

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

Finding himself at this supper, surrounded by faces with which he had been so well acquainted in old times...

not changed, unless it's for the better. They said you were, but I don't see it. You were—you were always very beautiful," said Joe...

"It's been took off!" "By George!" said the Black Lion, striking the table with his hand...

"Remember! But she said nothing. She raised her eyes for an instant. It was but a glance, a little, tearful, timid glance. It kept Joe silent though, for a long time."

CHAPTER XV.

By this Friday night—for it was on Friday in the riot week, that Emma and Dolly were rescued, by the timely aid of Joe and Edward Chester...

On the Thursday, both Houses had adjourned until the following Monday evening, declaring it impossible to pursue their deliberations with the necessary gravity and freedom...



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lace, and many families, hitherto unable to procure the means of flight, now availed themselves of the calm, and withdrew into the country.

They have a dizzy sensation in the head, the heart palpitate; they are irritable and nervous, weak and worn out, and the lightest household duties during the day seem to be a drag and a burden.

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strength to venture into the open ways, Barnaby sat in his dungeon, wondering at the silence, and listening in vain for the noise and outcry which had ushered in the night of late.

"You hope! Ay, but your hoping will not undo these chains. I hope, but they don't mind that. Grip hopes but who cares for Grip?"

"The House of Commons, sitting on Tuesday with locked and guarded doors, had passed a resolution to the effect that, as soon as the tumults subsided, it would immediately proceed to consider the petitions presented from many of his majesty's Protestant subjects, and would take the same into its serious consideration.

"Oh how much, and how keenly, the little coquette of five years ago, felt now! She had found her heart at last. Never having known its worth till now, she had never known the worth of his. How priceless it appeared!

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All remaining quiet, however, during the whole of this Friday, and on this Friday night, and no new discoveries being made, confidence began to be restored, and the most timid and desponding breathed again.

As day deepened into evening, and darkness crept into the nooks and corners of the town as if it were mustering in secret and gathering

"Mother," he said, after a long silence, "how long—how many days and nights—shall I be kept here?"

"You hope! Ay, but your hoping will not undo these chains. I hope, but they don't mind that. Grip hopes but who cares for Grip?"

"The raven gave a short, dull, melancholy croak. It said "Nobody," as plainly as a croak could speak.

"The sound of the word, or the current of his own thoughts, suggested to Grip his old phrase, "Never say die!" But he stopped short in the middle of it, drew a dismal cork, and subsided into a faint croak, as if he lacked the heart to get through the shortest sentence.

"Will they take his life as well as mine?" said Barnaby. "I wish they would. If you and I and he could die together, there would be none to feel sorry, or to grieve for us. But do what they will, I don't fear them. They will kill me—they may; I heard it said they would—but what will become of Grip when I am dead?"

"Oh! Don't you be too sure of that," cried Barnaby, with a strange pleasure in the belief that she was self-deceived, and in his own sagacity, from the first. I heard then say so to each other when they brought me to this place last night, and I believe them. Don't you cry for me. They said that I was bold, and so I am, and so I will be. You may think that I am silly, but I can die as well as another. I have done no harm, have I?" he added quickly.

"Why, then," said Barnaby, "let them do their worst. You told me once—you when I asked what death meant, that it was nothing to be feared if we did no harm. Ah! mother, you thought I had forgotten that!"

His merry laugh and playful manner smote her to the heart. She drew him closer to her, and besought him to talk to her in whispers, and to be very quiet, for it was getting dark, and their time was short, and she would soon have to leave him for the night.

"Do not ask any one where he is, or speak about him," she made answer. "Why not?" said Barnaby. "Because he is a stern man, and talks roughly? Well! I don't like him, or want to be with him by myself, but why not speak about him?"

"Because I am sorry that he is alive; sorry that he has come back; and sorry that he and you have ever met. Because, dear Barnaby, the endeavor of my life has been to keep you two asunder."

"Father and son asunder! Why?" "He has," she whispered in his ear, "he has shed blood. The time has come when you must know it. He has shed the blood of one who loved him well, and trusted him, and never did him wrong in word or deed."

Barnaby recoiled in horror, and glancing at his stained wrist for an instant, wrapped it, shuddering, in his dress.

"But," she added hastily as the key turned in the lock, "and although we shun him, he is your father, dearest, and I am his wretched wife. They seek his life, and he will lose it. It must not be by our means; nay, if we could win him back to penitence, we should be bound to love him yet. Do not seem to know him, except as one who fled with you from the jail, and if they question you about him, do not answer them. God be with you through the night, dear boy! God be with you!"

She tore herself away, and in a few seconds Barnaby was alone. He stood for a long time rooted to the spot, with his face hidden in his hands, then flung himself, sobbing, upon his miserable bed.

But the moon came slowly up in all her gentle glory, and the stars looked out, and through the small compass of the grated window, as through the narrow crevice of one good deed in a murky life of guilt, the face of Heaven shone bright and merciful. He raised his head, gazed upward at the quiet sky, which seemed to smile upon the earth in sadness, as if the night, more thoughtful than the day, looked down in sorrow on the sufferings and evil deeds of men; and felt its peace sink deep into his heart. He, a poor idiot, caged in his narrow cell, was as much lifted up to God, while gazing on the mild light, as the freest and most favored man in all the spacious city; and in his ill-remembered prayer, and in the fragment of the childish hymn, with which he sung and crooned himself asleep, there breathed as true a spirit as ever studied homily expressed, or old cathedral arches echoed.

As his mother crossed a yard on her way out, she saw through a grated door which separated it from another court, her husband, walking round and round, with his hands folded on his breast, and his head hung down. She asked the man who conducted her, if she might speak a word with this prisoner. Yes, but she must be quick, for he was locking up for the night, and there was but a minute or so to spare. Saying this, he unlocked the door, and bade her go in.

He started backward, trembling from head to foot; but seeing who it was, demanded why she came there. Before she could reply, he spoke again.

"Am I to live or die? Do you do murder too, or spare?" "My son—our son," she answered, "is in this prison."

"What is that to me?" he cried, stamping impatiently on the stone pavement. "I know it. He can no more aid me than I can aid him. If you are come to talk of him, begone!"

As he spoke he resumed his walk, and hurried round the court as before. When he came again to where she stood, he stopped, and said: "Am I to live or die? Do you repent?"

"Oh!—do you?" she answered. "Will you, while time remains? Do not believe that I could save you, if I dared."

"Say if you would," he answered with an oath, as he tried to disengage himself and pass on. "Say if you would."

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"Listen to me for one moment," she returned; "for but a moment. I am but newly risen from a sick-bed, from which I never hoped to rise again. The best among us think, at such a time, of good intentions half performed and duties left undone. If I have ever since that fateful night, omitted to pray for your repentance before death—if I omitted, even then, anything which might tend to urge it on you when the horror of your crime was fresh—in our later meeting; I yielded to the dread that was upon me, and forgot to fall upon my knees and solemnly adjure you, in the name of him you sent to his account with Heaven, to prepare for the retribution which must come, and which is stealing on you now—I humbly kneel before you, and in the agony of supplication in which you see me, beseech that you will let me make atonement."

"What is the meaning of your entreating words?" he answered roughly. "Speak so that I may understand you."

(To be continued.)

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Calendar table for March 1906, listing days of month, day of week, color of vestment, and feast days such as Our Lady of Lourdes, First Sunday of Lent, etc.

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