

"Eh, they are gathered," said the Count.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"They are here," added the Count, tapping his forehead significantly. "Large book at home—full of notes—music, picture, science, poetry, poltic; all tings."

"The word politics, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "comprises, in itself, a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude."

"Ah!" said the Count, drawing out the tablets again, "ver good—fine words to begin a chapter. Chapter forty-seven. Politics. The word poltic surprises by himself—" And down went Mr. Pickwick's remark, in Count Smortork's tablets, with such variations and additions as the Count's exuberant fancy suggested, or his imperfect knowledge of the language occasioned.

"Count," said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"Mrs. Hunt," replied the Count.

"This is Mr. Snodgrass, a friend of Mr. Pickwick's, and a poet."

"Stop," exclaimed the Count, bringing out the tablets once more. "Head, poetry—chapter, literary friends—name, Snowgrass; ver good. Introduced to Snowgrass—great poet, friend of Peek Weeks—by Mrs. Hunt, which wrote other sweet poem—what is that name?—Fog—Perspiring Fog—ver good—ver good indeed." And the Count put up his tablets, and with sundry bows and acknowledgments walked away, thoroughly satisfied that he had made the most important and valuable additions to his stock of information.

"Wonderful man, Count Smortork," said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"Sound philosopher," said Mr. Pott.

"Clear-headed, strong-minded person," added Mr. Snodgrass.

A chorus of by-standers took up the shout of Count Smortork's praise, shook their heads sagely, and unanimously cried "Very!"

As the enthusiasm in Count Smortork's favor ran very high, his praises might have been sung until the end of the festivities, if the four something-eat singers had not ranged themselves in front of a small apple-tree, to look picturesque, and commenced singing their national songs, which appeared by no means difficult of execution, inasmuch as the grand secret seemed to be, that three of the something-eat singers should grunt, while the fourth howled. This interesting performance having concluded amidst the loud plaudits of the whole company, a boy forthwith proceeded to entangle himself with the rails of a chair, and to jump over it, and crawl under it, and fall down with it, and do every thing but sit upon it, and then to make a cravat of his legs, and tie them round his neck, and then to illustrate the ease with which a human being can be made to look like a magnified toad—all which feats yielded high delight and satisfaction to the assembled spectators. After which, the voice of Mrs. Pott was heard to chirp faintly forth, something which courtesy interpreted into a song, which was all very classical, and strictly in character, because Apollo was himself a composer, and composers can very seldom sing their own music or any body else's, either. This was succeeded by Mrs. Leo Hunter's recitation of her far-famed Ode to

an Expiring Frog, which was encored once, and would have been encored twice, if the major part of the guests, who thought it was high time to get something to eat, had not said that it was perfectly shameful to take advantage of Mrs. Hunter's good-nature. So although Mrs. Leo Hunter professed her perfect willingness to recite the ode again, her kind and considerate friends wouldn't hear of it on any account; and the refreshment-room being thrown open, all the people who had ever been there before scrambled in with all possible dispatch: Mrs. Leo Hunter's usual course of proceeding, being, to issue cards for a hundred, and breakfast for fifty, or in other words to feed only the very particular lions, and let the smaller animals take care of themselves.

"Where is Mr. Pott?" said Mrs. Leo Hunter, as she placed the aforesaid lions around her.

"Here I am," said the editor, from the remotest end of the room; far beyond all hope of food, unless something was done for him by the hostess.

"Won't you come up here?"

"Oh pray don't mind him," said Mrs. Pott, in the most obliging voice—"you give yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble, Mrs. Hunter. You'll do very well there, won't you—dear?"

"Certainly—love," replied the unhappy Pott, with a grim smile. Alas for the knout! The nervous arm that wielded it, with such gigantic force, on public characters, was paralyzed beneath the glance of the imperious Mrs. Pott.

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

"My dear, here's Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall."

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER XVI.

TOO FULL OF ADVENTURE TO BE BRIEFLY DESCRIBED.

THERE is no month in the whole year in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers—when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our minds as completely as they have disappeared from the earth—and yet what a pleasant time it is! Orchards and corn-fields ring with the hum of labor; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wooed the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very wagon, whose slow motion across the well-reaped field, is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.

As the coach rolls swiftly past the fields and orchards which skirt the road, groups of women and children, piling the fruit in sieves, or gathering the scattered ears of corn, pause for an instant from their labor, and shading the sun-burned face with a still browner hand, gaze upon the passengers with curious eyes, while some stout urchin, too small to work, but too mischievous to be left at home, scrambles over the side of the basket in which he has been deposited for security, and kicks and screams with delight. The reaper stops in his work, and stands with folded arms, looking at the vehicle as it whirls past; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach-team, which says, as plainly as a horse's glance can, "It's all very fine to look at, but slow going, over a heavy field, is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road, after all." You cast a look behind you, as you turn a corner of the road. The women and children have resumed their labor: the reaper once more stoops to his work; the cart-horses have moved on: and all are again in motion.

The influence of a scene like this, was not lost upon the well-regulated mind of Mr. Pickwick. Intent upon the resolution he had formed, of exposing the real character of the nefarious Jingle, in any quarter in which he might be pursuing his fraudulent designs, he sat at first taciturn and contemplative, brooding over the means by which his purpose could be best attained. By degrees his attention grew more and more attracted by the objects around him; and at last he derived as much enjoyment from the ride, as if it had been undertaken for the pleasantest reason in the world.

"Delightful prospect, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Beats the chimney-pots, sir," replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat.

"I suppose you have hardly seen any thing but chimney-pots and bricks and mortar all your life, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

to have it mangled when it's upon one, though—trying process—very."

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

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

"Halloo!" said Jingle. "Quite forgot—no directions to postilion—give 'em at once—back in a minute."

"The servant, or Mr. Hunter will do it in a moment, Mr. Fitz-Marshall," said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"No, no—I'll do it—sha'n't be long—back in no time," replied Jingle. With these words he disappeared among the crowd.

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

"He is a gentleman of fortune, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Leo Hunter, "to whom I very much want to introduce you. The Count will be delighted with him."

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

"Is at present at the Angel at Bury."

"At Bury?"

"At Bury St. Edmunds, not many miles from here. But dear me, Mr. Pickwick, you are not going to leave us: surely, Mr. Pickwick, you can not think of going so soon."

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

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

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

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

"To the Angel at Bury," replied Mr. Pickwick, speaking very quickly. "How do we know whom he is deceiving there? He deceived a worthy man once, and we were the innocent cause. He shall not do it again, if I can help it; I'll expose him! Where's my servant?"

"Here you are, sir," said Mr. Weller, emerging from a sequestered spot, where he had been engaged in discussing a bottle of Madeira, which he had abstracted from the breakfast-table, an hour or two before. "Here's your servant, sir. Proud o' the title, as the Living Skellinton said, ven they show'd him."

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

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



"I worn't always a boots, sir," said Mr. Weller, with a shake of the head. "I was a vagginer's boy, once."

"When was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"When I was first pitched neck and crop into the world, to play at leap-frog with its troubles," replied Sam. "I was a carrier's boy at startin'; then a vagginer's, then a helper, then a boots. Now I'm a gen'l'm'n's servant. I shall be a gen'l'm'n myself one of these days, perhaps, with a pipe in my mouth, and a summer-house in the back-garden. Who knows? I shouldn't be surprised, for one."

"You are quite a philosopher, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It runs in the family, I b'lieve, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "My father's very much in that line, now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out, and gets another. Then she screams very loud, and falls into 'steries; and he smokes very comfortably till she comes to agin. That's philosophy, sir, an't it?"

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

"Service, sir," exclaimed Sam. "You may say that. Arter I run away from the carrier, and afore I took up with the vagginer, I had unfurnished lodgin's for a fortnight."

"Unfurnished lodgings?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes—the dry arches of Waterloo Bridge. Fine sleeping-place—within ten minutes' walk of all the public offices—only if there is any objection to it, it is that the stitivation's *rayther* too airy. I see some queer sights there."

"Ah, I suppose you did," said Mr. Pickwick, with an air of considerable interest.

"Sights, sir," resumed Mr. Weller, "as 'ud penetrate your benevolent heart, and come out on the other side. You don't see the reg'lar wagrants there; trust 'em, they knows better than that. Young beggars, male and female, as hasn't made a rise in their profession, takes up their quarters there sometimes; but it's generally the worn-out, starving, houseless creeturs as rolls themselves in the dark corners o' them lonesome places—poor creeturs as an't up to the two-penny rope."

"And pray, Sam, what is the two-penny rope?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"The two-penny rope, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "is just a cheap lodgin'-house, where the beds is twopence a night."

"What do they call a bed a rope for?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your innocence, sir, that an't it," replied Sam. "Wen the lady and gen'l'm'n as keeps the Hot-el first begun business they used to make the beds on the floor; but this wouldn't do at no price, 'cos instead o' taking a moderate two-penn'orth o' sleep, the lodgers used to lie there half the day. So now they has two ropes, 'bout six foot apart, and three from the floor, which goes right down the room; and the beds are made of slips of coarse sackin', stretched across 'em."

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "the advantage o' the plan's hobvious. At six o'clock every mornin' they lets go the ropes at one end, and down falls all the lodgers. 'Consequence is, that being thoroughly waked, they get up very quietly, and walk away! Beg your pardon, sir," said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his loquacious discourse. "Is this Bury St. Edmunds?"

"It is," replied Mr. Pickwick.

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

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

"Right as a trivet, sir," replied Mr. Weller, with a wink of intelligence; and having dragged Mr. Pickwick's portmanteau from the hind boot, into which it had been hastily thrown when they joined the coach at Eatanswill, Mr. Weller disappeared on his errand. A private room was speedily engaged; and into it Mr. Pickwick was ushered without delay.

"Now Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "the first thing to be done is to—"

"Order dinner, sir," interposed Mr. Weller. "It's very late, sir."

"Ah, so it is," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at his watch. "You are right, Sam."

"And if I might advise, sir," added Mr. Weller, "I'd just have a good night's rest arterwards, and not begin inquiring arter this here deep 'un till the mornin'. There's nothin' so refreshin' as sleep, sir, as the servant-girl said afore she drank the egg-cupful o' laudanum."

"I think you are right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "But I must first ascertain that he is in the house, and not likely to go away."

"Leave that to me, sir," said Sam. "Let me order you a snug little dinner, and make my inquiries below while it's a-gettin' ready; I could worm ev'ry secret out o' the boots's heart in five minutes, sir."

"Do so," said Mr. Pickwick: and Mr. Weller at once retired.

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

"Now, sir," argued Mr. Weller, when he had concluded his report, "if I can get a talk with this here servant in the mornin', he'll tell me all his master's concerns."

"How do you know that?" interposed Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your dear heart, sir, servants always do," replied Mr. Weller.

"Oh, ah, I forgot that," said Mr. Pickwick. "Well."

"Then you can arrange what's best to be done, sir, and we can act according."

As it appeared that this was the best arrangement

that could be made, it was finally agreed upon. Mr. Weller, by his master's permission, retired to spend the evening in his own way; and was shortly afterwards elected, by the unanimous voice of the assembled company, into the tap-room chair, in which honorable post he acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen frequenters, that their roars of laughter and approbation penetrated to Mr. Pickwick's bedroom, and shortened the term of his natural rest by at least three hours.

Early on the ensuing morning, Mr. Weller was dispelling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a half-penny shower-bath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable-department, by the offer of that coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored), when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-colored livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book, with an air of deep abstraction, but who occasionally stole a glance at the individual under the pump, as if he took some interest in his proceedings, nevertheless.

"You're a rum 'un to look at, you are!" thought Mr. Weller, the first time his eyes encountered the glance of the stranger in the mulberry suit: who had a large, shallow, ugly face, very sunken eyes, and a gigantic head, from which depended a quantity of lank black hair. "You're a rum 'un!" thought Mr. Weller; and thinking this, he went on washing himself, and thought no more about him.

Still the man kept glancing from his hymn-book to Sam, and from Sam to his hymn-book, as if he wanted to open a conversation. So at last Sam, by way of giving him an opportunity, said with a familiar nod—

"How are you, governor?"

"I am happy to say, I am pretty well, sir," said the man, speaking with great deliberation, and closing the book. "I hope you are the same, sir?"

"Why, if I felt less like a walking brandy-bottle, I shouldn't be quite so staggered this mornin'," replied Sam. "Are you stoppin' in this house, old 'un?"

The mulberry man replied in the affirmative.

"How was it, you worn't one of us, last night?" inquired Sam, scrubbing his face with the towel. "You seem one of the jolly sort—looks as convivial as a live trout in a lime basket," added Mr. Weller, in an undertone.

"I was out last night, with my master," replied the stranger.

"What's his name?" inquired Mr. Weller, coloring up very red with sudden excitement, and the friction of the towel combined.

"Fitz-Marshall," said the mulberry man.

"Give us your hand," said Mr. Weller, advancing; "I should like to know you. I like your appearance, old fellow."

"Well, that is very strange," said the mulberry man, with great simplicity of manner. "I like yours so much, that I wanted to speak to you, from the very first moment I saw you under the pump."

"Did you though?"

"Upon my word. Now, isn't that curious?"

"Wery sing'ler," said Sam, inwardly congratulating himself upon the softness of the stranger. "What's your name, my patriarch?"

"Job."

"And a wery good name it is—only one I know, that ain't got a nickname to it. What's the other name?"

"Trotter," said the stranger. "What is yours?"

Sam bore in mind his master's caution, and replied, "My name's Walker; my master's name's Wilkins. Will you take a drop o' somethin' this mornin', Mr. Trotter?"

Mr. Trotter acquiesced in this agreeable proposal: and having deposited his book in his coat-pocket, accompanied Mr. Weller to the tap, where they were soon occupied in discussing an exhilarating compound, formed by mixing together, in a pewter vessel, certain quantities of British Hollands, and the fragrant essence of the clove.

"And what sort of a place have you got?" inquired Sam, as he filled his companion's glass, for the second time.

"Bad," said Job, smacking his lips, "very bad."

"You don't mean that?" said Sam.

"I do, indeed. Worse than that, my master's going to be married."

"No."

"Yes; and worse than that, too, he's going to run away with an immense rich heiress, from boarding-school."

"What a dragon!" said Sam, refilling his companion's glass. "It's some boarding-school in this town, I suppose, ain't it?"

Now although this question was put in the most careless tone imaginable, Mr. Job Trotter plainly showed by gestures, that he perceived his new friend's anxiety to draw forth an answer to it. He emptied his glass, looked mysteriously at his companion, winked both of his small eyes, one after the other, and finally made a motion with his arm, as if he were working an imaginary pump-handle: thereby intimating that he (Mr. Trotter) considered himself as undergoing the process of being pumped, by Mr. Samuel Weller.

"No, no," said Mr. Trotter, in conclusion, "that's not to be told to every body. That is a secret—a great secret, Mr. Walker."

As the mulberry man said this, he turned his glass upside down, as a means of reminding his companion that he had nothing left wherewith to slake his thirst. Sam observed the hint; and feeling the delicate manner in which it was conveyed, ordered the pewter vessel to be refilled, whereat the small eyes of the mulberry man glistened.

"And so it's a secret?" said Sam.

"I should rather suspect it was," said the mulberry man, sipping his liquor, with a complacent face.

"I suppose your mas'r's wery rich?" said Sam.

Mr. Trotter smiled, and holding his glass in his left hand, gave four distinct slaps on the pocket of his mulberry indescribables with his right, as if to intimate that his master might have done the same without alarming any body much, by the chinking of coin.

"Ah," said Sam, "that's the game, is it?"

The mulberry man nodded significantly.