CHAPTER XXXV
Johanna Walks Abroad in Disguise

But, amid all the trials, and perplexities, and anxieties that beset the dramatis personae of our story, who suffered like Johanna? What heart bled as hers bled? What heart heaved with sad emotion as hers heaved? Alas! Poor Johanna, let the fate of Mark Ingestrie be what it might, he could not feel the pangs that tore thy gentle heart. Truly might she have said —

"Man's love is of his life a thing apart
'Tis woman's whole existence,"

for she felt that her joy — her life itself, was bartered for the remembrance of how she had been loved by him whose fate was involved in one of the most painful and most inscrutable of mysteries. Where could she seek for consolation, where for hope? The horizon of her young life seemed ever darkening, and the more she gazed upon it with the fond hope of singing —

"The first faint star of coming joy,"

the more confounded her gentle spirit became by the blackness of despair. It is sad indeed that the young, the good, and the gentle, should be the grand sufferers in this world, but so it is. The exquisite capacity to feel acutely is certain to find ample food for agony. If human nature could wrap itself up in the chill mantle of selfishness, and be perfectly insensible to all human feeling, it might escape, but such cannot be done by those who, like the fine and noble-minded Johanna Oakley, sympathise with all that is beautiful and great in creation. Already the pangs of hope deferred were feeding upon the damask of her cheeks. The lily had usurped the rose, and although still exquisitely beautiful, it was the pale beauty of a statue that she began to show to those who loved her. In the street people would turn to gaze after her with admiration blended with pity. They already looked upon her as half an angel, for already it seemed as though she had shaken off much of her earthly lurements, and was hastening to

"Rejoin the stars."

Let us look at her as she lies weeping upon the breast of her friend Arabella Wilmot. The tears of the two young girls are mingling together, but the one is playing the part of comforter, while the other mourns over much.

"Now, Johanna," sobbed Arabella, "you talk of doing something to save Mark Ingestrie, if he be living, or to bring to justice the man whom you suspect to be his murderer. Let me ask you what you can hope to do, if you give way to such an amount of distress as this?"

"Nothing — nothing."

“And are you really to do nothing? Have you not agreed, Johanna, to make an attempt, in the character of a boy, to find out the secret of Ingestrie’s disappearance, and have not I provided for you all that you require to support the character? Courage, courage, courage. — Oh, I could tell you such stories of fine ladies dressing as pages, and following gallant knights to the field of battle, that you would feel as though you could go through anything.”

“But the age of chivalry is gone.”

“Yes, and why — because folks will not be chivalric. To those who will, the age of chivalry comes back again in all its glory.”

“Listen to me, Arabella: if I really thought that Mark was no more, and lost to me for ever, I could lie down and die, leaving to Heaven the punishment of those who have taken his life, but in the midst of all my grief — in the moments of my deepest depression, the thought clings to me, that he lives yet. I do not know how it is, but the thought of Mark Ingestrie dead, is but a vague one, compared to the thought of Mark Ingestrie suffering.”

“Indeed?”

“Yes, and at times it seems as if a voice whispered to me, that he was yet to be saved, if there existed a heart fair enough and loving enough in its strength to undertake the task. It is for that reason, and not from any romantic love of adventure, or hope of visiting with punishment a bad man, that my imagination clings to the idea of going in boy’s apparel to Fleet Street, to watch, and perchance to enter that house to which he last went, and from which, according to all evidence, he never emerged.”

“And you are really bold enough?”

“I hope so — I think, if I am not, God will help me.”

A sob that followed these words, sufficiently testified how much in need of God’s help poor Johanna was, but after a few minutes she succeeded in recovering herself from her emotion, and she said more cheerfully —

“Come, Arabella, we talked of a rehearsal of my part; but I shall be more at ease when I go to act it in reality, and with danger. I shall be able to comport myself well, with only you for a companion, and such chance passengers as the streets of the city may afford for my audience.”

“I am glad,” said Arabella, “that you keep in this mind. Now come and dress yourself, and we will go out together. You will be taken for my brother, you know.”

In the course of a quarter of an hour, Johanna presented the appearance of as good-looking a lad of about fourteen as the world ever saw, and if she could but have imparted a little more confidence and boyish bustle to her gait and

manner, she would have passed muster under the most vigilant scrutiny. But as it was, nothing could be more unlikely than that any one should penetrate her disguise, for what is not suspected, is seldom seen very readily.

"You will do capitally," said Arabella, "I must take your arm, you know. We will not go far."

"Only to Fleet Street."

"Fleet Street. You surely will not go so far as that?"

"Yes, Arabella. Now that I have attired myself in these garments for a special purpose, let me do a something towards the carrying it out. By walking that distance I shall accustom myself to the road; and, moreover, a dreadful kind of fascination drags me to that man's shop."

Arabella, if the truth must be told, shook a little as they, after watching an opportunity, emerged into the street, for although the spirit of romantic adventure had induced her to give the advice to Johanna that she had, her own natural feminine sensibilities shrunk from the carrying of it out. Ashamed, however, of being the first to condemn her own suggestion, she took the arm of Johanna, and those two young creatures were in the tide of human life that ebbs and flows in the great city. The modest walk and gentle demeanour of the seeming young boy won Johanna many a passing glance as she and Arabella proceeded down Ludgate Hill towards Fleet Street, but it was quite clear that no one suspected the disguise which, to do Arabella justice, in its general arrangement was very perfect, and as Johanna wore a cap, which concealed much of the upper part of her face, and into which was gathered all her hair, she might have really deceived those who were the most intimate with her, so that it was no wonder she passed unobserved with mere strangers. In this way, then, they reached Fleet Street without obstruction, and Johanna's heart beat rapidly as they approached the shop of Sweeney Todd.

"It will be imprudent to stop for even a moment at his door or window," said Arabella, "for, remember, you have no opportunity of varying your disguise."

"I will not stop. We will pass rapidly on, but — but it is something to look upon the doorstep over which the shadow of Mark has last passed."

In another moment they were on a level with the shop. Johanna cast a glance at the window, and then shrunk back with affright as she saw, occupying one of the upper panes of glass, the hideous face of Todd. He was not looking at her though, for with an awful squint that revealed all the whites of his eyes — we were going to say, but the dirty yellows would have been much nearer the truth — he seemed to be observing something up the street.

"Come on — come on," whispered Johanna.

Arabella had not happened to observe this apparition of Todd in the window, and she looked round to see what occasioned Johanna's sudden terror, when a young Temple clerk, who chanced to be a few paces behind them, immediately, with the modesty peculiar to his class, imagined the glance of the blooming girl to be a tribute to his attractions. He kissed the end of a faded glove, and put on what he considered a first class fascinating aspect.

Johanna's Alarm at the Sight of Sweeney Todd.

"Come on — come on," said Arabella now in her turn.

Johanna, of course, thought that Arabella too had caught sight of the hideous and revolting countenance of Sweeney Todd, and so they both hastened on together.

"Don't look back," said Arabella.

"Is he following?"

"Oh, yes — yes."

Johanna thought she meant Todd, while Arabella really meant the Temple gent, but, notwithstanding the mutual mistake, they hurried on, and the clerk taking that as quite sufficient encouragement, pursued them, putting his cravat to rights as he did so, in order that when he came up to them, he should present the most fascinating aspect possible.

"No — no." said Johanna, as she glanced behind. "You must have been mistaken, Arabella. He is not pursuing us."

"Oh, I am so glad."

Arabella looked back, and the Temple gent kissed his dilapidated glove.

"Oh, Johanna," she said, "how could you tell me he was not following, when there he is."

"What, Todd?"

"No. That impertinent ugly puppy with the soiled cravat."

"And you meant him?"

"To be sure."

"Oh, what a relief, I was flying on, fancying that Todd was in pursuit of us, and yet my judgment ought at once to have told me that that could not be the case, knowing nothing of us. How our fears overcome all reason. Do you know that strange looking young man?"

"Know him? Not I."

"Well, my darling," said the gent, reaching to within a couple of paces of Arabella, "how do you do to-day? — ahem! Are you going far? Ain't you afraid that somebody will run away with such a pretty gal as you — 'pon soul, you are a charmer."

"Cross," whispered Arabella, and the two young girls at once crossed Fleet Street. It was not then so difficult an operation to get from one side of that thoroughfare to the other as it is now. The gent was by no means disconcerted at this evident wish to get out of his way, but he crossed likewise, and commenced a series of persecution, which such animals call gallantry, and which, to any respectable young female, are specially revolting.

"Now, my dear," he said, "St. Dunstan's is just going to strike the hour, and you will see the clubs hit the bells if you look, and I shall expect a kiss when it's all over."

"You are impertinent," said Johanna.

"Come, that's a good joke — why, you little whipper snapper, I suppose you came out to take care of your sister. Here's a penny to go and buy yourself a cold pie at Mrs. Lovett's. I'll see to your sister while you are gone. Oh, you need not look so wild about it. Did you never hear of a gent talking to a pretty gal in the street?"

"Often," said Johanna, "but I never heard of a gentleman doing so."

"Upon my word, you are as sharp as a needle, so I'll just pull your ears to teach you better manners, you young rascal — come — come, it's no use your kicking."

"Help — help!" cried Arabella.

They were now just opposite the principal entrance to the Temple, and as Arabella cried "help," who should emerge from under the gateway but Ben the beefeater. The fact is, that he was on his way to the Tower just previous to the meeting with Colonel Jeffery and Tobias. Arabella, who had twice or thrice seen him at the Oakley's, knew him at once.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "I am Johanna's friend, Miss Wilmot, and this — this gent won't leave me and my cousin here alone."

The gent made an effort to escape, but Ben caught him by the hinder part of his apparel, and held him tight.

"Is this him?"

"Yes — yes."

"Oh dear no — oh dear no, my good sir. It's that fellow there, with the white hat. There he goes, up Chancery Lane. My dear sir, you are quite mistaken; I wanted to protect the young lady, and as for the lad, bless his heart. I — oh dear, it wasn't me."

Still holding the gent by the first grasp he had taken of him, Ben suddenly crossed the road to where a parish pump stood, at the corner of Bell Yard, and holding him under the spout with one hand, he worked the handle with the other, despite the shrieks and groans of his victim, who in a few moments was rendered so limp and wet, that when Ben let him go, he fell into the sink below the pump, and there lay, until some small boys began pelting him. During the confusion and laughter of the bystanders, Arabella and Johanna rapidly retreated towards the City again, for they thought Ben might insist upon escorting them, and that, in such a case, it was possible enough the disguise of Johanna, good as it was, might not suffice to save her from the knowledge of one so well acquainted with her.

"Let us cross, Arabella," she said. "Let us cross, if it be but for one moment, to hear what the subject of the conversation between Todd and that man is."

"If you wish it, Johanna."

"I do, I do."

They crossed, and once again passed the shop of Todd, when they heard the man say —

"Well, if he has gone he has gone, but I think it is the strangest thing I ever heard of."

"So do I," said Todd.

Without lingering, and so perhaps exciting Todd's attention and suspicion, they could hear no more, but Johanna had heard enough to give the spur to imagination, and when they had again crossed Fleet Street, and were making their way rapidly up Ludgate-hill, she whispered to Arabella —

"Another! Another!"

"Another what, Johanna? You terrify me by that tone. Oh, be calm. Be calm, I pray you. Some one will observe your agitation."

"Another victim," continued Johanna. "Another victim — another victim. Did you not hear what the man said? Was it not suggestive of another murder? Oh, Heaven preserve my reason, for each day, each hour, brings to me such accumulating proof of horrors, that I fear I shall go mad."

"Hush! Hush! Johanna — Johanna!"

"My poor, poor Mark —"

"Remember that you are in the street, Johanna, and for my sake, I pray you to be calm. Those tears and that flushed cheek will betray you. Oh, why did I ever advise you to come upon such an enterprise as this? It is my fault, all my fault."

The terror and the self-accusation of Arabella Wilmot did more to bring Johanna to a reasonable state than anything else, and she made an effort to overcome her feelings, saying —

"Forgive me — forgive me, my dear friend — I, only, am to blame. But at the moment I was overcome by the thought that, in the heart of London, such a system of cold-blooded murder —"

She was unable to proceed, and Arabella, holding her arm tightly within her own, said —

"Do not attempt to say another word until we get home. There, in my chamber, you can give free vent to your feelings, but let the danger, as well as the impropriety of doing so in the open street, be present to your mind. Say no more now, I implore you; say no more."

This was prudent advice, and Johanna had sufficient command of herself to take it, for she uttered not one other word until they were both almost breathless with the haste they had made to Arabella's chamber. Then, being no longer under the restraint of locality or circumstances, the tears of Johanna burst forth, and she wept abundantly. Arabella's romantic reading did sometimes, as it would appear, stand her in good stead, and upon this occasion she did not attempt to stem the torrent of grief that was making its way from the eyes of her fair young friend. She told herself that with those tears a load of

oppressive grief would be washed from Johanna's spirit, and the result fully justified her prognostications. The tears subsided into sobs, and the sobs to sighs.

"Ah, my dear friend," she said, "how much have you to put up with from me. What a world of trouble I am to you."

"No," said Arabella, "that you are not, Johanna; I am only troubled when I see you overcome with too excessive grief, and then, I confess, my heart is heavy."

"It shall not be so again. Forgive me this once, dear Arabella."

Johanna flung herself into her friend's arms, and while they kissed each other, and Arabella was about commencing a hopeful kind of speech, a servant girl, with open mouth and eyes, looked into the room, transfixed with amazement.

"Well, Miss Bella," she cried at last, "you is fond of boys!"

Arabella started, and so did Johanna.

"Is that you, Susan?"

"Yes, Miss Bella, it is me. Well I never! The idea! I shall never get the better of this here! Only to think of you, Miss Bella, having a boy at your time of life."

"What do you mean, Susan? How dare you use such language to me? Get you gone!"

"Oh, yes, I'm agoing in course; but if I had anybody in the house, it shouldn't be a little impudent looking boy with no whiskers."

"She must know all," whispered Johanna.

"No, no," said Arabella, "I will not, feeling my innocence, be forced into making a confidant of a servant. Let her go."

"But she will speak."

"Let her speak."

Susan left the room, and went direct to the kitchen, holding up her hands all the way, and giving free expression to her feelings as she did so —

"Well, the *idea* now, of a little stumpy looking boy, when there's sich a lot of nice young men with whiskers to be had just for the wagging of one's little finger. Only to think of it. Sitting in her lap too, and them a kissing one another like — like — coach horses. Well I never. Now there's Lines's, the cheesemonger's,

young man as I has in of a night, he is somebody, and such loves of whiskers I never seed in my born days afore; but I is surprised at Miss Bella, that I is — a shrimp of a boy in her lap! Oh dear, oh dear!”

CHAPTER XXXVI
Mr Fogg Finds that all is not Gold that Glitters

We feel that we ought not entirely to take leave of that unfortunate, who failed in escaping with Tobias Ragg, from Mr. Fogg's establishment at Peckham, without a passing notice. It will be recollected that Tobias had enough to do to get away himself, and that he was in such a state of mind that it was quite a matter of new mechanical movement of his limbs that enabled him to fly from the madhouse. Horror of the place, and dread of the people who called it theirs, had lighted up the glare of a partial insanity in his brain, and he flew to London, we admit, without casting another thought upon the wretched creature who had fallen in the attempt to free herself from those fiends in human shape who made a frightful speculation in the misery of their fellow creatures. The alarm was already spread in the madhouse, and Mr. Fogg himself arrived at the spot where the poor creature lay stunned and wounded by her fall.

"Watson! Watson!" he cried.

"Here," said that official, as he presented himself.

"Take this carcase up, Watson. I'm afraid Todd's boy is gone."

"Ha! Ha!"

"Why do you laugh?"

"Why where's the odds if he has. I tell you what it is, Fogg, I haven't been here so long without knowing what's what. If that boy ever recovers his senses enough to tell a rational tale, I'll eat him. However, I'll soon go and hunt him up. We'll have him again."

"Well, Watson, you give me hopes, for you have upon two different occasions brought back runaways. Bring the woman in and — and, Watson?

"Aye, aye."

"I think I would put her in No. 10."

"Ho! Ho! — No. 10. Then she's booked. Well, well, come on Fogg, come on, it's all one. I suppose the story will be 'An attempt to escape owing to too much indulgence;' and some hints consequent on that, and then brought back to her own warm comfortable bed, where she went asleep so comfortably that we all thought she was as happy as an Emperor, and then —"

"She never woke again," put in Fogg. "But in this case you are wrong, Watson. It is true that twice or thrice I have thought, for the look of the thing, it would

be desirable to have an inquest upon somebody, but in this case I will not. The well is not full!"

"Full?"

"No, I say the well is not full, Watson; and it tells no tales."

"It would hold a hundred bodies one upon another yet," said Watson, "and tell no tales. Ha! Ha!"

"Good!"

"It is good. She is to go there, is she? Well, so be it."

Watson carried the miserable female in his arms to the house.

"By-the-bye, it is a second thought," he said, "about No. 10."

"Yes, yes, there's no occasion. Watson, could you not at once — eh? It is a good hour. Could you not go right through the house, my good Watson, and at once — eh?"

"At once what?"

"Oh, you know. Ha! Ha! You are not the dull fellow at comprehending a meaning you would fain make out; but you, Watson — you understand me well enough, you know you do. We understand each other, and always shall."

"I hope so, but if you want anything done I'll trouble you to speak out. What do you mean by 'couldn't you go through the house at once — eh?' "

"Pho! Pho! Put her down the well at once. Humanity calls upon us to do it. Why should she awaken to a sense of her disappointment, Watson? Put her down at once, and she will never awaken at all to a sense of anything."

"Very well. Come on, business is business."

"You — you don't want me?"

"Don't I," said Watson, bending his shaggy brows upon him, and looking extra hideous on account of a large black patch over one eye, which he bore as a relict of his encounter with Tobias. "Don't I? Hark you, Fogg; if you won't come and help me to do it, you shall have it to do by yourself, without me at all."

"Why — why, Watson, Watson. This language —"

"Is nothing new, Fogg."

“Well, well, come on. — Come on — if it must be so, it must. — I — I will hold a lantern for you, of course; and you know, Watson, I make things easy to you, in the shape of salary, and all that sort of thing.”

Watson made no reply to all this, but went through the house to the back part of the grounds, carrying with him his insensible burden, and Fogg followed him, trembling in every limb. The fact was, that he, Fogg, had not for some time had a refresher in the shape of some brandy. The old deserted well to which they were bound was at a distance of about fifty yards from the back of the house; towards it the athletic Watson hastened with speed, closely followed by Fogg, who was truly one of those who did not mind holding a candle to the devil. The walls of that building were high, and it was not likely that any intruder from the outside could see what was going on, so Watson took no precaution. — The well was reached, and Fogg cried to him —

“Now — now — quick about it, lest she recovers.”

Another moment and she would have been gone in her insensibility, but as if Fogg’s words were prophetic, she did recover, and clinging convulsively to Watson, she shrieked —

“Mercy! Mercy! Oh, have mercy upon me! Help! Help!”

“Ah, she recovers!” cried Fogg, “I was afraid of that. Throw her in. Throw her in, Watson.”

“Confound her!”

“Why don’t you throw her in?”

The Murder at the Well by Fogg and Watson

“She clings to me like a vice. I cannot — Give me a knife, Fogg. You will find one in my coat pocket — a knife — a knife!”

"Mercy! Mercy! Have mercy upon me! No — no — no, — Help! Oh God! God!"

"The knife! The knife, I say!"

"Here, here," cried Fogg, as he hastily took it from Watson's pocket and opened it. "Here! Finish her, and quickly too, Watson!"

The scene that followed is too horrible for description. The hands of the wretched victim were hacked from their hold by Watson, and in the course of another minute, with one last appalling shriek, down she went like a flash of lightning to the bottom of the well.

"Gone!" said Watson.

Another shriek and Fogg, even, stopped his ears, so appalling was that cry, coming as it did so strangely from the bottom of the well.

"Throw something upon her," said Fogg. "Here's a brick —"

"Bah!" cried Watson, "Bah! there's no occasion to throw anything on her. She'll soon get sick of such squealing."

Another shriek, mingled with a strange frothy cry, as though some one had managed to utter it under water, arose. The perspiration stood in large drops upon the face of Fogg. — He seized the brick he had spoken of, and cast it into the well. All was still as the grave before it reached the bottom, and then he wiped his face and looked at Watson.

"This is the worst job," he said, "that ever we have had — "

"Not a whit. — Brandy — give me a tumbler of brandy, Fogg. Some of our own particular, for I have something to say to you now, that a better opportunity than this for saying is not likely to occur."

"Come into my room then," said Fogg, "and we can talk quietly. — Do you think — that — that —"

"What?"

"That she is quite dead?"

"What do I care. — Let her crawl out of that, if she can."

With a jerk of his thumb, Watson intimated that the well was the "that" he referred to, and then he followed Fogg into the house, whistling as he went the same lively air with which he had frequently solaced his feelings in the hearing of poor Tobias Ragg. Never had Fogg been in such a state of agitation, except

once, and that was long ago, upon the occasion of his first crime. Then he had trembled as he now trembled, but the

"Dull custom of iniquity"

had effectually blunted soon the keen edge of his conscience, and he had for years carried on a career of infamy without any other feeling than exultation at his success. — Why then did he suffer now? Had the well in the garden ever before received a victim? Was he getting alive to the excellence of youth and beauty? — Oh no — no. Fogg was getting old. He could not stand what he once stood in the way of conscience. When he reached his room — that room in which he had held the conference with Todd, he sank into a chair with a deep groan.

"What's the matter now?" cried Watson, who got insolent in proportion as Fogg's physical powers appeared to be upon the wane.

"Nothing, nothing."

"Nothing? — Well, I never knew anybody look so white with nothing the matter. Come, I want a drop of brandy; where is it?"

"In that cupboard; I want some myself likewise. Get it out, Watson. You will find glasses there."

Watson was not slow in obeying this order. The brandy was duly produced, and, after Fogg had drank as much as would have produced intoxication in any one not so used to the ardent spirit as himself, he spoke more calmly, for it only acted upon him as a gentle sedative.

"You wished to say something to me, Watson."

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I am tired, completely tired, Fogg."

"Tired? Then why don't you retire to rest at once, Watson? There is, I am sure, nothing to keep you up now; I am going myself in a minute."

"You don't understand me, or you won't, which is much the same thing. I did not mean that I was tired of the day, but I am tired of doing all the work, Fogg, while you — while you —"

"Well — while I —"

"Pocket all the profit. Do you understand that? Now hark you. We will go partners, Fogg, not only in the present and the future, but in the past. I will have half of your hoarded up gains, or —"

"Or what?"

Mr. Watson made a peculiar movement, supposed to indicate the last kick of a culprit executed at the Old Bailey.

"You mean you will hang yourself," said Fogg. "My dear Watson, pray do so as soon as you think proper. Don't let me hinder you."

"Hark you, Fogg. You may be a fox, but I am a badger. I mean that I will hang you, and this is the way to do it. My wife —"

"Your what?"

"My wife," cried Watson, "has, in writing, the full particulars of all your crimes. She don't live far off, but still far enough to make it a puzzle for you to find her. If she don't see me once in every forty eight hours, she is to conclude something has happened to me, and then she is to go at once to Bow Street with the statement, and lay it before a magistrate. You understand. Now I have contrived, with what I got from you by fair means as well as by foul, and by robbing the patients besides, to save some money, and if you and I don't agree, Mrs. Watson and I will start for New Zealand, or some such place, but — but, Fogg —"

"Well?"

"We will denounce you before we go."

"And what is to be the end of all this? The law has a long as well as a strong arm, Watson."

"I know it. You would say it might be long enough to strike me."

Fogg nodded.

"Leave me to take care of that. But as you want to know the result of all this, it is just this. I want to have my share, and I will have it. Give me a couple of thousand down, and half for the future."

Fogg was silent for a moment or two, and then he said —

"Too much, Watson, too much. I have not so much."

"Bah! At your banker's now you have exactly £11,267."

Fogg writhed.

"You have been prying. Well, you shall have the two thousand."

"On account."

Fogg writhed again. "I say you shall have so much, Watson, and you shall keep the books, and have your clear half of all future proceeds. Is there anything else you have set your mind upon, because if you have, while we are talking about business, you may as well state it, you know."

"No, there's nothing else — I am satisfied. All I have to add is, that you had better put your head into the fire than attempt to play any tricks with me. You understand?"

"Perfectly."

Watson was not altogether satisfied. He would have been better pleased if Fogg had made more resistance. The easy compliance of such a man with anything that touched his pocket looked suspicious, and filled the mind of Watson with a thousand vague conjectures. Already — aye, even before he left Fogg's room, Watson began to feel the uneasiness of his new position, and to pay dearly for the money he was to have. Even money may be given an exorbitant price for. When he was by himself, as he traversed the passage leading to his own sleeping room, Watson could not forbear looking cautiously around him at times, as though gaunt murder stalked behind him, and he fastened his bedroom door with more than his usual caution. The wish to sleep came not to him, and sitting down upon his bed-side he rested his chin upon his hand and said to himself in a low anxious shrinking kind of whisper —

"What does Fogg mean to do?"

Nor was the recent interview without its after effects upon the madhouse keeper himself. When the door closed upon Watson he shook his clenched hand in the direction he had taken, and muttered curses,

"Not loud, but deep."

"The time will come," he said, "Master Watson, and that quickly too, when I will let you see that I am still the master spirit. You shall be satisfied for the present, but your death warrant is preparing. You will not live long to triumph over me by threats of what your low cunning can accomplish."

He rose and drank more raw brandy, after which, still muttering maledictions upon Watson, he returned to his bedroom, where, if he did not sleep, and if during the still hours of the night his brain was not too much vexed, he hoped to be able to concoct some scheme which should present him with a prospect of exemplary vengeance upon Watson.

CHAPTER XXXVII
Mrs. Lovett's New Lover

Mrs. Lovett was a woman of luxurious habits. Perhaps the constant savoury hot pie atmosphere in which she dwelt contributed a something to the development of her tastes, but certainly that lady, in dress, jewellery, and men, had her fancies. Did the reader think that she saw anything attractive in the satyr like visage of Todd, with its eccentricities of vision? Did the reader think that the lawyers' clerks frequenting her shop suited her taste, varying, as all the world knows that class of bipeds does, between the fat and flabby, and the white and candle looking, if we may be allowed the expression? Ah, no, — Mrs. Lovett's dreams of man had a loftier range, but we must not anticipate. Facts will speak trumpet tongued for themselves.

> It is the hour when lawyers' clerks
> From many a gloomy chamber stalk;
> It is the hour when lovers' vows
> Are heard in every Temple walk.

Mrs. Lovett was behind her counter all alone, but the loneliness continued but for a very brief period, for from Carey Street, with a nervousness of gait highly suggestive of a fear of bailiffs — bailiffs were there in all their glory — comes a — a what shall we say? Truly there are some varieties of the genus *homo* that defy minute classification, but perhaps this individual who hastened down Bell Yard was the nearest in approximation to what used to be called "a swaggering companion," that can be found. He was a gent upon town — that is to say, according to his own phraseology, he lived upon his wits; and if the reader will substitute dishonesty for wits, he will have a much clearer notion of what the swaggering companion of modern days lived upon. He was tall, burly, forty years of age, and his bloated countenance and sleepy eyes betrayed the effects of a long course of intemperance. He wore mock jewellery of an outrageous size; his attire was flashy and gaudy — his linen ..... the less we say about that the better — enormous black whiskers (false) shaded his cheeks, and mangy looking moustache (real) covered his upper lip — add to all this, such a stock of ignorance and impudence as may be supposed to thoroughly saturate one individual, and the reader has the swaggering companion before him. At a rapid pace he neared Mrs. Lovett's, muttering to himself as he went —

"I wonder if I can gammon her out of a couple of guineas."

Yes, reader, this compound of vulgarity, ignorance, impudence and debauchery was Mrs. Lovett's gentle fancy — her taste — her — her, what shall we say? — Her personification of all that a man should be. Do not start; Mrs. Lovett has many imitators, for, without libelling the fairer, better, and more gentle of that sex, who can be such angels as well as such — ahem! — There are thousands who would be quite smitten with the "swaggering companion." When he reached the shop window, he placed his nose against it for a moment to reconnoitre who was in the shop, and seeing the fair one alone, he at once crossed the threshold.

“Ah, charmer, how do the fates get on with you?”

“Sir —”

A smile upon the face of Mrs. Lovett was a practical contradiction to the rebuff which her reception of him by words of mouth seemed to carry.

“Oh, you bewitching — a — a —”

The remainder of the sentence was lost in the devouring a pie, which the “swaggering companion” took from the shop counter.

“Really, sir,” said Mrs. Lovett —” I wish you would not come here, I am all alone, and —”

“Alone? You beautiful female. — Oh you nice creature. — Allow me.”

The “swaggering companion” lifted up that portion of the counter which enabled Mrs. Lovett to pass from one side of it to the other, and as coolly as possible walked into the parlour. Mrs. Lovett followed him, protesting at what she called his impudence. But for all that, a bottle of spirits and some biscuits were procured. The “swaggering companion,” however, pushed the biscuits aside, saying —

“Pies for me. Pies for me.”

Mrs. Lovett looked at him scrutinisingly as she said —

“And do you really like the pies, or do you only eat them out of compliment to me?”

“Really like them? I tell you what it is; out of compliment to you, of course, I could eat anything, but the pies are delicacies. — Where do you get your veal?”

“Well, if you will have pies you shall, Major Bounce.” — That was the name which the “swaggering companion” appended to his disgusting corporealty.

“Certainly, my dear, certainly. As I was saying, I could freely, to compliment you, eat old Tomkins, the tailor, of Fleet Street.”

“Really. How do you think he would taste?”

“Tough!”

“Ha! Ha!”

It was an odd laugh that of Mrs. Lovett’s. Had she borrowed it from Todd?

"My dear Mrs. L.," said the major, "what made you laugh in that sort of way? Ah, if I could only persuade you to go from L to B —"

"Sir?"

"Now, my charmer, seriously speaking: — Here am I, Major Bounce, a gentleman with immense expectations, ready and willing to wed the most charming woman under the sun, if she will only say 'yes.' "

"Have you any objection to America?"

"America? None in the least. — With you for a companion, America would be a Paradise. A regular garden of, what do you call it, my dear? Only say the word, my darling."

The major's arm was gently insinuated round the lady's waist, and after a few moments she spoke.

"Major Bounce, I — I have made money."

"The devil! — So have I, but the police one day — ahem! — Ahem! — what a cough I have."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing — nothing — only a joke. You said you had made money, and that put me in mind of what I read in the 'Chronicle' today of some coiners, that's all. Ha-ha!"

"When I spoke of making money, I meant in the way of trade, but having made it, I should not like to spend it in London, and be pointed out as the well-known pie woman."

"Pie woman! Oh, the wretches — only let —"

"Peace. Hold your tongue, and hear me out. If I marry and retire, it will be far from here — very far indeed."

"Ah, any land, with you." The major absolutely saluted the lady.

"Be quiet. Pray, in what service are you a major?"

"The South American, my love. A much higher service than the British."

"Indeed."

"Lord bless you, yes. If I was now to go to my estates in South America, there would be a jubilee of ten days at the very least, and the people as well as the government would not know how to make enough of me, I can assure you. In

fact, I have as much right to take the rank of general as of major, but the natural modesty of a military man, and of myself in particular, steps in and says 'A major be it.' "

"Then you have property?"

"Property — property? I believe you, I have. Lots!"

The major dealt his forehead a slap as he spoke, which might be taken as an indication that that was where his property was situated, and that it consisted of his ignorance and impudence — very good trading capitals in this world for, strange to say, the parties solely possessing such qualifications get on much better than education, probity, and genius can push forward their unhappy victims. Mrs. Lovett was silent for some minutes, during which the major saluted her again. Then, suddenly rising, she said —

"I will give you an answer tomorrow. Go away now. We shall be soon interrupted. If I do consent to be yours, there will be something to do before we leave England."

"By Jove, only mention it to me, and it is as good as done. By-the-bye, there is something to do before I leave here, and that is, my charmer, to pay you for the pies."

"Oh, no — no."

"Yes, yes — my honour. Touch my honour, even in regard of a pie, and touch my life. — I put two guineas in one end of my purse, to pay my glover in the Strand, and at the other end are some small coins — where the deuce — can — I — have — put — it."

The major made an affectation of feeling in all his pockets for his lost purse, and then, with a serio-comic look, he said —

"By Jove, some rascal has picked my pocket."

"Never mind me," said Mrs. Lovett, "I don't want payment for the pies."

"Well, but — the — the glover. Poor devil, and I promised him his money this morning. For a soldier and a man of honour to break his word is death. What shall I do? — Mrs. L., could you lend me a couple of guineas until I have the happiness of seeing you again?"

"Certainly, major, certainly I can."

The gallant son of Mars pocketed the coins, and after saluting Mrs. Lovett some half score of times — and she, the beast, liked it — he left the shop and went chuckling into the Strand, where in a few minutes he was in a pot-house, from whence he emerged not until he had liquidated one of the guineas. Was

Mrs. Lovett taken in by the major? Did she believe his title, or his wealth, and his common honesty? Did she believe in the story of the purse and of the two guineas that were to be paid to the poor glover because he wanted them? No — no — certainly not. But for all that, she admired the major. — He was her *beau ideal* of a fine man! That was sufficient. Moreover, being what he was — a rogue, cheat, and common swindler — she could exercise, so she thought, a species of control over him which no decent man would put up with, and so in her own mind she had determined to marry the major and fly; but as she said — "There was a little something to be done first." Did that relate to the disposal of Todd? We shall see. If she calculated upon the major putting Sweeney Todd out of the way, she sadly miscalculated; but the wisest heads will blunder. Compared to Todd, the major was indeed a poor creature; but Mrs. Lovett, in the stern courage of her own intellect, could not conceive the possibility of the great, puffy, bloated, fierce Major Bounce being as arrant a coward as ever was kicked. He was so, though, for all that. After he had left her, Mrs. Lovett sat for a long time in a profound reverie, and as it happened that no one came into the shop; the current of her evil thoughts was uninterrupted.

"I have sufficient," she said; "and before it gets too late, I will leave this mode of life. Why did I — tempted by the fiend Todd — undertake it, but that I might make wealth by it, and so assume a position that my heart panted for. I will not delay until it is too late, or I may lose the enjoyment that I have sacrificed so much to find the means of getting. I live in this world but for the gratification of the senses, and finding that I could not gratify them without abundant means, I fell upon this plan. I — ah — that is he —"

Suddenly the swaggering companion, the redoubtable Major Bounce, rushed past the shop window, without so much as looking in for a single moment, and made his way towards Carey Street. Mrs. Lovett started up and made her way into the front shop. Major Bounce was out of sight, but from Fleet Street came a poor, draggled, miserable looking woman, making vain efforts at a speed which her weakness prevented her from keeping up. — She called aloud —

"Stop! Stop! — Only a moment, Flukes! Only a moment, John. Stop! — Stop!"

Her strength failed her, and she fell exhausted upon Mrs. Lovett's doorstep.

"Heartless! — Heartless ever!" she cried. "May the judgment of the Almighty reach him — may he suffer — yes — may he suffer only what I have suffered."

"Who and what are you?" said Mrs. Lovett.

"Poor, and therefore everything that is abject and despicable in London."

"What a truth," said Mrs. Lovett. "What a truth that is. Who would not do even as I do to avoid poverty in a widowed life! — It is too horrible. Amid savages it is nothing, but here it is indeed criminality of the deepest dye. Whom did you call after, woman?"

“My husband.”

“Husband. Describe him.”

“A sottish looking man, with moustache. Once seen, he is not easily mistaken — ruffian and villain are stamped by nature upon his face.”

Mrs. Lovett winced a little.

“Come in,” she said, “I will relieve you for the present. Come in.”

The woman by a great effort succeeded in rising and crossing the threshold. Mrs. Lovett gave her a seat, and having presented her with a glass of cordial and a pie, she waited until the poor creature should be sufficiently recovered to speak composedly, and then she said to her with perfect calmness, as though she was by no manner of means personally interested in the matter —

“Now tell me — is the man with moustache and the braided coat, who passed hastily up Bell Yard a few moments only before you, really your husband?”

“Yes, madam, that is Flukes —”

“Who?”

“Flukes, madam.”

“And pray who and what is Flukes?”

“He was a tailor, and he might have been as respectable a man, and earned as honest and good a living as any one in the trade, but a love of idleness and dissipation undid him.”

“Flukes — a tailor?”

“Yes, madam; and now that I am utterly destitute, and in want of the common necessaries of life, if I chance to meet him in the streets and ask him for the merest trifle to relieve my necessities, he flies from me in the manner he has done today.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, madam. If we were in a lonely place he would strike me, so that I should, from the injury he would do me, be unable to follow him, but that in the public streets he dare not do, for he fears some man would interfere and put a stop to his cruelty.”

“There, my good woman,” said Mrs. Lovett, “there are five shillings for you. Go now, for I expect to be busy very shortly.”

With a profusion of thanks, that while they lasted were quite stunning, poor Mrs. Flukes left the pie shop and hobbled homewards. When she was gone the colour went and came several times upon the face of Mrs. Lovett, and then she repeated to herself — “Flukes — a tailor!”

“Pies ready?” said a voice at the door.

“Not quite.”

“How long, mum; we want half a dozen of the muttons today.”

“In about ten minutes.”

“Thank you, I’ll look in again.”

“Flukes — a tailor? Indeed! — Flukes — a tailor? Well I ought to have expected something like this. What a glorious thing it is really to care for no one but oneself after all. I shall lose my faith in — in — fine men.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII
Tobias's Mother Awakens Old Recollections

Poor Tobias still remains upon his bed of sickness. The number of hours at the expiration of which the medical man had expected him to recover were nearly gone. In Colonel Jeffery's parlour three persons, besides himself, were assembled. These three were his friend the captain, Sir Richard Blunt, and Mrs. Ragg. The lady was sitting with a not over clean handkerchief at her eyes, and keeping up a perpetual motion with her knee, as though she were nursing some fractious baby, and Mrs. Ragg had been used of late to go out as a monthly nurse occasionally, which, perhaps, accounted for this little peculiarity.

"Now, madam," said the colonel, "you quite understand, I hope, that you are not to mention to any living soul the fact of your son Tobias being with me."

"Oh, dear me, no, sir. Who should I mention it to?"

"That we can't tell," interrupted the captain, "you are simply desired not to tell it."

"I'm sure I don't see anybody once in a week, sir."

"Good God! woman," cried the colonel, "does that mean that when you do see any one you will tell it?"

"Lord love you, sir, it's few people as comes to see you when you are down in the world. I'm sure it's seldom enough a soul taps at my door with a 'Mrs. Ragg, how are you?' "

"Now was there ever such an incorrigible woman as this?"

"If you were to talk to her for a month," said Sir Robert Blunt, "you would not get a direct answer from her. Allow me to try something else — Mrs. Ragg."

"Yes, sir — humbly at your service, sir."

"If you tell any one that Tobias is here, or indeed anywhere within your knowledge, I will apprehend you about a certain candlestick."

"Goodness gracious, deliver us."

"Do you understand that, Mrs. Ragg? You keep silence about Tobias, and I keep silence about the candlestick. You speak about Tobias, and I speak about the candlestick."

Mrs. Ragg shook her head and let fall a torrent of tears, which the magistrate took as sufficient evidence that she did understand him and would act accordingly, so he added —

"Shall we all proceed up stairs? For a great deal will depend upon the boy's first impression when he awakens — and in this case we should not lose a chance."

In pursuance of this sound advice they all proceeded to poor Tobias's bedroom, and there he lay in that profound repose which the powerful opiate administered to him had had the effect of producing. It did not seem as though he had moved head or foot since they had left him. His face was very pale, and when Mrs. Ragg saw him she burst into tears, exclaiming —

"He is dead — he is dead!"

"No such thing, madam," said Colonel Jeffery. "He only sleeps."

"But, oh deary me, what makes him look so old and so strange now? He was bad enough when I saw him last, poor fellow, but not like this."

"He has received ill usage from someone, and that is precisely what we want to find out. If you can get from him the particulars of what he has suffered, we will take care those who have made him suffer shall not escape."

"Bless you, gentlemen, what's the use of that if my poor boy is killed?"

There was a good home truth in these words from Mrs. Ragg, although, upon the score of general social policy, they might well be answered. An argument with Mrs. Ragg, however, upon such a subject was not very apropos. The colonel made her sit down by Tobias's bedside, and he was then upon the point of remarking to his friend, the captain, that it would be as well, since so many hours had passed, to send for the medical man, when that personage made his appearance.

"Has he awakened?" he asked.

"No — not yet."

"Oh, I see you have a nurse."

"It is his mother. We hope that she, by talking to him familiarly, may produce a good effect, and possibly rid him of that bewilderment of intellect under which he now labours. What think you, sir?"

"That it is a good thought. Let us darken the room as much as possible, as twilight will be most grateful to him upon awakening, which he must do shortly."

The curtains of the window were so arranged that the room was in a state of semidarkness, and then they all waited with no small anxiety for Tobias to

recover from the deep and deathlike sleep that had come over him. After about five minutes he moved uneasily and uttered a low moan.

"Speak to him, Mrs. a — a — what's your name?"

"Ragg, sir."

"Aye, Ragg, just speak to him; of course he is well acquainted with your voice, and it may have the effect of greatly rousing him from his lethargic condition."

Poor Mrs. Ragg considered that she had some very extraordinary post to perform, and accordingly she collected to her aid all her learning, which, interrupted by her tears, and now and then by a sob, which she had to gulp down like a large globule of castor oil, had certainly rather a droll effect.

"My dear Tobias — my dear — lie a bed, sluggard, you know — well, I never — Put the kettle on, Polly, and let's all have tea. Tobias, my ear — bless us and save us, are you going to stay in bed all day?"

Another groan from Tobias.

"Well, my dear, perhaps you won't mind getting up and just running towards the corner for a bunch of watercresses? Dear heart alive, there goes the muffin man like a lamplighter!"

It was by such domestic themes that Mrs. Ragg sought to recall the wandering senses of poor Tobias to a cognisance of the present. But alas! His thoughts were still in the dim and misty land of visions. Suddenly he spoke —

"Hush — hush! There they come! — Elephants! — Elephants! — on — on — on. Now for the soldiers, and all mad — mad — mad! Hide me in the straw — deep in a world of straw. Hush! He comes. Sing, oh sing again! — And he — he will not suspect."

The surgeon made a sign to Mrs. Ragg to speak again.

"Why, Tobias, my dear, what are you talking about? Do you mean the Elephant and Castle?"

"Call to his remembrance," said the surgeon, "some old scenes."

"Yes, sir, but when one's heart and all that sort of thing is in one's mouth it's very difficult to recollect things oneself. Tobias!"

"Yes — yes. Ha —ha!"

It was a low, plaintive, strange laugh that, that came from the poor boy whose mind had been so overthrown, and it jarred upon the feelings of all who heard it.

"Tobias, do you recollect the little cottage down the lane at Holloway where we lived, and the cockroaches, and the strange cat, you know, Tobias, that would not go away? Don't you recollect, Tobias, how the coals there were all slates, and how your poor father, as is dead and gone — "

"Yes, I see him now."

Mrs. Ragg gave a faint scream.

"Father! — Father!" said Tobias, as he held out his arms, and the big tears rolled down his cheeks. "Father — father, Todd has not got me now. Don't cry so, father. Stand out of the way of the elephants."

"My dear! My dear!" cried Mrs. Ragg, "Do you want to break my heart?"

Tobias rose to a sitting position in the bed, and looked his mother in the face —

"Are you, too, mad?" he said. "Are you, too, mad? Did you tell of Todd?"

"Yes, the only way," said Colonel Jeffery, "for people not to be mad, is to tell of Todd."

"Yes — yes."

"And so you, Tobias, will tell us all you know. That is what we want you to do, and then you will be quite happy and comfortable for the remainder of your days, and live with your mother again far from any apprehension from Todd. Do you understand me?"

Tobias opened his mouth several times in an eager, gasping sort of manner, as though he would have said something rapidly, but he could not. He placed his hands upon his brain, and rocked to and fro for a few moments, and then he broke out into the same low, peculiar laugh that had before so strangely affected Colonel Jeffery and the others who were there present in that room. The surgeon shook his head as he said, mournfully —

"It is of no use!"

"Do you really think so?" said the colonel.

"For the present, I am convinced that it is of no use to attempt to recall his wandering senses. Time will do wonders, and he has the one grand element of youth in his favour. That, as well as time, will do wonders. The case is a bad

one, and the shock the brain of this lad has received must be a most fearful one."

"Do not," said Sir Richard Blunt, "give up so readily, Mrs. Ragg; I would have you try him again. Speak to him again of his father — that seemed to be the topic that most moved him."

Mrs. Ragg could hardly do so for her tears, but she managed to stammer out —

"Tobias, do you recollect when your father bought you the rabbit, and out of vexation, the creature eat its way out of a willowwork cage in the night? Do you remember your poor father's funeral, Tobias, and how we went, you and I, my poor boy, to take the last look at the only one who — who — who — "

Mrs. Ragg could get no further.

"Ha — ha — ha!" laughed Tobias, "Who told of Todd?"

"Who is this Todd," said the surgeon, "that he continually speaks of, and shudders at the very name of?"

Colonel Jeffery glanced at Sir Richard Blunt, and the latter, who wished the affair by no means to transpire, merely said —

"We are quite as much in the dark as you, sir. It is just what we should like to know, who this Todd is, whose very name seems to hold the imagination of this poor boy in a grasp of iron. I begin to think that nothing more can be done now."

"Nothing, gentlemen, you may depend," said the surgeon. "How old is the lad?"

"Sixteen as never was," replied Mrs. Ragg, "and a hard time I had of it, sir, as you may suppose."

The surgeon did not exactly see how he was called upon to suppose anything of the sort; however he made no further remark to Mrs. Ragg, but continued in conversation for some time with Colonel Jeffery, who informed him that Tobias should remain for a time where he was, so that there should be every possible chance given for his recovery.

"I wish you to continue attending upon him, sir," he added, "for I would spare nothing that medical advice can suggest to restore him. He has, I am convinced, been a great sufferer."

"That is sufficiently clear, sir. You may rely upon my utmost attention."

"Mrs. Ragg," said the colonel, "can you cook?"

"Cook, sir? Lord bless you, sir. I can cook as well as here and there a one, though I say it that oughtn't, and if poor Tobias was but all right, I should not go to be after making myself miserable now about bygones. What's to be cured must be endured — it's a long lane as hasn't a turning. As poor Mr. Ragg often used to say when he was alive — 'Grizzling ain't fattening.' "

"I should think it was not. It so happens, Mrs. Ragg, that there is a vacancy in my house for a cook, and if you like to come and take the place, you can look after Tobias as well, you know, for I intend him to remain here for the present. Only remember, you tell this to no one."

"Me, sir! Lord bless you, sir, who do I see?"

The colonel was by no means anxious to convince himself a second time of the impossibility of bringing Mrs. Ragg to a precise answer, so he changed the subject, and it was finally arranged that without a word to any one upon the subject, that very night Mrs. Ragg was to take up her abode with Tobias. After this had been all arranged, the three gentlemen proceeded to the dining room, and held a consultation.

Tobias's Delerium

"Of the guilt of Todd," said the magistrate, "I entertain no doubt, but I own that I am extremely anxious to bring the crime legally home to him."

"Exactly," said the colonel, "and I can only say that every plan you can suggest will be cheerfully acquiesced in by me and my friend here."

The captain signified his assent.

"Be assured, gentlemen," added Sir Richard Blunt, "that something shall be done of a decisive character before many days are past. I have seen the higher powers upon the subject, and have full authority, and you may rest satisfied that I shall not mind running a little personal risk to unravel the mysteries that surround the career of Sweeney Todd. I think one thing may be done conveniently."

"What is that, sir?"

"Why, It seems to be pretty well understood that no one resides in Todd's house but himself, and as now he has no boy — unless he has provided himself with one already — he must go out sometimes and leave the place to itself, and upon one of those occasions an opportunity might be found of thoroughly searching the upper part, at all events, of his house."

"Could that be done with safety?"

"I think so. At all events, I feel inclined to try it. If I do so, and make any discovery, you may depend upon my letting you know without an hour's delay, and I sincerely hope that all that will take place may have the effect of setting your mind at rest regarding your friend, Mr. Ingestrie."

"But not of restoring him to us?"

The magistrate shook his head.

"I think, sir," he said, "that you ought to consider that he has, if any one has, fallen a victim to Sweeney Todd."

"Alas! I fear so."

"All the evidence points that way, and we can only take measures in the best way possible to bring his murderer to justice — that that murderer is Sweeney Todd, I cannot for one moment of time bring myself to doubt."

Sir Richard Blunt shortly afterwards left Colonel Jeffery's house and proceeded to the execution of a plan of proceeding, with the particulars of which he had not thought proper to entrust to the colonel, and his friend the captain. Long habits of caution had led the magistrate — who was not one of the fancy magistrates of the present day, but a real police officer — active, cool, and determined — to trust no one but himself with his secrets, and so he kept to himself what he meant to do that night. When he was gone, Colonel Jeffery had a long talk with his friend, and the subject gradually turned to Johanna, whom the colonel yet hoped, he said, to be able one day to call his own.

"No one," he remarked, "would be more truly rejoiced than I to restore Mark Ingestrie to her whom he loves, and whose affection for him is of so enduring and remarkable a character, but if, as Sir Richard Blunt supposes, he is really no more, I think Johanna, by being mine, would stand a better chance of

recovering her serenity, if not of enjoying all the happiness in this world that she deserves."

"Hope for the best," said the captain, "and recollect what the surgeon said as regarded Tobias, that time works wonders."

CHAPTER XXXIX
The Search at Todd's

The house in Fleet Street, next door to Todd's, was kept by a shoemaker, named Wheeler, and in this shoemaker's window was a bill, only put up on the very day of poor Tobias's escape from Peckham, announcing — "An Attic to Let." This was rather an alluring announcement to Sir Richard Blunt. At about half an hour after sunset on the same evening that had witnessed the utter discomfiture of the attempt to restore poor Tobias Ragg to his senses, two men stood in the deep recess of a doorway immediately opposite to the house of Sweeney Todd. These two men were none other than Sir Richard and his esteemed but rather eccentric officer, Mr. Crotchet. After some few moments' silence, Sir Richard spoke, saying —

"Well, Crotchet — what do you think of the affair now?"

"Nothink."

"Nothing? You do not mean that, Crotchet?"

"Says what I means — means what I says, and then leaves it alone."

"But you have some opinion, Crotchet?"

"Had, master — had —"

"Well, Crotchet; I think we can now cross over the way, and endeavour to get possession of the shoemaker's attic, from which we can get into Todd's house."

"And find nothink criminatory."

"You think not; but do you know, Crotchet, I am of opinion that the greatest and cleverest rogues not unfrequently leave themselves open to detection, in some little particular, which they have most strangely and unaccountably neglected. I am not without a hope that we shall find the man, Sweeney Todd, to be one of that class, and if so, we shall not fail to do some good by our visit to the house. — You remain here and watch for his going out, and when he is gone, come over the way and ask for Mr. Smith. Have you seen Fletcher?"

"No, but he will be here presently, and will wait till that 'ere fellow goes away, if so be as he goes out, and then when you and me hears two notes on the key-bugle, it will be time all for us to go for to come to mizzle."

"Very good," said Sir Richard Blunt, and he crossed over to the shoemaker's shop, leaving Crotchet on the watch in the deep doorway.

The fact is, they had been waiting there for some time, in the hope that Todd would go out, but he had not stirred, so that the magistrate thought it would

be as well to let Crotchet remain while he secured the shoemaker's attic, with a view to ulterior proceedings. The magistrate was dressed as a respectable, staid clerk, and he walked into the shoemaker's shop with a gravity of gait that was quite imposing.

"You have an attic to let," he said. "Is it furnished?"

"Oh yes, sir, and comfortably too. My missus looks after all that, I can tell you."

"Very well, I want just such a place; for, do you know, since I have left a widower, I like to live in some lively situation, and as all my friends are at Cambridge, and not a soul that I know in London, I don't half fancy going into an out of the way place to live; though, I dare say, for all that, London is safe enough."

"Why, I don't know that," said the shoemaker. "However, you'll be safe enough here, sir, never doubt. The rent is four shillings a week."

"Very good. I think, if you will show it to me, we shall suit each other. The great object with me is to find myself in the house of a respectable man, and one look at you, sir, is quite sufficient to show me that you are one."

This was all highly flattering to the shoemaker, and he was so well pleased to get such a respectable, civil spoken, middle aged gentleman into his house, that he was prepared, upon half a word to that effect, to come down a whole sixpence a week in the rent, if needs were. Of course, the would-be lodger was well enough pleased with the attic, and turning to the shoemaker, he handed him four shillings, saying —

"As my friends are all so far off, I ought to give you a week's rent in advance, instead of a reference, and there it is."

After this, who could ask any further questions? The magistrate, just, of his own accord, added that his name was Smith, and that he would stay a short time in his room if the shoemaker could oblige him with a light, which was done accordingly, and when the shoemaker's wife came home — that lady having been out to gossip with no less a personage than Mrs. Lovett — he was quite elated to tell her what a lodger they had, and as he handed her the four shillings, saying "My dear, that will buy you the ribbon at Mrs. Keating's, the mercer, that you had set your mind upon," how could she be other than quite amiable?

"Well, John," she said, "for once in a way, I must say that you have shown great judgment, and if I had been at home myself, I could not have managed better."

This, we are quite sure, our lady readers will agree with us was as much as any married female ought to say. Sir Richard Blunt ascended to the attic, of which he was now, by virtue of a weekly tenancy, lord and master, with a light,

and closing the door, he cast his eyes around the apartment. Its appointments were decidedly not luxurious. In one corner a stump bedstead awakened anything but lively associations, while the miserable little grate, the front of which was decidedly composed of some portions of an old iron hoop from a barrel, did not look redolent of comforts. The rest of the apartments were what the auctioneers call *en suite*, the said auctioneers having but a dreamy notion of what *en suite* means. But the appointments or disappointments of his attic were of little consequence to Sir Richard Blunt. It was the window that offered attractions to him. Softly opening it, he looked out, and found that there was a leaden gutter, with only the average amount of filth in it, the drain being, of course, stopped up by a dishclout and a cracked flowerpot, which is perfectly according to custom in London. He saw enough at a glance, however, to convince him that there would be no difficulty whatever in getting to the attic of Todd's house, and that fact once ascertained, he waited with exemplary and placid patience the return of Crotchet. Now, Sweeney Todd was, during much of that day, in what is denominated a brown study. He could not make up his mind in what way he was to make up for the loss of the senses of Tobias. It was with him an equal choice of disagreeables. To have a boy, or not to have a boy, which to do became an anxious question.

"A boy is a spy," muttered Todd to himself — "a spy upon all my actions — a perpetual police officer in a small way, constantly at my elbow — an alarum continually crying to me 'Todd! Todd! Beware!' Curses on them all, and yet what a slave am I to this place without a lad; and, after all, when they do become too troublesome and inquisitive, I can but dispose of them as I have disposed of him."

Todd patrolled his shop for some time, thus communing with himself; but as yet he could not make up his mind which to do. — A boy or not a boy? — That was the question. He remained in this unsatisfactory state of mind until sunset had passed away and the dim twilight was wrapping all things in obscurity. Then, without deciding upon either course, he suddenly, in a very hurried manner, shut up his shop, and closing the outer door carefully, he walked rapidly towards Bell Yard. He was going to Mrs. Lovett's, whither we shall follow him at a more convenient opportunity, but just now we have Sir Richard Blunt's enterprise to treat of. Todd had no sooner got fairly out of sight, than Mr. Crotchet emerged from the doorway in which he was concealed, and went a few paces down Fleet Street, towards the Temple. — He soon met a man genteelly dressed, who seemed to be sauntering along in an idle fashion.

"All's right, Fletcher," said Crotchet.

"Oh, is it?"

"Yes. Have you got that 'ere little article with you?"

"The bugle? Oh, yes."

"Mind you blows it then, if you sees Todd come home, and no gammon."

"Trust to me old fellow."

Without another word, Mr. Crotchet crossed over the road, and opened the shop door of the shoemaker. Now the face of Mr. Crotchet was not the most engaging in the world, and when he looked in upon the shoemaker, that industrious workman felt a momentary pang of alarm, and particularly when Mr. Crotchet, imparting a horrible obliquity to his vision, said —

"How is yer, old 'un?"

"Sir?" said the shoemaker.

"You couldn't show a fellow the way up to Smith's *hattic*, I supposes?"

"Smith — Smith? — Oh, dear me, that's the new lodger. I'll call him down if you wait here."

"No occasion. I'll toddle up, my tulip. He's a relation o' mine, don't you see the likeness atween us? — We was considered the handsomest pair o' men as was in London at one time, and it sticks to us now, I can tell you."

"If you wish, sir, to go up, instead of having Mr. Smith called down, of course, sir, you can, as you are an old friend. Allow me to light you, sir."

"Not the least occasion. Only tell me where it isn't, and I'll find out where it is, old chap."

"It's the front attic."

"All's right. Don't be sich a hass as to be flaring away arter me, with that 'ere double dip, I can find my way in *worserer* places than this here. All's right — easy does it."

To the surprise of the shoemaker, his mysterious visitor opened the little door at the back of the shop, which led to the staircase, and in a moment disappeared up them.

"Upon my life, this Mr. Smith," thought the shoemaker, "seems to have some very strange connections. He told me he knew nobody in London, and then here comes one of the ugliest fellows, I think, I ever saw in all my life, and claims acquaintance with him. What ought I to do? — Ought I to tell Mrs. W. of it?"

At this moment Mrs. W. made her appearance from the mercer's, with the ribbon that had tickled her feminine fancy — all smiles and sweetness. The heart of the shoemaker died within him, for well he knew what visitation he was likely to come in for, if anything connected with the lodger turned out wrong.

"Ahem! Ahem! Well, my dear, have you got the ribbon?"

“Oh yes, to be sure, and a love it is —”

“Ah! — Ah!”

“What’s the matter?”

“Nothing, my dove. I was only thinking that it wasn’t the ribbon that makes folks look lovely, but the person who wears it. You would look beautiful in any ribbon.”

“Why, my dear, that may be very true, but still one ought to look as well as one can, you know, for the credit of one’s maker.”

“Oh, yes, yes, but I was only thinking —”

“Thinking of what? Bless me, Mr. Wheeler, how mystifying you are tonight, to be sure. What do you mean by this conduct? Was ever a woman so pestered and tormented with a fool of a man, who looks like an owl in an ivy bush for all the world, or a crow peeping into a marrowbone.”

“My duck, how can you say so?”

“Duck indeed? Keep your ducks to yourself. Hoity toity. Duck, indeed. You low good for nothing —”

“My dear, my dear. I was only thinking, and not in the least wishing to offend.”

“But you do offend me, you nasty insinuating, sneering wretch. — What were you thinking about? Tell me this moment.”

“Why, that a pretty silver-grey satin mantle would set off your figure so well, that —”

“Oh, John!”

“That, though quarter day is near at hand, I think you ought to have one.”

“Really, Jackey.”

“Yes, my dear.”

“What a man you are. Ah, Jackey, after all, though we have, like all people, our little tiffs and wiffs and sniffs — after all, I say it, perhaps, that should not say it, you are a dear, good, obliging —”

“Don’t mention it.”

"Yes, but —"

"No, don't. By-the-bye, do you know, Susey, that I begin to have my suspicions — mind, I may be wrong, but I begin to have my suspicions, do you know, that our attic lodger is, after all, no better than he should be."

"Gracious!"

"Hush! Hush! There has been a man here; so ugly — so — so — squintified, if I may say so, that between you and me and the post, my dear, it's enough to frighten any one to look at him, it is indeed. — But as for the silver-grey satin, don't stint the quality for a sixpence or so."

"The wretch!"

"And take care to have plenty of rich trimming to it."

"The monster!"

"And have something pretty to match it, so that when you go to St. Dunstan's next Sunday, all the folks will ask what fine lady from court has come into the city out of curiosity to see the old church."

"Oh, Jackey."

"That's what I call," muttered Mr. Wheeler, "pouring oil upon the troubled waters." He then spoke aloud, saying — "Now, my dear, it is your judgment and advice I want. What shall we do in this case? For you see — first of all, the new lodger denies knowing a soul, and then, in half an hour, an old acquaintance calls upon him here."

The silver-grey satin — the flattering allusion to the probable opinion of the people in St. Dunstan's Church on the next Sunday — the obscure allusion to a something else to match it, and the appeal to her judgment, all had the effect desired upon Mrs. Wheeler, who, dropping entirely the hectoring tone, fell into her husband's views, and began calmly and dispassionately, without abuse or crimination, to discuss the merits, or rather the probable demerits, of the new lodger.

"I tell you, my dear, my opinion," said the lady. "As for stopping in the house and not knowing who and what he is, I won't."

"Certainly not, my love."

"Then, Mr. W., the only thing to do, is for you and I to go upstairs, and say that as I was out you did not know a Mr. Jones had spoken about the lodging, but that, if he could give a reference in London, we would still have him for a lodger."

“Very well. That will be only civil, and if he says he can’t, but must send to Cambridge —”

“Why then, my dear, you must say that he may stay till he writes, and I’ll be guided by his looks. If I give you a nudge, so, with my elbow, you may consider that it’s pretty right.”

“Very well, my dove.”

CHAPTER XL
Sir Richard Pries into Todd's Secrets

Crotchet soon reached the attic floor of the shoemaker's house, and although in profound darkness, he managed, as he thought, to touch the right door. Tap! Tap! went Crotchet's knuckles, and as he did so he followed a habit very general, when the knock is only a matter of ceremony, and opened the door at the same moment. He popped his head into a room where there was a light, and said —

"Here yer is."

A scream was the reply to him, and then Crotchet saw, by the state of affairs there, that he had made a little mistake in the topography of the attic landing. The attic in which he found himself, for he had crossed the threshold, was in the occupation of an elderly gaunt looking female, who was comforting her toes by keeping them immersed in a pan of water by the side of a little miserable fire, which was feebly pretending to look cheerful in the little grate.

"Lor', mum!" said Crotchet. "Who'd a thought o' seeing of you?"

"Oh, you monster. You base man, what do you want here?"

"Nothink!"

"Be off with you, or else I'll call the *perlice*."

"Oh, I'm a going, mum. How do you bring it in, mum, in a general way?"

"Help! Murder!"

"Lord bless us, what a racket. Don't you go for to fancy, mum, that I comed up these here attic stairs for to see you. Quite the rewerse, mum."

"Then, pray who did you come to see, you big ugly monster you? The other attic is empty. Oh, you base infidel. I believe I knows what men are by this time."

"No doubt on it, mum. Howsomedever this here's the wrong door, I take it. No harm done, mum. I wish you and your toes, mum, a remarkably good evening."

"Crotchet," said a voice.

"Here yer is."

Sir Richard Blunt had been attentively listening for Crotchet, and when he heard the screams of the old lady in the next attic, he opened the door of his

apartment, and looked out. He soon discovered what was amiss, and called out accordingly.

“Bless us, who’s that?”

“The Emperor o’ Russia, mum,” said Crotchet. “He’s took that ’ere attic next to you, cos he’s heard so much o’ the London chumbley pots, and he wants to have a good look at them at his leisure.”

With these words Mr. Crotchet left the old lady’s attic, and closed the door carefully, leaving her, no doubt, in a considerable state of bewilderment. In another moment he was with the magistrate.

“Crotchet,” said Sir Richard, “I thought I told you to do this thing as quietly as you possibly could.”

“Down as a hammer, sir.”

“I think it is anything but down.”

“Right as a trivet, sir, with a hextra leg. Lots o’ fear, but no danger. Now for it, Sir Richard. What lay is we to go on?”

It certainly never occurred to Sir Richard Blunt to hold any argument with Mr. Crotchet. He had long since found out that he must, if he would avail himself of his services — and for courage and fidelity he was unequalled — put up with his eccentricities; so upon this occasion he said no more about Crotchet’s mistake, but, after a few moments’ pause, pointing to the attic door, he said —

“Secure it.”

“All’s right.”

Crotchet took a curious little iron instrument from his pocket, and secured it into the wall by the side of the door. It did not take him more than a moment to do so, and then, fully satisfied of the efficacy of his work, he said —

“Let ’em get over that if they can.”

While he was so occupied. Sir Richard Blunt himself had opened the window, and fastened it open securely.

“Now, Crotchet,” he said, “look to your pistols.”

“All’s right, sir.”

The magistrate carefully examined the priming of his own arms, and seeing that all was right, he at once emerged from the attic through the window on to

the parapet of the house. He might have crept along the gutter just within the parapet, but the gutter aforesaid was not exactly in the most salubrious condition. Indeed, from its filthy state, one might have fancied it to be peculiarly under the direction of the city commissioners of sewers. Crotchet followed Sir Richard closely, and in a moment or two they had traversed a sufficient portion of the parapet to find themselves at the attic window of Todd's house. It would have been next thing to a miracle if they had been seen in their progress, for the roof was very dark coloured, and the night had fairly enough set in, so that if any one had by chance looked up from the street below, they would scarcely have discovered that there was anybody creeping along the parapet. Now there was a slight creaking noise for about half a minute, and then the window of Sweeney Todd's attic swung open.

"Come on," said Sir Richard, and he softly alighted in the apartment. Crotchet followed him, and then the magistrate carefully closed the window again, and left it in such a way, that a touch from within would open it. Then they were in profound darkness, and as it was no part of the policy of Sir Richard Blunt to run any unnecessary risks, he did not move one inch from the place upon which he stood until he had lighted a small hand lantern, which had a powerful reflector and a tin shade, which in a moment could be passed over the glass, so as to hide the light upon an emergency.

"Now, Crotchet," he said, "we shall see where we are."

"*Reether*," said Crotchet.

By holding the light some height up, they were able to command a good view of the attic. It was a miserable looking room: the walls were in a state of premature decay, and in several places lumps of mortar had fallen from the ceiling, making a litter of broken plaster upon the floor. It was entirely destitute of furniture, with the exception of an old stump bedstead, upon which there lay what looked like a quantity of old clothes.

"Safe enough," said Sir Richard.

"Stop!" said Crotchet.

"What's the matter?"

"There's something odd on the floor here. Don't you see as the dust has got into a crevice as is bigger nor all the other crevices, and goes right along this ways and then along that ways? Don't you move, sir. I'll be down upon it in a minute."

Mr. Crotchet laid himself down flat upon the floor, and then crept on until he came to that part of the flooring which had excited his suspicions. As soon as he pressed upon it with both his hands it gave way under them plainly, by the elevation of the other end of the three boards of which this trap was composed,

proclaiming that it was a moveable portion of the floor, revolving or turning upon one of the joists as a centre.

"Oh dear, how clever!" said Crotchet. "If Mr. Todd goes on a cutting away his joists in this here way he'll bring his blessed old house down with a run some day. How nice and handy, now, if any one was to step upon here — they'd go down into the room below, and perhaps break their blessed legs as they went."

The Secret Trap Discovered in Todd's House.

"Escape the first for us!" said Sir Richard.

"Oh, lor', yes. Now this here Todd thinks, by putting this here mantrap here, as he has *perwided* again any accidents; but we ain't them 'ere sort o' birds as is catched by chaff, not we. Why he must have spilted his blessed ceiling down below to make this here sort of a jigamaree concern."

"It's not a bad contrivance though, Crotchet. Its own weight, you see, restores it to its place again, and so there's no trouble with it."

"Oh dear, no. It's a what I calls a self-acting catch-'em-who-can sort o' machine. Yes, Sir Richard, I never did think that 'ere Todd was wery green. He don't know quite so much as we know; but yet he's a rum 'un."

"No doubt of it. Do you think, Crotchet, there is anything else in this attic to beware of?"

"Not likely; when he'd finished this here nice little piece of handywork, I dare say he said to himself — 'This will catch 'em,' and so down stairs he toddled, and grinned like a monkey as has swallowed a whole nut by haccident, and gived himself a pain in the side in consekence. 'That'll catch 'em,' says he."

Mr. Crotchet seemed so much amused at the picture he drew to himself of the supposed exultation of Todd, that for some moments he did nothing but laugh. The reader must not suppose, however, that in the circumstances of peril in which they were, he indulged in a regular "Ha! Ha!" — quite the contrary. He had a mode of laughing under such circumstances that was entirely his own, and which, while it made no noise, shook his huge frame as though some commotion had taken sudden possession of it, and the most ridiculous part of the process was the alarming suddenness with which he would become preternaturally serious again. But Sir Richard Blunt knew his peculiarities, and paid no attention to them, unless they very much interfered with business.

"We must not waste time. Come on, Crotchet."

Sir Richard walked to the door of the attic and tried it. It was as fast as though it had been part of the wall itself.

"So — so," he said. "Master Todd has taken some precautions against being surprised from the top of his house. He has nailed up this door as surely as any door was ever nailed up."

"Has he really, though?"

"Yes. Quick, Crotchet. You have your tools about you, I suppose."

"Never fear," said Crotchet. "I'm the *indiwedal* as never forgets nothink, and if I don't have the middle panel out o' this door a'most as soon as look at it, it's only 'cos it takes more time."

With this philosophical and indisputable remark, Mr. Crotchet stooped down before the door, and taking various exquisitely made tools from his pocket, he began to work at the door. He knocked nearly noiselessly, and it looked like something little short of magic to see how the panel was forced out of the door without any of the hammering and flustering which a carpenter would have made of it.

"All's right," he said. "If we can't creep through here, we are bigger than I think we is."

"That will do. Hush!"

They both listened attentively, for Sir Richard thought he heard a faint noise from the lower part of the house. As, however, five minutes of attentive listening passed away, and no repetition of it occurred, they thought it was only some one of those accidental sounds which will at times be heard in all houses whether occupied or not. Crotchet took the lead by creeping clearly enough through the opening that he had made in the door of the attic, and Sir Richard followed him. They were both, now, at the head of the staircase, and Sir Richard held up the lantern so as to have a good look around him. The walls looked damp and neglected. There were two other doors opening from that landing, but

neither of them was fastened, so that they entered the rooms easily. They took care, though, not to go beyond the threshold for fear of accidents, although it was very unlikely that Todd would take the trouble to construct a trapdoor in any other attic than the one which was so easily accessible from the parapet.

"Old clothes — old clothes!" said Crotchet. "There seems to be nothing else in these rooms."

"So it would appear," said Sir Richard.

He lifted up some of the topmost of a heap of garments upon the floor, and a cloud of moths flew upwards in confusion.

"There's the toggery," said Mr. Crotchet, "of the *smugged 'uns*!"

"You really think so."

"Knows it."

"Well, Crotchet, I don't think from what I know myself that we shall disagree about Todd's guilt. The grand thing is to discover how, and in what way he is guilty."

"Just so. I'm quite sure we have seed all as there is to see up here, so suppose we toddle down stairs now, sir. There's, perhaps, quite a lot o' wonders and natur', and art, down below."

"Stop a bit. Hold the lamp."

Crotchet did so, while Sir Richard took from his pocket a pair of thick linsey-woolsey stockings, and carefully drew them on over his boots, for the purpose of deadening the sound of his footsteps; and then he held the light, while Mr. Crotchet, who was similarly provided with linsey-woolseys, went through the same process. After this, they moved like spectres, so perfectly noiseless were their footsteps upon the stairs. Sir Richard went first, while Crotchet now carried the light, holding it sufficiently high that the magistrate could see the stairs before him very well, as he proceeded. It was quite evident, from the state of those stairs, as regarded undisturbed dust, that they had not been ascended for a considerable time; and indeed, Todd, considering the top of his house as perfectly safe after the precautions he had taken, did not trouble himself to visit it. Our adventurers reached the landing upon the second floor in perfect safety; and after giving a few minutes more to the precautionary measure of listening, they opened the first door that presented itself to the observation, and entered the room. They both paused in astonishment, for such a miscellaneous collection of matters as was in this room, could only have been expected to be met with in the shop of a general dealer. Several chairs and tables were loaded with wearing apparel of all kinds and conditions. The corners of the room were literally crowded with mobs of swords, walking sticks, and umbrellas; while a countless heap of hats lay upon the floor in disorder. You could not have

stepped into that room for miscellaneous personal appointments of one sort or another; and Mr. Crotchet and Sir Richard Blunt trod upon the hats as they walked across the floor, from sheer inability to get out of the way.

"Well," said Crotchet, "if so be as shaving should go out of fashion, Todd could set up a clothier's shop, and not want for stock to begin with."

"I can imagine," muttered the magistrate to himself, "what a trouble and anxiety all these things must be to Todd, and woollen goods are so difficult to burn. Crotchet, select some of the swords, and look if there are maker's names upon the blades."

While Crotchet was preparing this order. Sir Richard was making a hasty but sufficiently precise examination of the room.