GREAT EXPECTATIONS by Charles Dickens Chapter I My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip. I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the a
uthority of his tombstone and my sister,--Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived f
rom their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five litt
le stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine,--who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle,--I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that the
y had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence. Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to
me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with ne ttles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bart
holomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond t he churchyard, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line
beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers g rowing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip. "Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at
the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!" A fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his l eg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothe
red in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin. "Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray do
n't do it, sir." "Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!" "Pip, sir." "Once more," said the man, staring at me. "Give it mouth!" "Pip. P ip, sir." "Show us where you live," said the man. "Pint out the place!" I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the
alder-trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church. The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and e mptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself,--for he was so sudden and stro
ng that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet,--when the church came to itself, I say , I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling while he ate the bread ravenously. "You young dog," said the man, licking
his lips, "what fat cheeks you ha' got." I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized for my years, and not strong. "Darn me if I couldn't eat em," said the man, with a threatening shake of his head, "and if I han't half a mind to'
t!" I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn't, and held tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly, t o keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying. "Now lookee here!" said the man. "Where's your mother?"
"There, sir!" said I. He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder. "There, sir!" I timidly expl ained. "Also Georgiana. That's my mother." "Oh!" said he, coming back. "And is that your father alonger your mothe
r?" "Yes, sir," said I; "him too; late of this parish." "Ha!" he muttered then, considering. "Who d'ye live with,--supposin' you're kindly let to live, which I han't made up my mind about?" "My sister, sir,--Mr
s. Joe Gargery,--wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir." "Blacksmith, eh?" said he. And looked dow n at his leg. After darkly looking at his leg and me several times, he came closer to my tombstone,
took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me; so that his eyes looked most po werfully down into mine, and mine looked mos t helplessly up into his. "Now lookee here," he said, "the question being whether you're to be let to
live. You know what a file is?" "Yes, sir." "And you know what wittles is?" "Yes, sir." After each quest ion he tilted me over a little more, so as to give m e a greater sense of helplessness and danger. "You get me a file." He tilted me again. "And you get
me wittles." He tilted me again. "You bring 'em both to me." He tilted me again. "Or I'll have your heart a nd liver out." He tilted me again. I was dreadfull y frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, "If you would kindly please t
o let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn't be sick, and perhaps I could attend more." He gave me a m ost tremendous dip and roll, so that the chu rch jumped over its own weathercock. Then, he held me by the arms, in an upright position on the top o
f the stone, and went on in these fearful terms:-- "You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me, at th at old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning
your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, r
oasted, and ate. Now, I ain't alone, as you may think I am. There's a young man hid with me, in comparison w ith which young man I am a Angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret
way pecooliar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in wain for a boy to atte n will softly creep and creep his way to h mpt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck hims
elf up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young ma ?" I said that I would get him the file, and im and tear him open. I am a keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with
great difficulty. I find it wery hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say n. "Now," he pursued, "you remembe I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in th
e morning. "Say Lord strike you dead if you don't!" said the man. I said so, and he took me dow r what you've undertook, and you remember that young man, and you get home!" "Goo-good ni
ght, sir," I faltered. "Much of that!" said he, glancing about him over the cold wet fla t. "I wis h I was a frog. Or a eel!" At the same time, he hugged his shuddering body in
both his arms,--clasping himself, as if to hold himself togethe r,--and limped towards the low church wall. As I saw him go, picking his wa
y among the nettles, and among the brambles that bo und the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes a
s if he were eluding the hands of the d ead pe ople, stretching up cautiously
out of their g r aves, t n. Whe n he came to
th e low churc h wall, numbed and s tif
f, and then turned round to look fo ace towards home, and mad e the
best use of my legs. But presently I looked , and s aw him going on again toward
s the river, still hugging himself in both arms, and picking is sore feet among the great stones d ropped int
o the mar shes here and there, for stepping-places w hen the vy or th e tide was in. The marshes were just a lo ng black h
orizont al line then, as I stopped to look aft river wa s just another horiz ontal lin e, not n
early so broad k; and t he sky w as ju
st a r intermi xed.
On th ly two b lack
thing seemed to b
e sta se was t he b
acon an unhooped cas k up o
n a p er, a gibbet, with so me chains hangin g to it
ole,--an ugly thing when you wer whi g on towa rds this latter, as if he were the p irate
ch had once held a pirate. T himself up again. It gave me a ter
com n, and g I saw th e cattle lifting the ir he
e to life, and come dow ; and as dered w hether they thoug ht s
rible turn when I thought so m, I won nd for th e ho rri
ds t o gaze after hi d all rou d could see no si
a ooke man, an
gns of him . B ut now I was frighte ned again, and ran ho me witho
ut stopping. C hapter II My sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery, was mor e than twenty years older than I, and had esta b lished a gre
at reputation with herself and the neighbors because she had brought me up "by hand." Having at th t, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon he
r husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand. She al impression that she must have made Joe Gargery marry her by hand. Joe was a fair man, with cur
ls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecid ir own whites. He was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear
fellow,--a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakn revailing redness of skin that I sometimes used to wonde
r whether it was possible she all and bony, and almost alwa
ys oop
s, and having a square imp of pins and needles. Sh e
made it a powerful merit in herself, and a strong reproach aga so much. Though I really see no reason why she sho uld ha
ve worn i t at all; or why, if she did wear it at all, she should not have taken it off, every d e, which was a wooden house, as many of the dwellings in our country were, --most of
them, at that time. When I ran home from the churchyard, the forge was shut up, and Joe was sitting rers, and having confidences as such, Joe imparted a confidence to me, the moment I raised the la
tch of the door and peeped in at him opposite to it, sitting in the chimney corner. "Mrs. Joe has been out now, making it a baker's dozen." "Is she?" "Yes, Pip," said Joe; "and what's worse, she's got Ti
ckler with her." At this dismal intelligence, I twisted the only button on my waistcoat round and roun was a wax-ended piece of cane, worn smooth by collision with my tickled frame. "She sot down," s
aid Joe, "and she got up, and she made a grab at Tickler, and she Ram-paged out. That's what she d bars with the poker, and looking at it; "she Ram-paged out, Pip." "Has she been gone long, Joe?" I
always treated him as a larger species of child, and as no more than my equal. "Well," said Joe, gla ge, this last spell, about five minutes, Pip. She's a coming! Get behind the door, old chap, and hav
e the jack-towel betwixt you." I took the advice. My s ister, Mrs. Joe, throwing the door wide vined the cause, and applied Tickler to i ts further investigation. She concluded by throwi
ng me--I often served as a connubial missile- -at Joe, who, glad to get hold of etly fenced me up there with his g reat leg. "Where have you been, you young
monkey?" said Mrs. Joe, stamping her fo ot. "Tell me directly what you'v r me away with fret and fright a nd worrit, or I'd have you out of that cor
ner if you was fifty Pips, and he was fiv e hundred Gargerys." "I hav urchyard," said I, from my st ool, c rying and rubbing myself. "Churchy
ard!" repeated my sister. "If it warn't for me you'd ha ve been to the churchyard " "You did," said I. "And w hy did I do it, I sh ould like to know?" exclaimed my
sister. I whimpered, "I don't know." "I don't!" said my sist er. "I'd never do it again! ne off since born you wer e. It's bad enough to be a blacksmith's wife (and him a G
argery) without being your mothe r." My thoughts strayed from that question as I looke hes with the ironed leg, t he mysterious young man, the file, the food, and the dread
ful pledge I was under to commi t a larceny on those sheltering premises, rose before ckler to his station. "Ch urchyard, indeed! You may we ll say churchyard, you two."
One of us, by the by, had not s aid it at all. "You'll drive me to the churchyard betwixt y ithout me!" As she app lied herself to set the tea-things , Joe peeped down at me ov
er his leg, as if he were menta lly casting me and himself up, and calculating what kind us circumstances fore shadowed. After that, he sat feeli ng his right-side flaxen curl
s and whisker, and following Mrs. Joe about with had a trenchant way o f cutting our bread a nd butter for us, that never
varied. First, with her left h an d sh es got a pin into it, an d s om etimes a needle, which w
e afterwards got into our m out hs. Then sh af, in an apothecary k ind of way, as if she were making a plaster,--u
sing both sides of the knif e took some butter (n e the knife a final sma rt wipe on the edge of the plaster, an d then sawed a very thi
ck round off the loaf: whi e with a slapping de xter ity, and tr imming and mouldin the other. On the pre sent occasion, though I was hungry, I dared not eat my slice.
I felt that I must have so ch she finally, be fore se parating from the loaf, hewed rs. Joe's housekeepi ng to be of the strictest kind, and that my larcenous researc
hes might find nothing mething in reserve for my dre adful ac quaintance, and his s. The effort of resolu tion necessary to the achievement of th is purpose I found to
be quite awful. It was a available in the safe. Therefor e I resol ved to put my hunk o nd it was made the m ore difficult b y th e unconsciou s Joe. In our already-
mentioned freemasonr s if I had to make up my mind to leap fro m the top of a high h ompare the way we b it through o ur slices, by silently holding the
m up to each other's a y as fellow-suffere rs, and i n h is good-natured com ted me, by the displa y of his fast d iminishing s lice, to enter upon
our usual friendly co dmirati on now and t hen,-- which stimulated us ad and butter on the ircumstances. I took other. At last , I desperately considered that th
e thing I contemplate mpetitio n; but he fo und me, e a ch time, with my yell to be my loss of appe advantage of a moment whe n Joe had just look
ed at me, and got m d must b e do ne, and th a t it had best be done ood deal, and after al tite, and too k a thoughtful b ite out of his slice
, which he didn't se y bread a nd b utter do wn my leg. Joe was evid w that my bread and I gulped it d own like a pill. He was about to tak
e another bite, and em t o enj oy. He turne d it about in his mouth ation. "What's the ma butter was g one. The wonder an d consternation
with which Joe sto had just got his head on one side for a good purc ourself a mischief. It' tter now?" said she, smartly, as she p ut down her cup.
"I say, you know!" ppe d on the threshold of his bite and stared at me, we recommend you to d ll stick somew here. You can't have chawed it, Pip."
"What's the matte mu ttered Jo e, shaking his head a t me in very serious two whiskers, knock o it," said Joe , all aghast. "Mann ers is manners,
but still your elth' r now ?" repe ated my sister, more s harply than before. "I ister, out of breath, " ed his head f or a little while ag ainst the wall b
ehind him, while s your elth." B y this time, my sister wa s quite desperate, so is last bite in his che you staring great stuck pig." Joe looked at
her in a helpless I sat in the c orner, looking guiltil y on. "Now, perhaps a--" he moved his ch ek, and s peaking in a con fidential voice,
as if we two wer way, then to ok a helple ss bite, a nd looked at me agai You know, old chap," air and I ooked about th e floor betwee
n us, and then a e quite alon e, "you an d me is al ways friends, and I'd many Bolters; but I said Joe , looking at me , and not at M
rs. Joe, with his gain a t me- -"such a most oncom mon Bolt as that!" "B e than the awful wor never see your Bolting e qual yet, Pip,
and it's a merc bite still in his chee k, "I Bolted, myself, when I was yo e cupboard; having a ds, "You co me along and be dosed." Som
e medical beas y you ain't Bolted d ead." My sis ter made a dive at me cious of going about belief in its virtues correspo ndent to its n
astiness. At th t had reviv ed Tar- water in tho se days as a fine med greater comfort, whil , smelling li ke a new fence. On this particu
lar evening th e best of time s, so m uch of this elixir was administer de to swallow that (m e Mrs. Joe held my head und er her arm,
as a boot wou e urgen cy of my case demande d a pint of this mixtur rom myself, I should uch to his disturbance, as he sat slowl
y munching a ld be he ld in a bootjack. Joe got off with half a pint; bu ; but when, in the ca say he c ertainly had a tur n afterward
s, if he had h nd medit ating before the fir e), "bec ause he had had a tur t punishment. The g se of a b oy, that secret b urden co-o
perates with ad none before. Co nscienc e is a d readful thing when it property as his--unit uilty kn owledge that I w as going to
rob Mrs. Joe anothe r secret bur den d own the leg of his trousers, it ed to t he necessity of always kee
--I n ever though t I w as going to rob Joe, for I neve
ping one han d o n my bread a nd butter as I sat, or when I was ordered about the kitchen on any small errand, almost drove me out of my mind. Then, as the marsh winds made the fire glow and flare, I thoug ht I heard the vo ice outsi
e, of the ma n with the iron on his leg who had sworn me to secrecy, declaring that he couldn't and wouldn't starve until to-morrow, but must be fed now. At other times, I thought, What if the young man who
was wi th so much difficulty restrained from imbruing his hands in me should yield to a constitutional impatien ce, or should mista ke th
e time, and should thin k himself accredited to my heart and liver to-night, instead of to-mor row! If ever anybod y's h
air stoo d on end with terror, mine must have done so then. But, perha ps, nobody's ever did? It wa s Christmas Eve, and I had to stir the p uddin
g for next d ay, with a copper-stick, from seven to eight by the Dutch clo ck. I tried it with the load upon my leg (and that made me think afresh of the man with the load on HIS leg), and fo und the t
endency of exercise to bring the bread and butter out at my ankle, quite unman ageable. Happily I slippe d away, and deposited that part of my conscience in my garret bedroom. "Hark!" said I, when I had don
e my stirring, and was taking a final warm in the chimney corner before being sen t up to bed, "was that grea t guns, Joe?" "Ah!" said Jo e. "There's another conwict off." "What does that mean, Joe?" said I. Mrs. Joe,
who always took explanations upon herself, said, snappishly, "Escaped. Escaped." Administering the definit ion like Tar- water. While Mrs. J oe sat with her head bending over her needlework, I put my mouth into the forms
of saying to Joe, "What's a convict?" Joe put his mouth into the forms of returning s uch a highly el aborate answe r, that I could ma ke out nothing of it but the single word "Pip." "There was a conwict off last night,"
said Joe, aloud, "after sunset-gun. And they fired warning of him. And now it appear s they're firing w arning of anothe r." "Who's firing?" said I. "Drat that boy," interposed my sister, frowning at me over her work, "what a
questioner he is. Ask no questions, and you'll be told no lies." It was not very p olite to herself, I tho ught, to imply that I should be told lies by her even if I did ask questions. But she never was polite unless there was comp
any. At this point Joe greatly augmented my curiosity by taking the utmost pains to o pen his m outh very wide, and to pu t it into the form of a word that looked to me like "sul
ks." Therefore, I naturally pointed to Mrs. Joe, and put my mout h into th e form of saying, "her?" But Joe wouldn't hear of that, at
all, and again opened his mouth ve ry wide , and s hook the form of a most e mphatic wor
d out of it. But I could make nothi ng of the word. "Mrs. Joe
," said I, as a la st resort, "I should like to know--if you wouldn' t muc h min d--where the firing comes from?" "Lord bless the boy!" exclaim
ed my sister, as if she didn't quite mean that but rather the contrary. "From the Hulks!" "Oh- h!" sa id I, looking at Joe. "Hulks!" Joe gave a reproachful cough, as much as to say, "Well, I t
old you so." "And please, what's Hulks?" said I. "That's the way w ith this boy!" exclaimed my s ister, point ing me out with her needle and thread, and shaking her head at me. "Answer him one question, a
nd he'll ask you a dozen directly. Hulks are prison-ships, right 'cross th' m eshes." We alw ays us ed tha t name for marshes , in our country. "I wonder who's put into prison-ships, and why they're
put there?" said I, in a general way, and with quiet desperation. It was too much fo r Mrs. Joe, w ho immediately rose. "I tell you what, young fellow," said she, "I didn't b
ring you up by hand to badger people's lives out. It would be blame to me and not pr aise, if I had . People are put in the Hulks because they murder, and because they ro
b, and forge, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questio ns. Now, you get along to bed! " I was never allowed a candle to light me to bed, and, as I went up stairs in
the dark, with my head tingling,--from M himble having pla yed the tambourine rs. Joe's t upon it, t o accompany her last words,--I felt fear
fully sensible of the g enience that the hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on my way there. I had beg reat conv un by as king questions, and I
was goin rs. Joe. Since that time, which is far enough away now, I have often thought that fe g to rob M w people k now wha
t se c recy there is in t he young un der terror. No matter how unreasonable the terror, so that it be terror. I was in mortal te rror of the y oung man who w
ant ed my heart and liver; I was in m ortal terror o f my interlocutor with the iron leg; I was in mortal terror of myself, from whom an awful pr omise had b een extracted; I had no hope of
de livera nce through my all-powerful siste r, who repul sed me at every turn; I am afra id to think of what I might have d one on requ irement, in the secrecy of my te rror. If
l s lept at all that night, it was only to imagine mys elf drifting d own the river on a strong spring-tide, to the Hulks; a ghostly pira te calling out to me through a s peaking-trump
e t, as I passed t he gibbet-station, that I had better come asho re and be hanged the re at once, and not put it off. I was afr aid to get aid to clined, for I kn
e w that at the fir st faint dawn of m orning I must rob the pantry. There was no doi ng it in the night, for t here was no ttling his ch en; to have got
one I must have struck it out of fli nt and steel, and have made a noise like the v ery pirate himself ra ry board cal elvet pall outsid
e my little windo w was shot with g ray, I got up and went down stairs; every b oard upon the way, and every crack in eve are hanging et up, Mrs. Joe!"
In the pantry, w hich was far more abundantly supplied th an usual, owi ng to the season, I was very muc h alarmed by a h ything, for I her thought I ca
ught when my b ack was half turne d, winking. I had no tim e for verification, no time for selection, no time for an ght's slice), are. I stole some
bread, some rin d of cheese, about h alf a jar of m incemeat (which I tied up in my pocket-handkerchief w ith my last ni y room: dilu stone bottle (wh
ich I decan ted into a glass bottle I h ad secretly used for m aking that intoxicating fluid, Spanish-liquorice-w ater, up in m way without a jug in the
kitchen cupbo ard), a meat bo ne with very little on i t, and a beautiful round compact pork pie. I was nea rly going a nd it was th
nt upon a shelf, to l ook what it w as that was put away so carefully in a covered earthen ware dish in a corne r, and I fou forge; I unlo t was n
ot intended for e arly use, and would not be mis sed for s ome time. There was a door in the kitchen, communicatin g with the ight, shut it, t a file from amo
ng Joe's tools. T hen I put the faste nings as I h ad found them, opened the door at which I had entered when I ran h ome last n there all nig pter III It was a ri
my morning, and very dam p. I had seen the d amp lyin g on the outside of my little window, as if some goblin had be en crying to twig and t-handkerchief.
Now, I saw the d amp lyin g on t he bare hed ges and spare grass, like a coarser sort of spiders' webs; hanging itself from twig they never e, wet lay clam
my, and the mar sh mist w as so t hick, that th e woode n finger on the post directing people to our village--a direct ion which like a phant was invisible t
o me until I was quite close under it . Then, as I looked u p at it, while it dripped, it se nscience ry disagreea t was heavier
yet when I got o ut upon the mars hes, so that instead of my runni ng at everything, everythin g seemed to run at me. Th is was ve him!" The es and banks
came bursting at me through t he mist, as if they cried as plain ly as could be, "A boy with pie! Stop even had to ness, staring
out of their eye s, and stea ming o ut of their n ostrils, " Halloa, young thief!" One bl Somebody's else's pork on,--who ved round, t f a clerical air
,--fixed me so obstinatel y wi th his eyes, and mo ved his blunt head round in ack ox, with a white cravat r as I mo ed with a kic elp it, sir! It w
asn't for myse If I took i t!" Upon which he put down his head, blew a cloud such an accusatory manne d vanish e iron was ri is tail. All thi
s time, I was g etting on t owa rds the rive r; but ho wever fa st I went, I couldn't warm my of smoke out of his nose, an med rivet e that when man I was ru
nning to meet . I knew my w ay to the Ba ttery, pretty str aight, fo r I had been down there on a Sunday fe et, to which the damp cold see ed, as th un, had told m him, regular
ly bound, we wo uld have su ch L arks t here! Ho wever, in the confusion of th e mist, I fo und myself at last too far to the righ t, and cons equently ha d to try back along t
e river-s i on the ban k of I oose stones above the mud and the stake s that sta ked the tide out. Making my way alon g here with all despatc h, I had ju st crossed a
ditch w hich I knew to be ver y near the B attery, a nd h scrambled up the mound beyo nd the ditch, when I saw the m an sittin g befor e me. His back wa s toward s me, and he had his a
rms folded, and was no ddi ng forwa rd, heavy w ith sl e ep. I tho would be more glad if I came upon him with his breakfast, in that une xpected mann er, so l went forwa rd softly and touched h im on the
shoulder. H e instantly j um ped up, and it was not t he sam ut another man! And yet this man was dressed in coarse gray, too, and had a gr eat ir on on h is leg, and was lame, and hoarse, and cold, and
was everyt hing that the o ther m an was; exc ept th at he h e same face, and had a flat broad-brimmed low-crowned felt hat on. All this I sa w in a mome nt, for I had only a mo ment to see it i n: he swo
re an oath at me, made a hit a t me,--it wa s a round we that missed me and almost knocked himself down, for it made him stum ble,--and nto the mist, stum bling twice as he wen
t, and I los t him. "It's the yo ung man!" I tho eling my heart shoot as I identified him. I dare say I should have felt a pa in in my live r, too, if I ha d kno wn where it was. I wa
s soon at t he Battery aft er that, and as the right Man,--hugging himself and limping to and fro, as if he had ne ver all ni ght left off h uggin g and limping ,--waitin
g for me. He was awfull y cold, to be half expected to see him drop d own before my face and die o f deadly cold. His ey es loo ked so awfully hungry
too, that when I handed him the file aid it down on the grass, it oc curred to me he would hav e tried to eat it, if he had n ot seen my bun dle. He d
id not tur n me upside d own this tim at what I had, but left me rig ht side upwards while I op ened the bundle and empt ie d my pockets. " What's i
n the bot tle, boy?" sai d he. "Brand I. He was already handing m incemeat down his throat in the m ost curious m a nner,--more like a man
who was putting it aw ewhere in a violent hurry, tha n a man who was eating it,--b ut he left off to take s ome of
the liquor. He shiv the while so violently, that it w as quite as much as he could do to ke ep the neck of the bot
tle between his teeth, without biting it o nk you have got the ague," said I. "I'm much of your opinion, boy," sa id he. "I'd
been lying out on the meshes, and they're dreadful aguish. tic too." "I'll eat my breakfast af ore they're the death of me," sai d do that, if I was going to be strung up to that there gallows as t
here is over there, directly afterwards. I'll beat the shivers so far you." He was gobbling mincem eat, meatbone, bread, cheese, an d pork p ie, all at once: staring distrustfully while he did so at the mi
st all round us, and often stopping--even stoppi ws--to listen. Some real or fan cied sound, some clink upon th e river o r breathing of beast upon the marsh, now
gave him a start, and he said, s ,-- "You're not a deceiving i mp? You brought no one wit h you?" "No, sir! No!" "Nor giv' no
one the offic he, "I believe you. You'd be but a fie rce you
ow you?" "No!" "Well," said life you could help to hunt a wretch
d indeed, if at your time of nd dunghill as this poor wre tched w
int hunted as near death a is throat as if he had works in him I
s!" Something clicked in h e. And he smeared his ragg ed rough
ck, and was going to strik desolation, and watching him as h
over his eyes. Pitying his pie, I made bold to say, "I am glad
lly settled down upon the ou enjoyed it." "Thankee, my boy. I
you enjoy it." " speak?" "I said I was glad y between the dog's way o f eating, do." I had often wat
ched a large dog of ours eating his food; a noticed a decided similarity ast; and he looked sidew ays here and the man's. The man took strong sharp su
dden bites, just like the dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped up mouthful, too soon and too f ver it, to appreciate it co mfortably and there while he ate, as if he thought there was danger in ever
y direction of somebody's coming to take the pie away. He was a r too unsettled in his mind o u won't leave any of it for him," sa I thought, or to have anybody to dine with him, without making
a chop with his jaws at the visitor. In all of which particulars he like the dog. "I am afraid yo . "Leave id I, timidly; after a silence during which I had hesitated as to th
e politeness of making the remark. "There's no more to be got w here that came from." It was the certainty of this fact that im p elled me to offer the hint any for him? Who's him?" said my friend, stopping in his crunching of pie-crust. "The yo
ung man. That you spoke of. That was hid with you." "Oh ah!" he returned, with something like a gruff laug h. "Him? Yes, yes! He don't w ant no wittles." "I though t he looked as if he did," said I. The man stopped eating, and regarded me with the keenest scrutiny and th
e greatest surprise. "Looked? When?" "Just now." "Where?" "Yon ting; "over there, where I fou nd him nodding asleep, and thought it was yo u." He held me by the collar and stared at me so, that I began to t
hink his first idea about cutting my throat had revived. "Dress der," said I, poin t," I explained, trembling; "and--and "--I was very anxious to put this delicately--"and with--the same reas
on for wanting to borrow a file. Didn't you hear the cannon las ed like you, you know, only with a ha to himself. "I wonder you shouldn't have been su re of that," I returned, "for we heard it up at home, and that'
s farther away, and we were shut in besides." "Why, see now t night?" "Then there was firing!" he said ts, with a light head and a light stomach, perishi ng of cold and want, he hears nothin' all night, but guns fir
ing, and voices calling. Heard? He sees the soldiers, with !" said he. "When a man's alone on these fla their red coats lighted up by the torches carried afore,
closing in round him. Hears his number called, hears himself challenged, hears the rattle of the muskets,
hears the orders 'Make ready! Present! Cover him ste ady, men!' and is laid hands on--and there's nothin'! Why, if I see one pur suing party last night--coming up in order, Damn 'e
m, with their tramp, tramp--I see a hundred. And as to firing! Why, I see the mist shake with the cannon, arter it was broad day, --Bu t this man"; he had said all the rest, as if he had forgotten my being there; "did you notice anything in him?" "He had a badly bruised face," said
I, recalling what I hardly knew I knew. "Not here?" exclaimed the man, striking his left cheek mercilessly, with the flat of his hand. "Yes, there!" "Wh ere is he?" He crammed what little food was left, into the breast of his gray jacket. "Show me the way he went. I'll pull him down, like a bloodhou
nd. Curse this iron on my sore leg! Give us hold of the file, boy." I indicated in what directio n the mist had shrouded the other man, and he looked up at it for an instant. But
he was down on the rank wet grass, filing at his iron like a madman, and not minding me or minding his own leg, which had an old chafe upon it and was bloody, but whi
ch he handled as roughly as if it had no more feeling in it than the file. I was very much a fraid of him again, now that he had worked himself into this fierce hurry, and I
was likewise very much afraid of keeping away from home any longer. I told him I must go, but he took no notice, so I thought the best thing I could do was to slip off.
The last I saw of him, his head was bent over his knee and he was working hard at his fetter, muttering impatient imprecations at it and at his leg. The last I heard of him, I stopped in the mist to listen, and the file was still going. Chapter IV I fully expected to find a Constable in the kitchen,
waiting to take me up. But not only was there no Constable there, but no discovery had yet been made of the robbery. Mrs. Joe was prodigiousl y bus y in getting the house ready for the festivities of the day, and Joe had been put upon the kitchen doorstep to keep him out of the dust-pan,--an ar
ticle into which his destiny always led him, sooner or later, when my sister was vigorously reaping the floors of her establishment. "And where t he deu ce ha' you been?" was Mrs. Joe's Christmas salutation, when I and my conscience showed ourselves. I said I had been down to hear the C
arols. "Ah! well!" observed Mrs. Joe. "You might ha' done worse." Not a doubt of that I thought. "Perhaps if I warn't a blacksmith's wife, and (what's the same thing) a slave with her apron never off, I should have been to hear the Carols," said Mrs. Joe. "I'm rather partial to Carols, myself,
and that's the best of reasons for my never hearing any." Joe, who had ventured into the kitchen after me as the dustpan had retired before us, dr ew the back of his hand across his nose with a conciliatory air, when Mrs. Joe darted a look at him, and, when her eyes were withdrawn, secretly
crossed his two forefingers, and exhibited them to me, as our token that Mrs. Joe was in a cross temper. This was so much her normal state, tha t Joe and I would often, for weeks together, be, as to our fingers, like monumental Crusaders as to their legs. We were to have a superb dinner, consisting of a
leg of pickled pork and greens, and a pair of roast stuffed fowls. A handsome mince-pie had been made yesterday morning (which accounted for the mincemeat not being missed), and the pudding was already on the boil. These extensive arrangements occasioned us to be cut off unceremoniously in respe
ct of breakfast; "for I ain't," said Mrs. Joe,--"I ain't a going to have no formal cramming and busting and washing up now, with what I've got before me, I promise you!" So, we had our slices served out, as if we were two thousand troops on a forced march instead of a man and boy at home; and we took gulp
s of milk and water, with apologetic countenances, from a jug on the dresser. In the meantime, Mrs. Joe put clean white curtains up, and tacked a new flowered flounce across the wide chimney to replace the old one, and uncovered the little state parlor across the passage, which was never uncovered at an