

fireman's cottage, and Edward led Rhoda to the door.

Seth had already come home, but he was yet unwashed and grimy-looking and worn. His eyes, too, were red with weeping.

"This is a terrible affair, Edward," he said, motioning him to a chair. "There be many sore hearts in Trethyn to-night."

"Yes," replied Edward.

"The sights we saw underground will never fade from my memory."

"Nor from mine," said Edward; "indeed, I feel quite sick at the thought of them."

"What the poor wives and children will do," said Seth, "I ween not. Some of them are starvin' now, the strike has been going on so long and then this to come."

"They shall not want," said Edward warmly; "I will see to that."

"Will you?" cried Seth, a ray of hope entering into his heart.

"That I will," said Edward; "I will undertake to provide for every family for the next two years to come. Either I will do it myself or I will gather funds from outsiders to do it."

Seth was thankful for the generous words, and long after Edward had gone the fireman still talked of the young squire's generosity to Rhoda. And later, when the time for evening devotion had come, Seth made the matter one of special comment in his prayer, and thanked God fervently for bringing Edward Trethyn into his own again.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### FLIGHT.

Very secretly indeed Stephen Grainger stole away from amongst the vast crowd gathered at the pit's mouth that morning of the fatal explosion. The fact was, Detective Carlyle's words had alarmed him, and he felt there was a hidden meaning in them which brooked no hesitancy or delay on his (the agent's) part.

The reader will remember that at the sudden apparition of Edward Trethyn on the pit's brow, Stephen Grainger had crossed over to the detective, saying, "I shall hold you responsible for the arrest of that man," and that the detective had replied something to the effect that

time enough existed for the arrest when the rescue work was over. To Stephen Grainger's mind those words now meant a great deal, and he counted it wisdom on his part to put himself beyond too familiar proximity to the detective.

Stephen Grainger came to the conclusion that it was his safest and wisest policy to fly; and having secretly stolen from the meeting, he was very soon hastening away in a very undignified manner indeed. Where was he going? He scarcely knew himself. Flying as if for very life, but as yet undecided as to his destination. More than once he paused as he ran, feeling half-inclined to retrace his steps, and face the matter out, but when he thought of Edward Trethyn living and not dead, he again continued his course of flight, not daring to turn back.

At the foot of the hill were the stables of the Trethyn Collieries. On his way past them the fugitive agent looked into them to see if he could get a horse. Only one ostler was present, the others having all gone to the scene of the explosion, but this one ostler supplied the agent's demand.

"I want the best horse you've got," he cried, excitedly.

The ostler touched his cap respectfully.

"There's none here, sir," he said, "fit for a gen'l'man to ride."

"In times like these," replied the agent, "one mustn't be particular. Quick! Saddle me the best horse you've got."

"Will you have the grey mare, sir," said the ostler with provoking leisure in his tone.

"Is she a good trotter?"

"That she be," replied the ostler.

"Well, then, she'll do," said Stephen Grainger, "or any other that can go. Come, hurry up, my man," and the agent thrust a half-crown piece in his hand.

Dexterously now the ostler saddled the horse, and in a very few minutes led it forth to the stable door. The next moment Stephen Grainger mounted it in hot haste.

"Now then," he cried to the horse, at the same time kicking the mare's flanks with his spurless heels, "away! But hold! Ostler!"

"Yes, sir."

"If I'm sought for, say I've gone in