I divined that my coming had stopped conversation in the room, and that its other occupants were looking at me. I could see nothing of the room except the shining of the fire in the window-glass, but I stiffened in all my joints with the consciousness that I was under close inspection.

There were three ladies in the room and one gentleman. Before I had been standing at the window five minutes, they somehow conveyed to me that they were all toadies and humbugs, but that each of them pretended not to know that the others were toadies and humbugs, because the admission that he or she did know it, would have made him or her out to be a toady and humbug.

They all had a listless and dreary air of waiting somebody’s pleasure, and the most talkative of the ladies had to speak quite rigidly to press a yawn. This lady, whose name was Camilla, very much reminded me of my sister, with the difference that she was older and (as I found when I caught sight of her) of a blunter abruptness of manner quite my sister’s. No—body’s enemy but his own! “It would be much more commendable to be somebody else’s enemy,” said the gentleman; “far more natural.”

“A cousin John,” observed another lady, “are to love our neighbour.”

“Sarah Pocock,” returned Cousin John, “if a man is not his own neighbour, who is?” Miss Pocket laughed, and Camilla laughed and said (checkc a yawn), “The idea!” But I thought they seemed to think it rather a good idea too. The other lady who had not spoken yet, said gravely and emphatically, “Very true!”

“Poor soul!” Camilla presently went on (I knew they had all been looking at me in the mean time), “he is so very strange! Would any one believe that when Tom’s wife died, he actually could not be induced to see the importance of the children having the deepest of sentiments to their mourning? Good Lord!” says he, “Camilla, what can it signify so long as the poor bereaved little things are in black?” So like Matthew! The idea!

“Good points in him; good points in him,”
said Cousin John; "Heaven forbid I should deny good point in him; but he never had, and he never will have, any sense of the proprieties."

"You know I was obliged," said Camilla.

"I was obliged to be firm, I said. "It will not do for the credit of the family." I told him that, without deep trimming, the family was disgraced. I cried about it from breakfast till dinner. I injured my digestion. And last he flung out in his violent way, and said with a D, 'Then do as you like.' Thank Goodness it will always be a consolation to me to know that I instantly went out in a pouring rain and bought the things."

"He paid for them, did he not?" asked Estella.

"It's not the question, my dear child, who paid for them," returned Camilla, "I bought them. And I shall often think of that with peace, when I wake up in the night."

The ringing of a distant bell, combined with the echoing of some cry or call along the passage by which I had come, interrupted the conversation and caused Estella to say to me, "Now, boy!" On my turning round, they all looked at me with the utmost contempt, and, as I went out, said Sarah Pocket, "Well am I sure! What next?" and Camilla add, with indignation, "Was there ever such a fellow! The idea!"

As we were going out with our candle along the dark passage, Estella stopped all of a sudden, and facing round, said in her taunting manner with her face quite close to mine:

"Well, miss?" I answered, almost falling over her and checking myself.

She stood looking at me, and, of course, I stood looking at her.

"Am I pretty?"

"Yes, I think you are very pretty.""Am I insulting?"

"Not so much so as you were last time," said I.

"Not so much so?"

"No." She fired when she asked the last question, and she slapped my face with such force as she had, when I answered it.

"Now," said she, "You little coarse monster, what do you think of me now?"

"I shall not tell you.""Because you are going to tell, up-stairs. Is that it?"

"No," said I, "that's not it."

"Why don't you cry again, you little wretch?""Because I never cry for you again," said I. Which was, I suppose, as false a declaration as ever was made; for I was inwardly crying for her, and I know what I know of the pain she cost me afterwards.

We went on our way up-stairs after this episode; and, as we were going up, we met a gentleman going his way down.

"Who have we here?" asked the gentleman, stopping and looking at me."

"A boy," said Estella.

He was a burly man of an exceedingly dark complexion, with an exceedingly large head and a correspondingly large hand. He took my chin in his large hand and turned up my face to have a look at me by the light of the candle. He was prematurely bald on the top of his head, and had bushy black eyebrows that wouldn't lie down but stood up bristling. His eyes were set very deep in his head, and were disagreeably sharp and suspicious. He had a large watch-chain, and strong black dots where his beard and whiskers would have been if he had let them. He was nothing to me, and I could have had no foresight then, that he ever would be anything to me, but it happened that I had this opportunity of observing him well.

"Boy of the neighbourhood? Hey?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"How do you come here?"

"Miss Havisham sent for me, sir," I explained.

"Well! Behave yourself. I have a pretty large experience of boys, and you're a bad set of fellows. Now mind!" said he, biting the side of his great forefinger as he frowned at me, "you behave yourself!"

With these words, he released me—which I was glad of, for his hand smelt of scented soap—and went down his stairs. I wondered whether he could be a doctor; but no, I thought; he couldn't be a doctor, or he would have a quieter and more mannered manner. There was not much time to consider the subject for we were soon in Miss Havisham's room, where she and everything else were just as left them. Estella left me standing near the door, and I stood there until Miss Havisham cast her eyes upon me from the dressing-table.

"So?" she said, without being startled or surprised; the days have worn away, have they?"

"Yes, ma'am. To-day is—"

"There, there, there! with the impatient movement of her fingers, "I don't want to know. Are you ready to play?"

I was obliged to answer in some confusion, "I don't think I am, ma'am."

"Not at cards again?" she demanded, with a searching look.

"Yes, ma'am; I could do that, if I was wanted."

"Since this house strikes you old and grave, boy, said Miss Havisham, impatiently, "and you are unwilling to play, are you willing to work?"

I could answer this inquiry with a better heart than I had been able to find for the other question, and I said I was quite willing.

"Then go into that opposite room," said she, pointing at the door behind me with her withered hand, "and wait there till I come."

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive. A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-
fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to
go out than to burn up, and the returnant
smoke which hung in the room seemed colder
than the clearer air—like our own marsh mist.
Certain wintry branches of candles on the high
chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber; or
it would be more expressive to say, faintly
troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and
I dare say had once been handsome, but every
discernible thing in it was covered with dust
and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most
prominent object was a long table with a table-
cloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in
preparation when the house and the clocks all
stopped together. An arras or centre-piece
of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it
was so heavily overlaid with cobwebs that its
form was quite indistinguishable, and, as I
looked along the yellow expanse out of which I
remember its seeming to grow like a black
fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with
bloody bodies running home to it, and running
out from it, as if some circumstance of the
greatest public importance had just transpired
in the spider community.
I heard the mice too, rattling behind the
panels, as if the same occurrence were im-
portant to their interests. But, the black-beetles
took no notice of the agitation, and groped about
the hearth in a ponderous elderly way, as if they
were short-sighted and hard of hearing, and not
on terms with one another.
These crawling things had fascinated my at-
tention and I was watching them from a dis-
tance, when Miss Havisham laid a hand upon
my shoulder. In her other hand she had a
crutch-headed stick on which she leaned, and
I felt that I looked down upon Nothing worth
mentioning re tired. Miss Havisham, in her
exceeding sharpness.
I heard her in a ponderous elderly way, as if they
were short-sighted and hard of hearing, and not
terms with one another.

"Walk me, walk me at a pace that might have been
known, that your family feelings are gradually
undermining you to the extent of making one
of your legs shorter than the other."
"I am not aware," observed the grave lady
whose voice I had heard but once, "that to
think of any person is to make a great claim
upon that person, my dear!"
"Miss Sarah Pocket, whom I now saw to be a
little dry brown corrugated old woman, with a small face that might have been made of walnut-shells, and a large mouth like a cat's without the whiskers, supported this position by saying "No, indeed, my dear. Here is no thought of it with a melancholy satisfaction when I wake up in the night. I wish Matthew could have that comfort, but he sets it at defiance. I am determined not to make a display of my feelings, but it's very hard to be told one wants to fasten on one's relations—as if one were a Giant—and to be told to go. The bare idea!

Mr. Camilla interposing, as Mrs. Camilla laid her hand upon her heaving bosom, that lady assumed an unnatural fortitude of manner which I supposed to be expressive of an intention to drop and choke when out of view, and kissing her hand to Miss Havisham, was escorted forth. Sarah Pocket and Georgiana contended who should remain last; but, Sarah was too knowing to be outdone, and ambled round Georgiana with a smile of forgiving pity on her walnut-shell countenance for the weaknesses of the rest.

While Estella was away lighting them down, Miss Havisham still walked with her hand on her shoulder, but more and more slowly. At last she stopped before the fire, and said, after muttering and looking at it some seconds:

"This is my birthday, Pip.'

I was going to wish her many happy returns, when she lifted her stick.

"I don't suffer it to be spoken of. I don't suffer those who were here just now, or any one, to speak of it. They come here on the day, but they dare not refer to it."

Of course I made no further effort to refer to it.

"On this day of the year, long before you were born, this heap of decay," stabbing with her cruelled stick at the pile of cobwebs on the table but not touching it, "was brought here. It and I have worn away together. The mice have gnawed at it, and sharper teeth than teeth of mice have gnawed at me."

She held the head of her stick against her heart as she stood looking at the table; she in her once white dress, all yellow and withered; the once white cloth all yellow and withered; everything around, in a state to crumble under a touch.

"When the ruin is complete," said she, with a ghastly look, "and when they lay me dead in my bride's dress on the bride's table—which shall be done, and which will be the finished cause upon him—so much the better if it is on this day!"

She stood looking at the table as if she stood looking at her own figure lying there. I remained quiet. Estella returned, and she too remained quiet. It seemed to me that we continued thus for a long time. In the heavy air of the room,
and the heavy darkness that brooded in its recesses filled me with a new dread. I even had a notion that Estella and I would presently begin to decay.

At length, not coming out of her drooping state by degrees, but in an instant, Miss Estella said, "Let me see you two play cards; why have you not begun?" With that, we returned to her room, and sat down as before; I was beggared, as before; and again, as before, Miss Estella watched us all the time, directed my attention to Estella's beauty, and made me notice the more by trying her jewels on Estella's breast and hair.

Fenella, for her part, likewise treated me as before; except that she did not condescend to speak. When we had played some half-a-dozen games, a day was appointed for my return, and I was taken down into the yard to be fed in the former dog-like manner. There, too, I was again left to wander about as I liked.

It is not much to the purpose whether a gate in that garden wall which I had scrambled in to the bottom of the bank, open or shut, and with her walnut-shell case of the rest, if she be told one want if one was a Gimmie buss idea!"

One Mrs. Camilla hatched a room, that lady's mode of manner which was of such an intention to view, and kissing was aggregated forth, a contended who was too knowing and Georgiana with the likeness was Sarah Pocket the of departing with door in, and with a "her walnut-shell base of the rest, weighting them down, with her hand on time more slowly. At the fire, and said, she some seconds:"

"I may have been happy returns, of it I don't now, or any one here on the day, but it all effort to refer to reta, long before ye affair, "stumbling with a of cobweb on the was brought here together. The mice eat teeth than teeth.

She stick against he table, she is below and with a llow and withered was to crumble under a stone," said she, with her lay me in the side's table—which will be the finished the better if it is a plate as if she stood any where. I re- corded, and also too re- cord that we continued every air of the room,
ing himself or drinking out of the water-bottle, with the greatest satisfaction in seconding himself according to form, and then came at me with an air and a show that made me believe he was going to do me at least. He got heavily bruised for I am sorry to record that the more I hit him, the harder I hit him, but at last he got a bad fall with the back of his head against the wall. Even after that crisis in our affairs, he got up and turned round and round confusedly a few times, not knowing where he was; but finally went on his knees to his sponge and threw it up: at the same time panting out, "That means you have won."

He seemed so brave and innocent, that although I had not proposed the contest I felt but a gloomy satisfaction in my victory. Indeed, I went so far as to hope that I regarded myself while dressing as a species of savage young wolf, or other wild beast. However, I got dressed, darkly wiping my sanguinary face at intervals, and said, "Can I help you?" and he said "No thank you," and I said "Good afternoon," and he said "Same to you."

When I got into the court-yard, I found Estella waiting with the keys. But, she neither asked me where I had been, nor why I had kept her waiting; and there was a bright flush upon her face, as though something had happened to delight her. Instead of going straight to the gate, too, she stepped back into the passage, and beckoned me. "Come here! You may kiss me, if you like."

I kissed her cheek as she turned it to me. I think I would have gone through a great deal to kiss her cheek. But, I felt that the kiss was given to the coarse common boy as a piece of money might have been, and that it was worth nothing. What with the birthday visitors, and what with the cards, and what with the fight, my stay had lasted so long, that when I neared home the light on the spit of sand off the marshes was gleaming against a black night-sky, and Joe's furnace was slinging a path of fire across the road.

POLICEMEN IN PRUSSIA.

Not long since I read—in company with other readers of the arch-journal—that tale of the inoffensive British subject, who had the misfortune to be travelling with his wife and family on a Prussian railway at the same moment as an ill-named Prussian doctor. The inoffensive British subject had actually in his pocket a sheet of tissue-paper, or letter of introduction, in which a distinguished personage at home had kindly asked, in general terms, "every one whom it might concern," to take particular care of the person described in the document, as "a British subject travelling on the Continent," and pay every attention with that paper, the British subject had presented it to various parties, whom it did concern, and who had good-naturedly painted little pictures of split eagles, and crowns, and inscriptions in lump-black over it, sprinkled it profusely with sand and general dirt. So far the inoffensive British subject was complimentally treated.

But on that unlucky morning, when his seat was taken by the medical practitioner, he himself was dragged away by ruffians in uniform, and after a week into goal, and was finally, together with his station, reviled in foul language by a law officer of the Prussian crown. As I read this gross outrage, a little history of personal treatment in my own individual case, at the hands of these gentles, came into my mind.

I am at Calais, where the action of the little piece commences, newly descended from an effect, sheltered diligence—last of its tribe—which has lingered over from Boulogne. I had been assisted to the ground by some perilous steps, not unlike a series of half-door scrappers, and am at once accorded to by a species of human barbazine, or muzzel, what seems to be a stud-groom, but is, professionally, a commission, and who never leaves me for a second as long as I reside in the town. A gentleman of easy address, and speaking the English tongue with perfect fluency, not to be put back by suavities; his services are not required, by stern request to desist from dogging my steps, and it is with a flourish joy, when the hour of departure arrives, that I tell him that I shall not have a door— that he has been forewarned—that that or nuisance, a post, a plague. Yet smiles, and shrugs, and smiles, and is very sorry, but it cannot be helped. He has meant well; and is so seducing; finally, that he goes his way rejoicing, with an amiable guardian.

Then we plunge into the night—the midnight—and with a eternal turn, and huge window-shutting machine whirling ceaselessly in the ear, and periodical shiver, and heavy blinking eyes, and ineptitude, and inconsequent mind expatiating restlessly, and heads swathed in caps, we make the night express journey through Brussels. In the flash of broad daylight, looking very cold and crepisial, find a new green country, well wooded, swelling in easy hills and valleys, skimming by us; with a perceptible thickening in the clouds of tobacco; with eight little green men winking horns of chases, cheerfully, to one another, from distant extremities of the "convoys;" in short, with a general Prussian flavour over everything.

With a change, too, in company, the sleepy nodding heads, the human paddies that swing all night long from side to side, and the ten restless legs that searched accommodation all the night long, having vanished utterly, and there were, instead, fresh clean faces, faces that had washed and had been at the steaming breakfast-table, not wholly unconscious of buttered rolls and coffee according to milk, and such delicacies, that looked on new newspapers, and yellow little pirates of English books; English faces, in short, Mrs. Blanchard, and his two daughters, Miss Blundes and Miss Brunette. These ladies, fresh as daises, and their father the most placid, eye-glassed grey-whiskered and benevolent of