

LORD MORDEN'S DAUGHTER — OR — THE TRAGEDY OF THE CEDARS.

CHAPTER XXXV

He shrugged his shoulders in contempt, and Peters passed on, laughing softly.

He walked into the house, and having inquired from a footman the whereabouts of his master, turned to go upstairs, when he saw that Lady Clare Moncrieff was at his elbow.

He eyed her half-pitifully, and would have continued on his way had she not arrested him by the sharp intonation of his name.

"Yes, my lady!"

"One word with you. Follow me into your room, please."

She spoke with a certain hauteur and acidity that nettled the valet, but he obeyed the command, and waited for her to continue, his attitude one of defiance.

"Peters," said Lady Clare, "does it not occur to you that you have forgotten the respect due to your employers?"

"Whereas, have I failed, my lady?" he demanded.

"This is insolence!" said Lady Clare, haughtily. "I will not argue with a menial."

She stamped one foot angrily.

"I have not sought an argument," retorted Peters. "I am here to see my master."

"Whom you have shamefully neglected, while you have been indulging your passion for drink. I will not permit you to see Mr. Locksley. You are in no fit state to attend upon your master!"

The valet eyed her keenly.

"I am no drunkard, my lady!" he said, firmly, but respectfully. "My appearance may be a little wild, but it is not caused by the indulgence to which you attribute it. It is not difficult to guess who has put this into your mind, but I will reckon with him later!"

He brought his heavy fist down with a crash that nearly split the table near which he was standing.

"First, Sir George Moncrieff, then my young master! It will be my turn next, unless I get in a quick and decisive blow. Lady Clare, your partner in crime will prove too much for you."

He turned, but she sprang toward him, with ashen face and dilating eyes.

"My father and Mr. Edmund," she whispered, hoarsely, as she clutched at his shoulder with fingers that seemed, for the moment, to be transformed into eagle's talons. "My father and Edmund—the man I have loved, the man I love even now! Peters, you shall tell me your horrible meanings!"

The valet paused; then shook off her grasp and answered:

"Ask your honorable cousin—the viscount!"

He left the room, and strode up

stairs, with hasty feet; he knocked at his master's door, then entered, and was greeted with a cry of joy.

"I feared that you were not coming—that you had deserted me, as Edmund has," said Norman Locksley. "It is good of you to come, Peters, very good of you. After your hard words to the viscount, it was kind of him to suggest that I should send for you. I believe that I have misjudged him, Peters; he is not so bad as we thought him to be, and has gone to see if he can induce my son to come home, only for an hour or two, I shall not die in peace until I have his forgiveness, I never saw a man so completely penitent, and he loses all that he has schemed for, unless Edmund chooses to be generous."

Peters controlled himself by a strong effort, then replied, ambiguously:

"I am no friend of the viscount, master, and it would be well not to discuss his merits until the proper time arrives, and I warn you to be prepared for terrible things."

He parried many questions while he busied himself about the room, arranging his master's wardrobe; he dared not tell his knowledge and his suspicions yet.

"I shall not stay with you to-night, sir," he said, later in the day. "I have some friends to meet in the city; it is an engagement that cannot be broken."

"But you will come to-morrow, Peters? And you will wait until my son comes? I want you to be present when he returns with Melville."

"I will wait," replied the valet, and his master was satisfied.

It had been dark some time, when the viscount's horse entered through the drive. He had heard from the lodgekeeper of Peter's arrival, and he came upstairs at once.

"Well, Peters," he said, smilingly. "I hope that you have recovered your good humor." At the same time he cast at him a glance of warning, adding: "I would like to see you alone by and by, so that we can patch up our little misunderstanding."

The valet glowered at him, and nodded.

"I am at your service," he said. "I have resolved upon a settlement this night."

The viscount smiled, and, turning to Mr. Locksley, said, with the utmost sang froid:

"I have good and bad news for you, old friend. I have been to Richmond, but was not successful in seeing Edmund. Both he and his young wife have gone to Seville to spend their honeymoon, but I have sent him an urgent telegram."

Mr. Locksley's hands clasped and

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unclasped themselves in a quick, nervous manner; then he shaded his eyes to hide the tears that came into them.

"He will never forgive me," he moaned. "Why should he be so cruel? And yet, I deserve it."

"It is not that," Melville said, soothingly. "You must not forget the claims that he has upon him now. I am sure that we shall hear from him soon."

For a little while Norman Locksley gave vent to his grief; then Peters wished him good-night, promising to return the next day, and left the room with the viscount, a terrible smile playing about his hard lips.

Without a word Melville led the way to the library, and, after turning the key in the door, politely asked the valet to be seated.

"There is no need for that," replied Peters, "and a very few words will show you what sort of man you have to deal with."

"I understand what you allude to," said Melville, sorrowfully. "You witnessed my quarrel with poor Sir George; but I swear that he struck me first. I returned the blow, and he was dead before I could drag him from the pond. It was a most dangerous place, and I have had it filled in. His fate will never be discovered if I can make terms with you."

"Then these are easily named," the valet answered. "Tell me what you have done with my young master, and I will give you a week's start of the police."

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and looked Melville squarely in the eyes.

"I have my answer," he added, with fierce intensity. "It is you who have had a hand in his murder; and now what is there between you and a grand inheritance? A puny old man, whose mind and body are weakened by illness and a bitter remorse, is that all that stands between you and wealth? No! You have me to deal with, you scheming, murderous fiend!"

His muscular right hand flashed within an inch of Melville's ashen face.

"You have me to deal with; a man as implacable as the fate that overshadows you!"

"Peters!" groaned the viscount, "do not alarm the house; and hear me swear, before all I hold sacred, that I know nothing of my poor friend, Edmund Locksley. Give me twelve hours in which to prove it. Do not condemn me in this way. Remember the honor of my family. I will meet you anywhere you like to name, to-morrow, and I will bring proof—absolute proof—that Edmund died when he knew his father was a murderer. I will bring proof that he lives!"

His eyes were filled with wild appeal, and Rogers wavered.

"My lips are sealed," he said, at length, "until noon, to-morrow. Meet me at the house from whence you enjoyed my master. I give you until noon. Not a minute longer!"

"I will be there," Melville declared, fervently.

"I am going," said the valet. "Open that door for me, and stand aside. I do not want an unexpected stab, or a shot in the back. The servants would be told that I had been insolent—intoxicated, and had attacked you. Good-night. Thank you!"

He left the library, and stalked into the corridor, Melville holding the door wide open, a horrible smile on his distorted face.

(To be continued.)

Stopping Laws Need Regulation

Short Emergency Stop Chet Factor in Safety on Streets.

With the new tendency to discard speed limits as an unsatisfactory way of controlling traffic, comes an even newer plan for the safety of the road.

It's the "short-stop" idea, by which motorists should be expected to stop within certain distances under certain conditions.

This is the plan suggested by H. W. Slauson, mechanical engineer, who has been studying traffic conditions in the United States. He explains it in the May issue of the Scientific American.

According to Slauson, speed limitations are too arbitrary. Conditions vary to such an extent, even in the same territory that motorists must be limited in a more definite and more stable manner.

What we really intend to do when we enact speed laws, says Slauson, is to insure that the driver will have the car under control at all times.

Thirty miles an hour may be a safe enough speed on a certain highway under definite conditions. But if the road is wet and slippery, a driver going at that speed could not stop his car half so easily as he could on a dry surface.

Therefore, Mr. Slauson suggests, in effect, let's discard speed laws and enact stop laws. Let's set definite distances at which drivers might be compelled to stop under emergencies and require motorists to run along at a speed at which they could stop their cars within the specified distance.

Thus one driver, with good brakes a light car, and alert in mind, may be able to drive faster than another driver less alert, with a heavier car and perhaps poorer brakes, so long as both stop within a required distance.

It is the definite idea of having to stop say, within 15 feet at any time a signal is given or an emergency arises, that should be the main factor in driving. Then, no matter what the condition of the road, or of the motorist's car, that rule will apply at all times.

On a clear day, with good brakes and a light car a motorist may go 50 miles an hour and be able to stop within 15 feet. But on a rainy day, that same car may have to be driven at about 10 miles an hour to stop in the same distance.

That is the essential point—the short, emergency stop, Slauson stresses.

So long as it is the inability to stop in time which is the cause of most accidents, he says, let us go directly to the source of the trouble. Let us require that every car shall be driven only at such a rate that it may be brought to a complete standstill within specified distances; these distances varying with country and city driving conditions, much as do the variable speed rates now permitted.

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a system is that it would take into consideration, absolutely and automatically, all conditions then prevailing which would affect the stopping ability of the car or of the driver in question.—Ex.

The Challenge of Death

L. P. Jacks, in the Atlantic Monthly (Boston): The history of this visible universe, the whole presentation of it in space and time, is no more than a fragment, perhaps no more than a shadow, of its reality. As revealed to our senses, as apprehended by our faculties of perception, the universe is a mere thing, a lifeless object, infinite in extent and duration, but as dead as any stone. Death has dominion over the whole of it. Save in the spots where life has exceptionally appeared for a season in its nooks and crevices, the universe is all one vast empire of Death. Thought of it in that way, as an immensity of dead matter and blind force, the impression it makes upon

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