A TALE OF TWO CITIES

A STORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

By Charles Dickens

Book the First--Recalled to Life

CHAPTER I.

The Period

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of

wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it

was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the

season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of

despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were

all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in

short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its

noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for

evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face, on the

throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with

a fair face, on the throne of France. In both countries it was clearer

than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes,

that things in general were settled for ever.

It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period,

as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth

blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had

heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were

made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane

ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its

messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally

deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the

earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People,

from a congress of British subjects in America: which, strange

to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any

communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane

brood.

France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her

sister of the shield and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down

hill, making paper money and spending it. Under the guidance of her

Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides, with such humane

achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his tongue

torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not

kneeled down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks

which passed within his view, at a distance of some fifty or sixty

yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the woods of France and

Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death,

already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into

boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in

it, terrible in history. It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses

of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were

sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with

rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which

the Farmer, Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrils of

the Revolution. But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work

unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about

with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion

that they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to

justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and

highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night;

families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing

their furniture to upholsterers’ warehouses for security; the highwayman

in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognised and

challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of

“the Captain,” gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the

mail was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead, and

then got shot dead himself by the other four, “in consequence of the

failure of his ammunition:” after which the mail was robbed in peace;

that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand

and deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the

illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue; prisoners in London

gaols fought battles with their turnkeys, and the majesty of the law

fired blunderbusses in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and ball;

thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at

Court drawing-rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles’s, to search

for contraband goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the

musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences

much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever busy

and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition; now, stringing

up long rows of miscellaneous criminals; now, hanging a housebreaker on

Saturday who had been taken on Tuesday; now, burning people in the

hand at Newgate by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of

Westminster Hall; to-day, taking the life of an atrocious murderer,

and to-morrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer’s boy of

sixpence.

All these things, and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close

upon the dear old year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

Environed by them, while the Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded,

those two of the large jaws, and those other two of the plain and the

fair faces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights

with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred

and seventy-five conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small

creatures--the creatures of this chronicle among the rest--along the

roads that lay before them.

CHAPTER II.

The Mail

It was the Dover road that lay, on a Friday night late in November,

before the first of the persons with whom this history has business.

The Dover road lay, as to him, beyond the Dover mail, as it lumbered up

Shooter’s Hill. He walked up hill in the mire by the side of the mail,

as the rest of the passengers did; not because they had the least relish

for walking exercise, under the circumstances, but because the hill,

and the harness, and the mud, and the mail, were all so heavy, that the

horses had three times already come to a stop, besides once drawing the

coach across the road, with the mutinous intent of taking it back

to Blackheath. Reins and whip and coachman and guard, however, in

combination, had read that article of war which forbade a purpose

otherwise strongly in favour of the argument, that some brute animals

are endued with Reason; and the team had capitulated and returned to

their duty.

With drooping heads and tremulous tails, they mashed their way through

the thick mud, floundering and stumbling between whiles, as if they were

falling to pieces at the larger joints. As often as the driver rested

them and brought them to a stand, with a wary “Wo-ho! so-ho-then!” the

near leader violently shook his head and everything upon it--like an

unusually emphatic horse, denying that the coach could be got up the

hill. Whenever the leader made this rattle, the passenger started, as a

nervous passenger might, and was disturbed in mind.

There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its

forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding

none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the

air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the

waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out

everything from the light of the coach-lamps but these its own workings,

and a few yards of road; and the reek of the labouring horses steamed

into it, as if they had made it all.

Two other passengers, besides the one, were plodding up the hill by the

side of the mail. All three were wrapped to the cheekbones and over the

ears, and wore jack-boots. Not one of the three could have said, from

anything he saw, what either of the other two was like; and each was

hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from

the eyes of the body, of his two companions. In those days, travellers

were very shy of being confidential on a short notice, for anybody on

the road might be a robber or in league with robbers. As to the latter,

when every posting-house and ale-house could produce somebody in

“the Captain’s” pay, ranging from the landlord to the lowest stable

non-descript, it was the likeliest thing upon the cards. So the guard

of the Dover mail thought to himself, that Friday night in November, one

thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, lumbering up Shooter’s Hill, as

he stood on his own particular perch behind the mail, beating his feet,

and keeping an eye and a hand on the arm-chest before him, where a

loaded blunderbuss lay at the top of six or eight loaded horse-pistols,

deposited on a substratum of cutlass.

The Dover mail was in its usual genial position that the guard suspected

the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they

all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but

the horses; as to which cattle he could with a clear conscience have

taken his oath on the two Testaments that they were not fit for the

journey.

“Wo-ho!” said the coachman. “So, then! One more pull and you’re at the

top and be damned to you, for I have had trouble enough to get you to

it!--Joe!”

“Halloa!” the guard replied.

“What o’clock do you make it, Joe?”

“Ten minutes, good, past eleven.”

“My blood!” ejaculated the vexed coachman, “and not atop of Shooter’s

yet! Tst! Yah! Get on with you!”

The emphatic horse, cut short by the whip in a most decided negative,

made a decided scramble for it, and the three other horses followed

suit. Once more, the Dover mail struggled on, with the jack-boots of its

passengers squashing along by its side. They had stopped when the coach

stopped, and they kept close company with it. If any one of the three

had had the hardihood to propose to another to walk on a little ahead

into the mist and darkness, he would have put himself in a fair way of

getting shot instantly as a highwayman.

The last burst carried the mail to the summit of the hill. The horses

stopped to breathe again, and the guard got down to skid the wheel for

the descent, and open the coach-door to let the passengers in.

“Tst! Joe!” cried the coachman in a warning voice, looking down from his

box.

“What do you say, Tom?”

They both listened.

“I say a horse at a canter coming up, Joe.”

“\_I\_ say a horse at a gallop, Tom,” returned the guard, leaving his hold

of the door, and mounting nimbly to his place. “Gentlemen! In the king’s

name, all of you!”

With this hurried adjuration, he cocked his blunderbuss, and stood on

the offensive.

The passenger booked by this history, was on the coach-step, getting in;

the two other passengers were close behind him, and about to follow. He

remained on the step, half in the coach and half out of; they remained

in the road below him. They all looked from the coachman to the guard,

and from the guard to the coachman, and listened. The coachman looked

back and the guard looked back, and even the emphatic leader pricked up

his ears and looked back, without contradicting.

The stillness consequent on the cessation of the rumbling and labouring

of the coach, added to the stillness of the night, made it very quiet

indeed. The panting of the horses communicated a tremulous motion to

the coach, as if it were in a state of agitation. The hearts of the

passengers beat loud enough perhaps to be heard; but at any rate, the

quiet pause was audibly expressive of people out of breath, and holding

the breath, and having the pulses quickened by expectation.

The sound of a horse at a gallop came fast and furiously up the hill.

“So-ho!” the guard sang out, as loud as he could roar. “Yo there! Stand!

I shall fire!”

The pace was suddenly checked, and, with much splashing and floundering,

a man’s voice called from the mist, “Is that the Dover mail?”

“Never you mind what it is!” the guard retorted. “What are you?”

“\_Is\_ that the Dover mail?”

“Why do you want to know?”

“I want a passenger, if it is.”

“What passenger?”

“Mr. Jarvis Lorry.”

Our booked passenger showed in a moment that it was his name. The guard,

the coachman, and the two other passengers eyed him distrustfully.

“Keep where you are,” the guard called to the voice in the mist,

“because, if I should make a mistake, it could never be set right in

your lifetime. Gentleman of the name of Lorry answer straight.”

“What is the matter?” asked the passenger, then, with mildly quavering

speech. “Who wants me? Is it Jerry?”

(“I don’t like Jerry’s voice, if it is Jerry,” growled the guard to

himself. “He’s hoarser than suits me, is Jerry.”)

“Yes, Mr. Lorry.”

“What is the matter?”

“A despatch sent after you from over yonder. T. and Co.”

“I know this messenger, guard,” said Mr. Lorry, getting down into the

road--assisted from behind more swiftly than politely by the other two

passengers, who immediately scrambled into the coach, shut the door, and

pulled up the window. “He may come close; there’s nothing wrong.”

“I hope there ain’t, but I can’t make so ‘Nation sure of that,” said the

guard, in gruff soliloquy. “Hallo you!”

“Well! And hallo you!” said Jerry, more hoarsely than before.

“Come on at a footpace! d’ye mind me? And if you’ve got holsters to that

saddle o’ yourn, don’t let me see your hand go nigh ’em. For I’m a devil

at a quick mistake, and when I make one it takes the form of Lead. So

now let’s look at you.”

The figures of a horse and rider came slowly through the eddying mist,

and came to the side of the mail, where the passenger stood. The rider

stooped, and, casting up his eyes at the guard, handed the passenger

a small folded paper. The rider’s horse was blown, and both horse and

rider were covered with mud, from the hoofs of the horse to the hat of

the man.

“Guard!” said the passenger, in a tone of quiet business confidence.

The watchful guard, with his right hand at the stock of his raised

blunderbuss, his left at the barrel, and his eye on the horseman,

answered curtly, “Sir.”

“There is nothing to apprehend. I belong to Tellson’s Bank. You must

know Tellson’s Bank in London. I am going to Paris on business. A crown

to drink. I may read this?”

“If so be as you’re quick, sir.”

He opened it in the light of the coach-lamp on that side, and

read--first to himself and then aloud: “‘Wait at Dover for Mam’selle.’

It’s not long, you see, guard. Jerry, say that my answer was, RECALLED

TO LIFE.”

Jerry started in his saddle. “That’s a Blazing strange answer, too,”

said he, at his hoarsest.

“Take that message back, and they will know that I received this, as

well as if I wrote. Make the best of your way. Good night.”

With those words the passenger opened the coach-door and got in; not at

all assisted by his fellow-passengers, who had expeditiously secreted

their watches and purses in their boots, and were now making a general

pretence of being asleep. With no more definite purpose than to escape

the hazard of originating any other kind of action.

The coach lumbered on again, with heavier wreaths of mist closing round

it as it began the descent. The guard soon replaced his blunderbuss

in his arm-chest, and, having looked to the rest of its contents, and

having looked to the supplementary pistols that he wore in his belt,

looked to a smaller chest beneath his seat, in which there were a

few smith’s tools, a couple of torches, and a tinder-box. For he was

furnished with that completeness that if the coach-lamps had been blown

and stormed out, which did occasionally happen, he had only to shut

himself up inside, keep the flint and steel sparks well off the straw,

and get a light with tolerable safety and ease (if he were lucky) in

five minutes.

“Tom!” softly over the coach roof.

“Hallo, Joe.”

“Did you hear the message?”

“I did, Joe.”

“What did you make of it, Tom?”

“Nothing at all, Joe.”

“That’s a coincidence, too,” the guard mused, “for I made the same of it

myself.”

Jerry, left alone in the mist and darkness, dismounted meanwhile, not

only to ease his spent horse, but to wipe the mud from his face, and

shake the wet out of his hat-brim, which might be capable of

holding about half a gallon. After standing with the bridle over his

heavily-splashed arm, until the wheels of the mail were no longer within

hearing and the night was quite still again, he turned to walk down the

hill.

“After that there gallop from Temple Bar, old lady, I won’t trust your

fore-legs till I get you on the level,” said this hoarse messenger,

glancing at his mare. “‘Recalled to life.’ That’s a Blazing strange

message. Much of that wouldn’t do for you, Jerry! I say, Jerry! You’d

be in a Blazing bad way, if recalling to life was to come into fashion,

Jerry!”

CHAPTER III.

The Night Shadows

A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is

constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A

solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every

one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret; that every

room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every beating

heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of

its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it! Something of the

awfulness, even of Death itself, is referable to this. No more can I

turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved, and vainly hope in time

to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable

water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses

of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the

book should shut with a spring, for ever and for ever, when I had read

but a page. It was appointed that the water should be locked in an

eternal frost, when the light was playing on its surface, and I stood

in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead,

my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; it is the inexorable

consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that

individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life’s end. In

any of the burial-places of this city through which I pass, is there

a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their

innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them?

As to this, his natural and not to be alienated inheritance, the

messenger on horseback had exactly the same possessions as the King, the

first Minister of State, or the richest merchant in London. So with the

three passengers shut up in the narrow compass of one lumbering old mail

coach; they were mysteries to one another, as complete as if each had

been in his own coach and six, or his own coach and sixty, with the

breadth of a county between him and the next.

The messenger rode back at an easy trot, stopping pretty often at

ale-houses by the way to drink, but evincing a tendency to keep his

own counsel, and to keep his hat cocked over his eyes. He had eyes that

assorted very well with that decoration, being of a surface black, with

no depth in the colour or form, and much too near together--as if they

were afraid of being found out in something, singly, if they kept too

far apart. They had a sinister expression, under an old cocked-hat like

a three-cornered spittoon, and over a great muffler for the chin and

throat, which descended nearly to the wearer’s knees. When he stopped

for drink, he moved this muffler with his left hand, only while he

poured his liquor in with his right; as soon as that was done, he

muffled again.

“No, Jerry, no!” said the messenger, harping on one theme as he rode.

“It wouldn’t do for you, Jerry. Jerry, you honest tradesman, it wouldn’t

suit \_your\_ line of business! Recalled--! Bust me if I don’t think he’d

been a drinking!”

His message perplexed his mind to that degree that he was fain, several

times, to take off his hat to scratch his head. Except on the crown,

which was raggedly bald, he had stiff, black hair, standing jaggedly all

over it, and growing down hill almost to his broad, blunt nose. It was

so like Smith’s work, so much more like the top of a strongly spiked

wall than a head of hair, that the best of players at leap-frog might

have declined him, as the most dangerous man in the world to go over.

While he trotted back with the message he was to deliver to the night

watchman in his box at the door of Tellson’s Bank, by Temple Bar, who

was to deliver it to greater authorities within, the shadows of the

night took such shapes to him as arose out of the message, and took such

shapes to the mare as arose out of \_her\_ private topics of uneasiness.

They seemed to be numerous, for she shied at every shadow on the road.

What time, the mail-coach lumbered, jolted, rattled, and bumped upon

its tedious way, with its three fellow-inscrutables inside. To whom,

likewise, the shadows of the night revealed themselves, in the forms

their dozing eyes and wandering thoughts suggested.

Tellson’s Bank had a run upon it in the mail. As the bank

passenger--with an arm drawn through the leathern strap, which did what

lay in it to keep him from pounding against the next passenger,

and driving him into his corner, whenever the coach got a special

jolt--nodded in his place, with half-shut eyes, the little

coach-windows, and the coach-lamp dimly gleaming through them, and the

bulky bundle of opposite passenger, became the bank, and did a great

stroke of business. The rattle of the harness was the chink of money,

and more drafts were honoured in five minutes than even Tellson’s, with

all its foreign and home connection, ever paid in thrice the time. Then

the strong-rooms underground, at Tellson’s, with such of their valuable

stores and secrets as were known to the passenger (and it was not a

little that he knew about them), opened before him, and he went in among

them with the great keys and the feebly-burning candle, and found them

safe, and strong, and sound, and still, just as he had last seen them.

But, though the bank was almost always with him, and though the coach

(in a confused way, like the presence of pain under an opiate) was

always with him, there was another current of impression that never

ceased to run, all through the night. He was on his way to dig some one

out of a grave.

Now, which of the multitude of faces that showed themselves before him

was the true face of the buried person, the shadows of the night did

not indicate; but they were all the faces of a man of five-and-forty by

years, and they differed principally in the passions they expressed,

and in the ghastliness of their worn and wasted state. Pride, contempt,

defiance, stubbornness, submission, lamentation, succeeded one another;

so did varieties of sunken cheek, cadaverous colour, emaciated hands

and figures. But the face was in the main one face, and every head was

prematurely white. A hundred times the dozing passenger inquired of this

spectre:

“Buried how long?”

The answer was always the same: “Almost eighteen years.”

“You had abandoned all hope of being dug out?”

“Long ago.”

“You know that you are recalled to life?”

“They tell me so.”

“I hope you care to live?”

“I can’t say.”

“Shall I show her to you? Will you come and see her?”

The answers to this question were various and contradictory. Sometimes

the broken reply was, “Wait! It would kill me if I saw her too soon.”

Sometimes, it was given in a tender rain of tears, and then it was,

“Take me to her.” Sometimes it was staring and bewildered, and then it

was, “I don’t know her. I don’t understand.”

After such imaginary discourse, the passenger in his fancy would dig,

and dig, dig--now with a spade, now with a great key, now with his

hands--to dig this wretched creature out. Got out at last, with earth

hanging about his face and hair, he would suddenly fan away to dust. The

passenger would then start to himself, and lower the window, to get the

reality of mist and rain on his cheek.

Yet even when his eyes were opened on the mist and rain, on the moving

patch of light from the lamps, and the hedge at the roadside retreating

by jerks, the night shadows outside the coach would fall into the train

of the night shadows within. The real Banking-house by Temple Bar, the

real business of the past day, the real strong rooms, the real express

sent after him, and the real message returned, would all be there. Out

of the midst of them, the ghostly face would rise, and he would accost

it again.

“Buried how long?”

“Almost eighteen years.”

“I hope you care to live?”

“I can’t say.”

Dig--dig--dig--until an impatient movement from one of the two

passengers would admonish him to pull up the window, draw his arm

securely through the leathern strap, and speculate upon the two

slumbering forms, until his mind lost its hold of them, and they again

slid away into the bank and the grave.

“Buried how long?”

“Almost eighteen years.”

“You had abandoned all hope of being dug out?”

“Long ago.”

The words were still in his hearing as just spoken--distinctly in

his hearing as ever spoken words had been in his life--when the weary

passenger started to the consciousness of daylight, and found that the

shadows of the night were gone.

He lowered the window, and looked out at the rising sun. There was a

ridge of ploughed land, with a plough upon it where it had been left

last night when the horses were unyoked; beyond, a quiet coppice-wood,

in which many leaves of burning red and golden yellow still remained

upon the trees. Though the earth was cold and wet, the sky was clear,

and the sun rose bright, placid, and beautiful.

“Eighteen years!” said the passenger, looking at the sun. “Gracious

Creator of day! To be buried alive for eighteen years!”

CHAPTER IV.

The Preparation

When the mail got successfully to Dover, in the course of the forenoon,

the head drawer at the Royal George Hotel opened the coach-door as his

custom was. He did it with some flourish of ceremony, for a mail journey

from London in winter was an achievement to congratulate an adventurous

traveller upon.

By that time, there was only one adventurous traveller left be

congratulated: for the two others had been set down at their respective

roadside destinations. The mildewy inside of the coach, with its damp

and dirty straw, its disagreeable smell, and its obscurity, was rather

like a larger dog-kennel. Mr. Lorry, the passenger, shaking himself out

of it in chains of straw, a tangle of shaggy wrapper, flapping hat, and

muddy legs, was rather like a larger sort of dog.

“There will be a packet to Calais, tomorrow, drawer?”

“Yes, sir, if the weather holds and the wind sets tolerable fair. The

tide will serve pretty nicely at about two in the afternoon, sir. Bed,

sir?”

“I shall not go to bed till night; but I want a bedroom, and a barber.”

“And then breakfast, sir? Yes, sir. That way, sir, if you please.

Show Concord! Gentleman’s valise and hot water to Concord. Pull off

gentleman’s boots in Concord. (You will find a fine sea-coal fire, sir.)

Fetch barber to Concord. Stir about there, now, for Concord!”

The Concord bed-chamber being always assigned to a passenger by the

mail, and passengers by the mail being always heavily wrapped up from

head to foot, the room had the odd interest for the establishment of the

Royal George, that although but one kind of man was seen to go into it,

all kinds and varieties of men came out of it. Consequently, another

drawer, and two porters, and several maids and the landlady, were all

loitering by accident at various points of the road between the Concord

and the coffee-room, when a gentleman of sixty, formally dressed in a

brown suit of clothes, pretty well worn, but very well kept, with large

square cuffs and large flaps to the pockets, passed along on his way to

his breakfast.

The coffee-room had no other occupant, that forenoon, than the gentleman

in brown. His breakfast-table was drawn before the fire, and as he sat,

with its light shining on him, waiting for the meal, he sat so still,

that he might have been sitting for his portrait.

Very orderly and methodical he looked, with a hand on each knee, and a

loud watch ticking a sonorous sermon under his flapped waist-coat,

as though it pitted its gravity and longevity against the levity and

evanescence of the brisk fire. He had a good leg, and was a little vain

of it, for his brown stockings fitted sleek and close, and were of a

fine texture; his shoes and buckles, too, though plain, were trim. He

wore an odd little sleek crisp flaxen wig, setting very close to his

head: which wig, it is to be presumed, was made of hair, but which

looked far more as though it were spun from filaments of silk or glass.

His linen, though not of a fineness in accordance with his stockings,

was as white as the tops of the waves that broke upon the neighbouring

beach, or the specks of sail that glinted in the sunlight far at sea. A

face habitually suppressed and quieted, was still lighted up under the

quaint wig by a pair of moist bright eyes that it must have cost

their owner, in years gone by, some pains to drill to the composed and

reserved expression of Tellson’s Bank. He had a healthy colour in his

cheeks, and his face, though lined, bore few traces of anxiety.

But, perhaps the confidential bachelor clerks in Tellson’s Bank were

principally occupied with the cares of other people; and perhaps

second-hand cares, like second-hand clothes, come easily off and on.

Completing his resemblance to a man who was sitting for his portrait,

Mr. Lorry dropped off to sleep. The arrival of his breakfast roused him,

and he said to the drawer, as he moved his chair to it:

“I wish accommodation prepared for a young lady who may come here at any

time to-day. She may ask for Mr. Jarvis Lorry, or she may only ask for a

gentleman from Tellson’s Bank. Please to let me know.”

“Yes, sir. Tellson’s Bank in London, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Yes, sir. We have oftentimes the honour to entertain your gentlemen in

their travelling backwards and forwards betwixt London and Paris, sir. A

vast deal of travelling, sir, in Tellson and Company’s House.”

“Yes. We are quite a French House, as well as an English one.”

“Yes, sir. Not much in the habit of such travelling yourself, I think,

sir?”

“Not of late years. It is fifteen years since we--since I--came last

from France.”

“Indeed, sir? That was before my time here, sir. Before our people’s

time here, sir. The George was in other hands at that time, sir.”

“I believe so.”

“But I would hold a pretty wager, sir, that a House like Tellson and

Company was flourishing, a matter of fifty, not to speak of fifteen

years ago?”

“You might treble that, and say a hundred and fifty, yet not be far from

the truth.”

“Indeed, sir!”

Rounding his mouth and both his eyes, as he stepped backward from the

table, the waiter shifted his napkin from his right arm to his left,

dropped into a comfortable attitude, and stood surveying the guest while

he ate and drank, as from an observatory or watchtower. According to the

immemorial usage of waiters in all ages.

When Mr. Lorry had finished his breakfast, he went out for a stroll on

the beach. The little narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away

from the beach, and ran its head into the chalk cliffs, like a marine

ostrich. The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling

wildly about, and the sea did what it liked, and what it liked was

destruction. It thundered at the town, and thundered at the cliffs, and

brought the coast down, madly. The air among the houses was of so strong

a piscatory flavour that one might have supposed sick fish went up to be

dipped in it, as sick people went down to be dipped in the sea. A little

fishing was done in the port, and a quantity of strolling about by

night, and looking seaward: particularly at those times when the tide

made, and was near flood. Small tradesmen, who did no business whatever,

sometimes unaccountably realised large fortunes, and it was remarkable

that nobody in the neighbourhood could endure a lamplighter.

As the day declined into the afternoon, and the air, which had been

at intervals clear enough to allow the French coast to be seen, became

again charged with mist and vapour, Mr. Lorry’s thoughts seemed to cloud

too. When it was dark, and he sat before the coffee-room fire, awaiting

his dinner as he had awaited his breakfast, his mind was busily digging,

digging, digging, in the live red coals.

A bottle of good claret after dinner does a digger in the red coals no

harm, otherwise than as it has a tendency to throw him out of work.

Mr. Lorry had been idle a long time, and had just poured out his last

glassful of wine with as complete an appearance of satisfaction as is

ever to be found in an elderly gentleman of a fresh complexion who has

got to the end of a bottle, when a rattling of wheels came up the narrow

street, and rumbled into the inn-yard.

He set down his glass untouched. “This is Mam’selle!” said he.

In a very few minutes the waiter came in to announce that Miss Manette

had arrived from London, and would be happy to see the gentleman from

Tellson’s.

“So soon?”

Miss Manette had taken some refreshment on the road, and required none

then, and was extremely anxious to see the gentleman from Tellson’s

immediately, if it suited his pleasure and convenience.

The gentleman from Tellson’s had nothing left for it but to empty his

glass with an air of stolid desperation, settle his odd little flaxen

wig at the ears, and follow the waiter to Miss Manette’s apartment.

It was a large, dark room, furnished in a funereal manner with black

horsehair, and loaded with heavy dark tables. These had been oiled and

oiled, until the two tall candles on the table in the middle of the room

were gloomily reflected on every leaf; as if \_they\_ were buried, in deep

graves of black mahogany, and no light to speak of could be expected

from them until they were dug out.

The obscurity was so difficult to penetrate that Mr. Lorry, picking his

way over the well-worn Turkey carpet, supposed Miss Manette to be, for

the moment, in some adjacent room, until, having got past the two tall

candles, he saw standing to receive him by the table between them and

the fire, a young lady of not more than seventeen, in a riding-cloak,

and still holding her straw travelling-hat by its ribbon in her hand. As

his eyes rested on a short, slight, pretty figure, a quantity of golden

hair, a pair of blue eyes that met his own with an inquiring look, and

a forehead with a singular capacity (remembering how young and smooth

it was), of rifting and knitting itself into an expression that was

not quite one of perplexity, or wonder, or alarm, or merely of a bright

fixed attention, though it included all the four expressions--as his

eyes rested on these things, a sudden vivid likeness passed before him,

of a child whom he had held in his arms on the passage across that very

Channel, one cold time, when the hail drifted heavily and the sea ran

high. The likeness passed away, like a breath along the surface of

the gaunt pier-glass behind her, on the frame of which, a hospital

procession of negro cupids, several headless and all cripples, were

offering black baskets of Dead Sea fruit to black divinities of the

feminine gender--and he made his formal bow to Miss Manette.

“Pray take a seat, sir.” In a very clear and pleasant young voice; a

little foreign in its accent, but a very little indeed.

“I kiss your hand, miss,” said Mr. Lorry, with the manners of an earlier

date, as he made his formal bow again, and took his seat.

“I received a letter from the Bank, sir, yesterday, informing me that

some intelligence--or discovery--”

“The word is not material, miss; either word will do.”

“--respecting the small property of my poor father, whom I never saw--so

long dead--”

Mr. Lorry moved in his chair, and cast a troubled look towards the

hospital procession of negro cupids. As if \_they\_ had any help for

anybody in their absurd baskets!

“--rendered it necessary that I should go to Paris, there to communicate

with a gentleman of the Bank, so good as to be despatched to Paris for

the purpose.”

“Myself.”

“As I was prepared to hear, sir.”

She curtseyed to him (young ladies made curtseys in those days), with a

pretty desire to convey to him that she felt how much older and wiser he

was than she. He made her another bow.

“I replied to the Bank, sir, that as it was considered necessary, by

those who know, and who are so kind as to advise me, that I should go to

France, and that as I am an orphan and have no friend who could go with

me, I should esteem it highly if I might be permitted to place myself,

during the journey, under that worthy gentleman’s protection. The

gentleman had left London, but I think a messenger was sent after him to

beg the favour of his waiting for me here.”

“I was happy,” said Mr. Lorry, “to be entrusted with the charge. I shall

be more happy to execute it.”

“Sir, I thank you indeed. I thank you very gratefully. It was told me

by the Bank that the gentleman would explain to me the details of the

business, and that I must prepare myself to find them of a surprising

nature. I have done my best to prepare myself, and I naturally have a

strong and eager interest to know what they are.”

“Naturally,” said Mr. Lorry. “Yes--I--”

After a pause, he added, again settling the crisp flaxen wig at the

ears, “It is very difficult to begin.”

He did not begin, but, in his indecision, met her glance. The young

forehead lifted itself into that singular expression--but it was pretty

and characteristic, besides being singular--and she raised her hand,

as if with an involuntary action she caught at, or stayed some passing

shadow.

“Are you quite a stranger to me, sir?”

“Am I not?” Mr. Lorry opened his hands, and extended them outwards with

an argumentative smile.

Between the eyebrows and just over the little feminine nose, the line of

which was as delicate and fine as it was possible to be, the expression

deepened itself as she took her seat thoughtfully in the chair by which

she had hitherto remained standing. He watched her as she mused, and the

moment she raised her eyes again, went on:

“In your adopted country, I presume, I cannot do better than address you

as a young English lady, Miss Manette?”

“If you please, sir.”

“Miss Manette, I am a man of business. I have a business charge to

acquit myself of. In your reception of it, don’t heed me any more than

if I was a speaking machine--truly, I am not much else. I will, with

your leave, relate to you, miss, the story of one of our customers.”

“Story!”

He seemed wilfully to mistake the word she had repeated, when he added,

in a hurry, “Yes, customers; in the banking business we usually call

our connection our customers. He was a French gentleman; a scientific

gentleman; a man of great acquirements--a Doctor.”

“Not of Beauvais?”

“Why, yes, of Beauvais. Like Monsieur Manette, your father, the

gentleman was of Beauvais. Like Monsieur Manette, your father, the

gentleman was of repute in Paris. I had the honour of knowing him there.

Our relations were business relations, but confidential. I was at that

time in our French House, and had been--oh! twenty years.”

“At that time--I may ask, at what time, sir?”

“I speak, miss, of twenty years ago. He married--an English lady--and

I was one of the trustees. His affairs, like the affairs of many other

French gentlemen and French families, were entirely in Tellson’s hands.

In a similar way I am, or I have been, trustee of one kind or other for

scores of our customers. These are mere business relations, miss;

there is no friendship in them, no particular interest, nothing like

sentiment. I have passed from one to another, in the course of my

business life, just as I pass from one of our customers to another in

the course of my business day; in short, I have no feelings; I am a mere

machine. To go on--”

“But this is my father’s story, sir; and I begin to think”--the

curiously roughened forehead was very intent upon him--“that when I was

left an orphan through my mother’s surviving my father only two years,

it was you who brought me to England. I am almost sure it was you.”

Mr. Lorry took the hesitating little hand that confidingly advanced

to take his, and he put it with some ceremony to his lips. He then

conducted the young lady straightway to her chair again, and, holding

the chair-back with his left hand, and using his right by turns to rub

his chin, pull his wig at the ears, or point what he said, stood looking

down into her face while she sat looking up into his.

“Miss Manette, it \_was\_ I. And you will see how truly I spoke of myself

just now, in saying I had no feelings, and that all the relations I hold

with my fellow-creatures are mere business relations, when you reflect

that I have never seen you since. No; you have been the ward of

Tellson’s House since, and I have been busy with the other business of

Tellson’s House since. Feelings! I have no time for them, no chance

of them. I pass my whole life, miss, in turning an immense pecuniary

Mangle.”

After this odd description of his daily routine of employment, Mr. Lorry

flattened his flaxen wig upon his head with both hands (which was most

unnecessary, for nothing could be flatter than its shining surface was

before), and resumed his former attitude.

“So far, miss (as you have remarked), this is the story of your

regretted father. Now comes the difference. If your father had not died

when he did--Don’t be frightened! How you start!”

She did, indeed, start. And she caught his wrist with both her hands.

“Pray,” said Mr. Lorry, in a soothing tone, bringing his left hand from

the back of the chair to lay it on the supplicatory fingers that clasped

him in so violent a tremble: “pray control your agitation--a matter of

business. As I was saying--”

Her look so discomposed him that he stopped, wandered, and began anew:

“As I was saying; if Monsieur Manette had not died; if he had suddenly

and silently disappeared; if he had been spirited away; if it had not

been difficult to guess to what dreadful place, though no art could

trace him; if he had an enemy in some compatriot who could exercise a

privilege that I in my own time have known the boldest people afraid

to speak of in a whisper, across the water there; for instance, the

privilege of filling up blank forms for the consignment of any one

to the oblivion of a prison for any length of time; if his wife had

implored the king, the queen, the court, the clergy, for any tidings of

him, and all quite in vain;--then the history of your father would have

been the history of this unfortunate gentleman, the Doctor of Beauvais.”

“I entreat you to tell me more, sir.”

“I will. I am going to. You can bear it?”

“I can bear anything but the uncertainty you leave me in at this

moment.”

“You speak collectedly, and you--\_are\_ collected. That’s good!” (Though

his manner was less satisfied than his words.) “A matter of business.

Regard it as a matter of business--business that must be done. Now

if this doctor’s wife, though a lady of great courage and spirit,

had suffered so intensely from this cause before her little child was

born--”

“The little child was a daughter, sir.”

“A daughter. A-a-matter of business--don’t be distressed. Miss, if the

poor lady had suffered so intensely before her little child was born,

that she came to the determination of sparing the poor child the

inheritance of any part of the agony she had known the pains of, by

rearing her in the belief that her father was dead--No, don’t kneel! In

Heaven’s name why should you kneel to me!”

“For the truth. O dear, good, compassionate sir, for the truth!”

“A--a matter of business. You confuse me, and how can I transact

business if I am confused? Let us be clear-headed. If you could kindly

mention now, for instance, what nine times ninepence are, or how many

shillings in twenty guineas, it would be so encouraging. I should be so

much more at my ease about your state of mind.”

Without directly answering to this appeal, she sat so still when he had

very gently raised her, and the hands that had not ceased to clasp

his wrists were so much more steady than they had been, that she

communicated some reassurance to Mr. Jarvis Lorry.

“That’s right, that’s right. Courage! Business! You have business before

you; useful business. Miss Manette, your mother took this course with

you. And when she died--I believe broken-hearted--having never slackened

her unavailing search for your father, she left you, at two years old,

to grow to be blooming, beautiful, and happy, without the dark cloud

upon you of living in uncertainty whether your father soon wore his

heart out in prison, or wasted there through many lingering years.”

As he said the words he looked down, with an admiring pity, on the

flowing golden hair; as if he pictured to himself that it might have

been already tinged with grey.

“You know that your parents had no great possession, and that what

they had was secured to your mother and to you. There has been no new

discovery, of money, or of any other property; but--”

He felt his wrist held closer, and he stopped. The expression in the

forehead, which had so particularly attracted his notice, and which was

now immovable, had deepened into one of pain and horror.

“But he has been--been found. He is alive. Greatly changed, it is too

probable; almost a wreck, it is possible; though we will hope the best.

Still, alive. Your father has been taken to the house of an old servant

in Paris, and we are going there: I, to identify him if I can: you, to

restore him to life, love, duty, rest, comfort.”

A shiver ran through her frame, and from it through his. She said, in a

low, distinct, awe-stricken voice, as if she were saying it in a dream,

“I am going to see his Ghost! It will be his Ghost--not him!”

Mr. Lorry quietly chafed the hands that held his arm. “There, there,

there! See now, see now! The best and the worst are known to you, now.

You are well on your way to the poor wronged gentleman, and, with a fair

sea voyage, and a fair land journey, you will be soon at his dear side.”

She repeated in the same tone, sunk to a whisper, “I have been free, I

have been happy, yet his Ghost has never haunted me!”

“Only one thing more,” said Mr. Lorry, laying stress upon it as a

wholesome means of enforcing her attention: “he has been found under

another name; his own, long forgotten or long concealed. It would be

worse than useless now to inquire which; worse than useless to seek to

know whether he has been for years overlooked, or always designedly

held prisoner. It would be worse than useless now to make any inquiries,

because it would be dangerous. Better not to mention the subject,

anywhere or in any way, and to remove him--for a while at all

events--out of France. Even I, safe as an Englishman, and even

Tellson’s, important as they are to French credit, avoid all naming of

the matter. I carry about me, not a scrap of writing openly referring

to it. This is a secret service altogether. My credentials, entries,

and memoranda, are all comprehended in the one line, ‘Recalled to Life;’

which may mean anything. But what is the matter! She doesn’t notice a

word! Miss Manette!”

Perfectly still and silent, and not even fallen back in her chair, she

sat under his hand, utterly insensible; with her eyes open and fixed

upon him, and with that last expression looking as if it were carved or

branded into her forehead. So close was her hold upon his arm, that he

feared to detach himself lest he should hurt her; therefore he called

out loudly for assistance without moving.

A wild-looking woman, whom even in his agitation, Mr. Lorry observed to

be all of a red colour, and to have red hair, and to be dressed in some

extraordinary tight-fitting fashion, and to have on her head a most

wonderful bonnet like a Grenadier wooden measure, and good measure too,

or a great Stilton cheese, came running into the room in advance of the

inn servants, and soon settled the question of his detachment from the

poor young lady, by laying a brawny hand upon his chest, and sending him

flying back against the nearest wall.

(“I really think this must be a man!” was Mr. Lorry’s breathless

reflection, simultaneously with his coming against the wall.)

“Why, look at you all!” bawled this figure, addressing the inn servants.

“Why don’t you go and fetch things, instead of standing there staring

at me? I am not so much to look at, am I? Why don’t you go and fetch

things? I’ll let you know, if you don’t bring smelling-salts, cold

water, and vinegar, quick, I will.”

There was an immediate dispersal for these restoratives, and she

softly laid the patient on a sofa, and tended her with great skill and

gentleness: calling her “my precious!” and “my bird!” and spreading her

golden hair aside over her shoulders with great pride and care.

“And you in brown!” she said, indignantly turning to Mr. Lorry;

“couldn’t you tell her what you had to tell her, without frightening her

to death? Look at her, with her pretty pale face and her cold hands. Do

you call \_that\_ being a Banker?”

Mr. Lorry was so exceedingly disconcerted by a question so hard to

answer, that he could only look on, at a distance, with much feebler

sympathy and humility, while the strong woman, having banished the inn

servants under the mysterious penalty of “letting them know” something

not mentioned if they stayed there, staring, recovered her charge by a

regular series of gradations, and coaxed her to lay her drooping head

upon her shoulder.

“I hope she will do well now,” said Mr. Lorry.

“No thanks to you in brown, if she does. My darling pretty!”

“I hope,” said Mr. Lorry, after another pause of feeble sympathy and

humility, “that you accompany Miss Manette to France?”

“A likely thing, too!” replied the strong woman. “If it was ever

intended that I should go across salt water, do you suppose Providence

would have cast my lot in an island?”

This being another question hard to answer, Mr. Jarvis Lorry withdrew to

consider it.

CHAPTER V.

The Wine-shop

A large cask of wine had been dropped and broken, in the street. The

accident had happened in getting it out of a cart; the cask had tumbled

out with a run, the hoops had burst, and it lay on the stones just

outside the door of the wine-shop, shattered like a walnut-shell.

All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their

idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. The rough, irregular

stones of the street, pointing every way, and designed, one might have

thought, expressly to lame all living creatures that approached them,

had dammed it into little pools; these were surrounded, each by its own

jostling group or crowd, according to its size. Some men kneeled down,

made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help

women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before the wine had all

run out between their fingers. Others, men and women, dipped in

the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with

handkerchiefs from women’s heads, which were squeezed dry into infants’

mouths; others made small mud-embankments, to stem the wine as it ran;

others, directed by lookers-on up at high windows, darted here and

there, to cut off little streams of wine that started away in new

directions; others devoted themselves to the sodden and lee-dyed

pieces of the cask, licking, and even champing the moister wine-rotted

fragments with eager relish. There was no drainage to carry off the

wine, and not only did it all get taken up, but so much mud got taken up

along with it, that there might have been a scavenger in the street,

if anybody acquainted with it could have believed in such a miraculous

presence.

A shrill sound of laughter and of amused voices--voices of men, women,

and children--resounded in the street while this wine game lasted. There

was little roughness in the sport, and much playfulness. There was a

special companionship in it, an observable inclination on the part

of every one to join some other one, which led, especially among the

luckier or lighter-hearted, to frolicsome embraces, drinking of healths,

shaking of hands, and even joining of hands and dancing, a dozen

together. When the wine was gone, and the places where it had been

most abundant were raked into a gridiron-pattern by fingers, these

demonstrations ceased, as suddenly as they had broken out. The man who

had left his saw sticking in the firewood he was cutting, set it in

motion again; the women who had left on a door-step the little pot of

hot ashes, at which she had been trying to soften the pain in her own

starved fingers and toes, or in those of her child, returned to it; men

with bare arms, matted locks, and cadaverous faces, who had emerged into

the winter light from cellars, moved away, to descend again; and a gloom

gathered on the scene that appeared more natural to it than sunshine.

The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street

in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had

stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many

wooden shoes. The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks

on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was

stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again.

Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a

tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his

head more out of a long squalid bag of a nightcap than in it, scrawled

upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine-lees--BLOOD.

The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the

street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.

And now that the cloud settled on Saint Antoine, which a momentary

gleam had driven from his sacred countenance, the darkness of it was

heavy--cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, and want, were the lords in

waiting on the saintly presence--nobles of great power all of them;

but, most especially the last. Samples of a people that had undergone a

terrible grinding and regrinding in the mill, and certainly not in the

fabulous mill which ground old people young, shivered at every corner,

passed in and out at every doorway, looked from every window, fluttered

in every vestige of a garment that the wind shook. The mill which

had worked them down, was the mill that grinds young people old; the

children had ancient faces and grave voices; and upon them, and upon the

grown faces, and ploughed into every furrow of age and coming up afresh,

was the sigh, Hunger. It was prevalent everywhere. Hunger was pushed out

of the tall houses, in the wretched clothing that hung upon poles and

lines; Hunger was patched into them with straw and rag and wood and

paper; Hunger was repeated in every fragment of the small modicum of

firewood that the man sawed off; Hunger stared down from the smokeless

chimneys, and started up from the filthy street that had no offal,

among its refuse, of anything to eat. Hunger was the inscription on the

baker’s shelves, written in every small loaf of his scanty stock of

bad bread; at the sausage-shop, in every dead-dog preparation that

was offered for sale. Hunger rattled its dry bones among the roasting

chestnuts in the turned cylinder; Hunger was shred into atomics in every

farthing porringer of husky chips of potato, fried with some reluctant

drops of oil.

Its abiding place was in all things fitted to it. A narrow winding

street, full of offence and stench, with other narrow winding streets

diverging, all peopled by rags and nightcaps, and all smelling of rags

and nightcaps, and all visible things with a brooding look upon them

that looked ill. In the hunted air of the people there was yet some

wild-beast thought of the possibility of turning at bay. Depressed and

slinking though they were, eyes of fire were not wanting among them; nor

compressed lips, white with what they suppressed; nor foreheads knitted

into the likeness of the gallows-rope they mused about enduring, or

inflicting. The trade signs (and they were almost as many as the shops)

were, all, grim illustrations of Want. The butcher and the porkman

painted up, only the leanest scrags of meat; the baker, the coarsest of

meagre loaves. The people rudely pictured as drinking in the wine-shops,

croaked over their scanty measures of thin wine and beer, and were

gloweringly confidential together. Nothing was represented in a

flourishing condition, save tools and weapons; but, the cutler’s knives

and axes were sharp and bright, the smith’s hammers were heavy, and the

gunmaker’s stock was murderous. The crippling stones of the pavement,

with their many little reservoirs of mud and water, had no footways, but

broke off abruptly at the doors. The kennel, to make amends, ran down

the middle of the street--when it ran at all: which was only after heavy

rains, and then it ran, by many eccentric fits, into the houses. Across

the streets, at wide intervals, one clumsy lamp was slung by a rope and

pulley; at night, when the lamplighter had let these down, and lighted,

and hoisted them again, a feeble grove of dim wicks swung in a sickly

manner overhead, as if they were at sea. Indeed they were at sea, and

the ship and crew were in peril of tempest.

For, the time was to come, when the gaunt scarecrows of that region

should have watched the lamplighter, in their idleness and hunger, so

long, as to conceive the idea of improving on his method, and hauling

up men by those ropes and pulleys, to flare upon the darkness of their

condition. But, the time was not come yet; and every wind that blew over

France shook the rags of the scarecrows in vain, for the birds, fine of

song and feather, took no warning.

The wine-shop was a corner shop, better than most others in its

appearance and degree, and the master of the wine-shop had stood outside

it, in a yellow waistcoat and green breeches, looking on at the struggle

for the lost wine. “It’s not my affair,” said he, with a final shrug

of the shoulders. “The people from the market did it. Let them bring

another.”

There, his eyes happening to catch the tall joker writing up his joke,

he called to him across the way:

“Say, then, my Gaspard, what do you do there?”

The fellow pointed to his joke with immense significance, as is often

the way with his tribe. It missed its mark, and completely failed, as is

often the way with his tribe too.

“What now? Are you a subject for the mad hospital?” said the wine-shop

keeper, crossing the road, and obliterating the jest with a handful of

mud, picked up for the purpose, and smeared over it. “Why do you write

in the public streets? Is there--tell me thou--is there no other place

to write such words in?”

In his expostulation he dropped his cleaner hand (perhaps accidentally,

perhaps not) upon the joker’s heart. The joker rapped it with his

own, took a nimble spring upward, and came down in a fantastic dancing

attitude, with one of his stained shoes jerked off his foot into his

hand, and held out. A joker of an extremely, not to say wolfishly

practical character, he looked, under those circumstances.

“Put it on, put it on,” said the other. “Call wine, wine; and finish

there.” With that advice, he wiped his soiled hand upon the joker’s

dress, such as it was--quite deliberately, as having dirtied the hand on

his account; and then recrossed the road and entered the wine-shop.

This wine-shop keeper was a bull-necked, martial-looking man of thirty,

and he should have been of a hot temperament, for, although it was a

bitter day, he wore no coat, but carried one slung over his shoulder.

His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, too, and his brown arms were bare to

the elbows. Neither did he wear anything more on his head than his own

crisply-curling short dark hair. He was a dark man altogether, with good

eyes and a good bold breadth between them. Good-humoured looking on

the whole, but implacable-looking, too; evidently a man of a strong

resolution and a set purpose; a man not desirable to be met, rushing

down a narrow pass with a gulf on either side, for nothing would turn

the man.

Madame Defarge, his wife, sat in the shop behind the counter as he

came in. Madame Defarge was a stout woman of about his own age, with

a watchful eye that seldom seemed to look at anything, a large hand

heavily ringed, a steady face, strong features, and great composure of

manner. There was a character about Madame Defarge, from which one might

have predicated that she did not often make mistakes against herself

in any of the reckonings over which she presided. Madame Defarge being

sensitive to cold, was wrapped in fur, and had a quantity of bright

shawl twined about her head, though not to the concealment of her large

earrings. Her knitting was before her, but she had laid it down to pick

her teeth with a toothpick. Thus engaged, with her right elbow supported

by her left hand, Madame Defarge said nothing when her lord came in, but

coughed just one grain of cough. This, in combination with the lifting

of her darkly defined eyebrows over her toothpick by the breadth of a

line, suggested to her husband that he would do well to look round the

shop among the customers, for any new customer who had dropped in while

he stepped over the way.

The wine-shop keeper accordingly rolled his eyes about, until they

rested upon an elderly gentleman and a young lady, who were seated in

a corner. Other company were there: two playing cards, two playing

dominoes, three standing by the counter lengthening out a short supply

of wine. As he passed behind the counter, he took notice that the

elderly gentleman said in a look to the young lady, “This is our man.”

“What the devil do \_you\_ do in that galley there?” said Monsieur Defarge

to himself; “I don’t know you.”

But, he feigned not to notice the two strangers, and fell into discourse

with the triumvirate of customers who were drinking at the counter.

“How goes it, Jacques?” said one of these three to Monsieur Defarge. “Is

all the spilt wine swallowed?”

“Every drop, Jacques,” answered Monsieur Defarge.

When this interchange of Christian name was effected, Madame Defarge,

picking her teeth with her toothpick, coughed another grain of cough,

and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

“It is not often,” said the second of the three, addressing Monsieur

Defarge, “that many of these miserable beasts know the taste of wine, or

of anything but black bread and death. Is it not so, Jacques?”

“It is so, Jacques,” Monsieur Defarge returned.

At this second interchange of the Christian name, Madame Defarge, still

using her toothpick with profound composure, coughed another grain of

cough, and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

The last of the three now said his say, as he put down his empty

drinking vessel and smacked his lips.

“Ah! So much the worse! A bitter taste it is that such poor cattle

always have in their mouths, and hard lives they live, Jacques. Am I

right, Jacques?”

“You are right, Jacques,” was the response of Monsieur Defarge.

This third interchange of the Christian name was completed at the moment

when Madame Defarge put her toothpick by, kept her eyebrows up, and

slightly rustled in her seat.

“Hold then! True!” muttered her husband. “Gentlemen--my wife!”

The three customers pulled off their hats to Madame Defarge, with three

flourishes. She acknowledged their homage by bending her head, and

giving them a quick look. Then she glanced in a casual manner round the

wine-shop, took up her knitting with great apparent calmness and repose

of spirit, and became absorbed in it.

“Gentlemen,” said her husband, who had kept his bright eye observantly

upon her, “good day. The chamber, furnished bachelor-fashion, that you

wished to see, and were inquiring for when I stepped out, is on the

fifth floor. The doorway of the staircase gives on the little courtyard

close to the left here,” pointing with his hand, “near to the window of

my establishment. But, now that I remember, one of you has already been

there, and can show the way. Gentlemen, adieu!”

They paid for their wine, and left the place. The eyes of Monsieur

Defarge were studying his wife at her knitting when the elderly

gentleman advanced from his corner, and begged the favour of a word.

“Willingly, sir,” said Monsieur Defarge, and quietly stepped with him to

the door.

Their conference was very short, but very decided. Almost at the first

word, Monsieur Defarge started and became deeply attentive. It had

not lasted a minute, when he nodded and went out. The gentleman then

beckoned to the young lady, and they, too, went out. Madame Defarge

knitted with nimble fingers and steady eyebrows, and saw nothing.

Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Miss Manette, emerging from the wine-shop thus,

joined Monsieur Defarge in the doorway to which he had directed his own

company just before. It opened from a stinking little black courtyard,

and was the general public entrance to a great pile of houses, inhabited

by a great number of people. In the gloomy tile-paved entry to the

gloomy tile-paved staircase, Monsieur Defarge bent down on one knee

to the child of his old master, and put her hand to his lips. It was

a gentle action, but not at all gently done; a very remarkable

transformation had come over him in a few seconds. He had no good-humour

in his face, nor any openness of aspect left, but had become a secret,

angry, dangerous man.

“It is very high; it is a little difficult. Better to begin slowly.”

Thus, Monsieur Defarge, in a stern voice, to Mr. Lorry, as they began

ascending the stairs.

“Is he alone?” the latter whispered.

“Alone! God help him, who should be with him!” said the other, in the

same low voice.

“Is he always alone, then?”

“Yes.”

“Of his own desire?”

“Of his own necessity. As he was, when I first saw him after they

found me and demanded to know if I would take him, and, at my peril be

discreet--as he was then, so he is now.”

“He is greatly changed?”

“Changed!”

The keeper of the wine-shop stopped to strike the wall with his hand,

and mutter a tremendous curse. No direct answer could have been half so

forcible. Mr. Lorry’s spirits grew heavier and heavier, as he and his

two companions ascended higher and higher.

Such a staircase, with its accessories, in the older and more crowded

parts of Paris, would be bad enough now; but, at that time, it was vile

indeed to unaccustomed and unhardened senses. Every little habitation

within the great foul nest of one high building--that is to say,

the room or rooms within every door that opened on the general

staircase--left its own heap of refuse on its own landing, besides

flinging other refuse from its own windows. The uncontrollable and

hopeless mass of decomposition so engendered, would have polluted

the air, even if poverty and deprivation had not loaded it with their

intangible impurities; the two bad sources combined made it almost

insupportable. Through such an atmosphere, by a steep dark shaft of dirt

and poison, the way lay. Yielding to his own disturbance of mind, and to

his young companion’s agitation, which became greater every instant, Mr.

Jarvis Lorry twice stopped to rest. Each of these stoppages was made

at a doleful grating, by which any languishing good airs that were left

uncorrupted, seemed to escape, and all spoilt and sickly vapours seemed

to crawl in. Through the rusted bars, tastes, rather than glimpses, were

caught of the jumbled neighbourhood; and nothing within range, nearer

or lower than the summits of the two great towers of Notre-Dame, had any

promise on it of healthy life or wholesome aspirations.

At last, the top of the staircase was gained, and they stopped for the

third time. There was yet an upper staircase, of a steeper inclination

and of contracted dimensions, to be ascended, before the garret story

was reached. The keeper of the wine-shop, always going a little in

advance, and always going on the side which Mr. Lorry took, as though he

dreaded to be asked any question by the young lady, turned himself about

here, and, carefully feeling in the pockets of the coat he carried over

his shoulder, took out a key.

“The door is locked then, my friend?” said Mr. Lorry, surprised.

“Ay. Yes,” was the grim reply of Monsieur Defarge.

“You think it necessary to keep the unfortunate gentleman so retired?”

“I think it necessary to turn the key.” Monsieur Defarge whispered it

closer in his ear, and frowned heavily.

“Why?”

“Why! Because he has lived so long, locked up, that he would be

frightened--rave--tear himself to pieces--die--come to I know not what

harm--if his door was left open.”

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Mr. Lorry.

“Is it possible!” repeated Defarge, bitterly. “Yes. And a beautiful

world we live in, when it \_is\_ possible, and when many other such things

are possible, and not only possible, but done--done, see you!--under

that sky there, every day. Long live the Devil. Let us go on.”

This dialogue had been held in so very low a whisper, that not a word

of it had reached the young lady’s ears. But, by this time she trembled

under such strong emotion, and her face expressed such deep anxiety,

and, above all, such dread and terror, that Mr. Lorry felt it incumbent

on him to speak a word or two of reassurance.

“Courage, dear miss! Courage! Business! The worst will be over in a

moment; it is but passing the room-door, and the worst is over. Then,

all the good you bring to him, all the relief, all the happiness you

bring to him, begin. Let our good friend here, assist you on that side.

That’s well, friend Defarge. Come, now. Business, business!”

They went up slowly and softly. The staircase was short, and they were

soon at the top. There, as it had an abrupt turn in it, they came all at

once in sight of three men, whose heads were bent down close together at

the side of a door, and who were intently looking into the room to which

the door belonged, through some chinks or holes in the wall. On hearing

footsteps close at hand, these three turned, and rose, and showed

themselves to be the three of one name who had been drinking in the

wine-shop.

“I forgot them in the surprise of your visit,” explained Monsieur

Defarge. “Leave us, good boys; we have business here.”

The three glided by, and went silently down.

There appearing to be no other door on that floor, and the keeper of

the wine-shop going straight to this one when they were left alone, Mr.

Lorry asked him in a whisper, with a little anger:

“Do you make a show of Monsieur Manette?”

“I show him, in the way you have seen, to a chosen few.”

“Is that well?”

“\_I\_ think it is well.”

“Who are the few? How do you choose them?”

“I choose them as real men, of my name--Jacques is my name--to whom the

sight is likely to do good. Enough; you are English; that is another

thing. Stay there, if you please, a little moment.”

With an admonitory gesture to keep them back, he stooped, and looked in

through the crevice in the wall. Soon raising his head again, he struck

twice or thrice upon the door--evidently with no other object than to

make a noise there. With the same intention, he drew the key across it,

three or four times, before he put it clumsily into the lock, and turned

it as heavily as he could.

The door slowly opened inward under his hand, and he looked into the

room and said something. A faint voice answered something. Little more

than a single syllable could have been spoken on either side.

He looked back over his shoulder, and beckoned them to enter. Mr. Lorry

got his arm securely round the daughter’s waist, and held her; for he

felt that she was sinking.

“A-a-a-business, business!” he urged, with a moisture that was not of

business shining on his cheek. “Come in, come in!”

“I am afraid of it,” she answered, shuddering.

“Of it? What?”

“I mean of him. Of my father.”

Rendered in a manner desperate, by her state and by the beckoning of

their conductor, he drew over his neck the arm that shook upon his

shoulder, lifted her a little, and hurried her into the room. He sat her

down just within the door, and held her, clinging to him.

Defarge drew out the key, closed the door, locked it on the inside,

took out the key again, and held it in his hand. All this he did,

methodically, and with as loud and harsh an accompaniment of noise as he

could make. Finally, he walked across the room with a measured tread to

where the window was. He stopped there, and faced round.

The garret, built to be a depository for firewood and the like, was dim

and dark: for, the window of dormer shape, was in truth a door in the

roof, with a little crane over it for the hoisting up of stores from

the street: unglazed, and closing up the middle in two pieces, like any

other door of French construction. To exclude the cold, one half of this

door was fast closed, and the other was opened but a very little way.

Such a scanty portion of light was admitted through these means, that it

was difficult, on first coming in, to see anything; and long habit

alone could have slowly formed in any one, the ability to do any work

requiring nicety in such obscurity. Yet, work of that kind was being

done in the garret; for, with his back towards the door, and his face

towards the window where the keeper of the wine-shop stood looking at

him, a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very

busy, making shoes.

CHAPTER VI.

The Shoemaker

“Good day!” said Monsieur Defarge, looking down at the white head that

bent low over the shoemaking.

It was raised for a moment, and a very faint voice responded to the

salutation, as if it were at a distance:

“Good day!”

“You are still hard at work, I see?”

After a long silence, the head was lifted for another moment, and the

voice replied, “Yes--I am working.” This time, a pair of haggard eyes

had looked at the questioner, before the face had dropped again.

The faintness of the voice was pitiable and dreadful. It was not the

faintness of physical weakness, though confinement and hard fare no

doubt had their part in it. Its deplorable peculiarity was, that it was

the faintness of solitude and disuse. It was like the last feeble echo

of a sound made long and long ago. So entirely had it lost the life and

resonance of the human voice, that it affected the senses like a once

beautiful colour faded away into a poor weak stain. So sunken and

suppressed it was, that it was like a voice underground. So expressive

it was, of a hopeless and lost creature, that a famished traveller,

wearied out by lonely wandering in a wilderness, would have remembered

home and friends in such a tone before lying down to die.

Some minutes of silent work had passed: and the haggard eyes had looked

up again: not with any interest or curiosity, but with a dull mechanical

perception, beforehand, that the spot where the only visitor they were

aware of had stood, was not yet empty.

“I want,” said Defarge, who had not removed his gaze from the shoemaker,

“to let in a little more light here. You can bear a little more?”

The shoemaker stopped his work; looked with a vacant air of listening,

at the floor on one side of him; then similarly, at the floor on the

other side of him; then, upward at the speaker.

“What did you say?”

“You can bear a little more light?”

“I must bear it, if you let it in.” (Laying the palest shadow of a

stress upon the second word.)

The opened half-door was opened a little further, and secured at that

angle for the time. A broad ray of light fell into the garret, and

showed the workman with an unfinished shoe upon his lap, pausing in his

labour. His few common tools and various scraps of leather were at his

feet and on his bench. He had a white beard, raggedly cut, but not very

long, a hollow face, and exceedingly bright eyes. The hollowness and

thinness of his face would have caused them to look large, under his yet

dark eyebrows and his confused white hair, though they had been really

otherwise; but, they were naturally large, and looked unnaturally so.

His yellow rags of shirt lay open at the throat, and showed his body

to be withered and worn. He, and his old canvas frock, and his loose

stockings, and all his poor tatters of clothes, had, in a long seclusion

from direct light and air, faded down to such a dull uniformity of

parchment-yellow, that it would have been hard to say which was which.

He had put up a hand between his eyes and the light, and the very bones

of it seemed transparent. So he sat, with a steadfastly vacant gaze,

pausing in his work. He never looked at the figure before him, without

first looking down on this side of himself, then on that, as if he had

lost the habit of associating place with sound; he never spoke, without

first wandering in this manner, and forgetting to speak.

“Are you going to finish that pair of shoes to-day?” asked Defarge,

motioning to Mr. Lorry to come forward.

“What did you say?”

“Do you mean to finish that pair of shoes to-day?”

“I can’t say that I mean to. I suppose so. I don’t know.”

But, the question reminded him of his work, and he bent over it again.

Mr. Lorry came silently forward, leaving the daughter by the door. When

he had stood, for a minute or two, by the side of Defarge, the shoemaker

looked up. He showed no surprise at seeing another figure, but the

unsteady fingers of one of his hands strayed to his lips as he looked at

it (his lips and his nails were of the same pale lead-colour), and then

the hand dropped to his work, and he once more bent over the shoe. The

look and the action had occupied but an instant.

“You have a visitor, you see,” said Monsieur Defarge.

“What did you say?”

“Here is a visitor.”

The shoemaker looked up as before, but without removing a hand from his

work.

“Come!” said Defarge. “Here is monsieur, who knows a well-made shoe when

he sees one. Show him that shoe you are working at. Take it, monsieur.”

Mr. Lorry took it in his hand.

“Tell monsieur what kind of shoe it is, and the maker’s name.”

There was a longer pause than usual, before the shoemaker replied:

“I forget what it was you asked me. What did you say?”

“I said, couldn’t you describe the kind of shoe, for monsieur’s

information?”

“It is a lady’s shoe. It is a young lady’s walking-shoe. It is in the

present mode. I never saw the mode. I have had a pattern in my hand.” He

glanced at the shoe with some little passing touch of pride.

“And the maker’s name?” said Defarge.

Now that he had no work to hold, he laid the knuckles of the right hand

in the hollow of the left, and then the knuckles of the left hand in the

hollow of the right, and then passed a hand across his bearded chin, and

so on in regular changes, without a moment’s intermission. The task of

recalling him from the vagrancy into which he always sank when he

had spoken, was like recalling some very weak person from a swoon, or

endeavouring, in the hope of some disclosure, to stay the spirit of a

fast-dying man.

“Did you ask me for my name?”

“Assuredly I did.”

“One Hundred and Five, North Tower.”

“Is that all?”

“One Hundred and Five, North Tower.”

With a weary sound that was not a sigh, nor a groan, he bent to work

again, until the silence was again broken.

“You are not a shoemaker by trade?” said Mr. Lorry, looking steadfastly

at him.

His haggard eyes turned to Defarge as if he would have transferred the

question to him: but as no help came from that quarter, they turned back

on the questioner when they had sought the ground.

“I am not a shoemaker by trade? No, I was not a shoemaker by trade. I-I

learnt it here. I taught myself. I asked leave to--”

He lapsed away, even for minutes, ringing those measured changes on his

hands the whole time. His eyes came slowly back, at last, to the face

from which they had wandered; when they rested on it, he started, and

resumed, in the manner of a sleeper that moment awake, reverting to a

subject of last night.

“I asked leave to teach myself, and I got it with much difficulty after

a long while, and I have made shoes ever since.”

As he held out his hand for the shoe that had been taken from him, Mr.

Lorry said, still looking steadfastly in his face:

“Monsieur Manette, do you remember nothing of me?”

The shoe dropped to the ground, and he sat looking fixedly at the

questioner.

“Monsieur Manette”; Mr. Lorry laid his hand upon Defarge’s arm; “do you

remember nothing of this man? Look at him. Look at me. Is there no old

banker, no old business, no old servant, no old time, rising in your

mind, Monsieur Manette?”

As the captive of many years sat looking fixedly, by turns, at Mr.

Lorry and at Defarge, some long obliterated marks of an actively intent

intelligence in the middle of the forehead, gradually forced themselves

through the black mist that had fallen on him. They were overclouded

again, they were fainter, they were gone; but they had been there. And

so exactly was the expression repeated on the fair young face of her who

had crept along the wall to a point where she could see him, and where

she now stood looking at him, with hands which at first had been only

raised in frightened compassion, if not even to keep him off and

shut out the sight of him, but which were now extending towards him,

trembling with eagerness to lay the spectral face upon her warm young

breast, and love it back to life and hope--so exactly was the expression

repeated (though in stronger characters) on her fair young face, that it

looked as though it had passed like a moving light, from him to her.

Darkness had fallen on him in its place. He looked at the two, less and

less attentively, and his eyes in gloomy abstraction sought the ground

and looked about him in the old way. Finally, with a deep long sigh, he

took the shoe up, and resumed his work.

“Have you recognised him, monsieur?” asked Defarge in a whisper.

“Yes; for a moment. At first I thought it quite hopeless, but I have

unquestionably seen, for a single moment, the face that I once knew so

well. Hush! Let us draw further back. Hush!”

She had moved from the wall of the garret, very near to the bench on

which he sat. There was something awful in his unconsciousness of the

figure that could have put out its hand and touched him as he stooped

over his labour.

Not a word was spoken, not a sound was made. She stood, like a spirit,

beside him, and he bent over his work.

It happened, at length, that he had occasion to change the instrument

in his hand, for his shoemaker’s knife. It lay on that side of him

which was not the side on which she stood. He had taken it up, and was

stooping to work again, when his eyes caught the skirt of her dress. He

raised them, and saw her face. The two spectators started forward,

but she stayed them with a motion of her hand. She had no fear of his

striking at her with the knife, though they had.

He stared at her with a fearful look, and after a while his lips began

to form some words, though no sound proceeded from them. By degrees, in

the pauses of his quick and laboured breathing, he was heard to say:

“What is this?”

With the tears streaming down her face, she put her two hands to her

lips, and kissed them to him; then clasped them on her breast, as if she

laid his ruined head there.

“You are not the gaoler’s daughter?”

She sighed “No.”

“Who are you?”

Not yet trusting the tones of her voice, she sat down on the bench

beside him. He recoiled, but she laid her hand upon his arm. A strange

thrill struck him when she did so, and visibly passed over his frame; he

laid the knife down softly, as he sat staring at her.

Her golden hair, which she wore in long curls, had been hurriedly pushed

aside, and fell down over her neck. Advancing his hand by little and

little, he took it up and looked at it. In the midst of the action

he went astray, and, with another deep sigh, fell to work at his

shoemaking.

But not for long. Releasing his arm, she laid her hand upon his

shoulder. After looking doubtfully at it, two or three times, as if to

be sure that it was really there, he laid down his work, put his hand

to his neck, and took off a blackened string with a scrap of folded rag

attached to it. He opened this, carefully, on his knee, and it contained

a very little quantity of hair: not more than one or two long golden

hairs, which he had, in some old day, wound off upon his finger.

He took her hair into his hand again, and looked closely at it. “It is

the same. How can it be! When was it! How was it!”

As the concentrated expression returned to his forehead, he seemed to

become conscious that it was in hers too. He turned her full to the

light, and looked at her.

“She had laid her head upon my shoulder, that night when I was summoned

out--she had a fear of my going, though I had none--and when I was

brought to the North Tower they found these upon my sleeve. ‘You will

leave me them? They can never help me to escape in the body, though they

may in the spirit.’ Those were the words I said. I remember them very

well.”

He formed this speech with his lips many times before he could utter it.

But when he did find spoken words for it, they came to him coherently,

though slowly.

“How was this?--\_Was it you\_?”

Once more, the two spectators started, as he turned upon her with a

frightful suddenness. But she sat perfectly still in his grasp, and only

said, in a low voice, “I entreat you, good gentlemen, do not come near

us, do not speak, do not move!”

“Hark!” he exclaimed. “Whose voice was that?”

His hands released her as he uttered this cry, and went up to his white

hair, which they tore in a frenzy. It died out, as everything but his

shoemaking did die out of him, and he refolded his little packet and

tried to secure it in his breast; but he still looked at her, and

gloomily shook his head.

“No, no, no; you are too young, too blooming. It can’t be. See what the

prisoner is. These are not the hands she knew, this is not the face

she knew, this is not a voice she ever heard. No, no. She was--and He

was--before the slow years of the North Tower--ages ago. What is your

name, my gentle angel?”

Hailing his softened tone and manner, his daughter fell upon her knees

before him, with her appealing hands upon his breast.

“O, sir, at another time you shall know my name, and who my mother was,

and who my father, and how I never knew their hard, hard history. But I

cannot tell you at this time, and I cannot tell you here. All that I may

tell you, here and now, is, that I pray to you to touch me and to bless

me. Kiss me, kiss me! O my dear, my dear!”

His cold white head mingled with her radiant hair, which warmed and

lighted it as though it were the light of Freedom shining on him.

“If you hear in my voice--I don’t know that it is so, but I hope it

is--if you hear in my voice any resemblance to a voice that once was

sweet music in your ears, weep for it, weep for it! If you touch, in

touching my hair, anything that recalls a beloved head that lay on your

breast when you were young and free, weep for it, weep for it! If, when

I hint to you of a Home that is before us, where I will be true to you

with all my duty and with all my faithful service, I bring back the

remembrance of a Home long desolate, while your poor heart pined away,

weep for it, weep for it!”

She held him closer round the neck, and rocked him on her breast like a

child.

“If, when I tell you, dearest dear, that your agony is over, and that I

have come here to take you from it, and that we go to England to be at

peace and at rest, I cause you to think of your useful life laid waste,

and of our native France so wicked to you, weep for it, weep for it! And

if, when I shall tell you of my name, and of my father who is living,

and of my mother who is dead, you learn that I have to kneel to my

honoured father, and implore his pardon for having never for his sake

striven all day and lain awake and wept all night, because the love of

my poor mother hid his torture from me, weep for it, weep for it! Weep

for her, then, and for me! Good gentlemen, thank God! I feel his sacred

tears upon my face, and his sobs strike against my heart. O, see! Thank

God for us, thank God!”

He had sunk in her arms, and his face dropped on her breast: a sight so

touching, yet so terrible in the tremendous wrong and suffering which

had gone before it, that the two beholders covered their faces.

When the quiet of the garret had been long undisturbed, and his heaving

breast and shaken form had long yielded to the calm that must follow all

storms--emblem to humanity, of the rest and silence into which the storm

called Life must hush at last--they came forward to raise the father and

daughter from the ground. He had gradually dropped to the floor, and lay

there in a lethargy, worn out. She had nestled down with him, that his

head might lie upon her arm; and her hair drooping over him curtained

him from the light.

“If, without disturbing him,” she said, raising her hand to Mr. Lorry as

he stooped over them, after repeated blowings of his nose, “all could be

arranged for our leaving Paris at once, so that, from the very door, he

could be taken away--”

“But, consider. Is he fit for the journey?” asked Mr. Lorry.

“More fit for that, I think, than to remain in this city, so dreadful to

him.”

“It is true,” said Defarge, who was kneeling to look on and hear. “More

than that; Monsieur Manette is, for all reasons, best out of France.

Say, shall I hire a carriage and post-horses?”

“That’s business,” said Mr. Lorry, resuming on the shortest notice his

methodical manners; “and if business is to be done, I had better do it.”

“Then be so kind,” urged Miss Manette, “as to leave us here. You see how

composed he has become, and you cannot be afraid to leave him with me

now. Why should you be? If you will lock the door to secure us from

interruption, I do not doubt that you will find him, when you come back,

as quiet as you leave him. In any case, I will take care of him until

you return, and then we will remove him straight.”

Both Mr. Lorry and Defarge were rather disinclined to this course, and

in favour of one of them remaining. But, as there were not only carriage

and horses to be seen to, but travelling papers; and as time pressed,

for the day was drawing to an end, it came at last to their hastily

dividing the business that was necessary to be done, and hurrying away

to do it.

Then, as the darkness closed in, the daughter laid her head down on the

hard ground close at the father’s side, and watched him. The darkness

deepened and deepened, and they both lay quiet, until a light gleamed

through the chinks in the wall.

Mr. Lorry and Monsieur Defarge had made all ready for the journey, and

had brought with them, besides travelling cloaks and wrappers, bread and

meat, wine, and hot coffee. Monsieur Defarge put this provender, and the

lamp he carried, on the shoemaker’s bench (there was nothing else in the

garret but a pallet bed), and he and Mr. Lorry roused the captive, and

assisted him to his feet.

No human intelligence could have read the mysteries of his mind, in

the scared blank wonder of his face. Whether he knew what had happened,

whether he recollected what they had said to him, whether he knew that

he was free, were questions which no sagacity could have solved. They

tried speaking to him; but, he was so confused, and so very slow to

answer, that they took fright at his bewilderment, and agreed for

the time to tamper with him no more. He had a wild, lost manner of

occasionally clasping his head in his hands, that had not been seen

in him before; yet, he had some pleasure in the mere sound of his

daughter’s voice, and invariably turned to it when she spoke.

In the submissive way of one long accustomed to obey under coercion, he

ate and drank what they gave him to eat and drink, and put on the cloak

and other wrappings, that they gave him to wear. He readily responded to

his daughter’s drawing her arm through his, and took--and kept--her hand

in both his own.

They began to descend; Monsieur Defarge going first with the lamp, Mr.

Lorry closing the little procession. They had not traversed many steps

of the long main staircase when he stopped, and stared at the roof and

round at the walls.

“You remember the place, my father? You remember coming up here?”

“What did you say?”

But, before she could repeat the question, he murmured an answer as if

she had repeated it.

“Remember? No, I don’t remember. It was so very long ago.”

That he had no recollection whatever of his having been brought from his

prison to that house, was apparent to them. They heard him mutter,

“One Hundred and Five, North Tower;” and when he looked about him, it

evidently was for the strong fortress-walls which had long encompassed

him. On their reaching the courtyard he instinctively altered his

tread, as being in expectation of a drawbridge; and when there was

no drawbridge, and he saw the carriage waiting in the open street, he

dropped his daughter’s hand and clasped his head again.

No crowd was about the door; no people were discernible at any of the

many windows; not even a chance passerby was in the street. An unnatural

silence and desertion reigned there. Only one soul was to be seen, and

that was Madame Defarge--who leaned against the door-post, knitting, and

saw nothing.

The prisoner had got into a coach, and his daughter had followed

him, when Mr. Lorry’s feet were arrested on the step by his asking,

miserably, for his shoemaking tools and the unfinished shoes. Madame

Defarge immediately called to her husband that she would get them, and

went, knitting, out of the lamplight, through the courtyard. She quickly

brought them down and handed them in;--and immediately afterwards leaned

against the door-post, knitting, and saw nothing.

Defarge got upon the box, and gave the word “To the Barrier!” The

postilion cracked his whip, and they clattered away under the feeble

over-swinging lamps.

Under the over-swinging lamps--swinging ever brighter in the better

streets, and ever dimmer in the worse--and by lighted shops, gay crowds,

illuminated coffee-houses, and theatre-doors, to one of the city

gates. Soldiers with lanterns, at the guard-house there. “Your papers,

travellers!” “See here then, Monsieur the Officer,” said Defarge,

getting down, and taking him gravely apart, “these are the papers of

monsieur inside, with the white head. They were consigned to me, with

him, at the--” He dropped his voice, there was a flutter among the

military lanterns, and one of them being handed into the coach by an arm

in uniform, the eyes connected with the arm looked, not an every day

or an every night look, at monsieur with the white head. “It is well.

Forward!” from the uniform. “Adieu!” from Defarge. And so, under a short

grove of feebler and feebler over-swinging lamps, out under the great

grove of stars.

Beneath that arch of unmoved and eternal lights; some, so remote from

this little earth that the learned tell us it is doubtful whether their

rays have even yet discovered it, as a point in space where anything

is suffered or done: the shadows of the night were broad and black.

All through the cold and restless interval, until dawn, they once more

whispered in the ears of Mr. Jarvis Lorry--sitting opposite the buried

man who had been dug out, and wondering what subtle powers were for ever

lost to him, and what were capable of restoration--the old inquiry:

“I hope you care to be recalled to life?”

And the old answer:

“I can’t say.”

The end of the first book.

Book the Second--the Golden Thread

CHAPTER I.

Five Years Later

Tellson’s Bank by Temple Bar was an old-fashioned place, even in the

year one thousand seven hundred and eighty. It was very small, very

dark, very ugly, very incommodious. It was an old-fashioned place,

moreover, in the moral attribute that the partners in the House were

proud of its smallness, proud of its darkness, proud of its ugliness,

proud of its incommodiousness. They were even boastful of its eminence

in those particulars, and were fired by an express conviction that, if

it were less objectionable, it would be less respectable. This was

no passive belief, but an active weapon which they flashed at more

convenient places of business. Tellson’s (they said) wanted

no elbow-room, Tellson’s wanted no light, Tellson’s wanted no

embellishment. Noakes and Co.’s might, or Snooks Brothers’ might; but

Tellson’s, thank Heaven--!

Any one of these partners would have disinherited his son on the

question of rebuilding Tellson’s. In this respect the House was much

on a par with the Country; which did very often disinherit its sons for

suggesting improvements in laws and customs that had long been highly

objectionable, but were only the more respectable.

Thus it had come to pass, that Tellson’s was the triumphant perfection

of inconvenience. After bursting open a door of idiotic obstinacy with

a weak rattle in its throat, you fell into Tellson’s down two steps,

and came to your senses in a miserable little shop, with two little

counters, where the oldest of men made your cheque shake as if the

wind rustled it, while they examined the signature by the dingiest of

windows, which were always under a shower-bath of mud from Fleet-street,

and which were made the dingier by their own iron bars proper, and the

heavy shadow of Temple Bar. If your business necessitated your seeing

“the House,” you were put into a species of Condemned Hold at the back,

where you meditated on a misspent life, until the House came with its

hands in its pockets, and you could hardly blink at it in the dismal

twilight. Your money came out of, or went into, wormy old wooden

drawers, particles of which flew up your nose and down your throat when

they were opened and shut. Your bank-notes had a musty odour, as if they

were fast decomposing into rags again. Your plate was stowed away among

the neighbouring cesspools, and evil communications corrupted its good

polish in a day or two. Your deeds got into extemporised strong-rooms

made of kitchens and sculleries, and fretted all the fat out of their

parchments into the banking-house air. Your lighter boxes of family

papers went up-stairs into a Barmecide room, that always had a great

dining-table in it and never had a dinner, and where, even in the year

one thousand seven hundred and eighty, the first letters written to you

by your old love, or by your little children, were but newly released

from the horror of being ogled through the windows, by the heads

exposed on Temple Bar with an insensate brutality and ferocity worthy of

Abyssinia or Ashantee.

But indeed, at that time, putting to death was a recipe much in vogue

with all trades and professions, and not least of all with Tellson’s.

Death is Nature’s remedy for all things, and why not Legislation’s?

Accordingly, the forger was put to Death; the utterer of a bad note

was put to Death; the unlawful opener of a letter was put to Death; the

purloiner of forty shillings and sixpence was put to Death; the holder

of a horse at Tellson’s door, who made off with it, was put to

Death; the coiner of a bad shilling was put to Death; the sounders of

three-fourths of the notes in the whole gamut of Crime, were put to

Death. Not that it did the least good in the way of prevention--it

might almost have been worth remarking that the fact was exactly the

reverse--but, it cleared off (as to this world) the trouble of each

particular case, and left nothing else connected with it to be looked

after. Thus, Tellson’s, in its day, like greater places of business,

its contemporaries, had taken so many lives, that, if the heads laid

low before it had been ranged on Temple Bar instead of being privately

disposed of, they would probably have excluded what little light the

ground floor had, in a rather significant manner.

Cramped in all kinds of dim cupboards and hutches at Tellson’s, the

oldest of men carried on the business gravely. When they took a young

man into Tellson’s London house, they hid him somewhere till he was

old. They kept him in a dark place, like a cheese, until he had the full

Tellson flavour and blue-mould upon him. Then only was he permitted to

be seen, spectacularly poring over large books, and casting his breeches

and gaiters into the general weight of the establishment.

Outside Tellson’s--never by any means in it, unless called in--was an

odd-job-man, an occasional porter and messenger, who served as the live

sign of the house. He was never absent during business hours, unless

upon an errand, and then he was represented by his son: a grisly urchin

of twelve, who was his express image. People understood that Tellson’s,

in a stately way, tolerated the odd-job-man. The house had always

tolerated some person in that capacity, and time and tide had drifted

this person to the post. His surname was Cruncher, and on the youthful

occasion of his renouncing by proxy the works of darkness, in the

easterly parish church of Hounsditch, he had received the added

appellation of Jerry.

The scene was Mr. Cruncher’s private lodging in Hanging-sword-alley,

Whitefriars: the time, half-past seven of the clock on a windy March

morning, Anno Domini seventeen hundred and eighty. (Mr. Cruncher himself

always spoke of the year of our Lord as Anna Dominoes: apparently under

the impression that the Christian era dated from the invention of a

popular game, by a lady who had bestowed her name upon it.)

Mr. Cruncher’s apartments were not in a savoury neighbourhood, and were

but two in number, even if a closet with a single pane of glass in it

might be counted as one. But they were very decently kept. Early as

it was, on the windy March morning, the room in which he lay abed was

already scrubbed throughout; and between the cups and saucers arranged

for breakfast, and the lumbering deal table, a very clean white cloth

was spread.

Mr. Cruncher reposed under a patchwork counterpane, like a Harlequin

at home. At first, he slept heavily, but, by degrees, began to roll

and surge in bed, until he rose above the surface, with his spiky hair

looking as if it must tear the sheets to ribbons. At which juncture, he

exclaimed, in a voice of dire exasperation:

“Bust me, if she ain’t at it agin!”

A woman of orderly and industrious appearance rose from her knees in a

corner, with sufficient haste and trepidation to show that she was the

person referred to.

“What!” said Mr. Cruncher, looking out of bed for a boot. “You’re at it

agin, are you?”

After hailing the morn with this second salutation, he threw a boot at

the woman as a third. It was a very muddy boot, and may introduce the

odd circumstance connected with Mr. Cruncher’s domestic economy, that,

whereas he often came home after banking hours with clean boots, he

often got up next morning to find the same boots covered with clay.

“What,” said Mr. Cruncher, varying his apostrophe after missing his

mark--“what are you up to, Aggerawayter?”

“I was only saying my prayers.”

“Saying your prayers! You’re a nice woman! What do you mean by flopping

yourself down and praying agin me?”

“I was not praying against you; I was praying for you.”

“You weren’t. And if you were, I won’t be took the liberty with. Here!

your mother’s a nice woman, young Jerry, going a praying agin your

father’s prosperity. You’ve got a dutiful mother, you have, my son.

You’ve got a religious mother, you have, my boy: going and flopping

herself down, and praying that the bread-and-butter may be snatched out

of the mouth of her only child.”

Master Cruncher (who was in his shirt) took this very ill, and, turning

to his mother, strongly deprecated any praying away of his personal

board.

“And what do you suppose, you conceited female,” said Mr. Cruncher, with

unconscious inconsistency, “that the worth of \_your\_ prayers may be?

Name the price that you put \_your\_ prayers at!”

“They only come from the heart, Jerry. They are worth no more than

that.”

“Worth no more than that,” repeated Mr. Cruncher. “They ain’t worth

much, then. Whether or no, I won’t be prayed agin, I tell you. I can’t

afford it. I’m not a going to be made unlucky by \_your\_ sneaking. If

you must go flopping yourself down, flop in favour of your husband and

child, and not in opposition to ’em. If I had had any but a unnat’ral

wife, and this poor boy had had any but a unnat’ral mother, I might

have made some money last week instead of being counter-prayed and

countermined and religiously circumwented into the worst of luck.

B-u-u-ust me!” said Mr. Cruncher, who all this time had been putting

on his clothes, “if I ain’t, what with piety and one blowed thing and

another, been choused this last week into as bad luck as ever a poor

devil of a honest tradesman met with! Young Jerry, dress yourself, my

boy, and while I clean my boots keep a eye upon your mother now and

then, and if you see any signs of more flopping, give me a call. For, I

tell you,” here he addressed his wife once more, “I won’t be gone agin,

in this manner. I am as rickety as a hackney-coach, I’m as sleepy as

laudanum, my lines is strained to that degree that I shouldn’t know, if

it wasn’t for the pain in ’em, which was me and which somebody else, yet

I’m none the better for it in pocket; and it’s my suspicion that you’ve

been at it from morning to night to prevent me from being the better for

it in pocket, and I won’t put up with it, Aggerawayter, and what do you

say now!”

Growling, in addition, such phrases as “Ah! yes! You’re religious, too.

You wouldn’t put yourself in opposition to the interests of your husband

and child, would you? Not you!” and throwing off other sarcastic sparks

from the whirling grindstone of his indignation, Mr. Cruncher betook

himself to his boot-cleaning and his general preparation for business.

In the meantime, his son, whose head was garnished with tenderer spikes,

and whose young eyes stood close by one another, as his father’s did,

kept the required watch upon his mother. He greatly disturbed that poor

woman at intervals, by darting out of his sleeping closet, where he made

his toilet, with a suppressed cry of “You are going to flop, mother.

--Halloa, father!” and, after raising this fictitious alarm, darting in

again with an undutiful grin.

Mr. Cruncher’s temper was not at all improved when he came to his

breakfast. He resented Mrs. Cruncher’s saying grace with particular

animosity.

“Now, Aggerawayter! What are you up to? At it again?”

His wife explained that she had merely “asked a blessing.”

“Don’t do it!” said Mr. Crunches looking about, as if he rather expected

to see the loaf disappear under the efficacy of his wife’s petitions. “I

ain’t a going to be blest out of house and home. I won’t have my wittles

blest off my table. Keep still!”

Exceedingly red-eyed and grim, as if he had been up all night at a party

which had taken anything but a convivial turn, Jerry Cruncher worried

his breakfast rather than ate it, growling over it like any four-footed

inmate of a menagerie. Towards nine o’clock he smoothed his ruffled

aspect, and, presenting as respectable and business-like an exterior as

he could overlay his natural self with, issued forth to the occupation

of the day.

It could scarcely be called a trade, in spite of his favourite

description of himself as “a honest tradesman.” His stock consisted of

a wooden stool, made out of a broken-backed chair cut down, which stool,

young Jerry, walking at his father’s side, carried every morning to

beneath the banking-house window that was nearest Temple Bar: where,

with the addition of the first handful of straw that could be gleaned

from any passing vehicle to keep the cold and wet from the odd-job-man’s

feet, it formed the encampment for the day. On this post of his, Mr.

Cruncher was as well known to Fleet-street and the Temple, as the Bar

itself,--and was almost as in-looking.

Encamped at a quarter before nine, in good time to touch his

three-cornered hat to the oldest of men as they passed in to Tellson’s,

Jerry took up his station on this windy March morning, with young Jerry

standing by him, when not engaged in making forays through the Bar, to

inflict bodily and mental injuries of an acute description on passing

boys who were small enough for his amiable purpose. Father and son,

extremely like each other, looking silently on at the morning traffic

in Fleet-street, with their two heads as near to one another as the two

eyes of each were, bore a considerable resemblance to a pair of monkeys.

The resemblance was not lessened by the accidental circumstance, that

the mature Jerry bit and spat out straw, while the twinkling eyes of the

youthful Jerry were as restlessly watchful of him as of everything else

in Fleet-street.

The head of one of the regular indoor messengers attached to Tellson’s

establishment was put through the door, and the word was given:

“Porter wanted!”

“Hooray, father! Here’s an early job to begin with!”

Having thus given his parent God speed, young Jerry seated himself on

the stool, entered on his reversionary interest in the straw his father

had been chewing, and cogitated.

“Al-ways rusty! His fingers is al-ways rusty!” muttered young Jerry.

“Where does my father get all that iron rust from? He don’t get no iron

rust here!”

CHAPTER II.

A Sight

“You know the Old Bailey well, no doubt?” said one of the oldest of

clerks to Jerry the messenger.

“Ye-es, sir,” returned Jerry, in something of a dogged manner. “I \_do\_

know the Bailey.”

“Just so. And you know Mr. Lorry.”

“I know Mr. Lorry, sir, much better than I know the Bailey. Much

better,” said Jerry, not unlike a reluctant witness at the establishment

in question, “than I, as a honest tradesman, wish to know the Bailey.”

“Very well. Find the door where the witnesses go in, and show the

door-keeper this note for Mr. Lorry. He will then let you in.”

“Into the court, sir?”

“Into the court.”

Mr. Cruncher’s eyes seemed to get a little closer to one another, and to

interchange the inquiry, “What do you think of this?”

“Am I to wait in the court, sir?” he asked, as the result of that

conference.

“I am going to tell you. The door-keeper will pass the note to Mr.

Lorry, and do you make any gesture that will attract Mr. Lorry’s

attention, and show him where you stand. Then what you have to do, is,

to remain there until he wants you.”

“Is that all, sir?”

“That’s all. He wishes to have a messenger at hand. This is to tell him

you are there.”

As the ancient clerk deliberately folded and superscribed the note,

Mr. Cruncher, after surveying him in silence until he came to the

blotting-paper stage, remarked:

“I suppose they’ll be trying Forgeries this morning?”

“Treason!”

“That’s quartering,” said Jerry. “Barbarous!”

“It is the law,” remarked the ancient clerk, turning his surprised

spectacles upon him. “It is the law.”

“It’s hard in the law to spile a man, I think. It’s hard enough to kill

him, but it’s wery hard to spile him, sir.”

“Not at all,” retained the ancient clerk. “Speak well of the law. Take

care of your chest and voice, my good friend, and leave the law to take

care of itself. I give you that advice.”

“It’s the damp, sir, what settles on my chest and voice,” said Jerry. “I

leave you to judge what a damp way of earning a living mine is.”

“Well, well,” said the old clerk; “we all have our various ways of

gaining a livelihood. Some of us have damp ways, and some of us have dry

ways. Here is the letter. Go along.”

Jerry took the letter, and, remarking to himself with less internal

deference than he made an outward show of, “You are a lean old one,

too,” made his bow, informed his son, in passing, of his destination,

and went his way.

They hanged at Tyburn, in those days, so the street outside Newgate had

not obtained one infamous notoriety that has since attached to it.

But, the gaol was a vile place, in which most kinds of debauchery and

villainy were practised, and where dire diseases were bred, that came

into court with the prisoners, and sometimes rushed straight from the

dock at my Lord Chief Justice himself, and pulled him off the bench. It

had more than once happened, that the Judge in the black cap pronounced

his own doom as certainly as the prisoner’s, and even died before him.

For the rest, the Old Bailey was famous as a kind of deadly inn-yard,

from which pale travellers set out continually, in carts and coaches, on

a violent passage into the other world: traversing some two miles and a

half of public street and road, and shaming few good citizens, if any.

So powerful is use, and so desirable to be good use in the beginning. It

was famous, too, for the pillory, a wise old institution, that inflicted

a punishment of which no one could foresee the extent; also, for

the whipping-post, another dear old institution, very humanising and

softening to behold in action; also, for extensive transactions in

blood-money, another fragment of ancestral wisdom, systematically

leading to the most frightful mercenary crimes that could be committed

under Heaven. Altogether, the Old Bailey, at that date, was a choice

illustration of the precept, that “Whatever is is right;” an aphorism

that would be as final as it is lazy, did it not include the troublesome

consequence, that nothing that ever was, was wrong.

Making his way through the tainted crowd, dispersed up and down this

hideous scene of action, with the skill of a man accustomed to make his

way quietly, the messenger found out the door he sought, and handed in

his letter through a trap in it. For, people then paid to see the play

at the Old Bailey, just as they paid to see the play in Bedlam--only the

former entertainment was much the dearer. Therefore, all the Old Bailey

doors were well guarded--except, indeed, the social doors by which the

criminals got there, and those were always left wide open.

After some delay and demur, the door grudgingly turned on its hinges a

very little way, and allowed Mr. Jerry Cruncher to squeeze himself into

court.

“What’s on?” he asked, in a whisper, of the man he found himself next

to.

“Nothing yet.”

“What’s coming on?”

“The Treason case.”

“The quartering one, eh?”

“Ah!” returned the man, with a relish; “he’ll be drawn on a hurdle to

be half hanged, and then he’ll be taken down and sliced before his own

face, and then his inside will be taken out and burnt while he looks on,

and then his head will be chopped off, and he’ll be cut into quarters.

That’s the sentence.”

“If he’s found Guilty, you mean to say?” Jerry added, by way of proviso.

“Oh! they’ll find him guilty,” said the other. “Don’t you be afraid of

that.”

Mr. Cruncher’s attention was here diverted to the door-keeper, whom he

saw making his way to Mr. Lorry, with the note in his hand. Mr. Lorry

sat at a table, among the gentlemen in wigs: not far from a wigged

gentleman, the prisoner’s counsel, who had a great bundle of papers

before him: and nearly opposite another wigged gentleman with his hands

in his pockets, whose whole attention, when Mr. Cruncher looked at him

then or afterwards, seemed to be concentrated on the ceiling of the

court. After some gruff coughing and rubbing of his chin and signing

with his hand, Jerry attracted the notice of Mr. Lorry, who had stood up

to look for him, and who quietly nodded and sat down again.

“What’s \_he\_ got to do with the case?” asked the man he had spoken with.

“Blest if I know,” said Jerry.

“What have \_you\_ got to do with it, then, if a person may inquire?”

“Blest if I know that either,” said Jerry.

The entrance of the Judge, and a consequent great stir and settling

down in the court, stopped the dialogue. Presently, the dock became the

central point of interest. Two gaolers, who had been standing there,

went out, and the prisoner was brought in, and put to the bar.

Everybody present, except the one wigged gentleman who looked at the

ceiling, stared at him. All the human breath in the place, rolled

at him, like a sea, or a wind, or a fire. Eager faces strained round

pillars and corners, to get a sight of him; spectators in back rows

stood up, not to miss a hair of him; people on the floor of the court,

laid their hands on the shoulders of the people before them, to help

themselves, at anybody’s cost, to a view of him--stood a-tiptoe, got

upon ledges, stood upon next to nothing, to see every inch of him.

Conspicuous among these latter, like an animated bit of the spiked wall

of Newgate, Jerry stood: aiming at the prisoner the beery breath of a

whet he had taken as he came along, and discharging it to mingle with

the waves of other beer, and gin, and tea, and coffee, and what not,

that flowed at him, and already broke upon the great windows behind him

in an impure mist and rain.

The object of all this staring and blaring, was a young man of about

five-and-twenty, well-grown and well-looking, with a sunburnt cheek and

a dark eye. His condition was that of a young gentleman. He was plainly

dressed in black, or very dark grey, and his hair, which was long and

dark, was gathered in a ribbon at the back of his neck; more to be out

of his way than for ornament. As an emotion of the mind will express

itself through any covering of the body, so the paleness which his

situation engendered came through the brown upon his cheek, showing the

soul to be stronger than the sun. He was otherwise quite self-possessed,

bowed to the Judge, and stood quiet.

The sort of interest with which this man was stared and breathed at,

was not a sort that elevated humanity. Had he stood in peril of a less

horrible sentence--had there been a chance of any one of its savage

details being spared--by just so much would he have lost in his

fascination. The form that was to be doomed to be so shamefully mangled,

was the sight; the immortal creature that was to be so butchered

and torn asunder, yielded the sensation. Whatever gloss the various

spectators put upon the interest, according to their several arts and

powers of self-deceit, the interest was, at the root of it, Ogreish.

Silence in the court! Charles Darnay had yesterday pleaded Not Guilty to

an indictment denouncing him (with infinite jingle and jangle) for that

he was a false traitor to our serene, illustrious, excellent, and so

forth, prince, our Lord the King, by reason of his having, on divers

occasions, and by divers means and ways, assisted Lewis, the French

King, in his wars against our said serene, illustrious, excellent, and

so forth; that was to say, by coming and going, between the dominions of

our said serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth, and those of the

said French Lewis, and wickedly, falsely, traitorously, and otherwise

evil-adverbiously, revealing to the said French Lewis what forces our

said serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth, had in preparation

to send to Canada and North America. This much, Jerry, with his head

becoming more and more spiky as the law terms bristled it, made out with

huge satisfaction, and so arrived circuitously at the understanding that

the aforesaid, and over and over again aforesaid, Charles Darnay, stood

there before him upon his trial; that the jury were swearing in; and

that Mr. Attorney-General was making ready to speak.

The accused, who was (and who knew he was) being mentally hanged,

beheaded, and quartered, by everybody there, neither flinched from

the situation, nor assumed any theatrical air in it. He was quiet and

attentive; watched the opening proceedings with a grave interest;

and stood with his hands resting on the slab of wood before him, so

composedly, that they had not displaced a leaf of the herbs with which

it was strewn. The court was all bestrewn with herbs and sprinkled with

vinegar, as a precaution against gaol air and gaol fever.

Over the prisoner’s head there was a mirror, to throw the light down

upon him. Crowds of the wicked and the wretched had been reflected in

it, and had passed from its surface and this earth’s together. Haunted

in a most ghastly manner that abominable place would have been, if the

glass could ever have rendered back its reflections, as the ocean is one

day to give up its dead. Some passing thought of the infamy and disgrace

for which it had been reserved, may have struck the prisoner’s mind. Be

that as it may, a change in his position making him conscious of a bar

of light across his face, he looked up; and when he saw the glass his

face flushed, and his right hand pushed the herbs away.

It happened, that the action turned his face to that side of the court

which was on his left. About on a level with his eyes, there sat,

in that corner of the Judge’s bench, two persons upon whom his look

immediately rested; so immediately, and so much to the changing of his

aspect, that all the eyes that were turned upon him, turned to them.

The spectators saw in the two figures, a young lady of little more than

twenty, and a gentleman who was evidently her father; a man of a very

remarkable appearance in respect of the absolute whiteness of his hair,

and a certain indescribable intensity of face: not of an active kind,

but pondering and self-communing. When this expression was upon him, he

looked as if he were old; but when it was stirred and broken up--as

it was now, in a moment, on his speaking to his daughter--he became a

handsome man, not past the prime of life.

His daughter had one of her hands drawn through his arm, as she sat by

him, and the other pressed upon it. She had drawn close to him, in her

dread of the scene, and in her pity for the prisoner. Her forehead had

been strikingly expressive of an engrossing terror and compassion

that saw nothing but the peril of the accused. This had been so very

noticeable, so very powerfully and naturally shown, that starers who

had had no pity for him were touched by her; and the whisper went about,

“Who are they?”

Jerry, the messenger, who had made his own observations, in his own

manner, and who had been sucking the rust off his fingers in his

absorption, stretched his neck to hear who they were. The crowd about

him had pressed and passed the inquiry on to the nearest attendant, and

from him it had been more slowly pressed and passed back; at last it got

to Jerry:

“Witnesses.”

“For which side?”

“Against.”

“Against what side?”

“The prisoner’s.”

The Judge, whose eyes had gone in the general direction, recalled them,

leaned back in his seat, and looked steadily at the man whose life was

in his hand, as Mr. Attorney-General rose to spin the rope, grind the

axe, and hammer the nails into the scaffold.

CHAPTER III.

A Disappointment

Mr. Attorney-General had to inform the jury, that the prisoner before

them, though young in years, was old in the treasonable practices which

claimed the forfeit of his life. That this correspondence with the

public enemy was not a correspondence of to-day, or of yesterday, or

even of last year, or of the year before. That, it was certain the

prisoner had, for longer than that, been in the habit of passing and

repassing between France and England, on secret business of which

he could give no honest account. That, if it were in the nature of

traitorous ways to thrive (which happily it never was), the real

wickedness and guilt of his business might have remained undiscovered.

That Providence, however, had put it into the heart of a person who

was beyond fear and beyond reproach, to ferret out the nature of the

prisoner’s schemes, and, struck with horror, to disclose them to his

Majesty’s Chief Secretary of State and most honourable Privy Council.

That, this patriot would be produced before them. That, his position and

attitude were, on the whole, sublime. That, he had been the prisoner’s

friend, but, at once in an auspicious and an evil hour detecting his

infamy, had resolved to immolate the traitor he could no longer cherish

in his bosom, on the sacred altar of his country. That, if statues

were decreed in Britain, as in ancient Greece and Rome, to public

benefactors, this shining citizen would assuredly have had one. That, as

they were not so decreed, he probably would not have one. That, Virtue,

as had been observed by the poets (in many passages which he well

knew the jury would have, word for word, at the tips of their tongues;

whereat the jury’s countenances displayed a guilty consciousness that

they knew nothing about the passages), was in a manner contagious; more

especially the bright virtue known as patriotism, or love of country.

That, the lofty example of this immaculate and unimpeachable witness

for the Crown, to refer to whom however unworthily was an honour, had

communicated itself to the prisoner’s servant, and had engendered in him

a holy determination to examine his master’s table-drawers and pockets,

and secrete his papers. That, he (Mr. Attorney-General) was prepared to

hear some disparagement attempted of this admirable servant; but that,

in a general way, he preferred him to his (Mr. Attorney-General’s)

brothers and sisters, and honoured him more than his (Mr.

Attorney-General’s) father and mother. That, he called with confidence

on the jury to come and do likewise. That, the evidence of these two

witnesses, coupled with the documents of their discovering that would be

produced, would show the prisoner to have been furnished with lists of

his Majesty’s forces, and of their disposition and preparation, both by

sea and land, and would leave no doubt that he had habitually conveyed

such information to a hostile power. That, these lists could not be

proved to be in the prisoner’s handwriting; but that it was all the

same; that, indeed, it was rather the better for the prosecution, as

showing the prisoner to be artful in his precautions. That, the proof

would go back five years, and would show the prisoner already engaged

in these pernicious missions, within a few weeks before the date of the

very first action fought between the British troops and the Americans.

That, for these reasons, the jury, being a loyal jury (as he knew they

were), and being a responsible jury (as \_they\_ knew they were), must

positively find the prisoner Guilty, and make an end of him, whether

they liked it or not. That, they never could lay their heads upon their

pillows; that, they never could tolerate the idea of their wives laying

their heads upon their pillows; that, they never could endure the notion

of their children laying their heads upon their pillows; in short, that

there never more could be, for them or theirs, any laying of heads upon

pillows at all, unless the prisoner’s head was taken off. That head

Mr. Attorney-General concluded by demanding of them, in the name of

everything he could think of with a round turn in it, and on the faith

of his solemn asseveration that he already considered the prisoner as

good as dead and gone.

When the Attorney-General ceased, a buzz arose in the court as if

a cloud of great blue-flies were swarming about the prisoner, in

anticipation of what he was soon to become. When toned down again, the

unimpeachable patriot appeared in the witness-box.

Mr. Solicitor-General then, following his leader’s lead, examined the

patriot: John Barsad, gentleman, by name. The story of his pure soul was

exactly what Mr. Attorney-General had described it to be--perhaps, if

it had a fault, a little too exactly. Having released his noble bosom

of its burden, he would have modestly withdrawn himself, but that the

wigged gentleman with the papers before him, sitting not far from Mr.

Lorry, begged to ask him a few questions. The wigged gentleman sitting

opposite, still looking at the ceiling of the court.

Had he ever been a spy himself? No, he scorned the base insinuation.

What did he live upon? His property. Where was his property? He didn’t

precisely remember where it was. What was it? No business of anybody’s.

Had he inherited it? Yes, he had. From whom? Distant relation. Very

distant? Rather. Ever been in prison? Certainly not. Never in a debtors’

prison? Didn’t see what that had to do with it. Never in a debtors’

prison?--Come, once again. Never? Yes. How many times? Two or three

times. Not five or six? Perhaps. Of what profession? Gentleman. Ever

been kicked? Might have been. Frequently? No. Ever kicked downstairs?

Decidedly not; once received a kick on the top of a staircase, and fell

downstairs of his own accord. Kicked on that occasion for cheating at

dice? Something to that effect was said by the intoxicated liar who

committed the assault, but it was not true. Swear it was not true?

Positively. Ever live by cheating at play? Never. Ever live by play? Not

more than other gentlemen do. Ever borrow money of the prisoner? Yes.

Ever pay him? No. Was not this intimacy with the prisoner, in reality a

very slight one, forced upon the prisoner in coaches, inns, and packets?

No. Sure he saw the prisoner with these lists? Certain. Knew no more

about the lists? No. Had not procured them himself, for instance? No.

Expect to get anything by this evidence? No. Not in regular government

pay and employment, to lay traps? Oh dear no. Or to do anything? Oh dear

no. Swear that? Over and over again. No motives but motives of sheer

patriotism? None whatever.

The virtuous servant, Roger Cly, swore his way through the case at a

great rate. He had taken service with the prisoner, in good faith and

simplicity, four years ago. He had asked the prisoner, aboard the Calais

packet, if he wanted a handy fellow, and the prisoner had engaged him.

He had not asked the prisoner to take the handy fellow as an act of

charity--never thought of such a thing. He began to have suspicions of

the prisoner, and to keep an eye upon him, soon afterwards. In arranging

his clothes, while travelling, he had seen similar lists to these in the

prisoner’s pockets, over and over again. He had taken these lists from

the drawer of the prisoner’s desk. He had not put them there first. He

had seen the prisoner show these identical lists to French gentlemen

at Calais, and similar lists to French gentlemen, both at Calais and

Boulogne. He loved his country, and couldn’t bear it, and had given

information. He had never been suspected of stealing a silver tea-pot;

he had been maligned respecting a mustard-pot, but it turned out to be

only a plated one. He had known the last witness seven or eight years;

that was merely a coincidence. He didn’t call it a particularly curious

coincidence; most coincidences were curious. Neither did he call it a

curious coincidence that true patriotism was \_his\_ only motive too. He

was a true Briton, and hoped there were many like him.

The blue-flies buzzed again, and Mr. Attorney-General called Mr. Jarvis

Lorry.

“Mr. Jarvis Lorry, are you a clerk in Tellson’s bank?”

“I am.”

“On a certain Friday night in November one thousand seven hundred and

seventy-five, did business occasion you to travel between London and

Dover by the mail?”

“It did.”

“Were there any other passengers in the mail?”

“Two.”

“Did they alight on the road in the course of the night?”

“They did.”

“Mr. Lorry, look upon the prisoner. Was he one of those two passengers?”

“I cannot undertake to say that he was.”

“Does he resemble either of these two passengers?”

“Both were so wrapped up, and the night was so dark, and we were all so

reserved, that I cannot undertake to say even that.”

“Mr. Lorry, look again upon the prisoner. Supposing him wrapped up as

those two passengers were, is there anything in his bulk and stature to

render it unlikely that he was one of them?”

“No.”

“You will not swear, Mr. Lorry, that he was not one of them?”

“No.”

“So at least you say he may have been one of them?”

“Yes. Except that I remember them both to have been--like

myself--timorous of highwaymen, and the prisoner has not a timorous

air.”

“Did you ever see a counterfeit of timidity, Mr. Lorry?”

“I certainly have seen that.”

“Mr. Lorry, look once more upon the prisoner. Have you seen him, to your

certain knowledge, before?”

“I have.”

“When?”

“I was returning from France a few days afterwards, and, at Calais, the

prisoner came on board the packet-ship in which I returned, and made the

voyage with me.”

“At what hour did he come on board?”

“At a little after midnight.”

“In the dead of the night. Was he the only passenger who came on board

at that untimely hour?”

“He happened to be the only one.”

“Never mind about ‘happening,’ Mr. Lorry. He was the only passenger who

came on board in the dead of the night?”

“He was.”

“Were you travelling alone, Mr. Lorry, or with any companion?”

“With two companions. A gentleman and lady. They are here.”

“They are here. Had you any conversation with the prisoner?”

“Hardly any. The weather was stormy, and the passage long and rough, and

I lay on a sofa, almost from shore to shore.”

“Miss Manette!”

The young lady, to whom all eyes had been turned before, and were now

turned again, stood up where she had sat. Her father rose with her, and

kept her hand drawn through his arm.

“Miss Manette, look upon the prisoner.”

To be confronted with such pity, and such earnest youth and beauty, was

far more trying to the accused than to be confronted with all the crowd.

Standing, as it were, apart with her on the edge of his grave, not all

the staring curiosity that looked on, could, for the moment, nerve him

to remain quite still. His hurried right hand parcelled out the herbs

before him into imaginary beds of flowers in a garden; and his efforts

to control and steady his breathing shook the lips from which the colour

rushed to his heart. The buzz of the great flies was loud again.

“Miss Manette, have you seen the prisoner before?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Where?”

“On board of the packet-ship just now referred to, sir, and on the same

occasion.”

“You are the young lady just now referred to?”

“O! most unhappily, I am!”

The plaintive tone of her compassion merged into the less musical voice

of the Judge, as he said something fiercely: “Answer the questions put

to you, and make no remark upon them.”

“Miss Manette, had you any conversation with the prisoner on that

passage across the Channel?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Recall it.”

In the midst of a profound stillness, she faintly began: “When the

gentleman came on board--”

“Do you mean the prisoner?” inquired the Judge, knitting his brows.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Then say the prisoner.”

“When the prisoner came on board, he noticed that my father,” turning

her eyes lovingly to him as he stood beside her, “was much fatigued

and in a very weak state of health. My father was so reduced that I was

afraid to take him out of the air, and I had made a bed for him on the

deck near the cabin steps, and I sat on the deck at his side to take

care of him. There were no other passengers that night, but we four.

The prisoner was so good as to beg permission to advise me how I could

shelter my father from the wind and weather, better than I had done. I

had not known how to do it well, not understanding how the wind would

set when we were out of the harbour. He did it for me. He expressed

great gentleness and kindness for my father’s state, and I am sure he

felt it. That was the manner of our beginning to speak together.”

“Let me interrupt you for a moment. Had he come on board alone?”

“No.”

“How many were with him?”

“Two French gentlemen.”

“Had they conferred together?”

“They had conferred together until the last moment, when it was

necessary for the French gentlemen to be landed in their boat.”

“Had any papers been handed about among them, similar to these lists?”

“Some papers had been handed about among them, but I don’t know what

papers.”

“Like these in shape and size?”

“Possibly, but indeed I don’t know, although they stood whispering very

near to me: because they stood at the top of the cabin steps to have the

light of the lamp that was hanging there; it was a dull lamp, and they

spoke very low, and I did not hear what they said, and saw only that

they looked at papers.”

“Now, to the prisoner’s conversation, Miss Manette.”

“The prisoner was as open in his confidence with me--which arose out

of my helpless situation--as he was kind, and good, and useful to my

father. I hope,” bursting into tears, “I may not repay him by doing him

harm to-day.”

Buzzing from the blue-flies.

“Miss Manette, if the prisoner does not perfectly understand that

you give the evidence which it is your duty to give--which you must

give--and which you cannot escape from giving--with great unwillingness,

he is the only person present in that condition. Please to go on.”

“He told me that he was travelling on business of a delicate and

difficult nature, which might get people into trouble, and that he was

therefore travelling under an assumed name. He said that this business

had, within a few days, taken him to France, and might, at intervals,

take him backwards and forwards between France and England for a long

time to come.”

“Did he say anything about America, Miss Manette? Be particular.”

“He tried to explain to me how that quarrel had arisen, and he said

that, so far as he could judge, it was a wrong and foolish one on

England’s part. He added, in a jesting way, that perhaps George

Washington might gain almost as great a name in history as George the

Third. But there was no harm in his way of saying this: it was said

laughingly, and to beguile the time.”

Any strongly marked expression of face on the part of a chief actor in

a scene of great interest to whom many eyes are directed, will be

unconsciously imitated by the spectators. Her forehead was painfully

anxious and intent as she gave this evidence, and, in the pauses when

she stopped for the Judge to write it down, watched its effect upon

the counsel for and against. Among the lookers-on there was the same

expression in all quarters of the court; insomuch, that a great majority

of the foreheads there, might have been mirrors reflecting the witness,

when the Judge looked up from his notes to glare at that tremendous

heresy about George Washington.

Mr. Attorney-General now signified to my Lord, that he deemed it

necessary, as a matter of precaution and form, to call the young lady’s

father, Doctor Manette. Who was called accordingly.

“Doctor Manette, look upon the prisoner. Have you ever seen him before?”

“Once. When he called at my lodgings in London. Some three years, or

three years and a half ago.”

“Can you identify him as your fellow-passenger on board the packet, or

speak to his conversation with your daughter?”

“Sir, I can do neither.”

“Is there any particular and special reason for your being unable to do

either?”

He answered, in a low voice, “There is.”

“Has it been your misfortune to undergo a long imprisonment, without

trial, or even accusation, in your native country, Doctor Manette?”

He answered, in a tone that went to every heart, “A long imprisonment.”

“Were you newly released on the occasion in question?”

“They tell me so.”

“Have you no remembrance of the occasion?”

“None. My mind is a blank, from some time--I cannot even say what

time--when I employed myself, in my captivity, in making shoes, to the

time when I found myself living in London with my dear daughter

here. She had become familiar to me, when a gracious God restored

my faculties; but, I am quite unable even to say how she had become

familiar. I have no remembrance of the process.”

Mr. Attorney-General sat down, and the father and daughter sat down

together.

A singular circumstance then arose in the case. The object in hand being

to show that the prisoner went down, with some fellow-plotter untracked,

in the Dover mail on that Friday night in November five years ago, and

got out of the mail in the night, as a blind, at a place where he did

not remain, but from which he travelled back some dozen miles or more,

to a garrison and dockyard, and there collected information; a witness

was called to identify him as having been at the precise time required,

in the coffee-room of an hotel in that garrison-and-dockyard town,

waiting for another person. The prisoner’s counsel was cross-examining

this witness with no result, except that he had never seen the prisoner

on any other occasion, when the wigged gentleman who had all this time

been looking at the ceiling of the court, wrote a word or two on a

little piece of paper, screwed it up, and tossed it to him. Opening

this piece of paper in the next pause, the counsel looked with great

attention and curiosity at the prisoner.

“You say again you are quite sure that it was the prisoner?”

The witness was quite sure.

“Did you ever see anybody very like the prisoner?”

Not so like (the witness said) as that he could be mistaken.

“Look well upon that gentleman, my learned friend there,” pointing

to him who had tossed the paper over, “and then look well upon the

prisoner. How say you? Are they very like each other?”

Allowing for my learned friend’s appearance being careless and slovenly

if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise,

not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were thus brought

into comparison. My Lord being prayed to bid my learned friend lay aside

his wig, and giving no very gracious consent, the likeness became

much more remarkable. My Lord inquired of Mr. Stryver (the prisoner’s

counsel), whether they were next to try Mr. Carton (name of my learned

friend) for treason? But, Mr. Stryver replied to my Lord, no; but he

would ask the witness to tell him whether what happened once, might

happen twice; whether he would have been so confident if he had seen

this illustration of his rashness sooner, whether he would be so

confident, having seen it; and more. The upshot of which, was, to smash

this witness like a crockery vessel, and shiver his part of the case to

useless lumber.

Mr. Cruncher had by this time taken quite a lunch of rust off his

fingers in his following of the evidence. He had now to attend while Mr.

Stryver fitted the prisoner’s case on the jury, like a compact suit

of clothes; showing them how the patriot, Barsad, was a hired spy and

traitor, an unblushing trafficker in blood, and one of the greatest

scoundrels upon earth since accursed Judas--which he certainly did look

rather like. How the virtuous servant, Cly, was his friend and partner,

and was worthy to be; how the watchful eyes of those forgers and false

swearers had rested on the prisoner as a victim, because some family

affairs in France, he being of French extraction, did require his making

those passages across the Channel--though what those affairs were, a

consideration for others who were near and dear to him, forbade him,

even for his life, to disclose. How the evidence that had been warped

and wrested from the young lady, whose anguish in giving it they

had witnessed, came to nothing, involving the mere little innocent

gallantries and politenesses likely to pass between any young gentleman

and young lady so thrown together;--with the exception of that

reference to George Washington, which was altogether too extravagant and

impossible to be regarded in any other light than as a monstrous joke.

How it would be a weakness in the government to break down in this

attempt to practise for popularity on the lowest national antipathies

and fears, and therefore Mr. Attorney-General had made the most of it;

how, nevertheless, it rested upon nothing, save that vile and infamous

character of evidence too often disfiguring such cases, and of which the

State Trials of this country were full. But, there my Lord interposed

(with as grave a face as if it had not been true), saying that he could

not sit upon that Bench and suffer those allusions.

Mr. Stryver then called his few witnesses, and Mr. Cruncher had next to

attend while Mr. Attorney-General turned the whole suit of clothes Mr.

Stryver had fitted on the jury, inside out; showing how Barsad and

Cly were even a hundred times better than he had thought them, and the

prisoner a hundred times worse. Lastly, came my Lord himself, turning

the suit of clothes, now inside out, now outside in, but on the whole

decidedly trimming and shaping them into grave-clothes for the prisoner.

And now, the jury turned to consider, and the great flies swarmed again.

Mr. Carton, who had so long sat looking at the ceiling of the court,

changed neither his place nor his attitude, even in this excitement.

While his learned friend, Mr. Stryver, massing his papers before him,

whispered with those who sat near, and from time to time glanced

anxiously at the jury; while all the spectators moved more or less, and

grouped themselves anew; while even my Lord himself arose from his seat,

and slowly paced up and down his platform, not unattended by a suspicion

in the minds of the audience that his state was feverish; this one man

sat leaning back, with his torn gown half off him, his untidy wig put

on just as it had happened to light on his head after its removal, his

hands in his pockets, and his eyes on the ceiling as they had been all

day. Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him

a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he

undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness,

when they were compared together, had strengthened), that many of the

lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would

hardly have thought the two were so alike. Mr. Cruncher made the

observation to his next neighbour, and added, “I’d hold half a guinea

that \_he\_ don’t get no law-work to do. Don’t look like the sort of one

to get any, do he?”

Yet, this Mr. Carton took in more of the details of the scene than he

appeared to take in; for now, when Miss Manette’s head dropped upon

her father’s breast, he was the first to see it, and to say audibly:

“Officer! look to that young lady. Help the gentleman to take her out.

Don’t you see she will fall!”

There was much commiseration for her as she was removed, and much

sympathy with her father. It had evidently been a great distress to

him, to have the days of his imprisonment recalled. He had shown

strong internal agitation when he was questioned, and that pondering or

brooding look which made him old, had been upon him, like a heavy cloud,

ever since. As he passed out, the jury, who had turned back and paused a

moment, spoke, through their foreman.

They were not agreed, and wished to retire. My Lord (perhaps with George

Washington on his mind) showed some surprise that they were not agreed,

but signified his pleasure that they should retire under watch and ward,

and retired himself. The trial had lasted all day, and the lamps in

the court were now being lighted. It began to be rumoured that the

jury would be out a long while. The spectators dropped off to get

refreshment, and the prisoner withdrew to the back of the dock, and sat

down.

Mr. Lorry, who had gone out when the young lady and her father went out,

now reappeared, and beckoned to Jerry: who, in the slackened interest,

could easily get near him.

“Jerry, if you wish to take something to eat, you can. But, keep in the

way. You will be sure to hear when the jury come in. Don’t be a moment

behind them, for I want you to take the verdict back to the bank. You

are the quickest messenger I know, and will get to Temple Bar long

before I can.”

Jerry had just enough forehead to knuckle, and he knuckled it in

acknowledgment of this communication and a shilling. Mr. Carton came up

at the moment, and touched Mr. Lorry on the arm.

“How is the young lady?”

“She is greatly distressed; but her father is comforting her, and she

feels the better for being out of court.”

“I’ll tell the prisoner so. It won’t do for a respectable bank gentleman

like you, to be seen speaking to him publicly, you know.”

Mr. Lorry reddened as if he were conscious of having debated the point

in his mind, and Mr. Carton made his way to the outside of the bar.

The way out of court lay in that direction, and Jerry followed him, all

eyes, ears, and spikes.

“Mr. Darnay!”

The prisoner came forward directly.

“You will naturally be anxious to hear of the witness, Miss Manette. She

will do very well. You have seen the worst of her agitation.”

“I am deeply sorry to have been the cause of it. Could you tell her so

for me, with my fervent acknowledgments?”

“Yes, I could. I will, if you ask it.”

Mr. Carton’s manner was so careless as to be almost insolent. He stood,

half turned from the prisoner, lounging with his elbow against the bar.

“I do ask it. Accept my cordial thanks.”

“What,” said Carton, still only half turned towards him, “do you expect,

Mr. Darnay?”

“The worst.”

“It’s the wisest thing to expect, and the likeliest. But I think their

withdrawing is in your favour.”

Loitering on the way out of court not being allowed, Jerry heard no

more: but left them--so like each other in feature, so unlike each other

in manner--standing side by side, both reflected in the glass above

them.

An hour and a half limped heavily away in the thief-and-rascal crowded

passages below, even though assisted off with mutton pies and ale.

The hoarse messenger, uncomfortably seated on a form after taking that

refection, had dropped into a doze, when a loud murmur and a rapid tide

of people setting up the stairs that led to the court, carried him along

with them.

“Jerry! Jerry!” Mr. Lorry was already calling at the door when he got

there.

“Here, sir! It’s a fight to get back again. Here I am, sir!”

Mr. Lorry handed him a paper through the throng. “Quick! Have you got

it?”

“Yes, sir.”

Hastily written on the paper was the word “ACQUITTED.”

“If you had sent the message, ‘Recalled to Life,’ again,” muttered

Jerry, as he turned, “I should have known what you meant, this time.”

He had no opportunity of saying, or so much as thinking, anything else,

until he was clear of the Old Bailey; for, the crowd came pouring out

with a vehemence that nearly took him off his legs, and a loud buzz

swept into the street as if the baffled blue-flies were dispersing in

search of other carrion.

CHAPTER IV.

Congratulatory

From the dimly-lighted passages of the court, the last sediment of the

human stew that had been boiling there all day, was straining off, when

Doctor Manette, Lucie Manette, his daughter, Mr. Lorry, the solicitor

for the defence, and its counsel, Mr. Stryver, stood gathered round Mr.

Charles Darnay--just released--congratulating him on his escape from

death.

It would have been difficult by a far brighter light, to recognise

in Doctor Manette, intellectual of face and upright of bearing, the

shoemaker of the garret in Paris. Yet, no one could have looked at him

twice, without looking again: even though the opportunity of observation

had not extended to the mournful cadence of his low grave voice, and

to the abstraction that overclouded him fitfully, without any apparent

reason. While one external cause, and that a reference to his long

lingering agony, would always--as on the trial--evoke this condition

from the depths of his soul, it was also in its nature to arise of

itself, and to draw a gloom over him, as incomprehensible to those

unacquainted with his story as if they had seen the shadow of the actual

Bastille thrown upon him by a summer sun, when the substance was three

hundred miles away.

Only his daughter had the power of charming this black brooding from

his mind. She was the golden thread that united him to a Past beyond his

misery, and to a Present beyond his misery: and the sound of her voice,

the light of her face, the touch of her hand, had a strong beneficial

influence with him almost always. Not absolutely always, for she could

recall some occasions on which her power had failed; but they were few

and slight, and she believed them over.

Mr. Darnay had kissed her hand fervently and gratefully, and had turned

to Mr. Stryver, whom he warmly thanked. Mr. Stryver, a man of little

more than thirty, but looking twenty years older than he was, stout,

loud, red, bluff, and free from any drawback of delicacy, had a pushing

way of shouldering himself (morally and physically) into companies and

conversations, that argued well for his shouldering his way up in life.

He still had his wig and gown on, and he said, squaring himself at his

late client to that degree that he squeezed the innocent Mr. Lorry clean

out of the group: “I am glad to have brought you off with honour, Mr.

Darnay. It was an infamous prosecution, grossly infamous; but not the

less likely to succeed on that account.”

“You have laid me under an obligation to you for life--in two senses,”

said his late client, taking his hand.

“I have done my best for you, Mr. Darnay; and my best is as good as

another man’s, I believe.”

It clearly being incumbent on some one to say, “Much better,” Mr. Lorry

said it; perhaps not quite disinterestedly, but with the interested

object of squeezing himself back again.

“You think so?” said Mr. Stryver. “Well! you have been present all day,

and you ought to know. You are a man of business, too.”

“And as such,” quoth Mr. Lorry, whom the counsel learned in the law had

now shouldered back into the group, just as he had previously shouldered

him out of it--“as such I will appeal to Doctor Manette, to break up

this conference and order us all to our homes. Miss Lucie looks ill, Mr.

Darnay has had a terrible day, we are worn out.”

“Speak for yourself, Mr. Lorry,” said Stryver; “I have a night’s work to

do yet. Speak for yourself.”

“I speak for myself,” answered Mr. Lorry, “and for Mr. Darnay, and for

Miss Lucie, and--Miss Lucie, do you not think I may speak for us all?”

He asked her the question pointedly, and with a glance at her father.

His face had become frozen, as it were, in a very curious look at

Darnay: an intent look, deepening into a frown of dislike and distrust,

not even unmixed with fear. With this strange expression on him his

thoughts had wandered away.

“My father,” said Lucie, softly laying her hand on his.

He slowly shook the shadow off, and turned to her.

“Shall we go home, my father?”

With a long breath, he answered “Yes.”

The friends of the acquitted prisoner had dispersed, under the

impression--which he himself had originated--that he would not be

released that night. The lights were nearly all extinguished in the

passages, the iron gates were being closed with a jar and a rattle,

and the dismal place was deserted until to-morrow morning’s interest of

gallows, pillory, whipping-post, and branding-iron, should repeople it.

Walking between her father and Mr. Darnay, Lucie Manette passed into

the open air. A hackney-coach was called, and the father and daughter

departed in it.

Mr. Stryver had left them in the passages, to shoulder his way back

to the robing-room. Another person, who had not joined the group, or

interchanged a word with any one of them, but who had been leaning

against the wall where its shadow was darkest, had silently strolled

out after the rest, and had looked on until the coach drove away. He now

stepped up to where Mr. Lorry and Mr. Darnay stood upon the pavement.

“So, Mr. Lorry! Men of business may speak to Mr. Darnay now?”

Nobody had made any acknowledgment of Mr. Carton’s part in the day’s

proceedings; nobody had known of it. He was unrobed, and was none the

better for it in appearance.

“If you knew what a conflict goes on in the business mind, when the

business mind is divided between good-natured impulse and business

appearances, you would be amused, Mr. Darnay.”

Mr. Lorry reddened, and said, warmly, “You have mentioned that before,

sir. We men of business, who serve a House, are not our own masters. We

have to think of the House more than ourselves.”

“\_I\_ know, \_I\_ know,” rejoined Mr. Carton, carelessly. “Don’t be

nettled, Mr. Lorry. You are as good as another, I have no doubt: better,

I dare say.”

“And indeed, sir,” pursued Mr. Lorry, not minding him, “I really don’t

know what you have to do with the matter. If you’ll excuse me, as very

much your elder, for saying so, I really don’t know that it is your

business.”

“Business! Bless you, \_I\_ have no business,” said Mr. Carton.

“It is a pity you have not, sir.”

“I think so, too.”

“If you had,” pursued Mr. Lorry, “perhaps you would attend to it.”

“Lord love you, no!--I shouldn’t,” said Mr. Carton.

“Well, sir!” cried Mr. Lorry, thoroughly heated by his indifference,

“business is a very good thing, and a very respectable thing. And, sir,

if business imposes its restraints and its silences and impediments, Mr.

Darnay as a young gentleman of generosity knows how to make allowance

for that circumstance. Mr. Darnay, good night, God bless you, sir!

I hope you have been this day preserved for a prosperous and happy

life.--Chair there!”

Perhaps a little angry with himself, as well as with the barrister, Mr.

Lorry bustled into the chair, and was carried off to Tellson’s. Carton,

who smelt of port wine, and did not appear to be quite sober, laughed

then, and turned to Darnay:

“This is a strange chance that throws you and me together. This must

be a strange night to you, standing alone here with your counterpart on

these street stones?”

“I hardly seem yet,” returned Charles Darnay, “to belong to this world

again.”

“I don’t wonder at it; it’s not so long since you were pretty far

advanced on your way to another. You speak faintly.”

“I begin to think I \_am\_ faint.”

“Then why the devil don’t you dine? I dined, myself, while those

numskulls were deliberating which world you should belong to--this, or

some other. Let me show you the nearest tavern to dine well at.”

Drawing his arm through his own, he took him down Ludgate-hill to

Fleet-street, and so, up a covered way, into a tavern. Here, they were

shown into a little room, where Charles Darnay was soon recruiting

his strength with a good plain dinner and good wine: while Carton sat

opposite to him at the same table, with his separate bottle of port

before him, and his fully half-insolent manner upon him.

“Do you feel, yet, that you belong to this terrestrial scheme again, Mr.

Darnay?”

“I am frightfully confused regarding time and place; but I am so far

mended as to feel that.”

“It must be an immense satisfaction!”

He said it bitterly, and filled up his glass again: which was a large

one.

“As to me, the greatest desire I have, is to forget that I belong to it.

It has no good in it for me--except wine like this--nor I for it. So we

are not much alike in that particular. Indeed, I begin to think we are

not much alike in any particular, you and I.”

Confused by the emotion of the day, and feeling his being there with

this Double of coarse deportment, to be like a dream, Charles Darnay was

at a loss how to answer; finally, answered not at all.

“Now your dinner is done,” Carton presently said, “why don’t you call a

health, Mr. Darnay; why don’t you give your toast?”

“What health? What toast?”

“Why, it’s on the tip of your tongue. It ought to be, it must be, I’ll

swear it’s there.”

“Miss Manette, then!”

“Miss Manette, then!”

Looking his companion full in the face while he drank the toast, Carton

flung his glass over his shoulder against the wall, where it shivered to

pieces; then, rang the bell, and ordered in another.

“That’s a fair young lady to hand to a coach in the dark, Mr. Darnay!”

he said, filling his new goblet.

A slight frown and a laconic “Yes,” were the answer.

“That’s a fair young lady to be pitied by and wept for by! How does it

feel? Is it worth being tried for one’s life, to be the object of such

sympathy and compassion, Mr. Darnay?”

Again Darnay answered not a word.

“She was mightily pleased to have your message, when I gave it her. Not

that she showed she was pleased, but I suppose she was.”

The allusion served as a timely reminder to Darnay that this

disagreeable companion had, of his own free will, assisted him in the

strait of the day. He turned the dialogue to that point, and thanked him

for it.

“I neither want any thanks, nor merit any,” was the careless rejoinder.

“It was nothing to do, in the first place; and I don’t know why I did

it, in the second. Mr. Darnay, let me ask you a question.”

“Willingly, and a small return for your good offices.”

“Do you think I particularly like you?”

“Really, Mr. Carton,” returned the other, oddly disconcerted, “I have

not asked myself the question.”

“But ask yourself the question now.”

“You have acted as if you do; but I don’t think you do.”

“\_I\_ don’t think I do,” said Carton. “I begin to have a very good

opinion of your understanding.”

“Nevertheless,” pursued Darnay, rising to ring the bell, “there is

nothing in that, I hope, to prevent my calling the reckoning, and our

parting without ill-blood on either side.”

Carton rejoining, “Nothing in life!” Darnay rang. “Do you call the whole

reckoning?” said Carton. On his answering in the affirmative, “Then

bring me another pint of this same wine, drawer, and come and wake me at

ten.”

The bill being paid, Charles Darnay rose and wished him good night.

Without returning the wish, Carton rose too, with something of a threat

of defiance in his manner, and said, “A last word, Mr. Darnay: you think

I am drunk?”

“I think you have been drinking, Mr. Carton.”

“Think? You know I have been drinking.”

“Since I must say so, I know it.”

“Then you shall likewise know why. I am a disappointed drudge, sir. I

care for no man on earth, and no man on earth cares for me.”

“Much to be regretted. You might have used your talents better.”

“May be so, Mr. Darnay; may be not. Don’t let your sober face elate you,

however; you don’t know what it may come to. Good night!”

When he was left alone, this strange being took up a candle, went to a

glass that hung against the wall, and surveyed himself minutely in it.

“Do you particularly like the man?” he muttered, at his own image; “why

should you particularly like a man who resembles you? There is nothing

in you to like; you know that. Ah, confound you! What a change you have

made in yourself! A good reason for taking to a man, that he shows you

what you have fallen away from, and what you might have been! Change

places with him, and would you have been looked at by those blue eyes as

he was, and commiserated by that agitated face as he was? Come on, and

have it out in plain words! You hate the fellow.”

He resorted to his pint of wine for consolation, drank it all in a few

minutes, and fell asleep on his arms, with his hair straggling over the

table, and a long winding-sheet in the candle dripping down upon him.

CHAPTER V.

The Jackal

Those were drinking days, and most men drank hard. So very great is

the improvement Time has brought about in such habits, that a moderate

statement of the quantity of wine and punch which one man would swallow

in the course of a night, without any detriment to his reputation as a

perfect gentleman, would seem, in these days, a ridiculous exaggeration.

The learned profession of the law was certainly not behind any other

learned profession in its Bacchanalian propensities; neither was Mr.

Stryver, already fast shouldering his way to a large and lucrative

practice, behind his compeers in this particular, any more than in the

drier parts of the legal race.

A favourite at the Old Bailey, and eke at the Sessions, Mr. Stryver had

begun cautiously to hew away the lower staves of the ladder on which

he mounted. Sessions and Old Bailey had now to summon their favourite,

specially, to their longing arms; and shouldering itself towards the

visage of the Lord Chief Justice in the Court of King’s Bench, the

florid countenance of Mr. Stryver might be daily seen, bursting out of

the bed of wigs, like a great sunflower pushing its way at the sun from

among a rank garden-full of flaring companions.

It had once been noted at the Bar, that while Mr. Stryver was a glib

man, and an unscrupulous, and a ready, and a bold, he had not that

faculty of extracting the essence from a heap of statements, which is

among the most striking and necessary of the advocate’s accomplishments.

But, a remarkable improvement came upon him as to this. The more

business he got, the greater his power seemed to grow of getting at its

pith and marrow; and however late at night he sat carousing with Sydney

Carton, he always had his points at his fingers’ ends in the morning.

Sydney Carton, idlest and most unpromising of men, was Stryver’s great

ally. What the two drank together, between Hilary Term and Michaelmas,

might have floated a king’s ship. Stryver never had a case in hand,

anywhere, but Carton was there, with his hands in his pockets, staring

at the ceiling of the court; they went the same Circuit, and even there

they prolonged their usual orgies late into the night, and Carton was

rumoured to be seen at broad day, going home stealthily and unsteadily

to his lodgings, like a dissipated cat. At last, it began to get about,

among such as were interested in the matter, that although Sydney Carton

would never be a lion, he was an amazingly good jackal, and that he

rendered suit and service to Stryver in that humble capacity.

“Ten o’clock, sir,” said the man at the tavern, whom he had charged to

wake him--“ten o’clock, sir.”

“\_What’s\_ the matter?”

“Ten o’clock, sir.”

“What do you mean? Ten o’clock at night?”

“Yes, sir. Your honour told me to call you.”

“Oh! I remember. Very well, very well.”

After a few dull efforts to get to sleep again, which the man

dexterously combated by stirring the fire continuously for five minutes,

he got up, tossed his hat on, and walked out. He turned into the Temple,

and, having revived himself by twice pacing the pavements of King’s

Bench-walk and Paper-buildings, turned into the Stryver chambers.

The Stryver clerk, who never assisted at these conferences, had gone

home, and the Stryver principal opened the door. He had his slippers on,

and a loose bed-gown, and his throat was bare for his greater ease. He

had that rather wild, strained, seared marking about the eyes, which

may be observed in all free livers of his class, from the portrait of

Jeffries downward, and which can be traced, under various disguises of

Art, through the portraits of every Drinking Age.

“You are a little late, Memory,” said Stryver.

“About the usual time; it may be a quarter of an hour later.”

They went into a dingy room lined with books and littered with papers,

where there was a blazing fire. A kettle steamed upon the hob, and in

the midst of the wreck of papers a table shone, with plenty of wine upon

it, and brandy, and rum, and sugar, and lemons.

“You have had your bottle, I perceive, Sydney.”

“Two to-night, I think. I have been dining with the day’s client; or

seeing him dine--it’s all one!”

“That was a rare point, Sydney, that you brought to bear upon the

identification. How did you come by it? When did it strike you?”

“I thought he was rather a handsome fellow, and I thought I should have

been much the same sort of fellow, if I had had any luck.”

Mr. Stryver laughed till he shook his precocious paunch.

“You and your luck, Sydney! Get to work, get to work.”

Sullenly enough, the jackal loosened his dress, went into an adjoining

room, and came back with a large jug of cold water, a basin, and a towel

or two. Steeping the towels in the water, and partially wringing them

out, he folded them on his head in a manner hideous to behold, sat down

at the table, and said, “Now I am ready!”

“Not much boiling down to be done to-night, Memory,” said Mr. Stryver,

gaily, as he looked among his papers.

“How much?”

“Only two sets of them.”

“Give me the worst first.”

“There they are, Sydney. Fire away!”

The lion then composed himself on his back on a sofa on one side of the

drinking-table, while the jackal sat at his own paper-bestrewn table

proper, on the other side of it, with the bottles and glasses ready to

his hand. Both resorted to the drinking-table without stint, but each in

a different way; the lion for the most part reclining with his hands in

his waistband, looking at the fire, or occasionally flirting with some

lighter document; the jackal, with knitted brows and intent face,

so deep in his task, that his eyes did not even follow the hand he

stretched out for his glass--which often groped about, for a minute or

more, before it found the glass for his lips. Two or three times, the

matter in hand became so knotty, that the jackal found it imperative on

him to get up, and steep his towels anew. From these pilgrimages to the

jug and basin, he returned with such eccentricities of damp headgear as

no words can describe; which were made the more ludicrous by his anxious

gravity.

At length the jackal had got together a compact repast for the lion, and

proceeded to offer it to him. The lion took it with care and caution,

made his selections from it, and his remarks upon it, and the jackal

assisted both. When the repast was fully discussed, the lion put his

hands in his waistband again, and lay down to meditate. The jackal then

invigorated himself with a bumper for his throttle, and a fresh application

to his head, and applied himself to the collection of a second meal;

this was administered to the lion in the same manner, and was not

disposed of until the clocks struck three in the morning.

“And now we have done, Sydney, fill a bumper of punch,” said Mr.

Stryver.

The jackal removed the towels from his head, which had been steaming

again, shook himself, yawned, shivered, and complied.

“You were very sound, Sydney, in the matter of those crown witnesses

to-day. Every question told.”

“I always am sound; am I not?”

“I don’t gainsay it. What has roughened your temper? Put some punch to

it and smooth it again.”

With a deprecatory grunt, the jackal again complied.

“The old Sydney Carton of old Shrewsbury School,” said Stryver, nodding

his head over him as he reviewed him in the present and the past, “the

old seesaw Sydney. Up one minute and down the next; now in spirits and

now in despondency!”

“Ah!” returned the other, sighing: “yes! The same Sydney, with the same

luck. Even then, I did exercises for other boys, and seldom did my own.”

“And why not?”

“God knows. It was my way, I suppose.”

He sat, with his hands in his pockets and his legs stretched out before

him, looking at the fire.

“Carton,” said his friend, squaring himself at him with a bullying air,

as if the fire-grate had been the furnace in which sustained endeavour

was forged, and the one delicate thing to be done for the old Sydney

Carton of old Shrewsbury School was to shoulder him into it, “your way

is, and always was, a lame way. You summon no energy and purpose. Look

at me.”

“Oh, botheration!” returned Sydney, with a lighter and more

good-humoured laugh, “don’t \_you\_ be moral!”

“How have I done what I have done?” said Stryver; “how do I do what I

do?”

“Partly through paying me to help you, I suppose. But it’s not worth

your while to apostrophise me, or the air, about it; what you want to

do, you do. You were always in the front rank, and I was always behind.”

“I had to get into the front rank; I was not born there, was I?”

“I was not present at the ceremony; but my opinion is you were,” said

Carton. At this, he laughed again, and they both laughed.

“Before Shrewsbury, and at Shrewsbury, and ever since Shrewsbury,”

pursued Carton, “you have fallen into your rank, and I have fallen into

mine. Even when we were fellow-students in the Student-Quarter of Paris,

picking up French, and French law, and other French crumbs that we

didn’t get much good of, you were always somewhere, and I was always

nowhere.”

“And whose fault was that?”

“Upon my soul, I am not sure that it was not yours. You were always

driving and riving and shouldering and passing, to that restless degree

that I had no chance for my life but in rust and repose. It’s a gloomy

thing, however, to talk about one’s own past, with the day breaking.

Turn me in some other direction before I go.”

“Well then! Pledge me to the pretty witness,” said Stryver, holding up

his glass. “Are you turned in a pleasant direction?”

Apparently not, for he became gloomy again.

“Pretty witness,” he muttered, looking down into his glass. “I have had

enough of witnesses to-day and to-night; who’s your pretty witness?”

“The picturesque doctor’s daughter, Miss Manette.”

“\_She\_ pretty?”

“Is she not?”

“No.”

“Why, man alive, she was the admiration of the whole Court!”

“Rot the admiration of the whole Court! Who made the Old Bailey a judge

of beauty? She was a golden-haired doll!”

“Do you know, Sydney,” said Mr. Stryver, looking at him with sharp eyes,

and slowly drawing a hand across his florid face: “do you know, I rather

thought, at the time, that you sympathised with the golden-haired doll,

and were quick to see what happened to the golden-haired doll?”

“Quick to see what happened! If a girl, doll or no doll, swoons within a

yard or two of a man’s nose, he can see it without a perspective-glass.

I pledge you, but I deny the beauty. And now I’ll have no more drink;

I’ll get to bed.”

When his host followed him out on the staircase with a candle, to light

him down the stairs, the day was coldly looking in through its grimy

windows. When he got out of the house, the air was cold and sad, the

dull sky overcast, the river dark and dim, the whole scene like a

lifeless desert. And wreaths of dust were spinning round and round

before the morning blast, as if the desert-sand had risen far away, and

the first spray of it in its advance had begun to overwhelm the city.

Waste forces within him, and a desert all around, this man stood still

on his way across a silent terrace, and saw for a moment, lying in the

wilderness before him, a mirage of honourable ambition, self-denial, and

perseverance. In the fair city of this vision, there were airy galleries

from which the loves and graces looked upon him, gardens in which the

fruits of life hung ripening, waters of Hope that sparkled in his sight.

A moment, and it was gone. Climbing to a high chamber in a well of

houses, he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, and its

pillow was wet with wasted tears.

Sadly, sadly, the sun rose; it rose upon no sadder sight than the man of

good abilities and good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise,

incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight

on him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away.

CHAPTER VI.

Hundreds of People

The quiet lodgings of Doctor Manette were in a quiet street-corner not

far from Soho-square. On the afternoon of a certain fine Sunday when the

waves of four months had rolled over the trial for treason, and carried

it, as to the public interest and memory, far out to sea, Mr. Jarvis

Lorry walked along the sunny streets from Clerkenwell where he lived,

on his way to dine with the Doctor. After several relapses into

business-absorption, Mr. Lorry had become the Doctor’s friend, and the

quiet street-corner was the sunny part of his life.

On this certain fine Sunday, Mr. Lorry walked towards Soho, early in

the afternoon, for three reasons of habit. Firstly, because, on fine

Sundays, he often walked out, before dinner, with the Doctor and Lucie;

secondly, because, on unfavourable Sundays, he was accustomed to be with

them as the family friend, talking, reading, looking out of window, and

generally getting through the day; thirdly, because he happened to have

his own little shrewd doubts to solve, and knew how the ways of the

Doctor’s household pointed to that time as a likely time for solving

them.

A quainter corner than the corner where the Doctor lived, was not to be

found in London. There was no way through it, and the front windows of

the Doctor’s lodgings commanded a pleasant little vista of street that

had a congenial air of retirement on it. There were few buildings then,

north of the Oxford-road, and forest-trees flourished, and wild flowers

grew, and the hawthorn blossomed, in the now vanished fields. As a

consequence, country airs circulated in Soho with vigorous freedom,

instead of languishing into the parish like stray paupers without a

settlement; and there was many a good south wall, not far off, on which

the peaches ripened in their season.

The summer light struck into the corner brilliantly in the earlier part

of the day; but, when the streets grew hot, the corner was in shadow,

though not in shadow so remote but that you could see beyond it into a

glare of brightness. It was a cool spot, staid but cheerful, a wonderful

place for echoes, and a very harbour from the raging streets.

There ought to have been a tranquil bark in such an anchorage, and

there was. The Doctor occupied two floors of a large stiff house, where

several callings purported to be pursued by day, but whereof little was

audible any day, and which was shunned by all of them at night. In

a building at the back, attainable by a courtyard where a plane-tree

rustled its green leaves, church-organs claimed to be made, and silver

to be chased, and likewise gold to be beaten by some mysterious giant

who had a golden arm starting out of the wall of the front hall--as if

he had beaten himself precious, and menaced a similar conversion of all

visitors. Very little of these trades, or of a lonely lodger rumoured

to live up-stairs, or of a dim coach-trimming maker asserted to have

a counting-house below, was ever heard or seen. Occasionally, a stray

workman putting his coat on, traversed the hall, or a stranger peered

about there, or a distant clink was heard across the courtyard, or a

thump from the golden giant. These, however, were only the exceptions

required to prove the rule that the sparrows in the plane-tree behind

the house, and the echoes in the corner before it, had their own way

from Sunday morning unto Saturday night.

Doctor Manette received such patients here as his old reputation, and

its revival in the floating whispers of his story, brought him.

His scientific knowledge, and his vigilance and skill in conducting

ingenious experiments, brought him otherwise into moderate request, and

he earned as much as he wanted.

These things were within Mr. Jarvis Lorry’s knowledge, thoughts, and

notice, when he rang the door-bell of the tranquil house in the corner,

on the fine Sunday afternoon.

“Doctor Manette at home?”

Expected home.

“Miss Lucie at home?”

Expected home.

“Miss Pross at home?”

Possibly at home, but of a certainty impossible for handmaid to

anticipate intentions of Miss Pross, as to admission or denial of the

fact.

“As I am at home myself,” said Mr. Lorry, “I’ll go upstairs.”

Although the Doctor’s daughter had known nothing of the country of her

birth, she appeared to have innately derived from it that ability to

make much of little means, which is one of its most useful and most

agreeable characteristics. Simple as the furniture was, it was set off

by so many little adornments, of no value but for their taste and fancy,

that its effect was delightful. The disposition of everything in the

rooms, from the largest object to the least; the arrangement of colours,

the elegant variety and contrast obtained by thrift in trifles, by

delicate hands, clear eyes, and good sense; were at once so pleasant in

themselves, and so expressive of their originator, that, as Mr. Lorry

stood looking about him, the very chairs and tables seemed to ask him,

with something of that peculiar expression which he knew so well by this

time, whether he approved?

There were three rooms on a floor, and, the doors by which they

communicated being put open that the air might pass freely through them

all, Mr. Lorry, smilingly observant of that fanciful resemblance which

he detected all around him, walked from one to another. The first was

the best room, and in it were Lucie’s birds, and flowers, and books,

and desk, and work-table, and box of water-colours; the second was

the Doctor’s consulting-room, used also as the dining-room; the third,

changingly speckled by the rustle of the plane-tree in the yard, was the

Doctor’s bedroom, and there, in a corner, stood the disused shoemaker’s

bench and tray of tools, much as it had stood on the fifth floor of the

dismal house by the wine-shop, in the suburb of Saint Antoine in Paris.

“I wonder,” said Mr. Lorry, pausing in his looking about, “that he keeps

that reminder of his sufferings about him!”

“And why wonder at that?” was the abrupt inquiry that made him start.

It proceeded from Miss Pross, the wild red woman, strong of hand, whose

acquaintance he had first made at the Royal George Hotel at Dover, and

had since improved.

“I should have thought--” Mr. Lorry began.

“Pooh! You’d have thought!” said Miss Pross; and Mr. Lorry left off.

“How do you do?” inquired that lady then--sharply, and yet as if to

express that she bore him no malice.

“I am pretty well, I thank you,” answered Mr. Lorry, with meekness; “how

are you?”

“Nothing to boast of,” said Miss Pross.

“Indeed?”

“Ah! indeed!” said Miss Pross. “I am very much put out about my

Ladybird.”

“Indeed?”

“For gracious sake say something else besides ‘indeed,’ or you’ll

fidget me to death,” said Miss Pross: whose character (dissociated from

stature) was shortness.

“Really, then?” said Mr. Lorry, as an amendment.

“Really, is bad enough,” returned Miss Pross, “but better. Yes, I am

very much put out.”

“May I ask the cause?”

“I don’t want dozens of people who are not at all worthy of Ladybird, to

come here looking after her,” said Miss Pross.

“\_Do\_ dozens come for that purpose?”

“Hundreds,” said Miss Pross.

It was characteristic of this lady (as of some other people before her

time and since) that whenever her original proposition was questioned,

she exaggerated it.

“Dear me!” said Mr. Lorry, as the safest remark he could think of.

“I have lived with the darling--or the darling has lived with me, and

paid me for it; which she certainly should never have done, you may take

your affidavit, if I could have afforded to keep either myself or her

for nothing--since she was ten years old. And it’s really very hard,”

said Miss Pross.

Not seeing with precision what was very hard, Mr. Lorry shook his head;

using that important part of himself as a sort of fairy cloak that would

fit anything.

“All sorts of people who are not in the least degree worthy of the pet,

are always turning up,” said Miss Pross. “When you began it--”

“\_I\_ began it, Miss Pross?”

“Didn’t you? Who brought her father to life?”

“Oh! If \_that\_ was beginning it--” said Mr. Lorry.

“It wasn’t ending it, I suppose? I say, when you began it, it was hard

enough; not that I have any fault to find with Doctor Manette, except

that he is not worthy of such a daughter, which is no imputation on

him, for it was not to be expected that anybody should be, under any

circumstances. But it really is doubly and trebly hard to have crowds

and multitudes of people turning up after him (I could have forgiven

him), to take Ladybird’s affections away from me.”

Mr. Lorry knew Miss Pross to be very jealous, but he also knew her by

this time to be, beneath the service of her eccentricity, one of those

unselfish creatures--found only among women--who will, for pure love and

admiration, bind themselves willing slaves, to youth when they have lost

it, to beauty that they never had, to accomplishments that they were

never fortunate enough to gain, to bright hopes that never shone upon

their own sombre lives. He knew enough of the world to know that there

is nothing in it better than the faithful service of the heart; so

rendered and so free from any mercenary taint, he had such an exalted

respect for it, that in the retributive arrangements made by his own

mind--we all make such arrangements, more or less--he stationed Miss

Pross much nearer to the lower Angels than many ladies immeasurably

better got up both by Nature and Art, who had balances at Tellson’s.

“There never was, nor will be, but one man worthy of Ladybird,” said

Miss Pross; “and that was my brother Solomon, if he hadn’t made a

mistake in life.”

Here again: Mr. Lorry’s inquiries into Miss Pross’s personal history had

established the fact that her brother Solomon was a heartless scoundrel

who had stripped her of everything she possessed, as a stake to

speculate with, and had abandoned her in her poverty for evermore, with

no touch of compunction. Miss Pross’s fidelity of belief in Solomon

(deducting a mere trifle for this slight mistake) was quite a serious

matter with Mr. Lorry, and had its weight in his good opinion of her.

“As we happen to be alone for the moment, and are both people of

business,” he said, when they had got back to the drawing-room and had

sat down there in friendly relations, “let me ask you--does the Doctor,

in talking with Lucie, never refer to the shoemaking time, yet?”

“Never.”

“And yet keeps that bench and those tools beside him?”

“Ah!” returned Miss Pross, shaking her head. “But I don’t say he don’t

refer to it within himself.”

“Do you believe that he thinks of it much?”

“I do,” said Miss Pross.

“Do you imagine--” Mr. Lorry had begun, when Miss Pross took him up

short with:

“Never imagine anything. Have no imagination at all.”

“I stand corrected; do you suppose--you go so far as to suppose,

sometimes?”

“Now and then,” said Miss Pross.

“Do you suppose,” Mr. Lorry went on, with a laughing twinkle in his

bright eye, as it looked kindly at her, “that Doctor Manette has any

theory of his own, preserved through all those years, relative to

the cause of his being so oppressed; perhaps, even to the name of his

oppressor?”

“I don’t suppose anything about it but what Ladybird tells me.”

“And that is--?”

“That she thinks he has.”

“Now don’t be angry at my asking all these questions; because I am a

mere dull man of business, and you are a woman of business.”

“Dull?” Miss Pross inquired, with placidity.

Rather wishing his modest adjective away, Mr. Lorry replied, “No, no,

no. Surely not. To return to business:--Is it not remarkable that Doctor

Manette, unquestionably innocent of any crime as we are all well assured

he is, should never touch upon that question? I will not say with me,

though he had business relations with me many years ago, and we are now

intimate; I will say with the fair daughter to whom he is so devotedly

attached, and who is so devotedly attached to him? Believe me, Miss

Pross, I don’t approach the topic with you, out of curiosity, but out of

zealous interest.”

“Well! To the best of my understanding, and bad’s the best, you’ll tell

me,” said Miss Pross, softened by the tone of the apology, “he is afraid

of the whole subject.”

“Afraid?”

“It’s plain enough, I should think, why he may be. It’s a dreadful

remembrance. Besides that, his loss of himself grew out of it. Not

knowing how he lost himself, or how he recovered himself, he may never

feel certain of not losing himself again. That alone wouldn’t make the

subject pleasant, I should think.”

It was a profounder remark than Mr. Lorry had looked for. “True,” said

he, “and fearful to reflect upon. Yet, a doubt lurks in my mind, Miss

Pross, whether it is good for Doctor Manette to have that suppression

always shut up within him. Indeed, it is this doubt and the uneasiness

it sometimes causes me that has led me to our present confidence.”

“Can’t be helped,” said Miss Pross, shaking her head. “Touch that

string, and he instantly changes for the worse. Better leave it alone.

In short, must leave it alone, like or no like. Sometimes, he gets up in

the dead of the night, and will be heard, by us overhead there, walking

up and down, walking up and down, in his room. Ladybird has learnt to

know then that his mind is walking up and down, walking up and down, in

his old prison. She hurries to him, and they go on together, walking up

and down, walking up and down, until he is composed. But he never says

a word of the true reason of his restlessness, to her, and she finds it

best not to hint at it to him. In silence they go walking up and down

together, walking up and down together, till her love and company have

brought him to himself.”

Notwithstanding Miss Pross’s denial of her own imagination, there was a

perception of the pain of being monotonously haunted by one sad idea,

in her repetition of the phrase, walking up and down, which testified to

her possessing such a thing.

The corner has been mentioned as a wonderful corner for echoes; it

had begun to echo so resoundingly to the tread of coming feet, that it

seemed as though the very mention of that weary pacing to and fro had

set it going.

“Here they are!” said Miss Pross, rising to break up the conference;

“and now we shall have hundreds of people pretty soon!”

It was such a curious corner in its acoustical properties, such a

peculiar Ear of a place, that as Mr. Lorry stood at the open window,

looking for the father and daughter whose steps he heard, he fancied

they would never approach. Not only would the echoes die away, as though

the steps had gone; but, echoes of other steps that never came would be

heard in their stead, and would die away for good when they seemed close

at hand. However, father and daughter did at last appear, and Miss Pross

was ready at the street door to receive them.

Miss Pross was a pleasant sight, albeit wild, and red, and grim, taking

off her darling’s bonnet when she came up-stairs, and touching it up

with the ends of her handkerchief, and blowing the dust off it, and

folding her mantle ready for laying by, and smoothing her rich hair with

as much pride as she could possibly have taken in her own hair if she

had been the vainest and handsomest of women. Her darling was a pleasant

sight too, embracing her and thanking her, and protesting against

her taking so much trouble for her--which last she only dared to do

playfully, or Miss Pross, sorely hurt, would have retired to her own

chamber and cried. The Doctor was a pleasant sight too, looking on at

them, and telling Miss Pross how she spoilt Lucie, in accents and with

eyes that had as much spoiling in them as Miss Pross had, and would

have had more if it were possible. Mr. Lorry was a pleasant sight too,

beaming at all this in his little wig, and thanking his bachelor

stars for having lighted him in his declining years to a Home. But, no

Hundreds of people came to see the sights, and Mr. Lorry looked in vain

for the fulfilment of Miss Pross’s prediction.

Dinner-time, and still no Hundreds of people. In the arrangements of

the little household, Miss Pross took charge of the lower regions, and

always acquitted herself marvellously. Her dinners, of a very modest

quality, were so well cooked and so well served, and so neat in their

contrivances, half English and half French, that nothing could be

better. Miss Pross’s friendship being of the thoroughly practical

kind, she had ravaged Soho and the adjacent provinces, in search of

impoverished French, who, tempted by shillings and half-crowns, would

impart culinary mysteries to her. From these decayed sons and daughters

of Gaul, she had acquired such wonderful arts, that the woman and girl

who formed the staff of domestics regarded her as quite a Sorceress,

or Cinderella’s Godmother: who would send out for a fowl, a rabbit,

a vegetable or two from the garden, and change them into anything she

pleased.

On Sundays, Miss Pross dined at the Doctor’s table, but on other days

persisted in taking her meals at unknown periods, either in the lower

regions, or in her own room on the second floor--a blue chamber, to

which no one but her Ladybird ever gained admittance. On this occasion,

Miss Pross, responding to Ladybird’s pleasant face and pleasant efforts

to please her, unbent exceedingly; so the dinner was very pleasant, too.

It was an oppressive day, and, after dinner, Lucie proposed that the

wine should be carried out under the plane-tree, and they should sit

there in the air. As everything turned upon her, and revolved about her,

they went out under the plane-tree, and she carried the wine down for

the special benefit of Mr. Lorry. She had installed herself, some

time before, as Mr. Lorry’s cup-bearer; and while they sat under the

plane-tree, talking, she kept his glass replenished. Mysterious backs

and ends of houses peeped at them as they talked, and the plane-tree

whispered to them in its own way above their heads.

Still, the Hundreds of people did not present themselves. Mr. Darnay

presented himself while they were sitting under the plane-tree, but he

was only One.

Doctor Manette received him kindly, and so did Lucie. But, Miss Pross

suddenly became afflicted with a twitching in the head and body, and

retired into the house. She was not unfrequently the victim of this

disorder, and she called it, in familiar conversation, “a fit of the

jerks.”

The Doctor was in his best condition, and looked specially young. The

resemblance between him and Lucie was very strong at such times, and as

they sat side by side, she leaning on his shoulder, and he resting

his arm on the back of her chair, it was very agreeable to trace the

likeness.

He had been talking all day, on many subjects, and with unusual

vivacity. “Pray, Doctor Manette,” said Mr. Darnay, as they sat under the

plane-tree--and he said it in the natural pursuit of the topic in hand,

which happened to be the old buildings of London--“have you seen much of

the Tower?”

“Lucie and I have been there; but only casually. We have seen enough of

it, to know that it teems with interest; little more.”

“\_I\_ have been there, as you remember,” said Darnay, with a smile,

though reddening a little angrily, “in another character, and not in a

character that gives facilities for seeing much of it. They told me a

curious thing when I was there.”

“What was that?” Lucie asked.

“In making some alterations, the workmen came upon an old dungeon, which

had been, for many years, built up and forgotten. Every stone of

its inner wall was covered by inscriptions which had been carved by

prisoners--dates, names, complaints, and prayers. Upon a corner stone

in an angle of the wall, one prisoner, who seemed to have gone to

execution, had cut as his last work, three letters. They were done with

some very poor instrument, and hurriedly, with an unsteady hand.

At first, they were read as D. I. C.; but, on being more carefully

examined, the last letter was found to be G. There was no record or

legend of any prisoner with those initials, and many fruitless guesses

were made what the name could have been. At length, it was suggested

that the letters were not initials, but the complete word, DIG. The

floor was examined very carefully under the inscription, and, in the

earth beneath a stone, or tile, or some fragment of paving, were found

the ashes of a paper, mingled with the ashes of a small leathern case

or bag. What the unknown prisoner had written will never be read, but he

had written something, and hidden it away to keep it from the gaoler.”

“My father,” exclaimed Lucie, “you are ill!”

He had suddenly started up, with his hand to his head. His manner and

his look quite terrified them all.

“No, my dear, not ill. There are large drops of rain falling, and they

made me start. We had better go in.”

He recovered himself almost instantly. Rain was really falling in large

drops, and he showed the back of his hand with rain-drops on it. But, he

said not a single word in reference to the discovery that had been told

of, and, as they went into the house, the business eye of Mr. Lorry

either detected, or fancied it detected, on his face, as it turned

towards Charles Darnay, the same singular look that had been upon it

when it turned towards him in the passages of the Court House.

He recovered himself so quickly, however, that Mr. Lorry had doubts of

his business eye. The arm of the golden giant in the hall was not more

steady than he was, when he stopped under it to remark to them that he

was not yet proof against slight surprises (if he ever would be), and

that the rain had startled him.

Tea-time, and Miss Pross making tea, with another fit of the jerks upon

her, and yet no Hundreds of people. Mr. Carton had lounged in, but he

made only Two.

The night was so very sultry, that although they sat with doors and

windows open, they were overpowered by heat. When the tea-table was

done with, they all moved to one of the windows, and looked out into the

heavy twilight. Lucie sat by her father; Darnay sat beside her; Carton

leaned against a window. The curtains were long and white, and some of

the thunder-gusts that whirled into the corner, caught them up to the

ceiling, and waved them like spectral wings.

“The rain-drops are still falling, large, heavy, and few,” said Doctor

Manette. “It comes slowly.”

“It comes surely,” said Carton.

They spoke low, as people watching and waiting mostly do; as people in a

dark room, watching and waiting for Lightning, always do.

There was a great hurry in the streets of people speeding away to

get shelter before the storm broke; the wonderful corner for echoes

resounded with the echoes of footsteps coming and going, yet not a

footstep was there.

“A multitude of people, and yet a solitude!” said Darnay, when they had

listened for a while.

“Is it not impressive, Mr. Darnay?” asked Lucie. “Sometimes, I have

sat here of an evening, until I have fancied--but even the shade of

a foolish fancy makes me shudder to-night, when all is so black and

solemn--”

“Let us shudder too. We may know what it is.”

“It will seem nothing to you. Such whims are only impressive as we

originate them, I think; they are not to be communicated. I have

sometimes sat alone here of an evening, listening, until I have made

the echoes out to be the echoes of all the footsteps that are coming

by-and-bye into our lives.”

“There is a great crowd coming one day into our lives, if that be so,”

Sydney Carton struck in, in his moody way.

The footsteps were incessant, and the hurry of them became more and more

rapid. The corner echoed and re-echoed with the tread of feet; some,

as it seemed, under the windows; some, as it seemed, in the room; some

coming, some going, some breaking off, some stopping altogether; all in

the distant streets, and not one within sight.

“Are all these footsteps destined to come to all of us, Miss Manette, or

are we to divide them among us?”

“I don’t know, Mr. Darnay; I told you it was a foolish fancy, but you

asked for it. When I have yielded myself to it, I have been alone, and

then I have imagined them the footsteps of the people who are to come

into my life, and my father’s.”

“I take them into mine!” said Carton. “\_I\_ ask no questions and make no

stipulations. There is a great crowd bearing down upon us, Miss Manette,

and I see them--by the Lightning.” He added the last words, after there

had been a vivid flash which had shown him lounging in the window.

“And I hear them!” he added again, after a peal of thunder. “Here they

come, fast, fierce, and furious!”

It was the rush and roar of rain that he typified, and it stopped him,

for no voice could be heard in it. A memorable storm of thunder and

lightning broke with that sweep of water, and there was not a moment’s

interval in crash, and fire, and rain, until after the moon rose at

midnight.

The great bell of Saint Paul’s was striking one in the cleared air, when

Mr. Lorry, escorted by Jerry, high-booted and bearing a lantern, set

forth on his return-passage to Clerkenwell. There were solitary patches

of road on the way between Soho and Clerkenwell, and Mr. Lorry, mindful

of foot-pads, always retained Jerry for this service: though it was

usually performed a good two hours earlier.

“What a night it has been! Almost a night, Jerry,” said Mr. Lorry, “to

bring the dead out of their graves.”

“I never see the night myself, master--nor yet I don’t expect to--what

would do that,” answered Jerry.

“Good night, Mr. Carton,” said the man of business. “Good night, Mr.

Darnay. Shall we ever see such a night again, together!”

Perhaps. Perhaps, see the great crowd of people with its rush and roar,

bearing down upon them, too.

CHAPTER VII.

Monseigneur in Town

Monseigneur, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his

fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in

his inner room, his sanctuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to

the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur

was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many

things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather

rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning’s chocolate could not so

much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four

strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four ablaze with gorgeous decoration, and the

Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his

pocket, emulative of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to

conduct the happy chocolate to Monseigneur’s lips. One lacquey carried

the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed

the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function;

a third, presented the favoured napkin; a fourth (he of the two gold

watches), poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to

dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high

place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon

his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three

men; he must have died of two.

Monseigneur had been out at a little supper last night, where the Comedy

and the Grand Opera were charmingly represented. Monseigneur was out at

a little supper most nights, with fascinating company. So polite and so

impressible was Monseigneur, that the Comedy and the Grand Opera had far

more influence with him in the tiresome articles of state affairs and

state secrets, than the needs of all France. A happy circumstance

for France, as the like always is for all countries similarly

favoured!--always was for England (by way of example), in the regretted

days of the merry Stuart who sold it.

Monseigneur had one truly noble idea of general public business, which

was, to let everything go on in its own way; of particular public

business, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea that it must all go

his way--tend to his own power and pocket. Of his pleasures, general and

particular, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea, that the world

was made for them. The text of his order (altered from the original

by only a pronoun, which is not much) ran: “The earth and the fulness

thereof are mine, saith Monseigneur.”

Yet, Monseigneur had slowly found that vulgar embarrassments crept into

his affairs, both private and public; and he had, as to both classes of

affairs, allied himself perforce with a Farmer-General. As to finances

public, because Monseigneur could not make anything at all of them, and

must consequently let them out to somebody who could; as to finances

private, because Farmer-Generals were rich, and Monseigneur, after

generations of great luxury and expense, was growing poor. Hence

Monseigneur had taken his sister from a convent, while there was yet

time to ward off the impending veil, the cheapest garment she could

wear, and had bestowed her as a prize upon a very rich Farmer-General,

poor in family. Which Farmer-General, carrying an appropriate cane with

a golden apple on the top of it, was now among the company in the outer

rooms, much prostrated before by mankind--always excepting superior

mankind of the blood of Monseigneur, who, his own wife included, looked

down upon him with the loftiest contempt.

A sumptuous man was the Farmer-General. Thirty horses stood in his

stables, twenty-four male domestics sat in his halls, six body-women

waited on his wife. As one who pretended to do nothing but plunder and

forage where he could, the Farmer-General--howsoever his matrimonial

relations conduced to social morality--was at least the greatest reality

among the personages who attended at the hotel of Monseigneur that day.

For, the rooms, though a beautiful scene to look at, and adorned with

every device of decoration that the taste and skill of the time could

achieve, were, in truth, not a sound business; considered with any

reference to the scarecrows in the rags and nightcaps elsewhere (and not

so far off, either, but that the watching towers of Notre Dame, almost

equidistant from the two extremes, could see them both), they would

have been an exceedingly uncomfortable business--if that could have

been anybody’s business, at the house of Monseigneur. Military officers

destitute of military knowledge; naval officers with no idea of a ship;

civil officers without a notion of affairs; brazen ecclesiastics, of the

worst world worldly, with sensual eyes, loose tongues, and looser lives;

all totally unfit for their several callings, all lying horribly in

pretending to belong to them, but all nearly or remotely of the order of

Monseigneur, and therefore foisted on all public employments from which

anything was to be got; these were to be told off by the score and the

score. People not immediately connected with Monseigneur or the State,

yet equally unconnected with anything that was real, or with lives

passed in travelling by any straight road to any true earthly end, were

no less abundant. Doctors who made great fortunes out of dainty remedies

for imaginary disorders that never existed, smiled upon their courtly

patients in the ante-chambers of Monseigneur. Projectors who had

discovered every kind of remedy for the little evils with which the

State was touched, except the remedy of setting to work in earnest to

root out a single sin, poured their distracting babble into any ears

they could lay hold of, at the reception of Monseigneur. Unbelieving

Philosophers who were remodelling the world with words, and making

card-towers of Babel to scale the skies with, talked with Unbelieving

Chemists who had an eye on the transmutation of metals, at this

wonderful gathering accumulated by Monseigneur. Exquisite gentlemen of

the finest breeding, which was at that remarkable time--and has been

since--to be known by its fruits of indifference to every natural

subject of human interest, were in the most exemplary state of

exhaustion, at the hotel of Monseigneur. Such homes had these various

notabilities left behind them in the fine world of Paris, that the spies

among the assembled devotees of Monseigneur--forming a goodly half

of the polite company--would have found it hard to discover among

the angels of that sphere one solitary wife, who, in her manners and

appearance, owned to being a Mother. Indeed, except for the mere act of

bringing a troublesome creature into this world--which does not go far

towards the realisation of the name of mother--there was no such thing

known to the fashion. Peasant women kept the unfashionable babies close,

and brought them up, and charming grandmammas of sixty dressed and

supped as at twenty.

The leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance

upon Monseigneur. In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional

people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that

things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting

them right, half of the half-dozen had become members of a fantastic

sect of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves

whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the

spot--thereby setting up a highly intelligible finger-post to the

Future, for Monseigneur’s guidance. Besides these Dervishes, were other

three who had rushed into another sect, which mended matters with a

jargon about “the Centre of Truth:” holding that Man had got out of the

Centre of Truth--which did not need much demonstration--but had not got

out of the Circumference, and that he was to be kept from flying out of

the Circumference, and was even to be shoved back into the Centre,

by fasting and seeing of spirits. Among these, accordingly, much

discoursing with spirits went on--and it did a world of good which never

became manifest.

But, the comfort was, that all the company at the grand hotel of

Monseigneur were perfectly dressed. If the Day of Judgment had only been

ascertained to be a dress day, everybody there would have been eternally

correct. Such frizzling and powdering and sticking up of hair, such

delicate complexions artificially preserved and mended, such gallant

swords to look at, and such delicate honour to the sense of smell, would

surely keep anything going, for ever and ever. The exquisite gentlemen

of the finest breeding wore little pendent trinkets that chinked as they

languidly moved; these golden fetters rang like precious little bells;

and what with that ringing, and with the rustle of silk and brocade and

fine linen, there was a flutter in the air that fanned Saint Antoine and

his devouring hunger far away.

Dress was the one unfailing talisman and charm used for keeping all

things in their places. Everybody was dressed for a Fancy Ball that

was never to leave off. From the Palace of the Tuileries, through

Monseigneur and the whole Court, through the Chambers, the Tribunals

of Justice, and all society (except the scarecrows), the Fancy Ball

descended to the Common Executioner: who, in pursuance of the charm, was

required to officiate “frizzled, powdered, in a gold-laced coat, pumps,

and white silk stockings.” At the gallows and the wheel--the axe was a

rarity--Monsieur Paris, as it was the episcopal mode among his brother

Professors of the provinces, Monsieur Orleans, and the rest, to call

him, presided in this dainty dress. And who among the company at

Monseigneur’s reception in that seventeen hundred and eightieth year

of our Lord, could possibly doubt, that a system rooted in a frizzled

hangman, powdered, gold-laced, pumped, and white-silk stockinged, would

see the very stars out!

Monseigneur having eased his four men of their burdens and taken his

chocolate, caused the doors of the Holiest of Holiests to be thrown

open, and issued forth. Then, what submission, what cringing and

fawning, what servility, what abject humiliation! As to bowing down in

body and spirit, nothing in that way was left for Heaven--which may have

been one among other reasons why the worshippers of Monseigneur never

troubled it.

Bestowing a word of promise here and a smile there, a whisper on one

happy slave and a wave of the hand on another, Monseigneur affably

passed through his rooms to the remote region of the Circumference of

Truth. There, Monseigneur turned, and came back again, and so in due

course of time got himself shut up in his sanctuary by the chocolate

sprites, and was seen no more.

The show being over, the flutter in the air became quite a little storm,

and the precious little bells went ringing downstairs. There was soon

but one person left of all the crowd, and he, with his hat under his arm

and his snuff-box in his hand, slowly passed among the mirrors on his

way out.

“I devote you,” said this person, stopping at the last door on his way,

and turning in the direction of the sanctuary, “to the Devil!”

With that, he shook the snuff from his fingers as if he had shaken the

dust from his feet, and quietly walked downstairs.

He was a man of about sixty, handsomely dressed, haughty in manner, and

with a face like a fine mask. A face of a transparent paleness; every

feature in it clearly defined; one set expression on it. The nose,

beautifully formed otherwise, was very slightly pinched at the top

of each nostril. In those two compressions, or dints, the only little

change that the face ever showed, resided. They persisted in changing

colour sometimes, and they would be occasionally dilated and contracted

by something like a faint pulsation; then, they gave a look of

treachery, and cruelty, to the whole countenance. Examined with

attention, its capacity of helping such a look was to be found in the

line of the mouth, and the lines of the orbits of the eyes, being much

too horizontal and thin; still, in the effect of the face made, it was a

handsome face, and a remarkable one.

Its owner went downstairs into the courtyard, got into his carriage, and

drove away. Not many people had talked with him at the reception; he had

stood in a little space apart, and Monseigneur might have been warmer

in his manner. It appeared, under the circumstances, rather agreeable

to him to see the common people dispersed before his horses, and

often barely escaping from being run down. His man drove as if he were

charging an enemy, and the furious recklessness of the man brought no

check into the face, or to the lips, of the master. The complaint had

sometimes made itself audible, even in that deaf city and dumb age,

that, in the narrow streets without footways, the fierce patrician

custom of hard driving endangered and maimed the mere vulgar in a

barbarous manner. But, few cared enough for that to think of it a second

time, and, in this matter, as in all others, the common wretches were

left to get out of their difficulties as they could.

With a wild rattle and clatter, and an inhuman abandonment of

consideration not easy to be understood in these days, the carriage

dashed through streets and swept round corners, with women screaming

before it, and men clutching each other and clutching children out of

its way. At last, swooping at a street corner by a fountain, one of its

wheels came to a sickening little jolt, and there was a loud cry from a

number of voices, and the horses reared and plunged.

But for the latter inconvenience, the carriage probably would not have

stopped; carriages were often known to drive on, and leave their wounded

behind, and why not? But the frightened valet had got down in a hurry,

and there were twenty hands at the horses’ bridles.

“What has gone wrong?” said Monsieur, calmly looking out.

A tall man in a nightcap had caught up a bundle from among the feet of

the horses, and had laid it on the basement of the fountain, and was

down in the mud and wet, howling over it like a wild animal.

“Pardon, Monsieur the Marquis!” said a ragged and submissive man, “it is

a child.”

“Why does he make that abominable noise? Is it his child?”

“Excuse me, Monsieur the Marquis--it is a pity--yes.”

The fountain was a little removed; for the street opened, where it was,

into a space some ten or twelve yards square. As the tall man suddenly

got up from the ground, and came running at the carriage, Monsieur the

Marquis clapped his hand for an instant on his sword-hilt.

“Killed!” shrieked the man, in wild desperation, extending both arms at

their length above his head, and staring at him. “Dead!”

The people closed round, and looked at Monsieur the Marquis. There was

nothing revealed by the many eyes that looked at him but watchfulness

and eagerness; there was no visible menacing or anger. Neither did the

people say anything; after the first cry, they had been silent, and they

remained so. The voice of the submissive man who had spoken, was flat

and tame in its extreme submission. Monsieur the Marquis ran his eyes

over them all, as if they had been mere rats come out of their holes.

He took out his purse.

“It is extraordinary to me,” said he, “that you people cannot take care

of yourselves and your children. One or the other of you is for ever in

the way. How do I know what injury you have done my horses. See! Give

him that.”

He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up, and all the heads

craned forward that all the eyes might look down at it as it fell. The

tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry, “Dead!”

He was arrested by the quick arrival of another man, for whom the rest

made way. On seeing him, the miserable creature fell upon his shoulder,

sobbing and crying, and pointing to the fountain, where some women were

stooping over the motionless bundle, and moving gently about it. They

were as silent, however, as the men.

“I know all, I know all,” said the last comer. “Be a brave man, my

Gaspard! It is better for the poor little plaything to die so, than to

live. It has died in a moment without pain. Could it have lived an hour

as happily?”

“You are a philosopher, you there,” said the Marquis, smiling. “How do

they call you?”

“They call me Defarge.”

“Of what trade?”

“Monsieur the Marquis, vendor of wine.”

“Pick up that, philosopher and vendor of wine,” said the Marquis,

throwing him another gold coin, “and spend it as you will. The horses

there; are they right?”

Without deigning to look at the assemblage a second time, Monsieur the

Marquis leaned back in his seat, and was just being driven away with the

air of a gentleman who had accidentally broke some common thing, and had

paid for it, and could afford to pay for it; when his ease was suddenly

disturbed by a coin flying into his carriage, and ringing on its floor.

“Hold!” said Monsieur the Marquis. “Hold the horses! Who threw that?”

He looked to the spot where Defarge the vendor of wine had stood, a

moment before; but the wretched father was grovelling on his face on

the pavement in that spot, and the figure that stood beside him was the

figure of a dark stout woman, knitting.

“You dogs!” said the Marquis, but smoothly, and with an unchanged front,

except as to the spots on his nose: “I would ride over any of you very

willingly, and exterminate you from the earth. If I knew which rascal

threw at the carriage, and if that brigand were sufficiently near it, he

should be crushed under the wheels.”

So cowed was their condition, and so long and hard their experience of

what such a man could do to them, within the law and beyond it, that not

a voice, or a hand, or even an eye was raised. Among the men, not one.

But the woman who stood knitting looked up steadily, and looked the

Marquis in the face. It was not for his dignity to notice it; his

contemptuous eyes passed over her, and over all the other rats; and he

leaned back in his seat again, and gave the word “Go on!”

He was driven on, and other carriages came whirling by in quick

succession; the Minister, the State-Projector, the Farmer-General, the

Doctor, the Lawyer, the Ecclesiastic, the Grand Opera, the Comedy, the

whole Fancy Ball in a bright continuous flow, came whirling by. The rats

had crept out of their holes to look on, and they remained looking

on for hours; soldiers and police often passing between them and the

spectacle, and making a barrier behind which they slunk, and through

which they peeped. The father had long ago taken up his bundle and

bidden himself away with it, when the women who had tended the bundle

while it lay on the base of the fountain, sat there watching the running

of the water and the rolling of the Fancy Ball--when the one woman who

had stood conspicuous, knitting, still knitted on with the steadfastness

of Fate. The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran

into evening, so much life in the city ran into death according to rule,

time and tide waited for no man, the rats were sleeping close together

in their dark holes again, the Fancy Ball was lighted up at supper, all

things ran their course.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monseigneur in the Country

A beautiful landscape, with the corn bright in it, but not abundant.

Patches of poor rye where corn should have been, patches of poor peas

and beans, patches of most coarse vegetable substitutes for wheat. On

inanimate nature, as on the men and women who cultivated it, a prevalent

tendency towards an appearance of vegetating unwillingly--a dejected

disposition to give up, and wither away.

Monsieur the Marquis in his travelling carriage (which might have been

lighter), conducted by four post-horses and two postilions, fagged up

a steep hill. A blush on the countenance of Monsieur the Marquis was

no impeachment of his high breeding; it was not from within; it was

occasioned by an external circumstance beyond his control--the setting

sun.

The sunset struck so brilliantly into the travelling carriage when it

gained the hill-top, that its occupant was steeped in crimson. “It will

die out,” said Monsieur the Marquis, glancing at his hands, “directly.”

In effect, the sun was so low that it dipped at the moment. When the

heavy drag had been adjusted to the wheel, and the carriage slid down

hill, with a cinderous smell, in a cloud of dust, the red glow departed

quickly; the sun and the Marquis going down together, there was no glow

left when the drag was taken off.

But, there remained a broken country, bold and open, a little village

at the bottom of the hill, a broad sweep and rise beyond it, a

church-tower, a windmill, a forest for the chase, and a crag with a

fortress on it used as a prison. Round upon all these darkening objects

as the night drew on, the Marquis looked, with the air of one who was

coming near home.

The village had its one poor street, with its poor brewery, poor

tannery, poor tavern, poor stable-yard for relays of post-horses, poor

fountain, all usual poor appointments. It had its poor people too. All

its people were poor, and many of them were sitting at their doors,

shredding spare onions and the like for supper, while many were at the

fountain, washing leaves, and grasses, and any such small yieldings of

the earth that could be eaten. Expressive signs of what made them poor,

were not wanting; the tax for the state, the tax for the church, the tax

for the lord, tax local and tax general, were to be paid here and to be

paid there, according to solemn inscription in the little village, until

the wonder was, that there was any village left unswallowed.

Few children were to be seen, and no dogs. As to the men and women,

their choice on earth was stated in the prospect--Life on the lowest

terms that could sustain it, down in the little village under the mill;

or captivity and Death in the dominant prison on the crag.

Heralded by a courier in advance, and by the cracking of his postilions’

whips, which twined snake-like about their heads in the evening air, as

if he came attended by the Furies, Monsieur the Marquis drew up in

his travelling carriage at the posting-house gate. It was hard by the

fountain, and the peasants suspended their operations to look at him.

He looked at them, and saw in them, without knowing it, the slow

sure filing down of misery-worn face and figure, that was to make the

meagreness of Frenchmen an English superstition which should survive the

truth through the best part of a hundred years.

Monsieur the Marquis cast his eyes over the submissive faces that

drooped before him, as the like of himself had drooped before

Monseigneur of the Court--only the difference was, that these faces

drooped merely to suffer and not to propitiate--when a grizzled mender

of the roads joined the group.

“Bring me hither that fellow!” said the Marquis to the courier.

The fellow was brought, cap in hand, and the other fellows closed round

to look and listen, in the manner of the people at the Paris fountain.

“I passed you on the road?”

“Monseigneur, it is true. I had the honour of being passed on the road.”

“Coming up the hill, and at the top of the hill, both?”

“Monseigneur, it is true.”

“What did you look at, so fixedly?”

“Monseigneur, I looked at the man.”

He stooped a little, and with his tattered blue cap pointed under the

carriage. All his fellows stooped to look under the carriage.

“What man, pig? And why look there?”

“Pardon, Monseigneur; he swung by the chain of the shoe--the drag.”

“Who?” demanded the traveller.

“Monseigneur, the man.”

“May the Devil carry away these idiots! How do you call the man? You

know all the men of this part of the country. Who was he?”

“Your clemency, Monseigneur! He was not of this part of the country. Of

all the days of my life, I never saw him.”

“Swinging by the chain? To be suffocated?”

“With your gracious permission, that was the wonder of it, Monseigneur.

His head hanging over--like this!”

He turned himself sideways to the carriage, and leaned back, with his

face thrown up to the sky, and his head hanging down; then recovered

himself, fumbled with his cap, and made a bow.

“What was he like?”

“Monseigneur, he was whiter than the miller. All covered with dust,

white as a spectre, tall as a spectre!”

The picture produced an immense sensation in the little crowd; but all

eyes, without comparing notes with other eyes, looked at Monsieur

the Marquis. Perhaps, to observe whether he had any spectre on his

conscience.

“Truly, you did well,” said the Marquis, felicitously sensible that such

vermin were not to ruffle him, “to see a thief accompanying my carriage,

and not open that great mouth of yours. Bah! Put him aside, Monsieur

Gabelle!”

Monsieur Gabelle was the Postmaster, and some other taxing functionary

united; he had come out with great obsequiousness to assist at this

examination, and had held the examined by the drapery of his arm in an

official manner.

“Bah! Go aside!” said Monsieur Gabelle.

“Lay hands on this stranger if he seeks to lodge in your village

to-night, and be sure that his business is honest, Gabelle.”

“Monseigneur, I am flattered to devote myself to your orders.”

“Did he run away, fellow?--where is that Accursed?”

The accursed was already under the carriage with some half-dozen

particular friends, pointing out the chain with his blue cap. Some

half-dozen other particular friends promptly hauled him out, and

presented him breathless to Monsieur the Marquis.

“Did the man run away, Dolt, when we stopped for the drag?”

“Monseigneur, he precipitated himself over the hill-side, head first, as

a person plunges into the river.”

“See to it, Gabelle. Go on!”

The half-dozen who were peering at the chain were still among the

wheels, like sheep; the wheels turned so suddenly that they were lucky

to save their skins and bones; they had very little else to save, or

they might not have been so fortunate.

The burst with which the carriage started out of the village and up the

rise beyond, was soon checked by the steepness of the hill. Gradually,

it subsided to a foot pace, swinging and lumbering upward among the many

sweet scents of a summer night. The postilions, with a thousand gossamer

gnats circling about them in lieu of the Furies, quietly mended the

points to the lashes of their whips; the valet walked by the horses; the

courier was audible, trotting on ahead into the dull distance.

At the steepest point of the hill there was a little burial-ground,

with a Cross and a new large figure of Our Saviour on it; it was a poor

figure in wood, done by some inexperienced rustic carver, but he had

studied the figure from the life--his own life, maybe--for it was

dreadfully spare and thin.

To this distressful emblem of a great distress that had long been

growing worse, and was not at its worst, a woman was kneeling. She

turned her head as the carriage came up to her, rose quickly, and

presented herself at the carriage-door.

“It is you, Monseigneur! Monseigneur, a petition.”

With an exclamation of impatience, but with his unchangeable face,

Monseigneur looked out.

“How, then! What is it? Always petitions!”

“Monseigneur. For the love of the great God! My husband, the forester.”

“What of your husband, the forester? Always the same with you people. He

cannot pay something?”

“He has paid all, Monseigneur. He is dead.”

“Well! He is quiet. Can I restore him to you?”

“Alas, no, Monseigneur! But he lies yonder, under a little heap of poor

grass.”

“Well?”

“Monseigneur, there are so many little heaps of poor grass?”

“Again, well?”

She looked an old woman, but was young. Her manner was one of passionate

grief; by turns she clasped her veinous and knotted hands together

with wild energy, and laid one of them on the carriage-door--tenderly,

caressingly, as if it had been a human breast, and could be expected to

feel the appealing touch.

“Monseigneur, hear me! Monseigneur, hear my petition! My husband died of

want; so many die of want; so many more will die of want.”

“Again, well? Can I feed them?”

“Monseigneur, the good God knows; but I don’t ask it. My petition is,

that a morsel of stone or wood, with my husband’s name, may be placed

over him to show where he lies. Otherwise, the place will be quickly

forgotten, it will never be found when I am dead of the same malady, I

shall be laid under some other heap of poor grass. Monseigneur, they

are so many, they increase so fast, there is so much want. Monseigneur!

Monseigneur!”

The valet had put her away from the door, the carriage had broken into

a brisk trot, the postilions had quickened the pace, she was left far

behind, and Monseigneur, again escorted by the Furies, was rapidly

diminishing the league or two of distance that remained between him and

his chateau.

The sweet scents of the summer night rose all around him, and rose, as

the rain falls, impartially, on the dusty, ragged, and toil-worn group

at the fountain not far away; to whom the mender of roads, with the aid

of the blue cap without which he was nothing, still enlarged upon his

man like a spectre, as long as they could bear it. By degrees, as they

could bear no more, they dropped off one by one, and lights twinkled

in little casements; which lights, as the casements darkened, and more

stars came out, seemed to have shot up into the sky instead of having

been extinguished.

The shadow of a large high-roofed house, and of many over-hanging trees,

was upon Monsieur the Marquis by that time; and the shadow was exchanged

for the light of a flambeau, as his carriage stopped, and the great door

of his chateau was opened to him.

“Monsieur Charles, whom I expect; is he arrived from England?”

“Monseigneur, not yet.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Gorgon’s Head

It was a heavy mass of building, that chateau of Monsieur the Marquis,

with a large stone courtyard before it, and two stone sweeps of

staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony

business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and

stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions, in

all directions. As if the Gorgon’s head had surveyed it, when it was

finished, two centuries ago.

Up the broad flight of shallow steps, Monsieur the Marquis, flambeau

preceded, went from his carriage, sufficiently disturbing the darkness

to elicit loud remonstrance from an owl in the roof of the great pile

of stable building away among the trees. All else was so quiet, that the

flambeau carried up the steps, and the other flambeau held at the great

door, burnt as if they were in a close room of state, instead of being

in the open night-air. Other sound than the owl’s voice there was none,

save the falling of a fountain into its stone basin; for, it was one of

those dark nights that hold their breath by the hour together, and then

heave a long low sigh, and hold their breath again.

The great door clanged behind him, and Monsieur the Marquis crossed a

hall grim with certain old boar-spears, swords, and knives of the chase;

grimmer with certain heavy riding-rods and riding-whips, of which many a

peasant, gone to his benefactor Death, had felt the weight when his lord

was angry.

Avoiding the larger rooms, which were dark and made fast for the night,

Monsieur the Marquis, with his flambeau-bearer going on before, went up

the staircase to a door in a corridor. This thrown open, admitted him

to his own private apartment of three rooms: his bed-chamber and two

others. High vaulted rooms with cool uncarpeted floors, great dogs upon

the hearths for the burning of wood in winter time, and all luxuries

befitting the state of a marquis in a luxurious age and country.

The fashion of the last Louis but one, of the line that was never to

break--the fourteenth Louis--was conspicuous in their rich furniture;

but, it was diversified by many objects that were illustrations of old

pages in the history of France.

A supper-table was laid for two, in the third of the rooms; a round

room, in one of the chateau’s four extinguisher-topped towers. A small

lofty room, with its window wide open, and the wooden jalousie-blinds

closed, so that the dark night only showed in slight horizontal lines of

black, alternating with their broad lines of stone colour.

“My nephew,” said the Marquis, glancing at the supper preparation; “they

said he was not arrived.”

Nor was he; but, he had been expected with Monseigneur.

“Ah! It is not probable he will arrive to-night; nevertheless, leave the

table as it is. I shall be ready in a quarter of an hour.”

In a quarter of an hour Monseigneur was ready, and sat down alone to his

sumptuous and choice supper. His chair was opposite to the window, and

he had taken his soup, and was raising his glass of Bordeaux to his

lips, when he put it down.

“What is that?” he calmly asked, looking with attention at the

horizontal lines of black and stone colour.

“Monseigneur? That?”

“Outside the blinds. Open the blinds.”

It was done.

“Well?”

“Monseigneur, it is nothing. The trees and the night are all that are

here.”

The servant who spoke, had thrown the blinds wide, had looked out into

the vacant darkness, and stood with that blank behind him, looking round

for instructions.

“Good,” said the imperturbable master. “Close them again.”

That was done too, and the Marquis went on with his supper. He was

half way through it, when he again stopped with his glass in his hand,

hearing the sound of wheels. It came on briskly, and came up to the

front of the chateau.

“Ask who is arrived.”

It was the nephew of Monseigneur. He had been some few leagues behind

Monseigneur, early in the afternoon. He had diminished the distance

rapidly, but not so rapidly as to come up with Monseigneur on the road.

He had heard of Monseigneur, at the posting-houses, as being before him.

He was to be told (said Monseigneur) that supper awaited him then and

there, and that he was prayed to come to it. In a little while he came.

He had been known in England as Charles Darnay.

Monseigneur received him in a courtly manner, but they did not shake

hands.

“You left Paris yesterday, sir?” he said to Monseigneur, as he took his

seat at table.

“Yesterday. And you?”

“I come direct.”

“From London?”

“Yes.”

“You have been a long time coming,” said the Marquis, with a smile.

“On the contrary; I come direct.”

“Pardon me! I mean, not a long time on the journey; a long time

intending the journey.”

“I have been detained by”--the nephew stopped a moment in his

answer--“various business.”

“Without doubt,” said the polished uncle.

So long as a servant was present, no other words passed between them.

When coffee had been served and they were alone together, the nephew,

looking at the uncle and meeting the eyes of the face that was like a

fine mask, opened a conversation.

“I have come back, sir, as you anticipate, pursuing the object that

took me away. It carried me into great and unexpected peril; but it is

a sacred object, and if it had carried me to death I hope it would have

sustained me.”

“Not to death,” said the uncle; “it is not necessary to say, to death.”

“I doubt, sir,” returned the nephew, “whether, if it had carried me to

the utmost brink of death, you would have cared to stop me there.”

The deepened marks in the nose, and the lengthening of the fine straight

lines in the cruel face, looked ominous as to that; the uncle made a

graceful gesture of protest, which was so clearly a slight form of good

breeding that it was not reassuring.

“Indeed, sir,” pursued the nephew, “for anything I know, you may have

expressly worked to give a more suspicious appearance to the suspicious

circumstances that surrounded me.”

“No, no, no,” said the uncle, pleasantly.

“But, however that may be,” resumed the nephew, glancing at him with

deep distrust, “I know that your diplomacy would stop me by any means,

and would know no scruple as to means.”

“My friend, I told you so,” said the uncle, with a fine pulsation in the

two marks. “Do me the favour to recall that I told you so, long ago.”

“I recall it.”

“Thank you,” said the Marquis--very sweetly indeed.

His tone lingered in the air, almost like the tone of a musical

instrument.

“In effect, sir,” pursued the nephew, “I believe it to be at once your

bad fortune, and my good fortune, that has kept me out of a prison in

France here.”

“I do not quite understand,” returned the uncle, sipping his coffee.

“Dare I ask you to explain?”

“I believe that if you were not in disgrace with the Court, and had not

been overshadowed by that cloud for years past, a letter de cachet would

have sent me to some fortress indefinitely.”

“It is possible,” said the uncle, with great calmness. “For the honour

of the family, I could even resolve to incommode you to that extent.

Pray excuse me!”

“I perceive that, happily for me, the Reception of the day before

yesterday was, as usual, a cold one,” observed the nephew.

“I would not say happily, my friend,” returned the uncle, with refined

politeness; “I would not be sure of that. A good opportunity for

consideration, surrounded by the advantages of solitude, might influence

your destiny to far greater advantage than you influence it for

yourself. But it is useless to discuss the question. I am, as you say,

at a disadvantage. These little instruments of correction, these gentle

aids to the power and honour of families, these slight favours that

might so incommode you, are only to be obtained now by interest

and importunity. They are sought by so many, and they are granted

(comparatively) to so few! It used not to be so, but France in all such

things is changed for the worse. Our not remote ancestors held the right

of life and death over the surrounding vulgar. From this room, many such

dogs have been taken out to be hanged; in the next room (my bedroom),

one fellow, to our knowledge, was poniarded on the spot for professing

some insolent delicacy respecting his daughter--\_his\_ daughter? We have

lost many privileges; a new philosophy has become the mode; and the

assertion of our station, in these days, might (I do not go so far as

to say would, but might) cause us real inconvenience. All very bad, very

bad!”

The Marquis took a gentle little pinch of snuff, and shook his head;

as elegantly despondent as he could becomingly be of a country still

containing himself, that great means of regeneration.

“We have so asserted our station, both in the old time and in the modern

time also,” said the nephew, gloomily, “that I believe our name to be

more detested than any name in France.”

“Let us hope so,” said the uncle. “Detestation of the high is the

involuntary homage of the low.”

“There is not,” pursued the nephew, in his former tone, “a face I can

look at, in all this country round about us, which looks at me with any

deference on it but the dark deference of fear and slavery.”

“A compliment,” said the Marquis, “to the grandeur of the family,

merited by the manner in which the family has sustained its grandeur.

Hah!” And he took another gentle little pinch of snuff, and lightly

crossed his legs.

But, when his nephew, leaning an elbow on the table, covered his eyes

thoughtfully and dejectedly with his hand, the fine mask looked at

him sideways with a stronger concentration of keenness, closeness,

and dislike, than was comportable with its wearer’s assumption of

indifference.

“Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear

and slavery, my friend,” observed the Marquis, “will keep the dogs

obedient to the whip, as long as this roof,” looking up to it, “shuts

out the sky.”

That might not be so long as the Marquis supposed. If a picture of the

chateau as it was to be a very few years hence, and of fifty like it as

they too were to be a very few years hence, could have been shown to

him that night, he might have been at a loss to claim his own from

the ghastly, fire-charred, plunder-wrecked rains. As for the roof

he vaunted, he might have found \_that\_ shutting out the sky in a new

way--to wit, for ever, from the eyes of the bodies into which its lead

was fired, out of the barrels of a hundred thousand muskets.

“Meanwhile,” said the Marquis, “I will preserve the honour and repose

of the family, if you will not. But you must be fatigued. Shall we

terminate our conference for the night?”

“A moment more.”

“An hour, if you please.”

“Sir,” said the nephew, “we have done wrong, and are reaping the fruits

of wrong.”

“\_We\_ have done wrong?” repeated the Marquis, with an inquiring smile,

and delicately pointing, first to his nephew, then to himself.

“Our family; our honourable family, whose honour is of so much account

to both of us, in such different ways. Even in my father’s time, we did

a world of wrong, injuring every human creature who came between us and

our pleasure, whatever it was. Why need I speak of my father’s time,

when it is equally yours? Can I separate my father’s twin-brother, joint

inheritor, and next successor, from himself?”

“Death has done that!” said the Marquis.

“And has left me,” answered the nephew, “bound to a system that is

frightful to me, responsible for it, but powerless in it; seeking to

execute the last request of my dear mother’s lips, and obey the last

look of my dear mother’s eyes, which implored me to have mercy and to

redress; and tortured by seeking assistance and power in vain.”

“Seeking them from me, my nephew,” said the Marquis, touching him on the

breast with his forefinger--they were now standing by the hearth--“you

will for ever seek them in vain, be assured.”

Every fine straight line in the clear whiteness of his face, was

cruelly, craftily, and closely compressed, while he stood looking

quietly at his nephew, with his snuff-box in his hand. Once again he

touched him on the breast, as though his finger were the fine point of

a small sword, with which, in delicate finesse, he ran him through the

body, and said,

“My friend, I will die, perpetuating the system under which I have

lived.”

When he had said it, he took a culminating pinch of snuff, and put his

box in his pocket.

“Better to be a rational creature,” he added then, after ringing a small

bell on the table, “and accept your natural destiny. But you are lost,

Monsieur Charles, I see.”

“This property and France are lost to me,” said the nephew, sadly; “I

renounce them.”

“Are they both yours to renounce? France may be, but is the property? It

is scarcely worth mentioning; but, is it yet?”

“I had no intention, in the words I used, to claim it yet. If it passed

to me from you, to-morrow--”

“Which I have the vanity to hope is not probable.”

“--or twenty years hence--”

“You do me too much honour,” said the Marquis; “still, I prefer that

supposition.”

“--I would abandon it, and live otherwise and elsewhere. It is little to

relinquish. What is it but a wilderness of misery and ruin!”

“Hah!” said the Marquis, glancing round the luxurious room.

“To the eye it is fair enough, here; but seen in its integrity,

under the sky, and by the daylight, it is a crumbling tower of waste,

mismanagement, extortion, debt, mortgage, oppression, hunger, nakedness,

and suffering.”

“Hah!” said the Marquis again, in a well-satisfied manner.

“If it ever becomes mine, it shall be put into some hands better

qualified to free it slowly (if such a thing is possible) from the

weight that drags it down, so that the miserable people who cannot leave

it and who have been long wrung to the last point of endurance, may, in

another generation, suffer less; but it is not for me. There is a curse

on it, and on all this land.”

“And you?” said the uncle. “Forgive my curiosity; do you, under your new

philosophy, graciously intend to live?”

“I must do, to live, what others of my countrymen, even with nobility at

their backs, may have to do some day--work.”

“In England, for example?”

“Yes. The family honour, sir, is safe from me in this country. The

family name can suffer from me in no other, for I bear it in no other.”

The ringing of the bell had caused the adjoining bed-chamber to be

lighted. It now shone brightly, through the door of communication. The

Marquis looked that way, and listened for the retreating step of his

valet.

“England is very attractive to you, seeing how indifferently you have

prospered there,” he observed then, turning his calm face to his nephew

with a smile.

“I have already said, that for my prospering there, I am sensible I may

be indebted to you, sir. For the rest, it is my Refuge.”

“They say, those boastful English, that it is the Refuge of many. You

know a compatriot who has found a Refuge there? A Doctor?”

“Yes.”

“With a daughter?”

“Yes.”

“Yes,” said the Marquis. “You are fatigued. Good night!”

As he bent his head in his most courtly manner, there was a secrecy

in his smiling face, and he conveyed an air of mystery to those words,

which struck the eyes and ears of his nephew forcibly. At the same

time, the thin straight lines of the setting of the eyes, and the thin

straight lips, and the markings in the nose, curved with a sarcasm that

looked handsomely diabolic.

“Yes,” repeated the Marquis. “A Doctor with a daughter. Yes. So

commences the new philosophy! You are fatigued. Good night!”

It would have been of as much avail to interrogate any stone face

outside the chateau as to interrogate that face of his. The nephew

looked at him, in vain, in passing on to the door.

“Good night!” said the uncle. “I look to the pleasure of seeing you

again in the morning. Good repose! Light Monsieur my nephew to his

chamber there!--And burn Monsieur my nephew in his bed, if you will,” he

added to himself, before he rang his little bell again, and summoned his

valet to his own bedroom.

The valet come and gone, Monsieur the Marquis walked to and fro in his

loose chamber-robe, to prepare himself gently for sleep, that hot still

night. Rustling about the room, his softly-slippered feet making no

noise on the floor, he moved like a refined tiger:--looked like some

enchanted marquis of the impenitently wicked sort, in story, whose

periodical change into tiger form was either just going off, or just

coming on.

He moved from end to end of his voluptuous bedroom, looking again at the

scraps of the day’s journey that came unbidden into his mind; the slow

toil up the hill at sunset, the setting sun, the descent, the mill, the

prison on the crag, the little village in the hollow, the peasants at

the fountain, and the mender of roads with his blue cap pointing out the

chain under the carriage. That fountain suggested the Paris fountain,

the little bundle lying on the step, the women bending over it, and the

tall man with his arms up, crying, “Dead!”

“I am cool now,” said Monsieur the Marquis, “and may go to bed.”

So, leaving only one light burning on the large hearth, he let his thin

gauze curtains fall around him, and heard the night break its silence

with a long sigh as he composed himself to sleep.

The stone faces on the outer walls stared blindly at the black night

for three heavy hours; for three heavy hours, the horses in the stables

rattled at their racks, the dogs barked, and the owl made a noise with

very little resemblance in it to the noise conventionally assigned to

the owl by men-poets. But it is the obstinate custom of such creatures

hardly ever to say what is set down for them.

For three heavy hours, the stone faces of the chateau, lion and human,

stared blindly at the night. Dead darkness lay on all the landscape,

dead darkness added its own hush to the hushing dust on all the roads.

The burial-place had got to the pass that its little heaps of poor grass

were undistinguishable from one another; the figure on the Cross might

have come down, for anything that could be seen of it. In the village,

taxers and taxed were fast asleep. Dreaming, perhaps, of banquets, as

the starved usually do, and of ease and rest, as the driven slave and

the yoked ox may, its lean inhabitants slept soundly, and were fed and

freed.

The fountain in the village flowed unseen and unheard, and the fountain

at the chateau dropped unseen and unheard--both melting away, like the

minutes that were falling from the spring of Time--through three dark

hours. Then, the grey water of both began to be ghostly in the light,

and the eyes of the stone faces of the chateau were opened.

Lighter and lighter, until at last the sun touched the tops of the still

trees, and poured its radiance over the hill. In the glow, the water

of the chateau fountain seemed to turn to blood, and the stone faces

crimsoned. The carol of the birds was loud and high, and, on the

weather-beaten sill of the great window of the bed-chamber of Monsieur

the Marquis, one little bird sang its sweetest song with all its might.

At this, the nearest stone face seemed to stare amazed, and, with open

mouth and dropped under-jaw, looked awe-stricken.

Now, the sun was full up, and movement began in the village. Casement

windows opened, crazy doors were unbarred, and people came forth

shivering--chilled, as yet, by the new sweet air. Then began the rarely

lightened toil of the day among the village population. Some, to the

fountain; some, to the fields; men and women here, to dig and delve; men

and women there, to see to the poor live stock, and lead the bony cows

out, to such pasture as could be found by the roadside. In the church

and at the Cross, a kneeling figure or two; attendant on the latter

prayers, the led cow, trying for a breakfast among the weeds at its

foot.

The chateau awoke later, as became its quality, but awoke gradually and

surely. First, the lonely boar-spears and knives of the chase had been

reddened as of old; then, had gleamed trenchant in the morning sunshine;

now, doors and windows were thrown open, horses in their stables looked

round over their shoulders at the light and freshness pouring in at

doorways, leaves sparkled and rustled at iron-grated windows, dogs

pulled hard at their chains, and reared impatient to be loosed.

All these trivial incidents belonged to the routine of life, and the

return of morning. Surely, not so the ringing of the great bell of the

chateau, nor the running up and down the stairs; nor the hurried

figures on the terrace; nor the booting and tramping here and there and

everywhere, nor the quick saddling of horses and riding away?

What winds conveyed this hurry to the grizzled mender of roads, already

at work on the hill-top beyond the village, with his day’s dinner (not

much to carry) lying in a bundle that it was worth no crow’s while to

peck at, on a heap of stones? Had the birds, carrying some grains of it

to a distance, dropped one over him as they sow chance seeds? Whether or

no, the mender of roads ran, on the sultry morning, as if for his life,

down the hill, knee-high in dust, and never stopped till he got to the

fountain.

All the people of the village were at the fountain, standing about

in their depressed manner, and whispering low, but showing no other

emotions than grim curiosity and surprise. The led cows, hastily brought

in and tethered to anything that would hold them, were looking stupidly

on, or lying down chewing the cud of nothing particularly repaying their

trouble, which they had picked up in their interrupted saunter. Some of

the people of the chateau, and some of those of the posting-house, and

all the taxing authorities, were armed more or less, and were crowded

on the other side of the little street in a purposeless way, that was

highly fraught with nothing. Already, the mender of roads had penetrated

into the midst of a group of fifty particular friends, and was smiting

himself in the breast with his blue cap. What did all this portend,

and what portended the swift hoisting-up of Monsieur Gabelle behind

a servant on horseback, and the conveying away of the said Gabelle

(double-laden though the horse was), at a gallop, like a new version of

the German ballad of Leonora?

It portended that there was one stone face too many, up at the chateau.

The Gorgon had surveyed the building again in the night, and had added

the one stone face wanting; the stone face for which it had waited

through about two hundred years.

It lay back on the pillow of Monsieur the Marquis. It was like a fine

mask, suddenly startled, made angry, and petrified. Driven home into the

heart of the stone figure attached to it, was a knife. Round its hilt

was a frill of paper, on which was scrawled:

“Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from Jacques.”

CHAPTER X.

Two Promises

More months, to the number of twelve, had come and gone, and Mr. Charles

Darnay was established in England as a higher teacher of the French

language who was conversant with French literature. In this age, he

would have been a Professor; in that age, he was a Tutor. He read with

young men who could find any leisure and interest for the study of a

living tongue spoken all over the world, and he cultivated a taste for

its stores of knowledge and fancy. He could write of them, besides, in

sound English, and render them into sound English. Such masters were not

at that time easily found; Princes that had been, and Kings that were

to be, were not yet of the Teacher class, and no ruined nobility had

dropped out of Tellson’s ledgers, to turn cooks and carpenters. As a

tutor, whose attainments made the student’s way unusually pleasant and

profitable, and as an elegant translator who brought something to his

work besides mere dictionary knowledge, young Mr. Darnay soon became

known and encouraged. He was well acquainted, more-over, with the

circumstances of his country, and those were of ever-growing interest.

So, with great perseverance and untiring industry, he prospered.

In London, he had expected neither to walk on pavements of gold, nor

to lie on beds of roses; if he had had any such exalted expectation, he

would not have prospered. He had expected labour, and he found it, and

did it and made the best of it. In this, his prosperity consisted.

A certain portion of his time was passed at Cambridge, where he

read with undergraduates as a sort of tolerated smuggler who drove a

contraband trade in European languages, instead of conveying Greek

and Latin through the Custom-house. The rest of his time he passed in

London.

Now, from the days when it was always summer in Eden, to these days

when it is mostly winter in fallen latitudes, the world of a man has

invariably gone one way--Charles Darnay’s way--the way of the love of a

woman.

He had loved Lucie Manette from the hour of his danger. He had never

heard a sound so sweet and dear as the sound of her compassionate voice;

he had never seen a face so tenderly beautiful, as hers when it was

confronted with his own on the edge of the grave that had been dug for

him. But, he had not yet spoken to her on the subject; the assassination

at the deserted chateau far away beyond the heaving water and the long,

long, dusty roads--the solid stone chateau which had itself become the

mere mist of a dream--had been done a year, and he had never yet, by so

much as a single spoken word, disclosed to her the state of his heart.

That he had his reasons for this, he knew full well. It was again a

summer day when, lately arrived in London from his college occupation,

he turned into the quiet corner in Soho, bent on seeking an opportunity

of opening his mind to Doctor Manette. It was the close of the summer

day, and he knew Lucie to be out with Miss Pross.

He found the Doctor reading in his arm-chair at a window. The energy

which had at once supported him under his old sufferings and aggravated

their sharpness, had been gradually restored to him. He was now a

very energetic man indeed, with great firmness of purpose, strength

of resolution, and vigour of action. In his recovered energy he was

sometimes a little fitful and sudden, as he had at first been in the

exercise of his other recovered faculties; but, this had never been

frequently observable, and had grown more and more rare.

He studied much, slept little, sustained a great deal of fatigue with

ease, and was equably cheerful. To him, now entered Charles Darnay, at

sight of whom he laid aside his book and held out his hand.

“Charles Darnay! I rejoice to see you. We have been counting on your

return these three or four days past. Mr. Stryver and Sydney Carton were

both here yesterday, and both made you out to be more than due.”

“I am obliged to them for their interest in the matter,” he answered,

a little coldly as to them, though very warmly as to the Doctor. “Miss

Manette--”

“Is well,” said the Doctor, as he stopped short, “and your return will

delight us all. She has gone out on some household matters, but will

soon be home.”

“Doctor Manette, I knew she was from home. I took the opportunity of her

being from home, to beg to speak to you.”

There was a blank silence.

“Yes?” said the Doctor, with evident constraint. “Bring your chair here,

and speak on.”

He complied as to the chair, but appeared to find the speaking on less

easy.

“I have had the happiness, Doctor Manette, of being so intimate here,”

so he at length began, “for some year and a half, that I hope the topic

on which I am about to touch may not--”

He was stayed by the Doctor’s putting out his hand to stop him. When he

had kept it so a little while, he said, drawing it back:

“Is Lucie the topic?”

“She is.”

“It is hard for me to speak of her at any time. It is very hard for me

to hear her spoken of in that tone of yours, Charles Darnay.”

“It is a tone of fervent admiration, true homage, and deep love, Doctor

Manette!” he said deferentially.

There was another blank silence before her father rejoined:

“I believe it. I do you justice; I believe it.”

His constraint was so manifest, and it was so manifest, too, that it

originated in an unwillingness to approach the subject, that Charles

Darnay hesitated.

“Shall I go on, sir?”

Another blank.

“Yes, go on.”

“You anticipate what I would say, though you cannot know how earnestly

I say it, how earnestly I feel it, without knowing my secret heart, and

the hopes and fears and anxieties with which it has long been

laden. Dear Doctor Manette, I love your daughter fondly, dearly,

disinterestedly, devotedly. If ever there were love in the world, I love

her. You have loved yourself; let your old love speak for me!”

The Doctor sat with his face turned away, and his eyes bent on the

ground. At the last words, he stretched out his hand again, hurriedly,

and cried:

“Not that, sir! Let that be! I adjure you, do not recall that!”

His cry was so like a cry of actual pain, that it rang in Charles

Darnay’s ears long after he had ceased. He motioned with the hand he had

extended, and it seemed to be an appeal to Darnay to pause. The latter

so received it, and remained silent.

“I ask your pardon,” said the Doctor, in a subdued tone, after some

moments. “I do not doubt your loving Lucie; you may be satisfied of it.”

He turned towards him in his chair, but did not look at him, or

raise his eyes. His chin dropped upon his hand, and his white hair

overshadowed his face:

“Have you spoken to Lucie?”

“No.”

“Nor written?”

“Never.”

“It would be ungenerous to affect not to know that your self-denial is

to be referred to your consideration for her father. Her father thanks

you.”

He offered his hand; but his eyes did not go with it.

“I know,” said Darnay, respectfully, “how can I fail to know, Doctor

Manette, I who have seen you together from day to day, that between

you and Miss Manette there is an affection so unusual, so touching, so

belonging to the circumstances in which it has been nurtured, that it

can have few parallels, even in the tenderness between a father and

child. I know, Doctor Manette--how can I fail to know--that, mingled

with the affection and duty of a daughter who has become a woman, there

is, in her heart, towards you, all the love and reliance of infancy

itself. I know that, as in her childhood she had no parent, so she is

now devoted to you with all the constancy and fervour of her present

years and character, united to the trustfulness and attachment of the

early days in which you were lost to her. I know perfectly well that if

you had been restored to her from the world beyond this life, you could

hardly be invested, in her sight, with a more sacred character than that

in which you are always with her. I know that when she is clinging to

you, the hands of baby, girl, and woman, all in one, are round your

neck. I know that in loving you she sees and loves her mother at her

own age, sees and loves you at my age, loves her mother broken-hearted,

loves you through your dreadful trial and in your blessed restoration. I

have known this, night and day, since I have known you in your home.”

Her father sat silent, with his face bent down. His breathing was a

little quickened; but he repressed all other signs of agitation.

“Dear Doctor Manette, always knowing this, always seeing her and you

with this hallowed light about you, I have forborne, and forborne, as

long as it was in the nature of man to do it. I have felt, and do even

now feel, that to bring my love--even mine--between you, is to touch

your history with something not quite so good as itself. But I love her.

Heaven is my witness that I love her!”

“I believe it,” answered her father, mournfully. “I have thought so

before now. I believe it.”

“But, do not believe,” said Darnay, upon whose ear the mournful voice

struck with a reproachful sound, “that if my fortune were so cast as

that, being one day so happy as to make her my wife, I must at any time

put any separation between her and you, I could or would breathe a

word of what I now say. Besides that I should know it to be hopeless, I

should know it to be a baseness. If I had any such possibility, even at

a remote distance of years, harboured in my thoughts, and hidden in my

heart--if it ever had been there--if it ever could be there--I could not

now touch this honoured hand.”

He laid his own upon it as he spoke.

“No, dear Doctor Manette. Like you, a voluntary exile from France; like

you, driven from it by its distractions, oppressions, and miseries; like

you, striving to live away from it by my own exertions, and trusting

in a happier future; I look only to sharing your fortunes, sharing your

life and home, and being faithful to you to the death. Not to divide

with Lucie her privilege as your child, companion, and friend; but to

come in aid of it, and bind her closer to you, if such a thing can be.”

His touch still lingered on her father’s hand. Answering the touch for a

moment, but not coldly, her father rested his hands upon the arms of

his chair, and looked up for the first time since the beginning of the

conference. A struggle was evidently in his face; a struggle with that

occasional look which had a tendency in it to dark doubt and dread.

“You speak so feelingly and so manfully, Charles Darnay, that I thank

you with all my heart, and will open all my heart--or nearly so. Have

you any reason to believe that Lucie loves you?”

“None. As yet, none.”

“Is it the immediate object of this confidence, that you may at once

ascertain that, with my knowledge?”

“Not even so. I might not have the hopefulness to do it for weeks; I

might (mistaken or not mistaken) have that hopefulness to-morrow.”

“Do you seek any guidance from me?”

“I ask none, sir. But I have thought it possible that you might have it

in your power, if you should deem it right, to give me some.”

“Do you seek any promise from me?”

“I do seek that.”

“What is it?”

“I well understand that, without you, I could have no hope. I well

understand that, even if Miss Manette held me at this moment in her

innocent heart--do not think I have the presumption to assume so much--I

could retain no place in it against her love for her father.”

“If that be so, do you see what, on the other hand, is involved in it?”

“I understand equally well, that a word from her father in any suitor’s

favour, would outweigh herself and all the world. For which reason,

Doctor Manette,” said Darnay, modestly but firmly, “I would not ask that

word, to save my life.”

“I am sure of it. Charles Darnay, mysteries arise out of close love, as

well as out of wide division; in the former case, they are subtle and

delicate, and difficult to penetrate. My daughter Lucie is, in this one

respect, such a mystery to me; I can make no guess at the state of her

heart.”

“May I ask, sir, if you think she is--” As he hesitated, her father

supplied the rest.

“Is sought by any other suitor?”

“It is what I meant to say.”

Her father considered a little before he answered:

“You have seen Mr. Carton here, yourself. Mr. Stryver is here too,

occasionally. If it be at all, it can only be by one of these.”

“Or both,” said Darnay.

“I had not thought of both; I should not think either, likely. You want

a promise from me. Tell me what it is.”

“It is, that if Miss Manette should bring to you at any time, on her own

part, such a confidence as I have ventured to lay before you, you will

bear testimony to what I have said, and to your belief in it. I hope you

may be able to think so well of me, as to urge no influence against

me. I say nothing more of my stake in this; this is what I ask. The

condition on which I ask it, and which you have an undoubted right to

require, I will observe immediately.”

“I give the promise,” said the Doctor, “without any condition. I believe

your object to be, purely and truthfully, as you have stated it. I

believe your intention is to perpetuate, and not to weaken, the ties

between me and my other and far dearer self. If she should ever tell me

that you are essential to her perfect happiness, I will give her to you.

If there were--Charles Darnay, if there were--”

The young man had taken his hand gratefully; their hands were joined as

the Doctor spoke:

“--any fancies, any reasons, any apprehensions, anything whatsoever,

new or old, against the man she really loved--the direct responsibility

thereof not lying on his head--they should all be obliterated for her

sake. She is everything to me; more to me than suffering, more to me

than wrong, more to me--Well! This is idle talk.”

So strange was the way in which he faded into silence, and so strange

his fixed look when he had ceased to speak, that Darnay felt his own

hand turn cold in the hand that slowly released and dropped it.

“You said something to me,” said Doctor Manette, breaking into a smile.

“What was it you said to me?”

He was at a loss how to answer, until he remembered having spoken of a

condition. Relieved as his mind reverted to that, he answered:

“Your confidence in me ought to be returned with full confidence on my

part. My present name, though but slightly changed from my mother’s, is

not, as you will remember, my own. I wish to tell you what that is, and

why I am in England.”

“Stop!” said the Doctor of Beauvais.

“I wish it, that I may the better deserve your confidence, and have no

secret from you.”

“Stop!”

For an instant, the Doctor even had his two hands at his ears; for

another instant, even had his two hands laid on Darnay’s lips.

“Tell me when I ask you, not now. If your suit should prosper, if Lucie

should love you, you shall tell me on your marriage morning. Do you

promise?”

“Willingly.

“Give me your hand. She will be home directly, and it is better she

should not see us together to-night. Go! God bless you!”

It was dark when Charles Darnay left him, and it was an hour later and

darker when Lucie came home; she hurried into the room alone--for

Miss Pross had gone straight up-stairs--and was surprised to find his

reading-chair empty.

“My father!” she called to him. “Father dear!”

Nothing was said in answer, but she heard a low hammering sound in his

bedroom. Passing lightly across the intermediate room, she looked in at

his door and came running back frightened, crying to herself, with her

blood all chilled, “What shall I do! What shall I do!”

Her uncertainty lasted but a moment; she hurried back, and tapped at

his door, and softly called to him. The noise ceased at the sound of

her voice, and he presently came out to her, and they walked up and down

together for a long time.

She came down from her bed, to look at him in his sleep that night. He

slept heavily, and his tray of shoemaking tools, and his old unfinished

work, were all as usual.

CHAPTER XI.

A Companion Picture

“Sydney,” said Mr. Stryver, on that self-same night, or morning, to his

jackal; “mix another bowl of punch; I have something to say to you.”

Sydney had been working double tides that night, and the night before,

and the night before that, and a good many nights in succession, making

a grand clearance among Mr. Stryver’s papers before the setting in

of the long vacation. The clearance was effected at last; the Stryver

arrears were handsomely fetched up; everything was got rid of until

November should come with its fogs atmospheric, and fogs legal, and

bring grist to the mill again.

Sydney was none the livelier and none the soberer for so much

application. It had taken a deal of extra wet-towelling to pull him

through the night; a correspondingly extra quantity of wine had preceded

the towelling; and he was in a very damaged condition, as he now pulled

his turban off and threw it into the basin in which he had steeped it at

intervals for the last six hours.

“Are you mixing that other bowl of punch?” said Stryver the portly, with

his hands in his waistband, glancing round from the sofa where he lay on

his back.

“I am.”

“Now, look here! I am going to tell you something that will rather

surprise you, and that perhaps will make you think me not quite as

shrewd as you usually do think me. I intend to marry.”

“\_Do\_ you?”

“Yes. And not for money. What do you say now?”

“I don’t feel disposed to say much. Who is she?”

“Guess.”

“Do I know her?”

“Guess.”

“I am not going to guess, at five o’clock in the morning, with my brains

frying and sputtering in my head. If you want me to guess, you must ask

me to dinner.”

“Well then, I’ll tell you,” said Stryver, coming slowly into a sitting

posture. “Sydney, I rather despair of making myself intelligible to you,

because you are such an insensible dog.”

“And you,” returned Sydney, busy concocting the punch, “are such a

sensitive and poetical spirit--”

“Come!” rejoined Stryver, laughing boastfully, “though I don’t prefer

any claim to being the soul of Romance (for I hope I know better), still

I am a tenderer sort of fellow than \_you\_.”

“You are a luckier, if you mean that.”

“I don’t mean that. I mean I am a man of more--more--”

“Say gallantry, while you are about it,” suggested Carton.

“Well! I’ll say gallantry. My meaning is that I am a man,” said Stryver,

inflating himself at his friend as he made the punch, “who cares more to

be agreeable, who takes more pains to be agreeable, who knows better how

to be agreeable, in a woman’s society, than you do.”

“Go on,” said Sydney Carton.

“No; but before I go on,” said Stryver, shaking his head in his bullying

way, “I’ll have this out with you. You’ve been at Doctor Manette’s house

as much as I have, or more than I have. Why, I have been ashamed of your

moroseness there! Your manners have been of that silent and sullen and

hangdog kind, that, upon my life and soul, I have been ashamed of you,

Sydney!”

“It should be very beneficial to a man in your practice at the bar, to

be ashamed of anything,” returned Sydney; “you ought to be much obliged

to me.”

“You shall not get off in that way,” rejoined Stryver, shouldering the

rejoinder at him; “no, Sydney, it’s my duty to tell you--and I tell you

to your face to do you good--that you are a devilish ill-conditioned

fellow in that sort of society. You are a disagreeable fellow.”

Sydney drank a bumper of the punch he had made, and laughed.

“Look at me!” said Stryver, squaring himself; “I have less need to make

myself agreeable than you have, being more independent in circumstances.

Why do I do it?”

“I never saw you do it yet,” muttered Carton.

“I do it because it’s politic; I do it on principle. And look at me! I

get on.”

“You don’t get on with your account of your matrimonial intentions,”

answered Carton, with a careless air; “I wish you would keep to that. As

to me--will you never understand that I am incorrigible?”

He asked the question with some appearance of scorn.

“You have no business to be incorrigible,” was his friend’s answer,

delivered in no very soothing tone.

“I have no business to be, at all, that I know of,” said Sydney Carton.

“Who is the lady?”

“Now, don’t let my announcement of the name make you uncomfortable,

Sydney,” said Mr. Stryver, preparing him with ostentatious friendliness

for the disclosure he was about to make, “because I know you don’t mean

half you say; and if you meant it all, it would be of no importance. I

make this little preface, because you once mentioned the young lady to

me in slighting terms.”

“I did?”

“Certainly; and in these chambers.”

Sydney Carton looked at his punch and looked at his complacent friend;

drank his punch and looked at his complacent friend.

“You made mention of the young lady as a golden-haired doll. The young

lady is Miss Manette. If you had been a fellow of any sensitiveness or

delicacy of feeling in that kind of way, Sydney, I might have been a

little resentful of your employing such a designation; but you are not.

You want that sense altogether; therefore I am no more annoyed when I

think of the expression, than I should be annoyed by a man’s opinion of

a picture of mine, who had no eye for pictures: or of a piece of music

of mine, who had no ear for music.”

Sydney Carton drank the punch at a great rate; drank it by bumpers,

looking at his friend.

“Now you know all about it, Syd,” said Mr. Stryver. “I don’t care about

fortune: she is a charming creature, and I have made up my mind to

please myself: on the whole, I think I can afford to please myself. She

will have in me a man already pretty well off, and a rapidly rising man,

and a man of some distinction: it is a piece of good fortune for her,

but she is worthy of good fortune. Are you astonished?”

Carton, still drinking the punch, rejoined, “Why should I be

astonished?”

“You approve?”

Carton, still drinking the punch, rejoined, “Why should I not approve?”

“Well!” said his friend Stryver, “you take it more easily than I fancied

you would, and are less mercenary on my behalf than I thought you would

be; though, to be sure, you know well enough by this time that your

ancient chum is a man of a pretty strong will. Yes, Sydney, I have had

enough of this style of life, with no other as a change from it; I

feel that it is a pleasant thing for a man to have a home when he feels

inclined to go to it (when he doesn’t, he can stay away), and I feel

that Miss Manette will tell well in any station, and will always do me

credit. So I have made up my mind. And now, Sydney, old boy, I want to

say a word to \_you\_ about \_your\_ prospects. You are in a bad way, you

know; you really are in a bad way. You don’t know the value of money,

you live hard, you’ll knock up one of these days, and be ill and poor;

you really ought to think about a nurse.”

The prosperous patronage with which he said it, made him look twice as

big as he was, and four times as offensive.

“Now, let me recommend you,” pursued Stryver, “to look it in the face.

I have looked it in the face, in my different way; look it in the face,

you, in your different way. Marry. Provide somebody to take care of

you. Never mind your having no enjoyment of women’s society, nor

understanding of it, nor tact for it. Find out somebody. Find out some

respectable woman with a little property--somebody in the landlady way,

or lodging-letting way--and marry her, against a rainy day. That’s the

kind of thing for \_you\_. Now think of it, Sydney.”

“I’ll think of it,” said Sydney.

CHAPTER XII.

The Fellow of Delicacy

Mr. Stryver having made up his mind to that magnanimous bestowal of good

fortune on the Doctor’s daughter, resolved to make her happiness known

to her before he left town for the Long Vacation. After some mental

debating of the point, he came to the conclusion that it would be as

well to get all the preliminaries done with, and they could then arrange

at their leisure whether he should give her his hand a week or two

before Michaelmas Term, or in the little Christmas vacation between it

and Hilary.

As to the strength of his case, he had not a doubt about it, but clearly

saw his way to the verdict. Argued with the jury on substantial worldly

grounds--the only grounds ever worth taking into account--it was a

plain case, and had not a weak spot in it. He called himself for the

plaintiff, there was no getting over his evidence, the counsel for

the defendant threw up his brief, and the jury did not even turn to

consider. After trying it, Stryver, C. J., was satisfied that no plainer

case could be.

Accordingly, Mr. Stryver inaugurated the Long Vacation with a formal

proposal to take Miss Manette to Vauxhall Gardens; that failing, to

Ranelagh; that unaccountably failing too, it behoved him to present

himself in Soho, and there declare his noble mind.

Towards Soho, therefore, Mr. Stryver shouldered his way from the Temple,

while the bloom of the Long Vacation’s infancy was still upon it.

Anybody who had seen him projecting himself into Soho while he was yet

on Saint Dunstan’s side of Temple Bar, bursting in his full-blown way

along the pavement, to the jostlement of all weaker people, might have

seen how safe and strong he was.

His way taking him past Tellson’s, and he both banking at Tellson’s and

knowing Mr. Lorry as the intimate friend of the Manettes, it entered Mr.

Stryver’s mind to enter the bank, and reveal to Mr. Lorry the brightness

of the Soho horizon. So, he pushed open the door with the weak rattle

in its throat, stumbled down the two steps, got past the two ancient

cashiers, and shouldered himself into the musty back closet where Mr.

Lorry sat at great books ruled for figures, with perpendicular iron

bars to his window as if that were ruled for figures too, and everything

under the clouds were a sum.

“Halloa!” said Mr. Stryver. “How do you do? I hope you are well!”

It was Stryver’s grand peculiarity that he always seemed too big for any

place, or space. He was so much too big for Tellson’s, that old clerks

in distant corners looked up with looks of remonstrance, as though he

squeezed them against the wall. The House itself, magnificently reading

the paper quite in the far-off perspective, lowered displeased, as if

the Stryver head had been butted into its responsible waistcoat.

The discreet Mr. Lorry said, in a sample tone of the voice he would

recommend under the circumstances, “How do you do, Mr. Stryver? How do

you do, sir?” and shook hands. There was a peculiarity in his manner

of shaking hands, always to be seen in any clerk at Tellson’s who shook

hands with a customer when the House pervaded the air. He shook in a

self-abnegating way, as one who shook for Tellson and Co.

“Can I do anything for you, Mr. Stryver?” asked Mr. Lorry, in his

business character.

“Why, no, thank you; this is a private visit to yourself, Mr. Lorry; I

have come for a private word.”

“Oh indeed!” said Mr. Lorry, bending down his ear, while his eye strayed

to the House afar off.

“I am going,” said Mr. Stryver, leaning his arms confidentially on the

desk: whereupon, although it was a large double one, there appeared to

be not half desk enough for him: “I am going to make an offer of myself

in marriage to your agreeable little friend, Miss Manette, Mr. Lorry.”

“Oh dear me!” cried Mr. Lorry, rubbing his chin, and looking at his

visitor dubiously.

“Oh dear me, sir?” repeated Stryver, drawing back. “Oh dear you, sir?

What may your meaning be, Mr. Lorry?”

“My meaning,” answered the man of business, “is, of course, friendly and

appreciative, and that it does you the greatest credit, and--in short,

my meaning is everything you could desire. But--really, you know, Mr.

Stryver--” Mr. Lorry paused, and shook his head at him in the oddest

manner, as if he were compelled against his will to add, internally,

“you know there really is so much too much of you!”

“Well!” said Stryver, slapping the desk with his contentious hand,

opening his eyes wider, and taking a long breath, “if I understand you,

Mr. Lorry, I’ll be hanged!”

Mr. Lorry adjusted his little wig at both ears as a means towards that

end, and bit the feather of a pen.

“D--n it all, sir!” said Stryver, staring at him, “am I not eligible?”

“Oh dear yes! Yes. Oh yes, you’re eligible!” said Mr. Lorry. “If you say

eligible, you are eligible.”

“Am I not prosperous?” asked Stryver.

“Oh! if you come to prosperous, you are prosperous,” said Mr. Lorry.

“And advancing?”

“If you come to advancing you know,” said Mr. Lorry, delighted to be

able to make another admission, “nobody can doubt that.”

“Then what on earth is your meaning, Mr. Lorry?” demanded Stryver,

perceptibly crestfallen.

“Well! I--Were you going there now?” asked Mr. Lorry.

“Straight!” said Stryver, with a plump of his fist on the desk.

“Then I think I wouldn’t, if I was you.”

“Why?” said Stryver. “Now, I’ll put you in a corner,” forensically

shaking a forefinger at him. “You are a man of business and bound to

have a reason. State your reason. Why wouldn’t you go?”

“Because,” said Mr. Lorry, “I wouldn’t go on such an object without

having some cause to believe that I should succeed.”

“D--n \_me\_!” cried Stryver, “but this beats everything.”

Mr. Lorry glanced at the distant House, and glanced at the angry

Stryver.

“Here’s a man of business--a man of years--a man of experience--\_in\_

a Bank,” said Stryver; “and having summed up three leading reasons for

complete success, he says there’s no reason at all! Says it with his

head on!” Mr. Stryver remarked upon the peculiarity as if it would have

been infinitely less remarkable if he had said it with his head off.

“When I speak of success, I speak of success with the young lady; and

when I speak of causes and reasons to make success probable, I speak of

causes and reasons that will tell as such with the young lady. The young

lady, my good sir,” said Mr. Lorry, mildly tapping the Stryver arm, “the

young lady. The young lady goes before all.”

“Then you mean to tell me, Mr. Lorry,” said Stryver, squaring his

elbows, “that it is your deliberate opinion that the young lady at

present in question is a mincing Fool?”

“Not exactly so. I mean to tell you, Mr. Stryver,” said Mr. Lorry,

reddening, “that I will hear no disrespectful word of that young lady

from any lips; and that if I knew any man--which I hope I do not--whose

taste was so coarse, and whose temper was so overbearing, that he could

not restrain himself from speaking disrespectfully of that young lady at

this desk, not even Tellson’s should prevent my giving him a piece of my

mind.”

The necessity of being angry in a suppressed tone had put Mr. Stryver’s

blood-vessels into a dangerous state when it was his turn to be angry;

Mr. Lorry’s veins, methodical as their courses could usually be, were in

no better state now it was his turn.

“That is what I mean to tell you, sir,” said Mr. Lorry. “Pray let there

be no mistake about it.”

Mr. Stryver sucked the end of a ruler for a little while, and then stood

hitting a tune out of his teeth with it, which probably gave him the

toothache. He broke the awkward silence by saying:

“This is something new to me, Mr. Lorry. You deliberately advise me not

to go up to Soho and offer myself--\_my\_self, Stryver of the King’s Bench

bar?”

“Do you ask me for my advice, Mr. Stryver?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Very good. Then I give it, and you have repeated it correctly.”

“And all I can say of it is,” laughed Stryver with a vexed laugh, “that

this--ha, ha!--beats everything past, present, and to come.”

“Now understand me,” pursued Mr. Lorry. “As a man of business, I am

not justified in saying anything about this matter, for, as a man of

business, I know nothing of it. But, as an old fellow, who has carried

Miss Manette in his arms, who is the trusted friend of Miss Manette and

of her father too, and who has a great affection for them both, I have

spoken. The confidence is not of my seeking, recollect. Now, you think I

may not be right?”

“Not I!” said Stryver, whistling. “I can’t undertake to find third

parties in common sense; I can only find it for myself. I suppose sense

in certain quarters; you suppose mincing bread-and-butter nonsense. It’s

new to me, but you are right, I dare say.”

“What I suppose, Mr. Stryver, I claim to characterise for myself--And

understand me, sir,” said Mr. Lorry, quickly flushing again, “I

will not--not even at Tellson’s--have it characterised for me by any

gentleman breathing.”

“There! I beg your pardon!” said Stryver.

“Granted. Thank you. Well, Mr. Stryver, I was about to say:--it might be

painful to you to find yourself mistaken, it might be painful to Doctor

Manette to have the task of being explicit with you, it might be very

painful to Miss Manette to have the task of being explicit with you. You

know the terms upon which I have the honour and happiness to stand with

the family. If you please, committing you in no way, representing you

in no way, I will undertake to correct my advice by the exercise of a

little new observation and judgment expressly brought to bear upon

it. If you should then be dissatisfied with it, you can but test its

soundness for yourself; if, on the other hand, you should be satisfied

with it, and it should be what it now is, it may spare all sides what is

best spared. What do you say?”

“How long would you keep me in town?”

“Oh! It is only a question of a few hours. I could go to Soho in the

evening, and come to your chambers afterwards.”

“Then I say yes,” said Stryver: “I won’t go up there now, I am not so

hot upon it as that comes to; I say yes, and I shall expect you to look

in to-night. Good morning.”

Then Mr. Stryver turned and burst out of the Bank, causing such a

concussion of air on his passage through, that to stand up against it

bowing behind the two counters, required the utmost remaining strength

of the two ancient clerks. Those venerable and feeble persons were

always seen by the public in the act of bowing, and were popularly

believed, when they had bowed a customer out, still to keep on bowing in

the empty office until they bowed another customer in.

The barrister was keen enough to divine that the banker would not have

gone so far in his expression of opinion on any less solid ground than

moral certainty. Unprepared as he was for the large pill he had to

swallow, he got it down. “And now,” said Mr. Stryver, shaking his

forensic forefinger at the Temple in general, when it was down, “my way

out of this, is, to put you all in the wrong.”

It was a bit of the art of an Old Bailey tactician, in which he found

great relief. “You shall not put me in the wrong, young lady,” said Mr.

Stryver; “I’ll do that for you.”

Accordingly, when Mr. Lorry called that night as late as ten o’clock,

Mr. Stryver, among a quantity of books and papers littered out for the

purpose, seemed to have nothing less on his mind than the subject of

the morning. He even showed surprise when he saw Mr. Lorry, and was

altogether in an absent and preoccupied state.

“Well!” said that good-natured emissary, after a full half-hour of

bootless attempts to bring him round to the question. “I have been to

Soho.”

“To Soho?” repeated Mr. Stryver, coldly. “Oh, to be sure! What am I

thinking of!”

“And I have no doubt,” said Mr. Lorry, “that I was right in the

conversation we had. My opinion is confirmed, and I reiterate my

advice.”

“I assure you,” returned Mr. Stryver, in the friendliest way, “that I

am sorry for it on your account, and sorry for it on the poor father’s

account. I know this must always be a sore subject with the family; let

us say no more about it.”

“I don’t understand you,” said Mr. Lorry.

“I dare say not,” rejoined Stryver, nodding his head in a smoothing and

final way; “no matter, no matter.”

“But it does matter,” Mr. Lorry urged.

“No it doesn’t; I assure you it doesn’t. Having supposed that there was

sense where there is no sense, and a laudable ambition where there is

not a laudable ambition, I am well out of my mistake, and no harm is

done. Young women have committed similar follies often before, and have

repented them in poverty and obscurity often before. In an unselfish

aspect, I am sorry that the thing is dropped, because it would have been

a bad thing for me in a worldly point of view; in a selfish aspect, I am

glad that the thing has dropped, because it would have been a bad thing

for me in a worldly point of view--it is hardly necessary to say I could

have gained nothing by it. There is no harm at all done. I have not

proposed to the young lady, and, between ourselves, I am by no means

certain, on reflection, that I ever should have committed myself to

that extent. Mr. Lorry, you cannot control the mincing vanities and

giddinesses of empty-headed girls; you must not expect to do it, or you

will always be disappointed. Now, pray say no more about it. I tell you,

I regret it on account of others, but I am satisfied on my own account.

And I am really very much obliged to you for allowing me to sound you,

and for giving me your advice; you know the young lady better than I do;

you were right, it never would have done.”

Mr. Lorry was so taken aback, that he looked quite stupidly at Mr.

Stryver shouldering him towards the door, with an appearance of

showering generosity, forbearance, and goodwill, on his erring head.

“Make the best of it, my dear sir,” said Stryver; “say no more about it;

thank you again for allowing me to sound you; good night!”

Mr. Lorry was out in the night, before he knew where he was. Mr. Stryver

was lying back on his sofa, winking at his ceiling.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Fellow of No Delicacy

If Sydney Carton ever shone anywhere, he certainly never shone in the

house of Doctor Manette. He had been there often, during a whole year,

and had always been the same moody and morose lounger there. When he

cared to talk, he talked well; but, the cloud of caring for nothing,

which overshadowed him with such a fatal darkness, was very rarely

pierced by the light within him.

And yet he did care something for the streets that environed that house,

and for the senseless stones that made their pavements. Many a night

he vaguely and unhappily wandered there, when wine had brought no

transitory gladness to him; many a dreary daybreak revealed his solitary

figure lingering there, and still lingering there when the first beams

of the sun brought into strong relief, removed beauties of architecture

in spires of churches and lofty buildings, as perhaps the quiet time

brought some sense of better things, else forgotten and unattainable,

into his mind. Of late, the neglected bed in the Temple Court had known

him more scantily than ever; and often when he had thrown himself upon

it no longer than a few minutes, he had got up again, and haunted that

neighbourhood.

On a day in August, when Mr. Stryver (after notifying to his jackal

that “he had thought better of that marrying matter”) had carried his

delicacy into Devonshire, and when the sight and scent of flowers in the

City streets had some waifs of goodness in them for the worst, of health

for the sickliest, and of youth for the oldest, Sydney’s feet still trod

those stones. From being irresolute and purposeless, his feet became

animated by an intention, and, in the working out of that intention,

they took him to the Doctor’s door.

He was shown up-stairs, and found Lucie at her work, alone. She had

never been quite at her ease with him, and received him with some little

embarrassment as he seated himself near her table. But, looking up at

his face in the interchange of the first few common-places, she observed

a change in it.

“I fear you are not well, Mr. Carton!”

“No. But the life I lead, Miss Manette, is not conducive to health. What

is to be expected of, or by, such profligates?”

“Is it not--forgive me; I have begun the question on my lips--a pity to

live no better life?”

“God knows it is a shame!”

“Then why not change it?”

Looking gently at him again, she was surprised and saddened to see that

there were tears in his eyes. There were tears in his voice too, as he

answered:

“It is too late for that. I shall never be better than I am. I shall

sink lower, and be worse.”

He leaned an elbow on her table, and covered his eyes with his hand. The

table trembled in the silence that followed.

She had never seen him softened, and was much distressed. He knew her to

be so, without looking at her, and said:

“Pray forgive me, Miss Manette. I break down before the knowledge of

what I want to say to you. Will you hear me?”

“If it will do you any good, Mr. Carton, if it would make you happier,

it would make me very glad!”

“God bless you for your sweet compassion!”

He unshaded his face after a little while, and spoke steadily.

“Don’t be afraid to hear me. Don’t shrink from anything I say. I am like

one who died young. All my life might have been.”

“No, Mr. Carton. I am sure that the best part of it might still be; I am

sure that you might be much, much worthier of yourself.”

“Say of you, Miss Manette, and although I know better--although in the

mystery of my own wretched heart I know better--I shall never forget

it!”

She was pale and trembling. He came to her relief with a fixed despair

of himself which made the interview unlike any other that could have

been holden.

“If it had been possible, Miss Manette, that you could have returned the

love of the man you see before yourself--flung away, wasted, drunken,

poor creature of misuse as you know him to be--he would have been

conscious this day and hour, in spite of his happiness, that he would

bring you to misery, bring you to sorrow and repentance, blight you,

disgrace you, pull you down with him. I know very well that you can have

no tenderness for me; I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot

be.”

“Without it, can I not save you, Mr. Carton? Can I not recall

you--forgive me again!--to a better course? Can I in no way repay your

confidence? I know this is a confidence,” she modestly said, after a

little hesitation, and in earnest tears, “I know you would say this to

no one else. Can I turn it to no good account for yourself, Mr. Carton?”

He shook his head.

“To none. No, Miss Manette, to none. If you will hear me through a very

little more, all you can ever do for me is done. I wish you to know that

you have been the last dream of my soul. In my degradation I have not

been so degraded but that the sight of you with your father, and of this

home made such a home by you, has stirred old shadows that I thought had

died out of me. Since I knew you, I have been troubled by a remorse that

I thought would never reproach me again, and have heard whispers from

old voices impelling me upward, that I thought were silent for ever. I

have had unformed ideas of striving afresh, beginning anew, shaking off

sloth and sensuality, and fighting out the abandoned fight. A dream, all

a dream, that ends in nothing, and leaves the sleeper where he lay down,

but I wish you to know that you inspired it.”

“Will nothing of it remain? O Mr. Carton, think again! Try again!”

“No, Miss Manette; all through it, I have known myself to be quite

undeserving. And yet I have had the weakness, and have still the

weakness, to wish you to know with what a sudden mastery you kindled me,

heap of ashes that I am, into fire--a fire, however, inseparable in

its nature from myself, quickening nothing, lighting nothing, doing no

service, idly burning away.”

“Since it is my misfortune, Mr. Carton, to have made you more unhappy

than you were before you knew me--”

“Don’t say that, Miss Manette, for you would have reclaimed me, if

anything could. You will not be the cause of my becoming worse.”

“Since the state of your mind that you describe, is, at all events,

attributable to some influence of mine--this is what I mean, if I can

make it plain--can I use no influence to serve you? Have I no power for

good, with you, at all?”

“The utmost good that I am capable of now, Miss Manette, I have come

here to realise. Let me carry through the rest of my misdirected life,

the remembrance that I opened my heart to you, last of all the world;

and that there was something left in me at this time which you could

deplore and pity.”

“Which I entreated you to believe, again and again, most fervently, with

all my heart, was capable of better things, Mr. Carton!”

“Entreat me to believe it no more, Miss Manette. I have proved myself,

and I know better. I distress you; I draw fast to an end. Will you let

me believe, when I recall this day, that the last confidence of my life

was reposed in your pure and innocent breast, and that it lies there

alone, and will be shared by no one?”

“If that will be a consolation to you, yes.”

“Not even by the dearest one ever to be known to you?”

“Mr. Carton,” she answered, after an agitated pause, “the secret is

yours, not mine; and I promise to respect it.”

“Thank you. And again, God bless you.”

He put her hand to his lips, and moved towards the door.

“Be under no apprehension, Miss Manette, of my ever resuming this

conversation by so much as a passing word. I will never refer to it

again. If I were dead, that could not be surer than it is henceforth. In

the hour of my death, I shall hold sacred the one good remembrance--and

shall thank and bless you for it--that my last avowal of myself was made

to you, and that my name, and faults, and miseries were gently carried

in your heart. May it otherwise be light and happy!”

He was so unlike what he had ever shown himself to be, and it was so

sad to think how much he had thrown away, and how much he every day kept

down and perverted, that Lucie Manette wept mournfully for him as he

stood looking back at her.

“Be comforted!” he said, “I am not worth such feeling, Miss Manette. An

hour or two hence, and the low companions and low habits that I scorn

but yield to, will render me less worth such tears as those, than any

wretch who creeps along the streets. Be comforted! But, within myself, I

shall always be, towards you, what I am now, though outwardly I shall be

what you have heretofore seen me. The last supplication but one I make

to you, is, that you will believe this of me.”

“I will, Mr. Carton.”

“My last supplication of all, is this; and with it, I will relieve

you of a visitor with whom I well know you have nothing in unison, and

between whom and you there is an impassable space. It is useless to say

it, I know, but it rises out of my soul. For you, and for any dear to

you, I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that

there was any opportunity or capacity of sacrifice in it, I would

embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you. Try to hold

me in your mind, at some quiet times, as ardent and sincere in this one

thing. The time will come, the time will not be long in coming, when new

ties will be formed about you--ties that will bind you yet more tenderly

and strongly to the home you so adorn--the dearest ties that will ever

grace and gladden you. O Miss Manette, when the little picture of a

happy father’s face looks up in yours, when you see your own bright

beauty springing up anew at your feet, think now and then that there is

a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love beside you!”

He said, “Farewell!” said a last “God bless you!” and left her.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Honest Tradesman

To the eyes of Mr. Jeremiah Cruncher, sitting on his stool in

Fleet-street with his grisly urchin beside him, a vast number and

variety of objects in movement were every day presented. Who could sit

upon anything in Fleet-street during the busy hours of the day, and

not be dazed and deafened by two immense processions, one ever tending

westward with the sun, the other ever tending eastward from the sun,

both ever tending to the plains beyond the range of red and purple where

the sun goes down!

With his straw in his mouth, Mr. Cruncher sat watching the two streams,

like the heathen rustic who has for several centuries been on duty

watching one stream--saving that Jerry had no expectation of their ever

running dry. Nor would it have been an expectation of a hopeful kind,

since a small part of his income was derived from the pilotage of timid

women (mostly of a full habit and past the middle term of life) from

Tellson’s side of the tides to the opposite shore. Brief as such

companionship was in every separate instance, Mr. Cruncher never failed

to become so interested in the lady as to express a strong desire to

have the honour of drinking her very good health. And it was from

the gifts bestowed upon him towards the execution of this benevolent

purpose, that he recruited his finances, as just now observed.

Time was, when a poet sat upon a stool in a public place, and mused in

the sight of men. Mr. Cruncher, sitting on a stool in a public place,

but not being a poet, mused as little as possible, and looked about him.

It fell out that he was thus engaged in a season when crowds were

few, and belated women few, and when his affairs in general were so

unprosperous as to awaken a strong suspicion in his breast that Mrs.

Cruncher must have been “flopping” in some pointed manner, when an

unusual concourse pouring down Fleet-street westward, attracted his

attention. Looking that way, Mr. Cruncher made out that some kind of

funeral was coming along, and that there was popular objection to this

funeral, which engendered uproar.

“Young Jerry,” said Mr. Cruncher, turning to his offspring, “it’s a

buryin’.”

“Hooroar, father!” cried Young Jerry.

The young gentleman uttered this exultant sound with mysterious

significance. The elder gentleman took the cry so ill, that he watched

his opportunity, and smote the young gentleman on the ear.

“What d’ye mean? What are you hooroaring at? What do you want to conwey

to your own father, you young Rip? This boy is a getting too many for

\_me\_!” said Mr. Cruncher, surveying him. “Him and his hooroars! Don’t

let me hear no more of you, or you shall feel some more of me. D’ye

hear?”

“I warn’t doing no harm,” Young Jerry protested, rubbing his cheek.

“Drop it then,” said Mr. Cruncher; “I won’t have none of \_your\_ no

harms. Get a top of that there seat, and look at the crowd.”

His son obeyed, and the crowd approached; they were bawling and hissing

round a dingy hearse and dingy mourning coach, in which mourning coach

there was only one mourner, dressed in the dingy trappings that were

considered essential to the dignity of the position. The position

appeared by no means to please him, however, with an increasing rabble

surrounding the coach, deriding him, making grimaces at him, and

incessantly groaning and calling out: “Yah! Spies! Tst! Yaha! Spies!”

with many compliments too numerous and forcible to repeat.

Funerals had at all times a remarkable attraction for Mr. Cruncher; he

always pricked up his senses, and became excited, when a funeral passed

Tellson’s. Naturally, therefore, a funeral with this uncommon attendance

excited him greatly, and he asked of the first man who ran against him:

“What is it, brother? What’s it about?”

“\_I\_ don’t know,” said the man. “Spies! Yaha! Tst! Spies!”

He asked another man. “Who is it?”

“\_I\_ don’t know,” returned the man, clapping his hands to his mouth

nevertheless, and vociferating in a surprising heat and with the

greatest ardour, “Spies! Yaha! Tst, tst! Spi--ies!”

At length, a person better informed on the merits of the case, tumbled

against him, and from this person he learned that the funeral was the

funeral of one Roger Cly.

“Was he a spy?” asked Mr. Cruncher.

“Old Bailey spy,” returned his informant. “Yaha! Tst! Yah! Old Bailey

Spi--i--ies!”

“Why, to be sure!” exclaimed Jerry, recalling the Trial at which he had

assisted. “I’ve seen him. Dead, is he?”

“Dead as mutton,” returned the other, “and can’t be too dead. Have ’em

out, there! Spies! Pull ’em out, there! Spies!”

The idea was so acceptable in the prevalent absence of any idea,

that the crowd caught it up with eagerness, and loudly repeating the

suggestion to have ’em out, and to pull ’em out, mobbed the two vehicles

so closely that they came to a stop. On the crowd’s opening the coach

doors, the one mourner scuffled out by himself and was in their hands

for a moment; but he was so alert, and made such good use of his time,

that in another moment he was scouring away up a bye-street, after

shedding his cloak, hat, long hatband, white pocket-handkerchief, and

other symbolical tears.

These, the people tore to pieces and scattered far and wide with great

enjoyment, while the tradesmen hurriedly shut up their shops; for a

crowd in those times stopped at nothing, and was a monster much dreaded.

They had already got the length of opening the hearse to take the coffin

out, when some brighter genius proposed instead, its being escorted to

its destination amidst general rejoicing. Practical suggestions being

much needed, this suggestion, too, was received with acclamation, and

the coach was immediately filled with eight inside and a dozen out,

while as many people got on the roof of the hearse as could by any

exercise of ingenuity stick upon it. Among the first of these volunteers

was Jerry Cruncher himself, who modestly concealed his spiky head from

the observation of Tellson’s, in the further corner of the mourning

coach.

The officiating undertakers made some protest against these changes in

the ceremonies; but, the river being alarmingly near, and several voices

remarking on the efficacy of cold immersion in bringing refractory

members of the profession to reason, the protest was faint and brief.

The remodelled procession started, with a chimney-sweep driving the

hearse--advised by the regular driver, who was perched beside him, under

close inspection, for the purpose--and with a pieman, also attended

by his cabinet minister, driving the mourning coach. A bear-leader, a

popular street character of the time, was impressed as an additional

ornament, before the cavalcade had gone far down the Strand; and his

bear, who was black and very mangy, gave quite an Undertaking air to

that part of the procession in which he walked.

Thus, with beer-drinking, pipe-smoking, song-roaring, and infinite

caricaturing of woe, the disorderly procession went its way, recruiting

at every step, and all the shops shutting up before it. Its destination

was the old church of Saint Pancras, far off in the fields. It got there

in course of time; insisted on pouring into the burial-ground; finally,

accomplished the interment of the deceased Roger Cly in its own way, and

highly to its own satisfaction.

The dead man disposed of, and the crowd being under the necessity of

providing some other entertainment for itself, another brighter

genius (or perhaps the same) conceived the humour of impeaching casual

passers-by, as Old Bailey spies, and wreaking vengeance on them. Chase

was given to some scores of inoffensive persons who had never been near

the Old Bailey in their lives, in the realisation of this fancy, and

they were roughly hustled and maltreated. The transition to the sport of

window-breaking, and thence to the plundering of public-houses, was easy

and natural. At last, after several hours, when sundry summer-houses had

been pulled down, and some area-railings had been torn up, to arm

the more belligerent spirits, a rumour got about that the Guards were

coming. Before this rumour, the crowd gradually melted away, and perhaps

the Guards came, and perhaps they never came, and this was the usual

progress of a mob.

Mr. Cruncher did not assist at the closing sports, but had remained

behind in the churchyard, to confer and condole with the undertakers.

The place had a soothing influence on him. He procured a pipe from a

neighbouring public-house, and smoked it, looking in at the railings and

maturely considering the spot.

“Jerry,” said Mr. Cruncher, apostrophising himself in his usual way,

“you see that there Cly that day, and you see with your own eyes that he

was a young ’un and a straight made ’un.”

Having smoked his pipe out, and ruminated a little longer, he turned

himself about, that he might appear, before the hour of closing, on his

station at Tellson’s. Whether his meditations on mortality had touched

his liver, or whether his general health had been previously at all

amiss, or whether he desired to show a little attention to an eminent

man, is not so much to the purpose, as that he made a short call upon

his medical adviser--a distinguished surgeon--on his way back.

Young Jerry relieved his father with dutiful interest, and reported No

job in his absence. The bank closed, the ancient clerks came out, the

usual watch was set, and Mr. Cruncher and his son went home to tea.

“Now, I tell you where it is!” said Mr. Cruncher to his wife, on

entering. “If, as a honest tradesman, my wenturs goes wrong to-night, I

shall make sure that you’ve been praying again me, and I shall work you

for it just the same as if I seen you do it.”

The dejected Mrs. Cruncher shook her head.

“Why, you’re at it afore my face!” said Mr. Cruncher, with signs of

angry apprehension.

“I am saying nothing.”

“Well, then; don’t meditate nothing. You might as well flop as meditate.

You may as well go again me one way as another. Drop it altogether.”

“Yes, Jerry.”

“Yes, Jerry,” repeated Mr. Cruncher sitting down to tea. “Ah! It \_is\_

yes, Jerry. That’s about it. You may say yes, Jerry.”

Mr. Cruncher had no particular meaning in these sulky corroborations,

but made use of them, as people not unfrequently do, to express general

ironical dissatisfaction.

“You and your yes, Jerry,” said Mr. Cruncher, taking a bite out of his

bread-and-butter, and seeming to help it down with a large invisible

oyster out of his saucer. “Ah! I think so. I believe you.”

“You are going out to-night?” asked his decent wife, when he took

another bite.

“Yes, I am.”

“May I go with you, father?” asked his son, briskly.

“No, you mayn’t. I’m a going--as your mother knows--a fishing. That’s

where I’m going to. Going a fishing.”

“Your fishing-rod gets rayther rusty; don’t it, father?”

“Never you mind.”

“Shall you bring any fish home, father?”

“If I don’t, you’ll have short commons, to-morrow,” returned that

gentleman, shaking his head; “that’s questions enough for you; I ain’t a

going out, till you’ve been long abed.”

He devoted himself during the remainder of the evening to keeping a

most vigilant watch on Mrs. Cruncher, and sullenly holding her in

conversation that she might be prevented from meditating any petitions

to his disadvantage. With this view, he urged his son to hold her in

conversation also, and led the unfortunate woman a hard life by dwelling

on any causes of complaint he could bring against her, rather than

he would leave her for a moment to her own reflections. The devoutest

person could have rendered no greater homage to the efficacy of an

honest prayer than he did in this distrust of his wife. It was as if a

professed unbeliever in ghosts should be frightened by a ghost story.

“And mind you!” said Mr. Cruncher. “No games to-morrow! If I, as a

honest tradesman, succeed in providing a jinte of meat or two, none

of your not touching of it, and sticking to bread. If I, as a honest

tradesman, am able to provide a little beer, none of your declaring

on water. When you go to Rome, do as Rome does. Rome will be a ugly

customer to you, if you don’t. \_I\_’m your Rome, you know.”

Then he began grumbling again:

“With your flying into the face of your own wittles and drink! I don’t

know how scarce you mayn’t make the wittles and drink here, by your

flopping tricks and your unfeeling conduct. Look at your boy: he \_is\_

your’n, ain’t he? He’s as thin as a lath. Do you call yourself a mother,

and not know that a mother’s first duty is to blow her boy out?”

This touched Young Jerry on a tender place; who adjured his mother to

perform her first duty, and, whatever else she did or neglected, above

all things to lay especial stress on the discharge of that maternal

function so affectingly and delicately indicated by his other parent.

Thus the evening wore away with the Cruncher family, until Young Jerry

was ordered to bed, and his mother, laid under similar injunctions,

obeyed them. Mr. Cruncher beguiled the earlier watches of the night with

solitary pipes, and did not start upon his excursion until nearly one

o’clock. Towards that small and ghostly hour, he rose up from his chair,

took a key out of his pocket, opened a locked cupboard, and brought

forth a sack, a crowbar of convenient size, a rope and chain, and other

fishing tackle of that nature. Disposing these articles about him

in skilful manner, he bestowed a parting defiance on Mrs. Cruncher,

extinguished the light, and went out.

Young Jerry, who had only made a feint of undressing when he went to

bed, was not long after his father. Under cover of the darkness he

followed out of the room, followed down the stairs, followed down the

court, followed out into the streets. He was in no uneasiness concerning

his getting into the house again, for it was full of lodgers, and the

door stood ajar all night.

Impelled by a laudable ambition to study the art and mystery of his

father’s honest calling, Young Jerry, keeping as close to house fronts,

walls, and doorways, as his eyes were close to one another, held his

honoured parent in view. The honoured parent steering Northward, had not

gone far, when he was joined by another disciple of Izaak Walton, and

the two trudged on together.

Within half an hour from the first starting, they were beyond the

winking lamps, and the more than winking watchmen, and were out upon a

lonely road. Another fisherman was picked up here--and that so silently,

that if Young Jerry had been superstitious, he might have supposed the

second follower of the gentle craft to have, all of a sudden, split

himself into two.

The three went on, and Young Jerry went on, until the three stopped

under a bank overhanging the road. Upon the top of the bank was a low

brick wall, surmounted by an iron railing. In the shadow of bank and

wall the three turned out of the road, and up a blind lane, of which

the wall--there, risen to some eight or ten feet high--formed one side.

Crouching down in a corner, peeping up the lane, the next object that

Young Jerry saw, was the form of his honoured parent, pretty well

defined against a watery and clouded moon, nimbly scaling an iron gate.

He was soon over, and then the second fisherman got over, and then the

third. They all dropped softly on the ground within the gate, and lay

there a little--listening perhaps. Then, they moved away on their hands

and knees.

It was now Young Jerry’s turn to approach the gate: which he did,

holding his breath. Crouching down again in a corner there, and looking

in, he made out the three fishermen creeping through some rank grass!

and all the gravestones in the churchyard--it was a large churchyard

that they were in--looking on like ghosts in white, while the church

tower itself looked on like the ghost of a monstrous giant. They did not

creep far, before they stopped and stood upright. And then they began to

fish.

They fished with a spade, at first. Presently the honoured parent

appeared to be adjusting some instrument like a great corkscrew.

Whatever tools they worked with, they worked hard, until the awful

striking of the church clock so terrified Young Jerry, that he made off,

with his hair as stiff as his father’s.

But, his long-cherished desire to know more about these matters, not

only stopped him in his running away, but lured him back again. They

were still fishing perseveringly, when he peeped in at the gate for

the second time; but, now they seemed to have got a bite. There was a

screwing and complaining sound down below, and their bent figures were

strained, as if by a weight. By slow degrees the weight broke away the

earth upon it, and came to the surface. Young Jerry very well knew what

it would be; but, when he saw it, and saw his honoured parent about to

wrench it open, he was so frightened, being new to the sight, that he

made off again, and never stopped until he had run a mile or more.

He would not have stopped then, for anything less necessary than breath,

it being a spectral sort of race that he ran, and one highly desirable

to get to the end of. He had a strong idea that the coffin he had seen

was running after him; and, pictured as hopping on behind him, bolt

upright, upon its narrow end, always on the point of overtaking him

and hopping on at his side--perhaps taking his arm--it was a pursuer to

shun. It was an inconsistent and ubiquitous fiend too, for, while it

was making the whole night behind him dreadful, he darted out into the

roadway to avoid dark alleys, fearful of its coming hopping out of them

like a dropsical boy’s kite without tail and wings. It hid in doorways

too, rubbing its horrible shoulders against doors, and drawing them up

to its ears, as if it were laughing. It got into shadows on the road,

and lay cunningly on its back to trip him up. All this time it was

incessantly hopping on behind and gaining on him, so that when the boy

got to his own door he had reason for being half dead. And even then

it would not leave him, but followed him upstairs with a bump on every

stair, scrambled into bed with him, and bumped down, dead and heavy, on

his breast when he fell asleep.

From his oppressed slumber, Young Jerry in his closet was awakened after

daybreak and before sunrise, by the presence of his father in the

family room. Something had gone wrong with him; at least, so Young Jerry

inferred, from the circumstance of his holding Mrs. Cruncher by the

ears, and knocking the back of her head against the head-board of the

bed.

“I told you I would,” said Mr. Cruncher, “and I did.”

“Jerry, Jerry, Jerry!” his wife implored.

“You oppose yourself to the profit of the business,” said Jerry, “and me

and my partners suffer. You was to honour and obey; why the devil don’t

you?”

“I try to be a good wife, Jerry,” the poor woman protested, with tears.

“Is it being a good wife to oppose your husband’s business? Is it

honouring your husband to dishonour his business? Is it obeying your

husband to disobey him on the wital subject of his business?”

“You hadn’t taken to the dreadful business then, Jerry.”

“It’s enough for you,” retorted Mr. Cruncher, “to be the wife of a

honest tradesman, and not to occupy your female mind with calculations

when he took to his trade or when he didn’t. A honouring and obeying

wife would let his trade alone altogether. Call yourself a religious

woman? If you’re a religious woman, give me a irreligious one! You have

no more nat’ral sense of duty than the bed of this here Thames river has

of a pile, and similarly it must be knocked into you.”

The altercation was conducted in a low tone of voice, and terminated in

the honest tradesman’s kicking off his clay-soiled boots, and lying down

at his length on the floor. After taking a timid peep at him lying on

his back, with his rusty hands under his head for a pillow, his son lay

down too, and fell asleep again.

There was no fish for breakfast, and not much of anything else. Mr.

Cruncher was out of spirits, and out of temper, and kept an iron pot-lid

by him as a projectile for the correction of Mrs. Cruncher, in case

he should observe any symptoms of her saying Grace. He was brushed

and washed at the usual hour, and set off with his son to pursue his

ostensible calling.

Young Jerry, walking with the stool under his arm at his father’s side

along sunny and crowded Fleet-street, was a very different Young Jerry

from him of the previous night, running home through darkness and

solitude from his grim pursuer. His cunning was fresh with the day,

and his qualms were gone with the night--in which particulars it is not

improbable that he had compeers in Fleet-street and the City of London,

that fine morning.

“Father,” said Young Jerry, as they walked along: taking care to keep

at arm’s length and to have the stool well between them: “what’s a

Resurrection-Man?”

Mr. Cruncher came to a stop on the pavement before he answered, “How

should I know?”

“I thought you knowed everything, father,” said the artless boy.

“Hem! Well,” returned Mr. Cruncher, going on again, and lifting off his

hat to give his spikes free play, “he’s a tradesman.”

“What’s his goods, father?” asked the brisk Young Jerry.

“His goods,” said Mr. Cruncher, after turning it over in his mind, “is a

branch of Scientific goods.”

“Persons’ bodies, ain’t it, father?” asked the lively boy.

“I believe it is something of that sort,” said Mr. Cruncher.

“Oh, father, I should so like to be a Resurrection-Man when I’m quite

growed up!”

Mr. Cruncher was soothed, but shook his head in a dubious and moral way.

“It depends upon how you dewelop your talents. Be careful to dewelop

your talents, and never to say no more than you can help to nobody, and

there’s no telling at the present time what you may not come to be fit

for.” As Young Jerry, thus encouraged, went on a few yards in advance,

to plant the stool in the shadow of the Bar, Mr. Cruncher added to

himself: “Jerry, you honest tradesman, there’s hopes wot that boy will

yet be a blessing to you, and a recompense to you for his mother!”

CHAPTER XV.

Knitting

There had been earlier drinking than usual in the wine-shop of Monsieur

Defarge. As early as six o’clock in the morning, sallow faces peeping

through its barred windows had descried other faces within, bending over

measures of wine. Monsieur Defarge sold a very thin wine at the best

of times, but it would seem to have been an unusually thin wine that

he sold at this time. A sour wine, moreover, or a souring, for its

influence on the mood of those who drank it was to make them gloomy. No

vivacious Bacchanalian flame leaped out of the pressed grape of Monsieur

Defarge: but, a smouldering fire that burnt in the dark, lay hidden in

the dregs of it.

This had been the third morning in succession, on which there had been

early drinking at the wine-shop of Monsieur Defarge. It had begun

on Monday, and here was Wednesday come. There had been more of early

brooding than drinking; for, many men had listened and whispered and

slunk about there from the time of the opening of the door, who could

not have laid a piece of money on the counter to save their souls. These

were to the full as interested in the place, however, as if they could

have commanded whole barrels of wine; and they glided from seat to seat,

and from corner to corner, swallowing talk in lieu of drink, with greedy

looks.

Notwithstanding an unusual flow of company, the master of the wine-shop

was not visible. He was not missed; for, nobody who crossed the

threshold looked for him, nobody asked for him, nobody wondered to see

only Madame Defarge in her seat, presiding over the distribution of

wine, with a bowl of battered small coins before her, as much defaced

and beaten out of their original impress as the small coinage of

humanity from whose ragged pockets they had come.

A suspended interest and a prevalent absence of mind, were perhaps

observed by the spies who looked in at the wine-shop, as they looked in

at every place, high and low, from the king’s palace to the criminal’s

gaol. Games at cards languished, players at dominoes musingly built

towers with them, drinkers drew figures on the tables with spilt drops

of wine, Madame Defarge herself picked out the pattern on her sleeve

with her toothpick, and saw and heard something inaudible and invisible

a long way off.

Thus, Saint Antoine in this vinous feature of his, until midday. It was

high noontide, when two dusty men passed through his streets and under

his swinging lamps: of whom, one was Monsieur Defarge: the other a

mender of roads in a blue cap. All adust and athirst, the two entered

the wine-shop. Their arrival had lighted a kind of fire in the breast

of Saint Antoine, fast spreading as they came along, which stirred and

flickered in flames of faces at most doors and windows. Yet, no one had

followed them, and no man spoke when they entered the wine-shop, though

the eyes of every man there were turned upon them.

“Good day, gentlemen!” said Monsieur Defarge.

It may have been a signal for loosening the general tongue. It elicited

an answering chorus of “Good day!”

“It is bad weather, gentlemen,” said Defarge, shaking his head.

Upon which, every man looked at his neighbour, and then all cast down

their eyes and sat silent. Except one man, who got up and went out.

“My wife,” said Defarge aloud, addressing Madame Defarge: “I have

travelled certain leagues with this good mender of roads, called

Jacques. I met him--by accident--a day and half’s journey out of Paris.

He is a good child, this mender of roads, called Jacques. Give him to

drink, my wife!”

A second man got up and went out. Madame Defarge set wine before the

mender of roads called Jacques, who doffed his blue cap to the company,

and drank. In the breast of his blouse he carried some coarse dark

bread; he ate of this between whiles, and sat munching and drinking near

Madame Defarge’s counter. A third man got up and went out.

Defarge refreshed himself with a draught of wine--but, he took less

than was given to the stranger, as being himself a man to whom it was no

rarity--and stood waiting until the countryman had made his breakfast.

He looked at no one present, and no one now looked at him; not even

Madame Defarge, who had taken up her knitting, and was at work.

“Have you finished your repast, friend?” he asked, in due season.

“Yes, thank you.”

“Come, then! You shall see the apartment that I told you you could

occupy. It will suit you to a marvel.”

Out of the wine-shop into the street, out of the street into a

courtyard, out of the courtyard up a steep staircase, out of the

staircase into a garret--formerly the garret where a white-haired man

sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very busy, making shoes.

No white-haired man was there now; but, the three men were there who had

gone out of the wine-shop singly. And between them and the white-haired

man afar off, was the one small link, that they had once looked in at

him through the chinks in the wall.

Defarge closed the door carefully, and spoke in a subdued voice:

“Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques Three! This is the witness

encountered by appointment, by me, Jacques Four. He will tell you all.

Speak, Jacques Five!”

The mender of roads, blue cap in hand, wiped his swarthy forehead with

it, and said, “Where shall I commence, monsieur?”

“Commence,” was Monsieur Defarge’s not unreasonable reply, “at the

commencement.”

“I saw him then, messieurs,” began the mender of roads, “a year ago this

running summer, underneath the carriage of the Marquis, hanging by the

chain. Behold the manner of it. I leaving my work on the road, the sun

going to bed, the carriage of the Marquis slowly ascending the hill, he

hanging by the chain--like this.”

Again the mender of roads went through the whole performance; in which

he ought to have been perfect by that time, seeing that it had been

the infallible resource and indispensable entertainment of his village

during a whole year.

Jacques One struck in, and asked if he had ever seen the man before?

“Never,” answered the mender of roads, recovering his perpendicular.

Jacques Three demanded how he afterwards recognised him then?

“By his tall figure,” said the mender of roads, softly, and with his

finger at his nose. “When Monsieur the Marquis demands that evening,

‘Say, what is he like?’ I make response, ‘Tall as a spectre.’”

“You should have said, short as a dwarf,” returned Jacques Two.

“But what did I know? The deed was not then accomplished, neither did he

confide in me. Observe! Under those circumstances even, I do not

offer my testimony. Monsieur the Marquis indicates me with his finger,

standing near our little fountain, and says, ‘To me! Bring that rascal!’

My faith, messieurs, I offer nothing.”

“He is right there, Jacques,” murmured Defarge, to him who had

interrupted. “Go on!”

“Good!” said the mender of roads, with an air of mystery. “The tall man

is lost, and he is sought--how many months? Nine, ten, eleven?”

“No matter, the number,” said Defarge. “He is well hidden, but at last

he is unluckily found. Go on!”

“I am again at work upon the hill-side, and the sun is again about to

go to bed. I am collecting my tools to descend to my cottage down in the

village below, where it is already dark, when I raise my eyes, and see

coming over the hill six soldiers. In the midst of them is a tall man

with his arms bound--tied to his sides--like this!”

With the aid of his indispensable cap, he represented a man with his

elbows bound fast at his hips, with cords that were knotted behind him.

“I stand aside, messieurs, by my heap of stones, to see the soldiers

and their prisoner pass (for it is a solitary road, that, where any

spectacle is well worth looking at), and at first, as they approach, I

see no more than that they are six soldiers with a tall man bound, and

that they are almost black to my sight--except on the side of the sun

going to bed, where they have a red edge, messieurs. Also, I see that

their long shadows are on the hollow ridge on the opposite side of the

road, and are on the hill above it, and are like the shadows of giants.

Also, I see that they are covered with dust, and that the dust moves

with them as they come, tramp, tramp! But when they advance quite near

to me, I recognise the tall man, and he recognises me. Ah, but he would

be well content to precipitate himself over the hill-side once again, as

on the evening when he and I first encountered, close to the same spot!”

He described it as if he were there, and it was evident that he saw it

vividly; perhaps he had not seen much in his life.

“I do not show the soldiers that I recognise the tall man; he does not

show the soldiers that he recognises me; we do it, and we know it, with

our eyes. ‘Come on!’ says the chief of that company, pointing to the

village, ‘bring him fast to his tomb!’ and they bring him faster. I

follow. His arms are swelled because of being bound so tight, his wooden

shoes are large and clumsy, and he is lame. Because he is lame, and

consequently slow, they drive him with their guns--like this!”

He imitated the action of a man’s being impelled forward by the

butt-ends of muskets.

“As they descend the hill like madmen running a race, he falls. They

laugh and pick him up again. His face is bleeding and covered with dust,

but he cannot touch it; thereupon they laugh again. They bring him into

the village; all the village runs to look; they take him past the mill,

and up to the prison; all the village sees the prison gate open in the

darkness of the night, and swallow him--like this!”

He opened his mouth as wide as he could, and shut it with a sounding

snap of his teeth. Observant of his unwillingness to mar the effect by

opening it again, Defarge said, “Go on, Jacques.”

“All the village,” pursued the mender of roads, on tiptoe and in a low

voice, “withdraws; all the village whispers by the fountain; all the

village sleeps; all the village dreams of that unhappy one, within the

locks and bars of the prison on the crag, and never to come out of it,

except to perish. In the morning, with my tools upon my shoulder, eating

my morsel of black bread as I go, I make a circuit by the prison, on

my way to my work. There I see him, high up, behind the bars of a lofty

iron cage, bloody and dusty as last night, looking through. He has no

hand free, to wave to me; I dare not call to him; he regards me like a

dead man.”

Defarge and the three glanced darkly at one another. The looks of all

of them were dark, repressed, and revengeful, as they listened to the

countryman’s story; the manner of all of them, while it was secret, was

authoritative too. They had the air of a rough tribunal; Jacques One

and Two sitting on the old pallet-bed, each with his chin resting on

his hand, and his eyes intent on the road-mender; Jacques Three, equally

intent, on one knee behind them, with his agitated hand always gliding

over the network of fine nerves about his mouth and nose; Defarge

standing between them and the narrator, whom he had stationed in the

light of the window, by turns looking from him to them, and from them to

him.

“Go on, Jacques,” said Defarge.

“He remains up there in his iron cage some days. The village looks

at him by stealth, for it is afraid. But it always looks up, from a

distance, at the prison on the crag; and in the evening, when the work

of the day is achieved and it assembles to gossip at the fountain, all

faces are turned towards the prison. Formerly, they were turned towards

the posting-house; now, they are turned towards the prison. They

whisper at the fountain, that although condemned to death he will not be

executed; they say that petitions have been presented in Paris, showing

that he was enraged and made mad by the death of his child; they say

that a petition has been presented to the King himself. What do I know?

It is possible. Perhaps yes, perhaps no.”

“Listen then, Jacques,” Number One of that name sternly interposed.

“Know that a petition was presented to the King and Queen. All here,

yourself excepted, saw the King take it, in his carriage in the street,

sitting beside the Queen. It is Defarge whom you see here, who, at the

hazard of his life, darted out before the horses, with the petition in

his hand.”

“And once again listen, Jacques!” said the kneeling Number Three:

his fingers ever wandering over and over those fine nerves, with a

strikingly greedy air, as if he hungered for something--that was neither

food nor drink; “the guard, horse and foot, surrounded the petitioner,

and struck him blows. You hear?”

“I hear, messieurs.”

“Go on then,” said Defarge.

“Again; on the other hand, they whisper at the fountain,” resumed the

countryman, “that he is brought down into our country to be executed on

the spot, and that he will very certainly be executed. They even whisper

that because he has slain Monseigneur, and because Monseigneur was the

father of his tenants--serfs--what you will--he will be executed as a

parricide. One old man says at the fountain, that his right hand, armed

with the knife, will be burnt off before his face; that, into wounds

which will be made in his arms, his breast, and his legs, there will be

poured boiling oil, melted lead, hot resin, wax, and sulphur; finally,

that he will be torn limb from limb by four strong horses. That old man

says, all this was actually done to a prisoner who made an attempt on

the life of the late King, Louis Fifteen. But how do I know if he lies?

I am not a scholar.”

“Listen once again then, Jacques!” said the man with the restless hand

and the craving air. “The name of that prisoner was Damiens, and it was

all done in open day, in the open streets of this city of Paris; and

nothing was more noticed in the vast concourse that saw it done, than

the crowd of ladies of quality and fashion, who were full of eager

attention to the last--to the last, Jacques, prolonged until nightfall,

when he had lost two legs and an arm, and still breathed! And it was

done--why, how old are you?”

“Thirty-five,” said the mender of roads, who looked sixty.

“It was done when you were more than ten years old; you might have seen

it.”

“Enough!” said Defarge, with grim impatience. “Long live the Devil! Go

on.”

“Well! Some whisper this, some whisper that; they speak of nothing else;

even the fountain appears to fall to that tune. At length, on Sunday

night when all the village is asleep, come soldiers, winding down from

the prison, and their guns ring on the stones of the little street.

Workmen dig, workmen hammer, soldiers laugh and sing; in the morning, by

the fountain, there is raised a gallows forty feet high, poisoning the

water.”

The mender of roads looked \_through\_ rather than \_at\_ the low ceiling,

and pointed as if he saw the gallows somewhere in the sky.

“All work is stopped, all assemble there, nobody leads the cows out,

the cows are there with the rest. At midday, the roll of drums. Soldiers

have marched into the prison in the night, and he is in the midst

of many soldiers. He is bound as before, and in his mouth there is

a gag--tied so, with a tight string, making him look almost as if he

laughed.” He suggested it, by creasing his face with his two thumbs,

from the corners of his mouth to his ears. “On the top of the gallows is

fixed the knife, blade upwards, with its point in the air. He is hanged

there forty feet high--and is left hanging, poisoning the water.”

They looked at one another, as he used his blue cap to wipe his face,

on which the perspiration had started afresh while he recalled the

spectacle.

“It is frightful, messieurs. How can the women and the children draw

water! Who can gossip of an evening, under that shadow! Under it, have

I said? When I left the village, Monday evening as the sun was going to

bed, and looked back from the hill, the shadow struck across the church,

across the mill, across the prison--seemed to strike across the earth,

messieurs, to where the sky rests upon it!”

The hungry man gnawed one of his fingers as he looked at the other

three, and his finger quivered with the craving that was on him.

“That’s all, messieurs. I left at sunset (as I had been warned to do),

and I walked on, that night and half next day, until I met (as I was

warned I should) this comrade. With him, I came on, now riding and now

walking, through the rest of yesterday and through last night. And here

you see me!”

After a gloomy silence, the first Jacques said, “Good! You have acted

and recounted faithfully. Will you wait for us a little, outside the

door?”

“Very willingly,” said the mender of roads. Whom Defarge escorted to the

top of the stairs, and, leaving seated there, returned.

The three had risen, and their heads were together when he came back to

the garret.

“How say you, Jacques?” demanded Number One. “To be registered?”

“To be registered, as doomed to destruction,” returned Defarge.

“Magnificent!” croaked the man with the craving.

“The chateau, and all the race?” inquired the first.

“The chateau and all the race,” returned Defarge. “Extermination.”

The hungry man repeated, in a rapturous croak, “Magnificent!” and began

gnawing another finger.

“Are you sure,” asked Jacques Two, of Defarge, “that no embarrassment

can arise from our manner of keeping the register? Without doubt it is

safe, for no one beyond ourselves can decipher it; but shall we always

be able to decipher it--or, I ought to say, will she?”

“Jacques,” returned Defarge, drawing himself up, “if madame my wife

undertook to keep the register in her memory alone, she would not lose

a word of it--not a syllable of it. Knitted, in her own stitches and her

own symbols, it will always be as plain to her as the sun. Confide in

Madame Defarge. It would be easier for the weakest poltroon that lives,

to erase himself from existence, than to erase one letter of his name or

crimes from the knitted register of Madame Defarge.”

There was a murmur of confidence and approval, and then the man who

hungered, asked: “Is this rustic to be sent back soon? I hope so. He is

very simple; is he not a little dangerous?”

“He knows nothing,” said Defarge; “at least nothing more than would

easily elevate himself to a gallows of the same height. I charge myself

with him; let him remain with me; I will take care of him, and set him

on his road. He wishes to see the fine world--the King, the Queen, and

Court; let him see them on Sunday.”

“What?” exclaimed the hungry man, staring. “Is it a good sign, that he

wishes to see Royalty and Nobility?”

“Jacques,” said Defarge; “judiciously show a cat milk, if you wish her

to thirst for it. Judiciously show a dog his natural prey, if you wish

him to bring it down one day.”

Nothing more was said, and the mender of roads, being found already

dozing on the topmost stair, was advised to lay himself down on the

pallet-bed and take some rest. He needed no persuasion, and was soon

asleep.

Worse quarters than Defarge’s wine-shop, could easily have been found

in Paris for a provincial slave of that degree. Saving for a mysterious

dread of madame by which he was constantly haunted, his life was very

new and agreeable. But, madame sat all day at her counter, so expressly

unconscious of him, and so particularly determined not to perceive that

his being there had any connection with anything below the surface, that

he shook in his wooden shoes whenever his eye lighted on her. For, he

contended with himself that it was impossible to foresee what that lady

might pretend next; and he felt assured that if she should take it

into her brightly ornamented head to pretend that she had seen him do a

murder and afterwards flay the victim, she would infallibly go through

with it until the play was played out.

Therefore, when Sunday came, the mender of roads was not enchanted

(though he said he was) to find that madame was to accompany monsieur

and himself to Versailles. It was additionally disconcerting to have

madame knitting all the way there, in a public conveyance; it was

additionally disconcerting yet, to have madame in the crowd in the

afternoon, still with her knitting in her hands as the crowd waited to

see the carriage of the King and Queen.

“You work hard, madame,” said a man near her.

“Yes,” answered Madame Defarge; “I have a good deal to do.”

“What do you make, madame?”

“Many things.”

“For instance--”

“For instance,” returned Madame Defarge, composedly, “shrouds.”

The man moved a little further away, as soon as he could, and the mender

of roads fanned himself with his blue cap: feeling it mightily close

and oppressive. If he needed a King and Queen to restore him, he was

fortunate in having his remedy at hand; for, soon the large-faced King

and the fair-faced Queen came in their golden coach, attended by the

shining Bull’s Eye of their Court, a glittering multitude of laughing

ladies and fine lords; and in jewels and silks and powder and splendour

and elegantly spurning figures and handsomely disdainful faces of both

sexes, the mender of roads bathed himself, so much to his temporary

intoxication, that he cried Long live the King, Long live the Queen,

Long live everybody and everything! as if he had never heard of

ubiquitous Jacques in his time. Then, there were gardens, courtyards,

terraces, fountains, green banks, more King and Queen, more Bull’s Eye,

more lords and ladies, more Long live they all! until he absolutely wept

with sentiment. During the whole of this scene, which lasted some three

hours, he had plenty of shouting and weeping and sentimental company,

and throughout Defarge held him by the collar, as if to restrain him

from flying at the objects of his brief devotion and tearing them to

pieces.

“Bravo!” said Defarge, clapping him on the back when it was over, like a

patron; “you are a good boy!”

The mender of roads was now coming to himself, and was mistrustful of

having made a mistake in his late demonstrations; but no.

“You are the fellow we want,” said Defarge, in his ear; “you make

these fools believe that it will last for ever. Then, they are the more

insolent, and it is the nearer ended.”

“Hey!” cried the mender of roads, reflectively; “that’s true.”

“These fools know nothing. While they despise your breath, and would

stop it for ever and ever, in you or in a hundred like you rather than

in one of their own horses or dogs, they only know what your breath

tells them. Let it deceive them, then, a little longer; it cannot

deceive them too much.”

Madame Defarge looked superciliously at the client, and nodded in

confirmation.

“As to you,” said she, “you would shout and shed tears for anything, if

it made a show and a noise. Say! Would you not?”

“Truly, madame, I think so. For the moment.”

“If you were shown a great heap of dolls, and were set upon them to

pluck them to pieces and despoil them for your own advantage, you would

pick out the richest and gayest. Say! Would you not?”

“Truly yes, madame.”

“Yes. And if you were shown a flock of birds, unable to fly, and were

set upon them to strip them of their feathers for your own advantage,

you would set upon the birds of the finest feathers; would you not?”

“It is true, madame.”

“You have seen both dolls and birds to-day,” said Madame Defarge, with

a wave of her hand towards the place where they had last been apparent;

“now, go home!”

CHAPTER XVI.

Still Knitting

Madame Defarge and monsieur her husband returned amicably to the

bosom of Saint Antoine, while a speck in a blue cap toiled through the

darkness, and through the dust, and down the weary miles of avenue by

the wayside, slowly tending towards that point of the compass where

the chateau of Monsieur the Marquis, now in his grave, listened to

the whispering trees. Such ample leisure had the stone faces, now,

for listening to the trees and to the fountain, that the few village

scarecrows who, in their quest for herbs to eat and fragments of dead

stick to burn, strayed within sight of the great stone courtyard and

terrace staircase, had it borne in upon their starved fancy that

the expression of the faces was altered. A rumour just lived in the

village--had a faint and bare existence there, as its people had--that

when the knife struck home, the faces changed, from faces of pride to

faces of anger and pain; also, that when that dangling figure was hauled

up forty feet above the fountain, they changed again, and bore a cruel

look of being avenged, which they would henceforth bear for ever. In the

stone face over the great window of the bed-chamber where the murder

was done, two fine dints were pointed out in the sculptured nose, which

everybody recognised, and which nobody had seen of old; and on the

scarce occasions when two or three ragged peasants emerged from the

crowd to take a hurried peep at Monsieur the Marquis petrified, a

skinny finger would not have pointed to it for a minute, before they all

started away among the moss and leaves, like the more fortunate hares

who could find a living there.

Chateau and hut, stone face and dangling figure, the red stain on the

stone floor, and the pure water in the village well--thousands of acres

of land--a whole province of France--all France itself--lay under the

night sky, concentrated into a faint hair-breadth line. So does a whole

world, with all its greatnesses and littlenesses, lie in a twinkling

star. And as mere human knowledge can split a ray of light and analyse

the manner of its composition, so, sublimer intelligences may read in

the feeble shining of this earth of ours, every thought and act, every

vice and virtue, of every responsible creature on it.

The Defarges, husband and wife, came lumbering under the starlight,

in their public vehicle, to that gate of Paris whereunto their

journey naturally tended. There was the usual stoppage at the barrier

guardhouse, and the usual lanterns came glancing forth for the usual

examination and inquiry. Monsieur Defarge alighted; knowing one or two

of the soldiery there, and one of the police. The latter he was intimate

with, and affectionately embraced.

When Saint Antoine had again enfolded the Defarges in his dusky wings,

and they, having finally alighted near the Saint’s boundaries, were

picking their way on foot through the black mud and offal of his

streets, Madame Defarge spoke to her husband:

“Say then, my friend; what did Jacques of the police tell thee?”

“Very little to-night, but all he knows. There is another spy

commissioned for our quarter. There may be many more, for all that he

can say, but he knows of one.”

“Eh well!” said Madame Defarge, raising her eyebrows with a cool

business air. “It is necessary to register him. How do they call that

man?”

“He is English.”

“So much the better. His name?”

“Barsad,” said Defarge, making it French by pronunciation. But, he had

been so careful to get it accurately, that he then spelt it with perfect

correctness.

“Barsad,” repeated madame. “Good. Christian name?”

“John.”

“John Barsad,” repeated madame, after murmuring it once to herself.

“Good. His appearance; is it known?”

“Age, about forty years; height, about five feet nine; black hair;

complexion dark; generally, rather handsome visage; eyes dark, face

thin, long, and sallow; nose aquiline, but not straight, having a

peculiar inclination towards the left cheek; expression, therefore,

sinister.”

“Eh my faith. It is a portrait!” said madame, laughing. “He shall be

registered to-morrow.”

They turned into the wine-shop, which was closed (for it was midnight),

and where Madame Defarge immediately took her post at her desk, counted

the small moneys that had been taken during her absence, examined the

stock, went through the entries in the book, made other entries of

her own, checked the serving man in every possible way, and finally

dismissed him to bed. Then she turned out the contents of the bowl

of money for the second time, and began knotting them up in her

handkerchief, in a chain of separate knots, for safe keeping through the

night. All this while, Defarge, with his pipe in his mouth, walked

up and down, complacently admiring, but never interfering; in which

condition, indeed, as to the business and his domestic affairs, he

walked up and down through life.

The night was hot, and the shop, close shut and surrounded by so foul a

neighbourhood, was ill-smelling. Monsieur Defarge’s olfactory sense was

by no means delicate, but the stock of wine smelt much stronger than

it ever tasted, and so did the stock of rum and brandy and aniseed. He

whiffed the compound of scents away, as he put down his smoked-out pipe.

“You are fatigued,” said madame, raising her glance as she knotted the

money. “There are only the usual odours.”

“I am a little tired,” her husband acknowledged.

“You are a little depressed, too,” said madame, whose quick eyes had

never been so intent on the accounts, but they had had a ray or two for

him. “Oh, the men, the men!”

“But my dear!” began Defarge.

“But my dear!” repeated madame, nodding firmly; “but my dear! You are

faint of heart to-night, my dear!”

“Well, then,” said Defarge, as if a thought were wrung out of his

breast, “it \_is\_ a long time.”

“It is a long time,” repeated his wife; “and when is it not a long time?

Vengeance and retribution require a long time; it is the rule.”

“It does not take a long time to strike a man with Lightning,” said

Defarge.

“How long,” demanded madame, composedly, “does it take to make and store

the lightning? Tell me.”

Defarge raised his head thoughtfully, as if there were something in that

too.

“It does not take a long time,” said madame, “for an earthquake to

swallow a town. Eh well! Tell me how long it takes to prepare the

earthquake?”

“A long time, I suppose,” said Defarge.

“But when it is ready, it takes place, and grinds to pieces everything

before it. In the meantime, it is always preparing, though it is not

seen or heard. That is your consolation. Keep it.”

She tied a knot with flashing eyes, as if it throttled a foe.

“I tell thee,” said madame, extending her right hand, for emphasis,

“that although it is a long time on the road, it is on the road and

coming. I tell thee it never retreats, and never stops. I tell thee it

is always advancing. Look around and consider the lives of all the world

that we know, consider the faces of all the world that we know, consider

the rage and discontent to which the Jacquerie addresses itself with

more and more of certainty every hour. Can such things last? Bah! I mock

you.”

“My brave wife,” returned Defarge, standing before her with his head

a little bent, and his hands clasped at his back, like a docile and

attentive pupil before his catechist, “I do not question all this. But

it has lasted a long time, and it is possible--you know well, my wife,

it is possible--that it may not come, during our lives.”

“Eh well! How then?” demanded madame, tying another knot, as if there

were another enemy strangled.

“Well!” said Defarge, with a half complaining and half apologetic shrug.

“We shall not see the triumph.”

“We shall have helped it,” returned madame, with her extended hand in

strong action. “Nothing that we do, is done in vain. I believe, with all

my soul, that we shall see the triumph. But even if not, even if I knew

certainly not, show me the neck of an aristocrat and tyrant, and still I

would--”

Then madame, with her teeth set, tied a very terrible knot indeed.

“Hold!” cried Defarge, reddening a little as if he felt charged with

cowardice; “I too, my dear, will stop at nothing.”

“Yes! But it is your weakness that you sometimes need to see your victim

and your opportunity, to sustain you. Sustain yourself without that.

When the time comes, let loose a tiger and a devil; but wait for the

time with the tiger and the devil chained--not shown--yet always ready.”

Madame enforced the conclusion of this piece of advice by striking her

little counter with her chain of money as if she knocked its brains

out, and then gathering the heavy handkerchief under her arm in a serene

manner, and observing that it was time to go to bed.

Next noontide saw the admirable woman in her usual place in the

wine-shop, knitting away assiduously. A rose lay beside her, and if she

now and then glanced at the flower, it was with no infraction of her

usual preoccupied air. There were a few customers, drinking or not

drinking, standing or seated, sprinkled about. The day was very hot,

and heaps of flies, who were extending their inquisitive and adventurous

perquisitions into all the glutinous little glasses near madame, fell

dead at the bottom. Their decease made no impression on the other flies

out promenading, who looked at them in the coolest manner (as if they

themselves were elephants, or something as far removed), until they met

the same fate. Curious to consider how heedless flies are!--perhaps they

thought as much at Court that sunny summer day.

A figure entering at the door threw a shadow on Madame Defarge which she

felt to be a new one. She laid down her knitting, and began to pin her

rose in her head-dress, before she looked at the figure.

It was curious. The moment Madame Defarge took up the rose, the

customers ceased talking, and began gradually to drop out of the

wine-shop.

“Good day, madame,” said the new-comer.

“Good day, monsieur.”

She said it aloud, but added to herself, as she resumed her knitting:

“Hah! Good day, age about forty, height about five feet nine, black

hair, generally rather handsome visage, complexion dark, eyes dark,

thin, long and sallow face, aquiline nose but not straight, having a

peculiar inclination towards the left cheek which imparts a sinister

expression! Good day, one and all!”

“Have the goodness to give me a little glass of old cognac, and a

mouthful of cool fresh water, madame.”

Madame complied with a polite air.

“Marvellous cognac this, madame!”

It was the first time it had ever been so complimented, and Madame

Defarge knew enough of its antecedents to know better. She said,

however, that the cognac was flattered, and took up her knitting. The

visitor watched her fingers for a few moments, and took the opportunity

of observing the place in general.

“You knit with great skill, madame.”

“I am accustomed to it.”

“A pretty pattern too!”

“\_You\_ think so?” said madame, looking at him with a smile.

“Decidedly. May one ask what it is for?”

“Pastime,” said madame, still looking at him with a smile while her

fingers moved nimbly.

“Not for use?”

“That depends. I may find a use for it one day. If I do--Well,” said

madame, drawing a breath and nodding her head with a stern kind of

coquetry, “I’ll use it!”

It was remarkable; but, the taste of Saint Antoine seemed to be

decidedly opposed to a rose on the head-dress of Madame Defarge. Two

men had entered separately, and had been about to order drink, when,

catching sight of that novelty, they faltered, made a pretence of

looking about as if for some friend who was not there, and went away.

Nor, of those who had been there when this visitor entered, was there

one left. They had all dropped off. The spy had kept his eyes open,

but had been able to detect no sign. They had lounged away in a

poverty-stricken, purposeless, accidental manner, quite natural and

unimpeachable.

“\_John\_,” thought madame, checking off her work as her fingers knitted,

and her eyes looked at the stranger. “Stay long enough, and I shall knit

‘BARSAD’ before you go.”

“You have a husband, madame?”

“I have.”

“Children?”

“No children.”

“Business seems bad?”

“Business is very bad; the people are so poor.”

“Ah, the unfortunate, miserable people! So oppressed, too--as you say.”

“As \_you\_ say,” madame retorted, correcting him, and deftly knitting an

extra something into his name that boded him no good.

“Pardon me; certainly it was I who said so, but you naturally think so.

Of course.”

“\_I\_ think?” returned madame, in a high voice. “I and my husband have

enough to do to keep this wine-shop open, without thinking. All we

think, here, is how to live. That is the subject \_we\_ think of, and

it gives us, from morning to night, enough to think about, without

embarrassing our heads concerning others. \_I\_ think for others? No, no.”

The spy, who was there to pick up any crumbs he could find or make, did

not allow his baffled state to express itself in his sinister face; but,

stood with an air of gossiping gallantry, leaning his elbow on Madame

Defarge’s little counter, and occasionally sipping his cognac.

“A bad business this, madame, of Gaspard’s execution. Ah! the poor

Gaspard!” With a sigh of great compassion.

“My faith!” returned madame, coolly and lightly, “if people use knives

for such purposes, they have to pay for it. He knew beforehand what the

price of his luxury was; he has paid the price.”

“I believe,” said the spy, dropping his soft voice to a tone

that invited confidence, and expressing an injured revolutionary

susceptibility in every muscle of his wicked face: “I believe there

is much compassion and anger in this neighbourhood, touching the poor

fellow? Between ourselves.”

“Is there?” asked madame, vacantly.

“Is there not?”

“--Here is my husband!” said Madame Defarge.

As the keeper of the wine-shop entered at the door, the spy saluted

him by touching his hat, and saying, with an engaging smile, “Good day,

Jacques!” Defarge stopped short, and stared at him.

“Good day, Jacques!” the spy repeated; with not quite so much

confidence, or quite so easy a smile under the stare.

“You deceive yourself, monsieur,” returned the keeper of the wine-shop.

“You mistake me for another. That is not my name. I am Ernest Defarge.”

“It is all the same,” said the spy, airily, but discomfited too: “good

day!”

“Good day!” answered Defarge, drily.

“I was saying to madame, with whom I had the pleasure of chatting when

you entered, that they tell me there is--and no wonder!--much sympathy

and anger in Saint Antoine, touching the unhappy fate of poor Gaspard.”

“No one has told me so,” said Defarge, shaking his head. “I know nothing

of it.”

Having said it, he passed behind the little counter, and stood with his

hand on the back of his wife’s chair, looking over that barrier at the

person to whom they were both opposed, and whom either of them would

have shot with the greatest satisfaction.

The spy, well used to his business, did not change his unconscious

attitude, but drained his little glass of cognac, took a sip of fresh

water, and asked for another glass of cognac. Madame Defarge poured it

out for him, took to her knitting again, and hummed a little song over

it.

“You seem to know this quarter well; that is to say, better than I do?”

observed Defarge.

“Not at all, but I hope to know it better. I am so profoundly interested

in its miserable inhabitants.”

“Hah!” muttered Defarge.

“The pleasure of conversing with you, Monsieur Defarge, recalls to me,”

pursued the spy, “that I have the honour of cherishing some interesting

associations with your name.”

“Indeed!” said Defarge, with much indifference.

“Yes, indeed. When Doctor Manette was released, you, his old domestic,

had the charge of him, I know. He was delivered to you. You see I am

informed of the circumstances?”

“Such is the fact, certainly,” said Defarge. He had had it conveyed

to him, in an accidental touch of his wife’s elbow as she knitted and

warbled, that he would do best to answer, but always with brevity.

“It was to you,” said the spy, “that his daughter came; and it was

from your care that his daughter took him, accompanied by a neat brown

monsieur; how is he called?--in a little wig--Lorry--of the bank of

Tellson and Company--over to England.”

“Such is the fact,” repeated Defarge.

“Very interesting remembrances!” said the spy. “I have known Doctor

Manette and his daughter, in England.”

“Yes?” said Defarge.

“You don’t hear much about them now?” said the spy.

“No,” said Defarge.

“In effect,” madame struck in, looking up from her work and her little

song, “we never hear about them. We received the news of their safe

arrival, and perhaps another letter, or perhaps two; but, since then,

they have gradually taken their road in life--we, ours--and we have held

no correspondence.”

“Perfectly so, madame,” replied the spy. “She is going to be married.”

“Going?” echoed madame. “She was pretty enough to have been married long

ago. You English are cold, it seems to me.”

“Oh! You know I am English.”

“I perceive your tongue is,” returned madame; “and what the tongue is, I

suppose the man is.”

He did not take the identification as a compliment; but he made the best

of it, and turned it off with a laugh. After sipping his cognac to the

end, he added:

“Yes, Miss Manette is going to be married. But not to an Englishman; to

one who, like herself, is French by birth. And speaking of Gaspard (ah,

poor Gaspard! It was cruel, cruel!), it is a curious thing that she is

going to marry the nephew of Monsieur the Marquis, for whom Gaspard

was exalted to that height of so many feet; in other words, the present

Marquis. But he lives unknown in England, he is no Marquis there; he is

Mr. Charles Darnay. D’Aulnais is the name of his mother’s family.”

Madame Defarge knitted steadily, but the intelligence had a palpable

effect upon her husband. Do what he would, behind the little counter,

as to the striking of a light and the lighting of his pipe, he was

troubled, and his hand was not trustworthy. The spy would have been no

spy if he had failed to see it, or to record it in his mind.

Having made, at least, this one hit, whatever it might prove to be

worth, and no customers coming in to help him to any other, Mr. Barsad

paid for what he had drunk, and took his leave: taking occasion to say,

in a genteel manner, before he departed, that he looked forward to the

pleasure of seeing Monsieur and Madame Defarge again. For some minutes

after he had emerged into the outer presence of Saint Antoine, the

husband and wife remained exactly as he had left them, lest he should

come back.

“Can it be true,” said Defarge, in a low voice, looking down at his wife

as he stood smoking with his hand on the back of her chair: “what he has

said of Ma’amselle Manette?”

“As he has said it,” returned madame, lifting her eyebrows a little, “it

is probably false. But it may be true.”

“If it is--” Defarge began, and stopped.

“If it is?” repeated his wife.

“--And if it does come, while we live to see it triumph--I hope, for her

sake, Destiny will keep her husband out of France.”

“Her husband’s destiny,” said Madame Defarge, with her usual composure,

“will take him where he is to go, and will lead him to the end that is

to end him. That is all I know.”

“But it is very strange--now, at least, is it not very strange”--said

Defarge, rather pleading with his wife to induce her to admit it,

“that, after all our sympathy for Monsieur her father, and herself, her

husband’s name should be proscribed under your hand at this moment, by

the side of that infernal dog’s who has just left us?”

“Stranger things than that will happen when it does come,” answered

madame. “I have them both here, of a certainty; and they are both here

for their merits; that is enough.”

She rolled up her knitting when she had said those words, and presently

took the rose out of the handkerchief that was wound about her head.

Either Saint Antoine had an instinctive sense that the objectionable

decoration was gone, or Saint Antoine was on the watch for its

disappearance; howbeit, the Saint took courage to lounge in, very

shortly afterwards, and the wine-shop recovered its habitual aspect.

In the evening, at which season of all others Saint Antoine turned

himself inside out, and sat on door-steps and window-ledges, and came

to the corners of vile streets and courts, for a breath of air, Madame

Defarge with her work in her hand was accustomed to pass from place

to place and from group to group: a Missionary--there were many like

her--such as the world will do well never to breed again. All the women

knitted. They knitted worthless things; but, the mechanical work was a

mechanical substitute for eating and drinking; the hands moved for the

jaws and the digestive apparatus: if the bony fingers had been still,

the stomachs would have been more famine-pinched.

But, as the fingers went, the eyes went, and the thoughts. And as Madame

Defarge moved on from group to group, all three went quicker and fiercer

among every little knot of women that she had spoken with, and left

behind.

Her husband smoked at his door, looking after her with admiration. “A

great woman,” said he, “a strong woman, a grand woman, a frightfully

grand woman!”

Darkness closed around, and then came the ringing of church bells and

the distant beating of the military drums in the Palace Courtyard, as

the women sat knitting, knitting. Darkness encompassed them. Another

darkness was closing in as surely, when the church bells, then ringing

pleasantly in many an airy steeple over France, should be melted into

thundering cannon; when the military drums should be beating to drown a

wretched voice, that night all potent as the voice of Power and Plenty,

Freedom and Life. So much was closing in about the women who sat

knitting, knitting, that they their very selves were closing in around

a structure yet unbuilt, where they were to sit knitting, knitting,

counting dropping heads.

CHAPTER XVII.

One Night

Never did the sun go down with a brighter glory on the quiet corner in

Soho, than one memorable evening when the Doctor and his daughter sat

under the plane-tree together. Never did the moon rise with a milder

radiance over great London, than on that night when it found them still

seated under the tree, and shone upon their faces through its leaves.

Lucie was to be married to-morrow. She had reserved this last evening

for her father, and they sat alone under the plane-tree.

“You are happy, my dear father?”

“Quite, my child.”

They had said little, though they had been there a long time. When it

was yet light enough to work and read, she had neither engaged herself

in her usual work, nor had she read to him. She had employed herself in

both ways, at his side under the tree, many and many a time; but, this

time was not quite like any other, and nothing could make it so.

“And I am very happy to-night, dear father. I am deeply happy in the

love that Heaven has so blessed--my love for Charles, and Charles’s love

for me. But, if my life were not to be still consecrated to you, or

if my marriage were so arranged as that it would part us, even by

the length of a few of these streets, I should be more unhappy and

self-reproachful now than I can tell you. Even as it is--”

Even as it was, she could not command her voice.

In the sad moonlight, she clasped him by the neck, and laid her face

upon his breast. In the moonlight which is always sad, as the light of

the sun itself is--as the light called human life is--at its coming and

its going.

“Dearest dear! Can you tell me, this last time, that you feel quite,

quite sure, no new affections of mine, and no new duties of mine, will

ever interpose between us? \_I\_ know it well, but do you know it? In your

own heart, do you feel quite certain?”

Her father answered, with a cheerful firmness of conviction he could

scarcely have assumed, “Quite sure, my darling! More than that,” he

added, as he tenderly kissed her: “my future is far brighter, Lucie,

seen through your marriage, than it could have been--nay, than it ever

was--without it.”

“If I could hope \_that\_, my father!--”

“Believe it, love! Indeed it is so. Consider how natural and how plain

it is, my dear, that it should be so. You, devoted and young, cannot

fully appreciate the anxiety I have felt that your life should not be

wasted--”

She moved her hand towards his lips, but he took it in his, and repeated

the word.

“--wasted, my child--should not be wasted, struck aside from the

natural order of things--for my sake. Your unselfishness cannot entirely

comprehend how much my mind has gone on this; but, only ask yourself,

how could my happiness be perfect, while yours was incomplete?”

“If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy

with you.”

He smiled at her unconscious admission that she would have been unhappy

without Charles, having seen him; and replied:

“My child, you did see him, and it is Charles. If it had not been

Charles, it would have been another. Or, if it had been no other, I

should have been the cause, and then the dark part of my life would have

cast its shadow beyond myself, and would have fallen on you.”

It was the first time, except at the trial, of her ever hearing him

refer to the period of his suffering. It gave her a strange and new

sensation while his words were in her ears; and she remembered it long

afterwards.

“See!” said the Doctor of Beauvais, raising his hand towards the moon.

“I have looked at her from my prison-window, when I could not bear her

light. I have looked at her when it has been such torture to me to think

of her shining upon what I had lost, that I have beaten my head against

my prison-walls. I have looked at her, in a state so dull and lethargic,

that I have thought of nothing but the number of horizontal lines I

could draw across her at the full, and the number of perpendicular lines

with which I could intersect them.” He added in his inward and pondering

manner, as he looked at the moon, “It was twenty either way, I remember,

and the twentieth was difficult to squeeze in.”

The strange thrill with which she heard him go back to that time,

deepened as he dwelt upon it; but, there was nothing to shock her in

the manner of his reference. He only seemed to contrast his present

cheerfulness and felicity with the dire endurance that was over.

“I have looked at her, speculating thousands of times upon the unborn

child from whom I had been rent. Whether it was alive. Whether it had

been born alive, or the poor mother’s shock had killed it. Whether it

was a son who would some day avenge his father. (There was a time in my

imprisonment, when my desire for vengeance was unbearable.) Whether it

was a son who would never know his father’s story; who might even live

to weigh the possibility of his father’s having disappeared of his own

will and act. Whether it was a daughter who would grow to be a woman.”

She drew closer to him, and kissed his cheek and his hand.

“I have pictured my daughter, to myself, as perfectly forgetful of

me--rather, altogether ignorant of me, and unconscious of me. I have

cast up the years of her age, year after year. I have seen her married

to a man who knew nothing of my fate. I have altogether perished from

the remembrance of the living, and in the next generation my place was a

blank.”

“My father! Even to hear that you had such thoughts of a daughter who

never existed, strikes to my heart as if I had been that child.”

“You, Lucie? It is out of the Consolation and restoration you have

brought to me, that these remembrances arise, and pass between us and

the moon on this last night.--What did I say just now?”

“She knew nothing of you. She cared nothing for you.”

“So! But on other moonlight nights, when the sadness and the silence

have touched me in a different way--have affected me with something as

like a sorrowful sense of peace, as any emotion that had pain for its

foundations could--I have imagined her as coming to me in my cell, and

leading me out into the freedom beyond the fortress. I have seen her

image in the moonlight often, as I now see you; except that I never held

her in my arms; it stood between the little grated window and the door.

But, you understand that that was not the child I am speaking of?”

“The figure was not; the--the--image; the fancy?”

“No. That was another thing. It stood before my disturbed sense of

sight, but it never moved. The phantom that my mind pursued, was another

and more real child. Of her outward appearance I know no more than

that she was like her mother. The other had that likeness too--as you

have--but was not the same. Can you follow me, Lucie? Hardly, I think?

I doubt you must have been a solitary prisoner to understand these

perplexed distinctions.”

His collected and calm manner could not prevent her blood from running

cold, as he thus tried to anatomise his old condition.

“In that more peaceful state, I have imagined her, in the moonlight,

coming to me and taking me out to show me that the home of her married

life was full of her loving remembrance of her lost father. My picture

was in her room, and I was in her prayers. Her life was active,

cheerful, useful; but my poor history pervaded it all.”

“I was that child, my father, I was not half so good, but in my love

that was I.”

“And she showed me her children,” said the Doctor of Beauvais, “and

they had heard of me, and had been taught to pity me. When they passed

a prison of the State, they kept far from its frowning walls, and looked

up at its bars, and spoke in whispers. She could never deliver me; I

imagined that she always brought me back after showing me such things.

But then, blessed with the relief of tears, I fell upon my knees, and

blessed her.”

“I am that child, I hope, my father. O my dear, my dear, will you bless

me as fervently to-morrow?”

“Lucie, I recall these old troubles in the reason that I have to-night

for loving you better than words can tell, and thanking God for my great

happiness. My thoughts, when they were wildest, never rose near the

happiness that I have known with you, and that we have before us.”

He embraced her, solemnly commended her to Heaven, and humbly thanked

Heaven for having bestowed her on him. By-and-bye, they went into the

house.

There was no one bidden to the marriage but Mr. Lorry; there was even to

be no bridesmaid but the gaunt Miss Pross. The marriage was to make no

change in their place of residence; they had been able to extend it,

by taking to themselves the upper rooms formerly belonging to the

apocryphal invisible lodger, and they desired nothing more.

Doctor Manette was very cheerful at the little supper. They were only

three at table, and Miss Pross made the third. He regretted that Charles

was not there; was more than half disposed to object to the loving

little plot that kept him away; and drank to him affectionately.

So, the time came for him to bid Lucie good night, and they separated.

But, in the stillness of the third hour of the morning, Lucie came

downstairs again, and stole into his room; not free from unshaped fears,

beforehand.

All things, however, were in their places; all was quiet; and he lay

asleep, his white hair picturesque on the untroubled pillow, and his

hands lying quiet on the coverlet. She put her needless candle in the

shadow at a distance, crept up to his bed, and put her lips to his;

then, leaned over him, and looked at him.

Into his handsome face, the bitter waters of captivity had worn; but, he

covered up their tracks with a determination so strong, that he held the

mastery of them even in his sleep. A more remarkable face in its quiet,

resolute, and guarded struggle with an unseen assailant, was not to be

beheld in all the wide dominions of sleep, that night.

She timidly laid her hand on his dear breast, and put up a prayer that

she might ever be as true to him as her love aspired to be, and as his

sorrows deserved. Then, she withdrew her hand, and kissed his lips once

more, and went away. So, the sunrise came, and the shadows of the leaves

of the plane-tree moved upon his face, as softly as her lips had moved

in praying for him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Nine Days

The marriage-day was shining brightly, and they were ready outside the

closed door of the Doctor’s room, where he was speaking with Charles

Darnay. They were ready to go to church; the beautiful bride, Mr.

Lorry, and Miss Pross--to whom the event, through a gradual process of

reconcilement to the inevitable, would have been one of absolute bliss,

but for the yet lingering consideration that her brother Solomon should

have been the bridegroom.

“And so,” said Mr. Lorry, who could not sufficiently admire the bride,

and who had been moving round her to take in every point of her quiet,

pretty dress; “and so it was for this, my sweet Lucie, that I brought

you across the Channel, such a baby! Lord bless me! How little I thought

what I was doing! How lightly I valued the obligation I was conferring

on my friend Mr. Charles!”

“You didn’t mean it,” remarked the matter-of-fact Miss Pross, “and

therefore how could you know it? Nonsense!”

“Really? Well; but don’t cry,” said the gentle Mr. Lorry.

“I am not crying,” said Miss Pross; “\_you\_ are.”

“I, my Pross?” (By this time, Mr. Lorry dared to be pleasant with her,

on occasion.)

“You were, just now; I saw you do it, and I don’t wonder at it. Such

a present of plate as you have made ’em, is enough to bring tears into

anybody’s eyes. There’s not a fork or a spoon in the collection,” said

Miss Pross, “that I didn’t cry over, last night after the box came, till

I couldn’t see it.”

“I am highly gratified,” said Mr. Lorry, “though, upon my honour, I

had no intention of rendering those trifling articles of remembrance

invisible to any one. Dear me! This is an occasion that makes a man

speculate on all he has lost. Dear, dear, dear! To think that there

might have been a Mrs. Lorry, any time these fifty years almost!”

“Not at all!” From Miss Pross.

“You think there never might have been a Mrs. Lorry?” asked the

gentleman of that name.

“Pooh!” rejoined Miss Pross; “you were a bachelor in your cradle.”

“Well!” observed Mr. Lorry, beamingly adjusting his little wig, “that

seems probable, too.”

“And you were cut out for a bachelor,” pursued Miss Pross, “before you

were put in your cradle.”

“Then, I think,” said Mr. Lorry, “that I was very unhandsomely dealt

with, and that I ought to have had a voice in the selection of my

pattern. Enough! Now, my dear Lucie,” drawing his arm soothingly round

her waist, “I hear them moving in the next room, and Miss Pross and

I, as two formal folks of business, are anxious not to lose the final

opportunity of saying something to you that you wish to hear. You leave

your good father, my dear, in hands as earnest and as loving as your

own; he shall be taken every conceivable care of; during the next

fortnight, while you are in Warwickshire and thereabouts, even Tellson’s

shall go to the wall (comparatively speaking) before him. And when, at

the fortnight’s end, he comes to join you and your beloved husband, on

your other fortnight’s trip in Wales, you shall say that we have sent

him to you in the best health and in the happiest frame. Now, I hear

Somebody’s step coming to the door. Let me kiss my dear girl with an

old-fashioned bachelor blessing, before Somebody comes to claim his

own.”

For a moment, he held the fair face from him to look at the

well-remembered expression on the forehead, and then laid the bright

golden hair against his little brown wig, with a genuine tenderness and

delicacy which, if such things be old-fashioned, were as old as Adam.

The door of the Doctor’s room opened, and he came out with Charles

Darnay. He was so deadly pale--which had not been the case when they

went in together--that no vestige of colour was to be seen in his face.

But, in the composure of his manner he was unaltered, except that to the

shrewd glance of Mr. Lorry it disclosed some shadowy indication that the

old air of avoidance and dread had lately passed over him, like a cold

wind.

He gave his arm to his daughter, and took her down-stairs to the chariot

which Mr. Lorry had hired in honour of the day. The rest followed in

another carriage, and soon, in a neighbouring church, where no strange

eyes looked on, Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette were happily married.

Besides the glancing tears that shone among the smiles of the little

group when it was done, some diamonds, very bright and sparkling,

glanced on the bride’s hand, which were newly released from the

dark obscurity of one of Mr. Lorry’s pockets. They returned home to

breakfast, and all went well, and in due course the golden hair that had

mingled with the poor shoemaker’s white locks in the Paris garret, were

mingled with them again in the morning sunlight, on the threshold of the

door at parting.

It was a hard parting, though it was not for long. But her father

cheered her, and said at last, gently disengaging himself from her

enfolding arms, “Take her, Charles! She is yours!”

And her agitated hand waved to them from a chaise window, and she was

gone.

The corner being out of the way of the idle and curious, and the

preparations having been very simple and few, the Doctor, Mr. Lorry,

and Miss Pross, were left quite alone. It was when they turned into

the welcome shade of the cool old hall, that Mr. Lorry observed a great

change to have come over the Doctor; as if the golden arm uplifted

there, had struck him a poisoned blow.

He had naturally repressed much, and some revulsion might have been

expected in him when the occasion for repression was gone. But, it was

the old scared lost look that troubled Mr. Lorry; and through his absent

manner of clasping his head and drearily wandering away into his own

room when they got up-stairs, Mr. Lorry was reminded of Defarge the

wine-shop keeper, and the starlight ride.

“I think,” he whispered to Miss Pross, after anxious consideration, “I

think we had best not speak to him just now, or at all disturb him.

I must look in at Tellson’s; so I will go there at once and come back

presently. Then, we will take him a ride into the country, and dine

there, and all will be well.”

It was easier for Mr. Lorry to look in at Tellson’s, than to look out of

Tellson’s. He was detained two hours. When he came back, he ascended the

old staircase alone, having asked no question of the servant; going thus

into the Doctor’s rooms, he was stopped by a low sound of knocking.

“Good God!” he said, with a start. “What’s that?”

Miss Pross, with a terrified face, was at his ear. “O me, O me! All is

lost!” cried she, wringing her hands. “What is to be told to Ladybird?

He doesn’t know me, and is making shoes!”

Mr. Lorry said what he could to calm her, and went himself into the

Doctor’s room. The bench was turned towards the light, as it had been

when he had seen the shoemaker at his work before, and his head was bent

down, and he was very busy.

“Doctor Manette. My dear friend, Doctor Manette!”

The Doctor looked at him for a moment--half inquiringly, half as if he

were angry at being spoken to--and bent over his work again.

He had laid aside his coat and waistcoat; his shirt was open at the

throat, as it used to be when he did that work; and even the old

haggard, faded surface of face had come back to him. He worked

hard--impatiently--as if in some sense of having been interrupted.

Mr. Lorry glanced at the work in his hand, and observed that it was a

shoe of the old size and shape. He took up another that was lying by

him, and asked what it was.

“A young lady’s walking shoe,” he muttered, without looking up. “It

ought to have been finished long ago. Let it be.”

“But, Doctor Manette. Look at me!”

He obeyed, in the old mechanically submissive manner, without pausing in

his work.

“You know me, my dear friend? Think again. This is not your proper

occupation. Think, dear friend!”

Nothing would induce him to speak more. He looked up, for an instant at

a time, when he was requested to do so; but, no persuasion would extract

a word from him. He worked, and worked, and worked, in silence, and

words fell on him as they would have fallen on an echoless wall, or on

the air. The only ray of hope that Mr. Lorry could discover, was, that

he sometimes furtively looked up without being asked. In that, there

seemed a faint expression of curiosity or perplexity--as though he were

trying to reconcile some doubts in his mind.

Two things at once impressed themselves on Mr. Lorry, as important above

all others; the first, that this must be kept secret from Lucie;

the second, that it must be kept secret from all who knew him. In

conjunction with Miss Pross, he took immediate steps towards the latter

precaution, by giving out that the Doctor was not well, and required a

few days of complete rest. In aid of the kind deception to be practised

on his daughter, Miss Pross was to write, describing his having been

called away professionally, and referring to an imaginary letter of

two or three hurried lines in his own hand, represented to have been

addressed to her by the same post.

These measures, advisable to be taken in any case, Mr. Lorry took in

the hope of his coming to himself. If that should happen soon, he kept

another course in reserve; which was, to have a certain opinion that he

thought the best, on the Doctor’s case.

In the hope of his recovery, and of resort to this third course

being thereby rendered practicable, Mr. Lorry resolved to watch him

attentively, with as little appearance as possible of doing so. He

therefore made arrangements to absent himself from Tellson’s for the

first time in his life, and took his post by the window in the same

room.

He was not long in discovering that it was worse than useless to speak

to him, since, on being pressed, he became worried. He abandoned that

attempt on the first day, and resolved merely to keep himself always

before him, as a silent protest against the delusion into which he had

fallen, or was falling. He remained, therefore, in his seat near the

window, reading and writing, and expressing in as many pleasant and

natural ways as he could think of, that it was a free place.

Doctor Manette took what was given him to eat and drink, and worked on,

that first day, until it was too dark to see--worked on, half an hour

after Mr. Lorry could not have seen, for his life, to read or write.

When he put his tools aside as useless, until morning, Mr. Lorry rose

and said to him:

“Will you go out?”

He looked down at the floor on either side of him in the old manner,

looked up in the old manner, and repeated in the old low voice:

“Out?”

“Yes; for a walk with me. Why not?”

He made no effort to say why not, and said not a word more. But, Mr.

Lorry thought he saw, as he leaned forward on his bench in the dusk,

with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands, that he was in

some misty way asking himself, “Why not?” The sagacity of the man of

business perceived an advantage here, and determined to hold it.

Miss Pross and he divided the night into two watches, and observed him

at intervals from the adjoining room. He paced up and down for a long

time before he lay down; but, when he did finally lay himself down, he

fell asleep. In the morning, he was up betimes, and went straight to his

bench and to work.

On this second day, Mr. Lorry saluted him cheerfully by his name,

and spoke to him on topics that had been of late familiar to them. He

returned no reply, but it was evident that he heard what was said, and

that he thought about it, however confusedly. This encouraged Mr. Lorry

to have Miss Pross in with her work, several times during the day;

at those times, they quietly spoke of Lucie, and of her father then

present, precisely in the usual manner, and as if there were nothing

amiss. This was done without any demonstrative accompaniment, not long

enough, or often enough to harass him; and it lightened Mr. Lorry’s

friendly heart to believe that he looked up oftener, and that he

appeared to be stirred by some perception of inconsistencies surrounding

him.

When it fell dark again, Mr. Lorry asked him as before:

“Dear Doctor, will you go out?”

As before, he repeated, “Out?”

“Yes; for a walk with me. Why not?”

This time, Mr. Lorry feigned to go out when he could extract no answer

from him, and, after remaining absent for an hour, returned. In the

meanwhile, the Doctor had removed to the seat in the window, and had

sat there looking down at the plane-tree; but, on Mr. Lorry’s return, he

slipped away to his bench.

The time went very slowly on, and Mr. Lorry’s hope darkened, and his

heart grew heavier again, and grew yet heavier and heavier every day.

The third day came and went, the fourth, the fifth. Five days, six days,

seven days, eight days, nine days.

With a hope ever darkening, and with a heart always growing heavier and

heavier, Mr. Lorry passed through this anxious time. The secret was

well kept, and Lucie was unconscious and happy; but he could not fail to

observe that the shoemaker, whose hand had been a little out at first,

was growing dreadfully skilful, and that he had never been so intent on

his work, and that his hands had never been so nimble and expert, as in

the dusk of the ninth evening.

CHAPTER XIX.

An Opinion

Worn out by anxious watching, Mr. Lorry fell asleep at his post. On the

tenth morning of his suspense, he was startled by the shining of the sun

into the room where a heavy slumber had overtaken him when it was dark

night.

He rubbed his eyes and roused himself; but he doubted, when he had

done so, whether he was not still asleep. For, going to the door of the

Doctor’s room and looking in, he perceived that the shoemaker’s bench

and tools were put aside again, and that the Doctor himself sat reading

at the window. He was in his usual morning dress, and his face (which

Mr. Lorry could distinctly see), though still very pale, was calmly

studious and attentive.

Even when he had satisfied himself that he was awake, Mr. Lorry felt

giddily uncertain for some few moments whether the late shoemaking might

not be a disturbed dream of his own; for, did not his eyes show him his

friend before him in his accustomed clothing and aspect, and employed

as usual; and was there any sign within their range, that the change of

which he had so strong an impression had actually happened?

It was but the inquiry of his first confusion and astonishment, the

answer being obvious. If the impression were not produced by a real

corresponding and sufficient cause, how came he, Jarvis Lorry, there?

How came he to have fallen asleep, in his clothes, on the sofa in Doctor

Manette’s consulting-room, and to be debating these points outside the

Doctor’s bedroom door in the early morning?

Within a few minutes, Miss Pross stood whispering at his side. If he

had had any particle of doubt left, her talk would of necessity have

resolved it; but he was by that time clear-headed, and had none.

He advised that they should let the time go by until the regular

breakfast-hour, and should then meet the Doctor as if nothing unusual

had occurred. If he appeared to be in his customary state of mind, Mr.

Lorry would then cautiously proceed to seek direction and guidance from

the opinion he had been, in his anxiety, so anxious to obtain.

Miss Pross, submitting herself to his judgment, the scheme was worked

out with care. Having abundance of time for his usual methodical

toilette, Mr. Lorry presented himself at the breakfast-hour in his usual

white linen, and with his usual neat leg. The Doctor was summoned in the

usual way, and came to breakfast.

So far as it was possible to comprehend him without overstepping those

delicate and gradual approaches which Mr. Lorry felt to be the only safe

advance, he at first supposed that his daughter’s marriage had taken

place yesterday. An incidental allusion, purposely thrown out, to

the day of the week, and the day of the month, set him thinking and

counting, and evidently made him uneasy. In all other respects, however,

he was so composedly himself, that Mr. Lorry determined to have the aid

he sought. And that aid was his own.

Therefore, when the breakfast was done and cleared away, and he and the

Doctor were left together, Mr. Lorry said, feelingly:

“My dear Manette, I am anxious to have your opinion, in confidence, on a

very curious case in which I am deeply interested; that is to say, it is

very curious to me; perhaps, to your better information it may be less

so.”

Glancing at his hands, which were discoloured by his late work, the

Doctor looked troubled, and listened attentively. He had already glanced

at his hands more than once.

“Doctor Manette,” said Mr. Lorry, touching him affectionately on the

arm, “the case is the case of a particularly dear friend of mine. Pray

give your mind to it, and advise me well for his sake--and above all,

for his daughter’s--his daughter’s, my dear Manette.”

“If I understand,” said the Doctor, in a subdued tone, “some mental

shock--?”

“Yes!”

“Be explicit,” said the Doctor. “Spare no detail.”

Mr. Lorry saw that they understood one another, and proceeded.

“My dear Manette, it is the case of an old and a prolonged shock,

of great acuteness and severity to the affections, the feelings,

the--the--as you express it--the mind. The mind. It is the case of a

shock under which the sufferer was borne down, one cannot say for how

long, because I believe he cannot calculate the time himself, and there

are no other means of getting at it. It is the case of a shock from

which the sufferer recovered, by a process that he cannot trace

himself--as I once heard him publicly relate in a striking manner. It is

the case of a shock from which he has recovered, so completely, as to

be a highly intelligent man, capable of close application of mind, and

great exertion of body, and of constantly making fresh additions to his

stock of knowledge, which was already very large. But, unfortunately,

there has been,” he paused and took a deep breath--“a slight relapse.”

The Doctor, in a low voice, asked, “Of how long duration?”

“Nine days and nights.”

“How did it show itself? I infer,” glancing at his hands again, “in the

resumption of some old pursuit connected with the shock?”

“That is the fact.”

“Now, did you ever see him,” asked the Doctor, distinctly and

collectedly, though in the same low voice, “engaged in that pursuit

originally?”

“Once.”

“And when the relapse fell on him, was he in most respects--or in all

respects--as he was then?”

“I think in all respects.”

“You spoke of his daughter. Does his daughter know of the relapse?”

“No. It has been kept from her, and I hope will always be kept from her.

It is known only to myself, and to one other who may be trusted.”

The Doctor grasped his hand, and murmured, “That was very kind. That was

very thoughtful!” Mr. Lorry grasped his hand in return, and neither of

the two spoke for a little while.

“Now, my dear Manette,” said Mr. Lorry, at length, in his most

considerate and most affectionate way, “I am a mere man of business,

and unfit to cope with such intricate and difficult matters. I do not

possess the kind of information necessary; I do not possess the kind of

intelligence; I want guiding. There is no man in this world on whom

I could so rely for right guidance, as on you. Tell me, how does this

relapse come about? Is there danger of another? Could a repetition of it

be prevented? How should a repetition of it be treated? How does it come

about at all? What can I do for my friend? No man ever can have been

more desirous in his heart to serve a friend, than I am to serve mine,

if I knew how.

“But I don’t know how to originate, in such a case. If your sagacity,

knowledge, and experience, could put me on the right track, I might be

able to do so much; unenlightened and undirected, I can do so little.

Pray discuss it with me; pray enable me to see it a little more clearly,

and teach me how to be a little more useful.”

Doctor Manette sat meditating after these earnest words were spoken, and

Mr. Lorry did not press him.

“I think it probable,” said the Doctor, breaking silence with an effort,

“that the relapse you have described, my dear friend, was not quite

unforeseen by its subject.”

“Was it dreaded by him?” Mr. Lorry ventured to ask.

“Very much.” He said it with an involuntary shudder.

“You have no idea how such an apprehension weighs on the sufferer’s

mind, and how difficult--how almost impossible--it is, for him to force

himself to utter a word upon the topic that oppresses him.”

“Would he,” asked Mr. Lorry, “be sensibly relieved if he could prevail

upon himself to impart that secret brooding to any one, when it is on

him?”

“I think so. But it is, as I have told you, next to impossible. I even

believe it--in some cases--to be quite impossible.”

“Now,” said Mr. Lorry, gently laying his hand on the Doctor’s arm again,

after a short silence on both sides, “to what would you refer this

attack?”

“I believe,” returned Doctor Manette, “that there had been a strong and

extraordinary revival of the train of thought and remembrance that

was the first cause of the malady. Some intense associations of a most

distressing nature were vividly recalled, I think. It is probable that

there had long been a dread lurking in his mind, that those associations

would be recalled--say, under certain circumstances--say, on a

particular occasion. He tried to prepare himself in vain; perhaps the

effort to prepare himself made him less able to bear it.”

“Would he remember what took place in the relapse?” asked Mr. Lorry,

with natural hesitation.

The Doctor looked desolately round the room, shook his head, and

answered, in a low voice, “Not at all.”

“Now, as to the future,” hinted Mr. Lorry.

“As to the future,” said the Doctor, recovering firmness, “I should have

great hope. As it pleased Heaven in its mercy to restore him so soon, I

should have great hope. He, yielding under the pressure of a complicated

something, long dreaded and long vaguely foreseen and contended against,

and recovering after the cloud had burst and passed, I should hope that

the worst was over.”

“Well, well! That’s good comfort. I am thankful!” said Mr. Lorry.

“I am thankful!” repeated the Doctor, bending his head with reverence.

“There are two other points,” said Mr. Lorry, “on which I am anxious to

be instructed. I may go on?”

“You cannot do your friend a better service.” The Doctor gave him his

hand.

“To the first, then. He is of a studious habit, and unusually energetic;

he applies himself with great ardour to the acquisition of professional

knowledge, to the conducting of experiments, to many things. Now, does

he do too much?”

“I think not. It may be the character of his mind, to be always in

singular need of occupation. That may be, in part, natural to it; in

part, the result of affliction. The less it was occupied with healthy

things, the more it would be in danger of turning in the unhealthy

direction. He may have observed himself, and made the discovery.”

“You are sure that he is not under too great a strain?”

“I think I am quite sure of it.”

“My dear Manette, if he were overworked now--”

“My dear Lorry, I doubt if that could easily be. There has been a

violent stress in one direction, and it needs a counterweight.”

“Excuse me, as a persistent man of business. Assuming for a moment,

that he \_was\_ overworked; it would show itself in some renewal of this

disorder?”

“I do not think so. I do not think,” said Doctor Manette with the

firmness of self-conviction, “that anything but the one train of

association would renew it. I think that, henceforth, nothing but some

extraordinary jarring of that chord could renew it. After what has

happened, and after his recovery, I find it difficult to imagine any

such violent sounding of that string again. I trust, and I almost

believe, that the circumstances likely to renew it are exhausted.”

He spoke with the diffidence of a man who knew how slight a thing

would overset the delicate organisation of the mind, and yet with the

confidence of a man who had slowly won his assurance out of personal

endurance and distress. It was not for his friend to abate that

confidence. He professed himself more relieved and encouraged than he

really was, and approached his second and last point. He felt it to

be the most difficult of all; but, remembering his old Sunday morning

conversation with Miss Pross, and remembering what he had seen in the

last nine days, he knew that he must face it.

“The occupation resumed under the influence of this passing affliction

so happily recovered from,” said Mr. Lorry, clearing his throat, “we

will call--Blacksmith’s work, Blacksmith’s work. We will say, to put a

case and for the sake of illustration, that he had been used, in his bad

time, to work at a little forge. We will say that he was unexpectedly

found at his forge again. Is it not a pity that he should keep it by

him?”

The Doctor shaded his forehead with his hand, and beat his foot

nervously on the ground.

“He has always kept it by him,” said Mr. Lorry, with an anxious look at

his friend. “Now, would it not be better that he should let it go?”

Still, the Doctor, with shaded forehead, beat his foot nervously on the

ground.

“You do not find it easy to advise me?” said Mr. Lorry. “I quite

understand it to be a nice question. And yet I think--” And there he

shook his head, and stopped.

“You see,” said Doctor Manette, turning to him after an uneasy pause,

“it is very hard to explain, consistently, the innermost workings

of this poor man’s mind. He once yearned so frightfully for that

occupation, and it was so welcome when it came; no doubt it relieved

his pain so much, by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for

the perplexity of the brain, and by substituting, as he became more

practised, the ingenuity of the hands, for the ingenuity of the mental

torture; that he has never been able to bear the thought of putting it

quite out of his reach. Even now, when I believe he is more hopeful of

himself than he has ever been, and even speaks of himself with a kind

of confidence, the idea that he might need that old employment, and not

find it, gives him a sudden sense of terror, like that which one may

fancy strikes to the heart of a lost child.”

He looked like his illustration, as he raised his eyes to Mr. Lorry’s

face.

“But may not--mind! I ask for information, as a plodding man of business

who only deals with such material objects as guineas, shillings, and

bank-notes--may not the retention of the thing involve the retention of

the idea? If the thing were gone, my dear Manette, might not the fear go

with it? In short, is it not a concession to the misgiving, to keep the

forge?”

There was another silence.

“You see, too,” said the Doctor, tremulously, “it is such an old

companion.”

“I would not keep it,” said Mr. Lorry, shaking his head; for he gained

in firmness as he saw the Doctor disquieted. “I would recommend him to

sacrifice it. I only want your authority. I am sure it does no good.

Come! Give me your authority, like a dear good man. For his daughter’s

sake, my dear Manette!”

Very strange to see what a struggle there was within him!

“In her name, then, let it be done; I sanction it. But, I would not take

it away while he was present. Let it be removed when he is not there;

let him miss his old companion after an absence.”

Mr. Lorry readily engaged for that, and the conference was ended. They

passed the day in the country, and the Doctor was quite restored. On the

three following days he remained perfectly well, and on the fourteenth

day he went away to join Lucie and her husband. The precaution that

had been taken to account for his silence, Mr. Lorry had previously

explained to him, and he had written to Lucie in accordance with it, and

she had no suspicions.

On the night of the day on which he left the house, Mr. Lorry went into

his room with a chopper, saw, chisel, and hammer, attended by Miss Pross

carrying a light. There, with closed doors, and in a mysterious and

guilty manner, Mr. Lorry hacked the shoemaker’s bench to pieces, while

Miss Pross held the candle as if she were assisting at a murder--for

which, indeed, in her grimness, she was no unsuitable figure. The

burning of the body (previously reduced to pieces convenient for the

purpose) was commenced without delay in the kitchen fire; and the tools,

shoes, and leather, were buried in the garden. So wicked do destruction

and secrecy appear to honest minds, that Mr. Lorry and Miss Pross,

while engaged in the commission of their deed and in the removal of its

traces, almost felt, and almost looked, like accomplices in a horrible

crime.

CHAPTER XX.

A Plea

When the newly-married pair came home, the first person who appeared, to

offer his congratulations, was Sydney Carton. They had not been at home

many hours, when he presented himself. He was not improved in habits, or

in looks, or in manner; but there was a certain rugged air of fidelity

about him, which was new to the observation of Charles Darnay.

He watched his opportunity of taking Darnay aside into a window, and of

speaking to him when no one overheard.

“Mr. Darnay,” said Carton, “I wish we might be friends.”

“We are already friends, I hope.”

“You are good enough to say so, as a fashion of speech; but, I don’t

mean any fashion of speech. Indeed, when I say I wish we might be

friends, I scarcely mean quite that, either.”

Charles Darnay--as was natural--asked him, in all good-humour and

good-fellowship, what he did mean?

“Upon my life,” said Carton, smiling, “I find that easier to comprehend

in my own mind, than to convey to yours. However, let me try. You

remember a certain famous occasion when I was more drunk than--than

usual?”

“I remember a certain famous occasion when you forced me to confess that

you had been drinking.”

“I remember it too. The curse of those occasions is heavy upon me, for I

always remember them. I hope it may be taken into account one day,

when all days are at an end for me! Don’t be alarmed; I am not going to

preach.”

“I am not at all alarmed. Earnestness in you, is anything but alarming

to me.”

“Ah!” said Carton, with a careless wave of his hand, as if he waved that

away. “On the drunken occasion in question (one of a large number, as

you know), I was insufferable about liking you, and not liking you. I

wish you would forget it.”

“I forgot it long ago.”

“Fashion of speech again! But, Mr. Darnay, oblivion is not so easy to

me, as you represent it to be to you. I have by no means forgotten it,

and a light answer does not help me to forget it.”

“If it was a light answer,” returned Darnay, “I beg your forgiveness

for it. I had no other object than to turn a slight thing, which, to my

surprise, seems to trouble you too much, aside. I declare to you, on the

faith of a gentleman, that I have long dismissed it from my mind. Good

Heaven, what was there to dismiss! Have I had nothing more important to

remember, in the great service you rendered me that day?”

“As to the great service,” said Carton, “I am bound to avow to you, when

you speak of it in that way, that it was mere professional claptrap, I

don’t know that I cared what became of you, when I rendered it.--Mind! I

say when I rendered it; I am speaking of the past.”

“You make light of the obligation,” returned Darnay, “but I will not

quarrel with \_your\_ light answer.”

“Genuine truth, Mr. Darnay, trust me! I have gone aside from my purpose;

I was speaking about our being friends. Now, you know me; you know I am

incapable of all the higher and better flights of men. If you doubt it,

ask Stryver, and he’ll tell you so.”

“I prefer to form my own opinion, without the aid of his.”

“Well! At any rate you know me as a dissolute dog, who has never done

any good, and never will.”

“I don’t know that you ‘never will.’”

“But I do, and you must take my word for it. Well! If you could endure

to have such a worthless fellow, and a fellow of such indifferent

reputation, coming and going at odd times, I should ask that I might be

permitted to come and go as a privileged person here; that I might

be regarded as an useless (and I would add, if it were not for the

resemblance I detected between you and me, an unornamental) piece of

furniture, tolerated for its old service, and taken no notice of. I

doubt if I should abuse the permission. It is a hundred to one if I

should avail myself of it four times in a year. It would satisfy me, I

dare say, to know that I had it.”

“Will you try?”

“That is another way of saying that I am placed on the footing I have

indicated. I thank you, Darnay. I may use that freedom with your name?”

“I think so, Carton, by this time.”

They shook hands upon it, and Sydney turned away. Within a minute

afterwards, he was, to all outward appearance, as unsubstantial as ever.

When he was gone, and in the course of an evening passed with Miss

Pross, the Doctor, and Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay made some mention of

this conversation in general terms, and spoke of Sydney Carton as a

problem of carelessness and recklessness. He spoke of him, in short, not

bitterly or meaning to bear hard upon him, but as anybody might who saw

him as he showed himself.

He had no idea that this could dwell in the thoughts of his fair young

wife; but, when he afterwards joined her in their own rooms, he found

her waiting for him with the old pretty lifting of the forehead strongly

marked.

“We are thoughtful to-night!” said Darnay, drawing his arm about her.

“Yes, dearest Charles,” with her hands on his breast, and the inquiring

and attentive expression fixed upon him; “we are rather thoughtful

to-night, for we have something on our mind to-night.”

“What is it, my Lucie?”

“Will you promise not to press one question on me, if I beg you not to

ask it?”

“Will I promise? What will I not promise to my Love?”

What, indeed, with his hand putting aside the golden hair from the

cheek, and his other hand against the heart that beat for him!

“I think, Charles, poor Mr. Carton deserves more consideration and

respect than you expressed for him to-night.”

“Indeed, my own? Why so?”

“That is what you are not to ask me. But I think--I know--he does.”

“If you know it, it is enough. What would you have me do, my Life?”

“I would ask you, dearest, to be very generous with him always, and very

lenient on his faults when he is not by. I would ask you to believe that

he has a heart he very, very seldom reveals, and that there are deep

wounds in it. My dear, I have seen it bleeding.”

“It is a painful reflection to me,” said Charles Darnay, quite

astounded, “that I should have done him any wrong. I never thought this

of him.”

“My husband, it is so. I fear he is not to be reclaimed; there is

scarcely a hope that anything in his character or fortunes is reparable

now. But, I am sure that he is capable of good things, gentle things,

even magnanimous things.”

She looked so beautiful in the purity of her faith in this lost man,

that her husband could have looked at her as she was for hours.

“And, O my dearest Love!” she urged, clinging nearer to him, laying her

head upon his breast, and raising her eyes to his, “remember how strong

we are in our happiness, and how weak he is in his misery!”

The supplication touched him home. “I will always remember it, dear

Heart! I will remember it as long as I live.”

He bent over the golden head, and put the rosy lips to his, and folded

her in his arms. If one forlorn wanderer then pacing the dark streets,

could have heard her innocent disclosure, and could have seen the drops

of pity kissed away by her husband from the soft blue eyes so loving of

that husband, he might have cried to the night--and the words would not

have parted from his lips for the first time--

“God bless her for her sweet compassion!”

CHAPTER XXI.

Echoing Footsteps

A wonderful corner for echoes, it has been remarked, that corner where

the Doctor lived. Ever busily winding the golden thread which bound

her husband, and her father, and herself, and her old directress and

companion, in a life of quiet bliss, Lucie sat in the still house in

the tranquilly resounding corner, listening to the echoing footsteps of

years.

At first, there were times, though she was a perfectly happy young wife,

when her work would slowly fall from her hands, and her eyes would be

dimmed. For, there was something coming in the echoes, something light,

afar off, and scarcely audible yet, that stirred her heart too much.

Fluttering hopes and doubts--hopes, of a love as yet unknown to her:

doubts, of her remaining upon earth, to enjoy that new delight--divided

her breast. Among the echoes then, there would arise the sound of

footsteps at her own early grave; and thoughts of the husband who would

be left so desolate, and who would mourn for her so much, swelled to her

eyes, and broke like waves.

That time passed, and her little Lucie lay on her bosom. Then, among the

advancing echoes, there was the tread of her tiny feet and the sound of

her prattling words. Let greater echoes resound as they would, the young

mother at the cradle side could always hear those coming. They came, and

the shady house was sunny with a child’s laugh, and the Divine friend of

children, to whom in her trouble she had confided hers, seemed to take

her child in his arms, as He took the child of old, and made it a sacred

joy to her.

Ever busily winding the golden thread that bound them all together,

weaving the service of her happy influence through the tissue of all

their lives, and making it predominate nowhere, Lucie heard in the

echoes of years none but friendly and soothing sounds. Her husband’s

step was strong and prosperous among them; her father’s firm and equal.

Lo, Miss Pross, in harness of string, awakening the echoes, as an

unruly charger, whip-corrected, snorting and pawing the earth under the

plane-tree in the garden!

Even when there were sounds of sorrow among the rest, they were not

harsh nor cruel. Even when golden hair, like her own, lay in a halo on a

pillow round the worn face of a little boy, and he said, with a radiant

smile, “Dear papa and mamma, I am very sorry to leave you both, and to

leave my pretty sister; but I am called, and I must go!” those were not

tears all of agony that wetted his young mother’s cheek, as the spirit

departed from her embrace that had been entrusted to it. Suffer them and

forbid them not. They see my Father’s face. O Father, blessed words!

Thus, the rustling of an Angel’s wings got blended with the other

echoes, and they were not wholly of earth, but had in them that breath

of Heaven. Sighs of the winds that blew over a little garden-tomb were

mingled with them also, and both were audible to Lucie, in a hushed

murmur--like the breathing of a summer sea asleep upon a sandy shore--as

the little Lucie, comically studious at the task of the morning, or

dressing a doll at her mother’s footstool, chattered in the tongues of

the Two Cities that were blended in her life.

The Echoes rarely answered to the actual tread of Sydney Carton. Some

half-dozen times a year, at most, he claimed his privilege of coming in

uninvited, and would sit among them through the evening, as he had once

done often. He never came there heated with wine. And one other thing

regarding him was whispered in the echoes, which has been whispered by

all true echoes for ages and ages.

No man ever really loved a woman, lost her, and knew her with a

blameless though an unchanged mind, when she was a wife and a mother,

but her children had a strange sympathy with him--an instinctive

delicacy of pity for him. What fine hidden sensibilities are touched in

such a case, no echoes tell; but it is so, and it was so here. Carton

was the first stranger to whom little Lucie held out her chubby arms,

and he kept his place with her as she grew. The little boy had spoken of

him, almost at the last. “Poor Carton! Kiss him for me!”

Mr. Stryver shouldered his way through the law, like some great engine

forcing itself through turbid water, and dragged his useful friend in

his wake, like a boat towed astern. As the boat so favoured is usually

in a rough plight, and mostly under water, so, Sydney had a swamped

life of it. But, easy and strong custom, unhappily so much easier and

stronger in him than any stimulating sense of desert or disgrace, made

it the life he was to lead; and he no more thought of emerging from his

state of lion’s jackal, than any real jackal may be supposed to think of

rising to be a lion. Stryver was rich; had married a florid widow with

property and three boys, who had nothing particularly shining about them

but the straight hair of their dumpling heads.

These three young gentlemen, Mr. Stryver, exuding patronage of the most

offensive quality from every pore, had walked before him like three

sheep to the quiet corner in Soho, and had offered as pupils to

Lucie’s husband: delicately saying “Halloa! here are three lumps of

bread-and-cheese towards your matrimonial picnic, Darnay!” The polite

rejection of the three lumps of bread-and-cheese had quite bloated Mr.

Stryver with indignation, which he afterwards turned to account in the

training of the young gentlemen, by directing them to beware of the

pride of Beggars, like that tutor-fellow. He was also in the habit of

declaiming to Mrs. Stryver, over his full-bodied wine, on the arts

Mrs. Darnay had once put in practice to “catch” him, and on the

diamond-cut-diamond arts in himself, madam, which had rendered him “not

to be caught.” Some of his King’s Bench familiars, who were occasionally

parties to the full-bodied wine and the lie, excused him for the

latter by saying that he had told it so often, that he believed

it himself--which is surely such an incorrigible aggravation of an

originally bad offence, as to justify any such offender’s being carried

off to some suitably retired spot, and there hanged out of the way.

These were among the echoes to which Lucie, sometimes pensive, sometimes

amused and laughing, listened in the echoing corner, until her little

daughter was six years old. How near to her heart the echoes of her

child’s tread came, and those of her own dear father’s, always active

and self-possessed, and those of her dear husband’s, need not be told.

Nor, how the lightest echo of their united home, directed by herself

with such a wise and elegant thrift that it was more abundant than any

waste, was music to her. Nor, how there were echoes all about her, sweet

in her ears, of the many times her father had told her that he found her

more devoted to him married (if that could be) than single, and of the

many times her husband had said to her that no cares and duties seemed

to divide her love for him or her help to him, and asked her “What is

the magic secret, my darling, of your being everything to all of us,

as if there were only one of us, yet never seeming to be hurried, or to

have too much to do?”

But, there were other echoes, from a distance, that rumbled menacingly

in the corner all through this space of time. And it was now, about

little Lucie’s sixth birthday, that they began to have an awful sound,

as of a great storm in France with a dreadful sea rising.

On a night in mid-July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine, Mr.

Lorry came in late, from Tellson’s, and sat himself down by Lucie and

her husband in the dark window. It was a hot, wild night, and they were

all three reminded of the old Sunday night when they had looked at the

lightning from the same place.

“I began to think,” said Mr. Lorry, pushing his brown wig back, “that

I should have to pass the night at Tellson’s. We have been so full of

business all day, that we have not known what to do first, or which way

to turn. There is such an uneasiness in Paris, that we have actually a

run of confidence upon us! Our customers over there, seem not to be able

to confide their property to us fast enough. There is positively a mania

among some of them for sending it to England.”

“That has a bad look,” said Darnay--

“A bad look, you say, my dear Darnay? Yes, but we don’t know what reason

there is in it. People are so unreasonable! Some of us at Tellson’s are

getting old, and we really can’t be troubled out of the ordinary course

without due occasion.”

“Still,” said Darnay, “you know how gloomy and threatening the sky is.”

“I know that, to be sure,” assented Mr. Lorry, trying to persuade

himself that his sweet temper was soured, and that he grumbled, “but I

am determined to be peevish after my long day’s botheration. Where is

Manette?”

“Here he is,” said the Doctor, entering the dark room at the moment.

“I am quite glad you are at home; for these hurries and forebodings by

which I have been surrounded all day long, have made me nervous without

reason. You are not going out, I hope?”

“No; I am going to play backgammon with you, if you like,” said the

Doctor.

“I don’t think I do like, if I may speak my mind. I am not fit to be

pitted against you to-night. Is the teaboard still there, Lucie? I can’t

see.”

“Of course, it has been kept for you.”

“Thank ye, my dear. The precious child is safe in bed?”

“And sleeping soundly.”

“That’s right; all safe and well! I don’t know why anything should be

otherwise than safe and well here, thank God; but I have been so put out

all day, and I am not as young as I was! My tea, my dear! Thank ye. Now,

come and take your place in the circle, and let us sit quiet, and hear

the echoes about which you have your theory.”

“Not a theory; it was a fancy.”

“A fancy, then, my wise pet,” said Mr. Lorry, patting her hand. “They

are very numerous and very loud, though, are they not? Only hear them!”

Headlong, mad, and dangerous footsteps to force their way into anybody’s

life, footsteps not easily made clean again if once stained red, the

footsteps raging in Saint Antoine afar off, as the little circle sat in

the dark London window.

Saint Antoine had been, that morning, a vast dusky mass of scarecrows

heaving to and fro, with frequent gleams of light above the billowy

heads, where steel blades and bayonets shone in the sun. A tremendous

roar arose from the throat of Saint Antoine, and a forest of naked arms

struggled in the air like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind:

all the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or semblance of a

weapon that was thrown up from the depths below, no matter how far off.

Who gave them out, whence they last came, where they began, through what

agency they crookedly quivered and jerked, scores at a time, over the

heads of the crowd, like a kind of lightning, no eye in the throng could

have told; but, muskets were being distributed--so were cartridges,

powder, and ball, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes, every

weapon that distracted ingenuity could discover or devise. People who

could lay hold of nothing else, set themselves with bleeding hands to

force stones and bricks out of their places in walls. Every pulse and

heart in Saint Antoine was on high-fever strain and at high-fever heat.

Every living creature there held life as of no account, and was demented

with a passionate readiness to sacrifice it.

As a whirlpool of boiling waters has a centre point, so, all this raging

circled round Defarge’s wine-shop, and every human drop in the caldron

had a tendency to be sucked towards the vortex where Defarge himself,

already begrimed with gunpowder and sweat, issued orders, issued arms,

thrust this man back, dragged this man forward, disarmed one to arm

another, laboured and strove in the thickest of the uproar.

“Keep near to me, Jacques Three,” cried Defarge; “and do you, Jacques

One and Two, separate and put yourselves at the head of as many of these

patriots as you can. Where is my wife?”

“Eh, well! Here you see me!” said madame, composed as ever, but not

knitting to-day. Madame’s resolute right hand was occupied with an axe,

in place of the usual softer implements, and in her girdle were a pistol

and a cruel knife.

“Where do you go, my wife?”

“I go,” said madame, “with you at present. You shall see me at the head

of women, by-and-bye.”

“Come, then!” cried Defarge, in a resounding voice. “Patriots and

friends, we are ready! The Bastille!”

With a roar that sounded as if all the breath in France had been shaped

into the detested word, the living sea rose, wave on wave, depth on

depth, and overflowed the city to that point. Alarm-bells ringing, drums

beating, the sea raging and thundering on its new beach, the attack

began.

Deep ditches, double drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great

towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. Through the fire and through

the smoke--in the fire and in the smoke, for the sea cast him up against

a cannon, and on the instant he became a cannonier--Defarge of the

wine-shop worked like a manful soldier, Two fierce hours.

Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers,

cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. One drawbridge down! “Work, comrades

all, work! Work, Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques One Thousand, Jacques

Two Thousand, Jacques Five-and-Twenty Thousand; in the name of all

the Angels or the Devils--which you prefer--work!” Thus Defarge of the

wine-shop, still at his gun, which had long grown hot.

“To me, women!” cried madame his wife. “What! We can kill as well as

the men when the place is taken!” And to her, with a shrill thirsty

cry, trooping women variously armed, but all armed alike in hunger and

revenge.

Cannon, muskets, fire and smoke; but, still the deep ditch, the single

drawbridge, the massive stone walls, and the eight great towers. Slight

displacements of the raging sea, made by the falling wounded. Flashing

weapons, blazing torches, smoking waggonloads of wet straw, hard work

at neighbouring barricades in all directions, shrieks, volleys,

execrations, bravery without stint, boom smash and rattle, and the

furious sounding of the living sea; but, still the deep ditch, and the

single drawbridge, and the massive stone walls, and the eight great

towers, and still Defarge of the wine-shop at his gun, grown doubly hot

by the service of Four fierce hours.

A white flag from within the fortress, and a parley--this dimly

perceptible through the raging storm, nothing audible in it--suddenly

the sea rose immeasurably wider and higher, and swept Defarge of the

wine-shop over the lowered drawbridge, past the massive stone outer

walls, in among the eight great towers surrendered!

So resistless was the force of the ocean bearing him on, that even to

draw his breath or turn his head was as impracticable as if he had been

struggling in the surf at the South Sea, until he was landed in the

outer courtyard of the Bastille. There, against an angle of a wall, he

made a struggle to look about him. Jacques Three was nearly at his side;

Madame Defarge, still heading some of her women, was visible in the

inner distance, and her knife was in her hand. Everywhere was tumult,

exultation, deafening and maniacal bewilderment, astounding noise, yet

furious dumb-show.

“The Prisoners!”

“The Records!”

“The secret cells!”

“The instruments of torture!”

“The Prisoners!”

Of all these cries, and ten thousand incoherences, “The Prisoners!” was

the cry most taken up by the sea that rushed in, as if there were an

eternity of people, as well as of time and space. When the foremost

billows rolled past, bearing the prison officers with them, and

threatening them all with instant death if any secret nook remained

undisclosed, Defarge laid his strong hand on the breast of one of

these men--a man with a grey head, who had a lighted torch in his

hand--separated him from the rest, and got him between himself and the

wall.

“Show me the North Tower!” said Defarge. “Quick!”

“I will faithfully,” replied the man, “if you will come with me. But

there is no one there.”

“What is the meaning of One Hundred and Five, North Tower?” asked

Defarge. “Quick!”

“The meaning, monsieur?”

“Does it mean a captive, or a place of captivity? Or do you mean that I

shall strike you dead?”

“Kill him!” croaked Jacques Three, who had come close up.

“Monsieur, it is a cell.”

“Show it me!”

“Pass this way, then.”

Jacques Three, with his usual craving on him, and evidently disappointed

by the dialogue taking a turn that did not seem to promise bloodshed,

held by Defarge’s arm as he held by the turnkey’s. Their three heads had

been close together during this brief discourse, and it had been as much

as they could do to hear one another, even then: so tremendous was the

noise of the living ocean, in its irruption into the Fortress, and

its inundation of the courts and passages and staircases. All around

outside, too, it beat the walls with a deep, hoarse roar, from which,

occasionally, some partial shouts of tumult broke and leaped into the

air like spray.

Through gloomy vaults where the light of day had never shone, past

hideous doors of dark dens and cages, down cavernous flights of steps,

and again up steep rugged ascents of stone and brick, more like dry

waterfalls than staircases, Defarge, the turnkey, and Jacques Three,

linked hand and arm, went with all the speed they could make. Here and

there, especially at first, the inundation started on them and swept by;

but when they had done descending, and were winding and climbing up a

tower, they were alone. Hemmed in here by the massive thickness of walls

and arches, the storm within the fortress and without was only audible

to them in a dull, subdued way, as if the noise out of which they had

come had almost destroyed their sense of hearing.

The turnkey stopped at a low door, put a key in a clashing lock, swung

the door slowly open, and said, as they all bent their heads and passed

in:

“One hundred and five, North Tower!”

There was a small, heavily-grated, unglazed window high in the wall,

with a stone screen before it, so that the sky could be only seen by

stooping low and looking up. There was a small chimney, heavily barred

across, a few feet within. There was a heap of old feathery wood-ashes

on the hearth. There was a stool, and table, and a straw bed. There were

the four blackened walls, and a rusted iron ring in one of them.

“Pass that torch slowly along these walls, that I may see them,” said

Defarge to the turnkey.

The man obeyed, and Defarge followed the light closely with his eyes.

“Stop!--Look here, Jacques!”

“A. M.!” croaked Jacques Three, as he read greedily.

“Alexandre Manette,” said Defarge in his ear, following the letters

with his swart forefinger, deeply engrained with gunpowder. “And here he

wrote ‘a poor physician.’ And it was he, without doubt, who scratched

a calendar on this stone. What is that in your hand? A crowbar? Give it

me!”

He had still the linstock of his gun in his own hand. He made a sudden

exchange of the two instruments, and turning on the worm-eaten stool and

table, beat them to pieces in a few blows.

“Hold the light higher!” he said, wrathfully, to the turnkey. “Look

among those fragments with care, Jacques. And see! Here is my knife,”

throwing it to him; “rip open that bed, and search the straw. Hold the

light higher, you!”

With a menacing look at the turnkey he crawled upon the hearth, and,

peering up the chimney, struck and prised at its sides with the crowbar,

and worked at the iron grating across it. In a few minutes, some mortar

and dust came dropping down, which he averted his face to avoid; and

in it, and in the old wood-ashes, and in a crevice in the chimney

into which his weapon had slipped or wrought itself, he groped with a

cautious touch.

“Nothing in the wood, and nothing in the straw, Jacques?”

“Nothing.”

“Let us collect them together, in the middle of the cell. So! Light

them, you!”

The turnkey fired the little pile, which blazed high and hot. Stooping

again to come out at the low-arched door, they left it burning, and

retraced their way to the courtyard; seeming to recover their sense

of hearing as they came down, until they were in the raging flood once

more.

They found it surging and tossing, in quest of Defarge himself. Saint

Antoine was clamorous to have its wine-shop keeper foremost in the guard

upon the governor who had defended the Bastille and shot the people.

Otherwise, the governor would not be marched to the Hotel de Ville for

judgment. Otherwise, the governor would escape, and the people’s

blood (suddenly of some value, after many years of worthlessness) be

unavenged.

In the howling universe of passion and contention that seemed to

encompass this grim old officer conspicuous in his grey coat and red

decoration, there was but one quite steady figure, and that was a

woman’s. “See, there is my husband!” she cried, pointing him out.

“See Defarge!” She stood immovable close to the grim old officer, and

remained immovable close to him; remained immovable close to him through

the streets, as Defarge and the rest bore him along; remained immovable

close to him when he was got near his destination, and began to

be struck at from behind; remained immovable close to him when the

long-gathering rain of stabs and blows fell heavy; was so close to him

when he dropped dead under it, that, suddenly animated, she put her foot

upon his neck, and with her cruel knife--long ready--hewed off his head.

The hour was come, when Saint Antoine was to execute his horrible idea

of hoisting up men for lamps to show what he could be and do. Saint

Antoine’s blood was up, and the blood of tyranny and domination by the

iron hand was down--down on the steps of the Hotel de Ville where the

governor’s body lay--down on the sole of the shoe of Madame Defarge

where she had trodden on the body to steady it for mutilation. “Lower

the lamp yonder!” cried Saint Antoine, after glaring round for a new

means of death; “here is one of his soldiers to be left on guard!” The

swinging sentinel was posted, and the sea rushed on.

The sea of black and threatening waters, and of destructive upheaving

of wave against wave, whose depths were yet unfathomed and whose forces

were yet unknown. The remorseless sea of turbulently swaying shapes,

voices of vengeance, and faces hardened in the furnaces of suffering

until the touch of pity could make no mark on them.

But, in the ocean of faces where every fierce and furious expression was

in vivid life, there were two groups of faces--each seven in number--so

fixedly contrasting with the rest, that never did sea roll which bore

more memorable wrecks with it. Seven faces of prisoners, suddenly

released by the storm that had burst their tomb, were carried high

overhead: all scared, all lost, all wondering and amazed, as if the Last

Day were come, and those who rejoiced around them were lost spirits.

Other seven faces there were, carried higher, seven dead faces, whose

drooping eyelids and half-seen eyes awaited the Last Day. Impassive

faces, yet with a suspended--not an abolished--expression on them;

faces, rather, in a fearful pause, as having yet to raise the dropped

lids of the eyes, and bear witness with the bloodless lips, “THOU DIDST

IT!”

Seven prisoners released, seven gory heads on pikes, the keys of the

accursed fortress of the eight strong towers, some discovered letters

and other memorials of prisoners of old time, long dead of broken

hearts,--such, and such--like, the loudly echoing footsteps of Saint

Antoine escort through the Paris streets in mid-July, one thousand seven

hundred and eighty-nine. Now, Heaven defeat the fancy of Lucie Darnay,

and keep these feet far out of her life! For, they are headlong, mad,

and dangerous; and in the years so long after the breaking of the cask

at Defarge’s wine-shop door, they are not easily purified when once

stained red.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Sea Still Rises

Haggard Saint Antoine had had only one exultant week, in which to soften

his modicum of hard and bitter bread to such extent as he could, with

the relish of fraternal embraces and congratulations, when Madame

Defarge sat at her counter, as usual, presiding over the customers.

Madame Defarge wore no rose in her head, for the great brotherhood of

Spies had become, even in one short week, extremely chary of trusting

themselves to the saint’s mercies. The lamps across his streets had a

portentously elastic swing with them.

Madame Defarge, with her arms folded, sat in the morning light and heat,

contemplating the wine-shop and the street. In both, there were several

knots of loungers, squalid and miserable, but now with a manifest sense

of power enthroned on their distress. The raggedest nightcap, awry on

the wretchedest head, had this crooked significance in it: “I know how

hard it has grown for me, the wearer of this, to support life in myself;

but do you know how easy it has grown for me, the wearer of this, to

destroy life in you?” Every lean bare arm, that had been without work

before, had this work always ready for it now, that it could strike.

The fingers of the knitting women were vicious, with the experience that

they could tear. There was a change in the appearance of Saint Antoine;

the image had been hammering into this for hundreds of years, and the

last finishing blows had told mightily on the expression.

Madame Defarge sat observing it, with such suppressed approval as was

to be desired in the leader of the Saint Antoine women. One of her

sisterhood knitted beside her. The short, rather plump wife of a starved

grocer, and the mother of two children withal, this lieutenant had

already earned the complimentary name of The Vengeance.

“Hark!” said The Vengeance. “Listen, then! Who comes?”

As if a train of powder laid from the outermost bound of Saint Antoine

Quarter to the wine-shop door, had been suddenly fired, a fast-spreading

murmur came rushing along.

“It is Defarge,” said madame. “Silence, patriots!”

Defarge came in breathless, pulled off a red cap he wore, and looked

around him! “Listen, everywhere!” said madame again. “Listen to him!”

Defarge stood, panting, against a background of eager eyes and open

mouths, formed outside the door; all those within the wine-shop had

sprung to their feet.

“Say then, my husband. What is it?”

“News from the other world!”

“How, then?” cried madame, contemptuously. “The other world?”

“Does everybody here recall old Foulon, who told the famished people

that they might eat grass, and who died, and went to Hell?”

“Everybody!” from all throats.

“The news is of him. He is among us!”

“Among us!” from the universal throat again. “And dead?”

“Not dead! He feared us so much--and with reason--that he caused himself

to be represented as dead, and had a grand mock-funeral. But they have

found him alive, hiding in the country, and have brought him in. I have

seen him but now, on his way to the Hotel de Ville, a prisoner. I have

said that he had reason to fear us. Say all! \_Had\_ he reason?”

Wretched old sinner of more than threescore years and ten, if he had

never known it yet, he would have known it in his heart of hearts if he

could have heard the answering cry.

A moment of profound silence followed. Defarge and his wife looked

steadfastly at one another. The Vengeance stooped, and the jar of a drum

was heard as she moved it at her feet behind the counter.

“Patriots!” said Defarge, in a determined voice, “are we ready?”

Instantly Madame Defarge’s knife was in her girdle; the drum was beating

in the streets, as if it and a drummer had flown together by magic; and

The Vengeance, uttering terrific shrieks, and flinging her arms about

her head like all the forty Furies at once, was tearing from house to

house, rousing the women.

The men were terrible, in the bloody-minded anger with which they looked

from windows, caught up what arms they had, and came pouring down into

the streets; but, the women were a sight to chill the boldest. From

such household occupations as their bare poverty yielded, from their

children, from their aged and their sick crouching on the bare ground

famished and naked, they ran out with streaming hair, urging one

another, and themselves, to madness with the wildest cries and actions.

Villain Foulon taken, my sister! Old Foulon taken, my mother! Miscreant

Foulon taken, my daughter! Then, a score of others ran into the midst of

these, beating their breasts, tearing their hair, and screaming, Foulon

alive! Foulon who told the starving people they might eat grass! Foulon

who told my old father that he might eat grass, when I had no bread

to give him! Foulon who told my baby it might suck grass, when these

breasts were dry with want! O mother of God, this Foulon! O Heaven our

suffering! Hear me, my dead baby and my withered father: I swear on my

knees, on these stones, to avenge you on Foulon! Husbands, and brothers,

and young men, Give us the blood of Foulon, Give us the head of Foulon,

Give us the heart of Foulon, Give us the body and soul of Foulon, Rend

Foulon to pieces, and dig him into the ground, that grass may grow from

him! With these cries, numbers of the women, lashed into blind frenzy,

whirled about, striking and tearing at their own friends until they

dropped into a passionate swoon, and were only saved by the men

belonging to them from being trampled under foot.

Nevertheless, not a moment was lost; not a moment! This Foulon was at

the Hotel de Ville, and might be loosed. Never, if Saint Antoine knew

his own sufferings, insults, and wrongs! Armed men and women flocked out

of the Quarter so fast, and drew even these last dregs after them with

such a force of suction, that within a quarter of an hour there was not

a human creature in Saint Antoine’s bosom but a few old crones and the

wailing children.

No. They were all by that time choking the Hall of Examination where

this old man, ugly and wicked, was, and overflowing into the adjacent

open space and streets. The Defarges, husband and wife, The Vengeance,

and Jacques Three, were in the first press, and at no great distance

from him in the Hall.

“See!” cried madame, pointing with her knife. “See the old villain bound

with ropes. That was well done to tie a bunch of grass upon his back.

Ha, ha! That was well done. Let him eat it now!” Madame put her knife

under her arm, and clapped her hands as at a play.

The people immediately behind Madame Defarge, explaining the cause of

her satisfaction to those behind them, and those again explaining to

others, and those to others, the neighbouring streets resounded with the

clapping of hands. Similarly, during two or three hours of drawl,

and the winnowing of many bushels of words, Madame Defarge’s frequent

expressions of impatience were taken up, with marvellous quickness, at

a distance: the more readily, because certain men who had by some

wonderful exercise of agility climbed up the external architecture

to look in from the windows, knew Madame Defarge well, and acted as a

telegraph between her and the crowd outside the building.

At length the sun rose so high that it struck a kindly ray as of hope or

protection, directly down upon the old prisoner’s head. The favour was

too much to bear; in an instant the barrier of dust and chaff that had

stood surprisingly long, went to the winds, and Saint Antoine had got

him!

It was known directly, to the furthest confines of the crowd. Defarge

had but sprung over a railing and a table, and folded the miserable

wretch in a deadly embrace--Madame Defarge had but followed and turned

her hand in one of the ropes with which he was tied--The Vengeance and

Jacques Three were not yet up with them, and the men at the windows

had not yet swooped into the Hall, like birds of prey from their high

perches--when the cry seemed to go up, all over the city, “Bring him

out! Bring him to the lamp!”

Down, and up, and head foremost on the steps of the building; now, on

his knees; now, on his feet; now, on his back; dragged, and struck at,

and stifled by the bunches of grass and straw that were thrust into his

face by hundreds of hands; torn, bruised, panting, bleeding, yet always

entreating and beseeching for mercy; now full of vehement agony of

action, with a small clear space about him as the people drew one

another back that they might see; now, a log of dead wood drawn through

a forest of legs; he was hauled to the nearest street corner where one

of the fatal lamps swung, and there Madame Defarge let him go--as a cat

might have done to a mouse--and silently and composedly looked at him

while they made ready, and while he besought her: the women passionately

screeching at him all the time, and the men sternly calling out to have

him killed with grass in his mouth. Once, he went aloft, and the rope

broke, and they caught him shrieking; twice, he went aloft, and the rope

broke, and they caught him shrieking; then, the rope was merciful, and

held him, and his head was soon upon a pike, with grass enough in the

mouth for all Saint Antoine to dance at the sight of.

Nor was this the end of the day’s bad work, for Saint Antoine so shouted

and danced his angry blood up, that it boiled again, on hearing when

the day closed in that the son-in-law of the despatched, another of the

people’s enemies and insulters, was coming into Paris under a guard

five hundred strong, in cavalry alone. Saint Antoine wrote his crimes

on flaring sheets of paper, seized him--would have torn him out of the

breast of an army to bear Foulon company--set his head and heart on

pikes, and carried the three spoils of the day, in Wolf-procession

through the streets.

Not before dark night did the men and women come back to the children,

wailing and breadless. Then, the miserable bakers’ shops were beset by

long files of them, patiently waiting to buy bad bread; and while

they waited with stomachs faint and empty, they beguiled the time by

embracing one another on the triumphs of the day, and achieving them

again in gossip. Gradually, these strings of ragged people shortened and

frayed away; and then poor lights began to shine in high windows, and

slender fires were made in the streets, at which neighbours cooked in

common, afterwards supping at their doors.

Scanty and insufficient suppers those, and innocent of meat, as of

most other sauce to wretched bread. Yet, human fellowship infused

some nourishment into the flinty viands, and struck some sparks of

cheerfulness out of them. Fathers and mothers who had had their full

share in the worst of the day, played gently with their meagre children;

and lovers, with such a world around them and before them, loved and

hoped.

It was almost morning, when Defarge’s wine-shop parted with its last

knot of customers, and Monsieur Defarge said to madame his wife, in

husky tones, while fastening the door:

“At last it is come, my dear!”

“Eh well!” returned madame. “Almost.”

Saint Antoine slept, the Defarges slept: even The Vengeance slept with

her starved grocer, and the drum was at rest. The drum’s was the

only voice in Saint Antoine that blood and hurry had not changed. The

Vengeance, as custodian of the drum, could have wakened him up and had

the same speech out of him as before the Bastille fell, or old Foulon

was seized; not so with the hoarse tones of the men and women in Saint

Antoine’s bosom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Fire Rises

There was a change on the village where the fountain fell, and where

the mender of roads went forth daily to hammer out of the stones on the

highway such morsels of bread as might serve for patches to hold his

poor ignorant soul and his poor reduced body together. The prison on the

crag was not so dominant as of yore; there were soldiers to guard it,

but not many; there were officers to guard the soldiers, but not one of

them knew what his men would do--beyond this: that it would probably not

be what he was ordered.

Far and wide lay a ruined country, yielding nothing but desolation.

Every green leaf, every blade of grass and blade of grain, was as

shrivelled and poor as the miserable people. Everything was bowed down,

dejected, oppressed, and broken. Habitations, fences, domesticated

animals, men, women, children, and the soil that bore them--all worn

out.

Monseigneur (often a most worthy individual gentleman) was a national

blessing, gave a chivalrous tone to things, was a polite example of

luxurious and shining life, and a great deal more to equal purpose;

nevertheless, Monseigneur as a class had, somehow or other, brought

things to this. Strange that Creation, designed expressly for

Monseigneur, should be so soon wrung dry and squeezed out! There must

be something short-sighted in the eternal arrangements, surely! Thus it

was, however; and the last drop of blood having been extracted from the

flints, and the last screw of the rack having been turned so often that

its purchase crumbled, and it now turned and turned with nothing

to bite, Monseigneur began to run away from a phenomenon so low and

unaccountable.

But, this was not the change on the village, and on many a village like

it. For scores of years gone by, Monseigneur had squeezed it and wrung

it, and had seldom graced it with his presence except for the pleasures

of the chase--now, found in hunting the people; now, found in hunting

the beasts, for whose preservation Monseigneur made edifying spaces

of barbarous and barren wilderness. No. The change consisted in

the appearance of strange faces of low caste, rather than in the

disappearance of the high caste, chiselled, and otherwise beautified and

beautifying features of Monseigneur.

For, in these times, as the mender of roads worked, solitary, in the

dust, not often troubling himself to reflect that dust he was and

to dust he must return, being for the most part too much occupied in

thinking how little he had for supper and how much more he would eat if

he had it--in these times, as he raised his eyes from his lonely labour,

and viewed the prospect, he would see some rough figure approaching on

foot, the like of which was once a rarity in those parts, but was now

a frequent presence. As it advanced, the mender of roads would discern

without surprise, that it was a shaggy-haired man, of almost barbarian

aspect, tall, in wooden shoes that were clumsy even to the eyes of a

mender of roads, grim, rough, swart, steeped in the mud and dust of many

highways, dank with the marshy moisture of many low grounds, sprinkled

with the thorns and leaves and moss of many byways through woods.

Such a man came upon him, like a ghost, at noon in the July weather,

as he sat on his heap of stones under a bank, taking such shelter as he

could get from a shower of hail.

The man looked at him, looked at the village in the hollow, at the mill,

and at the prison on the crag. When he had identified these objects

in what benighted mind he had, he said, in a dialect that was just

intelligible:

“How goes it, Jacques?”

“All well, Jacques.”

“Touch then!”

They joined hands, and the man sat down on the heap of stones.

“No dinner?”

“Nothing but supper now,” said the mender of roads, with a hungry face.

“It is the fashion,” growled the man. “I meet no dinner anywhere.”

He took out a blackened pipe, filled it, lighted it with flint and

steel, pulled at it until it was in a bright glow: then, suddenly held

it from him and dropped something into it from between his finger and

thumb, that blazed and went out in a puff of smoke.

“Touch then.” It was the turn of the mender of roads to say it this

time, after observing these operations. They again joined hands.

“To-night?” said the mender of roads.

“To-night,” said the man, putting the pipe in his mouth.

“Where?”

“Here.”

He and the mender of roads sat on the heap of stones looking silently at

one another, with the hail driving in between them like a pigmy charge

of bayonets, until the sky began to clear over the village.

“Show me!” said the traveller then, moving to the brow of the hill.

“See!” returned the mender of roads, with extended finger. “You go down

here, and straight through the street, and past the fountain--”

“To the Devil with all that!” interrupted the other, rolling his eye

over the landscape. “\_I\_ go through no streets and past no fountains.

Well?”

“Well! About two leagues beyond the summit of that hill above the

village.”

“Good. When do you cease to work?”

“At sunset.”

“Will you wake me, before departing? I have walked two nights without

resting. Let me finish my pipe, and I shall sleep like a child. Will you

wake me?”

“Surely.”

The wayfarer smoked his pipe out, put it in his breast, slipped off his

great wooden shoes, and lay down on his back on the heap of stones. He

was fast asleep directly.

As the road-mender plied his dusty labour, and the hail-clouds, rolling

away, revealed bright bars and streaks of sky which were responded to

by silver gleams upon the landscape, the little man (who wore a red cap

now, in place of his blue one) seemed fascinated by the figure on the

heap of stones. His eyes were so often turned towards it, that he used

his tools mechanically, and, one would have said, to very poor account.

The bronze face, the shaggy black hair and beard, the coarse woollen

red cap, the rough medley dress of home-spun stuff and hairy skins of

beasts, the powerful frame attenuated by spare living, and the sullen

and desperate compression of the lips in sleep, inspired the mender

of roads with awe. The traveller had travelled far, and his feet were

footsore, and his ankles chafed and bleeding; his great shoes, stuffed

with leaves and grass, had been heavy to drag over the many long

leagues, and his clothes were chafed into holes, as he himself was into

sores. Stooping down beside him, the road-mender tried to get a peep at

secret weapons in his breast or where not; but, in vain, for he slept

with his arms crossed upon him, and set as resolutely as his lips.

Fortified towns with their stockades, guard-houses, gates, trenches, and

drawbridges, seemed to the mender of roads, to be so much air as against

this figure. And when he lifted his eyes from it to the horizon and

looked around, he saw in his small fancy similar figures, stopped by no

obstacle, tending to centres all over France.

The man slept on, indifferent to showers of hail and intervals of

brightness, to sunshine on his face and shadow, to the paltering lumps

of dull ice on his body and the diamonds into which the sun changed

them, until the sun was low in the west, and the sky was glowing. Then,

the mender of roads having got his tools together and all things ready

to go down into the village, roused him.

“Good!” said the sleeper, rising on his elbow. “Two leagues beyond the

summit of the hill?”

“About.”

“About. Good!”

The mender of roads went home, with the dust going on before him

according to the set of the wind, and was soon at the fountain,

squeezing himself in among the lean kine brought there to drink, and

appearing even to whisper to them in his whispering to all the village.

When the village had taken its poor supper, it did not creep to bed,

as it usually did, but came out of doors again, and remained there. A

curious contagion of whispering was upon it, and also, when it gathered

together at the fountain in the dark, another curious contagion of

looking expectantly at the sky in one direction only. Monsieur Gabelle,

chief functionary of the place, became uneasy; went out on his house-top

alone, and looked in that direction too; glanced down from behind his

chimneys at the darkening faces by the fountain below, and sent word to

the sacristan who kept the keys of the church, that there might be need

to ring the tocsin by-and-bye.

The night deepened. The trees environing the old chateau, keeping its

solitary state apart, moved in a rising wind, as though they threatened

the pile of building massive and dark in the gloom. Up the two terrace

flights of steps the rain ran wildly, and beat at the great door, like a

swift messenger rousing those within; uneasy rushes of wind went through

the hall, among the old spears and knives, and passed lamenting up the

stairs, and shook the curtains of the bed where the last Marquis

had slept. East, West, North, and South, through the woods, four

heavy-treading, unkempt figures crushed the high grass and cracked the

branches, striding on cautiously to come together in the courtyard. Four

lights broke out there, and moved away in different directions, and all

was black again.

But, not for long. Presently, the chateau began to make itself strangely

visible by some light of its own, as though it were growing luminous.

Then, a flickering streak played behind the architecture of the front,

picking out transparent places, and showing where balustrades, arches,

and windows were. Then it soared higher, and grew broader and brighter.

Soon, from a score of the great windows, flames burst forth, and the

stone faces awakened, stared out of fire.

A faint murmur arose about the house from the few people who were left

there, and there was a saddling of a horse and riding away. There was

spurring and splashing through the darkness, and bridle was drawn in the

space by the village fountain, and the horse in a foam stood at Monsieur

Gabelle’s door. “Help, Gabelle! Help, every one!” The tocsin rang

impatiently, but other help (if that were any) there was none. The

mender of roads, and two hundred and fifty particular friends, stood

with folded arms at the fountain, looking at the pillar of fire in the

sky. “It must be forty feet high,” said they, grimly; and never moved.

The rider from the chateau, and the horse in a foam, clattered away

through the village, and galloped up the stony steep, to the prison on

the crag. At the gate, a group of officers were looking at the fire;

removed from them, a group of soldiers. “Help, gentlemen--officers! The

chateau is on fire; valuable objects may be saved from the flames by

timely aid! Help, help!” The officers looked towards the soldiers who

looked at the fire; gave no orders; and answered, with shrugs and biting

of lips, “It must burn.”

As the rider rattled down the hill again and through the street, the

village was illuminating. The mender of roads, and the two hundred and

fifty particular friends, inspired as one man and woman by the idea of

lighting up, had darted into their houses, and were putting candles in

every dull little pane of glass. The general scarcity of everything,

occasioned candles to be borrowed in a rather peremptory manner of

Monsieur Gabelle; and in a moment of reluctance and hesitation on

that functionary’s part, the mender of roads, once so submissive to

authority, had remarked that carriages were good to make bonfires with,

and that post-horses would roast.

The chateau was left to itself to flame and burn. In the roaring and

raging of the conflagration, a red-hot wind, driving straight from the

infernal regions, seemed to be blowing the edifice away. With the rising

and falling of the blaze, the stone faces showed as if they were in

torment. When great masses of stone and timber fell, the face with the

two dints in the nose became obscured: anon struggled out of the smoke

again, as if it were the face of the cruel Marquis, burning at the stake

and contending with the fire.

The chateau burned; the nearest trees, laid hold of by the fire,

scorched and shrivelled; trees at a distance, fired by the four fierce

figures, begirt the blazing edifice with a new forest of smoke. Molten

lead and iron boiled in the marble basin of the fountain; the water ran

dry; the extinguisher tops of the towers vanished like ice before the

heat, and trickled down into four rugged wells of flame. Great rents and

splits branched out in the solid walls, like crystallisation; stupefied

birds wheeled about and dropped into the furnace; four fierce figures

trudged away, East, West, North, and South, along the night-enshrouded

roads, guided by the beacon they had lighted, towards their next

destination. The illuminated village had seized hold of the tocsin, and,

abolishing the lawful ringer, rang for joy.

Not only that; but the village, light-headed with famine, fire, and

bell-ringing, and bethinking itself that Monsieur Gabelle had to do with

the collection of rent and taxes--though it was but a small instalment

of taxes, and no rent at all, that Gabelle had got in those latter

days--became impatient for an interview with him, and, surrounding his

house, summoned him to come forth for personal conference. Whereupon,

Monsieur Gabelle did heavily bar his door, and retire to hold counsel

with himself. The result of that conference was, that Gabelle again

withdrew himself to his housetop behind his stack of chimneys; this time

resolved, if his door were broken in (he was a small Southern man

of retaliative temperament), to pitch himself head foremost over the

parapet, and crush a man or two below.

Probably, Monsieur Gabelle passed a long night up there, with the

distant chateau for fire and candle, and the beating at his door,

combined with the joy-ringing, for music; not to mention his having an

ill-omened lamp slung across the road before his posting-house gate,

which the village showed a lively inclination to displace in his favour.

A trying suspense, to be passing a whole summer night on the brink of

the black ocean, ready to take that plunge into it upon which Monsieur

Gabelle had resolved! But, the friendly dawn appearing at last, and the

rush-candles of the village guttering out, the people happily dispersed,

and Monsieur Gabelle came down bringing his life with him for that

while.

Within a hundred miles, and in the light of other fires, there were

other functionaries less fortunate, that night and other nights, whom

the rising sun found hanging across once-peaceful streets, where they

had been born and bred; also, there were other villagers and townspeople

less fortunate than the mender of roads and his fellows, upon whom the

functionaries and soldiery turned with success, and whom they strung up

in their turn. But, the fierce figures were steadily wending East, West,

North, and South, be that as it would; and whosoever hung, fire burned.

The altitude of the gallows that would turn to water and quench it,

no functionary, by any stretch of mathematics, was able to calculate

successfully.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Drawn to the Loadstone Rock

In such risings of fire and risings of sea--the firm earth shaken by

the rushes of an angry ocean which had now no ebb, but was always on the

flow, higher and higher, to the terror and wonder of the beholders on

the shore--three years of tempest were consumed. Three more birthdays

of little Lucie had been woven by the golden thread into the peaceful

tissue of the life of her home.

Many a night and many a day had its inmates listened to the echoes in

the corner, with hearts that failed them when they heard the thronging

feet. For, the footsteps had become to their minds as the footsteps of

a people, tumultuous under a red flag and with their country declared in

danger, changed into wild beasts, by terrible enchantment long persisted

in.

Monseigneur, as a class, had dissociated himself from the phenomenon of

his not being appreciated: of his being so little wanted in France, as

to incur considerable danger of receiving his dismissal from it, and

this life together. Like the fabled rustic who raised the Devil with

infinite pains, and was so terrified at the sight of him that he could

ask the Enemy no question, but immediately fled; so, Monseigneur, after

boldly reading the Lord’s Prayer backwards for a great number of years,

and performing many other potent spells for compelling the Evil One, no

sooner beheld him in his terrors than he took to his noble heels.

The shining Bull’s Eye of the Court was gone, or it would have been the

mark for a hurricane of national bullets. It had never been a good

eye to see with--had long had the mote in it of Lucifer’s pride,

Sardanapalus’s luxury, and a mole’s blindness--but it had dropped

out and was gone. The Court, from that exclusive inner circle to its

outermost rotten ring of intrigue, corruption, and dissimulation, was

all gone together. Royalty was gone; had been besieged in its Palace and

“suspended,” when the last tidings came over.

The August of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two was

come, and Monseigneur was by this time scattered far and wide.

As was natural, the head-quarters and great gathering-place of

Monseigneur, in London, was Tellson’s Bank. Spirits are supposed to

haunt the places where their bodies most resorted, and Monseigneur

without a guinea haunted the spot where his guineas used to be.

Moreover, it was the spot to which such French intelligence as was most

to be relied upon, came quickest. Again: Tellson’s was a munificent

house, and extended great liberality to old customers who had fallen

from their high estate. Again: those nobles who had seen the coming

storm in time, and anticipating plunder or confiscation, had made

provident remittances to Tellson’s, were always to be heard of there

by their needy brethren. To which it must be added that every new-comer

from France reported himself and his tidings at Tellson’s, almost as

a matter of course. For such variety of reasons, Tellson’s was at that

time, as to French intelligence, a kind of High Exchange; and this

was so well known to the public, and the inquiries made there were in

consequence so numerous, that Tellson’s sometimes wrote the latest news

out in a line or so and posted it in the Bank windows, for all who ran

through Temple Bar to read.

On a steaming, misty afternoon, Mr. Lorry sat at his desk, and Charles

Darnay stood leaning on it, talking with him in a low voice. The

penitential den once set apart for interviews with the House, was now

the news-Exchange, and was filled to overflowing. It was within half an

hour or so of the time of closing.

“But, although you are the youngest man that ever lived,” said Charles

Darnay, rather hesitating, “I must still suggest to you--”

“I understand. That I am too old?” said Mr. Lorry.

“Unsettled weather, a long journey, uncertain means of travelling, a

disorganised country, a city that may not be even safe for you.”

“My dear Charles,” said Mr. Lorry, with cheerful confidence, “you touch

some of the reasons for my going: not for my staying away. It is safe

enough for me; nobody will care to interfere with an old fellow of hard

upon fourscore when there are so many people there much better worth

interfering with. As to its being a disorganised city, if it were not a

disorganised city there would be no occasion to send somebody from our

House here to our House there, who knows the city and the business, of

old, and is in Tellson’s confidence. As to the uncertain travelling, the

long journey, and the winter weather, if I were not prepared to submit

myself to a few inconveniences for the sake of Tellson’s, after all

these years, who ought to be?”

“I wish I were going myself,” said Charles Darnay, somewhat restlessly,

and like one thinking aloud.

“Indeed! You are a pretty fellow to object and advise!” exclaimed Mr.

Lorry. “You wish you were going yourself? And you a Frenchman born? You

are a wise counsellor.”

“My dear Mr. Lorry, it is because I am a Frenchman born, that the

thought (which I did not mean to utter here, however) has passed through

my mind often. One cannot help thinking, having had some sympathy for

the miserable people, and having abandoned something to them,” he spoke

here in his former thoughtful manner, “that one might be listened to,

and might have the power to persuade to some restraint. Only last night,

after you had left us, when I was talking to Lucie--”

“When you were talking to Lucie,” Mr. Lorry repeated. “Yes. I wonder you

are not ashamed to mention the name of Lucie! Wishing you were going to

France at this time of day!”

“However, I am not going,” said Charles Darnay, with a smile. “It is

more to the purpose that you say you are.”

“And I am, in plain reality. The truth is, my dear Charles,” Mr. Lorry

glanced at the distant House, and lowered his voice, “you can have no

conception of the difficulty with which our business is transacted, and

of the peril in which our books and papers over yonder are involved. The

Lord above knows what the compromising consequences would be to numbers

of people, if some of our documents were seized or destroyed; and they

might be, at any time, you know, for who can say that Paris is not set

afire to-day, or sacked to-morrow! Now, a judicious selection from these

with the least possible delay, and the burying of them, or otherwise

getting of them out of harm’s way, is within the power (without loss of

precious time) of scarcely any one but myself, if any one. And shall

I hang back, when Tellson’s knows this and says this--Tellson’s, whose

bread I have eaten these sixty years--because I am a little stiff about

the joints? Why, I am a boy, sir, to half a dozen old codgers here!”

“How I admire the gallantry of your youthful spirit, Mr. Lorry.”

“Tut! Nonsense, sir!--And, my dear Charles,” said Mr. Lorry, glancing at

the House again, “you are to remember, that getting things out of

Paris at this present time, no matter what things, is next to an

impossibility. Papers and precious matters were this very day brought

to us here (I speak in strict confidence; it is not business-like to

whisper it, even to you), by the strangest bearers you can imagine,

every one of whom had his head hanging on by a single hair as he passed

the Barriers. At another time, our parcels would come and go, as easily

as in business-like Old England; but now, everything is stopped.”

“And do you really go to-night?”

“I really go to-night, for the case has become too pressing to admit of

delay.”

“And do you take no one with you?”

“All sorts of people have been proposed to me, but I will have nothing

to say to any of them. I intend to take Jerry. Jerry has been my

bodyguard on Sunday nights for a long time past and I am used to him.

Nobody will suspect Jerry of being anything but an English bull-dog, or

of having any design in his head but to fly at anybody who touches his

master.”

“I must say again that I heartily admire your gallantry and

youthfulness.”

“I must say again, nonsense, nonsense! When I have executed this little

commission, I shall, perhaps, accept Tellson’s proposal to retire and

live at my ease. Time enough, then, to think about growing old.”

This dialogue had taken place at Mr. Lorry’s usual desk, with

Monseigneur swarming within a yard or two of it, boastful of what he

would do to avenge himself on the rascal-people before long. It was too

much the way of Monseigneur under his reverses as a refugee, and it

was much too much the way of native British orthodoxy, to talk of this

terrible Revolution as if it were the only harvest ever known under

the skies that had not been sown--as if nothing had ever been done, or

omitted to be done, that had led to it--as if observers of the wretched

millions in France, and of the misused and perverted resources that

should have made them prosperous, had not seen it inevitably coming,

years before, and had not in plain words recorded what they saw. Such

vapouring, combined with the extravagant plots of Monseigneur for the

restoration of a state of things that had utterly exhausted itself,

and worn out Heaven and earth as well as itself, was hard to be endured

without some remonstrance by any sane man who knew the truth. And it was

such vapouring all about his ears, like a troublesome confusion of blood

in his own head, added to a latent uneasiness in his mind, which had

already made Charles Darnay restless, and which still kept him so.

Among the talkers, was Stryver, of the King’s Bench Bar, far on his

way to state promotion, and, therefore, loud on the theme: broaching

to Monseigneur, his devices for blowing the people up and exterminating

them from the face of the earth, and doing without them: and for

accomplishing many similar objects akin in their nature to the abolition

of eagles by sprinkling salt on the tails of the race. Him, Darnay heard

with a particular feeling of objection; and Darnay stood divided between

going away that he might hear no more, and remaining to interpose his

word, when the thing that was to be, went on to shape itself out.

The House approached Mr. Lorry, and laying a soiled and unopened letter

before him, asked if he had yet discovered any traces of the person to

whom it was addressed? The House laid the letter down so close to Darnay

that he saw the direction--the more quickly because it was his own right

name. The address, turned into English, ran:

“Very pressing. To Monsieur heretofore the Marquis St. Evrémonde, of

France. Confided to the cares of Messrs. Tellson and Co., Bankers,

London, England.”

On the marriage morning, Doctor Manette had made it his one urgent and

express request to Charles Darnay, that the secret of this name should

be--unless he, the Doctor, dissolved the obligation--kept inviolate

between them. Nobody else knew it to be his name; his own wife had no

suspicion of the fact; Mr. Lorry could have none.

“No,” said Mr. Lorry, in reply to the House; “I have referred it,

I think, to everybody now here, and no one can tell me where this

gentleman is to be found.”

The hands of the clock verging upon the hour of closing the Bank, there

was a general set of the current of talkers past Mr. Lorry’s desk. He

held the letter out inquiringly; and Monseigneur looked at it, in the

person of this plotting and indignant refugee; and Monseigneur looked at

it in the person of that plotting and indignant refugee; and This, That,

and The Other, all had something disparaging to say, in French or in

English, concerning the Marquis who was not to be found.

“Nephew, I believe--but in any case degenerate successor--of the

polished Marquis who was murdered,” said one. “Happy to say, I never

knew him.”

“A craven who abandoned his post,” said another--this Monseigneur had

been got out of Paris, legs uppermost and half suffocated, in a load of

hay--“some years ago.”

“Infected with the new doctrines,” said a third, eyeing the direction

through his glass in passing; “set himself in opposition to the last

Marquis, abandoned the estates when he inherited them, and left them to

the ruffian herd. They will recompense him now, I hope, as he deserves.”

“Hey?” cried the blatant Stryver. “Did he though? Is that the sort of

fellow? Let us look at his infamous name. D--n the fellow!”

Darnay, unable to restrain himself any longer, touched Mr. Stryver on

the shoulder, and said:

“I know the fellow.”

“Do you, by Jupiter?” said Stryver. “I am sorry for it.”

“Why?”

“Why, Mr. Darnay? D’ye hear what he did? Don’t ask, why, in these

times.”

“But I do ask why?”

“Then I tell you again, Mr. Darnay, I am sorry for it. I am sorry to

hear you putting any such extraordinary questions. Here is a fellow,

who, infected by the most pestilent and blasphemous code of devilry that

ever was known, abandoned his property to the vilest scum of the earth

that ever did murder by wholesale, and you ask me why I am sorry that a

man who instructs youth knows him? Well, but I’ll answer you. I am sorry

because I believe there is contamination in such a scoundrel. That’s

why.”

Mindful of the secret, Darnay with great difficulty checked himself, and

said: “You may not understand the gentleman.”

“I understand how to put \_you\_ in a corner, Mr. Darnay,” said Bully

Stryver, “and I’ll do it. If this fellow is a gentleman, I \_don’t\_

understand him. You may tell him so, with my compliments. You may also

tell him, from me, that after abandoning his worldly goods and position

to this butcherly mob, I wonder he is not at the head of them. But, no,

gentlemen,” said Stryver, looking all round, and snapping his fingers,

“I know something of human nature, and I tell you that you’ll never

find a fellow like this fellow, trusting himself to the mercies of such

precious \_protégés\_. No, gentlemen; he’ll always show ’em a clean pair

of heels very early in the scuffle, and sneak away.”

With those words, and a final snap of his fingers, Mr. Stryver

shouldered himself into Fleet-street, amidst the general approbation of

his hearers. Mr. Lorry and Charles Darnay were left alone at the desk,

in the general departure from the Bank.

“Will you take charge of the letter?” said Mr. Lorry. “You know where to

deliver it?”

“I do.”

“Will you undertake to explain, that we suppose it to have been

addressed here, on the chance of our knowing where to forward it, and

that it has been here some time?”

“I will do so. Do you start for Paris from here?”

“From here, at eight.”

“I will come back, to see you off.”

Very ill at ease with himself, and with Stryver and most other men,

Darnay made the best of his way into the quiet of the Temple, opened the

letter, and read it. These were its contents:

“Prison of the Abbaye, Paris.

“June 21, 1792. “MONSIEUR HERETOFORE THE MARQUIS.

“After having long been in danger of my life at the hands of the

village, I have been seized, with great violence and indignity, and

brought a long journey on foot to Paris. On the road I have suffered a

great deal. Nor is that all; my house has been destroyed--razed to the

ground.

“The crime for which I am imprisoned, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis,

and for which I shall be summoned before the tribunal, and shall lose my

life (without your so generous help), is, they tell me, treason against

the majesty of the people, in that I have acted against them for an

emigrant. It is in vain I represent that I have acted for them, and not

against, according to your commands. It is in vain I represent that,

before the sequestration of emigrant property, I had remitted the

imposts they had ceased to pay; that I had collected no rent; that I had

had recourse to no process. The only response is, that I have acted for

an emigrant, and where is that emigrant?

“Ah! most gracious Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, where is that

emigrant? I cry in my sleep where is he? I demand of Heaven, will he

not come to deliver me? No answer. Ah Monsieur heretofore the Marquis,

I send my desolate cry across the sea, hoping it may perhaps reach your

ears through the great bank of Tilson known at Paris!

“For the love of Heaven, of justice, of generosity, of the honour of

your noble name, I supplicate you, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, to

succour and release me. My fault is, that I have been true to you. Oh

Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, I pray you be you true to me!

“From this prison here of horror, whence I every hour tend nearer and

nearer to destruction, I send you, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, the

assurance of my dolorous and unhappy service.

“Your afflicted,

“Gabelle.”

The latent uneasiness in Darnay’s mind was roused to vigourous life

by this letter. The peril of an old servant and a good one, whose

only crime was fidelity to himself and his family, stared him so

reproachfully in the face, that, as he walked to and fro in the Temple

considering what to do, he almost hid his face from the passersby.

He knew very well, that in his horror of the deed which had culminated

the bad deeds and bad reputation of the old family house, in his

resentful suspicions of his uncle, and in the aversion with which his

conscience regarded the crumbling fabric that he was supposed to uphold,

he had acted imperfectly. He knew very well, that in his love for Lucie,

his renunciation of his social place, though by no means new to his own

mind, had been hurried and incomplete. He knew that he ought to have

systematically worked it out and supervised it, and that he had meant to

do it, and that it had never been done.

The happiness of his own chosen English home, the necessity of being

always actively employed, the swift changes and troubles of the time

which had followed on one another so fast, that the events of this week

annihilated the immature plans of last week, and the events of the week

following made all new again; he knew very well, that to the force of

these circumstances he had yielded:--not without disquiet, but still

without continuous and accumulating resistance. That he had watched

the times for a time of action, and that they had shifted and struggled

until the time had gone by, and the nobility were trooping from

France by every highway and byway, and their property was in course of

confiscation and destruction, and their very names were blotting out,

was as well known to himself as it could be to any new authority in

France that might impeach him for it.

But, he had oppressed no man, he had imprisoned no man; he was so

far from having harshly exacted payment of his dues, that he had

relinquished them of his own will, thrown himself on a world with no

favour in it, won his own private place there, and earned his own

bread. Monsieur Gabelle had held the impoverished and involved estate

on written instructions, to spare the people, to give them what little

there was to give--such fuel as the heavy creditors would let them have

in the winter, and such produce as could be saved from the same grip in

the summer--and no doubt he had put the fact in plea and proof, for his

own safety, so that it could not but appear now.

This favoured the desperate resolution Charles Darnay had begun to make,

that he would go to Paris.

Yes. Like the mariner in the old story, the winds and streams had driven

him within the influence of the Loadstone Rock, and it was drawing him

to itself, and he must go. Everything that arose before his mind drifted

him on, faster and faster, more and more steadily, to the terrible

attraction. His latent uneasiness had been, that bad aims were being

worked out in his own unhappy land by bad instruments, and that he who

could not fail to know that he was better than they, was not there,

trying to do something to stay bloodshed, and assert the claims of mercy

and humanity. With this uneasiness half stifled, and half reproaching

him, he had been brought to the pointed comparison of himself with the

brave old gentleman in whom duty was so strong; upon that comparison

(injurious to himself) had instantly followed the sneers of Monseigneur,

which had stung him bitterly, and those of Stryver, which above all were

coarse and galling, for old reasons. Upon those, had followed Gabelle’s

letter: the appeal of an innocent prisoner, in danger of death, to his

justice, honour, and good name.

His resolution was made. He must go to Paris.

Yes. The Loadstone Rock was drawing him, and he must sail on, until he

struck. He knew of no rock; he saw hardly any danger. The intention

with which he had done what he had done, even although he had left

it incomplete, presented it before him in an aspect that would be

gratefully acknowledged in France on his presenting himself to assert

it. Then, that glorious vision of doing good, which is so often the

sanguine mirage of so many good minds, arose before him, and he even

saw himself in the illusion with some influence to guide this raging

Revolution that was running so fearfully wild.

As he walked to and fro with his resolution made, he considered that

neither Lucie nor her father must know of it until he was gone.

Lucie should be spared the pain of separation; and her father, always

reluctant to turn his thoughts towards the dangerous ground of old,

should come to the knowledge of the step, as a step taken, and not in

the balance of suspense and doubt. How much of the incompleteness of his

situation was referable to her father, through the painful anxiety

to avoid reviving old associations of France in his mind, he did not

discuss with himself. But, that circumstance too, had had its influence

in his course.

He walked to and fro, with thoughts very busy, until it was time to

return to Tellson’s and take leave of Mr. Lorry. As soon as he arrived

in Paris he would present himself to this old friend, but he must say

nothing of his intention now.

A carriage with post-horses was ready at the Bank door, and Jerry was

booted and equipped.

“I have delivered that letter,” said Charles Darnay to Mr. Lorry. “I

would not consent to your being charged with any written answer, but

perhaps you will take a verbal one?”

“That I will, and readily,” said Mr. Lorry, “if it is not dangerous.”

“Not at all. Though it is to a prisoner in the Abbaye.”

“What is his name?” said Mr. Lorry, with his open pocket-book in his

hand.

“Gabelle.”

“Gabelle. And what is the message to the unfortunate Gabelle in prison?”

“Simply, ‘that he has received the letter, and will come.’”

“Any time mentioned?”

“He will start upon his journey to-morrow night.”

“Any person mentioned?”

“No.”

He helped Mr. Lorry to wrap himself in a number of coats and cloaks,

and went out with him from the warm atmosphere of the old Bank, into the

misty air of Fleet-street. “My love to Lucie, and to little Lucie,” said

Mr. Lorry at parting, “and take precious care of them till I come back.”

Charles Darnay shook his head and doubtfully smiled, as the carriage

rolled away.

That night--it was the fourteenth of August--he sat up late, and wrote

two fervent letters; one was to Lucie, explaining the strong obligation

he was under to go to Paris, and showing her, at length, the reasons

that he had, for feeling confident that he could become involved in no

personal danger there; the other was to the Doctor, confiding Lucie and

their dear child to his care, and dwelling on the same topics with the

strongest assurances. To both, he wrote that he would despatch letters

in proof of his safety, immediately after his arrival.

It was a hard day, that day of being among them, with the first

reservation of their joint lives on his mind. It was a hard matter to

preserve the innocent deceit of which they were profoundly unsuspicious.

But, an affectionate glance at his wife, so happy and busy, made him

resolute not to tell her what impended (he had been half moved to do it,

so strange it was to him to act in anything without her quiet aid), and

the day passed quickly. Early in the evening he embraced her, and her

scarcely less dear namesake, pretending that he would return by-and-bye

(an imaginary engagement took him out, and he had secreted a valise

of clothes ready), and so he emerged into the heavy mist of the heavy

streets, with a heavier heart.

The unseen force was drawing him fast to itself, now, and all the tides

and winds were setting straight and strong towards it. He left his

two letters with a trusty porter, to be delivered half an hour before

midnight, and no sooner; took horse for Dover; and began his journey.

“For the love of Heaven, of justice, of generosity, of the honour of

your noble name!” was the poor prisoner’s cry with which he strengthened

his sinking heart, as he left all that was dear on earth behind him, and

floated away for the Loadstone Rock.

The end of the second book.

Book the Third--the Track of a Storm

CHAPTER I.

In Secret

The traveller fared slowly on his way, who fared towards Paris from

England in the autumn of the year one thousand seven hundred and

ninety-two. More than enough of bad roads, bad equipages, and bad

horses, he would have encountered to delay him, though the fallen and

unfortunate King of France had been upon his throne in all his glory;

but, the changed times were fraught with other obstacles than

these. Every town-gate and village taxing-house had its band of

citizen-patriots, with their national muskets in a most explosive state

of readiness, who stopped all comers and goers, cross-questioned them,

inspected their papers, looked for their names in lists of their own,

turned them back, or sent them on, or stopped them and laid them in

hold, as their capricious judgment or fancy deemed best for the dawning

Republic One and Indivisible, of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or

Death.

A very few French leagues of his journey were accomplished, when Charles

Darnay began to perceive that for him along these country roads there

was no hope of return until he should have been declared a good citizen

at Paris. Whatever might befall now, he must on to his journey’s end.

Not a mean village closed upon him, not a common barrier dropped across

the road behind him, but he knew it to be another iron door in

the series that was barred between him and England. The universal

watchfulness so encompassed him, that if he had been taken in a net,

or were being forwarded to his destination in a cage, he could not have

felt his freedom more completely gone.

This universal watchfulness not only stopped him on the highway twenty

times in a stage, but retarded his progress twenty times in a day, by

riding after him and taking him back, riding before him and stopping him

by anticipation, riding with him and keeping him in charge. He had been

days upon his journey in France alone, when he went to bed tired out, in

a little town on the high road, still a long way from Paris.

Nothing but the production of the afflicted Gabelle’s letter from his

prison of the Abbaye would have got him on so far. His difficulty at the

guard-house in this small place had been such, that he felt his journey

to have come to a crisis. And he was, therefore, as little surprised as

a man could be, to find himself awakened at the small inn to which he

had been remitted until morning, in the middle of the night.

Awakened by a timid local functionary and three armed patriots in rough

red caps and with pipes in their mouths, who sat down on the bed.

“Emigrant,” said the functionary, “I am going to send you on to Paris,

under an escort.”

“Citizen, I desire nothing more than to get to Paris, though I could

dispense with the escort.”

“Silence!” growled a red-cap, striking at the coverlet with the butt-end

of his musket. “Peace, aristocrat!”

“It is as the good patriot says,” observed the timid functionary. “You

are an aristocrat, and must have an escort--and must pay for it.”

“I have no choice,” said Charles Darnay.

“Choice! Listen to him!” cried the same scowling red-cap. “As if it was

not a favour to be protected from the lamp-iron!”

“It is always as the good patriot says,” observed the functionary. “Rise

and dress yourself, emigrant.”

Darnay complied, and was taken back to the guard-house, where other

patriots in rough red caps were smoking, drinking, and sleeping, by

a watch-fire. Here he paid a heavy price for his escort, and hence he

started with it on the wet, wet roads at three o’clock in the morning.

The escort were two mounted patriots in red caps and tri-coloured

cockades, armed with national muskets and sabres, who rode one on either

side of him.

The escorted governed his own horse, but a loose line was attached to

his bridle, the end of which one of the patriots kept girded round his

wrist. In this state they set forth with the sharp rain driving in their

faces: clattering at a heavy dragoon trot over the uneven town pavement,

and out upon the mire-deep roads. In this state they traversed without

change, except of horses and pace, all the mire-deep leagues that lay

between them and the capital.

They travelled in the night, halting an hour or two after daybreak, and

lying by until the twilight fell. The escort were so wretchedly clothed,

that they twisted straw round their bare legs, and thatched their ragged

shoulders to keep the wet off. Apart from the personal discomfort of

being so attended, and apart from such considerations of present danger

as arose from one of the patriots being chronically drunk, and carrying

his musket very recklessly, Charles Darnay did not allow the restraint

that was laid upon him to awaken any serious fears in his breast; for,

he reasoned with himself that it could have no reference to the merits

of an individual case that was not yet stated, and of representations,

confirmable by the prisoner in the Abbaye, that were not yet made.

But when they came to the town of Beauvais--which they did at eventide,

when the streets were filled with people--he could not conceal from

himself that the aspect of affairs was very alarming. An ominous crowd

gathered to see him dismount of the posting-yard, and many voices called

out loudly, “Down with the emigrant!”

He stopped in the act of swinging himself out of his saddle, and,

resuming it as his safest place, said:

“Emigrant, my friends! Do you not see me here, in France, of my own

will?”

“You are a cursed emigrant,” cried a farrier, making at him in a

furious manner through the press, hammer in hand; “and you are a cursed

aristocrat!”

The postmaster interposed himself between this man and the rider’s

bridle (at which he was evidently making), and soothingly said, “Let him

be; let him be! He will be judged at Paris.”

“Judged!” repeated the farrier, swinging his hammer. “Ay! and condemned

as a traitor.” At this the crowd roared approval.

Checking the postmaster, who was for turning his horse’s head to the

yard (the drunken patriot sat composedly in his saddle looking on, with

the line round his wrist), Darnay said, as soon as he could make his

voice heard:

“Friends, you deceive yourselves, or you are deceived. I am not a

traitor.”

“He lies!” cried the smith. “He is a traitor since the decree. His life

is forfeit to the people. His cursed life is not his own!”

At the instant when Darnay saw a rush in the eyes of the crowd, which

another instant would have brought upon him, the postmaster turned his

horse into the yard, the escort rode in close upon his horse’s flanks,

and the postmaster shut and barred the crazy double gates. The farrier

struck a blow upon them with his hammer, and the crowd groaned; but, no

more was done.

“What is this decree that the smith spoke of?” Darnay asked the

postmaster, when he had thanked him, and stood beside him in the yard.

“Truly, a decree for selling the property of emigrants.”

“When passed?”

“On the fourteenth.”

“The day I left England!”

“Everybody says it is but one of several, and that there will be

others--if there are not already--banishing all emigrants, and

condemning all to death who return. That is what he meant when he said

your life was not your own.”

“But there are no such decrees yet?”

“What do I know!” said the postmaster, shrugging his shoulders; “there

may be, or there will be. It is all the same. What would you have?”

They rested on some straw in a loft until the middle of the night, and

then rode forward again when all the town was asleep. Among the many

wild changes observable on familiar things which made this wild ride

unreal, not the least was the seeming rarity of sleep. After long and

lonely spurring over dreary roads, they would come to a cluster of poor

cottages, not steeped in darkness, but all glittering with lights, and

would find the people, in a ghostly manner in the dead of the night,

circling hand in hand round a shrivelled tree of Liberty, or all drawn

up together singing a Liberty song. Happily, however, there was sleep in

Beauvais that night to help them out of it and they passed on once more

into solitude and loneliness: jingling through the untimely cold and

wet, among impoverished fields that had yielded no fruits of the earth

that year, diversified by the blackened remains of burnt houses, and by

the sudden emergence from ambuscade, and sharp reining up across their

way, of patriot patrols on the watch on all the roads.

Daylight at last found them before the wall of Paris. The barrier was

closed and strongly guarded when they rode up to it.

“Where are the papers of this prisoner?” demanded a resolute-looking man

in authority, who was summoned out by the guard.

Naturally struck by the disagreeable word, Charles Darnay requested the

speaker to take notice that he was a free traveller and French citizen,

in charge of an escort which the disturbed state of the country had

imposed upon him, and which he had paid for.

“Where,” repeated the same personage, without taking any heed of him

whatever, “are the papers of this prisoner?”

The drunken patriot had them in his cap, and produced them. Casting his

eyes over Gabelle’s letter, the same personage in authority showed some

disorder and surprise, and looked at Darnay with a close attention.

He left escort and escorted without saying a word, however, and went

into the guard-room; meanwhile, they sat upon their horses outside the

gate. Looking about him while in this state of suspense, Charles

Darnay observed that the gate was held by a mixed guard of soldiers and

patriots, the latter far outnumbering the former; and that while ingress

into the city for peasants’ carts bringing in supplies, and for similar

traffic and traffickers, was easy enough, egress, even for the homeliest

people, was very difficult. A numerous medley of men and women, not

to mention beasts and vehicles of various sorts, was waiting to issue

forth; but, the previous identification was so strict, that they

filtered through the barrier very slowly. Some of these people knew

their turn for examination to be so far off, that they lay down on the

ground to sleep or smoke, while others talked together, or loitered

about. The red cap and tri-colour cockade were universal, both among men

and women.

When he had sat in his saddle some half-hour, taking note of these

things, Darnay found himself confronted by the same man in authority,

who directed the guard to open the barrier. Then he delivered to the

escort, drunk and sober, a receipt for the escorted, and requested him

to dismount. He did so, and the two patriots, leading his tired horse,

turned and rode away without entering the city.

He accompanied his conductor into a guard-room, smelling of common wine

and tobacco, where certain soldiers and patriots, asleep and awake,

drunk and sober, and in various neutral states between sleeping and

waking, drunkenness and sobriety, were standing and lying about. The

light in the guard-house, half derived from the waning oil-lamps of

the night, and half from the overcast day, was in a correspondingly

uncertain condition. Some registers were lying open on a desk, and an

officer of a coarse, dark aspect, presided over these.

“Citizen Defarge,” said he to Darnay’s conductor, as he took a slip of

paper to write on. “Is this the emigrant Evrémonde?”

“This is the man.”

“Your age, Evrémonde?”

“Thirty-seven.”

“Married, Evrémonde?”

“Yes.”

“Where married?”

“In England.”

“Without doubt. Where is your wife, Evrémonde?”

“In England.”

“Without doubt. You are consigned, Evrémonde, to the prison of La

Force.”

“Just Heaven!” exclaimed Darnay. “Under what law, and for what offence?”

The officer looked up from his slip of paper for a moment.

“We have new laws, Evrémonde, and new offences, since you were here.” He

said it with a hard smile, and went on writing.

“I entreat you to observe that I have come here voluntarily, in response

to that written appeal of a fellow-countryman which lies before you. I

demand no more than the opportunity to do so without delay. Is not that

my right?”

“Emigrants have no rights, Evrémonde,” was the stolid reply. The officer

wrote until he had finished, read over to himself what he had written,

sanded it, and handed it to Defarge, with the words “In secret.”

Defarge motioned with the paper to the prisoner that he must accompany

him. The prisoner obeyed, and a guard of two armed patriots attended

them.

“Is it you,” said Defarge, in a low voice, as they went down the

guardhouse steps and turned into Paris, “who married the daughter of

Doctor Manette, once a prisoner in the Bastille that is no more?”

“Yes,” replied Darnay, looking at him with surprise.

“My name is Defarge, and I keep a wine-shop in the Quarter Saint

Antoine. Possibly you have heard of me.”

“My wife came to your house to reclaim her father? Yes!”

The word “wife” seemed to serve as a gloomy reminder to Defarge, to say

with sudden impatience, “In the name of that sharp female newly-born,

and called La Guillotine, why did you come to France?”

“You heard me say why, a minute ago. Do you not believe it is the

truth?”

“A bad truth for you,” said Defarge, speaking with knitted brows, and

looking straight before him.

“Indeed I am lost here. All here is so unprecedented, so changed, so

sudden and unfair, that I am absolutely lost. Will you render me a

little help?”

“None.” Defarge spoke, always looking straight before him.

“Will you answer me a single question?”

“Perhaps. According to its nature. You can say what it is.”

“In this prison that I am going to so unjustly, shall I have some free

communication with the world outside?”

“You will see.”

“I am not to be buried there, prejudged, and without any means of

presenting my case?”

“You will see. But, what then? Other people have been similarly buried

in worse prisons, before now.”

“But never by me, Citizen Defarge.”

Defarge glanced darkly at him for answer, and walked on in a steady

and set silence. The deeper he sank into this silence, the fainter hope

there was--or so Darnay thought--of his softening in any slight degree.

He, therefore, made haste to say:

“It is of the utmost importance to me (you know, Citizen, even better

than I, of how much importance), that I should be able to communicate to

Mr. Lorry of Tellson’s Bank, an English gentleman who is now in Paris,

the simple fact, without comment, that I have been thrown into the

prison of La Force. Will you cause that to be done for me?”

“I will do,” Defarge doggedly rejoined, “nothing for you. My duty is to

my country and the People. I am the sworn servant of both, against you.

I will do nothing for you.”

Charles Darnay felt it hopeless to entreat him further, and his pride

was touched besides. As they walked on in silence, he could not but see

how used the people were to the spectacle of prisoners passing along the

streets. The very children scarcely noticed him. A few passers turned

their heads, and a few shook their fingers at him as an aristocrat;

otherwise, that a man in good clothes should be going to prison, was no

more remarkable than that a labourer in working clothes should be

going to work. In one narrow, dark, and dirty street through which they

passed, an excited orator, mounted on a stool, was addressing an excited

audience on the crimes against the people, of the king and the royal

family. The few words that he caught from this man’s lips, first made

it known to Charles Darnay that the king was in prison, and that the

foreign ambassadors had one and all left Paris. On the road (except at

Beauvais) he had heard absolutely nothing. The escort and the universal

watchfulness had completely isolated him.

That he had fallen among far greater dangers than those which had

developed themselves when he left England, he of course knew now. That

perils had thickened about him fast, and might thicken faster and faster

yet, he of course knew now. He could not but admit to himself that he

might not have made this journey, if he could have foreseen the events

of a few days. And yet his misgivings were not so dark as, imagined by

the light of this later time, they would appear. Troubled as the future

was, it was the unknown future, and in its obscurity there was ignorant

hope. The horrible massacre, days and nights long, which, within a few

rounds of the clock, was to set a great mark of blood upon the blessed

garnering time of harvest, was as far out of his knowledge as if it had

been a hundred thousand years away. The “sharp female newly-born, and

called La Guillotine,” was hardly known to him, or to the generality

of people, by name. The frightful deeds that were to be soon done, were

probably unimagined at that time in the brains of the doers. How could

they have a place in the shadowy conceptions of a gentle mind?

Of unjust treatment in detention and hardship, and in cruel separation

from his wife and child, he foreshadowed the likelihood, or the

certainty; but, beyond this, he dreaded nothing distinctly. With this on

his mind, which was enough to carry into a dreary prison courtyard, he

arrived at the prison of La Force.

A man with a bloated face opened the strong wicket, to whom Defarge

presented “The Emigrant Evrémonde.”

“What the Devil! How many more of them!” exclaimed the man with the

bloated face.

Defarge took his receipt without noticing the exclamation, and withdrew,

with his two fellow-patriots.

“What the Devil, I say again!” exclaimed the gaoler, left with his wife.

“How many more!”

The gaoler’s wife, being provided with no answer to the question, merely

replied, “One must have patience, my dear!” Three turnkeys who entered

responsive to a bell she rang, echoed the sentiment, and one added, “For

the love of Liberty;” which sounded in that place like an inappropriate

conclusion.

The prison of La Force was a gloomy prison, dark and filthy, and with a

horrible smell of foul sleep in it. Extraordinary how soon the noisome

flavour of imprisoned sleep, becomes manifest in all such places that

are ill cared for!

“In secret, too,” grumbled the gaoler, looking at the written paper. “As

if I was not already full to bursting!”

He stuck the paper on a file, in an ill-humour, and Charles Darnay

awaited his further pleasure for half an hour: sometimes, pacing to and

fro in the strong arched room: sometimes, resting on a stone seat: in

either case detained to be imprinted on the memory of the chief and his

subordinates.

“Come!” said the chief, at length taking up his keys, “come with me,

emigrant.”

Through the dismal prison twilight, his new charge accompanied him by

corridor and staircase, many doors clanging and locking behind them,

until they came into a large, low, vaulted chamber, crowded with

prisoners of both sexes. The women were seated at a long table, reading

and writing, knitting, sewing, and embroidering; the men were for the

most part standing behind their chairs, or lingering up and down the

room.

In the instinctive association of prisoners with shameful crime and

disgrace, the new-comer recoiled from this company. But the crowning

unreality of his long unreal ride, was, their all at once rising to

receive him, with every refinement of manner known to the time, and with

all the engaging graces and courtesies of life.

So strangely clouded were these refinements by the prison manners and

gloom, so spectral did they become in the inappropriate squalor and

misery through which they were seen, that Charles Darnay seemed to stand

in a company of the dead. Ghosts all! The ghost of beauty, the ghost

of stateliness, the ghost of elegance, the ghost of pride, the ghost of

frivolity, the ghost of wit, the ghost of youth, the ghost of age, all

waiting their dismissal from the desolate shore, all turning on him eyes

that were changed by the death they had died in coming there.

It struck him motionless. The gaoler standing at his side, and the other

gaolers moving about, who would have been well enough as to appearance

in the ordinary exercise of their functions, looked so extravagantly

coarse contrasted with sorrowing mothers and blooming daughters who were

there--with the apparitions of the coquette, the young beauty, and the

mature woman delicately bred--that the inversion of all experience and

likelihood which the scene of shadows presented, was heightened to its

utmost. Surely, ghosts all. Surely, the long unreal ride some progress

of disease that had brought him to these gloomy shades!

“In the name of the assembled companions in misfortune,” said a

gentleman of courtly appearance and address, coming forward, “I have the

honour of giving you welcome to La Force, and of condoling with you

on the calamity that has brought you among us. May it soon terminate

happily! It would be an impertinence elsewhere, but it is not so here,

to ask your name and condition?”

Charles Darnay roused himself, and gave the required information, in

words as suitable as he could find.

“But I hope,” said the gentleman, following the chief gaoler with his

eyes, who moved across the room, “that you are not in secret?”

“I do not understand the meaning of the term, but I have heard them say

so.”

“Ah, what a pity! We so much regret it! But take courage; several

members of our society have been in secret, at first, and it has lasted

but a short time.” Then he added, raising his voice, “I grieve to inform

the society--in secret.”

There was a murmur of commiseration as Charles Darnay crossed the room

to a grated door where the gaoler awaited him, and many voices--among

which, the soft and compassionate voices of women were conspicuous--gave

him good wishes and encouragement. He turned at the grated door, to

render the thanks of his heart; it closed under the gaoler’s hand; and

the apparitions vanished from his sight forever.

The wicket opened on a stone staircase, leading upward. When they had

ascended forty steps (the prisoner of half an hour already counted

them), the gaoler opened a low black door, and they passed into a

solitary cell. It struck cold and damp, but was not dark.

“Yours,” said the gaoler.

“Why am I confined alone?”

“How do I know!”

“I can buy pen, ink, and paper?”

“Such are not my orders. You will be visited, and can ask then. At

present, you may buy your food, and nothing more.”

There were in the cell, a chair, a table, and a straw mattress. As

the gaoler made a general inspection of these objects, and of the four

walls, before going out, a wandering fancy wandered through the mind of

the prisoner leaning against the wall opposite to him, that this gaoler

was so unwholesomely bloated, both in face and person, as to look like

a man who had been drowned and filled with water. When the gaoler was

gone, he thought in the same wandering way, “Now am I left, as if I were

dead.” Stopping then, to look down at the mattress, he turned from it

with a sick feeling, and thought, “And here in these crawling creatures

is the first condition of the body after death.”

“Five paces by four and a half, five paces by four and a half, five

paces by four and a half.” The prisoner walked to and fro in his cell,

counting its measurement, and the roar of the city arose like muffled

drums with a wild swell of voices added to them. “He made shoes, he made

shoes, he made shoes.” The prisoner counted the measurement again, and

paced faster, to draw his mind with him from that latter repetition.

“The ghosts that vanished when the wicket closed. There was one among

them, the appearance of a lady dressed in black, who was leaning in the

embrasure of a window, and she had a light shining upon her golden

hair, and she looked like \* \* \* \* Let us ride on again, for God’s sake,

through the illuminated villages with the people all awake! \* \* \* \* He

made shoes, he made shoes, he made shoes. \* \* \* \* Five paces by four and

a half.” With such scraps tossing and rolling upward from the depths of

his mind, the prisoner walked faster and faster, obstinately counting

and counting; and the roar of the city changed to this extent--that it

still rolled in like muffled drums, but with the wail of voices that he

knew, in the swell that rose above them.

CHAPTER II.

The Grindstone

Tellson’s Bank, established in the Saint Germain Quarter of Paris, was

in a wing of a large house, approached by a courtyard and shut off from

the street by a high wall and a strong gate. The house belonged to

a great nobleman who had lived in it until he made a flight from the

troubles, in his own cook’s dress, and got across the borders. A

mere beast of the chase flying from hunters, he was still in his

metempsychosis no other than the same Monseigneur, the preparation

of whose chocolate for whose lips had once occupied three strong men

besides the cook in question.

Monseigneur gone, and the three strong men absolving themselves from the

sin of having drawn his high wages, by being more than ready and

willing to cut his throat on the altar of the dawning Republic one and

indivisible of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, Monseigneur’s

house had been first sequestrated, and then confiscated. For, all

things moved so fast, and decree followed decree with that fierce

precipitation, that now upon the third night of the autumn month

of September, patriot emissaries of the law were in possession of

Monseigneur’s house, and had marked it with the tri-colour, and were

drinking brandy in its state apartments.

A place of business in London like Tellson’s place of business in Paris,

would soon have driven the House out of its mind and into the Gazette.

For, what would staid British responsibility and respectability have

said to orange-trees in boxes in a Bank courtyard, and even to a Cupid

over the counter? Yet such things were. Tellson’s had whitewashed the

Cupid, but he was still to be seen on the ceiling, in the coolest

linen, aiming (as he very often does) at money from morning to

night. Bankruptcy must inevitably have come of this young Pagan, in

Lombard-street, London, and also of a curtained alcove in the rear of

the immortal boy, and also of a looking-glass let into the wall, and

also of clerks not at all old, who danced in public on the slightest

provocation. Yet, a French Tellson’s could get on with these things

exceedingly well, and, as long as the times held together, no man had

taken fright at them, and drawn out his money.

What money would be drawn out of Tellson’s henceforth, and what would

lie there, lost and forgotten; what plate and jewels would tarnish in

Tellson’s hiding-places, while the depositors rusted in prisons,

and when they should have violently perished; how many accounts with

Tellson’s never to be balanced in this world, must be carried over into

the next; no man could have said, that night, any more than Mr. Jarvis

Lorry could, though he thought heavily of these questions. He sat by

a newly-lighted wood fire (the blighted and unfruitful year was

prematurely cold), and on his honest and courageous face there was a

deeper shade than the pendent lamp could throw, or any object in the

room distortedly reflect--a shade of horror.

He occupied rooms in the Bank, in his fidelity to the House of which

he had grown to be a part, like strong root-ivy. It chanced that they

derived a kind of security from the patriotic occupation of the main

building, but the true-hearted old gentleman never calculated about

that. All such circumstances were indifferent to him, so that he did

his duty. On the opposite side of the courtyard, under a colonnade,

was extensive standing--for carriages--where, indeed, some carriages

of Monseigneur yet stood. Against two of the pillars were fastened two

great flaring flambeaux, and in the light of these, standing out in the

open air, was a large grindstone: a roughly mounted thing which appeared

to have hurriedly been brought there from some neighbouring smithy,

or other workshop. Rising and looking out of window at these harmless

objects, Mr. Lorry shivered, and retired to his seat by the fire. He had

opened, not only the glass window, but the lattice blind outside it, and

he had closed both again, and he shivered through his frame.

From the streets beyond the high wall and the strong gate, there came

the usual night hum of the city, with now and then an indescribable ring

in it, weird and unearthly, as if some unwonted sounds of a terrible

nature were going up to Heaven.

“Thank God,” said Mr. Lorry, clasping his hands, “that no one near and

dear to me is in this dreadful town to-night. May He have mercy on all

who are in danger!”

Soon afterwards, the bell at the great gate sounded, and he thought,

“They have come back!” and sat listening. But, there was no loud

irruption into the courtyard, as he had expected, and he heard the gate

clash again, and all was quiet.

The nervousness and dread that were upon him inspired that vague

uneasiness respecting the Bank, which a great change would naturally

awaken, with such feelings roused. It was well guarded, and he got up to

go among the trusty people who were watching it, when his door suddenly

opened, and two figures rushed in, at sight of which he fell back in

amazement.

Lucie and her father! Lucie with her arms stretched out to him, and with

that old look of earnestness so concentrated and intensified, that it

seemed as though it had been stamped upon her face expressly to give

force and power to it in this one passage of her life.

“What is this?” cried Mr. Lorry, breathless and confused. “What is the

matter? Lucie! Manette! What has happened? What has brought you here?

What is it?”

With the look fixed upon him, in her paleness and wildness, she panted

out in his arms, imploringly, “O my dear friend! My husband!”

“Your husband, Lucie?”

“Charles.”

“What of Charles?”

“Here.

“Here, in Paris?”

“Has been here some days--three or four--I don’t know how many--I can’t

collect my thoughts. An errand of generosity brought him here unknown to

us; he was stopped at the barrier, and sent to prison.”

The old man uttered an irrepressible cry. Almost at the same moment, the

bell of the great gate rang again, and a loud noise of feet and voices

came pouring into the courtyard.

“What is that noise?” said the Doctor, turning towards the window.

“Don’t look!” cried Mr. Lorry. “Don’t look out! Manette, for your life,

don’t touch the blind!”

The Doctor turned, with his hand upon the fastening of the window, and

said, with a cool, bold smile:

“My dear friend, I have a charmed life in this city. I have been

a Bastille prisoner. There is no patriot in Paris--in Paris? In

France--who, knowing me to have been a prisoner in the Bastille, would

touch me, except to overwhelm me with embraces, or carry me in triumph.

My old pain has given me a power that has brought us through the

barrier, and gained us news of Charles there, and brought us here. I

knew it would be so; I knew I could help Charles out of all danger; I

told Lucie so.--What is that noise?” His hand was again upon the window.

“Don’t look!” cried Mr. Lorry, absolutely desperate. “No, Lucie, my

dear, nor you!” He got his arm round her, and held her. “Don’t be so

terrified, my love. I solemnly swear to you that I know of no harm

having happened to Charles; that I had no suspicion even of his being in

this fatal place. What prison is he in?”

“La Force!”

“La Force! Lucie, my child, if ever you were brave and serviceable in

your life--and you were always both--you will compose yourself now, to

do exactly as I bid you; for more depends upon it than you can think, or

I can say. There is no help for you in any action on your part to-night;

you cannot possibly stir out. I say this, because what I must bid you

to do for Charles’s sake, is the hardest thing to do of all. You must

instantly be obedient, still, and quiet. You must let me put you in a

room at the back here. You must leave your father and me alone for

two minutes, and as there are Life and Death in the world you must not

delay.”

“I will be submissive to you. I see in your face that you know I can do

nothing else than this. I know you are true.”

The old man kissed her, and hurried her into his room, and turned the

key; then, came hurrying back to the Doctor, and opened the window and

partly opened the blind, and put his hand upon the Doctor’s arm, and

looked out with him into the courtyard.

Looked out upon a throng of men and women: not enough in number, or near

enough, to fill the courtyard: not more than forty or fifty in all. The

people in possession of the house had let them in at the gate, and they

had rushed in to work at the grindstone; it had evidently been set up

there for their purpose, as in a convenient and retired spot.

But, such awful workers, and such awful work!

The grindstone had a double handle, and, turning at it madly were two

men, whose faces, as their long hair flapped back when the whirlings of

the grindstone brought their faces up, were more horrible and cruel than

the visages of the wildest savages in their most barbarous disguise.

False eyebrows and false moustaches were stuck upon them, and their

hideous countenances were all bloody and sweaty, and all awry with

howling, and all staring and glaring with beastly excitement and want of

sleep. As these ruffians turned and turned, their matted locks now flung

forward over their eyes, now flung backward over their necks, some women

held wine to their mouths that they might drink; and what with dropping

blood, and what with dropping wine, and what with the stream of sparks

struck out of the stone, all their wicked atmosphere seemed gore and

fire. The eye could not detect one creature in the group free from

the smear of blood. Shouldering one another to get next at the

sharpening-stone, were men stripped to the waist, with the stain all

over their limbs and bodies; men in all sorts of rags, with the stain

upon those rags; men devilishly set off with spoils of women’s lace

and silk and ribbon, with the stain dyeing those trifles through

and through. Hatchets, knives, bayonets, swords, all brought to be

sharpened, were all red with it. Some of the hacked swords were tied to

the wrists of those who carried them, with strips of linen and fragments

of dress: ligatures various in kind, but all deep of the one colour. And

as the frantic wielders of these weapons snatched them from the stream

of sparks and tore away into the streets, the same red hue was red in

their frenzied eyes;--eyes which any unbrutalised beholder would have

given twenty years of life, to petrify with a well-directed gun.

All this was seen in a moment, as the vision of a drowning man, or of

any human creature at any very great pass, could see a world if it

were there. They drew back from the window, and the Doctor looked for

explanation in his friend’s ashy face.

“They are,” Mr. Lorry whispered the words, glancing fearfully round at

the locked room, “murdering the prisoners. If you are sure of what you

say; if you really have the power you think you have--as I believe you

have--make yourself known to these devils, and get taken to La Force. It

may be too late, I don’t know, but let it not be a minute later!”

Doctor Manette pressed his hand, hastened bareheaded out of the room,

and was in the courtyard when Mr. Lorry regained the blind.

His streaming white hair, his remarkable face, and the impetuous

confidence of his manner, as he put the weapons aside like water,

carried him in an instant to the heart of the concourse at the stone.

For a few moments there was a pause, and a hurry, and a murmur, and

the unintelligible sound of his voice; and then Mr. Lorry saw him,

surrounded by all, and in the midst of a line of twenty men long, all

linked shoulder to shoulder, and hand to shoulder, hurried out with

cries of--“Live the Bastille prisoner! Help for the Bastille prisoner’s

kindred in La Force! Room for the Bastille prisoner in front there! Save

the prisoner Evrémonde at La Force!” and a thousand answering shouts.

He closed the lattice again with a fluttering heart, closed the window

and the curtain, hastened to Lucie, and told her that her father was

assisted by the people, and gone in search of her husband. He found

her child and Miss Pross with her; but, it never occurred to him to be

surprised by their appearance until a long time afterwards, when he sat

watching them in such quiet as the night knew.

Lucie had, by that time, fallen into a stupor on the floor at his feet,

clinging to his hand. Miss Pross had laid the child down on his own

bed, and her head had gradually fallen on the pillow beside her pretty

charge. O the long, long night, with the moans of the poor wife! And O

the long, long night, with no return of her father and no tidings!

Twice more in the darkness the bell at the great gate sounded, and the

irruption was repeated, and the grindstone whirled and spluttered.

“What is it?” cried Lucie, affrighted. “Hush! The soldiers’ swords are

sharpened there,” said Mr. Lorry. “The place is national property now,

and used as a kind of armoury, my love.”

Twice more in all; but, the last spell of work was feeble and fitful.

Soon afterwards the day began to dawn, and he softly detached himself

from the clasping hand, and cautiously looked out again. A man, so

besmeared that he might have been a sorely wounded soldier creeping back

to consciousness on a field of slain, was rising from the pavement by

the side of the grindstone, and looking about him with a vacant air.

Shortly, this worn-out murderer descried in the imperfect light one of

the carriages of Monseigneur, and, staggering to that gorgeous vehicle,

climbed in at the door, and shut himself up to take his rest on its

dainty cushions.

The great grindstone, Earth, had turned when Mr. Lorry looked out again,

and the sun was red on the courtyard. But, the lesser grindstone stood

alone there in the calm morning air, with a red upon it that the sun had

never given, and would never take away.

CHAPTER III.

The Shadow

One of the first considerations which arose in the business mind of Mr.

Lorry when business hours came round, was this:--that he had no right to

imperil Tellson’s by sheltering the wife of an emigrant prisoner under

the Bank roof. His own possessions, safety, life, he would have hazarded

for Lucie and her child, without a moment’s demur; but the great trust

he held was not his own, and as to that business charge he was a strict

man of business.

At first, his mind reverted to Defarge, and he thought of finding out

the wine-shop again and taking counsel with its master in reference to

the safest dwelling-place in the distracted state of the city. But, the

same consideration that suggested him, repudiated him; he lived in the

most violent Quarter, and doubtless was influential there, and deep in

its dangerous workings.

Noon coming, and the Doctor not returning, and every minute’s delay

tending to compromise Tellson’s, Mr. Lorry advised with Lucie. She said

that her father had spoken of hiring a lodging for a short term, in that

Quarter, near the Banking-house. As there was no business objection to

this, and as he foresaw that even if it were all well with Charles, and

he were to be released, he could not hope to leave the city, Mr. Lorry

went out in quest of such a lodging, and found a suitable one, high up

in a removed by-street where the closed blinds in all the other windows

of a high melancholy square of buildings marked deserted homes.

To this lodging he at once removed Lucie and her child, and Miss Pross:

giving them what comfort he could, and much more than he had himself.

He left Jerry with them, as a figure to fill a doorway that would bear

considerable knocking on the head, and returned to his own occupations.

A disturbed and doleful mind he brought to bear upon them, and slowly

and heavily the day lagged on with him.

It wore itself out, and wore him out with it, until the Bank closed. He

was again alone in his room of the previous night, considering what to

do next, when he heard a foot upon the stair. In a few moments, a

man stood in his presence, who, with a keenly observant look at him,

addressed him by his name.

“Your servant,” said Mr. Lorry. “Do you know me?”

He was a strongly made man with dark curling hair, from forty-five

to fifty years of age. For answer he repeated, without any change of

emphasis, the words:

“Do you know me?”

“I have seen you somewhere.”

“Perhaps at my wine-shop?”

Much interested and agitated, Mr. Lorry said: “You come from Doctor

Manette?”

“Yes. I come from Doctor Manette.”

“And what says he? What does he send me?”

Defarge gave into his anxious hand, an open scrap of paper. It bore the

words in the Doctor’s writing:

“Charles is safe, but I cannot safely leave this place yet.

I have obtained the favour that the bearer has a short note

from Charles to his wife. Let the bearer see his wife.”

It was dated from La Force, within an hour.

“Will you accompany me,” said Mr. Lorry, joyfully relieved after reading

this note aloud, “to where his wife resides?”

“Yes,” returned Defarge.

Scarcely noticing as yet, in what a curiously reserved and mechanical

way Defarge spoke, Mr. Lorry put on his hat and they went down into the

courtyard. There, they found two women; one, knitting.

“Madame Defarge, surely!” said Mr. Lorry, who had left her in exactly

the same attitude some seventeen years ago.

“It is she,” observed her husband.

“Does Madame go with us?” inquired Mr. Lorry, seeing that she moved as

they moved.

“Yes. That she may be able to recognise the faces and know the persons.

It is for their safety.”

Beginning to be struck by Defarge’s manner, Mr. Lorry looked dubiously

at him, and led the way. Both the women followed; the second woman being

The Vengeance.

They passed through the intervening streets as quickly as they might,

ascended the staircase of the new domicile, were admitted by Jerry,

and found Lucie weeping, alone. She was thrown into a transport by the

tidings Mr. Lorry gave her of her husband, and clasped the hand that

delivered his note--little thinking what it had been doing near him in

the night, and might, but for a chance, have done to him.

“DEAREST,--Take courage. I am well, and your father has

influence around me. You cannot answer this.

Kiss our child for me.”

That was all the writing. It was so much, however, to her who received

it, that she turned from Defarge to his wife, and kissed one of the

hands that knitted. It was a passionate, loving, thankful, womanly

action, but the hand made no response--dropped cold and heavy, and took

to its knitting again.

There was something in its touch that gave Lucie a check. She stopped in

the act of putting the note in her bosom, and, with her hands yet at her

neck, looked terrified at Madame Defarge. Madame Defarge met the lifted

eyebrows and forehead with a cold, impassive stare.

“My dear,” said Mr. Lorry, striking in to explain; “there are frequent

risings in the streets; and, although it is not likely they will ever

trouble you, Madame Defarge wishes to see those whom she has the power

to protect at such times, to the end that she may know them--that she

may identify them. I believe,” said Mr. Lorry, rather halting in his

reassuring words, as the stony manner of all the three impressed itself

upon him more and more, “I state the case, Citizen Defarge?”

Defarge looked gloomily at his wife, and gave no other answer than a

gruff sound of acquiescence.

“You had better, Lucie,” said Mr. Lorry, doing all he could to

propitiate, by tone and manner, “have the dear child here, and our

good Pross. Our good Pross, Defarge, is an English lady, and knows no

French.”

The lady in question, whose rooted conviction that she was more than a

match for any foreigner, was not to be shaken by distress and, danger,

appeared with folded arms, and observed in English to The Vengeance,

whom her eyes first encountered, “Well, I am sure, Boldface! I hope

\_you\_ are pretty well!” She also bestowed a British cough on Madame

Defarge; but, neither of the two took much heed of her.

“Is that his child?” said Madame Defarge, stopping in her work for the

first time, and pointing her knitting-needle at little Lucie as if it

were the finger of Fate.

“Yes, madame,” answered Mr. Lorry; “this is our poor prisoner’s darling

daughter, and only child.”

The shadow attendant on Madame Defarge and her party seemed to fall so

threatening and dark on the child, that her mother instinctively

kneeled on the ground beside her, and held her to her breast. The

shadow attendant on Madame Defarge and her party seemed then to fall,

threatening and dark, on both the mother and the child.

“It is enough, my husband,” said Madame Defarge. “I have seen them. We

may go.”

But, the suppressed manner had enough of menace in it--not visible and

presented, but indistinct and withheld--to alarm Lucie into saying, as

she laid her appealing hand on Madame Defarge’s dress:

“You will be good to my poor husband. You will do him no harm. You will

help me to see him if you can?”

“Your husband is not my business here,” returned Madame Defarge, looking

down at her with perfect composure. “It is the daughter of your father

who is my business here.”

“For my sake, then, be merciful to my husband. For my child’s sake! She

will put her hands together and pray you to be merciful. We are more

afraid of you than of these others.”

Madame Defarge received it as a compliment, and looked at her husband.

Defarge, who had been uneasily biting his thumb-nail and looking at her,

collected his face into a sterner expression.

“What is it that your husband says in that little letter?” asked Madame

Defarge, with a lowering smile. “Influence; he says something touching

influence?”

“That my father,” said Lucie, hurriedly taking the paper from her

breast, but with her alarmed eyes on her questioner and not on it, “has

much influence around him.”

“Surely it will release him!” said Madame Defarge. “Let it do so.”

“As a wife and mother,” cried Lucie, most earnestly, “I implore you to

have pity on me and not to exercise any power that you possess, against

my innocent husband, but to use it in his behalf. O sister-woman, think

of me. As a wife and mother!”

Madame Defarge looked, coldly as ever, at the suppliant, and said,

turning to her friend The Vengeance:

“The wives and mothers we have been used to see, since we were as little

as this child, and much less, have not been greatly considered? We have

known \_their\_ husbands and fathers laid in prison and kept from them,

often enough? All our lives, we have seen our sister-women suffer, in

themselves and in their children, poverty, nakedness, hunger, thirst,

sickness, misery, oppression and neglect of all kinds?”

“We have seen nothing else,” returned The Vengeance.

“We have borne this a long time,” said Madame Defarge, turning her eyes

again upon Lucie. “Judge you! Is it likely that the trouble of one wife

and mother would be much to us now?”

She resumed her knitting and went out. The Vengeance followed. Defarge

went last, and closed the door.

“Courage, my dear Lucie,” said Mr. Lorry, as he raised her. “Courage,

courage! So far all goes well with us--much, much better than it has of

late gone with many poor souls. Cheer up, and have a thankful heart.”

“I am not thankless, I hope, but that dreadful woman seems to throw a

shadow on me and on all my hopes.”

“Tut, tut!” said Mr. Lorry; “what is this despondency in the brave

little breast? A shadow indeed! No substance in it, Lucie.”

But the shadow of the manner of these Defarges was dark upon himself,

for all that, and in his secret mind it troubled him greatly.

CHAPTER IV.

Calm in Storm

Doctor Manette did not return until the morning of the fourth day of his

absence. So much of what had happened in that dreadful time as could be

kept from the knowledge of Lucie was so well concealed from her, that

not until long afterwards, when France and she were far apart, did she

know that eleven hundred defenceless prisoners of both sexes and all

ages had been killed by the populace; that four days and nights had been

darkened by this deed of horror; and that the air around her had been

tainted by the slain. She only knew that there had been an attack upon

the prisons, that all political prisoners had been in danger, and that

some had been dragged out by the crowd and murdered.

To Mr. Lorry, the Doctor communicated under an injunction of secrecy on

which he had no need to dwell, that the crowd had taken him through a

scene of carnage to the prison of La Force. That, in the prison he had

found a self-appointed Tribunal sitting, before which the prisoners were

brought singly, and by which they were rapidly ordered to be put forth

to be massacred, or to be released, or (in a few cases) to be sent back

to their cells. That, presented by his conductors to this Tribunal, he

had announced himself by name and profession as having been for eighteen

years a secret and unaccused prisoner in the Bastille; that, one of the

body so sitting in judgment had risen and identified him, and that this

man was Defarge.

That, hereupon he had ascertained, through the registers on the table,

that his son-in-law was among the living prisoners, and had pleaded hard

to the Tribunal--of whom some members were asleep and some awake, some

dirty with murder and some clean, some sober and some not--for his life

and liberty. That, in the first frantic greetings lavished on himself as

a notable sufferer under the overthrown system, it had been accorded

to him to have Charles Darnay brought before the lawless Court, and

examined. That, he seemed on the point of being at once released, when

the tide in his favour met with some unexplained check (not intelligible

to the Doctor), which led to a few words of secret conference. That,

the man sitting as President had then informed Doctor Manette that

the prisoner must remain in custody, but should, for his sake, be held

inviolate in safe custody. That, immediately, on a signal, the prisoner

was removed to the interior of the prison again; but, that he, the

Doctor, had then so strongly pleaded for permission to remain and

assure himself that his son-in-law was, through no malice or mischance,

delivered to the concourse whose murderous yells outside the gate had

often drowned the proceedings, that he had obtained the permission, and

had remained in that Hall of Blood until the danger was over.

The sights he had seen there, with brief snatches of food and sleep by

intervals, shall remain untold. The mad joy over the prisoners who were

saved, had astounded him scarcely less than the mad ferocity against

those who were cut to pieces. One prisoner there was, he said, who had

been discharged into the street free, but at whom a mistaken savage had

thrust a pike as he passed out. Being besought to go to him and dress

the wound, the Doctor had passed out at the same gate, and had found him

in the arms of a company of Samaritans, who were seated on the bodies

of their victims. With an inconsistency as monstrous as anything in this

awful nightmare, they had helped the healer, and tended the wounded man

with the gentlest solicitude--had made a litter for him and escorted him

carefully from the spot--had then caught up their weapons and plunged

anew into a butchery so dreadful, that the Doctor had covered his eyes

with his hands, and swooned away in the midst of it.

As Mr. Lorry received these confidences, and as he watched the face of

his friend now sixty-two years of age, a misgiving arose within him that

such dread experiences would revive the old danger.

But, he had never seen his friend in his present aspect: he had never

at all known him in his present character. For the first time the Doctor

felt, now, that his suffering was strength and power. For the first time

he felt that in that sharp fire, he had slowly forged the iron which

could break the prison door of his daughter’s husband, and deliver him.

“It all tended to a good end, my friend; it was not mere waste and ruin.

As my beloved child was helpful in restoring me to myself, I will be

helpful now in restoring the dearest part of herself to her; by the aid

of Heaven I will do it!” Thus, Doctor Manette. And when Jarvis Lorry saw

the kindled eyes, the resolute face, the calm strong look and bearing

of the man whose life always seemed to him to have been stopped, like a

clock, for so many years, and then set going again with an energy which

had lain dormant during the cessation of its usefulness, he believed.

Greater things than the Doctor had at that time to contend with, would

have yielded before his persevering purpose. While he kept himself

in his place, as a physician, whose business was with all degrees

of mankind, bond and free, rich and poor, bad and good, he used his

personal influence so wisely, that he was soon the inspecting physician

of three prisons, and among them of La Force. He could now assure Lucie

that her husband was no longer confined alone, but was mixed with the

general body of prisoners; he saw her husband weekly, and brought sweet

messages to her, straight from his lips; sometimes her husband himself

sent a letter to her (though never by the Doctor’s hand), but she was

not permitted to write to him: for, among the many wild suspicions of

plots in the prisons, the wildest of all pointed at emigrants who were

known to have made friends or permanent connections abroad.

This new life of the Doctor’s was an anxious life, no doubt; still, the

sagacious Mr. Lorry saw that there was a new sustaining pride in it.

Nothing unbecoming tinged the pride; it was a natural and worthy one;

but he observed it as a curiosity. The Doctor knew, that up to that

time, his imprisonment had been associated in the minds of his daughter

and his friend, with his personal affliction, deprivation, and weakness.

Now that this was changed, and he knew himself to be invested through

that old trial with forces to which they both looked for Charles’s

ultimate safety and deliverance, he became so far exalted by the change,

that he took the lead and direction, and required them as the weak, to

trust to him as the strong. The preceding relative positions of himself

and Lucie were reversed, yet only as the liveliest gratitude and

affection could reverse them, for he could have had no pride but in

rendering some service to her who had rendered so much to him. “All

curious to see,” thought Mr. Lorry, in his amiably shrewd way, “but all

natural and right; so, take the lead, my dear friend, and keep it; it

couldn’t be in better hands.”

But, though the Doctor tried hard, and never ceased trying, to get

Charles Darnay set at liberty, or at least to get him brought to trial,

the public current of the time set too strong and fast for him. The new

era began; the king was tried, doomed, and beheaded; the Republic of

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, declared for victory or death

against the world in arms; the black flag waved night and day from the

great towers of Notre Dame; three hundred thousand men, summoned to rise

against the tyrants of the earth, rose from all the varying soils

of France, as if the dragon’s teeth had been sown broadcast, and

had yielded fruit equally on hill and plain, on rock, in gravel, and

alluvial mud, under the bright sky of the South and under the clouds of

the North, in fell and forest, in the vineyards and the olive-grounds

and among the cropped grass and the stubble of the corn, along the

fruitful banks of the broad rivers, and in the sand of the sea-shore.

What private solicitude could rear itself against the deluge of the Year

One of Liberty--the deluge rising from below, not falling from above,

and with the windows of Heaven shut, not opened!

There was no pause, no pity, no peace, no interval of relenting rest, no

measurement of time. Though days and nights circled as regularly as when

time was young, and the evening and morning were the first day, other

count of time there was none. Hold of it was lost in the raging fever

of a nation, as it is in the fever of one patient. Now, breaking the

unnatural silence of a whole city, the executioner showed the people the

head of the king--and now, it seemed almost in the same breath, the

head of his fair wife which had had eight weary months of imprisoned

widowhood and misery, to turn it grey.

And yet, observing the strange law of contradiction which obtains in

all such cases, the time was long, while it flamed by so fast. A

revolutionary tribunal in the capital, and forty or fifty thousand

revolutionary committees all over the land; a law of the Suspected,

which struck away all security for liberty or life, and delivered over

any good and innocent person to any bad and guilty one; prisons gorged

with people who had committed no offence, and could obtain no hearing;

these things became the established order and nature of appointed

things, and seemed to be ancient usage before they were many weeks old.

Above all, one hideous figure grew as familiar as if it had been before

the general gaze from the foundations of the world--the figure of the

sharp female called La Guillotine.

It was the popular theme for jests; it was the best cure for headache,

it infallibly prevented the hair from turning grey, it imparted a

peculiar delicacy to the complexion, it was the National Razor which

shaved close: who kissed La Guillotine, looked through the little window

and sneezed into the sack. It was the sign of the regeneration of the

human race. It superseded the Cross. Models of it were worn on breasts

from which the Cross was discarded, and it was bowed down to and

believed in where the Cross was denied.

It sheared off heads so many, that it, and the ground it most polluted,

were a rotten red. It was taken to pieces, like a toy-puzzle for a young

Devil, and was put together again when the occasion wanted it. It hushed

the eloquent, struck down the powerful, abolished the beautiful and

good. Twenty-two friends of high public mark, twenty-one living and one

dead, it had lopped the heads off, in one morning, in as many minutes.

The name of the strong man of Old Scripture had descended to the chief

functionary who worked it; but, so armed, he was stronger than his

namesake, and blinder, and tore away the gates of God’s own Temple every

day.

Among these terrors, and the brood belonging to them, the Doctor walked

with a steady head: confident in his power, cautiously persistent in his

end, never doubting that he would save Lucie’s husband at last. Yet the

current of the time swept by, so strong and deep, and carried the time

away so fiercely, that Charles had lain in prison one year and three

months when the Doctor was thus steady and confident. So much more

wicked and distracted had the Revolution grown in that December month,

that the rivers of the South were encumbered with the bodies of the

violently drowned by night, and prisoners were shot in lines and squares

under the southern wintry sun. Still, the Doctor walked among the

terrors with a steady head. No man better known than he, in Paris at

that day; no man in a stranger situation. Silent, humane, indispensable

in hospital and prison, using his art equally among assassins and

victims, he was a man apart. In the exercise of his skill, the

appearance and the story of the Bastille Captive removed him from all

other men. He was not suspected or brought in question, any more than if

he had indeed been recalled to life some eighteen years before, or were

a Spirit moving among mortals.

CHAPTER V.

The Wood-Sawyer

One year and three months. During all that time Lucie was never

sure, from hour to hour, but that the Guillotine would strike off her

husband’s head next day. Every day, through the stony streets, the

tumbrils now jolted heavily, filled with Condemned. Lovely girls; bright

women, brown-haired, black-haired, and grey; youths; stalwart men and

old; gentle born and peasant born; all red wine for La Guillotine, all

daily brought into light from the dark cellars of the loathsome prisons,

and carried to her through the streets to slake her devouring thirst.

Liberty, equality, fraternity, or death;--the last, much the easiest to

bestow, O Guillotine!

If the suddenness of her calamity, and the whirling wheels of the time,

had stunned the Doctor’s daughter into awaiting the result in idle

despair, it would but have been with her as it was with many. But, from

the hour when she had taken the white head to her fresh young bosom in

the garret of Saint Antoine, she had been true to her duties. She was

truest to them in the season of trial, as all the quietly loyal and good

will always be.

As soon as they were established in their new residence, and her father

had entered on the routine of his avocations, she arranged the little

household as exactly as if her husband had been there. Everything had

its appointed place and its appointed time. Little Lucie she taught,

as regularly, as if they had all been united in their English home. The

slight devices with which she cheated herself into the show of a belief

that they would soon be reunited--the little preparations for his speedy

return, the setting aside of his chair and his books--these, and the

solemn prayer at night for one dear prisoner especially, among the many

unhappy souls in prison and the shadow of death--were almost the only

outspoken reliefs of her heavy mind.

She did not greatly alter in appearance. The plain dark dresses, akin to

mourning dresses, which she and her child wore, were as neat and as well

attended to as the brighter clothes of happy days. She lost her colour,

and the old and intent expression was a constant, not an occasional,

thing; otherwise, she remained very pretty and comely. Sometimes, at

night on kissing her father, she would burst into the grief she had

repressed all day, and would say that her sole reliance, under Heaven,

was on him. He always resolutely answered: “Nothing can happen to him

without my knowledge, and I know that I can save him, Lucie.”

They had not made the round of their changed life many weeks, when her

father said to her, on coming home one evening:

“My dear, there is an upper window in the prison, to which Charles can

sometimes gain access at three in the afternoon. When he can get to

it--which depends on many uncertainties and incidents--he might see you

in the street, he thinks, if you stood in a certain place that I can

show you. But you will not be able to see him, my poor child, and even

if you could, it would be unsafe for you to make a sign of recognition.”

“O show me the place, my father, and I will go there every day.”

From that time, in all weathers, she waited there two hours. As the

clock struck two, she was there, and at four she turned resignedly away.

When it was not too wet or inclement for her child to be with her, they

went together; at other times she was alone; but, she never missed a

single day.

It was the dark and dirty corner of a small winding street. The hovel

of a cutter of wood into lengths for burning, was the only house at that

end; all else was wall. On the third day of her being there, he noticed

her.

“Good day, citizeness.”

“Good day, citizen.”

This mode of address was now prescribed by decree. It had been

established voluntarily some time ago, among the more thorough patriots;

but, was now law for everybody.

“Walking here again, citizeness?”

“You see me, citizen!”

The wood-sawyer, who was a little man with a redundancy of gesture (he

had once been a mender of roads), cast a glance at the prison, pointed

at the prison, and putting his ten fingers before his face to represent

bars, peeped through them jocosely.

“But it’s not my business,” said he. And went on sawing his wood.

Next day he was looking out for her, and accosted her the moment she

appeared.

“What? Walking here again, citizeness?”

“Yes, citizen.”

“Ah! A child too! Your mother, is it not, my little citizeness?”

“Do I say yes, mamma?” whispered little Lucie, drawing close to her.

“Yes, dearest.”

“Yes, citizen.”

“Ah! But it’s not my business. My work is my business. See my saw! I

call it my Little Guillotine. La, la, la; La, la, la! And off his head

comes!”

The billet fell as he spoke, and he threw it into a basket.

“I call myself the Samson of the firewood guillotine. See here again!

Loo, loo, loo; Loo, loo, loo! And off \_her\_ head comes! Now, a child.

Tickle, tickle; Pickle, pickle! And off \_its\_ head comes. All the

family!”

Lucie shuddered as he threw two more billets into his basket, but it was

impossible to be there while the wood-sawyer was at work, and not be in

his sight. Thenceforth, to secure his good will, she always spoke to him

first, and often gave him drink-money, which he readily received.

He was an inquisitive fellow, and sometimes when she had quite forgotten

him in gazing at the prison roof and grates, and in lifting her heart

up to her husband, she would come to herself to find him looking at her,

with his knee on his bench and his saw stopped in its work. “But it’s

not my business!” he would generally say at those times, and would

briskly fall to his sawing again.

In all weathers, in the snow and frost of winter, in the bitter winds of

spring, in the hot sunshine of summer, in the rains of autumn, and again

in the snow and frost of winter, Lucie passed two hours of every day at

this place; and every day on leaving it, she kissed the prison wall.

Her husband saw her (so she learned from her father) it might be once in

five or six times: it might be twice or thrice running: it might be, not

for a week or a fortnight together. It was enough that he could and did

see her when the chances served, and on that possibility she would have

waited out the day, seven days a week.

These occupations brought her round to the December month, wherein her

father walked among the terrors with a steady head. On a lightly-snowing

afternoon she arrived at the usual corner. It was a day of some wild

rejoicing, and a festival. She had seen the houses, as she came along,

decorated with little pikes, and with little red caps stuck upon them;

also, with tricoloured ribbons; also, with the standard inscription

(tricoloured letters were the favourite), Republic One and Indivisible.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death!

The miserable shop of the wood-sawyer was so small, that its whole

surface furnished very indifferent space for this legend. He had got

somebody to scrawl it up for him, however, who had squeezed Death in

with most inappropriate difficulty. On his house-top, he displayed pike

and cap, as a good citizen must, and in a window he had stationed his

saw inscribed as his “Little Sainte Guillotine”--for the great sharp

female was by that time popularly canonised. His shop was shut and he

was not there, which was a relief to Lucie, and left her quite alone.

But, he was not far off, for presently she heard a troubled movement

and a shouting coming along, which filled her with fear. A moment

afterwards, and a throng of people came pouring round the corner by the

prison wall, in the midst of whom was the wood-sawyer hand in hand with

The Vengeance. There could not be fewer than five hundred people, and

they were dancing like five thousand demons. There was no other music

than their own singing. They danced to the popular Revolution song,

keeping a ferocious time that was like a gnashing of teeth in unison.

Men and women danced together, women danced together, men danced

together, as hazard had brought them together. At first, they were a

mere storm of coarse red caps and coarse woollen rags; but, as they

filled the place, and stopped to dance about Lucie, some ghastly

apparition of a dance-figure gone raving mad arose among them. They

advanced, retreated, struck at one another’s hands, clutched at one

another’s heads, spun round alone, caught one another and spun round

in pairs, until many of them dropped. While those were down, the rest

linked hand in hand, and all spun round together: then the ring broke,

and in separate rings of two and four they turned and turned until they

all stopped at once, began again, struck, clutched, and tore, and then

reversed the spin, and all spun round another way. Suddenly they stopped

again, paused, struck out the time afresh, formed into lines the width

of the public way, and, with their heads low down and their hands high

up, swooped screaming off. No fight could have been half so terrible

as this dance. It was so emphatically a fallen sport--a something, once

innocent, delivered over to all devilry--a healthy pastime changed into

a means of angering the blood, bewildering the senses, and steeling the

heart. Such grace as was visible in it, made it the uglier, showing how

warped and perverted all things good by nature were become. The maidenly

bosom bared to this, the pretty almost-child’s head thus distracted, the

delicate foot mincing in this slough of blood and dirt, were types of

the disjointed time.

This was the Carmagnole. As it passed, leaving Lucie frightened and

bewildered in the doorway of the wood-sawyer’s house, the feathery snow

fell as quietly and lay as white and soft, as if it had never been.

“O my father!” for he stood before her when she lifted up the eyes she

had momentarily darkened with her hand; “such a cruel, bad sight.”

“I know, my dear, I know. I have seen it many times. Don’t be

frightened! Not one of them would harm you.”

“I am not frightened for myself, my father. But when I think of my

husband, and the mercies of these people--”

“We will set him above their mercies very soon. I left him climbing to

the window, and I came to tell you. There is no one here to see. You may

kiss your hand towards that highest shelving roof.”

“I do so, father, and I send him my Soul with it!”

“You cannot see him, my poor dear?”

“No, father,” said Lucie, yearning and weeping as she kissed her hand,

“no.”

A footstep in the snow. Madame Defarge. “I salute you, citizeness,”

from the Doctor. “I salute you, citizen.” This in passing. Nothing more.

Madame Defarge gone, like a shadow over the white road.

“Give me your arm, my love. Pass from here with an air of cheerfulness

and courage, for his sake. That was well done;” they had left the spot;

“it shall not be in vain. Charles is summoned for to-morrow.”

“For to-morrow!”

“There is no time to lose. I am well prepared, but there are precautions

to be taken, that could not be taken until he was actually summoned

before the Tribunal. He has not received the notice yet, but I know

that he will presently be summoned for to-morrow, and removed to the

Conciergerie; I have timely information. You are not afraid?”

She could scarcely answer, “I trust in you.”

“Do so, implicitly. Your suspense is nearly ended, my darling; he shall

be restored to you within a few hours; I have encompassed him with every

protection. I must see Lorry.”

He stopped. There was a heavy lumbering of wheels within hearing. They

both knew too well what it meant. One. Two. Three. Three tumbrils faring

away with their dread loads over the hushing snow.

“I must see Lorry,” the Doctor repeated, turning her another way.

The staunch old gentleman was still in his trust; had never left it. He

and his books were in frequent requisition as to property confiscated

and made national. What he could save for the owners, he saved. No

better man living to hold fast by what Tellson’s had in keeping, and to

hold his peace.

A murky red and yellow sky, and a rising mist from the Seine, denoted

the approach of darkness. It was almost dark when they arrived at the

Bank. The stately residence of Monseigneur was altogether blighted and

deserted. Above a heap of dust and ashes in the court, ran the letters:

National Property. Republic One and Indivisible. Liberty, Equality,

Fraternity, or Death!

Who could that be with Mr. Lorry--the owner of the riding-coat upon the

chair--who must not be seen? From whom newly arrived, did he come out,

agitated and surprised, to take his favourite in his arms? To whom did

he appear to repeat her faltering words, when, raising his voice and

turning his head towards the door of the room from which he had issued,

he said: “Removed to the Conciergerie, and summoned for to-morrow?”

CHAPTER VI.

Triumph

The dread tribunal of five Judges, Public Prosecutor, and determined

Jury, sat every day. Their lists went forth every evening, and were

read out by the gaolers of the various prisons to their prisoners. The

standard gaoler-joke was, “Come out and listen to the Evening Paper, you

inside there!”

“Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay!”

So at last began the Evening Paper at La Force.

When a name was called, its owner stepped apart into a spot reserved

for those who were announced as being thus fatally recorded. Charles

Evrémonde, called Darnay, had reason to know the usage; he had seen

hundreds pass away so.

His bloated gaoler, who wore spectacles to read with, glanced over them

to assure himself that he had taken his place, and went through the

list, making a similar short pause at each name. There were twenty-three

names, but only twenty were responded to; for one of the prisoners so

summoned had died in gaol and been forgotten, and two had already been

guillotined and forgotten. The list was read, in the vaulted chamber

where Darnay had seen the associated prisoners on the night of his

arrival. Every one of those had perished in the massacre; every human

creature he had since cared for and parted with, had died on the

scaffold.

There were hurried words of farewell and kindness, but the parting was

soon over. It was the incident of every day, and the society of La Force

were engaged in the preparation of some games of forfeits and a little

concert, for that evening. They crowded to the grates and shed tears

there; but, twenty places in the projected entertainments had to be

refilled, and the time was, at best, short to the lock-up hour, when the

common rooms and corridors would be delivered over to the great dogs

who kept watch there through the night. The prisoners were far from

insensible or unfeeling; their ways arose out of the condition of the

time. Similarly, though with a subtle difference, a species of fervour

or intoxication, known, without doubt, to have led some persons to

brave the guillotine unnecessarily, and to die by it, was not mere

boastfulness, but a wild infection of the wildly shaken public mind. In

seasons of pestilence, some of us will have a secret attraction to the

disease--a terrible passing inclination to die of it. And all of us have

like wonders hidden in our breasts, only needing circumstances to evoke

them.

The passage to the Conciergerie was short and dark; the night in its

vermin-haunted cells was long and cold. Next day, fifteen prisoners were

put to the bar before Charles Darnay’s name was called. All the fifteen

were condemned, and the trials of the whole occupied an hour and a half.

“Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay,” was at length arraigned.

His judges sat upon the Bench in feathered hats; but the rough red cap

and tricoloured cockade was the head-dress otherwise prevailing. Looking

at the Jury and the turbulent audience, he might have thought that the

usual order of things was reversed, and that the felons were trying the

honest men. The lowest, cruelest, and worst populace of a city, never

without its quantity of low, cruel, and bad, were the directing

spirits of the scene: noisily commenting, applauding, disapproving,

anticipating, and precipitating the result, without a check. Of the men,

the greater part were armed in various ways; of the women, some wore

knives, some daggers, some ate and drank as they looked on, many

knitted. Among these last, was one, with a spare piece of knitting under

her arm as she worked. She was in a front row, by the side of a man whom

he had never seen since his arrival at the Barrier, but whom he directly

remembered as Defarge. He noticed that she once or twice whispered in

his ear, and that she seemed to be his wife; but, what he most noticed

in the two figures was, that although they were posted as close to

himself as they could be, they never looked towards him. They seemed to

be waiting for something with a dogged determination, and they looked at

the Jury, but at nothing else. Under the President sat Doctor Manette,

in his usual quiet dress. As well as the prisoner could see, he and Mr.

Lorry were the only men there, unconnected with the Tribunal, who

wore their usual clothes, and had not assumed the coarse garb of the

Carmagnole.

Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay, was accused by the public prosecutor

as an emigrant, whose life was forfeit to the Republic, under the decree

which banished all emigrants on pain of Death. It was nothing that the

decree bore date since his return to France. There he was, and there was

the decree; he had been taken in France, and his head was demanded.

“Take off his head!” cried the audience. “An enemy to the Republic!”

The President rang his bell to silence those cries, and asked the

prisoner whether it was not true that he had lived many years in

England?

Undoubtedly it was.

Was he not an emigrant then? What did he call himself?

Not an emigrant, he hoped, within the sense and spirit of the law.

Why not? the President desired to know.

Because he had voluntarily relinquished a title that was distasteful

to him, and a station that was distasteful to him, and had left

his country--he submitted before the word emigrant in the present

acceptation by the Tribunal was in use--to live by his own industry in

England, rather than on the industry of the overladen people of France.

What proof had he of this?

He handed in the names of two witnesses; Theophile Gabelle, and

Alexandre Manette.

But he had married in England? the President reminded him.

True, but not an English woman.

A citizeness of France?

Yes. By birth.

Her name and family?

“Lucie Manette, only daughter of Doctor Manette, the good physician who

sits there.”

This answer had a happy effect upon the audience. Cries in exaltation

of the well-known good physician rent the hall. So capriciously were

the people moved, that tears immediately rolled down several ferocious

countenances which had been glaring at the prisoner a moment before, as

if with impatience to pluck him out into the streets and kill him.

On these few steps of his dangerous way, Charles Darnay had set his foot

according to Doctor Manette’s reiterated instructions. The same cautious

counsel directed every step that lay before him, and had prepared every

inch of his road.

The President asked, why had he returned to France when he did, and not

sooner?

He had not returned sooner, he replied, simply because he had no means

of living in France, save those he had resigned; whereas, in England,

he lived by giving instruction in the French language and literature.

He had returned when he did, on the pressing and written entreaty of

a French citizen, who represented that his life was endangered by his

absence. He had come back, to save a citizen’s life, and to bear his

testimony, at whatever personal hazard, to the truth. Was that criminal

in the eyes of the Republic?

The populace cried enthusiastically, “No!” and the President rang his

bell to quiet them. Which it did not, for they continued to cry “No!”

until they left off, of their own will.

The President required the name of that citizen. The accused explained

that the citizen was his first witness. He also referred with confidence

to the citizen’s letter, which had been taken from him at the Barrier,

but which he did not doubt would be found among the papers then before

the President.

The Doctor had taken care that it should be there--had assured him that

it would be there--and at this stage of the proceedings it was produced

and read. Citizen Gabelle was called to confirm it, and did so. Citizen

Gabelle hinted, with infinite delicacy and politeness, that in the

pressure of business imposed on the Tribunal by the multitude of

enemies of the Republic with which it had to deal, he had been slightly

overlooked in his prison of the Abbaye--in fact, had rather passed out

of the Tribunal’s patriotic remembrance--until three days ago; when he

had been summoned before it, and had been set at liberty on the Jury’s

declaring themselves satisfied that the accusation against him was

answered, as to himself, by the surrender of the citizen Evrémonde,

called Darnay.

Doctor Manette was next questioned. His high personal popularity,

and the clearness of his answers, made a great impression; but, as he

proceeded, as he showed that the Accused was his first friend on his

release from his long imprisonment; that, the accused had remained in

England, always faithful and devoted to his daughter and himself in

their exile; that, so far from being in favour with the Aristocrat

government there, he had actually been tried for his life by it, as

the foe of England and friend of the United States--as he brought these

circumstances into view, with the greatest discretion and with the

straightforward force of truth and earnestness, the Jury and the

populace became one. At last, when he appealed by name to Monsieur

Lorry, an English gentleman then and there present, who, like himself,

had been a witness on that English trial and could corroborate his

account of it, the Jury declared that they had heard enough, and that

they were ready with their votes if the President were content to

receive them.

At every vote (the Jurymen voted aloud and individually), the populace

set up a shout of applause. All the voices were in the prisoner’s

favour, and the President declared him free.

Then, began one of those extraordinary scenes with which the populace

sometimes gratified their fickleness, or their better impulses towards

generosity and mercy, or which they regarded as some set-off against

their swollen account of cruel rage. No man can decide now to which of

these motives such extraordinary scenes were referable; it is probable,

to a blending of all the three, with the second predominating. No sooner

was the acquittal pronounced, than tears were shed as freely as blood

at another time, and such fraternal embraces were bestowed upon the

prisoner by as many of both sexes as could rush at him, that after

his long and unwholesome confinement he was in danger of fainting from

exhaustion; none the less because he knew very well, that the very same

people, carried by another current, would have rushed at him with

the very same intensity, to rend him to pieces and strew him over the

streets.

His removal, to make way for other accused persons who were to be tried,

rescued him from these caresses for the moment. Five were to be tried

together, next, as enemies of the Republic, forasmuch as they had not

assisted it by word or deed. So quick was the Tribunal to compensate

itself and the nation for a chance lost, that these five came down to

him before he left the place, condemned to die within twenty-four

hours. The first of them told him so, with the customary prison sign

of Death--a raised finger--and they all added in words, “Long live the

Republic!”

The five had had, it is true, no audience to lengthen their proceedings,

for when he and Doctor Manette emerged from the gate, there was a great

crowd about it, in which there seemed to be every face he had seen in

Court--except two, for which he looked in vain. On his coming out, the

concourse made at him anew, weeping, embracing, and shouting, all by

turns and all together, until the very tide of the river on the bank of

which the mad scene was acted, seemed to run mad, like the people on the

shore.

They put him into a great chair they had among them, and which they had

taken either out of the Court itself, or one of its rooms or passages.

Over the chair they had thrown a red flag, and to the back of it they

had bound a pike with a red cap on its top. In this car of triumph, not

even the Doctor’s entreaties could prevent his being carried to his home

on men’s shoulders, with a confused sea of red caps heaving about him,

and casting up to sight from the stormy deep such wrecks of faces, that

he more than once misdoubted his mind being in confusion, and that he

was in the tumbril on his way to the Guillotine.

In wild dreamlike procession, embracing whom they met and pointing

him out, they carried him on. Reddening the snowy streets with the

prevailing Republican colour, in winding and tramping through them, as

they had reddened them below the snow with a deeper dye, they carried

him thus into the courtyard of the building where he lived. Her father

had gone on before, to prepare her, and when her husband stood upon his

feet, she dropped insensible in his arms.

As he held her to his heart and turned her beautiful head between his

face and the brawling crowd, so that his tears and her lips might come

together unseen, a few of the people fell to dancing. Instantly, all the

rest fell to dancing, and the courtyard overflowed with the Carmagnole.

Then, they elevated into the vacant chair a young woman from the

crowd to be carried as the Goddess of Liberty, and then swelling and

overflowing out into the adjacent streets, and along the river’s bank,

and over the bridge, the Carmagnole absorbed them every one and whirled

them away.

After grasping the Doctor’s hand, as he stood victorious and proud

before him; after grasping the hand of Mr. Lorry, who came panting in

breathless from his struggle against the waterspout of the Carmagnole;

after kissing little Lucie, who was lifted up to clasp her arms round

his neck; and after embracing the ever zealous and faithful Pross who

lifted her; he took his wife in his arms, and carried her up to their

rooms.

“Lucie! My own! I am safe.”

“O dearest Charles, let me thank God for this on my knees as I have

prayed to Him.”

They all reverently bowed their heads and hearts. When she was again in

his arms, he said to her:

“And now speak to your father, dearest. No other man in all this France

could have done what he has done for me.”

She laid her head upon her father’s breast, as she had laid his poor

head on her own breast, long, long ago. He was happy in the return he

had made her, he was recompensed for his suffering, he was proud of his

strength. “You must not be weak, my darling,” he remonstrated; “don’t

tremble so. I have saved him.”

CHAPTER VII.

A Knock at the Door

“I have saved him.” It was not another of the dreams in which he had

often come back; he was really here. And yet his wife trembled, and a

vague but heavy fear was upon her.

All the air round was so thick and dark, the people were so passionately

revengeful and fitful, the innocent were so constantly put to death on

vague suspicion and black malice, it was so impossible to forget that

many as blameless as her husband and as dear to others as he was to

her, every day shared the fate from which he had been clutched, that her

heart could not be as lightened of its load as she felt it ought to be.

The shadows of the wintry afternoon were beginning to fall, and even now

the dreadful carts were rolling through the streets. Her mind pursued

them, looking for him among the Condemned; and then she clung closer to

his real presence and trembled more.

Her father, cheering her, showed a compassionate superiority to this

woman’s weakness, which was wonderful to see. No garret, no shoemaking,

no One Hundred and Five, North Tower, now! He had accomplished the task

he had set himself, his promise was redeemed, he had saved Charles. Let

them all lean upon him.

Their housekeeping was of a very frugal kind: not only because that was

the safest way of life, involving the least offence to the people, but

because they were not rich, and Charles, throughout his imprisonment,

had had to pay heavily for his bad food, and for his guard, and towards

the living of the poorer prisoners. Partly on this account, and

partly to avoid a domestic spy, they kept no servant; the citizen and

citizeness who acted as porters at the courtyard gate, rendered them

occasional service; and Jerry (almost wholly transferred to them by

Mr. Lorry) had become their daily retainer, and had his bed there every

night.

It was an ordinance of the Republic One and Indivisible of Liberty,

Equality, Fraternity, or Death, that on the door or doorpost of every

house, the name of every inmate must be legibly inscribed in letters

of a certain size, at a certain convenient height from the ground. Mr.

Jerry Cruncher’s name, therefore, duly embellished the doorpost down

below; and, as the afternoon shadows deepened, the owner of that name

himself appeared, from overlooking a painter whom Doctor Manette had

employed to add to the list the name of Charles Evrémonde, called

Darnay.

In the universal fear and distrust that darkened the time, all the usual

harmless ways of life were changed. In the Doctor’s little household, as

in very many others, the articles of daily consumption that were wanted

were purchased every evening, in small quantities and at various small

shops. To avoid attracting notice, and to give as little occasion as

possible for talk and envy, was the general desire.

For some months past, Miss Pross and Mr. Cruncher had discharged the

office of purveyors; the former carrying the money; the latter, the

basket. Every afternoon at about the time when the public lamps were

lighted, they fared forth on this duty, and made and brought home

such purchases as were needful. Although Miss Pross, through her long

association with a French family, might have known as much of their

language as of her own, if she had had a mind, she had no mind in that

direction; consequently she knew no more of that “nonsense” (as she was

pleased to call it) than Mr. Cruncher did. So her manner of marketing

was to plump a noun-substantive at the head of a shopkeeper without any

introduction in the nature of an article, and, if it happened not to be

the name of the thing she wanted, to look round for that thing, lay hold

of it, and hold on by it until the bargain was concluded. She always

made a bargain for it, by holding up, as a statement of its just price,

one finger less than the merchant held up, whatever his number might be.

“Now, Mr. Cruncher,” said Miss Pross, whose eyes were red with felicity;

“if you are ready, I am.”

Jerry hoarsely professed himself at Miss Pross’s service. He had worn

all his rust off long ago, but nothing would file his spiky head down.

“There’s all manner of things wanted,” said Miss Pross, “and we shall

have a precious time of it. We want wine, among the rest. Nice toasts

these Redheads will be drinking, wherever we buy it.”

“It will be much the same to your knowledge, miss, I should think,”

retorted Jerry, “whether they drink your health or the Old Un’s.”

“Who’s he?” said Miss Pross.

Mr. Cruncher, with some diffidence, explained himself as meaning “Old

Nick’s.”

“Ha!” said Miss Pross, “it doesn’t need an interpreter to explain the

meaning of these creatures. They have but one, and it’s Midnight Murder,

and Mischief.”

“Hush, dear! Pray, pray, be cautious!” cried Lucie.

“Yes, yes, yes, I’ll be cautious,” said Miss Pross; “but I may say

among ourselves, that I do hope there will be no oniony and tobaccoey

smotherings in the form of embracings all round, going on in the

streets. Now, Ladybird, never you stir from that fire till I come back!

Take care of the dear husband you have recovered, and don’t move your

pretty head from his shoulder as you have it now, till you see me again!

May I ask a question, Doctor Manette, before I go?”

“I think you may take that liberty,” the Doctor answered, smiling.

“For gracious sake, don’t talk about Liberty; we have quite enough of

that,” said Miss Pross.

“Hush, dear! Again?” Lucie remonstrated.

“Well, my sweet,” said Miss Pross, nodding her head emphatically, “the

short and the long of it is, that I am a subject of His Most Gracious

Majesty King George the Third;” Miss Pross curtseyed at the name; “and

as such, my maxim is, Confound their politics, Frustrate their knavish

tricks, On him our hopes we fix, God save the King!”

Mr. Cruncher, in an access of loyalty, growlingly repeated the words

after Miss Pross, like somebody at church.

“I am glad you have so much of the Englishman in you, though I wish you

had never taken that cold in your voice,” said Miss Pross, approvingly.

“But the question, Doctor Manette. Is there”--it was the good creature’s

way to affect to make light of anything that was a great anxiety

with them all, and to come at it in this chance manner--“is there any

prospect yet, of our getting out of this place?”

“I fear not yet. It would be dangerous for Charles yet.”

“Heigh-ho-hum!” said Miss Pross, cheerfully repressing a sigh as she

glanced at her darling’s golden hair in the light of the fire, “then we

must have patience and wait: that’s all. We must hold up our heads and

fight low, as my brother Solomon used to say. Now, Mr. Cruncher!--Don’t

you move, Ladybird!”

They went out, leaving Lucie, and her husband, her father, and the

child, by a bright fire. Mr. Lorry was expected back presently from the

Banking House. Miss Pross had lighted the lamp, but had put it aside in

a corner, that they might enjoy the fire-light undisturbed. Little Lucie

sat by her grandfather with her hands clasped through his arm: and he,

in a tone not rising much above a whisper, began to tell her a story of

a great and powerful Fairy who had opened a prison-wall and let out

a captive who had once done the Fairy a service. All was subdued and

quiet, and Lucie was more at ease than she had been.

“What is that?” she cried, all at once.

“My dear!” said her father, stopping in his story, and laying his hand

on hers, “command yourself. What a disordered state you are in! The

least thing--nothing--startles you! \_You\_, your father’s daughter!”

“I thought, my father,” said Lucie, excusing herself, with a pale face

and in a faltering voice, “that I heard strange feet upon the stairs.”

“My love, the staircase is as still as Death.”

As he said the word, a blow was struck upon the door.

“Oh father, father. What can this be! Hide Charles. Save him!”

“My child,” said the Doctor, rising, and laying his hand upon her

shoulder, “I \_have\_ saved him. What weakness is this, my dear! Let me go

to the door.”

He took the lamp in his hand, crossed the two intervening outer rooms,

and opened it. A rude clattering of feet over the floor, and four rough

men in red caps, armed with sabres and pistols, entered the room.

“The Citizen Evrémonde, called Darnay,” said the first.

“Who seeks him?” answered Darnay.

“I seek him. We seek him. I know you, Evrémonde; I saw you before the

Tribunal to-day. You are again the prisoner of the Republic.”

The four surrounded him, where he stood with his wife and child clinging

to him.

“Tell me how and why am I again a prisoner?”

“It is enough that you return straight to the Conciergerie, and will

know to-morrow. You are summoned for to-morrow.”

Doctor Manette, whom this visitation had so turned into stone, that he

stood with the lamp in his hand, as if he were a statue made to hold it,

moved after these words were spoken, put the lamp down, and confronting

the speaker, and taking him, not ungently, by the loose front of his red

woollen shirt, said:

“You know him, you have said. Do you know me?”

“Yes, I know you, Citizen Doctor.”

“We all know you, Citizen Doctor,” said the other three.

He looked abstractedly from one to another, and said, in a lower voice,

after a pause:

“Will you answer his question to me then? How does this happen?”

“Citizen Doctor,” said the first, reluctantly, “he has been denounced to

the Section of Saint Antoine. This citizen,” pointing out the second who

had entered, “is from Saint Antoine.”

The citizen here indicated nodded his head, and added:

“He is accused by Saint Antoine.”

“Of what?” asked the Doctor.

“Citizen Doctor,” said the first, with his former reluctance, “ask no

more. If the Republic demands sacrifices from you, without doubt you as

a good patriot will be happy to make them. The Republic goes before all.

The People is supreme. Evrémonde, we are pressed.”

“One word,” the Doctor entreated. “Will you tell me who denounced him?”

“It is against rule,” answered the first; “but you can ask Him of Saint

Antoine here.”

The Doctor turned his eyes upon that man. Who moved uneasily on his

feet, rubbed his beard a little, and at length said:

“Well! Truly it is against rule. But he is denounced--and gravely--by

the Citizen and Citizeness Defarge. And by one other.”

“What other?”

“Do \_you\_ ask, Citizen Doctor?”

“Yes.”

“Then,” said he of Saint Antoine, with a strange look, “you will be

answered to-morrow. Now, I am dumb!”

CHAPTER VIII.

A Hand at Cards

Happily unconscious of the new calamity at home, Miss Pross threaded her

way along the narrow streets and crossed the river by the bridge of the

Pont-Neuf, reckoning in her mind the number of indispensable purchases

she had to make. Mr. Cruncher, with the basket, walked at her side. They

both looked to the right and to the left into most of the shops they

passed, had a wary eye for all gregarious assemblages of people, and

turned out of their road to avoid any very excited group of talkers. It

was a raw evening, and the misty river, blurred to the eye with blazing

lights and to the ear with harsh noises, showed where the barges were

stationed in which the smiths worked, making guns for the Army of the

Republic. Woe to the man who played tricks with \_that\_ Army, or got

undeserved promotion in it! Better for him that his beard had never

grown, for the National Razor shaved him close.

Having purchased a few small articles of grocery, and a measure of oil

for the lamp, Miss Pross bethought herself of the wine they wanted.

After peeping into several wine-shops, she stopped at the sign of the

Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, not far from the National Palace,

once (and twice) the Tuileries, where the aspect of things rather

took her fancy. It had a quieter look than any other place of the same

description they had passed, and, though red with patriotic caps, was

not so red as the rest. Sounding Mr. Cruncher, and finding him of her

opinion, Miss Pross resorted to the Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity,

attended by her cavalier.

Slightly observant of the smoky lights; of the people, pipe in mouth,

playing with limp cards and yellow dominoes; of the one bare-breasted,

bare-armed, soot-begrimed workman reading a journal aloud, and of

the others listening to him; of the weapons worn, or laid aside to be

resumed; of the two or three customers fallen forward asleep, who in the

popular high-shouldered shaggy black spencer looked, in that attitude,

like slumbering bears or dogs; the two outlandish customers approached

the counter, and showed what they wanted.

As their wine was measuring out, a man parted from another man in a

corner, and rose to depart. In going, he had to face Miss Pross. No

sooner did he face her, than Miss Pross uttered a scream, and clapped

her hands.

In a moment, the whole company were on their feet. That somebody was

assassinated by somebody vindicating a difference of opinion was the

likeliest occurrence. Everybody looked to see somebody fall, but only

saw a man and a woman standing staring at each other; the man with all

the outward aspect of a Frenchman and a thorough Republican; the woman,

evidently English.

What was said in this disappointing anti-climax, by the disciples of the

Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, except that it was something very

voluble and loud, would have been as so much Hebrew or Chaldean to Miss

Pross and her protector, though they had been all ears. But, they had no

ears for anything in their surprise. For, it must be recorded, that

not only was Miss Pross lost in amazement and agitation, but,

Mr. Cruncher--though it seemed on his own separate and individual

account--was in a state of the greatest wonder.

“What is the matter?” said the man who had caused Miss Pross to scream;

speaking in a vexed, abrupt voice (though in a low tone), and in

English.

“Oh, Solomon, dear Solomon!” cried Miss Pross, clapping her hands again.

“After not setting eyes upon you or hearing of you for so long a time,

do I find you here!”

“Don’t call me Solomon. Do you want to be the death of me?” asked the

man, in a furtive, frightened way.

“Brother, brother!” cried Miss Pross, bursting into tears. “Have I ever

been so hard with you that you ask me such a cruel question?”

“Then hold your meddlesome tongue,” said Solomon, “and come out, if you

want to speak to me. Pay for your wine, and come out. Who’s this man?”

Miss Pross, shaking her loving and dejected head at her by no means

affectionate brother, said through her tears, “Mr. Cruncher.”

“Let him come out too,” said Solomon. “Does he think me a ghost?”

Apparently, Mr. Cruncher did, to judge from his looks. He said not a

word, however, and Miss Pross, exploring the depths of her reticule

through her tears with great difficulty paid for her wine. As she did

so, Solomon turned to the followers of the Good Republican Brutus

of Antiquity, and offered a few words of explanation in the French

language, which caused them all to relapse into their former places and

pursuits.

“Now,” said Solomon, stopping at the dark street corner, “what do you

want?”

“How dreadfully unkind in a brother nothing has ever turned my love away

from!” cried Miss Pross, “to give me such a greeting, and show me no

affection.”

“There. Confound it! There,” said Solomon, making a dab at Miss Pross’s

lips with his own. “Now are you content?”

Miss Pross only shook her head and wept in silence.

“If you expect me to be surprised,” said her brother Solomon, “I am not

surprised; I knew you were here; I know of most people who are here. If

you really don’t want to endanger my existence--which I half believe you

do--go your ways as soon as possible, and let me go mine. I am busy. I

am an official.”

“My English brother Solomon,” mourned Miss Pross, casting up her

tear-fraught eyes, “that had the makings in him of one of the best and

greatest of men in his native country, an official among foreigners, and

such foreigners! I would almost sooner have seen the dear boy lying in

his--”

“I said so!” cried her brother, interrupting. “I knew it. You want to be

the death of me. I shall be rendered Suspected, by my own sister. Just

as I am getting on!”

“The gracious and merciful Heavens forbid!” cried Miss Pross. “Far

rather would I never see you again, dear Solomon, though I have ever

loved you truly, and ever shall. Say but one affectionate word to me,

and tell me there is nothing angry or estranged between us, and I will

detain you no longer.”

Good Miss Pross! As if the estrangement between them had come of any

culpability of hers. As if Mr. Lorry had not known it for a fact, years

ago, in the quiet corner in Soho, that this precious brother had spent

her money and left her!

He was saying the affectionate word, however, with a far more grudging

condescension and patronage than he could have shown if their relative

merits and positions had been reversed (which is invariably the case,

all the world over), when Mr. Cruncher, touching him on the shoulder,

hoarsely and unexpectedly interposed with the following singular

question:

“I say! Might I ask the favour? As to whether your name is John Solomon,

or Solomon John?”

The official turned towards him with sudden distrust. He had not

previously uttered a word.

“Come!” said Mr. Cruncher. “Speak out, you know.” (Which, by the way,

was more than he could do himself.) “John Solomon, or Solomon John? She

calls you Solomon, and she must know, being your sister. And \_I\_ know

you’re John, you know. Which of the two goes first? And regarding that

name of Pross, likewise. That warn’t your name over the water.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I don’t know all I mean, for I can’t call to mind what your name

was, over the water.”

“No?”

“No. But I’ll swear it was a name of two syllables.”

“Indeed?”

“Yes. T’other one’s was one syllable. I know you. You was a spy--witness

at the Bailey. What, in the name of the Father of Lies, own father to

yourself, was you called at that time?”

“Barsad,” said another voice, striking in.

“That’s the name for a thousand pound!” cried Jerry.

The speaker who struck in, was Sydney Carton. He had his hands behind

him under the skirts of his riding-coat, and he stood at Mr. Cruncher’s

elbow as negligently as he might have stood at the Old Bailey itself.

“Don’t be alarmed, my dear Miss Pross. I arrived at Mr. Lorry’s, to his

surprise, yesterday evening; we agreed that I would not present myself

elsewhere until all was well, or unless I could be useful; I present

myself here, to beg a little talk with your brother. I wish you had a

better employed brother than Mr. Barsad. I wish for your sake Mr. Barsad

was not a Sheep of the Prisons.”

Sheep was a cant word of the time for a spy, under the gaolers. The spy,

who was pale, turned paler, and asked him how he dared--

“I’ll tell you,” said Sydney. “I lighted on you, Mr. Barsad, coming out

of the prison of the Conciergerie while I was contemplating the walls,

an hour or more ago. You have a face to be remembered, and I remember

faces well. Made curious by seeing you in that connection, and having

a reason, to which you are no stranger, for associating you with

the misfortunes of a friend now very unfortunate, I walked in your

direction. I walked into the wine-shop here, close after you, and

sat near you. I had no difficulty in deducing from your unreserved

conversation, and the rumour openly going about among your admirers, the

nature of your calling. And gradually, what I had done at random, seemed

to shape itself into a purpose, Mr. Barsad.”

“What purpose?” the spy asked.

“It would be troublesome, and might be dangerous, to explain in the

street. Could you favour me, in confidence, with some minutes of your

company--at the office of Tellson’s Bank, for instance?”

“Under a threat?”

“Oh! Did I say that?”

“Then, why should I go there?”

“Really, Mr. Barsad, I can’t say, if you can’t.”

“Do you mean that you won’t say, sir?” the spy irresolutely asked.

“You apprehend me very clearly, Mr. Barsad. I won’t.”

Carton’s negligent recklessness of manner came powerfully in aid of his

quickness and skill, in such a business as he had in his secret mind,

and with such a man as he had to do with. His practised eye saw it, and

made the most of it.

“Now, I told you so,” said the spy, casting a reproachful look at his

sister; “if any trouble comes of this, it’s your doing.”

“Come, come, Mr. Barsad!” exclaimed Sydney. “Don’t be ungrateful.

But for my great respect for your sister, I might not have led up so

pleasantly to a little proposal that I wish to make for our mutual

satisfaction. Do you go with me to the Bank?”

“I’ll hear what you have got to say. Yes, I’ll go with you.”

“I propose that we first conduct your sister safely to the corner of her

own street. Let me take your arm, Miss Pross. This is not a good city,

at this time, for you to be out in, unprotected; and as your escort

knows Mr. Barsad, I will invite him to Mr. Lorry’s with us. Are we

ready? Come then!”

Miss Pross recalled soon afterwards, and to the end of her life

remembered, that as she pressed her hands on Sydney’s arm and looked up

in his face, imploring him to do no hurt to Solomon, there was a braced

purpose in the arm and a kind of inspiration in the eyes, which not only

contradicted his light manner, but changed and raised the man. She was

too much occupied then with fears for the brother who so little deserved

her affection, and with Sydney’s friendly reassurances, adequately to

heed what she observed.

They left her at the corner of the street, and Carton led the way to Mr.

Lorry’s, which was within a few minutes’ walk. John Barsad, or Solomon

Pross, walked at his side.

Mr. Lorry had just finished his dinner, and was sitting before a cheery

little log or two of fire--perhaps looking into their blaze for the

picture of that younger elderly gentleman from Tellson’s, who had looked

into the red coals at the Royal George at Dover, now a good many years

ago. He turned his head as they entered, and showed the surprise with

which he saw a stranger.

“Miss Pross’s brother, sir,” said Sydney. “Mr. Barsad.”

“Barsad?” repeated the old gentleman, “Barsad? I have an association

with the name--and with the face.”

“I told you you had a remarkable face, Mr. Barsad,” observed Carton,

coolly. “Pray sit down.”

As he took a chair himself, he supplied the link that Mr. Lorry wanted,

by saying to him with a frown, “Witness at that trial.” Mr. Lorry

immediately remembered, and regarded his new visitor with an undisguised

look of abhorrence.

“Mr. Barsad has been recognised by Miss Pross as the affectionate

brother you have heard of,” said Sydney, “and has acknowledged the

relationship. I pass to worse news. Darnay has been arrested again.”

Struck with consternation, the old gentleman exclaimed, “What do you

tell me! I left him safe and free within these two hours, and am about

to return to him!”

“Arrested for all that. When was it done, Mr. Barsad?”

“Just now, if at all.”

“Mr. Barsad is the best authority possible, sir,” said Sydney, “and I

have it from Mr. Barsad’s communication to a friend and brother Sheep

over a bottle of wine, that the arrest has taken place. He left the

messengers at the gate, and saw them admitted by the porter. There is no

earthly doubt that he is retaken.”

Mr. Lorry’s business eye read in the speaker’s face that it was loss

of time to dwell upon the point. Confused, but sensible that something

might depend on his presence of mind, he commanded himself, and was

silently attentive.

“Now, I trust,” said Sydney to him, “that the name and influence of

Doctor Manette may stand him in as good stead to-morrow--you said he

would be before the Tribunal again to-morrow, Mr. Barsad?--”

“Yes; I believe so.”

“--In as good stead to-morrow as to-day. But it may not be so. I own

to you, I am shaken, Mr. Lorry, by Doctor Manette’s not having had the

power to prevent this arrest.”

“He may not have known of it beforehand,” said Mr. Lorry.

“But that very circumstance would be alarming, when we remember how

identified he is with his son-in-law.”

“That’s true,” Mr. Lorry acknowledged, with his troubled hand at his

chin, and his troubled eyes on Carton.

“In short,” said Sydney, “this is a desperate time, when desperate games

are played for desperate stakes. Let the Doctor play the winning game; I

will play the losing one. No man’s life here is worth purchase. Any one

carried home by the people to-day, may be condemned tomorrow. Now, the

stake I have resolved to play for, in case of the worst, is a friend

in the Conciergerie. And the friend I purpose to myself to win, is Mr.

Barsad.”

“You need have good cards, sir,” said the spy.

“I’ll run them over. I’ll see what I hold,--Mr. Lorry, you know what a

brute I am; I wish you’d give me a little brandy.”

It was put before him, and he drank off a glassful--drank off another

glassful--pushed the bottle thoughtfully away.

“Mr. Barsad,” he went on, in the tone of one who really was looking

over a hand at cards: “Sheep of the prisons, emissary of Republican

committees, now turnkey, now prisoner, always spy and secret informer,

so much the more valuable here for being English that an Englishman

is less open to suspicion of subornation in those characters than a

Frenchman, represents himself to his employers under a false name.

That’s a very good card. Mr. Barsad, now in the employ of the republican

French government, was formerly in the employ of the aristocratic

English government, the enemy of France and freedom. That’s an excellent

card. Inference clear as day in this region of suspicion, that Mr.

Barsad, still in the pay of the aristocratic English government, is the

spy of Pitt, the treacherous foe of the Republic crouching in its bosom,

the English traitor and agent of all mischief so much spoken of and so

difficult to find. That’s a card not to be beaten. Have you followed my

hand, Mr. Barsad?”

“Not to understand your play,” returned the spy, somewhat uneasily.

“I play my Ace, Denunciation of Mr. Barsad to the nearest Section

Committee. Look over your hand, Mr. Barsad, and see what you have. Don’t

hurry.”

He drew the bottle near, poured out another glassful of brandy, and

drank it off. He saw that the spy was fearful of his drinking himself

into a fit state for the immediate denunciation of him. Seeing it, he

poured out and drank another glassful.

“Look over your hand carefully, Mr. Barsad. Take time.”

It was a poorer hand than he suspected. Mr. Barsad saw losing cards

in it that Sydney Carton knew nothing of. Thrown out of his honourable

employment in England, through too much unsuccessful hard swearing

there--not because he was not wanted there; our English reasons for

vaunting our superiority to secrecy and spies are of very modern

date--he knew that he had crossed the Channel, and accepted service in

France: first, as a tempter and an eavesdropper among his own countrymen

there: gradually, as a tempter and an eavesdropper among the natives. He

knew that under the overthrown government he had been a spy upon Saint

Antoine and Defarge’s wine-shop; had received from the watchful police

such heads of information concerning Doctor Manette’s imprisonment,

release, and history, as should serve him for an introduction to

familiar conversation with the Defarges; and tried them on Madame

Defarge, and had broken down with them signally. He always remembered

with fear and trembling, that that terrible woman had knitted when he

talked with her, and had looked ominously at him as her fingers moved.

He had since seen her, in the Section of Saint Antoine, over and over

again produce her knitted registers, and denounce people whose lives the

guillotine then surely swallowed up. He knew, as every one employed as

he was did, that he was never safe; that flight was impossible; that

he was tied fast under the shadow of the axe; and that in spite of

his utmost tergiversation and treachery in furtherance of the reigning

terror, a word might bring it down upon him. Once denounced, and on such

grave grounds as had just now been suggested to his mind, he foresaw

that the dreadful woman of whose unrelenting character he had seen many

proofs, would produce against him that fatal register, and would quash

his last chance of life. Besides that all secret men are men soon

terrified, here were surely cards enough of one black suit, to justify

the holder in growing rather livid as he turned them over.

“You scarcely seem to like your hand,” said Sydney, with the greatest

composure. “Do you play?”

“I think, sir,” said the spy, in the meanest manner, as he turned to Mr.

Lorry, “I may appeal to a gentleman of your years and benevolence, to

put it to this other gentleman, so much your junior, whether he can

under any circumstances reconcile it to his station to play that Ace

of which he has spoken. I admit that \_I\_ am a spy, and that it is

considered a discreditable station--though it must be filled by

somebody; but this gentleman is no spy, and why should he so demean

himself as to make himself one?”

“I play my Ace, Mr. Barsad,” said Carton, taking the answer on himself,

and looking at his watch, “without any scruple, in a very few minutes.”

“I should have hoped, gentlemen both,” said the spy, always striving to

hook Mr. Lorry into the discussion, “that your respect for my sister--”

“I could not better testify my respect for your sister than by finally

relieving her of her brother,” said Sydney Carton.

“You think not, sir?”

“I have thoroughly made up my mind about it.”

The smooth manner of the spy, curiously in dissonance with his

ostentatiously rough dress, and probably with his usual demeanour,

received such a check from the inscrutability of Carton,--who was a

mystery to wiser and honester men than he,--that it faltered here and

failed him. While he was at a loss, Carton said, resuming his former air

of contemplating cards:

“And indeed, now I think again, I have a strong impression that I

have another good card here, not yet enumerated. That friend and

fellow-Sheep, who spoke of himself as pasturing in the country prisons;

who was he?”

“French. You don’t know him,” said the spy, quickly.

“French, eh?” repeated Carton, musing, and not appearing to notice him

at all, though he echoed his word. “Well; he may be.”

“Is, I assure you,” said the spy; “though it’s not important.”

“Though it’s not important,” repeated Carton, in the same mechanical

way--“though it’s not important--No, it’s not important. No. Yet I know

the face.”

“I think not. I am sure not. It can’t be,” said the spy.

“It-can’t-be,” muttered Sydney Carton, retrospectively, and idling his

glass (which fortunately was a small one) again. “Can’t-be. Spoke good

French. Yet like a foreigner, I thought?”

“Provincial,” said the spy.

“No. Foreign!” cried Carton, striking his open hand on the table, as a

light broke clearly on his mind. “Cly! Disguised, but the same man. We

had that man before us at the Old Bailey.”

“Now, there you are hasty, sir,” said Barsad, with a smile that gave his

aquiline nose an extra inclination to one side; “there you really give

me an advantage over you. Cly (who I will unreservedly admit, at this

distance of time, was a partner of mine) has been dead several years. I

attended him in his last illness. He was buried in London, at the church

of Saint Pancras-in-the-Fields. His unpopularity with the blackguard

multitude at the moment prevented my following his remains, but I helped

to lay him in his coffin.”

Here, Mr. Lorry became aware, from where he sat, of a most remarkable

goblin shadow on the wall. Tracing it to its source, he discovered it

to be caused by a sudden extraordinary rising and stiffening of all the

risen and stiff hair on Mr. Cruncher’s head.

“Let us be reasonable,” said the spy, “and let us be fair. To show you

how mistaken you are, and what an unfounded assumption yours is, I will

lay before you a certificate of Cly’s burial, which I happened to have

carried in my pocket-book,” with a hurried hand he produced and opened

it, “ever since. There it is. Oh, look at it, look at it! You may take

it in your hand; it’s no forgery.”

Here, Mr. Lorry perceived the reflection on the wall to elongate, and

Mr. Cruncher rose and stepped forward. His hair could not have been more

violently on end, if it had been that moment dressed by the Cow with the

crumpled horn in the house that Jack built.

Unseen by the spy, Mr. Cruncher stood at his side, and touched him on

the shoulder like a ghostly bailiff.

“That there Roger Cly, master,” said Mr. Cruncher, with a taciturn and

iron-bound visage. “So \_you\_ put him in his coffin?”

“I did.”

“Who took him out of it?”

Barsad leaned back in his chair, and stammered, “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” said Mr. Cruncher, “that he warn’t never in it. No! Not he!

I’ll have my head took off, if he was ever in it.”

The spy looked round at the two gentlemen; they both looked in

unspeakable astonishment at Jerry.

“I tell you,” said Jerry, “that you buried paving-stones and earth in

that there coffin. Don’t go and tell me that you buried Cly. It was a

take in. Me and two more knows it.”

“How do you know it?”

“What’s that to you? Ecod!” growled Mr. Cruncher, “it’s you I have got a

old grudge again, is it, with your shameful impositions upon tradesmen!

I’d catch hold of your throat and choke you for half a guinea.”

Sydney Carton, who, with Mr. Lorry, had been lost in amazement at

this turn of the business, here requested Mr. Cruncher to moderate and

explain himself.

“At another time, sir,” he returned, evasively, “the present time is

ill-conwenient for explainin’. What I stand to, is, that he knows well

wot that there Cly was never in that there coffin. Let him say he was,

in so much as a word of one syllable, and I’ll either catch hold of his

throat and choke him for half a guinea;” Mr. Cruncher dwelt upon this as

quite a liberal offer; “or I’ll out and announce him.”

“Humph! I see one thing,” said Carton. “I hold another card, Mr. Barsad.

Impossible, here in raging Paris, with Suspicion filling the air, for

you to outlive denunciation, when you are in communication with another

aristocratic spy of the same antecedents as yourself, who, moreover, has

the mystery about him of having feigned death and come to life again!

A plot in the prisons, of the foreigner against the Republic. A strong

card--a certain Guillotine card! Do you play?”

“No!” returned the spy. “I throw up. I confess that we were so unpopular

with the outrageous mob, that I only got away from England at the risk

of being ducked to death, and that Cly was so ferreted up and down, that

he never would have got away at all but for that sham. Though how this

man knows it was a sham, is a wonder of wonders to me.”

“Never you trouble your head about this man,” retorted the contentious

Mr. Cruncher; “you’ll have trouble enough with giving your attention to

that gentleman. And look here! Once more!”--Mr. Cruncher could not

be restrained from making rather an ostentatious parade of his

liberality--“I’d catch hold of your throat and choke you for half a

guinea.”

The Sheep of the prisons turned from him to Sydney Carton, and said,

with more decision, “It has come to a point. I go on duty soon, and

can’t overstay my time. You told me you had a proposal; what is it?

Now, it is of no use asking too much of me. Ask me to do anything in my

office, putting my head in great extra danger, and I had better trust my

life to the chances of a refusal than the chances of consent. In short,

I should make that choice. You talk of desperation. We are all desperate

here. Remember! I may denounce you if I think proper, and I can swear my

way through stone walls, and so can others. Now, what do you want with

me?”

“Not very much. You are a turnkey at the Conciergerie?”

“I tell you once for all, there is no such thing as an escape possible,”

said the spy, firmly.

“Why need you tell me what I have not asked? You are a turnkey at the

Conciergerie?”

“I am sometimes.”

“You can be when you choose?”

“I can pass in and out when I choose.”

Sydney Carton filled another glass with brandy, poured it slowly out

upon the hearth, and watched it as it dropped. It being all spent, he

said, rising:

“So far, we have spoken before these two, because it was as well that

the merits of the cards should not rest solely between you and me. Come

into the dark room here, and let us have one final word alone.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Game Made

While Sydney Carton and the Sheep of the prisons were in the adjoining

dark room, speaking so low that not a sound was heard, Mr. Lorry looked

at Jerry in considerable doubt and mistrust. That honest tradesman’s

manner of receiving the look, did not inspire confidence; he changed the

leg on which he rested, as often as if he had fifty of those limbs,

and were trying them all; he examined his finger-nails with a very

questionable closeness of attention; and whenever Mr. Lorry’s eye caught

his, he was taken with that peculiar kind of short cough requiring the

hollow of a hand before it, which is seldom, if ever, known to be an

infirmity attendant on perfect openness of character.

“Jerry,” said Mr. Lorry. “Come here.”

Mr. Cruncher came forward sideways, with one of his shoulders in advance

of him.

“What have you been, besides a messenger?”

After some cogitation, accompanied with an intent look at his patron,

Mr. Cruncher conceived the luminous idea of replying, “Agicultooral

character.”

“My mind misgives me much,” said Mr. Lorry, angrily shaking a forefinger

at him, “that you have used the respectable and great house of Tellson’s

as a blind, and that you have had an unlawful occupation of an infamous

description. If you have, don’t expect me to befriend you when you

get back to England. If you have, don’t expect me to keep your secret.

Tellson’s shall not be imposed upon.”

“I hope, sir,” pleaded the abashed Mr. Cruncher, “that a gentleman like

yourself wot I’ve had the honour of odd jobbing till I’m grey at it,

would think twice about harming of me, even if it wos so--I don’t say it

is, but even if it wos. And which it is to be took into account that if

it wos, it wouldn’t, even then, be all o’ one side. There’d be two sides

to it. There might be medical doctors at the present hour, a picking

up their guineas where a honest tradesman don’t pick up his

fardens--fardens! no, nor yet his half fardens--half fardens! no, nor

yet his quarter--a banking away like smoke at Tellson’s, and a cocking

their medical eyes at that tradesman on the sly, a going in and going

out to their own carriages--ah! equally like smoke, if not more so.

Well, that ’ud be imposing, too, on Tellson’s. For you cannot sarse the

goose and not the gander. And here’s Mrs. Cruncher, or leastways wos

in the Old England times, and would be to-morrow, if cause given,

a floppin’ again the business to that degree as is ruinating--stark

ruinating! Whereas them medical doctors’ wives don’t flop--catch ’em at

it! Or, if they flop, their floppings goes in favour of more patients,

and how can you rightly have one without t’other? Then, wot with

undertakers, and wot with parish clerks, and wot with sextons, and wot

with private watchmen (all awaricious and all in it), a man wouldn’t get

much by it, even if it wos so. And wot little a man did get, would never

prosper with him, Mr. Lorry. He’d never have no good of it; he’d want

all along to be out of the line, if he, could see his way out, being

once in--even if it wos so.”

“Ugh!” cried Mr. Lorry, rather relenting, nevertheless, “I am shocked at

the sight of you.”

“Now, what I would humbly offer to you, sir,” pursued Mr. Cruncher,

“even if it wos so, which I don’t say it is--”

“Don’t prevaricate,” said Mr. Lorry.

“No, I will \_not\_, sir,” returned Mr. Crunches as if nothing were

further from his thoughts or practice--“which I don’t say it is--wot I

would humbly offer to you, sir, would be this. Upon that there stool, at

that there Bar, sets that there boy of mine, brought up and growed up to

be a man, wot will errand you, message you, general-light-job you, till

your heels is where your head is, if such should be your wishes. If it

wos so, which I still don’t say it is (for I will not prewaricate to

you, sir), let that there boy keep his father’s place, and take care of

his mother; don’t blow upon that boy’s father--do not do it, sir--and

let that father go into the line of the reg’lar diggin’, and make amends

for what he would have undug--if it wos so--by diggin’ of ’em in with

a will, and with conwictions respectin’ the futur’ keepin’ of ’em safe.

That, Mr. Lorry,” said Mr. Cruncher, wiping his forehead with his

arm, as an announcement that he had arrived at the peroration of his

discourse, “is wot I would respectfully offer to you, sir. A man don’t

see all this here a goin’ on dreadful round him, in the way of Subjects

without heads, dear me, plentiful enough fur to bring the price down

to porterage and hardly that, without havin’ his serious thoughts of

things. And these here would be mine, if it wos so, entreatin’ of you

fur to bear in mind that wot I said just now, I up and said in the good

cause when I might have kep’ it back.”

“That at least is true,” said Mr. Lorry. “Say no more now. It may be

that I shall yet stand your friend, if you deserve it, and repent in

action--not in words. I want no more words.”

Mr. Cruncher knuckled his forehead, as Sydney Carton and the spy

returned from the dark room. “Adieu, Mr. Barsad,” said the former; “our

arrangement thus made, you have nothing to fear from me.”

He sat down in a chair on the hearth, over against Mr. Lorry. When they

were alone, Mr. Lorry asked him what he had done?

“Not much. If it should go ill with the prisoner, I have ensured access

to him, once.”

Mr. Lorry’s countenance fell.

“It is all I could do,” said Carton. “To propose too much, would be

to put this man’s head under the axe, and, as he himself said, nothing

worse could happen to him if he were denounced. It was obviously the

weakness of the position. There is no help for it.”

“But access to him,” said Mr. Lorry, “if it should go ill before the

Tribunal, will not save him.”

“I never said it would.”

Mr. Lorry’s eyes gradually sought the fire; his sympathy with his

darling, and the heavy disappointment of his second arrest, gradually

weakened them; he was an old man now, overborne with anxiety of late,

and his tears fell.

“You are a good man and a true friend,” said Carton, in an altered

voice. “Forgive me if I notice that you are affected. I could not see my

father weep, and sit by, careless. And I could not respect your

sorrow more, if you were my father. You are free from that misfortune,

however.”

Though he said the last words, with a slip into his usual manner, there

was a true feeling and respect both in his tone and in his touch,

that Mr. Lorry, who had never seen the better side of him, was wholly

unprepared for. He gave him his hand, and Carton gently pressed it.

“To return to poor Darnay,” said Carton. “Don’t tell Her of this

interview, or this arrangement. It would not enable Her to go to see

him. She might think it was contrived, in case of the worse, to convey

to him the means of anticipating the sentence.”

Mr. Lorry had not thought of that, and he looked quickly at Carton to

see if it were in his mind. It seemed to be; he returned the look, and

evidently understood it.

“She might think a thousand things,” Carton said, “and any of them would

only add to her trouble. Don’t speak of me to her. As I said to you when

I first came, I had better not see her. I can put my hand out, to do any

little helpful work for her that my hand can find to do, without that.

You are going to her, I hope? She must be very desolate to-night.”

“I am going now, directly.”

“I am glad of that. She has such a strong attachment to you and reliance

on you. How does she look?”

“Anxious and unhappy, but very beautiful.”

“Ah!”

It was a long, grieving sound, like a sigh--almost like a sob. It

attracted Mr. Lorry’s eyes to Carton’s face, which was turned to the

fire. A light, or a shade (the old gentleman could not have said which),

passed from it as swiftly as a change will sweep over a hill-side on a

wild bright day, and he lifted his foot to put back one of the little

flaming logs, which was tumbling forward. He wore the white riding-coat

and top-boots, then in vogue, and the light of the fire touching their

light surfaces made him look very pale, with his long brown hair,

all untrimmed, hanging loose about him. His indifference to fire was

sufficiently remarkable to elicit a word of remonstrance from Mr. Lorry;

his boot was still upon the hot embers of the flaming log, when it had

broken under the weight of his foot.

“I forgot it,” he said.

Mr. Lorry’s eyes were again attracted to his face. Taking note of the

wasted air which clouded the naturally handsome features, and having

the expression of prisoners’ faces fresh in his mind, he was strongly

reminded of that expression.

“And your duties here have drawn to an end, sir?” said Carton, turning

to him.

“Yes. As I was telling you last night when Lucie came in so

unexpectedly, I have at length done all that I can do here. I hoped to

have left them in perfect safety, and then to have quitted Paris. I have

my Leave to Pass. I was ready to go.”

They were both silent.

“Yours is a long life to look back upon, sir?” said Carton, wistfully.

“I am in my seventy-eighth year.”

“You have been useful all your life; steadily and constantly occupied;

trusted, respected, and looked up to?”

“I have been a man of business, ever since I have been a man. Indeed, I

may say that I was a man of business when a boy.”

“See what a place you fill at seventy-eight. How many people will miss

you when you leave it empty!”

“A solitary old bachelor,” answered Mr. Lorry, shaking his head. “There

is nobody to weep for me.”

“How can you say that? Wouldn’t She weep for you? Wouldn’t her child?”

“Yes, yes, thank God. I didn’t quite mean what I said.”

“It \_is\_ a thing to thank God for; is it not?”

“Surely, surely.”

“If you could say, with truth, to your own solitary heart, to-night,

‘I have secured to myself the love and attachment, the gratitude or

respect, of no human creature; I have won myself a tender place in no

regard; I have done nothing good or serviceable to be remembered by!’

your seventy-eight years would be seventy-eight heavy curses; would they

not?”

“You say truly, Mr. Carton; I think they would be.”

Sydney turned his eyes again upon the fire, and, after a silence of a

few moments, said:

“I should like to ask you:--Does your childhood seem far off? Do the

days when you sat at your mother’s knee, seem days of very long ago?”

Responding to his softened manner, Mr. Lorry answered:

“Twenty years back, yes; at this time of my life, no. For, as I draw

closer and closer to the end, I travel in the circle, nearer and

nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind smoothings and

preparings of the way. My heart is touched now, by many remembrances

that had long fallen asleep, of my pretty young mother (and I so old!),

and by many associations of the days when what we call the World was not

so real with me, and my faults were not confirmed in me.”

“I understand the feeling!” exclaimed Carton, with a bright flush. “And

you are the better for it?”

“I hope so.”

Carton terminated the conversation here, by rising to help him on with

his outer coat; “But you,” said Mr. Lorry, reverting to the theme, “you

are young.”

“Yes,” said Carton. “I am not old, but my young way was never the way to

age. Enough of me.”

“And of me, I am sure,” said Mr. Lorry. “Are you going out?”

“I’ll walk with you to her gate. You know my vagabond and restless

habits. If I should prowl about the streets a long time, don’t be

uneasy; I shall reappear in the morning. You go to the Court to-morrow?”

“Yes, unhappily.”

“I shall be there, but only as one of the crowd. My Spy will find a

place for me. Take my arm, sir.”

Mr. Lorry did so, and they went down-stairs and out in the streets. A

few minutes brought them to Mr. Lorry’s destination. Carton left him

there; but lingered at a little distance, and turned back to the gate

again when it was shut, and touched it. He had heard of her going to

the prison every day. “She came out here,” he said, looking about him,

“turned this way, must have trod on these stones often. Let me follow in

her steps.”

It was ten o’clock at night when he stood before the prison of La Force,

where she had stood hundreds of times. A little wood-sawyer, having

closed his shop, was smoking his pipe at his shop-door.

“Good night, citizen,” said Sydney Carton, pausing in going by; for, the

man eyed him inquisitively.

“Good night, citizen.”

“How goes the Republic?”

“You mean the Guillotine. Not ill. Sixty-three to-day. We shall mount

to a hundred soon. Samson and his men complain sometimes, of being

exhausted. Ha, ha, ha! He is so droll, that Samson. Such a Barber!”

“Do you often go to see him--”

“Shave? Always. Every day. What a barber! You have seen him at work?”

“Never.”

“Go and see him when he has a good batch. Figure this to yourself,

citizen; he shaved the sixty-three to-day, in less than two pipes! Less

than two pipes. Word of honour!”

As the grinning little man held out the pipe he was smoking, to explain

how he timed the executioner, Carton was so sensible of a rising desire

to strike the life out of him, that he turned away.

“But you are not English,” said the wood-sawyer, “though you wear

English dress?”

“Yes,” said Carton, pausing again, and answering over his shoulder.

“You speak like a Frenchman.”

“I am an old student here.”

“Aha, a perfect Frenchman! Good night, Englishman.”

“Good night, citizen.”

“But go and see that droll dog,” the little man persisted, calling after

him. “And take a pipe with you!”

Sydney had not gone far out of sight, when he stopped in the middle of

the street under a glimmering lamp, and wrote with his pencil on a scrap

of paper. Then, traversing with the decided step of one who remembered

the way well, several dark and dirty streets--much dirtier than usual,

for the best public thoroughfares remained uncleansed in those times of

terror--he stopped at a chemist’s shop, which the owner was closing with

his own hands. A small, dim, crooked shop, kept in a tortuous, up-hill

thoroughfare, by a small, dim, crooked man.

Giving this citizen, too, good night, as he confronted him at his

counter, he laid the scrap of paper before him. “Whew!” the chemist

whistled softly, as he read it. “Hi! hi! hi!”

Sydney Carton took no heed, and the chemist said:

“For you, citizen?”

“For me.”

“You will be careful to keep them separate, citizen? You know the

consequences of mixing them?”

“Perfectly.”

Certain small packets were made and given to him. He put them, one by

one, in the breast of his inner coat, counted out the money for them,

and deliberately left the shop. “There is nothing more to do,” said he,

glancing upward at the moon, “until to-morrow. I can’t sleep.”

It was not a reckless manner, the manner in which he said these words

aloud under the fast-sailing clouds, nor was it more expressive of

negligence than defiance. It was the settled manner of a tired man, who

had wandered and struggled and got lost, but who at length struck into

his road and saw its end.

Long ago, when he had been famous among his earliest competitors as a

youth of great promise, he had followed his father to the grave. His

mother had died, years before. These solemn words, which had been

read at his father’s grave, arose in his mind as he went down the dark

streets, among the heavy shadows, with the moon and the clouds sailing

on high above him. “I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord:

he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and

whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.”

In a city dominated by the axe, alone at night, with natural sorrow

rising in him for the sixty-three who had been that day put to death,

and for to-morrow’s victims then awaiting their doom in the prisons,

and still of to-morrow’s and to-morrow’s, the chain of association that

brought the words home, like a rusty old ship’s anchor from the deep,

might have been easily found. He did not seek it, but repeated them and

went on.

With a solemn interest in the lighted windows where the people were

going to rest, forgetful through a few calm hours of the horrors

surrounding them; in the towers of the churches, where no prayers

were said, for the popular revulsion had even travelled that length

of self-destruction from years of priestly impostors, plunderers, and

profligates; in the distant burial-places, reserved, as they wrote upon

the gates, for Eternal Sleep; in the abounding gaols; and in the streets

along which the sixties rolled to a death which had become so common and

material, that no sorrowful story of a haunting Spirit ever arose among

the people out of all the working of the Guillotine; with a solemn

interest in the whole life and death of the city settling down to its

short nightly pause in fury; Sydney Carton crossed the Seine again for

the lighter streets.

Few coaches were abroad, for riders in coaches were liable to be

suspected, and gentility hid its head in red nightcaps, and put on heavy

shoes, and trudged. But, the theatres were all well filled, and the

people poured cheerfully out as he passed, and went chatting home. At

one of the theatre doors, there was a little girl with a mother, looking

for a way across the street through the mud. He carried the child over,

and before the timid arm was loosed from his neck asked her for a kiss.

“I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth

in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and

believeth in me, shall never die.”

Now, that the streets were quiet, and the night wore on, the words

were in the echoes of his feet, and were in the air. Perfectly calm

and steady, he sometimes repeated them to himself as he walked; but, he

heard them always.

The night wore out, and, as he stood upon the bridge listening to the

water as it splashed the river-walls of the Island of Paris, where the

picturesque confusion of houses and cathedral shone bright in the light

of the moon, the day came coldly, looking like a dead face out of the

sky. Then, the night, with the moon and the stars, turned pale and died,

and for a little while it seemed as if Creation were delivered over to

Death’s dominion.

But, the glorious sun, rising, seemed to strike those words, that burden

of the night, straight and warm to his heart in its long bright rays.

And looking along them, with reverently shaded eyes, a bridge of light

appeared to span the air between him and the sun, while the river

sparkled under it.

The strong tide, so swift, so deep, and certain, was like a congenial

friend, in the morning stillness. He walked by the stream, far from the

houses, and in the light and warmth of the sun fell asleep on the

bank. When he awoke and was afoot again, he lingered there yet a little

longer, watching an eddy that turned and turned purposeless, until the

stream absorbed it, and carried it on to the sea.--“Like me.”

A trading-boat, with a sail of the softened colour of a dead leaf, then

glided into his view, floated by him, and died away. As its silent track

in the water disappeared, the prayer that had broken up out of his heart

for a merciful consideration of all his poor blindnesses and errors,

ended in the words, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Mr. Lorry was already out when he got back, and it was easy to surmise

where the good old man was gone. Sydney Carton drank nothing but a

little coffee, ate some bread, and, having washed and changed to refresh

himself, went out to the place of trial.

The court was all astir and a-buzz, when the black sheep--whom many fell

away from in dread--pressed him into an obscure corner among the crowd.

Mr. Lorry was there, and Doctor Manette was there. She was there,

sitting beside her father.

When her husband was brought in, she turned a look upon him, so

sustaining, so encouraging, so full of admiring love and pitying

tenderness, yet so courageous for his sake, that it called the healthy

blood into his face, brightened his glance, and animated his heart. If

there had been any eyes to notice the influence of her look, on Sydney

Carton, it would have been seen to be the same influence exactly.

Before that unjust Tribunal, there was little or no order of procedure,

ensuring to any accused person any reasonable hearing. There could have

been no such Revolution, if all laws, forms, and ceremonies, had not

first been so monstrously abused, that the suicidal vengeance of the

Revolution was to scatter them all to the winds.

Every eye was turned to the jury. The same determined patriots and good

republicans as yesterday and the day before, and to-morrow and the day

after. Eager and prominent among them, one man with a craving face, and

his fingers perpetually hovering about his lips, whose appearance

gave great satisfaction to the spectators. A life-thirsting,

cannibal-looking, bloody-minded juryman, the Jacques Three of St.

Antoine. The whole jury, as a jury of dogs empannelled to try the deer.

Every eye then turned to the five judges and the public prosecutor.

No favourable leaning in that quarter to-day. A fell, uncompromising,

murderous business-meaning there. Every eye then sought some other eye

in the crowd, and gleamed at it approvingly; and heads nodded at one

another, before bending forward with a strained attention.

Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay. Released yesterday. Reaccused and

retaken yesterday. Indictment delivered to him last night. Suspected and

Denounced enemy of the Republic, Aristocrat, one of a family of tyrants,

one of a race proscribed, for that they had used their abolished

privileges to the infamous oppression of the people. Charles Evrémonde,

called Darnay, in right of such proscription, absolutely Dead in Law.

To this effect, in as few or fewer words, the Public Prosecutor.

The President asked, was the Accused openly denounced or secretly?

“Openly, President.”

“By whom?”

“Three voices. Ernest Defarge, wine-vendor of St. Antoine.”

“Good.”

“Thérèse Defarge, his wife.”

“Good.”

“Alexandre Manette, physician.”

A great uproar took place in the court, and in the midst of it, Doctor

Manette was seen, pale and trembling, standing where he had been seated.

“President, I indignantly protest to you that this is a forgery and

a fraud. You know the accused to be the husband of my daughter. My

daughter, and those dear to her, are far dearer to me than my life. Who

and where is the false conspirator who says that I denounce the husband

of my child!”

“Citizen Manette, be tranquil. To fail in submission to the authority of

the Tribunal would be to put yourself out of Law. As to what is dearer

to you than life, nothing can be so dear to a good citizen as the

Republic.”

Loud acclamations hailed this rebuke. The President rang his bell, and

with warmth resumed.

“If the Republic should demand of you the sacrifice of your child

herself, you would have no duty but to sacrifice her. Listen to what is

to follow. In the meanwhile, be silent!”

Frantic acclamations were again raised. Doctor Manette sat down, with

his eyes looking around, and his lips trembling; his daughter drew

closer to him. The craving man on the jury rubbed his hands together,

and restored the usual hand to his mouth.

Defarge was produced, when the court was quiet enough to admit of his

being heard, and rapidly expounded the story of the imprisonment, and of

his having been a mere boy in the Doctor’s service, and of the release,

and of the state of the prisoner when released and delivered to him.

This short examination followed, for the court was quick with its work.

“You did good service at the taking of the Bastille, citizen?”

“I believe so.”

Here, an excited woman screeched from the crowd: “You were one of the

best patriots there. Why not say so? You were a cannonier that day

there, and you were among the first to enter the accursed fortress when

it fell. Patriots, I speak the truth!”

It was The Vengeance who, amidst the warm commendations of the audience,

thus assisted the proceedings. The President rang his bell; but, The

Vengeance, warming with encouragement, shrieked, “I defy that bell!”

wherein she was likewise much commended.

“Inform the Tribunal of what you did that day within the Bastille,

citizen.”

“I knew,” said Defarge, looking down at his wife, who stood at the

bottom of the steps on which he was raised, looking steadily up at him;

“I knew that this prisoner, of whom I speak, had been confined in a cell

known as One Hundred and Five, North Tower. I knew it from himself. He

knew himself by no other name than One Hundred and Five, North Tower,

when he made shoes under my care. As I serve my gun that day, I resolve,

when the place shall fall, to examine that cell. It falls. I mount to

the cell, with a fellow-citizen who is one of the Jury, directed by a

gaoler. I examine it, very closely. In a hole in the chimney, where a

stone has been worked out and replaced, I find a written paper. This is

that written paper. I have made it my business to examine some specimens

of the writing of Doctor Manette. This is the writing of Doctor Manette.

I confide this paper, in the writing of Doctor Manette, to the hands of

the President.”

“Let it be read.”

In a dead silence and stillness--the prisoner under trial looking

lovingly at his wife, his wife only looking from him to look with

solicitude at her father, Doctor Manette keeping his eyes fixed on the

reader, Madame Defarge never taking hers from the prisoner, Defarge

never taking his from his feasting wife, and all the other eyes there

intent upon the Doctor, who saw none of them--the paper was read, as

follows.

CHAPTER X.

The Substance of the Shadow

“I, Alexandre Manette, unfortunate physician, native of Beauvais, and

afterwards resident in Paris, write this melancholy paper in my doleful

cell in the Bastille, during the last month of the year, 1767. I write

it at stolen intervals, under every difficulty. I design to secrete it

in the wall of the chimney, where I have slowly and laboriously made a

place of concealment for it. Some pitying hand may find it there, when I

and my sorrows are dust.

“These words are formed by the rusty iron point with which I write with

difficulty in scrapings of soot and charcoal from the chimney, mixed

with blood, in the last month of the tenth year of my captivity. Hope

has quite departed from my breast. I know from terrible warnings I have

noted in myself that my reason will not long remain unimpaired, but I

solemnly declare that I am at this time in the possession of my right

mind--that my memory is exact and circumstantial--and that I write the

truth as I shall answer for these my last recorded words, whether they

be ever read by men or not, at the Eternal Judgment-seat.

“One cloudy moonlight night, in the third week of December (I think the

twenty-second of the month) in the year 1757, I was walking on a retired

part of the quay by the Seine for the refreshment of the frosty air,

at an hour’s distance from my place of residence in the Street of the

School of Medicine, when a carriage came along behind me, driven very

fast. As I stood aside to let that carriage pass, apprehensive that it

might otherwise run me down, a head was put out at the window, and a

voice called to the driver to stop.

“The carriage stopped as soon as the driver could rein in his horses,

and the same voice called to me by my name. I answered. The carriage

was then so far in advance of me that two gentlemen had time to open the

door and alight before I came up with it.

“I observed that they were both wrapped in cloaks, and appeared to

conceal themselves. As they stood side by side near the carriage door,

I also observed that they both looked of about my own age, or rather

younger, and that they were greatly alike, in stature, manner, voice,

and (as far as I could see) face too.

“‘You are Doctor Manette?’ said one.

“I am.”

“‘Doctor Manette, formerly of Beauvais,’ said the other; ‘the young

physician, originally an expert surgeon, who within the last year or two

has made a rising reputation in Paris?’

“‘Gentlemen,’ I returned, ‘I am that Doctor Manette of whom you speak so

graciously.’

“‘We have been to your residence,’ said the first, ‘and not being

so fortunate as to find you there, and being informed that you were

probably walking in this direction, we followed, in the hope of

overtaking you. Will you please to enter the carriage?’

“The manner of both was imperious, and they both moved, as these words

were spoken, so as to place me between themselves and the carriage door.

They were armed. I was not.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said I, ‘pardon me; but I usually inquire who does me

the honour to seek my assistance, and what is the nature of the case to

which I am summoned.’

“The reply to this was made by him who had spoken second. ‘Doctor,

your clients are people of condition. As to the nature of the case,

our confidence in your skill assures us that you will ascertain it for

yourself better than we can describe it. Enough. Will you please to

enter the carriage?’

“I could do nothing but comply, and I entered it in silence. They both

entered after me--the last springing in, after putting up the steps. The

carriage turned about, and drove on at its former speed.

“I repeat this conversation exactly as it occurred. I have no doubt that

it is, word for word, the same. I describe everything exactly as it took

place, constraining my mind not to wander from the task. Where I make

the broken marks that follow here, I leave off for the time, and put my

paper in its hiding-place.

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“The carriage left the streets behind, passed the North Barrier, and

emerged upon the country road. At two-thirds of a league from the

Barrier--I did not estimate the distance at that time, but afterwards

when I traversed it--it struck out of the main avenue, and presently

stopped at a solitary house, We all three alighted, and walked, by

a damp soft footpath in a garden where a neglected fountain had

overflowed, to the door of the house. It was not opened immediately, in

answer to the ringing of the bell, and one of my two conductors struck

the man who opened it, with his heavy riding glove, across the face.

“There was nothing in this action to attract my particular attention,

for I had seen common people struck more commonly than dogs. But, the

other of the two, being angry likewise, struck the man in like manner

with his arm; the look and bearing of the brothers were then so exactly

alike, that I then first perceived them to be twin brothers.

“From the time of our alighting at the outer gate (which we found

locked, and which one of the brothers had opened to admit us, and had

relocked), I had heard cries proceeding from an upper chamber. I was

conducted to this chamber straight, the cries growing louder as we

ascended the stairs, and I found a patient in a high fever of the brain,

lying on a bed.

“The patient was a woman of great beauty, and young; assuredly not much

past twenty. Her hair was torn and ragged, and her arms were bound to

her sides with sashes and handkerchiefs. I noticed that these bonds were

all portions of a gentleman’s dress. On one of them, which was a fringed

scarf for a dress of ceremony, I saw the armorial bearings of a Noble,

and the letter E.

“I saw this, within the first minute of my contemplation of the patient;

for, in her restless strivings she had turned over on her face on the

edge of the bed, had drawn the end of the scarf into her mouth, and was

in danger of suffocation. My first act was to put out my hand to relieve

her breathing; and in moving the scarf aside, the embroidery in the

corner caught my sight.

“I turned her gently over, placed my hands upon her breast to calm her

and keep her down, and looked into her face. Her eyes were dilated and

wild, and she constantly uttered piercing shrieks, and repeated the

words, ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!’ and then counted up to

twelve, and said, ‘Hush!’ For an instant, and no more, she would pause

to listen, and then the piercing shrieks would begin again, and she

would repeat the cry, ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!’ and

would count up to twelve, and say, ‘Hush!’ There was no variation in the

order, or the manner. There was no cessation, but the regular moment’s

pause, in the utterance of these sounds.

“‘How long,’ I asked, ‘has this lasted?’

“To distinguish the brothers, I will call them the elder and the

younger; by the elder, I mean him who exercised the most authority. It

was the elder who replied, ‘Since about this hour last night.’

“‘She has a husband, a father, and a brother?’

“‘A brother.’

“‘I do not address her brother?’

“He answered with great contempt, ‘No.’

“‘She has some recent association with the number twelve?’

“The younger brother impatiently rejoined, ‘With twelve o’clock?’

“‘See, gentlemen,’ said I, still keeping my hands upon her breast, ‘how

useless I am, as you have brought me! If I had known what I was coming

to see, I could have come provided. As it is, time must be lost. There

are no medicines to be obtained in this lonely place.’

“The elder brother looked to the younger, who said haughtily, ‘There is

a case of medicines here;’ and brought it from a closet, and put it on

the table.

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“I opened some of the bottles, smelt them, and put the stoppers to my

lips. If I had wanted to use anything save narcotic medicines that were

poisons in themselves, I would not have administered any of those.

“‘Do you doubt them?’ asked the younger brother.

“‘You see, monsieur, I am going to use them,’ I replied, and said no

more.

“I made the patient swallow, with great difficulty, and after many

efforts, the dose that I desired to give. As I intended to repeat it

after a while, and as it was necessary to watch its influence, I then

sat down by the side of the bed. There was a timid and suppressed woman

in attendance (wife of the man down-stairs), who had retreated into

a corner. The house was damp and decayed, indifferently

furnished--evidently, recently occupied and temporarily used. Some thick

old hangings had been nailed up before the windows, to deaden the

sound of the shrieks. They continued to be uttered in their regular

succession, with the cry, ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!’ the

counting up to twelve, and ‘Hush!’ The frenzy was so violent, that I had

not unfastened the bandages restraining the arms; but, I had looked to

them, to see that they were not painful. The only spark of encouragement

in the case, was, that my hand upon the sufferer’s breast had this much

soothing influence, that for minutes at a time it tranquillised the

figure. It had no effect upon the cries; no pendulum could be more

regular.

“For the reason that my hand had this effect (I assume), I had sat by

the side of the bed for half an hour, with the two brothers looking on,

before the elder said:

“‘There is another patient.’

“I was startled, and asked, ‘Is it a pressing case?’

“‘You had better see,’ he carelessly answered; and took up a light.

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“The other patient lay in a back room across a second staircase, which

was a species of loft over a stable. There was a low plastered ceiling

to a part of it; the rest was open, to the ridge of the tiled roof, and

there were beams across. Hay and straw were stored in that portion of

the place, fagots for firing, and a heap of apples in sand. I had to

pass through that part, to get at the other. My memory is circumstantial

and unshaken. I try it with these details, and I see them all, in

this my cell in the Bastille, near the close of the tenth year of my

captivity, as I saw them all that night.

“On some hay on the ground, with a cushion thrown under his head, lay a

handsome peasant boy--a boy of not more than seventeen at the most.

He lay on his back, with his teeth set, his right hand clenched on his

breast, and his glaring eyes looking straight upward. I could not see

where his wound was, as I kneeled on one knee over him; but, I could see

that he was dying of a wound from a sharp point.

“‘I am a doctor, my poor fellow,’ said I. ‘Let me examine it.’

“‘I do not want it examined,’ he answered; ‘let it be.’

“It was under his hand, and I soothed him to let me move his hand away.

The wound was a sword-thrust, received from twenty to twenty-four hours

before, but no skill could have saved him if it had been looked to

without delay. He was then dying fast. As I turned my eyes to the elder

brother, I saw him looking down at this handsome boy whose life was

ebbing out, as if he were a wounded bird, or hare, or rabbit; not at all

as if he were a fellow-creature.

“‘How has this been done, monsieur?’ said I.

“‘A crazed young common dog! A serf! Forced my brother to draw upon him,

and has fallen by my brother’s sword--like a gentleman.’

“There was no touch of pity, sorrow, or kindred humanity, in this

answer. The speaker seemed to acknowledge that it was inconvenient to

have that different order of creature dying there, and that it would

have been better if he had died in the usual obscure routine of his

vermin kind. He was quite incapable of any compassionate feeling about

the boy, or about his fate.

“The boy’s eyes had slowly moved to him as he had spoken, and they now

slowly moved to me.

“‘Doctor, they are very proud, these Nobles; but we common dogs are

proud too, sometimes. They plunder us, outrage us, beat us, kill us; but

we have a little pride left, sometimes. She--have you seen her, Doctor?’

“The shrieks and the cries were audible there, though subdued by the

distance. He referred to them, as if she were lying in our presence.

“I said, ‘I have seen her.’

“‘She is my sister, Doctor. They have had their shameful rights, these

Nobles, in the modesty and virtue of our sisters, many years, but we

have had good girls among us. I know it, and have heard my father say

so. She was a good girl. She was betrothed to a good young man, too: a

tenant of his. We were all tenants of his--that man’s who stands there.

The other is his brother, the worst of a bad race.’

“It was with the greatest difficulty that the boy gathered bodily force

to speak; but, his spirit spoke with a dreadful emphasis.

“‘We were so robbed by that man who stands there, as all we common dogs

are by those superior Beings--taxed by him without mercy, obliged to

work for him without pay, obliged to grind our corn at his mill, obliged

to feed scores of his tame birds on our wretched crops, and forbidden

for our lives to keep a single tame bird of our own, pillaged and

plundered to that degree that when we chanced to have a bit of meat, we

ate it in fear, with the door barred and the shutters closed, that his

people should not see it and take it from us--I say, we were so robbed,

and hunted, and were made so poor, that our father told us it was a

dreadful thing to bring a child into the world, and that what we should

most pray for, was, that our women might be barren and our miserable

race die out!’

“I had never before seen the sense of being oppressed, bursting forth

like a fire. I had supposed that it must be latent in the people

somewhere; but, I had never seen it break out, until I saw it in the

dying boy.

“‘Nevertheless, Doctor, my sister married. He was ailing at that time,

poor fellow, and she married her lover, that she might tend and comfort

him in our cottage--our dog-hut, as that man would call it. She had not

been married many weeks, when that man’s brother saw her and admired

her, and asked that man to lend her to him--for what are husbands among

us! He was willing enough, but my sister was good and virtuous, and

hated his brother with a hatred as strong as mine. What did the two

then, to persuade her husband to use his influence with her, to make her

willing?’

“The boy’s eyes, which had been fixed on mine, slowly turned to the

looker-on, and I saw in the two faces that all he said was true. The two

opposing kinds of pride confronting one another, I can see, even in this

Bastille; the gentleman’s, all negligent indifference; the peasant’s, all

trodden-down sentiment, and passionate revenge.

“‘You know, Doctor, that it is among the Rights of these Nobles to

harness us common dogs to carts, and drive us. They so harnessed him and

drove him. You know that it is among their Rights to keep us in their

grounds all night, quieting the frogs, in order that their noble sleep

may not be disturbed. They kept him out in the unwholesome mists at

night, and ordered him back into his harness in the day. But he was

not persuaded. No! Taken out of harness one day at noon, to feed--if he

could find food--he sobbed twelve times, once for every stroke of the

bell, and died on her bosom.’

“Nothing human could have held life in the boy but his determination to

tell all his wrong. He forced back the gathering shadows of death, as

he forced his clenched right hand to remain clenched, and to cover his

wound.

“‘Then, with that man’s permission and even with his aid, his

brother took her away; in spite of what I know she must have told his

brother--and what that is, will not be long unknown to you, Doctor, if

it is now--his brother took her away--for his pleasure and diversion,

for a little while. I saw her pass me on the road. When I took the

tidings home, our father’s heart burst; he never spoke one of the words

that filled it. I took my young sister (for I have another) to a place

beyond the reach of this man, and where, at least, she will never be

\_his\_ vassal. Then, I tracked the brother here, and last night climbed

in--a common dog, but sword in hand.--Where is the loft window? It was

somewhere here?’

“The room was darkening to his sight; the world was narrowing around

him. I glanced about me, and saw that the hay and straw were trampled

over the floor, as if there had been a struggle.

“‘She heard me, and ran in. I told her not to come near us till he was

dead. He came in and first tossed me some pieces of money; then struck

at me with a whip. But I, though a common dog, so struck at him as to

make him draw. Let him break into as many pieces as he will, the sword

that he stained with my common blood; he drew to defend himself--thrust

at me with all his skill for his life.’

“My glance had fallen, but a few moments before, on the fragments of

a broken sword, lying among the hay. That weapon was a gentleman’s. In

another place, lay an old sword that seemed to have been a soldier’s.

“‘Now, lift me up, Doctor; lift me up. Where is he?’

“‘He is not here,’ I said, supporting the boy, and thinking that he

referred to the brother.

“‘He! Proud as these nobles are, he is afraid to see me. Where is the

man who was here? Turn my face to him.’

“I did so, raising the boy’s head against my knee. But, invested for the

moment with extraordinary power, he raised himself completely: obliging

me to rise too, or I could not have still supported him.

“‘Marquis,’ said the boy, turned to him with his eyes opened wide, and

his right hand raised, ‘in the days when all these things are to be

answered for, I summon you and yours, to the last of your bad race, to

answer for them. I mark this cross of blood upon you, as a sign that

I do it. In the days when all these things are to be answered for,

I summon your brother, the worst of the bad race, to answer for them

separately. I mark this cross of blood upon him, as a sign that I do

it.’

“Twice, he put his hand to the wound in his breast, and with his

forefinger drew a cross in the air. He stood for an instant with the

finger yet raised, and as it dropped, he dropped with it, and I laid him

down dead.

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“When I returned to the bedside of the young woman, I found her raving

in precisely the same order of continuity. I knew that this might last

for many hours, and that it would probably end in the silence of the

grave.

“I repeated the medicines I had given her, and I sat at the side of

the bed until the night was far advanced. She never abated the piercing

quality of her shrieks, never stumbled in the distinctness or the order

of her words. They were always ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven,

twelve. Hush!’

“This lasted twenty-six hours from the time when I first saw her. I had

come and gone twice, and was again sitting by her, when she began to

falter. I did what little could be done to assist that opportunity, and

by-and-bye she sank into a lethargy, and lay like the dead.

“It was as if the wind and rain had lulled at last, after a long and

fearful storm. I released her arms, and called the woman to assist me to

compose her figure and the dress she had torn. It was then that I knew

her condition to be that of one in whom the first expectations of being

a mother have arisen; and it was then that I lost the little hope I had

had of her.

“‘Is she dead?’ asked the Marquis, whom I will still describe as the

elder brother, coming booted into the room from his horse.

“‘Not dead,’ said I; ‘but like to die.’

“‘What strength there is in these common bodies!’ he said, looking down

at her with some curiosity.

“‘There is prodigious strength,’ I answered him, ‘in sorrow and

despair.’

“He first laughed at my words, and then frowned at them. He moved a

chair with his foot near to mine, ordered the woman away, and said in a

subdued voice,

“‘Doctor, finding my brother in this difficulty with these hinds, I

recommended that your aid should be invited. Your reputation is high,

and, as a young man with your fortune to make, you are probably mindful

of your interest. The things that you see here, are things to be seen,

and not spoken of.’

“I listened to the patient’s breathing, and avoided answering.

“‘Do you honour me with your attention, Doctor?’

“‘Monsieur,’ said I, ‘in my profession, the communications of patients

are always received in confidence.’ I was guarded in my answer, for I

was troubled in my mind with what I had heard and seen.

“Her breathing was so difficult to trace, that I carefully tried the

pulse and the heart. There was life, and no more. Looking round as I

resumed my seat, I found both the brothers intent upon me.

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“I write with so much difficulty, the cold is so severe, I am so

fearful of being detected and consigned to an underground cell and total

darkness, that I must abridge this narrative. There is no confusion or

failure in my memory; it can recall, and could detail, every word that

was ever spoken between me and those brothers.

“She lingered for a week. Towards the last, I could understand some few

syllables that she said to me, by placing my ear close to her lips. She

asked me where she was, and I told her; who I was, and I told her. It

was in vain that I asked her for her family name. She faintly shook her

head upon the pillow, and kept her secret, as the boy had done.

“I had no opportunity of asking her any question, until I had told the

brothers she was sinking fast, and could not live another day. Until

then, though no one was ever presented to her consciousness save the

woman and myself, one or other of them had always jealously sat behind

the curtain at the head of the bed when I was there. But when it came to

that, they seemed careless what communication I might hold with her; as

if--the thought passed through my mind--I were dying too.

“I always observed that their pride bitterly resented the younger

brother’s (as I call him) having crossed swords with a peasant, and that

peasant a boy. The only consideration that appeared to affect the mind

of either of them was the consideration that this was highly degrading

to the family, and was ridiculous. As often as I caught the younger

brother’s eyes, their expression reminded me that he disliked me deeply,

for knowing what I knew from the boy. He was smoother and more polite to

me than the elder; but I saw this. I also saw that I was an incumbrance

in the mind of the elder, too.

“My patient died, two hours before midnight--at a time, by my watch,

answering almost to the minute when I had first seen her. I was alone

with her, when her forlorn young head drooped gently on one side, and

all her earthly wrongs and sorrows ended.

“The brothers were waiting in a room down-stairs, impatient to ride

away. I had heard them, alone at the bedside, striking their boots with

their riding-whips, and loitering up and down.

“‘At last she is dead?’ said the elder, when I went in.

“‘She is dead,’ said I.

“‘I congratulate you, my brother,’ were his words as he turned round.

“He had before offered me money, which I had postponed taking. He now

gave me a rouleau of gold. I took it from his hand, but laid it on

the table. I had considered the question, and had resolved to accept

nothing.

“‘Pray excuse me,’ said I. ‘Under the circumstances, no.’

“They exchanged looks, but bent their heads to me as I bent mine to

them, and we parted without another word on either side.

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“I am weary, weary, weary--worn down by misery. I cannot read what I

have written with this gaunt hand.

“Early in the morning, the rouleau of gold was left at my door in a

little box, with my name on the outside. From the first, I had anxiously

considered what I ought to do. I decided, that day, to write privately

to the Minister, stating the nature of the two cases to which I had been

summoned, and the place to which I had gone: in effect, stating all the

circumstances. I knew what Court influence was, and what the immunities

of the Nobles were, and I expected that the matter would never be

heard of; but, I wished to relieve my own mind. I had kept the matter a

profound secret, even from my wife; and this, too, I resolved to state

in my letter. I had no apprehension whatever of my real danger; but

I was conscious that there might be danger for others, if others were

compromised by possessing the knowledge that I possessed.

“I was much engaged that day, and could not complete my letter that

night. I rose long before my usual time next morning to finish it.

It was the last day of the year. The letter was lying before me just

completed, when I was told that a lady waited, who wished to see me.

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“I am growing more and more unequal to the task I have set myself. It is

so cold, so dark, my senses are so benumbed, and the gloom upon me is so

dreadful.

“The lady was young, engaging, and handsome, but not marked for long

life. She was in great agitation. She presented herself to me as the

wife of the Marquis St. Evrémonde. I connected the title by which the

boy had addressed the elder brother, with the initial letter embroidered

on the scarf, and had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that I

had seen that nobleman very lately.

“My memory is still accurate, but I cannot write the words of our

conversation. I suspect that I am watched more closely than I was, and I

know not at what times I may be watched. She had in part suspected, and

in part discovered, the main facts of the cruel story, of her husband’s

share in it, and my being resorted to. She did not know that the girl

was dead. Her hope had been, she said in great distress, to show her,

in secret, a woman’s sympathy. Her hope had been to avert the wrath of

Heaven from a House that had long been hateful to the suffering many.

“She had reasons for believing that there was a young sister living, and

her greatest desire was, to help that sister. I could tell her nothing

but that there was such a sister; beyond that, I knew nothing. Her

inducement to come to me, relying on my confidence, had been the hope

that I could tell her the name and place of abode. Whereas, to this

wretched hour I am ignorant of both.

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“These scraps of paper fail me. One was taken from me, with a warning,

yesterday. I must finish my record to-day.

“She was a good, compassionate lady, and not happy in her marriage. How

could she be! The brother distrusted and disliked her, and his influence

was all opposed to her; she stood in dread of him, and in dread of her

husband too. When I handed her down to the door, there was a child, a

pretty boy from two to three years old, in her carriage.

“‘For his sake, Doctor,’ she said, pointing to him in tears, ‘I would do

all I can to make what poor amends I can. He will never prosper in his

inheritance otherwise. I have a presentiment that if no other innocent

atonement is made for this, it will one day be required of him. What

I have left to call my own--it is little beyond the worth of a few

jewels--I will make it the first charge of his life to bestow, with the

compassion and lamenting of his dead mother, on this injured family, if

the sister can be discovered.’

“She kissed the boy, and said, caressing him, ‘It is for thine own dear

sake. Thou wilt be faithful, little Charles?’ The child answered her

bravely, ‘Yes!’ I kissed her hand, and she took him in her arms, and

went away caressing him. I never saw her more.

“As she had mentioned her husband’s name in the faith that I knew it,

I added no mention of it to my letter. I sealed my letter, and, not

trusting it out of my own hands, delivered it myself that day.

“That night, the last night of the year, towards nine o’clock, a man in

a black dress rang at my gate, demanded to see me, and softly followed

my servant, Ernest Defarge, a youth, up-stairs. When my servant came

into the room where I sat with my wife--O my wife, beloved of my heart!

My fair young English wife!--we saw the man, who was supposed to be at

the gate, standing silent behind him.

“An urgent case in the Rue St. Honore, he said. It would not detain me,

he had a coach in waiting.

“It brought me here, it brought me to my grave. When I was clear of the

house, a black muffler was drawn tightly over my mouth from behind, and

my arms were pinioned. The two brothers crossed the road from a dark

corner, and identified me with a single gesture. The Marquis took from

his pocket the letter I had written, showed it me, burnt it in the light

of a lantern that was held, and extinguished the ashes with his foot.

Not a word was spoken. I was brought here, I was brought to my living

grave.

“If it had pleased \_God\_ to put it in the hard heart of either of the

brothers, in all these frightful years, to grant me any tidings of

my dearest wife--so much as to let me know by a word whether alive or

dead--I might have thought that He had not quite abandoned them. But,

now I believe that the mark of the red cross is fatal to them, and that

they have no part in His mercies. And them and their descendants, to the

last of their race, I, Alexandre Manette, unhappy prisoner, do this last

night of the year 1767, in my unbearable agony, denounce to the times

when all these things shall be answered for. I denounce them to Heaven

and to earth.”

A terrible sound arose when the reading of this document was done. A

sound of craving and eagerness that had nothing articulate in it but

blood. The narrative called up the most revengeful passions of the time,

and there was not a head in the nation but must have dropped before it.

Little need, in presence of that tribunal and that auditory, to show

how the Defarges had not made the paper public, with the other captured

Bastille memorials borne in procession, and had kept it, biding their

time. Little need to show that this detested family name had long been

anathematised by Saint Antoine, and was wrought into the fatal register.

The man never trod ground whose virtues and services would have

sustained him in that place that day, against such denunciation.

And all the worse for the doomed man, that the denouncer was a

well-known citizen, his own attached friend, the father of his wife. One

of the frenzied aspirations of the populace was, for imitations of

the questionable public virtues of antiquity, and for sacrifices and

self-immolations on the people’s altar. Therefore when the President

said (else had his own head quivered on his shoulders), that the good

physician of the Republic would deserve better still of the Republic by

rooting out an obnoxious family of Aristocrats, and would doubtless feel

a sacred glow and joy in making his daughter a widow and her child an

orphan, there was wild excitement, patriotic fervour, not a touch of

human sympathy.

“Much influence around him, has that Doctor?” murmured Madame Defarge,

smiling to The Vengeance. “Save him now, my Doctor, save him!”

At every juryman’s vote, there was a roar. Another and another. Roar and

roar.

Unanimously voted. At heart and by descent an Aristocrat, an enemy

of the Republic, a notorious oppressor of the People. Back to the

Conciergerie, and Death within four-and-twenty hours!

CHAPTER XI.

Dusk

The wretched wife of the innocent man thus doomed to die, fell under

the sentence, as if she had been mortally stricken. But, she uttered no

sound; and so strong was the voice within her, representing that it was

she of all the world who must uphold him in his misery and not augment

it, that it quickly raised her, even from that shock.

The Judges having to take part in a public demonstration out of doors,

the Tribunal adjourned. The quick noise and movement of the court’s

emptying itself by many passages had not ceased, when Lucie stood

stretching out her arms towards her husband, with nothing in her face

but love and consolation.

“If I might touch him! If I might embrace him once! O, good citizens, if

you would have so much compassion for us!”

There was but a gaoler left, along with two of the four men who had

taken him last night, and Barsad. The people had all poured out to the

show in the streets. Barsad proposed to the rest, “Let her embrace

him then; it is but a moment.” It was silently acquiesced in, and they

passed her over the seats in the hall to a raised place, where he, by

leaning over the dock, could fold her in his arms.

“Farewell, dear darling of my soul. My parting blessing on my love. We

shall meet again, where the weary are at rest!”

They were her husband’s words, as he held her to his bosom.

“I can bear it, dear Charles. I am supported from above: don’t suffer

for me. A parting blessing for our child.”

“I send it to her by you. I kiss her by you. I say farewell to her by

you.”

“My husband. No! A moment!” He was tearing himself apart from her.

“We shall not be separated long. I feel that this will break my heart

by-and-bye; but I will do my duty while I can, and when I leave her, God

will raise up friends for her, as He did for me.”

Her father had followed her, and would have fallen on his knees to both

of them, but that Darnay put out a hand and seized him, crying:

“No, no! What have you done, what have you done, that you should kneel

to us! We know now, what a struggle you made of old. We know, now what

you underwent when you suspected my descent, and when you knew it. We

know now, the natural antipathy you strove against, and conquered, for

her dear sake. We thank you with all our hearts, and all our love and

duty. Heaven be with you!”

Her father’s only answer was to draw his hands through his white hair,

and wring them with a shriek of anguish.

“It could not be otherwise,” said the prisoner. “All things have worked

together as they have fallen out. It was the always-vain endeavour to

discharge my poor mother’s trust that first brought my fatal presence

near you. Good could never come of such evil, a happier end was not in

nature to so unhappy a beginning. Be comforted, and forgive me. Heaven

bless you!”

As he was drawn away, his wife released him, and stood looking after him

with her hands touching one another in the attitude of prayer, and

with a radiant look upon her face, in which there was even a comforting

smile. As he went out at the prisoners’ door, she turned, laid her head

lovingly on her father’s breast, tried to speak to him, and fell at his

feet.

Then, issuing from the obscure corner from which he had never moved,

Sydney Carton came and took her up. Only her father and Mr. Lorry were

with her. His arm trembled as it raised her, and supported her head.

Yet, there was an air about him that was not all of pity--that had a

flush of pride in it.

“Shall I take her to a coach? I shall never feel her weight.”

He carried her lightly to the door, and laid her tenderly down in a

coach. Her father and their old friend got into it, and he took his seat

beside the driver.

When they arrived at the gateway where he had paused in the dark not

many hours before, to picture to himself on which of the rough stones of

the street her feet had trodden, he lifted her again, and carried her up

the staircase to their rooms. There, he laid her down on a couch, where

her child and Miss Pross wept over her.

“Don’t recall her to herself,” he said, softly, to the latter, “she is

better so. Don’t revive her to consciousness, while she only faints.”

“Oh, Carton, Carton, dear Carton!” cried little Lucie, springing up and

throwing her arms passionately round him, in a burst of grief. “Now that

you have come, I think you will do something to help mamma, something to

save papa! O, look at her, dear Carton! Can you, of all the people who

love her, bear to see her so?”

He bent over the child, and laid her blooming cheek against his face. He

put her gently from him, and looked at her unconscious mother.

“Before I go,” he said, and paused--“I may kiss her?”

It was remembered afterwards that when he bent down and touched her face

with his lips, he murmured some words. The child, who was nearest to

him, told them afterwards, and told her grandchildren when she was a

handsome old lady, that she heard him say, “A life you love.”

When he had gone out into the next room, he turned suddenly on Mr. Lorry

and her father, who were following, and said to the latter:

“You had great influence but yesterday, Doctor Manette; let it at least

be tried. These judges, and all the men in power, are very friendly to

you, and very recognisant of your services; are they not?”

“Nothing connected with Charles was concealed from me. I had the

strongest assurances that I should save him; and I did.” He returned the

answer in great trouble, and very slowly.

“Try them again. The hours between this and to-morrow afternoon are few

and short, but try.”

“I intend to try. I will not rest a moment.”

“That’s well. I have known such energy as yours do great things before

now--though never,” he added, with a smile and a sigh together, “such

great things as this. But try! Of little worth as life is when we misuse

it, it is worth that effort. It would cost nothing to lay down if it

were not.”

“I will go,” said Doctor Manette, “to the Prosecutor and the President

straight, and I will go to others whom it is better not to name. I will

write too, and--But stay! There is a Celebration in the streets, and no

one will be accessible until dark.”

“That’s true. Well! It is a forlorn hope at the best, and not much the

forlorner for being delayed till dark. I should like to know how you

speed; though, mind! I expect nothing! When are you likely to have seen

these dread powers, Doctor Manette?”

“Immediately after dark, I should hope. Within an hour or two from

this.”

“It will be dark soon after four. Let us stretch the hour or two. If I

go to Mr. Lorry’s at nine, shall I hear what you have done, either from

our friend or from yourself?”

“Yes.”

“May you prosper!”

Mr. Lorry followed Sydney to the outer door, and, touching him on the

shoulder as he was going away, caused him to turn.

“I have no hope,” said Mr. Lorry, in a low and sorrowful whisper.

“Nor have I.”

“If any one of these men, or all of these men, were disposed to spare

him--which is a large supposition; for what is his life, or any man’s

to them!--I doubt if they durst spare him after the demonstration in the

court.”

“And so do I. I heard the fall of the axe in that sound.”

Mr. Lorry leaned his arm upon the door-post, and bowed his face upon it.

“Don’t despond,” said Carton, very gently; “don’t grieve. I encouraged

Doctor Manette in this idea, because I felt that it might one day be

consolatory to her. Otherwise, she might think ‘his life was wantonly

thrown away or wasted,’ and that might trouble her.”

“Yes, yes, yes,” returned Mr. Lorry, drying his eyes, “you are right.

But he will perish; there is no real hope.”

“Yes. He will perish: there is no real hope,” echoed Carton.

And walked with a settled step, down-stairs.

CHAPTER XII.

Darkness

Sydney Carton paused in the street, not quite decided where to go. “At

Tellson’s banking-house at nine,” he said, with a musing face. “Shall I

do well, in the mean time, to show myself? I think so. It is best that

these people should know there is such a man as I here; it is a sound

precaution, and may be a necessary preparation. But care, care, care!

Let me think it out!”

Checking his steps which had begun to tend towards an object, he took a

turn or two in the already darkening street, and traced the thought

in his mind to its possible consequences. His first impression was

confirmed. “It is best,” he said, finally resolved, “that these people

should know there is such a man as I here.” And he turned his face

towards Saint Antoine.

Defarge had described himself, that day, as the keeper of a wine-shop in

the Saint Antoine suburb. It was not difficult for one who knew the city

well, to find his house without asking any question. Having ascertained

its situation, Carton came out of those closer streets again, and dined

at a place of refreshment and fell sound asleep after dinner. For the

first time in many years, he had no strong drink. Since last night he

had taken nothing but a little light thin wine, and last night he had

dropped the brandy slowly down on Mr. Lorry’s hearth like a man who had

done with it.

It was as late as seven o’clock when he awoke refreshed, and went out

into the streets again. As he passed along towards Saint Antoine, he

stopped at a shop-window where there was a mirror, and slightly altered

the disordered arrangement of his loose cravat, and his coat-collar, and

his wild hair. This done, he went on direct to Defarge’s, and went in.

There happened to be no customer in the shop but Jacques Three, of the

restless fingers and the croaking voice. This man, whom he had seen upon

the Jury, stood drinking at the little counter, in conversation with the

Defarges, man and wife. The Vengeance assisted in the conversation, like

a regular member of the establishment.

As Carton walked in, took his seat and asked (in very indifferent

French) for a small measure of wine, Madame Defarge cast a careless

glance at him, and then a keener, and then a keener, and then advanced

to him herself, and asked him what it was he had ordered.

He repeated what he had already said.

“English?” asked Madame Defarge, inquisitively raising her dark

eyebrows.

After looking at her, as if the sound of even a single French word were

slow to express itself to him, he answered, in his former strong foreign

accent. “Yes, madame, yes. I am English!”

Madame Defarge returned to her counter to get the wine, and, as he

took up a Jacobin journal and feigned to pore over it puzzling out its

meaning, he heard her say, “I swear to you, like Evrémonde!”

Defarge brought him the wine, and gave him Good Evening.

“How?”

“Good evening.”

“Oh! Good evening, citizen,” filling his glass. “Ah! and good wine. I

drink to the Republic.”

Defarge went back to the counter, and said, “Certainly, a little like.”

Madame sternly retorted, “I tell you a good deal like.” Jacques Three

pacifically remarked, “He is so much in your mind, see you, madame.”

The amiable Vengeance added, with a laugh, “Yes, my faith! And you

are looking forward with so much pleasure to seeing him once more

to-morrow!”

Carton followed the lines and words of his paper, with a slow

forefinger, and with a studious and absorbed face. They were all leaning

their arms on the counter close together, speaking low. After a silence

of a few moments, during which they all looked towards him without

disturbing his outward attention from the Jacobin editor, they resumed

their conversation.

“It is true what madame says,” observed Jacques Three. “Why stop? There

is great force in that. Why stop?”

“Well, well,” reasoned Defarge, “but one must stop somewhere. After all,

the question is still where?”

“At extermination,” said madame.

“Magnificent!” croaked Jacques Three. The Vengeance, also, highly

approved.

“Extermination is good doctrine, my wife,” said Defarge, rather

troubled; “in general, I say nothing against it. But this Doctor has

suffered much; you have seen him to-day; you have observed his face when

the paper was read.”

“I have observed his face!” repeated madame, contemptuously and angrily.

“Yes. I have observed his face. I have observed his face to be not the

face of a true friend of the Republic. Let him take care of his face!”

“And you have observed, my wife,” said Defarge, in a deprecatory manner,

“the anguish of his daughter, which must be a dreadful anguish to him!”

“I have observed his daughter,” repeated madame; “yes, I have observed

his daughter, more times than one. I have observed her to-day, and I

have observed her other days. I have observed her in the court, and

I have observed her in the street by the prison. Let me but lift my

finger--!” She seemed to raise it (the listener’s eyes were always on

his paper), and to let it fall with a rattle on the ledge before her, as

if the axe had dropped.

“The citizeness is superb!” croaked the Juryman.

“She is an Angel!” said The Vengeance, and embraced her.

“As to thee,” pursued madame, implacably, addressing her husband, “if it

depended on thee--which, happily, it does not--thou wouldst rescue this

man even now.”

“No!” protested Defarge. “Not if to lift this glass would do it! But I

would leave the matter there. I say, stop there.”

“See you then, Jacques,” said Madame Defarge, wrathfully; “and see you,

too, my little Vengeance; see you both! Listen! For other crimes as

tyrants and oppressors, I have this race a long time on my register,

doomed to destruction and extermination. Ask my husband, is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge, without being asked.

“In the beginning of the great days, when the Bastille falls, he finds

this paper of to-day, and he brings it home, and in the middle of the

night when this place is clear and shut, we read it, here on this spot,

by the light of this lamp. Ask him, is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge.

“That night, I tell him, when the paper is read through, and the lamp is

burnt out, and the day is gleaming in above those shutters and between

those iron bars, that I have now a secret to communicate. Ask him, is

that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge again.

“I communicate to him that secret. I smite this bosom with these two

hands as I smite it now, and I tell him, ‘Defarge, I was brought up

among the fishermen of the sea-shore, and that peasant family so injured

by the two Evrémonde brothers, as that Bastille paper describes, is my

family. Defarge, that sister of the mortally wounded boy upon the ground

was my sister, that husband was my sister’s husband, that unborn child

was their child, that brother was my brother, that father was my father,

those dead are my dead, and that summons to answer for those things

descends to me!’ Ask him, is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge once more.

“Then tell Wind and Fire where to stop,” returned madame; “but don’t

tell me.”

Both her hearers derived a horrible enjoyment from the deadly nature

of her wrath--the listener could feel how white she was, without seeing

her--and both highly commended it. Defarge, a weak minority, interposed

a few words for the memory of the compassionate wife of the Marquis; but

only elicited from his own wife a repetition of her last reply. “Tell

the Wind and the Fire where to stop; not me!”

Customers entered, and the group was broken up. The English customer

paid for what he had had, perplexedly counted his change, and asked, as

a stranger, to be directed towards the National Palace. Madame Defarge

took him to the door, and put her arm on his, in pointing out the road.

The English customer was not without his reflections then, that it might

be a good deed to seize that arm, lift it, and strike under it sharp and

deep.

But, he went his way, and was soon swallowed up in the shadow of the

prison wall. At the appointed hour, he emerged from it to present

himself in Mr. Lorry’s room again, where he found the old gentleman

walking to and fro in restless anxiety. He said he had been with Lucie

until just now, and had only left her for a few minutes, to come and

keep his appointment. Her father had not been seen, since he quitted the

banking-house towards four o’clock. She had some faint hopes that his

mediation might save Charles, but they were very slight. He had been

more than five hours gone: where could he be?

Mr. Lorry waited until ten; but, Doctor Manette not returning, and

he being unwilling to leave Lucie any longer, it was arranged that he

should go back to her, and come to the banking-house again at midnight.

In the meanwhile, Carton would wait alone by the fire for the Doctor.

He waited and waited, and the clock struck twelve; but Doctor Manette

did not come back. Mr. Lorry returned, and found no tidings of him, and

brought none. Where could he be?

They were discussing this question, and were almost building up some

weak structure of hope on his prolonged absence, when they heard him on

the stairs. The instant he entered the room, it was plain that all was

lost.

Whether he had really been to any one, or whether he had been all that

time traversing the streets, was never known. As he stood staring at

them, they asked him no question, for his face told them everything.

“I cannot find it,” said he, “and I must have it. Where is it?”

His head and throat were bare, and, as he spoke with a helpless look

straying all around, he took his coat off, and let it drop on the floor.

“Where is my bench? I have been looking everywhere for my bench, and I

can’t find it. What have they done with my work? Time presses: I must

finish those shoes.”

They looked at one another, and their hearts died within them.

“Come, come!” said he, in a whimpering miserable way; “let me get to

work. Give me my work.”

Receiving no answer, he tore his hair, and beat his feet upon the

ground, like a distracted child.

“Don’t torture a poor forlorn wretch,” he implored them, with a dreadful

cry; “but give me my work! What is to become of us, if those shoes are

not done to-night?”

Lost, utterly lost!

It was so clearly beyond hope to reason with him, or try to restore him,

that--as if by agreement--they each put a hand upon his shoulder, and

soothed him to sit down before the fire, with a promise that he should

have his work presently. He sank into the chair, and brooded over the

embers, and shed tears. As if all that had happened since the garret

time were a momentary fancy, or a dream, Mr. Lorry saw him shrink into

the exact figure that Defarge had had in keeping.

Affected, and impressed with terror as they both were, by this spectacle

of ruin, it was not a time to yield to such emotions. His lonely

daughter, bereft of her final hope and reliance, appealed to them both

too strongly. Again, as if by agreement, they looked at one another with

one meaning in their faces. Carton was the first to speak:

“The last chance is gone: it was not much. Yes; he had better be taken

to her. But, before you go, will you, for a moment, steadily attend to

me? Don’t ask me why I make the stipulations I am going to make, and

exact the promise I am going to exact; I have a reason--a good one.”

“I do not doubt it,” answered Mr. Lorry. “Say on.”

The figure in the chair between them, was all the time monotonously

rocking itself to and fro, and moaning. They spoke in such a tone as

they would have used if they had been watching by a sick-bed in the

night.

Carton stooped to pick up the coat, which lay almost entangling his

feet. As he did so, a small case in which the Doctor was accustomed to

carry the lists of his day’s duties, fell lightly on the floor. Carton

took it up, and there was a folded paper in it. “We should look

at this!” he said. Mr. Lorry nodded his consent. He opened it, and

exclaimed, “Thank \_God!\_”

“What is it?” asked Mr. Lorry, eagerly.

“A moment! Let me speak of it in its place. First,” he put his hand in

his coat, and took another paper from it, “that is the certificate which

enables me to pass out of this city. Look at it. You see--Sydney Carton,

an Englishman?”

Mr. Lorry held it open in his hand, gazing in his earnest face.

“Keep it for me until to-morrow. I shall see him to-morrow, you

remember, and I had better not take it into the prison.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know; I prefer not to do so. Now, take this paper that Doctor

Manette has carried about him. It is a similar certificate, enabling him

and his daughter and her child, at any time, to pass the barrier and the

frontier! You see?”

“Yes!”

“Perhaps he obtained it as his last and utmost precaution against evil,

yesterday. When is it dated? But no matter; don’t stay to look; put it

up carefully with mine and your own. Now, observe! I never doubted until

within this hour or two, that he had, or could have such a paper. It is

good, until recalled. But it may be soon recalled, and, I have reason to

think, will be.”

“They are not in danger?”

“They are in great danger. They are in danger of denunciation by Madame

Defarge. I know it from her own lips. I have overheard words of that

woman’s, to-night, which have presented their danger to me in strong

colours. I have lost no time, and since then, I have seen the spy. He

confirms me. He knows that a wood-sawyer, living by the prison wall,

is under the control of the Defarges, and has been rehearsed by

Madame Defarge as to his having seen Her”--he never mentioned Lucie’s

name--“making signs and signals to prisoners. It is easy to foresee that

the pretence will be the common one, a prison plot, and that it will

involve her life--and perhaps her child’s--and perhaps her father’s--for

both have been seen with her at that place. Don’t look so horrified. You

will save them all.”

“Heaven grant I may, Carton! But how?”

“I am going to tell you how. It will depend on you, and it could depend

on no better man. This new denunciation will certainly not take place

until after to-morrow; probably not until two or three days afterwards;

more probably a week afterwards. You know it is a capital crime, to

mourn for, or sympathise with, a victim of the Guillotine. She and her

father would unquestionably be guilty of this crime, and this woman (the

inveteracy of whose pursuit cannot be described) would wait to add that

strength to her case, and make herself doubly sure. You follow me?”

“So attentively, and with so much confidence in what you say, that for

the moment I lose sight,” touching the back of the Doctor’s chair, “even

of this distress.”

“You have money, and can buy the means of travelling to the seacoast

as quickly as the journey can be made. Your preparations have been

completed for some days, to return to England. Early to-morrow have your

horses ready, so that they may be in starting trim at two o’clock in the

afternoon.”

“It shall be done!”

His manner was so fervent and inspiring, that Mr. Lorry caught the

flame, and was as quick as youth.

“You are a noble heart. Did I say we could depend upon no better man?

Tell her, to-night, what you know of her danger as involving her child

and her father. Dwell upon that, for she would lay her own fair head

beside her husband’s cheerfully.” He faltered for an instant; then went

on as before. “For the sake of her child and her father, press upon her

the necessity of leaving Paris, with them and you, at that hour. Tell

her that it was her husband’s last arrangement. Tell her that more

depends upon it than she dare believe, or hope. You think that her

father, even in this sad state, will submit himself to her; do you not?”

“I am sure of it.”

“I thought so. Quietly and steadily have all these arrangements made in

the courtyard here, even to the taking of your own seat in the carriage.

The moment I come to you, take me in, and drive away.”

“I understand that I wait for you under all circumstances?”

“You have my certificate in your hand with the rest, you know, and will

reserve my place. Wait for nothing but to have my place occupied, and

then for England!”

“Why, then,” said Mr. Lorry, grasping his eager but so firm and steady

hand, “it does not all depend on one old man, but I shall have a young

and ardent man at my side.”

“By the help of Heaven you shall! Promise me solemnly that nothing will

influence you to alter the course on which we now stand pledged to one

another.”

“Nothing, Carton.”

“Remember these words to-morrow: change the course, or delay in it--for

any reason--and no life can possibly be saved, and many lives must

inevitably be sacrificed.”

“I will remember them. I hope to do my part faithfully.”

“And I hope to do mine. Now, good bye!”

Though he said it with a grave smile of earnestness, and though he even

put the old man’s hand to his lips, he did not part from him then. He

helped him so far to arouse the rocking figure before the dying embers,

as to get a cloak and hat put upon it, and to tempt it forth to find

where the bench and work were hidden that it still moaningly besought

to have. He walked on the other side of it and protected it to the

courtyard of the house where the afflicted heart--so happy in

the memorable time when he had revealed his own desolate heart to

it--outwatched the awful night. He entered the courtyard and remained

there for a few moments alone, looking up at the light in the window of

her room. Before he went away, he breathed a blessing towards it, and a

Farewell.

CHAPTER XIII.

Fifty-two

In the black prison of the Conciergerie, the doomed of the day awaited

their fate. They were in number as the weeks of the year. Fifty-two were

to roll that afternoon on the life-tide of the city to the boundless

everlasting sea. Before their cells were quit of them, new occupants

were appointed; before their blood ran into the blood spilled yesterday,

the blood that was to mingle with theirs to-morrow was already set

apart.

Two score and twelve were told off. From the farmer-general of seventy,

whose riches could not buy his life, to the seamstress of twenty, whose

poverty and obscurity could not save her. Physical diseases, engendered

in the vices and neglects of men, will seize on victims of all degrees;

and the frightful moral disorder, born of unspeakable suffering,

intolerable oppression, and heartless indifference, smote equally

without distinction.

Charles Darnay, alone in a cell, had sustained himself with no

flattering delusion since he came to it from the Tribunal. In every line

of the narrative he had heard, he had heard his condemnation. He had

fully comprehended that no personal influence could possibly save him,

that he was virtually sentenced by the millions, and that units could

avail him nothing.

Nevertheless, it was not easy, with the face of his beloved wife fresh

before him, to compose his mind to what it must bear. His hold on life

was strong, and it was very, very hard, to loosen; by gradual efforts

and degrees unclosed a little here, it clenched the tighter there; and

when he brought his strength to bear on that hand and it yielded,

this was closed again. There was a hurry, too, in all his thoughts,

a turbulent and heated working of his heart, that contended against

resignation. If, for a moment, he did feel resigned, then his wife and

child who had to live after him, seemed to protest and to make it a

selfish thing.

But, all this was at first. Before long, the consideration that there

was no disgrace in the fate he must meet, and that numbers went the same

road wrongfully, and trod it firmly every day, sprang up to stimulate

him. Next followed the thought that much of the future peace of mind

enjoyable by the dear ones, depended on his quiet fortitude. So,

by degrees he calmed into the better state, when he could raise his

thoughts much higher, and draw comfort down.

Before it had set in dark on the night of his condemnation, he had

travelled thus far on his last way. Being allowed to purchase the means

of writing, and a light, he sat down to write until such time as the

prison lamps should be extinguished.

He wrote a long letter to Lucie, showing her that he had known nothing

of her father’s imprisonment, until he had heard of it from herself,

and that he had been as ignorant as she of his father’s and uncle’s

responsibility for that misery, until the paper had been read. He had

already explained to her that his concealment from herself of the name

he had relinquished, was the one condition--fully intelligible now--that

her father had attached to their betrothal, and was the one promise he

had still exacted on the morning of their marriage. He entreated her,

for her father’s sake, never to seek to know whether her father had

become oblivious of the existence of the paper, or had had it recalled

to him (for the moment, or for good), by the story of the Tower, on

that old Sunday under the dear old plane-tree in the garden. If he had

preserved any definite remembrance of it, there could be no doubt that

he had supposed it destroyed with the Bastille, when he had found no

mention of it among the relics of prisoners which the populace had

discovered there, and which had been described to all the world. He

besought her--though he added that he knew it was needless--to console

her father, by impressing him through every tender means she could think

of, with the truth that he had done nothing for which he could justly

reproach himself, but had uniformly forgotten himself for their joint

sakes. Next to her preservation of his own last grateful love and

blessing, and her overcoming of her sorrow, to devote herself to their

dear child, he adjured her, as they would meet in Heaven, to comfort her

father.

To her father himself, he wrote in the same strain; but, he told her

father that he expressly confided his wife and child to his care. And

he told him this, very strongly, with the hope of rousing him from any

despondency or dangerous retrospect towards which he foresaw he might be

tending.

To Mr. Lorry, he commended them all, and explained his worldly affairs.

That done, with many added sentences of grateful friendship and warm

attachment, all was done. He never thought of Carton. His mind was so

full of the others, that he never once thought of him.

He had time to finish these letters before the lights were put out. When

he lay down on his straw bed, he thought he had done with this world.

But, it beckoned him back in his sleep, and showed itself in shining

forms. Free and happy, back in the old house in Soho (though it had

nothing in it like the real house), unaccountably released and light of

heart, he was with Lucie again, and she told him it was all a dream, and

he had never gone away. A pause of forgetfulness, and then he had even

suffered, and had come back to her, dead and at peace, and yet there

was no difference in him. Another pause of oblivion, and he awoke in the

sombre morning, unconscious where he was or what had happened, until it

flashed upon his mind, “this is the day of my death!”

Thus, had he come through the hours, to the day when the fifty-two heads

were to fall. And now, while he was composed, and hoped that he could

meet the end with quiet heroism, a new action began in his waking

thoughts, which was very difficult to master.

He had never seen the instrument that was to terminate his life. How

high it was from the ground, how many steps it had, where he would be

stood, how he would be touched, whether the touching hands would be dyed

red, which way his face would be turned, whether he would be the first,

or might be the last: these and many similar questions, in nowise

directed by his will, obtruded themselves over and over again, countless

times. Neither were they connected with fear: he was conscious of no

fear. Rather, they originated in a strange besetting desire to know what

to do when the time came; a desire gigantically disproportionate to the

few swift moments to which it referred; a wondering that was more like

the wondering of some other spirit within his, than his own.

The hours went on as he walked to and fro, and the clocks struck the

numbers he would never hear again. Nine gone for ever, ten gone for

ever, eleven gone for ever, twelve coming on to pass away. After a hard

contest with that eccentric action of thought which had last perplexed

him, he had got the better of it. He walked up and down, softly

repeating their names to himself. The worst of the strife was over.

He could walk up and down, free from distracting fancies, praying for

himself and for them.

Twelve gone for ever.

He had been apprised that the final hour was Three, and he knew he would

be summoned some time earlier, inasmuch as the tumbrils jolted heavily

and slowly through the streets. Therefore, he resolved to keep Two

before his mind, as the hour, and so to strengthen himself in the

interval that he might be able, after that time, to strengthen others.

Walking regularly to and fro with his arms folded on his breast, a very

different man from the prisoner, who had walked to and fro at La Force,

he heard One struck away from him, without surprise. The hour had

measured like most other hours. Devoutly thankful to Heaven for his

recovered self-possession, he thought, “There is but another now,” and

turned to walk again.

Footsteps in the stone passage outside the door. He stopped.

The key was put in the lock, and turned. Before the door was opened, or

as it opened, a man said in a low voice, in English: “He has never seen

me here; I have kept out of his way. Go you in alone; I wait near. Lose

no time!”

The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him

face to face, quiet, intent upon him, with the light of a smile on his

features, and a cautionary finger on his lip, Sydney Carton.

There was something so bright and remarkable in his look, that, for the

first moment, the prisoner misdoubted him to be an apparition of his own

imagining. But, he spoke, and it was his voice; he took the prisoner’s

hand, and it was his real grasp.

“Of all the people upon earth, you least expected to see me?” he said.

“I could not believe it to be you. I can scarcely believe it now. You

are not”--the apprehension came suddenly into his mind--“a prisoner?”

“No. I am accidentally possessed of a power over one of the keepers

here, and in virtue of it I stand before you. I come from her--your

wife, dear Darnay.”

The prisoner wrung his hand.

“I bring you a request from her.”

“What is it?”

“A most earnest, pressing, and emphatic entreaty, addressed to you

in the most pathetic tones of the voice so dear to you, that you well

remember.”

The prisoner turned his face partly aside.

“You have no time to ask me why I bring it, or what it means; I have

no time to tell you. You must comply with it--take off those boots you

wear, and draw on these of mine.”

There was a chair against the wall of the cell, behind the prisoner.

Carton, pressing forward, had already, with the speed of lightning, got

him down into it, and stood over him, barefoot.

“Draw on these boots of mine. Put your hands to them; put your will to

them. Quick!”

“Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it never can be done. You

will only die with me. It is madness.”

“It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? When I ask you

to pass out at that door, tell me it is madness and remain here. Change

that cravat for this of mine, that coat for this of mine. While you do

it, let me take this ribbon from your hair, and shake out your hair like

this of mine!”

With wonderful quickness, and with a strength both of will and action,

that appeared quite supernatural, he forced all these changes upon him.

The prisoner was like a young child in his hands.

“Carton! Dear Carton! It is madness. It cannot be accomplished, it never

can be done, it has been attempted, and has always failed. I implore you

not to add your death to the bitterness of mine.”

“Do I ask you, my dear Darnay, to pass the door? When I ask that,

refuse. There are pen and ink and paper on this table. Is your hand

steady enough to write?”

“It was when you came in.”

“Steady it again, and write what I shall dictate. Quick, friend, quick!”

Pressing his hand to his bewildered head, Darnay sat down at the table.

Carton, with his right hand in his breast, stood close beside him.

“Write exactly as I speak.”

“To whom do I address it?”

“To no one.” Carton still had his hand in his breast.

“Do I date it?”

“No.”

The prisoner looked up, at each question. Carton, standing over him with

his hand in his breast, looked down.

“‘If you remember,’” said Carton, dictating, “‘the words that passed

between us, long ago, you will readily comprehend this when you see it.

You do remember them, I know. It is not in your nature to forget them.’”

He was drawing his hand from his breast; the prisoner chancing to look

up in his hurried wonder as he wrote, the hand stopped, closing upon

something.

“Have you written ‘forget them’?” Carton asked.

“I have. Is that a weapon in your hand?”

“No; I am not armed.”

“What is it in your hand?”

“You shall know directly. Write on; there are but a few words more.” He

dictated again. “‘I am thankful that the time has come, when I can prove

them. That I do so is no subject for regret or grief.’” As he said these

words with his eyes fixed on the writer, his hand slowly and softly

moved down close to the writer’s face.

The pen dropped from Darnay’s fingers on the table, and he looked about

him vacantly.

“What vapour is that?” he asked.

“Vapour?”

“Something that crossed me?”

“I am conscious of nothing; there can be nothing here. Take up the pen

and finish. Hurry, hurry!”

As if his memory were impaired, or his faculties disordered, the

prisoner made an effort to rally his attention. As he looked at Carton

with clouded eyes and with an altered manner of breathing, Carton--his

hand again in his breast--looked steadily at him.

“Hurry, hurry!”

The prisoner bent over the paper, once more.

“‘If it had been otherwise;’” Carton’s hand was again watchfully and

softly stealing down; “‘I never should have used the longer opportunity.

If it had been otherwise;’” the hand was at the prisoner’s face; “‘I

should but have had so much the more to answer for. If it had been

otherwise--’” Carton looked at the pen and saw it was trailing off into

unintelligible signs.

Carton’s hand moved back to his breast no more. The prisoner sprang up

with a reproachful look, but Carton’s hand was close and firm at his

nostrils, and Carton’s left arm caught him round the waist. For a few

seconds he faintly struggled with the man who had come to lay down his

life for him; but, within a minute or so, he was stretched insensible on

the ground.

Quickly, but with hands as true to the purpose as his heart was, Carton

dressed himself in the clothes the prisoner had laid aside, combed back

his hair, and tied it with the ribbon the prisoner had worn. Then, he

softly called, “Enter there! Come in!” and the Spy presented himself.

“You see?” said Carton, looking up, as he kneeled on one knee beside the

insensible figure, putting the paper in the breast: “is your hazard very

great?”

“Mr. Carton,” the Spy answered, with a timid snap of his fingers, “my

hazard is not \_that\_, in the thick of business here, if you are true to

the whole of your bargain.”

“Don’t fear me. I will be true to the death.”

“You must be, Mr. Carton, if the tale of fifty-two is to be right. Being

made right by you in that dress, I shall have no fear.”

“Have no fear! I shall soon be out of the way of harming you, and the

rest will soon be far from here, please God! Now, get assistance and

take me to the coach.”

“You?” said the Spy nervously.

“Him, man, with whom I have exchanged. You go out at the gate by which

you brought me in?”

“Of course.”

“I was weak and faint when you brought me in, and I am fainter now you

take me out. The parting interview has overpowered me. Such a thing has

happened here, often, and too often. Your life is in your own hands.

Quick! Call assistance!”

“You swear not to betray me?” said the trembling Spy, as he paused for a

last moment.

“Man, man!” returned Carton, stamping his foot; “have I sworn by no

solemn vow already, to go through with this, that you waste the precious

moments now? Take him yourself to the courtyard you know of, place

him yourself in the carriage, show him yourself to Mr. Lorry, tell him

yourself to give him no restorative but air, and to remember my words of

last night, and his promise of last night, and drive away!”

The Spy withdrew, and Carton seated himself at the table, resting his

forehead on his hands. The Spy returned immediately, with two men.

“How, then?” said one of them, contemplating the fallen figure. “So

afflicted to find that his friend has drawn a prize in the lottery of

Sainte Guillotine?”

“A good patriot,” said the other, “could hardly have been more afflicted

if the Aristocrat had drawn a blank.”

They raised the unconscious figure, placed it on a litter they had

brought to the door, and bent to carry it away.

“The time is short, Evrémonde,” said the Spy, in a warning voice.

“I know it well,” answered Carton. “Be careful of my friend, I entreat

you, and leave me.”

“Come, then, my children,” said Barsad. “Lift him, and come away!”

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of

listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote

suspicion or alarm. There was none. Keys turned, doors clashed,

footsteps passed along distant passages: no cry was raised, or hurry

made, that seemed unusual. Breathing more freely in a little while, he

sat down at the table, and listened again until the clock struck Two.

Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined their meaning, then

began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and

finally his own. A gaoler, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely

saying, “Follow me, Evrémonde!” and he followed into a large dark room,

at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with the shadows

within, and what with the shadows without, he could but dimly discern

the others who were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were

standing; some seated. Some were lamenting, and in restless motion;

but, these were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking

fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two

were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing, to embrace him,

as having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of

discovery; but the man went on. A very few moments after that, a young

woman, with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare face in which there was

no vestige of colour, and large widely opened patient eyes, rose from

the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him.

“Citizen Evrémonde,” she said, touching him with her cold hand. “I am a

poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force.”

He murmured for answer: “True. I forget what you were accused of?”

“Plots. Though the just Heaven knows that I am innocent of any. Is it

likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor little weak creature

like me?”

The forlorn smile with which she said it, so touched him, that tears

started from his eyes.

“I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I

am not unwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good

to us poor, will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be,

Citizen Evrémonde. Such a poor weak little creature!”

As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it

warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

“I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true?”

“It was. But, I was again taken and condemned.”

“If I may ride with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your

hand? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me

more courage.”

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in

them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn young

fingers, and touched his lips.

“Are you dying for him?” she whispered.

“And his wife and child. Hush! Yes.”

“O you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger?”

“Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last.”

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The same shadows that are falling on the prison, are falling, in that

same hour of the early afternoon, on the Barrier with the crowd about

it, when a coach going out of Paris drives up to be examined.

“Who goes here? Whom have we within? Papers!”

The papers are handed out, and read.

“Alexandre Manette. Physician. French. Which is he?”

This is he; this helpless, inarticulately murmuring, wandering old man

pointed out.

“Apparently the Citizen-Doctor is not in his right mind? The

Revolution-fever will have been too much for him?”

Greatly too much for him.

“Hah! Many suffer with it. Lucie. His daughter. French. Which is she?”

This is she.

“Apparently it must be. Lucie, the wife of Evrémonde; is it not?”

It is.

“Hah! Evrémonde has an assignation elsewhere. Lucie, her child. English.

This is she?”

She and no other.

“Kiss me, child of Evrémonde. Now, thou hast kissed a good Republican;

something new in thy family; remember it! Sydney Carton. Advocate.

English. Which is he?”

He lies here, in this corner of the carriage. He, too, is pointed out.

“Apparently the English advocate is in a swoon?”

It is hoped he will recover in the fresher air. It is represented that

he is not in strong health, and has separated sadly from a friend who is

under the displeasure of the Republic.

“Is that all? It is not a great deal, that! Many are under the

displeasure of the Republic, and must look out at the little window.

Jarvis Lorry. Banker. English. Which is he?”

“I am he. Necessarily, being the last.”

It is Jarvis Lorry who has replied to all the previous questions. It

is Jarvis Lorry who has alighted and stands with his hand on the coach

door, replying to a group of officials. They leisurely walk round the

carriage and leisurely mount the box, to look at what little luggage it

carries on the roof; the country-people hanging about, press nearer to

the coach doors and greedily stare in; a little child, carried by its

mother, has its short arm held out for it, that it may touch the wife of

an aristocrat who has gone to the Guillotine.

“Behold your papers, Jarvis Lorry, countersigned.”

“One can depart, citizen?”

“One can depart. Forward, my postilions! A good journey!”

“I salute you, citizens.--And the first danger passed!”

These are again the words of Jarvis Lorry, as he clasps his hands, and

looks upward. There is terror in the carriage, there is weeping, there

is the heavy breathing of the insensible traveller.

“Are we not going too slowly? Can they not be induced to go faster?”

asks Lucie, clinging to the old man.

“It would seem like flight, my darling. I must not urge them too much;

it would rouse suspicion.”

“Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued!”

“The road is clear, my dearest. So far, we are not pursued.”

Houses in twos and threes pass by us, solitary farms, ruinous buildings,

dye-works, tanneries, and the like, open country, avenues of leafless

trees. The hard uneven pavement is under us, the soft deep mud is on

either side. Sometimes, we strike into the skirting mud, to avoid the

stones that clatter us and shake us; sometimes, we stick in ruts and

sloughs there. The agony of our impatience is then so great, that in our

wild alarm and hurry we are for getting out and running--hiding--doing

anything but stopping.

Out of the open country, in again among ruinous buildings, solitary

farms, dye-works, tanneries, and the like, cottages in twos and threes,

avenues of leafless trees. Have these men deceived us, and taken us back

by another road? Is not this the same place twice over? Thank Heaven,

no. A village. Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued! Hush!

the posting-house.

Leisurely, our four horses are taken out; leisurely, the coach stands in

the little street, bereft of horses, and with no likelihood upon it

of ever moving again; leisurely, the new horses come into visible

existence, one by one; leisurely, the new postilions follow, sucking and

plaiting the lashes of their whips; leisurely, the old postilions count

their money, make wrong additions, and arrive at dissatisfied results.

All the time, our overfraught hearts are beating at a rate that would

far outstrip the fastest gallop of the fastest horses ever foaled.

At length the new postilions are in their saddles, and the old are left

behind. We are through the village, up the hill, and down the hill, and

on the low watery grounds. Suddenly, the postilions exchange speech with

animated gesticulation, and the horses are pulled up, almost on their

haunches. We are pursued?

“Ho! Within the carriage there. Speak then!”

“What is it?” asks Mr. Lorry, looking out at window.

“How many did they say?”

“I do not understand you.”

“--At the last post. How many to the Guillotine to-day?”

“Fifty-two.”

“I said so! A brave number! My fellow-citizen here would have it

forty-two; ten more heads are worth having. The Guillotine goes

handsomely. I love it. Hi forward. Whoop!”

The night comes on dark. He moves more; he is beginning to revive, and

to speak intelligibly; he thinks they are still together; he asks him,

by his name, what he has in his hand. O pity us, kind Heaven, and help

us! Look out, look out, and see if we are pursued.

The wind is rushing after us, and the clouds are flying after us, and

the moon is plunging after us, and the whole wild night is in pursuit of

us; but, so far, we are pursued by nothing else.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Knitting Done

In that same juncture of time when the Fifty-Two awaited their fate

Madame Defarge held darkly ominous council with The Vengeance and

Jacques Three of the Revolutionary Jury. Not in the wine-shop did Madame

Defarge confer with these ministers, but in the shed of the wood-sawyer,

erst a mender of roads. The sawyer himself did not participate in the

conference, but abided at a little distance, like an outer satellite who

was not to speak until required, or to offer an opinion until invited.

“But our Defarge,” said Jacques Three, “is undoubtedly a good

Republican? Eh?”

“There is no better,” the voluble Vengeance protested in her shrill

notes, “in France.”

“Peace, little Vengeance,” said Madame Defarge, laying her hand with

a slight frown on her lieutenant’s lips, “hear me speak. My husband,

fellow-citizen, is a good Republican and a bold man; he has deserved

well of the Republic, and possesses its confidence. But my husband has

his weaknesses, and he is so weak as to relent towards this Doctor.”

“It is a great pity,” croaked Jacques Three, dubiously shaking his head,

with his cruel fingers at his hungry mouth; “it is not quite like a good

citizen; it is a thing to regret.”

“See you,” said madame, “I care nothing for this Doctor, I. He may wear

his head or lose it, for any interest I have in him; it is all one to

me. But, the Evrémonde people are to be exterminated, and the wife and

child must follow the husband and father.”

“She has a fine head for it,” croaked Jacques Three. “I have seen blue

eyes and golden hair there, and they looked charming when Samson held

them up.” Ogre that he was, he spoke like an epicure.

Madame Defarge cast down her eyes, and reflected a little.

“The child also,” observed Jacques Three, with a meditative enjoyment

of his words, “has golden hair and blue eyes. And we seldom have a child

there. It is a pretty sight!”

“In a word,” said Madame Defarge, coming out of her short abstraction,

“I cannot trust my husband in this matter. Not only do I feel, since

last night, that I dare not confide to him the details of my projects;

but also I feel that if I delay, there is danger of his giving warning,

and then they might escape.”

“That must never be,” croaked Jacques Three; “no one must escape. We

have not half enough as it is. We ought to have six score a day.”

“In a word,” Madame Defarge went on, “my husband has not my reason for

pursuing this family to annihilation, and I have not his reason for

regarding this Doctor with any sensibility. I must act for myself,

therefore. Come hither, little citizen.”

The wood-sawyer, who held her in the respect, and himself in the

submission, of mortal fear, advanced with his hand to his red cap.

“Touching those signals, little citizen,” said Madame Defarge, sternly,

“that she made to the prisoners; you are ready to bear witness to them

this very day?”

“Ay, ay, why not!” cried the sawyer. “Every day, in all weathers, from

two to four, always signalling, sometimes with the little one, sometimes

without. I know what I know. I have seen with my eyes.”

He made all manner of gestures while he spoke, as if in incidental

imitation of some few of the great diversity of signals that he had

never seen.

“Clearly plots,” said Jacques Three. “Transparently!”

“There is no doubt of the Jury?” inquired Madame Defarge, letting her

eyes turn to him with a gloomy smile.

“Rely upon the patriotic Jury, dear citizeness. I answer for my

fellow-Jurymen.”

“Now, let me see,” said Madame Defarge, pondering again. “Yet once more!

Can I spare this Doctor to my husband? I have no feeling either way. Can

I spare him?”

“He would count as one head,” observed Jacques Three, in a low voice.

“We really have not heads enough; it would be a pity, I think.”

“He was signalling with her when I saw her,” argued Madame Defarge; “I

cannot speak of one without the other; and I must not be silent, and

trust the case wholly to him, this little citizen here. For, I am not a

bad witness.”

The Vengeance and Jacques Three vied with each other in their fervent

protestations that she was the most admirable and marvellous of

witnesses. The little citizen, not to be outdone, declared her to be a

celestial witness.

“He must take his chance,” said Madame Defarge. “No, I cannot spare

him! You are engaged at three o’clock; you are going to see the batch of

to-day executed.--You?”

The question was addressed to the wood-sawyer, who hurriedly replied in

the affirmative: seizing the occasion to add that he was the most ardent

of Republicans, and that he would be in effect the most desolate of

Republicans, if anything prevented him from enjoying the pleasure of

smoking his afternoon pipe in the contemplation of the droll national

barber. He was so very demonstrative herein, that he might have been

suspected (perhaps was, by the dark eyes that looked contemptuously at

him out of Madame Defarge’s head) of having his small individual fears

for his own personal safety, every hour in the day.

“I,” said madame, “am equally engaged at the same place. After it is

over--say at eight to-night--come you to me, in Saint Antoine, and we

will give information against these people at my Section.”

The wood-sawyer said he would be proud and flattered to attend the

citizeness. The citizeness looking at him, he became embarrassed, evaded

her glance as a small dog would have done, retreated among his wood, and

hid his confusion over the handle of his saw.

Madame Defarge beckoned the Juryman and The Vengeance a little nearer to

the door, and there expounded her further views to them thus:

“She will now be at home, awaiting the moment of his death. She will

be mourning and grieving. She will be in a state of mind to impeach the

justice of the Republic. She will be full of sympathy with its enemies.

I will go to her.”

“What an admirable woman; what an adorable woman!” exclaimed Jacques

Three, rapturously. “Ah, my cherished!” cried The Vengeance; and

embraced her.

“Take you my knitting,” said Madame Defarge, placing it in her

lieutenant’s hands, “and have it ready for me in my usual seat. Keep

me my usual chair. Go you there, straight, for there will probably be a

greater concourse than usual, to-day.”

“I willingly obey the orders of my Chief,” said The Vengeance with

alacrity, and kissing her cheek. “You will not be late?”

“I shall be there before the commencement.”

“And before the tumbrils arrive. Be sure you are there, my soul,” said

The Vengeance, calling after her, for she had already turned into the

street, “before the tumbrils arrive!”

Madame Defarge slightly waved her hand, to imply that she heard, and

might be relied upon to arrive in good time, and so went through the

mud, and round the corner of the prison wall. The Vengeance and the

Juryman, looking after her as she walked away, were highly appreciative

of her fine figure, and her superb moral endowments.

There were many women at that time, upon whom the time laid a dreadfully

disfiguring hand; but, there was not one among them more to be dreaded

than this ruthless woman, now taking her way along the streets. Of a

strong and fearless character, of shrewd sense and readiness, of great

determination, of that kind of beauty which not only seems to impart

to its possessor firmness and animosity, but to strike into others an

instinctive recognition of those qualities; the troubled time would have

heaved her up, under any circumstances. But, imbued from her childhood

with a brooding sense of wrong, and an inveterate hatred of a class,

opportunity had developed her into a tigress. She was absolutely without

pity. If she had ever had the virtue in her, it had quite gone out of

her.

It was nothing to her, that an innocent man was to die for the sins of

his forefathers; she saw, not him, but them. It was nothing to her, that

his wife was to be made a widow and his daughter an orphan; that was

insufficient punishment, because they were her natural enemies and

her prey, and as such had no right to live. To appeal to her, was made

hopeless by her having no sense of pity, even for herself. If she had

been laid low in the streets, in any of the many encounters in which

she had been engaged, she would not have pitied herself; nor, if she had

been ordered to the axe to-morrow, would she have gone to it with any

softer feeling than a fierce desire to change places with the man who

sent her there.

Such a heart Madame Defarge carried under her rough robe. Carelessly

worn, it was a becoming robe enough, in a certain weird way, and her

dark hair looked rich under her coarse red cap. Lying hidden in her

bosom, was a loaded pistol. Lying hidden at her waist, was a sharpened

dagger. Thus accoutred, and walking with the confident tread of such

a character, and with the supple freedom of a woman who had habitually

walked in her girlhood, bare-foot and bare-legged, on the brown

sea-sand, Madame Defarge took her way along the streets.

Now, when the journey of the travelling coach, at that very moment

waiting for the completion of its load, had been planned out last night,

the difficulty of taking Miss Pross in it had much engaged Mr. Lorry’s

attention. It was not merely desirable to avoid overloading the coach,

but it was of the highest importance that the time occupied in examining

it and its passengers, should be reduced to the utmost; since their

escape might depend on the saving of only a few seconds here and there.

Finally, he had proposed, after anxious consideration, that Miss Pross

and Jerry, who were at liberty to leave the city, should leave it at

three o’clock in the lightest-wheeled conveyance known to that period.

Unencumbered with luggage, they would soon overtake the coach, and,

passing it and preceding it on the road, would order its horses in

advance, and greatly facilitate its progress during the precious hours

of the night, when delay was the most to be dreaded.

Seeing in this arrangement the hope of rendering real service in that

pressing emergency, Miss Pross hailed it with joy. She and Jerry had

beheld the coach start, had known who it was that Solomon brought, had

passed some ten minutes in tortures of suspense, and were now concluding

their arrangements to follow the coach, even as Madame Defarge,

taking her way through the streets, now drew nearer and nearer to the

else-deserted lodging in which they held their consultation.

“Now what do you think, Mr. Cruncher,” said Miss Pross, whose agitation

was so great that she could hardly speak, or stand, or move, or live:

“what do you think of our not starting from this courtyard? Another

carriage having already gone from here to-day, it might awaken

suspicion.”

“My opinion, miss,” returned Mr. Cruncher, “is as you’re right. Likewise

wot I’ll stand by you, right or wrong.”

“I am so distracted with fear and hope for our precious creatures,” said

Miss Pross, wildly crying, “that I am incapable of forming any plan. Are

\_you\_ capable of forming any plan, my dear good Mr. Cruncher?”

“Respectin’ a future spear o’ life, miss,” returned Mr. Cruncher, “I

hope so. Respectin’ any present use o’ this here blessed old head o’

mine, I think not. Would you do me the favour, miss, to take notice o’

two promises and wows wot it is my wishes fur to record in this here

crisis?”

“Oh, for gracious sake!” cried Miss Pross, still wildly crying, “record

them at once, and get them out of the way, like an excellent man.”

“First,” said Mr. Cruncher, who was all in a tremble, and who spoke with

an ashy and solemn visage, “them poor things well out o’ this, never no

more will I do it, never no more!”

“I am quite sure, Mr. Cruncher,” returned Miss Pross, “that you

never will do it again, whatever it is, and I beg you not to think it

necessary to mention more particularly what it is.”

“No, miss,” returned Jerry, “it shall not be named to you. Second: them

poor things well out o’ this, and never no more will I interfere with

Mrs. Cruncher’s flopping, never no more!”

“Whatever housekeeping arrangement that may be,” said Miss Pross,

striving to dry her eyes and compose herself, “I have no doubt it

is best that Mrs. Cruncher should have it entirely under her own

superintendence.--O my poor darlings!”

“I go so far as to say, miss, moreover,” proceeded Mr. Cruncher, with a

most alarming tendency to hold forth as from a pulpit--“and let my words

be took down and took to Mrs. Cruncher through yourself--that wot my

opinions respectin’ flopping has undergone a change, and that wot I only

hope with all my heart as Mrs. Cruncher may be a flopping at the present

time.”

“There, there, there! I hope she is, my dear man,” cried the distracted

Miss Pross, “and I hope she finds it answering her expectations.”

“Forbid it,” proceeded Mr. Cruncher, with additional solemnity,

additional slowness, and additional tendency to hold forth and hold

out, “as anything wot I have ever said or done should be wisited on my

earnest wishes for them poor creeturs now! Forbid it as we shouldn’t all

flop (if it was anyways conwenient) to get ’em out o’ this here dismal

risk! Forbid it, miss! Wot I say, for-\_bid\_ it!” This was Mr. Cruncher’s

conclusion after a protracted but vain endeavour to find a better one.

And still Madame Defarge, pursuing her way along the streets, came

nearer and nearer.

“If we ever get back to our native land,” said Miss Pross, “you may rely

upon my telling Mrs. Cruncher as much as I may be able to remember and

understand of what you have so impressively said; and at all events

you may be sure that I shall bear witness to your being thoroughly in

earnest at this dreadful time. Now, pray let us think! My esteemed Mr.

Cruncher, let us think!”

Still, Madame Defarge, pursuing her way along the streets, came nearer

and nearer.

“If you were to go before,” said Miss Pross, “and stop the vehicle and

horses from coming here, and were to wait somewhere for me; wouldn’t

that be best?”

Mr. Cruncher thought it might be best.

“Where could you wait for me?” asked Miss Pross.

Mr. Cruncher was so bewildered that he could think of no locality but

Temple Bar. Alas! Temple Bar was hundreds of miles away, and Madame

Defarge was drawing very near indeed.

“By the cathedral door,” said Miss Pross. “Would it be much out of

the way, to take me in, near the great cathedral door between the two

towers?”

“No, miss,” answered Mr. Cruncher.

“Then, like the best of men,” said Miss Pross, “go to the posting-house

straight, and make that change.”

“I am doubtful,” said Mr. Cruncher, hesitating and shaking his head,

“about leaving of you, you see. We don’t know what may happen.”

“Heaven knows we don’t,” returned Miss Pross, “but have no fear for me.

Take me in at the cathedral, at Three o’Clock, or as near it as you can,

and I am sure it will be better than our going from here. I feel certain

of it. There! Bless you, Mr. Cruncher! Think-not of me, but of the lives

that may depend on both of us!”

This exordium, and Miss Pross’s two hands in quite agonised entreaty

clasping his, decided Mr. Cruncher. With an encouraging nod or two, he

immediately went out to alter the arrangements, and left her by herself

to follow as she had proposed.

The having originated a precaution which was already in course of

execution, was a great relief to Miss Pross. The necessity of composing

her appearance so that it should attract no special notice in the

streets, was another relief. She looked at her watch, and it was twenty

minutes past two. She had no time to lose, but must get ready at once.

Afraid, in her extreme perturbation, of the loneliness of the deserted

rooms, and of half-imagined faces peeping from behind every open door

in them, Miss Pross got a basin of cold water and began laving her eyes,

which were swollen and red. Haunted by her feverish apprehensions, she

could not bear to have her sight obscured for a minute at a time by the

dripping water, but constantly paused and looked round to see that there

was no one watching her. In one of those pauses she recoiled and cried

out, for she saw a figure standing in the room.

The basin fell to the ground broken, and the water flowed to the feet of

Madame Defarge. By strange stern ways, and through much staining blood,

those feet had come to meet that water.

Madame Defarge looked coldly at her, and said, “The wife of Evrémonde;

where is she?”

It flashed upon Miss Pross’s mind that the doors were all standing open,

and would suggest the flight. Her first act was to shut them. There were

four in the room, and she shut them all. She then placed herself before

the door of the chamber which Lucie had occupied.

Madame Defarge’s dark eyes followed her through this rapid movement,

and rested on her when it was finished. Miss Pross had nothing beautiful

about her; years had not tamed the wildness, or softened the grimness,

of her appearance; but, she too was a determined woman in her different

way, and she measured Madame Defarge with her eyes, every inch.

“You might, from your appearance, be the wife of Lucifer,” said Miss

Pross, in her breathing. “Nevertheless, you shall not get the better of

me. I am an Englishwoman.”

Madame Defarge looked at her scornfully, but still with something of

Miss Pross’s own perception that they two were at bay. She saw a tight,

hard, wiry woman before her, as Mr. Lorry had seen in the same figure a

woman with a strong hand, in the years gone by. She knew full well that

Miss Pross was the family’s devoted friend; Miss Pross knew full well

that Madame Defarge was the family’s malevolent enemy.

“On my way yonder,” said Madame Defarge, with a slight movement of

her hand towards the fatal spot, “where they reserve my chair and my

knitting for me, I am come to make my compliments to her in passing. I

wish to see her.”

“I know that your intentions are evil,” said Miss Pross, “and you may

depend upon it, I’ll hold my own against them.”

Each spoke in her own language; neither understood the other’s words;

both were very watchful, and intent to deduce from look and manner, what

the unintelligible words meant.

“It will do her no good to keep herself concealed from me at this

moment,” said Madame Defarge. “Good patriots will know what that means.

Let me see her. Go tell her that I wish to see her. Do you hear?”

“If those eyes of yours were bed-winches,” returned Miss Pross, “and I

was an English four-poster, they shouldn’t loose a splinter of me. No,

you wicked foreign woman; I am your match.”

Madame Defarge was not likely to follow these idiomatic remarks in

detail; but, she so far understood them as to perceive that she was set

at naught.

“Woman imbecile and pig-like!” said Madame Defarge, frowning. “I take no

answer from you. I demand to see her. Either tell her that I demand

to see her, or stand out of the way of the door and let me go to her!”

This, with an angry explanatory wave of her right arm.

“I little thought,” said Miss Pross, “that I should ever want to

understand your nonsensical language; but I would give all I have,

except the clothes I wear, to know whether you suspect the truth, or any

part of it.”

Neither of them for a single moment released the other’s eyes. Madame

Defarge had not moved from the spot where she stood when Miss Pross

first became aware of her; but, she now advanced one step.

“I am a Briton,” said Miss Pross, “I am desperate. I don’t care an

English Twopence for myself. I know that the longer I keep you here, the

greater hope there is for my Ladybird. I’ll not leave a handful of that

dark hair upon your head, if you lay a finger on me!”

Thus Miss Pross, with a shake of her head and a flash of her eyes

between every rapid sentence, and every rapid sentence a whole breath.

Thus Miss Pross, who had never struck a blow in her life.

But, her courage was of that emotional nature that it brought the

irrepressible tears into her eyes. This was a courage that Madame

Defarge so little comprehended as to mistake for weakness. “Ha, ha!” she

laughed, “you poor wretch! What are you worth! I address myself to that

Doctor.” Then she raised her voice and called out, “Citizen Doctor! Wife

of Evrémonde! Child of Evrémonde! Any person but this miserable fool,

answer the Citizeness Defarge!”

Perhaps the following silence, perhaps some latent disclosure in the

expression of Miss Pross’s face, perhaps a sudden misgiving apart from

either suggestion, whispered to Madame Defarge that they were gone.

Three of the doors she opened swiftly, and looked in.

“Those rooms are all in disorder, there has been hurried packing, there

are odds and ends upon the ground. There is no one in that room behind

you! Let me look.”

“Never!” said Miss Pross, who understood the request as perfectly as

Madame Defarge understood the answer.

“If they are not in that room, they are gone, and can be pursued and

brought back,” said Madame Defarge to herself.

“As long as you don’t know whether they are in that room or not, you are

uncertain what to do,” said Miss Pross to herself; “and you shall not

know that, if I can prevent your knowing it; and know that, or not know

that, you shall not leave here while I can hold you.”

“I have been in the streets from the first, nothing has stopped me,

I will tear you to pieces, but I will have you from that door,” said

Madame Defarge.

“We are alone at the top of a high house in a solitary courtyard, we are

not likely to be heard, and I pray for bodily strength to keep you here,

while every minute you are here is worth a hundred thousand guineas to

my darling,” said Miss Pross.

Madame Defarge made at the door. Miss Pross, on the instinct of the

moment, seized her round the waist in both her arms, and held her tight.

It was in vain for Madame Defarge to struggle and to strike; Miss Pross,

with the vigorous tenacity of love, always so much stronger than hate,

clasped her tight, and even lifted her from the floor in the struggle

that they had. The two hands of Madame Defarge buffeted and tore her

face; but, Miss Pross, with her head down, held her round the waist, and

clung to her with more than the hold of a drowning woman.

Soon, Madame Defarge’s hands ceased to strike, and felt at her encircled

waist. “It is under my arm,” said Miss Pross, in smothered tones, “you

shall not draw it. I am stronger than you, I bless Heaven for it. I hold

you till one or other of us faints or dies!”

Madame Defarge’s hands were at her bosom. Miss Pross looked up, saw

what it was, struck at it, struck out a flash and a crash, and stood

alone--blinded with smoke.

All this was in a second. As the smoke cleared, leaving an awful

stillness, it passed out on the air, like the soul of the furious woman

whose body lay lifeless on the ground.

In the first fright and horror of her situation, Miss Pross passed the

body as far from it as she could, and ran down the stairs to call for

fruitless help. Happily, she bethought herself of the consequences of

what she did, in time to check herself and go back. It was dreadful to

go in at the door again; but, she did go in, and even went near it, to

get the bonnet and other things that she must wear. These she put on,

out on the staircase, first shutting and locking the door and taking

away the key. She then sat down on the stairs a few moments to breathe

and to cry, and then got up and hurried away.

By good fortune she had a veil on her bonnet, or she could hardly have

gone along the streets without being stopped. By good fortune, too, she

was naturally so peculiar in appearance as not to show disfigurement

like any other woman. She needed both advantages, for the marks of

gripping fingers were deep in her face, and her hair was torn, and her

dress (hastily composed with unsteady hands) was clutched and dragged a

hundred ways.

In crossing the bridge, she dropped the door key in the river. Arriving

at the cathedral some few minutes before her escort, and waiting there,

she thought, what if the key were already taken in a net, what if

it were identified, what if the door were opened and the remains

discovered, what if she were stopped at the gate, sent to prison, and

charged with murder! In the midst of these fluttering thoughts, the

escort appeared, took her in, and took her away.

“Is there any noise in the streets?” she asked him.

“The usual noises,” Mr. Cruncher replied; and looked surprised by the

question and by her aspect.

“I don’t hear you,” said Miss Pross. “What do you say?”

It was in vain for Mr. Cruncher to repeat what he said; Miss Pross could

not hear him. “So I’ll nod my head,” thought Mr. Cruncher, amazed, “at

all events she’ll see that.” And she did.

“Is there any noise in the streets now?” asked Miss Pross again,

presently.

Again Mr. Cruncher nodded his head.

“I don’t hear it.”

“Gone deaf in an hour?” said Mr. Cruncher, ruminating, with his mind

much disturbed; “wot’s come to her?”

“I feel,” said Miss Pross, “as if there had been a flash and a crash,

and that crash was the last thing I should ever hear in this life.”

“Blest if she ain’t in a queer condition!” said Mr. Cruncher, more and

more disturbed. “Wot can she have been a takin’, to keep her courage up?

Hark! There’s the roll of them dreadful carts! You can hear that, miss?”

“I can hear,” said Miss Pross, seeing that he spoke to her, “nothing. O,

my good man, there was first a great crash, and then a great stillness,

and that stillness seems to be fixed and unchangeable, never to be

broken any more as long as my life lasts.”

“If she don’t hear the roll of those dreadful carts, now very nigh their

journey’s end,” said Mr. Cruncher, glancing over his shoulder, “it’s my

opinion that indeed she never will hear anything else in this world.”

And indeed she never did.

CHAPTER XV.

The Footsteps Die Out For Ever

Along the Paris streets, the death-carts rumble, hollow and harsh. Six

tumbrils carry the day’s wine to La Guillotine. All the devouring and

insatiate Monsters imagined since imagination could record itself,

are fused in the one realisation, Guillotine. And yet there is not in

France, with its rich variety of soil and climate, a blade, a leaf,

a root, a sprig, a peppercorn, which will grow to maturity under

conditions more certain than those that have produced this horror. Crush

humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will

twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of

rapacious license and oppression over again, and it will surely yield

the same fruit according to its kind.

Six tumbrils roll along the streets. Change these back again to what

they were, thou powerful enchanter, Time, and they shall be seen to be

the carriages of absolute monarchs, the equipages of feudal nobles, the

toilettes of flaring Jezebels, the churches that are not my father’s

house but dens of thieves, the huts of millions of starving peasants!

No; the great magician who majestically works out the appointed order

of the Creator, never reverses his transformations. “If thou be changed

into this shape by the will of God,” say the seers to the enchanted, in

the wise Arabian stories, “then remain so! But, if thou wear this

form through mere passing conjuration, then resume thy former aspect!”

Changeless and hopeless, the tumbrils roll along.

As the sombre wheels of the six carts go round, they seem to plough up

a long crooked furrow among the populace in the streets. Ridges of faces

are thrown to this side and to that, and the ploughs go steadily onward.

So used are the regular inhabitants of the houses to the spectacle, that

in many windows there are no people, and in some the occupation of the

hands is not so much as suspended, while the eyes survey the faces in

the tumbrils. Here and there, the inmate has visitors to see the sight;

then he points his finger, with something of the complacency of a

curator or authorised exponent, to this cart and to this, and seems to

tell who sat here yesterday, and who there the day before.

Of the riders in the tumbrils, some observe these things, and all

things on their last roadside, with an impassive stare; others, with

a lingering interest in the ways of life and men. Some, seated with

drooping heads, are sunk in silent despair; again, there are some so

heedful of their looks that they cast upon the multitude such glances as

they have seen in theatres, and in pictures. Several close their eyes,

and think, or try to get their straying thoughts together. Only one, and

he a miserable creature, of a crazed aspect, is so shattered and made

drunk by horror, that he sings, and tries to dance. Not one of the whole

number appeals by look or gesture, to the pity of the people.

There is a guard of sundry horsemen riding abreast of the tumbrils,

and faces are often turned up to some of them, and they are asked some

question. It would seem to be always the same question, for, it is

always followed by a press of people towards the third cart. The

horsemen abreast of that cart, frequently point out one man in it with

their swords. The leading curiosity is, to know which is he; he stands

at the back of the tumbril with his head bent down, to converse with a

mere girl who sits on the side of the cart, and holds his hand. He has

no curiosity or care for the scene about him, and always speaks to the

girl. Here and there in the long street of St. Honore, cries are raised

against him. If they move him at all, it is only to a quiet smile, as he

shakes his hair a little more loosely about his face. He cannot easily

touch his face, his arms being bound.

On the steps of a church, awaiting the coming-up of the tumbrils, stands

the Spy and prison-sheep. He looks into the first of them: not there.

He looks into the second: not there. He already asks himself, “Has he

sacrificed me?” when his face clears, as he looks into the third.

“Which is Evrémonde?” says a man behind him.

“That. At the back there.”

“With his hand in the girl’s?”

“Yes.”

The man cries, “Down, Evrémonde! To the Guillotine all aristocrats!

Down, Evrémonde!”

“Hush, hush!” the Spy entreats him, timidly.

“And why not, citizen?”

“He is going to pay the forfeit: it will be paid in five minutes more.

Let him be at peace.”

But the man continuing to exclaim, “Down, Evrémonde!” the face of

Evrémonde is for a moment turned towards him. Evrémonde then sees the

Spy, and looks attentively at him, and goes his way.

The clocks are on the stroke of three, and the furrow ploughed among the

populace is turning round, to come on into the place of execution, and

end. The ridges thrown to this side and to that, now crumble in and

close behind the last plough as it passes on, for all are following

to the Guillotine. In front of it, seated in chairs, as in a garden of

public diversion, are a number of women, busily knitting. On one of the

fore-most chairs, stands The Vengeance, looking about for her friend.

“Thérèse!” she cries, in her shrill tones. “Who has seen her? Thérèse

Defarge!”

“She never missed before,” says a knitting-woman of the sisterhood.

“No; nor will she miss now,” cries The Vengeance, petulantly. “Thérèse.”

“Louder,” the woman recommends.

Ay! Louder, Vengeance, much louder, and still she will scarcely hear

thee. Louder yet, Vengeance, with a little oath or so added, and yet

it will hardly bring her. Send other women up and down to seek her,

lingering somewhere; and yet, although the messengers have done dread

deeds, it is questionable whether of their own wills they will go far

enough to find her!

“Bad Fortune!” cries The Vengeance, stamping her foot in the chair, “and

here are the tumbrils! And Evrémonde will be despatched in a wink, and

she not here! See her knitting in my hand, and her empty chair ready for

her. I cry with vexation and disappointment!”

As The Vengeance descends from her elevation to do it, the tumbrils

begin to discharge their loads. The ministers of Sainte Guillotine are

robed and ready. Crash!--A head is held up, and the knitting-women who

scarcely lifted their eyes to look at it a moment ago when it could

think and speak, count One.

The second tumbril empties and moves on; the third comes up. Crash!--And

the knitting-women, never faltering or pausing in their Work, count Two.

The supposed Evrémonde descends, and the seamstress is lifted out next

after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but

still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the

crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls, and she looks into

his face and thanks him.

“But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am

naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been

able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death, that we might

have hope and comfort here to-day. I think you were sent to me by

Heaven.”

“Or you to me,” says Sydney Carton. “Keep your eyes upon me, dear child,

and mind no other object.”

“I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let

it go, if they are rapid.”

“They will be rapid. Fear not!”

The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as

if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, hand to hand, heart to

heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart

and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home

together, and to rest in her bosom.

“Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question? I

am very ignorant, and it troubles me--just a little.”

“Tell me what it is.”

“I have a cousin, an only relative and an orphan, like myself, whom I

love very dearly. She is five years younger than I, and she lives in a

farmer’s house in the south country. Poverty parted us, and she knows

nothing of my fate--for I cannot write--and if I could, how should I

tell her! It is better as it is.”

“Yes, yes: better as it is.”

“What I have been thinking as we came along, and what I am still

thinking now, as I look into your kind strong face which gives me so

much support, is this:--If the Republic really does good to the poor,

and they come to be less hungry, and in all ways to suffer less, she may

live a long time: she may even live to be old.”

“What then, my gentle sister?”

“Do you think:” the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much

endurance, fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble:

“that it will seem long to me, while I wait for her in the better land

where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?”

“It cannot be, my child; there is no Time there, and no trouble there.”

“You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the

moment come?”

“Yes.”

She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other.

The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than

a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before

him--is gone; the knitting-women count Twenty-Two.

“I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth

in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and

believeth in me shall never die.”

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing

on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells

forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away.

Twenty-Three.

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They said of him, about the city that night, that it was the

peacefullest man’s face ever beheld there. Many added that he looked

sublime and prophetic.

One of the most remarkable sufferers by the same axe--a woman--had asked

at the foot of the same scaffold, not long before, to be allowed to

write down the thoughts that were inspiring her. If he had given any

utterance to his, and they were prophetic, they would have been these:

“I see Barsad, and Cly, Defarge, The Vengeance, the Juryman, the Judge,

long ranks of the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of

the old, perishing by this retributive instrument, before it shall cease

out of its present use. I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people

rising from this abyss, and, in their struggles to be truly free, in

their triumphs and defeats, through long years to come, I see the evil

of this time and of the previous time of which this is the natural

birth, gradually making expiation for itself and wearing out.

“I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful,

prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see

Her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see her father,

aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his

healing office, and at peace. I see the good old man, so long their

friend, in ten years’ time enriching them with all he has, and passing

tranquilly to his reward.

“I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of

their descendants, generations hence. I see her, an old woman, weeping

for me on the anniversary of this day. I see her and her husband, their

course done, lying side by side in their last earthly bed, and I know

that each was not more honoured and held sacred in the other’s soul,

than I was in the souls of both.

“I see that child who lay upon her bosom and who bore my name, a man

winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him

winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the

light of his. I see the blots I threw upon it, faded away. I see him,

fore-most of just judges and honoured men, bringing a boy of my name,

with a forehead that I know and golden hair, to this place--then fair to

look upon, with not a trace of this day’s disfigurement--and I hear him

tell the child my story, with a tender and a faltering voice.

“It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a

far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.”