission.

"What eyes! What hair! What a lovely face!" exclaimed Lady Skettles softly, as she looked at Florence through her glass.

"My sister," said Paul, presenting her.

The satisfaction of the Skettleses was now complete. And as Lady Skettles had conceived, at first sight, a liking for Paul, they all went upstairs together: Sir Barnet Skettles taking care of Florence, and young Barnet following.

Young Barnet did not remain long in the back-ground after they had reached the drawing-room, for Dr. Blimber had him out in no time, dancing with Florence. He did not appear to Paul to be particularly happy, or particularly anything but sulky, or to care much what he was about; but

as Paul heard Lady Skettles say to Mrs. Blimber, while she beat time with her fan, that her dear boy was evidently smitten to death by that angel of a child, Miss Dombey, it would seem that Skettles Junior was in a state of bliss, without showing it.

Little Paul thought it a singular coincidence that nobody had occupied his place among the pillows; and that when he came into the room again, they should all make way for him to go back to it, remembering it was his. Nobody stood before him either, when they observed that he liked to see Florence dancing, but they left the space in front quite clear, so that he might follow her with his eyes. They were so kind, too, even the strangers, of whom there were soon a great many, that they came and spoke to him every now and then, and asked him how he was, and if his head ached, and whether he was tired. He was very much obliged to them for all their kindness and attention, and reclining propped up in his corner, with Mrs. Blimber and Lady Skettles on the same sofa, and Florence coming and sitting by his side as soon as every dance was ended, he looked on very happily indeed.

Florence would have sat by him all night, and would not have danced at all of her own accord, but Paul made her, by telling her how much it pleased him. And he told her the truth, too; for his small heart swelled, and his face glowed, when he saw how much they all admired her, and how she was the beautiful little rosebud of the room.

From his nest among the pillows, Paul could see and hear almost everything that passed, as if the whole were being done for his amusement. Among other little incidents that he observed, he observed Mr. Baps the dancing-master get into conversation with Sir Barnet Skettles, and very soon ask him, as he had asked Mr. Toots, what you were to do with your raw materials, when they came into your ports in return for your drain of gold—which was such a mystery to Paul that he was quite desirous to know what ought to be done with them. Sir Barnet Skettles had much to say upon the question, and said it; but it did not appear to solve the question, for Mr. Baps retorted, Yes, but supposing Russia stepped in with her tal-lows; which struck Sir Barnet almost dumb, for he could only shake his head after that, and say, why then you must fall back upon your cottons, he supposed.

Sir Barnet Skettles looked after Mr. Baps when he went to cheer up Mrs. Baps (who, being quite deserted, was pretending to look over the music-book of the gentleman who played the harp), as if he thought him a remarkable kind of man; and shortly afterwards he said so in those words to Doctor Blimber, and inquired if he might take the liberty of asking who he was, and whether he had ever been in the Board of Trade. Doctor Blimber answered no, he believed not; and that in fact he was a Professor of—

“Of something connected with statistics, I’ll swear?” observed Sir Barnet Skettles.

“Why no, Sir Barnet,” replied Dr. Blimber, rubbing his chin. “No, not exactly.”

“Figures of some sort, I would venture a bet,” said Sir Barnet Skettles.

“Why yes,” said Dr. Blimber, “yes, but not of that sort. Mr. Baps is a very worthy sort of man, Sir Barnet, and—in fact he’s our professor of dancing.”

Paul was amazed to see that this piece of information quite altered Sir

Barnet Skettles' opinion of Mr. Baps, and that Sir Barnet flew into a perfect rage, and glowered at Mr. Baps over on the other side of the room. He even went so far as to D Mr. Baps to Lady Skettles, in telling her what had happened, and to say that it was like his most con-sun-mate and con-foun-ded impudence.

There was another thing that Paul observed. Mr. Feeder, after imbibing several custard-cups of negus, began to enjoy himself. The dancing in general was ceremonious, and the music rather solemn—a little like church music in fact—but after the custard-cups, Mr. Feeder told Mr. Toots that he was going to throw a little spirit into the thing. After that, Mr. Feeder not only began to dance as if he meant dancing and nothing else, but secretly to stimulate the music to perform wild tunes. Further, he became particular in his attentions to the ladies; and dancing with Miss Blimber, whispered to her—whispered to her!—though not so softly but that Paul heard him say this remarkable poetry,

“Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne'er could injure You!”

This, Paul heard him repeat to four young ladies, in succession. Well he might say to Mr. Toots, that he was afraid he should be the worse for it, to-morrow!

Mrs. Blimber was a little alarmed by this—comparatively speaking—profligate behaviour; and especially by the alteration in the character of the music, which, beginning to comprehend low melodies that were popular in the streets, might not unnaturally be supposed to give offence to Lady Skettles. But Lady Skettles was so very kind as to beg Mrs. Blimber not to mention it; and to receive her explanation that Mr. Feeder's spirits sometimes betrayed him into excesses on these occasions, with the greatest courtesy and politeness; observing, that he seemed a very nice sort of person for his situation, and that she particularly liked the unassuming style of his hair—which (as already hinted) was about a quarter of an inch long.

Once, when there was a pause in the dancing, Lady Skettles told Paul that he seemed very fond of music. Paul replied, that he was; and if she was too, she ought to hear his sister, Florence, sing. Lady Skettles presently discovered that she was dying with anxiety to have that gratification; and though Florence was at first very much frightened at being asked to sing before so many people, and begged earnestly to be excused, yet, on Paul calling her to him, and saying, “Do, Floy! Please! For me, my dear!” she went straight to the piano, and began. When they all drew a little away, that Paul might see her: and when he saw her sitting there alone, so young, and good, and beautiful, and kind to him; and heard her thrilling voice, so natural and sweet, and such a golden link between him and all his life's love and happiness, rising out of the silence; he turned his face away, and hid his tears. Not, as he told them when they spoke to him, not that the music was too plaintive or too sorrowful, but it was so dear to him.

They all loved Florence. How could they help it! Paul had known beforehand that they must and would; and sitting in his cushioned corner, with calmly folded hands, and one leg loosely doubled under him, few would have thought what triumph and delight expanded his childish

bosom while he watched her, or what a sweet tranquillity he felt. Lavish encomiums on "Dombey's sister;" reached his ears from all the boys: admiration of the self-possessed and modest little beauty, was on every lip: reports of her intelligence and accomplishments floated past him, constantly; and, as if borne in upon the air of the summer night, there was a half-intelligible sentiment diffused around, referring to Florence and himself, and breathing sympathy for both, that soothed and touched him.

He did not know why. For all that the child observed, and felt, and thought, that night—the present and the absent; what was then and what had been—were blended like the colours in the rainbow, or in the plumage of rich birds when the sun is shining on them, or in the softening sky when the same sun is setting. The many things he had had to think of lately, passed before him in the music; not as claiming his attention over again, or as likely ever more to occupy it, but as peacefully disposed of and gone. A solitary window, gazed through years ago, looked out upon an ocean, miles and miles away; upon its waters, fancies, busy with him only yesterday, were hushed and lulled to rest like broken waves. The same mysterious murmur he had wondered at, when lying on his couch upon the beach, he thought he still heard sounding through his sister's song, and through the hum of voices, and the tread of feet, and having some part in the faces flitting by, and even in the heavy gentleness of Mr. Toots, who frequently came up to shake him by the hand. Through the universal kindness he still thought he heard it, speaking to him; and even his old-fashioned reputation seemed to be allied to it, he knew not how. Thus little Paul sat musing, listening, looking on, and dreaming; and was very happy.

Until the time arrived for taking leave: and then, indeed, there was a sensation in the party. Sir Barnet Skettles brought up Skettles Junior to shake hands with him, and asked him if he would remember to tell his good Papa, with his best compliments, that he, Sir Barnet Skettles, had said he hoped the two young gentlemen would become intimately acquainted. Lady Skettles kissed him, and parted his hair upon his brow, and held him in her arms; and even Mrs. Baps—poor Mrs. Baps! Paul was glad of that—came over from beside the music-book of the gentleman who played the harp, and took leave of him quite as heartily as anybody in the room.

"Good bye, Doctor Blimber," said Paul, stretching out his hand.

"Good bye, my little friend," returned the Doctor.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Sir," said Paul, looking innocently up into his awful face. "Ask them to take care of Diogenes if you please."

Diogenes was the dog: who had never in his life received a friend into his confidence, before Paul. The Doctor promised that every attention should be paid to Diogenes in Paul's absence, and Paul having again thanked him, and shaken hands with him, bade adieu to Mrs. Blimber and Cornelia with such heartfelt earnestness that Mrs. Blimber forgot from that moment to mention Cicero to Lady Skettles, though she had fully intended it, all the evening. Cornelia taking both Paul's hands in hers, said, "Dombey, Dombey, you have always been my favourite pupil. God bless you!" And it shewed, Paul thought, how easily one might do injustice to a person; for Miss Blimber meant it—though she *was* a Forcer—and felt it.

A buzz then went round among the young gentlemen, of "Dombey's going!" "Little Dombey's going!" and there was a general move after Paul and Florence down the staircase and into the hall, in which the whole Blimber family were included. Such a circumstance, Mr. Feeder said aloud, as had never happened in the case of any former young gentleman within his experience; but it would be difficult to say if this were sober fact or custard-cups. The servants with the butler at their head, had all an interest in seeing Little Dombey go; and even the weak-eyed young man, taking out his books and trunks to the coach that was to carry him and Florence to Mrs. Pipchin's for the night, melted visibly.

Not even the influence of the softer passion on the young gentlemen—and they all, to a boy, doted on Florence—could restrain them from taking quite a noisy leave of Paul; waving hats after him, pressing down stairs to shake hands with him, crying individually "Dombey, don't forget me!" and indulging in many such ebullitions of feeling, uncommon among those young Chesterfields. Paul whispered Florence, as she wrapped him up before the door was opened, Did she hear them? Would she ever forget it? Was she glad to know it? And a lively delight was in his eyes as he spoke to her.

Once, for a last look, he turned and gazed upon the faces thus addressed to him, surprised to see how shining and how bright, and numerous they were, and how they were all piled and heaped up, as faces are at crowded theatres. They swam before him, as he looked, like faces in an agitated glass; and next moment he was in the dark coach outside, holding close to Florence. From that time, whenever he thought of Doctor Blimber's, it came back as he had seen it in this last view; and it never seemed to be a real place again, but always a dream, full of eyes:

This was not quite the last of Doctor Blimber's, however. There was something else. There was Mr. Toots. Who, unexpectedly letting down one of the coach-windows, and looking in, said, with a most egregious chuckle, "Is Dombey there?" and immediately put it up again, without waiting for an answer. Nor was this quite the last of Mr. Toots, even; for before the coachman could drive off, he as suddenly let down the other window, and looking in with a precisely similar chuckle, said in a precisely similar tone of voice, "Is Dombey there?" and disappeared precisely as before.

How Florence laughed! Paul often remembered it, and laughed himself whenever he did so.

But there was much, soon afterwards—next day, and after that—which Paul could only recollect confusedly. As, why they stayed at Mrs. Pipchin's days and nights, instead of going home; why he lay in bed, with Florence sitting by his side; whether that had been his father in the room, or only a tall shadow on the wall; whether he had heard his doctor say, of some one, that if they had removed him before the occasion on which he had built up fancies, strong in proportion to his own weakness, it was very possible he might have pined away.

He could not even remember whether he had often said to Florence, "Oh Floy, take me home, and never leave me!" but he thought he had. He fancied sometimes he had heard himself repeating, "Take me home, Floy! take me home!"

But he could remember, when he got home, and was carried up the

well-remembered stairs, that there had been the rumbling of a coach for many hours together, while he lay upon the seat, with Florence still beside him, and old Mrs. Pipchin sitting opposite. He remembered his old bed too, when they laid him down in it: his aunt, Miss Tox, and Susan: but there was something else, and recent too, that still perplexed him.

"I want to speak to Florence, if you please," he said. "To Florence by herself, for a moment!"

She bent down over him, and the others stood away.

"Floy, my pet, wasn't that Papa in the hall, when they brought me from the coach?"

"Yes, dear."

"He didn't cry, and go into his room, Floy, did he, when he saw me coming in?"

Florence shook her head, and pressed her lips against his cheek.

"I'm very glad he didn't cry," said little Paul. "I thought he did. Don't tell them that I asked."

CHAPTER XV.

AMAZING ARTFULNESS OF CAPTAIN CUTTLE, AND A NEW PURSUIT FOR WALTER GAY.

WALTER could not, for several days, decide what to do in the Barbados business; and even cherished some faint hope that Mr. Dombey might not have meant what he had said, or that he might change his mind, and tell him he was not to go. But as nothing occurred to give this idea (which was sufficiently improbable in itself) any touch of confirmation, and as time was slipping by, and he had none to lose, he felt that he must act, without hesitating any longer.

Walter's chief difficulty was, how to break the change in his affairs to Uncle Sol, to whom he was sensible it would be a terrible blow. He had the greater difficulty in dashing Uncle Sol's spirits with such an astounding piece of intelligence, because they had lately recovered very much, and the old man had become so cheerful, that the little back parlour was itself again. Uncle Sol had paid the first appointed portion of the debt to Mr. Dombey, and was hopeful of working his way through the rest; and to cast him down afresh, when he had sprung up so manfully from his troubles, was a very distressing necessity.

Yet it would never do to run away from him. He must know of it beforehand; and how to tell him, was the point. As to the question of going or not going, Walter did not consider that he had any power of choice in the matter. Mr. Dombey had truly told him that he was young, and that his uncle's circumstances were not good; and Mr. Dombey had plainly expressed, in the glance with which he had accompanied that reminder, that if he declined to go he might stay at home if he chose, but not in his counting-house. His uncle and he lay under a great obligation to Mr. Dombey, which was of Walter's own soliciting. He might have begun in secret to despair of ever winning that gentleman's favour, and might have thought that he was now and then disposed to put a slight upon

him, which was hardly just. But what would have been duty without that, was still duty with it—or Walter thought so—and duty must be done.

When Mr. Dombey had looked at him, and told him he was young, and that his uncle's circumstances were not good, there had been an expression of disdain in his face; a contemptuous and disparaging assumption that he would be quite content to live idly on a reduced old man, which stung the boy's generous soul. Determined to assure Mr. Dombey, in so far as it was possible to give him the assurance without expressing it in words, that indeed he mistook his nature, Walter had been anxious to show even more cheerfulness and activity after the West-Indian interview than he had shown before: if that were possible, in one of his quick and zealous disposition. He was too young and inexperienced to think, that possibly this very quality in him was not agreeable to Mr. Dombey, and that it was no stepping-stone to his good opinion to be elastic and hopeful of pleasing under the shadow of his powerful displeasure, whether it were right or wrong. But it may have been—it may have been—that the great man thought himself defied in this new exposition of an honest spirit, and purposed to bring it down.

"Well! at last and at least, Uncle Sol must be told," thought Walter with a sigh. And as Walter was apprehensive that his voice might perhaps quaver a little, and that his countenance might not be quite as hopeful as he could wish it to be, if he told the old man himself, and saw the first effects of his communication on his wrinkled face, he resolved to avail himself of the services of that powerful mediator, Captain Cuttle. Sunday coming round, he set off, therefore, after breakfast, once more to beat up Captain Cuttle's quarters.

It was not unpleasant to remember, on the way thither, that Mrs. Mac Stinger resorted to a great distance every Sunday morning, to attend the ministry of the Reverend Melchisedech Howler, who, having been one day discharged from the West India Docks on a false suspicion (got up expressly against him by the general enemy) of screwing gimlets into puncheons, and applying his lips to the orifice, had announced the destruction of the world for that day two years, at ten in the morning, and opened a front parlour for the reception of ladies and gentlemen of the Ranting persuasion, upon whom, on the first occasion of their assemblage, the admonitions of the Reverend Melchisedech had produced so powerful an effect, that, in their rapturous performance of a sacred jig, which closed the service, the whole flock broke through into a kitchen below, and disabled a mangle belonging to one of the fold.

This the Captain, in a moment of uncommon conviviality, had confided to Walter and his uncle, between the repetitions of lovely Peg, on the night when Brogley the broker was paid out. The Captain himself was punctual in his attendance at a church in his own neighbourhood, which hoisted the union jack every Sunday morning; and where he was good enough—the lawful beadle being infirm—to keep an eye upon the boys, over whom he exercised great power, in virtue of his mysterious hook. Knowing the regularity of the Captain's habits, Walter made all the haste he could, that he might anticipate his going out; and he made such good speed, that he had the pleasure, on turning into Brig Place, to behold the broad blue coat and waistcoat hanging out of the Captain's open window, to air in the sun.

It appeared incredible that the coat and waistcoat could be seen by mortal eyes without the Captain; but he certainly was not in them, otherwise his legs—the houses in Brig Place not being lofty—would have obstructed the street door, which was perfectly clear. Quite wondering at this discovery, Walter gave a single knock.

“Stinger,” he distinctly heard the Captain say, up in his room, as if that were no business of his. Therefore Walter gave two knocks.

“Cuttle,” he heard the Captain say upon that; and immediately afterwards the Captain, in his clean shirt and braces, with his neckerchief hanging loosely round his throat like a coil of rope, and his glazed hat on, appeared at the window, leaning out over the broad blue coat and waistcoat.

“Wal’r!” cried the Captain, looking down upon him in amazement.

“Ay, ay, Captain Cuttle,” returned Walter, “only me.”

“What’s the matter, my lad?” inquired the Captain, with great concern, “Gills an’t been and sprung nothing again?”

“No, no,” said Walter. “My uncle’s all right, Captain Cuttle.”

The Captain expressed his gratification, and said he would come down below and open the door, which he did.

“Though you’re early, Wal’r,” said the Captain, eyeing him still doubtfully, when they got up-stairs.

“Why, the fact is, Captain Cuttle,” said Walter, sitting down, “I was afraid you would have gone out, and I want to benefit by your friendly counsel.”

“So you shall,” said the Captain; “what’ll you take?”

“I want to take your opinion, Captain Cuttle,” returned Walter, smiling. “That’s the only thing for me.”

“Come on then,” said the Captain. “With a will, my lad!”

Walter related to him what had happened; and the difficulty in which he felt respecting his uncle, and the relief it would be to him if Captain Cuttle, in his kindness, would help him to smooth it away; Captain Cuttle’s infinite consternation and astonishment at the prospect unfolded to him, gradually swallowing that gentleman up, until it left his face quite vacant, and the suit of blue, the glazed hat, and the hook, apparently without an owner.

“You see, Captain Cuttle,” pursued Walter, “for myself, I am young, as Mr. Dombey said, and not to be considered. I am to fight my way through the world, I know; but there are two points I was thinking, as I came along, that I should be very particular about, in respect to my uncle. I don’t mean to say that I deserve to be the pride and delight of his life—you believe me, I know—but I am. Now, don’t you think I am?”

The Captain seemed to make an endeavour to rise from the depths of his astonishment, and get back to his face; but the effort being ineffectual, the glazed hat merely nodded with a mute, unutterable meaning.

“If I live and have my health,” said Walter, “and I am not afraid of that, still, when I leave England I can hardly hope to see my uncle again. He is old, Captain Cuttle; and besides, his life is a life of custom—”

“Steady, Wal’r! Of a want of custom?” said the Captain, suddenly reappearing.

“Too true,” returned Walter, shaking his head; “but I meant a life of

habit, Captain Cuttle—that sort of custom. And if (as you very truly said, I am sure) he would have died the sooner for the loss of the stock, and all those objects to which he has been accustomed for so many years, don't you think he might die a little sooner for the loss of—”

“Of his Nevy,” interposed the Captain. “Right!”

“Well then,” said Walter, trying to speak gaily, “we must do our best to make him believe that the separation is but a temporary one, after all; but as I know better, or dread that I know better, Captain Cuttle, and as I have so many reasons for regarding him with affection, and duty, and honour, I am afraid I should make but a very poor hand at that, if I tried to persuade him of it. That's my great reason for wishing you to break it out to him; and that's the first point.”

“Keep her off a point or so!” observed the Captain, in a contemplative voice.

“What did you say, Captain Cuttle?” inquired Walter.

“Stand by!” returned the Captain, thoughtfully.

Walter paused to ascertain if the Captain had any particular information to add to this, but as he said no more, went on.

“Now, the second point, Captain Cuttle. I am sorry to say, I am not a favourite with Mr. Dombey. I have always tried to do my best, and I have always done it; but he does not like me. He can't help his likings and dislikings, perhaps. I say nothing of that. I only say that I am certain he does not like me. He does not send me to this post as a good one; he disdains to represent it as being better than it is; and I doubt very much if it will ever lead me to advancement in the House—whether it does not, on the contrary, dispose of me for ever, and put me out of the way. Now, we must say nothing of this to my uncle, Captain Cuttle, but must make it out to be as favourable and promising as we can; and when I tell you what it really is, I only do so, that in case any means should ever arise of lending me a hand, so far off, I may have one friend at home who knows my real situation.

“Wal'r, my boy,” replied the Captain, “in the Proverbs of Solomon you will find the following words, ‘May we never want a friend in need, nor a bottle to give him!’ When found, make a note of.”

Here the Captain stretched out his hand to Walter, with an air of downright good faith that spoke volumes; at the same time repeating (for he felt proud of the accuracy and pointed application of his quotation), “When found, make a note of.”

“Captain Cuttle,” said Walter, taking the immense fist extended to him by the Captain in both his hands, which it completely filled, “next to my uncle Sol, I love you. There is no one on earth in whom I can more safely trust, I am sure. As to the mere going away, Captain Cuttle, I don't care for that; why should I care for that! If I were free to seek my own fortune—if I were free to go as a common sailor—if I were free to venture on my own account to the farthest end of the world—I would gladly go! I would have gladly gone, years ago, and taken my chance of what might come of it. But it was against my uncle's wishes, and against the plans he had formed for me; and there was an end of that. But what I feel, Captain Cuttle, is that we have been a little mistaken all along, and that, so far as any improvement in my prospects is concerned, I am no better off now than I was when I first entered Dombey's House—

perhaps a little worse, for the House may have been kindly inclined towards me then, and it certainly is not now."

"Turn again, Whittington," muttered the disconsolate Captain, after looking at Walter for some time.

"Aye!" replied Walter, laughing, "and turn a great many times, too, Captain Cuttle, I'm afraid, before such fortune as his ever turns up again. Not that I complain," he added, in his lively, animated, energetic way. "I have nothing to complain of. I am provided for. I can live. When I leave my uncle, I leave him to you; and I can leave him to no one better, Captain Cuttle. I haven't told you all this because I despair, not I; it's to convince you that I can't pick and choose in Dombey's House, and that where I am sent, there I must go, and what I am offered, that I must take. It's better for my uncle that I should be sent away; for Mr. Dombey is a valuable friend to him, as he proved himself, you know when, Captain Cuttle; and I am persuaded he won't be less valuable when he hasn't me there, every day, to awaken his dislike. So hurrah for the West Indies, Captain Cuttle! How does that tune go that the sailors sing?"

"For the Port of Barbados, boys!"

Cheerily!

Leaving old England behind us, boys!

Cheerily!"

Here the Captain roared in chorus

"Oh cheerily, cheerily!"

"Oh cheer—i—ly!"

The last line reaching the quick ears of an ardent skipper not quite sober, who lodged opposite, and who instantly sprung out of bed, threw up his window, and joined in, across the street, at the top of his voice, produced a fine effect. When it was impossible to sustain the concluding note any longer, the skipper bellowed forth a terrific "ahoy!" intended in part as a friendly greeting, and in part to show that he was not at all breathless. That done, he shut down his window, and went to bed again.

"And now, Captain Cuttle," said Walter, handing him the blue coat and waistcoat, and bustling very much, "if you'll come and break the news to Uncle Sol (which he ought to have known, days upon days ago, by rights) I'll leave you at the door, you know, and walk about until the afternoon."

The Captain, however, scarcely appeared to relish the commission, or to be by any means confident of his powers of executing it. He had arranged the future life and adventures of Walter so very differently, and so entirely to his own satisfaction; he had felicitated himself so often on the sagacity and foresight displayed in that arrangement, and had found it so complete and perfect in all its parts; that to suffer it to go to pieces all at once, and even to assist in breaking it up, required a great effort of his resolution. The Captain, too, found it difficult to unload his old ideas upon the subject, and to take a perfectly new cargo on board, with that rapidity which the circumstances required, or without jumbling and confounding the two. Consequently, instead of putting on his coat and waistcoat with anything like the impetuosity that could alone have kept pace with Walter's mood, he declined to invest himself with those garments at all at present; and informed Walter that on such a serious matter, he must be allowed to "bite his nails a bit."

"It's an old habit of mine, Wal'r," said the Captain, "any time these fifty year. When you see Ned Cuttle bite his nails, Wal'r, then you may know that Ned Cuttle's aground."

Thereupon the Captain put his iron hook between his teeth, as if it were a hand; and with an air of wisdom and profundity that was the very concentration and sublimation of all philosophical reflection and grave inquiry, applied himself to the consideration of the subject in its various branches.

"There's a friend of mine," murmured the Captain, in an absent manner, "but he's at present coasting round to Whitby, that would deliver such an opinion on this subject, or any other that could be named, as would give Parliament six and beat 'em. Been knocked overboard, that man," said the Captain "twice, and none the worse for it. Was beat in his apprenticeship, for three weeks (off and on), about the head with a ringbolt. And yet a clearer-minded man don't walk."

In spite of his respect for Captain Cuttle, Walter could not help inwardly rejoicing at the absence of this sage, and devoutly hoping that his limpid intellect might not be brought to bear on his difficulties until they were quite settled.

"If you was to take and show that man the buoy at the Nore," said Captain Cuttle in the same tone, "and ask him his opinion of it, Wal'r, he'd give you an opinion that was no more like that buoy than your uncle's buttons are. There an't a man that walks—certainly not on *two* legs—that can come near him. Not near him!"

"What's his name, Captain Cuttle?" inquired Walter, determined to be interested in the Captain's friend.

"His name's Bunsby," said the Captain. "But Lord, it might be anything for the matter of that, with such a mind as his!"

The exact idea which the Captain attached to this concluding piece of praise, he did not further elucidate; neither did Walter seek to draw it forth. For on his beginning to review, with the vivacity natural to himself and to his situation, the leading points in his own affairs, he soon discovered that the Captain had relapsed into his former profound state of mind; and that while he eyed him stedfastly from beneath his bushy eyebrows, he evidently neither saw nor heard him, but remained immersed in cogitation.

In fact, Captain Cuttle was labouring with such great designs, that far from being aground, he soon got off into the deepest of water, and could find no bottom to his penetration. By degrees it became perfectly plain to the Captain that there was some mistake here; that it was undoubtedly much more likely to be Walter's mistake than his; that if there were really any West India scheme afoot, it was a very different one from what Walter, who was young and rash, supposed; and could only be some new device for making his fortune with unusual celerity. "Or if there should be any little hitch between 'em," thought the Captain, meaning between Walter and Mr. Dombey, "it only wants a word in season from a friend of both parties, to set it right and smooth, and make all taut again." Captain Cuttle's deduction from these considerations was, that as he already enjoyed the pleasure of knowing Mr. Dombey, from having spent a very agreeable half hour in his company at Brighton (on the morning when they borrowed the money); and that, as

a couple of men of the world, who understood each other, and were mutually disposed to make things comfortable, could easily arrange any little difficulty of this sort, and come at the real facts; the friendly thing for him to do would be, without saying anything about it to Walter at present, just to step up to Mr. Dombey's house—say to the servant “Would ye be so good, my lad, as report Cap'en Cuttle here?”—meet Mr. Dombey in a confidential spirit—hook him by the button-hole—talk it over—make it all right—and come away triumphant!

As these reflections presented themselves to the Captain's mind, and by slow degrees assumed this shape and form, his visage cleared like a doubtful morning when it gives place to a bright noon. His eyebrows, which had been in the highest degree portentous, smoothed their rugged bristling aspect, and became serene; his eyes, which had been nearly closed in the severity of his mental exercise, opened freely; a smile which had been at first but three specks—one at the right-hand corner of his mouth, and one at the corner of each eye—gradually overspread his whole face, and, rippling up into his forehead, lifted the glazed hat: as if that too had been aground with Captain Cuttle, and were now, like him, happily afloat again.

Finally, the Captain left off biting his nails, and said, “Now Wal'r, my boy, you may help me on with them slops.” By which the Captain meant his coat and waistcoat.

Walter little imagined why the Captain was so particular in the arrangement of his cravat, as to twist the pendant ends into a sort of pigtail, and pass them through a massive gold ring with a picture of a tomb upon it, and a neat iron railing, and a tree, in memory of some deceased friend. Nor why the Captain pulled up his shirt collar to the utmost limits allowed by the Irish linen below, and by so doing decorated himself with a complete pair of blinkers; nor why he changed his shoes, and put on an unparal- leled pair of ankle-jacks, which he only wore on extraordinary occasions. The Captain being at length attired to his own complete satisfaction, and having glanced at himself from head to foot in a shaving-glass which he removed from a nail for that purpose, took up his knotted stick, and said he was ready.

The Captain's walk was more complacent than usual when they got out into the street; but this Walter supposed to be the effect of the ankle-jacks, and took little heed of. Before they had gone very far, they encountered a woman selling flowers; when the Captain stopping short, as if struck by a happy idea, made a purchase of the largest bundle in her basket: a most glorious nosegay, fan-shaped, some two feet and a half round, and composed of all the jolliest-looking flowers that blow.

Armed with this little token, which he designed for Mr. Dombey, Captain Cuttle walked on with Walter until they reached the Instrument-maker's door, before which they both paused.

“You're going in?” said Walter.

“Yes;” returned the Captain, who felt that Walter must be got rid of before he proceeded any further, and that he had better time his projected visit somewhat later in the day.

“And you won't forget anything?” said Walter.

“No,” returned the Captain.

“I'll go upon my walk at once,” said Walter, “and then I shall be out of the way, Captain Cuttle.”

"Take a good long 'un, my lad!" replied the Captain, calling after him. Walter waved his hand in assent, and went his way.

His way was nowhere in particular; but he thought he would go out into the fields, where he could reflect upon the unknown life before him, and resting under some tree, ponder quietly. He knew no better fields than those near Hampstead, and no better means of getting at them than by passing Mr. Dombey's house.

It was as stately and as dark as ever, when he went by and glanced up at its frowning front. The blinds were all pulled down, but the upper windows stood wide open, and the pleasant air stirring those curtains and waving them to and fro, was the only sign of animation in the whole exterior. Walter walked softly as he passed, and was glad when he had left the house a door or two behind.

He looked back then; with the interest he had always felt for the place since the adventure of the lost child, years ago; and looked especially at those upper windows. While he was thus engaged, a chariot drove to the door, and a portly gentleman in black, with a heavy watch-chain, alighted, and went in. When he afterwards remembered this gentleman and his equipage together, Walter had no doubt he was a physician; and then he wondered who was ill; but the discovery did not occur to him until he had walked some distance, thinking listlessly of other things.

Though still, of what the house had suggested to him; for Walter pleased himself with thinking that perhaps the time might come, when the beautiful child who was his old friend and had always been so grateful to him and so glad to see him since, might interest her brother in his behalf and influence his fortunes for the better. He liked to imagine this—more, at that moment, for the pleasure of imagining her continued remembrance of him, than for any worldly profit he might gain: but another and more sober fancy whispered to him that if he were alive then, he would be beyond the sea and forgotten; she married, rich, proud, happy. There was no more reason why she should remember him with any interest in such an altered state of things, than any plaything she ever had. No, not so much.

Yet Walter so idealised the pretty child whom he had found wandering in the rough streets, and so identified her with her innocent gratitude of that night and the simplicity and truth of its expression, that he blushed for himself as a libeller when he argued that she could ever grow proud. On the other hand, his meditations were of that fantastic order that it seemed hardly less libellous in him to imagine her grown a woman; to think of her as anything but the same artless, gentle, winning little creature, that she had been in the days of good Mrs. Brown. In a word, Walter found out that to reason with himself about Florence at all, was to become very unreasonable indeed; and that he could do no better than preserve her image in his mind as something precious, unattainable, unchangeable, and indefinite—indefinite in all but its power of giving him pleasure, and restraining him like an Angel's hand from anything unworthy.

It was a long stroll in the fields that Walter took that day, listening to the birds, and the Sunday bells, and the softened murmur of the town—breathing sweet scents; glancing sometimes at the dim horizon beyond which his voyage and his place of destination lay; then looking round on the green English grass and the home-landscape. But he hardly once thought, even of going away, distinctly; and seemed to put off reflection

idly, from hour to hour, and from minute to minute, while he yet went on reflecting all the time.

Walter had left the fields behind him, and was plodding homeward in the same abstracted mood, when he heard a shout from a man, and then a woman's voice calling to him loudly by name. Turning quickly in his surprise, he saw that a hackney-coach, going in the contrary direction, had stopped at no great distance; that the coachman was looking back from his box, and making signals to him with his whip; and that a young woman inside was leaning out of the window, and beckoning with immense energy. Running up to this coach, he found that the young woman was Miss Nipper, and that Miss Nipper was in such a flutter as to be almost beside herself.

"Staggs's Gardens, Mr. Walter!" said Miss Nipper; "if you please, oh do!"

"Eh?" cried Walter; "what is the matter?"

"Oh, Mr. Walter, Staggs's Gardens, if you please!" said Susan.

"There!" cried the coachman, appealing to Walter, with a sort of exulting despair; "that's the way the young lady's been a goin' on for up'ards of a mortal hour, and me continually backing out of no-thoroughfares, where she *would* drive up. I've had a many fares in this coach first and last, but never such a fare as her."

"Do you want to go to Staggs's Gardens, Susan?" inquired Walter.

"Ah! *She* wants to go there! WHERE IS IT?" growled the coachman.

"I don't know where it is!" exclaimed Susan, wildly. "Mr. Walter, I was there once myself, along with Miss Floy and our own poor darling Master Paul, on the very day when you found Miss Floy in the city, for we lost her coming home, Mrs. Richards and me, and a mad bull, and Mrs. Richards's eldest, and though I went there afterwards, I can't remember where it is, I think it's sunk into the ground, Oh, Mr. Walter, don't desert me, Staggs's Gardens, if you please! Miss Floy's darling—all our darlings—little, meek, meek Master Paul! Oh Mr. Walter!"

"Good God!" cried Walter. "Is he very ill?"

"The pretty flower!" cried Susan, wringing her hands, "has took the fancy that he'd like to see his old nurse, and I've come to bring her to his bedside, Mrs. Staggs, of Polly Toodle's Gardens, some one pray!"

Greatly moved by what he heard, and catching Susan's earnestness immediately, Walter, now that he understood the nature of her errand, dashed into it with such ardour that the coachman had enough to do to follow closely as he ran before, inquiring here and there and everywhere, the way to Staggs's Gardens.

There was no such place as Staggs's Gardens. It had vanished from the earth. Where the old rotten summer-houses once had stood, palaces now reared their heads, and granite columns of gigantic girth opened a vista to the railway world beyond. The miserable waste ground, where the refuse-matter had been heaped of yore, was swallowed up and gone; and in its frowsty stead were tiers of warehouses, crammed with rich goods and costly merchandise. The old by-streets now swarmed with passengers and vehicles of every kind; the new streets that had stopped disheartened in the mud and waggon-ruts, formed towns within themselves, originating wholesome comforts and conveniences belonging to themselves, and never tried nor thought of until they sprung into existence. Bridges that had led to

nothing, led to villas, gardens, churches, healthy public walks. The carcasses of houses, and beginnings of new thoroughfares, had started off upon the line at steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train.

As to the neighbourhood which had hesitated to acknowledge the railroad in its struggling days, that had grown wise and penitent, as any Christian might in such a case, and now boasted of its powerful and prosperous relation. There were railway patterns in its drapers' shops, and railway journals in the windows of its newsmen. There were railway hotels, coffee-houses, lodging-houses, boarding-houses; railway plans, maps, views, wrappers, bottles, sandwich-boxes, and time tables; railway hackney-coach and cab-stands; railway omnibuses, railway streets and buildings, railway hangers-on and parasites, and flatterers out of all calculation. There was even railway time observed in clocks, as if the sun itself had given in. Among the vanquished, was the master chimney-sweeper, whilom incredulous at Staggs's Gardens, who now lived in a stuccoed house three stories high, and gave himself out, with golden flourishes upon a varnished board, as contractor for the cleansing of the railway chimneys by machinery.

To and from the heart of this great change, all day and night, throbbing currents rushed and returned incessantly like its life's blood. Crowds of people and mountains of goods, departing and arriving scores upon scores of times in every four-and-twenty hours, produced a fermentation in the place that was always in action. The very houses seemed disposed to pack up and take trips. Wonderful Members of Parliament, who, little more than twenty years before, had made themselves merry with the wild railroad theories of engineers, and given them the liveliest rubs in cross-examination, went down into the north with their watches in their hands, and sent on messages before by the electric telegraph, to say that they were coming. Night and day the conquering engines rumbled at their distant work, or, advancing smoothly to their journey's end, and gliding like tame dragons into the allotted corners grooved out to the inch for their reception, stood bubbling and trembling there, making the walls quake, as if they were dilating with the secret knowledge of great powers yet unsuspected in them, and strong purposes not yet achieved.

But Staggs's Gardens had been cut up root and branch. Oh woe the day! when "not a rood of English ground"—laid out in Staggs's Gardens—is secure!

At last, after much fruitless inquiry, Walter, followed by the coach and Susan, found a man who had once resided in that vanished land, and who was no other than the master sweep before referred to, grown stout, and knocking a double knock at his own door. He knowed Toodle, he said, well. Belonged to the Railroad, didn't he?

"Yes, sir, yes!" cried Susan Nipper from the coach window.

Where did he live now? hastily inquired Walter.

He lived in the Company's own Buildings, second turning to the right, down the yard, cross over, and take the second on the right again. It was number eleven; they couldn't mistake it; but if they did, they had only to ask for Toodle, Engine Fireman, and any one would show them which was his house. At this unexpected stroke of success, Susan Nipper dismounted from the coach with all speed, took Walter's arm, and set off at a breathless pace on foot; leaving the coach there to await their return.

"Has the little boy been long ill, Susan?" inquired Walter, as they hurried on.

"Ailing for a deal of time, but no one knew how much," said Susan; adding, with excessive sharpness, "Oh them Blimbers!"

"Blimbers?" echoed Walter.

"I couldn't forgive myself at such a time as this, Mr. Walter," said Susan, "and when there's so much serious distress to think about, if I rested hard on any one, especially on them that little darling Paul speaks well of, but I *may* wish that the family was set to work in a stony soil to make new roads, and that Miss Blimber went in front, and had the pickaxe!"

Miss Nipper then took breath, and went on faster than before, as if this extraordinary aspiration had relieved her. Walter, who had by this time no breath of his own to spare, hurried along without asking any more questions; and they soon, in their impatience, burst in at a little door and came into a clean parlour full of children.

"Where's Mrs. Richards!" exclaimed Susan Nipper, looking round. "Oh Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Richards, come along with me, my dear creature!"

"Why, if it an't Susan!" cried Polly, rising with her honest face and motherly figure from among the group, in great surprise.

"Yes, Mrs. Richards, it's me," said Susan, "and I wish it wasn't, though I may not seem to flatter when I say so, but little Master Paul is very ill, and told his Pa to-day that he would like to see the face of his old nurse, and him and Miss Floy hope you'll come along with me—and Mr. Walter Mrs. Richards—forgetting what is past, and do a kindness to the sweet dear that is withering away. Oh, Mrs. Richards, withering away!" Susan Nipper crying, Polly shed tears to see her, and to hear what she had said; and all the children gathered round (including numbers of new babies); and Mr. Toodle, who had just come home from Birmingham, and was eating his dinner out of a basin, laid down his knife and fork, and put on his wife's bonnet and shawl for her, which were hanging up behind the door; then tapped her on the back; and said, with more fatherly feeling than eloquence, "Polly! cut away!"

So they got back to the coach, long before the coachman expected them; and Walter putting Susan and Mrs. Richards inside, took his seat on the box himself that there might be no more mistakes, and deposited them safely in the hall of Mr. Dombey's house—where, by the bye, he saw a mighty nosegay lying, which reminded him of the one Captain Cuttle had purchased in his company that morning. He would have lingered to know more of the young invalid, or waited any length of time to see if he could render the least service; but, painfully sensible that such conduct would be looked upon by Mr. Dombey as presumptuous and forward, he turned slowly, sadly, anxiously, away.

He had not gone five minutes' walk from the door, when a man came running after him, and begged him to return. Walter retraced his steps as quickly as he could, and entered the gloomy house with a sorrowful foreboding.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT THE WAVES WERE ALWAYS SAYING.

PAUL had never risen from his little bed. He lay there, listening to the noises in the street, quite tranquilly; not caring much how the time went, but watching it and watching everything about him with observing eyes.

When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on, and that the sky was red and beautiful. As the reflection died away, and a gloom went creeping up the wall, he watched it deepen, deepen, deepen, into night. Then he thought how the long streets were dotted with lamps, and how the peaceful stars were shining overhead. His fancy had a strange tendency to wander to the river, which he knew was flowing through the great city; and now he thought how black it was, and how deep it would look, reflecting the hosts of stars—and more than all, how steadily it rolled away to meet the sea.

As it grew later in the night, and footsteps in the street became so rare that he could hear them coming, count them as they paused, and lose them in the hollow distance, he would lie and watch the many-coloured ring about the candle, and wait patiently for day. His only trouble was, the swift and rapid river. He felt forced, sometimes, to try to stop it—to stem it with his childish hands—or choke its way with sand—and when he saw it coming on, resistless, he cried out! But a word from Florence, who was always at his side, restored him to himself; and leaning his poor head upon her breast, he told Floy of his dream, and smiled.

When day began to dawn again, he watched for the sun; and when its cheerful light began to sparkle in the room, he pictured to himself—pictured! he saw—the high church towers rising up into the morning sky, the town reviving, waking, starting into life once more, the river glistening as it rolled (but rolling fast as ever), and the country bright with dew. Familiar sounds and cries came by degrees into the street below; the servants in the house were roused and busy; faces looked in at the door, and voices asked his attendants softly how he was. Paul always answered for himself, “I am better. I am a great deal better, thank you! Tell Papa so!”

By little and little, he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of carriages and carts, and people passing and re-passing; and would fall asleep, or be troubled with a restless and uneasy sense again—the child could hardly tell whether this were in his sleeping or his waking moments—of that rushing river. “Why, will it never stop, Floy?” he would sometimes ask her. “It is bearing me away, I think!”

But Floy could always soothe and reassure him; and it was his daily delight to make her lay her head down on his pillow, and take some rest.

“You are always watching me, Floy. Let me watch *you*, now!” They would prop him up with cushions in a corner of his bed, and there he would recline the while she lay beside him: bending forward oftentimes to kiss her, and whispering to those who were near that she was tired, and how she had sat up so many nights beside him.

Thus, the flush of the day, in its heat and light, would gradually decline; and again the golden water would be dancing on the wall.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors—they used to assemble down-stairs, and come up together—and the room was so quiet, and Paul was so observant of them (though he never asked of anybody what they said), that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches. But his interest centered in Sir Parker Peps, who always took his seat on the side of the bed. For Paul had heard them say long ago, that that gentleman had been with his mamma when she clasped Florence in her arms, and died. And he could not forget it, now. He liked him for it. He was not afraid.

The people round him changed as unaccountably as on that first night at Dr. Blimber's—except Florence; Florence never changed—and what had been Sir Parker Peps, was now his father, sitting with his head upon his hand. Old Mrs. Pipchin dozing in an easy chair, often changed to Miss Tox, or his aunt: and Paul was quite content to shut his eyes again, and see what happened next, without emotion. But this figure with its head upon its hand returned so often, and remained so long, and sat so still and solemn, never speaking; never being spoken to, and rarely lifting up its face, that Paul began to wonder languidly, if it were real; and in the night-time saw it sitting there, with fear.

"Floy!" he said. "What *is* that?"

"Where, dearest?"

"There! at the bottom of the bed."

"There's nothing there, except Papa!"

The figure lifted up its head, and rose, and coming to the bedside, said: "My own boy! Don't you know me?"

Paul looked it in the face, and thought, was this his father? But the face, so altered to his thinking, thrilled while he gazed, as if it were in pain; and before he could reach out both his hands to take it between them, and draw it towards him, the figure turned away quickly from the little bed, and went out at the door.

Paul looked at Florence with a fluttering heart, but he knew what she was going to say, and stopped her with his face against her lips. The next time he observed the figure sitting at the bottom of the bed, he called to it.

"Don't be so sorry for me, dear Papa! Indeed I am quite happy!"

His father coming, and bending down to him—which he did quickly, and without first pausing by the bedside—Paul held him round the neck, and repeated those words to him several times, and very earnestly; and Paul never saw him in his room again at any time, whether it were day or night, but he called out, "Don't be so sorry for me! Indeed I am quite happy!" This was the beginning of his always saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced upon the wall; how many nights the dark dark river rolled towards the sea in spite of him; Paul never counted, never sought to know. If their kindness or his sense of it, could have increased, they were more kind, and he more grateful every day; but whether there were many days or few, appeared of little moment now, to the gentle boy.

One night he had been thinking of his mother, and her picture in the

drawing-room down stairs, and had thought she must have loved sweet Florence better than his father did, to have held her in her arms when she felt that she was dying—for even he, her brother, who had such dear love for her, could have no greater wish than that. The train of thought suggested to him to inquire if he had ever seen his mother? for he could not remember whether they had told him yes, or no, the river running very fast, and confusing his mind.

"Floy, did I ever see mamma?"

"No, darling, why?"

"Did I never see any kind face, like a mamma's, looking at me when I was a baby, Floy?"

He asked, incredulously, as if he had some vision of a face before him.

"Oh yes, dear!"

"Whose, Floy?"

"Your old nurse's. Often."

"And where is my old nurse?" said Paul. "Is she dead too? Floy, are we *all* dead, except you?"

There was a hurry in the room, for an instant—longer, perhaps; but it seemed no more—then all was still again; and Florence, with her face quite colourless, held his head upon her arm. Her arm trembled very much.

"Show me that old nurse, Floy, if you please!"

"She is not here, darling. She shall come to-morrow."

"Thank you, Floy!"

Paul closed his eyes with those words, and fell asleep. When he awoke, the sun was high, and the broad day was clear and warm. He lay a little, looking at the windows, which were open, and the curtains rustling in the air, and waving to and fro: then he said, "Floy, is it to-morrow? Is she come?"

Some one seemed to go in quest of her. Perhaps it was Susan. Paul thought he heard her telling him when he had closed his eyes again, that she would soon be back; but he did not open them to see. She kept her word—perhaps she had never been away—but the next thing that happened was a noise of footsteps on the stairs, and then Paul woke—woke mind and body—and sat upright in his bed. He saw them now about him. There was no gray mist before them, as there had been sometimes in the night. He knew them every one, and called them by their names.

"And who is this? Is this my old nurse?" said the child, regarding with a radiant smile, a figure coming in.

Yes, yes. No other stranger would have shed those tears at sight of him, and called him her dear boy, her pretty boy, her own poor blighted child. No other woman would have stooped down by his bed, and taken up his wasted hand, and put it to her lips and breast, as one who had some right to fondle it. No other woman would have so forgotten everybody there but him and Floy, and been so full of tenderness and pity.

"Floy! this is a kind good face!" said Paul. "I am glad to see it again. Don't go away, old nurse! Stay here!"

His senses were all quickened, and he heard a name he knew.

"Who was that, who said 'Walter?'" he asked, looking round. "Some one said Walter. Is he here? I should like to see him very much."

Nobody replied directly; but his father soon said to Susan, "Call him back, then: let him come up!" After a short pause of expectation, during which he looked with smiling interest and wonder, on his nurse, and saw that she had not forgotten Floy, Walter was brought into the room. His open face and manner, and his cheerful eyes, had always made him a favourite with Paul; and when Paul saw him, he stretched out his hand, and said, "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my child!" cried Mrs. Pipchin, hurrying to his bed's head. "Not good-bye?"

For an instant, Paul looked at her with the wistful face with which he had so often gazed upon her in his corner by the fire. "Ah, Yes," he said, placidly, "good-bye! Walter dear, good-bye!"—turning his head to where he stood, and putting out his hand again. "Where is Papa?"

He felt his father's breath upon his cheek, before the words had parted from his lips.

"Remember Walter, dear Papa," he whispered, looking in his face. "Remember Walter. I was fond of Walter!" The feeble hand waved in the air, as if it cried, 'good-bye!' to Walter once again.

"Now lay me down," he said; "and Floy, come close to me, and let me see you!"

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them, locked together.

"How fast the river runs, between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But it's very near the sea. I hear the waves! They always said so!"

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest. How green the banks were now, how bright the flowers growing on them, and how tall the rushes! Now the boat was out at sea, but gliding smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank!—

He put his hands together, as he had been used to do, at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it; but they saw him fold them so, behind her neck.

"Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! But tell them that the print upon the stairs at school, is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go!"

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old, fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion—Death!

Oh thank GOD, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean!

"Dear me, dear me! To think," said Miss Tox, bursting out afresh that night, as if her heart were broken, "that Dombey and Son should be a Daughter after all!"

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