



CHAPTER XX.

SURPRISE.

THE Castle had been shut up since Sir Jasper's death, but at midsummer it transpired that the estate had been disposed of by private bargain. It was rumoured that the purchaser was an old man, unmarried, and possessed of enormous wealth; that he had amassed his fortune abroad, and, being of Scotch parentage, had come to enjoy it in his native land. But when August brought him to The Linn, they found him to be a man in the prime of life, and handsome enough to do credit to the grand old home he had made his own.

The gentleman's name was Liddel.

It happened one Saturday afternoon that Christopher Kenyon had strolled up as far as The Castle, not knowing that the new owner had arrived the previous day. He was leisurely making his way up the avenue, when in the distance he saw a tall figure approaching, dressed in a light tweed suit, a deer-stalker cap, and a gun over his shoulder. Wondering who he could be, the schoolmaster bethought himself of turning into the wood (he was shy of meeting strangers), but the gentleman, whoever he was, made his escape impossible by perceptibly quickening his pace until he was within a hundred yards of him. Then he stood stock still in the road, and absolutely stared at the schoolmaster. I am bound to say that, unlike him-