

Literature.

The Queen of Diamonds.

his name ?"

som, calmly.

their plunder."

asked Reginald.

that's all."

ger in his tone.

in the crowd.

ng his hat.

terposed Reginald, hastily.

"She's dead," he muttered.

CHAPTER IV.

complished a quarter of our journey it was seize him by the throat. night. I curled myself in a cushioned through stations and darting past villages, till we streamed into a large, bright, bustling station, the last haulting-place upon our journey, some two hours distant from London.

lights; I noted the bewildered passen. at him.

a man standing near our carriage, his would be impossible to imagine as he tirement, seeing no one but my father. back towards me, who was a very picture shrank before the pistol-so miserable, so whose demeanor towards me altered

see whether he would take his seat for London.

He did not. He remained as immovable as when I first noticed him. The signal was given, the whistle

himself on the seat opposite to me.

I shuddered and shrank farther from Reginald at length upon the seat, and over him bent an elderly gentlemen in JACKSON ADAMS, my husband. dressing himself to me; "now, ma'am, " "Poison," said he, quietly, as he forced

would you like to learn who this cur was, a tiny phial from the dead man's tightly this ungrateful skunk, this fellow whose life I saved, and who had all the will to take mine in return? would you like to station seemed to whirl around me. I

know who was the reptile who, in acknow- held out my arms and called for help, ledgement of all my kindness to him, and then all was darkness and unconrobbed me of every farthing I possessed sciousness. and left me for dead? Shall I tell you I nearly died, they told me afterwards,

for it was many weeks before 1 became "It's a lie-it's a lie!" screamed my convalescent after an attack of brain husband, hurling himself across the car- fever, induced by the events of those ter- Queen Street, -

It was winter-time, and ere we had ac. riage upon Blossom, and endeavouring to rible two hours in the train. There had been an inquest, of course ;

Blossom only laughed, and with a mus- equally of course, a series of sensational corner of the carriage and maintained an obstinate silence, pleading a headache -a woman's refuge--as my excuse; and so, by the flickering lamplight, we tore on across the black bleak country, flashing him. Help! You shall not," and I have told the story of Reginald Canning's wrestled with him for the pistol. death, and illness that brought me to the "Don't be afraid, ma'am," he said brink of the grave provented my exami grimly. "I could have shot him a dozen nation as a witness.

times over this week if I'd been minded, My father was telegraphed for, and but I've got a better revenge than that. came to town, and by him the matter was

I looked out upon the platform with its hurrying porters and all-important guards bustling to and fro in the flare of the gas-

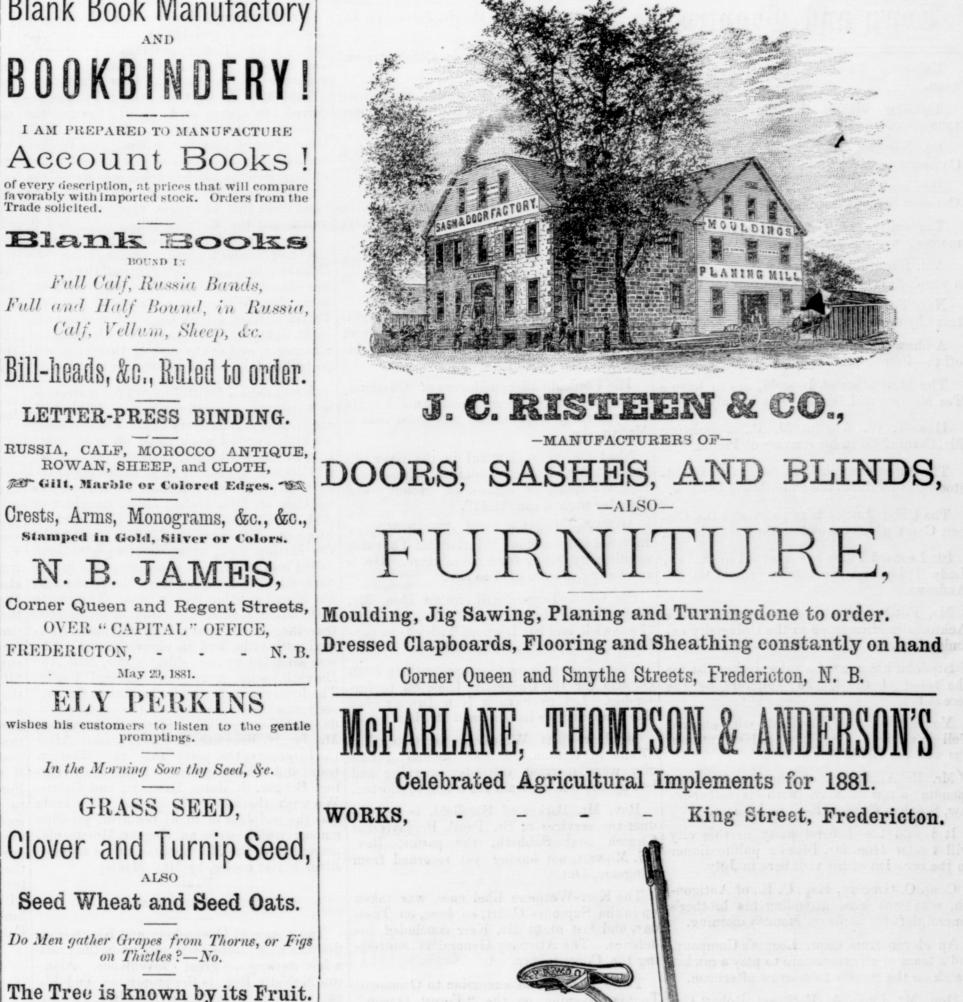
1 returned with Sir Humphrey to gers darting up and down in nervous un-certainty; and then my glance fell upon Anything more miserably abject than Reginald Canning at that moment it would be impossible to imposible to

thick overcoat—the back of a man not cowering attitude; and I turned from him going, of course, to cousin Douglas, but specially tall, but of that substantial build with a loathing which no words can de- without a single penny to support the specially tall, but of that substantial build which gives the idea of strength. Round his neck be wore a scarf twisted in many folds, upon his head a travelling cap pul-led low about his ears

His face I could not distinguish, but as since, till death us two should part. very night of Reginald's self-murder; inhe slightly changed his position, I noticed he wore a large beard. For a minute I idly speculated respecting him, and when idly speculated respecting him, and when the bell clanged its summons to tardy travellers, I looked with some curiosity to Blossom laughed. "Would you buy me off with my own property?" he said "Take them all, take everything, every farthing I have! I have just married the strongest presentment of it; yet why should I wish it? He is nothing now—less than nothing—to me.

this lady; her father is a baronet, and I have but one incident more to tell of "I'm not so sure of that," put in Blos





"This compartment is engaged-you

have no business here !" cried Reginald angrily, rising from his seat. "Perhaps not," answered the stranger

with a strong American twang, "but I rec kon you won't put me out.' We were clear of the station, and travel-

ling with momentarily accelerated speed, and it was quite clear that we must sub. mit to his company for the remainder of the journey.

Looking in my hushand's face, I was me in my revenge. surprised to see an extraordinary change in its expression; his cheeks-more, his very lips-were white, and his hands

trembled nervously. Was it only anger at the unwarrantable intrusion that affected him in this manner or was there some other reason of which I knew nothing?

For ten minutes we travelled in complete silence, and then the intruder laughed, and his laugh was not pleasant to hear.

"Haven't you a word of greeting for an old mate, Bob Moodie ?" he asked sneer-Well, now, see here. It you value your ingly.

"Do not listen to him, darling," whis pered my husband hurriedly in my ear; " he has been drinking."

"I'm sorry to make myself onpleasant -leastways to a lady," said the stranger, bending forward and addressing me; "but Bob and me have got an account to square.'

"I don't know what you mean, sir, cried Reginald. "My name is not Moodie I have never seen you before; and unless you cease your insolence, I shall give you in charge directly we reach a station."

" No, you wont, you bet on that." Then he leisurely unwound the wraps about his throat, and removed his travelling-cap.

" Don't you know me now ?" he asked with a grin.

"No," said Reginald faintly : but looked in his face and read there that he lied, and my heart sank within me. "Well, I've no wish to force my ac

quaintance on you, but as we've a couple of hours before us, I'm going to tell your good lady here a little story.

"No," said Reginald faintly. "Oh! you say 'No.' Now look here. Mr. Whoever-you-are, as you ain't Bob Moodie : you used to have to obey me in the old days, and you've got to do it again-that's all.

Then he turned to me.

"Madam," he said, "I'm going to tell you the history of a year of my life, and you've got to listen. I fancy I'm just about the biggest blackguard you ever spoke to, but no matter for that, I won't do you no hurt "

I turned away and took my husband's hand in mine. It was cold and clammy. "I will believe nothing against you, said I; but he only shuddered.

"My name's Bill Blossom, as he could tell you if he chose," recommenced the intruder, "and I'm an out and out had 'un.

but not so bad as him," and he pointed oughly dazed and perplexed. to Reginald. "It was about eighteen

for the sight, the thought of them even, at the lowest Hard Pan Prices. "What do you mean?" cried I, and was hateful to me; but because I could caught him eagerly by the arm. "Am l do nothing else. There was no address not married to him ?" to the scrawled note, and the postmark "Yes, you are, of course you are," in-

failed to be any guide to the detectives. whom through my lawyer, I employed to "And how about Mary Seymour at discover the man who had (though with. Broma, Capetown?" asked Blossom drily. out any good-will towards me) saved me "Reginald's face turned ashen grey. from a life of degration and misery. Heigho! I wonder where cousin Doug-"She is not dead, Bob Moodie.

las is? brought her to England with me to aid . . . . . And thus, with a sigh, perhaps a tear, Reginald sank back amongst the cushfor she turns her head towards the deep ions, and I still unable to believe that I est shadow and her face is hidden, the heard aright, bent forward with great Queen of Diamonds ends her story. staring eyas fixed upon the strange rough Her friends, who have with difficulty man who, in less than a couple of hours.

maintained a decorous silence during her had altered the entire course of iwo lives. "Now, lassie," said Blossom, speaking narration, now burst into full cry like a pack of clamorous hounds, Rosalind Grain a kindly tone, and looking at me with hame leading with fierce and angry desome compassion, "I mean you no harm. I'm sorry I frightened you, but I come of nunciation of all of the sterner sex figuring in Sibyl's eventful history. lot that never was crowed over twice

"Bill Blossom is the best," says Estelle. by the same man; an eye for an eye and Beyond being rough and common, he tooth for a tooth-that's my motto. was rather nice, and I think I would rather have married him than any of the others." self, when this train gets to London, you'll "Yee e-s," answers hosie, reflectively; leave him: you understand? quit him "his diamonds would have covered a mulright away; and when I've done with him. titude of sins. As for that Douglas, I've ind that won't be just yet, you bet, then no patience with him.

he and his sister, Lydia Moodie, or Trevor "Please don't speak of him like that." is she calls herself, - and a precious pair pleads Sibyl. "It was all my fault." they are, though she's not a thief, mind "Men have no business to be so you; they, I say, will have to start a new touchy," interposes Rosalind. "A fine life in a new world with the remains of state of things it would be if we girls were to be judged by any hard-and-fast rules

"What are you going to do with me?" like the inferior sex !' "He thought I was making a jest of "1? Nothing. You've put a rope

him," Sibyl sighs. ound your own neck, and justice will "And what if he did-and what if you probably tie t'other end to a cross-beam, were? He ran away, he deserted the battle field like a faint-hearted knight; and "It isn't a hanging matter, anyway,' as for its being your fault, Sibyl, why, it NOTICE TO POLICY HOLDERS answered my husband (if I should still was entirely owing to that nasty, schem:

call hun so,) with some attempt at swaging, underhand, false-haired Lydia Tre-

"No, diamond robbery aint, but\_\_\_\_" and he bent forward and whispered some-"What has become of her?" asks Es telle. thing which I did not overhear.

"Poor woman! I heard but the other The effect upon Reginald was horrible. saw him quickly raise his hand to his mouth, and then fall back rigid as if in a that the grace and beauty she believed it, with staring eyes and drooping jaw, herself to possess would enable her to Imperial, of London, Estab'd 1803 motionless and speechless. Then there take any position she desired in the world was the flashing of many lights, the shout-

she essayed a stage career." ing of porters, and the rattling of cabs. Our two hours' run was at an end, and we "I heard of her from my old manager, were at the London terminus. Hipson Hawes. She failed dismally, and

Before the train came to a standstill. he told me with a chuckle that, bedizen-Blossom opened the carriage door and swung himself out, and though I looked ed and berouged, she serves behind a city luncheon-bar, the butt of the clerkling after him, I lost sight of him immediately witlets, who fool her to the top of her bent with extravagant compliments, "Luggage, m'?" said a porter, touch-

painted cheek-bones." "Yes; no; that is, I don't know." " Your manager! Surely you were answered, completely bewildered, and never on the stage, Estelle !" cries Adela

looking towards Reginald, who remained immovable in the far corner of the car-Charlton in amazement. riage. "You'd-you'd-better ask my-"Yes, Addie-my happiest days were spent as an actress at a tiny country themean that gentleman." I was standing on the platform, thor-atre, on a salary of a pound a week. You. May well look incredulous; but when it All Losses prompti

comes to my turn I will tell you the story What was I to do? After the revela- of the experiences of a life so widely dif-



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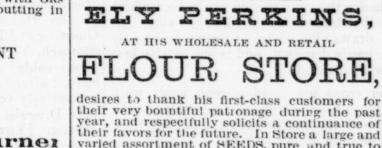
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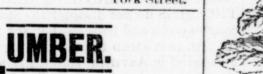
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R. A. E

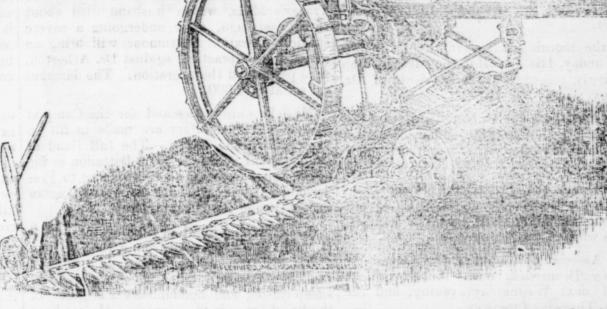
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