

by the eventful finger of time :—its massive warehouses ; and also its magnificent mansions, wherein peers and princes banquet in luxury :—its club-houses ; and its dens of pollution, amid whose shadows the grim spectres of degraded humanity struggle out a wretched existence. Into this great city—wonderful and complicated in itself—the modern Babylon of the world,—gentle reader, now follow me in imagination, and I will introduce you to the subject of the following story.

It is the Saturday evening of a chilly night towards the end of November, 1869, that season of the year in which the grey old buildings of London assume a more sombre aspect than during the sunny days of summer. The twilight had congealed into darkness after a somewhat foggy day, and mantling its shadows around the homes of the destitute and degraded, tinging the wretched inmates with melancholy, and even making their lives more miserable and less tenacious to the world. The dark streets have been lighted up. The great tide of human beings that have during the day thronged the thoroughfares, has partially subsided ; but thousands of pedestrians are still bustling to and fro ; while the din of carriages are heard on every street. The provision shops are crowded with noisy customers. The coffee-houses are steaming forth their delicious viands, where throngs of both men and