

"I essayed to answer, but my teeth chattered so with terror that I could not utter a word.

" 'Ha !' exclaimed the other, who all this time had been holding the lantern close to my face. 'This is the very fellow we were in search of. Your name is Richard Grove ?'

" 'Yes,' I managed to say, quaking with mortal fear.

" 'You are a mason by trade, and live in Minton ?' said, or rather affirmed, my fierce questioner.

"I replied in the affirmative, for I saw there was no use in attempting a lie.

" 'All right, Tom. You go for the carriage ; I will take care of our friend here until you return.'

"The one with the knife left the house, and the other, drawing a pistol, the disagreeable click of which made me jump, sat down before me, keeping his eyes immovably riveted on my face. I did not dare to move. I scarcely dared to breathe, as I stood with my eyes fixed, as if fascinated, on the deadly weapon. Nearly ten minutes passed thus in profound silence, when the sound of carriage-wheels was heard ; and the instant after, the man called Tom entered, his mask off, but his hat pulled so far down over his eyes, and his coat-collar turned so far up, that I could see nothing but a pair of dark, sinister eyes.

" 'The carriage is here,' he said.

" 'Then go on ; and you, my man, follow him—I will walk behind.'

"I did not venture to utter a word, and was about going out, when he called me back, exclaiming :

" 'I came near forgetting a very necessary precaution. Here, my good fellow, let me tie this bandage over your eyes.'

" 'Where are you taking me to ?' I ventured to say, as

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