GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XXV.

Bentley Drummle, who was so sulky a fellow that he even took up a book as if its writer had done him an injury, did not take up the acquaintance in a more amiable spirit. Heavy in figure, movement, and comprehension—in the sluggish complexions of his face, and in the large awkward tongue that seemed to loiter about in his mouth as he himself loitered about in a room he was idle, proud, neglected, reserved, and suspicious. He came of rich people down in Somersetshire, who had nursed this combination of qualities until they made the discovery that it was just of age and a blockhead. Thus Bentley Drummle had come to Mr. Pocket when he was a head taller than that gentleman, and half a dozen heads thicker than most gentlemen.

Startop had been split by a weak mother and kept at home when he ought to have been at school, but he was devotedly attached to her, and admired her beyond measure. He had a woman's delicacy of feature, and was—"as you may see, though you never saw her," said Herbert to me—"exactly like his mother. It was but natural that I should take to him much more kindly than to Drummle, and that even in the earliest evenings of our boating, he and I should pull homeward abreast of one another, conversing from boat to boat, while Bentley Drummle came up in our wake alone, under the overhanging banks and among the rushes. He would always crop us short like some uncomfortable amphibious creature, even when the tide would have sent him fast upon his way; and I always think of him as coming after us in the dark or by the back-water, when our own two boats were breaking the sunset or the moonlight in mid-stream.

Herbert was my intimate companion and friend. I presented him with a half-share in my boat, which was the occasion of his often coming down to Hammersmith; and my possession of a half-share in his chambers often took me up to London. We used to walk between the two places at all hours. I have an affection for the road yet (though it is not so pleasant a road as it was then), formed in the impressiveness of untried youth and hope.

When I had been in Mr. Pocket's family a mouth or two, Mr. and Mrs. Camilla turned up. Camilla was Mr. Pocket's sister. Georgia, whom I had seen at Miss Havisham's on the same occasion, also turned up. She was a cousin—an indigent single woman, who called her rigidly religion, and her liver love. These people hated me with the hatred of cupidity and disappointment. As a matter of course, they favored upon me in my prosperity with the latest news. Towards Mr. Pocket, as a grown-up infant with no notion of his own interests, they showed the complacent forbearance I had heard them express. Mrs. Pocket they had not seen for years and years; and they allowed the poor soul to have been heavily disappointed in life, because that shed a feeble reflected light upon themselves.

These were the surroundings among which I settled down, and applied myself to my education. I soon contradicted expensive habits, and began to spend an amount of money that within a few short months I should have thought almost fabulous, but through good and evil I stuck to my books. There was no other merit in this, than my having sense enough to feel my deficiencies. Between Mr. Pocket and Herbert I got on fast; and, with one or the other always at my elbow to give me the start I wanted, and clear obstructions out of my road, I must have been as great a doll as Drummle if I had done less.

I had not seen Mr. Wemmick for some weeks, when I thought I would write him a note and propose to go home with him on a certain evening. He replied that it would give him much pleasure, and that he would expect me at the office at six o'clock. Thither I went, and there I found him, putting the key of his safe down his back as the clock struck.

"Did you think of walking down to Walworth?" said he.

"Certainly," said I, "if you approve."

"Very much," was Wemmick's reply, "for I have had my legs under the desk all day, and shall be glad to stretch them. Now, I'll tell you what I have got for supper, Mr. Pip. I have got a stewed steak—which is of home preparation—and a cold roast fowl—which is from the cook's shop. I think it's tender, because the master of the shop was a Juryman in some cases of ours the other day, and we let him down easy."

I reminded him of it when I bought the fowl.
and I said, 'Pick us out a good one, old Briton, because if we had chosen to keep you in the box another day or two, we could easily have done it.' He said to that, 'Let me make you a present of the best fowl in the shop.' I let him, of course. As far as it goes, it's property and portable. You don't object to an aged parent, I hope?"

I really thought he was still speaking of the fowl, until he added, "Because I have got an aged parent at my place." I then said that I found it rather unpleasant.

"So, you haven't dined with Mr. Jaggers yet?" he pursued, as we walked along.

"Not yet."

"He told me so this afternoon when he heard you were coming. I expect you'll have him in to dinner to-morrow. I expect you'll have him in, too, whatever he may give you, he said to me publicly, you know."

I highly commended it. I think it was the smallest house I ever saw; with the queerest gothic windows (by far the greater part of them sham), and a gothic door, almost too small to get in at.

"That's a real flagstaff, you see," said Wemmick, and on Sundays I ran up a real flag. Then look here. After I have crossed this bridge, I hoist it up—so—and cut off the communication."

"At nine o'clock every night, Greenwich time," said Wemmick, "the gun fires. There he is, you see! And when you hear him go, I think you'll say he's a Sinner."

"The piece of ordnance referred to, was mounted in a separate fortress, constructed of lattice-work. It was protected from the weather by an ingenious little tarpaulin contrivance in the nature of an umbrella."

"Then, at the back," said Wemmick, "out of sight, so as not to impose the idea of fortifications—for it's a principle with me, if you have an idea, carry it out and keep it up; I don't want that to be your opinion._"

"I said, don't say it!"

"At the back, there's a pig, and there are fowls and rabbits; then I knock together my own little frame, you see, and grow cucumbers; and you'll judge at supper what sort of a man I can make. So, sir," said Wemmick, smilling again, but seriously too as he shook his head, "if you can suppose the little place besieged, it would hold out a devil of a time in point of provisions."

Then he conducted me to a bow window about a dozen yards off, but which was approached by such ingenious twists of path that it took quite a long time to get at; and in this retreat our glasses were already set forth. Our punch was cooling in an ornamental lake, on whose margin the bow window was raised. This piece of water (with an island in the middle which might have been planted for support) was of a circular

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for, and he had constructed a fountain in it, which, when you set a little mill going and took a cork out of a pipe, played to that powerful extent that it made the back of your hand quite wet.

"I am my own engineer, and my own carpenter, and my own plumber, and my own gardener, and my own Jack of all Trades," said Wemmick, in acknowledging my compliments.

"Well; it's a good thing, you know. It brushes the Newgate oathbooks away, and pleases the Aged. You wouldn't mind being at that introduced to the Aged, would you? It wouldn't put you out, would it?"

I expressed the readiness I felt, and we went into the Castle. There we found, sitting by a fire, a very old man in a damask coat; clean, cheerful, and comfortable, and well cared for, and intensely deaf.

"Well aged parent," said Wemmick, shaking hands with him in a cordial and jocose way, "how are you?"

"All right, John; all right!" replied the old man.

"Here's Mr. Pip, aged parent," said Wemmick, "and wish you could hear his name. Ned away at him, Mr. Pip; that's what he likes. Ned away at him, if you please, like winking!"

"This is a fine place of my son's, sir," cried the old man, while I nodded as hard as I possibly could. "This is a very pleasant-ground, sir. This spot and these beautiful works upon it ought to be kept together by the Nation, after my son's time, for the people's enjoyment."

"You're as proud of it as Punch; ain't you, Aged?" said Wemmick, contemplating the old man with his head really softened;

"there's a nod for you!" giving him a tremendous one; "there's another for you!" giving him a still more tremendous one; "you like that, don't you, Aged, Mr. Pip?"

thought I knew it's tiring to strangers—will you tip him one more? You can't think how it pleases him."

I tipped him several more, and he was in great spirits. We left him bestirring himself to feed the owls, and we sat down to our punch in the arbour; where Wemmick told me as he smoked a pipe that he had taken a good many years to bring the property up to its present pitch of perfection.

"Is it your own, Mr. Wemmick?"

"Oh yes," said Wemmick, "I have got hold of it, a bit at a time. It's a freehold, by George!"

"Is it, indeed? I hope Mr. Jaggers admires it?"

"Never seen it," said Wemmick. "Never heard of it. Never seen the Aged. Never heard of him. No; the office is one thing, and private life is another. When I come into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me. If it's not in any way disagreeable to you, you'll oblige me by doing the same. I don't wish it professionally spoken about."

Of course I felt my good faith involved in the observation of his request. The punch being very nice, we sat there drinking it and talking, until it was almost nine o'clock.

"Getting near gun-fire," said Wemmick then, as he laid down his pipe; "it's the Aged's treat."

Proceeding into the Castle again, we found the Aged heating the potter, with expectant eyes, as a preliminary to the performance of this great nightly ceremony. Wemmick stood with his watch in his hand, until the moment was come for him to take the red-hot poker from the Aged, and repair to the battery of the Keelboat, and went out, and presently the Stinger went off with a Bang that shook the crazy little box of a cottage as if it must fall to pieces, and made every glass and teacup ring. Upon this, the Aged—who I believe would have been blown out of his arm-chair but for holding on by the elbows—cried out exultingly, "He's fixed! I heard him!" and I nodded at the old gentleman until it is no figure of speech to declare that I absolutely could not see him.

The interval between that time and supper Wemmick devoted to showing me his collection of curiosities. They were mostly of a fabulous character; comprising the pen with which a celebrated forgery had been committed, a distinguished razor or two, some locks of hair, and several manuscript confessions written under condemnation—upon which Mr. Wemmick set particular value as being, to use his own words, "every one of 'em Lits, sir.

These were agreeably dispersed among small specimens of china and glass, various neat trifles made by the proprietor of the museum, and some tobacco-stoppers carved by the Aged. They were all displayed in that chamber in the Castle, in which I had been first inducted, and which served, not only as the general sitting-room but as the kitchen too, if I might judge from a scupper on the hob, and a large fireplace designed for the suspension of a roasting-jack.

There was a neat little girl in attendance, who looked after the Aged in the day. When we had laid the supper-cloth, the bridge was lowered to give her means of ingress, and she withdrew for the night. The supper was excellent; and though the Castle was rather too hot to eat so much that it tasted like a bednut, and though the pig might have been further off, I was heartily pleased with my whole entertainment. Nor was there any drawback on my little furres bedchambers, beyond there being such a very thin ceiling between me and the flagstaff that when I lay down on my back in bed, it seemed as if I had to balance that pole on my forehead all night.

Wemmick was up early in the morning, and I am afraid I heard him cleaning my boots. After that, he fell to gardening, and I saw him from my goats window pretending to employ the Aged, and nodding at him in a most devoted manner. Our breakfast was as good as the supper, and at half-past eight precisely we started for Little Britain. By degrees, Wemmick got drier and harder as we went along,
and his mouth tightened into a post-office again. At last when he got to his place of business and he pulled out his key from his coat-collar, he looked as unconscious of his Walworth property as if the Castle and the drawbridge and the arbour and the lake and the fountain and the Age, had all been blown into space together by the last discharge of the Stinger.

CHAPTER XXV.

It fell out, as Wemmick had told me it would, that I had an early opportunity of comparing my guardian's establishment with that of his cashier and clerk. My guardian was in his room, washing his hands with his scented soap, and he called me to him, and gave me the invitation for myself and friend which Wemmick had prepared me to receive. "No ceremony," he stipulated, "and no dinner dress, and say to-morrow." I asked him where we should come to (for I had no idea where he lived), and I believe it was in his general objection to make anything like an admission, that he replied, "Come in as I pull out my key and open the door, and we all went into a stone hall, bare, gloomy, and little used. So, in a dark brown staircase into a series of three dark brown rooms on the first floor. There were carved galleries on the panelled walls, and as he stood among them giving us welcome, I knew what kind of hopes I thought they looked like.

Dinner was laid in the best of these rooms; the second was his dressing-room; the third his bedroom. He told us that he held the whole house, but rarely used more of it than we saw. The table was comfortably laid—not silver in the service, of course—and on the side of his chair was a capacious dumb-waiter, with a variety of bottles and decanters on it, and four dishes of fruit for dessert. I noticed throughout, that he kept everything under his own hand, and distributed everything himself.

There was a bookcase in the room; I saw, from the backs of the books, that they were about evidence, criminal law, legal biography, trials, acts of parliament, and such things. The furniture was all very solid and good, like his watch-chain. It had an official look, however, and there was nothing merely ornamental to be seen. In a corner, was a little table of papers with a shaded lamp: so that he seemed to bring the office home with him in that respect too, and to wheel it out of an evening and fall to work.

As he had scarcely seen my three companions until now for he and I had walked together—
he stood on the hearth-rug, after ringing the bell, and took a searching look at them. To my surprise, he seemed at once to be principally if not solely interested in Drummle.

"Hm," said he, putting his large hand on my shoulder and moving me to the window, "I don't know one from the other. Who's the Spider?"

"The spider?" said I.

"That's Bentley Drummle," I replied, "the one with the delicate face is Scrooge."

Not making the least account of "the one with the delicate face," he returned, "Bentley Drummle is his name, is it? I like the look of that fellow."

He immediately began to talk to Drummle: not at all deterred by his replying in his heavy reticent way, but apparently led on by it to screw discourse out of him. I was looking at the two, when there came between me and them, the housekeeper, with the first dish for the table.

She was a woman of about forty, I supposed—but I may have thought her older than she was, as it is the manner of youth to do. Rather tall, of a little nimble figure, extremely pale, with large faded-blue eyes, and a quantity of streaming hair. I cannot say whether any diseased affection of the heart caused her lips to fall out, as if she was panting, and her face to bear a curious expression of wondrous and flutter; but I know that I had been to see Macbeth at the theatre, a night or two before, and that her face looked to me as if it were all disturbed by these airs, like the faces I had seen rise out of the Witches' cauldron. She set the dish on, touched my guardian quietly on the arm with a finger to notify that dinner was ready, and vanished. We took our seats at the round table, and my guardian kept Drummle on one side of him, while Scrooge sat
on the other. It was a noble dish of fish that the housekeeper had put on the table, and we had a joint of equally choice mutton afterwards, and then an equally choice bird. Sauces, wines, all the accessories we wanted, and all of the best, were given out by our host from his hives and forks, for each course, and dropped by his chair. No other attendant than the housekeeper, both by her own striking appearance and by her skill in the preparation, I observed that she put them back before her, hesitatingly, as if she dreaded his criticism. Years afterwards, I fancied that I could detect in his manner a consciousness of this, and a purpose of always holding her in suspense.

Dinner went on gaily, and, although my guardian seemed to follow rather than originate subjects, I knew that he wrestled the weakest part of our diapasons out of us. For myself, I found that I was expressing my tendency to lavish expenditure, and to patronise Horace, and to boast of my great prospects, before I quite knew that I had opened my lips. It was so with all of us, but with no one more than Drummlie: the development of whose inclination to gird in a grudging and suspicious manner at the rest, was screwed out of him before the fish was taken off. It was not then, but when we had got to the cheese, that our conversation turned upon our pleasing suits, and that Drummlie was rallied for coming up behind of a night in that sly ambiguous way of his. Drummlie upon this, informed our host that he much preferred our room to our other, and that he was more than our master, and that as to strength, he could scatter us like chaff. By some invisible agency, my guardian wound him up to a pitch of excitement about this trifle; and he fell into a sort of frenzy about how muscular it was, and we all fell to baring our arms in a ridiculous manner.

Now, the housekeeper was at that time clearing the table; my guardian, taking no heed of her, but with the side of his face turned from her, was leaning back in his chair biting the side of his forefinger and showing an interest in Drummlie, that, to me, was quite inexplicable. Suddenly, he snapped his lips across the housekeeper's, like a trap, as she stretched it across the table. So suddenly and smartly did he do this, that we all stopped in our foolish contention.

"If you talk of strength," said Mr. Jaggers, "I'll show you a wrist. Molly, let them see your wrist." Her entrapped hand was on the table, but she had already put her other hand behind her waist. "Master," she said, in a low voice, with her eyes attentively andarestingly fixed upon him.

"Don't!"

"I'll show you a wrist," repeated Mr. Jaggers, with an immovable determination to show it. "Molly, let them see your wrist."

"Master," she again murmured. "Please!"

"Molly," said Mr. Jaggers, not looking at her, but obstinately looking at the opposite side of the room, "let them see both your wrists. Show them. Come!"

He took his hand from hers, and turned that wrist up on the table. She brought her other hand from behind her, and held the two out side by side. The last wrist was much disfigured—deeply scarred and scarred across and across. When she held her hands out, she took her eyes from Mr. Jaggers, and turned to my guardian, talking no heed of him.

"There's power here," said Mr. Jaggers, coolly tracing out the sinews with his forefinger. "Very few men have the power of wrist that this woman has. It's remarkable what more force of grip there is in these hands. I have had occasion to notice many hands; but I never saw stronger in that respect than a woman's, since yours."

While he said these words in a leisurely critical style, she continued to look at every one of us in regular succession as we sat. The moment he ceased, she looked at him again. "That'll do, Molly," said Mr. Jaggers, giving her a slight nod; "you have been admired, and can go." She withdrew her hands and went out of the room, and Mr. Jaggers, putting the decanters on from his dumb-waiter, filled his glass and passed round the wine.

"At half-past nine, gentlemen," said he, "we must break up. Pray make the best use of your time. I am glad to see you all. Mr. Drummlie, I drink to you."

If his object in singling out Drummlie were to bring him out still more, it perfectly succeeded. In a sulky triumph, Drummlie showed a more offensive degree than we became downright intolerable. Through all his stages, Mr. Jaggers followed him with the same strange interest. He actually seemed to serve as a test to Mr. Jaggers's wine.

In our boyish want of discretion I dare say we took too much of it, and I know we talked too much. We became particularly hot upon some boorish snor of Drummlie's, to the effect that we were too free with our money. It led to my remarking, with more zeal than discretion, that it came with a bad grace from him, to whom Startop had lent money in my presence, but a week or so before.
"Well," retorted Drummle: "he'll be paid."

"I don't mean to imply that he won't," said I, "but it might make you hold out money to any of us, if we wanted it."

"You should think!" retorted Drummle.

"Oh Lord!"

"I dare say," I went on, meaning to be very severe, "that you wouldn't lend money to anybody a sixpence."

"Rather mean to borrow under those circumstances, I should say."

"You should say," repeated Drummle. "Oh Lord!"

This was so very aggravating—the more so, as I found myself making no way against his surly obstinacy—that I said, disregarding Herbert's efforts to check me:

"Come, Mr. Drummle, since we are on the subject, I'll tell you what passed between Herbert here and me, when you borrowed that money."

"I don't want to know what passed between Herbert there and you," growled Drummle. "I don't mean to borrow under those circumstances, I should say."

"I told him that I had come up again, to say how sorry I was that anything disagreeable should have occurred, and that I hoped he would not blame me much."

"Pooh!" said he, slouching his head, and speaking through the water-drops; "it's nothing. Pip, I like that Spider though."

He had turned towards me now, and was brushing his head, and blowing, and towelling himself:

"I am glad you like him, sir," said I, "but I don't."

"No, no," my guardian assented, "don't have too much to do with him. Keep as clear of him as you can. But I like the fellow, Pip: he is one of the true sort. Why, if I was a fortune-teller——"

Looking out of the towel, he caught my eye.

"But I am not a fortune-teller," he said, letting his head drop into a fist-bowl of towel, and towelling away at his two ears. "You know what I am, don't you? Good-night, Pip."

"Good night, sir."

"In about a month after that, the Spider's time with Mr. Pocket was up for good, and, to the great relief of all the house but Mrs. Pocket, he went home to the family hole."

Emigrants. In No. 97, Chapter xvi of Great Expectations, page 681, second column, line 16 from the bottom, the word "nephew" is printed instead of "cousin." The line should read, "Mr. Pip is Miss Havisham's cousin."

POETS AT FAULT.

Or all the regular phenomena of Nature, hardy one is so beautiful and solemn, or so deeply interesting to man, as the dawn of light in the early morning. It is interesting to the heart of man, not only because it is the natural call to renewed labor, but because it is the return of our hemisphere of the very source of life and fertility. How grand the thought that that golden crown of light and heat, thousands of miles away in the measureless amplitude of heaven, shines unceasingly; that when for a brief space we quit our sight, it is to verify our human kindred at the antipodes, leaving to us shadows and sleep and dreams; that this globe of ours is perpetually basking, in some portions of its surface, in the splendor of the sun's sphere, gliding smoothly, noiselessly, and unceasingly, out of zones of brightness into zones of night, out of darkness into day. At no moment are we made so sensible of this sublime ordination as at the time of dawn, and no operation of Providence is so suggestive of poetry as this daily repetition of one of the chief creative acts.

Yet it would seem that the greatest of our English poets have not been fully impressed