

Unit

*With the Compliments of*

*F. M. Bell-Smith*  
**LITTLE NELL**

ADAPTED FROM

**"The Old Curiosity Shop"**

OF

**CHARLES DICKENS**

BY

**F. M. BELL-SMITH**



AS PRESENTED BY

**The Dickens Fellowship Company of Players  
at Toronto, March the 23rd and 25th, 1909**

**Price, 25c.**

Copies supplied by the Secretary, Miss Bengough,  
60 Charles St. East, Toronto

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# LITTLE NELL

(From Charles Dickens' Novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*)

## Act 1—The Old Curiosity Shop

SCENE I.—Interior of Quilp's Lodgings on Tower Hill.

SCENE II.—The Old Curiosity Shop.

SCENE III.—A Country Churchyard.

## Act 2—The Lawyer's Office

SCENE I.—Brass' Office in Bevis Marks.

SCENE II.—Lodging over same.

SCENE III.—Brass' Office.

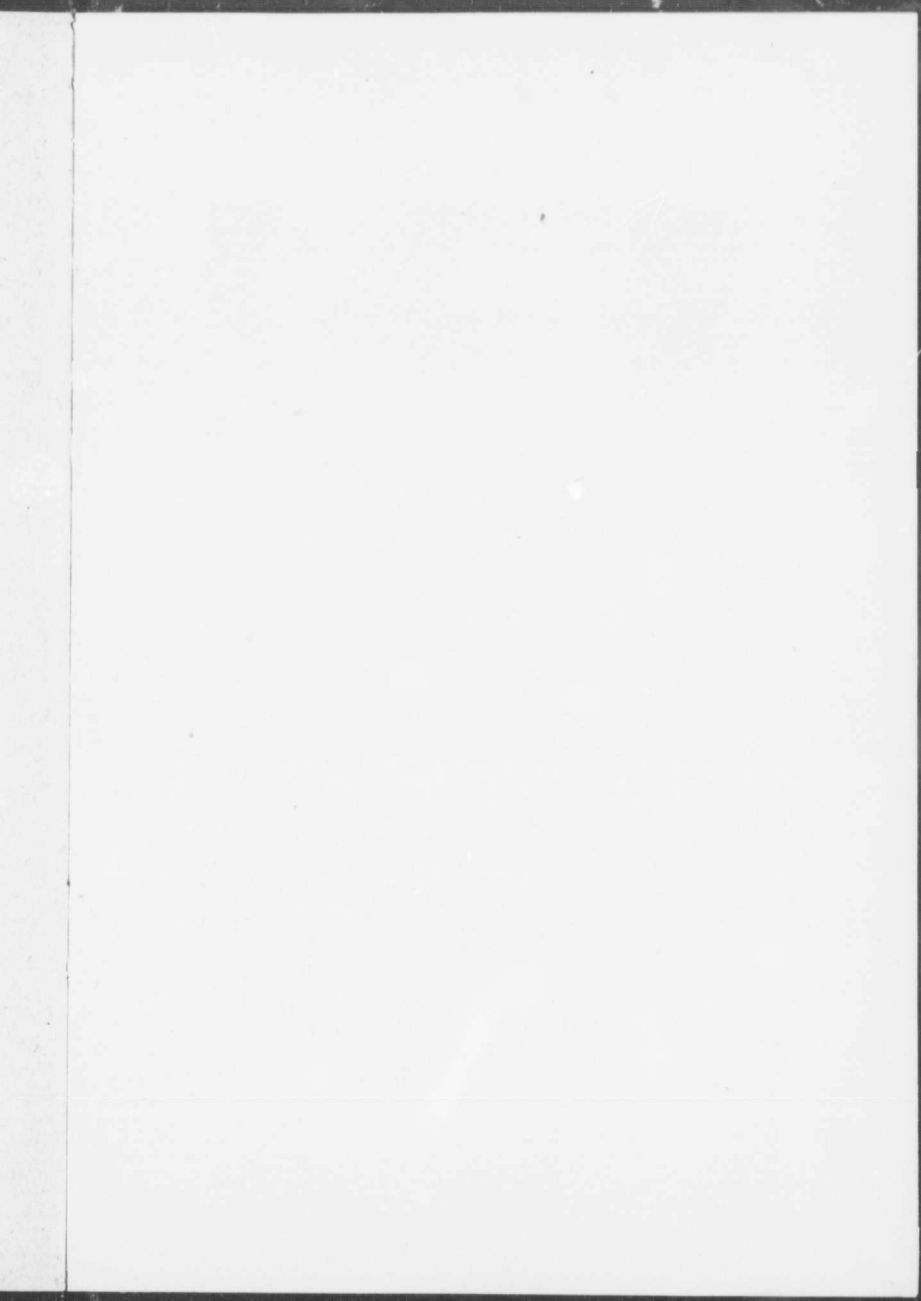
## Act 3—The Journey's End

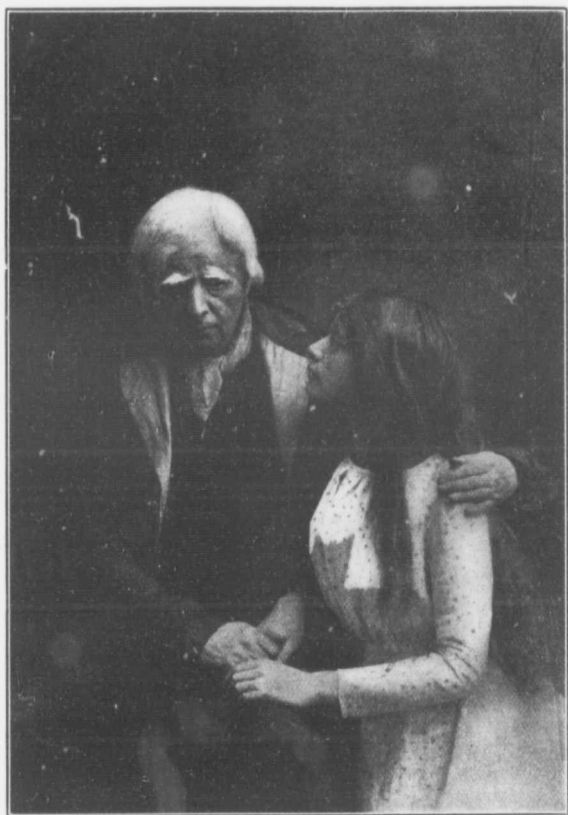
SCENE I.—Dick Swiveller's Bed Room.

SCENE II.—An Old Chamber.

### Cast :

DICK SWIVELLER	- - - - -	<i>Mr. T. G. Watson</i>
SAMPSON BRASS	- - - - -	<i>Mr. F. Kennedy</i>
THE GRANDFATHER	- - - - -	<i>Mr. F. M. Bell-Smith</i>
QUILP	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Thos. Harrison</i>
KIT	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Dalton</i>
SINGLE GENTLEMAN	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Williamson</i>
CODLIN	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Denovan</i>
SHORT	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Sweetman</i>
SCHOOLMASTER	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Thomas</i>
FRED TRENT	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Edwards</i>
PORTER	- - - - -	<i>Mr. Hayden</i>
LITTLE NELL, Tues.,	<i>Miss Dugmar Printz ; Thurs., Miss Nina Bickle</i>	
THE MARCHIONESS	- - - - -	<i>Miss Blanche Walter</i>
SALLY BRASS	- - - - -	<i>Miss Merry</i>
MRS. QUILP	- Tuesdays, <i>Miss Spencer ; Thursday, Miss Johnston</i>	
MRS. JINIWIN	- - - - -	<i>Miss Nora Coleman</i>
MRS. SPITE	- - - - -	<i>Miss Bengough</i>
MRS. GORGE	- - - - -	<i>Miss Grace</i>
MRS. GUZZLE	- - - - -	<i>Miss Tilly</i>





MISS DAGMAR PRINTZ AS LITTLE NELL AND  
MR. BELL-SMITH AS THE GRANDFATHER.

# Little Nell

A Drama in Three Acts from Charles Dickens' Book  
"The Old Curiosity Shop"

By F. M. Bell-Smith.

## CHARACTERS REPRESENTED

NELLY TRENT, (Little Nell).  
HER GRANDFATHER, AND GUARDIAN.  
HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, (known as the single gentleman).  
FREDERICK TRENT, Nell's brother.  
RICHARD SWIVELLER, "Nothing if not convivial."  
QUILP, a dwarf money lender.  
SAMPSON BRASS, a disgrace to the Law.  
KIT, faithful boy.  
THE SCHOOLMASTER.  
CODLIN } travelling with a "Punch and Judy."  
SHORT }  
PORTER.  
THE MARCHIONESS, a small servant.  
MRS. QUILP, a mild little woman.  
SALLY BRASS, a gorgon.  
MRS. JINIWIN, Mrs. Quilp's mother.  
MRS. GUZZLE } friends of Mrs. Quilp.  
MRS. GORGE }  
MRS. SPITE }

ACT I. THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

ACT II. THE LAWYER'S OFFICE.

ACT III. THE JOURNEY'S END.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Quilp's Lodgings on Tower Hill.

*A small apartment plainly furnished. Doors R. and L. Window with flowers in pots. A glimpse of the Tower of London, quite near, is seen through window. A sideboard, or shelves, with plates and dishes. Table C. set with tea things.*

MRS. QUILP and MRS. JINIWIN discovered seated at tea, with MRS. GORGE, MRS. GUZZLE, and MRS. SPITE. All are talking at once in a loud high key:—

MRS. GORGE: That's just what I was saying, you're too inexperienced, you ought to listen to the advice of those who are older; you have no right to set your own opinions against the experience of those who know so much better than you do. It's next door to being downright ungrateful to conduct yourself in that manner, and if you have no respect for your own self you ought to have for other people or the time will come when they will have no respect for you, there!

MRS. GUZZLE: To think of your letting that brute treat you as we all know he does, why don't you pluck up a spirit and defy him to his face. If my husband had so much as dared to even open his mouth to me—I'd have—I'd have—well I won't say what I'd have done but, he knew better—oh, he knew much better than to try to bully over me I can tell you.

MRS. SPITE: Do you suppose we don't know how he treats you? Do you think we're blind or deaf? Why it's the talk of the town that poor dear timid Mrs. Quilp is abused by that hideous monster of a dwarf—excuse the plainness of my expression, but how you could ever have seen anything in that villianously ugly creature is past all my powers of comprehension—Quite!

MRS. JINIWIN: Well, I've always said that all the fools are not dead yet, but I never could understand why you should have thrown yourself away upon such a man even if he has money—He never lets you have any I'll be bound, he he—Not much of his gold you'll ever see, but I hope he may die some day and give you a chance to get even with him. No indeed, when my poor husband was alive if he'd dared ever to venture a word to me, I'd have—

MRS. QUILP: It's all very fine talk, but I know very well that if I was to die to-morrow Quilp could marry anybody he pleased—now—that he could—I know!



MR. THOS. HARRISON AS QUILP



Chorus of Ladies : What—marry anybody he pleased, Oh—  
oh the wretch !

MRS. SPITE : I'd stab him if he hinted it !

MRS. QUILP : Yes, it's very easy to talk—but I know I'm  
sure Quilp has such a way with him that the best looking  
woman here couldn't refuse him—so there now !

(QUILP *puts his head in at door.*)

MRS. GUZZLE : That's for me, is it—well I never !

MRS. GORGE : Let him try it, that's all ! And with such  
a nose—why it's—

QUILP : Aquiline ! Go one, ladies—go on ! Mrs. Quilp,  
pray ask the ladies to supper !

MRS. QUILP : I didn't ask them, Quilp—it was quite an  
accident !

QUILP : What, not going, ladies—you're not going surely !  
(*Exit Ladies.*)

MRS. JINIWIN : And why not stop to supper, Quilp, if my  
daughter has a mind ?

QUILP : To be sure, why not—why not, eh !

MRS. JINIWIN : She has a right to do as she likes, I hope !

QUILP : Hope she has ! Oh, don't you know she has ?

Don't you know she has, Mrs. Jiniwin ? You look ill,  
Mrs. Jiniwin—you've been talking too much—it's your  
weakness—go to bed—do go to bed.

MRS. JINIWIN : I shall go when I please, Quilp.

QUILP : Oh, go now—do go now, Mrs. Jiniwin—go now !

(*Exit Mrs. Jiniwin.*)

QUILP : Mrs. Quilp !

MRS. QUILP : Yes, Quilp !

QUILP : Am I nice to look at ? Should I be the handsomest  
creature in the world if I had but whiskers ? Am I  
a lady's man as it is ? Am I, Mrs. Quilp ?

MRS. QUILP : Yes, Quilp.

QUILP : Mrs. Quilp !

MRS. QUILP : Yes, Quilp.

QUILP : If you listen to those beldames again, I'll bite you !

(*Enter Little Nell.*)

NELL : If you please, sir, here is a letter from grandfather.  
I am to wait for an answer.

QUILP : Oh, Nelly, come in, (*taking the letter*), sit down there,  
(*reading letter*). What, all gone ! and in one night !  
What can this mean ? Mrs. Quilp, come here—Listen,  
I want you to question this child—find out what her  
grandfather does—where he goes—mind, I shall pretend  
to go away, but I shall be listening and I shall creak  
the door if you do not do your work right—take care

that I do not have to creak it too much. Now mind—  
Ah, Nelly—I shall have to go out for a short time; wait  
till I return and you shall then have the answer.

MRS. QUILP : Dear Quilp, I love the child—If you *could*  
do without making me deceive her.

QUILP : (*in a rage*) : Go ! (*Exit Quilp*).

NELL : Oh, dear, Mrs. Quilp, I am so afraid of him.

MRS. QUILP : My dear Nelly, come sit down by me here,  
and tell me about yourself. You have been coming here  
a good deal lately.

NELL : I have said so to grandfather a hundred times !

MRS. QUILP : And what has he said to that ? (*Door creaks*.)

NELL : He only sighed and seemed so wretched that it made  
me cry—How that door creaks.

MRS. QUILP : It often does. But your grandfather used  
not to be so wretched, Nelly.

NELL : Oh no, but a sad change has fallen on us since,  
it is a long time since he began to—I thought I saw  
that door move—

MRS. QUILP : It is the wind—you were saying—

NELL : Since he began to go out at nights.—

MRS. QUILP : Does he go out often ?

NELL : Every night. But I have not told you of the greatest  
change of all—this you must not breathe to any one.  
He has no sleep or rest but that which he takes in the  
day time, and is often out for the whole night long.

MRS. QUILP :—Nelly. (*Door creaks*.)

NELL : Hush, (looking round anxiously). When he comes  
home—which is generally just before day, I let him in—  
Last night he was very late; it was quite light and I saw  
that his face was deathly pale and that his legs trembled  
as he walked. Poor grandfather, oh, what shall I do—  
what shall I do ?

*Enter Quilp. (Mrs. Quilp goes out crying.)*

QUILP : Ah, Nelly, now you shall have the answer—tell  
your grandfather that I will see him to-morrow or—  
next day. Why, Nelly, how pretty you look to-day.  
Nelly, how would you like to be my No. 2 ?

NELL : To be what, sir ?

QUILP : My No. 2, my second Mrs. Quilp ! (*taking hold of  
her hand and drawing her towards him*.) To be my little  
cherry-cheeked, rosy-lipped wife, eh !

*Kit enters the door and, seeing the child trying  
to get away from the embrace of the dwarf,  
rushes forward and with a sudden twist of his  
collar, sends him sprawling on the floor.*

KIT : Hands off, mister. How dare you touch Miss Nelly !—  
you're an uglier dwarf than can be seen anywheres for a  
penny. Don't you dare touch her. Come, Miss Nell.

NELL : Oh, dear Kit, let us go, I am afraid of that man.

KIT : Come, Miss Nell.

*(Exit Nell and Kit.)*

QUILP : So that is Kit, is it. Kit—an uglier dwarf than  
can be seen anywhere for a penny. *Kit!* I'll remem-  
ber you—oh, I'll remember you—Kit!

*(Curtain for one minute to change to second scene.)*

SCENE II.

*Interior of the old Curiosity shop. Antiques of all descriptions  
in great disorder fill the stage so that there is little room to  
move. The grandfather, his grandson and Mr. Dick  
Swiveller are discovered. Grandson is speaking in angry  
tones as the curtain rises.*

GRANDSON : Bah, you'd swear away my life if you could,  
we all know that.

GRANDFATHER : I almost think I could. If oaths and  
prayers and wishes could rid me of you they should.

GRANDSON : I know it, but neither oaths, prayers, nor wishes  
will kill me, and therefore I live, and mean to live.

DICK SWIVELLER : It's a devil of a thing, gentlemen, when  
relations fall out and disagree. Why not jine hands  
and forget it. *(looking from one to the other)*. No !  
Then permit me to suggest that a small quantity of liquid  
refreshment might restore peace and harmony. If I  
may be so bold I would say that soda-water, though a  
very good thing in the abstract, is apt to lie cold upon  
the stomach unless qualified with ginger or a small  
infusion of brandy, which latter I hold to be preferable  
in all cases save only for the one consideration of ex-  
pense.

GRANDSON : Hold your tongue.

DICK SWIVELLER : Sir, don't you interrupt the chair.  
Gentlemen, how does the case stand ? Here is a jolly  
old grandfather—I say it with the utmost respect—and  
here is a wild young grandson. The jolly old grand-  
father says to the wild young grandson—I have brought  
you up and educated you, Fred, and given you your start  
in life—you have bolted out of the course, and you shall  
never have another chance, nor the ghost of half a one.  
To which the wild young grandson replies—You are  
rich as rich can be—you are saving up your money for  
my little sister; why can't you stand a trifle to your

grown-up relation? The jolly old grandfather declines to fork out and hand over a reasonable amount of tin, which would make everything so nice and comfortable.

GRANDFATHER: Why do you hunt and persecute me. God help me. How often am I to tell you that my life is one of care and self-denial, and that I am poor?

GRANDSON: And how often am I to tell you that I know better?

GRANDFATHER (*aside*): And yet how poor we are, and what a life it is, the cause is that of an innocent orphan child. But nothing goes well with it. Hope and patience, hope and patience.

DICK SWIVELLER: I must go—but before I leave the gay and festive scene, the halls of dazzling lights, sir, I will with your permission, attempt a slight remark. I came here this day, under the impression that the old man was friendly. I am disappointed, for it is evident that the old man is not friendly, therefore permit me to say in parting, let the watchword be "fork."

(*Exit Grandson and Dick Swiveller.*)

GRANDFATHER: Two days, two whole days have passed and there is no reply. If he should desert me now! Nell: Nelly dear!

(*Enter Little Nell.*)

NELL: Yes, Grandfather, I'm here.

GRANDFATHER: Do I love thee, Nell—say do I love thee, Nell, or no—why dost thou sob, is it because thou knowest I love thee and dost not like that I should seem to doubt it by my question—well—well, then let us say that I love thee dearly. What did he tell thee, Nell, when you gave him the letter? Tell me again.

NELL: Exactly what I told you, dear Grandfather, indeed.

GRANDFATHER: True, yes, but tell me again, Nell. My head fails me, what was it he told thee? Nothing more than that he would see me to-morrow or next day?

NELL: Nothing more. Shall I go to him again to-morrow, dear Grandfather? very early. I can be there and back before breakfast?

GRANDFATHER: 'Twould be of no use, my dear. But if he deserts me, Nell, at this moment—if he deserts me now—I am ruined, and far worse than that, I have ruined thee for whom I ventured all. If we are beggars—

NELL: What if we are? Let us be beggars and be happy.

(*Enter Quilp at back unobserved.*)

GRANDFATHER: Beggars—and happy—poor child.

QUILP: What a pretty picture! It ought to be framed.

NELL: Let us be beggars; I have no fear but we shall have enough. I am sure we shall. Let us walk through



MISS NINA BICKLE AS NELL AND  
MISS JOHNSTON AS MRS. QUILP.

country places and sleep in fields, and under trees, and never think of money again, or anything that can make you sad, and when you are tired you shall stop to rest in the pleasantest places we can find, and I will go and beg for both. (*Sobs on the old man's shoulder.*)

GRANDFATHER : Nell ! dear Nelly !

NELL : (*Raising her head and, seeing Quilp, gives a faint scream and clings to her grandfather.*)

GRANDFATHER : How did you come here ?

QUILP : Through the door. I'm not quite small enough to get through key-holes. I wish I was. I want to speak to you alone. Good-bye, little Nell.

(*Nell kisses her Grandfather and retires.*)

QUILP (*watching her*) : What a nice *kiss* that was ! What a *capital* kiss ! Just on the *rosy* part ! Oh, a *lovely* kiss !

GRANDFATHER : Have you brought the money ?

QUILP : No !

GRANDFATHER : Then the child and I are lost.

QUILP : Neighbor, let me be plain with you—you have no secret from me now.

(*Grandfather starts and trembles.*)

QUILP : No, no secret now, for I know that all the money, loans, advances, and supplies that you have had from me have found their way to—shall I say it ?—the gaming table ! The gaming table ! This was the precious scheme to make your fortune, was it ? That I should have been deceived by a mere gambler.

GRANDFATHER : I am no gambler. I call Heaven to witness that I never played for gain of mine or love of play; that at every piece I staked I whispered to myself that orphan's name. Oh, Nelly, Nelly, it was for you I played. When I thought of how little I had saved, how long it took to save at all, how she would be left to the rough mercies of the world with barely enough to keep her from the sorrows that wait on poverty, then it was that I began to play.

QUILP : But did you never win ?

GRANDFATHER : Never, never won back my loss.

QUILP : I thought that if a man played long enough he was sure to win at last.

GRANDFATHER : And so he is, so he is. I have felt that from the first. I have always known it. I have seen it. I never felt it half so strongly as I feel it now. Quilp, I have dreamed of winning the same large sum these three nights ! Do not desert me now that I have this chance. I have no resource but you, give me some help—

see Quilp—look at these figures—I must win—I only want a little help— a few pounds—two score pounds, dear Quilp!

QUILP: The last advance was seventy and it went in one night!

GRANDFATHER: I know it did, but Quilp—dear Quilp, consider it is for that orphan child—Quilp not for my sake, for hers—for hers!

QUILP: No, not a penny. But I was deceived, so deceived by your miserly way of living that I would have given you all the money you wanted to-night if I had not found out your secret.

GRANDFATHER: Who is it that told you? Is it—? No—it cannot be Kit—say was it Kit?

QUILP: Kit, what made you think of him. (*aside*) (It was Kit who said I was an uglier dwarf than could be seen anywhere for a penny, wasn't it), ha, ha, ha, poor Kit, yes, it was Kit! Ha, ha, Kit! (*Exit.*)

GRANDFATHER: (*intensely excited*) Kit! Oh! Oh! (*falls fainting in a chair as Nell enters.*)

NELL: Grandfather, oh, dear dear grandfather, What is it? Are you ill? Oh, he has fainted, what shall I do—(*runs to door*)

(*Enter Kit.*)

NELL: Oh, dear Kit, Grandfather is ill.

KIT: Miss Nell! shall I run for a doctor?

GRANDFATHER (*recovering and seeing Kit struggles to his feet*):

Oh, you—you wretch—out of my sight—out I say!

NELL: My dear, dear grandfather—don't you know Kit—it is Kit, dear old Kit, so good, so true—!

GRANDFATHER: Kit! Yes, I know him—out I say or I shall kill you!

NELL: Dear Kit—go—there is some dreadful mistake, but go—go.

(*Exit Kit.*)

GRANDFATHER (*sinking exhausted into a chair*): Oh, the monster—the monster!

NELL: Dear, dear grandfather—there, he is gone—he is gone—there, come away to bed—come—come—dear come—

(*Enter Quilp and Brass.*)

QUILP: Now, this house and all that's in it is mine, and we'll take possession. I don't know what ails the old man, but smoking will keep off infection, so we'll smoke.

BRASS: I don't like smoke, it makes me sick.

QUILP : Oh yes you do, you *must* like it, Brass, you'll have to smoke. Now, I call this comfort. Smoke away, you dog. Is it good, Brass, is it nice, is it fragrant, do you feel like the grand Turk ?

BRASS : If I do, I pity the Grand Turk.

QUILP : This is the way to keep off fever.

BRASS : Shall we stop here long, Mr. Quilp ?

QUILP : We must stop, I suppose, until the old man is dead.

BRASS : He, he, he; Oh, very good.

QUILP : Smoke away, never stop. Don't lose time.

BRASS : He, he, he, but if he should get better, Mr. Quilp ?

QUILP : Then we shall stop till he does. (*After a pause*)  
Are you asleep, Brass ?

BRASS : Very nearly, Mr. Quilp. This smoke—(*choking*)  
is very—very—soothing, sir—quite narcotic.

QUILP : Don't talk. Keep awake—(*yawning*) keep—awake  
(*dozing*) awake—(*snore*) (*sleeps*).

*They gradually doze in their chairs and the Grandfather and Nell appear at back. Nell gets the key which Quilp has placed beside him on the table, and opening the door, they go out.*

### SCENE III.

SCENE—*A country churchyard. Codlin and Short, (Showmen travelling with a "Punch and Judy"), are discovered sitting on the graves repairing the puppets. Enter Nell and her grandfather, unobserved, and at first not noticing the two men.*

NELL : (*helping her grandfather to take off his knap-sack and placing the things on the grassy beds, and sitting down with evidence of great fatigue*) Dear grandfather, only that this place is prettier and a great deal better than the real one, if that in the book is like it, I feel as if we were both "Christian," and laid down upon this grass all the cares and troubles we brought with us; never to take them up again. (*Sinks back quite exhausted.*)

GRANDFATHER (*Seeing the men and not noticing the child*) : No never to return—never to return. Thou and I are free of it now, Nell—eh, what have we here ? (*Short nods his head to the old man.*)

GRANDFATHER (*Approaching the men and regarding them with great curiosity*) : Why do you come here to do this ?

HORT : Why, you see, we're putting up at the public-house yonder, and it wouldn't do to let 'em see the company undergoing repair !

GRANDFATHER (*amused*) : No, eh, why not ?



SHORT : Because it would destroy all the delusion, and take away the interest. Would you care a ha-penny for the Lord Chancellor if you know'd him in private without his wig ? Certainly not !

GRANDFATHER : Good, are you going to show them to-night—are you ?

SHORT : That is the intention, Gov'nor, and unless I'm much mistaken, Tommy Codlin is a calculating at this minute what we've lost through you a coming upon us. Cheer up, Tommy, it can't be much !

CODLIN (*snatching Punch off a tombstone and flinging him into a box*) : I don't care if we 'aven't lost a farden, but you're too free ! If you stood in front of the curtain and see the public's faces as I do you'd know human nature better. But I'm tired o' this, let's 'ave a game o' cards before supper.

*(They begin to play cards.)*

GRANDFATHER (*Going over to Nell who is sleeping—and waking her with difficulty*) : Nell—Nelly !—Nell, I say ! (*Nell rouses up.*) See Nell—they're playing cards—quick, some money, Nell—I know you have some—what money have we, I saw you with some yesterday—give it me !

NELL : No, no, let me keep it, grandfather. Let us go away from here—pray, let us go !

GRANDFATHER : Give it to me, I say ! Hush, hush, don't cry, Nell. If I spoke sharply, dear, I didn't mean it. It's for thy good, I'll right thee yet, where is the money ?

NELL : Do not take it ! Pray, do not take it, dear ! Better let me throw it away than take it now. Let us go ! Oh, do let us go !

GRANDFATHER : Give me the money. (*She gives him a small purse.*) There—there—that's my dear, Nell—I'll right thee one day, child, I'll right thee, never fear. (*He goes over to where the two men are playing.*)

CODLIN (*Gruffly*) : Now, old gentleman, what do you want a interrupting us for, eh ?

GRANDFATHER : I, I would like to—to play—won't you let me join you ?

SHORT : Perhaps the old gentleman has the same aversion as we 'ave to play for love and would rather play for money, Tommy !

GRANDFATHER : Yes, yes, I've money here, that's what I want to do—

CODLIN : Oh, well, I ain't any great objections.

*(They commence to play. Nell sits by with her head in her hands, weeping.)*



DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS.

SHORT : Well, that is hard luck ! But I've know'd a man to lose for years and strike it rich at last. That's mine !  
CODLIN : Well, I'm—blow'd. Oh, well, take it all—that's enough for me—What, all done, mister— ! (*Grandfather rises with empty purse.*)  
NELL : Come away, dear, come !  
GRANDFATHER : Oh, Nell, if I had only a little more I must have won—Hast thou no more, none at all—we must get some, Nell, we must get some—  
NELL : Oh, dear grandfather—forget it all and come away— (*leading him off*). Come, come— !  
CODLIN : Keep on to them—Don't let them go !  
SHORT : Yes, we'll not let them get away. (*Exit.*)

(*Curtain.*)

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Office of Sampson Brass in Bevis Marks. Doors R. and L. Window at back. Shelves with law books, boxes, etc. Table and high desk with papers, etc. Miss Sally Brass is seated on high stool at desk writing—Enter Quilp, Brass and Dick Swiveller.*

QUILP : (*Indicating Sally Brass*) There she is. There is the woman I should have married. There is the beautiful Sarah ! Oh, Sally, Sally.

MISS BRASS : Oh bother.

QUILP : Sally, my dear, look at me—am I an uglier dwarf than can be seen for a penny ? Am I ?

SALLY : (*taking a pinch of snuff and looking at Quilp*) Yes ! (*Here Brass shakes with laughter and turns away to hide his merriment*)

QUILP : (*looking at him*) And what do you think, you dog ! eh ?

BRASS : (*with great servility*) Oh no Mr. Quilp, no, not at all sir, I—I—

QUILP : Yes you do you snivelling cur ! (*running at him as if to strike him*) eugh, you hound !

BRASS : Oh Mr. Quilp, what a man you are to make jokes—so very humorous sir. Quite delightful !

(*Enter Dick Swiveller*)

QUILP (*Presenting Dick*) : This is Mr. Swiveller, my dear. My intimate friend. A gentleman of good family and great expectations, but who, having rather involved himself in youthful indiscretion, is content for a time to fill the humble station of clerk. Humble, but here most enviable. What a delicious atmosphere ! Now, Brass, Mr. Swiveller is yours :

BRASS : I am very proud sir. Mr. Swiveller, sir, is very fortunate to have your friendship. He will enter upon his duties at once—(*indicating place at desk where Miss Brass is writing*). Here, sir, are some papers you may copy. (*Dick takes his place at desk but seems so struck with the extraordinary appearance of Miss Brass that he keeps looking at her with the utmost astonishment*). Here, sir, take my seat and try your hand at making a fair copy of this ejectment, as I am going out for the rest of the evening.

QUILP : Walk with me. I have something to say. Can you spare the time ? (*Going out.*)

BRASS (*Going out*) : Can I spare the time to walk with you, sir ? Ha ! ha ! you're joking. (*Exit.*)

(*Comic business—Dick makes gesticulations with ruler over Miss Brass's head.*)

SALLY BRASS (*Putting down her pen and leaving desk, goes to door at right and calls "Come here, you little devil !" Opens a cupboard and takes out dish with some meat.*)  
(*Enter Marchioness, who stands with open mouth, looking eagerly at the food.*)

SALLY : Keep away ! (*cutting off a very small piece and holding it on fork.*) Now take that, and don't say you never have any meat. Now, have you had enough ? (*Marchioness nods.*) Now go down stairs. (*Follows her, striking at her.* Returns and says) : I'm going out and as I shall not be back till night you can lock up when you go. (*Exit Sally Brass.*)

DICK : Very good, Ma'am. (*Aside*) and don't hurry on my account. (*Looking after as she goes out.*) I'm delighted you are gone—may you stay for ever—So, I'm Brass' clerk, am I ? And the clerk to Brass' sister—clerk to a female dragon ! Very good—whatever you please—have it your own way, of course. Quilp offers me this place—Fred says, 'Take it'. Staggerer No. 1—My aunt in the country stops supplies, and writes that she has made a new will and left me out of it ! Staggerer No. 2—No money ! No credit ! No support from Fred who seems to have turned steady all at once. Notice to quit my lodgings ! Staggerers Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6—Under such an accumulation of staggerers no man can be considered a free agent. So go on, my Buck, and let us see who will be tired first. Destiny, lead on ! (*Takes flute from pocket and plays mournfully.*) (*Knock at door*)—Come in. (*Enter Marchioness.*)

MARCHIONESS : Oh, please, will you come and show the lodgings ?

DICK : Why—who are you ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, please, will you come and show the lodgings ?

DICK : Oh, I've nothing to do with the lodgings, tell them to call again.

MARCHIONESS : Oh, but please, will you come and show the lodgings—it's 18 shillings a week and us finding plate and linen. Boots and clothes is extra and fires in winter 18 pence a day.

DICK : Why don't you show them yourself ?

MARCHIONESS : Miss Sally said I wasn't to because people wouldn't believe the attendance was good when they saw how small I was first.

DICK : What do you do—cook ?

MARCHIONESS : Yes—I'm housemaid, too—I do all the work. (*Exit Marchioness.*)

DICK (*aside*) : I suppose Brass and I will do the dirtiest part of it.

(*Enter the single gentleman.*)

DICK : I believe, sir, that you desire to look at the apartments. Very charming apartments, sir.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : What's the rent ?

DICK : One pound a week.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : I'll take them.

DICK : Boots and clothes are extra and fires in—

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : All agreed to.

DICK : Two weeks certain—

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : Two weeks—two years—here, 10 pounds down.

DICK : Why, you see, my name's not Brass.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : Who said it was—my name's not Brass. What then ?

DICK : The name of the master of the house is.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : Take down the bill, and let no one disturb me till I ring the bell. (*Exit Single Gentleman.*)

DICK : Now, I think I shall just step over the way and order a supper of bread, beef and beer, and then pass an hour or so in the frenziedly exciting game of dummy cribbage. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Marchioness.*)

MARCHIONESS : Oh, ain't I hungry ! If I could only find the key to that cupboard where Miss Sally keeps the meat—I wouldn't take much—just enough to squench my hunger. Oh, here comes Mr. Liverer. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Dick—bearing plate of beef and a large can of beer.*  
DICK (*seating himself at table and addressing an imaginary companion*) : Now, my Lord, what shall we play for ?

A thou. ? Five thou. ? Very well—anything you like—let us say, then—five thousand pounds ! No—guineas ? Very good—Five—Oh—certainly if you wish, ten thousand guineas ! But before we begin—what do you say to a little supper ? What—ho—there a flacon of Sack—Varlet Wine—Wine and your best ! (*Drinks.*) Ah ! (*Seeing an eye at the keyhole goes to the door and opening it suddenly, drags in the Marchioness by the car.*)

MARCHIONESS : Oh, I didn't mean any harm—indeed—upon my word I didn't. It's so very dull down stairs—please don't tell upon me—please don't !

DICK : Tell upon you ? Do you mean to say that you were looking through the keyhole for company ?

MARCHIONESS : Yes, upon my word, I was.

DICK : How long have you been cooling your eye there ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, ever since you began to play those cards, and long before.

DICK : Well, come in. Why, how thin you are—what do you mean by't ? Are you hungry ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, ain't I, just—

DICK : Well, sit down there—and now clear off that, and then we'll see what's next !

DICK (*watching her with pleasure*) : Did you ever taste beer ?

MARCHIONESS : I had a sip once !

DICK : She never tasted beer—it can't be tasted in a sip !—here, take a pull at that—but moderate your transports, you now, for you're not used to it ! Well, is it good ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, isn't it ! (*Smacking her lips and wiping them with the back of her hand.*)

DICK : So you've watched me playing cards, eh ? Did you learn how to play ?

MARCHIONESS (*nods her head.*)

DICK (*snuffing the candle and placing two sixpenny pieces in a saucer*) : Now, these are the stakes. If you win, you get them all—if I win—I get them. To make it seem more real and pleasant I shall call you the Marchioness, do you hear ?

(*The Marchioness nods her head as she shuffles the cards.*)

DICK : Then, Marchioness, fire away. (*Takes a drink.*)

Ah, the Baron SAMPSONO BRASSO and his fair sister are, you tell me, at the play ? (*Marchioness nods.*) Ha, it's well, Marchioness !—but no matter. Some wine, there, ho ! (*Drinks.*) Do they often go where glory waits them and leave you here ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, yes, I believe you they do. Miss Sally is such a winner for that, she is.

DICK : Such a what ?



MISS BLANCHE WALTER AS THE  
MARCHIONESS.

- MARCHIONESS : Such a winner !
- DICK : Is Mr. Brass a—winner ?
- MARCHIONESS : Not half what Miss Sally is. Bless you he'd never do anything without her !
- DICK : I suppose they talk about people sometimes ? About me, for instance—eh—Marchioness ?
- MARCHIONESS (*nods her head vigorously.*)
- DICK : Complimentary ?
- MARCHIONESS (*shakes her head more vigorously.*)
- DICK : Would it be any breach of confidence, Marchioness, to relate what they say of the humble individual who now has the honour—
- MARCHIONESS : Miss Sally says you're a funny chap.
- DICK : Well, Marchioness, that's not uncomplimentary. Old King Cole was himself a merry old soul—if we may put faith in the pages of history—
- MARCHIONESS : She says you ain't to be trusted !
- DICK : Well, really, Marchioness—several ladies and gentlemen—not exactly professional persons—but trades people—Ma'am—tradespeople, have made the same remark—but I would merely observe that since life like a river is flowing—I care not how fast it rolls on, Ma'am, while such purl on the brink still is growing, and such eyes light the waves while they run, Marchioness—your health. You will excuse me wearing my hat, but the Palace is damp, and the marble floor is—if I may be allowed the expression—sloppy !
- MARCHIONESS : Oh, I must go now—if Sally was to ketch me here she'd kill me ! But you won't tell on me, will you ?
- DICK : Marchioness, the word of a gentleman is as good as his bond. I am your friend, and I hope to play many more rubbers in this same saloon. Good night—Marchioness—fare thee well, and if for ever—then forever—fare thee well ! Put up the chain, Marchioness, in case of accidents ! (*Exit Dick Swiveller.*)

SCENE II.

*Apartment over Brass' Offices. Table on which is decanter of wine and glasses—two chairs. Drum and Punch and Judy heard without.*

- LODGER (*who is sitting at table*) : Three months have passed and there is no trace of those two poor helpless creatures. But I am satisfied that my plan of questioning the travelling showmen as they return from fairs, races and the like is a good one. Ah, there's another Punch ? (*runs out—calling*) Here, you men, both of you come in.



(Enter Single Gentleman with Codlin and Short. They hesitate at door which they leave open.)

CODLIN (*shoving past Short*): Now then, what are you waiting for, ain't you got no manners?

LODGER: Now, my men, sit down, what will you take?—tell that little man behind to shut the door, will you?

CODLIN (*gruffly*): Shut the door, can't you? You might ha knowd the gen'l'man wanted the door shut without being told, I think.

LODGER (*pouring out wine and handing a glass to each*): You're pretty well browned by the sun, both of you. Have you been travelling? (*Both nod their heads and smile as they drink their wine.*)

LODGER: To fairs, races and so forth, I suppose?

SHORT: Yes, sir, pretty nigh all over the West of England. Manys the hard day's walking in the rain and mud we've had down in the West.

LODGER: Let me fill your glasses again.

(*Short advances his glass which Codlin thrusts aside and pushes his own in first.*)

CODLIN: I think I will. I'm the sufferer, sir. In town or country, wet or dry, hot or cold, Tom Codlin suffers. But Tom Codlin isn't to complain for all that. Oh, no. Short may complain, but let Codlin say a word and down with *him* directly.

SHORT: Codlin ain't without his usefulness. But he don't always keep his eyes open. Remember them last races, Tommy?

CODLIN: It's very likely I was asleep, ain't it, when five a penence was collected in one round. I was attendin' to my business, I was, and I couldn't 'ave my eyes everywhere at once, even to watch a old man and a young child. You were as much to blame as I was for lettin' 'em give us the slip.

LODGER: When was it you last saw that old man and the child?

SHORT: Sir!

LODGER: The old man and his grandchild that travelled with you, where are they? I will make it well worth your while to speak out. Can you give me no clue to their recovery?

SHORT: Did I always say, Thomas, that there was sure to be a inquiry after them two travellers?

CODLIN: *You* said? Did *I* always say that that ere blessed child was the most interesting I ever see? Did I always say I loved her and doted on her? Pretty creeter—I think I hear her now—Codlin's my friend—she

says—Not Short. Short's very well, but Codlin's the feelin's for my money, though he mayn't look it.

LODGER: Good heavens, men, can you give me no assistance to find them?

SHORT: Stay a minute. A man by the name of Jerry—you know Jerry—Thomas?

CODLIN: Oh, don't talk to me o' Jerrys. What do I care for Jerrys when I think o' that 'ere darling child. "Codlin's my friend"—she says—I don't object to Short, but I *cotton* to Codlin. Once she called me *Father* Codlin. I thought I should have bust.

SHORT: A man of the name of Jerry, sir, what keeps a company of dancing dogs, told me he'd seen the old gentleman in connection with a travelling wax-work.

LODGER: Is this man in town?

SHORT: Yes, he's staying at our house.

LODGER: Then take me to him at once. Here, here's a sovereign a piece for you, and if I find them I seek I make it much more.

(Exit Lodger with Codlin and Short.)

SCENE III.

Brass' Office—one month later.

SAMPSON BRASS and SALLY *discovered*. Enter Dick.

MISS BRASS: I say—you haven't seen a silver pencil case this morning, have you?

DICK: I didn't meet many in the street. I saw one—a stout pencil—case of respectable appearance—but as he was in company with an elderly penknife and a young tooth-pick with whom he was in earnest conversation, I felt a delicacy in speaking to him.

MISS BRASS: No, but have you?

DICK: No, but have you?

SAMPSON BRASS: This is a most extraordinary and painful circumstance. Mr. Richard, sir. The fact is, I have myself missed several small sums from the desk of late.

(Places a 5-pound note on desk.)

DICK: You'd better not leave that fiver there if you think there are thieves around. I'd take it up if I were you.

BRASS: No, Mr. Richard, sir. I will not take it up. I will let it lie there, sir. To take it up, sir, would imply a doubt of you, and in you I have unlimited confidence. We will let it lie there if you please, and we will not take it up by any means. (Patting Dick on shoulder.)

MISS BRASS: (Bringing her hand down violently on her desk and breaking a corner off) I've hit it.

DICK (*aside*): And broken it, too!

BRASS: Go on, will you

MISS BRASS: Why hasn't somebody been coming in and out of this office for the last three or four weeks, and been left alone in it sometimes—thanks to you—and do you mean to tell me that he isn't the thief?

BRASS: What somebody?

MISS BRASS: Why, what do you call him—Kit!

BRASS: Never, never, I'll not believe it.

MISS BRASS: I say he is the thief.

BRASS: I say he is not. What do you mean? How dare you? Are characters to be whispered away like this? Don't you know that he is the honestest and faithfulest fellow that ever lived. Oh, I'll never believe it! (*Knock at door.*) Come in. (*Enter Kit.*)

KIT: Is the gentleman upstairs, sir, if you please?

BRASS: Yes, Kit, he is. I am glad to see you, Kit—look in on your way down. (*Exit Kit.*) Kit a robber! Bah! I'd trust him with untold gold. Mr. Swiveller, sir, have the goodness to step over to Wrasp & Co's. in Broad Street and inquire if they have had instructions to appear in Carkam and Painter. That lad a robber! Bah!

(*Exit Dick Swiveller.*)

*Brass and his sister exchange low whispers and Kit enters.*

KIT: Is anything the matter, sir?

BRASS: Matter! No, why anything the matter?

KIT: You are so very pale that I should hardly have known you!

BRASS: Pooh, pooh. Mere fancy. Never better in my life. How is the gentleman upstairs?

KIT: A great deal better.

BRASS: I'm glad to hear it. Thankful, I might say. An excellent gentleman—an admirable lodger. (*Going close up to Kit and taking him by the button hole.*) I've been thinking, Kit, that I could throw some little emoluments into your mother's way. You have a mother, I think.

KIT: Oh, yes, certainly, sir.

BRASS: A widow, I think?

KIT: Yes, and a better mother never lived.

BRASS: And a widow—put your hat down, Kit.

KIT: Thank you, sir, I must be going directly.

BRASS: Put it down while you stay anyway. (*Taking hat from Kit, places it on desk.*) I was thinking, Kit, that we have often houses to let for people we are concerned for and matters of that sort.

MISS BRASS (*going out, turns at door and says*): Oh, Kit, have you heard anything about your old master and Miss Nelly?

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MR. T. G. WATSON AS DICK SWIVELLER

KIT : Only that they have been seen in the West of England. I wish I could go after them. (*Exit Miss Brass.*)  
(*While Kit is speaking to her Brass places the five pound note in Kit's hat.*)

BRASS : I was saying what's to prevent our employing your mother to take care of one of these houses—with lodging—good lodging, too, and rent free—what do you say ?

KIT : Why how can I object—How can I thank you for such a kind offer ?

BRASS : Why then, Kit, (*putting his face close to Kit's*) it's done ! Done, I say, and so you shall find, Kit. But, dear me, what a time Mr. Richard is gone. A sad loiterer, to be sure ! Will you mind the office one minute while I run upstairs ? Only one minute, I'll not detain you an instant longer, on any account, Kit.

(*Exit Brass.*)

KIT : That'll be good news for mother. Won't she be pleased ? Ah, now I can go !

(*Exit as Dick enters.*)

(*Enter also Brass and Sally.*)

MISS BRASS : Oh, there goes your pet, Sammy.

BRASS : Ah, there he goes. An honest fellow, Mr. Richard, sir. A worthy fellow, indeed.

MISS BRASS : Hem ! (*Coughing.*)

BRASS : She drives we wild, Mr. Richard, sir. She exasperates me beyond anything. Never mind, I've carried my point. I've shown my confidence in the lad. He has minded the office—and he—eh—why, where's the— ?

DICK : What have you lost ?

BRASS : Dear me—the note, Mr. Richard, the five pound note—what can have become of it ?

MISS BRASS : What ! Gone ! Now, who's right ? Now, who's got it ? Never mind five pounds ! What's five pounds ! He's honest, you know ! Quite honest ! It would be mean to suspect *him* ! Don't run after him—No—No, not for the world !

DICK : Is it really gone, though ?

BRASS : Upon my word, sir, I fear this is a black business. It certainly is gone. What's to be done ?

MISS BRASS : Don't run after him ! Don't run after him on any account, give him time to get rid of it, you know. It would be cruel to find him out. (*Exit Brass and Dick in haste.*)

QUILP (*Putting his head in at window*) : It works, eh ? Ah, Sally, my beauty, you're an angel. Oh, honest Kit. Ha, ha ! Kit—ah, here they come ! (*Exit.*)

(Enter Brass, Kit and Dick.)

KIT : Search me. But mind, sir, I know you'll be sorry for this to the last day of your life.

BRASS (*emptying Kit's pockets*) : It certainly is a very painful occurrence. Very painful. Nothing here, Mr. Richard, sir—all perfectly satisfactory. Nor here, sir. Nor in the waistcoat—nor in the coat tails. So far I'm rejoiced, I'm sure. Ah, the hat, Mr. Richard. A handkerchief. No harm in that—none whatever—Eh—*What, in the hat?*

(*Dick has taken the note from the lining of the hat and holds it up. Kit is stupified.*)

DICK : Tucked in under the lining !

BRASS : And this is the world that turns upon its own axis and has lunar influences and revolutions round heavenly bodies ? Sally, my dear, forgive me and ketch hold of him on the other side. Mr. Richard, sir, have the goodness to fetch a constable. A constable, sir, if you please. (*Exit Dick*)

(*Exit Kit, Brass and Sally.*)

DICK : There's some black devil's work there. I won't believe that lad's a thief. And if I can help it I'll never bear witness against him. (*Enter Quilp, who does not see Dick.*)

QUILP : Ha, ha, ha ! (*dancing with delight.*) Kit, honest Kit. Kit a thief. Ha, ha—Why, he's an uglier thief than can be seen for a penny ! Oh, they did it beautifully—but as soon as I can I'll get rid of these two also, for they know too much—they know—eh (*seeing Dick*) eh—what—what !

DICK : You inhuman monster with form as hideous as your heart is black. I've found you out, have I— (*Rushes at Quilp—they close and fight, overturn tables and chairs—at length Dick, who has given Quilp some hard blows, falls exhausted to the floor after flinging the Dwarf into a corner where he lies motionless.*)

(*Enter Marchioness, who runs to Dick and revives him with some water.*)

MARCHIONESS : Oh dear, Oh, Mr. Liverer—Oh !

QUILP (*getting up—aside*) : What—the brat ! How came she here—I thought Sally kept her locked up—I must stop her mouth— (*Exit.*)

MARCHIONESS : Please rouse up—there—drink some—there—Oh, dear, Oh—are you better now ?

DICK (*feebly*) : Eh, Oh, yes, Marchioness. I ought not to have tackled him—I'm not well—I'm sick—I feel a fever coming on—and—Well—(*rising and staggering*)

towards door)—Well, good-bye—Marchioness—It may be—a—last—good-bye. (*Exit.*)

MARCHIONESS : Oh—I can't stay here any longer after what I've seen—I can save that poor boy, though—but poor Mr. Liverer—how ill he looks ! Ah—I will—yes, I will—I'll follow him, and find out where he lives—and if he is really ill I'll nurse him. (*Exit.*)

(*Curtain.*)

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I.

*Interior of Dick Swiveller's Lodging. A bedstead with green and yellow striped curtains. Fireplace with fire—table centre—Dick in bed—The Marchioness is playing cribbage at table.*

DICK (*raising himself in bed and drawing back the curtains*) : What do I see ? THE MARCHIONESS ! (*Lying down again.*) Oh, I'm dreaming, that's clear. (*Looking at hands.*) When I went to bed my hands were not made of egg shells. Now I can almost see through them. If this isn't a dream, I've woke up in an Arabian Night instead of a London one. (MARCHIONESS *coughs.*)

DICK : Very remarkable, I never dreamed such a real cough as that ! (MARCHIONESS *coughs twice.*) There's another, and another—I say—I'm dreaming rather fast ! (*Feeling his arms.*) Queerer still ! I came to bed rather pumpt, and now there's nothing to take hold of. (*Looking round the room again.*) It's an Arabian Night, that's what it is ! The Marchioness is a Genie, and, having made a wager with another Genie, about who is the handsomest young man alive, and the worthiest to marry the princess of China, has brought me away, room and all, to compare us together. Perhaps the princess may still—(*looking at the other side of the bed.*) No—she's gone. (*Watching the Marchioness as she plays and turns up a knave.*) Two for his heels.

MARCHIONESS (*jumping up and clapping her hands in joy*) : Oh, I'm so glad ! I'm so glad I don't know what to do !

DICK : Marchioness, be pleased to draw nearer.

MARCHIONESS (*approaches bed half laughing and crying and wiping her eyes with her apron.*)

DICK : I begin to infer from your manner, and these appearances, that I've been ill ?

MARCHIONESS : You just have, and haven't you been talking nonsense ?

DICK : Oh, very ill, Marchioness, have I been ?

MARCHIONESS : Dead, all but. I never thought you'd get better. Thank heaven you have !

DICK : How long, Marchioness ?

MARCHIONESS : Three weeks to-morrow.

DICK : Three what ?

MARCHIONESS : Weeks. Three long, slow weeks.

DICK : Marchioness, how's Sally ?

MARCHIONESS : Bless you, I don't know. I've run away !

DICK (*sitting up in bed*) : Marchioness, where do you live ?

MARCHIONESS : Live ? Here. (*Dick falls back.*)

DICK : Oh !

(*Marchioness busies herself preparing some tea and toast.*)

DICK (*watching her*) : So you've run away ?

MARCHIONESS : Yes, and they've been a 'tizing of me !

DICK : Been—I beg pardon—what have they been doing ?

MARCHIONESS : Been a 'tizing of me—'tizing, you know—in the newspapers !

DICK : Aye, aye—advertising ! Tell me how you thought of coming here.

MARCHIONESS : Why, you see, when you went away and was feeling sick, I followed you, but lost you, and I felt bad to think of your being ill with nobody to take care of you, but one day when I was—

DICK : Near a keyhole ?

MARCHIONESS : Well, yes, when I was near the office keyhole, I heard some one say that she was your landlady and would someone come, for you was very ill. Well, Mr. Brass said it was none of his business, and Miss Sally said you was a funny chap, but it was none of her business, so the lady went away and slammed the door to when she went, I can tell you—so that night I ran away and come here, and told 'em you was my brother, and they believed me, and I've been here ever since.

DICK : This poor little Marchioness has been wearing herself to death !

MARCHIONESS : No, I haven't, don't you mind about me. I like sitting up, and I've often had a sleep, bless you, in one of them chairs. But if you could have seen how you tried to jump out o' winder, and if you could have heard how you used to keep on singing, and making speeches, you wouldn't have believed it—I'm so glad you're better, Mr. Liverer.

DICK : Liverer, indeed ! It's well I am a liverer. I should have died, Marchioness, but for you. (*Takes her hand and is affected.*)

MARCHIONESS : There now, lie down again, and keep quiet. The Dr. said you was to be kept quite still. Now, take





MISS GRACE MERRY AS SALLY BRASS

a rest, and then we'll talk again. I'll sit by you, you know. If you shut your eyes perhaps you'll go to sleep.  
(*Marchioness moves small table to bed-side and begins to mix some cooling drink.*)

DICK (*after a pause*) : Marchioness, what has become of Kit ?  
MARCHIONESS : He's been sentenced to transportation for a great many years !

DICK : Oh, Marchioness, and I'm sure he is not guilty.

MARCHIONESS : No, I *know* he isn't.

DICK (*excitedly and rising up in bed*) : What do you say ?

MARCHIONESS : Oh, what have I said ? Now, you must not excite yourself, and if you will keep quite quiet I could tell you something—but I won't now.

DICK : Yes, do, it will amuse me.

MARCHIONESS : Would it, though ? I know better than that.

DICK : If it is something about Kit, I must hear it now.

MARCHIONESS : Oh, if you go on like that I'll leave off—and so I tell you.

DICK : But you can't leave off until you have gone on, and do go on—there's a darling. Speak, sister, speak. Pretty Polly, say.

MARCHIONESS : Well, before I run away I used to sleep in the kitchen, where Miss Sally locked me in every night. Well, I was so afraid of being left alone there, and forgotten if there was a fire—you know—that I used to hunt around to try and find a key to the kitchen door, and at last I did find one and it opened it. They kept me very short, oh, you can't think how short they kept me. So I used to come out at night after they'd gone to bed and feel about in the dark for bits of biscuits, and sangwitches that you'd left in the office, or even pieces of orange peel, to put in cold water and make believe it was wine. Did you ever taste orange peel and water ?

DICK (*shakes his head and says feebly*) : No, Marchioness, but go on, there's a dear.

MARCHIONESS : If you make believe very much, it's quite nice, but if you don't, you know, it seems as if it would bear a little more seasoning certainly. Well, on the night before Mr. Kit was took, I came out before they'd gone to bed and I was—near the keyhole again—where I heard Mr. Brass and Miss Sally a talking by the fire. Upon my word he says it's a dangerous thing, and I don't half like it. Oh, she says, "you're too chicken-hearted—what does it signify, ain't we a constantly a ruining somebody in our way of business, then what

does it matter about ruining Kit, when Mr. Quilp desires it?" "Well," Mr. Brass says—"We'll agree that way. Kit's coming to-morrow—I'll put Mr. Quilp's five pound note in his hat and arrange so as Mr. Liverer shall find it there, and be the principal witness against him. And if that don't get Mr. Kit out of Mr. Quilp's way, the devil's in it"—then I heard 'em move so I run down stairs—there.

DICK : Marchioness, have you told this to anybody ?

MARCHIONESS : How could I ? I couldn't leave you to die, and I thought the young man'd get off.

DICK (*plucking off his nightcap and flinging it across the room*) : Marchioness, if you'll do me the favor to retire for a few minutes, and see what sort of a night it is—I'll get up.

MARCHIONESS : You mustn't think of such a thing.

DICK : I must—Marchioness—give me my clothes.

MARCHIONESS : Oh, I'm so glad—you haven't got any.

DICK (*astonished*) : Ma'am !

MARCHIONESS : I've been obliged to sell 'em, every one to get things that was ordered for you. (*Dick falls back on his pillow.*) But don't take on so about them. You're too weak to stand indeed.

DICK : I'm afraid you're right. What ought I to do ? What is to be done ? Marchioness, bring me some paper and a pen and ink. (*Marchioness does so and he writes address.*) Here,—as quick as you can, take this and have them come immediately—(*as she is leaving the room*) Marchioness—it's very embarrassing—there is not so much as a—waistcoat, eh ? Even an umbrella in case of fire would be something, (*exit Marchioness*), but you did quite right, Marchioness, I should have died without you. Oh, I hope it may not be too late. Bless that dear little Marchioness. Ah, if I can only make it up to her some way. Poor child. (*Enter Marchioness.*)

MARCHIONESS (*eagerly*) : Oh, Mr. Liverer, are you awake—Oh, dear, don't be too excited—Oh, what do you think ? Kit's free—let off—he's here—I met him and the lodger—(*enter Kit and single gentleman with a man—all carrying parcels and a hamper with bottles and provisions of all kinds*)—and here they are.

DICK (*stretching out his hand to Kit*) : Kit, my dear boy, shake—not too hard—for Richard is not yet quite himself again—how did it all happen ?

KIT : Brass—to save his own worthless skin—told the whole story. (*Lodger pays man, who goes out.*)

DICK : And Quilp ? Have they got him ?

KIT : He is dead ! Fell off his wharf while trying to escape arrest—Dead for sure this time, for they have found his body !

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : You've been very ill. I'm glad you are better. I will send you a proper nurse and we will take care of this child, who is no doubt tired out.

MARCHIONESS : Take me away—I won't go. I'll stay here till he's able to get up—and then—

DICK : She has saved my life—let her stay if she wants to—Marchioness, your hand—God bless you.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : Oh, I'd almost forgotten I was to tell you that Mr. Garland has been looking for somebody of your name in relation to the will of Rebecca Swiveller deceased—

DICK : Deceased !

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : Yes, in the will she says that had it not been for your wild habits you would have been heir to 25,000 pounds. But she has left you 150 pounds a year for life.

DICK : Ah, my dream ! Now, please God, we'll make a scholar of the poor Marchioness, yet (*with emotion.*) Marchioness, my dear, come here—*give me your hand*—I've been a wild chap, but I owe you my life—I'll make a scholar of you and a lady—and some day (*kissing her hand.*) Well. We'll see, Marchioness (*lying back in bed.*) We'll see.

MARCHIONESS : Now, take a drop of this and don't talk any more (*turning to the others.*) He has been too much excited and the Dr. said he was to be kept quiet—Let me stay and take care of him—I shall be able to get on now with all these good things—You'll see about getting his clothes, won't you ? Leave me now. Good night.

SINGLE GENTLEMAN : We must go—for we start to-night to bring back Little Nell and her grandfather.

KIT : Oh, I'm sure we shall find them—I'd find them anywheres—Good-bye. (*Exit Kit and Single Gentleman.*)

MARCHIONESS (*going to the bedside and arranging the pillows*) : Ah, that's good, he is asleep. Oh, ain't it nice to see him lying there so quiet. (*She then sits down in front of the fire and drops off to sleep, saying*)—How good he is. I'm to go to school and learn to be a lady—and some day—some day I'll be Mrs.—Richard—Swiveller—Oh, I'm so—happy. (*Sleeps.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II.

*Interior of an old chamber. Room is darkened except only the glow from a fire in large open fire-place. The old Grandfather is seated before the fire gazing into its light. He is rocking to and fro with arms crossed.*

*(Enter Kit in travelling clothes on which is snow.)*

KIT *(advancing slowly towards the old man)*: Master, dear master, speak to me.

GRANDFATHER: *(turning his head and regarding Kit absently)* This is another—How many of these spirits there have been to-night!

KIT: No spirit, master. No one but your old servant. You know me now, I'm sure. Miss Nell! Where is she? Where is she?

GRANDFATHER: They all say that. They all ask the same question, a spirit!

KIT: Where is she? Oh, tell me but that, dear master!

GRANDFATHER *(in a whisper)*: She is asleep—yonder—in there.

KIT: Thank God!

GRANDFATHER: Aye! Thank God! Hark! Did she call?

KIT: I heard no voice!

GRANDFATHER: You did! Do you tell me that you don't hear that. *(Starting up and listening.)*

KIT *(startled by his manner and listening)*: No!

GRANDFATHER: Nor that! Can anybody know the voice so well as I? Hush—hush! *(Goes to door at back which he opens quietly—looking in.)* She is still asleep, you were right, she did not call. She is sleeping soundly, but no wonder, Angel-hands have strewn the ground deep with snow, that the lightest footstep may be lighter yet, and the very birds are dead that they may not wake her. She used to feed them, sir, though never so cold and hungry, the timid things would fly from us; they never flew from her! Who is that?

*(Enter Single Gentleman and the Schoolmaster.)*

GRANDFATHER: Shut the door! Quick! Have we not enough to do to drive away the marble cold to keep her warm? *(Sits down again by the fire.) (The Schoolmaster draws a chair to the grandfather's side—Kit and the Single Gentleman stand apart.)*

SCHOOLMASTER: Another night and not in bed! Why do you not take some rest?

GRANDFATHER: Sleep has left me. It is all with her.

SCHOOLMASTER: It would pain her very much to know that you were watching thus. You would not give her pain!

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MR. F. KENNEDY AS SAMPSON BRASS

GRANDFATHER : She has slept very long, and yet it is a good and happy sleep, eh ?

SCHOOLMASTER : Indeed it is—indeed it is.

GRANDFATHER : That's well—and the waking ?

SCHOOLMASTER : Happy too—Happier than tongue can tell, or heart of man conceive.

*(Grandfather rises and steals on tiptoe to the other chamber and is heard murmuring.)*

GRANDFATHER : She is still asleep—and yet I think she moved a little, just a very little. *(Returning to the chair by the fireside.)* You do well to speak softly, for we must not wake her—we must not wake her now. *(He locks his hands in his hair and gives vent to a deep groan.)* Oh, Nelly—Nelly, wait—oh, wait for me ! *(They kneel at his side and unlock his hands.)*

SINGLE GENTLEMAN *(bending over him)* : My brother—my brother, that I have sought so long and now find only to lose again—I fear. Can you not give me a sign that you know me, we, who, as children were ever together. My brother !

GRANDFATHER : Hark—she calls. Yes, Nelly—Nell, I—I am coming. I—come—I come. *(Dies.)*

*(As the last words are uttered the body of Nell appears illuminated in a stream of moonlight which comes through a window at the back—the group round the old man are lighted up with the fire light which, however, does not affect the scene at the back.)*

*(Curtain.)*

THE END.

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