

returning the card to the lame man, informing him it was all a mistake, whispered to Mr. Pickwick, as the man turned away in dudgeon, that he was only a bail.

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"A bail," replied Perker.

"A bail!"

"Yes, my dear sir—half a dozen of 'em here. Bail you to any amount, and only charge half a crown. Curious trade, isn't it?" said Perker, regaling himself with a pinch of snuff.

"What! Am I to understand that these men earn a livelihood by waiting about here, to perjure themselves before the judges of the land, at the rate of half a crown a crime?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite aghast at the disclosure.

"Why, I don't exactly know about perjury, my dear sir," replied the little gentleman. "Harsh word, my dear sir, very harsh word indeed. It's a legal fiction, my dear sir, nothing more." Saying which, the attorney shrugged his shoulders, smiled, took a second pinch of snuff and led the way into the office of the judge's clerk.

This was a room of specially dirty appearance, with a very low ceiling and old paneled walls; and so badly lighted, that although it was broad day outside, great tallow candles were burning on the desks. At one end was a door leading to the judge's private apartment, round which were congregated a crowd of attorneys and managing clerks, who were called in in the order in which their respective appointments stood upon the file. Every time this door was opened to let a party out, the next party made a violent rush to get in; and, as in addition to the numerous dialogues which passed between the gentlemen who were waiting to see the judge, a variety of personal squabbles ensued between the greater part of those who had seen him, there was as much noise as could well be raised in an apartment of such confined dimensions.

Nor were the conversations of these gentlemen the only sounds that broke upon the ear. Standing on a box behind a wooden bar at another end of the room was a clerk in spectacles, who was "taking the affidavits;" large batches of which were, from time to time, carried into the private room by another clerk for the judge's signature. There were a large number of attorneys' clerks to be sworn; and it being a moral impossibility to swear them all at once, the struggles of these gentlemen to reach the clerk in spectacles were like those of a crowd to get in at the pit door of a theatre when Gracious Majesty honors it with its presence. Another functionary from time to time exercised his lungs in calling over the names of those who had been sworn, for the purpose of restoring to them their affidavits after they had been signed by the judge, which gave rise to a few more scuffles; and all these things going on at the same time, occasioned as much bustle as the most active and excitable person could desire to behold. There were yet another class of persons—those who were waiting to attend summonses their employers had taken out, which it was optional to the attorney on the opposite side to attend or not—and whose business it was, from time to time, to cry out the opposite attorney's name, to make cer-

tain that he was not in attendance without their knowledge.

For example. Leaning against the wall, close beside the seat Mr. Pickwick had taken, was an officelad of fourteen with a tenor voice; near him, a common-law clerk with a bass one.

A clerk hurried in with a bundle of papers, and stared about him.

"Sniggle and Blink," cried the tenor.

"Porkin and Snob," growled the bass.

"Stumpy and Deacon," said the new-comer.

Nobody answered; the next man who came in was hailed by the whole three; and he in his turn shouted for another firm; and then somebody else roared in a loud voice for another; and so forth.

All this time, the man in the spectacles was hard at work swearing the clerks: the oath being invariably administered, without any effort at punctuation, and usually in the following terms:

"Take the book in your right hand this is your name and hand-writing you swear that the contents of this your affidavit are true so help you God a shilling you must get change I haven't got it."

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "I suppose they are getting the *habeas corpus* ready."

"Yes," said Sam, "and I wish they'd bring out the have-his-carcass. It's very unpleasant keepin' us waitin' here. I'd ha' got half a dozen have-his-carcasses ready, pack'd up and all, by this time."

What sort of cumbersome and unmanageable machine, Sam Weller imagined a *habeas corpus* to be, does not appear; for Perker, at that moment, walked up, and took Mr. Pickwick away.

The usual forms having been gone through, the body of Samuel Pickwick was soon afterward confided to the custody of the tipstaff, to be by him taken to the Warden of the Fleet Prison, and there detained until the amount of the damages and costs in the action of Bardell against Pickwick was fully paid and satisfied.

"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, laughing, "will be a very long time. Sam, call another hackney-coach. Perker, my dear friend, good-bye."

"I shall go with you, and see you safe there," said Perker.

"Indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, "I would rather go without any other attendant than Sam. As soon as I get settled, I will write and let you know, and I shall expect you immediately. Until then, good-bye."

As Mr. Pickwick said this, he got into the coach, which had by this time arrived, followed by the tipstaff. Sam having stationed himself on the box, it rolled away.

"A most extraordinary man that!" said Perker, as he stopped to pull on his gloves.

"What a bankrupt he'd make, sir," observed Mr. Lowten, who was standing near. "How he would bother the commissioners! He'd set 'em at defiance if they talked of committing him, sir."

The attorney did not appear very much delighted with his clerk's professional estimate of Mr. Pickwick's character, for he walked away without deigning any reply.

The hackney-coach jolted along Fleet Street, as hackney-coaches usually do. The horses "went bet-

ter," the driver said, when they had any thing before them (they must have gone at a most extraordinary pace when there was nothing), and so the vehicle kept behind a cart; when the cart stopped, it stopped; and when the cart went on again, it did the same. Mr. Pickwick sat opposite the tipstaff; and the tipstaff sat with his hat between his knees, whistling a tune, and looking out of the coach window.

Time performs wonders. By the powerful old gentleman's aid, even a hackney-coach gets over half a mile of ground. They stopped at length, and Mr. Pickwick alighted at the gate of the Fleet.

The tipstaff, looking over his shoulder to see that his charge was following close at his heels, preceded Mr. Pickwick into the prison; turning to the left, after they had entered, they passed through an open door into a lobby, from which a heavy gate opposite to that by which they had entered, and which was guarded by a stout turnkey with the key in his hand, led at once into the interior of the prison.

Here they stopped, while the tipstaff delivered his papers; and here Mr. Pickwick was apprised that he would remain, until he had undergone the ceremony, known to the initiated as "sitting for your portrait."

"Sitting for my portrait!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Having your likeness taken, sir," replied the stout turnkey. "We're capital hands at likenesses here. Take 'em in no time, and always exact. Walk in, sir, and make yourself at home."

Mr. Pickwick complied with the invitation, and sat himself down; when Mr. Weller, who stationed himself at the back of the chair, whispered that the sitting was merely another term for undergoing an inspection by the different turnkeys, in order that they might know prisoners from visitors.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "then I wish the artists would come. This is rather a public place."

"They von't be long, sir, I des-say," replied Sam. "There's a Dutch clock, sir."

"So I see," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"And a bird-cage, sir," says Sam. "Veels vithin veels, a prison in a prison. Ain't it, sir?"

As Mr. Weller made this philosophical remark, Mr. Pickwick was aware that his sitting had commenced. The stout turnkey having been relieved from the lock, sat down, and looked at him carelessly from time to time, while a long thin man who had relieved him thrust his hands beneath his coat-tails, and planting himself opposite, took a good long view of him. A third rather surly-looking gentleman, who had apparently been disturbed at his tea, for he was disposing of the last remnant of a crust and butter when he came in, stationed himself close to Mr. Pickwick, and, resting his hands on his hips, inspected him narrowly; while two others mixed with the group, and studied his features with most intent and thoughtful faces. Mr. Pickwick winced a good deal under the operation, and appeared to sit very uneasily in his chair; but he made no remark to any body while it was being performed, not even to Sam, who reclined upon the back of the chair, reflecting, partly on the situation of his master, and partly on the great satisfaction it would have afforded him to make a fierce assault upon all the turnkeys there

assembled, one after the other, if it were lawful and peaceable so to do.

At length the likeness was completed, and Mr. Pickwick was informed that he might now proceed into the prison.

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, I don't rightly know about to-night," replied the stout turnkey. "You'll be chummed on somebody to-morrow, and then you'll be all snug and comfortable. The first night's generally rather unsettled, but you'll be set all squares to-morrow."

After some discussion, it was discovered that one of the turnkeys had a bed to let, which Mr. Pickwick could have for that night. He gladly agreed to hire it.

"If you'll come with me, I'll show it you at once," said the man. "It ain't a large 'un; but it's an out-and-outer to sleep in. This way, sir."

They passed through the inner gate, and descended a short flight of steps. The key was turned after them; and Mr. Pickwick found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of a debtor's prison.

## CHAPTER XLI.

WHAT BEFELL MR. PICKWICK WHEN HE GOT INTO THE FLEET; WHAT PRISONERS HE SAW THERE; AND HOW HE PASSED THE NIGHT.

MR. TOM ROKER, the gentleman who had accompanied Mr. Pickwick into the prison, turned sharp round to the right when he got to the bottom of the little flight of steps, and led the way, through an iron gate which stood open, and up another short flight of steps, into a long, narrow gallery, dirty and low, paved with stone, and very dimly lighted by a window at each remote end.

"This," said the gentleman, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking carelessly over his shoulder to Mr. Pickwick, "this here is the hall flight."

"Oh," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking down a dark and filthy staircase, which appeared to lead to a range of damp and gloomy stone vaults beneath the ground, "and those, I suppose, are the little cellars where the prisoners keep their small quantities of coals. Unpleasant places to have to go down to, but very convenient, I dare say."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder if they was convenient," replied the gentleman, "seeing that a few people live there, pretty snug. That's the Fair, that is."

"My friend," said Mr. Pickwick, "you don't really mean to say that human beings live down in those wretched dungeons?"

"Don't I?" replied Mr. Roker, with indignant astonishment; "why shouldn't I?"

"Live! Live down there!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Live down there! Yes, and die down there, too, very often!" replied Mr. Roker; "and what of that? Who's got to say any thing agin it? Live down there! Yes, and a very good place it is to live in, ain't it?"

As Roker turned somewhat fiercely upon Mr. Pick-



wick in saying this, and moreover muttered in an excited fashion certain unpleasant invocations concerning his own eyes, limbs, and circulating fluids, the latter gentleman deemed it advisable to pursue the discourse no further. Mr. Roker then proceeded to mount another staircase, as dirty as that which led to the place which had just been the subject of discussion, in which ascent he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and Sam.

"There," said Mr. Roker, pausing for breath when they reached another gallery of the same dimensions as the one below, "this is the coffee-room flight; the one above's the third, and the one above that's the top; and the room where you're agoing to sleep to-night is the warden's room, and it's this way—come on." Having said all this in a breath, Mr. Roker mounted another flight of stairs, with Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller following at his heels.

These staircases received light from sundry windows placed at some little distance above the floor, and looking into a graveled area bounded by a high brick wall, with iron *chevaux-de-frise* at the top. This area, it appeared from Mr. Roker's statement, was the racket-ground; and it further appeared, on the testimony of the same gentleman, that there was a smaller area in that portion of the prison which was nearest Farringdon Street, denominated and called "the Painted Ground," from the fact of its walls having once displayed the semblances of various men-of-war in full sail, and other artistical effects achieved in by-gone times by some imprisoned draughtsman in his leisure hours.

Having communicated this piece of information, apparently more for the purpose of discharging his bosom of an important fact, than with any specific view of enlightening Mr. Pickwick, the guide, having at length reached another gallery, led the way into a small passage at the extreme end, opened a door, and disclosed an apartment of an appearance by no means inviting, containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

"There," said Mr. Roker, holding the door open, and looking triumphantly round at Mr. Pickwick, "there's a room!"

Mr. Pickwick's face, however, betokened such a very trifling portion of satisfaction at the appearance of his lodging, that Mr. Roker looked for a reciprocity of feeling into the countenance of Samuel Weller, who until now had observed a dignified silence.

"There's a room, young man," observed Mr. Roker.

"I see it," replied Sam, with a placid nod of the head.

"You wouldn't think to find such a room as this in the Farringdon Hotel, would you?" said Mr. Roker, with a complacent smile.

To this Mr. Weller replied with an easy and unstudied closing of one eye; which might be considered to mean, either that he would have thought it, or that he would not have thought it, or that he had never thought any thing at all about it: as the observer's imagination suggested. Having executed this feat, and reopened his eye, Mr. Weller proceeded to inquire which was the individual bedstead that Mr. Roker had so flatteringly described as an out-an-outer to sleep in.

"That's it," replied Mr. Roker, pointing to a very rusty one in a corner. "It would make any one go to sleep, that bedstead would, whether they wanted to or not."

"I should think," said Sam, eying the piece of furniture in question with a look of excessive disgust, "I should think poppies was nothing to it."

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Roker.

"And I s'pose," said Sam, with a sidelong glance at his master, as if to see whether there were any symptoms of his determination being shaken by what passed, "I s'pose the other gen'l'men as sleeps here are gen'l'men."

"Nothing but it," said Mr. Roker. "One of 'em takes his twelve pints of ale a day, and never leaves off smoking even at his meals."

"He must be a first-rater," said Sam.

"A 1," replied Mr. Roker.

Nothing daunted, even by this intelligence, Mr. Pickwick smilingly announced his determination to test the powers of the narcotic bedstead for that night; and Mr. Roker, after informing him that he could retire to rest at whatever hour he thought proper, without any further notice or formality, walked off, leaving him standing with Sam in the gallery.

It was getting dark; that is to say, a few gas jets were kindled in this place which was never light, by way of compliment to the evening, which had set in outside. As it was rather warm, some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand, had set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them as he passed along, with great curiosity and interest. Here four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, were engaged in noisy and riotous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all-fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room, some solitary tenant might be seen, poring, by the light of a feeble tallow-candle, over a bundle of soiled and tattered papers, yellow with dust, and dropping to pieces from age: writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances, for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch. In a third, a man, with his wife and a whole crowd of children, might be seen making up a scanty bed on the ground, or upon a few chairs, for the younger ones to pass the night in. And in a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh, the noise, and the beer, and the tobacco-smoke, and the cards, all came over again in greater force than before.

In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the staircases, there lingered a great number of people, who came there, some because their rooms were empty and lonesome, others because their rooms were full and hot: the greater part because they were restless and uncomfortable, and not possessed of the secret of exactly knowing what to do with themselves. There were many classes of people here, from the laboring man in his fustian jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl dressing-gown, most appropriately out at elbows; but there was the same air about them all—a listless, jail-bird, careless swagger, a vagabondish who's-

afraid sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words, but which any man can understand in one moment if he wish, by setting foot in the nearest debtor's prison, and looking at the very first group of people he sees there with the same interest as Mr. Pickwick did.

"It strikes me, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, leaning over the iron rail at the stairhead, "it strikes me, Sam, that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all."

"Think not, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"You see how these fellows drink, and smoke, and roar," replied Mr. Pickwick. "It's quite impossible that they can mind it much."

"Ah, that's just the wery thing, sir," rejoined Sam, "they don't mind it; it's a regular holiday to them—all porter and skittles. It's the t'other vuns as gets done over with this sort o' thing: them down-hearted fellers as can't svig away at the beer, nor play at skittles neither; them as would pay if they could, and gets low by being boxed up. I'll tell you wot it is, sir; them as is always a-idlin' in public-houses it don't damage at all, and them as is always a-workin' wen they can, it damages too much. 'It's unekal,' as my father used to say wen his grog worn't made half-and-half: 'it's unekal, and that's the fault on it.'"

"I think you're right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, after a few moments' reflection, "quite right."

"Praps, now and then, there's some honest people as likes it," observed Mr. Weller, in a ruminative tone, "but I never heerd o' one as I can call to mind, 'cept the little dirty-faced man in the brown coat; and that was force of habit."

"And who was he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Wy, that's just the wery point as nobody never know'd," replied Sam.

"But what did he do?"

"Wy, he did wot many men as has been much better know'd has done in their time, sir," replied Sam, "he run a match agin the constable, and vun it."

"In other words, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick, "he got into debt."

"Just that, sir," replied Sam, "and in course o' time he come here in consekens. It warn't much—execution for nine pound nothin', multiplied by five for costs; but hows'ever here he stopped for seventeen year. If he got any wrinkles in his face, they was stopped up with the dirt, for both the dirty face and the brown coat was just the same at the end o' that time as they was at the beginnin'. He was a wery peaceful inoffendin' little creetur, and was always a-bustlin' about for somebody, or playin' rackets and never vinnin'; till at last the turnkeys they got quite fond on him, and he was in the lodge ev'ry night, a-chattering vith 'em, and tellin' stories, and all that 'ere. Vun night he was in there as usual, along vith a wery old friend of his as was on the lock, ven he says all of a sudden, 'I ain't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says (Fleet Market was there at that time)—'I ain't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says, 'for seventeen year.' 'I know you ain't,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe. 'I should like to see it for a minit, Bill,' he says. 'Wery probable,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe wery fierce, and

making believe he warn't up to wot the little man wanted. 'Bill,' says the little man, more abrupt than afore, 'I've got the fancy in my head. Let me see the public streets once more afore I die; and if I ain't struck with apoplexy, I'll be back in five minits by the clock.' 'And wot 'ud become o' me if you was struck with apoplexy?' said the turnkey. 'Wy,' says the little creetur, 'whoever found me, 'ud bring me home, for I've got my card in my pocket, Bill,' he says, 'No. 20, Coffee-room Flight;' and that was true, sure enough, for wen he wanted to make the acquaintance of any new-comer, he used to pull out a little limp card with them words on it and nothin' else; in consideration of vich, he was always called Number Twenty. The turnkey takes a fixed look at him, and at last he says in a solemn manner, 'Twenty,' he says, 'I'll trust you; you won't get your old friend into trouble.' 'No, my boy; I hope I've somethin' better behind here,' says the little man; and as he said it he hit his little veskit wery hard, and then a tear started out o' each eye, which was wery extraordinary, for it was supposed as water never touched his face. He shook the turnkey by the hand; out he vent—"

"And never came back again," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wrong for vunce, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "for back he come, two minits afore the time, a-bilin' with rage: sayin' how he'd been nearly run over by a hackney-coach: that he warn't used to it: and he was blowed if he wouldn't write to the Lord Mayor. They got him pacified at last; and for five years arter that, he never even so much as peeped out o' the lodge-gate."

"At the expiration of that time he died, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No he didn't, sir," replied Sam. "He got a curiosity to go and taste the beer at a new public-house over the way, and it was such a wery nice parlor, that he took it into his head to go there every night, wich he did for a long time, always comin' back reg'lar about a quarter of an hour afore the gate shut, wich was all wery snug and comfortable. At last he began to get so precious jolly, that he used to forget how the time vent, or care nothin' at all about it, and he vent on gettin' later and later, till vun night his old friend was just a-shuttin' the gate—had turned the key, in fact—wen he come up. 'Hold hard, Bill,' he says. 'Wot, ain't you come home yet, Twenty?' says the turnkey, 'I thought you was in long ago.' 'No I wasn't,' says the little man, vith a smile. 'Well, then, I'll tell you wot it is, my friend,' says the turnkey, openin' the gate wery slow and sulky, 'it's my 'pinion as you've got into bad company o' late, wich I'm wery sorry to see. Now, I don't wish to do nothing harsh,' he says, 'but if you can't confine yourself to steady circles, and find your vay back at reglar hours, as sure as you're a-standin' there, I'll shut you out altogether!' The little man was seized vith a wiolet fit o' tremblin', and never vent outside the prison walls artervards!"

As Sam concluded, Mr. Pickwick slowly retraced his steps down stairs. After a few thoughtful turns in the Painted Ground, which, as it was now dark, was nearly deserted, he intimated to Mr. Weller that he thought it high time for him to withdraw for the night; requesting him to seek a bed in some adja-



cent public-house, and return early in the morning, to make arrangements for the removal of his master's wardrobe from the George and Vulture. This request Mr. Samuel Weller prepared to obey with as good a grace as he could assume, but with a very considerable show of reluctance, nevertheless. He even went so far as to essay sundry ineffectual hints regarding the expediency of stretching himself on the gravel for that night; but finding Mr. Pickwick obstinately deaf to any such suggestions, finally withdrew.

There is no disguising the fact that Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable; not for lack of society, for the prison was very full, and a bottle of wine would at once have purchased the utmost good-fellowship of a few choice spirits, without any more formal ceremony of introduction; but he was alone in the coarse, vulgar crowd, and felt the depression of spirit and sinking of heart naturally consequent on the reflection that he was cooped and caged up, without a prospect of liberation. As to the idea of releasing himself by ministering to the sharpness of Dodson and Fogg, it never for an instant entered his thoughts.

In this frame of mind he turned again into the coffee-room gallery, and walked slowly to and fro. The place was intolerably dirty, and the smell of tobacco-smoke perfectly suffocating. There was a perpetual slamming and banging of doors as the people went in and out; and the noise of their voices and footsteps echoed and re-echoed through the passages constantly. A young woman, with a child in her arms, who seemed scarcely able to crawl, from emaciation and misery, was walking up and down the passage in conversation with her husband, who had no other place to see her in. As they passed Mr. Pickwick, he could hear the female sob; and once she burst into such a passion of grief, that she was compelled to lean against the wall for support, while the man took the child in his arms, and tried to soothe her.

Mr. Pickwick's heart was really too full to bear it, and he went up stairs to bed.

Now, although the warden's room was a very uncomfortable one (being, in every point of decoration and convenience, several hundred degrees inferior to the common infirmary of a county jail), it had at present the merit of being wholly deserted save by Mr. Pickwick himself. So he sat down at the foot of his little iron bedstead, and began to wonder how much a year the warden made out of the dirty room. Having satisfied himself, by mathematical calculation, that the apartment was about equal in annual value to the freehold of a small street in the suburbs of London, he took to wondering what possible temptation could have induced a dingy-looking fly that was crawling over his pantaloons, to come into a close prison, when he had the choice of so many airy situations—a course of meditation which led him to the irresistible conclusion that the insect was mad. After settling this point, he began to be conscious that he was getting sleepy; whereupon he took his night-cap out of the pocket in which he had had the precaution to stow it in the morning, and, leisurely undressing himself, got into bed, and fell asleep.

"Bravo! Heel over toe—cut and shuffle—pay

away at it, Zephyr! I'm smothered if the Opera-house isn't your proper hemisphere. Keep it up! Hooray!" These expressions, delivered in a most boisterous tone, and accompanied with loud peals of laughter, roused Mr. Pickwick from one of those sound slumbers which, lasting in reality some half-hour, seem to the sleeper to have been protracted for three weeks or a month.

The voice had no sooner ceased than the room was shaken with such violence that the windows rattled in their frames, and the bedsteads trembled again. Mr. Pickwick started up, and remained for some minutes fixed in mute astonishment at the scene before him.

On the floor of the room, a man in a broad-skirted green coat, with corduroy knee-smalls and gray cotton stockings, was performing the most popular steps of a hornpipe, with a slang and burlesque caricature of grace and lightness which, combined with the very appropriate character of his costume, was inexpressibly absurd. Another man, evidently very drunk, who had probably been tumbled into bed by his companions, was sitting up between the sheets, warbling as much as he could recollect of a comic song, with the most intensely sentimental feeling and expression; while a third, seated on one of the bedsteads, was applauding both performers with the air of a profound connoisseur, and encouraging them by such ebullitions of feeling as had already roused Mr. Pickwick from his sleep.

This last man was an admirable specimen of a class of gentry which never can be seen in full perfection but in such places;—they may be met with, in an imperfect state, occasionally about stable-yards and public-houses; but they never attain their full bloom except in these hot-beds, which would almost seem to be considerably provided by the Legislature for the sole purpose of rearing them.

He was a tall fellow, with an olive complexion, long, dark hair, and very thick, bushy whiskers meeting under his chin. He wore no neckerchief, as he had been playing rackets all day, and his open shirt-collar displayed their full luxuriance. On his head he wore one of the common eighteen-penny French skull-caps, with a gaudy tassel dangling therefrom, very happily in keeping with a common fustian coat. His legs, which, being long, were afflicted with weakness, graced a pair of Oxford-mixture trowsers, made to show the full symmetry of those limbs. Being somewhat negligently braced, however, and moreover, but imperfectly buttoned, they fell in a series of not the most graceful folds over a pair of shoes sufficiently down at heel to display a pair of very soiled white stockings. There was a rakish, vagabond smartness, and a kind of boastful rascality, about the whole man, that was worth a mine of gold.

This figure was the first to perceive that Mr. Pickwick was looking on; upon which he winked to the Zephyr, and entreated him, with mock gravity, not to wake the gentleman.

"Why, bless the gentleman's honest heart and soul!" said the Zephyr, turning round and affecting the extremity of surprise; "the gentleman is awake. Hem, Shakspeare! How do you do, sir? How is Mary and Sarah, sir? and the dear old lady at home,

sir? Will you have the kindness to put my compliments into the first little parcel you're sending that way, sir, and say that I would have sent 'em before, only I was afraid they might be broken in the wagon, sir?"

"Don't overwhelm the gentleman with ordinary civilities when you see he's anxious to have something to drink," said the gentleman with the whiskers, with a jocose air. "Why don't you ask the gentleman what he'll take?"

"Dear me, I quite forgot," replied the other. "What will you take, sir? Will you take port-wine, sir, or sherry-wine, sir? I can recommend the ale, sir; or perhaps you'd like to taste the porter, sir? Allow me to have the felicity of hanging up your night-cap, sir."

him of a considerable portion of the commodity which sometimes bears his name, and then, recapturing his night-cap, boldly placed himself in an attitude of defense.

"Now," said Mr. Pickwick, gasping no less from excitement than from the expenditure of so much energy, "come on—both of you—both of you!" With this liberal invitation the worthy gentleman communicated a revolving motion to his clenched fists, by way of appalling his antagonists with a display of science.

It might have been Mr. Pickwick's very unexpected gallantry, or it might have been the complicated manner in which he had got himself out of bed, and fallen all in a mass upon the hornpipe man, that touched his adversaries. Touched they were; for,



"COME ON—BOTH OF YOU—BOTH OF YOU!"

With this, the speaker snatched that article of dress from Mr. Pickwick's head, and fixed it in a twinkling on that of the drunken man, who, firmly impressed with the belief that he was delighting a numerous assembly, continued to hammer away at the comic song in the most melancholy strains imaginable.

Taking a man's night-cap from his brow by violent means, and adjusting it on the head of an unknown gentleman of dirty exterior, however ingenious a witticism in itself, is unquestionably one of those which come under the denomination of practical jokes. Viewing the matter precisely in this light, Mr. Pickwick, without the slightest intimation of his purpose, sprang vigorously out of bed, struck the Zephyr so smart a blow in the chest as to deprive

instead of then and there making an attempt to commit manslaughter, as Mr. Pickwick implicitly believed they would have done, they paused, stared at each other a short time, and finally laughed outright.

"Well, you're a trump, and I like you all the better for it," said the Zephyr. "Now jump into bed again, or you'll catch the rheumatics. No malice, I hope?" said the man, extending a hand the size of the yellow clump of fingers which sometimes swings over a glover's door.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Pickwick with great alacrity; for, now that the excitement was over, he began to feel rather cool about the legs.

"Allow me the honor," said the gentleman with the whiskers, presenting his dexter hand, and aspiring the h.



"With much pleasure, sir," said Mr. Pickwick; and having executed a very long and solemn shake, he got into bed again.

"My name is Smangle, sir," said the man with the whiskers.

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Mine is Mivins," said the man in the stockings.

"I am delighted to hear it, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hem," coughed Mr. Smangle.

"Did you speak, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"No, I did not, sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"I thought you did, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

All this was very genteel and pleasant; and, to make matters still more comfortable, Mr. Smangle assured Mr. Pickwick a great many times that he entertained a very high respect for the feelings of a gentleman; which sentiment, indeed, did him infinite credit, as he could be in nowise supposed to understand them.

"Are you going through the Court, sir?" inquired Mr. Smangle.

"Through the what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Through the Court—Portugal Street—the Court for the Relief of—you know."

"Oh no," replied Mr. Pickwick. "No, I am not."

"Going out, perhaps?" suggested Mivins.

"I fear not," replied Mr. Pickwick. "I refuse to pay some damages, and am here in consequence."

"Ah," said Mr. Smangle, "paper has been my ruin."

"A stationer, I presume, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick, innocently.

"Stationer! No, no; confound and curse me! Not so low as that. No trade. When I say paper, I mean bills."

"Oh, you use the word in that sense. I see," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Damm! A gentleman must expect reverses," said Smangle. "What of that? Here am I in the Fleet Prison. Well; good. What then? I'm none the worse for that, am I?"

"Not a bit," replied Mr. Mivins. And he was quite right; for, so far from Mr. Smangle being any the worse for it, he was something the better, inasmuch as to qualify himself for the place, he had attained gratuitous possession of certain articles of jewelry which long before that had found their way to the pawnbroker's.

"Well; but come," said Mr. Smangle; "this is dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burned sherry; the last-comer shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentleman-like division of labor, anyhow. Curse me!"

Unwilling to hazard another quarrel, Mr. Pickwick gladly assented to the proposition, and consigned the money to Mr. Mivins, who, as it was nearly eleven o'clock, lost no time in repairing to the coffee-room on his errand.

"I say," whispered Smangle, the moment his friend had left the room, "what did you give him?"

"Half a sovereign," said Mr. Pickwick.

"He's a devilish pleasant, gentlemanly dog," said Mr. Smangle;—"infernal pleasant. I don't know any body more so; but—" Here Mr. Smangle stopped short, and shook his head dubiously.

"You don't think there is any probability of his appropriating the money to his own use?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh no! Mind, I don't say that; I expressly say that he's a devilish gentlemanly fellow," said Mr. Smangle. "But I think, perhaps, if somebody went down just to see that he didn't dip his beak into the jug by accident, or make some confounded mistake in losing the money as he came up stairs, it would be as well. Here, you sir, just run down stairs, and look after that gentleman, will you?"

This request was addressed to a little, timid-looking, nervous man, whose appearance bespoke great poverty, and who had been crouching on his bedstead all this while, apparently stupefied by the novelty of his situation.

"You know where the coffee-room is," said Smangle; "just run down, and tell that gentleman you've come to help him up with the jug. Or—stop—I'll tell you what—I'll tell you how we'll do him," said Smangle, with a cunning look.

"How?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Send down word that he's to spend the change in cigars. Capital thought. Run and tell him that; d'ye hear? They sha'n't be wasted," continued Smangle, turning to Mr. Pickwick. "I'll smoke em."

This manœuvring was so exceedingly ingenious, and, withal, performed with such immovable composure and coolness, that Mr. Pickwick would have had no wish to disturb it, even if he had had the power. In a short time Mr. Mivins returned, bearing the sherry, which Mr. Smangle dispensed in two little cracked mugs: considerably remarking, with reference to himself, that a gentleman must not be particular under such circumstances, and that, for his part, he was not too proud to drink out of the jug. In which, to show his sincerity, he forthwith pledged the company in a draught which half emptied it.

An excellent understanding having been by these means promoted, Mr. Smangle proceeded to entertain his hearers with a relation of divers romantic adventures in which he had been from time to time engaged, involving various interesting anecdotes of a thorough-bred horse and a magnificent Jewess, both of surpassing beauty, and much coveted by the nobility and gentry of these kingdoms.

Long before these elegant extracts from the biography of a gentleman were concluded, Mr. Mivins had betaken himself to bed, and had set in snoring for the night, leaving the timid stranger and Mr. Pickwick to the full benefit of Mr. Smangle's experiences.

Nor were the two last-named gentlemen as much edified as they might have been, by the moving passages narrated. Mr. Pickwick had been in a state of slumber for some time, when he had a faint perception of the drunken man bursting out afresh with the comic song, and receiving from Mr. Smangle a gentle intimation, through the medium of the water-jug, that his audience were not musically disposed. Mr. Pickwick then once again dropped off to sleep, with a confused consciousness that Mr. Smangle was still engaged in relating a long story, the chief point of which appeared to be that, on some occasion particularly stated and set forth, he had "done" a bill and a gentleman at the same time.

## CHAPTER XLII.

ILLUSTRATIVE, LIKE THE PRECEDING ONE, OF THE OLD PROVERB, THAT ADVERSITY BRINGS A MAN ACQUAINTED WITH STRANGE BED-FELLOWS. LIKEWISE CONTAINING MR. PICKWICK'S EXTRAORDINARY AND STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT TO MR. SAMUEL WELLER.

WHEN Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object upon which they rested was Samuel Weller, seated upon a small black portmanteau, intently regarding, apparently in a condition of profound abstraction, the stately figure of the dashing Mr. Smangle: while Mr. Smangle himself, who was already partially dressed, was seated on his bedstead, occupied in the desperately hopeless attempt of staring Mr. Weller out of countenance. We say desperately hopeless, because Sam, with a comprehensive gaze which took in Mr. Smangle's cap, feet, head, face, legs, and whiskers, all at the same time, continued to look steadily on, with every demonstration of lively satisfaction, but with no more regard to Mr. Smangle's personal sentiments on the subject than he would have displayed had he been inspecting a wooden statue, or a straw-embowelled Guy Faux.

"Well; will you know me again?" said Mr. Smangle, with a frown.

"I'd swear to you anyveres, sir," replied Sam, cheerfully.

"Don't be impertinent to a gentleman, sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"Not on no account," replied Sam. "If you'll tell me wen he wakes, I'll be upon the very best extra-super behavior!" This observation, having a remote tendency to imply that Mr. Smangle was no gentleman, kindled his ire.

"Mivins!" said Mr. Smangle, with a passionate air.

"What's the office?" replied that gentleman from his couch.

"Who the devil is this fellow?"

"Gad," said Mr. Mivins, looking lazily out from under the bed-clothes, "I ought to ask you that. Hasn't he any business here?"

"No," replied Mr. Smangle.

"Then knock him down stairs, and tell him not to presume to get up till I come and kick him," rejoined Mr. Mivins; with this prompt advice, that excellent gentleman again betook himself to slumber.

The conversation exhibiting these unequivocal symptoms of verging on the personal, Mr. Pickwick deemed it a fit point at which to interpose.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Sir," rejoined that gentleman.

"Has any thing new occurred since last night?"

"Nothin' partickler, sir," replied Sam, glancing at Mr. Smangle's whiskers; "the late prewailance of a close and confined atmosphere has been rayther favorable to the growth of veeds, of an alarmin' and sangvinary natur; but vith that 'ere exception things is quiet enough."

"I shall get up," said Mr. Pickwick; "give me some clean things."

Whatever hostile intentions Mr. Smangle might have entertained, his thoughts were speedily diverted by the unpacking of the portmanteau; the con-

tents of which appeared to impress him at once with a most favorable opinion, not only of Mr. Pickwick, but of Sam also, who, he took an early opportunity of declaring in a tone of voice loud enough for that eccentric personage to overhear, was a regular thorough-bred original, and consequently the very man after his own heart. As to Mr. Pickwick, the affection he conceived for him knew no limits.

"Now is there any thing I can do for you, my dear sir?" said Smangle.

"Nothing that I am aware of, I am obliged to you," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"No linen that you want sent to the washer-woman's? I know a delightful washer-woman outside that comes for my things twice a week; and, by Jove!—how devilish lucky!—this is the day she calls. Shall I put any of those little things up with mine? Don't say any thing about the trouble. Confound and curse it! if one gentleman under a cloud is not to put himself a little out of the way to assist another gentleman in the same condition, what's human nature?"

Thus spake Mr. Smangle, edging himself meanwhile as near as possible to the portmanteau, and beaming forth looks of the most fervent and disinterested friendship.

"There's nothing you want to give out for the man to brush, my dear creature, is there?" resumed Smangle.

"Nothin' whatever, my fine feller," rejoined Sam, taking the reply into his own mouth. "P'raps if vun of us wos to brush, without troubling the man, it 'ud be more agreeable for all parties, as the school-master said wen the young gentleman objected to being flogged by the butler."

"And there's nothing that I can send in my little box to the washer-woman's, is there?" said Smangle, turning from Sam to Mr. Pickwick, with an air of some discomfiture.

"Nothin' whatever, sir," retorted Sam; "I'm afeard the little box must be chock-full o' your own as it is."

This speech was accompanied with such a very expressive look at that particular portion of Mr. Smangle's attire, by the appearance of which the skill of laundresses in getting up gentlemen's linen is generally tested, that he was fain to turn upon his heel, and, for the present, at any rate, to give up all design on Mr. Pickwick's purse and wardrobe. He accordingly retired in dudgeon to the racket-ground, where he made a light and wholesome breakfast on a couple of the cigars which had been purchased on the previous night.

Mr. Mivins, who was no smoker, and whose account for small articles of chandlery had also reached down to the bottom of the slate, and been "carried over" to the other side, remained in bed, and, in his own words, "took it out in sleep."

After breakfasting in a small closet attached to the coffee-room, which bore the imposing title of the Snuggery, the temporary inmate of which, in consideration of a small additional charge, had the unspeakable advantage of overhearing all the conversation in the coffee-room aforesaid; and after dispatching Mr. Weller on some necessary errands, Mr. Pickwick repaired to the Lodge, to consult Mr. Roker concerning his future accommodation.