GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER VII.

My state of mind regarding the pilfering from which I had been so unexpectedly exonerated, did not impair me to frank disclosure; but I hope it had some degree of good at the bottom of it.

I do not recall that I felt any tenderness of conscience in reference to Mrs. Joe, when the fear of being found out was lifted off me. But I love Joe—perhaps for no better reason in those early days than because the dear fellow let me love him—and, as to him, my inner self was not so easily composed. It was much upon my mind (particularly when I first saw him looking about for his slip) that I ought to tell Joe the whole truth. Yet I did not, and for the reason that I mistrusted that if I did, he would think me worse than I was. The fear of losing Joe's confidence, said of those first sitting in the chimney corner at night staring drearily at my mother, and friend, tied up my tongue. I morbidly represented to myself that if Joe knew it, I never afterwards could see him at the fireside feeding his fair whisker, without thinking that he was meditating on it. That, if Joe knew it, I never afterwards could see him glance, however casually, at yesterday's meal, or pudding when it came on to-day's table, without thinking that he was debating whether I had been in the pantry. That, if Joe knew it, and at my subsequent period of our joined domestic life remarked that his beer was flat or thick, the conviction that he suspected far in it, would bring a rush of blood to my face. In a word, I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong. I had had no intercourse with the world at that time, and I imitated none of its many inhabitants who act in this manner. Quite an untaught genius, I made the discovery of the line of action for myself.

As I was sleepy before we were far away from the prison ship, Joe took me on his back again and carried me home. He must have had a tame journey of it, for Mr. Wopsle, being knocked up, was in such a very bad temper that if the Chimes had been thrown open, he would probably have communicated the whole expedi-
deceased relations had been referred to as "Below," I have no doubt I should have formed the worst opinions of that member of the family. Neither were my notions of the theological positions to which my Catholic bound me, at all accurate; for, I have a lively remembrance that I supposed my declaration that I was to "walk in the same all the days of my life," laid me under an obligation always to go through the village from our house in one particular direction, and never to vary it by turning down by the wheelwright's or up by the mill.

When I was old enough, I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and until I could assume that dignity I was not to be what Mrs. Joe called "Pompey," or (as I render it) pampered. Therefore, I was not only odd-boy about the forge, but if any neighbour happened to want an extra boy to frighten birds, or pick up stones, or do any such job, I was favoured with the employment. In order, however, that our superior position might not be compromised thereby, a money-box was kept on the kitchen mantelshelf, into which it was publicly made known that all my earnings were dropped. I have an impression that they were to be contributed eventually towards the liquidation of the National Debt, but I know I had no hope of personal participation in the treasure.

Mr. Wopale's great-aunt kept an evening school in the village; that is to say, she was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening, in the society of youth who paid twopence per week each, for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it. She rented a small cottage, and Mr. Wopale had the room upstairs, where we students used to overhear him reciting aloud in a most dignified and terrible manner, and occasionally bumping on the ceiling. There was a fiction that Mr. Wopale "examined" the scholars, once a quarter. What he did on those occasions, was to turn up his cuffs, slick up his hair, and give us Mark Antony's oration over the body of Caesar. This was always followed by Collins's Ode on the Passions, wherein I particularly venerated Mr. Wopale as Revenge, throwing his blood-stained sword in thunder down, and taking the War department of his cap with a withering look. It was not with me then, as it was in later life: when I fell into the society of the Passions, and compared them with Collins and Wopale, rather to the disadvantage of both gentlemen.

Mr. Wopale's great-aunt, besides keeping this Educational Institution, kept—in the same room—a little general shop. She had no idea what stock she had, or what the price of anything in it was, but there was a little greasy memorandum-book kept in a drawer, which served as a Catalogue of Prices, and by this crude, Biddy arranged all the shops transactions. Biddy was Mr. Wopale's great-aunt's granddaughter; I confess myself quite unequal to the working-out of the problem, what relation she was to Mr. Wopale. She was an orphan like myself; like me, too, had been brought up by hand. She was most noticeable, I thought, in respect of her extremities; for, her hair always wanted brushing, her hands always wanted washing, and her shoes always wanted mending and pulling up at heel. This description must be received with a week-day limitation. On Sundays, she went to church elaborately.

Much of my unsatisfied self, and more by the help of Biddy than of Mr. Wopale's great-aunt, I struggled through the alphabet as if it had been a thimble-bush; getting considerably worried and scratched by every letter. After that, I fell among those thieves, the nine figures, who seemed every evening to do something new to disguise themselves and baffle recognition. But, at last I began, in a publind groping way, to read, write, and cipher, on the very smallest scale.

One night, I was sitting in the chimney corner with my slate, expending great efforts on the production of a letter to Joe. I think it must have been a full year after our hunt upon the marshes, for it was a long time after, and it was winter and a hard frost. With an alphabet on the hearth at my feet for reference, I contrived in an hour or two to print and smear this epistle:

"J DEES JO i OBE U R KAWFIE WELI i OBE i SMAL SON B KAWFIE 0 2 TEREDE I JO AN THEN WED AN NO BOUND AN WHEN I M FURGED 2 U JO WOT BAER AN KAWFIE 0 0 "

There was no indisputable necessity for my communicating with Joe by letter, inasmuch as he sat beside me and we were alone. But, the letter lived this written communication (stable and all) with my own hand, and Joe received it as a miracle of crotten.

"I say, Pip, old chap!" cried Joe, opening his blue eyes wide, "what a scholar you are! An't you?"

"I should like to be," said I, gazing at the slate as he held it: with a misgiving that the writing was rather lilly.

"Why, here's a J," said Joe, "and a Q equal to anything! Here's a J and a Q, Pip, and a J-Q, Joe."

I had never heard Joe read aloud to any greater effect than this monosyllable, and I had observed at church last Sunday when I incidentally held our Prayer-Book upside down, that it seemed to suit his convenience quite as well as if it had been all right. Wishing to embrace the present moment of finding out where to begin in teaching Joe I should have to begin quite at the beginning, I said, "Ah! But read the rest, Joe."

"The rest, oh, Pip?" said Joe, looking at it with a slowly searching eye. "Oo! two, three. Why, here's three Js, and three Os, and three J-Q, Joe's in it, Pip?"

I leaned over Joe, and, with the aid of my forefingers, read him the whole letter.

"Astonishing!" said Joe, when I had finished. "You are a scholar!"

"How do you spell Gargery, Joe?" I asked him, with a modest patronage.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.  [December 15, 1863.]

“I don’t spell it at all,” said Joe.

“But supposing you did?”

“It can’t be supposed,” said Joe. “Thou’st uncommon fond of reading, too.”

“Aren’t you, Joe?”

“On-cornmon. Give me,” said Joe, “a good book, or a good newspaper, and sit me down afore a good fire, and I ask no better. Lord,” he continued, after rubbing his knees a little, “when you do come to a J and a O, and says you, ‘Here, at last, is a J-O, Joe,’ how interesting is it!”

I derived from this, that Joe’s education, like Stearns, was yet in its infancy. Pursuing the subject, I inquired:

“Didn’t you ever go to school, Joe, when you were as little as me?”

“No, Pip.”

“Why didn’t you ever go to school, Joe, when you were as little as me?”

“Well, Pip,” said Joe, taking up the poker and settlement himself to his usual occupation when he was thoughtful, of slowly raking the fire between the lower hearth. “I’ll tell you, Pip. My father, Pip, he gave me to drink, and when he were overtook with drink, he hammered away at my mother, most unmercifully. It was just the only hammering he did, indeed, ’cepting at myself. And he hammered at me with a wigmans, only to be equalled by the wigman with which he didn’t hammer at his own. —You’re a listening and understanding, Pip.”

“Yes, Joe.”

“Consequence, my mother and me we run away from my father, several times; and then my mother she’d go out to work, and she’d say, ‘Joe,’ she’d say, ‘now, please God, you shall have some schooling, child,’ and she’d put me to school. But my father was that good in his heart that he couldn’t bear to be without us. So, he’d come with a most tremendous crowd and make such a row at the doors of the house where we was, that they used to be obliged to have no more to do with us and give us up to him. And then he took us home and hammered up to us. Which, you see, Pip,” said Joe, passing in his meditative taking of the fire and looking at me, “were a drawback on my learning.”

“Certainly, poor Joe!”

“Thorough mind you, Pip,” said Joe, with a judicial touch or two of the poker on the top bar. “Rendering unto all their doo, and maintaining equal justice between man and man, my father was that good in his heart, don’t you see?”

I didn’t say; but I didn’t say so.

“Why, Joe pursu’d, ‘somebody must keep the pot a-hiving, Pip, or the pot won’t be big, don’t you know?’

I saw that, and said so.

“Consequently, my father didn’t make objections to my going to work; so I went to work at my present calling, which were his too, if he would have followed it, and I worked tolerable hard, I assure you, Pip. In time I was able to keep him, and keep him till he went off in a purple passion. And it were my intentions to have had put upon his tombstone that What-
best of friends; an't us, Pip? Don't cry, old chap!"

When this little interruption was over, Joe resumed:

"Well, you see, Pip, and here we are! That's about where it lights; here we are! Now, when you take me in hand in my learning, Pip (and I tell you beforehand I am awful dull, most awful dull), Mrs. Joe mustn't see too much of what we're up to. It must be done, as I may say, on the fly. And why on the fly? I'll tell you why, Pip."

He had taken up the poker again, without which, I doubt if he could have proceeded in his demonstration.

"Your sister is given to government."

"Given to government, Joe?" I was startled, for I had some shadowy idea (and I am afraid I must add, hope) that Joe had divorced her in favour of the Lords of the Admiralty, or Treasury.

"Given to government," said Joe. "Which I mean to say the government of you and myself."

"Oh!"

"And she an't over partial to having scholars on the premises," Joe continued, "and in particular would not be over partial to my being a scholar, for fear as I might rise. Like a sort of rebel, don't you see?"

I was going to retort with an inquiry, and had got as far as "Why——" when Joe stopped me.

"Stay a bit. I know what you're going to say, Pip; stay a bit! I don't deny that your sister comes the Mo-gul over us, now and again. I don't deny that she does throw us back-falls, and that she do drop down upon us heavy. At such times as when your sister is on the Ramb-page, Pip," Joe sank his voice to a whisper and glanced at the door, "caus' compels fur to admit that she is a Buster."

Joe pronounced this word, as if it began with at least twelve capital Bs.

"Why don't I rise? That were your observation when I broke it off, Pip?"

"Yessir, Joe."

"Well," said Joe, passing the poker into his left hand, that he might feel his whisker; and I had no hope of him whenever he look to that particular place. "Your sister's a master-mind."

"What's that?" I asked, in some hope of bringing him to a stand. But, Joe was reader with his definition than I had expected, and completely stopped me by arguing circularly, and answering with a fixed look, "Her."

"And I ain't a master-mind," Joe resumed, when he had united his look, and got back to his whisker. "And last of all, Pip—and this I want to say very seriously to you, old chap—I see so much in my poor mother, of a woman drudging and slaving and breaking her honest heart and never getting no peace in her mortal days, that I'm dead afraid of going wrong in the way of not doing what's right by a woman, and I'd rather of the two go wrong the other way, and be a little ill-convenienced myself. I wish it was only me that got put out, Pip; I wish there wasn't no Tickler for you, old chap; I wish I could take it all on myself; but this is the up-and-down-and-straight on it, Pip, and I hope you'll overlook short-comings."

Young as I was, I believe that I dated a new admiration of Joe from that night. We were equals afterwards, as we had been before; but, afterwards at quiet times when I set looking at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart.

"However," said Joe, rising to replenish the fire, "here's the Dutch-clock a working himself up to being equal to striking Eight of 'em, and she's not come home yet! I hope Uncle Pumblechook's mare mayn't have set a fore-foot on a piece o' Joe, and gone down."

Mrs. Joe made occasional trips with Uncle Pumblechook on market days, to assist him in buying such household stuffs and goods as required a woman's judgment; Uncle Pumblechook being a bachelor and reposing as confidence in his domestic servant. This was market-day, and Mrs. Joe was out on one of these expeditions.

Joe made the fire and swept the hearth, and then we went to the door to listen for the chaise-cart. It was a dry cold night, and the wind blew keenly, and the frost was white and hard. A man would die to-night of lying out on the marshes, I thought. And then I looked at the stars, and considered how awful it would be for a man to turn his face up to them as he froze to death, and see no help or pity in all the glittering multitude.

"Here comes the mare," said Joe, "ringing like a peal of bells!"

The sound of her iron shoes upon the hard road was quite musical, as she came along at a much brisker trot than usual. We got a chair out ready for Mrs. Joe's sitting, and stirred up the fire that they might see a bright window, and took a full survey of the kitchen that nothing might be out of its place. When we had completed these preparations, they drove up, wrapped to the eyes. Mrs. Joe was soon landed, and Uncle Pumblechook was soon down too, covering the mare with a cloth, and we were soon all in the kitchen, carrying so much cold air in with us that it seemed to drive all the heat out of the fire.

"Now," said Mrs. Joe, unwrapping herself with haste and excitement, and throwing her h attorney back on her shoulders where it hung by the strings: "if this boy ain't grateful this night, he never will be!"

I looked as grateful as any boy possibly could, who was wholly uninformed why he ought to assume that expression.

"It's only to be hoped," said my sister, "that he won't be Pompeyed. But I have my fears."

"She ain't there, mum," said Mr. Pumblechook. "She knows better."

She? I looked at Joe, making the motion with my lips and eyebrows, "She?" Joe
looked at me, making the motion with his lips and eyebrows, "Shy?" My sister catching him in the act, she drew the back of his hand across his nose with his usual consolatory air on such occasions, and looked at her.

"Well?" said my sister, in her snappish way.

"What are you staring at? Is the house a fire?"

"—Which some individual," Joe politely hinted, "mentioned—she.

"And she is a she, I suppose?" said my sister. "Unless you call Miss Havisham a he. And I doubt if even you'll go so far as that."

"Miss Havisham, up town?" said Joe.

"Is there any Miss Havisham down town?" returned my sister. "She wants this boy to go and play there. And of course he's going. And he had better play there," said my sister, shaking her head at me as an encouragement to be extremely light and sportive, "or I'll work him."

I had heard of Miss Havisham up town—everybody for miles round, had heard of Miss Havisham up town—as an immensely rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house barricaded against robbers, and who led a life of seclusion.

"Well to be sure!" said Joe, astonished.

"I wonder how she comes to know Pip?"

"Noodle!" cried my sister. "Who said she knew him?"

"—Which some individual," Joe again politely hinted, "mentioned that she wanted him to go and play there."

"And couldn't she ask Uncle Pumblechook if he knew of a boy to go and play there? Isn't it just barely possible that Uncle Pumblechook may be a tenant of hers, and that he may have sometimes—woe betide—quarterly or half yearly, for that would be requiring too much of you—but sometimes—go there to pay his rent? And couldn't she then ask Uncle Pumblechook if he knew of a boy to go and play there? And couldn't Uncle Pumblechook, being always considerate and thoughtful for us—though you may not think it, Joseph," in a tone of the deepest reproach, as if he were the most callous of nephews, "thou mention this boy, standing praying here—which I solemnly declare I was not doing—that I have for ever been a willing slave to?"

"Good again!" cried Uncle Pumblechook.

"Well put! Prettily pointed! Good indeed! Now Joseph, you know the case.

"No Joseph," said my sister, still in a reproachful manner, while Joe apologetically drew the back of his hand across and across his nose, "you do not yet—though you may not think it—know the case. You may consider that you do, but you do not Joseph. But you do not know that Uncle Pumblechook, being sensible that for anything we can tell, this boy's fortune may be made by his going to Miss Havisham's, has offered to take him into town to-night in his own chaise-cart, and to keep him to-night, and to take him with his own hands to Miss Havisham's to-morrow morning. And Lor-a-mussy me! cried my sister, casting off her bonnet in sudden desperation, "here I stand talking to mere Moonsalls, with Uncle Pumblechook waiting, and the mere catching cold at the door, and the boy grinned with crook and dirt from the hair of his head to the soles of his feet!"

With that, she pounced upon me, like an eagle on a lamb, and my face was squeezed into wooden bowls in sinks, and my head was put under taps of water-hulls, and I was soaped, and kneeded, and towelled, and thumped, and rapped, until I really was quite beside myself. (May here remark that I suppose myself to be better acquainted than any living authority, with the ridgy effect of a wedding-ring, passing unsympathetically over the human countenance.)

When my ablutions were completed, I was put into clean lines of the stiffest character, like a young penitent into sackcloth, and was trussed up in my tightest and taurfulst suit. I was then delivered over to Mr. Pumblechook, who formally received me as if he were the Sheriff, and who let off upon me the speech that I knew he had been dying to make all along: "Boy, be ever grateful to all friends, but especially unto them which brought you up by hand!"

"Good-bye, Joe!"

"God bless you, Pip, old chap!"

I had never parted from before, and what with my feelings and what with soap-suds, I could at first see no stars from the chaise-cart. But they twinkled out one by one, without throwing any light on the questions why on earth I was going to play at Miss Havisham's, and what on earth I was expected to play at.

**THE MOON.**

Tum moonlight aspects both of mighty cities and of wild and natural scenery—moonlight walks, and moonlight drives—offer a most agreeable variety in the number of impressions which lie within the range of human enjoyment. The season, too, has now arrived when the sun's brief stay above the horizon renders the moon a much more conspicuous object in our eyes, than she is during the longer and lighter days of summer. Most persons, at present, will prefer having some precise idea of the surface of the silvery luminous which shines overhead, to discussing whether the spots that are visible upon it represent a face merely, or a man at full-length carrying a fagot of sticks upon his shoulders. We therefore direct our readers' attention to a clear and admirable map of the moon by Messieurs Lecomteur and A. Chappuis, published this summer, and accompanied by an excellent explanatory pamphlet. The map (in which the moon is delineated with a diameter of very nearly sixteen inches, and which is the only general chart of our satellite that has been given to the French public for the last two centuries*) is sold in Paris for three francs. At a London bookseller's it would cost a twoshoeller, to which must be added a shilling or so for the little treatise which is at the same time put into your

* There are partial maps, and small confused maps, as in Arago's Popular Astronomy.