

Chapter XX - Mr Dombey goes upon a Journey

'Mr Dombey, Sir,' said Major Bagstock, 'Joe' B. is not in general a man of sentiment, for Joseph is tough. But Joe has his feelings, Sir, and when they are awakened - Damme, Mr Dombey,?' cried the Major with sudden ferocity, 'this is weakness, and I won't submit to it!'

Major Bagstock delivered himself of these expressions on receiving Mr Dombey as his guest at the head of his own staircase in Princess's Place. Mr Dombey had come to breakfast with the Major, previous to their setting forth on their trip; and the ill-starved Native had already undergone a world of misery arising out of the muffins, while, in connexion with the general question of boiled eggs, life was a burden to him.

'It is not for an old soldier of the Bagstock breed,' observed the Major, relapsing into a mild state, 'to deliver himself up, a prey to his own emotions; but - damme, Sir,' cried the Major, in another spasm of ferocity, 'I condole with you!'

The Major's purple visage deepened in its hue, and the Major's lobster eyes stood out in bolder relief, as he shook Mr Dombey by the hand, imparting to that peaceful action as defiant a character as if it had been the prelude to his immediately boxing Mr Dombey for a thousand pounds a side and the championship of England. With a rotatory motion of his head, and a wheeze very like the cough of a horse, the Major then conducted his visitor to the sitting-room, and there welcomed him (having now composed his feelings) with the freedom and frankness of a travelling companion.

'Dombey,' said the Major, 'I'm glad to see you. I'm proud to see you. There are not many men in Europe to whom J. Bagstock would say that - for Josh is blunt. Sir: it's his nature - but Joey B. is proud to see you, Dombey.'

'Major,' returned Mr Dombey, 'you are very obliging.'

'No, Sir,' said the Major, 'Devil a bit! That's not my character. If that had been Joe's character, Joe might have been, by this time, Lieutenant-General Sir Joseph Bagstock, K.C.B., and might have received you in very different quarters. You don't know old Joe yet, I find. But this occasion, being special, is a source of pride to me. By the Lord, Sir,' said the Major resolutely, 'it's an honour to me!'

Mr Dombey, in his estimation of himself and his money, felt that this was very true, and therefore did not dispute the point. But the instinctive recognition of such a truth by the Major, and his plain avowal of it, were very able. It was a confirmation to Mr Dombey, if he

had required any, of his not being mistaken in the Major. It was an assurance to him that his power extended beyond his own immediate sphere; and that the Major, as an officer and a gentleman, had a no less becoming sense of it, than the beadle of the Royal Exchange.

And if it were ever consolatory to know this, or the like of this, it was consolatory then, when the impotence of his will, the instability of his hopes, the feebleness of wealth, had been so direfully impressed upon him. What could it do, his boy had asked him. Sometimes, thinking of the baby question, he could hardly forbear inquiring, himself, what could it do indeed: what had it done?

But these were lonely thoughts, bred late at night in the sullen despondency and gloom of his retirement, and pride easily found its reassurance in many testimonies to the truth, as unimpeachable and precious as the Major's. Mr Dombey, in his friendlessness, inclined to the Major. It cannot be said that he warmed towards him, but he thawed a little. The Major had had some part - and not too much - in the days by the seaside. He was a man of the world, and knew some great people. He talked much, and told stories; and Mr Dombey was disposed to regard him as a choice spirit who shone in society, and who had not that poisonous ingredient of poverty with which choice spirits in general are too much adulterated. His station was undeniable. Altogether the Major was a creditable companion, well accustomed to a life of leisure, and to such places as that they were about to visit, and having an air of gentlemanly ease about him that mixed well enough with his own City character, and did not compete with it at all. If Mr Dombey had any lingering idea that the Major, as a man accustomed, in the way of his calling, to make light of the ruthless hand that had lately crushed his hopes, might unconsciously impart some useful philosophy to him, and scare away his weak regrets, he hid it from himself, and left it lying at the bottom of his pride, unexamined.

'Where is my scoundrel?' said the Major, looking wrathfully round the room.

The Native, who had no particular name, but answered to any vituperative epithet, presented himself instantly at the door and ventured to come no nearer.

'You villain!' said the choleric Major, 'where's the breakfast?'

The dark servant disappeared in search of it, and was quickly heard reascending the stairs in such a tremulous state, that the plates and dishes on the tray he carried, trembling sympathetically as he came, rattled again, all the way up.

'Dombey,' said the Major, glancing at the Native as he arranged the table, and encouraging him with an awful shake of his fist when he upset a spoon, 'here is a devilled grill, a savoury pie, a dish of kidneys, and so forth. Pray sit down. Old Joe can give you nothing but camp fare, you see.

'Very excellent fare, Major,' replied his guest; and not in mere politeness either; for the Major always took the best possible care of himself, and indeed ate rather more of rich meats than was good for him, insomuch that his Imperial complexion was mainly referred by the faculty to that circumstance.

'You have been looking over the way, Sir,' observed the Major. 'Have you seen our friend?'

'You mean Miss Tox,' retorted Mr Dombey. 'No.'

'Charming woman, Sir,' said the Major, with a fat laugh rising in his short throat, and nearly suffocating him.

'Miss Tox is a very good sort of person, I believe,' replied Mr Dombey.

The haughty coldness of the reply seemed to afford Major Bagstock infinite delight. He swelled and swelled, exceedingly: and even laid down his knife and fork for a moment, to rub his hands.

'Old Joe, Sir,' said the Major, 'was a bit of a favourite in that quarter once. But Joe has had his day. J. Bagstock is extinguished - outrivalled - floored, Sir.'

'I should have supposed,' Mr Dombey replied, 'that the lady's day for favourites was over: but perhaps you are jesting, Major.'

'Perhaps you are jesting, Dombey?' was the Major's rejoinder.

There never was a more unlikely possibility. It was so clearly expressed in Mr Dombey's face, that the Major apologised.

'I beg your pardon,' he said. 'I see you are in earnest. I tell you what, Dombey.' The Major paused in his eating, and looked mysteriously indignant. 'That's a de-vilish ambitious woman, Sir.'

Mr Dombey said 'Indeed?' with frigid indifference: mingled perhaps with some contemptuous incredulity as to Miss Tox having the presumption to harbour such a superior quality.

'That woman, Sir,' said the Major, 'is, in her way, a Lucifer. Joey B. has had his day, Sir, but he keeps his eyes. He sees, does Joe. His

Royal Highness the late Duke of York observed of Joey, at a levee, that he saw.'

The Major accompanied this with such a look, and, between eating, drinking, hot tea, devilled grill, muffins, and meaning, was altogether so swollen and inflamed about the head, that even Mr Dombey showed some anxiety for him.

'That ridiculous old spectacle, Sir,' pursued the Major, 'aspires. She aspires sky-high, Sir. Matrimonially, Dombey.'

'I am sorry for her,' said Mr Dombey.

'Don't say that, Dombey,' returned the Major in a warning voice.

'Why should I not, Major?' said Mr Dombey.

The Major gave no answer but the horse's cough, and went on eating vigorously.

'She has taken an interest in your household,' said the Major, stopping short again, 'and has been a frequent visitor at your house for some time now.'

'Yes,' replied Mr Dombey with great stateliness, 'Miss Tox was originally received there, at the time of Mrs Dombey's death, as a friend of my sister's; and being a well-behaved person, and showing a liking for the poor infant, she was permitted - may I say encouraged - to repeat her visits with my sister, and gradually to occupy a kind of footing of familiarity in the family. I have,' said Mr Dombey, in the tone of a man who was making a great and valuable concession, 'I have a respect for Miss Tox. She has been so obliging as to render many little services in my house: trifling and insignificant services perhaps, Major, but not to be disparaged on that account: and I hope I have had the good fortune to be enabled to acknowledge them by such attention and notice as it has been in my power to bestow. I hold myself indebted to Miss Tox, Major,' added Mr Dombey, with a slight wave of his hand, 'for the pleasure of your acquaintance.'

'Dombey,' said the Major, warmly: 'no! No, Sir! Joseph Bagstock can never permit that assertion to pass uncontradicted. Your knowledge of old Joe, Sir, such as he is, and old Joe's knowledge of you, Sir, had its origin in a noble fellow, Sir - in a great creature, Sir. Dombey!' said the Major, with a struggle which it was not very difficult to parade, his whole life being a struggle against all kinds of apoplectic symptoms, 'we knew each other through your boy.'

Mr Dombey seemed touched, as it is not improbable the Major designed he should be, by this allusion. He looked down and sighed: and the Major, rousing himself fiercely, again said, in reference to the state of mind into which he felt himself in danger of falling, that this was weakness, and nothing should induce him to submit to it.

'Our friend had a remote connexion with that event,' said the Major, 'and all the credit that belongs to her, J. B. is willing to give her, Sir. Notwithstanding which, Ma'am,' he added, raising his eyes from his plate, and casting them across Princess's Place, to where Miss Tox was at that moment visible at her window watering her flowers, 'you're a scheming jade, Ma'am, and your ambition is a piece of monstrous impudence. If it only made yourself ridiculous, Ma'am,' said the Major, rolling his head at the unconscious Miss Tox, while his starting eyes appeared to make a leap towards her, 'you might do that to your heart's content, Ma'am, without any objection, I assure you, on the part of Bagstock.' Here the Major laughed frightfully up in the tips of his ears and in the veins of his head. 'But when, Ma'am,' said the Major, 'you compromise other people, and generous, unsuspecting people too, as a repayment for their condescension, you stir the blood of old Joe in his body.'

'Major,' said Mr Dombey, reddening, 'I hope you do not hint at anything so absurd on the part of Miss Tox as - '

'Dombey,' returned the Major, 'I hint at nothing. But Joey B. has lived in the world, Sir: lived in the world with his eyes open, Sir, and his ears cocked: and Joe tells you, Dombey, that there's a devilish artful and ambitious woman over the way.'

Mr Dombey involuntarily glanced over the way; and an angry glance he sent in that direction, too.

'That's all on such a subject that shall pass the lips of Joseph Bagstock,' said the Major firmly. 'Joe is not a tale-bearer, but there are times when he must speak, when he will speak! - confound your arts, Ma'am,' cried the Major, again apostrophising his fair neighbour, with great ire, - 'when the provocation is too strong to admit of his remaining silent.'

The emotion of this outbreak threw the Major into a paroxysm of horse's coughs, which held him for a long time. On recovering he added:

'And now, Dombey, as you have invited Joe - old Joe, who has no other merit, Sir, but that he is tough and hearty - to be your guest and guide at Leamington, command him in any way you please, and he is wholly yours. I don't know, Sir,' said the Major, wagging his

double chin with a jocose air, 'what it is you people see in Joe to make you hold him in such great request, all of you; but this I know, Sir, that if he wasn't pretty tough, and obstinate in his refusals, you'd kill him among you with your invitations and so forth, in double-quick time.'

Mr Dombey, in a few words, expressed his sense of the preference he received over those other distinguished members of society who were clamouring for the possession of Major Bagstock. But the Major cut him short by giving him to understand that he followed his own inclinations, and that they had risen up in a body and said with one accord, 'J. B., Dombey is the man for you to choose as a friend.'

The Major being by this time in a state of repletion, with essence of savoury pie oozing out at the corners of his eyes, and devilled grill and kidneys tightening his cravat: and the time moreover approaching for the departure of the railway train to Birmingham, by which they were to leave town: the Native got him into his great-coat with immense difficulty, and buttoned him up until his face looked staring and gasping, over the top of that garment, as if he were in a barrel. The Native then handed him separately, and with a decent interval between each supply, his washleather gloves, his thick stick, and his hat; which latter article the Major wore with a rakish air on one side of his head, by way of toning down his remarkable visage. The Native had previously packed, in all possible and impossible parts of Mr Dombey's chariot, which was in waiting, an unusual quantity of carpet-bags and small portmanteaus, no less apoplectic in appearance than the Major himself: and having filled his own pockets with Seltzer water, East India sherry, sandwiches, shawls, telescopes, maps, and newspapers, any or all of which light baggage the Major might require at any instant of the journey, he announced that everything was ready. To complete the equipment of this unfortunate foreigner (currently believed to be a prince in his own country), when he took his seat in the rumble by the side of Mr Towlinson, a pile of the Major's cloaks and great-coats was hurled upon him by the landlord, who aimed at him from the pavement with those great missiles like a Titan, and so covered him up, that he proceeded, in a living tomb, to the railroad station.

But before the carriage moved away, and while the Native was in the act of sepulture, Miss Tox appearing at her window, waved a lilywhite handkerchief. Mr Dombey received this parting salutation very coldly - very coldly even for him - and honouring her with the slightest possible inclination of his head, leaned back in the carriage with a very discontented look. His marked behaviour seemed to afford the Major (who was all politeness in his recognition of Miss Tox) unbounded satisfaction; and he sat for a long time afterwards, leering, and choking, like an over-fed Mephistopheles.

During the bustle of preparation at the railway, Mr Dombey and the Major walked up and down the platform side by side; the former taciturn and gloomy, and the latter entertaining him, or entertaining himself, with a variety of anecdotes and reminiscences, in most of which Joe Bagstock was the principal performer. Neither of the two observed that in the course of these walks, they attracted the attention of a working man who was standing near the engine, and who touched his hat every time they passed; for Mr Dombey habitually looked over the vulgar herd, not at them; and the Major was looking, at the time, into the core of one of his stories. At length, however, this man stepped before them as they turned round, and pulling his hat off, and keeping it off, ducked his head to Mr Dombey.

'Beg your pardon, Sir,' said the man, 'but I hope you're a doin' pretty well, Sir.'

He was dressed in a canvas suit abundantly besmeared with coal-dust and oil, and had cinders in his whiskers, and a smell of half-slaked ashes all over him. He was not a bad-looking fellow, nor even what could be fairly called a dirty-looking fellow, in spite of this; and, in short, he was Mr Toodle, professionally clothed.

'I shall have the honour of stokin' of you down, Sir,' said Mr Toodle. 'Beg your pardon, Sir. - I hope you find yourself a coming round?'

Mr Dombey looked at him, in return for his tone of interest, as if a man like that would make his very eyesight dirty.

'Scuse the liberty, Sir,' said Toodle, seeing he was not clearly remembered, 'but my wife Polly, as was called Richards in your family -'

A change in Mr Dombey's face, which seemed to express recollection of him, and so it did, but it expressed in a much stronger degree an angry sense of humiliation, stopped Mr Toodle short.

'Your wife wants money, I suppose,' said Mr Dombey, putting his hand in his pocket, and speaking (but that he always did) haughtily.

'No thank'ee, Sir,' returned Toodle, 'I can't say she does. I don't.'

Mr Dombey was stopped short now in his turn: and awkwardly: with his hand in his pocket.

'No, Sir,' said Toodle, turning his oilskin cap round and round; 'we're a doin' pretty well, Sir; we haven't no cause to complain in the worldly way, Sir. We've had four more since then, Sir, but we rubs on.'

Mr Dombey would have rubbed on to his own carriage, though in so doing he had rubbed the stoker underneath the wheels; but his attention was arrested by something in connexion with the cap still going slowly round and round in the man's hand.

'We lost one babby,' observed Toodle, 'there's no denyin'.'

'Lately,' added Mr Dombey, looking at the cap.

'No, Sir, up'ard of three years ago, but all the rest is hearty. And in the matter o' readin', Sir,' said Toodle, ducking again, as if to remind Mr Dombey of what had passed between them on that subject long ago, 'them boys o' mine, they learned me, among 'em, arter all. They've made a wery tolerable scholar of me, Sir, them boys.'

'Come, Major!' said Mr Dombey.

'Beg your pardon, Sir,' resumed Toodle, taking a step before them and deferentially stopping them again, still cap in hand: 'I wouldn't have troubled you with such a pint except as a way of gettin' in the name of my son Biler - christened Robin - him as you was so good as to make a Charitable Grinder on.'

'Well, man,' said Mr Dombey in his severest manner. 'What about him?'

'Why, Sir,' returned Toodle, shaking his head with a face of great anxiety and distress, 'I'm forced to say, Sir, that he's gone wrong.'

'He has gone wrong, has he?' said Mr Dombey, with a hard kind of satisfaction.

'He has fell into bad company, you see, genelmen,' pursued the father, looking wistfully at both, and evidently taking the Major into the conversation with the hope of having his sympathy. 'He has got into bad ways. God send he may come to again, genelmen, but he's on the wrong track now! You could hardly be off hearing of it somehow, Sir,' said Toodle, again addressing Mr Dombey individually; 'and it's better I should out and say my boy's gone rather wrong. Polly's dreadful down about it, genelmen,' said Toodle with the same dejected look, and another appeal to the Major.

'A son of this man's whom I caused to be educated, Major,' said Mr Dombey, giving him his arm. 'The usual return!'

'Take advice from plain old Joe, and never educate that sort of people, Sir,' returned the Major. 'Damme, Sir, it never does! It always fails!'

The simple father was beginning to submit that he hoped his son, the quondam Grinder, huffed and cuffed, and flogged and badged, and taught, as parrots are, by a brute jobbed into his place of schoolmaster with as much fitness for it as a hound, might not have been educated on quite a right plan in some undiscovered respect, when Mr Dombey angrily repeating 'The usual return!' led the Major away. And the Major being heavy to hoist into Mr Dombey's carriage, elevated in mid-air, and having to stop and swear that he would flay the Native alive, and break every bone in his skin, and visit other physical torments upon him, every time he couldn't get his foot on the step, and fell back on that dark exile, had barely time before they started to repeat hoarsely that it would never do: that it always failed: and that if he were to educate 'his own vagabond,' he would certainly be hanged.

Mr Dombey assented bitterly; but there was something more in his bitterness, and in his moody way of falling back in the carriage, and looking with knitted brows at the changing objects without, than the failure of that noble educational system administered by the Grinders' Company. He had seen upon the man's rough cap a piece of new crape, and he had assured himself, from his manner and his answers, that he wore it for his son.

So] from high to low, at home or abroad, from Florence in his great house to the coarse churl who was feeding the fire then smoking before them, everyone set up some claim or other to a share in his dead boy, and was a bidder against him! Could he ever forget how that woman had wept over his pillow, and called him her own child! or how he, waking from his sleep, had asked for her, and had raised himself in his bed and brightened when she came in!

To think of this presumptuous raker among coals and ashes going on before there, with his sign of mourning! To think that he dared to enter, even by a common show like that, into the trial and disappointment of a proud gentleman's secret heart! To think that this lost child, who was to have divided with him his riches, and his projects, and his power, and allied with whom he was to have shut out all the world as with a double door of gold, should have let in such a herd to insult him with their knowledge of his defeated hopes, and their boasts of claiming community of feeling with himself, so far removed: if not of having crept into the place wherein he would have lorded it, alone!

He found no pleasure or relief in the journey. Tortured by these thoughts he carried monotony with him, through the rushing landscape, and hurried headlong, not through a rich and varied country, but a wilderness of blighted plans and gnawing jealousies. The very speed at which the train was whirled along, mocked the swift

course of the young life that had been borne away so steadily and so inexorably to its foredoomed end. The power that forced itself upon its iron way - its own - defiant of all paths and roads, piercing through the heart of every obstacle, and dragging living creatures of all classes, ages, and degrees behind it, was a type of the triumphant monster, Death.

Away, with a shriek, and a roar, and a rattle, from the town, burrowing among the dwellings of men and making the streets hum, flashing out into the meadows for a moment, mining in through the damp earth, booming on in darkness and heavy air, bursting out again into the sunny day so bright and wide; away, with a shriek, and a roar, and a rattle, through the fields, through the woods, through the corn, through the hay, through the chalk, through the mould, through the clay, through the rock, among objects close at hand and almost in the grasp, ever flying from the traveller, and a deceitful distance ever moving slowly within him: like as in the track of the remorseless monster, Death!

Through the hollow, on the height, by the heath, by the orchard, by the park, by the garden, over the canal, across the river, where the sheep are feeding, where the mill is going, where the barge is floating, where the dead are lying, where the factory is smoking, where the stream is running, where the village clusters, where the great cathedral rises, where the bleak moor lies, and the wild breeze smooths or ruffles it at its inconstant will; away, with a shriek, and a roar, and a rattle, and no trace to leave behind but dust and vapour: like as in the track of the remorseless monster, Death!

Breasting the wind and light, the shower and sunshine, away, and still away, it rolls and roars, fierce and rapid, smooth and certain, and great works and massive bridges crossing up above, fall like a beam of shadow an inch broad, upon the eye, and then are lost. Away, and still away, onward and onward ever: glimpses of cottage-homes, of houses, mansions, rich estates, of husbandry and handicraft, of people, of old roads and paths that look deserted, small, and insignificant as they are left behind: and so they do, and what else is there but such glimpses, in the track of the indomitable monster, Death!

Away, with a shriek, and a roar, and a rattle, plunging down into the earth again, and working on in such a storm of energy and perseverance, that amidst the darkness and whirlwind the motion seems reversed, and to tend furiously backward, until a ray of light upon the Wet wall shows its surface flying past like a fierce stream, Away once more into the day, and through the day, with a shrill yell of exultation, roaring, rattling, tearing on, spurning everything with its dark breath, sometimes pausing for a minute where a crowd of faces

are, that in a minute more are not; sometimes lapping water greedily, and before the spout at which it drinks' has ceased to drip upon the ground, shrieking, roaring, rattling through the purple distance!

Louder and louder yet, it shrieks and cries as it comes tearing on resistless to the goal: and now its way, still like the way of Death, is strewn with ashes thickly. Everything around is blackened. There are dark pools of water, muddy lanes, and miserable habitations far below. There are jagged walls and falling houses close at hand, and through the battered roofs and broken windows, wretched rooms are seen, where 'want and fever hide themselves in many wretched shapes, while smoke and crowded gables, and distorted chimneys, and deformity of brick and mortar penning up deformity of mind and body, choke the murky distance. As Mr Dombey looks out of his carriage window, it is never in his thoughts that the monster who has brought him there has let the light of day in on these things: not made or caused them. It was the journey's fitting end, and might have been the end of everything; it was so ruinous and dreary.'

So, pursuing the one course of thought, he had the one relentless monster still before him. All things looked black, and cold, and deadly upon him, and he on them. He found a likeness to his misfortune everywhere. There was a remorseless triumph going on about him, and it galled and stung him in his pride and jealousy, whatever form it took: though most of all when it divided with him the love and memory of his lost boy.

There was a face - he had looked upon it, on the previous night, and it on him with eyes that read his soul, though they were dim with tears, and hidden soon behind two quivering hands - that often had attended him in fancy, on this ride. He had seen it, with the expression of last night, timidly pleading to him. It was not reproachful, but there was something of doubt, almost of hopeful incredulity in it, which, as he once more saw that fade away into a desolate certainty of his dislike, was like reproach. It was a trouble to him to think of this face of Florence.

Because he felt any new compunction towards it? No. Because the feeling it awakened in him - of which he had had some old foreshadowing in older times - was full-formed now, and spoke out plainly, moving him too much, and threatening to grow too strong for his composure. Because the face was abroad, in the expression of defeat and persecution that seemed to encircle him like the air. Because it barbed the arrow of that cruel and remorseless enemy on which his thoughts so ran, and put into its grasp a double-handed sword. Because he knew full well, in his own breast, as he stood there, tinging the scene of transition before him with the morbid colours of his own mind, and making it a ruin and a picture of decay,

instead of hopeful change, and promise of better things, that life had quite as much to do with his complainings as death. One child was gone, and one child left. Why was the object of his hope removed instead of her?

The sweet, calm, gentle presence in his fancy, moved him to no reflection but that. She had been unwelcome to him from the first; she was an aggravation of his bitterness now. If his son had been his only child, and the same blow had fallen on him, it would have been heavy to bear; but infinitely lighter than now, when it might have fallen on her (whom he could have lost, or he believed it, without a pang), and had not. Her loving and innocent face rising before him, had no softening or winning influence. He rejected the angel, and took up with the tormenting spirit crouching in his bosom. Her patience, goodness, youth, devotion, love, were as so many atoms in the ashes upon which he set his heel. He saw her image in the blight and blackness all around him, not irradiating but deepening the gloom. More than once upon this journey, and now again as he stood pondering at this journey's end, tracing figures in the dust with his stick, the thought came into his mind, what was there he could interpose between himself and it?

The Major, who had been blowing and panting all the way down, like another engine, and whose eye had often wandered from his newspaper to leer at the prospect, as if there were a procession of discomfited Miss Toxes pouring out in the smoke of the train, and flying away over the fields to hide themselves in any place of refuge, aroused his friends by informing him that the post-horses were harnessed and the carriage ready.

'Dombey,' said the Major, rapping him on the arm with his cane, 'don't be thoughtful. It's a bad habit, Old Joe, Sir, wouldn't be as tough as you see him, if he had ever encouraged it. You are too great a man, Dombey, to be thoughtful. In your position, Sir, you're far above that kind of thing.'

The Major even in his friendly remonstrances, thus consulting the dignity and honour of Mr Dombey, and showing a lively sense of their importance, Mr Dombey felt more than ever disposed to defer to a gentleman possessing so much good sense and such a well-regulated mind; accordingly he made an effort to listen to the Major's stories, as they trotted along the turnpike road; and the Major, finding both the pace and the road a great deal better adapted to his conversational powers than the mode of travelling they had just relinquished, came out of his entertainment,

But still the Major, blunt and tough as he was, and as he so very often said he was, administered some palatable catering to his companion's

appetite. He related, or rather suffered it to escape him, accidentally, and as one might say, grudgingly and against his will, how there was great curiosity and excitement at the club, in regard of his friend Dombey. How he was suffocated with questions, Sir. How old Joe Bagstock was a greater man than ever, there, on the strength of Dombey. How they said, 'Bagstock, your friend Dombey now, what is the view he takes of such and such a question? Though, by the Rood, Sir,' said the Major, with a broad stare, 'how they discovered that J. B. ever came to know you, is a mystery!'

In this flow of spirits and conversation, only interrupted by his usual plethoric symptoms, and by intervals of lunch, and from time to time by some violent assault upon the Native, who wore a pair of ear-rings in his dark-brown ears, and on whom his European clothes sat with an outlandish impossibility of adjustment - being, of their own accord, and without any reference to the tailor's art, long where they ought to be short, short where they ought to be long, tight where they ought to be loose, and loose where they ought to be tight - and to which he imparted a new grace, whenever the Major attacked him, by shrinking into them like a shrivelled nut, or a cold monkey - in this flow of spirits and conversation, the Major continued all day: so that when evening came on, and found them trotting through the green and leafy road near Leamington, the Major's voice, what with talking and eating and chuckling and choking, appeared to be in the box under the rumble, or in some neighbouring hay-stack. Nor did the Major improve it at the Royal Hotel, where rooms and dinner had been ordered, and where he so oppressed his organs of speech by eating and drinking, that when he retired to bed he had no voice at all, except to cough with, and could only make himself intelligible to the dark servant by gasping at him.

He not only rose next morning, however, like a giant refreshed, but conducted himself, at breakfast like a giant refreshing. At this meal they arranged their daily habits. The Major was to take the responsibility of ordering evrything to eat and drink; and they were to have a late breakfast together every morning, and a late dinner together every day. Mr Dombey would prefer remaining in his own room, or walking in the country by himself, on that first day of their sojourn at Leamington; but next morning he would be happy to accompany the Major to the Pump-room, and about the town. So they parted until dinner-time. Mr Dombey retired to nurse his wholesome thoughts in his own way. The Major, attended by the Native carrying a camp-stool, a great-coat, and an umbrella, swaggered up and down through all the public places: looking into subscription books to find out who was there, looking up old ladies by whom he was much admired, reporting J. B. tougher than ever, and puffing his rich friend Dombey wherever he went. There never was a man who stood by a

friend more staunchly than the Major, when in puffing him, he puffed himself.

It was surprising how much new conversation the Major had to let off at dinner-time, and what occasion he gave Mr Dombey to admire his social qualities. At breakfast next morning, he knew the contents of the latest newspapers received; and mentioned several subjects in connexion with them, on which his opinion had recently been sought by persons of such power and might, that they were only to be obscurely hinted at. Mr Dombey, who had been so long shut up within himself, and who had rarely, at any time, overstepped the enchanted circle within which the operations of Dombey and Son were conducted, began to think this an improvement on his solitary life; and in place of excusing himself for another day, as he had thought of doing when alone, walked out with the Major arm-in-arm.