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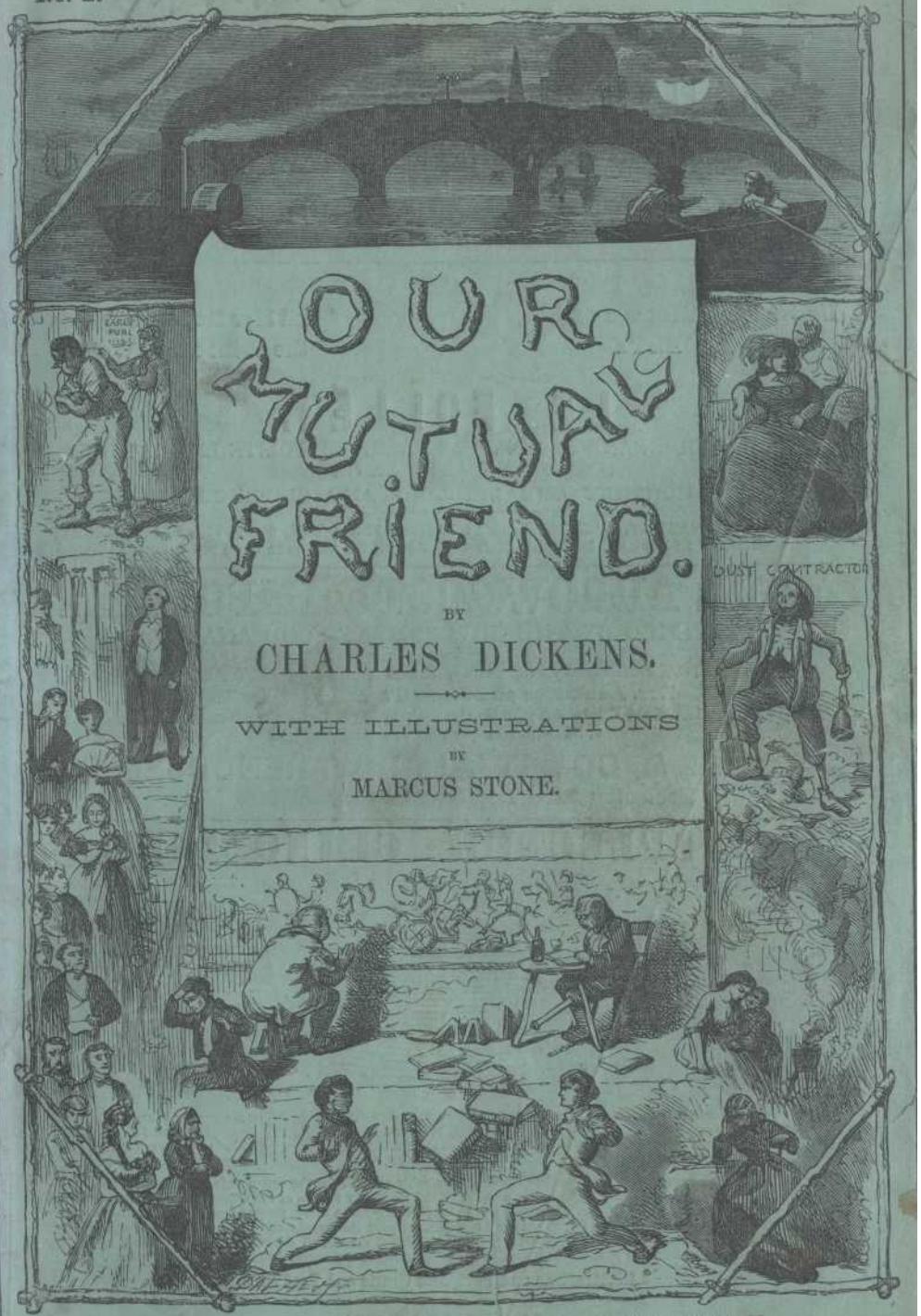

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IN CHANCERY.

IT was clearly proved, before Vice-Chancellor Sir W. P. Wood, by affidavits from eminent Hospital Physicians of London, that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was the Discoverer of Chlorodyne; that they prescribe it largely, and mean no other than Dr. BROWNE'S.—See *Times*, Jan. 12, 1864. The Public, therefore, are cautioned against using any other than Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE.

THIS INVALUABLE REMEDY produces quiet refreshing sleep, relieves pain, calms the system, restores the deranged functions, and stimulates healthy action of the secretions of the body, without creating any of those unpleasant results attending the use of opium. Old and young may take it at all hours and times, when requisite. Thousands of persons testify to its marvellous good effects and wonderful cures, while Medical Men extol its virtues most extensively, using it in great quantities in the following diseases:—

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FRENCH POLISHED MAHOGANY CASE, containing 3 Dozen best Ivory-handled Table Knives (No. 12), 2 Dozen Dessert Knives, 3 Pairs of Meat Carvers, 2 Pairs of Poultry Carvers, and 1 Table Steel £15 15

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IVORY-HANDLED BALANCED TABLE KNIVES, from 15*s.* 6*d.* to 55*s.* per Dozen, according to attern and quality. Carvers to correspond.

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	Fiddle Pattern.		Cottage or Old Silver Pattern.	Threaded Pattern, or Threaded Cottage Pattern.	Threaded, Shell, Lily, or Rose Pattern.
	Medium Quality.	Heavy Plating.	Heavy Plating.	Heavy Plating.	Heavy Pattern.
12 Table Forks	£2 2 0	£2 15 0	£2 15 0	£3 10 0	£3 10 0
12 Table Spoons	2 2 0	2 15 0	2 15 0	3 10 0	3 10 0
12 Dessert Forks	1 12 0	2 2 0	2 2 0	2 8 0	2 8 0
12 Dessert Spoons	1 12 0	2 2 0	2 2 0	2 8 0	2 8 0
2 Gravy Spoons	0 16 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 7 0	1 7 0
1 Soup Ladle	0 13 6	0 16 0	0 16 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
1 Fish Knife	0 15 0	0 18 0	0 18 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
4 Sauce Ladles	0 16 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 6 0	1 6 0
4 Salt Spoons (gilt bowls)	0 8 0	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 12 0	0 12 0
1 Mustard Spoon (gilt bowl)	0 2 6	0 2 6	0 2 6	0 3 0	0 3 0
12 Tea Spoons	1 0 0	1 6 0	1 6 0	1 15 0	1 15 0
1 Sugar Tongs	0 4 0	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 5 6	0 5 6
1 Sugar Sifter (pierced)	0 5 0	0 6 0	0 6 0	0 7 6	0 7 6
1 Moist Sugar Spoon	0 2 6	0 3 0	0 3 0	0 3 6	0 3 6
6 Egg Spoons (gilt bowls)	0 12 0	0 15 0	0 15 0	0 18 0	0 18 0
1 Butter Knife	0 4 0	0 4 6	0 4 6	0 6 0	0 6 0
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S. Fox and Co.'s Frames, made of solid wire, are warranted not to lock together on opening the Umbrella or Parasol, and, from the superior quality and temper of the steel, will not snap nor become bent in the use. They are charged one penny per Umbrella or Parasol more than the Frames of other makers.

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	Electro Plated Fiddle Pattern.	Strong Plated Fiddle Pattern.	Thread Pattern.	King's or Thread, with Shell.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Table Forks, per dozen	1 10 0	1 18 0	2 8 0	3 0 0
Dessert Forks	1 0 0	1 10 0	1 15 0	2 2 0
Table Spoons	1 10 0	1 18 0	2 8 0	3 0 0
Dessert Spoons	1 0 0	1 10 0	1 15 0	2 2 0
Tea Spoons	0 12 0	0 18 0	1 3 6	1 10 0

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VISITORS TO THE SEASIDE,

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The Scorching RAYS of the SUN, and Heated Particles of DUST,

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A most refreshing preparation for the Complexion, dispelling the cloud of languor and relaxation, allaying all heat and irritability, and immediately affording the pleasing sensation attending restored elasticity and healthful state of the skin. Freckles, Tan Spots, Pimples, Flushes, and Discoloration fly before its application, and give place to a clear and healthy complexion. In cases of sunburn, or stings of insects, its virtues have long been acknowledged. Price 4s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. per bottle.

The heat of Summer also frequently communicates a dryness to the hair and a tendency to fall off, which may be completely obviated by the use of

Rowlands' Macassar Oil,

an invigorator and beautifier of the hair beyond all precedent. Price 3s. 6d., 7s., 10s. 6d. (equal to four small), and 21s. per Bottle.

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OR PEARL DENTIFRICE,

A White Powder compounded of the choicest and most fragrant exotics. It bestows on the Teeth a pearl-like whiteness, frees them from tartar, and imparts to the gums a healthy firmness, and to the breath a pleasing fragrance. Price 2s. 9d. per box.

Sold by Chemists and Perfumers.

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Beg to announce that they have prepared, for the present Season, a large assortment of SUN SHADES and PARASOLS, made of entirely New Patterns in Lyons Silk, Lace, &c.

PRIZE MEDAL, 1862.

140 REGENT STREET,
94 FLEET STREET,
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THE PERFECT SUBSTITUTE FOR SILVER.

THE REAL NICKEL SILVER,

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When PLATED by the patent process of Messrs. Elkington and Co., is beyond all comparison the very best article next to sterling silver that can be employed as such, either usefully or ornamentally, as by no possible test can it be distinguished from real silver.

A small useful set, guaranteed of first quality for finish and durability, as follows:—

	Fiddle or Old Silver Pattern.	Bead Pattern.	Thread or Brunswick Pattern.	King's or Lily, &c.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
12 Table Forks	1 13 0	2 0 0	2 4 0	2 10 0
12 Table Spoons ...	1 13 6	2 0 0	2 4 0	2 10 0
12 Dessert Forks...	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Dessert Spoons..	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Tea Spoons.....	16 0	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 5 0
6 Egg Spoons, gilt bowls..	10 0	12 0	12 0	13 6
2 Sauce Ladles....	6 0	8 0	8 0	9 0
1 Gravy Spoon ...	6 6	9 0	10 0	11 0
2 Salt Spoons, gilt bowls..	3 4	4 0	4 0	4 6
1 Mustard Spoon, gilt bowl...	1 8	2 0	2 0	2 3
1 Pair Sugar Tongs	2 6	3 6	3 6	4 0
1 Pair Fish Carvers	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 10 0	1 10 0
1 Butter Knife....	2 6	4 0	5 6	6 0
1 Soup Ladle	10 0	12 0	16 0	17 0
1 Sugar Sifter	3 3	4 6	4 6	5 0
Total.....	9 19 9	12 9 0	13 9 6	14 17 3

Any article to be had singly at the same prices. An oak chest to contain the above, and a relative number of knives, &c., £2 15*s*. Tea and Coffee Sets, Dish Covers, and Corner Dishes, Cruet and Liqueur Frames, &c., at proportionate prices. All kinds of re-plating done by the patent process.

CUTLERY WARRANTED.

The most varied Assortment of TABLE CUTLERY in the World, all warranted, is on sale at

WILLIAM S. BURTON'S,

At prices that are remunerative only because of the largeness of the sales.

	Table Knives per doz.	Dessert Knives per doz.	Carvers per pair.
Ivory Handles.	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*
3½-inch ivory handles	12 0	9 6	4 6
3¾-inch fine ivory handles ..	15 0	11 6	4 6
4-inch ivory balance handles	18 0	14 0	5 0
4-inch fine ivory handles ...	24 0	17 0	7 3
4-inch finest African ivory handles	32 0	26 0	11 0
Ditto, with silver ferules ...	40 0	33 0	12 0
Ditto, carved handles, silver ferules	50 0	43 0	17 6
Nickel electro-silver handles, any pattern.....	25 0	19 0	17 6
Silver handles of any pattern	84 0	54 0	21 0
Bone and Horn Handles. Knives and Forks per dozen.			
White bone handles.....	11 0	8 6	2 0
Ditto, balance handles	21 0	17 0	4 6
Black horn, rim'd shoulders.	17 0	14 0	4 0
Do., very strong rivetted bdls.	12 0	9 0	3 0

The Largest Stock in existence of PLATED DESSERT KNIVES and FORKS, in Cases and otherwise, and of the new Plated Fish Carvers.

BATHS & TOILET WARE.

WILLIAM S. BURTON has ONE LARGE SHOW-ROOM devoted exclusively to the display of BATHS and TOILET WARE. The Stock of each is at once the largest, newest, and most varied ever submitted to the Public, and marked at prices proportionate with those that have tended to make his establishment the most distinguished in this country. Portable Showers, 7*s*. 6*d*.; Pillar Showers, 3*l*. to 5*l*.; Nursery, 15*s*. to 32*s*.; Sponging 14*s*. to 32*s*.; Hip, 14*s*. to 31*s*. 6*d*. A large Assortment of Gas Furnace, Hot and Cold Plunge, Vapour, and Camp Shower-baths; Toilet Ware in great variety, from 15*s*. 6*d*. to 45*s*. the set of three.

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39 OXFORD STREET, W.; 1, 1a, 2, 3, & 4, NEWMAN STREET; 4, 5, & 6, PERRY'S PLACE; & 1 NEWMAN YARD, LONDON.

ESTABLISHED 1820.

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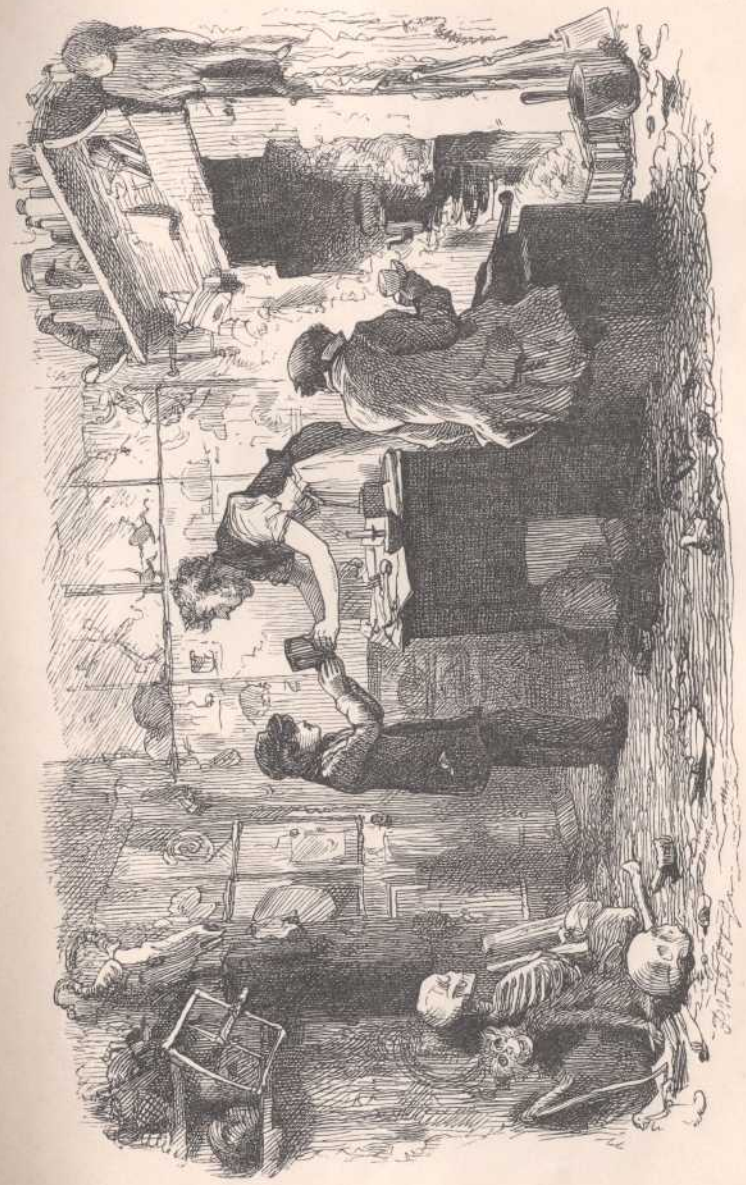
AT THE BAR.



MR VENUS SURROUNDED BY THE TROPHIES OF HIS ART.

CHAPTER V.

BOFFIN'S BOWER.

Over against a London house, a corner house not far from Cavendish Square, a man with a wooden leg had sat for some years, with his remaining foot in a basket in cold weather, picking up a living on this wise:—Every morning at eight o'clock, he stumped to the corner, carrying a chair, a clothes-horse, a pair of trestles, a board, a basket, and an umbrella, all strapped together. Separating these, the board and trestles became a counter, the basket supplied the few small lots of fruit and sweets that he offered for sale upon it and became a foot-warmer, the unfolded clothes-horse displayed a choice collection of halfpenny ballads and became a screen, and the stool planted within it became his post for the rest of the day. All weathers saw the man at the post. This is to be accepted in a double sense, for he contrived a back to his wooden stool, by placing it against the lamp-post. When the weather was wet, he put up his umbrella over his stock in trade, not over himself; when the weather was dry, he furled that faded article, tied it round with a piece of yarn, and laid it cross-wise under the trestles: where it looked like an unwholesomely-forced lettuce that had lost in color and crispness what it had gained in size.

He had established his right to the corner, by imperceptible prescription. He had never varied his ground an inch, but had in the beginning diffidently taken the corner upon which the side of the house gave. A howling corner in the winter time, a dusty corner in the summer time, an undesirable corner at the best of times. Shelterless fragments of straw and paper got up revolving storms there, when the main street was at peace; and the water-cart, as if it were drunk or short-sighted, came blundering and jolting round it, making it muddy when all else was clean.

On the front of his sale-board hung a little placard, like a kettle-holder, bearing the inscription in his own small text:

Errands gone
On with fi
Delity By
Ladies and Gentlemen
I remain
Your humble Serv
Silas Wegg.

He had not only settled it with himself in course of time, that he was errand-goer by appointment to the house at the corner (though he received such commissions not half a dozen times in a year, and then only as some servant's deputy), but also that he was one of the house's retainers and owed vassalage to it and was bound to leal and loyal interest in it. For this reason, he always spoke of it as "Our House," and, though his knowledge of its affairs was mostly specula-

tive and all wrong, claimed to be in its confidence. On similar grounds he never beheld an inmate at any one of its windows but he touched his hat. Yet, he knew so little about the inmates that he gave them names of his own invention: as "Miss Elizabeth," "Master George," "Aunt Jane," "Uncle Parker"—having no authority whatever for any such designations, but particularly the last—to which, as a natural consequence, he stuck with great obstinacy.

Over the house itself, he exercised the same imaginary power as over its inhabitants and their affairs. He had never been in it, the length of a piece of fat black water-pipe which trailed itself over the area-door into a damp stone passage, and had rather the air of a leech on the house that had "taken" wonderfully; but this was no impediment to his arranging it according to a plan of his own. It was a great dingy house with a quantity of dim side window and blank back premises, and it cost his mind a world of trouble so to lay it out as to account for everything in its external appearance. But, this once done, was quite satisfactory, and he rested persuaded, that he knew his way about the house blindfold: from the barred garrets in the high roof, to the two iron extinguishers before the main door—which seemed to request all lively visitors to have the kindness to put themselves out, before entering.

Assuredly, this stall of Silas Wegg's was the hardest little stall of all the sterile little stalls in London. It gave you the face-ache to look at his apples, the stomach-ache to look at his oranges, the tooth-ache to look at his nuts. Of the latter commodity he had always a grim little heap, on which lay a little wooden measure which had no discernible inside, and was considered to represent the penn'orth appointed by Magna Charta. Whether from too much east wind or no—it was an easterly corner—the stall, the stock, and the keeper, were all as dry as the Desert. Wegg was a knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of very hard material, that had just as much play of expression as a watchman's rattle. When he laughed, certain jerks occurred in it, and the rattle sprung. Sooth to say, he was so wooden a man that he seemed to have taken his wooden leg naturally, and rather suggested to the fanciful observer, that he might be expected—if his development received no untimely check—to be completely set up with a pair of wooden legs in about six months.

Mr. Wegg was an observant person, or, as he himself said, "took a powerful sight of notice." He saluted all his regular passers-by every day, as he sat on his stool backed up by the lamp-post; and on the adaptable character of these salutes he greatly plumed himself. Thus, to the rector, he addressed a bow, compounded of lay deference, and a slight touch of the shady preliminary meditation at church; to the doctor, a confidential bow, as to a gentleman whose acquaintance with his inside he begged respectfully to acknowledge; before the Quality he delighted to abase himself; and for Uncle Parker, who was in the army (at least, so he had settled it), he put his open hand to the side of his hat, in a military manner which that angry-eyed buttoned-up inflammatory-faced old gentleman appeared but imperfectly to appreciate.

The only article in which Silas dealt, that was not hard, was gingerbread. On a certain day, some wretched infant having purchased the damp gingerbread-horse (fearfully out of condition), and the adhesive bird-cage, which had been exposed for the day's sale, he had taken a tin box from under his stool to produce a relay of those dreadful specimens, and was going to look in at the lid, when he said to himself, pausing: "Oh! Here you are again!"

The words referred to a broad, round-shouldered, one-sided old fellow in mourning, coming comically ambling towards the corner, dressed in a pea over-coat, and carrying a large stick. He wore thick shoes, and thick leather gaiters, and thick gloves like a hedger's. Both as to his dress and to himself, he was of an overlapping rhinoceros build, with folds in his cheeks, and his forehead, and his eyelids, and his lips, and his ears; but with bright, eager, childishly-inquiring, grey eyes, under his ragged eyebrows, and broad-brimmed hat. A very odd-looking old fellow altogether.

"Here you are again," repeated Mr. Wegg, musing. "And what are you now? Are you in the Funns, or where are you? Have you lately come to settle in this neighbourhood, or do you own to another neighbourhood? Are you in independent circumstances, or is it wasting the motions of a bow on you? Come! I'll speculate! I'll invest a bow in you."

Which Mr. Wegg, having replaced his tin box, accordingly did, as he rose to bait his gingerbread-trap for some other devoted infant. The salute was acknowledged with:

"Morning, sir! Morning! Morning!"

("Calls me Sir!" said Mr. Wegg, to himself. "*He* won't answer. A bow gone!")

"Morning, morning, morning!"

"Appears to be rather a 'arty old cock, too," said Mr. Wegg, as before. "Good morning to *you*, sir."

"Do you remember me, then?" asked his new acquaintance, stopping in his amble, one-sided, before the stall, and speaking in a pouncing way, though with great good-humour.

"I have noticed you go past our house, sir, several times in the course of the last week or so."

"Our house," repeated the other. "Meaning——?"

"Yes," said Mr. Wegg, nodding, as the other pointed the clumsy forefinger of his right glove at the corner house.

"Oh! Now, what," pursued the old fellow, in an inquisitive manner, carrying his knotted stick in his left arm as if it were a baby, "what do they allow you now?"

"It's job work that I do for our house," returned Silas, drily, and with reticence; "it's not yet brought to an exact allowance."

"Oh! It's not yet brought to an exact allowance? No! It's not yet brought to an exact allowance. Oh!—Morning, morning, morning!"

"Appears to be rather a cracked old cock," thought Silas, qualifying his former good opinion, as the other ambled off. But, in a moment he was back again with the question:

"How did you get your wooden leg?"

Mr. Wegg replied, (tartly to this personal inquiry), "In an accident."

"Do you like it?"

"Well! I haven't got to keep it warm," Mr. Wegg made answer, in a sort of desperation occasioned by the singularity of the question.

"He hasn't," repeated the other to his knotted stick, as he gave it a hug; "he hasn't got—ha!—ha!—to keep it warm! Did you ever hear of the name of Boffin?"

"No," said Mr. Wegg, who was growing restive under this examination. "I never did hear of the name of Boffin."

"Do you like it?"

"Why, no," retorted Mr. Wegg, again approaching desperation; "I can't say I do."

"Why don't you like it?"

"I don't know why I don't," retorted Mr. Wegg, approaching frenzy, "but I don't at all."

"Now, I'll tell you something that'll make you sorry for that," said the stranger, smiling. "My name's Boffin."

"I can't help it!" returned Mr. Wegg. Implying in his manner the offensive addition, "and if I could, I wouldn't."

"But there's another chance for you," said Mr. Boffin, smiling still, "Do you like the name of Nicodemus? Think it over. Nick, or Noddy."

"It is not, sir," Mr. Wegg rejoined, as he sat down on his stool, with an air of gentle resignation, combined with melancholy candour; "it is not a name as I could wish any one that I had a respect for, to call *me* by; but there may be persons that would not view it with the same objections.—I don't know why," Mr. Wegg added, anticipating another question.

"Noddy Boffin," said that gentleman. "Noddy. That's my name. Noddy—or Nick—Boffin. What's your name?"

"Silas Wegg.—I don't," said Mr. Wegg, bestirring himself to take the same precaution as before, "I don't know why Silas, and I don't know why Wegg."

"Now, Wegg," said Mr. Boffin, hugging his stick closer, "I want to make a sort of offer to you. Do you remember when you first see me?"

The wooden Wegg looked at him with a meditative eye, and also with a softened air as descrying possibility of profit. "Let me think. I ain't quite sure, and yet I generally take a powerful sight of notice, too. Was it on a Monday morning, when the butcher-boy had been to our house for orders, and bought a ballad of me, which, being unacquainted with the tune, I run it over to him?"

"Right, Wegg, right! But he bought more than one."

"Yes, to be sure, sir; he bought several; and wishing to lay out his money to the best, he took my opinion to guide his choice, and we went over the collection together. To be sure we did. Here was him as it might be, and here was myself as it might be, and there was you, Mr. Boffin, as you identically are, with your self-same stick under your very same arm, and your very same back towards

us. To—be—sure!" added Mr. Wegg, looking a little round Mr. Boffin, to take him in the rear, and identify this last extraordinary coincidence, "your wery self-same back!"

"What do you think I was doing, Wegg?"

"I should judge, sir, that you might be glancing your eye down the street."

"No, Wegg. I was a listening."

"Was you, indeed?" said Mr. Wegg, dubiously.

"Not in a dishonorable way, Wegg, because you was singing to the butcher; and you wouldn't sing secrets to a butcher in the street, you know."

"It never happened that I did so yet, to the best of my remembrance," said Mr. Wegg, cautiously. "But I might do it. A man can't say what he might wish to do some day or another." (This, not to release any little advantage he might derive from Mr. Boffin's avowal.)

"Well," repeated Boffin, "I was a listening to you and to him. And what do you—you haven't got another stool, have you? I'm rather thick in my breath."

"I haven't got another, but you're welcome to this," said Wegg, resigning it. "It's a treat to me to stand."

"Lard!" exclaimed Mr. Boffin, in a tone of great enjoyment, as he settled himself down, still nursing his stick like a baby, "it's a pleasant place, this! And then to be shut in on each side, with these ballads, like so many book-leaf blinkers! Why, it's delightful!"

"If I am not mistaken, sir," Mr. Wegg delicately hinted, resting a hand on his stall, and bending over the discursive Boffin, "you alluded to some offer or another that was in your mind?"

"I'm coming to it! All right. I'm coming to it! I was going to say that when I listened that morning, I listened with hadmiration amounting to haw. I thought to myself, 'Here's a man with a wooden leg—a literary man with——'"

"N—not exactly so, sir," said Mr. Wegg.

"Why, you know every one of these songs by name and by tune, and if you want to read or to sing any one on 'em off straight, you've only to whip on your spectacles and do it!" cried Mr. Boffin. "I see you at it!"

"Well, sir," returned Mr. Wegg, with a conscious inclination of the head; "we'll say literary, then."

"'A literary man—*with* a wooden leg—and all Print is open to him!' That's what I thought to myself, that morning," pursued Mr. Boffin, leaning forward to describe, uncramped by the clothes-horse, as large an arc as his right arm could make; "'all Print is open to him!' And it is, ain't it?"

"Why, truly, sir," Mr. Wegg admitted, with modesty; "I believe you couldn't show me the piece of English print, that I wouldn't be equal to collaring and throwing."

"On the spot?" said Mr. Boffin.

"On the spot."

"I know'd it! Then consider this. Here am I, a man without a wooden leg, and yet all print is shut to me."

"Indeed, sir?" Mr. Wegg returned with increasing self-complacency. "Education neglected?"

"Neg—lected!" repeated Boffin, with emphasis. "That ain't no word for it. I don't mean to say but what if you showed me a B, I could so far give you change for it, as to answer Boffin."

"Come, come, sir," said Mr. Wegg, throwing in a little encouragement, "that's something, too."

"It's something," answered Mr. Boffin, "but I'll take my oath it ain't much."

"Perhaps it's not as much as could be wished by an inquiring mind, sir," Mr. Wegg admitted.

"Now, look here. I'm retired from business. Me and Mrs. Boffin—Henerietty Boffin—which her father's name was Henery, and her mother's name was Hetty, and so you get it—we live on a compittance, under the will of a diseased governor."

"Gentleman dead, sir?"

"Man alive, don't I tell you? A diseased governor? Now, it's too late for me to begin shovelling and sifting at alphabeds and grammar-books. I'm getting to be a old bird, and I want to take it easy. But I want some reading—some fine bold reading, some splendid book in a gorging Lord-Mayor's-Show of wollumes" (probably meaning gorgeous, but misled by association of ideas); "as'll reach right down your pint of view, and take time to go by you. How can I get that reading, Wegg? By," tapping him on the breast with the head of his thick stick, "paying a man truly qualified to do it, so much an hour (say twopence) to come and do it."

"Hem! Flattered, sir, I am sure," said Wegg, beginning to regard himself in quite a new light. "Hem! This is the offer you mentioned, sir?"

"Yes. Do you like it?"

"I am considering of it, Mr. Boffin."

"I don't," said Boffin, in a free-handed manner, "want to tie a literary man—*with* a wooden leg—down too tight. A halfpenny an hour shan't part us. The hours are your own to choose, after you've done for the day with your house here. I live over Maiden-Lane way—out Holloway direction—and you've only got to go East-and-by-North when you've finished here, and you're there. Twopence halfpenny an hour," said Boffin, taking a piece of chalk from his pocket and getting off the stool to work the sum on the top of it in his own way; "two long'uns and a short'un—twopence halfpenny; two short'uns is a long'un and two two long'uns is four long'uns—making five long'uns; six nights a week at five long'uns a night," scoring them all down separately, "and you mount up to thirty long'uns. A round'un! Half a crown!"

Pointing to this result as a large and satisfactory one, Mr. Boffin smeared it out with his moistened glove, and sat down on the remains.

"Half a crown," said Wegg, meditating. "Yes. (It ain't much, sir.) Half a crown."

"Per week, you know."

"Per week. Yes. As to the amount of strain upon the intellect now. Was you thinking at all of poetry?" Mr. Wegg inquired, musing.

"Would it come dearer?" Mr. Boffin asked.

"It would come dearer," Mr. Wegg returned. "For when a person comes to grind off poetry night after night, it is but right he should expect to be paid for its weakening effect on his mind."

"To tell you the truth Wegg," said Boffin, "I wasn't thinking of poetry, except in so fur as this:—If you was to happen now and then to feel yourself in the mind to tip me and Mrs. Boffin one of your ballads, why then we should drop into poetry."

"I follow you, sir," said Wegg. "But not being a regular musical professional, I should be loath to engage myself for that; and therefore when I dropped into poetry, I should ask to be considered so fur, in the light of a friend."

At this, Mr. Boffin's eyes sparkled, and he shook Silas earnestly by the hand: protesting that it was more than he could have asked, and that he took it very kindly indeed.

"What do you think of the terms, Wegg?" Mr. Boffin then demanded, with unconcealed anxiety.

Silas, who had stimulated this anxiety by his hard reserve of manner, and who had begun to understand his man very well, replied with an air; as if he were saying something extraordinarily generous and great:

"Mr. Boffin, I never bargain."

"So I should have thought of you!" said Mr. Boffin, admiringly.

"No, sir. I never did 'aggle and I never will 'aggle. Consequently I meet you at once, free and fair, with——Done, for double the money!"

Mr. Boffin seemed a little unprepared for this conclusion, but assented, with the remark, "You know better what it ought to be than I do, Wegg," and again shook hands with him upon it.

"Could you begin to night, Wegg?" he then demanded.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Wegg, careful to leave all the eagerness to him. "I see no difficulty if you wish it. You are provided with the needful implement—a book, sir?"

"Bought him at a sale," said Mr. Boffin. "Eight wollumes. Red and gold. Purple ribbon in every wollume, to keep the place where you leave off. Do you know him?"

"The book's name, sir?" inquired Silas.

"I thought you might have know'd him without it," said Mr Boffin slightly disappointed. "His name is Decline-And-Fall-Off The-Rooshan-Empire." (Mr. Boffin went over these stones slowly and with much caution.)

"Ay indeed!" said Mr. Wegg, nodding his head with an air of friendly recognition.

"You know him, Wegg?"

"I haven't been not to say right slap through him, very lately," Mr. Wegg made answer, "having been otherways employed, Mr. Boffin. But know him? Old familiar declining and falling off the Rooshan? Rather, sir! Ever since I was not so high as your stick.

Ever since my eldest brother left our cottage to enlist into the army. On which occasion, as the ballad that was made about it describes:

"Beside that cottage door, Mr. Boffin,
A girl was on her knees;
She held aloft a snowy scarf, Sir,
Which (my eldest brother noticed) fluttered in the breeze.
She breathed a prayer for him, Mr. Boffin;
A prayer he coold not hear.
And my eldest brother lean'd upon his sword, Mr. Boffin,
And wiped away a tear."

Much impressed by this family circumstance, and also by the friendly disposition of Mr. Wegg, as exemplified in his so soon dropping into poetry, Mr. Boffin again shook hands with that ligneous sharper, and besought him to name his hour. Mr. Wegg named eight.

"Where I live," said Mr. Boffin, "is called The Bower. Boffin's Bower is the name Mrs. Boffin christened it when we come into it as a property. If you should meet with anybody that don't know it by that name (which hardly anybody does), when you've got nigh upon about a odd mile, or say and a quarter if you like, up Maiden Lane, Battle Bridge, ask for Harmony Jail, and you'll be put right. I shall expect you, Wegg," said Mr. Boffin, clapping him on the shoulder with the greatest enthusiasm, "most jyfully. I shall have no peace or patience till you come. Print is now opening ahead of me. This night, a literary man—*with* a wooden leg—" he bestowed an admiring look upon that decoration, as if it greatly enhanced the relish of Mr. Wegg's attainments—"will begin to lead me a new life! My fist again, Wegg. Morning, morning, morning!"

Left alone at his stall as the other ambled off, Mr. Wegg subsided into his screen, produced a small pocket-handkerchief of a penitentially-scrubbing character, and took himself by the nose with a thoughtful aspect. Also, while he still grasped that feature, he directed several thoughtful looks down the street, after the retiring figure of Mr. Boffin. But, profound gravity sat enthroned on Wegg's countenance. For, while he considered within himself that this was an old fellow of rare simplicity, that this was an opportunity to be improved, and that here might be money to be got beyond present calculation, still he compromised himself by no admission that his new engagement was at all out of his way, or involved the least element of the ridiculous. Mr. Wegg would even have picked a handsome quarrel with any one who should have challenged his deep acquaintance with those aforesaid eight volumes of Decline and Fall. His gravity was unusual, portentous, and immeasurable, not because he admitted any doubt of himself, but because he perceived it necessary to forestall any doubt of himself in others. And herein he ranged with that very numerous class of impostors, who are quite as determined to keep up appearances to themselves, as to their neighbours.

A certain loftiness, likewise, took possession of Mr. Wegg; a condescending sense of being in request as an official expounder of mysteries. It did not move him to commercial greatness, but rather to littleness, insomuch that if it had been within the possibilities of things for the wooden measure to hold fewer nuts than usual, it would have done so that day. But, when night came, and with her veiled eyes beheld him stumping towards Boffin's Bower, he was elated too.

The Bower was as difficult to find, as Fair Rosamond's without the clue. Mr. Wegg, having reached the quarter indicated, inquired for the Bower half a dozen times without the least success, until he remembered to ask for Harmony Jail. This occasioned a quick change in the spirits of a hoarse gentleman and a donkey, whom he had much perplexed.

"Why, yer mean Old Harmon's, do yer?" said the hoarse gentleman, who was driving his donkey in a truck, with a carrot for a whip. "Why did'nt yer niver say so? Eddard and me is a goin' by *him!* Jump in."

Mr. Wegg complied, and the hoarse gentleman invited his attention to the third person in company, thus;

"Now, you look at Eddard's ears. What was it as you named, agin? Whisper."

Mr. Wegg whispered, "Boffin's Bower."

"Eddard! (keep yer hi on his ears) cut away to Boffin's Bower!"

Edward, with his ears lying back, remained immoveable.

"Eddard! (keep yer hi on his ears) cut away to Old Harmon's."

Edward instantly pricked up his ears to their utmost, and rattled off at such a pace that Mr. Wegg's conversation was jolted out of him in a most dislocated state.

"Was-it-Ev-verajail?" asked Mr. Wegg, holding on.

"Not a proper jail, wot you and me would get committed to," returned his escort; "they giv' it the name, on accounts of Old Harmon living solitary there."

"And-why-did-they-callitharm-Ony?" asked Wegg.

"On accounts of his never agreeing with nobody. Like a speeches of chaff. Harmon's Jail; Harmony Jail. Working it round like."

"Doyouknow-Mist-Erboff-in?" asked Wegg.

"I should think so! Everybody do about here. Eddard knows him. (Keep yer hi on his ears.) Noddy Boffin, Eddard!"

The effect of the name was so very alarming, in respect of causing a temporary disappearance of Edward's head, casting his hind hoofs in the air, greatly accelerating the pace and increasing the jolting, that Mr. Wegg was fain to devote his attention exclusively to holding on, and to relinquish his desire of ascertaining whether this homage to Boffin was to be considered complimentary or the reverse.

Presently, Edward stopped at a gateway, and Wegg discreetly lost no time in slipping out at the back of the truck. The moment he was landed, his late driver with a wave of the carrot, said "Supper, Eddard!" and he, the hind hoofs, the truck, and Edward, all seemed to fly into the air together, in a kind of apotheosis.

Pushing the gate, which stood ajar, Wegg looked into an enclosed space where certain tall dark mounds rose high against the sky, and where the pathway to the Bower was indicated, as the moonlight

showed, between two lines of broken crockery set in ashes. A white figure advancing along this path, proved to be nothing more ghostly than Mr. Boffin, easily attired for the pursuit of knowledge, in an undress garment of short white smock-frock. Having received his literary friend with great cordiality, he conducted him to the interior of the Bower and there presented him to Mrs. Boffin:—a stout lady of a rubicund and cheerful aspect, dressed (to Mr. Wegg's consternation) in a low evening-dress of sable satin, and a large black velvet hat and feathers.

"Mrs. Boffin, Wegg," said Boffin, "is a highflyer at Fashion. And her make is such, that she does it credit. As to myself, I ain't yet as Fash'nable as I may come to be. Henerietty, old lady, this is the gentleman that's a going to decline and fall off the Rooshan Empire."

"And I am sure I hope it'll do you both good," said Mrs. Boffin.

It was the queerest of rooms, fitted and furnished more like a luxurious amateur tap-room than anything else within the ken of Silas Wegg. There were two wooden settles by the fire, one on either side of it, with a corresponding table before each. On one of these tables, the eight volumes were ranged flat, in a row, like a galvanic battery; on the other, certain squat case-bottles of inviting appearance seemed to stand on tiptoe to exchange glances with Mr. Wegg over a front row of tumblers and a basin of white sugar. On the hob, a kettle steamed; on the hearth, a cat reposed. Facing the fire between the settles, a sofa, a footstool, and a little table, formed a centrepiece devoted to Mrs. Boffin. They were garish in taste and color, but were expensive articles of drawing-room furniture that had a very odd look beside the settles and the flaring gaslight pendent from the ceiling. There was a flowery carpet on the floor; but, instead of reaching to the fireside, its glowing vegetation stopped short at Mrs. Boffin's footstool, and gave place to a region of sand and sawdust. Mr. Wegg also noticed, with admiring eyes, that, while the flowery land displayed such hollow ornamentation as stuffed birds and waxen fruits under glass-shades, there were, in the territory where vegetation ceased, compensatory shelves on which the best part of a large pie and likewise of a cold joint were plainly discernible among other solids. The room itself was large, though low; and the heavy frames of its old-fashioned windows, and the heavy beams in its crooked ceiling, seemed to indicate that it had once been a house of some mark standing alone in the country.

"Do you like it, Wegg?" asked Mr. Boffin, in his pouncing manner.

"I admire it greatly, sir," said Wegg. "Peculiar comfort at this fireside, sir."

"Do you understand it, Wegg?"

"Why, in a general way, sir," Mr. Wegg was beginning slowly and knowingly, with his head stuck on one side, as evasive people do begin, when the other cut him short:

"You *don't* understand it, Wegg, and I'll explain it. These arrangements is made by mutual consent between Mrs. Boffin and me. Mrs. Boffin, as I've mentioned, is a highflyer at Fashion · at

present I'm not. I don't go higher than comfort, and comfort of the sort that I'm equal to the enjyment of. Well then. Where would be the good of Mrs. Boffin and me quarrelling over it? We never did quarrel, before we come into Boffin's Bower as a property; why quarrel when we *have* come into Boffin's Bower as a property? So Mrs. Boffin, she keeps up her part of the room, in her way; I keep up my part of the room in mine. In consequence of which we have at once, Sociability (I should go melancholy mad without Mrs. Boffin), Fashion, and Comfort. If I get by degress to be a higher-flyer at Fashion, then Mrs. Boffin will by degrees come for'arder. If Mrs. Boffin should ever be less of a dab at Fashion than she is at the present time, then Mrs. Boffin's carpet would go back'arder. If we should both continny as we are, why then *here* we are, and give us a kiss, old lady."

Mrs. Boffin who, perpetually smiling, had approached and drawn her plump arm though her lord's, most willingly complied. Fashion, in the form of her black velvet hat and feathers, tried to prevent it; but got deservedly crushed in the endeavour.

"So now, Wegg," said Mr. Boffin, wiping his mouth with an air of much refreshment, "you begin to know us as we are. This is a charming spot, is the Bower, but you must get to apprechiate it by degrees. It's a spot to find out the merits of, little by little, and a new'un every day. There's a serpentining walk up each of the mounds, that gives you the yard and neighbourhood changing every moment. When you get to the top, there's a view of the neighbouring premises, not to be surpassed. The premises of Mrs. Boffin's late father (Canine Provision Trade), you look down into, as if they was your own. And the top of the High Mound is crowned with a lattice-work Arbour, in which, if you don't read out loud many a book in the summer, ay, and as a friend, drop many a time into poetry too, it shan't be my fault. Now, what'll you read on?"

"Thank you, sir," returned Wegg, as if there were nothing new in his reading at all. "I generally do it on gin and water."

"Keeps the organ moist, does it, Wegg?" asked Mr. Boffin, with innocent eagerness.

"N-no, sir," replied Wegg, coolly, "I should hardly describe it so, sir. I should say, mellers it. Mellers it, is the word I should employ, Mr. Boffin."

His wooden conceit and craft kept exact pace with the delighted expectation of his victim. The visions rising before his mercenary mind, of the many ways in which this connexion was to be turned to account, never obscured the foremost idea natural to a dull overreaching man, that he must not make himself too cheap.

Mrs. Boffin's Fashion, as a less inexorable deity than the idol usually worshipped under that name, did not forbid her mixing for her literary guest, or asking if he found the result to his liking. On his returning a gracious answer and taking his place at the literary settle, Mr. Boffin began to compose himself as a listener, at the opposite settle, with exultant eyes.

"Sorry to deprive you of a pipe, Wegg," he said, filling his own, "but you can't do both together. Oh! and another thing I forgot to

name! When you come in here of an evening, and look round you, and notice anything on a shelf that happens to catch your fancy, mention it."

Wegg, who had been going to put on his spectacles, immediately laid them down, with the sprightly observation:

"You read my thoughts, sir. *Do* my eyes deceive me, or is that object up there a—a pie? It can't be a pie."

"Yes, it's a pie, Wegg," replied Mr. Boffin, with a glance of some little discomfiture at the Decline and Fall.

"*Have* I lost my smell for fruits, or is it a apple pie, sir?" asked Wegg.

"It's a veal and ham pie," said Mr. Boffin.

"Is it indeed, sir? And it would be hard, sir, to name the pie that is a better pie than a weal and hammer," said Mr. Wegg, nodding his head emotionally.

"Have some, Wegg?"

"Thank you, Mr. Boffin, I think I will, at your invitation. I wouldn't at any other party's, at the present juncture; but at yours, sir!——And meaty jelly too, especially when a little salt, which is the case where there's ham, is mellering to the organ, is very mellering to the organ." Mr. Wegg did not say what organ, but spoke with a cheerful generality.

So, the pie was brought down, and the worthy Mr. Boffin exercised his patience until Wegg, in the exercise of his knife and fork, had finished the dish: only profiting by the opportunity to inform Wegg that although it was not strictly Fashionable to keep the contents of a larder thus exposed to view, he (Mr. Boffin) considered it hospitable; for the reason, that instead of saying, in a comparatively unmeaning manner, to a visitor, 'There are such and such edibles down stairs; will you have anything up?' you took the bold practical course of saying, 'Cast your eye along the shelves, and, if you see anything you like there, have it down.'"

And now, Mr. Wegg at length pushed away his plate and put on his spectacles, and Mr. Boffin lighted his pipe and looked with beaming eyes into the opening world before him, and Mrs. Boffin reclined in a fashionable manner on her sofa: as one who would be part of the audience if she found she could, and would go to sleep if she found she couldn't.

"Hem!" began Wegg, "This, Mr. Boffin and Lady, is the first chapter of the first wollume of the Decline and Fall off——" here he looked hard at the book, and stopped.

"What's the matter, Wegg?"

"Why, it comes into my mind, do you know, sir," said Wegg with an air of insinuating frankness (having first again looked hard at the book), "that you made a little mistake this morning, which I had meant to set you right in, only something put it out of my head. I think you said Rooshan Empire, sir?"

"It is Rooshan; ain't it, Wegg?"

"No, sir. Roman. Roman."

"What's the difference, Wegg?"

"The difference, sir?" Mr. Wegg was faltering and in danger of breaking down, when a bright thought flashed upon him. "The difference, sir? There you place me in a difficulty, Mr. Boffin. Suffice it to observe, that the difference is best postponed to some other occasion when Mrs. Boffin does not honor us with her company. In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it."

Mr. Wegg thus came out of his disadvantage with quite a chivalrous air, and not only that, but by dint of repeating with a manly delicacy, "In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it!" turned the disadvantage on Boffin, who felt that he had committed himself in a very painful manner.

Then, Mr. Wegg, in a dry unflinching way, entered on his task; going straight across country at everything that came before him; taking all the hard words, biographical and geographical; getting rather shaken by Hadrian, Trajan, and the Antonines; stumbling at Polybius (pronounced Polly Beeious, and supposed by Mr. Boffin to be a Roman virgin, and by Mrs. Boffin to be responsible for that necessity of dropping it); heavily unseated by Titus Antoninus Pius; up again and galloping smoothly with Augustus; finally, getting over the ground well with Commodus: who, under the appellation of Commodious, was held by Mr. Boffin to have been quite unworthy of his English origin, and "not to have acted up to his name" in his government of the Roman people. With the death of this personage, Mr. Wegg terminated his first reading; long before which consummation several total eclipses of Mrs. Boffin's candle behind her black velvet disc, would have been very alarming, but for being regularly accompanied by a potent smell of burnt pens when her feathers took fire, which acted as a restorative and woke her. Mr. Wegg, having read on by rote and attached as few ideas as possible to the text, came out of the encounter fresh; but, Mr. Boffin, who had soon laid down his unfinished pipe, and had ever since sat intently staring with his eyes and mind at the confounding enormities of the Romans, was so severely punished that he could hardly wish his literary friend Good-night, and articulate "To-morrow."

"Commodious," gasped Mr. Boffin, staring at the moon, after letting Wegg out at the gate and fastening it: "Commodious fights in that wild-beast-show, seven hundred and thirty-five times, in one character only! As if that wasn't stunning enough, a hundred lions is turned into the same wild-beast-show all at once! As if that wasn't stunning enough, Commodious, in another character, kills 'em all off in a hundred goes! As if that wasn't stunning enough, Vittle-us (and well named too) eats six millions' worth, English money, in seven months! Wegg takes it easy, but upon-my-soul to a old bird like myself these are scarers. And even now that Commodious is strangled, I don't see a way to our bettering ourselves." Mr. Boffin added as he turned his pensive steps towards the Bower and shook his head, "I didn't think this morning there was half so many Scarers in Print. But I'm in for it now!"

CHAPTER VI.

CUT ADRIFT.

THE Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters, already mentioned as a tavern of a dropsical appearance, had long settled down into a state of hale infirmity. In its whole constitution it had not a straight floor, and hardly a straight line; but it had outlasted, and clearly would yet outlast, many a better-trimmed building, many a sprucer public-house. Externally, it was a narrow lopsided wooden jumble of corpulent windows heaped one upon another as you might heap as many toppling oranges, with a crazy wooden verandah impending over the water; indeed the whole house, inclusive of the complaining flag-staff on the roof, impended over the water, but seemed to have got into the condition of a faint-hearted diver who has paused so long on the brink that he will never go in at all.

This description applies to the river-frontage of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters. The back of the establishment, though the chief entrance was there, so contracted that it merely represented in its connexion with the front, the handle of a flat iron set upright on its broadest end. This handle stood at the bottom of a wilderness of court and alley: which wilderness pressed so hard and close upon the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters as to leave the hostelry not an inch of ground beyond its door. For this reason, in combination with the fact that the house was all but afloat at high water, when the Porters had a family wash the linen subjected to that operation might usually be seen drying on lines stretched across the reception-rooms and bed-chambers.

The wood forming the chimney-pieces, beams, partitions, floors and doors, of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters, seemed in its old age fraught with confused memories of its youth. In many places it had become gnarled and riven, according to the manner of old trees; knots started out of it; and here and there it seemed to twist itself into some likeness of boughs. In this state of second childhood, it had an air of being in its own way garrulous about its early life. Not without reason was it often asserted by the regular frequenters of the Porters, that when the light shone full upon the grain of certain panels, and particularly upon an old corner cupboard of walnut-wood in the bar, you might trace little forests there, and tiny trees like the parent tree, in full umbrageous leaf.

The bar of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters was a bar to soften the human breast. The available space in it was not much larger than a hackney-coach; but no one could have wished the bar bigger, that space was so girt in by corpulent little casks, and by cordial-bottles radiant with fictitious grapes in bunches, and by lemons in nets, and by biscuits in baskets, and by the polite beer-pulls that made low bows when customers were served with beer, and by the cheese in a snug corner, and by the landlady's own small table in a

snugger corner near the fire, with the cloth everlastingly laid. This haven was divided from the rough world by a glass partition and a half-door, with a leaden sill upon it for the convenience of resting your liquor; but, over this half-door the bar's snugness so gushed forth, that, albeit customers drank there standing, in a dark and draughty passage where they were shouldered by other customers passing in and out, they always appeared to drink under an enchanting delusion that they were in the bar itself.

For the rest, both the tap and parlor of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters gave upon the river, and had red curtains matching the noses of the regular customers, and were provided with comfortable fireside tin utensils, like models of sugar-loaf hats, made in that shape that they might, with their pointed ends, seek out for themselves glowing nooks in the depths of the red coals, when they mulled your ale, or heated for you those delectable drinks, Purl, Flip, and Dog's Nose. The first of these humming compounds was a speciality of the Porters, which, through an inscription on its door-posts, gently appealed to your feelings as, "The Early Purl House." For, it would seem that Purl must always be taken early; though whether for any more distinctly stomachic reason than that, as the early bird catches the worm, so the early purl catches the customer, cannot here be resolved. It only remains to add that in the handle of the flat iron, and opposite the bar, was a very little room like a three-cornered hat, into which no direct ray of sun, moon, or star, ever penetrated, but which was superstitiously regarded as a sanctuary replete with comfort and retirement by gaslight, and on the door of which was therefore painted its alluring name: Cosy.

Miss Potterson, sole proprietor and manager of the Fellowship-Porters, reigned supreme on her throne, the Bar, and a man must have drunk himself mad drunk indeed if he thought he could contest a point with her. Being known on her own authority as Miss Abbey Potterson, some water-side heads, which (like the water) were none of the clearest, harboured muddled notions that, because of her dignity and firmness, she was named after, or in some sort related to, the Abbey at Westminster. But, Abbey was only short for Abigail, by which name Miss Potterson had been christened at Limehouse Church, some sixty and odd years before.

"Now, you mind, you Riderhood," said Miss Abbey Potterson, with emphatic forefinger over the half-door, "the Fellowships don't want you at all, and would rather by far have your room than your company; but if you were as welcome here as you are not, you shouldn't even then have another drop of drink here this night, after this present pint of beer. So make the most of it."

"But you know, Miss Potterson," this was suggested very meekly though, "if I behave myself, you can't help serving me, miss."

"*Can't* I!" said Abbey, with infinite expression.

"No, Miss Potterson; because, you see, the law——"

"*I* am the law here, my man," returned Miss Abbey, "and I'll soon convince you of that, if you doubt it at all."

"I never said I did doubt it at all, Miss Abbey."

"So much the better for you."

Abbey the supreme threw the customer's halfpence into the till, and, seating herself in her fireside-chair, resumed the newspaper she had been reading. She was a tall, upright, well-favoured woman, though severe of countenance, and had more of the air of a schoolmistress than mistress of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters. The man on the other side of the half-door, was a waterside-man with a squinting leer, and he eyed her as if he were one of her pupils in disgrace.

"You're cruel hard upon me, Miss Potterson."

Miss Potterson read her newspaper with contracted brows, and took no notice until he whispered:

"Miss Potterson! Ma'am! Might I have half a word with you?"

Deigning then to turn her eyes sideways towards the suppliant, Miss Potterson beheld him knuckling his low forehead, and ducking at her with his head, as if he were asking leave to fling himself head foremost over the half-door and alight on his feet in the bar.

"Well?" said Miss Potterson, with a manner as short as she herself was long, "say your half word. Bring it out."

"Miss Potterson! Ma'am! Would you 'sxcuse me taking the liberty of asking, is it my character that you take objections to?"

"Certainly," said Miss Potterson.

"Is it that you're afraid of——"

"I am not afraid of *you*," interposed Miss Potterson, "if you mean that."

"But I humbly don't mean that, Miss Abbey."

"Then what do you mean?"

"You really are so cruel hard upon me! What I was going to make inquiries was no more than, might you have any apprehensions —leastways beliefs or suppositions—that the company's property mightn't be altogether to be considered safe, if I used the house too regular?"

"What do you want to know for?"

"Well, Miss Abbey, respectfully meaning no offence to you, it would be some satisfaction to a man's mind, to understand why the Fellowship-Porters is not to be free to such as me, and is to be free to such as Gaffer."

The face of the hostess darkened with some shadow of perplexity, as she replied: "Gaffer has never been where you have been."

"Signifying in Quod, Miss? Perhaps not. But he may have merited it. He may be suspected of far worse than ever I was."

"Who suspects him?"

"Many, perhaps. One, beyond all doubts. I do."

"*You* are not much," said Miss Abbey Potterson, knitting her brows again with disdain.

"But I was his pardner. Mind you, Miss Abbey, I was his pardner. As such I know more of the ins and outs of him than any person living does. Notice this! I am the man that was his pardner, and I am the man that suspects him."

"Then," suggested Miss Abbey, though with a deeper shade of perplexity than before, "you criminate yourself."

"No I don't, Miss Abbey. For how does it stand? It stands this way. When I was his pardner, I couldn't never give him satisfaction. Why couldn't I never give him satisfaction? Because my luck was bad; because I couldn't find many enough of 'em. How was his luck? Always good. Notice this! Always good! Ah! There's a many games, Miss Abbey, in which there's chance, but there's a many others in which there's skill too, mixed along with it."

"That Gaffer has a skill in finding what he finds, who doubts, man?" asked Miss Abbey.

"A skill in purwiding what he finds, perhaps," said Riderhood, shaking his evil head.

Miss Abbey knitted her brow at him, as he darkly leered at her.

"If you're out upon the river pretty nigh every tide, and if you want to find a man or woman in the river, you'll greatly help your luck, Miss Abbey, by knocking a man or woman on the head aforehand and pitching 'em in."

"Gracious Lud!" was the involuntary exclamation of Miss Potterson.

"Mind you!" returned the other, stretching forward over the half door to throw his words into the bar; for his voice was as if the head of his boat's mop were down his throat; "I say so, Miss Abbey! And mind you! I'll follow him up, Miss Abbey! And mind you! I'll bring him to book at last, if its twenty year hence, I will! Who's he, to be favoured along of his daughter? Ain't I got a daughter of my own!"

With that flourish, and seeming to have talked himself rather more drunk and much more ferocious than he had begun by being, Mr. Riderhood took up his pint pot and swaggered off to the tap-room.

Gaffer was not there, but a pretty strong muster of Miss Abbey's pupils were, who exhibited, when occasion required, the greatest docility. On the clock's striking ten, and Miss Abbey's appearing at the door, and addressing a certain person in a faded scarlet jacket, with "George Jones, your time's up! I told your wife you should be punctual," Jones submissively rose, gave the company good-night, and retired. At half-past ten, on Miss Abbey's looking in again, and saying, "William Williams, Bob Glamour, and Jonathan, you are all due," Williams, Bob, and Jonathan with similar meekness took their leave and evaporated. Greater wonder than these, when a bottle-nosed person in a glazed hat had after some considerable hesitation ordered another glass of gin and water of the attendant potboy, and when Miss Abbey, instead of sending it, appeared in person, saying, "Captain Joey, you have had as much as will do you good," not only did the captain feebly rub his knees and contemplate the fire without offering a word of protest, but the rest of the company murmured, "Ay, ay, Captain! Miss Abbey's right; you be guided by Miss Abbey, Captain." Nor, was Miss Abbey's vigilance in anywise abated by this submission, but rather sharpened; for, looking round on the deferential faces of her school, and descrying two other young persons in need of admonition, she thus bestowed it: "Tom Tootle, it's time for a young fellow who's going to be married next month, to be at home and asleep. And you needn't nudge him, Mr. Jack Mullins, for I know your work begins early to-morrow, and I say the same to you. So come! Good-night,

like good lads!" Upon which, the blushing Tootle looked to Mullins, and the blushing Mullins looked to Tootle, on the question who should rise first, and finally both rose together and went out on the broad grin, followed by Miss Abbey; in whose presence the company did not take the liberty of grinning likewise.

In such an establishment, the white-aproned pot-boy with his shirt-sleeves arranged in a tight roll on each bare shoulder, was a mere hint of the possibility of physical force, thrown out as a matter of state and form. Exactly at the closing hour, all the guests who were left, filed out in the best order: Miss Abbey standing at the half door of the bar, to hold a ceremony of review and dismissal. All wished Miss Abbey good-night, and Miss Abbey wished good-night to all, except Riderhood. The sapient pot-boy, looking on officially, then had the conviction borne in upon his soul, that the man was evermore outcast and excommunicate from the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters.

"You Bob Glibbery," said Miss Abbey to this pot-boy, "run round to Hexam's and tell his daughter Lizzie that I want to speak to her."

With examplary swiftness Bob Glibbery departed, and returned. Lizzie, following him, arrived as one of the two female domestics of the Fellowship-Porters arranged on the snug little table by the bar fire, Miss Potterson's supper of hot sausages and mashed potatoes.

"Come in and sit ye down, girl," said Miss Abbey. "Can you eat a bit?"

"No thank you, Miss. I have had my supper."

"I have had mine too, I think," said Miss Abbey, pushing away the untasted dish, "and more than enough of it. I am put out, Lizzie."

"I am very sorry for it, Miss."

"Then why, in the name of Goodness," quoth Miss Abbey, sharply, "do you do it?"

"*I* do it, Miss!"

"There, there Don't look astonished. I ought to have begun with a word of explanation, but it's my way to make short cuts at things. I always was a pepperer. You Bob Glibbery there, put the chain upon the door and get ye down to your supper."

With an alacrity that seemed no less referable to the pepperer fact than to the supper fact, Bob obeyed, and his boots were heard descending towards the bed of the river.

"Lizzie Hexam, Lizzie Hexam," then began Miss Potterson, "how often have I held out to you the opportunity of getting clear of your father, and doing well?"

"Very often, Miss."

"Very often? Yes! And I might as well have spoken to the iron funnel of the strongest sea-going steamer that passes the Fellowship-Porters."

"No, Miss," Lizzie pleaded; "because that would not be thankful, and I am."

"I vow and declare I am half ashamed of myself for taking such

an interest in you," said Miss Abbey, pettishly, "for I don't believe I should do it if you were not good-looking. Why ain't you ugly?"

Lizzie merely answered this difficult question with an apologetic glance.

"However, you ain't," resumed Miss Potterson, "so it's no use going into that. I must take you as I find you. Which indeed is what I've done. And you mean to say you are still obstinate?"

"Not obstinate, Miss, I hope."

"Firm (I suppose you call it) then?"

"Yes, Miss. Fixed like."

"Never was an obstinate person yet, who would own to the word!" remarked Miss Potterson, rubbing her vexed nose; "I'm sure I would, if I was obstinate; but I am a pepperer, which is different. Lizzie Hexam, Lizzie Hexam, think again. Do you know the worst of your father?"

"Do I know the worst of father!" she repeated, opening her eyes.

"Do you know the suspicions to which your father makes himself liable? Do you know the suspicions that are actually about, against him?"

The consciousness of what he habitually did, oppressed the girl heavily, and she slowly cast down her eyes.

"Say, Lizzie. Do you know?" urged Miss Abbey.

"Please to tell me what the suspicions are, Miss," she asked after a silence, with her eyes upon the ground.

"It's not an easy thing to tell a daughter, but it must be told. It is thought by some, then, that your father helps to their death a few of those that he finds dead."

The relief of hearing what she felt sure was a false suspicion, in place of the expected real and true one, so lightened Lizzie's breast for the moment, that Miss Abbey was amazed at her demeanour. She raised her eyes quickly, shook her head, and, in a kind of triumph, almost laughed.

"They little know father who talk like that!"

("She takes it," thought Miss Abbey, "very quietly. She takes it with extraordinary quietness!")

"And perhaps," said Lizzie, as a recollection flashed upon her, "it is some one who has a grudge against father; some one who has threatened father! Is it Riderhood, Miss?"

"Well; yes it is."

"Yes! He was father's partner, and father broke with him, and now he revenges himself. Father broke with him when I was by, and he was very angry at it. And besides, Miss Abbey!—Will you never, without strong reason, let pass your lips what I am going to say?"

She bent forward to say it in a whisper.

"I promise," said Miss Abbey.

"It was on the night when the Harmon murder was found out, through father, just above bridge. And just below bridge, as we were sculling home, Riderhood crept out of the dark in his boat. And many and many times afterwards, when such great pains were taken to come to the bottom of the crime, and it

never could be come near, I thought in my own thoughts, could Riderhood himself have done the murder, and did he purposely let father find the body? It seemed a'most wicked and cruel to so much as think such a thing; but now that he tries to throw it upon father, I go back to it as if it was a truth. Can it be a truth? That was put into my mind by the dead?"

She asked this question, rather of the fire than of the hostess of the Fellowship-Porters, and looked round the little bar with troubled eyes.

But, Miss Potterson, as a ready schoolmistress accustomed to bring her pupils to book, set the matter in a light that was essentially of this world.

"You poor deluded girl," she said, "don't you see that you can't open your mind to particular suspicions of one of the two, without opening your mind to general suspicions of the other? They had worked together. Their goings-on had been going on for some time. Even granting that it was as you have had in your thoughts, what the two had done together would come familiar to the mind of one."

"You don't know father, Miss, when you talk like that. Indeed, indeed, you don't know father."

"Lizzie, Lizzie," said Miss Potterson. "Leave him. You needn't break with him altogether, but leave him. Do well away from him; not because of what I have told you to-night—we'll pass no judgment upon that, and we'll hope it may not be—but because of what I have urged on you before. No matter whether it's owing to your good looks or not, I like you and I want to serve you. Lizzie, come under my direction. Don't fling yourself away, my girl, but be persuaded into being respectable and happy."

In the sound good feeling and good sense of her entreaty, Miss Abbey had softened into a soothing tone, and had even drawn her arm round the girl's waist. But, she only replied, "Thank you, thank you! I can't. I won't. I must not think of it. The harder father is borne upon, the more he needs me to lean on."

And then Miss Abbey, who, like all hard people when they do soften, felt that there was considerable compensation owing to her, underwent reaction and became frigid.

"I have done what I can," she said, "and you must go your way. You make your bed, and you must lie on it. But tell your father one thing: he must not come here any more."

"Oh, Miss, will you forbid him the house where I know he's safe?"

"The Fellowships," returned Miss Abbey, "has itself to look to, as well as others. It has been hard work to establish order here, and make the Fellowships what it is, and it is daily and nightly hard work to keep it so. The Fellowships must not have a taint upon it that may give it a bad name. I forbid the house to Riderhood, and I forbid the house to Gaffer. I forbid both, equally. I find from Riderhood and you together, that there are suspicions against both men, and I'm not going to take upon myself to decide betwixt them. They are both tarred with a dirty brush, and I can't have the Fellowships tarred with the same brush. That's all *I* know."

"Good-night, Miss!" said Lizzie Hexam, sorrowfully.

"Hah!—Good-night!" returned Miss Abbey with a shake of her head.

"Believe me, Miss Abbey, I am truly grateful all the same."

"I can believe a good deal," returned the stately Abbey, "so I'll try to believe that too, Lizzie."

No supper did Miss Potterson take that night, and only half her usual tumbler of hot Port Negus. And the female domestics—two robust sisters, with staring black eyes, shining flat red faces, blunt noses, and strong black curls, like dolls—interchanged the sentiment that Missis had had her hair combed the wrong way by somebody. And the pot-boy afterwards remarked, that he hadn't been "so rattled to bed," since his late mother had systematically accelerated his retirement to rest with a poker.

The chaining of the door behind her, as she went forth, disenchanted Lizzie Hexam of that first relief she had felt. The night was black and shrill, the river-side wilderness was melancholy, and there was a sound of casting-out, in the rattling of the iron-links, and the grating of the bolts and staples under Miss Abbey's hand. As she came beneath the lowering sky, a sense of being involved in a murky shade of Murder dropped upon her; and, as the tidal swell of the river broke at her feet without her seeing how it gathered, so, her thoughts startled her by rushing out of an unseen void and striking at her heart.

Of her father's being groundlessly suspected, she felt sure. Sure. Sure. And yet, repeat the word inwardly as often as she would, the attempt to reason out and prove that she was sure, always came after it and failed. Riderhood had done the deed, and entrapped her father. Riderhood had not done the deed, but had resolved in his malice to turn against her father, the appearances that were ready to his hand to distort. Equally and swiftly upon either putting of the case, followed the frightful possibility that her father, being innocent, yet might come to be believed guilty. She had heard of people suffering Death for bloodshed of which they were afterwards proved pure, and those ill-fated persons were not, first, in that dangerous wrong in which her father stood. Then at the best, the beginning of his being set apart, whispered against, and avoided, was a certain fact. It dated from that very night. And as the great black river with its dreary shores was soon lost to her view in the gloom, so, she stood on the river's brink unable to see into the vast blank misery of a life suspected, and fallen away from by good and bad, but knowing that it lay there dim before her, stretching away to the great ocean, Death.

One thing only, was clear to the girl's mind. Accustomed from her very babyhood promptly to do the thing that could be done—whether to keep out weather, to ward off cold, to postpone hunger, or what not—she started out of her meditation, and ran home.

The room was quiet, and the lamp burnt on the table. In the bunk in the corner, her brother lay asleep. She bent over him softly, kissed him, and came to the table.

"By the time of Miss Abbey's closing, and by the run of the tide,

it must be one. Tide's running up. Father at Chiswick, wouldn't think of coming down, till after the turn, and that's at half after four. I'll call Charley at six. I shall hear the church-clocks strike, as I sit here."

Very quietly, she placed a chair before the scanty fire, and sat down in it, drawing her shawl about her.

"Charley's hollow down by the flare is not there now. Poor Charley!"

The clock struck two, and the clock struck three, and the clock struck four, and she remained there, with a woman's patience and her own purpose. When the morning was well on between four and five, she slipped off her shoes (that her going about, might not wake Charley), trimmed the fire sparingly, put water on to boil, and set the table for breakfast. Then she went up the ladder, lamp in hand, and came down again, and glided about and about, making a little bundle. Lastly, from her pocket, and from the chimney-piece, and from an inverted basin on the highest shelf, she brought halfpence, a few sixpences, fewer shillings, and fell to laboriously and noiselessly counting them, and setting aside one little heap. She was still so engaged, when she was startled by:

"Hal-loa!" From her brother, sitting up in bed.

"You made me jump, Charley."

"Jump! Didn't you make *me* jump, when I opened my eyes a moment ago, and saw you sitting there, like the ghost of a girl-miser, in the dead of the night."

"It's not the dead of the night, Charley. It's nigh six in the morning."

"Is it though? But what are you up to, Liz?"

"Still telling your fortune, Charley."

"It seems to be a precious small one, if that's it," said the boy. "What are you putting that little pile of money by itself for?"

"For you, Charley."

"What do you mean?"

"Get out of bed, Charley, and get washed and dressed, and then I'll tell you."

Her composed manner, and her low distinct voice, always had an influence over him. His head was soon in a basin of water, and out of it again, and staring at her through a storm of towelling.

"I never," towelling at himself as if he were his bitterest enemy, "saw such a girl as you are. What *is* the move, Liz?"

"Are you almost ready for breakfast, Charley?"

"You can pour it out. Hal-loa! I say? And a bundle?"

"And a bundle, Charley."

"You don't mean it's for me, too?"

"Yes, Charley; I do, indeed."

More serious of face, and more slow of action, than he had been, the boy completed his dressing, and came and sat down at the little breakfast-table, with his eyes amazedly directed to her face.

"You see, Charley dear, I have made up my mind that this is the right time for your going away from us. Over and above all the blessed change of by-and-bye, you'll be much happier, and

do much better, even so soon as next month. Even so soon as next week."

"How do you know I shall?"

"I don't quite know how, Charley, but I do." In spite of her unchanged manner of speaking, and her unchanged appearance of composure, she scarcely trusted herself to look at him, but kept her eyes employed on the cutting and buttering of his bread, and on the mixing of his tea, and other such little preparations. "You must leave father to me, Charley—I will do what I can with him—but you must go."

"You don't stand upon ceremony, I think," grumbled the boy, throwing his bread and butter about, in an ill-humour.

She made him no answer.

"I tell you what," said the boy, then, bursting out into an angry whimpering, "you're a selfish jade, and you think there's not enough for three of us, and you want to get rid of me."

"If you believe so, Charley,—yes, then I believe too, that I am a selfish jade, and that I think there's not enough for three of us, and that I want to get rid of you."

It was only when the boy rushed at her, and threw his arms round her neck, that she lost her self-restraint. But she lost it then, and wept over him.

"Don't cry, don't cry! I am satisfied to go, Liz; I am satisfied to go. I know you send me away for my good."

"O, Charley, Charley, Heaven above us knows I do!"

"Yes, yes. Don't mind what I said. Don't remember it. Kiss me."

After a silence, she loosed him, to dry her eyes and regain her strong quiet influence.

"Now listen, Charley dear. We both know it must be done, and I alone know there is good reason for its being done at once. Go straight to the school, and say that you and I agreed upon it—that we can't overcome father's opposition—that father will never trouble them, but will never take you back. You are a credit to the school, and you will be a greater credit to it yet, and they will help you to get a living. Show what clothes you have brought, and what money, and say that I will send some more money. If I can get some in no other way, I will ask a little help of those two gentlemen who came here that night."

"I say!" cried her brother, quickly. "Don't you have it of that chap that took hold of me by the chin! Don't you have it of that Wrayburn one!"

Perhaps a slight additional tinge of red flashed up into her face and brow, as with a nod she laid a hand upon his lips to keep him silently attentive.

"And above all things mind this, Charley! Be sure you always speak well of father. Be sure you always give father his full due. You can't deny that because father has no learning himself he is set against it in you; but favour nothing else against him, and be sure you say—as you know—that your sister is devoted to him. And if you should ever happen to hear anything said against father that is

new to you, it will not be true. Remember, Charley! It will not be true."

The boy looked at her with some doubt and surprise, but she went on again without heeding it.

"Above all things remember! It will not be true. I have nothing more to say, Charley dear, except, be good, and get learning, and only think of some things in the old life here, as if you had dreamed them in a dream last night. Good-bye, my Darling!"

Though so young, she infused into these parting words a love that was far more like a mother's than a sister's, and before which the boy was quite bowed down. After holding her to his breast with a passionate cry, he took up his bundle and darted out at the door, with an arm across his eyes.

The white face of the winter day came sluggishly on, veiled in a frosty mist; and the shadowy ships in the river slowly changed to black substances; and the sun, blood-red on the eastern marshes behind dark masts and yards, seemed filled with the ruins of a forest it had set on fire. Lizzie, looking for her father, saw him coming, and stood upon the causeway that he might see her.

He had nothing with him but his boat, and came on apace. A knot of those amphibious human-creatures who appear to have some mysterious power of extracting a subsistence out of tidal water by looking at it, were gathered together about the causeway. As her father's boat grounded, they became contemplative of the mud, and dispersed themselves. She saw that the mute avoidance had begun.

Gaffer saw it, too, in so far as that he was moved when he set foot on shore, to stare around him. But, he promptly set to work to haul up his boat, and make her fast, and take the sculls and rudder and rope out of her. Carrying these with Lizzie's aid, he passed up to his dwelling.

"Sit close to the fire, father, dear, while I cook your breakfast. It's all ready for cooking, and only been waiting for you. You must be frozen."

"Well, Lizzie, I ain't of a glow; that's certain. And my hands seemed nailed through to the sculls. See how dead they are!" Something suggestive in their colour, and perhaps in her face, struck him as he held them up; he turned his shoulder and held them down to the fire.

"You were not out in the perishing night, I hope, father?"

"No, my dear. Lay aboard a barge, by a blazing coal-fire.—Where's that boy?"

"There's a drop of brandy for your tea, father, if you'll put it in while I turn this bit of meat. If the river was to get frozen, there would be a deal of distress; wouldn't there, father?"

"Ah! there's always enough of that," said Gaffer, dropping the liquor into his cup from a squat black bottle, and dropping it slowly that it might seem more; "distress is for ever a going about, like sut in the air—Ain't that boy up yet?"

"The meat's ready now, father. Eat it while it's hot and comfortable. After you have finished, we'll turn round to the fire and talk."

But, he perceived that he was evaded, and, having thrown a hasty angry glance towards the bunk, plucked at a corner of her apron and asked:

"What's gone with that boy?"

"Father, if you'll begin your breakfast, I'll sit by and tell you."

He looked at her, stirred his tea and took two or three gulps, then cut at his piece of hot steak with his case-knife, and said, eating:

"Now then. What's gone with that boy?"

"Don't be angry, dear. It seems, father, that he has quite a gift of learning."

"Unnat'ral young beggar!" said the parent, shaking his knife in the air.

"—And that having this gift, and not being equally good at other things, he has made shift to get some schooling."

"Unnat'ral young beggar!" said the parent again, with his former action.

"—And that knowing you have nothing to spare, father, and not wishing to be a burden on you, he gradually made up his mind to go seek his fortune out of learning. He went away this morning, father, and he cried very much at going, and he hoped you would forgive him."

"Let him never come a nigh me to ask me my forgiveness," said the father, again emphasizing his words with the knife. "Let him never come within sight of my eyes, nor yet within reach of my arm. His own father ain't good enough for him. He's disowned his own father. His own father therefore, disowns him for ever and ever, as a unnat'ral young beggar."

He had pushed away his plate. With the natural need of a strong rough man in anger, to do something forcible, he now clutched his knife overhand, and struck downward with it at the end of every succeeding sentence. As he would have struck with his own clenched fist if there had chanced to be nothing in it.

"He's welcome to go. He's more welcome to go than to stay. But let him never con.e back. Let him never put his head inside that door. And let you never speak a word more in his favour, or you'll disown your own father, likewise, and what your father says of him he'll have to come to say of you. Now I see why them men yonder held aloof from me. They says to one another, 'Here comes the man as ain't good enough for his own son!' Lizzie——!"

But, she stopped him with a cry. Looking at her he saw her, with a face quite strange to him, shrinking back against the wall, with her hands before her eyes.

"Father, don't! I can't bear to see you striking with it. Put it down!"

He looked at the knife; but in his astonishment still held it.

"Father, it's too horrible. O put it down, put it down!"

Confounded by her appearance and exclamation, he tossed it away, and stood up with his open hands held out before him.

"What's come to you, Liz? Can you think I would strike at you with a knife?"

"No, father, no; you would never hurt me."

"What should I hurt?"

"Nothing, dear father. On my knees, I am certain, in my heart and soul I am certain, nothing! But it was too dreadful to bear; for it looked——" her hands covering her face again, "O it looked——"

"What did it look like?"

The recollection of his murderous figure, combining with her trial of last night, and her trial of the morning, caused her to drop at his feet, without having answered.

He had never seen her so before. He raised her with the utmost tenderness, calling her the best of daughters, and "my poor pretty creetur," and laid her head upon his knee, and tried to restore her. But failing, he laid her head gently down again, got a pillow and placed it under her dark hair, and sought on the table for a spoonful of brandy. There being none left, he hurriedly caught up the empty bottle, and ran out at the door.

He returned as hurriedly as he had gone, with the bottle still empty. He kneeled down by her, took her head on his arm, and moistened her lips with a little water into which he dipped his fingers: saying, fiercely, as he looked around, now over this shoulder, now over that:

"Have we got a pest in the house? Is there summ'at deadly sticking to my clothes? What's let loose upon us? Who loosed it?"

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WEGG LOOKS AFTER HIMSELF.

Silas Wegg, being on his road to the Roman Empire, approaches it by way of Clerkenwell. The time is early in the evening; the weather moist and raw. Mr. Wegg finds leisure to make a little circuit, by reason that he folds his screen early, now that he combines another source of income with it, and also that he feels it due to himself to be anxiously expected at the Bower. "Boffin will get all the eagerer for waiting a bit," says Silas, screwing up, as he stumps along, first his right eye, and then his left. Which is something superfluous in him, for Nature has already screwed both pretty tight.

"If I get on with him as I expect to get on," Silas pursues, stumping and meditating, "it wouldn't become me to leave it here. It wouldn't be respectable." Animated by this reflection, he stumps faster, and looks a long way before him, as a man with an ambitious project in abeyance often will do.

Aware of a working-jeweller population taking sanctuary about the church in Clerkenwell, Mr. Wegg is conscious of an interest in, and a respect for, the neighbourhood. But, his sensations in this regard halt as to their strict morality, as he halts in his gait; for, they suggest the delights of a coat of invisibility in which to walk off safely with the precious stones and watch-cases, but stop short of any compunction for the people who would lose the same.

Not, however, towards the "shops" where cunning artificers work in pearls and diamonds and gold and silver, making their hands so rich, that the enriched water in which they wash them is bought for the refiners;—not towards these does Mr. Wegg stump, but towards the poorer shops of small retail traders in commodities to eat and drink and keep folks warm, and of Italian frame-makers, and of barbers, and of brokers, and of dealers in dogs and singing-birds. From these, in a narrow and a dirty street devoted to such callings, Mr. Wegg selects one dark shop-window with a tallow candle dimly burning in it, surrounded by a muddle of objects vaguely resembling pieces of leather and dry stick, but among which nothing is resolvable into anything distinct, save the candle itself in its old tin candlestick, and two preserved frogs fighting a small-sword duel. Stumping with fresh vigour, he goes in at the dark greasy entry, pushes a little greasy dark reluctant side-door, and follows the door into the little dark greasy shop. It is so dark that nothing can be made out in it, over a little counter, but another tallow candle in another old tin candlestick, close to the face of a man stooping low in a chair.

Mr. Wegg nods to the face, "Good evening."

The face looking up is a sallow face with weak eyes, surmounted by a tangle of reddish-dusty hair. The owner of the face has no cravat on, and has opened his tumbled shirt-collar to work with the more ease. For the same reason he has no coat on: only a loose waistcoat over his yellow linen. His eyes are like the overtried eyes of an engraver, but he is not that; his expression and stoop are like those of a shoemaker, but he is not that.

"Good evening, Mr. Venus. Don't you remember?"

With slowly dawning remembrance, Mr. Venus rises, and holds his candle over the little counter, and holds it down towards the legs, natural and artificial, of Mr. Wegg.

"To be *sure!*" he says, then. "How do you do?"

"Wegg, you know," that gentleman explains.

"Yes, yes," says the other. "Hospital amputation?"

"Just so," says Mr. Wegg.

"Yes, yes," quoth Venus. "How do you do? Sit down by the fire, and warm your—your other one."

The little counter being so short a counter that it leaves the fireplace, which would have been behind it if it had been longer, accessible, Mr. Wegg sits down on a box in front of the fire, and inhales a warm and comfortable smell which is not the smell of the shop. "For that," Mr. Wegg inwardly decides, as he takes a corrective sniff or two, "is musty, leathery, feathery, cellary, gluey, gummy, and," with another sniff, "as it might be, strong of old pairs of bellows."

"My tea is drawing, and my muffin is on the hob, Mr. Wegg; will you partake?"

It being one of Mr. Wegg's guiding rules in life always to partake, he says he will. But, the little shop is so excessively dark, is stuck so full of black shelves and brackets and nooks and corners, that he sees Mr. Venus's cup and saucer only because it is close

under the candle, and does not see from what mysterious recess Mr. Venus produces another for himself, until it is under his nose. Concurrently, Wegg perceives a pretty little dead bird lying on the counter, with its head drooping on one side against the rim of Mr. Venus's saucer, and a long stiff wire piercing its breast. As if it were Cock Robin, the hero of the ballad, and Mr. Venus were the sparrow with his bow and arrow, and Mr. Wegg were the fly with his little eye.

Mr. Venus dives, and produces another muffin, yet untoasted; taking the arrow out of the breast of Cock Robin, he proceeds to toast it on the end of that cruel instrument. When it is brown, he dives again and produces butter, with which he completes his work.

Mr. Wegg, as an artful man who is sure of his supper by-and-bye, presses muffin on his host to soothe him into a compliant state of mind, or, as one might say, to grease his works. As the muffins disappear, little by little, the black shelves and nooks and corners begin to appear, and Mr. Wegg gradually acquires an imperfect notion that over against him on the chimney-piece is a Hindoo baby in a bottle, curved up with his big head tucked under him, as though he would instantly throw a summersault if the bottle were large enough.

When he deems Mr. Venus's wheels sufficiently lubricated, Mr. Wegg approaches his object by asking, as he lightly taps his hands together, to express an undesigning frame of mind:

"And how have I been going on, this long time, Mr. Venus?"

"Very bad," says Mr. Venus, uncompromisingly.

"What? Am I still at home?" asks Wegg, with an air of surprise.

"Always at home."

This would seem to be secretly agreeable to Wegg, but he veils his feelings, and observes, "Strange. To what do you attribute it?"

"I don't know," replies Venus, who is a haggard melancholy man, speaking in a weak voice of querulous complaint, "to what to attribute it, Mr. Wegg. I can't work you into a miscellaneous one, nohow. Do what I will, you can't be got to fit. Anybody with a passable knowledge would pick you out at a look, and say,—'No go! Don't match!'"

"Well, but hang it, Mr. Venus," Wegg expostulates with some little irritation, "that can't be personal and peculiar in *me*. It must often happen with miscellaneous ones."

"With ribs (I grant you) always. But not else. When I prepare a miscellaneous one, I know beforehand that I can't keep to nature, and be miscellaneous with ribs, because every man has his own ribs, and no other man's will go with them; but elseways I can be miscellaneous. I have just sent home a Beauty—a perfect Beauty—to a school of art. One leg Belgian, one leg English, and the pickings of eight other people in it. Talk of not being qualified to be miscellaneous! By rights you *ought* to be, Mr. Wegg."

Silas looks as hard at his one leg as he can in the dim light, and after a pause sulkily opines "that it must be the fault of the other people. Or how do you mean to say it comes about?" he demands impatiently.

"I don't know how it comes about. Stand up a minute. Hold the light." Mr. Venus takes from a corner by his chair, the bones of a leg and foot, beautifully pure, and put together with exquisite neatness. These he compares with Mr. Wegg's leg; that gentleman looking on, as if he were being measured for a riding-boot. "No, I don't know how it is, but so it is. You have got a twist in that bone, to the best of my belief. *I* never saw the likes of you."

Mr. Wegg having looked distrustfully at his own limb, and suspiciously at the pattern with which it has been compared, makes the point:

"I'll bet a pound that ain't an English one!"

"An easy wager, when we run so much into foreign! No, it belongs to that French gentleman."

As he nods towards a point of darkness behind Mr. Wegg, the latter, with a slight start, looks round for "that French gentleman," whom he at length descries to be represented (in a very workmanlike manner) by his ribs only, standing on a shelf in another corner, like a piece of armour or a pair of stays.

"Oh!" says Mr. Wegg, with a sort of sense of being introduced; "I dare say you were all right enough in your own country, but I hope no objections will be taken to my saying that the Frenchman was never yet born as I should wish to match."

At this moment the greasy door is violently pushed inward, and a boy follows it, who says, after having let it slam:

"Come for the stuffed canary."

"It's three and ninepence," returns Venus; "have you got the money?"

The boy produces four shillings. Mr. Venus, always in exceedingly low spirits and making whimpering sounds, peers about for the stuffed canary. On his taking the candle to assist his search, Mr. Wegg observes that he has a convenient little shelf near his knees, exclusively appropriated to skeleton hands, which have very much the appearance of wanting to lay hold of him. From these Mr. Venus rescues the canary in a glass case, and shows it to the boy.

"There!" he whimpers. "There's animation! On a twig, making up his mind to hop! Take care of him; he's a lovely specimen.—And three is four."

The boy gathers up his change and has pulled the door open by a leather strap nailed to it for the purpose, when Venus cries out:

"Stop him! Come back, you young villain! You've got a tooth among them halfpence."

"How was I to know I'd got it? You giv it me. I don't want none of your teeth; I've got enough of my own." So the boy pipes, as he selects it from his change, and throws it on the counter.

"Don't sauce *me*, in the wicious pride of your youth," Mr. Venus retorts pathetically. "Don't hit *me* because you see I'm down. I'm low enough without that. It dropped into the till, I suppose. They drop into everything. There was two in the coffee-pot at breakfast time. Molars."

"Very well, then," argues the boy, "what do you call names for?"

To which Mr. Venus only replies, shaking his shock of dusty hair, and winking his weak eyes, "Don't sauce *me*, in the wicious pride of

your youth; don't hit *me*, because you see I'm down. You've no idea how small you'd come out, if I had the articulating of you."

This consideration seems to have its effect on the boy, for he goes out grumbling.

"Oh dear me, dear me!" sighs Mr. Venus, heavily, snuffing the candle, "the world that appeared so flowery has ceased to blow! You're casting your eye round the shop, Mr. Wegg. Let me show you a light. My working bench. My young man's bench. A Wice. Tools. Bones, warious. Skulls, warious. Preserved Indian baby. African ditto. Bottled preparations, warious. Everything within reach of your hand, in good preservation. The mouldy ones a-top. What's in those hampers over them again, I don't quite remember. Say, human warious. Cats. Articulated English baby. Dogs. Ducks. Glass eyes, warious. Mummied bird. Dried cuticle, warious. Oh, dear me! That's the general panoramic view."

Having so held and waved the candle as that all these heterogeneous objects seemed to come forward obediently when they were named, and then retire again, Mr. Venus despondently repeats, "Oh dear me, dear me!" resumes his seat, and with drooping despondency upon him, falls to pouring himself out more tea.

"Where am I?" asks Mr. Wegg.

"You're somewhere in the back shop across the yard, sir; and speaking quite candidly, I wish I'd never bought you of the Hospital Porter."

"Now, look here, what did you give for me?"

"Well, replies Venus, blowing his tea: his head and face peering out of the darkness, over the smoke of it, as if he were modernizing the old original rise in his family: "you were one of a warious lot, and I don't know."

Silas puts his point in the improved form of "What will you take for me?"

"Well," replies Venus, still blowing his tea, "I'm not prepared, at a moment's notice, to tell you, Mr. Wegg."

"Come! According to your own account I'm not worth much," Wegg reasons persuasively.

"Not for miscellaneous working in, I grant you, Mr. Wegg; but you might turn out valuable yet, as a——" here Mr. Venus takes a gulp of tea, so hot that it makes him choke, and sets his weak eyes watering; "as a Monstrosity, if you'll excuse me."

Repressing an indignant look, indicative of anything but a disposition to excuse him, Silas pursues his point.

"I think you know me, Mr. Venus, and I think you know I never bargain."

Mr. Venus takes gulps of hot tea, shutting his eyes at every gulp, and opening them again in a spasmodic manner; but does not commit himself to assent.

"I have a prospect of getting on in life and elevating myself by my own independent exertions," says Wegg, feelingly, "and I shouldn't like—I tell you openly I should *not* like—under such circumstances, to be what I may call dispersed, a part of me here, and a part of me there, but should wish to collect myself like a genteel person."

"It's a prospect at present, is it, Mr. Wegg? Then you haven't got the money for a deal about you? Then I'll tell you what I'll do with you; I'll hold you over. I am a man of my word, and you needn't be afraid of my disposing of you. I'll hold you over. That's a promise. Oh dear me, dear me!"

Fain to accept his promise, and wishing to propitiate him, Mr. Wegg looks on as he sighs and pours himself out more tea, and then says, trying to get a sympathetic tone into his voice:

"You seem very low, Mr. Venus. Is business bad?"

"Never was so good."

"Is your hand out at all?"

"Never was so well in. Mr. Wegg, I'm not only first in the trade, but I'm *the* trade. You may go and buy a skeleton at the West End if you like, and pay the West End price, but it'll be my putting together. I've as much to do as I can possibly do, with the assistance of my young man, and I take a pride and a pleasure in it."

Mr. Venus thus delivers himself, his right hand extended, his smoking saucer in his left hand, protesting as though he were going to burst into a flood of tears.

"That ain't a state of things to make you low, Mr. Venus."

"Mr. Wegg, I know it ain't. Mr. Wegg, not to name myself as a workman without an equal, I've gone on improving myself in my knowledge of Anatomy, till both by sight and by name I'm perfect. Mr. Wegg, if you was brought here loose in a bag to be articulated, I'd name your smallest bones blindfold equally with your largest, as fast as I could pick 'em out, and I'd sort 'em all, and sort your wertebræ, in a manner that would equally surprise and charm you."

"Well," remarks Silas (though not quite so readily as last time), "*that* ain't a state of things to be low about.—Not for *you* to be low about, leastways."

"Mr. Wegg, I know it ain't; Mr. Wegg, I know it ain't. But it's the heart that lowers me, it is the heart! Be so good as take and read that card out loud."

Silas receives one from his hand, which Venus takes from a wonderful litter in a drawer, and putting on his spectacles, reads:

"'Mr. Venus,"

"Yes. Go on."

"'Preserver of Animals and Birds,'"

"Yes. Go on."

"'Articulator of human bones.'"

"That's it," with a groan. "That's it! Mr. Wegg, I'm thirty-two, and a bachelor. Mr. Wegg, I love her. Mr. Wegg, she is worthy of being loved by a Potentate!" Here Silas is rather alarmed by Mr. Venus's springing to his feet in the hurry of his spirits, and haggardly confronting him with his hand on his coat collar; but Mr. Venus, begging pardon, sits down again, saying, with the calmness of despair, "She objects to the business."

"Does she know the profits of it?"

"She knows the profits of it, but she don't appreciate the art of it, and she objects to it. 'I do not wish,' she writes in her own hand writing, 'to regard myself, nor yet to be regarded, in that boney light.'"

Mr. Venus pours himself out more tea, with a look and in an attitude of the deepest desolation.

"And so a man climbs to the top of the tree, Mr. Wegg, only to see that there's no look-out when he's up there! I sit here of a night surrounded by the lovely trophies of my art, and what have they done for me? Ruined me. Brought me to the pass of being informed that 'she does not wish to regard herself, nor yet to be regarded, in that boney light!'" Having repeated the fatal expressions, Mr. Venus drinks more tea by gulps, and offers an explanation of his doing so.

"It lowers me. When I'm equally lowered all over, lethargy sets in. By sticking to it till one or two in the morning, I get oblivion. Don't let me detain you, Mr. Wegg. I'm not company for any one."

"It is not on that account," says Silas, rising, "but because I've got an appointment. It's time I was at Harmon's."

"Eh?" said Mr. Venus. "Harmon's, up Battle Bridge way?"

Mr. Wegg admits that he is bound for that port.

"You ought to be in a good thing, if you've worked yourself in there. There's lots of money going, there."

"To think," says Silas, "that you should catch it up so quick, and know about it. Wonderful!"

"Not at all, Mr. Wegg. The old gentleman wanted to know the nature and worth of everything that was found in the dust; and many's the bone, and feather, and what not, that he's brought to me."

"Really, now!"

"Yes. (Oh dear me, dear me!) And he's buried quite in this neighbourhood, you know. Over yonder."

Mr. Wegg does not know, but he makes as if he did, by responsively nodding his head. He also follows with his eyes, the toss of Venus's head: as if to seek a direction to over yonder.

"I took an interest in that discovery in the river," says Venus. "(She hadn't written her cutting refusal at that time.) I've got up there——never mind, though."

He had raised the candle at arm's length towards one of the dark shelves, and Mr. Wegg had turned to look, when he broke off.

"The old gentleman was well known all round here. There used to be stories about his having hidden all kinds of property in those dust mounds. I suppose there was nothing in 'em. Probably you know, Mr. Wegg?"

"Nothing in 'em," says Wegg, who has never heard a word of this before.

"Don't let me detain you. Good night!"

The unfortunate Mr. Venus gives him a shake of the hand with a shake of his own head, and drooping down in his chair, proceeds to pour himself out more tea. Mr. Wegg, looking back over his shoulder as he pulls the door open by the strap, notices that the movement so shakes the crazy shop, and so shakes a momentary flare out of the candle, as that the babies—Hindoo, African, and British —the "human warious," the French gentleman, the green glass-eyed cats, the dogs, the ducks, and all the rest of the collection, show for an instant as if paralytically animated; while even poor little Cock Robin at Mr. Venus's elbow turns over on his innocent side. Next moment, Mr. Wegg is stumping under the gaslights and through the mud.

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In addition to a summary of the fishing news of each month, the Magazine will contain articles by the most eminent writers on the different piscatory topics of the day, as well as occasional complete works in a serial form; and it is the aim of the projectors to give the best practical information combined with the necessary scientific and literary talent for presenting that information in its most valuable and attractive form.

It only remains to add that, under certain necessary restrictions, free discussion is invited on all matters of general interest within the limits indicated, and that letters and communications from correspondents will be gladly received, and will meet with every consideration.

Such are the objects and scope of the present periodical. They can only be maintained, however, by an extended and permanent circulation; and a confident appeal is therefore made to the *esprit de corps* of Fishermen—as a body, and individually—to come forward and lend their support to a

FISHERMAN'S MAGAZINE.

To

MESSRS. CHAPMAN AND HALL,

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Persons desiring to effect Assurances through the Agent in any locality not named in this Prospectus, may ascertain the Agent's address by applying to the Head Office.

THE

SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND
Life Assurance Society.

III. *Surrender Values payable on Demand.*

Probably the greatest impediment to the extension of Life Assurance, is the apprehension that inability to continue to pay the Premiums will involve their forfeiture. *Before a person insures his life* in the SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND, he can know, from its published Tables, the precise sum he can withdraw at any time in respect of the original sum assured, which, of course, will be increased by Bonuses. The following are

Examples of Surrender Values of Policies of £1000, and Bonuses thereon. Age at entry being 30.

Duration of Policy.	Premiums paid.	Surrender Value.	Per Centage on Premiums paid.
One Year.....	£25 17 6	£8 0 10	31 per cent.
Ten Years	258 15 0	160 12 10	62 per cent.
Twenty Years	517 10 0	390 15 11	75 per cent.
Thirty Years	776 5 0	699 10 0	90 per cent.
Forty Years..... ...	1035 0 0	1071 19 0	104 per cent.
Forty-five Years ...	1164 7 6	1435 9 0	123 per cent.

IV. *The Public Usefulness of the Society*

may be inferred from the amount of New Assurances annually effected in it, and the extent to which families are now being annually benefited by the forethought of deceased members. On these two points the following are

THE FACTS FOR THE YEAR 1863 ALONE.

	New Sums Assured.	New Premiums.
New Assurances effected in 1863	£901,185 13 3	£30,658 0 9
Less Surplus Assurances given off to other Offices	18,700 0 0	623 12 10
Nett New Assurances for Year 1863 alone	£882,485 13 3	£30,034 7 11

Probably the Largest British Business transacted by any Office during 1863.

Claims in 1863.

201 Members died, entitling their Representatives to £291,167 4 6

TABLE OF PREMIUMS.

For the Assurance of £100, with Participation in Profits.

Age.	Premium.	Age.	Premium.	Age.	Premium.
26	£2 7 6	36	£2 19 9	46	£3 18 7
28	2 9 7	38	3 3 0	48	4 3 7
30	2 11 9	40	3 6 3	50	4 9 2
32	2 14 2	42	3 10 0	52	4 15 0
34	2 16 9	44	3 14 1	54	5 1 7

HEAD OFFICE, No. 9 ST. ANDREW SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

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J. J. P. ANDERSON, *Secretary.*

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EXCLUSIVELY USED IN THE ROYAL LAUNDRY.

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT,

STARCH PURVEYORS

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

The best proofs of the great superiority of this STARCH are the numerous distinguished marks of approval which have been accorded to it from all quarters; amongst which may be mentioned the following, viz.:—

IT IS EXCLUSIVELY USED IN THE ROYAL LAUNDRY,

AND

HER MAJESTY'S LAUNDRESS says it is the FINEST STARCH SHE EVER USED.
HONOURABLE MENTION was awarded it at the Great Exhibition in London, in 1851.
A PRIZE MEDAL was awarded for it at the New York Exhibition in 1853; and
A PRIZE MEDAL was also awarded for it at the International Exhibition in London, 1862.
HER MAJESTY'S LACE DRESSER says that it is the best she has tried; and
HUNDREDS OF GROCERS, &c., say that it pleases their Customers better than any other;
and perhaps the most striking proof of all is, that notwithstanding the great depression in the Cotton Manufacturing Trade, which influences the Starch trade materially, the demand for

THE GLENFIELD STARCH

HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE RAPIDLY.

The Manufacturers have every confidence in asserting, that if those Ladies and Laundresses who do not regularly use this STARCH would disregard the advice of interested dealers, who are allowed extra profits on inferior articles, and give it a fair trial, they would then feel satisfied with the very superior finish which it imparts to Laces, Linens, Muslins, &c., the great saving of trouble in its application, and the entire absence of disappointment with the results, and would for the future, like

THE QUEEN'S LAUNDRESS, USE NO OTHER.

To be had of all respectable Grocers, Druggists, Oilmen, &c., &c., and wholesale of the Manufacturers,

ROBERT WOTHERSPOON & CO.,

STARCH PURVEYORS

TO

Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales,

AND MANUFACTURERS OF

WOTHERSPOON'S VICTORIA LOZENGES,

WHICH WERE AWARDED

A PRIZE MEDAL FOR PURITY AND EXCELLENCE OF QUALITY

At the INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION of 1862

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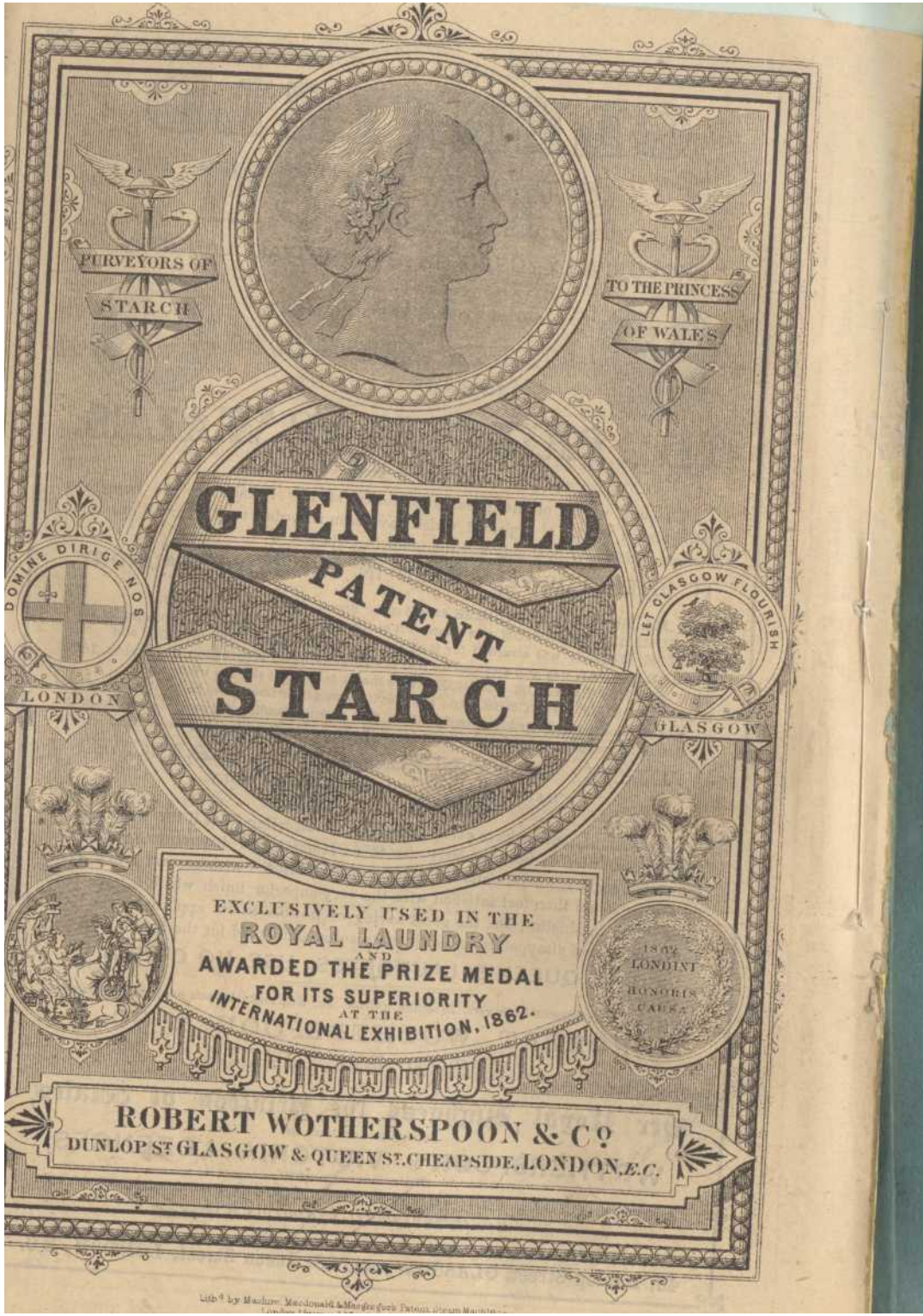

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PETER ROBINSON is now offering a Manufacturer's Stock from Thirty Shillings to Thirty Guineas; Three large Lots of Last Year's Designs, £1 7*s.* 6*d.* the extra full dress—remarkably cheap; 1000 Pieces of Plain Glacés, in Thirty-three Shades of Colour, commencing at £2 15*s.* 6*d.* the extra full Dress; Rich Moiré Antiques, £4 18*s.* 6*d.*—nearly half price.

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Perfectly new Fabrics, highest Novelties of Fashion, from £1 5*s.* 6*d.* to Three Guineas the extra full Dress; an endless Assortment of cheap and useful Dresses, in every variety of Material, from 8*s.* 9*d.* to 21*s.* the full Dress. Washing Grenadine Dresses (pure White), Striped, Figured, and Plain, from 9*s.* 6*d.* to 14*s.* 9*d.* the extra full Dress. Last Year's French Organdie Muslins at very reduced Prices.

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New Mantles, in every variety of Shape and Material, from One Guinea to Twenty Guineas; Opera Mantles, from 18*s.* 6*d.* to Ten Guineas; Waterproof Mantles, always 500 in Stock, commencing at 21*s.*; Large Travelling ditto, from 30*s.* Ten large Show Rooms, the Largest in London. PETER ROBINSON'S Illustrations of New Fashions in Mantles and Dresses published Monthly, and forwarded free on application.

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Upwards of One Thousand Pairs to select from, commencing at 6*s.* 6*d.* to Five Guineas per pair. A quantity of last season's, equal to new patterns, at half price.—A sample pair of any price sent anywhere on approval, returnable if not approved. PETER ROBINSON'S complete Household, Family, and Furnishing Linen Guide gratis, and forwarded free on application. A distinct Warehouse for this Department only.

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