

AVENGED AT LAST.

A Story of Love and Daring.

the author of "What He Cost Her," "Gwendoline's Harvest," and other popular novels.

CHAPTER I.

IN CRAVEN.

"Who travels by Donnerblick Scar takes a bad road," runs a local proverb in Craven; and, like most proverbs, it contains a half truth. The cart-track is, in fact, so wretched that it has no right to the name of the road, especially too, since in the winter time it is not used by man at all, but is the sole occupation of a mountain torrent. Such being the case even at this present, when Craven (British, Crayvan, "District of Rocks") is the summer haunt of tourists, demanding to be carried everywhere in wheeled conveyances, we may imagine it was no better in the year of grace 1820. At that very date, however, and somewhere about midnight in September, two travellers might have been seen (for luckily for them there was a moon) essaying that ill-reputed way in a gig. Western Yorkshire, as geographers are aware, does not fringe the sea-coast, and yet upon the left hand of the wayfarers arose a wall of cliff as sheer and massive as any which oppose itself to ocean; scattered fragments of rock, too, similar to those which are found on the sea-beach, strewed the track, and in such numbers as to be unavoidable. What there was of roadway, independent of these, was a natural lime-stone pavement, with fissures in it at unequal intervals. The vehicle, one would have thought, must have been made of boxwood at least to have resisted such continuous shocks; and how the springs stood would have been a marvel to such as were unacquainted with the fact that the gig had no springs.

"Now, Cator, pull up, and let me out," cried one of the inmates, after a concussion which made every timber in the homely conveyance rattle and creak. "I'd rather get along upon all fours, if that be necessary, than sit through another jolt like that. Come, let me out, I say."

"Sit where ye be, I say. My orders were, I was never to lose hold on ye, for that ye were unfitted to walk alone."

"But look you, Sirrah—thunder what a bump! I protest I thought my collarbone was broken. How dare you talk to me in that fashion? Am not I your master, sir?"

"Ay, ay, that's like enough; but my orders come from the master of both of us. Sit you down I say," and the driver seized the other's wrist, as he strove to rise, and forced him down with iron grip on to the seat again.

"Well, upon my word, this is pretty treatment," observed the victim querulously; "it really is, Cator. Why, you couldn't treat me much worse if I was one of the patients."

"Well," cried the driver, slapping his thigh, "but that is a good one; couldn't treat you much worse!" Here he laughed so loud and harshly that the mountain-walls were forced, though sullenly enough, to re-echo his cheerless mirth. "Ah, Mr. Clement Carr, but I think I could."

"Don't laugh like that," exclaimed his companion, earnestly; "don't do it; pray don't; and don't talk of such things. My brother said we were never to talk of them, even to one another."

"Ah, did he?" replied the man that was called Cator, in a sobered tone. "Well, then, I ax his pardon. Mr. Gideon is a knowing one, he is, else what could be the harm of talking about any mortal thing on Donnerblick Scar at midnight, with nobody but the devil—who knows all about us already, I reckon—within hearing, is more than I can tell, and devilish funny."

"Cator, be quiet, I say," interrupted Mr. Carr almost with a scream. "Don't speak of anything dreadful like that; and don't swear—for Heaven's sake don't swear—until we come to the turnpike road."

"Then I shall talk like a parson to the end of this journey, that's certain, Mr. Clement. There is no turnpike, or anything like it, between this and Clyffe Hall. Why, you're never satisfied, you ain't. Yet didn't like the moor-track, as we came along, any better, just because it was a little slushy-like."

"It was a quagmire," answered the other, shuddering at the bare recollection; "it was a shaking, quaking, swamp."

"Ay, and I know who was a shaking, quaking summat else," replied the other maliciously. "Just in that 'ere place, when I was a-telling you that pretty story about the young woman and her sweetheart who was lost in that very quag years ago, and was dug out since, only the other day, as one might say, all fresh and pleasant, only a trifle browned with the peat, and all of a sudden we plumped in up to the axles—my life, didn't you turn a pretty color!"

Again Mr. Cator relieved his feelings by peal after peal of discordant laughter, and again the unwilling rocks returned his mirth.

"This is truly horrible," observed Mr. Clement Carr, as he clung in agony of terror to the side rail of the gig which was now descending a sort of precipice—"to travel such a road as this in company with such a man!"

He spoke in a tone of pious reprobation, such as would have galled most people clothed with any remnant of self-respect. But Mr. Cator, who had long parted with his last rag, only laughed the more. "Well, of all the lily-livered chaps as ever I came across, strike me blind—but you are—"

"Don't," growled the other, the image of his companion, sightless, immediately presenting itself before him. "There is lightning in the air. Pray don't. How should I ever find my way alone out of this howling wilderness?"

"Ay, howling it is," rejoined the driver, looking over the shoulder grimly at his unconscious companion—a short but corpulent man of middle age, who might be termed "gentleman," so far as a new suit of broadcloth and a decent hatband could carry him towards that social elevation, "you never spoke a truer word than that, Mr. Clement. Have you not heard strange sounds ever since we passed the Kirkstone, like the rushing and rolling of thunder?"

"Yes, Cator, yes. I thought—and hoped—it was only a sort of singing in my own ears. What is it, my good friend?—what on earth is it?"

"It's nothing on earth," Mr. Clement responded the other gravely; "it's the

waters underneath us on their way to Hell Gates."

"Heaven forgive me, the man's gone mad!" ejaculated the stout man, the thin red lines which were his lips growing white with fear.

"Well, and what if I was mad, Mr. Clement?" pursued the other with a leer. "You would know how to quiet me, I suppose, as well as any man except Mr. Gideon; that is to say, you would if you had me at the Dene, although here, perhaps, I should rather have the advantage of you, being the more powerful of the two. My life, but it would be a pretty game if you were to be paid out for all your tricks in that very way! Think of one of those poor wretches whom we have left behind us yonder catching you here alone, under the harvest moon, and settling his long account against you for—"

"You're not to talk about it, Cator; you're not to talk about it," interrupted the other piteously; "and besides, we do it all for their good; and if I do but get safe home, it shall never be done again, so help me—it never shall!"

"Well, you are a clever one," observed the driver, admiringly, "and you've a certain pluck about you—that I will say, although you are such an everlasting coward. Now, to think of your attempting to gammon Providence in that way! It's a out above me, and that's a fact. I shouldn't have the face to set about it. Why, you know as well as I do that if you only get safe out of this bad road and indifferent company, and once find yourself in clover again at the Dene, you'll be worse than ever; for won't you be taking it out of them as is left, for all the terrors you have suffered in bringing this news of 'our dear lamented friend as has exchanged our humble guardianship for a place where we are assured even yet more tender care will be taken of him!' The sanctimonious snuff with which these last words were delivered proclaimed them at once to be a quotation from Mr. Clement Carr himself, whose ordinary speech, when not under the influence of alarm, it really rather happily parodied. So delighted, at all events, was Mr. Cator by the success of the imitation, that he indulged himself with another of his joyless screeches. This was duly reverberated, as usual, with the addition of a curious humming sound not discernible in the original. "There," observed Mr. Cator, triumphantly, "that's what comes of trying to gammon Providence. There's the Hell Gates abiding."

"I trust the ground may not open," ejaculated the stout man, piously—"I only trust the ground mayn't open with using such wicked words."

"But that's the very thing it's a-going to do," returned the other with a sneer; "so what's the use of trusting? Here we are, look at the very edge of Boden Pot—otherwise called Hell Gates—and it's a sight to be seen. Ain't the ground just opened with a vengeance, eh, Mr. Clement?"

Upon the right-hand side of the cart-track, and separated from it by no fence of any kind, gaped a huge elliptical chasm, far down in which the unseen water was bubbling and simmering, as though it indeed did boil.

"Would you not like to step out now and just crane over a bit?" inquired the last speaker, maliciously, pulling the powerful black mare he drove so suddenly up that she reared within a few feet of the frightful cavity. "Why, darned if the man isn't shutting his eyes—shutting his eyes, but moving his lips. Why, you ain't a gammoning Providence again, surely? There, that's right; take a good long look at it. People come from miles away and spend a deal o' money to see Boden Pot even when it ain't a-biling as it is to-night. But you're in luck, you are."

If Mr. Clement Carr, part proprietor of that famous asylum for the nobility and gentry of aberrated intellect, called the Dene, Yorkshire, was in luck upon the present occasion, his countenance exhibited no vulgar triumph, or even complacency. In fact, if we had not had the word of the voracious Mr. Cator to the contrary, one would have pronounced him to have been in the worst luck conceivable, so abject was his appearance, as, clinging to his favorite rail, and bowing his whole weight on the side of the gig most remote from the object of his terrors, he regarded the curious natural phenomenon thus presented to his notice.

"I was born and bred in Craven myself," continued the keeper—for such was the position which the driver of the vehicle occupied when at the Dene—"and yet I have never seen this sight but once before. There must have been a deal of rain on the moors of late, that's certain. There's always rain enough, of course; for all the underground rivers as you have heard a-rushing beneath you—the singing in your ears, as you called it—empty themselves here. But as for biling, that's rare."

"I have quite satisfied my curiosity, Cator," observed Mr. Carr in a hollow voice, and speaking with no little difficulty on account of a tendency of his tongue to cleave to the roof of his mouth.

"Very good, sir," replied the other with mock respect. "I am sure your wish is my law; only, Mr. Gideon said I was to take the greatest care of this here mare; and she's come a long way and wants rest; and here's a nice bit of level ground—there's not much of it in Craven—as seems to be put a-purpose for her to rest upon. I'm sure you wouldn't be cruel to animals, Mr. Clement; cruelty is something totally foreign to your nature; our system is opposed to violence of all description," here he snuffed again, "so let us bide a bit, and wait for the Boggart."

"The Boggart!" whispered Mr. Clement, hoarsely, casting an apprehensive glance about him for an instant, and then refixing his gaze upon the chasm, as though fascinated by its horrid depths, "what is the Boggart?"

"When I have lit my pipe," returned Mr. William Cator, suiting the action to the word, "I shall be delighted to give you all the information in my power. What a (puff, whiff) fortunate man you are to visit Craven for the first time with a guide like me."

CHAPTER II.

POST-MORTEM ADVENTURE OF MR. GUY CLYFFARD.

"The Boggart," commenced Mr. William Cator, calmly, "is what is more generally known as the Devil; but while he is in these parts, he goes by the former name, as a sort of territorial title. When he is not elsewhere, hereabouts—at Staynton Hole,

Ribbleside Pit (which you should see by the bye), or Withgill Wells, all country seats of his in these parts—he is sure to be in Boden Pot. See how the white water churns down yonder, just where the moon catches it, like the froth on a madman's lips. One hundred and eighty feet sheer, they say, Mr. Clement, from where the rank grass ceases to grow; and there, at the very edge, do you see a footprint deep in the stone, with the toes pointing downwards?"

Following the direction of the speaker's finger, his companion could just discover a bare spot, something of the shape of a human foot. The suggestion of a fellow-creature having ever stood in such a position might have sent a chill to a bolder heart than Mr. Carr's.

"I see, I see—it is too frightful," answered he, hastily; "it looks like certain death."

"I should think it did," remarked Mr. Cator, dryly; "and it would have been death too, if the man had not been dead already."

"Dead already?" echoed the other. "How could a dead man plant a footprint like that?"

"Ah! how, indeed, Mr. Clement? You must ask the judge before whom the case was tried a century ago. Now, think of your not knowing that, and you a relative by marriage of the party in question! I don't mean the Boggart—although I have seen you under circumstances when you might have passed for own brother to him—but Guy Clyffe of Clyffe, an ancestor of the very man whose sudden and deplorable death—"

"Heaven is my witness that could not be helped," interrupted his companion earnestly. "He brought it upon himself, Cator. It was a question of his life or ours. Don't you think the mare is sufficiently rested, my good friend? The moon is sinking; it is getting sensibly darker."

"Did I not say 'sudden and deplorable,' Mr. Clement? Why, you could not have caught me up more sharply, if I had hinted at a coroner's quest. Guy Clyffe, then, was a faraway ancestor, although in the direct line; of our late lamented friend and patient; and if there had been such an establishment as the Dene in those days, ought most certainly to have been placed there under—what is our phrase?—judicious moral restraint. But there was no benevolent institution of the kind then extant, and so this mad fellow went at large. I can't tell you what he did, or rather what he did not do, to make Satan his friend, but it is certain he brought the curse upon the Clyffards. There is an ugly story about his having left a mother and child in the caves under Ribbleside forest yonder, to find their way out by themselves; but at all events he was not a moral character, like you and me. He married a queer wife, too. The Clyffards have often done that, although it is only of late years that they have married beneath them—may, don't be angry, Mr. Clement; I mean no offence to Miss Grace as was—but in that respect Guy Clyffe outdid them all. No pair were ever so cordially hated as they by the whole Fell-side. Well, after a pretty long lease of life, and having sowed his full crop of tares, as a parson would say, the Squire fell sick and was not expected to recover. About that time, on a certain day in June, one Mr. Howarth (his family live in Thorpdale yet) was out-hunting in Boden Beck—it breaks into the open above and below the Pot here, and is still famed for otters—and there was a matter of four-and-twenty folks with him on foot and on horseback. While they were at check, not a hundred yards from where we are standing now, a couple of men came running up the Fell with exceeding swiftness.

"These be well-winded," said Howard to his huntsman; "never did I see men run so fast before."

"Why, Heaven save us! the one in grey is Squire Guy Clyffe," replied the huntsman. "And who is in black that follows him so close?"

"But nobody answered that, although all the hunt had got their eyes fixed upon the advancing pair. They ran on at head-long speed right towards the Pot (it was not called Hell Gates then), and Guy's face looked like a hunted hare's; they said, so it is like he knew who was behind him; then he fled down the cleft, though all cried out to him to stop, and into the yawning gulf, as if for shelter, and that was his last footstep which is printed there. There was no other mark or sign, though the man in black took the same road. Clyffe's Leap they sometimes call it. There was no more otter-hunting after that; but Howarth goes straight home, and tells his wife he is sure the Squire is dead, for he has just seen him chased by the devil into Boden Pot. And sure enough he had breathed his last in Clyffe Hall at that very time. You may suppose how this was talked of over all the Fell-side; so much so, that Madam Clyffe, the widow, brought her action against Mr. Howarth for publishing the scandal that he had seen her deceased husband driven into hell; and the defence set up was this, that he had so seen him. She laid the damages at five thousand pounds. It was tried before Judge Boltby, at York, in 1687. The witnesses for Madam were the doctor and other two, who had been with the Squire when he died. He had refused to go to bed, and insisted upon being dressed in a new gray hunting-suit, in which to take the field the moment he felt better. But Howarth, on his part, had his four-and-twenty men, of whom the huntsman and many others swore to the very buttons on the said suit, which they had observed were covered with the same sort of cloth whereof the cloth was made. It is impossible to resist such testimony; and the judge gave into it like the rest. 'Lord have mercy upon me!' said he, 'and grant I may never see what you have seen: one or two may be mistaken, but five-and-twenty cannot be mistaken.' So Madam Clyffe lost her cause."

"But the Boggart!" exclaimed Mr. Clement, enthralled, despite his terrors, by this singular narrative.

"Well, the Boggart had haunted Boden ever since. Do you see 'these stones, as large as eggs, which he has cast up from the water in his rage; and listen, you will hear him cursing to himself far down in the depths of Hell Gates."

The bubbling and boiling had by this time subsided, but as the pair listened attentively, a dull, monotonous sound—doubtless the gutting of the swollen pool against the rock—could be distinctly heard.

The two men listened for a little in total silence, then, "Come up, mare—come up," ejaculated Mr. William Cator; "master has had enough of the Boggart."

Master had had so much of him that he never spoke a word until the dark and perilous way lay well behind them, and they were moving swiftly along upon what was by comparison a level road.

"Are there no more bowlders, or underground rivers, or Pots, William?" inquired Mr. Clement Carr with assumed carelessness.

"Nothing more, sir," replied his companion with some tinge of conventional respect apparent in his tones for the first time, "I thought you would think it rather a wild journey over them Fells."

"If I ever come that accursed road again," exclaimed Mr. Clement, breathing very hard, and shaking his fist in the direction from which they came, "may the fiend in truth fly away with me, as those other hunting fools fancied they saw him—"

"I say," interrupted Mr. William Cator, checking his steed for the second time, "just you take care what you are talking about."

"Why? where? what?" interrogated the other, apprehensively. "You told me there was nothing more to be alarmed at."

"Don't you go making a jest in the place we're coming to of what happened to Guy Clyffe, Mr. Clement. The Clyffards are an old family, and hug their traditions after a fashion which you mayn't understand. They're particularly proud, I believe, of the ancestor who brought the curse upon them. If he didn't go downward by the way of Boden Pot, it is certain he took some other road to the same place; but it was a fine thing, and a compliment to the Clyffards to be fetched by the Prince of Darkness."

"I am sure they are welcome to any superstitions they please," observed the other with a grating laugh. "Folly of that sort is always a step in the right direction, and I trust that one member of the family, at least, may always qualify himself for a residence at the Dene."

"Ay, you may call it superstition, Mr. Clement Carr; but if you had lived boy and man for a quarter of a century within a mile of Clyffe Hall, you would not be so glib with your tongue."

"You are an ignorant and uneducated man, Cator," returned the other loftily, "and therefore such credulity, fostered by local prejudice, is in your case only natural."

"Very good, Mr. Clement," answered the other dryly. "Perhaps we shall differ less about this matter to-morrow morning."

"Why to-morrow morning less than now, my good Cator?" inquired the other, with an air of careless patronage.

"Because you will have slept upon it, sir, which is said to often alter a man's opinion, and more especially as you will have done so in Clyffe Hall."

"But there's nothing against the Hall, my good Cator, is there? Mrs. Clyffe has never breathed a syllable of anything unpleasant?"

"Nothing, sir, nothing, except those tales which 'credulity, fostered by local prejudice, is so apt to invent, and which ignorant and uneducated folks are so ready to believe. But yonder is Clyffe Hall itself; we shall have a couple of hours' sleep before daybreak yet, if we push on."

"I shall not go to bed to-night," said Mr. Clement Carr decisively; "it would be scarcely worth while."

Mr. William Cator chuckled aloud. "And look you, Cator, perhaps our staying in the house may be looked upon as an intrusion at this period of the family affliction. To-morrow night we will sleep at the inn."

"There is no inn, Mr. Clement," returned the driver maliciously. "Here are the lodge gates; please to hold the reins, while I get out and ring the bell."

CHAPTER III.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

It was the quietest hour of the twenty-four, as we in our egotism are wont to speak, as though it were not far otherwise with the majority of our fellow creatures on this orb, and busy midday with our own flesh and blood in the under world. The high harvest-moon at full was flooding the silent woods with mellow light, and crowning the eternal hills with solemn splendor. Through the iron gates, the avenue stretched far and wide, and the broad oaks threw each a shadow of itself on the eastern sward, as perfect as though it were a cast mantle. At the end of the long vista rose the midmost tower of Clyffe Hall; and on both sides, beyond the trees, vast masses of the stately mansion, or at least of its girdling terraces, could be seen sleeping in the moonbeams like some enchanted pile of fairyland. Around it spread the park, wooded and knotted, the ferny couching-place of many an antlered herd; and behind it, as far as the eye could range, rose the dark background of Ripple Forest and Fell. It was a scene to make the lightest hearted thoughtful, and yet, if viewed aright, to lighten the burden of the most sorrowful. It matters not which sort beholds it, or if neither does. Autumn after autumn, age after age, the innocent night wears still this precious jewel of the harvest moon upon her brow; and the soft effulgence overflows the world, and steepets it in heavenly splendor, whether mortals care to mark it or no, as the Urim and Thummin shone in the same, whether he who looked upon them perceived the presence of the Lord of Hosts, or only beheld a burnished breastplate.

Alike upon all the crowded towns it shines, where the children of honest labor sleep unconscious of it; as upon the lonely desolate moorlands, where there is none to gaze upon its lavish sheen. Whatever it bathes in its mild radiance, straight grows fair, except the faces of the wicked. Fat and afraid, irresolute and cruel, Clement Carr sat in the springless gig looking like a vulgar Vitellius. The countenance of Mr. William Cator, also, who did not contrive to waken the lodge-keeper (although he clung on to the bell as though he were taking part in a bob major) with his first, nor yet with his second summons, was harsh and grim as the stone deacons that sat on either side the portal. When the gates were opened at last, he lashed the mare into a gallop, as though she had been the cause of their long detention. Still, even these men, as they emerged from the double line of oaks, standing like sentinels whose officer of the watch was Time itself, and beheld the

various proportion" of the castle (for such in truth it was), each significant of its epoch, but harmonized one with the other by the revolving years—even these men, I say, could not restrain a characteristic outburst of admiration. It was not, indeed, the picturesqueness of this edifice, girt by its broad black belt the sleeping moat, and far less any of the historical associations which might have hallowed it from turret to basement to some folks, that claimed their regard, but the more practical consideration of how considerable an income the proprietor of such a domain must needs possess, who could keep it in such due order and repair; for old as Clyffe Hall was, there was not a vestige of ruin about it; the lawns that sloped down to the moat side were smoothly shorn, and set with banks of flowers; and from the stone terrace above them, faced with fruit trees, came news of a trim rose garden, in every odorous breath of the cool autumn air.

"Fine place, Cator," observed Mr. Carr, as they drove over the stone bridge, but thinly covered with ivy, which only of late years had replaced the less convenient draw-bridge. He spoke not only approvingly, but with a certain air of part proprietorship which did not escape his companion's attention.

"Very true, Mr. Clement," returned he. "It's been in the family in one shape or another more than five hundred years. They say it has grown to this, bit by bit, from a single tower—that to the west, I think it was, where the walls are sixteen feet thick, and the windows mere holes with bars to them—wonderfully convenient for our little business, eh, Mr. Clement? But these great places don't change hands very readily. You may smile in your mischievous way, and Miss Grace, as was, is doubtless a very clever woman; but the Clyffards of Clyffe—Strike me blind, but that's the bloodhounds! Well, I own it made my heart go pit-a-pat. Did you ever hear such a howling in your life? It really seemed as though they had overheard us, and guessed what we were thinking of. Them very bloodhounds, or leastways their fathers before them, have been here these three hundred years. Not even a puppy, they say, has ever been parted with by the family; only a full-grown one was killed by the king's order, or something like it, for eating the gate-keeper's child in Squire Guy's time. He swore it was such a piece of tyranny as he would never put up with; but the dog was hung for all that; and the story goes that his master buried him in the chapel yonder, and got excommunicated by his priests for so doing. Hang the dogs! I hope their chains are strong! Well, it's one way of rousing the house, at all events."

The feelings of Mr. Clement Carr (who sat on the side next the kennel) did not admit of articulate speech; but he got down with much more agility than could have been expected of a gentleman of his proportions, and running round the back of the gig, applied himself to the iron knocker of the nail-studded front door with a will. The court-yard in which they now were was formed by three sides of the castle, which stared upon them from a score of curtained windows, as from sightless eyes; but through both shutter and curtain of one of them gleamed a pale and sickly light, telling of wakefulness and watching even at that slumberous hour.

"That is Squire Ralph's own chamber," observed Mr. Cator, nodding cautiously in the direction in question; "and if you'll take the advice of so humble an individual as myself, you will not make such a dreadful noise."

The shocks which Mr. Carr was administering to the oak door did indeed reverberate over the whole building; and the baying of the bloodhounds, mixed with the rattle of chains as they strained to break their bonds, made up a hideous clamor. The latter noise, however, only incited Mr. Clement to fresh exertions; and when the door was suddenly opened in front of him, he rushed frantically in, crying, "The dogs, the dogs! Shut it, look it; never mind, Cator!" without even casting a glance at the person who had admitted him. If his alarm had permitted him to do so, it would probably have taken another direction.

He who stood in the doorway, glancing in speechless indignation from the intruder in the gig to him who had made so unceremonious an entrance, was evidently no serving man. His face, though haggard, and, at the moment, puckered with rage, wore an air of conscious superiority very different from the well-weighted superciliousness of a hall porter; while his apparel, although disheveled, as though he had sought repose (as indeed he had) without undressing, was rich and even elegant. But what rendered him most peculiar, and put it out of the question that he could be merely a retainer of the establishment, was that he wore his hair, of which he had an enormous quantity, notwithstanding that he was far advanced in years, in plaits, as race horses do in these days, and from out of them his gray face peered inquiringly, as a river god's is sometimes pictured to do from his fell of burlesques.

"How dare you make this clamor at my door?" he broke forth after awhile. "Who are you, fellow, in the gig, and who is this cur whom you have brought with you?"

His inquiry was addressed to Mr. William Cator, but referred to Mr. Clement Carr, who, having climbed up to the huge marble mantel-piece of the hall by means of a chair, had cleverly kicked it over, so as to isolate himself from all attacks of bloodhounds or others; and there he sat, with his legs swinging from the impetus of his exertions, but by no means from the careless confidence which sometimes begets that motion in persons similarly circumstanced.

"My name is Cator, sir," returned the driver, baring his head, and speaking with unwonted humility. "We have just come over from the Dene."

"I might have known it," muttered Ralph Clyffe gravely, for it was the Squire of Clyffe Hall himself who stood before them. "Have I not been forewarned these three times?"—then he added aloud, "Come, in, sirrah; a groom will take your horse. When did my poor brother Cyril die?"

"We regret to say, sir," quoth Mr. Clement Carr from the mantelpiece—"I speak for Gideon and myself—that the sudden and deplorable demise of Cyril Clyffe, Esq., took place yesterday afternoon at twenty-seven minutes and a half exactly to four o'clock."

"Come down, sir, and tell your tidings in a fitting manner!" cried Ralph Clyffe in

(Continued on sixth page.)