

the same buoyant and business-like air which he wore upon his entrance.

Nicholas found himself unhappy and discontented when Mr. Cavendish closed the door behind him. He had done that which he knew Glezen would laugh at, but he felt, somehow, that he could not have helped himself. The man's will and expectation were so strong that he was powerless to disappoint him. He determined only that he would be more careful in the future.

He had thought the matter over in a vague uneasiness for half an hour, when Pont appeared again, with the announcement that a sick man was at the door, and insisted on seeing Mr. Minturn.

"I don't want to see him," said Nicholas, shrinking from another encounter.

"Dat's jes what I tole him," said Pont; "but he says he *mus'* see you, mas'r."

"Well, I'm in for it to-day, Pont. "I'll see it through. Show him up."

Pont was gone a long time, but at last Nicholas overheard conversation, a great shuffling of feet upon the stairs, and the very gradual approach of his visitor.

The door was opened, and a feeble-looking, shabby fellow appeared, creeping slowly upon feet that were apparently swollen to twice their natural size. They were incased in shoes, slit over the tops, to accommodate the enlarged members, with their manifold wrappings. With many sighs and groans, he sank into a chair, and Nicholas observed him silently while he regained his breath. There was no doubt in the mind of Nicholas that the man was not only poor, but miserable.

"I am troubling you," said the panting visitor at length, in a feeble, regretful voice, "because I am obliged to trouble somebody. I have had no experience in straits like these, and I have no arts by which to push my claims upon your charity. I am simply poor and helpless.

"How long have you been so?" inquired Nicholas.

"Only a day and a night, in which I have neither slept nor tasted food."

"Tell me your story," said Nicholas.

The invalid had a twinge of terrible pain at this moment, and lifted and nursed one of his aching feet.

"I walked the streets all last night, until just before morning, and I don't feel much like talk," said the man. "However, I'll make it short. I came here nine months ago, looking for work. Before I had been here a week, I was taken down with acute rheumatism. I ought to say that I am a son of Dr. Yankton, of Boston, and that my home has been in Virginia for the last twenty years, though my life has been an official one,—at Washington,—in the departments. As I said, I came here for