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**The Baron of
Grogzwig and other
short stories**

Charles Dickens

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《格罗茨温男爵》

查尔斯·狄更斯(1812—1870)生在英格兰南部海岸城市朴次茅斯。兄弟姊妹8个。他的童年很悲惨，父亲因负债而坐牢，他12岁只得到一家工厂干活。他自学了速记，当上了报社记者，开始在各种报纸、杂志上发表特写，1836—1837年发表了《皮克威克外传》，从此声誉鹊起。《奥列佛·特维斯特》、《尼古拉斯·尼克尔贝》和《老古玩店》三部长篇小说也获得了成功。他曾去美国旅行，对这个新共和国感到失望。在后期作品，如《荒凉山庄》、《艰难时世》和《远大前程》中，他对社会的批判更加彻底，塑造的喜剧人物也更加偏激。他最后一部长篇小说《艾德温·德鲁德之谜》没有写完。死后葬于威斯敏斯特教堂的诗人之角，至今依然是最受欢迎的英国小说家之一。

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THE BARON OF GROGZWIG

‘THE Baron Von Koëldwethout, of Grogzwig in Germany, was as likely a young baron as you would wish to see. I needn’t say that he lived in a castle, because that’s of course; neither need I say that he lived in an old castle; for what German baron ever lived in a new one? There were many strange circumstances connected with this venerable building, among which, not the least startling and mysterious were, that when the wind blew, it rumbled in the chimneys, or even howled among the trees in the neighbouring forest; and that when the moon shone, she found her way through certain small loopholes in the wall, and actually made some parts of the wide halls and galleries quite light, while she left others in gloomy shadow. I believe that one of the baron’s ancestors, being short of money, had inserted a dagger in a gentleman who called one night to ask his way, and it was supposed that these miraculous occurrences took place in consequence. And yet I hardly know how that could have been, either, because the baron’s ancestor, who was an amiable man, felt very sorry afterwards for having been so rash, and laying violent hands upon a quantity of stone and timber-which belonged

likely: probable. **wish:** want.

neither need I say: *note the inversion after neither.*

venerable: old and important.

startling: surprising.

blew: moved. **rumbled:** made a low sound.

chimneys: structures above a fire which carry the smoke out of the building. **howled:** made a sound like a dog crying.

neighbouring: near, adjacent. **shone:** was visible. **she:** *note the personification of moon as female.* **loopholes:** small holes.

gloomy: dark. **shadow:** out of the light.

ancestors: relations from the past.

inserted: put in. **dagger:** short sword or knife.

miraculous: surprising, wonderful. **occurrences:** events. **in**

consequence: because of this. **hardly:** don't really.

ancestor: relation from the past. **amiable:** friendly.

rash: in a hurry, unthinking.

laying violent hands upon: stealing, taking without permission.

timber: wood.

to a weaker baron, built a chapel as an apology, and so took a receipt from Heaven, in full of all demands.

‘Talking of the baron’s ancestor puts me in mind of the baron’s great claims to respect, on the score of his pedigree. I am afraid to say, I am sure, how many ancestors the baron had; but I know that he had a great many more than any other man of his time; and I only wish that he had lived in these latter days, that he might have had more. It is a very hard thing upon the great men of past centuries, that they should have come into the world so soon, because a man who was born three or four hundred years ago, cannot reasonably be expected to have had as many relations before him, as a man who is born now. The last man, whoever he is – and he may be a cobbler or some low vulgar dog for aught we know – will have a longer pedigree than the greatest nobleman now alive; and I contend that this is not fair.

‘Well, but the Baron Von Koëldwethout of Grogzwig! He was a fine swarthy fellow, with dark hair and large moustachios, who rode a-hunting in clothes of Lincoln green, with russet boots on his feet, and a bugle slung over his shoulder, like the guard of a long stage. When he blew this bugle, four-and-twenty other gentlemen of inferior rank, in Lincoln green a little coarser, and russet boots with a little thicker soles, turned out directly; and away galloped the whole train, with spears in their hands like lackered arena railings, to hunt down the boars, or perhaps encounter a bear: in which latter case the baron killed him first, and greased his whiskers with him afterwards.

‘This was a merry life for the Baron of Grogzwig, and a merrier still for the baron’s retainers, who drank Rhine wine every night till they fell under the table, and then had

belonged to: was the property of. **weaker:** not so strong or important. **chapel:** small church. **apology:** way of saying sorry. **receipt:** note saying he had paid. **Heaven:** Paradise. **in full of all demands:** satisfying all requests. **ancestor:** relation from the past. **claims to:** reasons for. **on the score of:** regarding. **pedigree:** family.

wish: desire.

latter: recent. **might have had more:** *note the use of perfect modal.*

cobbler: shoemaker. **low:** common, inferior.

for aught we know: as far as we know. **pedigree:** family tree.

contend: assert, say.

fair: right, just.

swarthy: dark. **fellow:** man.

moustachios: facial hair above lips. **rode:** went on horseback.

a-hunting: going after animals to kill them. **bugle:** kind of trumpet or horn. **slung:** hung. **shoulder:** upper part of back. **long stage:**

type of coach or horse-drawn transport. **blew:** sounded. **rank:** military level. **coarser:** rougher, of inferior quality. **russet:** red-

brown. **thicker:** more substantial. **soles:** bottom part of shoes.

turned out: appeared. **directly:** immediately. **galloped:** went

fast on horseback. **train:** procession, **spears:** long weapon for killing animals. **lackered:** painted. **area railings:** metal fence

around the basement of a house. **boars:** wild pigs with tusks.

encounter: meet. **bear:** large wild animal. **latter:** last, second.

greased: put fat on. **whiskers:** facial hair. **greased his whiskers:** using bear-fat on hair was then fashionable. **merry:** happy.

merrier: happier. **still:** even more. **retainers:** servants. **Rhine:** from the Rhine valley in Germany.

the bottles on the floor, and called for pipes. Never were such jolly, roystering, rollicking, merry-making blades, as the jovial crew of Grogzwig.

‘But the pleasures of the table, or the pleasures of under the table, require a little variety; especially when the same five-and-twenty people sit daily down to the same board, to discuss the same subjects, and tell the same stories. The baron grew weary, and wanted excitement. He took to quarrelling with his gentlemen, and tried kicking two or three of them every day after dinner. This was a pleasant change at first; but it became monotonous after a week or so, and the baron felt quite out of sorts, and cast about, in despair, for some new amusement.

‘One night, after a day’s sport in which he had outdone Nimrod or Gillingwater, and slaughtered “another fine bear”, and brought him home in triumph, the Baron Von Koëldwethout sat moodily at the head of his table, eyeing the smoky roof of the hall with a discontented aspect. He swallowed huge bumpers of wine, but the more he swallowed, the more he frowned. The gentlemen who had been honoured with the dangerous distinction of sitting on his right and left, imitated him to a miracle in the drinking, and frowned at each other.

“‘I will!” cried the baron suddenly, smiting the table with his right hand, and twirling his moustache with his left. “Fill to the Lady of Grogzwig!”

‘The four-and-twenty Lincoln greens turned pale, with the exception of their four-and-twenty noses, which were unchangeable.

““I said to the Lady of Grogzwig,” repeated the baron, looking round the board.

““To the Lady of Grogzwig!” shouted the Lincoln greens;

jolly: happy. **roystering, rollicking**: drinking and having a good time. **merry-making**: enjoying themselves. **blades**: men. **jovial**: happy. **crew**: group.

require: need.

five-and-twenty: (*old fashioned*) twenty five. **daily**: every day. **board**: table.

grew: became. **weary**: tired. **took to**: began to, acquired the habit of. **quarrelling**: arguing. **kicking**: hitting with his feet.

monotonous: boring.

out of sorts: unhappy, in poor condition. **cast about**: looked around. **despair**: desperation, unhappiness. **amusement**: entertainment, something to do. **outdone**: done better than.

Nimrod: famous mythical hunter. **Gillingwater**: London barber, who killed bears to use their fat to grease his customers' hair.

slaughtered: killed. **moodily**: in a bad mood, unhappily. **eyeing**: looking at. **smoky**: full of smoke. **discontented**: unhappy. **aspect**: appearance, look. **swallowed**: consumed. **huge**: enormous.

bumpers: type of large glasses. **frowned**: put an angry expression on his face. **distinction**: privilege.

to a miracle: almost perfectly.

frowned: put an angry expression on their faces.

smiting: hitting.

twirling: twisting, moving in a circular fashion.

Fill: fill your glasses with wine and drink a toast.

four-and-twenty: (*old fashioned*) twenty four. **Lincoln greens**: men in green uniform. **pale**: without colour.

unchangeable: the men drank so much wine that their noses were a bright colour which never changed.

board: table.

and down their four-and-twenty throats went four-and-twenty imperial pints of such rare old hock, that they smacked their eight-and-forty lips, and winked again.

“‘The fair daughter of the Baron Von Swillenhauseu,” said Koëldwethout, condescending to explain. “We will demand her in marriage of her father, ere the sun goes down tomorrow. If he refuse our suit, we will cut off his nose.”

‘A hoarse murmur arose from the company; every man touched, first the hilt of his sword, and then the tip of his nose, with appalling significance.

‘What a pleasant thing filial piety is, to contemplate! If the daughter of the Baron Von Swillenhauseu had pleaded a preoccupied heart, or fallen at her father’s feet and corned them in salt tears, or only fainted away, and complimented the old gentleman in frantic ejaculations, the odds are a hundred to one, but Swillenhauseu castle would have been turned out at window, or rather the baron turned out at window, and the castle demolished. The damsel held her peace, however, when an early messenger bore the request of Von Koëldwethout next morning, and modestly retired to her chamber, from the casement of which she watched the coming of the suitor and his retinue. She was no sooner assured that the horseman with the large moustachios was her proffered husband, than she hastened to her father’s presence, and expressed her readiness to sacrifice herself to secure his peace. The venerable baron caught his child to his arms, and shed a wink of joy.

‘There was great feasting at the castle, that day. The four-and-twenty Lincoln greens of Von Koëldwethout exchanged vows of eternal friendship with twelve Lincoln greens of Von Swillenhauseu, and promised the old baron that they would drink his wine “Till all was blue” – meaning

four-and-twenty: (*old fashioned*) twenty four. **throats:** passage below mouth for food and air. **imperial pints:** measurement of capacity (*about half a litre*). **rare:** unusual, refined. **hock:** type of white wine. **smacked:** made a noise with their lips. **eight-and-forty:** (*old fashioned*) forty eight. **winked:** opened and closed their eyes in a humorous way. **fair:** beautiful. **condescending:** deciding to do a favour. **demand:** ask with insistence. **ere:** before. **If he refuse:** *note the very formal use of subjunctive.* **suit:** request for marriage, favour. **hoarse:** without voice. **murmur:** low sound of speaking. **arose:** came up. **hilt:** handle. **tip:** end. **appalling:** terrible. **significance:** meaning. **filial:** of sons or daughters. **piety:** goodness. **contemplate:** consider. **pleaded:** made an excuse. **preoccupied:** worried. **corned:** preserved with salt. **tears:** liquid associated with crying. **fainted:** lost consciousness. **frantic:** desperate. **ejaculations:** exclamations, words without sense. **odds:** probabilities.

turned out at window: completely ruined, thrown out of the window. **demolished:** destroyed. **damsel:** young and innocent girl. **held her peace:** was silent. **bore:** brought. **retired:** went. **chamber:** room. **casement:** window.

suitor: person asking for her hand in marriage. **retinue:** followers. **assured:** made certain. **moustachios:** facial hair.

proffered: offered, promised. **hastened:** hurried, went quickly. **readiness:** state of being ready.

venerable: old and important. **caught:** held.

shed a wink: made a sign with his eye.

feasting: celebrating, eating and drinking.

vows: sacred promises.

probably until their whole countenances had acquired the same tint as their noses. Everybody slapped everybody else's back, when the time for parting came; and the Baron Von Koëldwethout and his followers rode gaily home.

'For six mortal weeks, the bears and boars had a holiday. The houses of Koëldwethout and Swillenhäusen were united; the spears rusted; and the baron's bugle grew hoarse for lack of blowing.

'Those were great times for the four-and-twenty; but, alas! their high and palmy days had taken boots to themselves, and were already walking off.

"My dear," said the baroness.

"My love," said the baron.

"Those coarse, noisy men –"

"Which, ma'am?" said the baron starting.

'The baroness pointed, from the window at which they stood, to the courtyard beneath, where the unconscious Lincoln greens were taking a copious stirrup-cup, preparatory to issuing forth, after a boar or two.

"My hunting train, ma'am," said the baron.

"Disband them, love," murmured the baroness.

"Disband them!" cried the baron, in amazement.

"To please me, love," replied the baroness.

"To please the devil, ma'am," answered the baron.

'Whereupon the baroness uttered a great cry, and swooned away at the baron's feet.

'What could the baron do? He called for the lady's maid, and roared for the doctor; and then, rushing into the yard, kicked the two Lincoln greens who were the most used to it, and cursing the others all round, bade them go – but never mind where, I don't know the German for it, or I would put it delicately that way.

countenances: faces. **acquired:** got.

tint: colour. **slapped:** hit.

parting: saying goodbye.

rode: went by horse. **gaily:** happily.

mortal: human. **boars:** wild pigs with big, sharp theeth.

spears: long metal weapons. **rusted:** became oxidised. **bugle:**

kind of trumpet or hunting horn. **grew hoarse:** lost its voice.

for lack of blowing: because it was never used. **alas!:** exclamation of sadness. **palmy:** happy, comfortable. **had taken boots to themselves:** were about to end.

coarse: rough, rude. **noisy:** making too much noise.

ma'am: madam. **starting:** moving in surprise.

pointed: indicated with her hand.

courtyard: open space near a building.

copious: large. **stirrup-cup:** last drink before going hunting.

preparatory to issuing forth: before going out. **boar:** wild pig.

train: procession, followers.

Disband: abolish, send away. **murmured:** said in a low voice.

amazement: surprise.

ma'am: madam.

Whereupon: at this moment, at this point. **uttered:** emitted.

swooned: fainted, lost consciousness.

maid: servant.

roared: shouted like a lion. **rushing:** running. **yard:** open space near a building. **kicked:** hit with his foot. **Lincoln greens:** his

men dressed in green uniform. **cursing:** saying bad words. **all**

round: all of them. **bade:** told. **never mind where:** euphemism for the devil or hell. **delicately:** politely.

‘It is not for me to say by what means or by what degrees, some wives manage to keep down some husbands as they do, although I may have my private opinion on the subject, and may think that no Member of Parliament ought to be married, inasmuch as three married members out of every four, must vote according to their wives’ consciences (if there be such things), and not according to their own. All I need say, just now, is, that the Baroness Von Koëldwethout somehow or other acquired great control over the Baron Von Koëldwethout, and that, little by little, and bit by bit, and day by day, and year by year, the baron got the worst of some disputed question, or was silyly unhorsed from some old hobby; and that by the time he was a fat hearty fellow of forty-eight or thereabouts, he had no feasting, no revelry, no hunting train, and no hunting – nothing in short that he liked, or used to have; and that, although he was as fierce as a lion and as bold as brass, he was decidedly snubbed and put down, by his own lady, in his own castle of Grogzwig.

‘Nor was this the whole extent of the baron’s misfortunes. About a year after his nuptials, there came into the world a lusty young baron, in whose honour a great many fireworks were let off, and a great many dozens of wine drunk; but next year there came a young baroness, and next year another young baron, and so on, every year, either a baron or baroness (and one year both together), until the baron found himself the father of a small family of twelve. Upon every one of these anniversaries, the venerable Baroness Von Swillenhauseu was nervously sensitive for the well-being of her child the Baroness Von Koëldwethout; and although it was not found that the good lady ever did anything material towards contributing to her child’s reco-

means: ways. **by what degrees:** how much.

manage: succeed. **keep down:** oppress, repress.

although: even if.

ought to: should.

inasmuch as: because.

according to: following. **consciences:** moral sense.

if there be: *note the use of subjunctive.*

somehow: in some way. **acquired:** got.

got the worst: lost. **disputed:** controversial, subject of argument.

slily: carefully, cleverly. **unhorsed from some old hobby:** had to give up some old opinion. **hearty:** vigorous, robust.

thereabouts: about that age. **feasting:** parties, banquets, celebrations. **revelry:** drinking. **train:** followers in procession.

fierce: aggressive. **bold:** courageous. **as bold as brass:** very courageous. **snubbed:** ignored. **put down:** criticised.

Nor was this: *note the use of inversion after nor.* **extent:** size, degree. **misfortunes:** bad luck. **nuptials:** marriage.

lusty: healthy, vigorous.

fireworks: explosive devices. **let off:** exploded. **dozens:** groups of twelve (*bottles*).

venerable: old and important.

very, still she made it a point of duty to be as nervous as possible at the castle at Grogzwig, and to divide her time between moral observations on the baron's housekeeping, and bewailing the hard lot of her unhappy daughter. And if the Baron of Grogzwig, a little hurt and irritated at this, took heart, and ventured to suggest that his wife was at least no worse off than the wives of other barons, the Baroness Von Swillenhauseu begged all persons to take notice, that nobody but she, sympathized with her dear daughter's sufferings; upon which, her relations and friends remarked, that to be sure she did cry a great deal more than her son-in-law, and that if there were a hard-hearted brute alive, it was that Baron of Grogzwig.

'The poor baron bore it all, as long as he could, and when he could bear it no longer lost his appetite and his spirits, and sat himself gloomily and dejectedly down. But there were worse troubles yet in store for him, and as they came on, his melancholy and sadness increased. Times changed. He got into debt. The Grogzwig coffers ran low, though the Swillenhauseu family had looked upon them as inexhaustible; and just when the baroness was on the point of making a thirteenth addition to the family pedigree, Von Koëldwethout discovered that he had no means of replenishing them.

"'I don't see what is to be done," said the baron. "I think I'll kill myself."

'This was a bright idea. The baron took an old hunting-knife from a cupboard hard by, and having sharpened it on his boot, made what boys call "an offer" at his throat.

"'Hem !" said the baron, stopping short. "Perhaps it's not sharp enough."

'The baron sharpened it again, and made another offer,

recovery: getting better after an illness. **duty**: moral obligation.

housekeeping: management of the house.

bewailing: complaining about. **hard lot**: difficult circumstances.

hurt: offended.

took heart: was encouraged. **ventured**: tried.

no worse off: not poorer.

begged: prayed, implored.

sympathised: had compassion for.

a great deal: a lot.

hard-hearted: without compassion. **brute**: animal, beast, cruel person.

bore: took, tolerated.

bear: tolerate.

gloomily: miserably, **dejectedly**: in a depressed way.

yet: still. **in store**: coming soon.

melancholy: sad state.

into debt: state of owing money. **coffers**: financial affairs. **ran**

low: were nearly zero.

inexhaustible: without end.

pedigree: family tree.

means: way.

replenishing: filling.

bright: intelligent, happy.

hard by: near. **sharpened**: made it ready to cut.

throat: passage under mouth for food and air.

Hem!: exclamation.

when his hand was arrested by a loud screaming among the young barons and baronesses, who had a nursery in an upstairs tower with iron bars outside the window, to prevent their tumbling out into the moat.

“If I had been a bachelor,” said the baron sighing, “I might have done it fifty times over, without being interrupted. Hallo! Put a flask of wine and the largest pipe, in the little vaulted room behind the hall.”

‘One of the domestics, in a very kind manner, executed the baron’s order in the course of half an hour or so, and Von Koëldwethout being apprised thereof, strode to the vaulted room, the walls of which, being of dark shining wood, gleamed in the light of the blazing logs which were piled upon the hearth. The bottle and pipe were ready, and, upon the whole, the place looked very comfortable.

“Leave the lamp,” said the baron.

“Anything else, my lord?” inquired the domestic.

“The room,” replied the baron. The domestic obeyed, and the baron locked the door.

“I’ll smoke a last pipe,” said the baron, “and then I’ll be off.”

So, putting the knife upon the table till he wanted it, and tossing off a goodly measure of wine, the Lord of Grogz-wig threw himself back in his chair, stretched his legs out before the fire, and puffed away.

‘He thought about a great many things – about his present troubles and past days of bachelorship, and about the Lincoln greens, long since disappeared up and down the country, no one knew whither: with the exception of two who had been unfortunately beheaded, and four who had killed themselves with drinking. His mind was running upon bears and boars, when, in the process of draining his

arrested: stopped. **screaming:** shouting and crying.

nursery: room for children.

tumbling: falling. **moat:** water around a castle.

bachelor: unmarried man. **sighing:** making a sad noise.

Hallo!: calls servant. **flask:** bottle.

vaulted: with an arched ceiling.

domestics: servants. **executed:** carried out, did.

or so: about.

being apprised thereof: a servant told him all was ready. **strode:** walked in a determined way.

gleamed: shone. **blazing:** burning. **logs:** trunks of wood. **piled:** arranged vertically. **hearth:** space in front of fire.

inquired: asked.

The room: leave the room.

locked: closed with a key.

be off: commit suicide.

tossing off: drinking. **goodly measure:** large quantity.

stretched: elongated.

puffed: smoked.

troubles: problems. **bachelorship:** being a single man.

long since: long ago. **disappeared:** gone away.

whither: where.

beheaded: had lost their heads.

running upon: thinking about. **bears:** large wild animals. **boars:** wild pigs with tusks. **draining:** drinking the last of a liquid.

glass to the bottom, he raised his eyes, and saw, for the first time and with unbounded astonishment, that he was not alone.

‘No, he was not; for, on the opposite side of the fire, there sat with folded arms a wrinkled hideous figure, with deeply sunk and bloodshot eyes, and an immensely long cadaverous face, shadowed by jagged and matted locks of coarse black hair. He wore a kind of tunic of a dull bluish colour, which, the baron observed, on regarding it attentively, was clasped or ornamented down the front, with coffin handles. His legs too, were encased in coffin plates as though in armour; and over his left shoulder he wore a short dusky cloak, which seemed made of remnant of some pall. He took no notice of the baron, but was intently eyeing the fire. “Halloa!” said the baron, stamping his foot to attract attention.

““Halloa!” replied the stranger, moving his eyes towards the baron, but not his face or himself “What now?”

““What now!” replied the baron, nothing daunted by his hollow voice and lustreless eyes, “I should ask that question. How did you get here?”

““Through the door,” replied the figure.

““What are you?” says the baron.

““A man,” replied the figure.

““I don’t believe it,” says the baron.

““Disbelieve it then,” says the figure.

““I will,” rejoined the baron.

‘The figure looked at the bold Baron of Grogzwig for some time, and then said familiarly,

““There’s no coming over you, I see. I’m not a man!”

““What are you then?” asked the baron.

““A genius,” replied the figure.

raised: moved up.

unbounded: without limits. **astonishment**: surprise.

folded: one touching the other. **wrinkled**: with lines on the skin.

hideous: horrible. **sunk**: inside the head. **bloodshot**: red.

immensely: extremely. **cadaverous**: like a dead body.

shadowed: made dark. **jagged**: not smooth. **matted**: sticking

together. **locks**: pieces of hair. **coarse**: rough. **tunic**: item of

clothing. **dull**: not luminous. **bluish**: more or less blue. **regarding**:

looking at. **attentively**: carefully. **clasped**: fastened, attached.

ornamented: decorated. **coffin**: box in which dead people are

put underground. **encased**: covered. **plates**: panels. **armour**,

old-fashioned metal suit used in war. **dusky**: dark. **cloak**: mantle.

remnant: what remains, the last of. **pall**: funeral cloth. **intently**:

intensely. **eyeing**: looking at. **stamping**: striking on the ground.

daunted: frightened.

hollow: sinister. **lustreless**: without light.

rejoined: replied.

bold: brave, courageous.

familiarly: in a friendly way.

coming over: tricking, deceiving.

A genius: a spirit, a ghost.

"You don't look much like one," returned the baron scornfully.

"I am the Genius of Despair and Suicide," said the apparition.

"Now you know me."

'With these words the apparition turned towards the baron, as if composing himself for a talk – and, what was very remarkable, was, that he threw his cloak aside, and displaying a stake, which was run through the centre of his body, pulled it out with a jerk, and laid it on the table, as composedly as if it had been a walking-stick.

"Now," said the figure, glancing at the hunting-knife, "are you ready for me?"

"Not quite," rejoined the baron; "I must finish this pipe first."

"Look sharp then," said the figure.

"You seem in a hurry," said the baron.

"Why, yes, I am," answered the figure, "they're doing a pretty brisk business in my way, over in England and France just now and my time is a good deal taken up."

"Do you drink?" said the baron, touching the bottle with the bowl of his pipe.

"Nine times out of ten, and then very hard," rejoined the figure, drily.

"Never in moderation?" asked the baron.

"Never," replied the figure, with a shudder, "that breeds cheerfulness."

'The baron took another look at his new friend, whom he thought an uncommonly queer customer, and at length inquired whether he took any active part in such little proceedings as that which he had in contemplation.

"No," replied the figure evasively; "but I am always present."

returned: replied.

scornfully: without respect.

Despair: desperation, depression.

apparition: ghost.

composing: preparing.

remarkable: surprising. **threw his cloak aside:** took off his mantle.

displaying: showing. **stake:** sharp piece of wood used to kill vampires. **jerk:** sudden movement. **laid:** put.

composedly: without losing his calm. **walking-stick:** stick used by old people to help them walk. **glancing:** looking quickly.

rejoined: answered.

Look sharp: hurry up.

pretty: quite. **brisk:** quick, good.

a good deal: very. **taken up:** occupied.

bowl: round part of pipe.

very hard: a lot. **rejoined:** answered.

drily: without emotion.

shudder: tremble, shock. **breeds:** generates.

cheerfulness: happiness.

uncommonly: unusually. **queer:** strange. **at length:** after a long time. **inquired:** asked. **whether:** if.

proceedings: events (*here suicide*). **contemplation:** his thoughts.

evasively: not wanting to give an answer.

“Just to see fair, I suppose?” said the baron.

“Just that,” replied the figure playing with the stake, and examining the ferule.

“Be as quick as you can, will you, for there’s a young gentleman who is afflicted with too much money and leisure wanting me now, I find.”

“Going to kill himself because he has too much money!” exclaimed the baron, quite tickled: “Ha! ha! that’s a good one.”

(This was the first time the baron had laughed for many a long day.)

“I say,” expostulated the figure, looking very much scared; “don’t do that again.”

“Why not?” demanded the baron.

“Because it gives me pain all over,” replied the figure.

“Sigh as much as you please; that does me good.”

The baron sighed mechanically, at the mention of the word; the figure, brightening up again, handed him the hunting-knife with the most winning politeness.

“It’s not a bad idea though,” said the baron, feeling the edge of the weapon; “a man killing himself because he has too much money.”

“Pooh!” said the apparition, petulantly, “no better than a man’s killing himself because he has none or little.”

Whether the genius unintentionally committed himself in saying this, or whether he thought the baron’s mind was so thoroughly made up that it didn’t matter what he said, I have no means of knowing. I only know that the baron stopped his hand, all of a sudden, opened his eyes wide, and looked as if quite a new light had come upon him for the first time.

“Why, certainly,” said Von Koëldwethout, “nothing is too bad to be retrieved.”

Just: only. **see fair:** make sure that things are done properly.

stake: piece of wood used to kill vampires.

ferule: piece of metal on the bottom of a stick.

afflicted with: suffering from.

leisure: free time.

quite: completely. **tickled:** amused.

expostulated: exclaimed.

scared: afraid.

demanded: asked in an aggressive way.

Sigh: make sad noises.

mechanically: automatically. **mention:** saying.

brightening up: becoming happier. **handed:** gave.

winning: charming.

though: however.

edge: side. **weapon:** instrument for killing.

Pooh!: expression of disgust. **apparition:** ghost. **petulantly:** in a changeable mood.

Whether: if. **unintentionally:** without wanting to. **committed**

himself: made a mistake.

means: way.

retrieved: recovered.

“Except empty coffers,” cried the genius.

“Well; but they may be one day filled again,” said the baron.

“Scolding wives,” snarled the genius.

“Oh! They may be made quiet,” said the baron.

“Thirteen children,” shouted the genius.

“Can’t all go wrong, surely,” said the baron.

“The genius was evidently growing very savage with the baron, for holding these opinions all at once, but he tried to laugh it off, and said if he would let him know when he had left off joking, he should feel obliged to him.

“But I am not joking; I was never farther from it,” remonstrated the baron.

“Well, I am glad to hear that,” said the genius, looking very grim, “because a joke, without any figure of speech, *is* the death of me. Come! Quit this dreary world at once.”

“I don’t know,” said the baron, playing with the knife; “it’s a dreary one certainly, but I don’t think yours is much better, for you have not the appearance of being particularly comfortable.

That puts me in mind – what security have I, that I shall be any the better for going out of the world after all!” he cried, starting up;

“I never thought of that.”

“Dispatch,” cried the figure, gnashing its teeth.

“Keep off!” said the baron. “I’ll brood over miseries no longer, but put a good face on the matter, and try the fresh air and the bears again; and if that don’t do, I’ll talk to the baroness soundly, and cut the Von Swillenhause dead.” With this the baron fell into his chair, and laughed so loud and boisterously, that the room rang with it.

“The figure fell back a pace or two, regarding the baron

coffers: chests of money, finances.

Scolding: critical. **snarled**: said aggressively, like a wild animal.

evidently: obviously. **savage**: wild.

holding: having.

laugh it off: forget it by joking about it.

left off: finished. **obliged to him**: thankful.

farther: more distant.

remonstrated: protested.

grim: terrible. **figure of speech**: play on words.

Quit: leave. **dreary**: depressing.

starting up: getting up suddenly.

Dispatch: do it! kill yourself! **gnashing**: moving his teeth with a metallic sound. **brood**: think sadly.

bears: wild animals. **don't do**: (*informal*) doesn't work.

soundly: forcefully. **cut... dead**: avoid... completely.

boisterously: aggressively. **rang**: sounded.

fell: moved. **pace**: step.

meanwhile with a look of intense terror, and when he had ceased, caught up the stake, plunged it violently into its body, uttered a frightful howl, and disappeared.

‘Von Koëldwethout never saw it again. Having once made up his mind to action, he soon brought the baroness and the Von Swillenhausens to reason, and died many years afterwards: not a rich man that I am aware of, but certainly a happy one: leaving behind him a numerous family, who had been carefully educated in bear- and boar-hunting under his own personal eye. And my advice to all men is, that if ever they become hipped and melancholy from similar causes (as very many men do), they look at both sides of the question, applying a magnifying glass to the best one; and if they still feel tempted to retire without leave, that they smoke a large pipe and drink a full bottle first, and profit by the laudable example of the baron of Grogzwig.’

ceased: stopped. **caught up:** took. **stake:** piece of wood.
plunged: put violently. **uttered:** emitted. **frightful:** frightening,
terrible. **howl:** noise like an animal.

am aware of: know about.

bear- and boar: wild animals.

hipped: miserable. **melancholy:** sad.

applying: using. **magnifying glass:** optical lens making things
look bigger. **feel tempted:** want.

retire without leave: go without permission (*here commit suicide*).
profit by: learn from. **laudable:** excellent.

TO BE READ AT DUSK

ONE, two, three, four, five. There were five of them.

Five couriers, sitting on a bench outside the convent on the summit of the Great St. Bernard in Switzerland, looking at the remote heights, stained by the setting sun, as if a mighty quantity of red wine had been broached upon the mountain top, and had not yet had time to sink into the snow.

This is not my simile. It was made for the occasion by the stoutest courier, who was a German. None of the others took any more notice of it than they took of me, sitting on another bench on the other side of the convent door, smoking my cigar, like them, and – also like them – looking at the reddened snow, and at the lonely shed hard by, where the bodies of belated travellers, dug out of it, slowly wither away, knowing no corruption in that cold region.

The wine upon the mountain top soaked in as we looked; the mountain became white; the sky, a very dark blue; the wind rose; and the air turned piercing cold. The five couriers buttoned their rough coats. There being no safer man to imitate in all such proceedings than a courier, I buttoned mine.

The mountain in the sunset had stopped the five couriers in a conversation. It is a sublime sight, likely to stop conver-

DUSK: time when the sun has just gone down, nearly dark.

couriers: travelling servants. **bench:** long wooden chair. **convent:** religious institution for women. **summit:** top, peak. **Great St. Bernard:** famous mountain. **remote:** distant. **heights:** mountain peaks. **stained:** coloured. **setting:** going down. **mighty:** large, great. **broached:** poured, opened. **sink:** penetrate. **simile:** figure of speech comparing one thing to another. **stoutest:** fattest, most robust. **courier:** guide.

bench: long wooden chair. **convent:** religious institution.

reddened: reflecting the red colour of the sun. **lonely:** solitary. **shed:** small wooden structure for keeping things. **hard by:** near. **belated:** late. **dug out of it:** extracted from the snow. **wither:** lose their shape. **corruption:** decay. **soaked:** penetrated.

rose: became stronger. **turned:** became. **piercing:** penetrating. **buttoned:** fastened, closed. **rough:** simple, not elegant. **safer:** more secure. **proceedings:** actions. **courier:** travelling servant.

sunset: time when the sun goes down.
sublime: beautiful. **likely:** probable.

sation. The mountain being now out of the sunset, they resumed. Not that I had heard any part of their previous discourse; for, indeed, I had not then broken away from the American gentleman, in the travellers' parlour of the convent, who, sitting with his face to the fire, had undertaken to realize to me the whole progress of events which had led to the accumulation by the Honourable Ananias Dodger of one of the largest acquisitions of dollars ever made in our country.

'My God!' said the Swiss courier, speaking in French, which I do not hold (as some authors appear to do) to be such an all sufficient excuse for a naughty word, that I have only to write it in that language to make it innocent; 'if you talk of ghosts –'

'But I *don't* talk of ghosts,' said the German.

'Of what then?' asked the Swiss.

'If I knew of what then,' said the German, 'I should probably know a great deal more.'

It was a good answer, I thought, and it made me curious. So, I moved my position to that corner of my bench which was nearest to them, and leaning my back against the convent-wall, heard perfectly, without appearing to attend.

'Thunder and lightning!' said the German, warming, 'when a certain man is coming to see you, unexpectedly; and, without his own knowledge, sends some invisible messenger, to put the idea of him in your head all day, what do you call that? When you walk along a crowded street – at Frankfort, Milan, London, Paris – and think that a passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and then that another passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and so begin to have a strange foreknowledge that presently you'll meet your friend Heinrich – which you do, though you believed him at Trieste – what do you call *that*?'

sunset: time when the sun goes down.

resumed: started their conversation again.

discourse: conversation. **indeed:** really, truly. **broken away from:** left. **parlour:** room.

convent: religious institution for women. **undertaken:** promised, tried. **realize:** tell. **led:** brought.

acquisitions: collections.

hold: consider.

naughty: profane.

a great deal: a lot.

bench: wooden seat.

leaning: supporting.

attend: listen.

Thunder and lightning!: sound and visual effects of a storm, exclamation. **warming:** becoming more excited. **unexpectedly:** without warning. **his own knowledge:** knowing.

crowded: full of people.

stranger: someone you do not know.

foreknowledge: feeling of anticipation. **presently:** soon.

though: even if.

‘It’s not uncommon either,’ murmured the Swiss and the other three.

‘Uncommon!’ said the German. ‘It’s as common as cherries in the Black Forest. It’s as common as maccaroni at Naples. And Naples reminds me! When the old Marchesa Senzanima shrieks at a card party on the Chiaja – as I heard and saw her, for it happened in a Bavarian family of mine, and I was overlooking the service that evening – I say, when the old Marchesa starts up at the card-table, white through her rouge, and cries, “My sister in Spain is dead! I felt her cold touch on my back!” – and when that sister *is* dead at the moment – what do you call that?’

‘Or when the blood of San Gennaro liquefies at the request of the clergy – as all the world knows that it does regularly once a-year, in my native city,’ said the Neapolitan courier after a pause, with a comical look, ‘what do you call that?’

‘*That!*’ cried the German. ‘Well! I think I know a name for that.’

‘Miracle?’ said the Neapolitan, with the same sly face. The German merely smoked and laughed; and they all smoked and laughed.

‘Bah!’ said the German, presently. ‘I speak of things that really do happen. When I want to see the conjurer, I pay to see a professed one, and have my money’s worth. Very strange things do happen without ghosts. Ghosts! Giovanni Baptista, tell your story of the English bride. There’s no ghost in that, but something full as strange. Will any man tell me what?’

As there was a silence among them, I glanced around. He whom I took to be Baptista was lighting a fresh cigar. He presently went on to speak. He was a Genoese, as I judged. ‘The story of the English bride?’ said he. ‘Basta! one ought

uncommon: rare. **murmured:** said in a low voice.

cherries: type of red fruit. **maccaroni:** Italian pasta.

reminds me: makes me remember.

shrieks: screams. **Chiaja:** famous street in Naples.

overlooking: supervising.

starts up: gets up suddenly.

rouge: red make-up.

liquefies: turns from solid to liquid.

clergy: religious figures.

Neapolitan: from Naples.

comical: funny.

sly: cunning, clever.

merely: simply, only.

Bah!: expression of disbelief. **presently:** after a short time.

conjuror: magician.

professed: professional. **my money's worth:** what I paid for.

bride: woman who has just been married.

full as: equally.

glanced: looked.

presently: soon. **judged:** thought.

bride: woman who has just been married. **Basta!:** Enough!
(*Italian*).

not to call so slight a thing a story. Well, it's all one. But it's true. Observe me well, gentlemen, it's true. That which glitters is not always gold; but what I am going to tell, is true.'

He repeated this more than once.

Ten years ago, I took my credentials to an English gentleman at Long's Hotel, in Bond Street, London, who was about to travel—it might be for one year, it might be for two. He approved of them; likewise of me. He was pleased to make inquiry. The testimony that he received was favourable. He engaged me by the six months, and my entertainment was generous.

He was young, handsome, very happy. He was enamoured of a fair young English lady, with a sufficient fortune, and they were going to be married. It was the wedding trip, in short, that we were going to take. For three months' rest in the hot weather (it was early summer then) he had hired an old palace on the Riviera, at an easy distance from my city, Genoa, on the road to Nice. Did I know that palace? Yes; I told him I knew it well. It was an old palace, with great gardens. It was a little bare, and it was a little dark and gloomy, being close surrounded by trees; but it was spacious, ancient, grand, and on the sea shore. He said it had been so described to him exactly, and he was well pleased that I knew it. For its being a little bare of furniture, all such places were. For its being a little gloomy, he had hired it principally for the gardens, and he and my mistress would pass the summer weather in their shade.

'So all goes well, Baptista?' said he.

'Indubitably, signor; very well.'

We had a travelling chariot for our journey, newly built for

ought not to: should not. **slight:** little.

glitters: shines.

credentials: references for a job.

was about to: was preparing to.

likewise: in the same way.

make inquiry: ask the people who wrote the references.

engaged: employed.

entertainment: pay.

handsome: good-looking.

enamoured of: in love with. **fair:** beautiful. **a sufficient fortune:** enough money of her own. **trip:** journey.

hired: rented.

Riviera: the coast near Genoa (*Italian*).

bare: without decoration.

gloomy: sinister. **close surrounded by trees:** with lots of trees near it. **spacious:** with lots of space. **ancient:** old. **grand:** aristocratic. **on the sea shore:** near the water.

bare: without. **furniture:** chairs, tables etc.

gloomy: dark. **hired:** rented.

principally: mainly. **mistress:** (*female*) employer.

shade: area out of the sun under a tree.

Indubitably: without a doubt.

chariot: carriage. **newly:** just.

us, and in all respects complete. All we had was complete; we wanted for nothing. The marriage took place. They were happy. *I* was happy, seeing all so bright, being so well situated, going to my own city, teaching my language in the rumble to the maid, la bella Carolina, whose heart was gay with laughter: who was young and rosy.

The time flew. But I observed – listen to this, I pray! (and here the courier dropped his voice) – I observed my mistress sometimes brooding in a manner very strange; in a frightened manner; in an unhappy manner; with a cloudy, uncertain alarm upon her. I think that I began to notice this when I was walking up hills by the carriage side, and master had gone on in front. At any rate, I remember that it impressed itself upon my mind one evening in the South of France, when she called to me to call master back; and when he came back, and walked for a long way, talking encouragingly and affectionately to her, with his hand upon the open window, and hers in it. Now and then, he laughed in a merry way, as if he were bantering her out of something. By and by, she laughed, and then all went well again.

It was curious. I asked la bella Carolina, the pretty little one, Was mistress unwell? – No. Out of spirits? – No. Fearful of bad roads, or brigands? – No. And what made it more mysterious was, the pretty little one would not look at me in giving answer, but *would* look at the view.

But, one day she told me the secret.

‘If you must know,’ said Carolina, ‘I find, from what I have overheard, that mistress is haunted.’

‘How haunted?’

‘By a dream.’

‘What dream?’

wanted for nothing: had everything. **took place:** was celebrated, occurred.

rumble: the back part of a carriage where the servants travelled.

maid: female servant. **gay:** happy. **rosy:** pink, healthy.

flew: passed very quickly. **I pray:** please.

dropped his voice: spoke in a lower tone.

mistress: (*female*) employer. **brooding:** thinking sadly. **manner:** way. **cloudy:** unhappy.

alarm: fear, state of being frightened.

by the carriage side: next to the carriage.

gone on: continued.

impressed itself upon my mind: stayed in my thoughts.

encouragingly: saying kind words. **affectionately:** with love.

merry: happy. **bantering:** using funny words.

By and by: after a short time.

curious: strange.

unwell: ill. **Out of spirits?:** not feeling in a good mood.

Fearful: afraid. **brigands:** bandits on the road.

view: beautiful landscape.

overheard: heard without the other person knowing. **mistress:** (*female*) employer. **haunted:** visited by ghosts.

‘By a dream of a face. For three nights before her marriage, she saw a face in a dream – always the same face, and only One.’

‘A terrible face?’

‘No. The face of a dark, remarkable-looking man, in black, with black hair and a grey moustache – a handsome man, except for a reserved and secret air. Not a face she ever saw, or at all like a face she ever saw. Doing nothing in the dream but looking at her fixedly, out of darkness.’

‘Does the dream come back?’

‘Never. The recollection of it, is all her trouble.’

‘And why does it trouble her?’

Carolina shook her head.

‘That’s master’s question,’ said *la bella*. ‘She don’t know. She wonders why, herself. But I heard her tell him, only last night, that if she was to find a picture of that face in our Italian house (which she is afraid she will), she did not know how she could ever bear it.’

Upon my word I was fearful after this (said the Genoese courier) of our coming to the old palazzo, lest some such ill-starred picture should happen to be there. I knew there were many there; and, as we got nearer and nearer to the place, I wished the whole gallery in the crater of Vesuvius. To mend the matter, it was a stormy dismal evening when we, at last, approached that part of the Riviera. It thundered; and the thunder of my city and its environs, rolling among the high hills, is very loud. The lizards ran in and out of the chinks in the broken stone wall of the garden, as if they were frightened; the frogs bubbled and croaked their loudest; the seawind moaned, and the wet trees dripped; and the lightning – body of San Lorenzo, how it lightened! We all know what an old palazzo in or near Genoa is – how

remarkable: unusual.

moustache: facial hair above the mouth. **handsome:** good-looking. **air:** way of behaving.

fixedly: without moving.

recollection: memory. **trouble:** problem.

trouble: cause problems.

shook her head: made a gesture with her head meaning no.

don't know: (*dialect*) doesn't know.

wonders: asks herself.

was to find: found.

bear: tolerate.

Upon my word: sincerely. **fearful:** afraid.

courier: travelling servant. **palazzo:** palace (*Italian*). **lest:** in case.

ill-starred: unlucky. **happen:** by chance.

the whole gallery: all the pictures in the palazzo. **crater:** mouth of volcano. **Vesuvius:** famous volcano near Naples. **mend:** improve (*ironic*). **stormy:** with bad weather. **dismal:** dark, miserable. **approached:** came near to. **thundered:** made a loud noise. **thunder:** noise of storms. **environs:** surroundings. **rolling:** sounding. **lizards:** reptiles. **chinks:** holes, gaps.

frogs: green amphibians. **bubbled and croaked:** made strange noises. **loudest:** at maximum volume. **moaned:** made a crying sound. **dripped:** let water fall. **lightning:** visual effect of storm, electrical discharge. **body of San Lorenzo:** exclamation. **how it lightened!:** what lightning there was!

time and the sea air have blotted it – how the drapery painted on the outer walls has peeled off in great flakes of plaster – how the lower windows are darkened with rusty bars of iron – how the courtyard is overgrown with grass – how the outer buildings are dilapidated – how the whole pile seems devoted to ruin. Our palazzo was one of the true kind. It had been shut up close for months. Months? – years! It had an earthy smell, like a tomb. The scent of the orange-trees on the broad back terrace, and of the lemons ripening on the wall, and of some shrubs that grew around a broken fountain, had got into the house somehow, and had never been able to get out again. There it was, in every room, an aged smell, grown faint with confinement. It pined in all the cupboards and drawers. In the little rooms of communication between great rooms, it was stifling. If you turned a picture – to come back to the pictures – there it still was, clinging to the wall behind the frame, like a sort of bat.

The lattice-blinds were close shut, all over the house. There were two ugly grey old women in the house, to take care of it; one of them with a spindle, who stood winding and mumbling in the doorway, and who would as soon have let in the devil as the air. Master, mistress, la bella Carolina, and I, went all through the palazzo. I went first, though I have named myself last, opening the windows and the lattice-blinds, and shaking down on myself splashes of rain, and scraps of mortar, and now and then a dozing mosquito, or a monstrous, fat, blotchy, Genoese spider. When I had let the evening light into a room, master, mistress, and la bella Carolina, entered. Then, we looked round at all the pictures, and I went forward again into another room. Mistress secretly had great fear of meeting

blotted: made marks on. **drapery**: decoration.

peeled off: fallen off. **flakes**: flat pieces.

plaster: material used for the outside walls. **lower**: ground floor.

darkened: made dark. **rusty**: oxidised. **overgrown with**: covered.

dilapidated: in bad condition.

pile: construction. **devoted**: dedicated. **ruin**: destruction.

close: carefully.

earthy: like the ground. **tomb**: place where people are put after death. **scent**: perfume. **broad**: wide.

ripening: becoming ready for use. **shrubs**: low trees.

somehow: in some way.

aged: old. **faint**: not very distinct. **confinement**: being closed in, imprisonment. **pined**: declined. **cupboards and drawers**: structures where food and clothes are kept. **stifling**: suffocating.

clinging: attached.

bat: nocturnal mammal with wings.

lattice-blinds: covering for windows. **close shut**: completely shut.

ugly: horrible-looking.

spindle: utensil for spinning wool or cotton. **winding**: spinning.

mumbling: speaking in an unintelligible way. **doorway**: entrance.

as soon have let the devil in as the air: did not dream of letting fresh air into the house. **though**: even if.

lattice-blinds: covering for windows. **shaking**: agitating.

splashes: quantities of liquid. **scraps**: small pieces. **mortar**: material used for walls. **dozing**: sleeping. **mosquito**: insect.

monstrous: enormous. **blotchy**: not all of one colour. **spider**: insect with eight legs.

with the likeness of that face – we all had; but there was no such thing. The Madonna and Bambino, San Francisco, San Sebastiano, Venus, Santa Caterina, Angels, Brigands, Friars, Temples at Sunset, Battles, White Horses, Forests, Apostles, Doges, all my old acquaintance many times repeated? – yes. Dark handsome man in black, reserved and secret, with black hair and grey moustache, looking fixedly at mistress out of darkness? – no.

At last we got through all the rooms and all the pictures, and came out into the gardens. They were pretty well kept, being rented by a gardener, and were large and shady. In one place, there was a rustic theatre, open to the sky, the stage a green slope: the coulisses, three entrances upon a side, sweet-smelling leafy screens. Mistress moved her bright eyes, even there, as if she looked to see the face come in upon the scene: but all was well.

‘Now Clara,’ master said, in a low voice, ‘you see that it is nothing? You are happy.’

Mistress was much encouraged. She soon accustomed herself to that grim palazzo, and would sing, and play the harp, and copy the old pictures, and stroll with master under the green trees and vines, all day. She was beautiful. He was happy. He would laugh and say to me, mounting his horse for his morning ride before the heat:

‘All goes well, Baptista!’

‘Yes, signore, thank God; very well!’

We kept no company. I took la bella to the Duomo and Annunciata, to the Café, to the Opera, to the village Festa, to the Public Garden, to the Day Theatre, to the Marionetti. The pretty little one was charmed with all she saw. She learnt Italian – heavens! miraculously! Was mistress quite forgetful of that dream? I asked Carolina sometimes. Nearly, said la bella – almost. It was wearing out.

likeness: image.

Venus: goddess of love.

Friars: members of a religious order. **Temples:** ancient religious buildings. **Sunset:** time when the sun goes down. **Apostles:** followers of Jesus Christ. **Doges:** rulers of Venice. **my acquaintance:** what I knew. **moustache:** facial hair above lip. **fixedly:** without moving.

pretty: quite. **kept:** maintained.

rented: used in exchange for money. **shady:** with lots of protection from the sun. **rustic:** simple, country.

stage: part of theatre where actors act. **slope:** hill, incline.

coulisses: side scenes of the stage. **leafy:** made of leaves.

screens: coverings. **bright:** lively, shining.

encouraged: pleased. **accustomed:** became used to.

grim: austere, depressing.

harp: stringed instrument. **stroll:** walk slowly.

vines: plant on which grapes grow.

mounting: getting on.

ride: journey on a horse.

kept no company: saw no one.

Marionetti: puppet show.

charmed: fascinated.

heavens!: exclamation. **miraculously:** in an incredible way.

quite: completely. **forgetful:** not remembering.

wearing out: disappearing.

One day master received a letter, and called me.

‘Baptista!’

‘Signore.’

‘A gentleman who is presented to me will dine here today. He is called the Signor Dellombra. Let me dine like a prince.’

It was an odd name. I did not know that name. But, there had been many noblemen and gentlemen pursued by Austria on political suspicions, lately, and some names had changed. Perhaps this was one. Altro! Dellombra was as good a name to me as another.

When the Signor Dellombra came to dinner (said the Genoese courier in the low voice, into which he had subsided once before), I showed him into the reception-room, the great sala of the old palazzo. Master received him with cordiality, and presented him to mistress. As she rose, her face changed, she gave a cry, and fell upon the marble floor.

Then, I turned my head to the Signor Dellombra, and saw that he was dressed in black, and had a reserved and secret air, and was a dark remarkable-looking man, with black hair and a grey moustache.

Master raised mistress in his arms, and carried her to her own room, where I sent la bella Carolina straight. La bella told me afterwards that mistress was nearly terrified to death, and that she wandered in her mind about her dream, all night.

Master was vexed and anxious – almost angry, and yet full of solicitude. The Signor Dellombra was a courtly gentleman, and spoke with great respect and sympathy of mistress’s being so ill.

The African wind had been blowing for some days (they

dine: have dinner.

odd: strange.

pursued: persecuted.

lately: recently.

courier: travelling servant.

subsided: fallen, moved.

reception-room: room where visitors are received.

cordiality: friendliness. **mistress:** the wife and employer of the servants. **rose:** stood up. **cry:** shout, scream. **marble:** type of stone used to make floors.

dressed in: wearing.

air: way of behaving. **remarkable-looking:** of unusual appearance.

raised: lifted, took up.

straight: immediately, directly.

terrified: scared, frightened.

wardered in he mind: was delirious.

vexed: angry, perplexed. **anxious:** worried. and yet: but.

solicitude: care. **courtly:** polite, refined.

blowing: active.

had told him at his Hôtel of the Maltese Cross), and he knew that it was often hurtful. He hoped the beautiful lady would recover soon. He begged permission to retire, and to renew his visit when he should have the happiness of hearing that she was better. Master would not allow of this, and they dined alone.

He withdrew early. Next day he called at the gate, on horseback, to inquire for mistress. He did so two or three times in that week.

What I observed myself, and what *la bella Carolina* told me, united to explain to me that master had now set his mind on curing mistress of her fanciful terror. He was all kindness, but he was sensible and firm. He reasoned with her, that to encourage such fancies was to invite melancholy, if not madness. That it rested with herself to be herself. That if she once resisted her strange weakness, so successfully as to receive the Signor Dellombra as an English lady would receive any other guest, it was for ever conquered. To make an end, the Signor came again, and mistress received him without marked distress (though with constraint and apprehension still), and the evening passed serenely. Master was so delighted with this change, and so anxious to conform it, that the Signor Dellombra became a constant guest. He was accomplished in pictures, books, and music; and his society, in any grim palazzo, would have been welcome.

I used to notice, many times, that mistress was not quite recovered. She would cast down her eyes and droop her head, before the Signor Dellombra, or would look at him with a terrified and fascinated glance, as if his presence had some evil influence or power upon her. Turning from her to him, I used to see him in the shaded gardens, or the large half-

hurtful: dangerous, damaging.

recover: get better. **begged**: implored, asked for. **retire**: leave.

renew: repeat.

allow of: permit.

dined: ate.

withdrew: went home. **gate**: outside door.

horseback: on his horse. **inquire**: ask.

united: combined.

set his mind on: decided. **fanciful**: imaginative.

kindness: goodness. **sensible**: down-to-earth. **reasoned with**: persuaded. **encourage**: accept. **fancies**: imagination.

melancholy: sadness. **rested with herself**: was her prerogative. **weakness**: defect, not being strong.

conquered: beaten, defeated.

marked: visible. **distress**: sadness.

constraint: difficulty. **apprehension**: worry.

serenely: peacefully, without problems. **delighted**: pleased.

anxious: keen. **conform**: confirm.

accomplished: an expert.

grim: depressing.

quite: completely.

recovered: returned to normal. **cast down**: move down. **droop**: move down. **before**: in front of.

glance: look.

evil: bad.

shaded: out of the light.

lighted sala, looking, as I might say, 'fixedly upon her out of darkness'. But, truly, I had not forgotten la bella Carolina's words describing the face in the dream.

After his second visit I heard master say:

'Now see, my dear Clara, it's over! Dellombra has come and gone, and your apprehension is broken like glass.'

'Will he- will he ever come again?' asked mistress.

'Again? Why, surely, over and over again! Are you cold?' (She shivered.)

'No, dear – but – he terrifies me: are you sure that he need come again?'

'The surer for the question, Clara!' replied master, cheerfully.

But, he was very hopeful of her complete recovery now, and grew more and more so every day. She was beautiful. He was happy.

'All goes well, Baptista?' he would say to me again.

'Yes, signore, thank God; very well.'

We were all (said the Genoese courier, constraining himself to speak a little louder), we were all at Rome for the Carnival. I had been out, all day, with a Sicilian, a friend of mine and a courier, who was there with an English family. As I returned at night to our hôtel, I met the little Carolina, who never stirred from home alone, running distractedly along the Corso.

'Carolina! What's the matter?'

'O Baptista! Oh, for the Lord's sake! where is my mistress?'

'Mistress, Carolina?'

'Gone since morning – told me, when master went out on his day's journey, not to call her, for she was tired with no resting in the night (having been in pain), and would lie in bed until the evening; then get up refreshed. She is gone!'

fixedly: without moving his eyes.

over: finished.

apprehension: worry.

over and over again: many more times.

need: *note the modal use of need (without -s) in interrogative form.*

surer: more certain.

cheerfully: happily.

recovery: return to normal.

courier: travelling servant. **constraining**: making, forcing.

louder: at higher volume.

stirred: moved. **distractedly**: without knowing what she was doing.

for the Lord's sake!: for the love of God!

Gone: disappeared.

she is gone! Master has come back, broken down the door, and she is gone! My beautiful, my good, my innocent mistress!’

The pretty little one so cried, and raved, and tore herself, that I could not have held her, but for her swooning on my arm as if she had been shot. Master came up – in manner, face, or voice, no more the master that I knew, than I was he. He took me (I laid the little one upon her bed in the hôtel, and left her with the chamber-women), in a carriage, furiously through the darkness, across the desolate Campagna. When it was day, and we stopped at a miserable posthouse, all the horses had been hired twelve hours ago, and sent away in different directions. Mark me! – by the Signor Dellombra, who had passed there in a carriage, with a frightened English lady crouching in one corner.

I never heard (said the Genoese courier, drawing a long breath) that she was ever traced beyond that spot. All I know is, that she vanished into infamous oblivion, with the dreaded face beside her that she had seen in her dream.

‘What do you call *that*?’ said the German courier, triumphantly: ‘Ghosts! There are no ghosts *there*! What do you call this, that I am going to tell you? Ghosts! There are no ghosts *here*!’

I took an engagement once (pursued the German courier) with an English gentleman, elderly and a bachelor, to travel through my country, my Fatherland. He was a merchant who traded with my country and knew the language, but who had never been there since he was a boy- as I judge, some sixty years before.

His name was James, and he had a twin-brother John, also

raved: spoke without sense. **tore:** hurt.

swooning: losing consciousness.

shot: killed with a gun. **manner:** way of behaving.

laid: put.

chamber-women: female servants.

furiously: very fast. **desolate:** without anything.

posthouse: coaching station which had horses to be rented.

hired: rented. **Mark me!:** listen to me!

crouching: in a strange position.

drawing a long breath: respiring deeply. **traced:** heard of.

beyond: further than. **spot:** place. **vanished:** disappeared.

infamous: terrible. **oblivion:** nothing. **dreaded:** terrible, frightening.

triumphantly: with a sense of victory.

engagement: job. **pursued:** continued. **courier:** travelling servant. **elderly:** old. **bachelor:** without a wife.

merchant: person who buys and sells.

traded: did business.

judge: think.

a bachelor. Between these brothers there was a great affection. They were in business together, at Goodman's Fields, but they did not live together. Mr James dwelt in Poland Street, turning out of Oxford Street, London. Mr John resided by Epping Forest.

Mr James and I were to start for Germany in about a week. The exact day depended on business. Mr John came to Poland Street (where I was staying in the house), to pass that week with Mr James. But, he said to his brother on the second day, 'I don't feel very well, James. There's not much the matter with me: but I think I am a little gouty. I'll go home and put myself under the care of my old housekeeper, who understands my ways. If I get quite better, I'll come back and see you before you go. If I don't feel well enough to resume my visit where I leave it off, why *you* will come and see *me* before you go.' Mr James, of course, said he would, and they shook hands – both hands, as they always did – and Mr John ordered out his old-fashioned chariot and rumbled home.

It was on the second night after that – that is to say, the fourth in the week – when I was awoke out of my sound sleep by Mr James coming into my bedroom in his flannel-gown, with a lighted candle. He sat upon the side of my bed, and looking at me, said:

'Wilhelm, I have reason to think I have got some strange illness upon me.'

I then perceived that there was a very unusual expression in his face.

'Wilhelm,' said he, 'I am not afraid or ashamed to tell you, what I might be afraid or ashamed to tell another man. You come from a sensible country, where mysterious things are inquired into, and are not settled to have been weighed and

bachelor: unmarried.

dwelt: lived.

resided: lived. **Epping Forest:** forest north east of London.

were to: had decided to.

gouty: suffering from an illness.

housekeeper: lady looking after the house. **quite:** completely.

resume: start again. **leave it off:** stop it.

shook hands: gesture of greeting.

old-fashioned: of an old style.

chariot: carriage. **rumbled:** went noisily.

awoke: woke up. **sound:** deep.

flannel-gown: type of clothing worn when you get up.

illness: disease.

perceived: saw.

ashamed: embarrassed.

sensible: down-to-earth, having common sense.

inquired into: investigated. **settled:** decided.

measured – or to have been unweighable and unmeasurable – or in either case to have been completely disposed of, for all time – ever so many years ago. I have just now seen the phantom of my brother.’

I confess (said the German courier) that it gave me a little tingling of the blood to hear it.

‘I have just now seen.’ Mr James repeated, looking full at me, that I might see how collected he was, ‘the phantom of my brother John. I was sitting up in bed, unable to sleep, when it came into my room, in a white dress, and, regarding me earnestly, passed up to the end of the room, glanced at some papers on my writing-desk, turned, and, still looking earnestly at me as it passed the bed, went out at the door. Now, I am not in the least mad, and am not in the least disposed to invest that phantom with any external existence out of myself. I think it is a warning to me that I am ill; and I think I had better be bled.’

I got out of bed directly (said the German courier) and began to get on my clothes, begging him not to be alarmed, and telling him that I would go myself to the doctor. I was just ready, when we heard a loud knocking and ringing at the street door. My room being an attic at the back, and Mr James’s being the second-floor room in the front, we went down to his room, and put up the window, to see what was the matter.

‘Is that Mr James?’ said a man below, falling back to the opposite side of the way to look up.

‘It is,’ said Mr James: ‘and you are my brother’s man, Robert.’

‘Yes, sir. I am sorry to say, sir, that Mr John is ill. He is very bad, sir. It is even feared that he may be lying at the point of death. He wants to see you, sir. I have a chaise here. Pray come to him. Pray lose no time.’

weighed and measured: examined carefully.

unweighable and unmeasurable: impossible to examine.

disposed of: clear.

phantom: ghost.

confess: admit.

tingling: thrilling feeling.

collected: calm.

unable to: I could not.

dress: clothes. **regarding:** looking at.

earnestly: seriously. **glanced:** looked.

earnestly: seriously.

in the least: at all.

disposed: prepared. **invest:** give. **phantom:** ghost.

external existence out of myself: a life apart from in my mind.

warning: indication. **be bled:** have medical treatment involving the extraction of blood. **directly:** immediately.

get on: put on. **begging:** asking with insistence. **alarmed:** worried, frightened.

knocking: sound. **ringing:** sound of bell.

put up: opened.

below: in the street.

way: street.

at the point of: very near. **chaise:** carriage. **Pray:** please.

Mr James and I looked at one another. 'Wilhelm,' said he, 'this is strange. I wish you to come with me!' I helped him to dress, partly there and partly in the chaise; and no grass grew under the horses' iron shoes between Poland Street and the Forest.

Now, mind! (said the German courier). I went with Mr James into his brother's room, and I saw and heard myself what follows.

His brother lay upon his bed, at the upper end of a long bed-chamber. His old housekeeper was there, and others were there: I think three others were there, if not four, and they had been with him since early in the afternoon. He was in white, like the figure-necessarily so, because he had his night-dress on. He looked like the figure – necessarily so, because he looked earnestly at his brother when he saw him come into the room.

But, when his brother reached the bed-side, he slowly raised himself in bed, and looking full upon him, said these words:

'JAMES, YOU HAVE SEEN ME BEFORE, TO-NIGHT – AND YOU KNOW IT!'

And so died!

*

I waited, when the German courier ceased, to hear something said of this strange story. The silence was unbroken. I looked round and the five couriers were gone: so noiselessly that the ghostly mountain might have absorbed them into its eternal snows. By this time, I was by no means in a mood to sit alone in that awful scene, with the chill air coming solemnly upon me – or, if I may tell the truth, to sit alone anywhere. So I went back into the convent-parlour, and, finding the American gentleman still disposed to

wish: want.

chaise: carriage.

no grass grew under the horses' iron shoes: they went very quickly.

mind!: listen!

lay: was.

bedchamber: bedroom. **housekeeper:** woman managing the house.

earnestly: seriously.

raised: moved up.

so: in this way.

courier: travelling servant. **ceased:** finished.

unbroken: complete, uninterrupted.

noiselessly: silently. **ghostly:** sinister. **absorbed:** taken.

eternal: lasting for ever. **by no means:** in no way.

mood: emotional condition. **awful:** terrible. **chill:** cold.

solemnly: seriously.

convent-parlour: guest-room of the convent.

disposed: prepared.

relate the biography of the Honourable Ananias Dodger,
heard it all out.

relate: tell. **biography:** life-story.

heard it all out: heard the story from beginning to end.

OUR SCHOOL

WE went to look at it, only this last Midsummer, and found that the Railway had cut it up root and branch. A great trunk-line had swallowed the playground, sliced away the schoolroom, and pared off the corner of the house: which, thus curtailed of its proportions, presented itself, in a green stage of stucco, profilewise towards the road, like a forlorn flat-iron without a handle, standing on end.

It seems as if our schools were doomed to be the sport of change. We have faint recollections of a Preparatory Day-School, which we have sought in vain, and which must have been pulled down to make a new street, ages ago. We have dim impressions, scarcely amounting to a belief, that it was over a dyer's shop. We know that you went up steps to it; that you frequently grazed your knees in doing so; that you generally got your leg over the scraper, in trying to scrape the mud off a very unsteady little shoe. The mistress of the Establishment holds no place in our memory; but, rampant on one eternal door-mat, in an eternal entry long and narrow, is a puffy pug-dog, with a personal animosity towards us, who triumphs over Time. The bark of that baleful Pug, a certain radiating way he had of snapping at our undefended legs, the ghastly grinning of his moist black

We: *literary* "I". **Midsummer:** middle of summer, June.

root and branch: completely, from top to bottom.

trunk-line: type of railway line. **swallowed:** consumed.

playground: area in school where children play during the break.

sliced: cut. **schoolroom:** classroom. **pared off:** cut off. **thus:** in this way. **curtailed:** deprived. **proportions:** shape. **green:** early, premature. **stage:** condition. **profilewise:** sideways.

forlorn: sad. **flat-iron:** utensil for ironing clothes. **handle:** part of object used for holding it. **standing on end:** arranged vertically.

doomed: destined. **faint:** vague. **recollections:** memories.

sought: looked for. **in vain:** without success. **pulled down:** demolished. **ages:** a long time. **dim:** vague. **impressions:** feelings. **scarcely:** not. **amounting:** making up. **belief:** something which is thought. **dyer:** person who colours cloth. **steps:** stairs.

grazed: cut. **scraper:** structure outside for cleaning shoes.

scrape: clean. **mud:** wet earth. **unsteady:** unstable. **mistress:** head. **Establishment:** School. **rampant:** in an aggressive position.

puffy: inflated. **pug-dog:** type of dog. **animosity:** unfriendliness.

triumphs: is victorious. **bark:** sound that dogs make.

baleful: horrible. **Pug:** dog. **snapping:** using his teeth.

undefended: unprotected. **ghastly:** horrible. **grinning:** false smile. **moist:** wet.

muzzle and white teeth, and the insolence of his crisp tail curled like a pastoral crook, all live and flourish. From an otherwise unaccountable association of him with a fiddle, we conclude that he was of French extraction, and his name *Fidèle*. He belonged to some female, chiefly inhabiting a back-parlor, whose life appears to us to have been consumed in sniffing, and in wearing a brown beaver bonnet. For her, he would sit up and balance cake upon his nose, and not eat it until twenty had been counted. To the best of our belief we were once called in to witness this performance; when, unable, even in his milder moments, to endure our presence, he instantly made at us, cake and all.

Why a something in mourning, called 'Miss Frost', should still connect itself with our preparatory school, we are unable to say. We retain no impression of the beauty of Miss Frost – if she were beautiful; or of the mental fascinations of Miss Frost – if she were accomplished; yet her name and her black dress hold an enduring place in our remembrance. An equally impersonal boy, whose name has long since shaped itself unalterably into 'Master Mawls', is not to be dislodged from our brain. Retaining no vindictive feeling towards Mawls – no feeling whatever, indeed – we infer that neither he nor we can have loved Miss Frost. Our first impression of Death and Burial is associated with this formless pair. We all three nestled awfully in a corner one wintry day, when the wind was blowing shrill, with Miss Frost's pinafore over our heads; and Miss Frost told us in a whisper about somebody being 'screwed down'. It is the only distinct recollection we preserve of these impalpable creatures, except a suspicion that the manners of Master Mawls were susceptible of much improvement. Generally speaking, we may observe that whenever we see

muzzle: nose. **insolence**: rudeness. **crisp**: decisive.
curled: in a curve. **pastoral crook**: utensil used for looking after sheep. **flourish**: are still vivid. **otherwise**: in other ways.
unaccountable: unexplainable. **fiddle**: violin. **extraction**: origin.
Fidèle: pronounced like fiddle in English. **belonged to**: was the property of. **chiefly**: mainly. **inhabiting**: living in. **back-parlor**: back room. **consumed**: passed. **sniffing**: clearing her nose.
beaver: type of animal. **bonnet**: hat. **balance**: hold.

To the best of our belief: as far as we remember. **witness**: watch.
performance: show. **milder**: more tranquil. **endure**: tolerate.
instantly: immediately. **made at us**: attacked us.
mourning: black clothes worn after the death of a relation or friend. **preparatory school**: school preparing for high school.
retain: have, remember.

accomplished: clever, skilful. **yet**: but.
enduring: long-lasting.
remembrance: memory.
long since: long ago. **unalterably**: cannot be changed.
dislodged: moved. **Retaining**: having.
vindictive: aggressive, unpleasant. **whatever**: at all. **indeed**: really. **infer**: deduce.
Burial: being put underground after death.
formless: without faces or shapes. **nestled**: sat.
wintry: cold. **shrill**: hard.
pinafore: school dress.
whisper: a very low voice. **screwed down**: put in a box and put underground. **recollection**: memory.
impalpable: vague. **suspicion**: idea. **manners**: etiquette.
were susceptible of much improvement: could have been much better.

a child intently occupied with its nose, to the exclusion of all other subjects of interest, our mind reverts, in a flash, to Master Mawls.

But, the School that was Our School before the Railroad came and overthrew it, was quite another sort of place. We were old enough to be put into Virgil when we went there, and to get Prizes for a variety of polishing on which the rust has long accumulated. It was a School of some celebrity in its neighbourhood – nobody could have said why – and we had the honor to attain and hold the eminent position of first boy. The master was supposed among us to know nothing, and one of the ushers was supposed to know everything. We are still inclined to think the first-named supposition perfectly correct.

We have a general idea that its subject had been in the leather trade, and had bought us – meaning Our School – of another proprietor who was immensely learned. Whether this belief had any real foundation, we are not likely ever to know now. The only branches of education with which he showed the least acquaintance, were, ruling and corporally punishing. He was always ruling ciphering-books with a bloated mahogany ruler, or smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument, or viciously drawing a pair of pantaloons tight with one of his large hands, and caning the wearer with the other. We have no doubt whatever that this occupation was the principal solace of his existence.

A profound respect for money pervaded Our School, which was, of course, derived from its Chief. We remember an idiotic goggle-eyed boy, with a big head and half-crowns without end, who suddenly appeared as a parlor-boarder, and was rumoured to have come by sea from some

intently: in a concentrated way. **occupied**: busy.

reverts: goes back. **in a flash**: very quickly.

Railroad: railway.

overthrew: destroyed.

Virgil: Latin poet.

Prizes: special presents for merit. **polishing**: academic work.

rust: dirt, red deposit on metal which is left for a long time.

celebrity: fame. **neighbourhood**: area.

attain: receive, have. **eminent**: important.

first boy: most important boy in the school. **master**: teacher.

usher: servant.

are inclined: prefer.

leather: skins of animals. **trade**: business, commerce.

proprietor: owner. **immensely**: extremely. **learned**: with a good education. **Whether**: if. **likely**: probable.

branches: sections.

acquaintance: familiarity, knowledge. **ruling**: making lines on a page. **corporally punishing**: hitting. **ciphering-books**: books

for mathematical exercises. **bloated**: enlarged. **mahogany**: type of wood. **smiting**: hitting. **palms**: part of hands. **offenders**: boys who had done something wrong. **diabolical**: like the devil.

viciously: cruelly. **drawing**: pulling. **pantaloons**: trousers. **tight**: to the limit. **caning**: hitting with a stick. **whatever**: at all.

solace: satisfaction.

profound: deep. **pervaded**: filled.

Chief: head, boss.

idiotic: very stupid. **goggle-eyed**: with very large eyes.

half-crowns: coin corresponding to two shillings and sixpence.

parlor-boarder: someone who lived with the family of the headmaster. **rumoured**: said.

mysterious part of the earth where his parents rolled in gold. He was usually called 'Mr' by the Chief, and was said to feed in the parlor on steaks and gravy; likewise to drink currant wine. And he openly stated that if rolls and coffee were ever denied him at breakfast, he would write home to that unknown part of the globe from which he had come, and cause himself to be recalled to the regions of gold. He was put into no form or class, but learnt alone, as little as he liked – and he liked very little – and there was a belief among us that this was because he was too wealthy to be 'taken down'. His special treatment, and our vague association of him with the sea, and with storms, and sharks, and Coral Reefs occasioned the wildest legends to be circulated as his history. A tragedy in blank verse was written on the subject – if our memory does not deceive us, by the hand that now chronicles these recollections – in which his father figured as Pirate, and was shot for a voluminous catalogue of atrocities: first imparting to his wife the secret of the cave in which his wealth was stored, and from which his only son's half-crowns now issued.

Dumbledon (the boy's name) was represented as 'yet unborn' when his brave father met his fate, and the despair and grief of Mrs Dumbledon at that calamity was movingly shadowed forth as having weakened the parlor-boarder's mind. This production was received with great favor, and was twice performed with closed doors in the dining-room. But, it got wind, and was seized as libellous, and brought the unlucky poet into severe affliction. Some two years afterwards, all of a sudden one day, Dumbledon vanished. It was whispered that the Chief himself had taken him down to the Docks, and re-shipped him for the Spanish Main: but nothing certain was ever known about his

rolled in gold: had lots of money.

feed: eat. **parlor:** private room. **steaks:** good quality meat. **gravy:** juice from meat. **likewise:** similarly. **curreant wine:** wine made from a type of dried fruit. **rolls:** type of bread. **denied:** refused. **globe:** world.

recalled: taken back.

form: class.

wealthy: rich.

taken down: punished.

sharks: aggressive type of fish.

Coral Reefs: hard barriers in the sea formed by polyps.

occasioned: caused. **wildest:** most unusual. **legends:** stories.

blank verse: type of verse used in Shakespeare's plays. **if our memory does not deceive us:** if we remember correctly.

chronicles: tells, writes. **recollections:** memories. **figured:** appeared. **shot:** killed with a gun. **voluminous:** large, long.

catalogue: list. **atrocities:** terrible actions. **imparting:** telling.

wealth: riches, treausre, money. **half-crowns:** coins of the value of two shillings and sixpence. **issued:** came.

yet unborn: still inside his mother. **fate:** destiny. **despair:** desperation. **grief:** sadness. **calamity:** disaster. **movingly:** in an emotional way.

shadowed forth: shown, acted. **weakened:** maade less strong. **parlor-boarder:** privileged pupil living with the headmaster's family. **performed:** acted.

it got wind: the authorities discovered it. **seized:** confiscated.

libellous: insulting. **affliction:** suffering.

vanished: disappeared.

whispered: said in a low voice, in secret.

Docks: Port. **re-shipped:** put him on a ship again.

Spanish Main: part of America near the Caribbean sea.

disappearance. At this hour, we cannot thoroughly disconnect him from California.

Our School was rather famous for mysterious pupils. There was another – a heavy young man, with a large double-cased silver watch, and a fat knife the handle of which was a perfect tool-box – who unaccountably appeared one day at a special desk of his own, erected close to that of the Chief, with whom he held familiar converse. He lived in the parlor, and went out for his walks, and never took the least notice of us – even of us, the first boy – unless to give us a deprecatory kick, or grimly to take our hat off and throw it away, when he encountered us out of doors, which unpleasant ceremony he always performed as he passed – not even condescending to stop for the purpose. Some of us believed that the classical attainments of this phenomenon were terrific, but that his penmanship and arithmetic were defective, and he had come there to mend them; others, that he was going to set up a school, and had paid the Chief ‘twenty-five pound down’, for leave to see Our School at work. The gloomier spirits even said that he was going to buy us; against which contingency, conspiracies were set on foot for a general defection and running away. However, he never did that. After staying for a quarter, during which period, though closely observed, he was never seen to do anything but make pens out of quills, write small hand in a secret portfolio, and punch the point of the sharpest blade in his knife into his desk all over it, he too disappeared, and his place knew him no more.

There was another boy, a fair, meek boy, with a delicate complexion and rich curling hair, who, we found out, or thought we found out (we have no idea now, and probably had none then, on what grounds, but it was confidentially

thoroughly: completely.

disconnect: separate.

double-cased: with two containers. **handle**: part of an object that the hand holds. **tool-box**: container for utensils. **unaccountably**: without explanation. **erected**: constructed, put. **Chief**: Head, teacher. **familiar converse**: friendly conversation. **parlor**: private room.

deprecatory: insulting. **grimly**: severely.

encountered: met.

ceremony: ritual. **performed**: carried out, did.

condescending: bothering. **purpose**: aim.

attainments: results. **phenomenon**: extraordinary person.

penmanship: handwriting.

defective: not good enough. **mend**: improve.

set up: establish.

down: deposit. **leave**: permission.

gloomier: more depressing.

contingency: event. **conspiracies**: plots, plans.

set on foot: put into action, started. **defection**: escape.

quarter: term, three months.

though: even if. **closely**: carefully.

quills: birds' feathers.

portfolio: wallet. **punch**: make a hole with. **blade**: sharp edge of knife.

fair: blond. **meek**: shy.

complexion: skin. **rich**: lots of. **curling**: not straight. **found out**: discovered.

on what grounds: for what reason. **confidentially**: secretly.

revealed from mouth to mouth), was the son of a Viscount who had deserted his lovely mother. It was understood that if he had his rights, he would be worth twenty thousand a year. And that if his mother ever met his father, she would shoot him with a silver pistol, which she carried, always loaded to the muzzle, for that purpose. He was a very suggestive topic. So was a young Mulatto, who was always believed (though very amiable) to have a dagger about him somewhere. But, we think they were both outshone, upon the whole, by another boy who claimed to have been born on the twenty-ninth of February, and to have only one birthday in five years. We suspect this to have been a fiction – but he lived upon it all the time he was at Our School.

The principal currency of Our School was slate pencil. It had some inexplicable value, that was never ascertained, never reduced to a standard. To have a great hoard of it, was somehow to be rich. We used to bestow it in charity, and confer it as a precious boon upon our chosen friends. When the holidays were coming, contributions were solicited for certain boys whose relatives were in India, and who were appealed for under the generic name of ‘Holiday-stoppers’, – appropriate marks of remembrance that should enliven and cheer them in their homeless state. Personally, we always contributed these tokens of sympathy in the form of slate-pencil, and always felt that it would be a comfort and a treasure to them.

Our School was remarkable for white mice. Red-polls, linnets, and even canaries, were kept in desks, drawers, hat-boxes, and other strange refuges for birds; but white mice were the favourite stock. The boys trained the mice, much better than the masters trained the boys. We recall

revealed: uncovered. **Viscount:** noble.
deserted: abandoned. **lovely:** beautiful.
be worth: would have an annual income.

shoot: kill with a gun.

loaded: ready for firing. **to the muzzle:** to the end, to the maximum.

purpose: aim. **topic:** subject for conversation. **Mulatto:** half white, half black. **amiable:** friendly. **dagger:** knife.

outshone: less important than.

upon the whole: all things considered. **claimed:** said.

fiction: lie, false story.

currency: money. **slate:** type of stone used for pencils.

inexplicable: which could not be explained. **ascertained:** discovered. **hoard:** store, collection.

somehow: in some way. **bestow:** give.

confer: give. **boon:** favour.

solicited: asked for.

appealed for: asked for.

remembrance: memory.

enliven: make more exciting. **cheer:** make happier. **homeless:** without a home. **tokens:** symbols.

slate-pencil: type of pencil.

treasure: valuable thing.

remarkable: unusual. **mice:** rodents kept as pets.

Red-polls, linnets,... canaries: types of birds. **drawers:** sliding part of a table or cupboard. **hat-boxes:** box in which hats were kept. **refuges:** places. **stock:** type of animal. **trained:** taught to do something. **recall:** remember.

one white mouse, who lived in the cover of a Latin dictionary, who ran up ladders, drew Roman chariots, shouldered muskets, turned wheels, and even made a very creditable appearance on the stage as the Dog of Montargis. He might have achieved greater things, but for having the misfortune to mistake his way in a triumphal procession to the Capitol, when he fell into a deep inkstand, and was dyed black and drowned. The mice were the occasion of some most ingenious engineering, in the construction of their houses and instruments of performance. The famous one belonged to a company of proprietors, some of whom have since made Railroads, Engines, and Telegraphs; the chairman has erected mills and bridges in New Zealand. The usher at Our School, who was considered to know everything as opposed to the Chief, who was considered to know nothing, was a bony, gentle-faced, clerical-looking young man in rusty black. It was whispered that he was sweet upon one of Maxby's sisters (Maxby lived close by, and was a day pupil), and further that he 'favoured Maxby'. As we remember, he taught Italian to Maxby's sisters on half-holidays. He once went to the play with them, and wore a white waistcoat and a rose: which was considered among us equivalent to a declaration. We were of opinion on that occasion, that to the last moment he expected Maxby's father to ask him to dinner at five o'clock, and therefore neglected his own dinner at half-past one, and finally got none. We exaggerated in our imaginations the extent to which he punished Maxby's father's cold meat at supper; and we agreed to believe that he was elevated with wine and water when he came home. But, we all liked him; for he had a good knowledge of boys, and would have made it a much better school if he had had more power. He was writing master, mathematical master, English master, made

ladders: wooden stairs. **drew:** pulled. **chariots:** carriages.
shouldered: put on its back. **muskets:** old fashioned type of guns. **creditable:** acceptable. **stage:** theatre. **Dog of Montargis:** famous dog who brought his master's killer to justice in the 14th century. **achieved:** obtained results. **misfortune:** bad luck. **triumphal:** victorious. **Capitol:** Roman monument. **inkstand:** place where liquid for writing was kept. **dyed:** coloured. **drowned:** died in liquid. **mice:** rodents kept as pets. **ingenious:** clever.

belonged to: was the property of. **proprietors:** owners, bosses. **Railroads:** railways. **Telegraphs:** electrical communication. **chairman:** leader of group. **erected:** built. **mills:** factories. **usher:** servant.

as opposed to: in contrast to. **Chief:** head, teacher.
bony: thin. **clerical-looking:** who had the appearance of an office-worker. **rusty:** dirty, brown. **whispered:** said in secret. **sweet upon:** in love with. **close by:** near.
day pupil: student who did not live in the school building. **further:** in addition.

half-holidays: days on which afternoon school was suspended.
play: theatre. **waistcoat:** item of clothing under jacket.
declaration: declaration of love.
to the last moment: until the last moment.

therefore: for this reason. **neglected:** did not pay attention to.

extent: degree. **punished:** ate.
elevated: put into high spirits.

knowledge: familiarity.

master: teacher.

out the bills, mended the pens, and did all sorts of things. He divided the little boys with the Latin master (they were smuggled through their rudimentary books, at odd times when there was nothing else to do), and he always called at parents' houses to inquire after sick boys, because he had gentlemanly manners. He was rather musical, and on some remote quarter-day had bought an old trombone; but a bit of it was lost, and it made the most extraordinary sounds when he sometimes tried to play it of an evening. His holidays never began (on account of the bills) until long after ours; but, in the summer vacations he used to take pedestrian excursions with a knapsack; and at Christmas time, he went to see his father at Chipping Norton, who we all said (on no authority) was a dairy-fed-pork-butcher. Poor fellow! He was very low all day on Maxby's sister's wedding-day, and afterwards was thought to favour Maxby more than ever, though he had been expected to spite him. He has been dead these twenty years. Poor fellow!

Our remembrance of Our School, presents the Latin master as a colorless doubled-up near-sighted man with a crutch, who was always cold, and always putting onions into his ears for deafness, and always disclosing ends of flannel under all his garments, and almost always applying a ball of pocket-handkerchief to some part of his face with a screwing action round and round. He was a very good scholar, and took great pains where he saw intelligence and a desire to learn: otherwise, perhaps not. Our memory presents him (unless teased into a passion) with as little energy as color – as having been worried and tormented into monotonous feebleness— as having had the best part of his life ground out of him in a Mill of boys. We remember with terror how he fell asleep one sultry afternoon with the

bills: accounts. **mended:** repaired. **sorts:** kinds, types.

smuggled: helped. **rudimentary:** basic. **odd:** various.

inquire after: ask about. **sick:** ill.

gentlemanly: refined.

remote: distant. **quarter-day:** holiday. **trombone:** musical instrument with slide. **bit:** piece. **extraordinary:** strange.

bills: financial accounts.

vacations: holidays.

pedestrian: on foot. **knapsack:** sack carried on the back.

dairy-fed: eating milk butter and cheese.

pork-butcher: someone who cut up pigs. **fellow:** man. **low:** depressed. **though:** even if.

spite: punish.

fellow: man.

remembrance: memory. **master:** teacher.

doubled-up: not straight. **near-sighted:** myopic. **crutch:** wooden support for invalids. **onions:** vegetable.

deafness: not being able to hear. **disclosing:** showing. **flannel:** kind of material. **garments:** clothes. **applying:** using.

pocket-handkerchief: cloth for cleaning face and nose.

screwing: circular.

scholar: teacher, person who studies. **took great pains:** tried very hard. **otherwise:** if not.

unless: if not. **teased:** confused.

tormented: tortured.

monotonous: boring. **feebleness:** weakness.

ground out: destroyed. **Mill:** place where flour etc. are ground into small particles. **sultry:** hot.

little smuggled class before him, and awoke not when the footstep of the Chief fell heavy on the floor; how the Chief aroused him, in the midst of a dread silence, and said, 'Mr Blinkins, are you ill, sir?' how he blushingly replied, 'Sir, rather so'; how the Chief retorted with severity, 'Mr Blinkins, this is no place to be ill in' (which was very, very true), and walked back solemn as the ghost in Hamlet, until, catching a wandering eye, he caned that boy for inattention, and happily expressed his feelings towards the Latin master through the medium of a substitute.

There was a fat little dancing-master who used to come in a gig, and taught the more advanced among us hornpipes (as an accomplishment in great social demand in after life); and there was a brisk little French master who used to come in the sunniest weather, with a handleless umbrella, and to whom the Chief was always polite, because (as we believed), if the Chief offended him, he would instantly address the Chief in French, and for ever confound him before the boys with his inability to understand or reply.

There was besides, a serving man, whose name was Phil. Our retrospective glance presents Phil as a shipwrecked carpenter, cast away upon the desert island of a school, and carrying into practice an ingenious inkling of many trades. He mended whatever was broken, and made whatever was wanted. He was general glazier, among other things, and mended all the broken windows - at the prime cost (as was darkly rumoured among us) of ninepence, for every square charged three-and-six to parents. We had a high opinion of his mechanical genius, and generally held that the Chief 'knew something bad of him', and on pain of divulgence enforced Phil to be his bondsman. We particularly remember that Phil had a sovereign contempt for learning: which

smuggled: having had help from the other master. **awoke not**: (*archaic*) did not wake up. **footstep**: sound of walking. **Chief**: headmaster. **aroused him**: woke him up. **midst**: middle. **blushingly**: in an embarrassed way. **retorted**: replied.

solemn: serious.

catching: seeing. **wandering**: moving without direction or aim.

caned: punished.

medium: method, way.

gig: type of carriage. **hornpipes**: sailors' dances.

accomplishment: skill. **in great social demand**: very popular in society. **after life**: life after school. **brisk**: quick and efficient.

handleless: without a handle.

Chief: headmaster.

instantly: immediately. **address**: talk to.

confound: confuse. **before**: in front of.

inability: state of not being able to.

besides: also.

retrospective: looking backwards in time. **glance**: look.

shipwrecked: having had a nautical disaster. **carpenter**: man working with wood. **cast away**: abandoned. **ingenious**: clever.

inkling: little part. **trades**: skills, occupations.

mended: repaired. **glazier**: person making and repairing windows.

prime cost: basic cost.

darkly: in a sinister way. **rumoured**: secretly said.

ninepence, three-and-six: there were twelve pence in a shilling so three shillings and sixpence were equivalent to forty-two pence. **charged**: costing. **held**: thought. **Chief**: headmaster. **pain**:

punishment. **divulgence**: telling a secret. **enforced**: made.

bondsman: servant, slave. **sovereign**: complete. **contempt**: hate. **learning**: study.

engenders in us a respect for his sagacity, as it implies his accurate observation of the relative positions of the Chief and the ushers. He was an impenetrable man, who waited at table between whiles, and throughout 'the half' kept the boxes in severe custody. He was morose, even to the Chief, and never smiled, except at breaking-up, when, in acknowledgment of the toast, 'Success to Phil! Hooray!' he would slowly carve a grin out of his wooden face, where it would remain until we were all gone. Nevertheless, one time when we had the scarlet fever in the school, Phil nursed all the sick boys of his own accord, and was like a mother to them.

There was another school not far off, and of course Our School could have nothing to say to that school. It is mostly the way with schools, whether of boys or men. Well! the railway has swallowed up ours, and the locomotives now run smoothly over its ashes.

'So fades and languishes, grows dim and dies,

All that this world is proud of,'

— and is not proud of, too. It had little reason to be proud of Our School, and has done much better since in that way, and will do far better yet.

engenders: creates. **sagacity**: intelligence. **implies**: means.

ushers: servants. **impenetrable**: hard to understand his real feelings. **waited at table**: served the meals. **between whiles**: sometimes. **half**: half-term holiday. **in severe custody**: under strict control. **morose**: unhappy. **breaking-up**: end of term. **acknowledgement**: recognition. **toast**: greeting, raising of glasses. **carve**: make, cut. **grin**: smile.

Nevertheless: all the same.

scarlet fever: infectious illness. **nursed**: looked after.

of his own accord: without being asked.

whether: if.

swallowed: consumed. **locomotives**: trains.

smoothly: with no problems. **ashes**: remains.

fades: disappears. **languishes**: decays. **grows dim**: becomes dark. **'So... of'**: is a quotation from Wordsworth's poem "The Excursion".