

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

"She knows," was Barnaby's timid answer, pointing to his mother—"I always, I believe, I believe..."

"From his birth," said the widow. "I don't believe it," cried the gentleman, "not a bit of it. It's an excuse not to work. There's nothing like fogging to cure that disorder. I'd make a difference in him in ten minutes, I'll be bound."

"Heaven has made none in more than twice ten years, sir," said the widow mildly. "Then why don't you shut him up? we pay enough for county institutions, damn 'em, but tho' you'd rather drag him about to excite charity—of course. Ay, I know thee."

Now this gentleman had various endearing appellations among his intimate friends. By some he was called "a country gentleman of the true school," by some "a fine old country gentleman," by some "a sportsman."

"I can hardly expect them to sell the bird, against their own desire," she faltered. "If they prefer to keep him..."

"Prefer to keep him!" he echoed. "These people, who go tramping about the country, a pilfering and vagabonding on the hands, prefer to keep a bird, when a landed proprietor or a justice asks his price! That old woman's been to school. I know she has. Don't tell me no," he roared to the widow. "I say, yes."

Barnaby's mother pleaded guilty to the accusation, and hoped there was no harm in it. "No harm!" said the gentleman. "No. No harm. No harm, ye old rebel, not a bit of harm. If my clerk was here, I'd set ye in jail for prowling up and down, on the look-out for petty larcenies, ye limb of a rascal. Here, Simon, put these pilferers out, shove 'em into the road, out with 'em! Ye don't want to sell the bird, ye that come here to double-dog-dangle me, set the dogs upon 'em!"

"They waited for no further dismissal, but fled precipitately, leaving the gentleman to storm away by himself (for the poor lady had already retreated), and making a great many vain attempts to silence Grip, who, excited by the noise, drew corks enough for a city feast as they hurried down the avenue, and appeared to congratulate himself beyond measure on having been the cause of the disturbance. When they had nearly reached the lodge, another servant, emerging from the shrubbery, feigned to be very active in ordering them off, but this man put a crown into the widow's hand, and whispering that his lady sent it, thrust them gently from the gate."

"This incident only suggested to the widow's mind, when they halted at an alehouse some miles further on, and heard the justice's character as given by his friends, that perhaps something more than capacity of stomach and tastes for the kennel and the stable, were required to form either a perfect country gentleman, a thoroughbred Englishman, or a genuine John Bull, and that possibly the terms were sometimes misapplied, not to say disgraced. She little thought then, that a circumstance so slight would ever influence their future fortunes, but time and experience enlightened her in this respect."

"Mother," said Barnaby, as they were sitting next day in a wagon which was to take them to within ten miles of the capital, "we're going to London first, you said. Shall we see that blind man there?"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Uncertain where to go next, and bewildered by the crowd of people who were already astir, they sat down in one of the recesses on the bridge, to rest. They soon became aware that the stream of life was at pouring one way, and that a vast throng of persons were crossing the river from the Middlesex to the Surrey shore, in unusual haste and evident excitement. They were, for the most part, in knots of two or three, or sometimes half a dozen; they spoke little together—many of them were quite silent, and hurried on as if they had one absorbing object in view, which was common to them all.

They were surprised to see that nearly every man in this great concourse, which still came pouring past, without slackening in the least, wore on his hat a blue cockade, and that the chance passengers who were not so decorated, appeared in various ways to escape observation or attack and gave them the wall as if they would conciliate them. This, however, was natural enough, considering their inferiority in point of numbers, for the proportion of those who wore blue cockades, to those who were dressed as usual, was at least forty or fifty to one. There was no quarrelling, however; the blue cockades went swarming on, passing each other when they could, and making all the speed that was possible in such a multitude, and exchanged nothing more than looks, and very often not even those, with such of the passers-by as were not of their number."

At first, the current of people had been confined to the two pathways, and but a few eager stragglers kept the road. But after half an hour or so, the passage was completely blocked up by the great press, which, being now closely wedged together, and impeded by the carts and coaches, it encountered, moved but slowly, and was sometimes at a stand for five or ten minutes together."

After the lapse of nearly two hours the numbers began to diminish visibly, and gradually dwindling away, by little and little, left the bridge quite clear, save that, now and then, some hot and dusty man with the cockade in his hat, and his coat thrown over his shoulder, went panting by, fearful of being too late, or stopped to ask which way his friends had taken, and being directed, hastened on again like one refreshed. In this comparative solitude, which seemed quite strange and novel after the late crowd, the widow had for the first time an opportunity of inquiring of an old man who came and sat beside them, what the meaning of that great assembly, was."

"Why, where have you come from," he returned, "that you haven't heard of Lord George Gordon's great association? This is the day that he presents the petition against the Catholics. God bless him!"

"What have all these men to do with that?" she asked. "What have they to do with it?" the old man replied. "Why, how you talk! Don't you know his lordship has declared he won't present it to the house at all, unless it is attended by a crowd of four or five thousand good and true men at least? There's a crowd for you!"

"A crowd indeed!" said Barnaby. "Do you hear that, mother?" "And they're mustering yonder, as I am told," resumed the old man, "nigh upon a hundred thousand strong. Ah! Let Lord George glory. He knows his power. There'll be a good many faces inside them three windows over there," and he pointed to where the House of Commons overlooked the river, "that'll turn pale when good Lord George gets up this afternoon, and with reason too! Ay, ay. Let his lordship alone. Let him alone. He knows!"

"And so," said Barnaby, looking wistfully at her, "he talked to me about gold, which is a rare thing, and say what you will, a thing you would like to have, I know. And because he came and went away so strangely—just as white-headed old men come sometimes to my bed's foot in the night and say what I can't remember when the bright day returns. He told me he'd come back. I wonder why he broke his word."

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and made him a low bow, "it's no great matter on a day like this, which every Englishman will remember with delight and pride. Put on your hat, friend, and follow us, for you lag behind and are late. It's past ten now. Didn't you know that the hour of assembling was ten o'clock?"

Barnaby shook his head and looked vacantly from one to the other. "You might have known it, friend," said Gashford, "it was perfectly understood. How came you to be so ill informed?"

"He cannot tell you, sir," the widow interposed. "It's of no use to ask him. We are but this morning come from a long distance in the country, and know nothing of these matters."

"The cause has taken a deep root, and has spread its branches far and wide," said Lord George to his secretary. "This is a pleasing hearing. I thank Heaven for it."

"Amen!" cried Gashford, with a solemn face. "You do not understand me, my lord," said the widow. "Pardon me, but you cruelly mistake my meaning. We know nothing of these matters. We have no desire or right to join in what you are about to do. This is my son, my poor afflicted son, dearer to me than my own life. In mercy's name, my lord, go your way alone and do not tempt him into danger."

"My good woman," said Gashford, "how can you!—Dear me!—What do you mean by tempting, and by darning me? Do you think his lordship is a roaring lion, going about and seeking whom he may devour? God bless me!"

"No, no, my lord, forgive me," implored the widow, laying both her hands upon his breast, and scarcely knowing what she did, or said, in the earnestness of her supplication, "but there are reasons why you should hear my earnest, mother's prayer, and leave my son with me. Oh, do. He is not in his right senses, he is not, indeed!"

Table with columns: DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTIMENT, and SOULS IN PURGATORY. Includes dates for November 1905 and lists of saints and feast days.

BY MAIL Canadian Correspondence College, Limited TORONTO, CAN.

Scouts had been posted in advance of the great body, to give notice of their leader's coming. These falling back, the word was quickly passed through the whole host, and for a short interval there ensued a profound and death-like silence, during which the mass was so still and quiet, that the fluttering of a banner caught the eye, and became a circumstance of note. They burst into a tremendous shout, into another and another, and the air seemed rent and shaken, as if by the discharge of cannon."

"Gashford!" cried Lord George, pressing his secretary's arm tight within his arm, and speaking with as much emotion in his voice as in his altered face. "I am the leader of a host. If they summoned me at this moment with one voice to lead them on to death, I'd do it—Yes and fall first myself."

"It is a proud sight," said the secretary. "It is a noble day for England, and for the great cause throughout the world. See! my lord, as I, an humble but devoted man, can render!"

"What are you doing!" cried his master, catching him by both hands, for he had made a show of kneeling at his feet. "Do not unfit me, dear Gashford, for the solemn duty of this glorious day—the tears stood in the eyes of the poor gentleman as he said the words—'Let us go among them, we have to find a place in some division for this new recruit—give me your hand!'"

Gashford slid his cold viscidious palm into his master's grasp, and so, hand in hand, and followed still by Barnaby and his mother too, they mingled with the concourse."

"They had by this time taken to their singing again, and as their leader passed between their ranks, they raised their voices to their utmost. Many of those who were banded together to support the religion of their country, even unto death, had never heard a hymn or psalm in all their lives. But these fellows having for the most part strong lungs, and being naturally fond of singing, chanted any ribaldry or nonsense that occurred to them, feeling pretty certain that it would not be detected in the general chorus, and not caring very much if it were. Many of these volunteers were sung under the very nose of Lord George Gordon, who quite unconscious of their burden, passed on with his usual stiff and solemn deportment, very much edified and delighted by the pious conduct of his followers."

So they went on and on, up this line, down that, round the exterior of this circle, and on every side of that hollow square, and still there were lines, and squares, and circles out of number to review. The day being now intensely hot, and the sun striking down his fiercest rays upon the field, those who carried heavy banners began to grow faint and weary, most of the number assembled were faint to pull off their neckcloths, and throw their coats and waistcoats open; and some, towards the centre, quite overpowered by the excessive heat, which was of course rendered more unendurable by the multitude around them, lay down on the grass and offered all they had about them for a drink of water. Still, no man left the ground, not even those who were so distressed; still, Lord George, streaming from every pore, went on with Gashford, and still Barnaby and his mother followed close behind them."

grass brought back his old days at cricket, when he was a young boy and played on Chigwell Green. Confused by this sudden and boisterous address, he stared in a bewildered manner at the man, and could scarcely say, "What! Hugh!"

"Hugh!" echoed the other; "ay, Hugh—Maypoote Hugh! You remember my dog? He's alive now, and will know you. I warrant. What, you wear the color, do you? Well done! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know this young man, I see," said Lord George. "Know him, my lord! as well as I know my own right hand. My captain knows him. We all know him!"

"What's the matter here?" cried Simon Tappertit, bustling up in a great heat. "Do you call this order?"

"Nothing like it, captain," answered Hugh, still holding her back with his outstretched hand. "It's against all orders. Ladies are carrying off our gallant soldiers from their duty. The word of command, captain! They're filing off the ground. Quick!"

"Close!" cried Simon, with the whole power of his lungs. "Form! March!"

She was thrown to the ground; the whole field was in motion; Barnaby was whirled away into the heart of a dense mass of men, and she saw him no more. (To be Continued.)

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