

2 THE CASTLE OF DAWN

nating than to visit Morden's law office for a few moments' chat on very commonplace subjects. By such trivial incidents are our lives moulded and our destinies decided.

Should you glance from your car window at the proper point on the great plains of North Dakota, a giant tree with no others within miles of it may attract your attention, and should the porter be versed in the lore of that section, he would tell you how on one winter's day a man was hanged there because it was alleged that he had stolen a horse. His protestations were vain. It was too cold to bother with a prisoner when a tree was so temptingly near, and so his lifeless body was found dangling, half an hour later, by a man who had ridden hard to inform the posse that, after all, the horse had not been stolen. Had a bird not dropped a seed there long years before, there would have been no tree and a man's life would not have gone out in injustice. Such is the power of trivialities.

Elmore hesitated a moment as he stood in State Street and looked up at the window bearing Morden's name. His railroad ticket was in his pocket, his sleeper reservation awaited him at the Pullman office in the depot, — the "Courier" had attended to all of that, — and his bag-