Story of Old Manchester.

CHAPTER XXI.

We left Mr. Radclyffe standing at the Half door—that is, the back entrance to the mansion—confronted by the posaber Jim Binns, and his companion, Ned o' Peggy's; for these two disreputable characters were the individuals who had called upon him, Richard could searcely have explained at the moment why he invited them to come in, but he remembered subsequently that there had been an uneasy feeling in his mind that these men might have something to communicate to him

sequently that there has been an inight have something to communicate to him which it would be well he should avoid the chance of others hearing.

He led the way to his sitting room, followed by Binns and Tyson, and it was a relief to him that he did not encounter any of the domestics between the Hall door and the cosy apartment in which how as accustomed to spend his evenings. The huge fire burning in the grate and the comfortable surroundings were not lost upon Mr. Binns, for he gave his friend an appreciative nudge with his elbow as they entered, and then rubbed his hands as if taking in the warmth, so different from the wintry chilliness without.

Evidently, however, the two poachers had been awaiting Richard's arrival from Manchester under shelter at the stables, or elsewhere, in the vicinity of the Hall, as there were but few signs on their Manchester under shelter at the stables, or elsewhere, in the vicinity of the Hall, as there were but few signs on their clothing of the anow which was still falling fast. Mr. Radolyffe did not fail to notice this, and it increased his disquietude; for it was not a pleasant circumstance to think that two such roughlooking fellows as these had been lottering about the premises with the object of seeing him, and to the knowledge, probably, of the grooms and others. This idea did not improve his temper, and perhaps might be the reason—after he had closed the room door—of his demanding, with unusual gruffness of voice and manner:

"Well, what do you chaps want with me?"

me?"
Mr. Binns, however, seeming'y juite oblivious to the speaker's abruptness of manner, rubbed his hands again contemplatively, and then, looking about for the most convenient obair, scated himself and placed his hat on the floor between his legs.

his legs.

For a moment or two, although his eyes flashed and his brows knit darkly Richard was speechless with amazement and anger. Then, in a terrible rage, he rushed upon the poacher, seized him by the collar of his coat, and whilst endeavouring to drag Binns from the chair, exclaimed, in a tone hoarse with passion.

hoarse with passion.
"You impudent rascal! What do yo
mean? I'll have you horsewhipped of the place?

But Binns wag strong and heavy of frame, and although Richard succeeded in the sudlenness of the attack in pulling him from the chair, the poache shock him off easily at the same time.

shook him off easily at the same time saying:

"Houd, mester, houd, an' tay yo're wint a bit. Yo'acannot hang folk for tayin' a cheer, nor throttle 'em nothur. This chap an' me nobbut comed to ask have yo' yerd aught abeawt a mon delving a grave i' Boggart Ho' Clough one neet?"

A sudden faintness came over over Richard. Radolyffe as he heard these terrible words, and, staggering' back, he sank into a cheir, his face white and death-like. It seemed for a moment as if his senses were leaving him; and yot, as his senses were leaving him; and yet,

death-like. It seemed for a moment as if his senses were leaving him; and yet; as the poacher continued, the awful meaning was only too clear, and burnt into his brain.

"Happen yo' have no heerd on it, mester, but me an' this chap, Ned Tyson, seed it, a',—a mon wi's pick an' a spade delvin' at greawnd at midneet, till he getten a do' big 'enoug' ta bury dhyed body o' th' mon as he'd shot. Happen yo' dunnut folieve it, Mester Radolyfie; but it's a' true, for sure."

Terrible as was the ordeal through which he was passing, Richard recovered his presence of mind almost as rapidly as it had deserted him. Whilst Binns was talking, the unhappy master of Blackley Hall was revolving in his mind what steps he should take to bind these men to secreey. That he was utterly in their power, he could not doubt; and to have such persons for taskmasters was worse than anything he could have conceived. Dick was quick of comprehension, and he at once realized that the elder man was the moving spirit; for whilst Binns had seated himself so insolently, and was the speaker, Tyson stood, and seemed abashed at finding himself in a gentleman's man. speaker, Tyson stood, and seemed abashed at finding himself in a gentleman's man

sion.

Yet whilst arriving at the conclusion that it was with Binns he would have to treat. Richard was too wary to commit himself, just then, more than he had already done by giving way to the sudden faintness which had seized him. The thought even occurred as to whether these two men could be guessing at a portion of their apparent knowledge; but this idea he was compelled to reject as speedily as it flashed upon him. That one, or both, had witnesened his orime, scemed unquestionable, and now his only chance of escape was to bribe them to silence. And yet though so quick to take in all the difficulty and danger of his position, his first words of reply to Binns were lame and foolish enough.

"I don't know why you should come to me with this strange story," he said. "I am not a magistrate, and it is no concern of mine, even if true. However, I suppose it was some other reason which brought you here besides wishing to teil me this tale that nobody would be likely "Happen yo'r reet, Mester Radelyffe," answered Binns," an' happen yo'r wrong; but heave mich breast will yog'i us.mester. Yet whilst arriving at the co

nswered Binns," an' happen yo'r wron nt heaw mich brass will yogi' us,mest This demand for money did not surp Richard in the least. In fact, it was o This demand for money did not surprise. Richard in the least. In fact, it was only what he had anticipated when he realized that he was in the power of these two men; for he felt that their purpose was to trade upon their knowledge, and levy black-mail through his fears.

And yet, though he was perfectly aware that he dare not refuse whatever they might choose to ask, so long as it was within his ability to grant it, he hesistated for a while before he ventuged to speak in reply. There was an awkward pause of a minute or so, during which it was easy to, see that Mr. Binns was becoming impatient—so much so, indeed, that he was about to break the silence by a strong and pertinent remark, when Dick interrupted, or rather stopped, him by saying, a little unguardedly:

"How much money do you want me to give you? What will you take to leave the neighborhood, and trouble me no more?"

"Na mester," answered Binns, with a

"Na mester," answered Binns, with a dry chuckle, "we're noan goin' away fro Manchester, aw recken. What says ta Neddy, owd lad?"

This last appeal was addressed to Tyson, and first raising one foot and then the other by way of resting his body, Ned o' Peggy's shock his head gravely in denial. "See, yo', mester, neaw," continued Binns, again turning to Richard, "we'll moan be hard wi' yo'. Gi' us a bit brass to see us o'er Kesmas."

"And then?" saked Richard Radel ffe, biting his under lip.

"Aw'st keep comin' again, mester," answered Binns, quietly, "as lung as aw'm wick an' weel. A' if aught happens to me, aw reckon yo' may depend on Ned o' Peggy's."

Richar made no further comment, but with his heart sinking within him at the thought that he should never be free from these harries whilst he or they lived, he took out his purse to see what gold he had about him.

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into the scheme as we believe they will. A committee consisting of Messrs. George Murton and W. G. Smith, has been appointed to inspect our books every night and take down the amount of our cash sales. A cheque from the office will be given to every person who makes a cash purchase; this cheque is to be handed Mr. W. G. Smith, Druggist, corner Wyndham and Macdonnell streets, who will make up the amount and compareit with our books. All are requested to ask for these cheques. As an inducement to those who are not sufficiently interested in the Hospital to make their

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