## Chapter XX - Moving In Society

If Young John Chivery had had the inclination and the power to write a satire on family pride, he would have had no need to go for an avenging illustration out of the family of his beloved. He would have found it amply in that gallant brother and that dainty sister, so steeped in mean experiences, and so loftily conscious of the family name; so ready to beg or borrow from the poorest, to eat of anybody's bread, spend anybody's money, drink from anybody's cup and break it afterwards. To have painted the sordid facts of their lives, and they throughout invoking the death's head apparition of the family gentility to come and scare their benefactors, would have made Young John a satirist of the first water.

Tip had turned his liberty to hopeful account by becoming a billiard-marker. He had troubled himself so little as to the means of his release, that Clennam scarcely needed to have been at the pains of impressing the mind of Mr Plornish on that subject. Whoever had paid him the compliment, he very readily accepted the compliment with HIS compliments, and there was an end of it. Issuing forth from the gate on these easy terms, he became a billiard-marker; and now occasionally looked in at the little skittle-ground in a green Newmarket coat (second-hand), with a shining collar and bright buttons (new), and drank the beer of the Collegians.

One solid stationary point in the looseness of this gentleman's character was, that he respected and admired his sister Amy. The feeling had never induced him to spare her a moment's uneasiness, or to put himself to any restraint or inconvenience on her account; but with that Marshalsea taint upon his love, he loved her. The same rank Marshalsea flavour was to be recognised in his distinctly perceiving that she sacrificed her life to her father, and in his having no idea that she had done anything for himself.

When this spirited young man and his sister had begun systematically to produce the family skeleton for the overawing of the College, this narrative cannot precisely state. Probably at about the period when they began to dine on the College charity. It is certain that the more reduced and necessitous they were, the more pompously the skeleton emerged from its tomb; and that when there was anything particularly shabby in the wind, the skeleton always came out with the ghastliest flourish.

Little Dorrit was late on the Monday morning, for her father slept late, and afterwards there was his breakfast to prepare and his room to arrange. She had no engagement to go out to work, however, and therefore stayed with him until, with Maggy's help, she had put

everything right about him, and had seen him off upon his morning walk (of twenty yards or so) to the coffee-house to read the paper.

She then got on her bonnet and went out, having been anxious to get out much sooner. There was, as usual, a cessation of the small- talk in the Lodge as she passed through it; and a Collegian who had come in on Saturday night, received the intimation from the elbow of a more seasoned Collegian, 'Look out. Here she is!' She wanted to see her sister, but when she got round to Mr Cripples's, she found that both her sister and her uncle had gone to the theatre where they were engaged. Having taken thought of this probability by the way, and having settled that in such case she would follow them, she set off afresh for the theatre, which was on that side of the river, and not very far away.

Little Dorrit was almost as ignorant of the ways of theatres as of the ways of gold mines, and when she was directed to a furtive sort of door, with a curious up-all-night air about it, that appeared to be ashamed of itself and to be hiding in an alley, she hesitated to approach it; being further deterred by the sight of some half-dozen close-shaved gentlemen with their hats very strangely on, who were lounging about the door, looking not at all unlike Collegians. On her applying to them, reassured by this resemblance, for a direction to Miss Dorrit, they made way for her to enter a dark hall - it was more like a great grim lamp gone out than anything else - where she could hear the distant playing of music and the sound of dancing feet. A man so much in want of airing that he had a blue mould upon him, sat watching this dark place from a hole in a corner, like a spider; and he told her that he would send a message up to Miss Dorrit by the first lady or gentleman who went through. The first lady who went through had a roll of music, half in her muff and half out of it, and was in such a tumbled condition altogether, that it seemed as if it would be an act of kindness to iron her. But as she was very good-natured, and said, 'Come with me; I'll soon find Miss Dorrit for you,' Miss Dorrit's sister went with her, drawing nearer and nearer at every step she took in the darkness to the sound of music and the sound of dancing feet.

At last they came into a maze of dust, where a quantity of people were tumbling over one another, and where there was such a confusion of unaccountable shapes of beams, bulkheads, brick walls, ropes, and rollers, and such a mixing of gaslight and daylight, that they seemed to have got on the wrong side of the pattern of the universe. Little Dorrit, left to herself, and knocked against by somebody every moment, was quite bewildered, when she heard her sister's voice.

'Why, good gracious, Amy, what ever brought you here?'

'I wanted to see you, Fanny dear; and as I am going out all day to-morrow, and knew you might be engaged all day to-day, I thought - '

'But the idea, Amy, of YOU coming behind! I never did!' As her sister said this in no very cordial tone of welcome, she conducted her to a more open part of the maze, where various golden chairs and tables were heaped together, and where a number of young ladies were sitting on anything they could find, chattering. All these young ladies wanted ironing, and all had a curious way of looking everywhere while they chattered.

just as the sisters arrived here, a monotonous boy in a Scotch cap put his head round a beam on the left, and said, 'Less noise there, ladies!' and disappeared. Immediately after which, a sprightly gentleman with a quantity of long black hair looked round a beam on the right, and said, 'Less noise there, darlings!' and also disappeared.

'The notion of you among professionals, Amy, is really the last thing I could have conceived!' said her sister. 'Why, how did you ever get here?'

'I don't know. The lady who told you I was here, was so good as to bring me in.'

'Like you quiet little things! You can make your way anywhere, I believe. I couldn't have managed it, Amy, though I know so much more of the world.'

It was the family custom to lay it down as family law, that she was a plain domestic little creature, without the great and sage experience of the rest. This family fiction was the family assertion of itself against her services. Not to make too much of them.

'Well! And what have you got on your mind, Amy? Of course you have got something on your mind about me?' said Fanny. She spoke as if her sister, between two and three years her junior, were her prejudiced grandmother.

'It is not much; but since you told me of the lady who gave you the bracelet, Fanny - '

The monotonous boy put his head round the beam on the left, and said, 'Look out there, ladies!' and disappeared. The sprightly gentleman with the black hair as suddenly put his head round the beam on the right, and said, 'Look out there, darlings!' and also disappeared. Thereupon all the young ladies rose and began shaking their skirts out behind.

'Well, Amy?' said Fanny, doing as the rest did; 'what were you going to say?'

'Since you told me a lady had given you the bracelet you showed me, Fanny, I have not been quite easy on your account, and indeed want to know a little more if you will confide more to me.'

'Now, ladies!' said the boy in the Scotch cap. 'Now, darlings!' said the gentleman with the black hair. They were every one gone in a moment, and the music and the dancing feet were heard again.

Little Dorrit sat down in a golden chair, made quite giddy by these rapid interruptions. Her sister and the rest were a long time gone; and during their absence a voice (it appeared to be that of the gentleman with the black hair) was continually calling out through the music, 'One, two, three, four, five, six - go! One, two, three, four, five, six - go! Steady, darlings! One, two, three, four, five, six - go!' Ultimately the voice stopped, and they all came back again, more or less out of breath, folding themselves in their shawls, and making ready for the streets. 'Stop a moment, Amy, and let them get away before us,' whispered Fanny. They were soon left alone; nothing more important happening, in the meantime, than the boy looking round his old beam, and saying, 'Everybody at eleven to-morrow, ladies!' and the gentleman with the black hair looking round his old beam, and saying, 'Everybody at eleven to-morrow, darlings!' each in his own accustomed manner. When they were alone, something was rolled up or by other means got out of the way, and there was a great empty well before them, looking down into the depths of which Fanny said, 'Now, uncle!' Little Dorrit, as her eyes became used to the darkness, faintly made him out at the bottom of the well, in an obscure corner by himself, with his instrument in its ragged case under his arm.

The old man looked as if the remote high gallery windows, with their little strip of sky, might have been the point of his better fortunes, from which he had descended, until he had gradually sunk down below there to the bottom. He had been in that place six nights a week for many years, but had never been observed to raise his eyes above his music-book, and was confidently believed to have never seen a play. There were legends in the place that he did not so much as know the popular heroes and heroines by sight, and that the low comedian had 'mugged' at him in his richest manner fifty nights for a wager, and he had shown no trace of consciousness. The carpenters had a joke to the effect that he was dead without being aware of it; and the frequenters of the pit supposed him to pass his whole life, night and day, and Sunday and all, in the orchestra. They had tried him a few times with pinches of snuff offered over the rails, and he had always responded to this attention with a momentary waking up of manner that had the pale phantom of a gentleman in it: beyond this he never,

on any occasion, had any other part in what was going on than the part written out for the clarionet; in private life, where there was no part for the clarionet, he had no part at all. Some said he was poor, some said he was a wealthy miser; but he said nothing, never lifted up his bowed head, never varied his shuffling gait by getting his springless foot from the ground. Though expecting now to be summoned by his niece, he did not hear her until she had spoken to him three or four times; nor was he at all surprised by the presence of two nieces instead of one, but merely said in his tremulous voice, 'I am coming, I am coming!' and crept forth by some underground way which emitted a cellarous smell.

'And so, Amy,' said her sister, when the three together passed out at the door that had such a shame-faced consciousness of being different from other doors: the uncle instinctively taking Amy's arm as the arm to be relied on: 'so, Amy, you are curious about me?'

She was pretty, and conscious, and rather flaunting; and the condescension with which she put aside the superiority of her charms, and of her worldly experience, and addressed her sister on almost equal terms, had a vast deal of the family in it.

'I am interested, Fanny, and concerned in anything that concerns you.'

'So you are, so you are, and you are the best of Amys. If I am ever a little provoking, I am sure you'll consider what a thing it is to occupy my position and feel a consciousness of being superior to it. I shouldn't care,' said the Daughter of the Father of the Marshalsea, 'if the others were not so common. None of them have come down in the world as we have. They are all on their own level. Common.'

Little Dorrit mildly looked at the speaker, but did not interrupt her. Fanny took out her handkerchief, and rather angrily wiped her eyes. 'I was not born where you were, you know, Amy, and perhaps that makes a difference. My dear child, when we get rid of Uncle, you shall know all about it. We'll drop him at the cook's shop where he is going to dine.'

They walked on with him until they came to a dirty shop window in a dirty street, which was made almost opaque by the steam of hot meats, vegetables, and puddings. But glimpses were to be caught of a roast leg of pork bursting into tears of sage and onion in a metal reservoir full of gravy, of an unctuous piece of roast beef and blisterous Yorkshire pudding, bubbling hot in a similar receptacle, of a stuffed fillet of veal in rapid cut, of a ham in a perspiration with the pace it was going at, of a shallow tank of baked potatoes glued together by their own richness, of a truss or two of boiled greens, and

other substantial delicacies. Within, were a few wooden partitions, behind which such customers as found it more convenient to take away their dinners in stomachs than in their hands, Packed their purchases in solitude. Fanny opening her reticule, as they surveyed these things, produced from that repository a shilling and handed it to Uncle. Uncle, after not looking at it a little while, divined its object, and muttering 'Dinner? Ha! Yes, yes, yes!' slowly vanished from them into the mist.

'Now, Amy,' said her sister, 'come with me, if you are not too tired to walk to Harley Street, Cavendish Square.'

The air with which she threw off this distinguished address and the toss she gave to her new bonnet (which was more gauzy than serviceable), made her sister wonder; however, she expressed her readiness to go to Harley Street, and thither they directed their steps. Arrived at that grand destination, Fanny singled out the handsomest house, and knocking at the door, inquired for Mrs Merdle. The footman who opened the door, although he had powder on his head and was backed up by two other footmen likewise powdered, not only admitted Mrs Merdle to be at home, but asked Fanny to walk in. Fanny walked in, taking her sister with her; and they went up- stairs with powder going before and powder stopping behind, and were left in a spacious semicircular drawing-room, one of several drawing-rooms, where there was a parrot on the outside of a golden cage holding on by its beak, with its scaly legs in the air, and putting itself into many strange upside-down postures. This peculiarity has been observed in birds of quite another feather, climbing upon golden wires.

The room was far more splendid than anything Little Dorrit had ever imagined, and would have been splendid and costly in any eyes. She looked in amazement at her sister and would have asked a question, but that Fanny with a warning frown pointed to a curtained doorway of communication with another room. The curtain shook next moment, and a lady, raising it with a heavily ringed hand, dropped it behind her again as she entered.

The lady was not young and fresh from the hand of Nature, but was young and fresh from the hand of her maid. She had large unfeeling handsome eyes, and dark unfeeling handsome hair, and a broad unfeeling handsome bosom, and was made the most of in every particular. Either because she had a cold, or because it suited her face, she wore a rich white fillet tied over her head and under her chin. And if ever there were an unfeeling handsome chin that looked as if, for certain, it had never been, in familiar parlance, 'chucked' by the hand of man, it was the chin curbed up so tight and close by that laced bridle.

'Mrs Merdle,' said Fanny. 'My sister, ma'am.'

'I am glad to see your sister, Miss Dorrit. I did not remember that you had a sister.'

'I did not mention that I had,' said Fanny.

'Ah!' Mrs Merdle curled the little finger of her left hand as who should say, 'I have caught you. I know you didn't!' All her action was usually with her left hand because her hands were not a pair; and left being much the whiter and plumper of the two. Then she added: 'Sit down,' and composed herself voluptuously, in a nest of crimson and gold cushions, on an ottoman near the parrot.

'Also professional?' said Mrs Merdle, looking at Little Dorrit through an eye-glass.

Fanny answered No. 'No,' said Mrs Merdle, dropping her glass. 'Has not a professional air. Very pleasant; but not professional.'

'My sister, ma'am,' said Fanny, in whom there was a singular mixture of deference and hardihood, 'has been asking me to tell her, as between sisters, how I came to have the honour of knowing you. And as I had engaged to call upon you once more, I thought I might take the liberty of bringing her with me, when perhaps you would tell her. I wish her to know, and perhaps you will tell her?' 'Do you think, at your sister's age - ' hinted Mrs Merdle.

'She is much older than she looks,' said Fanny; 'almost as old as I am.'

'Society,' said Mrs Merdle, with another curve of her little finger, 'is so difficult to explain to young persons (indeed is so difficult to explain to most persons), that I am glad to hear that.

I wish Society was not so arbitrary, I wish it was not so exacting - Bird, be quiet!'

The parrot had given a most piercing shriek, as if its name were Society and it asserted its right to its exactions.

'But,' resumed Mrs Merdle, 'we must take it as we find it. We know it is hollow and conventional and worldly and very shocking, but unless we are Savages in the Tropical seas (I should have been charmed to be one myself - most delightful life and perfect climate, I am told), we must consult it. It is the common lot. Mr Merdle is a most extensive merchant, his transactions are on the vastest scale, his wealth and influence are very great, but even he - Bird, be quiet!'

The parrot had shrieked another shriek; and it filled up the sentence so expressively that Mrs Merdle was under no necessity to end it.

'Since your sister begs that I would terminate our personal acquaintance,' she began again, addressing Little Dorrit, 'by relating the circumstances that are much to her credit, I cannot object to comply with her request, I am sure. I have a son (I was first married extremely young) of two or three-and-twenty.'

Fanny set her lips, and her eyes looked half triumphantly at her sister.

'A son of two or three-and-twenty. He is a little gay, a thing Society is accustomed to in young men, and he is very impressible. Perhaps he inherits that misfortune. I am very impressible myself, by nature. The weakest of creatures - my feelings are touched in a moment.'

She said all this, and everything else, as coldly as a woman of snow; quite forgetting the sisters except at odd times, and apparently addressing some abstraction of Society; for whose behoof, too, she occasionally arranged her dress, or the composition of her figure upon the ottoman.

'So he is very impressible. Not a misfortune in our natural state I dare say, but we are not in a natural state. Much to be lamented, no doubt, particularly by myself, who am a child of nature if I could but show it; but so it is. Society suppresses us and dominates us - Bird, be quiet!' The parrot had broken into a violent fit of laughter, after twisting divers bars of his cage with his crooked bill, and licking them with his black tongue.

'It is quite unnecessary to say to a person of your good sense, wide range of experience, and cultivated feeling,' said Mrs Merdle from her nest of crimson and gold - and there put up her glass to refresh her memory as to whom she was addressing, - 'that the stage sometimes has a fascination for young men of that class of character. In saying the stage, I mean the people on it of the female sex. Therefore, when I heard that my son was supposed to be fascinated by a dancer, I knew what that usually meant in Society, and confided in her being a dancer at the Opera, where young men moving in Society are usually fascinated.'

She passed her white hands over one another, observant of the sisters now; and the rings upon her fingers grated against each other with a hard sound.

'As your sister will tell you, when I found what the theatre was I was much surprised and much distressed. But when I found that your

sister, by rejecting my son's advances (I must add, in an unexpected manner), had brought him to the point of proposing marriage, my feelings were of the profoundest anguish - acute.' She traced the outline of her left eyebrow, and put it right.

'In a distracted condition, which only a mother - moving in Society - can be susceptible of, I determined to go myself to the theatre, and represent my state of mind to the dancer. I made myself known to your sister. I found her, to my surprise, in many respects different from my expectations; and certainly in none more so, than in meeting me with - what shall I say - a sort of family assertion on her own part?' Mrs Merdle smiled.

'I told you, ma'am,' said Fanny, with a heightening colour, 'that although you found me in that situation, I was so far above the rest, that I considered my family as good as your son's; and that I had a brother who, knowing the circumstances, would be of the same opinion, and would not consider such a connection any honour.'

'Miss Dorrit,' said Mrs Merdle, after frostily looking at her through her glass, 'precisely what I was on the point of telling your sister, in pursuance of your request. Much obliged to you for recalling it so accurately and anticipating me. I immediately,' addressing Little Dorrit, '(for I am the creature of impulse), took a bracelet from my arm, and begged your sister to let me clasp it on hers, in token of the delight I had in our being able to approach the subject so far on a common footing.' (This was perfectly true, the lady having bought a cheap and showy article on her way to the interview, with a general eye to bribery.)

'And I told you, Mrs Merdle,' said Fanny, 'that we might be unfortunate, but we are not common.'

'I think, the very words, Miss Dorrit,' assented Mrs Merdle.

'And I told you, Mrs Merdle,' said Fanny, 'that if you spoke to me of the superiority of your son's standing in Society, it was barely possible that you rather deceived yourself in your suppositions about my origin; and that my father's standing, even in the Society in which he now moved (what that was, was best known to myself), was eminently superior, and was acknowledged by every one.'

'Quite accurate,' rejoined Mrs Merdle. 'A most admirable memory.'

'Thank you, ma'am. Perhaps you will be so kind as to tell my sister the rest.'

'There is very little to tell,' said Mrs Merdle, reviewing the breadth of bosom which seemed essential to her having room enough to be unfeeling in, 'but it is to your sister's credit. I pointed out to your sister the plain state of the case; the impossibility of the Society in which we moved recognising the Society in which she moved - though charming, I have no doubt; the immense disadvantage at which she would consequently place the family she had so high an opinion of, upon which we should find ourselves compelled to look down with contempt, and from which (socially speaking) we should feel obliged to recoil with abhorrence. In short, I made an appeal to that laudable pride in your sister.'

'Let my sister know, if you please, Mrs Merdle,' Fanny pouted, with a toss of her gauzy bonnet, 'that I had already had the honour of telling your son that I wished to have nothing whatever to say to him.'

'Well, Miss Dorrit,' assented Mrs Merdle, 'perhaps I might have mentioned that before. If I did not think of it, perhaps it was because my mind reverted to the apprehensions I had at the time that he might persevere and you might have something to say to him.

I also mentioned to your sister - I again address the non- professional Miss Dorrit - that my son would have nothing in the event of such a marriage, and would be an absolute beggar. (I mention that merely as a fact which is part of the narrative, and not as supposing it to have influenced your sister, except in the prudent and legitimate way in which, constituted as our artificial system is, we must all be influenced by such considerations.) Finally, after some high words and high spirit on the part of your sister, we came to the complete understanding that there was no danger; and your sister was so obliging as to allow me to present her with a mark or two of my appreciation at my dressmaker's.'

Little Dorrit looked sorry, and glanced at Fanny with a troubled face.

'Also,' said Mrs Merdle, 'as to promise to give me the present pleasure of a closing interview, and of parting with her on the best of terms. On which occasion,' added Mrs Merdle, quitting her nest, and putting something in Fanny's hand, 'Miss Dorrit will permit me to say Farewell with best wishes in my own dull manner.'

The sisters rose at the same time, and they all stood near the cage of the parrot, as he tore at a claw-full of biscuit and spat it out, seemed to mock them with a pompous dance of his body without moving his feet, and suddenly turned himself upside down and trailed himself all over the outside of his golden cage, with the aid of his cruel beak and black tongue.

'Adieu, Miss Dorrit, with best wishes,' said Mrs Merdle. 'If we could only come to a Millennium, or something of that sort, I for one might have the pleasure of knowing a number of charming and talented persons from whom I am at present excluded. A more primitive state of society would be delicious to me. There used to be a poem when I learnt lessons, something about Lo the poor Indians whose something mind! If a few thousand persons moving in Society, could only go and be Indians, I would put my name down directly; but as, moving in Society, we can't be Indians, unfortunately - Good morning!'

They came down-stairs with powder before them and powder behind, the elder sister haughty and the younger sister humbled, and were shut out into unpowdered Harley Street, Cavendish Square.

'Well?' said Fanny, when they had gone a little way without speaking. 'Have you nothing to say, Amy?'

'Oh, I don't know what to say!' she answered, distressed. 'You didn't like this young man, Fanny?'

'Like him? He is almost an idiot.'

'I am so sorry - don't be hurt - but, since you ask me what I have to say, I am so very sorry, Fanny, that you suffered this lady to give you anything.'

'You little Fool!' returned her sister, shaking her with the sharp pull she gave her arm. 'Have you no spirit at all? But that's just the way! You have no self-respect, you have no becoming pride. just as you allow yourself to be followed about by a contemptible little Chivery of a thing,' with the scornfullest emphasis, 'you would let your family be trodden on, and never turn.'

'Don't say that, dear Fanny. I do what I can for them.'

'You do what you can for them!' repeated Fanny, walking her on very fast. 'Would you let a woman like this, whom you could see, if you had any experience of anything, to be as false and insolent as a woman can be - would you let her put her foot upon your family, and thank her for it?'

'No, Fanny, I am sure.' 'Then make her pay for it, you mean little thing. What else can you make her do? Make her pay for it, you stupid child; and do your family some credit with the money!'

They spoke no more all the way back to the lodging where Fanny and her uncle lived. When they arrived there, they found the old man practising his clarionet in the dolefullest manner in a corner of the

room. Fanny had a composite meal to make, of chops, and porter, and tea; and indignantly pretended to prepare it for herself, though her sister did all that in quiet reality. When at last Fanny sat down to eat and drink, she threw the table implements about and was angry with her bread, much as her father had been last night.

'If you despise me,' she said, bursting into vehement tears, 'because I am a dancer, why did you put me in the way of being one?

It was your doing. You would have me stoop as low as the ground before this Mrs Merdle, and let her say what she liked and do what she liked, and hold us all in contempt, and tell me so to my face. Because I am a dancer!'

'O Fanny!'

'And Tip, too, poor fellow. She is to disparage him just as much as she likes, without any check - I suppose because he has been in the law, and the docks, and different things. Why, it was your doing, Amy. You might at least approve of his being defended.'

All this time the uncle was dolefully blowing his clarionet in the corner, sometimes taking it an inch or so from his mouth for a moment while he stopped to gaze at them, with a vague impression that somebody had said something.

'And your father, your poor father, Amy. Because he is not free to show himself and to speak for himself, you would let such people insult him with impunity. If you don't feel for yourself because you go out to work, you might at least feel for him, I should think, knowing what he has undergone so long.'

Poor Little Dorrit felt the injustice of this taunt rather sharply.

The remembrance of last night added a barbed point to it. She said nothing in reply, but turned her chair from the table towards the fire. Uncle, after making one more pause, blew a dismal wail and went on again.

Fanny was passionate with the tea-cups and the bread as long as her passion lasted, and then protested that she was the wretchedest girl in the world, and she wished she was dead. After that, her crying became remorseful, and she got up and put her arms round her sister. Little Dorrit tried to stop her from saying anything, but she answered that she would, she must! Thereupon she said again, and again, 'I beg your pardon, Amy,' and 'Forgive me, Amy,' almost as passionately as she had said what she regretted.

'But indeed, indeed, Amy,' she resumed when they were seated in sisterly accord side by side, 'I hope and I think you would have seen this differently, if you had known a little more of Society.'

'Perhaps I might, Fanny,' said the mild Little Dorrit.

'You see, while you have been domestic and resignedly shut up there, Amy,' pursued her sister, gradually beginning to patronise, 'I have been out, moving more in Society, and may have been getting proud and spirited - more than I ought to be, perhaps?'

Little Dorrit answered 'Yes. O yes!'

'And while you have been thinking of the dinner or the clothes, I may have been thinking, you know, of the family. Now, may it not be so, Amy?'

Little Dorrit again nodded 'Yes,' with a more cheerful face than heart.

'Especially as we know,' said Fanny, 'that there certainly is a tone in the place to which you have been so true, which does belong to it, and which does make it different from other aspects of Society. So kiss me once again, Amy dear, and we will agree that we may both be right, and that you are a tranquil, domestic, home- loving, good girl.'

The clarionet had been lamenting most pathetically during this dialogue, but was cut short now by Fanny's announcement that it was time to go; which she conveyed to her uncle by shutting up his scrap of music, and taking the clarionet out of his mouth.

Little Dorrit parted from them at the door, and hastened back to the Marshalsea. It fell dark there sooner than elsewhere, and going into it that evening was like going into a deep trench. The shadow of the wall was on every object. Not least upon the figure in the old grey gown and the black velvet cap, as it turned towards her when she opened the door of the dim room.

'Why not upon me too!' thought Little Dorrit, with the door Yet in her hand. 'It was not unreasonable in Fanny.'