

CHAPTER CXVII

The Route to Newgate — Mrs. Lovett's Danger from the Mob

Mrs. Lovett, upon hearing these words, turned ghastly pale, but she did not speak. The officers looked at each other with something like dismay, and then before either of them could say another word, there arose a wild prolonged shout from without.

"Out with her — out with her! Kill her! Tear her to bits and hang her on the lamppost in the middle of Bell Yard! Out with her! Drag her out! Hang her! Hang her!"

"The coach you say is waiting, Crotchet?" said the officer, who had been entrusted by Sir Richard Blunt with the conduct of the whole business connected with Mrs. Lovett's capture.

"It were," said Crotchet, "and that coachman ain't the sort of fellow to move on till I tell him. I knows him."

"Very good, then we must make a dash for it, and get her away by main force, it must be done, let the risk and the consequences be what they may, and the sooner the better, too. Come on, madam."

"Death — death!" said Mrs. Lovett. "Kill me here, some of you, kill me at once; but do not let me be torn to pieces by a savage mob. Oh, God, they yell for my blood! Save me from them, and kill me here. A knife! Oh, for a knife!"

"And a fork too, mum," said Crotchet; "in course, if you wants 'em. I tells you what it is, Mr. Green, that there mob is just savage, and we have about as much chance of getting her down to Fleet Street with her head on her shoulders, as all of us have of flying over the blessed house tops."

"We must. It is our duty, and if we fail, they must kill us, which I don't think they will do. Come on."

"I will go with you," said the cook, starting up from the chair upon which he had on account of his weakness been compelled to seat himself, "I will go with you, and implore the people to let the law take its course upon this woman."

"In the cupboard, in the parlour," said Mrs. Lovett, speaking in a strange gasping tone, "there is a letter addressed by me to Sir Richard Blunt. It will be worth your while to save it from the mob. Let me show you where to lay your hands upon it, and if you have any wish to take a greater criminal than I, go to the shop of one Sweeney Todd, a barber, in Fleet Street. His number is sixty nine. Seize him, for he is the head of all the criminality you can possibly impute to me. Seize him, and I shall be content."

"The man you mention," said Mr. Green, "has been in Newgate an hour nearly."

"Newgate?"

"Yes. We took him first, and then attended to you."

"Todd — captured — in Newgate — and I in fancied security here remained wasting the previous moments upon which hung my life. Oh, fool — fool — dolt — idiot. A knife! Oh, sirs, I pray you to give me the means of instant death. What can the law do, but take my life? What have you all come here, and plotted and planned for, but to take my life? I will do it. Oh, I pray you to give me the means, and I will satisfy you and justice, and die at once."

Another loud roar from the infuriated people without, drowned whatever the officer might have said in reply to this appeal from Mrs. Lovett, and again arose the wild shouts of —

"Out with her! — Out with her! — Hang her! — Hang the murderess! — Hang her in the yard! — Out with her!"

"Forward!" cried Mr. Green. "To hesitate is only to make our situation ten times worse. Forward!"

"Hold a bit," cried Crotchet, "let me speak to the people; I knows how to humour 'em. Only you see if I don't get her along. Come, mum, just step this aways if yer pleases. Open the door, Mr. Cook, and let me out first."

The cook opened the door, and before the mob could rush into the place, Crotchet stepped on to the threshold of the shop, and in a tremendous voice that made itself heard above all others, he cried —

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Nothing is easier than to throw a cry into a crowd, and to get it echoed to your heart's content; and so some couple of hundred voices now immediately cried — "Hurrah!" and when the vast volume of sound had died away, Crotchet in such a voice that it must have been heard in Fleet Street quite plainly, said —

"My opinion is, that Mrs. Lovett ought to be hung outright, and at once without any more bother about it."

"Hurrah! — Hang her! — Hang her!" shouted the mob.

"And," added Crotchet, "I propose the lamppost at the top of Fleet Market as a nice public sort of place to do the job in. She says she won't walk, but I have a coach in Fleet Street, and we will pop her into that, and so take her along quite snug."

"Yes, yes," cried the people. "Bring her along, that will do."

"Oh, will it?" muttered Crochet to himself. "What a precious set of ninnies you are. If I get her once in the coach, and she gets out again except to step into the stone jug, may I be hanged myself."

"I think you have managed it, Crotchet," whispered Mr. Green, "I think that will do."

"To be sure it will, sir. All's right. Bless your heart, mobs is the stupidest beasts as is. You may do anything you like with them if you will only let them have their own way a little, but if so be as you trys to fight 'em, they is all horns and *porkipines* quills, and stone walls, and iron rails, they is!"

"You are right enough, Crotchet; and now then let Smith stay here and mind the house, and shut it all up snug till the morning; when it can be thoroughly searched, and you and I and Simmons here will go with Mrs. Lovett."

"And I too," said the cook. "We can go to Sir Richard's afterwards."

"So we can — so we can. Come on, now."

"You will deliver me up to the mob," screamed Mrs. Lovett. "Mercy! Mercy! I shall be torn limb from limb. Oh, what a death! Are you men or fiends that you will condemn me to it? Mercy! — Mercy!"

This sudden passion of Mrs. Lovett's was the very thing the officers would have desired, inasmuch as it materially helped to deceive the mob, and to prevent any idea upon the part of the infuriated people, that there was any collusion between the officers and Mrs. Lovett, for the purpose of getting her safely to prison.

They dragged her out into Bell Yard, and then the shouts that the mob set up was truly terrific.

"Lights! Links!" cried a voice. "Let's show her the way!"

In a moment an oil shop opposite to Mrs. Lovett's was plundered of a score or two of links, and being lighted with great rapidity from the solitary oil lamp that there stood in the middle of Bell Yard, they sent a bright lurid glare upon the sea of heads, that seemed so close they might have been walked upon all the way to Fleet Street. Another shout echoed far and near, and then Crotchet took hold of one of Mrs. Lovett's arms, and Mr. Green hold of the other, and the cook and the other officers following, they all began slowly to make way through the mob.

"Let's get along with her," cried Crotchet. "I have her tight. She won't get away. Some of you get a good stout rope ready, and make a noose in it. We will

hang her on the lamp post at the top of the market. Bring her along. Make way a little. Only a little!"

Mrs. Lovett shrieked as she saw the sea of angry faces before, behind, and on all sides of her. She thought that surely her last hour was come, and that a far more horrible death than any she had ever calculated upon in her worst moments of depression, was about to be hers. Her eyes were bloodshot — she bit her underlip through, and the blood poured from her mouth — she, each moment that she could gather breath to do so, raised a fearful shriek, and the mob shouted and yelled, and swayed to and fro, and the links were tossed from hand to hand, flashing, and throwing around them thousands of bright sparks, and people rapidly joined the mob.

CHAPTER CXVIII
The Cook Waits upon Sir Richard Blunt and Hears News

It took a quarter of an hour to reach the coach from the door of Mrs. Lovett's shop, a distance that in twenty steps any one might have traversed; and, oh! What a quarter of an hour of horrible suffering that was to the wretched woman, whose crimes had so infuriated the populace, that with one voice they called for her death!



Mrs. Lovett's Escort to the Gallows.

The coach door was opened, and Crotchet pushed his prisoner in. Mr. Green, and the other officer and the cook followed her.

"I will go on the box," said Crotchet.

"Very well," said Green, "but be mindful of your own safety, Crotchet."

"All's right. There ain't any more o' my sort in London, and I know I am rather a valuable piece o' goods. Has anybody got the rope ready for the lady?"

"Here you are," said a man, "I have one."

"You get up behind then," said Crotchet, "for of course you know we shall soon want you."

"Yes, I will. That's right! It's all right, friends. I am to get up behind with the rope. Here's the rope!"

"Three cheers for the rope!" cried somebody, and the cheers were given with deafening violence. What will not a mob give three cheers for — ay, or any

number of cheers you like to name? A piece of poor humanity in tinsel and fine linen, called a king or queen — a popular cry — a murderess — a rope — anything will suffice. Surely, Mr. Crotchet, you know something of the people!

“Now,” said Crotchet to the coachman, “are you as bold as brass, and as strong as an iron file?”

The coachman looked puzzled, but Mr. Crotchet pursued his queries.

“Will these ’osses, if they is frightened a bit, cut along quick?”

“Rather,” said the coachman. “The blessed fact is, that they won’t cut along unless you do frighten them a bit; and as for me being an old file and having lots o’ brass, I doesn’t consider as I’m a bit worser nor my neighbours.”

“You is as hignorant as a badger!” said Crotchet. “Make yourself easy and give me the reins. The mobs o’ people thinks as we is a going to hang the woman at the corner of Fleet Market, but if I lives another ten minutes, she will be in Newgate. There may be something of a scuffle, and if anything happens to you, or to the coach or the ’osses, the county will pay handsomely, so now give me the reins. You may not like to whip through them, but I haven’t the least objection.”

The coachman looked scared and nervous, but he gave up the reins and the whip to Crotchet, and then leaning back on the box, he waited with no small trepidation the result of the expected disturbance, while he had only Mr. Crotchet’s word that the county would pay for handsomely.

The short distance from the corner of Bell Yard to the end of Fleet Market was rapidly traversed, and when that interesting point was reached, the dense mass of people set up another shout, and began to surround the lamp post that was there, and to fill up all the avenues.

“Get the rope up,” said Crotchet.

“Yes, yes. Hurrah! Hurrah! Pull her out, and hang her!”

The highly interesting process of getting the rope fixed upon the little projecting piece of iron, upon which the lamplighter was wont to rest his ladder, had the effect that Crotchet expected, namely, to attract general attention; and then, taking advantage of the moment, he seized the whip and used it with such effect upon the horses, that, terrified and half maddened, they set off with the coach at a tearing gallop.

For a moment or two — and in that moment or two Mr. Crotchet with his prisoner got to the corner of the Old Bailey — the mob were so staggered by this unexpected elopement of the hackney coach, that not a soul followed it. The idea that the horses had of their own accord started, being probably alarmed at

the links, was the first that possessed the people, and many voices called out loudly —

“Pull ’em in — pull ’em in! Saw their heads off!”

But when they saw Mr. Crotchet fairly turn into the Old Bailey, the trick that had been played upon them became apparent; and one yell of indignation and rage burst from the multitude.

The pursuit was immediate; but Mr. Crotchet had too much the start of the mob, and long before the struggling infuriated people, impeding each other as they tore along, had reached the corner of the Old Bailey, Mrs. Lovett was in the lobby of the prison, and the officers safely with her.

She looked like a corpse. The colour of her face was that of soiled white wax.

But mobs, if they cannot wreak their vengeance upon what may be, for distinction’s sake, called the legitimate object of their displeasure, will do so upon something else; and upon reaching the door of Newgate, and finding there was no sort of chance of getting hold of Mrs. Lovett, they took the horses out of the hackney coach, and started them off through the streets to go where they liked; and then, dragging the coach to Smithfield, they then and there made a bonfire of it, and were very much satisfied and delighted, indeed.

“Now, mum,” said Crotchet to Mrs. Lovett, “didn’t I say I’d bring yer to the old stone jug as safe as ninepence?”

She only looked at him vacantly; and then, glaring around her with a shudder, she said —

“And this is Newgate!”

“Just a few,” said Crotchet.

The governor at this moment made his appearance, and began to give orders as to where Mrs. Lovett should be placed. A slight change of colour came over her face, as she said —

“Shall I see Todd?”

“Not at present,” said the governor.

“I should like to see him to forgive him; for no doubt it is to him that I owe this situation. He has betrayed me!”

The look which she put on when she uttered the words “I should like to see him to forgive him,” was so truly demoniac, that it was quite clear if she did see Todd, that whether she were armed or not, she would fly upon him, and try to take his life; and although in that she might fail, there would be very little doubt

but that, in the process of failure, she would inflict upon him some very serious injury.

It was not likely, though, that the officials of Newgate would indulge her with an opportunity.

“You had better all of you wait here,” said the governor to Mr. Crotchet, and the officers, and the cook, “until the mob is gone.”

“The street is quite clear, sir,” said a turnkey, “They have taken the coach to knock it to pieces, I suppose, sir.”

“And I’m done up at last!” said the coachman, wringing his hands, for he had, in fear for his own safety, made his way into the lobby of Newgate along with Mr. Crotchet; “I’m done up at last!”

“Not at all,” said the governor. “We would not have lost such a prisoner as this Mrs. Lovett, for the worth of fifty coaches. Every penny of your loss will be made good to you. There is a guinea, in the meantime — go home, and do not distress yourself upon the subject, my good fellow.”

Upon this the coachman was greatly comforted, and with Mr. Crotchet and the officers, he left the lobby of Newgate at the same moment that Mrs. Lovett was led off into the interim of that gloomy and horrible abode.

The object of the officer was now to get to the private office of Sir Richard Blunt as soon as possible, and let him know of the successful capture of Mrs. Lovett. Sir Richard, too, it will be remembered, had left a special message with the cook to repair to his office as soon as he could after his release from his bondage in Bell Yard, so that the liberated cook, who felt that he owed that liberation to the advice and assistance of Sir Richard, did not scruple to obey the directions of the magistrate at once.

The private office of Sir Richard, it will be recollected, was in Craven Street, at the bottom of the Strand.

Upon the route there, Mr. Crotchet and the cook held a long and very serious discourse about the proceedings of Mrs. Lovett, and if the cook was able to tell the active and enterprising Crotchet much that was curious regarding the underground operations at Mrs. Lovett’s, he, in return, received some curious edifying information concerning the lady’s business connection with Sweeney Todd, with the particulars of which the cook had been completely ignorant.

By the time they reached Craven Street, therefore, the cook’s eyes were considerably opened, and many matters that had been to him extremely obscure, became all at once quite clear, so that he was upon the whole far from sorry for the companionship of the eccentric Crotchet on the road down the Strand to the magistrate’s private office.

Sir Richard was at home, and anxiously expecting them, so that upon the first hint of their presence they were introduced to him, and he received the report of the officer with evident satisfaction.

"Thank God," he said, "two of the greatest malefactors the world ever saw are now in the hands of justice."

"Yes," said Crotchet. "They are cotched."

"You may depend all of you," added Sir Richard, "that your conduct and great skill in exertions in this affair shall be, by me, communicated to the Secretary of State, who will not leave you unrewarded. Pray wait for me in the outer room, I have some private business with this gentleman."

The officers were a little surprised to hear Sir Richard Blunt call Mrs. Lovett's cook, "this gentleman;" but they of course took no notice of the circumstance while in the presence of their principal, and in a few moments the magistrate was alone with the cook.

From a cupboard in his room, then Sir Richard Blunt took wine and other refreshments, and laid them before the cook, saying —

"Refresh yourself, my friend; but for your own sake, as your fare has been but indifferent for some time, I beg you to be sparing."

"I will, sir. I owe you much — very much!"

"You are free now."

"I — am — sir."

"And yet you are very unhappy."

The cook started and changed colour slightly. He filled, for himself, a glass of wine, and after drinking it he heaved a sigh, as he said —

"Sir, I am unhappy. I do not care how soon the world and I part, sir. The hope — the dream of my life has gone from me. All that I lived for — all that I cherished as the brightest expectation of joy in this world has passed away like a vapour, and left not a rack behind. I am unhappy, and better, far better, would it have been for me if Sweeney Todd had taken my life, or if by some subtle poison, Mrs. Lovett had shuffled me out of the world — I am unhappy."

"Indeed! And you really think you have nothing in this world now to live for?"

"I do. But it is not a thought only. It is a knowledge — it is a fact that cannot be gainsaid or controverted. I tell you, sir, that I can never now hope to realise the happiness which was the daydream of my existence, and which has passed from me like a dream, never — never to come again. It was in the despair

contingent upon such thoughts and feelings, that I went to Mrs. Lovett and became her slave; but now I will be off far away from England, and on some foreign shore I will lay my bones.”

“But, my good sir, you will be wanted on the trial of your old friend, Mrs. Lovett.”

“Cannot you hang the woman without my help?”

“Yes, I think we might, but so material a witness to her infamy as yourself cannot be dispensed with. Of course I do not pretend to be a conjuror, or to say to any man — ‘You shall be happy in spite of all your prognostications to the contrary’; but from what you have told me of your story, I must confess that to my perception you take much too gloomy a view of your condition.”

“Too gloomy!” exclaimed the cook, as he filled himself up another glass of wine. “Too gloomy! My dear, sir, you don’t know how I loved that girl — you don’t know how I — I. — But it is no matter now — all that is past. Oh God! That she should be false to me — she of all persons in the great world!”

“And so you will let this little disappointment of the heart, place you in your youth quite beside all possible enjoyment? Is this wise, sir? Is it even manly?”

The poor cook was silent for a few moments, and then in a voice of deep emotion, he said —

“Sir, you don’t know how much I loved her. You do not know how I pictured to myself happiness with her alone. You do not know, sir, how, even when death stared me in the face, I thought of her and her only, and how. — But no matter — no matter, sir. She is false, and it is madness to speak of her. Let her go, sir. It is just possible that in the time to come, I may outlive the despair that now fills my heart.”

“You surely will.”

“I do not think it. But I will hope that I may.”

“And have you really no hope — no innate lurking supposition in your mind, that you may be doing her an injustice in your suspicions of her faith?”

“Suspensions?”

“Ay, sir, suspicions, for even you must admit that you know nothing.”

“Know nothing, sir?”

“Absolutely nothing. You will find, if you come to consider the affair, that, as I say, you know nothing, but suspect much; and so upon mere suspicion you will make your future life miserable. I would not so bend to circumstances if

the whole world stood up before me, and told me I was right in my dread thoughts of one whom I had loved.”

The poor cook glanced at Sir Richard Blunt, and for the space of about half a minute, not one word passed between them. Then in a low voice, the cook said —

“You have read Romeo and Juliet, sir?”

“Yes — what then?”

“There is one line there, in which we read that

‘He jests at scars who never felt a wound.’ ”

“Well, how would you apply that line to the present circumstances?”

“I would say you have never loved, sir, and I have loved.”

“A broad assumption that, my friend,” said Sir Richard Blunt, “a very broad assertion, indeed. But come, I have to spare a short time. Will you, in recompense for what I have done for you, relate to me more fully than you have done, how it is that you suspect her whom you loved of falsehood to you?”

“Do not say loved, sir; I love her still.”

“I am glad to hear it. I pray you to go on, and tell me now all, if you feel that you can have sufficient confidence in me, and that you can view me with a sufficient friendly feeling.”

“Oh, sir, why do you doubt me? Do I not owe to you my life? Do I not owe it to you that I escaped the death that without a doubt was designed for me by Todd? And was it not by your persevering, that at length I had patience enough to wait until the proper time had come for my release, when it could be accomplished without the shadow of a doubt as to the result?”

“Well,” said Sir Richard Blunt, with a smile, “I hope then that I have established some claim upon you; so now tell me your story, my friend, and at the end of it I will, from my experience, do what I can to bring you substantial comfort.”

“You shall hear all, sir,” said the cook, “but comfort and I have parted long since, I fear, from each other for ever.”

CHAPTER CXIX
The Cook Becomes a Very Important Personage

At this last declaration of Mrs. Lovett's late cook, regarding the tender adieu that he and comfort had taken of each other, Sir Richard Blunt only smiled faintly, and slightly inclined his hand as much as to say —

"That is all very well, but I am waiting to hear your story, if you please."

"Well, sir," added the cook. "You already know that I am not exactly what I seem, and that my being in that most abominable woman's employment as a cook, was one of those odd freaks of fortune, which will at times detract the due order of society, and place people in the most extraordinary positions."

"Exactly."

"I am, sir, an orphan, and was brought up by an uncle with every expectation that he would be kind and liberal to me as I progressed in years; but he had taken his own course and had made up his mind as to what I was to be, how I was to look, and what I was to say and to do, without asking himself the question, if nature was good enough to coincide with him or not. The consequence was then, that directly he found me very different from what he wished me to be, he was very angry indeed, and then I put the finishing stroke to his displeasure, by committing the greatest crime that in his eyes I could commit: I fell in love."

"Humph!"

"Yes, sir, that was just what he said at first, when some officious friend told of it, and sending for me he said — 'You must give up all love nonsense if you wish to preserve my favour', upon which I said — 'Sir, did you never love?' 'That is not the question,' he said. 'It is of your follies now, not mine, that we are speaking,' and so he turned me out of the room."

"And what did you do? Did you give up your love?"

"No, sir; if he had asked me to give up my life that would have been much easier to me."

"Go on. What then happened?"

"Why, sir, my uncle and I met very seldom, but there was one upon my track that he paid to follow me, and to report my actions to him; and that spy — oh, that I had caught him! That spy made my uncle acquainted with the fact, that I continued, despite his prohibition, to meet with the only being who ever awakened in my bosom a tender feeling; and so I was abandoned by my relative, and left penniless almost."

“But you had youth and health?”

“I had, and I resolved to make use of those advantages as best I might, by endeavouring while they lasted, frail and fluttering possessions as they are, to make a home for myself and for her whom I loved.”

“The feeling, I presume, was reciprocal?”

“I thought so.”

“Was it only a thought, then?”

“Alas! No. It was a certainty; and if an angel with wings fresh spread from Heaven, and carrying upon them the soft light of an eternal world, had come to me and told me that she would be false to me, I would not have believed as much.”

“And yet — ”.

“And yet, as you say, I have found her false. Well — well, Sir Richard — let me proceed. The thought of her unmans me at moments, but in time I may recover from such feelings.”

“Most unquestionably you will; and then you will look to your present condition of mind with such a smile of incredulity, and only a faint faith in your own memory that paints you such feelings.”

“I cannot say, sir, that it will not be so, but I do not think so. To proceed, however. I heard that an expedition was about to start to explore some rich islands in the Southern Sea. If successful, every one who took part in it would be enriched; and if unsuccessful, I could not lose my life in a better cause than in trying to make a happy home for her whom I love. I at once embraced the proposition, and became one of the adventurers, much against the inclination of the gentle girl whom I loved, and who in imagination pictured to herself a thousand dangers as involved in the enterprise.”

“You went?”

“I did, and with every hope of returning in about a year an independent man. I thought little of the perils I was about to encounter in my voyage. I and the fair girl upon whom I had fixed my best hopes and affections parted, after many tears and protestations of fidelity. I kept my faith.”

“And she?”

“Broke hers.”

“As you think — as you think. You cannot be too cautious, my young friend, in making assertions of that character.”

“Cautious, sir? Am I to believe the evidence of my own eyes, or am I not?”

“Not always,” said Sir Richard Blunt, calmly. “But I pray you go on with your narrative.”

“I will. The principal object of the voyage failed entirely; but by pure accident I got possession of a String of Pearls, of very great value indeed, which, provided I could get home in safety, would value in Europe quite a sufficient sum to enable us to live in comfort. But the dangers of the deep assailed us. We were wrecked; and fully believing that I should not survive, I handed the pearls to a stronger comrade, and begged him to take them to her whom I had loved, to tell herself my fate, and to bid her not weep for me, since I had died happy in the thought that I had achieved something for her; and so, my friend and I parted. I was preserved and got on board a merchant vessel bound for England, where I arrived absolutely penniless. But I had a heart full of hope and joy; for if I could but find my poor girl faithful to me, I felt that we might yet be happy, whether my comrade had lived to bring to her the pearls or not.”

“And you found her?”

“You shall hear, sir. I walked from Southampton to London, subsisting on the road as best I could. Sometimes I met with kind treatment at farmhouses, and sometimes with quite the reverse, until at length I reached London tolerably exhausted, as you may suppose, and in anything but a good plight.”

“Well, but you found your girl all right, I suppose?”

“No. I walked up the Strand; and as some of our happiest interviews had taken place in the Temple Gardens, I could not resist turning aside for a moment to look at the old familiar spot, when what do you think was the sight that met my eyes?”

“I really can’t say.”

“I will tell you, sir. I saw her whom I loved — the young and beautiful girl for whom I had gone through so much — the being upon whose faith and constancy I would at any time have staked my life — the, as I thought, most innocent, guileless creature upon the face of the earth — ”.

“Well, well, my good friend, what did you see this paragon of perfection about?”

“You will not believe it, sir.”

“Oh, yes, I shall — do not be afraid of that — I shall believe it. Your narrative bears too much the stamp of truth about it for me to doubt it for a moment. I pray you to go on.”

"I will then. The first object that met my eyes in that Temple Garden was the being whom I loved so fondly leaning upon the arm of a man in a military undress — leaning, did I say, upon his arm? she was almost upon his breast, and he was actually supporting her with one of his arms round her waist."

"Well?"

"What, sir! Is that all you can say to it? Would you say 'Well?' if you saw the only creature you ever loved in such a situation, sir? Well, indeed!"

"My dear friend, do not get excited, now."

"Oh, sir, it would excite a stick or a stone."

"Excuse me, then, for having said 'Well,' and go on with your story. What did she say to excuse herself to you?"

"'Tis well, sir — of course, I cannot expect others to feel as I do upon such an occasion. I did not speak to her, sir. The sight of such perfidy was enough for me. From that moment she fell from the height I had raised her to in my imagination, and nothing she could say, and nothing I could say, would raise her up again."

"And you, then, only walked away?"

"That is all. With such a pang at my heart at the moment as I wonder did not kill me, I walked away, and left her to her own conclusions."

"Then — then, my young friend, you did the very reverse of what I should have done, for you should have gone up to her, and politely taken leave of her, so as to let her know at all events that you were aware of her perfidy. I should not have been content to let her have the satisfaction of thinking I was at the bottom of the sea while she was enjoying a flirtation with her officer; but, of course, different people take different courses upon emergencies. There is one thing, however, that I wonder you did not inquire about."

"What was that?"

"Your String of Pearls. How could you tell but that your friend had got to London, and had actually given her the Pearls with your message appended to them? I really am surprised that you did not step forward and say, 'Oblige me, miss, with my pearls, if you no longer favour me with your affections!' "

"No, no. To tell the truth, I was too heartbroken at the time to care about anything in all the world; I had lost her who was to me the greatest jewel it had ever contained, and I cared for nothing else. I do believe I was a little mad, for I walked about the rest of that day, not knowing where I went to, and at last I found myself, tired, worn out, famishing, opposite to Mrs. Lovett's shop window, and the steam of those abominable pies began to tempt me, so much that I went

into the shop, and after some talk, I actually accepted the situation of cook to her, and there, but for you, I should have breathed my last."

"Not a doubt of it. And now, my young friend, you know that I am a police magistrate, and I dare say you have heard a great deal about my sources of information, and the odd way in which I find out things when folks think they keep them a profound secret. You have told me all your history, but you have thought proper, as you were, if you pleased, quite justified in doing, to withhold your name."

"I have done so, but I hardly know why. I will tell it to you, however, now."

"Hold, I know it."

"You know it, sir?"

"Yes, your name is Mark Ingestrie!"

"It is, indeed. But how you came to know that, sir, is to me most mysterious."

"Oh, I know more than that. The name of the young lady who, you believe, played you such a trick, is Johanna Oakley."

Mark Ingestrie, for it was indeed no other, sprang to his feet, exclaiming —

"Are you man or devil, that you know what I have never breathed to you?"

"Don't be surprised, my young friend. I can tell you a little more than that even. The friend to whom you intrusted your String of Pearls, was named Francis Thornhill; and his dog — let me see — Oh, his large dog was called 'Hector'. "

Mark Ingestrie trembled excessively, and sinking back in his seat, he turned very pale.

"This must be a dream," he said, "or you, sir, get your information from the spirits of the dead."

"Not at all. But have you faith in my inspiration now sufficient to induce you to believe anything that I may tell you?"

"In good truth, I have; and I may well have, for after what you have already told me, your power of knowledge cannot by me be for one moment doubted."

"Very well, then. In the first place, Mr. Francis Thornhill reached London in safety."

"He did?"

"I tell you so. He arrived in London with your String of Pearls in his pocket. He fully believed you were dead. Indeed, he fancied that he had seen the last of you, and was quite prepared to say as much to Miss Johanna Oakley."

"And he did? That will be some excuse for her, if she thought that I was gone."

"No, he did not. On his route he turned into the shop of Sweeney Todd to be shaved, and there he was murdered."

"Murdered!"

"Yes, most foully murdered; and the String of Pearls got into the possession of that man, proving ultimately one of the means by which his frightful villainous crime came to light. The dog remained at Todd's door seeking for its master, to the great discomfiture of the murderer, who made every effort within his power for its destruction, in which however he did not succeed."

"Gracious Heaven! My poor friend Thornhill to meet with such a fate! Oh God! and all on account of that fatal String of Pearls! Oh, Thornhill — Thornhill! rather would I have sunk for ever beneath the wave, than such a dreadful end should have been yours."

"The past cannot be recalled," said Sir Richard. "It is only with the present, and with the future that we have anything to do now. Would you like to hear more?"

"More? Of whom? Is he not dead? — my poor friend?"

"Yes, he is dead; but I can tell you more of other people. I can tell you that Johanna Oakley was faithful to you. I can tell you that she mourned your loss as you would wish her to mourn it, knowing how you would mourn hers. I can tell you that the gentleman's arm she was leaning upon was only a dear friend, and that the fact of her having to be supported by him at the unlucky moment when you saw this was solely owing to the deep grief she was plunged into upon your account."

"Oh no — no — no!"

"I say yes. It was so, Mr. Ingestrie; and if you had at that moment stepped forward, you would have saved yourself much misery, and you would have saved her such heartbreaking thoughts, and such danger, as it will frighten you to listen to."

CHAPTER CXX
Johanna is Amply Paid for her Brief Service at Todd's

Upon hearing all this, poor Mark Ingestrie turned very faint and fell back in his chair, looking so pale and wan, that Sir Richard Blunt was compelled to go across the room to hold him up. After giving him a glass of wine, he recovered, and with a deep sigh he said —

“And so I have wronged her after all! Oh, my Johanna, I am unworthy of you!”

“That,” said Sir Richard, “is a subject entirely for the young lady's own consideration. — N. O. W.”

Mark Ingestrie looked curiously in the face of Sir Richard Blunt, as with marked emphasis upon each letter he said, “N. O. W!” But he had not to wait long for an explanation of what it meant. A door at the back of the room was flung open, and Johanna sprung forward with a cry of joy. In another moment she was in the arms of Mark Ingestrie, and Sir Richard Blunt had left the room.



The Meeting of Mark and Johanna.

It would be quite impossible, if we had the will to attempt it, for us to go through the scene that took place between Johanna Oakley and Mark Ingestrie in the magistrate's parlour. For about half an hour they quite forgot where they were, or that there was any one in the world but themselves. At the end of that period of time, though, Sir Richard Blunt gently walked into the room.

“Well,” he said, “have you come to any understanding about that military man in the Temple Gardens?”

Johanna sprang towards the magistrate, and placing her arms upon his breast, she kissed him on the cheek.

“Sir,” she said, “you are our very dear friend, and I love you as I love my father.”

“God bless you!” said Sir Richard, “You have, by those few words, more than repaid me for all that I have done. Are you happy?”

“Very, very happy.”

“So very happy, sir,” said Ingestrie, as his eyes glistened through tears of joy, “that I can hardly believe in its reality.”

“And yet you are both so poor.”

“Ah, sir, what is poverty when we shall be together?”

“We will face that foe, Mark, I think,” said Johanna, with a smile, “and he shall not extort a tear from us.”

“Well,” said Sir Richard, as he opened his desk, “since you are not to be knocked down by poverty, what say you to riches? Do you know these, Mr. Ingestrie?”

“Why, that is my String of Pearls.”

“Yes. I took this from Todd’s escritoire myself, and they are yours and Johanna’s. Will you permit me always to call you Johanna?”

“Oh, yes — yes. Do so. All who love me call me Johanna.”

“Very well. This String of Pearls, I have ascertained, is worth a sufficient sum to place you both very far above all the primary exigences of life. It will be necessary to produce them at the trial of Sweeney Todd, but after that event they will be handed to you to do what you please with them, when you can realise them at at once, and be happy enough with the proceeds.”

“If my poor friend, Thornhill,” sighed Mark Ingestrie, “could but have lived to see this day!”

“That, indeed, would have been a joy,” said Johanna.

“Yes,” said the magistrate; “but the grave has closed on his poor remains — at least, I may say so figuratively. He was one of Todd’s victims, one of his numerous victims; for I do believe that, for a long time, scarcely a week passed that did not witness some three or four murders in that man’s shop.”

“Horrible!”

"You may well use that expression, in speaking of the career of Sweeney Todd. It has been most horrible; but there cannot be a doubt of his expiating his crimes upon the scaffold, together with his partner in guilt, Mrs. Lovett."

Mark Ingestrie gave a shudder as that woman's name was mentioned, for it put him in mind of the cellar where he had lived so long, and where it was only by the most good fortune that he had not terminated his career.

Before they could say any more, one of the officers in attendance upon Sir Richard, announced Colonel Jeffery.

"Ah, that is your dreadful military rival," said Sir Richard to Ingestrie. "That is the gentleman whom you saw in the garden of the Temple with Johanna."

"I have much to thank him for. His conduct to Johanna has been most noble."

The colonel smiled when he saw Mark Ingestrie and Johanna, for he well knew, from private information he had got from the magistrate, that Mark Ingestrie and Mrs. Lovett's cook were identical; and holding out his hand to the young man, he said —

"Accept of my best and sincerest wishes, Mr. Ingestrie."

"And you, sir," said Mark, "accept of my best thanks. Our gratitude is largely due to you, sir."

"I am quite repaid by this very happy result; and I have the pleasure of informing you, Sir Richard, that poor Tobias is very much better indeed."

"Which I am rejoiced to hear," said Sir Richard. "And now, my dear Johanna, it is time for you to go home. You will hear from me in the morning, for I intend to do myself the pleasure of calling upon your father, and explaining all to him; for there are some circumstances that he is yet in ignorance of, and particularly concerning Mr. Ingestrie."

"I will walk with you to your door, Johanna," said Mark rising and tottering.

"No," said Sir Richard Blunt; "that must not be tonight. Do not let him, Johanna. He is by far too weak and unwell to do anything of the kind. A calm and long night's rest here will do him a world of good. Business prevents me from leaving the office; but I daresay the colonel will see Johanna in safety."

"With pleasure," said Colonel Jeffery, "if Mr. Ingestrie has no objection to my doing so."

"Sir," said Mark, "there is no one in all the world that I would more cheerfully see protecting my Johanna. I feel that I am in too great a state of exhaustion to go out. I leave her to your care, sir."

"That is right," said Sir Richard Blunt. "Now, good night, Johanna, and God bless you. You will see me in the morning, recollect."

Mark Ingestrie took a parting embrace of Johanna, and then she went off with the colonel, who, on their road home, told her how he and Arabella had got so far as to fix their wedding day, and how he should not feel at all happy unless both she and Mark Ingestrie were at the ceremony.

"Indeed, he hoped," he said, "that they might give the parson only one trouble, by being married upon the same occasion."

Johanna warded this last part of the colonel's speech; but she was fervent in her hopes that he and Arabella would be so very happy, and in her praises of her young friend; so in very pleasant discourse indeed, they reached the old spectacle maker's shop, and then the colonel shook hands with Johanna, and bade her a kind and friendly adieu, and she was let in by — to her immense surprise — her mother!

Mrs. Oakley fell upon Johanna's neck in a passion of tears, crying —

"Come, my child — come to your mother's heart, and tell her that you forgive her for much past neglect and unkindness."

"Oh, mother," said Johanna, "do not speak so. There is nothing to forgive; and if you are happy and we are all good friends, we will never think of the past."

"That's right, my dear," said Mr. Oakley, from the passage; "that's right, my love. Come in, both of you."

But it is necessary that we should briefly state how it was that this wonderful change in the behaviour of Mrs. Oakley came about, and for that purpose we must retrace our steps a little.

The reader will be so good as to recollect that the last time Mrs. Oakley was introduced to his notice she was encumbered by Mr. Lupin, and had the pleasure of introducing that gentleman to the notice of Big Ben the beefeater, who had quickly put all idea of escape out of the question, as regarded that highly religious personage.

At that point the presence of other events compelled us to leave the lady, and repair to Todd's shop, and to Mrs. Lovett's little concern in Bell Yard.

The appearance of Lupin's face when he found that he was in the grasp of Big Ben, would have been quite a study for a painter. It transcended all description, and for the moment seemed as if he were bidding farewell to this world and to all his iniquities in it, without the intervention of the law. But in a

few moments he recovered from this condition, and sliding on to his knees, and in a whining tone, he cried —

“Mercy, Mercy! Oh, let me go!”

“At the end of a rope,” said Big Ben. “Easy does it. What has he been and done, Mrs. O.?”

“Murder, murder!”

A crowd of people soon began to collect around them, and then Lupin made an effort to thrust himself out of the grasp of Big Ben, but the only result of the effort was very nearly to strangle himself.

“You are killing the man, you great brute!” cried a woman. “You are throttling the poor man.”

“He will be murdered,” shouted another female. “Oh, you great wretch, do you want to take his life?”

“Listen to me,” said Mrs. Oakley. “He has murdered his poor wife, and that is the reason I have asked that he should be held tight.”

“Murdered his wife!” exclaimed about twelve females in chorus. “Murdered his wife? Then hanging is a great deal too good for him. Hold him tight, sir, do. Oh, the wretch!”

The tide of popular feeling fairly turned against Mr. Lupin, and Big Ben had as much difficulty now in preserving the half dead wretch from popular fury as if he had been accused of any other crime, he might have had to prevent popular sympathy from aiding his escape.

“Oh!” cried one lady, of rather extensive proportions, who was the wife of a baker, “I should like to have him in a brisk oven for an hour and a half.”

“And I,” said the lady of a butcher, “would see him slaughtered without so much as winking at him.”

“And serve him right, the wagabone!” cried Big Ben. “Come along, will you, you ill-looking scarecrow! Easy does it. Will you walk? Oh, very well, don’t. Who are you?”

A little man with a constable’s staff in his hand, rushed before Ben, crying out —

“What is it? what is it? I’m a constable. What is it?”

“Murder!” said Mrs. Oakley. “I give that man in charge for murdering his wife. I saw him do it.”

“That will do,” said the constable. “Give him to me. I’ll take him. He dare not resist me. I’ll have him.”

Big Ben looked at the constable and then he shook his head, as he said very gravely —

“I tell you what it is, my little man, you ain’t fit to tussle with such a fellow as this — I’ll take him along for you. Where is he to go?”

“To the roundhouse, in course; but I’m a constable. I must take him — I will take him! Give him to me, sir, directly — I will have him — I must go with him!”

“Wait a minute,” said Ben. “Easy does it! You must go with him, you say? Very good — easy does everything!”

With this, Ben grasped Mr. Lupin round the middle, and placed him under his left arm, and suddenly pouncing, then, upon the constable, he caught him up and placed him under the right arm; and then away he walked, to the admiration of the populace, and paying about as much attention to the kicking of the constable and the kicking of Mr. Lupin, as though they were two dogs that he was carrying home.

And so the murderer was taken to the roundhouse, where Mrs. Oakley duly preferred the charge against him, and promised to substantiate it before a magistrate when called upon so to do.

CHAPTER CXXI

Shows how Mrs. Oakley Reconciled Herself to Everybody at Home

When Ben and Mrs. Oakley had thus disposed of Mr. Lupin, and left him to his solitary and not very pleasant reflections in a cell of the roundhouse, they found themselves together in the open street, and Ben, as he cast a woeful glance at her, said —

“Well, how does yer feel now? Easy does it! Oh, you ain’t a been and behaved yourself properly lately — you is like the old bear as we calls Nosey. He’s always a doing what he shouldn’t, and always a never doing what he should.”

“Ben?”

“Well, blaze away. What is yer going to say now?”

“I feel, Ben, that I am a very different woman from what I was — very different.”

“Then you must have gained by the exchange, for you was, I will say it, anything but a pleasant bit o’ goods. There’s poor old Oakley a making of spectacles all days, and a wearing of his old eyes out — and there’s Miss Johanna, bless her heart! As wise a little bit o’ human nature as you’d wish to see, whether she’s in petticoats or the other things; and yet you neglects ’em both, all for to run arter a canting snivelling wagabone like this Lupin, that we wouldn’t have among the beasteses at the Tower, if so be he’d come and offer himself.”

“I know it, Ben — I know it.”

“You know it! Why didn’t you know it before?”

“I don’t know, Ben; but my eyes are open now. I have had a lesson that to my dying day I shall never forget. I have found that piety may only be a cloak with which to cover up the most monstrous iniquity.”

“Oh, you have made that discovery, have you?”

“I have, indeed, Ben.”

“Well, I knowed as much as that when I was a small baby. It only shows how back’ard some folks is in coming for’ard with their edication.”

“Yes, Ben.”

“Well, and what is you going to be arter now?”

"I wish to go home, and I want you to come with me, and to say a kind word for me; I want you to tell them how I now see the error of my ways, and how I am an altered woman, and mean to be a very — very different person than I was."

Here Mrs. Oakley's genuine feelings got the better of her, and she began to weep bitterly; and Ben, after looking at her for a few moments, cried out —

"Why, it's real, and not like our hyena that only does it to gammon us! Come, mother Oakley, just pop your front paw under my arm, and I'll go home with you; and if you don't get a welcome there, I'm not a beefeater. Why, the old man will fly right bang out of his wits for joy. You should only see what a house is when the mother and the wife don't do as she ought. Mother O., you should see what a bit of fire there is in the grate, and what a hearth."

"I know it — I ought to know it."

"You ought to know it!" added Ben, putting himself into an oratorical attitude. "You should only see the old man when dinner time comes round. He goes into the parlour and he finds no fire; then he says — 'Dear me!'"

"Yes — yes."

"Then he gives a boy a ha'penny to go and get him something that don't do him no sort of good from the cook's shop, and sometimes the boy nabs the ha'penny and the shilling both, and ain't never heard of again by any means no more."

"No doubt, Ben."

"Then, when tea comes round, it don't come round at all, and the old man has none; but he takes in a ha'porth of milk in a jug without a spout, and he drinks that up, cold and miserable, with a penny loaf, you see."

"Yes — yes."

"And then at night, when there ought to be a little sort of comfort round the fireside, there ain't none."

"But Johanna, Ben — there is Johanna?"

"Johanna?"

"Yes. Is she not there to see to some of her father's comforts? She loves him — I know she does, Ben!"

Ben placed his finger by the side of his nose, and in an aside to himself, he said —

“Now I’ll touch her up a bit — now I’ll punish her for all she has done, and it will serve her right.” Then, elevating his voice, he added — “Did you mention Johanna?”

“Yes, Ben, I did.”

“Then I’m sorry you did. Perhaps you think she’s been seeing to the old man’s comforts a little — airing his nightcap, and so on — Eh? Is that the idea?”

“Yes, I know that she would do anything gladly for her father. She was always most tenderly attached to him.”

“Humph!”

“Why do you say, Humph, Ben?”

“Just answer me one question, Mrs. O. Did you ever hear of a young girl as was neglected by her mother — her mother who of all ought to be the person to attend to her — turning out well?”

“Do not terrify me, Ben.”

“Well, all I have got to say is, that Johanna can’t be in two places at once, and as she isn’t at home, how, I would ask any reasonable Christian, can she attend to the old man?”

“Not at home, Ben?”

“Not — at — home!”

“Oh, Heaven! Why did I not stay in that dreadful man’s house, and let him murder me! Why did I not tell him at once that I knew of his crime, and implore him to make me his next victim! Oh, Ben, if you have any compassion in your disposition you will tell me all, and then I shall know what to hope, and what to dread.”

“Well,” said Ben, “here goes then.”

“What goes?”

“I mean I’m agoing to tell you all, as you seem as if you’d like to know it.”

“Do! Oh, do!”

“Then of course Johanna being but a very young piece of goods, and not knowing much o’ the ways o’ this here world, and the habits and manners o’ the wild beastesses as is in it, when she found as the old house wasn’t good enough for her mother, she naturally enough thought it wasn’t good enough for her, you know.”

“Oh, this is the most dreadful stroke of all!”

“I should say it were,” said Ben, quite solemnly. “Take it easy though and you’ll get through it in the course of time. Well then, when Johanna found as everything at home was sixes and sevens, she borrowed a pair of what do call ’ems of some boy, and a jacket, and off she went.”

“She what?”

“She put on a pair of thingumys — well, breeches then, if you must have it — and away she went, and the last I saw of her was in Fleet Street with ’em on.”

“Gracious Heaven!”

“Very likely, but that don’t alter the facts of the case, you know, Mrs. O. On she had ’em, and all I can say is that you might have knocked me down flat to see her, that you might. I didn’t think I should ever have got home to the beasteses in the Tower again, it gave me such a turn.”

“Lost! Lost!”

“Eh? What do you say? What have you lost now?”

“My child! My Johanna!”

“Oh! Ah, to be sure. But then you know, Mrs. O, you ought to have stayed at home, and gived her ever so much good advice, you know; and when you saw she was bent upon putting on the boy’s things, you as a mother ought to have said, ‘My dear, take your legs out of that if yer pleases, and if yer don’t, I’ll pretty soon make you,’ and then stayed and gived the affair up as a bad job that wouldn’t pay, and took to morals.”

“Yes — yes. ’Tis I, and I only, who am to blame. I have been the destruction of my child. Farewell, Ben. You will perhaps in the course of time not think quite so badly of me as you now do. Farewell!”

“Hold!” cried Ben as he clutched the arm of Mrs. Oakley only the more tightly in his own: “What are you at now?”

“Death is now my only resource. My child is lost to me, and I have driven her by my neglect to such a dreadful course. I cannot live now. Let me go, Ben. You will never hear of me again.”

“If I let you go may I be — Well, no matter — no matter. Come on. It’s all one, you know, a hundred years hence.”

"But at present it is madness and despair. Let me go, I say. The river is not far off, and beneath its waters I shall at least find peace for my breaking heart. Let my death be considered as some sort of expiation of my sins."

"Stop a bit."

"No — no — no."

"But I say, yes. Things ain't quite so bad as you think 'em, only it was right o' me, you know, just to let you know what they might have been."

"What do you tell me?"

"Why that there ain't a better girl than Johanna in all the world, and that if all the mothers that ever was or ever will be, had neglected her and set her all their bad examples in the universal world, she would still be the little angel that she is now, and no mistake."

"Then she is not from home? It is all a fable?"

"Not quite, Mrs. O. just you trot on now comfortably by the side of me, and I will tell you the whole particulars, and then you will find that there ain't no occasion to go plumping into the river on Johanna's account."

Poor Mrs. Oakley, with delight beaming upon every feature of her face, now listened to Ben while he explained the whole matter to her, as far as he himself was cognisant of it; and if he did not offer to be very explicit in minor details, she at all events heard from him quite enough to convince her that Johanna was all that the tenderest mother could wish.

"Oh, Ben," she said, as the tears coursed each other down her cheeks, "how could you torture me as you have done?"

"All for your own good," said Ben. "It only lets you see what might have happened if Johanna had not been the good little thing that she is, that's all."

"Well, perhaps it is for the best that I should have suffered such a pang, and I only hope that Heaven will accept of it as some sort of expiation of my wickedness. If you had not held me, Ben, I should certainly have taken my life."

"Not a doubt about it," said Ben; "and a pretty kittle of fish you would then have made of the whole affair. However, that's all right enough now, and as for old Oakley, all you have got to do is to go into the shop and say to him. 'Here I am, and I am sorry for the past, which I hope you will forgive, and for the future I will strive to be a good wife.'"

"Must I say that, Ben?"

“Yes, to be sure. If you are ashamed to say what’s right, you may depend upon it you haven’t much inclination to do it.”

“You have convinced me, Ben. I will humble myself. It is fit and proper that I should. So I will say as nearly as I can recollect just what you have told me to say.”

“You can’t do better; and here we are at the corner of the street. Now if you would rather go in by yourself without me, only say the word, and I’m off.”

Mrs. Oakley hesitated for a moment and then she said —

“Yes, Ben, I would rather go alone.”

“Very good. I think it’s better too, so goodbye; and I’ll call tomorrow and see how you are all getting on.”

“Do so, Ben. No one can possibly be more welcome than you will be. You will be sure to come tomorrow?”

“Rather.”

With this Ben walked away, and Mrs. Oakley entered the house. What then passed we do not feel that we ought to relate. The humiliations of human nature, although for the best of purposes, and for the ultimate happiness of the parties themselves, are not subjects for the pen of the chronicler. Suffice it, that Mr. and Mrs. Oakley were perfectly reconciled, and were happy upon that day.

CHAPTER CXXII
Takes a Peep at Tobias at the Colonel's House

The more stirring events of our story, have compelled us in some measure to neglect poor Tobias. He had suffered very much from that visit of Todd's to the colonel's house, and it had a very prejudicial effect upon his mind too, inasmuch as it deprived him of that feeling of security, which had before possessed him beneath that roof.

The colonel felt this very acutely, and he could not help perceiving by Tobias's manner, that the faith he put in his assurance that Todd could not possibly again come near him, was not full and complete. Under these circumstances, then, it was a very great satisfaction to the colonel to be able to make the gratifying communication he had it in his power to make to Tobias, on the morning following the arrest of Todd and Mrs. Lovett.

The illness contingent upon the fright that Todd had given the poor boy, or the relapse as we might call it, had in a great measure worn off, and if Tobias's mind could have been quite at ease, his recovery would have been as rapid as any one could possibly have wished or expected.

As soon as he was up and about upon the following morning, then, after the arrests, the colonel sought Tobias's room, and with a cheerful smile upon his face he said —

"Well, Tobias, I come to bring you good news."

"Indeed, sir?" said Tobias his colour coming and going in flushes. "I am very weak, and — and if —"

"Come, come, Tobias. What I am going to tell you will strengthen you, I know. Todd is in Newgate!"

Tobias drew a long breath.

"Todd is in Newgate?" he replied. "Todd is in Newgate? The walls are very thick. I am safe now."

"Yes, you are, indeed, Tobias. The walls of Newgate are thick, and the doors are massive and well guarded. Be assured that Todd will never issue out at them but to his execution. Your old cunning enemy is at length more powerless by a great deal than you are, and from this moment you may completely banish all fear from your mind upon his account."

"And the woman, sir, Mrs. Lovett?"

"She is in Newgate likewise."

“Both, both, and their crimes then are all known at last, and there will be no more murders, and no more poor boys driven mad as I was! Oh, God be thanked, it is indeed all over now, all over.”

With this Tobias burst into tears, and relieved his surcharged heart of a load of misery. In the course of about five minutes he looked up with such a great smile of happiness upon his face, that it was quite a joy to see it.

“And you, sir, you,” he said, “my dear friend have done all this!”

“Not all, Tobias. I have helped in every way that lay in my power to bring the affair about, but it is Sir Richard Blunt the magistrate, who has toiled day and night almost in the matter, and who has at last brought it to so successful an issue, that the guilt of both Todd and Mrs. Lovett can be distinctly and clearly proved, without the shadow of a doubt.”

“Unhappy wretches!”

“They are, indeed, Tobias, unhappy wretches, and may Heaven have mercy upon them. Some other old friends of yours, too, will, before nightfall I think, find a home in Newgate.”

“Indeed, sir, whom mean you?”

“The folks at the madhouse at Peckham. Sir Richard would have had them apprehended some time ago, but he was afraid that it might give the alarm to Todd, before the affair was ripe enough to enable him to be arrested, with a certainty of his crimes being clearly understood and brought home to him. Now, however, that is all over, and they will be punished.”

“They are very, very wicked. I think, sir, they are almost worse than Sweeney Todd.”

“They are, if anything; but they will meet with their deserts, never fear; and as Minna Gray is expected every moment, so your mother tells me, I will not deprive you of the gratification of giving her the piece of news yourself. Of course, all the town will know it soon through the medium of the press; and Sir Richard Blunt, too, will be here in the course of the morning, to arrange with you concerning your evidence.”

“My evidence? Shall I be wanted?”

“Yes, Tobias. Surely you would not like so notorious a criminal to find a loophole of escape, from the want of your evidence?”

“Oh, no, no — I will go. I have only to tell the truth, and that should never be denied for or against. I will go, sir.”

"You are right, Tobias. It is a duty you owe to society. If some one long ago, and before you even had the evil fortune to go into his shop, had found out and exposed the iniquities of Sweeney Todd, how much misery would have been spared in this world both to you and to others!"

"Ah, yes, sir; and yet — "

"Yet what, Tobias?"

"I was only thinking, sir, that what at times seems like our very worst misfortunes, at times turn out to be the very things that are the making of us."

"Indeed, Tobias?"

"Yes, sir. If I had not been Sweeney Todd's boy, and if he had not persecuted me in the way he did, I should never have known what it was to have the friend I now have in you, sir; and perhaps she whom I love so dearly, would not have thought so much of me, if she had not deeply pitied me for all that I suffered."

"There is profound philosophy in what you say, my poor boy," replied the colonel; "and if we could only bring ourselves to think, when things apparently go wrong with us, that after all it is for the best, we should be much happier than we are now; but with our shortsighted wisdom, we hastily take upon ourselves to decide upon matters concerning the issues of which we know nothing, and so by anticipation we make ourselves pleased or sorrowful, when the precise contrary may be the real result."

"Yes, sir," said Tobias, "I have had time to think of that, and of many other strange things, as I lay here."

"Then you have done yourself some good, Tobias. But I hear a light footstep upon the stairs, and I will now leave you, for I can guess by that heightened colour that you hear it likewise, and I know that two may be good company but three none."

Tobias would have said something deprecatory of the colonel leaving him, and he did begin, but with a smile his kind and hospitable friend took his leave, and Tobias soon had the satisfaction of relating to the young girl, whom he was so tenderly attached to, that nothing further was now to be feared from Sweeney Todd or from Mrs. Lovett.

We may now leave Tobias in good company; and it was really surprising to those who have not made a habit of noting the intimate connection there is between the mind and the body, to see how from the very moment that he felt assured there was nothing further to apprehend from Sweeney Todd, Tobias's health picked up and improved. The absolute dread with which that bold impious bad man had inspired the boy, had been the sole cause of keeping him in so delicate a state. His dreams had been all of Todd; but now that word

Newgate, in conjunction with Todd's name, was a spell that brought with it peace and security.

Tobias, as he sat with the hand of the young and fair girl who had pleased his boyish fancy in his own, was now truly happy.



Tobias and Minna Rejoice at the Capture of Todd and Mrs. Lovett.

When Johanna got home, after being escorted from Sir Richard Blunt's house in Craven Street by Colonel Jeffery, she found her mother at home, and not a little surprised was she to find herself suddenly clasped in that mother's arms, a most unwonted process for Mrs. Oakley to go through.

"Oh, my child, my dear child!" sobbed the now repentant woman. "Can you forgive me as your father has done?"

"Forgive you, mother? Oh, do not speak to me in such a way as that. It is quite a joy to find you — you are really my mother?"

"You might well doubt it, my dear child; but the future is before us all, and then you will find that it was only when I could not have been in my right mind, that I preferred any place to my own home."

Old Oakley wiped his eyes as he said to Johanna —

"Yes, my darling, your mother has come back to us now in every sense of the word, and all the past is to be forgotten, except such of it as will be pleasant to remember. Your good friend, and I may say the good friend of us all, Sir Richard Blunt, sent us a letter to say that you would be here tonight, and God bless him my child, for watching over you as he did."

"Oh, how perilous an enterprise you went upon, my darling." said Mrs. Oakley.

The door of the adjoining room was partially open, and from it now stepped forward Arabella, saying —

“It is I who ought to ask pardon of you all for advising that step; and you will grant me that pardon I am sure, if upon no other ground, upon that that I have suffered greatly for my folly and precipitation.”

“My dear Arabella,” said Johanna, “you must not blame yourself in such a way. How pleased I am to find you here, my dear friend. Ah! At one time how little did we ever expect to meet all thus, in this little room!”

Johanna and Arabella embraced each other, and while they were so occupied, Big Ben came out of the room from whence Arabella had proceeded, and flinging his arms round them both, he made a great roaring noise, in imitation of the largest of the bears in the Tower collection.

At the moment, Johanna was alarmed, and could not conceive what it was; but Arabella, who knew that Ben had been in the room, waiting for some opportunity of coming out in a highly practical manner, only laughed, and then Johanna knew in a moment who it was, and she cried —

“Ben, it is you!”

“Yes, it’s me,” said Ben, “and I’m only astonished at you two girls fancying I was going to be quiet, and see all that kissing and hugging going on, and not come in for any of it. Don’t kick now, for I must kiss you both, and there’s an end of it. It’s no use a-kicking.”

To the credit of both Arabella and Johanna we may state, that they neither of them kicked, but very quietly let Ben kiss them both.

“Well,” said Ben as he plumped himself down upon a chair after the salute. “Well! — Murder! Where am I going to now?”

“Dear me,” said Mrs. Oakley. “All four legs of the chair are broken off, and Ben is on the floor.”

“Really, Ben,” said Mr. Oakley, “you ought to be perfectly careful when you sit down.”

“Easy does it,” said Ben. “I really thought I was going to kingdom come. Pull me, Johanna, my dear. Pull me up.”

Johanna shook her head, and declined the Herculean attempt, so that Ben had to scramble to his feet the best way he could, and then as he sat down upon the sofa which was sufficiently strong to withstand any shocks, Mrs. Oakley asked him what it was he had been upon the point of saying, when the chair had so very unceremoniously given way with him; but Ben had quite

forgotten it, only he said he recollected something else that was quite as good, and that was that he ordered to come about that hour a foaming tankard of mulled wine, and then he winked at Mrs. Oakley and hoped she had no medicine in the house to put in it.

“Oh, no, Ben,” she said, “and if there isn’t a knock at the door; and if you ordered it at the Unicorn’s Tail, you may depend that’s it.”

“Very good,” said Ben, and then he proceeded to the door and found that it was the boy from the Unicorn’s dorsal appendage with the spiced wine; and after whispering to bring a similar quantity in half an hour, and to keep on at it every half hour until further orders, Ben took it into the parlour, and a happier party than was there could not have been found in all London.

CHAPTER CXXIII
The Criminals in Newgate — Todd's Attempt at Suicide

It is grievous to turn from the contemplation of so pleasant and grateful a scene as that that was taking place at the old spectacle maker's house, to dive into the interior of Newgate. But thither it is that now we would conduct the reader.

The state of mind that Todd was in after his arrest, was one that such a man with such strong passions as he had was exceedingly unlikely to come to. It is difficult to describe it, but if we say that he was mentally stunned, we shall be as near the mark as language will permit us to be.

He walked, and looked, and spoke very much like a man in a dream; and it is really doubtful whether, for some hours, he comprehended the full measure of the calamity that had befallen him on his apprehension.

At Newgate they are quite accustomed to find this unnatural calmness in great criminals immediately after their arrest, so they take their measures accordingly.

Sir Richard Blunt had given some very special instructions to the Governor of Newgate concerning his prisoner, when he should arrive and be placed in his custody, so everything was ready for Todd. How little he suspected that for two days and two nights the very cell he was to occupy in Newgate had been actually pointed out, and that the irons in which his limbs were to be encompassed were waiting for him in the lobby!

He was placed in a small stone room that had no light but what came from a little orifice in the roof, and that was only a borrowed light after all, so that the cell was in a state of semidarkness always.

Into this place he was hurried, and the blacksmith who was in the habit of officiating upon such occasions, riveted upon him, as was then the custom, a complete set of irons.

All this Todd looked at with seeming indifference. His face had upon it an unnatural flush, and probably Todd had never looked so strangely well in health as upon the occasion of the first few hours he spent in Newgate.

"Now, old fellow," said one of the turnkeys, "I'm not to be very far off, in case you should happen to want to say anything; and if you give a rap at the door, I'll come to you."

"In case I want to say anything?" said Todd.

"Yes, to be sure. What, are you asleep?"

“Am I asleep?”

“Why, he’s gone a little bit out of his mind,” said the blacksmith, as he gathered up his tools to be gone.

The turnkey shook his head.

“Are you quite sure you have made a tight job of that?”

“Sure? Ay, that I am. If he gets out of them, put me in ’em, that’s all. Oh, no! It would take — let me see — it would take about half a dozen of him to twist out o’ that suit of armour. They are just about the best we have in the old stone jug.”

“Good.”

“Yes, they are good.”

“I mean very well. And now Mr. Sweeney Todd, we will leave you to your own reflections, old boy, and much good may they do you. Good night, old fellow. I always says good night to the prisoners, ’cos it has a tender sort o’ sound, and disposes of ’em to sleep. It’s kind o’ me, but I always was tenderhearted, as any little chick, I was.”

Bang went the cell door, and its triple locks were shot into their hoops. Todd was alone.

He had sat down upon a stool that was in the cell; and that stool, with a sort of bench fastened to the wall, was the only furniture it contained; and there he sat for about half an hour, during which time one of the most extraordinary changes that ever took place in the face of any human being, took place in his.

It seemed as if the wear and tear of years had been concentrated into minutes; and in that short space of time he passed from a middle aged, to be an old man.

Then reflection came!

“Newgate!” he cried as he sprang to his feet.

The chains rattled and clanked together.

“Chains — Newgate — a cell — death! Found out at last! At the moment of my triumph — defeated — detected! Newgate — chains — death!”

He fell back upon the stool again, and sat for the space of about two minutes in perfect silence. Then he sprang up again with such a wild yell of rage and mental agony, that not only the cell, but the whole of that portion of the prison, echoed again with it.

The turnkey opened a small wicket in the door, which when it was opened from without, still was defended by iron bars across it, and peering into the cell, he said —

“Hilloa! What now?”

“Hilloa!” shouted Todd. “Air — air!”

“Air? Why what do you mean by gammoning a fellow in that sort o’ way for, eh? Haven’t you got lots o’ air? Well, of all the unreasonable coves as ever I comed across, you is the worstest. Be quiet, will you?”

“No — no! Death — death! Give me the means of instant death. I am going mad — mad — mad!”

“Oh, no yer ain’t. It’s only yer first few hours in the stone jug that has comed over you a little, that’s all, old fellow. You’ll soon pick up, and behave yourself like any other christian. All you have got to do is never to mind, and then it’s nothink at all, old chap.”

Clap went shut the little wicket door again.

“Help! Help!” shouted Todd. “Take these irons off me. It is only a dream after all. Back, back you grinning fiends — why do you look at me when you know that it is not real? No — no, it cannot be, you know that it cannot be real.”

“Be quiet will you?” shouted the turnkey.

“Keep off, I say. All is well. Mrs. Lovett dead — quite dead. The boy to die too. The house in a blaze — all is well arranged. Why do you mock and joke at me?”

“Well, I never!” said the turnkey. “I do begin to think now that he’s getting queer in the upper story. I have heard of its driving some of ’em mad to be bowled out when they didn’t expect it, more ’special when it’s a hanging affair. I wonder what he will say next? He’s a regular rum ’un, he is.”

“What have I done?” shouted Todd. “What have I done? Nothing — nothing. The dead tell no tales. All is safe — quite safe. The grave is a good secret keeper. I think Tobias is dead too — why not? Mrs. Lovett is dead. This is not Newgate. These are not chains. It is only the nightmare. Ha! Ha! Ha! It is only the nightmare — I can laugh now!”

“Oh, can you?” said the turnkey. “It’s rather an odd sort o’ laugh though, to my thinking. Howsomedever, there’s no rule agin’ grinning, so you can go on at it as long as you like.”

"Mercy!" suddenly shrieked Todd, and then down he fell upon the floor of the cell, and lay quite still. The turnkey looked curiously in at him, through the little grating.

"Humph!" he said, "I must go and report him to the Governor, and he will do whatsomever he likes about him; but I suppose as they will send the doctor to him, and all that 'ere sort o' thing, for it won't do to let him slip out o' the world and quite cheat the gallows; oh dear no."

Muttering these and similar remarks to himself, the turnkey went, as he was bound in duty to do upon any very extraordinary conduct upon the part of any prisoner in his department, to report what Todd was about to the Governor.

"Ah!" said that functionary, the surgeon, "and I will soon come to him. I fully expected we should have some trouble with that man. It really is too bad, that when people come into the prison, they will not be quiet. It would be just as well for them, and much more comfortable for me."

"Werry much, sir," said the turnkey.

"Well — well, he shall be attended to."

"Werry good, sir."

The turnkey went back and took up his post again outside Todd's door, and in the course of ten minutes or so, without making the least hurry of the subject, the Governor and the jail surgeon arrived and entered the cell.

Todd was picked up, and then it was found that he had struck his head against the stone floor, and so produced a state of insensibility, but whether he had done it on purpose or by accident, they could come to no opinion.

"Lay him on the bench," said the surgeon, "I can do nothing with him. He will come to himself again in a little while, I daresay, and be all right again in the morning."

"He seems really, indeed, to be a very troublesome man," said the Governor to the surgeon.

"Very likely. Have you a mind for a game of cribbage tonight, Governor? I suppose this fellow will hang?"

"Yes, I don't mind a game. Yes, they will tuck him up."

With this they left Todd's cell, and the turnkey closed the door, and made the highly philosophical remark to himself of —

"Werry good."

Todd remained until the morning in a state of insensibility, and when he awakened from it he was very much depressed in strength indeed. He lay for about two hours gazing on the ceiling of his cell, and then the door was opened, and the turnkey appeared with a basin of milk and water and a lump of coarse bread.

“Breakfast!” he cried.

Todd glared at him.

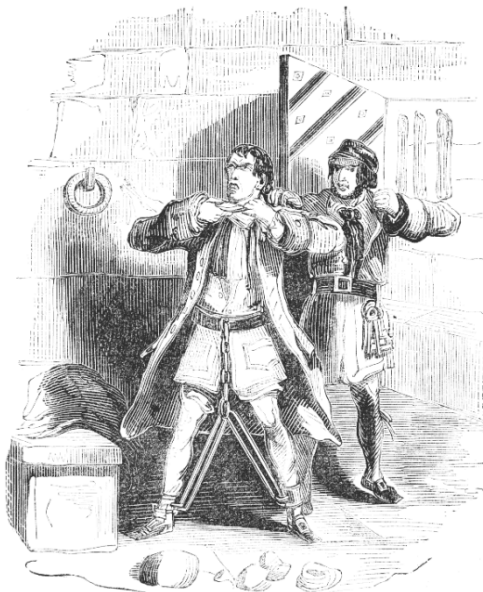
“Breakfast; don’t you understand that, old cock? However, it’s all one to me. There it is — take it or leave it.”

Todd did not speak, and the not over luxurious meal was placed on the table, or rather upon the end of the bench upon which he lay, and which served the purpose of a table.

The moment Todd heard the door of the cell closed behind the turnkey, he rose from his recumbent posture, and, although he staggered when he got to his feet, he seized the basin, and at once, without tasting any of its contents, broke it against the corner of the bench to fragments.

“I shall elude them yet!” he said. “They think they have me in their toils — but I shall elude them yet!”

He selected a long jagged piece of the broken basin, and dragging down his cravat with one hand, he was upon the very point of plunging it into his throat with the other, when the turnkey sprang into the cell.



Todd in Newgate, Tries to Commit Suicide.

“Hold a bit!” he cried. “We don’t allow that sort of thing here with any of our customers. You should have thought of those games before you got into the stone jug!”

With one powerful blow, the turnkey struck the piece of the broken basin from the hand of Todd, and with another he felled him to the floor.

“None o’ your nonsense,” he said; and then he carefully collected the pieces of the broken basin.

“Why should you grudge me the means of death,” said Todd, “when you know that you have brought me here among you to die?”

“Contrary to rules.”

“In mercy, I ask you only to give me leave to take my own life, for I have failed in the object of my living.”

“Contrary to rules.”

The turnkey left the cell, then, as coolly as if nothing had happened, and carefully locked the door again, while he went to report the attempted suicide of the prisoner to the proper quarter.

Foiled, then, in every way, Todd looked round the cell for some means of ridding himself of his life and his troubles together; but he found none. He then paced the cell to and fro like a maniac, as he muttered to himself —

“All lost — lost — lost — all lost! Foiled, too, at the moment when I thought myself most secure — when I had made every preparation to leave England for ever! Oh, dolt that I was, not to have done so long ago, when I had half — ay, when I had only a quarter of the sum that I should this day have fled with! In my dreams I have seen myself as I am now, and the sight has shaken me, but I never thought to be so in reality. Is there any hope for me? What do they know? — what can they know?”

Upon these questions, Todd paused in his uneasy walk in the cell, and sat down upon the low stool to think. His head rested upon his breast, and he was profoundly still.