

CHAPTER X - Containing the Sequel of the Midshipman's Disaster

Major Bagstock, after long and frequent observation of Paul, across Princess's Place, through his double-barrelled opera-glass; and after receiving many minute reports, daily, weekly, and monthly, on that subject, from the native who kept himself in constant communication with Miss Tox's maid for that purpose; came to the conclusion that Dombey, Sir, was a man to be known, and that J. B. was the boy to make his acquaintance.

Miss Tox, however, maintaining her reserved behaviour, and frigidly declining to understand the Major whenever he called (which he often did) on any little fishing excursion connected with this project, the Major, in spite of his constitutional toughness and slyness, was fain to leave the accomplishment of his desire in some measure to chance, 'which,' as he was used to observe with chuckles at his club, 'has been fifty to one in favour of Joey B., Sir, ever since his elder brother died of Yellow Jack in the West Indies.'

It was some time coming to his aid in the present instance, but it befriended him at last. When the dark servant, with full particulars, reported Miss Tox absent on Brighton service, the Major was suddenly touched with affectionate reminiscences of his friend Bill Bitherstone of Bengal, who had written to ask him, if he ever went that way, to bestow a call upon his only son. But when the same dark servant reported Paul at Mrs Pipchin's, and the Major, referring to the letter favoured by Master Bitherstone on his arrival in England - to which he had never had the least idea of paying any attention - saw the opening that presented itself, he was made so rabid by the gout, with which he happened to be then laid up, that he threw a footstool at the dark servant in return for his intelligence, and swore he would be the death of the rascal before he had done with him: which the dark servant was more than half disposed to believe.

At length the Major being released from his fit, went one Saturday growling down to Brighton, with the native behind him; apostrophizing Miss Tox all the way, and gloating over the prospect of carrying by storm the distinguished friend to whom she attached so much mystery, and for whom she had deserted him,

'Would you, Ma'am, would you!' said the Major, straining with vindictiveness, and swelling every already swollen vein in his head. 'Would you give Joey B. the go-by, Ma'am? Not yet, Ma'am, not yet! Damme, not yet, Sir. Joe is awake, Ma'am. Bagstock is alive, Sir. J. B. knows a move or two, Ma'am. Josh has his weather-eye open, Sir. You'll find him tough, Ma'am. Tough, Sir, tough is Joseph. Tough, and de-vilish sly!'

And very tough indeed Master Bitherstone found him, when he took that young gentleman out for a walk. But the Major, with his complexion like a Stilton cheese, and his eyes like a prawn's, went roving about, perfectly indifferent to Master Bitherstone's amusement, and dragging Master Bitherstone along, while he looked about him high and low, for Mr Dombey and his children.

In good time the Major, previously instructed by Mrs Pipchin, spied out Paul and Florence, and bore down upon them; there being a stately gentleman (Mr Dombey, doubtless) in their company. Charging with Master Bitherstone into the very heart of the little squadron, it fell out, of course, that Master Bitherstone spoke to his fellow-sufferers. Upon that the Major stopped to notice and admire them; remembered with amazement that he had seen and spoken to them at his friend Miss Tox's in Princess's Place; opined that Paul was a devilish fine fellow, and his own little friend; inquired if he remembered Joey B. the Major; and finally, with a sudden recollection of the conventionalities of life, turned and apologised to Mr Dombey.

'But my little friend here, Sir,' said the Major, 'makes a boy of me again: An old soldier, Sir - Major Bagstock, at your service - is not ashamed to confess it.' Here the Major lifted his hat. 'Damme, Sir,' cried the Major with sudden warmth, 'I envy you.' Then he recollected himself, and added, 'Excuse my freedom.'

Mr Dombey begged he wouldn't mention it.

'An old campaigner, Sir,' said the Major, 'a smoke-dried, sun-burnt, used-up, invalided old dog of a Major, Sir, was not afraid of being condemned for his whim by a man like Mr Dombey. I have the honour of addressing Mr Dombey, I believe?'

'I am the present unworthy representative of that name, Major,' returned Mr Dombey.

'By G-, Sir!' said the Major, 'it's a great name. It's a name, Sir,' said the Major firmly, as if he defied Mr Dombey to contradict him, and would feel it his painful duty to bully him if he did, 'that is known and honoured in the British possessions abroad. It is a name, Sir, that a man is proud to recognise. There is nothing adulatory in Joseph Bagstock, Sir. His Royal Highness the Duke of York observed on more than one occasion, 'there is no adulation in Joey. He is a plain old soldier is Joe. He is tough to a fault is Joseph:' but it's a great name, Sir. By the Lord, it's a great name!' said the Major, solemnly.

'You are good enough to rate it higher than it deserves, perhaps, Major,' returned Mr Dombey.

'No, Sir,' said the Major, in a severe tone. No, Mr Dombey, let us understand each other. That is not the Bagstock vein, Sir. You don't know Joseph B. He is a blunt old blade is Josh. No flattery in him, Sir. Nothing like it.'

Mr Dombey inclined his head, and said he believed him to be in earnest, and that his high opinion was gratifying.

'My little friend here, Sir,' croaked the Major, looking as amiably as he could, on Paul, 'will certify for Joseph Bagstock that he is a thorough-going, down-right, plain-spoken, old Trump, Sir, and nothing more. That boy, Sir,' said the Major in a lower tone, 'will live in history. That boy, Sir, is not a common production. Take care of him, Mr Dombey.'

Mr Dombey seemed to intimate that he would endeavour to do so.

'Here is a boy here, Sir,' pursued the Major, confidentially, and giving him a thrust with his cane. 'Son of Bitherstone of Bengal. Bill Bitherstone formerly of ours. That boy's father and myself, Sir, were sworn friends. Wherever you went, Sir, you heard of nothing but Bill Bitherstone and Joe Bagstock. Am I blind to that boy's defects? By no means. He's a fool, Sir.'

Mr Dombey glanced at the libelled Master Bitherstone, of whom he knew at least as much as the Major did, and said, in quite a complacent manner, 'Really?'

'That is what he is, sir,' said the Major. 'He's a fool. Joe Bagstock never minces matters. The son of my old friend Bill Bitherstone, of Bengal, is a born fool, Sir.' Here the Major laughed till he was almost black. 'My little friend is destined for a public school,' I presume, Mr Dombey?' said the Major when he had recovered.

'I am not quite decided,' returned Mr Dombey. 'I think not. He is delicate.'

'If he's delicate, Sir,' said the Major, 'you are right. None but the tough fellows could live through it, Sir, at Sandhurst. We put each other to the torture there, Sir. We roasted the new fellows at a slow fire, and hung 'em out of a three pair of stairs window, with their heads downwards. Joseph Bagstock, Sir, was held out of the window by the heels of his boots, for thirteen minutes by the college clock'

The Major might have appealed to his countenance in corroboration of this story. It certainly looked as if he had hung out a little too long.

'But it made us what we were, Sir,' said the Major, settling his shirt frill. 'We were iron, Sir, and it forged us. Are you remaining here, Mr Dombey?'

'I generally come down once a week, Major,' returned that gentleman. 'I stay at the Bedford.'

'I shall have the honour of calling at the Bedford, Sir, if you'll permit me,' said the Major. 'Joey B., Sir, is not in general a calling man, but Mr Dombey's is not a common name. I am much indebted to my little friend, Sir, for the honour of this introduction.'

Mr Dombey made a very gracious reply; and Major Bagstock, having patted Paul on the head, and said of Florence that her eyes would play the Devil with the youngsters before long - 'and the oldsters too, Sir, if you come to that,' added the Major, chuckling very much - stirred up Master Bitherstone with his walking-stick, and departed with that young gentleman, at a kind of half-trot; rolling his head and coughing with great dignity, as he staggered away, with his legs very wide asunder.

In fulfilment of his promise, the Major afterwards called on Mr Dombey; and Mr Dombey, having referred to the army list, afterwards called on the Major. Then the Major called at Mr Dombey's house in town; and came down again, in the same coach as Mr Dombey. In short, Mr Dombey and the Major got on uncommonly well together, and uncommonly fast: and Mr Dombey observed of the Major, to his sister, that besides being quite a military man he was really something more, as he had a very admirable idea of the importance of things unconnected with his own profession.

At length Mr Dombey, bringing down Miss Tox and Mrs Chick to see the children, and finding the Major again at Brighton, invited him to dinner at the Bedford, and complimented Miss Tox highly, beforehand, on her neighbour and acquaintance.

'My dearest Louisa,' said Miss Tox to Mrs Chick, when they were alone together, on the morning of the appointed day, 'if I should seem at all reserved to Major Bagstock, or under any constraint with him, promise me not to notice it.'

'My dear Lucretia,' returned Mrs Chick, 'what mystery is involved in this remarkable request? I must insist upon knowing.'

'Since you are resolved to extort a confession from me, Louisa,' said Miss Tox instantly, 'I have no alternative but to confide to you that the Major has been particular.'

'Particular!' repeated Mrs Chick.

'The Major has long been very particular indeed, my love, in his attentions,' said Miss Tox, 'occasionally they have been so very marked, that my position has been one of no common difficulty.'

'Is he in good circumstances?' inquired Mrs Chick.

'I have every reason to believe, my dear - indeed I may say I know,' returned Miss Tox, 'that he is wealthy. He is truly military, and full of anecdote. I have been informed that his valour, when he was in active service, knew no bounds. I am told that he did all sorts of things in the Peninsula, with every description of fire-arm; and in the East and West Indies, my love, I really couldn't undertake to say what he did not do.'

'Very creditable to him indeed,' said Mrs Chick, 'extremely so; and you have given him no encouragement, my dear?'

'If I were to say, Louisa,' replied Miss Tox, with every demonstration of making an effort that rent her soul, 'that I never encouraged Major Bagstock slightly, I should not do justice to the friendship which exists between you and me. It is, perhaps, hardly in the nature of woman to receive such attentions as the Major once lavished upon myself without betraying some sense of obligation. But that is past - long past. Between the Major and me there is now a yawning chasm, and I will not feign to give encouragement, Louisa, where I cannot give my heart. My affections,' said Miss Tox - 'but, Louisa, this is madness!' and departed from the room.

All this Mrs Chick communicated to her brother before dinner: and it by no means indisposed Mr Dombey to receive the Major with unwonted cordiality. The Major, for his part, was in a state of plethoric satisfaction that knew no bounds: and he coughed, and choked, and chuckled, and gasped, and swelled, until the waiters seemed positively afraid of him.

'Your family monopolises Joe's light, Sir,' said the Major, when he had saluted Miss Tox. 'Joe lives in darkness. Princess's Place is changed into Kamschatka in the winter time. There is no ray of sun, Sir, for Joey B., now.'

'Miss Tox is good enough to take a great deal of interest in Paul, Major,' returned Mr Dombey on behalf of that blushing virgin.

'Damme Sir,' said the Major, 'I'm jealous of my little friend. I'm pining away Sir. The Bagstock breed is degenerating in the forsaken person of old Joe.' And the Major, becoming bluer and bluer and puffing his

cheeks further and further over the stiff ridge of his tight cravat, stared at Miss Tox, until his eyes seemed as if he were at that moment being overdone before the slow fire at the military college.

Notwithstanding the palpitation of the heart which these allusions occasioned her, they were anything but disagreeable to Miss Tox, as they enabled her to be extremely interesting, and to manifest an occasional incoherence and distraction which she was not at all unwilling to display. The Major gave her abundant opportunities of exhibiting this emotion: being profuse in his complaints, at dinner, of her desertion of him and Princess's Place: and as he appeared to derive great enjoyment from making them, they all got on very well.

None the worse on account of the Major taking charge of the whole conversation, and showing as great an appetite in that respect as in regard of the various dainties on the table, among which he may be almost said to have wallowed: greatly to the aggravation of his inflammatory tendencies. Mr Dombey's habitual silence and reserve yielding readily to this usurpation, the Major felt that he was coming out and shining: and in the flow of spirits thus engendered, rang such an infinite number of new changes on his own name that he quite astonished himself. In a word, they were all very well pleased. The Major was considered to possess an inexhaustible fund of conversation; and when he took a late farewell, after a long rubber, Mr Dombey again complimented the blushing Miss Tox on her neighbour and acquaintance.

But all the way home to his own hotel, the Major incessantly said to himself, and of himself, 'Sly, Sir - sly, Sir - de-vil-ish sly!' And when he got there, sat down in a chair, and fell into a silent fit of laughter, with which he was sometimes seized, and which was always particularly awful. It held him so long on this occasion that the dark servant, who stood watching him at a distance, but dared not for his life approach, twice or thrice gave him over for lost. His whole form, but especially his face and head, dilated beyond all former experience; and presented to the dark man's view, nothing but a heaving mass of indigo. At length he burst into a violent paroxysm of coughing, and when that was a little better burst into such ejaculations as the following:

'Would you, Ma'am, would you? Mrs Dombey, eh, Ma'am? I think not, Ma'am. Not while Joe B. can put a spoke in your wheel, Ma'am. J. B.'s even with you now, Ma'am. He isn't altogether bowled out, yet, Sir, isn't Bagstock. She's deep, Sir, deep, but Josh is deeper. Wide awake is old Joe - broad awake, and staring, Sir!' There was no doubt of this last assertion being true, and to a very fearful extent; as it continued to be during the greater part of that night, which the Major chiefly passed in similar exclamations, diversified with fits of coughing and choking that startled the whole house.

It was on the day after this occasion (being Sunday) when, as Mr Dombey, Mrs Chick, and Miss Tox were sitting at breakfast, still eulogising the Major, Florence came running in: her face suffused with a bright colour, and her eyes sparkling joyfully: and cried,

'Papa! Papa! Here's Walter! and he won't come in.'

'Who?' cried Mr Dombey. 'What does she mean? What is this?'

'Walter, Papa!' said Florence timidly; sensible of having approached the presence with too much familiarity. 'Who found me when I was lost.'

'Does she mean young Gay, Louisa?' inquired Mr Dombey, knitting his brows. 'Really, this child's manners have become very boisterous. She cannot mean young Gay, I think. See what it is, will you?'

Mrs Chick hurried into the passage, and returned with the information that it was young Gay, accompanied by a very strange-looking person; and that young Gay said he would not take the liberty of coming in, hearing Mr Dombey was at breakfast, but would wait until Mr Dombey should signify that he might approach.

'Tell the boy to come in now,' said Mr Dombey. 'Now, Gay, what is the matter? Who sent you down here? Was there nobody else to come?'

'I beg your pardon, Sir,' returned Walter. 'I have not been sent. I have been so bold as to come on my own account, which I hope you'll pardon when I mention the cause.'

But Mr Dombey, without attending to what he said, was looking impatiently on either side of him (as if he were a pillar in his way) at some object behind.

'What's that?' said Mr Dombey. 'Who is that? I think you have made some mistake in the door, Sir.'

'Oh, I'm very sorry to intrude with anyone, Sir,' cried Walter, hastily: 'but this is - this is Captain Cuttle, Sir.'

'Wal'r, my lad,' observed the Captain in a deep voice: 'stand by!'

At the same time the Captain, coming a little further in, brought out his wide suit of blue, his conspicuous shirt-collar, and his knobby nose in full relief, and stood bowing to Mr Dombey, and waving his hook politely to the ladies, with the hard glazed hat in his one hand, and a red equator round his head which it had newly imprinted there.

Mr Dombey regarded this phenomenon with amazement and indignation, and seemed by his looks to appeal to Mrs Chick and Miss Tox against it. Little Paul, who had come in after Florence, backed towards Miss Tox as the Captain waved his book, and stood on the defensive.

'Now, Gay,' said Mr Dombey. 'What have you got to say to me?'

Again the Captain observed, as a general opening of the conversation that could not fail to propitiate all parties, 'Wal'r, standby!'

'I am afraid, Sir,' began Walter, trembling, and looking down at the ground, 'that I take a very great liberty in coming - indeed, I am sure I do. I should hardly have had the courage to ask to see you, Sir, even after coming down, I am afraid, if I had not overtaken Miss Dombey, and - '

'Well!' said Mr Dombey, following his eyes as he glanced at the attentive Florence, and frowning unconsciously as she encouraged him with a smile. 'Go on, if you please.'

'Ay, ay,' observed the Captain, considering it incumbent on him, as a point of good breeding, to support Mr Dombey. 'Well said! Go on, Wal'r.'

Captain Cuttle ought to have been withered by the look which Mr Dombey bestowed upon him in acknowledgment of his patronage. But quite innocent of this, he closed one eye in reply, and gave Mr Dombey to understand, by certain significant motions of his hook, that Walter was a little bashful at first, and might be expected to come out shortly.

'It is entirely a private and personal matter, that has brought me here, Sir,' continued Walter, faltering, 'and Captain Cuttle

'Here!' interposed the Captain, as an assurance that he was at hand, and might be relied upon.

'Who is a very old friend of my poor Uncle's, and a most excellent man, Sir,' pursued Walter, raising his eyes with a look of entreaty in the Captain's behalf, 'was so good as to offer to come with me, which I could hardly refuse.'

'No, no, no;' observed the Captain complacently. 'Of course not. No call for refusing. Go on, Wal'r.'

'And therefore, Sir,' said Walter, venturing to meet Mr Dombey's eye, and proceeding with better courage in the very desperation of the

case, now that there was no avoiding it, 'therefore I have come, with him, Sir, to say that my poor old Uncle is in very great affliction and distress. That, through the gradual loss of his business, and not being able to make a payment, the apprehension of which has weighed very heavily upon his mind, months and months, as indeed I know, Sir, he has an execution in his house, and is in danger of losing all he has, and breaking his heart. And that if you would, in your kindness, and in your old knowledge of him as a respectable man, do anything to help him out of his difficulty, Sir, we never could thank you enough for it.'

Walter's eyes filled with tears as he spoke; and so did those of Florence. Her father saw them glistening, though he appeared to look at Walter only.

'It is a very large sum, Sir,' said Walter. 'More than three hundred pounds. My Uncle is quite beaten down by his misfortune, it lies so heavy on him; and is quite unable to do anything for his own relief. He doesn't even know yet, that I have come to speak to you. You would wish me to say, Sir,' added Walter, after a moment's hesitation, 'exactly what it is I want. I really don't know, Sir. There is my Uncle's stock, on which I believe I may say, confidently, there are no other demands, and there is Captain Cuttle, who would wish to be security too. I - I hardly like to mention,' said Walter, 'such earnings as mine; but if you would allow them - accumulate - payment - advance - Uncle - frugal, honourable, old man.' Walter trailed off, through these broken sentences, into silence: and stood with downcast head, before his employer.

Considering this a favourable moment for the display of the valuables, Captain Cuttle advanced to the table; and clearing a space among the breakfast-cups at Mr Dombey's elbow, produced the silver watch, the ready money, the teaspoons, and the sugar-tongs; and piling them up into a heap that they might look as precious as possible, delivered himself of these words:

'Half a loaf's better than no bread, and the same remark holds good with crumbs. There's a few. Annuity of one hundred pound premium also ready to be made over. If there is a man chock full of science in the world, it's old Sol Gills. If there is a lad of promise - one flowing,' added the Captain, in one of his happy quotations, 'with milk and honey - it's his nevy!'

The Captain then withdrew to his former place, where he stood arranging his scattered locks with the air of a man who had given the finishing touch to a difficult performance.

When Walter ceased to speak, Mr Dombey's eyes were attracted to little Paul, who, seeing his sister hanging down her head and silently weeping in her commiseration for the distress she had heard described, went over to her, and tried to comfort her: looking at Walter and his father as he did so, with a very expressive face. After the momentary distraction of Captain Cuttle's address, which he regarded with lofty indifference, Mr Dombey again turned his eyes upon his son, and sat steadily regarding the child, for some moments, in silence.

'What was this debt contracted for?' asked Mr Dombey, at length. 'Who is the creditor?'

'He don't know,' replied the Captain, putting his hand on Walter's shoulder. 'I do. It came of helping a man that's dead now, and that's cost my friend Gills many a hundred pound already. More particulars in private, if agreeable.'

'People who have enough to do to hold their own way,' said Mr Dombey, unobservant of the Captain's mysterious signs behind Walter, and still looking at his son, 'had better be content with their own obligations and difficulties, and not increase them by engaging for other men. It is an act of dishonesty and presumption, too,' said Mr Dombey, sternly; 'great presumption; for the wealthy could do no more. Paul, come here!'

The child obeyed: and Mr Dombey took him on his knee.

'If you had money now - ' said Mr Dombey. 'Look at me!'

Paul, whose eyes had wandered to his sister, and to Walter, looked his father in the face.

'If you had money now,' said Mr Dombey; 'as much money as young Gay has talked about; what would you do?'

'Give it to his old Uncle,' returned Paul.

'Lend it to his old Uncle, eh?' retorted Mr Dombey. 'Well! When you are old enough, you know, you will share my money, and we shall use it together.'

'Dombey and Son,' interrupted Paul, who had been tutored early in the phrase.

'Dombey and Son,' repeated his father. 'Would you like to begin to be Dombey and Son, now, and lend this money to young Gay's Uncle?'

'Oh! if you please, Papa!' said Paul: 'and so would Florence.'

'Girls,' said Mr Dombey, 'have nothing to do with Dombey and Son. Would you like it?'

'Yes, Papa, yes!'

'Then you shall do it,' returned his father. 'And you see, Paul,' he added, dropping his voice, 'how powerful money is, and how anxious people are to get it. Young Gay comes all this way to beg for money, and you, who are so grand and great, having got it, are going to let him have it, as a great favour and obligation.'

Paul turned up the old face for a moment, in which there was a sharp understanding of the reference conveyed in these words: but it was a young and childish face immediately afterwards, when he slipped down from his father's knee, and ran to tell Florence not to cry any more, for he was going to let young Gay have the money.

Mr Dombey then turned to a side-table, and wrote a note and sealed it. During the interval, Paul and Florence whispered to Walter, and Captain Cuttle beamed on the three, with such aspiring and ineffably presumptuous thoughts as Mr Dombey never could have believed in. The note being finished, Mr Dombey turned round to his former place, and held it out to Walter.

'Give that,' he said, 'the first thing to-morrow morning, to Mr Carker. He will immediately take care that one of my people releases your Uncle from his present position, by paying the amount at issue; and that such arrangements are made for its repayment as may be consistent with your Uncle's circumstances. You will consider that this is done for you by Master Paul.'

Walter, in the emotion of holding in his hand the means of releasing his good Uncle from his trouble, would have endeavoured to express something of his gratitude and joy. But Mr Dombey stopped him short.

'You will consider that it is done,' he repeated, 'by Master Paul. I have explained that to him, and he understands it. I wish no more to be said.'

As he motioned towards the door, Walter could only bow his head and retire. Miss Tox, seeing that the Captain appeared about to do the same, interposed.

'My dear Sir,' she said, addressing Mr Dombey, at whose munificence both she and Mrs Chick were shedding tears copiously; 'I think you

have overlooked something. Pardon me, Mr Dombey, I think, in the nobility of your character, and its exalted scope, you have omitted a matter of detail.'

'Indeed, Miss Tox!' said Mr Dombey.

'The gentleman with the - Instrument,' pursued Miss Tox, glancing at Captain Cuttle, 'has left upon the table, at your elbow - '

'Good Heaven!' said Mr Dombey, sweeping the Captain's property from him, as if it were so much crumb indeed. 'Take these things away. I am obliged to you, Miss Tox; it is like your usual discretion. Have the goodness to take these things away, Sir!'

Captain Cuttle felt he had no alternative but to comply. But he was so much struck by the magnanimity of Mr Dombey, in refusing treasures lying heaped up to his hand, that when he had deposited the teaspoons and sugar-tongs in one pocket, and the ready money in another, and had lowered the great watch down slowly into its proper vault, he could not refrain from seizing that gentleman's right hand in his own solitary left, and while he held it open with his powerful fingers, bringing the hook down upon its palm in a transport of admiration. At this touch of warm feeling and cold iron, Mr Dombey shivered all over.

Captain Cuttle then kissed his hook to the ladies several times, with great elegance and gallantry; and having taken a particular leave of Paul and Florence, accompanied Walter out of the room. Florence was running after them in the earnestness of her heart, to send some message to old Sol, when Mr Dombey called her back, and bade her stay where she was.

'Will you never be a Dombey, my dear child!' said Mrs Chick, with pathetic reproachfulness.

'Dear aunt,' said Florence. 'Don't be angry with me. I am so thankful to Papa!'

She would have run and thrown her arms about his neck if she had dared; but as she did not dare, she glanced with thankful eyes towards him, as he sat musing; sometimes bestowing an uneasy glance on her, but, for the most part, watching Paul, who walked about the room with the new-blown dignity of having let young Gay have the money.

And young Gay - Walter- what of him?

He was overjoyed to purge the old man's hearth from bailiffs and brokers, and to hurry back to his Uncle with the good tidings. He was overjoyed to have it all arranged and settled next day before noon; and to sit down at evening in the little back parlour with old Sol and Captain Cuttle; and to see the Instrument-maker already reviving, and hopeful for the future, and feeling that the wooden Midshipman was his own again. But without the least impeachment of his gratitude to Mr Dombey, it must be confessed that Walter was humbled and cast down. It is when our budding hopes are nipped beyond recovery by some rough wind, that we are the most disposed to picture to ourselves what flowers they might have borne, if they had flourished; and now, when Walter found himself cut off from that great Dombey height, by the depth of a new and terrible tumble, and felt that all his old wild fancies had been scattered to the winds in the fall, he began to suspect that they might have led him on to harmless visions of aspiring to Florence in the remote distance of time.

The Captain viewed the subject in quite a different light. He appeared to entertain a belief that the interview at which he had assisted was so very satisfactory and encouraging, as to be only a step or two removed from a regular betrothal of Florence to Walter; and that the late transaction had immensely forwarded, if not thoroughly established, the Whittingtonian hopes. Stimulated by this conviction, and by the improvement in the spirits of his old friend, and by his own consequent gaiety, he even attempted, in favouring them with the ballad of 'Lovely Peg' for the third time in one evening, to make an extemporaneous substitution of the name 'Florence;' but finding this difficult, on account of the word Peg invariably rhyming to leg (in which personal beauty the original was described as having excelled all competitors), he hit upon the happy thought of changing it to Fle-e-eg; which he accordingly did, with an archness almost supernatural, and a voice quite vociferous, notwithstanding that the time was close at hand when he must seek the abode of the dreadful Mrs MacStinger.

That same evening the Major was diffuse at his club, on the subject of his friend Dombey in the City. 'Damme, Sir,' said the Major, 'he's a prince, is my friend Dombey in the City. I tell you what, Sir. If you had a few more men among you like old Joe Bagstock and my friend Dombey in the City, Sir, you'd do!'