

The Education of Mr. Brown

A novel of appearances and substance in Victorian England



John C. Nash

The Education of Mr. Brown

John C. Nash

7 Copyright ©2023 John C. Nash

nashjc @ ncf.ca
18 Spyglass Ridge
Ottawa, ON K2S 1R6
Canada

??which are made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

?? And Tony is just one of our protagonists.

Preamble

I welcome courteous communications, including criticism if the sender is willing to engage in discussion that can bring better understanding. I may be contacted at nashjc _at_ ncf.ca.

John Nash, Ottawa, 2021

On a late January day in 1857, a donkey cart proceeded slowly along a Brighton street. The carter was dressed in a seaman's pea jacket and canvas trousers with a cap pulled down as far as it would go on his head. He had a scarf and gloves against the cold drizzle that was being driven by a nasty wind. Normally his route would be along the promenade, but today's weather meant the chosen street was a couple of rows of houses to the north. A rather odd looking dog, brown with shortish fur, trotted along in front, seemingly oblivious to the weather. Perhaps the part of it that was English sheepdog made it resistant to the damp cold. The donkey, named Moonbeam, was less happy, and was looking forward to her stall, which was dry and relatively free of draughts, with another donkey – Annabelle – where several cats and the dog, a bitch named Jolly, all found comfort, food and water.

The carter was apparently a young man, though actually a young woman just shy of 18 years. Tony Brown had been orphaned at a tender age and survived on the streets, managing to avoid the Workhouse. Some five years before, he had been rescued from the streets by a Miss Cassandra Match, now Mrs. Cohen, into whose entrepreneurial activities he had been absorbed. About two years ago she had sold him Moonbeam and her cart, and he had been doing quite well with the business, having above £40 set aside. We will use male pronouns in keeping with Tony's choice.

A serendipitous accompaniment of his friend Maud Mortimer to an estate sale in April 1855 had momentous implications for Tony. Maud, who traded in second hand furniture, was looking for some pieces she could sell on at a profit, possibly after some refurbishment by their friends Tom and Vera Soulton. Tony and Moonbeam were there so any purchases could be removed *post haste*. In curiosity, Tony came inside with Maud, paying a street urchin to watch Moonbeam. He saw a seaman's chest that took his fancy, and Maud bid on it for him. As it happened, nobody else was interested in a locked chest that had no key, and they got the item for half a crown.

The chest turned out to be that of his father, Samuel Crown. "Brown" was likely a mis-hearing of the name, and Tony short for Antonia, for that was the name eventually found on a baptismal record showing a birth-date of March 15, 1839. With the help of his landlady and friend, Rebecca Upton, the chest was opened. The contents started a year and a half pursuit of information that led to the discovery that his great uncle Ezekiel Crown, whose

estate sale had contained the chest, had maliciously usurped the inheritance of Tony's father, Samuel, and with the loss of Samuel overboard at sea in a storm, that of Tony him- or herself.

Given Tony's age, he would have just over three more years until he took control of the monies and house that made up the estate, worth roughly £1000. The house had, however, been rented out by Mr. Dwyer, Ezekiel's solicitor, in order to preserve its fabric while the will was probated. Nevertheless, the diocesan court that held judgment of wills had allowed that the trustees might distribute modest amounts to Tony for purposes of which the trustees approved. Maud's husband Henry was one of the trustees, but also a friend. Dwyer, with whom Henry had formed an alliance, and who had not liked the avaricious Ezekiel, was the other trustee. Both were sympathetic to Tony's fortunes.

This situation meant Tony spent quite a bit of time thinking what, if anything, he would like to do with some of the money. So far, he had come to the conclusion he would like to travel to some parts of the United Kingdom to improve his general education. He had invited his friend, Adeline Naismith, a lady in her late sixties who had taught him to read and who he considered a trusted advisor, to accompany him, as he felt he would profit from having a companion with whom to discuss his discoveries. Adeline had also been, in a sense, rescued by Cassandra Match-Cohen, and indeed lived in the Fortescue Road house Cassandra owned and occupied with her husband Abraham.

It was the particulars of the travels that were preoccupying Tony's thoughts. Indeed, they took the majority of his mental activity when he, Moonbeam and Jolly were, as today, moving from one location to another and the roads were quiet.

Jolly barked, and Tony pulled on Moonbeam's bridle to hold her back at the beginning of an intersection, just as a hansom cab came barrelling down the cross street.

"Whoa! Whoa!" shouted the cabby, since the horse was moving at a goodly clip, but eventually slowed and stopped about a hundred yards down the road, in fact just before the promenade. Tony tied Moonbeam to a gas lamppost and jogged to the cab, where the cabby was checking on his clients.

"You all right, Mr. Camby," Tony asked, as he was acquainted with the driver.

"Yeah. Some urchins decided to throw pebbles at the horse. If I find 'em they'll get a taste of my whip."

It seemed the passengers were not injured, though possibly a bit shaken by the experience. Tony returned to Moonbeam and they made their way to Upton's yard, where he took an old sheet of towelling, one of several kept for the purpose, and dried Moonbeam as well as he could, finishing with her hooves. The towelling would need to be washed and hung to dry, and Tony

took it with him into the house part of the main shop and house building. Jolly stayed in the stable. She had a small bed there in with Moonbeam, but also a mat beside Tony's cot in the house. Today she opted for the stable.

"There you are, Tony," Rachel Upton greeted him. "Joseph's just back too. I'm glad you're in before dark on a day like today."

"I'll just wash this, then myself," Tony said, heading for the scullery.

"Take the kettle. It's not long boiled. No sense having to do everything in cold water."

"Thanks, Mrs. Upton."

When he came back to the kitchen proper, Rachel said "Tea in about twenty minutes. I've some mutton stew that's been going since early this morning so the meat should be tender by now."

"Good. I'll welcome something hot inside. Then I've told Mrs. Naismith I'll be by to see her tonight."

"Out again. Take care you don't catch cold. And make sure you've got your key. We might retire early rather than bother with light."

"Before I go out, I'd better see if Joseph thinks he can do without me for a couple of weeks starting the end of April."

"You're taking a journey?"

"I want to learn about different places in the British Isles. Mr. Mortimer said it might be possible to have a little of the money from Ezekiel Crown's estate for sensible purposes. Actually, I probably have enough myself, but a bit extra will allow for more comfort."

"Do you think Valerie could handle Moonbeam if we need her and her cart?"

"I don't see why not. Mr. McDowell might help out too, but his facial injuries tend to upset people."

"Yes. Waterloo was not kind to him, yet soldiers like him saved our bacon from old Boney, and he deserves better. But he and Valerie together might work. She's good with clients, and he with the animals."

"I'll talk to him. He's a good fellow, and seems to be finding a way of living. However, I need to sort out when and where we'll be going. I've invited Mrs. Naismith to accompany me, as I feel I'll learn more if I can discuss what we're seeing."

"Better to have a friend with you," Rachel said. She was one of the people who knew Tony's true gender.

* * *

Adeline Naismith said "I'm glad you saw this newspaper item too, Tony. I read it and also another item. The Art Treasures Exhibition starts on May

5, it says, but the admission will be half a crown for the first 10 days, as well as on Thursdays, but a shilling otherwise.”

“That’s a strange arrangement of prices. Why would anyone choose to go on Thursday?” Tony mused.

“Perhaps they expect Thursdays to be favoured by those wanting a less crowded exhibition. There are also seasons tickets at a guinea, or two guineas including the two state ceremonial occasions on May 5, when Prince Albert will open it, and June 29, when the Queen will visit publicly, but she will have a private visit on the 30th.”

“It would be interesting to see the Exhibition,” Tony said. “If we were to arrange our journey so we could go there after the first 10 days, perhaps allowing two days since there are to be so many works displayed.”

“I have a calendar here. Perhaps we could aim for May 25 and 26. That’s a Monday and Tuesday. We could arrive on the Saturday or Sunday and leave on the Wednesday or Thursday, depending on our interest in Manchester apart from the Exhibition.”

“I had hoped to travel in April, in order to be here when there are visitors wanting rides on the beach, but if we leave Manchester until last, we could come back on the 27th.”

“That should be possible. If you want to see more of Manchester, we could even arrive on the Friday, May 22,” Adeline said.

“And I believe we could get to Manchester from the Lake District quite easily by rail.”

“Well, we have the end of our trip. Do you think we can get home in one day from Manchester?” Adeline asked.

“We will have to check, but I believe we can. It takes about five hours from Manchester to London someone told me, and about an hour and a half from London to here, but of course we need to get across the city.”

“Well, we have the end of our excursion. Now we need to plan the start and middle,” Adeline said. “But first, let us have some tea and biscuits.”

* * *

That evening, Tony and Adeline sketched out their itinerary by putting a partial calendar on a piece of paper in pen and ink, then using pencil to fill in the squares. They would aim to go to York, Durham, Carlisle, the Lake District, and Manchester. Tony also wanted to see London, but they decided to take a weekend in March, travelling up on a Friday morning and coming home on Sunday night. Adeline had talked with Mary Yarrow about the time Mary and Cassandra stayed in Brown’s Hotel in 1851, and thought they might stay there if finances allowed.

Henry Mortimer had told Tony that the procedure for obtaining monies from the inheritance was to write to the trustees explaining the proposed amounts and their purpose, with expected benefits. Tony felt he would use some of his own monies, possibly as much as £15, and would need perhaps £15 more at the outside for the two excursions, and made a draft letter to show Henry.

Upton's Yard
Brighton

February 2, 1857

Messrs Dwyer and Mortimer, Solicitors
c/o Henry Mortimer, Esq.
Chorley Terrace
Brighton

Re: Request for funds from trusteeship of A. Crown

In accordance with the terms of the diocesan judgement on my inheritance, I am requesting \textsterling 15 for the purpose of travel in England to widen my education. I hope to visit London for 2-3 days in March, and York, Durham, the Lake District and Manchester in May. In Manchester, I plan to attend the Art Treasures Exhibition. In addition to the monies requested, I also intend to spend some of my own savings. I have asked Mrs. A. Naismith to accompany me, as I believe the companionship and additional perspective will enlarge my own learning, and plan to cover her direct expenses.

I would be obliged if you would inform me of your decision shortly, and remain, yours sincerely,

Antonia Crown,
commonly known as Tony Brown

Tony did not post this. Indeed he had written it in pencil. Instead on the Tuesday, February 3, he made a detour to Chorley Terrace near the end of the day and knocked on the door. Yolanda Karwowski, the cook and housekeeper, welcomed him and said Mr. Mortimer was available and showed him into the office. In truth, Henry had seen him arrive and opened the office door.

“Hello, Tony. How are you?”

“I’m well, Mr. Mortimer – Henry. I came to show you a draft letter to ask for some money from the inheritance.”

“Well, let me take a quick look, and if needed we’ll make a few adjustments.”

Tony passed over the sheet of paper, and Henry took a few seconds to read it, then said

“This is very much how you should present a request. Bravo. However, I’ll suggest a few changes.

“First, I believe that you will need some more ... er ... stylish clothing. I think at least a suit and a cloak or coat. Probably a new shirt or two and a tie. It will help you to fit in. As I recall, Mrs. Naismith has some decent attire, though if you are going to spend your own monies, I would direct them towards her needs, keeping a rather precise record of what you spend on the travel, accommodation and activities. In fact, one item of expenditure that should appear would be a notebook in which to record such expenditure, so that you may, should there be any query, present an accounting.”

“That does make sense. And I am ... er ... a bit ... ashamed ... I did not think of how my appearance might be important to being a part of the society in which we will be moving.”

“I am going to suggest that you ask for £15 for the entire year to improve your wardrobe. If you are careful, possibly looking for a second-hand cloak, for example, I think that will get you properly outfitted. And I will suggest you ask for £30 to cover the travel, accommodation and activities. You need not spend all of this, or not all in the activities already considered, but you may later in the year wish to do something else of a similar sort, and I believe you are not being unreasonable in your plans.”

“Thank you, ... Henry.”

“I’ll look forward to getting the finished letter tomorrow or the next day, and I will make sure Dwyer and I give you a quick response.”

* * *

As might be expected, Tony put the finished letter through Henry’s letter slot the very next morning. The following Monday, February 9, a formal letter was carried by Joseph who had accompanied Maud Mortimer to an estate sale that day in order to convey any purchases Maud made to Tom and Vera Soulton for refurbishment or to Upton’s or a client if they could be sold on right away.

The formal letter simply said what Henry had proposed to Tony, except that it included instructions for Tony to send a note giving Henry a couple

of days advance notice of the amount of funds he would like of the allocated £45. In other words, it would not be necessary, nor sensible, to take all the money at once. In that Tony had just a cot and his seaman's chest at Rachel Upton's house, a house attached to a busy shop and stable, this was a sensible precaution.

Joseph also brought a note from Maud to come for tea and cake either Monday or Tuesday evening. As he had no business that Monday, he went to Chorley Terrace that very night. Joseph was actually privy to the reason for the invitation, but Maud had sworn him to secrecy.

"Come in, come in and let us keep the cold out," Yolanda said, welcoming Tony and Jolly. "Hello Jolly," she said, scratching the dog behind her ears.

"Let me wipe her feet before we go in. People have the doormat, but she gets wet between her claws." Tony had a cloth and cleaned Jolly's paws.

They went into the parlour which was at the rear of the house, Henry having his office in the front. Maud was sitting with William, who would be two in May. Henry was in an armchair with a newspaper, which he put down, saying "Come in, come in and sit down. Here Jolly, come by me. Yolanda, bring some tea and cake and join us."

Yolanda Karwowski was cook and housekeeper to Henry and Maud, and had assisted at William's birth. She had joined the household about two years before after first her husband and child died of the cholera, then her employer expired even before paying any of Yolanda's wages. The employer had been a down-on-her-luck French countess, and the agent from France who came to settle the countess' affairs came to Henry after noting his brass plate at the front door to sort out any legal matters.

Maud, it should be told, had escaped the Workhouse thanks to Cassandra Match, now Cohen, and had tumbled more or less by accident into trading in second-hand furniture. She had never learned cooking or, indeed, other household skills. On the other hand, she had a fine eye for bargains and for profitable items to purchase. When Henry had to deal with the demise of the countess, he and Maud were seeking a more permanent solution to meal preparation than the rather catch as catch can arrangements with some local women. Yolanda proved to be a good fit to their needs. However, with Maud's background, their relationship was only nominally mistress and servant and much closer to colleagues. Thus Yolanda ate with her employers and was welcomed into the parlour. If Henry and Maud needed privacy, they used the office or their bedroom, but such occasions were quite rare.

When the tea and cake – a light fruit cake – had been served, Maud said "I'm afraid I couldn't help overhearing you and Henry the other evening when he said you should improve your wardrobe."

"I had not thought of it, but Henry's suggestion makes sense. Adeline told me that she was going to make a similar comment, and we are considering

what we should both acquire, as well as what we should carry with us on our travels.”

“Well, I may be able to provide a partial solution,” Maud said.

At that moment, William started to fuss. Yolanda said “Let me take Master William up and get him ready for bed, and you can come and say goodnight to him in about a quarter hour.”

This led to a certain amount of moving about the parlour, as William wanted to say goodnight to his father, then Jolly, and Tony. Finally, Yolanda carried him out.

Maud said “Now we can return to what I was about to say. Today Joseph and I went to an estate sale. While there I saw a lot that was the clothing of a young man who apparently was in London for business and died of the cholera. I believe Joseph is not too different from you in size, though a little shorter perhaps. In any event, we got a number of items, all for a guinea. Actually, we had to pay a shilling for an old tea chest to put them in, as they were simply hanging on hangers on a rod.”

Henry said “You’ve told Tony all this, but really you should be showing him. Shall we bring in the tea chest.”

“Oh, yes. We can see what might be useful, then set aside what you don’t want. Henry, bring along that pillowcase I put with the chest. We can use it for the discarded items or else for what Tony wants, whatever is the smaller quantity.”

Tony went with Henry, as the tea chest, though not particularly heavy, was awkward to move. They put it in the middle of the room. Jolly got up and sniffed, then went back to settle beside Henry’s chair.

Maud said “Henry, I think we should clear the table and take off the table covering so we have somewhere to set the items down. As yet we have not had a chance to get them cleaned or washed, and it would be best they not touch fabrics.”

Tony said “Why don’t you say goodnight to William. Henry and I can finish our cups of tea while you do, then we can see what treasures you have found.”

“Yes, that would be best. Thank you, Tony.”

When Maud had left the room, Henry asked “I was also going to ask if you wanted some monies now. Possibly £5 or £10, which I can manage immediately.”

“Perhaps it will depend on how much Maud will want for anything I select.”

“Even if you double her investment, it will unlikely be an extravagance. Perhaps I may suggest I give you £5 tonight and whatever we agree for Maud can be settled by me directly, since it need not be paid tonight. However, I have set up an account book for your inheritance, and will retrieve it now, along

with the money.”

Henry was gone about two minutes, and re-entered the room at the same time as Maud. Henry said “Here are five sovereigns. I suspect you would prefer not to have a £5 note.”

“True,” Tony answered. “Maud, have you an idea what you would want for the clothing.”

“You know me well enough, I think. I’ve expended 22 shillings so would like to clear that and have a small profit. However, I’m hopeful you will find some bargains that easily allow for that.”

“We had better see what there is,” Tony said.

The first item at the top of the chest was a Mackintosh raincoat. Tony tried it on – he had arrived wearing his pea jacket and cap, but had removed these and was now in a shirt and pullover.

Henry said “It is a little large, but not excessively so, especially if you were wearing a full three-piece suit.”

“Yes. I’m sure I can use it,” Tony said.

“Lay it at the far end of the table. We’ll use this end for the things you don’t want.”

The next item, or rather group of items, was a three piece suit.

“Oh dear. We should have thought of a screen so you could try on shirts or trousers,” Maud said.

At that moment, Yolanda returned. “Master William fell asleep quickly. I heard your last comment, Mrs. Mortimer. Mr. Brown could change in the kitchen. I will draw all the curtains then return here.”

Tony said “Let me try the waistcoat and jacket. If they do not fit me, the trousers are unnecessary.”

“That’s true,” Maud admitted.

Tony took off the pullover. He had on a shirt with a vest underneath that camouflaged the evidence that Tony might be Antonia. He put on the vest, which turned out to fit quite well, if possibly a little looser than was common. Henry held up the jacket, which was quite long, down to mid-thigh. This too, fitted quite well. Many young men would choose a tighter fit, but only a discerning eye would find fault with how Tony carried the waistcoat and jacket.

“I think you should try the trousers. There are two pairs, even.”

Tony removed the jacket, but left the waistcoat, and took the two pairs of trousers through to the the kitchen, shutting the door. Yolanda had left a gas light lit there. He set the trousers on a chair, and took off his shoes. Unbuttoning the vest, and after taking off his work trousers, he pulled on one of the pairs of the suit pants. He had to look carefully to figure out the fastenings of the waistband of these, but eventually worked out the organization of buttons and hooks, and fastened them, then the buttons of

the fly. The trousers seemed to fit, but felt strange after the comfort of well-worn work pants. Doing up the vest again, and putting on his shoes, he returned to the parlour.

“Well, they fit remarkably well,” Yolanda said. “I think a very small shortening of the trousers at the hem, since you are wearing the waist very high.”

Indeed, Tony had pulled the trousers up so the cuffs would not drag on the floor.

Maud said “Yolanda. Where is the pin-cushion? We can pin up the cuff and see how well they look then.”

Some ten minutes went by while Tony stood on a chair and Maud and Yolanda pinned up the cuff. It really needed pressing to make the line correct, but shortening the legs of the trousers by about three-quarters of an inch allowed the waistband to sit at the right level that the trousers now felt, and looked comfortable. With the waistcoat and jacket, the whole suit looked well, though the shirt – a collarless workers shirt – was of course out of place.

Tony asked “Is there a shirt and tie?”

Henry removed some items from the chest and put them on the table. A couple of layers down, he found a white shirt, which he handed to Tony. Then another layer and there was a black tie. Tony returned to the kitchen and put on the shirt, which possibly was again a little on the large side, with the sleeves in particular being a little long, but came back to ask Henry or Maud to help with the tie.

The entire outfit gave Tony an air of poise.

Henry said “You look remarkably well in that suit. You will have no difficulty fitting in at the theatre or concert hall.”

“Is there a mirror that will let me see?” Tony asked.

It turned out there was, but in Maud and Henry’s bedroom, so Maud took Tony up, leading the way with an oil lamp. When they returned, Henry asked

“Do you agree that the suit fits you well?”

“Yes. It looks remarkably well on me. We will need to agree a price for Maud. And I will need some cuff-links.

“Can we see what else there might be?”

Maud said “We should go through what there is, then let you try on the things that are of interest. The suit was, however, the main motivation for my purchase. There is, in fact, another, but not as stylish.”

There were two more shirts, several pairs of socks, a pullover, a pair of gloves, a hat, now slightly crumpled from being in the chest. There was another, but less fashionable, suit, some men’s drawers and undervests, and a pair of shoes.

“The shoes are too big for me, as are the gloves,” Tony said.

“We can probably get rid of them to a second-hand dealer,” Maud said. “And I’d suggest we launder the underclothes then use them for rags. You’ll probably want to carefully wash the suits and iron them. Does the hat fit?”

It did not.

Henry said “I’ll suggest you buy some dress shoes, a pair of walking shoes or light boots – the latter could be worn in your daily work as well – a pair of gloves and a hat. Possibly a cane, which could be useful if there are street brigands. You may also want a wallet or purse.”

Tony asked “Maud. Would two guineas be appropriate for everything but the hat, shoes, gloves and underwear?”

“No, no. That’s too much.”

There was a short to and fro, but eventually Maud accepted £2.

Henry said “Here is the notebook I have acquired to record all transactions on your inheritance, Tony. You will see that it already has recorded the transaction that transfers Ezekiel’s estate to your account, and I have attached Dwyer’s report on Ezekiel’s estate. There is also, as you will see, a rent payment on the house in your favour, but also a payment for some maintenance and rates. Now we will add £5 payment to you for the cash, and £2 payable to Maud for the clothing. I will write those down, and I will get your signature against each to show you have received the money or goods, though I expect you will need to come with Moonbeam for the chest, as there is very little of the contents you are not taking.”

Maud said “Tony. Why do you not take the lot? We’ll wrap the items you don’t want in newspaper on top and you can dispose of them and buy me tea and cakes sometime when we are on a buying mission.”

This resolution was generally agreed, and it avoided leaving things for Yolanda to have to put somewhere.

* * *

Tony and Moonbeam came by the next afternoon to collect the chest and took it to Fortescue Road. Adeline was there, as she usually was, but Martha Murphy, who was nursemaid to Katherine, Cassandra and Abraham’s daughter, helped move the chest down into the kitchen.

“Oh my. You’ve quite a collection of clothes, Tony,” Adeline said.

“Indeed, for £2 Maud sold me the lot.”

“Look at this raincoat, Martha. And this suit.”

“Maud thought the suits should be washed carefully,” Tony said.

“Yes. Brushed and very gently washed and dried carefully. Don’t want any moths or other insects. And properly pressed with a hot iron and steam.”

“There’s some items that don’t fit. The shoes, gloves and hat. And Maud thought the underwear should be laundered and then used for rags.”

“Probably best,” Martha said. “Though these look hardly worn. If they were boiled hard, they’d be safe to wear I think.”

Adeline said “Next washday we’ll do that, then we can decide after.”

Tony asked “Adeline. Do you have a raincoat? I know you often use that quite small cloak-like wrap when it’s raining.”

“Nothing particular, like this Mackintosh.”

“Then before we travel, we should find you one. And we should ensure you have something suitable to wear when I wear the better suit, for example, should we go to the theatre as we have mentioned.”

“I’m not sure I’ve the resources ...”

“But I do. Henry Mortimer suggested I ask for £15 to improve my wardrobe over the year, when I was going to spend some of my own money. Since my own funds are now released, we will make sure you and I present well.”

“Oh. Thank you, Tony. You’ll make this old woman very happy.”

“I think my travels and education will profit from your company. I don’t fancy going places and seeing things on my own.”

“We’d better also look for a carpet bag or two to carry our things,” Adeline said.

* * *

Before he collected the tea chest, Tony had stopped at a stationers and bought a notebook for sixpence. He already had his commission book in an oilcloth pouch with a couple of pencils, and added the notebook to that. He would, that evening, label in ink the new notebook **Legacy Expenditure** with his name and address below. The first page was

Amounts withdrawn			
Date	Description	Amount	Balance
1857, Feb 9	Advance from Mr Mortimer	5 / 0 / 0	
1857, Feb 9	To purchase clothing Mrs. Mortimer	2 / 0 / 0	

He left the back of that page blank, then started another

Amounts expended			
Date	Description	Amount	Total
1857, Feb 9	To purchase clothing Mrs. Mortimer	2 / 0 / 0	2 / 0 / 0
1857, Feb 10	This notebook to record expenditure	6	2 / 0 / 6

He made a mental note to acquire another oilcloth pouch and some pencils for this new notebook.

Tony carried the unwanted shoes, gloves and hat with him on his rounds. They were of the right style, so he could show them to appropriate merchants but seek his own size. He was also looking now for a wallet and/or a purse. In daily work, he was also used to having a belt for his trousers, and had asked Adeline if loops could be added to the trousers of the suits he had acquired. A new, more elegant, belt was a possible acquisition, though not critical at this juncture.

It had only been yesterday, Tuesday February 10, 1857, that he had taken the chest to Fortescue Road, but already other ideas began to percolate. The itinerary now had a structure. Actually it was itineraries, for Tony had suggested that he would like to spend the weekend of his 18th birthday – Sunday March 15 was the day – in London. They would go up by train on the Saturday and come home on the Monday, staying two nights at Brown's Hotel. This would also give them a trial of their travelling.

For the larger May excursion, the itinerary was now tentatively set.

Mon 11 Brighton to Peterborough
Tue 12 York
Wed 13 York
Thu 14 York
Fri 15 Newcastle
Sat 16 Newcastle
Sun 17 Newcastle
Mon 18 Carlisle
Tue 19 Carlisle
Wed 20 Lake District
Thu 21 Lake District
Fri 22 Lake District to Manchester
Sat 23 Manchester; Could go to Liverpool too
Sun 24 Manchester
Mon 25 Art Treasures Exhibition
Tue 26 Art Treasures Exhibition
Wed 27 travel home to Brighton

Tony was moving some bolts of cloth and other items from the Station to Bartlett and Jones haberdashery, of which Cassandra Cohen was the director. His thoughts were, however, swirling around the various needs of the travels, and he suddenly had the realization that, given the need to be on time for trains, a watch would be extremely useful. The realization struck so quickly that he nearly stopped in the street, which would have upset Moonbeam,

who had definite routines that did not include either speeding up nor slowing down, nor stopping unless for an emergency or by plan.

Fortunately, Tony caught himself and continued to their destination, unloaded, then, having an hour or so before the next commission, went to Mr. Goldman's pawn shop.

"Mr. Brown. Good to see you. It has been a couple of weeks, and I wondered how you were getting on."

Tony related how he'd been planning some travels to widen his education.

Goldman said "That will hopefully go well, and I approve your taking Mrs. Naismith with you, as I believe both of you will benefit by the company. And, let me guess why you may be here."

"Am I that transparent," Tony said.

"Not really, but I believe you have not travelled much, if at all, by train."

"That is true. I have never yet been on one."

"And they leave and arrive on a strict schedule. So you are likely to want to be on time so not to miss your journey."

"Yes. That is why I came to ..."

"See if I had a watch, much like our Mr. Tom Soulton."

"Indeed you have guessed my purpose."

"Today I have nothing available, but I will keep my eye out for you. There is one – it is perhaps not as good as that Tom acquired, but will likely serve – that comes available if not redeemed in two weeks."

"What would it cost me?"

"I think 25 shillings would cover my costs and a small profit. Would that work, assuming it is available?"

"Yes. I could manage that. Could I see it to get an idea of what it looks like. I'm afraid it is like trains. I've never had the use of one."

Goldman went to a wall of small drawers that were arranged by date and opened one, searched inside and pulled out a pocket watch with chain.

"I'd better wind it, set the time, and make sure it keeps that time. No use having a watch that lets you be late."

"I like it," Tony said. "A simple, clean design."

"Yes. It has none of the fancy engraving. Actually, that is to your advantage for the price. The decorations add to the price, but not to the value as a timepiece."

"Mr. Mortimer suggested that I might also look for a walking stick. He thought it might be helpful if there were rough people about."

"I might have one or two, but you may well want to talk to Tom Soulton and have one made. You likely want something that is less a walking stick than a sturdy cane, and he could make it more or less to your specifications unless you wanted something fancy. The walking sticks I have are mostly

the plain ones with curved top, or else quite lightweight with fancy tops, or in one case hollow to hold brandy or other liquor.”

“Yes. I want something unobtrusive but serviceable as a walking stick when I might walk some of the slopes as in the Lake District, but also solid enough to serve for my defence should the need arise.”

“And you will have Mrs. Naismith to look after as well. Still you did well last year with the poker when the Saultons were robbed.”

Tony, Vera and Tom had caught burglars trying to rob them. Unfortunately, one had clubbed and killed Tom and Vera’s dog, but Tom speared him with the handle end of a broom and Tony whacked another across the kneecap with a poker and likely broke the patella. The man had pulled Tony down, but Vera was there with a kitchen knife at his throat and two men were captured for the constables. The third was caught later when trying to return to a hideout to recover some stolen goods and he was chased to the Chain Pier and caught.

Tony simply added “That was actually nearly two years ago. Time flies.”

“That it does, Mr. Brown. That it does.”

* * *

Given his preoccupations, Tony decided to go directly to Saultons’ yard. He had not seen Tom and Vera for nearly two weeks. For some reason Joseph and Annabelle had done the deliveries and collections of furniture.

Arriving at the cottage and workshop, Jolly barked and Fuzzy, her sibling that Tom and Vera had adopted, responded. While many dogs would be highly excited, these two simply went and lay down by Fuzzy’s shelter by the cottage back door together. By this time, Vera had come out of the workshop.

“Hello Tony. We’ve not seen you for a while.”

“I know. For some reason, Joseph has had the visits here, so I thought I should come by and catch up. Also I have a possible commission for you and Tom.”

“You need some furniture?”

“No. I’m planning to use a bit of money I have to travel a little. Mr. Mortimer – Henry – has suggested I should improve my wardrobe so I will fit in at the theatre or similar places. Mrs. Naismith is coming with me, so I will have some companionship. I know her presence will help me increase my knowledge, too. But it was also suggested a good walking stick, stout enough to serve against some of the less savoury street people, could be useful. Mr. Goldman thought that the examples he had were all too plain or too lightweight, or were a form of flask for spirituous liquor.”

Tom, who was coming out of the workshop, said “I think we could come up with something suitable. In fact, just wait here a minute, or go with Vera and start the teapot, and I’ll show you an idea.”

Five minutes later, Tom came into the kitchen with a rather tarnished lump of brass.

“It’s a brass door-knocker in the shape of an owl. It’s perched on a branch, but I think if I cut off the edges of the perch, it will serve as the top of a cane, especially if I mount a piece of birch behind that is rounded so it acts as a good handle. Do you want it as a true walking stick too?”

“I did think it might be helpful climbing the sides of the valleys in the Lake District or similar excursions.”

“Should be good for that. Let me look into what we have around. I think I’ve got a suitable ferrule for the foot, and possibly a strap you could slip over your wrist to allow both your hands free, though the cane would hand down.”

“Tom. You’ve got it half made already,” Vera chided. “And that brass looks horrible.”

“It’ll clean up fine. Give me a bit of the salt and soda polish from under the sink and I’ll show you.”

Vera fetched an old cup with broken handle and a moist rag, and Tom started to clean a portion of the owl, which started to shine almost immediately. Tony and Vera nodded when they saw it, and Tom then set it aside for now.

“How much would you charge?” Tony asked. “It’s not that I begrudge the expense, but I need to keep track of the outflow.”

“10 shillings assembled but unfinished. A pound all done. That would cover our time and materials and some profit. The finishing of a cane needs some good black lacquer, I think.”

“I can manage £1. It might seem an extravagance, but it should last me many years. Also it will be unique.”

Vera and Tom nodded their agreement and Vera passed a plate of biscuits.

* * *

It took Tony a fortnight more to find shoes, gloves and a hat. The shoes he got at a cobbler who had been making a pair for a man who absconded from town to avoid paying some debts, leaving the shoes behind. The cobbler had not yet joined the upper to the sole. He thought he could sell on the shoes Tony had, and that he could adjust the unfinished pair to Tony’s feet.

A pair of walking boots were found in a different shoe shop. Together these items set Tony back 30/- plus the shoes that did not fit.

The hat and gloves were traded for ones that fit for half a crown. Tony bargained and got the new hat steamed and blocked. Steam would probably kill any lice or other passengers.

Adeline asked her dressmaker friends and the ladies of the Brighton Emporium and within a few days found a cloak that was, if not made of true Mackintosh cloth, was of a material that would shed the rain. It was clearly meant to be functional rather than decorative, and they got it for 12/-.

Rachel Upton was helpful, too. She asked Tony what he would do for luggage.

“Oh. I hadn’t thought. But we will need to carry our spare clothing and footwear, as well as other items we might need.”

“I saw a damaged carpet bag the other day with some furnishings. I’ll see if it is still available.”

Rachel did better than that. She found there were two bags. One was damaged, but she knew upholstery, and found some material to effect a repair. The other was simply very dirty. Tony and Joseph spent an hour or so beating much of the dirt out of it. Normally such an item would not be washed, but Rachel told them to put it in very slightly warm soapy water and work out any stains, then rinse several times in clear water. They let it dry for almost a week. Thus Tony and Adeline had luggage.

For some reason, Tony had a blind spot as far as his birthday was concerned. His friends knew the Ides of March would bring his 18th birthday. While not his majority, it was an important milestone, and they wanted to make it memorable for him. Thus Rachel and Valerie added a small leather purse to the repaired carpet bag, as well as a brass tag that was fitted to it with a chain engraved with

Tony Brown
Brighton

Furthermore, when Tony went to collect the cane, Vera said

“We’ve decided it’s a birthday present. You’ve helped us out a number of times.”

“That’s too generous,” Tony said. “It’s even got my name burned into the top knob.”

Indeed, there was a round knob on top of the shaft. This was in varnished birch, with the owl’s face fastened to the front of the knob. Tom had cleverly put screws through the eyes and a brass band around the juncture of the shaft and knob was brazed to the owl’s perch. A brass ferrule surrounded the bottom of the shaft and held a disc of rubber. The shaft was a glossy

black, and the owl now shone brightly. Tony tried the cane. It was just the right height for his hand, and there was a ring attached to the back of the knob with a leather loop about 10 inches across. Yes. If he slipped the loop over his wrist, the cane would be out of the way should he need both hands free.

“It’s lovely. Thank you.”

“You’ll have to come back and tell us all about London,” Vera said. “I’ve been there, but each person finds their own version of the city, and I hope you find a good one.”

“Thank you Vera. And you too, Tom.”

* * *

That night, at Fortescue Road, Tony was invited to dinner, but when he arrived Cassandra said, tongue in cheek, “But you have to dress for dinner,” which led to a general applause. Thus Tony had to put on the full outfit from top to toe.

“Oh my, you do look the young gentleman, Tony. And that cane is special.”

“Tom made it for me, though I am certain Vera did the polishing and finishing.”

“We need not fear being taken for provincials,” Adeline said. “By the way, I’ve written to Brown’s Hotel, and I’ve asked them if they can book tickets for the Sadler’s Wells Theatre for the Saturday evening performance. Samuel Phelps is supposed to perform, but as yet I’m not sure which of the Shakespeare plays. He has resurrected the texts from the First Folio rather than use the adaptations that were introduced later.”

* * *

Tony slept at Fortescue Road on the night of March 13. Neither he nor Adeline felt anxious about Friday the 13th. They wanted to breakfast well, but leave quite early for the Station, which was only a few hundred yards away, so they could walk. Tony had purchased second-class train tickets on the Friday.

Tony wore the second suit Maud had found, as he did not want to risk the better one, given the potential for smuts, dirty seats, or clumsy passengers. Adeline also had opted for a sensible travel dress, but had her cloak, just as Tony had his Mackintosh.

Both were quite excited getting on the train, though for Tony the novelty was especially stimulating. However, he wanted to maintain an appearance of calm, both for himself and Adeline. They were early enough that they easily found seats in an appropriate compartment. Tony noticed, before they got into the carriage, that the locomotive was one that Timothy Lester, a local newspaper reporter, had said was of the Jenny Lind class. These were designed by the London and Brighton's engineer John Chester Craven. Tony wondered why the designer had chosen to leave the fireman and driver out in the open. He recalled that late January day when he'd returned from a commission with Moonbeam along roads away from the Front to avoid the wind and wet. The railwaymen would have an effective wind from the movement of the locomotive, and would be exposed to the elements.

* * *

The novelty of the train was repeated when they arrived at London Bridge Station and they engaged a hansom cab. Brown's Hotel was on Albermarle Street, and over three miles away. Adeline said "It's been over a decade and a half since I've been in London. I wonder if I'll remember things."

Tony had, in fact, purchased a Bradshaws for the train times, and had found a rather tattered *Strangers Guide to London* from 1829. However, it did have a map, and he opened it to follow their route. Somewhere he had learned that the fare would be 8d per mile, rounded up to the nearest half mile. Three and a half miles would be 2 shillings and 4 pence, and when they arrived at the hotel, he had a half-crown and a threepenny piece, or 2 / 9, which the cabby seemed happy to accept.

To Adeline he said "Remind me to record the cab fares. It will be easy to forget them, but I believe I should have a careful record for Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Dwyer."

"Yes. There is no sense in omitting legitimate expenses," Adeline replied.

The reception at the hotel was also a novelty to Tony, and likely also to Adeline, since she had never stayed in an establishment quite as august as Brown's. Nevertheless the staff were polite and, if they suspected the class from which Tony and Adeline came, they made no show of it.

They also made no reaction to a young man and an older lady sharing a private room. Tony was asked to sign the register and to list "accompanying guests". He simply wrote "Mrs. A. Naismith". If asked, they would answer that Adeline was an aunt who had looked after Tony since his youth. Apart from the familial description, this was, of course, true. However, the staff seemed indifferent to their relationship, though a man was detailed to show

them their room. In the corridor before their room, he pointed out the water closet. Such facilities were, apparently, found only in better hotels, and even there had not been introduced much before the last decade. Tony had another thru'penny piece ready for the man, though he was not sure if this was sufficient. It was, however, accepted without apparent offence.

Before they left the reception desk, however, Tony had asked if the hotel had managed to acquire theatre tickets for them. The answer was positive, and the clerk presented an envelope.

"Would you like payment now, or with our final bill?" Tony asked.

"It is recorded on your account, Mr. Brown. 17 / 6 for two tickets plus our commission of half a crown."

"Thank you. We appreciate the service."

"May we also arrange for tea – I assume there are sandwiches with it – for half past four so that we may take a cab to the theatre in good time."

"Certainly sir. And I will ensure there is a cab available. I believe the curtain is at half-past seven, and the Sadler's Wells is almost four miles depending on the route, so I will suggest a quarter past six. That will, unfortunately, probably mean you will be rather early, but we have had disappointed clients who were delayed by crowded streets."

Having been shown to their room and the porter dismissed, Tony said "I'll write down those expenses right away. I'm thinking we will want to allow more than I expected for cabs and tips."

"In part that goes with travelling above Third Class and taking cabs and staying in nice hotels, but I believe you should be comfortable in such surroundings." Adeline said. "Excuse me while I visit the water closet."

In that it was now just after noon, our friends had to decide how to use their time. They had, in fact, already decided that they would sally forth in the neighbourhood, find a public house or café for some lunch, and return before half-past three to change and rest before tea. They could, of course, have found lunch in the hotel, but thought the tariff higher than necessary. Tea would be half a crown each – more than a week's wage for Adeline – though Tony did not begrudge that. This was London and an upscale hotel, so the charges were expected. Moreover, it was only for this weekend.

Brown's was nicely situated for Green Park and St. James' Palace. Having found some food and drink in an unassuming public house, they entered the park and made a promenade towards Buckingham Palace, then west to the Wellington Arch and across into Hyde Park. Tony noticed Adeline was tiring, so they only skirted the edge of this green space, then turned back into Curzon Street to return to the hotel. Tony found the Mayfair streets interesting, but thought that Moonbeam would find the bustle and noise distressing. Indeed, he found his own reaction to his surroundings was one of mild anxiety.

* * *

The beds in the room were comfortable. Adeline had the double bed and Tony the single. They had returned to the hotel about 11 p.m., which was much later than the usual bedtime for either of them. With careful undressing so they could hang their good clothes, it was not very long before midnight before they were in bed.

Adeline said "Tony, I must thank you for bringing me with you on this visit to London. I have only once been to the theatre before. This was a very special evening for me."

"With everything so new, and with the need to behave to match my clothes, I am very glad you are with me. Even the nightgown is new to me. Normally I sleep in my singlet and drawers except when it is very cold."

"You have much to get used to. But I must say that this evening nobody could have faulted your appearance as a young gentleman. And your behaviour was fine."

"Mainly I watched others and kept quiet. Everything feels new."

"Do you find your new suits comfortable?" Adeline asked.

"Yes. They seem to fit me well. The day suit, as I think of it, has a looser fit, but neither are too tight, especially the waistcoat of the more formal suit I wore tonight. It would be uncomfortable across the front otherwise."

"It is fortunate you are quite small in the chest."

"The monthly visit is still a great nuisance."

"Since I told you of it I have been remiss in not asking if you needed any help. How are you managing that problem?"

"I learned of a T bandage, which works simply enough, though I need to ensure enough clean rags. But Mrs. Cohen showed me how to make tampons, and I always have a couple in an oilcloth bag about my person, along with a few clean rags."

"I had heard some women talk of that method, but never tried it myself."

"Unfortunately, the monthly visit is perhaps the most awkward obstacle to my choice of life," Tony admitted.

"Do you ever wish to wear female clothing?"

"You must remember I have not ever worn such. It would feel very foreign I think."

"Yes. And you now walk and stand as a young man does. That, I think, is a large part of living as a man. But do you think you will want to continue thus throughout your life?"

"I don't know surely, but though I can appreciate the value of a partnership – a marriage – since I see Henry and Maud and Tom and Vera, and also the Cohens and the Yarrows, I know I would lose my livelihood as a donkey man."

“Yes. And that is a job you do well. Though now you have some expectations. Will being a donkey man bring enough income to fit your station as the owner of a house and some monies?”

“I am giving that some thought. I like the work with Moonbeam or Annabelle. It could be that I find some other young people who have been abandoned and teach them to do the sort of work I do. Whether that is possible I do not know.”

Adeline answered “You have to make enough money in so doing to cover expenses and wages.”

“Yes. I will have to carefully work out the costs and revenues.”

“Can the donkeys compete with horses and carts?” Adeline asked.

“It is clear that horses are more common, but I think the donkeys carry or pull at least as much for their size, and they are, I believe, much easier to work with, despite the common belief that they are stubborn. It may be that they demand to be a part of a team with their driver, and not simply at his whim. I’ve never found Moonbeam difficult. Look how she followed my instructions to help rescue Miss Crouch.”

“Indeed. Both of you acquitted yourselves well.

“But perhaps we had better sleep. Though I don’t plan to rise early.”

* * *

The rest of the weekend were spent as tourists. There were now some horse-drawn omnibuses, indeed the London General Omnibus Company had started operating in January, and they took these to go to the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, then Fleet Street and St. Pauls, and the Tower of London.

Having talked to Cassandra Cohen and Mary Yarrow, they sought out a curry house for their dinner on Sunday, and found they enjoyed the meal very much, though it did result in some perspiration from the spiciness.

They planned to return to Brighton on the last, or 6:30 p.m. train, but arranged to leave their valises at the hotel until the afternoon. They spent the morning in the British Museum then went to Regents Park to the Zoo. In both locations they realized there was far too much for the time they had allocated to these institutions, even though their lunch was a quick pork pie and ale in a public house. However, not wishing to miss their train, they recovered their luggage around four o’clock and took a cab to the area of the Station, where they found a chop house and enjoyed a decent meal of roast beef.

* * *

Tony found he could not stay awake on the homeward train journey. The motion and clickety-clack of the wheels was soporific. He put his hat in the rack and wedged himself in a corner. Adeline took the opposite corner and there was just one other passenger in their compartment, which nominally seated 8. He did, however, find he woke when the train stopped at the scheduled stations, though he found his thoughts drifted, as if he was semi-conscious. In this state, he found himself dreaming about a young gentleman, which he realized was himself, standing in front of a stable that had a number of donkeys and carts. There was a modest but well-kept house, where through a Dutch door he could see a young woman working in the kitchen. What was this place?

At that moment a train passed in the other direction with its whistle sounding, and his reverie was suddenly halted. Adeline had been woken too. Realizing Tony had just woken as well, she said, “We tired ourselves, but I feel our excursion would be difficult to improve upon.”

“Indeed. I’m very satisfied with all we saw and did.”

The other passenger was a man of likely forty or so. He had been eyeing Tony’s cane, and said “Sir, I have been noting your most interesting cane. May I ask where you purchased it?”

“Actually it was made for me by Mr. Tom Soulton of Soulton’s Furniture Repair and Restoration. He has a great ingenuity and can make or repair a great many items. However, though I was prepared to pay for it, he and his wife – who participates in their work – gave it to me as a birthday present.”

“But how did he make the owl?”

“He found an old brass door-knocker and modified it to fit the birch knob he carved to attach to the cane. Mr. Soulton and his wife are very talented. If you wish, I can give you the address of their workshop, though I will caution that I believe this is the only walking stick they have so far made, and as I mentioned, it was a gift rather than a commission.”

“And a splendid gift it is. I believe it would be worth my while to at least talk to Mr. Soulton, so I will welcome the address. Thank you.”

* * *

Though it was not particularly late when the train arrived in Brighton, our two friends were tired, as they expected to be. Therefore, it had been pre-arranged that Tony would sleep at Fortescue Road, where they arrived around nine o’clock. James McDowell, the former soldier who had taken a ball to the jaw in the Crimea, had to some extent become the keeper of the

kitchen, in that he ensured the fire in the stove which was also the boiler was kept going and even did some of the cooking. His injuries caused some shock to many, and his speech was difficult to understand, so he sometimes had to resort to a notepad he kept handy in a pocket. However, at Fortescue Road he had found acceptance and purpose. Next door, in number 23, his patrons Captain David Fraser and his wife Angela ran a modest day school to provide practical education to those of modest resources. They had taken in James and another injured soldier, Angus Sinclair, who had lost a leg in the Crimea. Angus helped with the teaching, while James did practical work at Fortescue Road and with Joshua Goldman, especially in taking care of Joshua's pony, Moses.

Martha Murphy, the nursemaid for Katherine, Cassandra and Abraham Cohen's infant daughter, was in the kitchen to fetch some hot water. She said "There you are, Mrs. Naismith, Mr. Brown. Mrs. Cohen asked me to tell Mr. Brown that she will see him at breakfast and if he has time would welcome a few minutes to talk with him."

Tony was not apprehensive about Cassandra's suggestion. She took an interest in the people who came into her sphere of activity, and often had information that could be helpful or lead to profitable enterprise. Given all the new experiences of the past few days, Tony was ready to sleep, and was glad of the cot offered, and fell asleep immediately.

* * *

As the early breakfast dishes were being cleared, Cassandra asked "Do you have a few minutes to tell me how you are doing, Tony?"

"Of course, Mrs. Cohen. And I was careful to not plan too many commissions for today."

"At breakfast we heard about your London visit – especially from Adeline – but that was about the things you saw and the play you went to. You were in new situations, and your clothes and appearance would not suggest that you are a carter. On the other hand, when I saw you in the suit the other night, I thought that your appearance accorded with your inheritance. Not many people get to choose their social class. I wondered how you found the experience."

"I've been happy as a donkey-man, but in London I passed for a young middle-class gentleman. I know how to be a donkey-man, and I like the life. However, if I want to put my inheritance to work, I will probably have to be more like the young gentleman. I actually found the play most affecting. I suspect that I would prefer to go the plays looking like a gentleman rather than a carter."

“A lot to think about?”

“Yes.”

“I thought that might be the case, which was a part of my reason for asking to talk for a few minutes. On top of which you live as a man while underneath you are a young woman. Indeed much to deal with.”

“My mother was about my age when she married. I find that somewhat difficult to accept as real.”

“I was younger than you when I married,” Cassandra said.

“But ... ” Tony was at a loss for words. Cassandra had revealed this part of her history to very few of her circle.

“We eloped to Gretna Green when I was 17. He died four days later of cholera in Glasgow. My father disowned me, and I was forced to make my own way in the world. While I know I have abilities – more than most men or women I believe – I was still very lucky. Even more, I’ve been able to help others while doing well for myself, and that gives me great satisfaction. It is different from your path, but I believe I have had to ponder who I am and who I wish to become.”

“I’ve had some ... I can’t really say thoughts, more like dreams or hopes that I might be able to use the inheritance when it is released to me to do some good. As yet I’ve no ideas how that may happen.”

“Give yourself time. You have friends who will listen and ask questions. That includes me and Abraham – Mr. Cohen.”

“Thank you. I very much appreciate how much you’ve done for me. I’d still be a street urchin, if I were still alive, had you and Tom not found me with Annabelle that night.”

“On the other hand, you did a lot for yourself in how you searched for your own history. And also how you run your own business with Moonbeam.”

“Moonbeam also listens to me, and as I’ve told Adeline, her answers are always appropriate.”

Cassandra laughed, but said “I laugh, but there is much to be said for having an audience such as Moonbeam. She gives you a chance to voice your ideas, and I’m sure that she understands much more than we will ever know.”

* * *

In January and February, Tony’s thoughts as he walked with Moonbeam had been of travels and learning. Now, in late March, his preoccupations drifted more to the longer future. The plans for May were still present, but now ideas of how he might live and work were often in mind. Mingled with these were a cloudy and ethereal sense that others should benefit, and definitely not be harmed, but whatever choices he made.

The newspapers and magazines brought home the uncomfortable facts that lives were often broken by events or decisions beyond the control of those harmed. In February, the Lundhill Colliery explosion at Wombwell had killed nearly 200 miners. Early in March, France and Britain had declared war on China. Like most of the general population, Tony did not have any real feeling for the justification for hostilities against the Chinese. The arguments about trade, particularly in opium, were unconvincing, and the injuries of Captain Fraser, Angus Sinclair and James McDowell declaimed against war. Still, there were many ordinary people who seemed to feel that following the Union Jack was right and proper, no matter who carried the flag nor their direction.

On April 2, a Thursday, Tony was delivering some cloth and other items to Bartlett and Jones when he met Rev. Wagner, vicar of St. Nicholas walking in the opposite direction.

“Good morning, Mr. ... Brown. I was going to say Crown, but remembered that people use Brown.”

“I will not take offence Rev. Wagner. Crown is, of course, my legal name.”

“Did your search for information about your family bear fruit? I have been remiss in not following your progress, but I did see you in church the other week in most respectable garb.”

“My investigations revealed that I was heir to a modest legacy, though I am just now 18, so will have to wait until I am 21 to have control of the monies and a house, though the latter is rented out. However, the diocesan court has specified that the trustees of my legacy may grant some monies for purposes that are deemed worthy, and Mrs. Naismith will accompany me on some travels around the country to broaden my education. When I broached this possibility to Mr. Mortimer, who is one of the trustees, he suggested that I should improve my wardrobe to match my expectations. Truthfully, I am more comfortable as I am today, though I am pondering my future. Given my past, I would like eventually to be able to give some assistance to young people – especially those not much more than infants – to help them advance in life. However, I also realize that I must employ my legacy to maintain revenues so any such effort could be sustained. That may require me to undertake some new ventures, and appear as a person used to business.”

“Well, well, Mr. Brown. Anyone seeing you on the street would not for a moment realize such thoughts in your head. I applaud your intent. Do keep me apprised of your progress – I realize it may take some time – as in my ministry I do come across those less fortunate.”

“Indeed, Vicar. I will no doubt need help to find those I can best help. From my own experience with Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Naismith, I am certain

that there is a need for both practical protection as well as education and opportunity, but I confess I yet have only general sentiments and no firm plans.”

“It is nonetheless a beginning, and I will pray for your success. A good day to you, Mr. Brown.”

“To you also, Vicar.”

* * *

That Sunday, Palm Sunday of the year, Tony met Tom and Vera at church and walked back with them to their home and workshop. On the way, he mentioned his talk with the vicar as well as his ambitions to use he legacy to good purpose.

Vera said “You are right to recognize that just spending the money won’t do enough. You have to find a way that it earns revenues if you want to help others in the long term. There’s a sad amount of poverty, even as the nation claims it is the most advanced in the world.”

Tom asked “Have you any thoughts on directions for your work that might help?”

Tony answered “Well, you remember last year you made me a hand truck to aid in moving things?” This was a two-wheeled dolly that allowed Tony to more easily shift large boxes or trunks. Moreover, it could be hung under the deck of Moonbeam’s cart and there was a padlock and short chain to inhibit theft. “My thoughts are that tools or procedures that make work more efficient would be sensible. For example, the carts that Joseph and I use are not the same. The wheels cannot be interchanged, at least not easily. And with the increase in business from Fortescue Factory with Mrs. Yarrow now sending Treats all over the place, I wonder if we should not just set up a daily or even twice daily schedule. We essentially do that now, but it may make sense that we also pass other regular customers like Bartlett and Jones, and the Railway Station. I suspect that if it is known that we come by at specific times, we might pick up other custom.”

“The schedule’s an easy experiment. Gotta be worth a try,” Tom said.

“I’ll talk to Joseph tonight.

“But about the hand trucks and the carts. You remember Dan and Mr. McDowell made a gig for Mr. Goldman’s pony Moses. I wonder if we could come up with some more or less standard designs that could be fabricated quickly from a small set of parts.”

“You mean set up so you just bolted them together? No fussing around to make parts fit.”

“Yes. That’s sort of what I was thinking. Except maybe I hadn’t got to details. Just a rather fuzzy idea.”

The word "fuzzy" was inspired by the dog of that very name, for our friends were now nearing the gate of the workshop, and the dog came bounding to this gate with a small bark. If it were strangers, the noise would be greater, but Fuzzy knew his owners.

Vera said “I’ll put on a kettle and work on dinner while the two of you talk and make some notes. Don’t let these ideas simply vanish.

“Oh. Call Robert and see if he is joining us.”

Robert Vance was the sixteen-year-old apprentice who had his bed in the workshop and served as watch-man when Tom and Vera were away. They had had one attempt at burglary, as we have noted above.

Tom and Tony sketched some ideas for the hand-truck and a donkey cart. Not much was settled, but there were items of import, such as standard wheels. Tom also thought that he could make the deck out of just one or two parts.

Tony said “Isn’t it also that we want to be able to exchange parts easily?”

“Were you about when Jeremiah and Dan and I greased Mr. Goldman’s cart? With a clever idea from Vera, I built a jack that lets us raise the cart wheel really quickly.”

“I don’t recall seeing that, but definitely that’s what I feel will be important. I often am annoyed when I can’t attach a strap with one hand, for example.”

“Let me make a note of that – one-hand strap attachment. That’s a good thought. Yes. I think if you work in that direction, you could add nicely to your business without having to put out a lot of capital.”

“I won’t have all the legacy for three more years, though Henry says I can ask for some monies for worthy projects. He actually told me to add to what I asked for in order to do a bit of travel, and to improve my wardrobe.”

Vera joined in “You seem to have done well in London. And with your new clothes, you’ll not be out of place.”

“Yes. When I look in the mirror, I’m not sure who the person is. You both know I’m a young woman, but of course I’ve never dressed as such. I don’t think I’d know how to wear a dress or skirt.”

“I’d not thought of that,” Tom said. “I’d not know how to do up the hooks!”

They all laughed, then had to pretend it was an inappropriate joke as Robert came in. Robert was not part of the circle who knew Tony was Antonia.

* * *

It was the following night that Tony was able to talk to Joseph about his ideas. Rebecca and Valerie were present, which suited Tony's purpose. He wanted no suspicions that he was planning to take advantage. He began

"I wanted to tell you all about some ideas I have. They aren't very well thought out yet, but might bring more business to Best Bonnet, or make us more profit."

"Never refuse to listen when better profits might result," Rebecca said. This was a general comment, but Tony felt it was directed towards both Joseph, now 15, and Valerie, who would be 17 in June.

"Well, you all know I'll come into a bit of money in three years, and that I can ask now for some amounts if they are for a useful purpose. I'm trying to figure out how I want to live, what I should do for a living. I like the work with the donkeys. It would give me a reasonable life. However, I've thought I might use my fortune, such as it is, to help orphans like I was find a better way. Mrs. Cohen did me a huge service when she found me in Archie's hovel."

"We've all a lot to thank her and her associates for," Rebecca said. "What's so interesting is that she does well herself even as we all find a bit more comfort."

"That's sort of what I'd like to do, if I can fathom how," Tony answered.

"Makes sense," Joseph added. "But do you have any ideas for us here and now?"

"Well, I was talking with Tom and Vera yesterday. You know the hand-truck I had him make me last year?"

"Course I do. Been trying to figure out how I could get one too."

"Tom and I were playing around with some drawings yesterday. I think the way to get them is to work out a good design and then make them. Similarly, I figure that the carts should be standardized with parts that can be interchanged, and, moreover, changed easily. Also some thinking about straps and fastenings. I'm always struggling to hold something and put a strap around, so a strap that would fasten with one hand would be good."

Valerie said "That sort of thinking applies everywhere. It would be nice to have doors that would open somehow when you were carrying a large parcel. You know – a way that they would unlatch if you pushed on a bar."

"Better write that down, Valerie," Tony said. "Vera made Tom and I take notes so we wouldn't forget what we discussed. A lot of those ideas will turn out to be rubbish, and hopefully we'll realize they are before we spend a lot of time and money on them, but forgetting them until we see someone else profiting will be an unhappy occurrence."

"But I also wanted to ask whether we should think of setting up some scheduled routes for Best Bonnet. We visit Fortescue Factory essentially every day. Would it be smart to make the visits at a particular time or

times?”

“I’d meant to say something like that to you as well, so it seems we agree on the idea. What about the time or times?”

Tony answered “I think we have to talk to Mrs. Yarrow at least, and she’ll probably want to get Ethel involved so there’s more than one viewpoint. There’s others like Bartlett and Jones, and we have a few other clients now who we visit at least twice a week. Even if we just go by on the other days, it would mean avoiding messengers and confirmations. That is, of course, providing the routes aren’t too wasteful of steps.”

“It could be a lot easier,” Joseph said. “I sometimes wondered if some of our clients might be better served by handcarts. We’ve a few who really only get modest deliveries or make small shipments. The furniture with Maud and Mr. Cohen, of course, rarely has a fixed time or place.”

Tony said “On the other hand, Fortescue Factory is getting special boxes made to protect the treats, and Mrs. Yarrow is thinking of having extras to store some stock. There was a box last week that some oaf set close to the edge of the waggon and when he was pulling on something pushed it onto the platform with his arse-end. They’ve put in a claim for damages, but the shipment was largely a write-off, and the agents in Hastings and St. Leonards were short.”

Rebecca asked “If you have standard carts, will they take the boxes tidily?”

“I hope so,” Tony replied. “I’m thinking that the cart should easily handle them side by side and likely 3 fore and aft, so six on the deck. If they’re not too heavy – and we’ll be sure to be careful of Moonbeam and Annabelle – we might do two layers, so 12 boxes. I’m also thinking that such standardized boxes might be thought of for other clients.”

“Do you think the right sized hand cart could take one or two of those boxes?” Joseph asked.

“Don’t see why not,” Tony answered. “I’ll mention it to Tom when I see him.”

* * *

It was Easter Saturday when Tony next met Tom. They had been invited to Fortescue Road for lunch, and agreed as they came to table to talk after.

“I mentioned to Joseph some of my ideas. He likes the idea of regularly timed routes. He’s been thinking too, and figures we could get business with hand carts, serving clients with smaller shipments and deliveries. But he wondered if both the donkey and hand carts would handle the shipping boxes of Fortescue Factory and similar enterprises.”

“They will if we get them sized correctly. And I think the Fortescue shipping boxes are of a size that is useful for a lot of different clients.

Actually, I also had an idea. I think we can fit a third wheel to the hand truck that converts it to a hand cart. And the third wheel could be on a mounting that can be fitted or removed easily.”

“How would it work?”

Tom took out his notepad and drew an L on its side with the long end at an angle of 30 degrees. He sketched in some wheels at the vertex of the L. Then he drew a vertical line from the long side of the L downward and drew a circle on the bottom.

“Oh. Now I see,” Tony said. “Do you really think it’ll work?”

“I’m confident of the hand-truck. Got to experiment a bit with the third wheel, I expect. Actually it’ll need to be on a caster. Things like that can be tricky, but we’ll give it a good try. The two-wheel hand truck is best for moving things a short distance with awkward twists and turns. But for routes around town, we’ll want to pull or push the cart and not have to lift the handles.”

“I’ll look forward to seeing an example whenever you can have it ready to look at. And I’ll be happy to pay you for materials and effort, within reason of course.”

Both laughed, but Tom said “I’ll keep a good track of my costs and time, but I think we’ll find that Vera and I can make money making the hand trucks as long as people know we have them for sale, which you and Joseph can help with, since people will see you, and hopefully not too far in the future your employees, using them.

“Oh, by the way. A man named Shawbury came by the other morning. Said he’d seen your cane and asked if I could make him one similar. Having seen your cane, he knew it needed a brass head, and he’d found a nice lion doorknocker that will work. We agreed £2 10 s. for me – well, Vera and me – to build it into a walking stick like yours.”

“I hope that gives you enough profit. I’m thinking there’s a lot of work, and fiddly work at that.”

“Yes. There’s quite a bit of work, but actually it’s work I can do in small bits and pieces. For example, the carving and filing of the knob for the handle I can work at for five minutes while I’m waiting for a delivery. And I’ve said I want six weeks to make it so we won’t be too pressed. I think we’ll do well on it, since the value is all in the time to make it.”

“It will be unique, and worth what he pays you. I love the one you gave me. Thanks again.”

* * *

The trial hand truck with possible hand cart adaptation was not complete before Tony and Adeline took their trip around the country. In the meanwhile there was some discussion and adjustment of tasks among the various members of the loose team associated with Fortescue Road. Dan, whose tasks were general maintenance and fixing things at the Drake Apartments on Fortescue Road, took on a few commissions with Moonbeam. Like others who had worked with her and let the donkey show them her intelligence, he found he enjoyed doing this. Tony had been worried that he might try to drive her, rather than walk along and have her cooperate in the task, but Dan had a natural sympathy with animals, and, in the event, Jolly was allowed to stay with him for the time Tony was away.

Our characters showed almost no apparent interest in the General Election, nor in the ending of the Anglo-Persian War. They were items in the newspapers rather than part of "real" life.

Tom, Vera and Robert were busy with making shipping and storage boxes – they used a common design – for Fortescue Factory. Robert, to his credit, came up with some jigs that made the production simpler. Then Tom noted that putting a 2 inch strip of 1/2 inch thick strapping as a border to the base of the boxes and a similar rectangle to stiffen the lid but 2 inches in from the edge would allow the boxes to stack but not slide off each other. They also worked out how to have hand-holds cut into each side near the top so the boxes could be lifted easily, but the handles would not inhibit stacking side by side.

A final detail that took several iterations of trial and rejection was the mechanism to secure the lids. Hinges were nice, but expensive and time consuming to install. Eventually a pair of pins on the lid and slots on the inside of the box made fairly simply in thin iron served to hold one side of the lid. The other used side used a pair of iron slots on the lid with a sliding bolt in the side of the box. An opening on the outside of the box allowed the bolt to be slid open or closed, and there was a hole in the slider to allow a padlock to be passed through hold the bolt closed. Some shellacked canvas was glued over the mechanism to keep the contents of the box dry.

Initially Tom had thought of going to Mr. Howard, the blacksmith, to have these parts made, but that would double the cost of the boxes, which were close to a pound at initial estimate. Then Robert suggested that iron bar could be bent to the slots or the bolts and pins. Some experiments with 3/4 and 1/2 inch wide bar of either 1/8 or 3/16 inch thickness. Eventually, they realized that the smallest dimension – 1/2 by 1/8 – was strong enough and easiest to work. They built a lever press and made some shaping dies out of iron and could quickly produce the parts. Initially they sawed the bar, but then made a cutting jig for the lever press.

The lever press was simply a six-foot iron bar with a pin through an iron

trunnion. It had a couple of holes drilled a few inches from the hinge pin to fasten a die. A corresponding die could be positioned below this and then Tom, Robert or Vera could pull the bar down and easily force iron bar to the desired shape, or cut off lengths as needed.

Eventually, though it was nearly 18 months until this was achieved, they were able to reduce the price of the boxes from an initial level of 16 shillings down to 10 shillings but improve their raw profit, excluding their labour cost, from 1 shilling and five pence per box to almost 2 shillings and 4 pence. Moreover, other firms saw the boxes and recognized the value.

Even as early as late May, as they were finishing their supper, Vera said “We make much better profit when we can use jigs to build things. I haven’t actually timed the work, though we should, but I think some of the jigs and special tools we’ve made double our efficiency.”

Robert, who ate with his employers, said “We also get better consistency in the work, though we need to ensure the jigs are strong and don’t warp over time.”

Tom added “It’s more like factory work than craft work, but I find it satisfying to figure out how to do things better. Tony’s thinking along the same lines with the work he does. All trying to get more done with the same amount of effort.”

“It’ll mean that we won’t have difficulty paying Mrs. Cohen so we own this place,” Vera commented.

Later that evening, in bed, Tom asked “Are you worried we might not be able to pay off the loan to Mrs. Cohen? You mentioned that the jigs would help with that earlier.”

“Not really worried, Tom. But though we’ve been taking some precautions, it’s not unlikely I could have a baby, and that would cut into the work I could do.”

“You now do a lot of the workshop tasks. And you’re good at them. Better than a lot of men I’ve seen doing such things. Are we making enough we could hire someone to do the housekeeping and cooking?” Tom left a lot of the figures to Vera. He had a good sense of profit and loss on individual projects, and made sure they each at least broke even, but the overall state of the finances was left to his wife.

“We’re doing well. I’ve set aside a cushion of £30 or so. And I think we could afford about 5 shillings a week for wages plus the cost of food for someone to live in. We’d need to get a cot for them in the kitchen. If I did get with child, it would give us some flexibility.”

“Then let’s try to find someone. I’m sure I can find enough scrap material to make a frame for a cot. You talk to Mrs. Upton about a mattress and bedclothes. We seem to have quite a bit of work, and your labour is useful enough that it should more than offset the cost of wages for housekeeping

work.

“And I should probably tell you that the last time I saw Maud she asked whether there were any problem that we didn’t have a child yet.”

“What’d you tell her?”

“Just that it hadn’t happened yet. Didn’t mention the precautions. Not sure how she’d feel about that. No use risking upsetting her.”

“No. Some people think it’s immoral to try to plan things a bit.”

* * *

Tony and Adeline were away much of May, in fact from the 11th to the 27th.

We could follow their journey as a travelogue. However, the important aspects of their travel from Tony’s perspective were the change in his view of the world. Up to now, apart from a jaunt around Sussex with Tom a couple of years previously and the weekend in London, his life had been entirely in Brighton. While a pleasant seaside town, with the benefit of many visitors to give it a certain cosmopolitan ambience, it was still a modest urban space.

That Adeline had taught Tony to read was perhaps the largest change in his understanding of life beyond the immediate demands of daily existence. However, reading spawned a hunger for more knowledge, hence the wish to explore the country.

The travel to York, Durham, Carlisle, the Lake District and Manchester offered several contrasting styles of landscape and way of life. This led to some conversations about where one might like to live, or might like to spend some weeks or months in residence between our travellers. Adeline forced some serious contemplation by saying “Surely we must ask ourselves what motivates us to wish to stay somewhere. Is it a single view? That might be a short-lived reason that one could come to regret. And does one know enough about the costs and realities of a particular place before deciding?”

“You mean that one builds a daydream from some brief fragments of experience that are not a reality?”

“Yes. Precisely. But having the daydreams is still worthwhile. It is acting on them without sufficient investigation and questioning. The daydreams are just a source of possibilities. There’s a lot of difference between possibilities and their realization.”

This conversation took place on the train home, on the part of the journey from Manchester to London. Tony noticed that on these longer journeys one could observe the changes in topography, architectural features of towns, type of industry, even to some extent regional some clothing styles.

There was also the sameness of trains, of the dress of the middle classes, of the dirt of poverty. Thus a mixture of sameness and diversity. And, Tony realized, his legacy would allow him to become, at least for a while, a part of any of these, and either as man or woman. The choice was daunting. Indeed, for the moment, it was too daunting even to mention to as close a confidant as Adeline.

For her part, Adeline sensed Tony's emotional turmoil and did not press him to conversation. The vocal silence was not oppressive. There was still the noise of the train, and each had a considerable weight of recent experience to review and digest.

Both of them thought much about the Art Treasures. They had, with many other visitors, found a certain exhilaration at the old Italian masters. But Tony had astutely recognized that the excitement – at least for him, but likely many others – was the age, the antiquity, of these paintings by Raphael and Michaelangelo. He found the men and women in Rembrandt's works had souls that were lacking in the Italians' canvases. And Turner captured the soul of landscape or scene, even if the images somehow abandoned detail.

The Exhibition had much more than paintings, but you may read of that elsewhere, or peruse images captured with the camera and silver shadows, or engravings of the massive exhibition building or the Queen and Prince Albert visiting. He wasn't yet officially the Prince Consort, though that would be proclaimed a month later. The photographs are empty of people, as at this time each image required several seconds of exposure without motion.

The decorative arts were, to Tony's sensibilities, overrepresented. And the collections of armour seemed an anachronism beside the industrial skyline of the young and brash city. He did not abhor the porcelain and similar objects, but neither did they come into his mind in daydreams the way some of the paintings and prints did. Nor did he see any object that caught his imagination in the way that the owl walking stick of Tom and Vera did. Somehow brass and wood talked to him as ceramics and glass did not.

* * *

By Midsummer's Day a few of the business initiatives discussed in early Spring between Tony, Joseph, Tom and Vera had taken some small steps forward.

The idea of a regular schedule and route for collections and deliveries was being tried with a handful of clients, of which Fortescue Factory and Bartlett and Jones were the most important in terms of revenues. The route was a circuit that started and ended at the Railway Station, and took place quite early in the day. Of course, it had its problems. Items that had not come

in on early trains were not delivered until the next day. A potential option to ship overnight production – as yet not implemented by Fortescue bakers – would not be possible on the early trains leaving Brighton.

Tom had drawn and made some parts that could be quickly assembled into a hand-truck. A very crude third wheel addition had been prepared, though the fastening mechanism was not complete so the wheel could be put in place but could not be used. Nevertheless, Tony and Joseph were impressed with the design. Tom had kept things clean and simple, and used just one size of nuts and bolts and one of wood screws. When Tony and Joseph went to look at the prototype, Joseph said

“You’ve also used just one size of wood for the side rails and cross pieces.”

“Yes. It’s essentially 3 inches by two, and I’ve used half inch by 1/8 inch metal bar to make plates and brackets to fasten them. That isn’t really the best fastening, but it means everything can be swapped out if it gets damaged.”

“Where are you getting the wheels?” Tony asked.

Tom laughed “You would ask that, wouldn’t you. Well, that is our main concern now. We want to find a supply of standard wheels. These are 9 inches and iron, and I found them as scrap from a trolley that had been used in the Railway workshop and been run into by a careless shunting engine driver – not Percy of course. But I think I’d like to standardize on 8 inches.”

Joseph was looking at the axle and wheels. “You’ve used iron brackets to hold the axle rod to the frame and the brackets also attach the two parts of the L of the cart at the same time. Clever.”

Tom smiled. It was nice when someone understood the ingenuity that went into his creations. He and Robert had used the lever press, though with a wooden die that would not last very long.

Tony asked “Where do you think you’ll get the wheels?”

“At the moment I don’t know. But to start with, Robert and I think we’ll get some thin slats and glue them up as sandwiches with the grain criss-crossed, if possible in three directions. If we have a jig, that won’t be very expensive, but we’d really like to have a tire on the wheel. I think we saw something of the type at the Great Exhibition made of rubber, but where we’d get ’em I don’t know. We will put a metal bushing at the center of the wooden wheels to reduce the wear against the axle, but really that’s just a piece of pipe of the right size. Probably won’t bother with a tire, though maybe its possible to dip them in molten rubber. I’ve not got much knowledge of that.”

“Would a metal wheel work and last longer?” Tony asked.

“Yes. But likely more costly, and heavier. But we are going to see what we can do. For example, we might be able to shape a disk of sheet metal over a form to make a sort of pot lid. Two of them, one a bit smaller than

the other could be put together to make a wheel. Robert's going to give that a try, but at the moment the wooden wheels are almost sure to at least function reasonably, while we've no idea if the formed sheet metal makes sense, will stay together properly or will roll nicely."

Joseph said "It looks like replacement of wheels will be quite easy."

"Yes. Probably just need a pair of pliers to unbend the wire that holds the outer washer." There were large washers either side of the wheels, and the outer washer was kept on the axle with a simple folded wire through a hole in the end of the axle. The fold was bulged so it would not slip through the hole, and the two free ends of the wire were looped round the axle. "I could have used a linchpin, but then it can be knocked out with a hammer or a piece of stone and your wheels stolen. Or the linchpin can fall out thanks to bumps and vibrations. This takes a bit more work, but it's actually easier to make and probably cheaper."

Tony said "We could carry a spare wheel with us if we were worried."

Vera came into the workshop. With her characteristic clarity she said "Tom and Robert have a great design, but we'll need to think how to sell it to advance our profits. Otherwise it's just a nice idea."

Tony said "Yes. Joseph and I are not going to be a big enough market. We'll need to get the attention of carters and others who need hand trucks in other places. Possibly advertise in newspapers or magazines. Lots of thinking and figuring to do. Tom and Vera, do let me know when you have a good idea of cost and price – making sure that there's a decent profit – and we'll talk some more. In my travels with Mrs. Naismith I should have watched for people using such dollies. I'll start to take more notice, and also ask where they are to be purchased."

"Well, we haven't spent the rent or housekeeping on the project," Vera said. "Even if I'm playing the devil's advocate, I think it's a good idea. And if we all consider the possibilities, I'm sure we'll find a way to do all right with it."

* * *

Midsummer had been a Sunday, and Joseph and Tony had taken some scotch eggs, pork pies and cider to Soultons' workshop to share with their friends. Conversation moved from hand trucks to news of their friends, such as the growth of infants and their first steps and words, and speculation about who might next have a child – Vera and Tom said nothing on this topic.

There was a short conversation about news from India. Native regiments had mutinied and Delhi had been taken. The situation appeared to be se-

rious. Tony cautioned “I wonder how much of the real story we get in the newspapers.”

Vera responded “That’s a sensible thought. I understand that the Army in India is really under the British East India Company. It’s not actually under the control of the Colonial Office.”

While this interested Tony, Tom and Joseph could not muster much enthusiasm and Tom said “Should we take a walk up towards the Southdowns?” and this precipitated a move to clear the lunch plates. Robert was staying, as after the robbery attempt it had been decided to never, if possible, leave the workshop unattended. Vera realized that she hadn’t done anything yet to hire a housemaid, though what name to call someone who would be a general assistant she did not know. Still, it was time to take action, as she had missed her monthlies a couple of weeks ago, but said nothing to Tom.

Tom and Joseph each had a rucksack into which some lemonade in bottles and some biscuits were put in case refreshment were needed. The friends and the two dogs, Joyful and Fuzzy, set off happily up towards the rolling hills.

* * *

The next day Tony ran the morning route then took Moonbeam towards the beach where he would sell rides to children. Along the Promenade, not far from where he wanted to station himself and Moonbeam on the shore, he encountered Mr. Archibald Turcotte, QC, who had his offices in 21 Fortescue Road and who had given him friendly advice that had been helpful. He also knew Tony’s true gender, and the reasons why. They met occasionally on the Promenade, where Turcotte liked to walk at mid-day.

“Good day, Mr. Turcotte. I’ve not seen you for a while.”

“Good day to you too, Mr. Brown. I think we have each been away at different times, so our visits to the Promenade have not overlapped.”

“Yes. Has Mrs. Naismith told you of our travels and the Art Treasures Exhibition?”

“We had the opportunity for a brief conversation. It seems you did very well, and I trust you consider it to have enlarged your education.”

“Yes. I’m very glad we had the chance. It has given me much to think upon.”

“No doubt your London excursion and the theatre also.”

“Yes. Oh. I realize we have not met since before then. That is quite a long time.”

“Indeed it is. Henry Mortimer has told me a little about the legacy, though of course no details except what would be recorded in the public register.”

“I should give him permission to share whatever he pleases with you, Mr. Turcotte, for you have been a good friend.”

“I thank you for your confidence in me, Mr. Brown. May I ask if the legacy subsidized your travels.”

“Yes. Mr. Mortimer even suggested I improve my wardrobe so that I would be more easily accepted wherever we went.”

“It was good advice. We saw you in church and my wife asked who the attractive young man with Mrs. Naismith was. I did not enlighten her beyond telling her it was Mr. Brown.”

They both laughed, and Turcotte continued “As you and your business mature, you may need to fit into different groups in society, Mr. Brown. It is sometimes an awkward trick to look comfortable when you are not.”

“I have been realizing that, and it has been giving me much thought.”

“Think long and act slowly will be my advice. You are doing well and I have high hopes for your future.”

“Thank you Mr. Turcotte. Now I’d better get to the beach before some other donkey takes the good spot.”

“And Miss Bingham will give me an earful of complaint if I do not get back to work with her to complete a submission we must make. Good afternoon to you, Mr. Brown.”

“And to you, Mr. Turcotte.”

“Walk on, Moonbeam.”

* * *

By mid-July, it was becoming clear that the scheduled route did not increase revenues. Over supper one evening, Tony said “Joseph, do you think we should keep the scheduled route. It doesn’t seem to have made money.”

Valerie, who arranged the commissions, jumped in before Joseph could. “It doesn’t increase our income, but it cuts the amount of organization I have to do, so I think it is worthwhile. The reduction in effort is not a lot, but it’s enough that I can notice it.”

“Then we should continue with it,” Tony said. “And Johnson, the ironmonger, has asked me to stop by to see if there are any items to be delivered and he gave me a letter of authorization to pick up for him at the Station. So far not much, but it is a start.”

“Wasn’t that the idea?” Rebecca underlined that the idea had been a good one. Tony perhaps had hoped for a more dramatic change.

* * *

About a week later, Tony went to Saultons after receiving a message that Tom and Robert thought he should see the hand truck in its latest configuration. When Tony arrived, he was met by a girl of perhaps 14 or 15 as he walked into the yard and Fuzzy and Joyful barked softly to each other. They never made a big fuss, but there were always a few moments of recognition and greeting.

“Are you Mr. Brown?” When Tony nodded agreement, the girl said “They’re all in the workshop. Mrs. Saulton said you were expected.”

Tony found Tom, Robert and Vera all working on different tasks in the workshop. Robert and Vera stayed with their work, but Tom said “Hello there, Tony. We’ve got something to show you. It’s over here.”

There was a hand-truck in the corner, but it was on a slant, with a third wheel on a post that came down from the long side of its L. There were two of the Fortescue Factory shipping boxes, which were cubes two feet on a side, sitting on the dolly.

“We put the boxes there to give an idea how it could be a hand cart, but watch!”

Tom lifted off the boxes, then reached underneath the sloping deck of the dolly and undid something, which turned out to be a wing nut. He then lifted the handles of the hand-truck and the third wheel fell away and he put it aside and set the truck upright.

“Nice!” Tony said.

Tom added “The bottom of the truck at the moment is wood. That means it’s not as easy for moving things like trunks, since the deck is thicker. I’ve worked out we can do an iron plate, but that will be quite a bit more expensive. However, the parts are more or less interchangeable, so we don’t have two totally different products.”

“I’ll guess the main question is how much they cost you to make and how much you can sell them for.” Tony knew those were the critical questions.

Vera, having got to a point where she could interrupt the work she was doing on sanding the top of a chest of drawers that had suffered from a careless cigar, said “I’ve been timing some of the steps so we know how long different parts take to make. Our profit more or less depends on keeping the timing consistent and not too long.”

“Yeah. Be real nice to have a little steam engine to drive a drill or circular saw,” Tom said.

“But then you’d have to spend on coal, and that would be wasted unless you used it. What about my idea of using a treadle like an old spinning wheel,” Vera complained.

“We should do that,” Robert said. “With a fairly heavy flywheel, we could more easily do the drilling, and maybe even saw small pieces that we need in quantity, like the slats for making the wheels.”

“Do you think you could make the treadle and flywheel?” Tom asked, directing his question to Robert. “We’d want a pulley on the flywheel, or else a groove in it to drive a cord or belt.”

“The awkward bit will be changing from vertical to horizontal turning. We’ve got the drill wheel we set up last year for Tony’s hand-cart. Just have to figure out how to get the treadle to spin it.”

Robert was referring to an old wheel they’d attached to a spindle that held a clamp for a drill bit. Later usage would call this a chuck, but the present arrangement was a lot more rustic, and sometimes required two or three tries to get the bit properly centred. Still, when set up, it worked well, with the weight of the wheel providing enough downward pressure on the bit while the operator spun the wheel with his hand.

“Can’t you run the belt over a couple of pulleys to change the direction?” Tony asked.

“Yes. That works,” Tom answered. “But it does lose a bit of the energy, and it needs pulleys. However, I think that’s how we’ll have to do it, and run the belt around the spindle between the two bearings so the sideways force doesn’t throw us off.”

This was essentially what Robert ended up doing, and it saved a lot of time with the drilling of screw and bolt holes in the iron strapping used to hold the hand cart together. Of course, it also got used in other projects, such as the manufacture of the boxes for Fortescue Factory. They eventually found ways to streamline the changing of bits, which quickly dulled and needed resharpening. The solution to that was to have a dozen or so sharpened bits, though they did then need to account for sharpening time in their profit calculations. Still, the treadle wheel meant that holes in the iron now were done in less than half a minute each.

Turning the conversation back to the matter of profit and loss, Tony said “When you have a reasonable idea of how much it will cost you to make the hand truck in both its forms, and I’ll hazard a guess that those figures will depend on numbers made at once, let me know and we can talk about how we might sell them. I’ve a very modest sum as capital, but I think I should try to invest some, and this seems a worthwhile choice, since I know how useful the hand-truck can be. I’ll be happy to take some of the risk, since I figure we’ll find people who will want these. It should be a matter of thinking who they are and making sure they know about your product. By the way, can we add a couple of rings to the side of the main struts. That’s where I’d hook a strap, and I’ve realized that a strap with a buckle and hooks at the ends to go through the rings will be ideal for keeping a trunk or box under

control.”

“Oh. That’s sensible,” Tom said. “Should have thought of that. And it half-ways meets your request for a way to attach things with one hand if the strap doesn’t have too much slack.”

* * *

The girl who welcomed Tony was Molly Vance, a cousin of Robert. She came from a family of smallholders who, like Robert’s family, lived mostly quite well on their own produce plus some cash products they grew or made. But, as was common at the time, there were often more mouths to feed than the income could comfortably manage, and when Robert learned Vera was seeking someone to help cook and do housework, he mentioned that he had a cousin who might suit. A couple of letters cemented the arrangement, though the Saultons did not realize at the time that Molly did not write the letters.

Molly was well-trained in household matters as the second eldest in a family with six children. Her most significant handicap was that she had been kept home and missed schooling. That could have been cause to send her home, but she did a good job with the house and the meals. The lack of reading and writing was still a serious deficiency if Tom and Vera wanted to be able to leave her in charge, so Vera set about to teach Molly to read at least printed text as quickly as possible. Arithmetic turned out to be equally lacking, but that was less critical, though Robert undertook to show her a few skills. That the Saultons were now paying her money provided an incentive to learn how to reckon. Moreover, signs in shops with prices provided a lure that also encouraged both reading and arithmetic. Having lived a rural existence until now, the commercial streets of Brighton were filled with enticing products, but you needed to read and reckon if you were to make good use of your money. By Christmas of 1857 Molly had sufficient skills that Tom and Vera were content that she could take down simple notes and respond to similar ones giving instructions.

* * *

By early August, Tom and Robert had a sample hand-truck ready. Tony already had the earlier, custom made one in metal, so Joseph took the new one out for a trial. Tony paid Tom and Vera £2 for this hand-cart and a second, which was to be made as and when there was time.

“We need one on hand to be able to sell if someone asks, and you’ll have some cash to get materials and set up jigs,” Tony said, knowing full well that

for Tom, and now Robert and even Vera, having the right tool for making things was important and would be done anyway.

After a few days, Joseph put the third wheel on the hand truck. This third wheel wasn't on a caster, but it was pretty easy to simply lift on the handles to change direction, while on a straight path lifting wasn't necessary. As yet there wasn't an organized box on the deck, so they strapped on the tea chest in which Maud had supplied the auction-house clothing for Tony.

Valerie was present and said "It's likely better more or less on its side, since the deck is sloping, and we can attach a piece of canvas to cover the opening in the tea chest so rain doesn't get in."

"Good idea, Val," Joseph said. "I'm guessing you have a piece of material in mind."

Valerie did, and they found a piece of thin wood to act as a batten to attach it to the lip of the chest, and Valerie hemmed the opposite edge but put some small pebbles in the hem so it was weighted down.

That week, since Valerie and Rebecca received messages about commissions for the carters, there were three small commissions and Valerie took the hand cart and fulfilled them, demonstrating a possibility. Over supper that night, Tony said "We'd better paint the Best Bonnet name on the tea chest."

"I'll do it tonight," Valerie said, "but we'd better also work out how much commission you'll get. After all, you paid for the hand cart. I already bought a notebook and have recorded the commissions so far, and I've put it in an oilcloth pouch with a couple of pencils."

"Don't forget to put in the cost of the notebook, pouch and pencils. How much did you charge for the commissions?"

"8 pence an hour, charged at 4 pence for each half hour or part thereof. I didn't really know what to say, then remembered the 8 pence a mile you were talking about for hansoms in London."

"And nobody made a fuss?"

"No. Must be close to what they expected."

"Does it seem about right if the hand cart gets a ha'penny from each half hour?" Tony asked.

"Is that enough," Rebecca asked.

"Well, I gave Tom £2 for this cart and one he's going to make so we'll have one to sell. He hasn't worked out his costs yet, but I don't think the selling price will be more than 30 shillings per cart. So if the cart earns, say, tu'pence a day, and there's about 200 days a year, that's over a pound in the first year. Should be about right."

"That's assuming a steady custom," Rebecca said.

"Yes, but surely if we don't work the cart two hours in a day there's not enough custom at all."

“Yes. If it works six hours, you’ll have plenty of profit,” Rebecca concluded.

“I’m thinking our bigger problem may be knowing how much time has been expended. I’ve now got the pocket watch I bought from Mr. Goldman.”

“I’ll keep an eye out for watches for Joseph and Valerie,” Rebecca said. “But maybe we should figure out a pricing that doesn’t require the clock.”

Joseph said “How about tu’pence to come out, 4 pence for the first commission, and tu’pence for each additional stage, for example, if they’ve several deliveries. And we should have a policy for going outside of some boundary, like over to Hove.”

“That’d work,” Valerie said. “Should be about the same general revenue. And, Tony, still a penny-ha’penny on the shilling for the cart?”

“Let’s go with that for now, and write it up on some cards. If it works out, we can get some handbills printed.”

“I’d still like to have a watch, Ma,” Joseph said.

“Me too,” said Valerie.

“I’ll keep an eye out, but you two had better think who can be the runner to do the commissions with the hand cart.”

* * *

It was Tony who found them someone to operate the hand cart. He was on the beach the next afternoon, giving rides to children on Moonbeam. The sun was not cooperating, or perhaps it was the clouds. Not raining, but rather dull, though not cold. Still, this was not bad for business, since children often need diversions, so the revenue was steady.

Towards half-past five, Tony started to pack up and walked toward the opening to the Promenade. Sitting by the wall was a young man who Tony recognized as the boy who’d gone to the police station at the request of the constable who dealt with the aftermath of the incident where Tony and Moonbeam had rescued Miss Olivia Crouch three years earlier.

“Afternoon, Mr Brown,” the youth said.

“I’m afraid I don’t know your name, but I believe you went to the police station for the constable who came when Miss Crouch was dumped in the sea.”

“Arthur Anderson. That was three years ago today.”

“Yes. I’d not registered that today was the anniversary. Did you get the muffin I believe the constable promised.”

“Yeah. He kept ’is word. And I was glad ’e did. Not a lot of food in our ’ouse.”

“What do you do to earn your daily bread?” Tony asked, largely out of curiosity.

“Anything I can find that’ll pay. Go round builders’ yards and ask if they’ve anything. Sometimes get some commissions to carry messages. Or some mucking out of stables, or walking horses. Bit thin lately.”

“Can you read and write?”

“Went to school for a couple of years. Manage the headlines, but not some of the fancy words. I’m all right figuring money. Gotta be or you’ll get cheated. You got something in mind?”

“It’s a bit of an experiment. Mr. Upton and I with Best Bonnet have a new hand cart. We’re thinking we can do small commissions – ones too small for the donkey carts, rather as we’re smaller than the heavy transport with the Clydesdales or other large horses.”

“What’d you pay?”

“Still working that out. I know if you were getting bed and board, we’d pay 4 bob a week to start. But you live at home, don’t you?”

“If you can call it home. Seven of us if we’re all there. Just one room. If there’s a chance to get out, I will.”

“Come to Upton’s yard tomorrow morning at 8 and I’ll have you meet my colleagues and we’ll see if there’s a fit. For starters, it will be a trial. Well, the whole idea of the hand cart is a trial, but perhaps it’ll give you a few weeks work, and hopefully more for all our sakes.”

* * *

“There’s room in the stable. In fact a small tack room which really doesn’t have much in it,” Rebecca said.

“But we’ll need to figure out how we charge costs. How much should Best Bonnet pay you for Arthur’s room and board?” Tony asked.

“You’re paying 2/- a week, but truthfully I like having you here and you just have a corner. A young man will eat more and he won’t do his own laundry, which you help with, along with some of the housekeeping, and without my asking.”

“Why not 4/- for Arthur?” Joseph said. “It will come out of the Best Bonnet revenues anyway. We’ll pay Tony three ha’pence a shilling on the hand cart revenues for the cart use, and 4/- a week to Arthur for wages. Probably better buy a notebook for him to record his receipts and activities, too. And likely he’ll need some clothes that look a bit like Tony and I wear.”

“I’ve got the ones you were wearing a couple of years ago if they’ll fit him,” Rebecca said.

Tony said “I think shirts, pullovers and jackets probably will fit. I didn’t really get a chance to gauge his height, but I think he might have longer legs than Joseph had then.

“Is Valerie all right continuing to do the commissions at the current rate? Well, at least until we see the hand-cart generating some revenue, then we can augment it a little.”

“The scheduled route has reduced the work a bit, so that will be fine. Of course, if we start to see £5 notes, I’ll want some coin.”

They all laughed, and turned to having their supper.

* * *

Arthur arrived at ten to 8. Joseph was introduced, then left with Annabelle for the scheduled route, for which he was already a few minutes late, normally leaving no later than a quarter to the hour. He was thinking that a watch would be very helpful to regulating his day, though it might mean he could no longer dawdle to watch people on the beach.

Rebecca took charge, showing Arthur where he would sleep and explaining the meals. She asked if he had had breakfast – no – and said she would make him some while he took a bath which had been set up in the parlour. She pointed out fresh clothes hanging over a chair and asked him to put his in a basket so they could be laundered. She showed him where there was some soft soap and suggested using it to wash his hair.

“Call out when you’re dressed, and I’ll check you for nits,” Valerie said.

Arthur wasn’t quite sure what to make of all this, but he couldn’t complain about a clean place and the promise of food, as well as some fresh clothes – he hadn’t changed his for several weeks. It would be nice to be rid of the nits. At home it was impossible to keep clear of them with everyone on top of one another.

Rebecca had solved the trouser problem with some old ones of her late husband. Arthur now took on an appearance similar to that of Tony and Joseph when they were working. After Valerie had gone through his hair with the nit comb, she took him past the pier glass in the hallway so he could see how he looked. The one aspect of his appearance they were not able to correct was his shoes, which were in poor condition. That would have to be sorted out later.

Valerie led him to the kitchen, where Rebecca put bacon, eggs and toast in front of him. Arthur’s eyes widened, but Rebecca said “Go ahead, we’ve already breakfasted. Tea to drink?”

“Please,” Arthur managed through a full mouth.

After Arthur had finished – a very short time in fact – Tony showed him the hand cart.

“Nice,” Arthur said. “It can be a dolly or a hand cart. and well made.”

“Soultons’ workshop designed and made it. It’s a design that can be made from standard, interchangeable parts so it can be fixed easily if there are problems. We hope eventually to sell lots of them.

“Valerie will tell you how we work and go with you to your first few commissions. But do make sure to write down the names of the clients, how much they paid you, and what you did for them. It’s also helpful if you note the time you started and finished, though you’ll have to estimate that without a watch. And you’ll note the date and day at the top of the page.”

“Ain’t never thought much of the date before. ’ave to get used to that.”

“Oh, yes. We expect payment before we go on a delivery so we don’t have to come back. When we bring something from the Railway Station or from a supplier if the recipient is paying, we ask for payment before unloading. I find it helps to have the delivery slip in my hand and ask for payment before handing over the goods.”

“Yeah. I can guess people want to tell you they’ll pay next week.”

“Precisely. Though we do have some clients who we’ll give an account, though they are on our scheduled routes, so they pay a fixed fee per week. That gives us steady revenue and they get a discount over what they’d pay per commission. In fact they sometimes get both incoming and outgoing shipments and we get just the weekly fee.”

“But you do get the weekly fee, and you said a schedule. Does that mean you go there at a regular time?”

“Yes. That’s the idea.”

* * *

That Friday, August 14, Tony was doing the morning schedule when he came across Constable Shaw outside a shop near to Johnson’s ironmongery where he had delivered a couple of heavy boxes of nails and other items. Shaw was writing in his notebook while seated on the step of the shop. Indeed, with the constable on the step, it would not be possible to get in the shop.

“Good morning, Constable Shaw.”

“’Morning Mr Brown.”

“Trouble?” Tony asked.

“Sadly, yes. Mrs. Macdonald had this little shop selling newspapers and tobacco and sweets and other odds and ends. Two children, 7 and 9. Somehow managed to make ends meet, but probably only just. We thought she was a widow. Turns out her husband was in prison for trying to fix a

horse race, but he finished his sentence last week and last night apparently came here wanting money. When she wouldn't give it to him he bashed 'er. Wasn't 'till the morning newspaper delivery that she was found with the kids sitting beside her not knowing what to do. Had to get from them that it was a 'bad man' who hit the woman, but the details still ain't clear, though almost certainly their father. The children said their mother called him Toby, and you don't use a name like that for a stranger."

"Where's Mrs. Macdonald now?"

"I got one of my colleagues to take a cab to the Sussex County Hospital. Had to lift her into it. She was unconscious and her injuries looked bad, but she did have a pulse."

"The children?"

"A neighbour said she'd take them until this evening, but then they'd have to go somewhere else. That means the Workhouse if we can't find family or someone to take them."

"And nobody to take on the business either, I presume."

"There's a key in the door, so I'll lock up when I've finished my notes."

Tony had a moment of decision, and he let the choice fall where he felt it should.

"Constable Shaw. You know my history, and that of the Saultons. It would be tragic for those children to go to the Workhouse. I'll finish my rounds, then see if the children can stay with Mrs. Cohen or Mrs. Mortimer for a few nights, and if you like I'll ask if Mrs. Naismith can come to try to keep this shop in order. There are likely some subscriptions to be attended. Perhaps you could put a note on the door for deliveries to contact me at Uptons, which is only a hundred yards away. I realize I've no legal standing, but I can be a good neighbour."

"And you'll be saving me a good deal of bother. But the deliveries came already. I'll add a note on the door for customers to watch for information."

"I'll send word to you at the police station, but perhaps you can introduce me to the neighbour who has the children so I can collect them if I find accommodation."

"I'll lock the door. No sense tempting more trouble."

* * *

By noon, Maud Mortimer had agreed to take the children. And at Bartlett and Jones, Tony had talked to Cassandra Cohen, who took him round to the Emporium and related the story to Winnifred and Frieda in front of two of their staff. It was soon arranged that there would be one or two ladies who would attempt to maintain the little shop while the owner

recovered. Thus before one o'clock, Tony was at the police station and Constable Shaw was writing up a receipt for the key. It was, of course, rather irregular. Still, the alternative was worse. Shaw did send another constable, named Minton, with Tony to the shop, where Adeline was waiting outside. Minton was to take notes of what they found and, Tony suspected, satisfy himself that there was no misappropriation of property.

He said "I'm glad you're here, Constable Minton. Tongues will still wag that we're here to profit at the misfortune of another, but they will hopefully be less active."

"We also want to gather any evidence about the assault on Mrs. Macdonald."

When they got inside, things were not in too much disarray. The till had been pulled out and was on the floor, with several notes scattered about. These were IOU notes from different clients. Adeline collected them. There was, of course, no money.

Behind the shop was but a single room. The upper floors were accessed separately. The single room was kitchen, parlour and bedroom. A door led out to a courtyard and, visible through a dirty window, the privy. There was a pump on the sink and Adeline filled a bowl, found a rag, and came into the shop.

"May I clean up the blood?" she asked.

"In case Shaw didn't take it down, let me make notes of where the stain is."

Tony had been making a sketch in his notebook, and had noted where the till was found behind, and the bloodstain in front, of the counter.

"Will this help you?" he asked.

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. That it will."

He looked at the sketch and added a few annotations, then said "I think you can clean up the blood. The customers won't like to see anything like that."

In the meanwhile, Tony had been looking in the drawers of the counter and had found a couple of notebooks. One was clearly the subscriptions. The other was a record of monies in and out. The amounts were depressingly small. There was also precious little stock on the shelves. Tony wondered who were Mrs. Macdonald's suppliers.

Minton said "How do you propose to proceed?"

Tony answered "I've found the subscription book, so I think we can try to fulfill these. Our biggest difficulty will be if someone pretends to be a client to get a free newspaper. It's likely not a big risk, but we'll ask people to sign for their subscriptions I think, and hope for the best. I'll put a note on the door to that effect, and that our hours will be reduced.

"Are there any family around?"

“Not that I know about. That’s going to be my next task – to knock on all the doors in the immediate vicinity to ask for information.”

Just then Maud Mortimer came in.

“Ah. Tony. I was hoping you would be here. I came to collect the children and bring them home.”

Tony said “Constable Minton, this is Mrs. Henry Mortimer who has agreed to shelter the children for a while. Perhaps your first visit can be to Mrs. Ashbury where they are now so the transfer is properly witnessed. Maud, do you have your card to save Constable Minton from having to write down your address.”

“Mr. Brown, you are making my work easier, and I thank you.”

At that moment another constable arrived and he was out of breath. Minton said “What’s up, Walter? You’ve been in a rush.”

“It’s ... ugh ... no longer ... ugh ... assault. Mrs. Macdonald died. We’ve got a murder to sort out. I’m to help you with the door to door.”

“All right. I’m going to go to Mrs. Ashbury to pass the kids over to Mrs. Mortimer here. I’ve got her address. Mr. Brown here and ... Mrs. ...”

“Naismith,” Adeline filled in.

“will try to clear up and keep the shop running so the subscriptions aren’t interrupted more than they have been. At least until we find if there’s family somewhere. It’s quite a mess. I’ll come back here when I’ve finished.”

The constables and Maud left. Adeline had finished cleaning the floor, but there was a wet patch of floorboards that would take a while to dry.

“Adeline. Why don’t you see if you can find any letters or other evidence of family connections in the back room. I’ll look about here and I’ll start an inventory of stock, such as it is. Then we’ll talk about what is to be done.”

“Shouldn’t we put a notice on the front to tell customers about their subscriptions.”

“Yes. I was about to do that when Maud came in. Oh. And I should tell you I made sure I held onto the key. Didn’t want to have to chase Minton all over the town to lock up. Not that there’s much to steal.”

Adeline said “I’ll be surprised if we don’t find a loose floorboard. Mothers often try to have a hidden reserve.”

Clients of Mrs. Macdonald

To avoid customer inconvenience, some local business persons will attempt to continue operations and fulfil subscriptions during the hours of 8 to noon Monday to Saturday. Please be prepared to identify yourself and to sign for items received. Your patience is appreciated.

T Brown

* * *

It was nearly five o' clock when Minton came back. By then Tony had made the inventory, and laid out the newspapers and magazines – there had clearly been more than one delivery, and there were some magazines on the step when he'd arrived with Minton.

As Minton came in, Adeline said “There you are. I was worried you wouldn't come back, and I wanted you to sign this note of which I've made two copies.”

Found my Mrs. Adeline Naismith in Macdonald's shop

Under a loose floorboard, I found a small cardboard box with 2 sovereigns and 1 half-sovereign, which I will use with Mr. Tony Brown to maintain the operations of the shop as well as the benefit of the orphaned children, and for which I will provide an accounting when needed.

A. Naismith

Witnessed: Minton

August 14, 1857

“I'm afraid I don't know your initial, Constable Minton.”

“T for Thomas. I'll say you're a lot more honest than most, Mrs. Naismith.”

“Do unto others', Constable Minton. That's all. And we'll need to pay the newspapers for the subscriptions and other suppliers perhaps. Hopefully family will be found.”

* * *

Sadly, there appeared to be no family, or at least none that were known.

Toby Macdonald was arrested in Lewes, where he had got drunk in a tavern on the meagre proceeds of his crime against his family. He revealed

that his wife had been an orphan and he had been the illegitimate son of a minor aristocrat who had gambled away his family fortune, then decamped to Australia. Perhaps there were family there, but Macdonald was a very, very common name.

Tony felt very awkward when he went to see Maud and Henry.

“I’m afraid I let my feelings about the children get the better of my judgment. And I caused Joseph and Valerie quite a lot of inconvenience in getting my commissions completed, though Arthur Anderson, our new employee, managed to fill in rather well. But now I must try to unravel the mess I have created.”

Maud responded “Tony. You don’t have to tell me why. I was actually in the Workhouse. And Martin and Angela are delightful children and quite well-behaved, considering what they’ve had to put up with.”

“Do they know about their mother and father?”

“I’ve told them their mother has gone to heaven,” Maud said. “but I don’t think Angela understands. Martin seems to grasp it more. He also asks why the ‘bad man’ hit his mother. I don’t think either of them know it was their father.”

Henry said “At some point, they will have to be told, and probably sooner rather than later to avoid others telling them in the street.”

“Yes,” Tony said, but then didn’t know how to continue.

Henry added “While it will make the place a little full, we are happy to keep them here. Yolanda even said she hoped we wouldn’t send them away, which was one of our concerns.”

“I hope you’ll let me contribute. I don’t have a lot of money, but I can afford a few shillings. By the way, I brought what little of their clothing I could find, so I know there will be costs for that.”

Henry and Maud allowed that Tony would contribute £5 per year, or roughly 2/- per week, while the children were with the Mortimers.

* * *

Cassandra mentioned what Tony had done to keep the Macdonald shop running. Dan Dixon, the man-of-all-trades for the house, said “Tony’ll need someone to take over the shop if he wants to keep the carts running. Should send our Jack to see him.”

“Is that your younger brother?” Cassandra asked.

“Yeah. 15 now, and useless with ‘is ‘ands. But he can read, write and figure all right. Ma was saying it was time he contributed to the ‘ousekeeping, instead of always ‘aving ‘is nose in a book.”

Thus it turned out that Jack showed up the next morning to the shop, where Tony had taken to sleeping, since some of the newspapers arrived early. Some nights Arthur would substitute for him, but this particular Friday morning, August 21, Tony was there. He had run into Jack with Dan on several occasions, so knew who the youth was.

“Dan said you might need someone to help run the shop,” Jack said.

“We do, but it might not be for long. Don’t know if the Macdonalds have anyone.”

“Well, I’ve no work at the moment.”

“Can we say 4 bob a week and you can stay here, and we’ll take food out of the shop operations, hoping we can make enough to do so, but I’ll make it up if not.”

“Sounds all right. When can I start?”

“Might as well be now.”

Several customers came in, and Tony showed Jack how to handle them. They were all subscriptions. The newspaper delivery had come, but then the magazines came. Tony realized that the person doing the delivery was a cabbie, and that this one was different from the previous Friday.

“Do you deliver regularly?” Tony asked, paying the fare.

“Nah. The porters call us over to make the delivery.”

“Thanks,” Tony said, and tipped the man a thru’pence.

After he’d left, Tony said “We can take over those commissions ourselves.”

Jack answered “Pretty obvious. And cabs gotta cost a lot more.”

At that moment, a man came in who Tony had seen around town collecting rents. He remembered his name, and had seen it in the accounts book.

“Mr. Peregrin Withers, I believe.”

“Yes. Here to collect the rent for last week and the next.”

“You’re aware Mrs. Macdonald is deceased?”

“Yeah. I’d heard. Anyway, it’ll be 15/-. 7 and 6 a week.”

“That’s odd. The accounts book only shows 6 shillings each week with your initials and PAID beside it.”

“Well. I’m putting it up, else you can clear out and I can rent to someone else.”

“I’m simply acting as caretaker until the coroner rules,” Tony said, guessing that this would be the procedure. “But it seems to me that if it gets around that there was a murder right on the spot where you’re standing – in fact I was here when Mrs. Naismith had to clean up the blood – you might find it more difficult to rent. People are very superstitious.”

“All right. Stay at 6 shillings.” Withers moved a couple of feet back. It was clear he was superstitious. That was a bit of luck.

“Well, with the murder, business is precarious. I was thinking 5 shillings a week. I’ve a half-sovereign here.”

“All right. Show me the accounts book.”

After Withers left, Jack was doubled up laughing.

“Oh, that was priceless. You did well there, Mr. Brown. How did you know he was windy about things like murder?”

“I didn’t. But anyway, 6 shillings is above the odds for such a tiny place. By the way, we also need to get a cat. I’ve heard mice at night. If you find one, let me know, because I’ll be looking too.”

* * *

Henry Mortimer only told his wife Maud that he was going to visit Mr. Toby Macdonald in gaol. The case would come up soon enough, and it was more than likely Toby would hang. Henry wanted to ask Macdonald about his family and that of his wife.

When he came home, it was clear that the experience of the visit had not been a pleasant one, and Maud asked Yolanda to take the children for a walk while she and Henry had a cup of tea.

“I’ve been to the gaol before, but not to visit someone who is facing a murder charge. If his attorney is good, he’ll try to get the charge reduced to manslaughter, but given there’s a previous conviction, the court will likely not be sympathetic.”

“Did you find out anything?”

“Barest details. Toby Macdonald, born June 10, 1822 to a Deborah Mack in Norwich. No father listed on the birth certificate. Raised by his maternal grandparents Charles and Agnes Mack just outside Norwich where they had a smallholding. Deborah born in November 1804, exact day he could not recall.

“The mother was a Geraldine Smith, and she grew up partly in the Workhouse in Norwich but got farmed out to the local squire near where the Mack’s had their smallholding. The Macdonalds married in 1848, only a couple of months before Martin was born. Macdonald was by then working for a racehorse stable, which is how he got into trouble. It may be he was the scapegoat and just did what he was told. He almost said as much.”

“What about his father?”

“He knew the name. Sir Augustus Ashbury Macdonald. Son of a minor peer. Liked gambling. He apparently paid some money to the Macks for about five years, then did a bunk when his gambling and other creditors came after him. Apparently took passage to Australia, though he may not have stayed on all the way, as the ship carried freight for Lisbon, Rio de

Janeiro, Cape Town and Singapore before going on to Fremantle. But the last port is a major destination for convicts, and I doubt it would appeal. My guess is that he got off, most likely in Cape Town. They got their own parliament in 1854 I was reading a while ago. But it would hardly surprise me if he wasn't now known by another name."

"Henry. You did remarkably well, and I see you wrote things down. Shall I transcribe your notes and make copies for the children for when they are older?"

* * *

Macdonald wasn't hanged. The prosecution realized that the only real witnesses were the children, and might be unreliable. The other evidence against Macdonald was circumstantial, and since he was willing to plead guilty to manslaughter, he was sentenced to transportation to Western Australia, one of the last such sentences, and an irony considering the nominal destination his father had used. He was gone from England before the end of 1857, the same year a new Penal Servitude act came into force which essentially replaced transportation by prison with hard labour. However, Henry and Maud were glad he was transported, since there would be less chance of someone raising the matter of his being "in gaol" to the children, nor the stigma of a hanged parent, given the children did not even know him except as "the bad man".

* * *

Jack Dixon, for all his family considered him a failure because he was not handy with tools, was adept at getting people to sign up for magazines and newspapers. He also was quick with his arithmetic and could calculate the return on an item almost without thinking. Thus he discounted the stale tobacco steeply and soon replaced it with a modest assortment of fresh stock. He had a sale of the sweets that had been around for a long time, then selected just a few items that were common and popular such as barley sugar twists, humbugs, pear drops, aniseed balls, and Pontefract cakes. A limited but saleable selection. He also added items such as matches and candles. Thus the small shop was not overloaded with stock, but what it did have did not stay on the shelf too long.

Jack's success let Tony return to the hand and donkey carts, with the shop – now renamed News and More – being one of the stops on his routes. Dan had painted and installed a sign above the modest window at the front

which Jack paid for out of earnings. Tony was a bit annoyed that he was not consulted first, though Jack had asked him if he thought *News and More* was a good name and he had murmured agreement.

An early arrival at the shop was Olaf, who was despite the name a female cat. Jack had simply asked around the neighbours and someone pointed to a rather forlorn animal whose owners had abandoned her in their haste to depart before paying some rent. Olaf was a good mouser, but liked the front window. She chose a spot on top of some magazines Jack wanted to display. After a couple of tries to discourage Olaf, Jack put down a low basket that had no bottom and was on a trash pile, lined it with some old cloth, and moved the magazines a bit but set them up so it could be thought Olaf was reading them. On some card he wrote “Even the cat loves to read our magazines.” While it was a form of joke, the basket was at the corner of the window by the door, and customers would regularly pet the cat as they came in or went out, establishing the shop as a part of the local community.

* * *

In early September, Tony gave Arthur a note for Mr. Johnson, the ironmonger, asking if he might have a few minutes of time to talk to him. Johnson suggested closing time – one o’clock – the following Wednesday, which was his early closing. Tony replied that he would be there.

Johnson was surprised that Tony arrived with a hand cart.

“I wasn’t expecting you to bring the tools of your trade, Mr. Brown.”

“Actually, I wanted to get your opinion on the marketability of these hand carts. May I show you some of the features?”

“Go ahead. I’m watching.”

Tony unfastened and removed the the box that was on the hand cart, showing how it was fastened if desired to the deck of the trolley. He removed the third wheel and set the hand truck upright. He pointed out the ring bolts and took a strap out of the box and showed how the strap would go around the box, now playing the role of a trunk, and could be set in place and tightened with one hand. Then he took out the iron plate that could be used as the base of a slightly different model of hand truck, though he was careful to mention that it required a repositioning of the wheels.

“You will note that the parts are interchangeable, and there is just one size of screw and one of nut and bolt.”

“It’s a nice design and well made. Are you the manufacturer?”

“No. Saultons designed and made them to my commission.”

“I’ve been hearing about them. Seems they do good work.”

“So now we come to the critical question. How much will each cost and what do we expect as the selling price.”

“We’re thinking the retail price will be £1 for the hand truck or dolly, whichever name you give it, and 30 shillings for the hand cart version, with a box much like this. We haven’t quite settled on a permanent design for the box. Currently we’re looking at tea chests, but Mr. Soulton has been making some special reusable protective shipping and storage boxes for Fortescue Factory and Treats for the Tongue, and for some customers that might be attractive. We’re still working out the price for those. In fact, we’re still working on the prices for the whole line, as the Soultons are experimenting with some special jigs and tools that will simplify production.”

“What about wholesale?”

“We’re currently thinking that the hand truck that retails for £1 we’d supply one-off for 16 shillings. Ideally for sales of some dozens at once, we’d try to get that down to 14 shillings or maybe even 12/6. Truthfully, I approached you first as you’ve seen the product in use and I wanted a reaction. If we are too far from what will give you a sensible return, then we will need to rethink our ideas.”

“Every merchant wants to pay nothing and get a handful of £5 notes. Your retail price is probably attractive enough. The agent price for one at a time would mean we had quite a bit of money tied up in the product, and it takes space.”

“We’re looking at getting an engraved picture or two to put in a magazine advertisement. Such sales would normally be by postal communication, but that is quite difficult because of the money transaction. However, we think it might make sense if agents received and paid us. Then they don’t stock the item, just get it in when clients order one.”

“Price makes sense then. I’ll take 4 shillings in the pound when I get my money up front. Your headache then will be the costs to deliver, especially if they’re wanted up in the Hebrides.”

“Your comment is pertinent, Mr. Johnson. Perhaps we shall have to advertise as £1 plus applicable shipping, but still have an agent to receive and deliver the items.”

“I can see that will work, especially if your hand trucks are as good as they seem. And you will supply parts so they can be repaired?”

“That is our intent. We suspect wheels will wear and possibly break if the carts are roughly used. But as you can see, taking out the wire retainer allows for quick replacement of the wheels.”

“I like how you’ve made the third wheel fit on with just that one wing nut. Quick and straightforward.”

“May I send you a price list when we have it ready?”

“I’ll look forward to receiving it.”

* * *

The Mortimer house at 84 Chorley Terrace was, for the house and office of a solicitor, decidedly busy with infant William Mortimer, the foster children Angela and Martin Macdonald and the housekeeper Yolanda Karwowski. At the end of September, Maud had asked Mr. Brougham, the builder, to suggest if they could extend the house into the rear garden.

“How much of an extension do you wish, Mrs. Mortimer?”

“I was hoping for a decent sized room on each floor. Would that be about a dozen feet.”

“That might be just possible. There’s a cesspool under that grass there. Can you hold this end of the tape for me and stand by the French window?”

“Do you want me to put my hand next to the house?”

“Please.”

“Yes. We have 15 feet to what I judge is the wall of the pit. It would be good to empty it before we build. Give you a few years before things fill up.”

“At least we can build. But how would we empty the pit?”

“Normally buckets to a tank on a dray. But here we’ll want to avoid open containers, because I can’t see how we’re going to avoid going through the house.”

Maud said “That probably applies for the building materials as well, does it not?”

“Unfortunately, yes. If you go ahead, we will want to protect the floors and some walls, and get as much furniture as possible out of the way.”

“It will be a challenge.”

“I’m afraid so.”

“But it is possible, you think?”

“Oh yes. We can build walls outward from the house. The parlour will have the French window moved out 12 feet. Probably you’ll need to let the smallest bedroom upstairs become a corridor or ante-room to the one or two rooms at the rear. In fact, I’d recommend using some posts rather than walls, and use some lightweight partitions if you want separate rooms.”

“And downstairs?”

“I think one big room. It may need a pair of solid pillars and a beam to support the floor above. You’ll want big windows at the back of the house, because you cannot really have them at the side in case your neighbours do the same extension. So the light has to come from the rear, and the existing rooms can be dark and need lamps, or we put in a skylight.”

“Does it make more sense to expand into the attic if we have to work there to put in a skylight?”

“The space is more awkward with the slope of the roof and things like the water tank. But it means a lot less building. We need to put in stairs

and some structure, but not a lot. And we can add skylights or dormers if needed. I prefer dormers, though they are more costly initially, as my experience is that skylights need to be made very well or else they leak.”

“I’m thinking I should ask you for three separate quotations, Mr. Brougham. One for the emptying of the cesspit. One for the extension at the back to the point where it is enclosed and plastered but not painted or papered. Then one for the attic similarly unfinished. I think for the moment, we’ll leave decorating and finishing as separate jobs.”

“You are thinking that you need to be able to do the work in stages? That is, one can live with unpainted or unpapered walls for a while.”

“My husband and I have done quite well, but I do not want us to get ... er ...”

“Overextended?” Brougham suggested.

“Precisely. I have a background where my family lost everything. That makes me ... cautious, I suppose.”

“I know your history, Mrs. Mortimer. You give inspiration to others and have no reason to apologize for a little caution. Why risk what you have? And I think that make sense. The cesspit is more or less separate from the others, though if you decide to do the first two, then we can probably get the cesspit emptied and the materials through the house, possibly in one day, though almost certainly in two. There would still be the need to have the workmen come through the house, so you’ll want to protect the floor. Workmen aren’t the most careful in keeping their boots clean. Of course, that would apply to the attic as well, but I think there’d only be a couple of workers. The space is too constrained for a lot of men, and as I said, there is less construction. The main work is the stairs and the flooring.

“Let me send you some rough estimates a couple of days. They might be a bit off on the cost of materials, since I won’t go out and price things at the moment. But they’ll be pretty close on the cost of labour and within 15 percent of the right numbers, and I mean in either direction. My estimates might be above final cost. When you’ve decided what you want to do, I’ll refine them. I think you know my work, but in any case show them to your brother Tom. He’s got a good head for building and carpentry.”

“Yes. Tom’s good like that. And your suggestion will be fine. Mr. Mortimer and I need to make sure that we’re ready to go ahead.”

* * *

Brougham’s preliminary estimates were £12 to empty the cesspit, including protecting the floors in the house. Building the unfinished addition

would be about £95, while opening up the attic, with dormers front and back, would be £60.

“Can we afford any of these?” Maud asked Henry.

“You know our monies as well as I, my dear. However, I think we need the space. It would cost us much more, I think, to buy a bigger house. Moreover, a change of address would impact our businesses.”

“We seem to have decided to keep Martin and Angela. Are you happy with that?” Maud asked.

“For some reason, it just seems right. I’m not sure why. We’ve no particular obligation, save that of common decency and charity. But they also seem to have a godfather in Tony. His business is growing, but it is now at a bit of an awkward and sensitive stage. Nevertheless, they have people who care about them.”

“I’m of the view that we’re better to use the attic,” Maud said. “Brougham hasn’t shown any chimneys. I think we should plan to have at least a stove up there, rather like Tom and Vera have in their kitchen, but perhaps a bit smaller.”

“That makes sense. But we could, for a start, just have Brougham fit the chimney ready for a stove and close it off with an iron plate.”

“Yes. No sense in spending before we have the money in hand.”

* * *

Henry and Maud decided to extend their house in the attic. They put in a cast iron stove on the landing between two small rooms, each with a dormer. Brougham charged them £75 and Tom found the stove for £5.

It was Tom who also suggested that the new hand truck with a barrel would, if appropriate planks were set out, allow for emptying the cesspit. Given that the house extension was in the attic, this was not needed immediately, but Henry and Maud decided that it would be sensible to do the job while the house was already disrupted. They didn’t get Brougham to do this, but arranged to pay Tom, Tony, Dan and Robert. James McDowell offered to help. With £1 each and some monies for two barrels and the use of two handcarts, along with £1 to a man who had a cart with a large tub on it who would dispose of the detritus, they were still under £8 for the job and would not have to worry about an unpleasant overflow for a while.

The work in the attic took, of course, longer than expected. However, by early May 1858 the two rooms were ready to occupy. They had even been given a simple coat of distemper. The dormers were not large, but had windows of a size that there was light. Some considerable discussion about the merits of putting gas piping in the attic were finally concluded in favour

of using candles or perhaps oil lamps, as at least one of the rooms would become that of children, and gas should be kept out of their reach. Yolanda would have the other room, and she chose that with a northern exposure to get the softer light.

By the time the attic was in use, Maud was certain that another child was on the way. The house would be busy with three adults and four children. Still, they would manage.

* * *

In mid-January 1858, Arthur was trundling the hand-cart from the Station to Bartlett and Jones. He had four bolts of cloth which didn't quite fit in the box but were wrapped in heavy brown paper. There was also a box that clearly contained something quite heavy and metallic from the clinking noise it made when moved. Later it would be revealed that it contained scissors and related items that the haberdashery would carry.

Arthur was about a hundred yards from the B and J shop when a youth ran from an alley and shouldered him over. Another youth pushed the hand-cart away, trying to run. Arthur's assailant followed his comrade. Arthur was winded, but quickly got up and yelled "Stop! Thief!" and tried to chase them, but discovered his leg was painful, and probably badly bruised.

By the time Arthur was passing Bartlett and Jones, it was clear he was not going to catch the thieves, so he entered the shop and, rather breathlessly, related what had happened to Alexander Collier who was Cassandra's second-in-command of the shop. Cassandra was, however, in the office and overheard.

"Mr. Collier. Send for a constable. Arthur. Did you recognize either of the robbers?"

"The one who barged into me had a handkerchief across his face, and the other was running away. I didn't see either of them very clearly because they came from the side."

* * *

It took about a quarter hour before a constable arrived. This was a new man named Walton, and he was not very organized. It was not until Cassandra asked "Have you not a notebook, Constable Walton?" that he took it out and started to get names and accounts of what happened.

Walton had hardly started to write when two urchins turned up with the hand cart. Arthur said "Eric, Sam. You found the cart?"

The one who turned out to be Eric said "Saw two oafs go down an alleyway then run off. Knew it was your truck. They were swearin' bloody murder that there was no money and had thrown stuff on the ground. We put it all back in the box. Don't think we lost anythin'."

"Thanks, fellers. I'll 'ave to buy you a pie and ale."

"Well, until Tony Brown 'ired you, you were one of us."

Walton, not bothering to ask Arthur why he did not suspect Eric and Sam, started to accuse these two of orchestrating the whole escapade to gain a reward. Cassandra intervened, saying "Constable Walton. Is it not sensible to ask Arthur why he does not believe Eric and Sam have any role in the theft?"

Mumbling something incomprehensible, Walton asked Arthur this.

"The lout who ran into me was about four inches taller 'n me. And the other was fatter than either Eric or Sam."

Cassandra said "I have a tape measure here. Should we measure the height of all three young men?"

Walton, somewhat reluctantly, took down the heights of the three. Cassandra then suggested that he draw the street layout and a diagram of how the cart was taken. Also that the lout who barged Arthur had a height 4 inches more than that of Arthur.

"What height was the other, Arthur?"

"When 'e was pushin' the cart, he ran by the door of the Emporium, and 'is shoulder just came to the top of the number on the side of the door."

"We can measure that," Cassandra said, heading for the number in question.

When she returned she said, "Constable Walton, may we examine the merchandise to establish its content and condition?"

"Ugh. I suppose so, Mrs. ... er..."

"Cohen. You did not yet ask me. However, the merchandise is four bolts of cloth and a parcel of scissors, pinking shears, needles, thimbles and a selection of spools of thread and ribbons, of which I have a purported inventory in the form of a copy of my order for the goods."

Walton woke up to the reality that it was necessary to establish if anything was missing or damaged for the prosecution of the miscreants. He told Cassandra she could verify if anything were missing, and give a statement of opinion on the condition. Since Cassandra had not seen the goods before this, she had to extrapolate from her experience. Fortunately, the bolts of cloth were still in their brown paper, though one wrapping was torn and some dirt had got on the cloth. The package of notions was, of course, broken open and scattered, but when Mr. Collier and a shop girl laid everything out on the shop counter, all but a few needles and pins were present.

Arthur checked the hand truck. Thanks to Tom's attention to quality construction, it suffered only a few scuffs.

Cassandra said "Though there is rather little damage, Mr. Anderson has been assaulted and the hand truck and goods taken away. Save for the honesty of Eric and Sam, these would not have been recovered, so there is still a theft."

With the level of competence of Constable Walton, the culprits in the case were never arrested. They were, however, suspected by a number of the street people of Brighton, and decided to move to Portsmouth.

Tony had a passing acquaintance with Sam and Eric. He suspected neither could read or write properly, so Best Bonnet could not easily use them with hand carts. Still, a few days later, when he and Moonbeam encountered them, he said

"Hold, Moonbeam.

"Eric, Sam. I want to thank you for your actions the other day, and for helping Arthur."

"Arfur's one of us," Sam said.

"Can either of you read and write?"

"A bit," Sam said.

"Not much," from Eric.

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

?? Maud and Yolanda help Vera. Midwife?

* * *

On May 12, after their evening meal, Joseph and Tony walked to the Old King and Queen for some cider and ale and to talk about Best Bonnet. At least, that was the intention. However, it seemed that the business was continuing as it more or less should. Valerie was rendering regular accounting of activity, and the unfortunate cost of the theft from Arthur's cart was well behind them, at least financially.

Joseph asked "Ever do something really awkward and not know how to get out of it?"

"We've all done or said something awkward sometime. But I can't think of anything really terrible," Tony answered.

"I'm wondering how to fix a misunderstanding with Mary Lawrence."

"The dark-haired girl we see at church."

"Yeah. I asked if she'd like to go with me to an organ concert at St. Mary the Virgin. They got a new organ a couple of years ago. I quite like the sound. They were doing something called a Bach Fugue and some other stuff."

"I should learn more about Bach – I think there were several men in the family who composed quite a bit of music," Tony said, then went quiet as he realized he was leading the conversation off-topic.

"Anyway, at the intermission, Mary said something. There was the usual hubbub of people talking, and I heard 'water' and thought she wanted a glass of water, so I agreed and went with her, thinking to give her aid."

"But ...?" Tony prompted.

"She'd said something about 'water closet' and was none to happy that I was following her. Got all anxious. I think she thought I wanted to ... er... become familiar with 'er."

"I assume that wasn't the case," Tony said.

"Not then. I think she's pretty and ... well ... I would like to become familiar with 'er."

"But with her a willing accomplice, I expect."

"Yeah."

"Your apologies were not accepted as genuine?"

"No. She even moved to a different seat, and asked if she could have a hansom home. Cost me a shilling to pay the cabbie in advance."

"You'd like to see her again? That is, if the misunderstanding can be rectified."

"I would. She and I are about the same age – I was born in November 1841 and she on the 8th of December."

"The Immaculate Conception."

"What's that about?" Joseph asked.

"Oh. It's the religious observance of the conception of Christ. The Catholics celebrate it. I think some consider it a day when you must go to

church. Just some idea that stayed in my head after some reading. Sorry to cause a distraction.”

“You sure are an odd one, Tony. What with how you appear different from what’s underneath – I only ever think of you as a fella.”

“Anyway, Joseph, I’m not sure the rift with Mary can be repaired, but you might write a note.”

“But what would I say?”

“Perhaps something like

“Dear Miss Lawrence, I very much regret mis-hearing you the other night and thereby creating a misunderstanding. You have my sincere apology and my best wishes for the future.”

“Do you think she’ll respond?”

“No idea, but assuming that message is the truth, it sets out your view of the matter, and you can really do no more than that. If you go round to try to see her, she might think it aggressive. The note lets her choose.”

* * *

Tony and Moonbeam were on the regular morning route and at Fortescue Factory. Two new workers whose names Tony did not yet know, though he’d seen them around and talking to Mary Yarrow, were putting half a dozen boxes on the cart. Good job the other collections were quite small, and the next stop was the Station.

Janet Nuffield came out of the factory with a tray on which was a plate and a mug.

“Mr. Brown, Mr. Brown. Would you like a taste of something new we are trying? Cheese and onion tarts, and I poured you a cup of tea. I hope you take it with milk.”

“Thanks,” Tony said, and picked up a tart. It was about 2 inches across, having a pastry shell, and the top had been browned in the grill or a hot oven. In fact it was still warm.

“It may be hot inside, so be careful,” Janet said.

Tony took a careful bite, and ate that carefully.

“Very nice, and I can use a cup of tea.”

“Does your donkey need some water?”

“Probably not. Moonbeam drank at the trough a few minutes ago.”

“You keep her well-groomed. The hat is such a nice detail.”

“How we got the name Best Bonnet. Are you finding the work here to your taste – sorry, that could be taken as a pun given the product of the factory.”

“I do like working here. It’s been a salvation from the Workhouse, and I seem to have found a place. Though I must say I’m still trying to ascertain how I will fit into the local society. I have been watching for lectures and concerts – inexpensive ones of course – so that I can meet people who value intellectual pursuits and, to be honest, to find friends. Up to now, my brother Felix and I have been concentrating on ensuring our material safety.”

“From my own experience, I know that material matters take precedence, but it is important to have wider interests, and, of course, friends.”

“Do you ever go to concerts, Mr. Brown?”

“Occasionally. And I have had the good fortune to attend a couple of plays in the last year or so. That was a novelty for me, but assuredly one that I found very interesting and hope to do again. But the trains will not wait for Moonbeam and I. I thank you for your kindness, Miss Nuffield.”

* * *

Mary Yarrow had seen Janet offer Tony refreshment. The offer of refreshment had her approval, but the motivation for making the offer was, she suspected, that Janet found Tony attractive as a young man. This could possibly end badly.

That evening, Mary arranged to take a walk to Uptons yard. She told Michael and Elizabeth she wanted to talk to Rebecca about some ideas for upholstering some chairs, and indeed was so interested, though it was hardly urgent. Moreover, she made sure she got to Uptons early enough that the evening meal would just be finishing.

“Hello Mary,” Rebecca said. “What brings you out this evening?” Rebecca was alone in the parlour.

“I believe I need to talk to Tony about a delicate social matter involving Janet Nuffield. But I’ve told Michael I wanted to ask you about some upholstery material.”

“I think I can guess,” Rebecca said. “Janet has taken a shine to Tony, which will only be awkward. But did you really want also to talk of upholstery?”

“Your guess is right. And, yes, I’ve a couple of wing chairs that are very comfortable, but the arms are threadbare.”

“Why don’t we call Tony – he’s with the donkeys brushing them I think. Joseph has gone off to walk with Mary Lawrence. At least I hope they are just walking out and not getting into trouble. Valerie is in her room reading, or I’d get her to come and find some of the material we have. But I suggest that I keep in mind your needs and set aside some material for you to look at on another occasion. What general colour are the chairs?”

“They are a deep pink or if you like a faded dark red.”

“Probably something contrasting would look better than a colour that is almost but not quite right. Perhaps a dark grey, and make some arm covers that can be pinned with the pins out of sight.”

“Good. We’ve settled that in case anyone asks. I’ll go and talk to Tony. Thank you Rebecca.”

Indeed, Tony was brushing Annabelle, having completed the brushing of Moonbeam.

“Hello Tony.”

“Good evening, Mrs. Yarrow. I’m afraid I almost said McNair.”

“You’ll have to just call me Mary, like you call Mrs. Naismith Adeline now.”

“Wouldn’t be appropriate at the factory,” Tony answered.

“True. Anyway, it’s something at the factory I wanted to see you about.”

“Oh. Have I done something wrong?”

“No. No. Not at all. Just that I noticed Janet Nuffield bring you some refreshments. I actually approve of her doing that, but I think her motives may be ... Oh. This is awkward.”

“You think she may be hoping I’ll court her as a young man might?”

“Yes. And I can understand why. You have always presented as a young man, and for a woman your voice is quite low pitched. You even have the gait and mannerisms of a man. Indeed, I can’t imagine you as a woman in women’s clothes.”

“Nor can I,” Tony said, and they both laughed.

“Anyway, I’m not sure how to discourage what may become an unfortunate disappointment.”

“Does she not sometimes go to church of a Sunday?” Tony asked.

“Yes. Though not always.”

“Let me write a note that you can give her, inviting her to walk with me after church this coming Sunday. I would actually welcome her company to lectures or concerts as she suggested to me, but we had better have some ... er... clarity on what might be possible.”

“You will tell her your reality?”

“I have stated to Mr. Turcotte and Constable Shaw and others that I won’t deny I’m a young woman if asked, but plan to stay in male attire so I can continue my manner of earning a living. It seems this is an occasion where I am essentially being asked my gender, if only implicitly.”

“Thank you Tony. I hope Janet will not be too unhappy to learn what you will tell her.”

“Well, Annabelle is now properly brushed, aren’t you old girl. Let me wash my hands, then perhaps you’ll join me for a glass of something round the corner. My treat.”

“Thank you. That will be enjoyable.”

“You coming, Jolly. No. Well, we did walk a fair way today.”

* * *

On Sunday, June 6, 1858, Tony waited outside St. Nicholas after the morning service for Janet Nuffield.

“Good morning, Mr. Brown.”

“Good morning, Miss Nuffield. I trust that you are here because you got my note.”

“Indeed. Thank you for the invitation.

“Where did you propose to walk?”

“If you have the energy for it, we could walk to Hove beach, take some tea, then walk back to your lodgings.”

“That sounds nice. Shall we go.”

“First, let’s pay our respects to Phoebe Hessel.”

“Is she one of your relatives?”

“I don’t think so. But her gravestone is remarkably informative.”

They quickly found the grave and read the inscription.

In Memory of
PHOEBE HESSEL

who was born at Stepney in the Year 1713
She served for many Years
as a private Soldier in the 5th Regt of foot
in different parts of Europe
and in the Year 1745 fought under the command
of the DUKE of CUMBERLAND
and the Battle of Fontenoy
where she received a Bayonet wound in her Arm
Her long life which commenced in the time of
QUEEN ANNE
extended to the reign of
GEORGE IV
by whose munificence she received comfort
and support in her latter Years
She died at Brighton where she had long resided
December 12th 1821 aged 108 years.

“What an amazing story!” Janet exclaimed. “And such a great age after such a tumultuous early life.”

“Indeed. And she was for a long time living as a man, showing how women can do so.”

“Surely it would be more difficult today, a century after.”

“Do you really think so? Perhaps a small anecdote might convince you otherwise.”

“Please. Do tell me.”

“A young couple, much in love, married in 1838. They were Samuel Crown and Mathilda Evans. The two had met after the unfortunate death of Samuels parents and Mathilda’s father when a coach overturned not far from Brighton. Their marriage led to the birth of a daughter, Antonia Crown, in March of 1839. However, Samuel’s uncle, Ezekiel, fabricated a story that Samuel’s parents owed money, when in fact they left an estate of several hundred pounds. Ezekiel indentured Samuel as a sailor, and he lost contact with Mathilda, his daughter and his mother in law, Josephine Evans. Unfortunately, Mathilda died in 1843, then Josephine in 1846. Antonia had been cautioned to avoid the Workhouse, and took to the streets.”

“Felix and I were in the Workhouse for a short time. It was awful. I’m so glad Ethel took us out.”

“Many young women are ... er... molested,” Tony said.

“Felix had to fight some louts who tried to take advantage of me.”

“Thus our young – not much more than an infant – Antonia put on boys’ clothing, and became a street urchin who was apparently male.”

“And grew up as a young man?”

“Never wore women’s garb.”

“And how does she make her living?” Janet asked.

“With a donkey and cart.”

“Oh ... oh ... I see. How foolish of me.”

“You are not foolish, Miss Nuffield. But I would not want to have you later on feel deceived by appearances.”

“But you use Brown as your name?”

“I suspect that is purely mispronunciation or mis-hearing of Crown.

“Will we still walk to Hove beach? I would like to talk of what lectures or concerts might be available to attend.”

“Oh. Yes. It would be good to have a companion for such occasions.

“You would, I take it, prefer I not share your secret.”

“There are some situations where my use of male gender would be a fraud, but wearing men’s clothing and making my living as a man is not, according to Mr. Turcotte and Mr. Mortimer. I do not intend to cause grief by my presentation as a young man, but would prefer to inform people myself.”

“I can understand that, and will welcome your friendship, ... er... Mr. Brown.”

* * *

On Sunday July 4, 1858, Tony donned a new linen suit and a straw hat – an outfit suggested by Adeline – and he walked to Fortescue Factory to collect Janet Nuffield. The two of them then walked to Fortescue Road so Adeline could join them to walk to the Promenade where there was a bandstand and a public brass band concert.

There were folding chairs in the best places to hear the concert and Tony paid the few pennies each for chairs and our three friends sat together to wait for the commencement of the music.

Adeline asked “Did you read about the stink in London? Apparently Parliament is considering moving to Oxford or St. Albans.”

Tony said “Since the shop gets the newspapers, I’ve read several items on the problem of sewage. But we have a similar problem right here in Brighton, I think. It will take a lot of work to provide good sewers and a proper disposal of the waste.”

“I envy you the chance to see all the newspapers,” Janet said. “Several of us put in a ha’penny so we can have the Times and the Brighton paper, the weekly Herald.”

* * *

Later in the month, Tony read that, on 26 July, Lionel de Rothschild took his seat as the first Jewish Member of Parliament. However, despite his limited formal education, Tony realized that there was a generally negative attitude in society to Jewish people. He found this confusing. The Jewish people he knew, namely the Goldmans and Abraham Cohen, were people of great honour and integrity, who had treated him with more courtesy and kindness than almost all others. There were similar social attitudes towards Catholics, but somewhat different in tone.

The news of Rothschild was just one of several events reported that summer. Tony realized that sometimes the world went through periods when there was a much greater activity and energy, and that this was one of them.

At the start of August, for example, the Medical Act of 1858 regulated practitioners in medicine and surgery. Most people outside the profession likely did not register this change. It was, perhaps, a start to removing some of the quackery from the field.

There was more discussion about the British Empire taking over the properties and governmental role of the British East India Company. It would probably mean a lot of fuss about whether shareholders would be compensated. When Tony thought about things, he realized how strange it

was that India had been governed by a commercial society that had its own army, and army larger than that of most nations.

In the middle of the month there was a lot of excitement about the new trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. President Buchanan exchanged greetings with Queen Victoria. Unfortunately, the cable failed very soon after and it will However, a weak signal will force a shutdown of the service in a few weeks, with its resurrection several years in the future. That was a great pity, as the rapid communications the telegraph brought were changing the way people saw the world, and themselves in it.

All this news made the world seem larger, the individual seem smaller. Yet at the same time the individual had more opportunities than before. Even a young woman posing as a man had a fraction more chance for prosperity than a decade or so earlier.

* * *

On a sunny evening in late July, Tony was sitting on the sea wall of the Promenade watching people on the beach. Jolly had settled on the wall beside him, her head on her paws. It was good to just let the world pass by for a while.

This reverie was, however, interrupted after a few minutes by Dan Dixon, who came and sat beside Tony.

“Nice evening,” Dan said.

“That it is,” Tony agreed.

“Wanted to ask you somethin’” Dan said.

“Certainly. Ask away.”

“You ever have a problem pissing? Last few days its like boiling water coming out, and some pus or other between attempts.”

Dan was not in the circle that was aware of Tony’s gender. While Tony liked Dan, he did not consider him very discreet. This was not out of any specific examples of behaviour, just a general suspicion, which seemed to be correct.

“Have you been with a woman?” Tony asked.

“Er... You won’t tell my Ma?”

“’Course not.”

“Actually yes. My first time. Been finding it hard to keep my pecker from getting hard at inconvenient times. Then I got to know Betty Nixon who’s a barmaid at that pub not far from the Factory. She’s not a whore, but lets it be known that for 5 bob she’ll give you a nice time.”

“Was it a nice time?” Tony asked, rather skeptically.

“Yes. It was very nice.

“I should tell you, so you don’t find out otherwise, that Jack let me have the key to the shop of a Sunday morning. Didn’t want to be out in the open. Betty said sometimes it was just up against the wall behind the pub. Hello, lift your skirts, here’s your five bob. I got the feeling she liked a bit of comfort.”

“I suppose everyone does.”

“You tried it, Tony?”

“No. Taking my time. And I’ve read enough that I suspect Betty gave you the clap.”

“What’s that?”

“A venereal disease. Sometimes called the clap. You’ll need to get it treated, but I’m not sure who you should consult.”

“And Betty? She probably should get treated too.”

“If only to avoid giving it to others.”

“Can you ’elp me find a doctor for it?”

“I’ll ask around discreetly. Don’t want folk giving either of us the evil eye.”

* * *

Dan eventually paid out nearly £5 in total for various consultations and treatments, none of which were pleasant. Tony’s enquiries suggested a Dr. Raleigh, who had a busy practice among the women who plied an ancient profession among the upper class but nonetheless diseased men who came to Brighton for entertainment. Raleigh’s practice also included some of those men. Dan became just another victim of an old but persistent disease.

Tony, of course, was a bystander to this aspect of life, but the reality of venereal disease had been a presence during the time he had spent as a child on the street, as well as the quick, crude, outdoor copulations of the cheaper prostitutes that spread those afflictions. Those memories were a sad and constant warning that sex could be dangerous. And the street sex trade was ugly. It was difficult to associate such behaviour with pleasure and joy. Yet Adeline had said her unofficial husband had given her respect and pleasure, and in the tone and colour of her words in so saying was a depth of truth that could not be unsaid. Moreover, Adeline had talked of this pleasure enjoyed at a time when she would, to most of society, be considered elderly.

Thus it was that Dan’s dose of the clap pushed awkward conflicts into Tony’s dreams, dreams which bled into the days thoughts and moods.

The last weekend in August, 1858, Tony and Adeline decided take a day in Hastings. As a seaside town, it was not really very different from

Brighton, though perhaps less encumbered by escapees from London. A somewhat quieter seaside town.

Tony treated Adeline to luncheon at the Stag Inn.

"This is very nice. Thank you Tony."

"I almost feel we haven't had much time for real conversation since we got back from our travels a year ago May. We've been in the same places and talked, but day-to-day activities have taken the priority."

"That is true. It's not from any deliberate intent on my part, and I'm sure not on yours. But we've both been rather busy. After all, you've engaged Arthur to take on the hand cart and Jack Dixon for the newspaper shop.

"In fact, I was going to ask you about Jack's brother Dan. He seems out of sorts lately. When I was walking by the water closet, I thought I heard him sigh in pain. I hope he hasn't got himself a dose of the clap."

"Since you have guessed, I will tell you that that is the case. And I am rather annoyed with him, as he persuaded Jack to let him use the shop on a Sunday with a barmaid named Betty Nixon who seems to dabble in whoring from time to time."

"Is he getting treatment from a physician?" Adeline asked.

"Yes. Dr. Raleigh."

"Oh, him. Makes a good few pounds from the vices of the rich tourists who dally with the poxy lasses of the streets."

"I sometimes wonder if, but for accidents of place and time, those poxy lasses might not have included me," Tony mused. "Ah, here are our plates of roast beef."

Adeline said "I should be more sympathetic to the girls. And my own situation with Albert was as a kept woman. To my knowledge, Albert was true to me and never dallied with another while we were together."

Tony said "I fear I don't understand how the urges overcome reason, but perhaps that is due to my inexperience. Dan seemed to indicate he was somehow pulled out of control. Does that happen to both men and women?"

"I would say it does, though not everyone of course. I never had the inclination that powerfully, but some men and women – people you'd think sensible and respectable – somehow suffer a sort of insanity when their libido takes them over."

"Do you think the girls in the streets are so affected?" Tony asked.

"There, I suspect, it's more a matter of wanting to eat and have a roof over their head. Sadly, they often end up with neither and dying young."

"From what I've overheard at Fortescue Road, Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Yarrow were somehow involved with a house of ill repute. But they seem to have avoided the pox or the clap," Tony said.

"I think they may have worked, or even run, a place where things were ... oh, I don't quite know how to put it ... more regulated. I think that is

how Mrs. Cohen has knowledge of some medical things. And Mrs. Yarrow was the cook. Mrs. Yarrow essentially admitted as much by saying it was a private hotel where she did the cooking. So the girls would have cost the men a lot more, but had fewer clients. And likely the house was more a place where men could eat, drink and gamble, as well as find a woman for the night. But I'm fairly sure there'd be cases of disease, and then the girls would likely be given some money and a quick good-bye."

"It seems so sad," Tony said.

"That it is. Be thankful for our good fortune. And this meal, for which I am grateful to you, Tony."

* * *

As with most people suffering the clap, Dan wanted to keep this information confidential, especially from his employer. However, Alexander Collier happened to see Dan leaving Dr. Raleigh's surgery that was in a quite fine house. At B and J, Collier was talking to Cassandra and said "Have you started some new venture on Marine Parade?"

"No. Why would you ask?"

"I saw Mr. Dan Dixon coming out of a house there. I assumed he was there on some commission for you."

"How odd.

"Do you remember where this house was?"

Collier could not remember the number of the house, but gave the nearest cross street and that he thought it was three or four doors down.

Cassandra walked home via the Marine Parade, which was definitely not on her usual route. It did not take her long to find Dr. Raleigh's brass plate beside a door in the location Collier had suggested. Raleigh was well known for his treatment of what were sometimes called "social" diseases.

When she got home to Fortescue Road, Cassandra asked Martha to tell Dan to come to the drawing room as soon as he got the request. Some ten minutes later, he knocked on the door of the drawing room and Cassandra called "Enter."

"Martha said you wanted to see me, Mrs. Cohen."

"Yes. Mr. Collier asked me today if I had a new venture on the Marine Parade, as he saw you coming out of a house there."

Dan flushed. He had just had his first consultation with Raleigh and had been given some medicine to take which he was told would likely make him feel unwell. Not knowing what to say, he stayed silent.

Cassandra continued "As far as I can tell, the house you visited is the surgery for Dr. Raleigh, who is known for his knowledge of the treatment of

certain diseases that are acquired from interactions between men and women, and those women often share their favours among men for money. Would I be incorrect in my thinking?"

Dan, realizing there was little to gain by denying where he had been, said "No. Mrs. Cohen."

It did not take Cassandra long to extract the story.

At this time, the ideas of germs had not been widely accepted. Cassandra and her mother, Frida, having worked in an apothecary and having read several treatises on the subject, including Gideon Mantell's book on animalcules. Her feeling was that, even if it eventually proved to be a false theory, precautions against such microscopic infectious agents was worthwhile. Therefore, she banned Dan from the water closet – he would have to use a pot in the shed at the bottom of the yard. And she made him promise to abide by a stringent regime of hand-washing.

"I imagine Dr. Raleigh's fees will deplete your resources. If you need a loan, I will advance some funds against your wages. However, I expect you will need some days leave during your treatment, which, of course, will be unpaid."

"Yes, Mrs. Cohen. Thank you."

"Get along with you. Make sure you take the medicine exactly as instructed. For the clap, some of the treatments are quite toxic. More medicine is not necessarily better."

* * *

Two days later, Cassandra encountered Tony and Moonbeam in the street near B & J.

"Hello Tony. I'm afraid I have a bone to pick with you," Cassandra said in a rather cool voice.

This took Tony by surprise. He knew of no reason why Cassandra should be annoyed with him.

"Mrs. Cohen. You have me at a disadvantage, as I've no idea how I may have caused offence."

"I have learned that Dan Dixon took a woman to the room at your newspaper shop."

Tony was taken aback. "But you surely don't think I would approve of such behaviour?"

"You can't have been watching out for what Jack Dixon was allowing to happen in the back of your shop," Cassandra said.

"Jack has, up to now, not shown any reason I should mistrust him. Moreover, I believe Dan used the fact he is the older brother to be allowed

the use of the room for some time on a Sunday morning. I did not ask Jack if he knew why Dan wanted the room. If I have made any mistake, it is in not asking Jack particularly why he agreed to allow his brother the key.”

“I should not castigate you, Tony. I am annoyed with myself for not seeing what was going on.”

“But how would you know, Mrs. Cohen?”

“By being more observant. However, it is no crime for Dan to want to court a young woman. His choice to pay a slattern to go with him does him no credit, but he is hardly the first, and will not be the last. Let us hope he attains a full cure. The clap is an unkind disease, and the pox – syphilis – can be worse. Until he is cured, Dan will be using his own chamber pot and the privy, and we will get a shallow bucket or a hat tub for him to use for bathing. It is not known quite how it is transmitted apart from sexual congress, but there are some claims that it could be passed in other ways, and I want to avoid such possibilities.”

Tony said “I should talk to Jack to ensure he has no symptoms and to suggest he get the bedsheets and towels boiled.”

* * *

Jack was somewhat annoyed to have to boil bed linen and do a thorough cleaning of the back room of the shop, but realized his own culpability in letting his brother use it.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Brown. Should’ve told Dan he couldn’t use the room. He said he wanted a nice quiet nap of a Sunday morning and couldn’t get that at Fortescue Road with all the people about. Seemed harmless enough, but I should’ve guessed it weren’t so simple.”

“Well, we’d better make sure things are clean and we don’t spread the clap any further. Mrs. Cohen says there are some people believe it can be spread by more than a man and woman lying together.”

“I’ll do my best, Mr. Brown.”

* * *

In the middle of the first week of November, Tony noticed several newspaper reports of poisonings in Bradford. Apparently a confectioner who regularly adulterated sweets with plaster – it saved on sugar – accidentally got arsenic in the sweets instead. Twenty-one fatalities and over two hundred seriously ill.

“Jack. Who makes the sweets we sell?”

“I think it’s a little factory in the east end. I’ve the address in the ledger. Here it is. Sylvester Sweets.”

“I’ll do my urgent commissions then go over there and find out if they make all their own stuff.”

It was about two o’ clock on that Thursday, November 4, that Tony arrived at Sylvesters’. He had changed into his street suit, as he called it, and walked with Jolly. Sylvester Sweets was a modest building with a small shop front at one end.

“Good afternoon,” Tony said to the woman behind the counter. “Are you Mrs. Sylvester?”

“The name’s Hawking, but my father was Sylvester, so we kept that name. Who may I be speaking with.”

“I’m Tony Brown. I took over from Mrs. Macdonald with what we now call News and More. Reading the newspapers this week gave us a concern that some of the Bradford sweets might have got into your supply and hence ours, so I thought I should come by to discuss how we – and I include Sylvesters – might reassure our customers.”

“Well, we do make all our own sweets, right here on the premises.”

“And no adulteration?” Tony asked.

Mrs. Hawking flushed.

“Well ... er... not with arsenic to be sure.”

“I’ve heard that sometimes cheap material may be substituted for the sugar, which is above sixpence a pound just now.”

“That is the common practice, or one cannot compete with the rest. It is usual to put a bit of gypsum – daff – in place of some of the sugar, or the lozenges are rather small.”

“Customers are, however, rather shy of purchasing sweets this week.”

“It will hit us hard, I’m afraid.”

“I can imagine that it is difficult to know that the gypsum is not poisonous. That is, that it contains only gypsum and no toxic material.”

“We get it from a local apothecary. I’m sure he is most careful.”

“Perhaps it would be better to use only good ingredients and offer the product at a premium price with a warranty of its origin.”

“But would people buy them?”

“In the current situation of apprehension, I know I would. And I’m prepared to at least try an order of a couple of pounds each of, say, humbugs and barley sugar, assuming we can get a label that declares the origin.”

“How would you state the warranty?” Mrs. Hawking asked.

“Wholesome Humbugs. These humbugs are made only with sugar, peppermint, and ... I’ll let you put in the rest ... by Sylvester Sweets, Brighton, under my personal supervision. Then a signature with a name underneath. And similarly for, shall we say, Best Barley Sugar?”

“Might work. Probably cost about double.”

“Make them smaller so per sweet it is less than 50% more, and I suspect they’ll sell better.”

“Let’s see what my ’usband thinks.”

Mr. Hawking was called from the back – the factory where he and two assistants were making sweets. After some discussion, it was agreed that Sylvester would make a small batch of unadulterated sweets which they and News and More and possibly a couple of other shops would try to sell. However, Hawking realized that using the Sylvester name for these would kill the market for the regular, gypsum added, sweets. Hence they were sold as Hawkings Wholesome Sweets. However, News and More did put a sign in the shop window that Sylvester Sweets were made entirely in Brighton and they did not bring in any from other towns.

* * *

Martha Murphy slept in the partitioned-off area formerly occupied by Mary McNair-Yarrow that was in front of the water cistern closet, while Adeline had Cassandra’s former corner similarly set up to provide some privacy.

Sunday, November 28, 1858 there had been a dinner in the kitchen reminiscent of those several years before when all the residents except the tenants dined together. Tony, Tom and Vera had been invited, and Rose Bingham had returned early from her parents. The Frasers, James McDowell and Angus Sinclair were also there, so with Adeline and Martha there were a full dozen at table, Dan being at his parents’ house. The group was cheerful without being raucous, and the party did not extend beyond the slow-paced meal.

Adeline mentioned she felt very tired as she got ready for bed. She was, after all, not far from the four score and ten of King David, and those who heard her, mainly Martha and James McDowell, who was helping with the dishes, did not consider the comment to be cause for alarm.

The morrow morning, however, Martha did not hear Adeline arise. As the time of breakfast approached, she went to the curtain of Adeline’s cubby-hole and said “Adeline, are you awake?” With no answer, she repeated this a little louder. Then she moved the curtain aside a little, and could see Adeline in the bed, lying peacefully. Too peacefully. Martha stepped to beside the bed and brought her hand near Adeline’s face. She could feel no breath.

“Dan! James! Somebody! There’s something wrong with Adeline.”

Dan was nearest, as James was not yet on the Number 21 side of the pair of houses. Dan had not encountered death at this proximity before.

However, James came into the kitchen just after him, and Martha explained what she had discovered. James gently took Martha aside and felt Adeline's neck for a pulse. He took out his notebook rather than try to speak and wrote "Dead. Get Mrs. Cohen."

Martha went up to get Cassandra. James, having seen death aplenty in the Crimea, pointed to breakfast things and Dan set about continuing the preparation. He was glad James had the presence of mind to give him something to do. People seemed always to have fears and superstitions about having to be with a dead body. Dan didn't actually feel that. It was more that he was uncertain about how he should behave. Fortunately Cassandra arrived quickly with a somewhat flustered Marha.

"It is unfortunate that Adeline appears to have died in her sleep, but we should perhaps be thankful that she has had a peaceful death at a time of her life when she seemed to be happy. I see that breakfast is in hand, so I suggest we close the curtain and have our breakfast before we deal with what has to be done.

Afterwards, I will ask Dan to go to the undertakers. I believe your father went to Conroy's when Archie Temple died and they seemed competent enough. Do you know their premises, Dan?"

"Yes. Mrs. Cohen.

"What do I tell 'em?"

"Say there's been a death of a woman of advanced years and there will be a need for a simple funeral. Ask if they will collect the body and tell them they can talk to me either at B and J in the forenoon or here after 3 o'clock. Then go and inform Tony. He and Adeline were quite close friends. Tell Tony he can talk to me at the same times, as I believe I should ask his opinion on the details of the funeral."

"Where'll she be buried, Miss?" Martha asked.

"A good question. I believe her husband is in the extension to St. Nicholas churchyard that is called the Rest Garden, but I do not know if arrangements have been made for Mrs. Naismith."

Rose Bingham came into the kitchen, saw the group of people around Adeline's cubby-hole and asked "Is everything all right?"

Cassandra answered "I'm afraid Mrs. Naismith died in her sleep. I'm getting Dan to go to the undertakers, then to try to inform Tony."

"Oh dear. Well, I will talk to Mr. Turcotte when he comes in. As you know, we let her keep a small box in our safe for her money. I think there may be some papers there too."

"That's a useful reminder. Martha. If I am not here when the undertakers come for Adeline's body, make sure you watch them so nothing is taken but the body."

Martha looked stricken. Cassandra noticed that James was holding her

hand. He said something, and Martha translated "James says he'll make sure he's here."

"All right. That will likely be more secure. That is very much appreciated, James. I will leave a note that we will send appropriate clothing for the burial, and for now they should simply take her in her nightgown. They will perhaps want to know a cause of death, but possibly will accept 'old age'."

"I believe Mrs. Naismith ensured she had enough set aside to be buried decently," Rose said. "However, she has said several times she never went along with burying good clothes or good timber and brass, so I anticipate she will want a simple but dignified funeral."

Cassandra said "Dan. After you've been to the undertaker and Tony, better go to St. Nicholas and leave a note for the vicar if he isn't there. On second thoughts, while you all eat breakfast, I will write to him and to the undertakers. Martha, as soon as you've eaten, bring me up a tray and take care of Catherine. I'm afraid I've left Abraham – Mr. Cohen – trying to shave and watch her at the same time."

* * *

Adeline's funeral was surprisingly well attended three days later. Conroy's were disappointed that they did not get to charge the fees for their splendid black horses and shiny hearse. Instead, Tony and Moonbeam with the humble but adequate donkey cart brought the body from the undertakers to St. Nicholas, then the short distance to the Rest Garden, where a newly dug grave was waiting. This was not beside Albert Naismith, whose headstone ended with "and his wife Theresa" and that lady's birth year. Theresa Naismith had separated from Albert some time before he met Adeline. She had died in Great Yarmouth five years ago and been buried there. Still, the inscription made it awkward for Adeline to be buried beside Albert. Moreover, there were some formalities that required the involvement of Theresa's estate. It was easier for a new plot to be arranged.

Rose Bingham had, with great efficiency and competence, found a letter Adeline had written that expressed her wishes. It was not a proper will, but a discreet enquiry by Rose of Mr. Turcotte suggested that unless there were a claimant to Adeline's small estate, no court would contest her written wishes. These stated that she wished to be buried in Brighton, preferably in the Rest Garden, and that her funeral be a modest one. The remainder of her money – after £2 5 s 2 d to Conroy's, there was a total of £22 4 s 11 d – was to be given half each to Tony and Martha, and Martha would have Adeline's clothes and personal possessions, except for her books, letters and daguerreotypes, which were to go to Tony.

The distribution of Adeline's estate was done almost immediately after the funeral. Cassandra had thought to arrange a reception in the upstairs drawing room of Number 21. When the names of those who knew Adeline were written down, there was a need for much more space. After all, there were all the denizens of Fortescue Road, those at Upton's yard, especially Tony, the Goldmans, Tom and Vera, with Robert and Molly Vance, Winnifred and Frieda and the ladies at the Emporium, as well as a number of others. In fact, the church was more full than empty.

However, Cassandra did issue written invitations to Tony, Martha, and Rose, even though Martha and Rose lived in 21 Fortescue Road. And she invited Henry and Maud as well, as she felt the equilibrium Henry brought as a solicitor would be helpful to the occasion, as well as his role as Tony's trustee. Rose, of course, had reviewed Adeline's estate, in that Mr. Turcotte allowed several of the residents at Fortescue Road to keep a box of money and documents in his safe. Rose was even entrusted with the key to this safe.

The mood in the drawing room would have been sombre, but the two three year-olds, William Mortimer and Catherine Cohen, as well as Maud and Henry's daughter Joan, born in early September, prevented excessive melancholy. This particular evening Yolanda Karwowski, the housekeeper and nursemaid for the Mortimers, had previously arranged to attend a meeting, so their children were brought along. Tony, and probably some others, were relieved that they were present, as they reminded everyone that there is birth as well as death.

Moreover, Cassandra had told Mary Yarrow the reason for the gathering – to pass Adeline's legacy to Martha and Tony as requested – and Mary, though she was not invited because space would be limited, had suggested she send some Treats as refreshments. This was a most welcome offering, and Cassandra thanked her friend, especially for her understanding of the situation, and asked to be informed should Mary ever need comparable support.

After tea was poured and the three-year-olds had been settled on cushions on the floor where they soon fell asleep, Cassandra said "You all know that we are here to pass Adeline's modest possessions to Martha and Tony, to whom she has asked that they be given. I think we all found Adeline Naismith a great help and good company here, and she will be missed. Rose. I think you should say what is to be done."

"I have looked at Adeline's possessions and, following the wishes of a letter she left entitled *In the event of my death*, I have put all her letters and daguerreotypes in this large envelope, and all her books in that box there in the corner, together with this smaller envelope containing £11 2s 5 1/2 d, for Tony Brown. A similar envelope of money for Martha has been put in her box in Mr. Turcotte's safe. Martha and I went through the rest of Adeline's

possessions earlier today and have arranged the disposition of those Martha has chosen not to keep.”

Henry said “Thank you, Rose, for such a competent handling of a delicate task.”

There was a general murmur of thanks around the room.

Tony said “Mrs. Cohen. Would you mind if the box of books stayed in the kitchen for a couple of days until I can come by to collect it. I did not realize that Adeline was going to leave them to me.”

“Of course. If you had not asked, I was going to suggest that. Martha, can you let James and Dan know about the books so there is no confusion.”

“Yes. Mrs. Cohen,” Martha answered, though with a somewhat uncertain tone. She was rather confused by everything that had happened concerning Adeline’s passing, particularly that she should be a beneficiary of it.

Tony asked that he be excused to leave. He didn’t give a reason, but let it be assumed that he had had a tiring day and / or an early start on the morrow. The truth was that he was near to being overcome. Having lost mother and grandmother before the age of 6, Adeline had given him someone who provided at least a whisper of a parental voice. She had also become a friend.

Before coming to Fortescue Road that evening, Tony had asked Rachel Upton if he should wear one of his suits. The answer was that it would not be amiss to dress a little formally given the occasion, and he had put on the more common suit, as he did not want to attract too much attention on the street. Jolly came with him – she was permitted to lie down in the kitchen where James McDowell was always happy to have her nearby to pet. Tony also put on his Mackintosh coat and carried the owl walking stick.

Going home along the dark streets, Tony was glad of Jolly’s company as well as the walking stick. If it were known, the money now in an inner pocket would be of interest to robbers. However, the insecurity Tony felt was more due to the loss of a friend and confidant.

Back at Upton’s, where his bed was more or less in a corner of a corridor, with only a recently added curtain for privacy, he undressed and hung the suit, put on his nightgown and got into bed. Throughout the day, with the funeral and then the distribution of Adeline’s things, Tony Brown had managed to be a Victorian man and had kept a solemn but steady face. Now, however, Antonia Crown could weep. The tears flowed copiously but in silence. This grief was private and very deep. It was not for others to hear. It was a grief not only for Adeline, but also for a mother and a grandmother, who now were misty, ghostlike memories, and as well a father, Samuel Crown, who in the right clothing Tony closely resembled, but who he had never known.

Sensing something was not as it should be, Jolly came and sat by the cot and put her head near Tony's. Tony moved to one side, patted the bed, and the dog jumped up and lay close. Soon both fell asleep.

* * *

Adeline's books were of sufficient volume that they precipitated another change in Tony's life. As we have noted, his cot was more or less in a corridor at Uptons'. There were just two bedrooms. Before James Upton had died in 1852, Valerie and Joseph had shared. Valerie was now a young woman, so she and Rachel shared the largest bedroom while Joseph had the small one. Tony was, as we have said, in a corridor, and Arthur Anderson slept in the stable with the donkeys, cats, and, on occasion, Jolly.

Tony now had more clothes than easily could be hung on hooks near his cot. Samuel Crown's sea chest and some other odds and ends cluttered the space. Then a couple of days after Adeline's funeral, Tony was at News and More to get a report on the operations, and Jack Dixon said "Ma's been complaining it feels lonely at home now everyone's got jobs and moved out."

"Would you prefer to sleep there? I've been thinking my cot at Uptons' is getting awkward and I should move over here. We could even make sure there's always a palliasse and some blankets here so you can doss down behind the counter if needed."

"Yeah. I think that might please Ma, and I think me too."

* * *

Tony talked to Rebecca that night over supper— it was Friday December 3. He offered to continue to pay 2/- a week for his supper and laundry, and it was agreed he could breakfast there on Saturday and Sunday. This was an effective increase in what Rebecca received, but in truth she had been subsidizing his board for some time, while she made money from the stabling of Moonbeam. Of course, Tony would not be far away, as it was only 100 yards to News and More, and Goldmans' was nearby also..

"I'd better tidy up over the weekend. Be good to paint the back room and put in a bookshelf," Tony said.

"I'll give you a hand paintin' if you like," Arthur said. "Better'n goin' home to the fights that are goin' on."

"Troubles, Arthur?" Valerie asked.

"Dad put a bet on the wrong nag last week and there's nothin' for the 'ousekeeping."

“That’ll put the cat among the pigeons,” Rebecca said. “Tony, you might as well take the cot and bed-clothes.”

“There are two beds – well essentially cots – there. Also a table and two chairs, though no comfortable chairs. Unless you’ve a need for the cot I’ve used, then sell it. But I wouldn’t mind the bedclothes, as the ones at the shop are pretty worn. Jack’s been using both sets to keep warm.”

“Is the stove there any good?” Joseph asked.

“Not too bad. Can be regulated down to just a little bit of air and it keeps going all night. I’m going to put in a bookshelf, though, and I’ll see if I can get some light-coloured paint tomorrow.”

Rebecca said “Valerie. How long have we been meaning to fix up that wing-back chair with the threadbare arms?”

“Well over a year, Ma.”

“Then Tony, why don’t you have that, and Valerie will tack on some cloth over the arms. Not a proper fix, but at least some comfort.”

Saturday morning, Tony and Arthur, after fulfilling a couple of commissions that allowed Tony to buy some distemper from Johnson’s ironmongery, started painting, and in fact got it mostly complete. Of course, it needed to dry for a couple of days. Still, by Monday night, Tony was able to sleep in his new room. Word had got about, and Tom and Vera came by on Sunday afternoon with a rather battered wardrobe, which they brought on one of the hand trucks now being produced in modest but steady numbers.

Vera said “Someone was using this to play darts and it’s all pocked. You might be able to put on some paper or other covering, but it isn’t worthwhile for us to refurbish it as we regularly would. Maud got it for about a shilling, so have it as a house-warming present.”

“Thanks Vera. Tom.”

Tom also helped set up some bookshelves, which were simply some bricks and planks for now. Jolly’s pieces of carpet that were beside the cot at Uptons were moved beside the better of the two beds in the room at the shop. The other bed Tony suggested Tom and Vera take away for resale. This would give more room for the wing-back chair and around the small table and two hard chairs.

Apart from a few pieces of rug, the floor was bare boards. That might be changed in the future, but for now the plain boards were easier to sweep. Mrs. Macdonald’s leftovers included a broom and dustpan and some similar plain equipment. The room was modest, but offered a place Tony could call home. The first home that was his own, in a sense. He had almost no memory of his time with his mother, and he was not supposed to be in the alms house with Josephine. After that, he had been on the street, with Archie Temple, or with Cassandra or Rebecca.

A major change in the back room of the shop was a set of hooks for

lamps. Tony wanted good light to read, and in the right place so the pages were properly illuminated. Similarly above the table, which was now moved against one wall where a bed had been, so that any tasks could be carried out in good light. Using some heavy wire, Tony made some hooks that were screwed into the ceiling. When he was at Johnson's to buy paint and brushes, he bought two new lamps and a gallon of lamp oil. There were already four lamps in the shop and back room, but four lamps do not give a lot of light for two rooms.

A late visitor on Monday afternoon, in fact not long before supper, was Rebecca Upton. She brought some bread, butter, cheese, four eggs, a small jug of milk, some tea and a little sugar. There was a small larder in one corner of the room. Tony could make his own breakfast in the morning.

"We'll see you in a few minutes for supper, Tony. But I congratulate you on the appearance of the room.

"Did you know there was a special service today at St. Nicholas? It happens to be the feast of St. Nicholas. I didn't go, but one of my neighbours said the vicar said that in America they have taken St. Nicholas and called him Santa Claus, who they treat as a sort of Father Christmas."

If there were any individual unhappy with the change occasioned by Tony's taking up residence, it would be Olaf. However, the disdain for the activity in the shop shown by the cat – she stuck to her basket in the shop window all weekend to the extent of not eating the morsels of fish put out for her – disappeared by Tuesday morning, when Tony found Olaf curled up with Jolly in Jolly's dog bed.

* * *

Christmas Eve was only two and a half weeks away. There was,

* * *

* * *

* * *