

As she took the pretty walk to the village post office Clare reflected that most certainly she must now pin her faith and hope to Cyrus Rodney, and make her case, and appeal to him as strongly as possible.

She dispatched her telegrams—one to Ted, requesting him to come to Wreford without delay, and adding a few cryptic words which would prepare him for what he might expect; then another to Glenlochan, directing what was to be done with his letters.

She felt better after she had accomplished so much, and she turned to take the walk home and make ready for the evening's campaign, which practically meant the siege of Cyrus Rodney.

In the village street she came face to face with Estelle, who had just come in by a slow train and was now walking home. Their surprise was mutual, though Estelle's was the greater. She imagined that both Cyril and his wife were still in Scotland.

"How do you do, Clare?" she said in her quiet, cool voice. "I am surprised to see you. When did you come?"

"To-day. And I had the extreme pleasure of travelling down from Waterloo with your father."

Estelle's face flushed with joy and emotion.

"With father! But I don't understand! We did not expect him till next week."

"He seems to have got in ahead of time," said Clare genially. "Of course, it is quite a family atmosphere up at the house, so I just slipped out as I had a couple of telegrams to send."

Estelle nodded, and they turned to walk together in the direction of the house.

"Is Cyril with you?"

"No. I left Cyril at Hexham, or rather I parted from him at Newcastle on my way south."

"But isn't he coming?"