A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

In Three Books.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE GOLDEN THREAD.

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 around 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 or 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 over-clouded 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—evince 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 of his mind was black brooding from his hand. 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 reach, 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 anguished 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 somebody 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 appoint to Doctor Manette to break up this conference and order us all to our homes. Miss Lucie looks ill, Mr. Darnay. 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: they were very close together, and he believed them over.

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 mingled with fear. With this strange expression on him his thoughts had wandered away: "The shadow of the Bastille on the garret."

"My father," said Lucie, softly laying her hand on his shoulder. 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 dis-
persed, under the impression—which he him-
self had originated—that he would not be re-
leased 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 morn-
ing'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 bu-
iness 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 of ourselves."

"I know, I know," rejoined Mr. Carton, care-
lessly. "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.

"Is it 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 indifferencc, "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
course deportment, to be like a dream, Charles
Darnay was at a loss how to answer; finally, an-
wered 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 "You," were the
answer.

"That's a fair young lady to be pitied by and
wet 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 disappointed, "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, drinker, 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 or 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 got 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 daylight, 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 bedgown, 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
of those crown witnesses to-day. Every question
posed 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,
and walked out. He turned into an adjoining
room, and came back with

"Get to work, get to work."

The lion then composed himself on his back
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 re-
sorted 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 im-
perative 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 head-gear as no words can describe; which
were made the more ludicrous by his anxious
gravity.

At length the jackal had got together a com-
 pact 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 re-
past was fully discussed, the lion put his hands
in his waistband again, and lay down to med-
itate. The jackal then invigorated himself with a
bumper for his throttle, and a fresh application
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been the furnace in which sustained endeavour was forged, and the one noble task 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 light 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 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 Quartier Latin, 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 pressing, 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 grisy 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 less 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 the overwhelming of 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 his 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; and 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.

THE PARLIAMENTARY M.C.

HAVING a past life to be proud of, Parliament is pleasantly remarkable for rigid settlement into the innumerable little habits and ceremonies natural to any orderly body of advanced years. Of these little ceremonies we shall here act as master.

The year of the birth of our Imperial Parliament is an interesting mystery. The good old body does not live in single blessedness. Parliament comprises the whole substance of the government of the great British empire. It includes the Queen herself. Five hundred years ago, the Pope having asked homage and arras of a grant made by King John to the Holy Sec, Edward the Third laid the demand before Parliament. The prelates, dukes, counts, barons, and commons, thereupon answered and said, with one accord, that no King could put himself, or his kingdom, or people, in such subjection without their assent. Even in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who pushed royal prerogative to the utmost, a prominent writer upon our political system taught that “the most high and absolute power of the realm of England consisteth in the Parliament,” and then proceeded to assign to the Crown the same place in Parliament that has been assigned to it by statute since the Revolution. Her Majesty, then, is a member of Parliament.

Still the Queen is supreme. The assembly of the House of Commons takes place in obedience to royal will expressed by the Queen’s
Book the Second. The Golden Thread.

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, tiptalking, rending, 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 that you could see beyond it into a glare of brightness. It was a cool spot, staitd 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 still 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 until 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 up-stairs."

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, whether he approved? His eyes, and his fancy, followed the disused shoemaker's bench and tray of rustle of the plane-tree in the yard, was the tor's consulting-room, used also as the dining-room; the third, changingly speckled by the 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 dismall 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 by 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 a grudge, and yet as if to express that she bore a grudge. 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 surface of her eccentricity, one of those unselvish creatures—found only among women—who will, for pure love and admiration, bind themselves 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.

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that her brother Solomon was a heartless scoundrel who had stripped her of everything she possessed, as a state 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 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 bolt 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 lurs 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 uncerainty 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 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 soundingly 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 acoustic 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
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 spoiled 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 marvelously. 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—and he said it in the natural manner and his look quite terrified them all.

He had suddenly started up, with his hand to his head. His manner and his look quite terrified them all.

"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 Headquarters 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 leant 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, caught them up to the ceiling, and waved them like spectral wings."

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"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 by 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. Were 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 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 footpads, 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 it—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. There were solitary patches of road on the way between Soho and Clerkenwell, and Mr. Lorry, mindful of footpads, always retained Jerry for this service: though it was usually performed a good two hours earlier.

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