

# Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCES ALL THE REST.

THERE once lived, in a sequestered part of the county of Devonshire, one Mr. Godfrey Nickleby, a worthy gentleman, who, taking it into his head rather late in life that he must get married, and not being young enough or rich enough to aspire to the hand of a lady of fortune, had wedded an old flame out of mere attachment, who in her turn had taken him for the same reason. Thus two people who cannot afford to play cards for money, sometimes sit down to a quiet game for love.

Some ill-conditioned persons who sneer at the life matrimonial may perhaps suggest, in this place, that the good couple would be better likened to two principals in a sparring match, who, when fortune is low and backers scarce, will chivalrously set to, for the mere pleasure of the buffeting; and in one respect, indeed, this comparison would hold good: for as the adventurous pair of the five-court will afterwards send round a hat, and trust to the bounty of the lookers-on for the means of regaling themselves, so Mr. Godfrey Nickleby and *his* partner, the honeymoon being over, looked wistfully out into the world, relying in no inconsiderable degree upon chance for the improvement of their means. Mr. Nickleby's income, at the period of his marriage, fluctuated between sixty and eighty pounds per annum.

There are people enough in the world, Heaven knows! and even in London (where Mr. Nickleby dwelt in those days) but few complaints prevail of the population being scanty. It is extraordinary how long a man may look among the crowd without discovering the face of a friend, but it is no less true. Mr. Nickleby looked, and looked, till his eyes became sore as his heart, but no friend