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 anything agin it? Live down there! Yes, and a wery good place it is to live in, ain't it?'

As Roker turned somewhat fiercely upon Mr Pickwick 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 has 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 a-going 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 gravelled 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 semblance of various men- of-war in full sail, and other artistical effects achieved in bygone 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 anything 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-and-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, eyeing 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.

'A1,' 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 stair- cases, 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 labouring 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 kind of 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 debtors' 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 stair-head-'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 reg'lar holiday to them - all porter and skittles. It's the t'other vuns as gets done over vith this sort o' thing; them down-hearted fellers as can't svig avay at the beer, nor play at skittles neither; them as vould 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 alvays 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.'

'P'raps, 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 were stopped up vith the dirt, for both the dirty face and the brown coat wos just the same at the end o' that time as they wos at the beginnin'. He wos a wery peaceful, inoffendin' little creetur, and wos alvays a-bustlin' about for somebody, or playin' rackets and never vinnin'; till at last the turnkeys they got quite fond on him, and he wos in the lodge ev'ry night, a-chattering vith 'em, and tellin' stories, and all that 'ere. Vun night he wos in there as usual, along vith a wery old friend of his, as wos on the lock, ven he says all of a sudden, 'I ain't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says (Fleet Market wos 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 WOS 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 wos true, sure enough, for wen he wanted to make the acquaintance of any new-comer, he used to pull out a little limp card vith them words on it and nothin' else; in consideration of vich, he vos alvays called Number Tventy. The turnkey takes a fixed look at him, and at last he says in a solemn manner, 'Tventy,' 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 vesket wery hard, and then a tear started out o' each eye, which wos wery extraordinary, for it wos 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 wos such a wery nice parlour, that he took it into his head to go there every night, which he did for a long time, always comin' back reg'lar about a quarter of an hour afore the gate shut, which 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 went on gettin' later and later, till vun night his old friend wos 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, Tventy?' says the turnkey, 'I thought you wos in, long ago.' 'No, I wasn't,' says the little man, with 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, which 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 reg'lar hours, as sure as you're a-standin' there, I'll shut you out altogether!' The little man was seized vith a wiolent fit o' tremblin', and never vent outside the prison walls artervards!'

As Sam concluded, Mr Pickwick slowly retraced his steps downstairs. 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 adjacent 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 spirits 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 & 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 bitterly; 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 upstairs to bed.

Now, although the warder'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 warder 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 insane. After settling this point, he began to be conscious that he was getting sleepy; whereupon he took his nightcap 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 considerately 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 eighteenpenny 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 trousers, 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, Shakespeare! 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 gentlemen 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 nightcap, Sir.'

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 nightcap 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 him of a considerable portion of the commodity which sometimes bears his name, and then, recapturing his nightcap, boldly placed himself in an attitude of defence.

'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, instead of then and there making an attempt to commit man- slaughter, 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 H-onour,' said the gentleman with the whiskers, presenting his dexter hand, and aspirating 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.

All this was very genteel and pleasant; and, to make matters still more comfortable, Mr Smangle assured Mr Pickwick a great many more 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 no wise 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 Relief of - You know.'

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

'Going out, perhaps?' suggested Mr 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. 'Damme! 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 jewellery, 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 burnt sherry; the last-comer shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentlemanlike division of labour, 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 anybody 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 upstairs, it would be as well. Here, you sir, just run downstairs, 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 shan't be wasted,' continued Smangle, turning to Mr Pickwick. 'I'LL smoke 'em.'

This manoeuvring 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; considerately 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 thoroughbred 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 was 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.