CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Oh Mrs. Manning! Don’t You Cry for Me!

All was brightness and promise, excepting in the street below, . . . where, in the midst of so much life, and hope, and renewal of existence, stood the terrible instrument of death. It seemed as if the very sun forebore to look upon it.

—Barnaby Rudge

In his memoirs Marie Manning’s counsel, Ballantine, described one of Old Bailey’s greatest celebrities: “Rarely met with upon festive occasions, he was, nevertheless, accustomed to present himself after dinner on the last day of the sessions. He was a decently dressed, quiet-looking man. Upon his appearance he was presented with a glass of wine. This he drank to the health of his patrons, and expressed with becoming modesty his gratitude for past favours, and his hopes for favours to come. He was Mr. Calcraft, the hangman.” It was William Calcraft, executioner for the City of London and Middlesex, who was entrusted with the hanging of the Mannings. Elected to his office in 1829, Calcraft served for forty-five years, a record among England’s executioners. His tenure was not a happy period for the condemned, for Calcraft, despite his dedication to his work, was a woeful incompetent. Part of his problem traced from an old-fashioned or even nostalgic strain in his personality, for he shunned the technical innovations of modern hanging in favor of the antique “short drop.” His “clients” fell only a few feet after the trap opened and often were “violently convulsed” for several minutes before they died. Horace Bleackley has pointed out the irony that, decade after decade while mid-Victorian England was priding itself on its social progress, the Home Office allowed “an
Yet Calcraft was a simple and kind man who did not seem destined by background or temperament for his chosen work. Prior to becoming an assistant executioner under his predecessor, Tom Cheshire, he had been a ladies' shoemaker and a private watchman at a brewery. He was a loving husband and father, and his pacific hobbies included the culture of flowers and bees, and the breeding of pigeons and prize rabbits. Noted for his shyness and his reluctance to talk about his work, Calcraft often left his home early in the morning or after dark to avoid recognition. His destination was often the Tiger public house at Hoxton, where he liked to talk and play skittles with his fellow rabbit fanciers. When he was at work he was a nervous performer and had "shown on more than one occasion, that his dread of facing the crowd was equal to his victim's dread of facing the gallows." In his latter days Calcraft was reported to have undergone a religious conversion, and he was seen with his wife in regular Sunday attendance at a church in Islington. It was apparent that he had seen the light, for he seemed to have lost his love for his work and had even stopped driving his profitable trade in the sale of his victims' clothes and of bits of the ropes that had hanged them.

Calcraft enjoyed a much better press than his famous predecessors, who were pictured in Victorian literature as criminals, brutes, and egoists. In 1838 Londoners were chuckling over the third edition of The Autobiography of a Notorious Legal Functionary, a satirical account of the early career of Jack Ketch, the infamous seventeenth-century hangman whose name became a term of opprobrium applied to all his successors. In this novel Ketch is the son of thieves and himself becomes a pickpocket, an unsuccessful burglar, and a conniver at a murder of revenge. He succeeds to the office of hangman after his uncle, who held the post, commits suicide; and on being examined as to his qualifications as an executioner, he is taught a useful credo: "Never hang the wrong man—never fail to hang the right one; and never hang yourself, as your poor simple uncle did."
In his early novel, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), Charles Dickens presented the eighteenth-century hangman Edward ("Ned") Dennis as a nihilist and a sadist. Dennis, who in the novel as in real life was a participant in the destructive anti-Catholic riots by the followers of Lord George Gordon in 1780, shouts a very sweeping political slogan of his own: "Down with everybody, down with everything!" When he meets Hugh of Maypole, he cannot resist an immediate professional appraisal: "Did you ever see such a throat as his? Do but cast your eye upon it. That's a neck for stretching!" But joined to Dennis's cruelty and bent for destruction is an insistence on the "constitutional" status of his function and on his rights to profit from his executions. When he takes part in the storming of Newgate Prison by the rioters and the freeing of the prisoners, he tries unsuccessfully to prevent the liberation of four prisoners condemned to the gallows, and upbraids their rescuers: "Don't you know they're left for death on Thursday? Don't you respect the law—the constitution—nothing? Let the four men be."

William Calcraft, unlike Ned Dennis, did not always permit self-interest to dictate his opinions about his professional responsibilities. After the conviction of the Mannings he went to see his superiors, the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, and told them he was reluctant to hang Mrs. Manning. A wife, he maintained, was under the control of her husband and, not being a free agent, should not suffer with him. His qualms were very disturbing to sheriff Donald Nicoll, who was mindful of the fact that, if substitutes could not be found, the sheriffs were personally responsible for carrying out the executions. But as in all ages, there was no shortage of volunteers for the task. Several applications were received; one came from a market gardener who boasted that he was "strong in the wrist" from his exercise in binding bunches of broccoli for the Covent Garden market. But the vegetarian was turned down, because Calcraft ultimately notified the sheriffs that he had quieted his scruples.

The usual scene of Mr. Calcraft's operations was Newgate Prison, but the Mannings were condemned to be hanged at Horsemonger Lane Gaol in Southwark. The jail was about a half mile to the southwest of Minver Place, and it was only a
slight exaggeration when one commentator said that the Mannings were to be hanged within sight of the scene of their crime. Located on Horsemonger Lane (now Harper Road) close by the Surrey Sessions Courthouse, the jail was built at the end of the eighteenth century. Between 1813 and 1815 Leigh Hunt served part of his two-year sentence for libel at the Horsemonger Lane Gaol and was visited there by Lord Byron. The prison building was comparatively small, forming an irregular square of greater length than width. The roof was flat except where the surface was interrupted by projecting skylights. In the middle of the northerly side of the outer wall that surrounded the prison was built an entrance lodge whose roof rose thirty-five or forty feet. It was expected that the Mannings' gallows would be erected on the roof of the prison itself, but one eyewitness account maintains that it was, in fact, built on the western end of the roof of the entrance lodge. The prison was higher than the lodge and from the south shut out any view of executions on the lodge roof. Therefore, the faces of the Mannings would be turned northward toward London when they died.

In its fifty-odd years of history, Horsemonger Lane had witnessed executions for crimes great and small. One of the most notorious criminals executed at the prison was Colonel Despard, hanged in 1803 for plotting to assassinate King George III and seize the Tower of London and the Bank of England. Three years later, Horsemonger Lane Gaol was thronged to witness a triple feature, the executions of the murderer Richard Patch and the counterfeiters Benjamin Herring and his wife, Sarah. When the ropes had been placed around the necks of the Herrings, Benjamin kissed Sarah, "which had a most impressive effect." But the love scene above did not instill tender sentiments in all observers; the crowd was large and unruly, and two men and a child in its midst were trampled to death.

For several days before erection of the Mannings' gallows, feverish building activity was proceeding down below on the street to the north of the prison entrance. There was a large open area before the prison; the thoroughfare on the prison
side of Horsemonger Lane was at least forty feet wide and extended beyond either end of the prison wall. Across the thoroughfare, opposite the prison wall, was a newly built row of houses, called Winter Terrace, whose gardens, planted with stunted poplars, were fenced from the street by low iron rails. The windows, roofs, and grounds of the Winter Terrace were being let to spectators at prices to fit every pocketbook. For a place at the windows of the houses directly in front of the prison entrance lodge the tariff was one pound, but for five shillings hundreds could be accommodated on temporary three-tier platforms being erected in the gardens in front of some of the Winter Terrace houses. These stands, which resembled "those one sees in front of the lesser booths on Epsom Race-course," were not erected by the house owners but by entrepreneurs who had rented the ground for the purpose, paying from seven pounds to twenty pounds depending on the surface area. The speculators were described as consisting chiefly of costermongers (peddlers who sold produce from carts) and "the lowest frequenters of the prize ring." Spaces were also being rented at two public houses at either end of Winter Terrace, the Masons' Arms on the west, where one could get a good view from a first-floor terrace at two pounds, and at the Albion on the east, where an amphitheater had been erected in the direction of the prison entrance with seats going for five shillings. From the tops of houses in surrounding streets a distant and presumably even more economical view of the execution could be purchased.

In two of the Winter Terrace houses representatives of the press had obtained seats. This arrangement was necessary because an order of the Secretary of State, which had been enforced for several years, prohibited anyone except responsible officials from entering the jail on the morning of an execution. But other reservations of places had no professional justification. It was rumored that several members of the aristocracy had secured choice locations. At one house opposite the jail, it was reported, "the landlord makes no secret of the fact that his guests have required him to furnish a champagne breakfast at unlimited cost." Mention was made of "an old
gentleman who, fearing to breast the crowd on the morning, had engaged a bed for the night thus ensuring the opportunity of gloating his eyes upon the drop at daybreak."

On Saturday, 10 November, the police took a number of countermeasures in the interest of safety. A number of men removed some loose flints that had been laid down on the road in front of the prison. This precaution was thought necessary "as much to avoid the possibility of mutual injury by the mob, as of popular vengeance on the convicts." To keep the crowd from congregating close to the entrance lodge, a portion of the area before the prison was barricaded and manned by a large police detachment, and many of the streets feeding into the area were also blocked off. Nevertheless, by Saturday Horsemonger Lane was already thronged; the neighborhood public houses were doing record business; and the erection of stands for viewing the execution proceeded apace.

During the day Reverend Rowe appeared before Police Magistrate Secker to request his intervention to stop the building boom at Horsemonger Lane. The chaplain told Secker that in front of nearly all of the houses in the locality the inhabitants had raised a number of slender scaffold poles tied with side pieces and surmounted by planks to serve as seats for people to witness the Tuesday execution. He was certain that, because of the negligent manner in which these platforms had been erected, some serious accident would occur unless the court ordered the stands pulled down. Magistrate Secker asked a good Victorian question: were the scaffolds erected on public property? When Reverend Rowe replied that they were built in the gardens of the Winter Terrace, the magistrate said that, if such was the case, he could not interfere. He was, however, sorry to hear that respectable people should act in such a disgusting manner. He hoped the public would have some regard for their morals and would have nothing to do with such people. Reverend Rowe then asked whether the property owners, in the event of accidents of a fatal nature, would be liable to be indicted for manslaughter. Secker said that he had no doubt they would be; he hoped, however, that the public
would not endanger their lives for the sake of witnessing the execution of two fellow creatures.

But the harried magistrate had not heard the last of the entrepreneurs of Horsemonger Lane. Late on the same afternoon, another complaint about the mushrooming grandstands was submitted to him, this time by a tenant who charged that his landlord had erected a scaffolding to such a height that his room was cut off from the daylight and he could not do his work. Rights to the daylight were something with which the common law was accustomed to deal, and the magistrate directed one of his warrant officers to proceed to the spot and to ascertain whether the applicant's statement was true. The warrant officer returned with the landlord in tow and reported that a great portion of the scaffolding projected over the street and also shut out the light. The landlord denied the encroachment on the street; and as for the obstruction of light, he told Secker that his lodger had no basis to complain since he had been given a week's notice last Saturday to vacate the premises. The lodger was tenacious; he rejoined that the owner had wanted to get rid of him only to find an opportunity of letting the front window on the day of the execution, and he was determined not to leave. Secker said he wanted no part of their private quarrels but, convinced that the scaffolding did project over the public way, he ordered it removed.

The *Times* reported that the authorities could have taken stronger legal measures against the builders of the stands on Horsemonger Lane. It appeared that under the Gaol Act the erection of scaffolding of any kind within view of the prison could be prohibited, but the act required fourteen days' advance notice, which the authorities had failed to give. At Scotland Yard Superintendent Haynes huddled with his advisers to consider whether there was any other strategy that could be forged in the face of this administrative failure, but meanwhile the sale of places for viewing the execution turned into a real boom. In an allusion to the American Gold Rush then in progress, the *Times* reported that some of the best places in Horsemonger Lane were bringing "Californian prices." There
was only one substantial risk in the local speculation; many of the would-be purchasers of seats were wondering whether the two convicts would be brought out for execution at the same time. Some persons connected with the prison had stated that an interval of about an hour would separate the executions of the two prisoners, and this led to great disappointment because the true aficionados of public hanging thought that the occasion would lose much of its special interest if both spouses were not "turned off" at the same time. But still the "to let" signs sprouted on the windows, and when a bargain for a seat was closed, a printed ticket was presented to the buyer in the following form:

Admit the bearer
to one front seat
at Mr. _______ ________’s
Number _____ Winter Terrace

Paid, £1 00s. 0d.

From an early hour on Sunday, large numbers of idlers were seen lounging about the prison, making running commentaries on the likely conduct of the criminals in their last days, "their remarks in some instances being of the most revolting description." It was not until shortly after noon that the curiosity of the crowd was gratified; the black timbers of the scaffold became visible atop the prison wall. The gallows was finally completed about four o’clock, and the noise of its erection was plainly audible in Marie’s cell, which was situated almost opposite. The windows of her cell had been barricaded to spare her the sight of the men at work.

The battle against the grandstands resumed on Monday. As a result of an application to the Commissioners of Pavements, a number of officers went out in the morning to inspect the various scaffolds and temporary seats and ordered their removal in all cases where the slightest encroachment has been made on the public street. Both the Mason’s Arms and the Albion Tavern were served with notices to remove the encroaching structures. At the same time Superintendent Haynes appeared before Magistrate A’Becket (who was sitting in place of
Secker) to play a new legal card. He argued that the New Building Act provided that before any building of a temporary kind could be erected for the purpose of an exhibition, a certificate must be obtained from the official referee. A’Becket accepted this position and recommended that the authorities serve immediate notice on the owners of the buildings that if the structures were not immediately pulled down they would be fined two hundred pounds. Haynes and his men left the court to carry out the court’s order, and more of the jerry-built structures were pulled down.

Early Sunday morning the hardy spirit of Marie Manning finally broke; she attempted to kill herself. She had professed a strong attachment to the three female turnkeys who were watching her and often requested them to lie down and take a few hours rest, but they declined to do so, for they had noticed that she frequently pretended to be asleep when, in fact, she was watching their movements closely. At about three o’clock Sunday morning, however, two of them, tired out by their watch, fell asleep, and Marie attempted to strangle herself by grasping her throat and forcing her nails into her windpipe. The third guard saw her becoming convulsed and, waking the other attendants, was able with their aid to prevent Marie from succeeding in her attempt. When they had her under restraint, they examined her nails, which they found she had grown to great length and sharpened almost to a point.

Later in the morning Marie was sufficiently recovered to attend services with her husband at the prison chapel. The Mannings were so placed that neither could observe the other. On entering the chapel neither of them betrayed any extraordinary emotion, but as the service proceeded they both became distressed, and during portions of Chaplain Rowe’s sermon they wept bitterly. The chaplain took as his text the second verse of Psalm 65: “O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come.” He began by remarking that if all his hearers knew how short a period existed between them and eternity they would each feel the necessity of so living their lives that they would be able to assist each other, and would thus merit assistance hereafter through the heavenly and divine grace of
the blessed Redeemer. How much more forcibly did this apply, he said, to their unhappy brother and sister, whose days were numbered, and who had but a few hours to live. Calling on the Mannings to repent, he assured them that the mercy of God was all-sufficient to pardon the most guilty criminal, if truly penitent. He implored them to embrace the opportunity without delay of laying their hearts open before God and not to lose one moment of the short period allotted to them for existence in the world. He concluded: "God be merciful to you both, and to all of us sinners, and teach us to look to Jesus, the sinners' friend, as the only true source of absolution for our transgressions."

On the previous Friday evening Manning had written to Chaplain Rowe to seek his good offices in arranging the interview that Marie still denied him. "May I ask it of you," he wrote, "as an act of kindness, to learn from her whether an interview may not take place, as it is truly awful to contemplate the wickedness of any one who shall enter the presence, the awful presence, of God without being at peace with all men." Marie, however, had persistently refused to see Fred unless he first agreed to affirm her innocence, and despite her emotion at the Sunday chapel services, she still remained adamant. She met with Chaplain Rowe in the afternoon but declined his spiritual comfort and would not see her husband. On Sunday evening she went to bed early and did not rise until late on the following morning, although she had slept little. She expressed great indignation at the close guard kept over her bed and said she would not endure their watch again, for on the next and final night she would not go to bed at all.

The noise of the crowd around the jail could clearly be heard in her cell, and she was told that the scaffold had been erected. She said that the crowd would not see her since she would cover her face. All her words about her husband were bitter; she asked how he was and how he looked and, on being told that he was greatly emaciated, she remarked that she supposed his "fat old jowl" was thinner. She made frequent references to the railway robberies and declared that she had been the means of saving him from transportation as a participant in the crimes and regretted that she had done so, for if he had been sent out
of the country, she would now be a happy woman, enjoying her liberty instead of facing execution. On Monday night Reverend Rowe visited Marie in her cell shortly after eight and remained with her for more than two hours. It was reported that during that period she made a "pretended confession" to him, "carefully excluding from that confession—if such rambling and evidently false statements which she made may be called—every appearance of an acknowledgment that she had any guilty participation in the murder of Patrick O'Connor." She pleaded entire ignorance of the crime, beyond the fact that it had been perpetrated by "the young man from Jersey," and would not respond to Rowe's questions as to how she obtained possession of O'Connor's keys.

According to the Observer Marie continued to give more careful thought to her dress than her soul. It reported that, as soon as she had been told that her appeal was decided against her, she asked to be supplied with some materials from among the things she had with her in the jail, "then very coolly set to work and made herself a new pair of drawers which she kept, and refused to wear until the morning of her execution, having made them expressly for the purpose of being hanged." When she arose on the morning of her execution, one of her watchers handed her a pair of cotton stockings which she at once gave her back again, saying, "No, not these, but silk ones." She directed that a pair of new white silk ones be given her, and she put them on with much care. The Observer tattled that "although naturally having a fine figure she had by art considerably improved herself by padding such portions of her dress as she thought would do so. Since her capture she had become very stout and as she increased in size she carefully removed the padding from her dress concealing it as much as possible from the view of those around her. On the night before her death she burned her bustles, not choosing to assign any reason for the act."

When Chaplain Rowe left Marie on Monday night, he went to see Fred and stayed with him until one o'clock in the morning. Fred seemed perfectly resigned to his fate but became very irritated when Rowe, respecting Marie's confidence, refused to
tell him what she had said about his part in the murder; both
the prisoners had failed in their frequent efforts to press Rowe
into the role of an informer. On the chaplain’s leaving for the
night, Manning told him he hoped to see him the following
morning at five o’clock. During the night Manning remained
dressed and hardly slept, but read and reread the sixth and
seventh verses of Psalm 51:

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the
hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall
be whiter than snow.

But when the morning came, he put aside his devotions and was
overcome with a sense of his own celebrity. As souvenirs he
wrote out notes for some of the turnkeys. One of them read:
“Frederick George Manning, age 28 years, died at Horse-
monger Lane Gaol Tuesday, the 13th of November, 1849. I
have now only three hours to live in this world.”

Between six and seven Chaplain Rowe was sent for, and on
entering Manning’s cell he found him much calmer than on the
previous evening. Afterward, Rowe visited Marie and solemnly
enjoined her, as she was so soon to appear before her God, with
whom disguise was useless, that if she had anything to say or any
request to make, she should do so at once. Her reply was dis­
appointing; she asked the chaplain to write to two ladies and to
express her heartfelt thanks for their kind efforts on her  behalf,
even though they had not been of any avail. While the chaplain
still struggled to move Marie to repentance, Manning had
breakfast and was granted permission to walk in the prison
yard. He soon tired of the exercise and, entering the chapel, sat
down at one end of a bench placed directly in front of the
reading desk and pulpit. It was now about a quarter past eight.
After a while Manning told the turnkey who had accompanied
him that he wanted very much to see his wife. In a few minutes
Marie entered the chapel and sat on the same bench as her
husband, with two guards between them.

Fred leaned toward Marie and said, “I hope you are not
going to depart this life with animosity. Will you kiss me?”
The last meeting but one, from Huish's *The Progress of Crime.*
Marie said that she had no animosity towards him. She bent over to him and they kissed. Chaplain Rowe then administered the sacrament to them, and they kissed and embraced each other several times. Manning was heard to say to Marie, “I hope we shall meet in heaven.” At this moment the prison governor, Keene, came in and told them that it was time to make ready. Mr. Calcraft also appeared, and the Mannings were led to different parts of the chapel for the pinioning of their arms. Fred Manning submitted to the procedure patiently. While being pinioned he asked Calcraft whether he would suffer much pain. Calcraft replied that if he kept himself still he would suffer no pain at all, and Manning seemed considerably relieved. He addressed some polite words to the chaplain: “I was petulant last night, and I hope you will forgive me, making allowances for my situation.”

Marie’s pinioning was more difficult. When Calcraft entered the room where she was waiting for him, Marie nearly fainted, and it was necessary to administer some brandy to her. On recovering, she took out of her pocket a small black silk handkerchief, which she requested be placed over her eyes before she left the room. The prison surgeon, Harris, took the handkerchief and bound it carefully over her eyes, after which, at her request, he threw over her head a black lace veil, which she tied tightly under her chin. Calcraft then approached and pinioned her arms. The hangman suggested that she wear a cloak over her shoulders in order to hide the ropes, but she objected strongly to this and the cloak was put aside. At this point one of the female turnkeys burst into tears, but Marie said to her calmly, “Do not cry, but pray for me.” She was then led out into the chapel yard, where her husband waited for her. The procession moved toward the scaffold headed by Mr. Keene. Chaplain Rowe walked immediately in advance of Manning, who was flanked by two of the turnkeys, and about two paces behind came the female convict supported by the surgeon, Mr. Harris, and by Mr. Wheatley, an officer of the jail. She walked with some hesitation from being blindfolded and more than once requested Harris to be careful she did not come into contact with anything. She complained that the cords hurt her wrists.
Reporters wrote that in their progress through the chapel corridor the Mannings passed over their own graves, in which was placed a coating of lime, “an instance of retributive justice for the crime of which they had been so righteously convicted.”

The crowd below had swollen to about thirty thousand, packing the stands that had survived the police campaign and thronging streets, windows, gardens, and rooftops. On Monday evening a stream of spectators had begun to pour into Horsemonger Lane before the watchful eyes of five hundred policemen positioned outside the prison. The Times reporter described the crowd as “the dregs and offscourings of the population of London, the different elements that composed the disorderly rabble crew being mingled together in wild and unsightly disorder, the ‘navvy’ and Irish labourer smoking clay pipes and muzzy with beer, pickpockets plying their light-fingered art, little ragged boys climbing up posts, and standing on some dangerous elevation, or tumbling down again, and disappearing among the sea of heads.” But on the outskirts of the crowd, grouped in smaller numbers, the reporter spotted “a very different class of people—men and women too,—who had paid their two or three guineas to gratify a morbid curiosity, and who, from the fashionable clubs at the west end, and from their luxurious homes, came to fill the windows, the gardens and the housetops of a few miserable little houses, in order to enjoy the excitement of seeing two fellow-creatures die by an ignominious death upon the scaffold.”

The crowd had come to brave the cold winter night with their vigil, and the roar of their collective voice never stopped. To keep their spirits high and their blood circulating they broke up into dancing parties and performed quadrilles, polkas, or jigs. Above the general clamor the voices of amateur vocalists could be heard. One anonymous wit achieved instant popularity with a parody of Stephen Foster’s latest hit, “Oh! Susanna,” which was taken up by the crowd: “Oh Mrs. Manning! Don’t you cry for me!” In counterpoint to the song, the proprietors of the grandstands, accosting every respectably dressed person they saw, chanted praises of the strength, security, and cheapness of their structures and of the “splendid view.” The public houses
in the neighborhood were filled, every house was lighted, shops of all kinds were open, and “hundreds of itinerant basketmen were crying Manning’s biscuits and Maria Manning’s peppermints for sale.” Squibs and firecrackers flew through the air punctuating the merrymaking.

Shortly after seven Calcraft and several assistants appeared on the gallows and tested its working order. They received no notice from the crowd, which was hilariously absorbed in the efforts of several spectators to escape the pressure of the mob by scrambling over the closely packed heads that surrounded them. The crowd thought the execution would take place at eight o’clock, but the hour came and went with nothing to be seen but two men loitering lazily near the gallows. At about half past eight a fire broke out at the back of the jail, and for five minutes the gallows was shrouded in smoke. When the smoke was blown away, the “sun broke out with great splendour.” Then it was nine, and shortly afterward the jail procession, to the tolling of the prison bell, emerged from a small door in the inner side of a piece of brickwork at the east end of the roof. Thousands of spectators strained their eyes watching for the first appearance of the Mannings. Fred came first, supported by the two jailers and accompanied by Chaplain Rowe, who read the usual church service. Fred was wearing a black suit, and his shirt collar had been loosened for the convenience of Mr. Calcraft. His legs seemed to fail him, and he was scarcely able to move. He first turned to the east, apparently reluctant to face the crowd beneath him. “A gleam of sunshine fell upon his features while in this position, and showed that the pallor of his countenance still continued.” Marie, dressed in a handsome black satin gown, followed him with firm strides and did not exhibit any signs of agitation. When she approached the scaffold, Fred gradually turned in the direction of the crowd while Calcraft proceeded to draw a white nightcap over his head and to adjust the rope. In the meantime, Marie had mounted the scaffold, and when she took her place under the gallows beam, she did not tremble but stood “as fixed as a marble statue.” Perhaps her firmness communicated itself at last to Fred, for he leaned over in Marie’s direction as far as the rope would permit
The last scene, from Huish's *The Progress of Crime*. 
and, whispering something, held out his pinioned hand to her. One of the turnkeys brought Fred's hands into contact with those of his wife, and the couple took their final leave of each other. For the parting kiss of Benjamin and Sarah Herring that had moved the ancestors of the Horsemonger Lane crowd forty years before, the Mannings had been able to substitute only a crippled handshake.

Calcraft put a nightcap over Marie's head and then the noose; the scaffold was cleared of all occupants but the Mannings, the chaplain, and the executioner. Reverend Rowe, making one last attempt to bring Marie Manning to repentance, asked if she had anything to say to him, and she replied, "Nothing, but to thank you much for all your kindness." As he left, the Mannings again approached each other, extending their hands, after which they resumed their positions. An instant later Calcraft withdrew the bolt and the drop of the scaffold fell. According to some accounts it appeared that the hangman for once had done his work well and that the Mannings died almost without a struggle; "at least," said the Daily News, "there was far less muscular action than is usual." But to make sure that the reality of death matched the appearance, their bodies were left hanging for about an hour.

At the conclusion of the hanging the crowd began to separate, and it became apparent that, as at the Herrings' execution, death was not only on the prison roof but in the street below. As the ground became cleared, "hats, bonnets, shawls, shoes and other articles of dress were thickly strewed on the ground which had the appearance of having been the field of some frightful struggle." A man who had placed a leg between some iron railings to resist the pressure of the crowd fractured his thigh when the crowd swayed. After having been dragged out, he was conveyed to a hospital on a stretcher. While the crowd was pushing between two of the barricades near Newington Causeway at the western end of Horsemonger Lane, several people made an attempt to get out. Among them was a young woman named Catherine Reed, who fell down in a faint and was trodden by the mob. She was taken to Guy's Hospital with terrible injuries and died the next day. Near the place where
Miss Reed fell, a young man named Thomas Overall was also forced down in the midst of the crowd and was so seriously injured that he was also rushed to Guy's Hospital, where he was reported to be in a very dangerous condition.

The crowd had already dispersed when Calcraft lowered the Mannings' bodies and removed the ropes from their necks. They were then carried to an upper room in the lobby on the roof where, it was reported, they were both dissected by the medical authorities; the purpose of this procedure, if performed, was unclear, since the regular practice of dissecting bodies of executed criminals had been abolished by statute in 1832. The report of the Observer did not bear out the impression of the crowd that both Mannings had died peacefully. Fred's features "did not indicate that his sufferings had been at all intense, for beyond a slight swelling of the face and a muscular contortion of the lips, he bore all the appearance of a calm sleep." But Marie's features "were fearfully distorted, and plainly showed that before life had ceased her sufferings must have been very acute." After completion of the medical examination, the Mannings' bodies were covered except their heads, which were shorn of their hair to permit casts to be made. The press was not told whether the casts were being made for phrenological purposes or for public exhibition. The early Victorians had a passion for the science of phrenology, which purported to find badges of criminality in the bumps on the heads of hanged men. The Observer tended to doubt that the casts could have been made for exhibition, because Manning had strongly expressed the wish that his head not be put on show after his death. During the day, however, several county magistrates were granted their wish to view the Mannings' bodies, but Governor Keene sternly barred all others, although applications had been received from "high and influential offices." The public read that Keene was not successful in defending Marie's hair; in its story on the execution, the Observer claimed that "several members of the police force having obtained admission to the room managed to possess themselves of some of the long and beautiful tresses of the female, which they afterwards disposed of at high prices to those whose filthy
and depraved taste renders them ambitious to obtain such revolting relics of notorious criminals.” This statement stung the authorities of the prison and Scotland Yard, who ordered an investigation. Superintendent Haynes, in a memorandum preserved in the Yard’s dossier, reported to Commissioner Mayne that there was no truth in the Observer article. Haynes enclosed a copy of a letter from prison surgeon Harris stating: “... fore-seeing some improper use might be made of it, I with my own hands cut off all her hair both in front and behind, as close as I well could with scissors, and the same is now in my possession.” He added indelicately that “she had very little hair, most of it being false.”

But Harris’s disclaimer does not go far to reduce the impression that the indignities meted out to the Mannings’ bodies at Horsemonger Lane on November 13 rivaled the grim burial at Minver Place. Finally, when the doctors, modelers, magistrates, and barber had gone, the Mannings’ bodies were placed on separate shelves and at a late hour at night were buried side by side in the passage fronting the entrance of the prison chapel.

The day’s excitement was too much for the sensitive hangman. After the Mannings had been executed, Calcraft went down from the roof of the lodge to one of the rooms underneath. He looked extremely pale and trembled strongly. On being asked by one of the prison authorities what was the matter with him, he replied in a faint voice “that he was very nervous that morning, and that he should like to have a mouthful of air.” One of the turnkeys took hold of his arm and escorted him into the prison yard, where they walked back and forth for nearly half an hour. Only then had Calcraft sufficiently recovered to aid his associates in taking down the Mannings’ bodies. When he left the jail he exclaimed that “he did not much like hanging a man and his wife.”