

CHAPTER LXXXIII
Todd Takes a Journey to the Temple

The two females took their way to the Temple. Todd had been quite right in his conjectures. The friend of Mrs. Ragg was one of the old compatriots of the laundress tribe; and that good lady herself, although, while there was no temptation to do otherwise, she had kept well the secret of her son's residence at Colonel Jeffery's, broke down like a frail and weak vessel as she was with the weight of the secret the moment she got into a gossip with an old friend. Now Mrs. Ragg had only come into that neighbourhood upon some little errand of her own, and with a positive promise of returning to the colonel's house as soon as possible. She would have kept this promise, but that amid the purlieus of Fetter Lane she encountered Martha Jones her old acquaintance. One word begot another, and at last as they walked up Fleet Street, Mrs. Ragg could not help, with many headshakings and muttered interjectional phrases, letting Martha Jones know that she had a secret. Nay, as she passed Todd's shop, she could not help intimating that she fully believed certain persons, not a hundred miles off, who might be barbers or who might not, would some day come to a bad end in front of Newgate, in the Old Bailey. It was at this insinuation that Martha Jones lifted up her hands, and Mrs. Ragg lifted up hers in sympathy. Todd had seen this action upon the part of the ladies. To overhear what they were saying was to Todd a great object. That it in some measure concerned him he could not for a moment doubt, since the headshaking and hand uplifting reference that had been made to his shop by them both as they passed, could not mean anything else. And so, as we have said, he followed them cautiously, dodging behind bulky passengers, so that they should not see him by any sudden glance backwards. One corpulent old lady served him for a shield half up Fleet Street, until, indeed, she turned into a religious bookseller's shop, and left him nothing but thin passengers to interfere between him and the possibility of observation. But Mrs. Ragg and her friend Martha Jones were much too fully engaged to look behind them. In due course, they arrived opposite to the Temple; and then, after much flurrying, in consequence of real and supposed danger from the passing vehicles, they got across the way. They at once dived into the recesses of the legally-learned Temple. Todd dashed after them.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Ragg," said Martha Jones, "you must not say No. It's got a beautiful head upon it, and will do you good."

"No — no. Really."

"Like cream."

"But, really, I — I —"

“Come, come, it ain’t often you is in the Temple, and I knew very well he don’t miss a bottle now and then; and ’twix you and me and the pump, I think we has as much a right to that beautiful bottled ale as Mr. Juggas has, for I’d take my bible oath, he don’t mean to pay for it, Mrs. Ragg.”

“You don’t say so?”

“Yes, I does, Mrs. Ragg. Oh, he’s a bad ’un, he is. Ah, Mrs. Ragg, you don’t know, nor nobody else, what takes place in his chambers of a night.”

“Is it possible?”

“Yes. I often say to myself what universal profundity he must be possessed with, for he was once intended, he says, for the church, and I heard him say he’d have stuck to it like bricks, if he could have heard of any church that was intended for him.”

“Shocking!”

“Yes, Mrs. Ragg. There’s profundity for you.”

Did Martha Jones mean profanity?

“Ah,” interposed Mrs. Ragg, “we live in a world.”

“Yes, Mrs. Ragg, we does; but as you was a saying?”

“Eh?”

“As you was a saying about somebody being hung, if rights was rights, you know.”

“Oh, dear, really you must not ask me. Indeed you must not.”

“Well, I won’t; but here we are, in Pump Court.”

Todd darted into a doorway, and watched them up the staircase of No. 6, in that highly classic locality. He slunk into the doorway, and by taking a perspective glance up the staircase, he saw them stop upon the first floor. He saw that they turned to the right. He darted up a few stairs, and just caught sight of a black door. Then there was a sharp sound, as of some small latch closing suddenly, after which all was still. Todd ascended the stairs.

“Curses on them!” he muttered. “What can they mean by looking in such a manner at my shop? I thought the last time I saw that woman, Ragg, that she was cognizant of something. If now she, in her babbling, would give me any news of Tobias — Pho! He is — he must be dead.”

By this time Todd had got to the top of the first flight of stairs, and stood upon the landing, close to several open doors — that is to say, outer black heavy looking doors — and within them were smaller ones, armed with knockers.

“To the right,” he muttered. “They went to the right — this must be the door.”

He paused at one and listened. Not a sound met his ears, and his impatience began to get extreme. That these two women were going to have a conference about him he fully believed; and that he should be so near at hand, and yet not near enough to listen to it, was indeed galling. In a few moments it became insupportable.

“I must and will know what they mean,” he said. “My threats may wring the truth from them; and if necessary, I should not scruple to silence them both. Dead men tell no tales, so goes the proverb, and it applies equally well to dead women.”

Todd smiled. He was always fond of a conceit.

“Yes,” he muttered, “every circumstance says to me now in audible language, ‘Go — go — go!’ and go I will, far away from England. I feel that I have not now many hours to spare. This *fracas* with Mrs. Lovett expedites my departure wonderfully, and tomorrow’s dawn shall not see me in London. But I will — I must ascertain what these women are about. Yes, and I will do so at all risks.”

A glance showed him that the act of temerity was a safe one. The door opened upon a dingy sort of passage, in which were some mops, pails, and brooms. At its further extremity there was another door, but it was not quite shut, and from the room into which it opened, came the murmur of voices. There were other doors right and left, but Todd heeded only that one which conducted to the room inhabited. He crept along the passage at a snail’s pace; and then, having achieved a station exactly outside the door, he placed one of his hands behind one of his elephantine looking ears, and while his countenance looked like that of some malignant demon, he listened to what was going on within that apartment. Martha Jones was speaking.



Todd Listens and Learns a Dangerous Secret.

“It is good, indeed, Mrs. Ragg, as you may well say, and the glasses sticks to the table, when they is left overnight, showing, as Mr. Juggus says, as it’s a *gluetenious* quality this ale is.”

“Sticks to the table?” said Mrs. Ragg.

“Yes, mum, sticks. But as you was a saying?”

“Well, Martha, in course I know that what goes to you goes no farther.”

“Not a step.”

“And you won’t mention it to no one?”

“Not a soul. Another glass?”

“No, no.”

“Only one. Nonsense! It don’t get into your head. It’s as harmless as milk, Mr. Juggus says.”

“But ain’t you afeard, Martha, he may come in?”

“Not he, Mrs. Ragg. Chambers won’t see him agin till night. Oh, he’s a shocking young man. Well, Mrs. Ragg, as you was a saying?”

“Well, it is good. As I was a saying, Martha, I don’t feel uneasy now about Tobias, poor boy; for if ever a poor lad, as was a orphan in a half-and-half kind of way, seeing that I am his natural mother, and living, and thanking God for the same, and health, leastways, as far as it goes at this present moment of speakin’, I — I — Bless me, where was I?”

“At Tobias.”

“Oh, yes, I was at Tobias. As I was saying, if ever a poor body was well provided for, Tobias is. The colonel — ”

“The who?”

“The colonel, Martha — the colonel as has took the care of him, and who, sooner or later, will have all the truth out of him about the *Toddey Sween*.”

“Who? Who?”

“Bless my poor head, I mean Sweeney Todd. Dear me, what am I thinking of?”

“The barber?”

“Yes, Martha; that horrid barber in Fleet Street; and between you and me, there isn’t in all the mortal world a more horrid wretch living than he is.”

“I’m all of a shake.”

“He — he —”.

“Yes, yes. What — ”.

“He takes folks in and does for ’em.”

“Kills ’em?”

“Kills ’em.”

“What — why — what —? You don’t mean to say — why —? Take another glass Mrs. Ragg. You don’t mean to say that Tobias says, that Todd the barber is a murderer? — My dear Mrs. Ragg, take another glass, and tell us all about it; only look at the cream on the top of it.”

“You’ll excuse me, Mrs. Jones, but the truth is, I aught not to say more than I have said; and if the colonel only knew I’d said as much, I can tell you, I think he’d be like a roaring lion. But Tobias is quite a gentleman now, you see, and sleeps in as fine a bed as a nobleman could have for love or money. The colonel is very good to him; and there never was such a kind good — good —”.

Mrs. Ragg began to run over with tears of ale.

“Bless me, and where does he live?”

“Who?”

"The colonel. The good, kind, colonel — colonel — a — a dear me, I forget what you said his name was."

"Jeffery, and may his end be peace. He will get the reward of all his good actions in another world than this, Martha. Ah, Martha, such men as he can afford to smile at their latter ends. — No — no, I couldn't."

"Only half a glass; look at the —".

"No — no —".

"Cream on it."

"I must go, indeed. In course the colonel, since I have been his cook, knows what cooking is, for though I say it, perhaps as should not, I am a cook, and not a spiler of folks' victuals. Of course what's said, goes no further. I know I can trust you, Martha."

"Oh dear, yes, in course. I'll just put on my shawl and walk a little way with you, Mrs. Ragg. Dear me — dear me!"

"What is it, Martha?"

"Its a raining like cats and dogs, it is. Well, I never; what shall you do, Mrs. Ragg? What shall you do?"

"Call a coach, I shall, Martha. The last words the colonel said to me was, 'Mrs. Ragg, rather than there should be any delay in your return,' says he, 'as Tobias may want you, call a coach, and I will pay for it.' "

Todd had only just time to dart down the staircase before the two ladies made their appearance; and then hiding sometimes in doorways, and sometimes behind columns and corners, he dodged them into Fleet Street. A coach was duly called, and Mrs. Ragg by the assistance of Martha Jones, was safely bestowed inside it. Todd heard distinctly the colonel's address given to the coachman, who would have it twice over, so that he should be sure he had it all right.

"That will do," said Todd.

He darted across the street, and made the best of his way to his shop again. He listened at the door for a few moments before he entered, and he thought he heard the sound of weeping. He listened more attentively, and then he was sure. Some one was sobbing bitterly within the shop.

"It must be Charley," thought Todd.

He placed his ear quite close to the panel of the door, in the hope that the boy would speak. Todd was quite an adept at listening, but this time he was disappointed, for the sham Charley Green spoke not one word. Yet the deep sobs continued. Todd was not in the best of tempers. He could stand the delay no longer, and bouncing into the shop, he cried —

“What the devil is the meaning of all this? What is the meaning of it, you young rascal? I suspect —”.

“Yes, sir,” said Johanna, looking Todd full in the face, “and so do I.”

“You — you? suspect what?”

“That I shall have to have it out, for its aching distracts me. Did you ever have the toothache, sir?”

“The toothache?”

“Yes, sir. It’s — it’s worse than the heartache, and that I have had.”

“Ah! — Humph! Any one been?”

“One gentleman, sir, to be shaved; he says he will call again.”

“Very good — very good.”

Todd took from his pocket the key of the back parlour — that key without which in his own possession he never left the shop; and then, after casting upon Johanna a somewhat sinister and threatening look, he muttered to himself —

“I suspect that boy. If he refuse to come into the parlour, I will cut his throat in the shop; but if he come in I shall be better satisfied. Charley? Come here.”

“Yes, sir,” said Johanna, and she walked boldly into the parlour.

“Shut the door.”

She closed it.

“Humph,” said Todd. “It is no matter. I will call you again when I want you.”

CHAPTER LXXXIV
Johanna is Encouraged

Was Todd satisfied with Johanna's excuse about the toothache? Was he satisfied of the good foible of the supposed Charley Green, by the readiness with which she had come into the parlour? We shall see. If he were not satisfied, he was staggered in his suspicions sufficiently to delay — and delay just then was to Sweeney Todd — one of the most fatal things that could be imagined. There are crumbs of consolation under all circumstances. When Johanna was best sent out of the shop, upon the occasion of the visit of Mrs. Lovett to Todd, she had scarcely got a half dozen steps from the door of the barber's, when a man in passing her, and without pausing a moment, said —

"Miss Oakley, be so good as to follow me."

Johanna at once obeyed the mandate. The man walked rapidly on until a fruiterer's shop was gained, into which he at once walked.

"Mr. Oston," he said to a man behind the counter, "is your parlour vacant?"

"Yes, Sir Richard, and quite at your service," said the fruiterer.

By this Johanna found that she had made no mistake, and that the person she had followed was no other than Sir Richard Blunt, the magistrate, who was interesting himself so much for her safety, as well as for the discovery of what had befallen Mark Ingestrie. The fruiterer's parlour was a prettily fitted up place, where a couple of lovers might in a very romantic manner, if they chose, eat strawberries and cream, and quite enjoy each other's blissful society, in whispered nothing the while. Sir Richard handed Johanna a seat as he said — "Miss Oakley, I am very much pleased, indeed, to have this opportunity of seeing you, and of saying a few words to you."

"Ah, Sir, how much do I owe you."

"Nay, Miss Oakley, you owe me nothing. When once I happily become aware of your situation, it becomes my duty as well as my inclination to protect you in every way against what, I am sure you will forgive me, for calling your rashness."

"Call it what you will, sir."

"Well, Miss Oakley, we will dismiss that part of the subject. Are you going upon any errand, or have you a little time to spare."

"I have some time."

"Then it is a very proper thing that you should enjoy it in taking some proper refreshment."

“I want nothing.”

“Nay, but you shall have something whether you want it or not, before I say any more to you about Todd and his affairs.”

Johanna, whose mental excitement had prevented her completely from feeling the amount of exhaustion, which otherwise must by that time have come over her, would still have protested that she wanted nothing, but Sir Richard Blunt opened the door of the parlour, and called out —

“Mr. Orton, is your daughter at home?”

“Yes, Sir Richard, Ann is upstairs.”

“Very good. My young friend here can find the way, I dare say. Is it the first floor?”

“Yes, don’t you hear her practising upon her spinet.”

The tinkling sounds of a spinet, then all the fashion; came upon their ears, and Sir Richard, said to Johanna —

“Go up stairs, now, to that young lady. She is about your own age, and her father’s housekeeper. She will find you something to eat and drink, and then come down to me, as soon as you can.”

Sir Richard nodded to Mr. Orton, who nodded in return, and then Johanna seeing that it was all right, ascended the staircase, and guided by the sound of the spinet, soon found herself in a tolerably handsome room, upon the first floor.

A young girl with a profusion of chesnut curls hanging down her back, was seated at the spinet. Johanna made up to her at once, and throwing her arms round her neck, said —

“And will you say a kind word to me?”

The girl gave a slight scream, and rose.

“Well, I’m sure, you impertinant — handsome — ”

“Girl,” said Johanna.

“Boy,” faltered Miss Orton.

“No, girl,” added Johanna. “Your father sent me to you, and Sir Richard Blunt suggested it. Shall I leave you again.”

“Oh, no — no,” said Ann Orton, as she sprang towards Johanna, and kissed her on both cheeks, “you are Miss Johanna Oakley.”

“How is it that you know me?”

“My father is an old friend of Sir Richard’s, and he has told us all your story. How truly delighted I am to see you. And so you have escaped from that odious Todd, and — ”.

“Immediate refreshment, my dear, and all the attention you can cram into a very short space of time to Miss Oakley, my dear,” said Mr. Orton, just putting his head so far into the room as to make himself plainly and distinctly heard.

“Yes, father, yes.”

“How kind you all are,” said Johanna.

“No — no — at least we wish to be, but what I mean is that we are no kinder than we ought to be. My father is so good, I have no mother.”

“And I, too, am motherless.”

“Yes, I — I heard that Mrs. Oakley —”.

“Lived, you would say; and yet am I motherless.”

Johanna burst into tears. The sense of desolation that came over the young girl’s heart whenever she thought how little of a mother the fanatical personage who owned that title was to her, generally overcame all her firmness, as upon the present occasion. Ann flung her arms around Johanna, and the two young creatures wept in unison. We will leave them to their sacred intercourse.

* * * * *

Sir Richard Blunt remained in conversation with Mr. Orton for about a quarter of an hour, and then both Johanna and Ann came down stairs. Johanna looked calmer and happier. Ann had said some kind things to her — such as none but a young girl can say to a young girl.

“I am ready,” said Johanna.

“Ready for what?” enquired Sir Richard Blunt, with a look of earnest affection in the face of the beautiful heroine — for if ever there were a heroine, we really think Johanna Oakley was one, and we are quite sure that you agree with us.

“For my mission,” said Johanna, “I am ready.”

“And can you really find courage to go again to that — that —”.

Sir Richard could not find a fitting name for Todd's home, but Johanna understood him, and she replied gently —

"I may not pause now. It is my duty."

"Your duty?"

"Yes. Oh, Mark — Mark, I cannot restore you from the dead, but in the sacred cause of justice I may bring your murderer to the light of day. It is my duty to do so much for your memory."

Ann turned aside to hide her tears. Mr. Orton, too, was much affected, and there was an unwonted jar, as though some false note had had been struck in voice of Sir Richard Blunt as he spoke, saying —

"Miss Oakley, I will not — I cannot deny that by your going back to Todd's house, you may materially assist in the cause of justice. But yet I advise you not to do so."

"I know you are all careful of my safety, while I —".

"Ah, Johanna," said Ann, "you do not know yet that you are so desolate as to wish to die."

"Yes, yes — I am desolate."

"And so," added Sir Richard, "because you loved one who has been, according to your judgment upon the circumstances that have come to your knowledge, torn from you by death, you will admit no other ties which could bind you to the world. Is that right? Is it like you?"

The tones of voice in which these words were uttered, as well as the sentiment embodied in them, sunk deeply into Johanna's heart. Clasp ing her hands together, she cried —

"Oh, no, no! Do not think me so inhuman. Do not think me so very ungrateful."

"Had you forgotten, Arabella Wilmot? Had you forgotten your father? Nay, had you forgotten the brave Colonel Jeffery?"

"No, no! I ought not to forget any, when so many have so kindly remembered me, and you too, sir, I ought not, and will not forget you, for you have been a kind friend to me."

"Nay, I am nothing."

"Seek not, sir, to disparage what you have done, you have been all kindness to me."

Before he was aware of what she was about, Johanna had seized the hand of Sir Richard Blunt, and for one brief moment touched it with her lips. The good magistrate was sensibly affected.

“God bless me!” said Mr. Orton, “something very big keeps blocking up the whole of my window.”

They all looked, and as they were silent at that moment, they heard a voice from the street, say —

“Come! Come, my dear! Don’t set the water-works agoing. Always remember, that easy does it. You come in here, and have something to eat, if you won’t go home. Lor’ bless me! what will they think has become of me at the tower?”

“Why, it is Ben!” cried Johanna.

“Ben?” said Ann. “Who is Ben?”

“Hush! Stop,” said Sir Richard, “I pray you, stop.”

Johanna would have rushed out to speak to Ben, who certainly was at the window of the fruiterer’s shop, with Arabella Wilmot upon his arm, endeavouring to persuade her to enter, and partake of some refreshment.

“I will bring him in,” said Sir Richard. “Retire into the parlour, I beg of you, Miss Oakley, for he will make quite a scene in the shop if you do not.”

Johanna knew well Ben’s affection for her, and doubted not, but that as Sir Richard said, he would not scruple to show it, even in the open shop, probably to the great edification of the passers by. She accordingly retired to the parlour with Ann. In a few moments, Sir Richard Blunt ushered in both Ben and Arabella Wilmot. Arabella with a shriek of joy, rushed into Johanna’s arms, and then with excess of emotion she fainted. Ben caught up Johanna fairly off her feet, as though he had been dancing some little child, and holding her in a sitting posture upon one arm, he said —

“Bless you! Easy does it. Easy I say — does — it. Don’t you think I’m a crying. It’s a tea chest has flew in my eye from that grocer’s shop opposite. Oh, you little rogue, you. Easy does it. What you have got them what do you call ’ems on, have you?”

The kiss that Ben gave her might have been heard at Sweeney Todd’s, and then when prevailed upon to sit down, he would insist upon holding her fast upon his knee.

“I must go,” said Johanna, and then looking at Arabella, she added — “Let me go, before she awakens from her transient forgetfulness to beg me to stay.”

Ben was furious at the idea of Johanna going back to Todd's, but Sir Richard, overruled him, and after some trouble, got him to consent. Then turning to Johanna, he said —

"The moment night comes on, you will have some visitors, and remember, Miss Oakley, that St. Dunstan's is the watchword. Whoever comes to you with that in his mouth, is a friend."

"I will remember, and now farewell and God bless and reward you for all your goodness to me. I will live for the many who love me yet, and whom I love in this world."

* * * * *

Was it not a world of wonders that amid all this, Johanna did not go mad? Surely something more than mortal strength must have sustained that young and innocent girl in the midst of all these strange events. No human power that she possessed, could have possibly prevented her mind from sinking, and the hideous fascinations of an overcharged fancy from breeding

"Rude riot in her brain."

But there was a power who supported her — a power which from the commencement of the world has supported many — a power which while the world continues, will support many more, strengthening the weak and trampling on the strong. The power of love in all the magic of its deep and full intensity. Yes, this was the power which armed that frail and delicate looking girl with strength to cope with such a man — man shall we call him? No, we may say such a fiend as Sweeney Todd. If it required no small amount of moral courage to go in the first instance upon that expedition — so fraught with danger, to Todd's shop — what did it require now to enable her to return after having passed through much peril, and tasting the sweets of friendship and sympathy? Surely any heart but Johanna's must have shrunk aghast from ever again even in thought, approaching that dreadful place. And yet she went. Yes upon her mission of justice she went. To be sure, she was told that as far as human means went, she would be upheld and supported from those without; but what could that assure to her further than that if she fell she should not fall unavenged? Truly, if some higher, some far nobler impulse than that derived from any consciousness that she was looked after, had not strengthened her, the girl's spirit, must have sunk beneath the weight of many terrors. With a sad smile she once again crossed the threshold of that house, which she now no longer suspected to be the murderer's haunt. She knew it.

CHAPTER LXXXV
Todd Makes Plans

How she sped with Todd we are already aware. Let us take a peep at the archdemon in that parlour, which he considered his sanctuary, his city of refuge as it were. At least Todd considered it to be such, whether it was or not. He sits at a table, the table beneath which there was no floor, and covering up his face with his huge hands, he sets about thinking. Yes, that man now abandons himself to thought, as to how he is, with a blaze of wickedness, to disappear from the scene of his iniquities. It was not remorse that now filled his brain. It was not any feeling of bitter heartfelt regret for what he had done that oppressed him now. No such feeling might possibly find a home in his heart at the hour of success, but now when he saw and felt that he was surrounded by many difficulties, it had no home in his brain. But yet he thought that they were only difficulties that now surrounded; he did not as yet dream of positive danger. He still reasoned, as you have heard him reason before, namely, that if anything beyond mere suspicion were entertained regarding his mode of life, he would be at once apprehended. He thought that somebody — most likely Colonel Jeffery — was trying to find out something, and the fact that he, Todd, was there in his own parlour, a free man, appeared to him proof sufficient that nothing was found out.

“How fallacious!”

If he had but known that he was virtually in custody even then, as he, indeed, really was, for Fleet Street was alive with officers and the emissaries of the police. If he had but guessed so much for a moment what a wild tumult would have been raised in his brain. But he knew nothing and suspected little. After a time from generalising upon his condition, Todd began to be particular, and then he laid down, as it were, one proposition or fact which he intended should be the groundwork of all in other proceedings. That proposition was contained in the words —

“Before the dawn of tomorrow I must be off! That’s settled,” said Todd, and he gave the table a blow with his hand. “Yes, that’s settled.”

The table creaked ominously, and Todd rose to peep into the shop to see what his boy was doing. Charley Green, alias, Johanna Oakley, was sitting upon a low stool reading a bill that some one had thrown into the shop, and which detailed the merits of some merchandise. How far away from the contents of that bill which she held before her face, were her thoughts?

“Good,” said Todd. “That boy, at all events, suspects nothing, and yet his death is one of the things which had better not be left to chance. He shall fall in the general way of this place. What proper feeling errand boy would wish to survive his master’s absence. Ha!”

Of late Todd had not been very profuse in his laughs, but now he came out with one quite of the old sort.

The sound startled himself, and he retired to the table again.

By the dim light he opened a desk and supplied himself with writing materials; the twilight was creeping on, and he could only just see. Spreading a piece of paper before him, he proceeded to make a memoranda of what he had to do.

It was no bad plan this of Todd's, and the paper, when it was finished was quite a curiosity in its way.

It ran thus —

Mem. — To go to Colonel Jeffery's, and by some means get into the house and murder Tobias.

Mem. — To pack off goods to the wharf where the Hamburg vessel, called the Dianna, sails from.

Mem. — To arrange combustibles for setting fire to the house.

Mem. — To cut Charley Green's throat, if any suspicion arise — if not to let him be smothered in the fire.

Mem. — To have a letter ready to post to Sir Richard Blunt, the magistrate, accusing Mrs. Lovett of her own crimes, and mine likewise.

"I think that is all," said Todd.

He folded the paper and placed it in his bosom, after which he came out of the parlour into the shop, and called to Johanna.

"Charles?"

"Yes, sir."

"Go to the market, and get me a couple of stout porters — I want something carried a short distance."

"Yes, sir."

Away went Johanna, but before she got half way down to Fleet Market she met Sir Richard, who said —

"What is it?"

"He wants a couple of porters to carry something."

“Very well, get them. Depend upon me.”

“I do, sir. I feel now in good heart to go through with anything, for you are near to me, and I know that I am safe.”

“You are safe. It will need to be some very extraordinary circumstances, indeed, that could compromise you. But go at once for these porters; I, and my men will take good care to find where they go to.”

There was no difficulty in finding parties in abundance at the end of Fleet Market, and Johanna speedily returned, followed by two sturdy fellows. Todd had quite a smile upon his face, as he received them.

“This way,” he said — “This way. I hope you have been lucky to day, and have had plenty of work.”

“No, master,” said one, “we haven’t, I’m sorry to say.”

“Indeed,” added Todd. “Well, I am very glad I have a little job for you. You see these two little boxes. You can carry one each of you, and I will go with you and show you where to.”

One of the porters raised one of the boxes, and then he gave a long whistle, as he said —

“I say, master is there penny pieces or paving stones in this here, its deuced heavy, that it is.”

“And so is this, Bill,” said the other. “Oh, my eyes ain’t it. There must be a quarter of a pound of goose feathers in here.”

“Ha! Ha!” said Todd, “How funny you both are.”

“Funny?”

“Yes, to be sure, but come. This will put strength into you if you had none before.”

He took a bottle and glass from a cupboard, and gave each of the men a full measure of such frightfully strong spirits, that they winked again, and the tears came into their eyes, as they drank it.

“Now shoulder the little boxes, and come along,” he said, “and I tell you what I’ll do. If you step in here in the evening, and I should happen to be at home, I’ll give each of you a shave for nothing, and polish you off in such a manner, that you will recollect it as long you live.”

“Thank you, master — thank you. We’ll come.”

One of the porters helped his companion with the chest on to his back and head, and Todd then lent a helping hand with the other.

“Charley,” he said. “I shall be back in a quarter of an hour.”

Away he went, preceding the porter by some half dozen steps only, but yet ever and anon keeping a wary eye upon the two chests, which contained cash, and jewels, sufficient to found a little kingdom. If he got clear off with those two chests only, he felt that he would not give himself much uneasiness about what was left behind. But was Todd going to trust these two porters from out his own immediate neighbourhood, with the secret of the destination of the boxes? No. He was by far too crafty for that. After proceeding some distance, he took them round the unfrequented side of St. Paul’s Church yard, and stopping suddenly at the door of a house that was to let, he said —

“This will do.”

“In here, master.”

“This will do. Put them down.”

The porters complied, and Todd set down upon one of the boxes, as he said —

“How much?”

“A shilling each of us, master.”

“There’s double the money, and now be off, both of you, about your business.”

The porters were rather surprised, but as they considered themselves sufficiently paid, they made no objection, and walked off with considerable alacrity, leaving Todd, and his treasure in the street.

“Now for a coach,” he muttered. “Now for a coach. Here boy” — to a ragged boy who was creeping on at some short distance. “Earn a penny by fetching me a coach directly.”

The boy darted off, and in a very few minutes brought Todd a hackney coach. The boxes, too, were got upon it by the united efforts of Todd, the coachman, and the boy, and then, and not till then did Todd give the correct address of the wharf in Thames Street from which the Hamburg ship was going, and in which he fully intended to embark that night. The ship was advertised to sail at the turn of the tide, which would be about four o’clock in the morning. All this did not take long to do. The coach rumbled along Thames Street, but Todd was not aware that Mr. Crotchet had got up behind the vehicle, but such was the fact, and when the lumbering old machine stopped at the wharf, that gentleman got down, and felt quite satisfied with the discovery he had made. “He’s a trying of it on,” soliloquised Mr. Crotchet, “in the bolting line, but it ain’t no manner of a

go. He'll swing, and he can't help it, if he were to book himself to the moon, and there was a coach or a ship as went all the way, and no stoppages."

"*Mem*," said Todd to himself. "To go to Colonel Jeffery's and murder Tobias — Ha!"

"Lor'!" said the coachman, "was that you, sir?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why as made that horrid sort of noise."

"Mind your business, my friend, and tell me if you can take me quickly to Islington, for I have no time to lose."

"Like the wind, sir, you can go with these here osses," replied the coachman, "did you ever see sich bits o' blood, sir, one on 'ems blind, and t'other on 'em is deaf, which is advantages as you don't get in one pair."

"Advantages?"

"Lor' bless you, yes, sir. The blind 'un goes unknown quick, cos you sees, sir, he thinks he's only in some dark place, and in course he wants to get out on it as soon as he can."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir, and the deaf 'un, he goes quick too, cos as he hears nothink, he thinks as there never was sich a quiet place as he's go's, and he does it out o' feeling and gratitude, sir, yer sees."

"Be quick then, and charge your own price."

Todd sprang into the vehicle, and stimulated by the idea of charging his own price, the coachman certainly did make the bits of blood do wonders, and in quite an incredibly short space of time, Todd found himself in the immediate neighbourhood of the Colonel's house. It was now getting dark, but that was what he wished. He dismissed the coach, and took from the angle of a wall, near at hand, a long and earnest look at the Colonel's house, and as he did so dark and hideous thoughts concerning Tobias passed through his mind.

CHAPTER LXXXVI
Todd Visits the Colonel

"Well, Tobias," said Colonel Jeffery, as he entered the pretty, cheerful room into which the now convalescent boy had been removed. "Well, Tobias, how are you now?"

"Much better, sir. Oh, sir, — I — I —".

"What would you say?"

"I feel that when I see you, sir, I ought to say so much to convince you of how truly, and deeply grateful I am to you, and yet I can scarcely ever say a word about it. I pray for your happiness, sir, indeed I do. Your name and my mother's, and — and Minna Gray's, are always uttered to God by me."

"Now, Tobias," said Colonel Jeffery gravely. "I am quite satisfied that as regards all that has passed, you feel as you ought to feel, and for my own part, I beg you to feel and to know that your saying anything about it only distresses me."

"Distresses you, sir?"

"Yes, it does, indeed. I see your eyes are upon the door. You expect Minna, today, I am sure."

"Yes, sir, — she — she — my mother was to bring her, sir."

A ringing at a bell now came upon Tobias's ear, and his colour went and came fitfully.

"You are still very weak, my poor boy," said the colonel, "but you are certainly much improved. Do you feel any confusion in your head now?"

"None at all, only when I think of Todd suddenly, ever it makes me feel cold and sick, and something seems to rush through my heart."

"Oh, that will go away. That is nothing. There, I will draw up the blind for you. The evening is coming, and the sky is overclouded. You can see better now, and there is one coming whom I know you wish to lose no sight of."

"I hear her foot upon the stairs," said Tobias.

"Do you? — It is more than I do."

"Ah, sir, the senses are sharpened, I think, by illness."

"Not so much as by love. Tobias! Do you hear her footstep now?"

“Yes, and it is like music.”

He had his head on one side in an attitude of listening; and then with joy sparkling from every feature of his face, he spoke again —

“She comes — she comes. Ah, she comes fast. My own — my beautiful. She come — she comes.”

“This is real love,” said the colonel, and he stepped from the room. Nearly on the landing at the head of the stairs, he met Minna Gray.

“Welcome,” he said as he held out his hand to her. “You will find your young friend up and much better.”

Minna could only look her thanks. Mrs. Ragg was following her, and as the ascent of stairs was always rather a task to that good Lady, she was making a noise like a stranded grampus in breathing.

“Ah, colonel,” she said, “young legs get up stairs faster than old ones, sir, as you see. Well — well, there was a time when first I knew poor dear Ragg, who is of course dead and gone, quite premature.”

“Exactly, Mrs. Ragg,” said the colonel, as he rapidly descended the stairs.

“Did you ever, my dear, know such a strange man?” said Mrs. Ragg to Minna.

“Who?”

“The colonel, to be sure. So soon as I begin to tell him any little what do you call it. No it ain’t *nannygoat* — that’s ridiculous. It’s — it’s — what is it?”

“Anecdote do you mean, Mrs. Ragg?”

“Yes, to be sure. Well, as I was a saying, no sooner do I begin telling him a little *nannygoat* — no, I mean anecdote, than off he is like a shot.”

Minna smiled to herself, and she was far from wondering that the colonel was off like a shot, for well she knew, that when Mrs. Ragg did begin anything concerning the late Mr. Ragg, it usually lasted three quarters of an hour at the very least.

“Minna, Minna!” called Tobias.

“I am here, Tobias.”

In another moment she was in the room. Truly it was a pleasant thing to see the face of Tobias, when, his sunshine, as he called Minna, came close to him, and in her soft voice asked him if he was better.

“Don’t mind me,” said Mrs. Ragg, “I am going to darn a stocking or two, that’s all. Just say what you both like. Young folks will be young folks. Bless me, I recollect just as if it were only yesterday, when I used to speak to poor departed Mr. Ragg, who is, premature, dead and gone, in a manner of speaking. Ah, dear me! How the world goes round and round — round and round, continually.”

Tobias and Minna were so well accustomed to the garrulity of Mrs. Ragg, and so well aware that she required no answer, that they let her talk on, and did not mind her, as she requested they would not; and so the evening grew apace, and the light gradually began to wane, as those two young loving hearts spoke together of the future, and indulged in that day dream of happiness which can only belong to youth and love.

* * * * *

Todd was skulking round the angle of the garden wall, from which he could get a view of the colonel’s house, and yet not be seen himself.

The more he looked the more the desire grew upon him, notwithstanding the immense risk he ran of personal detection, by so doing, to get into the house, and finish the career of poor Tobias. He would have had no particular objection rather to have taken the life of Mrs. Ragg, if it could be easily and comfortably done.

It has been said that there are folks in the world who never forgive any one for doing them a kindness; and such paradoxical views of human nature have been attempted to be laid down as truths; but whether this be so or not, is still to be proved, although it is certain that nothing stirs the evil passions of men who will inflict injury upon the innocent, as to find themselves baffled in their villany. From that moment the matter becomes a personal affair of vengeance.

Hence, since Todd had become thoroughly aware that Tobias had escaped from the death he had intended for him at the madhouse, his rage against the boy knew no bounds.

Indeed, the reader will conclude that it must have been a feeling of no ordinary strength, that, at such a busy and ticklish time, would take Todd to the colonel’s house at all.

It was revenge — bitter, uncompromising revenge!

Now, you must know the colonel’s house was one of those half villa, half mansion-like residences, that are so common in the neighbourhood of London. There was a kind of terrace in the front, and a garden with flowering shrubs, that had a pretty enough appearance, and which at night afforded abundance of shelter.

It was by this front garden that Todd hoped to reach the house.

When it was nearly dark, he slunk in, crouching down among the trees and shrubs, and crawling along like a serpent as he was. He soon came to a flight of stone steps that led to the kitchens.

By the time Todd had got thus far, some of her domestic duties had called Mrs. Ragg to the lower part of the house. He saw by the firelight that some one was going about the kitchen, close to the foot of the stone steps; but he could not exactly, by that dim and uncertain radiance, take upon himself to say that it was Mrs. Ragg.

She soon lit a candle, though, and then all was clear. He saw the good lady preparing diverse lights for the upper rooms.

While Todd was halfway down the stone steps, peeping into the kitchen, one of the other servants of the house came into that receptacle for culinary articles, and commenced putting on a bonnet and shawl. Todd could not hear one word of what was said by Mrs. Ragg and this young woman who was getting ready to go out; but he saw them talk, and by their manner he felt convinced that it was only upon ordinary topics.

If the young woman left the house by the steps upon which Todd was, and which it was more than likely she would do, his situation would be anything but a pleasant one, and discovery would be certain.

To obviate the chance of this, he stepped back, and crouched down in among the shrubs in the garden.

He was not wrong in his conjectures, for in a few moments the servant, who was going out, ascended the steps, and passed him so closely, that by stretching out his hand, he could, if he had been so minded, have touched her dress. In a short time she was out of earshot.

Todd emerged from his concealment again, and crept down the steps, and once more peeped into the kitchen.

Mrs. Ragg was still busy with the candles.

He was just considering what he should do, when he heard the tramp of horses' feet in the road above. He ascended sufficient of the steps to enable himself to get a peep at what was going on. He saw a groom well mounted, and leading another horse. Then no other than Colonel Jeffrey himself, although he did not of his own knowledge, feel assured that it was him, come out at the front door of the house and mounted.

"Now, William," said the colonel, "we must ride sharply."

"Yes, sir," said the groom.

Another moment and they were gone.

"This is lucky," said Todd. "It is not likely that there is any other room in the house; and if not, I have the game in my own hands."

He crept down the remainder of the stone steps, and placed his ear quite close to the kitchen window.

Mrs. Ragg was enjoying a little conversation to herself.

"Ah!" she said, "it's always the way — girls will be girls; but what I blame her for is, that she don't ask the colonel's leave at once, and say — 'Sir, your *disorderly* has won my *infections*, and may he come here and take a cup of tea?' "

This was Greek to Todd.

"What is the old fool talking about," he muttered. "But I will soon give her a subject that will last for her life."

He now arrived at the door of the kitchen. It was very unlikely to be locked or otherwise fastened, so immediately after the young woman, who had left the house, and passed so close to him, Todd. Yet he listened for a few moments more, as Mrs. Ragg kept making observations to herself.

"Listeners hear no good of themselves", says the proverb, and at all events it was verified in this instance.

"*Lor' a mussy*," ejaculated Mrs. Ragg, "how my mind do run upon that horrid old ugly monster of a Todd today. Well, I do hope I shall never look upon his frightful face again, and how awful he did squint, too. Dear me, what did the colonel say he had with his vision — could it be — a something *afixity*? No that isn't it."

"Obliquity!" said Todd, popping his head in at the kitchen door. "It was obliquity, and if you scream or make the least alarm, I'll skin you, and strew this kitchen with your mangled remains!"

Mrs. Ragg sank into a chair with a melodramatic groan, that would have made her fortune over the water in domestic tragedy if she could have done it so naturally. Todd kept his eye upon her. That basilisk like eye, which had fascinated the good woman often, and this time it acted as a kind of spell, for truly might he have said, or rather might some one have said for him,

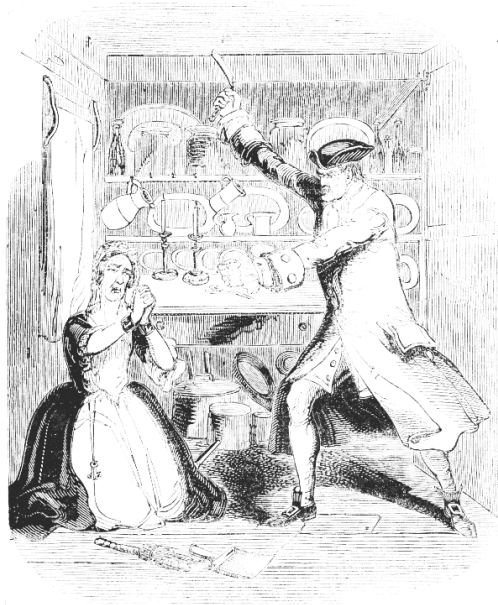
"He held her with his glittering eye."

Todd's first care now was to get between Mrs. Ragg and the kitchen door, lest upon some sudden impulse she should rise and flee. Then he folded his arms, and looked at her calmly, and with such a devilish smile as might have become

Mephistopheles himself, while contemplating the ruin of a soul. He took from his pocket a razor.

“Mercy,” gasped Mrs. Ragg.

“Where is Tobias?”



Todd Horrifies Mrs. Ragg.

“Upstairs. Back room, second floor, looking into the garden.”

“Alone?”

“No, Minna Grey is with him.”

“Listen to me. If you stir from here until I come to you again, I will not only murder you, but Tobias likewise, and every one whom I meet with in this house. You know me, and can come to some opinion as to whether or not I am a man likely to keep my word. Remain where you are; move not, speak not, and all will be well.”

Mrs. Ragg slowly slid off her chair, and fell to the floor of the kitchen, where she lay, in what seemed a swoon.

“That will do as well,” said Todd as he glanced at her, “and yet as I return.” He made a movement with his hand across his throat to indicate what he would do, and then feeling assured that he had little or, indeed, no opposition to expect in the house, he left the kitchen, and walked upstairs.

When he reached the top of the kitchen stairs he paused to listen. All was very still in the house.

“’Tis well,” he said “’tis well. This deed of blood shall be done, and long before it can be thought that it was I who struck the blow, I shall be gone.”

Alas! After passing through so much! After being persued in so almost a miraculous manner from the murderous intentions of Todd, backed by the cupidity of Fogg, and his subordinate Watson, was poor Tobias yet to die a terrible death as a victim to the cruel passions of his relentless persecutor? No, we will not yet believe that such is to be the fate of poor honest Tobias, although at the present time, his prospects look gloomy. Todd may have, and no doubt has, taken as worthy lives, but we will hope that the hand of Providence will prevent him from taking this one. He reached the landing of the first floor, and he paused to listen again. He thought this time, that he heard the faint sound of voices above, but he was not quite sure. Otherwise all was quiet. This was a critical situation for Todd. If any one, who was a painter of pictures or of morals had but seen him, Sweeney Todd, as he there stood, they would no longer have doubted either that there was a devil, or that some persons in this world, were actuated by a devilish fiend. He looked the incarnate fiend! — The Mephistopheles of the imagination, such as he is painted by the German enthusiast. His laugh too? Was not that satanic? He set himself to listen to the voices that he heard in that quiet rooms and the sounds, holy and full of affection as they were, awakened no chord of answering feeling, in that bold, bad man’s breast. He stood apart from human nature, a solitary being. A wreck upon the ocean of society

“None loving, and by none beloved.”

Who would be Sweeney Todd, for all the wealth, real or fabled, of a million Californias?

“He is here,” he said, “I know his voice. Tobias is here. Ah! He mentions the name of God. Ha! He is more fitting to go to that heaven he can talk of so glibly, but there is none. There is none! No, no! All that is a fable.”

Of course Todd could not believe in a divinity of goodness and mercy. If he had, what on earth could have saved him from absolute madness?

CHAPTER LXXXVII

Tobias in Jeopardy

"And so you do love me, Minna?" said Tobias.

How his voice shook like a reed swayed by the wind, and yet what a world of melody was in it.

"Can you ask me to say yes?" was the reply of the fair young creature by his side. "Can you ask me to say yes, Tobias?"

"It seems to me," said Tobias, "as though it would be such a joy to hear you say so, Minna, and yet I will not ask you."

"How well you have got, Tobias. Your cheek has got its old colour back again. The colour it had long before you knew there was such a man as Sweeney Todd in the world. Your eyes are bright too, and your voice has its old pleasant sound."

"Used it to be pleasant to you, Minna?"

She held up her hand, and shook her head laughingly.

"No questions, Tobias! No questions. I will confess nothing."

"Stop!" said Tobias, as he put himself into an attitude of listening, "What was that, I thought I heard something? It was like a suppressed growl. I wish the colonel would come home. Did you not hear it, Minna?"

Minna had heard it, but she did not say she had.

"Where did it come from, Tobias?"

"From the stairhead, Minna."

"Oh, it is some accidental noise, such as is common to all houses, and such as always defy conjecture and explanation, and being nothing and meaning nothing, always comes to nothing. Yet I will go and see. Perhaps a door has been left open, and is banging to and fro by the wind, and if so it will only vex you to hear it again, Tobias."

It was Todd, who upon hearing the soft and tender speeches from the young lovers, had not been able to suppress a growl, and now that he had heard Minna Grey talk of coming to look what it was, he felt the necessity of instantly concealing himself somewhere.

It was not likely she would come down the stairs, so Todd adopted an original mode of keeping himself out of sight.

He descended steps sufficient, that by laying at full length along them, his head did not reach the top, and in the darkness he then considered that he should be quite safe from the casual glance, that in all likelihood, merely to satisfy Tobias, Minna would give outside the room door.

Todd thought by her manner she had heard nothing.

“No, no, Minna,” said Tobias, “there is no occasion. It is nothing, I dare say, and I don’t like you to be out of my sight a moment.”

“It is only a moment.”

She rose, and proceeded to the door.

An unknown feeling of dread, she knew not why, was at the heart of Minna. Certainly the slight sound she had heard, and that too in the house of Colonel Jeffery, was not sufficient to warrant such a feeling, and yet there, at her heart, it sat brooding.

She stood for a moment at the door.

It was only for a moment.

“How foolish I am,” she thought, and then she passed out on to the landing, where she stood for a moment glancing round her.

“It is nothing, Minna,” called out Tobias, “or shall I try and come. I feel quite strong enough to do so.”

“Oh, no — no! It is nothing.”

Minna stepped lightly back and sat down. She clasped her hands very tight indeed together, and then placed both upon her breast.

She had seen Todd.

Yes, Minna Grey had seen the man that had been, and who was for all she knew to the contrary still to be, the bane of Tobias’s existence. The clear eyes of youth had noticed the lumbering figure as it lay upon the stairs before them.

And she did not scream — she did not cry for help — she did not faint, she only crept back as we have seen, and held her hands upon her heart, and looked at Tobias.

There was no mistaking Todd. Once seen he was known for ever. Like some hideous picture, there dwelt the memory of Sweeney Todd upon the young imagination of the fair Minna Grey.

Once before, a long time ago, so it seemed to her, she had seen him in the Temple skulking up an old staircase. From that moment the face was Daguerretyped upon her brain.

It was never to be forgotten, and with the face comes the figure too. That she saw upon the stairs.

Alas! Poor Minna!

“And so it was nothing but one of those odd accidents that will occur in defiance of all experience, and calculation,” said Tobias.

“Just that,” replied Minna.

“Ah, my dear Minna. We are so safe here. It always seems to me as though the very air of this house, belonging as it does to such a man, so full of goodness as the colonel is, such that nothing very bad could live in it for long.”

“I — I hope so — I think so. — What a calm and pleasant evening it is, Tobias, did you see the new book of the seasons, so full of pretty engravings in the shape of birds and trees, and flowers, that the colonel has purchased.”

“New book?”

“Yes, it lies in his small study, upon this floor. I will fetch it for you, if you wish it, Tobias?”

“Nay, I will go.”

“You are still weak. Remain in peace upon the couch, dear Tobias, and I will go for you.”

Before she left the room, she kissed the forehead of the boy. A tear, too, fell upon his hand.

“Who knows,” she thought, “that I shall ever see him in life again?”

“Minna, you weep.”

“Weep? No — no — I am so — so happy.”

She hastily left the room. Todd had heard what had passed, and had turned to hide himself again. The young girl knew that she passed the murderer within a hair's breadth. She knew that he had but to stretch out his right hand and say — “Minna Gray, you are my victim!” and his victim she would have become. Was not that dreadful? And she so young and so fair — so upon the threshold, as it were, of the garden of her existence — so loving, and so well-beloved. She felt for a moment, as she crossed the landing — just for a moment as though she were going mad. But the eye of the Omnipotent was upon that house. She

staggered on. She made her way into a bedroom. It was the colonel's. Above the mantelshelf, supported on a small bracket, was a pair of pistols. They were of a large size, and she had heard from the current gossip of the house, how they were always loaded, and how the servants feared to touch them, and how even they shrank from making the bed, lest the pistol from some malice aforethought, or from something incidental to such watching, should go off at once of their own accord, and inevitably shoot whoever chanced to be in the room. Minna Gray laid her hand upon the dreaded weapons.

"For Tobias! For Tobias!" she gasped.

Then she paused to listen. All was still as the grave. Todd was not yet ready for the murder, or he wished to take their lives both together, and in the one room. That was more probable. Then she began to think that he must have some suspicion, and that it was necessary upon her part to do something more than merely make no alarm. The idea of singing occurred to her. It was a childish song that she had been taught, when a pretty child, that she now warbled forth a few lines of —

"If I were a forest bird,
I'd shun the noisy town;
I'd seek the verdure of the spring
The dear autumnal brown.
And even when the winter came,
By sunny skies bereft,
I'd sleep in some deep distant cave,
Which wanton winds had left."

She crossed the landing.

"Minna," said Tobias. "My Minna!"

"I come."

She passed into the room, and the moment she crossed the threshold — she turned her face to it and presented both the pistols before her. Then as she wound, inch by inch, into the centre of the room, all her power of further concealment of her feelings deserted her, and she could only say, in a strange choking tone —

"Todd! — Todd! — Todd!"

"No — no — no! Oh, God, no!" cried Tobias.

"Todd! — Todd! — Todd!"

"No — no! Help! Help!"

"Damn!" said Sweeney Todd, as he dashed open the door of the chamber, and stood upon the threshold with a glittering knife in his right hand.

“Hold!” shrieked Minna Gray. “Another step, murderer, and I send you to your God!”

Todd waited. He could almost see down the barrels of the large pistols, which a touch of the young girl’s finger would explode in his face. With a sharp convulsive cry, Tobias fell to the floor. The blood gushed from his mouth, and he lay bereft of sensation.



Heroic Conduct of Minna Gray.

“Away!” cried Minna. “Monster, away! Another moment, and as Heaven hears me, I will fire; once — twice — ”

Todd darted to the stairhead, but he darted away again quicker than he had gone there; for who, to his horror, should he meet, advancing with great speed up the steps, but Mrs. Ragg, who had managed to get out of the kitchen, and who bore, as a weapon of offence and defence, the large kitchen poker, which was of a glowing red heat. Todd caught a touch of it on his face.

“Oh, you villain of the world!” cried Mrs. Ragg, “I’ll teach you to come here murdering people. My poor Tobias is no more, I know; but I’ll take the law of you, I will. Murder! Murder! Police! Colonel!”

With an alacrity, that was far beyond to all appearance Mrs. Ragg’s powers, that good lady pursued Todd with the red-hot poker. He dared not take refuge in Tobias’s room, for there stood Minna with the pistols in her hand, so he darted up the first flight of stairs he saw, which led to the top of the house. Mrs. Ragg pursued him; but when she got to the head of the stairs, Minna pressed too hard upon the hair-trigger of one of the pistols, and off it went. Mrs. Ragg fully believed herself shot, and rolled down the stairs, poker included; while Todd, labouring under the impression that the shot was at him, became still

more anxious to find some place of refuge. Upon the landing, which he was not a moment in reaching, he found a great show of doors; for he was, in fact, upon the floor from which all the sleeping rooms of the servants opened. It was quite a chance that the first one he bounced into was one that had in the roof a little square trapdoor, facetiously called "a fire escape;" but which, in the event of a fire, would have acquired the agility of a harlequin, and the coolness of a tax gatherer to get through. Todd dragged a bedstead beneath the trap; and then his great height enabled him to thrust it open, and project his head through it. He found that part of his corporality was in the roof as it were — that is to say, in the cavity, between the ceiling of the room and the house. A trapdoor of somewhat larger size in the actual roof, opened to the air. Todd dragged himself through, and was fairly upon the top of the colonel's house. A slippery elevation! But surely that was better than facing a red-hot poker, and a pair of hair-trigger duelling pistols; and so, for a time, the desire to escape kept down every other feeling. Even his revengeful thoughts gave way to the great principle of self-preservation; and Todd was only intent upon safely getting away. He glared round him upon the night sky, and a gaudy assemblage of chimney tops. What was he to do? In a minute he uttered a string of such curses, as we cannot very well here set down, and he turned preternaturally calm and still.

"Shall I go back," he said, "or escape?"

He heard the tramp of horses' feet, and peeping carefully over the front parapet of the house, he saw Colonel Jeffery arrive on horseback, and dismount. His groom led the horse away, and the colonel ascended the steps. Then, and not until then, Todd made up his mind.

"Escape," he said, "and be off."

There was a long sloping part of the roof close to where he was, and he thought that if he slid down that very carefully he should be able to get on to the roof of the next house, and so perchance through their trap door, and by dint of violence or cunning, or both united, reach the street.

It was a desperate resource, but his only one.

The top part of the long sloping roof was easily gained, and then Todd began to let himself down very carefully, but the angle of the roof was greater than he had imagined, and by the time he got about halfway down he found a dangerous and most uncomfortable acceleration of motion ensuing.

It was in vain he tried to stop himself: down he went with a speed into the gutter behind the coping stone, that left him lying there for a few moments half stunned, and scarcely conscious if he were safe or not.

The colonel's house, however, was stoutly built, and Todd's weight had not displaced anything; so that there he lay safe enough, wedged into a narrow rain gutter, from which, when he did recover himself sufficiently to make the attempt, he found some difficulty in wrenching himself out of.

Sore and shaken, Todd now looked about him. He was close to the roof of the next-door house. To be sure there was a chasm of sixty feet; but its width was not as many inches, so Todd ought, with his long legs, to easily step it.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII
Todd's Wonderful Escape

The step was but a trifle; and yet, shaken as Todd was by his fall, it really seemed to him to be one of the most hazardous and nervous things in the world to take it.

He made two feints before he succeeded. At length he stood fairly upon the roof of the adjoining house. He did not say "Thank God!"; such words were not exactly in the vocabulary of Sweeney Todd; but he wiped the perspiration from his brow, and seemed to think that he had effected something at last.

And yet how far was he from safety? It is some satisfaction to have got such a man as Todd upon the house tops. Who pities him? Who would be violently afflicted if he made a false step and broke his neck? No one, we apprehend; but such men, somehow, do not make false steps; and if they do, they manage to escape the consequences.

Surely it was about as ticklish a thing to crawl up a sloping roof as to come down one. Todd did not think so, however, and he began to shuffle up the roof of the house he was now on, looking like some gigantic tortoise, slowly making its way.

Reasoning from his experience of the colonel's house, Todd thought he should very well be able to pitch upon the trap, in the roof of the domicile upon which he was, nor was he wrong. He found it in precisely the same relative position, and then he paused.

He drew a long breath.

"What a mad adventure this is," he said; "and yet what a satisfaction it would have been to me, before I left England, to be able to feel that I had had my revenge upon that brat Tobias. That he had not altogether failed me after I had paid so much money to be rid of him. But that is over. I have failed in that attempt; but they shall not say it cost me my life. They will be bold people who stop me in my passage to the street in this house."

He felt the trapdoor. It was fast.

"Humph!" he said, "Doors are but bonds; and the rains of a few winters rot them quickly enough. We shall see."

The knife, with which he would have been well pleased to give poor Tobias his quietus, was thick and strong. He slid it under the wooden trap, and by mere force lifted it up. The nails of the bolt easily withdrew themselves from the rotten wood.

Todd was right. The rains of a few winters had done their work.

It was not exactly a time in the evening, when, in such a class of house, any one might be expected to be found in the attics; so Todd made no scruple of at once removing the lower trap in the ceiling.

He dropped comfortably enough on to the floor.

And now, coming suddenly as he did from the light, faint as it was, of the open air in the room, which he found himself, seemed to be involved in profound darkness; but that he knew would wear away in a few moments, and he stood still for his eyes to get accustomed to the semiobscurity of the place.

Gradually, then, as though out of chaos, there loomed a bedstead and all the necessary appointments of a bedroom. It was untenanted; and so Todd, after listening intently, and believing, from the marked stillness that there prevailed, that the upper part of the house was deserted, walked to the door, and opening it, stood upon the landing.

“If I can now but step downstairs noiselessly, and open the street door, all will be well. People don’t sit upon the staircase, and I may be fortunate enough to encounter no one.”

There was no time to lose. Affairs in Fleet Street required his presence; and, besides, the present moment might be the most propitious, for all he knew, for the enterprise.

Down he went, not clinging to the balustrades — for who should say they might not wheeze and creak? — not walking upon the middle of the stairs, for there was no saying what telltale sounds they might give vocality to; but sliding along close to the wall, and stepping so quietly, that it would have required attentive ears to have detected his silent and steady march.

And so, flight by flight of these stairs Todd descended in safety, until he reached the passage. Yes, he got to the passage without the shadow of an interruption.

Then he heard voices in one of the parlours.

“Confound them!” said Todd, “they will hear me open the street door to a certainty; but it must be done.”

He crept up to the door. There was some complicated latch upon it that defied all his knowledge of latches, and all his perseverance; and yet, no doubt, it was something that only required a touch; but he might be hours in finding out in the dark where to apply that touch.

He still heard the voices in the parlour.

More than five minutes — precious minutes to him — had already been

consumed in fumbling at the lock of the street door; and then Todd gave it up as useless, and he crept to the parlour door to listen to the speakers, and so, perhaps, ascertain the force that was within.

A female voice was speaking.

“Oh, dear me, yes, I daresay,” it said. “You no doubt think that house can be kept for nothing, and that a respectable female wants no clothes to her back; but I can tell you, Mr. Simmons, that you will find yourself wonderfully mistaken, sir.”

“Pshaw!” said a man’s voice. “Pshaw! I know what I mean, and so do you. You be quiet wife, and think yourself well off, that you are as you are.”

“Well off?”

“Yes, to be sure, well off.”

“Well off, when I was forced to go to Mr. Rickup’s party, in the same dress they saw me in last Easter. Oh! You brute!”

“What’s the matter with the dress?”

“The matter? Why I’ll tell you what the matter is. The matter is, and the long and short of everything, that you are a brute.”

“Very conclusive indeed. The deuce take me if it ain’t.”

“I suppose by the deuce, you mean the devil, Mr. Simmons; and if he don’t take you some day, he won’t have his own. Ha! Ha! You may laugh, but there’s many a true word spoken in jest, Mr. Simmons.”

“Oh, you are in jest, are you?”

“No sir, I am not, and I should like to know what woman could jest with only one black silk, and, that turned. Yes, Mr. Simmons, you often call upon the deuce to take this, and to take that. Mind he don’t come some day to you when you least expect it sir, and say —”

“Lend me a light!” said Todd, popping his awfully ugly face right over the top of the half open door, a feat which he was able to accomplish by standing on his tip toes.

There are things that can be described, but certainly the consternation of Mr. and Mrs. Simmons cannot be included in the list. They gazed upon the face of Todd in speechless horror, nor did he render himself a bit less attractive by several of his most hideous contortions of visage.

Finding then that both husband and wife appeared spellbound, Todd stepped into the room, and taking a candle from the table, he stalked into the passage with it.

The light in his hand threw a light upon the mystery of the lock. Todd opened the street door, and passed out in a moment. To hurl the candle and candlestick into the passage, and close the door, was the next movement of Todd, but then he saw two figures upon the steps leading to Colonel Jeffery's house, and he shrunk back a moment.

"Now William," said Colonel Jeffery himself, "you will take this letter to Sir Richard Blunt, and tell him to use his own discretion about it."

"Yes, sir."

"Be quick, and give it into no hands but his own."

"Certainly, sir."

"Remember, William, this is important."

The groom touched his hat, and went away at a good pace, and Colonel Jeffery himself closed the door.

"Indeed," muttered Todd. "Indeed. So, Sir Richard Blunt, who is called an active magistrate, is to know of my little adventure here? Well — well — we shall see."

He darted from the door of the house, through which he had made so highly successful and adventurous a progress, and pursued William with such strides as soon brought him close up to him. But the thoroughfare in which they were was too public a one for Todd to venture upon any overt act in it.

He followed William sufficiently closely however to be enabled to take advantage of any opportunity that might present itself to possess himself by violence of the letter.

Now William had been told the affair was urgent, so of course he took all the nearest cuts he could to the house of Sir Richard Blunt, and such a mode of progress soon brought him into a sufficiently quiet street for Todd's purpose.

The latter looked right and left. He turned completely round, and no one was coming — a more favourable opportunity could not be. Stepping lightly up to William he by one heavy blow upon the back of his neck felled him.

The groom lay insensible.

Todd had seen him place the colonel's letter in his breast pocket, and at once he dived his huge hand into that receptacle to find it. He was successful — one

glance at the epistle that he drew forth sufficed to assure him that it was the one he sought. It was duly addressed to Sir Richard Blunt — "With speed and private."

"Indeed, very private," said Todd.

"Wretch! Wretch!" cried some one from a window, and Todd knew then that the deed of violence had been witnessed by some one from one of the houses.

With an execration, he darted off at full speed, and soon placed a perfect labyrinth of streets between him and all pursuit. He thrust the letter all crumbled up into his pocket, and he would not pause to read it until he was much nearer to Fleet Street than to the colonel's house, or the scene of his attack upon the groom. Then, by the light of a more than usually brilliant lamp, which with its expiring energies was showing the world what an old oil lamp could do, he opened and read the brief letter.

It was as follows.

"DEAR SIR RICHARD.

"Todd has been here upon murderous thoughts intent. Poor Tobias has, I fear, broken a blood vessel, and is in a most precarious condition. I leave all to you. The villain escaped, but is injured I think."

"Yours very faithfully,
"JOHN JEFFERY."

"To SIR RICHARD BLUNT.

"Broken a blood vessel," said Todd. "Ha! Ha! Broken a blood vessel. Ha! Then Tobias may yet be food for worms, and the meat of the pretty crawlers to the banquet. Ha!"

He walked on with quite a feeling of elation; and yet there was, as he came to think, a something — he could not exactly define what — about the tone of the letter, that began upon second thoughts to give him no small share of uneasiness.

The familiar way in which he was mentioned as Todd merely, without further description, argued some foregone conclusion. It seemed to say, Todd, the man whom we both know so well, and have our eyes upon.

Did it mean that? A cold perspiration broke out upon the forehead of the guilty wretch. What was he to think? What was he to do?

He read the letter again. It sounded much more unmeaning and strange now. He had at first been too much dazzled by the pleasant intelligence regarding Tobias, to comprehend fully the alarming tone of the epistle; but now it waked upon his imagination, and his brain soon became vexed and troubled.

"Off — off, and away," he muttered. "Yes, I must be off before the dawn. The interception of this letter saves me for some few hours. In the morning, the colonel will see Sir Richard Blunt, and then they will come to arrest me; but I shall be upon the German Ocean by then. Yes, the Hamburg ship for me."

He was so near his home now that it was not worth while to call a coach. He could run to Fleet Street quicker, so off he set at a great pace till his breath failed him.

Then he held on to a post so faint and weak, that a little child might have apprehended him.

"Curse them all," he said. "I wish they all had but one throat, and I a knife at it. All who cross me, I mean."

Time was rather an important element now in Todd's affairs, and he felt that he could not allow himself a long period even to recover from the state of exhaustion in which he was.

After a few minutes rest, he pushed on.

One of those sudden changes that the climate of this country is subject to, now took place; and although the sky had looked serene and bright, and there had been twinkling stars in the blue firmament but a short time before, Todd began to find that his clothing was but little protection against the steady rain that commenced falling with a perseverance that threatened something lasting.

"All is against me," he said. "All is against me."

He struggled on with the rain dashing in his face, and trickling, despite all his exertions to the contrary, down his neck. Suddenly he paused, and laid his finger upon his forehead, as though a sudden thought of more than ordinary importance had come across his mind.

"The turpentine!" he said. "The turpentine. Confound it, I forget the turpentine."

What this might mean was one of Todd's own secrets; but before he went home, he ran down several streets until he came to a kind of wholesale drug warehouse.

He rang the bell violently.

"What is it?" said a voice.

"The small keg of turpentine that was to be sent to Mr. Todd's in Fleet Street, is particularly wanted."

"It was sent about half an hour ago."

“Oh, thank you — thank you. That will do. A wet night.”

In a few minutes more he was at his own shop door.

CHAPTER LXXXIX
The Night is Coming

Johanna had had a long time to herself in Todd's shop now. When first he left upon that expedition of murder, she had almost been afraid to stir, for she had feared he might momentarily return; but as his stay became longer and longer protracted, she plucked up courage.

She began to look about her.

"As yet," she said to herself, "what has been done towards arriving at a solution of the mysteries of this dreadful place?"

The more she thought, the more she felt compelled to answer this inquiry in an unsatisfactory manner. What had been done?

The only thing that could be said to be settled, was the fact that Todd was guilty, and that Mrs. Lovett was his accomplice. That he, by some diabolical means, murdered people who came into his shop to be shaved, was a fact, incontestable; but how he did the deed, still remained a mystery.

The care which Todd always bestowed for the purpose of concealing the manner in which he committed the murder, had hitherto been successful. No one but himself, and probably Mrs. Lovett, knew exactly how he did the deed.

It has been of course sufficiently observed that he never attempted anything amiss when two people were in the shop. That he always made it a point to get rid of Johanna upon occasions when he thought he had a chance of making a victim; and that in fact he had, by the very fact that Sir Richard Blunt and his officers had in various disguises followed people into his shop, been for some time prevented from the commission of his usual murders.

Now without in the smallest degree disguising what he did know, it is quite clear that Sir Richard Blunt up to that time did not know how Todd did the deeds of blood for which his shop was to become famous, and himself infamous.

That people went in and never came out again, was about the extent of what was really known.

The authorities, including Sir Richard Blunt, were extremely anxious to know exactly how these murders were committed, and hence they waited with the hope, that something would occur to throw a light upon that part of the subject, before they apprehended Todd.

At any moment, of course, he could have been seized, and he little suspected that he was upon such a mine.

If anything, however, could be said to expedite the arrest of Todd, it would certainly be what had taken place at the colonel's house.

Now, to all appearance, when the colonel came home so close upon the events that had happened in his absence, and had so very nearly been fatal to both Minna Gray and Tobias, Todd had made his escape.

A rapid, but effective search of his, the colonel's house, sufficed to prove that there he was not.

The appearance of Tobias, with blood gushing from his mouth, was sufficiently alarming, and it was under the impression that he was dying from the rupture of a blood vessel, that the colonel wrote the note to Sir Richard Blunt, which was intercepted by Sweeney Todd himself.

Upon the arrival, however, of the surgeon, who was immediately sent for, it was soon ascertained that the blood vessel which had given way in poor Tobias, was not on the lungs, and that the danger arising from it was by no means great, provided he were kept quiet and properly attended to.

Minna Gray received this information with deep thankfulness, and the colonel, upon hearing it, immediately sought Sir Richard to consult with him upon the subject in its now altered state, for the idea that Tobias was dying, had made him, the colonel, view the affair much more passionately than prudently.

By dint of some trouble, the colonel found Sir Richard Blunt, and then to his no small surprise, for he had known his groom long, and thought he could thoroughly depend upon him, he found that the magistrate had received no note at all upon the subject, so that of course no steps had been taken.

Upon hearing the affair detailed to him, Sir Richard Blunt said —

"I regret this much, as it will put Todd in a fright and expedite his departure."

"But was he not going by the Hamburg packet before day dawn? At any rate, I understood you that by the manner in which you had dogged him, you had thoroughly ascertained that fact?"

"I had, but had taken steps to prevent him."

"You would arrest him tonight?"

"No, I do not think it advisable to arrest him just yet. The fact is, I do not know all that I want to know; but in order to stop him from leaving his shop tonight, I have caused the Hamburg Captain Owners, to write to him, since he had taken a passage, telling him that the ships stores would not be ready until tomorrow, when at one hour before sunrise he would sail."

"Then you want to keep him in his shop another day?"

"I do. I hope and expect that during that day, something may occur to clear up the mystery that still attaches to the mode in which he commits his murders."

"It may so."

"I think I can take measures by running some little personal risk to make it do so; but something must be hit upon to calm his mind, regarding this affair at your house now, for he will expect nothing but instant arrest on its account."

"What can I do?"

"If you will be guided by me you will write Todd a letter, threatening him that if there is any more interference with Tobias, you will prosecute him, but that you will, if you hear no more of him at your house, say nothing of the past. You need be under no fear that he will derive any future advantage from such a promise, as any charge against him connected with poor Tobias will sink into insignificance, compared with other offences."

"True! True!"

"Such a letter, couched with the one concerning the non-departure of the ship, may keep him in his shop over tomorrow."

"And then — "

"Then he sleeps in Newgate, from which building he steps on to the scaffold."

"But has he not sent many trunks and packages to the ship?"

"Yes, and I have as regularly removed them all to the police office at Bow Street. We have already some thousands of pounds worth of property of the most costly description."

"But Johanna? What is to become of her?"

"You may depend upon it that Todd will pursue the same course with her that he did with Tobias. He will give her a trifle of money, and tell her to get a night's lodging out; and in that case she knows where to come to be quite safe and comfortable. But if such should not be the case, my protecting arm is over her; I think I can almost defy Todd to do her any injury."

"Think you so?"

"Yes, I have made such arrangements that if she were missed only for ten minutes, Todd's house would be searched from top to bottom. I would not, for this right hand, that any harm should come to her."

“Nor I — nor I.”

“Be at ease regarding her, colonel.”

“I know how fully we may trust to you, and therefore I will be at ease regarding her; and I will at once write the letter to Todd you suggest to me.”

“Do so. His fears upon your account must be calmed down.”

The colonel accordingly wrote the necessary note to Todd. Of course, neither he nor Sir Richard Blunt knew that Todd had another reason for wishing to be off that night, which consisted in his great unwillingness to meet Mrs. Lovett in the morning; for it will be recollected that he had an appointment with that lady upon money matters at an early hour.

The reader is now fully aware of how matters stand, and will be able to comprehend easily the remarkable events which rapidly ensued upon this state of things, and therefore we can at once return to Todd.

We left him upon his doorstep.

It was never Todd’s custom to walk at once into his house as any one else would do upon their arrival, whose

“Conscience was not redolent of guilt!”

but he would peep and pry about, and linger like a moth fluttering around a candle, or a rat smelling at some tempting morsel, which might be connected with some artfully contrived trap, before he entered.

He wanted sadly to get a peep at what Charley was doing.

Now, poor Johanna, fortunately at that moment, was only sitting before the little miserable fire, holding her face in her hands, and deeply thinking of the once happy past. She had brought out from beneath the counter the sleeve of a sailor’s jacket, which she had found upon her former examination of the shop, and after sprinkling it with some tears, for she fully believed it must have belonged to Mark Ingestrie, she had hidden it again.

And now as she sat in that house of murder all alone, she was picturing to herself every tone and look of her lover when he had first told her that he loved her before, as she might have said in the words of the old song —

“He loved me, and he sped away
Far o’er the raging sea,
To seek the gems of other lands,
And bring them all to me.”

At that moment, with all external objects hidden from her perception she could almost fancy she could hear his voice as he had said to her — “My darling, I shall come back rich and prosperous, and we shall be happy.”

Alas! How sadly had that dream ended. He who had escaped the perils of the deep — he who had successfully battled with the tempest, and all the perils by sea and by land incidental to the life he had embarked in, hadnreturned miserably to perish, almost within hearing of her for whom henhad adventured so much.

The thought was maddening!

“And I live!” she said; “I can live after that! Oh, Mark — Mark — I did not love you well enough, or I could not have existed so long after the horrible certainty of your fate has been revealed to me. They may say what they will to try to make me calmer and happier, but I know that he is Todd’s victim.”

After this she sat for a time in a kind of stupor, and it was during that interval that Todd arrived home.

There was no light in the shop but what at times came from a little flickering flame, that would splutter into a moment’s brief existence in the fire; but Todd, as he glared through the upper portion of the half glass door at a spot where he knew the blind did not prevent him, could just see Johanna thus sitting.

“Humph!” he said. “The boy is quiet enough, and probably, after all, may suspect nothing; although I don’t at all like his manner at times; yet it is safer to kill him before I go. It is absolute security. He shall help me to arrange everything to set the house on fire, and then when I have completed all my arrangements, it will be easy to knock him on the head.”

With this he opened the door.

Johanna started.

“Well,” said Todd, “well, any one been?”

“Only a man to be shaved, sir. I told him you would be home soon, but he could not wait, so he left.”

“Let him leave and get shaved at the devil!” said Todd. “You are sure no one has been here peeping and prying, and asking questions which you would be quite delighted to answer, eh?”

“Peeping and prying, sir?”

“Yes, peeping and prying. You know the meaning of that. Don’t put on a look of surprise at me. It won’t do. I known what you boys are. Curse you all! Yes, I know what you are.”

Johanna made no answer.

Todd took off his hat, and shook the rain from it violently. Then in a voice that made Johanna start again, he cried —

“Light the lamp, idiot!”

It was quite clear that the occurrences at the colonel’s had not improved Todd’s temper at all, and that upon very little pretext for it, he would have committed some act of violence, of which Johanna might be the victim. Anything short of that she could endure, but she had made up her mind that if even he so much as laid his hand upon her, her power of further patience would be gone, and she would be compelled to adopt the means of summoning aid which had been pointed out to her by Sir Richard Blunt — namely, by casting something through the window into the street.

She lit the shop lamp as quickly as she could.

“A lazy life you lead,” said Todd. “A lazy life, indeed. Well, well,” he added, softening his tone, “it don’t matter — I shall polish you off for all that, Charley. What a pretty boy you are.”

“Sir?”

“I say what a pretty boy you are. Why, you must have been your mamma’s pet, that you must. I was. Ha! Ha! Look at me, now. I was fondled and kissed once, and called a pretty boy. Ha!”

Johanna shuddered.

“Yes,” added Todd, as he wiped himself down with a soiled towel, “yes, my mother used to make quite a pet of me. I often used to wish I was strong enough to throttle her! Ha! Ha! That I did!”

“Throttle her, sir?”

“Yes,” added Todd, fiercely. “What the devil did she bring me into the world for her own gratifications, unless she had plenty of money to give me that I might enjoy myself in it?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

“You don’t know? Who the devil supposed you did know? Answer me that, you imp! Well, well, Charley, you and I won’t quarrel about such matters. Come, my boy, I want you to be of use to me tonight.”

“Tonight, sir?”

“Yes, tonight. Is it broad daylight? Is the sun shining? Is there no such thing as night, under cover of which black deeds are done? Curse you! why do you ask if tonight is the time for action?”

“I will do your bidding, sir.”

“Yes; and — ah! Who is this?”

“Is this here keg of turpentine for you?” said a man, with it upon his shoulder. “Mr. Todd’s this is, ain’t it?”

“Yes — yes. Put it down, my good fellow. You ought to have something to drink.”

“Thank you kindly, sir.”

“But you must pay for it yourself. There is a public house opposite.”

The man went away swearing; and scarcely had he crossed the threshold, when a letter was brought by a lad, and handed to Todd. Before he could ask any questions, the lad was gone.

Todd held the letter in his hand, and glared at the direction. It was to him, sure enough, and written in a very clerk-like hand, too. Before he could open it, some one hit the door a blow upon the outside, and it swung open.

“Is this Todd’s, the barber?”

“Yes,” said Johanna.

“Then give him that letter, little chap, will you?”

“Stop!” cried Todd. “Stop. Where do you come from, and who are you? Stop, you rascal. Will you stop? Confound you, I wish I had a razor at your throat.”