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## LORD MORDEN'S DAUGHTER

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE CEDARS.

CHAPTER VI.

"Father, you have not been more wretched than I if Melville had not taken me away, I believe that I should have gone to Van Dieman's Land, I was so miserable and reckless."

"And yet it was all for the best," said Mr. Locksley, looking away, for the figure of Lady Clare strolled past the window, along an ornamental terrace, festooned with creepers and flowers.

"Yes, father, replied Edmund, thinking of Dora Deane, "it was all for the best."

Should he tell his father about Dora now? Was this an opportune moment? He hesitated, while the words burned upon his lips.

"Melville has told me about your drifting away in a storm, and of the acquaintance you made on the coast of Deal. This Captain Deane seems to have been much impressed by you, Edmund, and you by him, or you would not have become such friends. The ways of Providence are indeed strange!"

Edmund eyed his father curiously. "So you are determined to prosecute a search for Lord Morden, by Captain Deane's request?" went on Mr. Locksley.

"I have resolved to do so, but not now."

"Edmund," interrupted the elder man; "I think that I can help you better than all the detectives in Scotland Yard. I think that I can point out the very man within a few days—nay, a few hours—a personal friend of yours."

"Father, you surprise me. I have never heard you mention the name of Lord Morden. He must have been—may be still—a personal friend of yours."

"He has been my greatest enemy," was the evasive answer. "And I desire you, Edmund, to make no effort to discover his lordship. If you will promise me this, I will reveal him to you—probably to-morrow."

"Of course I promise readily, father, and I am delighted to learn that he lives."

"Why should you be delighted?" demanded Mr. Locksley, sternly and suspiciously; then his face softened, and he went on:

"Edmund, my boy, you little dream what a load of care you have lifted from my heart by your action of today. I feel that I can never thank you sufficiently for the filial affection you have displayed, and it comes doubly hard upon me now, so fully aware as I am of my own shortcomings. But the cloud that has overshadowed you—has overshadowed me—because of a youthful folly—or sin—and it perhaps deserves the latter name—this cloud shall now be dispersed, and when you know all, I can only ask you to forgive your erring father."

"And I shall know who and what my mother was?" Edmund asked, his face burning with eagerness.

"You shall know all."

"Tell me, father, tell me one thing. It is most important that I should know it now. I must not marry a woman whom I love and honor with any fears in my mind. It would be

unfair to her. There is no shame connected with my birth."

Mr. Locksley flushed a little, but met his son's anxious gaze with a reassuring smile.

"No," he replied, "I will tell you that much, Edmund. I know why you are so impatient, and I honor you for your motives. I have long regarded Lady Clare as a daughter."

"But, father," interrupted Edmund desperately, "you must not misunderstand me, Lady Clare is—"

"Who speaks of Lady Clare?" said the blunt voice of Lady Clare's father, pushing his way through an open French window. "By George, it is confoundingly hot work riding to-day. I have been as far as Russell Street, and my mare is in a perfect lather. Edmund, I have often heard you say that horses and men require similar treatment under certain maladies. Now, my mare has been suffering for a week or more with a sore throat and a cough. What would you prescribe? I haven't an atom of faith in my veterinarian, you know. Just come and see her, will you, if you have done talking with your papa about my daughter."

"I think that we may congratulate them," Mr. Locksley supplemented, with a smile. "I have seen sufficient to convince me of that!"

Sir George seized the young man's hand and shook it heartily, tears in his eyes the while.

"You have made me happy," he said, "and I wish you joy."

Edmund knew not what to say, and a dozen explanations sprang to his lips, not one of which he dared to utter in the presence of both men.

"To-morrow," his father whispered, "I will hand my confession to you in writing. Melville and I will prepare it this night. I will alone inclose the address of Lord Morden with the document."

He said something to Sir George Moncrieff, and with a nod toward his son, left the room, while the baronet dragged Edmund through the French window in the direction of the stables.

"I am afraid of that confounded cough settling on her lungs," he was saying. "And I wouldn't lose that mare for five hundred guineas. You know how difficult it is to get rid of a cold during our beastly cold autumn weather, even in a horse, and I've no end of faith in you, my boy. Hail! there's Melville. Looks as though he had the world on his back, eh? I wonder that fellow doesn't get married and settle down! We are going to look at my mare," he called out to the viscount. "Will you come with us? I am persuading Edmund to treat her as he would one of us, and have faith in the cure."

The viscount joined them, eyeing Locksley keenly the while.

"Am I to congratulate you?" he asked, aside. "Your father informs me that everything is settled in a satisfactory manner at last. My dear fellow, I wish you every earthly happiness, and you will soon learn the part I have had to play in your life. Whether or not we shall remain friends when you know all, rests with you."

Locksley listened to this ambiguous speech in some bewilderment. He knew not how to reply, he felt that Melville had some power over his father, and he wondered if he were using it honorably.

"I am so surrounded with mysteries and misunderstandings," he said, "that I know not how to answer you. Let to-morrow speak for itself."

Melville glanced at him quickly, but said nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

Locksley prescribed for the mare, but declined to administer the medicine. That was the work of the groom, or a veterinary surgeon.

He found it impossible to shake off the society of Melville and Sir George Moncrieff until after dinner.

He never forgot the agony of that meal, and was thankful that Lady Clare had excused herself from appearing at the table. It was a great relief to him, otherwise a painful explanation would have been inevitable, for Sir George was brimming over with good-humored badinage, while Melville listened in curious silence, and watched young Locksley.

"So Clare is too bashful to appear," laughed Sir George. "I declare that this is the first time that ever I suspected her of being in the slightest degree put out. Ah, well, it will soon wear off, and she knows what a tease I am."

Mr. Locksley, senior, made some re-



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ply, and Melville thought that Edmund appeared to be very ill at ease.

After dinner the viscount and Mr. Locksley excused themselves and retired to the library, while Sir George Moncrieff and Edmund went to the billiard-room to smoke and play with the ivory balls. To Locksley anything was better than idleness—anything to distract his thoughts until he could have a final interview with Lady Clare Moncrieff.

"Nine o'clock," observed Sir George at last. "I am tired, Edmund, and shall go to bed early. It is useless waiting for your father and Melville. I understand that they will be engaged until long past midnight. I can hear Clare in the front drawing-room at the piano. You have been good to stay with me, but I will not keep you from her any longer."

"Thank you, Sir George," replied Locksley. Then he paused and hesitated. Was not this an excellent opportunity to have a complete understanding with Lady Clare's father? No. He would see Lady Clare first; he would not humiliate her in the eyes of any one if he could avoid it. She might give out her own version of the breaking off of the match if she chose. "Thank you, Sir George. Good-night."

"Good-night. I shall smoke one cigar, and then go to bed."

Locksley went to the drawing-room where Lady Clare was amusing herself at the piano.

She was an accomplished musician, and sang well, though her style was a trifle too florid. Locksley noticed it particularly now, for the sweet tones of Dora Deane were ever echoing through his soul.

(To be continued.)

### Household Notes

Flaed, cooked flounder, well seasoned, makes a splendid casserole dish. Have a long, narrow brush for cleaning the spout of the teapot, perforator, etc.

Remember that an abundance of vegetables should be included in the spring menus.

Belts are easier to iron if they are detached and held in place by snaps or straps.

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