

## Chapter XV

### **Acquaints the Reader with the Cause and Origin of the Interruption described in the last Chapter, and with some other Matters necessary to be known**

Newman Noggs scrambled in violent haste upstairs with the steaming beverage, which he had so unceremoniously snatched from the table of Mr Kenwigs, and indeed from the very grasp of the water-rate collector, who was eyeing the contents of the tumbler, at the moment of its unexpected abstraction, with lively marks of pleasure visible in his countenance. He bore his prize straight to his own back-garret, where, footsore and nearly shoeless, wet, dirty, jaded, and disfigured with every mark of fatiguing travel, sat Nicholas and Smike, at once the cause and partner of his toil; both perfectly worn out by their unwonted and protracted exertion.

Newman's first act was to compel Nicholas, with gentle force, to swallow half of the punch at a breath, nearly boiling as it was; and his next, to pour the remainder down the throat of Smike, who, never having tasted anything stronger than aperient medicine in his whole life, exhibited various odd manifestations of surprise and delight, during the passage of the liquor down his throat, and turned up his eyes most emphatically when it was all gone.

'You are wet through,' said Newman, passing his hand hastily over the coat which Nicholas had thrown off; 'and I - I - haven't even a change,' he added, with a wistful glance at the shabby clothes he wore himself.

'I have dry clothes, or at least such as will serve my turn well, in my bundle,' replied Nicholas. 'If you look so distressed to see me, you will add to the pain I feel already, at being compelled, for one night, to cast myself upon your slender means for aid and shelter.'

Newman did not look the less distressed to hear Nicholas talking in this strain; but, upon his young friend grasping him heartily by the hand, and assuring him that nothing but implicit confidence in the sincerity of his professions, and kindness of feeling towards himself, would have induced him, on any consideration, even to have made him acquainted with his arrival in London, Mr Noggs brightened up again, and went about making such arrangements as were in his power for the comfort of his visitors, with extreme alacrity.

These were simple enough; poor Newman's means halting at a very considerable distance short of his inclinations; but, slight as they were, they were not made without much bustling and running about. As Nicholas had husbanded his scanty stock of money, so well that it was not yet quite expended, a supper of bread and cheese, with some

cold beef from the cook's shop, was soon placed upon the table; and these viands being flanked by a bottle of spirits and a pot of porter, there was no ground for apprehension on the score of hunger or thirst, at all events. Such preparations as Newman had it in his power to make, for the accommodation of his guests during the night, occupied no very great time in completing; and as he had insisted, as an express preliminary, that Nicholas should change his clothes, and that Smike should invest himself in his solitary coat (which no entreaties would dissuade him from stripping off for the purpose), the travellers partook of their frugal fare, with more satisfaction than one of them at least had derived from many a better meal.

They then drew near the fire, which Newman Noggs had made up as well as he could, after the inroads of Crawl upon the fuel; and Nicholas, who had hitherto been restrained by the extreme anxiety of his friend that he should refresh himself after his journey, now pressed him with earnest questions concerning his mother and sister.

'Well,' replied Newman, with his accustomed taciturnity; 'both well.'

'They are living in the city still?' inquired Nicholas.

'They are,' said Newman.

'And my sister,' - added Nicholas. 'Is she still engaged in the business which she wrote to tell me she thought she should like so much?'

Newman opened his eyes rather wider than usual, but merely replied by a gasp, which, according to the action of the head that accompanied it, was interpreted by his friends as meaning yes or no. In the present instance, the pantomime consisted of a nod, and not a shake; so Nicholas took the answer as a favourable one.

'Now listen to me,' said Nicholas, laying his hand on Newman's shoulder. 'Before I would make an effort to see them, I deemed it expedient to come to you, lest, by gratifying my own selfish desire, I should inflict an injury upon them which I can never repair. What has my uncle heard from Yorkshire?'

Newman opened and shut his mouth, several times, as though he were trying his utmost to speak, but could make nothing of it, and finally fixed his eyes on Nicholas with a grim and ghastly stare.

'What has he heard?' urged Nicholas, colouring. 'You see that I am prepared to hear the very worst that malice can have suggested. Why should you conceal it from me? I must know it sooner or later; and what purpose can be gained by trifling with the matter for a few

minutes, when half the time would put me in possession of all that has occurred? Tell me at once, pray.'

'Tomorrow morning,' said Newman; 'hear it tomorrow.'

'What purpose would that answer?' urged Nicholas.

'You would sleep the better,' replied Newman.

'I should sleep the worse,' answered Nicholas, impatiently. 'Sleep! Exhausted as I am, and standing in no common need of rest, I cannot hope to close my eyes all night, unless you tell me everything.'

'And if I should tell you everything,' said Newman, hesitating.

'Why, then you may rouse my indignation or wound my pride,' rejoined Nicholas; 'but you will not break my rest; for if the scene were acted over again, I could take no other part than I have taken; and whatever consequences may accrue to myself from it, I shall never regret doing as I have done - never, if I starve or beg in consequence. What is a little poverty or suffering, to the disgrace of the basest and most inhuman cowardice! I tell you, if I had stood by, tamely and passively, I should have hated myself, and merited the contempt of every man in existence. The black-hearted scoundrel!'

With this gentle allusion to the absent Mr Squeers, Nicholas repressed his rising wrath, and relating to Newman exactly what had passed at Dotheboys Hall, entreated him to speak out without more pressing. Thus adjured, Mr Noggs took, from an old trunk, a sheet of paper, which appeared to have been scrawled over in great haste; and after sundry extraordinary demonstrations of reluctance, delivered himself in the following terms.

'My dear young man, you mustn't give way to - this sort of thing will never do, you know - as to getting on in the world, if you take everybody's part that's ill-treated - Damn it, I am proud to hear of it; and would have done it myself!'

Newman accompanied this very unusual outbreak with a violent blow upon the table, as if, in the heat of the moment, he had mistaken it for the chest or ribs of Mr Wackford Squeers. Having, by this open declaration of his feelings, quite precluded himself from offering Nicholas any cautious worldly advice (which had been his first intention), Mr Noggs went straight to the point.

'The day before yesterday,' said Newman, 'your uncle received this letter. I took a hasty copy of it, while he was out. Shall I read it?'

'If you please,' replied Nicholas. Newman Noggs accordingly read as follows:

'DOTHEBOYS HALL, 'THURSDAY MORNING.

'SIR,

'My pa requests me to write to you, the doctors considering it doubtful whether he will ever recuver the use of his legs which prevents his holding a pen.

'We are in a state of mind beyond everything, and my pa is one mask of brooses both blue and green likewise two forms are steepled in his Goar. We were kimpelled to have him carried down into the kitchen where he now lays. You will judge from this that he has been brought very low.

'When your neveu that you recommended for a teacher had done this to my pa and jumped upon his body with his feet and also langwedge which I will not pollewt my pen with describing, he assaulted my ma with dreadful violence, dashed her to the earth, and drove her back comb several inches into her head. A very little more and it must have entered her skull. We have a medical certifiket that if it had, the tortershell would have affected the brain.

'Me and my brother were then the victims of his feury since which we have suffered very much which leads us to the arrowing belief that we have received some injury in our insides, especially as no marks of violence are visible externally. I am screaming out loud all the time I write and so is my brother which takes off my attention rather and I hope will excuse mistakes.

'The monster having sasiated his thirst for blood ran away, taking with him a boy of desperate character that he had excited to rebellyon, and a garnet ring belonging to my ma, and not having been apprehended by the constables is supposed to have been took up by some stage-coach. My pa begs that if he comes to you the ring may be returned, and that you will let the thief and assassin go, as if we prosecuted him he would only be transported, and if he is let go he is sure to be hung before long which will save us trouble and be much more satisfactory. Hoping to hear from you when convenient

'I remain 'Yours and cetrer 'FANNY SQUEERS.

'P.S. I pity his ignorance and despise him.'

A profound silence succeeded to the reading of this choice epistle, during which Newman Noggs, as he folded it up, gazed with a kind of

grotesque pity at the boy of desperate character therein referred to; who, having no more distinct perception of the matter in hand, than that he had been the unfortunate cause of heaping trouble and falsehood upon Nicholas, sat mute and dispirited, with a most woe-begone and heart-stricken look.

'Mr Noggs,' said Nicholas, after a few moments' reflection, 'I must go out at once.'

'Go out!' cried Newman.

'Yes,' said Nicholas, 'to Golden Square. Nobody who knows me would believe this story of the ring; but it may suit the purpose, or gratify the hatred of Mr Ralph Nickleby to feign to attach credence to it. It is due - not to him, but to myself - that I should state the truth; and moreover, I have a word or two to exchange with him, which will not keep cool.'

'They must,' said Newman.

'They must not, indeed,' rejoined Nicholas firmly, as he prepared to leave the house.

'Hear me speak,' said Newman, planting himself before his impetuous young friend. 'He is not there. He is away from town. He will not be back for three days; and I know that letter will not be answered before he returns.'

'Are you sure of this?' asked Nicholas, chafing violently, and pacing the narrow room with rapid strides.

'Quite,' rejoined Newman. 'He had hardly read it when he was called away. Its contents are known to nobody but himself and us.'

'Are you certain?' demanded Nicholas, precipitately; 'not even to my mother or sister? If I thought that they - I will go there - I must see them. Which is the way? Where is it?'

'Now, be advised by me,' said Newman, speaking for the moment, in his earnestness, like any other man - 'make no effort to see even them, till he comes home. I know the man. Do not seem to have been tampering with anybody. When he returns, go straight to him, and speak as boldly as you like. Guessing at the real truth, he knows it as well as you or I. Trust him for that.'

'You mean well to me, and should know him better than I can,' replied Nicholas, after some consideration. 'Well; let it be so.'

Newman, who had stood during the foregoing conversation with his back planted against the door, ready to oppose any egress from the apartment by force, if necessary, resumed his seat with much satisfaction; and as the water in the kettle was by this time boiling, made a glassful of spirits and water for Nicholas, and a cracked mug-full for the joint accommodation of himself and Smike, of which the two partook in great harmony, while Nicholas, leaning his head upon his hand, remained buried in melancholy meditation.

Meanwhile, the company below stairs, after listening attentively and not hearing any noise which would justify them in interfering for the gratification of their curiosity, returned to the chamber of the Kenwigses, and employed themselves in hazarding a great variety of conjectures relative to the cause of Mr Noggs' sudden disappearance and detention.

'Lor, I'll tell you what,' said Mrs Kenwigs. 'Suppose it should be an express sent up to say that his property has all come back again!'

'Dear me,' said Mr Kenwigs; 'it's not impossible. Perhaps, in that case, we'd better send up and ask if he won't take a little more punch.'

'Kenwigs!' said Mr Lillyvick, in a loud voice, 'I'm surprised at you.'

'What's the matter, sir?' asked Mr Kenwigs, with becoming submission to the collector of water-rates.

'Making such a remark as that, sir,' replied Mr Lillyvick, angrily. 'He has had punch already, has he not, sir? I consider the way in which that punch was cut off, if I may use the expression, highly disrespectful to this company; scandalous, perfectly scandalous. It may be the custom to allow such things in this house, but it's not the kind of behaviour that I've been used to see displayed, and so I don't mind telling you, Kenwigs. A gentleman has a glass of punch before him to which he is just about to set his lips, when another gentleman comes and collars that glass of punch, without a 'with your leave', or 'by your leave', and carries that glass of punch away. This may be good manners - I dare say it is - but I don't understand it, that's all; and what's more, I don't care if I never do. It's my way to speak my mind, Kenwigs, and that is my mind; and if you don't like it, it's past my regular time for going to bed, and I can find my way home without making it later.'

Here was an untoward event! The collector had sat swelling and fuming in offended dignity for some minutes, and had now fairly burst out. The great man - the rich relation - the unmarried uncle - who had it in his power to make Morleena an heiress, and the very baby a legatee - was offended. Gracious Powers, where was this to end!

'I am very sorry, sir,' said Mr Kenwigs, humbly.

'Don't tell me you're sorry,' retorted Mr Lillyvick, with much sharpness. 'You should have prevented it, then.'

The company were quite paralysed by this domestic crash. The back-parlour sat with her mouth wide open, staring vacantly at the collector, in a stupor of dismay; the other guests were scarcely less overpowered by the great man's irritation. Mr Kenwigs, not being skilful in such matters, only fanned the flame in attempting to extinguish it.

'I didn't think of it, I am sure, sir,' said that gentleman. 'I didn't suppose that such a little thing as a glass of punch would have put you out of temper.'

'Out of temper! What the devil do you mean by that piece of impertinence, Mr Kenwigs?' said the collector. 'Morleena, child - give me my hat.'

'Oh, you're not going, Mr Lillyvick, sir,' interposed Miss Petowker, with her most bewitching smile.

But still Mr Lillyvick, regardless of the siren, cried obdurately, 'Morleena, my hat!' upon the fourth repetition of which demand, Mrs Kenwigs sunk back in her chair, with a cry that might have softened a water-butt, not to say a water-collector; while the four little girls (privately instructed to that effect) clasped their uncle's drab shorts in their arms, and prayed him, in imperfect English, to remain.

'Why should I stop here, my dears?' said Mr Lillyvick; 'I'm not wanted here.'

'Oh, do not speak so cruelly, uncle,' sobbed Mrs Kenwigs, 'unless you wish to kill me.'

'I shouldn't wonder if some people were to say I did,' replied Mr Lillyvick, glancing angrily at Kenwigs. 'Out of temper!'

'Oh! I cannot bear to see him look so, at my husband,' cried Mrs Kenwigs. 'It's so dreadful in families. Oh!'

'Mr Lillyvick,' said Kenwigs, 'I hope, for the sake of your niece, that you won't object to be reconciled.'

The collector's features relaxed, as the company added their entreaties to those of his nephew-in-law. He gave up his hat, and held out his hand.

'There, Kenwigs,' said Mr Lillyvick; 'and let me tell you, at the same time, to show you how much out of temper I was, that if I had gone away without another word, it would have made no difference respecting that pound or two which I shall leave among your children when I die.'

'Morleena Kenwigs,' cried her mother, in a torrent of affection. 'Go down upon your knees to your dear uncle, and beg him to love you all his life through, for he's more a angel than a man, and I've always said so.'

Miss Morleena approaching to do homage, in compliance with this injunction, was summarily caught up and kissed by Mr Lillyvick; and thereupon Mrs Kenwigs darted forward and kissed the collector, and an irrepressible murmur of applause broke from the company who had witnessed his magnanimity.

The worthy gentleman then became once more the life and soul of the society; being again reinstated in his old post of lion, from which high station the temporary distraction of their thoughts had for a moment dispossessed him. Quadruped lions are said to be savage, only when they are hungry; biped lions are rarely sulky longer than when their appetite for distinction remains unappeased. Mr Lillyvick stood higher than ever; for he had shown his power; hinted at his property and testamentary intentions; gained great credit for disinterestedness and virtue; and, in addition to all, was finally accommodated with a much larger tumbler of punch than that which Newman Noggs had so feloniously made off with.

'I say! I beg everybody's pardon for intruding again,' said Crawl, looking in at this happy juncture; 'but what a queer business this is, isn't it? Noggs has lived in this house, now going on for five years, and nobody has ever been to see him before, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.'

'It's a strange time of night to be called away, sir, certainly,' said the collector; 'and the behaviour of Mr Noggs himself, is, to say the least of it, mysterious.'

'Well, so it is,' rejoined Grawl; 'and I'll tell you what's more - I think these two geniuses, whoever they are, have run away from somewhere.'

'What makes you think that, sir?' demanded the collector, who seemed, by a tacit understanding, to have been chosen and elected mouthpiece to the company. 'You have no reason to suppose that they have run away from anywhere without paying the rates and taxes due, I hope?'



Mr Crowl, with a look of some contempt, was about to enter a general protest against the payment of rates or taxes, under any circumstances, when he was checked by a timely whisper from Kenwigs, and several frowns and winks from Mrs K., which providentially stopped him.

'Why the fact is,' said Crowl, who had been listening at Newman's door with all his might and main; 'the fact is, that they have been talking so loud, that they quite disturbed me in my room, and so I couldn't help catching a word here, and a word there; and all I heard, certainly seemed to refer to their having bolted from some place or other. I don't wish to alarm Mrs Kenwigs; but I hope they haven't come from any jail or hospital, and brought away a fever or some unpleasantness of that sort, which might be catching for the children.'

Mrs Kenwigs was so overpowered by this supposition, that it needed all the tender attentions of Miss Petowker, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to restore her to anything like a state of calmness; not to mention the assiduity of Mr Kenwigs, who held a fat smelling-bottle to his lady's nose, until it became matter of some doubt whether the tears which coursed down her face were the result of feelings or SAL VOLATILE.

The ladies, having expressed their sympathy, singly and separately, fell, according to custom, into a little chorus of soothing expressions, among which, such condolences as 'Poor dear!' - 'I should feel just the same, if I was her' - 'To be sure, it's a very trying thing' - and 'Nobody but a mother knows what a mother's feelings is,' were among the most prominent, and most frequently repeated. In short, the opinion of the company was so clearly manifested, that Mr Kenwigs was on the point of repairing to Mr Noggs's room, to demand an explanation, and had indeed swallowed a preparatory glass of punch, with great inflexibility and steadiness of purpose, when the attention of all present was diverted by a new and terrible surprise.

This was nothing less than the sudden pouring forth of a rapid succession of the shrillest and most piercing screams, from an upper story; and to all appearance from the very two-pair back, in which the infant Kenwigs was at that moment enshrined. They were no sooner audible, than Mrs Kenwigs, opining that a strange cat had come in, and sucked the baby's breath while the girl was asleep, made for the door, wringing her hands, and shrieking dismally; to the great consternation and confusion of the company.

'Mr Kenwigs, see what it is; make haste!' cried the sister, laying violent hands upon Mrs Kenwigs, and holding her back by force. 'Oh don't twist about so, dear, or I can never hold you.'

'My baby, my blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed baby!' screamed Mrs Kenwigs, making every blessed louder than the last. 'My own darling, sweet, innocent Lillyvick - Oh let me go to him. Let me go-o-o-o!'

Pending the utterance of these frantic cries, and the wails and lamentations of the four little girls, Mr Kenwigs rushed upstairs to the room whence the sounds proceeded; at the door of which, he encountered Nicholas, with the child in his arms, who darted out with such violence, that the anxious father was thrown down six stairs, and alighted on the nearest landing-place, before he had found time to open his mouth to ask what was the matter.

'Don't be alarmed,' cried Nicholas, running down; 'here it is; it's all out, it's all over; pray compose yourselves; there's no harm done;' and with these, and a thousand other assurances, he delivered the baby (whom, in his hurry, he had carried upside down), to Mrs Kenwigs, and ran back to assist Mr Kenwigs, who was rubbing his head very hard, and looking much bewildered by his tumble.

Reassured by this cheering intelligence, the company in some degree recovered from their fears, which had been productive of some most singular instances of a total want of presence of mind; thus, the bachelor friend had, for a long time, supported in his arms Mrs Kenwigs's sister, instead of Mrs Kenwigs; and the worthy Mr Lillyvick had been actually seen, in the perturbation of his spirits, to kiss Miss Petowker several times, behind the room-door, as calmly as if nothing distressing were going forward.

'It is a mere nothing,' said Nicholas, returning to Mrs Kenwigs; 'the little girl, who was watching the child, being tired I suppose, fell asleep, and set her hair on fire.'

'Oh you malicious little wretch!' cried Mrs Kenwigs, impressively shaking her forefinger at the small unfortunate, who might be thirteen years old, and was looking on with a singed head and a frightened face.

'I heard her cries,' continued Nicholas, 'and ran down, in time to prevent her setting fire to anything else. You may depend upon it that the child is not hurt; for I took it off the bed myself, and brought it here to convince you.'

This brief explanation over, the infant, who, as he was christened after the collector! rejoiced in the names of Lillyvick Kenwigs, was partially suffocated under the caresses of the audience, and squeezed to his mother's bosom, until he roared again. The attention of the company was then directed, by a natural transition, to the little girl who had had the audacity to burn her hair off, and who, after receiving sundry

small slaps and pushes from the more energetic of the ladies, was mercifully sent home: the ninepence, with which she was to have been rewarded, being escheated to the Kenwigs family.

'And whatever we are to say to you, sir,' exclaimed Mrs Kenwigs, addressing young Lillyvick's deliverer, 'I am sure I don't know.'

'You need say nothing at all,' replied Nicholas. 'I have done nothing to found any very strong claim upon your eloquence, I am sure.'

'He might have been burnt to death, if it hadn't been for you, sir,' simpered Miss Petowker.

'Not very likely, I think,' replied Nicholas; 'for there was abundance of assistance here, which must have reached him before he had been in any danger.'

'You will let us drink your health, anyways, sir!' said Mr Kenwigs motioning towards the table.

' - In my absence, by all means,' rejoined Nicholas, with a smile. 'I have had a very fatiguing journey, and should be most indifferent company - a far greater check upon your merriment, than a promoter of it, even if I kept awake, which I think very doubtful. If you will allow me, I'll return to my friend, Mr Noggs, who went upstairs again, when he found nothing serious had occurred. Good-night.'

Excusing himself, in these terms, from joining in the festivities, Nicholas took a most winning farewell of Mrs Kenwigs and the other ladies, and retired, after making a very extraordinary impression upon the company.

'What a delightful young man!' cried Mrs Kenwigs.

'Uncommon gentlemanly, really,' said Mr Kenwigs. 'Don't you think so, Mr Lillyvick?'

'Yes,' said the collector, with a dubious shrug of his shoulders, 'He is gentlemanly, very gentlemanly - in appearance.'

'I hope you don't see anything against him, uncle?' inquired Mrs Kenwigs.

'No, my dear,' replied the collector, 'no. I trust he may not turn out - well - no matter - my love to you, my dear, and long life to the baby!'

'Your namesake,' said Mrs Kenwigs, with a sweet smile.

'And I hope a worthy namesake,' observed Mr Kenwigs, willing to propitiate the collector. 'I hope a baby as will never disgrace his godfather, and as may be considered, in arter years, of a piece with the Lillyvicks whose name he bears. I do say - and Mrs Kenwigs is of the same sentiment, and feels it as strong as I do - that I consider his being called Lillyvick one of the greatest blessings and Honours of my existence.'

'THE greatest blessing, Kenwigs,' murmured his lady.

'THE greatest blessing,' said Mr Kenwigs, correcting himself. 'A blessing that I hope, one of these days, I may be able to deserve.'

This was a politic stroke of the Kenwigses, because it made Mr Lillyvick the great head and fountain of the baby's importance. The good gentleman felt the delicacy and dexterity of the touch, and at once proposed the health of the gentleman, name unknown, who had signalised himself, that night, by his coolness and alacrity.

'Who, I don't mind saying,' observed Mr Lillyvick, as a great concession, 'is a good-looking young man enough, with manners that I hope his character may be equal to.'

'He has a very nice face and style, really,' said Mrs Kenwigs.

'He certainly has,' added Miss Petowker. 'There's something in his appearance quite - dear, dear, what's that word again?'

'What word?' inquired Mr Lillyvick.

'Why - dear me, how stupid I am,' replied Miss Petowker, hesitating. 'What do you call it, when Lords break off door-knockers and beat policemen, and play at coaches with other people's money, and all that sort of thing?'

'Aristocratic?' suggested the collector.

'Ah! aristocratic,' replied Miss Petowker; 'something very aristocratic about him, isn't there?'

The gentleman held their peace, and smiled at each other, as who should say, 'Well! there's no accounting for tastes;' but the ladies resolved unanimously that Nicholas had an aristocratic air; and nobody caring to dispute the position, it was established triumphantly.

The punch being, by this time, drunk out, and the little Kenwigses (who had for some time previously held their little eyes open with their

little forefingers) becoming fractious, and requesting rather urgently to be put to bed, the collector made a move by pulling out his watch, and acquainting the company that it was nigh two o'clock; whereat some of the guests were surprised and others shocked, and hats and bonnets being groped for under the tables, and in course of time found, their owners went away, after a vast deal of shaking of hands, and many remarks how they had never spent such a delightful evening, and how they marvelled to find it so late, expecting to have heard that it was half-past ten at the very latest, and how they wished that Mr and Mrs Kenwigs had a wedding-day once a week, and how they wondered by what hidden agency Mrs Kenwigs could possibly have managed so well; and a great deal more of the same kind. To all of which flattering expressions, Mr and Mrs Kenwigs replied, by thanking every lady and gentleman, SERIATIM, for the favour of their company, and hoping they might have enjoyed themselves only half as well as they said they had.

As to Nicholas, quite unconscious of the impression he had produced, he had long since fallen asleep, leaving Mr Newman Noggs and Smike to empty the spirit bottle between them; and this office they performed with such extreme good-will, that Newman was equally at a loss to determine whether he himself was quite sober, and whether he had ever seen any gentleman so heavily, drowsily, and completely intoxicated as his new acquaintance.