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

CHAPTER XXV. Continued. "But, it so happened, that as Dr. Green left the Sailor's Rest, he was overtaken by the group who had emerged from Danesheld Hall. Apperly was among them; and Inspector Young walked by the side of Lydney. Dr. Green informed Apperly that he was wanted at the Sailor's Rest in his professional capacity, and the latter went in at once, and proceeded to the door of the sick chamber."

"I am told the old gentleman wants me, who is lying here," quoth he to Sophie, who came out to him.

"Yes, he is very ill," answered Sophie. "But you need not call him old, Mr. Apperly; he is not as old as you are. You can

She held the door open for him, quitting the room herself. Mr. Apperly advanced to the couch, near which stood Ravensbird. "I am sorry to hear you are seriously ill,

sir," he began. "Mr. Home, I believe." The invalid turned his head toward him. His high features, somewhat attenuated now by suffering, his keen eyes, and his white hair. A handsome man still. Mr. Apperly gazed at him, and then backed a few paces, astonishment, mingled with terror, on his countenance.

"Good Heavens!" he uttered, as he wiped kis brow. "It-it-can it be? It is Captain Dane! come to life again."

"No, sir," rejoined the invalid, very sharply for one so ill, "it is not Captain Dane. I am Lord Dane. And so I have been, ever since my father's death.'

The lawyer looked bewildered. He turned from the sick man to Ravensbird, from Ravensbird to the sick man.

"Is it not a dream?" he gasped. "It is not a dream," said Ravensbird. "It is my old master sure enough; my lord now. I have been proud to know it ever since the day after the shipwreck.

Why you-you-are supposed to be lying in the Danesheld vaults, sir-my lord. Goodness help me!" broke off Apperly, in his former hot fashion; "if you are in truth Lord Dane, who is he—the other Lord Dane at the castle?

"It I am in truth Lord Dane!" retorted the invalid. "What do you mean, Apperly? I am my tather's son."

"Yes, yes, of course; but these sudden changes confuse me, my lord. Who is he at the castle, I say? I can't collect my senses.' "I should think you can't," was the reply of the true Lord Dane. "He is an usurper; not an intentional one; we must give him that due. He is plain Mr. Herbert Dane, and never has been anything else, though he has reveled in all rights of a peer for these ten уевтя."

"It will take me-it will take mea week to get over this; a week before I can comprehend it," ejaculated Apperly. "Were you really killed, my lord?"

"If I was killed I came to life again," said Lord Dane, intending the words as a joke. "The fall over the cliff took away my senses for a time, and otherwise injured me; but I recovered. A moment yet, Apperly; there will be some work for the lawyers between me and the false Lord Dane; which side do you enlist upon?"

"Yours, my lord, certainly; yours by all means."

"Then I retain you as my adviser, and I somebody else to be present. Ravensbird, where's Mr. Williams?"

"He has not been in, my lord, since he went this morning to Danesheld Hall." "Did he go to Danesheld Hall?" asked

Lord Dane. "Yes," was Ravensbird's answer. "Squire Lester sent for him.

"And a pretty kettle of fish he has got himselfinto, if you mean the young man lodging me?" here, William Lydney," put in the lawyer. "He is taken into custody on remand. Young has just walked him off to the stationhouse.

"Walked Mr. Lydney off to the stationhouse!" uttered Ravensbird, while Lord Dane stared, in unqualified astonishment.

"A shocking scapegrace, I'm afraid, gentlemanly as he looks," exclaimed Mr. Apperly. "Reports have been abroad, connecting him with the poachers, for sometime: but he has got himself into real trouble now. He and three more, with blackened faces, broke into the hall last night, for robbery no doubt, but that they were disturbed. Lydney is the only one of the lot taken as yet."

" How dare you so traduce him, and in my presence?" cried Lord Dane, his eyes flashing wrath. "You don't know what you are saying, Apperly. Are you aware who he is?" "Not I, my lord. I know nothing of him, except that his name's Lydney; or he says it is. Danesheld looks upon him as an adven-

"He will be Danesheld's chieftain, sir: I can tell you that," returned his lordship, with emotion. "Ay, you may stare, but he will. He is my own lawful son, and will be returned Lord Dane. "And now for my story my Lord Dane before many days are over, for I shan't last longer."

"Why, it is mystery upon mystery!" ex-claimed Mr. Apperly, who certainly did stare in no measured degree. "He goes by the

name of Lydney." "He is my own son, I tell you, the Honorable Geoffry William Lydney Dane. Geoffry is his first name, but we have always called him William; my wife, a lady of French ex- Henry Dane, as I was then, went over the traction, used to say her lips would not pro-

nounce the Geoffry. And you assert that he is in custody?" "He is in custody beyond dispute, for I made out the warrant myself for his commit-

tal," was the answer of Mr. Apperly. And he forthwith proceeded to give Lord Dane a summary of the circumstances so far as he knew them; dwelling on the fact that Mr. Lydney did not deny having been in the house, as testified to by Tiffle.

"One thing is certain," said Lord Dane, "that William is incapable of a mean or dishonorable action. If he was in Lester's house, he was there for some good and legitimate purpose, and so it will turn out; not for a bad one. Pshaw sir! speak of housebreaking in connection with William Dane, a future peer of England! I will stake the rest of my beauty. I say blindly—had I not been blind poor life that Herbert Dane-my lord, as you all call him—is at the bottom of these rumors against him. I do not suppose he suspects who William is; but I think it likely that he fears I am alive, and goes upon thorns lest I should turn up."

"My lord, may I ask you why you did not assume your rank and your rights when you first returned?" said Apperly. "Why you have lain on here in obscurity, suffering Lord in the ruins of the chapel-you know them Dane-Mr. Herbert, I should say-to continue in his honors?

"All in good time," replied Lord Dane. "I had my reasons. You know that box that broke forth and I kicked him, Ravensbird so much has been said about?"

have it safely by my side now. Apperly," continued Lord Dane, after a pause given to reflection, Fit has been in my mind some time to have a detective officer down. Keen men are those London detectives; they ferret of quarrel between you and Raversbird," put out everything; and perhaps by those means in Mr. Apperly; but Lord Dane went on. I may arrive at the box. I was only waiting for my health to get better; but it has got his yacht in the harbor. I had dined with worse instead. You shall telegraph for one him on board the previous evening, and on

this day. 7 "A London detective is at present in Danesheld, at the castle," replied Mr. Apperly. "His name is Blair, and he passes as Lord Dane's banker; business brought me in of pink ribbon, whose centre was a pearl, pretty well over the globe, Europe excepted. contact with him some time ago, and of which I knew Lady Adelaide had worn on course I recognized him, but he gave me a the front of her dress the previous evening, hint that he was here incog. He might suit for I had seen her dress for dinner before I your lordship's purpose as well as another."

"Not if he be a friend of Lord Danes, as you persist in calling him."

"I beg the true Lord Dane's pardon," smiled Mr. Apperly; but we have called Mr. Herbert Lord Dane so long, that we must call him so, I fear, by many another slip of the tongue. I could ascertain by two words to Blair himself, whether he is at liberty to give his energies to your cause."

"Then go and do so at once," was the command. "Let him understand that he will have to act against the present Lord Dane at the castle, but do not mention me otherwise than as Mr. Home. When Dr. Green was called in to me-I could not send for Wild because he would have known me-he asked my name. I replied, 'Mr. Home,' for I was thinking of my own home at the moment, and the word did as well as any other. If this Blair will assist, bring him back with you for it is high time to act, and the plot is thickening. The heir of Dane in custody for felony! Do you hear it. Ravenshird ?"

As Mr. Apperly walked toward the castle, not knowing where else to look for the detective, it occurred to him that he was not bent upon altogether an honorable erraud. To seek Mr. Blair in his host's residence, purposely to ask him to act against that host, was certainly not altogether clear steering; but lawyers are thick-skinned, most of them, and so was Mr. Apperly. It happened, however, that he had not to seek Mr. Blair at the castle, for he met the latter walking from it.

"I was going in search of you," began Mr. Apperly. "A gentleman down here has need of the services of a detective officer. Could you act for him ?"

"Yes: for the business that brought me down is so far over that I am no longer needed, and have now quitted the castle. What is

"I must premise that you will have to act against Lord Dane, though in what manner I do not precisely understand myself. Will your private feelings allow you to do so?"

"An officer must have no private feelings," was Mr. Blair's reply. "Lord Dane demanded a detective from town, and I was sent down. My business with him is concluded; and if I am required by another party, I have neither plea nor wish for refusing, whether my services may be put in requisition against Lord Dane, or against any other lord. Does it relate to this business of breaking into the hall? which I confess I cannot fathom-at least Lydney's share in

"In a manner it does; and I can fathom i as little as you."

"I fancied so. I thought Squire Lester might be calling upon me for aid."
"I am not the agent of Squire Lester," re plied the lawyer, as he took Mr. Blair to the

Sailor's Rest. Lord Dane was then off the sofa, pacing the room by the help of Ravensbird's arm. will tell you my tale. But I should wish complaint that he labored under was an inward one, telling little upon his general ap-

pearance and his apparent health. "This is Mr. Blair, my lord," said Lawyer Apperly.

"Sir," said the peer, stopping in his walk I hear you have been visiting. Can you aid

"I have no doubt I can," was Mr. Blair's reply; "at least I can inform you whether anything can be done if you will put me in possession of the circumstances."

"Very good. But before I enter upon my tale, which is a long one, allow me to inform you that I am Lord Dane."

The detective gave a sort of cough, impressed with the sudden belief that the gentleman before him was laboring under a mania, and wanted a keeper rather than a police-officer. His eye glanced at Mr. Apperly.

"His lordship says right," observed the latter. "He is the true Lord Dane."

"The true veritable William Henry, Lord Dane, only surviving son of the old Lord Dane, of whom you may have heard," continued the peer. "You look astonished, Mr. Blair; I thought police-officers were surprised at nothing."
"The present lord has enjoyed the honors

so long," remarked Mr. Blair, recovering himcelf. "He is not like one who succeeded yesterday. Sir Richard Mayne himself would be surprised at this "

" I dare say he will be when he hears of it," -when you will learn how it happens that he has enjoyed them."

Lord Dane seated himself on the sofa Ravensbird disposing the pillows for his support, and then taking his stand by his side while the lawyer and the detective occupied chairs opposite, and Lord Dane began: "You may probably have heard, Mr. Detec-

tive, that Captain the Honorable William cliff, one moonlight night, by accident, or by treachery, and lost his life; that his body was turned up by the sea some weeks afterward, and buried in the family vault."

"I have heard this," replied Mr. Blair. "Bruff, the butler at the castle, a sociable spirit if encouraged, has been fond of visiting my room since my sojourn here, and entertaining me with various items of the family's history. All in good faith; he is proud

to tell laudatory tales of the Danes." "I had been staying at home for some time," proceeded Lord Dane, "and was engaged to my mother's niece and ward, Lady Adelaide Errol. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Blair-for you may have lost your head for a woman yourself-that I was madly and I might have seen that her love was given to another. This was the man to enlighten me, -touching Ravensbird's arm. "He came to me in my chamber one morning, in his true regard for my welfare and honor, and warned me that Lady Adelaide was deceiving me; that she loved my cousin, Mr. Herbert Dane, and that he returned her love. When he went on to say that they met almost nightly on the edge of the cliff-met for their lovers' endearments, their confidential converse, their ridicule and deceit of me—then my passion my faithful friend and servent down the stairs,

my gentle, child-like Adelaide!"

Danesheld never could come at the cause

this morning he came up to call at the castle. I walked out with him afterward, and was went down to the yacht. All in an instant it flashed upon me that Ravensbird had told me the truth-for, unless she had visited the ruins the previous night, the bow could not have come there. My blood was boiling over, and I determined that not a day should pass, before I had it out. I met Herbert Dane, and told him I should step into his house to smoke a cigar that evening; intending in my own mind to tax him with the treachery."

"He said he was expecting you," again interrupted Mr. Apperly. "And we found him at home, waiting for you, after your fall

from the cliff." "Not waiting for me," significantly returned Lord Dane. "Evening came. I had promised Moncton to dine on board and say farewell, for the yacht was to sail with the tide, I did not go. I had brooded over my wrongs all the afternoon, and felt in no fit state even for Moncton's society, and I dined at home, with Lord and Lady Dane, and Adelaide; we had no guests that evening.

After dinner I took my way to the ruins, resolved to watch the meeting between them, should there be one. I felt half mad to think that I had been so gulled; to know that Adelaide had but tampered with me; to feel that her love was another's. Inside the ruins I waited, and presently I saw Herbert Dane come stealing over the grass, keeping as much in the shade as he could, for I think the moon was never brighter. Cautiously he came up, came inside, and all but touched me, as I stood close to one of the apertures. Whether he heard my breathing, whether I made any movement, I don't know, but he evidently became aware that some one was there. He took it to be her for whom he waited: 'Adelaide, my dearest, is it you?' he whispered, and the words unnerved me. In my passionate rage I seized hold of him and shook him; I reproached him with his base treachery; I told him he should fight me on the next day. He retorted-and quarrelling vehemently, we made our way outside the ruins, close to the edge of the cliff. There it came to a strnggle, and there I saw Lady Adelaide, who must have come up meanwhile, quickly step out of the ruins, and gaze at us. In the same moment, we got on the edge, and I lost my footing and fell--"

"Then it was Herbert Dane who flung you over?" eagerly inquired Mr. Apperly, in his eagerness. "We have never know whom to

suspect." "It was Herbert Dane. I do not think it was purposely done. He was trying to fling me to the ground, but not over the cliff: I was trying to fling him, and I lost my footing I say, and fell. In the instant of the fall my ear caught Lady Adelaide's shrill

scream ." "She ran screaming back to the castle half dead with terror," exclaimed Mr. Apperly, whose mercurial temperament could not be still. "But she did not recognize either you or Herbert Dane."

"She recognized us both," returned Lord Dane; "it is absurd to suppose otherwise. It was light as day, I say. I know that she denied it; I have talked it all over with Ravensbird, over and over again since I lay and facing him. "I have need of advice and recognized us. Love for Herbert Dane Still, we did not dare tell our secret, and the assistance. I have been wronged by Herbert | may have kept her silent; or fear lest her own | years passed on. We waited patiently for the that it was with him I struggled. I hear that after this, she refused to continue her friendship with Herbert Dane. I am glad-she had so much grace.'

"She may have looked upon him as a murderer in intention as well as actually. Most persons thought the marderer was a

"Oh, that packman was nothing," said Lord Dane. "As I was crossing the heights to the ruins some fellow accosted me, opened a small box or tray of wares, and importuned me to buy. I refused harshly enough, I dare say, for I was in no mood of suavity, and the fellow grew loud and insulting. I promised ness to enter upon it. You must remember the booty of smugglers, and his lordship, hon-him if he did not be off I would call forth the that I was not the heir; my brother Geoffry's orable and haughty, liked not that coloring servants from my father's castle to convey him and his pack to the lockup, and away he hurried.

"And how were you rescued after the fall?" again began Mr. Apperly, while the detective sat perfectly silent, as he had done from the

"By one of those interpositions of Providence that no doubt come direct from Heaven," solemnly repeated Lord Dane. Moncton, disappointed of seeing me on board, anxleus to bid me farewell, caused his yacht to heave to when she was abreast of the castle, put off in the boat, with a hand, and came to the very spot where I was lying, intending to seek me at the castle. Now, mark you, he was not well acquainted with the coast, and he mistook this small spot of beach for the larger one above, where steps wind up the cliff; what do you call that but Providence? He found me lying there insensible; he thought dead; and he found that there was no road to the heights from that place He put me in the boat, with the help of the sailor, and they pulled back to the yacht. I revived. I was very much bruised and hurt, but no bones were broken. They had a surgeon on board, a young man who had come with them from the States for what he called a spree. Moneton was for putting the yacht back to port, but I-smarting under the infamous deceit of Lady Adelaide—preferred to go on with him on the voyage. I did not care if England never saw me again, and the farther I was away from it the better. The yacht touched here and touched there, reaching the States at last, long before I was well; in fact, this complaint that I am dying from was no doubt induced by that fall. I ought to have written to them at home, at least to tell them I was in the land of the living, but I put it overtook me was a fever; a long, nervous fever, rendering me incapable in mind and in body. When I was sufficiently well to hear the news, Moncton informed me of the death of my mother; he had seen it in the papers many weeks back; had kept them, now put them into my hand. 'I must write to my father now, said I to him, but that very same day fresh papers arrived bringing accounts of the death of Lord Dane."

at the last, and never signed his will. Mr. Herbert succeeded then."

"Yes, Herbert succeeded," replied Lord

thing was the accusation that she stole out at Had I known that it was Herbert, and that I bringing my effects to England, and was pronight to visit the ruins and meet her lover—myself was the true Lord Dane, the first and paring to denounce him as my destroyer. I myself was the true Lord Dane, the first and paring to denounce him as my destroyer. I fasfest steamer would have brought me over. say I cannot fathom his precise thoughts and I had not been friendly with brother Geoffry; he was overbearing and tyrnnnical, and I did not care to return, neither did I care to write. England had lost her attractions for me, and I had ceased relations with her. I knew that 1 should inherit nothing under my father's will-my fortune had been paid to me when I

came of age. Therefore, I stayed on, giving being chiefly in America, though I traveled pretty well over the globe, Europe excepted. When I found my health failing, failing probably to a fatal termination, then I turned my thoughts to home, and lost no time in returning hither. We took passage in the 'Wind, eleven hundred tons register, New York She brought us safely to this, my own native spot, and wrecked us on it. That was strange," he musingly added, but after a moment's pause went on. "But for my son's interest I do not suppose I should have troubled the old country again-

"Your son?" said Mr. Blair, interrupting for the first time. "Yes, sir, my son," returned the narrator, his agitation rising. "The gentleman whom you and Squire Lester and Herbert Dane, have, between you, ordered into custody today on a charge of miduight plundering, he is

my son." "He! William Lydney!" continued the in-

spector, astonished for once in his life. "He, and no other, sir. He is the Honorable William Dane, one of your future peers. Do you think he broke into George Lester's house?

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Blair, surprised

out of his equanimity. "I had never lighted upon any account of the marriage of Lord Dane (always supposing it to be my brother Geoffry), and, failing in children of his own, of course William was his heir, after me; for that reason, and establish his rights, I came home. We were wrecked-and saved; all that we had with us went down, save a few papers and letters in William's pockets, who was dressed when the catastrophe occurred, sufficient to establish our identity with the agents in London of our American bankers; otherwise we might have been at a temporary strait for money

"Never, my lord," put in Ravensbird, "so far as my narrow means could prevent it." "Knowing me for Lord Dane, perhaps not, Ravensbird," smiled his master. "But you might not have been so ready to help two distressed unknown shipwrecked travelers."

"My lord," spoke Mr. Apperly, who was dying to have his curiosity gratified, "how does that young gentleman come to be your son? You must have made an early marriage."

"I did make an early marriage," replied Lord Dane. "I was not much more than of age. I married the daughter of a French merchant and banker, who had settled in the States, and I married her in secret. Her father had a bitter prejudice against the English, arising from a grievous wrong done to his family by an English officer in the time of the Napoleon war. I was an English officer, and he told her plainly he would rather see her in her grave than my wife. On my own side, I knew that my family, always a haughty one, would never sanction my alliance with a merchant's daughter, and the result was we married in secret, and continued to keep it a secret. My wife lived on, unsuspected, at her father's home, making plausible absences from it occasionally During one of these William was born, and was christened Geoffry William Lydney. As the boy grew he was was introduced by my wife to her father's house as the child of a friend, and from that time there was no difficulty in her having him there much, for the old gentlehere, and I say that Lady Adelaide must have | man grew to like him, and to ask for him. time that death, in the course of nature, would take him, and release him from our bondage. Alas, death came, as it often does come, where it is not expected. The old gentleman died; that was expected, leaving his accumulated riches to his daughter; but ere we had well declared our position, and inherited, she also died : died from a neglected cold. After the lapse of a few months, I came on a visit to England, and to my father's at Dane Castle, and there my senses became enthralled by the charms of Lady Adelaide. I did not tell Lord and Lady Dane of my marriage, or my boy: I had no particular motive for the reticence, save that I felt a constant unwillingwas a good life, and I never cast a thought done so I should have been the first to declare | Herbert." that I had a son. I did tell Adelaide. In

one of our confidential interviews I told her I had made an early and secret marriage, and honor to secrecy, and so far as I know she has teeling prompted me not to; but I meant to have told her of him before we married. William's very large fortune in his own right, inherited from his mother, would prevent any icalous unpleasantness on pecuniary scores. done?" he feverishly asked of the detective. Now you perceive how it is that William Lydney—as he has called himself here—is my

"It's like the winding up of a comedy,"

cried Mr. Apperly. "The comedy's not wound up yet," retorted Lord Dane. "And now, Mr. Detective," he ant still, and might cancel it. None in the added, turning to that gentleman, "I come to the part that more particularly concerns you. There was cast up from the wreck, a box, which was claimed by William—a japanned box, with the initials 'V. V. V.' upon it, surmounted by a Maltese cross. While he came Dane. "Will you suffer him to remain in here to get assistance to remove it, my Lord Dane goes on the beach, sees the box, and orders it up to the castle. Why did he do this?" Lord Dane stopped, but his question was

not answered. "Because he recognized it : recognized it as my mother's box—one that she had given me when I first weut abroad. There is not the slightest doubt that he must have known it again, for he had seen it many and many a tell him, to confide in you. He may do it." score of times at the castle in earlier days; "In all security. He may tell me as a and Mitchel, whom Rauensbird questioned, says that he appeared struck with its appearance. The initials stood for her maiden blindly in love with her, fascinated by her off, and put it off, and the next thing that name, Verena Vincent Verner, General Vincent having been ber uncle; and the Maltese cross had been added to them, in a freak, by her brother, young Verner. He had hor rowed the box of her, and when it came back it was embellished with the cross. This box she gave to me when I was going out with my regiment, and the very day I was putting my papers and best treasures in it, Herbert Dane stood by and helped me. Yes, he recognized the box, and that's why he laid his hasty hands upon it and sent it to the castle."

Mr. Blair drew his chair a few inches ginning now, and the plot was getting inter-

motives, but that he holds that box securely housed in the castle—unless he has destroyed ic and its contents with it—is my unshakable conviction.

"Permit me," raid Mr. Blair, interposing. Will your loidsbip inform me what its con-

tents were?" "They were varied, sir. Papers and documents relating to my property in America, for my money is invested there, and to that of my son. My will was also in it. All these can be replaced; but what I fear can never be replaced are the testamentary papers relatingto my marriage and to my son's birth. The clergyman who united us is dead, the witnesses are dead; altogether, if these are lost, I might never he able to prove, to the satisfaction of British law, that William is my veritable, legitimate son. See you not how

the proof of William's title he would be the next baron by right of law." The detective nodded his head; he saw it

valuable the suppression of them would be to

Herbert Dane? I cannot last long, and failing

all now clearly.
"That box has been the cause of my remaining on in this house in secrecy and seclusion," continued Lord Dane. "I never intended, you may be sure, to return home otherwise than openly, than as my own proper self; but the moment the life-boat had saved us-for which we may thank young Lester—came the knowledge that the box was lost, and all else we had had with us. I told William that night it would be better to remain incog. for a time, till we could see what must be done. I did not choose, you not prove my own innocence without comsee, to bring him home and introduce him as | promising another." my son and heir, without being able to prove the fact, were I challenged to do it. Then burst upon me the knowledge that my own brother had long been dead, and that be who reigned as the Baron was Herbert Dane. All the more cause for my going to work cautiously. The box at present may be intact: at any rate, not destroyed; but were I to make a stir, and it came to his knowledge that I am here, and that William is my son, he might burn the contents wholesale.'

"I understand that the castle had been thoroughly searched, and that no such box

brought me home the news from the police- curred to me more than once, having its risc inspector, and it has troubled me much. But from some words dropped last night, by that for that, I might have gone about matters in respectable member of society, Shad. Is it a bolder manner. The fact is I have been ill possible that Mr. Lester's son has been the all along, in daily hopes of getting better, and actor in this, and not you; that the woman I put it off until I should be so. It appears now that I never shall be."

"The chances are that he has removed it from the castle," mused Mr. Blair. "Young | him?" told me the search was as efficient as he could make it. But again it was, by all accounts, very heavy, and he must have had help to do this; would be risk that, under the noise that | deed the culprit, and that he had sushed in has been made? I suppose," he continued, after him, having waited for him in vain near stroking his chin, and speaking half in a the castle, through Shad's tale, rushed in solilequy, half as a question, to Lord Dane, " that there are no secert hiding-places in the castle?"

"I cannot say: if there are. I do not know of them." was the emphatic answer of Lord | had been accomplished, and the deed was then Dane. "I never heard the supposition mentioned till the other day. William came in contact with Ben Beecher-a loose devil-maycare set those Beechers always were--and by something that accidentally transpired, William thought Beecher or his companions had been concerned in the abstraction of the box. and that through Beecher he might get it again. It came to nothing, but he has met Beecher occasionally since—the box mind you, being the object—and the man persists in it to him that there are secret places in the castle, old Beecher vouching for it."

"I know of one," observed Mr. Apperly, while they all turned to him with interest.

"In the strong room-

"Which do you call the strong-room?" interrupted Lord Dane. "The death-rom, as it was in your time my lord, but the present owner of the castle chose to change the name, not liking, possibly, the associations the word death gave, as connected with your supposed fate. In the trestle-closet in that room there is a hidden spring; press it, and the side of the closet slowly opens like a door; plenty of space there to conceal auything. It came to my knowledge by accident. I went to the death-room once in search of the old Lord Dane, and he, not expecting me or any one else, had the place open. He commanded my secrecy: tradition went that the castle had once, it was in his grandfather's time, been a refuge for should be added to the tale. I informed upon the probability of inheriting. Had I the present lord of that place--I mean Mr.

" You." "I did, my lord. It was just after he came into the title. We were speaking of the casthat my wife was dead. I bound her in the and its rooms, and I told him of that hiding-spot, and showed it to him. He was the observed it. I did not mention William; a only and legitimate lord, as I believed, and had more right to the secret than I."

"Then, by Heaven, that's where my box is!" uttered Lord Dane, rising from his seat in excitement. "And, now, what's to be "Plenty of clew to work upon now."

"Your lordship must give me a few hours for deliberation. As you have observed, we must act cautiously, lest he become alarmed, and destroy it. We might get a search-warrant for the castle, but he is the lord-lieutencounty possess his authority. There is no immediate hurry for to-day, and I must mature my plans. It may be necessary for me to ap-

ply to Sir Richard Mayne." "And my son," imperiously spoke Lord custody?"

"That he cannot be guilty, is perfectly clear to my mind," returned Mr. Blair, "and I will release him of my own responsibility, provided he shall satisfactorily account to me for his presence at Mr. Lester's with those men last night, Can your lordship explain it?"

"No, I cannot," replied Lord Dane. "I will drop a few penciled words to him, and friend, not as a detective."

The words were written, and Mr. Blair departed with them to the police-station, leaving his lordship, the lawyer, and Ravensbird setting their wits to work over the box and the hiding-place.

CHAPTER XXVI. WILLIAM LYDNEY sat quietly enough in the

He had requested to be allowed an interview. with his landlord Ravensbird, and Inspector. Young had appeared to acquiesce, and to send a messenger for him. In point of fact, the messenger was dispatched to the castle to innearer Lord Dane. His part was indeed, be- quire Lord Dane's pleasure on the subject. The door opened, and William Lydney arose in expectation, but he saw only the stranger, who had been at Lord Dane's side that morngan Mr. Blair, putting the folded paper in his

William looked at it, and then at hi visitor.

" From whom did you say ?" "From the true Lord Dane," was the whispered answer. "And I believe I have now the honor of speaking to the future lord. Your father, in that note, bids you conside to me: he has done so. Perhaps it may be in my power to order your release." But what can you possibly have to do

with it?" exclaimed young Lydney. "You are a friend of-of him at the castle-his town banker." "You have been flourishing in Danesheld

under false colors, Mr. Dane; so have I. I am not Lord Dane's (the title will slip out) banker and how the report got wind is more than I can say. I am one of the chief de. tective-officers of the police force. You father has called in my aid to assist him, and I am ready to assist you. First of all, what did bring you to Mr. Lester's with whose companions last night." "I cannot explain; I cannot tell you any.

thing about it," was the quick response.

Mr. Blair looked at him, doubts arising. "You could not have broken in with those men for a nefarious purpose, surely!" he slowly debated, feeling very unpleasantly per plexed in his own mind.

"I!" returned William Dane as baughtily as any Dane had had ever spoken. "Youin timated but now your cognizance of my rank I do not forget it, I assure you, or yet di grace it."

"Will you give me your reasons for no

confiding in me?" "I do not know that I need object to that said William, after deliberating. "I could

"I told your father you might confide it me. as a friend, not as a detective officer. Do so, that I may be enabled to assist you and I declare to you, upon my sacred word, that what you may tell me of any other party shall remain locked up in my own breastshall never be used against them.'

"Never be spoken of? never betrayed?"

"Never, so long as I breathe, unless by your permission. I am not retained to work out this business at Mr. Lester's; it i nothing more to me than to any idle specta tor, therefore I can safely give you the prowas there," observed Mr. Blair.

"So did I," said Lord Dane. "William ning to end. A curious suspicion has ocservant Tiffle, or whatever her name is---mistook you for him in the confusion; and that you have been bearing the stigma to screen

William Dane saw that it would be the bes plan to confide the whole truth to Mr. Blair and re did so. That Wilfred Lester was in hoping to bring him to his senses, and rescue him from his alarming danger. He gave the history of the deed as the motive of the in break, not plunder; he told that the object in Wilfred's possession, unsuspected by Mr. Lester. It was William Dane, who finding Lester amidst the shrubs, had torn the crape

from his face, and seen him into his home. "You see," he concluded, "I cannot declare these facts, without awfully compromising Wilfred Lester. and it is not my intention t

do that." "The facts must be confided to Squire Les

ter, and he must stop proceedings."

"I don't know. He is very bitter against his son. If he knew me for the true heir to Dane, I might have some influence with him, continued William, smiling, "and it should certainly be exerted for Wilfred. It may be better to wait and see what will turn up, so

long as Wilfred is not suspected." "You seem wonderfully easy under own incarceration," observed Mr. Blair, gaz-

ing on his handsome face. "A man with his conscience at peace generally easy under most circumstances And as to the accusation-nshaw! I nee only point my finger, and say there is the true Lord Dane at Ravensbirds, come home to as sume his rights, and you may know me for his son; Danesheld would soon scatter the

accusatian to the winds." "I think I can do that," said Hr. Blair.

"Come with me." He led the way into the general office, where sat Inspector Young on his usual stool, writing. At the same moment, the messenger, who had been dispatched to Dane Castle, entered.

inspector of the latter. "Yes. And he says no person whatever especially Ravensbird, is to be admitted to the prisoner." "The interdiet will not he necessary,

"Did you see his lordship?" inpuired the

coolly observed Mr. Blair, as he turned to the inspector. "Young, I am about to relieve you of your charge. This gentleman must be set at liberty."

The inspector stood in mute consternation.

"Where is the warrant for it?" he presently ejaculated. "Your warrant is, that you are bound to

obey my orders,' said Mr. Blair. "Let that be your answer to any one who has authority to question you." Mr. Blair opened the door, and bowed slightly, with every mark of respect, as Lydney passed him. Had the inspector possessed ten eyes, they could not have stared away his astonishment; it was not lessened

when Lydney, laughing and looking back spoke: "I will not cherish resentment against you, inspector, for holding me your prisoner. But theday may come when you will thank your stars for not having made an enemy of me. Better, for your self-interest, that you made

one of my Lord Dane." As Mr. Blair and the ex-prisoner left the town behind them, and were nearing the Sailor's Rest, who should come full upon them, in a not very frequented part of the road, but Lord Dane. He was swinging down from the castle to the station, to enforce his prohibition personally against any one beiing admitted to the prisoner. To describe his amazement when he saw Lydney, free and at large, would be difficult; he gaze and rubbed his eyes, and gazed again, believe

ing his vision must be deceiving him. "What is the meaning of this? what brings that man here, at liberty?" demanded hereely of Mr. Blair. The latter signed to his lordship that he would speak to him privately and Lydney, slightly raising his hat, which motion Lord Dane might take as one mean in courtesy or mockery, just whichever he

pleased, strolled gently on. "Circumstances have come to my know-ledge since the examination this morning my lord, which render it inexpedient that Mr. Lydney should be kept in custody. I have

"What on earth do you mean?" ejaculated Lord Dane. " Circumstances !"." "They have indeed.' Mr. Lydney is no more guilty than you or I. I know it; my

deemed it my duty to release him."

lord. "I think you must be mad," returned Lord

"Ah, they were not long apart," said Mr. Apperly. "My lord went off quite suddenly

Dane, with emotion, "but I never suspected

"What he may have feared, what he may "Well, my lord?"

"Well, my lord?"

"Well, my lord?"

"I must get that into my possession, if I can, before I alarm Mr. Herbert Dane. I was but traducing her, and I visited it upon would almost barter my boy's future title to him. What made me more angry than any. have thought, I do not pretend to say, when he saw it on the beach. He may have ar- "I bring you a line from Lord Dane," be-

strong-room of the station, expecting a visitor.