

## Chapter LXVIII - Going

Arthur continuing to lie very ill in the Marshalsea, and Mr Rugg desecrating no break in the legal sky affording a hope of his enlargement, Mr Pancks suffered desperately from self-reproaches. If it had not been for those infallible figures which proved that Arthur, instead of pining in imprisonment, ought to be promenading in a carriage and pair, and that Mr Pancks, instead of being restricted to his clerkly wages, ought to have from three to five thousand pounds of his own at his immediate disposal, that unhappy arithmetician would probably have taken to his bed, and there have made one of the many obscure persons who turned their faces to the wall and died, as a last sacrifice to the late Mr Merdle's greatness. Solely supported by his unimpugnable calculations, Mr Pancks led an unhappy and restless life; constantly carrying his figures about with him in his hat, and not only going over them himself on every possible occasion, but entreating every human being he could lay hold of to go over them with him, and observe what a clear case it was. Down in Bleeding Heart Yard there was scarcely an inhabitant of note to whom Mr Pancks had not imparted his demonstration, and, as figures are catching, a kind of cyphering measles broke out in that locality, under the influence of which the whole Yard was light-headed.

The more restless Mr Pancks grew in his mind, the more impatient he became of the Patriarch. In their later conferences his snorting assumed an irritable sound which boded the Patriarch no good; likewise, Mr Pancks had on several occasions looked harder at the Patriarchal bumps than was quite reconcilable with the fact of his not being a painter, or a peruke-maker in search of the living model.

However, he steamed in and out of his little back Dock according as he was wanted or not wanted in the Patriarchal presence, and business had gone on in its customary course. Bleeding Heart Yard had been harrowed by Mr Pancks, and cropped by Mr Casby, at the regular seasons; Mr Pancks had taken all the drudgery and all the dirt of the business as his share; Mr Casby had taken all the profits, all the ethereal vapour, and all the moonshine, as his share; and, in the form of words which that benevolent beamer generally employed on Saturday evenings, when he twirled his fat thumbs after striking the week's balance, 'everything had been satisfactory to all parties - all parties - satisfactory, sir, to all parties.'

The Dock of the Steam-Tug, Pancks, had a leaden roof, which, frying in the very hot sunshine, may have heated the vessel. Be that as it may, one glowing Saturday evening, on being hailed by the lumbering bottle-green ship, the Tug instantly came working out of the Dock in a highly heated condition. 'Mr Pancks,' was the Patriarchal remark, 'you have been remiss, you have been remiss, sir.'

'What do you mean by that?' was the short rejoinder.

The Patriarchal state, always a state of calmness and composure, was so particularly serene that evening as to be provoking. Everybody else within the bills of mortality was hot; but the Patriarch was perfectly cool. Everybody was thirsty, and the Patriarch was drinking. There was a fragrance of limes or lemons about him; and he made a drink of golden sherry, which shone in a large tumbler as if he were drinking the evening sunshine. This was bad, but not the worst. The worst was, that with his big blue eyes, and his polished head, and his long white hair, and his bottle-green legs stretched out before him, terminating in his easy shoes easily crossed at the instep, he had a radiant appearance of having in his extensive benevolence made the drink for the human species, while he himself wanted nothing but his own milk of human kindness.

Wherefore, Mr Pancks said, 'What do you mean by that?' and put his hair up with both hands, in a highly portentous manner.

'I mean, Mr Pancks, that you must be sharper with the people, sharper with the people, much sharper with the people, sir. You don't squeeze them. You don't squeeze them. Your receipts are not up to the mark. You must squeeze them, sir, or our connection will not continue to be as satisfactory as I could wish it to be to all parties.'

'Don't I squeeze 'em?' retorted Mr Pancks. 'What else am I made for?'

'You are made for nothing else, Mr Pancks. You are made to do your duty, but you don't do your duty. You are paid to squeeze, and you must squeeze to pay.' The Patriarch so much surprised himself by this brilliant turn, after Dr Johnson, which he had not in the least expected or intended, that he laughed aloud; and repeated with great satisfaction, as he twirled his thumbs and nodded at his youthful portrait, 'Paid to squeeze, sir, and must squeeze to pay.'

'Oh,' said Pancks. 'Anything more?'

'Yes, sir, yes, sir. Something more. You will please, Mr Pancks, to squeeze the Yard again, the first thing on Monday morning.'

'Oh!' said Pancks. 'Ain't that too soon? I squeezed it dry to-day.'

'Nonsense, sir. Not near the mark, not near the mark.'

'Oh!' said Pancks, watching him as he benevolently gulped down a good draught of his mixture. 'Anything more?'

'Yes, sir, yes, sir, something more. I am not at all pleased, Mr Pancks, with my daughter; not at all pleased. Besides calling much too often to inquire for Mrs Clennam, Mrs Clennam, who is not just now in circumstances that are by any means calculated to - to be satisfactory to all parties, she goes, Mr Pancks, unless I am much deceived, to inquire for Mr Clennam in jail. In jail.'

'He's laid up, you know,' said Pancks. 'Perhaps it's kind.'

'Pooh, pooh, Mr Pancks. She has nothing to do with that, nothing to do with that. I can't allow it. Let him pay his debts and come out, come out; pay his debts, and come out.'

Although Mr Pancks's hair was standing up like strong wire, he gave it another double-handed impulse in the perpendicular direction, and smiled at his proprietor in a most hideous manner.

'You will please to mention to my daughter, Mr Pancks, that I can't allow it, can't allow it,' said the Patriarch blandly.

'Oh!' said Pancks. 'You couldn't mention it yourself?'

'No, sir, no; you are paid to mention it,' the blundering old booby could not resist the temptation of trying it again, 'and you must mention it to pay, mention it to pay.'

'Oh!' said Pancks. 'Anything more?'

'Yes, sir. It appears to me, Mr Pancks, that you yourself are too often and too much in that direction, that direction. I recommend you, Mr Pancks, to dismiss from your attention both your own losses and other people's losses, and to mind your business, mind your business.'

Mr Pancks acknowledged this recommendation with such an extraordinarily abrupt, short, and loud utterance of the monosyllable 'Oh!' that even the unwieldy Patriarch moved his blue eyes in something of a hurry, to look at him. Mr Pancks, with a sniff of corresponding intensity, then added, 'Anything more?'

'Not at present, sir, not at present. I am going,' said the Patriarch, finishing his mixture, and rising with an amiable air, 'to take a little stroll, a little stroll. Perhaps I shall find you here when I come back. If not, sir, duty, duty; squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, on Monday; squeeze on Monday!'

Mr Pancks, after another stiffening of his hair, looked on at the Patriarchal assumption of the broad-brimmed hat, with a momentary

appearance of indecision contending with a sense of injury. He was also hotter than at first, and breathed harder. But he suffered Mr Casby to go out, without offering any further remark, and then took a peep at him over the little green window-blinds. 'I thought so,' he observed. 'I knew where you were bound to. Good!' He then steamed back to his Dock, put it carefully in order, took down his hat, looked round the Dock, said 'Good-bye!' and puffed away on his own account. He steered straight for Mrs Plornish's end of Bleeding Heart Yard, and arrived there, at the top of the steps, hotter than ever.

At the top of the steps, resisting Mrs Plornish's invitations to come and sit along with father in Happy Cottage - which to his relief were not so numerous as they would have been on any other night than Saturday, when the connection who so gallantly supported the business with everything but money gave their orders freely - at the top of the steps Mr Pancks remained until he beheld the Patriarch, who always entered the Yard at the other end, slowly advancing, beaming, and surrounded by suitors. Then Mr Pancks descended and bore down upon him, with his utmost pressure of steam on.

The Patriarch, approaching with his usual benignity, was surprised to see Mr Pancks, but supposed him to have been stimulated to an immediate squeeze instead of postponing that operation until Monday. The population of the Yard were astonished at the meeting, for the two powers had never been seen there together, within the memory of the oldest Bleeding Heart. But they were overcome by unutterable amazement when Mr Pancks, going close up to the most venerable of men and halting in front of the bottle-green waistcoat, made a trigger of his right thumb and forefinger, applied the same to the brim of the broad-brimmed hat, and, with singular smartness and precision, shot it off the polished head as if it had been a large marble.

Having taken this little liberty with the Patriarchal person, Mr Pancks further astounded and attracted the Bleeding Hearts by saying in an audible voice, 'Now, you sugary swindler, I mean to have it out with you!'

Mr Pancks and the Patriarch were instantly the centre of a press, all eyes and ears; windows were thrown open, and door-steps were thronged.

'What do you pretend to be?' said Mr Pancks. 'What's your moral game? What do you go in for? Benevolence, an't it? You benevolent!' Here Mr Pancks, apparently without the intention of hitting him, but merely to relieve his mind and expend his superfluous power in wholesome exercise, aimed a blow at the bumpy head, which the bumpy head ducked to avoid. This singular performance was

repeated, to the ever-increasing admiration of the spectators, at the end of every succeeding article of Mr Pancks's oration.

'I have discharged myself from your service,' said Pancks, 'that I may tell you what you are. You're one of a lot of impostors that are the worst lot of all the lots to be met with. Speaking as a sufferer by both, I don't know that I wouldn't as soon have the Merdle lot as your lot. You're a driver in disguise, a screwer by deputy, a wringer, and squeezer, and shaver by substitute. You're a philanthropic sneak. You're a shabby deceiver!' (The repetition of the performance at this point was received with a burst of laughter.)

'Ask these good people who's the hard man here. They'll tell you Pancks, I believe.'

This was confirmed with cries of 'Certainly,' and 'Hear!'

'But I tell you, good people - Casby! This mound of meekness, this lump of love, this bottle-green smiler, this is your driver!' said Pancks. 'If you want to see the man who would flay you alive - here he is! Don't look for him in me, at thirty shillings a week, but look for him in Casby, at I don't know how much a year!'

'Good!' cried several voices. 'Hear Mr Pancks!'

'Hear Mr Pancks?' cried that gentleman (after repeating the popular performance). 'Yes, I should think so! It's almost time to hear Mr Pancks. Mr Pancks has come down into the Yard to-night on purpose that you should hear him. Pancks is only the Works; but here's the Winder!'

The audience would have gone over to Mr Pancks, as one man, woman, and child, but for the long, grey, silken locks, and the broad-brimmed hat.

'Here's the Stop,' said Pancks, 'that sets the tune to be ground. And there is but one tune, and its name is Grind, Grind, Grind! Here's the Proprietor, and here's his Grubber. Why, good people, when he comes smoothly spinning through the Yard to-night, like a slow-going benevolent Humming-Top, and when you come about him with your complaints of the Grubber, you don't know what a cheat the Proprietor is! What do you think of his showing himself to-night, that I may have all the blame on Monday? What do you think of his having had me over the coals this very evening, because I don't squeeze you enough? What do you think of my being, at the present moment, under special orders to squeeze you dry on Monday?'

The reply was given in a murmur of 'Shame!' and 'Shabby!'

'Shabby?' snorted Pancks. 'Yes, I should think so! The lot that your Casby belongs to, is the shabbiest of all the lots. Setting their Grubbers on, at a wretched pittance, to do what they're ashamed and afraid to do and pretend not to do, but what they will have done, or give a man no rest! Imposing on you to give their Grubbers nothing but blame, and to give them nothing but credit! Why, the worst-looking cheat in all this town who gets the value of eighteenpence under false pretences, an't half such a cheat as this sign-post of The Casby's Head here!'

Cries of 'That's true!' and 'No more he an't!'

'And see what you get of these fellows, besides,' said Pancks 'See what more you get of these precious Humming-Tops, revolving among you with such smoothness that you've no idea of the pattern painted on 'em, or the little window in 'em. I wish to call your attention to myself for a moment. I an't an agreeable style of chap, I know that very well.'

The auditory were divided on this point; its more uncompromising members crying, 'No, you are not,' and its politer materials, 'Yes, you are.'

'I am, in general,' said Mr Pancks, 'a dry, uncomfortable, dreary Plodder and Grubber. That's your humble servant. There's his full-length portrait, painted by himself and presented to you, warranted a likeness! But what's a man to be, with such a man as this for his Proprietor? What can be expected of him? Did anybody ever find boiled mutton and caper-sauce growing in a cocoa-nut?'

None of the Bleeding Hearts ever had, it was clear from the alacrity of their response.

'Well,' said Mr Pancks, 'and neither will you find in Grubbers like myself, under Proprietors like this, pleasant qualities. I've been a Grubber from a boy. What has my life been? Fag and grind, fag and grind, turn the wheel, turn the wheel! I haven't been agreeable to myself, and I haven't been likely to be agreeable to anybody else. If I was a shilling a week less useful in ten years' time, this impostor would give me a shilling a week less; if as useful a man could be got at sixpence cheaper, he would be taken in my place at sixpence cheaper. Bargain and sale, bless you! Fixed principles! It's a mighty fine sign-post, is The Casby's Head,' said Mr Pancks, surveying it with anything rather than admiration; 'but the real name of the House is the Sham's Arms. Its motto is, Keep the Grubber always at it. Is any gentleman present,' said Mr Pancks, breaking off and looking round, 'acquainted with the English Grammar?'

Bleeding Heart Yard was shy of claiming that acquaintance.

'It's no matter,' said Mr Pancks, 'I merely wish to remark that the task this Proprietor has set me, has been never to leave off conjugating the Imperative Mood Present Tense of the verb To keep always at it. Keep thou always at it. Let him keep always at it. Keep we or do we keep always at it. Keep ye or do ye or you keep always at it. Let them keep always at it. Here is your benevolent Patriarch of a Casby, and there is his golden rule. He is uncommonly improving to look at, and I am not at all so. He is as sweet as honey, and I am as dull as ditch-water. He provides the pitch, and I handle it, and it sticks to me. Now,' said Mr Pancks, closing upon his late Proprietor again, from whom he had withdrawn a little for the better display of him to the Yard; 'as I am not accustomed to speak in public, and as I have made a rather lengthy speech, all circumstances considered, I shall bring my observations to a close by requesting you to get out of this.'

The Last of the Patriarchs had been so seized by assault, and required so much room to catch an idea in, an so much more room to turn it in, that he had not a word to offer in reply. He appeared to be meditating some Patriarchal way out of his delicate position, when Mr Pancks, once more suddenly applying the trigger to his hat, shot it off again with his former dexterity. On the preceding occasion, one or two of the Bleeding Heart Yarders had obsequiously picked it up and handed it to its owner; but Mr Pancks had now so far impressed his audience, that the Patriarch had to turn and stoop for it himself.

Quick as lightning, Mr Pancks, who, for some moments, had had his right hand in his coat pocket, whipped out a pair of shears, swooped upon the Patriarch behind, and snipped off short the sacred locks that flowed upon his shoulders. In a paroxysm of animosity and rapidity, Mr Pancks then caught the broad-brimmed hat out of the astounded Patriarch's hand, cut it down into a mere stewpan, and fixed it on the Patriarch's head.

Before the frightful results of this desperate action, Mr Pancks himself recoiled in consternation. A bare-poll'd, goggle-eyed, big-headed lumbering personage stood staring at him, not in the least impressive, not in the least venerable, who seemed to have started out of the earth to ask what was become of Casby. After staring at this phantom in return, in silent awe, Mr Pancks threw down his shears, and fled for a place of hiding, where he might lie sheltered from the consequences of his crime. Mr Pancks deemed it prudent to use all possible despatch in making off, though he was pursued by nothing but the sound of laughter in Bleeding Heart Yard, rippling through the air and making it ring again.