

RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE

By MRS. HENRY WOOD: Author of "East Lynne," "Oswald Gray," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.—CONTINUED.

The gentleman smiled again. Had it been only that, he thought he could have managed the job himself, without troubling her, provided she had supplied him with needle and cotton.

"No," he continued, "it is something that requires more skill. I want a shade made for the eyes."

Sophie raised her own to the eyes looking at her; clear, bright eyes they were, of a dark gray, and she wondered what they could want with a shade.

"It is for my fellow-passenger," he proceeded to explain. "I have been to his room, and all his cry is for a shade for his eyes. He suffered with them during the voyage, I observed, and the light of the room this morning affects them much."

"Oh, I'll soon make that," said Sophie. "Who is he, sir?"

"You must ask himself that question," was the reply. "A large shade, he said, made of thin cardboard, covered with dark-blue or green silk, any color, in fact, and tape to tie it with."

"Tape!" ejaculated Sophie; "you mean ribbon, sir?"

"Anything. He will not care what the materials are, provided his eyes are shaded. I asked him about breakfast, but he seemed only anxious for the shade."

Sophie soon got her necessary materials; a sheet of card-board, which she fished up from somewhere, and some purple silk, the remnant of a dress; and set to work. The gentleman sat himself on the arm of an old horse-hair sofa opposite, and watched her fingers. His orders were, he said, laughingly, not to go up again without the shade for fellow-passengers."

"And so you and he met on board as fellow-passengers?" cried Sophie, as she worked. "Strangers, I suppose, to each other until then?"

"We were on board, fellow-passengers." "It's strange, how intimate people grow upon a sea voyage!" resumed she, "just as if they had been friends for years. The old gentleman seems ill."

"Very ill. Very ill, indeed, he has been all the voyage."

"What is his name? what was he coming to England for?" proceeded Sophie. "I suppose he's an American?"

"His name—his name!" deliberated the gentleman, as if casting back his thoughts. "I am not sure that I heard his name mentioned during the time we were in the ship. As to his motive for coming to England, I cannot speak. Gentlemen travelers do not unceremoniously inquire into each other's private affairs, Mr. Ravensbird."

"I hope you will let me have the gratification of knowing your name, sir," continued Sophie, nothing daunted. "I'm sure it's a pleasant one."

"Do you guess so?" laughed he. "I do not discuss much in myself. Lydney."

"Lydney?" repeated Sophie, after him. "And you are an American, too, sir? And have you come over on business?"

"I have come over on pleasure—to look about me, never having had the honor of seeing old England before," answered he, good-humoredly. "How many more questions would you like answered, Mrs. Ravensbird?"

"Ah, ha! it's my French nature, and I ask you to excuse it. I am not English; you may tell that by my tongue; and we Gauls are always curious. Do you speak French, Mr. Lydney?"

"Quite as well as I do English. My mother was a Frenchwoman."

Sophie's eyes sparkled with delight; her heart had warmed to him at first, she said, and for with she commenced a rattling conversation in her native tongue. He sat there till the shade was finished, and then went up stairs with it.

In the course of the morning Lord Dane walked into the sailor's Rest, to inquire after the rescued Richard Ravensbird was still in the way at the moment, but Sophie was quite equal to receiving his lordship. In earlier days, when he was plain and poor Herbert Dane, she had been rather fond of chatting to him, or he was to her; and her manner to him still retained features of ease than did those of some of the inhabitants of Danesheld. Sophie began pouring into his ear all the news she had been able to collect, as regarded the two passengers, coupled with her own additions; for she was one of those who form conclusions according to their active imagination, and then assume them to be facts.

They were both Americans, from the United States, she said; the old gentleman traveling over here for his health, especially for a weakness in the eyes; and the young one for pleasure. They had first met on board, and got friendly together. The old gentleman's name she had not come at yet, but the young man's was Lydney. Such a pleasant young man!—spoke French like an angel—and as rattling and free as my lord himself used to be, in the by-gone days. And Madame Sophie cast a half-saucy glance to my lord when she said it.

"Are they gentlemen?" inquired Lord Dane. "Or people in business, merchants, and that sort of thing?"

"The young one's a gentleman, if ever I saw one," returned Mrs. Ravensbird, warmly. "In looks and manners he is fit, every inch of him, to be what you are, my lord—a British nobleman. There's no mistaking him for anything inferior. And, do you know, his face puts me in mind of somebody, but for the life of me I can't tell who. As to the other, the old man, I don't know whether he's a gentleman or not; I have seen little of him, except his shoulders and his purple shade—the one I made him; for there he lies, buried in his pillow and the bed-clothes, his face to the wall, and his back up; and all you can discern of him, barring the shade, is his white hair. When we go in with a tray of refreshment, he tells us to put it on the table by the bed, and helps himself when we are gone."

"The younger one is up, I suppose," remarked Lord Dane.

"Oh, up hours ago, my lord; up and out. He seems in a fine way about some box being lost that was on board, and is going toward the wreck to hear if there's any chance of things being got up. Does your lordship think there is?"

"A few things, may be, perhaps; I cannot tell. I wish to send a message to this old gentleman, if you will convey it to him," continued his lordship. "Say that I, Lord Dane, shall be happy to render him any assistance, and if he would like me to pay him a visit, I can do so now."

Sophie ran up the stairs to the invalid's chamber, and came back again, shaking her head.

"I'll lay any money he's a cross-grained old fellow," cried she, "he speaks up so sharply. He answered me quite rudely, my lord. My sister, Lord Dane, but tell him I am a private individual, seeking only repose, and

am not desirous of forming acquaintance, even with his lordship. You might speak it more civilly. I thought to myself, as I took it from him."

"Oh, very well," said Lord Dane. "When these disastrous circumstances occur, it is due from my position to show courtesy to the sufferers; but if it be refused, of course the obligation is at an end. It is the last time I shall trouble your old gentleman, Mrs. Ravensbird."

The wind was less violent this morning, and many people were gathered on the heights, watching the spot where the wreck had been. At low-water part of the ship could be seen, and she lay with her larboard side to the rocks. Quantities of chips were floating about, and pieces of iron might be discerned on the beach. The masts and yards were gone, and there was no symptom of a bowsprit. Something more appalling than wood or iron floated in occasionally—a human body; not near enough, however, to terrify away the watchers on the heights; some of whom were ladies.

Standing most imprudently on the very edge of the heights, in their eager sympathy, their sad curiosity, were Miss Bordillon and Maria Lester.

The latter, who was a little apart, bent forward to look at some bundle right underneath, when a gust of wind, more furious than any they had experienced that morning, suddenly swept over them, swept over Maria, and—

"Take care, Maria!" shrieked out Miss Bordillon in an agony of terror.

Whether Maria could have taken care, must remain an unanswered question. Certain it is, that the wind shook her, and she had all but lost her balance, when, at the very moment of peril, just as Miss Bordillon called out, a strong arm was thrown around her, and snatched her into safety. She had felt her own dagger, and her face was perfectly white, as she turned it to her preserver.

She saw a stranger. A young, aristocratic man, who had "gentleman" stamped on every motion and lineament.

"I thank you very greatly," she said to him, from between her agitated lips. "I did not know the wind was still so high."

"In spite of the kicking out?" put in the stranger.

"Pshaw!" returned Ravensbird. "A dispute of a moment, in which we both lost our tempers, could not destroy the friendship of years. Yes, sir, I presume to say it—friendship. Yes, he was the Honorable Captain Dane, and I but his servant; and though he never lost his dignity any more than I forget my place, there was a feeling between us that might be called friendship."

There ensued a long silence. The gentleman broke it.

"What has become of Herbert Dane? He was to have married Lady Adelaide Errol. There was some—some—some talk of such a thing, I fancy."

"He did not marry her. Ah! that was another mystery. She would not have him, after all; and she married Mr. Lester. She has a whole troop of children now."

"And where is Herbert Dane? What has become of him?"

Ravensbird turned round to the bed in astonishment.

"He is at the castle now, sir; I have just said so."

"He at the castle! what for?"

"The castle is his home, sir," replied Ravensbird, beginning to wonder whether the sick man was in his right mind.

"Whose home? I am speaking of Herbert Dane. What should bring the castle his home? Does Lord Dane tolerate him there?"

"Why, sir, is it possible you do not know that Herbert Dane—that was—the present Lord Dane? uttered Ravensbird. "He succeeded the old lord."

The stranger raised himself on his elbow, and peered at Ravensbird under the purple shade.

"Then what on earth has become of Geoffrey—the eldest son? Where was he—that Herbert Dane should inherit?"

"He died at the same time as his brother," answered Ravensbird, shaking his head.

"Before the body of my master was found, the remains of the other were brought home, and interred in the family vault."

"Where did he die? What did he die of?" reiterated the invalid, who appeared unable to overcome his shock of astonishment.

"He died of fever, sir. I can't take upon myself just to say where, for I forget; but he was put on board at Civita Vecchia. My lady went almost as quick; and the old lord did not live above a month or two."

"I know, I know," cried the stranger with feverish impatience. "I saw their deaths announced in the newspapers; and I saw the succession of the new peer, Geoffrey, Lord Dane. Not of Herbert."

"His name is Herbert Geoffrey, sir. As soon as he became heir, he was no longer called Herbert, but Geoffrey. It is a favorite name with the Lords Dane."

The invalid laid down and covered his face. Ravensbird was about to leave the room, when he spoke again.

"This Herbert—Lord Dane, as you tell me he is—is he liked?"

"He has not given much opportunity to be liked or disliked, sir, stopping away so long," was the rejoinder of Ravensbird. "He behaved generously in the matter of my lord's will. The will left presents and legacies to servants, and fifteen thousand pounds to Lady Adelaide Errol, and my lord died before he signed it; consequently it was void. The young lord, however, fulfilled all the bequests to the very letter, as honorably as though he had been legally bound to do so."

"Why did he not marry Lady Adelaide?" sharply put in the invalid.

"She turned round, sir, as I tell you, and would not have him. It was exactly like a sudden freak, a change of mind that nobody could account for. My present wife was maid to her at that time, and I heard of her refusal; but it was not generally known that there was anything between them."

"Perhaps there never was anything between them," remarked the invalid.

"Oh, yes, there was, sir; when he was plain Herbert Dane," significantly replied Ravensbird. "Ah! he little thought then to be what he is now—the Lord of Danesheld!"

The stranger turned his face to the wall, and put up his back; and nothing could be seen of him but his white hair and the purple shade.

CHAPTER XV.

The days went on, and the divers were busy, striving to fish up articles from the wreck. The coast presented an unusually stirring appearance, so many idlers flocking constantly to the scene—the preventive-men being in charge, so that no depredations could take place. As the divers' exertions, however, appeared likely to meet with but poor reward, the idle spectators got tired of thronging to the spot, and the operators and coast-guard were left comparatively in peace.

One visitor they constantly had, and that was the young stranger, Mr. Lydney. He expressed himself as being most anxious to recover a certain box, describing it as one of middling size—a tin one, japanned. Wilfred Lester, between whom and Mr. Lydney an-

timacy was springing up, laughed at him one day, and rallied on his disquiet.

"One would think all your worldly wealth was entombed in that chest, Lydney," he observed.

"And it is—in a measure," was the answer; "for it contains valuable deeds and documents, without which my worldly wealth will be of little value to me."

"Suppose it is gone forever?" returned Wilfred. "Would the loss be totally irremediable?"

"Upon my word, I cannot say," replied Mr. Lydney. "Some of its documents might be replaced, but others—I would rather not dwell on that possibility; I am of a hopeful nature."

And he appeared, in this instance, not to be of a hopeful nature in vain. One morning, a fortnight after the night of the wreck, Mr. Lydney found, upon going down, that the divers had brought up several things. They were of various and opposite kinds, as you may well imagine. A part of a beam of wood; a gold Albert chain; a small cask which contained salt meat; a sealed case, holding letters; and there were divers boxes. Once, they thought they were hauling up a poor little baby, but it proved to be a huge wax doll, dressed in lace and satins; its young mistress was colder and more lifeless now than the doll.

With an eager step, when he saw the recovered things, did William Lydney hasten to inspect them. Owners had been found for none; not for one of those articles lying on the beach. The owners had gone with the wax doll's little mistress, and would awaken no more in this world.

"Is it among 'em, sir?" asked Mitchel, the preventive-man, coming up as Mr. Lydney stood over the boxes; for his anxiety to recover the chest was no secret. "There's one tin case, you see, sir, but I fear it's larger than you describe yours to be."

William Lydney lifted his head, and his face expressed keen disappointment.

"It is not among them," was all he said.

"What's this?" rejoined Mitchel, turning around to speak as he was walking away, for he perceived that something else was coming up, to be added to the relics.

It was a japanned box, about two feet square, with the initials "V. V. V." surmounted by a Maltese cross, studded on it in brass nails. Mitchel scarcely need have asked what it was he glanced at the countenance of Mr. Lydney; the eager, trembling expectation; the intense joy that lighted it up, proved it was the much-wished-for chest. In the moment's excitement he took it, he alone, from the grasp of the men who bore it. William Lydney was a strong man, but not strong enough to lift that heavy case in ordinary moments.

"It's a cork one you've been looking out for, ain't it, master," asked one of the bearers, as it was deposited on the beach.

"Yes it is," replied Mr. Lydney. "I will reward you and the divers well."

"But them letters don't stand for your name, sir," cried Mitchel, as the men moved away again.

"I have not said they did," laughed Mr. Lydney. "But now, to get it up to the sailor's Rest. I'll leave you guard over it, Mitchel, while I go and find somebody with a truck or barrow; or get Ravensbird to send. Mark you, my good man, it's very precious."

"I'll take charge of it, sir," smiled Mitchel; "it's all in my duty and my day's work. Where you leave it, there you'll find it, untouched."

You spoke there without your host, Mr. Preventive Mitchel.

Hardly had Mr. Lydney quitted the beach when Lord Dane appeared on it. He was in sporting attire; but underneath his black velvet coat, linen shone out of the finest and most costly texture. His keeper—not the one who was wounded—had gone to the preserves with the guns and dogs, and Lord Dane had been following him, when a rumor met him that the divers were now beginning to short. His lordship turned off his way for a brief visit to the beach. There stood Mitchel, keeping watch over the things, in pursuance of his duty.

"Is this all they have got up?" uttered his lordship to Mitchel, in a tone of surprise. "I thought it must have been half the ship full. Young Shad came grinning up to me, and said the beach was covered."

"A light-beached young monkey!" apostrophized Mitchel. "I drove him off from here, for it would require a man with ten eyes to watch him. No, my lord, they have not got up much, and I don't expect they will, though they have been more fortunate the last few hours than they have been all along. That box has turned up at last, my lord, that the young gent has been so worried after."

"What young gent?" asked his lordship.

"That fine young man who was saved in the life-boat, and is stopping at the sailor's Rest," replied Mitchel. "How anxious he has come here, day after day, watching and waiting, all for this japanned box! Had it been crammed full of gold and pound bank-notes, he couldn't have been more eager. That's it, my lord, behind you."

Lord Dane was standing with his back to the box, and turned around at the words. What could he find in it to attract his notice? Something apparently; for he remained gazing down at it. Like one transfixed stood he; and when he did raise himself and lift his head, it was only to walk round the box, survey it on all sides, touch it, shake it, and, in short, look like a child does at a new toy, as if he would very much enjoy the pulling it to pieces to see what was in it.

"Who do you say this belongs to?" cried he presently to Mitchel.

"That young American, my lord, who was brought ashore in the life-boat. Your lordship must have seen him many times; a fine, handsome man he is, pleasant to speak to, I mean Mr. Lydney."

"Is it his chest?"

"It can't well be anybody else's," returned Mitchel, "as your lordship would say, if you had seen his anxiety over it. When it came up this morning it was just as if he had found a treasure; all a-tremble he was, with delight."

"Lydney?—Lydney?" repeated his lordship to himself, as if oblivious of the presence of Mitchel. "Lydney? Have I heard that name ever? It does not strike upon my memory. Neither does it answer to—"

Lord Dane stopped; he was looking down at the initials on the box, and Mitchel spoke up, possibly, bell-ringing he discovered, the drift of the peer's thoughts.

"The letters don't stand for his own name, my lord, as I remarked to him just now; and he answered me, merrily like, that he had not said they did. He is gone to send down some men to remove it to the sailor's Rest."

Lord Dane stepped to the rest of the things and glanced keenly at it. "Does any of this belong to him?" he questioned of Mitchel.

"Nothing else, my lord; nothing but that japanned box that seems so precious to him. He has not appeared to care at all about any other part of his luggage being found, though he says he had a good bit on board."

Lord Dane walked away without saying more, Mitchel stayed in charge. Presently, somewhat to the surprise of the latter, his lordship re-appeared, followed by an empty

cart and two men. The cart belonged to a miller on the Dane estate, and was on its way to fetch what he had ground. Lord Dane encountered it as he turned off the beach toward the road, and commanded it into his own service, for what purpose you will see.

Down came the cart, its two attendants and his lordship, and halted close to Mitchel and the recovered things. Lord Dane pointed to them with his finger. "Hoist them in," said he.

The men did so to the wondering surprise of Mitchel, and in a short work of the process. None of the articles were heavy, save the japanned box. That went in with the rest, but the barrel of pork and the beam of wood his lordship told them they might leave on the beach. Then the cart and its contents proceeded to move away again.

"My lord," uttered Mitchel, in a perfect ecstasy of consternation, "they must not take off the things, especially that tin chest. I am left here to see that nobody does it."

"I have ordered them to the castle for safety," replied Lord Dane.

"But that in case, my lord—it's owner is coming down for it directly. And I passed my word that he should find it here safe and untouched. If he complains to the supervisor I may lose my place, your lordship."

"Lose your place for yielding the authority vested in you to mine?" returned Lord Dane in a good-humored tone, which seemed to know yet to whom these things may belong, and they will be in safety at the castle."

"But—I hope your lordship will pardon me for speaking—this tin box has got its owner," persisted Mitchel. "When the gentleman returns for it, what am I to say to him?"

"Mitchel," said his lordship, quietly, "you must understand one thing which you do not yet appear to be aware of. As lord of the manor, I possess a right to claim all and everything fished up from that wreck, whether the original owners be saved or not. I do not wish to exert this privilege; I should not think of doing so; but I do choose that these things shall, for the present, be placed in the castle, that they may be in safety. You may say that to Mr. Lydney."

Lord Dane strode off after the cart, and Mitchel remained where he was, as still as though he had been changed to a statue. The procedure did not meet his approbation; and, in defiance of Lord Dane's assurance, he feared he might get into trouble over it. He neither spoke nor moved, but just remained staring and thinking. Neither did he when, some time after, Mr. Lydney appeared. Ravensbird came with him, and a man with a truck.

"Why, where's the box?" exclaimed Mr. Lydney, gazing around. "Mitchel, what have you done with the box?"

"I don't know," replied Mitchel, speaking helplessly. "I have not done anything with it. Lord Dane came down, and sent it away, and the other things also."

"Sent it where?" asked Mr. Lydney.

"Up to the castle, sir. He was lord of the manor, and possessed a right to claim what was got up from the wreck, he said. Not that he should think of claiming them, but they must be put in the castle for safety till the owners turned up—which, of course, they are never likely to do; but perhaps he meant their friends."

"The owners of that japanned box had turned up," cried Mr. Lydney. "His lordship had no business to interfere, so much as to put his finger upon it. How could you think of allowing it, Mitchel. You are to blame."

"If you were not a stranger here, sir, you would never ask how we can think of allowing away to Lord Dane," was the reply of the preventive-man to Mr. Lydney.

"He is master of everything; of Danesheld and the people in it. I had no more power to keep your box back, when Lord Dane said it was to go, than I have to stop that sea from flowing."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Lydney, who appeared much provoked. "Lord Dane cannot be allowed to play the martinet over all the world."

"Well, sir, I assure you it was no fault of mine. But if you go to the castle, of course he will give the box up to you; it can be of no use to him."

Ravensbird looked around at Mr. Lydney. "I don't think you'll get it, sir," he said. "At any rate you must go cautiously to work."

With a haughty toss of the head and contemptuous curl of the lip, not directed at Ravensbird—but ill or underhand doing always excited the scorn of William Lydney—he proceeded immediately to the castle, the man and the truck following in his wake. Not Ravensbird; it was rare, indeed, that he troubled the castle. He rang a sounding peal on the bell, just as Mr. Bruff, who was quitting the house, opened the gate.

"I wish to see Lord Dane," said Mr. Lydney. And Bruff thought that no man had ever appeared at that castle yet, possessing more of the bearing and tones of a chieftain. He bowed low.

"His lordship is out, sir."

"I was informed his lordship had just returned, in charge of some property got up from the wreck."

Bruff looked curiously at the visitor. Who could he be, presuming to speak in those scornful tones, palpably directed toward Lord Dane and his doings? Bruff did not resent it, but he felt convinced that the gentleman before him was a gentleman, and an honorable man.

"My lord did return here, sir, with the men who brought up the things. But he has gone out since."

"Amongst those things was a box, which I claim," proceeded Mr. Lydney. "I must request you to deliver it to me."

"It is not in my power, sir. I dare not meddle with anything against the orders of Lord Dane."

"I say that I claim it," quietly returned Mr. Lydney, "and I must have it given up to me."

"I am sure, sir, when you remember that I am Lord Dane's servant, you will see how impossible it is that I can meddle with anything contrary to his lordship's orders."

"The things are in the castle?"

"Certainly they are, sir. His lordship had them put in the strong-room, that they might be in safety; he gave them the key, and charged me not to let them be touched; the death-room we used to call it; but the name, not being an agreeable one, has been changed."

"Do you know that you may do me an irreparable injury—an injury that can never be removed—by refusing to deliver up that property?" pursued Mr. Lydney.

"I am sorry to hear you say so, sir; and if it depended on my will, you should have it this instant; but this is a matter of duty to my lord, which I, receiving his wages and living under his roof, must not violate."

Mr. Lydney silently acquiesced in the good faith of the reasoning, and perceived how useless it would be to argue the point further.

"Is there any one who holds authority at the castle to whom I can apply?" he inquired.

"Miss Dane is at the castle, sir; my lord's

siester; but as to authority—you can see, her, if you please, sir."

The visitor motioned with his hand in reply, and Bruff led the way to the drawing-rooms.

"What name, sir?" he asked, pausing, with his hand on the door.

"Mr. William Lydney."

Miss Dane rose at his entrance. She was older than her brother; in fact, in her forty-second year; but she assumed the dress and the manners of a girl of twenty. She had small and rather pretty features, a delicate complexion, and a soft, rose-color on her cheeks—altogether looking very much more youthful than she really was. Her dark-brown hair, beginning to be sprinkled with silver, was worn, as carelessly as a child's, in a profusion of long ringlets all around her head; and her blue eyes had a habit of shyly sinking from the gaze of other eyes, especially those of gentlemen. Putting her vanity and her affectation aside, Miss Dane was not to be disliked. She was simple and kind-hearted—not overburdened with strong intellect; and the most marked peculiarity about her was, that she fancied every stranger fell in love with her, at first sight. Danesheld called her an old maid; Miss Dane would have been mortally offended had she heard them. She was attired in a light-blue silk, and jacket to match, jointly set off with many trimmings and silver buttons.

"I have the honor of speaking to Miss Dane?" began Mr. Lydney.

Miss Dane curtsied and smiled, and simply and curtsied again.

"What an attractive man!" quoth she to herself; and forthwith fell right in love with him, and fondly hoped that he was returning the compliment. Mr. Lydney, however, was too much engrossed by his tin box and its attractions to admit soft impressions just then, even though he had been as susceptible as the lady. He gave her a concise history of the affair, and inquired whether she would not give orders that his box should be restored to him.

"I never heard of such a procedure," cried she, in a pretty little weak voice, and shaking her ringlets affectingly. "Geoffrey—my brother—went down to the beach, and ordered the recovered things up here, you say? What did he do it for? what did he want with them?"

"That is precisely what I should be glad to know," Miss Dane.

"I don't think they can have come here, dear sir, I fancy there must be some error. Allow me to ring for Bruff."

She tripped to the bell, before Mr. Lydney could forestall her; and Bruff, who for some reason, best known to himself, had delayed the errand he was departing upon when Mr. Lydney appeared at the castle-gate—came in answer to the summons.

"Bruff," asked Miss Dane, "have any boxes and things been brought here this morning, belonging to that wrecked ship?"

"Yes, miss," answered Bruff. For Miss Dane, though living at the castle as its mistress, never would submit to be addressed as "mam." In her opinion it would have taken from her appearance of youth; and we be to the servant who transgressed, for he fell under her stern displeasure; at least, as stern as simple Miss Dane could show.

"Is this gentleman's box here, then?" she proceeded.

"I can't say that miss; I did not remark particularly what came. It was all put in the strong-room. If the box was in the cart with the other things it's here."

"It is of the very utmost consequence that I should have it, Miss Dane," struck in Mr. Lydney. "Lord Dane would surely not object to its being returned to me, were he at home."

"Of course not, sir," warmly acquiesced Miss Dane. "Bruff, you cannot do