

shake their several wise heads ominously: this is evidently a serious case. Mr. Bumble however is equal to the occasion; having consulted his cocked hat for inspiration, he deems it expedient to call his confreres together in solemn conclave in order that the most efficient means may be adopted to keep this juvenile trouble-maker in subjection. After several hours deliberation it is resolved that the only way to instil into Oliver a wholesome fear, and inspire him with a proper sense of dependence on the charity of the parish, is to make him appear before the board. Forthwith our little hero is summoned to the presence of that august body to which he is indebted for such a magnificent allotment of hardship and misery.

Oliver's indomitable courage, as manifested during the proceedings which resulted in his falling under the displeasure of the board, cannot fail to elicit our unbounded admiration. To resist the authorities in this way required an amount of daring hardly to be expected, and very seldom met with in a systematically ill-treated child; to presume to be hungry was practically to tell the notoriously heartless officials of the establishment, that their outrageous system of starvation was to be resisted: a thing altogether without precedent in the annals of the institution. But certainly no more conclusive proof of the little fellow's sturdy spirit can be adduced than the fact that, even half-starved as he was, he survived the encounter with the parochial officers. The "gentleman in the white waistcoat," offering what consolation it was in his nature to bestow, ventured the remark that Oliver would eventually be hanged, and pronounced him a fool at first sight. Whatever may have been the effect of this weighty and authoritative statement on Oliver, it failed to produce any alteration in the imperturbable gravity of his judges; they were determined above all to give the rebellious ingrate the benefit of a fair trial. These parochial officers were deep philosophical men; they had long since foreseen that the culprit before them was going to be a source of trouble, but even the gentleman distinguish by the unusual personal decoration already mentioned, could not have imagined that he would be so bold as to resist the authorities of the brick and mortar elysium of which he was an inmate. Now that the unexpected had happened, the hazard of harbouring such