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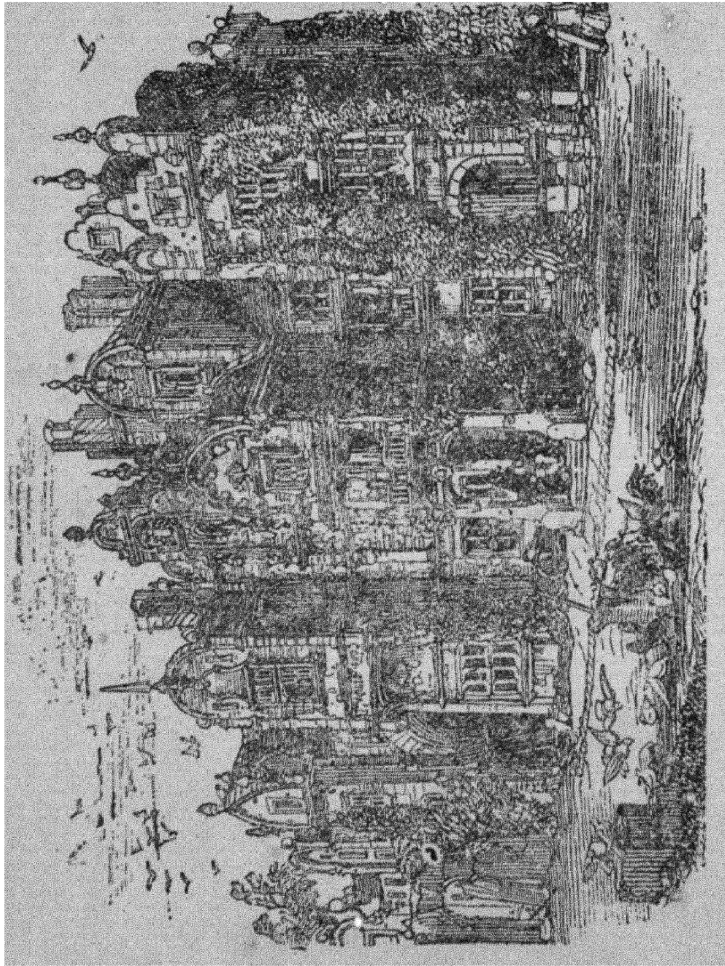
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XI

BARNABY RUDGE



THE MAYPOLE.

BARNABY RUDGE

BY

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CHAPTER I.

In the year 1775 there stood upon the borders of Epping Forest and close to the village of Chigwell—about twelve miles from London—an inn called the Maypole ; which fact was demonstrated to all such travellers as could neither read nor write (and in those days a vast number both of travellers and stay-at-homes were unable to do either) by the emblem reared on the roadside opposite the house, which, although not as large as the Maypole of later times, was a fair young ash, thirty feet in height and straight as an arrow.

The Maypole was an old building, with more gable-ends than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day, and was said to have been built in the days of King Henry the Eighth. It was really an old house, a very old house, perhaps as old as it claimed to be, and perhaps older. Its windows were old, its floors were sunken and uneven, its ceilings blackened by the hand of Time, and heavy with great beams. Over the doorway was a huge porch, quaintly carved : and here on summer evenings the more favoured customers smoked and drank — ay, and sang many a good song too sometimes — reposing on two grim-looking high backed settles, which, like the twin dragons of some fairy tale, guarded the entrance to the mansion.

The evening with which we have to do was neither a summer nor an autumn one, but the twilight of a day in March, when the wind howled dismally among the bare branches of the trees, and, rumbling in the wide chimneys and driving the rain against the windows of the Maypole Inn, gave its customers a sound reason for prolonging their stay, and caused the landlord to prophesy that the night would certainly clear at eleven o'clock precisely,—which by a remarkable coincidence was the hour at which he always closed his house.

The name of the landlord was John Willet, a burly, large-headed man with a fat face, which betokened profound obstinacy and slowness of understanding, combined with a

very strong reliance upon his own merits. It was John's ordinary boast that if he were slow he was sure: which assertion could in one sense at least be by no means gainsaid, seeing that he was in everything the reverse of fast, and also one of the most dogged and positive fellows in existence—always sure that what he thought or said or did was right, and holding it as a thing quite settled and ordained by the laws of nature and Providence, that anybody that said or did or thought otherwise must be inevitably wrong.

Mr. Willet walked slowly up to the window, flattened his fat nose against the cold glass, and shading his eyes that his sight might not be affected by the ruddy glow of the fire, looked abroad. Then he walked slowly back to his old seat in the chimney-corner, and, composing himself in it with a slight shiver, said, looking round upon his guests:

“It will clear at eleven o'clock. No sooner and no later. Not before and not afterwards.”

“How do you make out that?” said a little man in the opposite corner. “The moon is past the full, and she rises at nine.”

John looked sclemnly at his questioner until he had brought his mind to bear upon the whole of his observation, and then made answer, in a tone which seemed to imply that the moon was his business and nobody else's:

“Never you mind about the moon. Don't you trouble yourself about her. You let the moon alone, and I'll let you alone.”

“No offence, I hope?” said the little man.

Again John waited leisurely until the observation had thoroughly sunk into his brain, and then replying, “No offence *as yet*,” applied a light to his pipe and smoked in placid silence. Now and then he cast a sidelong look at a man wrapped in a loose riding-coat with huge cuffs ornamented with tarnished silver lace and large metal buttons, who sat apart from the regular frequenters of the house, and, wearing a hat turned down over his face, looked unsociable enough.

There was another guest, who sat, booted and spurred,

at some distance from the fire also. This was a young man of about eight-and-twenty, rather above the middle height, and though of a somewhat slight figure, gracefully and strongly made. He had dark hair and wore a riding-dress, which, together with his large boots, showed traces of the bad condition of the roads. But travel-stained though he was, he was well and even richly attired and looked a gallant gentleman. Beside him were a heavy riding-whip and a big hat suited to the inclemency of the weather; also a pair of pistols and a short riding-cloak. Little of his face was visible, except the long dark lashes which concealed his down-cast eyes, but an air of careless ease and natural grace pervaded his figure.

Towards this young gentleman the eyes of Mr. Willet wandered but once, and it was plain that John and the young gentleman had often met before. Finding however that his look was not returned he gradually concentrated the whole power of his eyes into one focus, and brought it to bear upon the man in the turned down hat, at whom he came to stare in course of time with an intensity so remarkable that it affected his fireside friends, who all, as with one accord, took their pipes from their lips and stared with open mouths at the stranger likewise.

The stranger became restless: perhaps from being exposed to this scrutiny, perhaps from the nature of his meditations—most probably from the latter cause, for as he changed his position and looked hastily round he started to find himself the object of such keen regard, and darted an angry and suspicious glance at the fireside group. It had the effect of immediately diverting all eyes to the chimney, except those of John Willet, who remained staring at his guest in a particularly awkward manner.

“Well?” said the stranger.

“I thought you gave an order,” said the landlord, after a pause of two or three minutes for consideration. The stranger took off his hat, and disclosed the hard features of a man of sixty or thereabouts, much weather-beaten and worn by time. His naturally harsh expression was not improved by a dark

handkerchief which was bound tightly round his head. This served the purpose of a wig, shaded his forehead, and almost hid his eyebrows. His complexion was deadly pale, and he had a grizzly jagged beard of some three weeks' growth. Such was the figure (very meanly and poorly clad) that now rose from the seat, and stalking across the room sat down in a corner of the chimney, and called for some drink.

This was promptly supplied by the landlord's son, Joe, a broad-shouldered strapping young fellow of twenty, whom it pleased his father still to consider a little boy, and to treat accordingly. Stretching out his hands to warm them by the blazing fire the man turned his head towards the company, and, after running his eye sharply over them, said in a voice well suited to his appearance:

"What house is that which stands a mile or so from here?"

"Public-house." Said the landlord, with his usual deliberation.

"Public-house, father!" exclaimed Joe, "where's the public-house within a mile or so of the Maypole? He means the great house—the Warren—naturally and of course. The old red brick house, sir, that stands in its own grounds?"

"Ay," said the stranger.

"And that fifteen or twenty years ago stood in a park five times as broad, which with other and richer property has bit by bit changed hands and dwindled away—more's the pity!" pursued the young man.

"May be," was the reply. "But I was going to enquire about the owner. What the house has been I don't care to know, and what it is I can see for myself."

The heir-apparent to the Maypole pressed his finger on his lips, and glancing at the young gentleman already noticed, who had changed his attitude when the house was first mentioned, replied in a lower tone:

"The owner's name is Haredale, Mr. Geoffrey Haredale, and,"—again he glanced in the same direction as before—"and a worthy gentleman."

The stranger continued: "I turned out of my way

coming here, and took the foot-path that crosses the grounds. Who was the young lady that I saw entering a carriage? His daughter?"

"Why, how should I know, honest man?" replied Joe, contriving in the course of some arrangements about the hearth to advance close to his questioner and pluck him by the sleeve. "I didn't see the young lady, you know. Whew! There's the wind again—and rain—Well, it is a night!"

"Rough weather indeed!" observed the strange man.

"You're used to it?" said Joe, catching at anything which seemed to promise a change of subject.

"Pretty well," returned the other. "About the young lady—Has Mr. Haredale a daughter?"

"No, no," said the young fellow fretfully, "he's a single gentleman—He's—be quiet, can't you, man? Don't you see this talk is not pleasing to the gentleman over there?"

Regardless of this whispered remonstrance and affecting not to hear it, his tormentor provokingly continued: "I mean no harm and have said none that I know of. I ask a few questions—as any stranger may, and not unnaturally—about the inmates of a remarkable house in a neighbourhood which is new to me, and you are as aghast and disturbed as if I were talking treason against King George. Perhaps *you* can tell me why, sir, for (as I say) I am a stranger and this is Greek to me?"

The latter remark was addressed to the other stranger, who had risen and was adjusting his riding-cloak before leaving. Briefly replying that he could give him no information, the young man beckoned to Joe, and handing him a piece of money in payment of his bill, hurried out attended by young Willet himself, who, taking up a candle, followed to light him to the house door.

CHAPTER II.

After a considerable time Joe returned—very talkative and conciliatory, as though with a strong presentiment that he was going to be found fault with.

“Such a thing as love is!” he said, drawing a chair near the fire and looking round for sympathy. “Mr. Chester has set off to walk to London,—all the way to London. His horse went lame riding out here this afternoon, and now he is giving up a good hot supper and our best bed, because Miss Haredale has gone to a dance up in town and he has set his heart on seeing her! I don’t think I could persuade myself to do that, beautiful as she is,—but then I’m not in love (at least I don’t think I am), and that’s the whole difference.”

“He is in love then?” said the stranger.

“Rather,” replied Joe. “He’ll never be more in love, and may very easily be less.”

“Silence, sir!” cried his father.

“What a chap you are, Joe!” said one of John’s friends.

“Such an inconsiderate lad.” Said another.

“Putting himself forward and wringing the very nose off his own father’s face!” exclaimed the parish-clerk.

“What *have* I done?” asked Joe.

“Silence, sir!” returned his father. “What do you mean by talking, when you see people that are more than two or three times your age sitting still and silent and not dreaming of saying a word?”

“Why, that’s the proper time for me to talk, isn’t it?” said Joe rebelliously.

“The proper time, sir!” retorted his father, “the proper time’s no time. When I was your age I never talked, I never wanted to talk. I listened and improved myself; that’s what I did.”

“You hear what your father says, Joe?” said one of the friends, “you wouldn’t much like to tackle *him* in argument, I’m thinking, sir?”

“It’s all very fine talking,” muttered Joe, who had been fidgeting in his chair with several uneasy gestures. “But if:

you mean to tell me that I'm never to open my lips—"

"Silence, sir!" roared his father. "No, you never are. When your opinion's wanted, you give it. When you're spoken to, you speak." Then, addressing the stranger, he said: "If you had asked your questions of a grown-up person—of me or any of these gentlemen—you'd have had some satisfaction and wouldn't have wasted breath. Miss Hareale is Mr. Geoffrey Haredale's niece."

"Is her father alive?" said the man carelessly.

"No," rejoined the landlord, "he is not alive, and he is not dead—"

"Not dead!" cried the other.

"Not dead in a common sort of way," said the landlord.

The stranger suffered a short pause to elapse and then asked abruptly, "What do you mean?"

"More than you think, friend," returned John Willet. "Perhaps there's more meaning in those words than you suspect."

"Perhaps there is," said the strange man gruffly; "but what do you speak in such mysteries for? You tell me first that a man is not alive, nor yet dead—then that he's not dead in a common sort of way—then that you mean a great deal more than I think. What do you mean, I ask again?"

"That," returned the landlord, "is a Maypole story, and has been for the last twenty-four years. That story is Solomon Daisy's story. It belongs to the house, and nobody but Solomon Daisy has ever told it under this roof, or ever shall—that's more."

The man glanced at Solomon Daisy, who was the parish-clerk, and observing that he was about to tell the story gathered his large coat about him and leaned back in the gloom of the spacious chimney-corner, while Solomon in the flickering light of the fire told his tale.

CHAPTER III.

"It was Mr. Reuben Haredale, Mr. Geoffrey Haredale's brother, that twenty-two years ago was the owner of the Warren, which, as Joe has said, was then a much larger and better place and a much more valuable property than it is now. His lady was lately dead, and he was left with one child—the Miss Haredale you have been enquiring about—who was then scarcely a year old. Mr. Haredale left this place when his lady died and went up to London, where he stopped some months; but finding that place as lonely as this he suddenly came back again with his little girl to the Warren, bringing with him only two women servants, and Mr. Rudge his steward, and a gardener. The rest of the servants stopped behind up in London and were to follow next day. It happened that that night an old gentleman, who lived at the neighbouring village of Chigwell and who had long been poorly, died and an order came to me at half past twelve o'clock at night to go and toll the church bell."

There was a movement in the little group of listeners, showing the strong repugnance any of them would have felt to have turned out at such a time upon such an errand. The clerk felt and understood it, and pursued his theme accordingly.

"It was a dreary thing, especially as the grave digger was sick in bed and I was consequently obliged to go alone. However, I put as good a face upon it as I could, and muffling myself up (for it was terribly cold) I started out with a lighted lantern in one hand and the key of the church in the other. It was just such a night as this; blowing a hurricane, raining heavily, and very dark. I got into the church, chained the door back so that it should keep ajar—for, to tell the truth, I didn't like to be shut in there alone—and putting my lantern on the stone seat in the little corner where the bell-rope is, sat down beside it to trim the candle.

"I sat down to trim the candle and when I had done so I could not persuade myself to get up again and go about my work. I don't know how it was, but I thought of all the ghost

stories I had ever heard, even those that I had heard when I was a boy at school, and had forgotten long ago. And then I began to think of the old gentleman who was just dead, and I could have sworn, as I looked up the dark church, that I saw him there wrapping his grave-clothes about him and shivering as if he felt cold. All this time I sat listening and listening and hardly dared to breathe. At length I started up and took the bell rope in my hands. At that minute there rang—not that bell, for I had hardly touched the bell-rope—but another. I heard the ringing of another bell, and a deep bell too, plainly. It was only for an instant, and even then the wind carried the sound away, but I heard it. I listened for a long time, but it rang no more. I then tolled my bell—how, or how long, I don't know—and ran home to bed as fast as I could touch the ground. I was up early next morning after a restless night and told the story to my neighbours. Some were serious and some made light of it; I don't think anybody believed it. But that morning, Mr. Reuben Haredale was found murdered in his bed-chamber; and in his hand was a piece of the cord attached to an alarm-bell outside the roof, which hung in his room and had been cut asunder, no doubt by the murderer when he seized it. That was the bell I heard.

“A chest was found opened and a cash-box, which Mr. Haredale had brought from London that day and which was supposed to contain a large sum of money, was gone. The steward and gardener were both missing and both suspected for a long time, but they were never found, though hunted far and wide. What was supposed to be the body of poor Mr. Rudge the steward was found months afterwards, but it was scarcely to be recognised except by the clothes and the watch and the ring he wore. It was found at the bottom of a piece of water in the grounds, with a deep gash in the breast, where he had been stabbed with a knife. He was only partly dressed; and people all agreed that he had been sitting up reading in his own room, where there were many traces of blood, and was suddenly fallen upon and killed, and his master afterwards. Everybody now thought that the gardener must be the murderer, and though he has never been heard of from that time

to this, he will be, mark my words. The crime was committed this day two-and-twenty years ago—on the nineteenth of March, 1753.”

“A strange story!” said the man who had been the cause of its narration. “Is that all?”

“Is that all?” repeated Solomon Daisy, “yes, that’s all, sir. And enough too, I think.”

“I think so too. My horse, young-man! Though but a poor one, he must carry me to London to-night.”

“To-night!” said Joe.

“To-night,” returned the other. “What do you stare at? This inn would seem to be a house of call for all the gaping idlers of the neighbourhood.”

At this remark Joe, who was a mettlesome fellow, returned the stranger’s angry glance with a steady look and rejoined:

“It’s not a very bold thing to wonder at your going on to-night. You surely have been asked such a harmless question in an inn before, and in better weather than this. I thought you mightn’t know the way, as you seem strange to this part of the country.”

“The way—” repeated the other, irritably.

“Yes. *Do* you know it?”

“I’ll—humph!—I’ll find it,” replied the man, waving his hand and turning on his heel. “Landlord give me my bill.”

John Willet did as he was asked, for on that point he was seldom slow, except in the matter of giving change. The guest then wrapped his garments about him so as to shelter himself as effectually as he could from the rough weather, and without any word or sign of farewell went out to the stable-yard, where Joe was protecting himself and the horse from the rain under the shelter of an old roof.

“He’s pretty much of my opinion,” said Joe, patting the horse upon the neck; “I’ll wager that your stopping here to-night would please him better than it would me.”

“He and I are of different opinions, as we have been more than once on our way here,” was the short reply.

“So I was thinking before you came out, for he has felt

your spurs, poor beast."

The stranger adjusted his coat-collar about his face, and made no answer.

"You'll know me again, I see," he said, marking the young fellow's earnest gaze, when he had sprung into the saddle.

"The man's worth knowing, master, who travels a road he doesn't know, mounted on a tired horse, and leaves good quarters to do it on such a night as this."

"You have sharp eyes and a sharp tongue, I find."

"Both I hope by nature, but the last grows rusty sometimes for want of using."

"Use the first less too, and keep their sharpness for your friends, boy," said the man.

So saying he shook Joe's hand from the bridle, struck him roughly on the head with the butt end of his whip, and galloped away : dashing through the mud and darkness with a headlong speed, which few badly mounted horsemen would have cared to venture, even had they been thoroughly acquainted with the country : and which, to one who knew nothing of the way he rode, was attended at every step with the greatest danger.

CHAPTER IV.

The roads even within twelve miles of London were at that time ill-paved, seldom repaired and very badly made. Great holes and gaps had worn into the soil, which, being now filled with water from the late rains, were not easily distinguishable even by day ; and a plunge into any one of them might have brought down a surer-footed horse than the poor beast now urged forward to the utmost extent of his powers. At that time too all the roads in the neighbourhood of the metropolis were infested by highwaymen, and it was a night, of all others, in which a person of this class might have pursued his unlawful calling with little fear of detection.

The traveller however swept on more like a hunted

phantom than a man, nor checked his pace until he bore down so suddenly upon a vehicle which was coming towards him that in the effort to avoid it he nearly pulled his horse upon his haunches, and narrowly escaped being thrown.

"Yoho!" cried the voice of a man. "What's that? Who goes there?"

"A friend!" replied the traveller.

"A friend" repeated the voice. "Who calls himself a friend and rides like that, endangering not only his own neck, which might be no great matter, but the necks of other people?"

"You have a lantern there, I see," said the traveller, dismounting; "lend it me for a moment. You have wounded my horse, I think, with your shaft or wheel."

"Wounded him!" cried the other; "if I haven't killed him, it's no fault of yours. What do you mean by galloping along the King's highway like that?"

"Give me the light," returned the traveller, snatching it from his hand, "and don't ask idle questions of a man who is in no mood for talking."

The traveller held the light near his panting beast and examined him in limb and body. Meanwhile the other man sat very composedly in his vehicle, which was a kind of chaise with a cupboard for a large bag of tools, and watched his proceedings with a careful eye. He was a round, red-faced, sturdy yeoman, with a double chin and a voice husky with good living, good sleeping, good humour and good health. He was hale, hearty and in a green old age: at peace with himself and evidently disposed to be so with all the world.

"He is not hurt," said the traveller at length, raising his head and the lantern together.

"You have found that out at last, have you?" rejoined the old man. "I could have told you that five minutes ago. Give me the light, friend; ride forward at a gentler pace, and good-night."

In handing up the lantern, the man necessarily cast its rays full on the speaker's face. Their eyes met at the instant. The traveller suddenly dropped the light and crushed it with

his foot.

"Did you never see a locksmith before," cried the old man in the chaise, "or is this a scheme for robbing me? I know these roads, friend. When I travel them, I carry nothing but a few shillings. You shall not have it all your own way, I promise you, if you play at that game." With these words he stood upon the defensive.

"I am not what you take me for, Gabriel Varden," replied the other.

"So you know my name?" returned the locksmith. "Let me know yours."

"I know your name," said the traveller, "because it is written on your cart for all the world to see." And thereupon he threatened Gabriel with a violent death if he were not allowed to proceed immediately, put spurs to his horse and rode away at the same furious gallop which had been his pace when the locksmith first encountered him.

Gabriel Varden remained for a time in the road and finally, when all sound of the stranger's galloping horse had died away, drove on to the Maypole, whence, in answer to his call, Joe Willet emerged.

"The merciful man is merciful to his beast," said the locksmith; "I'll get out for a little while."

This he did and was soon seated in a snug corner of the inn, listening to the talk of little Solomon Daisy, and bearing no unimportant part in the social gossip round the Maypole fire. His adventures however were not over for the night, for, as he was driving drowsily back to London and had reached the outskirts of the great town, a loud cry at no great distance ahead roused him with a start. This cry was repeated many times and Gabriel, who was a bold man, made straight to the spot, urging on his stout little horse as if for life or death.

The matter indeed looked serious, for, coming to the place whence the cries had proceeded, he descried the figure of a man extended apparently dead upon the pathway, and hovering round him another person with a torch in his hand, which he waved impatiently in the air.

"What's the matter?" asked the old man, alighting.

“How’s the—what—Barnaby?”

The bearer of the torch shook his long loose hair back from his eyes, and thrusting his face eagerly into that of the locksmith, fixed upon him a look which showed clearly that he was a madman.

“You know me, Barnaby?” said Varden. “What’s the matter?”

“There’s blood upon him,” said Barnaby with a shudder. “It makes me sick.”

“How came it there?” demanded Varden.

“Steel, steel, steel!” he replied fiercely, imitating with his hand the thrust of a sword.

“Is he robbed?” said the locksmith.

Barnaby caught him by the arm and nodded “Yes”; then pointed towards the city.

“Oh!” said the old man, bending over the body. “The robber went that way, did he? Well, well, never mind that just now. Now stand quiet, while I try to see what harm is done.”

With these words he applied himself to a closer examination of the prostrate form, while Barnaby held the torch, revealing thereby his face and figure. He was about twenty-three years old, and though rather spare, was of a fair height and strong make. His hair, of which he had a great quantity, was red, and hung in disorder about his face and shoulders. This, together with his pale complexion and glassy eyes, gave him a most unearthly look.

His dress was of green, clumsily trimmed with gaudy lace, and he had ornamented his hat with peacock’s feathers, which trailed down his back.

“Barnaby,” said the locksmith after careful inspection, “this man is not dead, but he has a wound in his side, and is in a fainting fit.”

“I know him, I know him!” cried Barnaby, clapping his hands.

“Know him?” repeated the locksmith.

“Hush!” said Barnaby. “He went out to-day a-weeing. Look at the stars! Why do they look down here

and see good men hurt, and only wink and sparkle all the night?"

"Now Heaven help this silly fellow," murmured the perplexed locksmith, "can he know the gentleman? His mother's house is not far off; I had better see if she can tell me who he is. Barnaby, my man, help me to put him in the chaise and we'll ride home together."

"I can't touch him!" cried the idiot, falling back and shuddering; "he is bloody!"

"It's in his nature, I know," murmured the lock-smith. "It's cruel to ask him, but I must have help. Barnaby—dear Barnaby—good Barnaby if you know this gentleman, for the sake of his life help me to raise him."

"Cover him then, wrap him close—don't let me see it—smell it—hear the word. Don't speak the word—don't!"

"No, no, I'll not. There, you see he's covered now. Gently! Well done, well done!"

They placed him in the carriage with great ease for Barnaby was strong and active, and, this accomplished, proceeded to the house of Barnaby's mother—Mrs. Rudge—where they left the wounded stranger in her care.

CHAPTER V.

In the venerable suburb of London called Clerkenwell the business of the present chapter lies, for there stood the locksmith's house, with which we have to deal. It was a modest building; built of wood and plaster, and it was planned with no dull and wearisome regard to regularity, for no one window matched the other or seemed to have the slightest reference to anything besides itself. Three steep stairs led down from the street into the work-shop and behind the work-shop was a sitting-room, and from this room two flights of stairs communicated with the rest of the house. Though the house was curious in the way in which it had been built, there was not a neater or tidier house in all England.

From this dwelling, early on the morning after he had met with the wounded man, Gabriel Varden stepped into the road and stole a look at the upper windows. One of them chanced to be thrown open at the moment and the face of a pretty, laughing girl met his. It was Dolly Varden, the locksmith's daughter.

"Hush!" she whispered, bending forward and pointing to the window underneath, "Mother is still asleep."

"Still, my dear?" returned the locksmith in the same tone. "You talk as if she had been asleep all night, instead of little more than half an hour. But I'm very thankful. Sleep's a blessing—no doubt about it."

"How cruel of you to keep us up so late this morning and never tell us where you were, or send us word!" said the girl.

"Ah, Dolly, Dolly!" returned the locksmith, shaking his head and smiling, "how cruel of you to run upstairs to bed! Come down to breakfast, and come down quietly or you will wake your mother."

Returning his daughter's nod, he was passing into the workshop, when he caught sight of his apprentice's brown paper cap ducking down to avoid observation and shrinking from the window back to its former place, which the wearer no sooner reached than he began to hammer lustily. "Listening again, Simon!" said Gabriel to himself. "That's bad. What in the name of wonder does he expect the girl to say, that I always catch him listening when *she* speaks, and never at any other time? A bad habit, Sim, a sneaking, underhand way."

So saying and shaking his head gravely, he re-entered the work-shop and stood in front of his apprentice.

"That's enough now," said the locksmith. "You needn't make any more of that noise. Breakfast's ready."

"Sir," said Sim, looking up with amazing politeness. "I shall attend you immediately."

"I suppose," muttered Gabriel, "he gets these expressions out of some text-book for apprentices. Now he's going to make himself beautiful! What a fine locksmith he'll become!"

Unaware that his master was looking on from the dark corner by the sitting-room door, Sim threw off the paper cap, sprang from his seat, and in two extraordinary steps bounded to a washing place at the other end of the shop. There he removed from his face and hands all traces of his previous work, and then drew from some concealed place a scrap of looking glass and arranged his hair.

Sim, as he was called in the locksmith's family, or Mr. Simon Tappertit, as he called himself, was an old-fashioned, thin-faced, smooth-haired, sharp-nosed, small-eyed little fellow of twenty years of age with a very high opinion of himself, an opinion which was shared by no one else. He held his own figure, especially his legs (which were extremely thin), in the highest admiration and imagined that his eyes were possessed of almost supernatural powers. His two objects in life were to unite all apprentices in London (of whom there were a very great number) into a powerful league under his own leadership, and secondly to marry the daughter of his employer, Gabriel Varden. Dolly Varden however was really bent on marrying Joe Willet of the Maypole and took no interest whatever in Sim Tappertit.

"Father," said Dolly, as they all took their seats at the breakfast table, "what is this I hear about last night?"

"All true, my dear: quite true."

"Young Mr. Chester robbed and lying wounded in the road, when you came up?"

"Ay—Mr. Edward Chester. And, close to him, Barnaby, calling for help with all his might."

"I dread to think of it!" cried his daughter with a shudder. "How did you know him?"

"Know him!" returned the locksmith. "I didn't know him—how could I? I had never seen him, often as I had heard and spoken of him. I took him to Mrs. Rudge's and she no sooner saw him than the truth came out."

"Miss Emma, father—If this news should reach her exaggerated as it is sure to be, she will go distracted."

"Why, Miss Haredale was with her uncle at a dance, and so what does your silly old father do but go to the dance

too? Sure enough there she was. I whispered to her what the matter was and she gave a kind of scream and fainted away."

"What did you do—what happened next?" asked his daughter.

"Why, everyone flocked round making a terrible noise and I thought myself lucky to get away, that's all," rejoined the locksmith.

While this conversation had been going on Sim Tappertit had been endeavouring to attract Dolly's attention to himself by screwing and twisting his face in the most extraordinary way, and Gabriel, suddenly looking towards him, was struck with amazement. "Why, what's the matter with the lad!" cried the locksmith. "Is he choking?"

"Who?" demanded Sim.

"Who? Why, you," returned his master. "What do you mean by making those horrible faces over your breakfast?"

"Faces are matters of taste, sir," said Mr. Tappertit.

"Sim," rejoined Gabriel, laughing heartily. "Don't be a fool. These young fellows," he added, turning to his daughter, "are always committing some folly or other. There was a quarrel between Joe Willet and old John last night. Joe will be missing one of these days and will have gone away to earn his fortune elsewhere. Why, what's the matter, Doll? *You* are making faces now. The girls are as bad as the boys every bit!"

"It's the tea," said Dolly, turning first very red and then very white. "The tea's so very hot!"

"Is that all?" returned the locksmith. "Put some more milk in it. Yes, I'm sorry for Joe because he's a good fellow. But he'll go away somewhere, you'll find. Indeed he told me so himself."

"Indeed?" cried Dolly in a faint voice. "Indeed?"

"Is the tea tickling your throat still, my dear?" said the locksmith.

Before she could answer, a message arrived from Mrs. Varden to the effect that she was not well enough to

rise from her bed after her great agitation and anxiety of the previous night, and desired to have a pot of tea and two slices of buttered toast sent up to her room. This interruption put an end to breakfast and the three dispersed to their various duties. Dolly went to see the orders of Mrs. Varden executed as quickly as possible, Gabriel to some out-of-door work and Sim, who had observed the effect of Joe's name upon Dolly and was consequently in a fit of jealous anger, set to work to sharpen the locksmith's tools.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as the business of the day was over, Gabriel Varden set out alone to visit the wounded gentleman and ascertain the progress of his recovery. The house where he had left him was not far from London Bridge and thither he hurried through the stormy night and eventually knocked softly at Mrs. Rudge's door.

"Who's there?" demanded a woman's voice from within. Being answered, it added a hasty word of welcome, and the door was quickly opened.

Mrs. Rudge, the widow of the steward at the Warren, was a woman of about forty, with a face that bore traces of sorrow and care, which Time had partially smoothed away. However there still remained a look of terror in her face, which was understood well by those who knew the Maypole story and could remember what the widow was before her husband's and his master's murder.

"God save you, neighbour," said the locksmith, as he followed her into a little sitting-room, where a cheerful fire was burning.

"And you," she answered smiling. "Your kind heart has brought you here again. Nothing will keep you at home, I know, if there are friends to serve or comfort out of doors."

"Tut, tut," returned the locksmith. "You women are such talkers. What of the patient, neighbour?"

"He is sleeping now. He was restless towards daylight, but now the fever has left him and the doctor says he will soon mend. He must not be removed till tomorrow."

"Has he had visitors to day?" said Gabriel.

"Yes. His father has been here ever since we sent for him and has only just gone."

"No ladies?" said Gabriel.

"Only a letter," replied the widow.

"Come. That's better than nothing!" cried the locksmith. "Who was the bearer?"

"Barnaby, of course."

"Barnaby's a jewel!" said Varden, "and can do some things better than we, who think ourselves wiser, can. He is not out wandering again, I hope?"

"Thank Heaven he is in his bed, having been up all night as you know and on his feet all day. He was quite tired out. Ah, neighbour, if I could only see him oftener so—if I could tame down that terrible restlessness—"

"In good time," said the locksmith, kindly,—“don't be down-hearted. To my mind he grows wiser every day. He'll be a clever man yet. Hark! what was that?"

"It was a noise in the street," returned the widow. "Yes. There it is again! It's someone knocking softly at the shutter. Who can it be?"

"Some thief, or ruffian, maybe," said the locksmith. "Give me the light."

"No, no," she returned hastily. "Such visitors have never come to this poor dwelling. You stay here. I would rather go myself—alone."

"Why?" said the locksmith, unwillingly handing her the candle.

"Because—I don't know why—because the wish is strong upon me," she rejoined. "There it is again—do not keep me, I pray you!"

She left the room in a state of great agitation and closed the door behind her. Gabriel heard the door into the street opened, then the tread of a man and a moment's silence—broken at last by something which sounded like a shriek or

groan or a cry for help.

He rushed out immediately. There was that dreadful look of terror upon her face, and there she stood, gazing upon a man whom he recognized as the brutal traveller he had met in the road the night before. The stranger's eyes met those of the locksmith. It was but an instant and he was gone.

The locksmith dashed after him, but the widow clutched his arms and threw herself upon the ground in front of him.

"What does this mean?" cried the locksmith.

"No matter what it means, don't ask, don't speak, don't think about it. He is not to be followed, checked or stopped. Come back!"

The old man looked at her in wonder and allowed her to drag him back into the house, where she turned upon him a look of horror and then sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"You are ill," said Gabriel. "Let me call some neighbour in."

"Not for the world," she rejoined. "It is enough that you should have seen."

"You and I are old friends, Mary. Tell me who that man is."

"I cannot. This is a secret, which I trust to you. Ask me no more. I trust to you. How much I trust, you never can guess."

Fixing her eyes upon him for an instant, she withdrew and left him there alone.

Gabriel, not knowing what to think, stood staring at the door with a countenance full of surprise and dismay. The more he thought over what had happened the less able he was to explain matters satisfactorily. What was the mystery hanging over the widow and her half-witted son? Why did Mrs. Rudge fear this man and yet save him from capture?

As Varden was pondering over the secret, Barnaby, who had been sleeping upstairs, came down to conduct him up to the room in which Mr. Edward Chester was lying. The wounded man welcomed Gabriel Varden as his preserver and friend.

"Say no more, sir, say no more," said Gabriel. "Pray tell me, sir, exactly what happened last night. I have my reason for inquiring. You left the Maypole, alone?"

"And walked homeward, alone until I had nearly reached the place where you found me, when I heard the gallop of a horse."

"Behind you?" said the locksmith.

"Indeed, yes—behind me. It was a single rider, who soon overtook me and, checking his horse, inquired the way to London. I directed him as he desired, but before the words had passed my lips he rode upon me furiously, as if bent on trampling me down beneath his horse's hoofs. In starting aside I slipped and fell, and you found me with this wound and an ugly bruise or two, and without my purse."

"What was this robber like, sir?" pursued Gabriel.

"The night was so dark, the attack so sudden and he so wrapped up that I can hardly say, but I recognised his voice as the voice of the stranger whom I noticed at the Maypole while I was there."

"It is as I feared. The very man was here to-night," thought the locksmith. "What dark story is this!"

"Halloa!" cried a hoarse voice in his ear. "Halloa! Halloa! Halloa! Bow, wow! What's the matter here! Halloa!"

The speaker was a large raven, who had perched upon the top of Gabriel's easy-chair and listened with a polite attention and a most extraordinary appearance of comprehending every word. It was Barnaby's pet raven-Grip and its behaviour on this occasion made Barnaby clap his hands and roll on the ground with delight.

"Strange companions, sir," said the locksmith, shaking his head and looking from Barnaby to Grip. "The bird has all the wit."

"Strange indeed!" said Edward. "By the by, what noise was that below? I heard your voice in the midst of it and should have inquired before. What was it?"

The locksmith looked towards Mrs. Rudge, who leant against a chair and bent her eyes upon the ground.

"Some mad or drunken fellow, sir," Varden at length made answer. "He mistook the house and tried to force an entrance." With these words the locksmith bade Mr. Edward Chester "Good night," and followed the widow downstairs. :

With a trembling hand she unfastened the chain and bolts and turned the key. As she opened the door the locksmith said in a low voice, "I have told a lie to-night, for your sake, Mary, though I would never have done for my own. I hope I may have done no harm. I can't help the suspicions you have forced upon me, and I am unwilling to leave Mr. Edward here. Take care he comes to no hurt. I doubt the safety of this house and am glad he leaves it to-morrow. Now, let me go."

Mrs. Rudge opened the door, let the locksmith out into the street, and then hid her face in her hands and wept.

Gabriel Varden walked home, wondering all the way whether it was possible that such a woman as the widow could on account of her poverty offer her cottage as a refuge for a robber and murderer.

CHAPTER VII.

It was on one of those mornings, common in early spring, when the year is undecided whether to step backward into winter or forward into summer, that old John Willet heard the sound of a horse's feet and glancing out of the window beheld a traveller checking his horse at the Maypole door. The newcomer was a staid, placid gentleman, something past the prime of life, yet upright in his carriage for all that, and slim in figure. He was well-mounted on a sturdy chestnut horse, and had the graceful seat of an experienced horseman. He wore a riding-coat of a somewhat bright green. His linen was of the finest kind, worked in a rich pattern at the wrists and throat and scrupulously white.

John Willet went out and stood with his hand upon the horse's bridle and his great eyes upon the rider.

"A quaint place this," said the gentleman—and his voice

was as rich as his dress. "Are you the landlord?"

"At your service, sir," replied John Willet.

"You can give my horse good stabling, can you, and me an early dinner?" said the stranger.

"You can have, sir," returned John, with a readiness quite surprising, "anything you please."

"It's well I'm easily satisfied," returned the other with a smile, and dismounted.

"Halloa there! Hugh!" roared John to his stable man. "I ask your pardon, sir, for keeping you standing outside, but my son has gone to town on business and I'm left to do as best I may with Hugh. Hugh!" he shouted. "A dreadful idle fellow, sir—half a gipsy, I think—always sleeping in the sun in summer and in the straw in winter, sir. Hugh! I wish that chap was dead, I do."

"Possibly he is," returned the other. "I should think if he were living he would have heard you by this time."

"In his fits of laziness, he sleeps so hard," said the landlord, "if you were to fire off cannon-balls into his ears, it wouldn't awake him, sir. Ah! here's the fellow at last!" cried John. "Did you hear me calling, villain?"

The figure he addressed made no answer, but, putting his hand upon the saddle, sprang into it at a bound, turned the horse's head towards the stable and was gone in an instant.

"Brisk enough when he is awake," said the guest.

"Brisk enough, sir! You look at him, and there he is. You look at him again and—there he isn't," replied John Willet, leading the gentleman up the wide staircase into the Maypole's best apartment.

After lighting with his own hands the faggots, which were heaped upon the hearth, old John withdrew to hold grave council with his cook, on the subject of the stranger's entertainment, while the guest himself waited until the fire was burnt up, and having wheeled the most comfortable chair into the warmest corner, summoned John Willet.

"Sir," said John.

The guest wanted pen, ink and paper. Having set this before him, the landlord was retiring, when he was motioned

to stay.

"There's a house not far from here," said the guest, when he had written a few lines, "which you call the Warren, I believe?"

John contented himself with nodding his head in the affirmative.

"I want this note," said the guest, glancing on what he had written and folding it, "conveyed there without loss of time and an answer brought back here. Have you a messenger at hand?"

John was thoughtful for about a minute and then said, "Yes."

"Let me see him," said the guest.

This was unfortunate; for Joe being out and Hugh engaged in rubbing down the stranger's chestnut horse, he designed sending on the errand Barnaby, who had just arrived.

"Why, the truth is," said John "that the person who'd go the quickest is a sort of idiot, as one may say, sir: and though quick of foot, and as much to be trusted as the post itself, he's not good at talking, sir."

"You don't mean—what's the fellow's name—you don't mean Barnaby?" said the guest, raising his eyes to John's fat face.

"Yes, I do," returned the landlord in surprise.

"How comes he to be here?" inquired the guest. "I saw him in London last night."

"He's here one hour, and there the next," returned old John. "Sometimes he walks, and sometimes he runs. He's known along the road by everybody, and sometimes comes in a cart, sometimes on a horse."

"He goes often to the Warren, does he not?" said the guest carelessly. "I seem to remember his mother telling me something to that effect yesterday."

"You're right, sir," John made answer, "he does. His father, sir, was murdered in that house."

"So I have heard," returned the guest. "A very disagreeable circumstance for the family."

"Very," said John with a puzzled look. "Shall he do

your errand, sir ? ”

“ Oh, yes,” replied the guest. “ Oh, certainly. Let him do it by all means. Please to bring him here that I may tell him to be quick. If he objects to come you may tell him it’s Mr. John Chester the father of the man who is lying wounded at Mrs. Rudge’s house. He will remember my name, I dare say.”

John was so astonished to find who his visitor was, that it was fully ten minutes before he returned to the guest’s apartment with Barnaby.

“ Come hither, lad,” said Mr. Chester. “ You know Mr. Geoffrey Haredale ? ” Barnaby merely laughed.

“ He knows him sir,” said John, frowning at Barnaby, “ as well as you or I do.”

“ I haven’t the pleasure of much acquaintance with the gentleman,” returned his guest. “ You may have. Limit the comparison to yourself, my friend. Give that,” said he, turning to Barnaby, “ into Mr. Haredale’s own hands. Wait for an answer, and bring it back to me—here. If you should find that Mr. Haredale is engaged just now, tell him that I shall be glad to wait his convenience here and to see him (if he will call) at any time this evening. At the worst I can have a bed here, Willet, I suppose ? ”

The landlord replying in the affirmative, Mr. Chester gave Barnaby the letter and bade him make all speed away.

Whereat Barnaby, folding the little packet in his breast, waved his hat above his head and darted off.

“ A strange creature, upon my word ! ” said the guest, and drew his chair nearer to the fire. John, taking this as a hint that the stranger would like to be alone, went out of the room, and left him to himself. Very thoughtful old John Willet was while the dinner was preparing. Mr. Chester and Mr. Haredale had been school-boys together. The former had taken every opportunity of ill-treating Haredale at school and a deep and bitter hatred had sprung up between them. This had grown still more bitter in later life when Mr. Chester had stolen away Mr. Haredale’s intended wife and the two men had become still greater enemies as Mr. Haredale was a

Roman Catholic and Mr. Chester a Protestant. Everyone knew the causes of their hatred, and that Mr. Chester should come to the Maypole on purpose to see Mr. Haredale was more than John could understand.

Barnaby was very late in returning. It was not until Mr. Chester had decided to stay the night and John Willet had made up the fire and was about to withdraw, that a bounding step was heard upon the stair and Barnaby came panting in.

"He'll have his foot in the stirrup in an hour's time," he cried. "He has been riding hard all day—has just come in—but will be in the saddle again as soon as he has had his dinner, to meet his loving friend."

"Was that his message?" asked the visitor, looking up.

"All but the last words," Barnaby rejoined. "He meant those. I saw that in his face."

"Take this for your trouble," said the other, putting money in his hand. "Take this, sharp Barnaby."

"For Grip, and me and Hugh, to share among us," he rejoined, holding it up and nodding, as he counted it on his fingers. "Grip one, me two, Hugh three."

"What has he in that basket at his back?" asked the guest after a few moments.

"In this?" Barnaby answered, jumping up before John Willet could reply—shaking it as he spoke and stooping his head to listen. "In this? What is there here? Tell him."

"A devil, a devil," cried the hoarse voice of the raven.

"Here's money," said Barnaby. "Money for a treat, Grip!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" replied the raven "Keep up your spirits. Never say die. Bow, wow, wow."

Mr. Willet thereupon took Barnaby off and quitted the room with his very best bow.

CHAPTER VIII.

The fact that Mr. John Chester had demanded an interview with Mr. Geoffréy Haredale of the Warren and that this interview was about to take place at the Maypole caused great excitement amongst the regular Maypole customers; and, when at last the sound of a horse was heard outside, John and Hugh sprang to their feet, the former to show Mr. Haredale the way in and the latter to take his horse.

"You have a stranger here, Willet, who sent to me," said Mr. Haredale, in a voice which sounded stern and deep. "Where is he?"

"In the great room upstairs, sir," answered John.

"Show the way. Your staircase is dark, I know." With that he signed to the landlord to go on before, and went up the stairs, old John in front of him.

"Stop!" he said, when they reached the landing. "I can announce myself. Don't wait."

He laid his hand upon the door, entered, and shut it heavily. Mr. Willet was by no means inclined to stand there listening by himself, specially as the walls were very thick; so he descended with much greater speed than he had come up and joined his friends below.

Mr. Haredale strode into the big room of the Maypole and presented himself abruptly and in silence before the smiling guest. If the two had no greater sympathy in their inward thoughts than in their outward bearing and appearance, the meeting did not seem likely to prove a very calm or pleasant one. With no great difference between them in point of years, they were in every other respect as unlike each other as two men could well be. The one was soft-spoken, delicately made, precise and elegant; the other, a burly, square-built man, carelessly dressed, rough and abrupt in manner and stern both in look and speech. The one preserved a calm and placid smile, the other a distrustful frown. The new-comer indeed appeared bent on showing by his every tone and gesture his determined opposi-

tion to the man he had come to meet.

"Haredale," said Mr. Chester, "I am very glad to see you."

"Let us dispense with compliments. They are misplaced between us," returned the other waving his hand, "and say plainly what we have to say. You have asked me to meet you. I am here. Why do we stand face to face again?"

"Still the same frank and sturdy character, I see!"

"Good or bad, sir, I am the man I used to be," returned the other. "I have lost no old likings or dislikings; my memory has not failed me. You ask me to give you a meeting. I say, I am here."

"Our meeting, Haredale," said Mr. Chester, tapping his snuff-box, "is one of conference and peace, I hope."

"I have come here," returned the other, "at your desire, holding myself bound to meet you when and where you would. I have not come to make pleasant speeches. You are a smooth man of the world, sir, and at such play have me at a disadvantage."

"You do me a great deal of honour, Haredale," replied the other, "and I thank you. I will be frank with you—"

"I beg your pardon—will be what?"

"Frank—open—perfectly candid."

"Hah!" cried Mr. Haredale, with a sarcastic smile. "But don't let me interrupt you."

"Haredale, we are not what the world calls friends. You have a niece and I a son—a fine lad, Haredale, but foolish. They wish to marry. Are we to let them do so or are we to prevent their marriage and part them?"

"I love my niece," retorted Mr. Haredale fiercely. "Do you think that, loving her, I would have her fling her heart away on any man who had your blood in his veins?"

"You see the advantage," said the other, not at all disturbed, "of being so frank and open. Just what I was about to add! I am amazingly fond of Edward—and even if we could afford to consider so poor a marriage, which we cannot, we could not overcome the objection you urge."

"Mark me," said Mr. Haredale, striding to the table and laying his hand upon it heavily; "if any man believes that I, in word or deed, ever entertained the idea of Emma Haredale's marrying one who was akin to you, he lies and does me grievous wrong in the mere thought."

"Haredale," returned the other, "it's extremely manly and really very generous in you to agree with me in this way. Upon my word, those are exactly my sentiments, only expressed with much more force and power than I could use."

"While I would restrain her from all correspondence with your son, and sever their intercourse now, though it would cause her death, I propose to do it kindly and tenderly, if I can."

"I am more delighted than I can possibly tell you," rejoined Mr. Chester, with the utmost blandness, "to find my own impression so confirmed. You see the advantage of our having met. We understand each other. We quite agree."

"Pray, who," said Mr. Haredale, "have aided Emma or your son? Who are their go-betweens and agents—do you know?"

"All the good people hereabouts, I think," returned the other with his most pleasant smile. "The messenger I sent to you to-day, foremost among them all."

"The idiot? Barnaby?"

"You are surprised? And so was I. I heard it from his mother, from whom indeed I chiefly learnt how serious the matter had become, and so I determined to ride out here to-day and talk with you."

"Our business, I presume, is nearly at an end," said Mr. Haredale. "Trust me, Mr. Chester, my niece shall change from this time."

"And so I hope will Edward," said Mr. Chester, restoring some faggots to their places in the grate with the toe of his boot.

"If now," pursued Mr. Haredale, "we should find it difficult to separate these young people, and break off their

intercourse—if, for instance, you find it difficult on your side, what course do you intend to take?”

“Nothing plainer, my good fellow, nothing easier, returned the other. “I shall then resort to a few methods of rousing jealousy and resentment. You see?”

“In short, we are as a last resource for tearing them asunder, to resort to treachery—and lying?” said Mr. Haredale.

“Oh dear no. Fie, fie! returned the other. “Not lying. Only a little management, a little diplomacy, a little—intriguing, that’s the word.”

“I wish,” said Mr. Haredale, moving to and fro like one who was ill at ease, “that this could have been foreseen or prevented. But, as it has gone so far, and it is necessary for us to act, it is of no use shrinking from anything. Well! I shall second your endeavours to the utmost of my power. We shall act in agreement, but apart. There will be no need, I hope, for us to meet again.”

“Are you going?” said Mr. Chester, rising. “Let me light you down the stairs.”

“Pray keep your seat,” returned the other drily; “I know the way.” So, waving his hand slightly and putting on his hat as he turned upon his heel, he went out, shut the door behind him and tramped down the echoing stairs.

“Pah! A very coarse animal!” said Mr. Chester, settling himself in the easy chair again. “A rough brute indeed!”

John Willet and his friends, who had been listening intently for the clash of swords or firing of pistols in the great room, were very much astonished to see Mr. Haredale come down unhurt, call for his horse, and ride away slowly from the inn.

It was only when Mr. Chester rang the bell and expressed his intention of retiring to bed for the night that it dawned upon the dull brains of the landlord that the interview had passed off without any mishap.

CHAPTER IX.

Joe Willet was riding leisurely back from London one night late in March when he heard the tramp of a horse's feet behind him, and looking back saw a well-mounted gentleman advancing at a smart canter. As this rider passed, he checked his steed, and called Joe by his name. Joe set spurs to his grey mare and was at his side directly.

"I thought it was you, sir," he said, touching his hat. "A fair evening, sir. Glad to see you well and out of doors again. Are you bound for our house, sir?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Edward Chester—for it was he. "As I am not quite strong yet, I shall stay there to-night and ride home early in the morning."

"If you're in no particular hurry," said Joe after a short silence, "and will bear with the pace of my poor horse, I shall be glad to ride on with you to the Warren, sir, and hold your horse when you dismount. It'll save your having to walk from the Maypole there and back again. I can spare the time well, sir, for I am too soon."

"And so am I," returned Edward, "though I was unconsciously riding fast just now. We will keep together, Joe, willingly, and be as good company as may be."

It was a fine dry night, and the light of a young moon, which was then just rising, shed around that peace and tranquillity which gives to evening-time its most delicious charm. The lengthened shadows of the trees, softened as if reflected in still water, threw their carpet on the path the travellers pursued, and the light wind stirred yet more softly than before, as though it were soothing Nature in her sleep. Little by little they ceased talking, and rode on side by side in a pleasant silence.

"The Maypole lights are brilliant to-night," said Edward, as they rode along the lane from which that inn was visible.

"Brilliant indeed, sir," returned Joe. "Lights in the large room and a fire glimmering in the best bed-chamber.

Why, what company can this be for, I wonder!"

"Some late traveller on his way towards London, I suppose," said Edward.

"He must be a traveller, of good quality to have such accommodation. The bed intended for you too, sir—!"

"No matter, Joe. Any other room will do for me. But come—there's nine striking. We may push on."

They cantered forward at as brisk a pace as Joe's horse could attain, and presently stopped in a little wood close to the Warren. Edward dismounted, gave his bridle to his companion and walked with a light step towards the house. A female servant was waiting at a side gate in the garden-wall and admitted him without delay. He hurried along the terrace-walk, and darted up a flight of broad steps leading into an old and gloomy hall. Here he paused, but not long; for as he looked round, Emma Haredale appeared. Almost at the same instant a heavy hand was laid upon her arm, Edward felt himself thrust aside and Mr. Haredale stood between them.

He regarded the young man sternly without removing his hat; with one hand he clasped his niece, and with the other, in which he held his riding-whip, motioned him towards the door. The young man drew himself up and returned his gaze.

"This is well done of you, sir, to corrupt my servants, and enter my house unbidden and in secret, like a thief!" said Mr. Haredale. "Leave it, sir, and return no more."

"Miss Haredale's presence," returned the young man, "and your relationship to her, allow you to use words to me, which you would not use otherwise with impunity. You have compelled me to this course, and the fault is yours—not mine."

"It is neither generous, nor honourable, nor the act of a true man, sir," retorted the other, "to play with the affections of a weak, trusting girl, while you shrink from her guardian and protector and dare not meet the light of day. More than this I will not say to you, except that I forbid you this house and require you to be gone."

"It is neither generous, nor honourable, nor the act of a true man to play the spy," said Edward. "Your words imply dishonour, and I reject them with the scorn they merit."

"You will find," said Mr. Haredale calmly, "your trusty go between in waiting at the gate by which you entered. I have played no spy's part, sir, I chanced to see you pass the gate, and followed. Please to withdraw. Your presence here is offensive to me and distressful to my niece."

"Mr. Haredale," said Edward, "your arm encircles her on whom I have set my every hope and thought, and to purchase one minute's happiness for whom I would gladly lay down my life. Your niece has promised to marry me and I her."

"I cancel the agreement between you," replied Mr. Haredale. "I reject you and all your kith and kin."

"Listen to me, sir, I will not abandon this pursuit. I rely upon your niece's truth and honour. I leave her with a confidence in her pure faith, which you will never weaken."

With these words he pressed Emma's cold hand to his lips and, once more encountering Mr. Haredale's steady look, withdrew.

A few words to Joe as he mounted his horse sufficiently explained what had passed, and they rode back to the Maypole in silence. Old John was out directly and said with great importance as he held the young man's stirrup, "He's comfortable in bed—the best bed. A thorough gentleman; the most smiling, pleasant gentleman I ever had to do with."

"Who, Willet?" said Edward carelessly, as he dismounted.

"Your worthy father, sir," replied John. "Your honourable, venerable father."

"What does he mean?" said Edward.

"Why didn't you know of it, sir?" said John in surprise. "Bless you, Mr. Chester has been here ever since

noon to-day, and Mr. Haredale has been having a long talk with him."

"My father, Willet!"

"Yes, sir. In your old room up yonder, sir. No doubt you can go in, sir," said John, looking up at the window. "He hasn't put out his candle yet, I see."

Edward glanced at the window also, and hastily murmuring that he had changed his mind and must return to London, mounted his horse again and rode away, leaving the Willets, father and son, looking at each other in mute astonishment.

CHAPTER X.

At noon next day Mr. John Chester sat lingering over his breakfast in his own home in London, when the room-door opened and Edward, his son, entered; his father gently waved his hand to him and smiled.

"Are you at leisure for a little conversation, sir?" said Edward.

"Surely. I am always at leisure. You know my constitution. Have you breakfasted?"

"Three hours ago!"

"What a very early dog!" cried his father with a languid smile.

"The truth is," said Edward, bringing a chair forward and seating himself near the table, "that I slept but ill last night and was glad to rise. The cause of my uneasiness cannot but be known to you, sir; and it is upon that I wish to speak.

"My dear boy," returned his father, "confide in me, I beg. But you know my constitution—don't be prosy, Edward."

"I will be plain and brief," said his son.

"Don't say you will, my good fellow," returned his father, crossing his legs, "or you certainly will not be. You are going to tell me—"

"Plainly this, then," said the son, "that I know where you were last night, and whom you saw, and what your purpose was."

"You don't say so!" cried his father. "I am delighted to hear it. It saves us the worry and terrible wear and tear of a long explanation, and is a great relief to us both."

"I saw Miss Haredale last night," Edward resumed, "her uncle, in her presence, immediately after your interview and of course in consequence of it, forbade me the house and commanded me to leave it on the instant."

"For his manner of doing so I give you my honour, Edward, I am not accountable," said his father.

"Father," said the young man, "we must not trifle in this matter. I wish to marry Emma Haredale. You have interposed to part us and have to a certain extent succeeded. May I induce you, sir, in time to think more favourably of our attachment, or is it your intention and your fixed design to hold us apart if you can?"

"My dear son," returned his father, taking a pinch of snuff, "that is my purpose most undoubtedly."

"And may I ask your reasons, sir, for this course of action?" replied Edward.

"I will give you a perfectly plain and candid answer," said his father. "One reason is that the fortune, into which I stepped when I married your mother is gone—has been gone for many years. We are living on a very small annuity and my past reputation. We are, in other words, beggars, and it is imperative that you should find a rich wife for yourself. The second reason is that you are a Protestant and she a Catholic. How could you ever think of uniting yourself to a Catholic, unless she was amazingly rich?"

"Why have I never known this before? To think that I—a beggar—have been trying to win the heart of Emma Haredale!"

"I am glad you see, Edward," returned his father, "how perfectly self-evident it is that you cannot marry her. But perhaps you would rather be alone? I am going out. Take

care of yourself. You are a person of great consequence to me. God bless you !”

With these words the father withdrew, humming a tune as he went. The younger man however sat on, with his head resting on his hands, in what appeared to be a kind of stupor. At last he made up his mind that the only course open to him was to write a letter to Emma Haredale explaining that his poverty made it impossible for him to ask her hand in marriage, and to despatch it to her by her humble friend and foster-sister, Dolly Varden. Having come to this decision he rose and left the room, in which his hopes had been dashed to the ground.

CHAPTER XI.

The streets of London in the night, even at the comparatively recent date of this tale, were, one and all, from the broadest and best to the narrowest and least frequented, very dark. The oil and cotton lamps burnt feebly at the best ; and at a late hour, when they were unassisted by the lamps and candles in the shops, cast but a narrow track of doubtful light upon the foot way, leaving the projecting doors and house-fronts in the deepest gloom. Many of the courts and lanes were left in total darkness. Thus, in the lightest thoroughfares, there was at every turn some obscure and dangerous spot whither a thief might fly for shelter, and few would care to follow.

It was no wonder that with these favouring circumstances street robberies should have been of nightly occurrence in the very heart of London, or that quiet folks should have had great dread of traversing its streets after the shops were closed. Among all the dangerous characters who prowled about London at night there was one man from whom all shrank with fear. Who he was, or whence he came, was a question often asked, but which none could answer. This night, as he glided down a by-street, a woman with a little basket on her arm turned into it at the other end. Directly he observed

her, he sought the shelter of an archway, and stood aside until she had passed. Then he emerged cautiously from his hiding-place, and followed. She went into several shops to purchase various kinds of household necessaries, and round every place at which she stopped he hovered like her evil spirit, following her when she reappeared. It was nearly eleven o'clock, and the passengers in the streets were thinning fast, when she turned, doubtless to go home. The phantom still followed her.

She turned into the same street in which he had seen her first, which, being free from shops, and narrow, was extremely dark. She quickened her pace here, as though distrustful of being stopped, and robbed of such trifling property as she carried with her. He crept along on the other side of the road. At length the widow—for it was Mrs. Rudge—reached her own door, and, panting for breath, paused to take the key from her basket. She raised her head and saw him standing silently beside her.

“I have been looking for you many nights,” he said. “Is the house empty? Answer me. Is any one inside?”

She could only answer by a rattle in her throat.

“Make me a sign,” he said.

She seemed to indicate that there was no one there. He took the key, unlocked the door, motioned her in, and secured it carefully behind them.

It was a chilly night and the fire in the widow's parlour had burnt low. The man's dress was drenched with wet and he shivered from head to foot. He was besmeared with mire; his beard was unshaven, his face unwashed, his meagre cheeks worn into deep hollows,—a more miserable wretch could hardly be than this man who now cowered down upon the widow's hearth.

She had covered her face with her hands, fearing, as it seemed, to look towards him. So they remained for some short time in silence. Glancing round, he asked at length :—

“Is this your house?”

“It is. Why, in the name of Heaven, do you darken it?”

“Give me meat and drink,” he answered sullenly. “I must have warmth and food, and I will have them here.”

“You are the man who robbed Mr. Chester on the road from the Maypole.”

“I am.”

“And you nearly murdered him.”

“The will was not wanting. But there was a man who came upon me and shouted. I made a thrust at him.”

“You thrust your sword at *him*!” cried the widow, looking upwards. He looked at her. Then starting to his feet, he advanced towards her.

“Beware!” she cried in a suppressed voice. “Do not so much as touch me with a finger, or you are lost; body and soul, you are lost.”

“Hear me,” he replied, threatening her with his hand, “I am past all fear. Give the alarm, cry out, refuse to shelter me. I will not hurt you. But I will not be taken alive; and so surely as you threaten me above your breath, I fall a dead man upon the floor.”

As he spoke, he took a pistol from his breast and firmly clutched it in his hand.

“Remove this man from me, good Heaven!” cried the widow.

“Heaven has no such purpose,” he said, confronting her. “It is deaf. Give me something to eat and drink.”

• “Will you leave me, if I do this much? Will you leave me and return no more?”

“I will promise nothing” he rejoined, seating himself at the table, “nothing but this—I will execute my threat if you betray me.”

She rose at length, and, going to a closet in the room, brought out some fragments of cold meat and bread and put them on the table. He asked for brandy and for water. These she produced likewise and he ate and drank with the hunger of a famished hound. His supper ended, he moved his chair towards the fire again, and warming himself before the blaze, which had now sprung brightly up, spoke to her once more.

"I am an outcast. You live here at your ease. Do you live alone?"

"I do not," she made reply with an effort.

"Who dwells here besides?"

"One—it is no matter who. You had best be gone, or he may find you here. Why do you linger?"

"For warmth," he replied, spreading out his hands before the fire. "For warmth. You are rich, perhaps?"

"Very," she said faintly. "Very rich! No doubt I am very rich!"

"At least you are not penniless. You have some money. You were making purchases to-night."

"I have a little left. It is but a few shillings."

"Give me your purse. You had it in your hand at the door. Give it to me."

She stepped to the table and laid it down. He reached across, took it up and counted the contents into his hand. As he was counting them, she listened for a moment, and then sprang towards him.

"Take what there is, take all, but go before it is too late. I have heard a step without, which I know full well. It will return directly. Begone."

"What do you mean?"

"Do not stop to ask. I will not answer. Miserable wretch! fly from this place."

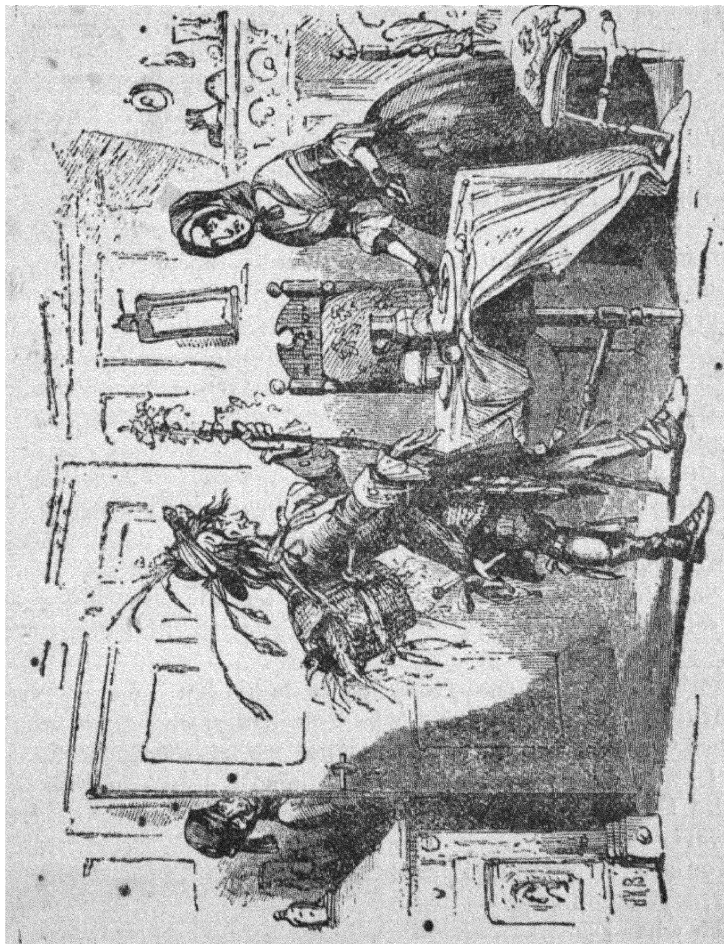
"If there are spies outside, I am safer here," replied the man. "I will remain here, and will not fly till the danger is past."

"It is too late!" cried the widow, who had listened for the step and not to him. "Hark to that foot upon the ground. Do you tremble to hear it! It is my son, my idiot son!"

As she said this wildly, there came a heavy knocking at the door. He looked at her and she at him.

"Let him come in," said the man, hoarsely. "I fear him less than the dark night. He knocks again. Let him come in!"

"The dread of this hour has been upon me all my life,



BARNABY GREET'S HIS MOTHER

and I will not."

She had sunk upon her knees, and so knelt down, moving her lips, but uttering no sound. As he gazed upon her, uncertain what to do and where to turn, the shutters flew open. He had barely time to catch a knife from the table, sheathe it in the loose sleeve of his coat, hide in the closet, and do all with lightning speed, when Barnaby tapped at the bare glass, and raised the window.

"Why, who can keep out Grip and me!" he cried, thrusting in his head and staring round the room. "Are you there, mother? How long you keep us from the fire and light."

She stammered some excuse. Barnaby sprang lightly in without assistance, and putting his arms round her neck, kissed her. "We have been in the fields, mother—leaping ditches, scrambling through hedges, running down steep banks, up and away, and hurrying on. And Grip—ha, ha, ha! brave Grip who cares for nothing, has been with me and taking such care of me! How pale you are to-night! We have been cruel, Grip, and made her anxious!"

Anxious in good truth and sick at heart! The listener held the door of his hiding-place open with his hand and closely watched the widow's son. Grip—alive to everything his master was unconscious of—had his head out of the basket, and in return was watching him intently with his glistening eye.

"Mother!" said Barnaby, laying aside his hat and stick, and returning to the chair from which he had risen, "I'll tell you where we have been to-day, and what we have been doing,—shall I? Why *do* you look behind me so?"

"Did I?" she answered faintly. "I didn't know I did. Come nearer me."

"You are frightened!" said Barnaby, changing colour. "Mother,—you don't see—"

"See what?"

He fell into a shivering fit as he put the question. After a time he raised his head and looked about him.

"Is it gone?"

"There has been nothing here," rejoined his mother, soothing him.

"Nothing indeed, dear Barnaby. Look! You see there are but you and I."

Barnaby, reassured, began again to tell his mother what he had been doing. "Maypole Hugh, and I, and Grip—we have been lying in the forest, and among the trees by the roadside, with a dark lantern after night came on, and the dog ready to let loose, when the man came by."

"What man?"

"The robber. We have waited for him after dark these many nights, and we shall have him. I'd know him in a thousand. Mother, see here; this is the man. Look!"

He twisted his handkerchief round his head, pulled his hat upon his brow, wrapped his coat about him and stood up before her, just like the real robber, who was peering out from the closet behind him.

"Ha, ha, ha! We shall have him," he cried, "Mother, you are pale again, and trembling. And why do you look behind me so?"

"It is nothing," she answered. "I am not quite well. Go to bed, dear, and leave me here."

"To bed!" he answered. "I don't like bed. I like to lie before the fire. I am hungry too, and Grip has eaten nothing since noon. Let us have supper, Grip! To supper, lad!"

The raven flapped his wings, and, hopping to the feet of his master, there held his beak open, ready for snapping up such lumps of food as he should throw him. Of these he received about a score in rapid succession, without the smallest discomposure.

"That's all," said Barnaby.

"More!" cried Grip. "More."

His supper done, Barnaby, regardless of his mother's entreaties to go to bed, stretched himself upon the mat before the fire, while Grip perched upon his leg. After a long interval Barnaby slept soundly, and the bird too with his bill sunk upon his breast.

The widow, scarcely venturing to breathe, rose from

her seat. The man glided from the closet and extinguished the candle.

"You teach your son well," he whispered.

"I have taught him nothing that you heard to-night. Depart instantly, or I will rouse him."

"You are free to rouse him. Shall I do so?"

"You dare not do that."

"I dare do anything, I have told you. He knows me well, it seems. At least I will know him."

With that he advanced, and bending down over the prostrate form, softly turned back the head and looked into the face. He contemplated it for a space and hastily rose up.

"Observe," he whispered in the widow's ear "In this son, of whose existence I was ignorant until to-night, I have you in my power. Be careful how you use me. I am destitute and starving, and a wanderer upon the earth. I may take a slow and sure revenge."

"There is some dreadful meaning in your words. I do not fathom it."

"There is a meaning in them, and I see you fathom it to its very depth. You have anticipated it for years; you have told me as much. I leave you to digest it. Do not forget my warning." He pointed, as he left her, to the slumbering form, and stealthily withdrawing, made his way into the street. She fell on her knees beside the sleeper, and remained like one changed into stone, until the tears which fear had frozen so long came tenderly to her relief.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Edward Chester had, it will be remembered, decided to send a letter to Emma Haredale at the Warren by the hands of Dolly Varden, and it was shortly after the events of the last chapter that the Varden family drove out towards the Maypole. It was a beautiful day. Everyone along the road was glad to see the Vardens and to

have a chat with them. However, in course of time—and in course of a pretty long time too, for these agreeable interruptions delayed them not a little,—they arrived upon the outskirts of the Forest. Riding pleasantly on among the trees, they came at last to the Maypole, where the locksmith's cheerful shout speedily brought to the porch old John Willet, and after him young Joe, both of whom were so transfixed at sight of the ladies, that for a moment they were perfectly unable to give them any welcome, and could do nothing but stare.

The ladies were helped out of the carriage and were taken by John and Joe into the most comfortable room in the inn. While dinner was being prepared for them, Dolly, whose gay heart and head ran upon other matters, passed out of the garden door, and glancing back now and then tripped away by a path across the fields with which she was well acquainted, to discharge her mission at the Warren.

Emma rose to greet her when she arrived, and kissing her affectionately on the cheek, told her, in her quiet way that she had been very unhappy.

"I have heard about it, miss," said Dolly, "and it's very sad indeed, but when things are at the worst they are sure to mend."

"But are you sure they are at the worst?" asked Emma with a smile.

"Why, I don't see how they can very well be more unpromising than they are; I really don't," said Dolly. "And I bring something to begin with."

"Not from Edward?"

Dolly nodded and smiled and gave her the letter. Emma hastily broke the seal and became absorbed in its contents.

It was a very long letter—a very, very long letter, written close on all four sides of the sheet of paper, and crossed afterwards; but it was not a consolatory letter, for as Emma read it she stopped from time to time to put her handkerchief to her eyes. Everything has an end though, and in course of time the packet was folded up, and it only remained to write the answer.

But, as this promised to be a work of time likewise, Emma said she would put it off until after dinner, and that Dolly must dine with her. As Dolly had made up her mind to do so beforehand, she required very little pressing; and when they had settled this point, they went to walk in the garden.

After this came the dinner and the letter-writing and some more talking and then Emma suffered her to depart; but not before she had entrusted to her that important answer with a request that it should be taken very special care of, and endowed her moreover with a pretty little bracelet as a keepsake. Having clasped it on her arm she bade Dolly farewell and after calling her back to give her more supplementary messages for Edward than Dolly Varden could reasonably be expected to remember, at length dismissed her.

Dolly bade her good-bye and tripping lightly down the stairs arrived at the library door and was about to pass it on tiptoe, when it opened, and behold! there stood Mr. Haredale. Dolly had always been afraid of Mr. Haredale and now she gave a start, and then with downcast eyes stood still and trembled.

"Come here, girl," said Mr. Haredale, taking her by the hand. "I want to speak to you."

"If you please, sir, I'm in a hurry," faltered Dolly, "and—you have frightened me by coming so suddenly upon me, sir—I would rather go, sir, if you'll be so good as to let me."

"Immediately," said Mr. Haredale, who had by this time led her into the room and closed the door. "You shall go directly. You have just left Emma?"

"Yes, sir, just this minute—Father's waiting for me, sir, if you will please to have the goodness—"

"I know, I know," said Mr. Haredale, "but answer me a question first. What did you bring here to-day?"

"Bring here, sir?" faltered Dolly.

"You will tell the truth, I am sure."

Dolly hesitated for a little while, and, somewhat emboldened by his manner, said at last, "Well then, sir—it was a letter."



READING THE LOVE-LETTER

"From Mr. Edward Chester, of course. And you are the bearer of the answer?"

Dolly hesitated again, and not being able to decide on any other course of action, burst into tears.

"You alarm yourself without cause," said Mr. Haredale. "Why are you so foolish? Surely you can answer me. You know that I have but to put the question to Emma and learn the truth directly. Have you the answer with you?"

Dolly had what is popularly called a spirit of her own, and being now in a corner, made the most of it.

"Yes, sir, I have. You may kill me, if you please, sir, but I won't give it up. I'm very sorry—but I won't. There, sir."

"I commend your firmness and your plain speaking" said Mr. Haredale. "Rest assured that I have as little desire to take your letter as your life. You are a very discreet messenger, and a good girl."

In spite of his fine words Dolly kept as far away from him as she could, and resolved to defend her pocket (for the letter was there) to the last extremity.

"I have some design," said Mr. Haredale, after a short silence "of providing a companion for my niece; for her life is a very lonely one. Would *you* like to be her companion? You are the oldest friend she has."

"I don't know, sir," answered Dolly; "I can't say. I don't know what they might wish at home. I couldn't give an opinion, sir."

"If your friends had no objection, would *you* have any?" said Mr. Haredale. "Come. There's a plain question and easy to answer."

"None at all, that I know of, sir," replied Dolly. "I should be very glad to be near Miss Emma, of course, and always am."

"That's well," said Mr. Haredale. "That is all I had to say. You are anxious to go. Don't let me detain you."

Dolly didn't let him, nor did she wait for him to try, for the words had no sooner passed his lips than she was out of the room, out of the house and in the fields again.

The twilight had come on, and it was quickly growing dusk, but the path was so familiar to her from frequent

traversing that she hardly thought of this, and certainly felt no uneasiness at being alone. Moreover there was the bracelet to admire ; and when she had given it a good rub, and held it out at arm's length, it sparkled and glittered so beautifully on her wrist that to look at it was quite an absorbing business.

Neither the letter nor the bracelet, however, was destined to reach the Maypole, for in the gathering darkness a man suddenly leapt through the bushes by her side, snatched both letter and bracelet from her, and was gone in an instant.

She was close to the Maypole by now and her cries for help brought out Joe Willet, who hastened (only too gladly) to her assistance and took her to the inn. The search for the robber proved of no avail nor could any sign of him be seen.

Dolly, who was quite inconsolable for her loss, wrote a note to Miss Haredale, explaining what had happened. This note Joe undertook to deliver as soon as the family at the Warren were awake next day. Then, after all the preparations for their journey back to London had been made and they had bidden farewell to old John Willet, the carriage rolled away, with Joe escorting it until the dangerous part of the road had been left behind.

CHAPTER XIII.

Twilight had given place to night some hours. In his home in London the elder Mr. Chester reclined upon a couch in his dressing-room, entertaining himself with a book. He had been reading a very considerable time when he was disturbed by a noise at the outer door, occasioned as it seemed by the endeavours of his servant to obstruct the entrance of some unwelcome visitor.

On the entrance of his servant Mr. Chester asked what the trouble was.

"A man, sir," replied the servant, "has brought home the riding-whip which you lost the other day. I told him you were out, but he said he was to wait while I brought it in, and wouldn't go till I did."

"He was quite right," returned his master. "Tell him to come in, and see that he rubs his shoes on the mat for exactly five minutes"

The man laid the whip on the chair, and withdrew, and shortly afterwards the visitor entered. The visitor turned out to be Hugh of the Maypole, and he was followed by a dog, as rough and sullen as himself.

"My good fellow," said Mr. Chester, "I am delighted to see you. How are you?"

"I'm well enough," said Hugh impatiently.

"You look a perfect marvel of health. Sit down."

"I'd rather stand," said Hugh.

"Please yourself, my good fellow," returned Mr. Chester. "Please yourself by all means."

Having said this in the politest tone possible he took no further notice of his guest, who stood in the same spot uncertain what to do next and eyeing him sulkily from time to time.

"Are you going to speak to me, master?" he said, after a long silence.

"My worthy creature," returned Mr. Chester, "you are a little out of temper. I'll wait till you are yourself again. I am in no hurry."

This behaviour had its intended effect. It humbled the man and made him irresolute and uncertain. It was some time before he dared to repeat his question:—

"Are you going to speak to me, master, or am I to go away?"

"You must speak, my good fellow," said Mr. Chester. "I have spoken, have I not? I am waiting for you."

"Why, look here, sir," returned Hugh, "am I the man that you privately left your whip before you rode away from the Maypole and told to bring it back whenever he might want to see you on a certain subject?"

"No doubt the same," said Mr. Chester.

"Then I have come, sir," said Hugh "and I have brought it back and something else along with it." As he spoke, he laid upon the table Dolly's lost letter—the very letter that had cost her so much trouble.

"Did you obtain this by force, my good fellow?" said

Mr. Chester.

"Not quite," said Hugh. "Partly."

"Who was the messenger from whom you took it?"

"A woman. One Varden's daughter."

"Oh indeed!" said Mr. Chester gaily. "What else did you take from her?"

"What else?"

"Yes," said the other. "What else?"

"Nothing."

"I think," said Mr. Chester, in the same easy tone, as before, "I think there was something else. I have heard a trifle of jewellery spoken of—a mere trifle—a thing of such little value, indeed, that you may have forgotten it. Do you remember anything of the kind—such as a bracelet, now, for instance?"

Hugh angrily thrust his hand into his breast and drawing the bracelet forth was about to lay it on the table when Mr. Chester bade him put it back again.

"You took that for yourself, my excellent friend," he said, "and may keep it. This letter was directed to my son and you did quite right to bring it to me. I shall open it on my own responsibility and shall then burn it. Take this for your trouble."

Hugh stepped forward to receive the piece of money he held out to him. As Mr. Chester put it in his hand he added:

"If you should happen to find anything else of this sort or to pick up any kind of information you may think I would like to have, bring it here, will you, my good fellow?"

Hugh answered that he would.

"By the bye," said Mr. Chester, "what is your name, my good soul? You are called Hugh, I know, of course—your other name?"

"I have no other name."

"A very strange fellow! Do you mean you never knew one, or that you don't choose to tell it? Which?"

"I'd tell it if I could," said Hugh quickly. "I can't. I have been always called Hugh; nothing more. I never knew, nor saw, nor thought about a father; and I was a boy of six—that's not very old—when they hanged my mother. They might have let her live. She was poor enough."

"How very sad!" exclaimed his patron, with a smile. "I have no doubt she was an exceedingly fine woman."

Hugh made no answer, but whistling to his dog, who sprang up at the sound and came jumping about him, bade Mr. Chester good-night.

"Good night," he returned. "Remember; you're safe with me—quite safe. So long as you deserve it, my good fellow, as I hope you always will, you have a friend in me, on whose silence you may rely. Good night! Bless you!"

Hugh crept out of the door so submissively that his patron, on being left alone, smiled more than ever. After a few moments' reflection he summoned his man, who promptly attended. "Here," said Mr. Chester. "Bring some scent and sprinkle the floor and take away the chair that man sat on and air it; and dash a little of that mixture upon me. I am stifled!"

The man obeyed; and the room and its master being both purified, nothing remained for Mr. Chester but to demand his hat and to set out for his night's entertainment, humming a tune.

CHAPTER XIV.

Leaving Mr. Chester to enjoy himself in his fashionable surroundings, we follow in the steps of two slow travellers on foot making towards Chigwell, Barnaby and his mother, with Grip in their company of course.

The widow, to whom each painful mile seemed longer than the last, toiled wearily along; while Barnaby fluttered here and there, now leaving her far behind, now lingering far behind himself. Sometimes he would bid her lean upon his arm, and would keep beside her steadily for a short distance; but it was more his nature to be rambling to and fro, and she better liked to see him free and happy, even than to have him near her, because she loved him better than herself.

She had quitted the village of Chigwell, to which they were travelling, directly after the event which had changed her whole existence; and for two-and-twenty years had never had

courage to revisit it. It was her native village. How many recollections crowded on her mind when it appeared in sight!

The people all knew Barnaby and the children of the place came flocking round him, but none of them knew the widow.

The Warren was the end of their journey. Mr. Haredale was walking in the garden, and seeing them pass the iron gate, unlocked it and bade them enter that way.

"At length you have mustered heart to visit the old place," he said to the widow. "I am glad you have."

"For the first time, and the last, sir," she replied.

"The first for many years, but not the last?"

"The very last."

"You mean," said Mr. Haredale, regarding her with some surprise, "that having made this effort you are resolved not to persevere. This is unworthy of you. I have often told you, you should return here. You would be happier here than elsewhere, I know. As to Barnaby it's quite his home."

"And Grip's," said Barnaby, holding the basket open. The raven hopped gravely out, and perching on his shoulder and addressing himself to Mr. Haredale, cried, "Polly, put the kettle on, we'll all have tea!"

"Have you come all this way at last, solely to speak to me?" continued Mr. Haredale, as they approached the house.

She answered, "Yes. I took my resolution but last night; and, taking it, felt that I must not lose a day—not an hour—in having speech with you."

They had by this time reached the house, and there was Emma seated in a window reading. The young lady, seeing who approached, hastily rose and laid aside her book, and with many kind words and not without tears, gave her a warm and earnest welcome. But the widow shrank from her embrace as though she feared her and sank down trembling on a chair.

Miss Haredale stood beside her chair, regarding her with silent pity. She remained for a little time quite still, then rose and turned to Mr. Haredale, who had sat down in his

easy chair, and was contemplating her with fixed attention.

"I scarcely know," said the widow, breaking silence, "how to begin. You will think my mind disordered."

"You do not speak to strangers," returned Mr. Haredale mildly. "Be more yourself. Take heart. Any advice or assistance that I can give you, you know is yours by right, and freely yours."

"I have come, sir," she rejoined, "I, who have but one other friend on earth, have come to reject your aid from this moment and to say that henceforward I am going to try to live alone and unassisted, to sink or swim, as Heaven may decree!"

"If that be true," said Mr. Haredale calmly, "if you have come for such a purpose, you must have some reason to assign for conduct so extraordinary?"

"That, sir," she answered, "is the misery of my distress. I can give no reason whatever. My own bare word is all that I can offer. It is my duty, my imperative duty. If I did not do it, I should be a base and guilty wretch. Having said that, my lips are sealed and I can say no more."

As though she felt relieved at having said so much, and had nerved herself to the remainder of her task, she spoke from this time with a firmer voice and heightened courage.

"Heaven is my witness, sir, that I have lived, since that time we all have bitter reason to remember, in unchanging devotion and gratitude to this family. And it is my witness, too, that my feelings alone impel me to the course I must take and from which nothing now shall turn me."

"Let me be sure," said Mr. Haredale, "that I understand you, for I am doubtful of my own senses. Do you mean that you are resolved voluntarily to deprive yourself of those means of support you have received from us so long—that you are determined to resign the annuity we settled on you twenty years ago? Are you determined to leave house and home and goods and begin life anew—and this for some secret reason, which only now exists?"

"Though I am deeply thankful," she made answer, "for the kindness of those who have owned this house, I can no longer subsist upon their bounty. You do not know," she added suddenly, "to what uses it may be applied; into

what hands it may pass. I do, and I renounce it."

"Surely," said Mr. Haredale, "the spending of it rests with you."

"It did, but it rests with me no longer."

"What words are these!" cried Mr. Haredale, regarding her with wonder. "Among what associates have you fallen? Into what guilt have you ever been betrayed?"

"I am guilty, and yet innocent; wrong, yet right; good in intentions though compelled to aid the bad. Ask me no more questions, sir, but believe that I am rather to be pitied than condemned. I must leave my house to-morrow. My future dwelling, if I am to live in peace, must be a secret. If my poor boy should ever stray this way, do not tempt him to say where our dwelling is, nor have him watched when he returns; for, if we are hunted, we must fly again. And now this load is off my mind, I beseech you—and you, dear Miss Haredale, too—to trust me, if you can and think of me kindly as you have been used to do."

With that she would have left them, but they detained her, and with many soothing words and kind entreaties besought her to consider what she did. Finding her deaf to their persuasions, they reluctantly suffered her to depart, since she would neither eat nor drink within the house; and she, Barnaby and Grip accordingly went out as they had come, by the private stair and garden-gate, seeing and being seen by no one on the way.

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Chester, fully determined that his son's marriage should not take place, spared no pains to prevent it. He had discovered that messages were being conveyed between the lovers by Barnaby, Dolly Varden and Joe Willett. But Barnaby and his mother having left their house in London and departed no one knew where, could not be dealt with for the time being.

He visited the Varden's house, and by means of flattery

and misrepresentation, he persuaded Mrs. Varden to exert her influence to restrain her husband and daughter from helping Edward in his love affairs. He prejudiced the vain obstinate woman against honest Joe Willett, who was deeply in love with her daughter; and Dolly, a coquette by nature, was in truth much more deeply attached to Joe than she led him to believe. Dolly, as we know, had written a note to tell Emma of the loss of the letter, and had entrusted it to Joe. Joe's father, however, who wished to oblige Mr. Chester, an important customer, had forbidden him to leave the Maypole Inn. So he passed on Dolly's note to Hugh; but Hugh, instead of delivering it to Miss Haredale, went to Mr. Chester's rooms and gave it to him.

Mr. Chester then decided to see Emma herself, and having heard from Hugh that she usually walked out alone, about noon, in the grounds of the Warren, he met her the following day by the bridge, and in a short interview so poisoned her mind against his son that she indignantly broke off her engagement. He tried next to convince his son that Emma had thrown him over on account of his poverty, and after reproaching him unjustly for his undutiful conduct, turned him from his house and ordered his servant to refuse him admittance in future. Edward left without a word and people soon whispered that Mr. Chester's son had occasioned him great grief and sorrow. They wondered at his even temper and said how amiable a man must be who could undergo so much and remain so placid and so calm.

CHAPTER XVI.

Old John Willett having put his son Joe on his word of honour not to leave the Maypole, soon became more and more tyrannical and encouraged the frequenters of the Inn to worry and brow-beat him. At last Joe could bear it no longer, and one night after a violent quarrel, he decided to leave his home. The following morning at sunrise, he dropped from his bedroom window a bundle of clothes and his stick, and

climbed down to the ground himself.

He walked away at a great pace, full of great thoughts of going for a soldier and dying in some foreign country, where it was very hot and sandy and leaving unheard of wealth to Dolly. He pushed on vigorously until the noise of London sounded in his ears, and an inn called the Black



MISS HARLDALE ON THE BRIDGE

Lion came in sight. It was only eight o'clock then, and very much astonished the Landlord of the Black Lion was to see him come walking in, with dust upon his feet at that early hour.

“What noisy fellow is that in the next room?” said Joe, when he had eaten his breakfast, and had washed and

brushed himself.

“A recruiting Serjeant,” replied the Landlord.

Joe started. Here was the very thing he had been dreaming of, all the way along.

“Is he recruiting for a fine regiment?” said Joe.

“I believe he is,” replied the host. “It’s much the same thing though, I’m told there isn’t much difference between a fine man and another one, when they’re shot through and through.”

“Ah!” retorted Joe. “You don’t care for glory”, and he walked out, stopped at the door of the next room and listened. The Serjeant was describing a military life. A battle, he said, was the finest thing in the world—when your side won it—and Englishmen always did that. “Supposing you should be killed, sir?” said a timid voice in one corner. “Well, sir, supposing you should be,” said the Serjeant, “what then? Your country loves you sir: his Majesty King George the Third loves you: your memory is honoured and respected; everybody is fond of you and grateful to you: your name is written down at full length in a book in the War Office. Why, gentlemen, we must all die some time or another, eh?”

Joe walked into the room, and it was not many minutes before he had made up his mind to enlist as a soldier. But he resolved to have a parting word with charming Dolly Varden, so bent his steps to the locksmith’s house. But Dolly was a spoilt child—she was hurt at Joe’s going away, and too proud to tell him she loved him. So she said “good-bye” as lightly as if he were only going into the next street, but when he had really gone she bolted herself into her room and cried as if her heart would break.

Joe, disconsolate, but full of courage too, made his way back to the Serjeant and in less than five minutes was enrolled as one of the gallant soldiers of the King. Next morning, with a party of other recruits he had left London behind. And the world went on turning round as usual, for five years, concerning which this Narrative is silent.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the nineteenth of March in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty, John Willet and his friends sat round the fire listening to the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain against the windows.

It was getting nearly time for them to go to bed, when Solomon Daisy, the parish clerk, with a lighted lantern in his hand, and the rain streaming from his clothes, dashed into the room. A more complete picture of terror than the little man presented, it would be difficult to imagine.

When he had sufficiently recovered, he explained that he had been to the church to wind up the clock and on leaving the church again he had seen a man in the churchyard, who was none other than the man who was supposed to have been murdered—Rudge.

This story so affected the listeners that it was some time before any of them spoke. Eventually however a long discussion followed and while the others went home to bed, John Willet summoned Hugh, and together they proceeded to the Warren and acquainted Mr. Haredale with the story.

Mr. Haredale, ever since Mrs. Rudge had come to his house and told him she would no longer accept any money from him, had had a suspicion that the murderer of his brother was not the gardener, but Rudge.

The story told by John Willet now confirmed his suspicion and from this moment he made up his mind to devote himself to the discovery of Rudge.

On their return John Willet and Hugh had just got clear of the Warren grounds and were in the open road, when Hugh pulled John Willet suddenly aside, and almost at the same instant three horsemen swept up and checked their horses. The horseman in the centre inquired in a somewhat loud voice whether that was the London road and how far distant London was.

"Why, from here, sir," answered John, "it is thirteen easy miles."

"Thirteen miles!" said the gentleman, "that's a long distance! Are there any inns hereabouts?"

"There are no inns," rejoined Mr. Willet, with a strong emphasis on the plural number; "but there's an inn—one inn—the Maypole Inn. That's an Inn indeed. You won't see the like of that Inn often."

"You keep it, perhaps?" said the horseman smiling.

"I do, sir," replied John.

"And how far is the Maypole from here?"

"About a mile, sir."

"And have you one excellent bed, landlord?" asked one of the other riders. "A bed that you can recommend—a bed that you are sure is well aired?"

"Three beds," interposed the gentleman who had spoken before. "We shall want three beds, if we stay, though my friend only speaks of one."

"No, no, my lord; you are too good, you are too kind; but *your* life is of far too much importance to the nation in these times to be placed upon a level with one so useless and so poor as mine. A great cause, my lord, a mighty cause depends on you. You are its leader and its champion. It is the cause of our altars and our homes, our country and our faith. Let *me* sleep on a chair—the carpet—anywhere. No one will be sorry if *I* take cold or fever. Let John Grueby pass the night beneath the open sky—no one need take any thought of *him*. But forty thousand men of this our island have their eyes and thoughts on Lord George Gordon; and every day, from the rising up of the sun to the going down of the same, pray for his health and vigour. My lord," said the speaker, "it is a glorious cause and must not be forgotten. My lord, it is a holy cause, and must not be deserted."

"It is a holy cause," exclaimed Lord George Gordon, lifting up his hat with great solemnity.

By this time Mr. Willet, who had never heard so many words spoken together at one time, and whose brain had quite given itself up for lost, recovered so far as to observe that there was ample accommodation at the Maypole for

all the party; good beds and excellent entertainment for man and beast.

Lord George, turning to his other companion who had not yet spoken, exclaimed, "What say you, Gashford? Shall we stay at this house he speaks of, or press forward? You shall decide."

"I would submit, my lord," returned the person he appealed to, "that your health and spirits—so important to our cause, *our pure and truthful cause*—require refreshment and repose."

"Go on before, landlord, and show the way," said Lord George Gordon; "we will follow at a foot-pace."

"If you'll give me leave, my lord," said John Grueby, in a low voice, "I'll change my proper place, and ride before you. The looks of the landlord's friend are not over honest, and it may be as well to be cautious with him."

"John Grueby is quite right," interposed Mr. Gashford, falling back hastily. "My lord, a life so precious as yours must not be put in peril. Go forward, John, by all means. If you have any reason to suspect the fellow, blow his brains out."

John Grueby, who was Lord George's servant, made no answer, but bade Hugh push on, and followed close behind him. Then came his lordship, with Mr. Willet at his horse's head, and last of all, his lordship's secretary—Mr. Gashford.

Hugh strode briskly on, often looking back at the servant, whose horse was close upon his heels, and glancing at his pistols. He was a square-built, strong-made, bull-necked fellow of the true English breed. He was much older than the Maypole man, being to all appearance five and forty; but also one of those self-possessed, hard-headed fellows, who, if they are ever beaten at any kind of warfare, never know it and go on coolly till they win.

"If I led you wrong now," said Hugh, "you'd shoot me through the head, I suppose."

John Grueby took no more notice of this remark than if he had been deaf and Hugh dumb; but kept riding on quite comfortably. Before the lapse of many minutes the party

halted at the Maypole door. Lord George and his secretary quickly dismounted and gave their horses to their servant, who under the guidance of Hugh went to the stables.

John Willet, as he hurried out of the room and in again, making preparations for the proper entertainment of his guests, had an opportunity of observing the two travellers, of whom, as yet, he knew nothing but the voices.

The lord, the great personage who did the Maypole so much honour, was about the middle height, of a slender make and pale complexion, with straight nose and long hair of reddish brown. He was attired, under his great-coat, in a suit of black, quite free from any ornament. The gravity of his dress added nearly ten years to his age, but his figure was that of a man not yet past thirty.

Gashford, the secretary, was taller, high-shouldered, bony and ungraceful. This gentleman had an overhanging brow, great hands and feet and ears, and a pair of eyes that seemed to have made an unnatural retreat into his head, and to have dug themselves a cave to hide in. His manner was smooth and humble.

In less than an hour's time, supper had been served, and eaten and cleared away; and Lord George and his secretary sat comfortably close to the fire.

"So ends, my lord," said Gashford, "the blessed work of a most blessed day."

"And of a blessed yesterday," said his lordship, raising his head.

"Ah!"—and here the secretary clasped his hands—"a blessed yesterday indeed! The Protestants of Suffolk are godly men and true."

"Did I move them, Gashford?" said Lord George.

"Move them, my lord! Move them! They cried to be led on against the Papists, they vowed a dreadful vengeance on their heads. When you told them that you were never of the lukewarm or the timid tribe and bade them take heed that they were prepared to follow one who would lead them on, though to the very death; when you spoke of a hundred and twenty thousand men across the Scottish border, who would

help you ; when you cried, ' Perish the Pope and all his base followers ; ' and when they cried, ' No Popery ! Lord George ! Down with the Papists ! Vengeance on their heads ; ' when this was said and done, ah ! then I felt what greatness was indeed and I thought, ' When was there ever power like this of Lord George Gordon's ! ' "

" It's a great power. You're right. It is a great power ! " he cried, with sparkling eyes. " But—dear Gashford—did I really say all that ? "

" And how much more ! " said the secretary, looking upwards.

" Ah ! How much more ! "

" And I told them what you say about the hundred and twenty thousand men in Scotland, did I ? " he asked, with evident delight. " That was bold. "

" Our cause is boldness. Truth is always bold. "

" Certainly. So is religion. She's bold, Gashford ? "

" The true religion is, my lord. "

" And that's ours," he rejoined. " There can be no doubt of ours being the true one. It's a proud thing to lead the people, Gashford. "

" By force of reason, too," replied the secretary.

" Ay, to be sure. And as we are honest, true and in a sacred cause, Gashford," said Lord George in a louder voice, " we will uphold the people to the last, and will raise a cry against these Papists which shall re-echo through the country. I will be worthy of the motto on my coat of arms, ' Called, and chosen and faithful. ' "

" Called," said the Secretary, " by Heaven. "

" I am. "

" Chosen by the people. "

" Yes. "

" Faithful to both. "

" To the death. "

It would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the excited manner in which he gave these answers to the secretary's words ; of the rapidity of his utterance, or the violence of his tone and gestures. For some minutes he

walked rapidly up and down the room; then stopping suddenly, exclaimed,

“Gashford—you moved them yesterday too. Oh yes! You did.”

“I shone with a reflected light, my lord,” replied the humble secretary, laying his hand upon his heart. “I did my best.”

“You did well,” said his master, “and are a great and worthy helper in the cause. And now to bed!”

With which words the secretary was dismissed and the party retired for the night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The cause, of which Lord George Gordon was the champion, was the cause of the Puritans against the Papists and all who in those times favoured the Church of Rome. Harsh laws had been passed against people of the Catholic religion. They were not permitted to educate their children in that religion, nor were members of the Roman Church allowed to inherit property in the United Kingdom. But of late these laws had been relaxed, and there were rumours that the power of the Roman Church was growing stronger and stronger in England and that the Protestant faith was in danger. These rumours led to the formation of a body of Puritans, determined to petition Parliament not to revoke the laws against Catholics. If the figures are correct, Lord George seems to have been successful in securing a very large number of recruits in Scotland, and his efforts were now being directed to England. He was not only attempting to increase the numbers of his adherents, which he did largely by addressing meetings and distributing hand-bills, but he was also busy in collecting funds for the cause.

His cause, which was a purely religious cause as a matter of fact, was eagerly seized upon and supported by all who had any kind of grievance, whether real or imaginary. Hence amongst his strongest supporters were Simon Tappertit and

his League of Apprentices, who had no grievance of a religious nature at all, but were eager to assert their independence and, if possible, make their employers uncomfortable.

Among those who contributed money to the cause was Mrs. Varden whose religious zeal therein found an outlet. It is perhaps needless to say that Gabriel Varden knew nothing of Mrs. Varden's connection with the cause.

One of the hand-bills, which were being secretly distributed, read as follows:—"To every Protestant into whose hands this shall come. Men and Brethren. Whoever shall find this letter will take it as a warning to join, without delay, the friends of Lord George Gordon. There are great events at hand; and the times are dangerous and troubled. Read this carefully, keep it clean and drop it somewhere else. For King and Country. Union."

The distribution of these hand-bills, the speech-making and the energy displayed by Lord George Gordon and his secretary Gashford resulted in the enrolment of thousands of men of very doubtful character, and amongst the number were Maypole Hugh, Simon Tappertit and Dennis, who was the public hangman, and was afraid that if the Papists were to come into power he was likely to lose his position.

Simon had, since first we made his acquaintance, established himself as leader of the apprentices in London and had been very busy in his leisure time in completing their organisation.

Dennis, the public hangman, was a short, thick-set man, with a low forehead, a great deal of thick, coarse hair, small eyes, which were very close together, and a broken nose. His clothes were disgracefully dirty and untidy and in his filthy hands he held a big stick with a carved knob at the end of it.

It was from among men such as Simon and Dennis that Lord George drew a large number of his recruits.

Lord George, Gashford and their servant, John Grueby, rode to London the following day and were greeted all along the streets by cheers and shouts, which showed that at any rate a large number of people were in favour of the cause.

Lord George was only a modest member of Parliament, and the Government did not anticipate any serious trouble from him or his adherents.

Hugh, Simon and Dennis meanwhile took up their quarters in a poor kind of inn, called the Boot, where they made merry in company and swore to help Lord George and his cause to the best of their ability.

CHAPTER XIX.

In the meantime nothing had been heard of Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby since their flight from London, or of Joe Willet, who had gone to the wars five years before.

Mr. Haredale, whose mind had been greatly disturbed by the reported appearance of Rudge on the nineteenth of March and by the disappearance of Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby, was frequently away from the Warren, searching for them and lying in wait for Rudge. His constant absences from home were a source of anxiety to his niece, Emma Haredale, and to Dolly Varden, who now stayed at the Warren as companion to Emma.

Mr. Chester had lately become a Knight and was now deferred to as Sir John Chester. He had also made up his mind to harass Mr. Haredale as much as he could, partly because of his private enmity with him—an enmity which had existed since their school days—and partly because Mr. Haredale was a Catholic and Sir John was a Protestant. Consequently he enlisted the services of Mr.ypole Hugh, who was now awaiting an early opportunity of exacting punishment, on behalf of Sir John, from Mr. Haredale with the help of his newly-found friends.

The growing power of Lord George Gordon and his movement against the Catholics had made it necessary for the Government to call up the Volunteers and to station a large number of troops in London. The Royal East London Volunteers were often to be seen drilling and one of the most conspicuous figures amongst them was that of Serjeant

Gabriel Varden.

It was on his return from drilling one evening that Varden found a carriage waiting near his door; and as he passed it Mr. Haredale looked from the window and called him by his name.

"The sight of you is a pleasure, sir," said the locksmith, stepping up to him. "I wish you had walked in, though, rather than waited here."

"There is nobody at home, I find," Mr. Haredale answered. "Besides, I desired to be as private as I could."

Mr. Haredale invited him to come into the coach, and, if he were not tired or anxious to go home, to ride with him a little way that they might have some talk together. Gabriel cheerfully complied, and the coachman, mounting his box, drove off.

"Varden," said Mr. Haredale, after a minute's pause, "you will be amazed to hear what errand I am on; it will seem a very strange one."

"I have no doubt it's a reasonable one, sir, and has a meaning in it," replied the locksmith, "or it would not be yours at all. Have you just come back to town, sir?"

"But half an hour ago."

"Bringing no news of Barnaby or his mother?"

"No indeed. Where are they? Where can they be?"

"Heaven knows," rejoined the locksmith. "The world is a wide place. It's hopeless to try to find them, sir, believe me."

"Varden, my good fellow," said Mr. Haredale, "I have a deep meaning in my present anxiety to find them out. I have no rest by day or night; I have no peace or quiet."

His voice was so altered from its usual tones, that Gabriel in his wonder could only look towards him in the darkness of the coach and guess what the expression of his face was.

"Do not ask me," continued Mr. Haredale, "to explain myself. It is enough that this is so."

"Since when, sir," said the locksmith, after a pause, "has this uneasy feeling been upon you?"

Mr. Haredale hesitated for some moments, and then replied: "Since the 'night of' the storm. In short, since the last nineteenth of March. Now," he went on, "the furniture remains in Mrs. Rudge's house, and the house has been shut up by my orders, since she went away. I am on my way there now."

"For what purpose?" asked the locksmith.

"To pass the night there," he replied; "and not to-night alone, but many nights. This is a secret which I trust to you. You will not come, unless in case of strong necessity, to me; from dusk to broad day I shall be there. Emma, your daughter, and the rest suppose me to be out of London, as I have been until an hour ago. Do not tell them where I am."

With that, he went over again the story of the night when the highwayman came to the Maypole, of the robbery of Edward Chester, of the reappearance of the man at Mrs. Rudge's house and of all the strange circumstances which afterwards occurred. He pieced together the information he had obtained on the subject from Gabriel Varden and from old John Willet. He even asked the locksmith about the man's height, his face, his figure, whether he was like any one he had ever seen at any time—like Hugh, for instance, or any man he had known at any time—and put many questions of that sort, which the locksmith answered but carelessly.

At length, they arrived at the corner of the street in which Mrs. Rudge's house stood, where Mr. Haredale, alighting, dismissed the coach.

"If you desire to see me safely lodged," he said, turning to the locksmith with a smile, "you can."

Gabriel followed him along the narrow pavement in silence. When they reached the door Mr. Haredale softly opened it with a key he had about him, and closing it when Varden entered, they were left in thorough darkness. They groped their way into the ground-floor room. Here Mr. Haredale struck a light. It was then, when the light of the flame was full upon him, that the locksmith saw for the

first time how pale and changed he looked ; how worn and thin he was. -

“ Will you walk through the house ? ” said Mr. Haredale with a glance towards the window. “ Speak low.”

There was a kind of awe about the place, which would have made it difficult to speak in any other manner. Gabriel whispered, “ Yes,” and followed him upstairs.

Everything was just as Mr. Rudge had left it and, after examining the rooms above, they again went down in the room they had just left. Mr. Haredale unbuckled his sword and laid it on the table, with a pair of pocket-pistols ; then told the locksmith he would light him to the door.

“ But this is a dull place, sir,” said Gabriel, lingering ; “ may no one share your watch ? ”

He shook his head, and so plainly showed his wish to be alone that Gabriel could say no more. In another moment the locksmith was standing alone in the street, and Mr. Haredale remained in the house awaiting the appearance of Rudge.

CHAPTER XX.

Next morning brought no satisfaction to the locksmith's thoughts, nor next day, nor the next, nor many others. Often after night-fall he entered the street, and turned his eyes towards the well-known house ; and as surely as he did so, there was the solitary light, still gleaming through the crevices of the window-shutter, while all within was motionless and noiseless. Every evening at twilight Mr. Haredale shut himself up, and at daybreak he came forth. He never missed a night, always came and went alone, and never varied his proceedings in the least degree.

One evening on his way to Mrs. Rudge's house he found a pretty large crowd of people assembled round the Houses of Parliament, looking at the Members as they entered and departed. As he made his way through the crowd he heard once or twice the No-Popery cry, which was then becoming

fairly familiar to the ears of most men. Without giving the cry much thought he was passing along when suddenly he came upon Sir John Chester in conversation with Lord George Gordon's secretary, Gashford.

Sir John lifted his hat. "Haredale!" he said. "Bless me, this is strange."

"It is," returned Haredale impatiently.

"My dear friend," cried the other, detaining him, "why such great speed? One minute, Haredale, for the sake of old acquaintance."

"I am in haste" he said. "Neither of us has sought this meeting. Let it be a brief one. Good night!"

"Fie, fie!" replied Sir John. "We were speaking of you. Your name was on my lips—perhaps you heard me mention it? No? I am sorry for that. I am really sorry—You know our friend here, Haredale? This is really a most remarkable meeting!"

The friend, very ill at ease, unwillingly gave a smile, as Mr. Haredale turned his eyes upon him.

"Mr. Gashford!" said Haredale coldly. "It is as I have heard then. You have forsaken your faith, sir, and now hate those whose opinions you formerly held. You are an honour, sir, to any cause."

"Mr. Haredale," said Gashford, stealthily raising his eyes, and letting them drop again, when they met the other's steady gaze, "is too conscientious, too honourable, too manly, I am sure, to find fault with a man who from honest motives changes his opinions."

"No, but let us really," interposed Sir John, "let us really for a moment contemplate the very remarkable character of this meeting. Haredale, my dear friend, think of it! Here we stand, by no previous appointment, or arrangement, three old school-fellows, three old boarders in a remarkably dull and shady school at Saint Omer's, where you, being Catholics and of necessity educated out of England, were brought up; and where I, being a promising young Protestant at that time, was sent to learn the French tongue from a native of Paris!"

“Add to the remarkable character of the meeting, Sir John,” said Mr. Haredale, “that some of you Protestants of promise are at this moment leagued in yonder Houses of Parliament to prevent our having the privilege of teaching our children to read and write—here—in this land, and that others of you are led on to regard all men of my creed as beasts of prey by this man Gashford. Add to it besides the fact that this man lives in society and walks the streets in broad day—and this meeting is strange, very strange, I grant you.”

“Oh! you are hard upon our friend,” replied Sir John, smiling. “You are really very hard upon our friend!”

“Let him go on, Sir John,” said Gashford, nervously. “Let him go on. I am honoured with *your* good opinion and need not have Mr. Haredale’s. Mr. Haredale is a sufferer from the penal laws, and I can’t expect his favour!”

At this moment a murmur arose amongst the crowd and Mr. Haredale saw Lord-George Gordon coming towards him, with a crowd of people around him.

When they were very near to where the secretary, Sir John and Mr. Haredale stood, Lord George turned with a few violent remarks about Catholics to the people and stepped up to Gashford’s side. Both he and Sir John being well known to the populace, they fell back a little and left the four standing together.

• “Mr. Haredale—Lord George,” said Sir John Chester, introducing the two. “A Catholic gentleman unfortunately—most unhappily a Catholic—but an honoured acquaintance of mine, and once of Mr. Gashford’s. My dear Haredale, this is Lord George Gordon.”

“I should have guessed that, had I been ignorant of his Lordship’s appearance,” said Mr. Haredale. “I hope there is but one gentleman in England who, addressing an ignorant and excited mob, would speak of Catholics in such abominable language as I heard this moment. For shame, my lord, for shame!”

• “I cannot talk to you, sir,” replied Lord George, in a loud voice, “we have nothing in common.”

"We have much in common—many things—all that God gave us," said Mr. Haredale; "and common charity, my lord, common sense and common decency should teach you to refrain from these proceedings."

"I don't hear you, sir," he replied in the same manner as before; "I can't hear you. It is indifferent to me what you say. Don't retort, Gashford," for the secretary had made a show of wishing to do so; "I can hold no conversation with the worshippers of idols."

"*He* retort!" cried Mr. Haredale. "Look you here, my lord. Do you know this man?"

Lord George replied by laying his hand upon the shoulder of his secretary, and viewing him with a smile of confidence.

"This man," said Mr. Haredale, eyeing him from top to toe, "who in his boyhood was a thief, and has been from that time to this a false knave—Do you know this man, my lord?"

"Oh, really—you are very, very hard upon our friend," exclaimed Sir John.

"Let Mr. Haredale go on," said Gashford. "I don't mind him, Sir John. If he reviles my lord, as you have heard how can I hope to escape?"

"Is it not enough, my lord," Mr. Haredale continued, "that I, as good a gentleman as you, must hold my property, such as it is, by a trick because of these hard laws; and that we may not teach our youth in schools the common principles of right and wrong; but must we be denounced by such men as this! Here is a man to head your No Popery cry, my lord! For shame! For shame!"

"I have nothing to say in reply, sir," answered Lord George, "and no desire to hear any more. I beg you won't intrude your conversation or these personal attacks upon me any further. I shall not be deterred from doing my duty to my country and my countrymen by any such attempts, whether they proceed from Catholics, or not, I assure you. Come, Gashford!"

They had walked on a few paces while speaking, and were now at the door of Westminster Hall, through which

they passed together. Mr. Haredale, without any leave-taking, turned away to the stone steps leading to the bank of the Thames, and called to the only boatman who remained there.

But the throng of people—the foremost of whom had heard every word that Lord George Gordon had spoken, and recognised that Mr. Haredale was a Papist—came pouring along and, forcing the nobleman, his secretary and Sir John on before them, crowded to the top of the steps where Mr. Haredale waited until the boat was ready, and there stood still, leaving him on a little clear space by himself.

They were not silent however, though inactive. At first some indistinct mutterings arose among them, which were followed by a hiss or two, and these swelled by degrees into a perfect storm. Then one voice said, "Down with the Papists!" and there was a pretty general cheer, but nothing more. After a lull of a few moments, one man cried out, "Stone him;" another, "Throw him into the water," another in a loud voice, "No Popery!" This favourite cry the rest re-echoed, and the mob, which might have numbered two hundred, joined in a general shout.

Mr. Haredale stood calmly on the edge of the steps until this moment, when he looked round in contempt and walked slowly down the stairs. He was near the boat when Gashford turned round to the crowd and directly afterwards a great stone was thrown by one of the crowd, which struck Mr. Haredale on the head and made him stagger.

The blood sprang freely from the wound, and trickled down his coat. He turned directly and rushing up the steps with a boldness and passion which made them all fall back demanded: "Who did that? Show me the man who hit me."

Not a soul moved.

"Who did that?" he repeated; "show me the man who did it. Dog, was it you? It was your deed, if not your hand—I know you."

He threw himself on Gashford as he said the words, and hurled him to the ground. There was a sudden motion in the crowd, and some laid hands on him, but his sword was

out, and they fell off again.

"My lord—Sir John—" he cried, "draw your sword, one of you—you are responsible for this outrage, and I look to you. Draw, if you are gentlemen." With that he struck Sir John upon the breast with the flat of his weapon, and with a burning face and flashing eyes stood upon his guard; alone, before them all.

For an instant, there was a change in Sir John's smooth face, such as no one had ever seen there. The next moment he stepped forward, and laid one hand on Mr. Haredale's arm, while with the other he endeavoured to quiet the crowd.

"My dear friend, my good Haredale, you are blinded with passion—it's very natural, extremely natural—but you don't know friends from foes."

"I know them all, sir, I can distinguish well—," he retorted, almost mad with rage. "Sir John, my lord—do you hear me? Are you cowards?"

"Never mind, sir," said a man, forcing his way between and pushing him towards the stairs with friendly violence, "never mind asking that. For Heaven's sake, get away. What can *you* do alone against all of these people? Now do retire, sire. Make haste—as quick as you can."

Mr. Haredale, who began to turn faint and sick, felt how sensible this advice was and descended the steps with his unknown friend's assistance. He was helped into the boat and the boatman rowed away into mid-stream. The crowd contented themselves with sending a shower of small missiles after the boat, which splashed harmlessly in the water.

From this amusement they proceeded to knocking at the doors of private houses, breaking a few lamps and assaulting some policemen. But as soon as it was whispered that a detachment of soldiers had been sent for, they took to their heels as swiftly as they could and left the street quite clear.

The man who had thrown the stone at Mr. Haredale was Maypole Hugh, and this outrage was the first step in the plan which, under instructions from Sir John Chester and Mr. Gashford, Hugh and his friend Dennis the hangman had formed for the ruin of Mr. Haredale.

CHAPTER XXI.

Since last we heard of Mrs. Rudge and her son Barnaby—that is to say during a period of five years—they had been living in a small English country town. The inhabitants of this town supported themselves by preparing straw for those who made hats and other articles of clothing, and Mrs. Rudge had earned thereby a living for herself and her son. To labour in peace and devote her labour and her life to her poor son was all the widow sought.

Their hut stood at the edge of the town, at a short distance from the high-road, but in a secluded place, where but a very few passers-by ever came. Their income was increased by Grip, who performed many tricks for which the public, who came to see the wonderful raven, paid him well.

Time had passed in this way, and nothing had happened to disturb or change their mode of life, when, one summer's night in June, they were in their little garden, resting from the labours of the day.

"A brave evening, mother!" said Barnaby. "If you had but a few bits of gold, we should be rich for life."

"We are better as we are," returned the widow with a quiet smile. "Let us be contented. We do not want gold."

"Oh!" said Barnaby. "Gold is a good thing to have mother. I wish I knew where to find it. Grip and I could do much with gold."

"What would you do?" she asked.

"What! A world of things. We'd dress finely—you and I, I mean; not Grip—keep horses and dogs, do no more work, live at our ease. I wish I knew where gold was buried. How hard I'd work to dig it up!"

"You do not know," said his mother, rising from her seat and laying her hand upon his shoulder, "what men have done to win it, and how disappointed they have been when they have found it."

“Ay, ay, so you say; so you think,” he answered. “For all that, mother, I should like to try.”

“Avoid it, Barnaby. Do not so much as think of it. It has brought much misery and suffering on your head and mine.”

For a moment Barnaby looked at her in wonder. He seemed about to question her, when a new object caught his attention.

This was a man with dusty feet and garments, who stood behind the hedge that divided their garden from the road. His face was turned towards the setting sun and the light that fell upon it showed that he was blind.

“A blessing on those voices!” said the wayfarer. “Will they speak again and cheer the heart of a poor traveller?”

“Have you no guide?” asked the widow, after a moment’s pause.

“None but that,” he answered, pointing with his stick to the sun.

“Have you travelled far?”

“A weary way and long,” rejoined the traveller. “A weary, weary way. I struck my stick just now upon the bucket of your well—be pleased to let me have a draught of water, lady.”

“Why do you call me lady?” she answered. “I am as poor as you.”

“Your speech is soft and gentle, and I judge by that,” replied the man.

“Come round this way,” said Barnaby, who had passed out at the garden gate, and now stood close beside him. “Put your hand in mine. You are blind and always in the dark, eh? Are you frightened in the dark?”

“Alas!” returned the other, “I see nothing. Waking or sleeping, nothing.”

Barnaby looked closely at his eyes and touching them with his fingers, as a child might do, led him towards the house.

“You have come a long distance,” said the widow,

meeting him at the door. "How have you found your way so far?"

"Use and necessity are good teachers," said the blind man, sitting down on the chair to which Barnaby had led him.

"You have wandered from the road too?" said the widow, in a tone of pity.

"Perhaps, perhaps," returned the blind man, with something of a smile upon his face. "Thank you for this rest and this refreshing drink." As he spoke, he raised the cup of water to his mouth and drank. The widow set some bread and cheese before him but he did not seem hungry. He thanked her and opened his purse and took out a few pence, which was all it appeared to contain.

"Might I make bold," he said, "to ask your son to buy me some bread to keep me on my way?"

Barnaby looked at his mother, who nodded assent; in another moment he was gone upon his charitable errand. The blind man sat listening with an attentive face, until long after the sound of his retreating footsteps was inaudible to the widow, and then said, suddenly and in a very altered tone:

"Madam, I have taken a liberty to get your son out of the way for a short time, while you and I confer together. My name is Stagg. You wonder who I am, and what has brought me here. I will tell you. A friend of mine, who has desired the honour of meeting you any time during the last five years, has sent me to call upon you. He does not care to show his face abroad, and so he has employed me to find you. I should be glad to whisper that gentleman's name in your ear."

"You need not repeat it," said the widow, with a groan; "I see too well from whom you come."

"But as a man of honour, madam," said the blind man, "I take leave to say that I *will* mention that gentleman's name. With your leave, I desire the favour of a whisper."

She moved towards him, and stooped down. He muttered a word in her ear, and, wringing her hands, she paced

up and down the room like one who is mad. The blind man followed her, with his face, in silence.

"You are slow in conversation, widow," he said after a time. "We shall have to talk before your son."

"What would you have me do?" she answered. "What do you want?"

"We are poor, widow, we are poor," he retorted.

"Poor!" she cried. "And what am I?"

"I don't know, I don't care," said the blind man. "I say that we are poor. My friend's circumstances are bad, and so are mine. We must have our rights, widow, or we must be bought off. But you know that, as well as I, so where is the use of talking?"

She still walked wildly to and fro. At length, stopping in front of him she said:

"Is he near here?"

"He is close at hand."

"Then I am lost!"

"Not lost, widow," said the blind man, calmly; "only found. Shall I call him?"

"On no account," she answered.

"Very good," he replied. "As you please, widow. His presence is not necessary. But both he and I must live; to live, we must eat and drink; to eat and drink, we must have money;—I say no more."

"Do you know how terribly poor I am myself?" she retorted. "I do not think you do, or can. If you had eyes and could look round you on this poor hut, you would have pity on me."

The blind man answered carelessly:

"That is not the point, widow. Listen to me. This is a matter of business. As a friend of both parties, I wish to arrange it in a satisfactory manner, if possible, and thus the case stands. If you are poor now, it is by your own choice. You have friends who are always ready to help you. My friend is in a more destitute and desolate situation than most men and he naturally expects you to help him. You have always had a roof over your head; and he has always

been an outcast. You have your son to comfort and assist you; he has nobody at all. The advantage must not all be on one side."

She was about to speak, but he checked her, and went on.

"The only way of helping him is by giving him money now and then. That is what I advise. Otherwise, he may take charge of your son and make a man of him."

He laid great stress on these latter words and paused as if to find out what effect they had produced. She only answered by her tears.

"He is a promising lad," said the blind man, thoughtfully, "for many purposes. Come. In a word, my friend requires twenty pounds. You can get that sum for him. Twenty pounds is a moderate demand. You know where to apply for it."

She was about to answer him again, but again he stopped her.

"Don't say anything hastily; you might be sorry for it. Think for a little while. I'm in no hurry. Night is coming on and I shall not go far. Twenty pounds! That's all."

With these words he groped his way to the door, carrying his chair with him. Then, seating himself under a spreading bush, and stretching his legs across the door-way, so that no person could pass in or out without his knowledge he took from his pocket a pipe and began to smoke. It was a lovely evening, of that gentle kind and at that time of year, when the twilight is most beautiful. Pausing now and then to let his smoke curl slowly away, he sat there at his ease, waiting for the widow's answer and for Barnaby's return.

CHAPTER XXII.

When Barnaby returned with the bread the blind man produced a bottle and bade him sit down and drink.

"Taste that," he said. "Is it good?"

The water stood in Barnaby's eyes as he coughed from the strength of the draught and answered in the affirmative.

"Drink some more," said the blind man; "don't be afraid of it. You don't taste anything like that often, eh?"

"Often!" cried Barnaby. "Never!"

"Too poor?" returned the man with a sigh. "Ay. That's bad. Your mother would be happier if she was richer, Barnaby."

"Why, so I tell her—the very thing I told her just before you came to-night," said Barnaby, drawing his chair nearer to him and looking eagerly in his face. "Tell me. Is there any way of being rich, that I could find out?"

"Any way! A hundred ways."

"Do you say so? What are they? Nay, mother, it's for your sake I ask, not mine;—for yours indeed. What are they?"

The blind man turned his face, on which there was a smile of triumph, to where the widow stood in great distress, and answered: "Why, they are not to be found by stay-at-homes, my good friend."

"By stay-at-homes!" cried Barnaby. "But I am not one. Now, there you make a mistake. I am often out before the sun and travel home when he has gone to rest. As I walk along I try to find among the grass some of that money for which my mother works so hard. As I lie asleep in the shade, I dream of it—dream of digging it up in heaps. But I never find it. Tell me where it is. I'd go there if the journey were a whole year long, because I know she would be happier when I came home and brought some with me. Speak again. I'll listen to you if you talk all night."

The blind man made answer; "It's in the world, bold Barnaby, the merry world; not in solitary places like those

you pass your time in, but in crowds, and where there's noise and rattle."

"Good! Good!" said Barnaby. "Yes? I love that. Grip loves it too. It suits us both. That's brave!"

"The kind of places," said the blind man, "that a young fellow likes, and in which a good son may do more for his mother, and himself, in a month, than he could do here in all his life—that is, if he had a friend, you know, and someone to advise him."

"You hear this, mother?" cried Barnaby, turning to her with delight. "Why do you toil from morning till night?"

The blind man turned to her and asked slowly: "Is your mind not made up yet?"

"Let me speak with you," she answered, "apart."

"Lay your hand upon my sleeve," said the man, arising from the table; "and lead me where you will. Courage, bold Barnaby. We'll talk more of this; I've a fancy for you. Wait there till I come back. Now, widow."

She led him out at the door, and into the little garden, where they stopped.

"First answer me one question," she demanded. "You say the man who sent you is close at hand. Has he left London?"

"Being close at hand, widow, it would seem he has," returned the blind man.

"I mean, for good? You know that."

"Yes, for good. The truth is, widow, that his making a longer stay there might have had disagreeable consequences. He has come away for that reason."

"Listen," said the widow, counting some money out upon a bench beside them. "Count."

"Six," said the blind man, listening attentively. "Any more?"

"They are the savings," she answered, "of five years. Six guineas."

He put out his hand for one of the coins, felt it carefully, put it between his teeth, rang it on the bench, and

nodded to her to proceed.

"These have been scraped together, and laid by, lest sickness or death should separate my son and me. They have been purchased at the price of much hunger, hard labour and want of rest. If you *can* take them—do—on condition that you leave this place upon the instant, and enter no more into that room, where my son sits now, expecting your return."

"Six guineas," said the blind man, shaking his head, "fall very far short of twenty pounds, widow."

"For such a sum, as you know, I must write to a distant part of the country. To do that and to receive an answer, I must have time."

"Two days?" said the man.

"More."

"Four days?"

"A week. Return on this day week, at the same hour, but not to the house. Wait at the corner of the street."

"Of course," said the blind man with a crafty look, "I shall find you there."

"Where else can I take refuge? Is it not enough that you have made a beggar of me, and that I have sacrificed my whole store, so hardy earned, to preserve this home?"

"Very good!" said the blind man, after some consideration. "Set me with my face towards the point you speak of, and in the middle of the road. Is this the spot?"

"It is."

"On this day week at sunset. And think of him within the house. For the present, good-night."

She made him no answer, nor did he stop for any. He went slowly away, turning his head from time to time and stopping to listen, as if he were anxious to know whether he was watched by anyone. The shadows of night were closing fast around, and he was soon lost in the gloom. It was not however until she had traversed the lane from end to end and made sure that he was gone, that she re-entered the cottage, and hurriedly barred the door and window.

"Mother!" said Barnaby, "What is the matter? Where

is the blind man ? ”

“ He is gone.”

• “ Gone ! ” he cried, springing up. “ I must have more talk with him. Which way did he take ? ”

“ I don’t know,” she answered, folding her arms about him. “ You must not go out to-night. It is not safe to stir. We must leave this place to-morrow.”

“ This place ! This cottage—and the little garden, mother ! ”

“ Yes ! To-morrow morning at sunrise. We must travel to London ; lose ourselves in that wide place ; then travel on again and find some new home.”

Barnaby, though surprised at the suddenness of their departure, was wild with delight at the thought of a change to London, but his mother did not close her eyes all night. She sat beside him, watching him as he slept.

As the sun shed his earliest beams upon the earth, they closed the door of their deserted home and turned their faces towards London—the widow, Barnaby and Grip, the raven.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was early in the morning of the second of June, 1780, that they stood alone close to Westminster Bridge, surprised at the great crowds of people that were coming across the bridge in unusual haste and evident excitement. Nearly every man too in this great crowd wore a blue badge in his hat, and, on inquiry, they discovered that that day was the day on which Lord George Gordon was to present the petition against the Catholics and that the blue badge was worn by those who were of Lord George’s party.

Shortly after they had made this discovery a badge was handed to Barnaby by a stranger, who advised him to make haste to St. George’s Fields. Barnaby put the badge in his hat and was about to move on with the hurrying crowd, when two gentlemen came over to him.

"Why are you stopping here?" said one of them.
 "Why have you not gone with the rest?"

"I am going, sir," replied Barnaby. "I shall be there directly."

"Say 'my lord,' young man, when his lordship does you the honour of speaking to you," said the second gentleman. "If you don't know Lord George Gordon when you see him, it's high time you should."

"Nay, Gashford," said Lord George, as Barnaby took off his hat and made him a low bow, "it's no great matter on a day like this, which every Englishman will remember with delight and pride. Put on your hat, friend, and follow us."

The widow, in great fear that some harm would come to her son, tried to persuade Lord George and his secretary not to take Barnaby with them, but without success. Barnaby was only too eager to follow Lord George's advice. The weakness of his intellect, the advice given him by the blind man, his eagerness to find gold to spend on his mother and himself, all compelled him to join the crowd. So he bade his mother farewell and left her to follow as best she could.

They made their way at last to St. George's Fields where vast crowds had already assembled, and there Barnaby found Hugh, Dennis and Simon Tappertit, who readily admitted him into their company and gave him a large flag to carry. Barnaby's pleasure in finding Hugh was intense. They had often amused themselves together in earlier days and Barnaby had always felt a great admiration for Hugh and Hugh, in his turn, had always treated Barnaby kindly. At the word of command the whole body of men moved towards the Houses of Parliament and the widow saw Barnaby no more.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon Lord George presented his petition at the House of Commons while the dense crowds outside awaited the Government's reply. This reply turned out to be unsatisfactory and the crowds set siege to the Houses of Parliament. The siege however had been but poorly organised and when the military were called out and the Riot Act read the crowds were forced to disperse for the time being. Some of the soldiers however were



BARNABY IS ENROLLED

wounded and many of the people. Barnaby swept a mounted soldier out of his saddle with his great flag and with difficulty managed to escape capture. Many of the rioters were arrested and taken to the great prison of Newgate, but Barnaby and Hugh managed to make their way to the inn, called the Boot, which was the meeting-place of the leaders of the riot.

There, at the suggestion of Gashford, they made a plan for burning down some of the Catholic churches and proceeded to put it into execution. Soldiers were again called out, again they took a few prisoners, and again the crowd dispersed. As yet they had not broken all bounds, nor set all law and government at defiance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The rioting, which had begun in such a half-hearted way, gradually, as day succeeded day, became bolder. Bands of men were to be seen, now in one quarter of London, now in another, destroying the private houses of Catholics and carrying off everything of value in them. The Catholic churches were also pillaged and Government offered large rewards for the capture of the leaders of the riots. The plunder and destruction of one big Catholic church was witnessed by Mr. Haredale. Mr. Haredale during the last five years had spared no effort to discover the man who had ruined Mrs. Rudge's life. He had been spending his nights at Mrs. Rudge's old house in London and his days in a ceaseless search, and it was during his daily hunt through the streets of London that he discovered the rioters at their terrible work of plunder. He immediately gave information as to the affair and it was this fact that led Tappert, Hugh and Dennis to carry out immediately their plan for the destruction of Mr. Haredale's house—the Warren. As Barnaby was a friend of Haredale's, it was necessary to perform this work of revenge without his assistance, and so he was left as a sentry over the Boot, while the other three with

a band of lawless ruffians at their heels set out for the Warren. On their way there they entered the Maypole and began to break open casks of wine and drink the contents as a preparation for the terrible work that was before them. Poor old John Willet was too overcome to save any of his property. His servants had locked themselves into a room upstairs at the first sound of the approaching crowd, and had left John alone. As the hour was getting late, the crowd eventually moved on in the direction of the Warren, but not before they had securely bound old John Willet hand and foot.

Rumour of their approach having gone before, they found the garden doors of the Warren fast closed, the windows made secure and the house quite dark.

Some climbed the gates, some the garden walls ; others pulled down the iron fence and made deadly weapons of the bars. No answer being returned by those within, the crowd proceeded to break open doors and windows and in a very short time they poured into the house and the work of destruction began. While some lit fires underneath the windows, others broke up the furniture and hurled tables, beds and pictures out to feed the flames below. The more the fire crackled and raged, the wilder and more cruel the men grew.

At length the whole house was but a blackened ruin ; the glare of the flames had sunk to nothing. A heavy smoke hung upon the place. Nothing was left but a dull and dreary blank—a smouldering heap of dust and ashes—the silence and solitude of utter desolation.

And what in the meantime had happened to Emma Haredale and her companion—Dolly Varden ? They had heard the approach of the crowd and, recognising their danger, had retired into one of the inner rooms of the house and there awaited their fate.

When the crowd had broken in and were busy setting fire to the house and destroying all it contained, Hugh, Dennis and Tappertit had commenced their search for the two girls. They discovered them at last and, in spite of their struggles, conveyed them by a back way out of the house

and through the woods to the main road. There they put them in a carriage, which they had brought for this purpose, and drove them away to a distant cottage, where they left them under guard for the remainder of the night.

The glare of the fire at the Warren had shown so bright in the sky that Mr. Haredale had observed it from the streets of London and in a terrible state of fear for the safety of his niece he mounted a horse and rode as fast as he could to the Warren.

Arrived there he tied his horse to the trunk of a tree and stole softly along the foot-path into what had been the garden of his house. He drew his sword, looked into every doorway and gap in the wall, and made the circuit of the ruined building, searching in every corner, but found no one.

After a short pause, Mr. Haredale shouted twice or thrice. Then he cried aloud, "Is anyone in hiding here, who knows my voice! There is nothing to fear now. If any of my people are near, I entreat them to answer!" He called them all by name; his voice was echoed in many mournful tones; then all was silent as before. He was standing near the foot of the tower, where the alarm-bell had hung, and as he stood, listening to the echoes as they died away and hoping in vain to hear a voice he knew, some of the ashes in this tower slipped and fell down.

Mr. Haredale watched and listened keenly. Then he stole into the tower, with his drawn sword in his hand, and disappeared. Again the ashes slipped and rolled—very, very softly—again—and then again. And now a figure was just visible, climbing very softly. Some more ashes slipped and suddenly another form—that of Mr. Haredale—rushed out into the moonlight, flung itself upon the foremost one, knelt down upon its breast and clutched its throat with both hands.

"Villain!" cried Mr. Haredale in a terrible voice. "Dead and buried, as all men believed you to be—at last—at last I have you. You, whose hands are red with my brother's blood, and that of his faithful servant—You, Rudge, double murderer and monster, I arrest you in the name of God, who has delivered you into my hands. Though you had the strength

of twenty men, you could not escape me or loosen my grasp to-night !”

CHAPTER XXV.

Barnaby in the meantime was marching up and down in front of the Boot ; glad to be alone after the noise and riot in which the last two days had been passed. As the day wore on he became hungry and summoned Grip to dinner, and, while he was eating, two persons on horseback approached, in whom he recognised Lord George Gordon and his servant John Grueby. The two however did not stop any length of time. John Grueby warned Barnaby not to stop alone at the Boot, because of the danger of soldiers coming and taking him off to prison, and then they rode away. It was not until the evening that John Grueby's fears for Barnaby's safety were realised. As the heat of the day was giving place to the cool of night, a strong detachment of soldiers marched up to the Boot and surrounded it. Barnaby was called upon to surrender but refused, and it was only when he had struck down two or three of the soldiers that he was mastered and found himself a prisoner.

Grip meanwhile had been digging about in the straw of the stable with his beak and had revealed a large number of gold cups, spoons, candle-sticks and other things, which the rioters had stolen from Catholic churches and houses.

The soldiers brought sacks and dug up everything that was hidden there. Then they handcuffed Barnaby. He was marched out, with a guard round him. The other soldiers closed in and thus they moved away with the prisoner in the centre.

Arrived at the barracks, Barnaby was taken into a small back-yard, and there they opened a great door, plated with iron, and pierced some five feet from the ground with a few holes to let in air and light. Into this dungeon they put him straightway ; and having locked him up there, and placed a sentry over him, they left him to his meditations.

He was not destined to remain in this cell for long. That night his door was unlocked and he was taken out to the

police-court in Bow Street, where he was tried by a magistrate, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment in Newgate Prison.

He went out into the street so surrounded by soldiers that he could see nothing, but he knew there was a great crowd of people and that the people were not friendly to the soldiers. But no friend's voice could he hear.

As they came nearer and nearer to Newgate, the shouts of the people grew more violent. Stones were thrown, and every now and then a rush was made against the soldiers. But the soldiers were strong enough to resist all attempts at his rescue, and finally he found himself inside the walls of Newgate prison. A blacksmith put heavy irons upon him and he was conducted to a strong stone cell, where he was left, well-secured, but not alone. As the door was being shut, Grip was thrust inside to share his master's fallen fortunes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On that same night, Mr. Haredale, having strongly bound his prisoner and forced him to mount his horse, conducted him to Chigwell. There he hoped to secure a carriage, in which to convey him to London. He found however that the villagers of Chigwell, in spite of their good feelings towards him, did not dare to offer him any help for fear of the revenge which the rioters would be sure to take upon them. With very great difficulty Mr. Haredale at last obtained a carriage and thrusting his prisoner inside, bound as he was, he proceeded to London, and with the assistance of a magistrate and several watchmen lodged Rudge in Newgate Gaol.

With eager eyes Mr. Haredale saw him chained and locked and barred up in his cell. Even when he had left the prison and stood in the free street outside he felt the iron plates upon the doors with his hands, to assure himself that he had really got his prisoner safe at last.

Satisfied that this was the case, he began to turn his thoughts to the discovery of his niece Emma and her companion.

The prisoner, left to himself, sat down upon his bedstead ; and resting his elbows on his knees, and his chin upon

his hands, remained in that attitude for hours.

After a long time, the door of his cell opened. He looked up; saw the blind man enter; and fell back into his former position. The visitor advanced and stood silently in front of him.

"This is bad, Rudge. This is bad," he said at length. "How were you taken? And where? You never told me more than half your secret. No matter. I know it now. How was it and where?" he asked again, coming still nearer to him.

"At Chigwell," said the other.

"At Chigwell! How came you there?"

"Because I went there to avoid the man I met," he answered. "Because I was chased and driven there by him and Fate. Because I was urged to go there, by something stronger than my own will. When I found him watching in the house my wife used to live in, night after night, I knew I never could escape him—never!"

He shivered; muttered that it was very cold; paced quickly up and down the narrow cell; and, sitting down again, fell into his old position.

"I went to Chigwell," he continued, "in search of the crowd. I have been so hunted by this man that I knew my only hope of safety lay in joining them. I hoped that some of them might be still lingering among the ruins, and was searching for them when I heard—" he drew a long breath—"his voice."

"Saying what?"

"No matter what, I don't know. I was then at the foot of the tower, where I did the—"

"Ay," said the blind man, nodding his head, "I understand."

"I climbed the stair, or so much of it as was left, meaning to hide till he had gone. But he had heard me, and followed almost as soon as I set foot upon the ashes."

"You might have hidden in the wall and thrown him down, or stabbed him," said the blind man.

"Might I? Between that man and me was one who led him on—I saw it, though he did not—and raised above his head a bloody hand. It was in the room above that he—"

Reuben Haredale—and I stood facing each other on the night of the murder, and before he fell he raised his hand—like that, and fixed his eyes on me. I knew the chase would end there.”

“ You have a strong fancy,” said the blind man, with a smile.

The other groaned and, looking up for the first time, said in a low, hollow voice : “ Eight and twenty years ! Eight and twenty years ! Reuben Haredale has never changed in all that time, never grown older, nor altered in the least degree. He has been before me in the dark night, and the sunny day ; in the twilight, the moonlight, the sunlight, the light of fire and lamp and candle, and in the deepest darkness. Always the same.”

The blind man listened in silence.

“ Fancy ! You say I have a strong fancy ! Do I fancy that I killed him ? Do I fancy that as I left the chamber where he lay, I saw the face of a man—the gardener—peeping from a dark door, who plainly showed me by his looks of fear that he suspected what I had done ? Do I remember that I spoke kindly to him—that I drew nearer—nearer yet—with the hot knife in my sleeve ? Do I fancy how *he* died ? Did I not see him stagger back against the wall—erect and on his feet—but dead ? ”

The blind man, who knew that he had risen, motioned him to sit down again upon his bedstead ; but he took no notice.

“ It was then I thought for the first time of fastening the murder upon *him*. It was then I dressed him in my clothes, and dragged him down the back-stair to the piece of water. Do I remember listening to the bubbles that came rising up when I had rolled him in ? Did I go home when I had done ? Did I stand before my wife and tell her ? Did I see her fall upon the ground ; and, when I stooped to raise her did she thrust me back with a force that cast me off as if I had been a child ? Is all this fancy ?

“ Is it not this deed of mine, this black and cruel murder, that has made my son Barnaby shrink from the

sight of blood ever since he was born? Was he not born half witted because of my crime?

• “Did my wife go down upon her knees and call on Heaven to witness that she and her unborn child would have nothing to do with me from that hour; and did she in words so solemn that they turned me cold, warn me to fly while there was time; for though she would be silent, being my wretched wife, she would not shelter me? Did I not go forth that night, to wander for ever about the earth?”

“Why did you return?” said the blind man.

“I could no more help it than I could live without breath. I struggled against the impulse, but I was drawn back. Nothing could stop me. Why did I come back? Because this gaol was gaping for me!”

“I suppose then,” said the blind man, after a silence, “that you are penitent, and that you desire to make peace with everybody—in particular with your wife who has brought you to this? She is in London.”

“How do you know?”

“From my friend, Mr. Tappertit. I learnt from the last time I saw him, which was yesterday, that your son, who is called Barnaby, is now among the rioters.”

“And what is that to me? If father and son be hanged together, what comfort shall I find in that?”

“Stay—stay, my friend,” returned the blind man, with a cunning look. “Suppose I find your wife out and say to her: ‘You want your son, madam—good. I can restore him to you, madam—good. You must pay a price, madam, for his restoration—good again. The price is small, and easy to be paid—dear madam, that’s best of all. A person, madam, said to be your husband, is in prison, his life in danger—the charge against him, murder. Now, madam, your husband has been dead a long, long time. The gentleman never can be taken for him if you will have the goodness to say a few words, on oath, as to when he died, and how; and that this person is no more he than I am. Say these words, madam, and I will undertake to keep your son (a fine lad) out of harm’s way. He shall be delivered up to you

safe and sound.' ”

“ There is some hope in this ! ” cried the prisoner, starting up. f

“ Hush ! ” returned his friend. “ I hear the tread of distant feet. Rely on me. ”

“ When shall I hear more ? ”

“ As soon as I do. I should hope to-morrow. They are coming to say that our time for talk is over. I hear the noise of the keys. Not another word of this just now, or they may overhear us. ”

As he said these words, the lock was turned and one of the prison warders, appearing at the door, announced that it was time for visitors to leave the gaol.

“ So soon ! ” said the blind man. “ But it can't be helped. Cheer up, friend. This mistake will soon be put right and then you are a man again ! ”

So saying, and pausing for an instant at the door to turn his face towards his friend, he departed.

When the warder had seen him out, he returned and again unlocking and unbarring the door of the cell, set it wide open, informing its inmate that he was at liberty to walk in the adjacent yard for an hour.

The prisoner answered with an angry nod ; and, being left alone again, sat thinking over what he had heard and the hopes which the recent conversation had awakened.

His attention was suddenly attracted by a sound of chains. Presently a voice began to sing and he saw the shadow of a man on the floor of the yard. He walked out into the courtyard and paced it up and down. There was a door near his, which, like his, stood half open.

He had not taken half a dozen turns up and down the yard, when, standing still to observe this door, he heard the sound of chains again. A face looked out of the window—he saw it very dimly, for the cell was dark and the bars across the windows were heavy—and directly afterwards a man appeared and came towards him.

Made eager by the hope of companionship, Rudge quickened his pace, and hastened to meet the man half way.—

What was this ! His son !

They stood face to face, staring at each other. Barnaby was struggling with his imperfect memory, and wondering where he had seen that face before. He was not uncertain long, for suddenly he laid hands upon him and, striving to bring him to the ground, cried :

“Ah ! I know : You are the robber.”

Rudge said nothing in reply at first, but held down his head and struggled with his son silently. Finding the younger man too strong for him he raised his face, looked close into his eyes, and said :

“ I am your father.”

Barnaby released his hold, fell back and looked at him in awe. Suddenly he sprang towards him, put his arms about his neck and embraced him tenderly.

Yes, yes, he was ; he was sure he was. But where had he been so long, and why had he left his mother by herself, all alone with only her poor foolish boy to care for her ? And where was she ? Was she near there ? She could not be happy, now he was in gaol, could she ?

Not a word was said in answer. Only Grip croaked loudly and hopped about them, round and round.

CHAPTER XXVII.

During the whole of this day, every regiment in or near London was on duty in one or other part of the town. The disturbance had become so formidable and the rioters so daring that the sight of this large force of soldiers only helped to increase the anger of the mob.

It was about six o'clock in the evening when a vast crowd poured into the part of London around Newgate prison. On their way thither they had halted before the house of Gabriel Varden and had demanded his assistance in picking the lock of the great prison. Gabriel had refused to help them but after a violent struggle, in which he had behaved in a most courageous way, he had been overpowered

and was taken to the head of the crowd, where he was made to walk between Dennis and Hugh.

The crowd then advanced on Newgate and halted in a dense mass in front of the prison gate.

They demanded to speak with the Governor. On his appearance, Hugh, acting as leader of the people, addressed him :

"You have got", he said, " some friends of ours in your custody, master."

"I have a good many people in my custody" he replied.

"Deliver up our friends," said Hugh " and you may keep the rest."

" It's my duty to keep them all. I shall do my duty."

" If you don't throw the doors open, we shall break them down" said Hugh.

"All I can do, good people," replied the Governor, " is to ask you to disperse, and to remind you that the consequences of any disturbance in this place will be very severe. "

A shower of stones greeted the remarks of the Governor and he was compelled to retire, and the mob, pressing on advanced close to the big door. Gabriel Varden was ordered to open the lock of the door, but steadfastly refused. Blows were showered upon him and he was beaten to the ground. He resisted, when suddenly a cry of "Remember the prisoners! Remember Barnaby!" was raised and the crowd went mad.

The strokes of weapons began to fall upon the gate and on the strong building. Men worked in gangs, and at short intervals relieved each other, that all their strength might be devoted to the work, but there stood the big gate, as dark and strong as ever. Some worked at battering down the gate, some with ladders tried to climb the walls, some fought the police and beat them back, and others besieged the Governor's house and, driving in the door, brought out the furniture and piled it up against the prison-gate. They then covered the heap with tar and set it alight.

The furniture being very dry took fire at once. The flames roared high and fiercely, blackening the prison wall

and curling up the front of the building like burning serpents. The fire grew hotter and fiercer; it crackled, leaped and roared. It shone on the houses opposite, lighting up the pale and wondering faces at the windows. The heat was so intense that the paint on the doors of the houses near parched and crackled up, broke and crumbled away. The glass fell out of the windows. The sparrows under the eaves of the houses took wing, and made giddy by the smoke fell fluttering down upon the blazing pile. Still the fire was fed by busy hands. Masses of burning wood were constantly being handed up to the men on the walls, who threw them down upon the buildings inside. Men fainted from the heat and yet the work went on. Those who fell from exhaustion and who were not crushed under foot or burnt were carried to an inn-yard close at hand and dashed with water from a pump. Buckets of water were passed from man to man among the crowd, but such was the strong desire of all to drink, and such the fighting to be first, that often the whole contents were spilled upon the ground without the lips of one man being moistened. Inside and out the prison was in flames, and by and by the great door, round which the crowd was massed in spite of the terrible heat, tottered, yielded and fell down.

Hugh leapt upon the blazing heap and dashed into the gaol, followed by Dennis and the crowd. They came rushing through the gaol, calling to each other in the passages; wrenching off the bolts and locks and bars; tearing down door-posts to get men out. By their legs, their arms, even the hair upon their heads, they dragged the prisoners out.

At last a party of men reached the cells where Rudge and his son Barnaby were. They made a breach at the window, handed them out to the rest of the crowd, and bidding them fly and lose no time, hurried away to rescue others.

In another minute, so quickly was the work of rescue done, Rudge and his son were through the dense crowd in the street, and were glancing backward at a burning pile which once had been Newgate.

It remained only to set the condemned prisoners free, and when this last task had been achieved, the shouts and cries of the mob grew fainter. All the noises subsided into a hoarse and sullen murmur, as the crowd passed into the distance, and when the human tide had rolled away, a melancholy heap of smoking ruins marked the spot where it had lately struggled and roared.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mr. Haredale, having lodged Rudge in gaol, began his search for his niece and Dolly Varden. He sought them in every place where he thought it possible they could have taken refuge, but in vain. No sign of them could be found.

The riots had become so violent that the Government had at last decided upon strong action. The military were called out and soldiers were stationed all over London with orders to fire upon the mob. This however did not prevent the rioters from setting fire to private houses, churches and prisons, and the leader of these lawless crowds was Hugh, armed with a huge axe, and mounted upon a great horse. He was here, there and everywhere, urging on his followers and striking at the soldiers.

Mr. Haredale overheard it said that the people had set fire to Newgate prison and had set free the prisoners, and bent his steps thither, only to find that the report was too true. Rudge was free again! There he met a friend and was taken to his house, but had not been long there when the crowd, led by Hugh, burst through the guard of soldiers and began to beat the door down. Mr. Haredale and his friend had barely time to escape by a back-passage, where they found Joe Willet and Edward Chester, who had come to their aid. Joe was back from the wars, where he had lost one of his arms. He had won renown on the field of battle and now felt that he was worthy to claim the hand of Dolly Varden in marriage. As soon then as he heard of the disappearance of

Dolly he immediately joined in the search for her. Edward Chester was also determined to find Emma Haredale, and together these two were scouring the land and hunting in every possible corner for a trace of the two girls. To avoid the fury of the rioters they had temporarily taken refuge in this back passage, and there they had the good fortune to aid Mr. Haredale and his friend. As the four men hurried out at the back of the house into the streets the crowd broke in at the front and in a few minutes the house behind them was in flames.

Barnaby and his father, freed from Newgate prison, passed out into the streets and made for the country. They wandered about for a long time and at last found a poor hut in some fields, where they lay down until the next night.

Then, leaving Grip with his father, Barnaby returned alone to London to find the blind man. The blind man's house was shut and though he waited there a long time no one came. At last he withdrew and went down into the city and there, at the head of the crowd, he found Hugh. As Barnaby pressed through the people Hugh was struck down from his horse and Barnaby forced his way to his side. "Barnaby—" said Hugh, "You! Whose hand was that, that struck me down?"

"Not mine."

"Whose!—I say, whose?" he cried, looking wildly round. "What are we doing? Where is he? Show me!"

"You are hurt," said Barnaby—as indeed he was. "Come away with me."

As he spoke, he took the horse's bridle in his hand, turned him, and dragged Hugh out of the crowd. With great difficulty he got Hugh into the saddle again and, mounting behind him, turned the horse and galloped down the streets into the open country. He stopped about half a mile from the shed where his father lay, made Hugh dismount and then half-dragged, half-carried him to the hut.

CHAPTER XXIX.

It was the dead of night, and very dark, when Barnaby with his companion approached the place where he had left his father. Hugh sank to the ground.

Rudge, in fear of every new face, crept away, but when Barnaby approached him, he said in a terrible voice :

“ You have seen your mother and she and you have betrayed me ! ”

“ No,” cried Barnaby, eagerly. “ I have not seen her for a long time. Is she here ? ”

“ What man is that there ? ” demanded Rudge.

“ Hugh—Hugh. Only Hugh. You know him ! *He* will not harm you.”

“ What man is he, I ask you ? ” he rejoined fiercely. “ Whom have you brought with you to our hiding-place, and where is the blind man ? ”

“ I don't know where. His house was close shut. I waited, but no man came. This is Hugh—brave Hugh, who broke into that ugly gaol and set us free.”

“ Why does he lie upon the ground ? ”

“ He has had a fall and is hurt. You know him ? See ! ” They bent over him and looked at his face.

“ I recollect the man,” his father murmured. “ Why did you bring him here ? ”

“ Because he would have been killed if I had left him over yonder. Shall I bring him in, father ? ” asked Barnaby.

He only answered with a groan and lying down upon the ground wrapped his cloak about his head and shrank into the darkest corner.

Barnaby dragged Hugh into the hut and laid him on a heap of hay and straw, and there the three passed the night. The next day Barnaby set out again to London and in the evening returned, bringing with him the blind man.

Rudge immediately questioned the blind man about his interview with Mrs. Rudge.

“ Does she consent to say the word that may save me ? ”

he asked.

"No," returned the blind man, emphatically. "No. She has been very ill, since she lost her son—has been insensible—I tracked her to a hospital and presented myself at her bedside. Our talk was not a long one, as she was weak. I told her all that you and I agreed upon, and pointed out Barnaby's position. She tried to soften me. She cried and moaned, you may be sure. Then suddenly she found her voice and strength and said that Heaven would help her and her innocent son and that to Heaven she appealed against us. I then told her where I lived and left her."

"Will you tell me what I am to do?" said Rudge.

"Do! Nothing easier. Get as far as you can from London and take your son with you. Let me know where you are and leave the rest to me."

As he spoke, Dennis entered. He had heard the bells on the horse which Hugh had been riding out of London, and had tracked him and Barnaby to that hiding place. He was better dressed than usual, and spoke in a confident manner.

"How are you, brother!" said he to Hugh.

"How am I?" answered Hugh. "Where were you yesterday? Where did you go, when you left me in the gaol? Why did you leave me?"

Dennis did not reply to these questions, for at that moment Barnaby jumped up and looked out.

"What's the matter, Barnaby?" said Dennis, glancing at Hugh.

"Hush!" he answered softly. "What do I see glittering behind the hedge?"

"What?" cried Dennis, shouting as loudly as he could, and laying hold of Barnaby and Hugh. "Not—not soldiers, surely!"

That moment the shed was filled with armed men, and a body of horse-soldiers, galloping into the field, drew up in front of it. "There!" said Dennis, who remained untouched among them, when they had seized the prisoners. "It's those two young ones that you want, and this other is

an escaped felon."

In the excitement of the moment the blind man tried to escape by running across the field, but the soldiers shot him down, and when his pockets were turned out they were found to be full of treasures he had stolen during the riots.

The soldiers, after binding the three prisoners, carried them off, Barnaby and his father going by one road, and Hugh, fast bound upon a horse, being taken by another.

Dennis, the traitor, was left alone and very well pleased with himself at having got out of a most difficult situation.

CHAPTER XXX.

Dennis bent his steps towards the house where Dolly and Miss Haredale were still confined. In this house they had been kept close prisoners under the care of Tappetit, not knowing what was going to be their fate, and in a state of terrible fear lest their prison should never be found by their friends.

On the night on which Dennis arrived at the house, a stranger entered their room, none other than Gashford, Lord George Gordon's secretary. Gashford, in order to wreak vengeance upon Mr. Haredale, had employed Tappetit, Hugh and Dennis to burn the Warren to the ground and to abduct Emma Haredale and Dolly Varden. This they had done successfully and it only remained for Gashford himself to carry Emma away out of reach of her uncle. Of this cowardly plot the two girls were of course ignorant and in their ignorance they immediately appealed to him and besought him to restore them to their friends.

"For what other purpose am I here?" he answered, closing the door and standing with his back against it. "With what object have I made my way to this place through difficulty and danger, but to preserve you?"

The girls were deceived by the stranger's words and believed that his purpose in coming to them was really to rescue them. "You have news of my uncle, sir?" said

Emma, turning hastily towards him.

“And of my father and mother?” added Dolly.

• “Yes,” he said. “Good news.”

“They are alive and unhurt?” they both cried at once.

“Yes, and unhurt,” he rejoined.

“And close at hand?”

“I did not say close at hand,” he answered. “They are at no great distance. *Your* friends,” he added, addressing Dolly, “are within a few hours’ journey. You will be restored to them, I hope, to-night.”

“My uncle, sir,—” asked Emma.

“Your uncle, dear Miss Haredale, happily is safe; he has crossed the sea and is out of Britain.”

“Does he desire,” said Emma, “that I should follow him?”

“Do you ask if he desires it?” cried the stranger in surprise. “He does indeed. You do not know the danger of remaining in England. The people have risen against us; the streets are filled with soldiers who do their bidding. We have no safety but in flight. I, through the help of Protestant friends, have saved your uncle. I have the means of saving you. I have at last found your place of confinement and have forced my way in to see you. Come with me now and I will place you in your uncle’s arms.”

“You bring,” said Emma, “some note or token from my uncle?”

“No, he doesn’t,” cried Dolly, who had all along been suspicious of the man. “I am sure he doesn’t. Don’t go with him.”

“Hush—be silent,” he replied, looking angrily at Dolly. “No, Miss Haredale, I have no letter, nor any token of any kind. I never thought of bringing any, nor did Mr. Haredale think of entrusting me with one, possibly because he had good experience of my faith and honesty, and owed his life to me. Time presses, and danger surrounds us. Will you come?”

• “Stay, sir!” cried Emma—“one moment, I beg you. Cannot we two go together?”

"The task of conveying one female in safety through the crowds is enough. I have said that she will be restored to her friends to-night. Now, Miss Haredale, do you stay, or go?"

"Dolly," said Emma hurriedly, "I will trust to this gentleman."

"No—no—no!" cried Dolly. "Pray, pray, do not!"

"We have time for no more of this," cried the man roughly separating the two, who were clinging to one another. "Now; quick, outside there! Are you ready?"

"Ay!" cried a loud voice, which made Gashford tremble. "Quite ready! Stand back there!"

And in an instant Gashford was struck to the ground with a heavy blow, and friendly faces came pouring into the room. Emma was clasped in her uncle's embrace and Dolly with a joyful cry fell into the arms of her father and mother.

Gabriel Varden and Mr. Haredale, ably assisted by Joe and Edward Chester, had been searching and searching high and low for the two girls and it was only at the last minute, when Gashford was about to carry Emma off, that they found the house in which the girls had been imprisoned.

No language can describe what laughing, what crying, what smiling, what talking there was, but at last the old locksmith pointed to two men who were standing apart by themselves, and then they saw—whom? Yes, Edward Chester and Joe Willet.

"See here!" cried Gabriel Varden. "See here! Where would any of us have been without these two? Oh, Mr. Edward, Mr. Edward—Oh, Joe, Joe, how glad you have made my old heart to-night!"

A coach was ready for them at the door and they passed out of the house. In the outer room lay Tappertit and Dennis, the former burnt and bruised and with a gun-shot wound in his body, and both in safe custody.

CHAPTER XXXI.

That night the riots finally came to an end. Peace and order were restored to the city. In a word, the crowd was utterly routed. Upwards of two hundred had been shot dead in the streets. Two hundred and fifty more were lying, badly wounded, in the hospitals. A hundred were already in prison and more were taken every hour. Seventy-two private houses and four strong gaols had been destroyed in the four great days of these riots, but now it was all over. Lord George Gordon—the unhappy author of all—had been arrested. Of all his forty thousand men, not one remained to bear him company. Friends, dependents, followers—none were there. His secretary had played the traitor and he was left desolate and alone.

There we must leave him, while we take a look at another prison scene.

As day deepened into evening, Barnaby sat in his dungeon. Beside him, with his hand in hers, sat his mother—worn and altered, full of grief and heavy-hearted.

“Mother,” he said, after a long silence; “how long—how many days and nights—shall I be kept here?”

“Not many, dear. I hope not many.”

“You hope! Ay, but your hoping will not undo these chains. I hope, but they don’t mind that. Grip hopes, but who cares for Grip?”

The raven gave a short, melancholy croak. It said “Nobody,” as plainly as a croak could speak.

“Who cares for Grip, excepting you and me?” said Barnaby.

The raven croaked again—“Nobody.”

“And by the way,” said Barnaby, “if they kill me—

what will become of Grip, when I am dead ? ”

“ They will not harm you, ” his mother said. “ They will never harm you, when they know all. I am sure they never will. ”

“ Oh ! Don't you be too sure of that, ” cried Barnaby. “ They have noticed me, mother, from the first. I heard them say so much to each other, when they brought me to this place last night ; and I believe them. Don't you cry for me. They said that I was bold, and so I am and so I shall be. I have done no harm, have I ? ” he added quickly.

“ None before Heaven, ” she answered.

“ Why then, ” said Barnaby, “ let them do their worst. You told me once, when I asked you what death meant, that it was nothing to be feared, if we did no harm. Aha ! mother, you thought I had forgotten that ! ”

She drew him closer to her and besought him to speak in whispers. It was getting dark and their time was short and she would soon have to leave him for the night.

“ You will come to-morrow ? ” said Barnaby.

Yes. And every day. And they would never part again.

“ Mother, ” said Barnaby, as they heard the man approaching to close the cells for the night, “ when I spoke to you just now about my father you cried ‘ Hush ’ and turned away your head. Why did you do so ? Tell me why, in a word. You thought he was dead. You are not sorry he is alive and has come back to us ? Where is he ? Here ? ”

“ Do not ask anyone where he is, nor speak about him, ” she made answer.

“ Why not ? ” said Barnaby. “ Why not speak about him ? ”

“ Because I am sorry that he is alive ; sorry that he has come back ; and sorry that you have ever met. Because, dear Barnaby, the endeavour of my life has been to keep you two apart. ”

“ Father and son apart ! Why ? ”

“ He is, ” she whispered in his ear, “ a murderer. The time has come when you must know it. He murdered one

who loved him well, and trusted him, and never did him wrong in word or deed."

Barnaby shrank away in horror.

"But," she added hastily, "he is your father, dearest and I am his wretched wife. God be with you through the night, dear boy! God be with you!"

She tore herself away and in a few seconds Barnaby was alone. He stood for a long time in the same spot, with his face hidden in his hands, then flung himself, sobbing, upon his miserable bed. As his mother crossed the yard on her way out, she saw her husband pacing round and round his cell, with his hands folded on his breast and his head hung down. At sight of her he merely uttered a curse upon her and her son, told her to be gone, and cast himself down upon the stone floor of his cell, and she passed out into the street with a prayer in her heart that he would repent before his hour of death came.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A month passed away and at the end came the execution of the prisoners. Thousands of people assembled to see the hanging of the leaders of the riots, and of Rudge, the murderer. Dennis died, as he had lived, a coward. Not so Hugh, who with his last breath begged that no harm should come to Barnaby. He told the people that Barnaby was a lunatic and that he had taken him from his mother, without thinking what harm would happen to him. He then asked the mother's pardon and Barnaby's, and was led away and hanged. Rudge was also hanged for the double murder he had committed many years ago at the Warren.

At the very last moment, in fact as Barnaby was being

led out to meet his death, a free pardon was granted to him. Ever since he had been put in prison and condemned to death, Gabriel Varden and Mr. Haredale had striven to get him pardoned. They made their way, not only to the judge and jury who had tried him, but to men of influence at the Court, to the young Prince of Wales, and even to the chamber of the King himself. The result of a searching inquiry was that, between eleven and twelve o'clock—only a few minutes before he was to die—a free pardon was signed. Barnaby was set free and was restored safe and whole to his mother's arms. You may be sure he did not leave Grip behind at the gaol.

Gabriel Varden had spent his whole life in kind and thoughtful deeds, but the crowning moment was that at which he secured a pardon for Barnaby and made him and his mother once more happy. His daughter, Dolly, found out at last how fine a man Joe Willet was and how fond she was of him, and they were married. Old John Willet gave up the Maypole to his son and Dolly, and retired to a small cottage in the village of Chigwell, and there we leave him.

The troublous times through which he had passed had left their mark upon Mr. Haredale. One of his first acts was to seek out Edward Chester and to explain to him that he had made a mistake in forbidding the marriage between him and his niece, Emma. Edward had, during the last few years, been to the West Indies and had established a prosperous business there, and, as soon as possible after Mr. Haredale had spoken to him, he married Emma and took her back to the Indies.

Mr. Haredale himself had decided to look once more on the house which had once been his home and with that purpose he drove out to Chigwell and walked to the Warren.

It was a clear, calm evening, with hardly a breath of wind to stir the leaves, or any sound to break the stillness. There was his home—a blackened ruin.

He walked slowly round the house. It was by this time nearly dark. He had almost made the circuit of the building, when he started, and stood still. Leaning, in an

easy attitude, with his back against a tree, and contemplating the ruin with an expression of the greatest pleasure—there stood Sir John Chester—his life-long enemy.

Although his blood so boiled against this man, that he could have struck him dead, he restrained himself so far that he passed him without a word or look. Yes, and he would have gone on, and not turned, if Sir John had not himself summoned him to stop. He turned back and said, slowly and quite calmly :

“ Why have you called to me ? ”

“ To remark, ” said Sir John Chester, “ what an odd chance it is, that we should meet here ! ”

“ It is a strange chance ! ”

“ Strange ! The most remarkable thing in the world. How very picturesque this is ! ” He pointed, as he spoke, to the ruined house.

“ You praise your own work very freely. ”

“ Work ! ” echoed Sir John, looking smilingly round. “ Mine !—I beg your pardon— ”

“ Why, you see, ” said Mr. Haredale, “ those walls. You see on every side where fire and smoke have raged. Do you not ? ”

“ My good fellow, ” returned the knight, “ Of course I do. I really am very sorry for you. Shall we walk as we talk ? It's rather damp. ”

“ Listen to me, ” said Mr. Haredale. “ You employed a fit agent to do your work—this work before us now. You set Gashford to do it, and not only to destroy this house by means of his miserable assistants, but to carry off my niece. I see denial in your face— ” he cried. “ Denial is a lie ! ”

With that he raised his arm and struck him on the breast so that he staggered. Sir John, the instant he recovered, drew his sword, and running on his adversary made a desperate lunge at his heart. But his opponent's rage had reached a stop. He parried his rapid thrusts without returning them, and called to him with a frantic kind of terror in his face, to keep back. “ Not to-night ! Not to-night ! ” he

cried. "In God's name, not to-night." "Haredale," said Sir John "I have always despised you. I am sorry to find you a coward."

Not another word was spoken on either side. They crossed swords and attacked each other fiercely. They were well matched. Each was skilled in the management of his



LORD GEORGE GORDON IN THE TOWER

weapon. After a few seconds they grew hotter and more furious, and, pressing on each other, inflicted and received several slight wounds. It was directly after receiving one of these in his arm, that Mr. Haredale, making a keener thrust as he felt the warm blood spurting out, plunged his sword through his opponent's body to the hilt. Their eyes met, and

were on each other, as he drew it out. He put his arm about the dying man, who thrust him away feebly, dropped upon the grass, and lay dead.

Mr. Haredale fled that night and left England for France, where he spent his last years in a religious establishment.

And what of the other actors in this little history ?

Lord George Gordon, though found not guilty of treason, was eight years later tried on another charge, was condemned to gaol and there died of fever in seventeen hundred and ninety-three. Gashford, his secretary, after the failure of his plan to carry off Emma Haredale, became a spy employed by Government. He finally took poison, preferring death to a life of extreme poverty and disease.

Simon Tappertit was taken first to a hospital and then to prison. He was tried and eventually discharged, but his legs had been so badly crushed during the riots that they had to be taken off, and two wooden legs were supplied him. He earned a fair living by cleaning boots in the streets of London.

It was not very long before Willet and Dolly Varden were made husband and wife, and took possession of the Maypole. Here they brought up their large family and hospitably entertained wounded soldiers, for the sake of Joe's old campaign, while John Willet, now in his dotage, lived in a small cottage close by, surrounded by his old friends.

Some time elapsed before Barnaby regained his old health and gaiety. But he did recover by degrees and had a better memory and greater steadiness of purpose. He lived with his mother on the Maypole farm, looking after the poultry and the cattle, working in a garden of his own, and helping everywhere. He never left his mother, but was evermore her stay and comfort.

Grip soon recovered his good looks, but became extremely silent, and for a whole year he never indulged in any other sound than a grave croak.

THE END

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