raised to a proud eminence in the world, have usually some little weakness which appears the more conspicuous from the contrast it presents to their general character. If Mr. Pott had a weakness, it was, perhaps, that he was *rather* too submissive to the somewhat contemptuous control and sway of his wife. We do not feel justified in laying any particular stress upon the fact, because on the present occasion all Mrs. Pott's most winning ways were brought into requisition to receive the two gentlemen.

"My dear," said Mr. Pott, "Mr. Pickwick — Mr. Pickwick of London."

Mrs. Pott received Mr. Pickwick's paternal grasp of the hand with enchanting sweetness: and Mr. Winkle, who had not been announced at all, slided and bowed, unnoticed, in an obscure corner.

"P. my dear—" said Mrs. Pott.

"My life," said Mr. Pott.

"Pray introduce the other gentleman."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said Mr. Pott. "Permit me, Mrs. Pott, Mr. —"

"Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Winkle," echoed Mr. Pott; and the ceremony of introduction was complete.

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

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

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

"Nobody but *you*," retorted Mrs. Pott, with asperity.

"You see, Mr. Pickwick," said the host in explanation of his wife's lament, "that we are in some measure cut off from many enjoyments and pleasures of which we might otherwise partake. My public station, as editor of the Eatanswill *Gazette*, the position which that paper holds in the country, my constant immersion in the vortex of politics—"

"P. my dear—" interposed Mrs. Pott.

"My life—" said the editor.

"I wish, my dear, you would endeavor to find some topic of conversation in which these gentlemen might take some rational interest."

"But my love," said Mr. Pott, with great humility, "Mr. Pickwick does take an interest in it."

"It's well for him if he can," said Mrs. Pott, emphatically; "I am wearied out of my life with your politics, and quarrels with the *Independent*, and nonsense. I am quite astonished P. at your making such an exhibition of your absurdity."

"But my dear—" said Mr. Pott.

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

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

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

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

"I should like to hear them very much, indeed," said Mr. Pickwick.

Up came the file, and down sat the editor, with Mr. Pickwick at his side.

We have in vain pored over the leaves of Mr. Pickwick's note-book, in the hope of meeting with a general summary of these beautiful compositions. We have every reason to believe that he was perfectly enraptured with the vigor and freshness of the style; indeed Mr. Winkle has recorded the fact that his eyes were closed, as if with excess of pleasure, during the whole time of their perusal.

The announcement of supper put a stop both to the game at *ecarté*, and the recapitulation of the beauties of the Eatanswill *Gazette*. Mrs. Pott was in the highest spirits and the most agreeable humor. Mr. Winkle had already made considerable progress in her good opinion, and she did not hesitate to inform him, confidentially, that Mr. Pickwick was "a delightful old dear." These terms convey a familiarity of expression, in which few of those who were intimately acquainted with that colossal-minded man would have presumed to indulge. We have preserved them, nevertheless, as affording at once a touching and a convincing proof of the estimation in which he was held by every class of society, and the ease with which he made his way to their hearts and feelings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Energetic, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Uncommon," replied Sam; "I never see men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they an't afeer'd o' bustin."

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

"Wery likely," replied Sam, briefly.

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

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

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

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

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

"Lord bless your heart, sir," said Sam, "why where was you half baptized?—that's nothin', that an't."

"Nothing?" said Mr. Pickwick.

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

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

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

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

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

"What was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why he drove a coach down here once," said Sam; "'lection-time came on, and he was engaged by vun party to bring down woters from London. Night afore he was agoing to drive up, committee on t'other side sends for him quietly, and away he goes vith the messenger, who shows him in;—large room—lots of gen'l'm'n—heaps of papers, pens and ink, and all that 'ere. 'Ah, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n in the chair, 'glad to see you, sir; how are you?'—'Werry well, thank'ee, sir,' says my father; 'I hope *you're* pretty middlin,' says he—'Pretty well, thank-'ee, sir,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'sit down, Mr. Weller—pray sit down, sir.' So my father sits down, and he and the gen'l'm'n looks werry hard at each other.—'You don't remember me?' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Can't say I do,' says my father.—'Oh, I know you,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'know'd you when you was a boy,' says he.—'Well, I don't remember you,' says my father—'That's very odd,' says the gen'l'm'n—'Werry,' says my father—'You must have a bad mem'ry, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n—'Well, it is a wery bad 'un,' says my father—'I thought so,' says the gen'l'm'n. So then they pours him out a glass of wine, and gammons him about his driving, and gets him into a reg'lar good humor, and at last shoves a twenty-pound note in his hand. 'It's a werry bad road between this and London,' says the gen'l'm'n—'Here and there it *is* a heavy road,' says my father—''Specially near the canal, I think,' says the gen'l'm'n—'Nasty bit that 'ere,' says my father—'Well, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n, 'you're a wery good whip, and can do what you like with your horses, we know. We're all wery fond o' you, Mr. Weller, so in case you *should* have an accident when you're a-bringing these here woters down, and *should* tip 'em over into the canal vithout hurtin' of 'em, this is for yourself,' says he—'Gen'l'm'n, you're wery kind,' says my father, 'and I'll drink your health in another glass of wine,' says he; wich he did, and then buttons up the money, and bows himself out. You wouldn't believe, sir," continued Sam, with a look of inexpressible impudence at his master, "that on the wery day as he came down with them woters, his coach *was* upset on that 'ere wery spot, and ev'ry man on 'em was turned into the canal."

"And got out again?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"Why," replied Sam, very slowly, "I rather think one old gen'l'm'n was missin'; I know his hat was found, but I an't quite certain whether his head was in it or not. But what I look at, is the hex-traordinary, and wonderful coincidence, that arter what that gen'l'm'n said, my father's coach should be upset in that wery place, and on that wery day!"

"It is, no doubt, a very extraordinary circumstance indeed," said Mr. Pickwick. "But brush my hat, Sam, for I hear Mr. Winkle calling me to breakfast."

With these words Mr. Pickwick descended to the parlor, where he found breakfast laid, and the family already assembled. The meal was hastily dispatched; each of the gentlemen's hats was decorated with an enormous blue favor, made up by the fair hands of Mrs. Pott herself; and as Mr. Winkle had undertaken to escort that lady to a house-top, in the immediate vicinity of the hustings, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Pott repaired alone to the Town Arms, from the back window of which, one of Mr. Slumkey's committee was addressing six small boys, and one girl, whom he dignified, at every second sentence, with the imposing title of "men of Eatanswill," whereat the six small boys aforesaid cheered prodigiously.

The stable-yard exhibited unequivocal symptoms of the glory and strength of the Eatanswill Blues. There was a regular army of blue flags, some with one handle, and some with two, exhibiting appropriate devices, in golden characters four feet high, and stout in proportion. There was a grand band of trumpets, bassoons and drums, marshaled four abreast, and earning their money, if ever men did, especially the drum beaters, who were very muscular. There were bodies of constables with blue staves, twenty committee-men with blue scarfs, and a mob of voters with blue cockades. There were electors on horseback, and electors afoot. There was an open carriage-and-four, for the honorable Samuel Slumkey; and there were four carriages and pair, for his friends and supporters; and the flags were rustling and the band was playing, and the constables were

swearing, and the twenty committee-men were squabbling, and the mob were shouting, and the horses were backing, and the post-boys perspiring; and every body, and every thing, then and there assembled, was for the special use, behoof, honor, and renown, of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, one of the candidates for the representation of the Borough of Eatanswill, in the Commons House of Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Loud and long were the cheers, and mighty was the rustling of one of the blue flags, with "Liberty of the Press" inscribed thereon, when the sandy head of Mr. Pott was discerned in one of the windows, by the mob beneath; and tremendous was the enthusiasm when the honorable Samuel Slumkey himself, in top-boots, and a blue neckerchief, advanced and seized the hand of the said Pott, and melodramatically testified by gestures to the crowd, his ineffaceable obligations to the Eatanswill *Gazette*.

"Is every thing ready?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey to Mr. Perker.

"Every thing, my dear sir," was the little man's reply.

"Nothing has been omitted, I hope?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"Nothing has been left undone, my dear sir—nothing whatever. There are twenty washed men at the street door for you to shake hands with; and six children in arms that you're to pat on the head, and inquire the age of; be particular about the children, my dear sir,—it has always a great effect, that sort of thing."

"I'll take care," said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"And, perhaps, my dear sir—" said the cautious little man, "perhaps if you *could*—I don't mean to say it's indispensable—but if you *could* manage to kiss one of 'em, it would produce a very great impression on the crowd."

"Wouldn't it have as good an effect if the proposer or seconder did that?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"Why, I am afraid it wouldn't," replied the agent; "if it were done by yourself, my dear sir, I think it would make you very popular."

"Very well," said the honorable Samuel Slumkey, with a resigned air, "then it must be done. That's all."

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

Amidst the cheers of the assembled throng, the band, and the constables, and the committee-men, and the voters, and the horsemen, and the carriages, took their places—each of the two-horse vehicles being closely packed with as many gentlemen as could manage to stand upright in it: and that assigned to Mr. Perker, containing Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and about half a dozen of the committee besides.

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

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

Another cheer, much louder.

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

Another cheer, far more vehement.

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

A roar of applause that rent the air.

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

A second roar.

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

A third roar.

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

How or by what means it became mixed up with the other procession, and how it was ever extricated from the confusion consequent thereupon, is more than we can undertake to describe, inasmuch as Mr. Pickwick's hat was knocked over his eyes, nose, and mouth, by one poke of a Buff flag-staff, very early in the proceedings. He describes himself as being surrounded on every side, when he could catch a glimpse of the scene, by angry and ferocious countenances, by a vast cloud of dust, and by a dense crowd of combatants. He represents himself as being forced from the carriage by some unseen power, and being personally engaged in a pugilistic encounter; but with whom, or how, or why, he is wholly unable to state. He then felt himself forced up some wooden steps by the persons from behind: and on removing his hat, found himself surrounded by his friends, in the very front of the left-hand side of the hustings. The right was reserved for the Buff party, and the centre for the Mayor and his officers; one of whom—the fat crier of Eatanswill—was ringing an enormous bell, by way of commanding silence, while Mr. Horatio Fizkin, and the honorable Samuel Slumkey, with their hands upon their hearts, were bowing with the utmost affability to the troubled sea of heads that inundated the open space in front; and from whence arose a storm of groans, and shouts, and yells, and hootings, that would have done honor to an earthquake.

"There's Winkle," said Mr. Tupman, pulling his friend by the sleeve.

"Where?" said Mr. Pickwick, putting on his spectacles, which he had fortunately kept in his pocket hitherto.

"There," said Mr. Tupman, "on the top of that house." And there, sure enough, in the leaden gutter of a tiled roof, were Mr. Winkle and Mrs. Pott, comfortably seated in a couple of chairs, waving their handkerchiefs in token of recognition—a compliment which Mr. Pickwick returned by kissing his hand to the lady.

The proceedings had not yet commenced; and as an inactive crowd is generally disposed to be jocose, this very innocent action was sufficient to awaken their facetiousness.

"Oh you wicked old rascal," cried one voice, "looking arter the girls, are you?"

"Oh you wenerable sinner," cried another.

"Putting on his spectacles to look at a married 'ooman!" said a third.

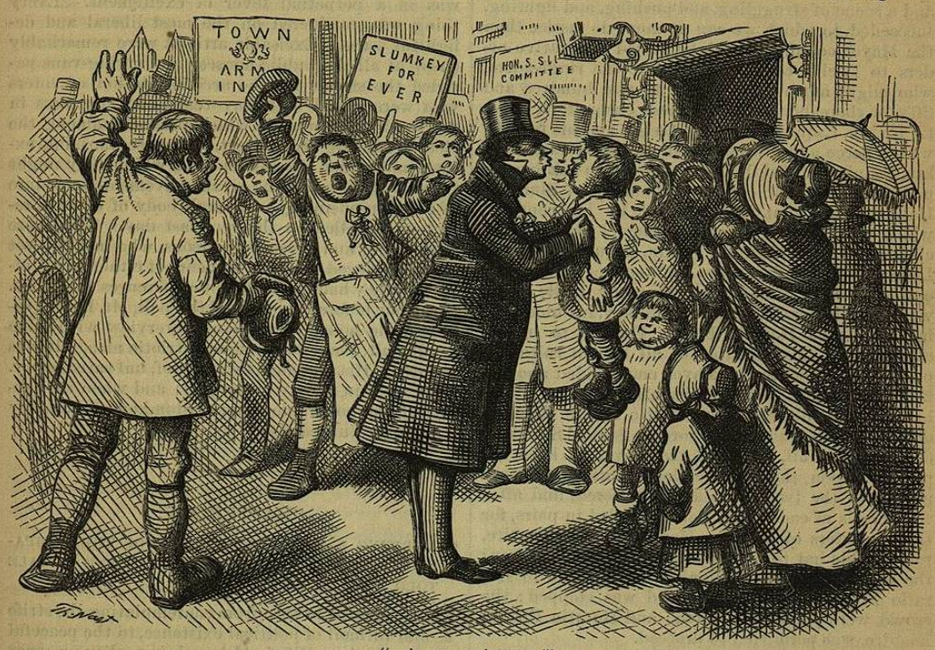
"I see him a-winkin' at her, with his wicked old eye," shouted a fourth.

"Look arter your wife, Pott," bellowed a fifth;—and then there was a roar of laughter.

As these taunts were accompanied with invidious comparisons between Mr. Pickwick and an aged ram, and several witticisms of the like nature; and as they moreover rather tended to convey reflections upon the honor of an innocent lady, Mr. Pickwick's indignation was excessive; but as silence was proclaimed at the moment, he contented himself by scorching the mob with a look of pity for their misguided minds, at which they laughed more boisterously than ever.

"Silence!" roared the mayor's attendants.

"Whiffin, proclaim silence," said the Mayor, with an air of pomp befitting his lofty station. In obedience to this command the crier performed another concerto on the bell, whereupon a gentleman in the crowd called out "muffins;" which occasioned another laugh.



"HE'S KISSING 'EM ALL!"

"Gentlemen," said the Mayor, at as loud a pitch as he could possibly force his voice to, "Gentlemen. Brother electors of the Borough of Eatanswill. We are met here to-day for the purpose of choosing a representative in the room of our late—"

Here the Mayor was interrupted by a voice in the crowd.

"Suc-cess to the Mayor!" cried the voice, "and may he never desert the nail and sarspan business, as he got his money by."

This allusion to the professional pursuits of the orator was received with a storm of delight, which, with a bell-accompaniment, rendered the remainder of his speech inaudible, with the exception of the concluding sentence, in which he thanked the meeting for the patient attention with which they had heard him throughout,—an expression of gratitude which elicited another burst of mirth, of about a quarter of an hour's duration.

Next, a tall thin gentleman, in a very stiff white neckerchief, after being repeatedly desired by the crowd to "send a boy home, to ask whether he hadn't left his woice under the pillow," begged to nominate a fit and proper person to represent them in Parliament. And when he said it was Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, the Fizkinites applauded, and the Slumkeyites groaned, so long, and so loudly, that both he and the seconder might have sung comic songs in lieu of speaking, without any body's being a bit the wiser.

The friends of Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, having had their innings, a little choleric, pink-faced man stood forward to propose another fit and proper person to represent the electors of Eatanswill in Parliament; and very swimmingly the pink-faced gentleman would have got on, if he had not been rather too choleric to entertain a sufficient perception of the fun of the crowd. But after a very few sentences of figurative eloquence, the pink-faced gentleman got from denouncing those who interrupted him in the mob, to exchanging defiances with the gentlemen on the hustings; whereupon arose an uproar which reduced him to the necessity of expressing his feelings

by serious pantomime, which he did, and then left the stage to his seconder, who delivered a written speech of half an hour's length, and wouldn't be stopped, because he had sent it all to the Eatanswill *Gazette*, and the Eatanswill *Gazette* had already printed it, every word.

Then Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, presented himself for the purpose of addressing the electors; which he no sooner did, than the band employed by the honorable Samuel Slumkey, commenced performing with a power to which their strength in the morning was a trifle; in return for which, the Buff crowd belabored the heads and shoulders of the Blue crowd; on which the Blue crowd endeavored to dispossess themselves of their very unpleasant neighbors the Buff crowd; and a scene of struggling, and pushing, and fighting, succeeded, to which we can no more do justice than the Mayor could, although he issued imperative orders to twelve constables to seize the ringleaders, who might amount in number to two hundred and fifty, or thereabout. At all these encounters, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, and his friends, waxed fierce and furious; until at last Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, begged to ask his opponent the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, whether that band played by his consent; which question the honorable Samuel Slumkey declining to answer, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, shook his fist in the countenance of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall; upon which the honorable Samuel Slumkey, his blood being up, defied Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, to mortal combat. At this violation of all known rules and precedents of order, the Mayor commanded another fantasia on the bell, and declared that he would bring before himself, both Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, and the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, and bind them over to keep the peace. Upon this terrific denunciation, the supporters of the two candidates interfered, and after the friends of each party had quarreled in pairs, for three-quarters of an hour, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, touched his hat to the honorable Samuel Slumkey: the honorable Samuel Slumkey touched his to Horatio Fizkin, Esquire: the band was stopped: the crowd were partially quieted: and Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, was permitted to proceed.

The speeches of the two candidates, though differing in every other respect, afforded a beautiful tribute to the merit and high worth of the electors of Eatanswill. Both expressed their opinion that a more independent, a more enlightened, a more public-spirited, a more noble-minded, a more disinterested set of men than those who had promised to vote for him, never existed on earth; each darkly hinted his suspicions that the electors in the opposite interest had certain swinish and besotted infirmities which rendered them unfit for the exercise of the important duties they were called upon to discharge. Fizkin expressed his readiness to do any thing he was wanted; Slumkey, his determination to do nothing that was asked of him. Both said that the trade, the manufactures, the commerce, the prosperity of Eatanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object; and each had it in his power to state, with the utmost confidence, that he was the man who would eventually be returned.

There was a show of hands; The Mayor decided in favor of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall. Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, demanded a poll, and a poll was fixed accordingly. Then a vote of thanks was moved to the Mayor for his able conduct in the chair; and the Mayor devoutly wishing that he had had a chair to display his able conduct in (for he had been standing during the whole proceedings), returned thanks. The processions re-formed, the carriages rolled slowly through the crowd, and its members screeched and shouted after them as their feelings or caprice dictated.

During the whole time of the polling, the town was in a perpetual fever of excitement. Every thing was conducted on the most liberal and delightful scale. Excisable articles were remarkably cheap at all the public-houses; and spring-vans paraded the streets for the accommodation of voters who were seized with any temporary dizziness in the head—an epidemic which prevailed among the electors, during the contest, to a most alarming extent, and under the influence of which they might frequently be seen lying on the pavements in a state of utter insensibility. A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day. They were calculating and reflecting persons, who had not yet been convinced by the arguments of either party, although they had had frequent conferences with each. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr. Perker solicited the honor of a private interview with these intelligent, these noble, these patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief, but satisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was returned also.

CHAPTER XIV.

COMPRISING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY AT THE PEACOCK ASSEMBLED; AND A TALE TOLD BY A BAG-MAN.

IT is pleasant to turn from contemplating the strife and turmoil of political existence, to the peaceful repose of private life. Although in reality no great partisan of either side, Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently fired with Mr. Pott's enthusiasm, to apply his whole time and attention to the proceedings, of which the last chapter affords a description compiled from his own memoranda. Nor while he was thus occupied was Mr. Winkle idle, his whole time being devoted to pleasant walks and short country excursions with Mrs. Pott, who never failed, when such an opportunity presented itself, to seek some relief from the tedious monotony she so constantly complained of. The two gentlemen being thus completely domesticated in the Editor's house, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were in a great measure cast upon their own resources. Taking but little interest in public affairs, they beguiled their time chiefly with such amusements as the Peacock afforded, which were limited to a bagatelle-board in the first-floor, and a

sequestered skittle-ground in the back-yard. In the science and nicety of both these recreations, which are far more abstruse than ordinary men suppose, they were gradually initiated by Mr. Weller, who possessed a perfect knowledge of such pastimes. Thus, notwithstanding that they were in a great measure deprived of the comfort and advantage of Mr. Pickwick's society, they were still enabled to beguile the time, and to prevent its hanging heavily on their hands.

It was in the evening, however, that the Peacock presented attractions which enabled the two friends to resist even the invitations of the gifted, though prosy, Pott. It was in the evening that the "commercial room" was filled with a social circle, whose characters and manners it was the delight of Mr. Tupman to observe; whose sayings and doings it was the habit of Mr. Snodgrass to note down.

Most people know what sort of places commercial rooms usually are. That of the Peacock differed in no material respect from the generality of such apartments; that is to say, it was a large bare-looking room, the furniture of which had no doubt been better when it was newer, with a spacious table in the centre, and a variety of smaller dittos in the corners; an extensive assortment of variously shaped chairs, and an old Turkey-carpet, bearing about the same relative proportion to the size of the room as a lady's pocket-handkerchief might to the floor of a watch-box. The walls were garnished with one or two large maps; and several weather-beaten rough great-coats, with complicated capes, dangled from a long row of pegs in one corner. The mantel-shelf was ornamented with a wooden inkstand, containing one stump of a pen and half a wafer: a road-book and directory: a county history minus the cover: and the mortal remains of a trout in a glass coffin. The atmosphere was redolent of tobacco-smoke, the fumes of which had communicated a rather dingy hue to the whole room, and more especially to the dusty red curtains which shaded the windows. On the sideboard a variety of miscellaneous articles were huddled together, the most conspicuous of which were some very cloudy fish-sauce cruets, a couple of driving-boxes, two or three whips, and as many traveling shawls, a tray of knives and forks, and the mustard.

Here it was that Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were seated on the evening after the conclusion of the election, with several other temporary inmates of the house, smoking and drinking.

"Well, gents," said a stout, hale personage of about forty, with only one eye—a very bright black eye, which twinkled with a roguish expression of fun and good-humor, "our noble selves, gents. I always propose that toast to the company, and drink Mary to myself. Eh, Mary!"

"Get along with you, you wretch," said the handmaiden, obviously not ill pleased with the compliment, however.

"Don't go away, Mary," said the black-eyed man.

"Let me alone, imperence," said the young lady.

"Never mind," said the one-eyed man, calling after the girl as she left the room. "I'll step out by-and-by, Mary. Keep your spirits up, dear." Here he went through the not very difficult process of winking upon the company with his solitary eye, to the enthusiastic delight of an elderly personage with a dirty face and a clay pipe.

"Rum creeters is women," said the dirty-faced man, after a pause.

"Ah! no mistake about that," said a very red-faced man, behind a cigar.

After this little bit of philosophy there was another pause.

"There's rummer things than women in this world though, mind you," said the man with the black eye, slowly filling a large Dutch pipe, with a most capacious bowl.

"Are you married?" inquired the dirty-faced man.

"Can't say I am."

"I thought not." Here the dirty-faced man fell into fits of mirth at his own retort, in which he was joined by a man of bland voice and placid countenance, who always made it a point to agree with every body.

"Women, after all, gentlemen," said the enthusiastic Mr. Snodgrass, "are the great props and comforts of our existence."

"So they are," said the placid gentleman.

"When they're in a good-humor," interposed the dirty-faced man.

"And that's very true," said the placid one.

"I repudiate that qualification," said Mr. Snodgrass, whose thoughts were fast reverting to Emily Wardle, "I repudiate it with disdain—with indignation. Show me the man who says any thing against women, as women, and I boldly declare he is not a man." And Mr. Snodgrass took his cigar from his mouth, and struck the table violently with his clenched fist.

"That's good sound argument," said the placid man.

"Containing a position which I deny," interrupted he of the dirty countenance.

"And there's certainly a very great deal of truth in what you observe too, sir," said the placid gentleman.

"Your health, sir," said the bag-man with the lonely eye, bestowing an approving nod on Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Snodgrass acknowledged the compliment.

"I always like to hear a good argument," continued the bag-man, "a sharp one, like this; it's very improving; but this little argument about women brought to my mind a story I have heard an old uncle of mine tell, the recollection of which, just now, made me say there were rummer things than women to be met with, sometimes."

"I should like to hear that same story," said the red-faced man with the cigar.

"Should you?" was the only reply of the bag-man, who continued to smoke with great vehemence.

"So should I," said Mr. Tupman, speaking for the first time. He was always anxious to increase his stock of experience.

"Should *you?* Well then, I'll tell it. No I won't. I know you won't believe it," said the man with the roguish eye, making that organ look more roguish than ever.

"If you say it's true, of course I shall," said Mr. Tupman.