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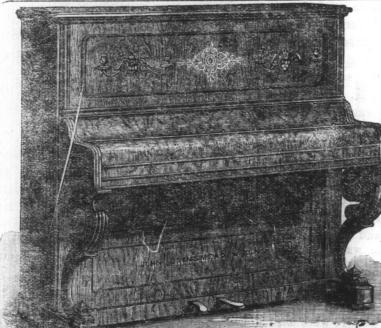
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CAMERON'S "SHADOW LOVE,

By the Author of Dora Thorne.

CHAPTER XLIV.

(Continued.) In her strained, morbid train of thought Lady Rylestone began to imagine that her husband would be relieved if he were never to

see her or hear of her again. Through the gray September mist she and her companions drove in silence. She made no complaint; she prayed no further prayer; she never noticed their solicitude to save her from all observation; she sat silent, cold, motionless, her dark eyes fixed on the trees, her white, intent face never changing. The crowning sorrow had come to her-the certain conviction that, now that she had undergone this disgrace, she could never be publicly acknowledged as Lord Rylestone's wife. It dawned across her mind with a keen, sudden pain. She herself had raised the barrier between them; she had, to all intents and purposes, separated herself from him. Lord Rylestone could not show to the world as his wife the woman who had been tried for theft. She had ruined herself; and the ruin was irretrievable. It was this certain conviction that had driven her to the last depths of despair. She almost forgot the rest in remembering that; the terrible dilemma in which she had so rashly placed herself faded into insignifiance—the secret of the will lost some of its horror. She,

acknowledged as Lord Rylestone's wife. 'There must have been a curse upon me,' she said to herself; but it did not strike her that the curse was the result of acting upon impulse rather than upon principle, the result of studying the end rather than the means, the result of a certain deficiency in honor which all the beauty, the passion, the genius in the world could not atone for.

by her own act, had made herself unfit to be

'There is a curse upon me,' she repeatedit is my fate.'

After this, she grew reckless. She said to herself that she had been degraded by the taunts of underlings, disgraced by being suspected of theft-that she had separated herself from her husband as much as death itself could have done. What mattered what followed? She never saw the sun disperse the clouds on that September morning, to shine forth in all its brilliancy; she never heard the song of the birds, she never saw the autumn foliage-she was like a woman turned to stone.

'If a dagger had been put into my hands, and I had plunged it into my heart,' she said to herself, ' that would have been foolish; but to have done what I have done is suicide more deadly still.'

She was like a woman turned to stone. When Mr. Layston looked at her, he started back in amazement at the cold, dark loveliness of the once brilliant face-it was more like a mask than a face.

'They shall not see my heart bleed,' she said to herself-' these, my foes, who have hunted me down.'

She was taken to the magistrate's room, in Mr. Layston's house.

'Of what is this lady accused?' asked that gentleman; and the answer startled him. as her cold, impassive beauty had done.

'It is not the face of a thief,' he thought to himself. 'Whoever says so judges wrongfully. The woman is half mad with some great

Opposite the table where she stood was a tal window of stained glass. The sun shone through it now, and made the white hands crimson. He saw her rub them, as though they were stained with blood-rub them with a frightened expression—and again he said to himself-

'She is mad with some great sorrow.'

And then he took his seat, and the official investigation began. He listened to the charge -listened to the witnesses-and saw how entirely indifferent she appeared.

'She does not feel it,' he thought- neither the shame nor the sorrow that follows the detection of crime.'

Mrs. Grame told her story-and a telling one it was against the prisoner—how she had come first in disguise, under the pretense of seeing the Court-how she had returned again as Miss Cameron's companion-how she had manœuvered to get the keys, and how, suspectand caught her in the act of plundering.

The magistrate's voice was full of pity as he sked the prisoner had she anything to say. The dark dazed eyes were raised slowly to his face, and she answered, ' No.'

Then Mr. Beale told his story, and it was against her. Again the kindly, pitying voice asked her had she nothing to say-no explanation to give-and the answer again was ' No.

John Bayns revealed her half-admission of her own guilt, but the magistrate was shrewder than any of the three arrayed against her.

'It is sorrow, not crime,' he said to himself. I know not what led her to the safe, but I am quite sure she did not wish to steal from it. although she was found with the jewels and money on the floor. If she goes to prison there will be no justice in the land,' he thought. ' Was anything found in her possession?' he

inquired. " No.

' Was anything missing from the safe?'

And then the magistrate conversed for some ittle time with Mr. Beale. He told the lawver his opinion that there was some mystery about the case, that Miss Avenel had some other design in doing what she had done. He looked up suddenly.

'What is kept there,' he asked, 'besides jewels and money?'

'Documents of all kinds-private papers belonging to the Rylestone family.'

'Then you may rely upon it,' said the magistrate, 'that it was something of that kind she wanted to see. If she had cared only to steal jewels or money, she has had many opportuni-

But who is she?' cried Mr. Beale, startled by this view of the case. 'What can she want to see the Rylestone papers for?"

'That I cannot explain. Every family has its own secrets. I can form no idea of what she wanted to see; but I will stake my professhe wanted to see; but I will stake my professional judgment and reputation that I am right ON SALE BY CLIFT, WOOD & CO., -it was papers and not jewels that brought her to the Court.'

Mr. Beale looked anxious. Could there be any mystery in the Rylestone family unknown to him? Still, think, ponder as he would, no idea of the real truth, or even of anything approaching to it, ever dawned across him.

Mr. Layston was shrewd enough to see something else. Miss Avenel apparently did not care what happened her-she would not mind however severe the sentence might be that he passed upon her. She would not care if he acquitted her. He spoke in an undertone

'I think we must take everything into consideration,' he said. 'She has stolen nothing -nothing has been found upon her-nothing has been missed. As a matter of course, after losing her situation and her character, the ruin of all her worldly prospect must follow: and that, I think, will be punishment sufficient. Whatever wrong may have been contemplated, none was actually done, but the social ruin that will follow is certain. I think the justice of the case will be met if the prisoner be discharged.

## CHAPTER XLV.

MISS AVENEL was discharged. The charge of theft was withdrawn. The magistrate looking into the white drawn face, spoke a few words of kindly caution to her; she did not hear or heed them. She was free to go where she would: the freedom was of no use to her. The cruel accusation that had darkened her life was withdrawn; the withdrawal gave her no satisfaction. She was like a woman changed

Mr. Layston, if he had followed his own impulse, would have detained her in his house -would have soothed and calmed her, and have won from her the story of her grief; but propriety forbade all such kindness. He could only repeat, looking at the white face and wideopen frightened eyes-

'You are free to go wheresoever you will, Miss Avenel. You should thank Mr. Beale for his leniency. He would not press the

He saw that it was quite useless speaking. She did not in the least comprehend. Mr. Beale went up to her. The dark eyes looked 'I am truly sorry, Miss Avenel,' he said,

that you placed yourself, by your own folly, in this terrible position. I hope what has passed this morning will prove a lesson to you. She made him no answer. She could have laughed aloud in her bitterness and despair. What mattered all such platitudes! They could not touch her height of sorrow-they could not take one sting from the pain that was killing her. Let those about her advise, counsel. Heaven knew words could not reach her grief. Something in the expression of her face made Mr. Beale kinder than he had intended to be.

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