

THE MAN WITH THE HUGE UMBRELLA.

CHAPTER I.

Shewing the reciprocity of feeling existing between Miss Eliza Pivett and Miss Julia Waggett—lodgings for single gentlemen—an odd character—conjecture—diurnal duties—a walk—a queer follower—gallantry—escort accepted—laughter—regret—the excuse—the bolt, &c. &c.

MISS ELIZA PIVETT and Miss Julia Waggett were of that particularly useful and industrious class of persons, ycleped mantua-makers. The complete sisterhood of their attire proclaimed the reciprocity of taste existing between them. The harmony in which they lived, at once bespoke the affectionate disposition of each. They dwelt together in a small room, in a small house, in a short street, near to Spitalfield's market. They had lived in the state of blissful tranquillity described for nearly two years, when a bill appeared in the parlour-window of the opposite house, implying that a room was to be let furnished, for a single gentleman. Now the young ladies were not of a naturally inquisitive disposition, yet they were both curious enough, as they sat at the window at work, to watch the gentlemen who inquired within for further particulars, in reference to the aforesaid bill in the parlour-window.

Now there is no question but that it was perfectly natural that the young ladies should feel some anxiety as to the character and description of their opposite neighbour; more particularly as it was stated explicitly on the bill that he must be a single gentleman. If single ladies have not a right to look after single gentlemen, in the name of Cupid, who has?

On the morning of the fifth day Miss Julia Waggett called the attention of Miss Eliza Pivett, to observe a young man, who at that moment was, to all appearance, perusing the bill in the parlour-window. He was not that particularly smart person outwardly which could, or would, be taken for a London swell—he was dressed in seedy black, with trowsers, and gaiters at least two inches above the top of them; a white stocking displayed the division between

each. He was bow-legged, very short, and carried a large cotton umbrella.

"What an odd looking man," said Miss Pivett.

"I never saw such a droll figure," said Miss Waggett.

The little man with the umbrella knocked at the door, and entered the house.

"How I shall laugh if he comes to live opposite," said Miss Eliza.

"So shall I," said Julia, and then both laughed at the anticipation of it.

In about five minutes the small man, and his large umbrella, again made their appearance; he seemed to have made up his mind, and, as far as the ladies could judge, was informing the woman of the house when he would come in. The little man left the door, and the bill left the window; this was proof positive, and the ladies, the rest of the day, amused themselves by conjecturing who and what the funny little man could be.

The next morning, and for many consecutive mornings, the funny gentleman was observed to leave the house about nine o'clock, and return about seven in the evening, so between those hours the fair sempstresses saw nothing of him. Things went on in this way for some weeks, until it chanced that Miss Pivett and Miss Waggett, both being dressed very smartly, sallied forth with the intention of paying a visit to the Eagle Tavern, or rather Grecian Saloon, as it is now called, in the City-road. They had not proceeded far, when, upon Miss Pivett turning her head round, she beheld the man in the short gaiters walking behind them. The young lady intimated the discovery to her companion, and they both began to giggle, which giggle, in the due course of things, naturally expanded into a laugh. On they walked, and on they laughed, and the little man kept pace with them behind.

"Can he be following us," whispered Miss Waggett to her friend.

"He must be," responded the other young lady.

"What a bit of fun," said Miss Pivett.

"Lor, 'Liza, for shame," observed Miss Waggett.

When they got to Norton Folgate they halted, prior to crossing the road, to allow two omnibuses to pass. The small man seized the opportunity, and stepping up, very politely offered his arm to escort the ladies over the street. Whether the ladies really felt that there was danger attending the crossing of the road; or whether they were glad to pick up a *beau* at any price; or whether at that moment they either of them took a fancy to the small man, his gaiters, or his umbrella, it is quite impossible for us to determine—but certain it is, that they immediately accepted the gallant offer of that extraordinary individual.

"We was er going to the Eagle," said Miss Pivett, as the trio proceeded up Worship-street; for the ladies still kept the arm of the small man.

"I shall be delighted to accompany you," said the polite little gentleman, who, for the greater convenience of his fair companions, had fastened the prodigious gingham umbrella to the top button of his seedy black coat; it hung and swung before him, very much after the fashion of the pendulum of a Dutch clock. Altogether his appearance was ludicrous in the extreme, and before the girls had got quite to the City-road, they began to regret having accepted the arm of such an oddity. The boys grinned as they passed, the men laughed, and the women tittered, and in consequence thereof, Miss Pivett and Miss Julia Waggett most heartily wished the funny man at old Scratch, or anywhere but in their society.

"I'm afear'd we're taking you out of your way, sir," said Miss Eliza Pivett.

"Not the least, miss," said he of the immense gingham; "your way is my way, ladies."

"We want to make a call for a minute just down the street, if you would be so good as to wait for us, sir," said Miss Waggett, at the same time disengaging herself from the small man, and taking the arm of Miss Pivett.

"Certainly," replied the owner of the prodigious umbrella; "I will wait for you at this post;" and away the girls ran down the street. As soon as they got to the bottom, Miss Waggett ex-

claimed, "I wont go into the Eagle, with that object, I'll take my oath." "I'll be hanged if I do," responded Miss Pivett.

"Don't let's go back to him," said Miss Waggett; and having mutually resolved to cut the queer man, the two young ladies took to the bye-ways, and shortly arrived at the Grecian Saloon.

CHAPTER II.

The arrival at the Eagle—unexpected meeting—an introduction.—Reappearance of the man with the umbrella—laughter provoked—little man incensed—a row and assault—turning out.—White Conduit—falsehoods exposed—the battle of the Amazons—resolves, and a separation.

WHEN the ladies arrived at the Eagle, they took their seats in the Saloon, to hear the singing and music.

"How do you do?" said a voice behind them. They turned round, and who should be sitting on the next form but a particular friend of Miss Pivett's, one Mr. Piesley, a pastry-cook from Bethnal Green.

"Lor, who'd er thought of seeing you," said Miss P.

"I didn't think of meeting you," said Mr. Piesley; "allow me to introduce this here young feller, as sits next to me, to your friend; he's a tickler old acquaintance of miern."

"Certainly," said Miss Pivett; and upon that Mr. Piesley and his tickler acquaintance stepped over, and seated themselves by the side of the young ladies. All this was very comfortable, and no doubt would have continued so, for the two gentlemen made themselves very agreeable, had not the small man, with the immense gingham umabrella, again made his appearance.

"Ah!" said the small man, as he made up towards the place the girls occupied; "I am very sorry I missed you; I just stepped into a shop to get the ferrule of my umbrella fastened; I was'nt there above a minute—you must have returned while I was away. No matter, I'm very glad I've found you;" and with that he sat down on the left of Miss Waggett, Mr. Piesley's tickler old acquaintance being seated on the right.

"Who the deuce is that queer-looking feller?" asked Mr. Piesley, in a whisper, of Miss Pivett. That lady explained by saying, that he was a friend

of Miss Waggett's. Miss W. being interrogated by Mr. Piesley's tickler old acquaintance upon the same subject, replied that he was a cousin of Miss Pivett's. The girls were utterly ashamed of the small man, his umbrella, and his gaiters; the men laughed, and a little boy on the next row pulled his mother by the gown to look at old Paul Pry, as he happily designated the gentleman of the huge gingham.

This little bit of the ludicrous pleased the pastry-cook and his *tickler* acquaintance vastly; they looked at the small man, and laughed to a personal extent. Miss Pivett did the same, and Miss Waggett likewise. He of the immense umbrella became irate—little men are generally more tenacious of ridicule than large ones.

"What are you laughing at, stupid," said the small man, addressing himself to Mr. Piesley's tickler acquaintance.

"Mightn't I laugh if I fancies it," replied that gentleman, still indulging his risible faculties to the fullest degree.

"You may laugh if you like," said he of the umbrella, "but I'm d—d if you laugh at me with impunity." This was said in a tone of voice not to be misunderstood, and it somewhat alarmed the ladies, yet the two gentlemen and the little boy in the next row continued to laugh. This was not to be borne, at any rate, by the small man; his look became terrific, and grasping his huge umbrella, he dealt the tickler acquaintance a most unmerciful blow on the sconce. The ladies shrieked, the old women fainted, and the men called the police.

"Turn 'em out," said everybody; and accordingly the small man and Mr. Piesley's tickler acquaintance were forthwith seized, and turned into the street. The ladies and Mr. Piesley followed, and joined that gentleman's tickler acquaintance, but the small man was nowhere to be found; he had vanished, and the party, particularly the two girls, were not sorry for it. Finding the injury received by the gentleman struck to be of a very slight description, it was proposed to adjourn to White Conduit House to finish the evening; so, in the greatest good humour with each other, the party bent their steps to the gardens famed for cockney adventures.

The party promenaded the gardens for some time, amid music, singing, dancing, conjuring, fire-works, &c., when Mr. Piesley suggested retiring to an arbour, to have some negus and biscuits. This being agreed, they repaired to a snug box, in a secluded part of the gardens, and ordered the required refreshments.

"What a rum feller that ere vos with the umbrella," observed Mr. Piesley's tickler acquaintance.

"I never seed sich a rum un," responded Mr. Piesley.

"A horrid wretch," said Miss Pivett.

"A perfect beast," said the gentle Miss Waggett.

"He's a cousin of yours, Miss Pivett, I believe," said the tickler acquaintance.

"He's no such a thing, sir," said that lady indignantly.

"No, he's a friend of Miss Waggett's," rejoined Mr. Piesley.

"He's nothin of the sort, sir; I don't know the little object," answered Miss Waggett.

"Well, I'm blowed," ejaculated the tickler acquaintance.

"What's the matter," said Mr. Piesley.

"Why this here young voman told me as the queer cove vos Miss Pivett's cousin."

"Well, I'm sure," exclaimed Miss Pivett; "its like your imperdence, Julia."

Here the pastry-cook observed that Miss Eliza Pivett had informed him that the man with the umbrella was a friend of Miss Julia's.

"I'm much obliged to you, 'Liza, for putting the little wretch upon me," cried the gentle Miss Waggett.

"As to that," replied the other lady, "you know you are a great deal better acquainted with him than I am, my dear."

"How can you tell such a story, 'Liza," said Miss Waggett; "you know as you talked to him with your fingers three times last week."

This was too much for the hasty temperament of Miss Pivett.

"You're a good-for-nothing hussy, Julia, and you knows it," said that lady. Whereupon Miss Julia made a rush at the bonnet of Miss Pivett, and speedily demolished the Tuscan fabric. Miss Pivett, in return, rending asunder the habit shirt and lace collar of Miss Julia Waggett. The two gentlemen, in vain,

endeavoured to separate the belligerents. At length Miss Pivett gave in, and, seating herself down upon the bench, she burst into a flood of tears, and sobbing, declared that she never again would enter the threshold of a house where Miss Waggett was. Miss Waggett contemptuously replied, that she hoped she never would; and having blown her nose, and pulled her shoes up at heel, she bowed coolly to Mr. Piesley, and his tickler acquaintance, and withdrew from the scene of action.

CHAPTER III.

Shewing how Miss Waggett again met with the small man—his politeness, gallantry, liberality, &c. &c.—The arrival of Miss Pivett—her resolve—departure of her friends—the drunken landlord—a mistake—an alarm—the alarm general—a discovery—awkward situation of the small man, &c.

MISS WAGGETT sauntered in dudgeon from the garden, without having decided what course to pursue, or what path to take. She proceeded into the City-road, cogitating whether she should go home, or to her aunt's in Pancras, or to her mother's in Stepney-fields. While thus engaged, the storm was fast subsiding within, but gathering without. The rain came down in large drops, and no gateway or door presented itself to shelter her—for in that part of the road long gardens with iron railings protect the fronts of the houses. At this critical moment, who should approach, most opportunely, but the small man with his huge umbrella.

"Ah," said that eccentric individual, "my dear young lady, what are you doing here; have your friends deserted you, or have you been ill-used? How came your clothes torn?"

"To this Miss Waggett, who was not devoid of natural nose and cunning, without hesitation, replied, that after the affray, she had taken his part against the two vulgar men who had insulted him; and that, in consequence thereof, her friend had turned round upon her, and abused her, and therefore she had left them. The small man, as he held his immense gingham over the head of Miss Waggett, grasped the handle of it, and expressed a wish that he had been there.

The young lady now took the arm of the little gentleman, and they proceeded

towards home, along the City-road; but the faster they walked, the faster the rain appeared to come down.

"We'll go into the next public-house we come to, and put up till the shower is over," said the small man. Having arrived at one, they entered the parlour, and he of the umbrella ordered a glass of hot rum and water for himself, and some white wine negus for Miss Waggett.

While drinking their respective drains of comfort, Miss Julia and the small man became remarkably communicative to each other. Miss W. went into further details respecting her contention in favour of the small man, and wound up by vowing that she would sooner walk the streets all night than enter a place where she was likely to meet with the vile and ungrateful Miss Pivett.

At this moment a slip of painted glass hanging over the fire-place met the eye of the small man, upon which was written "Good Beds."

"A thought strikes me, my dear girl," said that excellent individual; "your feelings shall not be lacerated by being again brought into contact with that worthless young woman; you shall sleep to-night at my lodging, and I will order a bed here, and, after escorting you home, return. In the course of to-morrow you will have the opportunity of making proper arrangements; but it is now very late, and this plan will save you much annoyance and inconvenience."

At first Miss Waggett protested against giving the gentleman of the umbrella so much trouble upon her account, but at last she consented to the arrangement; and the little man, having engaged his bed, sallied forth to escort Miss Waggett to his lodgings. Having arrived he popped a small latch key into the door, and the young lady was speedily and snugly deposited for the night in his apartment. This being done, the little man bade his fair *protégé* good night, and left the house to go back to his new domicile.

It was not long before the small man, his huge umbrella, and short gaiters, reached the public-house, and after having had one more tumbler of grog, he enquired to be shown to his room, and forthwith tumbled into bed.

About half an hour after the little gentleman had so disposed of himself, Miss Waggett, Miss Pivett, Mr. Piesley the pastry-cook, and his tickler old acquaintance, looked in at the identical public-house; and, having ordered something to drink, the following conversation took place between them:—

“The hussy,” said Miss Pivett. “If I was to die for it, I’d never speak to her again; and I’d sooner walk about till day-light, and then go to my Aunt Betsey’s, than I’ll enter the house where she is. If I could get a bed any where, I wouldn’t mind paying five shillings for it,” continued the enraged young lady.

“You can have a bed here, marm,” said the landlady of the house, who, being behind the bar, had heard what had fallen from Miss Pivett.

“I think you’d better,” said Mr. Piesley.

“You can’t walk the streets all night, by yourself,” said that gentleman’s tickler old acquaintance. The young men, it seems, were not remarkable for their gallantry, neither of them having offered to accompany their fair companion in the nocturnal ramble she had suggested.

“Can I,” replied Miss Pivett to the landlady; “then I’m sure I will, mum.”

“Lucy, put sheets on to No. 4,” said the landlady; and she having asked Miss Pivett to walk in, Mr. Piesley and his tickler acquaintance wished the young lady good night, and departed, apparently rather glad that they had got rid of their charge.

No. 4 being duly sheeted, Miss Pivett was shown up stairs, and, having borrowed a night-cap of Lucy, prepared herself to yield to soft repose. We should here observe, that the small man slumbered in No. 3.

We must now introduce our readers to another character in the farcical scene, viz. the landlord of the public-house: he was a person of the most dissipated habits, constantly coming home drunk, and while in that state committing innumerable irregularities. On the night in question, or rather morning, he arrived home, in his usual happy state, and having been let in, after ringing several times, by the drowsy pot-boy, he stood for a moment considering in the dark, and then proceeded up stairs; instead, however, of going direct to his own

room, he entered, by mistake, that which contained the small man with the umbrella. As he walked gently towards the bed, his progress was intercepted by the immense gingham, which the small man had opened, and put up for the purpose of drying. He kicked the umbrella out of the way, and the noise awoke the little gentleman, who placed himself perpendicularly in bed in breathless alarm. The publican having cleared the way, tumbled his drunken carcase on to the small man, who was for a moment divested of the power of utterance.

At length, by an extraordinary effort of nature, he flung the drunken landlord from him, and bellowed “murder,” as loud as his terror would permit him. All the inmates of the house were immediately alarmed, the landlady came down stairs from the second floor, with a rush-light in her hand, and ran into the room occupied by Miss Pivett, for protection. Lucy, who slept in the kitchen, had rushed to the tap-room to arouse the snoring pot-boy. The small man continued to halloo, and the lushy publican, having rolled on to the ground from the bed, laid on his back unable to rise. At length the forces mustered, and entered the room of the little gentleman. The scene was ludicrous in the extreme. The drowsy pot-boy, in the hurry and alarm of the moment, had put on his corderoy small clothes hind part before; had one stocking partly on, his shoes in one hand, and the tap-room poker in the other. The gentle Lucy was armed with a quart pot, and a large copper funnel. The lady of the house entered the room, almost in a state of nudity, accompanied by Miss Pivett, very much in the same condition. The small man had by this time got out of bed, and, having seized and closed his gigantic umbrella, he was laying too at the walls and bed curtains with that same, in the vain hope of piercing his aggressor, who, as we have said, was lying upon the floor.

As soon as the little gentleman perceived the light, and the number of females his cries had attracted, he felt the peculiar delicacy of his situation, and, by way of shielding himself from their view, he opened his huge gingham, and crouched himself down in a corner behind it.

When the landlady beheld her hus-

band upon the floor in a state of intoxication, the cause of the small man's alarm was instantly explained. "Look here, Bob," said she to the pot-boy; "why didn't yer see your master up stairs; he's gone into this gentleman's room by mistake, and alarmed him, and that is what has caused all the disturbance."

The publican having been taken out of the room, and the ladies retired, the small man emerged from behind the umbrella, and called out to the pot-boy that he wanted to speak to him.

Now it will be seen that the little gentleman had recognized the features of Miss Pivett, for he interrogated the pot-boy as to who she was. The drowsy young gentleman informed him all the particulars, which merely amounted to this, that the young 'oman com'd there late last night, and hired a bed, cos she didn't like to go home, on the account of some quarrel as she'd had vith some other gal, and as she vos er sleeping in the next room to him.

Having given all this important information, the pot-boy retired to rest, and all was once more tranquil.

We must now explain to our readers the very unenviable position of Miss Waggett.

CHAPTER IV.

The watchful proceedings of the policeman—disagreeable situation of Miss Waggett—the pious landlady—abuse—turning out—a kind reception—extraordinary coincidence—the small man's delinquency—the alarm—*expose*—departure of the small man—and his huge umbrella—lodgings to let, and the sequel.

ABOUT an hour after the small man had left Miss Waggett in his bed, the landlord of the house came home, and as he was placing the key in the door, the policeman of the beat informed him, that he had observed the little bow-legged chap, who lodged in his first-floor front, go in with a woman.

"Did you, indeed," said the landlord, who was a particularly moral-minded person. "I'll tell my wife of that."

The man had no sooner got in doors, than, as good as his word, he informed his wife of the seeming delinquency of the small man.

"I'll turn her out," exclaimed the lady, who, in virtue, and horror of such

iniquitous proceedings, yielded to none. It was but the work of a moment to go from her bed-room to that of the small man, and she accordingly did so. Having given three taps at the door in a gentle strain, and received no answer, she tried *long metre*, and struck the panel remarkably hard, and very often.

"Who's there," said the timid and faltering voice of Miss Julia Waggett.

"Come out, you strumpet," said the pious landlady. "I'll have no sich doings in my house. I'm surprised at you, Mr. Kink," (for it appeared that was the name of the small man;) "you ought to know better. I should rather have suspected my own husband than you, arter the reference I had vith yer. Well, there's no knowing nobody. But if yer don't open the door, I'll have it burst open; that's all."

The threats of the landlady induced Miss Waggett to get out of bed and open the door. Upon seeing her, the landlady exclaimed with surprise to her husband, "Why, Tifley, who do yer think the wretch has got here? I declare if it an't one of them ere brazen-faced dress-makers over the way."

"Turn her out," said Tifley from above, who always left the management of disagreeable matters to his better half.

By this time the gentle Mrs. Tifley had entered the room, and discovered that Mr. Kink, the small man, was not there.

"I suppose," said the unfeeling and invidious woman, "as that nasty feller, Kink, has gone out to get guzzle for yer both; but I'll take care you're disappointed, so dress yerself, and be off, yer nasty bunter."

In vain did Miss Waggett attempt an explanation; the enraged Mrs. Tifley wouldn't hear a word she had to say. As remonstrance was vain, the ill-fated young woman dressed herself, and set out upon her way back to the public-house in the City-road, where the small man had taken up his abode for the night.

When Miss Waggett arrived, she rang the bell and awakened the landlady, who popped her head out of window. "My good woman," said Miss W., "can you accommodate me with a bed? I stopped here rather late to-night, with a small gentleman, with a large um-

rella, who, I believe, is sleeping here, and I have been shut out of my apartments."

"Why, you look a respectable young gal," said the kind-hearted landlady; "and if I don't let you in, you may come to some harm; so if you don't mind a bed in a double-bedded room, you shall sleep here. There's a very decent young woman in the other bed, so you needn't be at all alarmed."

Miss Waggett thanked the landlady for her kindness, and of course acceded to her proposition. She was let in in the dark, and placed in the same apartment with Miss Pivett.

We must now return to the small man. Whether that gentleman was actuated by the spirit of revenge for the indignity Miss Waggett had received, or whether he really felt the tender flame burning in his bosom for Miss P., or whether, as he stated, the cold affected him, we cannot say; but certain it is, that as soon as he discovered that Miss Pivett was located in the next room to him, he resolved to enter her chamber; and soon after Miss Waggett had been admitted into the house, he arose, and, in pursuance of his object, entered the room where both ladies, unconscious of the presence of each other, were sleeping.

Now the small man, having got inside the room, could just discern the white curtains of a bedstead, which was the one whereon Miss Waggett was lying fast asleep; the other, having dark hangings, did not attract his attention at all. He placed his hands over the face of Miss Waggett, upon which that lady awoke.

"Pray don't be alarmed, my dear Miss Pivett," said the small man; "you can't see me, but I am the short gentleman who lives opposite to you, and always carries a large umbrella. I did not dream of beholding your sweet face again to-night, but I recognized it in the crowd, which assembled in the next room in consequence of the alarm caused by the drunken landlord."

Miss Waggett was completely electrified; she could hardly believe her senses; her astonishment took away her speech.

The small man continued, "I left that ugly wretch, Miss Waggett, three hours ago at my lodgings. She spoke very ill of you, my dear Miss Pivett, but of

course I did not believe a word she said. I love you very sincerely, and I assure you that I feel remarkably cold in the next room, and it just struck me that you might have a blanket to spare, my dear Miss Pivett." Upon this the little gentleman got closer to Miss Waggett, and actually made an attempt to salute her, under the impression, of course, that he was offering that tribute of his affection to Miss Pivett.

At this juncture, Miss Pivett, having been awakened by the sound of a man's voice, gave a violent shriek, and once more the whole household gathered together. Lights were brought, and all was confusion, before the little gentleman had time to escape. He was overwhelmed with shame, and stood trembling and shivering in his short shirt, without the shade of his extensive umbrella to hide himself.

The surprise of the dress-makers at perceiving one another may better be imagined than described. Miss Pivett broke into a violent fit of laughter as soon as she saw the man of the huge umbrella. The scandalous libel perpetrated by that individual upon Miss Waggett, under the idea that he was addressing Miss Pivett, had completely disgusted Miss W. The landlady, upon finding how matters stood, and the immoral intentions of the small man becoming manifest, requested that gentleman to dress himself and depart;—glad to escape from the scene of his disgrace, he hastily put on his clothes, buttoned his short gaiters, and, grasping his huge umbrella, he departed "more in sorrow than in anger."

Miss Waggett and Miss Pivett settled their differences, and embraced.

In the morning they returned to their home and avocations, on the best possible terms with each other. The first thing they espied was the bill in the parlour-window, again clearly proclaiming the removal of the small man, his gaiters, and his huge umbrella; but where he went is yet a mystery—at least to the two ladies, who never saw him afterwards.

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