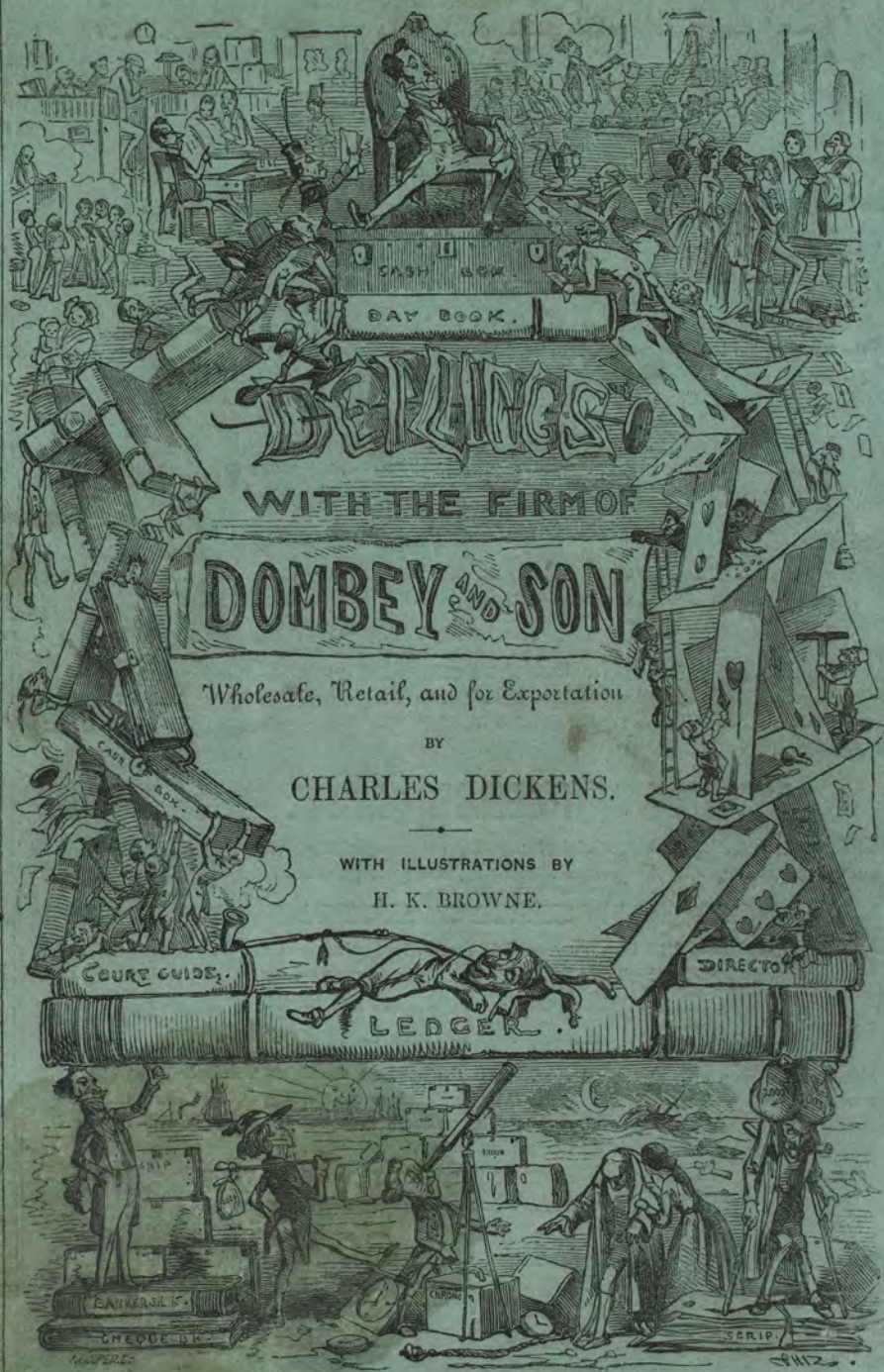


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The noise and bustle which ushered in the morning, were sufficient to dispel from the mind of the most romantic visionary in existence, any associations but those which were immediately connected with the rapidly-approaching election. The beating of drums, the blowing of horns and trumpets, the shouting of men, and tramping of horses, echoed and re-echoed through the streets from the earliest dawn of day; and an occasional fight between the light skirmishers of either party, at once enlivened the preparations, and agreeably diversified their character.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as his valet appeared at his bed-room door, just as he was concluding his toilet; "all alive to-day, I suppose?"

"Reg'lar game, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "our people's a collecting down at the Town Arms, and they're a hollering themselves hoarse already."

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, "do they seem devoted to their party, Sam?"

"Never see such devotion in my life, sir."

"Energetic, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Uncommon," replied Sam; "I never see men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they a'nt afeer'd o' bustin'."

"That's the mistaken kindness of the gentry here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Werry likely," replied Sam, briefly.

"Fine, fresh, hearty fellows they seem," said Mr. Pickwick, glancing from the window.

"Werry fresh," replied Sam; "me, and the two waiters at the Peacock, has been a pumpin' over the independent voters as supped there last night."

"Pumping over independent voters!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes," said his attendant, "every man slept vere he fell down; we dragged 'em out, one by one, this mornin' and put 'em under the pump, and they're in reg'lar fine order, now. Shillin' a head the committee paid for that 'ere job."

"Can such things be!" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"Lord bless your heart, sir," said Sam, "why where was you half baptized!—that's nothin', that a'nt."

"Nothing?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Nothin' at all, sir," replied his attendant. "The night afore the last day o' the last election here, the opposite party bribed the bar-maid at the Town Arms, to hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpoll'd electors as was a stoppin' in the house."

"What do you mean by 'hoccusing' brandy and water?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Puttin' laud'num in it," replied Sam. "Blessed if she didn't send 'em all to sleep till twelve hours arter the election was over. They took one man up to the booth, in a truck, fast asleep, by way of experiment, but it was no go—they wouldn't poll him; so they brought him back, and put him to bed again."

"Strange practices, these," said Mr. Pickwick; half speaking to himself, and half addressing Sam.

"Not half so strange as a miraculous circumstance as happened to my own father, at an election-time, in this werry place, sir," replied Sam.

"What was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why he drove a coach down here once," said Sam; "'lection time came on, and he was engaged by yun party to bring down voters from London. Night afore he was a going to drive up, committee on t'other side sends for him quietly, and away he goes vith the messenger, who shows him in;—large room—lots of gen'l'm'n—heaps of papers, pens and ink, and all that 'ere. 'Ah, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n in the chair, 'glad to see you, sir; how are you?'—'Werry well, thank'ee, sir,' says my father; 'I hope you're pretty middlin,' says he—'Pretty well, thank'ee, sir,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'sit down, Mr. Weller—pray sit down, sir.' So my father sits down, and he and the gen'l'm'n looks werry hard at each other. 'You don't remember me?' says the

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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.

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

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

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I am, Sir, your humble servant,
P. HAWKER.
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Inferior kinds from 9d. per pound and upwards.

These are the prices of some of our Coffees. The best is 2s. per pound—and the Best is the Best—if people can only get hold of it—but how few can! and why? Because they are always being told that the Best can be supplied at 1s. 9d. per pound—now the best can *not* be sold at that price. Our Best is 2s. per pound, and we trust we

HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED

it as the Best; for it is in reality the very best and choicest old Coffee imported. It is far better than the Best of the Bests frequently spoken of; it is in verity and truth the very Best, and we pledge ourselves most sincerely that it shall give every and unqualified satisfaction to the consumer. Taste then, Ye lovers of fine Coffee! and prove its excellence.

Again, we respectfully solicit attention to the Coffee we sell at 1s. 8d. per pound, and invite comparison.

THE PRINCIPLE

to which we look for success, with that commonly known as the Best, and if ours be not the better, we are content that all our assertions be considered vain and empty; and so convinced are we of the superior quality of this widely approved good Coffee, that we are satisfied to stand or fall by the result.

To enable the public to prove as much as possible, without tasting the Coffee, the truth of what we have just stated, we will endeavour to show the present market value of some of the principal sorts, as space will not permit us mentioning many, and we will add the price at which we are in the habit

OF SELLING RETAIL.

	Price per cwt. for Raw Coffee.		British duty.	Selling price at "Number One," for roasted Coffee.			
	s.	s.		At per cwt.		At per pound.	
JAMAICA, ordinary to middling	28	to 70	4d and 5 per cent.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Good middling to fine qualities ..	75	130	4d and 5 per cent.	84 0	to 144 8	0 9	to 1 3½
CEYLON, ordinary to low middling	40	58	4d and 5 per cent.	149 0	224 0	1 4	2 0
Middling to fine plantation	60	96	4d and 5 per cent.	107 4	130 8	0 11½	1 2
BERBICE and DEMERARA	30	80	4d and 5 per cent.	133 0	177 4	1 2½	1 7
DOMINICA and ST. LUCIA	30	75	4d and 5 per cent.	88 8	156 4	0 9½	1 4½
MOCHA	50	110	6d and 5 per cent.	133 0	151 8	0 9½	1 4½
COSTA RICA	33	60	6d and 5 per cent.	144 8	224 0	1 3½	2 0
JAVA	35	54	6d and 5 per cent.	121 4	156 4	1 1	1 4½
CUBA, &c. &c.	37	80	6d and 5 per cent.	128 4	140 4	1 1½	1 4
				128 4	182 0	1 1½	1 7½

By the above list it will be noticed that we supply the public retail not only

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but we may say at merchants' prices, which, being ourselves merchants, we are enabled to do and give them every advantage. This is the principle on which our business was based, and which has already met with such gratifying and remunerating success, for prosperity and public favour has hitherto attended, and we respectfully hope will ultimately crown our great undertaking, the object of which has been to bring the growers and producers of, we may now say, the necessities of life in direct communication with the consumers, more particularly for the great benefit of the latter.

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

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

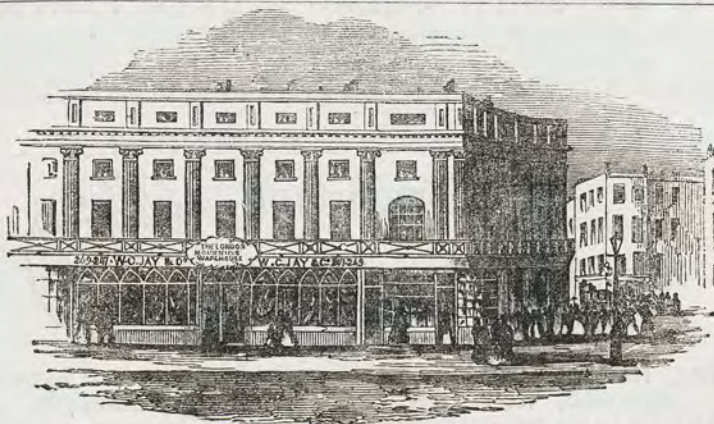


10s. per doz. large bottles
7s. per doz. small ditto
exclusive of carriage from
London.

"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.



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

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small ditto
of carriage from
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guard against adulteration
or at
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WAREHOUS

Street.
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the Morning after the
necessity of proceeding
led by a visit to the
Cumbria, Merca, and
most reasonable terms
made up, if required, by
'Laidley' and Family for
required (either in case
for slight or complete
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Madlin Colley, Bath

gent-street



The Wooden Midshipman on the look out



Poor Paul's Friends

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CHAPTER XVII.

CAPTAIN CUTTLE DOES A LITTLE BUSINESS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

CAPTAIN CUTTLE, in the exercise of that surprising talent for deep-laid and unfathomable scheming, with which (as is not unusual in men of transparent simplicity) he sincerely believed himself to be endowed by nature, had gone to Mr. Dombey's house on the eventful Sunday, winking all the way as a vent for his superfluous sagacity, and had presented himself in the full lustre of the ankle-jacks before the eyes of Towlinson. Hearing from that individual, to his great concern, of the impending calamity, Captain Cuttle, in his delicacy, sheered off again confounded; merely handing in the nosegay as a small mark of his solicitude, and leaving his respectful compliments for the family in general, which he accompanied with an expression of his hope that they would lay their heads well to the wind under existing circumstances, and a friendly intimation that he would "look up again" to-morrow.

The Captain's compliments were never heard of any more. The Captain's nosegay, after lying in the hall all night, was swept into the dust-bin next morning; and the Captain's sly arrangement, involved in one catastrophe with greater hopes and loftier designs, was crushed to pieces. So, when an avalanche bears down a mountain-forest, twigs and bushes suffer with the trees, and all perish together.

When Walter returned home on the Sunday evening from his long walk, and its memorable close, he was too much occupied at first by the tidings he had to give them, and by the emotions naturally awakened in his breast by the scene through which he had passed, to observe either that his uncle was evidently unacquainted with the intelligence the Captain had undertaken to impart, or that the Captain made signals with his hook, warning him to avoid the subject. Not that the Captain's signals were calculated to have proved very comprehensible, however attentively observed; for, like those Chinese sages who are said in their conferences to write certain learned words in the air that are wholly impossible of pronunciation, the Captain made such waves and flourishes as nobody without a previous knowledge of his mystery, would have been at all likely to understand.

Captain Cuttle, however, becoming cognizant of what had happened, relinquished these attempts, as he perceived the slender chance that now existed of his being able to obtain a little easy chat with Mr. Dombey before the period of Walter's departure. But in admitting to himself, with a disappointed and crest-fallen countenance, that Sol Gills must be told, and that Walter must go—taking the case for the present as he found it, and not having it enlightened or improved beforehand by the knowing management of a friend—the Captain still felt an unabated confidence that he, Ned Cuttle, was the man for Mr. Dombey; and that, to set Walter's fortunes quite square, nothing was wanted but that they two should come together. For the Captain never could forget how well he

and Mr. Dombey had got on at Brighton; with what nicety each of them had put in a word when it was wanted; how exactly they had taken one another's measure; nor how Ned Cuttle had pointed out that resource in the first extremity, and had brought the interview to the desired termination. On all these grounds the Captain soothed himself with thinking that though Ned Cuttle was forced by the pressure of events to "stand by" almost useless for the present, Ned would fetch up with a wet sail in good time, and carry all before him.

Under the influence of this good-natured delusion, Captain Cuttle even went so far as to revolve in his own bosom, while he sat looking at Walter and listening with a tear on his shirt-collar to what he related, whether it might not be at once genteel and politic to give Mr. Dombey a verbal invitation, whenever they should meet, to come and cut his mutton in Brig Place on some day of his own naming, and enter on the question of his young friend's prospects over a social glass. But the uncertain temper of Mrs. Mac Stinger, and the possibility of her setting up her rest in the passage during such an entertainment, and there delivering some homily of an uncomplimentary nature, operated as a check on the Captain's hospitable thoughts, and rendered him timid of giving them encouragement.

One fact was quite clear to the Captain, as Walter, sitting thoughtfully over his untasted dinner, dwelt on all that had happened; namely, that however Walter's modesty might stand in the way of his perceiving it himself, he was, as one might say, a member of Mr. Dombey's family. He had been, in his own person, connected with the incident he so pathetically described; he had been by name remembered and commended in close association with it; and his fortunes must have a particular interest in his employer's eyes. If the Captain had any lurking doubt whatever of his own conclusions, he had not the least doubt that they were good conclusions for the peace of mind of the Instrument-maker. Therefore he availed himself of so favourable a moment for breaking the West Indian intelligence to his old friend, as a piece of extraordinary preferment; declaring that for his part he would freely give a hundred thousand pounds (if he had it) for Walter's gain in the long-run, and that he had no doubt such an investment would yield a handsome premium.

Solomon Gills was at first stunned by the communication, which fell upon the little back-parlour like a thunderbolt, and tore up the hearth savagely. But the Captain flashed such golden prospects before his dim sight: hinted so mysteriously at Whittingtonian consequences: laid such emphasis on what Walter had just now told them: and appealed to it so confidently as a corroboration of his predictions, and a great advance towards the realisation of the romantic legend of Lovely Peg: that he bewildered the old man. Walter, for his part, feigned to be so full of hope and ardour, and so sure of coming home again soon, and backed up the Captain with such expressive shakings of his head and rubbings of his hands, that Solomon, looking first at him and then at Captain Cuttle, began to think he ought to be transported with joy.

"But I'm behind the time, you understand," he observed, in apology, passing his hand nervously down the whole row of bright buttons on his

coat, and then up again, as if they were beads and he were telling them twice over: "and I would rather have my dear boy here. It's an old-fashioned notion, I dare say. He was always fond of the sea. He's"—and he looked wistfully at Walter—"he's glad to go."

"Uncle Sol!" cried Walter, quickly, "if you say that, I *won't* go. No, Captain Cuttle, I won't. If my uncle thinks I could be glad to leave him, though I was going to be made Governor of all the Islands in the West Indies, that's enough. I'm a fixture."

"Wal'r, my lad," said the Captain. "Steady! Sol Gills, take an observation of your nevy."

Following with his eyes the majestic action of the Captain's hook, the old man looked at Walter.

"Here is a certain craft," said the Captain, with a magnificent sense of the allegory into which he was soaring, "a-going to put out on a certain voyage. What name is wrote upon that craft indelibly? Is it *The Gay*? or," said the Captain, raising his voice as much as to say, observe the point of this, "is it *The Gills*."

"Ned," said the old man, drawing Walter to his side, and taking his arm tenderly through his, "I know. I know. Of course I know that Wally considers me more than himself always. That's in my mind. When I say he is glad to go, I mean I hope he is. Eh? look you, Ned, and you too, Wally, my dear, this is new and unexpected to me; and I'm afraid my being behind the time, and poor, is at the bottom of it. Is it really good fortune for him, do you tell me, now?" said the old man, looking anxiously from one to the other. "Really and truly? Is it? I can reconcile myself to almost anything that advances Wally, but I won't have Wally putting himself at any disadvantage for me, or keeping anything from me. You, Ned Cuttle!" said the old man, fastening on the Captain, to the manifest confusion of that diplomatist; "are you dealing plainly by your old friend? Speak out, Ned Cuttle. Is there anything behind? Ought he to go? How do you know it first, and why?"

As it was a contest of affection and self-denial, Walter struck in with infinite effect, to the Captain's relief; and between them they tolerably reconciled old Sol Gills, by continued talking, to the project; or rather so confused him, that nothing, not even the pain of separation, was distinctly clear to his mind.

He had not much time to balance the matter; for on the very next day, Walter received from Mr. Carker the Manager, the necessary credentials for his passage and outfit, together with the information that the Son and Heir would sail in a fortnight, or within a day or two afterwards at latest. In the hurry of preparation: which Walter purposely enhanced as much as possible: the old man lost what little self-possession he ever had; and so the time of departure drew on rapidly.

The Captain, who did not fail to make himself acquainted with all that passed, through inquiries of Walter from day to day, found the time still tending on towards his going away, without any occasion offering itself, or seeming likely to offer itself, for a better understanding of his position. It was after much consideration of this fact, and much pondering over such an unfortunate combination of circumstances, that a bright idea

occurred to the Captain. Suppose he made a call on Mr. Carker, and tried to find out from *him* how the land really lay!

Captain Cuttle liked this idea very much. It came upon him in a moment of inspiration, as he was smoking an early pipe in Brig Place after breakfast; and it was worthy of the tobacco. It would quiet his conscience, which was an honest one, and was made a little uneasy by what Walter had confided to him, and what Sol Gills had said; and it would be a deep, shrewd act of friendship. He would sound Mr. Carker carefully, and say much or little, just as he read that gentleman's character, and discovered that they got on well together or the reverse.

Accordingly, without the fear of Walter before his eyes (who he knew was at home packing), Captain Cuttle again assumed his ankle-jacks and mourning brooch, and issued forth on this second expedition. He purchased no propitiatory nosegay on the present occasion, as he was going to a place of business; but he put a small sunflower in his button-hole to give himself an agreeable relish of the country; and with this, and the knobby stick, and the glazed hat, bore down upon the offices of Dombey and Son.

After taking a glass of warm rum-and-water at a tavern close by, to collect his thoughts, the Captain made a rush down the court, lest its good effects should evaporate, and appeared suddenly to Mr. Perch.

"Matey," said the Captain, in persuasive accents. "One of your Governors is named Carker."

Mr. Perch admitted it; but gave him to understand, as in official duty bound, that all his Governors were engaged, and never expected to be disengaged any more.

"Look 'ee here, mate," said the Captain in his ear; "my name's Cap'en Cuttle."

The Captain would have hooked Perch gently to him, but Mr. Perch eluded the attempt; not so much in design, as in starting at the sudden thought that such a weapon unexpectedly exhibited to Mrs. Perch might, in her then condition, be destructive to that lady's hopes.

"If you'll be so good as just report Cap'en Cuttle here, when you get a chance," said the Captain, "I'll wait."

Saying which, the Captain took his seat on Mr. Perch's bracket, and drawing out his handkerchief from the crown of the glazed hat, which he jammed between his knees (without injury to its shape, for nothing human could bend it), rubbed his head well all over, and appeared refreshed. He subsequently arranged his hair with his hook, and sat looking round the office, contemplating the clerks with a serene respect.

The Captain's equanimity was so impenetrable, and he was altogether so mysterious a being, that Perch the messenger was daunted.

"What name was it you said?" asked Mr. Perch, bending down over him as he sat on the bracket.

"Cap'en," in a deep hoarse whisper.

"Yes," said Mr. Perch, keeping time with his head.

"Cuttle."

"Oh!" said Mr. Perch, in the same tone, for he caught it, and couldn't help it; the Captain, in his diplomacy, was so impressive. "I'll see if he's disengaged now. I don't know. Perhaps he may be for a minute."

"Aye, aye, my lad, I won't detain him longer than a minute," said the Captain, nodding with all the weighty importance that he felt within him. Perch, soon returning, said, "Will Captain Cuttle walk this way?"

Mr. Carker the manager, standing on the hearth-rug before the empty fire-place, which was ornamented with a castellated sheet of brown paper, looked at the Captain as he came in, with no very special encouragement.

"Mr. Carker?" said Captain Cuttle.

"I believe so," said Mr. Carker, showing all his teeth.

The Captain liked his answering with a smile; it looked pleasant. "You see," began the Captain, rolling his eyes slowly round the little room, and taking in as much of it as his shirt collar permitted; "I'm a seafaring man myself, Mr. Carker, and Wal'r, as is on your books here, is a'most a son of mine."

"Walter Gay?" said Mr. Carker, showing all his teeth again.

"Wal'r Gay it is," replied the Captain, "right!" The Captain's manner expressed a warm approval of Mr. Carker's quickness of perception. "I'm an intimate friend of his and his uncle's. Perhaps," said the Captain, "you may have heard your head Governor mention my name?—Captain Cuttle."

"No!" said Mr. Carker, with a still wider demonstration than before.

"Well," resumed the Captain, "I've the pleasure of his acquaintance. I waited upon him down on the Sussex coast there, with my young friend Wal'r, when,—in short, when there was a little accommodation wanted." The Captain nodded his head in a manner that was at once comfortable, easy, and expressive. "You remember, I dare say?"

"I think," said Mr. Carker, "I had the honour of arranging the business."

"To be sure!" returned the Captain. "Right again! you had. Now I've took the liberty of coming here—"

"Won't you sit down?" said Mr. Carker, smiling.

"Thank'ee," returned the Captain, availing himself of the offer. "A man does get more way upon himself, perhaps, in his conversation, when he sits down. Won't you take a cheer yourself?"

"No thank you," said the manager, standing, perhaps from the force of winter habit, with his back against the chimney-piece, and looking down upon the Captain with an eye in every tooth and gum. "You have taken the liberty, you were going to say—though it's none—"

"Thank'ee kindly, my lad," returned the Captain: "of coming here, on account of my friend Wal'r. Sol Gills, his uncle, is a man of science, and in science he may be considered a clipper; but he ain't what I should altogether call an able seaman—not a man of practice. Wal'r is as trim a lad as ever stepped; but he's a little down by the head in one respect, and that is, modesty. Now what I should wish to put to you," said the Captain, lowering his voice, and speaking in a kind of confidential growl, "in a friendly way, entirely between you and me, and for my own private reckoning, 'till your head Governor has wore round a bit, and I can come alongside of him, is this.—Is everything right and comfortable here, and is Wal'r out'ard bound with a pretty fair wind?"

"What do you think now, Captain Cuttle," returned Carker, gathering up his skirts and settling himself in his position. "You are a practical man; what do you think?"

The acuteness and significance of the Captain's eye, as he cocked it in reply, no words short of those unutterable Chinese words before referred to could describe.

"Come!" said the Captain, unspeakably encouraged, "what do you say? Am I right or wrong?"

So much had the Captain expressed in his eye, emboldened and incited by Mr. Carker's smiling urbanity, that he felt himself in as fair a condition to put the question, as if he had expressed his sentiments with the utmost elaboration.

"Right," said Mr. Carker, "I have no doubt."

"Out'ard bound with fair weather, then, I say," cried Captain Cuttle.

Mr. Carker smiled assent.

"Wind right astarn, and plenty of it," pursued the Captain.

Mr. Carker smiled assent again.

"Aye, aye!" said Captain Cuttle, greatly relieved and pleased. "I know'd how she headed, well enough; I told Wal'r so. Thank'ee, thank'ee."

"Gay has brilliant prospects," observed Mr. Carker, stretching his mouth wider yet; "all the world before him."

"All the world and his wife too, as the saying is," returned the delighted Captain.

At the word "wife," (which he had uttered without design), the Captain stopped, cocked his eye again, and putting the glazed hat on the top of the knobby stick, gave it a twirl, and looked sideways at his always-smiling friend.

"I'd bet a gill of old Jamaica," said the Captain, eyeing him attentively, "that I know what you're smiling at."

Mr. Carker took his cue, and smiled the more.

"It goes no farther?" said the Captain, making a poke at the door with the knobby stick to assure himself that it was shut.

"Not an inch," said Mr. Carker.

"You're a thinking of a capital F perhaps?" said the Captain.

Mr. Carker didn't deny it.

"Anything about a L," said the Captain, "or a O?"

Mr. Carker still smiled.

"Am I right, again?" inquired the Captain in a whisper, with the scarlet circle on his forehead, swelling in his triumphant joy.

Mr. Carker, in reply, still smiling, and now nodding assent, Captain Cuttle rose and squeezed him by the hand, assuring him, warmly, that they were on the same tack, and that as for him (Cuttle) he had laid his course that way all along. "He know'd her first," said the Captain, with all the secrecy and gravity that the subject demanded, "in an uncommon manner — *you* remember his finding her in the street, when she was a'most a babby—he has liked her ever since, and she him, as much as two such youngsters can. We've always said, Sol Gills and me, that they was cut out for each other."

A cat, or a monkey, or a hyena, or a death's-head, could not have shown the Captain more teeth at one time, than Mr. Carker showed him at this period of their interview.

There's a general in-draught that way," observed the happy Captain. "Wind and water sets in that direction, you see. Look at his being present t'other day!"

"Most favourable to his hopes," said Mr. Carker.

"Look at his being towed along in the wake of that day!" pursued the Captain. "Why what can cut him adrift now?"

"Nothing," replied Mr. Carker.

"You're right again," returned the Captain, giving his hand another squeeze. "Nothing it is. So! steady! There's a son gone: pretty little cretur'. Ain't there?"

"Yes, there's a son gone," said the acquiescent Carker.

"Pass the word, and there's another ready for you," quoth the Captain. "Nevy of a scientific uncle! Nevv of Sol Gills! Wal'r! Wal'r, as is already in your business! And"—said the Captain, rising gradually to a quotation he was preparing for a final burst, "who—comes from Sol Gills's daily, to your business, and your buzzums."

The Captain's complacency as he gently joggled Mr. Carker with his elbow, on concluding each of the foregoing short sentences, could be surpassed by nothing but the exultation with which he fell back and eyed him when he had finished this brilliant display of eloquence and sagacity; his great blue waistcoat heaving with the throes of such a masterpiece, and his nose in a state of violent inflammation from the same cause.

"Am I right?" said the Captain.

"Captain Cuttle," said Mr. Carker, bending down at the knees, for a moment, in an odd manner, as if he were falling together to hug the whole of himself at once, "your views in reference to Walter Gay are thoroughly and accurately right. I understand that we speak together in confidence."

"Honour!" interposed the Captain. "Not a word."

"To him or any one?" pursued the Manager.

Captain Cuttle frowned and shook his head.

"But merely for your own satisfaction and guidance—and guidance, of course," repeated Mr. Carker, "with a view to your future proceedings."

"Thank'ee kindly, I am sure," said the Captain, listening with great attention.

"I have no hesitation in saying, that's the fact. You have hit the probabilities exactly."

"And with regard to your head governor," said the Captain, "why an interview had better come about nat'ral between us. There's time enough."

Mr. Carker, with his mouth from ear to ear, repeated "Time enough." Not articulating the words, but bowing his head affably, and forming them with his tongue and lips.

"And as I know now—it's what I always said—that Wal'r's in a way to make his fortune," said the Captain.

"To make his fortune," Mr. Carker repeated, in the same dumb manner.

"And as Wal'r's going on this little voyage is, as I may say, in his day's work, and a part of his general expectations here," said the Captain.

"Of his general expectations here," assented Mr. Carker, dumbly as before.

"Why, so long as I know that," pursued the Captain, "there's no hurry, and my mind's at ease."

Mr. Carker still blandly assenting in the same voiceless manner, Captain Cuttle was strongly confirmed in his opinion that he was one of the most agreeable men he had ever met, and that even Mr. Dombey might improve himself on such a model. With great heartiness, therefore, the Captain once again extended his enormous hand (not unlike an old block in colour), and gave him a grip that left upon his smoother flesh a proof impression of the chinks and crevices with which the Captain's palm was liberally tattoo'd.

"Farewell!" said the Captain. "I an't a man of many words, but I take it very kind of you to be so friendly, and above-board. You'll excuse me if I've been at all intruding, will you?" said the Captain.

"Not at all," returned the other.

"Thank'ee. My berth an't very roomy," said the Captain, turning back again, "but it's tolerable snug; and if you was to find yourself near Brig Place, number nine, at any time—will you make a note of it?—and would come up stairs, without minding what was said by the person at the door, I should be proud to see you."

With that hospitable invitation, the Captain said "Good day!" and walked out and shut the door; leaving Mr. Carker still reclining against the chimney-piece. In whose sly look and watchful manner; in whose false mouth, stretched but not laughing; in whose spotless cravat and very whiskers; even in whose silent passing of his soft hand over his white linen and his smooth face; there was something desperately cat-like.

The unconscious Captain walked out in a state of self-glorification that imparted quite a new cut to the broad blue suit. "Stand by, Ned!" said the Captain to himself. "You've done a little business for the youngsters to-day, my lad!"

In his exultation, and in his familiarity, present and prospective, with the House, the Captain, when he reached the outer office, could not refrain from rallying Mr. Perch a little, and asking him whether he thought everybody was still engaged. But not to be bitter on a man who had done his duty, the Captain whispered in his ear, that if he felt disposed for a glass of rum-and-water, and would follow, he would be happy to bestow the same upon him.

Before leaving the premises, the Captain, somewhat to the astonishment of the clerks, looked round from a central point of view, and took a general survey of the office as part and parcel of a project in which his young friend was nearly interested. The strong-room excited his especial admiration; but, that he might not appear too particular, he limited himself to an approving glance, and, with a graceful recognition of the clerks as a body, that was full of politeness and patronage, passed out into the court. Being promptly joined by Mr. Perch, he conveyed that gentleman to the tavern, and fulfilled his pledge—hastily, for Perch's time was precious.

"I'll give you for a toast," said the Captain, "Wal'r!"

"Who?" submitted Mr. Perch.

"Wal'r!" repeated the Captain, in a voice of thunder.

Mr. Perch, who seemed to remember having heard in infancy that there was once a poet of that name, made no objection; but he was much astonished at the Captain's coming into the City to propose a poet; indeed if he had proposed to put a poet's statue up—say Shakespeare's for example—in a civic thoroughfare, he could hardly have done a greater outrage to Mr. Perch's experience. On the whole, he was such a mysterious and incomprehensible character, that Mr. Perch decided not to mention him to Mrs. Perch at all, in case of giving rise to any disagreeable consequences.

Mysterious and incomprehensible the Captain, with that lively sense upon him of having done a little business for the youngsters, remained all day, even to his most intimate friends; and but that Walter attributed his winks and grins, and other such pantomimic reliefs of himself, to his satisfaction in the success of their innocent deception upon old Sol Gills, he would assuredly have betrayed himself before night. As it was, however, he kept his own secret; and went home late from the Instrument-maker's house, wearing the glazed hat so much on one side, and carrying such a beaming expression in his eyes, that Mrs. MacStinger (who might have been brought up at Doctor Blimber's, she was such a Roman matron) fortified herself, at the first glimpse of him, behind the open street-door, and refused to come out to the contemplation of her blessed infants, until he was securely lodged in his own room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THERE is a hush through Mr. Dombey's house. Servants gliding up and down stairs rustle but make no sound of footsteps. They talk together constantly, and sit long at meals, making much of their meat and drink, and enjoying themselves after a grim unholy fashion. Mrs. Wickam, with her eyes suffused with tears, relates melancholy anecdotes; and tells them how she always said at Mrs. Pipchin's that it would be so, and takes more table-ale than usual, and is very sorry but sociable. Cook's state of mind is similar. She promises a little fry for supper, and struggles about equally against her feelings and the onions. Towlinson begins to think there's a fate in it, and wants to know if anybody can tell him of any good that ever came of living in a corner-house. It seems to all of them as having happened a long time ago; though yet the child lies, calm and beautiful, upon his little bed.

After dark there come some visitors—noiseless visitors, with shoes of felt—who have been there before; and with them comes that bed of rest which is so strange a one for infant sleepers. All this time, the bereaved father has not been seen even by his attendant; for he sits in an inner corner of his own dark room when any one is there, and never seems to move at other times, except to pace it to and fro. But in the morning it is whispered among the household that he was heard to go

up stairs in the dead night, and that he stayed there—in the room—until the sun was shining.

At the offices in the city, the ground-glass windows are made more dim by shutters; and while the lighted lamps upon the desks are half extinguished by the day that wanders in, the day is half extinguished by the lamps, and an unusual gloom prevails. There is not much business done. The clerks are indisposed to work; and they make assignations to eat chops in the afternoon, and go up the river. Perch, the messenger, stays long upon his errands; and finds himself in bars of public houses, invited thither by friends, and holding forth on the uncertainty of human affairs. He goes home to Ball's Pond earlier in the evening than usual, and treats Mrs. Perch to a veal cutlet and Scotch ale. Mr. Carker the manager treats no one; neither is he treated; but alone in his own room he shows his teeth all day; and it would seem that there is something gone from Mr. Carker's path—some obstacle removed—which clears his way before him.

Now the rosy children living opposite to Mr. Dombey's house, peep from their nursery windows down into the street; for there are four black horses at his door, with feathers on their heads; and feathers tremble on the carriage that they draw; and these, and an array of men with scarves and staves, attract a crowd. The juggler who was going to twirl the basin, puts his loose coat on again over his fine dress; and his trudging wife, one-sided with her heavy baby in her arms, loiters to see the company come out. But closer to her dingy breast she presses her baby, when the burden that is so easily carried is borne forth; and the youngest of the rosy children at the high window opposite, needs no restraining hand to check her in her glee, when, pointing with her dimpled finger, she looks into her nurse's face, and asks "What's that!"

And now, among the knot of servants dressed in mourning, and the weeping women, Mr. Dombey passes through the hall to the other carriage that is waiting to receive him. He is not "brought down," these observers think, by sorrow and distress of mind. His walk is as erect, his bearing is as stiff as ever it has been. He hides his face behind no handkerchief, and looks before him. But that his face is something sunk and rigid, and is pale, it bears the same expression as of old. He takes his place within the carriage, and three other gentlemen follow. Then the grand funeral moves slowly down the street. The feathers are yet nodding in the distance, when the juggler has the basin spinning on a cane, and has the same crowd to admire it. But the juggler's wife is less alert than usual with the money-box, for a child's burial has set her thinking that perhaps the baby underneath her shabby shawl may not grow up to be a man, and wear a sky-blue fillet round his head, and salmon-coloured worsted drawers, and tumble in the mud.

The feathers wind their gloomy way along the streets, and come within the sound of a church bell. In this same church, the pretty boy received all that will soon be left of him on earth—a name. All of him that is dead, they lay there, near the perishable substance of his mother. It is well. Their ashes lie where Florence in her walks—oh lonely, lonely walks!—may pass them any day.

The service over, and the clergyman withdrawn, Mr. Dombey looks round, demanding in a low voice, whether the person who has been requested to attend to receive instructions for the tablet, is there?

Some one comes forward, and says "Yes."

Mr. Dombey intimates where he would have it placed; and shows him, with his hand upon the wall, the shape and size; and how it is to follow the memorial to the mother. Then, with his pencil, he writes out the inscription, and gives it to him: adding, "I wish to have it done at once."

"It shall be done immediately, sir."

"There is really nothing to inscribe but name and age, you see."

The man bows, glancing at the paper, but appears to hesitate. Mr. Dombey not observing his hesitation, turns away, and leads towards the porch.

"I beg your pardon, sir;" a touch falls gently on his mourning cloak; "but as you wish it done immediately, and it may be put in hand when I get back—"

"Well?"

"Will you be so good as read it over again? I think there's a mistake."

"Where?"

The statuary gives him back the paper, and points out, with his pocket rule, the words "beloved and only child."

"It should be 'son,' I think, sir?"

"You are right. Of course. Make the correction."

The father, with a hastier step, pursues his way to the coach. When the other three, who follow closely, take their seats, his face is hidden for the first time—shaded by his cloak. Nor do they see it any more that day. He alights first, and passes immediately into his own room. The other mourners (who are only Mr. Chick, and two of the medical attendants) proceed up-stairs to the drawing-room, to be received by Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox. And what the face is, in the shut-up chamber underneath: or what the thoughts are: what the heart is, what the contest or the suffering: no one knows.

The chief thing that they know, below-stairs, in the kitchen, is that "it seems like Sunday." They can hardly persuade themselves but that there is something unbecoming, if not wicked, in the conduct of the people out of doors, who pursue their ordinary occupations and wear their every-day attire. It is quite a novelty to have the blinds up, and the shutters open; and they make themselves dimly comfortable over bottles of wine, which are freely broached as on a festival. They are much inclined to moralize. Mr. Towlinson proposes with a sigh, "Amendment to us all!" for which, as Cook says with another sigh, "There's room enough, God knows." In the evening, Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox take to needlework again. In the evening also, Mr. Towlinson goes out to take the air, accompanied by the housemaid, who has not yet tried her mourning bonnet. They are very tender to each other at dusky street-corners, and Towlinson has visions of leading an altered and blameless existence as a serious green-grocer in Oxford Market.

There is sounder sleep and deeper rest in Mr. Dombey's house to-night, than there has been for many nights. The morning sun awakens the old

household, settled down once more in their old ways. The rosy children, opposite, run past with hoops. There is a splendid wedding in the church. The juggler's wife is active with the money-box in another quarter of the town. The mason sings and whistles as he chips out P-A-U-L in the marble slab before him.

And can it be that in a world so full and busy, the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart, so wide and deep that nothing but the width and depth of vast eternity can fill it up! Florence, in her innocent affliction, might have answered "Oh my brother, oh my dearly loved and loving brother! Only friend and companion of my slighted childhood! Could any less idea shed the light already dawning on your early grave, or give birth to the softened sorrow that is springing into life beneath this rain of tears!"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Chick, who held it as a duty incumbent on her, to improve the occasion, "when you are as old as I am—"

"Which will be the prime of life," observed Miss Tox.

"You will then," pursued Mrs. Chick, gently squeezing Miss Tox's hand, in acknowledgment of her friendly remark, "you will then know that all grief is unavailing, and that it is our duty to submit."

"I will try, dear aunt. I do try," answered Florence, sobbing.

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Chick, "because, my love, as our dear Miss Tox—of whose sound sense and excellent judgment, there cannot possibly be two opinions—"

"My dear Louisa, I shall really be proud, soon," said Miss Tox.

"—will tell you, and confirm by her experience," pursued Mrs. Chick, "we are called upon on all occasions to make an effort. It is required of us. If any—my dear," turning to Miss Tox, "I want a word. Mis—Mis—"

"Demeanour?" suggested Miss Tox.

"No, no, no," said Mrs. Chick. "How can you! Goodness me, it's on the end of my tongue. Mis—"

"Placed affection?" suggested Miss Tox, timidly.

"Good gracious, Lucretia!" returned Mrs. Chick, "How very monstrous! Misanthrope, is the word I want. The idea! Misplaced affection! I say, if any misanthrope were to put, in my presence, the question 'Why were we born?' I should reply, 'To make an effort.'"

"Very good indeed," said Miss Tox, much impressed by the originality of the sentiment. "Very good."

"Unhappily," pursued Mrs. Chick, "we have a warning under our own eyes. We have but too much reason to suppose, my dear child, that if an effort had been made in time, in this family, a train of the most trying and distressing circumstances might have been avoided. Nothing shall ever persuade me," observed the good matron, with a resolute air, "but that if that effort had been made by poor dear Fanny, the poor dear darling child would at least have had a stronger constitution."

Mrs. Chick abandoned herself to her feelings for half a moment; but, as a practical illustration of her doctrine, brought herself up short, in the middle of a sob, and went on again.

"Therefore, Florence, pray let us see that you have some strength of

mind, and do not selfishly aggravate the distress in which your poor papa is plunged."

"Dear aunt!" said Florence, kneeling quickly down before her, that she might the better and more earnestly look into her face. "Tell me more about Papa. Pray tell me about him! Is he quite heart-broken?"

Miss Tox was of a tender nature, and there was something in this appeal that moved her very much. Whether she saw in it a succession, on the part of the neglected child, to the affectionate concern so often expressed by her dead brother—or a love that sought to twine itself about the heart that had loved him, and that could not bear to be shut out from sympathy with such a sorrow, in such sad community of love and grief—or whether she only recognised the earnest and devoted spirit which, although discarded and repulsed, was wrung with tenderness long unreturned, and in the waste and solitude of this bereavement cried to him to seek a comfort in it, and to give some, by some small response—whatever may have been her understanding of it, it moved Miss Tox. For the moment she forgot the majesty of Mrs. Chick, and, patting Florence hastily on the cheek, turned aside and suffered the tears to gush from her eyes, without waiting for a lead from that wise matron.

Mrs. Chick herself lost, for a moment, the presence of mind on which she so much prided herself; and remained mute, looking on the beautiful young face that had so long, so steadily, and patiently, been turned towards the little bed. But recovering her voice—which was synonymous with her presence of mind, indeed they were one and the same thing—she replied with dignity:

"Florence, my dear child, your poor papa is peculiar at times; and to question me about him, is to question me upon a subject which I really do not pretend to understand. I believe I have as much influence with your papa as anybody has. Still, all I can say is, that he has said very little to me; and that I have only seen him once or twice for a minute at a time, and indeed have hardly seen him then, for his room has been dark. I have said to your papa 'Paul!'—that is the exact expression I used—'Paul! why do you not take something stimulating?' Your papa's reply has always been, 'Louisa, have the goodness to leave me. I want nothing. I am better by myself.' If I was to be put upon my oath to-morrow, Lucretia, before a magistrate," said Mrs. Chick, "I have no doubt I could venture to swear to those identical words."

Miss Tox expressed her admiration by saying, "My Louisa is ever methodical!"

"In short, Florence," resumed her aunt, "literally nothing has passed between your poor papa and myself, until to-day; when I mentioned to your papa that Sir Barnet and Lady Skettles had written exceedingly kind notes—our sweet boy! Lady Skettles loved him like a——where's my pocket handkerchief!"

Miss Tox produced one.

"Exceedingly kind notes, proposing that you should visit them for change of scene. Mentioning to your papa that I thought Miss Tox and myself might now go home (in which he quite agreed), I inquired if he had any objection to your accepting this invitation. He said, 'No Louisa, not the least!'"

Florence raised her tearful eyes.

"At the same time, if you would prefer staying here, Florence, to paying this visit at present, or to going home with me——"

"I should much prefer it, aunt," was the faint rejoinder.

"Why then, child," said Mrs. Chick, "you can. It's a strange choice, I must say. But you always *were* strange. Anybody else at your time of life, and after what has passed—my dear Miss Tox, I have lost my pocket-handkerchief again—would be glad to leave here, one would suppose."

"I should not like to feel," said Florence, "as if the house was avoided. I should not like to think that the—his—the rooms up-stairs were quite empty and dreary, aunt. I would rather stay here, for the present. Oh my brother! oh my brother!"

It was a natural emotion, not to be suppressed; and it would make way even between the fingers of the hands with which she covered up her face. The overcharged and heavy-laden breast must sometimes have that vent, or the poor wounded solitary heart within it would have fluttered like a bird with broken wings, and sunk down in the dust.

"Well, child!" said Mrs. Chick, after a pause. "I wouldn't on any account say anything unkind to you, and that I'm sure you know. You will remain here, then, and do exactly as you like. No one will interfere with you, Florence, or wish to interfere with you, I'm sure."

Florence shook her head in sad assent.

"I had no sooner begun to advise your poor papa that he really ought to seek some distraction and restoration in a temporary change," said Mrs. Chick, "than he told me he had already formed the intention of going into the country for a short time. I'm sure I hope he'll go very soon. He can't go too soon. But I suppose there are some arrangements connected with his private papers and so forth, consequent on the affliction that has tried us all so much—I can't think what's become of mine: Lucretia lend me yours my dear—that may occupy him for one or two evenings in his own room. Your papa's a Dombey, child, if ever there was one," said Mrs. Chick, drying both her eyes at once with great care on opposite corners of Miss Tox's handkerchief. "He'll make an effort. There's no fear of him."

"Is there nothing, aunt," asked Florence, trembling, "I might do to——"

"Lord, my dear child," interposed Mrs. Chick, hastily, "what are you talking about? If your papa said to me—I have given you his exact words, 'Louisa I want nothing; I am better by myself'—what do you think he'd say to you? You mustn't show yourself to him, child. Don't dream of such a thing."

"Aunt," said Florence, "I will go and lie down in my bed."

Mrs. Chick approved of this resolution, and dismissed her with a kiss. But Miss Tox, on a faint pretence of looking for the mislaid handkerchief, went up-stairs after her; and tried in a few stolen minutes to comfort her, in spite of great discouragement from Susan Nipper. For Miss Nipper, in her burning zeal, disparaged Miss Tox as a crocodile; yet her sympathy seemed genuine, and had at least the vantage-ground of disinterestedness—there was little favour to be won by it.

And was there no one nearer and dearer than Susan, to uphold the striving heart in its anguish? Was there no other neck to clasp; no other face to turn to; no one else to say a soothing word to such deep sorrow? Was Florence so alone in the bleak world that nothing else remained to her? Nothing. Stricken motherless and brotherless at once—for in the loss of little Paul, that first and greatest loss fell heavily upon her—this was the only help she had. Oh, who can tell how much she needed help at first!

At first, when the house subsided into its accustomed course, and they had all gone away, except the servants, and her father shut up in his own rooms, Florence could do nothing but weep, and wander up and down, and sometimes, in a sudden pang of desolate remembrance, fly to her own chamber, wring her hands, lay her face down on her bed, and know no consolation: nothing but the bitterness and cruelty of grief. This commonly ensued upon the recognition of some spot or object very tenderly associated with him; and it made the miserable house, at first, a place of agony.

But it is not in the nature of pure love to burn so fiercely and unkindly long. The flame that in its grosser composition has the taint of earth, may prey upon the breast that gives it shelter; but the sacred fire from heaven, is as gentle in the heart, as when it rested on the heads of the assembled twelve, and showed each man his brother, brightened and unhurt. The image conjured up, there soon returned the placid face, the softened voice, the loving looks, the quiet trustfulness and peace; and Florence, though she wept still, wept more tranquilly, and courted the remembrance.

It was not very long before the golden water, dancing on the wall, in the old place at the old serene time, had her calm eyes fixed upon it as it ebbed away. It was not very long before that room again knew her, often; sitting there alone, as patient and as mild as when she had watched beside the little bed. When any sharp sense of its being empty smote upon her, she could kneel beside it, and pray GOD—it was the pouring out of her full heart—to let one angel love her and remember her.

It was not very long, before, in the midst of the dismal house so wide and dreary, her low voice in the twilight, slowly and stopping sometimes, touched the old air to which he had so often listened, with his drooping head upon her arm. And after that, and when it was quite dark, a little strain of music trembled in the room: so softly played and sung, that it was more like the mournful recollection of what she had done at his request on that last night, than the reality repeated. But it was repeated, often—very often, in the shadowy solitude; and broken murmurs of the strain still trembled on the keys, when the sweet voice was hushed in tears.

Thus she gained heart to look upon the work with which her fingers had been busy by his side on the sea-shore; and thus it was not very long before she took to it again—with something of a human love for it, as if it had been sentient and had known him; and, sitting in a window, near her mother's picture, in the unused room so long deserted, wore away the thoughtful hours.

Why did the dark eyes turn so often from this work to where the rosy children lived? They were not immediately suggestive of her loss; for they were all girls: four little sisters. But they were motherless like her—and had a father.

It was easy to know when he had gone out and was expected home, for the elder child was always dressed and waiting for him at the drawing-room window, or in the balcony; and when he appeared, her expectant face lighted up with joy, while the others at the high window, and always on the watch too, clapped their hands, and drummed them on the sill, and called to him. The elder child would come down to the hall, and put her hand in his, and lead him up the stairs; and Florence would see her afterwards sitting by his side, or on his knee, or hanging coaxingly about his neck and talking to him: and though they were always gay together, he would often watch her face as if he thought her like her mother that was dead. Florence would sometimes look no more at this, and bursting into tears would hide behind the curtain as if she were frightened, or would hurry from the window. Yet she could not help returning; and her work would soon fall unheeded from her hands again.

It was the house that had been empty, years ago. It had remained so for a long time. At last, and while she had been away from home, this family had taken it; and it was repaired and newly painted; and there were birds and flowers about it; and it looked very different from its old self. But she never thought of the house. The children and their father were all in all.

When he had dined, she could see them, through the open windows, go down with their governess or nurse, and cluster round the table; and in the still summer weather, the sound of their childish voices and clear laughter would come ringing across the street, into the drooping air of the room in which she sat. Then they would climb and clamber up stairs with him, and romp about him on the sofa, or groupe themselves at his knee, a very nosegay of little faces, while he seemed to tell them some story. Or they would come running out into the balcony; and then Florence would hide herself quickly, lest it should check them in their joy, to see her in her black dress, sitting there alone.

The elder child remained with her father when the rest had gone away, and made his tea for him—happy little housekeeper she was then!—and sat conversing with him, sometimes at the window, sometimes in the room, until the candles came. He made her his companion, though she was some years younger than Florence; and she could be as staid and pleasantly demure with her little book or work-box, as a woman. When they had candles, Florence from her own dark room was not afraid to look again. But when the time came for the child to say “Good night, papa,” and go to bed, Florence would sob and tremble as she raised her face to him, and could look no more.

Though still she would turn, again and again, before going to bed herself, from the simple air that had lulled him to rest so often, long ago, and from the other low soft broken strain of music, back to that house. But that she ever thought of it, or watched it, was a secret which she kept within her own young breast.

And did that breast of Florence—Florence, so ingenuous and true—so worthy of the love that he had borne her, and had whispered in his last faint words—whose guileless heart was mirrored in the beauty of her face, and breathed in every accent of her gentle voice—did that young breast hold any other secret? Yes. One more.

When no one in the house was stirring, and the lights were all extinguished, she would softly leave her own room, and with noiseless feet descend the stair-case, and approach her father's door. Against it, scarcely breathing, she would rest her face and head, and press her lips, in the yearning of her love. She crouched upon the cold stone floor outside it, every night, to listen even for his breath; and in her one absorbing wish to be allowed to show him some affection, to be a consolation to him, to win him over to the endurance of some tenderness from her, his solitary child, she would have knelt down at his feet, if she had dared, in humble supplication.

No one knew it. No one thought of it. The door was ever closed, and he shut up within. He went out once or twice, and it was said in the house that he was very soon going on his country journey; but he lived in those rooms, and lived alone, and never saw her, or inquired for her. Perhaps he did not even know that she was in the house.

One day, about a week after the funeral, Florence was sitting at her work, when Susan appeared, with a face half laughing and half crying, to announce a visitor.

"A visitor! To me, Susan!" said Florence, looking up in astonishment.

"Well, it *is* a wonder, ain't it now Miss Floy," said Susan; "but I wish you had a many visitors, I do, indeed, for you'd be all the better for it, and it's my opinion that the sooner you and me goes even to them old Skettleses, Miss, the better for both, I may not wish to live in crowds, Miss Floy, but still I'm not a oyster."

To do Miss Nipper justice, she spoke more for her young mistress than herself; and her face showed it.

"But the visitor, Susan," said Florence.

Susan, with a hysterical explosion that was as much a laugh as a sob, and as much a sob as a laugh, answered,

"Mr. Toots!"

The smile that appeared on Florence's face passed from it in a moment, and her eyes filled with tears. But at any rate it was a smile, and that gave great satisfaction to Miss Nipper.

"My own feelings exactly, Miss Floy," said Susan, putting her apron to her eyes, and shaking her head. "Immediately I see that Innocent in the Hall, Miss Floy, I burst out laughing first, and then I choked."

Susan Nipper involuntarily proceeded to do the like again on the spot. In the meantime Mr. Toots, who had come up stairs after her, all unconscious of the effect he produced, announced himself with his knuckles on the door, and walked in very briskly.

"How dy'e do, Miss Dombey?" said Mr. Toots. "I'm very well I thank you; how are you?"

Mr. Toots—than whom there were few better fellows in the world, though

there may have been one or two brighter spirits—had laboriously invented this long burst of discourse with the view of relieving the feelings both of Florence and himself. But finding that he had run through his property, as it were, in an injudicious manner, by squandering the whole before taking a chair, or before Florence had uttered a word, or before he had well got in at the door, he deemed it advisable to begin again.

“How dy’e do, Miss Dombey?” said Mr. Toots. “I’m very well, I thank you; how are you?”

Florence gave him her hand, and said she was very well.

“I’m very well indeed,” said Mr. Toots, taking a chair. “Very well indeed, I am. I don’t remember,” said Mr. Toots, after reflecting a little, “that I was ever better, thank you.”

“It’s very kind of you to come,” said Florence, taking up her work. “I am very glad to see you.”

Mr. Toots responded with a chuckle. Thinking that might be too lively, he corrected it with a sigh. Thinking that might be too melancholy, he corrected it with a chuckle. Not thoroughly pleasing himself with either mode of reply, he breathed hard.

“You were very kind to my dear brother,” said Florence, obeying her own natural impulse to relieve him by saying so. “He often talked to me about you.”

“Oh, it’s of no consequence,” said Mr. Toots hastily. “Warm, ain’t it?”

“It is beautiful weather,” replied Florence.

“It agrees with *me*!” said Mr. Toots. “I don’t think I ever was so well as I find myself at present, I’m obliged to you.”

After stating this curious and unexpected fact, Mr. Toots fell into a deep well of silence.

“You have left Doctor Blimber’s, I think?” said Florence, trying to help him out.

“I should hope so,” returned Mr. Toots. And tumbled in again.

He remained at the bottom, apparently drowned, for at least ten minutes. At the expiration of that period, he suddenly floated, and said,

“Well! Good morning, Miss Dombey.”

“Are you going?” asked Florence, rising.

“I don’t know, though. No, not just at present,” said Mr. Toots, sitting down again, most unexpectedly. “The fact is—I say, Miss Dombey!”

“Don’t be afraid to speak to me,” said Florence, with a quiet smile.

“I should be very glad if you would talk about my brother.”

“Would you, though,” retorted Mr. Toots, with sympathy in every fibre of his otherwise expressionless face. “Poor Dombey! I’m sure I never thought that Burgess & Co.—fashionable tailors (but very dear), that we used to talk about—would make this suit of clothes for such a purpose.” Mr. Toots was dressed in mourning. “Poor Dombey! I say! Miss Dombey!” blubbered Toots.

“Yes,” said Florence.

“There’s a friend he took to very much at last. I thought you’d like to have him, perhaps, as a sort of keepsake. You remember his remembering Diogenes?”

"Oh yes! oh yes!" cried Florence.

"Poor Dombey! So do I," said Mr. Toots.

Mr. Toots, seeing Florence in tears, had great difficulty in getting beyond this point, and had nearly tumbled into the well again. But a chuckle saved him on the brink.

"I say," he proceeded, "Miss Dombey! I could have had him stolen for ten shillings, if they hadn't given him up: and I would: but they were glad to get rid of him, I think. If you'd like to have him, he's at the door. I brought him on purpose for you. He ain't a lady's dog, you know," said Mr. Toots, "but you won't mind that, will you?"

In fact, Diogenes was at that moment, as they presently ascertained from looking down into the street, staring through the window of a hackney cabriolet, into which, for conveyance to that spot, he had been ensnared, on a false pretence of rats among the straw. Sooth to say, he was as unlike a lady's dog as dog might be; and in his gruff anxiety to get out presented an appearance sufficiently unpromising, as he gave short yelps out of one side of his mouth, and overbalancing himself by the intensity of every one of those efforts, tumbled down into the straw, and then sprung panting up again, putting out his tongue, as if he had come express to a Dispensary to be examined for his health.

But though Diogenes was as ridiculous a dog as one would meet with on a summer's day; a blundering, ill-favoured, clumsy, bullet-headed dog, continually acting on a wrong idea that there was an enemy in the neighbourhood, whom it was meritorious to bark at; and though he was far from good-tempered, and certainly was not clever, and had hair all over his eyes, and a comic nose, and an inconsistent tail, and a gruff voice; he was dearer to Florence, in virtue of that parting remembrance of him and that request that he might be taken care of, than the most valuable and beautiful of his kind. So dear, indeed, was this same ugly Diogenes, and so welcome to her, that she took the jewelled hand of Mr. Toots and kissed it in her gratitude. And when Diogenes, released, came tearing up the stairs and bouncing into the room (such a business as there was, first, to get him out of the cabriolet!), dived under all the furniture, and wound a long iron chain, that dangled from his neck, round legs of chairs and tables, and then tugged at it until his eyes became unnaturally visible, in consequence of their nearly starting out of his head; and when he growled at Mr. Toots, who affected familiarity; and went pell-mell at Towlinson, morally convinced that he was the enemy whom he had barked at round the corner all his life and had never seen yet; Florence was as pleased with him as if he had been a miracle of discretion.

Mr. Toots was so overjoyed by the success of his present, and was so delighted to see Florence bending down over Diogenes, smoothing his coarse back with her little delicate hand—Diogenes graciously allowing it from the first moment of their acquaintance—that he felt it difficult to take leave, and would, no doubt, have been a much longer time in making up his mind to do so, if he had not been assisted by Diogenes himself, who suddenly took it into his head to bay Mr. Toots, and to make short runs at him with his mouth open. Not exactly seeing his way to the end of these demonstrations, and sensible that they placed the pantaloons constructed

by the art of Burgess & Co. in jeopardy, Mr. Toots, with chuckles, lapsed out at the door: by which, after looking in again two or three times without any object at all, and being on each occasion greeted with a fresh run from Diogenes, he finally took himself off and got away.

"Come, then, Di! Dear Di! Make friends with your new mistress. Let us love each other, Di!" said Florence, fondling his shaggy head. And Di, the rough and gruff, as if his hairy hide were pervious to the tear that dropped upon it, and his dog's heart melted as it fell, put his nose up to her face, and swore fidelity.

Diogenes the man did not speak plainer to Alexander the Great than Diogenes the dog spoke to Florence. He subscribed to the offer of his little mistress cheerfully, and devoted himself to her service. A banquet was immediately provided for him in a corner; and when he had eaten and drunk his fill, he went to the window where Florence was sitting, looking on, rose up on his hind legs, with his awkward fore paws on her shoulders, licked her face and hands, nestled his great head against her heart, and wagged his tail till he was tired. Finally, Diogenes coiled himself up at her feet, and went to sleep.

Although Miss Nipper was nervous in regard of dogs, and felt it necessary to come into the room with her skirts carefully collected about her, as if she were crossing a brook on stepping-stones; also to utter little screams and stand up on chairs when Diogenes stretched himself; she was in her own manner affected by the kindness of Mr. Toots, and could not see Florence so alive to the attachment and society of this rude friend of little Paul's, without some mental comments thereupon that brought the water to her eyes. Mr. Dombey, as a part of her reflections, may have been, in the association of ideas, connected with the dog; but, at any rate, after observing Diogenes and his mistress all the evening, and after exerting herself with much good will to provide Diogenes a bed in an antechamber outside his mistress's door, she said hurriedly to Florence, before leaving her for the night:

"Your Pa's a going off, Miss Floy, to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning, Susan?"

"Yes, Miss; that's the orders. Early."

"Do you know," asked Florence, without looking at her, "where Papa is going, Susan?"

"Not exactly, Miss. He's going to meet that precious Major first, and I must say, if I was acquainted with any Major myself (which Heavens forbid), it shouldn't be a blue one!"

"Hush, Susan!" urged Florence gently.

"Well, Miss Floy," returned Miss Nipper, who was full of burning indignation, and minded her stops even less than usual. "I can't help it, blue he is, and while I was a Christian, although humble, I would have natural-coloured friends, or none."

It appeared from what she added and had gleaned down stairs, that Mrs. Chick had proposed the Major for Mr. Dombey's companion, and that Mr. Dombey, after some hesitation, had invited him.

"Talk of *him* being a change, indeed!" observed Miss Nipper to herself with boundless contempt. "If he's a change, give me a constancy."

"Good night, Susan," said Florence.

"Good night, my darling dear Miss Floy."

Her tone of commiseration smote the chord so often roughly touched, but never listened to while she or any one looked on. Florence left alone, laid her head upon her hand, and pressing the other over her swelling heart, held free communication with her sorrows.

It was a wet night; and the melancholy rain fell pattering and dropping with a weary sound. A sluggish wind was blowing, and went moaning round the house, as if it were in pain or grief. A shrill noise quivered through the trees. While she sat weeping, it grew late, and dreary midnight tolled out from the steeples.

Florence was little more than a child in years—not yet fourteen—and the loneliness and gloom of such an hour in the great house where Death had lately made its own tremendous devastation, might have set an older fancy brooding on vague terrors. But her innocent imagination was too full of one theme to admit them. Nothing wandered in her thoughts but love—a wandering love, indeed, and castaway—but turning always to her father.

There was nothing in the dropping of the rain, the moaning of the wind, the shuddering of the trees, the striking of the solemn clocks, that shook this one thought, or diminished its interest. Her recollections of the dear dead boy—and they were never absent—were itself; the same thing. And oh, to be shut out: to be so lost: never to have looked into her father's face or touched him, since that hour!

She could not go to bed, poor child, and never had gone yet, since then, without making her nightly pilgrimage to his door. It would have been a strange sad sight, to see her now, stealing lightly down the stairs through the thick gloom, and stopping at it with a beating heart, and blinded eyes, and hair that fell down loosely and unthought of: and touching it outside with her wet cheek. But the night covered it, and no one knew.

The moment that she touched the door on this night, Florence found that it was open. For the first time it stood open, though by but a hair's-breadth: and there was a light within. The first impulse of the timid child—and she yielded to it—was to retire swiftly. Her next, to go back, and to enter; and this second impulse held her in irresolution on the stair-case.

In its standing open, even by so much as that chink, there seemed to be hope. There was encouragement in seeing a ray of light from within, stealing through the dark stern doorway, and falling in a thread upon the marble floor. She turned back, hardly knowing what she did, but urged on by the love within her, and the trial they had undergone together, but not shared: and with her hands a little raised and trembling, glided in.

Her father sat at his old table in the middle room. He had been arranging some papers, and destroying others, and the latter lay in fragile ruins before him. The rain dripped heavily upon the glass panes in the outer room, where he had so often watched poor Paul, a baby; and the low complainings of the wind were heard without.

But not by him. He sat with his eyes fixed on the table, so immersed in thought, that a far heavier tread than the light foot of his child could make, might have failed to rouse him. His face was turned towards her.

By the waning lamp, and at that haggard hour, it looked worn and dejected; and in the utter loneliness surrounding him, there was an appeal to Florence that struck home.

"Papa! Papa! Speak to me, dear Papa!"

He started at her voice, and leaped up from his seat. She was close before him with extended arms, but he fell back.

"What is the matter?" he said, sternly. "Why do you come here? What has frightened you?"

If anything had frightened her, it was the face he turned upon her. The glowing love within the breast of his young daughter froze before it, and she stood and looked at him as if stricken into stone.

There was not one touch of tenderness or pity in it. There was not one gleam of interest, parental recognition, or relenting in it. There was a change in it, but not of that kind. The old indifference and cold constraint had given place to something: what, she never thought and did not dare to think, and yet she felt it in its force, and knew it well without a name: that as it looked upon her, seemed to cast a shadow on her head.

Did he see before him the successful rival of his son, in health and life? Did he look upon his own successful rival in that son's affection? Did a mad jealousy and withered pride, poison sweet remembrances that should have endeared and made her precious to him? Could it be possible that it was gall to him to look upon her in her beauty and her promise: thinking of his infant boy!

Florence had no such thoughts. But love is quick to know when it is spurned and hopeless: and hope died out of hers, as she stood looking in her father's face.

"I ask you, Florence, are you frightened? Is there anything the matter, that you come here?"

"I came Papa —"

"Against my wishes. Why?"

She saw he knew why: it was written broadly on his face: and dropped her head upon her hands with one prolonged low cry.

Let him remember it in that room, years to come. It has faded from the air, before he breaks the silence. It may pass as quickly from his brain, as he believes, but it is there. Let him remember it in that room, years to come!

He took her by the arm. His hand was cold, and loose, and scarcely closed upon her.

"You are tired, I dare say," he said, taking up the light, and leading her towards the door, "and want rest. We all want rest. Go, Florence. You have been dreaming."

The dream she had had, was over then, God help her! and she felt that it could never more come back.

"I will remain here to light you up the stairs. The whole house is yours above there," said her father, slowly. "You are its mistress now. Good night!"

Still covering her face, she sobbed, and answered "Good night, dear Papa," and silently ascended. Once she looked back as if she would have returned to him, but for fear. It was a momentary thought, too hopeless

to encourage; and her father stood there with the light—hard, unresponsive, motionless—until the fluttering dress of his fair child was lost in the darkness.

Let him remember it in that room, years to come. The rain that falls upon the roof: the wind that mourns outside the door: may have foreknowledge in their melancholy sound. Let him remember it in that room, years to come!

The last time he had watched her, from the same place, winding up those stairs, she had had her brother in her arms. It did not move his heart towards her now, it steeled it: but he went into his room, and locked his door, and sat down in his chair, and cried for his lost boy.

Diogenes was broad awake upon his post, and waiting for his little mistress.

“Oh Di! Oh dear Di! Love me for his sake!”

Diogenes already loved her for her own, and didn't care how much he showed it. So he made himself vastly ridiculous by performing a variety of uncouth bounces in the ante-chamber, and concluded, when poor Florence was at last asleep, and dreaming of the rosy children opposite, by scratching open her bedroom door: rolling up his bed into a pillow: lying down on the boards, at the full length of his tether, with his head towards her: and looking lazily at her, upside down, out of the tops of his eyes, until from winking and winking he fell asleep himself, and dreamed, with gruff barks, of his enemy.

CHAPTER XIX.

WALTER GOES AWAY.

THE Wooden Midshipman at the Instrument-maker's door, like the hard-hearted little midshipman he was, remained supremely indifferent to Walter's going away, even when the very last day of his sojourn in the back-parlour was on the decline. With his quadrant at his round black knob of an eye, and his figure in its old attitude of indomitable alacrity, the midshipman displayed his elfin small-clothes to the best advantage, and, absorbed in scientific pursuits, had no sympathy with worldly concerns. He was so far the creature of circumstances, that a dry day covered him with dust, and a misty day peppered him with little bits of soot, and a wet day brightened up his tarnished uniform for the moment, and a very hot day blistered him; but otherwise he was a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman, intent on his own discoveries, and caring as little for what went on about him, terrestrially, as Archimedes at the taking of Syracuse.

Such a midshipman he seemed to be, at least, in the then position of domestic affairs. Walter eyed him kindly many a time in passing in and out; and poor old Sol, when Walter was not there, would come and lean against the door-post, resting his weary wig as near the shoe-buckles of the guardian genius of his trade and shop as he could. But no fierce idol with a mouth from ear to ear, and a murderous visage made of parrot's

feathers, was ever more indifferent to the appeals of its savage votaries, than was the midshipman to these marks of attachment.

Walter's heart felt heavy as he looked round his old bed-room, up among the parapets and chimney-pots, and thought that one more night already darkening would close his acquaintance with it, perhaps for ever. Dismantled of his little stock of books and pictures, it looked coldly and reproachfully on him for his desertion, and had already a foreshadowing upon it of its coming strangeness. "A few hours more," thought Walter, "and no dream I ever had here when I was a school-boy will be so little mine as this old room. The dream may come back in my sleep, and I may return waking to this place, it may be: but the dream at least will serve no other master, and the room may have a score, and every one of them may change, neglect, misuse it."

But his uncle was not to be left alone in the little back-parlour, where he was then sitting by himself; for Captain Cuttle, considerate in his roughness, stayed away against his will, purposely that they should have some talk together unobserved: so Walter, newly returned home from his last day's bustle, descended briskly, to bear him company.

"Uncle," he said gaily, laying his hand upon the old man's shoulder, "what shall I send you home from Barbadoes?"

"Hope, my dear Wally. Hope that we shall meet again, on this side of the grave. Send me as much of that as you can."

"So I will, Uncle: I have enough and to spare, and I'll not be chary of it! And as to lively turtles, and limes for Captain Cuttle's punch, and preserves for you on Sundays, and all that sort of thing, why I'll send you shiploads, Uncle: when I'm rich enough."

Old Sol wiped his spectacles, and faintly smiled.

"That's right, Uncle!" cried Walter, merrily, and clapping him half a dozen times more upon the shoulder. "You cheer up me! I'll cheer up you! We'll be as gay as larks to-morrow morning, Uncle, and we'll fly as high! As to my anticipations, they are singing out of sight now."

"Wally, my dear boy," returned the old man, "I'll do my best, I'll do my best."

"And *your* best, Uncle," said Walter, with his pleasant laugh, "is the best best that I know. You'll not forget what you're to send *me*, Uncle?"

"No, Wally, no," replied the old man; "everything I hear about Miss Dombey, now that she is left alone, poor lamb, I'll write. I fear it won't be much though, Wally."

"Why, I'll tell you what, Uncle," said Walter, after a moment's hesitation, "I have just been up there."

"Ay, ay, ay?" murmured the old man, raising his eyebrows, and his spectacles with them.

"Not to see *her*," said Walter, "though I could have seen her, I dare say, if I had asked, Mr. Dombey being out of town: but to say a parting word to Susan. I thought I might venture to do that, you know, under the circumstances, and remembering when I saw Miss Dombey last."

"Yes, my boy, yes," replied his uncle, rousing himself from a temporary abstraction.

"So I saw her," pursued Walter, "Susan, I mean: and I told her I was off and away to-morrow. And I said, Uncle, that you had always had an interest in Miss Dombey since that night when she was here, and always wished her well and happy, and always would be proud and glad to serve her in the least: I thought I might say that, you know, under the circumstances. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, my boy, yes," replied his uncle, in the tone as before.

"And I added," pursued Walter, "that if she—Susan, I mean—could ever let you know, either through herself, or Mrs. Richards, or anybody else who might be coming this way, that Miss Dombey *was* well and happy, you would take it very kindly, and would write so much to me, and I should take it very kindly too. There! Upon my word, Uncle," said Walter, "I scarcely slept all last night through thinking of doing this; and could not make up my mind when I was out, whether to do it or not; and yet I am sure it is the true feeling of my heart, and I should have been quite miserable afterwards if I had not relieved it."

His honest voice and manner corroborated what he said, and quite established its ingenuousness.

"So if you ever see her, Uncle," said Walter, "I mean Miss Dombey now—and perhaps you may, who knows!—tell her how much I felt for her; how much I used to think of her when I was here; how I spoke of her, with the tears in my eyes, Uncle, on this last night before I went away. Tell her that I said I never could forget her gentle manner, or her beautiful face, or her sweet kind disposition that was better than all. And as I didn't take them from a woman's feet, or a young lady's: only a little innocent child's," said Walter: "tell her, if you don't mind, Uncle, that I kept those shoes—she'll remember how often they fell off, that night—and took them away with me as a remembrance!"

They were at that very moment going out at the door in one of Walter's trunks. A porter carrying off his baggage on a truck for shipment at the docks on board the *Son and Heir*, had got possession of them; and wheeled them away under the very eye of the insensible Midshipman before their owner had well finished speaking.

But that ancient mariner might have been excused his insensibility to the treasure as it rolled away. For, under his eye at the same moment, accurately within his range of observation, coming full into the sphere of his startled and intensely wide-awake look-out, were Florence and Susan Nipper: Florence looking up into his face half timidly, and receiving the whole shock of his wooden ogling!

More than this, they passed into the shop, and passed in at the parlour door before they were observed by anybody but the Midshipman. And Walter, having his back to the door, would have known nothing of their apparition even then, but for seeing his uncle spring out of his own chair, and nearly tumble over another.

"Why Uncle!" exclaimed Walter. "What's the matter?"

Old Solomon replied, "Miss Dombey!"

"Is it possible!" cried Walter, looking round and starting up in his turn. "Here!"

Why it was so possible and so actual, that, while the words were on his

lips, Florence hurried past him; took Uncle Sol's snuff-coloured lappels, one in each hand; kissed him on the cheek; and turning, gave her hand to Walter with a simple truth and earnestness that was her own, and no one else's in the world!

"Going away, Walter!" said Florence.

"Yes, Miss Dombey," he replied, but not so hopefully as he endeavoured: "I have a voyage before me."

"And your Uncle," said Florence, looking back at Solomon. "He is sorry you are going, I am sure. Ah! I see he is! Dear Walter, I am very sorry too."

"Goodness knows," exclaimed Miss Nipper, "there's a many we could spare instead, if numbers is a object, Mrs. Pipchin as a overseer would come cheap at her weight in gold, and if a knowledge of black slavery should be required, them Blimbers is the very people for the sitiuation."

With that Miss Nipper untied her bonnet strings, and after looking vacantly for some moments into a little black tea-pot that was set forth with the usual homely service, on the table, shook her head and a tin canister, and began unasked to make the tea.

In the meantime Florence had turned again to the Instrument-maker, who was as full of admiration as surprise. "So grown!" said old Sol. "So improved! And yet not altered! Just the same!"

"Indeed!" said Florence.

"Ye—yes," returned old Sol, rubbing his hands slowly, and considering the matter half aloud, as something pensive in the bright eyes looking at him arrested his attention. "Yes, that expression was in the younger face, too!"

"You remember me," said Florence with a smile, "and what a little creature I was then?"

"My dear young lady," returned the Instrument-maker, "how could I forget you, often as I have thought of you and heard of you since! At the very moment, indeed, when you came in, Wally was talking about you to me, and leaving messages for you, and—"

"Was he?" said Florence. "Thank you, Walter! Oh thank you, Walter! I was afraid you might be going away and hardly thinking of me;" and again she gave him her little hand so freely and so faithfully that Walter held it for some moments in his own, and could not bear to let it go.

Yet Walter did not hold it as he might have held it once, nor did its touch awaken those old day-dreams of his boyhood that had floated past him sometimes even lately, and confused him with their indistinct and broken shapes. The purity and innocence of her endearing manner, and its perfect trustfulness, and the undisguised regard for him that lay so deeply seated in her constant eyes, and glowed upon her fair face through the smile that shaded—for alas! it was a smile too sad to brighten—it, were not of their romantic race. They brought back to his thoughts the early death-bed he had seen her tending, and the love the child had borne her; and on the wings of such remembrances she seemed to rise up, far above his idle fancies, into clearer and serener air.

"I—I am afraid I must call you Walter's Uncle, Sir," said Florence to the old man, "if you'll let me."

"My dear young lady," cried old Sol. "Let you! Good gracious!"

"We always knew you by that name, and talked of you," said Florence, glancing round, and sighing gently. "The nice old parlour! Just the same! How well I recollect it!"

Old Sol looked first at her, then at his nephew, and then rubbed his hands, and rubbed his spectacles, and said below his breath, "Ah! time, time, time!"

There was a short silence; during which Susan Nipper skilfully impounded two extra cups and saucers from the cupboard, and awaited the drawing of the tea with a thoughtful air.

"I want to tell Walter's Uncle," said Florence, laying her hand timidly upon the old man's as it rested on the table, to bespeak his attention, "something that I am anxious about. He is going to be left alone, and if he will allow me—not to take Walter's place, for that I couldn't do, but to be his true friend and help him if I ever can while Walter is away, I shall be very much obliged to him indeed. Will you? May I, Walter's Uncle?"

The Instrument-maker, without speaking, put her hand to his lips, and Susan Nipper, leaning back with her arms crossed, in the chair of presidency into which she had voted herself, bit one end of her bonnet strings, and heaved a gentle sigh as she looked up at the skylight.

"You will let me come to see you," said Florence, "when I can; and you will tell me everything about yourself and Walter; and you will have no secrets from Susan when she comes and I do not, but will confide in us, and trust us, and rely upon us. And you'll try to let us be a comfort to you? Will you, Walter's Uncle?"

The sweet face looking into his, the gently pleading eyes, the soft voice, and the light touch on his arm made the more winning by a child's respect and honour for his age, that gave to all an air of graceful doubt and modest hesitation—these, and her natural earnestness, so overcame the poor old Instrument-maker, that he only answered:

"Wally! say a word for me, my dear. I'm very grateful."

"No, Walter," returned Florence with her quiet smile. "Say nothing for him, if you please. I understand him very well, and we must learn to talk together without you, dear Walter."

The regretful tone in which she said these latter words, touched Walter more than all the rest.

"Miss Florence," he replied, with an effort to recover the cheerful manner he had preserved while talking with his uncle, "I know no more than my uncle, what to say in acknowledgment of such kindness, I am sure. But what could I say, after all, if I had the power of talking for an hour, except that it is like you!"

Susan Nipper began upon a new part of her bonnet string, and nodded at the skylight, in approval of the sentiment expressed.

"Oh! but Walter," said Florence, "there is something that I wish to say to you before you go away, and you must call me Florence if you please, and not speak like a stranger."

"Like a stranger!" returned Walter. "No. I couldn't speak so. I am sure, at least, I couldn't feel like one."

"Aye, but that is not enough, and is not what I mean. For Walter," added Florence, bursting into tears, "he liked you very much, and said before he died that he was fond of you, and said 'Remember Walter!' and

if you 'll be a brother to me Walter, now that he is gone and I have none on earth, I 'll be your sister all my life, and think of you like one wherever we may be! This is what I wished to say, dear Walter, but I cannot say it as I would, because my heart is full."

And in its fulness and its sweet simplicity, she held out both her hands to him. Walter taking them, stooped down and touched the tearful face that neither shrunk nor turned away, nor reddened as he did so, but looked up at him with confidence and truth. In that one moment, every shadow of doubt or agitation passed away from Walter's soul. It seemed to him that he responded to her innocent appeal, beside the dead child's bed: and, in the solemn presence he had seen there, pledged himself to cherish and protect her very image, in his banishment, with brotherly regard; to garner up her simple faith, inviolate; and hold himself degraded if he breathed upon it any thought that was not in her own breast when she gave it to him.

Susan Nipper, who had bitten both her bonnet strings at once, and imparted a great deal of private emotion to the skylight, during this transaction, now changed the subject by inquiring who took milk and who took sugar; and being enlightened on these points, poured out the tea. They all four gathered socially about the little table, and took tea under that young lady's active superintendence; and the presence of Florence in the back parlour, brightened the Tartar frigate on the wall.

Half an hour ago Walter, for his life, would have hardly called her by her name. But he could do so now when she entreated him. He could think of her being there, without a lurking misgiving that it would have been better if she had not come. He could calmly think how beautiful she was, how full of promise, what a home some happy man would find in such a heart one day. He could reflect upon his own place in that heart, with pride; and with a brave determination, if not to deserve it—he still thought that far above him—never to deserve it less.

Some fairy influence must surely have hovered round the hands of Susan Nipper when she made the tea, engendering the tranquil air that reigned in the back parlour during its discussion. Some counter-influence must surely have hovered round the hands of Uncle Sol's chronometer, and moved them faster than the Tartar frigate ever went before the wind. Be this as it may, the visitors had a coach in waiting at a quiet corner not far off; and the chronometer, on being incidentally referred to, gave such a positive opinion that it had been waiting a long time, that it was impossible to doubt the fact: especially when stated on such unimpeachable authority. If Uncle Sol had been going to be hanged by his own time, he never would have allowed that the chronometer was too fast, by the least fraction of a second.

Florence at parting recapitulated to the old man all that she had said before, and bound him to their compact. Uncle Sol attended her lovingly to the legs of the Wooden Midshipman, and there resigned her to Walter, who was ready to escort her and Susan Nipper to the coach.

"Walter," said Florence by the way, "I have been afraid to ask, before your uncle. Do you think you will be absent very long?"

"Indeed," said Walter, "I don't know. I fear so. Mr. Dombey signified as much, I thought, when he appointed me."

"Is it a favour, Walter?" inquired Florence, after a moment's hesitation, and looking anxiously in his face.

"The appointment?" returned Walter.

"Yes."

Walter would have given anything to have answered in the affirmative, but his face answered before his lips could, and Florence was too attentive to it not to understand its reply.

"I am afraid you have scarcely been a favourite with Papa," she said, timidly.

"There is no reason," replied Walter, smiling, "why I should be."

"No reason, Walter!"

"There *was* no reason," said Walter, understanding what she meant.

"There are many people employed in the house. Between Mr. Dombey and a young man like me, there's a wide space of separation. If I do my duty, I do what I ought, and do no more than all the rest."

Had Florence any misgiving of which she was hardly conscious: any misgiving that had sprung into an indistinct and undefined existence since that recent night when she had gone down to her father's room: that Walter's accidental interest in her, and early knowledge of her, might have involved him in that powerful displeasure and dislike? Had Walter any such idea, or any sudden thought that it was in her mind at that moment? Neither of them hinted at it. Neither of them spoke at all, for some short time. Susan, walking on the other side of Walter, eyed them both sharply; and certainly Miss Nipper's thoughts travelled in that direction, and very confidently too.

"You may come back very soon," said Florence, "perhaps, Walter."

"I *may* come back," said Walter, "an old man, and find you an old lady. But I hope for better things."

"Papa," said Florence, after a moment, "will—will recover from his grief, and—and speak more freely to me one day, perhaps; and if he should. I will tell him how much I wish to see you back again, and ask him to recall you for my sake."

There was a touching modulation in these words about her father that Walter understood too well.

The coach being close at hand, he would have left her without speaking, for now he felt what parting was; but Florence held his hand when she was seated, and then he found there was a little packet in her own.

"Walter," she said, looking full upon him with her affectionate eyes, "like you, I hope for better things. I will pray for them, and believe that they will arrive. I made this little gift for Paul. Pray take it with my love, and do not look at it until you are gone away. And now, God bless you, Walter! never forget me. You are my brother, dear!"

He was glad that Susan Nipper came between them, or he might have left her with a sorrowful remembrance of him. He was glad too that she did not look out of the coach again, but waved the little hand to him instead, as long as he could see it.

In spite of her request, he could not help opening the packet that night when he went to bed. It was a little purse: and there was money in it.

Bright rose the sun next morning, from his absence in strange countries, and up rose Walter with it to receive the Captain, who was already at the door: having turned out earlier than was necessary, in order to get under weigh while Mrs. MacStinger was yet slumbering. The Captain pretended to be in tip-top spirits, and brought a very smoky tongue in one of the pockets of the broad blue coat for breakfast.

"And Wal'r," said the Captain, when they took their seats at table, "if your uncle 's the man I think him, he'll bring out the last bottle of the Madeira on the present occasion."

"No, no, Ned," returned the old man. "No! That shall be opened when Walter comes home again."

"Well said!" cried the Captain. "Hear him!"

"There it lies," said Sol Gills, "down in the little cellar, covered with dirt and cobwebs. There may be dirt and cobwebs over you and me perhaps, Ned, before it sees the light."

"Hear him!" cried the Captain. "Good morality! Wal'r my lad. Train up a fig-tree in the way it should go, and when you are old sit under the shade on it. Overhaul the—Well," said the Captain on second thoughts, "I an't quite certain where that 's to be found; but when found, make a note of. Sol Gills, heave a-head again!"

"But there, or somewhere, it shall lie, Ned, until Wally comes back to claim it," said the old man. "That 's all I meant to say."

"And well said too," returned the Captain; "and if we three don't crack that there bottle in company, I'll give you two leave to drink my allowance!"

Notwithstanding the Captain's excessive joviality, he made but a poor hand at the smoky tongue, though he tried very hard, when anybody looked at him, to appear as if he were eating with a vast appetite. He was terribly afraid, likewise, of being left alone with either uncle or nephew; appearing to consider that his only chance of safety as to keeping up appearances, was in their being always three together. This terror on the part of the Captain, reduced him to such ingenious evasions as running to the door, when Solomon went to put his coat on, under pretence of having seen an extraordinary hackney-coach pass: and darting out into the road when Walter went up-stairs to take leave of the lodgers, on a feint of smelling fire in a neighbouring chimney. These artifices Captain Cuttle deemed inscrutable by any uninspired observer.

Walter was coming down from his parting expedition up-stairs, and was crossing the shop to go back to the little parlour, when he saw a faded face he knew, looking in at the door, and darted towards it.

"Mr. Carker!" cried Walter, pressing the hand of John Carker the Junior. "Pray come in! This is kind of you, to be here so early to say good bye to me. You knew how glad it would make me to shake hands with you, once, before going away. I cannot say how glad I am to have this opportunity. Pray come in."

"It is not likely that we may ever meet again, Walter," returned the other, gently resisting his invitation, "and I am glad of this opportunity too. I may venture to speak to you, and to take you by the hand, on the eve of separation. I shall not have to resist your frank approaches, Walter, any more."

There was a melancholy in his smile as he said it, that showed he had found some company and friendship for his thoughts even in that.

"Ah, Mr. Carker!" returned Walter. "Why did you resist them? You could have done me nothing but good, I am very sure."

He shook his head. "If there were any good," he said, "I could do on this earth, I would do it, Walter, for you. The sight of you from day to day, has been at once happiness and remorse to me. But the pleasure has outweighed the pain. I know that, now, by knowing what I lose."

"Come in, Mr. Carker, and make acquaintance with my good old uncle," urged Walter. "I have often talked to him about you, and he will be glad to tell you all he hears from me. I have not," said Walter, noticing his hesitation, and speaking with embarrassment himself: "I have not told him anything about our last conversation, Mr. Carker; not even him, believe me."

The grey Junior pressed his hand, and tears rose in his eyes.

"If I ever make acquaintance with him, Walter," he returned, "it will be that I may hear tidings of you. Rely on my not wronging your forbearance and consideration. It would be to wrong it, not to tell him all the truth, before I sought a word of confidence from him. But I have no friend or acquaintance except you: and even for your sake, am little likely to make any."

"I wish," said Walter, "you had suffered me to be your friend indeed. I always wished it, Mr. Carker, as you know; but never half so much as now, when we are going to part."

"It is enough," replied the other, "that you have been the friend of my own breast, and that when I have avoided you most, my heart inclined the most towards you, and was fullest of you. Walter, good bye!"

"Good bye, Mr. Carker. Heaven be with you, sir!" cried Walter, with emotion.

"If," said the other, retaining his hand while he spoke; "if when you come back, you miss me from my old corner, and should hear from any one where I am lying, come and look upon my grave. Think that I might have been as honest and as happy as you! And let me think, when I know my time is coming on, that some one like my former self may stand there, for a moment, and remember me with pity and forgiveness! Walter, good bye!"

His figure crept like a shadow down the bright, sun-lighted street, so cheerful yet so solemn in the early summer morning; and slowly passed away.

The relentless chronometer at last announced that Walter must turn his back upon the Wooden Midshipman: and away they went, himself, his uncle, and the Captain, in a hackney-coach to a wharf, where they were to take steam-boat for some Reach down the river, the name of which, as the captain gave it out, was a hopeless mystery to the ears of landmen. Arrived at this Reach (whither the ship had repaired by last night's tide), they were boarded by various excited watermen, and among others by a dirty Cyclops of the captain's acquaintance, who, with his one eye, had made the captain out some mile and a half off, and had been exchanging unintelligible roars with him ever since. Becoming the lawful prize of this personage, who was frightfully hoarse and constitutionally in

want of shaving, they were all three put aboard the Son and Heir. And the Son and Heir was in a pretty state of confusion, with sails lying all bedraggled on the wet decks, loose ropes tripping people up, men in red shirts running barefoot to and fro, casks blockading every foot of space, and, in the thickest of the fray, a black cook in a black caboose up to his eyes in vegetables and blinded with smoke.

The Captain immediately drew Walter into a corner, and with a great effort, that made his face very red, pulled up the silver watch, which was so big, and so tight in his pocket, that it came out like a bung.

"Wal'r," said the Captain, handing it over, and shaking him heartily by the hand, "a parting gift, my lad. Put it back half an hour every morning, and about another quarter towards the artemnoon, and it's a watch that 'll do you credit."

"Captain Cuttle! I couldn't think of it!" cried Walter, detaining him, for he was running away. "Pray take it back. I have one already."

"Then Wal'r," said the Captain, suddenly diving into one of his pockets and bringing up the two tea-spoons and the sugar-tongs, with which he had armed himself to meet such an objection, "Take this here trifle of plate, instead."

"No, no, I couldn't indeed!" cried Walter, "a thousand thanks! Don't throw them away, Captain Cuttle!" for the Captain was about to jerk them overboard. "They'll be of much more use to you than me. Give me your stick. I have often thought that I should like to have it. There! Good bye, Captain Cuttle! Take care of my uncle! Uncle Sol, God bless you!"

They were over the side in the confusion, before Walter caught another glimpse of either; and when he ran up to the stern, and looked after them, he saw his uncle hanging down his head in the boat, and Captain Cuttle rapping him on the back with the great silver watch (it must have been very painful), and gesticulating hopefully with the tea-spoons and sugar-tongs. Catching sight of Walter, Captain Cuttle dropped the property into the bottom of the boat with perfect unconcern, being evidently oblivious of its existence, and pulling off the glazed hat hailed him lustily. The glazed hat made quite a show in the sun with its glistening, and the Captain continued to wave it until he could be seen no longer. Then the confusion on board, which had been rapidly increasing, reached its height; two or three other boats went away with a cheer; the sails shone bright and full above, as Walter watched them spread their surface to the favourable breeze; the water flew in sparkles from the prow; and off upon her voyage went the Son and Heir, as hopefully and trippingly as many another son and heir, gone down, had started on his way before her.

Day after day, old Sol and Captain Cuttle kept her reckoning in the little back parlour and worked out her course, with the chart spread before them on the round table. At night, when old Sol climbed up-stairs, so lonely, to the attic where it sometimes blew great guns, he looked up at the stars and listened to the wind, and kept a longer watch than would have fallen to his lot on board the ship. The last bottle of the old Madeira, which had had its cruising days, and known its dangers of the deep, lay silently beneath its dust and cobwebs, in the meanwhile, undisturbed.

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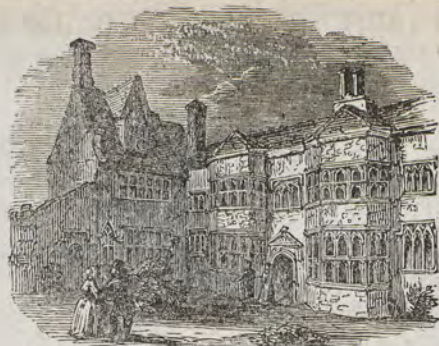
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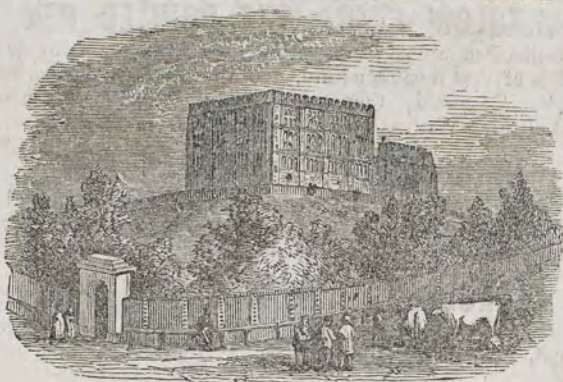
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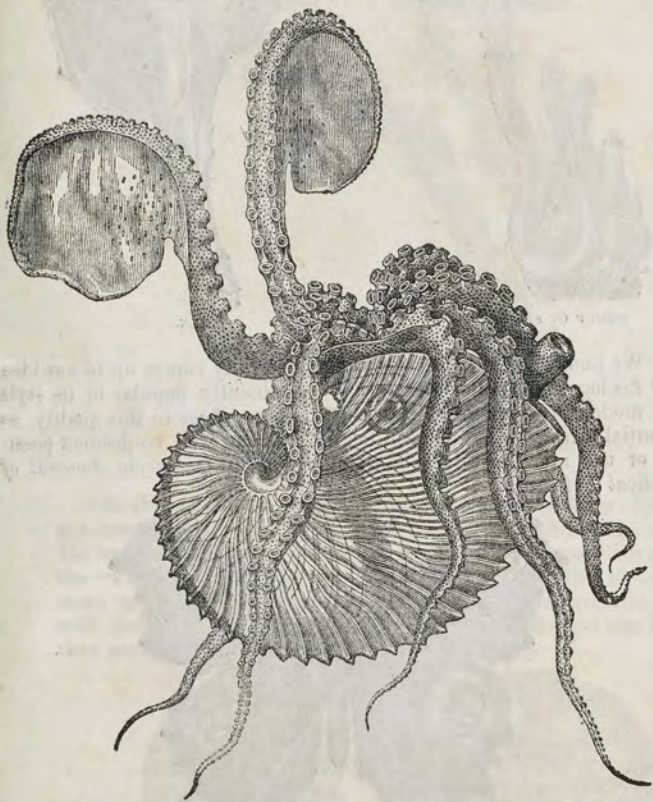
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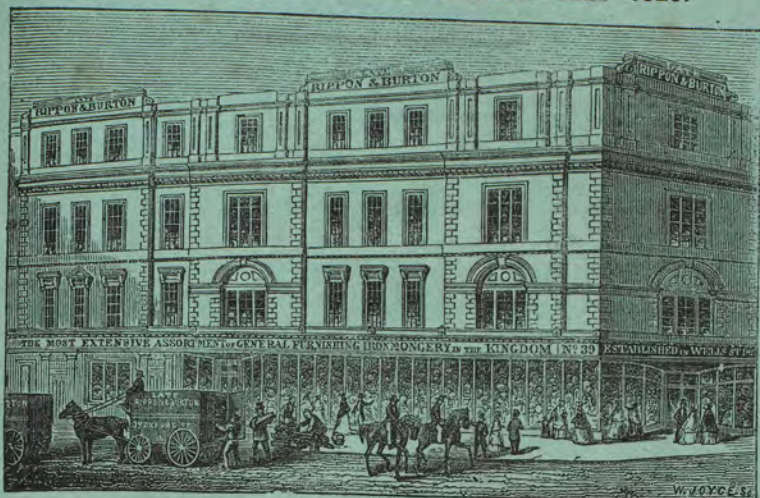
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The LARGEST ASSORTMENT of STOVES, KITCHEN RANGES, and FENDERS, as well as General Ironmongery in the world, is now on sale at WILLIAM S. BURTON'S (late RIPPON and BURTON'S) extensive warehouses. Bright Steel Fenders, to 4 feet, from 30s. each; ditto ditto, with or-molu ornaments, from 60s.; rich bronzed scroll ditto, with steel bar, 10s. 6d.; iron fenders, 3 feet, 4s. 6d.; 4 feet, 6s.; ditto bronzed, and fitted with standards, 3 feet, 9s.; 4 feet, 11s.; wrought iron kitchen fenders, 3 feet, 4s. 6d.; 4 feet, 6s.; bright register stoves, with bronzed ornaments, and two sets of bars, from 95s.; ditto ditto, with or-molu ornaments, from 9l.; black dining-room register stoves, 2 feet, 18s.; 3 feet, 27s.; bed-room register stoves, 2 feet, 16s.; 3 feet, 24s. The new economical thermic stove, with fender and radiating hearth-plate, from 8l.; fire-irons for chambers, 1s. 9d. per set; handsome ditto, with cut heads, 6s. 6d.; newest pattern, with elegant bronzed heads, 11s. A variety of fire-irons, with or-molu and richly cut heads, at proportionate prices. Any article in the Furnishing Ironmongery, 30 per cent. under any other house. The money returned for every article not approved of. Detailed Catalogues with engravings, sent (per post) free.

THE PERFECT SUBSTITUTE FOR SILVER.

The high estimate formed by the public during the ten years WILLIAM S. BURTON'S (late RIPPON and BURTON'S) chemically-purified material has been before it (made into every useful and ornamental article usually made in silver, possessing, as it does, the characteristic purity and durability of silver), has called into existence the deleterious compounds of "Albata Plate," "Berlin Silver," and other so-called substitutes; they are at best but bad imitations of the genuine articles manufactured and sold only by him.

	Fiddle Pattern.	Threaded Pattern.	King's Pattern.
Table Spoons and Forks, full size, per dozen	12s. 0d.	28s. 0d.	30s. 0d.
Dessert ditto and ditto, ditto	10 0	21 0	25 0
Tea ditto and ditto, ditto	5 0	11 0	12 0
Gravy ditto	3 0	6 0	7 0

NICKEL ELECTRO-PLATED.

The real NICKEL SILVER, introduced and made only by WILLIAM S. BURTON, (late RIPPON and BURTON'S), when plated by the patent process of Messrs. Elkington and Company, is beyond all comparison the very best article, next to sterling silver, that can be employed as such, either usefully or ornamentally. In the lengthened and increasing popularity of the material itself, and the high character of the method of plating, the public have a guarantee that the articles sold by W. S. BURTON (and by him only) are, as it regards wear, immeasurably superior to what can be supplied at any other house, while by no possible test can they be distinguished from real silver.

	Fiddle.	Thread.	King's.	Fiddle.	Thread.	King's.
Teaspoons, per doz.	18s.	32s.	38s.	Table Forks, per doz.	40s.	68s.
Dessert Forks ,,	30	46	58	Table Spoons ,,	40	72
Dessert Spoons ,,	30	52	62		80	75s.

Tea and coffee sets, waiters, candlesticks, &c., at proportionate prices. All kinds of re-plating done by the patent process. Detailed Catalogues, with engravings, as well as of every ironmongery article, sent (per post) free.

WILLIAM S. BURTON'S (late RIPPON and BURTON'S) Stock of general Furnishing Ironmongery is literally the largest in the world, and as no language can be employed to give a correct idea of its variety and extent, purchasers are invited to call and inspect it.

39, OXFORD STREET (CORNER OF NEWMAN STREET).

Public Applause.

No tradesmen throughout the whole kingdom have won
Such "PUBLIC APPLAUSE" as E. MOSES & SON;
One general cry of approval is rais'd,
And the goods which they sell are by ev'ry one prais'd;
Like a magnet, this noted Establishment draws,
And its projects are honour'd with "PUBLIC APPLAUSE."

When a gentleman orders coat, trowsers or vest,
He pronounces the cloth and the work as "the best;"
And as soon as he finds how the articles sit,
He highly approves of the style and the fit;
Nor does he, in wearing them, find any cause
To be mute in the chorus of—"PUBLIC APPLAUSE."

With regard to their Hats, you would hardly believe
What astounding support Messrs. MOSES receive,
Their Hat Mart is known to have boundless control,
And, at all times, it stands at "the top of the Poll."
The Hats are well made, and without any flaws,
And are truly deserving of—"PUBLIC APPLAUSE."

The same may be said of the Boots and the Shoes,
Which cannot be equall'd, wherever you cruise,
The Ladies and Gentlemen join, as in one,
To praise up the makè of E. MOSES & SON;
And, in fact, not a single supporter withdraws
From the Shoe Mart which meets with such "PUBLIC APPLAUSE."

E. MOSES and SON in their Hosiery, too,
And in Outfits, as well, are believ'd to out-do.
Moses' wonderful Warehouse (renown'd far and near,
Is "the Public's own Pet."—What a splendid idea!
And as all things are sold by Economy's laws,
No wonder it meets with such "PUBLIC APPLAUSE."

LIST OF PRICES.

Made to Measure.		Ready Made.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Chesterfields and Codringtons	from 0 16 6	Dress Coats	from 1 0 0
Pelto, velvet collar and cuffs	1 4 0	Extra Superfine	1 15 0
Milled Cloth Overcoats, in every pattern	2 5 0	Frock Coat	1 4 0
and shape	0 12 6	Extra Superfine	1 18 0
Sporting Coats	1 10 0	Roll Collar Vest	0 2 6
Dress Coats	2 15 0	Double-breasted ditto	0 3 6
" " First and best quality	1 12 0	French Satin black and fancy	0 6 6
Frock Coats	3 3 0	Rich Silk Velvet	0 12 6
" " First and best	0 8 0	Cloth and Cassimere	0 4 6
Rich Pattern Vest	0 8 6	Tweed Trowsers, lined	0 4 6
Cassimere Cloth	0 13 6	Black Cassimere or Doeskins	0 9 6
Dress Cassimere	0 12 6	Pilot Cloth	0 8 6
Plain or Figured Satin	0 12 6	WINTER COATS.	
Doeskin or Cassimere Trowsers	1 6 0	Chesterfields and Taglionis	0 0 6
Best or Dress	1 8 0	Russian Envelopes	1 6 0
Boys' Hussar and Tunic Suits	1 8 0	Milled Cloth Great Coat	1 12 0
		Boys' Tunic and Hussar Suits	0 17 6

Mourning to any extent can be had at Five Minutes' notice.

Gratis and post-free!—The Autumn and Winter Book, descriptive of the Houses, and interspersed with poetical tales, &c., together with a novel system of self-measurement, important to country residents.

TAKE NOTICE.—The prices of the articles are marked in plain figures, and no abatement can be made. Observe also, that any article may be exchanged, or that the money paid may be returned.

. The Establishment closes at sun-set on Fridays, until sun-set on Saturdays, when business is resumed till 12 o'clock.

ESSENTIAL CAUTION.—E. MOSES and SON are under the necessity of guarding the public against imposition, having learned that the untradesmanlike falsehood of "being connected with them," or "It's the same concern," has been resorted to in many instances and for obvious reasons. The Proprietors have no connection with any other house, and those who would prevent disappointment should observe the address,

**E. MOSES & SON, Tailors, Woollen Drapers, Hosiery, Furriers,
Hatters, Boot and Shoe Makers, &c.,
154, 155, 156, & 157 Minories, & 83, 84, 85, & 86, Aldgate, City.**