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Pickwick Papers

CHARLES DICKENS

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THE PICKWICK PAPERS

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CHARLES DICKENS

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS
OF THE
PICKWICK CLUB

with illustrations by

IAN EMMERY

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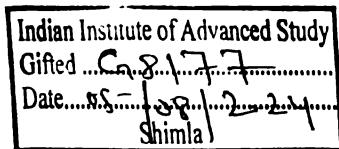
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Contents

1	<i>The Pickwickians</i>	page 9
2	<i>The First Day's Journey</i>	11
3	<i>A Field Day and Bivouac—More new Friends—An Invitation to the Country</i>	19
4	<i>Showing how Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive, and Mr. Winkle to ride; and how they both did it</i>	27
5	<i>How Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the Pigeon and killing the Crow, shot at the Crow and wounded the Pigeon; how the Dingley Dell Cricket Club played All-Muggleton</i>	34
6	<i>Strongly illustrative of the Position, that the Course of True Love is not a Railway</i>	41
7	<i>A Discovery and a Chase</i>	50
8	<i>Clearing up all Doubts (if any existed) of the Disinterestedness of Mr. A. Jingle's Character</i>	57
9	<i>Involving another Journey, and an Antiquarian Discovery</i>	65
10	<i>Descriptive of a very important Proceeding on the Part of Mr. Pickwick</i>	71
11	<i>Some Account of Eatanswill; and of the Election of a Member to serve in Parliament for that ancient, loyal, and patriotic Borough</i>	77

12	<i>In which is given a faithful Portraiture of two distinguished Persons; and an accurate Description of a public Breakfast in their House and Grounds</i>	84
13	<i>Too full of Adventure to be briefly described</i>	92
14	<i>Briefly illustrative of two Points; first, the Power of Hysterics, and, secondly, the Force of Circumstances</i>	103
15	<i>Showing how Dodson and Fogg were Men of Business, and how an affecting Interview took place between Mr. Weller and his long-lost Parent</i>	110
16	<i>Mr. Pickwick journeys to Ipswich and meets with a romantic Adventure with a middle-aged Lady in yellow Curl-papers</i>	118
17	<i>In which Mr. Samuel Weller begins to devote his Energies to the Return Match between himself and Mr. Trotter</i>	127
18	<i>Wherein Mr. Peter Magnus grows jealous, and the middle-aged Lady apprehensive, which brings the Pickwickians within the Grasp of the Law</i>	131
19	<i>Showing how majestic and impartial Mr. Nupkins was; and how Mr. Weller returned Mr. Job Trotter's Shuttlecock as heavily as it came</i>	139
20	<i>A brief Account of the Progress of the Action of Bardell against Pickwick</i>	149
21	<i>A good-humoured Christmas Chapter, containing an Account of a Wedding</i>	152
22	<i>How the Pickwickians disported themselves on the Ice; and how their Visit came to a Conclusion</i>	157

23	<i>Mr. Weller the elder delivers some Critical Sentiments respecting Literary Composition</i>	165
24	<i>Is wholly devoted to a full and faithful Report of the memorable Trial of Bardell against Pickwick</i>	172
25	<i>Introduces Mr. Pickwick to a new and not uninteresting Scene in the great Drama of Life</i>	185
26	<i>What befell Mr. Pickwick when he got into the Fleet</i>	190
27	<i>Illustrative; like the preceding one, of the old Proverb, that Adversity brings a Man acquainted with strange Bed-fellows</i>	195
28	<i>Showing how Mr. Samuel Weller got into Difficulties</i>	203
29	<i>Treats of divers little Matters which occurred in the Fleet, and of Mr. Winkle's mysterious Behaviour</i>	209
30	<i>Records a touching Act of delicate Feeling, not unmixed with Pleasantry, achieved and performed by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg</i>	215
31	<i>Mr. Winkle reappears under extraordinary Circumstances—Mr. Pickwick's Benevolence proves stronger than his Obstinacy</i>	221
32	<i>Involving a serious Change in the Weller Family, and the untimely Downfall of Mr: Stiggins—Sam hears of his mother-in-law's death, and goes to Dorking to visit his father</i>	228

33	<i>A Morning of Business in Gray's Inn Square—Certain interesting Disclosures relative to Mr. Snodgrass and a Young Lady are by no means irrelevant to this History</i>	233
34	<i>An important Conference takes place between Mr. Pickwick and Samuel Weller, at which his Parent assists—An old Gentleman in a snuff-coloured Suit arrives unexpectedly</i>	242
35	<i>In which the Pickwick Club is finally dissolved, and everything concluded to the Satisfaction of Everybody</i>	250
	NOTES	254

The Pickwickians

THE EDITOR of these papers feels the highest pleasure in laying before his readers the following entry in the translations of the Pickwick Club.

‘May 12, 1827. The following resolutions unanimously agreed to:—

‘That this Association has heard read, with feelings of unmixed satisfaction, and unqualified approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., entitled “Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds, with some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats.”

‘That this Association cannot but entertain a lively sense of the inestimable benefits which must inevitably result from carrying the speculations of that learned man into a wider field, from extending his travels, and, consequently, enlarging his sphere of observation.

‘That, with the view just mentioned, this Association has taken into its serious consideration a proposal, emanating from the aforesaid, Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., and three other Pickwickians hereinafter named, for forming a new branch of United Pickwickians.

‘That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., M.P.C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C., and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M.P.C., are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same; and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations, of their observations of character and manners, and of the whole of

their adventures, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London.'

A casual observer, adds the secretary, to whose notes we are indebted for the following account—a casual observer might possibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the bald head, and circular spectacles, which were intently turned towards his (the secretary's) face, during the reading of the above resolutions: to those who knew that the gigantic brain of Pickwick was working beneath that forehead, and that the beaming eyes of Pickwick were twinkling behind those glasses, the sight was indeed an interesting one. There sat the man who had traced to their source the mighty ponds of Hampstead, and agitated the scientific world with his Theory of Tittlebats. That illustrious man slowly mounted into the Windsor chair, on which he had been previously seated, and addressed the club himself had founded. On his right hand sat Mr. Tracy Tupman—the too susceptible Tupman. Time and feeding had expanded that once romantic form; the black silk waistcoat had become more and more developed; inch by inch had the gold watch-chain beneath it disappeared from within the range of Tupman's vision; but the soul of Tupman had known no change—admiration of the fair sex was still its ruling passion. On the left of his great leader sat the poetic Snodgrass, and near him again the sporting Winkle; the former poetically enveloped in a mysterious blue cloak with a canine-skin collar, and the latter communicating additional lustre to a new green shooting-coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely-fitted drabs.

'Mr. Pickwick observed (says the secretary) that fame was dear to the heart of every man. He (Mr. Pickwick) would not deny that he was influenced by human passions and human feelings (cheers)—possibly by human weaknesses (loud cries of "No"). He had felt some pride—he acknowledged it freely, and let his enemies make the most of it—he had felt some pride when he presented his Tittlebatian Theory to the world; it might be celebrated or it might not. (A cry of "It is," and great cheering.) But if the fame of that treatise were to extend to the farthest confines of the known world, the pride with which he should reflect on the authorship of that production would be as nothing compared with the pride with

which he looked around him, on this, the proudest moment of his existence.'

Here the entry terminates. We have no official statement of the facts which the reader will find recorded in the next chapter, but they have been carefully collated from letters and other MS. authorities.

2

The First Day's Journey

THAT punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was on his right hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way. Great men are seldom over-scrupulous in the arrangement of their attire; the operation of shaving, dressing, and coffee-imbibing was soon performed; and, in another hour, Mr. Pickwick, with his portmanteau in his hand, his telescope in his greatcoat pocket and his note-book in his waistcoat, ready for the reception of any discoveries worthy of being noted down, had arrived at the coach-stand in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

'Cab!' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Here you are, sir,' shouted the waterman. 'Here you are, sir. Now, then, fust cab!' And the first cab having been fetched from the public-house, where he had been smoking his first pipe, Mr. Pickwick and his portmanteau were thrown into the vehicle.

'Golden Cross,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Only a bob's vorth, Tommy,' cried the driver sulkily, for the information of his friend the waterman, as the cab drove off.

'How old is that horse, my friend?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

'Forty-two,' replied the driver, eying him askant.

'What!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr. Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.

'And how long do you keep him out at a time?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, searching for further information.

'Two or three weeks,' replied the man.

'Weeks!' said Mr. Pickwick in astonishment, and out came the note-book again.

'He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home,' observed the driver coolly, 'but we seldom takes him home, on account of his weakness. He always falls down when he's took out o' the cab, but when he's in it, we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down; and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on, so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on—he can't help it.'

Mr. Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club, as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses under trying circumstances. The entry was scarcely completed when they reached the Golden Cross. Down jumped the driver, and out got Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, who had been anxiously waiting the arrival of their illustrious leader, crowded to welcome him.

'Here's your fare,' said Mr. Pickwick, holding out the shilling to the driver.

What was the learned man's astonishment, when that unaccountable person flung the money on the pavement, and requested in figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting him (M. Pickwick) for the amount!

'You are mad,' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'Or drunk,' said Mr. Winkle.

'Or both,' said Mr. Tupman.

'Come on!' said the cab-driver, sparring away like clock-work. 'Come on—all four of you.'

'Here's a lark!' shouted half a dozen hackney coachmen.

'What's the row, Sam?' inquired one gentleman in black calico sleeves.

'Row!' replied the cabman, 'what did he want my number for?'

'I didn't want your number,' said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

'Would anybody believe,' continued the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd, 'would anybody believe as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number, but ev'ry word he says into the bargain' (a light flashed upon Mr. Pickwick—it was the note-book).

'Did he though?' inquired another cabman.

'Yes, did he,' replied the first; 'and then arter aggerawatin' me to assault him, gets three witnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've six months for it. Come on!' and the cabman dashed his hat upon the ground, with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and knocked Mr. Pickwick's spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr. Pickwick's nose, and another on Mr. Pickwick's chest, and a third in Mr. Snodgrass's eye, and a fourth, by way of variety, in Mr. Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road, and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr. Winkle's body; and all in half a dozen seconds.

'Where's an officer?' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'Put 'em under the pump,' suggested a hot-pieman.

'You shall smart for this,' gasped Mr. Pickwick.

'Informers!' shouted the crowd.

'Come on,' cried the cabman, who had been sparring without cessation the whole time.

The mob hitherto had been passive spectators of the scene, but as the intelligence of the Pickwickians being informers was spread among them, there is no saying what acts

of personal aggression they might have committed, had not the affray been unexpectedly terminated by the interposition of a new-comer.

‘What’s the fun?’ said a rather tall, thin, young man, in a green coat, emerging suddenly from the coach-yard.

‘Informers!’ shouted the crowd again.

‘We are not,’ roared Mr. Pickwick. That learned man in a few hurried words explained the real state of the case.

‘Come along, then,’ said he of the green coat, lugging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. ‘Here, No. 924, take your fare, and take yourself off—respectable gentleman—know him well—none of your nonsense—this way, sir—where’s your friends?—all a mistake, I see—never mind—accidents will happen—best regulated families—’ And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the traveller’s waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.

‘Here, waiter!’ shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, ‘glasses round—brandy-and-water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty—eye damaged, sir? Waiter! raw beef-steak for the gentleman’s eye—nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient.’ And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught full half a pint of the reeking brandy-and-water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

He was about the middle height, but the thinness of his body, and the length of his legs, gave him the appearance of being much taller. The green coat had been a smart dress garment in the days of swallow-tails, but had evidently in those times adorned a much shorter man than the stranger, for the soiled and faded sleeves scarcely reached to his wrists. His scanty black trousers displayed here and there those shiny patches which bespeak long service, and were strapped very tightly over a pair of patched and mended shoes. His long, black hair escaped in negligent waves from beneath

each side of his old pinched-up hat. His face was thin and haggard; but an indescribable air of jaunty impudence and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man.

Such was the individual on whom Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles (which he had fortunately recovered), and to whom he proceeded to return in chosen terms his warmest thanks for his recent assistance.

'Never mind,' said the stranger, cutting the address very short, 'said enough—no more; smart chap that cabman—handled his fives well.'

This coherent speech was interrupted by the entrance of the Rochester coachman, to announce that the commodore was on the point of starting.

'Commodore!' said the stranger, starting up, 'my coach—place booked—one outside—leave you to pay for the brandy-and-water—want change for a five—bad silver—Brummagem buttons—won't do—no go—eh?' and he shook his head most knowingly.

Now it so happened that Mr. Pickwick and his three companions had resolved to make Rochester their first halting-place too; and having intimated to their new-found acquaintance that they were journeying to the same city, they agreed to occupy the seat at the back of the coach, where they could all sit together.

'Up with you,' said the stranger, assisting Mr. Pickwick on to the roof.

'Any luggage, sir?' inquired the coachman.

'Who—I? Brown paper parcel here, that's all—other luggage: gone by water—packing-cases nailed up—big as houses—heavy, heavy, damned heavy,' replied the stranger.

'Heads, heads—take care of your heads!' cried the loquacious stranger, as they came out under the low archway, which in those days formed the entrance to the coach-yard. 'Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady, eating sandwiches—forgot the arch—crash—knock—children look round—mother's head off—sandwich in her hand—no mouth to put it in—head of a family off—shocking, shocking! Looking at Whitehall, sir?—fine place—little window—somebody else's head off there,

eh, sir?—he didn't keep a sharp look-out enough either—eh, sir, eh?"

'I am ruminating,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'on the strange mutability of human affairs.'

'Philosopher, sir?'

'An observer of human nature, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Ah, so am I. Most people are when they've little to do and less to get. Poet, sir?'

'My friend Mr. Snodgrass has a strong poetic turn,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'So have I,' said the stranger. 'Epic poem—ten thousand lines—revolution of July—composed it on the spot—Mars by day, Apollo by night—bang the field-piece twang the lyre.'

'You were present at that glorious scene, sir?' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'Present! think I was. Sportsman, sir?' abruptly turning to Mr. Winkle.

'A little, sir,' replied that gentleman.

'Fine pursuit, sir—fine pursuit.—Dogs, sir?'

'Not just now,' said Mr. Winkle.

'Ah! you should keep dogs—fine animals—sagacious creatures—dog of my own once—pointer—surprising instinct—out shooting one day—entering inclosure—whistled—dog stopped—whistled again—Ponto—no go; dog transfix'd—staring at a board—looked up, saw an inscription—"Game-keeper has orders to shoot all dogs found in this inclosure"—wouldn't pass it—wonderful dog—valuable dog that—very.'

'Singular circumstance that,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Will you allow me to make a note of it?'

'Certainly, sir, certainly—hundred more anecdotes of the same animal. Fine girl, sir' (to Mr. Tracy Tupman, who had been bestowing sundry anti-Pickwickian glances on a young lady by the roadside).

'Very!' said Mr. Tupman.

'English girls not so fine as Spanish—noble creatures—jet hair—black eyes—lovely forms—sweet creatures—beautiful.'

'You have been in Spain, sir?' said Mr. Tracy Tupman.

'Lived there—ages.'

'Many conquests, sir?' inquired Mr. Tupman.

'Conquests! Thousands. Don Bolaro Fizzgig—grandee—only daughter—Donna Christina—splendid creature—loved me to distraction—jealous father—high-souled daughter—handsome Englishman—Donna Christina in despair—prussic acid—stomach pump in my portmanteau—operation performed—old Bolaro in ecstasies—consent to our union—join hands and floods of tears—romantic story—very.'

'Is the lady in England now, sir?' inquired Mr. Tupman.

'Dead, sir—dead,' said the stranger, applying to his right eye the brief remnant of a very old cambric handkerchief. 'Never recovered the stomach pump—undermined constitution—fell a victim.'

'And her father?' inquired the poetic Snodgrass.

'Remorse and misery,' replied the stranger. 'Sudden disappearance—talk of the whole city—public fountain in the great square suddenly ceased playing—workmen employed to clean it—water drawn off—father-in-law discovered sticking head first in the main pipe, with a full confession in his right boot—took him out, and the fountain played away again, as well as ever.'

'Will you allow me to note that little romance down, sir?' said Mr. Snodgrass, deeply affected.

'Certainly, sir, certainly—fifty more if you like to hear 'em—'

In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale, by way of parenthesis, when the coach changed horses, did the stranger proceed, until they reached the Bull Inn, in the High Street at Rochester, where the coach stopped.

'Do you remain here, sir?' inquired Mr. Nathaniel Winkle.

'Here—not I—but you'd better—good house—nice beds—'

'You rendered us a very important service this morning, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'will you allow us to offer a slight mark of our gratitude by begging the favour of your company at dinner?'

'Great pleasure—not presume to dictate, but broiled fowl and mushrooms—capital thing! What time?'

'Let me see,' replied Mr. Pickwick, referring to his watch, 'it is now nearly three. Shall we say five?'

'Suit me excellently,' said the stranger, 'five precisely—till then—care of yourselves;' and lifting the pinched-up hat a few inches from his head, and carelessly replacing it very much on one side, the stranger, with half the brown paper parcel sticking out of his pocket, walked briskly up the yard, and turned into the High Street.

'Evidently a traveller in many countries, and a close observer of men and things,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I should like to see his poem,' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'I should like to have seen that dog,' said Mr. Winkle.

Mr. Tupman said nothing; but he thought of Donna Christina, the stomach pump, and the fountain; and his eyes filled with tears.

A private sitting-room having been engaged, bedrooms inspected, and dinner ordered, the party walked out to view the city and adjoining neighbourhood.

Punctual to five o'clock came the stranger, and shortly afterwards the dinner. He had divested himself of his brown paper parcel, but had made no alteration in his attire, and was, if possible, more loquacious than ever.

'What's that?' he inquired, as the waiter removed one of the covers.

'Soles, sir.'

'Soles—ah!—capital fish—all come from London—stage-coach proprietors get up political dinners—carriage of soles—dozens of baskets—cunning fellows. Glass of wine, sir.'

'With pleasure,' said Mr. Pickwick; and the stranger took wine, first with him, and then with Mr. Snodgrass, and then with Mr. Tupman, and then with Mr. Winkle, and then with the whole party together, almost as rapidly as he talked.

'Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter,' said the stranger. 'Forms going up—carpenters coming down. What's going forward?'

'Ball, sir,' said the waiter.

Mr. Tupman expressed an earnest wish to be present at the festivity; but meeting with no response in the darkened eye of Mr. Snodgrass, or the abstracted gaze of Mr. Pickwick,

he applied himself with great interest to the port wine and dessert, which had just been placed on the table. The waiter withdrew, and the party were left to enjoy the cosy couple of hours succeeding dinner.

The wine was passed, and a fresh supply ordered. The visitor talked, the Pickwickians listened. Mr. Pickwick's countenance glowed with an expression of universal philanthropy, and Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass fell fast asleep.

3

*A Field Day and Bivouac—More new Friends—
An Invitation to the Country*

THE whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the lines. The manœuvres of half a dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung.

Mr. Pickwick was an enthusiastic admirer of the army. Nothing could have been more delightful to him—nothing could have harmonised so well with the peculiar feeling of each of his companions—as this sight. Accordingly they were soon afoot, and walking in the direction of the scene of action, towards which crowds of people were already pouring from a variety of quarters.

Mr. Pickwick and his three companions stationed themselves in the front of the crowd, and patiently awaited the commencement of the proceedings. At one time there was a sudden pressure from behind, and then Mr. Pickwick was jerked forward for several yards. Then some facetious gentle-

men on the left, after pressing sideways in a body, and squeezing Mr. Snodgrass into the very last extreme of human torture, would request to know 'verè he vos a shovin' to?' and when Mr. Winkle had done expressing his excessive indignation at witnessing this unprovoked assault, some person behind would knock his hat over his eyes, and beg the favour of his putting his head in his pocket. These, and other practical witticisms, coupled with the unaccountable absence of Mr. Tupman (who had suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found), rendered their situation upon the whole rather more uncomfortable than pleasing or desirable.

At length that low roar of many voices ran through the crowd which usually announces the arrival of whatever they have been waiting for. A few moments of eager expectation, and colours were seen fluttering gaily in the air, arms glistened brightly in the sun, column after column poured on to the plain. The troops halted and formed; the word of command rang through the line; there was a general clash of muskets as arms were presented; and nothing was to be seen on either side, as far as the eye could reach, but a long perspective of red coats and white trousers, fixed and motionless.

'We are in a capital situation now,' said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. The crowd had gradually dispersed in their immediate vicinity, and they were nearly alone.

'Capital!' echoed both Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle.

'What are they doing now?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, adjusting his spectacles.

'I—I—rather think,' said Mr. Winkle, changing colour—'I rather think they're going to fire.'

'Impossible,' replied Mr. Pickwick. He had hardly uttered the word, when the whole half-dozen regiments levelled their muskets as if they had but one common object, and that object the Pickwickians, and burst forth with the most awful and tremendous discharge that ever shook the earth to its centres, or an elderly gentleman off his.

'We had better throw ourselves on our faces, hadn't we?' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'No, no—it's over now,' said Mr. Pickwick. His lip might

quiver, and his cheek might blanch, but no expression of fear or concern escaped the lips of that immortal man.

Mr. Pickwick was right—the firing ceased; but he had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the accuracy of his opinion, when a quick movement was visible in the line; the hoarse shout of the word of command ran along it, and before either of the party could form a guess at the meaning of this new manœuvre, the whole of the half-dozen regiments, with fixed bayonets, charged at double-quick time down upon the very spot on which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were stationed.

Man is but mortal; and there is a point beyond which human courage cannot extend. Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles for an instant on the advancing mass, and then fairly turned his back and—we will not say fled; firstly, because it is an ignoble term, and, secondly, because Mr. Pickwick's figure was by no means adapted for that mode of retreat—he trotted away, at as quick a rate as his legs would convey him.

The opposite troops, whose falling-in had perplexed Mr. Pickwick a few seconds before, were drawn up to repel the mimic attack of the sham besiegers of the citadel; and the consequence was that Mr. Pickwick and his two companions found themselves suddenly inclosed between two lines of great length, the one advancing at a rapid pace, and the other firmly waiting the collision in hostile array.

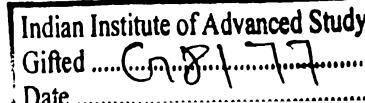
‘Hoi,’ shouted the officers of the advancing line.

‘Get out of the way,’ cried the officers of the stationary one.

‘Where are we to go to?’ screamed the agitated Pickwickians.

‘Hoi—hoi—hoi,’ was the only reply. There was a moment of intense bewilderment, a heavy tramp of footsteps, a violent concussion, a smothered laugh; the half-dozen regiments were half a thousand yards off, and the soles of Mr. Pickwick's boots were elevated in air.

Mr. Snodgrass and M^r. Winkle had each performed a compulsory somerset with remarkable agility, when the first object that met the eyes of the latter as he sat on the ground, staunching with a yellow silk handkerchief the stream of life



which issued from his nose, was his venerated leader at some distance off, running after his own hat, which was gambolling playfully away in perspective.

There was a fine gentle wind, and Mr. Pickwick's hat rolled sportively before it. The wind puffed, and Mr. Pickwick puffed, and the hat rolled over and over as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide. Mr. Pickwick was completely exhausted, and about to give up the chase, when the hat was blown with some violence against the wheel of a carriage, which was drawn up in a line with half a dozen other vehicles. Mr. Pickwick, perceiving his advantage, darted briskly forward, secured his property, planted it on his head, and paused to take breath. He had not been stationary half a minute, when he heard his own name eagerly pronounced by a voice, which he at once recognised as Mr. Tupman's, and, looking upwards, he beheld a sight which filled him with surprise and pleasure.

In an open barouche stood a stout old gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches and top-boots, two young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a young gentleman apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a lady of doubtful age, probably the aunt of the aforesaid, and Mr. Tupman, as easy and unconcerned as if he had belonged to the family from the first moments of his infancy. Fastened up behind the barouche was a hamper of spacious dimensions and on the box sat a fat and red-faced boy, in a state of somnolency.

'Pickwick—Pickwick,' said Mr. Tupman; 'come up here. Make haste.'

'Come along, sir. Pray, come up,' said the stout gentleman. 'Joe!—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again.—Joe, let down the steps.' The fat boy rolled slowly off the box, let down the steps, and held the carriage door invitingly open. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle came up at the moment.

'Room for you all, gentlemen,' said the stout man. 'Two inside, and one out. Joe, make room for one of these gentlemen on the box. Now, sir, come along;' and the stout gentleman extended his arm, and pulled first Mr. Pickwick, and then Mr. Snodgrass, into the barouche by main force.



The whole of the half-dozen regiments charged at double-quick time down upon the very spot on which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were stationed.

Mr. Winkle mounted to the box, the fat boy waddled to the same perch, and fell fast asleep instantly.

'Well, gentlemen,' said the stout man, 'very glad to see you. Picked up my friend Mr. Tupman here this morning, and very glad I was to see him. My daughters, gentlemen—my gals these are; and that's my sister, Miss Rachael Wardle; this is my friend Mr. Trundle. And now you all know each other, let's be comfortable and happy, and see what's going forward; that's what I say.' So the stout gentleman put on his spectacles, and Mr. Pickwick pulled out his glass, and everybody stood up in the carriage, and looked over somebody else's shoulder at the evolutions of the military.

Astounding evolutions they were, one rank firing over the heads of another rank, and then running away; and then the other rank firing over the heads of another rank, and running away in their turn. Then there was such a ramming down of the contents of enormous guns on the battery, with instruments like magnified mops; such a preparation before they were let off, and such an awful noise when they did go, that the air resounded with the screams of ladies. The young Misses Wardle were so frightened, that Mr. Trundle was actually obliged to hold one of them up in the carriage, while Mr. Snodgrass supported the other; and Mr. Wardle's sister suffered under such a dreadful state of nervous alarm, that Mr. Tupman found it indispensably necessary to put his arm round her waist, to keep her up at all.

'Joe, Joe!' said the stout gentleman, when the citadel was taken, and the besiegers and besieged sat down to dinner. 'Damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again. Be good enough to pinch him, sir—in the leg, if you please; nothing else wakes him—thank you. Undo the hamper, Joe.'

The whole party were stowed down in the barouche; and the stout gentleman proceeded to hand the things from the fat boy (who had mounted up behind for the purpose) into the carriage.

'Now, Joe, knives and forks.' The knives and forks were handed in. 'Plates, Joe, plates.' A similar process employed in the distribution of the crockery.

'Now, Joe, the fowls. That's right—look sharp. Now the

tongue—now the pigeon pie. Take care of that veal and ham—mind the lobsters—take the salad out of the cloth—give me the dressing.’ Such were the hurried orders which issued from the lips of Mr. Wardle, as he handed in the different articles described.

‘Now ain’t this capital?’ inquired that jolly personage, when the work of destruction had commenced.

‘Capital!’ said Mr. Winkle, who was carving a fowl on the box.

‘Glass of wine?’

‘With the greatest pleasure.’

‘You’d better have a bottle to yourself up there, hadn’t you?’

‘You’re very good.’

‘How dear Emily is flirting with the strange gentleman,’ whispered the spinster aunt, with true spinster-aunt-like envy, to her brother, Mr. Wardle.

‘Oh! I don’t know,’ said the jolly old gentleman; ‘all very natural, I dare say—nothing unusual. Mr. Pickwick, some wine, sir?’ Mr. Pickwick, who had been deeply investigating the interior of the pigeon-pie, readily assented.

‘Emily, my dear,’ said the spinster aunt, with a patronising air, ‘don’t talk so loud, love.’

‘Lor, aunt!’

‘Aunt and the little old gentleman want to have it all to themselves, I think,’ whispered Miss Isabella Wardle to her sister Emily. The young ladies laughed very heartily, and the old one tried to look amiable, but couldn’t manage it.

‘Damn that boy,’ said the old gentleman, ‘he’s gone to sleep again.’

‘Very extraordinary boy, that,’ said Mr. Pickwick; ‘does he always sleep in this way?’

‘Sleep!’ said the old gentleman, ‘he’s always asleep. Goes on errands fast asleep, and snores as he waits at table. I’m proud of that boy—wouldn’t part with him on any account—he’s a natural curiosity! Here, Joe—Joe—take these things away, and open another bottle—d’ye hear?’

The fat boy rose, opened his eyes, swallowed the huge piece of pie he had been in the act of masticating when he last fell

asleep, and slowly obeyed his master's orders. The fresh bottle was produced, and speedily emptied: the hamper was made fast in its old place—the fat boy once more mounted the box—the spectacles and pocket-glass were again adjusted—and the evolutions of the military recommenced. There was a great fizzing and banging of guns, and starting of ladies—and then a mine was sprung, to the gratification of everybody—and when the mine had gone off, the military and the company followed its example, and went off too.

'Now, mind,' said the old gentleman, as he shook hands with Mr. Pickwick at the conclusion of a conversation which had been carried on at intervals, during the conclusion of the proceedings, 'we shall see you all to-morrow.'

'Most certainly,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'You have got the address?'

'Manor Farm, Dingley Dell,' said Mr. Pickwick, consulting his pocket-book.

'That's it,' said the old gentleman. 'I don't let you off, mind, under a week; and undertake that you shall see everything worth seeing.'

The driver mounted—the fat boy clambered up by his side—farewells were exchanged—and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again.

*Showing how Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive, and
Mr. Winkle to ride; and how they both did it*

BRIGHT and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leaned over the balustrades of Rochester Bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape.

Mr. Pickwick found that his three companions had risen, and were waiting his arrival to commence breakfast, which was ready laid in tempting display. They sat down to the meal; and broiled ham, eggs, tea, coffee and sundries, began to disappear with a rapidity which at once bore testimony to the excellence of the fare, and the appetites of its consumers.

'Now, about Manor Farm,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'How shall we go?'

'We had better consult the waiter perhaps,' said Mr. Tupman; and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

'Dingley Dell, gentlemen—fifteen miles, gentlemen—cross road—post-chaise, sir?'

'Post-chaise won't hold more than two,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'True, sir—beg your pardon, sir.—Very nice four-wheel chaise, sir—seat for two behind—one in front for the gentleman that drives—oh! beg your pardon, sir—that'll only hold three.'

'What's to be done?' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'Perhaps one of the gentlemen would like to ride, sir?' suggested the waiter, looking towards Mr. Winkle.

'The very thing,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Winkle, will you go on horseback?'

Now Mr. Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings in the very lowest recesses of his own heart, relative to his equestrian skill; but, as he would not have them even suspected, on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, 'Certainly. I should enjoy it of all things.'

'Let them be at the door by eleven,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Very well, sir,' replied the waiter.

Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready.

It was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-bin for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near, holding by the bridle another immense horse—apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise—ready saddled for Mr. Winkle.

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. 'Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that.'

'Oh! you, of course,' said Mr. Tupman.

'Not the slightest fear, sir,' interposed the hostler. 'Warrant him quiet, sir; a hinfant in arms might drive him.'

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr. Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his feet on a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it for that purpose.

'Now, shiny Villiam,' said the hostler to the deputy hostler, 'give the gen'l'm'n the ribbons.'

'Wo—o!' cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

'Only his playfulness, gen'l'm'n,' said the head hostler encouragingly; 'jist kitch hold on him, Villiam.' The deputy restrained the animal's impetuosity, and the principal ran to assist Mr. Winkle in mounting.

'T'other side, sir, if you please.'

'Blowed if the gen'l'm'n worn't a-gettin' up on thew rong side,' whispered a grinning post-boy to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr. Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war.

‘All right?’ inquired Mr. Pickwick, with an inward presentiment that it was all wrong.

‘All right,’ replied Mr. Winkle faintly.

‘Let ‘em go,’ cried the hostler.—‘Hold him in, sir;’ and away went the chaise, and the saddle-horse, with Mr. Pickwick on the box of the one, and Mr. Winkle on the back of the other, to the delight and gratification of the whole inn-yard.

‘What makes him go sideways?’ said Mr. Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr. Winkle in the saddle.

‘I can’t imagine,’ replied Mr. Winkle.

Mr. Pickwick had no leisure to observe either this or any other particular, the whole of his faculties being concentrated in the management of the animal attached to the chaise. He had a singular propensity for darting suddenly every now and then to the side of the road, then stopping short, and then rushing forward for some minutes, at a speed which it was wholly impossible to control.

‘What *can* he mean by this?’ said Mr. Snodgrass, when the horse had executed this manœuvre for the twentieth time.

‘I don’t know,’ replied Mr. Tupman; ‘it *looks* very like shying, don’t it?’ Mr. Snodgrass was about to reply, when he was interrupted by a shout from Mr. Pickwick.

‘Woo!’ said that gentleman; ‘I have dropped my whip.’

‘Winkle,’ said Mr. Snodgrass, as the equestrian came trotting up on the tall horse, with his hat over his ears, and shaking all over, as if he would shake to pieces, with the violence of the exercise, ‘pick up the whip, there’s a good fellow.’ Mr. Winkle pulled at the bridle of the tall horse till he was black in the face; and having at length succeeded in stopping him, dismounted, handed the whip to Mr. Pickwick, and grasping the reins, prepared to remount. Mr. Winkle had no sooner touched the reins, than the horse slipped them over his head, and darted backwards to their full length.

‘Poor fellow,’ said Mr. Winkle soothingly—‘poor fellow—

good old horse.' The 'poor fellow' was proof against flattery; the more Mr. Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away.

'What am I to do?' shouted Mr. Winkle. 'I can't get on him.'

'You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike,' replied Mr. Pickwick from the chaise.

'But he won't come!' roared Mr. Winkle. 'Do come and hold him.'

Mr. Pickwick was the very personation of kindness and humanity; he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr. Pickwick advancing towards him with the chaise whip in his hand, than he exchanged the rotary motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement. There was a great scraping of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr. Winkle, his arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr. Winkle and Mr. Pickwick gazing on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

'Bless my soul!' exclaimed the agonised Mr. Pickwick; 'there's the other horse running away!'

It was but too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. He tore off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the four-wheeled chaise. Mr. Tupman threw himself into the hedge, Mr. Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body, and the bin from the perch; and finally stood stock still to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extricate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickset—a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry

rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

It was late in the afternoon when the four friends and their four-footed companion turned into the lane leading to Manor Farm; and even when they were so near their place of destination, the pleasure they would otherwise have experienced was materially damped as they reflected on the singularity of their appearance, and the absurdity of their situation. Torn clothes, lacerated faces, dusty shoes, exhausted looks, and, above all, the horse. Oh, how Mr. Pickwick cursed that horse: more than once he had calculated the probable amount of the expense he would incur by cutting his throat. He was roused from a meditation on these dire imaginings by the sudden appearance of two figures at a turn of the lane. It was Mr. Wardle, and his faithful attendant, the fat boy.

'Why, where *have* you been?' said the hospitable old gentleman; 'I've been waiting for you all day. Well, you *do* look tired. What! Scratches! So you've been spilt, eh? Never mind. Common accident in these parts. Joe—he's asleep again!—Joe, take that horse from the gentlemen, and lead it into the stable.'

The fat boy sauntered heavily behind them with the animal; and the old gentleman, condoling with his guests in homely phrase on so much of the day's adventures as they thought proper to communicate, led the way to the kitchen.

'We'll have you put to rights here,' said the old gentleman, 'and then I'll introduce you to the people in the parlour. Emma, bring out the cherry brandy; now, Jane, a needle and thread here; towels and water, Mary. Come, girls, bustle about.'

Three or four buxom girls speedily dispersed in search of the different articles in requisition, while a couple of large-headed, circular-visaged males rose from their seats in the chimney-corner and dived into some obscure recesses, from

which they speedily produced a bottle of blacking, and some half-dozen brushes.

'Ready?' said the old gentleman inquiringly, when his guests had been washed, mended, brushed, and brandied.

'Quite,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'Come along, then;' and the party having traversed several dark passages, arrived at the parlour door.

'Welcome,' said their hospitable host, throwing it open and stepping forward to announce them, 'welcome, gentlemen, to Manor Farm.'

A very old lady, in a lofty cap and faded silk gown—no less a personage than Mr. Wardle's mother—occupied the post of honour on the right-hand corner of the chimney-piece. The aunt, the two young ladies, and Mr. Wardle, crowded round her easy-chair, one holding her ear-trumpet, another an orange, and a third a smelling-bottle, while a fourth was busily engaged in patting and punching the pillows which were arranged for her support. A little hard-headed, Ripstone pippin-faced man was conversing with a fat old gentleman in one corner; and two or three more old gentlemen, and two or three more old ladies sat bolt upright and motionless on their chairs, staring very hard at Mr. Pickwick and his fellow-voyagers.

'Mr. Pickwick, mother,' said Mr. Wardle, at the very top of his voice.

'Ah!' said the old lady, shaking her head; 'I can't hear you.'

'Mr. Pickwick, grandma!' screamed both the young ladies together.

'Ah!' exclaimed the old lady. 'Well, it don't much matter. He don't care for an old 'ooman like me, I dare say'

'Grandma's rather put out now,' said Miss Isabella Wardle, in a low tone; 'but she'll talk to you presently.'

Mr. Pickwick nodded his readiness to humour the infirmities of age, and entered into a general conversation with the other members of the circle.

'Delightful situation this,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Delightful!' echoed Messrs. Snodgrass, Tupman, and Winkle.

'Well, I think it is,' said Mr. Wardle.

'There ain't a better spot o' ground in all Kent, sir,' said the hard-headed man with the pippin-face; 'there ain't indeed, sir.'

'Come,' said the bustling host, 'what say you to a rubber, Mr. Pickwick?'

'I should like it of all things,' replied that gentleman; 'but pray don't make up one on my account.'

'Oh, I assure you, mother's very fond of a rubber,' said Mr. Wardle; 'ain't you, mother?'

The old lady, who was much less deaf on this subject than any other, replied in the affirmative.

'Joe, Joe!' said the gentleman; 'Joe—damn that—oh, here he is; put out the card-tables.'

The lethargic youth contrived without any additional rousing to set out two card-tables; the one for Pope Joan, and the other for whist. The whist-players were Mr. Pickwick and the old lady, Mr. Miller and the fat gentleman. The round game comprised the rest of the company.

The rubber was conducted with all that gravity of deportment and sedateness of demeanour which befit the pursuit entitled 'whist.' Meanwhile the round game proceeded right merrily. Isabella Wardle and Mr. Trundle 'went partners,' and Emily Wardle and Mr. Snodgrass did the same; and even Mr. Tupman and the spinster aunt established a joint-stock company of fish and flattery. Old Mr. Wardle was in the very height of his jollity; and he was *so* funny in his management of the board, and the old ladies were *so* sharp after their winnings, that the whole table was in a perpetual roar of merriment and laughter. When the spinster aunt got 'matrimony,' the young ladies laughed afresh, and the spinster aunt seemed disposed to be pettish; till, feeling Mr. Tupman squeezing her hand under the table, *she* brightened up too. As to Mr. Snodgrass, he did nothing but whisper poetical sentiments into his partner's ear. And Mr. Winkle came out with jokes which are very well known in town, but are not all known in the country; and as everybody laughed at them very heartily, and said they were very capital, Mr. Winkle was in a state of great honour and glory.

The evening glided swiftly away, in these cheerful recrea-

tions; and when the substantial though homely supper had been despatched, and the little party formed a social circle round the fire, Mr. Pickwick thought he had never felt so happy in his life, and at no time so much disposed to enjoy, and make the most of, the passing moment.

5

How Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the Pigeon and killing the Crow, shot at the Crow and wounded the Pigeon; how the Dingley Dell Cricket Club played All-Muggleton

THE fatiguing adventures of the day operated so strongly on the drowsy tendencies of Mr. Pickwick, that in less than five minutes after he had been shown to his comfortable bedroom he fell into a sound and dreamless sleep, from which he was only awakened by the morning sun darting his bright beams reproachfully into the apartment. Mr. Pickwick was no sluggard, and he sprang like an ardent warrior from his tent-bedstead.

'Pleasant, pleasant country,' sighed the enthusiastic gentleman, as he opened his lattice window. 'Who could continue to exist where there are no cows but the cows on the chimney-pots; nothing redolent of Pan but pan-tiles; no crop but stone crop?'

The rich, sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower-garden beneath scented the air around; the deep-green meadows shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air; and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were to them a fountain of inspiration. Mr. Pickwick fell into an enchanting and delicious reverie.

'Hollo!' was the sound that roused him.

He looked to the right, but he saw nobody; his eyes

wandered to the left, and pierced the prospect; he stared into the sky, but he wasn't wanted there; and then he did what a common mind would have done at once—looked into the garden, and there saw Mr. Wardle.

'How are you?' said the good-humoured individual. 'Make haste down, and come out. I'll wait for you here.'

Mr. Pickwick needed no second invitation. Ten minutes sufficed for the completion of his toilet, and at the expiration of that time he was by the old gentleman's side.

'Hollo!' said Mr. Pickwick in his turn, seeing that his companion was armed with a gun, and that another lay ready on the grass; 'what's going forward?'

'Why, your friend and I,' replied the host, 'are going out rook-shooting before breakfast. He's a very good shot, ain't he?'

'I've heard him say he's a capital one,' replied Mr. Pickwick, 'but I never saw him aim at anything.'

'Well,' said the host, 'I wish he'd come. Joe—Joe!'

The fat boy, who under the exciting influence of the morning did not appear to be more than three parts and a fraction asleep, emerged from the house.

'Go up, and call the gentleman, and tell him he'll find me and Mr. Pickwick in the rookery. Show the gentleman the way there; d'ye hear?'

'This is the place,' said the old gentleman, pausing after a few minutes walking, in an avenue of trees. The information was unnecessary; for the incessant cawing of the unconscious rooks sufficiently indicated their whereabouts.

'Here they are,' said Mr. Pickwick; and, as he spoke, the forms of Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle appeared in the distance. The fat boy, not being quite certain which gentleman he was directed to call, had with peculiar sagacity, and to prevent the possibility of any mistake, called them all.

'Come along,' shouted the old gentleman, addressing Mr. Winkle; 'a keen hand like you ought to have been up long ago, even to such poor work as this.'

Mr. Winkle responded with a forced smile, and took up the spare gun.

The old gentleman nodded; and two ragged boys who had been marshalled to the spot under the direction of the infant Lambert, forthwith commenced climbing up two of the trees. The boy shouted, and shook a branch with a nest on it. Half a dozen young rooks in violent conversation, flew out to ask what the matter was. The old gentleman fired by way of reply. Down fell one bird, and off flew the others.

'Take him up, Joe,' said the old gentleman. 'Now, Mr. Winkle, fire away.'

Mr. Winkle advanced, and levelled his gun. Mr. Pickwick and his friends cowered involuntarily to escape damage from the heavy fall of rooks, which they felt quite certain would be occasioned by the devastating barrel of their friend. There was a solemn pause—a shout—a flapping of wings—a faint click.

'Missed fire,' said Mr. Winkle, who was very pale—probably from disappointment.

'Odd,' said the old gentleman, taking the gun. 'Never knew one of them miss fire before. Why, I don't see anything of the cap.'

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Winkle, 'I declare I forgot the cap!'

The slight omission was rectified. Mr. Pickwick crouched again. Mr. Winkle stepped forward with an air of determination and resolution; and Mr. Tupman looked out from behind a tree. The boy shouted; four birds flew out. Mr. Winkle fired. There was a scream as of an individual—not a rook—in corporal anguish. Mr. Tupman had saved the lives of innumerable unoffending birds by receiving a portion of the charge in his left arm.

To tell how Mr. Pickwick in the first transports of emotion called Mr. Winkle 'Wretch!' how Mr. Tupman lay prostrate on the ground; and how Mr. Winkle knelt horror-stricken beside him; how Mr. Tupman called distractedly upon some feminine Christian name, and then opened first one eye, and then the other, and then fell back and shut them both—all this would be as difficult to describe in detail, as it would be to depict the gradual recovering of the unfortunate individual, the binding up of his arm with pocket-handker-

chiefs, and the conveying him back by slow degrees supported by the arms of his anxious friends.

They drew near the house. The ladies were at the garden gate, waiting for their arrival and their breakfast. They approached nearer.

'Don't be frightened,' called out the old host, fearful of alarming his daughters.

'What's the matter?' screamed the ladies.

'Mr. Tupman has met with a little accident; that's all.'

The spinster aunt uttered a piercing scream, burst into an hysterical laugh, and fell backwards in the arms of her nieces.

'Throw some cold water over her,' said the old gentleman.

'No, no,' murmured the spinster aunt; 'I am better now. Bella, Emily—a surgeon! Is he wounded?—Is he dead?' Here the spinster aunt burst into fit number two, of hysterical laughter interspersed with screams.

'Do not agitate yourself, I entreat you, dearest madam,' said Mr. Tupman soothingly. 'I am very little hurt, I assure you.'

'Then you are not dead!' ejaculated the hysterical lady.
'Oh, say you are not dead!'

'Don't be a fool, Rachael,' interposed Mr. Wardle. 'What the devil's the use of his *saying* he isn't dead?'

'No, no, I am not,' said Mr. Tupman. 'I require no assistance but yours. Let me lean on your arm.' He added, in a whisper, 'Oh, Miss Rachael!' The agitated female advanced, and offered her arm. They turned into the breakfast parlour. Mr. Tracy Tupman gently pressed her hand to his lips, and sank upon the sofa.

'He sleeps,' murmured the spinster aunt. (His organs of vision had been closed nearly twenty seconds.) 'Dear—dear—Mr. Tupman!'

Mr. Tupman jumped up—'Oh, say those words again! If you would have me recover, repeat them.'

'Hush!' said the lady. 'My brother.'

Mr. Tracy Tupman resumed his former position; and Mr. Wardle, accompanied by a surgeon, entered the room.

The arm was examined, the wound dressed, and pronounced to be a very slight one; and the minds of the com-

pany having been thus satisfied, they proceeded to satiate their appetites with countenances to which an expression of cheerfulness was again restored. Mr. Pickwick alone was silent and reserved. Doubt and distrust were exhibited in his countenance. His confidence in Mr. Winkle had been shaken—greatly shaken—by the proceedings of the morning.

‘Are you a cricketer?’ inquired Mr. Wardle of the mark man.

At any other time, Mr. Winkle would have replied in the affirmative. He felt the delicacy of the situation, and modestly replied, ‘No.’

‘The grand match is played to-day, I believe,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘It is,’ replied the host. ‘Of course you would like to see it.’

It was settled that Mr. Tupman should be left at home in charge of the females; and that the remainder of the guests under the guidance of Mr. Wardle, should proceed to the spot where was to be held that trial of skill, which had roused all Muggleton from its torpor, and inoculated Dingley Dell with a fever of excitement.

As their walk, which was not above two miles long, lay through shady lanes and sequestered footpaths, Mr. Pickwick was almost inclined to regret the expedition they had used, when he found himself in the main street of the town of Muggleton.

There was an open square for the market-place; and in the centre of it, a large inn with a sign-post in front, displaying an object very common in art, but rarely met with in nature—to wit, a blue lion, with three bow legs in the air, balancing himself on the extreme point of the centre claw of his fourth foot. There were, within sight, an auctioneer’s and fire-agency office, a corn-factor’s, a linen-draper’s, a saddler’s, a distiller’s, a grocer’s, and a shoe-shop. Mr. Pickwick having paused to make these observations, hastened to rejoin his friends, who had turned out of the main street, and were already within sight of the field of battle.

The wickets were pitched, and so were a couple of marquees for the rest and refreshment of the contending parties. The game had not yet commenced. Two or three Dingley Dellers,

and All-Muggletonians, were amusing themselves with a majestic air by throwing the ball carelessly from hand to hand; and several other gentlemen were sprinkled about the tents, towards one of which Mr. Wardle conducted the party.

‘Capital game—smart sport—fine exercise—very,’ were the words which fell upon Mr. Pickwick’s ear as he entered the tent; and the first object that met his eyes was his green-coated friend of the Rochester coach, holding forth, to the no small delight and edification of a select circle of the chosen of All-Muggleton.

The stranger recognised his friends immediately; and, darting forward and seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand, dragged him to a seat with his usual impetuosity.

‘Well; and how came you here?’ said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile in which benevolence struggled with surprise.

‘Come,’ replied the stranger—‘stopping at Crown—Crown at Muggleton—met a party—flannel jackets—white trousers—anchovy sandwiches—devilled kidneys—splendid fellows—glorious.’

All-Muggleton had the first innings; and the interest became intense when Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, bat in hand, to their respective wickets. Mr. Lussey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder.

The umpires were stationed behind the wickets; the scorers were prepared to notch the runs; a breathless silence ensued. Mr. Lussey retired a few paces behind the wicket of the passive Podder, and applied the ball to his right eye for several seconds.

‘Play!’ suddenly cried the bowler. The ball flew from his hand straight and swift towards the centre stump of the wicket. The wary Dumkins was on the alert: it fell upon the tip of the bat, and bounded far away over the heads of the scouts, who had just stooped low enough to let it fly over them.

‘Run—run—another.—Now, then, throw her up—up—with her—stop there—another—no—yes—no—throw her up,

throw her up!—Such were the shouts which followed the stroke; and at the conclusion of which All-Muggleton had scored two. Nor was Podder behindhand in earning laurels wherewith to garnish himself and Muggleton. The scouts were hot and tired; the bowlers were changed and bowled till their arms ached; but Dumkins and Podder remained unconquered. When Dumkins was caught out, and Podder stumped out, All-Muggleton had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley Dellers was as blank as their faces. The advantage was too great to be recovered. In an early period of the winning game Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton.

‘Capital game—well played—some strokes admirable,’ said the stranger, as both sides crowded into the tent, at the conclusion of the game.

‘You have played it, sir?’ inquired Mr. Wardle, who had been much amused by his loquacity.

‘Played it! Think I have—thousands of times—not here—West Indies—exciting thing—hot work—very.’

Two of the principal members of the Dingley Dell club approached Mr. Pickwick, and said:

‘We are about to partake of a plain dinner at the Blue Lion, sir; we hope you and your friends will join us.’

‘Of course,’ said Mr. Wardle, ‘among our friends we include Mr. ——,’ and he looked towards the stranger.

‘Jingle,’ said that versatile gentleman, taking the hint at once. ‘Jingle—Alfred Jingle, Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere.’

‘I shall be very happy, I am sure,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘So shall I,’ said Mr. Alfred Jingle, drawing one arm through Mr. Pickwick’s, and another through Mr. Wardle’s, as he whispered confidentially in the ear of the former gentleman:

‘Devilish good dinner—cold, but capital—peeped into the room this morning—fowls and pies, and all that sort of thing—pleasant fellows these—well behaved, too—very.’

There being no further preliminaries to arrange, the company straggled into the town in little knots of twos and threes; and within a quarter of an hour were all seated in the great room of the Blue Lion Inn, Muggleton.

*Strongly illustrative of the Position, that the Course of
True Love is not a Railway*

THE quiet seclusion of Dingley Dell, the presence of so many of the gentler sex, were favourable to the growth and development of those softer feelings which nature had implanted deep in the bosom of Mr. Tracy Tupman. The young ladies were pretty, their manners winning, their dispositions unexceptionable; but there was a dignity in the air, a touch-me-not-ishness in the walk, a majesty in the eye, of the spinster aunt, to which, at their time of life, they could lay no claim, which distinguished her from any female on whom Mr. Tupman had ever gazed.

It was evening. Isabella and Emily had strolled out with Mr. Trundle; the deaf old lady had fallen asleep in her chair; the snoring of the fat boy penetrated in a low and monotonous sound from the distant kitchen; and there sat the interesting pair, uncared for by all, caring for none, and dreaming only of themselves; there they sat, in short, like a pair of carefully folded kid gloves—bound up in each other.

‘I have forgotten my flowers,’ said the spinster aunt.

‘Water them now,’ said Mr. Tupman, in accents of persuasion.

‘You will take cold in the evening air,’ urged the spinster aunt affectionately.

‘No, no,’ said Mr. Tupman, rising; ‘it will do me good. Let me accompany you.’

The lady paused to adjust the sling in which the left arm of the youth was placed, and taking his right arm led him to the garden.

There was a bower at the farther end, with honeysuckle, jessamine, and creeping plants—one of those sweet retreats

which humane men erect for the accommodation of spiders.

The spinster aunt took up a large watering-pot which lay in one corner, and was about to leave the arbour. Mr. Tupman detained her, and drew her to a seat beside him.

‘Miss Wardle!’ said he.

The spinster aunt trembled, till some pebbles which had accidentally found their way into the large watering-pot shook like an infant’s rattle.

‘Miss Wardle,’ said Mr. Tupman, ‘you are an angel.’

‘Mr. Tupman!’ exclaimed Rachael, blushing as red as the watering-pot itself.

‘Nay,’ said the eloquent Pickwickian—‘I know it but too well.’

The lady turned aside her head. ‘Men are such deceivers,’ she softly whispered.

‘They are, they are,’ ejaculated Mr. Tupman; ‘but not all men. There lives at least one being who can never change.’ And ere the lady was aware of his intention, Mr. Tupman had sunk upon his knees at her feet.

‘Mr. Tupman, rise,’ said Rachael.

‘Never!’ was the valorous reply. ‘Oh, Rachael!’ He seized her passive hand, and the watering-pot fell to the ground as he pressed it to his lips. ‘Oh, Rachael! say you love me.’

‘Mr. Tupman,’ said the spinster aunt, with averted head, ‘I can hardly speak the words; but—but—you are not wholly indifferent to me.’

Mr. Tupman no sooner heard this avowal, than he jumped up, and, throwing his arm round the neck of the spinster aunt, imprinted upon her lips numerous kisses, which after a due show of struggling and resistance, she received so passively, that there is no telling how many more Mr. Tupman might have bestowed, if the lady had not given a very unaffected start, and exclaimed in an affrighted tone:

‘Mr. Tupman, we are observed!—we are discovered!’

Mr. Tupman looked round. There was the fat boy, perfectly motionless, with his large circular eyes staring into the arbour, but without the slightest expression on his face; and the longer Mr. Tupman observed the utter vacancy of the



'Mr. Tupman, we are observed!—we are discovered!'

fat boy's countenance, the more convinced he became that he either did not know, or did not understand, anything that had been going forward. Under this impression, he said with great firmness:

"What do you want here, sir?"

'Supper's ready, sir,' was the prompt reply.

'Have you just come here, sir?' inquired Mr. Tupman, with a piercing look.

'Just,' replied the fat boy.

Mr. Tupman took the arm of the spinster aunt, and walked towards the house; the fat boy followed behind.

'He knows nothing of what has happened,' he whispered. 'He must have been fast asleep.'

'I have not the least doubt of it,' replied the spinster aunt. They both laughed heartily.

Mr. Tupman was wrong. The fat boy, for once, had not been fast asleep. He was awake—wide awake—to what had been going forward.

The supper passed off without any attempt at a general conversation. Eleven—twelve—one o'clock had struck, and the gentlemen had not arrived. Consternation sat on every face. Could they have been waylaid and robbed? Hark! there they were. What could have made them so late? A strange voice, too! They rushed into the kitchen, whither the truants had repaired, and at once obtained rather more than a glimmering of the real state of the case.

Mr. Pickwick, with his hands in his pockets and his hat cocked completely over his left eye, was leaning against the dresser; old Mr. Wardle, with a highly-inflamed countenance, was grasping the hand of a strange gentleman muttering protestations of eternal friendship; Mr. Winkle, supporting himself by the eight-day clock, was feebly invoking destruction upon the head of any member of the family who should suggest the propriety of his retiring for the night; and Mr. Snodgrass had sunk into a chair, with an expression of the most abject and hopeless misery.

'Is anything the matter?' inquired the three ladies.

'Nothin' the matter,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'We—we're—all right.—I say, Wardle, we're all right, ain't we?'

'I should think so,' replied the jolly host. 'My dears, here's my friend Mr. Jingle—Mr. Pickwick's friend, Mr. Jingle, come 'pon—little visit.'

'Is anything the matter with Mr. Snodgrass, sir?' inquired Emily, with great anxiety.

'Nothing the matter, ma'am,' replied the stranger. 'Cricket dinner—glorious party—capital songs—old port—claret—good—very good—wine, ma'am—wine.'

'Let's—have—'nother—bottle,' cried Mr. Winkle, commencing in a very loud key, and ending in a very faint one. His head dropped upon his breast; and he fell fast asleep; in which condition he was borne to his apartment by two young giants under the personal superintendence of the fat boy, to whose protecting care Mr. Snodgrass shortly afterwards confided his own person. Mr. Pickwick accepted the proffered arm of Mr. Tupman and quietly disappeared, smiling more than ever; and Mr. Wardle consigned to Mr. Trundle the honour of conveying him upstairs.

'What a shocking scene!' said the spinster aunt.

'Dis—gusting!' ejaculated both the young ladies.

'Dreadful—dreadful!' said Jingle, looking very grave: he was about a bottle and a half ahead of any of his companions.

'What a nice man!' whispered the spinster aunt to Mr. Tupman.

'Good-looking, too!' whispered Emily Wardle.

Mr. Tupman was troubled. The succeeding half-hour's conversation was not of a nature to calm his perturbed spirit. The new visitor was very talkative, and the number of his anecdotes was only to be exceeded by the extent of his politeness. Mr. Tupman felt that as Jingle's popularity increased, he (Tupman) retired further into the shade.

The indefatigable stranger rose betimes next morning, and, although his companions remained in bed overpowered with the dissipation of the previous night, exerted himself most successfully to promote the hilarity of the breakfast-table.

It was the old lady's habit on the fine summer mornings to walk leisurely to the arbour, where the fat boy would leave her to enjoy the fresh air for the space of half an hour. She was not a little surprised on this particular morning to see

the fat boy, instead of leaving the arbour, walk a few paces out of it, look carefully round him in every direction, and return towards her with great stealth and an air of the most profound mystery.

The old lady was timorous—most old ladies are—and her first impression was that the bloated lad was about to do her some grievous bodily harm with the view of possessing himself of her loose coin. She, therefore, watched his motions with feelings of intense horror which were in no degree diminished by his coming close up to her, and shouting in her ear in an agitated, and as it seemed to her, a threatening tone:

‘Missus!’

Now it so happened that Mr. Jingle was walking in the garden close to the arbour at that moment. He too heard the shouts of ‘Missus,’ and stopped to hear more.

‘Well, Joe,’ said the trembling old lady. ‘I’m sure I have been a good mistress to you, Joe. You have never had too much to do; and you have always had enough to eat.’

This last was an appeal to the fat boy’s most sensitive feelings. He seemed touched, as he replied emphatically:

‘I knows I has.’

‘Then what can you want to do now?’ said the old lady, gaining courage.

‘I wants to make your flesh creep,’ replied the boy. ‘What do you think I see in this very arbour last night?’

‘Bless us! What?’ exclaimed the old lady.

‘The strange gentleman—him as had his arm hurt—a-kissin’ and huggin’—’

‘Who, Joe? None of the servants, I hope.’

The fat boy looked cautiously round, and having concluded his survey, shouted in the old lady’s ear:

‘Miss Rachael.’

‘And she suffered him!’ exclaimed the old lady.

A grin stole over the fat boy’s features as he said:

‘I see her a-kissin’ of him agin.’

Mr. Jingle, from his place of concealment, listened attentively. Fragments of angry sentences such as, ‘Without my permission!’—‘At her time of life’—‘Might have waited till I was dead,’ and so forth, reached his ears.

It was a remarkable coincidence perhaps, but it was nevertheless a fact, that Mr. Jingle within five minutes of his arrival at Manor Farm on the preceding night, had inwardly resolved to lay siege to the heart of the spinster aunt, without delay. He had observation enough to see that his off-hand manner was by no means disagreeable to the fair object of his attack; and he had more than a strong suspicion that she possessed that most desirable of all requisites, a small independence. The imperative necessity of ousting his rival by some means or other, flashed quickly upon him. He crept from his place of concealment, and, under cover of the shrubs before mentioned, approached the house.

The breakfast-parlour door was partially open. He peeped in. The spinster aunt was knitting. He coughed; she looked up and smiled. Hesitation formed no part of Mr. Alfred Jingle's character. He laid his finger on his lips mysteriously, walked in, and closed the door.

'Miss Wardle,' said Mr. Jingle, with affected earnestness, 'forgive intrusion—short acquaintance—no time for ceremony—all discovered.'

'Sir!' said the spinster aunt, rather astonished by the unexpected apparition and somewhat doubtful of Mr. Jingle's sanity.

'Hush!' said Mr. Jingle, in a stage-whisper—'large boy—dumpling face—round eyes—rascal!'

'I presume you allude to Joseph, sir?' said the lady, making an effort to appear composed.

'Yes, ma'am—damn that Joe!—treacherous dog, Joe—told the old lady—old lady furious—wild—raving—arbour—Tupman—kissing and hugging—'

'Mr. Jingle,' said the spinster aunt, 'if you come here, sir, to insult me—'

'Not at all—by no means,' replied the unabashed Mr. Jingle—'overheard the tale—came to warn you of your danger—tender my services—prevent the hubbub.'

'What shall I do?' said the poor spinster, bursting into tears. 'My brother will be furious. Oh, Mr. Jingle, what can I say!'

'Say he dreamt it,' replied Mr. Jingle coolly. 'Nothing

more easy—blackguard boy—lovely woman—fat boy horse-whipped—you believed.'

He sighed deeply, fixed his eyes on the spinster aunt's face for a couple of minutes, started melodramatically, and suddenly withdrew them.

'You seem unhappy, Mr. Jingle,' said the lady, in a plaintive voice. 'May I show my gratitude for your kind interference, by inquiring into the cause, with a view, if possible, to its removal?'

'Ha!' exclaimed Mr. Jingle, with another start—'removal! remove *my* unhappiness, and your love bestowed upon a man who is insensible to the blessing—but no; he is my friend; I will not expose his vices. Miss Wardle—farewell!'

'Stay, Mr. Jingle!' said the spinster aunt emphatically. 'You have made an allusion to Mr. Tupman—explain it.'

Mr. Jingle appeared to be struggling with various conflicting emotions for a few seconds, and then said in a low deep voice:

'Tupman only wants your money.'

'The wretch!' exclaimed the spinster, with energetic indignation. (Mr. Jingle's doubts were resolved. She *had* money.)

'More than that,' said Jingle—'loves another.'

'Another!' ejaculated the spinster. 'Who?'

'Short girl—black eyes—niece Emily.'

Now, if there was one individual in the whole world, of whom the spinster aunt entertained a mortal and deep-rooted jealousy, it was this identical niece. Biting her thin lips, and bridling up, she said:

'It can't be. I won't believe it.'

'Watch 'em,' said Jingle.

'I will,' said the aunt.

'He'll flatter her.'

'Let him.'

'And he'll cut you.'

'Cut *me*!' screamed the spinster aunt.

'You will convince yourself?' said Jingle.

'I will.'

'You'll show your spirit?'

'I will.'

‘You’ll take somebody else?’

‘Yes.’

Mr. Jingle fell on his knees, remained thereupon for five minutes thereafter; and rose the accepted lover of the spinster aunt—conditionally upon Mr. Tupman’s perjury being made clear and manifest.

The burden of proof lay with Mr. Alfred Jingle; and he produced his evidence that very day at dinner. The spinster aunt could hardly believe her eyes. Mr. Tracy Tupman was established at Emily’s side, ogling, whispering, and smiling, in opposition to Mr. Snodgrass. Not a word, not a look, not a glance, did he bestow upon his heart’s pride of the evening before.

‘Damn that boy!’ thought old Mr. Wardle to himself.—He had heard the story from his mother. ‘It’s all imagination.’

‘Traitor!’ thought the spinster aunt. ‘Ugh! how I hate the wretch!’

The time was evening; the scene the garden. There were two figures walking in a side path; one was rather short and stout; the other tall and slim. They were Mr. Tupman and Mr. Jingle. The stout figure commenced the dialogue.

‘How did I do it?’ he inquired.

‘Splendid—capital—couldn’t act better myself.’

‘Does Rachael still wish it?’

‘Of course—she don’t like it—but must be done—avert suspicion—only a few days more—when old folks blinded—crown your happiness.’

‘My dear fellow,’ said the unsuspecting Mr. Tupman, ‘carry my best love—say how hard I find it to dissemble—but add how sensible I am of the necessity of the suggestion she made to me, through you, this morning.’

‘I will. Anything more?’

‘Oh, my friend!’ said poor Mr. Tupman, grasping the hand of his companion, ‘receive my warmest thanks for your disinterested kindness. Can I ever repay you?’

‘Don’t talk of it,’ replied Mr. Jingle. ‘By the bye—can’t spare ten pounds, can you?—very particular purpose—pay you in three days.’

‘I dare say I can,’ replied Mr. Tupman, in the fullness of his heart. ‘Three days, you say?’

Mr. Tupman counted the money into his companion's hand, and he dropped it piece by piece into his pocket, as they walked towards the house.

'Be careful,' said Mr. Jingle—'not a look.'

'Not a wink,' said Mr. Tupman. 'I'll take care.'

'And I'll take care,' said Mr. Jingle internally; and they entered the house.

The scene of that afternoon was repeated that evening, and on the three afternoons and evenings next ensuing. On the fourth, the host was in high spirits, for he had satisfied himself that there was no ground for the charge against Mr. Tupman.

7

A Discovery and a Chase

THE supper was ready laid, and everything betokened the approach of the most convivial period in the whole four-and-twenty hours.

'Where's Rachael?' said Mr. Wardle.

'Ay, and Jingle?' added Mr. Pickwick.

The bell was rung, and the fat boy appeared.

'Where's Miss Rachael?' He couldn't say.

'Where's Mr. Jingle, then?' He didn't know.

Everybody looked surprised. It was late—past eleven o'clock.

'Never mind,' said Wardle, after a short pause. 'They'll turn up presently, I dare say. I never wait supper for anybody.'

'Excellent rule, that,' said Mr. Pickwick—'admirable.'

There was a gigantic round of cold beef on the table, and Mr. Pickwick was supplied with a plentiful portion of it. He had raised his fork to his lips, and was on the very point

of opening his mouth for the reception of a piece of beef, when the hum of many voices suddenly arose in the kitchen.

Heavy footsteps were heard in the passage; the parlour door was suddenly burst open; and the man who had cleaned Mr. Pickwick's boots on his first arrival, rushed into the room, followed by the fat boy and all the domestics.

'What the devil's the meaning of this?' exclaimed the host.

The man gasped for breath, and faintly ejaculated:

'They ha' gone, mas'r!—gone right clean off, sir!'

'Who's gone?' said Mr. Wardle fiercely.

'Mus'r Jingle and Miss Rachael, in a po'-chay, from Blue Lion, Muggleton. I was there; but I couldn't stop 'em; so I run off to tell'ee.'

'I paid his expenses!' said Mr. Tupman, jumping up frantically. 'He's got ten pounds of mine!—stop him!—he's swindled me!—I won't bear it!—I'll have justice, Pickwick!—I won't stand it!'

'Lord preserve us!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick. 'He's gone mad! What shall we do?'

'Do!' said the stout old host, who regarded only the last words of the sentence. 'Put the horse in the gig! I'll get a chaise at the Lion, and follow 'em instantly.'

'Don't let him go alone!' screamed the females. 'He'll kill somebody!'

'I'll go with him,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'You're a good fellow, Pickwick,' said the host, grasping his hand. 'Emma, give Mr. Pickwick a shawl to tie round his neck—make haste. Look after your grandmother, girls; she has fainted away. Now then, are you ready?'

Mr. Pickwick's mouth and chin having been hastily enveloped in a large shawl, his hat having been put on his head, and his greatcoat thrown over his arm, he replied in the affirmative.

They jumped into the gig. 'Give her her head, Tom,' cried the host; and away they went, down the narrow lanes; jolting in and out of the cart-ruts, and bumping up against the hedges on either side, as if they would go to pieces every moment.

'How much are they ahead?' shouted Wardle, as they drove

up to the door of the Blue Lion, round wh
had collected, late as it was.

‘Not above three-quarters of an hour,’
reply.

‘Chaise-and-four directly!—out with ‘em
afterwards.’

Away ran the hostlers and the boys. T
mered, as the men ran to and fro; the hors
on the uneven paving of the yard; the cha
was drawn out of the coach-house; and a
bustle.

‘Now then!—is that chaise coming out
Wardle.

Out came the chaise—in went the horses;
boys—in got the travellers.

‘Mind—the seven-mile stage in less than
shouted Wardle.

The boys applied whip and spur, the wait
hostlers cheered, and away they went, fast as

‘Pretty situation,’ thought Mr. Pickwick
had a moment’s time for reflection. ‘Pretty
general chairman of the Pickwick Club,
strange horses—fifteen miles an hour—and to
night!’

The chaise proceeded, without any slack
towards the conclusion of the stage. The moon
on the wane; large tiers of dark, heavy clouds
been gradually overspreading the sky for some
now formed one black mass overhead; and
rain which pattered every now and then again
of the chaise, seemed to warn the travellers
approach of a stormy night. Mr. Pickwick
closer about him, coiled himself more snugly
corner of the chaise, and fell into a sound sleep.
he was only awakened by the stopping of the
sound of the hostler’s bell, and a loud cry
directly!’

But here a delay occurred. The boys were
such mysterious soundness, that it took five

to wake them. The hostler had somehow or other mislaid the key of the stable, and even when that was found, two sleepy helpers put the wrong harness on the wrong horses, and the whole process of harnessing had to be gone through afresh. But old Wardle laid about him with such hearty good-will, cuffing this man, and pushing that; strapping a buckle here, and taking in a link there, that the chaise was ready in a much shorter time than could reasonably have been expected, under so many difficulties.

They resumed their journey; and certainly the prospect before them was by no means encouraging. The stage was fifteen miles long, the night was dark, the wind high, and the rain pouring in torrents. It was impossible to make any great way against such obstacles united; it was hard upon one o'clock already; and nearly two hours were consumed in getting to the end of the stage. Here, however, an object presented itself, which rekindled their hopes, and reanimated their dropping spirits.

‘When did this chaise come in?’ cried old Wardle, leaping out of his own vehicle, and pointing to one covered with wet mud, which was standing in the yard.

‘Not a quarter of an hour ago, sir,’ replied the hostler.

‘Lady and gentleman?’ inquired Wardle, almost breathless with impatience. ‘Tall gentleman—dress-coat—long legs—thin body?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Elderly lady—thin face—rather skinny—eh?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘By heavens, it’s the couple, Pickwick!’

‘Would have been here before,’ said the hostler, ‘but they broke a trace.’

‘Tis them!’ said Wardle, ‘it is, by Jove! Chaise-and-four instantly! We shall catch them yet before they reach the next stage. A guinea a-piece, boys—be alive there!’

And with such admonitions as these, the old gentleman ran up and down the yard, and hustled to and fro, in a state of excitement.

‘Jump in—jump in!’ cried old Wardle, climbing into the chaise, pulling up the steps, and slamming the door after

him. 'Come along! Make haste!' And before Mr. Pickwick knew precisely what he was about, he felt himself forced in at the other door, by one pull from the old gentleman and one push from the hostler; and off they were again.

'Ah! we *are* moving now,' said the old gentleman exultingly. They were indeed, as was sufficiently testified to Mr. Pickwick, by his constant collision either with the hard wood-work of the chaise, or the body of his companion.

They had travelled in this way about three miles, when Mr. Wardle, who had been looking out of the window for two or three minutes, suddenly drew in his face, covered with splashes, and exclaimed in breathless eagerness:

'Here they are!'

Mr. Pickwick thrust his head out of his window. Yes: there was a chaise-and-four, a short distance before them, dashing along at full gallop.

'Go on, go on,' almost shrieked the old gentleman. 'Two guineas a-piece, boys—don't let 'em gain on us—keep it up—keep it up.'

The countenance of Mr. Jingle, completely coated with mud thrown up by the wheels, was plainly discernible at the window of his chaise; and the motion of his arm, which was waving violently towards the postillions, denoted that he was encouraging them to increased exertion.

Fields, trees, and hedges, seemed to rush past them with the velocity of a whirlwind, so rapid was the pace at which they tore along. They were close by the side of the first chaise. Jingle's voice could be plainly heard, even above the din of the wheels, urging on the boys. Old Mr. Wardle roared out scoundrels and villains by the dozen; but Mr. Jingle only answered with a contemptuous smile, and replied to his menaces by a shout of triumph, as his horses, answering the increased application of whip and spur, broke into a faster gallop, and left the pursuers behind.

Mr. Pickwick had just drawn in his head, and Mr. Wardle, exhausted with shouting, had done the same, when a tremendous jolt threw them forward against the front of the vehicle. There was a sudden bump—a loud crash—away rolled a wheel, and over went the chaise.



here was a chaise-and-four, a short distance before them, dashing along at full gallop.

After a very few seconds of bewilderment and confusion, in which nothing but the plunging of horses, and breaking of glass could be made out, Mr. Pickwick felt himself violently pulled out from among the ruins of the chaise; and as soon as he had gained his feet, the full disaster of the case met his view.

Old Mr. Wardle without a hat, and his clothes torn in several places, stood by his side, and the fragments of the chaise lay scattered at their feet. The post-boys, who had succeeded in cutting the traces, were standing, disfigured with mud and disordered by hard riding, by the horses' heads. About a hundred yards in advance was the other chaise, which had pulled up on hearing the crash. The day was just breaking, and the whole scene was rendered perfectly visible by the gray light of the morning.

'Hollo!' shouted the shameless Jingle, 'anybody damaged?—elderly gentlemen—no light weights—dangerous work—very.'

'You're a rascal,' roared Wardle.

'Ha! ha!' replied Jingle; and then he added, with a knowing wink, and a jerk of the thumb towards the interior of the chaise—'I say—she's very well—desires her compliments—begs you won't trouble yourself—love to *Tuppy*—won't you get up behind?—drive on, boys.'

The postillions resumed their proper attitudes, and away rattled the chaise, Mr. Jingle fluttering in derision a white handkerchief from the coach window.

'How far is it to the next stage?' inquired Mr. Wardle, of one of the boys.

'Rayther better nor six mile, sir.'

'Can't be helped,' said Wardle, 'we must walk it, Pickwick.'

'No help for it,' replied that truly great man.

So sending forward one of the boys on horseback, to procure a fresh chaise and horse, and leaving the other behind to take care of the broken one, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle set manfully forward on the walk, first tying their shawls round their necks, and slouching down their hats to escape as much as possible from the deluge of rain, which after a slight cessation had again begun to pour heavily down.

*Clearing up all Doubts (if any existed) of the
Disinterestedness of Mr. A. Jingle's Character*

THERE are in London several old inns, once the headquarters of celebrated coaches, but which have now degenerated into little more than the abiding and booking-places of country wagons.

It was in the yard of one of these inns—of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart—that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse, striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue gloss buttons; drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head.

A double tier of bedroom galleries, with old clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. A loud ringing of one of the bells was followed by the appearance of a smart chambermaid in the upper sleeping gallery, who, after tapping at one of the doors, and receiving a request from within, called over the balustrades:

‘Sam!’

‘Hollo,’ replied the man with the white hat.

‘Number twenty-two wants his boots.’

‘Well, you *are* a nice young ’ooman for a musical party, you are,’ said the boot-cleaner. ‘Who’s number twenty-two, that’s to put all the others out? No, no; reg’lar rotation, as Jack Ketch said, ven he tied the men up.’

There was another loud ring; and the bustling old land-

lady of the White Hart made her appearance in the opposite gallery.

‘Sam,’ cried the landlady, ‘clean these shoes for number seventeen directly, and take ‘em to private sitting-room, number five, first floor.’

The landlady flung a pair of lady’s shoes into the yard, and hustled away.

‘She came in early this morning,’ cried the girl, who was still leaning over the railing of the gallery, ‘with a gentleman in a hackney-coach, and it’s him as wants his boots, and you’d better do ‘em, that’s all about it.’

‘Vy didn’t you say so before,’ said Sam, with great indignation, singling out the boots in question from the heap before him. ‘For all I know’d he vas one o’ the regular threepennies. Private room! and a lady too! If he’s anything of a gen’l’m’n, he’s vurth a shillin’ a day, let alone the arrands.’

Stimulated by this inspiring reflection, Mr. Samuel brushed away with such hearty good-will, that in a few minutes the boots and shoes had arrived at the door of number five.

‘Come in,’ said a man’s voice, in reply to Sam’s rap at the door.

Sam made his best bow, and stepped into the presence of a lady and gentleman seated at breakfast.

‘Boots,’ said the gentleman. ‘Do you know—what’s a-name—Doctors’ Commons?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Where is it?’

‘Paul’s Churchyard, sir; low archway on the carriage side, bookseller’s at one corner, hotel on the other, and two porters in the middle as touts for licenses.’

‘Touts for licenses!’ said the gentleman. ‘What do they do?’

‘Do! *You, sir!* That ain’t the worst on it, neither. They puts things into old gen’l’m’n’s heads as they never dreamed of. My father, sir, wos a coachman. His missus dies, and leaves him four hundred pound. Down he goes to the Commons, to see the lawyer and draw the blunt—very smart—quite the gen’l’m’n. Goes through the archvay, thinking how he should inwest the money—up comes the touter, touches his hat—

“License, sir, license?”—“What license?” says my father.—“Marriage license,” says the touter.—“Dash my veskit,” says my father, “I never thought o’ that. Damme, I’m too old, b’sides, I’m a many sizes too large.”—“Not a bit on it sir” says the touter.—“We married a gen’lm’n twice your size last Monday. You’re a babby to him—this way, sir—this way!”—and sure enough my father walks arter him, like a tame monkey behind a horgan, into a little back office. “What’s your name, sir,” says the lawyer.—“Tony Weller,” says my father.—“Parish?” says the lawyer. “Belle Savage,” says my father; for he stopped there wen he drove up, and he know’d nothing about parishes, *he* didn’t.—“And what’s the lady’s name?” says the lawyer. My father was struck all of a heap. “Blessed if I know,” says he.—“Can’t I put that in arterwards?”—“Impossible!” says the lawyer.—“Wery well,” says my father, after he’d thought a moment, “put down Mrs. Clarke.”—“What Clarke?” says the lawyer, dipping his pen in the ink.—“Susan Clarke, Markis o’ Granby, Dorking,” says my father; “she’ll have me, if I ask, I des-say—I never said nothing to her, but she’ll have me, I know.” The license was made out, and she *did* have him, and what’s more she’s got him now; and *I* never had any of the four hundred pound, worse luck. Beg your pardon, sir,’ said Sam, when he had concluded, ‘but wen I gets on this here grievance, I runs on like a new barrow with the wheel greased.’ Having said which, Sam left the room.

‘Half past nine—just the time—off at once,’ said the gentleman, whom we need hardly introduce as Mr. Jingle.

‘Time—for what?’ said the spinster aunt coquettishly.

‘License, dearest of angels—give notice at the church—call you mine, to-morrow’—said Mr. Jingle, and he squeezed the spinster aunt’s hand.

‘I am so terrified, lest my brother should discover us!’

‘Discover—nonsense—too much shaken by the break-down—besides—extreme caution—came to the Borough—last place in the world that he’d look in—ha—ha!’

‘Don’t be long,’ said the spinster affectionately.

‘Long away from *you*?—Cruel charmer.’

‘Dear man!’ said the spinster, as the door closed after him.

'Rum old girl,' said Mr. Jingle, as he walked down the passage.

He reached the vicar-general's office in safety and having procured a highly flattering address on parchment, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, to his 'trusty and well-beloved Alfred Jingle and Rachael Wardle, greeting,' he carefully deposited the mystic document in his pocket, and retraced his steps in triumph to the Borough.

He was yet on his way to the White Hart, when two plump gentlemen and one thin one entered the yard, and looked round in search of some authorised person of whom they could make a few inquiries. Mr. Samuel Weller happened to be at that moment engaged in burnishing a pair of painted tops; and to him the thin gentleman straightway advanced.

'My friend,' said the thin gentleman, with a conciliatory hem—'have you got many people stopping here now? Pretty busy. Eh?'

Sam stole a look at the inquirer. He was a little high-dried man, with a dark squeezed-up face, and small, restless, black eyes. He was dressed all in black, with boots as shiny as his eyes, a low white neckcloth, and a clean shirt with a frill to it.

'Oh, werry well, sir,' replied Sam, 'we shan't be bankrupts, and we shan't make our fort'ns. We eats our biled mutton without capers, and don't care for horse-radish ven ve can get beef.'

One of the plump gentlemen, who in addition to a benevolent countenance, possessed a pair of spectacles, and a pair of black gaiters, said:

'The fact of the matter is that my friend here (pointing to the other plump gentleman) will give you half a guinea, if you'll answer one or two—'

'Now, my dear sir—my dear sir,' said the little man, 'if you place the matter in the hands of a professional man, you must in no way interfere in the progress of the business. We want to know who you've got in this house at present?'

'Who there is in the house!' said Sam. 'There's a wooden leg in number six; there's a pair of Hessians in thirteen;

there's two pair of halves in the commercial; there's these here painted tops in the snuggery inside the bar; and five more tops in the coffee-room.'

'Nothing more?' said the little man.

'Stop a bit,' replied Sam, suddenly recollecting himself. 'Yes; there's a pair of Wellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair o' lady's shoes, in number five.'

'What sort of shoes?' hastily inquired Wardle.

'Country make,' replied Sam.

'Any maker's name?'

'Brown.'

'Where of?'

'Muggleton.'

'It is them,' exclaimed Wardle. 'By heavens, we've found them.'

'Hush!' said Sam. 'The Wellingtons has gone to Doctors' Commons.'

'No,' said the little man.

'Yes, for a license.'

'We're in time,' exclaimed Wardle. 'Show us the room; not a moment is to be lost.'

'Pray, my dear sir—pray,' said the little man; 'caution, caution.' He drew from his pocket a red silk purse, and looked very hard at Sam as he drew out a sovereign.

Sam grinned expressively.

'Show us into the room at once, without announcing us,' said the little man, 'and it's yours.'

Sam threw the painted tops into a corner, and led the way through a dark passage, and up a wide staircase. He paused at the end of a second passage.

Old Wardle opened the door; and the whole three walked into the room just as Mr. Jingle, who had that moment returned, had produced the license to the spinster aunt.

The spinster uttered a loud shriek, and throwing herself into a chair, covered her face with her hands. The unwelcome visitors advanced into the middle of the room.

'You—you are a nice rascal, aren't you?' exclaimed Wardle, breathless with passion. 'How dare you drag my sister from my house?'

'Ay—ay,' said the little gentleman. 'How dare you, sir?—eh, sir?"

'Who the devil are you?' inquired Mr. Jingle, in so fierce a tone, that the little gentleman involuntarily fell back a step or two.

'Who is he, you scoundrel,' interposed Wardle. 'He's my lawyer, Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn. Perker, I'll have this fellow prosecuted—indicted—I'll—I'll—I'll ruin him. And you,' continued Mr. Wardle, turning abruptly round to his sister—'you, Rachael, at a time of life when you ought to know better, what do *you* mean by running away with a vagabond, disgracing your family, and making yourself miserable? Get on your bonnet and come back.'

'Do nothing of the kind,' said Jingle. 'Leave the room, sir—no business here—lady's free to act as she pleases—more than one-and-twenty.'

'More than one-and-twenty!' ejaculated Wardle contemptuously. 'You're fifty if you're an hour.'

Here the spinster aunt uttered a loud shriek, and became senseless.

'A glass of water,' said the humane Mr. Pickwick, summoning the landlady.

'A *glass* of water!' said the passionate Wardle. 'Bring a bucket, and throw it all over her; it'll do her good, and she richly deserves it.'

'Ugh, you brute!' ejaculated the kind-hearted landlady.

'I *won't* be taken away,' murmured the spinster aunt. (Here there was a frightful relapse.)

'My dear sir,' said the little man, in a low tone, taking Mr. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick apart, 'it's a distressing case—very; I never knew one more so; but really, my dear sir, really we have no power to control this lady actions. I warned you before we came, my dear sir, that there was nothing to look to but a compromise. We must be content to suffer some pecuniary loss.'

'I'll suffer any, rather than submit to this disgrace, and let her, fool as she is, be made miserable for life,' said Wardle.

'I rather think it can be done,' said the bustling little man.

'Mr. Jingle, will you step with us into the next room for a moment?'

Mr. Jingle assented, and the quartette walked into an empty apartment.

'Now, sir,' said the little man, as he carefully closed the door, 'step this way, sir, for a moment—into this window, sir, where we can be alone. Now, my dear sir, between you and I, we know very well, my dear sir, that you have run off with this lady for the sake of her money. Don't frown, sir, don't frown; I say, between you and I, *we* know it. Now, the fact is, that beyond a few hundreds, the lady has little or nothing till the death of her mother—fine old lady, my dear sir.'

'Old,' said Mr. Jingle briefly but emphatically.

'Why, yes,' said the attorney, with a slight cough. 'She comes of an old family though, my dear sir; old in every sense of the word. The founder of that family came into Kent when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain—only one member of it, since, who hasn't lived to eighty-five, and *he* was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is not seventy-three now, my dear sir.' The little man paused, and took a pinch of snuff.

'Well,' said Mr. Jingle.

'Don't you think—now, my dear sir, I put it to you *don't* you think—that fifty pounds and liberty would be better than Miss Wardle and expectation?'

'Won't do—not half enough!' said Mr. Jingle, rising.

'Nay, nay, my dear sir,' remonstrated the little attorney, seizing him by the button. 'Good round sum—a man like you could treble it in no time—great deal to be done with fifty pounds, my dear sir.'

'More to be done with a hundred and fifty,' replied Mr. Jingle coolly.

'Well, my dear sir, we won't waste time in splitting straws,' resumed the little man, 'say—say—seventy.'

'Won't do,' said Mr. Jingle.

'Well, my dear sir, well,' said the little man, still detaining him: 'just tell me what *will* do.'

'Expensive affair,' said Mr. Jingle. 'Money out of pocket—

posting, nine pounds; license, three—that's twelve—compensation, a hundred—hundred and twelve—breach of honour—and loss of the lady—'

'Yes, my dear sir, yes,' said the little man with a knowing look, 'never mind the last two items. That's a hundred and twelve—say a hundred. Come, I'll write you a cheque.' And down he sat at the table for that purpose.

'I'll make it payable the day after to-morrow,' said the little man, with a look toward Mr. Wardle; 'and we can get the lady away, meanwhile.' Mr. Wardle sullenly nodded assent.

'A hundred,' said the little man.

'And twenty,' said Mr. Jingle.

'Give it him,' interposed Mr. Wardle, 'and let him go.'

The cheque was written by the little gentleman, and pocketed by Mr. Jingle.

'Now, leave this house instantly!' said Wardle, starting up. 'And mind that nothing should have induced me to make this compromise—not even a regard for my family—if I had not known that the moment you got any money in that pocket of yours, you'd go to the devil faster, if possible, than you would without it—'

'My dear sir,' urged the little man.

'Be quiet, Peiker,' resumed Wardle. 'Leave the room, sir.'

'Off directly,' said the unabashed Jingle. 'Bye-bye, Pickwick. Here,' continued the hardened traitor, tossing the license at Mr. Pickwick's feet; 'get the name altered—take home the lady—do for Tuppy.'

Mr. Pickwick was a philosopher, but philosophers are only men in armour, after all. In the frenzy of his rage, he hurled the inkstand madly forward, and followed it up himself. But Mr. Jingle had disappeared, and he found himself caught in the arms of Sam.

'Hollo,' said that eccentric functionary, 'furniter's cheap where you come from, sir. Hold still, sir; wot's the use o' runnin' arter a man as has made his lucky, and got to t' other end of the Borough by this time?'

Mr. Pickwick's mind, like those of all truly great men, was open to conviction. He was a quick and powerful reasoner;

and a moment's reflection sufficed to remind him of the impotency of his rage. It subsided as quickly as it had been roused.

Slowly and sadly did the two friends and the deserted lady return next day in the Muggleton heavy coach. Dimly and darkly had the sombre shadows of a summer's night fallen upon all around, when they again reached Dingley Dell, and stood within the entrance to Manor Farm.

9

Involving another Journey and an Antiquarian Discovery

A NIGHT of quiet and repose in the profound silence of Dingley Dell, and an hour's breathing of its fresh and fragrant air on the ensuing morning, completely recovered Mr. Pickwick from the effects of his late fatigue of body and anxiety of mind. That illustrious man had been separated from his friends and followers for two whole days; and it was with pleasure and delight that he stepped forward to greet Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, as he encountered those gentlemen on his return from his early walk.

'And how,' said Mr. Pickwick, when he had grasped his followers by the hand, and exchanged warm salutations of welcome—'how is Tupman?'

Mr. Winkle, to whom the question was more peculiarly addressed, made no reply. He turned away his head, and appeared absorbed in melancholy reflection.

'Winkle—Snodgrass,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'what does this mean? Where is our friend? What has happened?'

'He is gone,' said Mr. Snodgrass.

'Gone!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick. 'Gone! Where!'

'We can only guess, from that communication,' replied

Mr. Snodgrass, taking a letter from his pocket, and placing it in his friend's hand.

Mr. Pickwick opened the epistle. It was in his friend's handwriting, and these were its contents:

'MY DEAR PICKWICK,—You, my dear friend, are placed far beyond the reach of many mortal frailties and weaknesses which ordinary people cannot overcome. You do not know what it is, at one blow, to be deserted by a lovely and fascinating creature, and to fall a victim to the artifices of a villain.

'Any letter addressed to me at the Leather Bottle, Cobham, Kent, will be forwarded—supposing I still exist. I hasten from the sight of that world, which has become odious to me. You may tell Rachael—Ah, that name!—

"TRACY TUPMAN."

'We must leave this place directly,' said Mr. Pickwick, as he refolded the note. 'We are bound to follow in search of our friend.' And so saying, he led the way to the house.

His intention was rapidly communicated. The entreaties to remain were pressing, but Mr. Pickwick was inflexible.

It was a difficult task to take leave of the inmates of Manor Farm, from whom they had received so much hospitality and kindness. Many a backward look they gave at the farm, as they walked slowly away; and many a kiss did Mr. Snodgrass waft in the air, in acknowledgment of something very like a lady's handkerchief, which was waved from one of the upper windows, until a turn of the lane hid the old house from their sight.

At Muggleton they procured a conveyance to Rochester. By the time they reached the last-named place, the violence of their grief had sufficiently abated to admit of their making a very excellent early dinner; and having procured the necessary information relative to the road, the three friends set forward again in the afternoon to walk to Cobham.

A delightful walk it was; for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick

foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs.'

'Really,' said Mr. Pickwick, after half an hour's walking had brought them to the village, 'really, for a misanthrope's choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with.'

In this opinion, both Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass expressed their concurrence; and having been directed to the Leather Bottle, a clean and commodious village ale-house, the three travellers entered, and at once inquired for a gentleman of the name of Tupman.

'Show the gentlemen into the parlour, Tom,' said the landlady.

A stout country lad opened a door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and *et ceteras*; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world, as possible.

'I did not expect to see you here,' he said, as he grasped Mr. Pickwick's hand. 'It's very kind.'

'Ah!' said Mr. Pickwick, sitting down, and wiping from his forehead the perspiration which the walk had engendered. 'Finish your dinner, and walk out with me. I wish to speak to you alone.'

Mr. Tupman did as he was desired; and Mr. Pickwick having refreshed himself with a copious draught of ale, waited his friend's leisure. The dinner was quickly despatched, and they walked out together.

For half an hour, their forms might have been seen pacing the churchyard to and fro, while Mr. Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion's resolution. Whether Mr. Tupman was already tired of retirement, or whether he was wholly unable to resist the eloquent appeal which was made to him, matters not, he did *not* resist it at last.

'It mattered little to him,' he said, 'where he dragged out the miserable remainder of his days; and since his friend laid so much stress upon his humble companionship, he was willing to share his adventures.'

Mr. Pickwick smiled; they shook hands, and walked back to rejoin their companions.

It was at this moment that Mr. Pickwick's eye fell upon a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground, in front of a cottage door. He paused.

'This is very strange,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'What is strange?' inquired Mr. Tupman, staring eagerly at every object near him, but the right one. 'God bless me, what's the matter?'

This last was an ejaculation of irrepressible astonishment, occasioned by seeing Mr. Pickwick, in his enthusiasm for discovery, fall on his knees before the little stone, and commence wiping the dust off it with his pocket handkerchief.

'There is an inscription heré,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Is it possible?' said Mr. Tupman.

'I can discern,' continued Mr. Pickwick, rubbing away with all his might, and gazing intently through his spectacles—'I can discern a cross, and a B, and then a T. This is important,' continued Mr. Pickwick, starting up. 'This is some very old inscription, existing perhaps long before the ancient almshouses in this place. It must not be lost.'

He tapped at the cottage door. A labouring man opened it.

'Do you know how this stone came here, my friend?' inquired the benevolent Mr. Pickwick.

'No, I doan't, sir,' replied the man civilly. 'It was here long afore I was born, or any on us.'

'You—you—are not particularly attached to it, I dare say,' said Mr. Pickwick, trembling with anxiety. 'You wouldn't mind selling it, now?'

'Ah! but who'd buy it?' inquired the man.

'I'll give you ten shillings for it, at once,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'if you would take it up for me.'

The astonishment of the village may be easily imagined, when (the little stone having been raised with one wrench of a spade) Mr. Pickwick, by dint of great personal exertion, bore it with his own hands to the inn, and after having carefully washed it, deposited it on the table.

The stone was uneven and broken, and the letters were

straggling and irregular, but the following fragment of an inscription was clearly to be deciphered:

+

B I L S T
U M
P S H I
S. M.
A R K

Mr. Pickwick's eyes sparkled with delight, as he sat and gloated over the treasure he had discovered. In a county known to abound in the remains of the early ages; in a village in which there still existed some memorials of the olden time, he—he, the chairman of the Pickwick Club—had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity.

'This—this,' said he, 'determines me. We return to town to-morrow. This treasure must be at once deposited where it can be thoroughly investigated and properly understood. I have another reason for this step. In a few days, an election is to take place for the borough of Eatanswill, at which Mr. Perker, a gentleman whom I lately met, is the agent of one of the candidates. We will behold, and minutely examine, a scene so interesting to every Englishman.'

'We will,' was the animated cry of three voices.

Mr. Pickwick looked round him. The attachment and fervour of his followers lighted up a glow of enthusiasm within him. He was their leader, and he felt it.

'Let us celebrate this happy meeting with a convivial glass,' said he. This proposition, like the other, was received with unanimous applause. Having himself deposited the important stone in a small deal box, purchased from the landlady for the purpose, he placed himself in an arm-chair, at the head of the table; and the evening was devoted to festivity and conversation.

Mr. Pickwick lectured upon his discovery at a General Club Meeting, convened on the night succeeding their return, and entered into a variety of ingenious and erudite speculations on the meaning of the inscription. It also appears that

a skilful artist executed a faithful delineation of the curiosity, which was engraven on stone, and presented to the Royal Antiquarian Society, and other learned bodies.

Mr. Blotton, a member of the club, presumed to state a view of the case, as degrading as ridiculous. Mr. Blotton, with a mean desire to tarnish the lustre of the immortal name of Pickwick, actually undertook a journey to Cobham in person, and on his return sarcastically observed in an oration at the club, that he had seen the man from whom the stone was purchased; that the man presumed the stone to be ancient, but solemnly denied the antiquity of the inscription—inasmuch as he represented it to have been rudely carved by himself in an idle mood, and to display letters intended to bear neither more or less than the simple construction of—‘BILL STUMPS, HIS MARK’; and that Mr. Stumps, being little in the habit of original composition, had omitted the concluding ‘L’ of his Christian name.

The Pickwick Club received this statement with the contempt it deserved, expelled the presumptuous and ill-conditioned Blotton from the society, and voted Mr. Pickwick a pair of gold spectacles, in token of their confidence and approbation: in return for which, Mr. Pickwick caused a portrait of himself to be painted, and hung up in the club room. And to this day the stone remains, an illegible monument of Mr. Pickwick’s greatness, and a lasting trophy to the littleness of his enemies.

*Descriptive of a very important Proceeding on the part
of Mr. Pickwick*

MR. PICKWICK's apartments in Goswell Street, although on a limited scale, were not only of a very neat and comfortable description, but peculiarly adapted for the residence of a man of his genius and observation. His sitting-room was the first-floor front; his bedroom the second-floor front; and thus, whether he was sitting at his desk in his parlour, or standing before the dressing-glass in his dormitory, he had an equal opportunity of contemplating human nature. His landlady, Mrs. Bardell—the relict and sole executrix of a deceased custom-house officer—was a comely woman of bustling manners and agreeable appearance, with a natural genius for cooking, improved by study and long practice, into an exquisite talent. The only other inmates of the house were a large man and a small boy; the first a lodger; the second a production of Mrs. Bardell's.

To any one conversant with the admirable regulation of Mr. Pickwick's mind, his appearance and behaviour on the morning previous to that which had been fixed upon for the journey to Eatanswill would have been most mysterious and unaccountable. He paced the room to and fro with hurried steps, popped his head out of the window at intervals of about three minutes each, constantly referred to his watch, and exhibited many other manifestations of impatience very unusual with him.

'Mrs. Bardell,' said Mr. Pickwick, at last, as that amiable female approached the termination of a prolonged dusting of the apartment.

'Sir,' said Mrs. Bardell.

'Do you think it a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?'

'La, Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Bardell, colouring up to the very border of her cap, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle in the eyes of her lodger; 'La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!'

'Well, but *do* you?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'That depends,' said Mrs. Bardell, 'that depends a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir.'

'That's very true,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'but the person I have in my eye (here he looked very hard at Mrs. Bardell) I think possesses these qualities; and has, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the world, and a great deal of sharpness, Mrs. Bardell, which may be of material use to me. And to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bardell, I have made up my mind.'

'Dear me, sir,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

'You'll think it very strange now,' said the amiable Mr. Pickwick, with a good-humoured glance at his companion, 'that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning —ch?'

Mrs. Bardell coul^t only reply by a look. She had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, but here she was, all at once, raised to a pinnacle to which her wildest and most extravagant hopes had never dared to aspire. Mr. Pickwick was going to propose—a deliberate plan, too—sent her little boy to the Borough, to get him out of the way—how thoughtful—how considerate!

'It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, sir,' replied Mrs. Bardell; 'and, of course, I should take more trouble to please you then, than ever; but it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.'

'Ah, to be sure,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'I never thought of that. And your little boy——'

'Bless his heart!' interposed Mrs. Bardell, with a maternal sob.

'He, too, will have a companion,' resumed Mr. Pickwick,

'a lively one, who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.' And Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

'Oh, you dear——' said Mrs. Bardell.

Mr. Pickwick started.

'Oh, you kind, good, playful dear,' said Mrs. Bardell; and without more ado, she rose from her chair, and flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck, with a cataract of tears and a chorus of sobs.

'Bless my soul,' cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick; 'Mrs. Bardell, my good woman—dear me, what a situation—pray consider.—Mrs. Bardell, don't—if anybody should come——'

'Oh, let them come,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell frantically.

'Mercy upon me,' said Mr. Pickwick, struggling violently, 'I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't, don't, there's a good creature, don't.' But entreaty and remonstrance were alike unavailing; for Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick's arms; and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, ushering in Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass.

The astonishment of the Pickwickians was so absorbing, and the perplexity of Mr. Pickwick was so extreme, that they might have remained in exactly the same relative situations until the suspended animation of the lady was restored, had it not been for a most beautiful and touching expression of filial affection on the part of her youthful son. Considering Mr. Pickwick as the aggressor, he set up an appalling and semi-earthly kind of howling, and butting forward with his head, commenced assailing that immortal gentleman about the back and legs, with such blows and pinches as the strength of his arm, and the violence of his excitement, allowed.

'Take this little villain away,' said the agonised Mr. Pickwick, 'he's mad.' (Here Mr. Winkle carried the interesting boy, screaming and struggling, to the farther end of the apartment.) 'Now help me, lead this woman downstairs.'

'Oh, I am better now,' said Mrs. Bardell faintly.

'Let me lead you downstairs,' said the ever-gallant Mr. Tupman.

'Thank you, sir—thank you,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell

hysterically. And downstairs she was led accordingly, accompanied by her affectionate son.

'I cannot conceive,' said Mr. Pickwick when his friend returned—'I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant, when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing.'

'Very,' was the reply of his followers, as they coughed slightly, and looked dubiously at each other.

This behaviour was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He remarked their incredulity. They evidently suspected him.

'There is a man in the passage now,' said Mr. Tupman.

'It's the man I spoke to you about,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass.'

Mr. Snodgrass did as he was desired; and Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself.

'Oh—you remember me, I suppose?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I should think so,' replied Sam, with a patronising wink. 'Queer start that 'ere, but he was one too many for you, warn't he? Up to snuff and a pinch or two over—ch?'

'Never mind that matter now,' said Mr. Pickwick hastily; 'I want to speak to you about something else. Sit down.

'I want to know, in the first place,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'whether you have any reason to be discontented with your present situation.'

'Afore I answers that 'ere questions, gen'l'm'n,' replied Mr. Weller, 'I should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a-goin' to purwide me with a better?'

A sunbeam of placid benevolence played on Mr. Pickwick's features as he said, 'I have half made up my mind to engage you myself.'

'Wages?' inquired Sam.

'Twelve pounds a year,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'Clothes?'

'Two suits.'

'Work?'

'To attend upon me; and travel about with me and these gentlemen here.'



Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick's arms.

'Take the bill down,' said Sam emphatically. 'I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon.'

'You can get a character of course?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Ask the landlady o' the White Hart about that, sir,' replied Sam.

'Can you come this evening?'

'I'll get into the clothes this minute, if they're here,' said Sam, with great alacrity.

'Call at eight this evening,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'and if the inquiries are satisfactory, they shall be provided.'

With the single exception of one amiable indiscretion, in which an assistant housemaid had equally participated, the history of Mr. Weller's conduct was so very blameless, that Mr. Pickwick felt fully justified in closing the engagement that very evening. Before night had closed in, Mr. Weller was furnished with a grey coat with the P.C. button, a black hat with a cockade to it, a pink striped waistcoat, light breeches and gaiters, and a variety of other necessaries, too numerous to recapitulate.

'Well,' said that suddenly transformed individual, as he took his seat on the outside of the Eatanswill coach next morning; 'I wonder whether I'm meant to be a footman, or a groom, or a gamekeeper, or a seedsman. I looks like a sort of compo of every one on 'em. Never mind; there's a change of air, plenty to see, and little to do; and all this suits my complaint uncommon; so long life to the Pickwicks, says I!'

Some Account of Eatanswill; and of the Election of a Member to serve in Parliament for that ancient, loyal, and patriotic Borough

IT APPEARS that the Eatanswill people, like the people of many other small towns, considered themselves of the utmost and most mighty importance, and that every man in Eatanswill, conscious of the weight that attached to his example, felt himself bound to unite, heart and soul, with one of the two great parties that divided the town—the Blues and the Buffs.

Of course it was essentially and indispensably necessary that each of these powerful parties should have its chosen organ and representative: and, accordingly, there were two newspapers in the town—the *Eatanswill Gazette* and the *Eatanswill Independent*; the former advocating Blue principles, and the latter conducted on grounds decidedly Buff.

Mr. Pickwick, with his usual foresight and sagacity, had chosen a peculiarly desirable moment for his visit to the borough. Never was such a contest known. The Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was the Blue candidate; and Horatio Fizkin, Esq., of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, had been prevailed upon by his friends to stand forward on the Buff interest.

It was late in the evening when Mr. Pickwick and his companions, assisted by Sam, dismounted from the roof of the Eatanswill coach. Large blue silk flags were flying from the windows of the Town Arms Inn, and bills were posted in every sash, intimating, in gigantic letters, that the Honourable Samuel Slumkey's committee sat there daily.

The Pickwickians entered the house, the crowd opening right and left to let them pass, and cheering vociferously.

The first object of consideration was to secure quarters for the night.

'Can we have beds here?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, summoning the waiter. He gave him his card, and desired him to present it to Mr. Perker forthwith, if he should happen to be in the house. The waiter retired; and reappearing almost immediately with a request that Mr. Pickwick would follow him, led the way to a large room on the first floor, where, seated at a long table covered with books and papers, was Mr. Perker.

'Ah—ah, my dear sir,' said the little man, advancing to meet him; 'very happy to see you, my dear sir, very. Pray sit down. So you have carried your intention into effect. You have come down here to see an election—eh?'

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

'Spirited contest, my dear sir,' said the little man.

'And what are the probabilities as to the result of the contest?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'Why, doubtful, my dear sir; rather doubtful as yet,' replied the little man. 'Fizkin's people have got three-and-thirty voters in the lock-up coach-house at the White Hart. The effect of that is, you see, to prevent our getting at them; and even if we could, it would be of no use, for they keep them very drunk on purpose. Smart fellow Fizkin's agent—very smart fellow indeed.'

Mr. Pickwick stared, but said nothing.

'We are pretty confident, though,' said Mr. Perker, sinking his voice almost to a whisper. 'We had a little tea-party here, last night—five-and-forty women, my dear sir—and gave every one of 'em a green parasol when she went away. All women like finery—extraordinary the effect of those parasols. Secured all their husbands, and half their brothers—beats stockings, and flannel, and all that sort of thing hollow. My idea, my dear sir, entirely. Hail, rain, or sunshine, you can't walk half a dozen yards up the street, without encountering half a dozen green parasols.'

Here the little man indulged in a convulsion of mirth, which was only checked by the entrance of a third party.

This was a tall, thin man, with a sandy-coloured head

inclined to baldness, and a face in which solemn importance was blended with a look of unfathomable profundity. The new-comer was introduced to Mr. Pickwick as Mr. Pott, the editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. After a few preliminary remarks, Mr. Pott turned round to Mr. Pickwick, and said with solemnity:

‘This contest excites great interest in the metropolis, sir?’

‘I believe it does,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘To which I have reason to know,’ said Pott, looking towards Mr. Perker for corroboration—‘to which I have reason to know that my article of last Saturday in some degree contributed.’

‘Not the least doubt of it,’ said the little man.

‘The press is a mighty engine, sir,’ said Pott.

Mr. Pickwick yielded his fullest assent to the proposition. ‘Allow me, sir, to introduce you to my fellow-travellers, the other corresponding members of the club I am proud to have founded.’

‘I shall be delighted,’ said Mr. Pott.

Mr. Pickwick withdrew, and returning with his friends, presented them in due form to the editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*.

‘Now, my dear Pott,’ said little Mr. Perker, ‘the question is, what are we to do with our friends here?’

‘We can stop in this house, I suppose,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Not a spare bed in the house, my dear sir—not a single bed.’

‘I have an idea upon this subject,’ said Mr. Pott, ‘which I think may be very successfully adopted. They have two beds, at the Peacock, and I can boldly say, on behalf of Mrs. Pott, that she will be delighted to accommodate Mr. Pickwick and any one of his friends, if the other two gentlemen and their servant do not object to shifting, as they best can, at the Peacock.’

After dining together at the Town Arms, the friends separated, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass repairing to the Peacock, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle proceeding to the mansion of Mr. Pott; it having been previously arranged that they should all reassemble at the Town Arms in the

morning, and accompany the Honourable Samucl Slumkey's procession to the place of nomination.

Mr. Pott's domestic circle was limited to himself and his wife. If Mr. Pott had a weakness, it was, perhaps, that he was *rather* too submissive to the somewhat contemptuous control and sway of his wife. On the present occasion all Mrs. Pott's most winning ways were brought into requisition to receive the two gentlemen.

'We owe you many apologies, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'for disturbing your domestic arrangements at so short a notice.'

'I beg you won't mention it, sir,' replied the feminine Pott, with vivacity. 'It is a high treat to me, I assure you, to see any new faces; living as I do, from day to day, and week to week, in this dull place, and seeing nobody.'

'Nobody, my dear!' exclaimed Mr. Pott archly.

'Nobody but *you*,' retorted Mrs. Pott, with asperity. 'I am wearied out of my life with your politics, and quarrels with the *Independent*, and nonsense.'

'But, my dear——' said Mr. Pott.

'Oh, nonsense, don't talk to me,' said Mrs. Pott. 'Do you play *écarté*, sir?'

'I shall be very happy to learn under your tuition,' replied Mr. Winkle.

'Well, then, draw that little table into this window, and let me get out of hearing of those prosy politics.'

'Jane,' said Mr. Pott, to the servant who brought in candles, 'go down into the office, and bring me up the file of the *Gazette* for eighteen hundred and twenty-six. I'll read you,' added the editor, turning to Mr. Pickwick—'I'll just read you a few of the leaders I wrote at that time upon the Buff job of appointing a new tollman to the turnpike here; I rather think they'll amuse you.'

The announcement of supper put a stop both to the game of *écarté*, and the recapitulation of the beauties of the *Eatans-will Gazette*. Mrs. Pott was in the highest spirits and the most agreeable humour. Mr. Winkle had already made considerable progress in her good opinion, and she did not hesitate to inform him, confidenially, that Mr. Pickwick was 'a delightful old dear.'

It was a late hour of the night—long after Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had fallen asleep in the inmost recesses of the Peacock—when the two friends retired to rest. Slumber soon fell upon the senses of Mr. Winkle, but his feelings had been excited, and his admiration roused; and for many hours after sleep had rendered him insensible to earthly objects, the face and figure of the agreeable Mrs. Pott presented themselves again and again to his wandering imagination.

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 street from the earliest dawn of day.

Mr. Pickwick descended to the parlour, where he found breakfast laid, and the family already assembled. The meal was hastily despatched; each of the gentlemen's hats was decorated with an enormous blue favour, made up by the fair hands of Mrs. Pott herself; and as Mr. Winkle had undertaken to escort that lady to a house-top, in the immediate vicinity of the hustings, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Pott repaired alone to the Town Arms.

The stable-yard exhibited unequivocal symptoms of the glory and strength of the Eatanswill Blues. There was a grand band of trumpets, bassoons, and drums, marshalled four abreast, and earning their money, if ever men did, especially the drumbeaters, who were very muscular. There were bodies of constables with blue staves, twenty committeemen with blue scarfs, and a mob of voters with blue cockades. There was an open carriage-and-four, for the Honourable Sainuel Slumkey; and there were four carriage-and-pair for his friends and supporters.

Loud and long were the cheers, and mighty was the rustling of one of the blue flags, with 'Liberty of the Press' inscribed thereon, when the sandy head of Mr. Pott was discerned in one of the windows, by the mob beneath; and tremendous was the enthusiasm when the Honourable

Samuel Slumkey himself, in top-boots, and a blue neckerchief, advanced and seized the hand of the said Pott.

'Is everything ready?' said the Honourable Samuel Slumkey to Mr. Perker.

'Everything, my dear sir,' was the little man's reply. 'There are twenty washed men at the street door for you to shake hands with; and six children in arms that you're to pat on the head, and inquire the age of; be particular about the children, my dear sir—it has always a great effect, that sort of thing.'

'Arrange the procession,' cried the twenty committee-men.

Amidst the cheers of the assembled throng, the band, and the constables, and the committee-men, and the voters, and the horsemen, and the carriages, took their places—each of the two-horse vehicles being closely packed with as many gentlemen as could manage to stand upright in it.

There was a moment of awful suspense as the procession waited for the Honourable Samuel Slumkey to step into his carriage. Suddenly the crowd set up a great cheering.

'He has come out,' said little Mr. Perker, greatly excited; the more so as their position did not enable them to see what was going forward.

Another cheer, much louder.

'He has shaken hands with the men,' cried the little agent.

Another cheer, far more vehement.

'He has patted the babies on the head,' said Mr. Perker, trembling with anxiety.

A roar of applause that rent the air.

'He has kissed one of 'em!' exclaimed the delighted little man.

A second roar.

'He has kissed another,' gasped the excited manager.

A third roar.

'He's kissing 'em all!' screamed the enthusiastic little gentleman. And hailed by the deafening shouts of the multitude, the procession moved on.

How or by what means it became mixed up with the other procession is more than we can undertake to describe, inasmuch as Mr. Pickwick's hat was knocked over his eyes, nose,

and mouth, by one poke of a Buff flag-staff, very early in the proceedings. He represents himself as being forced from the carriage by some unseen power; and on removing his hat, found himself surrounded by his friends, in the very front of the left-hand side of the hustings. The right was reserved for the Buff party, and the centre for the mayor and his officers; one of whom—the fat crier of Eatanswill—was ringing an enormous bell, by way of commanding silence, while Mr. Horatio Fizkin, and the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, with their hands upon their hearts, were bowing with the utmost affability to the troubled sea of heads that inundated the open space in front; and from whence arose a storm of groans, and shouts, and yells, and hootings, that would have done honour to an earthquake.

The speeches of the two candidates, though differing in every other respect, afforded a beautiful tribute to the merit and high worth of the electors of Eatanswill. Both expressed their opinion that a more independent, a more enlightened, a more public-spirited, a more noble-minded, a more disinterested set of men than those who had promised to vote for him, never existed on earth. Both said that the trade, the manufactures, the commerce, the prosperity of Eatanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object; and each had it in his power to state, with the utmost confidence, that he was the man who would eventually be returned.

There was a show of hands; the mayor decided in favour of the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall. Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, demanded a poll, and a poll was fixed accordingly. Then a vote of thanks was moved to the mayor for his able conduct in the chair; and the mayor, devoutly wishing that he had had a chair to display his able conduct in (for he had been standing during the whole proceedings), returned thanks.

During the whole time of the polling, the town was in a perpetual fever of excitement. A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr. Perker solicited the honour of a private interview with these intelligent, these noble, these

patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief but satisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was returned also.

12

In which is given a faithful Portraiture of two distinguished Persons; and an accurate Description of a public Breakfast in their House and Grounds

MR. PICKWICK's conscience had been somewhat reproaching him for his recent neglect of his friends at the Peacock; and he was just on the point of walking forth in quest of them, on the third morning after the election had terminated, when his faithful valet put into his hand a card, on which was engraved the following inscription:

Mrs. Leo Hunter

The Den, Eatanswill.

Mr. Pickwick descended to the drawing-room, where sat a grave man, who started up on his entrance, and said, with an air of profound respect:

‘Mr. Pickwick, I presume?’

‘The same.’

‘Allow me, sir, the honour of grasping your hand. Permit me, sir, to shake it,’ said the grave man.

‘Certainly,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

The stranger shook the extended hand, and then continued:

‘We have heard of your fame, sir: The noise of your anti-

quarian discussion has reached the ears of Mrs. Leo Hunter—my wife, sir; *I am Mr. Leo Hunter*—the stranger paused, as if he expected that Mr. Pickwick would be overcome by the disclosure; but seeing that he remained perfectly calm, proceeded:

‘My wife, sir—Mrs. Leo Hunter—is proud to number among her acquaintance all those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents.’

‘I shall be extremely happy to make the acquaintance of such a lady, sir,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

‘You *shall* make it, sir,’ said the grave man. ‘To-morrow morning, sir, we give a public breakfast—a *fête champêtre*—to a great number of those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works ‘and talents. Permit Mrs. Leo Hunter, sir, to have the gratification of seeing you at the Den.’

‘With great pleasure,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

‘You have a gentleman in your train, who has produced some beautiful little poems, I think, sir.’

‘My friend Mr. Snodgrass, has a great taste for poetry,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

‘So has Mrs. Leo Hunter, sir. She dotes on poetry, sir. You may have met with her “Ode to an Expiring Frog,” sir.’

‘I don’t think I have,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘You astonish me, sir,’ said Mr. Leo Hunter. ‘It created an immense sensation. It was signed with an “L” and eight stars, and appeared originally in a lady’s magazine. It commenced:

Can I view thee panting, lying
On thy stomach, without sighing;
Can I unmoved see thee dying
On a log,
Expiring frog!

‘Beautiful!’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Fine,’ said Mr. Leo Hunter; ‘so simple.’

‘Very,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

'The next verse is still more touching. Shall I repeat it?'

'If you please,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'It runs thus,' said the grave man, still more gravely.

Say, have fiends in shape of boys,
With wild halloo, and brutal noise,
Hunted thee from marshy joys,
With a dog,
Expiring frog!

'Finely expressed,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'All point, sir,' said Mr. Leo Hunter; 'but you shall hear Mrs. Leo Hunter repeat it. *She* can do justice to it, sir. She will repeat it, in character, sir, to-morrow morning.'

'In character!'

'As Minerva. But I forgot—it's a fancy-dress *déjeuné*.'

'Dear me,' said Mr. Pickwick, glancing at his own figure—'I can't possibly——'

'Can't, sir; can't!' exclaimed Mr. Leo Hunter. 'Solomon Lucas, the Jew in the High Street, has thousands of fancy-dresses. Consider, sir, how many appropriate characters are open for your selection. Plato, Zeno, Epicurus, Pythagoras—all founders of clubs.'

'I know that' said Mr. Pickwick; 'but as I cannot put myself in competition with those great men, I cannot presume to wear their dresses.'

The grave man considered deeply, for a few seconds, and then said:

'On reflection, sir, I don't know whether it would not afford Mrs. Leo Hunter greater pleasure, if her guests saw a gentleman of your celebrity in his own costume, rather than in an assumed one.'

'In that case,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I shall have great pleasure in coming.'

'But I waste your time, sir,' said the grave man, as if suddenly recollecting himself. 'I know its value, sir. I will not detain you. I may tell Mrs. Leo Hunter, then, that she may confidently expect you and your distinguished friends? Good morning, sir.' And without giving Mr. Pickwick time to offer

remonstrance or denial, Mr. Leo Hunter stalked gravely away.

Mr. Pickwick took up his hat, and repaired to the Peacock, but Mr. Winkle had conveyed the intelligence of the fancy-ball there, before him.

'Mrs. Pott's going,' were the first words with which he saluted his leader.

'Is she?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'As Apollo,' replied Winkle. 'Only Pott objects to the tunic.'

'He is right. He is quite right,' said Mr. Pickwick emphatically.

'Yes; so she's going to wear a white satin gown with gold spangles.'

'They'll hardly know what she's meant for; will they?' inquired Mr. Snodgrass.

'Of course they will,' replied Mr. Winkle indignantly. 'They'll see her lyre, won't they?'

'True; I forgot that,' said Mr. Snodgrass.

The morning came; it was a pleasant sight to behold Mr. Tupman in full brigand's costume, with a very tight jacket, sitting like a pincushion over his back and shoulders, the upper portion of his legs incased in the velvet shorts, and the lower part thereof swathed in the complicated bandages to which all brigands are peculiarly attached. Equally humorous and agreeable was the appearance of Mr. Snodgrass in blue satin trunks and cloak, white silk tights and shoes, and Grecian helmet, which everybody knows (and if they do not, Mr. Solomon Lucas did) to have been the regular, authentic, everyday costume of a troubadour. All this was pleasant, but this was as nothing compared with the shouting of the populace when the carriage drew up, behind Mr. Pott's chariot, which chariot itself drew up at Mr. Pott's door, which door itself opened, and displayed the great Pott accoutred as a Russian officer of justice, with a tremendous knout in his hand—tastefully typical of the stern and mighty power of the *Eatanswill Gazette*, and the fearful lashings it bestowed on public offenders.

'Bravo!' shouted Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass from the passage, when they beheld the walking allegory.

'Hoo—roar Pott!' shouted the populace.

Then there emerged from the house, Mrs. Pott, who would have looked very like Apollo, if she hadn't had a gown on, conducted by Mr. Winkle, who, in his light-red coat could not possibly have been mistaken for anything but a sportsman, if he had not borne an equal resemblance to a general postman. Last of all came Mr. Pickwick, whom the boys applauded as loud as anybody; probably under the impression that his tights and gaiters were some remnants of the dark ages; and then the two vehicles proceeded towards Mrs. Leo Hunter's; Mr. Weller (who was to assist in waiting) being stationed on the box of that in which his master was seated.

The grounds were more than an acre and a quarter in extent, and they were filled with people! Never was such a blaze of beauty, and fashion, and literature. And above all, there was Mrs. Leo Hunter in the character of Minerva, receiving the company, and overflowing with pride and gratification at the notion of having called such distinguished individuals together.

'Mr. Pickwick, ma'am,' said a servant, as that gentleman approached the presiding goddess, with his hat in his hand, and the brigand and troubadour on either arm.

'Is it possible that I have really the gratification of beholding Mr. Pickwick himself!' ejaculated Mrs. Leo Hunter.

'No other, ma'am,' replied Mr. Pickwick, bowing very low. 'Permit me to introduce my friends—Mr. Tupman—Mr. Winkle—Mr. Snodgrass—to the authoress of "The Expiring Frog."

'Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter, 'I must make you promise not to stir from my side the whole day. There are hundreds of people here, that I must positively introduce you to.'

'You are very kind, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Count, count,' screamed Mrs. Leo Hunter to a well-whiskered individual in a foreign uniform, who was passing by.

'Ah! you want me?' said the count, turning back.

'I want to introduce two very clever people to each other,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter. 'Mr. Pickwick, I have great pleasure

in introducing you to Count Smorltork.' She added in a hurried whisper to Mr. Pickwick—'The famous foreigner—gathering materials for his great work on England—hem!—Count Smorltork, Mr. Pickwick.'

Mr. Pickwick saluted the count with all the reverence due to so great a man.

'Ah, ah, I see,' replied the count. 'Peek—Christian name; Weeks—surname; good, ver good. Peek Weeks. How you do, Weeks?'

'Quite well, I thank you,' replied Mr. Pickwick, with all his usual affability. 'Have you been long in England?'

'Long—ver long time—fortnight—more.'

'Do you stay here long?'

'One week.'

'You will have enough to do,' said Mr. Pickwick smiling, 'to gather all the materials you want in that time.'

'They are here,' added the count, tapping his forehead significantly. 'Large book at home—full of notes—music, picture, science, potry, poltic; all things.' And the count with sundry bows walked away.

'Wonderful man, Count Smorltork,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

'Sound philosopher,' said Mr. Pott.

As the enthusiasm in Court Smorltork's favour ran very high, his praises might have been sung until the end of the festivities, if four something-can singers had not ranged themselves in front of a small apple-tree, to look picturesque, and commenced singing their national songs. This was succeeded by Mrs. Leo Hunter's recitation of her far-famed 'Ode to an Expiring Frog,' which was encored once, and would have been encored twice, if the major part of the guests, who thought it was high time to get something to eat, had not said that it was perfectly shameful to take advantage of Mrs. Hunter's good nature. The refreshment room being thrown open, all the people who had ever been there before, scrambled in with all possible despatch—Mrs. Leo Hunter's usual course of proceeding being to issue cards for a hundred, and breakfast for fifty, or in other words to feed only the very particular lions, and let the smaller animals take care of themselves.

Mrs. Leo Hunter looked round her in triumph. Count Smorltork was busily engaged in taking notes of the contents of the dishes; Mr. Tupman was doing the honours of the lobster salad to several lionesses, with a degree of grace which no brigand ever exhibited before; Mr. Snodgrass having cut out the young gentleman who cut up the books for the *Eatanswill Gazette*, was engaged in an impassioned argument with the young lady who did the poetry; and Mr. Pickwick was making himself universally agreeable. Nothing seemed wanting to render the select circle complete, when Mr. Leo Hunter—whose department on these occasions was to stand about in doorways, and talk to the less important people—suddenly called out:

‘My dear; here’s Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.’

‘Oh dear,’ said Mrs. Leo Hunter, ‘how anxiously I have been expecting him. Tell Mr. Fitz-Marshall, my dear, to come up to me directly, to be scolded for coming so late.’

‘Coming, my dear ma’am,’ cried a voice, ‘as quick as I can—crowds of people—full room—hard work—very.’

Mr. Pickwick’s knife and fork fell from his hand. He stared across the table at Mr. Tupman, who had dropped *his* knife and fork, and was looking as if he were about to sink into the ground without further notice.

‘Ah!’ cried the voice, as its owner pushed his way among the last five-and-twenty Turks, officers, cavaliers, and Charles the Seconds, that remained between him and the table, ‘regular mangle—not a crease in my coat, after all this squeezing—might have “got up my linen” as I came along—ha! ha! not a bad idea.’

With these broken words, a young man dressed as a naval officer made his way up to the table, and presented to the astonished Pickwickians the identical form and features of Mr. Alfred Jingle.

The offender had barely time to take Mrs. Leo Hunter’s proffered hand, when his eyes encountered the indignant orbs of Mr. Pickwick.

‘Hollo!’ said Jingle. ‘Quite forgot—no directions to postillion—give ’em at once—back in a minute.’ With these words he disappeared among the crowd.

'Will you allow me to ask you, ma'am,' said the excited Mr. Pickwick, rising from his seat, 'who that young man is, and where he resides?'

'He is a gentleman of fortune, Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter, 'to whom I very much want to introduce you.'

'Yes, yes,' said Mr. Pickwick hastily. 'His residence——'

'Is at present at the Angel at Bury St. Edmunds, not many miles from here. But dear me, Mr. Pickwick, you are not going to leave us.'

But long before Mrs. Leo Hunter had finished speaking, Mr. Pickwick had plunged through the throng, and reached the garden, whither he was shortly afterwards joined by Mr. Tupman, who had followed his friend closely.

'It's of no use,' said Mr. Tupman. 'He has gone.'

'I know it,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'and I will follow him.'

'Follow him! Where?' inquired Mr. Tupman.

'To the Angel at Bury,' replied Mr. Pickwick, speaking very quickly. 'How do we know whom he is deceiving there? I'll expose him! Sam! Where's my servant?'

'Here you are, sir,' said Mr. Weller, emerging from a sequestered spot, where he had been engaged in discussing a bottle of Madeira.

'Follow me instantly,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Tupman, if I stay at Bury, you can join me there, when I write. Till then, good-bye!'

Mr. Tupman returned to his companions; and in another hour had drowned all present recollection of Mr. Alfred Jingle, or Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall, in an exhilarating quadrille and a bottle of champagne. By that time, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, perched on the outside of a stage-coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds.

THERE is no month in the whole year in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Orchards and cornfields ring with the hum of labour; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wooed the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue.

The influence of a scene like this, was not lost upon the well-regulated mind of Mr. Pickwick. By degrees his attention grew more and more attracted by the objects around him; and at last he derived as much enjoyment from the ride, as if it had been undertaken for the pleasantest reason in the world.

‘Delightful prospect, Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Beats the chimbley-pots, sir,’ replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat.

‘I suppose you have hardly seen anything but chimney-pots and bricks and mortar all your life, Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

‘I worn’t always a boots, sir,’ said Mr. Weller, with a shake of the head. ‘I wos a vaginer’s boy, once, then a helper, then a boots. Now I’m a gen’l’m’n’s servant. I shall be a gen’l’m’n myself one of these days, perhaps, with a pipe in my mouth, and a summer-house in the back-garden. Who knows? I shouldn’t be surprised for one.’

‘You are quite a philosopher, Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘It runs in the family, I b’lieve, sir,’ replied Mr. Weller. ‘My father’s very much in that line now. If my mother-in-

law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out, and gets another. Then she screams very loud, and falls into 'sterics; and he smokes very comfortably till she comes to agin. That's philosophy, sir, ain't it?"

"A very good substitute for it, at all events," replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing. "It must have been of great service to you, in the course of your rambling life, Sam."

"Service, sir," exclaimed Sam. "You may say that. Beg your pardon, sir," said Sam, suddenly breaking off. "Is this Bury St. Edmunds?"

"It is," replied Mr. Pickwick.

The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey.

"And this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel!! We alight here, Sam. But some caution is necessary. Or a private room, and do not mention my name. You understand."

"Right as a trivet, sir," replied Mr. Weller, with a wink of intelligence.

In half an hour, Mr. Pickwick was seated at a very satisfactory dinner; and in three-quarters Mr. Weller returned with the intelligence that Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall had ordered his private room to be retained for him, until further notice. He was going to spend the evening at some private house in the neighbourhood, had ordered the boots to sit up until his return, and had taken his servant with him.

"Now, sir," argued Mr. Weller, when he had concluded his report, "if I can get a talk with this here servant in the mornin', he'll tell me all his master's concerns. Then you can arrange what's best to be done, sir, and we can act accordingly."

As it appeared that this was the best arrangement that could be made, it was finally agreed upon. Mr. Weller, by his master's permission, retired to spend the evening in his own way.

Early on the ensuing morning, Mr. Weller was dispelling

all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a halfpenny shower-bath when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-coloured livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book.

'You're a rum un to look at, you are!' thought Mr. Weller, the first time his eyes encountered the glance of the stranger in the mulberry suit, who had a large, sallow, ugly face, very sunken eyes, and a gigantic head, from which depended a quantity of lank black hair.

'How was it you worn't one of us, last night?' inquired Sam, scrubbing his face with the towel.

'I was out last night with my master,' replied the stranger.

'What's his name?' inquired Mr. Weller.

'Fitz-Marshall,' said the mulberry man.

'Give us your hand,' said Mr. Weller, advancing; 'I should like to know you. What's your name, my patriarch?'

'Job.'

'And a very good name it is; only one I know that ain't got a nickname to it. What's the other name?'

'Trotter,' said the stranger. 'What is yours?'

Sam bore in mind his master's caution, and replied.

'My name's Walker; my master's name's Wilkins. Will you take a drop o' somethin' this mornin', Mr. Trotter?'

Mr. Trotter acquiesced in this agreeable proposal; and having deposited his book in his coat pocket, accompanied Mr. Weller to the tap.

'And what sort of a place have you got?' inquired Sam, as he filled his companion's glass, for the second time.

'Bad,' said Job, smacking his lips, 'very bad.'

'You don't mean that?' said Sam.

'I do, indeed. Worse than that, my master's going to be married. He's going to run away with an immense rich heiress, from boarding-school.'

'What a dragon!' said Sam, refilling his companion's glass.

'And don't you think, old feller, that if you let your master take in this here young lady, you're a precious rascal?'

'I know that,' said Job, turning upon his companion a countenance of deep contrition, and groaning slightly. 'I

know that, and that's what it is that preys upon my mind. But what am I to do?"

"Do!" said Sam; "di-wulge to the missis, and give up your master."

"Who'd believe me?" replied Job Trotter. "I should lose my place, and get indicted for a conspiracy, or some such thing."

"There's somethin' in that," said Sam, ruminating; "there's somethin' in that."

"If I knew any respectable gentleman who would take the matter up," continued Mr. Trotter, "I might have some hope of preventing the elopement."

"Come this way," said Sam suddenly jumping up, and grasping the mulberry man by the arm. "My mas'r's the man you want to see." And after a slight resistance on the part of Job Trotter, Sam led his newly-found friend to the apartment of Mr. Pickwick, to whom he presented him, together with a brief summary of the dialogue we have just repeated.

"I am very sorry to betray my master, sir," said Job Trotter, applying to his eyes a pink-checked pocket handkerchief about six inches square.

"The feeling does you a great deal of honour," replied Mr. Pickwick; "but it is your duty, nevertheless."

"Come, come," interposed Sam, who had witnessed Mr. Trotter's tears with considerable impatience, "blow this 'ere water-cärt bis'ness. It won't do no good, this won't."

"My man is in the right," said Mr. Pickwick, accosting Job, "although his mode of expressing his opinion is somewhat homely. Now, where is this boarding-school?"

"It is a large, old red brick house, just outside the town, sir," replied Job Trotter.

"And when," said Mr. Pickwick—"when is this elopement to take place?"

"This very night, sir," replied Job Trotter. "That is what alarms me so much."

"Instant measures must be taken," said Mr. Pickwick. "I will see the lady who keeps the establishment immediately."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Job, "but that course of proceeding will never do. My master, sir, is a very artful man

and he has so wound himself round the old lady's heart that nothing but taking him in the very act of eloping will convince the old lady, sir.'

'But this taking him in the very act of clopement would be a very difficult thing to accomplish, I fear,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I don't know, sir,' said Mr. Trotter, after a few moments' reflection. 'I think it might be very easily done. My master and I, being in the confidence of the two servants, will be secreted in the kitchen at ten o'clock. When the family have retired to rest, we shall come out of the kitchen, and the young lady out of her bedroom. A post-chaise will be waiting, and away we go.'

'Well?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Well, sir, I have been thinking that if you were waiting in the back garden alone, and I was to let you in, at the door which opens into it, from the end of the passage, at exactly half past eleven o'clock, you would be just in the very moment of time to assist me in frustrating the designs of this bad man, by whom I have been unfortunately ensnared.' Here Mr. Trotter sighed deeply.

'I don't like this plan,' said Mr. Pickwick, after deep meditation. 'Why cannot I communicate with the young lady's friends?'

'Because they live one hundred miles from here, sir,' responded Job Trotter.

'Then this garden,' resumed Mr. Pickwick. 'How am I to get into it?'

'The wall is very low, sir, and your servant will give you a leg up.'

'You will be sure to be near this door that you speak of?'

'You cannot mistake it, sir; it's the only one that opens into the garden. Tap at it when you hear the clock strike, and I will open it instantly.'

'I don't like the plan,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'but as I see no other, and as the happiness of this young lady's whole life is at stake, I adopt it. What is the name of the house?'

'Westgate House, sir. It stands by itself, some little distance

off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate.'

'I know it,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'I observed it once before, when I was in this town. You may depend upon me.'

The day wore on, evening came, and at a little before ten o'clock Sam Weller reported that Mr. Jingle and Job had gone out together, that their luggage was packed up, and that they had ordered a chaise.

Half past ten o'clock arrived, and it was time for Mr. Pickwick to issue forth on his delicate errand. Resisting Sam's tender of his greatcoat, in order that he might have no encumbrance in scaling the wall, he set forth, followed by his attendant.

There was a bright moon, but it was behind the clouds. It was a fine dry night, but it was most uncommonly dark. Paths, hedges, fields, houses, and trees, were enveloped in one deep shade. They found the house, read the brass plate, walked round the wall, and stopped at that portion of it which divided them from the bottom of the garden.

'You will return to the inn, Sam, when you have assisted me over,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'And you will sit up, till I return. Take hold of my leg; and, when I say "Over," raise me gently.'

Having settled these preliminaries, Mr. Pickwick grasped the top of the wall, and gave the word 'Over,' which was literally obeyed.

With stealthy steps Sam Weller departed, leaving Mr. Pickwick alone in the garden. Not caring to go too near the door, ~~until~~ the appointed time, Mr. Pickwick crouched into an angle of the wall, and awaited its arrival.

It was a situation which might well have depressed the spirits of many a man. It was dull, certainly; not to say dreary; but a contemplative man can always employ himself in meditation. Mr. Pickwick had meditated himself into a doze, when he was roused by the chimes of the neighbouring church ringing out the hour—half past eleven.

'That's the time,' thought Mr. Pickwick, getting cautiously on his feet. He looked up at the house. The lights had disappeared, and the shutters were closed—all in bed, no doubt.

He walked on tiptoe to the door, and gave a gentle tap. Two or three minutes passing without any reply, he gave another tap rather louder, and then another rather louder than that.

Now the door opened outwards; and as the door opened wider and wider, Mr. Pickwick receded behind it, more and more. What was his astonishment when he just peeped out, by way of caution, to see that the person who had opened it was—not Job Trotter, but a servant-girl with a candle in her hand!

‘It must have been the cat, Sarah,’ said the girl, addressing herself to someone in the house. ‘Puss, puss, puss—tit, tit, tit.’

But no animal being decoyed by these blandishments, the girl slowly closed the door, and refastened it.

Mr. Pickwick cautiously retired to the angle of the wall in which he had been before ensconced. He had not been here five minutes, when a vivid flash of lightning was followed by a loud peal of thunder that crashed and rolled away in the distance with a terrific noise—then came another flash of lightning, brighter than the other, and a second peal of thunder louder than the first; and then down came the rain, with a force and fury that swept everything before it.

‘What a dreadful situation,’ said Mr. Pickwick. He looked up at the house—all was dark. They must be gone to bed now. He would try the signal again.

He walked on tiptoe across the moist gravel, and tapped at the door. He held his breath, and listened at the key-hole. No reply: very odd. Another knock. He listened again. A window above stairs was thrown up, and three or four female voices cried ‘Who’s there?’

Mr. Pickwick dared not move hand or foot. It was clear that the whole establishment was roused.

What was his discomfiture, when he heard the chain and bolts withdrawn, and saw the door slowly opening, wider and wider! He retreated into the corner, step by step.

‘Who’s there?’ screamed a numerous chorus of treble voices from the staircase inside, consisting of the spinster lady of the establishment, three teachers, five female servants, and thirty boarders, all half-dressed and in a forest of curl-papers.



*Now the door opened outwards; and as the door opened wider and wider,
Mr. Pickwick receded behind it more and more.*

'Cook,' said the lady abbess, who took care to be on the top stair, the very last of the group—'cook, why don't you go a little way into the garden?'

'Please, ma'am, I don't like,' responded the cook.

'Cook,' said the lady abbess, with great dignity; 'don't answer me, if you please. I insist upon your looking into the garden immediately.'

The unfortunate cook, thus strongly urged, advanced a step or two, and holding her candle just where it prevented her from seeing at all, declared there was nothing there, and it must have been the wind. The door was just going to be closed in consequence, when an inquisitive boarder, who had been peeping between the hinges, set up a fearful screaming.

'What is the matter with Miss Smithers?' said the lady abbess.

'Oh, the man—the man—behind the door!' screamed Miss Smithers.

The lady abbess no sooner heard this appalling cry, than she retreated to her own bedroom, double-locked the door, and fainted away comfortably. The boarders, and the teachers, and the servants, fell back upon the stairs, and upon each other; and never was such a screaming, and fainting, and struggling beheld. In the midst of the tumult, Mr. Pickwick emerged from his concealment, and presented himself amongst them.

'Ladies,' roared Mr. Pickwick, rendered desperate by the danger of his situation. 'Hear me. I am no robber. I want the lady of the house.'

Here there was a general scream.

'Ring the alarm bell, somebody!' cried a dozen voices.

'Don't—don't,' shouted Mr. Pickwick. 'Look at me. Do I look like a robber! My dear ladies—you may bind me hand and leg, or lock me up in a closet, if you like. Only hear what I have got to say—only hear me.'

It was proposed, as a test of Mr. Pickwick's sincerity, that he should immediately submit to personal restraint; and that gentleman having consented to hold a conference with Miss Tomkins, from the interior of a closet in which the day boarders hung their bonnets and sandwich-bags, he at once

stepped into it, of his own accord, and was securely locked in. This revived the others; and Miss Tomkins having been brought to, and brought down, the conference began.

'What did you do in my garden, man?' said Miss Tomkins, in a faint voice.

'I came to warn you that one of your young ladies was going to elope to-night,' replied Mr. Pickwick, from the interior of the closet.

'Elope!' exclaimed Miss Tomkins, the three teachers, the thirty boarders, and the five servants. 'Who with?'

'Your friend, Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.'

'My friend! I don't know any such person.'

'Well, Mr. Jingle, then.'

'I never heard the name in my life.'

'Then I have been deceived, and deluded,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'I have been the victim of a conspiracy—a foul and base conspiracy. Send to the Angel for Mr. Pickwick's manservant, I implore you, ma'am.'

'He must be respectable—he keeps a manservant,' said Miss Tomkins to the writing and ciphering governess. 'Let two of the servants repair to the Angel, and let the others remain here, to protect us.'

Mr. Pickwick sat down in the closet, beneath a grove of sandwich-bags, and awaited the return of the messengers, with all the philosophy and fortitude he could summon to his aid. An hour and a half elapsed before they came back, and when they did come, Mr. Pickwick recognised, in addition to the voice of Mr. Samuel Weller, two other voices, the tones of which struck familiarly on his ear.

A very brief conversation ensued. The door was unlocked. Mr. Pickwick stepped out of the closet, and found himself in the presence of the whole establishment of Westgate House, Mr. Samuel Weller, and—old Wardle, and his destined son-in-law, Mr. Trundle!

'My dear friend,' said Mr. Pickwick, running forward and grasping Wardle's hand, 'my dear friend, pray, for Heaven's sake, explain to this lady the unfortunate and dreadful situation in which I am placed. Say, at all events, my dear fellow, that I am neither a robber nor a madman.'

'I have said so, my dear friend. I have said so already,' replied Mr. Wardle, shaking the right hand of his friend, while Mr. Trundle shook the left.

Mr. Pickwick's explanation having already been partially made, was soon concluded. But neither in the course of his walk home with his friends, nor afterwards when seated before a blazing fire at the supper he so much needed, could a single observation be drawn from him. Once, and only once, he turned round to Mr. Wardle, and said:

'How did you come here?'

'Trundle and I came down here, for some good shooting on the first,' replied Wardle. 'We arrived to-night, and were astonished to hear from your servant that you were here too. But I am glad you are,' said the old fellow, slapping him on the back—'I am glad you are.'

Mr. Pickwick shortly afterwards retired for the night, desiring Sam to fetch his candle when he rung.

The bell did ring in due course, and Mr. Weller presented himself.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, looking out from under the bed-clothes.

'Sir,' said Mr. Weller.

'Where is that Trotter?'

'Gone, sir.'

'Jingle suspected my design, and set that fellow on you, with this story, I suppose?' said Mr. Pickwick, half choking.

'Just that, sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'I don't think he'll escape us quite so easily the next time, Sam!' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I don't think he will, sir.'

'Whenever I meet that Jingle again, wherever it is,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I'll inflict personal chastisement on him, in addition to the exposure he so richly merits. I will, or my name is not Pickwick.'

'And venever I catches hold o' that there melan-cholly chap with the black hair,' said Sam, 'if I don't bring some real water into his eyes, for once in a way, my name ain't Weller. Good-night, sir!'

Briefly illustrative of two Points; first, the Power of Hysterics, and, secondly, the Force of Circumstances

FOR two days after the *déjeuné* at Mrs. Hunter's, the Pickwickians remained at Eatanswill, anxiously awaiting the arrival of some intelligence from their revered leader. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were once again left to their own means of amusement; for Mr. Winkle, in compliance with a most pressing invitation, continued to reside at Mr. Pott's house, and to devote his time to the companionship of his amiable lady. Nor was the occasional society of Mr. Pott himself wanting to complete their felicity. He unbent, relaxed, stepped down from his pedestal, and walked upon the ground, benignly adapting his remarks to the comprehension of the herd, and seeming in outward form, if not in spirit, to be one of them.

Such having been the demeanour of this celebrated public character towards Mr. Winkle, it will readily be imagined that considerable surprise was depicted on the countenance of the latter gentleman, when, as he was sitting alone in the breakfast-room, the door was hastily thrown open, and as hastily closed, on the entrance of Mr. Pott, who, stalking majestically towards him, exclaimed, in a saw-like voice:

‘Serpent!’

‘Sir!’ exclaimed Mr. Winkle, starting from his chair. ‘My dear sir!’

‘Dear sir!’ replied Pott. ‘How dare you address me, as dear sir, sir? How dare you look me in the face and do it, sir?’

‘Well, sir, if you come to that,’ responded Mr. Winkle, ‘how dare you look *me* in the face, and call me a serpent, sir?’

'Because you are one,' replied Mr. Pott.

'Prove it, sir,' said Mr. Winkle warmly. 'Prove it.'

A malignant scowl passed over the profound face of the editor, as he drew from his pocket the *Independent* of that morning; and laying his finger on a particular paragraph, threw the journal across the table to Mr. Winkle.

That gentleman took it up, and read as follows:

'Our obscure and filthy contemporary has presumed to violate the hallowed sanctity of private life, and to refer, in a manner not to be misunderstood, to the personal affairs of our late candidate Mr. Fizkin. What if we were to print the following effusion, which we received from a talented fellow-townsman and correspondent?

LINES TO A BRASS POT

' "Oh Pott! if you'd known
How false she'd have grown,
When you heard the marriage bells tinkle;
You'd have done then, I vow,
What you cannot help now,
And handed her over to W*****",

'What,' said Mr. Pott solemnly—'what rhymes to "tinkle," villain?'

'What rhymes to tinkle?' said Mrs. Pott, whose entrance at the moment forestalled the reply. 'What rhymes to tinkle? Why, Winkle, I should conceive.' Saying this, Mrs. Pott smiled sweetly on the disturbed Pickwickian, and extended her hand towards him.

'Wretched woman, look here,' exclaimed the husband. 'Look here, ma'am—"Lines to a Brass Pot." "Brass Pot;" that's me, ma'am. "False she'd have grown;" that's you, ma'am—you.' With this ebullition of rage, which was not unaccompanied with something like a tremble, at the expression of his wife's face, Mr. Pott dashed the current number of the *Eatanswill Independent* at her feet.

'Upon my word, sir,' said the astonished Mrs. Pott, stooping to pick up the paper. 'Upon my word, sir!'

Mr. Pott winced beneath the contemptuous gaze of his

wife. He had made a desperate struggle to screw up his courage, but it was fast coming unscrewed again.

Mrs. Pott read the paragraph, uttered a loud shriek, and threw herself at full length on the hearth-rug, screaming, and tapping it with the heels of her shoes, in a manner which could leave no doubt of the propriety of her feelings on the occasion.

'My dear,' said the terrified Pott, 'I didn't say I believe it; I——' but the unfortunate man's voice was drowned in the screaming of his partner.

'Mrs. Pott, let me entreat you, my dear ma'am, to compose yourself,' said Mr. Winkle; but the shrieks and tappings were louder, and more frequent than ever.

Very fortunately, however, attached to Mrs. Pott's person was a bodyguard of one. The screams reached this young lady's ears in due course, and brought her into the room.

'Oh, my dear, dear mistress!' exclaimed the bodyguard, kneeling frantically by the side of the prostrate Mrs. Pott. 'Oh, my dear mistress, what is the matter?'

'Your master—your brutal master,' murmured the patient. Pott was evidently giving way.

'It's a shame,' said the bodyguard reproachfully. 'I know he'll be the death on you, ma'am. Poor dear thing!'

'My dear,' remonstrated Mr. Pott, 'do not give way to these sensitive feelings. I never believed that the paragraph had any foundation, my dear—impossible. I was only angry, my dear—I may say outrageous—with the *Independent* people for daring to insert it; that's all.'

'And what steps, sir, do you mean to take to obtain redress?' inquired Mr. Winkle, gaining courage as he saw Pott losing it.

'Oh, Goodwin,' observed Mrs. Pott, 'does he mean to horsewhip the editor of the *Independent*—does he, Goodwin?'

'Hush, hush, ma'am; pray keep yourself quiet,' replied the bodyguard. 'I dare say he will, if you wish it, ma'am.'

'Certainly,' said Pott. 'Of course I shall.'

As the hysterics were still hovering about, Mr. Pott said once more that he would do it; and finally, when that unhappy individual had been frightened and snubbed down

to his proper level, Mrs. Pott recovered, and they went to breakfast.

'You will not allow this base newspaper slander to shorter your stay here, Mr. Winkle?' said Mrs. Pott, smiling through the traces of her tears.

'You are very good,' said Mr. Winkle; 'but a letter has been received from Mr. Pickwick—so I learn by a note from Mr. Tupman, which was brought up to my bedroom door, this morning—in which he requests us to join him at Bury to-day.'

'But you will come back?' said Mrs. Pott.

'Oh, certainly,' replied Mr. Winkle.

'If he ever comes back, I'll poison him,' thought Mr. Pott, as he turned into the little back office where he prepared his thunderbolts.

'If I ever do come back, and mix myself up with these people again,' thought Mr. Winkle, as he wended his way to the Peacock, 'I shall deserve to be horsewhipped myself—that's all.'

His friends were ready, the coach was nearly so, and in half an hour they were proceeding on their journey, along the road over which Mr. Pickwick and Sam had so recently travelled.

Mr. Weller was standing at the door of the Angel, ready to receive them, and by that gentleman they were ushered to the apartment of Mr. Pickwick, where, to the no small surprise of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, and the no small embarrassment of Mr. Tupman, they found old Wardle and Trundle.

'How are you?' said the old man, grasping Mr. Tupman's hand. 'Don't hang back, or look sentimental about it; it can't be helped, old fellow. For her sake, I wish you'd had her; for your own, I'm very glad you have not. I have just been telling Pickwick that we must have you all down at Christmas. We're going to have a wedding—a real wedding this time.'

'A wedding!' exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass, turning very pale.

'Yes, a wedding. But don't be frightened,' said the good-humoured old man; 'it's only Trundle there, and Bella. But

come! Here's the dinner. You must be hungry after your ride. I am, without any ride at all; so let us fall to.'

Ample justice was done to the meal; and when they were seated round the table, after it had been disposed of, Mr. Pickwick, to the intense horror and indignation of his followers, related the adventure he had undergone, and the success which had attended the base artifices of the diabolical Jingle.

'I, too, have had something of an adventure,' said Mr. Winkle, with a smile; and, at the request of Mr. Pickwick, he detailed the malicious libel of the *Eatanswill Independent*, and the consequent excitement of their friend, the editor.

Mr. Pickwick struck the table emphatically with his clenched fist, and spoke as follows:

'Is it not a wonderful circumstance,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'that we seem destined to enter no man's house without involving him in some degree of trouble? Does it not, I ask, bespeak the indiscretion, or, worse than that, the blackness of heart—that I should say so!—of my followers, that, beneath whatever roof they locate, they disturb the peace of mind and happiness of some confiding female? Is it not, I say—'

Mr. Pickwick would in all probability have gone on for some time, had not the entrance of Sam, with a letter, caused him to break off in his eloquent discourse.

'What have you there, Sam?'

'Called at the post-office just now, and found this here letter, as has laid there for two days,' replied Mr. Weller.

'I don't know this hand,' said Mr. Pickwick, opening the letter. 'Mercy on us! what's this? It must be a jest; it—it—can't be true.'

'What's the matter?' was the general inquiry.

Mr. Pickwick made no reply, but, pushing the letter across the table, and desiring Mr. Tupman to read it aloud, fell back in his chair with a look of vacant astonishment quite alarming to behold.

Mr. Tupman, with a trembling voice, read the letter, of which the following is a copy:

*Freeman's Court, Cornhill,
August, 28th, 1827*

Bardell against Pickwick.

Sir,

Having been instructed by Mrs. Martha Bardell to commence an action against you for a breach of promise of marriage, for which the plaintiff lays her damages at fifteen hundred pounds, we beg to inform you that a writ has been issued against you in this suit in the Court of Common Pleas; and request to know, by return of post, the name of your attorney in London, who will accept service thereof.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

Dodson & Fogg.

Mr. Samuel Pickwick.

There was something so impressive in the mute astonishment with which each man regarded his neighbour, and every man regarded Mr. Pickwick, that all seemed afraid to speak. The silence was at length broken by Mr. Tupman.

'Dodson and Fogg,' he repeated mechanically.

'Bardell and Pickwick,' said Mr. Snodgrass, musing.

'Peace of mind and happiness of confiding females,' murmured Mr. Winkle, with an air of abstraction.

'It's a conspiracy,' said Mr. Pickwick, at length recovering the power of speech; 'a base conspiracy between these two grasping attorneys, Dodson and Fogg. Mrs. Bardell would never do it—she hasn't the heart to do it—she hasn't the case to do it. Ridiculous—ridiculous.'

'Of her heart,' said Wardle, with a smile, 'you should certainly be the best judge.'

'Who ever heard me address her in any way but that in which a lodger would address his landlady?' continued Mr. Pickwick, with great vehemence.

'Except on one occasion,' said Mr. Tupman.

Mr. Pickwick changed colour.

'Ah,' said Mr. Wardle. 'Well, that's important. There was nothing suspicious then, I suppose?'

Mr. Tupman glanced timidly at his leader. 'Why,' said he, 'there was nothing suspicious; but—I don't know how it happened, mind—she certainly was reclining in his arms.'

'Gracious powers!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, as the recollection of the scene in question struck forcibly upon him; 'what a dreadful instance of the force of circumstances! So she was—so she was.'

'And our friend was soothing her anguish,' said Mr. Winkle, rather maliciously.

'So I was,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'I don't deny it. So I was.'

'Hollo;' said Wardle; 'for a case in which there's nothing suspicious, this looks rather queer—eh, Pickwick?'

'What a dreadful conjunction of appearances!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, resting his chin upon his hands. 'Winkle—Tupman—I beg your pardon for the observations I made just now. We are all the victims of circumstances, and I the greatest. I'll see this Dodson and Fogg! I'll go to London to-morrow.'

'Not to-morrow,' said Wardle; 'you're too lame.'

'Well, then, the day after,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'Thursday.—Sam!'

'Sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Take two places outside to London, on Thursday morning, for yourself and me.'

'Wery well, sir.'

'Rum feller, the hemperor,' said Mr. Weller, as he walked slowly up the street. 'Think o' his makin' up to that 'ere Mrs. Bardell—vith a little boy, too! I didn't think he'd ha' done it, though—I didn't think he'd ha' done it!'

*Showing how Dodson and Fogg were Men of Business,
and how an affecting Interview took place between Mr.
Weller and his long-lost Parent*

IN THE ground-floor front of a dingy house, at the very farthest end of Freeman's Court, Cornhill, sat the four clerks of Messrs. Dodson & Fogg, two of His Majesty's attorneys of the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Westminster, and solicitors of the High Court of Chancery.

The clerks' office of Messrs. Dodson & Fogg was a dark, mouldy, earthy-smelling room, with a high wainscotted partition to screen the clerks from the vulgar gaze. There was a glass door leading into the passage which formed the entrance to the court, and on the outer side of this glass door, Mr. Pickwick, closely followed by Sam Weller, presented himself on the Friday morning.

'Come in, can't you?' cried a voice from behind the partition, in reply to Mr. Pickwick's gentle tap at the door. And Mr. Pickwick and Sam entered accordingly.

'Mr. Dodson or Mr. Fogg at home, sir?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, gently, advancing, hat in hand, towards the partition.

'Mr. Dodson ain't at home,' replied the voice; and at the same time the head to which the voice belonged, with a pen behind its ear, looked over the partition, and at Mr. Pickwick. 'What name shall I tell Mr. Fogg?'

'Pickwick,' replied the illustrious subject of these memoirs.

Mr. Jackson, the clerk, departed upstairs to the apartment of Fogg, from whence he came back to say that he (Fogg) was ready to see Mr. Pickwick if he would step upstairs.

Upstairs Mr. Pickwick did step accordingly, leaving Sam Weller below. The room door of the one-pair back, bore inscribed in legible characters the imposing words, 'Mr.

Fogg;' and, having tapped thereat, and been desired to come in, Jackson ushered Mr. Pickwick into the presence.

'Take a seat, sir,' said Fogg; 'there is a paper, sir; my partner will be here soon, and we can converse about this matter, sir.'

Mr. Pickwick took a seat and the paper, but, instead of reading the latter, peeped over the top of it, and took a survey of the man of business, who was an elderly, pimply-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in a black coat, dark mixture trousers, and small black gaiters.

After a few minutes' silence, Mr. Dodson, a plump, portly, stern-looking man, with a loud voice, appeared; and the conversation commenced.

'This is Mr. Pickwick,' said Fogg.

'Ah! You are the defendant, sir, in Bardell and Pickwick?' said Dodson.

'I am, sir,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'Well, sir,' said Dodson, 'and what do you propose?'

'I came, gentlemen,' said Mr. Pickwick, gazing placidly on the two partners, 'I came here, gentlemen, to express the surprise with which I received your letter of the other day, and to inquire what grounds of action you can have against me.'

'For the grounds of action, sir,' said Dodson, with moral elevation in his air, 'you will consult your own conscience and your own feelings. We, sir, we, are guided entirely by the statement of our client.'

'I am to understand, then,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'that it really is your intention to proceed with this action?'

'Understand, sir!—that you certainly may,' replied Dodson, with something as near a smile as his importance would allow.

'And that the damages are actually laid at fifteen hundred pounds?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'To which understanding you may add my assurance that if we could have prevailed upon our client, they would have been laid at treble the amount. As you offer no terms, sir,' said Dodson, displaying a slip of parchment in his right hand, and affectionately pressing a paper copy of it, on Mr. Pickwick

with his left, 'I had better serve you with a copy of this writ, sir. Here is the original, sir.'

'Very well, gentlemen, very well,' said Mr. Pickwick, rising in person and wrath at the same time; 'you shall hear from my solicitor, gentlemen.'

'We shall be very happy to do so,' said Fogg, rubbing his hands.

'Very,' said Dodson, opening the door.

'And before I go, gentlemen,' said the excited Mr. Pickwick, turning round on the landing, 'permit me to say, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings——'

'Stay, sir, stay,' interposed Dodson, with great politeness. 'Mr. Jackson! Mr. Wicks!'

'Sir,' said the two clerks, appearing at the bottom of the stairs.

'I merely want you to hear what this gentleman says,' replied Dodson. 'Pray, go on, sir—disgraceful and rascally proceedings, I think you said?'

'I did,' said Mr. Pickwick, thoroughly roused, 'I said, sir, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings that ever were attempted, this is the most so. I repeat it, sir.'

'Very good,' said Dodson. 'You can hear down there, I hope, Mr. Wicks?'

'Oh, yes, sir,' said Wicks.

'You had better come up a step or two higher, if you can't,' added Mr. Fogg. 'Go on, sir; do go on. You had better call us thieves, sir; or perhaps you would like to assault one of us. Pray do it, sir, if you would; we will not make the smallest resistance.'

As Fogg put himself very temptingly within the reach of Mr. Pickwick's clenched fist, there is little doubt that that gentleman would have complied with his earnest entreaty, but for the interposition of Sam, who, hearing the dispute, emerged from the office, mounted the stairs, and seized his master by the arm.

'You must come away,' said Mr. Weller. 'If you want to ease your mind by blowing up somebody, come out into the court and blow up me; but it's rayther too expensive work to be carried out here.'



Fogg put himself very temptingly within the reach of Mr. Pickwick's clenched fist.

And without the slightest ceremony, Mr. Weller hauled his master down the stairs, and down the court, and having safely deposited him in Cornhill, fell behind, prepared to follow whithersoever he should lead.

Mr. Pickwick walked on abstractedly, crossed opposite the Mansion House, and bent his steps up Cheapside. Sam began to wonder where they were going, when his master turned round, and said:

'Sam, I will go immediately to Mr. Perker's, but first, as I have been ruffled, I should like a glass of brandy-and-water warm, Sam. Where can I have it, Sam?'

Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar. He replied, without the slightest consideration:

'Second court on the right hand side—last house but vun on the same side the vay.'

Mr. Pickwick observed his valet's directions implicitly, and bidding Sam follow him, entered the tavern he had pointed out, where the hot-brandy-and-water was speedily placed before him; while Mr. Weller, seated at a respectful distance, though at the same table with his master, was accommodated with a pint of porter.

The room was one of a very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage-coachmen. A stout man, having blown a thick cloud from his pipe, a hoarse voice, like some strange effort of ventriloquism, emerged from beneath the capacious shawls which muffled his throat and chest, and slowly uttered these sounds—'Wy, Sammy!'

'Who's that, Sam?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'Why, I wouldn't ha' believed it, sir,' replied Mr. Weller, with astonished eyes. 'It's the old un. How are you, my ancient?' And with this beautiful ebullition of filial affection, Mr. Weller made room on the seat beside him, for the stout man, who advanced pipe in mouth and pot in hand, to greet him.

'Wy, Sammy,' said the father, 'I ha'n't see you, for two ear and better.'

'Nor more you have old codger,' replied the son. 'How's mother-ir law?'

The elder Mr. Weller shook his head, as he replied with a sigh, 'I've done it once too often, Sammy; I've done it once too often. Take example by your father, my boy, and be very careful o' widders all your life, 'specially if they've kept a public-house, Sammy.'

'Beg your pardon, sir,' he said, addressing Mr. Pickwick, after a considerable pause, 'nothin' personal, I hope, sir; I hope you ha'n't got a widder, sir.'

'Not I,' replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing; and while Mr. Pickwick laughed, Sam Weller informed his parent in a whisper, of the relation in which he stood towards that gentleman.

'Beg you pardon, sir,' said Mr. Weller, senior, taking off his hat, 'I hope you've no fault to find with Sammy, sir?'

'None whatever,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Very glad to hear it, sir,' replied the old man; 'I took a good deal o' pains with his eddication, sir; let him run in the streets when he was very young, and shift for hisself. It's the only way to make a boy sharp, sir.'

'Rather a dangerous process, I should imagine,' said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

'And not a very sure one, neither,' added Mr. Weller; 'I got reg'larly done the other day.' And he proceeded to relate, in as few words as possible, how he had fallen a ready dupe to the stratagems of Job Trotter.

Mr. Weller, senior, listened to the tale with the most profound attention, and, at its termination, said:

'Worn't one o' these chaps slim and tall, with long hair, and the g'ft o' the gab very gallopin'?'

Mr. Pickwick did not quite understand the last item of description, but, comprehending the first, said 'Yes,' at a venture.

'T' other's a black-haired chap in mulberry livery, with a very large head?'

'Yes, yes, he is,' said Mr. Pickwick and Sam, with great earnestness.

'Then I know where they are, and that's all about it,' said Mr. Weller; 'they're at Ipswich, safe enough, them two.'

'No!' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Fact,' said Mr. Weller, 'and I'll tell you how I know it. I work an Ipswich coach now and then for a friend o' mine. I worked down the very day arter the night as you caught the rheumatiz, and I took 'em up, right through to Ipswich, where the man-servant—him in the mulberries—told me they was a-goin' to put up for a long time.'

'I'll follow him,' said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table.

'I shall work down to Ipswich the day arter to-morrow, sir,' said Mr. Weller the elder, 'from the Bull in Whitechapel; and if you really mean to go, you'd better go with me.'

'So we had,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'very true; I can write to Bury, and tell them to meet me at Ipswich. We will go with you. But don't hurry away, Mr. Weller;... won't you take anything?'

'You're very good, sir,' replied Mr. W., stopping short; 'perhaps a small glass of brandy to drink your health, and success to Sammy, sir, wouldn't be amiss.'

'Certainly not,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'A glass of brandy here!' The brandy was brought; and Mr. Weller, after pulling his hair to Mr. Pickwick, and nodding to Sam, jerked it down his capacious throat as if it had been a small thimbleful.

Mr. Pickwick, after settling the reckoning, resumed his walk to Gray's Inn. By the time he reached its secluded groves, however, eight o'clock had struck, and the majority of the offices had closed for that day. After climbing two pairs of steep and dirty stairs, he found his anticipations were realised. Mr. Perker's 'outer door' was closed; and the dead silence which followed Mr. Weller's repeated kicks thereat, announced that the officials had retired from business for the night.

'Here's an old 'ooman comin' upstairs, sir,' replied Mr. Weller; 'p'raps she knows where we can find somebody. Hollo, old lady, vere's Mr. Perker's people?'

'Mr. Perker's people,' said a thin, miserable-looking old woman, stopping to recover breath after the ascent of the staircase—'Mr. Perker's people's gone, and I'm a-goin' to do the office out. Mr. Perker's out o' town now.'

'That's unfortunate,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'where's his clerk? I have very particular business with him.'

'Well,' said the old woman, 'if it was anything very particular, I was to say where he was, so I suppose there's no harm in telling. If you just go to the Magpie and Stump, and ask at the bar for Mr. Lowten, they'll show you in to him, and he's Mr. Perker's clerk.'

With this direction, Mr. Pickwick and Sam descended the rickety staircase in safety, and issued forth in quest of the Magpie and Stump.

On Mr. Pickwick's presenting himself at the bar, an elderly female emerged from behind the screen therein, and presented herself before him.

'Is Mr. Lowten here, ma'am?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'Yes, he is, sir,' replied the landlady. 'Here, Charley, show the gentleman in to Mr. Lowten.'

At the announcement of 'A gentleman to speak to you, sir,' a puffy-faced young man, who filled the chair at the head of the table, looked with some surprise in the direction from whence the voice proceeded.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'but I come on very particular business; and if you will suffer me to detain you at this end of the room for five minutes, I shall be very much obliged to you.'

The puffy-faced young man rose, and drawing a chair close to Mr. Pickwick in an obscure corner of the room, listened attentively to his tale of woe.

'Ah,' he said, when Mr. Pickwick had concluded, 'Dodson and Fogg—sharp practice theirs—capital men of business, Dodson and Fogg, sir. Perker ain't in town, and he won't be, neither, before the end of next week; but if you want the action defended, and will leave the copy with me, I can do all that's needful till he comes back.'

'That's exactly what I came here for,' said Mr. Pickwick, handing over the document. 'If anything particular occurs, you can write to me at the post-office, Ipswich.'

Mr. Pickwick journeys to Ipswich and meets with a romantic Adventure with a middle-aged Lady in yellow Curl-papers

‘THAT ‘erc your governor’s luggage, Sammy?’ inquired Mr. Weller of his affectionate son, as he entered the yard of the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, with a travelling-bag and a small portmanteau.

‘You might ha’ made a worser guess than that, old feller,’ replied Mr. Weller the younger. ‘The governor hisself’ll be down here presently. How’s mother-in-law this mornin’?’

‘Queer, Sammy, queer,’ replied the elder Mr. Weller, with impressive gravity. ‘She’s been gettin’ rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy. What do you think them women does t’other day?’

‘Don’t know,’ replied Sam, ‘what?’

‘Goes and gets up a grand tea drinkin’ for a seller they calls their shepherd,’ said Mr. Weller. ‘I dresses myself out very smart, and off I goes with the old ‘ooman, and up we walks into a fust-floor where there was tea-things for thirty. By and by, there comes a great bustle downstairs, and a lanky chap with a red nose and a white neckcloth rushes up, and sings out, “Here’s the shepherd a-coming to wisit his faithful flock;” and in comes a fat chap in black, with a great white face a-smilin’ avay like clockwork. Such goin’s on, Sammy! “The kiss of peace,” says the shepherd; and he kissed the women all round, and ven he’d done, the man with the red nose began. Such a precious loud hymn, Sammy, while the tea was a brewing; such a grace, such eatin’ and drinkin’! I wish you could ha’ seen the shepherd walkin’ into the ham and muffins. Holló! here’s the governor, the size of life.’

As Mr. Weller spoke, Mr. Pickwick dismounted from a cab, and entered the yard.

'Fine mornin', sir,' said Mr. Weller, senior.

'Beautiful indeed,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'Beautiful indeed,' echoes a red-haired man with an inquisitive nose and green spectacles, who had unpacked himself from a cab at the same moment as Mr. Pickwick. 'Going to Ipswich, sir?'

'I am,' replied Mr. Pickwick;

'Going outside?' said the red-haired man.

Mr. Pickwick bowed again.

'Bless my soul, how remarkable—I am going outside, too,' said the red-haired man; 'we are positively going together.'

'I am happy in the prospect of your company, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Ah,' said the new-comer, 'it's a good thing for both of us, isn't it? What's your name, sir?'

'Here is my card, sir,' replied Mr. Pickwick, much amused by the abruptness of the question, and the singular manner of the stranger.

'Ah,' said the red-haired man, placing the card in his pocket-book, 'Pickwick; very good. I like to know a man's name, it saves so much trouble. That's my card, sir. Magnus, you will perceive, sir—Magnus is my name. It's rather a good name, I think, sir.'

'A very good name, indeed,' said Mr. Pickwick, wholly unable to repress a smile.

'Yes, I think it is,' resumed Mr. Magnus. 'There's a good name before it, too, you will observe. Permit me, sir—if you hold the card a little slanting, this way, you catch the light upon the up-stroke. There—Peter Magnus—sounds well, I think, sir.'

'Very,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Now, gen'l'm'n,' said the hostler, 'coach is ready, if you please.'

'Jump up in front, Sammy,' said Mr. Weller. 'Now Villam, run 'em out. Take care o' the archvay, gen'l'm'n. "Heads," as the pieman says. That'll do, Villam. Let 'em alone.' And away went the coach up Whitechapel, to the admiration of the whole population of that pretty densely populated quarter.

'Not a very nice neighbourhood, this, sir,' said Sam, with a touch of the hat, which always preceded his entering into conversation with his master.

'It is not indeed, Sam,' replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the crowded and filthy street through which they were passing.

'It's a very remarkable circumstance, sir,' said Sam, 'that poverty and oysters always seem to go together.'

'I don't understand you, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'What I mean, sir,' said Sam, 'is, that the poorer a place is, the greater call there seems to be for oysters.'

By this time they had reached the turnpike at Mile End; a profound silence prevailed until they had got two or three miles farther on, when Mr. Weller, senior, turning suddenly to Mr. Pickwick, said:

'Wery queer life is a pike-keeper's, sir.'

'A what?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'A pike-keeper. They're all on 'em men as has met with some disappointment in life. Consequence of vich, they retires from the world, and shuts themselves up in pikes; partly with the view of being solitary, and partly to rewenge themselves on mankind by takin' tolls.'

'Dear me,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I never knew that before.'

'Fact, sir,' said Mr. Weller; 'if they was gen'l'm'n, you'd call 'em misanthropes, but as it is, they only takes to pike-keepin'.'

With such conversation, possessing the inestimable charm of blending amusement with instruction, did Mr. Weller beguile the tediousness of the journey, during the greater part of the day. Topics of conversation were never wanting, for even when any pause occurred in Mr. Weller's loquacity, it was abundantly supplied by the desire evinced by Mr. Magnus to make himself acquainted with the whole of the personal history of his fellow-travellers.

In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of the Great White Horse, rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbour-

hood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or a county-paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its enormous size. It was at the door of this overgrown tavern that Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Mr. Peter Magnus dismounted.

‘Do you stop here, sir?’ inquired Mr. Peter Magnus.

‘I do,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Dear me,’ said Mr. Magnus, ‘I never knew anything like these extraordinary coincidences. Why, I stop here too. I hope we dine together?’

‘With pleasure,’ replied Mr. Pickwick. ‘I am not quite certain whether I have any friends here or not, though. Is there any gentleman of the name of Tupman, here, waiter?’

A corpulent man, with a fortnight’s napkin under his arm, and coeval stockings on his legs, replied emphatically:

‘No!’

‘Nor any gentleman of the name of Snodgrass?’

‘No!’

‘Nor Winkle?’

‘No!’

‘My friends have not arrived to-day, sir,’ said Mr. Pickwick. ‘We will dine alone, then. Show us a private room, waiter.’

On this request being preferred, the corpulent man condescended to order the boots to bring in the gentlemen’s luggage; and preceding them down a long, dark passage, ushered them into a large, badly-furnished apartment. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak was served up to the travellers, and when the dinner was cleared away, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Peter Magnus drew their chairs up to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy-and-water for their own.

Mr. Peter Magnus was naturally of a very communicative disposition, and the brandy-and-water operated with wonderful effect in warming into life the deepest hidden secrets of his bosom. He took a view of Mr. Pickwick through his coloured spectacles for several minutes, and then said, with an air of modesty:

‘And what do you think—what *do* you think, Mr. Pickwick—I have come down here for?’

‘Upon my word,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘it is wholly impossible for me to guess.’

‘Why, then, he—he—he!’ said Mr. Peter Magnus, with a bashful titter, ‘what should you think, Mr. Pickwick, if I had come down here to make a proposal, sir, eh? He, he, he!’

‘Think! That you are very likely to succeed,’ replied Mr. Pickwick, with one of his beaming smiles.

‘Ah.’ said Mr. Magnus. ‘But do you really think so, Mr. Pickwick? Do you though?’

‘Certainly,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Why, then,’ said Mr. Magnus, ‘to let you into a little secret, I think so too. I don’t mind telling you, Mr. Pickwick, although I’m dreadful jealous by nature—horrid—that the lady is in this house.’ Here Mr. Magnus took off his spectacles, on purpose to wink, and then put them on again. ‘She’s a fine creature,’ said Mr. Magnus.

‘Is she?’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Very,’ said Mr. Magnus, ‘very. She lives about twenty miles from here, Mr. Pickwick. I heard she would be here to-night and all to-morrow forenoon, and came down to seize the opportunity. I think an inn is a good sort of a place to propose to a single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation in travelling, perhaps, than she would be at home. What’s the time, Mr. Pickwick?’

‘Past twelve.’

‘Dear me, it’s time to go to bed. It will never do, sitting here. I shall be pale to-morrow, Mr. Pickwick.’

At the bare notion of such a calamity, Mr. Peter Magnus rang the bell for the chambermaid; he retired in company with a japanned candlestick, to one side of the house, while Mr. Pickwick, and another japanned candlestick, were conducted through a multitude of tortuous windings, to another.

‘This is your room, sir,’ said the chambermaid.

‘Very well,’ replied Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. It was a tolerably large double-bedded room, with a fire. ‘Nobody sleeps in the other bed, of course.’

‘Oh, no, sir.’

‘Very good. Tell my servant to bring me up some hot

water at half-past eight in the morning, and that I shall not want him any more to-night.'

'Yes, sir,' and bidding Mr. Pickwick good-night, the chambermaid retired, and left him alone.

Mr. Pickwick began to undress, when he recollects he had left his watch on the table downstairs. Now this watch was a special favourite with Mr. Pickwick, so he slipped on his coat, of which he had just divested himself, and taking the japanned candlestick in his hand, walked quietly downstairs.

The more stairs Mr. Pickwick went down, the more stairs there seemed to be to descend. Passage after passage did he explore; room after room did he peep into; at length, as he was on the point of giving up the search in despair, he opened the door of the identical room in which he had spent the evening, and beheld his missing property on the table.

Mr. Pickwick seized the watch in triumph, and proceeded to retrace his steps to his bedchamber. If his progress downward had been attended with difficulties and uncertainty, his journey back was infinitely more perplexing. He was reduced to the verge of despair, when an open door attracted his attention. He peeped in. Right at last! There were the two beds, whose situation he perfectly remembered, and the fire still burning.

The bedsteads stood one on each side of the door; and on the inner side of each was a little path, terminating in a rush-bottomed chair. Having carefully drawn the curtains of his bed on the outside, Mr. Pickwick sat down on the rush-bottomed chair, and leisurely divested himself of his shoes and gaiters. He then took off and folded up his coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth, and slowly drawing on his tasselled nightcap, secured it firmly on his head, by tying beneath his chin the strings which he always had attached to that article of dress.

'It is the best idea,' said Mr. Pickwick to himself, smiling till he almost cracked the nightcap strings—'it is the best idea, my losing myself in this place, and wandering about these staircases, that I ever heard of. Droll, droll, very droll.' Here Mr. Pickwick smiled again, a broader smile than before,

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Mr. Pickwick seized the watch in triumph, and proceeded to retrace his steps to his bedchamber. If his progress downward had been attended with difficulties and uncertainty, his journey back was infinitely more perplexing. He was reduced to the verge of despair, when an open door attracted his attention. He peeped in. Right at last! There were the two beds, whose situation he perfectly remembered, and the fire still burning.

The bedsteads stood one on each side of the door; and on the inner side of each was a little path, terminating in a rush-bottomed chair. Having carefully drawn the curtains of his bed on the outside, Mr. Pickwick sat down on the rush-bottomed chair, and leisurely divested himself of his shoes and gaiters. He then took off and folded up his coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth, and slowly drawing on his tasselled nightcap, secured it firmly on his head, by tying beneath his chin the strings which he always had attached to that article of dress.

'It is the best idea,' said Mr. Pickwick to himself, smiling till he almost cracked the nightcap strings—'it is the best idea, my losing myself in this place, and wandering about these staircases, that I ever heard of. Droll, droll, very droll.' Here Mr. Pickwick smiled again, a broader smile than before,

and was about to continue the process of undressing, in the best possible humour, when he was suddenly stopped by a most unexpected interruption: to wit, the entrance into the room of some person with a candle, who, after locking the door, advanced to the dressing-table, and set down the light upon it.

The only way in which Mr. Pickwick could catch a glimpse of his mysterious visitor with the least danger of being seen himself, was by creeping on to the bed, and peeping out from between the curtains on the opposite side. To this manœuvre he accordingly resorted. Keeping the curtains carefully closed with his hand, so that nothing more of him could be seen than his face and nightcap, and putting on his spectacles, he mustered up courage and looked out.

Mr. Pickwick almost fainted with horror and dismay. Standing before the dressing-glass was a middle-aged lady, in yellow curl-papers, busily engaged in brushing what ladies call their 'back-hair.'

'Bless my soul!' thought Mr. Pickwick, 'what a dreadful thing!'

'Hem!' said the lady; and in went Mr. Pickwick's head with automaton-like rapidity.

It was quite impossible to resist the urgent desire to see what was going forward. So out went Mr. Pickwick's head again. The prospect was worse than before. The middle-aged lady had finished arranging her hair; had carefully enveloped it in a muslin nightcap with a small plaited border; and was gazing pensively on the fire.

'This matter is growing alarming,' reasoned Mr. Pickwick with himself. 'I can't allow things to go on in this way.' He shrunk behind the curtains, and called out very loudly:

'Ha—hum!'

'Gracious Heaven!' said the middle-aged lady, 'what's that?'

'It's—it's—only a gentleman, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, from behind the curtains.

'A gentleman!' said the lady, with a terrific scream.

Another instant and the house would be alarmed. Her garments rustled as she rushed towards the door.



'Bless my soul!' thought Mr. Pickwick, 'what a dreadful thing!'

'Ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, thrusting out his head, in the extremity of his desperation, 'ma'am!'

'Wretch,' said the lady, covering her eyes with her hands, 'what do you want here?'

'Nothing, ma'am, upon my honour,' said Mr. Pickwick, nodding his head so energetically, that the tassel of his nightcap danced again. 'It is evident to me, ma'am, now, that I have mistaken this bedroom for my own. I had not been here five minutes, ma'am, when you suddenly entered it.'

'If this improbable story be really true, sir, sir,' said the lady, sobbing violently, 'you will leave it instantly.'

'Certainly, ma'am. I—I—am very sorry, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, making his appearance, at the bottom of the bed.

The lady pointed to the door. One excellent quality of Mr. Pickwick's character was beautifully displayed at this moment, under the most trying circumstances. Although he had hastily put on his hat over his nightcap, after the manner of the old patrol; although he carried his shoes and gaiters in his hand, and his coat and waistcoat over his arm; nothing could subdue his native politeness.

'I trust, ma'am,' resumed Mr. Pickwick, turning round to bow—'I trust, ma'am, that my unblemished character, and the devoted respect I entertain for your sex, will plead as some slight excuse for this—' But before Mr. Pickwick could conclude the sentence, the lady had thrust him into the passage, and locked and bolted the door behind him.

It was not to be supposed that he could find his way in perfect darkness to a room which he had been wholly unable to discover with a light. So after groping his way a few paces down the passage, and, to his infinite alarm, stumbling over several pairs of boots in so doing, Mr. Pickwick crouched into a little recess in the wall, to wait for morning, as philosophically as he might.

He had not been long ensconced in his present concealment when, to his unspeakable horror, a man, bearing a light, appeared at the end of the passage. His horror was suddenly converted into joy, however, when he recognised the form of his faithful attendant.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly appearing before him, 'where's my bedroom?'

Mr. Weller stared at his master with the most emphatic surprise; and it was not until the question had been repeated three several times, that he turned round, and led the way to the long-sought apartment.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, as he got into bed, 'I have made one of the most extraordinary mistakes to-night, that ever were heard of.'

'Wery likely, sir,' replied Mr. Weller dryly. 'Good-night, sir.'

17

In which Mr. Samuel Weller begins to devote his Energies to the Return Match between himself and M Trotter

IN A SMALL room in the vicinity of the stable-yard, betimes in the morning, which was ushered in by Mr. Pickwick's adventure with the middle-aged lady in the yellow curl-papers, sat Mr. Weller, senior, preparing himself for his journey to London.

On the table before him, stood a pot of ale, a cold round of beef, and a very respectable-looking loaf, to each of which he distributed his favours in turn, with the most rigid impartiality. He had just cut a mighty slice from the latter, when the footsteps of somebody entering the room, caused him to raise his head; and he beheld his son.

'Mornin', Sammy!' said the father.

The son walked up to the pot of ale, and nodding significantly to his parent, took a long draught by way of reply.

'I'm very sorry, Sammy,' said the elder Mr. Weller, 'to hear from your lips, as you let yo'rself be gammoned by that 'ere mulberry man.'

'Well, it's no use talking about it now,' said Sam. 'It's over, and can't be helped.' His revered parent continued in a solemn tone:

'I'm a-goin' to leave you, Samivel, my boy, and there's no telling ven I shall see you again. I've only this here one little bit of adwice to give you. If ever you gets to up'ards o' fifty, and feels disposed to go a-marryin' anybody—no matter who—jist you shut yourself up in your own room, if you've got one, and pison yourself off hand. Hangin's wulgar, so don't you have nothin' to say to that. Pison yourself, Samivel, my boy, pison yourself, and you'll be glad on it arterwards.' With these affecting words, Mr. Weller looked steadfastly on his son, and turning slowly upon his heel, disappeared from his sight.

In the contemplative mood which these words had awakened, Mr. Samuel Weller walked forth from the Great White Horse when his father had left him; and bending his steps towards St. Clement's Church, endeavoured to dissipate his melancholy, by strolling among its ancient precincts. He had loitered about, for some time, when he found himself in a retired spot—a kind of courtyard of venerable appearance—which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered. He was about retracing his steps, when the green gate of a garden at the bottom of the yard opened, and a man having emerged therefrom, walked briskly up the courtyard; but he no sooner caught sight of Mr. Weller than he faltered, and stopped. As the green gate was closed behind him, and there was no other outlet but the one in front, however, he was not long in perceiving that he must pass Mr. Samuel Weller to get away. He therefore resumed his brisk pace, and advanced, staring straight before him. The most extraordinary thing about the man was, that he was contorting his face into the most fearful and astonishing grimaces that ever were beheld.

'Hollo, you sir!' shouted Sam fiercely.

• The stranger stopped.

'It won't do, Job Trotter,' said Sam. 'You ain't so wery 'andsome that you can afford to throw avay many o' your good looks. Bring them 'ere eyes 'o your'n back into their

proper places, or I'll knock 'em out of your head. D'ye hear?"

Mr. Trotter gradually allowed his face to resume its natural expression; and then giving a start of joy, exclaimed, 'What do I see? Mr. Walker!'

'Ah,' replied Sam. 'You're wery glad to see me, ain't you? What have you got to say to me, afore I knock your head off?'

'I, Mr. Walker!'

'Don't call me Valker; my name's Veller; you know that well enough. What have you got to say to me?'

'Bless you, Mr. Walker—Weller, I mean. If you knew how I have looked for you, Mr. Weller—'

'Wery hard, indeed, I s'pose?' said Sam dryly.

'Very, very, sir,' replied Mr. Trotter, without moving a muscle of his face. 'But shake hands, Mr. Weller.'

Sam eyed his companion for a few seconds, and then, as if actuated by a sudden impulse, complied with his request.

'How,' said Job Trotter, as they walked away, 'how is your dear, good master? Oh, he is a worthy gentleman, Mr. Weller! I hope he didn't catch cold, that dreadful night, sir.'

There was a momentary look of deep slyness in Job Trotter's eye, as he said this, which ran a thrill through Mr. Weller's clenched fist, as he burned with a desire to make a demonstration on his ribs. Sam constrained himself, however, and replied that his master was extremely well.

'Oh, I am so glad,' replied Mr. Trotter; 'is he here?'

'Is your'n?' asked Sam, by way of reply.

'Oh, yes, he is here, and I grieve to say, Mr. Weller, he is going on worse than ever.'

'At the house with the green gate?' said Sam.

'No, no—oh, not there,' replied Job, with a quickness very unusual to him, 'not there.'

'What was *you* a-doin' there?' asked Sam.

'Why, Mr. Weller,' replied Job, 'I don't mind telling you my little secrets, because, you know, we took such a fancy for each other when we first met. In that house with the green gate, Mr. Weller, they keep a good many servants. And one

of them is a cook, who has saved up a little money, Mr. Weller, and is desirous, if she can establish herself in life, to open a little shop in the chandlery way, you see. I got a little intimate with her, and from that, an acquaintance sprung up between us, and I may venture to say, Mr. Weller, that I am to be the chandler.'

'Ah, and a werry amiable chandler you'll make,' replied Sam, eyeing Job with a side look of intense dislike.

'The great advantage of this, Mr. Weller,' continued Job, his eyes filling with tears as he spoke, 'will be, that I shall be able to leave my present disgraceful service with that bad man. To think that my master should have suspected the conversation I had with yours, and so dragged me away in a post-chaise, and after persuading the sweet young lady to say she knew nothing of him, and bribing the school-mistress to do the same, deserted her for a better speculation! Oh! Mr. Weller, it makes me shudder.'

'Oh, that was the vay, was it?' said Mr. Weller.

'To be sure it was,' replied Job.

'Vell,' said Sam, as they had now arrived near the hotel. 'I vant to have a little bit o' talk with you, Job; so if you're not partickler engaged, I should like to see you at the Great White Horse to-night, somewhere about eight o'clock.'

'I shall be sure to be with you, sir,' said Mr. Trotter; and wringing Sam's hand with the utmost fervour, he walked away.

'Take care, Job Trotter, take care,' said Sam, looking after him, 'or I shall be one too many for you this time. I shall indeed.'

Wherein Mr. Peter Magnus grows jealous, and the middle-aged Lady apprehensive, which brings the Pickwickians within the Grasp of the Law

WHEN Mr. Pickwick descended to the room in which he and Mr. Peter Magnus had spent the preceding evening, he found that gentleman pacing up and down the room in a state of the utmost excitement and agitation.

‘Good-morning, sir,’ said Mr. Peter Magnus. ‘Mr. Pickwick, I have sent up my card. And the waiter brought back word, that she would see me at eleven—at eleven, sir; it only wants a quarter now.’

‘Confidence is a great thing in these cases,’ observed Mr. Pickwick.

‘I believe it is, sir,’ said Mr. Peter Magnus. ‘I am very confident, sir. Really, Mr. Pickwick, I do not see why a man should feel any fear in such a case as this, sir.’

Down they sat to breakfast, but it was evident, notwithstanding the boasting of Mr. Peter Magnus, that he laboured under a very considerable degree of nervousness.

‘He—he—he,’ tittered Mr. Magnus, affecting cheerfulness, and gasping with agitation. ‘It only wants two minutes, Mr. Pickwick. Am I pale, sir?’

‘Not very,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

There was a brief pause.

‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick; but have you ever done this sort of thing in your time?’ said Mr. Magnus.

‘You mean proposing?’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Yes.’

‘Never,’ said Mr. Pickwick, with great energy, ‘never.’

Mr. Magnus gazed on Mr. Pickwick’s intelligent face for a short time in silence; and then shook him warmly by the hand, and rushed desperately from the room.

Mr. Pickwick had taken a few strides to and fro; and the small hand of the clock following the latter part of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half-hour, when the door suddenly opened. He turned round to meet Mr. Peter Magnus, and encountered, in his stead, the joyous face of Mr. Tupman, the serene countenance of Mr. Winkle, and the intellectual lineaments of Mr. Snodgrass. As Mr. Pickwick greeted them, Mr. Peter Magnus tripped into the room.

'My friends, the gentleman I was speaking of—Mr. Magnus,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Your servant, gentleman,' said Mr. Magnus, evidently in a high state of excitement; 'Mr. Pickwick, allow me to speak to you one moment, sir.'

As he said this, Mr. Magnus harnessed his forefinger to Mr. Pickwick's buttonhole, and, drawing him to a window recess, said:

'Congratulate me, Mr. Pickwick, she is mine.'

'I congratulate you, with all my heart,' replied Mr. Pickwick, warmly shaking his new friend by the hand.

'You must see her, sir,' said Mr. Magnus; 'this way, if you please. Excuse us for one instant, gentlemen.' Hurrying on in this way, Mr. Peter Magnus drew Mr. Pickwick from the room. He paused at the next door in the passage, and tapped gently thereat.

'Come in,' said a female voice. And in they went.

'Miss Witherfield,' said Mr. Magnus, 'allow me to introduce my very particular friend, Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick, I beg to make you known to Miss Witherfield.'

As Mr. Pickwick bowed, he took his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, and put them on; a process which he had no sooner gone through, than, uttering an exclamation of surprise, Mr. Pickwick retreated several paces, and the lady, with a half-suppressed scream, hid her face in her hands, and dropped into a chair; whereupon Mr. Peter Magnus was stricken motionless on the spot, and gazed from one to the other, with a countenance expressive of the extremities of horror and surprise.

The fact is, that Mr. Pickwick no sooner put on his spectacles, than he at once recognised in the future Mrs. Magnus

the lady into whose room he had so unwarrantably intruded on the previous night.

‘Mr. Pickwick!’ exclaimed Mr. Magnus, lost in astonishment, ‘what is the meaning of this, sir? What is the meaning of it, sir?’ added Mr. Magnus, in a threatening, and a louder tone.

‘Sir,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘I decline answering that question.’

‘Miss Witherfield,’ said Mr. Peter Magnus, ‘do you know this person?’

‘I have seen him,’ replied the middle-aged lady.

‘Where?’ inquired Mr. Magnus, ‘where?’

‘That,’ said the middle-aged lady, rising from her seat, and averting her head—‘that I would not reveal for worlds.’

‘I understand you, ma’am,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘and respect your delicacy; it shall never be revealed by *me*, depend upon it.’

‘Upon my word, ma’am,’ said Mr. Magnus, ‘considering the situation in which I am placed with regard to yourself, you carry this matter off with tolerable coolness—tolerable coolness, ma’am.’

‘Cruel, Mr. Magnus!’ said the middle-aged lady; ‘here she wept very copiously indeed.’

‘Address your observations to me, sir,’ interposed Mr. Pickwick; ‘I alone am to blame, if anybody be.’

‘Oh! you alone are to blame, are you, sir?’ said Mr. Magnus. Here Mr. Peter Magnus indulged in a prolonged sneer; and taking off his green spectacles—which he probably found superfluous in his fit of jealousy—rolled his little eyes about, in a manner frightful to behold.

Mr. Pickwick’s upright and honourable bearing would have carried conviction to any reasonable mind; but, unfortunately, at that particular moment the mind of Mr. Peter Magnus was in anything but reasonable order.

Mr. Pickwick, in his turn, conscious of his own innocence and rectitude, and irritated by having unfortunately involved the middle-aged lady in such an unpleasant affair, was not so quietly disposed as was his wont. The consequence was, that words ran high, and voices higher; and at length Mr. Magnus told Mr. Pickwick he should hear from him; to

which Mr. Pickwick replied, with laudable politeness, that the sooner he heard from him the better; whereupon the middle-aged lady rushed in terror from the room.

If the middle-aged lady had mingled much with the busy world, she would have known that this sort of ferocity is the most harmless thing in nature; but as she had lived for the most part in the country, and never read the parliamentary debates, she was little versed in these particular refinements of civilised life. The more the middle-aged lady meditated, the more terrified she became; and at length she determined to repair to the house of the principal magistrate of the town, and request him to secure the persons of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman (who had been called in to support his leader) without delay.

Now George Nupkins, Esquire, the principal magistrate aforesaid, on this particular morning, was in a state of the utmost excitement and irritation, for there had been a rebellion in the town; all the day-scholars at the largest day-school had conspired to break the windows of an obnoxious apple-seller, and had hooted the beadle and pelted the constabulary—an elderly gentleman in top-boots, who had been called out to repress the tumult. When a lady was announced on pressing, private, and particular business, Mr. Nupkins looked calmly terrible, and commanded that the lady should be shown in; and Miss Witherfield, interestingly agitated, was ushered in accordingly.

‘Muzzle!’ said the magistrate.

Muzzle was an undersized footman, with a long body and short legs.

‘Muzzle! Place a chair, and leave the room.’

‘Yes, your Worship.’

‘Now, ma’am, will you state your business?’ said the magistrate.

‘It is very distressing to me, sir, to give this information,’ said Miss Witherfield, ‘but I fear a duel is going to be fought here.’

‘In Ipswich, ma’am! A duel in Ipswich!’ said the magistrate, perfectly aghast at the notion. ‘Impossible, ma’am; nothing of the kind can be contemplated in this town, I am persuaded.’

'My information is, unfortunately, but too correct,' said the middle-aged lady; 'I was present at the quarrel.'

'It's a most extraordinary thing,' said the astounded magistrate. 'Muzzle. Send Mr. Jinks here, directly! Instantly!'

'Yes, your Worship.'

Muzzle retired; and a pale, sharp-nosed, half-fed, shabbily-clad clerk, of middle age, entered the room and, being ordered to take the lady's information, shambled to a seat, and proceeded to write it down.

'This man, Pickwick, is the principal, I understand?' said the magistrate, when the statement was finished.

'He is,' said the middle-aged lady.

'And the other rioter—what's his name, Mr. Jinks?'

'Tupman, sir.'

'Very well,' said the magistrate. 'These are two cut-throats from London, who have come down here to destroy his Majesty's population. Draw up the warrants, Mr. Jinks. Muzzle!'

'Yes, your Worship.'

'Is Grummer downstairs?'

'Yes, your Worship.'

'Send him up.'

The obsequious Muzzle retired, and presently returned, introducing the elderly gentleman in the top-boots, who was chiefly remarkable for a bottle-nose, a hoarse voice, a snuff-coloured surtout, and a wandering eye.

'Grummer,' said the magistrate. 'You will bring these persons before me, this afternoon. You will find them at the Great White Horse. Procure assistance, and execute these warrants with as little delay as possible.'

While these resolute and determined preparations for the conservation of the king's peace were pending, Mr. Pickwick and his friends had sat quietly down to dinner; and very talkative and companionable they all were when the door opened, and a somewhat forbidding countenance peeped into the room. The body to which the forbidding countenance belonged, slowly brought itself into the apartment, and presented the form of an elderly individual in top-boots.

The Pickwickians gazed on each other with wondering eyes.

'Which is Mr. Tupman?' inquired Mr. Grummer. He had an intuitive perception of Mr. Pickwick; he knew *him* at once.

'My name's Tupman,' said that gentleman.

'My name's Law,' said Mr. Grummer. 'Law, civil power, and executive; them's my titles; here's my authority. Blank Tupman, blank Pickwick—against the peace of our sufferin' lord the king. I apprehend you, Pickwick! Tupman—the aforesaid.'

'What do you mean by this insolence?' said Mr. Tupman, starting up; 'leave the room!'

'Hollo,' said Mr. Grummer, retreating very expeditiously to the door, and opening it an inch or two. 'Come for'ard, Dubbley.'

At the word of command, a dirty-faced man, something over six feet high, and stout in proportion, squeezed himself through the half-open door (making his face very red in the process), and entered the room.

'Order in the division under your charge, Dubbley,' said Mr. Grummer.

Mr. Dubbley did as he was desired; and half a dozen men, each with a short truncheon and a brass crown, flocked into the room.

Mr. Pickwick and his followers rose as one man.

'What is the meaning of this atrocious intrusion upon my privacy?' said Mr. Pickwick.

When the executive perceived that Mr. Pickwick and his friends were disposed to resist the authority of the law, they very significantly turned up their coat sleeves. This demonstration was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He conferred a few moments with Mr. Tupman apart, and then signified his readiness to proceed to the mayor's residence, merely begging the parties then and there assembled, to take notice, that it was his firm intention to resent this monstrous invasion of his privileges as an Englishman, the instant he was at liberty.

But Mr. Pickwick resolutely protested against making his appearance in the public streets, surrounded and guarded



My name's Law,' said Grummer. 'Law, civil power, and exekative; them' my titles.'

by the officers of justice, like a common criminal. It was recollected that there stood in the inn yard, an old sedan-chair, which would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, at least as conveniently as a modern post-chaise. The chair was hired, and brought into the hall, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman squeezed themselves inside, and pulled down the blinds; a couple of chairmen were speedily found; and the procession started in grand order. The specials surrounded the body of the vehicle; Mr. Grummer and Mr. Dubbley marched triumphantly in front; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle walked arm-in-arm behind; and the unsoaped of Ipswich brought up the rear.

Mr. Weller was returning in a rather desponding state from an unsuccessful survey of the mysterious house with the green gate, when, raising his eyes, he beheld a crowd pouring down the street, surrounding an object which had very much the appearance of a sedan-chair. He stepped aside to see the crowd pass; and finding that they were cheering away, forthwith began to cheer too, with all his might and main, when he was suddenly stopped by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass.

‘What’s the row, gen’l’m’n?’ cried Sam. ‘Who have they got in this here watch-box in mournin’?’

Though the words were inaudible, Sam saw by the motion of the two pairs of lips that they had uttered the magic word ‘Pickwick.’

This was enough. In another minute Mr. Weller had made his way through the crowd, stopped the chairmen, and confronted the portly Grummer.

‘Stand back,’ said Mr. Grummer.

‘Knock him down, if he don’t,’ said Mr. Dubbley.

‘I’m very much obliged to you, old gen’l’m’n,’ replied Sam, ‘for consulting my convenience. How are you, sir?’ This last observation was addressed with a patronising air to Mr. Pickwick, who was peeping through the front window.

‘Stand back!’ said the outraged Mr. Grummer. By way of adding force to the command, he thrust the brass emblem of royalty into Sam’s neckcloth with one hand, and seized Sam’s collar with the other—a compliment which Mr. Weller

returned by knocking him down out of hand, having previously with the utmost consideration, knocked down a chairman for him to lie upon.

Mr. Winkle no sooner saw Mr. Grummer fall than he made a terrific onslaught on a small boy who stood next him; whereupon Mr. Snodgrass announced in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation. He was immediately surrounded and secured; and it is but common justice both to him and Mr. Winkle to say, that they did not make the slightest attempt to rescue either themselves nor Mr. Weller, who, after a most vigorous resistance, was overpowered by numbers and taken prisoner. The procession then reformed; the chairmen resumed their stations; and the march was recommenced.

19

Showing how majestic and impartial Mr. Nupkins was; and how Mr. Weller returned Mr. Job Trotter's Shuttlecock as heavily as it came

VIOLENT was Mr. Weller's indignation as he was borne along; but anger quickly gave way to curiosity when the all-important Mr. Grummer, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps to the very green gate from which Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-handle. The ring was answered by a very smart and pretty-faced servant-girl, who summoned Mr. Muzzle. Mr. Muzzle opened one half of the carriage gate, to admit the sedan, the captured ones, and the specials; and immediately slammed it in the faces of the mob.

At the foot of a flight of steps, leading to the house door, which was guarded on either side by an American aloe in a green tub, the sedan-chair stopped. Mr. Pickwick and his

friends were conducted into the hall, whence, having been previously announced by Muzzle, and ordered in by Mr. Nupkins, they were ushered into the worshipful presence of that public-spirited officer.

'Now, Grummer, who is that person?' said Mr. Nupkins, pointing to Mr. Pickwick, who, as the spokesman of his friends, stood hat in hand, bowing with the utmost politeness and respect.

'This here's Pickwick, your Wash-up,' said Grummer.

'Come, none o' that 'ere, old Strike-a-light,' interposed Mr. Weller, elbowing himself into the front rank.

'Who is this man, Giummer?' said the magistrate.

'Wery desp'rate ch'racter, your Wash-up,' replied Grummer. 'He attempted to rescue the prisoners, and assaulted the officers; so we took him into custody, and brought him here.'

'You did quite right,' replied the magistrate. 'He is evidently a desperate ruffian.'

'He is my servant, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick angrily.

'Oh! he is your servant, is he?' said Mr. Nupkins. 'What's your name, fellow?'

'Veller,' replied Sam.

'A very good name for the Newgate Calendar,' said Mr. Nupkins.

This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter of five minutes' duration.

'Put down his name, Mr. Jinks,' said the magistrate.

'Two L's, old feller,' said Sam.

Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him instantly. It is a dangerous thing to laugh at the wrong man, in these cases.

'Now, Mr. Jinks,' said the magistrate, 'swear Grummer.'

Grummer was sworn directly; but as Grummer wandered, and Mr. Nupkins's dinner was nearly ready, Mr. Nupkins cut the matter short, by putting leading questions to Grummer, which Grummer answered as nearly in the affirmative as he could. So the examination went off, all very smooth and comfortable, and two assaults were proved against Mr.

Weller, and a threat against Mr. Winkle, and a push against Mr. Snodgrass. 'When all this was done to the magistrate's satisfaction, the magistrate drew himself up in his chair, and was proceeding to commence his address, when Mr. Pickwick interposed.

'I beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'but I must claim my right to be heard so far as I am personally concerned.'

Mr. Nupkins looked at Mr. Pickwick with a gaze of intense astonishment, at his displaying such unwonted temerity; and was apparently about to return a very angry reply, when Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered something in his ear.

At length the magistrate turned to Mr. Pickwick, and said sharply, 'What do you want to say?'

'First,' said Mr. Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles, under which even Nupkins quailed, 'first, I wish to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?'

'An information has been sworn before me,' said the magistrate, 'that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man, Tupman, is your aider and abettor in it. Therefore I call upon you both, to—I think that's the course, Mr. Jinks?'

'Certainly, sir.'

'To—to—what, Mr. Jinks?' said the magistrate pettishly.

'To find bail, sir.'

'Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both to find bail. I shall require two sureties of fifty pounds each, and they must be householders, of course.'

'But bless my heart, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'we are perfect strangers in this town. I have as little knowledge of any householders here, as I have intention of fighting a duel with anybody.'

'Have you anything more to say?' inquired the magistrate.

Mr. Pickwick *had* a great deal more to say, which he would no doubt have said, if he had not been pulled by the sleeve by Mr. Weller, with whom he was immediately engaged in so earnest a conversation, that he suffered the magistrate's inquiry to pass wholly unnoticed. Mr. Nupkins proceeded.

amidst the reverential and admiring silence of the constables, to pronounce his decision.

He should fine Weller two pounds for the first assault, and three pounds for the second. He should fine Winkle two pounds, and Snodgrass one pound, besides requiring them to enter into their own recognisances to keep the peace towards all his Majesty's subjects.

Immediately on the magistrate ceasing to speak, Mr. Pickwick, with a smile mantling on his again good-humoured countenance, stepped forward, and said:

'I beg the magistrate's pardon, but may I request a few minutes' private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?'

'This is a most extraordinary request,' said the magistrate.—'A private interview?'

'A private interview,' replied Mr. Pickwick firmly; 'only as a part of the information which I wish to communicate is derived from my servant, I should wish him to be present.'

Mr. Nupkins turned suddenly pale. Could the man Weller, in a moment of remorse, have divulged some secret conspiracy for his assassination? It was a dreadful thought. He was a public man; and he turned paler, as he thought of Julius Cæsar and Mr. Perceval.

Mr. Nupkins debated the matter within himself for a few seconds, and then, rising from his chair, and requesting Mr. Pickwick and Sam to follow him, led the way into a small room which opened into the justice-parlour.

'I will come to the point at once, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'it affects yourself and your credit materially. I have every reason to believe, sir, that you are harbouring in your house a gross impostor! Is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitz-Marshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because,' added Mr. Pickwick, as he saw that Mr. Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption, 'because if he be I know that person to be an unprincipled adventurer—a dishonourable character—a man who preys upon society, and makes easily-deceived people his dupes, sir; his absurd, his foolish, his wretched dupes.'

'Dear me,' said Mr. Nupkins, turning very red, and

altering his whole manner directly. 'Dear me, Mr.—'
'Pickwick,' said Sam.

'Pickwick,' said the magistrate, 'dear me, Mr. Pickwick—pray take a seat—you cannot mean this? Captain Fitz-Marshall!'

Mr. Pickwick proceeded to pour into the horror-stricken ear of Mr. Nupkins, an abridged account of all Mr. Jingle's atrocities. As the narrative proceeded, all the warm blood in the body of Mr. Nupkins tingled up into the very tips of his ears. He had picked up the captain at a neighbouring race-course. Charmed with his long list of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive travel, and his fashionable demeanour, Mrs. Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited Captain Fitz-Marshall and quoted Captain Fitz-Marshall, and hurled Captain Fitz-Marshall at the devoted heads of their select circle of acquaintance. And now, to hear, after all, that he was a needy adventurer, a strolling player, and if not a swindler, something so very like it, that it was hard to tell the difference!

'But after all,' said Mr. Nupkins, brightening for a moment, after a long pause; 'after all, this is a mere statement. Captain Fitz-Marshall is a man of very engaging manners, and, I dare say, has many enemies. What proof have you of the truth of these representations?'

'Confront me with him,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'that is all I ask, and all I require.'

'Why,' said Mr. Nupkins, 'that might be very easily done, for he will be here to-night, and then there would be no occasion to make the matter public. Pray step back into the next room.'

Into the next room they went.

'Grummer,' said the magistrate, in an awful voice. 'Was the account you gave me just now strictly true? Now be careful, sir?'

'Your Wasn-up,' stammered Grummer, 'I—'

'Oh, you are confused, are you?' said the magistrate. 'Mr. Jinks, you observe this confusion?'

'Certainly, sir,' replied Jinks.

The unfortunate Grummer proceeded to re-state his com-

plaint, but, what between Mr. Jinks's taking down his words, and the magistrate's taking them up, his natural tendency to rambling, and his extreme confusion, he managed to get involved, in something under three minutes, in such a mass of entanglement and contradiction, that Mr. Nupkins at once declared he didn't believe him. So the fines were remitted, and Mr. Jinks found a couple of bail in no time.

Mrs. Nupkins was a majestic female in a pink gauze turban and a light brown wig. Miss Nupkins possessed all her mamma's haughtiness without the turban, and all her ill-nature without the wig; and whenever the exercise of these two amiable qualities involved mother and daughter in some unpleasant dilemma, as they not unfrequently did, they both concurred in laying the blame on the shoulders of Mr. Nupkins. Accordingly, when Mr. Nupkins sought Mrs. Nupkins, and detailed the communication which had been made by Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Nupkins suddenly recollected that she had always expected something of the kind.

'The idea!' said Miss Nupkins, forcing a tear of very scanty proportions into the corner of each eye; 'the idea of my being made such a fool of!'

'Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear,' said Mrs. Nupkins; 'how I have implored and begged that man to inquire into the captain's family connections.'

'How can we ever show ourselves in society!' said Miss Nupkins.

'How can we face the Porkenhams?' cried Mrs. Nupkins.

'Or the Griggs!' cried Miss Nupkins.

Mrs. Nupkins decided, in her own mind, that the best thing to do would be to ask Mr. Pickwick and his friends to remain until the captain's arrival, and then to give Mr. Pickwick the opportunity he sought. If it appeared that he had spoken truly, the captain could be turned out of the house without noising the matter abroad.

When Mrs. Nupkins dried up her tears, Miss Nupkins dried up *hers*, and Mr. Nupkins was very glad to settle the matter as Mrs. Nupkins had proposed. So Mr. Pickwick and his friends, having washed off all marks of their late encounter,

were introduced to the ladies, and soon afterwards to their dinner; and Mr. Weller was consigned to the care and guardianship of Mr. Muzzle, who was specially enjoined to take him below, and make much of him.

'How de do, sir?' said Mr. Muzzle, as he conducted Mr. Weller down the kitchen stairs. 'Take care of the last step, Mr. Weller. Would you like to wash your hands, sir, before we join the ladies? Here's a sink, with the water laid on, sir, and a clean jack towel behind the door.'

'Ah! perhaps I may as well have a rinse,' replied Mr. Weller, applying plenty of yellow soap to the towel; and rubbing away till his face shone again. 'How many ladies are there?'

'Only two in our kitchen,' said Mr. Muzzle; 'cook and ouscmaid. This way, sir, if you please; this way.'

Preceding Mr. Weller, with the utmost politeness, Mr. Muzzle conducted him into the kitchen.

'Mary,' said Mr. Muzzle to the pretty servant-girl, 'this is Mr. Weller; a gentleman as master has sent down, to be made as comfortable as possible.'

'And yout master's a knowin' hand, and has just sent me to the right place,' said Mr. Weller, with a glance of admiration at Mary. 'If I wos master o' this here house, I should alvays find the materials for comfort vere Mary wos.'

'Lor, Mr. Weller!' said Mary, blushing.

'Well, I never!' ejaculated the cook.

Mr. Weller's easy manners and conversational powers had such irresistible influence with his new friends, that before the dinner was half over, they were on a footing of perfect intimacy, and in possession of a full account of the delinquency of Job Trotter.

'I never could a-bear that Job,' said Mary.

'No more you never ought to, my dear,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Why not?' inquired Mary.

'Cos ugliness and svindlin' never ought to be formiliar with elegance and wirtew,' replied Mr. Weller.

In the midst of all this jollity and conviviality the kitchen door opened, and in walked Mr. Job Trotter. He involuntarily shrank back a pace or two, and stood gazing on the

unexpected scene before him, perfectly motionless with amazement and terror.

Laying his hand on the mulberry collar of the unresisting Job, Mr. Weller dragged him into the kitchen; and, locking the door, handed the key to Mr. Muzzle, who very coolly buttoned it up in a side pocket.

'Well, here's a game!' cried Sam. 'Only think o' my master havin' the pleasure o' meeting your'n upstairs, and me havin' the joy o' meetin' you down hére. How *are* you gettin' on, and how *is* the chandlery bis'ness likely to *do*? Sit down; sit down.'

Mr. Trotter suffered himself to be forced into a chair by the fireside. He cast his small eyes, first on Mr. Weller, and then on Mr. Muzzle, but said nothing.

'Now, I'll tell you what it is, young man,' said Mr. Muzzle solemnly, 'this here lady (pointing to the cook) keeps company with me; and when you presume, sir, to talk of keeping chandlers' shops with her, you injure me in one of the most delicatest points in which one man can injure another. I'm very sorry to have to explain myself before ladies, but the urgency of the case will be my excuse. The back kitchen's empty, sir. If you will step in there, sir, Mr. Weller will see fair, and we can have mutual satisfaction till the bell rings. Follow me, sir!'

Now, the cook no sooner heard the concluding words of this desperate challenge than she uttered a loud and piercing shriek; and rushing on Mr. Job Trotter, tore and buffeted his large flat face, and twining her hands in his long black hair, tore therefrom about enough to make five or six dozen of the very largest-sized mourning-rings. Having accomplished this feat with all the ardour which her devoted love for Mr. Muzzle inspired, she instantly fell under the dresser, and fainted away.

At this moment the bell rang.

'That's for you, Job Trotter,' said Sam; and before Mr. Trotter could offer remonstrance or reply, Sam seized one arm and Mr. Muzzle the other; and one pulling before, and the other pushing behind, they conveyed him upstairs, and into the parlour.

Alfred Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitz-Marshall, was standing near the door with his hat in his hand, and a smile on his face, wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant situation.

‘What prevents me,’ said Mr. Nupkins, with magisterial dignity, as Job was brought in—‘what prevents me from detaining these men as rogues and impostors?’

‘Pride, old fellow, pride,’ replied Jingle, quite at his *ease*—‘Wouldn’t do—no go—caught a captain, eh?—ha! ha! very good—husband for daughter—biter bit—make it public—not for worlds—look stupid—very!’

‘Mr. Nupkins,’ said the elder lady, ‘this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed.’

‘Certainly, my dear,’ said Mr. Nupkins. ‘Muzzle! Open the front door.’

‘Yes, your Worship.’

‘Leave the house!’ said Mr. Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled, and moved towards the door.

‘Stay!’ said Mr. Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

‘I have only to add, sir,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘that I consider you a rascal, and a—a ruffian—and—and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except that pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery.’

‘Ha! ha!’ said Jingle, ‘good fellow, Pickwick—fine neart—stout old boy—but must *not* be passionate—bad thing, very—bye, bye—see you again some day.’

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in his old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

‘Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Weller was following.

‘Mayn’t I polish that ’ere Job off, in the front garden?’ said Mr. Weller.

‘Certainly not,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

‘Mayn’t I kick him out o’ the gate, sir?’ said Mr. Weller.

'Not on any account,' replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr. Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up; for the wily Mr. Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr. Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

'Having discharged my duty, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Nupkins, 'I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. Your secret is safe with us.'

Mr. Pickwick bowed low to the ladies, and notwithstanding the solicitations of the family, left the room with his friends.

'Get your hat, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'It's below stairs, sir,' said Sam, and he ran down after it.

Now, there was nobody in the kitchen, but the pretty housemaid. They had to look all over the place for the hat. The pretty housemaid, in her anxiety to find it, went down on her knees, and turned over all the things that were heaped together in a little corner by the door.

'Here it is,' said the pretty housemaid. 'This is it, ain't it?'

'Let me look,' said Sam.

Whether it was that the pretty housemaid's face looked prettier still, when it was raised towards Sam's, or whether it was the accidental consequence of their being so near to each other, is matter of uncertainty to this day; but Sam kissed her.

'You don't mean to say you did that on purpose,' said the pretty housemaid, blushing.

'No, I didn't then,' said Sam; 'but I will now.'

So he kissed her again.

And this was the first passage of Mr. Weller's first love.

*A brief Account of the Progress of the Action of
Bardell against Pickwick*

HAVING accomplished the main end and object of his journey, by the exposure of Jingle, Mr. Pickwick resolved on immediately returning to London; and accompanied by his three friends, and Mr. Samuel Weller, he arrived in the metropolis, in perfect health and safety.

Messrs. Tupman, Winkle, and Snodgrass repaired to their several homes to make such preparations as might be requisite for their forthcoming visit to Dingley Dell; and Mr. Pickwick and Sam took up their present abode in very good, old-fashioned and comfortable quarters, to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.

Mr. Pickwick had dined, finished his second pint of particular port, pulled his silk handkerchief over his head, put his feet on the fender, and thrown himself back in an easy-chair, when the entrance of Mr. Weller with his carpet-bag, aroused him from his tranquil meditation.

'I have just been thinking, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'that having left a good many things at Mrs. Bardell's, in Goswell Street, I ought to arrange for taking them away, before I leave town again. I wish you would step up to Goswell Street, Sam, and arrange about it. And stay, Sam,' added Mr. Pickwick, pulling out his purse, 'there is some rent to pay. Tell Mrs. Bardell she may put a bill up, as soon as she likes.'

'Wery good, sir,' replied Mr. Weller; 'anythin' more, sir?'

'I have no objection, Sam, to your endeavouring to ascertain how Mrs. Bardell herself seems disposed towards me, and whether it is really probable that this vile and groundless action is to be carried to extremity.'

Sam gave a short nod of intelligence, and left the room. It.

was nearly nine o'clock when he reached Goswell Street. A couple of candles were burning in the little front parlour, and a couple of caps were reflected on the window-blind. Mrs. Bardell had got company.

The two caps, reflected on the window-blind, were the respective head-dresses of a couple of Mrs. Bardell's most particular acquaintance, who had just stepped in, to have a quiet cup of tea, and a little warm supper of a couple of sets of pettitoes and some toasted cheese. Mrs. Cluppins was a little, brisk, busy-looking woman; Mrs. Sanders was a big, fat, heavy-faced personage; and the two were the company.

Mr. Weller presenting himself in the parlour, explained his business to Mrs. Bardell thus:

'Wery sorry to 'casion any personal inconveniencce, ma'am. All I've come about is jest this here; first, to give my governor's notice—there it is. Secondly, to pay the rent—here it is. Thirdly, to say as all his things is to be put together, and give to anybody as we sends for 'em. Fourthly, that you may let the place as soon as you like—and that's all.'

'Whatever has happened,' said Mrs. Bardell, 'I always have said, and always will say, that in every respect but one, Mr. Pickwick has always behaved himself like a perfect gentleman. His money always was as good as the bank—always.'

As Mrs. Bardell said this, she applied her handkerchief to her eyes.

'I raly carinot contain myself,' said Mrs. Cluppins, 'when I think of such perjury. Hows'ever, there is law for us women, mis'rable creeturs as they'd make us, if they could; and that your master will find out, young man, to his cost, afore he's six months older.'

At this consolatory reflection, Mrs. Cluppins bridled up, and smiled at Mrs. Sanders, who smiled back again.

'The action's going in, and no mistake,' thought Sam.

'Here's the receipt, Mr. Weller,' said Mrs. Bardell, 'and here's the change. I suppose you've heard what's going forward?'

'I've heerd somethin' on it,' replied Sam.

'It's a terrible thing to be dragged before the public, in that way, Mr. Weller,' said Mrs. Bardell; 'but I see now, that it's

the only thing I ought to do, and my lawyers, Mr. Dodson and Fogg, tell me that, with the evidence as we shall call, we must succeed.'

'Ven is it expected to come on?' inquired Sam.

'Either in February or March,' replied Mrs. Bardell.

'And won't Mr. Dodson and Fogg be wild if the plaintiff shouldn't get it?' added Mrs. Cluppins, 'when they do it all on speculation!'

'Ah! won't they!' said Mrs. Sanders.

'But the plaintiff must get it,' resumed Mrs. Cluppins.

'Vell,' said Sam, rising, 'all I can say is that I vish you *may* get it.'

'Thank'ee, Mr. Weller,' said Mrs. Bardell fervently.

'And of them Dodson and Foggs, as does these sort o' things on spec,' continued Mr. Weller—'all I can say o' them is, that I vish they had the reward I'd give 'em.'

Mr. Weller wended his way back to the George and Vulture, and faithfully recounted to his master, such indications of the sharp practice of Dodson & Fogg, as he had contrived to pick up in his visit to Mrs. Bardell's. An interview with Mr. Perker, next day, more than confirmed Mr. Weller's statement; and Mr. Pickwick was fain to prepare for his Christmas visit to Dingley Dell, with the pleasant anticipation that some two or three months afterwards, an action brought against him for damages sustained by reason of a breach of promise of marriage, would be publicly tried in the Court of Common Pleas.

A good-humoured Christmas Chapter, containing an Account of a Wedding

As BRISK as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the twenty-second day of December. Christmas was close at hand, in all his bluff and hearty honesty; it was the season of hospitality, merriment, and open-heartedness; the old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him, and amidst the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away.

But we are keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold on the outside of the Muggleton coach, which they have just attained, well wrapped up in greatcoats, shawls, and comforters. The portmanteaus and carpet-bags have been stowed away, and Mr. Weller and the guard are endeavouring to insinuate into the fore-boot a huge cod-fish several sizes too large for it—which is snugly packed up, in a long brown basket, with a layer of straw over the top, and which has been left to the last, in order that he may repose in safety on the half-dozen barrels of real native oysters, all the property of Mr. Pickwick, which have been arranged in regular order at the bottom of the receptacle. The coachman mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs and their shawls over their noses, the helpers pull the horse-cloths off, the coachman shouts out a cheery 'All right,' and away they go.

At three o'clock that afternoon they all stood high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion, having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy, to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters, and weaving its beautiful network upon the trees and hedges. Mr. Pickwick

was busily engaged in counting the barrels of oysters and superintending the disinterment of the cod-fish, when he felt himself gently pulled by the skirts of the coat. Looking round, he discovered that the individual who resorted to this mode of catching his attention was no other than Mr. Wardle's favourite page.

'Aha!' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Aha!' said the fat boy.

As he said it, he glanced from the cod-fish to the oyster-barrels, and chuckled joyously. He was fatter than ever.

'Well, you look rosy enough, my young friend,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I've been asleep, right in front of the taproom fire,' replied the fat boy. 'Master sent me over with the shay-cart, to carry your luggage up to the house. He'd ha' sent some saddle-horses, but he thought you'd rather walk, being a cold day.'

'Yes, yes,' said Mr. Pickwick hastily. 'Yes, we would rather walk. Here, Sam!'

'Sir,' said Mr. Weller.

'Help Mr. Wardle's servant to put the packages into the cart, and then ride on with him. We will walk forward at once.'

Having given this direction, and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the footpath across the fields, and walked briskly away. The paths were hard; the grass was crisp and frosty; the air had a fine, dry, bracing coldness; and the rapid approach of the gray twilight (slate-coloured is a better term in frosty weather) made them look forward with pleasant anticipation to the comforts which awaited them at their hospitable entertainer's. As they turned into a lane they had to cross, the sound of many voices burst upon their ears; and before they had even had time to form a guess to whom they belonged, they walked into the very centre of the party who were expecting their arrival.

First, there was Wardle himself, looking, if that were possible, more jolly than ever; then there were Bella and her faithful Trundle; and, lastly, there were Emily and some eight or ten young ladies, who had all come down to the wedding, which was to take place next day, and who were in

as happy and important a state as young ladies usually are, on such momentous occasions; and they were, one and all, startling the fields and lanes, far and wide, with their frolic and laughter.

The ceremony of introduction, under such circumstances, was very soon performed. In two minutes thereafter, Mr. Pickwick was joking with the young ladies who wouldn't come over the stile while he looked. It is worthy of remark, too, that Mr. Snodgrass offered Emily far more assistance than the absolute terrors of the stile (although it was full three feet high, and had only a couple of stepping-stones) would seem to require; while one black-eyed young lady in a very nice little pair of boots with fur round the top, was observed to scream very loudly, when Mr. Winkle offered to help her over.

But if they were social and happy outside the house, what was the warmth and cordiality of their reception when they reached the farm!

The old lady was seated with customary state in the front parlour, but she was rather cross, and, by consequence, most particularly deaf.

'Mother,' said Wardle, 'Mr. Pickwick. You recollect him?'

'Never mind,' replied the old lady, with great dignity. 'Don't trouble Mr. Pickwick about an old creetur like me.' Here the old lady tossed her head, and smoothed down her lavender-coloured silk dress with trembling hands.

'Come, come, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I can't let you cut an old friend in this way. I have come down expressly to have a long talk, and another rubber with you.'

A happy party they were, that night. Sedate and solemn were the score of rubbers in which Mr. Pickwick and the old lady played together; uproarious was the mirth of the round table. Long after the ladies had retired, did the hot elder wine, well qualified with brandy and spice, go round, and round, and round again; and sound was the sleep and pleasant were the dreams that followed.

Mr. Pickwick was awakened early in the morning, by a hum of voices and a patterning of feet, sufficient to rouse even the fat boy from his heavy slumbers. Mr. Pickwick in his

innocence began to imagine that something dreadful must have occurred—when he grew more awake, and remembered the wedding. The occasion being an important one, he dressed himself with peculiar care; and descended to the breakfast-room.

There were all the female servants in a brand new uniform of pink muslin gowns with white bows in their caps. The old lady was dressed out in a brocaded gown, which had not seen the light for twenty years. Mr. Trundle was in high feather and spirits, but a little nervous withal. All the girls were in tears and white muslin, except a select two or three, who were being honoured with a private view of the bride and bride's-maids, upstairs.

Let us briefly say that the ceremony was performed by the old clergyman, in the parish church of Dingley Dell, and that Mr. Pickwick's name is attached to the register, still preserved in the vestry thereof. To all this, we may add, that Mr. Pickwick was the first who saluted the bride, and that in so doing he threw over her neck a rich gold watch and chain, which no mortal eyes but the jeweller's had ever beheld before. Then, the old church bell rang as gaily as it could, and they all returned to breakfast.

'Wardle,' said Mr. Pickwick, almost as soon as they were all seated, 'a glass of wine in honour of this happy occasion!'

'I shall be delighted, my boy,' said Wardle. 'Joe—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep.'

'No, I ain't, sir,' replied the fat boy, starting up from a remote corner, where, like the patron saint of fat boys—the immortal Horner—he had been devouring a Christmas pie.

'Fill Mr. Pickwick's glass.'

The fat boy filled Mr. Pickwick's glass, and then retired behind his master's chair, from whence he watched the play of the knives and forks, and the progress of the choice morsels from the dishes to the mouths of the company, with a kind of dark and gloomy joy that was most impressive.

'God bless you, old fellow!' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Same to you, my boy,' replied Wardle; and they pledged each other, heartily. All was happiness and festivity, until the mysterious disappearance of both the poor relations

beneath the table, warned the party that it was time to adjourn.

At dinner they met again, after a five-and-twenty mile walk, undertaken by the males at Wardle's recommendation, to get rid of the effects of the wine at breakfast. Then came the dessert and some more toasts. Then came the tea and coffee; and then, the ball.

The best sitting-room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark-panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. The carpet was up, the candles burned bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rang through the room.

If anything could have added to the interest of this agreeable scene, it would have been the remarkable fact of Mr. Pickwick's appearing without his gaiters, for the first time within the memory of his oldest friends.

'You mean to dance?' said Wardle.

'Of course I do,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'Don't you see I am dressed for the purpose?' Mr. Pickwick called attention to his speckled silk stockings, and smartly tied pumps.

'*You* in silk stockings!' exclaimed Mr. Tupman jocosely.

'And why not, sir—why not?' said Mr. Pickwick, turning warmly upon him. 'You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings, *as* stockings, I trust, sir?'

'Certainly not. Oh, certainly not,' replied Mr. Tupman. He walked away; and Mr. Pickwick's countenance resumed its customary benign expression.

'We are all ready, I believe,' said Mr. Pickwick, who was stationed with the old lady at the top of the dance, and had already made four false starts, in his excessive anxiety to commence.

'Then begin at once,' said Wardle. 'Now!'

Up struck the two fiddles and the one harp. Away went Mr. Pickwick—hands across—down the middle to the very end of the room, and half-way up the chimney, back again to the door—poussette everywhere—loud stamp on the

ground—ready for the next couple—off again—all the figure over once more.

Long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly-married couple had retired from the scene. There was a glorious supper downstairs, notwithstanding, and a good long sitting after it; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke, late the next morning, he had a confused recollection of having, severally and confidentially, invited somewhere about five-and-forty people to dine with him at the George and Vulture, the very first time they came to London; which Mr. Pickwick rightly considered a pretty certain indication of his having taken something besides exercise, on the previous night.

22

How the Pickwickians disported themselves on the Ice, and how their Visit came to a Conclusion

‘WELL, SAM,’ said Mr. Pickwick, as that favoured servitor entered his bedchamber, with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas Day, ‘still frosty?’

‘Water in the washhand basin’s a mask o’ ice, sir,’ responded Sam.

‘I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick, untying his nightcap.

‘Wery good, sir,’ replied Sam. ‘There’s a couple o’ sawbones downstairs.’

‘A couple of what?’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sitting up in bed.

‘What! don’t you know what a sawbones is, sir?’ inquired Mr. Weller. ‘I thought everybody know’d as a sawbones was a surgeon.’

‘Oh, a surgeon, eh?’ said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile. ‘You may retire, Sam.’

Sam did retire accordingly. Mr. Pickwick at the expiration of the quarter of an hour, went down to breakfast.

'Here he is at last!' said old Mr. Wardle. 'Pickwick, this is Miss Allen's brother, Mr. Benjamin Allen. This gentleman is his very particular friend, Mr.——'

'Mr. Bob Sawyer,' interposed Mr. Benjamin Allen; whereupon Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen laughed in concert.

Mr. Benjamin Allen was a coarse, stout, thick-set young man, with black hair cut rather short, and a white face cut rather long. Mr. Bob Sawyer had about him that sort of slovenly smartness, and swaggering gait, which is peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, shout and scream in the same by night, call waiters by their Christian names, and do various other acts and deeds of an equally facetious description.

Such were the two worthies to whom Mr. Pickwick was introduced, as he took his seat at the breakfast-table on Christmas morning.

'Have you come far this morning, gentlemen?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'Blue Lion at Muggleton,' briefly responded Mr. Allen.

'Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite,' said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

'I've put my name down for an arm at our place,' said Mr. Allen. 'We're clubbing for a subject, and the list is nearly full, only we can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it.'

'No,' replied Bob Sawyer; 'can't afford expensive luxuries. I wouldn't mind a brain, but I couldn't stand a whole head.'

'Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I hear the ladies.'

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, the ladies, gallantly escorted by Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, returned from an early walk.

'Why, Ben!' said Arabella, in a tone which expressed more surprise than pleasure at the sight of her brother.

'Don't you see Bob Sawyer, Arabella?' inquired Mr.

Benjamin Allen, somewhat reproachfully. Arabella gracefully held out her hand, in acknowledgment of Bob Sawyer's presence. A thrill of hatred struck to Mr. Winkle's heart, as Bob Sawyer inflicted on the proffered hand a perceptible squeeze.

The arrival of the two new visitors, and the consequent check upon Mr. Winkle and the young lady with the fur round her boots, would in all probability have proved a very unpleasant interruption to the hilarity of the party, had not the cheerfulness of Mr. Pickwick, and the good humour of the host, been exerted to the very utmost for the commonwealth.

'Now,' said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to, 'what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time.'

'Capital!' said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

'Prime!' ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

'You skate, of course, Winkle?' said Wardle.

'Ye—yes; oh, yes,' replied Mr. Winkle. 'I—I—am *rather* out of practice.'

'Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle,' said Arabella. 'I like to see it so much.'

'Oh, it is *so* graceful,' said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was 'swan-like.'

'I should be very happy, I'm sure,' said Mr. Winkle, reddening; 'but I have no skates.'

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half a dozen more downstairs; whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and Mr. Bob Sawyer described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted

by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions, which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

'Now, then, sir,' said Sam, in an encouraging tone; 'off with you, and show 'em 'ow to do it.'

'These—these— are very awkward skates; ain't they, Sam?' inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

'I'm afeerd there's a orkard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir,' replied Sam.

'Stop an instant, Sam,' gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. 'I find I've got a couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam.'

'Thank'ee, sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Never mind touching your hat, Sam,' said Mr. Winkle hastily. 'You needn't take your hand away to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam.'

'You're very good, sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?' said Mr. Winkle. 'Not too fast, Sam; not too fast.'

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank:

'Sam!'

'Let go, sir,' said Sam. 'Don't you hear the governor a-callin'? Let go, sir.'

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonised Pickwickian, and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment

when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind, in skates.

'Are you hurt?' inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

'Not much,' said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

'I wish you'd let me bleed you,' said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness.

'No, thank you,' replied Mr. Winkle hurriedly.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, 'Take his skates off.'

'No; but really I had scarcely begun,' remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

'Take his skates off,' repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it, in silence.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the bystanders; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

'You're a humbug, sir.'

'A what?' said Mr. Winkle, starting.

'A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir.'

With these words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

'It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?' he inquired of Wardle.

'Ah, it does, indeed,' replied Wardle. 'Do you slide?'

'I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'But I haven't done such a thing these thirty years.'

'Pooh! pooh! Nonsense!' said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterised all his proceedings. 'Here; I'll keep you company; come along!' And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat; took two or three short runs, balked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

'Keep the pot a-bilin', sir!' said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels; and running after each other with as much eagerness as if their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank; a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale; and the females fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming 'Fire!' with all his might.



Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down.

It was at this moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, that a face, hand, and shoulders, emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

‘Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant!’ bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

‘Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?’ said Wardle.

‘Yes, certainly,’ replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. ‘I fell upon my back. I couldn’t get on my feet at first.’

As the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy’s suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

‘Oh, he’ll catch his death of cold,’ said Emily.

‘Dear old thing!’ said Arabella. ‘Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick.’

‘Ah, that’s the best thing you can do,’ said Wardle; ‘and when you’ve got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly.’

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller; presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly-defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr. Tupman had arrived some five minutes before.

Mr. Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner; a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards,

and a grand carouse held in honour of his safety. When Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning, there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him; which proves, as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases.

The jovial party broke up next morning. The different members of the party dispersed to their several homes; Mr. Pickwick and his friends once more took their seats on the top of the Muggleton coach; and Arabella Allen repaired to her place of destination, wherever it might have been—we dare say Mr. Winkle knew, but we confess we don't—under the care and guardianship of her brother Benjamin, and his most intimate and particular friend, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

23

Mr. Weller the elder delivers some Critical Sentiments respecting Literary Composition

THE morning of the thirteenth of February, the day immediately preceding that which was appointed for the trial of Mrs. Bardell's action, was a busy time for Mr. Samuel Weller, who was perpetually engaged in travelling from the George and Vulture to Mr. Perker's chambers and back again.

Sam had solaced himself with a most agreeable little dinner, and was waiting at the bar for the glass of warm mixture in which Mr. Pickwick had requested him to drown the fatigues of his morning's walks, when a young boy of about three feet high, or thereabouts, in a hairy cap and fustian overalls, entered the passage of the George and Vulture.

'Is there anybody here named Sam?' inquired the youth, in a loud voice of treble quality.

'What's the t'other name?' said Sam Weller, looking round.

'How should I know?' briskly replied the young gentleman below the hairy cap.

'You're a sharp boy, you are,' said Mr. Weller. 'What do you mean by comin' to a hot-el, and asking arter Sam, vith as much politeness as a vild Indian?'

"Cos an old gen'l'm'n told me to,' replied the boy. 'Him as drives a Ipswich coach, and uses our parlour. You was to come to him at six o'clock to our 'ouse, 'cos he wants to see you—Blue Boar, Leaden'all Market. Shall I say you're comin'?"

'You *may* wenture on that 'ere statement, sir,' replied Sam.

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of by-streets and courts. As he stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window. He gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed, with energy, 'If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!'

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this was a highly-coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow. Sam at once stepped into the stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market. Looking round him, he there beheld a signboard on which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

'He won't be here this three-quarters of an hour or more,' said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar.

'Very good, my dear,' replied Sam. 'Let me have nine-penn'orth o' brandy-and-water luke, and the inkstand, will you, miss?'

The brandy-and-water luke, and the inkstand, having been carried into the little parlour, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen.

Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

'Vell, Sammy,' said the father.

'Vell, my Prooshan Blue,' responded the son, laying down his pen. 'What's the last bulletin about mother-in-law?'

'Mrs. Veller passed a very good night, but is uncommon perwese, and unpleasant this mornin'. Signed upon oath, Tony Veller, Esquire. But wot's that, you're a-doin' of? Pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, Sammy?'

'I've done now,' said Sam, with slight embarrassment; 'I've been a-writin'.'

'So I see,' replied Mr. Weller. 'Not to any young 'ooman, I hope, Sammy?'

'Why, it's no use a-sayin' it ain't,' replied Sam: 'it's a walentine.'

'Samivel, Samivel,' said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents, 'I didn't think you'd ha' done it. It'll be a very agonisin' trial to me at my time of life.'

'Wot'll be a trial?' inquired Sam.

'To see you married, Sammy—to see you a dillusded wictim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all very capital,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Nonsense,' said Sam. 'I ain't a-goin' to get married, don't you fret yourself about that; I know you're a judge of these things. Order in your pipe and I'll read you the letter. There!'

Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air:

'"Lovely____",'

'Stop,' said Mr. Weller, ringing the bell. 'A double glass o' the invariable, my dear.'

‘Very well, sir,’ replied the girl; who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared.

‘“Lovely creetur,”’ repeated Sam.

‘Tain’t in poetry, is it?’ interposed his father.

‘No, no,’ replied Sam.

‘Wery glad to hear it,’ said Mr. Weller. ‘Poetry’s unnat’ral. Never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin agin, Sammy.’

Sam once more commenced, and read as follows:

‘“Lovely creetur I feel myself a damned——”’

‘That ain’t proper,’ said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

‘No; it ain’t “damned,”’ observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, ‘it’s “shamed,” there’s a blot there—“I feel myself ashamed.”’

‘Wery good,’ said Mr. Weller. ‘Go on.’

‘“Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir——”’ I forget what this here word is,’ said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

‘Why don’t you look at it, then?’ inquired Mr. Weller.

‘So I *am* a-lookin’ at it,’ replied Sam, ‘but there’s another blot. Here’s a “c,” and a “i,” and a “d.”’

‘Circumwented, p’raps,’ suggested Mr. Weller.

‘No, it ain’t that,’ said Sam, ‘“circumscribed”; that’s it.’

‘That ain’t as good a word as “circumwented,” Sammy,’ said Mr. Weller gravely.

‘Think not?’ said Sam.

‘Nothin’ like it,’ replied his father.

‘But don’t you think it means more?’ inquired Sam.

‘Vell, p’raps it’s a more tenderer word,’ said Mr. Weller, after a few moments’ reflection. ‘Go on, Sammy.’

‘“Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed in a-dressin’ of you, for you *are* a nice gal and nothin’ but it.”’

‘That’s a very pretty sentiment,’ said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

‘Yes, I think it is rayther good,’ observed Sam, highly flattered.

‘Wot I like in that ’ere style of writin’,’ said the elder Mr. Weller, ‘is that there ain’t no callin’ names in it—no Wenuses,

nor nothin' o' that kind. Wot's the good o' callin' a young 'oman a Wenus or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam.

"You might jist as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arms at once, which is very well known to be a collection o' fabulous animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on, Sammy," said Mr. Weller.

"Afore I see you, I thought all women was alike."

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller parenthetically.

"But now," continued Sam, "now I find what a reg'lar soft-headed, inkred'lous turnip I must ha' been; for there ain't nobody like you, though I like you better than nothin' at all." I thought it best to make that rayther strong," said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

"So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear, to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my hart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p'raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook at the end to hang it up by, and all in two minutes and a quarter."

"I am afceerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy," said Mr. Weller dubiously.

"No, it don't," replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point:

"Except of me Mary my dear as your walentine and think over what I've said.—My dear Mary I will now conclude." That's all," said Sam.

"That's rather a sudden pull-up, ain't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll vish there wos more, and that's the great art o' letter-writin'."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "there's somethin' in that. Ain't you a-goin' to sign it?"

"That's the difficulty," said Sam; "I don't know what *to* sign it."

'Sign it—"Veller,"' said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.

'Won't do,' said Sam. 'Never sign a walentine with your own name.'

'Sign it "Pickwick," then,' said Mr. Weller; 'it's a wery good name, and a easy one to spell.'

'The wery thing,' said Sam. 'I could end with a werce; what do you think?'

'I don't like it, Sam,' rejoined Mr. Weller.

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter:

'Your love-sick
Pickwick.'

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a downhill direction in one corner: 'To Mary, Housemaid, at Mr. Nupkins's Mayor's, Ipswich, Suffolk'; and put it into his pocket, wafered, and ready for the general post. This important business having been transacted, Mr. Weller the elder proceeded to open that, on which he had summoned his son.

'The first matter relates to your governor, Sammy,' said Mr. Weller. 'He's a-goin' to be tried to-morrow, ain't he?'

'The trial's a-comin' on,' replied Sam.

'Vell,' said Mr. Weller, 'Now I s'pose he'll want to call some witnesses to speak to his character, or p'rhaps to prove a alleybi. I've got some friends as'll do either for him, but my adwice 'ud be this here—never mind the character, and stick to the alleybi. Nothing like a alleybi, Sammy, nothing.'

'Why, what do you mean?' said Sam; 'you don't think he's a-goin' to be tried at the Old Bailey, do you?'

'That ain't no part of the present con-sideration, Sammy,' replied Mr. Weller. 'Verever he's a-goin' to be tried, my boy, a alleybi's the thing to get him off.'

Finding that it was of no use to discuss the matter further, Sam changed the subject, and inquired what the second topic was, on which his revered parent wished to consult him.

'That's a pint o' domestic policy, Sammy,' said Mr. Weller. 'This here Stiggins—'

'Red-nosed man?' inquired Sam.

'The wery same,' replied Mr. Weller. 'This here red-nosed man, Sammy, wisits your mother-in-law vith a kindness and constancy I never see equalled. He always brings now, a flat bottle as holds about a pint and a half, and fills it with the pine-apple rum afore he goes avay.'

'And empties it afore he comes back, I s'pose?' said Sam.

'Clean!' replied Mr. Weller; 'never leaves nothin' in it but the cork and the smell: trust him for that, Sammy. Now, these here fellows, my boy, are a-goin' to-night to get up the monthly meetin' o' the Brick Lane Branch o' the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association. Your mother-in-law *was* a-goin', Sammy, but she's got the rheumatics, and can't; and I, Sammy—I've got the two tickets as *was* sent her.'

'Well?' said that young gentleman.

'Well,' continued his progenitor, looking round him very cautiously, 'you and I'll go, punctiwal to the time. The deputy-shepherd won't, Sammy; the deputy-shepherd won't.' Here Mr. Weller was seized with a paroxysm of chuckles. 'Two friends o' mine, as works the Oxford Road, and is up to all kinds o' games, has got the deputy-shepherd safe in tow, Sammy; and ven he does come to the Ebenezer Junction he'll be as far gone in rum-and-water, as ever he *was* at the Markis o' Granby, Dorkin', and that's not sayin' a little neither.' And with this, Mr. Weller once more laughed immoderately, and relapsed into a state of partial suffocation, in consequence.

It being very near the appointed hour of meeting, the father and son took their way at once to Brick Lane, Sam not forgetting to drop his letter into a general post-office as they walked along.

*Is wholly devoted to a full and faithful Report of the
memorable Trial of Bardell against Pickwick*

'I WONDER what the foreman of the jury, whoever he'll be, has got for breakfast,' said Mr. Snodgrass, by way of keeping up a conversation on the eventful morning of the fourteenth of February.

'Ah!' said Perker, 'I hope he's got a good one. A good, contented, well-breakfasted juryman is a capital thing to get hold of. Discontented or hungry jurymen, my dear sir, always find for the plaintiff.'

'Bless my heart,' said Mr. Pickwick, looking very blank, 'what do they do that for?'

'Why, I don't know,' replied the little man coolly; 'saves time, I suppose. You had better ring for a coach, my dear sir, or we shall be rather late.'

Mr. Pickwick immediately rang the bell; and a coach having been procured, the four Pickwickians and Mr. Perker ensconced themselves therein, and drove to Guildhall; Sam Weller, Mr. Lowten, and the blue bag, following in a cab.

'Lowten,' said Perker, when they reached the outer hall of the court, 'put Mr. Pickwick's friends in the students' box; Mr. Pickwick himself had better sit by me. This way, my dear sir, this way.' Taking Mr. Pickwick by the coat sleeve, the little man led him to the low seat just beneath the desks of the King's Counsel.

There were already a pretty large sprinkling of spectators in the gallery, and a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs, in the barristers' seats, who presented, as a body, all that pleasing and extensive variety of nose and whisker for which the Bar of England is so justly celebrated.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh was a most particularly short man,

and so fat, that he seemed all face and waistcoat. He rolled in, upon two little turned legs, and having bobbed gravely to the Bar, who bobbed gravely to him, put his little legs underneath his table, and his little three-cornered hat upon it; and when Mr. Justice Stareleigh had done this, all you could see of him was two queer little eyes, one broad pink face, and somewhere about half of a big and very comical-looking wig.

The judge had no sooner taken his seat, than the officer on the floor of the court called out 'Silence!' in a commanding tone, upon which another officer in the gallery cried 'Silence!' in an angry manner, whereupon three or four more ushers shouted 'Silence!' in a voice of indignant remonstrance. This being done, a gentleman in black, who sat below the judge, proceeded to call over the names of the jury.

A slight sensation was perceptible in the body of the court; and immediately afterwards Mrs. Bardell, supported by Mrs. Cluppins, was led in, and placed, in a drooping state, at the other end of the seat on which Mr. Pickwick sat. Mrs. Sanders then appeared, leading in Master Bardell. At sight of her child, Mrs. Bardell started; suddenly recollecting herself, she kissed him in a frantic manner; then relapsing into a state of hysterical imbecility, the good lady requested to be informed where she was. In reply to this, Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders turned their heads away and wept, while Messrs. Dodson and Fogg entreated the plaintiff to compose herself.

'Bardell and Pickwick,' cried the gentleman in black.

'I am for the plaintiff, my Lord,' said Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz.

'Who is with you, Brother Buzfuz?' said the judge. Mr. Skimpin bowed, to intimate that he was.

'I appear for the defendant, my Lord,' said Mr. Sergeant Snubbin.

'Anybody with you, Brother Snubbin?' inquired the court.

'Mr. Phunk, my Lord,' replied Sergeant Snubbin.

Mr. Skimpin proceeded to 'open the case'; and sat down, after a lapse of three minutes, leaving the jury in precisely the same advanced stage of wisdom as they were in before.

Sergeant Buzfuz then rose with all the majesty and dignity

which the grave nature of the proceedings demanded, pulled his gown over his shoulders, settled his wig and addressed the jury.

‘You have heard from my learned friend, gentlemen,’ began Sergeant Buzfuz, ‘that this is an action for a breach of promise of marriage, in which the damages are laid at £1500. The plaintiff, gentlemen, is a widow; yes, gentlemen, a widow. The late Mr. Bardell, after enjoying, for many years, the esteem and confidence of his sovereign, as one of the guardians of his royal revenues, glided almost imperceptibly from the world, to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house can never afford.’

At this pathetic description of the decease of Mr. Bardell, who had been knocked on the head with a quart-pot in a public-house cellar, the learned sergeant’s voice faltered, and he proceeded, with emotion:

‘Some time before his death, he had stamped his likeness upon a little boy. With this little boy, the only pledge of her departed exciseman, Mrs. Bardell shrank from the world, and courted the retirement and tranquillity of Goswell Street; and here she placed in her front parlour window a written placard, bearing this inscription—“Apartments furnished for a single gentleman. Inquire within.” I entreat the attention of the jury to the wording of this document—“Apartments furnished for a single gentleman”! Mrs. Bardell’s opinions of the opposite sex, gentlemen, were derived from a long contemplation of the inestimable qualities of her lost husband. She had no fear, she had no distrust, she had no suspicion; all was confidence and reliance. Actuated by this beautiful and touching impulse (among the best impulses of our imperfect nature, gentlemen) the lonely and desolate widow dried her tears, furnished her first floor, caught her innocent boy to her maternal bosom, and put the bill up in her parlour window. Did it remain there long? Before the bill had been in the parlour window three days—three days, gentlemen—a being, erect upon two legs, and bearing all the outward semblance of a man, and not of a monster, knocked at the door of Mrs. Bardell’s house. He inquired within—he took the lodgings; and on the very next day he entered into

possession of them. This man was Pickwick—Pickwick, the defendant.'

Sergeant Buzfuz, who had proceeded with such volubility that his face was perfectly crimson, here paused for breath. The silence awoke Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who immediately wrote down something with a pen without any ink in it. Sergeant Buzfuz proceeded:

'I shall show you, gentlemen, that for two years, Pickwick continued to reside constantly, and without interruption or intermission, at Mrs. Bardell's house. I shall show you that Mrs. Bardell, during the whole of that time, waited on him, attended to his comforts, cooked his meals, looked out his linen for the washerwoman when it went abroad, darned, aired, and prepared it for wear, when it came home, and, in short, enjoyed his fullest trust and confidence. I shall show you that, on many occasions, he gave halfpence, and on some occasions even sixpences, to her little boy; and I shall prove to you, by a witness whose testimony it will be impossible for my learned friend to weaken or controvert, that on one occasion he patted the boy on the head, and made use of this remarkable expression, "How should you like to have another father?" I shall prove to you, gentlemen, that on one occasion, when he returned from the country, he distinctly and in terms, offered her marriage: previously, however, taking special care that there would be no witness to their solemn contract; and I am in a situation to prove to you, on the testimony of three of his own friends—most unwilling witnesses, gentlemen, that on that morning he was discovered by them holding the plaintiff in his arms, and soothing her agitation by his caresses and endearments.'

A visible impression was produced upon the auditors by this part of the learned sergeant's address. Drawing forth two very small scraps of paper, he proceeded:

'And now, gentlemen, but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties, letters which are admitted to be in the handwriting of the defendant, and which speak volumes, indeed. They are covert, sly, underhanded communications. Let me read the first: "Garraway's, twelve o'clock. Dear Mrs. B.—Chops and tomato sauce. Yours,

PICKWICK.' Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and tomato sauce. Yours, Pickwick! Chops! Gracious heavens! and tomato sauce! Gentlemen, is the happiness of a sensitive and confiding female to be trifled away, by such shallow artifices as these? The next has no date whatever, which is in itself suspicious. "Dear Mrs. B., I shall not be at home till to-morrow. Slow coach." And then follows this very remarkable expression. "Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan." The warming-pan! Why, gentlemen, who *does* trouble himself about a warming-pan? Why is Mrs. Bardell so earnestly entreated not to agitate herself about this warming pan, unless (as is no doubt the case) it is a mere cover for hidden fire—a mere substitute for some endearing word or promise. And what does this allusion to the slow coach mean? For aught I know, it may be a reference to Pickwick himself. My client's hopes and prospects are ruined, and it is no figure of speech to say that her occupation is gone indeed. But Pickwick, gentlemen, Pickwick, the ruthless destroyer of this domestic oasis in the desert of Goswell Street—Pickwick who has choked up the well, and thrown ashes on the sward—Pickwick, who comes before you to-day with his heartless tomato sauce and warming-pans—Pickwick still rears his head with unblushing effrontery. Damages, gentlemen—heavy damages is the only punishment, with which you can visit him. And for those damages she now appeals to an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-feeling, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathising, a contemplative jury of her civilised countrymen.' With this beautiful peroration, Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz sat down, and Mr. Justice Stareleigh woke up.

'Call Elizabeth Cluppins,' said Sergeant Buzfuz, rising a minute afterwards, with renewed vigour.

Mrs. Cluppins, with the combined assistance of Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Fogg, was hoisted into the witness-box.

'Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins,' said Sergeant Buzfuz, after a few unimportant questions—'do you recollect being in Mrs. Bardell's back one pair of stairs, on one particular morning in July last, when she was dusting Pickwick's apartment?'

'Yes, my Lord and jury, I do,' replied Mrs. Cluppins.

'What were you doing in the back room, ma'am?' inquired the judge.

'I walked in, gentlemen, just to say good-mornin', and went in a permiscuous manner, upstairs, and into the back room.'

And Mrs. Cluppins repeated by slow degrees, and by dint of many questions, the conversation with which our readers are already acquainted.

The jury looked suspicious, and Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz smiled and sat down. They looked positively awful when Sergeant Snubbin intimated that he should not cross-examine the witness, for Mr. Pickwick wished it to be distinctly stated that it was due to her to say, that her account was in substance correct.

'Nathaniel Winkle!' said Mr. Skimpin.

'Here!' replied a feeble voice. Mr. Winkle entered the witness-box, and having been duly sworn, bowed to the judge with considerable deference.

Mr. Winkle was then examined by Mr. Skimpin, who, being a promising young man of two or three-and-forty, was of course anxious to confuse a witness who was notoriously predisposed in favour of the other side, as much as he could.

'Now, Mr. Winkle,' said Mr. Skimpin, 'attend to me, if you please, sir. I believe you are a particular friend of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant, are you not?'

'I have known Mr. Pickwick now, as well as I recollect at this moment, nearly—'

'Pray, Mr. Winkle; do not evade the question. Are you, or are you not, a particular friend of the defendant's?'

'I was just about to say, that—'

'Come, sir,' said Mr. Skimpin, 'yes or no, if you please.'

'Yes, I am,' replied Mr. Winkle.

'Yes, you are. And why couldn't you say that at once, sir? Perhaps you know the plaintiff too? Eh, Mr. Winkle?'

'I don't know her; I've seen her.'

'How often have you seen her, sir?'

First of all, Mr. Winkle said it was quite impossible for him to say how many times he had seen Mrs. Bardell. Then he was asked if he had seen her twenty times, to which he replied, 'Certainly—more than that.' Then he was asked

whether he hadn't seen her a hundred times—whether he couldn't swear that he had seen her more than fifty times—whether he didn't know that he had seen her at least seventy-five times, and so forth. The witness having been by these means reduced to the requisite ebb of nervous perplexity, the examination was continued as follows:

'Pray, Mr. Winkle, do you remember calling on the defendant Pickwick at these apartments in the plaintiff's house in Goswell Street, on one particular morning, in the month of July last?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Now, sir, tell the gentlemen of the jury what you saw on entering the defendant's room, on this particular morning. Come; out with it, sir; we must have it, sooner or later.'

'The defendant, Mr. Pickwick, was holding the plaintiff in his arms, with his hands clasping her waist,' replied Mr. Winkle with natural hesitation, 'and the plaintiff appeared to have fainted away. I heard him call Mrs. Bardell a good creature, and I heard him ask her to compose herself, for what a situation it was, if anybody should come, or words to that effect.'

'Now, Mr. Winkle, will you undertake to swear that Pickwick, the defendant, did not say on the occasion in question—"My dear Mrs. Bardell, you're a good creature; compose yourself to this situation, for to this situation you must come," or words to *that* effect?'

'I—I didn't understand him so, certainly,' said Mr. Winkle, astounded at this ingenious dove-tailing of the few words he had heard.

'But you will not swear that Pickwick did not make use of the expressions I have quoted? Do I understand that?'

'No, I will not,' replied Mr. Winkle; and down sat Mr. Skimpin with a triumphant countenance.

Mr. Pickwick's case had not gone off in so particularly happy a manner, up to this point, that it could very well afford to have any additional suspicion cast upon it. But as it could afford to be placed in a rather better light, if possible, Mr. Phunkie rose for the purpose of getting something important out of Mr. Winkle in cross-examination.

'I believe, Mr. Winkle,' said Mr. Phunk, 'that Mr. Pickwick is not a young man?'

'Oh, no,' replied Mr. Winkle; 'old enough to be my father.'

'Did you ever see anything in Mr. Pickwick's manner and conduct towards the opposite sex, to induce you to believe that he ever contemplated matrimony of late years, in any case?'

'Oh, no; certainly not,' replied Mr. Winkle.

'Has his behaviour, when females have been in the case, always been that of a man who treats them only as a father might his daughters?'

'Not the least doubt of it,' replied Mr. Winkle, in the fullness of his heart. 'That is—yes—oh, yes—certainly.'

'You have never known anything in his behaviour towards Mrs. Bardell, or any other female, in the least degree suspicious?' said Mr. Phunk, preparing to sit down; for Sergeant Snubbin was winking at him.

'N—n—no,' replied Mr. Winkle, 'except on one trifling occasion, which, I have no doubt, might be easily explained.'

Now, if the unfortunate Mr. Phunk had sat down when Sergeant Snubbin had winked at him this unfortunate admission would not have been elicited. The moment the words fell from Mr. Winkle's lips, Mr. Phunk sat down, and Sergeant Snubbin rather hastily told him he might leave the box, which Mr. Winkle prepared to do with great readiness, when Sergeant Buzfuz stopped him.

'Stay, Mr. Winkle, stay!' said Sergeant Buzfuz, 'will your Lordship have the goodness to ask him, what this one instance of suspicious behaviour towards females on the part of this gentleman, who is old enough to be his father, was?'

'My Lord,' said Mr. Winkle, trembling with anxiety, 'I—I'd rather not.'

'Perhaps so,' said the little judge; 'but you must.'

Amid the profound silence of the whole court, Mr. Winkle faltered out, that the trifling circumstance of suspicion was Mr. Pickwick's being found in a lady's sleeping-apartment at midnight; which had terminated, he believed, in the breaking off of the projected marriage of the lady in question, and had led, he knew, to the whole party being forcibly

carried before George Nupkins, Esq., magistrate and justice of the peace, for the borough of Ipswich!

'You may leave the box, sir,' said Sergeant Snubbin. Mr. Winkle *did* leave the box, and rushed with delirious haste to the George and Vulture, where he was discovered some hours after, by the waiter, groaning in a hollow and dismal manner, with his head buried beneath the sofa cushions.

Tracy Tupman, and Augustus Snodgrass, were severally called into the box; both corroborated the testimony of their unhappy friend; and each was driven to the verge of desperation by excessive badgering.

Susannah Sanders was then called, and examined by Sergeant Buzfuz, and cross-examined by Sergeant Snubbin. Had always said and believed that Pickwick would marry Mrs. Bardell. Had heard Pickwick ask the little boy how he should like to have another father. Thought Mrs. Bardell fainted away on the morning in July, because Pickwick asked her to name the day: knew that she (witness) fainted away stone dead when Mr. Sanders asked *her* to name the day.

Sergeant Buzfuz now rose with more importance than he had yet exhibited, if that were possible, and vociferated: 'Call Samuel Weller.'

It was quite unnecessary to call Samuel Weller; for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced.

'What's your name, sir?' inquired the judge.

'Sam Weller, my Lord,' replied that gentleman.

'Do you spell it with a "V" or a "W"?' inquired the judge.

'That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my Lord,' replied Sam; 'I never had occasion to spell it more than once or twice in my life, but I spells it with a "V."'

Here a voice in the gallery exclaimed aloud, 'Quite right too, Samivel, quite right. Put it down a "we," my Lord, put it down a "we."'

'Who is that, who dares address the court?' said the little judge, looking up. 'Usher.'

'Yes, my Lord.'

'Bring that person here instantly.'

'Yes, my Lord.'



Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced.

But as the usher didn't find the person, he didn't bring him; and, after a great commotion, all the people who had got up to look for the culprit, sat down again.

'Now, Mr. Weller,' said Sergeant Buzfuz.

'Now, sir,' replied Sam.

'I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant in this case? Speak up, if you please, Mr. Weller.'

'I mean to speak up, sir,' replied Sam; 'I am in the service o' that 'ere gen'l'man, and a very good service it is.'

'Do you recollect anything particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant; eh, Mr. Weller?' said Sergeant Buzfuz.

'Yes, I do, sir,' replied Sam.

'Have the goodness to tell the jury what it was.'

'I had a reg'lar new fit out o' clothes that mornin', gen'l'men of the jury,' said Sam, 'and that was a very particlker and uncommon circumstance with me in those days.'

Hereupon there was a general laugh; and the little judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, 'You had better be careful, sir.'

'So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my Lord,' replied Sam; 'and I was very careful o' that 'ere suit o' clothes; very careful indeed, my Lord.'

The judge looked sternly at Sam for full two minutes, but Sam's features were so perfectly calm and serene that the judge said nothing, and motioned Sergeant Buzfuz to proceed.

'Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller,' said Sergeant Buzfuz, 'that you say nothing of this fainting on the part of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant, which you have heard described by the witnesses?'

'Certainly not,' replied Sam; 'I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady was not there.'

'You were in the passage, and yet saw nothing of what was going forward. Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?'

'Yes, I have a pair of eyes,' replied Sam, 'and that's just it. If they wos a pair o' patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power, p'raps I might be able to see through a flight o' stairs and a deal door; but bein' only eyes, you see, my wision's limited.'

At this answer, which was delivered without the slightest appearance of irritation, and with the most complete simplicity and equanimity of manner, the spectators tittered, the little judge smiled, and Sergeant Buzfuz looked particularly foolish. After a short consultation with Dodson & Fogg, the learned sergeant again turned towards Sam, and said, with a painful effort to conceal his vexation, 'Now, Mr. Weller, do you remember going up to Mrs. Bardell's house, one night in November last?'

'Oh, yes, very well.'

'I suppose you went up to have a little talk about this trial—eh, Mr. Weller?' said Sergeant Buzfuz.

'I went up to pay the rent; but we *did* get a-talkin' about the trial,' replied Sam.

'Oh, you did get a-talking about the trial,' said Sergeant Buzfuz, brightening up with the anticipation of some important discovery. 'Now, what passed about the trial; will you have the goodness to tell us, Mr. Weller?'

'With all the pleasure in life, sir,' replied Sam. 'The ladies gets into a very great state o' admiration at the honourable conduct of Mr. Dodson and Fogg—they two gen'l'men as is settin' near you now.'

'Well! They spoke in high praise of the honourable conduct of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, the attorneys for the plaintiff, did they?'

'Yes,' said Sam, 'they said what a very gen'rous thing it was o' them to have taken up the case on spec, and to charge nothing at all for costs, unless they got 'em out of Mr. Pickwick.'

At this very unexpected reply, the spectators tittered again and Dodson & Fogg, turning very red, leaned over to Sergeant Buzfuz, and in a hurried manner whispered something in his ear.

'You are quite right,' said Sergeant Buzfuz aloud, with affected composure. 'It's perfectly useless, my Lord, attempting to get at any evidence through the impenetrable stupidity of this witness. You may go down, sir.' Sam went down accordingly, after doing Messrs. Dodson & Fogg's case as much harm as he conveniently could, and saying just as little

respecting Mr. Pickwick as might be, which was precisely the object he had had in view all along.

Sergeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant; and a very long and a very emphatic address he delivered, in which he bestowed the highest possible eulogiums on the conduct and character of Mr. Pickwick. He attempted to show that the letters which had been exhibited, merely related to Mr. Pickwick's dinner, or to the preparations for receiving him in his apartments on his return from some country excursion. It is sufficient to add in general terms, that he did the best he could for Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh summed up, in the old-established and most approved form. He read as much of his notes to the jury as he could decipher on so short a notice, and made running comments on the evidence as he went along. The jury then retired to their private room to talk the matter over, and the judge retired to *his* private room, to refresh himself with a mutton chop and a glass of sherry.

An anxious quarter of an hour elapsed; the jury came back; the judge was fetched in. Mr. Pickwick put on his spectacles, and gazed at the foreman with an agitated countenance and a quickly-beating heart.

'Gentlemen,' said the individual in black, 'are you all agreed upon your verdict?'

'We are,' replied the foreman.

'Do you find for the plaintiff, gentlemen, or for the defendant?'

'For the plaintiff.'

'With what damages, gentlemen?'

'Seven hundred and fifty pounds.'

Mr. Pickwick took off his spectacles, carefully wiped the glasses, folded them into their case, and put them in his pocket; then, having drawn on his gloves with great nicety, and stared at the foreman all the while, he mechanically followed Mr. Perker and the blue bag out of court.

They stopped in a side room while Perker paid the court fees; and here, Mr. Pickwick was joined by his friends. Here, too, he encountered Messrs. Dodson & Fogg, rubbing their hands with every token of outward satisfaction.

'You imagine you'll get your costs, don't you, gentlemen?' said Mr. Pickwick. 'But not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get from me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtor's prison.'

'Ha, ha!' laughed Dodson. 'You'll think better of that, before next term, Mr. Pickwick.'

Speechless with indignation, Mr. Pickwick allowed himself to be led by his solicitor and friends to the door, and there assisted into a hackney-coach, which had been fetched for the purpose, by the ever-watchful Sam Weller.

Sam had put up the steps, and was preparing to jump upon the box, when he felt himself gently touched on the shoulder; and, looking round, his father stood before him. The old gentleman's countenance wore a mournful expression, as he shook his head gravely, and said, in warning accents:

'I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' bisness. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!'

25

Introduces Mr. Pickwick to a new and not uninteresting Scene in the great Drama of Life

'BUT SURELY, my dear sir,' said little Perker, as he stood in Mr. Pickwick's apartment on the morning after the trial, 'surely you don't really mean that you won't pay these costs and damages?'

'Not one halfpenny,' said Mr. Pickwick firmly; 'not one halfpenny. I shall employ myself as usual, until the opposite party have the power of issuing a legal process of execution against me. When can they do this?'

'They can issue execution, my dear sir, for the amount of

the damages and taxed costs, next term,' replied Perker, 'just two months hence, my dear sir.'

'Very good,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Until that time, my dear fellow, let me hear no more of the matter. And now,' continued Mr. Pickwick, looking round on his friends with a good-humoured smile, 'the only question is, where shall we go next?'

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were too much affected by their friend's heroism to offer any reply.

'Well,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'if you leave me to suggest our destination, I say Bath. I think none of us have ever been there.'

Nobody had; and as the proposition was warmly seconded by Perker, who considered it extremely probable that if Mr. Pickwick saw a little change and gaiety he would be inclined to think better of his determination, and worse of a debtor's prison, it was carried unanimously.

The period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of the stay at Bath passed over without the occurrence of anything material. Trinity term commenced. On the expiration of its first week, Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.

On the third morning after their arrival, just as all the clocks in the city were striking nine individually, and somewhere about nine hundred and ninety-nine collectively, Sam was taking the air in George Yard, when a queer sort of fresh-painted vehicle drove up, out of which there jumped with great agility a queer sort of gentleman.

The vehicle was not exactly a gig, neither was it a stanhope. It was painted a bright yellow, with the shafts and wheels picked out in black. The master himself was dressed in a particularly gorgeous manner, with plenty of articles of jewellery about him—all about three sizes larger than those which are usually worn by gentlemen—and a rough greatcoat to crown the whole.

It had not escaped Sam's attention that, when this person dismounted, a shabby-looking man in a brown greatcoat

shorn of divers buttons, who had been previously slinking about, on the opposite side of the way, crossed over, and remained stationary close by.

'Good-morning, my dear,' said the principal, addressing the young lady at the bar, with Botany Bay ease, and New South Wales gentility; 'which is Mr. Pickwick's room, my dear?'

'Show him up,' said the barmaid to a waiter.

The waiter led the way upstairs as he was desired, and the man in the rough coat followed, with Sam behind him. The shabby-looking man remained below, and expectorated in the passage.

Mr. Pickwick was fast asleep in bed, when his early visitor, followed by Sam, entered the room. The noise they made, in so doing, awoke him.

'Shaving-water, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, from within the curtains.

'Shave you directly, Mr. Pickwick,' said the visitor, drawing one of them back from the bed's head. 'I've got an execution against you, at the suit of Bardell.—Here's the warrant.—Common Pleas.—Here's my card. I suppose you'll come over to my house.' Giving Mr. Pickwick a friendly tap on the shoulder, the sheriff's officer (for such he was) threw his card on the counterpane, and pulled a gold toothpick from his waistcoat pocket.

'Namby's the name,' said the sheriff's deputy, as Mr. Pickwick took his spectacles from under the pillow, and put them on, to read the card. 'Namby, Bell Alley, Coleman Street.'

'Are you a Quaker?' said Sam.

'I'll let you know who I am, before I've done with you,' replied the indignant officer. 'I'll teach you manners, my fine fellow, one of these fine mornings.'

'Thankee,' said Sam. 'I'll do the same to you. Take your hat off.' With this, Mr. Weller, in the most dexterous manner, knocked Mr. Namby's hat to the other side of the room.

'Observe this, Mr. Pickwick,' said the disconcerted officer, gasping for breath. 'I've been assaulted in the execution of my dooty by your servant in your chamber.'

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, in an angry voice. 'Take that hat up again.'

But this Sam flatly and positively refused to do; and, after he had been severely reprimanded by his master, the officer, being in a hurry, condescended to pick it up himself, venting a great variety of threats against Sam meanwhile; and, soon after, called up Smouch, the shabby-looking man in the brown coat. Namby then swaggered out, and drove away. Smouch, requesting Mr. Pickwick in a surly manner 'to be as alive as he could, for it was a busy time,' drew up a chair by the door and sat there, until he had finished dressing. Sam was then despatched for a hackney-coach, and in it the triumvirate proceeded to Coleman Street.

The coach having turned into a very narrow and dark street, stopped before a house with iron bars to all the windows; the door-posts of which were graced by the name and title of 'Namby, Officer to the Sheriffs of London;' the inner gate having been opened, Mr. Pickwick was shown into the 'coffee-room.'

This coffee-room was a front parlour, the principal features of which were fresh sand and stale tobacco smoke. Mr. Pickwick rang the bell, and was shown, at his own request, into a private room. Here he had the advantage of hearing Mrs. Namby's performance on a square piano overhead, while the breakfast was getting ready; when it came, Mr. Perker came too.

'Aha, my dear sir,' said the little man, 'nailed at last, eh? Come, come, I'm not sorry for it either, because now you'll see the absurdity of this conduct. I've noted down the amount of the taxed costs and damages for which the ca-sa was issued, and we had better settle at once and lose no time. Shall I draw a cheque, or will you?'

'Perker,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'let me hear no more of this, I beg. I see no advantage in staying here, so I shall go to prison to-night.'

'You can't go to Whitecross Street, my dear sir,' said Perker. 'Impossible! There are sixty beds in a ward; and the bolt's on, sixteen hours out of the four-and-twenty.'

'I would rather go to some other place of confinement if

I can,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'If not, I must make the best I can of that.'

'You can go to the Fleet, my dear sir, if you're determined to go somewhere,' said Perker.

'That'll do,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'I'll go there directly I have finished my breakfast.'

'Stop, stop, my dear sir. We must have a *habeas-corpus*. There'll be no judge at chambers till four o'clock this afternoon. You must wait till then.'

'Very good,' said Mr. Pickwick, with unmoved patience. 'Then we will have a chop, here, at two. See about it, Sam, and tell them to be punctual.'

Mr. Pickwick remaining firm, despite all the remonstrances and arguments of Perker, the chops appeared and disappeared in due course; he was then put into another hackney coach, and carried off to Chancery Lane, after waiting half an hour or so for Mr. Namby, who had a select dinner-party and could on no account be disturbed before.

There were two judges in attendance at Sergeant's Inn—one King's Bench, and one Common Pleas—and a great deal of business appeared to be transacting before them, if the number of lawyers' clerks who were hurrying in and out with bundles of papers, afforded any test.

The usual forms having been gone through, the body of Samuel Pickwick was confided to the custody of the tipstaff, to be by him taken to the warden of the Fleet Prison, and there detained until the amount of the damages and costs in the action of Bardell against Pickwick was fully paid and satisfied.

'And that,' said Mr. Pickwick, laughing, 'will be a very long time. Sam, call another hackney-coach.'

'I shall go with you, and see you safe there,' said Perker.

'Indeed,' replied Mr. Pickwick, 'I would rather go without any other attendant than Sam. As soon as I get settled, I will write and let you know, and I shall expect you immediately. Until then, good-bye.'

As Mr. Pickwick said this, he got into the coach which had by this time arrived, followed by the tipstaff. Sam having stationed himself on the box, it rolled away. They stopped

at length, and Mr. Pickwick alighted at the gate of the Fleet.

The tipstaff, just looking over his shoulder to see that his charge was following close at his heels, preceded Mr. Pickwick into the prison; turning to the left, after they had entered, they passed through an open door into a lobby, from which a heavy gate, opposite to that by which they had entered, and which was guarded by a stout turnkey with the key in his hand, led at once into the interior of the prison.

'Where am I to sleep to-night?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'Why, I don't rightly know about to-night,' replied the stout turnkey. 'You'll be chummed on somebody to-morrow, and then you'll be all snug and comfortable.'

After some discussion, it was discovered that one of the turnkeys had a bed to let, which Mr. Pickwick could have for that night. He gladly agreed to hire it.

'If you'll come with me, I'll show it you at once,' said the man. 'It ain't a large un; but it's an out-and-outer to sleep in. This way, sir.'

They passed through the inner gate, and descended a short flight of steps. The key was turned after them; and Mr. Pickwick found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of a debtor's prison.

26

What befell Mr. Pickwick when he got into the Fleet

MR. TOM ROKER, the gentleman who had accompanied Mr. Pickwick into the prison, turned sharp round to the right when he got to the bottom of the little flight of steps, and led the way, through an iron gate which stood open, and up another short flight of steps, into a long narrow gallery, dirty and low, paved with stone, and very dimly lighted by a window at each remote end.

'This,' said the gentleman, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking carelessly over his shoulder to Mr. Pickwick—'this here is the hall flight.'

Mr. Roker then proceeded to mount another staircase, in which ascent he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and Sam.

'There,' said Mr. Roker, pausing for breath when they reached another gallery of the same dimensions as the one below, 'this is the coffee-room flight; the one above's the third, and the one above that's the top; and the room where you're a-going to sleep to-night is the warden's room, and it's this way—come on.'

The guide, having at length reached another gallery, led the way into a small passage at the extreme end, opened a door, and disclosed an apartment of an appearance by no means inviting, containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

'There,' said Mr. Roker, holding the door open, and looking triumphantly round at Mr. Pickwick, 'there's a room!'

Mr. Pickwick's face, however, betokened a very trifling portion of satisfaction at the appearance of his lodging.

'That's it,' replied Mr. Roker, pointing to a very rusty bedstead in a corner. 'It would make anyone go to sleep, that bedstead would, whether they wanted to or not.'

'I should think,' said Sam, eying the piece of furniture in question with a look of excessive disgust—I should think poppies was nothing to it. I s'pose the other gen'l'men as sleeps here *are* gen'l'men.'

'Nothing but it,' said Mr. Roker. 'One of 'em takes his twelve pints of ale a day, and never leaves off smoking even at his meals.'

Nothing daunted, even by this intelligence, Mr. Pickwick smilingly announced his determination to test the powers of the narcotic bedstead for that night; and Mr. Roker, after informing him that he could retire to rest at whatever hour he thought proper, without any further notice or formality, walked off, leaving him standing with Sam in the gallery.

As it was rather warm, some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand,

had set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them as he passed along, with great curiosity and interest. Here, four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco smoke, were engaged in noisy and riotous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all-fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room, some solitary tenant might be seen writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances, for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch.

In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the stair-cases, there were many classes of people, from the labouring man in his fustian jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl dressing-gown, most appropriately out at elbows; but, there was the same air about them all—a kind of listless, jail-bird, careless swagger, a vagabondish who's-afraid sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words.

'It strikes me, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, leaning over the iron rail at the stair-head—'it strikes me, Sam, that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all.'

'Think not, sir?' inquired Mr. Weller.

'You see how these fellows drink, and smoke, and roar,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'It's quite impossible that they can mind it much.'

'Ah, that's just the wery thing, sir,' rejoined Sam, '*they* don't mind it; it's a reg'lar holiday to them—all porter and skittles. It's the t'other vuns as gets done over with this sort o' thing;—them down-hearted fellers as can't svig avay at the beer, nor play at skittles neither; them as would pay if they could, and gets low by being boxed up.'

'I think you're right, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, after a few moments' reflection, 'quite right.'

Mr. Pickwick slowly retraced his steps downstairs and intimated to Mr. Weller that he thought it high time for him to withdraw for the night; requesting him to seek a bed in some adjacent public-house, and return early in the morning, to make arrangements for the removal of his master's wardrobe from the George and Vulture. This request Mr. Samuel Weller prepared to obey, with as good a grace as he

could assume, but with a very considerable show of reluctance nevertheless.

There is no disguising the fact that Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable—not for lack of society, for the prison was very full; but he was alone in the coarse, vulgar crowd, and felt the depression of spirits and sinking of heart, naturally consequent on the reflection that he was cooped and caged up, without a prospect of liberation.

Now, although the warder's room was a very uncomfortable one, it had at present the merit of being wholly deserted save by Mr. Pickwick himself. He began to be conscious that he was getting sleepy; whereupon he took his nightcap out of the pocket in which he had had the precaution to stow it in the morning, and, leisurely undressing himself, got into bed and fell asleep.

'Bravo! Heel over toe—cut and shuffle—pay away at it, Zephyr! I'm smothered if the opera house isn't your proper hemisphere. Keep it up! Hooray!' These expressions, delivered in a most boisterous tone, and accompanied with loud peals of laughter, roused Mr. Pickwick from one of those sound slumbers which, lasting in reality some half-hour, seem to the sleeper to have been protracted for three weeks or a month.

On the floor of the room, a man in a broad-skirted green coat, with corduroy knee-smalls and gray cotton stockings, was performing the most popular steps of a hornpipe, with a slang and burlesque caricature of grace and lightness, which was inexpressibly absurd. Another man, evidently very drunk, was sitting up between the sheets, warbling as much as he could recollect of a comic song; while a third, seated on one of the bedsteads, was applauding both performers with the air of a profound connoisseur.

This last man was a tall fellow, with an olive complexion, long dark hair, and very thick bushy whiskers meeting under his chin. There was a rakish, vagabond smartness, and a kind of boastful rascality, about the whole man, that was worth a mine of gold.

This figure was the first to perceive that Mr. Pickwick was looking on; upon which he winked to the Zephyr, and

entreated him, with mock gravity, not to wake the gentleman.

'Why, bless the gentleman's honest heart and soul!' said the Zephyr, turning round and affecting the extremity of surprise; 'the gentleman *is* awake. Hem, Shakespeare! How do you do, sir? Will you take port wine, sir, or sherry wine, sir? I can recommend the ale, sir; or perhaps you'd like to taste the porter, sir? Allow me to have the felicity of hanging up your nightcap, sir.'

With this, the speaker snatched that article of dress from Mr. Pickwick's head, and fixed it in a twinkling on that of the drunken man.

Mr. Pickwick, without the slightest intimation of his purpose, sprang vigorously out of bed, struck the Zephyr so smart a blow in the chest as to deprive him of a considerable portion of the commodity which sometimes bears his name, and then, recapturing his nightcap, boldly placed himself in an attitude of defence.

'Now,' said Mr. Pickwick, gasping no less from excitement than from the expenditure of so much energy, 'come on—both of you—both of you!'

His adversaries paused, stared at each other a short time, and finally laughed outright.

'Well, you're a trump, and I like you all the better for it,' said the Zephyr. 'No malice, I hope?'

'Certainly not,' said Mr. Pickwick, with great alacrity.

'Allow me the honour,' said the gentleman with the whiskers, presenting his dexter hand, and aspirating the h.

'With much pleasure, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick; and having executed a very long and solemn shake, he got into bed again.

'My name is Smangle, sir,' said the man with the whiskers.

'Oh,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Mine is Mivins,' said the man in the stockings.

'I am delighted to hear it, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Are you going through the court, sir?' inquired Mr. Smangle. 'The Court for Relief of—— You know.'

'Oh, no,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'I refuse to pay some damages, and am here in consequence.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Smangle, 'paper has been my ruin.'

'A stationer, I presume, sir?' said Mr. Pickwick innocently.
'Stationer! No, no; confound and curse me! Not so low as that. No trade. When I say paper, I mean bills. But come, this is dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burnt sherry; the last-comer shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentlemanlike division of labour, anyhow. Curse me!'

Unwilling to hazard another quarrel, Mr. Pickwick gladly assented to the proposition, and consigned the money to Mr. Mivins, who in a short time returned, bearing the sherry, which Mr. Smangle dispensed in two little cracked mugs. An excellent understanding having been by these means promoted, Mr. Smangle proceeded to entertain his hearers with a relation of divers romantic adventures.

Long before these elegant extracts from the biography of a gentleman were concluded, Mr. Mivins had betaken himself to bed, and had set in snoring for the night, leaving Mr. Pickwick to the full benefit of Mr. Smangle's experiences.

27

*Illustrative, like the preceding one, of the old Proverb,
that Adversity brings a Man acquainted with strange
Bed-fellows*

WHEN Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object upon which they rested was Samuel Weller, seated upon a small black portmanteau, intently regarding, apparently in a condition of profound abstraction, the stately figure of the dashing Mr. Smangle; while Mr. Smangle himself, who was already partially dressed, was seated on his bedstead, occupied in the desperately hopeless attempt of staring Mr. Weller out of countenance.

'Well, will you know me again?' said Mr. Smangle, with a frown.

'I'd swear to you anyveres, sir,' replied Sam cheerfully.

'Don't be impertinent to a gentleman, sir,' said Mr. Smangle.

'Not on no account,' replied Sam: 'If you'll tell me wen he wakes, I'll be upon the wery best extra-super behaviour!'

The conversation exhibiting unequivocal symptoms of verging on the personal, Mr. Pickwick deemed it a fit point at which to interpose.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Sir,' rejoined that gentleman.

'Has anything new occurred since last night?'

'Nothin' partickler, sir,' replied Sam, glancing at Mr. Smangle's whiskers; 'the late prewailance of a close and confined atmosphere has been rayther favourable to the growth of veeds, of an alarmin' and sangvinary natur'; but vith that 'ere exception things is quiet enough.'

And, after despatching Mr. Weller on some necessary errands, Mr. Pickwick repaired to the lodge, to consult Mr. Roker concerning his future accommodation.

'Accommodation, eh?' said that gentleman, consulting a large book. 'Plenty of that, Mr. Pickwick. Your chummage ticket will be on twenty-seven, in the third.'

'Oh,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'My what, did you say?'

'Why,' said Mr. Roker, 'it's as plain as Salisbury. You'll have a chummage ticket upon twenty-seven in the third, and them as is in the room will be your chums.'

'Are there many of them?' inquired Mr. Pickwick dubiously.

'Three,' replied Mr. Roker.

Mr. Pickwick coughed.

'One of 'em's a parson,' said Mr. Roker, filling up a little piece of paper as he spoke; 'another's a butcher. What a thorough-paced goer he used to be sure-ly! You remember Tom Martin, Neddy?' said Roker, appealing to another man in the lodge, who was paring the mud off his shoes with a five-and-twenty-bladed pocket-knife.

'I should think so,' replied the party addressed, with a strong emphasis on the personal pronoun.

'Bless my dear eyes!' said Mr. Roker, 'it seems but yesterday

that he whopped the coal-heaver down Fox-under-the-Hill by the wharf there.'

'Do you know what the third gentleman is?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, not very much gratified by this description of his future associates.

'What is that Simpson, Neddy?' said Mr. Roker.

'Oh, him!' replied Neddy; 'he's nothing exactly. He *was* a horse chaunter; he's a leg now.'

'Ah, so I thought,' rejoined Mr. Roker, closing the book, and placing the small piece of paper in Mr. Pickwick's hands. 'That's the ticket, sir.'

Very much perplexed by this summary disposition of his person, Mr. Pickwick walked back into the prison, revolving in his mind what he had better do. Convinced, however, that before he took any other steps it would be advisable to see, and hold personal converse with, the three gentlemen with whom it was proposed to quarter him, he made the best of his way to the third flight.

There was only one man in room twenty-seven, and he demanded in a surly tone what the—something beginning with a capital H—he wanted.

'I have come here in consequence of receiving this bit of paper,' rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

'Hand it over,' said the gentleman.

Mr. Pickwick complied.

'I think Roker might have chummed you somewhere else,' said Mr. Simpson (for it was the leg), after a very discontented sort of a pause.

Mr. Pickwick thought so also; but, under all the circumstances, he considered it a matter of sound policy to be silent.

Mr. Simpson mused for a few moments after this, and then, thrusting his head out of the window, gave a shrill whistle. In a few seconds, a gentleman, prematurely broad for his years, clothed in a professional blue jean frock and top-boots with circular toes, entered the room nearly out of breath, closely followed by another gentleman in a very shabby black, and a sealskin cap. The latter gentleman, who fastened his coat all the way up to his chin by means of a pin and a button

alternately, had a very coarse red face, and looked like drunken chaplain; which, indeed, he was.

'It's an aggravating thing, just as we got the beds so snug,' said the chaplain, looking at three dirty mattresses, each rolled up in a blanket.

Mr. Martin expressed the same opinion in rather stronger terms; Mr. Simpson, after having let a variety of expletive adjectives loose upon society without any substantive to accompany them, tucked up his sleeves, and began to wash the greens for dinner. While this was going on, Mr. Pickwick had been eyeing the room, which was filthily dirty, and smelt intolerably close. There was no vestige of either carpet, curtain, or blind.

'I suppose this can be managed somehow,' said the butcher, after a pretty long silence. 'What will you take to go out?'

'I beg your pardon,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'What did you say?'

'What will you take to be paid out?' said the butcher.

'I really am so wholly ignorant of the rules of this place,' returned Mr. Pickwick, 'that I do not yet comprehend you. *Can I live anywhere else?* I thought I could not.'

'Can you?' repeated Mr. Martin, with a smile of pity.

'Well, if I knew as little of life as that, I'd eat my hat and swallow the buckle whole,' said the clerical gentleman.

The three chums informed Mr. Pickwick, in a breath, that money was, in the Fleet, just what money was out of it; that it would instantly procure him almost anything he desired; and that, supposing he had it, and had no objection to spend it, if he only signified his wish to have a room to himself, he might take possession of one, furnished and fitted to boot, in half an hour's time.

With this the parties separated, very much to their common satisfaction; Mr. Pickwick once more retracing his steps to the lodge, and the three companions adjourning to the coffee-room, there to spend the five shillings which the clerical gentleman had, with admirable prudence and foresight, borrowed of him for the purpose.

'I knowed it!' said Mr. Roker, with a chuckle, when Mr. Pickwick stated the object with which he had returned. 'I

knowed you'd want a room for yourself, bless you! Let me see. You'll want some furnitur'. You'll hire that of me, I suppose? That's the reg'lar thing. There's a capital room up in the coffee-room flight, that belongs to a Chancery prisoner. It'll stand you in a pound a week. I suppose you don't mind that?"

'Not at all,' said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Roker entered upon his arrangements with such expedition, that in a short time the room was furnished with a carpet, six chairs, a table, a sofa bedstead, a tea-kettle, and various small articles, on hire, at the very reasonable rate of seven-and-twenty shillings and sixpence per week.

'Now, is there anything more we can do for you?' inquired Mr. Roker, looking round with great satisfaction, and gaily chinking the first week's hire in his closed fist.

'Why, yes,' said Mr. Pickwick, who had been musing deeply for some time. 'Are there any people here who run on errands, and so forth?'

'Yes, there is,' said Roker. 'There's an unfortunate devil, who has got a friend on the poor side, that's glad to do anything of that sort. He's been running odd jobs, and that, for the last two months. Shall I send him?'

'If you please,' rejoined Mr. Pickwick. 'Stay; no. The poor side, you say? I should like to see it. I'll go to him myself.'

The poor side of a debtor's prison is, as its name imports, that in which the most miserable and abject class of debtors are confined. A prisoner having declared upon the poor side, pays neither rent nor chummage. His fees, upon entering and leaving the jail, are reduced in amount, and he becomes entitled to a share of some small quantities of food. We still leave unblotted in the leaves of our statute book, for the reverence and admiration of succeeding ages, the just and wholesome law which declares that the sturdy felon shall be fed and clothed, and that the penniless debtor shall be left to die of starvation and nakedness.

Turning these things in his mind, as he mounted the narrow staircase at the foot of which Roker had left him, Mr. Pickwick gradually worked himself to the boiling-over point; and so excited was he with his reflections on this sub-

ject, that he had burst into the room to which he had been directed, before he had any distinct recollection, either of the place in which he was, or of the object of his visit.

The general aspect of the room recalled him to himself at once; but he had no sooner cast his eye on the figure of a man who was brooding over the dusty fire, than, letting his hat fall on the floor, he stood perfectly fixed and immovable with astonishment.

Yes; in tattered garments, and without a coat; his common calico shirt yellow and in rags; his hair hanging over his face; his features changed with suffering, and pinched with famine —there sat Mr. Alfred Jingle; his head resting on his hands, his eyes fixed upon the fire, and his whole appearance denoting misery and dejection!

On the opposite side of the room an old man was seated on a small wooden box, with his eyes riveted on the floor, and his face settled into an expression of the deepest and most hopeless despair. A young girl—his little grand-daughter—was hanging about him, endeavouring, with a thousand childish devices, to engage his attention; but the old man neither saw nor heard her.

Such were the objects which presented themselves to Mr. Pickwick's view, as he looked round him in amazement. The noise of some one stumbling hastily into the room, roused him. Turning his eyes towards the door, they encountered the new-comer; and in him, through his rags and dirt, he recognised the familiar features of Mr. Job Trotter.

'Mr. Pickwick!' exclaimed Job aloud.

'Eh?' said Jingle, starting from his seat. 'Mr.——! So it is—queer place—strange thing—serves me right—very.'

Mr. Pickwick was affected; the two men looked so very miserable. The sharp, involuntary glance Jingle had cast at a small piece of raw loin of mutton, which Job had brought in with him, said more of their reduced state than two hours' explanation could have done. Mr. Pickwick looked mildly at Jingle, and said:

'I should like to speak to you in private. Will you step out for an instant?'

'Certainly,' said Jingle, rising hastily. 'Can't step far—no

danger of overwalking yourself here—spike park—grounds pretty—romantic, but not extensive.'

'You have forgotten your coat,' said Mr. Pickwick, as they walked out to the staircase, and closed the door after them.

'Eh?' said Jingle. 'Gone, my dear sir—last coat—can't help it. Lived on a pair of boots—whole fortnight. Silk umbrella—ivory handle—week—fact—honour—ask Job—knows it.'

'Lived for three weeks upon a pair of boots, and a silk umbrella with an ivory handle!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, who had only heard of such things in shipwrecks or read of them in *Constable's Miscellany*.

'True,' said Jingle, nodding his head. 'Pawnbroker's shop—duplicates here—small sums—mere nothing—all rascals.'

'Oh,' said Mr. Pickwick, much relieved by this explanation; 'I understand you. You have pawned your wardrobe.'

'Everything—Job's too—all shirts gone—never mind—saves washing. Nothing soon—lie in bed—starve—die—deserved it all—but suffered much—very.' Wholly unable to keep up appearances any longer, the dejected stroller sat down on the stairs, and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed like a child.

'Come, come,' said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable emotion, 'we will see what can be done, when I know all about the matter. Here, Job; where is that fellow?'

'Here, sir,' replied Job, presenting himself on the staircase.

'Come here, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick, trying to look stern, with four large tears running down his waistcoat. 'Take that, sir.'

'Take what? As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound, hearty cuff. Must we tell the truth? It was something from Mr. Pickwick's waistcoat pocket, which chinked as it was given into Job's hand, and the giving of which, somehow or other imparted a sparkle to the eye, and a swelling to the heart, of our excellent old friend, as he hurried away.

Sam had returned when Mr. Pickwick reached his own room, and was inspecting the arrangements that had been made for his comfort.

'Well, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Well, sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'Pretty comfortable now, eh, Sam?'

'Pretty vell, sir,' responded Sam, looking round him in a disparaging manner.

'You have brought the things I wanted?'

Mr. Weller in reply pointed to various packages which he had arranged, as neatly as he could, in a corner of the room.

'I have felt from the first, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, with much solemnity, 'that this is not the place to bring a young man to. Independently of my wish that you should not be idling about a place like this, for years to come, I feel that for a debtor in the Fleet to be attended by his manservant is a monstrous absurdity. Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'for a time you must leave me.'

'Oh, for a time, eh, sir?' rejoined Mr. Weller, rather sarcastically.

'Yes, for the time that I remain here,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Your wages I shall continue to pay.'

'Now I'll tell you wot it is, sir,' said Mr. Weller, in a grave and solemn voice. 'This here sort o' thing won't do at all, so don't let's hear no more about it.'

'I am serious, and resolved, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'You air, air you, sir?' inquired Mr. Weller firmly. 'Wery good, sir; then so am I.'

Thus speaking, Mr. Weller fixed his hat on his head with great precision, and abruptly left the room.

'Sam!' cried Mr. Pickwick, calling after him. 'Sam! Here!'

But the long gallery ceased to re-echo the sound of footsteps. Sam Weller was gone.

Showing how Mr. Samuel Weller got into Difficulties

IN A LOFTY room, ill-lighted and worse ventilated, situated in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, there sit nearly the whole year round, one, two, three, or four gentlemen in wigs, as the case may be, with little writing-desks before them. These gentlemen are the Commissioners of the Insolvent Court, and the place in which they sit, is the Insolvent Court itself.

It is, and has been, time out of mind, the remarkable fate of this court to be, somehow or other, held and understood, by the general consent of all the destitute shabby-genteel people in London, as their common resort, and place of daily refuge.

But the attorneys, who sit at a large bare table below the commissioners, are the greatest curiosities. The professional establishment of the more opulent of these gentlemen, consists of a blue bag and a boy; generally a youth of the Jewish persuasion. They have no fixed offices, their legal business being transacted in the parlours of public-houses, or the yards of prisons, whither they repair in crowds, and canvass for customers after the manner of omnibus cads.

Mr. Solomon Pell, one of this learned body, was a fat, flabby, pale man, in a surtout which looked green one minute, and brown the next, with a velvet collar of the same cameleon tints.

'I'm sure to bring him through it,' said Mr. Pell.

'Are you, though?' replied the person to whom the assurance was pledged.

'Certain sure,' replied Pell; 'but if he'd gone to any irregular practitioner, mind you, I wouldn't have answered for the consequences.'

Now, the place where this discourse occurred was the

public-house just opposite to the Insolvent Court; and the person with whom it was held was no other than the elder Mr. Weller, who had come there, to comfort and console a friend, whose petition to be discharged under the act, was to be that day heard, and whose attorney he was at that moment consulting.

‘And vere is George?’ inquired the old gentleman.

Mr. Pell jerked his head in the direction of a back parlour, whither Mr. Weller at once repairing, was immediately greeted in the warmest and most flattering manner by some half-dozen of his professional brethren, in token of their gratification at his arrival. The insolvent gentleman, who had contracted a speculative but imprudent passion for horsing long stages, which had led to his present embarrassments, looked extremely well, and was soothing the excitement of his feelings with shrimps and porter.

‘Vell, George,’ said Mr. Weller senior, taking off his upper coat, and seating himself with his accustomed gravity. ‘How is it? All right behind, and full inside?’

‘All right, old feller,’ replied the embarrassed gentleman.

‘Is the gray mare made over to anybody?’ inquired Mr. Weller anxiously. George nodded in the affirmative.

‘Wery good, wery good,’ said Mr. Weller. ‘Is the vay-bill all clear and straight for’erd?’

‘The schedule, sir,’ said Pell, guessing at Mr. Weller’s meaning, ‘the schedule is as plain and satisfactory as pen and ink can make it.’

Mr. Weller surveyed the attorney from head to foot with great admiration, and said emphatically:

‘And what’ll you take, sir?’

‘Why, really,’ replied Mr. Pell, ‘you’re very—— Upon my word and honour, I’m not in the habit of—— Well, you may bring me threepenn’orth of rum, my dear.’

The officiating damsel, who had anticipated the order before it was given, set the glass of spirits before Pell, and retired.

‘Gentlemen,’ said Mr. Pell, looking round upon the company, ‘success to your friend! I don’t like to boast, gentlemen; it’s not my way; but I can’t help saying, that, if your

friend hadn't been fortunate enough to fall into hands that
— But I won't say what I was going to say.'

This virtuous resolution had scarcely been formed, when the boy and the blue bag, who were inseparable companions, rushed violently into the room, and said (at least the boy did, for the blue bag took no part in the announcement) that the case was coming on directly. The intelligence was no sooner received than the whole party hurried across the street, and began to fight their way into court.

Mr. Weller cast himself at once into the crowd. Having neglected to take his hat off, it was knocked over his eyes by some unseen person, upon whose toes he had alighted with considerable force. Apparently this individual regretted his impetuosity immediately afterwards, for, muttering an indistinct exclamation of surprise, he dragged the old man out into the hall, and, after a violent struggle, released his head and face.

'Samivel!' exclaimed Mr. Weller, when he was thus enabled to behold his rescuer.

Sam nodded.

'You're a dutiful and affectionate little boy, you are, ain't you,' said Mr. Weller, 'to come a-bonnetin' your father in his old age?'

'How should I know who you wos?' responded the son. 'Do you s'pose I wos to tell you by the weight o' your foot?'

'Vell, that's verry true, Sammy,' replied Mr. Weller, mollified at once; 'but wot are you a-doin' on here? Your gov'nor can't do no good here, Sammy. They won't pass that werdick, they won't pass it, Sammy.' And Mr. Weller shook his head with legal solemnity.

'Wot a perwerse old file it is!' exclaimed Sam. 'Always a-goin' on about werdicks and alleybis and that. Just open them ears o' yours, and don't say nothin' till I've done.' With this preface, Sam related, as succinctly as he could, the last memorable conversation he had had with Mr. Pickwick.

'Stop there by himself, poor creetur!' exclaimed the elder Mr. Weller, 'without nobody to take his part! It can't be done, Samivel, it can't be done.'

'O' course it can't,' asserted Sam: 'I know'd that, afore I came.'

'Why, they'll eat him up alive, Sammy,' exclaimed Mr. Weller.

Sam nodded his concurrence in the opinion. 'Don't you see any vay o' takin' care on him?'

'No, I don't, Sammy,' said Mr. Weller, with a reflective visage. 'If he von't let you stop there, I see no vay at all. It's no thoroughfare, Sammy, no thoroughfare.'

'Well, then, I'll tell you wot it is,' said Sam, 'I'll trouble you for the loan of five-and-twenty pound.'

'Wot good'll that do?' inquired Mr. Weller.

'Never mind,' replied Sam. 'P'raps you may ask for it five minits arterwards; p'raps I must say I von't pay, and cut up rough. You von't think o' arrestin' your own son for the money, and sendin' him off to Fleet, will you, you unnat'ral wagabone?'

At this reply of Sam's, the father and son exchanged a complete code of telegraph nods and gestures, after which, the elder Mr. Weller sat himself down on a stone step and laughed till he was purple.

'Wot a old image it is!' exclaimed Sam, indignant at this loss of time. 'Where's the money?'

'In the boot, Sammy, in the boot,' replied Mr. Weller, composing his features. 'Hold my hat, Sammy.'

Having divested himself of this encumbrance, Mr. Weller gave his body a sudden wrench to one side, and by a dexterous twist, contrived to get his right hand into a most capacious pocket, from whence, after a great deal of panting and exertion, he extricated a pocket-book of the large octavo size, fastened by a huge leathern strap. From this ledger he drew forth a small roll of very dirty bank-notes, from which he selected the required amount, which he handed over to Sam.

'And now, Sammy,' said the old gentleman, 'I know a gen'l'm'n here, as'll do the rest o' the bisness for us, in no time—a limb o' the law, Sammy, as has got brains like the frogs, dispersed, all over his body, and reachin' to the very tips of his fingers.'



He extricated a pocket-book of the large octavo size, fastened by a huge leather strap.

Mr. Weller at once sought the erudite Solomon Pell, and acquainted him with his desire to issue a writ, instantly, for the sum of twenty-five pounds and costs of process; to be executed without delay upon the body of one Samuel Weller; the charges thereby incurred, to be paid in advance to Solomon Pell.

The attorney was in high glee, for the embarrassed coach-horser was ordered to be discharged forthwith. He at once led the elder Mr. Weller down to the Temple, to swear the affidavit of debt, which the boy, with the assistance of the blue bag, had drawn up on the spot.

Meanwhile, Sam, having been formally introduced to the whitewashed gentleman and his friends, as the offspring of Mr. Weller, of the Belle Savage, was treated with marked distinction, and invited to regale himself with them in honour of the occasion.

By the time the officer arrived, Sam had made himself so extremely popular, that the congregated gentlemen determined to see him to prison in a body. So off they set; the plaintiff and defendant walking arm in arm, the officer in front, and eight stout coachmen bringing up the rear. When they reached the gate of the Fleet, the cavalcade, taking the time from the plaintiff, gave three tremendous cheers for the defendant, and, after having shaken hands all round, left him.

Sam, having been formally delivered into the warder's custody, passed at once into the prison, walked straight to his master's room, and knocked at the door.

'Come in,' said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam appeared, pulled off his hat, and smiled.

'Ah, Sam, my good lad!' said Mr. Pickwick, evidently delighted to see his humble friend again, 'I had no intention of hurting your feelings yesterday, my faithful fellow, by what I said. Put down your hat, Sam, and let me explain my meaning, a little more at length.'

'I'd rayther not now, sir,' Sam said.

'Why?' inquired Pickwick.

"Cause——" said Sam, hesitating.

'Because of what?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, alarmed at his follower's manner. 'Speak out, Sam.'

'Why, the fact is,' said Sam, with a desperate effort, 'perhaps I'd better see arter my bed afore I do anythin' else.'

'Your bed!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, in astonishment.

'Yes, my bed, sir,' replied Sam, 'I'm a pris'ner. I was arrested this here very arternoon for debt. And the man as put me in, 'ull never let me out till you go yourself.'

'Bless my heart and soul!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick. 'What do you mean?'

'Wot I say, sir,' rejoined Sam. 'If it's forty years to come, I shall be a pris'ner, and I'm very glad on it; and if it had been Newgate, it would ha' been just the same. Now the murderer's out, and, damme, there's an end on it!'

With these words, which he repeated with great emphasis and violence, Sam Weller dashed his hat upon the ground, in a most unusual state of excitement; and then, folding his arms, looked firmly and fixedly in his master's face.

29

Treats of divers little Matters which occurred in the Fleet, and of Mr. Winkle's mysterious Behaviour

MR. PICKWICK felt a great deal too much touched by the warmth of Sam's attachment, to be able to exhibit any manifestation of anger or displeasure at the precipitate course he had adopted, in voluntarily consigning himself to a debtor's prison for an indefinite period. The only point on which he persevered in demanding an explanation, was, the name of Sam's detaining creditor; but this Mr. Weller as perseveringly withheld.

'It ain't o' no use,' said Sam, again and again; 'he's a malicious, bad-disposed, worldly-minded, spiteful, windictive creetur.'

'But consider, Sam,' Mr. Pickwick remonstrated, 'the sum is so small that it can very easily be paid.'

'Wery much obliged to you, sir,' replied Mr. Weller gravely; 'but I'd rayther not.'

Here Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with an air of some vexation, Mr. Weller thought it prudent to change the theme of the discourse.

'I takes my determination on principle, sir,' remarked Sam, 'and you takes yours on the same ground; which puts me in mind o' the man as killed his-self on principle, he wos a clerk in a gov'ment office, sir, and a very pleasant gen'l'm'n too—one o' the précise and tidy sort, as puts their feet in little india-rubber fire-buckets wen it's wet weather; he saved up his money on principle, wore a clean shirt ev'ry day on principle; never spoke to none of his relations on principle, 'fear they shou'd want to borrow money of him; and wos altogether, in fact, an uncommon agreeable character. Being a very reg'lar gen'l'm'n, he din'd ev'ry day at the same place, were it wos one-and-nine to cut off the joint, and a very good one-and-nine's worth he used to cut, as the landlord often said, with the tears a-trickling down his face. Well, sir, here he'd stop, occupin' the best place for three hours, and never takin' nothin' arter his dinner, but sleep, and then he'd go away to a coffee-house a few streets off, and have a small pot o' coffee and four crumpets, arter which he'd walk home to Kensington and go to bed. One night he wos took very ill; sends for a doctor; doctor comes in a green fly. "Wot's the matter?" says the doctor. "Wery ill," says the patient. "Wot's the last thing you dewoured?" says the doctor. "Crumpets," says the patient. "That's it!" says the doctor. "I'll send you a box of pills directly, and don't you never take no more of 'em," he says. "No more o' wot?" says the patient—"pills?" "No; crumpets," says the doctor, "Wy?" says the patient, starting up in bed; "I've eat four crumpets, ev'ry night for fifteen year, on principle." "Well, then, you'd better leave 'em off, on principle," says the doctor. "Crumpets is *not* wholesome, sir," says the doctor, very fierce. "But they're so cheap," says the patient, conin' down a little, "and so wery fillin' at the price." "They'd be dear to you, at any price; dear if you wos paid to eat 'em," says the doctor. "Four crumpets a night," he says,

"vill do your business in six months!" The patient looks him full in the face, and turns it over in his mind for a long time, and at last he says, "Are you sure o' that 'ere, sir?" "I'll stake my professional reputation on it," says the doctor. "How many crumpets, at a sittin' do you think 'ud kill me off at once?" says the patient. "I don't know," says the doctor. "Do you think half-a-crown's wurth 'ud do it?" says the patient. "I think it might," says the doctor. "Three shillin's' wurth 'ud be sure to do it, I s'pose?" says the patient. "Certainly," says the doctor. "Wery good," says the patient; "good-night." Next mornin' he gets up, has a fire lit, orders in three shillin's' wurth o' crumpets, toasts 'em all, eats 'em all, and blows his brains out.'

"What did he do that for?" inquired Mr. Pickwick abruptly; for he was considerably startled by this tragical termination of the narrative.

"Wot did he do it for, sir?" reiterated Sam. "Wy, in support of his great principle that crumpets wos wholesome, and to show that he wouldn't be put out of his way for nobody!"

With such like shiftings and changings of the discourse, did Mr. Weller meet his master's questioning on the night of his taking up his residence in the Fleet. Finding all gentle remonstrance useless, Mr. Pickwick at length yielded a reluctant consent to his taking lodgings by the week, of a bald-headed cobbler, who rented a small slip room in one of the upper galleries. To this humble apartment Mr. Weller moved a mattress and bedding, which he hired of Mr. Roker; and, by the time he lay down upon it at night, was as much at home as if he had been bred in the prison, and his whole family had vegetated therein for three generations.

Mr. Pickwick was sitting at breakfast, alone, next morning (Sam being busily engaged in the cobbler's room, polishing his master's shoes and brushing the black gaiters) when there came a knock at the door, which, before Mr. Pickwick could cry 'Come in!' was followed by the appearance of a head of hair and a cotton-velvet cap, both of which articles of dress he had no difficulty in recognising as the personal property of Mr. Smangle.

'How are you?' said that worthy, accompanying the inquiry with a score or two of nods; 'I say—do you expect anybody this morning? Three men—devilish gentlemanly fellows—have been asking after you downstairs, and knocking at every door on the hall flight; for which they've been most infernally blown up by the collegians that had the trouble of opening 'em.'

'Dear me! How very foolish of them,' said Mr. Pickwick, rising. 'Yes; I have no doubt they are some friends whom I rather expected to see, yesterday.'

'Friends of yours!' exclaimed Smangle, seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand. 'Say no more. Curse me, they're friends of mine from this minute, and friends of Mivin's, too. Infernal pleasant, gentlemanly dog, Mivins, isn't he? I don't know better company anywhere; but he has one drawback. If the ghost of his grandfather, sir, was to rise before him this minute, he'd ask him for the loan of his acceptance on an eighteenpenny stamp.'

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick. 'But I'm afraid that while we are talking here, my friends may be in a state of great perplexity at not finding me.'

'I'll show 'em the way,' said Smangle, making for the door. 'Good-day. I won't disturb you while they're here. you know. By the bye—'

As Smangle pronounced the last three words, he stopped suddenly, reclosed the door which he had opened, and, walking softly back to Mr. Pickwick, stepped close up to him on tiptoe, and said, in a very soft whisper:

'You couldn't make it convenient to lend me half-a-crown till the latter end of next week, could you?'

Mr. Pickwick could scarcely forbear smiling, but managing to preserve his gravity, he drew forth the coin, and placed it in Mr. Smangle's palm; upon which, that gentleman, with many nods and winks, implying profound mystery, disappeared in quest of the three strangers, with whom he presently returned; he shook hands all round, in an engaging manner, and at length took himself off.

'My dear friends,' said Mr. Pickwick, shaking hands alternately with Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snod-

grass, who were the three visitors in question, 'I am delighted to see you.'

The triumvirate were much affected. Mr. Tupman shook his head deploringly; Mr. Snodgrass drew forth his handkerchief, with undisguised emotion; and Mr. Winkle retired to the window, and sniffed aloud.

'Mornin', gen'l'm'n,' said Sam, entering at the moment with the shoes and gaiters. 'Velcome to the college, gen'l'm'n.'

'This foolish fellow,' said Mr. Pickwick, tapping Sam on the head as he knelt down to button up his master's gaiters—'this foolish fellow has got himself arrested, in order to be near me.'

'What!' exclaimed the three friends.

'Yes, gen'l'm'n,' said Sam, 'I'm a—stand steady, sir, if you please—I'm a pris'ner, gen'l'm'n. Con-fined, as the lady said.'

'A prisoner!' exclaimed Mr. Winkle, with unaccountable vehemence.

'Hollo, sir!' responded Sam, looking up. 'Wot's the matter, sir?'

'I had hoped, Sam, that—— Nothing, nothing,' said Mr. Winkle precipitately.

There was something so very abrupt and unsettled in Mr. Winkle's manner, that Mr. Pickwick involuntarily looked at his two friends for an explanation.

'We don't know,' said Mr. Tupman, answering this mute appeal aloud. 'He has been much excited for two days past, and his whole demeanour very unlike what it usually is. We feared there must be something the matter, but he resolutely denies it.'

'No, no,' said Mr. Winkle, colouring beneath Mr. Pickwick's gaze; 'there is really nothing. It will be necessary for me to leave town, for a short time, on private business, and I had hoped to have prevailed upon you to allow Sam to accompany me.'

Mr. Pickwick led the conversation to different topics, and Mr. Winkle gradually appeared more at ease, though still very far from being completely so. They had all so much to converse about, that the morning very quickly passed away;

and when, at three o'clock, Mr. Weller produced upon the little dining-table, a roast leg of mutton and an enormous meat-pie, with sundry dishes of vegetables, and pots of porter, everybody felt disposed to do justice to the meal.

But, if Mr. Winkle's behaviour had been unaccountable in the morning, it became perfectly unearthly and solemn when he prepared to take leave of his friend. He lingered behind, until Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had disappeared, and then fervently clenched Mr. Pickwick's hand, with an expression of face in which deep and mighty resolve was fearfully blended with the very concentrated essence of gloom.

'Good-night, my dear sir!' said Mr. Winkle between his set teeth.

'Bless you, my dear fellow!' replied the warm-hearted Mr. Pickwick, as he returned the pressure of his young friend's hand.

There was another good-night, and another, and half a dozen more after that, and still Mr. Winkle had fast hold of his friend's hand, and was looking into his face with the same strange expression.

'My friend, my benefactor, my honoured companion,' murmured Mr. Winkle, 'do not judge me harshly; do not, when you hear that, driven to extremity by hopeless obstacles, I—'

'Now then,' said Mr. Tupman, reappearing at the door. 'Are you coming, or are we to be locked in?'

'Yes, yes, I am ready,' replied Mr. Winkle. And with a violent effort he tore himself away.

As Mr. Pickwick was gazing down the passage after them in silent astonishment, Sam Weller appeared at the stair-head.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Sir,' replied Mr. Weller.

'I am going for a walk round the prison, and I wish you to attend me.'

Mr. Pickwick wandered along all the galleries, up and down all the staircases, and once again round the whole area of the yard. The great body of the prison population appeared to be Mivins, and Smangle, and the parson, and the butcher, and the leg, over and over, and over again. There were the

same squalor, the same turmoil and noise, the same general characteristics, in every corner; in the best and the worst alike. The whole place seemed restless and troubled; and the people were crowding and flitting to and fro, like the shadows in an uneasy dream.

'I have seen enough,' said Mr. Pickwick, as he threw himself into a chair in his little apartment. 'My head aches with these scenes, and my heart too. Henceforth I will be a prisoner in my own room.'

And Mr. Pickwick steadfastly adhered to this determination. For three long months he remained shut up, all day; only stealing out at night to breathe the air, when the greater part of his fellow-prisoners were in bed or carousing in their rooms. His health was beginning to suffer from the closeness of the confinement, but neither the often-repeated entreaties of Perker and his friends, nor the still more frequently-repeated warnings and admonitions of Mr. Samuel Weller, could induce him to alter one jot of his inflexible resolution.

30

Records a touching Act of delicate Feeling, not unmixed with Pleasantry, achieved and performed by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg

IT WAS within a week of the close of the month of July, that a hackney-cabriolet, number unrecorded, was seen to proceed at a rapid pace up Goswell Street; three people were squeezed into it besides the driver, who sat in his own particular little dickey at the side; over the apron were hung two shawls, belonging to two small vixenish-looking ladies under the apron; between whom, compressed into a very small compass, was stowed away, a gentleman of heavy and subdued demeanour, who, whenever he ventured to make an obser-

vation, was snapped up short by one of the vixenish ladies before-mentioned.

'Stop at the house with a green door, driver,' said the heavy gentleman.

'Oh! You perwerse creetur!' exclaimed one of the vixenish ladies. 'Drive to the 'ouse with the yellow door, cabmin.'

But after the cabriolet had dashed up, in splendid style, to the house with the yellow door, 'making,' as one of the vixenish ladies triumphantly said, 'acterrally more noise than if one had come in one's own carriage,' and after the driver had dismounted to assist the ladies in getting out, the small round head of Master Thomas Bardell was thrust out of the one-pair window of a house with a red door, a few numbers off.

'Aggravatin' thing!' said the vixenish lady last-mentioned, darting a withering glance at the heavy gentleman.

'My dear, it's not my fault,' said the gentleman.

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Raddle,' said the other little woman, who was no other than Mrs. Cluppins.

While this dialogue was going on, the driver was most ignominiously leading the horse, by the bridle, up to the house with the red door, which Master Bardell had already opened.

'Well, Tommy,' said Mrs. Cluppins, 'how's your poor dear mother?'

'Oh, she's very well,' replied Master Bardell. 'She's in the front parlour, all ready. I'm ready too, I am.'

'Is anybody else a-goin', Tommy?' said Mrs. Cluppins, arranging her pelerine.

'Mrs. Sanders is going, she is,' replied Tommy; 'I'm going too, I am.'

'Who else is a-goin', lovey?' said Mrs. Cluppins, in an insinuating manner.

'Oh! Mrs. Rogers is a-goin',' replied Master Bardell.

'What? The lady as has taken the lodgings!' ejaculated Mrs. Cluppins. 'Bless us! It's quite a party!'

'Ah, if you knew what was in the cupboard, you'd say so,' replied Master Bardell.

'What is there, Tommy?' said Mrs. Cluppins coaxingly. 'You'll tell me, Tommy, I know.'

'No, I won't,' replied Master Bardell, shaking his head.

The above examination of a child of tender years took place while Mr. and Mrs. Raddle and the cab-driver were having an altercation concerning the fare, which, terminating at this point in favour of the cabman, Mrs. Raddle came up tottering.

'Lauk, Mary Ann! what's the matter?' said Mrs. Cluppins.

'It's put me all over in such a tremble, Betsy,' replied Mrs. Raddle. 'Raddle ain't like a man; he leaves everything to me.'

This was scarcely fair upon the unfortunate Mr. Raddle, who had been thrust aside by his good lady in the commencement of the dispute, and peremptorily commanded to hold his tongue. He had no opportunity of defending himself, however, for Mrs. Raddle gave unequivocal signs of fainting; which, being perceived from the parlour window, Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, the lodger, and the lodger's servant, darted precipitately out, and conveyed her into the house. She was there deposited on a sofa; and the lady from the first floor running up to the first floor, returned with a bottle of sal-volatile, which, holding Mrs. Raddle tight round the neck, she applied in all womanly kindness and pity to her nose, until that lady with many plunges and struggles was fain to declare herself decidedly better.

'Why, Mrs. Rogers, ma'am,' said Mrs. Bardell, 'you've never been introduced, I declare! Mr. Raddle, ma'am; Mrs. Cluppins, ma'am; Mrs. Raddle, ma'am.'

'Which is Mrs. Cluppins's sister,' suggested Mrs. Sanders.

'Oh, indeed!' said Mrs. Rogers graciously; for she was the lodger, and her servant was in waiting, so she was more gracious than intimate, in right of her position. 'Oh, indeed!'

'Well, Mr. Raddle,' said Mrs. Bardell; 'I'm sure you ought to feel very much honoured at you and Tommy being the only gentlemen to escort so many ladies all the way to the Spaniards, at Hampstead.'

'Of course I feel it, ma'am,' said Mr. Raddle, rubbing his hands, and evincing a slight tendency to brighten up a little. 'Indeed, to tell you the truth, I said, as we was a-coming along in the cabrioily——'

At the recapitulation of the word which awakened so many painful recollections, Mrs. Bardell frowned upon Mr. Raddle, to intimate that he had better not say anything more, and desired Mrs. Rogers's servant, with an air, to 'put the wine on.'

This was the signal for displaying the hidden treasures of the closet, which comprised sundry plates of oranges and biscuits, and a bottle of old crusted port—that at one-and-nine—with another of the celebrated East India sherry at fourteen-pence, which were all produced in honour of the lodger, and afforded unlimited satisfaction to everybody. After great consternation had been excited in the mind of Mrs. Cluppins, by an attempt on the part of Tommy to recount how he had been cross-examined regarding the cupboard then in action, the party walked forth in quest of a Hampstead stage. This was soon found, and in a couple of hours they all arrived safely in the Spaniards Tea-gardens. The tea-tray came, with seven cups and saucers, and bread and-butter on the same scale. Mrs. Bardell was unanimously voted into the chair, and Mrs. Rogers being stationed on her right hand, and Mrs. Raddle on her left, the meal proceeded with great merriment and success.

'How sweet the country is, to be sure!' sighed Mrs. Rogers; 'I almost wish I lived in it always.'

'For lone people as have got nobody to care for them, or take care of them, or as have been hurt in their mind, or that kind of thing,' observed Mr. Raddle, plucking up a little cheerfulness, and looking round, 'the country is all very well. The country for a wounded spirit, they say.'

Of course Mrs. Bardell burst into tears, and requested to be led from the table instantly; upon which the affectionate child began to cry too, most dismally.

After this, there was a great hoisting up of Master Bardell, who was rather a large size for hugging, into his mother's arms, in which operation he got his boots in the tea-board, and occasioned some confusion among the cups and saucers. But Mrs. Bardell recovered, set him down again, wondering how she could have been so foolish, and poured out some more tea.

It was at this moment, that the sound of approaching wheels

was heard, and that the ladies, looking up, saw a hackney-coach stop at the garden gate.

'Well, if it ain't Mr. Jackson, the young man from Dodson and Fogg's!' cried Mrs. Bardell. 'Why, gracious! Surely Mr. Pickwick can't have paid the damages.'

'Or hoffered marriage!' said Mrs. Cluppins.

'Dear me, how slow the gentleman is,' exclaimed Mrs. Rogers. 'Why doesn't he make haste!'

As the lady spoke these words, Mr. Jackson turned from the coach where he had been addressing some observations to a shabby man in black leggings, who had just emerged from the vehicle with a thick ash stick in his hand, and made his way to the place where the ladies were seated.

'Is anything the matter? Has anything taken place, Mr. Jackson?' said Mrs. Bardell eagerly.

'Nothing whatever, ma'am,' replied Mr. Jackson. 'How de do, ladies? I called in Goswell Street, and hearing that you were here, from the slavey, took a coach and came on. Our people want you down in the city directly, Mrs. Bardell. I've kept the coach on purpose for you to go back in.'

'How very strange!' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

There was a certain degree of pride and importance about being wanted by one's lawyers in such a monstrous hurry, that was by no means displeasing to Mrs. Bardell. She simpered a little, affected extreme vexation and hesitation, and at last arrived at the conclusion that she supposed she must go; upon which, Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Cluppins, and Tommy (who it was arranged should accompany Mrs. Bardell, leaving the others to Mr. Raddle's protection), got into the coach.

'Isaac,' said Jackson, as Mrs. Bardell prepared to get in, looking up at the man with the ash stick, who was seated on the box, smoking a cigar. 'This is Mrs. Bardell.'

'Oh, I know'd that long ago,' said the man.

On they drove, and Mrs. Bardell fell asleep. She was awakened, after some time, by the stopping of the coach.

'Bless us!' said the lady. 'Are we at Freeman's Court?'

'We're not going quite so far,' replied Jackson. 'Have the goodness to step out.'

Mrs. Bardell, not yet thoroughly awake, complied. It was a curious place: a large wall, with a gate in the middle, and a gaslight burning inside.

'Now, ladies,' cried the man with the ash stick, looking into the coach, and shaking Mrs. Sanders to wake her. 'Come!' Rousing her friend, Mrs. Sanders alighted. Mrs. Bardell, leaning on Jackson's arm, and leading Tommy by the hand, had already entered the porch. They followed.

The room they turned into was even more good-looking than the porch. Such a number of men standing about! And they stared so!

'What place is this?' inquired Mrs. Bardell, pausing.

'Only one of our public offices,' replied Jackson, hurrying her through a door, and looking round to see that the other women were following. 'Look sharp, Isaac!'

'Safe and sound,' replied the man with the ash stick. The door swung heavily after them, and they descended a small flight of steps.

'Here we are at last. All right and tight, Mrs. Bardell!' said Jackson, looking exultingly round.

'What do you mean?' said Mrs. Bardell, with a palpitating heart.

'Just this,' replied Jackson, drawing her a little on one side; 'don't be frightened, Mrs. Bardell. There never was a more delicate man than Dodson, ma'am, or a more humane man than Fogg. It was their duty in the way of business, to take you in execution for them costs; but they were anxious to spare your feelings as much as they could. What a comfort it must be, to you, to think how it's been done! This is the Fleet, ma'am. Wish you good-night, Mrs. Bardell. Good-night, Tommy!'

As Jackson hurried away in company with the man with the ash stick another man, with a key in his hand, who had been looking on, led the bewildered female to a second short flight of steps leading to a doorway. Mrs. Bardell screamed violently; Tommy roared; Mrs. Cluppins shrunk within herself; and Mrs. Sanders made off, without more ado. For there stood the injured Mr. Pickwick, taking his nightly allowance of air; and beside him leaned Samuel Weller, who,

seeing Mrs. Bardell, took his hat off with mock reverence, while his master turned indignantly on his heel.

'Don't bother the woman,' said the turnkey to Weller; 'she's just come in.'

'A pris'ner!' said Sam, quickly replacing his hat. 'Who's the plaintives? What for? Speak up, old feller.'

'Dodson and Fogg,' replied the man; 'execution on cog-novit for costs.'

'Here, Job, Job!' shouted Sam, dashing into the passage. 'Run to Mr. Perker's, Job. I want him directly. I see some good in this. Here's a game. Hooray! vere's the gov'nor?'

But there was no reply to these inquiries, for Job had started furiously off, the instant he received his commission, and Mrs. Bardell had fainted in real downright earnest.

31

*Mr. Winkle reappears under extraordinary Circumstances
—Mr. Pickwick's Benevolence proves stronger than his
Obstinacy*

PUNCTUALLY at the appointed hour next morning, the good-humoured little attorney tapped at Mr. Pickwick's door, which was opened with great alacrity by Sam Weller.

'Mr. Perker, sir,' said Sam, announcing the visitor to Mr. Pickwick, who was sitting at the window in a thoughtful attitude. 'Wery glad you've looked in accidentally, sir. I rather think the gov'nor wants to have a word and a half with you, sir.'

Perker bestowed a look of intelligence on Sam, intimating that he understood he was not to say he had been sent for; and beckoning him to approach, whispered briefly in his ear.

Mr. Samuel Weller grinned, laughed outright, and finally, catching up his hat from the carpet, without further explanation, disappeared.

'What papers are those?' inquired Mr. Pickwick, as the little man deposited on the table a small bundle of documents tied with red tape.

'The papers in Bardell and Pickwick,' replied Perker.

Mr. Pickwick looked sternly—if Mr. Pickwick ever could look sternly—at his legal friend.

'You don't like to hear the name of the cause?' said the little man.

'I would rather that the subject should be never mentioned between us, Perker.'

'Pooh, pooh, my dear sir,' said the little man, untying the bundle, and glancing eagerly at Mr. Pickwick out of the corners of his eyes. 'It must be mentioned. I have come here on purpose. Mrs. Bardell, the plaintiff in the action, is within these walls, sir.'

'I know it,' was Mr. Pickwick's reply.

'Very good,' retorted Perker. 'And you know how she comes here, I suppose; I mean on what grounds, and at whose suit?'

'Yes; at least I have heard Sam's account of the matter,' said Mr. Pickwick, with affected carelessness.

'Sam's account of the matter,' replied Perker, 'is, I will venture to say, a perfectly correct one. Well, now, my dear sir, the first question I have to ask, is, whether this woman is to remain here?'

'How can you ask me? It rests with Dodson and Fogg; you know that very well.'

'I know nothing of the kind,' retorted Perker firmly. 'It does *not* rest with Dodson and Fogg; you know the men, my dear sir, as well as I do. It rests solely, wholly, and entirely with you.'

'With me!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, rising nervously from his chair, and reseating himself directly afterwards.

'I say, my dear sir,' resumed the little man, 'I say that her speedy liberation or perpetual imprisonment rests with you, and with you alone. I have seen the woman, this morning. By paying the costs, you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages; and further, a voluntary statement, under her hand, in the form of a letter to me, that this business

was, from the very first, foiented, and encouraged, and brought about, by these men, Dodson and Fogg; and that she entreats me to intercede with you, and implore your pardon.'

'If I pay her costs for her,' said Mr. Pickwick indignantly. 'A valuable document, indeed!'

'No "if" in the case, my dear sir,' said Perker triumphantly. 'There is the very letter I speak of. Brought to my office by another woman at nine o'clock this morning, before I had set foot in this place, or held any communication with Mrs. Bardell, upon my honour.' Selecting the letter from the bundle, the little lawyer laid it at Mr. Pickwick's elbow, and took snuff for two consecutive minutes, without winking.

'Is this all you have to say to me?' inquired Mr. Pickwick mildly.

'Not quite,' replied Perker. 'My dear sir, I put it to you. This one hundred and fifty pounds, or whatever it may be—take it in round numbers—is nothing to you. A jury had decided against you; well, their verdict is wrong, but still they decided as they thought right, and it is against you. You have now an opportunity, on easy terms, of placing yourself in a much higher position than you ever could, by remaining here. Can you hesitate to avail yourself of it, when it restores you to your friends, your old pursuits, your health and amusements; when it liberates your faithful and attached servant, whom you otherwise doom to imprisonment for the whole of your life; and above all, when it enables you to take the very magnanimous revenge—which I know, my dear sir, is one after your own heart—of releasing this woman from a scene of misery and debauchery, to which no man should ever be consigned, if I had my will, but the infliction of which on any woman, is even more frightful and barbarous.'

Before Mr. Pickwick could reply there was a low murmuring of voices outside, and then a hesitating knock at the door.

'Dear, dear,' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, who had been evidently roused by his friend's appeal: 'what an annoyance that door is! Who is that?'

'Me, sir,' replied Sam Weller, putting in his head. 'Here's

a lady here, sir, as says she's somethin' wery partickler to disclose. Will you see her, sir?

'I suppose I must,' said Mr. Pickwick, looking at Perker.

'Well then, all in to begin!' cried Sam. 'Sound the gong, draw up the curtain, and enter the two conspiraytors.'

As Sam Weller spoke, he threw the door open, and there rushed tumultuously into the room, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, leading after him by the hand, the identical young lady who at Dingley Dell had worn the boots with the fur round the tops, and who, now a very pleasing compound of blushes and confusion, and lilac silk, and a smart bonnet, and a rich lace veil, looked prettier than ever.

'Miss Arabella Allen!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, rising from his chair.

'No,' replied Mr. Winkle, dropping on his knees. 'Mrs. Winkle. Pardon, my dear friend, pardon!'

Mr. Pickwick could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses, and perhaps would not have done so, but for the corroborative testimony afforded by the smiling countenance of Perker, and the bodily presence, in the background, of Sam and the pretty housemaid; who appeared to contemplate the proceedings with the liveliest satisfaction.

'Oh, Mr. Pickwick!' said Arabella, in a low voice, as if alarmed at the silence. 'Can you forgive my imprudence?'

'Why, my dear girl,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'how has all this come about? Come! Sit down, and let me hear it all. How well she looks, doesn't she, Perker?' added Mr. Pickwick, surveying Arabella's face with a look of as much pride and exultation, as if she had been his daughter. 'Now then; how long have you been married, eh?'

Arabella looked bashfully at her lord and master, who replied, 'Only three days.'

'Why the fact is,' said Mr. Winkle, looking at his blushing young wife, 'that I could not persuade Bella to run away, for a long time. And when I had persuaded her, it was a long time more before we could find an opportunity. Mary had to give a month's warning, too, before she could leave her place.'

'Upon my word,' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, 'you seem to



'No,' replied Mr. Winkle, dropping on his knees. 'Mrs. Winkle. Pardon, my dear friend, pardon!'

have been very systematic in your proceedings. And is your brother acquainted with all this, my dear?"

"Oh, no, no," replied Arabella, changing colour. "Dear Mr. Pickwick, he must only know it from you—from your lips alone."

"You forget, my love," said Mr. Pickwick gently, "you forget that I am a prisoner."

"No, indeed I do not, my dear sir," replied Arabella. "I have never ceased to think how great your sufferings must have been in this shocking place. But I hoped that what no consideration for yourself would induce you to do, a regard to our happiness might. If my brother hears of this, first, from you, I feel certain we shall be reconciled. He is my only relation in the world, Mr. Pickwick, and unless you plead for me, I fear I have lost even him." Here poor Arabella hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly.

Mr. Pickwick's nature was a good deal worked upon, by these same tears; and evidently undecided how to act, as was evinced by sundry nervous rubbings of his spectacles-glasses, nose, tights, head, and gaiters.

Taking advantage of these symptoms of indecision, Mr. Perker urged with legal point and shrewdness that Mr. Winkle senior was still unacquainted with the important rise in life's flight of steps which his son had taken; that Mr. Pickwick repairing to Bristol to seek Mr. Allen, might, with equal reason, repair to Birmingham to seek Mr. Winkle, senior.

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass arrived, most opportunely, in this stage of the pleadings, and as it was necessary to explain to them all that had occurred, the whole of the arguments were gone over again. And, at last, Mr. Pickwick, caught Arabella in his arms, and declaring that he had always been very fond of her from the first, said he could never find it in his heart to stand in the way of young people's happiness, and they might do with him as they pleased.

Mr. Weller's first act, on hearing this concession, was to despatch Job Trotter to the illustrious Mr. Pell, with an authority to deliver to the bearer the formal discharge which his prudent parent had had the foresight to leave in the hands of that learned gentleman; his next proceeding was, to invest

his whole stock of ready-money in the purchase of five-and-twenty gallons of mild porter, which he himself dispensed on the racket-ground to everybody who would partake of it.

At three o'clock that afternoon, Mr. Pickwick took a last look at his little room, and made his way, as well as he could, through the throng of debtors who pressed eagerly forward to shake him by the hand, until he reached the lodge steps.

'Perker,' said Mr. Pickwick, beckoning one young man towards him, 'this is Mr. Jingle, whom I spoke to you about.'

'Very good, my dear sir,' replied Perker, looking hard at Jingle. 'You will see me again, young man, to-morrow. I hope you may live to remember and feel deeply, what I shall have to communicate, sir. Now, is there anything more?'

'Nothing,' rejoined Mr. Pickwick. 'You have delivered the little parcel I gave you for your old landlord, Sam?'

'I have sir,' replied Sam. 'He bust out a-cryin', sir, and said you wos wery gen'rous and thoughtful.'

'Poor fellow, poor fellow!' said Mr. Pickwick. 'God bless you, my friends!'

As Mr. Pickwick uttered this adieu, the crowd raised a loud shout. Many among them were pressing forward to shake him by the hand again, when he drew his arm through Perker's, and hurried from the prison, far more sad and melancholy, for the moment, than when he had first entered it. Alas! how many sad and unhappy beings had he left behind!

Involving a serious Change in the Weller Family, and the untimely Downfall of Mr. Stiggins—Sam hears of his mother-in-law's death, and goes to Dorking to visit his father

IT WAS just seven o'clock when Samuel Weller, alighting from the box of a stage-coach which passed through Dorking, stood within a few hundred yards of the Marquis of Granby. It was a cold, dull evening; the little street looked dreary and dismal; and the mahogany countenance of the noble and gallant marquis seemed to wear a more sad and melancholy expression than it was wont to do, as it swung to and fro, creaking mournfully in the wind.

Seeing nobody of whom he could ask any preliminary questions, Sam walked softly in, and glancing round, he quickly recognised his parent in the distance.

The widower was seated at a small round table in the little room behind the bar, smoking a pipe, with his eyes intently fixed upon the fire. The funeral had evidently taken place that day, for attached to his hat, which he still retained on his head, was a hatband measuring about a yard and a half in length, which hung over the top rail of the chair and streamed negligently down. Mr. Weller was in a very abstracted and contemplative mood, and was only roused ultimately by his son's placing the palm of his hand on his shoulder.

'I've been a-callin' to you half a dozen times,' said Sam, hanging his hat on a peg, 'but you didn't hear me.'

'No, Sammy,' replied Mr. Weller, again looking thoughtfully at the fire. 'I was in a referee, Sammy.'

'Wot about?' inquired Sam, drawing his chair up to the fire.

'In a referee, Sammy,' replied the elder Mr. Weller, 'regarding *her*, Samivel.' Here Mr. Weller jerked his head in the direction of Dorking churchyard, in mute explanation that his words referred to the late Mrs. Weller.

'I wos a-thinkin', Sammy,' said Mr. Weller, eyeing his son, with great earnestness, over his pipe, 'that upon the whole I wos very sorry she wos gone.'

'Vell, and so you ought to be,' replied Sam.

'Those wos very sensible observations as she made, Sammy.'

'Wot was they?'

'Somethin' to this here effect. "Veller," she says, "I'm aiseered I've not done by you quite wot I ought to have done; you're a very kind-hearted man, and I might ha' made your home more comfortabler. But I hope ven I'm gone, Veller, that you'll think on me as I wos afore I know'd them people, and as I raly wos by natur." "Susan," I says, "you've been a very good vife to me, altogether; don't say nothin' at all about it; keep a good heart, my dear; and you'll live to see me punch that 'ere Stiggins's head yet." She smiled at this, Samivel,' said the old gentleman, stifling a sigh with his pipe, 'but she died arter all!'

'Vell,' said Sam, venturing to offer a little homely consolation, 'vell, gov'nor, ve must all come to it, one day or another. There's a Providence in it all.'

'O' course there is,' replied his father, with a nod of grave approval. 'Wot 'ud become of the undertakers vithout it, Sammy?'

Lost in the immense field of conjecture opened by this reflection, the elder Mr. Weller laid his pipe on the table, and stirred the fire with a meditative visage.

While the old gentleman was thus engaged, a very buxom-looking cook, dressed in mourning, who had been bustling about, in the bar, glided into the room.

'Have a cup of tea, there's a good soul,' said the buxom female coaxingly.

'I von't,' replied Mr. Weller, in a somewhat boisterous

manner. 'I'll see you——' Mr. Weller hastily checked himself, and added in a low tone, 'furder fust.'

'Oh, dear, dear! How adwerty does change people!' said the lady, looking upwards.

'It's the only thing 'twixt this and the doctor as shall change *my* condition,' muttered Mr. Weller.

'I really never saw a man so cross,' said the buxom female.

'As I don't rekvire any o' your conversation just now, mum, vill you have the goodness to re-tire?' inquired Mr. Weller, in a steady and grave voice.

'Well, Mr. Weller,' said the buxom female, 'I'm sure I only spoke to you out of kindness.'

'Wery likely, mum,' replied Mr. Weller. 'Samivel, show the lady out, and shut the door after her.'

This hint was not lost upon the buxom female; for she at once left the room, and slammed the door behind her, upon which Mr. Weller, senior, falling back in his chair in a violent perspiration, said:

'Sammy, if I wos to stop here alone vun veek—only vun veek, my boy—that 'ere 'oman 'ud marry me by force and violence afore it was over.'

'Wot a thing it is to be so sought arter!' observed Sam, smiling.

'I don't take no pride out on it, Sammy,' replied Mr. Weller, poking the fire vehemently, 'it's a horrid sitiuation. I'm actiually drove out o' house and home by it. Therefore, my boy, I have come to the determination o' driving the Safety, and puttin' up vunce more at the Belle Savage, vich is my nat'ral born element, Sammy.'

'And wot's to become o' the bis'ness?' inquired Sam.

'The bis'ness, Samivel,' replied the old gentleman, 'good-vill, stock, and fixters, vill be sold by private contract; and out o' the money, two hundred pound, agreeable to a rekvest o' your mother-in-law's to me, a little afore she died, vill be inwested for you, Samivel, in the funs; four and a half per cent reduced counsels, Sammy.'

'Wery kind o' the old lady to think o' me,' said Sam.

'The rest will be inwested in my name,' continued the elder Mr. Weller; 'and ven I'm took off the road, it'll come

to you, so take care you don't spend it all at vunst, my boy, and mind that no widder gets a inklin' o' your fortun', or you're done.'

Having delivered this warning, Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with a more serene countenance; the disclosure of these matters appearing to have eased his mind considerably.

'Somebody's a-tappin' at the door,' said Sam.

'Hush,' whispered Mr. Weller, with apprehensive looks, 'don't take no notice on 'em, Sammy, it's vun o' the widders, p'raps.'

No notice being taken of the taps, the unseen visitor, after a short lapse, ventured to open the door and peep in. It was no female head that was thrust in at the partially-opened door, but the long black locks and red face of Mr. Stiggins. Mr. Weller's pipe fell from his hands.

The reverend gentleman gradually opened the door by almost imperceptible degrees, until the aperture was just wide enough to admit of the passage of his lank body, when he glided into the room and closed it after him, with great care and gentleness. He carried the high-backed chair to his old corner by the fire, and, seating himself on the very edge, drew forth a brown pocket-handkerchief, and applied the same to his optics. Moaning decently meanwhile, and then, mastering his feelings by a strong effort, put it in his pocket and buttoned it up.

'Do you know, young man,' whispered Mr. Stiggins, drawing his chair closer to Sam, 'whether she has left Emanuel anything?'

'She hasn't left the fold nothin', nor the shepherd nothin', nor the animals nothin',' said Sam decisively; 'nor the dogs neither.'

Mr. Stiggins looked slyly at Sam; glanced at the old gentleman, who was sitting with his eyes closed, as if asleep; and drawing his chair still nearer, said:

'Nothing for *me*, Mr. Samuel?'

'Not so much as the vorth o' that 'ere old umberella o' yours.'

'Perhaps,' said Mr. Stiggins hesitatingly, after a few moments' deep thought, 'perhaps she recommended me to the care of the man of wrath, Mr. Samuel?'

'I think that's wery likely, from what he said,' rejoined Sam; 'he wos a-speakin' about you, jist now.'

'Was he, though?' exclaimed Stiggins, brightening up. 'Ah! He's changed, I dare say. We might live very comfortably together now, Mr. Samuel, eh? I could take care of his property when you are away—good care, you see.'

Mr. Weller the elder gave vent to an extraordinary sound, which, being neither a groan, nor a grunt, nor a gasp, nor a growl, seemed to partake in some degree of the character of all four.

Mr. Stiggins, encouraged by this sound, which he understood to betoken remorse or repentance, looked about him, rubbed his hands, wept, smiled, wept again, and then, walking softly across the room to a well-remembered shelf in one corner, took down a tumbler, and with great deliberation put four lumps of sugar in it. He walked softly into the bar, and presently returning with the tumbler half full of pine-apple rum, advanced to the kettle which was singing gaily on the hob, mixed his grog, stirred it, sipped it, sat down, and taking a long and hearty pull at the rum-and-water, stopped for breath.

The elder Mr. Weller offered not a single word during these proceedings; but when Stiggins stopped for breath, he darted upon him, and snatching the tumbler from his hand, threw the remainder of the rum-and-water in his face, and the glass itself into the grate. Then, seizing the reverend gentleman firmly by the collar, he suddenly fell to kicking him most furiously, accompanying every application of his top-boot to Mr. Stiggins's person, with sundry violent and incoherent anathemas upon his limbs, eyes, and body.

'Sammy,' said Mr. Weller, 'put my hat on tight for me.'

Sam dutifully adjusted the hat with the long hatband more firmly on his father's head, and the old gentleman, resuming his kicking with greater agility than before, tumbled with Mr. Stiggins through the bar, and through the passage, out at the front door, and so into the street.

It was a beautiful and exhilarating sight to see the red-nosed man writhing in Mr. Weller's grasp, and his whole frame quivering with anguish as kick followed kick in rapid

succession; it was a still more exciting spectacle to behold Mr. Weller, after a powerful struggle, immersing Mr. Stiggins's head in a horse-trough full of water, and holding it there, until he was half suffocated.

'Therc!' said Mr. Weller, throwing all his energy into one most complicated kick, as he at length permitted Mr. Stiggins to withdraw his head from the trough, 'send any vun o' them lazy shepherds here, and I'll pound him to a jelly first, and drownd him artervards! Sammy help me in, and fill me a small glass of brandy. I'm out o' breath, my boy.'

33

Certain interesting Disclosures relative to Mr. Snodgrass and a Young Lady are by no means irrelevant to this History

As MR. PICKWICK was prompted to betake himself to Gray's Inn Square by an anxious desire to come to a pecuniary settlement with the kind-hearted little attorney without further delay, he made a hurried breakfast, and executed his intention so speedily, that ten o'clock had not struck when he reached Gray's Inn.

It still wanted ten minutes to the hour when he had ascended the staircase on which Perker's chambers were. The clerks had not arrived yet, and he beguiled the time by looking out of the staircase window.

'You're early, Mr. Pickwick,' said a voice behind him.

'Ah, Mr. Lowten,' replied that gentleman, looking round, and recognising his old acquaintance.

'Precious warm walking, isn't it?' said Lowten. 'I've come along, rather, I can tell you. I'm here before *him*, though, so I don't mind.'

Comforting himself with this reflection, Mr. Lowten

ushered Mr. Pickwick into the office. Here, in the twinkling of an eye, he divested himself of his coat, put on a threadbare garment, which he took out of a desk, hung up his hat, pulled forth a few sheets of cartridge and blotting-paper in alternate layers, and, sticking a pen behind his ear, rubbed his hands with an air of great satisfaction.

‘There, you see, Mr. Pickwick,’ he said, ‘now I’m complete. Perker’s been about that business of yours, by the bye.’

‘What business?’ inquired Mr. Pickwick. ‘Mrs. Bardell’s costs?’

‘No, I don’t mean that,’ replied Mr. Lowten. ‘About getting that customer that we paid the ten shillings in the pound to the bill-discounter for, on your account—to get him out of the Fleet, you know—about getting him to Demerara.’

‘Oh, Mr. Jingle,’ said Mr. Pickwick hastily. ‘Yes. Well?’

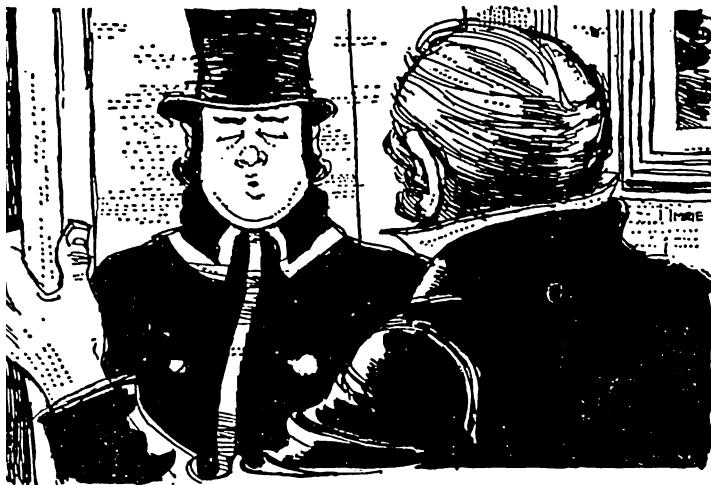
‘Well, it’s all arranged,’ said Lowten, mending his pen. ‘But I say, *what a soft chap* that other is—that servant, or friend, *you* know; Trotter. What do you think of *his* going to Demerara, too?’

‘What! And giving up what was offered him here?’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

‘Treating Perker’s offer of eighteen bob a week, and a rise if he behaved himself, like dirt,’ replied Lowten. ‘He said he must go along with the other one, and so they persuaded Perker to write again, and they’ve got him something on the same estate.’

‘Foolish fellow,’ said Mr. Pickwick, with glistening eyes.

‘Oh, it’s worse than foolish; it’s downright sneaking, you know,’ replied Lowten, nibbing the pen with a contemptuous face. ‘He says that he’s the only friend he ever had, and he’s attached to him, and all that. No man should have more than two attachments—the first, to number one, and the second to the ladies; that’s what I say—ha! ha!’ Mr. Lowten concluded with a loud laugh, half in jocularity, and half in derision, which was prematurely cut short by the sound of Perker’s footsteps on the stairs, at the first approach of which, he vaulted on his stool with an agility most remarkable, and wrote intensely.



wonderfully fat boy standing upright on the mat, with his eyes closed as if in sleep.

The greeting between Mr. Pickwick and his professional adviser was warm and cordial.

'Well, now,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'let me have a settlement with you. You have done me many acts of kindness that I can never repay, and have no wish to repay, for I prefer continuing the obligation.'

With this preface, the two friends dived into some very complicated accounts and vouchers, which, having been duly displayed and gone through by Perker, were at once discharged by Mr. Pickwick with many professions of esteem and friendship.

They had no sooner arrived at this point, than a most violent and startling knocking was heard at the door; it was not an ordinary double-knock, but a constant and uninterrupted succession of the loudest single raps.

'Make haste, Mr. Lowten,' Perker called out; 'we shall have the panels beaten in.'

Mr. Lowten, who was washing his hands in a dark closet hurried to the door, and turned the handle.

The object that presented itself to the eyes of the astonished clerk was a boy—a wonderfully fat boy—habited as a serving

lad, standing upright on the mat, with his eyes closed as if in sleep.

"What the devil do you knock in that way for?" inquired the clerk angrily.

"Which way?" said the boy, in a low and sleepy voice.

"Why, like forty hackney-coachmen," replied the clerk.

"Because master said I wasn't to leave off knocking till they opened the door, for fear I should go to sleep," said the boy. "He wants to know whether you're at home."

All further inquiries were superseded by the appearance of old Wardle, who, running upstairs and just recognising Lowten, passed at once into Mr. Perker's room.

"Pickwick!" said the old gentleman. "Your hand, my boy! Why have I never heard until the day before yesterday of your suffering yourself to be cooped up in jail? And why did you let him to do it, Perker?"

"I couldn't help it, my dear sir," replied Perker, with a smile and a pinch of snuff; "you know how obstinate he is?"

"Of course I do; of course I do," replied the old gentleman. "I am heartily glad to see him, notwithstanding."

With these words, Wardle shook Mr. Pickwick's hand once more, and, having done the same by Perker, threw himself into an arm-chair, his jolly red face shining again with smiles and health.

"Well!" said Wardle. "Here are pretty goings on—a pinch of your snuff, Perker, my boy—never were such times, eh?"

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Mean!" replied Wardle. "Why, I think the girls are all running mad. Arabella wrote, the day before yesterday, to say she had made a stolen match without her husband's father's consent. But this is not the best of it, it seems. This is only half the love-making and plotting that have been going forward."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, turning pale; "no other secret marriage, I hope?"

"No, no," replied old Wardle; "not so bad as that; no. My daughter Bella sat herself down by my side the other evening, and began to talk over this marriage affair. "Well, pa," she says, "what do you think of it?" "Why, my dear,"

I said, "I suppose it's all very well; I hope it's for the best." "It's quite a marriage of affection, pa," said Bella, after a short silence. "Yes, my dear," said I, "but such marriages do not always turn out the happiest." "I am sorry to hear you express your opinion against marriages of affection, pa," said Bella, colouring a little. "The fact is I wanted to speak to you about Emily." The long and the short of it is, then, that Bella at last mustered up courage to tell me that Emily was very unhappy; that she and your young friend Snodgrass had been in constant correspondence and communication ever since last Christmas; that she had very dutifully made up her mind to run away with him; but that having some compunctions of conscience on the subject, they had thought it better in the first instance to pay me the compliment of asking whether I would have any objection to their being married in the usual matter-of-fact manner.'

Mr. Pickwick's face had settled down into an expression of blank amazement and perplexity, quite curious to behold.

"Snodgrass!—since last Christmas!" were the first broken words that issued from the lips of the confounded gentleman.

"Since last Christmas," replied Wardle; "that's plain enough, and very bad spectacles we must have worn, not to have discovered it before. Now the question is, what's to be done?"

"What have *you* done?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I fretted and fumed all next day, and raised a great disturbance," rejoined the old gentleman. "At last I got tired of rendering myself unpleasant and making everybody miserable; so I hired a carriage at Muggleton, and, putting my own horses in it, came up to town, under pretence of bringing Emily to see Arabella."

"Miss Wardle is with you, then?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"To be sure she is," replied Wardle. "She is at Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi at this moment, unless your enterprising friend has run away with her since I came out this morning."

"You want my advice in this matter, I suppose?" said Perker.

"I suppose so," said Wardle, looking at Mr. Pickwick.

"Well then," said Perker, rising and pushing his chair back,

'my advice is, that you both walk away together, and just talk this matter over between you.'

'You dine with me to-day,' said Wardle to Perker, as he showed them out.

'Can't promise, my dear sir, can't promise,' replied Perker.

'I shall expect you at five,' said Wardle. 'Now, Joe!' And Joe having been at length awakened, the two friends departed in Mr. Wardle's carriage.

Driving to the George and Vulture, they found that Arabella and her maid had sent for a hackney-coach immediately on the receipt of a short note from Emily announcing her arrival in town, and had proceeded straight to the Adelphi. As Wardle had business to transact in the city, they sent the carriage and the fat boy to his hotel, with the information that he and Mr. Pickwick would return together to dinner at five o'clock.

Charged with this message, the fat boy returned, and went upstairs to execute his commission. He walked into the sitting-room without previously knocking at the door; and so beheld a gentleman with his arms clasping his young mistress's waist, sitting very lovingly by her side on a sofa, while Arabella and her pretty handmaid feigned to be absorbed in looking out of a window at the other end of the room.

'Wretched creature, what do you want here?' said the gentleman, who it is needless to say was Mr. Snodgrass.

'Master and Mr. Pickwick is a-going to dine here at five,' replied the fat boy.

'Leave the room!' said Mr. Snodgrass, glaring upon the bewildered youth.

'No, no, no,' added Emily hastily. 'Bella dear, advise me.'

Upon this, Emily and Mr. Snodgrass, and Arabella and Mary, crowded into a corner, and conversed earnestly in whispers for some minutes, during which the fat boy dozed.

'Joe,' said Arabella, at length, looking round with a most bewitching smile, 'how do you do, Joe?'

'Joe,' said Emily, 'you're a very good boy; I won't forget you, Joe.'

'Joe,' said Mr. Snodgrass, advancing to the astonished youth, and seizing his hand, 'I didn't know you before. There's five shillings for you, Joe!'

The fat boy's perception being slow, he looked rather puzzled at first to account for this sudden prepossession in his favour. At length his broad face began to show symptoms of a grin of proportionately broad dimensions; and then, thrusting half-a-crown into each of his pockets, and a hand and wrist after it, he burst into a horse laugh: being for the first and only time in his existence.

'He understands us, I see,' said Arabella.

The fat boy almost laughed again when he heard this suggestion. Mary, after a little more whispering, tripped forth from the group and said:

'I am going to dine with you to-day, sir, if you have no objection.'

'This way,' said the fat boy eagerly. 'There is such a jolly meat-pie!'

With these words, the fat boy led the way downstairs.

There was so much to say upstairs, that it wanted only half an hour of dinner when Mr. Snodgrass took his final adieu. He had scarcely got outside the door, when he heard Wardle's voice talking loudly, and looking over the banisters beheld him, followed by some other gentlemen, coming straight upstairs. Mr. Snodgrass in his confusion stepped hastily back into the room he had just quitted, and passing thence into an inner apartment (Mr. Wardle's bedchamber), closed the door softly, just as the persons he had caught a glimpse of entered the sitting-room. These were Mr. Wardle, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, and Mr. Benjamin Allen.

'Very lucky I had the presence of mind to avoid them,' thought Mr. Snodgrass with a smile, and walking on tiptoe to another door near the bedside; 'this opens into the same passage, and I can walk quietly and comfortably away.'

There was only one obstacle to his walking quietly and comfortably away, which was that the door was locked and the key gone.

'Let us have some of your best wine to-day, waiter,' said

old Wardle, rubbing his hands. 'We won't wait a minute for Perker. He will be here, in time, if he means to come; and if he does not, it's of no use waiting. Ha! Arabella!'

'My sister!' exclaimed Mr. Benjamin Allen, folding her in a most romantic embrace.

'Oh, Ben, dear, how do you smell of tobacco,' said Arabella, rather overcome by this mark of affection.

'Is nothing to be said to me?' cried Wardle, with open arms.

'A great deal,' whispred Arabella, as she received the old gentleman's hearty caress and congratulation. 'You are a hard-hearted, unfeeling, cruel monster.'

'You are a little rebel,' replied Wardle, in the same tone, 'and I am afraid I shall be obliged to forbid you the house. But come!' added the old gentleman aloud, 'here's the dinner; you shall sit by me, Joe; why, damn the boy, he's awake!'

To the great distress of his master, the fat boy was indeed in a state of remarkable vigilance, his eyes being wide open, and looking as if they intended to remain so. There was an alacrity in his manner, too, which was equally unaccountable; every time his eyes met those of Emily or Arabella, he smirked and grinned; once, Wardle could have sworn, he saw him wink.

'Joe,' said Mr. Wardle, after an unsuccessful search in all his pockets, 'is my snuff-box on the sofa?'

'No, sir,' replied the fat boy.

'Oh, I recollect; I left it on my dressing-table this morning,' said Wardle. 'Run into the next room and fetch it.'

The fat boy went into the next room; and, having been absent about a minute, returned with the snuff-box, and the palest face that ever a fat boy wore.

'What's the matter with the boy?' exclaimed Wardle.

'Nothen's the matter with me,' replied Joe nervously.

The unfortunate youth had only interchanged a dozen words with Mr. Snodgrass, that gentleman having implored him to make a private appeal to some friend to release him, and then pushed him out with the snuff-box, lest his prolonged absence should lead to a discovery.

'Joe!' said Wardle. 'Take this cheese to Mr. Pickwick.'

Now, Mr. Pickwick being in the very best health and spirits, had been making himself perfectly delightful all dinner-time, and was at this moment engaged in an energetic conversation with Emily and Mr. Winkle. He took a piece of cheese from the plate, and was on the point of turning round to renew the conversation, when the fat boy pointed with his thumb over his shoulder, and made the most horrible and hideous face that was ever seen out of a Christmas pantomime.

'Dear me!' said Mr. Pickwick, starting, 'what a very—Eh?' He stopped, for the fat boy was, or pretended to be, fast asleep.

'What's the matter?' inquired Wardle.

'This is such an extremely singular lad!' replied Mr. Pickwick, looking uneasily at the boy. 'Oh!' ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, suddenly jumping up with a short scream. 'I beg your pardon, ladies, but at that moment he ran some sharp instrument into my leg. Really, he is not safe.'

'He's drunk,' roared old Wardle passionately. 'Ring the bell! Call the waiters! He's drunk.'

'I ain't,' said the fat boy, falling on his knees as his master seized him by the collar. 'I ain't drunk.'

'Then you're mad; that's worse. Call the waiters,' said the old gentleman. 'Don't come near him; he's vicious; ring the bell, and let him be taken downstairs.'

Just as Mr. Winkle caught the bell-rope in his hand, it was arrested by a general expression of astonishment; the captive lover, his face burning with confusion, suddenly walked in from the bedroom, and made a comprehensive bow to the company.

'Hollo!' cried Wardle, releasing the fat boy's collar, and staggering back. 'What's this?'

Mr. Snodgrass at once recounted how he had been placed in his then distressing predicament. It was a painful situation to be placed in; but he now regretted it the less, inasmuch as it afforded him an opportunity of acknowledging, before their mutual friends, that he loved Mr. Wardle's daughter deeply and sincerely.

Having delivered himself to this, effect, Mr. Snodgrass

bowed again, looked into the crown of his hat, and stepped towards the door.

'Stop!' shouted Wardle. 'Why couldn't you say all this to me in the first instance?'

'Dear, dear,' said Arabella, taking up the defence, 'what is the use of asking all that now, when you know you are so wild and fierce, that everybody is afraid of you, except me? Shake hands with him, and order him some dinner, for goodness' gracious' sake, for he looks half starved; and pray have your wine up at once, for you'll not be tolerable until you have taken two bottles at least.'

'She is right on one point at all events,' said the old gentleman cheerfully. 'Ring for the wine!'

The wine came, and Perker came upstairs at the same moment. Mr. Snodgrass had dinner at a side table, and, when he had despatched it, drew his chair next Emily, without the smallest opposition on the old gentleman's part.

34

An important Conference takes place between Mr. Pickwick and Samuel Weller, at which his Parent assists—An old Gentleman in a snuff-coloured Suit arrives unexpectedly

MR. PICKWICK was sitting alone, musing over many things, when Mary stepped lightly into the room, and, advancing to the table, said, rather hastily:

'Oh, if you please, sir, Samuel is downstairs, and he says may his father see you?'

'Surely,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

Mary, apparently much relieved, hurried away.

Mr. Pickwick took two or three turns up and down the room; and, rubbing his chin with his left hand as he did so, appeared lost in thought.

'Well, well,' said Mr. Pickwick, at length in a kind but

somewhat melancholy tone, 'it is the best way in which I could reward him for his attachment and fidelity; let it be so, in Heaven's name.'

Mr. Pickwick had been so absorbed in these reflections, that a knock at the door was three or four times repeated before he heard it. Hastily seating himself, and calling up his accustomed pleasant looks, he gave the required permission, and Sam Weller entered, followed by his father.

'Glad to see you back again, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'How do you do, Mr. Weller?'

'Wery hearty, thankee, sir,' replied the widower; 'hope I see *you* well, sir.'

'Quite, I thank you,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'I wanted to have a little bit o' conwersation with you, sir,' said Mr. Weller, 'if you could spare me five minits or so, sir.'

'Certainly,' replied Mr. Pickwick. 'Sam, give your father a chair.'

The old gentleman was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which, being terminated, he nodded his head and winked and made several supplicatory and threatening gestures to his son, all of which Sam Weller steadily abstained from seeing.

'I never see sich a aggrawatin' boy as you are, Samivel,' said Mr. Weller, looking indignantly at his son; 'never in all my born days. You might ha' seen I warn't able to start, and yet you von't put out a hand to help me. I'm ashamed on you, Samivel.'

'The fact is, sir,' said Sam, with a slight bow, 'the gov'nor's been a-drawin' his money.'

'You may sit down, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, apprehending that the interview was likely to prove rather longer than he had expected.

Sam bowed again and sat down; his father looking round, he continued:

'The gov'nor, sir, has drawn out five hundred and thirty pound. To vich sum, he has added for the house and business—'

'Lease, good-vill, stock, and fixters,' interposed Mr. Weller.

'Indeed!' said Mr. Pickwick. 'I am delighted to hear it, I congratulate you, Mr. Weller, on having done so well.'

'Wait a minit, sir,' said Mr. Weller, raising his hand in a deprecatory manner. 'Get on, Samivel.'

'This here money,' said Sam, with a little hesitation, 'he's anxious to put somevercs, vere he knows it'll be safe, and I'm very anxious too, for if he keeps it, he'll go a-lendin' it to somebody, or inwestin' property in horses, or droppin' his pocket-book down an airy, or makin' a Egyptian mummy of his-self in some vay or another. For vich reasons,' continued Sam, plucking nervously at the brim of his hat—'for vich reasons, he's drawn it out to-day, and come here with me to say, leastvays to offer, or in other words to—'

'To say this here,' said the elder Mr. Weller impatiently, 'that it ain't o' no use to me. I'm a-goin' to vork a coach reg'lar, and ha'n't got noveres to keep it in. If you'll take care on it for me, sir, I shall be very much obliged to you. P'raps,' said Mr. Weller, walking up to Mr. Pickwick and whispering in his ear—'p'raps it'll go a little vay towards the expenses o' that 'ere conviction. All I say is, just you keep it till I ask you for it again.' With these words, Mr. Weller placed the pocket-book in Mr. Pickwick's hands, caught up his hat, and ran out of the room with a celerity scarcely to be expected from so corpulent a subject.

'Stop him, Sam!' exclaimed Mr. Pickwick earnestly. 'Overtake him; bring him back instantly!'

Sam saw that his master's injunctions were not to be disobeyed; and, catching his father by the arm as he was descending the stairs, dragged him back by main force.

'My good friend,' said Mr. Pickwick, taking the old man by the hand, 'your honest confidence overpowers me. I assure you, my good friend, I have more money than I can ever need. I must beg you to take this back, Mr. Weller.'

'Wery well,' said Mr. Weller, with a discontented look. 'Mark my words, Sammy, I'll do somethin' desperate with this here property; somethin' desperate!'

'You'd better not,' replied Sam.

Mr. Weller reflected for a short time, and then, buttoning up his coat with great determination, said:

'I'll keep a pike. Say good-bye to your father, Samivel. I dewote the remainder of my days to a pike.'

This threat was such an awful one, and Mr. Weller seemed so deeply mortified by Mr. Pickwick's refusal, that that gentleman, after a short reflection, said:

'Well, well, Mr. Weller, I will keep your money. I can do more good with it, perhaps, than you can.'

'Just the very thing, to be sure,' said Mr. Weller, brightening up; 'o' course you can, sir.'

'Say no more about it,' said Mr. Pickwick, locking the pocket-book in his desk; 'I am heartily obliged to you, my good friend. Now sit down again. I want to ask your advice. Wait outside a few minutes, Sam, will you?'

Sam immediately withdrew.

Mr. Pickwick opened the discourse by saying: 'Did you happen to see a young girl downstairs when you came in just now with your son?'

'Yes. I see a young gal,' replied Mr. Weller shortly.

'What did you think of her, now? Candidly, Mr. Weller, what did you think of her?'

'I thought she was very plump, and well made,' said Mr. Weller, with a critical air.

'I take a great interest in her, Mr. Weller,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'That young person is attached to your son.'

'To Samivel Weller!' exclaimed the parent.

'Yes,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'This young person is not only attached to your son, Mr. Weller, but your son is attached to her. Supposing I were desirous of establishing them comfortably as man and wife in some little business or situation, where they might hope to obtain a decent living, what should you think of it, Mr. Weller?'

At first, Mr. Weller received with wry faces a proposition involving the marriage of anybody in whom he took an interest; but, as Mr. Pickwick argued the point with him, and laid great stress on the fact that Mary was not a widow, he gradually became more tractable. At length he said that it was not for him to oppose Mr. Pickwick's inclination, and that he would be very happy to yield to his advice; upon

which, Mr. Pickwick joyfully took him at his word, and called Sam back into the room.

'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, clearing his throat, 'your father and I have been having some conversation about you.'

'About you, Samivel,' said Mr. Weller, in a patronising and impressive voice.

'I am not so blind, Sam, as not to have seen, a long time, since, that you entertain something more than a friendly feeling towards Mrs. Winkle's maid,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I hope, sir,' said Sam, 'I hope there's no harm in a young man takin' notice of a young 'ooman as is undeniably good-looking and well conducted.'

'So far from thinking there is anything wrong in conduct so natural,' resumed Mr. Pickwick, 'it is my wish to assist and promote your wishes in this respect. I wish to free you from the restraint which your present position imposes upon you, and to mark my sense of your fidelity and many excellent qualities, by enabling you to marry this girl at once, and to earn an independent livelihood for yourself and family. I shall be proud, Sam, proud and happy to make your future prospects in life my grateful and peculiar care.'

There was a profound silence for a short time, and then Sam said, in a low, husky sort of voice, but firmly withal:

'I'm very much obliged to you for your goodness, sir, as is only like yourself; but it can't be done. Wot's to become of you, sir?'

'My good fellow,' replied Mr. Pickwick, 'the recent changes among my friends will alter my mode of life in future, entirely; besides, I am growing older, and want repose and quiet. My rambles, Sam, are over.'

'Wery good,' rejoined Sam. 'Then, that's the wery best reason wy you should alvays have somebody by you as understands you, to keep you up and make you comfortable. If you vant a more polished sort o' feller, vell and good, have him; but vages or no vages, notice or no notice, board or no board, lodgin' or no lodgin', Sam Veller, as you took from the old inn in the Borough, sticks by you, come what come may.'

'My good fellow,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'you are bound to consider the young woman also.'

'I do consider the young 'ooman, sir,' said Sam. 'I've told her how I'm sitized; she's ready to vait till I'm ready, and I believe she vill. If she don't, she's not the young 'ooman I take her for, and I give her up with readiness. You've know'd me afore, sir. My mind's made up, and nothin' can ever alter it.'

Who could combat this resolution? Not Mr. Pickwick. He derived, at that moment, more pride and luxury of feeling from the disinterested attachment of his humble friends, than ten thousand protestations from the greatest men living could have awakened in his heart.

While this conversation was passing in Mr. Pickwick's room, a little old gentleman in a suit of snuff-coloured clothes, followed by a porter carrying a small portmanteau, presented himself below; and, after securing a bed for the night, inquired of the waiter whether one Mrs. Winkle was staying there, to which question the waiter of course responded in the affirmative.

'Is she alone?' inquired the old gentleman.

'I believe she is, sir,' replied the waiter.

As the little old gentleman uttered this command, he slipped five shillings into the waiter's hand, and looked steadily at him.

There was something so very cool and collected in the gentleman's manner, that the waiter put the five shillings in his pocket, and led him upstairs without another word. The little old gentleman, waiting till the waiter was out of sight, tapped at the door.

'Come in,' said Arabella.

'Um, a pretty voice, at anyrate,' murmured the little old gentleman; 'but that's nothing.' As he said this, he opened the door and walked in. Arabella, who was sitting at work, rose on beholding a stranger—a little confused—but by no means ungracefully so.

'Pray don't rise, ma'am,' said the unknown, walking in, and closing the door after him. 'Mrs. Winkle, I believe?'

Arabella inclined her head.

'I'll take a chair, if you'll allow me, ma'am,' said the stranger.

He took one; and drawing a spectacle-case from his pocket, leisurely pulled out a pair of spectacles, which he adjusted on his nose.

'You don't know me, ma'am?' he said, looking so intently at Arabella that she began to feel alarmed.

'No, sir,' she replied timidly.

'No,' said the gentleman, nursing his left leg; 'I don't know how you should. You have been recently married, ma'am?'

'I have,' replied Arabella, in a scarcely audible tone.

'Without having represented to your husband the propriety of first consulting his father, on whom he is dependent, I think?' said the stranger.

Arabella's tears flowed fast, as she pleaded in extenuation that she was young and inexperienced; and that she had been deprived of the counsel and guidance of her parents almost from infancy.

'It was wrong,' said the old gentleman in a milder tone, 'very wrong. It was romantic, unbusinesslike, foolish.'

'It was my fault; all my fault, sir,' replied poor Arabella, weeping.

'Nonsense,' said the old gentleman; 'it was not your fault that he fell in love with you, I suppose? Yes it was, though,' said the old gentleman, looking rather slyly at Arabella. 'It was your fault. He couldn't help it.'

This little compliment, or the little gentleman's odd way of paying it, or his altered manner—so much kinder than it was, at first—or all three together, forced a smile from Arabella in the midst of her tears.

'Where's your husband?' inquired the old gentleman.

'I expect him every instant, sir,' said Arabella. 'He is very low and wretched at not having heard from his father.'

'Low, is he?' said the old gentleman. 'Serve him right!'

The words were scarcely out of the old gentleman's lips, when footsteps were heard ascending the stairs, which he and Arabella seemed both to recognise at the same moment. The little gentleman turned pale; and, making a strong effort to appear composed, stood up, as Mr. Winkle entered the room.

'Father!' cried Mr. Winkle, recoiling in amazement.

'Yes, sir,' replied the little old gentleman. 'Well, sir, what have you got to say to me?'

Mr. Winkle remained silent.

'You are ashamed of yourself, I hope, sir?'

'No, sir,' replied Mr. Winkle, drawing Arabella's arm through his. 'I am very sorry to have done anything which has lessened your affection for me, sir, but I will say, at the same time, that I have no reason to be ashamed of having this lady for my wife, nor you of having her for a daughter.'

'Give me your hand, Nat,' said the old gentleman, in an altered voice. 'Kiss me, my love. You *are* a very charming little daughter-in-law after all!'

In a few minutes' time Mr. Winkle went in search of Mr. Pickwick, and returning with that gentleman, presented him to his father, whereupon they shook hands for five minutes incessantly.

'Mr. Pickwick, I thank you most heartily for all your kindness to my son,' said old Mr. Winkle, in a bluff, straightforward way. 'I am a hasty fellow, and I have judged for myself now, and am more than satisfied.'

FOR a whole week after the happy arrival of Mr. Winkle from Birmingham, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller were from home all day long, only returning just in time for dinner. At length, when the brains of the whole party had been racked for six long days, by unavailing speculation, it was unanimously resolved that Mr. Pickwick should be called upon to explain his conduct, and to state distinctly why he had thus absented himself from the society of his admiring friends.

With this view, Mr. Wardle invited the full circle to dinner at the Adelphi; and the decanters having been thrice sent round, opened the business.

‘We are all anxious to know,’ said the old gentleman, ‘what we have done to offend you, and to induce you to desert us and devote yourself to these solitary walks.’

‘Are you?’ said Mr. Pickwick. ‘It is singular enough that I had intended to volunteer a full explanation this very day; so, if you will give me another glass of wine, I will satisfy your curiosity.’

The decanters passed from hand to hand with unwonted briskness, and Mr. Pickwick, looking round on the faces of his friends with a cheerful smile, proceeded:

‘All the changes that have taken place among us,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘rendered it necessary for me to think, soberly and at once, upon my future plans. I determined on retiring to some quiet, pretty neighbourhood in the vicinity of London. The house I have taken is at Dulwich. It has a large garden, and is situated in one of the most pleasant spots near London. Sam accompanies me there. I have engaged,

on Perker's representation, a housekeeper—a very old one—and such other servants as she thinks I shall require. I wish, if my friend Wardle entertains no objection, that his daughter should be married from my new house, on the day I take possession of it. It will warm my heart to witness the happiness of those friends who are dearest to me, beneath my own roof.'

Mr. Pickwick paused: Emily and Arabella sobbed audibly.

'I have communicated, both personally and by letter, with the club,' resumed Mr. Pickwick, 'acquainting them with my intention. During our long absence, it has suffered much from internal dissensions; and the withdrawal of my name, coupled with this and other circumstances, has occasioned its dissolution. The Pickwick Club exists no longer.

'I shall never regret,' said Mr. Pickwick in a low voice, 'I shall never regret having devoted the greater part of two years to mixing with different varieties and shades of human character. If I have done but little good, I trust I have done less harm. God bless you all!'

With these words, Mr. Pickwick filled and drained a bumper with a trembling hand; and his eyes moistened as his friends rose with one accord, and pledged him from their hearts.

There were few preparatory arrangements to be made for the marriage of Mr. Snodgrass. As he had neither father nor mother, and had been in his minority a ward of Mr. Pickwick's, that gentleman was perfectly well acquainted with his possessions and prospects. His account of both was quite satisfactory to Wardle, and a handsome portion having been bestowed upon Emily, the marriage was fixed to take place on the fourth day from that time.

The bridegroom sallied forth gallantly to Dulwich Church to meet the bride, attended by Mr. Pickwick, Ben Allen, Bob Sawyer, and Mr. Tupman; with Sam Weller outside, having at his button-hole a white favour, the gift of his lady-love, and clad in a new and gorgeous suit of livery invented for the occasion. They were met by the Wardles, and the Winkles, and the bride and bride's-maids, and the Trundles; and the ceremony having been performed, the

coaches rattled back to Mr. Pickwick's to breakfast, where little Mr. Perker already awaited them.

Here, all the light clouds of the more solemn part of the proceedings passed away; every face shone forth joyously; and nothing was to be heard but congratulations and commendations.

Breakfast is announced. Mr. Pickwick leads the old lady to the top of a long table; Wardle takes the bottom; the friends arrange themselves on either side; Sam takes his station behind his master's chair; the laughter and talking cease; Mr. Pickwick, having said grace, pauses for an instant and looks round him. As he does so, the tears roll down his cheeks, in the fullness of his joy.

In compliance with custom we subjoin a few biographical words, in relation to the party at Mr. Pickwick's assembled.

Mr. and Mrs. Winkle, being fully received into favour by the old gentleman, were shortly afterwards installed in a newly-built house, not half a mile from Mr. Pickwick's. Mr. and Mrs. Snodgrass settled at Dingley Dell, where they purchased and cultivated a small farm, more for occupation than profit.

Mr. Tupman, when his friends married, and Mr. Pickwick settled, took lodgings at Richmond, where he has ever since resided. He walks constantly on the terrace during the summer months, with a youthful and jaunty air, which has rendered him the admiration of the numerous elderly ladies of single condition, who reside in the vicinity. He has never proposed again.

Sam Weller kept his word, and remained unmarried, for two years. The old housekeeper dying at the end of that time, Mr. Pickwick promoted Mary to the situation, on condition of her marrying Mr. Weller at once, which she did without a murmur.

The elder Mr. Weller drove a coach for twelve months, but being afflicted with the gout, was compelled to retire. The contents of the pocket-book had been so well invested for him, however, by Mr. Pickwick, that he had a handsome independence to retire on, upon which he still lives at an excellent public-house near Shooter's Hill.

Mr. Pickwick himself continued to reside in his new house, employing his leisure hours in arranging the memoranda which he afterwards presented to the secretary of the once famous club. He never had occasion to regret his bounty to Mr. Jingle; for both that person and Job Trotter became, in time, worthy members of society. Mr. Pickwick is somewhat infirm now; but he retains all his former juvenility of spirit. He is known by all the poor people about, who never fail to take their hats off, as he passes, with great respect. Every year he repairs to a large family merry-making at Mr. Wardle's; on this, as on all other occasions, he is invariably attended by the faithful Sam, between whom and his master there exists a steady and reciprocal attachment which nothing but death will terminate.

page

9. *G.C.M.P.C.* General Chairman-Member Pickwick Club.
tittlebats. Childish form of sticklebacks (a small spiny-backed river fish).
11. *waterman.* An attendant at cabstands whose duty it was to water the horses.
15. *Brummagem.* Cheap and showy (from Birmingham).
Whitehall. King Charles I stepped on to the scaffold from the windows of Whitehall, which was originally a Royal palace (built by Henry VIII).
16. *revolution of July.* This refers to the revolution of July, 1830, when Charles X of France was forced to abdicate. (This dialogue is supposed to take place in 1827; Dickens later humorously attributed his mistake to 'the prophetic force of Mr. Jingle's imagination.')
19. *bivouac.* Temporary encampment without tents.
22. *barouche.* A double-seated four-wheeled carriage with a falling top.
33. *Pope Joan.* This round game played with counters and cards was very popular in the nineteenth century. When the spinster aunt got 'matrimony' she had a King and Queen in her hand.
34. *Pan.* The Greek god of pastures, woods and flocks.
pantiles. Curved roof-tiles.
36. *infant Lambert.* This refers to Daniel Lambert, who weighed over fifty-two stone when he died in 1809.
57. *Sam.* Pickwick Papers was first published as a serial in monthly parts with illustrations (beginning in 1837). Sam Weller appeared in part five and from that point the success of the book was assured. The interchange of 'v' and 'w' in Sam's speech was quite common in those days.
Jack Ketch. The public hangman.

page

58. *Doctors' Commons*. Law college to which were attached proctors (solicitors).

59. *Belle Savage*. 'Belle Sauvage'—a famous inn off Ludgate Hill.

60. *Hessians*. Long boot first worn by Hessian troops.

64. *made his lucky*. Made his escape (slang).

74. *up to snuff*. Knowing; not likely to be deceived.

77. *Eatanswill Election*. Bribery and corruption at elections were by no means uncommon in 1827 and many years afterwards.

80. *écarté*. A French card game in which cards may be discarded for others.

86. *Zeno* (336-264 B.C.). Greek philosopher who founded school of philosophy called Stoicism which laid great stress on self-control and freedom from emotion.

Plato (427-347 B.C.). Greek philosopher and pupil of Socrates. He believed that the visible world of sense obscured the real world open to thought alone.

Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). Greek philosopher. Founded Epicurean school which taught a materialistic view of life.

Pythagoras (582-507 B.C.). Greek mathematician and philosopher who founded in Italy a brotherhood of religious and social reform.

88. *postman*. Red coats for postmen were abolished in 1861.

92. *mother-in-law*. Step-mother.

122. *japanned*. Covered with a black glossy varnish after the manner of the Japanese.

134. *beadle*. Parish officer who has power to punish petty offences.

142. *Perceval*. Spencer Perceval (1762-1812). British statesman who became Prime Minister in 1809. He was shot by a madman (Bellingham) in the lobby of the House of Commons in 1812.

145. *jack towel*. Roller towel.

150. *pettitoes*. Pig's feet as food (probably 'petty' and 'toes').

169. *griffin*. Fabulous animal with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.

170. *wafered*. Sealed with a wafer—a thin leaf of coloured paste.

170. *Old Bailey*. The name applied to the Central Criminal Court for London and the surrounding areas from the street where it is situated. Since the eighteenth century most of the trials for murder and other serious offences have been held there.

186. *Trinity term*. The Easter term.

186. *stanhope*. Light open carriage first made for Fitzroy Stanhope.

187. *Botany Bay*. A reference to the fact that convicts used to be sent to Botany Bay, Australia.

Quaker. Sam Weller is angry because Namby has kept his hat on, thus showing disrespect for Mr. Pickwick. Men of the Quaker faith keep their hats on when in church.

189. *Fleet prison*. London prison built in the twelfth century on the banks of the Fleet river. It existed in varying forms till 1846 when it was pulled down. Debtors and bankrupts were housed there.

190. *Tipstaff*. An officer who carries a staff tipped with metal.

191. *narcotic*. Sleep-inducing like a narcotic or drug.

193. *Zephyr*. Zephyr is the west wind. Mr. Pickwick attacked Zephyr (or Mivins) so vigorously that he deprived him of his wind or breath.

197. *horse chaunter*. One who cries up (praises) horses.

leg. Lag (convict).

201. *Constable's Miscellany*. Constable, the Scottish publisher, began in 1827 to publish a series of standard works in cheap form—an early attempt to popularise good literature.

203. *ameleon*. Chameleon, a small lizard with the power of changing its colour.

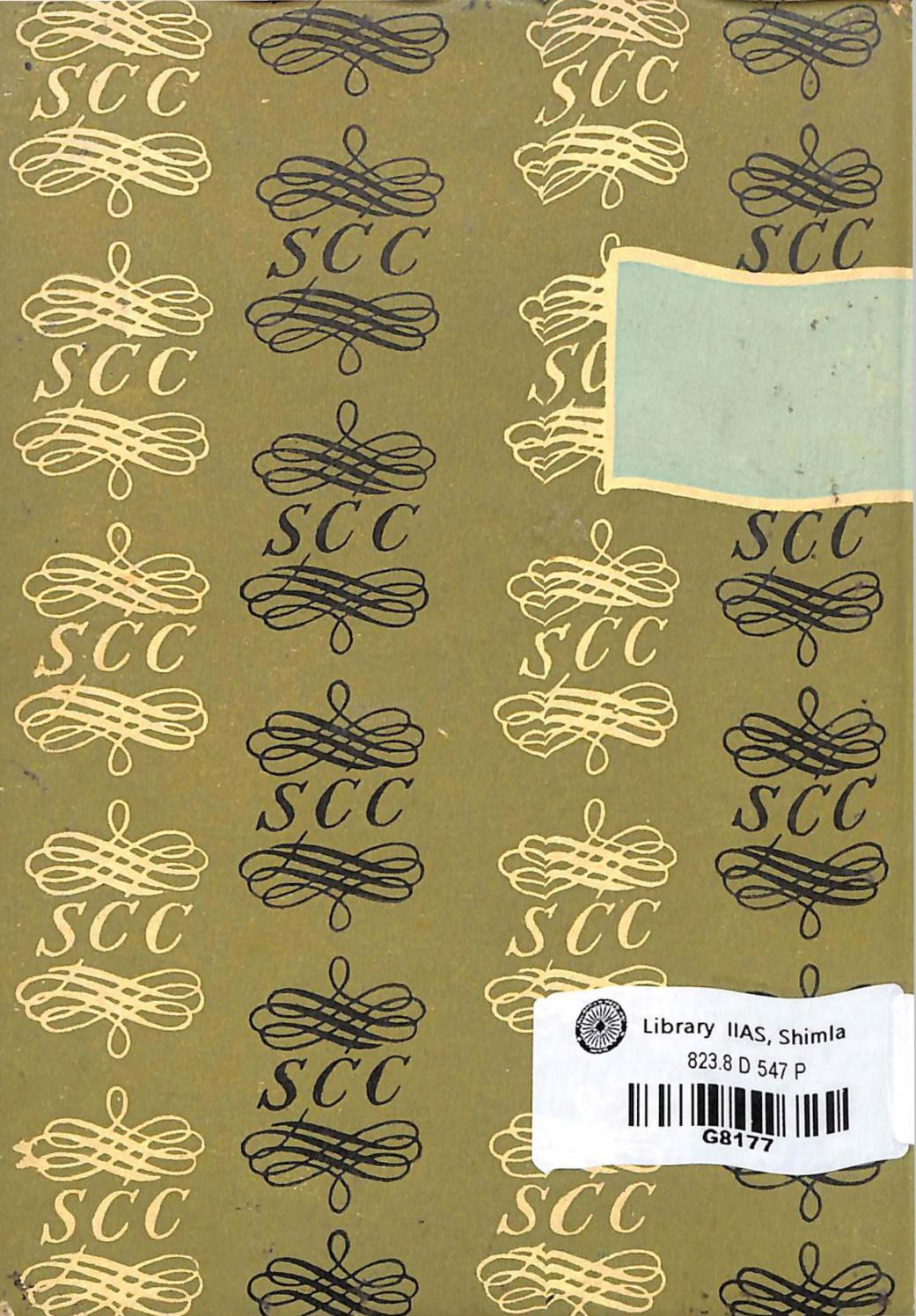
204. *vay-bill*. Way-bill, a list of passengers and goods carried on a public vehicle.

209. *Newgate*. A famous prison in London originally housed in the new gate of the city. A record called the Newgate Calendar was kept of the prisoners and their crimes.

216. *pelerine*. Woman's cape, especially one with long ends coming down in front.

232. *anathemas*. Curses; solemn denunciation usually by the church.

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