

There were a few timid young children, who, miserable as they had been, and many as were the tears they had shed in the wretched school, still knew no other home, and had formed for it a sort of attachment, which made them weep when the bolder spirits fled, and cling to it as a refuge. Of these, some were found crying under hedges and in such places, frightened at the solitude. One had a dead bird in a little cage; he had wandered nearly twenty miles, and when his poor favourite died, lost courage, and lay down beside him. Another was discovered in a yard hard by the school, sleeping with a dog, who bit at those who came to remove him, and licked the sleeping child's pale face.

They were taken back, and some other stragglers were recovered, but by degrees they were claimed or lost again; and in course of time Dotheboys Hall and its last breaking up began to be forgotten by the neighbours, or to be only spoken of as among the things that had been.

A HAPPY COUPLE.

"Tim Linkinwater condescended, after much entreaty and brow-beating, to accept a share in the house, but he could never be prevailed upon to suffer the publication of his name as a partner, and always persisted in the punctual and regular discharging his clerical duties.

He and his wife lived in the old house, and occupied the very bed-chamber in which he had slept for four-and-forty years. As his wife grew older, she became even a more cheerful and light-hearted little creature; and it was a common saying among their friends, that it was impossible to say which looked the happier—Tim as he sat calmly smiling in his elbow-chair on one side of the fire, or his brisk little wife chatting and laughing, and constantly bustling in and out of hers, on the other.

Dick, the blackbird, was removed from the counting-house and promoted to a warm corner in the common sitting-room. Beneath his cage hung two miniatures, of Mrs. Linkinwater's execution: one representing herself and the other Tim, and both smiling very hard at all beholders. Tim's head being powdered like a twelfth cake and his spectacles copied with great nicety, strangers detected a close resemblance to him at the first glance, and this leading them to suspect that the other must be his wife, and emboldening them to say so without scruple, Mrs. Linkinwater grew very proud of these achievements in time, and considered them among the most successful likenesses she had ever painted. Tim had the profoundest faith in them likewise, for upon this, as upon all other subjects, they held but one opinion, and if ever there were a "comfortable couple" in the world, it was Mr. and Mrs. Linkinwater.

SETTLEMENT OF THE NICKLEBYS.

The first act of Nicholas, when he became a rich and prosperous merchant, was to buy his father's old house. As time crept on, and there came gradually about him a group of lovely children, it was altered and enlarged, but none of the old rooms were ever pulled down, no old tree was rooted up, nothing with which there was any association of by gone times was ever removed or changed.

Within a stone's-throw was another retreat, enlivened by children's pleasant voices too, and here was Kate, with many new cares and occupations, and many new faces courting her sweet smile (and one so like her own, that to her mother she seemed a child again), the same true gentle creature, the same fond sister, the same in the love of all about her, as in her girlish days.

Mrs. Nickleby lived sometimes with her daughter, and sometimes with her son, accompanying one or other of them to London at those periods when the cares of business obliged both families to reside there, and always preserving a great appearance of dignity, and relating her experiences (especially on points connected with the management and bringing-up of children) with much solemnity and importance.

There was one grey-haired, quiet, harmless gentleman, who, winter and summer, lived in a little cottage hard by Nicholas's house, and when he was not there, assumed the superintendence of affairs. His chief pleasure and delight was in the children, with whom he was a child himself, and master of the revels. The little people could do nothing without dear Newman Noggs.

The grass was green above the dead boy's grave, and trodden by feet so small and light, that not a daisy dropped its head beneath their pressure. Through all the spring and summer-time, garlands of fresh flowers wreathed by infant hands rested upon the stone, and when the children came to change them lest they should wither and be pleasant to him no longer, their eyes filled with tears, and they spoke low and softly of their poor dead cousin."

ADVENTURE IN NORWAY.

I set out early one morning with two attendants, well armed and provided to enjoy the chase of the bear in a Norwegian forest. My dress was that generally worn by the Norwegian sportsman,—a coat composed of a coarse cloth, manufactured in the country, well lined throughout, and made to button close about the neck, trousers and gaiters of the same, with warm stockings and flannel, which in those countries should always be worn next the skin, linen shirts being always uncomfortable and sometimes even dangerous.—Instead of a bat I used a cap, with

lappets to cover the ears, which, without that precaution, run the risk of being frost-bitten. But I must not forget one of the most essential parts of a Norwegian sportsman's equipment; the skidor, or snow-skais, generally constructed of fir, covered with seal-skin, the skait for the left foot being generally from eight to ten feet in length, while that for the right is considerably shorter, the object of which is the better to enable the hunter to turn. The skidor seldom exceeds two or three inches in breadth, and are of great service to the sportsman, enabling him to glide over the vast wastes of trackless snow with a rapidity and ease utterly unattainable without them. Armed with my rifle, and a good sharp strong knife in a sheath at my girdle, I sallied forth, after a good breakfast of reindeer flesh and coffee, to try my fortune in the forest. Nothing can exceed the grandeur of the Norwegian scenery,—its terrific precipices,—its raging cataracts,—its gloomy forests, and trackless wilds, covered with frozen snow, with lofty mountains in the back ground,—its dark lakes and mighty rivers, never fail to excite both awe and admiration in the traveller. On this occasion I was returning alone, after a long and unsuccessful pursuit of a bear, which had separated me from my attendants, when I met with the following accident. Having broken one of my skais in the chase, I had been compelled to take them both off, and trudge along as well as I could without them, and, as it turned out, most luckily for me it was that I did so. As I was walking carelessly on, every now and then giving a loud shout to endeavour to let my attendants know where I was, and directing my footsteps by my pocket compass, I suddenly put my feet upon a pit-fall, and in a moment was precipitated to the bottom. These pit-falls are frequently used to ensnare wild animals, and in order to avoid accidents, the person who digs them is obliged by law to give proper notice through the whole district, but even this does not prevent peasants falling in. The pit-fall is made by digging a circular hole in the ground, of about fourteen feet in diameter, and about twelve in depth, having in the centre strong upright posts which come up to the surface of the ground. On these posts a moveable platform is placed in such a way that it lets down any animal that may chance to set foot on it, headlong into the pit, when by means of a spring it instantly resumes its place. The outside is covered with loose earth, snow, or twigs, and generally baited in such a manner as not to scare the animal for which it is intended. It was into such a pit I so suddenly fell, and to this day I cannot imagine how I managed to escape without broken bones. For some moments I lay as it were stunned and unconscious of my helpless plight, but on recovering my senses, my first impression was, that I must have broken some limb; but no sooner, however, had this idea flashed across my mind than it gave place to one of a real and even more alarming description. The moment I came to myself, I knew that I must have fallen into a pit-fall, but my horror may be more easily imagined than described, when a heavy breathing near me made me conscious that I was not the only tenant of the pit, but that a bear or a wolf, nay perhaps both, shared my captivity. On making this discovery, I squeezed myself up into the corner I found myself in, my heart seemed to be suspended motionless in my bosom, such was the terror of these dreadful moments. In this state I listened in breathless attention for the dreaded sounds, and my worst fears were soon, but too plainly, confirmed.

Not only were the breathings of two animals distinctly audible at the other corners of the pit, but I even fancied I saw their glaring eyes fixed on me through the darkness, and felt their hot and fetid breath upon my face. Never shall I forget the agony of these moments, the cold sweat rained off my brow as I crouched on the cold earth in expectation each moment of finding myself in the fatal clutch of a huge bear. I know not how long I continued in this fearful state of suspense, but at last feeling some slight courage from what I began to consider a panic, having taken the same possession of these animals as it had of me, after a short but fervid prayer, I began to reflect on the possibility of escape. Upon feeling my clothes, I found I had not lost my knife, which I immediately drew. These little moments occupied some time, for I was obliged to exercise the utmost caution to avoid making the least noise, for that I imagined would bring round an immediate catastrophe. I now began to have some hopes, and still exercising the utmost caution to avoid noise, I set about feeling the sides of the pit with my hands to learn if there was any chance of my being able to climb up them to the mouth of the pit. Instead of being perpendicular, I found they had been hollowed out so as to increase the difficulty, or rather render it impossible to climb them. I soon, however, hit upon a plan to overcome this difficulty, and immediately set about its execution. Turning my face to the sides of the pit, and my back to my fellow captives, I commenced cutting foot-steps, or rather holes in the sides with my knife, at such distances as would enable me to get to the top, a work which occupied me some time, as I was obliged to work very slowly to prevent the enemy from taking alarm. Having accomplished this, I resolved to make the attempt, but feeling anxious to take my rifle with me, which I knew must be at the bottom of the pit, I stooped down, and with my hand on the ground, began feeling around me, not venturing far at a time.

In this way I kept on feeling and feeling, still further, and further, when suddenly I thought I had found it, but imagine my horror when I found I had in my hand the huge paw of a bear. I need not add I dropped it in a second, but it was some time before I could recover from the shock this untoward familiarity with my dangerous neighbor and the smothered growl it drew from him occasioned. At length just when I had given up all idea of recovering my rifle, and had resolved to make the attempt without it, it most unexpectedly came to hand. I had already put my foot in the first hole and was preparing to ascend to the second, when my hand fell by accident on the stock of my rifle, which had rested with its muzzle down against the sides of the pit in the position in which it fell. This was indeed a joyful discovery, and I carefully raised it and placed it in the best situation my climbing would admit. Having reached the utmost extent of the wall of the pit, I then began to examine with my hand the wooden platform, so as to discover the best way to open it. Here again I found my difficulties return upon me, but having achieved so much, I was resolved not to be overcome, and after much trouble and labor with my knife, I at length succeeded in removing enough of the deal plank of the platform to allow my body to pass. Before I entirely removed this I made myself ready for a spring, so that not a moment might be lost in taking advantage of the outlet, as I knew very well, that the moment the opening became visible, it was more than probable the bear would endeavour to take advantage of it. Nerving myself to the last struggle, I suddenly pushed aside the loosened board and instantly raised myself with both hands into the aperture. It was indeed an anxious moment when I found myself with the upper part of my body once more in the open air, the lower part still suspended in the pit, and felt the boards quivering under my hands. I was obliged to exercise the utmost caution, as the least mistake would have once more hurled me from the treacherous platform into the den. By keeping one hand firm on the post on which part of the platform rested, I at last, to my inexpressible joy, found myself once more at liberty beneath the canopy of heaven. My first care was to replace the board, so as to shut out the light from the pit, it being now a beautiful moonlight night; my next to pour out my grateful thanks to the great Power who had so signally preserved me. I then held council with myself what was best to be done, whether single-handed to attack the bear in his den, or to go for assistance. While holding this council within myself, I examined my rifle, which I found uninjured, and carefully re-primed it. I confess that after the handsome treatment that I had experienced from the paws of the bear, I felt some compunction in commencing hostilities on my late fellow captive; besides, I remembered that the same steps which enabled me to escape, might do the same for him, an event by no means agreeable, and I had resolved to leave him unmolested, when suddenly the board was shoved aside, and who should I behold but the gentleman in question, who with his huge muzzle through the hole, began making most desperate efforts to pull down sufficient of the platform to enable his carcass to pass through. Peace was now out of the question, accordingly placing my rifle as close as possible to his head, I pulled the trigger, and with a terrific growl the bear fell to the bottom of the pit, as I imagined, mortally wounded. Without loss of time I re-loaded my rifle, and while doing so heard a dreadful conflict carried on below, between the enraged bear and a wolf, whose piercing yells mingled in dire discord with the growling of the enraged bear. It appeared as if the bear had fallen on the wolf, and in his fury was sacrificing him to his vengeance; gradually these yells became fainter and fainter as the wolf expired in the grasp of his huge foe, and I could not help shuddering when I recollected that his might have been my fate. While this dreadful scene was passing in the pit I had reloaded my rifle, and again placed the board over the hole, and now stood prepared to receive another attack. As I expected, having satisfied his vengeance on the wolf, bruin once more ascended with increased fury to the mouth of the pit, and having thrown away the piece of board commenced a most desperate attempt to break through the platform. For a moment as I gazed on his grim muzzle covered with blood, I felt almost unnerved at his fury and determination, but soon recollecting that it must be his life or mine, I once more put my rifle to my shoulder, and advanced the muzzle close to his head. My alarm was dreadful, when stretching out his huge paw the bear seized the barrel of my gun and drew it towards him; not a moment was to be lost, the gun was cocked, his own paw held it to the lower part of his neck, in another second the gun would have been wrested from me, when I pulled the trigger, this shot was fatal, the gun was once more in my hands, and the bear fell dead to the bottom of the pit. This last encounter was the work of an instant, and I could hardly believe that my deadly foe was killed. By the time, however, I had re-loaded my rifle to be prepared for the worst, I heard some shouts, and soon beheld lights in the distance coming towards me, and presently my attendants, with some peasants they had enlisted in the search, and who had been full of apprehension on my account, came up guided by the report of my gun. These honest people were delighted at finding me safe and sound, but at first would scarcely credit my adventure. With assistance the platform was removed, due precaution being preserved in case the bear should