

tive, and bidding the housekeeper farewell, was soon hastening through the park.

His mind was already made up as to what to do, and he was resolved to do it without delay. At all hazards he was determined to find out the truth of his suspicions. Why, his very case depended upon this paramount discovery. To try to establish the innocence of Edward Trethyn, without the assistance Edward Trethyn alone could give, was a thing impossible. How blind was Lady Trethyn not to see it! It was to her interest to divulge to him what she knew, and not to hide it. Did she think he would disclose her secret? If she did she was greatly mistaken; she might as well think that he would wilfully destroy his own evidence. It was really very, very annoying. But, despite all the hindrances, he should fathom the mystery.

Thus thinking and ruminating, on went the detective at a swinging pace, until very soon he was clear from the town, and on the high road to Netton, a neighbouring parish. Between Netton and Trethyn, perhaps two miles away from the latter, stood a public-house, known as the Trethyn Arms; and into this public-house Detective Carlyle found his way, and seated himself in the cozy bar-parlour. Then he rang the small bell which stood on the table, and his call was immediately answered by the proprietor himself.

"What can I serve you with, sir?"

"What will you take?"

The landlord rubbed his hands together, smiled pleasantly, and suggested wine.

"Wine for two, then," said the detective.

After a little time, and when they had gossiped about things in general, Mr. Carlyle seized an opportunity of introducing the true subject of his visit.

"Does your business do well?"

"Only fairly," answered the landlord. "Somehow people shun this house."

"Why?"

"I suppose it is because of my evidence at the trial of Edward Trethyn. But what else could I do, sir? I could do no more than speak the truth, and what I said about Mr. Grainger and me going together into the drawing-room at the manor was perfectly true."

"Oh, you were formerly at the manor, were you?" asked the detective, with an assumed air of surprise.

"Yes; I was butler there."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and when Sir Charles Montgomery was made trustee I had to go."

"Spite," said the detective.

"Nothing else in the world, sir. And it's just the same with the people. Years ago this here house used to do a rare business. They always made this house one of call in those days; but ever since that unfortunate affair at the manor things here be as dead as a door-nail."

"Is this house in the Trethyn estate?"

"Yes."

"So when you were driven from the manor Mr. Grainger clapped you here?"

The landlord's glass of wine was not the first he had swallowed that day by any means, or perhaps the detective could not so easily have gained his ends.

"Y'are just about right," answered the landlord. "Was it likely Mr. Grainger was going to let the only man who could corroborate his evidence be driven into the workhouse altogether?"

"Certainly not," said the detective, and then added to himself, "Here is a clear case of bribery. Stephen Grainger has shut this fellow's mouth for some end of his own. What? Well, Carlyle's the man to find it out."

"Have you heard the rumour about Edward Trethyn not being dead after all?" asked the detective.

The landlord glanced quickly at him in surprise.

"No," he said, "nor do I believe it."

"It isn't very likely, is it?"

"When a man's body is found in the river, and by all appearance has been there several days, it isn't likely that he could live after that?"

"No, but was it Edward Trethyn's body? Could there have been any mistake about it?"

"None whatever," and the landlord shook his head decidedly. "Has any one said that they've seen him?"

"Well you know what a rumour is."

"Generally a big thumping lie," said the landlord, emphatically.

"By-the-bye," said the detective, with an affected sudden change of