THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

CHARLES DICKENS

Simplified and abridged

by

JESS COLACO

ORIENT LONGMANS

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PREFACE

All children have their problems and their own secret sorrows. Little Nell was no exception. Her life and character will appeal to all young boys and girls. With this idea in view, THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP by Charles Dickens has been condensed and simplified for the benefit of young readers. This novel presents two problems: one, of an old man fighting to become rich within the short span of life left to him, for the sake of his grand-daughter; and the other, of a sweet young girl fighting in her own way, for the happiness and peace of mind of the old man. Both, old man and child, are patterns of unselfishness in different ways.

This book has been abridged with the help of about two thousand words which children in the Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools are expected to be familiar with according to the Revised Syllabus of the Madras Education Department. The Glossary explains the new words that had to be used for the sake of the story.

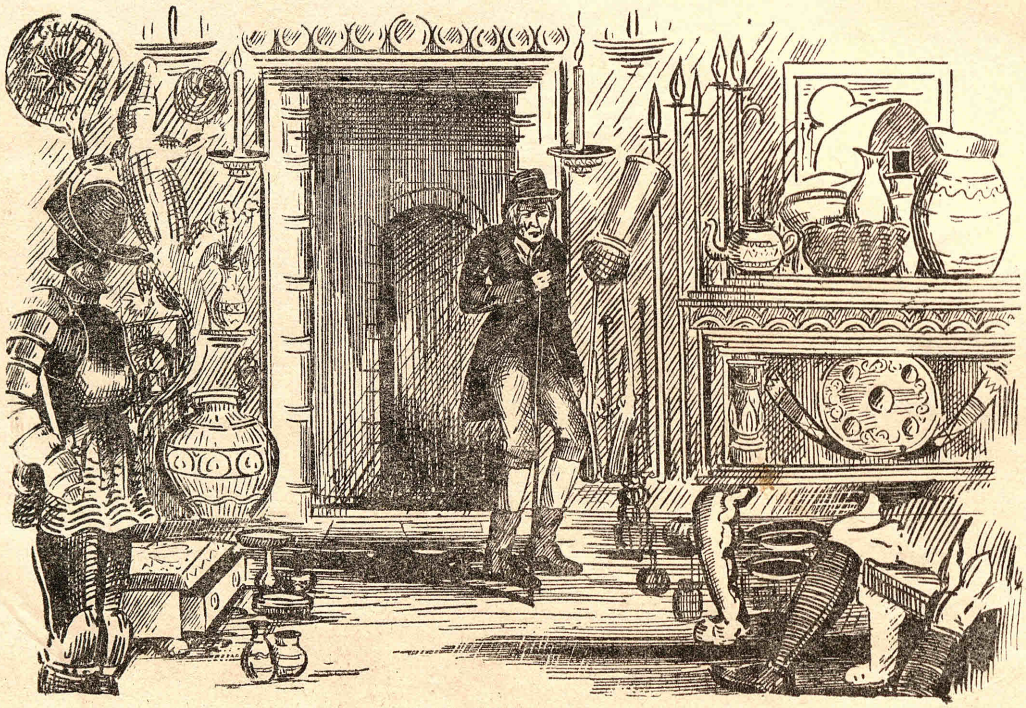
Madras,
8th September, 1961.

JESS COLACO.

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THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

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THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

CHAPTER I

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

NELL was a pretty little girl. She had a sweet face with bright blue eyes and light brown hair. She had a gentle and noble character. She was kind and helpful to everyone who knew her. She was always patient and spoke in a soft and sweet way. Her father and mother were both dead. She was brought up by her grandfather, a very old man.

The old man had long grey hair and a face which was always sad. His daughter who was Nell's mother had died early, leaving the small child to his care. The old man was very fond of his grandchild, for, she was all he had in this world. He cared for no one else. The old man and the young child loved each other tenderly.

They lived in an old house in London. The front part of the house was an old curiosity shop. All kinds of ancient and curious things were found there: funny figures in china, wood, iron and ivory; furniture that was more fanciful than useful; rusty weapons of various kinds. The shop was full of all sorts of strange and peculiar objects. The old man carried on a trade in these old and curious things, but the money that he made was very little.

The rooms occupied by the old man and the child were behind the old curiosity shop. Though

the house was old and dull, little Nell made it bright with her presence. She would put fresh flowers in the room where they sat in the evenings and her pet bird in its cage had a little green branch to shade it. It was a fact that they were poor, but Nell kept their home always neat and tidy. When her other work was done, Nell would sit by the old man's side, busy with some needle-work. She was very attentive to her grandfather's needs and it was a touching sight to observe the tender care of the little girl for the old man.

Nell was an unselfish girl and she always thought of others. Twice a week she gave lessons to Kit. Kit Nubbles was in the service of the old man, who kept him to run errands and to do odd jobs. Now Kit was a funny-looking boy and Nell always laughed at him, not rudely, but kindly. Kit was an awkward lad with a very wide mouth, very red cheeks, a turned-up nose and a head of hair which looked as if it had never known a comb! Kit was not at all offended when Nell laughed at him. On the contrary, he was happy that his appearance and manner gave Nell some amusement. She was very kind to Kit and he worshipped his little mistress. To please her, he was most earnest in studying the lessons she gave him. He was slow to learn but Nell was a patient teacher. She would teach him to write English and he would sit down with his face close to the copy-book in an effort to write carefully. Taking up the pen, he would begin to write, but he succeeded only in getting ink all over his body and even up to the roots of his hair. However hard he tried, he seemed to put only big drops of ink on the sheet rather than any

letters ! At every mistake, Nell would laugh merrily and Kit himself would join her with a loud laugh and thus, the lessons went on, till it was time for Kit to go home.

Every night, soon after Kit went home, the old man got ready to go out. The child gave him his hat and stick and went with him to the door. The old man blessed the girl and reminded her to say her prayers before she went to bed. He would return home only next morning. This happened every night. No one knew where he went or what he did. It was as much a mystery as a wonder. He was so fond of the child and yet, he dared to leave her absolutely alone in that dark house. The child neither knew nor did she seek to question him about his strange movements. She loved him and trusted in him completely. However, there were times when she wished that her grandfather would stay at home at night and talk to her about her mother, as he used to do, in the old days. Little Nell was not one to complain and she kept her sad thoughts to herself. She only prayed that her grandfather may return home safe.

Where did the old man go at that time of night and what did he do? No one could tell.

EXERCISES

1. Give a brief description of Nell.
2. Who was the old man ? Describe him.
3. What were the things found in the old curiosity shop?
4. Describe Kit and his lessons.
5. What happened every night after Kit left the old curiosity shop ?

COMPREHENSION

1. Try and understand the meanings of the following *three* words.

   Note that there is a *difference* and also a *connection* between these words.

   i. 'Curious' *means* wanting to know everything; *or* eager to learn; *or* strange, surprising, odd.

   ii. 'Curio' *means* a curious or strange object of art; something rare and precious.

   iii. 'Curiosity' is the noun form of 'curious', *meaning* the desire to know.

   'Curiosity' also *means* a strange or rare object, not commonly found. The old curiosity shop was full of such things.

2. Make sentences with the above *three* words.
3. Mention a few *curios* of Indian art. Do you have any in your home?

CHAPTER II

RICH OR POOR?

"I TELL you again that I want to see my sister."

"*Your sister!*" cried the old man sadly.

"Ah! You can't change that fact," said the young man. "If you could, you would have done it. I want to see my sister whom you keep here like a prisoner. You make her work like a servant so that you can save money. And you have so much money that you can't even count it! I want to see my sister and I tell you, I will."

The young man, who spoke in this rude manner, was the brother of the gentle

Nell. He was twenty-one years old and had never done a day's honest work in all his life. He did not wish to work, as he thought that his grandfather ought to support him. He thought that the old man was very rich and that it was his duty to give money to his grandson. Fred Trent was a thoroughly bad fellow and so were his friends and companions. They spent all their time on all kinds of merriment and never a single shilling did they earn. Fred had brought his friend, Dick Swiveller, to the house and Dick was trying his best to persuade the old man that he ought to give money to his grandson instead of saving all his wealth for the grand-daughter. Dick himself was drunk and his long speeches drove the old man almost mad. It was a sad, sad state that Fred and Dick were in. Drink had ruined them as it had ruined many others before and as it does to this day.

"Why do you worry me so much?" cried the old man in despair. "Why do you bring your wicked friends here? How often am I to tell you that I am a poor man?"

"I know you are rich," declared his grandson. The young fellow had left the protection of his grandfather in order to lead a gay and wicked life and came to the house only to demand money.

Just then, Nell who had gone out, returned. With her was a man who was so short that he could be called a dwarf. Though his body was very short, his head and face were large enough for a giant. He had strange black eyes and his mouth and chin were covered with a short, rough beard as if he had not shaved for many days. He had a peculiar and ugly smile which showed the few dirty

yellow teeth that were still left in his mouth. His hands were rough and his finger nails were long and yellow. His name was Daniel Quilp and he was altogether an ugly wretch and his character was as bad as his looks.

Little Nell went up to her brother and put her hand in his.

"Well, Nell," said that young fellow, "do they teach you to hate me?"

"No, no. Oh, no!" cried Nell.

"Perhaps they teach you to love me?" questioned her brother.

"To do neither," she returned. "They never speak to me about you."

"Oh, I believe you, Nell. I am sure they don't," said the young man with a bitter look at his grandfather.

"But I love you dearly, Fred," said the child. "And I could love you more if you would only stop making grandfather unhappy."

"I see!" said the young man.

After a little while, Fred and his friend, Dick, went away. Quilp, who was a very sharp man knew at once the object of their visit. He went up to the old man and gave him some money which he had brought with him. It was a loan. The old man had borrowed several sums of money from Quilp and the latter was curious to know what the old man was doing with such a lot of money. He did not appear to spend it on the house for they lived a simple and almost poor life. Where, then, did the money go?

"I wish I knew what you do with all the money I give you," said Quilp, "but you keep it a deep secret."

"Yes, yes, it is a deep secret," said the old man with a weary and sorrowful look. He said no more, but took the money and locked it up.

Mr. Quilp soon took his leave.

When Nell came and sat by his side, the old man laid his hand on hers and said:

"I feel sad to think of your lonely life here, Nell. You have no friends or childish pleasures. But I hope good fortune will come to you. How much I wish that you could mix among the gay and pretty ladies! How happy would I be if I could make you rich! But I still have hopes, Nell, I still have hopes. Fortune will come to thee!"

Nell looked at him in surprise when he spoke like this and to show him that she loved him more than money, she put her arms around his neck and kissed him.

The evening passed and night came on. Once again, the old man left the house and the child was once more left alone in the dark, old house.

EXERCISES

1. Write a few lines about Fred Trent.
2. Who was Dick Swiveller?
3. Repeat the conversation between Fred and his grandfather *in your own* words.
4. Describe Quilp.
5. Why did Quilp come there?

COMPREHENSION

1. Explain the difference between a *giant* and a *dwarf*.
2. Did Fred come to see his sister or to get money from the old man?
3. Take careful note of Quilp—he plays an important part in this story.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THE SECRET?

DANIEL QUILP was a strange man. Nobody liked him and almost everyone hated him, while it can be said truly that all who knew him were afraid of him. Quilp had no particular profession, but he made money in various ways—not all of them good. One of these ways was lending money. That is how he came to know the old man.

Quilp had a small office close to the Thames which he reached by crossing the river. The office was very dirty and contained a single broken desk and two old chairs. An inkstand with no ink and a pen with a broken handle were found on the desk. A clock which had not gone for nearly twenty years completed the picture.

Tom Scott was a boy who worked for Quilp. His master treated him rudely and even cruelly but Tom was a lad of spirit who did not want to run away from his unkind master. He continued to serve him. Tom Scott was always by the river-side—it looked as if he was born and lived in water. He spent his time looking out over the river and in watching the stones which he threw into the water. Tom knew a clever trick: he could stand on his head!

The day after Quilp had been to the old curiosity shop, he turned up at the office. The first thing that he saw was Tom standing on his head with his feet up in the air! Quilp gave him a blow.

"Let me alone," said the boy. "You'll get something you won't like."

"You dog," cried Quilp, "I'll beat you with an iron rod. I will!"

"Why don't you hit one of your own size?" demanded the boy.

As soon as Quilp entered the office and closed the door, Tom again stood on his head! It had become quite a habit with him.

Hardly a quarter of an hour later, Tom put in his head to say that somebody had come to see his master. When Quilp saw who it was, he said:

"Come in, Nell. Come in. Just look out into the yard, and see whether there's a boy standing on his head."

"No, sir," replied Nell. "He is on his feet."

"You're sure he is?" asked Quilp. "Well, now come in and shut the door. What's your message, Nell?"

The child gave him a letter which Quilp began to read. The contents of the letter seemed to surprise and shock him and he said half to himself:

"Gone already! Gone in four and twenty hours! What the devil has he done with it? That's the mystery!"

Now Quilp was not a man who would go on lending money without knowing where it went and whether there was any chance of the borrower returning the loan. He had lent a lot of money to Nell's grandfather and he was determined to find out what he did with it. He had a plan in mind. He turned to Nell saying,

"Come home with me, Nell, and meet Mrs. Quilp. She is very fond of you."

"I must go back, sir," said the child. "Grandfather told me to return as soon as I got the answer."

"But you haven't got it," replied Quilp, "and you won't have it till you come home with me."

Nell had no other choice but to go with Quilp.

When they came out of the office they saw Tom Scott and another boy of the same height having a fight. They had got a tight hold of each other and were receiving and giving blows at the same time.

"It's Kit!" cried Nell. "Oh! please stop them, Mr. Quilp!"

"I'll stop them," cried Quilp, who, taking up a thick stick began to beat them. He hit them several times, aiming always at their heads in a cruel way. This was more than the poor boys could stand.

"Come, you drop that stick, or it'll be worse for you," said Tom Scott.

"You come a little nearer and I'll drop it on your head," replied his master.

The boy refused this kind invitation and rubbing his head, said "Never mind; you see if ever I offer to strike anybody, again, because they say you're an uglier dwarf than can be seen anywhere for a penny! That's all."

"Who said that?" demanded the angry Quilp.

"*He* said so," replied the boy, pointing to Kit.

"Then why did he say," shouted Kit, "that Miss Nell was ugly and that she and *my* master were forced to do whatever *his* master liked? Why did he say that?"

"*He* said *that* because he's a fool and *you* said what you did because you're very wise and clever—almost too clever to live, Kit," said Quilp with a

peculiar look in his eyes. "Here's sixpence for you, Kit. Always speak the truth. At all times, Kit, speak the truth." *Quilp never forgot and never forgave Kit for the remark he had made.*

When Quilp took Nell to his home he put his plan into action. He took Mrs. Quilp aside and told her that she must pretend to sympathize with poor little Nell and try and find out from her all about her grandfather's ways and habits. Now, Mrs. Quilp certainly did not wish to deceive the innocent child in this fashion. But alas! Mrs. Quilp was a weak and timid woman who lived in constant fear of her wicked husband. When he got angry, Quilp was a terrible man and by means of threats he forced his wife to do as he wished. Poor Mrs. Quilp, trembling with fear, questioned the child as well as she could, while her husband listened from behind the closed door. What he heard was enough for him—the rest he knew. The mystery of the old man going out every night was now clear!

He gave a note to the child to be given to the old man, saying he would see him in a day or two.

The third night after she had seen Quilp, Nell was sitting by the side of the old man who looked very weak and ill.

"Two whole days have passed, Nell, and still, there is no reply."

"Shall I go to him again, tomorrow, dear grandfather?"

"No use, my dear. No use. But I do hope he won't leave me, now. Oh, Nell, if he would only help me now, I would make up all the money and time I have lost. If he does not help me now, I am ruined. Ruined! Alas! I have ruined you, also. If we are beggars—"

"What if we are?" said the child boldly. "Let us be beggars and be happy."

"Beggars—and happy!" said the old man. "Poor child!"

"Yes, let us be beggars," said Nell, putting her arm round his neck. "Dear grandfather, if you are poor, let us be poor together. We can beg or work in open roads or fields rather than live as we do now."

The poor man hid his face in his hands.

"You look so pale and sad," continued Nell. "Let us leave this sad place and beg our way from door to door. Let us sleep in fields and under trees and never think of money again."

Tears came into her eyes at the sight of the old man's misery and falling on his neck, she wept. The old man also wept.

This was not a scene for other eyes, but an enemy's eyes were there. Quilp had entered quietly and had seen and heard everything. It would have made anyone else but Quilp sad to see their sorrow. Quilp's heart was as hard as stone. The only sorrow he felt was to realize that he had thrown his money away.

When the old man suddenly realized that Quilp was there, the latter spoke to him.

"I want to have a talk with you, in private. With nobody present."

On hearing this, Nell went in, leaving the men together. The old man turned to Quilp and said:

"Have you brought me any money?"

"No!" returned Quilp.

"Then," said the old man in despair, "the child and I are lost!"

"Let me tell you that I know everything. I know your secret," declared Quilp. The old man looked up, trembling.

"You are surprised?" said Quilp. "I know all your secrets. I know where all the money that I gave you has gone. You are—shall I say the word?"

"Yes," said the old man, "say it, if you like."

"A *gambler*," said Quilp.

"Yes," cried the old man, his eyes shining bright. "Yes, I am a gambler and I will be a gambler till I die!"

"To think that I should be deceived by a mere gambler!" said Quilp, looking at the old man with hate.

"I gambled for the sake of the child," cried the old man, fiercely. "Heaven knows I never played for my own gain. Every time I played I whispered that orphan's name and prayed to God to bless me with luck. But God never heard my prayer!"

"But did you never win?" asked Quilp.

"Never! never!" cried the old man, in despair.

The truth was now known. It was the old, old story: every man gambles in the hope of becoming rich but no one succeeds. They only succeed in losing what they had. The old man's story was doubly sad. He had never gambled for his own pleasure. He wanted to make his grandchild rich before he died. He knew he was old and that he would die soon. He had saved very little money and he knew he could not increase it. The only way, he had thought, to become rich, was to gamble. This brought him only poverty—poverty worse than before.

The old man was now in the hands of Quilp and Quilp never showed mercy. The old man had borrowed much more than he could ever hope to pay back. Quilp was too clever a man to have lent him money merely against his word. He had been cautious enough to take from the old man a bill of sale upon the property—the old curiosity shop. When he had learnt the worst from the old man, Quilp stood up and looked about as if to make sure that none of the property had been taken away.

The old man asked him again and again to help him with money just once more but Quilp refused absolutely and started to leave. Finally, the old man asked :

" Who is it that in spite of all my caution told you about my secret ? Come, let me know the name."

Quilp did not want to mention Nell's name as he would have to confess the trick he had used. So he said, " Now, who do you think it is ?"

" It was Kit, it must have been the boy," said the old man.

" How came you to think of him ?" said the dwarf as if in pity. " Yes, it was Kit."

Saying this, he took his leave and when he had crossed the door he burst into laughter, saying to himself :

" It was Kit who said I was an uglier dwarf than could be seen anywhere for a penny. Ha ! ha ! ha ! It was Kit ! "

EXERCISES

1. Write a few sentences about Quilp.
2. Who was Tom Scott ? What could he do ?

3. Why did Quilp take Nell to his house?
4. Describe the fight between Tom and Kit.
5. Give an account of the conversation between Quilp and the old man.

COMPREHENSION

Write *ten sentences* on the evil habit of gambling. Make a firm resolution never to fall into this habit. Once you begin to gamble, it is next to impossible to give it up.

CHAPTER IV

KIT AND NELL

KIT was a loyal and faithful servant. He was grateful to his harmless old master and to Nell who was always kind to him. Kit never liked Quilp. He wondered what influence Quilp had over his master—he suspected something. When Kit left the old curiosity shop every night, in order to go home, he would stay in a dark place, opposite, and keep a watch over the house. He continued to stay there till late at night, his eyes fixed on the window at which Nell would sit.

On the night that Quilp had exposed the guilty secret of the old man, Kit was keeping watch as usual. It was past eleven when he, at last, decided to go home.

"Old master hasn't gone out to-night," Kit told his mother, "and so she did not sit at the window, at all."

Kit sat down by the fire and looked very sad and disappointed. The room in which Kit sat down was a simple and poor place, but it was clean. There was order and comfort in that poor home. Kit's mother, Mrs. Nubbles, was a poor widow who had to work very hard to support herself and her three children. Though it was nearly midnight, she was still working, an iron in her hands. A baby lay sleeping near the fire. Another, a boy of about two years was sitting up straight in a basket which was meant for clothes. He had already refused to go to sleep and now he was staring over the edge of the basket with his big round eyes. He looked as if he had firmly made up his mind never to go to sleep any more! Kit made a face at the tiny rebel who was named Jacob.

"Did you tell me, just now, that your master had not gone out to-night?" enquired Mrs. Nubbles.

"Yes," said Kit, "worse luck!"

"You should say better luck," returned his mother. "because Miss Nell will not be left alone."

"Ah!" said Kit, "I forgot *that*. I said worse luck, because I could not see her."

"I wonder what she would say," cried his mother stopping in her work and looking at Kit, "if she knew that when she is sitting alone at the window, you are watching from the street for fear any harm should come to her; and that you never come home to bed till you know that she is safe in hers."

"She'll never say anything because she knows nothing," replied Kit.

"I know what some people would say, Kit—" said his mother.

"Nonsense," said Kit, knowing what was to follow.

"Some people would say that you have fallen in love with her."

It was an awkward moment for the lad.

"But to be serious, though," his mother went on, "it is cruel of the old gentleman to keep the dear child shut up there."

"He does not think it is cruel, mother. I am sure he would not hurt her for all the gold and silver in the world. But listen! who's that?"

At that moment the door opened and Nell herself rushed into the room. She had come in great haste and looked pale and breathless.

"Miss Nelly! What is the matter?" cried mother and son together.

"I must not stay a moment," replied the child, "grandfather is very ill. I found him in a fit upon the floor—"

"I'll run for a doctor," said Kit, "I'll come there at once. I'll—"

"No, no," cried Nell, "there is a doctor there. You are not wanted. You—you—must never come near us any more!"

"What!" roared Kit.

"Never again," repeated the child. "Don't ask me why, for I don't know. Please don't be angry with me!"

Kit looked at her with his eyes wide open; his mouth opened and shut a great many times; but he was not able to bring out even one word.

"Grandfather complains of you," the child went on. "I don't know what you have done, but I hope it's nothing very bad."

"*I* have done!" roared Kit.

"He cries that you're the cause of all his misery," returned the child, her eyes full of tears. "You must not come near him or he will die. Oh, Kit, what *have* you done? You in whom I trusted so much! You who were my only friend!"

The unfortunate Kit looked at his young mistress with all his eyes but he could not get a single word out of his lips.

"I have brought his pay for the week," said Nell, looking at Mrs. Nubbles and keeping the money on the table, "and—and—a little more, for he was always good and kind to me. I hope he will be sorry and do well somewhere else. It makes me sad to part with him, but I can't help it. Good night!"

Little Nell left the house with tears running down her face.

Quilp had remembered Kit's insult. The mischief was done!

EXERCISES

1. Was Kit a good servant?
2. What were Kit's first words to his mother when he reached home?
3. Describe Kit's home.
4. Why did Nell come there?
5. Narrate briefly what Nell said to Mrs. Nubbles.

COMPREHENSION

1. Why did Kit watch the house at night? Was that his duty?
2. What was the mischief done by Quilp? Narrate in your own words.

Chapter V

DICK AND FRED

Dick was entertaining a visitor in his room. It was his friend, Fred Trent. Fred had come there with a certain plan in mind. Fred was trying his best to get Dick to listen to him but Dick was more merry than attentive.

"Dick," said Fred, "will you talk seriously for two minutes? I can show you a way to make your fortune quickly."

"You have shown me so many," returned Dick, "and still I have nothing but empty pockets!"

"This is different," said his friend. "You saw my sister, Nell?"

"What about her?" asked Dick.

"Has she a pretty face?"

"Why, certainly," replied Dick, "she has a very pretty face. What of that?"

"Well, all the money that the old man has and of which I ought to get a share, will go to her when he dies. Now look here. Nell is nearly fourteen."

"She is a fine girl," said Dick.

"She is a very loving girl and I think I can make her do what I want," said Fred. "What's to prevent your marrying her?"

"What?" said Dick, in great surprise at such a suggestion.

"I say, what's to prevent your marrying her?" repeated his friend.

"But she is not even fourteen!" cried Dick, who was shocked.

"I don't mean marrying her now," said the brother angrily, "say, in two or three or four years' time. Does the old man look as if he will live long?"

"He does not look like it," said Dick, shaking his head, "but these old people—you can't trust them, Fred. I have a rich aunt of mine who was going to die when I was eight years old and she hasn't kept her word, yet!"

"Well, suppose he lives. And suppose I persuade or force Nell to a secret marriage with you. What do you think would come of that?"

"A family and an annual income of nothing to feed them on!" replied Dick, after some thought.

Fred told him that the old man loved the girl so much that even if she married against his wish, he would still give her money and leave everything to her when he died. Fred told Dick he must pretend that he had had a serious quarrel with his friend and for this very reason the old man would forgive him.

"You will get all the wealth of this rich old miser and you and I will spend it together," concluded Fred Trent.

It should be understood here that Dick was not really a wicked fellow, but he was easily misled. Fred had a strong influence over him and Dick was prepared to do anything which would provide him with easy money. He thought he could win a beautiful young girl and plenty of money, too. Both Fred, the fond brother of Nell, and Dick firmly believed that the old man was really and truly wealthy!

EXERCISES

1. Why had Fred come to Dick's room?
2. What was the proposal made by Fred Trent?
3. In what way would Fred profit by that?

COMPREHENSION

Fred was suggesting a marriage between his sister and his best friend. Was there anything wrong in that? Give your opinion in ten simple sentences.....

ERNAKULAM.

CHAPTER VI

FLIGHT

THE old man was seriously ill. He lay on his bed unconscious and burning with fever. There was none to care for him except the young girl. She was by his bedside, watching over him and nursing him day and night. The old man's mind was wandering and it looked as if he would never recover.

Fearing that he would die, Quilp had come with Tom Scott and taken possession of the house and property. To advise and assist him, Quilp had brought along a lawyer who had a very bad reputation. His name was Brass and his heart was as hard and cold as that metal. He was a friend of Quilp and between them, they had ruined many a man. He was just the sort of lawyer meant for Quilp, for, birds of a feather flock together.

Nell was thoroughly frightened of these strange men in her house. Her heart was full of sorrow

and her head was full of troubles and she did not have a single friend in the whole wide world. But no—there was one!

One night, she had stolen to her usual window and was sitting there very sorrowfully, for the old man was worse that day, when she heard someone calling her. Looking down, she recognized Kit standing in the dark.

"Miss Nell!" called the boy, softly.

"Yes," replied the girl, doubting whether she ought to talk to the boy whom her grandfather disliked. "What do you want?"

"I have wanted to say a word to you, for a long time," the boy replied, "but those two men, there, have driven me away. Miss Nell, I hope you don't really believe that I have done any wrong, do you, Miss?"

"I must believe it," said the girl, "or why would grandfather be so angry with you?"

"I don't know why," said Kit. "I'm sure I never deserved it from him, no, nor from you. I can say that with a true and honest heart. And then, when I came to ask how old master was, they drove me from the door."

"They never told me that," said little Nell.

"Miss Nell," continued Kit, coming a little closer to the window, "there are new masters in possession of the house and when my old master gets better——"

"If he ever does," added the child, tears coming into her eyes.

"I am sure he will. Please don't cry, Miss Nell, and please don't be sad. When he gets better, say a kind word for me, Miss Nell," begged Kit.

"They tell me I must not even mention your name to him. And even if I do, what good would a kind word do you, Kit? We shall be very poor. We shall not have enough bread to eat, ourselves."

"Oh, it's not that I may be taken back. It is not for the sake of food and wages that I have been waiting so long to see you. If only he could be made to believe that I've been a faithful servant—"

Here Kit stopped speaking, for he could not get the proper words. Nell begged him to speak out, quickly, for it was very late and time to shut the window.

"If he does not think it is too bold of me to say so," cried Kit, before his courage failed him, "this home is gone from you and him. Mother and I have a poor home but it's better than this with all these people here. Why not come to our home till you have time to look about and find a better one?"

The girl did not speak for she could find no words to say. Kit, however, went on speaking.

"You think our home is very small and inconvenient? So it is, but it is very clean. The little front room is very pleasant—mother says it would just suit you both. Mother will do all your work and I can run your errands. We don't want any money, bless you! You are not to think of that! Will you please ask him, Miss Nell? Do try to make old master come, and ask him first what I have done. Will you only promise that, Miss Nell?"

Before the girl could reply to this earnest request, the door of the house opened, Mr, Brass put out his head and shouted, "Who's there?" Kit immediately went away and Nell, closing the window softly, drew back into the room.

Poor Nell was passing through a time of great sorrow and anxiety. Kit's kind words had given her a little happiness. She found comfort in the thought of her good and faithful servant's kind offer of his own home. Poor, honest Kit!

After some days, the old man felt a little better and he was able to sit up. He was quiet and patient but something seemed to have happened to his mind. Perhaps, it was the result of his long and serious illness. Or, could it be the shock of the knowledge that he could gamble no more? What would happen to his dearest grandchild? Who knows what thoughts passed through that troubled brain?

On a certain Tuesday, Quilp told the old man that he could not allow them to continue to stay in the house as he wanted to take possession of the property. The old man asked for time till Friday morning.

On Thursday evening the old man and the child were sitting together in silence. The old man began crying.

"It shall be as you once said, Nell. We shall be beggars. We will not stop here, another day. Let us go far away from here."

"Yes, let us go," said the young girl earnestly. "Let us go and never come back. Let us wander through the world rather than stay here."

"We will travel through fields and woods and by the side of rivers and trust in God. Yes, Nell, you and I shall be happy and cheerful together."

"We will be happy together!" cried the girl.

"Let us steal away tomorrow morning—early and softly, so that no one can see or hear us.

Tomorrow morning, my dear, we'll go away from this scene of sorrow."

The grandchild hoped that the sun and fresh air would restore her grandfather's health. She never thought of hunger or thirst or cold or suffering. She only looked forward to peace and happiness.

While the old man slept, she put their few belongings together. A few old clothes for herself and a few old clothes for her grandfather—that was all they took. A good stick to help the weak old man to walk and now, everything was ready for their flight.

She went round the old rooms for the last time wishing them a fond good-bye! She went to her own little room where she had prayed every night. She cast one last look around. She could see some little things which were dear to her and which she would have liked to take with her but alas! no; it was impossible. She looked at her pet, a poor little bird in its small cage. She began crying at the thought of leaving it, when suddenly an idea came to her head. She hoped that somehow or other it would fall into the hands of Kit who would keep it for her sake. Perhaps, he would think that she had left it behind for him in gratitude for his kind offer of his humble home. She found some comfort in such a thought.

As soon as the sun rose in the east, the old man and the young girl set out.

"Which way?" asked the girl.

The man looked at her in a helpless way. He looked first to the right and then to the left and again at her and finally shook his head. Putting her hand in his, she led him gently forward.

* * * *



THE JOURNEY BEGINS

When Quilp rose from his sleep in the morning, he discovered the flight. He could not imagine where they had gone. He was not at all sorry for them, but he was curious.

Dick Swiveller came there that very morning. On the previous night, Fred Trent had informed him of his grandfather's illness. Dick thought the proper thing to do was to come and enquire how the old man was and also to sympathize with the young girl. According to Dick and his plan to marry Nell, this kind action on his part was sure to win the heart of Nell. This was the first step he would take to win her hand. The bird, alas! had flown!

Quilp, who was a very sharp man, knew that Dick had come there with a certain purpose in mind. Picking up a conversation with Dick, Quilp soon came to know the real reason of his courtesy visit. He kept this knowledge in his wicked mind to be used to his own advantage in the future. How he hated the old man and the girl!

Quilp next saw Kit peeping in at the door. Calling him in, he began to question him. Kit showed great surprise when he heard that his master and mistress had left the house. Where could they have gone? In his simplicity he even confessed to Quilp that he had offered them his small home. Quilp remembered this information also.

Just then Tom Scott called out, "Here's a bird. What shall I do with it?"

"Kill it," replied Quilp.

"Oh no, don't do that," said Kit, "give it to me."

"Oh yes, I dare say," cried the other boy. "Come! let go of the cage and let me kill it. Let the cage alone, will you?"

The two boys fell upon each other tooth and nail. They were a match for each other and rolled on the ground, fighting and hitting each other. At last, Kit gave his enemy a blow on the chest, got up and snatching up the cage, ran away with his prize.

He did not stop till he reached home. When they saw blood on his face, Jacob began crying loudly and Mrs. Nubbles demanded, "What's the matter with you, Kit?"

"Never mind, mother," answered her son, wiping away the blood with a towel. "I'm not hurt. I've been fighting for a bird and won it, that's all. You shut up, Jacob. I have never seen such a naughty boy in all my life!"

"You have been fighting for a bird!" asked Mrs. Nubbles, in surprise.

"Ah! this is Miss Nell's bird, mother. They wanted to kill it. I stopped that though—ha! ha! ha!"

Kit laughed so much that it made little Jacob also laugh. Kit proudly showed the bird to both children as if it was a very precious thing. He got up on a chair and a table and hung the cage on an old nail in the window. He took care to hang it quite straight and walked backwards to admire it.

"And now, mother," said Kit, "before I rest, I'll go out and see if I can find a horse to hold. Then I can buy something nice for you and a little food for the bird with the money I get."

EXERCISES

1. What happened to the old man?
2. Who was Brass? Describe his character.
3. Why did Quilp and Brass stay in the house?
4. Describe Nell's preparations for the flight.
5. When Kit took the bird home, what did he do with it?

COMPREHENSION

1. Condense *in your own words* the talk between Nell and Kit.
2. Imagine you are leaving your home for ever. Mention *five* things, besides your clothes, that you would like to take with you. If you have a pet—a dog, or cat, or bird—would you take it with you?

CHAPTER VII

NEW FRIENDS FOR KIT

KIT was tired of walking up and down the streets. He was looking out for a chance to hold a horse for some gentleman, who would pay him for looking after the horse in his absence. Today, he had earned not a single penny and there was no food at all at home. Kit was about to sit down on a step to rest, when he saw a little carriage drawn by a small horse. It was driven by a fat old gentleman. By his side sat a fat old lady. They seemed to be good and kind persons. Kit followed the carriage and when the horse stopped, he went up to hold it.

Mr. Garland and his wife entered the office of a lawyer called Witherden. Their son Abel was also a lawyer working under Mr. Witherden. Unlike Mr. Brass, Witherden was an honest lawyer and he was very fond of Abel Garland, who was one of the best young men in this world. He was also the best son in the world—at least, that is what his parents thought.

When their business was over, Mr. Garland came out with his wife and son and got into the carriage. The old gentleman put his hand into his pocket to find a sixpence for Kit. He had no sixpence, neither had the old lady, nor the perfect son, nor was there a shop near by at which to get change, so he gave a shilling to the boy.

"There," he said jokingly, "I'm coming here again next Monday, at the same time, and mind you're here, my lad, to work it out."

"Thank you, sir," said Kit. "I'll be sure to be here."

Now, Kit was quite serious and meant it, too, but everyone else laughed as though it was a great joke.

Kit bought some food for the family, not forgetting some seed for the wonderful bird, and went home.

* * * *

One day, Kit was busy cleaning the cage and feeding the bird. All the time he was wondering where Nell and her grandfather were. Suddenly, he remembered that it was on that very day—almost the very same hour—the fat old gentleman had said he would be at the lawyer's office again. Quickly, Kit hung up the cage and went as fast as he could to that place.

Sure enough, the horse was coming up with the carriage, with the fat old gentleman and the fat old lady in it. Kit went up and held the horse.

"Why, bless me," said the old gentleman who was thoroughly surprised to see Kit there. "That lad *has* come. My dear, do you see?"

"I said I'd be here, sir, and I have come," said honest Kit.

"My dear," said Mr. Garland to his wife, "this is an uncommon lad. A good lad I'm sure."

"I'm sure he is," declared the old lady. "A very good lad, and I am sure he is a good son."

Both smiled at Kit and entered the office. Very soon, Mr. Witherden came to the window and looked at him, and then Mr. Abel Garland came and looked at him, and after that, the old gentleman and the old lady came and looked at him again, and soon after, they all came and looked at him together!

Next, Kit was called into the office.

"Well, boy," said Mr. Witherden, "did you come to work out that shilling or to get another?"

"No indeed, sir," replied Kit, "I never thought of such a thing."

"Is your father alive?" asked the lawyer.

"Dead, sir."

"Mother?"

"Yes, sir."

"Married again?"

Kit answered that she was a widow with three children and as to her marrying again, if the gentleman knew her, he would never have thought of such a thing! Mr. Witherden turned to Mr. Garland and whispered that he believed the lad was really honest.

"Now," said Mr. Garland, "I am not going to give you anything—"

"Thank you, sir," Kit replied at once, for that made him free of any suspicion that he had come to get some more money.

"But," continued the old gentleman, "I may want to know something more about you. Give me your address."

Kit told him his address and the old gentleman wrote it down.

They then got into the carriage and drove away.

Kit turned away and soon forgot the fat old gentleman and the fat old lady. His thoughts were all on his old master and Nell. Wishing to finish cleaning the cage, he walked home. When he opened the door, there were Mr. Garland and his wife talking to Mrs. Nubbles!

They were convinced that Kit was an honest boy and they had come to offer him employment in their own house. It was soon settled that Kit should join them on six pounds a year. They would, of course, provide him with food and lodging. When they had left, Kit said to his mother, "Well mother, I think my fortune is made!"

"I should think it is, Kit," said his mother, "six pounds a year! just think of it!"

Mother and son were very happy and planned many good things for the family.

Kit was to report for duty the day after the next and Mrs. Nubbles was very busy getting all his clothes ready and packed. If Kit was about to go to distant Africa, or on a voyage round the world, his mother could not have been more busy!

At last, everything was ready and his mother kissed Kit good-bye and cried as if he was going very far away and for a very long time.

The fat old gentleman and the fat old lady received Kit very kindly and though he was only a servant, they provided him with all comforts.

He had good company, too. Working in the same house was a servant-girl, named Barbara. She was a very pretty girl, neat in dress and habits. We will now leave Kit here, and follow the fortunes of his old master and mistress.

EXERCISES

1. How did Kit try to earn some money?
2. Who were *the following* persons?
   (a) Mr. Garland, (b) Abel Garland, (c) Mr. Witherden, (d) Barbara.
3. What did Kit do with the shilling that Mr. Garland gave him?
4. Why were they surprised to find Kit waiting for them when they came again?
5. Give *one* reason why the Garlands decided to employ Kit.

COMPREHENSION

1. How many pence make a shilling?
2. How many shillings make a pound?
3. How many shillings are six pounds?

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAVELLERS

HAND in hand, the young girl and the old man walked on. Without knowing exactly where they were going, they walked on to the open country.

They passed through the busy London streets and came to a quiet spot just outside the city. The old man and his young guide (yes, it was she who had to be the guide, though she knew not where she was going) sat down to rest in a pleasant field. She had brought in her little basket a few pieces of bread and meat which they now ate.

The day was fresh, the leaves were green, the wild flowers were pretty and the birds were singing. All this made them both glad that they had left their sad house. The girl said her morning prayers.

"Are you tired?" asked the young girl.

"No," replied the old man, "let us continue our journey."

There was a pool of clear water in the field and the girl washed her hands and face and feet. She washed her grandfather's face for him and dried it with her own dress.

"I can do nothing for myself, my dear," said the weak old man. "Don't leave me, Nell; tell me you won't leave me. If I lose thee too, I will die!"

They began walking again and walked all day till they came to a cottage. They were given beds for a small fee and they slept that night, there. Next morning, they went on. They often stopped to rest when they were tired. With the little money they had, they bought a little milk, sometimes. People wondered who this strange couple was, but looking at the sweet face of Nell and the helplessness of the old man, they were kind to them. Sometimes, a cart would stop and give them a lift which was a great relief to their aching feet.

They would meet some people on the way and walk with them to pass the time. The old man was

always afraid that people were following him. He feared that they would say he was mad and take away the child from him. Every day he would urge the child to go on and on—the greater the distance from London, the better it would be.

How long could they go on like this? She had a little money, it was true, but it was very little and when that was gone, they must begin to beg. She had a single gold coin which she was keeping for any urgent or great need. She wanted to keep it till they had absolutely nothing else. Therefore, she sewed that coin of gold into her dress so that they might not be tempted to spend it.

A few days passed and the travellers were still on the march. They had passed through a town and were now approaching a village. They were wandering up and down the village road, wondering where they could ask for shelter. They could see an old man sitting in a little garden before his house. The word SCHOOL was written over the window of the house and the old man was probably the schoolmaster.

"Speak to him, dear," said Nell's grandfather.

"I am afraid to disturb him," said the girl, "He does not seem to see us. Perhaps if we wait a little, he may look this way."

They waited, but the schoolmaster did not look their way. He seemed to be deep in thought. He had a kind face. In his plain old suit of black, he looked pale and thin.

They were very tired and at last they made bold to open the gate and walk up. Nell told the schoolmaster that they were poor travellers looking out

for a night's shelter. Though they were poor, they were willing to pay a small sum, she added.

"If you could tell us of some place, we shall be grateful," said the young girl.

"You have been walking a long way," said the schoolmaster.

"A long way, sir," replied the girl.

"You're too young to travel, my child," he said, laying his hand gently on her head. Turning to the old man he asked, "Is she your grandchild?"

"Yes, sir," answered the old man, "and the joy and support of my life."

"Come in," said the schoolmaster.

He invited them to enter his house and told them that they were welcome to stay there till the next morning. He spread a white cloth on the table and bringing out some meat and bread, asked them to eat and drink.

Both grandfather and grandchild had a good night's sleep. The girl rose early in the morning and put everything in order for she was always neat in her habits. The girl then prepared breakfast and all three of them sat down at the table.

Observing that the old man looked very tired, the schoolmaster invited them to spend another day with him. He told them that he was happy to have their company. Nell showed her gratitude to the kind man by doing various odd jobs in the house. When she had finished her work she sat down in a corner, her needlework in her hands.

The day passed and all of them went to bed. When the sun shone in her room the next day the girl arose and wished the kind old man farewell. The schoolmaster walked with them up to the

gate. The girl thanked him most sincerely and held out the little money she had, feeling sorry it was so little. The kind and gentle schoolmaster refused to take it and bending down and kissing her cheek, he went back to the house.

They had gone only a few steps when the schoolmaster came to the gate again. The old man went back to shake hands once again and the girl did the same.

"Good fortune and happiness go with you!" said the schoolmaster. "If you ever pass this way again, you'll not forget the little school?"

"We shall never forget it, sir," answered Nell, "nor ever forget your kindness to us."

"God bless you!" said the kind schoolmaster.

They wished him farewell very many times and at last turned away. They walked slowly and looked back often until they could see him no more.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the place where the travellers rested.
2. Where did they spend the first night?
3. What did Nell do with the gold coin?
4. Describe the schoolmaster.
5. What were the last words of the schoolmaster?

COMPREHENSION

1. Imagine you are Nell and write *five sentences* why you like the schoolmaster.
2. In what way did Nell show her gratitude to the schoolmaster?

CHAPTER IX

JOY AND SORROW

MRS. JARLEY had a collection of exactly one hundred figures of wax. Mrs. Jarley's wax-works were famous. Everyone went to see them when they were exhibited in any town. In this collection were Kings, Queens, famous politicians, murderers and historical characters, fat men and thin, tall women and short—all in wax but absolutely life-like. It was a curious collection and people were most curious to see these figures of wax. Mrs. Jarley had made a lot of money by the simple art of satisfying popular curiosity.

One day, Mrs. Jarley happened to see the two poor wanderers. She offered to employ them. She did have a very kind heart and also she thought Nell's pretty face would be an added attraction for visitors to her wonderful show. She appointed Nell as a guide to show people round. The old man was given some light work such as cleaning the figures of wax and collecting the tickets. They were to stay with her and she would provide them with food.

This arrangement was an excellent one and poor Nell thanked God for it. Her wanderings and her sufferings made her feel more than grateful to the good Mrs. Jarley. The old man also seemed happy and contented.

Nell did think of the old curiosity shop, sometimes. She thought of poor Kit and all his kindness, until the tears came into her eyes and she would weep and smile at the same time.

One evening, Nell and her grandfather went out for a walk. When they had gone some distance, it began to rain and before they realized it, they were caught in a storm. They took shelter in a house which proved to be an hotel. They went in and dried themselves before the fire. Some men were playing cards at a table. The old man was at once interested. He caught hold of the girl's arm and demanded,

"What money have we, Nell? Come! I saw some money with you, yesterday. Give it to me at once!"

The poor girl was surprised and frightened to see the change in the old man's face. His eyes were eager and shining.

"No, no, grandfather," she replied, "let us go away from here. Never mind the rain. Let us go away."

"It is for thy sake, Nell. It is for your good, my dear," saying which the old man snatched her little purse and joined the men at the table.

* * * *

The storm went on for full three hours. And then, the thunder grew less and the lightning stopped.... but the game of cards went on. After a long time, the men rose from the table. Nell's little purse was *empty*. The old man still sat looking at the cards to see if he would have won, the next time, if they had continued the game.

Nell went up to him and putting her hand on his shoulder said, "Try to forget them; put those cards down, grandfather."

"Forget them? How are we ever to grow rich if I forget them?" The poor girl could only shake her head. "No, no, Nell," said the old man, "Lose today and win tomorrow."

The time was past midnight and it was impossible to go back and wake up the good Mrs. Jarley. Nell, therefore, told her grandfather that she still had a little money left with her and proposed that they should spend the night in the hotel. The old man's reply was: "If I had that money before—if I had only known of it a few minutes ago!" Alas! the curse of gambling was on him again!

Now Nell had still the coin of gold sewn in her dress. As she thought it best not to let her grandfather know about it, she secretly removed it from her dress. As they were to leave early the next morning, she wanted to pay the inn-keeper that very night. So when he went to the next room, she followed him and giving him the gold coin, she asked,

"Will you give me the change, here, please?"

The inn-keeper was, of course, surprised and looked at the money and rang it and looked at the girl and at the money again as though he wished to enquire how she got it. The coin being genuine, however, he decided that it was no business of his. When she was leaving the room she thought she saw a figure watching her. She wondered who it could be!

She went to bed but all of a sudden, she woke up from her sleep. There was someone in the room! She had left the window open and a little

light came in. She could see a figure creeping round her bed. She was unable either to move or cry for help. She just lay still watching *it*!

On it came, slow and silent. It came close to her pillow and she was afraid of those hands so close to her face. Back again the dark figure went to the window and she could see it searching in her clothes and then she heard the jingling of coins!

Soft and silent, it dropped upon its hands and knees and went creeping and crawling out of the room.

Nell jumped out of bed! If only she had the strength to go to her grandfather's room, she would be safe! She opened the door of her room and went out but there was the figure again! Not caring now for her own safety but thinking only of the old and helpless man, she went in.

What sight was that which met her eyes!

The bed was empty. At a table sat the old man himself—counting the money he had robbed from her!

The old man's temptation was so great that he had robbed his own dear grand-daughter. The strange fact was that he was doing it for her sake—to make her rich. It was not for himself that he robbed or played cards. His one desire was to make her rich before he died. This idea had become a madness with him.

From that day he began gambling again. Every evening he went out and came back desperate.

"Get me money," he would cry, "I must have money, Nell. I shall pay it all back and much more to you, one day."

What could the poor girl do ? Every penny that she earned she gave him. If she did not supply him with money, he would supply himself. Suppose he robbed the good Mrs. Jarley ? Nell was full of sorrow. To whom could she tell her fears ? If the truth were known about her grandfather, they would say he was mad and lock him up.

One evening, Nell, who now looked pale and worried, went out for a walk. When she felt tired she sat down. She heard some men talking nearby and when she looked she saw her grandfather in conversation with those men from the hotel. They were talking of cards and gambling. Though they could not see her, she could both see and hear them.

Imagine her horror when she heard the old man agreeing to rob Mrs. Jarley. The other men tempted him saying that he was sure to win, if only he had sufficient money to gamble. They told him that Mrs. Jarley would never, never suspect him. She kept her money in a tin box and she never locked the door of her room. The old man consented to carry out the robbery on the following night.

Sleep never came to poor Nell that night. How could she sleep ! She went to the old man's bed and woke him up.

" I had a bad dream," cried the child, " a terrible dream. I have had it once before. It is a dream of old men like you coming to a dark room at night and robbing gold while people sleep. This dream is too real. I cannot sleep. We cannot stay here."

He looked at her and trembled.

" Get up and come ! There is no time to lose," insisted the girl.

" Tonight ? " asked the old man.

" Yes, tonight," replied the girl. " Tomorrow night will be too late. The dream will come again. Nothing but flight can save us."

The old man rose from his bed. The girl had brought their few possessions and the old man' staff.

Thank God, she had prevented him from robbing the good and kind Mrs. Jarley !

Once again they were on the road. They travelled through many towns and endured many sufferings. Poor Nell was weak, tired and feeling miserable. She felt that she could not walk any more.

In front of them was another traveller who was reading a book as he walked along. The child walked fast hoping to receive some help from him. At last she reached him and began to ask for his help. The man turned his head to look at her. The girl gave a loud cry and fell down unconscious.

EXERCISES

1. Who was Mrs. Jarley ?
2. What did Mrs. Jarley have in her collection ?
3. What job did Mrs. Jarley give Nell ?
4. Why did Nell and her grandfather go to the hotel ?
5. Why did Nell decide to leave Mrs. Jarley ?

COMPREHENSION

1. Put in *indirect speech* the following :—
" Get me money," he would cry, " I must have money, Nell. I shall pay it all back and much more to you, one day."

2. Are the following statements *false* or *true* ?
   (a) The old man gambled only to make his granddaughter rich.
   (b) The old man gambled because he could not give up the habit
   (c) Gambling, like drinking, is a madness.
   (d) All gamblers become rich, one day.

CHAPTER X

THE SINGLE GENTLEMAN

WHERE was Quilp all this while ? What was he doing ? Quilp was busy doing further mischief. Quilp had an evil heart and an evil mind. His thoughts and actions were all evil. He knew of Fred's suggestion and Dick's desire to marry Nell. He hated both Fred and Dick. He now wanted to encourage and help Fred and Dick in this plan. Why ? When Dick married Nell, he would come to know how poor she really was. Then would Quilp laugh ! The wicked man found pleasure in making others unhappy. He was a strange man, indeed !

With this object in view, Quilp pretended to be the best friend Dick ever had. He even found a job for him. One day, he took Dick to his equally wicked friend, Mr. Brass, who had promised to employ Dick in his office.

Mr. Brass had a sister, named Sally, who was thirty five years old. She managed the house as well as the office. Except that she dressed like a lady, Sally looked, talked and behaved like a man.

She did not have the gentle nature or the soft heart of a woman. She knew as much of the law as her brother, Mr. Brass, if not more. She was her brother's assistant, secretary and adviser. Unhappy was the man who came to them for advice, for, between her brother and Miss Brass, many a person had lost all his money. Mr. Quilp was the only person who proved too clever for them.

For the first time in his life, Dick Swiveller was forced to work for his daily bread. The lawyer's office was in a small dirty room of a small dark house. Mr. Brass and his sister lived in one part of this house and rented out the other part. On the door was a notice which said 'First floor to let to a single gentleman'.

Dick joined duty on a Monday morning. When both the brother and sister left the office on some work, Dick was alone in the office. Instead of doing his work, Dick was busy drawing funny pictures of the terrible Sally. Dick had known many ladies but never one who looked so peculiar as Sally Brass!

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" said Dick.

"Oh, please," said someone who was nowhere to be seen, "will you come and show the lodgings?"

Not being able to see anyone, Dick, at last looked over the table and on the other side he could see a little girl. She was completely covered in a dress which looked like a pillow-case. Only her face and feet were visible.

"Why, who are you?" said Dick.

The only reply he received was, "Oh, please, will you come and show the lodgings?"

"Why don't you show them yourself?" demanded Dick.

"Miss Sally said I should not," said the girl. "People won't believe the service is good if they see how small I am, first."

"But they'll see how small you are afterwards, won't they?" asked Dick.

"Ah! But they will have taken the rooms for a fortnight," replied the little girl, "and then, people don't like to move, once they're settled."

Surprised at so much wisdom in so small a creature, Dick rose from his table.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am the cook," said the little girl and then, added as in explanation, "I do all the work of the house."

The poor little girl looked as though she was made to work from the time that she was a baby!

Dick went upstairs and met the single gentleman who wished to take the rooms. Dick told him what the charges would be. The single gentleman agreed to all the conditions and even gave a ten-pound note as advance payment. He had only one thing to say and that was that nobody should disturb him till he rang the bell. Saying so, he changed his clothes even though Dick was in the room and calmly got into bed.

The single gentleman went to sleep and did not get up at all, even though Brass and Sally made all possible noises to wake him up. He continued to sleep for six-and-twenty hours! At last, Brass, Sally and Dick joined together and made such a loud noise that the single gentleman was forced to wake up.

"We were afraid that you were dead, sir," said Dick. "Anyway, we cannot allow single gentleman to come here and sleep like double gentlemen without paying extra for it."

"Really?" cried the single gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said Dick who liked to talk a lot, "an equal quantity of sleep was never got out of one bed and if you're going to sleep in that way, you must pay for double gentlemen."

This was a funny statement to make and the single gentleman laughed. He liked Dick and began talking to him. The single gentleman did not like either Brass or his sister and refused to have any business with them. Everything was done through Dick.

Now, this single gentleman had come to London with a certain object in mind. He was trying to find out where Nell and the old man were. His search took him to many places and he had come to make further enquiries of people who knew them in London. The single gentleman was a very cautious person. He had never told his name to anyone. He did not say why he wished to meet Nell and her grandfather. Nobody knew whether he was a relation or friend or an enemy. We shall hear more of him, later on.

Sometimes, Dick would be left alone in the office. He was really worried about the small servant. Sally was very cruel to her. She did not even give her enough to eat. Dick had many faults, but he was a generous fellow. Knowing that the poor girl was always hungry, one day, he decided to give her some good food. He sent for a plate of meat and bread and gave it to the

servant. She ate it up as if she was starving all her life. She was most grateful to Dick and ever after that, she was prepared to do anything for him. This good deed of Dick proved very helpful to him in the future.

EXERCISES

1. Why did Quilp want to help Dick?
2. Where was Dick employed?
3. What did Dick say when the single gentleman, at last, woke up?
4. Why had the single gentleman come to London?
5. What was Dick's good deed?

COMPREHENSION

1. Narrate in indirect speech the conversation between Dick and the small servant.
2. Note that 'advise' is a verb and 'advice' is a noun. Make a sentence each with these words.

CHAPTER XI

GOOD NEWS

THE single gentleman was busy making enquiries about the old man and Nell. He soon came to hear about Kit who had been their loyal servant. He came to know that Kit was working in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Garland. He also found out where Abel Garland was working and that Kit drove the carriage which took Abel to his office. One day, Kit was called in.

"Is this the boy?" asked the single gentleman who was present in the room.

"That's the boy," replied Mr. Witherden. "I have reason to think that he is a good boy and an honest one. You may believe what he says."

Knowing that he could trust Mr. Abel Garland and Mr. Witherden, the single gentleman spoke to them and Kit.

"My business is no secret. I have been trying for a long time to trace an old man who kept an old curiosity shop. I want to meet him and his grand-daughter. If this boy, here, and you gentlemen, can help me, I shall be most grateful."

He then questioned Kit about his old master. Kit told him all that he knew. He informed him how Quilp had taken possession of the house and how Nell and the old man had vanished.

The single gentleman gave five shillings to Kit, saying,

"You shall hear from me, again. Don't tell a word of this to anyone."

"Mother, sir, would be glad to know,—"said Kit.

"Glad to know what?" demanded the single gentleman.

"Anything about Miss Nell, sir."

"Well, then, you may tell her, if she can keep a secret. But mind, not a word of this to anybody else. Don't forget that."

"I'll take care, sir," said Kit. "Thank you, sir, and good-morning, sir!"

A few days later, Kit was again asked to come to the office.

"I have found your old master and young mistress," announced the single gentleman.

"No, sir! have you, really, sir?" asked Kit, his eyes shining with delight. "Where are they, sir? How are they, sir? Are they here, sir?"

"A long way from here," returned the gentleman. "But I am going there to-night to bring them back, and I want you to go with me."

"Me, sir?" cried Kit, full of joy and surprise.

"Yes, you. They will not know me and the girl may be afraid that I have come to take away her grandfather. But, if I take you with me, they will think I am their friend."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Kit who had listened with a sad face, "but if that's the reason, I'm afraid I should do more harm than good. Nell herself told me that I must not go near him or let him see me, any more. If I went with you, I should spoil everything. I'd give the world to go, sir, but you had better not take me."

"One more difficulty!" cried the single gentleman.

Kit suggested that his mother could go in his place. Both Nell and the old man knew her and they had nothing against her.

To cut a long story short, Kit's mother accompanied the single gentleman in search of Nell and her grandfather.

The single gentleman took her to a town about sixty miles away, where Mrs. Jarley of the waxworks was to be found. The single gentleman had received information that Nell was with her.

The single gentleman had one more disappointment! The good and kind Mrs. Jarley sadly revealed the fact that she herself did not know where Nell and the old man had disappeared. No one knew when they had gone or where!

EXERCISES

1. Why did the single gentleman want to see Kit?
2. Summarize what the single gentleman told Kit and the two lawyers.
3. Why did the single gentleman want Kit to go with him?
4. What was Kit's reply?
5. What was the result of the search for Nell and the old man?

COMPREHENSION

Fill in the blanks of the following :—

1. The———gentleman was busy making———about the old man and Nell.
2. "I have———your———master and——— mistress," ———the single gentleman.

CHAPTER XII

KIT IS IN TROUBLE

QUILP was a thoroughly bad man. He hated anyone who was good. He hated Kit. He had always remembered the remark Kit had made about his appearance. He wanted to teach Kit a lesson. He had one more reason for hating Kit. Quilp had come to know that the single gentleman was interested in Kit and was kind and generous to him. Quilp also knew that the said single gentleman had taken Mrs. Nubbles with him when he went in search of Nell and her grandfather. Quilp made up his mind to cause some harm to Kit—the dwarf was really a wicked man!

One day, Quilp met Mr. Brass and Sally and told them that they must get Kit into trouble. The terrible Sally and her brother were willing and ready to do anything that Quilp wished. They hit upon a plan.

They knew that Kit often brought letters for the single gentleman who lived on the first floor, above their office. This gentleman had become friendly with Abel Garland and his parents. Kit acted as a messenger.

One morning Kit had gone upstairs with a letter for the gentleman. When Mr. Brass knew of this, he sent Dick away on some work. Sally also got up and went into the house. When Kit came downstairs, Mr. Brass smiled at him.

"How are you, Kit?" he asked.

Kit was about to go away.

"Please don't go, Kit," said the lawyer. "Come here."

Brass began talking very kindly to Kit and told him how sad he was that he had been forced to take possession of the old curiosity shop. He had not really liked doing it.

"He's not so bad after all," thought honest Kit.

To prove how good he was, Mr. Brass even went to the extent of giving Kit some money as a present. With many thanks, Kit took the money and went home. He told himself he was wrong in thinking that Brass was not a good man.

"May I come in?" said Sally, peeping in at the door, the moment Kit had gone.

"Oh, yes, you may come in," said her brother who had a smile on his face. The brother and sister were quite a pair!

This kind of scene was enacted often. When Kit went upstairs with a letter, Dick was sent out of the office on some excuse or other, and Sally disappeared. Kit was called in when he came downstairs and Brass would talk to Kit as if he had the highest opinion of him and his honesty. Brass would even leave the office for a short time and ask Kit to look after the place. He showed Kit that he trusted him. Sally and her brother were playing a deep game.

One day, Sally asked Dick, "Have you seen my silver pencil-box anywhere?"

When Dick replied that he had not, she told him that her silver knife was also missing. She had also lost some money which she had left about in the office.

"Are you quite sure? Is there no mistake?" asked Dick.

"No mistake at all," said Miss Brass.

Mr. Brass entered the office with a five-pound note in his hand and holding it against the light, began examining it. Dick told him how Sally had lost some things as well as money. Brass in his turn confessed that he himself had lost several small sums from the desk. While speaking he put down the five-pound note on his desk. Dick told him to take it up.

"No, no. I will not take it up," said Brass. "I will let it lie there. To take it up means to doubt you and I know I can trust you."

All of them fell into deep thought when suddenly Sally cried out, "I've hit it!" At the same time she hit the desk with her hand.

"Why," she went on, "hasn't there been somebody always coming in and out of this office? Hasn't that somebody been left alone here, sometimes? Do you mean to tell me that that somebody is not the thief?"

"Who?" asked Brass.

"Why, what do you call him—Kit!"

"Never!" cried Brass. "Never. I'll never believe it. Never!"

"I say that he *is* the thief," repeated Sally.

"I say that he is *not*," declared Brass.

At that moment Kit came in with a letter for the gentleman upstairs. Brass asked him to come to the office on his return. Dick was quickly sent away on some invented business and Sally, as usual, disappeared. When Kit came downstairs, Brass began talking to him.

"Put down your hat, Kit," said Brass addressing him in a very kind manner.

"No, thank you, sir. I must go," said Kit.

"Put it down at least till you go," said the lawyer, taking the hat from him and putting it down among the papers on the table.

Talking to Kit all the while, Brass moved the hat twice or thrice, searching among the papers as though looking for something. He was so kind to Kit that he even went so far as to offer a job to Kit's mother.

Then, complaining that Dick had not yet returned, he requested Kit to remain in the office for a little time while he ran upstairs for a minute.

In a very short time, Brass returned and so did Sally. Dick also happened to come back at the same moment and Kit went away.

"There goes your pet," said Sally.

"Yes, my pet, if you please. He is an honest fellow," declared Brass. "In fact, I asked him again to stay in the office for a short time, while I was away. He—why, oh,—where's the——dear me!" he went on, putting his hands in all his pockets and looking into his desk, and under it and upon it. "Where's that note, Dick? I had kept it here....."

"What?" cried Sally, jumping up. "Gone! Now who's right? He's honest. Don't run after him!"

"Is it really gone?" asked Dick.

"Yes, This is a bad business. It is gone!" said Brass.

"Don't run after him!" said Sally, "it would be cruel to catch him!"

In spite of Sally's advice, Dick and Brass ran after Kit and caught him. They searched him and his hat. In the hat was a handkerchief and under the handkerchief and beneath the lining was found the missing five- pound note!

A policeman was sent for and Kit was taken off to prison. A trial was held and Kit was found guilty and sent to prison. What greater proof did judge or jury want than the presence of the five-pound note under the hat on Kit's head!

EXERCISES

1. Why did Quilp hate Kit? Mention *two* reasons.
2. What business brought Kit to the lawyer's office?
3. In what way did Brass show kindness to Kit?
4. When Kit came in, why did Brass send Dick away?
5. Where was the five-pound note found?

COMPREHENSION

1. Repeat the remark that Kit had made about Quilp.
2. Why did Sally tell her brother and Dick that they must not run after Kit and catch him? Was she sincere? Explain.

CHAPTER XIII

JOURNEY'S END

WHO was the stranger at whose feet Nell fell down unconscious? No! gentle reader, it was not a stranger but a friend! He proved to be the best friend that Nell ever had. She had recognized the schoolmaster, and fell down senseless, not out of fear but out of sudden relief. She had walked much more than her strength allowed and her health was none too good. At the best of times, Nell was more beautiful than strong and this journey, full of suffering, had been too much for her.

The schoolmaster bent down and picked up the unconscious child. He carried her to the nearest hotel where he did everything to restore her. A doctor was sent for who found that Nell was suffering from extreme weakness and advised perfect rest for a couple of days. She was given good food and made to have a fairly long sleep.

The schoolmaster felt very sad to see her thin body and pale face.

"How can I ever thank you?" said Nell. "If I had not met you, I might have died."

"Let us not talk about dying," said the schoolmaster. "I must tell you that I have made my fortune since you slept at my cottage."

"Really?" cried Nell, happily.

"Oh yes," said her friend, "I have been appointed schoolmaster in a village far away from here, at five-and-thirty pounds a year."

"I am very glad," said Nell, "so very, very glad."

"But you—where are you going?" asked the kind schoolmaster. "What have you been doing since you left me and what had you been doing before? Now, you must tell me, please tell me."

The kindness of the schoolmaster so completely won Nell's confidence that she told him everything about the old man and herself. She concluded by saying that she was searching for some quiet, distant spot where the old man would never again have a chance to fall into the old temptation.

The schoolmaster requested Nell and her grandfather to go with him. He was sure that they could find some little job there.

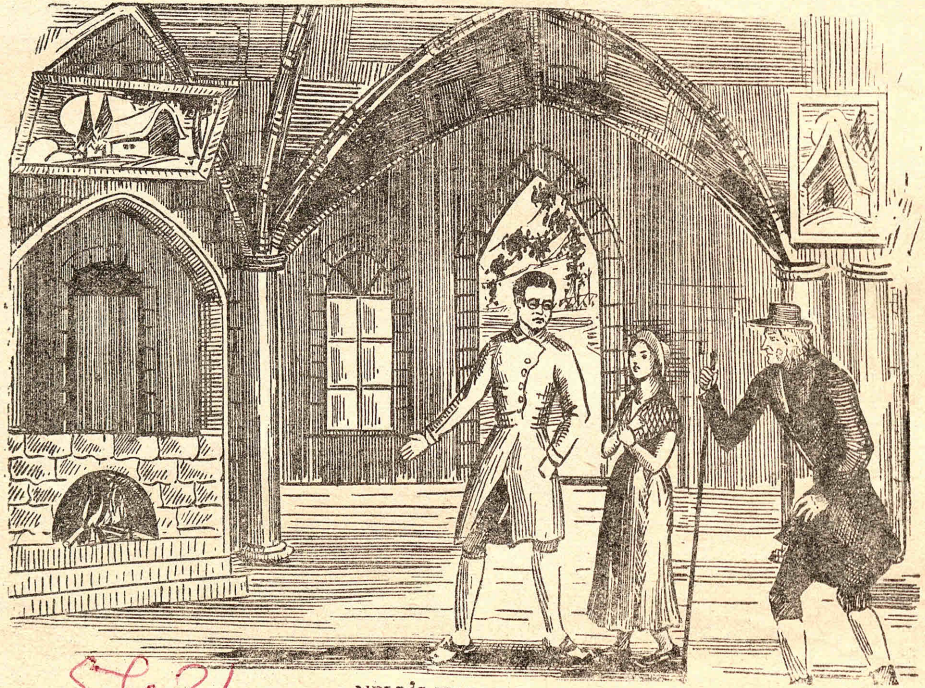
Nell, being still rather weak, it was arranged that she should travel by carriage. After a couple of days, they arrived at a beautiful, quiet, peaceful village.

"See, here's the church," cried the delighted schoolmaster, "and that old building, there, is the school."

Close to the church, there were two small houses. They were ancient but very pretty buildings. There was a certain charm about them.

"Can you see those two old houses?" asked the schoolmaster.

"Yes, surely," said Nell.



NELL'S NEW HOME

"One of those houses is mine and the other—well, is yours."

The girl was taken by surprise.

"It is a very beautiful place!" she said.

"Oh, yes It is a peaceful place too," said her friend.

"A quiet, happy place—a place to live and learn to die in!" said Nell.

This little house was heaven to poor little Nell. She had longed for a house in which to settle down. After her long journey, she wished for rest and peace. She set about making both the old houses as comfortable as possible. She put order everywhere, and soon, a bright fire was burning in each house. If Nell had been given a palace, she could not have been happier. The old man also made himself busy helping her, and he appeared happy.

Seeing the happiness of the old man and the girl, the schoolmaster was also happy. He took Nell and the old man to visit the local clergyman. The church was an old and beautiful one and many tourists came to see it. Nell and her grandfather were appointed to serve as guides to these tourists. They were to receive a small salary. Their needs were few and simple and they had many friends to help them.

One of these was a little old gentleman popularly known as the Bachelor. No one knew exactly why he was called so—perhaps because of his college degree or because he had never married. The Bachelor was a great friend of the clergyman and had lived with him for fifteen years. He was a very kind and generous man. He helped all those who were in need in that village. He took a great

fancy to Nell and he helped her in many ways. He knew that Nell had suffered much and was still far from well.

"You will be happy here," he told her, "at least, we will try to make you happy."

Nell and her grandfather often worked in the garden. Nell loved the sun, the flowers and the birds and liked to sit out in the fresh air. She had become very thin and both the schoolmaster and the Bachelor felt sad to see her sweet face, so pale. Her grandfather also seemed worried about her. He would often sit and look anxiously at her till she looked up and smiled at him.

Nell was happy and contented. It was true that she did not feel so well as before, but what did that matter? She had kind and good friends here and her dear grandfather was free from temptation. She had saved him!

In the evenings, all of them would sit by the fire while the schoolmaster would read out from a book. The Bachelor would tell a story which made Nell smile and all of them were happy, together. Everybody in the village became very fond of gentle Nell. The villagers were poor, but still, they would bring her some small gift and stay to talk with her. The children of the neighbourhood loved her and she took great pleasure in playing and laughing with them.

The weeks passed slowly but happily. Nell was glad to think that her grandfather and she were together. Though not rich, they had enough. They were contented with their little house and many good friends, for happiness is not brought by money alone.

Nell looked out of her window and said,

"Spring will come soon. The birds will sing in spring. Spring! a beautiful and happy time!"

EXERCISES

1. Why did Nell fall down unconscious?
2. In what way did the schoolmaster help Nell?
3. What work were Nell and the old man given?
4. Who was the Bachelor?
5. Why had Nell become pale and thin?

COMPREHENSION

1. Write *ten sentences* about Nell in her new home.
2. 'Spring' is a season. Name the other three seasons.
3. Could Nell have been thinking about her bird which she had left behind? About Kit?

CHAPTER XIV

OUT OF EVIL COMETH GOOD

KIT was in prison. Quilp and his two friends had set a trap for the poor boy and he had fallen into it.

Quilp had one more trick to do. Why should Dick continue to get a salary for working in the lawyer's office? He sent for Brass and told him to dismiss Dick. Circumstances had made Quilp change his mind about Dick and Nell. He had come to know that the single gentleman was in search of Nell and her grandfather. For all he knew, Nell might become a rich lady and there

was every reason why Quilp should not help Dick to marry a wealthy lady. Quilp certainly had no intentions to make anyone happy. On the contrary, he did not like others to be happy. He was a strange man, indeed!

On the same day that Kit was sent to prison, Brass dismissed Dick. Dick, of course, was surprised but not sorry. He had never liked his work in the lawyer's office and anyway, he had just received five pounds as his salary and had no need to worry about the immediate future! Such was Dick's nature.

Dick had no chance to spend that money. That very night he fell ill and in twenty-four hours he ran a very high temperature. He lay between life and death for three weeks. Who nursed him during his long illness? Did he have a mother or a sister to take care of him? No, there was none. Did he have a friend to sit by his bed and watch over him? No, there was none. Then how did Dick live through such a serious illness?

The lady of the house where Dick was staying had gone to the lawyer's office to tell them that he was very ill and that somebody ought to come and take care of him. Both Brass and Sally said that it was not their business to do so. All this was heard by the small servant who had listened through the keyhole. She at once remembered Dick's good deed and how he had always talked kindly to her. That very night, she ran away and went to Dick's house and said that she was his sister! They believed her and left Dick to her care. A better nurse or a more loving sister could not have been found in the world. One of the

first statements that Dick made when he recovered consciousness was,

"Without you, I should have died!"

Dick asked the small servant what had become of Kit? She replied that she could tell him something very interesting about Kit but she did not want Dick to be worried. Dick begged her to tell him and this is what she said :

"The night before Kit was taken away by the policeman, I was listening at the keyhole. I often did that and I came to know many things about Mr. Brass and Miss Sally. Well, that night, Mr. Brass said to Miss Sally, 'Upon my word, it is a dangerous thing to do. It might get us into trouble.' *She* said, 'You're a coward! I know that. I ought to have been the brother and you the sister. After all, Quilp is our principal support,' and Mr. Brass said, 'Yes, of course, he is!' Then Miss Sally said, 'What does it matter if we ruin Kit? After all, Quilp wishes it.'"

At this moment Dick got very much excited and the small servant refused to go on. Dick told her she must continue, otherwise, he would become worse. So, she completed what she had to say.

"Then Mr. Brass pulled out his purse and said, 'Well, here it is—Quilp's own five-pound note. Kit is coming tomorrow, I know. While he's upstairs you must get away and I'll send Dick away, somewhere. Having Kit alone, I'll hold him in conversation and put this note in his hat. That will put Kit out of Quilp's way.' Miss Sally laughed and said that was an excellent plan. They began to get up and I was afraid to stop any longer, so, I went away."

By this time, the small servant was as much excited as Dick.

"I want to get up," declared Dick,

"You must not think of such a thing!" declared the small servant.

"I must!" insisted Dick, "where are my clothes?"

"Oh I'm so glad—you haven't got any," replied the small servant.

"What do you mean?" asked Dick, in astonishment.

"I've sold all your clothes, every bit, to get your medicines. But don't you worry about that, You're too weak even to stand!"

"I'm afraid you're right," said Dick, sadly.

Since Dick had neither the health nor the clothes to go out and do something about Kit, he sent the small servant to fetch Mr. Abel Garland. He gave her Mr. Witherden's office address.

She returned with Abel Garland. Dick made her repeat what she had heard and seen that night through the keyhole.

"You have heard it all and you'll not forget it," Dick told Abel. "I'm too weak to do anything, but you and your friends will know what to do. After this long delay, every minute is precious."

The next morning, four gentleman came to visit Dick. Mr. Garland, Abel, Mr. Witherden and the single gentleman told him that they would do everything possible to save Kit. In fact, they told Dick that they always *knew* that Kit was innocent but what could they do when there was such a strong *proof* of guilt? Now that the truth was known they would not rest till it was proved that Kit was innocent.

"We are quite sure that the poor lad will soon be set free," said the single gentleman, "but we must take every care to catch Quilp. We must not let him escape. Quilp is at the bottom of all this—he is the man who must be punished."

They then took leave of Dick who already looked very tired and was in danger of getting fever again.

Just after they left, Mrs. Garland came in with a basket full of all kinds of nice things to eat and which would soon help to make Dick perfectly healthy. There were oranges and grapes, cakes and sweets, soup and tea and milk. The small servant had never seen so many things at the same time, except in a shop, in all her life.

On that same day, Mr. Witherden came again to visit Dick.

"As you are so much better, now," said Witherden, "I want to tell you something."

"Certainly, sir. I hope it's nothing bad," said Dick, who at once thought of one or two debts which he had not yet paid.

"I have been making some enquiries about you," said the lawyer, "and I have just learnt that you are the nephew of the late Rebecca Swiveller of Dorsetshire."

"The late—?" cried Dick.

"Yes, she is dead. Her will is in your favour. As her heir you'll be quite rich."

"Sir," said Dick, crying and laughing at the same time, "we shall send the small servant to school. We'll dress her in clothes of silk! We'll give her gold and silver or may I never rise from this bed again!"

Dick's first thoughts were for his unselfish nurse which goes to show that Dick was not such a bad fellow, after all.

EXERCISES

1. Why did Brass dismiss Dick?
2. Who nursed Dick? Explain why.
3. Why did Dick send for Abel Garland?
4. Who came to visit Dick, the next morning?
5. What was the news which Mr. Witherden gave to Dick?

COMPREHENSION

Imagine you are the small servant and narrate in *your own words* what you saw and heard through the keyhole on that night. Remember that Kit was saved through you.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRUTH IS OUT

THANKS to the small servant, it was clear that Kit was not guilty of the offence for which he had been sent to prison. Care had now to be taken to catch and punish those who had got him into trouble. It was thought that they could persuade Sally to tell the truth about the whole affair. Sally was, after all, a woman, and she could be made to confess everything. They soon found out that they were wrong.

The single gentleman accompanied by Mr. Witherden and Mr. Garland went to a certain

hotel. In answer to a letter sent to her, Sally Brass came there to see them. Sitting down, she took out a tin box and calmly took a pinch of snuff.

"Miss Brass," began the lawyer, "I'll say what I have to say in a few words. You had a servant who has run away?"

"Well," returned Miss Brass, "what about it?"

"She is found," said the lawyer.

"Who found her?" demanded Sally.

"We found her—we three. Only last night, or you would have heard from us before."

"And now that I *have* heard from you," said Sally, folding her arms, "what have you got to say?" She was determined not to say anything herself.

She took another pinch of snuff.

"Perhaps you didn't know that she had a habit of listening through keyholes? Perhaps you don't know that she was listening on a certain night—the night before that innocent boy was accused of robbery? Perhaps you don't know that she saw and heard everything that you and your brother had planned to do?"

She took another pinch of snuff. She tried not to show it but there was no doubt that Sally was surprised.

"Come, come, Miss Brass," went on the lawyer, "your face may not show it, but I can see that you never thought that the truth would come out in such a way. You know enough of the law to realize how both of you can be punished—you and your brother are quite a pair. But there is a third person who is worse than both of you and that is

Quilp. Now, I want to make a suggestion. If you confess the whole truth about this affair, you will be let free. We do not wish to take action against you. Time is very important and I ask you to give us your decision quickly."

With a strange smile on her face, Miss Brass took another pinch of snuff and then another pinch; and again another pinch till the tin box was empty.

" You want my answer at once, do you? "

" Yes," said Mr. Witherden.

Miss Sally Brass was opening her lips to speak when the door was suddenly opened and Mr. Brass came in, to everybody's surprise.

" Excuse me," he said, " wait a bit. You keep quiet, Sally, and let me speak. Gentlemen," he went on, looking at the three friends, " I may be a bad man, even a criminal, but I too have my feelings."

" If you're not a fool," said Sally rudely to her brother, " keep quiet! "

" Sally, my dear," said the brother, " I know what I ought to do. Gentlemen, I saw my sister coming here and I followed her. Since then, I have been listening."

" If you're not mad, " said Sally once again, " stop and say no more. "

But Brass went on.

" Gentlemen, " he said, " Quilp has always treated me like a dog. I have always hated Quilp. I know that the truth has come out. It is clear to me that I am done for. Sally is comparatively safe. What I am going to tell you is for my own profit. "

With that, Mr. Brass made known the whole story. He put the whole and entire blame on Quilp. He would have liked the gentlemen to believe that he himself was a holy character, almost a saint. He concluded thus:

"Now gentlemen, you must do with me what you please and take me where you please. If you wish to have this in writing, I'll do so, at once. You will be tender with me, I am sure. But punish Quilp, gentlemen. Grind him down. Don't spare him. Punish Quilp."

"And this" said Miss Sally Brass looking at him from head to foot, "this is my brother, is it? This is my brother for whom I have worked so hard? I thought he was a man!"

"Sally, my dear," said Brass, "You are disturbing our friends."

"You, you coward," said that lady, "were you afraid that I would tell them? Do you think I would have been forced to say a single word? No! not if they had tempted me for twenty years."

With all her faults, Sally, at least, had some courage.

The three gentlemen spoke together for a few moments. The lawyer then told Brass that if he wished to, he could give his statement in writing. He also told him that he would be taken before a judge, soon.

While Brass sat down and wrote the statement, Sally walked up and down the room. After some time she was tired and she sat down and fell asleep on a chair near the door. Brass was still writing when evening came on. Without anyone observing her, Sally slipped away in the dark. Whether she

had pretended to fall asleep or whether she had walked away in her sleep, no one knew exactly, but one thing was certain—she never walked back!

That very evening Mr. Brass was taken before a judge, who, on learning the facts, had Mr. Brass safely locked up till he could be brought to justice. The three friends were also informed that Quilp would be arrested and charged. Kit, of course, would be set free.

Black deeds are discovered one day or another. There is a saying, "When thieves fall out, the truth comes out". Thus did it happen that when Brass knew he was in danger, he did not hesitate to expose his wicked friend.

EXERCISES

1. Why did the three gentlemen decide to send for Sally Brass?
2. Narrate in your own words what the lawyer told Sally.
3. What were the first words of Mr. Brass when he entered the room?
4. What did Sally say to her brother?
5. Tell briefly what Brass said to the three gentlemen.

COMPREHENSION

Write briefly about the character of Miss Sally Brass. Remember that it is important to compare and contrast her with her brother.

CHAPTER XVI

QUILP COMES TO A BAD END

IT was a damp, dark and dull day. London was covered with fog. It was a cold and miserable evening. The thick mist spread everywhere. It went right into one's bones and made one shiver. It was a day to sit at home by the fire, and keep warm and tell stories to each other.

Quilp, that strange and wicked man, was alone in his office by the river. Having had a quarrel with his wife, he had left her and gone to stay alone in the office. Quilp did not know that his game was up. Brass had already made his confession, but so far Quilp had no warning. The three friends had kept everything secret so that Quilp may have no chance to escape.

Suddenly, Quilp heard a low knock on the door. He opened the small window and asked who was there.

"Only me," replied a woman.

"Only you!" cried Quilp who had now seen that the visitor was his wife. "Why have you come here?"

"I have come with some news," replied his wife, "don't be angry with me, please!"

"What news is it?" demanded Quilp.

"I have brought a letter," said Mrs. Quilp, trembling. "A boy brought it to our house this afternoon. He said it was very important and that it must be given to you, quickly. But please," she added, "please let me in. You don't know how wet and cold I am or how many times I have lost

my way coming here through this thick fog. Let me come in and dry myself at the fire for five minutes. I'll go away as soon as you tell me. Please!"

At last, Quilp opened the door and admitted his wife who gave him the letter. She went close to the fire for she was wet and cold.

"I'm glad you're wet. I am glad you're cold," said her wonderful husband. "I'm glad you lost your way. Did you think I was dead? Did you think you were going to have all my money and marry somebody else?"

"Oh, how cruel of you to say this!" was all that his wife could find to say to this strange husband of hers.

Looking at the address on the letter, Quilp recognized Sally's writing. Opening the letter, he read the following:

"My brother has broken confidence. It has all come out. You had better not be in the way, for strangers are going to call upon you. They have been very quiet so far, because they wanted to surprise you. Don't lose time. I didn't. I am not to be found anywhere. If I was you, I wouldn't be either.

S.B."

Quilp was never more surprised in his life. He was more angry than words could tell. His poor wife was frightened even to see the anger on his face.

"If only I had *him* here—I should drown him. The river is close by. Only if he were here! Just take him to the shore, joke with him—and one sudden push! Drowning men come up three times, they say. Ah! how I would laugh at him

those three times. Oh, Brass, Brass, my dear and good friend!—if only I had you here!"

Since Brass was not there, Quilp had now to think of saving himself. His first thought was to send his wife away. He ordered her to go home and added, "Ask no questions about me; make no search for me; say nothing about me to anyone. But remember, wife, I shall not die!"

At one moment he thought of escaping from there, but on second thoughts he decided that it was safer to remain where he was. He went out to the two old gates leading to the office and closed them. The gates were quite strong and he barred them with a heavy beam. There was a lane at the back through which he could run away if they came to arrest him. He began putting a few things in his pockets in case he had to leave suddenly.

"And all this," he thought to himself, "has come upon me because of that miserable old man and his grand-daughter. I shall still see that they don't prosper. And you, sweet Kit, honest Kit, innocent Kit—take care! where I hate, I bite. You may be proud tonight but wait—what's that."

A knock at the gate he had just closed; a loud and violent knock; again was the knock repeated.

"So soon?" said Quilp, "and so eager? You shall not find me!"

As he spoke, he put out the light so that nobody might see him. The knocking continued and Quilp quietly went out of the back door. He went forward a few steps.

It was about eight o'clock. It was a dark night and a thick fog still hung everywhere. Quilp took

some more steps in the dark and then thinking he had gone in the wrong direction, turned to a side. He walked slowly on, speaking to himself, "If only Brass were here. It is a good, black, devil's night to drown him! If only I could drown him this very night, I would not care if day never came!"

As the words passed his lips, he slipped and fell—the next moment he was fighting for life in the cold dark water! He struggled and shouted knowing full well that no one could save him. He himself had shut and barred the gate. The men who had knocked could not come to his aid, though he could see them looking on. Once more Quilp struggled for dear life but the strong tide filled his throat. One last cry and Quilp went under.

The river flowed on as before.....

EXERCISES

1. Describe the day on which Quilp died.
2. Why was Quilp staying alone in the office?
3. Tell in your own words what Sally wrote to Quilp.
4. If Mr. Brass was there, what would Quilp have done to him?

COMPREHENSION

Quilp wanted to take revenge on Mr. Brass. Describe how God took revenge on Quilp.

Chapter XVII

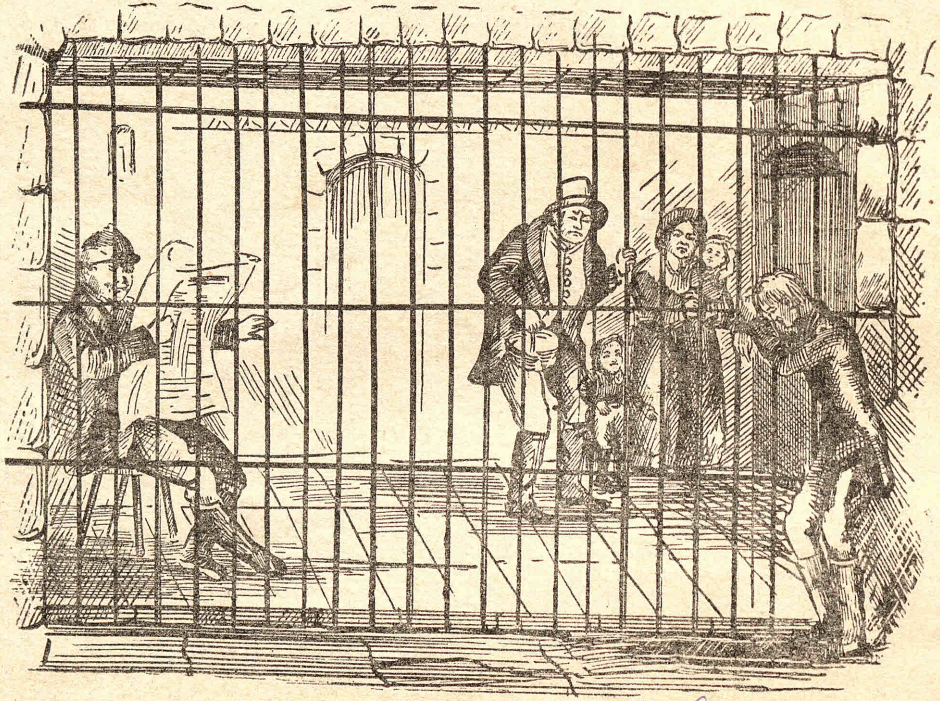
KIT IS SET FREE

Kit was set free. His kind and old master went to the prison to take him home. Mr. Garland had always known in his heart of hearts that Kit was innocent and he was very glad to do something for Kit to make up for all that he had suffered.

Mr. Garland hired a carriage and took Kit to his own home where the fat old lady, Mrs. Garland, had prepared a grand welcome for poor, honest Kit. Kit's mother, Jacob, his brother, and the baby were also invited. As soon as they reached the house, Kit rushed into his mother's arms. Poor dear mother! How she must have suffered!

Dear old Mrs. Garland and Abel were both very happy and pleased to have Kit back with them. Also present was the single gentleman who was so busy doing everything at the same time that he succeeded in doing nothing! Pretty little Barbara was also there to welcome her dear friend Kit. She looked rather thin and pale. She was fond of Kit and she had missed him a lot.

To celebrate Kit's freedom there was a lovely big cake. Little Jacob had had his eye on it for a long time and when it was cut, you can be sure that he ate the biggest piece! Each of them gave a present to Kit to show how pleased they were to know that he was really honest. The single gentleman's gift was a silver watch with Kit's own name written on the back! Kit was the happiest young man in London.



KIT IN PRISON

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Kit went to see the little horse. It was through this horse that he had come to know the kind and generous Garland family. Even the horse seemed glad to see Kit again! But who is it who comes in there? Why! it is Barbara! Kit looks up at her and realizes, suddenly as it were, that Barbara is a very pretty girl, indeed! And then, suddenly he puts his arms round her and kisses her once; and then, once again!

That night, Mr. Garland called Kit to him and told him that he must be ready for a journey the next morning.

"For a journey, sir!" cried Kit.

"In company with me and my friend," said Mr. Garland, who went on to tell how Nell and the old man had been found. Mr. Garland and the single gentleman were starting for the place, the next morning. When Kit asked how Nell was and whether she was happy, Mr. Garland replied.

"Happy she is, yes. But she is not very well. She has been ill for some time and is still very weak. But we hope that she will be well, soon."

Garland then told Kit the rest of the story. He had a brother whose picture, taken when he was a young man, hung in the best room. Perhaps Kit remembered Mr. Garland speaking of his brother? Now, this brother lived in a village, far awy. He stayed with a clergyman who was his best friend. Although Mr. Garland and his brother loved each other as brothers should, they had not met for many years. They used to write to each other and plan to meet again but somehow a long time had passed without their meeting each other. This brother was very kind and generous to the people

of the village where he lived. The simple people called him the Bachelor. In one of his recent letters to his brother, the Bachelor had made mention of a young girl and an old man. He had written all about their wanderings and how much they loved each other. Mr. Garland at once thought that this couple may be Nell and the old man! He wrote to his brother for more details. That very morning a letter had arrived and there was now no doubt at all that the young girl and the old man were none other than Nell and her grandfather. The single gentleman and Mr. Garland decided to take Kit with them and leave the very next morning. It was true that the old man would not be happy to see Kit but that did not matter. The Bachelor was Mr. Garlands's own brother and that would be enough to show to the old man that all those who came in search of him were his good and true friends.

Kit got up early the next morning and went to help Barbara in the kitchen. By now, he knew that Barbara was fond of him and he was fond of her. He told her that he was so happy that he was going to see Miss Nell and bring her back. Barbara, being a young girl herself, was, naturally enough, a little bit jealous of this Miss Nell whom Kit admired so much. Kit soon saw this and was quick to tell Barbara that he loved Miss Nell as a servant loves his mistress and that Nell had been very kind to him and had helped him to be a good boy always. Barbara soon understood what Kit meant and her jealousy vanished.

The carriage was soon at the door and Mr. Garland and the single gentleman got in. Kit took

with him the cage with Nell's little bird in it and sat at the back. Everyone came out to wish them good-bye. The carriage started and Kit waved his hand to Barbara and she waved to Kit.

EXERCISES

1. Who went to bring Kit from the prison?
2. Who were the different people who met to welcome Kit?
3. Describe the scene between Kit and Barbara.

COMPREHENSION

Imagine you are Mr. Garland and narrate *in your own words* how you came to know about Nell and the old man.

S&S1

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SINGLE GENTLEMAN'S STORY

IT was winter and snow lay on the ground. The wind blew and it was bitterly cold. The carriage rolled on and on, and they had still a long distance to go. They expected to be on the road for a couple of days though they wished with all their hearts that they could go faster. The single gentleman and Mr. Garland passed the time in talking to each other about Nell and the old man.

It was past midnight when the single gentleman turned to his friend and said,

"I would like to tell you a story. It is very short."

Without waiting for a reply, he put his hand on Mr. Garland's arm and went on.

"There were once two brothers who loved each other very much. As a child, the younger one was weak and delicate. The elder brother was a strong, healthy lad, full of life and fond of sports. But he would give up his sports and come and sit by the side of his younger brother's bed. He would tell him stories or take him outside in the fresh air to some green spot and take care of him like a fond and faithful nurse.

The boys grew up and soon were young men. They both fell in love with the same girl. The younger brother remembered the many sacrifices which his brother had made for his sake. For this reason he decided to go away without telling anyone the real reason. He wanted his brother to be happy. The younger brother left England and went abroad and hoped he would die there.

The elder brother married the beautiful young girl. She soon went to Heaven leaving behind a baby daughter. The baby grew up into a beautiful young girl—the very picture of her mother. You can imagine how much her father loved this young daughter who reminded him of his own wife whom he had lost.

Well, this girl grew up and fell in love with a worthless fellow. Her father tried to object, but finding that it was useless, he consented to their marriage. He hoped that with such a good wife the young man would improve his ways.

Alas! the father's worst fears came true. Not only did the man neglect her and cause her all kinds of suffering but also brought poverty on her.

He wasted all her money and after that, her father's. She never complained of her fate. Her husband died and soon after that she went to her grave. She left to her father's care two orphans: one a boy and the other, a baby girl. This girl was just like her mother in her looks.

The elder brother, grandfather to these two helpless children, had lost both his health and wealth. In order to support the orphans, he began to trade—in pictures first, and then, in curious and ancient things.

The boy grew up just like his father both in looks and character. He soon left his home and kept company with other fellows like him. The old man and the child lived alone together.

The younger brother travelled to many countries, but he never married. The two brothers wrote to each other very rarely. When the younger brother received information of the true state of affairs and how much the old man was suffering, he at once decided to go to his help. As quickly as he could, he settled his affairs and sold all that he had. He had enough wealth for both. With a heart bursting with love for his elder brother whom he had always loved, he returned to England. One evening, he arrived at his brother's door—"

The story-teller could not go on and he stopped.

"The rest," said kind old Mr. Garland, "I know."

"Yes, you know all about my search for them. I made enquiries everywhere and even went to the place where they were last seen, but we were too late. Pray God we are not too late again!"

EXERCISES

1. Where were Mr. Garland and the single gentleman going?
2. Why did the younger brother leave England?
3. "The boy grew up just like his father both in looks and character." Who was this boy?

COMPREHENSION

1. You now know who the single gentleman is? How is he related to Nell?
2. Why has he been called 'the single gentleman'? Refer to Chapter X and give *two* reasons.

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CHAPTER XIX

FOUND AT LAST

THE church bell struck the hour of midnight and the carriage stopped. They had arrived at the village. All of them got down from the carriage and walked up to the clergyman's house. There, they expected to meet the Bachelor who would soon take them to the old man and Nell. Kit carried the bird in its cage. He knew Nell would be glad to see it, again. When they arrived at the clergyman's house they looked round and could see in the distance one, single light shining in the dark.

"What light is that?" said the younger brother.

"It must be from the ruin where they live." said Mr. Garland. "I can see no other old house here."

"They cannot." said the brother, "be awake at this late hour—"

At this moment Kit begged the gentlemen to allow him to go and find out from where that light shone. While they waited for the clergyman to open the door, Kit would go and see if any people lived there. Still carrying the cage in his hand, Kit went straight to that spot. He went up softly to the old house and listened at the window. There was no sound inside. There was a strange and still silence everywhere. It was hard to understand—a light at that time of night and still no one near it! He listened and listened but not a single sound. Leaving the window he went round to the front of the house. He saw a door. He knocked. No answer. But wait..... there was a curious noise inside. It was difficult to know what it was. Was it the cry of a man in pain? Kit opened the door and entered.

A bent old man was sitting before a dying fire. His head was white like the ash on the fire. The terrible low cry came from him and despair was in the air. Ashes, dust and ruin!

Kit took a step forward and looked at the face of the old man. *Was it he*? Yes! His face was changed, but it was he.

"Master!" he cried, falling on one knee before him, "dear master. Speak to me! Miss Nell—where is she—*where is she?*"

"She is asleep—in there."

"Thank God!" cried honest Kit.

"Ah! Thank God!" returned the old man. "I have prayed to Him many and many a night. Listen! Did she call?"

"I heard nothing," said Kit.

"You did. There, she is calling me." The old man listened again.

Making a sign to Kit to be silent, he stole into the next room. Kit could hear him speaking softly. He returned soon with a lamp in his hand.

"She is still asleep," he whispered. "You were right. She did not call. Or perhaps she called in her sleep? I feared the light would disturb her, so I brought it here."

Again he stopped and listened. Then, he took out some clothes from an old box. He held them as carefully as if they were living things and began to brush and smooth them with his hand.

"This is her simple little dress—her favourite," cried the old man pressing the dress to his heart. "She will miss it when she wakes up. Why did they hide it here? See here—these shoes—how worn they are—she kept them to remind her of our long last journey together. See here, the holes in the shoes where her little feet went bare upon the ground. They told me, afterwards, that her feet were cut and hurt by the stones, but *she* never told me that. She never complained."

The old man kissed those shoes and put them back carefully.

Kit could not speak. His eyes were filled with tears.

The door was opened and Mr. Garland and his friend came in. With them were the schoolmaster and the Bachelor. The former, it seemed, had just gone to his own house to bring a lamp when Kit came in and found the old man alone. The Bachelor drew a chair towards the old man and sat down close to him.

"You promised me to go to bed," he said softly: "Why don't you sleep?"

"Sleep has left me," said the old man. "It is all with her!"

"It would make her sad to know that you were watching thus," said the Bachelor.

Once again the old man rose and went quietly to the next room. They could hear him speaking softly. They looked at each other and tears stood in their eyes. He came back whispering that she was still asleep. He dropped into his chair and put his head into his hands.

"We will not wake her," said the old man. "I should be happy to see her open her eyes and smile. There is a smile upon her young face now but it is a fixed smile. She had a happy nature always."

"We have heard you say that she was just like her mother," said the schoolmaster. "You can remember her? You can remember your own dear wife who died so young? Can you remember how when you were a child yourself, another child loved you. Can you remember a brother whom you have not seen for many long years? That brother comes back, at last, to comfort you—"

"To show you all the affection which you once gave him," cried the younger brother, falling on his knees before him.

"To love you, to take care of you," the younger brother continued, "to be with you always as we once were—always together."

The old man had risen and gone nearer the next room. He pointed there as he said,

"All of you are planning to take my heart from her. You never will do that—never while I have

life! I have no relation or friend but her—I never had—I never will have. She is everything to me. You cannot separate us now."

Waving them away with his hand and calling softly to her, he went again into the room.

The others drew close together and spoke softly to each other and then they followed him into the next room. They entered gently and softly.

EXERCISES

1. What did Kit carry in his hand? Why?
2. Why did they go to the clergyman's house?
3. Describe what Kit saw when he first entered the house.

COMPREHENSION

1. Summarize the conversation between the old man and Kit.
2. Summarize what the schoolmaster and the younger brother told the old man and his reply.

CHAPTER XX

PEACE

SHE was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. There, upon her little bed she lay at rest. It was a beautiful sleep, so calm and so free from pain, so fair to look upon. Where were the signs of her early cares and sufferings? All was gone and only peace and beauty remained in her face. Peace, perfect peace!

On her bed were some bright red berries and green leaves found in winter in a place where she

often used to sit. "When I die, put near me something that has loved the light and the sky." Those were her words.

The old man took her cold arm in his hand. He pressed her hand to his heart. He kissed it with his lips and again he pressed it to his heart as if to put some warmth in that cold hand. He could not—did not—would not—believe that his dearest, sweetest Nell was dead. Had his Nell left him for ever? Would she never again put her little hand in his own? The old man did not *want to believe* that Nell had gone!

Mr. Garland and the younger brother, the schoolmaster and the Bachelor and Kit stood near the bed and looked on that fair and beautiful face. Their cheeks were wet with tears.

* * * *

In the morning they were told of her last days on earth. She had been dead two days though the old man still declared that she was but sleeping.... She had often talked of Kit, they said; she would have liked to see him. She had wished she could send her love to Kit through someone.

She never spoke of her own illness. She never complained. Like the light which dies on a summer's evening, she faded day by day. They had known that the end was near.

One night she had a very quiet sleep but when the dawn came, she opened her eyes and asked each one of them to kiss her. Last, she turned to her grandfather with a most lovely smile upon her

sweet face and put both her arms about his neck. Holding him fast, she breathed her last.

* * * *

The day came when she had to be buried. On that day they arranged for a little child to take the old man away. They were to gather fresh red berries and green leaves for her bed. The old man never knew when she was taken away from him.

And now, the church bell rang for her who was so young and so good. The church bell rang for her who was pure as the snow which lay on the ground as they carried her to her grave. The church bell rang for her who had sat so often in a quiet corner in that very church—and there they buried her.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!

* * * *

It was late when the old man came home. He went straight to her room. Not finding her there, he rushed next door to the schoolmaster's house, calling her name. They followed him there and brought him home.

He never understood or seemed to care about his brother. He wanted only Nell and he wandered here and there in search of her. Why had she left him all alone? When would she come back to him?

At last, not finding her, the old man rose early, one day, took his bag on his back and his stick in his hand and was gone. He had taken her

own straw hat and the little basket which she used to carry. They searched for him everywhere and found him sitting in the church—upon her grave. He sat there the whole day waiting for her to come. When night fell, he rose and returned home, saying, "She will come tomorrow."

The next day he was at her grave again from sunrise till sunset; and still at night he said, "She will come tomorrow!"

Every day and all day long, he waited at her grave for her. Every night they heard him pray; "Lord! Let her come tomorrow!"

The last time was on a fine day in spring—the spring which the young girl never lived to see. He did not return at the usual hour and they went to bring him. He was lying dead upon her grave.

They buried him by the side of her whom he had loved so well. The child and the old man slept in peace together.

EXERCISES

1. Describe Nell in her last sleep.
2. Why did the old man take Nell's cold hand in his?
3. Did Nell remember Kit? What did she say?
4. Describe Nell's last moments.
5. Where did the old man die? Where was he buried?

COMPREHENSION

1. Give a brief appreciation of Nell's character. Bring out her affection, her unselfishness and her sufferings.
2. All grandfathers are fond of their grand-children. But Nell's grandfather had special and strong reasons to be so fond of her. Write a short essay—*one page*—on the old man's love for Nell.

CHAPTER XXI

THE END OF THE STORY

WHAT more is there to tell? Nell had gone to Heaven and her grandfather had followed her to that happy place. The two poor wanderers had found eternal rest.

It remains only to tell about those people who knew them and helped them to be happy or those who made them sad.

Mr. Brass, of course, was sent to prison. His name was struck off from the official register of lawyers.

Miss Sally Brass was never seen again. Rumour said many things. Some said that since she looked so much like a man she had gone to become a sailor; some said, a soldier.

What happened to Tom Scott? When Quilp died, he lost his job. As he could not stand on his own feet, Tom decided to stand on his head and earn a living! Many people went to see this extraordinary boy who could stand on his head and Tom Scott became quite famous and prosperous.

Quilp had left no will and his wife got all his money. She had married the first time to please her mother and now she married again to please herself. She chose a smart young fellow with whom she was happy. They lived a merry life with the help of Quilp's money.

The fat old gentleman and the fat old lady—Mr. and Mrs. Garland—continued to be good and kind and happy as they always were.

Their son, Abel, was taken as a partner by Mr. Witherden. To celebrate this occasion there was a grand dinner followed by a dance. That night Abel fell in love with a shy young lady. In course of time, Abel married her and lived happily ever after.

When his friend the clergyman died, the good Bachelor came to live with his brother, Mr. Garland. All of them were happy as, surely, they deserved to be.

Fred Trent had left England permanently. He was wanted by the police for a serious offence and he had decided to disappear. It was said that he died in a fight in Paris.

Dick Swiveller recovered from his illness and kept up his promise to educate the small servant. He bought a good stock of clothes for her and sent her to a good school. As no one, not even she herself, knew the small servant's name, Dick gave her a grand name—Sophronia Sphynx! It must be mentioned to Dick's honour that he himself had to make many sacrifices in order to give Sophronia a good education. Every month he went to visit her and he was happy to learn that she was improving in mind and looks. He continued to assist her for six years and he was wondering what to do next, for by then, Sophronia was full nineteen years of age. The next time he went to visit her, he thought it would be an excellent idea to marry her—which he did! It was the most sensible action of his life, for Sophronia proved to be an ideal wife.

The kind schoolmaster remained where he was, happy in his school in the quiet, peaceful village.

The younger brother or the single gentleman—call him what you will—had in his heart a great

sorrow. He was, after all, too late to do anything for his elder brother whom he had loved so much. That, however, did not make him a bitter man. He went about doing good. His chief delight was to travel in the steps of the old man and Nell and reward those who had been helpful and kind to those poor wanderers.

What about good, honest Kit? Many people came to hear of his story and wanted to help him, but Kit did not wish to leave Mr. Garland's service. Mr. Garland himself wanted Kit to have a good job and in time, Kit was persuaded to leave Mr. Garland and take up a good post.

Kit's mother also, was no longer poor and her whole family was quite happy.

Did Kit live a single man all his life or did he marry? Of course, he married, and who could his wife be, but Barbara? Kit married when he was quite young and little Jacob became an uncle at a very early age!

Kit gave his children various names in honour of various people. His pretty little daughter was called Barbara. One son was named Jacob, and another, Abel, and still another, was called Dick! The little children would gather round Kit at night and beg him to tell again *that* story of good Miss Nell who died. Kit would tell them the story once again and once again they would cry to hear it. Kit would teach them how Nell had gone to Heaven as all good people did. He also taught them that if they were good, like her, they too could hope to go there, one day.

Such are the changes which a few years brought about and so do things pass away, like a tale that is told.

EXERCISES

1. What happened to the following characters in the story?

   Write two sentences about each:

   (a) Mr. Brass.
   (b) Tom Scott.
   (c) Abel Garland.
   (d) Dick Swiveller.
   (e) Sophronia Sphynx.

2. Write a paragraph on Kit Nubbles.

COMPREHENSION

Did you like this story? Have you read any other books by Charles Dickens? Read *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist* which will be found in your school library.

LIST OF NEW WORDS AND PHRASES

Bachelor : Unmarried man ; also one who has taken the university degree of Bachelor of Arts(B.A.), etc.

Break one's confidence : Tell what one ought not to tell ; break or prove false to the trust placed in one.

Breathed one's last : Died.

Cast a look : Throw a look ; give a tender look.

Conversation : Talk between two or more persons.

Despatch : Get something done or finished quickly ; *also* to send messenger or letter.

Dwarf : A very short person, much below normal size.

Encourage: To give courage to ; to cheer up with hope.

Eternal rest: Rest which comes after death and which is for ever. Nell and her grandfather would have perfect rest in heaven.

Extraordinary: Strange ; unusual.

Fall upon tooth and nail: Fight with all one's might.

Finally: At last ; in the end.

Flight : Fleeing away ; the fact of leaving a place for any reason. Nell and the old man left the house where they were so unhappy.

Fog : Kind of cloud coming over the earth such as you see on a December morning. In cold countries a fog comes down like a thin white curtain and if it is also a dark night, one can see very little.

Gamble: To play games of chance for money. In this case, the old man played games with cards where the winner got money.

Grind: To punish severely ; crush down.

Heart of hearts: In one's deepest thoughts or feelings.

Jingling: Noise made when money is handled.

Lining of the hat: A loose piece of cloth which covers and is fixed to the inside of a hat. It helps to protect the hat from the oil, sweat, etc., of the hair.

Make a face: To put on a funny or ugly look to show anger or contempt.

Match (they are a match): One equal to the other.

Midnight: 12 o'clock at night. Usually, the middle of the night.

Mist: Something like a fog. In London, the night can be very dark and one can hardly see a yard ahead.

Nonsense: That which is foolish; not true; which does not make sense.

Politician: One engaged in politics; person taking part in the public affairs of one's country.

Proof: Clear sign pointing to the truth.

Quite a pair: Well suited to each other. In this case, one could not say who was worse—Sally or Brass.

Seek: To search for; to look out for.

Shade: Protection from the sun; a place so protected from the sun, such as under a tree.

Smart: Clever, bright, sharp.

Sufficient: Enough for the purpose.

Tale: A story.

Tiny: Very small.

Touching: Something which goes to one's heart; something which seems to reach and touch one's heart.

Wax-works: A collection of figures made of wax.

Work it out: Do some work for which one has already been paid. Kit received a shilling when he ought to have got only six pence. Therefore, he went again to work for the extra six-pence he had already received.


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