Bardell, leaving the others to Mr. Raddle's protection), got into the coach.

"Isaac," said Jackson, as Mrs. Bardell prepared to get in, looking up at the man with the ash stick, who was seated on the box, smoking a cigar.

"Well?"

"*This* is Mrs. Bardell."

"Oh, I know'd that long ago," said the man.

Mrs. Bardell got in, Mr. Jackson got in after her, and away they drove. Mrs. Bardell could not help ruminating on what Mr. Jackson's friend had said. Shrewd creatures, those lawyers. Lord bless us, how they find people out!

"Sad thing about these costs of our people's, ain't it," said Jackson, when Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders had fallen asleep; "your bill of costs, I mean?"

"I'm very sorry they can't get them," replied Mrs. Bardell. "But if you law-gentlemen do these things on speculation, why you must get a loss now and then, you know."

"You gave them a *cognovit* for the amount of your costs, after the trial, I'm told?" said Jackson.

"Yes. Just as a matter of form," replied Mrs. Bardell.

"Certainly," replied Jackson, dryly. "Quite a matter of form. Quite."

On they drove, and Mrs. Bardell fell asleep. She was awakened after some time, by the stopping of the coach.

"Bless us!" said the old lady. "Are we at Freeman's Court?"

"We're not going quite so far," replied Jackson. "Have the goodness to step out."

Mrs. Bardell, not yet thoroughly awake, complied. It was a curious place: a large wall, with a gate in the middle, and a gas-light burning inside.

"Now, ladies," cried the man with the ash stick, looking into the coach, and shaking Mrs. Sanders to wake her, "come!" Rousing her friend, Mrs. Sanders alighted. Mrs. Bardell, leaning on Jackson's arm, and leading Tommy by the hand, had already entered the porch. They followed.

The room they turned into was even more odd-looking than the porch. Such a number of men standing about! And they stared so!

"What place is this?" inquired Mrs. Bardell, pausing.

"Only one of our public offices," replied Jackson, hurrying her through a door, and looking round to see that the other women were following. "Look sharp, Isaac!"

"Safe and sound," replied the man with the ash stick. The door swung heavily after them, and they descended a small flight of steps.

"Here we are at last. All right and tight, Mrs. Bardell!" said Jackson, looking exultingly round.

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Bardell, with a palpitating heart.

"Just this," replied Jackson, drawing her a little on one side; "don't be frightened, Mrs. Bardell. There never was a more delicate man than Dodson, ma'am, or a more humane man than Fogg. It was their duty, in the way of business, to take you in execution for them costs; but they were anxious to spare your feelings as much as they could. What a comfort it must be to you to think how it's been done! This is the Fleet, ma'am. Wish you good-night, Mrs. Bardell. Good-night, Tommy!"

As Jackson hurried away in company with the man with the ash stick, another man with a key in his hand, who had been looking on, led the bewildered female to a second short flight of steps leading to a door-way. Mrs. Bardell screamed violently; Tommy roared; Mrs. Cluppins shrunk within herself; and Mrs. Sanders made off without more ado. For there stood the injured Mr. Pickwick, taking his nightly allowance of air; and beside him leaned Samuel Weller, who, seeing Mrs. Bardell, took his hat off with mock reverence, while his master turned indignantly on his heel.

"Don't bother the woman," said the turnkey to Weller: "she's just come in."

"A pris'ner!" said Sam, quickly replacing his hat. "Who's the plaintives? What for? Speak up, old feller."

"Dodson and Fogg," replied the man; "execution on cognovit for costs."

"Here Job, Job!" shouted Sam, dashing into the passage. "Run to Mr. Perker's, Job. *I* want him directly. I see some good in this. Here's a game. Hooray! where's the gov'nor?"

But there was no reply to these inquiries, for Job had started furiously off, the instant he received his commission, and Mrs. Bardell had fainted in real downright earnest.

CHAPTER XLVII.

IS CHIEFLY DEVOTED TO MATTERS OF BUSINESS, AND THE TEMPORAL ADVANTAGE OF DODSON AND FOGG. MR. WINKLE RE-APPEARS UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. MR. PICKWICK'S BENEVOLENCE PROVES STRONGER THAN HIS OBSTINACY.

JOB TROTTER, abating nothing of his speed, ran up Holborn: sometimes in the middle of the road, sometimes on the pavement, sometimes in the gutter, as the chances of getting along varied with the press of men, women, children, and coaches, in each division of the thoroughfare; regardless of all obstacles, he stopped not for an instant until he reached the gate of Gray's Inn. Notwithstanding all the expedition he had used, however, the gate had been closed a good half-hour when he reached it, and by the time he had discovered Mr. Perker's laundress, who lived with a married daughter, who had bestowed her hand upon a non-resident waiter, who occupied the one-pair of some number in some street closely adjoining to some brewery somewhere behind Gray's Inn Lane, it was within fifteen minutes of closing the prison for the night. Mr. Lowten had still to be ferreted out from the back parlor of the Magpie and Stump; and Job had scarcely accomplished this object, and communicated Sam Weller's message, when the clock struck ten.

"There," said Lowten, "it's too late now. You can't get in to-night; you've got the key of the street, my friend."

"Never mind me," replied Job. "I can sleep anywhere. But won't it be better to see Mr. Perker to-night, so that we may be there the first thing in the morning?"

"Why," responded Lowten, after a little consideration, "if it was in any body else's case, Perker wouldn't be best pleased at my going up to his house; but as it's Mr. Pickwick's, I think I may venture to take a cab and charge it to the office." Deciding on this line of conduct, Mr. Lowten took up his hat, and begging the assembled company to appoint a deputy chairman during his temporary absence, led the way to the nearest coach-stand. Summoning the cab of most promising appearance, he directed the driver to repair to Montague Place, Russell Square.

Mr. Perker had had a dinner-party that day, as was testified by the appearance of lights in the drawing-room windows, the sound of an improved grand piano, and an improvable cabinet voice issuing therefrom, and a rather overpowering smell of meat which pervaded the steps and entry. In fact a couple of very good country agencies happening to come up to town at the same time, an agreeable little party had been got together to meet them: comprising Mr. Snicks, the Life Office Secretary, Mr. Prosee, the eminent counsel, three solicitors, one commissioner of bankrupts, a special pleader from the Temple, a small-eyed peremptory young gentleman, his pupil, who had written a lively book about the law of demises, with a vast quantity of marginal notes and references; and several other eminent and distinguished personages. From this society little Mr. Perker detached himself, on his clerk being announced in a whisper; and repairing to the dining-room, there found Mr. Lowten and Job Trotter looking very dim and shadowy by the light of a kitchen candle, which the gentleman who condescended to appear in plush shorts and cottons for a quarterly stipend had, with a becoming contempt for the clerk and all things appertaining to "the office," placed upon the table.

"Now, Lowten," said little Mr. Perker, shutting the door, "what's the matter? No important letter come in a parcel, is there?"

"No, sir," replied Lowten. "This is a messenger from Mr. Pickwick, sir."

"From Pickwick, eh?" said the little man, turning quickly to Job. "Well, what is it?"

"Dodson and Fogg have taken Mrs. Bardell in execution for her costs, sir," said Job.

"No!" exclaimed Perker, putting his hands in his pockets, and reclining against the sideboard.

"Yes," said Job. "It seems they got a cognovit out of her, for the amount of 'em, directly after the trial."

"By Jove!" said Perker, taking both hands out of his pockets, and striking the knuckles of his right against the palm of his left, emphatically, "those are the cleverest scamps I ever had any thing to do with!"

"The sharpest practitioners *I* ever knew, sir," observed Lowten.

"Sharp!" echoed Perker. "There's no knowing where to have them."

"Very true, sir, there is not," replied Lowten; and then both master and man pondered for a few seconds with animated countenances, as if they were reflecting upon one of the most beautiful and ingenious discoveries that the intellect of man had ever made. When they had in some measure recovered from their trance of admiration, Job Trotter discharged himself of the rest of his commission. Perker nodded his head thoughtfully, and pulled out his watch.

"At ten precisely I will be there," said the little man. "Sam is quite right. Tell him so. Will you take a glass of wine, Lowten?"

"No, thank you, sir."

"You mean yes, I think," said the little man, turning to the sideboard for a decanter and glasses.

As Lowten *did* mean yes, he said no more on the subject, but inquired of Job, in an audible whisper, whether the portrait of Perker, which hung opposite the fire-place, wasn't a wonderful likeness, to which Job of course replied that it was. The wine being by this time poured out, Lowten drank to Mrs. Perker and the children, and Job to Perker. The gentleman in the plush shorts and cottons considering it no part of his duty to show the people from the office out, consistently declined to answer the bell, and they showed themselves out. The attorney betook himself to his drawing-room, the clerk to the Magpie and Stump, and Job to Covent Garden Market to spend the night in a vegetable basket.

Punctually at the appointed hour next morning, the good-humored little attorney tapped at Mr. Pickwick's door, which was opened with great alacrity by Sam Weller.

"Mr. Perker, sir," said Sam, announcing the visitor to Mr. Pickwick, who was sitting at the window in a thoughtful attitude. "Wery glad you've looked in accidentally, sir. I rather think the gov'nor wants to have a word and a half with you, sir."

Perker bestowed a look of intelligence on Sam, intimating that he understood he was not to say he had been sent for: and beckoning him to approach, whispered briefly in his ear.

"You don't mean that 'ere, sir?" said Sam, starting back in excessive surprise.

Perker nodded and smiled.

Mr. Samuel Weller looked at the little lawyer, then at Mr. Pickwick, then at the ceiling, then at Perker again; grinned, laughed outright, and finally, catching up his hat from the carpet, without further explanation disappeared.

"What does this mean?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, looking at Perker with astonishment. "What has put Sam into this most extraordinary state?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," replied Perker. "Come, my dear sir, draw up your chair to the table. I have a good deal to say to you."

"What papers are those?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, as the little man deposited on the table a small bundle of documents tied with red tape.

"The papers in Bardell and Pickwick," replied Perker, undoing the knot with his teeth.

Mr. Pickwick grated the legs of his chair against the ground; and throwing himself into it, folded his hands and looked sternly — if Mr. Pickwick ever could look sternly—at his legal friend.

"You don't like to hear the name of the cause?" said the little man, still busying himself with the knot.

"No, I do not, indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Sorry for that," resumed Perker, "because it will form the subject of our conversation."

"I would rather that the subject should be never mentioned between us, Perker," interposed Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"Pooh, pooh, my dear sir," said the little man, untying the bundle, and glancing eagerly at Mr. Pickwick out of the corners of his eyes. "It must be mentioned. I have come here on purpose. Now, are you ready to hear what I have to say, my dear sir? No hurry; if you are not, I can wait. I have this morning's paper here. Your time shall be mine. There!" Hereupon the little man threw one leg over the other, and made a show of beginning to read with great composure and application.

"Well, well," said Mr. Pickwick, with a sigh, but softening into a smile at the same time. "Say what you have to say; it's the old story, I suppose?"

"With a difference, my dear sir; with a difference," rejoined Perker, deliberately folding up the paper and putting it into his pocket again. "Mrs. Bardell, the plaintiff in the action, is within these walls, sir."

"I know it," was Mr. Pickwick's reply.

"Very good," retorted Perker. "And you know how she comes here, I suppose; I mean on what grounds, and at whose suit?"

"Yes; at least I have heard Sam's account of the matter," said Mr. Pickwick, with affected carelessness.

"Sam's account of the matter," replied Perker, "is, I will venture to say, a perfectly correct one. Well now, my dear sir, the first question I have to ask is, whether this woman is to remain here?"

"To remain here!" echoed Mr. Pickwick.

"To remain here, my dear sir," rejoined Perker, leaning back in his chair and looking steadily at his client.

"How can you ask me?" said that gentleman. "It rests with Dodson and Fogg; you know that very well."

"I know nothing of the kind," retorted Perker, firmly. "It does *not* rest with Dodson and Fogg; you know the men, my dear sir, as well as I do. It rests solely, wholly, and entirely with you."

"With me!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, rising nervously from his chair, and reseating himself directly afterward.

The little man gave a double knock on the lid of his snuff-box, opened it, took a great pinch, shut it up again, and repeated the words, "With you."

"I say, my dear sir," resumed the little man, who seemed to gather confidence from the snuff; "I say, that her speedy liberation or perpetual imprisonment rests with you, and with you alone. Hear me out, my dear sir, if you please, and do not be so very energetic, for it will only put you into a perspiration, and do no good whatever. I say," continued Perker, checking off each position on a different finger, as he laid it down; "I say that nobody but you can rescue her from this den of wretchedness; and that you can only do that by paying the costs of this suit—both of plaintiff and defendant—into the hands of these Freeman's Court sharks. Now pray be quiet, my dear sir."

Mr. Pickwick, whose face had been undergoing most surprising changes during this speech, and who was evidently on the verge of a strong burst of indignation, calmed his wrath as well as he could. Perker, strengthening his argumentative powers with another pinch of snuff, proceeded.

"I have seen the woman this morning. By paying the costs, you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages; and further—this I know is a far greater object of consideration with you, my dear sir—a voluntary statement, under her hand, in the form of a letter to me, that this business was, from the very first, fomented, and encouraged, and brought about by these men, Dodson and Fogg; that she deeply regrets ever having been the instrument of annoyance or injury to you; and that she entreats me to intercede with you, and implore your pardon."

"If I pay her costs for her," said Mr. Pickwick, indignantly. "A valuable document, indeed!"

"No '*if*' in the case, my dear sir," said Perker. triumphantly. "There is the very letter I speak of Brought to my office by another woman at nine o'clock this morning, before I had set foot in this place, or held any communication with Mrs. Bardell, upon my honor." Selecting the letter from the bundle, the little lawyer laid it at Mr. Pickwick's elbow, and took snuff for two consecutive minutes, without winking.

"Is this all you have to say to me?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, mildly.

"Not quite," replied Perker. "I can not undertake to say at this moment whether the wording of the cognovit, the nature of the ostensible consideration, and the proof we can get together about the whole conduct of the suit, will be sufficient to justify an indictment for conspiracy. I fear not, my dear sir; they are too clever for that, I doubt. I do mean to say, however, that the whole facts, taken together, will be sufficient to justify you, in the minds of all reasonable men. And now, my dear sir, I put it to you. This one hundred and fifty pounds, or whatever it may be—take it in round numbers—is nothing to you. A jury has decided against you; well, their verdict is wrong, but still they decided as they thought right, and it *is* against you. You have now an opportunity, on easy terms, of placing yourself in a much higher position than you ever could by remaining here; which would only be imputed, by people who didn't know you, to sheer dogged, wrong-headed, brutal obstinacy: nothing else, my dear sir, believe me. Can you hesitate to avail yourself of it, when it restores you to your friends, your old pursuits, your health and amusements; when it liberates your faithful and attached servant, whom you otherwise doom to imprisonment for the whole of your life; and above all, when it enables you to take the very magnanimous revenge—which I know, my dear sir, is one after your own heart—of releasing this woman from a scene of misery and debauchery to which no man should ever be consigned, if I had my will, but the infliction of which on any woman is even more frightful and barbarous. Now I ask you, my dear sir, not only as your legal adviser, but as your very true friend, will you let slip the occasion of attaining all these objects, and doing all this good for the paltry consideration of a few pounds finding their way into the pockets of a couple of rascals, to whom it makes no manner of difference, except that the more they gain, the more they'll seek, and so the sooner be led into some piece of knavery that must end in a crash? I have put these considerations to you, my dear sir, very feebly and imperfectly, but I ask you to think of them. Turn them over in your mind as long as you please. I wait here most patiently for your answer."

Before Mr. Pickwick could reply; before Mr. Perker had taken one-twentieth part of the snuff with which so unusually long an address imperatively required to be followed up; there was a low murmuring of voices outside, and then a hesitating knock at the door.

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, who had been evidently roused by his friend's appeal; "what an annoyance that door is! Who is that?"

"Me, sir," replied Sam Weller, putting in his head.

"I can't speak to you just now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "I am engaged at this moment, Sam."

"Beg your pardon, sir," rejoined Mr. Weller. "But here's a lady here, sir, as says she's somethin' wery partickler to disclose."

"I can't see any lady," replied Mr. Pickwick, whose mind was filled with visions of Mrs. Bardell.

"I vouldn't make too sure o' that, sir," urged Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "If you know'd who was near, sir, I rayther think you'd change your note. As the hawk remarked to himself with a cheerful laugh, ven he heerd the robin-redbreast a-singin' round the corner."

"Who is it?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Will you see her, sir?" asked Mr. Weller, holding the door in his hand as if he had some curious live animal on the other side.

"I suppose I must," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at Perker.

"Well, then, all in to begin!" cried Sam. "Sound the gong, draw up the curtain, and enter the two con-spiraytors."

As Sam Weller spoke, he threw the door open, and there rushed tumultuously into the room Mr. Nathaniel Winkle: leading after him by the hand the identical young lady who at Dingley Dell had worn the boots with the fur round the tops, and who, now a very pleasing compound of blushes and confusion and lilac silk and a smart bonnet and a rich lace veil, looked prettier than ever.

"Miss Arabella Allen!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, rising from his chair.

"No," replied Mr. Winkle, dropping on his knees, "Mrs. Winkle. Pardon, my dear friend, pardon!"

Mr. Pickwick could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses, and perhaps would not have done so, but for the corroborative testimony afforded by the smiling countenance of Perker, and the bodily presence, in the background, of Sam and the pretty housemaid, who appeared to contemplate the proceedings with the liveliest satisfaction.

"Oh, Mr. Pickwick!" said Arabella, in a low voice, as if alarmed at the silence. "Can you forgive my imprudence?"

Mr. Pickwick returned no verbal response to this appeal; but he took off his spectacles in great haste, and seizing both the young lady's hands in his, kissed her a great number of times—perhaps a greater number than was absolutely necessary—and then, still retaining one of her hands, told Mr. Winkle he was an audacious young dog, and bade him get up. This, Mr. Winkle, who had been for some seconds scratching his nose with the brim of his hat in a penitent manner, did; whereupon Mr. Pickwick slapped him on the back several times, and then shook hands heartily with Perker, who, not to be behindhand in the compliments of the occasion, saluted both the bride and the pretty house-maid with right good-will, and, having wrung Mr. Winkle's hand most cordially, wound up his demonstrations of joy by taking snuff enough to set any half-dozen men with ordinarily constructed noses a-sneezing for life.

"Why, my dear girl," said Mr. Pickwick, "how has all this come about? Come! Sit down, and let me hear it all. How well she looks, doesn't she, Perker?" added Mr. Pickwick, surveying Arabella's face with a look of as much pride and exultation as if she had been his daughter.

"Delightful, my dear sir," replied the little man. "If I were not a married man myself, I should be disposed to envy you, you dog." Thus expressing himself, the little lawyer gave Mr. Winkle a poke in the chest, which that gentleman reciprocated; after which they both laughed very loudly, but not so loudly as Mr. Samuel Weller. Who had just relieved his feelings by kissing the pretty house-maid, under cover of the cupboard door.

"I can never be grateful enough to you, Sam, I am sure," said Arabella, with the sweetest smile imaginable. "I shall not forget your exertions in the garden at Clifton."

"Don't say nothin' wotever about it, ma'am," replied Sam. "I only assisted natur', ma'am; as the doctor said to the boy's mother arter he'd bled him to death."

"Mary, my dear, sit down," said Mr. Pickwick, cutting short these compliments. "Now, then; how long have you been married, eh?"

Arabella looked bashfully at her lord and master, who replied, "Only three days."

"Only three days, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Why, what have you been doing these three months?"

"Ah, to be sure!" interposed Perker; "come! Account for this idleness. You see Pickwick's only astonishment is, that it wasn't all over months ago."

"Why the fact is," replied Mr. Winkle, looking at his blushing young wife, "that I could not persuade Bella to run away for a long time. And when I had persuaded her, it was a long time more before we could find an opportunity. Mary had to give a month's warning, too, before she could leave her place next door, and we couldn't possibly have done it without her assistance."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, who by this time had resumed his spectacles, and was looking from Arabella to Winkle, and from Winkle to Arabella, with as much delight depicted in his countenance as warm-heartedness and kindly feeling can communicate to the human face: "upon my word! you seem to have been very systematic in your proceedings. And is your brother acquainted with all this, my dear?"

"Oh no, no," replied Arabella, changing color. "Dear Mr. Pickwick, he must only know it from you—from your lips alone. He is so violent, so prejudiced, and has been so—so anxious in behalf of his

friend, Mr. Sawyer," added Arabella, looking down, "that I fear the consequences dreadfully."

"Ah, to be sure," said Perker, gravely. "You must take this matter in hand for them, my dear sir. These young men will respect you, when they would listen to nobody else. You must prevent mischief, my dear sir. Hot blood, hot blood." And the little man took a warning pinch, and shook his head doubtfully.

"You forget, my love," said Mr. Pickwick, gently, "you forget that I am a prisoner."

"No, indeed I do not, my dear sir," replied Arabella. "I never have forgotten it. I have never ceased to think how great your sufferings must have been in this shocking place. But I hoped that what no consideration for yourself would induce you to do, a regard to our happiness might. If my brother hears of this first from you, I feel certain we shall be reconciled. He is my only relation in the world, Mr. Pickwick, and unless you plead for me, I fear I have lost even him. I have done wrong, very, very wrong, I know." Here poor Arabella hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly.

Mr. Pickwick's nature was a good deal worked upon by these same tears; but when Mrs. Winkle, drying her eyes, took to coaxing and entreating in the sweetest tones of a very sweet voice, he became particularly restless, and evidently undecided how to act. As was evinced by sundry nervous rubbings of his spectacle-glasses, nose, tights, head, and gaiters.

Taking advantage of these symptoms of indecision, Mr. Perker (to whom, it appeared, the young couple had driven straight that morning) urged with legal point and shrewdness that Mr. Winkle, senior, was still unacquainted with the important rise in life's flight of steps which his son had taken; that the future expectations of the said son depended entirely upon the said Winkle, senior, continuing to regard him with undiminished feelings of affection and attachment, which it was very unlikely he would, if this great event were long kept a secret from him; that Mr. Pickwick, repairing to Bristol to seek Mr. Allen might, with equal reason, repair to Birmingham to seek Mr. Winkle, senior; lastly, that Mr. Winkle, senior, had good right and title to consider Mr. Pickwick as in some degree the guardian and adviser of his son, and that it consequently behooved that gentleman, and was indeed due to his personal character, to acquaint the aforesaid Winkle, senior, personally, and by word of mouth, with the whole circumstances of the case, and with the share he had taken in the transaction.

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass arrived, most opportunely, in this stage of the pleadings, and as it was necessary to explain to them all that had occurred, together with the various reasons, pro and con, the whole of the arguments were gone over again, after which every body urged every argument in his own way, and at his own length. And, at last, Mr. Pickwick, fairly argued and remonstrated out of all his resolutions, and being in imminent danger of being argued and remonstrated out of his wits, caught Arabella in his arms, and declaring that she was a very amiable creature, and that he didn't know how it was, but he had always been very fond of her from the first, said he could never find it in his heart to stand in the way of young people's happiness, and they might do with him as they pleased.

Mr. Weller's first act, on hearing this concession, was to dispatch Job Trotter to the illustrious Mr. Pell with an authority to deliver to the bearer the formal discharge which his prudent parent had had the foresight to leave in the hands of that learned gentleman, in case it should be at any time required on an emergency; his next proceeding was, to invest his whole stock of ready money in the purchase of five-and-twenty gallons of mild porter: which he himself dispensed on the racket-ground to every body who would partake of it; this done, he hurraed in divers parts of the building until he lost his voice, and then quietly relapsed into his usual collected and philosophical condition.

At three o'clock that afternoon, Mr. Pickwick took a last look at his little room, and made his way, as well as he could, through the throng of debtors who pressed eagerly forward to shake him by the hand, until he reached the lodge steps. He turned here, to look about him, and his eye lightened as he did so. In all the crowd of wan, emaciated faces, he saw not one which was not the happier for his sympathy and charity.

"Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, beckoning one young man toward him, "this is Mr. Jingle, whom I spoke to you about."

"Very good, my dear sir," replied Perker, looking hard at Jingle. "You will see me again, young man, to-morrow. I hope you may live to remember and feel deeply what I shall have to communicate, sir."

Jingle bowed respectfully, trembled very much as he took Mr. Pickwick's proffered hand, and withdrew.

"Job you know, I think?" said Mr. Pickwick, presenting that gentleman.

"I know the rascal," replied Perker, good-humoredly. "See after your friend, and be in the way to-morrow at one. Do you hear? Now, is there any thing more?"

"Nothing," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "You have delivered the little parcel I gave you for your old landlord, Sam?"

"I have, sir," replied Sam. "He bust out a-cryin', sir, and said you wos wery gen'rous and thoughtful, and he only wished you could have him innokilated for a gallopin' consumption, for his old friend as had lived here so long wos dead, and he'd noweres to look for another."

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" said Mr. Pickwick. "God bless you, my friends!"

As Mr. Pickwick uttered this adieu, the crowd raised a loud shout. Many among them were pressing forward to shake him by the hand again, when he drew his arm through Perker's, and hurried from the prison: far more sad and melancholy, for the moment, than when he had first entered it. Alas! how many sad and unhappy beings had he left behind!

A happy evening was that for, at least, one party in the George and Vulture; and light and cheerful were two of the hearts that emerged from its hospitable door next morning. The owners thereof were

Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, the former of whom was speedily deposited inside a comfortable post-coach, with a little dickey behind, in which the latter mounted with great agility.

"Sir," called out Mr. Weller to his master.

"Well, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, thrusting his head out of the window.

"I wish them horses had been three months and better in the Fleet, sir."

"Why, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Wy, sir," exclaimed Mr. Weller, rubbing his hands, "how they would go if they had been!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

RELATES HOW MR. PICKWICK, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF SAMUEL WELLER, ESSAYED TO SOFTEN THE HEART OF MR. BENJAMIN ALLEN, AND TO MOLLIFY THE WRATH OF MR. ROBERT SAWYER.

MR. BEN ALLEN and Mr. Bob Sawyer sat together in the little surgery behind the shop, discussing minced veal and future prospects, when the discourse, not unnaturally, turned upon the practice acquired by Bob the aforesaid, and his present chances of deriving a competent independence from the honorable profession to which he had devoted himself.

"—Which, I think," observed Mr. Bob Sawyer, pursuing the thread of the subject, "which, I think, Ben, are rather dubious."

"What's rather dubious?" inquired Mr. Ben Allen, at the same time sharpening his intellects with a draught of beer. "What's dubious?"

"Why, the chances," responded Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"I forgot," said Mr. Ben Allen. "The beer has reminded me that I forgot, Bob—yes; they *are* dubious."

"It's wonderful how the poor people patronize me," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, reflectively. "They knock me up at all hours of the night; they take medicine to an extent which I should have conceived impossible; they put on blisters and leeches with a perseverance worthy of a better cause; they make additions to their families in a manner which is quite awful. Six of those last-named little promissory notes, all due on the same day, Ben, and all intrusted to me!"

"It's very gratifying, isn't it?" said Mr. Ben Allen, holding his plate for some more minced veal.

"Oh, very," replied Bob; "only not quite so much so, as the confidence of patients with a shilling or two to spare, would be. This business was capitally described in the advertisement, Ben. It is a practice, a very extensive practice—and that's all."

"Bob," said Mr. Ben Allen, laying down his knife and fork and fixing his eyes on the visage of his friend, "Bob, I'll tell you what it is."

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You must make yourself, with as little delay as possible, master of Arabella's one thousand pounds."

"Three per cent. consolidated Bank annuities, now standing in her name in the book or books of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England," added Bob Sawyer in legal phraseology.

"Exactly so," said Ben. "She has it when she comes of age, or marries. She wants a year of coming of age, and if you plucked up a spirit she needn't want a month of being married."

"She's a very charming and delightful creature," quoth Mr. Robert Sawyer, in reply; "and has only one fault that I know of, Ben. It happens, unfortunately, that that single blemish is a want of taste. She don't like me."

"It's my opinion that she don't know what she does like," said Mr. Ben Allen, contemptuously.

"Perhaps not," remarked Mr. Bob Sawyer. "But it's my opinion that she does know what she doesn't like, and that's of more importance."

"I wish," said Mr. Ben Allen, setting his teeth together, and speaking more like a savage warrior who fed on raw wolf's flesh which he carved with his fingers, than a peaceable young gentleman who ate minced veal with a knife and fork, "I wish I knew whether any rascal really has been tampering with her, and attempting to engage her affections. I think I should assassinate him, Bob."

"I'd put a bullet in him, if I found him out," said Mr. Sawyer, stopping in the course of a long draught of beer, and looking malignantly out of the porter pot. "If that didn't do his business, I'd extract it afterward, and kill him that way."

Mr. Benjamin Allen gazed abstractedly on his friend for some minutes in silence, and then said,

"You have never proposed to her point-blank, Bob?"

"No. Because I saw it would be of no use," replied Mr. Robert Sawyer.

"You shall do it before you are twenty-four hours older," retorted Ben, with desperate calmness. "She *shall* have you, or I'll know the reason why. I'll exert my authority."

"Well," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, "we shall see."

"We *shall* see, my friend," replied Mr. Ben Allen, fiercely. He paused for a few seconds, and added, in a voice broken by emotion, "You have loved her from a child, my friend. You loved her when we were boys at school together, and, even then she was wayward, and slighted your young feelings. Do you recollect, with all the eagerness of a child's love, one day pressing upon her acceptance two small caraway-seed biscuits and one sweet apple, neatly folded into a circular parcel with the leaf of a copy-book?"

"I do," replied Bob Sawyer.

"She slighted that, I think?" said Ben Allen.

"She did," rejoined Bob. "She said I had kept the parcel so long in the pockets of my corduroys, that the apple was unpleasantly warm."

"I remember" said Mr. Allen, gloomily. "Upon which we ate it ourselves, in alternate bites."

Bob Sawyer intimated his recollection of the circumstance last alluded to by a melancholy frown; and the two friends remained for some time absorbed, each in his own meditations.

While these observations were being exchanged between Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen; and while the boy in the gray livery, marveling at the unwonted prolongation of the dinner, cast an anxious look, from time to time, toward the glass door, distracted by inward misgivings regarding the