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## The Battle for the Cedars.

BY PRESSLY W. MORRIS.

CONTINUED.

EVANS had his way. Though the master of The Cedars raged and stormed for a while, the end of it all was, that Mr. Arthur Evans was to be sent to Baltimore to consult Mr. Wylie as to what arrangements the new claimant would make, and forever surrender her right, if she possessed any, in the estate of the late Herbert Cashel, deceased.

Mr. Arthur Evans ascended the steps of an attorney's office in Baltimore. A gilt-lettered sign bore the names of "Wylie & Oldham." Evans rang the door-bell. An office-boy answered his summons.

"Is Mr. Wylie in?" was his question, handing his card.

"Walk in, and I will see," said the boy politely.

Evans entered, and the boy gave him a seat. Several clerks were writing busily. The boy disappeared, but returned in a few moments.

Mr. Wylie will see you in his private office, sir," he said to Evans, who followed him as he led the way into the lawyers' presence.

Mr. Wylie glanced up from some writing with which he was engaged, and then laid down his pen.

"Pray be seated," he said, glancing once more at the card he still held in his hand.

He had been wondering whether or not Mr. Arthur Evans, attorney at law, had been sent by the master of The Cedars.

His curiosity was soon satisfied; for Evans at once plunged into the subject that had brought him hither.

"I have come as the representative of Mr. Lionel Cashel of The Cedars," he began.

Mr. Wylie's brow contracted for a moment, but only for a moment. Then his face was clear again.

"Proceed," he said.

"He informs me," Evans continued, "that you are the attorney of a claimant for the estate of the late Herbert Cashel."

"I am," Mr. Wylie replied.

Evans hesitated. He was at a sticking-point. But he founds words presently, and proceeded.

"Inasmuch as litigation, which I suppose may be long continued, will certainly involve the estate, Mr. Lionel Cashel authorizes me to enter into some reasonable compromise. Of course, it is expected by him that I will not go too far."

Mr. Wylie's eyes sparkled.

"What does Mr. Cashel propose?" asked he, with a smile that Evans fancied did not augur well for the success of his mission.

"As his attorney, I will say that the young lady shall be assured of a comfortable competence," Evans returned, "provided she will relinquish all claims to the estate. This upon condition that the proofs be submitted to a disinterested attorney, qualified to decide the matter. If he decides that the claimant has even a shadow of a chance, my client will perform what I indicate."

Mr. Wylie's face flushed.

"It amuses me," he said, "to know that, after all this bravado, Mr. Cashel is getting frightened."

Then he added, cuttingly:

"The proofs have been submitted to me, Mr. Evans; and my decision is that your client has not even the ghost of a prospect of holding the Cashel estates when the matter shall be tested by justice. I assure you that it is mere folly to think that she to whom the estate

actually belongs can be bought off with a mere title of her rights. I should suppose that, if your client were an honest man, he would desire to return to the daughter of Herbert Cashel the property he holds by virtue of a collateral relationship. Why should he desire to take advantage of her misfortunes and of her having been hitherto unknown. Why should he wish to intrude himself behind the mere fact of possession, and battle against the rightful owner of the Cashel estate?"

"But—" "Miss Cashel has placed this whole matter in my hands," Mr. Wylie interrupted; "and I beg to assure you, Mr. Evans, that if your client had displayed the disposition and intentions of a gentleman, he would have been allowed a comfortable competence from the property. But he threw down the gauntlet; he defied us; he cried, 'No quarter.' Now he shall abide by his first choice, and he can expect nothing whatever from us. He challenged us to go to a court of law, and there we propose to have the matter tested. I speak as I do, knowing that it must be decided there. I never beheld Mr. Lionel Cashel but once. However, I am not so blind that I cannot read, especially when the page is opened for me."

"Then you take the grounds of no compromise?"

"No compromise whatever," returned Mr. Wylie. "Mr. Lionel Cashel can surrender the estate now, or when he is compelled. As I have indicated, I am well aware that he will not surrender it till he is compelled."

"No, not till he is compelled. And let me tell you, sir, that you are boasting too soon. It will be no easy matter to convince a court of justice that the daughter of Herbert Cashel has been kept concealed for twenty years. It is rather late in the day for a person to come forward and claim a great estate on such grounds. And her claims may be treated as preposterous by sensible men. Good-day, sir."

And, with these words uttered, Mr. Arthur Evans left the law-office of Wylie & Oldham.

"It isn't my habit to talk so much," said Mr. Wylie to himself after Evans was gone; "but believing both those fellows to be scamps, I was a little carried away by my feelings."

His face grew thoughtful.

"My only fear is that they may beat us by some rascality," he continued in his thoughts. "Still, I will not compromise with rascals for fear of their rascality. And I know, as well as that oily Evans did, that they would consent to nothing within the bounds of reason. It would be a mere waste of breath to talk with them upon the subject of a compromise."

Mr. Arthur Evans was forced to announce to the master of The Cedars that his mission had been a failure.

"By the heart of Pluto!" that person swore, "old Wylie and his client will not gain anything by their stubbornness. I will give them so bitter a fight that they will wish, before they are through, that they had never entered into law against me. Demanding the Cashel estate and obtaining it will be two entirely different matters, as they will discover to their sorrow."

A week later, the master of The Cedars received the first legal notice in the case of Cashel *versus* Cashel.

And it was shortly afterward that Barbara Lindsley had come to visit the De Veres.

The master of The Cedars was driving rapidly along the hard, level road that ran through his estate and down past residence of the De Veres. The animal that he was driving was a large black horse, superbly formed, and with glistening skin. Evidently he was wild and fiery. The servants at The Cedars shook their heads every time the master took his seat behind him.

"Better take some other beast," they would mutter. "Dat brack villain 'll be de death ob him yet."

But the mutterings and head-shakings were all unheeded.

The horse and driver were passing De Vere's residence. Generally, the man kept his eyes upon the beast; but as it chanced, just at this time his head was bowed in thought. Suddenly a dog sprang out by the roadside, with a growl.

The horse leaped away with a bound, the reins were jerked from his driver's hands. The animal took the bit in his teeth and dashed onward badly. But he had run scarcely fifty yards when the vehicle struck a tree, standing by the side of the road. There was a crash, a moment of struggling and pain, then darkness shadowed the vision of the master of The Cedars.

Robert De Vere had seen the accident. He came running down the avenue, and sprang through the gates. He reached the shattered carriage, and bent over the man lying prostrate there.

The horse had continued on his course, taking a portion of the vehicle with him.

The period of unconsciousness of the master of The Cedars was of brief duration. He opened his eyes and tried to raise himself to his feet. But he sank back with a groan.

"Satan take that beast?" he cried savagely.

"Be quiet," said Robert De Vere to him, "and I will have assistance shortly."

Robert ran back to the avenue gate.—Victoria had just come out of the house and stood upon the piazza.

"Send some of the servants to me," he said; "an injured man is lying in the road."

Victoria re-entered the house. Robert hastened back.

"Do you feel as though you are very severely hurt?" he asked of the master of The Cedars, as he lifted his head into an easier position than that which it had occupied.

"I do not know," was the answer with a groan. "My right leg feels as though it were broken. Curse the devil of a horse!"

Several negro men appeared upon the scene. The master of The Cedars was lifted in their arms, and carefully carried to the house. When they reached it, he was laid upon a couch, and one of the men was hastily mounted and dispatched for a physician.

"Go for Dr. Gower," Robert De Vere said. "Be speedy."

The servant had a ride of three miles and back to perform. Consequently, it was fully an hour before Dr. Gower came.

Meantime, Robert De Vere examined the injuries of the master of The Cedars. He was severely bruised, but his wounds were not dangerous. His right ankle was sprained, instead of the limb being broken.

When Dr. Gower did appear he found there was very little that he could do, additional to what Robert had already done.

"You have done nobly," he said to Robert. "I compliment you as being a very good surgeon."

Dr. Gower decided that the injured man could not be taken to his home for a few days.

A couple of days after the accident the man was able to lean on Robert De Vere, and, by that means, walk into the parlor. Thus far the servants, assisted by Robert, had attended to his wants.—Robert had been with him most of the time.

As it chanced, Victoria De Vere was in the parlor. As Victoria had not before beheld the master of The Cedars there was an introduction.

"I am very sorry that you were so unfortunate, Mr. Cashel," Victoria murmured.

He gave the sweet face of the young girl an admiring glance.

"Thank you," he returned. "I have been warned that the animal of mine will kill me, but I never paid much attention to the warnings."

"But you will heed this last one," smiled Victoria.

"Yes. However, I will not promise to heed it so much as to cease driving that horse; that case, it would seem as though he had conquered me. But I will watch him closely in the future, depend upon it."

Then he detailed to Victoria the manner in which the accident had occurred. There was nothing tiger-like in his expression now. He was laughing, and seemed frank and pleasant. He congratulated himself that there was one favorable thing about his accident.—It had made him acquainted with these pleasant people.

The subject of conversation was changed, and the minutes fled rapidly. Pres-

ently the master of The Cedars asked for some music. Victoria complied with his request, playing several pieces.

He applauded her.

"My playing will not compare with that of Miss Lindsley, a guest of ours," Victoria said. "You should hear her play!"

"Where is Miss Lindsley this afternoon?" Robert asked. "I have scarcely seen her during the day."

"I dare say she is in her room," Victoria replied. "She may be ill. If Mr. Cashel will excuse me, I will go and search for her, and will persuade her to come and entertain him with some of her delightful music."

And with a bow Victoria left the apartment. As she had anticipated, she found Barbara in her room. She was sitting with her face bowed in her hands, in deep thought. Victoria entered without knocking.

"Are you ill, Barbara," she asked, as Miss Lindsley raised her head.

"Not at all," was the reply. "I was only thinking."

"I have taken it upon myself," Victoria exclaimed, "to promise Mr. Cashel, who is the parlor, some music at your hands. Will you enable me to keep my promise?"

A little deeper tinge of color than usual dyed Barbara cheeks. Then she said:

"To be sure, Victoria's promise shall be kept."

As she followed Victoria her thought was, "I'd as well meet him now as any time. At any rate, he will have no idea who I am!"

Soon the two girls were in the parlor.

"Miss Lindsley, Mr. Cashel," said Victoria simply.

The man bowed, and felt a thrill of pleasure. He had admired Victoria!—But what a beautiful, magnificent, incomparable creature this was!

"It would be worth a life-time of labor to win her!" he thought.

Barbara took her place at the piano.—She had paled a little, but was not embarrassed. She was master of the instrument, and never in her life had she played better than on this afternoon. The master of The Cedars, had man though he was, felt the power of her music.

Barbara ceased. The eyes of the master of The Cedars met hers. His heart beat a more rapid motion. Instinctively she turned her face away with a chilled sensation. In those first moments of acquaintance her soul warned her truly, and thought came to her that whatever fate might work out for this man and her, she could never like him.

Conversation was resumed. Shortly, dinner was announced. The day passed, a few more like it sped. Then the master of The Cedars was able to go to his home.

"Do not drive that wild horse of yours any more," were almost the last words Victoria said to him.

"I think I shall," he returned.

"I will have to prophecy," Victoria cried, half gayly, half seriously.

"Prophecy, Miss De Vere!"

"I warn you that if you do not cease driving that wild animal he will kill you. You have heard that before, but I warn you to heed it!"

But Victoria's prophecy never came true.

Robert De Vere had been to Fairmount. Returning, he dismounted, and giving horse into the charge of a servant, entered the house. He met Victoria in the hall.

"You are in good time," she cried; "dinner is just ready. I was going out on the piazza to take a last look for you."

"I heard a piece of news at Fairmount that surprised me a little," Robert said, after they were seated.

"Well, what was it?" asked Victoria.

"There is a new claimant for the Cashel estate," Robert replied, "and a great lawsuit is in prospective."

"A new claimant!" exclaimed Victoria. "Who can it be?"

"I know very little about it, except 'tis a woman."

"A woman!"

"Yes; and a Cashel. I suppose she must claim to be a daughter of the deceased Herbert Cashel. I suppose the case will come up before the Circuit Court at Fairmount in August next; but I dare say it will not stop there."

"Why not?" inquired Barbara Lindsley.

"Because it is not probable that the losing party will be satisfied with the decision of that tribunal," Robert said, "but will wish to carry it to a higher court."

"Oh, I perceive," Barbara returned. The then she added with a smile, "I know but little about law."

The conversation on the subject continued for some time, Victoria and Robert doing most of the talking, however, Barbara saying but little.

After dinner Barbara went to her room. Directly, however, she came down-stairs, equipped for a walk. As was her custom, frequently, she was going to take a solitary ramble. She started in the direction of The Cedars; but she did not keep in the road, taking instead a path that led through a grassy field.

She was thinking about the Cashel estate. She wondered what the De Veres would say could they know she was the new claimant of The Cedars. Should she tell them?

She concluded, finally, that as she had kept the matter a secret from them thus far, she would continue to do so—at least until the case was decided. If the suit should go against her, she need never be known to the world by any other than Barbara Lindsley.

If it should go against her? Mr. Wylie had told her that unless there was some deep rascality, that could not be exposed, practised against her, it could not terminate so!

And if she won, she would be Barbara Cashel, mistress of a vast estate!

Barbara walked on, passed through a gate now and then, scarcely realizing how far she was going. Ere she was aware of it, she was near to The Cedars. A great gray stone mansion rose up before her.

Barbara's sensations were somewhat strange ones. Able lawyers had told her that this grand old place was justly hers. Her ancestors had lived and died here. But for fate, the apartments of this great building had been as familiar to her as the little house by the sea, that for so many years she had called her home. As it was, a stranger held her inheritance. She, the daughter of Herbert Cashel, had been cut off from it.

Is it strange that Barbara's heart swelled and the tears came to her eyes at that last thought? The cold cruel sea had stolen her forever from the clasp of her father's arms and kept her these twenty years from ever looking upon that place that should have been her home from babyhood up!

It was a great house, that was before her, with long wings extending from the main building. The builder must have had in his brain the baronial castles of the Old World, and have tried to pattern after them. Barbara half fancied that all it needed was moat and wall, and then she might expect to see issuing from it knights with shields and spears.

Then, with a musical laugh, the girl brought herself back to the reality.

"How I dream!" she murmured.

The grounds about The Cedars were beautiful. Barbara did not feel in the least tired, and thought that she would ramble over the place a little. She turned and walked along a grass-green path, and came soon to a high stone wall. A gate already open was before her, and she passed through.

She was in an enchanted place. Great trees towered toward the sky. The earth was carpeted in green. A little distance away a silvery little stream wound along.

Unobserved by Barbara, a huge dog came along the wall. He was fierce and vicious looking. Seemingly prompted by curiosity, he gave forth no evidence of anger, he followed along after the girl, scenting the earth. His tread was as noiseless as a tiger's.

Barbara reached the banks of the stream. She paused untrapped by the scene that surrounded her. The animal on her track paused too, and sniffed the air.

Barbara beheld a light boat, floating in the stream, and fastened to a post on the shore with a lock and long chain. She stepped in the boat, and with an oar she found lying in it pushed it away from shore. The chain was just stretched, and the boat could go no further, when her eyes chanced to wander to the top of the bank.

Barbara's blood chilled with fear, for standing there watching her was a great monster with red tongue and white, cruel fangs. He looked at her for a moment, and laid down with his eyes fixed upon her. To be continued.