

as they went, to admit the fading light: and, still finding nobody, and everything quiet and in its place, doubted whether they should go further. One man, however, remarking that they had not yet been into the garret, and that it was there he had been last seen, they agreed to look there too, and went up softly; for the mystery and silence made them timid.

After they had stood for an instant, on the landing, eyeing each other, he who had proposed their carrying the search so far, turned the handle of the door, and, pushing it open, looked through the chink, and fell back directly.

"It's very odd," he whispered, "he's hiding behind the door! Look!"

They pressed forward to see; but one among them thrusting the others aside with a loud exclamation, drew a clasp knife from his pocket and dashing into the room cut down the body.

He had torn a rope from one of the old trunks, and hanged himself on an iron hook immediately below the trap-door in the ceiling—in the very place to which the eyes of his son, a lonely desolate little creature, had so often been directed in childish terror, fourteen years before.

CHAPTER LXIII

THE BROTHERS CHEERYBLE MAKE VARIOUS DECLARATIONS
FOR THEMSELVES AND OTHERS. TIM LINKINWATER
MAKES A DECLARATION FOR HIMSELF

SOME weeks had passed, and the first shock of these events had subsided. Madeline had been removed; Frank had been absent; Nicholas and Kate had begun to try in good earnest to stifle their own regrets, and to live for each other and for their mother—who, poor lady, could in nowise be reconciled to this dull and altered state of affairs—when there came one evening, per favour of Mr. Linkinwater, an invitation from the Brothers, to dinner on the next day but one: comprehending, not only Mrs. Nickleby, Kate, and Nicholas, but little Miss La Creevy who was most particularly mentioned.

"Now, my dears," said Mrs. Nickleby, when they had