

I should spend the night at the inn, and call next morning before the ladies started homewards, as Mrs. Marston did not consider it prudent for us to accompany them in the carriage, the hour of her husband's return being uncertain.

You may fancy how highly disagreeable was the sensation produced among the party at this moment by the sound of the old screw's voice at the back-entrance!

"Away, as fast as you can," cried Mrs. Marston.

Out we both sprang into the front lobby, and into the garden, Dick two lengths ahead, springing over the flower-beds, and lost in the darkness in less time than I take to say it, and I about to follow him, when I discovered that I had forgotten my hat on the hall-table, and rushed back for it, in hopes of escaping scot-free. The door always stood open, I sprang in, seized my property, and turned to fly. Alas, in my headlong course, I came into violent collision with old Marston, who, hearing the steps in the garden, had come round—my impetus was so great that he went down like a shot, and catching his foot in one of the croquet hoops that by some chance had been left standing on the lawn, fell with a horrible clatter and very strong imprecations.

I confess that my discretion overpowered my politeness, for I bolted away as hard as I could by the same road as Dick, with the sound of Marston's voice raised in angry threatening following me down to the garden wall, over which I dropped most awkwardly, spraining my ankle in my fall. I picked myself up as I best could, and called in a low voice for Dick, who did not answer. I limped to the inn, where the trap was already being got ready by Westfield, who had hastened thither at once, and was much grieved and distressed at my accident. There was no time to lose however, and after taking a glass of brandy, to remove the faintness caused by the pain, I was lifted into the dog-cart, liberally tipping the groom, who promised to bring us news of Julia and her mother, as early as possible next day.

What a drive that was! Though suffering a good deal from my sprain, I could not help laughing heartily at the summary way in which I had felled Mr. Marston, which Dick declared was an