

wildered by the novelty and strangeness of his position to say anything : " quite so. And therefore we have invited your solicitor to an interview with us to-morrow morning at ten o'clock in the library, when I trust you will be present, for we shall offer you abundant proofs of our position."

On the following morning Ivar repaired to the library, where he found the late earl's solicitor in company with Idris and Godfrey.

Ivar was well aware that Idris was the rightful heir of Ravenhall. His only hope was that the other might find it impossible to prove the legitimacy of his title. But in this he was quickly doomed to disappointment.

With a face that grew darker and darker he listened to the evidence that had been accumulated by the joint labours of Lorelie and Beatrice. The prior and secret marriage of the old earl, Urien Ravengar, with the village maiden, Agnes Marville : the birth of a child named Eric, together with Idris' legitimate filiation to the latter, were all clearly set forth.

The lawyer was at first disposed to be sceptical, but became fully convinced in the end.

" I fear it is of no use to dispute the evidence," he whispered to Ivar. " Contest the claim and you're sure to lose. Better to appeal to the generosity of your new-found cousin and heir, and try to come to some monetary arrangement with him."

Ivar sat for a few minutes in moody silence. Then, looking up and scowling at Idris, he muttered :

" If I've got to give up Ravenhall, I may as well go at once. I won't be beholden to that fellow for a roof."

" Surely you will remain till your father's funeral shall have taken place ? " said Idris.

" Damn the funeral ! " muttered the late viscount, savagely. " What good shall I do myself by waiting