GREAT EXPECTATIONS.
BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XXII.

The pale young gentleman and I stood contemplating one another in Barnard's Inn, until we both burst out laughing. "The idea of its being you!" said he. "The idea of its being you!" said I. And then we contemplated one another afresh, and laughed again. "Well!" said the pale young gentleman, reaching out his hand good-humouredly, "it's all over now, I hope, and it will be magnanimous in you if you'll forgive me for having knocked you about so.

I derived from this speech that Mr. Herbert Pocket (for Herbert was the pale young gentleman's name) still rather confounded his intention with his execution. But I made a modest reply, and we shook hands warmly.

"You hadn't come into your good fortune at that time?" said Herbert Pocket.

"No," said I.

"No," he acquiesced; "I heard it had happened very lately.

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Miss Havisham had sent for me, to see if she could take a fancy to me. But she couldn't—at all events, she didn't."

I thought it polite to remark that I was surprised to hear that.

"Bad taste," said Herbert, laughing, "but a fact. Yes, she had sent for me on a trial visit, and if I had come out of it successfully, I suppose I should have been provided for; perhaps I should have been what you may call it to Estella."

"What's that?" I asked, with sudden gravity.

He was arranging his fruit in plates while we talked, which divided his attention, and was the cause of his having made this lapse of a word. "Allied," he explained, "still busy with the fruit. "Betrothed. Engaged. What's his name? Any word of that sort."

"How did you bear your disappointment?" I asked.

"Poor!" said he, "I didn't care much for it. She's a flirt."

"Miss Havisham?" I suggested.

"I don't say no to that, but I meant Estella. That girl's hard and haughty and capricious to the last degree, and has been brought up by Miss Havisham to wreak revenge on all the male sex."

"What relation is she to Miss Havisham?"

"None," said he. "Only adopted."

"Why should she wreak revenge on all the male sex? What revenge?"

"Lord, Mr. Pip!" said he. "Don't you know?"

"No," said I.

"Dear me! It's quite a story, and shall be saved till dinner-time. And now let me take the liberty of asking you a question. How did you come there that day?"

I told him, and he was attentive until I had finished, and then burst out laughing again, and asked me if I was sore afterwards? I didn't ask him if he was, for my conviction on that point was perfectly established.

"Mr. Jaggers is your guardian, I understand?" he went on.

"Yes."

"You know he is Miss Havisham's man of business and solicitor, and has her confidence when nobody else has?"

This was bringing me (I felt) towards dangerous ground. I answered with a constant I made no attempt to disguise, that I had seen Mr. Jaggers in Miss Havisham's house on the very day of our combat, but never at any other time, and that I believed he had no recollection of having ever seen me there.

"He was so obliging as to suggest my father for your tutor, and he called on my father to propose it. Of course he knew about my father from his connexion with Miss Havisham. My father is Miss Havisham's nephew; no, that that; implies him in the male sex?

"What revenge?"

"I know?"

"Mr. Jaggers had a frank and easy way with him that was very taking. I had never seen any one else, and I have never seen any one since, who more strongly expressed to me, in every look and tone, a natural incapacity to do anything secret or sous. There was something wonderfully hopeful about his general air, and something that at the same time whispered to me he would never be very successful or rich. I don't know how this was. I became imbued with the notion on that first occasion before we
sat down to dinner, but I cannot define by what means.

He was still a pale young gentleman, and had a certain conquered languor about him in the midst of his spirits and briskness, that did not seem indicative of natural strength. He had not a handsome face, but it was better than handsome: being extremely amiable and cheerful. His figure was a little ungainly, as in the days when my knuckles had taken such liberties with it, but it looked as if it would always be light and young. Whether Mr. Trabb's local wit suited to our years. I therefore told him I was brought up a blacksmith in a town, and knew very little of the ways of politeness, I would take it as a great kindness in him if he would give me a hint whenever he saw me at a loss or going wrong.

"With pleasure," said he, "though I venture to prophesy that you'll want very few hints. I dare say we shall be often together, and I should like to burden you with no needless restraint between us. Will you do me the favour to begin at once to call me by my christian name, Herbert?"

I thanked him, and said I would. I informed him in exchange that my christian name was Philip.

"I don't take to Philip," said he, smiling, "for it sounds like a moral boy out of the spelling-book, who was so lazy that he fell into a pond, or so fat that he couldn't see out of his eyes, or so avaricious that he locked up his cake till the mice ate it, or so determined to go birds-nestig that he got himself eaten by bears who lived haudly in the neighbourhood. I tell you what I should like. We are so harmonious, and you have been a blacksmith—would you mind it?"

"I shouldn't mind anything that you propose," I answered, "but I don't understand you."

"Would you mind Handel for a familiar name? There's a charming piece of music by Handel, called the Harmonious Blacksmith."

"I should like it very much."

"Then, my dear Handel," said he, turning round as the door opened, "here is the dinner, and I must beg of you to take the top of the table, because the dinner is of your providing."

This I would not hear of, so he took the top, and I fixed him. It was a nice little dinner—seemed to me a very Lord Mayor's Feast—and it required additional relish from being eaten under those independent circumstances, with no old people by, and with Lezame round us. This again was brightened by a certain gipsy character that set the banquet off; for while the table was, as Mr. Pumblechook might have said, the lap of luxury—being entirely furnished forth from the coffee-house—the circumstances of the sitting-room was a conservancy gipsy and shifty character: imposing on the waiter the wandering habits of putting the covers on the floor (where he fell over them), the melted butter in the arm-chair, the bread on the bookshelves, the cheese in the coal-scuttle, and the boiled fowl into my bed in the next room—where I found much of its parsley and butter in a state of congelation when I retired for the night. All this made the feast delightful, and when the waiter was not there to watch me, my pleasure was without alloy.

We had made some progress in the dinner, when I reminded Herbert of his promise to tell me about Miss Havisham.

"True," he replied. "I'll redeem it at once. Let me introduce the topic, Handel, by mentioning that in London it is not the custom to put the knife in the mouth—for fear of accidents—"and while the fork is reserved for that use, it is not put further in than is necessary. It is scarcely worth mentioning, only it's as well to do as other people do. Also, the spoon is not generally used over-hand, but under. This has two advantages. You get at your mouth better (which after all is the object), and you save a good deal of the attitude of opening oysters, on the part of the right elbow."

He offered these friendly suggestions in such a lively way that we both laughed and I scarcely blushed.

"Now," he pursued, "concerning Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham, you must know, was a spoilt child. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father denied her nothing. Her father was a country gentleman down in your part of the world, and was a brewer. I don't know why it should be a crack thing to be a brewer; but it is indisputable that while you cannot possibly be gentleman and brewer, you may be as general as never was and brew. You see it every day."

"A gentleman may not keep a public-house; may he?" said I. If "Not on any account," returned Herbert; "but a public-house may keep a gentleman. Well! Mr. Havisham was very rich and very proud. So was his daughter."

"Miss Havisham was an only child?" I hazarded.

"Stop a moment, I am coming to that. No, she was not an only child; she had a half-brother. Her father privately married again—his cook, I rather think."

"I thought he was proud," said I.

"My good Handel, so he was. He married his second wife privately, because he was proud, and in course of time she died. When she was dead, I apprehend he first told his daughter what he had done, and then the son became a part of the family, residing in the house you are acquainted with. As the son grows a young man, he turned out violent, extravagant, un-
dutiful—altogether bad. At last his father disinherited him; but he softened when he was dying, and left him well off, though not nearly so well off as Miss Havisham. Take another glass of wine, and excuse my mentioning that society as a body does not expect one to be so strictly conscientious in emptying one’s glass, as to turn it bottom upwards with the rim on one’s nose.

I had been doing this, in an excess of attention to his recital. I thanked him and apologized. He said, “Not at all,” and resumed.

“Miss Havisham was now an heiress, and you may suppose was looked after as a great lady. Her half-brother had now ample means again, but what with debts and what with new madness wasted them most fearfully again. There were stronger differences between him and her than there had been between him and his father, and it is suspected that he cherished a deep and mortal grudge against her, as having influenced the father’s anger. Now, I came to the cruel part of the story—merely breaking off my story. I have retired to a distant nephew will not go into a tumble.”

“Why I was trying to pack mine into my tumbler, I am wholly unable to say. I only know that I found myself with a perseverance worse than a better, and thinking the most strenuous exertions to compress it within those limits. Again I thanked him and apologized, and again I said in the cheerfulness manner, “Not at all. I am sure?” and resumed.

“There appeared upon the scene—say at the races, or the public halls, or anywhere else. You like—a certain man, who made love to Miss Havisham. I never saw him, for this happened five and twenty years ago (before you and I were, I believe), but I have heard my father mention that he was a showy man, and the kind of man for the purpose. But that he was not to be, without ignorance or prejudice, mistaken for a gentleman, and the kind of man most strongly associated; because it is a principle of his that no man was a true gentleman at heart, ever was, since the world began, a true gentleman in summer. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of the wood; and the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself. Well! This man pursued Miss Havisham closely, and professed to be devoted to her. I believe she had shown much susceptibility up to that time; but all she possessed, certainly came out then, and she passionately loved him. There is no doubt that she perfectly idolized him. He practiced on her affection in that systematic way, that he got great sums of money from her, and he induced her to buy her brother out of a share in the brewery (which had been weakly left him by his father) at an immense price, on the plea that when he was her husband he must sell and manage it all. Your guardian was not at that time in Miss Havisham’s counsels, and she was too haughty and too much in love, to be advised by any one. Her relations were poor and harmless, with the exception of my father; he was poor enough, but not time-serving or jealous. The only independent one among them, he warned her that she was doing much for this man, and was placing herself too unreservedly in his power. She took the first opportunity of doubly ordering my father out of the house, in her presence, and my father has never seen her since.”

I thought of her having said “Matthew will come and see me at last when I am laid dead upon that table.” and I asked Herbert whether his father was so inveterate against her?

“It’s not that,” said he, “but she charged him in the presence of her intended husband with being disappointed in the hope of marrying upon her for his own advancement, and, if he were to go to her now, it would look true—even to him—and even to her. To return to the man and make an end of him. The marriage day was fixed, the wedding dress was bought, the wedding tour was planned out, the wedding guests were invited. The day came, but not the bridegroom. He wrote her a letter—”

“What did he receive?” I asked.

“When she was dressing for her marriage? At twenty minutes to nine?”

“At the hour and minute,” said Herbert, “at which she afterwards stopped all the clocks. What was further than that the most heartless broke the marriage off, I can’t tell you, because I don’t know. When she recovered from a bad illness that she had, she laid the whole place waste, as you have seen it, and she has never since looked upon the light of day.”

“Is that all the story?” I asked, after considering it.

“All I know of it; and indeed I only know so much, through picking it out for myself; for my father always avoids it, and even when Miss Havisham invited me to go there, told me no more of it than it was absolutely requisite I should understand. But I have forgotten one thing. It has been supposed that the man to whom she gave her misplaced confidence, noted throughout in concert with her half-brother; that it was a conspiracy between them; and that they shared the profits.”

“I wonder he didn’t marry her and get all the property,” said I.

“Woe may have been married already, and her cruel mortification may have been a part of her half-brother’s scheme,” said Herbert. “Mind! I don’t know that.”

“What became of the two men?” I asked, after again considering the subject.

“They fell into deeper shame and degradation—if there can be deeper—and ruin.”

“Are they alive now?”

“I don’t know.”

“You said just now, that Estella was no relation to Miss Havisham, nor adopted. When adopted?”

Herbert shrugged his shoulders. “There has always been an Estella, since I have heard of a Miss Havisham. I know no more. And now LinkedIn,” said he, finally throwing off the
story as it were, "there is a perfectly open understanding between us. All that I know about Miss Havisham, you know.

"And all that I know," I retorted, "you know.

"I fully believe it. So there can be no competition or perplexity between you and me. And as to the condition on which you hold your advancement in life—namely, that you are not to inquire or discuss to whom you owe it—you led me up to the theme for the purpose of clearing it out of my way. And I have always been a very easy subject, or even approached, by me, or by any one belonging to me."

In truth, he said this with so much delicacy, that I felt the subject done with, even though I should be under his father's roof for years and years to come. Yet he said it with so much meaning, too, that I felt he so perfectly understood Miss Havisham to be my benefactress, as I understood the fact myself.

It had not occurred to me before, that he had led up to the theme for the purpose of clearing it out of my way; but we were so much the lighter and easier for having broached it, that I now perceived this to be the case. We were in the course of conversation, what he was to think, when he added, "for he added, "Somehow, that pursuit seemed more in keeping with me."

It seemed to me that he took all blows and buffets now, with just the same air as he had taken mine then. It was evident that he had nothing around him but the simplest necessaries, and wished Jed did. He insured mostly traded to the East Indies, for sugar, tobacco, and rum, his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, to the West Indies, for sugar, tobacco, and rum. Also to Ceylon, specially for elephants' tusks."

"You will want a good many ships," said I.

"A perfect fleet," said he.

Quite overwhelmed by the magnificence of those transactions, I asked him where the ships he insured mostly traded to at present?

"I haven't begun insuring yet," he replied.

"I am looking after about me."

Somehow, that pursuit seemed more in keeping with Barnard's Inn. I said (in a tone of conviction) "Ah-ha!"

"Yes, I am in a counting-house, and looking about me."

"Is a counting-house profitable? I asked.

"To you, do you mean to the young fellow who's in it?" he asked, in reply.

"Yes; to you."

"Why, no: not to me." He said this with the air of one carefully reckoning up and striking a balance. "Not directly profitable. That is, it doesn't pay me anything, and I have to—keep myself.

"But the thing is," said Herbert Poonke, "that you look about you. That's the grand thing. You are in a counting-house, you know, and you look about you."

It struck me as a singular implication that you couldn't be out of a counting-house, you know, and look about you; but I silently deferred to his experience.

"Then the time comes," said Herbert, "when you see opportunity, and you go in and you swoop upon it and you make your capital, and then there you are! When you have once made your capital, you have nothing to do but employ it."

This was very like his way of conducting that encounter in the garden; very like. His manner of bearing his poverty, too, exactly corresponded to his manner of bearing that debt. It seemed to me that he took all blows and buffets now, with just the same air as he had taken mine then. It was evident that he had nothing around him but the simplest necessaries, for everything that I remarked upon, turned out to have been sent in on my account from the coffee-house or somewhere else.

Yet, having already made his fortune in his own mind, he was so unassuming with it that I felt quite grateful to him for not being puffed up. It was a pleasant addition to his naturally pleasant ways, and we got on famously. In the evening we went out for a walk in the streets, and went half-price to the Theatre; and next day we went to church at Westminster Abbey, and in the afternoon we walked in the Parks; and I wondered who all the horses there, and wished Joe did.

On a moderate computation, it was many months, that Sunday, since I had left Joe and Biddy. The space interspersed between myself and them, partook of that expansion, and our acquaintance was no distance off. That I could have been at our old church in my old church-going clothes, on the very last Sunday that ever was, seemed a combination of impossibilities, geographical and social, solar and lunar. Yet in the London streets so crowded with people and so brilliantly lighted in the dusk of evening, there were descending hints of reproaches for that I had put the poor old kitchen at home so far away; and in the dead of night, the footsteps of some incapable impostor of a porter mooing about Barnard's Inn, under
pretence of watching it, fell hollow on my heart.

On the Monday morning at a quarter before nine, Herbert went to the counting-house to report himself—to look about him, too, I suppose—and I bore him company. He was to come away in an hour or two to attend me to Hammersmith, and I was to wait about for him. It appeared to me that the eggs from which young Insurers were hatched, were incubated in dust and heat, like the eggs of ostriches, judging from the places to which those incipient giants repaired on a Monday morning. Nor did the counting-house where Herbert assisted, show in my eyes as at all a good Observatory; being a back second floor up a yard, of a grimy presence in all particulars, and with a look into another back second floor rather than a look out.

I waited until it was noon, and I went upon O'Change, and I saw two men sitting there under the bits about shipping, whom I took to be great philanthropists, though I couldn't understand why they should all be out of spirits. When Herbert came, he went and had lunch at a celebrated house which I then quite venerated. I supposed—I suppose—and I bore him company. He was no doubt she would have been quite well.

I-Hammersmith, and I was to wait about for him. would have sent her compliments, then the It appeared to me that the eggs from which nurse came to my rescue. the young Insurers were hatched, were incubated Well! she cried, picking up the pocket-handkerchief, if that don't make seven times! I won't see you doing this afternoon, Mum! Mrs. Pocket received her property at first with the look of unutterable surprise as if she had never seen it before, and then with a laugh of recognition, and said, Thank you, Flopson, and forgot me, and went on reading.

I found, now I had leisure to count them, that there were no fewer than six little Pockets present, in various stages of tumbling up. I had scarcely arrived at the total when a seventh was heard, as in the region of air, waiting dolefully.

"If there ain't Baby!" said Flopson, appearing to think it most surprising. "Make haste up, Millers!"

Millers, who was the other nurse, retired into the house, and by degrees the child's waiting was busied and stopped, as if it were a young vertiginist with something in its mouth. Mrs. Pocket read all the time, and I was curious to know what the book could be.

We were waiting, I supposed, for Mr. Pocket to come out to us; at any rate we waited there, and so I had an opportunity of observing the remarkable family phenomenon that whenever any of the children strayed near Mrs. Pocket in their play, they always tripped themselves up and tumbled over her—always very much to her momentary astonishment, and their own more enduring amazement. I was at a loss to account for this surprising circumstance, and could not help giving my mind to speculations about it, until by-and-by Millers came down with the baby, which was handed to Flopson, which Flopson was handing it to Mrs. Pocket, when she gave fairly head foremost over Mrs. Pocket, baby and all, and was caught by Herbert and myself.

"Gracious me, Flopson!" said Mrs. Pocket, looking off her book for a moment, "everybody's tumbling!"

"Gracious you, indeed, Mum!" returned Flopson, very red in the face; "what have you got there?"

"I got here, Flopson?" asked Mrs. Pocket. "Why, if it isn't your footstool!" cried Flopson. "And if you keep it under your skirts like that, who's to help tumbling! Here! Take the baby, Mum, and give me your book."

Mrs. Pocket noted on the advice, and immediately danced the incest a little in her lap, while the other children played about it. This had lasted but a very short time, when Mrs. Pocket issued summary orders that they were all to be taken into the house for a nap. Thus I made the second discovery on this first occasion, that the dozen lines, she fixed her eyes upon me, and said, "I hope your mamma is quite well?"

This unexpected inquiry put me into such a difficulty that I began saying in the most absurd way that if there had been any such person I had no doubt she would have been quite well and would have been very much obliged and would have sent her compliments, when the nurse came to my rescue.

"Well!" she cried, picking up the pocket-handkerchief, if that don't make seven times! What are you doing of this afternoon, Mum! Mrs. Pocket received her property at first with a look of unutterable surprise as if she had never seen it before, and then with a laugh of recognition, and said, Thank you, Flopson, and forgot me, and went on reading.

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nurture of the little Pockets consisted of alternately tumbling up and lying down. Under these circumstances, when Lipson and Millers had got the children into the house like a little flock of sheep, and Mr. Pocket came out of it to make my acquaintance, I was not much surprised to find that Mr. Pocket was a gentleman with a rather perplexed expression of face, and with his very grey hair disordered on his head as if he didn’t quite see his way to putting anything straight.

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

There is only one way of getting men, true men and plenty of them, into the service of the country, whether as soldiers or sailors, in the present day. It is, to secure for them in either service the reception due to those who spend their lives and energies in any work, to treat them with confidence, spare their vexations and yoke-restrictions, keep faith with them, and enable them to feel that they are set over them work with them, understanding them and respecting them, in order that they may be themselves understood and respected. Where a private soldier who has anything to ask of his officer, is marched up to him by a corporal, who cries Halt! when he comes to the right speaking distance, and stands by, ready to cry about face, quick, march! when he has done—and this is no imaginary case—there cannot be the best of army discipline. When men who have been trained, some prejudice to enter for the ten years’ service in the navy, for the benefit of the small pension and other advantages held out to them, are, without their consent, paid off in the course of the term, and told when they enlist, that they are taken by the state, and only charged to the mess when lost or thrown overboard? The rigger under examination thought the change would be liked, but the boatswain’s mate being examined with this proviso: “Without anything should occur, that the thing should be expended; if you could bring it to a true account.” We rely the profoundness of such observations even when the men cannot make out all their bearings. The Common Soldier—who has bought his discharge—is quite another sort of man. He handles my Lord Palatine with a servile and contemptuous familiarity, and has no doubt that the cursers of the men in the ranks are what he would “facetiously phrase curiously remarks.” But whatever his manner, this writer has facts to tell. He has lived in Chatham barracks as a private in a regiment reckoned to be above the average in comfort; his facts have been produced and reproduced, not only without contradiction but with the comment of some readers that they were too atrocious to be worth telling. To a remark of the Army and Navy Gazette, that while disclosing many evils in the army he has proposed no cure, the soldier’s answer is to point to this matter and that, but to add, “still, I must confess, that the chief points of censure have root, as it seems to me, in the supercilious bearing and dictatorial assumption of the executive.” In fact, the feeling of caste among different grades of the army and navy, is at odds with the temper of the days in which we live. On the day that he first entered a barrack-room, a soldier who wrote, he says, by a soldier of eleven years’ experience, that he had “better have gone and hung himself at once than do what he had done.” He found hatred of officers by men, too common a source of barrack conversation; and to this the non-commissioned officers expose themselves even more frequently than those bearing commissions. (But it must be always remembered that they are more liable to hostility, as being the immediate executors of orders.) So in the navy there seems to be nobody so unpopular as the sergeant-at-arms, who is in the habit of turning to his own account the petty authority he has as an understand ship’s shipkeeper as well as chief of ship’s police. “I was once taking a comrade’s dinner to the hospital,” says the soldier, “when I was ordered back by one of the non-commissioned officers because I dared to cross the barrack square without my regimental stock. The parade-ground was empty.