

ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

**PAUL CLIFFORD —
VOLUME 07**

Эдвард Джордж Бульвер-Литтон
Paul Clifford — Volume 07

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Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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CHAPTER XXXIV

*O Fortuna, viris invida fortibus
Quam non aqua bonis praemia dividis.*

SENECA.

.....
*And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew.*

.....
*Here, to the houseless child of want,
My door is open still.*

GOLDSMITH.

Slowly for Lucy waned the weeks of a winter which to her was the most dreary portion of life she had ever passed. It became the time for the judge to attend one of those periodical visitations so fraught with dread and dismay to the miserable inmates of the dark abodes which the complex laws of this country so bounteously supply,—those times of great hilarity and eating to the legal gentry,—

"Who feed on crimes and fatten on distress,
And wring vile mirth from suffering's last excess."

Ah! excellent order of the world, which it is so wicked to disturb! How miraculously beautiful must be that system which makes wine out of the scorching tears of guilt; and from the suffocating suspense, the agonized fear, the compelled and self-mocking bravery, the awful sentence, the despairing death-pang of one man, furnishes the smirking expectation of fees, the jovial meeting, and the mercenary holiday to another! "Of Law, nothing less can be said than that her seat is the bosom of God."— [Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.]—To be sure not; Richard Hooker, you are perfectly right. The divinity of a sessions and the inspiration of the Old Bailey are undeniable!

The care of Sir William Brandon had effectually kept from Lucy's ear the knowledge of her lover's ignominious situation. Indeed, in her delicate health even the hard eye of Brandon and the thoughtless glance of Mauleverer perceived the danger of such a discovery. The earl, now waiting the main attack on Lucy till the curtain had forever dropped on Clifford, proceeded with great caution and delicacy in his suit to his purposed bride. He waited with the more patience inasmuch as he had drawn in advance on his friend Sir William for some portion of the heiress's fortune; and he readily allowed that he could not in the mean while have a better advocate than he found in Brandon.

So persuasive, indeed, and so subtle was the eloquence of this able sophist, that often in his artful conversations with his niece he left even on the unvitiated and strong though simple mind of Lucy an uneasy and restless impression, which time might have ripened into an inclination towards the worldly advantages of the marriage at her command. Brandon was no bungling mediator or violent persecutor. He seemed to acquiesce in her rejection of Mauleverer. He scarcely recurred to the event. He rarely praised the earl himself, save for the obvious qualities of liveliness and good-nature. But he spoke, with all the vivid colours he could infuse at will into his words, of the pleasures and the duties of rank and wealth. Well could he appeal alike to all the prejudices and all the foibles of the human breast, and govern virtue through its weaknesses. Lucy had been brought up, like the daughters of most country gentlemen of ancient family, in an undue and idle consciousness of superior birth; and she was far from inaccessible to the warmth and even feeling (for here Brandon was sincere) with which her uncle spoke of the duty of raising a gallant name sunk into disrepute, and sacrificing our own inclination for the redecoration of the mouldered splendour of those who have gone before us. If the confusion of idea occasioned by a vague pomposity of phrase, or the infant inculcation of a sentiment that is mistaken for a virtue, so often makes fools of the wise on the subject of ancestry; if it clouded even the sarcastic and keen sense of Brandon himself, we may forgive its influence over a girl so little versed in the arts of sound reasoning as poor Lucy,

who, it may be said, had never learned to think until she had learned to love. However, the impression made by Brandon, in his happiest moments of persuasion, was as yet only transient; it vanished before the first thought of Clifford, and never suggested to her even a doubt as to the suit of Mauleverer.

When the day arrived for Sir William Brandon to set out on the circuit, he called Barlow, and enjoined on that acute and intelligent servant the strictest caution with respect to Lucy. He bade him deny her to every one, of whatever rank, and carefully to look into every newspaper that was brought to her, as well as to withhold every letter, save such as were addressed to her in the judge's own handwriting. Lucy's maid Brandon had already won over to silence; and the uncle now pleased himself with thinking that he had put an effectual guard to every chance of discovery. The identity of Lovett with Clifford had not yet even been rumoured; and Mauleverer had rightly judged of Clifford, when he believed the prisoner would himself take every precaution against the detection of that fact. Clifford answered the earl's note, and promised, in a letter couched in so affecting yet so manly a tone of gratitude that even Brandon was touched when he read it. And since his confinement and partial recovery of health, the prisoner had kept himself closely secluded, and refused all visitors. Encouraged by this reflection, and the belief in the safety of his precautions, Brandon took leave of Lucy. "Farewell!" said he, as he embraced her affectionately. "Be sure that you write to me, and forgive me if I do not answer you punctually. Take care

of yourself, my sweet niece, and let me see a fresher colour on that soft cheek when I return!"

"Take care of yourself rather, my dear, dear uncle," said Lucy, clinging to him and weeping, as of late her weakened nerves caused her to do at the least agitation. "Why may I not go with you? You have seemed to me paler than usual the last three or four days, and you complained yesterday. Do let me go with you. I will be no trouble, none at all; but I am sure you require a nurse."

"You want to frighten me, my pretty Lucy," said Brandon, shaking his head with a smile. "I am well, very well. I felt a strange rush of blood towards the head yesterday, it is true; but I feel to-day stronger and lighter than I have done for years. Once more, God bless you, my child!"

And Brandon tore himself away, and commenced his journey.

The wandering and dramatic course of our story now conducts us to an obscure lane in the metropolis, leading to the Thames, and makes us spectators of an affecting farewell between two persons, whom the injustice of fate and the persecutions of men were about perhaps forever to divide.

"Adieu, my friend!" said Augustus Tomlinson, as he stood looking full on that segment of the face of Edward Pepper which was left unconcealed by a huge hat and a red belcher handkerchief. Tomlinson himself was attired in the full costume of a dignified clergyman. "Adieu, my friend, since you will remain in England,—adieu! I am, I exult to say, no less sincere a patriot than you. Heaven be my witness, how long I looked

repugnantly on poor Lovett's proposal to quit my beloved country. But all hope of life here is now over; and really, during the last ten days I have been so hunted from corner to corner, so plagued with polite invitations, similar to those given by a farmer's wife to her ducks, 'Dilly, dilly, dilly, come and be killed!' that my patriotism has been prodigiously cooled, and I no longer recoil from thoughts of self-banishment. 'The earth,' my dear Ned, as a Greek sage has very well observed,—'the earth is the same everywhere!' and if I am asked for my home, I can point, like Anaxagoras, to heaven!"

"Pon my soul, you affect me!" said Ned, speaking thick, either from grief or the pressure of the belcher handkerchief on his mouth; "it is quite beautiful to hear you talk!"

"Bear up, my dear friend," continued Tomlinson; "bear up against your present afflictions. What, to a man who fortifies himself by reason and by reflection on the shortness of life, are the little calamities of the body? What is imprisonment or persecution or cold or hunger? By the by, you did not forget to put the sandwiches into my coat-pocket!"

"Hush!" whispered Ned, and he moved on involuntarily; "I see a man at the other end of the street."

"Let us quicken our pace," said Tomlinson; and the pair proceeded towards the river.

"And now," began Ned, who thought he might as well say something about himself; for hitherto Augustus, in the ardour of his friendship, had been only discussing his own plans,—and

now,—that is to say, when I leave you,—I shall hasten to dive for shelter, until the storm blows over. I don't much like living in a cellar and wearing a smock frock; but those concealments have something interesting in them, after all! The safest and snugest place I know of is the Pays Bas, about Thames Court; so I think of hiring an apartment underground, and taking my meals at poor Lovett's old quarters, the Mug,—the police will never dream of looking in these vulgar haunts for a man of my fashion."

"You cannot then tear yourself from England?" said Tomlinson.

"No, hang it! the fellows are so cursed unmanly on the other side of the water. I hate their wine and their parley woo. Besides, there is no fun there."

Tomlinson, who was absorbed in his own thoughts, made no comment on his friend's excellent reasons against travel; and the pair now approached the brink of the river. A boat was in waiting to receive and conduct to the vessel in which he had taken his place for Calais the illustrious emigrant. But as Tomlinson's eye fell suddenly on the rude boatmen and the little boat which were to bear him away from his native land; as he glanced, too, across the blue waters, which a brisk wind wildly agitated, and thought how much rougher it would be at sea, where "his soul" invariably "sickened at the heaving wave,"—a whole tide of deep and sorrowful emotions rushed upon him.

He turned away. The spot on which he stood was a piece of ground to be let (as a board proclaimed) upon a building

lease; below, descended the steps which were to conduct him to the boat; around, the desolate space allowed him to see in far and broad extent the spires and domes and chimneys of the great city whose inhabitants he might never plunder more. As he looked and looked, the tears started to his eyes, and with a gust of enthusiasm, little consonant with his temperate and philosophical character, he lifted his right hand from his black breeches-pocket, and burst into the following farewell to the metropolis of his native shores:—

"Farewell, my beloved London, farewell! Where shall I ever find a city like you? Never, till now, did I feel how inexpressibly dear you were to me. You have been my father and my brother and my mistress and my tailor and my shoemaker and my hatter and my cook and my wine-merchant! You and I never misunderstood each other. I did not grumble when I saw what fine houses and good strong boxes you gave to other men. No! I rejoiced at their prosperity. I delighted to see a rich man,—my only disappointment was in stumbling on a poor one. You gave riches to my neighbours; but, O generous London, you gave those neighbours to me! Magnificent streets, all Christian virtues abide within you! Charity is as common as smoke! Where, in what corner of the habitable world, shall I find human beings with so many superfluities? Where shall I so easily decoy, from benevolent credulity, those superfluities to myself? Heaven only knows, my dear, dear, darling London, what I lose in you! O public charities! O public institutions! O banks that belie

mathematical axioms and make lots out of nothing! O ancient constitution always to be questioned! O modern improvements that never answer! O speculations! O companies! O usury laws which guard against usurers, by making as many as possible! O churches in which no one profits, save the parson, and the old women that let pews of an evening! O superb theatres, too small for parks, too enormous for houses, which exclude comedy and comfort, and have a monopoly for performing nonsense gigantically! O houses of plaster, built in a day! O palaces four yards high, with a dome in the middle, meant to be invisible!

[We must not suppose this apostrophe to be an anachronism. Tomlinson, Of course, refers to some palace of his day; one of the boxes—Christmas boxes—given to the king by his economical nation of shopkeepers. We suppose it is either pulled down or blown down long ago; it is doubtless forgotten by this time, except by antiquaries. Nothing is so ephemeral as great houses built by the people. Your kings play the deuce with their playthings!]

"O shops worth thousands, and O shopkeepers not worth a shilling! O system of credit by which beggars are princes, and princes are beggars! O imprisonment for debt, which lets the mare be stolen, and then locks up the bridle! O sharpers, bubbles, senators, beaux, taverns, brothels, clubs, houses private and public!—O LONDON, in a word, receive my last adieu! Long may you flourish in peace and plenteousness! May your knaves be witty, and your fools be rich! May you alter only two

things, —your damnable tricks of transportation and hanging! Those are your sole faults; but for those I would never desert you. Adieu!"

Here Tomlinson averted his head, and then hastily shaking the hand of Long Ned with a tremulous and warm grasp, he hurried down the stairs and entered the boat. Ned remained motionless for some moments, following him with his eyes as he sat at the end of the boat, waving a white pocket-handkerchief. At length a line of barges snatched him from the sight of the lingerer; and Ned, slowly turning away, muttered,—"Yes, I have always heard that Dame Lobkins's was the safest asylum for misfortune like mine. I will go forthwith in search of a lodging, and to-morrow I will make my breakfast at the Mug!"

Be it our pleasing task, dear reader, to forestall the good robber, and return, at the hour of sunrise on the day following Tomlinson's departure, to the scene at which our story commenced. We are now once more at the house of Mrs. Margery Lobkins.

The room which served so many purposes was still the same as when Paul turned it into the arena of his mischievous pranks. The dresser, with its shelves of mingled delf and pewter, occupied its ancient and important station. Only it might be noticed that the pewter was more dull than of yore, and that sundry cracks made their erratic wanderings over the yellow surface of the delf. The eye of the mistress had become less keen than heretofore, and the care of the hand maid had, of necessity,

relaxed. The tall clock still ticked in monotonous warning; the blanket-screen, haply innocent of soap since we last described it, many-storied and polyballaded, still unfolded its ample leaves "rich with the spoils of time;" the spit and the musket yet hung from the wall in amicable proximation. And the long, smooth form, "with many a holy text thereon bestrewn," still afforded rest to the weary traveller, and an object to the vacant stare of Mrs. Margery Lobkins, as she lolled in her opposite seat and forgot the world. But poor Piggy Lob!—there was the alteration! The soul of the woman was gone; the spirit had evaporated from the human bottle! She sat, with open mouth and glassy eye, in her chair, sidling herself to and fro, with the low, peevish sound of fretful age and bodily pain; sometimes this querulous murmur sharpened into a shrill but unmeaning scold: "There now, you gallows-bird! you has taken the swipes without chalking; you wants to cheat the poor widow; but I sees you, I does! Providence protects the aged and the innocent—Oh, oh! these twinges will be the death o' me. Where's Martha? You jade, you! you wiperous hussy, bring the tape; does n't you see how I suffers? Has you no bowels, to let a poor Christian cretur perish for want o' help! That's with 'em, that's the way! No one cares for I now,—no one has respect for the gray 'airs of the old!" And then the voice dwindled into the whimpering "tenor of its way."

Martha, a strapping wench with red hair streaming over her "hills of snow," was not, however, inattentive to the wants of her mistress. "Who knows," said she to a man who sat by the

hearth, drinking tea out of a blue mug, and toasting with great care two or three huge rounds of bread for his own private and especial nutriment,—“who knows,” said she, “what we may come to ourselves?” And, so saying, she placed a glowing tumbler by her mistress's elbow.

But in the sunken prostration of her intellect, the old woman was insensible even to her consolation. She sipped and drank, it is true; but as if the stream warmed not the benumbed region through which it passed, she continued muttering in a crazed and groaning key,—

“Is this your gratitude, you serpent! Why does not you bring the tape, I tells you? Am I of a age to drink water like a 'oss, you nasty thing! Oh, to think as ever I should live to be deserted!”

Inattentive to these murmurs, which she felt unreasonable, the bouncing Martha now quitted the room to repair to her “upper household” avocations. The man at the hearth was the only companion left to the widow. Gazing at her for a moment, as she sat whining, with a rude compassion in his eye, and slowly munching his toast, which he had now buttered and placed in a delf plate on the hob, this person thus soothingly began:—

“Ah, Dame Lobkins, if so be as 'ow little Paul vas a vith you, it would be a gallows comfort to you in your latter hend!”

The name of Paul made the good woman incline her bead towards the speaker; a ray of consciousness shot through her bedulled brain.

“Little Paul,—eh, sirs! where is Paul? Paul, I say, my ben cull.

Alack! he's gone,—left his poor old nurse to die like a cat in a cellar. Oh, Dummie, never live to be old, man! They leaves us to oursel's, and then takes away all the lush with 'em! I has not a drop o' comfort in the 'varsal world!"

Dummie, who at this moment had his own reasons for soothing the dame, and was anxious to make the most of the opportunity of a conversation as unwitnessed as the present, replied tenderly, and with a cunning likely to promote his end, reproached Paul bitterly for never having informed the dame of his whereabouts and his proceedings. "But come, dame," he wound up, "come, I guess as how he is better nor all that, and that you need not beat your hold brains to think where he lies, or vot he's a doing. Blow me tight, Mother Lob,—I ax pardon, Mrs. Margery, I should say,—if I would not give five bob, ay, and five to the tail o' that, to know what the poor lad is about; I takes a mortal hinterest in that 'ere chap!"

"Oh! oh!" groaned the old woman, on whose palsied sense the astute inquiries of Dummie Dunnaker fell harmless; "my poor sinful carcass! what a way it be in!"

Artfully again did Dummie Dunnaker, nothing defeated, renew his attack; but fortune does not always favour the wise, and it failed Dummie now, for a twofold reason,—first, because it was not possible for the dame to comprehend him; secondly, because even if it had been, she had nothing to reveal. Some of Clifford's pecuniary gifts had been conveyed anonymously, all without direction or date; and for the most part they had

been appropriated by the sage Martha, into whose hands they fell, to her own private uses. Nor did the dame require Clifford's grateful charity; for she was a woman tolerably well off in this world, considering how near she was waxing to another. Longer, however, might Dummie have tried his unavailing way, had not the door of the inn creaked on its hinges, and the bulky form of a tall man in a smockfrock, but with a remarkably fine head of hair, darkened the threshold. He honoured the dame, who cast on him a lacklustre eye, with a sulky yet ambrosial nod, seized a bottle of spirits and a tumbler, lighted a candle, drew a small German pipe and a tobacco-box from his pouch, placed these several luxuries on a small table, wheeled it to a far corner of the room, and throwing himself into one chair, and his legs into another, he enjoyed the result of his pains in a moody and supercilious silence. Long and earnestly did the meek Dummie gaze on the face of the gentleman before him. It had been some years since he had last beheld it; but it was one which did not easily escape the memory; and although its proprietor was a man who had risen in the world, and had gained the height of his profession (a station far beyond the diurnal sphere of Dummie Dunnaker), and the humble purloiner was therefore astonished to encounter him in these lower regions, yet Dummie's recollection carried him back to a day when they had gone shares together without respect of persons, and been right jolly partners in the practical game of beggar my neighbour. While, however, Dummie Dunnaker, who was a little inclined to be shy, deliberated as to the propriety

of claiming acquaintanceship, a dirty boy, with a face which betokened the frost, as Dummie himself said, like a plum dying of the scarlet fever, entered the room, with a newspaper in his dexter paw.

"Great news! great news!" cried the urchin, imitating his vociferous originals in the street; "all about the famous Captain Lovett, as large as life!"

"Old your blarney, you blattergowl!" said Dummie, rebukingly, and seizing the journal.

"Master says as how he must have it to send to Clapham, and can't spare it for more than a 'our!" said the boy, as he withdrew.

"I 'members the day," said Dummie, with the zeal of a clansman, "when the

Mug took a paper all to itsel' instead o' 'iring it by the job like!"

Thereon he opened the paper with a fillip, and gave himself tip to the lecture. But the tall stranger, half rising with a start, exclaimed,—

"Can't you have the manners to be communicative? Do you think nobody cares about Captain Lovett but yourself?" On this, Dummie turned round on his chair, and, with a "Blow me tight, you're velcome, I'm sure," began as follows (we copy the paper, not the diction of the reader):—

"The trial of the notorious Lovett commences this day. Great exertions have been made by people of all classes to procure seats in the Town Hall, which will be full to a degree never before known in this peaceful province. No

less than seven indictments are said to await the prisoner; it has been agreed that the robbery of Lord Mauleverer should be the first to come on. The principal witness in this case against the prisoner is understood to be the king's evidence, MacGrawler. No news as yet have been circulated concerning the suspected accomplices, Augustus Tomlinson and Edward Pepper. It is believed that the former has left the country, and that the latter is lurking among the low refuges of guilt with which the heart of the metropolis abounds. Report speaks highly of the person and manners of Lovett. He is also supposed to be a man of some talent, and was formerly engaged in an obscure periodical edited by MacGrawler, and termed the 'Altheneum,' Or 'Asinaeum.' Nevertheless, we apprehend that his origin is remarkably low, and suitable to the nature of his pursuits. The prisoner will be most fortunate in a judge. Never did any one holding the same high office as Sir William Brandon earn an equal reputation in so short a time. The Whigs are accustomed to sneer at us, when we insist on the private virtues of our public men. Let them look to Sir William Brandon, and confess that the austere morals maybe linked with the soundest knowledge and the most brilliant genius. The opening address of the learned judge to the jury at —— is perhaps the most impressive and solemn piece of eloquence in the English language!"

A cause for this eulogium might haply be found in another part of the paper, in which it was said,—

"Among the higher circles, we understand, the rumour

has gone forth that Sir William Brandon is to be recalled to his old parliamentary career in a more elevated scene. So highly are this gentleman's talents respected by his Majesty and the ministers, that they are, it is reported, anxious to secure his assistance in the House of Lords!"

When Dummie had spelt his "toilsome march" through the first of the above extracts he turned round to the tall stranger, and, eying him with a sort of winking significance, said,—

"So MacGrawler peaches,—blows the gaff on his pals, eh! Vel, now, I always suspected that 'ere son of a gun! Do you know, he used to be at the Mug many 's a day, a teaching our little Paul, and says I to Piggy Lob, says I, 'Blow me tight, but that cove is a queer one! and if he does not come to be scragged,' says I, 'it will only be because he'll turn a rusty, and scrag one of his pals!' So you sees" (here Dummie looked round, and his voice sank into a whisper),—"so you sees, Meester Pepper, I vas no fool there!"

Long Ned dropped his pipe, and said sourly and with a suspicious frown, "What! you know me?"

"To be sure and sartin I does," answered little Dummie, walking to the table where the robber sat. "Does not you know I?"

Ned regarded the interrogator with a sullen glance, which gradually brightened into knowledge. "Ah!" said he, with the air of a Brummel, "Mr. Bummie, or Dummie, I think, eh! Shake a paw,—I'm glad to see you. Recollect the last time I saw you, you rather affronted me. Never mind. I dare say you did not mean it."

Encouraged by this affable reception from the highwayman,

though a little embarrassed by Ned's allusion to former conduct on his part, which he felt was just, Dummie grinned, pushed a stool near Ned, sat himself down, and carefully avoiding any immediate answer to Ned's complaints, rejoined,—

"Do you know, Meester Pepper, you struck I all of a heap? I could not have s'posed as how you'd condescend nowadays to come to the Mug, where I never seed you but once afore. Lord love ye, they says as 'ow you go to all the fine places in ruffles, with a pair of silver pops in your vaistcoat pocket! Vy, the boys hereabout say that you and Meester Tomlinson, and this 'ere poor devil in quod, vere the finest gemmen in town; and, Lord, for to think of your ciwility to a pitiful ragmerchant, like I!"

"Ah!" said Ned, gravely, "there are sad principles afloat now. They want to do away with all distinctions in ranks,—to make a duke no better than his valet, and a gentleman highwayman class with a filcher of fogles.' But, damme, if I don't think misfortune levels us all quite enough; and misfortune brings me here, little Dummie."

"Ah! you wants to keep out of the vay of the bulkies!" "Right. Since poor Lovett was laid by the heels, which I must say was the fault of his own deuced gentlemanlike behaviour to me and Augustus (you've heard of Guz, you say), the knot of us seems quite broken. One's own friends look inclined to play one false; and really, the queer cuffins hover so sharply upon us that I thought it safe to duck for a time. So I have taken a lodging in a cellar, and I intend for the next three months to board at the Mug.

I have heard that I may be sure of lying snug here. Dummie, your health! Give us the baccy."

"I say, Meester Pepper," said Dummie, clearing his throat, when he had obeyed the request, "can you tell I, if so be you 'as met in your travels our little Paul? Poor chap! You knows as 'ow and vy he was sent to quod by Justice Burnflat. Vel, ven he got out, he vent to the devil, or summut like it, and ve have not 'card a vord of him since. You 'members the lad,—a 'nation fine cull, tall and straight as a harrow!"

"Why, you fool," said Ned, "don't you know"—then checking himself suddenly, "Ah! by the by, that rigmarole oath! I was not to tell; though now it's past caring for, I fear! It is no use looking after the seal when the letter's burned."

"Blow me," cried Dunnaker, with unaffected vehemence, "I sees as how you know vot's come of he! Many's the good turn I'll do you, if you vill but tell I."

"Why, does he owe you a dozen bobs; or what, Dummie?" said Ned.

"Not he,—not he," cried Dummie.

"What then, you want to do him a mischief of some sort?"

"Do little Paul a mischief!" ejaculated Dummie; "vy, I've known the cull ever since he was that high! No, but I wants to do him a great sarvice, Meester Pepper, and myself too,—and you to boot, for aught that I know, Meester Pepper."

"Humph!" said Ned,—"humph! what do you mean? I do, it is true, know where Paul is; but you must tell me first why you

wish to know, otherwise you may ask your grandfather for me."

A long, sharp, wistful survey did Mr. Dummie Dunnaker cast around him before he rejoined. All seemed safe and convenient for confidential communication. The supine features of Mrs. Lobkins were hushed in a drowsy stupor; even the gray cat that lay by the fire was curled in the embrace of Morpheus. Nevertheless, it was in a close whisper that Dummie spoke.

"I dares be bound, Meester Pepper, that you 'members vell ven Harry Cook, the great highvayman,—poor fellow! he's gone where ve must all go,— brought you, then quite a gossoon,' for the first time to the little back parlour at the Cock and Hen, Dewereux Court?"

Ned nodded assent.

"And you 'members as how I met Harry and you there, and I vas all afeard at you,—'cause vy? I had never seen you afore, and ve vas a going to crack a swell's crib. And Harry spoke up for you, and said as 'ow though you had just gone on the town, you was already prime up to gammon. You 'members, eh?"

"Ay, I remember all," said Ned; "it was the first and only house I ever had a hand in breaking into. Harry was a fellow of low habits; so I dropped his acquaintance, and took solely to the road, or a chance ingenuity now and then. I have no idea of a gentleman turning cracksman."

"Vel, so you vent vith us, and ve slipped you through a pane in the kitchen-vindow. You vas the least of us, big as you be now; and you vent round and opened the door for us; and ven you had

opened the door, you saw a woman had joined us, and you were a funk'd then, and stayed without the crib, to keep watch while we went in."

"Well, well," cried Ned, "what the devil has all this rigmarole got to do with Paul?"

"Now don't be glimflashy, but let me go on smack right about. Well, when we came out, you minds as 'ow the woman had a bundle in her arms, and you spoke to her; and she answered you roughly, and left us all, and went straight home; and we went and fenced the swag' that very night and afterwards napped the regulars. And sure you made us laugh 'artily, Meester Pepper, when you said, says you, 'That 'ere woman is a rum blo' en.' So she was, Meester Pepper!"

[The reader has probably observed the use made by Dummie and Mrs. Lobkins of Irish phraseology or pronunciation, This is a remarkable trait in the dialect of the lowest orders in London, owing, we suppose, to their constant association with emigrants from "the first flower of the earth." Perhaps it is a modish affectation among the gentry of St. Giles's, just as we eke out our mother-tongue with French at Mayfair.]

"Oh, spare me," said Ned, affectedly, "and make haste; you keep me all in the dark. By the way, I remember that you joked me about the bundle; and when I asked what the woman had wrapped in it, you swore it was a child. Rather more likely that the girl, whoever she was, would have left a child behind her than

carried one off!" The face of Dummie waxed big with conscious importance.

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