

# THE COURTSHIP OF MR. BUMBLE AND MRS. CORNEY

A Humorous Reading

by  
Charles Dickens



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From "Oliver Twist."

The night was bitter cold and Mrs. Corney, the matron of the workhouse, sat down before a cheerful fire to solace herself with a cup of tea.

"I'm sure we all of us have a great deal to be thankful for! A great deal if we did but know it. Ah! how slight a thing will disturb the equanimity of our frail minds." The black teapot ran over while Mrs. Corney was moralizing, and the water slightly scalded Mrs. Corney's hand. "Drat the pot! A little stupid thing that only holds a couple of cups! What use is it to anybody--except to a poor, desolate creature like me! Oh, dear!" She was just testing her first cup when she was disturbed by a soft tap at the door.

"Oh, come in with you! Some of the old women dying, I suppose. They always die when I'm at meals. Don't stand there letting the cold air in. What's amiss now, eh?"

"Nothing, ma'am, nothing," replied a man's voice.

"Dear me, is that you, Mr. Bumble?"

"At your service, ma'am."

"Hard weather, Mr. Bumble?"

"Hard indeed, ma'am. We have given away, Mrs. Corney, a matter of twenty loaves and a cheese and a half, this afternoon. And yet them paupers are not contented."

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