

air, when the light of the moon falling full upon her face, showed him a change upon her features, which made him stagger beneath her weight, like a helpless infant.

"Set me down, George," she said faintly. He did so, and seating himself beside her, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

"It is very hard to leave you, George," she said, "but it is God's will, and you must bear it for my sake. Oh! how I thank him for having taken our boy! He is happy, and in heaven now. What would he have done here, without his mother!"

"You shall not die, Mary, you shall not die," said the husband, starting up. He paced hurriedly to and fro, striking his head with his clenched fists; then reseating himself beside her, and supporting her in his arms, added more calmly, "Rouse yourself, my dear girl. Pray, pray do. You will revive yet."

"Never again, George; never again," said the dying woman. "Let them lay me by my poor boy now, but promise me, that if ever you leave this dreadful place, and should grow rich, you will have us removed to some quiet country church-yard, a long, long way off—very far from here—where we can rest in peace. Dear George, promise me you will."

"I do, I do," said the man, throwing himself passionately on his knees before her. "Speak to me, Mary, another word; one look—but one!"

He ceased to speak; for the arm that clasped his neck grew stiff and heavy. A deep sigh escaped from the wasted form before him; the lips moved, and a smile played upon the face; but the lips were pallid, and the smile faded into a rigid and ghastly stare. He was alone in the world.

That night, in the silence and desolation of his miserable room, the wretched man knelt down by the dead body of his wife, and called on God to witness a terrible oath, that from that hour he devoted himself to revenge her death and that of his child; that thenceforth to the last moment of his life his whole energies should be directed to this one object; that his revenge should be protracted and terrible; that his hatred should be undying and inextinguishable, and should hunt its object through the world.

"The deepest despair, and passion scarcely human, had made such fierce ravages on his face and form in that one

night that his companions in misfortune shrunk affrighted from him as he passed by. His eyes were bloodshot and heavy, his face a deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had bitten his under-lip nearly through in the violence of his mental suffering, and the blood which had flowed from the wound had trickled down his chin, and stained his shirt and neckerchief. No tear or sound of complaint escaped him; but the unsettled look and disordered haste with which he paced up and down the yard denoted the fever which was burning within.

"It was necessary that his wife's body should be removed from the prison, without delay. He received the communication with perfect calmness, and acquiesced in its propriety. Nearly all the inmates of the prison had assembled to witness its removal; they fell back on either side when the widower appeared; he walked hurriedly forward, and stationed himself, alone, in a little railed area close to the lodge-gate, from whence the crowd, with an instinctive feeling of delicacy, had retired. The rude coffin was borne slowly forward on men's shoulders. A dead silence pervaded the throng, broken only by the audible lamentations of the women, and the shuffling steps of the bearers on the stone pavement. They reached the spot where the bereaved husband stood: and stopped. He laid his hand upon the coffin, and mechanically adjusting the pall with which it was covered, motioned them onward. The turnkeys in the prison lobby took off their hats as it passed through, and in another moment the heavy gate closed behind it. He looked vacantly upon the crowd, and fell heavily to the ground.

Although for many weeks after this, he was watched, night and day, in the wildest ravings of fever, neither the consciousness of his loss, nor the recollection of the vow he had made, ever left him for a moment. Scenes changed before his eyes, place succeeded place, and event followed event, in all the hurry of delirium; but they were all connected in some way with the great object of his mind. He was sailing over a boundless expanse of sea, with a blood-red sky above, and the angry waters, lashed into fury beneath, boiling and eddying up, on every side. There was another vessel before them, toiling and laboring in the howling storm: her canvas fluttering in ribbons from the mast, and her deck thronged with figures who were lashed to the

sides, over which huge waves every instant burst, sweeping away some devoted creatures into the foaming sea. Onward they bore, amidst the roaring mass of water, with a speed and force which nothing could resist; and striking the stern of the foremost vessel, crushed her, beneath their keel. From the huge whirlpool which the sinking wreck occasioned, arose a shriek so loud and shrill—the death-cry of a hundred drowning creatures, blended into one fierce yell—that it rung far above the war-cry of the elements, and echoed, and re-echoed till it seemed to pierce air, sky, and ocean. But what was that—that old gray head that rose above the water's surface, and with looks of agony, and screams for aid, buffeted with the waves! One look, and he had sprung from the vessel's side, and with vigorous strokes was swimming toward it. He reached it; he was close upon it. They were *his* features. The old man saw him coming, and vainly strove to elude his grasp. But he clasped him tight, and dragged him beneath the water. Down, down with him, fifty fathoms down; his struggles grew fainter and fainter, until they wholly ceased. He was dead; he had killed him, and had kept his oath.

“He was traversing the scorching sands of a mighty desert, barefoot and alone. The sand choked and blinded him; its fine thin grains entered the very pores of his skin, and irritated him almost to madness. Gigantic masses of the same material, carried forward by the wind, and shone through, by the burning sun, stalked in the distance like pillars of living fire. The bones of men, who had perished in the dreary waste, lay scattered at his feet; a fearful light fell on every thing around; so far as the eye could reach, nothing but objects of dread and horror presented themselves. Vainly striving to utter a cry of terror, with his tongue cleaving to his mouth, he rushed madly forward. Armed with supernatural strength, he waded through the sand, until exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he fell senseless on the earth. What fragrant coolness revived him; what gushing sound was that? Water! It was indeed a well; and the clear fresh stream was running at his feet. He drank deeply of it, and throwing his aching limbs upon the bank, sunk into a delicious trance. The sound of approaching footsteps roused him. An old gray-headed man tottered forward to slake his burning thirst. It was *he* again! He wound his arms round the old man's body, and held him

back. He struggled, and shrieked for water, for but one drop of water to save his life! But he held the old man firmly, and watched his agonies with greedy eyes; and when his lifeless head fell forward on his bosom, he rolled the corpse from him with his feet.

“When the fever left him, and consciousness returned, he awoke to find himself rich and free: to hear that the parent who would have let him die in jail—*would!* who *had* let those who were far dearer to him than his own existence, die of want and sickness of heart that medicine can not cure—had been found dead on his bed of down. He had had all the heart to leave his son a beggar, but proud even of his health and strength, had put off the act till it was too late, and now might gnash his teeth in the other world, at the thought of the wealth his remissness had left him. He awoke to this, and he awoke to more. To recollect the purpose for which he lived, and to remember that his enemy was his wife's own father—the man who had cast him into prison, and who, when his daughter and her child sued at his feet for mercy, had spurned them from his door. Oh, how he cursed the weakness that prevented him from being up, and active, in his scheme of vengeance!

“He caused himself to be carried from the scene of his loss and misery, and conveyed to a quiet residence on the sea-coast; not in the hope of recovering his peace of mind or happiness, for both were fled forever; but to restore his prostrate energies, and meditate on his darling object. And here, some evil spirit cast in his way the opportunity for his first, most horrible revenge.

“It was summer-time; and wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, he would issue from his solitary lodgings early in the evening, and wandering along a narrow path beneath the cliffs, to a wild and lonely spot that had struck his fancy in his ramblings, seat himself on some fallen fragment of the rock, and, burying his face in his hands, remain there for hours—sometimes until night had completely closed in, and the long shadows of the frowning cliffs above his head cast a thick black darkness on every object near him.

“He was seated here, one calm evening, in his old position, now and then raising his head to watch the flight of a sea-gull, or carry his eye along the glorious crimson path, which, commencing in the middle of the ocean, seemed to lead to its very verge where the sun was setting, when the

profound stillness of the spot was broken by a loud cry for help; he listened, doubtful of his having heard aright, when the cry was repeated with even greater vehemence than before, and starting to his feet, he hastened in the direction whence it proceeded.

"The tale told itself at once; some scattered garments lay on the beach; a human head was just visible above the waves at a little distance from the shore; and an old man, wringing his hands in agony, was running to and fro, shrieking for assistance. The invalid, whose strength was now sufficiently restored, threw off his coat, and rushed toward the sea, with the intention of plunging in and dragging the drowning man ashore.

"Hasten here, sir, in God's name; help, help, sir, for the love of Heaven! He is my son, sir, my only son!" said the old man, frantically, as he advanced to meet him. "My only son, sir, and he is dying before his father's eyes!"

"At the first word the old man uttered, the stranger checked himself in his career, and, folding his arms, stood perfectly motionless.

"Great God!" exclaimed the old man, recoiling. "Heyling!"

"The stranger smiled, and was silent.

"Heyling!" said the old man, wildly: "my boy, Heyling, my dear boy, look, look!" gasping for breath, the miserable father pointed to the spot where the young man was struggling for life.

"Hark!" said the old man. "He cries once more. He is alive yet. Heyling, save him, save him!"

"The stranger smiled again, and remained immovable as a statue.

"I have wronged you," shrieked the old man, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands together. "Be revenged; take my all, my life; cast me into the water at your feet, and, if human nature can repress a struggle, I will die, without stirring hand or foot. Do it, Heyling, do it, but save my boy, he is so young, Heyling, so young to die!"

"Listen," said the stranger, grasping the old man fiercely by the wrist: "I will have life for life, and here is ONE. My child died, before his father's eyes, a far more agonizing and painful death than that young slanderer of his sister's worth is meeting while I speak. You laughed—laughed in your daughter's face, where death had already set his hand—at

our sufferings, then. What think you of them now? See there, see there!"

"As the stranger spoke, he pointed to the sea. A faint cry died away upon its surface: the last powerful struggle of the dying man agitated the rippling waves for a few seconds; and the spot where he had gone down into his early grave, was undistinguishable from the surrounding water.

"Three years had elapsed, when a gentleman alighted from a private carriage at the door of a London attorney, then well known as a man of no great nicety in his professional dealings, and requested a private interview on business of importance. Although evidently not past the prime of life, his face was pale, haggard, and dejected; and it did not require the acute perception of the man of business, to discern at a glance, that disease or suffering had done more to work a change in his appearance, than the mere hand of time could have accomplished in twice the period of his whole life.

"I wish you to undertake some legal business for me," said the stranger.

"The attorney bowed obsequiously, and glanced at a large packet which the gentleman carried in his hand. His visitor observed the look, and proceeded.

"It is no common business," said he; "nor have these papers reached my hands without long trouble and great expense."

"The attorney cast a still more anxious look at the packet; and his visitor, untying the string that bound it, disclosed a quantity of promissory notes, with copies of deeds, and other documents.

"Upon these papers," said the client, "the man whose name they bear, has raised, as you will see, large sums of money, for some years past. There was a tacit understanding between him and the men into whose hands they originally went—and from whom I have by degrees purchased the whole, for treble and quadruple their nominal value—that these loans should be from time to time renewed, until a given period had elapsed. Such an understanding is nowhere expressed. He has sustained many losses of late; and these obligations accumulating upon him at once, would crush him to the earth."

"The whole amount is many thousands of pounds," said the attorney, looking over the papers,

"It is," said the client.

"What are we to do?" inquired the man of business.

"Do!" replied the client, with sudden vehemence. "Put every engine of the law in force, every trick that ingenuity can devise and rascality execute; fair means and foul; the open oppression of the law; aided by all the craft of its most ingenious practitioners. I would have him die a harassing and lingering death. Ruin him, seize and sell his lands and goods, drive him from house and home, and drag him forth a beggar in his old age, to die in a common jail."

"But the costs, my dear sir, the costs of all this," reasoned the attorney, when he had recovered from his momentary surprise. "If the defendant be a man of straw, who is to pay the costs, sir?"

"Name any sum," said the stranger, his hand trembling so violently with excitement, that he could scarcely hold the pen he seized as he spoke; "any sum, and it is yours. Don't be afraid to name it, man. I shall not think it dear, if you gain my object."

"The attorney named a large sum, at hazard, as the advance he should require to secure himself against the possibility of loss; but more with the view of ascertaining how far his client was really disposed to go, than with any idea that he would comply with the demand. The stranger wrote a check upon his banker for the whole amount, and left him.

"The draft was duly honored, and the attorney, finding that his strange client might be safely relied upon, commenced his work in earnest. For more than two years afterward, Mr. Heyling would sit whole days together, in the office, poring over the papers as they accumulated, and reading again and again, his eyes gleaming with joy, the letters of remonstrance, the prayers for a little delay, the representations of the certain ruin in which the opposite party must be involved, which poured in, as suit after suit, and process after process, was commenced. To all applications for a brief indulgence, there was but one reply—the money must be paid. Land, house, furniture, each in its turn, was taken under some one of the numerous executions which were issued; and the old man himself would have been immured in prison had he not escaped the vigilance of the officers, and fled.

"The implacable animosity of Heyling, so far from being

satiated by the success of his persecution, increased a hundred-fold with the ruin he inflicted. On being informed of the old man's flight, his fury was unbounded. He gnashed his teeth with rage, tore the hair from his head, and assailed with horrid imprecations the men who had been intrusted with the writ. He was only restored to comparative calmness by repeated assurances of the certainty of discovering the fugitive. Agents were sent in quest of him, in all directions; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to, for the purpose of discovering his place of retreat; but it was all in vain. Half a year had passed over, and he was still undiscovered.

"At length, late one night, Heyling, of whom nothing had been seen for many weeks before, appeared at his attorney's private residence, and sent up word that a gentleman wished to see him instantly. Before the attorney, who had recognized his voice from above stairs, could order the servant to admit him, he had rushed up the staircase, and entered the drawing-room pale and breathless. Having closed the door, to prevent being overheard, he sunk into a chair, and said, in a low voice:

"Hush! I have found him at last."

"No!" said the attorney. "Well done, my dear sir; well done."

"He lies concealed in a wretched lodging in Camden Town," said Heyling. "Perhaps it is as well, we *did* lose sight of him, for he has been living alone there, in the most abject misery, all the time, and he is poor—very poor."

"Very good," said the attorney. "You will have the caption made to-morrow, of course?"

"Yes," replied Heyling. "Stay! No! The next day. You are surprised at my wishing to postpone it," he added, with a ghastly smile; "but I had forgotten. The next day is an anniversary in his life; let it be done then."

"Very good," said the attorney. "Will you write down instructions for the officer?"

"No; let him meet me here, at eight in the evening, and I will accompany him, myself."

"They met on the appointed night, and, hiring a hackney-coach, directed the driver to stop at that corner of the old Pancras Road at which stands the parish work-house. By the time they alighted there, it was quite dark; and, proceeding by the dead wall in front of the Veterinary Hospital, they

entered a small by-street, which is, or was at that time, called Little College Street, and which, whatever it may be now, was in those days a desolate place enough, surrounded by little else than fields and ditches.

"Having drawn the traveling-cap he had on half over his face, and muffled himself in his cloak, Heyling stopped before the meanest-looking house in the street, and knocked gently at the door. It was at once opened by a woman, who dropped a courtesy of recognition, and Heyling, whispering the officer to remain below, crept gently up-stairs, and, opening the door of the front room, entered at once.

"The object of his search and his unrelenting animosity, now a decrepit old man, was seated at a bare deal table, on which stood a miserable candle. He started on the entrance of the stranger, and rose feebly to his feet.

"What now, what now?" said the old man. "What fresh misery is this? What do you want here?"

"A word with *you*," replied Heyling. As he spoke, he seated himself at the other end of the table, and, throwing off his cloak and cap, disclosed his features.

"The old man seemed instantly deprived of the power of speech. He fell backward in his chair, and, clasping his hands together, gazed on the apparition with a mingled look of abhorrence and fear.

"This day six years," said Heyling, "I claimed the life you owed me for my child's. Beside the lifeless form of your daughter, old man, I swore to live a life of revenge. I have never swerved from my purpose for a moment's space; but if I had, one thought of her uncomplaining, suffering look, as she drooped away, or of the starving face of our innocent child, would have nerved me to my task. My first act of requital you will remember: this is my last."

"The old man shivered, and his hands dropped powerless by his side.

"I leave England to-morrow," said Heyling, after a moment's pause. "To-night I consign you to the living death to which you devoted her—a hopeless prison—"

"He raised his eyes to the old man's countenance and paused. He lifted the light to his face, set it gently down, and left the apartment.

"You had better see to the old man," he said to the woman, as he opened the door and motioned the officer to follow him into the street. "I think he is ill." The woman

closed the door, ran hastily up stairs, and found him lifeless.

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"Beneath a plain grave-stone, in one of the most peaceful and secluded church-yards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England, lie the bones of the young mother and her gentle child. But the ashes of the father do not mingle with theirs; nor, from that night forward, did the attorney ever gain the remotest clue to the subsequent history of his queer client."

As the old man concluded his tale, he advanced to a peg in one corner, and taking down his hat and coat, put them on with great deliberation; and, without saying another word, walked slowly away. As the gentleman with Mosaic studs had fallen asleep, and the major part of the company were deeply occupied in the humorous process of dropping melted tallow-grease into his brandy-and-water, Mr. Pickwick departed unnoticed, and having settled his own score and that of Mr. Weller, issued forth, in company with that gentleman, from beneath the portal of the Magpie and Stump.

## CHAPTER XXII.

MR. PICKWICK JOURNEYS TO IPSWICH, AND MEETS WITH A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE WITH A MIDDLE-AGED LADY IN YELLOW CURL-PAPERS.

"THAT 'ere your governor's luggage, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller of his affectionate son, as he entered the yard of the Bull inn, Whitechapel, with a traveling-bag and a small portmanteau.

"You might ha' made a worsen guess than that, old feller," replied Mr. Weller the younger, setting down his burden in the yard, and sitting himself down upon it afterward. "The Governor hisself 'll be down here presently."

"He's a-cabbin' it, I suppose?" said the father.

"Yes, he's a-havin' two mile o' danger at eight-pence," responded the son. "How's mother-in-law this mornin'?"

"Queer, Sammy, queer," replied the elder Mr. Weller, with impressive gravity. "She's been gettin' rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy; and she is uncommon