

RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE

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 alone. Mr. Apperly; he is not as old as you are. You can go in."

have it safely by my side now. Apperly, continued Lord Dane, after a pause given to reflection, "it has been in my mind some time to have a detective officer down. Keen men are those London detectives; they forget me everything, and perhaps by those means I may arrive at the box. I was only waiting for my health to get better, but it has got worse instead. You shall telegraph for one this day."

thing was the accusation that she stole out at night to visit the ruins and meet her lover, my gentle child-like Adelaide. "Danesheld never could come at the cause of quarrel between you and Ravensbird," put in Mr. Apperly, but Lord Dane went on. "My friend of mine, Colonel Moncton, had his light in the harbor. He had dined with him on board the previous evening, and on this morning he came up to call at the castle. I walked out with him afterward, and was showing him the locality. We went into the ruins, and there I picked up a small box of pink ribbon, whose centre was a pearl, which I knew Lady Adelaide had worn on the front of her dress the previous evening, for I had seen her dress for dinner before I 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 box 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."

Had I known that it was Herbert, and that I myself was the true Lord Dane, the first and fastest steamer would have brought me over. I had not been friendly with brother Geoffry; he was overbearing and tyrannical, 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 I 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 no token home of my existence, my residence being chiefly in America, though I traveled pretty well over the globe, Europe excepted. When I found my health falling, falling 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."

bringing my effects; to England, and was preparing to denounce him as my destroyer. "I say I cannot fathom his precise thoughts, and motives, but he holds that box securely hoarded in the castle—unless he has destroyed it and its contents with it—is my unshakable conviction." "Permit me," said Mr. Blair, interposing. "Will your lordship inform me what its contents 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 relating to 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 be able to prove, to the satisfaction of British law, that William is my veritable, legitimate son. See you not how valuable the suppression of them would be to Herbert Dane? I cannot last long, and failing the proof of William's title he would be the next baron by right of law."

William looked at it, and then at his 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 confide 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 detective-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 those companions last night?" "I cannot explain; I cannot tell you anything 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?" "I returned William Dane as he has been named by any Dane had ever spoken. You indicated but now your cognizance of my rank; I do not forget it, I assure you, or yet disgrace it." "Will you give me your reasons for not confiding in me?" "I do not know that I need object to that," said William, after deliberating. "I could not prove my own innocence without compromising another."