Literature.

The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"I AM THAT WOMAN."

As Blanche had stated to Blair Moreland, Amber was settled as governess in the family of Mrs. Netson. She had seen that lady's advertisement in the *Times*, had applied for the situation, had pleased by her manners and appearance; and although the salary was much smaller than that she had received from Lady Moreland, she had accepted the situation when Mrs. Netson had hastened to secure her after interview with Blanche.

On the very morning of the day when Blanche Longley and Blair Moreland were so cruelly plotting against her, she arrived at her new home at Islington.

It was a very different one from the Moreland mansion, being simply a small and unpretending house, which was, however, dignified with the title of Elm Villa. The name was slightly incongruous, there being no elms in the vicinity.

Although the servants at Elm Villa were fewer and not so well trained as at Moreland House, and the furniture was less massive and expensive, it had a home-like air which the statelier dwelling lacked.

As Amber was admitted into the corridor, Mrs. Netson came out of a reception room near at hand, and greeted her cordially, inviting her into the apartment, and then ordering her luggage to be taken to her chamber.

"Your room is all ready for you, Miss Vale," she said, "but you had better rest a little before you go up to it. I've been thinking of what you said about not being accustomed to the care of children out of school hours, and have concluded that I shall need your assistance with them except during school hours. They have a good nurse who takes all the trouble of them."

Amber expressed her satisfaction as this concession, and Mrs. Netson, who was a lively and chatty personage, continued:

"I told you in my note yesterday that I had called upon your friend, Miss Longley. She is a sweet, pretty girl, and she spoke very handsomely of you—very handsomely indeed. I also saw the bar onet, Sir Ralph Courtney—a splendid-looking man. He reminded me of my poor, dear captain. I told you that my late husband was a captain in the army, did I not?"

Amber replied in the negative.

"I thought I did," said Mrs. Netson, apologetically. He died nearly two years ago. I assure you, my dear, after I had got a little reconciled to his death, I used to feel a positive relief in thinking I should never have to worry any more about his being ordered off to India. As I was saying, Sir Ralph Courtney reminded me of him. I wonder if he won't marry Miss Longley?

"They are engaged to be married," said Amber.

What! And living in the same house? exclaimed Mrs. Netson. That is very improper.

"Miss Longley is Sir Ralph's ward, and has no other home," declared Amber.—Besides they have a lady housekeeper, who chaperones Miss Longley.

"I suppose that makes it all right," said Mrs. Netson. I have given you a pleasant room, Miss Vale, and shall give you the privilege of receiving your company in this parlor. You can have as much company out of school hours as you choose. I would like Miss Longley to come often—in fact, I'd like her for a personal friend. And now let me show you your room.

She led the way to the floor above the drawing-room, chatting busily the while, and ushered Amber into a neat, square sitting room. It was carpeted, and neat white muslin curtains shaded the windows, and were looped back with blue ribbons. In addition to the usual articles of furniture, were a set of carved book shelves leaded with books. In an alcove was placed a small, white-draped bedstead, which was partly hidden by the white curtains that were looped away before it.

"How very pretty!" said Amber, with genuine pleasure. I shall feel very much at home, here, Mrs. Netson. My luggage is brought up, I see, and I shall soon be quite settled.

I hope so, said her employer, heartily. I am glad you like the room. My own suite of apartments are across the hall, and I put you here for company, for I sometimes get timid in the night. You will take all your meals with me. My children are always at table, for now that the poor, dear captain is gone, I can not bear to sit at an empty table. I like the prattle of my children while I eat. Besides, how are they to learn manners if they were obliged to eat in the nursery."

Amber not being able to answer this question, Mrs. Netson continued:

We won't have any teaching to-day, Miss Vale, but I'd like you to become acquainted with the children, so that you can take them in hand to-morrow. I will leave you now to unpack your trunks and dress for dinner—which I am old fashioned enough to have at one.

She left the apartment, and Amber devoted herself to the tasks set for her.

After unpacking her trunks and stowing away her gowns in the ample closets, she dressed herself in a neat gray dress, gave an additional touch to her glossy hair, which shone like burnished gold, and then descended to the drawing-room floor. There she was met by a servant, who conducted her to the drawing-room, where were assembled Mrs. Netson and her children. Amber was introduced to the little ones, and by her winning manners was soon on good terms with them all. This fact increased the esteem her employer had already for her, and Amber was made to feel quite at home.

The next morning her duties as governess began. She had to examine the children as to what they had already knew, and what they were competent to undertake; but this task was light with such young children, and the little school was soon in full progress.

On the second day of her new life, after school hours were over, and Amber was in her own room looking over a novel she had found on one of the book shelves, a servant knocked at the door, and announced that a woman wished to see her.

"A young lady?" asked Amber, thinking of Blanche, to whom she had written immediately after entering upon this situation.

The servant shook his head doubtfully, saying: "I think not, Miss. She bade me say that she came from Miss Longley."

"Very well. I'll be down directly," said Amber, flinging aside her book.

The servant departed, and Amber hastened down to the little reception-room. She found awaiting her a woman of rather lady-like appearance, who arose at her entrance and handed her a note, saying: "I come from a friend of yours, Miss Vale—I mean Miss Longley. Be so kind as to read her note."

Amber did so.

It was from Blanche, and introduced the bearer, Miss Warr to her notice. The note went on to state that Miss Warr had called upon Blanche with a piteous story demanding assistance, and stating that she lived at Islington. The writer therefore begged her "dear Amber" to call at the woman's address, ascertain if her story were true, and communicate the result to Miss Longley, that she might assist the suppliant if deserving. The note concluded with an apology for demanding even so trifling a service, but as Amber resided at Islington it certainly could not make her much trouble to ascertain the truth of the story, and thus satisfy the generous sympathies of her friend.

When the maiden had finished reading it, she looked up at Miss Warr, and was surprised to meet that person's gaze fixed strangely and earnestly upon her.

A single moment was sufficient for her to scrutinize her companion.

Miss Warr was a woman of middle age, of not unprepossessing appearance.—There was a boldness, however, in her black eyes, a treacherous expression about her lips, and a silkiness about her manner that would have caused a keen observer of human nature to distrust her.

Her dress was poor and scanty, and indicated the most extreme poverty joined with an extreme neatness and an endeavor to keep up appearances. In contrast with her garments her cheeks were plentifully ornamented with rouge, and set off by a liberal quantity of pearl powder.

Although Amber was not skilled in reading physiognomy, she felt an instinctive dislike and distrust of the person before her, and carefully questioned her as to her history.

Miss Warr replied by relating such a pitiful tale that Amber's sympathies were aroused, and she said:

"I will call at your residence, Miss Warr, as Miss Longley requests me. Indeed, if you wish, I will go home with you."

A strange gleam shot up into the woman's eyes—a gleam of triumph—but her eyelids drooped in time to conceal it from Amber.

"Thank you," she said, with a grateful manner that touched the maiden. "I shall never forget your kindness. It seems to me," she added, "that I have seen you somewhere before, Miss Vale. Vale—Vale! I know no one of that name, and yet your face seems familiar."

Amber blushed, remembering that her name was assumed, and her confusion seemed to arouse some suspicion in the mind of her visitor.

"Perhaps, Miss Vale," she suggested, "I have seen you under another name, if you will pardon me saying so."

Amber's confusion confirmed this idea in the woman's mind, and after a few minutes' thoughtful scrutiny of the maiden's face, she suddenly exclaimed:

"I have it! I certainly can not be mistaken! Were you not the adopted daughter of the late Sir John Courtney? Were you not called Amber Courtney?"

Amber struggled to regain her self-possession, and managed to reply, quietly:

"You are right, Miss Warr. But having no right to that name, I have resigned it for another."

The woman seemed astonished and agitated at the girl's ready acknowledgment of her identity, and exclaimed:

"Do you know your history?"

"I know all that was known of it by my adopted father."

"Then you have heard of the woman from whom Sir John Courtney took you."

"I have. And you—you know"

The woman arose, exclaiming, excitedly:

"I am that woman, Amber!"

To describe the astonishment of the maiden on hearing this declaration would be impossible.

"You are the woman?" she ejaculated as soon as she could speak. How strange.

The woman sank back into the chair from which she had arisen, and surveyed Amber with a strange, eager gaze.

"You are the woman!" repeated Amber, approaching her. "Then tell me who I am. Am I your daughter?"

Miss Warr, as the woman had called herself, smiled as she replied: "Do we look alike? It is not necessary for me to say that you are not my child. You can see that for yourself."

"Thank Heaven!" breathed Amber, "Then Sir John Courthey did not wrong you in taking me from you?"

No answered the woman, hesitatingly.

And do you know who I am?"

Miss Warr nodded.

Amber grew deathly pale and her tone was full of pleading, as she asked: "Who am I, then? Oh, won't you tell me who I am?"

The woman shook her head.

Amber pleaded long and earnestly, but elicited no satisfactory answer, and at last she said: "Tell me, at least, if my parents are living. Have I a father and a mother?"

After a moment's thought, Miss Warr replied: "Your parents are both living."

"And shall I never see them? Oh, I beg of you to restore me to them!" prayed Amber. "If you only knew how lonely and desolate I am, you would have pity upon me."

Miss Warr did not seem to be under the influence of pity, and there was a subtle gleam in her eyes, as she said:

"When I came here to see you, I little thought of finding Amber Courtney in Miss Vale. I recognized you from your resemblance to your mother, and from having seen you at Courtney Hall twice while Sir John was living, and when neither you nor he knew that I was in that vicinity. I kept myself informed of your movements, and knew that you were employed in the family of Lord Moreland I knew, too, that Blair Morelrnd loved you. When I came here to-day however, I thought that it was a new face he was in love with—"

"I dont't understand you!"

Miss Warr bit her lip, and endeavored to correct the mistake she had made, and as Amber was unsuspicious, she succeeded. As might have been gathered from the hint she had dropped, however, she had come to Amber upon a false errand. She was really in the employ of Blair Moreland, and was the wife of Tamley, she having been united to the valet that morning. She had known from Tamley that Amber was a governess in the Moreland family, but had not been made acquinted with the fact that the Miss Vale she was to entrap was Amber herself.

On making the discovery she had been tempted to confess the girl's identity as a matter of speculation, and in the hope of a reward, but a recollection that she was Tamely's wife, and must join with him to please Blair Moreland—in conjunction with more potent recollections—decided her to keep her secret.

She was deaf, therefore, to all Amber's entreaties.

Concealing her real intentions under a mask of hypocrisy, she observed: "Well, Amber, go home with me now and see how I live, and how needy I am, and then—yes, I will tell you your entire history."

"But why not here?"

"I will tell you nowhere save in my own home. If you are anxious to know who you are, you will come with me."

Amber did not hesitate long, but assented and went to her room to get ready for her walk.

In a few minutes she returned, and they set out for Miss Warr's home.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PRICE OF SILENCE.

When Blanche Longley had flown to her boudoir on recovering from her swoon occasioned by seeing the strange-looking woman in the street, she gave herself up to a paroxysm of mingled grief and fear. For a long time she lay prostrate upon her sofa, and at length she grew calmer, and muttered:

"Ah, she could not have recognized me. She would have been here before this if she had, I am sure."

The thought seemed to give her fresh courage, and she arose and paced to and fro, gathering hope and courage every moment.

She had reasoned herself into almost her usual calmness, when her maid entered the boudoir, and said:

"If you please, my lady, there's a person wishes to see you—"

"A person?" faltered Blanche.

"Yes, my lady. She says she was your maid in Paris, and that if you were told she was here you would want to see her.

Blanche drooped her fair curls over her white face, and responded, in a tone of assumed carelessness:

"Ah, Loson, it is my former maid who wishes to see me. Perhaps the poor thing is in distress. Send her up."

The maid retreated to perform the errand, and Blanche nerved herself for the approaching interview.

Since Miss Longley had dropped a hint to Loson that she might soon become Lady Courtney, that person had called her mistress "my lady," a species of flattery very acceptable to its recipient.

But on this occasion the words had grated harshly upon her hearing, suggesting that there were obstacles to be overcome before that title could be rightfully hers.

She had barely time to summon her self-possession before the door again opened, and Loson ushered her visitor into the apartment.

She was the same woman the sight of whom had so excited Blanche a little while before.

"You may go, Loson," remarked her mistress, quietly, as the maid lingered to ascertain the business of her predecessor.

"When I want you I will ring."

Loson withdrew.

Blanche then turned her gaze upon her visitor.

That individual, a coarse, ill-clad woman met her glance with defiant looks.

"What are you doing here, Hawks?" asked Miss Longley, in a commanding tone. "Why have you returned to England?"

Why, I couldn't stay in Paris forever, returned the woman, boldly, as she seated herself without being invited to do so.

"You agreed to remain there," said Blanche, haughtily. "I paid you handsomely upon condition that you should never return to England, nor molest me in any way. Is this the manner in which you keep your solemn oath?"

"I don't know as oaths are more bindin' on me than on you," observed Hawks.—"I heard as how you going to marry Sir Ralph Courtney, and I resolved to come over and see you."

The women smiled as she perceived that Blanche writhed under these words.

You wished to see me, Hawks? Please state your business.

"Why, Miss, when you discharged me in Paris you paid me very well indeed for keeping your secret, which wa'n't any great trouble as circumstances were then. But times have changed. If I am to remain silent, I must be better paid."

And suppose I refuse?

Then I shall call upon Sir Ralph Courtney and explain to him that the lady he is about to marry is already a wife, and her husband is an Italian robber.

Enough! exclaimed Blanche, hastily, fearing that Loson might be lingering near the door. Suppose I bribe you again, how am I to know that you will keep your oath better than you have already done?

By making it my interest to do so, was her reply.

It isn't likely that I'll ever betray your secrets, Miss, as long as I am making a good living out of 'em."

This argument was convincing, and Blanche demanded: "What is the price of your silence?"

Hawks hesitated, and said, reflectively: "Sir Ralph is very rich."

But I am not married to him, interrupted Miss Longley.

You are engaged to marry him?

No, I am not.

The woman seemed disconcerted for a moment, but then said confidently:

At any rate you expect to marry him. You would like to be free to do so, would you not?

I want to be free to do anything I choose, asserted Blanche, evasively. For what sum will you leave England and forget my existence?

I want a hundred pounds down and an annuity of two hundred pounds a year," answered Hawks. For these sums I agree to keep your secret and never breathe a word against you.

Blanche made some vain efforts to obtain a reduction of these terms, and finally drew out her portemonnaie, in which was a hundred pound note—the only money she possessed in the world. I will pay you this, she said, holding it up, on condition that you do not molest me for the annuity until I am Lady Courtney. Do you agree to this?

Hawks assented.

Blanche then gave her the money, feeling for the first time a sentiment of relief.

And now tell me, she said, have you ever seen him since I left Paris?

Lord Claonville? No, Miss, but I've heard that he's been there and made inquiries after you and me. Perhaps he wanted me because I was a witness to his marriage with you.

Hush! interrupted Blanche. Seme one might hear you.

My friend who told me of his being there, said that he took on awful when he found that you had gone. Oh, he loved you, Miss, if man ever loved woman yet.

A shadow passed over Blanche's fair face—a shadow that almost seemed made of regret.

"Hush," she said again, almost fiercely "You need not speak of his love. I can judge of that for myself. You thing that he does not know where I am?"

"I am sure he does not, Miss."

"That is well. How long have you been in London?"

"I arrived yesterday, Miss. I came out on purpose to find you, and it wasn't long before I saw you at the window, for I had inquired my way to Sir Ralph Courtney's house. You seemed to be scared at seeing me, so I took a little turn in the park before inquiring for you."

"But I don't see how you knew I was here."

"Oh, I heard that fact from a lady's mind that was traveling with her mistress and stopped in Paris for a few days. She told me you was quiet a belle."

Blanche asked a few more questions of her former servant, and then dismissed her.

I must hasten to secure Sir Ralph, she muttered, when she found herself alone. It is time that he was at home. Perhaps he has returned, and is in the library. I begin to feel unsafe. I think Hawks will be faithful now, but once I am married to Sir Ralph, I can make it still more to her interest to keep my secret. I think I have art enough to draw from him a proposal of marriage within the hour. I will make the effort.

She waited to school her features into their customary calmness, and then descended to the library, where she found Sir Ralph engaged with his books.

May I come in, she asked, with assumed playfulness, looking into the apartment.

Ralph sprang up with some alacrity to receive her saying: Yes, do come in, Blanche. I shall be delighted to show you some books I purchased to-day.

Blanche accepted the invitation with a smile, and seated herself near him.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AN INOPPORTUNE ARRIVAL.

You look pale and weary, Blanche, observed Ralph, as Miss Longley seated herself. Indeed, you look almost ill. It is late hours that causes you to look so.

No, was the reply. It is not that. It is—

She paused, as if unable to proceed.

What is it, Blanche? Is it any trouble of the mind? Blanche summoned a blush to her cheeks, and looked down, while she sighed.

Ralph was convinced by her manner that some grief was really preying upon her mind, and he instinctively gave her his sympathy. His manner was very kind as he begged her to confide her sorrow to him.

I cannot! oh, I cannot! she exclaimed, covering her face with her hands.

But why not, Blanche? Confide in me as as in a brother. Has your trouble a pecuniary source?

Blanche shook her head.

Has it any connection with Jasper?

Blanche faltered a negative.

Ralph looked thoughtful. Miss Longley's apparent confusion and her blushes suggested that her grief might have its origin in a love affair, but his delicacy prevented his making the suggestion.

Do not ask me further, cried Blanche, while he was pondering on the subject. I could not tell you, of all persons. Oh, what have I said? Have I betrayed my secret?

Ralph's countenance flushed as a comprehension of her words entered his mind. It was impossible to misunderstand their meaning.

Ah, you know my secret! said Blanche, wondering if she had managed the affair rightly. Do not despise me, Ralph—dear Ralph. Do not think me unmaidenly, I implore you.

There are few gentleman who would not feel flattered at such a confession of love from a girl as pretty as Blanche, but Ralph's pulse beat as quietly as ever, and his heart throbs were not quickened. In fact, his emotions at that moment were of mingled sorrow and aversion. To his fastidious taste, Blanche seemed suddenly to have fallen from the high pedestal she had heretofore occupied in his mind—not for having given her love unsought, but for having confessed such a love, and in not the most delicate manner.

It never entered his honest, straightforward mind that her pretended confession was all a falsehood, and her agitation feigned.

I think—I hope—I have misunderstood you, Blanche, he said, in an embarrassed manner.

Miss Longley felt a pang of disappointment, but she was determined to understand her position in his regard, and, if possible, work upon his high sense of honor to the extent of a proposal of marriage.

You can not have misunderstood me, Ralph," she murmured. "I fear I have betrayed myself to thoroughly. But how could I live under the same roof with you and remain insensible to your goodness and nobleness? How could I.

She pretended to sob.

Ralph was thoroughly embarrased and ill at ease. He moved about in his chair, and finally said, gently:

I can no longer affect misunderstanding, Blanche. I regard you as a sister, and have made up my mind never to marry. To be frank with you, I have been continually haunted by the image of your friend, Miss Vale, and had she been free I should have offered her my hand and heart. Brief as has been my acquaintance with her, I love her! As you tell me she is engaged to be married, I have, of course, relinquished all hopes in that direction. Perhaps it may console you to know of my disappointment."

"Would that I might console you!" exclaimed Blanche, with apparent impulsiveness.

Tell me, Blanche, frankly and truly, said Ralph, struck with a sudden thought, have I offered you more than a brother's affection? Do not hesitate in expressing your opinion.

Blanche knew very well that Ralph's attentions to her had been guarded, and much more cool than fraternal attentions are wont to be. She also knew that he had never felt or exhibited a particle of love for her, and yet she was anxious to secure his hand that she laid aside both truth and womanly delicacy to say: I—I thought you meant you loved me, Ralph, I supposed you meant to offer me marriage, and so I learned to love you.

Ralph's fine countenance darkened, and a stern expression gathered upon it.

If this be so, he said, if I have given you hopes and led you to love me, I—

He hesitated instinctively, as Blanche held her breath to listen to the words she thirsted to heer.

At that moment came a knock upon the outer door—the knock of Sir John Courtney.

Neither of them heard it.

A memory of Amber as Miss Vale recurred to Ralph, and he became thoughtful and silent.

Blanche regarded him with hopeful expectancy.

Meanwhile, Robinson, the servant whose duty it was to attend to the door, had given entrance to the rightful owner of the mansion. Robinson was a new servant, and the baronet's face was entirely unfamiliar to him, but he was impressed by his dignified bearing, as he asked:

Is Mr. Courtney at home?"

Sir Ralph is at home, sir, responded Robinson, somewhat jealous of his master's honors. Please be seated in the drawing room as he spoke.

Sir John glanced in saw that it was empty, and said: I won't trouble you to call him. Tell me which room he is in.

Robinson was considerably puzzled at the familiarity with the house, evinced by this remark, on the part of the strange gentleman when he remembered never to have seen at Courtney House during his years service with Ralph, but Sir John had an air of quiet authority he dared not contradict.

"Sir Ralph is in the library, sir," he responded, somewhat pompously. "But he is engaged at present. His ward, Miss Longley, is with him."

A shadow flitted over the baronet's worn and haggard face, and he started towards the library.

Robinson made a few steps in the same direction in order to announce the the audacious stranger, who had not yet given his name, but Sir John waved him back with a quiet, yet imperious gesture which could not fail to command his obedience.

Sir John paused a moment on the threshold of the library, pressing his hands against his wildly throbbing heart.

No sound came to him from within the library. The silence into which Ralph had lapsed still remained unbroken.

Summoning all his self-control, the baronet pushed opened the door, and quietly entered the library.

He paused just within the door, where the light from a window streamed full upon him, folded his arms across his chest, and looked at his son.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"THIS WOMAN IS ALREADY MARRIED!"

Slight as was the noise made by his entrance, it was enough to arouse both Ralph and Blanche, who stared at the intruder with wild countenances.

Blanche's first idea was that she beheld an apparition, and she fairly cowered in her seat.

Ralph was stunned and bewildered, not knowing what to think.

He had firmly believed his father to be dead and buried in the family vault, and the idea now flitted through his mind that his father's spirit—perhaps angry at the offer of marriage he had been about to make to Blanche, to the total disregard of Amber—had appeared to him to testify his disapprobation.

But the thought simply flitted through his mind. It found no lodgment there.

As he stared at the intruder, a warm smile flickered over the face of the baronet, and his arms unfolded to embrace his son.

As he saw this, Ralph sprang from his chair, crying:

"Father! Father!"

The next moment he was folded to his father's heart. and a father's kisses were pressed upon his bearded lips—kisses which he returned with a passionate fervor known only to those who have welcomed home a loved one who has been thought dead.

"My son! My son!" exclaimed Sir John. "Thank God I behold you again!"

"And you are really alive, father?" cried Ralph, lifting his head to look into his father's face. "Why, we all supposed you dead! We have buried some one who seemed to be you!"

"I know it, my son! You buried the body of your uncle William!"

"How strange!" ejaculated Ralph, his astonishment increasing, and leading the baronet tenderly to a sofa. "Where have you been all these months, dear father? Why have you allowed us to think you dead? It seems as though you had risen from the grave!"

"To rob you of your honors, my son?" said Sir John, with a smile.

"Oh, father, Heaven knows it was a sad moment for me when I put them on!" exclaimed Ralph. "I would rather never have a title and wealth than gain them by the terrible sacrifice of your death! Welcome, ten thousand welcomes home, father!"

"Alas!" said the baronet, "the great joy of this moment is terribly marred to me, my son! Another voice as dear to me as yours is not raised to welcome me! I left Amber to your care, and now ask her at your hands."

"I know not where she is, father. Indeed, I have not knowingly failed in my duty toward Amber. I will explain all as soon as you are rested, father."

Sir John's stern countenance relaxed a little as he listened to his son's earnest self-defense.

"But tell me, father," said Ralph, "where have you been all these weary months? Why have you not. at least, written to us?

"Because I have spent all this time in a robber's cave in a state of unconsciousness, Ralph. The year or more of my absence has been to me a blank."

Ralph uttered a cry of horror.

The baronet explained how he came to be taken captive, and how he came to be restored to reason.

As Blanche listened, she realized that it was no apparition she beheld, but the real and living Sir John, and she availed herself of a pause in the narrative to come forward and exclaim:

"Then it is you—and alive, dear Sir John! Let me add my welcome to Ralph's. I am so glad to see you."

The baronet bowed, but did not avail himself of her proffered hand.

He could not press in amity the hand that had driven Amber from her home.

"Why, father," said Ralph, in surprise, "do you not see that Blanche desires to shake hands with you?"

"Tell me, my son," replied his father, "have I returned in time to break off your marriage with Blanche? You must give her up, if it breaks your heart."

"I am not engaged to marry Blanche and I love her only as a brother regards a sister—but what do you mean, father.

"I mean that this unhappy woman is already married! I have seen her husband—heard the whole story from his lips! He is the infamous Il Diavolo!"

Blanche uttered a low shriek and sank back into a chair.

"Can this be possible?" ejaculated Ralph, remembering his recent interview with Blanche.

"It is! The brigand's real name is Claonville! He begged me to intercede for him with his wife, whom he still loves, and freed me that I might do so."

Blanche shivered and moaned.

That was a terrible moment to her erring soul.

In the very moment she had expected to triumph, had come her downfall.

The baronet related his interview with the robberchief, and added:

"Blanche, it was you who with false and cruel words drove Amber from her home, telling her that Ralph regarded her as a sordid dependent; it was you who sent her out upon a harsh and cruel world to earn her bread—"

"Oh, father, are you not mistaken?" cried Ralph.

"No. I have heard all this and more. For confirmation you have only to look at Blanche."

Blanche's countenance did indeed confirm the statement. The mask of hypocrisy had fallen from her fair, but deceitful visage. She could no longer keep up her show of self-possession, and her every motion was plainly evinced. The rage and humiliation she experienced on listening to the revelation of her baseness almost banished the beauty from her face, and to her companions it looked worse than repulsive.

The baronet told, in language that came from his heart, the story of Amber's wrongs, and then, for the first time, Ralph did full and ample justice to the delicacy, modesty, and other womanly attributes of the noble girl whose love he had rejected

The scales had fallen from his eyes at last.

"Your husband will follow me soon, Blanche," concluded the baronet. "He may be here to-morrow. I have promised him to say nothing against him to you, and to mention in his favor the release of myself and the two French surgeons. I made this promise, knowing that you were of woman's age and competent to decide for yourself. Do as you choose in the matter, but reflect carefully before you make your choice. I shall not advise you, knowing well that any advice I might give would be rejected. If you decide on remaining apart from your husband, you shall have a small annuity for your support, but I can not have you in my house. Amber's place can never be occupied by you."

"I don't wish to stay," returned Blanche, her features distorted by passion. "It's a pity, however, that you did not remain unconscious a week longer. You might have returned to find me Lady Courtney."

Ralph shuddered.

Noticing his involuntary movement, Blanche smiled sardonically, and swept from the apartment, leaving father and son alone.

"Thank God, father, you came as you did!" murmured Ralph, pressing his father's hand affectionately. "I was on the point of making her an offer of marriage, she having intimated that she expected it. How deceived we have all been in her? Until now," he added, "I have never appreciated Amber as she deserved. Noble, long-suffering, gentle girl, she deserved a better fate,"

But you do not love Blanche at all. Not the least, father.

And you love no one?

"Yes, father, I do love, but hopelessly. I love a Miss Vale, whom I have seen but once, but whom I regard as my twin spirit. But she is engaged to a gentleman in Australia, so I have no hope"

"Then, if we can find Amber, Ralph, you will marry her?"

"Alas, father," said Ralph, when I spoke of Amber being so noble and good, I alluded to her as she was—not as she is."

The baronet was agitated by this remark, and eagerly demanded an explanation.

Ralph related how he had discovered that Amber had found a situation as governess in the family of Lady Moreland, and how she had disappeared from her home, to re-appear again after a few days of absence.

Those days, father, were spent in the country with a fellow who cared only for her ruin, and when that was accomplished, he threw her aside—"

"Who says so?" interrupted Sir John excitedly.

The Morelands.

"They shall eat their words. It is false. Amber, if alive, is as pure today as when I left her. Do you suppose I do not know the child I reared? If an angel were to swear to this story, I should give him a lie."

His wild earnestness of manner produced their effect upon his son, who said:

"Can it be possible that we are all mistaken, father? Blair Moreland asserts the truth of what I have said—"

"And who is Blair Moreland?"

"The son of Lord and Lady Moreland. He fell in love with Amber, and she rejected him—"

"Ah, there you have the truth in a nutshell. He had an object in defaming Amber. Very likely he carried her off, and told that lie to screen himself from the consequences of his action. I would believe anything sooner than ill of Amber. When did all this take place?

Ralph gave the dates.

"So lately? Then we have some chances of finding the dear girl. Have you searched for her?"

Ralph replied in the affirmative, giving a brief description of his efforts to find Amber, and concluded:

"To-morrow, dear father, we will unite in an extended search for Amber, but now you need food and rest. Remember, if you do not recruit your strength you can do nothing."

At this juncture dinner was announced, and Ralph, drawing his father's arm within his own, and tenderly supporting his wearied form, led him to the dining-room, passing on the way Robinson, who seemed astonished on hearing the stranger called by his master "father."

In the dining-room the baronet met Mrs. George, who received him as one from the grave; and after dinner he summoned his old servants to the Hall, and made known his presence, receiving their heartfelt gratulations.

At an early hour he retired to gather strength for the proposed search of the morrow.

(To be continued)

Their Name is Legion.

Legions of people have had their lives made miserable by Piles. This painful difficulty is often induced and always aggravated by Constipation. Kidney-Wort is the great remedy for all affections of this kind. It acts as a gentle cathartic, promotes healthy action of the bowels, and soothes and heals the inflamed surfaces. It has cured hundreds of cases where all other remedies and applications have failed. Sold by all druggists.

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THE SURE CURE FOR KIDNEY DISEASES, LIVER COMPLAINTS, CONSTIPATION, PILES, AND BLOOD DISEASES.

PHYSICIANS ENDORSE IT HEARTILY.

"Kidney-Wort is the most successful remedy I ever used." Dr. P. C. Ballou, Monkton, Vt.

"Kidney-Wort is always reliable." Dr. R. N. Clark, So. Hero, Vt.

"Kidney-Wort has cured my wife after two years suffering." Dr. C. M. Summerlin, Sun Hill, Ga.

IN THOUSANDS OF CASES it has cured where all else had failed. It is mild, but efficient, CERTAIN IN ITS ACTION, but harmless in all cases.

It cleanses the Blood and Strengthens and gives New Life to all the important organs of the body. The natural action of the Kidneys is restored. The Liver is cleansed of all disease, and the Bowels move freely and healthfully. In this way the worst diseases are eradicated from the system. 2

PRICE, $1.00 LIQUID OR DRY, SOLD BY DRUGGISTS. Dry can be sent by mail.

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KIDNEY-WORT

NEW BRUNSWICK RAILWAY.

(Operating 443 miles.)

SUMMER TIME TABLE.

All trains are run on Eastern standard time, which is 36 minutes slower than Saint John actual time.

COMMENCING JUNE 2nd, 1884, Trains will run as follows:

St. John Division.

DEPARTURES.

7 25 A. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Mixed accommodation for Fredericton.

6 30 A. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Boston Fast Express for points West, and for St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock, and all points North and South.

4 30 P. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Express for Fredericton.

8 30 P. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Night Express for points West, and for St. Stephen, Woodstock, Houlton, and all points North.

1 00 P. M.—From Fredericton for St. John.

6 25 A. M.—From Fredericton, for points West, North and South, and St. John.

4 50 P. M.—From Fredericton for St. John.

7 00 A. M.—From Gibson, for Woodstock and points north.

ARRIVALS.

5 30 A. M., at St. John—Fast Express Train from all points West, and from St. Stephen, Woodstock, Houlton, and all points North

9 15 A. M., at St. John, Water Street—Express from Fredericton.

4 30 P. M., at St. John, Water Street—Express from points West, and from St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Woodstock, Houlton, Fredericton, and all points North and South.

8 00 P. M., at St. John, Water Street—Mixed accommodation from Fredericton.

4 35 P. M., at Fredericton from points West, North and South.

7 30 P. M., at Fredericton from St. John.

11 20 A. M., at Fredericton from St. John.

4 20 P. M., at Gibson, from Woodstock and points north.

Pullman Sleeping Cars on Night Trains, and Dining Room Cars on Day Trains, to and from Bangor. Berths secured at ticket office, Water Street—G. A. Freeze, agent.

No train leaves St. John Saturday night or Sunday morning.

A train arrives at St. John from the West Sunday morning and a train leaves for the West Sunday night.

Through connections are made from Boston on Sunday nights.

Connexion is made at Vanceboro with trains of the Maine Central Railway to and from all points West, at Fredericton Junction for Fredericton, and at Gibson by branch line, for all points North.

Tickets for sale in Fredericton at New Brunswick Railway Ticket Office, and at Messrs. J. Richards & Son's Ticket Agency, Queen street.

E. R. BURPEE, Gen'l Manager.

N. T. GREATHEAD, Gen'l Pass. and Ticket Agent.

St. John, N. B., June 2, 1884

DR. FOWLER'S EXTRACT OF WILD STRAWBERRY

CURES CHOLERA, CHOLERA INFANTUM, DIARRHŒA, ALL SUMMER COMPLAINTS

SOLD BY ALL DEALERS

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THE COURSE OF STUDY is thorough, complete and practical. Pupils are fitted for the duties and work of every day life.

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THE DISCIPLINE is of the highest order and inculcates valuable business lessons.

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THE REPUTATION of this school for *originality* and *leadership* and as the Standard Institution of its kind is generally acknowledged.

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JUST RECEIVED:

63 D^{oz}. Tin Top Jellie Tumblers. Only 75 cts. per doz. At

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Churns, Butter Firkins, &c.

WE have in stock a large lot of Churns, Butter Firkins, Wash Tubs, Pails, &c., cheap,

AT LEMONT'S.

Stoneware.

JUST RECEIVED:

A LARGE Stock of Stoneware, Butter Crocks, Churns, Water Coolers, Bean Jars, Batter Pitchers, Spittoons, etc., cheap at

LEMONT & SONS.

Fredericton, July 30, 1884

In Stock.

HAYING TOOLS, all kinds, Sugar, Flour, Fish, Teas, Rice, Sugar Cured Hams, &c., all very low for cash, at

W. H. VANWART'S

Fredericton, July 23.

Railroad Supplies.

SHOVELS, Pick Axes, Wheel Barrows, Crow Bars, Powder, Fuse Drill Steel, etc.

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July 1

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NOW Landing and in stock, 225 boxes Window Glass, all sizes, which will be sold at the lowest rates.

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Fredericton, July 23, 1884

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Hartford, of Hartford, Conn. Capital, $1,250,000.00 (Established 1819.)

Northern, of London, England. Capital, $15,000,000.00 (Established 1836.)

Fire Ins. Association (Ltd.) of London, England. Capital, $5,000,000.00

City of London Fire Ins. Co. (Ltd.) of London, Eng. Capital, $10,000,000.00

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