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Charles Dickens' Children Stories

Charles Dickens

Henry Altemus and Co., Philadelphia, 1900

Frontispiece.

LITTLE NELL AND HER GRANDFATHER.

CHARLES DICKENS'

Children Stories

RE-TOLD BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER
AND OTHERS

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

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TROTTY VECK AND HIS DAUGHTER MEG.

“TROTTY” seems a strange name for an old man, but it was given to Toby Veck because of his always going at a trot to do his errands; for he was a porter, and carried letters and messages for people who were in too great a hurry to send them by the post. He did not earn very much, and had to be out in all weathers and all day long. But Toby was of a cheerful disposition, and looked on the bright side of everything. His greatest joy was his dear daughter Meg, who loved him dearly.

One cold day Toby had been trotting up and down in his usual place before the church, when the bells chimed twelve o’clock, which made Toby think of dinner.

“There’s nothing,” he remarked, “more regular in coming round than dinner-time, and nothing less regular in coming round than dinner. That’s the great difference between ‘em.” He went on talking to himself never noticing who was coming near to him.

“Why, father, father,” said a pleasant voice, and Toby turned to find his daughter’s sweet, bright eyes close to his.

“Why, pet,” said he, kissing her, “what’s-to-do? I didn’t expect you to-day, Meg.”

“Neither did I expect to come, father,” said Meg, smiling. “But here I am! And not alone, not alone!”

“Why, you don’t mean to say,” observed Trotty, looking curiously at the covered basket she carried, “that you?——”

“Smell it, father dear,” said Meg; “only smell it, and guess what it is.”

Toby took the shortest possible sniff at the edge of the basket. “Why, it’s hot,” he said.

But to Meg’s great delight he could not guess what it was that smelt so good. At last he exclaimed in triumph, “Why, what am I a-thinking of? It’s tripe!”

And it was.

Just as Toby was about to sit down to his dinner on the doorsteps of a big house close by,

the chimes rang out again, and Toby took off his hat and said, “Amen.”

“Amen to the bells, father?”

“They broke in like a grace, my dear,” said Trotty, “they’d say a good one if they could, I’m sure. Many’s the kind thing they say to me. How often have I heard them bells say, ‘Toby Veck, Toby Veck, keep a good heart, Toby!’ A millions times? More!”

“Well, I never!” cried Meg.

While Toby ate his unexpected dinner with immense relish, Meg told him how her lover Richard, a young blacksmith, had brought his dinner to share with her, and had begged her to marry him on New Year’s Day, “the best and happiest day of the whole year.”

“So,” went on Meg, “I wanted to make this a sort of holiday to you, as well as a dear and happy day to me, father, and I made a little treat and brought it to surprise you.”

Just then, Richard himself came up to persuade Toby to agree to their plan; and almost at the same moment, a footman came out of the house and ordered them all off the steps, and some gentleman came out who called up Trotty, and gave him a letter to carry.

Toby trotted off to a very grand house, where he was told to take the letter in to the gentleman. While he was waiting, he heard the letter read. It was from Alderman Cute, to tell Sir Joseph Bowley that one of his tenants named Will Fern who had come to London to try and get work, had been brought before him charged with sleeping in a shed, and asking if Sir Joseph wished him to be dealt leniently with or otherwise. To Toby’s great disappointment the answer was given that Will Fern might be sent to prison as a vagabond, though his only fault was poverty. On his way home, Toby ran against a man dressed like a countryman, carrying a fair-haired little girl. The man asked him the way to Alderman Cute’s house.

“It’s impossible,” cried Toby, “that your name is Will Fern?”

“That’s my name,” said the man.

Thereupon Toby told him what he had just heard, and said “Don’t go there.”

TROTTY VECK'S DINNER.
TOBY TOOK A SNIFF AT THE EDGE OF THE BASKET.

Poor Will told him how he could not make a living in the country, and had come to London with his orphan niece to try and find a friend of her mother's and to endeavor to get some work, and wishing Toby a happy New Year, was about to trudge wearily off again, when Trotty caught his hand saying—

"Stay! The New Year never can be happy to me if I see the child and you go wandering away without a shelter for your heads. Come home with me. I'm a poor man, living in a poor place, but I can give you lodging for one night and never miss it," and lifting up the pretty little one, he trotted towards home, and rushing in, he set the child down before his daughter. The little girl ran into her arms at once, while Trotty ran round the room, saying, "Here we are and here we go. Here, Uncle Will, come to the fire. Meg, my precious darling, where's the kettle? Here it is and here it goes, and it'll bile in no time!"

"Why, father!" said Meg, "you're crazy to-night, I think. Poor little feet, how cold they are!"

"Oh, they're warmer now!" exclaimed the child. "They're quite warm now!"

"No, no, no," said Meg. "We haven't rubbed 'em half enough. And when they're done, we'll brush out the damp hair; and we'll bring some color to the poor pale face with fresh water; and then we'll be so gay and brisk and happy!"

The child sobbing, clasped her round the neck, saying, “O Meg, O dear Meg!”

“Good gracious me!” said Meg, presently, “father’s crazy! He’s put the dear child’s bonnet on the kettle, and hung the lid behind the door!”

Trotty hastily repaired this mistake, and went off to find some tea and a rasher of bacon he fancied “he had seen lying somewhere on the stairs.” He soon came back and made the tea, and before long they were all enjoying the meal.

After tea Meg took Lilian to bed, and Toby showed Will Fern where he was to sleep. Then he went to sit by the fire and read his paper, and fell asleep, to have a wonderful dream so terrible and sad, that it was a great relief when he woke to find Meg sitting near him, putting some ribbons on her simple gown for her wedding, and looking so happy and young and blooming, that he jumped up to clasp her in his arms.

But somebody came rushing in between them, crying,—“No! Not even you. The first kiss of Meg in the New Year is mine. Meg, my precious prize, a happy year! A life of happy years, my darling wife!”

Then in came Lilian and Will Fern, and a band of music with a flock of neighbors burst into the room, shouting, “A Happy New Year, Meg.” “A happy wedding!” “Many of ‘em,” and the Drum stepped forward and said—

“Trotty Veck, it’s got about that your daughter is to be married to-morrow. And there ain’t a soul that knows you both that don’t wish you both all the happiness the New Year can bring. And here we are, to play it in and dance it in accordingly.” Then Mrs. Chickenstalker came in (a good-humored, comely woman, who, to the delight of all, turned out to be the friend of Lilian’s mother for whom Will Fern had come to look), to wish Meg joy, and then the music struck up, and Trotty, making Meg and Richard second couple, led off Mrs. Chickenstalker down the dance, and danced it in a step unknown before or since, founded on his own peculiar trot.

TINY TIM.

THERE was once a man who did not like Christmas. His name was Scrooge, and he was a hard sour-tempered man of business, intent only on saving and making money, and caring nothing for anyone. He paid the poor, hard-working clerk in his office as little as he could possibly get the work done for, and lived on as little as possible himself, alone, in two dismal rooms. He was never merry or comfortable, or happy, and he hated other people to be so, and that was the reason why he hated Christmas, because people will be happy at Christmas, you know, if they possibly can.

Well, it was Christmas eve, a very cold and foggy one, and Mr. Scrooge, having given his poor clerk unwilling permission to spend Christmas day at home, locked up his office and

went home himself in a very bad temper. After having taken some gruel as he sat over a miserable fire in his dismal room, he got into bed, and had some wonderful and disagreeable dreams, to which we will leave him, whilst we see how Tiny Tim, the son of his poor clerk, spent Christmas day.

The name of this clerk was Bob Cratchet. He had a wife and five other children beside Tim, who was a weak and delicate little cripple, gentle and patient and loving, with a sweet face of his own, which no one could help looking at.

It was Mr. Cratchet’s delight to carry his little boy out on his shoulder to see the shops and the people; and to-day he had taken him to church for the first time.

“Whatever has got your precious father, and your brother Tiny Tim!” exclaimed Mrs. Cratchet, “here’s dinner all ready to be dished up. I’ve never known him so late on Christmas day before.”

“Here he is, mother!” cried Belinda, and “here he is!” cried the other children, as Mr. Cratchet came in, his long comforter hanging three feet from under his threadbare coat; for cold as it was the poor clerk had no top-coat. Tiny Tim was perched on his father’s shoulder.

“And how did Tim behave?” asked Mrs. Cratchet.

“As good as gold and better,” replied his father. “He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people in church, who saw he was a cripple, would be pleased to remember on Christmas day who it was who made the lame to walk.”

“Bless his sweet heart!” said the mother in a trembling voice.

Dinner was waiting to be dished up. Mrs. Cratchet proudly placed a goose upon the table. Belinda brought in the apple sauce, and Peter the mashed potatoes; the other children set chairs, Tim’s as usual close to his father’s; and Tim was so excited that he rapped the table with his knife, and carried “Hurrah.” After the goose came the pudding, all ablaze, with its sprig of holly in the middle, and was eaten to the last morsel; then apples and oranges were set upon the table, and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire, and Mr. Cratchet served round some hot sweet stuff out of a jug as they closed round the fire, and said, “A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us.” “God bless us, every one,” echoed Tiny Tim, and then they drank each other’s health, and Mr. Scrooge’s health, and told stories and sang songs.

TINY TIM.
TINY TIM WAS PERCHED ON HIS FATHER'S SHOULDER.

Now in one of Mr. Scrooge's dreams on Christmas eve a Christmas spirit showed him his clerk's home; he saw them all, heard them drink his health, and he took special note of Tiny Tim himself.

How Mr. Scrooge spent Christmas day we do not know; but on Christmas night he had more dreams, and the spirit took him again to his clerk's poor home.

Upstairs, the father, with his face hidden in his hands, sat beside a little bed, on which lay a tiny figure, white and still. "Tiny Tim died because his father was too poor to give him what was necessary to make him well; *you* kept him poor," said the dream-spirit to Mr. Scrooge. The father kissed the cold, little face on the bed, and went down-stairs, where the sprays of holly still remained about the humble room; and taking his hat, went out, with a wistful glance at the little crutch in the corner as he shut the door. Mr. Scrooge saw all this, but, wonderful to relate, he woke the next morning feeling as he had never felt in his life before.

"Why, I am as light as a feather, and as happy as an angel, and as merry as a schoolboy," he said to himself. "I hope everybody had a merry Christmas, and here's a happy New Year to all the world."

Poor Bob Cratchet crept into the office a few minutes late, expecting to be scolded for it, but his master was there with his back to a good fire, and actually smiling, and he shook

hands with his clerk, telling him heartily he was going to raise his salary, and asking quite affectionately after Tiny Tim! “And mind you make up a good fire in your room before you set to work, Bob,” he said, as he closed his own door.

Bob could hardly believe his eyes and ears, but it was all true. Such doings as they had on New Year’s day had never been seen before in the Cratchet’s home, nor such a turkey as Mr. Scrooge sent them for dinner. Tiny Tim had his share too, for Tiny Tim did not die, not a bit of it. Mr. Scrooge was a second father to him from that day, he wanted for nothing, and grew up strong and hearty. Mr. Scrooge loved him, and well he might, for was it not Tiny Tim who had unconsciously, through the Christmas dream-spirit, touched his hard heart, and caused him to become a good and happy man?

LITTLE DOMBEY.

LITTLE DOMBEY was the son of a rich city merchant, a cold, stern, and pompous man, whose life and interests were entirely absorbed in his business. He was so desirous of having a son to associate with himself in the business, and make the house once more Dombey & Son in fact, as it was in name, that the little boy who was at last born to him was eagerly welcomed.

There was a pretty little girl six years old, but her father had taken little notice of her. Of what use was a girl to Dombey & Son? She could not go into the business.

Little Dombey’s mother died when he was born, but the event did not greatly disturb Mr. Dombey; and since his son lived, what did it matter to him that his little daughter Florence was breaking her heart in loneliness for the mother who had loved and cherished her!

During the first few months of his life, little Dombey grew and flourished; and as soon as he was old enough to take notice, there was no one he loved so well as his sister Florence.

In due time the baby was taken to church, and baptized by the name of Paul (his father’s name). A grand and stately christening it was, followed by a grand and stately feast; and little Paul was declared by his godmother to be “an angel, and the perfect picture of his own papa.”

But from that time Paul seemed to waste and pine; his healthy and thriving babyhood had received a check, and as for illnesses, “There never was a blessed dear so put upon,” his nurse said.

By the time he was five years old, though he had the prettiest, sweetest little face in the world, there was always a patient, wistful look upon it, and he was thin and tiny and delicate. He soon got tired, and had such old-fashioned ways of speaking and doing things, that his nurse often shook her head sadly over him.

When he sat in his little arm-chair with his father, after dinner, they were a strange pair,—

so like, and so unlike each other.

“What is money, papa?” asked Paul on one of these occasions, crossing his tiny arms as well as he could—just as his father’s were crossed.

“Why, gold, silver and copper; you know what it is well enough, Paul,” answered his father.

“Oh yes; I mean, what can money do?”

“Anything, everything—almost,” replied Mr. Dombey, taking one of his son’s wee hands.

Paul drew his hand gently away. “It didn’t save me my mamma, and it can’t make me strong and big,” said he.

“Why, you *are* strong and big, as big as such little people usually are,” returned Mr. Dombey.

“No,” replied Paul, sighing; “when Florence was as little as me, she was strong and tall, and did not get tired of playing as I do. I am so tired sometimes, papa.”

Mr. Dombey’s anxiety was aroused, and the doctor was sent for to examine Paul.

“The child is hardly so stout as we could wish,” said the doctor; “his mind is too big for his body, he thinks too much—let him try sea air—sea air does wonders for children.”

So it was arranged that Florence, Paul, and nurse should go to Brighton, and stay in the house of a lady named Mrs. Pipchin, who kept a very select boarding-house for children.

There is no doubt that, apart from his importance to the house of Dombey & Son, little Paul had crept into his father’s heart, cold though it still was towards his daughter, colder than ever now, for there was in it a sort of unacknowledged jealousy of the warm love lavished on her by Paul, which he himself was unable to win.

Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellously ugly old lady, with a hook nose and stern cold eyes.

“Well, Master Paul, how do you think you will like me?” said Mrs. Pipchin, seeing the child intently regarding her.

“I don’t think I shall like you at all,” replied Paul, shaking his head. “I want to go away. I do not like your house.”

Paul did not like Mrs. Pipchin, but he would sit in his arm-chair and look at her. Her ugliness seemed to fascinate him.

As the weeks went by little Paul grew more healthy-looking, but he did not seem any stronger, and could not run about out of doors. A little carriage was therefore got for him, in which he could be wheeled down to the beach, where he would pass the greater part of the day. He took a great fancy to a queer crab-faced old man, smelling of sea-weed, who wheeled his carriage, and held long conversations with him; but Florence was the only child companion whom he ever cared to have with him, though he liked to watch other children playing in the distance.

“I love you, Floy,” he said one day to her.

Florence laid her head against his pillow, and whispered how much stronger he was

growing.

“Oh, yes, I know, I am a great deal better,” said Paul, “a very great deal better. Listen, Floy; what is it the sea keeps saying?”

“Nothing, dear, it is only the rolling of the waves you hear.”

“Yes, but they are always saying something, and always the same thing. What place is over there, Floy?”

She told him there was another country opposite, but Paul said he did not mean that, he meant somewhere much farther away, oh, much farther away—and often he would break off in the midst of their talk to listen to the sea and gaze out towards that country “farther away.”

After having lived at Brighton for a year, Paul was certainly much stronger, though still thin and delicate. And on one of his weekly visits, Mr. Dombey explained to Mrs. Pipchin, with pompous condescension, that Paul’s weak health having kept him back in his studies, he had made arrangements to place him at the educational establishment of Dr. Blimber, which was close by. Florence was, for the present, to remain under Mrs. Pipchin’s care, and see her brother every week.

Dr. Blimber’s school was a great hot-house for the forcing of boy’s brains; and Dr. Blimber promised speedily to make a man of Paul.

“Shall you like to be made a man of, my son?” asked Mr. Dombey.

“I’d rather be a child and stay with Floy,” answered Paul.

Miss Blimber, the doctor’s daughter, a learned lady in spectacles, was his special tutor, and from morning till night his poor little brains were forced and crammed till his head was heavy and always had a dull ache in it, and his small legs grew weak again—every day he looked a little thinner and a little paler, and became more old-fashioned than ever in his looks and ways—“old-fashioned” was a distinguishing title which clung to him. He was gentle and polite to every one—always looking out for small kindnesses which he might do to any inmate of the house. “The oddest and most old-fashioned child in the world,” Dr. Blimber would say to his daughter; “but bring him on, Cornelia—bring him on.”

And Cornelia did bring him on; and Florence, seeing how pale and weary the little fellow looked when he came to her on Saturdays, and how he could not rest from anxiety about his lessons, would lighten his labors a little, and ease his mind by helping him to prepare his week’s work. But one day, when his lessons were over, little Paul laid his weary and aching head against the knee of a schoolfellow of whom he was very fond; and the first thing he noticed when he opened his eyes was that the window was open, his face and hair were wet with water, and that Dr. Blimber and the usher were both standing looking at him.

“Ah, that’s well,” said Dr. Blimber, as Paul opened his eyes, “and how is my little friend now?”

“Oh, quite well, thank you, sir,” answered Paul, but when he got up there seemed something the matter with the floor, and the walls were dancing about, and Dr. Blimber’s head was twice its natural size. He was put to bed, and presently the doctor came and said

he was not to do any more lessons for the present.

In a few days Paul was able to get up and creep about the house. He wondered sometimes why every one looked at and spoke so very kindly to him, and was more than ever careful to do any little kindnesses he could think of for them: even the rough, ugly dog Diogenes, who lived in the yard, came in for a share of his attentions.

There was a party at Dr. Blimber’s on the evening before the boys went home. Paul sat in a corner of the sofa all the evening, and every one was very kind to him indeed, it was quite extraordinary, Paul thought, and he was very happy; he liked to see how pretty Florence was, and how every one admired and wished to dance with her. After resting for a night at Mrs. Pipchin’s house, little Paul went home, and was carried straight upstairs to his bed.

LITTLE PAUL AND FLORENCE.
A LITTLE CARRIAGE WAS GOT FOR HIM.

He lay in his bed day after day quite happily and patiently, content to watch and talk to Florence. He would tell her his dreams, and how he always saw the sunlit ripples of a river rolling, rolling fast in front of him; sometimes he seemed to be rocking in a little boat on the water, and its motion lulled him to rest, and then he would be floating away, away to that shore farther off, which he could not see. One day he told Florence that the water was rippling brighter and faster than ever, and that he could not see anything else.

“My own boy, cannot you see your poor father?” said Mr. Dombey, bending over him.

“Oh yes, but don’t be so sorry, dear papa. I am so happy,—good-bye, dear papa.” Presently he opened his eyes again, and said, “Floy, mamma is like you, I can see her. Come close to me, Floy, and tell them,” whispered the dying boy, “that the face of the picture of Christ on the staircase at school is not divine enough; the light from it is shining on me now, and the water is shining too, and rippling so fast, so fast.”

The evening light shone into the room, but little Paul’s spirit had gone out on the rippling water, and the Divine Face was shining on him from the farther shore.

THE RUNAWAY COUPLE.

“SUPPOSING a young gentleman not eight years old was to run away with a fine young woman of seven, would you consider that a queer start? That there is a start as I—the boots at the Holly-Tree Inn—have seen with my own eyes; and I cleaned the shoes they ran away in, and they was so little that I couldn’t get my hand into ‘em.

THE RUNAWAY COUPLE.

“Master Harry Walmers’s father, he lived at the Elms, away by Shooter’s Hill, six or seven miles from London. He was uncommon proud of Master Harry, as was his only child; but he didn’t spoil him neither. He was a gentleman that had a will of his own, and an eye of his own, and that would be minded. Consequently, though he made quite a companion of the fine bright boy, still he kept the command over him, and the child *was* a child. I was under gardener there at that time I and one morning Master Harry, he comes to me and says—

“‘Cobbs, how should you spell Norah, if you were asked?’ and he took out his little knife and began cutting that name in print all over the fence. The next day as it might be, he stops, along with Miss Norah, where I was hoeing weeds in the gravel, and says, speaking up—

“‘Cobbs, I like you! Why do I like you do you think, Cobbs? Because Norah likes you.’

“‘Indeed, sir,’ says I. ‘That’s very gratifying.’

“‘Gratifying, Cobbs?’ says Master Harry. ‘It’s better than a million of the brightest diamonds, to be liked by Norah. You’re going away ain’t you, Cobbs? Then you shall be our head gardener when we’re married.’ And he tucks her, in her little sky-blue mantle, under his arm, and walks away.

“I was the boots at this identical Holly-Tree Inn when one summer afternoon the coach drives up, and out of the coach gets these two children. The young gentleman gets out; hands his lady out; gives the guard something for himself; says to my governor, the landlord: ‘We’re to stop here to-night, please. Sitting room and two bed-rooms will be required. Mutton chops and cherry pudding for two!’ and tucks her under his arm, and walks into the house, much bolder than brass.

“I had seen ‘em without their seeing me, and I gave the governor my views of the expedition they was upon. ‘Cobbs,’ says the governor, ‘if this is so, I must set off myself and quiet their friends’ minds. In which case you must keep your eye upon ‘em, and humor ‘em, until I come back. But before I take these measures, Cobbs, I should wish you to find out from themselves whether your opinion is correct.’

“So I goes upstairs, and there I finds Master Harry on an e-nor-mous sofa a-drying the eyes of Miss Norah with his pocket handkercher. Their little legs was entirely off the ground, of course, and it really is not possible to express how small them children looked. ‘It’s Cobbs! it’s Cobbs!’ cries Master Harry, and he comes a-runing to me, and catching hold of my hand. Miss Norah, she comes running to me on t’other side, and catching hold of my t’other hand, and they both jump for joy. And what I had took to be the case was the case.

“‘We’re going to be married, Cobbs, at Gretna Green,’ says the boy. ‘We’ve run away on purpose. Norah has been in rather low spirits, Cobbs; but she’ll be happy now we have found you to be our friend.’

“I give you my word and honor upon it that, by way of luggage the lady had got a parasol, a smelling-bottle, a round and a half of cold buttered toast, eight peppermint drops, and a doll’s hair-brush. The gentleman had got about a dozen yards of string, a knife, three or four sheets of writing-paper folded up surprisingly small, a orange, and a chaney mug with

his name on it.

"'What may be the exact nature of your plans, sir?' says I.

"'To go on,' replies the boy, 'in the morning, and be married to-morrow.'

"'Just so, sir. Well, sir, if you will excuse my having the freedom to give an opinion, what I should recommend would be this. I'm acquainted with a pony, sir, which would take you and Mrs. Harry Walmers junior to the end of your journey in a very short space of time. I am not altogether sure, sir, that the pony will be at liberty to-morrow, but even if you had to wait for him it might be worth your while.'

"They clapped their hands and jumped for joy, and called me 'Good Cobbs!' and 'Dear Cobbs!' and says I, 'Is there anything you want at present, sir?'

"'We should like some cakes after dinner,' answers Mr. Harry, 'and two apples—and jam. With dinner we should like to have toast and water. But Norah has always been accustomed to half a glass of currant wine at dessert, and so have I.'

"'They shall be ordered, sir,' I answered, and away I went; and the way in which all the women in the house went on about that boy and his bold spirit was a thing to see. They climbed up all sorts of places to get a look at him, and they peeped, seven deep, through the keyhole.

"In the evening, after the governor had set off for the Elms, I went into the room to see how the run-away couple was getting on. The gentleman was on the window seat, supporting the lady in his arms. She had tears upon her face, and was lying very tired and half asleep, with her head upon his shoulder.

"'Mrs. Harry Walmers junior fatigued, sir?'

"'Yes, she's tired, Cobbs; she's been in low spirits again; she isn't used to being in a strange place, you see. Could you bring a Norfolk biffin, Cobbs? I think that would do her good.'

"Well, I fetched the biffin, and Master Harry fed her with a spoon; but the lady being heavy with sleep and rather cross, I suggested bed, and called a chambermaid, but Master Harry must needs escort her himself, and carry the candle for her. After embracing her at her own door he retired to his room, where I softly locked him in.

"They consulted me at breakfast (they had ordered sweet milk and water, and toast and currant jelly, over night) about the pony, and I told 'em that it did unfortunately happen that the pony was half clipped, but that he'd be finished clipping in the course of the day, and that to-morrow morning at eight o'clock he would be ready. My own opinion is that Mrs. Harry Walmers junior was beginning to give in. She hadn't had her hair curled when she went to bed, and she didn't seem quite up to brushing it herself, and it getting into her eyes put her out. But nothing put out Mr. Harry. He sat behind his breakfast cup tearing away at the jelly, as if he'd been his own father.

"In the course of the morning, Master Harry rung the bell,—it was surprising how that there boy did carry on,—and said in a sprightly way, 'Cobbs, is there any good walks in the neighborhood?'

“‘Yes, sir, there’s Love Lane.’

“‘Get out with you, Cobbs!’—that was that there mite’s expression—‘you’re joking.’

“‘Begging your pardon, sir, there really is a Love Lane, and a pleasant walk it is; and proud shall I be to show it to yourself and Mrs. Harry Walmers junior.’

“Well, I took him down Love Lane to the water meadows, and there Master Harry would have drowned himself in another minute a getting out a water-lily for her. But they was tired out. All being so new and strange to them, they were as tired as tired could be. And they laid down on a bank of daisies and fell asleep.

“They woke up at last, and then one thing was getting pretty clear to me, namely, that Mrs. Harry Walmers junior’s temper was on the move. When Master Harry took her round the waist, she said he ‘teased her so’; and when he says, ‘Norah, my young May moon, your Harry tease you?’ she tells him, ‘Yes, and I want to go home.’

“A boiled fowl, and baked bread and butter pudding, brought Mrs. Walmers up a little; but I could have wished, I must privately own, to have seen her more sensible to the voice of love and less abandoning herself to the currants in the pudding. However, Master Harry, he kep’ up, and his noble heart was as fond as ever. Mrs. Walmers turned very sleepy about dusk, and began to cry. Therefore, Mrs. Walmers went off to bed as per yesterday; and Master Harry ditto repeated.

“About eleven at night comes back the governor in a chaise, along of Master Harry’s father and a elderly lady. And Master Harry’s door being unlocked by me, Master Harry’s father goes in, goes up to the bedside, bends gently down, and kisses the little sleeping face. Then he stands looking at it for a moment, looking wonderfully like it; and then he gently shakes the little shoulder. ‘Harry, my dear boy! Harry!’

“Master Harry starts up and looks at his pa. Such is the honor of that mite, that he looks at me, too, to see whether he has brought me into trouble.

“‘I am not angry, my child. I only want you to dress yourself and come home.’

“‘Yes, Pa.’ Master Harry dresses himself quick.

“‘Please may I—please, dear pa—may I—kiss Norah before I go?’

“Master Harry’s father he takes Master Harry in his hand, and I leads the way with the candle to that other bedroom where the elderly lady is seated by the bed, and poor little Mrs. Harry Walmers junior is fast asleep. There the father lifts the boy up to the pillow, and he lays his little face down for an instant by the little warm face of poor little Mrs. Harry Walmers junior, and gently draws it to him.

“And that’s all about it. Master Harry’s father drove away in the chaise having hold of Master Harry’s hand. The elderly lady Mrs. Harry Walmers junior that was never to be (she married a captain long after and went to India) went off next day.”

POOR JO!

JO was a crossing-sweeper; every day he swept up the mud, and begged for pennies from the people who passed. Poor Jo wasn't pretty and he wasn't clean. His clothes were only a few poor rags that hardly protected him from the cold and the rain. He had never been to school, and he could neither write nor read—could not even spell his own name.

Poor Jo! He was ugly and dirty and ignorant; but he knew one thing, that it was wicked to tell a lie, and knowing this, he always told the truth. One other thing poor Jo knew too well, and that was what being hungry means. For little Jo was very poor. He lived in Tom-all-Alones, one of the most horrible places in all London. The people who live in this dreadful den are the poorest of London poor. All miserably clad, all dirty, all very hungry. They know and like Jo, for he is always willing to go on errands for them, and does them many little acts of kindness.

No one in Tom-all-Alones is spoken of by his name. Thus it is that if you inquired there for a boy named Jo, you would be asked whether you meant Carrots, or the Colonel, or Gallows, or young Chisel, or Terrier Tip, or Lanky, or the Brick.

Jo was generally called Toughy, although a few superior persons who affected a dignified style of speaking called him "the tough subject."

Jo used to say he had never had but one friend.

It was one cold Winter night, when he was shivering in a door-way near his crossing, that a dark-haired, rough-bearded man turned to look at him, and then came back and began to talk to him.

"Have you a friend, boy?" he asked presently.

"No, never 'ad none."

"Neither have I. Not one. Take this, and Good-night," and so saying the man, who looked very poor and shabby, put into Jo's hand the price of a supper and a night's lodging.

Often afterwards the stranger would stop to talk with Jo, and give him money, Jo firmly believed, whenever he had any to give. When he had none, he would merely say, "I am as poor as you are to-day, Jo," and pass on.

One day, Jo was fetched away from his crossing to a public-house, where the Coroner was holding an Inquest—an "Inkwich" Jo called it.

"Did the boy know the deceased?" asked the Coroner.

Indeed Jo had known him; it was his only friend who was dead.

"He was very good to me, he was," was all poor Jo could say.

The next day they buried the dead man in the churchyard hard by.

But that night there came a slouching figure through the court to the iron gate. It stood

looking in for a little while, then with an old broom it softly swept the step and made the archway clean. It was poor Jo; and as he went away, he softly said to himself, “He was very good to me, he was.”

Now, there happened to be at the Inquest a kind-hearted little man named Snagsby, and he pitied Jo so much that he gave him half-a-crown.

Jo was very sad after the death of his one friend. The more so as his friend had died in great poverty and misery, with no one near him to care whether he lived or not.

A few days after the funeral, while Jo was still living on Mr. Snagsby’s half-crown, he was standing at his crossing as the day closed in, when a lady, closely veiled and plainly dressed, came up to him.

“Are you the boy Jo who was examined at the Inquest?” she asked.

“That’s me,” said Jo.

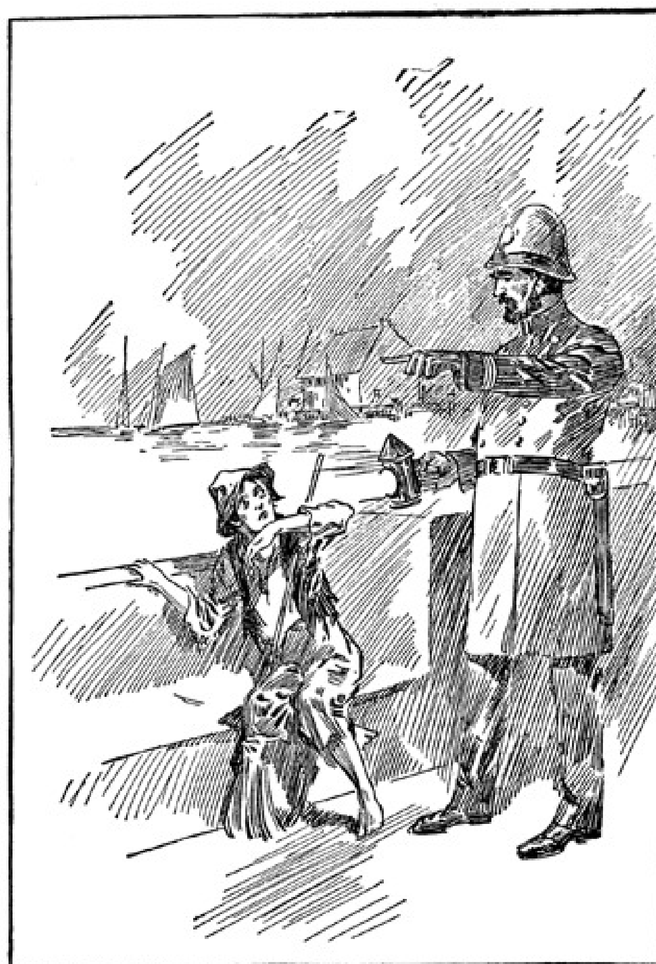
“Come farther up the court, I want to speak to you.”

“Wot, about him as was dead? Did you know him?”

“How dare you ask me if I knew him?”

“No offence, my lady,” said Jo humbly.

“Listen and hold your tongue. Show me the place where he lived, then where he died, then where they buried him. Go in front of me, don’t look back once, and I’ll pay you well.”



JO AND THE POLICEMAN.

"I'M ALWAYS A MOVING ON."

Jo takes her to each of the places she wants to see. Then she draws off her glove, and Jo sees that she has sparkling rings on her fingers. She drops a coin into his hand and is gone. Jo holds the coin to the light and sees to his joy that it is a golden sovereign.

But people in Jo's position in life find it hard to change a sovereign, for who will believe that they can come by it honestly? So poor little Jo didn't get much of the sovereign for himself, for, as he afterwards told Mr. Snagsby—

"I had to pay five bob down in Tom-all-Alones before they'd square it for to give me change, and then a young man he thieved another five while I was asleep, and a boy he thieved ninepence, and the landlord he stood drains round with a lot more of it."

As time went on Jo's troubles began in earnest. The police turned him away from his crossing, and wheresoever they met him ordered him "to move on."

Once a policeman, angry to find that Jo hadn't moved on, seized him by the arm and dragged him down to Mr. Snagsby's.

"What's the matter, constable?" asked Mr. Snagsby.

"This boy's as obstinate a young gonoph as I know: although repeatedly told to, he won't move on."

"I'm always amoving on," cried Jo. "Oh, my eye, where am I to move to?"

"My instructions don't go to that," the constable answered; "my instructions are that you're to keep moving on. Now the simple question is, sir," turning to Mr. Snagsby, "whether you know him. He says you do."

"Yes, I know him."

"Very well, I leave him here; but mind you keep moving on."

The constable then moved on himself, leaving Jo at Mr. Snagsby's. There was a little tea-party there that evening, and when Jo was at last allowed to go, Mr. Snagsby followed him to the door and filled his hands with the remains of the little feast they had had upstairs.

And now Jo began to find life harder and rougher than ever. He lost his crossing altogether, and spent day after day in moving on. He remembered a poor woman he had once done a kindness to, who had told him she lived at St. Albans, and that a lady there had been very good to her. "Perhaps she'll be good to me," thought Jo, and he started off to go to St. Albans.

One Saturday night Jo reached that town very tired and very ill. Happily for him the woman met him and took him into her cottage. While he was resting there a lady came in and asked him very kindly what was the matter.

"I'm abeing froze and then burnt up, and then froze and burnt up again, ever so many times over in an hour. And my head's all sleepy, and all agoing round like, and I'm so dry, and my bones is nothing half so much bones as pain."

“Where are you going?”

“Somewheres,” replied Jo, “I’m a-being moved on, I am.”

“Well, to-night you must come with me, and I’ll make you comfortable.” So Jo went with the lady to a great house not far off, and there they made a bed for him, and brought him tempting wholesome food. Everyone was very kind to him, but something frightened Jo, and he felt he could not stay there, and he ran out into the cold night air. Where he went he could never remember, for when he next came to his senses he found himself in a hospital. He stayed there for some weeks, and was then discharged, though still weak and ill. He was very thin, and when he drew a breath his chest was very painful. “It draws,” said Jo, “as heavy as a cart.”

Now, a certain young doctor who was very kind to poor people, was walking through Tom-all-Alones one morning, when he saw a ragged figure coming along, crouching close to the dirty wall. It was Jo. The young doctor took pity on Jo. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will find you a better place than this to stay in,” for he saw that the lad was very, very ill. So Jo was taken to a clean little room, and bathed, and had clean clothes, and good food, and kind people about him once more, but he was too ill now, far too ill, for anything to do him any good.

“Let me lie here quiet,” said poor Jo, “and be so kind anyone as is passin’ nigh where I used to sweep, as to say to Mr. Snagsby as Jo, wot he knew once, is amoving on.”

One day the young doctor was sitting by him, when suddenly Jo made a strong effort to get out of bed.

“Stay, Jo—where now?”

“It’s time for me to go to that there burying-ground.”

“What burying-ground, Jo?”

“Where they laid him as was very good to me, very good to me indeed he was. It’s time for me to go down to that there burying-ground, sir, and ask to be put along of him. I wants to go there and be buried. Will you promise to have me took there and laid along with him?”

“I will indeed.”

“Thankee, sir. There’s a step there as I used to sweep with my broom. It’s turned very dark, sir, is there any light coming?”

“It’s coming fast, Jo.”

Then silence for a while.

“Jo, my poor fellow——!”

“I can hear you, sir, in the dark.”

“Jo, can you say what I say?”

“I’ll say anything you say, sir, for I knows it’s good.”

“Our Father.”

“Our Father—yes, that’s very good, sir.”

“Which art in Heaven.”

“Art in Heaven. Is the light a-coming, sir?”

“It’s close at hand. Hallowed be Thy name.”

“Hallowed be Thy”—

The light had come. Oh yes! the light had come, for Jo was dead.

THE LITTLE KENWIGS.

MRS. KENWIGS was the wife of an ivory turner, and though they only had a very humble home of two rooms in a dingy-looking house in a small street, they had great pretensions to being “genteel.” The little Miss Kenwigs had their flaxen hair plaited into pig-tails and tied with blue ribbons, and wore little white trousers with frills round their ankles, the highest fashion of that day; besides being dressed with such elegance, the two eldest girls went twice a week to a dancing school. Mrs. Kenwigs, too, had an uncle who collected the water rate, and she was therefore considered a person of great distinction, with quite the manners of a lady. On the eighth anniversary of their wedding day, Mr. and Mrs. Kenwigs invited a party of friends to supper to celebrate the occasion. The four eldest children were to be allowed to sit up to supper, and the uncle, Mr. Lillyvick, had promised to come. The baby was put to bed in a little room lent by one of the lady guests, and a little girl hired to watch him. All the company had assembled when a ring was heard, and Morleena, whose name had been *invented by Mrs. Kenwigs* specially for her, ran down to open the door and lead in her distinguished great-uncle, then the supper was brought in.

The table was cleared; Mr. Lillyvick established in the arm-chair by the fireside; the four little girls arranged on a small form in front of the company with their flaxen tails towards them; Mrs. Kenwigs was suddenly dissolved in tears and sobbed out—

“They are so beautiful!”

“Oh, dear,” said all the ladies, “so they are; it’s very natural you should feel proud of that; but don’t give way, don’t.”

“I can—not help it, and it don’t signify,” sobbed Mrs. Kenwigs: “oh! they’re too beautiful to live, much too beautiful.”

On hearing this dismal prophecy, all four little girls screamed until their light flaxen tails vibrated again, and rushed to bury their heads in their mother’s lap.

At length she was soothed, and the children calmed down; while the ladies and gentlemen

all said they were sure they would live for many many years, and there was no occasion for their mother’s distress: and as the children were not so remarkably lovely, this was quite true.

Then Mr. Lillyvick talked to the company about his niece’s marriage, and said graciously that he had always found Mr. Kenwigs a very honest, well-behaved, upright, and respectable sort of man, and shook hands with him, and then Morleena and her sisters kissed their uncle and most of the guests.

Then Miss Petowker, who could sing and recite in a way that brought tears to Mrs. Kenwigs’ eyes, remarked—

“Oh, dear Mrs. Kenwigs, while Mr. Noggs is making that punch to drink happy returns in, do let Morleena go through that figure dance before Mr. Lillyvick.”

“Well, I’ll tell you what,” said Mrs. Kenwigs. “Morleena shall do the steps, if uncle can persuade Miss Petowker to recite us the ‘Blood-Drinker’s Burial’ afterwards.”

Everyone clapped their hands and stamped their feet at this proposal, but Miss Petowker said, “You know I dislike doing anything professional at private parties.”

“Oh, but not here!” said Mrs. Kenwigs. “You might as well be going through it in your own room: besides, the occasion.”

“I can’t resist that,” interrupted Miss Petowker, “anything in my humble power, I shall be delighted to do.”

In reality Mrs. Kenwigs and Miss Petowker had arranged all the entertainment between them beforehand, but had settled that a little pressing on each side would look more natural. Then Miss Petowker hummed a tune, and Morleena danced. It was a very beautiful figure, with a great deal of work for the arms, and gained much applause. Then Miss Petowker was entreated to begin her recitation, so she let down her back hair, and went through the performance with great spirit, and died raving mad in the arms of a bachelor friend who was to rush out and catch her at the words “in death expire,” to the great delight of the audience and the terror of the little Kenwigses, who were nearly frightened into fits.

Just as the punch was ready, a knock at the door startled them all. But it was only a friend of Mr. Noggs, who lived upstairs, and who had come down to say that Mr. Noggs was wanted.

Mr. Noggs hurried out, saying he would be back soon, and presently startled them all by rushing in, snatching up a candle and a tumbler of hot punch, and darting out again.

Now, it happened unfortunately that the tumbler of punch was the very one that Mr. Lillyvick was just going to lift to his lips, and the great man—the rich relation—who had it in his power to make Morleena and her sisters heiresses—and whom everyone was most anxious to please—was offended.

Poor Mr. Kenwigs endeavored to soothe him, but only made matters worse. Mr. Lillyvick demanded his hat, and was only induced to remain by Mrs. Kenwigs’ tears and the entreaties of the entire company.

THE LITTLE KENWIGS.
"THEY ARE SO BEAUTIFUL."

"There, Kenwigs," said Mr. Lillyvick, "and let me tell you, to show you how much out of temper I was, that if I had gone away without another word, it would have made no difference respecting that pound or two which I shall leave among your children when I die."

"Morleena Kenwigs," cried her mother, "go down on your knees to your dear uncle, and beg him to love you all his life through; for he's more an angel than a man, and I've always said so."

Just as all were happy again, everyone was startled by a rapid succession of the loudest and shrillest shrieks, apparently coming from the room where the baby was asleep.

"My baby, my blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed baby! My own darling, sweet, innocent Lillyvick! Let me go-o-o-o," screamed Mrs. Kenwigs.

Mr. Kenwigs rushed out, and was met at the door of the bedroom by a young man with the baby (upside down) in his arms, who came out so quickly that he knocked Mr. Kenwigs down; handing the child to his mother, he said, "Don't be alarmed, it's all out, it's all over—the little girl, being tired, I suppose, fell asleep and set her hair on fire. I heard her cries and ran up in time to prevent her setting fire to anything else. The child is not hurt: I took it off the bed myself and brought it here to convince you."

After they had all talked over this last excitement, and discussed little Lillyvick's deliverer, the collector pulled out his watch and announced that it was nearly two o'clock, and as the poor children had been for some time obliged to keep their little eyes open with their little forefingers, the company took leave, declaring they had never spent such a delightful evening, and that they wished Mr. and Mrs. Kenwigs had a wedding-day once a week.

LITTLE DORRIT.

MANY years ago, when people could be put in prison for debt, a poor gentleman, who was unfortunate enough to lose all his money, was brought to the Marshalsea prison. As there seemed no prospect of being able to pay his debts, his wife and their two little children came to live there with him. The elder child was a boy of three; the younger a little girl of two years old, and not long afterwards another little girl was born. The three children played in the courtyard, and were happy, on the whole, for they were too young to remember a happier state of things.

But the youngest child, who had never been outside the prison walls, was a thoughtful little creature, and wondered what the outside world could be like. Her great friend, the turnkey, who was also her godfather, became very fond of her, and as soon as she could walk and talk, he bought a little arm-chair and stood it by his fire at the lodge, and coaxed her with cheap toys to come and sit with him.

One day, she was sitting in the lodge gazing wistfully up at the sky through the barred window. The turnkey, after watching her some time, said:—

"Thinking of the fields, ain't you?"

"Where are they?" she asked.

"Why, they're—over there, my dear," said the turnkey, waving his key vaguely, "just about there."

"Does anybody open them and shut them? Are they locked?"

"Well," said the turnkey, discomfited, "not in general."

"Are they pretty, Bob?" She called him Bob, because he wished it.

"Lovely. Full of flowers. There's buttercups, and there's daisies, and there's—" here he hesitated, not knowing the names of many flowers—"there's dandelions, and all manner of games."

"Is it very pleasant to be there, Bob?"

"Prime," said the turnkey.

“Was father ever there?”

“Hem!” coughed the turnkey. “O yes, he was there, sometimes.”

“Is he sorry not to be there now?”

“N—not particular,” said the turnkey.

“Nor any of the people?” she asked, glancing at the listless crowd within. “O are you quite sure and certain, Bob?”

At this point, Bob gave in and changed the subject. But after this chat, the turnkey and little Amy would go out on his free Sunday afternoons to some meadows or green lanes, and she would pick grass and flowers to bring home, while he smoked his pipe.

When Amy was only eight years old, her mother died, and the poor father was more helpless and broken-down than ever, and as Fanny was a careless child, and Edward idle, the little one, who had the bravest and truest heart, was inspired by her love and unselfishness to be the little mother of the forlorn family, and struggled to get some little education for herself and her brother and sister. She went as often as she could to an evening school outside, and managed to get her brother and sister sent to a day-school at intervals, during three or four years. At thirteen, she could read and keep accounts. Once, amongst the debtors, a dancing-master came in, and as Fanny had a great desire to learn dancing, little Amy went timidly to the new prisoner, and said,

“If you please, I was born here, sir.”

“Oh! You are the young lady, are you?” said he.

“Yes, sir.”

“And what can I do for you?”

“Nothing for me, sir, thank you; but if, while you stay here, you could be so kind as to teach my sister cheap.”

“My child, I’ll teach her for nothing,” said the dancing-master.

Fanny was a very apt pupil, and the good-natured dancing-master went on giving her lessons even after his release, and Amy was so emboldened with the success of her attempt that, when a milliner came in, she went to her on her own behalf, and begged her to teach her.

“I am afraid you are so weak, you see,” the milliner objected.

“I don’t think I am weak, ma’am.”

“And you are so very, very little, you see,” the milliner still objected.

THE BLIND TOY MAKER.

LITTLE DORRIT AND MAGGIE.
"SHE HAS NEVER GROWN OLDER SINCE."

"Yes, I am afraid I am very little indeed," returned the child, and began to sob, so that the milliner was touched, and took her in hand and made her a clever workwoman.

But the father could not bear the idea that his children should work for their living, so they had to keep it all secret. Fanny became a dancer, and lived with a poor old uncle, who played the clarionet at the small theatre where Fanny was engaged. Amy, or little Dorrit as she was generally called, her father's name being Dorrit, earned small sums by going out to do needlework. She got Edward into a great many situations, but he was an idle, careless fellow, and always came back to be a burden and care to his poor little sister. At last she saved up enough to send him out to Canada.

"God bless you, dear Tip" (his name had been shortened to Tip), "don't be too proud to come and see us when you have made your fortune," she said.

But Tip only went as far as Liverpool, and appeared once more before his poor little second mother, in rags, and with no shoes.

In the end, after another trial, Tip returned telling Amy, that this time he was "one of the regulars."

"Oh! Don't say you are a prisoner, Tip. Don't, don't!"

But he was—and Amy nearly broke her heart. So with all these cares and worries

struggling bravely on, little Dorrit passed the first twenty-two years of her life. Then the son of a lady, Mrs. Clennem, to whose house Amy went to do needlework, was interested in the pale, patient little creature, and learning her history resolved to do his best to try and get her father released, and to help them all.

One day when he was walking home with little Dorrit a voice was heard calling, “Little Mother, Little Mother,” and a strange figure came bouncing up to them and fell down, scattering her basketful of potatoes on the ground. “Oh Maggie,” said Little Dorrit, “what a clumsy child you are!”

She was about eight and twenty, with large bones, large features, large hands and feet, large eyes and no hair. Little Dorrit told Mr. Clennem that Maggie was the grand-daughter of her old nurse, and that her grandmother had been very unkind to her and beat her. “When Maggie was ten years old, she had a fever, and she has never grown older since.”

“Ten years old,” said Maggie. “But what a nice hospital! So comfortable wasn’t it? Such a Ev’nly place! Such beds there is there! Such lemonades! Such oranges! Such delicious broth and wine! Such chicking! Oh, AIN’T it a delightful place to stop at!”

“Then when she came out, her grandmother did not know what to do with her, and was very unkind. But after some time, Maggie tried to improve, and was very attentive and industrious, and now she can earn her own living entirely, sir!”

Little Dorrit did not say who had taken pains to teach and encourage the poor half-witted creature, but Mr. Clennem guessed from the name Little Mother, and the fondness of the poor creature for Amy.

Thanks to Mr. Clennem, a great change took place in the fortunes of the family, and not long after this wretched night, it was discovered that Mr. Dorrit was owner of a large property, and they became very rich.

When, in his turn, Mr. Clennem became a prisoner in the Marshalsea little Dorrit came to comfort and console him, and after many changes of fortune, she became his wife, and they lived happy ever after.

THE BLIND TOY-MAKER.

CALEB PLUMMER and his blind daughter lived alone in a little cracked nutshell of a house. They were toy-makers, and their house was stuck like a toadstool on to the premises of Messrs. Gruff & Tackleton, the Toy Merchants for whom they worked,—the latter of whom was himself both Gruff and Tackleton in one.

I am saying that Caleb and his blind daughter lived here. I should say Caleb did, his daughter lived in an enchanted palace, which her father’s love had created for her. She did not know that the ceilings were cracked, the plaster tumbling down, and the wood work

rotten; that everything was old and ugly and poverty-stricken about her and that her father was a grey-haired stooping old man, and the master for whom they worked a hard and brutal taskmaster;—oh, dear no, she fancied a pretty, cosy, compact little home full of tokens of a kind master's care, a smart, brisk, gallant-looking father, and a handsome and noble-looking Toy Merchant who was an angel of goodness.

This was all Caleb's doings. When his blind daughter was a baby he had determined in his great love and pity for her, that her deprivation should be turned into a blessing, and her life as happy as he could make it. And she was happy; everything about her she saw with her father's eyes, in the rainbow-coloured light with which it was his care and pleasure to invest it.

Bertha sat busily at work, making a doll's frock, whilst Caleb bent over the opposite side of the table painting a doll's house.

"You were out in the rain last night in your beautiful new great-coat," said Bertha.

"Yes, in my beautiful new great-coat," answered Caleb, glancing to where a roughly made garment of sack-cloth was hung up to dry.

"How glad I am you bought it, father."

"And of such a tailor! quite a fashionable tailor, a bright blue cloth, with bright buttons; it's a deal too good a coat for me."

"Too good!" cried the blind girl, stopping to laugh and clap her hands—"as if anything was too good for my handsome father, with his smiling face, and black hair, and his straight figure."

Caleb began to sing a rollicking song.

"What, you are singing, are you?" growled a gruff voice, as Mr. Tackleton put his head in at the door. "*I* can't afford to sing, I hope you can afford to work too. Hardly time for both, I should say."

"You don't see how the master is winking at me," whispered Caleb in his daughter's ear—"such a joke, pretending to scold, you know."

The blind girl laughed and nodded, and taking Mr. Tackleton's reluctant hand, kissed it gently. "What is the idiot doing?" grumbled the Toy Merchant, pulling his hand roughly away.

"I am thanking you for the beautiful little tree," replied Bertha, bringing forward a tiny rose-tree in blossom, which Caleb had made her believe was her master's gift, though he himself had gone without a meal or two to buy it.

"Here's Bedlam broke loose. What does the idiot mean?" snarled Mr. Tackleton; and giving Caleb some rough orders, he departed without the politeness of a farewell.

"If you could only have seen him winking at me all the time, pretending to be so rough to escape thanking," exclaimed Caleb, when the door was shut.

Now a very sad and curious thing had happened. Caleb, in his love for Bertha, had so successfully deceived her as to the real character of Mr. Tackleton, that she had fallen in love, not with her master, but with what she imagined him to be, and was happy in an

innocent belief in his affection for her; but one day she accidently heard he was going to be married, and could not hide from her father the pain and bewilderment she felt at the news.

“Bertha, my dear,” said Caleb at length, “I have a confession to make to you; hear me kindly though I have been cruel to you.” “You cruel to me!” cried Bertha, turning her sightless face towards him. “Not meaning it, my child! and I never suspected it till the other day. I have concealed things from you which would have given pain, I have invented things to please you, and have surrounded you with fancies.”

“But living people are not fancies, father, you cannot change them.”

“I have done so, my child, God forgive me! Bertha, the man who is married to-day is a hard master to us both, ugly in his looks and in his nature, and hard and heartless as he can be.”

“Oh heavens! how blind I have been, how could you father, and I so helpless!” Poor Caleb hung his head.

“Answer me father,” said Bertha. “What is my home like?”

“A poor place, Bertha, a very poor and bare place! indeed as little able to keep out wind and weather as my sackcloth coat.”

“And the presents that I took such care of, that came at my wish, and were so dearly welcome?” Caleb did not answer.

“I see, I understand,” said Bertha, “and now I am looking at you, at my kind, loving compassionate father, tell me what is he like?”

“An old man, my child, thin, bent, grey-haired, worn-out with hard work and sorrow, a weak, foolish, deceitful old man.”

The blind girl threw herself on her knees before him, and took his grey head in her arms. “It is my sight, it is my sight restored,” she cried. “I have been blind, but now I see, I have never till now truly seen my father. Father, there is not a grey hair on your head that shall be forgotten in my prayers and thanks to Heaven.”

“My Bertha!” sobbed Caleb, “and the brisk smart father in the blue coat—he’s gone, my child.”

“Dearest father, no, he’s not gone, nothing is gone. I have been happy and contented, but I shall be happier and more contented still, now that I know what you are. I am *not* blind, father, any longer.”

LITTLE NELL.

THE house was one of those receptacles for old and curious things, which seem to crouch in odd corners of the town; and in the old, dark, murky rooms, there lived alone together an old man and a child—his grandchild, little Nell. Solitary and monotonous as was her life, the innocent and cheerful spirit of the child found happiness in all things, and through the dim rooms of the old curiosity shop little Nell went singing, moving with gay and lightsome step.

But gradually over the old man, to whom she was so tenderly attached, there stole a sad change. He became thoughtful, dejected, and wretched. He had no sleep or rest but that which he took by day in his easy chair; for every night, and all night long, he was away from home.

At last a raging fever seized him, and as he lay delirious or insensible through many weeks, Nell learned that the house which sheltered them was theirs no longer; that in the future they would be very poor; that they would scarcely have bread to eat.

At length the old man began to mend, but his mind was weakened. As the time drew near when they must leave the house, he made no reference to the necessity of finding other shelter. But a change came upon him one evening, as he and Nell sat silently together.

“Let us speak softly, Nell,” he said. “Hush! for if they knew our purpose they would say that I was mad, and take thee from me. We will not stop here another day. We will travel afoot through the fields and woods, and trust ourselves to God in the places where He dwells.”

The child’s heart beat high with hope and confidence. To her it seemed that they might beg their way from door to door in happiness, so that they were together.

When the day began to glimmer they stole out of the house, and passing into the street stood still.

“Which way?” asked the child.

The old man looked irresolutely and helplessly at her, and shook his head. It was plain that she was thenceforth his guide and leader. The child felt it, but had no doubts or misgivings, and putting her hand in his, led him gently away.

They passed through the long, deserted streets, until these streets dwindled away, and the open country was about them. They walked all day, and slept that night at a small cottage where beds were let to travellers. The sun was setting on the second day of their journey, when, following a path which led to the town where they were to spend the night, they fell in with two travelling showmen, bound for the races at a neighboring town.

They made two long days’ journey with their new companions. The men were rough and strange in their ways, but they were kindly, too; and in the bewildering noise and movement of the race-course, where she tried to sell some little nosegays, Nell would have clung to them for protection, had she not learned that these men suspected that she and the old man had left their home secretly, and that they meant to take steps to have them sent back and taken care of. Separation from her grandfather was the greatest evil Nell could dread. She seized her opportunity to evade the watchfulness of the two men, and hand in hand she and the old man fled away together.

That night they reached a little village in a woody hollow. The village schoolmaster, attracted by the child's sweetness and modesty, gave them a lodging for the night; nor would he let them leave him until two days more had passed.

They journeyed on when the time came that they must wander forth again, by pleasant country lanes. The afternoon had worn away into a beautiful evening, when they came to a caravan drawn up by the road. It was a smart little house upon wheels, and at the door sat a stout and comfortable lady, taking tea. The tea-things were set out upon a drum, covered with a white napkin. And there, as if at the most convenient table in the world, sat this roving lady, taking her tea and enjoying the prospect. Of this stout lady Nell ventured to ask how far it was to the neighboring town. And the lady, noticing that the tired child could hardly repress a tear at hearing that eight weary miles lay still before them, not only gave them tea, but offered to take them on in the caravan.

Now this lady of the caravan was the owner of a wax-work show, and her name was Mrs. Jarley. She offered Nell employment in pointing out the figures in the wax-work show to the visitors who came to see it, promising in return both board and lodging for the child and her grandfather, and some small sum of money. This offer Nell was thankful to accept, and for some time her life and that of the poor, vacant, fond old man, passed quietly and almost happily.

One night Nell and her grandfather went out to walk. A terrible thunder-storm coming on, they were forced to take refuge in a small public-house where men played cards. The old man watched them with increasing interest and excitement, until his whole appearance underwent a complete change. His face was flushed and eager, his teeth set. He seized Nell's little purse, and in spite of her entreaties joined in the game, gambling with such a savage thirst for gain that the distressed and frightened child could almost better have borne to see him dead. The night was far advanced before the play came to an end, and they were forced to remain where they were until the morning. And in the night the child was awakened from her troubled sleep to find a figure in the room. It was her grandfather himself, his white face pinched and sharpened by the greediness which made his eyes unnaturally bright, counting the money of which his hands were robbing her.

Evening after evening, after that night, the old man would steal away, not to return until the night was far spent, demanding, wildly, money. And at last there came an hour when the child overheard him, tempted beyond his feeble powers of resistence, undertake to find more money to feed the desperate passion which had laid hold upon his weakness by robbing Mrs. Jarley.

That night the child took her grandfather by the hand and led him forth; sustained by one idea—that they were flying from disgrace and crime, and that her grandfather's preservation must depend solely upon her firmness; the old man following as though she had been an angel messenger sent to lead him where she would.

They slept in the open air that night, and on the following morning some men offered to take them a long distance on their barge. These men, though they were not unkindly, drank and quarrelled among themselves, to Nell's inexpressible terror. It rained, too, heavily, and she was wet and cold. At last they reached the great city whither the barge was bound, and here they wandered up and down, being now penniless, and watched the faces of those

who passed, to find among them a ray of encouragement or hope.

They laid down that night, and the next night too, with nothing between them and the sky; a penny loaf was all they had had that day, and when the third morning came, it found the child much weaker, yet she made no complaint. Faint and spiritless as they were, the streets were insupportable; and the child, throughout the remainder of that hard day, compelled herself to press on, that they might reach the country. Evening was drawing on; they were dragging themselves through the last street. Seeing a traveller on foot before them, she shot on before her grandfather and began in a few faint words to implore the stranger's help. He turned his head, the child uttered a wild shriek, and fell senseless at his feet. It was the village schoolmaster who had been so kind to them before.

The good man took her in his arms and carried her quickly to a little inn hard by, where she was tenderly put to bed and where a doctor arrived with all speed. The schoolmaster, as it appeared, was on his way to a new home. And when the child had recovered somewhat from her exhaustion, it was arranged that she and her grandfather should accompany him to the village whither he was bound, and that he should endeavor to find them some humble occupation by which they could subsist.

It was a secluded village, lying among the quiet country scenes Nell loved. And here, her grandfather being tranquil and at rest, a great peace fell upon the spirit of the child. Often she would steal into the church, and sit down among the quiet figures carved upon the tombs. What if the spot awakened thoughts of death? It would be no pain to sleep here. For the time was drawing nearer every day when Nell was to rest indeed. She never murmured or complained, but faded like a light upon a summer's evening and died. Day after day and all day long, the old man, broken-hearted and with no love or care for anything in life, would sit beside her grave with her straw hat and the little basket she had been used to carry, waiting till she should come to him again. At last they found him lying dead upon the stone. And in the church where they had often prayed and mused and lingered, hand in hand, the child and the old man slept together.

LITTLE DAVID COPPERFIELD.

LITTLE DAVID COPPERFIELD lived with his mother in a pretty house in the village of Blunderstone in Suffolk. His father died before David could remember anything and he had neither brothers nor sisters. He was fondly loved by his pretty young mother, and their kind, good servant Peggotty, and David was a very happy little fellow. They had very few friends, and the only relation Mrs. Copperfield talked about was an aunt of David's father, a tall and rather terrible old lady, from all accounts. One visitor, a tall dark gentleman, David did not like at all, and he was rather inclined to be jealous that his mother should be friendly with the stranger.

One day Peggotty, the servant, asked David if he would like to go with her on a visit to her brother at Yarmouth.

“Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?” he enquired.

“Oh, what an agreeable man he is!” cried Peggotty. “Then there’s the sea, and the boats and ships, and the fishermen, and the beach. And ‘Am to play with.”

Ham was her nephew. David was quite anxious to go when he heard of all these delights; but his mother, what would she do all alone? Peggotty told him his mother was going to pay a visit to some friends, and would be sure to let him go. So all was arranged, and they were to start the next day in the carrier’s cart. When they arrived at Yarmouth, they found Ham waiting to meet them. He was a great strong fellow, six feet high, and took David on his back and the box under his arm to carry both to the house. David was delighted to find that this house was made of a real big black boat, with a door and windows cut in the side, and an iron funnel sticking out of the roof for a chimney. Inside, it was very cosy and clean, and David had a tiny bedroom in the stern. He was very much pleased to find a dear little girl, about his own age, to play with, and soon discovered that she and Ham were orphans, children of Mr. Peggotty’s brother and sister, whose fathers had been drowned at sea, so kind Mr. Peggotty had taken them to live with him. David was very happy in this queer house, playing on the beach with Em’ly, as they called the little girl, and told her all about his happy home; and she told him how her father had been drowned at sea before she came to live with her uncle. David said he thought Mr. Peggotty must be a very good man.

“Good!” said Em’ly. “If ever I was to be a lady, I’d give him a sky-blue coat with diamond buttons, nankeen trousers, a red velvet waistcoat, a cocked hat, a large gold watch, a silver pipe, and a box of money!”

David was quite sorry to leave these kind people and his dear little companion, but still he was glad to think he should get back to his own dear mamma. When he reached home, however, he found a great change. His mother was married to the dark man David did not like, whose name was Mr. Murdstone, and he was a stern, hard man, who had no love for little David, and did not allow his mother to pet and indulge him as she had done before. Mr. Murdstone’s sister came to live with them, and as she was even more difficult to please than her brother, and disliked boys, David’s life was no longer a happy one. He had always had lessons with his mother, and as she was patient and gentle, he had enjoyed learning to read, but now he had a great many very hard lessons to do, and was so frightened and shy when Mr. and Miss Murdstone were in the room, that he did not get on at all well, and was continually in disgrace. His only pleasure was to go up into the little room at the top of the house where he had found a number of books that had belonged to his own father, and he would sit and read Robinson Crusoe, and many tales of travels and adventures.

But one day he got into sad trouble over his lessons, and Mr. Murdstone was very angry, and took him away from his mother and beat him with a cane. David had never been beaten in his life before, and was so maddened by pain and rage that he bit Mr. Murdstone’s hand! Now, indeed, he had done something to deserve the punishment, and Mr. Murdstone in a fury, beat him savagely, and left him sobbing and crying on the floor.

David was kept locked up in his room for some days, seeing no one but Miss Murdstone, who brought him his food. At last, one night, he heard his name whispered at the key hole.

"Is that you, Peggotty?" he asked, groping his way to the door.

"Yes, my precious Davy. Be as soft as a mouse or the cat will hear us."

David understood she meant Miss Murdstone, whose room was quite near. "How's mamma, Peggotty dear? Is she very angry with me?" he whispered.

"No—not very," she said.

"What is going to be done with me, dear Peggotty, do you know?" asked poor David, who had been wondering all these long, lonely days.

"School—near London—"

"When, Peggotty?"

"To-morrow," answered Peggotty.

"Shan't I see mamma?"

"Yes—morning," she said, and went on to promise David she would always love him, and take the greatest care of his dear mamma, and write him every week.

The next morning David saw his mother, very pale and with red eyes. He ran to her arms and begged her to forgive him.

"Oh, Davy," she said, "that you should hurt anyone I love! I forgive you, Davy, but it grieves me so that you should have such bad passions in your heart. Try to be better, pray to be better."

David was very unhappy that his mother should think him so wicked, and though she kissed him, and said, "I forgive you, my dear boy, God bless you," he cried so bitterly when he was on his way in the carrier's cart, that his pocket handkerchief had to be spread out on the horse's back to dry.

After they had gone a little way the cart stopped, and Peggotty came running up, with a parcel of cakes and a purse for David. After giving him a good hug, she ran off.

Davy found three bright shillings in the purse, and two half-crowns wrapped in paper on which was written, in his mother's hand—"For Davy. With my love."

Davy shared his cakes with the carrier, who asked if Peggotty made them, and David told him yes, she did all their cooking. The carrier looked thoughtful, and then asked David if he would send a message to Peggotty from him. David agreed, and the message was "Barkis is willing." While David was waiting for the coach at Yarmouth, he wrote to Peggotty:

"My Dear Peggotty,—I have come here safe. Barkis is willing. My love to mamma.—Yours affectionately."

"*P. S.*—He says he particularly wanted you to know *Barkis is willing*."

At Yarmouth he found dinner was ordered for him, and felt very shy at having a table all to himself, and very much alarmed when the waiter told him he had seen a gentleman fall

down dead, after drinking some of their beer. David said he would have some water, and was quite grateful to the waiter for drinking the ale that had been ordered for him, for fear the people of the hotel should be offended. He also helped David to eat his dinner and accepted one of his bright shillings.

When they got to Salem House, as the School was called, David found that he had been sent before the holidays were over as a punishment, and was also to wear a placard on his back, on which was written—“Take care of him. He bites.” This made David miserable, and he dreaded the return of the boys.

Some of the boys teased David by pretending he was a dog, calling him Towser, and patting and stroking him; but, on the whole, it was not so bad as David had expected. The head boy, Steerforth, promised to take care of him, and David loved him dearly, and thought him a great hero. Steerforth took a great fancy to the pretty bright-eyed little fellow, and David became a favorite with all the boys, by telling them all he could remember of the tales he had read.

One day David had a visit from Mr. Peggotty and Ham, who had brought two enormous lobsters, a huge crab, and a large canvas bag of shrimps, as they “remembered he was partial to a relish with his meals.”

David was proud to introduce his friend Steerforth to these kind simple friends, and told them how good Steerforth was to him, and the “relish” was much appreciated by the boys at supper that night.

When he got home for the holidays David found he had a little baby brother, and his mother and Peggotty were very much pleased to see him again. Mr. and Miss Murdstone were out, and David sat with his mother and Peggotty, and told them all about his school and Steerforth, and took the little baby in his arms and nursed it lovingly. But when the Murdstones came back they showed plainly they disliked him, and thought him in the way, and scolded him, and would not allow him to touch the baby, or even to sit with Peggotty in the kitchen, so he was not sorry when the time came for him to go back to school, except for leaving his dear mamma and the baby.

About two months after he had been back at school he was sent for one day and told that his dear mamma had died! The wife of the head-master was very kind and gentle to the desolate little boy, and the boys were very sorry for him.

David went home the next day, and heard that the dear baby had died too. Peggotty received him with great tenderness, and told him about his mother’s illness and how she had sent a loving message.

“Tell my dearest boy that his mother, as she lay here, blessed him not once, but a thousand times,” and she had prayed to God to protect and keep her fatherless boy.

Mr. Murdstone did not take any notice of poor little David, nor had Miss Murdstone a word of kindness for the orphan. Peggotty was to leave in a month, and, to their great joy, David was allowed to go with her on a visit to Mr. Peggotty. On their way David found out that the mysterious message he had given to Peggotty meant that Barkis wanted to marry her, and Peggotty had consented. Everyone in Mr. Peggotty’s cottage was pleased to see David, and did their best to comfort him. Little Em’ly was at school when he arrived,

and he went out to meet her, but when he saw her coming along, her blue eyes bluer, and her bright face prettier than ever, he pretended not to know her, and was passing by, when Em'ly laughed and ran away, so of course he was obliged to run and catch her and try to kiss her, but she would not let him, saying she was not a baby now. But she was kind to him all the same, and when they spoke about the loss of his dear mother, David saw that her eyes were full of tears.

During this visit Peggotty was married to Mr. Barkis, and had a nice little house of her own, and Davy spent the night before he was to return home in a little room in the roof.

"Young or old, Davy dear, so long as I have this house over my head," said Peggotty, "you shall find it as if I expected you here directly every minute. I shall keep it as I used to keep your old little room, my darling, and if you was to go to China, you might think of its being kept just the same all the time you were away."

David felt how good and true a friend she was, and thanked her as well as he could, for they had brought him to the gate of his home, and Peggotty had him clasped in her arms.

How utterly wretched and forlorn he felt! He found he was not to go back to school any more, and wandered about sad and solitary, neglected and uncared for. Peggotty's weekly visits were his only comfort. No one took any pains with him, and he had no friends near who could help him.

At last one day, after some weary months had passed, Mr. Murdstone told him he was to go to London and earn his own living. There was a place for him at Murdstone & Grinby's, a firm in the wine trade. His lodging and clothes would be provided for him by his step-father, and he would earn enough for his food and pocket money. The next day David was sent up to London with the manager, dressed in a shabby little white hat with black crape round it for his mother, a black jacket, and hard, stiff corduroy trousers, a little fellow of ten years old to fight his own battles in the world!

His place, he found, was one of the lowest, with boys of no education and in quite an inferior station to himself—his duties were to wash bottles, stick on labels, and so on. David was utterly miserable at being degraded in this way, and shed bitter tears, as he feared he would forget all he had learnt at school. His lodging, one bare little room, was in the house of some people named Micawber, shiftless, careless, good-natured people, who were always in debt and difficulties. David felt great pity for their misfortunes and did what he could to help poor Mrs. Micawber to sell her books and other little things she could spare, to buy food for herself, her husband, and their four children. If he had not been a very innocent-minded, good little boy, he might easily have fallen into bad ways at this time. But God took care of the orphan boy and kept him from harm.

The troubles of the Micawbers increased more and more, until at last they were obliged to leave London. The last Sunday the Micawbers were in town David dined with them. After he had seen them off the next morning by the coach, he wrote to Peggotty to ask her if she knew where his aunt, Miss Betsy Trotwood, lived, and to borrow half a guinea; for he had resolved to run away from Murdstone & Grinby's, and go to his aunt and tell her his story. Peggotty wrote, enclosing the half-guinea, and saying she only knew Miss Trotwood lived near Dover, but whether in that place itself, or at Folkestone, Sandgate, or Hythe, she could not tell. Hearing that all these places were close together, David made up his mind

to start. As he had received his week’s wages in advance, he waited till the following Saturday, thinking it would not be honest to go before. He went out to look for some one to carry his box to the coach office, and unfortunately employed a wicked young man who not only ran off with his box, but robbed him of his half-guinea, leaving poor David in dire distress. In despair, he started off to walk to Dover, and was forced to sell his waistcoat to buy some bread. The first night he found his way to his old school at Blackheath, and slept on a haystack close by, feeling some comfort in the thought of the boys being near. He knew Steerforth had left, or he would have tried to see him.

On he trudged the next day and sold his jacket for one shilling and fourpence. He was afraid to buy anything but bread or to spend any money on a bed or a shelter for the night. After six days, he arrived at Dover, ragged, dusty, and half-dead with hunger and fatigue. But here, at first, he could get no tidings of his aunt, and, in despair, was going to try some of the other places Peggotty had mentioned, when the driver of a fly dropped his horsecloth, and as David was handing it up to him, he saw something kind in the man’s face that encouraged him to ask once more if he knew where Miss Trotwood lived.

LITTLE DAVID COPPERFIELD.

The man directed him towards some houses on the heights, and thither David toiled; a forlorn little creature, without a jacket or waistcoat, his white hat crushed out of shape, his shoes worn out, his shirt and trousers torn and stained, his pretty curly hair tangled, his face and hands sunburnt, and covered with dust. Lifting his big, wistful eyes to one of the windows above, he saw a pleasant faced gentleman with grey hair, who nodded at him

several times, then shook his head and went away. David was just turning away to think what he should do, when a tall, erect, elderly lady, with a gardening apron on and a knife in her hand, came out of the house, and began to dig up a root in the garden.

“Go away,” she cried. “Go away. No boys here.”

But David felt desperate. Going in softly, he stood beside her, and touched her with his finger, and said timidly, “If you please, ma’am—” and when she looked up, he went on—

“Please, aunt, I am your nephew.”

“Oh, Lord!” she exclaimed in astonishment, and sat flat down on the path, staring at him, while he went on—

“I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone, in Suffolk, where you came the night I was born, and saw my dear mamma. I have been unhappy since she died. I have been slighted and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you. I was robbed at first starting out and have walked all the way, and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey.” Here he broke into a passion of crying, and his aunt jumped up and took him into the house, where she put him on the sofa and sent the servant to ask “Mr. Dick” to come down. The gentleman whom David had seen at the window came in and was told who the ragged little object on the sofa was.

“Now here you see young David Copperfield, and the question is What shall I do with him?”

“Do with him?” answered Mr. Dick. Then, after some consideration, and looking at David, he said, “Well, if I was you, I would wash him!”

David knelt down to say his prayers that night in a pleasant room facing the sea, and as he lay in the clean, snow-white bed, he prayed he might never be homeless again, and might never forget the homeless.

The next morning his aunt told him she had written to Mr. Murdstone, and at last Mr. and Miss Murdstone arrived.

Mr. Murdstone told Miss Betsy that David was a very bad, stubborn, violent-tempered boy, whom he had tried to improve, but could not succeed. If Miss Trotwood chose to protect and encourage him now, she must do it always, for he had come to fetch him away.

“Are you ready to go, David?” asked his aunt.

But David answered no, and begged and prayed her for his father’s sake to befriend and protect him, for neither Mr. nor Miss Murdstone had ever liked him or been kind to him.

“Mr. Dick,” said Miss Trotwood, “what shall I do with this child?”

Mr. Dick considered. “Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly.”

“Mr. Dick,” said Miss Trotwood, “your common sense is invaluable.”

Then she pulled David towards her, and said to Mr. Murdstone, “You can go when you like. I’ll take my chance with the boy. If he’s all you say he is I can at least do as much for him as you have done. But I don’t believe a word of it.”

Some clothes were bought for him that same day and marked “Trotwood Copperfield,” for

his aunt wished to call him by her name.

Now David felt his troubles were over, and he began quite a new life, well cared for and kindly treated. He was sent to a very nice school in Canterbury, where his aunt left him with these words, which David never forgot.

"Trot, be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you. Never be mean in anything, never be false, never be cruel. Avoid these three vices, Trot, and I shall always be hopeful of you."

David did his best to show his gratitude to his dear aunt by studying hard, and trying to be all she could wish.

When you are older you can read how he grew up to be a good, clever man, and met again all his old friends, and made many new ones.

JENNY WREN.

ONE day, a great many years ago, a gentleman ran up the steps of a tall house in the neighborhood of St. Mary Axe.

The gentleman knocked and rang several times before any one came, but at last an old man opened the door. "What were you up to that you did not hear me?" said Mr. Fledgeby irritably.

"I was taking the air at the top of the house, sir," said the old man meekly, "it being a holiday. What might you please to want, sir?"

"Humph! Holiday indeed," grumbled his master, who was a toy merchant amongst other things. He then seated himself and gave the old man—a Jew and Riah by name—directions about the dressing of some dolls, and, as he rose to go, exclaimed—

"By the bye, how *do* you take the air? Do you stick your head out of a chimney-pot?"

"No, sir, I have made a little garden on the roof."

"Let's look at it," said Mr. Fledgeby.

"Sir, I have company there," returned Riah hesitating, "but will you please come up and see them?"

Mr. Fledgeby nodded, and the old man led the way up flight after flight of stairs, till they arrived at the house-top. Seated on a carpet, and leaning against a chimney-stack, were two girls bending over books. Some creepers were trained round the chimney-pots, and evergreens were placed round the roof, and a few more books, a basket of gaily colored scraps, and bits of tinsel, lay near. One of the girls rose on seeing that Riah had brought a visitor, but the other remarked, "I'm the person of the house downstairs, but I can't get up,

whoever you are, because my back is bad, and my legs are queer."

"This is my master," said Riah speaking to the two girls, "and this," he added, turning to Mr. Fledgeby, "is Miss Jenny Wren; she lives in this house, and is a clever little dressmaker for little people. Her friend Lizzie," continued Riah, introducing the second girl. "They are good girls, both, and as busy as they are good; in spare moments they come up here, and take to book learning."

"Humph!" said Mr. Fledgeby, looking round, "Humph!" He was so much surprised that apparently he couldn't get beyond that word.

Lizzie, the elder of these two girls, was strong and handsome, but the little Jenny Wren, whom she so loved and protected, was small, and deformed, though she had a beautiful little face, and the longest and loveliest golden hair in the world, which fell about her like a cloak of shining curls, as though to hide the poor little misshapen figure.

The Jew Riah, as well as Lizzie, was always kind and gentle to Jenny Wren, who called him godfather. She had a father, who shared her poor little rooms, whom she called her child, for he was a bad, drunken, disreputable old man, and the poor girl had to care for him, and earn money to keep them both. Sometimes the two girls, Jenny helping herself along with a crutch, would go and walk about the fashionable streets. As they walked along, Jenny would tell her friend of the fancies she had when sitting alone at her work. "I imagine birds till I can hear them sing," she said one day, "and flowers till I can smell them. And oh! the beautiful children that come to me, in the early mornings! They are quite different to other children, not like me, never cold, or anxious, or tired, or hungry, never any pain; they come in numbers, in long bright slanting rows, all dressed in white, with shiny heads. 'Who is this in pain?' they say, and they sweep around and about me, take me up in their arms, and I feel so light, and all the pain goes. I know they are coming a long way off, by hearing them say, 'Who is this in pain?' and I answer, 'Oh my blessed children, it's poor me! have pity on me, and take me up and then the pain will go.'"

JENNIE WREN.
“THE BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN THAT COME TO ME.”

Lizzie sat stroking and brushing the beautiful hair, when they were at home again, and as she kissed her good-night, a miserable old man stumbled into the room. “How’s my Jenny Wren, best of children?” he mumbled, as he shuffled unsteadily towards her, but Jenny pointed her small finger towards him exclaiming—“Go along with you, you bad, wicked, old child, you troublesome, wicked, old thing, *I* know where you have been; ain’t you ashamed of yourself, you disgraceful boy?” “Yes; my dear, yes,” stammered the tipsy old father, tumbling into a corner. One day when Jenny was on her way home with Riah, they came on a small crowd of people. A tipsy man had been knocked down and badly hurt—“Let us see what it is!” said Jennie. The next moment she exclaimed—“Oh, gentlemen—gentlemen, he is my child, he belongs to me, my poor, bad, old child!”

“Your child—belongs to you—” repeated the man who was about to lift the helpless figure on to a stretcher. “Aye, it’s old Dolls—tipsy old Dolls—” cried some one in the crowd, for it was by this name that they knew the old man.

“He’s her father, sir,” said Riah in a low tone to the doctor who was now bending over the stretcher.

“So much the worse,” answered the doctor, “for the man is dead.”

Yes, “Mr. Dolls” was dead, and many were the dresses which the weary fingers of the

sorrowful little worker must make in order to pay for his humble funeral, and buy a black frock for herself. Often the tears rolled down on to her work. “My poor child,” she said to Riah, “my poor old child, and to think I scolded him so.”

“You were always a good, brave, patient girl,” returned Riah, “always good and patient, however tired.”

And so the poor little “person of the house” was left alone but for the faithful affection of the kind Jew, and her friend Lizzie. Her room grew pretty comfortable, for she was in great request in her “profession” as she called it, and there was now no one to spend and waste her earnings. But nothing could make her life otherwise than a suffering one till the happy morning, when her child-angels visited her for the last time and carried her away to the land where all such pain as hers is healed for evermore.

PIP’S ADVENTURE.

ALL that little Philip Pirrip, usually called Pip, knew about his father and mother, and five little brothers, was from seeing their tombstones in the churchyard. He was taken care of by his sister, who was twenty years older than himself. She had married a blacksmith, named Joe Gargery, a kind, good man, while she, unfortunately, was a hard, stern woman, and treated her little brother and her amiable husband with great harshness. They lived in a marshy part of the country, about twenty miles from the sea.

One cold raw day towards evening, when Pip was about six years old, he wandered into the churchyard, and trying to make out what he could of the inscriptions on his family tombstones, and the darkness coming on, he felt very lonely and frightened, and began to cry.

“Hold your noise!” cried a terrible voice, and a man started up from among the graves close to him. “Keep still, you little imp, or I’ll cut your throat!”

He was a dreadful looking man, dressed in coarse grey cloth, with a great iron on his leg. Wet, muddy and miserable, his teeth chattered in his head, as he seized Pip by the chin.

“Oh! don’t cut my throat, sir,” cried Pip, in terror.

“Tell us your name!” said the man. “Quick!”

“Pip, sir.”

“Once more,” said the man, staring at him. “Give it mouth.”

“Pip. Pip, sir.”

“Show us where you live,” said the man. “Point out the place.”

Pip showed him the village, about a mile or more from the church.

The man looked at him for a moment, and then turned him upside down and emptied his pockets. He found nothing in them but a piece of bread, which he ate ravenously.

“Now lookee here,” said the man. “Where’s your mother?”

“There, sir,” said Pip.

At this the man started to run away, but stopped and looked over his shoulder.

“There, sir,” explained Pip, showing him the tombstone.

“Oh, and is that your father along of your mother?”

“Yes, sir,” said Pip.

“Ha!” muttered the man, “then who d’ye live with—supposin’ you’re kindly let to live, which I han’t made up my mind about?”

“My sister, sir, Mrs. Joe Gargery, wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.”

“Blacksmith, eh?” said the man, and looked down at his leg. Then he seized the trembling little boy by both arms, and glaring down at him, he said,—

“Now lookee here, the question being whether you’re to be let to live—You know what a file is?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you know what wittles is?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You get me a file, and you get me wittles—you bring ‘em both to me.” All this time he was tilting poor Pip backwards till he was dreadfully frightened and giddy.

“You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles—You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live.” Then he let him go, saying—“You remember what you’ve undertook, and you get home.”

Pip ran home without stopping. Joe was sitting in the chimney corner, and told him Mrs. Joe had been out to look for him, and taken Tickler with her. Tickler was a cane, and Pip was rather depressed by this piece of news.

Mrs. Joe came in almost directly, and after having given Pip a taste of Tickler, she sat down to prepare the tea, and cutting a huge slice of bread and butter, she gave half of it to Joe and half to Pip. Pip managed, after some time, to slip his down the leg of his trousers, and Joe, thinking he had swallowed it, was dreadfully alarmed and begged him not to bolt his food like that. “Pip, old chap, you’ll do yourself a mischief,—it’ll stick somewhere, you can’t have chewed it, Pip. You know, Pip, you and me is always friends, and I’d be the last to tell upon you at any time, but such a—such a most uncommon bolt as that.”

PIP AND THE CONVICT.
HALF DEAD WITH COLD AND HUNGER.

“Been bolting his food, has he?” cried Mrs. Joe.

“You know, old chap,” said Joe, “I bolted myself when I was your age—frequent—and as a boy I’ve been among many bolters; but I never see your bolting equal yet, Pip, and it’s a mercy you ain’t bolted dead.”

Poor Pip passed a wretched night, thinking of the dreadful promise he had made, and as soon as it was beginning to get light outside he got up and crept downstairs.

As quickly as he could he took some bread, some cheese, about half a jar of mince-meat he tied up in a handkerchief, with the slice of bread and butter, some brandy from a stone bottle, a meat bone with very little on it, and a pork pie, which he found on an upper shelf. Then he got a file from among Joe’s tools, and ran for the marshes.

Pip found the man waiting for him, half dead with cold and hunger, and he ate the food in such a ravenous way that Pip, in spite of his terror, was quite pitiful over him, and said, “I am glad you enjoy it.”

“Thankee, my boy, I do.”

Pip watched him trying to file the iron off his leg, and then, being afraid of stopping longer away from home, he ran off.

Pip passed a wretched morning expecting every moment that the disappearance of the pie would be found out. But Mrs. Joe was too much taken up with preparing the dinner, for they were expecting visitors.

Just at the end of the dinner Pip thought his time had come to be found out, for his sister said graciously to her guests—

"You must taste a most delightful and delicious present I have had. It's a pie, a savory pork pie."

Pip could bear it no longer, and ran for the door, and there ran head foremost into a party of soldiers with their muskets, one of whom held out a pair of handcuffs to him saying—"Here you are, look sharp, come on." But they had not come for him, they only wanted Joe to mend the handcuffs, for they were on the search for two convicts who had escaped and were somewhere hid in the marshes. This turned the attention of Mrs. Joe from the disappearance of the pie without which she had come back, in great astonishment. When the handcuffs were mended the soldiers went off, accompanied by Joe and one of the visitors, and Joe took Pip and carried him on his back.

Pip whispered, "I hope, Joe, we shan't find them," and Joe answered "I'd give a shilling if they had cut and run, Pip."

But the soldiers soon caught them, and one was Pip's miserable acquaintance, and once when the man looked at Pip, the child shook his head to try and let him know he had said nothing.

But the convict, without looking at anyone, told the Sergeant he wanted to say something to prevent other people being under suspicion, and said he had taken some "wittles" from the blacksmith's. "It was some broken wittles, that's what it was, and a dram of liquor, and a pie."

"Have you happened to miss such an article as a pie, blacksmith?" enquired the Sergeant.

"My wife did, at the very moment when you came in."

"So," said the convict, looking at Joe, "you're the blacksmith, are you? Then I'm sorry to say, I've eat your pie."

"God knows you're welcome to it," said Joe. "We don't know what you have done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it, poor miserable fellow creature. Would us, Pip?"

Then the boat came, and the convicts were taken back to prison, and Joe carried Pip home.

Some years after, some mysterious friend sent money for Pip to be educated and brought up as a gentleman, but it was only when Pip was quite grown up that he discovered this mysterious friend was the wretched convict who had frightened him so dreadfully that cold, dark Christmas Eve.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation have been retained from the original.

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected as follows:

Page 7: Fren changed to Fern
Page 25: Joe changed to Jo
Page 31: DORRITT changed to DORRIT
Page 34: needlwork changed to needlework
Page 40: distresed changed to distressed
Page 41: grandfaather changed to grandfather
Page 56: hugh changed to huge