

## Chapter XXV

### **Showing, Among A Variety Of Pleasant Matters, How Majestic And Impartial Mr Nupkins Was; And How Mr Weller Returned Mr Job Trotter's Shuttlecock As Heavily As It Came - With Another Matter, Which Will Be Found In Its Place**

Violent was Mr Weller's indignation as he was borne along; numerous were the allusions to the personal appearance and demeanour of Mr Grummer and his companion; and valorous were the defiances to any six of the gentlemen present, in which he vented his dissatisfaction. Mr Snodgrass and Mr Winkle listened with gloomy respect to the torrent of eloquence which their leader poured forth from the sedan-chair, and the rapid course of which not all Mr Tupman's earnest entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed, were able to check for an instant. But Mr Weller's anger quickly gave way to curiosity when the procession turned down the identical courtyard in which he had met with the runaway Job Trotter; and curiosity was exchanged for a feeling of the most gleeful astonishment, when the all-important Mr Grummer, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps to the very green gate from which Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-handle which hung at the side thereof. The ring was answered by a very smart and pretty-faced servant-girl, who, after holding up her hands in astonishment at the rebellious appearance of the prisoners, and the impassioned language of Mr Pickwick, summoned Mr Muzzle. Mr Muzzle opened one half of the carriage gate, to admit the sedan, the captured ones, and the specials; and immediately slammed it in the faces of the mob, who, indignant at being excluded, and anxious to see what followed, relieved their feelings by kicking at the gate and ringing the bell, for an hour or two afterwards. In this amusement they all took part by turns, except three or four fortunate individuals, who, having discovered a grating in the gate, which commanded a view of nothing, stared through it with the indefatigable perseverance with which people will flatten their noses against the front windows of a chemist's shop, when a drunken man, who has been run over by a dog-cart in the street, is undergoing a surgical inspection in the back-parlour.

At the foot of a flight of steps, leading to the house door, which was guarded on either side by an American aloe in a green tub, the sedan-chair stopped. Mr Pickwick and his friends were conducted into the hall, whence, having been previously announced by Muzzle, and ordered in by Mr Nupkins, they were ushered into the worshipful presence of that public-spirited officer.

The scene was an impressive one, well calculated to strike terror to the hearts of culprits, and to impress them with an adequate idea of

the stern majesty of the law. In front of a big book-case, in a big chair, behind a big table, and before a big volume, sat Mr Nupkins, looking a full size larger than any one of them, big as they were. The table was adorned with piles of papers; and above the farther end of it, appeared the head and shoulders of Mr Jinks, who was busily engaged in looking as busy as possible. The party having all entered, Muzzle carefully closed the door, and placed himself behind his master's chair to await his orders. Mr Nupkins threw himself back with thrilling solemnity, and scrutinised the faces of his unwilling visitors.

'Now, Grummer, who is that person?' said Mr Nupkins, pointing to Mr Pickwick, who, as the spokesman of his friends, stood hat in hand, bowing with the utmost politeness and respect.

'This here's Pickvick, your Wash-up,' said Grummer.

'Come, none o' that 'ere, old Strike-a-light,' interposed Mr Weller, elbowing himself into the front rank. 'Beg your pardon, sir, but this here officer o' yourn in the gambooge tops, 'ull never earn a decent livin' as a master o' the ceremonies any vere. This here, sir' continued Mr Weller, thrusting Grummer aside, and addressing the magistrate with pleasant familiarity, 'this here is S. Pickvick, Esquire; this here's Mr Tupman; that 'ere's Mr Snodgrass; and farder on, next him on the t'other side, Mr Winkle - all verry nice gen'l'm'n, Sir, as you'll be verry happy to have the acquaintance on; so the sooner you commits these here officers o' yourn to the tread - mill for a month or two, the sooner we shall begin to be on a pleasant understanding. Business first, pleasure arterwards, as King Richard the Third said when he stabbed the t'other king in the Tower, afore he smothered the babbies.'

At the conclusion of this address, Mr Weller brushed his hat with his right elbow, and nodded benignly to Jinks, who had heard him throughout with unspeakable awe.

'Who is this man, Grummer?' said the magistrate,.

'Wery desp'rate ch'racter, your Wash-up,' replied Grummer. 'He attempted to rescue the prisoners, and assaulted the officers; so we took him into custody, and brought him here.'

'You did quite right,' replied the magistrate. 'He is evidently a desperate ruffian.'

'He is my servant, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick angrily.

'Oh! he is your servant, is he?' said Mr Nupkins. 'A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, and murder its officers. Pickwick's servant. Put that down, Mr Jinks.'

Mr Jinks did so.

'What's your name, fellow?' thundered Mr Nupkins.

'Veller,' replied Sam.

'A very good name for the Newgate Calendar,' said Mr Nupkins.

This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter of five minutes' duration.

'Put down his name, Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate.

'Two L's, old feller,' said Sam.

Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him instantly. It is a dangerous thing to laugh at the wrong man, in these cases.

'Where do you live?' said the magistrate.

'Vere ever I can,' replied Sam.

'Put down that, Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate, who was fast rising into a rage.

'Score it under,' said Sam.

'He is a vagabond, Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate. 'He is a vagabond on his own statement, - is he not, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, Sir.'

'Then I'll commit him - I'll commit him as such,' said Mr Nupkins.

'This is a very impartial country for justice,' said Sam. 'There ain't a magistrate goin' as don't commit himself twice as he commits other people.'

At this sally another special laughed, and then tried to look so supernaturally solemn, that the magistrate detected him immediately.

'Grummer,' said Mr Nupkins, reddening with passion, 'how dare you select such an inefficient and disreputable person for a special constable, as that man? How dare you do it, Sir?'

'I am very sorry, your Wash-up,' stammered Grummer.

'Very sorry!' said the furious magistrate. 'You shall repent of this neglect of duty, Mr Grummer; you shall be made an example of. Take that fellow's staff away. He's drunk. You're drunk, fellow.'

'I am not drunk, your Worship,' said the man.

'You ARE drunk,' returned the magistrate. 'How dare you say you are not drunk, Sir, when I say you are? Doesn't he smell of spirits, Grummer?'

'Horrid, your Wash-up,' replied Grummer, who had a vague impression that there was a smell of rum somewhere.

'I knew he did,' said Mr Nupkins. 'I saw he was drunk when he first came into the room, by his excited eye. Did you observe his excited eye, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, Sir.'

'I haven't touched a drop of spirits this morning,' said the man, who was as sober a fellow as need be.

'How dare you tell me a falsehood?' said Mr Nupkins. 'Isn't he drunk at this moment, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, Sir,' replied Jinks.

'Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate, 'I shall commit that man for contempt. Make out his committal, Mr Jinks.'

And committed the special would have been, only Jinks, who was the magistrate's adviser (having had a legal education of three years in a country attorney's office), whispered the magistrate that he thought it wouldn't do; so the magistrate made a speech, and said, that in consideration of the special's family, he would merely reprimand and discharge him. Accordingly, the special was abused, vehemently, for a quarter of an hour, and sent about his business; and Grummer, Dubbley, Muzzle, and all the other specials, murmured their admiration of the magnanimity of Mr Nupkins.

'Now, Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate, 'swear Grummer.'

Grummer was sworn directly; but as Grummer wandered, and Mr Nupkins's dinner was nearly ready, Mr Nupkins cut the matter short, by putting leading questions to Grummer, which Grummer answered as nearly in the affirmative as he could. So the examination went off, all very smooth and comfortable, and two assaults were proved against Mr Weller, and a threat against Mr Winkle, and a push against

Mr Snodgrass. When all this was done to the magistrate's satisfaction, the magistrate and Mr Jinks consulted in whispers.

The consultation having lasted about ten minutes, Mr Jinks retired to his end of the table; and the magistrate, with a preparatory cough, drew himself up in his chair, and was proceeding to commence his address, when Mr Pickwick interposed.

'I beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you,' said Mr Pickwick; 'but before you proceed to express, and act upon, any opinion you may have formed on the statements which have been made here, I must claim my right to be heard so far as I am personally concerned.'

'Hold your tongue, Sir,' said the magistrate peremptorily.

'I must submit to you, Sir - ' said Mr Pickwick.

'Hold your tongue, sir,' interposed the magistrate, 'or I shall order an officer to remove you.'

'You may order your officers to do whatever you please, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick; 'and I have no doubt, from the specimen I have had of the subordination preserved amongst them, that whatever you order, they will execute, Sir; but I shall take the liberty, Sir, of claiming my right to be heard, until I am removed by force.'

'Pickvick and principle!' exclaimed Mr Weller, in a very audible voice.

'Sam, be quiet,' said Mr Pickwick.

'Dumb as a drum with a hole in it, Sir,' replied Sam.

Mr Nupkins looked at Mr Pickwick with a gaze of intense astonishment, at his displaying such unwonted temerity; and was apparently about to return a very angry reply, when Mr Jinks pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered something in his ear. To this, the magistrate returned a half-audible answer, and then the whispering was renewed. Jinks was evidently remonstrating. At length the magistrate, gulping down, with a very bad grace, his disinclination to hear anything more, turned to Mr Pickwick, and said sharply, 'What do you want to say?'

'First,' said Mr Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles, under which even Nupkins quailed, 'first, I wish to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?'

'Must I tell him?' whispered the magistrate to Jinks.

'I think you had better, sir,' whispered Jinks to the magistrate. 'An information has been sworn before me,' said the magistrate, 'that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man, Tupman, is your aider and abettor in it. Therefore - eh, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, sir.'

'Therefore, I call upon you both, to - I think that's the course, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, Sir.'

'To - to - what, Mr Jinks?' said the magistrate pettishly.

'To find bail, sir.'

'Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both - as I was about to say when I was interrupted by my clerk - to find bail.' 'Good bail,' whispered Mr Jinks.

'I shall require good bail,' said the magistrate.

'Town's-people,' whispered Jinks.

'They must be townspeople,' said the magistrate.

'Fifty pounds each,' whispered Jinks, 'and householders, of course.'

'I shall require two sureties of fifty pounds each,' said the magistrate aloud, with great dignity, 'and they must be householders, of course.'

'But bless my heart, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick, who, together with Mr Tupman, was all amazement and indignation; 'we are perfect strangers in this town. I have as little knowledge of any householders here, as I have intention of fighting a duel with anybody.'

'I dare say,' replied the magistrate, 'I dare say - don't you, Mr Jinks?'

'Certainly, Sir.'

'Have you anything more to say?' inquired the magistrate.

Mr Pickwick had a great deal more to say, which he would no doubt have said, very little to his own advantage, or the magistrate's satisfaction, if he had not, the moment he ceased speaking, been pulled by the sleeve by Mr Weller, with whom he was immediately engaged in so earnest a conversation, that he suffered the magistrate's inquiry to pass wholly unnoticed. Mr Nupkins was not the man to ask

a question of the kind twice over; and so, with another preparatory cough, he proceeded, amidst the reverential and admiring silence of the constables, to pronounce his decision. He should fine Weller two pounds for the first assault, and three pounds for the second. He should fine Winkle two pounds, and Snodgrass one pound, besides requiring them to enter into their own recognisances to keep the peace towards all his Majesty's subjects, and especially towards his liege servant, Daniel Grummer. Pickwick and Tupman he had already held to bail.

Immediately on the magistrate ceasing to speak, Mr Pickwick, with a smile mantling on his again good-humoured countenance, stepped forward, and said -

'I beg the magistrate's pardon, but may I request a few minutes' private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?'

'What?' said the magistrate. Mr Pickwick repeated his request.

'This is a most extraordinary request,' said the magistrate. 'A private interview?'

'A private interview,' replied Mr Pickwick firmly; 'only, as a part of the information which I wish to communicate is derived from my servant, I should wish him to be present.'

The magistrate looked at Mr Jinks; Mr Jinks looked at the magistrate; the officers looked at each other in amazement. Mr Nupkins turned suddenly pale. Could the man Weller, in a moment of remorse, have divulged some secret conspiracy for his assassination? It was a dreadful thought. He was a public man; and he turned paler, as he thought of Julius Caesar and Mr Perceval.

The magistrate looked at Mr Pickwick again, and beckoned Mr Jinks.

'What do you think of this request, Mr Jinks?' murmured Mr Nupkins.

Mr Jinks, who didn't exactly know what to think of it, and was afraid he might offend, smiled feebly, after a dubious fashion, and, screwing up the corners of his mouth, shook his head slowly from side to side.

'Mr Jinks,' said the magistrate gravely, 'you are an ass.'

At this little expression of opinion, Mr Jinks smiled again - rather more feebly than before - and edged himself, by degrees, back into his own corner.

Mr Nupkins debated the matter within himself for a few seconds, and then, rising from his chair, and requesting Mr Pickwick and Sam to follow him, led the way into a small room which opened into the justice-parlour. Desiring Mr Pickwick to walk to the upper end of the little apartment, and holding his hand upon the half-closed door, that he might be able to effect an immediate escape, in case there was the least tendency to a display of hostilities, Mr Nupkins expressed his readiness to hear the communication, whatever it might be.

'I will come to the point at once, sir,' said Mr Pickwick; 'it affects yourself and your credit materially. I have every reason to believe, Sir, that you are harbouring in your house a gross impostor!'

'Two,' interrupted Sam. 'Mulberry agin all natur, for tears and willainny!'

'Sam,' said Mr Pickwick, 'if I am to render myself intelligible to this gentleman, I must beg you to control your feelings.'

'Wery sorry, Sir,' replied Mr Weller; 'but when I think o' that 'ere Job, I can't help opening the walve a inch or two.'

'In one word, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick, 'is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitz-Marshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because,' added Mr Pickwick, as he saw that Mr Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption, 'because if he be, I know that person to be a - '

'Hush, hush,' said Mr Nupkins, closing the door. 'Know him to be what, Sir?'

'An unprincipled adventurer - a dishonourable character - a man who preys upon society, and makes easily-deceived people his dupes, Sir; his absurd, his foolish, his wretched dupes, Sir,' said the excited Mr Pickwick.

'Dear me,' said Mr Nupkins, turning very red, and altering his whole manner directly. 'Dear me, Mr - '

'Pickvick,' said Sam.

'Pickwick,' said the magistrate, 'dear me, Mr Pickwick - pray take a seat - you cannot mean this? Captain Fitz-Marshall!'

'Don't call him a cap'en,' said Sam, 'nor Fitz-Marshall neither; he ain't neither one nor t'other. He's a strolling actor, he is, and his name's Jingle; and if ever there was a wolf in a mulberry suit, that 'ere Job Trotter's him.'



'It is very true, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick, replying to the magistrate's look of amazement; 'my only business in this town, is to expose the person of whom we now speak.'

Mr Pickwick proceeded to pour into the horror-stricken ear of Mr Nupkins, an abridged account of all Mr Jingle's atrocities. He related how he had first met him; how he had eloped with Miss Wardle; how he had cheerfully resigned the lady for a pecuniary consideration; how he had entrapped himself into a lady's boarding-school at midnight; and how he (Mr Pickwick) now felt it his duty to expose his assumption of his present name and rank.

As the narrative proceeded, all the warm blood in the body of Mr Nupkins tingled up into the very tips of his ears. He had picked up the captain at a neighbouring race-course. Charmed with his long list of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive travel, and his fashionable demeanour, Mrs. Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited Captain Fitz-Marshall, and quoted Captain Fitz-Marshall, and hurled Captain Fitz-Marshall at the devoted heads of their select circle of acquaintance, until their bosom friends, Mrs. Porkenham and the Misses Porkenhams, and Mr Sidney Porkenham, were ready to burst with jealousy and despair. And now, to hear, after all, that he was a needy adventurer, a strolling player, and if not a swindler, something so very like it, that it was hard to tell the difference! Heavens! what would the Porkenhams say! What would be the triumph of Mr Sidney Porkenham when he found that his addresses had been slighted for such a rival! How should he, Nupkins, meet the eye of old Porkenham at the next quarter-sessions! And what a handle would it be for the opposition magisterial party if the story got abroad!

'But after all,' said Mr Nupkins, brightening for a moment, after a long pause; 'after all, this is a mere statement. Captain Fitz-Marshall is a man of very engaging manners, and, I dare say, has many enemies. What proof have you of the truth of these representations?'

'Confront me with him,' said Mr Pickwick, 'that is all I ask, and all I require. Confront him with me and my friends here; you will want no further proof.'

'Why,' said Mr Nupkins, 'that might be very easily done, for he will be here to-night, and then there would be no occasion to make the matter public, just - just - for the young man's own sake, you know. I - I - should like to consult Mrs. Nupkins on the propriety of the step, in the first instance, though. At all events, Mr Pickwick, we must despatch this legal business before we can do anything else. Pray step back into the next room.'

Into the next room they went.

'Grummer,' said the magistrate, in an awful voice.

'Your Wash-up,' replied Grummer, with the smile of a favourite.

'Come, come, Sir,' said the magistrate sternly, 'don't let me see any of this levity here. It is very unbecoming, and I can assure you that you have very little to smile at. Was the account you gave me just now strictly true? Now be careful, sir!' 'Your Wash-up,' stammered Grummer, 'I-'

'Oh, you are confused, are you?' said the magistrate. 'Mr Jinks, you observe this confusion?'

'Certainly, Sir,' replied Jinks.

'Now,' said the magistrate, 'repeat your statement, Grummer, and again I warn you to be careful. Mr Jinks, take his words down.'

The unfortunate Grummer proceeded to re-state his complaint, but, what between Mr Jinks's taking down his words, and the magistrate's taking them up, his natural tendency to rambling, and his extreme confusion, he managed to get involved, in something under three minutes, in such a mass of entanglement and contradiction, that Mr Nupkins at once declared he didn't believe him. So the fines were remitted, and Mr Jinks found a couple of bail in no time. And all these solemn proceedings having been satisfactorily concluded, Mr Grummer was ignominiously ordered out - an awful instance of the instability of human greatness, and the uncertain tenure of great men's favour.

Mrs. Nupkins was a majestic female in a pink gauze turban and a light brown wig. Miss Nupkins possessed all her mamma's haughtiness without the turban, and all her ill-nature without the wig; and whenever the exercise of these two amiable qualities involved mother and daughter in some unpleasant dilemma, as they not infrequently did, they both concurred in laying the blame on the shoulders of Mr Nupkins. Accordingly, when Mr Nupkins sought Mrs. Nupkins, and detailed the communication which had been made by Mr Pickwick, Mrs. Nupkins suddenly recollected that she had always expected something of the kind; that she had always said it would be so; that her advice was never taken; that she really did not know what Mr Nupkins supposed she was; and so forth.

'The idea!' said Miss Nupkins, forcing a tear of very scanty proportions into the corner of each eye; 'the idea of my being made such a fool of!'

'Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear,' said Mrs. Nupkins; 'how I have implored and begged that man to inquire into the captain's

family connections; how I have urged and entreated him to take some decisive step! I am quite certain nobody would believe it - quite.'

'But, my dear,' said Mr Nupkins.

'Don't talk to me, you aggravating thing, don't!' said Mrs. Nupkins.

'My love,' said Mr Nupkins, 'you professed yourself very fond of Captain Fitz-Marshall. You have constantly asked him here, my dear, and you have lost no opportunity of introducing him elsewhere.'

'Didn't I say so, Henrietta?' cried Mrs. Nupkins, appealing to her daughter with the air of a much-injured female. 'Didn't I say that your papa would turn round and lay all this at my door? Didn't I say so?' Here Mrs. Nupkins sobbed.

'Oh, pa!' remonstrated Miss Nupkins. And here she sobbed too.

'Isn't it too much, when he has brought all this disgrace and ridicule upon us, to taunt me with being the cause of it?' exclaimed Mrs. Nupkins.

'How can we ever show ourselves in society!' said Miss Nupkins.

'How can we face the Porckenhams?' cried Mrs. Nupkins.

'Or the Griggs!' cried Miss Nupkins. 'Or the Slummintowkens!' cried Mrs. Nupkins. 'But what does your papa care! What is it to HIM!' At this dreadful reflection, Mrs. Nupkins wept mental anguish, and Miss Nupkins followed on the same side.

Mrs. Nupkins's tears continued to gush forth, with great velocity, until she had gained a little time to think the matter over; when she decided, in her own mind, that the best thing to do would be to ask Mr Pickwick and his friends to remain until the captain's arrival, and then to give Mr Pickwick the opportunity he sought. If it appeared that he had spoken truly, the captain could be turned out of the house without noising the matter abroad, and they could easily account to the Porckenhams for his disappearance, by saying that he had been appointed, through the Court influence of his family, to the governor-generalship of Sierra Leone, of Saugur Point, or any other of those salubrious climates which enchant Europeans so much, that when they once get there, they can hardly ever prevail upon themselves to come back again.

When Mrs. Nupkins dried up her tears, Miss Nupkins dried up hers, and Mr Nupkins was very glad to settle the matter as Mrs. Nupkins had proposed. So Mr Pickwick and his friends, having washed off all

marks of their late encounter, were introduced to the ladies, and soon afterwards to their dinner; and Mr Weller, whom the magistrate, with his peculiar sagacity, had discovered in half an hour to be one of the finest fellows alive, was consigned to the care and guardianship of Mr Muzzle, who was specially enjoined to take him below, and make much of him.

'How de do, sir?' said Mr Muzzle, as he conducted Mr Weller down the kitchen stairs.

'Why, no considerable change has taken place in the state of my system, since I see you cocked up behind your governor's chair in the parlour, a little vile ago,' replied Sam.

'You will excuse my not taking more notice of you then,' said Mr Muzzle. 'You see, master hadn't introduced us, then. Lord, how fond he is of you, Mr Weller, to be sure!'

'Ah!' said Sam, 'what a pleasant chap he is!'

'Ain't he?' replied Mr Muzzle.

'So much humour,' said Sam.

'And such a man to speak,' said Mr Muzzle. 'How his ideas flow, don't they?'

'Wonderful,' replied Sam; 'they comes a-pouring out, knocking each other's heads so fast, that they seems to stun one another; you hardly know what he's arter, do you?' 'That's the great merit of his style of speaking,' rejoined Mr Muzzle. 'Take care of the last step, Mr Weller. Would you like to wash your hands, sir, before we join the ladies! Here's a sink, with the water laid on, Sir, and a clean jack towel behind the door.'

'Ah! perhaps I may as well have a rinse,' replied Mr Weller, applying plenty of yellow soap to the towel, and rubbing away till his face shone again. 'How many ladies are there?'

'Only two in our kitchen,' said Mr Muzzle; 'cook and 'ouse- maid. We keep a boy to do the dirty work, and a gal besides, but they dine in the wash'us.'

'Oh, they dines in the wash'us, do they?' said Mr Weller.

'Yes,' replied Mr Muzzle, 'we tried 'em at our table when they first come, but we couldn't keep 'em. The gal's manners is dreadful vulgar;

and the boy breathes so very hard while he's eating, that we found it impossible to sit at table with him.'

'Young grampus!' said Mr Weller.

'Oh, dreadful,' rejoined Mr Muzzle; 'but that is the worst of country service, Mr Weller; the juniors is always so very savage. This way, sir, if you please, this way.'

Preceding Mr Weller, with the utmost politeness, Mr Muzzle conducted him into the kitchen.

'Mary,' said Mr Muzzle to the pretty servant-girl, 'this is Mr Weller; a gentleman as master has sent down, to be made as comfortable as possible.'

'And your master's a knowin' hand, and has just sent me to the right place,' said Mr Weller, with a glance of admiration at Mary. 'If I was master o' this here house, I should always find the materials for comfort vere Mary vos.' 'Lor, Mr Weller!' said Mary blushing.

'Well, I never!' ejaculated the cook.

'Bless me, cook, I forgot you,' said Mr Muzzle. 'Mr Weller, let me introduce you.'

'How are you, ma'am?' said Mr Weller. 'Wery glad to see you, indeed, and hope our acquaintance may be a long 'un, as the gen'l'm'n said to the fi' pun' note.'

When this ceremony of introduction had been gone through, the cook and Mary retired into the back kitchen to titter, for ten minutes; then returning, all giggles and blushes, they sat down to dinner. Mr Weller's easy manners and conversational powers had such irresistible influence with his new friends, that before the dinner was half over, they were on a footing of perfect intimacy, and in possession of a full account of the delinquency of Job Trotter.

'I never could a-bear that Job,' said Mary.

'No more you never ought to, my dear,' replied Mr Weller.

'Why not?' inquired Mary.

'Cos ugliness and svindlin' never ought to be formiliar with elegance and wirtew,' replied Mr Weller. 'Ought they, Mr Muzzle?'

'Not by no means,' replied that gentleman.

Here Mary laughed, and said the cook had made her; and the cook laughed, and said she hadn't.

'I ha'n't got a glass,' said Mary.

'Drink with me, my dear,' said Mr Weller. 'Put your lips to this here tumbler, and then I can kiss you by deputy.'

'For shame, Mr Weller!' said Mary.

'What's a shame, my dear?'

'Talkin' in that way.'

'Nonsense; it ain't no harm. It's natur; ain't it, cook?'

'Don't ask me, imperence,' replied the cook, in a high state of delight; and hereupon the cook and Mary laughed again, till what between the beer, and the cold meat, and the laughter combined, the latter young lady was brought to the verge of choking - an alarming crisis from which she was only recovered by sundry pats on the back, and other necessary attentions, most delicately administered by Mr Samuel Weller. In the midst of all this jollity and conviviality, a loud ring was heard at the garden gate, to which the young gentleman who took his meals in the wash-house, immediately responded. Mr Weller was in the height of his attentions to the pretty house- maid; Mr Muzzle was busy doing the honours of the table; and the cook had just paused to laugh, in the very act of raising a huge morsel to her lips; when the kitchen door opened, and in walked Mr Job Trotter.

We have said in walked Mr Job Trotter, but the statement is not distinguished by our usual scrupulous adherence to fact. The door opened and Mr Trotter appeared. He would have walked in, and was in the very act of doing so, indeed, when catching sight of Mr Weller, he involuntarily shrank back a pace or two, and stood gazing on the unexpected scene before him, perfectly motionless with amazement and terror.

'Here he is!' said Sam, rising with great glee. 'Why we were that very moment a-speaking o' you. How are you? Where have you been? Come in.'

Laying his hand on the mulberry collar of the unresisting Job, Mr Weller dragged him into the kitchen; and, locking the door, handed the key to Mr Muzzle, who very coolly buttoned it up in a side pocket.

'Well, here's a game!' cried Sam. 'Only think o' my master havin' the pleasure o' meeting yourn upstairs, and me havin' the joy o' meetin'

you down here. How are you gettin' on, and how is the chandlery bis'ness likely to do? Well, I am so glad to see you. How happy you look. It's quite a treat to see you; ain't it, Mr Muzzle?

'Quite,' said Mr Muzzle.

'So cheerful he is!' said Sam.

'In such good spirits!' said Muzzle. 'And so glad to see us - that makes it so much more comfortable,' said Sam. 'Sit down; sit down.'

Mr Trotter suffered himself to be forced into a chair by the fireside. He cast his small eyes, first on Mr Weller, and then on Mr Muzzle, but said nothing.

'Well, now,' said Sam, 'afore these here ladies, I should jest like to ask you, as a sort of curiosity, whether you don't consider yourself as nice and well-behaved a young gen'l'm'n, as ever used a pink check pocket-handkerchief, and the number four collection?'

'And as was ever a-going to be married to a cook,' said that lady indignantly. 'The willin!'

'And leave off his evil ways, and set up in the chandlery line arterwards,' said the housemaid.

'Now, I'll tell you what it is, young man,' said Mr Muzzle solemnly, enraged at the last two allusions, 'this here lady (pointing to the cook) keeps company with me; and when you presume, Sir, to talk of keeping chandlers' shops with her, you injure me in one of the most delicatest points in which one man can injure another. Do you understand that, Sir?'

Here Mr Muzzle, who had a great notion of his eloquence, in which he imitated his master, paused for a reply.

But Mr Trotter made no reply. So Mr Muzzle proceeded in a solemn manner -

'It's very probable, sir, that you won't be wanted upstairs for several minutes, Sir, because MY master is at this moment particularly engaged in settling the hash of YOUR master, Sir; and therefore you'll have leisure, Sir, for a little private talk with me, Sir. Do you understand that, Sir?'

Mr Muzzle again paused for a reply; and again Mr Trotter disappointed him.

'Well, then,' said Mr Muzzle, 'I'm very sorry to have to explain myself before ladies, but the urgency of the case will be my excuse. The back kitchen's empty, Sir. If you will step in there, Sir, Mr Weller will see fair, and we can have mutual satisfaction till the bell rings. Follow me, Sir!'

As Mr Muzzle uttered these words, he took a step or two towards the door; and, by way of saving time, began to pull off his coat as he walked along.

Now, the cook no sooner heard the concluding words of this desperate challenge, and saw Mr Muzzle about to put it into execution, than she uttered a loud and piercing shriek; and rushing on Mr Job Trotter, who rose from his chair on the instant, tore and buffeted his large flat face, with an energy peculiar to excited females, and twining her hands in his long black hair, tore therefrom about enough to make five or six dozen of the very largest-sized mourning-rings. Having accomplished this feat with all the ardour which her devoted love for Mr Muzzle inspired, she staggered back; and being a lady of very excitable and delicate feelings, she instantly fell under the dresser, and fainted away.

At this moment, the bell rang.

'That's for you, Job Trotter,' said Sam; and before Mr Trotter could offer remonstrance or reply - even before he had time to stanch the wounds inflicted by the insensible lady - Sam seized one arm and Mr Muzzle the other, and one pulling before, and the other pushing behind, they conveyed him upstairs, and into the parlour.

It was an impressive tableau. Alfred Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitz-Marshall, was standing near the door with his hat in his hand, and a smile on his face, wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant situation. Confronting him, stood Mr Pickwick, who had evidently been inculcating some high moral lesson; for his left hand was beneath his coat tail, and his right extended in air, as was his wont when delivering himself of an impressive address. At a little distance, stood Mr Tupman with indignant countenance, carefully held back by his two younger friends; at the farther end of the room were Mr Nupkins, Mrs. Nupkins, and Miss Nupkins, gloomily grand and savagely vexed. 'What prevents me,' said Mr Nupkins, with magisterial dignity, as Job was brought in - 'what prevents me from detaining these men as rogues and impostors? It is a foolish mercy. What prevents me?'

'Pride, old fellow, pride,' replied Jingle, quite at his ease. 'Wouldn't do - no go - caught a captain, eh? - ha! ha! very good - husband for



daughter - biter bit - make it public - not for worlds - look stupid - very!

'Wretch,' said Mr Nupkins, 'we scorn your base insinuations.'

'I always hated him,' added Henrietta.

'Oh, of course,' said Jingle. 'Tall young man - old lover - Sidney Porkenham - rich - fine fellow - not so rich as captain, though, eh? - turn him away - off with him - anything for captain - nothing like captain anywhere - all the girls - raving mad - eh, Job, eh?'

Here Mr Jingle laughed very heartily; and Job, rubbing his hands with delight, uttered the first sound he had given vent to since he entered the house - a low, noiseless chuckle, which seemed to intimate that he enjoyed his laugh too much, to let any of it escape in sound. 'Mr Nupkins,' said the elder lady, 'this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed.'

'Certainly, my dear,' Said Mr, Nupkins. 'Muzzle!'

'Your Worship.'

'Open the front door.'

'Yes, your Worship.'

'Leave the house!' said Mr Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled, and moved towards the door.

'Stay!' said Mr Pickwick. Jingle stopped.

'I might,' said Mr Pickwick, 'have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there.'

Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

'I say,' said Mr Pickwick, growing gradually angry, 'that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, Sir, which I hope you will remember.'

When Mr Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity, applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

'And I have only to add, sir,' said Mr Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, 'that I consider you a rascal, and a - a - ruffian - and - and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except that pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery.'

'Ha! ha!' said Jingle, 'good fellow, Pickwick - fine heart - stout old boy - but must NOT be passionate - bad thing, very - bye, bye - see you again some day - keep up your spirits - now, Job - trot!'

With these words, Mr Jingle stuck on his hat in his old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr Pickwick, and a wink to Mr Weller, the audacious slyness of which baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

'Sam,' said Mr Pickwick, as Mr Weller was following.

'Sir.' 'Stay here.'

Mr Weller seemed uncertain.

'Stay here,' repeated Mr Pickwick.

'Mayn't I polish that 'ere Job off, in the front garden?' said Mr Weller. 'Certainly not,' replied Mr Pickwick.

'Mayn't I kick him out o' the gate, Sir?' said Mr Weller.

'Not on any account,' replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up; for the wily Mr Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

'Having discharged my duty, Sir,' said Mr Pickwick to Mr Nupkins, 'I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. While we thank you for such hospitality as we have received, permit me to assure you, in our joint names, that we should not have accepted it, or have consented to extricate ourselves in this way, from our previous dilemma, had we not been impelled by a strong sense of duty. We return to London tomorrow. Your secret is safe with us.'

Having thus entered his protest against their treatment of the morning, Mr Pickwick bowed low to the ladies, and notwithstanding the solicitations of the family, left the room with his friends.

'Get your hat, Sam,' said Mr Pickwick.

'It's below stairs, Sir,' said Sam, and he ran down after it.

Now, there was nobody in the kitchen, but the pretty housemaid; and as Sam's hat was mislaid, he had to look for it, and the pretty housemaid lighted him. They had to look all over the place for the hat. The pretty housemaid, in her anxiety to find it, went down on her knees, and turned over all the things that were heaped together in a little corner by the door. It was an awkward corner. You couldn't get at it without shutting the door first.

'Here it is,' said the pretty housemaid. 'This is it, ain't it?'

'Let me look,' said Sam.

The pretty housemaid had stood the candle on the floor; and, as it gave a very dim light, Sam was obliged to go down on HIS knees before he could see whether it really was his own hat or not. It was a remarkably small corner, and so - it was nobody's fault but the man's who built the house - Sam and the pretty housemaid were necessarily very close together.

'Yes, this is it,' said Sam. 'Good-bye!'

'Good-bye!' said the pretty housemaid.

'Good-bye!' said Sam; and as he said it, he dropped the hat that had cost so much trouble in looking for.

'How awkward you are,' said the pretty housemaid. 'You'll lose it again, if you don't take care.'

So just to prevent his losing it again, she put it on for him.

Whether it was that the pretty housemaid's face looked prettier still, when it was raised towards Sam's, or whether it was the accidental consequence of their being so near to each other, is matter of uncertainty to this day; but Sam kissed her.

'You don't mean to say you did that on purpose,' said the pretty housemaid, blushing.

'No, I didn't then,' said Sam; 'but I will now.'

So he kissed her again. 'Sam!' said Mr Pickwick, calling over the banisters.

'Coming, Sir,' replied Sam, running upstairs.

'How long you have been!' said Mr Pickwick.

'There was something behind the door, Sir, which perwented our getting it open, for ever so long, Sir,' replied Sam.

And this was the first passage of Mr Weller's first love.