

in the train, and that Mr. Dwerrihouse alighted at Blackwater station.'

'Quite impossible, sir,' replied the station-master, promptly.

'Why impossible?'

'Because there is no station along the line where he is so well known, or where he would run so great a risk. It would be just running his head into the lion's mouth. He would have been mad to come nigh Blackwater station; and if he had come, he would have been arrested before he left the platform.'

'Can you tell me who took the Blackwater tickets of that train?'

'I can, sir. It was the guard,—Benjamin Somers.'

'And where can I find him?'

'You can find him, sir, by staying here, if you please, till one o'clock. He will be coming through with the up express from Crampton, which stays at Blackwater for ten minutes.'

We waited for the up express beguiling the time as best we could by strolling along the Blackwater road till we came almost to the outskirts of the town, from which the station was distant nearly a couple of miles. By one o'clock we were back again upon the platform, and waiting for the train. It came punctually, and I at once recognized the ruddy-faced guard who has gone down with my train the evening before.

'The gentlemen want to ask you something about Mr. Dwerrihouse, Somers,' said the station-master by way of introduction.

The guard flashed a keen glance from my face to Jelf's, and back again to mine.

'Mr. John Dwerrihouse, the late director,' said he, interrogatively.

'The same,' replied my friend. 'Should you know him if you saw him?'

'Anywhere, sir.'

'Do you know if he was in the 4.15 express yesterday afternoon?'

'He was not, sir.'

'How can you answer so positively?'

'Because I looked into every carriage, and saw every face in that train, and I could take my oath that Mr. Dwerrihouse was not in it. This gentleman was,' he added, turning sharply upon me. 'I don't know that I ever saw him before in my life, but I remember his face perfectly. You nearly missed taking your seat in time at this station, sir, and you got out at Clayborough.'

'Quite true, guard,' I replied; but do you not also remember the face of the gentleman who travelled down in the same carriage with me as far as here?'

'It was my impression, sir, that you trav-

elled down alone,' said Somers, with a look of some surprise.

'By no means; I had a fellow-traveller as far as Blackwater, and it was in trying to restore him the cigar-case which he had dropped in the carriage that I so nearly let you go on without me.'

'I remember your saying something about a cigar-case, certainly,' replied the guard, 'but—'

'You asked for my ticket just before we entered the station.'

'I did, sir.'

'Then you must have seen him. He sat in the corner next the very door to which you came.'

'No, indeed. I saw no one.'

I looked at Jelf. I began to think the guard was in the ex-director's confidence, and paid for his silence.

'If I had seen another traveller I should have asked for his ticket, sir?'

'I observed that you did not ask for it, but he explained that by saying—"I hesitated. I feared I might be telling too much and so broke off abruptly."

The guard and the station-master exchanged glances. The former looked impatiently at his watch.

'I am obliged to go on in four minutes more, sir,' he said.

'One last question, then,' interposed Jelf, with a sort of desperation. 'If this gentleman's fellow-traveller had been Mr. John Dwerrihouse, and he had been sitting in the corner next the door by which you took the tickets, could you have failed to see and recognize him?'

'No, sir; it would have been quite impossible.'

'And you are certain you did not see him?'

'As I said before, sir, I could take my oath I did not see him. And if it wasn't that I don't like to contradict a gentleman, would say I could also take my oath that this gentleman was quite alone in the carriage the whole way from London to Clayborough. Why, sir,' he added, dropping his voice so as to be inaudible to the station-master, who had been called away to speak to some person close by, 'you expressly asked me to give you a compartment to yourself, and I did so. I looked you in, and you were so good as to give me something for myself.'

'Yes, but Mr. Dwerrihouse had a key of his own.'

'I never saw him sir; I saw no one in that compartment but yourself. Beg pardon, sir, my time's up.'

And with this the ruddy guard touched