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LORD MORDEN'S DAUGHTER

— OR —

THE TRAGEDY OF THE CEDARS.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"No, Mrs. Locksley, it is not so bad as that." Fairfax hastened to tell her, "and it may be that we are alarming you needlessly. I must plead as my excuse, however, that both I and Mr. Rogers are most anxious to follow the movements of Edmund after he left his father, just before midnight, on the Surrey side of the Thames. His description, and the circumstances attending his disappearance, have been telegraphed to the principal police stations, and this morning I was notified that the Thames police had found two hats floating in the river. A young officer has also volunteered the information that a gentleman, answering Locksley's description, aroused his suspicion of suicidal intent. This, of course, in nonsensical, for at the time Edmund was looking over the parapet, he was there to keep an appointment with his father's valet. He met the valet, and went away with him, and probably returned, by way of Waterloo Bridge, to mysteriously disappear. No one ever saw him again."

"He is dead!" moaned Dora. "He is dead, or nothing would have kept him from me."

"It is terrible to believe so," the young barrister said, "and if it is indeed true, I will hunt his murdered to the gallows." Then he added: "But no; it cannot be—it cannot be! To set aside all doubt, Mrs. Locksley, to prove that Edmund did cross Waterloo Bridge, I wish to ask you if you can positively identify the hat he wore when he left here with me on that unhappy day?"

"Yes, yes!" came tremulously from her rigid lips. "The name of the maker is inside—James Fortescue, Fleet street—and the crown is pierced with several small holes."

"I don't think that any more evidence is needful," Fairfax remarked, quietly, "but you can see the hat at Scotland Yard, Mrs. Locksley, if you wish to do so. It may have blown into the water, or a hundred things may have happened."

"My darling is dead!" Dora repeated, mournfully. I now understand why his false friend—why Viscount Melville spoke so confidently—why he assured me that my love would return to me no more."

"I have not forgotten that,' said Fairfax, "and Mr. Rogers has secured a description of the man who caused the story of his flight to be printed in that society paper. He was a large man, and pretented to be your father. The publisher will willingly assist in identifying him. He was accompanied by a woman, therefore I am possitive that it was Marlowe."

"You will not deceive me?" Dora whispered. "You will tell me, when you are sure that he—that my love is dead? Let me go with you now—let me go anywhere, rather than wait here for that which never comes. Oh, Heaven! what have I done that my burden should be so hard to bear.

"Would you like to stay with my mother for a few days?" Frank whispered. But Dora quickly negatived the proposal.

"No; my place is here. If Edmund ever comes back again, he will look for me here, and I must not disappoint him."

She went to the city with Fairfax and Frank Rogers, and from there to Scotland Yard. It was not difficult to identify the hat. Oh, yes, it was the same that Edmund had worn. There were the nine little holes that he had punctured in the top in her presence. He had complained of the heat, and the holes were made for ventilation.

But the inside of the hat was completely battered in. Frank tried to hide this from her, but she handed it back to the officer in charge, feeling that she must shriek aloud or suffocate.

Frank Rogers volunteered to see Dora home, and on the way he told her many things in connection with the elder Locksley, Peters, the valet, and Viscount Melville.

"So far," he said, in conclusion, "verything points to Marlowe and Esther Marsh for wishing my master out of the way, but it is not likely that they would stoop to murder. I will hunt them down; I will know no rest until the mystery is laid bare!"

Before he left her, he told her to be prepared for a summons to the office of Mr. Fairfax at almost any time. For Dora there was a wretched night and a day of misery. She seemed to be numbed with grief and despair, and her one cry was for Edmund.

It was late in the afternoon when she was startled by the double ring of a messenger from the telegraph office, and the missive was handled to her by Madam Bell.

It read thus:

Mrs. Locksley, "The Myrtles," Richmond:—Come to Charing Cross station by the six-fifteen from Richmond. I will meet you there. We have important clew.—Frank Rogers.

While she dressed, Madam Bell ordered the carriage, for Edmund had presented his bride with a pony and a smart little phaeton; and in twenty minutes she was being driven to Richmond railway station.

"It may be late when I return," she told the coachman, "but hold yourself in readiness to fetch me, as I shall send a telegram to Madam Bell."

She was in good time for the train, and upon arriving at Charing Cross was met by a light man, in a tweed suit. At first sight he struck one as being rather small, but his height was considerably reduced by a stoop in the shoulders. He wore blue spectacles, and his hair was turning white.

"Have I the honor of addressing Mrs. Locksley?" he asked, touching his hat.

"I do not know you, sir," replied Dora, haughtily.

"I have come to meet Mrs. Locksley, at the request of Frank Rogers," he said, in apologetic tones. "If I have make a mistake, I ask your pardon, but your answer to the description he gave to me, and no other lady has alighted from the train."

Dora looked at him keenly. Where had she heard those tones before—when and where?

"Why could not Mr. Rogers come himself?" she demanded. "My name is Locksley."

"He is at the chambers of Mr. Fairfax, and bade me tell you how he regretted his inability to leave at the moment. I am engaged in an office in the next building."

"I will go with you," Dora announced. "You will pardon my rudeness."

He again touched his hat, and there seemed something unreal—something mocking—in his servility.

He hailed a hansom at the main entrance to the station, whispered something to the driver, and in one minute they were dashing through the Strand, which was now in a state of semi-darkness, for the shopkeepers had not yet illumined their windows.

Dora was conscious of an awful feeling of nervous depression, and in the half-light, everything appeared to be inexpressibly gloomy.

From the Strand they went into Fleet street and not until they were going up Ludgate Hill did she notice that they had passed the Temple.

"It is all right, madam," her companion said, with a quiet smile. "I have a very urgent message to leave at Purdy's and a letter to mail at St. Martin's Le Grand. I quite forgot to post my letters, and the office is open until eight at the general."

Dora accepted this explanation with many misgivings, but as the streets were crowded with people, who would run to her assistance if she gave one cry for help, she felt that her suspicions must be unfounded.

The hansome dashed by the General Post Office, and headed for the badly lighted and foul-smelling streets beyond the great Charterhouse Schools.

"I will not go any farther," Dora said, suddenly. "If you have other calls to make, permit me to alight here. I can go to Mr. Fairfax's chambers in another cab."

"Certainly, madam," replied the old gentleman, readily. "I am sorry that I have put you to the inconvenience, but I did not think that you would object——"

He turned, as though to pull the checkstring, but instead pressed a pocket handkerchief to Dora's nostrils. The movement was a dextrous one, and she inhaled sufficient chloroform to render her insensible without a struggle or a sigh.

The old man smiled.

"She is very pretty," he murmured. "Very beautiful, I should say; but she is in the way. She must go back to Deal and become the wife of the respectable Mr. Marlowe. The man is infatuated with her; he seems to spare no outlay, to care for nothing; if he can only secure her for his wife, and he shall have his wishes gratified. I will promise to aid him to that end. In the meantime——"

He paused in his reflections, for they were rapidly nearing Islington.

Presently, he stopped the cab, and jumped out. The action was a very lively one, for an old man—for a man with stooping shoulders.

"Cabby!" he said, "draw up to the curbstone, next house, and ring the bell. My daughter has fainted."

The cabman obeyed, for the old man was half-supporting the young lady in his arms, and in obedience to his summons the door was opened by a woman who had a most ill-favored countenance, which at once became irradiated with a savage kind of joy when she beheld the fainting girl.

All this the cabman was quick to notice, and when he received his fee, he stared hard at the old gentleman, thinking:

"I shall know him again."

The young lady was carried indoors, and the cabman drove away.

(To be continued.)

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COL. PERKINS'S PROPOSAL.

A Bill to provide for the preferential employment of British seamen in British-owned and British-registered ships of the Mercantile Marine has been presented by Col. E. K. Perkins, one of the Unionist members for Southampton. He suggests the compulsory use of a Union Jack with a red border instead of the Red Ensign by all ships of British registry not complying with certain provisions.

The Bill states that the Red Ensign shall be the proper national colours for all ships belonging to any British subject, except:

"Where the total of officers and men engaged in such ships is less than 95 per cent. of British subjects of British or Dominion birth, or 98 per cent. of British subjects of British or over-seas birth."

Col. Perkins's plan is in effect that ships of British registry that do not carry a practically "all British" crew shall not be entitled to fly the Red Ensign, but should fly a distinguishing flag, under penalties for failure to do so.

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Cost of Crossing the Atlantic

Official statistics show that last year 326,977 American visitors arrived in Europe. That was 69,174 more than in the preceding year. During the coming summer the number will be larger still. It is expected to be a record one.

Among the generally beneficial results of travel must be counted the vast amount of money which it puts into circulation. But as a money spender the Atlantic ferry (the steamship route between Europe and North America) takes first place among all the agencies for moving people about. On this side of the Atlantic the main gateways of the ferry are Cherbourg and Southampton. Among the vessels which ply on it are the six largest liners in existence, and the aggregate turnover is colossal. That is the only word that describes it adequately.

Taking both-ways traffic, the Atlantic ferry carried, during 1924, approximately 785,014 passengers, who paid in fares to the steamship companies the huge sum of £22,506,108.

These are big figures, but anyone with a taste for statistics may easily check their accuracy. An analysis of the passenger total of 785,014 shows it to have been made up of 153,563 first class, 314,704 second class, and 316,744 third class passengers. The fares paid averaged £50 each first class, £29 second class, and £18 third class. That gives £7,678,000 paid by first class, £9,126,416 by second class, and £5,701,392 by third class. Taking one ship alone, the White Star liner Majestic, which is the largest vessel afloat, she carried 33,289 people during the year, and earned considerably more than £1,000,000 for her owners.

Although the average first class fare works out at about £50 for the whole of the voyage, one cannot for that figure enjoy the luxury of travelling by the palatial liners which run between Southampton and New York, many of which have every conceivable amenity in them, from a bank to a special issue of The Daily Mail. "First class" in these means anything from about £59 for an ordinary passage to upwards of £1,000 for a suite. And the accommodation is well worth the money, too, to those who can afford it.

One interesting fact revealed by the passage statistics is that the liner companies draw their largest revenue not from the very wealthiest of their patrons but from those who "travel second."

That will not surprise anybody who knows how attractive "second class" has been made. Of the 69,174 additional people who came from America to Europe last year 6,756 travelled first class, 21,638 second, and 40,780 third. Most of the tourists were in the two first named, and they undoubtedly brought a great deal of money to this side of the water.—D.J.

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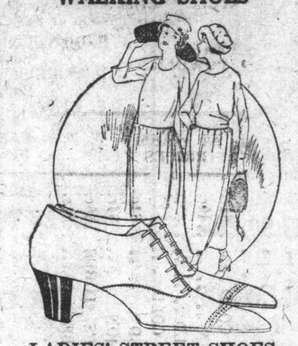

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Girls' Brown High Lace Boots, good quality, rubber heels attached. Sizes 8½ to 2.
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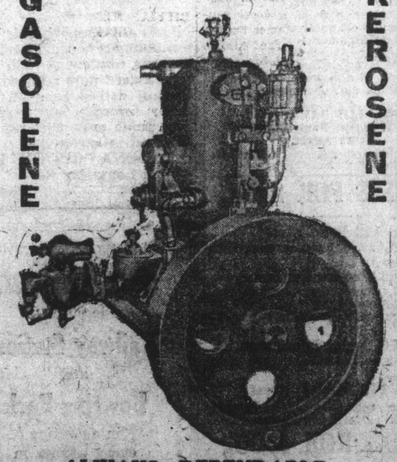

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