

The Pickwick Book Club—March 11th Meeting

Topic: Dickens and the World

Scheduled Reading: Book 1 of *Little Dorrit* (please note: all suggested passages below are from Book 1 only)

- 1. Is Charles Dickens an essentially English novelist or is he a novelist of the world? Do you think he writes narrowly about England and Englishness or are worldly and global matters also a part of his imaginative terrain? Consider *Little Dorrit* as well as other works by Dickens you may have read.**

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Read: Excerpt from *Global Dickens*—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

- 2. Why *does* the novel begin in Marseilles? How are England's entanglements abroad a part of the novel's plot even when the narrative relocates to England?**

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Passages to consider:

Thirty years ago, Marseilles lay burning in the sun, one day.

A blazing sun upon a fierce August day was no greater rarity in southern France then, than at any other time, before or since. Everything in Marseilles, and about Marseilles, had stared at the fervid sky, and been stared at in return, until a staring habit had become universal there. Strangers were stared out of countenance by staring white houses, staring white walls, staring white streets, staring tracts of arid road, staring hills from which verdure was burnt away. The only things to be seen not fixedly staring and glaring were the vines drooping under their load of grapes. These did occasionally wink a little, as the hot air barely moved their faint leaves.

There was no wind to make a ripple on the foul water within the harbour, or on the beautiful sea without. The line of demarcation between the two colours, black and blue, showed the point which the pure sea would not pass; but it lay as quiet as the abominable pool, with which it never mixed. Boats without awnings were too hot to touch; ships blistered at their moorings; the stones of the quays had not cooled, night or day, for months. Hindoos, Russians, Chinese, Spaniards, Portuguese, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Genoese, Neapolitans, Venetians, Greeks, Turks, descendants from all the builders of Babel, come to trade at Marseilles, sought the shade alike--taking refuge in

any hiding-place from a sea too intensely blue to be looked at, and a sky of purple, set with one great flaming jewel of fire. (15)

'No more of yesterday's howling over yonder to-day, Sir; is there?' 'I have heard none.' 'Then you may be sure there is none. When these people howl, they howl to be heard.' 'Most people do, I suppose.' 'Ah! but these people are always howling. Never happy otherwise.' 'Do you mean the Marseilles people?' 'I mean the French people. They're always at it. As to Marseilles, we know what Marseilles is. It sent the most insurrectionary tune into the world that was ever composed. It couldn't exist without allonging and marshonging to something or other--victory or death, or blazes, or something.' The speaker, with a whimsical good humour upon him all the time, looked over the parapet-wall with the greatest disparagement of Marseilles; and taking up a determined position by putting his hands in his pockets and rattling his money at it, apostrophised it with a short laugh. 'Allong and marshong, indeed. It would be more creditable to you, I think, to let other people allong and marshong about their lawful business, instead of shutting 'em up in quarantine!' 'Tiresome enough,' said the other. 'But we shall be out to-day.' 'Out to-day!' repeated the first. 'It's almost an aggravation of the enormity, that we shall be out to-day. Out! What have we ever been in for?' 'For no very strong reason, I must say. But as we come from the East, and as the East is the country of the plague--' 'The plague!' repeated the other. 'That's my grievance. I have had the plague continually, ever since I have been here. I am like a sane man shut up in a madhouse; I can't stand the suspicion of the thing. I came here as well as ever I was in my life; but to suspect me of the plague is to give me the plague. And I have had it--and I have got it.' 'You bear it very well, Mr Meagles,' said the second speaker, smiling. (29-30)

In London itself, though in the old rustic road towards a suburb of note where in the days of William Shakespeare, author and stage-player, there were Royal hunting-seats--howbeit no sport is left there now but for hunters of men--Bleeding Heart Yard was to be found; a place much changed in feature and in fortune, yet with some relish of ancient greatness about it. Two or three mighty stacks of chimneys, and a few large dark rooms which had escaped being walled and subdivided out of the recognition of their old proportions, gave the Yard a character. It was inhabited by poor people, who set up their rest among its faded glories, as Arabs of the desert pitch their tents among the fallen stones of the Pyramids; but there was a family sentimental feeling prevalent in the Yard, that it had a character. (148-150)

Was it possible that Flora could have been such a chatterer in the days she referred to? Could there have been anything like her present disjointed volubility in the fascinations that had captivated him? 'Indeed I have little doubt,' said Flora, running on with astonishing speed, and pointing her conversation with nothing but commas, and very few of them, 'that you are married to some Chinese lady, being in China so long and being in business and naturally desirous to settle and extend your connection nothing was more likely than that you should propose to a Chinese lady and nothing was more

natural I am sure than that the Chinese lady should accept you and think herself very well off too, I only hope she's not a Pagodian dissenter.' 'I am not,' returned Arthur, smiling in spite of himself, 'married to any lady, Flora.' (166)

Bestowing this eulogium on the retired character of his retreat with a dubious shake of the head, Mr Meagles led the way into the house. It was just large enough, and no more; was as pretty within as it was without, and was perfectly well-arranged and comfortable. Some traces of the migratory habits of the family were to be observed in the covered frames and furniture, and wrapped-up hangings; but it was easy to see that it was one of Mr Meagles's whims to have the cottage always kept, in their absence, as if they were always coming back the day after to-morrow. Of articles collected on his various expeditions, there was such a vast miscellany that it was like the dwelling of an amiable Corsair. There were antiquities from Central Italy, made by the best modern houses in that department of industry; bits of mummy from Egypt (and perhaps Birmingham); model gondolas from Venice; model villages from Switzerland; morsels of tessellated pavement from Herculaneum and Pompeii, like petrified minced veal; ashes out of tombs, and lava out of Vesuvius; Spanish fans, Spezzian straw hats, Moorish slippers, Tuscan hairpins, Carrara sculpture, Trastaverini scarves, Genoese velvets and filigree, Neapolitan coral, Roman cameos, Geneva jewellery, Arab lanterns, rosaries blest all round by the Pope himself, and an infinite variety of lumber. There were views, like and unlike, of a multitude of places; and there was one little picture-room devoted to a few of the regular sticky old Saints, with sinews like whipcord, hair like Neptune's, wrinkles like tattooing, and such coats of varnish that every holy personage served for a fly-trap, and became what is now called in the vulgar tongue a Catch-em-alive O. Of these pictorial acquisitions Mr Meagles spoke in the usual manner. He was no judge, he said, except of what pleased himself; he had picked them up, dirt-cheap, and people _had_ considered them rather fine. One man, who at any rate ought to know something of the subject, had declared that 'Sage, Reading' (a specially oily old gentleman in a blanket, with a swan's-down tippet for a beard, and a web of cracks all over him like rich pie-crust), to be a fine Guercino. As for Sebastian del Piombo there, you would judge for yourself; if it were not his later manner, the question was, Who was it? Titian, that might or might not be--perhaps he had only touched it. Daniel Doyce said perhaps he hadn't touched it, but Mr Meagles rather declined to overhear the remark. When he had shown all his spoils, Mr Meagles took them into his own snug room overlooking the lawn, which was fitted up in part like a dressing-room and in part like an office, and in which, upon a kind of counter-desk, were a pair of brass scales for weighing gold, and a scoop for shovelling out money. 'Here they are, you see,' said Mr Meagles. 'I stood behind these two articles five-and-thirty years running, when I no more thought of gadding about than I now think of--staying at home. When I left the Bank for good, I asked for them, and brought them away with me. I mention it at once, or you might suppose that I sit in my counting-house (as Pet says I do), like the king in the poem of the four-and-twenty blackbirds, counting out my money.'

(210-211)

It had reached this point when Mr Merdle came home from his daily occupation of causing the British name to be more and more respected in all parts of the civilised globe capable of the appreciation of world-wide commercial enterprise and gigantic combinations of skill and capital. For, though nobody knew with the least precision what Mr Merdle's business was, except that it was to coin money, these were the terms in which everybody defined it on all ceremonious occasions, and which it was the last new polite reading of the parable of the camel and the needle's eye to accept without inquiry. (416-417)

3. What role does travel play in the novel? Which characters travel? How does movement and experiences outside of England change these characters and change their experiences of England?

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Passages to consider:

It was a Sunday evening in London, gloomy, close, and stale. Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, sharp and flat, cracked and clear, fast and slow, made the brick-and-mortar echoes hideous. Melancholy streets, in a penitential garb of soot, steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency. In every thoroughfare, up almost every alley, and down almost every turning, some doleful bell was throbbing, jerking, tolling, as if the Plague were in the city and the dead-carts were going round. Everything was bolted and barred that could by possibility furnish relief to an overworked people. No pictures, no unfamiliar animals, no rare plants or flowers, no natural or artificial wonders of the ancient world--all _taboo_ with that enlightened strictness, that the ugly South Sea gods in the British Museum might have supposed themselves at home again. Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to change the brooding mind, or raise it up. Nothing for the spent toiler to do, but to compare the monotony of his seventh day with the monotony of his six days, think what a weary life he led, and make the best of it--or the worst, according to the probabilities.

At such a happy time, so propitious to the interests of religion and morality, Mr Arthur Clennam, newly arrived from Marseilles by way of Dover, and by Dover coach the Blue-eyed Maid, sat in the window of a coffee-house on Ludgate Hill. Ten thousand responsible houses surrounded him, frowning as heavily on the streets they composed, as if they were every one inhabited by the ten young men of the Calender's story, who blackened their faces and bemoaned their miseries every night. Fifty thousand lairs surrounded him where people lived so unwholesomely that fair water put into their crowded rooms on Saturday night, would be corrupt on Sunday morning; albeit my lord, their county member, was amazed that they failed to sleep in company with their butcher's meat. Miles of close wells and pits of houses, where the inhabitants gasped for air, stretched far away towards every point of the compass. Through the heart of the

town a deadly sewer ebbed and flowed, in the place of a fine fresh river. What secular want could the million or so of human beings whose daily labour, six days in the week, lay among these Arcadian objects, from the sweet sameness of which they had no escape between the cradle and the grave--what secular want could they possibly have upon their seventh day? Clearly they could want nothing but a stringent policeman. (43-44)

‘Mr Clennam?’ said Mr Barnacle. ‘Be seated.’

Mr Clennam became seated.

‘You have called on me, I believe,’ said Mr Barnacle, ‘at the Circumlocution--’ giving it the air of a word of about five-and-twenty syllables--‘Office.’

‘I have taken that liberty.’ Mr Barnacle solemnly bent his head as who should say, ‘I do not deny that it is a liberty; proceed to take another liberty, and let me know your business.’

‘Allow me to observe that I have been for some years in China, am quite a stranger at home, and have no personal motive or interest in the inquiry I am about to make.’ (126)

This was such a new point of view that Arthur Clennam found himself at a loss how to receive it.

‘You can if you like. I can give you plenty of forms to fill up. Lots of ‘em here. You can have a dozen if you like. But you’ll never go on with it,’ said number four.

‘Would it be such hopeless work? Excuse me; I am a stranger in England.’ (130)

3. What do foreign languages in the novel signify? How is language and language use in *Little Dorrit* connected to national, cultural, and personal identity?

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Passages to consider:

‘ALTRO!’ returned John Baptist, closing his eyes and giving his head a most vehement toss. The word being, according to its Genoese emphasis, a confirmation, a contradiction, an assertion, a denial, a taunt, a compliment, a joke, and fifty other things, became in the present instance, with a significance beyond all power of written expression, our familiar English ‘I believe you!’ (23-24)

‘Why, a native Englishman is put to it every night of his life, to save his life from them Mails,’ argued the first old man; ‘and _he_ knows when they’re a coming round the corner, to tear him limb from limb. What can you expect from a poor foreigner who

don't know nothing about 'em!' 'Is this a foreigner?' said Clennam, leaning forward to look. In the midst of such replies as 'Frenchman, sir,' 'Porteghee, sir,' 'Dutchman, sir,' 'Prooshan, sir,' and other conflicting testimony, he now heard a feeble voice asking, both in Italian and in French, for water. A general remark going round, in reply, of 'Ah, poor fellow, he says he'll never get over it; and no wonder!' Clennam begged to be allowed to pass, as he understood the poor creature. He was immediately handed to the front, to speak to him. 'First, he wants some water,' said he, looking round. (A dozen good fellows dispersed to get it.) 'Are you badly hurt, my friend?' he asked the man on the litter, in Italian. 'Yes, sir; yes, yes, yes. It's my leg, it's my leg. But it pleases me to hear the old music, though I am very bad.' 'You are a traveller! Stay! See, the water! Let me give you some.' They had rested the litter on a pile of paving stones. It was at a convenient height from the ground, and by stooping he could lightly raise the head with one hand and hold the glass to his lips with the other. A little, muscular, brown man, with black hair and white teeth. A lively face, apparently. Earrings in his ears. 'That's well. You are a traveller?' 'Surely, sir.' 'A stranger in this city?' 'Surely, surely, altogether. I am arrived this unhappy evening.' 'From what country?' 'Marseilles.' 'Why, see there! I also! Almost as much a stranger here as you, though born here, I came from Marseilles a little while ago. Don't be cast down.' The face looked up at him imploringly, as he rose from wiping it, and gently replaced the coat that covered the writhing figure. 'I won't leave you till you shall be well taken care of. Courage! You will be very much better half an hour hence.' 'Ah! Altro, Altro!' cried the poor little man, in a faintly incredulous tone; and as they took him up, hung out his right hand to give the forefinger a back-handed shake in the air. Arthur Clennam turned; and walking beside the litter, and saying an encouraging word now and then, accompanied it to the neighbouring hospital of Saint Bartholomew. None of the crowd but the bearers and he being admitted, the disabled man was soon laid on a table in a cool, methodical way, and carefully examined by a surgeon who was as near at hand, and as ready to appear as Calamity herself. 'He hardly knows an English word,' said Clennam; 'is he badly hurt?' 'Let us know all about it first,' said the surgeon, continuing his examination with a businesslike delight in it, 'before we pronounce.' After trying the leg with a finger, and two fingers, and one hand and two hands, and over and under, and up and down, and in this direction and in that, and approvingly remarking on the points of interest to another gentleman who joined him, the surgeon at last clapped the patient on the shoulder, and said, 'He won't hurt. He'll do very well. It's difficult enough, but we shall not want him to part with his leg this time.' Which Clennam interpreted to the patient, who was full of gratitude, and, in his demonstrative way, kissed both the interpreter's hand and the surgeon's several times. 'It's a serious injury, I suppose?' said Clennam. 'Ye-es,' replied the surgeon, with the thoughtful pleasure of an artist contemplating the work upon his easel. 'Yes, it's enough. There's a compound fracture above the knee, and a dislocation below. They are both of a beautiful kind.' He gave the patient a friendly clap on the shoulder again, as if he really felt that he was a very good fellow indeed, and worthy of all commendation for having broken his leg in a manner interesting to science. 'He speaks French?' said the surgeon. 'Oh yes, he speaks French.' 'He'll be at no loss here, then.--You have only to bear a little pain like a brave fellow, my friend, and to be

thankful that all goes as well as it does,' he added, in that tongue, 'and you'll walk again to a marvel. Now, let us see whether there's anything else the matter, and how our ribs are?' There was nothing else the matter, and our ribs were sound. Clennam remained until everything possible to be done had been skilfully and promptly done--the poor belated wanderer in a strange land movingly besought that favour of him--and lingered by the bed to which he was in due time removed, until he had fallen into a doze. Even then he wrote a few words for him on his card, with a promise to return to-morrow, and left it to be given to him when he should awake. (178-180)

The foreigner, by name John Baptist Cavalletto--they called him Mr Baptist in the Yard--was such a chirping, easy, hopeful little fellow, that his attraction for Pancks was probably in the force of contrast. Solitary, weak, and scantily acquainted with the most necessary words of the only language in which he could communicate with the people about him, he went with the stream of his fortunes, in a brisk way that was new in those parts. With little to eat, and less to drink, and nothing to wear but what he wore upon him, or had brought tied up in one of the smallest bundles that ever were seen, he put as bright a face upon it as if he were in the most flourishing circumstances when he first hobbled up and down the Yard, humbly propitiating the general good-will with his white teeth. It was uphill work for a foreigner, lame or sound, to make his way with the Bleeding Hearts. In the first place, they were vaguely persuaded that every foreigner had a knife about him; in the second, they held it to be a sound constitutional national axiom that he ought to go home to his own country. They never thought of inquiring how many of their own countrymen would be returned upon their hands from divers parts of the world, if the principle were generally recognised; they considered it particularly and peculiarly British. In the third place, they had a notion that it was a sort of Divine visitation upon a foreigner that he was not an Englishman, and that all kinds of calamities happened to his country because it did things that England did not, and did not do things that England did. In this belief, to be sure, they had long been carefully trained by the Barnacles and Stiltstalkings, who were always proclaiming to them, officially, that no country which failed to submit itself to those two large families could possibly hope to be under the protection of Providence; and who, when they believed it, disparaged them in private as the most prejudiced people under the sun. This, therefore, might be called a political position of the Bleeding Hearts; but they entertained other objections to having foreigners in the Yard. They believed that foreigners were always badly off; and though they were as ill off themselves as they could desire to be, that did not diminish the force of the objection. They believed that foreigners were dragooned and bayoneted; and though they certainly got their own skulls promptly fractured if they showed any ill-humour, still it was with a blunt instrument, and that didn't count. They believed that foreigners were always immoral; and though they had an occasional assize at home, and now and then a divorce case or so, that had nothing to do with it. They believed that foreigners had no independent spirit, as never being escorted to the poll in droves by Lord Decimus Tite Barnacle, with colours flying and the tune of Rule Britannia playing. Not to be tedious, they had many

other beliefs of a similar kind. Against these obstacles, the lame foreigner with the stick had to make head as well as he could; not absolutely single-handed, because Mr Arthur Clennam had recommended him to the Plornishes (he lived at the top of the same house), but still at heavy odds. However, the Bleeding Hearts were kind hearts; and when they saw the little fellow cheerily limping about with a good-humoured face, doing no harm, drawing no knives, committing no outrageous immoralities, living chiefly on farinaceous and milk diet, and playing with Mrs Plornish's children of an evening, they began to think that although he could never hope to be an Englishman, still it would be hard to visit that affliction on his head. They began to accommodate themselves to his level, calling him 'Mr Baptist,' but treating him like a baby, and laughing immoderately at his lively gestures and his childish English--more, because he didn't mind it, and laughed too. They spoke to him in very loud voices as if he were stone deaf. They constructed sentences, by way of teaching him the language in its purity, such as were addressed by the savages to Captain Cook, or by Friday to Robinson Crusoe. Mrs Plornish was particularly ingenious in this art; and attained so much celebrity for saying 'Me ope you leg well soon,' that it was considered in the Yard but a very short remove indeed from speaking Italian. Even Mrs Plornish herself began to think that she had a natural call towards that language. As he became more popular, household objects were brought into requisition for his instruction in a copious vocabulary; and whenever he appeared in the Yard ladies would fly out at their doors crying 'Mr Baptist--tea-pot!' 'Mr Baptist--dust-pan!' 'Mr Baptist--flour-dredger!' 'Mr Baptist--coffee-biggin!' At the same time exhibiting those articles, and penetrating him with a sense of the appalling difficulties of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. (321-323)

Mr Baptist seemed to have a general understanding of what she said; or perhaps his quickness caught and applied her slight action of peeping. In any case he closed his eyes and tossed his head with the air of a man who had sufficient reasons for what he did, and said in his own tongue, it didn't matter. Altro! 'What's Altro?' said Pancks. 'Hem! It's a sort of a general kind of expression, sir,' said Mrs Plornish. 'Is it?' said Pancks. 'Why, then Altro to you, old chap. Good afternoon. Altro!' Mr Baptist in his vivacious way repeating the word several times, Mr Pancks in his duller way gave it him back once. From that time it became a frequent custom with Pancks the gipsy, as he went home jaded at night, to pass round by Bleeding Heart Yard, go quietly up the stairs, look in at Mr Baptist's door, and, finding him in his room, to say, 'Hallo, old chap! Altro!' To which Mr Baptist would reply with innumerable bright nods and smiles, 'Altro, signore, altro, altro, altro!' After this highly condensed conversation, Mr Pancks would go his way with an appearance of being lightened and refreshed. (325)

4. Which characters in the novel are framed as foreign or international? How do they animate and complicate the domestic plot of the novel? What does their foreign or cosmopolitan or worldly identity register? What ideas is the foreign associated with?

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Passages to consider (in addition to the passages cited for question 3):

Signor Cavalletto took his cigarette from between his parted lips, and showed more momentary discomfiture than might have been expected. 'I am a'--Monsieur Rigaud stood up to say it--'I am a cosmopolitan gentleman. I own no particular country. My father was Swiss--Canton de Vaud. My mother was French by blood, English by birth. I myself was born in Belgium. I am a citizen of the world.' (24)

One man slowly moving on towards Chalons was the only visible figure in the landscape. Cain might have looked as lonely and avoided. With an old sheepskin knapsack at his back, and a rough, unbarked stick cut out of some wood in his hand; miry, footsore, his shoes and gaiters trodden out, his hair and beard untrimmed; the cloak he carried over his shoulder, and the clothes he wore, sodden with wet; limping along in pain and difficulty; he looked as if the clouds were hurrying from him, as if the wail of the wind and the shuddering of the grass were directed against him, as if the low mysterious plashing of the water murmured at him, as if the fitful autumn night were disturbed by him. He glanced here, and he glanced there, sullenly but shrinkingly; and sometimes stopped and turned about, and looked all round him. Then he limped on again, toiling and muttering. 'To the devil with this plain that has no end! To the devil with these stones that cut like knives! To the devil with this dismal darkness, wrapping itself about one with a chill! I hate you!' And he would have visited his hatred upon it all with the scowl he threw about him, if he could. He trudged a little further; and looking into the distance before him, stopped again. 'I, hungry, thirsty, weary. You, imbeciles, where the lights are yonder, eating and drinking, and warming yourselves at fires! I wish I had the sacking of your town; I would repay you, my children!' (141)

6. Is Tattycoram foreign or domestic—is she is an insider or outsider figure, does she exist at the center or on the periphery, is she “English” or “non-English” in a metaphorical sense? How do discourses of race and class overlap in Dickens’s novel? How might we interpret the casting choice of the actress in the *Little Dorrit* miniseries we have been screening?

Small group discussion—5 minutes

Whole group discussion—10 minutes

Passages to consider:

'So I said next day: Now, Mother, I have a proposition to make that I think you'll approve of. Let us take one of those same little children to be a little maid to Pet. We are practical people. So if we should find her temper a little defective, or any of her ways a little wide of ours, we shall know what we have to take into account. We shall know what an immense deduction must be made from all the influences and experiences that have formed us--no parents, no child-brother or sister, no individuality of home, no Glass Slipper, or Fairy Godmother. And that's the way we came by Tattycoram.' 'And the name itself--' 'By George!' said Mr Meagles, 'I was forgetting the name itself. Why, she was called in the Institution, Harriet Beadle--an arbitrary name, of course. Now, Harriet we changed into Hattey, and then into Tatty, because, as practical people, we thought even a playful name might be a new thing to her, and might have a softening and affectionate kind of effect, don't you see? As to Beadle, that I needn't say was wholly out of the question. If there is anything that is not to be tolerated on any terms, anything that is a type of Jack-in-office insolence and absurdity, anything that represents in coats, waistcoats, and big sticks our English holding on by nonsense after every one has found it out, it is a beadle. You haven't seen a beadle lately?' 'As an Englishman who has been more than twenty years in China, no.' 'Then,' said Mr Meagles, laying his forefinger on his companion's breast with great animation, 'don't you see a beadle, now, if you can help it. Whenever I see a beadle in full fig, coming down a street on a Sunday at the head of a charity school, I am obliged to turn and run away, or I should hit him. The name of Beadle being out of the question, and the originator of the Institution for these poor foundlings having been a blessed creature of the name of Coram, we gave that name to Pet's little maid. At one time she was Tatty, and at one time she was Coram, until we got into a way of mixing the two names together, and now she is always Tattycoram.' (33)

'See here,' she said, in the same level way as before. 'Here is your patron, your master. He is willing to take you back, my dear, if you are sensible of the favour and choose to go. You can be, again, a foil to his pretty daughter, a slave to her pleasant wilfulness, and a toy in the house showing the goodness of the family. You can have your droll name again, playfully pointing you out and setting you apart, as it is right that you should be pointed out and set apart. (Your birth, you know; you must not forget your birth.) You can again be shown to this gentleman's daughter, Harriet, and kept before her, as a living reminder of her own superiority and her gracious condescension. You can recover all these advantages and many more of the same kind which I dare say start up in your memory while I speak, and which you lose in taking refuge with me--you can recover them all by telling these gentlemen how humbled and penitent you are, and by going back to them to be forgiven. What do you say, Harriet? Will you go?' The girl who, under the influence of these words, had gradually risen in anger and heightened in colour, answered, raising her lustrous black eyes for the moment, and clenching her hand upon the folds it had been puckering up, 'I'd die sooner!' Miss Wade, still standing at her side holding her hand, looked quietly round and said with a smile, 'Gentlemen! What do you do upon that?' Poor Mr Meagles's inexpressible consternation in hearing

his motives and actions so perverted, had prevented him from interposing any word until now; but now he regained the power of speech. 'Tattycoram,' said he, 'for I'll call you by that name still, my good girl, conscious that I meant nothing but kindness when I gave it to you, and conscious that you know it--' 'I don't!' said she, looking up again, and almost rending herself with the same busy hand. 'No, not now, perhaps,' said Mr Meagles; 'not with that lady's eyes so intent upon you, Tattycoram,' she glanced at them for a moment, 'and that power over you, which we see she exercises; not now, perhaps, but at another time. Tattycoram, I'll not ask that lady whether she believes what she has said, even in the anger and ill blood in which I and my friend here equally know she has spoken, though she subdues herself, with a determination that any one who has once seen her is not likely to forget. I'll not ask you, with your remembrance of my house and all belonging to it, whether you believe it. I'll only say that you have no profession to make to me or mine, and no forgiveness to entreat; and that all in the world that I ask you to do, is, to count five-and-twenty, Tattycoram.' She looked at him for an instant, and then said frowningly, 'I won't. Miss Wade, take me away, please.' The contention that raged within her had no softening in it now; it was wholly between passionate defiance and stubborn defiance. Her rich colour, her quick blood, her rapid breath, were all setting themselves against the opportunity of retracing their steps. 'I won't. I won't. I won't!' she repeated in a low, thick voice. 'I'd be torn to pieces first. I'd tear myself to pieces first!' Miss Wade, who had released her hold, laid her hand protectingly on the girl's neck for a moment, and then said, looking round with her former smile and speaking exactly in her former tone, 'Gentlemen! What do you do upon that?' 'Oh, Tattycoram, Tattycoram!' cried Mr Meagles, adjuring her besides with an earnest hand. 'Hear that lady's voice, look at that lady's face, consider what is in that lady's heart, and think what a future lies before you. My child, whatever you may think, that lady's influence over you--astonishing to us, and I should hardly go too far in saying terrible to us to see--is founded in passion fiercer than yours, and temper more violent than yours. What can you two be together? What can come of it?' 'I am alone here, gentlemen,' observed Miss Wade, with no change of voice or manner. 'Say anything you will.' 'Politeness must yield to this misguided girl, ma'am,' said Mr Meagles, 'at her present pass; though I hope not altogether to dismiss it, even with the injury you do her so strongly before me. Excuse me for reminding you in her hearing--I must say it--that you were a mystery to all of us, and had nothing in common with any of us when she unfortunately fell in your way. I don't know what you are, but you don't hide, can't hide, what a dark spirit you have within you. If it should happen that you are a woman, who, from whatever cause, has a perverted delight in making a sister-woman as wretched as she is (I am old enough to have heard of such), I warn her against you, and I warn you against yourself.' 'Gentlemen!' said Miss Wade, calmly. 'When you have concluded--Mr Clennam, perhaps you will induce your friend--' 'Not without another effort,' said Mr Meagles, stoutly. 'Tattycoram, my poor dear girl, count five-and-twenty.' 'Do not reject the hope, the certainty, this kind man offers you,' said Clennam in a low emphatic voice. 'Turn to the friends you have not forgotten. Think once more!' 'I won't! Miss Wade,' said the girl, with her bosom swelling high, and speaking with her hand held to her throat, 'take me away!' 'Tattycoram,' said Mr Meagles. 'Once more yet! The only thing I

ask of you in the world, my child! Count five-and-twenty!' She put her hands tightly over her ears, confusedly tumbling down her bright black hair in the vehemence of the action, and turned her face resolutely to the wall. Miss Wade, who had watched her under this final appeal with that strange attentive smile, and that repressing hand upon her own bosom with which she had watched her in her struggle at Marseilles, then put her arm about her waist as if she took possession of her for evermore. And there was a visible triumph in her face when she turned it to dismiss the visitors. 'As it is the last time I shall have the honour,' she said, 'and as you have spoken of not knowing what I am, and also of the foundation of my influence here, you may now know that it is founded in a common cause. What your broken plaything is as to birth, I am. She has no name, I have no name. Her wrong is my wrong. I have nothing more to say to you.' (348-351)