

search of experienced engineers to assist at the pit yonder."

"Right, sir," said the ostler, and the next moment Stephen Grainger was galloping away for very life.

Whither?

Not even then did Stephen Grainger know whither, but he guided his horse out into the open road, as if he wished to get away from everybody and from all signs of life. Strangely enough he soon found himself on the high road to Netton, and then the thought occurred to him, "I must see the landlord of Trethyn Arms." Strengthened in this purpose as he rode along, he urged his horse to its greatest speed. After a little time the village of Netton came into view, and soon the agent reigned in his steed at the door of the Trethyn Arms. Quickly dismounting, the agent flung his reins to a bystander, and turned to enter the inn. Then for the first time the strangely forsaken appearance of the place struck him—the drawn blinds, the closed door, the absence of all signs of life and business. Somewhat puzzled, he tried to open the door, but found it fastened. Then he rattled the latch impatiently, but there was no answer from within.

"Mebbe you haven't heard the news, sir," said the man who was holding the horse's reins. "You can't get anything to drink here, sir."

"Drink!" cried Stephen Grainger, contemptuously. "It's the landlord I wish to see."

"Then you be come too late," said the man.

"Too late! What do you mean?"

"Oh!" said the man somewhat confidentially, "he's safe enough; you needn't fear for that. They've got him safe and fast."

At the words Stephen Grainger started, and glared (no other word of milder form would properly express the agent's look) at the man anxiously.

"Explain," he said imperiously.

"There be nothin' to explain," said the man. "They've been an' fetched him, that be all I knows."

"Who?"

"Why, the bobbies, to be sure."

Stephen Grainger could not refrain from uttering an exclamation of surprise, but before he could frame another question, the man said quietly:

"You see, sir, they say he be con-

cerned in some murder or other—at all events, that be the tale going about, though I don't know as how true it be."

"But he really has been arrested?"

"Oh! yes, that be right enough. an' they tell me the bobbies stuck to him pretty tight as they walked him off from here."

Stephen Grainger did not wish to hear more. He had heard enough, and, placing a small coin in the man's hand, he sprang on his horse.

"You didn't know the news afore, sir?" asked the man, with his hand still on the horse's bridle, and looking up in the agent's face.

"No"—abruptly spoken.

"It was a rum go, sir. A poor-looking old covey came here this mornin', a kind of tramp, you know. I suppose he was a wretched-looking individual from what they tells me—"

"Well," interrupted Stephen Grainger impatiently, "what about him?"

"There was a good deal about him," replied the man. "He was no tramp at all, that fellow weren't."

"No? What was he then?"

"He was one of these here detectives, as they call 'em."

"What!" exclaimed Stephen Grainger; not as a question, for he perfectly understood the word spoken, but the exclamation escaped him in surprise.

"They were telling me that his name was Detective Carlyle, a very cute officer they say."

"Are you sure that was his name?" asked Stephen Grainger earnestly.

"Well, no," said the man, "I can't say as how I am sure, seein' as how I didn't see him myself. Not as how I would have known him neither had I seed him, but that's what folks as does know says. You see he was a-sitting in the bar, an' he overheard a conversation did this 'ere detective with the lan'lord an' some fine gen'l'man."

"Who was the gentleman?" asked Stephen Grainger anxiously.

"Nay, I cannot tell thee that," replied the man, "but they say as how the bobbies knows him."

The words struck terror to Stephen Grainger's heart. This was indeed startling news: news which admitted of no further dallying on his part.

"Loose her head!" he cried to the man, and instantly galloped abruptly away.