

of grave and prodigious proportions, which not only seriously inconvenienced his nose and his breakfast, but seriously impeded his perusal of the letter. For he had the eyes of a microscope and a telescope combined, when they were unassisted.

The letter alluded to is from a professed philanthropist, named Honeythunder, who, as we might expect from Dickens, unites in his character everything that is disagreeable, and has for its object the placing of his wards, Neville and Helena Landless, in the care respectively of Mr. Crisparkle and Mrs. Twinkleton, the principal of the seminary in which Rosa Bud is a pupil, for the completion of their education. The introduction of this brother and sister into the plot of the story, complicates it wonderfully. They are twins from Ceylon, and have been abused and brought up in ignorance by a cruel stepfather there, and have gone through many adventures. Neville thus depicts himself to his teacher:—

"I have had, sir, from my earliest remembrance, to suppress a deadly and bitter hatred. This has made me secret and revengeful. I have been always tyrannically held down by the strong hand. This has driven me, in my weakness, to the resource of being false and mean. I have been stinted of education, liberty, money, dress, the very necessities of life, the commonest pleasures of childhood, the commonest possessions of youth. This has caused me to be utterly wanting in I don't know what emotions, or remembrances, or good instincts—I have not even a name for the thing, you see!—that you have had to work upon in other young men to whom you have been accustomed."

"This is evidently true. But this is not encouraging," thought Mr. Crisparkle, as they turned again.

"And to finish with, sir: I have been brought up among abject and servile dependents, of an inferior race, and I may easily have contracted some affinity with them. Sometimes, I don't know but that it may be a drop of what is tigerish in their blood."

This passionate young man meets young Drood at his uncle's, quarrels with and appears ready to murder him on account of the complacent way in which Edwin speaks of Rosa, who has already impressed Neville deeply. There is in this scene the vaguest possible hint that the wine supplied to them by Jasper is drugged to produce this effect.

This quarrel is carefully smoothed over by the friends; but it is not very long before the engagement is broken through in the following manner. We give the whole conversation, as it is one of the finest passages in the book:—

"My dear Eddy," said Rosa, when they had turned out of the High Street, and had got among the quiet walks in the neighborhood of the Cathedral and the river, "I want to say something very serious to you. I have been thinking about it for a long, long time."

"I want to be serious with you too, Rosa, dear. I mean to be serious and earnest."

"Thank you, Eddy. And you will not think me unkind because I begin, will you? You will not think I speak for myself only because I speak first? That would not be generous, would it? And I know you are generous!"

He said, "I hope I am not ungenerous to you, Rosa." He called her Pussy no more. Never again.

"And there is no fear," pursued Rosa, "of our quarrelling, is there? Because, Eddy," clasping her hand on his arm, "we have so much reason to be very lenient to each other!"

"We will be, Rosa."

"That's a dear good boy! Eddy, let us be courageous. Let us change to brother and sister from this day forth."

"Never be husband and wife?"

"Never!"

Neither spoke again for a little while. But after that pause he said with some effort—

"Of course I know that this has been in both our minds, Rosa, and of course I am in honor bound to confess freely that it does not originate with you."

"No, nor with you, dear," she returned, with pathetic earnestness! "It has sprung up between us. You are not truly happy in our engagement; I am not truly happy in it. O, I am so sorry, so sorry!" And there she broke into tears.

"I am deeply sorry, too, Rosa. Deeply sorry for you."

"And I for you, poor boy! And I for you!"

This pure young feeling, this gentle and forbearing feeling of each toward the other, brought with it its reward in a softening light that seemed to shine on their position. The relations between them did not look wilful or capricious, or a failure, in such a light; they became elevated into something more self-denying, honorable, affectionate, and true.

"If we knew yesterday," said Rosa, as she dried her eyes, "and we did know yesterday, and on many, many yesterdays, that we were far from right together in