

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

CHAPTER XXXI.

Pondering on his unhappy lot, Joe sat and listened for a long time, expecting every moment to hear their creaking footsteps on the stairs, or to be greeted by his worthy father with a summons to capitulate unconditionally, and deliver himself up straightway.

It came on darker and darker. The old-fashioned furniture of the chamber, which was a kind of hospital for all the invalided movables in the house, grew indistinct and shadowy in its many shapes; chairs and tables, which by day were as honest cripples as need be, assumed a double and mysterious character; and one old leprous screen of faded India leather and gold binding, which had kept out many a cold blast of air in days of yore and shut in many a jolly face, frowned on him with a spectral aspect, and stood at full height in its allotted corner, like some gaunt ghost who waited to be questioned.

Still nobody came. The distant noises in the house had ceased, and out of doors all was quiet too; save for the occasional barking of some deep-mouthed dog, and the shaking of the branches by the night wind. He gazed mournfully out of window at each well-known object as it lay sleeping in the dim light of the moon; and creeping back to his former seat, thought about the late uproar, until, with long thinking, he seemed to have occurred a month ago. Thus, between dozing and thinking, and walking to the window and looking out, the night wore away; the grim old screen, and the kindred chairs and tables, began slowly to reveal themselves in their accustomed forms; the gray-eyed general seemed to wink and yawn and rouse himself, and at last he was broad awake again, and very uncomfortable and cold and haggard he looked, in the dull gray light of morning.

The sun had begun to peep above the forest trees, and already hung across the curling mist bright bars of gold, when Joe dropped from his window on the ground below, a little bundle and his trusty stick, and prepared to descend himself. It was not a very difficult task; for there were so many projections and gable ends in the way that they formed a series of clumsy steps, with no greater obstacle than a jump of some few feet at last. Joe, with his stick and bundle on his shoulder, quickly stood on the firm earth, and looked up at the old Maypole, it might be for the last time.

He didn't apostrophize it, for he was no great scholar. He didn't curse it, for he had little ill-will to give to anything on earth. He felt more affectionate and kind to it than ever he had done in all his life before, so said with all his heart, "God bless you!" as a parting wish, and turned away. He walked along at a brisk pace, big with great thoughts of going for a soldier and dying in some foreign country where it was very hot and sandy, and leaving God knows what unheard-of wealth in prize money to Dolly, who would be very much affected when she came to know of it, and full of such youthful visions, which were sometimes sanguine and sometimes melancholy, but always had her for their main point and centre, pushed on vigorously until the noise of London sounded in his ears, and the Black Lion hove in sight.

It was only eight o'clock then, and very much astonished the Black Lion was, to see him come walking in with dust upon his feet at that early hour, with no gray mare to bear him company. But as he ordered breakfast to be got ready with all speed, and on its being set before him, gave indisputable tokens of a hearty appetite, the Lion received him, as usual, with a hospitable welcome, and treated him with those marks of distinction, which, as a regular customer, and one with the freemasonry of the trade, he had a right to claim. This Lion or landlord, for he was called both man and beast, by reason of his having instructed the artist who painted his sign, to convey into the features of the lordly brute whose effigy it bore, as near a counterpart of his own face as his skill could compass and devise, was a gentleman almost as quick of apprehension, and of almost as subtle a wit, as the mighty John himself. But the difference between them lay in this; that whereas Mr. Chester was the efforts of unassisted nature, the Lion stood indebted, in no small amount, to beer, of which he swigged such copious draughts, that most of his faculties were utterly drowned and washed away, except the one great faculty of sleep, which he retained in surprising perfection. The creaking Lion over the house-door was, to say the truth, rather a drowsy, tame, and feeble lion; and as these social representatives of a conventional character (being depicted, for the most part, in impossibly attitudes and of unearthly colors) he was frequently supposed by the more ignorant and uninformed among the neighbors, to be the veritable portrait of the host as he appeared on the occasion of some great funeral ceremony or public mourning. "What noisy fellow is that in the next room?" said Joe, when he had disposed of his breakfast and had washed and brushed himself.

cried the sergeant, holding Joe's hand in his, in the excess of his admiration. "You're the boy to push your fortune. I don't say it because I bear you any envy, or would take away from the credit of the rise you will make, but if I had been bred and taught like you, I'd have been a coloured by this time."

"Tush man!" said Joe, "I'm not so young as that. Needs must when the devil drives; and the devil that drives me is an empty pocket and an unhappy home. For the present, good-by." "For king and country!" cried the sergeant, flourishing his cap. "For bread and meat!" cried Joe, snapping his fingers. And so they parted. He had very little money in his pocket; so little indeed, that after paying for his breakfast (which he was too honest and perhaps too proud to score up to his father's charge) he had but a penny left. He had courage, notwithstanding, to resist all the affectionate importunities of the sergeant, who waylaid him at the door with many protestations of eternal friendship, and did in particular request that he would do him the favor to accept of only one shilling as a temporary accommodation. Rejecting his offers both of cash and credit, Joe walked away with stick and bundle as before, bent upon getting through the day as he best could, and going down to the locksmith's in the dusk of the evening; for it should go hard, he had resolved, but he would have a parting word with charming Dolly Varden.

He went out by Islington and so on to Highgate, and sat on many stones and gates, but there were no voices in the bells to bid his turn. Since the time of noble Whittington, fair flower of merchants, I-I-I have come to have less sympathy with humankind. They only ring for money and on state occasions. Wanderers have increased in number; ships leave the Thames for distant regions, carrying from stem to stern no other cargo; the bells are silent; they ring out no entreaties or regrets; they are used to it and have grown worldly. Joe bought a roll, and reduced his purse to the condition of a defunct; of that celebrated purse of Fortunatus, which, whatever were its favored owner's necessities, had one unvarying amount in it. In these real times, when all the Fairies are dead and buried, there are a great many purses which possess that quality. The sum-total they contain is expressed in arithmetic by a circle, and whether it be added to or multiplied by its own amount, the result than any known in figures.

Evening drew on apace, and the desolate and solitary feeling of one who had no home or shelter, and was alone utterly in the world, for the first time, he bent his steps towards the locksmith's house. He had delayed till now, knowing that Mrs. Varden sometimes went out alone, or with Miggs for her sole attendant, to lectures in the evening; and devoutly hoping that this might be one of her nights of moral culture. He walked up and down before the house, on the opposite side of the way, two or three times, when as he returned to it again, he caught a glimpse of a fluttering skirt at the door. It was Dolly's—so whom else could it belong? No dress but hers had such a flow as that. He stepped up his spirits, and followed it into the workshop of the Golden Key.

His darkening the door caused her to look round. Oh that face! "If it hadn't been for that," thought Joe, "I should never have walked into poor Tom Cobb. She's twenty times handsomer than ever. She might marry a lord!" He didn't say this. He only thought it—perhaps looked it also. Dolly was glad to see him, and was so sorry her father and mother were away from home. Joe begged she wouldn't mention it on any account. Dolly hesitated to lead the way into the parlor, for there it was usually dark; at the same time she hesitated to stand talking in the workshop, which was yet light and open to the street. They had got by some means, too, before the little forge; and Joe having her hand in his (which he had no right to have, for Dolly only gave it him to shake), it was so like standing before some homely altar before married, that it was the most embarrassing state of things in the world.

"I have come," said Joe, "to say good-by to—say good-by for I don't know how many years, perhaps forever. I am going abroad." Now this was exactly what he should not have said. Here he was, talking like a gentleman at large who was free to come and go and roam about the world at his pleasure when that gallant coachmaker had vowed but the night before that Miss Varden held him bound in adamant chains; and had positively stated in so many words that she was killing him by inches, and that in a fortnight more or thereabouts he expected to make a decent end and leave the business to his mother.

Dolly released her hand, and said, "Indeed!" She remarked in the same breath that it was a fine night, and in short, betrayed no more emotion than the forge itself. "I couldn't go," said Joe, "with-out coming to see you. I hadn't the heart to."

Dolly was more sorry than she could tell, that he should have taken so much trouble. It was such a long way, and he must have such a deal to do. And how was Mr. Willet—that do you gentlemen? "Is this all you say?" cried Joe. "All! Good gracious, what did the man expect! She was obliged to take her apron in her hand and run her eyes along the hem from corner to corner, to keep herself from laughing in his face, not because his gaze confused her—not at all. Joe had not a special experience in love affairs, and had no notion how different young ladies are at different times; he had expected to take Dolly up again at the very point where he had left her after that delicious evening ride, and was no more prepared for such an alteration than to see the sun and moon change places. He had buoyed himself up all day with an indistinct idea that she would certainly say "Don't go," or "Don't leave us," or "Why do you go?" or "Why do you leave us?" and he would give him some little encouragement of that sort; he had even entertained the possibility of her bursting into tears, of her throwing herself into his arms, of her falling down in a fainting fit without previous word

Table with 4 columns: DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTMENTS, and names of saints. Includes August 31 days, 1905, and lists of saints for various days.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION BY MAIL. We make a speciality of preparing students for University and Departmental examinations. Canadian Correspondence College, Limited TORONTO, CAN.

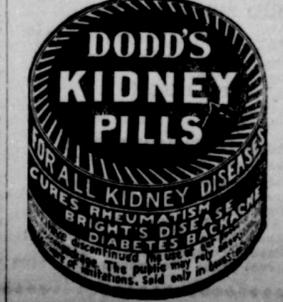
stick and bundle. The party embarked in a passage-boat bound for Gravesend, whence they were to proceed on foot to Chatham; the wind was in their favor, and they soon left London behind them, a mere dark mist—a giant phantom in the air.

CHAPTER XXXII. Misfortunes, saith the adage, never come singly. There is little doubt that troubles are exceedingly gregarious in their nature, and fly in flocks, are apt to perch capriciously, crowding on the heads of some poor wights until there is not an inch of room left on their unlucky crowns, and taking no more notice of others who offer as good resting places for the soles of their feet, than if they had no existence. It may have happened that a flight brooding over London, and looking out for Joseph Willet, whom they could not find, darted down hap-hazard on the first young man that caught their fancy, and settled on him instead. However this may be, certain it is that on the very day of Joe's departure they swarmed about the ears of Edward Chester, and did so buzz and flap their wings, and persecute him, that he was most profoundly wretched.

It was evening, and just eight o'clock, when he and his father, having wine and desert set before them, were left to themselves for the first time that day. They had dined together, but a third person had been present during the meal, and until they met at table they had not seen each other since the previous night. Edward was reserved and silent, but Chester was more than usually gay; but not caring, as it seemed, to open a conversation with one whose humor was so different, he vented the lightness of his spirit in smiles and sparkling looks, and made no effort to awaken his attention. So they remained for some time; the father lying on a sofa with his accustomed air of graceful negligence; the son seated opposite to him with downcast eyes, busied, it was plain, with painful and uneasy thoughts.

"My dear Edward," said Mr. Chester at length, with a most engaging laugh, "do not extend your drowsy influence to the decanter. Suffer that to circulate, let your spirits be never so stagnant." Edward begged his pardon, passed it and relapsed into his former state. "You do wrong not to fill your glass," said Mr. Chester, holding up his own before the light. "Wine in moderation—not in excess, for that makes men ugly—has a thousand pleasant influences. It brightens the eye, improves the voice, imparts a new vivacity to one's thoughts and conversation; you should try it, Ned."

"Ah, father!" cried his son, "if my good fellow," interposed the parent hastily, as he set down his glass, and raised his eyebrows with a startled and horrified expression, "for heaven's sake don't call me by that obsolete and ancient name. Have some regard for delicacy. Am I gray or wrinkled, do I go on crutches, have I lost my teeth, that you adopt such a mode of address? Good God, how very coarse!" "I was about to speak to you from my heart, sir," returned Edward, "in the confidence which should subsist between us; and you check me in the outset." "No do, Ned, do not," said Mr. Chester, raising his delicate hand imploringly. "Talk in that monstrous manner. About to speak from your heart is an ingenious part of our formation—the centre of the blood-vessels and all that sort of thing, which has no more to do with what you say or think, than your knees have? How can you be so very vulgar and absurd? These anatomical allusions should be left to gentlemen of the medical profession. They are really not agreeable in society. You quite surprise me, Ned."



Reduced Rates to Toronto. Specially reduced rates have been granted by all lines of travel connecting with Toronto, to be in force during the holding of the great Canadian National Exhibition, from August 26th to September 11th. In addition, special excursions will be run two or three times a week from points within a radius of 300 miles. A Requisite for the Rancher.—On the cattle ranges of the West, where men and stock are far from doctors and apothecaries, Dr. Thomas' Eclectic Oil is kept on hand by the intelligent as a ready made medicine, not only for many human ills, but as a horse and cattle medicine of surpassing merit. A horse and cattle rancher will find matter's greatly simplified by using this Oil.