

PICKWICK : He, too, will have a companion, a lively one, who'll teach him I'll be bound, more tricks in a week, than he would ever learn in a year !

MRS. BARDELL : Oh you dear ! (*Pickwick starts.*) Oh you good, kind playful dear. (*Rises from her chair and throws arms around Mr. P's. neck with tears and sobs.*)

PICKWICK : Bless my soul, Mrs. Bardell,—my good woman,—dear me !—what a situation—pray consider—Mrs. Bardell, don't, don't !—if anybody should come—

MRS. BARDELL (*clinging tighter*) : Oh, let them come ! I'll never leave you—dear, kind, good soul.

PICKWICK (*struggling violently*) : Mercy upon me—I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't—don't—there's a good creature—don't. Gracious me, she's fainted !

(*Enter Master Bardell, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, Mr. Snodgrass.*)

MASTER BARDELL : Oh mother, mother—oh, you horrid man, stop hurting my mother ! (*Attacks Pickwick from behind.*)

PICKWICK : Be quiet—stop it—you little rascal ! (*To his friends.*) Take this little villain away—he's mad.

WINKLE : What is the matter ?

PICKWICK : I don't know. Take away the boy.

(*Winkle drags Master Bardell away.*) Now help me lead this woman downstairs.

MRS. BARDELL : Oh, I'm better now.

TUPMAN : Let me lead you downstairs.

MASTER BARDELL : Oh mother, mother—

MRS. BARDELL : Come darling, (*to Tupman*)—Thank you sir, thank you.

(*Exit Tupman, Mrs. Bardell and Master Bardell. Embarrassed pause—Re-enter Tupman.*)

PICKWICK : I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her



MRS. BARDELL