

The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN THE MORNING of the day when

Blanche had stated to Blair

Moreland that she was going

to the family of Mr. Nelson,

she had been sitting at the

table, and looking at the

picture of her mother, and

thinking of the many years

that had passed since she

had been adopted by her

kind and loving father.

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for her, and carefully questioned her as to her history.

"Miss Warr," replied by relating such

particulars as to her father's

sympathies were

wounded, and she said:

"I will call at your residence, Miss

Warr, as Miss Longley suggested. In

deed, if you wish, I will go home with

you."

A strange gleam shot into the

woman's eyes—a gleam of triumph—but

she said nothing more.

"Thank you, Miss Warr," she said, with a

grateful manner that touched the

maiden. "I shall never forget your

kindness. I shall never forget your

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never return to England, nor molest me

in any way. Is this the manner in which

you intend to treat me?"

"I don't know," she said, "but I am

bound to do as I am told."

"I heard how you going to marry Sir

Ralph Courtney, and I resolved to come

over and see you."

The woman smiled as she perceived

that she had been under a great

delusion. "I am glad to hear of your

business."

"Thank you, Miss Warr, when you

discharge me in this way, I will indeed

keep your secret, which was not a

great trouble as circumstances were then.

But times have changed. I am a free

man, and I must be better paid."

"Suppose I refuse?"

"You shall not refuse," said Sir Ralph

Courtney, and explain to him that the

fact is about a man already a wife, and

that the man is already a wife, and

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that the man is already a wife, and

been free I should have offered her my

hand and heart. Brief as has been my

acquaintance with her, I love her."

"You tell me she is engaged to be married,

I have, of course, relinquished all hopes

in that direction. I am glad to know

that you know of my disappointment."

"Would that I might console you,"

exclaimed Blanche, with apparent

sympathy, "but I am not qualified to

do so."

Tell me, Blanche, frankly and truly,

said Ralph, "how much of a woman

have I offered you more than a brother's

affection? Do not hesitate in your

reply."

Blanche knew very well that Ralph's

attention to her had been good, and

much more cool than fraternal attention

was 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 had made both

truth and womanly delicacy to say, "I

thought you meant you loved me, Ralph,

I supposed you meant to offer me

marriage, and so I accepted of you."

Blanche was so much surprised, and

a stern expression gathered upon her

face. "If this be so, said, if I have given

you hope and led you to love me, I

will never be able to do so again."

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