CHAPTER XLI
The Mysterious Cupboard

"Here they are," said Crotchet. "Some of these are worth something."

"Get a cane or two, likewise."

"All's right, sir. I tell you what it is, sir. If there's such things as ghosts in the world, I wonder how this Todd can sleep o' nights, for he must have a plaguey lot of 'em about his bed of a night."

"Perhaps he satisfied himself upon that head, Crotchet, before he began his evil practices, for all we know; but let us make our way into another room, for I think we have seen all there is to see in this one."

"Not a doubt of it. It's only a kind of storeroom, this, and from the size of it, I should say it ain't the largest on this floor."

Sir Richard walked out of the room on to the landing place. All was perfectly still in the barber's house, and as he had heard nothing of the bugle sound in Fleet Street, he felt quite satisfied that Todd had not returned. It was a great thing, in all his daring exploits in discovering criminals, and successfully ferreting out their haunts, that he (Sir Richard) could thoroughly depend upon his subordinates. He knew they were not only faithful but brave. He knew that, let what might happen, they would never leave him in the lurch. Hence, in the present instance, he felt quite at his ease in the house of Todd, so long as he did not hear the sound of the bugle. Of course, personal danger he did not consider, for he knew he was, if even he had been alone, more than a match for Todd; but what he wanted was, not to overcome Sweeney Todd, but to find out exactly what were his practices. He could, upon the information he already had, have walked into Todd's shop at any time, and have apprehended him, but that would not have answered. What he wanted to do was to

"Pluck out the heart of his mystery,"

and, in order to do that, it was not only necessary that Todd should be at large, but that he should have no hint that such a person as he, Sir Richard Blunt, had his eyes wide open to his actions and manoeuvres. Hence was it that, in this examination of the house, he wished to keep himself so secret, and free from any observation. There were three rooms upon the second floor of Todd's house, and the very next one they met with, was the one immediately beneath the trap in the floor of the attic. A glance at the ceiling enabled them easily to perceive it. This room was larger than the other considerably, and in it were many boxes and chests, as well as in the centre an immense old-fashioned counting house desk, with six immense flaps to it, three upon each side, while a brass railing went along the middle.

"Ah!" said Sir Richard, "here will be something worth the examining, I hope."

"Let's take the cupboards first," said Crotchet. "There are two here, and as they are the first we have seen, let's look at 'em, Sir Richard. I never likes to be in a strange room long, without a peep in the cupboard."

"Very well, Crotchet. Look in that one to the left, while I look in this one to the right."

Sir Richard opened a cupboard door to the right of the fireplace in this room, while Crotchet opened one to the left.

"More clothes," said Sir Richard. "What's in yours, Crotchet?"

"Nothing at all. Yet stay. There's a something high up here. I don't know what it is, but I'll try and reach it if I can."

Crotchet went completely into the cupboard, but he had no sooner done so, than Sir Richard Blunt heard a strange crushing sound, and then all was still.

"Hilloa! What's that, Crotchet?"

He hastily stepped to the cupboard. The door had swung close. It was evidently hung upon its hinges in a manner to do so. With his disengaged hand, the magistrate at once pulled it open. Crotchet was gone. The astonishment of Sir Richard Blunt for a moment was excessive. There was the flooring of the cupboard perfectly safe, but no Crotchet. Nothing to his eyes had looked so like a magical disappearance as this, and with the trap in his hand, he stood while any one might have counted twenty, completely motionless and transfixed by astonishment. Starting then from this lethargic condition, he drew a pistol from his pocket, and rushed to the door of the room. At this instant, he heard the bugle sound clearly and distinctly in the street. Before the echo of the sound had died away, the magistrate was upon the landing place outside the door of the second floor. He listened intently, and heard some one below coughing. It was not the cough of Crotchet. What was he to do? If he did not make a signal to the officers in the street that all was safe, the house would soon be stormed, and, for all he knew, that might ensure the destruction of Crotchet, instead of saving him. For a moment, the resolution to go down the staircase at all hazards and face Todd — for he had no doubt but that he had come home — possessed him, but a moment's reflection turned the scale of thought in another direction. If the officers, not finding him make a signal that he was safe, did attack the house, they would not do so for some minutes. It was their duty not to be precipitate. He leant on the balustrade, and listened with an intentness that was perfectly painful. He heard the cough again from quite the lower part of the house, and then he became aware that some one was slowly creeping up the stairs. He had placed the slide over the bull's eye of his little lamp, so that all was darkness, but he heard the breathing of the person who was coming up towards him. He shrunk back close to the wall, determined to seize, and with an iron hand, any one who should reach the landing. Suddenly, from quite the lower part of the building, he heard the cough again. The thought, then, that it

must be Crotchet who was coming up, impressed itself upon him, but he would not speak. In a few moments some one reached the landing, and stretching out his right arm, Sir Richard caught whoever it was, and said in a whisper —

"Any resistance will cost you your life."

"Crotchet it is," said the newcomer.

"Ah, how glad I am it is you!"

"Reether. Hush. The old 'un is below. Ain't I shook a bit. It's a precious good thing as my bones is in the blessed habit o' holding on, one of 'em to the rest and all the rest to one, or else I should have tumbled to bits."

"Hush! Hush!"

"Oh, he's a good way off. That 'ere cupboard has got a descending floor with ropes and pullies, so down I went and was rolled out into a room below and up went the bit of flooring again. I was very nearly startled a little."

"Nearly?"

"Reether, but here I is. I got out and crept up stairs as soon as I could, 'cos, says I, the governor will wonder what the deuce has become of me."

"I did, indeed."

"Just as I thought. Sir Richard, just listen to me! I've got a fancy for Todd."

"A fancy for Todd?"

"Yes, and I want to stay here a few hours — yes, go and let them as is outside know all's right, and leave me here, I think somehow I shall like to be in this crib alone with Todd for an hour or two. You have got other business to see to, you know, so just leave me here; and mind yer, if I don't get here by six in the morning, just consider as he's got the better of me."

"No, Crotchet, I cannot."

"Can't what?"

"Consent to leave you here alone."

"Bother! What's the row, and where's the danger, I should like to know? Who's Todd? Who am I? Gammon!"

Sir Richard shook his head, although Crotchet could not very well see him shake it, and after a pause he added —

"I don't suppose exactly that there is much danger, Crotchet, but, at all events, I don't like it said that I brought you into this place and then left you here."

"Bother!"

"You go and leave me."

"A likely joke that. No, I tell yer what it is, Sir Richard. You knows me and I knows you, so what does it matter what other folks say? Business is business I hope, and don't you believe that I'm going to be such a flat as to throw away my life upon such a fellow as Todd. I think I can do some good by staying here; if I can't I'll come away, but I don't think, in either case, that Todd will see me. If he does I shall, perhaps, be forced to nab him, and that, after all, is the worst that can come of it."

"Well, Crotchet, you shall have your own way."

"Good."

"I will return to the attic as soon as I conveniently can, and, let what will happen to you, remember that you are not deserted."

"I knows it."

"Good bye. Take care of yourself, old friend."

"I means it."

"I should be indeed afflicted if anything were to happen to you."

"Gammon."

Sir Richard left him his own pistols, in addition to the pair which he, Crotchet, always had about him, so that he was certainly well armed, let what would happen to him in that house of Sweeney Todd's, which had now become something more than a mere object of suspicion to the police. Well, they knew Todd's guilt — it was the mode in which he was guilty only that still remained a mystery. The moment Sir Richard Blunt reached the attic again, he held his arm out at full length from the window, and waved to and fro the little lantern as a signal to the officers in the street that he was safe. This done, he would not return to the room he had hired of the bootmaker, but he resolved to wait about ten minutes longer in case anything should happen in the house below that might sound alarming. After that period of time, he resolved upon leaving for an hour or two, but he, of course, would not do so without apprising his officers of Crotchet's situation. During the time that had been passed by Crotchet and Sir Richard Blunt in Sweeney Todd's house, the shoemaker and his wife had had an adventure which created in their minds abundance of surprise. It will be recollected that the shoemaker's wife had decided upon what was to be done

regarding the new lodger — namely, that under the pretence that a Mr. Jones was a more satisfactory lodger, he was to be asked to be so good as to quit the attic he had so strangely taken. The arrival of Mr. Crotchet with so different a story from that told by Sir Richard Blunt certainly had the effect of engendering many suspicions in the minds of Sir Richard's new landlord and landlady.

"Well, my dear," said the shoemaker, "if you are willing to come upstairs, I will say what you wish to this man, particularly as his pretended friend don't seem to be coming down stairs again."

"Very well, my dear; I'll take the kitchen poker and follow you, and while I am behind you, if I think he is a pleasant man, you know, and we had better let him stay, I will give you a slight poke."

"Ahem! Thank you — yes."

Armed with the poker, the lady of the mansion followed her husband up the staircase, and perhaps we may fairly say that curiosity was as strong a feeling with her as any other in the business. To tell the truth, the shoemaker did not half like the job; but what will a man, who is under proper control at home, not do to keep up the shallow treaty of peace which his compliance produces between him and his better half? Is there anything which a henpecked husband dares say he will not do, when the autocrat of his domestic hearth bids him do it? Up — up the long dark staircase they went! Our ancestors, as one of their pieces of wisdom, had a knack of making steep dark staircases; and, to tell the truth, there are many modern architects equally ingenious. At length the attic landing was reached. The shoemaker knew the localities of his house better than to make such a mistake as Crotchet had done; so the old lady, with her feet in the pan of water, was saved such another interruption as had already taken place into her peaceful domains.

"Now, my dear, knock boldly," said the lady of the mansion. "Knock like a man."

"Yes, my love."

The shoemaker tapped at the door with about the energy of a fly. The soft appeal produced no effect whatever, and the lady growing impatient, then poised the poker, and dealt the door a blow which induced her husband to start aside, lest the lodger should open it quickly, and rush out in great wrath. All was profoundly still, however; and then they tried the lock, and found it fast.

"He's gone to bed," said the shoemaker.

"He can't," said the lady, "for there are no sheets on the bed. Besides, they have not both gone to bed. I tell you what it is. There's some mystery in this that I should like to find out. Now, all the keys of all the attics are alike. Just wait here, and I'll borrow Mrs. Macconikie's."

The shoemaker waited in no small amount of trepidation, while this process of key borrowing from the old lady who enjoyed a pan of water, took place upon the part of his wife.

CHAPTER XLII
Crotchet Astonishes Mr. Todd

The key was soon procured, but it will be recollected that Crotchet had fastened the door rather too securely for it to be opened by any such ordinary implement as a key, and so disappointment was the portion of the shoemaker's wife.

"Don't you think, my love," said the shoemaker, "that it will be just as well to leave this affair until the morning, before taking any further notice of it?"

"And pray, then, am I to sleep all night, if I don't know the rights of it, I should like to know? Perhaps, if you can tell me that, you are a little wiser than I think you. Marry, come up!"

"Oh, well, I only —"

"You only! Then only don't. That's the only favour I ask of you, sir, is to only don't."

What extraordinary favour this was, the lady did not condescend to explain any more particulars, but it was quite enough for the husband to understand that a storm was brewing, and to become humble and submissive accordingly.

"Well, my dear, I'm sure I only wish you to do just what you like; that's all, my dear, I'm sure."

"Very good."

After this, she made the most vigorous efforts to get into the attic, and if anyone had been there — which at that juncture there was not — they might truly have asked "Who's that knocking at the door?" Finding that all her efforts were ineffectual, she took to peeping through the keyhole, but nothing was to be seen; and then, for the first time, the idea struck her that there was something supernatural about the business, and in a few moments this notion gained sufficient strength to engender some lively apprehensions.

"I tell you what," she said to her husband, "if you don't fetch a constable at once, and have the door opened, and see all about, I'm afraid — indeed I'm quite sure — I shall be very ill."

"Oh, dear — oh, dear."

"It's of no use your standing here and saying 'Oh, dear,' like a great stupid as you are — always was and always will be. Go for a constable, at once."

"A constable?"

"Yes, There's Mr. Otton, the beadle of St. Dunstan's, lives opposite, as you well know, and he's a constable. Run over the way and fetch him, this minute."

She began hastily to descend the stairs, and the shoemaker followed her, remonstrating, for the idea of fetching a constable, and making him and his house the talk of the whole neighbourhood, was by no means a proposition that met with his approval. The lady was positive, however, and Mr. Otton, the beadle of St. Dunstan's, was brought from over the way, and the case stated to him at length.

"*Conwulsions*!" exclaimed Otton, "what can I do?"

"*Burst* open the door," said the lady.

"*Burst* a door open, mum! What is you a thinking on? Why, that's contrary to *Habus Corpus*, mum, and all that sort of thing. Conwulsions, mum! you mustn't do it. But I tell you what, now, will be the thing."

Here Mr. Otton put his finger to the side of his nose, and looked so cunning that you would hardly have believed it possible.

"What? — what?"

"Why, suppose, mum, we ask Mr. Todd, next door, to give us leave to go up into his attic, and get out at the window and look in at yours, mum?"

"That'll do. Run in — "

"Me!" cried the shoemaker. "Oh, M — Mr. Todd is a strange man — a very strange man — not at all a neighbourly sort of man, and I don't like to go to him. — I won't go, that's flat — unless, my love, you particularly wish it."

"Conwulsions!" cried the beadle. "Ain't I agoing with you? Ain't I a constabulary force, I should like to know? Conwulsions! What is yer afeard on? Come on. Lor', what's the meaning o' that, I wonders, now; I should just like to take that 'ere fellow up. Whoever heard of a horn being blowed at such a rate, in the middle o' Fleet Street, afore, unless it was somethin' as consarned the parish? Conwulsions! it's contrary to *Habus Corpus*, it is. Is me a constabulary force, or is me not?"

This was the bugle sound which warned Sir Richard Blunt and his friend Crotchet that Sweeney Todd had returned to his shop; and, in fact, while this very conversation was going on at the shoemaker's, Todd had lit the lamp in his shop, and actually opened it for business again, as the evening was by no means very far advanced. Mr. Otton went to the door, and looked about for the audacious bugle player, but he was not to be seen; so he returned to the back parlour of the shoemaker, uttering his favourite expletive of "Conwulsions" very frequently.

"Now, if you is ready," he said, "I is; so let's come at once, and speak to Mr. Todd. He may be a strange man, but for all that, he knows, I *dessay*, what's proper respect to a *beetle*."

With this strange transformation of his own title upon his lips, Mr. Otton stalked on rather majestically, as he thought, to the street, and thence to Todd's shop door, with the shoemaker following him. The gait of the latter expressed reluctance, and there was a dubious expression upon his face, which was quite amusing to behold.

"Really, Mr. Otton," he said, "don't you think, after all, it would be better to leave this affair alone till the morning? We can easily tell my wife, you know, that Mr. Todd won't let us into his attic. That must satisfy her, for what can she say to it?"

"Sir," said the beadle, "when you call in the *constabullary* force, you must do just what they say, or lasteways you acts contrary to *Habus Corpuses*. Come on. Conwulsions! Is we to be brought over the street, and then is we to do nothing to go down to prosperity?"

The beadle uttered these words with such an air of pomposity and importance that the shoemaker, who had a vague idea that *Habus Corpus* was some fearful engine of the law at the command of all its administrators, no longer offered any opposition, but, as meekly as any lamb, followed Mr. Otton into Sweeney Todd's shop. The door yielded to a touch, and Mr. Otton presented his full rubicund countenance to the gaze of Sweeney Todd, who was at the further end of the shop, as though he had just come from the parlour at the back of it, or was just going there. He did not at first see the shoemaker, who was rather obscured by the portly person of the beadle, and Todd's first idea was, the most natural one in the world, namely, that the beadle came upon an emergency to be shaved. Giving him an hideous leer, Todd said —

"A fine night for a clean shave."

"Werry. In course, Mr. T., you is the best judge o' that 'ere, but I does for myself."

As he spoke, Mr. Otton rubbed his chin, to intimate that it was to his shaving himself that he alluded just then.

"Hair cut?" said Todd, giving a snap to the blades of a large pair of scissors, that made Mr. Otton jump again, and nearly induced the shoemaker to run out of the shop into the street.

"No," said the beadle; and taking off his hat, he felt his hair, as though to satisfy himself that it was all there, just as usual. "No."

Todd looked as though he would have shaved him with extreme pleasure, and advancing a few steps, he added —

"Then what is it that you bring your wieldy carcase here for, you gross lump of stupidity? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"What? Conwulsions!"

"Pho! — Pho! Can't you take a joke, Mr. Otton? I know you well enough. It's my funny way to call people, whom I admire very much, all the hard names I can think of."

"Is it?"

"Oh, dear, yes. I thought you and all my neighbours knew that well enough. I'm one of the drollest dogs alive. That I am. Won't you sit down?"

"Well, Mr. Todd, a joke may be a joke." The beadle looked very sententious at this discovery. "But you have the oddest way of poking your fun at any one that ever I heard of; but, I comes to you now as a respectable parishioner, to —"

"Oh," said Todd, putting his hands, very deliberately into his pockets, "how much?"

"It ain't anything to pay. It's a mere trifle. I just want to go up to your front attic, and —"

"What?"

"Your front attic, and get out of the window to look into the front attic next door. We won't trouble you if you will oblige us with a candle. That's all."

Todd advanced two steps further towards the beadle and looked peeringly in his face. All the suspicious qualities of his nature rose up in alarm. Every feeling of terror regarding the instability of his position, and the danger by which he was surrounded, rushed upon him. At once he conjectured that danger was approaching him, and that in this covert manner the beadle was intent upon getting into the house, for the purpose of searching it to his detriment. As the footpad sees in each bush an officer, so, in the most trivial circumstances, even the acute intellect of Sweeney Todd saw dangers, and rumours of dangers, which no one but himself could have had the remotest idea of. He glared upon the beadle with positive ferocity, and so much affected was Otton by that lynx like observation of Sweeney Todd's, that he stepped aside and disclosed that he was not alone. If anything could have confirmed Todd in his suspicions that there was a dead set at him, it was finding that the beadle was not alone. And yet the shoemaker was well known to him. But what will lull such suspicion as Sweeney Todd had in his mind? Once engendered, it was like the jealousy that —

"Makes the meat it feeds on!"

He advanced, step by step, glaring upon the beadle and upon the shoemaker. Reaching up his hand, he suddenly turned the lamp that hung from the ceiling clear round, so that, in lieu of its principal light falling upon him, it fell upon the faces of those who had paid him so unceremonious a visit.

"Lawks!" said the beadle.

"Excuse us, Mr. Todd," said the shoemaker, "I assure you we only meant —"

"What?" thundered Todd. Then suddenly softening his voice, he added — "You are very welcome here indeed. Pray what do you want?"

"Why, sir," said Otton, "you must know that this gentleman has a lodger."

"A what?"

"A lodger, sir, and so you see that's just the case. You understand that this lodger — lor', Mr. Todd, this is your neighbour the shoemaker, you know. The front attic, you know, and all that sort of thing. After this explanation, I hope you'll lend us a candle at once, Mr. Todd, and let us up to the attic."

Todd shaded his eyes with his hands, and looked yet more earnestly at the beadle.

"Why, Mr. Otton," he said, "indeed you do want a shave."

"A shave?"

"Yes, Mr. Otton, I have a good razor here that will go over your chin like a piece of butter. Only take a seat, sir, and if you, neighbour, will go home comfortably to your own fireside, I will send for you when Mr. Otton is shaved."

"But really," said the beadle, rubbing his chin, "I was shaved this morning, and as I do for myself always, you see, why I don't think I require. Conwulsions! Mr. Todd, why do you look at a man so? Remember the *Habus Corpus*. That's what we call the *paladermius* of the British Constitution, you know."

By this time the beadle had satisfied himself that he did not at all require shaving, and turning to the shoemaker, he said —

"Why don't you be shaved?"

"Well, I don't care if I do, and perhaps, in the meantime you, Mr. Otton, will go up to the attic, and take a peep into the next one, and see if my lodger is up or in bed, or what the deuce has become of him. It's a very odd thing, Mr. Todd, that a man should take one's attic, and then disappear without coming downstairs."

"Disappear without coming downstairs?" said Todd.

"Yes, and my wife says —"

Todd made an impatient gesture.

"Gentlemen, I will look in my attic myself. The fact is, that the flooring is rather out of order, and unless you know exactly where to step you will be apt to fall through a hole into the second floor."

"The deuce you are!" said Otton.

"Yes; so I would not advise either of you to make the attempt. Just remain there, and I'll go at once."

The proposition suited both parties, and Mr. Todd immediately passed through a door at the back of his shop, which he immediately closed behind him again. Instead of going upstairs, however, he slid aside a small opening in the panel of this door, and placed his ear to it. "If people say anything impudent, it is the moment they are free from the company that has held them in check," was one of Sweeney Todd's maxims. His first notion that the beadle and the shoemaker had come covertly to search his house, had given way a little, and he wanted to convince himself of the innocency or the reverse of their intentions, before he put himself to any further trouble.

"I don't like it," said the shoemaker.

"Like what? Conwulsions! What don't you like?"

"Intruding upon Mr. Todd. What does he care about my lodgers? It ain't as if he let any of his own house, and had a fellow feeling with us."

"Werry good," said the beadle, "but you send for me, and you ask me what's best, and I tell yer that *Habus Corpus*, and one thing and another, what I advised was the only thing, that was to get into Mr. Todd's attic, and then get on the parapet and into yours. But if so be as there's holes in Mr. Todd's attic, that will alter the affair, you know."

"Fool — fool!" muttered Todd. "After all, they only come upon their own twaddling affairs, and I was idiot enough to suspect such muddy pated rascals."

In an instant he was in the shop again.

"Nobody there, gentlemen; I have looked into the attic, and there's nobody there."

"Well, I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Todd," said the shoemaker, "for taking so much trouble. I'll go, and rather astonish my wife, I think."

"Conwulsions!" said the beadle. "It's an odd thing, but you know, Mr. Todd, *Habus Corpus* must have his way."

CHAPTER XLIII
Todd's Vision

When they had left, Todd remained for some minutes in an attitude of thought.

"Is this an accident?" he said, "or is it but the elaboration of some deep design to entrap me. What am I to think?"

Todd was an imaginative man quite. He was just the individual to think, and think over the affair until he made something of it, very different from what it really was, and yet there was some hope that the matter was no more than what it appeared to be, by the character of the parties who had come upon the mission. If anything serious had come to the ears of the authorities, he thought, that surely two such people as the beadle of St. Dunstan's, and his neighbour the shoemaker, would not be employed to unravel such a mystery. He sat down in an armchair and rested his head upon his hand, and while he was in that attitude the door of his shop opened, and a man in the dress of a carter made his appearance.

"Be this Muster Todd's?"

"Well," said Todd, "what then?"

"Why, then, this be for him like. It's a letter, but larning waren't much i' the fashion in my young days, so I can't read what's on it."

Todd stretched out his hand. An instant examination showed him it bore the Peckham postmark.

"Ah!" he muttered, "from Fogg. Thank you, my man, that will do. That will do. What do you wait for?"

"Please to remember the carter, your honour!"

Todd looked daggers at him, and slowly handed out twopence, which the man took with a very ill grace.

"What," said Todd, "would you charge me more for carrying a letter than King George the Third does, you extortionate rascal?"

The carter gave a nod.

"Get out with you, or by —"

Todd snatched up a razor, and the carter was off like a shot, for he really believed, from the awful looks of Todd, that his life was not worth a minute's

purchase. Todd opened the letter with great gravity. — It contained the following words: —

"DEAR SIR,"

"The lad, T. R., I grieve to say, is no more. Let us hope he is gone where the weary are at rest, and where there is neither sin nor sorrow.

"I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,
"JACOB B. FOGG."

"Humph!" said Todd.

He held the letter in the flame of the lamp until it fell a piece of airy tinder at his feet.

"Humph!" he repeated, and that humph was all that he condescended to say of poor Tobias Ragg, whom the madhouse keeper had thought proper to say was dead; hoping that Todd might never be undeceived, for the barber was a good customer.

If, however, Tobias should turn up to the confusion of Fogg and of Todd, what could the latter do for the deceit that had been practised upon him? — Literally nothing.

"No sooner," said Todd, "does one cloud disappear from my route than another takes its place. What can that story mean about the attic next door? It sounds to my ears strange and portentous. What am I to think of it?"

He rose and paced his shop with rapid strides. At length he paused as though he had come to a determination.

"The want of a boy is troublesome to me," he said. "I must get one, but for the present this must suffice."

He wrote upon a small slip of paper the words — "Gone to the Temple — will return shortly." He then, by the aid of a wafer, affixed this announcement to the upper part of the half glass door leading into his shop. Locking this door securely on the inside, and starting a couple of bolts into their sockets, he lit a candle and left his shop. With a stealthy, catlike movement, Todd passed through the room immediately behind his business apartment, and opening another door he made his way towards the staircase. Then he paused a moment. He thought some sound from above had come upon his ears, but he was not quite sure. To suspect, however, was with such a man as Todd to be prepared for the worst, and accordingly he went back to the room behind his shop again, and from a table drawer he took a knife, such as is used by butchers in their trade, and firmly clutching it in his right hand, while he carried the candle in his left, he once more approached the staircase.

"I do not think," he said, "that for nine years now any mortal footsteps, but my own, have trod upon these stairs or upon the flooring of the rooms above. Woe be to those who may now attempt to do so. Woe, I say, be to them, for their death is at hand."

These words were spoken in a deep hollow voice, that sounded like tones from a sepulchre, as they came from the lips of that man of many crimes. To give Todd his due, he did not seem to shrink from the unknown and dimly appreciated danger that might be upstairs in his house. He was courageous, but it was not the high souled courage that nerves a man to noble deeds. No, Sweeney Todd's courage was that of hate — hatred to the whole human race, which he considered, with a strange inconsistency, had conspired against him; whereas he had been the one to place an impassable barrier between himself and the amenities of society. He ascended the stairs with great deliberation. When he reached the landing upon the first floor, he cast his eyes suspiciously about him, shading the light as he did so with his hand — that same hand that held the knife, the shadow of which fell upon the wall in frightful proportions.

"All is still," he said. "Is fancy, after all, only playing me such tricks as she might have played me twenty years ago? I thought I was too old for such freaks of the imagination."

Todd did not suspect that there was a second period in his life, when the mental infirmities of his green youth might come back to him, with many superadded horrors accumulated, with a consciousness of guilt. He slowly approached a door and pushed it open, saying as he did so —

"No — no — no. Above all things, I must not be superstitious. If I were so, into what a world of horrors might I not plunge. No — no, I will not people the darkness with horrible fantasies, I will not think that it is possible that men with

"Twenty murders on their heads,"

can revisit this world to drive those who have done them to death with shrieking madness — this world do I say? There is no other. Bah! Priests may talk, and the weak brained fools who gape at what they do not understand, may believe them, but when man dies — when the electric condition that has imputed to his humanity what is called life, flies, he is indeed

"Dust to dust!"

Ha! Ha! I have lived as I will die, fearing nothing and believing nothing."

As he uttered those words — words which found no real echo in his heart, for at the bottom of it lay a trembling belief in, and a dread of the great God that rules all things, and who is manifest in the meanest seeming thing that crawls upon the earth — he entered one of the rooms upon that floor, and glanced uneasily around him. All was still. There were trunks — clothes upon chairs,

and a vast amount of miscellaneous property in this room, but nothing in the shape of a human being. Todd's spirits rose, and he held the long knife more carelessly than he had done.

"Pho! Pho!" he said. "I do, indeed, at times make myself the slave of a disturbed fancy. Pho! Pho! I will no more listen to vague sounds, meaning nothing; but wrapping myself up in my consciousness of having nothing to fear, I will pursue my course, hideous though it may be."

He turned and took his way towards the landing place of the staircase again. He was now carrying both the light and the knife rather carelessly, and everybody knows that when a candle is held before a person's face, that but little indeed can be seen in the hazy vapour that surrounds it. So it was with Todd. He had got about two paces from the door, when a strange consciousness of something being in his way came over him. He immediately raised his hand — that hand that still carried the knife, to shade the light, and then, horror! Horror! He saw standing upon the landing a figure attired in faded apparel, whose face was dabbled in blood, and the stony eyes which were fixed upon the face of Todd, with so awful an expression, that had the barber's heart been made of much more flinty materials than it was, he could not have resisted the terrors of that awful moment. With a shriek that echoed through the house, Todd fell upon the landing. The light rolled from stair to stair until it was finally extinguished, and all was darkness.

Sweeney Todd Astonished by Crotchet, the Bow Street Officer.

"Good," said Crotchet, for it was he who had enacted the ghost. "Good! I'm blessed if I didn't think that 'ere would nail him. These sort o' chaps are always on the lookout for something or another to be frightened at, and you have only to show yourself to put 'em almost out of their seven senses. It was a capital idea that of me to cut my finger a little, and get some blood to smear over my

face. It's astonishing what a long way a little drop will go, to be sure. I dare say it makes me look precious rum."

Mr. Crotchet was quite right regarding the appearance which the blood, smeared over his face, gave to him. It made him look perfectly hideous, and any one whose conscience was not —

"With injustice corrupted!"

might well have been excused for a cold chill, and, perchance, even a swoon, like Sweeney Todd's, at his appearance.

"I rather think," added Crotchet, "that's a settler; so I'll just take the liberty, old fellow, of lighting your candle again, and then *mizzling*, for I don't somehow think much good is to be done in this crib just now."

By the aid of his phosphorus match Crotchet soon succeeded in reillumining the candle, which he found on a mat in the passage; but notwithstanding his opinion that he had seen about as much as there was to see in Todd's house, he, when he had the candle alight, thought he might just as well peep into the parlour immediately behind the shop, before going upstairs again. The door offered no opposition, for Todd had certainly not expected anyone down stairs, and Mr. Crotchet found himself in the parlour about as soon as he had formed the wish to be there. This parlour was perfectly crammed with furniture, and all of the bureau kind, that is to say, large shapeless looking pieces of mahogany, with no end of drawers. Crotchet made an attempt at several before he found one that yielded to his efforts to open it, and that only did so because the hasp into which the lock was shot had given way, and no longer held it close. This drawer was full of watches.

"Humph!" said Crotchet, "Todd ought to know the time of day certainly, and no mistake. Ah, these 'ere machines, if they had tongues now, I rather think, could tell a tale or two. Howsomedever, I'll pocket some of 'em."

Mr. Crotchet put about a dozen watches in his pocket forthwith, and then he began to think that, as he did not wish to take Mr. Todd just then into custody, it would be just as well if he left the house. Besides, the barber had only fell into a swoon through fright, so that his recovery was a matter that could be calculated upon with something like certainty in a short time.

"It would be a world of pities if he was to find out as the ghost was only me," said Crotchet, "so I'll be off before he comes to himself."

Extinguishing the light, Crotchet wound his way up the staircase again, but when he got to the landing he stopped, and said —

"Bless us! I've not got them canes and swords as Sir Richard wanted me to bring away with me. Well, the watches will answer better than them, for all he

wants is to compare 'em with the descriptions of some folks as has been missed by their blessed relations in London, so that's all right. Hilloa!"

This latter ejaculation arose from Crotchet having trodden upon Todd.

"The deuce!" he added, "I thought I had got clear of him."

He paused, and heard Todd utter a deep groan. Mr. Crotchet took this as a signal that he had better be off; and accordingly he ascended the next staircase quickly, and in a very few minutes reached the attic of Todd's house. When there, he quickly made his appearance in the shoemaker's attic, and found that Sir Richard Blunt had left the door of it just upon the latch for him. He was upon the point of passing out of the room, and going down stairs, when he heard a confused sound approaching the attic, and he paused instantly. The sound came nearer and nearer, until Crotchet found that some half dozen people were upon the landing, and all talking together in anxious whispers.

"What the deuce is up now?" he thought.

He approached the door and listened.

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Otton," said a female voice. "It's now getting on for ten o'clock, and I positively can't sleep in my bed unless I know something more about this horrid attic."

"Well, but, mum —"

"Don't speak to me. Here's an attic, and two men go into it. Then all at once there's no men in it; and then all at once, one man comes down and walks out as cool as a cucumber, and says nothing at all; and then we know well enough as there was two men, and only one —"

"But, mum — "

"Don't speak to me, and only one has come down."

"And here's the t'other!" cried Crotchet, suddenly bouncing out of the attic.

The confusion that ensued baffles all description. A grand rush was made into the apartments of the lady who was fond of putting her feet into hot water; and in the midst of the confusion, Crotchet quickly enough went downstairs, and made his escape from the shoemaker's house.

CHAPTER XLIV
The Great Sacrifice

While all these things were going on at Sweeney Todd's, in Fleet Street, Mrs. Lovett was not quite idle as regarded her own affairs and feelings. That lady's — what shall we say — certainly not affections, for she had none — passions is a better word — were inconceivably shocked by the discovery she had made of the perfidy of her flaunting and moustachioed lover. It will be perceived, by this little affair of Mrs. Lovett's, how strong-minded women have their little weaknesses. The hour of the appointment, which she (Mrs. Lovett) had made with her military looking beau, came round; and there she sat, looking rather disconsolate.

"Am I never to succeed," she muttered to herself, "in finding one with whom I can make my escape from this sea of horrors that surrounds me? Am I, notwithstanding I have so fully accomplished all I wished to accomplish, by — by" — she shuddered and paused. — "Well, well, the time will come — I must go alone. Let Todd go alone, and let me go alone. Why should he wish to trammel my actions? He cannot surely think, for a moment, that with him I will consent to pass the remainder of my life!"

The scornful curl of the lip, and the indignant toss of the head, which accompanied these words, would have been quite sufficient to convince Todd, had he seen them, of the hopelessness of any such notion.

"No," she added, after a pause, "I shall be alone in the world, or, if I make ties, they shall be made in another country. There it is possible I may be — oh, no, no — not happy; but I may be powerful, and have cringing slaves about me, who, finding that I am rich, will tell me that I am beautiful, and I shall be able to drink deeply of the intoxicating cup of pleasure, in some land where prudery, or what is called propriety, has not set up its banner as it has in this land of outward virtue. As for Todd — I — I will try to be assured that he is a corpse before I breathe freely; and if I fail in that, I will hope that we shall be thousands of leagues asunder."

A shadow passed the window. Mrs. Lovett started to her feet.

"Ah! Who comes? 'Tis he — no — God! 'Tis Todd."

For a moment she pressed her hands upon her face, as though she would squeeze out the traces of passion from the muscles, and then her old set smile came back again. Todd entered the shop. For a few moments they looked at each other in silence, and then Todd said —

"Alone?"

"Quite," she replied.

He gave one of his peculiar laughs, and then glided into the parlour behind the shop. Mrs. Lovett followed him.

“News?” he said.

“None.”

“Hem! The time is coming.”

“The time to leave off this —”

“Yes. The time to quit business, Mrs. Lovett. All goes well — swimmingly. Ha! Ha!”

She shuddered as she said —

“Do not laugh.”

“Let those laugh who win,” replied Todd. “How old are you, Sarah?”

“Old?”

“Yes, or to shape the question perhaps more to a woman’s liking, how young are you? Have you yet many years before you in which to enjoy the fruits of our labours? Have you the iron frame which will enable you to say — ‘I shall revel for years in the soft enjoyments of luxury stolen from a world I hate?’ Tell me.”

Mrs. Lovett fell into a musing attitude, and Todd thought she was reflecting upon her age; but at length she said —

“I sometimes think I would give half of what is mine if I could forget how I became possessed of the whole.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, Todd. Has no such feeling ever crossed you?”

“Never! I am implacable. Fate made me a barber, but nature made me something else. In the formation of man there is a something that gives weakness to his resolves, and makes him pause upon the verge of enterprise with a shrinking horror. That is what the world calls conscience. It has no hold of me. I have but one feeling towards the human race, and that is hatred. I saw that while they pretended to bow down to God, they had in reality set up another idol in their heart of hearts. Gold! Gold! Tell me — how many men there are in this great city who do not worship gold far more sincerely and heartily than they worship Heaven?”

“Few — few.”

"Few? None, I say, none. No. The future is a dream — an *ignis fatuus* — a vapour. The present we can grasp — ha!"

"What is our wealth, Todd?"

"Hundreds of thousands."

He shaded his eyes with his hands, and peered from the parlour into the shop.

"Who is that keeps dodging past the window each moment, and peeping in at every convenient open space in the glass that he can find?"

Mrs. Lovett looked, and then, after an effort, she said —

"Todd, I was going to speak to you of that man."

"Ah!"

"Listen; I suspect him. For some days past he has haunted the shop, and makes endeavours to become acquainted with me. I did not think it sound policy wholly to shun him, but gave him such encouragement as might supply me with opportunities of judging if he were a spy or not."

"Humph!"

"I think him dangerous."

Todd's eyes glistened like burning coals.

"Should he come into your shop to be shaved, Todd —"

"Ha! Ha!"

The horrible laugh rang through the place, and Mrs. Lovett's lover, with the moustache, sprung to the other side of Bell Yard, for the unearthly sound even reached his ears as he was peeping through the window to catch a glimpse of the charming widow.

"You understand me, Todd?"

"Perfectly — perfectly — I shall know him again. Ah, my dear Mrs. Lovett, how dangerous it is to be safe in this world. Even our virtue cannot escape detraction; but we will live in hopes of better times. You and I will show the world, yet, what wealth is."

"Yes — yes."

Todd crept close to her, and was about to place his arm round her waist, but she started from him, exclaiming —

"No — no, Todd — a thousand times no. Have we not before quarrelled upon this point. Do not approach me, or our compact, infernal as it is, is at an end. I have sold my soul to you, but I have not bartered myself."

The expression of Todd's countenance at this juncture was that of an incarnate fiend. He glared at Mrs. Lovett as though with the horrible fascination of his ugliness he would overcome her, and then slowly rising, he said —

"Her soul — ha! She has sold her soul to me — ha! I will call tomorrow."

He left the shop, and as he passed the gent who, by force of his moustache, hoped to win the affections of Mrs. Lovett, he gave him such a look that he terrified him and the gent found himself in the shop before he was aware.

"Bless me, what a horrid looking fellow! I swear by my courage and honour I never saw such a face. Ah, my charmer! Who was that left your charming presence just now?"

"Some one who came for a pie."

"'Pon honour, he's enough to poison all the pies! Oh, you beauty, yo — ou — ou — ou —"

The gallant's mouth was so full of a veal pie that he had stuffed into it that for some few moments he could not produce an intelligible sound. When he had recovered, he walked into the parlour and sat down, saying —

"Now, Mrs. Lovett, here am I, 'pon honour, your humble servant, and stop my breath if I'd say as much to the commander-in-chief. When's the happy day to be?"

"Do you really love me?"

"Do I love you? Do I love fighting? Do I love honour — glory? Do I love eating and drinking? Do I love myself?"

"Ah, Major Bounce, you military men are so gallant."

"'Pon honour we are. General Cavendish used to say to me — 'Bounce,' says he, 'if you don't make your fortune by war, which you ought to do, Bounce, 'pon honour, you will make it by love.' 'General,' says I — now I was always ready for a smart answer, Mrs. Lovett — so 'General,' says I, 'the same to you!' "

"Very smart."

"Yes, wasn't it. 'Pon honour it was, and 'pon soul you looks more and more charming every day that I see you."

"Oh you flatterer!"

"No — no. Bar flattering — bar flattering. His Majesty has often said, 'Talk of flattery. Oh dear, Bounce is the man for me. He is right down — straight-up — offhanded. And no sort of mistake, on — on — on.' "

Another pie converted the oratory of the major into something between a grunt and a sigh.

"But major, I'm afraid that you will regret marrying me. If I convert all I have into money" — the major pricked up his ears — "I could not make of it more than fifty thousand pounds."

The major's eyes opened to the size of pint saucers, as he said —

"Fifty — fift — fif. — Say it again!"

"Fifty thousand pounds."

The major rose and embraced Mrs. Lovett. Tears actually came into his eyes, and gulping down the pie, he cried —

"You have fifty thousand charms. Only let me be your slave, your dog, damme — your dog, Mrs. Lovett, and I shall consider myself the luckiest dog in the world, but not for the money — not for the money. No, as the Marquis of Cleveland once said, 'If you want a thoroughly disinterested man, go to Bounce.' "

"Well, major, since we understand each other so well, there are two little things that I must name as my conditions."

"Name 'em — name 'em. Do you want me to bring you the king's eyetooth, or her majesty's wig and snuff box — only say the word."

"One is, that I will leave England. I have a private reason for so doing."

"Damme, so have I. That is ahem! If you have a reason, that is a reason to me, you know."

"Exactly. In some other capital of Europe we may spend our money and enjoy all the delights of existence. Do you speak French?"

"Ah-hem! Oh, of course. I never tried particularly, but as Lord North said to the Duke of Bridgewater, 'Bounce is the man if you want anything done of an out of-the-way character.' "

"Very well, then. My next condition is, that you shave off your moustache."

"What?"

"Shave off your moustache; I have the greatest possible aversion to moustache, therefore I make that a positive condition without which I shall say no more to you."

"My charmer, do you think I hesitate? If you were to say to me, 'Bounce, off with your head,' in a moment it would roll at your feet."

"Go, then, to Mr. Todd's, the barber, in Fleet Street, and have them taken off at once, and then come back to me, for I declare I won't speak another word to you while you have them on."

"But, dear creature —"

Mrs. Lovett shook her head.

"'Pon honour!"

She shook her head again.

"I'll go at once then, 'pon soul, and have 'em taken off. I'll be back in a jiffy, Mrs. Lovett. Oh, you duck, I adore you. Confound the cash! It's you I knuckle under to. Man doats on Venus, and I love Lovett. Bye, bye; I'll get it done and soon be back. Fifty thousand — fifty — fif. — Oh, lor' why Flukes, your fortune is made at last."

These last words did not reach the ear of Mrs. Lovett. That lady threw herself into a chair, where the gallant major had left her.

"Another!" she said. "Another! Why did he try to deceive me? The fool, to pitch upon me, of all persons, to make his victim. I must have found him out, and poisoned him, if I had married him. It is better that Todd should take vengeance for me, and then the time shall come when he shall fall. Yes, so soon as I can, by cajollery or scheming, get sufficient of the plunder into my own hands, Todd's hours are numbered."

After this, Mrs. Lovett fell into a train of musing, and her face assumed an expression so different from that with which she was wont to welcome her customers in the shop, that not one of them would have known her. But we must look at Todd. It was upon his return home from several calls, the last of which had been this recent visit to Mrs. Lovett, that he had heard the noise in his house, which had terminated in his going upstairs, and being so terrified by Crotchet. It will be recollected that he fell insensible upon the staircase, and that Crotchet took that opportunity of making good his retreat. How long he lay there, he, Todd, had no means of knowing, for all was profound darkness upon the staircase, but his first sensation consisted of a tingling in his feet and

hands, similar to the sensation which is properly called “your limbs going to sleep.” Then a knocking noise came upon his sense of hearing.

“What’s that? Where am I?” he cried. “No — no. Don’t hang me. Where’s Mrs. Lovett? Hang her. She is guilty!”

Knock! — Knock! — Knock!

“Hush! Hush! What is it? Who wants me? Good God — no — no. There is no good God for me!”

Knock! Knock! Knock! came again with increased violence at the door of the shop below.

CHAPTER XLV
An Old Acquaintance

Todd scrambled to his feet. He held his head in his hand.

“What does it all mean? What does it all mean?”

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Todd’s senses were slowly returning to him. He began to recollect events at first confusedly, and then the proper order of their occurrence — how he had come home, and then heard a noise, and gone up stairs and seen — what? There he paused in his catalogue of events. What had he seen?”

Knock! Knock! Knock!

“Curses!” he muttered. “Who can that be hammering with such devilish perseverance at my door? By all that’s horrible they shall pay dearly for thus disturbing me. Who can it be? Not any one to arrest me? No — no! They would not knock so long. An enforced entrance long before this would have brought them to me. What did I see? What did I see? What did I see? Dare I give it a name?”

He slowly descended the stairs, and reaching the shop, he peeped through a place in the door which he had made for such a purpose. There stood the hero of the moustachios knocking away with all his might to get the behests of Mrs. Lovett obeyed. Todd suddenly flung open the door, and in fell Major Bounce, alias Flukes.

“The devil! What do you want?”

“’Pon honour. Damn it. Is this the way to treat a military man?”

Todd turned to the side of the shop, and hastily put on a wig — by an adroit movement of his fingers, he pulled his cravat sufficiently out from his neck to be able to bury his chin in it, and when he turned to the mock major, the latter had no suspicion that he looked upon the same person who had so alarmed him by a look, in Bell Yard.

“Shaved or dressed sir?” said Todd.

“Confound you. Why did you open the door so quick?”

“Thought you knocked, sir.”

“I did, but stop my breath, if you haven’t given me an ugly fall. But no matter. None but the brave deserve the fair. You perceive I am a military man?”

"Oh, yes, sir, anybody may see that by your martial air."

"Ahem! You are right. Well then, Mr. Barber, I want my moustache shaved off. It's a fancy of a lady. One of the most charming of her sex. One with a fifty thousand pound charm. 'Pon my valour, she has. Ah! I am a lucky dog. Thirty eight — handsome as Apollo, and beloved by the fairest of the fair."

"Life is a jolly thing,
Life is a jolly thing,
While I drink deep and go frolicking,
Fair maids, wives, and widows,
Fair maids, wives, and widows
Doat on the youth that goes frolicking."

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Life's a bumper. Upon my valour, Mr. Barber, I feel like a young colt, that I do."

"Really, sir. You don't say so?"

"Oh, yes, yes! Ha! Ha! All's right. All's right. Now, Mr. What's-your-name. Off with the moustache. It's only in the cause of the fair that I would condescend to part with them, that's a fact, but when a lady's in the case — upon my valour, you are an ugly fellow."

"You don't say so," replied Todd, as he made a most hideous contortion. "Most people think me so fascinating that they stay with me."

"Ha! Ha! A good joke."

Major Bounce — we may as well still call the poor wretch Major Bounce — placed his hat upon a chair, and his sword upon the top of it.

"Pray, sir, be seated," said Todd.

"Ah! Damme, is this seat a fixture?"

"Yes, sir, it's in the proper light, you see, sir."

"Oh, very well — I — pluff, pluff — puff, puff! Confound you, what have you filled my mouth with soap suds for?"

"Quite an accident, sir. Quite an accident, for which I humbly beg your pardon, I assure you, sir. If you keep your mouth shut, and your eyes open, you will get on amazingly. Have you seen the paper today, sir?"

"No!"

"Sorry for that, sir. A very odd case, sir — a little on one side — a most remarkable case, I may say. A gentleman, sir, went into a barber's shop, and — "

"Eh! — Puff! Sleush! puff! Am I to be poisoned by your soap suds? Upon my valour, I shall have to make an example of you to all barbers."

"You opened your mouth at the wrong time, sir."

"The wrong devil. Don't keep me here all night."

"Certainly not, sir. But as I was saying about this curious case in the paper. A military gentleman went into a barber's shop to be shaved."

"Well. The devil — pluff, pluff! Good God! Am I to endure all this?"

"Certainly not, sir. I'll show you the paper itself. You must know, sir, that the paragraph is headed 'Mysterious disappearance of a gentleman.' "

"Damn it, what do I care about it? Get on with the shaving."

"Certainly, sir."

Todd gave a horrible scrape to Major Bounce's face with a blunt razor.

"Quite easy, sir?"

"Easy? Good gracious, do you want to skin me?"

"Oh, dear no, sir. What an idea. To skin a military gentleman. Certainly not, sir. I see you require one of my best keen razors — one of the Magnum Bonums. Ha! Ha!"

"Eh? What was that?"

"Only me giving a slight smile, sir."

"The deuce it was. Don't do it again, then, that's all; and get your keen razor at once, and make an end of the business."

"I will — make an end of the business. Sit still, sir. I'll be back in a moment."

Todd went into the parlour.

"£50,000!" muttered Major Bounce. "I am a happy fellow. At last, after so many ups and downs, I light upon my feet. A charming widow! — And she wishes to leave England. How lucky. I wish the very same thing. £50,000! — 50,000 charms!"

* * * * * * *

"Good God! what's that?" said a man, who was passing Todd's window, in Fleet Street. "What a horrid shriek. Did you hear it, mum?"

"Oh dear, yes," said a woman. "I'm all of a tremble."

"It came from the barber's shop, here. Let's go in, and ask if anything is the matter?"

The man and woman crossed Todd's threshold, and opened the shop door. A glance showed them that a man's face was at a small opening of the parlour door. *The shaving chair was empty*.

"What's the matter?" said the man.

"With whom?" said Todd.

"Well, I don't know, but I thought somebody cried out."

Todd crept along the floor until he came close to the man, and then he said —

"My friend, have you anything to do?"

"Yes, thank God."

"Then, go and do it; and the next time you hear me cry out with the stomachache, ask yourself if it is your business to come in and ask me any questions about it. As for you, ma'am, unless you want to be shaved, I don't know, for the life of me, what you do here."

"Well, we only thought —"

Todd gave a hideous howl, which so terrified both the intruders, that they left the shop in a moment. His countenance then assumed that awful satanic expression which it sometimes bore, and he stood for the space of about five minutes in deep thought. Starting then suddenly, he took up the sword and hat of Major Bounce, and was in the act of putting both into a cupboard, when a smothered cry met his ears. Todd unsheathed the sword, and after fastening his shop door, he went into the parlour. He was absent about ten minutes, and when he returned he had not the sword, but he hastily washed his hands.

"Done!" he said.

Scratch! Scratch! Scratch! Came something at his door, and Todd bent forward in an attitude of listening. Scratch! — Scratch! — Scratch! — His face turned ghastly pale, and his knees knocked together as he whispered to himself —

"What is that? — what is that?"

Todd was getting superstitious. Since his adventure with Mr. Crotchet, his nerves had been out of order, notwithstanding the exertions he had made to control himself, and to convince his judgment that it was all a matter of imagination. Yet now, somehow or another, although there was no visible connection between the two things, he could not help mentally connecting this scratching at the door with the vision on the staircase. It is strange how the fancy will play such tricks, but it is no less strange than true that she does so, yoking together matters most dissimilar, and leading the judgment into strange disorder.

Scratch! — Scratch! — Scratch!

"What — what is it?" gasped Todd.

But time works wonders, and after the first shock to his nerves, the barber began to think that some one must be playing him a trick, and, for all he knew, it might be the very man whom he had snubbed so for interfering with him, or it might be some boy — the boys would at times tease Sweeney Todd. This supposition gathered strength each moment.

"It is a trick — a trick," he said. "I will be revenged!"

He took a thick stick from a corner, and stealthily approached the door. The odd scratching noise continued, and he again paused for a few moments to listen to it.

"A boy — a boy," he growled. "It is one of the infernal boys."

Opening the door a little way with great quickness, Todd aimed a blow through the opening. There was a short angry bark, and his old enemy, the dog that had belonged to the mariner, thrust in his head, and glared at Todd.

"Help! — Help! Murder!" cried Todd. "The dog again!"

He made a vain effort to shut the door; but Hector was too strong for him, and, as he had got his head in, he seemed to be determined to force in his whole body, which he fully succeeded in doing. Todd dropped the stick, and rushed into the back parlour for safety, from whence, through a small square of glass near the top of the door, he glared at the proceedings of his four-footed foe. The dog went direct to the cupboard from which he had taken his master's hat, and, opening the door, he dragged out an assemblage of miscellaneous property, as though he hoped to find among it some other vestige of the dear master he had lost. When, however, after tossing the things about, he found that they were all strange to him, he gave a melancholy howl. Hector then appeared to be considering what he should do next, and, after a few moments' consideration, he made a general survey of the shop, and finally ended by leaping into the shaving chair, where he sat and commenced such a series of melancholy howls, that Todd was nearly driven out of his mind at the conviction that the whole street must be soon in a state of alarm. Oh! How glad he would have been to

have shot Hector; but then, although he had pistols in the parlour, he might miss him, and send the bullet into Fleet Street through his own window, and, perchance, hit somebody, and that would be a trouble. The report, too, would bring a crowd round his shop, and the old story of him and the accusing dog — for had not that dog accused him? — would be brought up again. But yet something must be done.

"Am I to be a prisoner here," said Todd, "while that infernal dog sits in the shaving chair, howling?"

Now and then, for the space of about half a minute, the dog would be quiet, but then the prolonged howl that he would give plainly showed that he had only been gathering breath to give it. Todd got desperate.

"I must and will shoot him," he said.

Going to a sideboard he opened a drawer, and took from it a large double-barrelled pistol. He looked carefully at the priming, and satisfying himself that all was right, he crept again to the parlour door.

"I must and will shoot him at any risk," he said. "This infernal dog will be else the bane and torment of my life. I thought I had been successful in poisoning the brute as he suddenly disappeared from my door, but he has been preserved by some sort of miracle on purpose to torment me."

Howl went the dog again. Sweeney Todd took a capital aim with the pistol. To be sure his nerves were not quite in such good order as they sometimes were, but then the distance was so short that how could he miss such an object as a Newfoundland dog?

"I have him — I have him," he muttered. "Ha! Ha! I have him!"

He pulled the trigger of the pistol — snap went the lock, and the powder in the pan flashed up in Todd's face, but that was all. Before he could utter even an oath the shop door was opened, and a man's voice cried —

"Hasn't nobody seen nothing of never a great dog nowheres? Oh, there you is, my tulip. Come to your father, you rogue you. So you guved me the slip at last did you, you willain!"

CHAPTER XLVI
Johanna's Visit to Todd

Hector whined a kind of recognition of this man, but he did not move from the chair in Todd's shop upon which he had seated himself.

"Come, old fellow," said the man, "you don't want to be shaved, do you?"

Hector gave a short bark, but he wagged his tail as much as to intimate — "Mind, I am not at all angry with you." And indeed it was quite evident, from the manner of the dog to this man, that there was a good understanding between them.

"Come now, Pison," said the man, "don't be making a fool of yourself here any more. You ain't on friendly terms here, my tulip."

"Hilloa!" cried Todd.

The man gave a start, and Hector uttered an angry growl.

"Hilloa! Who are you?"

"Why, I'm the ostler at the 'Bullfinch!' *oppesite*."

"Is that your dog?"

"Why in a manner o' speaking, for want of a better master, he's got me."

The ostler, by dint of shading his eyes with his hands, and looking very intently, at last saw Todd, and then he added —

"Oh, it's you, master, is it?"

"Take away that animal directly," cried Todd. "Take him away. I hate dogs. Curses on both you and him; how came he here?"

"Ah, Pison, Pison, why did you come here, you good for nothink feller you? You ought to have knowed better. Didn't I always say to you — leastways, since I've had you — didn't I say to you — 'Don't you go over the way, for that 'ere barber is your natural enemy, Pison,' and yet here yer is."

As he spoke, the ostler embraced Hector, who was not at all backward in returning the caress, although in the midst of it he turned his head in the direction of the back parlour, and gave a furious bark at Todd.

"There is some mystery at the bottom of all this," muttered Todd; and then raising his voice, he added — "How did you come by the dog?"

"Why, I'll tell you, master. For a matter of two days, you know, he stuck at your door with a hat as belonged —"

"Well, well!"

"Yes, his master, folks said, was murdered."

"Ha! Ha!"

"Eh? Oh, Lord, what was that?"

"Only me; I laughed at the idea of anybody being murdered in Fleet Street, that was all."

"Oh, ah! It don't seem very likely. Well, as I was a saying, arter you had finished off his master —"

"I?"

"Oh, I begs your pardon! Only, you see, the dog would have it that you had, and so folks say so as natural as possible; but, howsomedever, I comed by and seed this here dog in the agonies o' conwulsions all along o' pison. Now where I come from, the old man — that's my father as was — had lots o' dogs, and consekewently I knowed somethink about them 'ere creturs; so I takes up this one and carries him on my back over the way to the stables, and there I cures him and makes a pet of him, and I called him Pison, cos, you see, as he had been pisoned. Lor', sir, you should only have seed him, when he was a getting a little better, how he used to look at me and try to say — 'Bill, don't I love you neither!' It's affection — that it is, blow me!"

Todd gave an angry snarl of derision.

"I tell you what it is, my man," he said; "if you will hang that dog, I will give you a guinea."

"Hang Pison? No, old 'un, I'd much rather hang you for half that 'ere money. Come along, my daffydowndilly. Don't you stay here any more. Why, I do believe it was you as pisoned him, you old bloke."

The ostler seized Hector, or Pison, as he had fresh christened him, round the neck, and fairly dragged him away out of the shop. To be sure, if Hector had resisted, the ostler, with all the power of resistance he possessed, it would indeed have been no easy matter to remove him; but it was wonderful to see how nicely the grateful creature graduated his struggles, so that they fell short of doing the smallest hurt to his preserver, and yet showed how much he wished to remain as a terror and a reproach to Sweeney Todd. When they were both fairly gone, Todd emerged from his parlour again, and the horrible oaths and imprecations he uttered will not bear transcription. With eager haste he again

bundled into the cupboard all the things that the dog had dragged out of it, and then stamping his foot, he said —

"Am I, after defeating the vigilance of heaven only knows who, and for so long preserving myself from almost suspicion, to live in dread of a dog? Am I to be tormented with the thought that that fiend of an animal is opposite to me, and ready at any moment to fly over here and chase me out of my own shop. Confound it! I cannot and will not put up with such a state of things. Oh, if I could but get one fair blow at him. Only one fair blow!"

Sweeney Todd Revisited by the Dog of one of his Victims.

As he spoke he took up a hammer that was in a corner of the shop, and made a swinging movement with it through the air. Some one at that moment opened the shop door, and narrowly escaped a blow upon the head, that would have finished their mortal career.

"Hilloa! Are you mad?"

"Mad!" said Todd.

"Yes: do you knock folks' brains out when they come to be shaved?"

"Mine's a sedentary employment," said Todd, "and when I am alone, I like exercise to open my chest. That's all. Ain't it rather late to be shaved? I was just about to shut up."

"Why it is rather late, Mr. Todd; but the fact is, I am going to York by the early coach from the Bullfinch Inn, opposite, and I want a shave before I get upon my journey, as I shan't have an opportunity you see, again, for some time."

"Very well, sir."

"Come in, Charley."

Todd started.

"What's that?" he said. He felt afraid that it was the dog again, under some new name. Truly, conscience was beginning to make a coward of Sweeney Todd, although he denied to himself the possession of such an article. Charley came in the shape of a little boy, of about eight years of age.

"Now you sit down, and don't do any mischief," said the father, "while I get Mr. Todd to shave me. I am a late customer indeed. You see the coach goes in two hours, and as I have got to call the last thing upon Alderman Stantons, I thought I would be shaved first, and my little lad here would come with me."

"Oh, certainly, sir," said Todd; "I believe I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Brown, the silversmith."

"Yes — yes. The alderman gave me some jewels, worth about three thousand pounds, to reset, and though they are not done, I really don't like to have them at home while I take such a journey, so I want to lodge them with him again until I come back."

Todd lathered away at Mr. Brown's chin, as he said with an air of innocence —

"Can you carry so many jewels about with you, sir?"

"So many? Aye, ten times as many. Why they are all in a little narrow case, that would not hold a pair of razors."

"Indeed!"

Todd began the shaving.

"And so this is your little boy? A sharp lad, no doubt."

"Tolerable."

"The whiskers as they are, sir?"

"Oh, yes — yes."

"I suppose you never trust him out alone in the streets?"

"Oh, yes; often."

"Is it possible. Well, now, I should hardly have thought it. What a sweet child he looks, and such a nice complexion, too. It's quite a pleasure to see him. I was considered myself a very fine child a good while ago."

Todd took care to lift the razor judiciously, so as to give Mr. Brown opportunities of replying; and the silversmith said —

"Oh, yes; he's a nice little fellow. He's got his mother's complexion."

"And he shan't lose it," said Todd, "if there's any virtue in *pearlometrical savonia*."

"In what?"

"Oh, that's the name I give to a soap that preserves the complexion in all its purity. I have only a small parcel of it, so I don't sell it, but I give it away now and then, to my lady customers. Excuse me for one moment."

"Oh, certainly."

Todd opened a glass case, and took out two pieces of soap, of a yellowish tint.

"There, Charley," he said as he handed them to the little fellow. "There's a piece for you, and a piece for mamma."

"Really you are very kind, Mr. Todd," said Brown.

"Oh, don't mention it. Run home at once, Charley, with them, and by the time you get back your father will be — finished. Run along."

"I won't," said Charley.

"Ah, come — come," said his father.

"I won't go, and I don't like soap."

"And why don't you like soap, my little man?" said Todd, as he recommenced operations upon the silversmith's face.

"Because I don't like to be washed at all, it scrubs so, and I don't like you, either, you are so dreadfully ugly — that I don't."

Todd smiled blandly.

"Now, Charley," said his father, "I am very angry with you. You are a very bad boy indeed. Why don't you do as Mr. Todd tells you?"

"Because I won't."

"Bless him," said Todd, "bless his heart. But don't you think, Mr. B." — here Todd's voice sank to a whisper — "don't you think that it's rather injudicious to

encourage this obstinacy — if one may call it such — thus early in life? It may, you know, grow upon the dear little fellow."

"You are right, Mr. Todd; and I know that he is spoiled; but I have a more than ordinary affection for him, since, under most critical circumstances, once I saved his life. From that time, I confess that I have been weak enough to allow him too much of his own way. Thank you, Mr. Todd. A very clean comfortable shave indeed."

Mr. Brown rose from his chair and approached the little boy.

"Charley, my dear," he said; "you will save papa's life some day, won't you?"

"Yes," said Charley.

The father kissed him; as he added —

"How affected I feel tonight. I suppose it's the thought of the long journey I am going."

"No doubt," said Todd.

"Good night, Mr. Todd. Come along, Charley."

"Won't you give me a kiss, you darling, before you go?" said Todd.

"No, ugly, I won't."

"Oh, Charley — Charley, your behaviour to Mr. Todd is really anything but right. You are a very bad boy tonight. Come along."

Away they went, and Todd stood stropping the lately used razor upon his hand, as he glared upon them, and muttered —

"Jewels worth three thousand pounds! And so you saved the child's life, did you? By all that's devilish he has returned the obligation."

He went to the door and looked after the retreating figures of the silversmith and his child. He saw with what tender care the father lifted the little one over the roadway, and again he muttered —

"Three thousand pounds gone! — Gone, when it was almost within my grasp. All this is new. I used not to be the sport of such accidents and adverse circumstances. Time was, when by the seeming irresistible force of my will, I could bend circumstances to my purposes, but now I am the sport of dogs and children. What is the meaning of it all? Is my ancient cunning deserting me? Is my brain no longer active and full of daring?"

He crept back into his shop again. The hour was now getting late, and after sitting for some time in silent musing he rose, and without a word, commenced closing his establishment for the night.

"I must have another boy," he said, as he put up the last shutter and secured it in its place. "I must have another boy. This state of things will not do. I must certainly have another boy. Tobias Ragg would have suited me very well, if he had not been so — so — what shall I call it, confoundedly imaginative. But he is dead — dead! That is a comfort. He is dead, and I must have another boy."

"Bang!" went Sweeney Todd's shop door. The beautiful moon climbed over the house tops in old Fleet Street. The clock of St. Dunstan's struck the hour of eleven. The streets began to be thin of pedestrians, and the din of carriages had almost entirely ceased. London then, although it was so not long ago, presented a very different aspect at the hour of eleven to what it does now. The old hackney coaches had not been ousted from the streets by the cabs and the omnibuses, and the bustle of the city was indeed but a faint echo then, of what it is now. Time changes all things.

CHAPTER XLVII
Johanna's New Situation

"Johanna, attend to me," said Mrs. Oakley, upon the morning after these events.

"Well, mother?"

"Your father is an idiot."

"Mother, mother! I dissent from the opinion, and if it were true, it comes with the worst possible grace from you, but I am sick at heart. I pray you to spare me reproaches or angry words, mother."

"Haity taity, one must not speak next, I suppose. Some people fancy that other people know nothing, but there is such a thing as overhearing what some people say to other people."

Johanna had not the most remote notion of what her mother meant, but Mrs. Oakley's tongue was like many pieces of machinery, that when once set in motion are not without considerable trouble brought to a standstill again, so on she went.

"Of course. I now know quite well why the godly man who would have made you a chosen vessel was refused. It was all owing to that scamp, Mark Ingestrie."

"Mother!"

"Marry come up! You need not look at me in such a way. We don't all of us see with the same eyes. A scamp he is, and a scamp he will be."

"Mother, he whom you so name is with his God. Mention him no more. The wild ocean rolls over his body — his soul is in heaven. Speak not irreverently of one whose sole crime was that he loved me. Oh, mother, mother, you — "

Johanna could say no more, she burst into tears.

"Well," said Mrs. Oakley, "if he is dead, pray what hinders you from listening to the chosen vessel, I should like to know?"

"Do not. Oh do not, mother, say any more to me — I cannot, dare not trust myself to speak to you upon such a subject."

"What is this?" said Mr. Oakley, stepping into the room. "Johanna in tears! What has happened?"

Mr. Oakley Defends Johanna from the Violence of her Mother.

“Father — dear father!”

“And Mr. O.,” cried Mrs. Oakley, “what business is it of yours, I should like to know? Be so good, sir, as to attend to your spectacles, and such like rubbish, and not to interfere with my daughter.”

“Dear me! — Ain’t she my daughter likewise?”

“Oh yes, Mr. O.! Go on with your base, vile, wretched, contemptible, unmanly insinuations. Do go on, pray — I like it. Oh, you odious wretch! You spectacle making monster!”

“Do not,” cried Johanna, who saw the heightened colour of her father’s cheek. “Oh, do not let me be the unhappy cause of any quarrelling. Father! Father!”

“Hush, my dear, don’t you say another word. Cousin Ben is coming to take a little bit of lunch with us today.”

“I know it,” cried Mrs. Oakley, clapping her hands together with a vengeance that made Oakley jump again. “I know it. Oh, you wretch. You couldn’t have put on such airs if your bully had not been coming; I thought the last time he came here was enough for him. Aye, and for you too, Mr. O.”

“It was nearly too much,” said the spectacle maker, shaking his head.

“Tow row, row, row, row!” cried Big Ben, popping his head into the parlour, “what do you all bring it in now? Wilful murder with the chill off or what? Ah, mother Oakley, what’s the price of vinegar now, wholesale — pluck does it. Here you is. Ha, ha! Ain’t we a united family. Couldn’t stay away from you, Mother Oakley, no more nor I could from that ’ere laughing hyena we has in the Tower.”

"Eugh! — wretch!"

"Sit down, Ben," said Mr. Oakley. "I am glad to see you, and I am quite sure Johanna is."

"Oh, yes, yes."

"That's it," said Ben. "It's on Johanna's account I came. Now, little one, just tell me — "

Johanna had just time to place her finger upon her lips, unobserved by any one, and shake her head at Ben.

"Ah — hem! How are you, eh?" he said, turning the conversation. "Come, Mother O., stir your old stumps and be alive, will you? I have come to lunch with your lord and master, so bustle — bustle."

Mrs. Oakley rose, and placing her hands upon her hips, she looked at Ben, as she said —

"You great, horrid, man-mountain of a wretch. I only wonder you ain't afraid, after the proper punishment you had on the occasion of your last visit, to show your horrid face here again?"

"You *deludes* to the physicking, I suppose, mum. Lor bless you, it did us no end of good; but, howsomedever, we provide agin wice in animals when we knows on it aforehand, do you see. Oh, there you is."

A boy howled out from the shop — "Did a gentleman order two gallons of half-and-half here, please?"

"All's right," said Ben. "Now, Mother O., the only thing I'll trouble you for, is a knife and fork. As for the rest of the combustibles, here they is."

Ben took from one capacious pocket a huge parcel, containing about six pounds of boiled beef, and from the other he took as much ham.

"Hold hard!" he cried to the boy who brought the beer. "Take this half-crown, my lad, and get three quartern loaves."

"But, Ben," said old Mr. Oakley, "I really had no intention, when I asked you to come to lunch this morning, of making you provide it yourself. We have, or we ought to have, plenty of everything in the house."

"Old birds," said Ben, "isn't to be caught twice. A fellow, arter he has burnt his fingers, is afeard o' playing with the fire. No, Mrs. O., you gave us a benefit last time, and I ain't agoing to try my luck again. All's right — pitch into the grub. How is the chosen vessel, Mother O.? All right, eh?"

Mrs. Oakley waited until Ben had made an immense sandwich of ham and beef; and then in an instant, before he was aware of what she was about, she caught it up, and slapped it in his face with a vengeance that was quite staggering.

“Easy does it,” said Ben.

“Take that, you great, fat elephant.”

“Go it — go it.”

Mrs. Oakley bounced out of the room. Johanna looked her sorrow; and Mr. Oakley rose from his chair, but Ben made him sit down again, saying —

“Easy does it — easy does it. Never mind her, cousin Oakley. She must have her way sometimes. Let her kick and be off. There’s no harm done — not a bit. Lord bless you. I’m used to all sorts of cantankerous animals.”

Mr. Oakley shook his head.

“Forget it, father,” said Johanna.

“I only wish, my dear, I could forget many things; and yet there are so many others, that I want to remember, mixed up with them, that I don’t know how I should manage to separate them one from the other.”

“You couldn’t do it,” said Ben. “Here’s luck in a bag, and shake it out as you want it.”

This sentiment was uttered while Ben’s head was deep in the recesses of the two-gallon can of beer, so that it had a peculiar solemn and sonorous effect with it. After drinking about a quart, Ben withdrew the can, and drew a long breath.

“Has he brought yours?” he said.

“What? — who?”

“Why the other two gallons for you and Johanna.”

“Good gracious, Ben, you don’t mean that?”

“Don’t I, though. Oh, here he is. All’s right. Now, my lad, get the little pint jug, with the silver top to it, and if we don’t mull a drop, I’m a sinner. Now, you’ll see if Mrs. O. don’t come round quite handsome.”

Ben, by the aid of some sugar, succeeded in making a very palatable drink, and just as the steam began to salute the nostrils of old Oakley and himself, the door of the parlour was opened, and who should heedlessly step into the room but the pious Mr. Lupin himself. Mr. Lupin was so transfixed by finding

Ben there, that for a moment or two he could not gather strength to retreat; and during that brief period, Ben had shifted his chair, until he got quite behind the reverend gentleman, who, when he did step back, in consequence fell into Ben's lap.

"What do yer mean?" cried Ben, in a voice of thunder.

"Oh, murder — murder! Have mercy upon me! I only looked in as I was passing, to ask how all the family was."

"Yes," said Mr. Oakley, "and because you, no doubt, heard I was going to Tottenham, to Judge Merivale's, to fit him with a pair of spectacles."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Let me go, sir."

"I don't want you," said Ben; "but as you are here, let's make an end of all differences, and have a pint together."

"A pint?"

"Yes, to be sure. By the look of your nose, I should say it knows pretty well what a pint is."

"Oh, dear — man is sinful alway. I bear no malice, and if the truly right-minded and pious Mrs. Oakley was only here, we might drink down all differences, Mr. a — a — "

"Ben."

"Mr. Ben. Thank you, sir."

"Oh, Mr. Lupin," cried Mrs. Oakley, at this moment bursting into the parlour. "Is it possible that you can give your mind in this way to the Philistines? Is not this backsliding?"

"Let us hope for the best, sister," said Mr. Lupin, with an evangelical twang. "Let us hope for the best. If people will drink, they had much better drink with the saints, who may take some favourable opportunity of converting them, than with sinners."

"Sit down, mum," said Ben, "and let's bury all animosities in the can. Easy does it. Don't you go, Johanna."

"Yes, but, Ben, I — "

"Now don't."

Ben saw by the direction of Johanna's eyes, that the Rev. gentleman was resting one of his red raw looking hands upon her arm, and, situated as she was, she could not get out of his way but by rising.

"Sit still," said Ben. "Easy does it."

Lifting up the can, then, he pretended to drink out of it, and then brought it with such a thundering crack upon Mr. Lupin's head, that it quite staggered him.

"Paws off," said Ben. "Just attend to that 'ere gentle hint, old friend."

Mr. Lupin sat down with a groan.

"Now, mum," said Ben, who all the while had held fast the stone mug of mulled porter. "Now, mum, here's some hot, that don't suit me so well as the cold, perhaps you and Mr. Lupin will take that, while I cuts a few more sandwiches."

He placed the jug before Mr. Lupin, who thereupon left off rubbing his head, and said —

"I'm sure it would be highly unchristian of me to bear any malice, so, with the Lord's leave, I will even partake of some of this worldly liquor, called mulled porter."

Now while Mr. Lupin drank the savoury stream from the jug, it assailed the senses of Mrs. Oakley, and when the porter was placed before her, she raised it to her lips, saying —

"If folks are civil to me, I'm civil to them, only I don't like my godly friends to be ill-treated. I'm sure nobody knows what I have gone through for my family, and nobody thinks what a mother and wife I have been. What would have become of Oakley if it hadn't been for me, is a question I often ask myself in the middle of the night?"

"She's a wonderful woman," sighed Lupin.

"Oh, uncommon," said Ben.

"Let me go," whispered Johanna to Ben.

"No, no! Wait for the fun."

"What fun?"

"Oh, you'll see. You don't know what a trouble it has cost me, to be sure. Only wait a bit, there's a duck, do."

Johanna did not like to say she would not, so she shrunk back in her chair in no small curiosity, to know what was about to happen. Mrs. Oakley lifted the jug to her lips and drunk deep. The aroma of the liquor must have been peculiarly grateful to the palate of Mrs. Oakley, for she certainly kept the jug at her mouth for a length of time, that, to judge by the look of impatience upon the countenance of Mr. Lupin, was something outrageous.

"Sister!" he said. "Mind your breath."

Down came the jug, and Mrs. Oakley, when she could draw breath, gasped —

"Very good indeed. A dash of allspice would make it delicious."

"Oh, sister," cried Lupin as he grasped the jug, that was gently pushed towards him by Ben after Mrs. Oakley had set it down. "Oh, sister, don't give your mind to carnal things, I beg of you. Why, she's drank it all."

Mr. Lupin peered into the jug. He shut the right eye and looked in with the left, and then he shut the left eye and looked in with the right, and then he moved the jug about until the silver lid came down with a clap, that nearly snapped his nose off.

"What's the matter?" said Ben.

"I — I — don't exactly — " Mr. Lupin raised the lid again and again, and peered into the jug in something of the fashion which popular belief supposes a crow to look into a marrow bone.

At length he turned the jug upside down, and struck the bottom of it with his pious knuckles. A huge toad fell sprawling upon the table. Mrs. Oakley gave a shriek, and rushed into the yard. Mr. Lupin gave a groan, and flew into the street, and the party in the parlour could hear them in a state of horrible sickness.

"Easy does it," said Ben, "it's only a piece of wood shaped like a toad and painted, that's all. Now I'm easy. I owed 'em one."