

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

Miss Miggs was at some trouble to improve her for this state of mind, and to entreat her to take example by herself, who, she said, was now receiving back, with interest, tenfold the amount of her subscriptions to the red-brick dwelling-house, in the articles of peace of mind and a quiet conscience.

Having delivered these ironical passages with a most wonderful volubility, and with a shrillness perfectly deafening (especially when she jerked out the interjections), Miss Miggs, from mere habit, and not because weeping was at all appropriate to the occasion, which was one of triumph, concluded by bursting into a flood of tears, and calling in an impassioned manner on the name of Simmons.

What Emma Haredeale and Dolly would have done, or how long Miss Miggs, now that she had hoisted her true colors, would have gone on waving them before their astonished senses, it is impossible to tell. Nor is it necessary to speculate on these matters, for a startling interruption occurred at that moment, which took their whole attention by storm.

This was a violent knocking at the door of the house, and then its sudden bursting open; which was immediately succeeded by a scuffle in the room without, and the clash of weapons. Transported with the hope that rescue had at length arrived, Emma and Dolly shrieked aloud for help; nor were their shrieks unanswered, for after a hurried interval, a man, bearing in one hand a drawn sword, and in the other a taper, rushed into the chamber where they were confined.

It was some check upon their transport to find in this person an entire stranger, but they appealed to him, nevertheless, and besought him, in impassioned language, to restore them to their friends.

"For what other purpose am I here?" he answered, closing the door, and standing with his back against it. "With what object have I made my way to this place, through difficulty and danger but to preserve you?"

With a joy for which it was impossible to find adequate expression, they embraced each other, and thanked Heaven for this most timely aid. Their deliverer stepped forward for a moment to put the light upon the table, and immediately returning to his former position against the door, bared his head and looked on smilingly.

"You have news of my uncle, sir?" said Emma, turning hastily towards him.

"And of my father and mother?" added Dolly.

"Yes," he said. "Good news. They are alive and unhurt!" they both cried at once.

"Yes, and unhurt," he rejoined.

"And close at hand?"

"I did not say close at hand," he answered smoothly; "they are at no great distance. Your friends, sweet one," he added, addressing Dolly, "are within a few hours' journey. You will be restored to them, I hope, to-night."

"My uncle, sir?" faltered Emma.

"Your uncle, dear Miss Haredeale, happily—I say happily, because he has succeeded where many of our creed have failed, and is safe—has crossed the sea, and is out of Britain."

"I thank God for it," said Emma, faintly.

"You say well. You have reason to be thankful; greater reason than it is possible for you, who have seen but one night of these cruel outrages, to imagine."

"Does he desire," said Emma, "that I should follow him?"

"Do you ask if he desires it?" cried the stranger in surprise. "If he desires it! But you do not know the danger of remaining in England, the difficulty of escape, or the price hundreds would pay to secure the means, when you make that inquiry. Pardon me. I had forgotten that you could not, being prisoner here."

"I gather, sir," said Emma, after a moment's pause, "from what you hint at, but fear to tell me, that I have witnessed but the beginning, and the least, of the violence to which we are exposed, and that it has not yet slackened in its fury?"

My only becoming occupations is to help young flaunting pagans to brush and comb and titivate themselves into whitening and suppelichres, and leave the young men to think that there ain't a bit of padding in it nor no pinching ins oor fillings nor pomatums nor deceits nor earthly wanties—ain't it, miss! Yes, to be sure it is—ho yes!"

He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, lifted up his hands, and with the same smooth smile, which was not a pleasant one to see, cast his eyes upon the ground, and remained silent.

"You may venture, sir, to speak plain," said Emma, "and to tell me the worst. We have undergone some preparation for it."

But here Dolly interposed, and entreated her not to hear the worst but the best, and besought the gentleman to tell them the best, and to keep the remainder of his news until they were safe among their friends again.

"It is told in three words," he said, glancing at the locksmith's daughter with a look of some pleasure. "The people have risen to a man, against us; the streets are filled with soldiers, who support them and do their bidding. We have no protection but from above, and no safety but in flight; and that is a poor resource; for we are watched on every hand, and detained here, both by force and fraud. Miss Haredeale, I cannot bear—believe me, that I cannot bear—by speaking of myself, or what I have done, or am prepared to do, to seem to vaunt my services before you. But, having powerful Protestant connections, and having my whole wealth embarked with theirs, in shipping and commerce, I happily possessed the means of saving your uncle. I have the means of saving you, and in redemption of my sacred promise, made to him, I am here, pledged not to leave you until I have placed you in his arms. The treachery or penitence of one of the men about you, led to the discovery of your place of confinement, and that I have forced my way here, sword in hand, you see."

"You bring," said Emma, faltering, "some note or token from my uncle?"

"No, he doesn't," cried Dolly, pointing at him earnestly; "now I am sure he doesn't. Don't go with him for the world."

"Hush, pretty fool—be silent," he replied, frowning angrily upon her. "No, Miss Haredeale, I have no letter, nor any token of any kind; for while I sympathize with you, and such as you, on whom misfortune so heavy and so undeserved has fallen, I value my life. I carry, therefore, no writing which, found upon me, would lead to its certain loss. I never thought of bringing any other token, nor did Mr. Haredeale think of intrusting me with one—possibly because he had good experience of my faith and honesty, and owed his life to me."

There was a reproof conveyed in these words, which, to a nature like Emma Haredeale's, was well addressed. But Dolly, who was differently constituted, was by no means touched by it, and still conjured her, in all the terms of affection and attachment she could think of, not to be lured away.

"Time presses," said their visitor, who, although he sought to express the deepest interest, had something cold and even in his speech, that grated on the ear; "and danger surrounds us. If I have exposed myself to it, in vain, let it be so; but if you and he should ever meet again, do me justice. If you decide to remain (as I think you do), remember, Miss Haredeale, that I left you with a solemn caution, and acquitting myself of all the consequences to which you expose yourself."

"Stay, sir!" cried Emma—"one moment, I beg you. Cannot we"—and she drew Dolly closer to her—"cannot we go together?"

"The task of conveying one female in safety through such scenes as we must encounter, to say nothing of attracting the attention of those who crowd the streets," he answered, "is enough. I have said that she will be restored to her friends to-night. If you accept the service I tender, Miss Haredeale, she shall be instantly placed in safe conduct, and that promise redeemed. You decide to remain? People of all ranks and creeds are flying from the town, which is sacked from end to end. Let me be of use in some quarter. Do you stay, or go?"

"Dolly," said Emma, in a hurried manner, "my dear girl, this is our last hope. If we part now, it is only that we may meet again in happiness and honor. I will trust to this gentleman."

"No—no!" cried Dolly, clinging to her. "Pray, pray, do not!"

"You hear," said Emma, "that to-night—only to-night—within a few hours—think of that!—you will be among those who would die of grief to lose you, and who are now plunging in the deepest misery for your sake. Pray for me, dear girl, as I will for you; and never forget the many quiet hours we have passed together. Say one 'God bless you!' Say that at parting!"

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But Dolly could say nothing; no, not when Emma kissed her cheek a hundred times, and covered it with tears, could she do more than hang upon her neck, and sob, and clasp, and hold her tight.

"We have time for no more of this!" cried the man, unditching her hands, and pushing her roughly off, as he drew Emma Haredeale towards the door: "Now! Quick, outside there! are you ready?"

"Ay!" cried a loud voice, which made him start. "Quite ready! Stand back here, for your lives!"

And in an instant he was felled like an ox in the butcher's shambles—struck down as though a block of marble had fallen from the roof and crushed him—and cheerful light, and beaming faces came pouring in—and Emma was clasped in her uncle's embrace and Dolly, with a shriek that pierced the air, fell into the arms of her father and mother.

What fainting there was, what laughing, what crying, what sobbing, what smiling, how much questioning, no answering, all talking together, all bestirring themselves with joy, what kissing, congratulating, embracing, shaking of hands, and falling into all these raptures, over and over again, no language can describe.

At length, and after a long time, the old locksmith went up and fairly hugged two strangers, who had stood apart and left them to themselves, and then they saw—whom? Yes, Edward Chester and Joseph Willet.

"See here!" cried the locksmith. "See here! where would any of us have been without these two? Oh, Mr. Edward, Mr. Edward—oh, Joe, Joe, how light, and yet how full you have made my old heart to-night!"

"It was Mr. Edward that knocked him down, sir," said Joe: "I longed to do it, but I gave it up to him. Come, you brave and honest gentleman! Get your senses together, for you haven't long to lie here."

He had his foot upon the breast of their sham deliverer, in the absence of a spare arm; and gave him a gentle roll as he spoke. Gashford, for it was no other, crouching, yet malignant, raised his scowling face, like sin subdued, and pleaded to be gently used.

"I have access to all my lord's papers, Mr. Haredeale," he said in a submissive voice. Mr. Haredeale keeping his back towards him, and not once looking round; "there are very important documents among them. There are a great many in secret drawers, and distributed in various places, known only to my lord and me. I can give some very valuable information, and render important assistance to any inquiry. You will have to answer it if I receive ill usage."

"Pah!" cried Joe, in deep disgust. "Get up, man; you're waited for outside. Get up, do you hear?"

Gashford slowly rose, and picking up his hat, and looking with a baffled malevolence, yet with an air of despicable humility all round the room, crawled out.

"And now, gentlemen," said Joe, who seemed to be the spokesman of the party, for all the rest were silent; "the sooner we get back to the Black Lion the better, perhaps."

Mr. Haredeale nodded assent, and drawing his niece's arm through his, and taking one of her hands between his own, passed out straightway, followed by the locksmith, Mrs. Varden and Dolly—who would scarcely have presented a sufficient surface for all the hugs and caresses they bestowed upon her though she had been a dozen Dollys. Edward Chester and Joe followed.

And did Dolly ever once look behind—not once? Was there not one little fleeting glimpse of the dark eyelash, almost resting on her flushed cheek, and of the downcast sparkling eye, that had? Joe thought there was—and he is not likely to have been mistaken, for there were not many eyes like Dolly's, that's the truth.

The outer room through which they had to pass, was full of men; among them Mr. Dennis, in safe keeping; and there had been since yesterday, lying in hiding behind a wooden screen which was now thrown down, Simon Tappertit, the recreant Prentice, burned and bruised, and with a gunshot wound in his body; and his legs—his perfect legs, the pride and glory of his life, the comfort of his whole existence—crushed into shapeless ugliness. Wondering no longer at the means they had heard, Dolly crept closer to her father, and shuddered at the sight, but neither bruises, burns, nor gunshot wound, nor all the torture of his shattered limbs, sent half so keen a pang to Simon's breast as Dolly passing out with Joe for her preserver.

A coach was ready at the door, and Dolly found herself safe and whole inside, between her father and mother, with Emma Haredeale, and her uncle, quite real, sitting opposite. But there was no Joe, no Edward; and they had said nothing. They had only bowed once, and kept at a distance. Dear heart! what a long way it was to the Black Lion.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Black Lion was so far off, and occupied such a length of time in the getting at, that notwithstanding the strong presumptive evidence she had about her of the late events being real and of actual occurrence, Dolly could not divest herself of the belief that she must be in a dream which was lasting all night. Nor was she quite certain that she saw and heard with her own proper senses, even when the coach, in the fulness

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of time, stopped at the Black Lion, and the host of that tavern approached in a gush of cheerful light to help them to dismount, and give them hearty welcome.

There too, at the coach door, one on one side, one upon the other, were already Edward Chester and Joe Willet, who must have followed in another coach; and this was such a strange and unaccountable proceeding, that Dolly was the more inclined to favor the idea of her being fast asleep. But when Mr. Willet appeared—old John himself—so heavy-headed and obstinate, and with such a double chin as the liveliest imagination could never in its boldest flights have conjured up; in all its vast proportions—then she stood corrected, and unwillingly admitted to herself that she was broad awake.

And Joe had lost an arm—be that well-made, handsome, gallant fellow! As Dolly glanced towards him and thought of the pain he must have suffered, and the far-off places in which he had been wandering, and wondered who had been his nurse, and hoped that whoever it was, she had been as kind and gentle and considerate as she would have been, the tears came rising to her bright eyes, one by one, little by little, until she could keep them back no longer, and so, before them all, wept bitterly.

"We are all safe now, Dolly," said her father, kindly. "We shall not be separated any more. Cheer up, my love, cheer up!"

The locksmith's wife knew better perhaps than he, what ailed her daughter. But Mrs. Varden being quite an altered woman—for the riots had done that good—added her word to his, and comforted her with similar representations.

"Mayhap," said Mr. Willet, senior, looking round upon the company, "she's hungry. That's what it is, depend upon it—I am, myself."

The Black Lion, who, like old John, had been waiting supper past all reasonable and conscientious hours, hailed this as a philosophical discovery of the profoundest and most penetrating kind; and the table being already spread, they sat down to supper straightway.

The conversation was not of the liveliest nature, nor were the appetites of some among them very keen. But in both these respects, old John more than atoned for any deficiency on the part of the rest, and very much distinguished himself.

It was not in point of actual conversation that Mr. Willet shone so brilliantly, for he had none of his old cronies to "tackle," and was rather timorous of venturing on Joe; having certain vague misgivings within him, that he was ready on the shortest notice, and on receipt of the slightest offence, to fell the Black Lion to the floor of his own parlor, and immediately withdraw to China or some other remote and unknown region, there to dwell forever, or at least until he had got rid of his remaining arm and both legs, and perhaps an eye or so, into the bargain. It was with a peculiar kind of pantomime that Mr. Willet filled up

every pause; and in this he was considered by the Black Lion, who had been his familiar acquaintance for some years, quite to surpass and go beyond himself, and outrun the expectations of his most admiring friends.

The subject that worked in Mr. Willet's mind, and occasioned these demonstrations, was no other than his son's bodily disfigurement, which he had never yet got himself thoroughly to believe, or comprehend. Shortly after their first meeting, he had been observed to wander, in a state of great perplexity, to the kitchen, and to direct his gaze towards the fire, as if in search of his usual adviser in all matters of doubt and difficulty. But there being no boiler at the Black Lion, and the rioters having so beaten and battered his own that it was quite unfit for further service, he wandered out again, in a perfect bog of uncertainty and mental confusion, and in that state took the strangest means of resolving his doubts; such as feeling the sleeve of his son's great coat as deeming it possible that his arm might be there; looking at his own arm and those of everybody else, as if to assure himself that two and not one was the usual allowance; sitting by the hour together in a brown study, as if he were endeavoring to recall Joe's image in his younger days, and to remember whether he really had in those times one arm or a pair; and employing himself in many other speculations of the same kind.

(To be continued.)

THE HOLY FATHER'S "BAD HABIT."

Talking to the Cardinals who had come to congratulate him on his seventieth birthday, Pius X. said: "I never thought I would learn as much in my old days as I am doing. For instance," he added, with a sunny smile, "I write my name without muzzing up a cossack worth 200 francs." And he explained: "For years I had indulged in the habit of wiping my pen on the left sleeve of my coat before I began and during writing. Of course that didn't matter much as long as I wore black clothes, but when I donned the white Papal habit things looked different, and so did I when I came from my writing room. For a time my valet didn't know where to get enough clothes for me to wear. Then I determined to break with this bad habit and I did. One can give up anything if one but tries hard enough."

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