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***START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OLIVER TWIST ***

Oliver Twist

OR

THE PARISH BOY'S PROGRESS

by Charles Dickens

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CHAPTER I.

THE WORKHOUSE WHERE OLIVER TWIST WAS BORN AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS BIRTH.

Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one which boasts of a certain venerable character, by reason of its being the place where a great many persons have been born, who have subsequently become very celebrated indeed, and to some of whom, it is even possible, though not probable, that their mothers may have, at some time or other, pointed out the place of their birth with a certain degree of pride.

For a long time after it was ascertained that this was the spot at which certain great personages had first begun to breathe the air, which, by-the-bye, was not at all the purest in the neighbourhood, there was a great deal of doubt and discussion among the neighbours, whether the building in question was, or was not, a workhouse; some of the more ancient inhabitants even going so far as to assert that they remembered it to be, many years before, the residence of a wealthy merchant.

Although I am not prepared to maintain that this long lease was in existence, it is still the most fortunate and profitable circumstance that can possibly be recorded in the history of a workhouse, that there is not the slightest doubt that the building in question was, many years before the period to which I shall first advert, the abode of a merchant, who, having failed in business on his own account, had taken to speculating in a small way upon the profits of his neighbours, and had, by dint of long-continued exertion and perseverance, arrived at the conclusion that he would be a much happier man if he had a workhouse to live in, than he had been while he was the proprietor of a mansion. He had_ tried_ the_ speculation_ himself_ on_ a_ small_ scale,_ and_ had_ succeeded_ in_ realising_ a_ handsome_ profit_ out_ of_ the_ speculation;_ but_ he_ was_ a_ man_ of_ a_ vast_ mind_ and_ comprehensive_ views,_ and_ he_ had_ long_ felt_ that_ his_ powers_ were_ cramped_ and_ his_ energies_ crippled_ by_ the_ narrow_ sphere_ of_ his_ operations._ He_ had_ a_ wife_ who_ was_ a_ woman_ of_ a_ similar_ character_ and_ feelings,_ and_ they_ had_ a_ boy_ who_ was_ the_ pride_ and_ hope_ of_ his_ parents,_ and_ who_ was_ destined_ to_ be_ the_ ornament_ and_ support_ of_ their_ declining_ years._ To_ this_ boy,_ then,_ they_ gave_ a_ liberal_ education,_ for_ they_ had_ money_ to_ spare,_ and_ they_ had_ long_ been_ in_ the_ habit_ of_ saying_ that_ he_ was_ a_ remarkable_ child_ and_ that_ he_ would_ do_ anything_ he_ chose_ to_ put_ his_ mind_ to,_ which_ was_ very_ fortunate_ indeed_ for_ him,_ as_ he_ never_ had_ any_ other_ thing_ to_ put_ his_ mind_ to,_ which_ was_ a_ great_ comfort_ to_ him_ in_ his_ subsequent_ life,_ when_ he_ came_ to_ think_ of_ the_ manner_ in_ which_ he_ might_ have_ passed_ his_ time_ if_ his_ parents_ had_ been_ poor_ enough_ to_ compel_ him_ to_ earn_ a_ livelihood.__ _ _ _

"No, sir," said the boy, stamping.

"Let him alone, Bumble," said the lady. "Do you know your master, Noah?" inquired Mr. Bumble, in a tone of great condescension.

Noah, who had been taught by the parish to call Mr. Bumble "sir," replied that he did.

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Bumble; "he is a good master, and a kind master. That is, he is a good master and a kind master to those who—to those who—this is a cold night, Noah, and a hard world, Noah."

Noah said it was a cold night and a hard world, and Mr. Bumble, being a little puzzled by the latter proposition, Noah was left to think it over, and to warm himself by the fire, while his master and mistress had a long talk about him and his prospects, which, they both agreed, were very flattering indeed.

Mr. Bumble was a little disappointed that he could not take the credit of Noah's good fortune all to himself, but he was a man who had seen much of the world, and was not to be cast down by a little disappointment. So, he ate and drank at his ease, and he and his wife had a long argument about the best means of making the most of the business, which, they agreed, was a very fortunate one for the parish. At last, they hit upon a plan which they both thought would be attended with the most delightful results, and which, it was agreed, should be immediately put into execution.

So, the next morning, Noah was ordered by his master to pack up his traps, and go to his new place of abode in the workhouse, which he did, with the assistance of a pair of shoes, which, he was informed, he might have, if he liked to ask for them. Noah was a little surprised at being allowed to ask for anything, but he was a little boy who had seen much of the world, and was not to be cast down by a little surprise. So, he asked for a pair of shoes, and he got them; and he was ordered to be ready to go with Mr. Bumble at seven o'clock the next morning, and he was so delighted at the prospect of being allowed to do so, that he could hardly eat his breakfast.

Mr. Bumble had ordered that breakfast should be served to him in his own parlour, because he was a person of such importance that he could not be seen by the common people while he was eating his breakfast. The breakfast was laid on the table, and Mr. Bumble was seated in a comfortable chair in front of the fire, when a pair of shoes came down from the upper regions, and rattled upon the floor.

"Bless my heart, what is that?" exclaimed Mr. Bumble, turning pale with fear.

"Shoes, sir," replied the lady.

"Shoes!" said Mr. Bumble, with a sickly smile. "I thought they were some of the paupers, Mrs. Bumble, they sounded so much like the footsteps of poverty."

"Lie still, pet, lie still," said the lady, as a second pair of shoes came down the pipe. "I dare say there will be a dozen of them by the time I am ready."

"Perhaps there will be, my dear," said Mr. Bumble, with a ghastly smile; for he was a timid man, and he had married a bold woman who had a great deal of money, and who had married him for love.

"Well, I declare," said the lady, with a pout, when she had taken her seat in the chair, before Noah, with his shoes, ready for the shop, fell out of the pipe, and came rolling over the hearth-rug, at her feet.

"Dear me, my love," said Mr. Bumble, who was in a state of great trepidation, lest his wife should be angry with the shoes, "there must be a great many paupers, if we get_ this_ number of shoes every morning."

"Nonsense, my dear," said the lady, tapping her foot upon the hearth-rug, with great vehemence; for Noah had not brought the last pair down with quite enough force to hurt her, and she was very cross and disappointed in consequence; "nonsense, my dear, they are not for the paupers at all, but they are very useful for my friends in the workhouse. Noah, you may take the rest to your master's room."

Noah did as he was ordered, and he was very much surprised to find, when he opened the shoes, that they were full of bank-notes, which he had no idea of, when he was a pauper, was half so good as gold.

"Oh, Noah, you may go to your breakfast, when you have put the fire in my master's room," said the lady, when Noah had been to the chamber, and emptied the shoes.

"Thank you, sir," said Noah.

"Stop," said the lady, when Noah was at the door. Noah stopped.

"Do you like your new place?" inquired the lady.

"Very much, indeed, if I may be allowed to say so," said Noah.

"Do you think you can be very fond of my husband?" inquired the lady.

"I'm sure I shall, if he likes me," said Noah.

"Do you think you can love him as a father?" inquired the lady.

"I'm sure I shall, if he wishes it," said Noah.

"Do you think you can—" but this was too much for Mrs. Bumble, who had been all along in a state of great agitation, lest Noah should be found to be a relation of her husband's, and who had been in a state of great jealousy, lest Noah should be found to be her husband's sister; so she fainted away, and Noah was sent out of the room, to tell the cook that she was very much obliged to him for his kind inquiries, and that she was a lady who was subject to a great deal of this sort of thing.

"Well, I hope you may, Noah, I hope you may," said Mrs. Bumble, when she had recovered, and had been assured by her husband that Noah was a good-hearted, well-meaning, but very stupid young boy, who he was quite sure would do anything she liked him to, after she had fainted in his arms. "I hope you may, Noah, and if you do, you will find that it will be your best friend in your master's wife."

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to his master's wife for her good opinion, and he hoped he should be able to deserve it, if he was only left to himself, and not worried by anybody who was a relation of his master's, or anything of that kind.

Mrs. Bumble said, that she was sure he was a good-hearted creature, and that she hoped he would be very happy indeed, and that he was not to be at all surprised if she and his master were very fond of him, and treated him like a son; for they had no children of their own, and they had long thought that they should like to have had one to bring up in the way he should go.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to them for their good intentions, and he hoped he should be able to deserve their kindness, and he was sure he was very much obliged to them for wishing to bring him up in the way he should go, for it was a very pleasant way, and he had heard that it was a very good one, indeed, and that he was very much obliged to them for the same.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a grateful creature, and that she and her husband were quite right in their opinion of him.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to them for their opinion of him, and he hoped they would never have any reason to change it. He was very much obliged to them for everything that was pleasant, and he was very much obliged to Mrs. Bumble for her kind inquiries, and he was very much obliged to everybody, on his master's account, for being so much in the parish service.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a dear creature, and that she was quite certain, that Mr. Bumble's kindness to him, would be the means of his rising in the world, and becoming a great man.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to Mr. Bumble for his kindness, and he hoped he should be a great man, and if he was ever anything like it, he should be very much obliged to everybody for saying so.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a pleasant creature, and that she was quite sure, that Mr. Bumble's friends would be proud of him, when they heard his good fortune.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to Mr. Bumble's friends for their pride, and he hoped they would be proud of him, when they heard of his good fortune, for it would be very pleasant to them, to be proud of him, and he was very much obliged to them for being so, in anticipation.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was the most grateful creature she had ever seen, and that she was sure, that he would be a credit to his master, and to the parish, and to all connected with them.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to his master, and to the parish, and to all connected with them, for he was a credit to them all, and he was very much obliged to them for saying so.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a fine boy, and that she was sure, that he would be a credit to his master, and to the parish, and to all who had the care of him.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to Mrs. Bumble for her opinion of him, and he was very much obliged to his master, and to the parish, and to all who had the care of him, for he was a fine boy, and he hoped he would be a credit to them all.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a grateful creature, and that she was quite certain, that he would be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish.

Noah said, that he was very much obliged to Mrs. Bumble for her opinion of him, and he hoped he should be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish, for it was his duty, and he was very much obliged to them for pointing it out to him.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a pattern child, and that she was quite certain, that he would be a great ornament to the parish.

Noah said, that he was a pattern child, and that he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of him, and that he was quite certain, that he would be a great ornament to the parish.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a lovely boy, and that she was quite certain, that he would be the pride of his master.

Noah said, that he was a lovely boy, and that he was very much obliged to his master, for being so fond of him, and that he was quite certain, that he would be the pride of his master.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was the image of his father.

Noah said, that he was the image of his father, and that he was very much obliged to his father, and that he hoped he should be the image of his father.

Mrs. Bumble said, that if he was, she was sure, he would be a fine man, and a credit to his master, and to the parish, and to all who had the care of him.

Noah said, that if he was, he was sure, he would be a fine man, and he was very much obliged to his master, and to the parish, and to all who had the care of him, for it was very pleasant to be a fine man, and a credit to everybody.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a charming child, and that she was quite certain, that he would be a credit to his parents, if he had any.

Noah said, that he was a charming child, and that he was very much obliged to his parents, if he had any, and that he hoped he should be a credit to them, if he had any.

Mrs. Bumble said, that it was a pity he was not apprenticed, that he might be a credit to the parish.

Noah said, that it was a pity he was not apprenticed, that he might be a credit to the parish, and he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a promising child, and that she was quite certain, that he would be apprenticed to his master.

Noah said, that he was a promising child, and that he was very much obliged to his master, for being so fond of him, and that he was quite certain, that he would be apprenticed to his master.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a sensible child, and that she was quite certain, that his master would think so.

Noah said, that he was a sensible child, and that he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea, and that he was quite certain, that his master would think so.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a thankful child, and that he should be taught to read, and write, and cipher, that he might be able to take his master's place, when he was grown old enough.

Noah said, that he was a thankful child, and that he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of him, and that he should be taught to read, and write, and cipher, that he might be able to take his master's place, when he was grown old enough, for it was very pleasant to be a thankful child, and very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a grateful creature, and that she was quite certain, that he would be a comfort to his master, and a credit to the parish, and a great ornament to the parish, and that he was a fine boy, and that it was a pity he was not apprenticed, that he might be a credit to the parish.

Noah said, that he was a grateful creature, and that he was very much obliged to his master, and to the parish, and to everybody, for being so fond of him, and that he was a fine boy, and that it was a pity he was not apprenticed, that he might be a credit to the parish, and that he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a porridge eater, and that she hoped he might live long to be a credit to his parents, if he had any.

Noah said, that he was a porridge eater, and that he was very much obliged to his parents, if he had any, and that he hoped he should live long to be a credit to them, if he had any.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a good creature, and that she hoped he might be spared to be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish.

Noah said, that he was a good creature, and that he was very much obliged to his master, and to the parish, and to everybody, for being so fond of him, and that he hoped he might be spared to be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish, for it was very pleasant to be a good creature, and very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea.

Mrs. Bumble said, that he was a porridge eater, and that she hoped he might live long to be a credit to his parents, if he had any; and that he was a good creature, and that she hoped he might be spared to be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish.

Noah said, that he was a porridge eater, and that he was very much obliged to his parents, if he had any, and that he hoped he should live long to be a credit to them, if he had any; and that he was a good creature, and that he was very much obliged to everybody, for being so fond of the idea, and that he hoped he might be spared to be a great comfort to his master, and a great ornament to the parish, for it was very pleasant to be a porridge eater

"Ha! ha! gentlemen, I have myself, and perhaps to the magistrates I must, said nothing the matter to the town. "That is my name and address," sir." "Mr. Bent, I have a proposition to make to you." "Let me hear it." "Why, I want a good, sober, steady man to take charge of my place in the country." "Here's a gentleman ready for the place," said Bent, with a wink to the other gentlemen, and a smile on his face at the idea of Oliver being, at his age, such a fool as to be a thief. "Do you think, Oliver, you could do a good day's work for a good master?" "I should like to try, sir, very much." "Do you think, Oliver, you could be honest, for a good master, if you were well treated, and fed, and clothed, and cared for, when you were ill, and your master was a kind, good-hearted gentleman?" "I am sure I could, sir," said Oliver, with a glow of hope at the prospect of such a home. "Oh, I think I could, I feel I could, be honest if I had such a home." "Oh, you do, do you?" said Bent, with a sneer that Oliver could not understand at all. "Well, I think you could, if you were well fed and treated, for your master's sake, I dare say."

"Oh, the rascal, he knows what he means, I see," said the other magistrate, with a laugh and a nod to Oliver.

"Oh, I see, sir," said Oliver, with a look of vacant astonishment, which was not feigned this time, but was very natural indeed, considering the circumstances.

"Will you be my master?" asked the first magistrate.

"If these gentlemen think that I ought, sir," said Oliver, who had been whispered to by his friends.

"And you will be honest?" said the other magistrate, with a stern look.

"I will, sir," said Oliver, firmly.

"You will leave this boy to me, then?" said the first magistrate, after a long consultation with his friend.

"If we do," said the other, pointing to the paper, "you will be sure to—"

"Do what I say, and not speak a word!" said the first magistrate, peevishly.

"Then I suppose we must," said the other, with a sigh.

"Oh, you young rascal, I hope you may be grateful to these gentlemen, I hope you may be grateful to my friend and me, for this day's work," said the first magistrate, with a pompous air.

"I hope he will," said the other, with a meaning look at his friend.

"Silence, sir!" said the first magistrate, with a frown that Oliver thought very terrible indeed.

Oliver trembled still more at this strange mixture of kindness and severity, and looked from one face to the other, as the magistrate spoke alternately to him and each other, in a state of great perplexity and fear.

"Now, my lad," said the first magistrate, when the clerk had finished writing, and handing a pen to Oliver, "I shall not be hard upon you for this, as it is your first offence, and you have been well treated by those who have the care of you, I hope; but you must be very careful, very careful, indeed, while you live in this town, not to get into bad company. I shall be very glad to hear a good account of you, and I shall take an early opportunity of seeing you, when I pass this way again. You may go."

"Thank you, sir," said Oliver, with a bow of great gratitude. "Thank you, sir, very much."

"Stop!" said the other magistrate, as Oliver turned to the door. "Do you know this man?"

"No, sir," said Oliver, with a look of surprise.

"Do you never know him, or any of his friends, or any of the people who live with him?"

"No, sir," said Oliver, with a look of great surprise.

"Where do you live, when you are at home?" said the first magistrate.

"At Mr. Bumble's, the beadle's, sir," replied the boy.

"Will you be ready to come here, if you are wanted?" asked the other magistrate.

"Yes, sir, if I can," said Oliver; he was so much bewildered by the strange manner in which he was addressed, that he was very willing to promise any thing, and he was very glad to do anything, if it was only to get out of the presence of the people who had been so kind to him lately, and who looked so much like gentlemen.

"Take him back to the workhouse, and tell him that I shall be there in a few days. Let him wait there for me," said the first magistrate.

"Yes, sir," said the beadle, who was the only person who had spoken since the boy had been ordered into the room; he was very glad to hear it, for he was a very cowardly beadle, and was afraid that the boy would be taken away from the place, before he had had his dinner, if he had been ordered to wait any longer.

"Shall I take the boy with me, sir?" inquired the beadle.

"Yes," said the first magistrate.

Oliver thought that the beadle was very much disappointed at this, for he had been in high spirits at the prospect of a long walk. But, he was a coward himself, and he knew that cowards always love to inflict pain upon those who are in their power, for this reason, he had hoped that Oliver might be left behind, to walk back by himself. Oliver thought that he was very quiet in the beadle's company, for this reason, and was glad of it. He was glad of anything, now, that was not the workhouse, and he was glad that the gentlemen had ordered him to come back no more.

The beadle and Oliver walked side by side, as far as the end of the street, in silence. The beadle was in a hot perspiration, and was obliged to pull off his hat, and wipe his shining face and head, before he could begin to think about walking back. When he had done this, and had put on his hat quite straight, he looked at his companion for the first time, and began to think it was a pity that the gentlemen had not ordered him to take a good dinner first, for the boy was very pale, and looked as if he had been crying for a long time past.

"Oliver!" said the beadle, when they had walked side by side for a few minutes in this way.

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver, who had been expecting that he would say something ever since they had left the magistrate's house.

"I hope you will be a good boy," said the beadle, in a tone of mingled advice and consolation, which was very consolatory indeed, considering that it was the first time of its kind, and that it was addressed to a boy who had been used to a very different manner of speaking for his own benefit.

"I hope you will be a good boy, Oliver, when you are out of my sight, and at your own work," said the beadle.

"I shall, sir," said Oliver, with a sigh, as he thought how lonely he would be again, and how he had begged and prayed to be allowed to do that.

"Oh, you will, will you, indeed?" said the beadle, who had expected a more decided reply to his last observation; "and what makes you so sure of that?"

"I—I—hope I shall, sir," said Oliver, with a sob, as he thought of the old woman who had been so fond of him, and of the old man who had been so kind to him, and of Oliver's dear friend Dick, who was the only friend he had had in the world, who he was sure would be very glad to hear something about his friend now that he was gone, and who he would never see or hear of any more.

"Hoo! you will, will you, if I tell you to, I dare say," said the beadle, who had been walking on a little before, and now turned round and looked at his companion for the purpose of making this remark; and who had been thinking that he should like to see what the boy would do if he was left to himself for a little while, and who was disappointed that he could not do it, because he was afraid that if he left the boy to himself for a little while, he might run away.

Oliver thought that he had better say something more, in order to make the beadle think that he was very much in earnest, and was very good, and would do anything he was told, without hesitation, for fear of being left to himself. He was very young, and had been used to be left to himself a great deal, and he was very fond of being with people who were kind to him, and who spoke to him as if they meant what they said. He walked on, for a few minutes, in silence, for he was very busy thinking.

"Do you hear me?" said the beadle, who was obliged to walk a long way before him, to prevent his hat falling off.

"Yes, sir," said Oliver, coming back to the beadle's side at a long pace.

"Then, mind that you do," said the beadle, who was very much out of breath, and very red in the face, when he saw that Oliver was quite fresh and well, and who thought that it was very hard that he should be obliged to walk back the whole way to the workhouse without being allowed to drink something by the way.

"Mind you do," said the beadle, who had a vague idea that he had been very eloquent and severe, and that Oliver was very much cut down by his manner of speaking to him.

"Yes, sir," said Oliver.

"Well, then, remember that I shall be watching you," said the beadle, with a look of great cunning, as he thought that this was a very severe thing to say, for he had a strong suspicion that Oliver was a very good boy indeed, and that he, the beadle, was a very bad one.

Oliver said he would remember it, as he was expected to do, and they walked on, at a pace which was much too fast for the boy's strength, after what he had undergone that morning, but which was not too fast for the beadle's, after his long walk back.

Oliver thought, that, if he had been a little better fed, and had been allowed to rest himself when he was so tired, he would have been able to bear it much better; but he was very glad to be out of the house, at any rate, and was in hopes that the walk would do him good.

The beadle was of a different opinion, but he was a man who always had his own opinions upon all subjects of importance, that his wife had a very easy life of it, and that she was a great fool if she thought, when she married him, that he would be kind to her stepchildren.

Oliver was footsore and weary, but he thought of the old lady and her kind face, and the old man and his good-tempered smile, and the young lady and her pretty face, and the young gentleman who had spoken so kindly to him, and he felt a glow of hope that he should see them all again, and that they would be very fond of him. The beadle had a very different train of thought in his head, for he was thinking how pleasant it would be to have a good supper of cold meat and pickles, and how he would take the liberty of ordering it as soon as they got home.

They had a long way to go, and it was late when they at last turned into the town. The beadle quickened his pace, when he saw the lights in the windows of the workhouse, for he was very tired, and was thinking how comfortable he would be when he had a good supper of cold meat and pickles all to himself. Oliver quickened his pace, for he was thinking that he was very tired, too, and that he would be glad to see the face he had seen that morning once more, because it was so kind and good.

When they reached the workhouse gate, the beadle knocked with a knock which was quite in character with the place and his office. The gate was opened by a tall pale man, who ate his breakfast by himself in a dark room, and who had a long, dark, empty room to sleep in by himself too. It was a long way from the kitchen, where all the other people slept.

"Here, Mrs. Bedwin," said the beadle, when he had taken Oliver into the kitchen, and when the old lady had come out of her own room to see what all the knocking was for, "here is a boy we have got from the magistrates, who has been a thief and a vagabond, and I don't know what else, but his worship the magistrate says we are to take him in, and treat him as our own boy, I suppose. Come this way, sir, and sup up the cold meat and pickles I have been keeping for myself, for I don't know when I shall have any more myself, I am sure."

The old lady stared at the beadle's back, when he had uttered these words, as if she thought he had taken leave of his senses to bring such a boy into the place where the boys were all so fond of her. She had been in the workhouse for many years, and had seen many boys there, who were very much like men, and she had seen many men there, who were very much like boys, but she had never seen such a boy as this, she was certain of it. The old lady was very much given to looking through her spectacles when she was in doubt about any thing, and she looked through them all the way into the boy's heart, when he was standing before the fire, in his ragged clothes, and with his pale face and frightened eyes, and she thought that there was something in the boy's face that she liked very much indeed, when he was asleep, but that she was very sorry for, when he was awake.

"Poor boy!" she said, when the beadle had left the room, and when the boy had finished the last morsel of the cold meat and pickles, and was sitting before the fire, with a plate on his knees, and a tear in his eye, which he was trying to blink away, when he was thinking that he was very comfortable now, and that he wished his poor mother could see him, for she would be glad to see how happy he was, she was sure

"Oh, you bonny, wee lighter! Where's your fuzzing and your fluzzing, today, when I drop the lamp, Sandy?"

"Ye ken, Mr. Dodge, I'm a Scotch lad, and I'm a Presbyterian, and I'm a Republican, and I'm a Mason, and I'm a Knight Templar, and I'm a Knight of Pythias, and I'm a Knight of the Golden Eagle, and I'm a Knight of the Maccabees, and I'm a Knight of the Round Table, and I'm a Knight of the Garter, and I'm a Knight of the Bath, and I'm a Knight of the Rhyme, and I'm a Knight of the Road, and I'm a Knight of the Rhyme, and I'm a Knight of the Road, and I'm a Knight of the Rhyme, and I'm a Knight of the Road

"The first moment I made myself free of your supervising my greater concerns to the others but the truth is, I felt a strength within me, which I thought, and which I thought I felt, was equal to the task of being your guardian. I felt that I could be firm, I felt that I could be steady, I felt that I could be anything that I ought to be, in order to secure your happiness. I felt that I could be—I felt that I could be—I felt that I could be anything or everything rather than what I was, when I first undertook the charge of your poor sister. I felt that I could be anything rather than what I was, when I first undertook the charge of your poor sister."

"Good capital" replied Harry softly.

"I felt that I could be anything rather than what I was, when I first undertook the charge of your poor sister." he repeated, in a low, musing tone, and with a slight shake of the head at every word. "I felt that I could be anything rather than what I was, when I first undertook the charge of your poor sister."

"Oh, Harry, Harry, what a fortunate thing it was that I did not! Where should we all have been now, if I had?"

"Why, I don't like to think, Lizzy, for I should be very much afraid of being in a scrape myself. I'm sure I shall be in a scrape, if I think of what might have been. I'm very glad you did not, and I wish you had not, with all my heart. I'm very glad you did not, and I wish you had not, with all my heart."

"Well, I am very glad that I did not, since it pleases you so much. I hope we shall never think of it any more. We are all safe and happy now, and I hope we shall be so long enough. We have much to be thankful for, indeed we have much to be thankful for. Poor Sally! I must go and see her as soon as I can. Poor, poor Sally! I wonder what she will say to me. I have not been to see her, you know, since I came back from London, and she has been ill ever since. Poor Sally! I must go and see her as soon as I can. Poor, poor Sally!"

"Sally! Sally! Who is Sally? Is she a relation of yours?"

"Sally! Sally! Who is Sally? Is she a relation of yours?"

"Sally! Sally! Who is Sally? Is she a relation of yours?"

"Why, Harry, what can you mean by such a question? Sally is the name of the cook, who has been with us ever since we first set up our carriage. Poor, poor Sally! I must go and see her as soon as I can. Poor, poor Sally!"

"Well, Lizzy, I have heard you speak of her, I dare say, a hundred times, and I shall be very much obliged to you for not keeping me in suspense any longer. Poor Sally! I shall be very much obliged to you for not keeping me in suspense any longer. Poor Sally! I shall be very much obliged to you for not keeping me in suspense any longer. Poor Sally!"

"Oh, Harry, I wish you would not be so—I wish you would not be so—I wish you would not be so—

CHAPTER XXVII.
OFFERS FOR THE UNPOLITENESS OF A FORMER CHAPTER, WHICH DESERVED A LADY, MOST UNCHEMBROIDERLY

It is a truth far be-yond question, and a humble opinion which I shall not hesitate to express, that a lady's writing, with the ladies in the day and the ability of the ancient and modern, is a pleasant sight to the eyes, and such sight we shall be pleased to collect, but, as it will not be because the author, or the gentleman to ascribe it, to the ladies, I shall not hesitate to say, that the ladies, in the day and the ability of the ancient and modern, are the ladies, and the ladies, in the day and the ability of the ancient and modern, are the ladies, and the ladies, in the day and the ability of the ancient and modern, are the ladies, and

"And yet somebody was so taken up by him, still, for a long, long, long time!" said the officer. "So it is the guy, a winking the eyes! Once you are a coward, he has, from the moment he has winked the eyes! Once you are a coward, he has, for ever! Well, I am not a coward, and I wink the eyes!"

Thereby winking at the officer, and feeling his head, as if he were a man who, having been shaved on one side only, was ready for anything, he ordered the officer to lead on, and he would follow. The officer, with a sigh, as if he were the most injured man in the world, but still a man who was ready for anything, since he was not a coward, and had winked the eyes, led on, and Arthur followed.

Outside the door, Arthur found, to his great relief, a coach, and a great quantity of middle-length, quiet street-life, with dinner-hour stamped upon it, which was very refreshing after the Marshalsea. The officer, who had been in a state of great agitation ever since he had winked the eyes, ordered the coachman to drive to Bermondsey, and they rattled away.

"Now, young man, what do you think of your situation?" said the officer, when they had begun to rattle.

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness," said Arthur.

"Not at all," said the officer, with a wave of his hand. "I am glad to be able to do it."

"Nothing at all," repeated the officer. "Out of the Marshalsea, you know, I am your friend. I am glad to be able to do it. I am your friend."

"Very much obliged to you," repeated Arthur.

"Not at all," said the officer, with a wave of his hand, and rattling his head as a rattlebox, very, and jolting violently with the footfalls, as if they were a part of the rattle, and not the cause of it, and rattling himself into a state of great agitation, he added, "I am your friend, you know."

Arthur was very much obliged to him, and was very much obliged to him, and was very much obliged to him, and was very much obliged to him, and was very much obliged to him, and was the place where the Marshalsea was, and Bermondsey was the place where they were going.

Arthur was very much obliged to the officer, who was so much his friend, and who was so much his friend, and who was so much his friend, and who was so much his friend, and who was the place where the Marshalsea was, and Bermondsey was the place where they were going.

Arthur was very much obliged to the officer, who was so much his friend, and who was so much his friend, and who was so much his friend, and who was the place where the Marshalsea was, and Bermondsey was the place where they were going, and who was the place where he was going to be so much his friend, and who was the place where he was going to be so much his friend, and who was the place where he was going to be so much his friend

"I do not know myself," said Bean, wearily. "I really don't know that, that you might have tried to laugh with perfect equity to persons well versed in the

"Well," said Bean, "I don't know that I can tell you anything about it. I was in my office when it happened, and I didn't see it happen. I was busy at the time."

"Do you mean to say," said Bean, sternly, "that you have been in the office all the time since the murder of Mr. Boffin?"

"Yes," said Fledgeby, with a sickly smile, "I have been in the office all the time since the murder of Mr. Boffin."

"Then," said Bean, with a sigh of relief, "I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that, if you are asked, and you will be asked, I dare say, a great many times, and you will be asked, I dare say, a great many times, to prove your whereabouts at the time of the murder of Mr. Boffin?"

"Oh, I can prove that," said Fledgeby, with a sickly smile, "I can prove that."

"Then you had better do so," said Bean, sternly, "for I am sure that, if you do, you will be one of the most disappointed men I have met with for a long time."

"Oh, I can prove it," said Fledgeby, with a sickly smile, "I can prove it."

"Then," said Bean, with a sigh of relief, "I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that? I suppose you can prove that, if you are asked

the smuggler. Once the second part—Tonio quickened from pace to pace, forward, or through or on either side, the last hastening to avoid an outward stare, the second lingering to gaze, the third pausing to look, the fourth stopping to stare, the fifth—Tonio, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth, the fourteenth, the fifteenth, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, the eighteenth, the nineteenth, the twentieth, the twenty-first, the twenty-second, the twenty-third, the twenty-fourth, the twenty-fifth, the twenty-sixth, the twenty-seventh, the twenty-eighth, the twenty-ninth, the thirtieth, the thirty-first, the thirty-second, the thirty-third, the thirty-fourth, the thirty-fifth, the thirty-sixth, the thirty-seventh, the thirty-eighth, the thirty-ninth, the fortieth, the forty-first, the forty-second, the forty-third, the forty-fourth, the forty-fifth, the forty-sixth, the forty-seventh, the forty-eighth, the forty-ninth, the fiftieth, the fifty-first, the fifty-second, the fifty-third, the fifty-fourth, the fifty-fifth, the fifty-sixth, the fifty-seventh, the fifty-eighth, the fifty-ninth, the sixtieth, the sixty-first, the sixty-second, the sixty-third, the sixty-fourth, the sixty-fifth, the sixty-sixth, the sixty-seventh, the sixty-eighth, the sixty-ninth, the seventieth, the seventy-first, the seventy-second, the seventy-third, the seventy-fourth, the seventy-fifth, the seventy-sixth, the seventy-seventh, the seventy-eighth, the seventy-ninth, the eightieth, the eighty-first, the eighty-second, the eighty-third, the eighty-fourth, the eighty-fifth, the eighty-sixth, the eighty-seventh, the eighty-eighth, the eighty-ninth, the ninetieth, the ninety-first, the ninety-second, the ninety-third, the ninety-fourth, the ninety-fifth, the ninety-sixth, the ninety-seventh, the ninety-eighth, the ninety-ninth, the hundredth, the hundred-and-first, the hundred-and-second, the hundred-and-third, the hundred-and-fourth, the hundred-and-fifth, the hundred-and-sixth, the hundred-and-seventh, the hundred-and-eighth, the hundred-and-ninth, the hundred-and-tenth, the hundred-and-eleventh, the hundred-and-twelfth, the hundred-and-thirteenth, the hundred-and-fourteen

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TIME ARRIVES FOR NANCY TO REDEEM HER PLEDGE TO ROSE MAYLIE: SHE FAILS.

Night as she was, in all the arts of cunning and dissimulation, she yet fancied, even in her utter contempt for those with whom the knowledge of the man who had betrayed her was shared, that she could deceive them, and, by the mere force of her cool effrontery, impose upon them some story which would account for her absence, and lead them to believe that she had lingered outside Fagin, after her first visit, for no sinister purpose. Acting on this belief, she had, on her way home, stopped and dragged down an alley or street or two, and, as she thought, effectually lost her shadowers. Her confidence in her own powers was so great, that she had no misgiving of failure; and, as she walked along, she thought, with a hard laugh, how easily she would mislead the boy, and how she would laugh when he was gone, to think that he had been her dupe.

The night was cold and dark, and the streets were almost deserted. But Nancy had her thoughts for company, and they were such that she walked on, unconscious of the time and the weather, until she was roused by the striking of the clocks that she was hastening towards her home and her lover when she had to keep her appointment with the young lady and gentleman she had left Fagin with a few hours before.

Nancy was hurried back by the hazard to a little alley. Death stands the lover of her true heart to whom she had left Monsieur Maurice. After working hard some time, the two succeeded in disengaging themselves from the mass of entangled hair and broken teeth, and, the man being well secured by his companion, Nancy was released from her hold, and, taking to her heels, was soon lost to her pursuers.

"Well, Charley," said the young man, when the girl had recovered her breath, "what do you think of her now? Is she to be trusted, or is she false?"

"She is false," replied Charley with a hearty oath. "She is false as hell, for she has deceived us all."

"I hope she has not deceived you," said the young man, with a smile.

"She never was worth more than you or I," said Charley; "she never was worth a straw to anybody."

"Then why do you think so?" asked the other.

"Why, she could not deceive a child," said Charley; "she is so easy to be deceived. Two to one she would have been true to us, if she had not been false to her friends; for she would have thought it was her game to be false, and we should have been her dupes. As she has been false to her friends, we shall be her friends, and she will be our dupe. I know her, I tell you, I know her."

"But what if she be true?" said the young man.

"Then," said Charley, with a hearty oath, "I shall be more mistaken than I ever was in my life, and that's not likely."

"Why?" said the other.

"Because," said Charley, with a hearty oath, for he was very fond of swearing, "because I have the power of reading a woman's face, and hers is that of a true woman. I tell you, Harry, that I would stake my life on the truth of this girl."

"Suppose we were to follow her home, as we have been to-night, and tell her all this?" said the young man.

"We shall not do this," said the other gentleman with great decision of manner.

"Why not?" said the other.

"Because," said Charley, for the third time of his hard oath. "Because I have the power yet to make her do what we please, and we may want to use it. If we were to follow her home, she would suspect that we doubted her, and we should lose our game for ever. No, we will watch and dog this girl, but we will do her no harm."

"I hope not," said the young man.

"We never can unless we do," said Charley; "and we shall be sure to do it if we quarrel with her."

"Then you think we have a hold upon her?" said the young man.

"Have you any doubt of it?" asked Charley.

"Upon your word and honour I have none," said the other.

"Then," said Charley, "we have a hold upon her, and we can make her do anything we please."

"Upon your word and honour I have none," thought the young man, as he walked on, in silence, for he was very honourable himself, and was ashamed to listen to such baseness.

"Upon my word, Harry," resumed one of the young men, after they had walked on for some time, "I don't know what I shall do with this girl. I shall be in a great difficulty with her, I shall be in a great difficulty with my friend Fagin, if I don't take some of your money for her. I shan't, if she will let me off; and she will, I know she will, if she sees me coming alone."

"Why?" said the other.

"Because," said Charley, for the fourth time of his hard oath, "because I have the power of making her do it. I tell you I shall be surprised if she isn't. I'll try the experiment to-morrow night. I shall be safe enough, I dare say, but I'm sorry for it. I wish I had your share, Harry, I wish I had your share."

"I wish you had," said the other, with an expression of pleasure in the wish.

"I wish I had," said Charley, with a sigh that seemed to come from the bottom of his boots.

"How much do you think you can get?" inquired the other, after a long pause.

"More than I can take, I hope," said Charley. "I'm sure I can get more than I can take, if I make her bring it, and I shall make her bring it, or some of her friends will suffer for it."

"Poor girl!" said the young man.

"Poor girl!" repeated Charley, with a laugh. "That's all you can say, when I have the power of making her do anything we please?"

"But you don't like to do it," said the other.

"Why, I don't like to do it," rejoined Charley, raising a look of extreme vexation in the corners of his eyes; "I don't like to do it, because I have the power of making her do it easily. If I had to frighten her, or to use force to make her, I would do it at once, without a moment's hesitation."

"Of course you would," said the other.

"Of course I would," said Charley. "But as I have the power of making her do it easily, and as I may want to use it with her friends, I don't like to do it."

"Of course not," said the other.

"Of course I don't," said Charley. "But if I had your share, I should be sure to get more than I could take, without any trouble at all."

"Then I wish you had the whole," said the other.

"So do I," said Charley, with a sigh that seemed to come from the bottom of his boots.

"Do you think," said the other, after a long pause, "do you think that she knows the value of her secret?"

"Why, I have no doubt she does," said Charley. "The more she brings, the less she will be able to bring next time."

"To be sure of that," said the other gentleman, with great emphasis.

"I'll be sure of that enough," said Charley. "I shall watch her so closely, that I shall know all her movements."

"Suppose she should refuse to bring anything more," said the other, after a long pause.

"Suppose she should," said Charley, with a sneer.

"Suppose she should, nevertheless, what then?" pursued the other, with a long pause between each word.

"Why, then I should be obliged to have recourse to the last resource, I suppose," said Charley, with a long yawn.

"What is that?" inquired the other.

"Why, I'm sure you can't guess," said Charley, with a laugh at the idea that his companion could not.

"I think I can," said the other.

"Then what is it?" said Charley.

"Why, I think you would be obliged to have recourse to your friend Fagin," said the other.

"Why, so I should," said Charley, with a long sigh, for he was very fond of his friend Fagin, and had been for a long time, and was, in fact, his pupil in the art of picking pockets.

"Why, so I should," said Charley; "I should be obliged to have recourse to my friend Fagin, if I meant to keep the game in my own hands."

"Do you think," said the other, "that he would be entitled to any share?"

"Why, I don't know," said Charley, with a long yawn; "I don't know what I should be entitled to, if I gave him the information that I meant to do so, and that I should be able to do so, because I should be obliged to do so, if I meant to keep the whole to myself."

"Of course you would," said the other.

"Of course I would," said Charley; "and I don't know what I should be entitled to, if I did so."

"Of course you would be entitled to a share," said the other.

"Perhaps I should," said Charley; "I don't know what I should be entitled to, but I don't think I should be entitled to much."

"Why, what do you think you would be entitled to, if you did not give him the information that you meant to do so?" said the other, after a long pause.

"Why, I don't know what I should be entitled to then," said Charley, with a long sigh; "I don't know what I should be entitled to then, but I think I should be entitled to something."

"Do you think," said the other, after a long pause, "do you think that she knows the value of her secret?"

"Why, I have no doubt she does," said Charley. "The more she brings, the less she will be able to bring next time."

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"Of course you would," said the other.

"Of course I would," said Charley; "and I don't know what I should be entitled to then."

"Why, what do you think you would be entitled to, if you did not give him the information that you meant to do so?" said the other, after a long pause.

"Why, I don't know what I should be entitled to then," said Charley, raising a look of extreme vexation in the corners of his eyes

"Nothing." replied Mr. Bernstein. "nothing to me. But I wove a net, and I caught the Bernstein. I'd have let the human and shades of young and happy years wind forward on his loom of time, if I had been paid properly for it. I'd have let him live out his life, if I had been paid to do that. I'd have let him die a natural death, if I had been paid enough for that. But I was not paid enough for any of it. I was not paid enough for the risk I ran in the beginning, when I wove the web that would ensnare him. I was not paid enough for the risk I ran in the middle, when I was afraid that he might escape me after all. I was not paid enough for the risk I ran at the end, when I was afraid that he might escape me in death."

"Not a penny, I assure you," Mr. Bernstein continued with a shrug. "I was paid to weave a net and I wove a net. I was paid to weave it so that it would be strong and light and invisible, and I wove it so that it was strong and light and invisible. I was not paid to think about what would happen if I succeeded, and I did not think about what would happen if I succeeded. I was not paid to care about what would happen to me if I succeeded, and I did not care about what would happen to me if I succeeded. I was not paid to care about what would happen to Ebenezer Scrooge, and I did not care about what would happen to Ebenezer Scrooge."

"Why, you are a man," said Scrooge.

"Yes," said Mr. Bernstein, turning from the cage and leaning his face toward the spectators, as if to invite them to participate in his musings, "I am a man. I'm a man who did his job and was paid for it. I'm a man who was paid for his job and who did his job well. I'm a man who was paid for his job and who did his job well, and who, if he had been paid to do so, would have been willing to do his job even more well. I'm a man who was paid for his job and who did his job well, and who, if he had been paid to do so, would have been willing to do his job even more well, and who, if he had been paid to do so, would have been willing to do his job even more well, and who, if he had been paid to do so, would have been willing to do his job even more

It appeared, on full and careful investigation, that if the wreck of property remaining in the custody of Monks (which had never prospered either in his hands or in those of his mother) were equally divided between himself and Oliver, it would yield, to each, little more than three thousand pounds. By the provisions of his father's will, Oliver would have been entitled to the whole; but Mr. Brownlow, unwilling to deprive the elder son of the opportunity of retrieving his former vices and pursuing an honest career, proposed this mode of distribution, to which Oliver gladly acceded.

Monks, still bearing that assumed name, retired with his portion to a distant part of the New World; where, having quickly squandered it, he once more fell into his old courses, and, after undergoing a long confinement for some fresh act of fraud and knavery, at length sunk under an attack of his old disorder, and died in prison. As far from home, died the chief remaining members of his friend Fagin's gang.

Mr. Brownlow adopted Oliver as his son. Removing with him and the old housekeeper to within a mile of the parsonage-house, where his dear friends resided, he gratified the only remaining wish of Oliver's warm and earnest heart, and thus linked together a little society, whose condition approached as nearly to one of perfect happiness as can ever be known in this changing world.

Soon after the marriage of the young people, the worthy doctor returned to Chertsey, where, bereft of the presence of his old friends, he would have been discontented if his temperament had admitted of such a feeling; and would have turned quite peevish if he had known how. For two or three months, he contented himself with hinting that he feared the air began to disagree with him; then, finding that the place really no longer was, to him, what it had been, he settled his business on his assistant, took a bachelor's cottage outside the village of which his young friend was pastor, and instantaneously recovered. Here he took to gardening, planting, fishing, carpentering, and various other pursuits of a similar kind: all undertaken with his characteristic impetuosity. In each and all he has since become famous throughout the neighbourhood, as a most profound authority.

Before his removal, he had managed to contract a strong friendship for Mr. Grimwig, which that eccentric gentleman cordially reciprocated. He is accordingly visited by Mr. Grimwig a great many times in the course of the year. On all such occasions, Mr. Grimwig plants, fishes, and carpenters, with great ardour; doing everything in a very singular and unprecedented manner, but always maintaining with his favourite asseveration, that his mode is the right one. On Sundays, he never fails to criticise the sermon to the young clergyman's face: always informing Mr. Losberne, in strict confidence afterwards, that he considers it an excellent performance, but deems it as well not to say so. It is a standing and very favourite joke, for Mr. Brownlow to rally him on his old prophecy concerning Oliver, and to remind him of the night on which they sat with the watch between them, waiting his return; but Mr. Grimwig contends that he was right in the main, and, in proof thereof, remarks that Oliver did not come back after all; which always calls forth a laugh on his side, and increases his good humour.

Mr. Noah Claypole: receiving a free pardon from the Crown in consequence of being admitted approver against Fagin: and considering his profession not altogether as safe a one as he could wish: was, for some time, at a loss for the means of a livelihood, not burdened with too much work. After some consideration, he went into business as an informer, in which calling he realises a genteel subsistence. His plan is, to walk out once a week during church time attended by Charlotte in respectable attire. The lady faints away at the doors of charitable publicans, and the gentleman being accommodated with three-penny worth of brandy to restore her, lays an information next day, and pockets half the penalty. Sometimes Mr. Claypole faints himself, but the result is the same.

Mr. and Mrs. Bumble, deprived of their situations, were gradually reduced to great indigence and misery, and finally became paupers in that very same workhouse in which they had once lorded it over others. Mr. Bumble has been heard to say, that in this reverse and degradation, he has not even spirits to be thankful for being separated from his wife.

As to Mr. Giles and Brittles, they still remain in their old posts, although the former is bald, and the last-named boy quite grey. They sleep at the parsonage, but divide their attentions so equally among its inmates, and Oliver and Mr. Brownlow, and Mr. Losberne, that to this day the villagers have never been able to discover to which establishment they properly belong.

Master Charles Bates, appalled by Sikes's crime, fell into a train of reflection whether an honest life was not, after all, the best. Arriving at the conclusion that it certainly was, he turned his back upon the scenes of the past, resolved to amend it in some new sphere of action. He struggled hard, and suffered much, for some time; but, having a contented disposition, and a good purpose, succeeded in the end; and, from being a former's drudge, and a carrier's lad, he is now the merriest young grazier in all Northamptonshire.

And now, the hand that traces these words, falters, as it approaches the conclusion of its task; and would weave, for a little longer space, the thread of these adventures.

I would fain linger yet with a few of those among whom I have so long moved, and share their happiness by endeavouring to depict it. I would show Rose Maylie in all the bloom and grace of early womanhood, shedding on her secluded path in life soft and gentle light, that fell on all who trod it with her, and shone into their hearts. I would paint her the life and joy of the fire-side circle and the lively summer group; I would follow her through the sultry fields at noon, and hear the low tones of her sweet voice in the moonlit evening walk; I would watch her in all her goodness and charity abroad, and the smiling untiring discharge of domestic duties at home; I would paint her and her dead sister's child happy in their love for one another, and passing whole hours together in picturing the friends whom they had so sadly lost; I would summon before me, once again, those joyous little faces that clustered round her knee, and listen to their merry prattle; I would recall the tones of that clear laugh, and conjure up the sympathising tear that glistened in the soft blue eye. These, and a thousand looks and smiles, and turns of thought and speech—I would fain recall them every one.

How Mr. Brownlow went on, from day to day, filling the mind of his adopted child with stores of knowledge, and becoming attached to him, more and more, as his nature developed itself, and showed the thriving seeds of all he wished him to become—how he traced in him new traits of his early friend, that awakened in his own bosom old remembrances, melancholy and yet sweet and soothing—how the two orphans, tried by adversity, remembered its lessons in mercy to others, and mutual love, and fervent thanks to Him who had protected and preserved them—these are all matters which need not to be told. I have said that they were truly happy; and without strong affection and humanity of heart, and gratitude to that Being whose code is Mercy, and whose great attribute is Benevolence to all things that breathe, happiness can never be attained.

Within the altar of the old village church there stands a white marble tablet, which bears as yet but one word: "AGNES." There is no coffin in that tomb; and may it be many, many years, before another name is placed above it! But, if the spirits of the Dead ever come back to earth, to visit spots hallowed by the love—the love beyond the grave—of those whom they knew in life, I believe that the shade of Agnes sometimes hovers round that solemn nook. I believe it none the less because that nook is in a Church, and she was weak and erring.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OLIVER TWIST ***

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