

himself in an apartment, which was evidently a store-room of some description. Hastily groping his way back, he made an essay in another direction, and dived into a passage which ultimately landed him in a coal-cellar. On returning from this second unsuccessful expedition he discovered a door in the passage which he opened. Merely pausing to assure himself that it wasn't a cupboard, he stepped confidently out, and was precipitated into the kitchen, in a manner more expeditious than dignified, or even comfortable.

"Good gracious! Whatever *can* that be!" exclaimed Minnie, starting up, and running to the rescue, while the others followed with various appropriate and characteristic remarks of an ejaculatory description.

"O, don't disturb yourselves for the world—it isn't worth your while—*now!*" they were assured in the familiar tones of Charlie. "A nice set of people, you," he continued, when he had seated himself in the chair Ned had vacated in his astonishment. "To sit here comfortably and listen to a fellow searching about for the kitchen till it might as well be in the North West Passage for all the chance he has of finding it."

"We heard you come down stairs," explained Minnie when she could speak again, the rest were too much overcome with amusement to offer any observations whatever. "But we thought you had changed your mind and gone back when you didn't make your appearance." And she went off into another fit of merriment.

"Well, now that I *am* here at last—my dangers and perils