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For the Year 1886

	Place of Sittings and P. O. Address of Clerks.	Clerks.	Jan.	Mar.	May.	July.	Sep.	Nov.	Hour of Opening
1	Milton	Wm. Panton	29	26	28	9	24	26	10 a.m.
2	Oakville	R. Balmer	6	3	5	3	11	3	10 a.m.
3	Georgetown	L. Grant	12	16	11	7	17	9	9.30 a.m
	Acton	J. Matthews	13	11	13	8	16	11	10 a.m.
	Campbellville	S. R. Lister	11	8	10	6	9	8	9 30 "
	Burlington	W. J. Bastedo	5	2	4	2	10	2	11 "

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, with or without Jury, Tuesday 5th June, 14th December, at 1 p. m.

County Court Sittings, without Jury, Tuesday, 6th April, and 5th October, at 10 a.m.

County Court Sittings—Formerly Terms—Monday, 4th January, 5th April, 5th July, and 4th October at 10 a.m., each day.

Judges Chambers.—Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week, except on Court days and during vacation, at 11 a.m.

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LADY ISABEL'S ATONEMENT.

A SEQUEL TO EAST LYNNE.

"You are not wounded?" he asked, earnestly. "When you know me better you will learn that I always speak my thoughts. I detest compliments. They are the food that hypocrisy offers to vanity. Had I been able to sketch your face I should have shown you the picture and told you I thought the likeness perfect. Between us there is no need for deceit. If I thought you plain I should tell you so, but I think you more beautiful than any woman I ever saw. Miss Carlyle, and I feel you will understand me better if I tell you that, Honesty and sincerity are the safest footing in this life, for where there is nothing hidden there is nothing to dread!"

They were strange words those—Isabel, pulling the ruby petals from a rose and listening earnestly, thought so, even then; but in the days to come how bitterly she remembered them, and how vainly she wished that they had terrified her then, that she might have flown from Lord Lionel Beresford's life and shut out the miserable future.

"I should like to see some of those sketches," she said, presently. "I should like to see how much of that scene you have carried into your 'mind's eye,' my lord."

"They are at Ravenswood Court—I have not destroyed one, failures though they were," his lordship replied. "It would be the greatest pleasure of my life to see you standing under the roof of Ravenswood, Miss Carlyle. If you have no engagement for to-morrow—"

"I have no engagement, my lord."

"And you will come? only say you will, and I shall be inexpressibly happy. I should delight in showing you the sketches and taking you through my old ancestral home. Ravenswood Court is one of the oldest places in all England, and I hope—nay, I am sure—you will find much to interest and delight you there. Hark! they are striking up 'Le Reve.' Your tablet is blank for this waltz, Miss Carlyle. May I claim this dance, and will you come to Ravenswood to-morrow?"

He had half risen at the first chord of "Le Reve;" he bent down now until she could feel his breath stirring the soft tresses on her brow, and all the earnestness of his heart rang its changes through his voice.

"Will you grant me this waltz and come to Ravenswood to-morrow, Miss Carlyle?"

It was the time to shun him; it was the hour to fly and put Lord Lionel Beresford's face forever from her heart; it was the moment to shun him—before he became part of her life—but there was no warning voice, there was no vague presentiment to stay fate's pitiful aim—and so, blind, and young, and happy, she went headlong to her doom.

"You may claim the waltz, and I will visit Ravenswood to-morrow, Lord Beresford," she said, as she arose, but looking back on that moment through the days of the tragical future, Isabel Carlyle wished that she had fallen dead before she spoke those words.

My lord, however, was in the seventh heaven of human happiness as they floated down under the glittering arches to the dreamy measures of "Le Reve," and the memory of that night sweetened many a bitter hour. They were the cynosure of all eyes as they whirled onward—"the very loveliest lady of the day, the very handsomest man in all England," *vide* sighing mammas, with more truth than rigid grammar—my lord waltzing to perfection, the dark fairy on his arm seeming to float like a Spanish gypsy or an etherealized sylph, her golden gauze clinging about her like netted sunbeams, her perfumed hair touching my lord's cheek and tingling to the task of winning Lord Lionel Beresford's heart, and then—then he should go to his proud old mother and tell her the country solicitor's daughter had rejected him.

In that brief moment, this was the thought that came into Isabel's mind, this was the work she had set herself to do, and if ever a human being mapped out her own destruction, Isabel Carlyle mapped out hers then.

"I shall be happy to sing your grace," she said, sweetly.

"If Lord Beresford will escort me to the piano, I shall endeavor to satisfy the cravings of Cerberus," she said, softly.

If Lord Beresford would escort her to the piano! She had chosen him in the very face of his grace of Arleigh, she had offered him the post of honor over all that brilliant gathering; and Lord Isabel, Lord Beresford, would have walked to the block to win the guerdon of her choice.

He arose, too happy to speak, and drew her hand through his arm. She made her apologies to the ladies of the "exclusive court," shot that pale, proud mother a glance of triumph supreme, and turning, with all her golden tissues a glitter, she swept proudly down the room on the arm of the man whose love she meant to trample to strike his mother's pride.

All tender recollections of that moonlit night on the channel were blotted from her heart; the fancy, that night so soon have drifted into worship of love was thrust behind her. She would think of him, henceforth, as a toy to crush and fling away; she would recollect that his mother had scorned her, and she would return scorn for scorn to the uttermost limit.

She so resolved as she dropped down in her seat before the open instrument, and lifted her dark eyes to his in a smile that might have waked the soul of an anchorite; but there came to her no thought of what the step would cost her, no dream that the game of fast and loose might bring down a curse upon her.

"What shall I sing, Lord Beresford?" she asked, with a smile that set his senses reeling. "Stay! There is Bach's arrangement of Tennyson's 'Lady Clara.' Place it on the rack. I think I prefer to sing that just now."

My lord opened the music and spread it before her. The flush had come back to her face, a feverish glitter filled her eyes; she dashed into the brilliant prelude with a reckless sort of joy, her eyes lifted once, met those of Lady Beresford, and then that pure sweet voice rolled out clear and rich as the notes of a flute.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name.
Your pride is yet no matter for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Yet I shall break for your sweet sake
A lance in your defense upon my charms—
A simple maiden in her bloom
Is worth a hundred coats of arms.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus she met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some unkind words to you.
Unkind, I heard one bitter taunt
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall.
The blot of shame is at your door—
You changed a loving heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse
To make him trust his modest worth,
And last you spoke the cruel word,
And slew him with your noble birth!"

The song ended with a rich, sweet chord, the flushed dark face looked at that other face all still, and cold, and white with pride, and Isabel arose from the piano.

It was the signal of war, and Vivienne, Countess of Beresford, lying back in the cushioned depths of her chair, knew that, henceforth, all pity and tenderness were over between her and the girl whose pride she had touched.

So the long sweet night went by; Isabel led his lordship on until his heart and brain were whirling, and right and left she bestowed her glances and her smiles, till she stood the centre of a court of nobles, the queen of queens for whose smiles every belle and beauty was deserted.

She waltzed with Lord Beresford and held her dainty little head haughtily erect as she floated in Lord Beresford's most unhappy manner, who almost swooned when she saw that her darling wore a blood-red rose in his coat—a rose plucked from the bouquet of the country solicitor's daughter.

The night slipped by like a dream, and dawn began to look in through the sullen grayness of the Devon sky. Other beauties might look pale and worn and washed out in the light of day, but Miss Carlyle, after eight hours' dancing, was as fresh and blooming as ever when my lord's carriage was announced and my lord's mother, wrapped in violet plush and swansdown, stood shivering and pale in the ragged light of day.

He came to say adieu, and Isabel received him with a bewildering smile.

"You will come to Ravenswood today?" he said, looking into her sweet young face.

"I will come to Ravenswood to-day, Lord Beresford," she answered, sweetly.

"And after that?"

"After that—Lady Clydesmore's garden-party to-morrow, Lady Chiltcroe's kettle-drum the next day, the flower show the next, and then—then one or two receptions before we go to London."

"And I may hope to see you in all those places, Miss Carlyle?—You will not be angered if I come?"

"I will not be angered, my lord—why should I? But see, Lady Beresford awaits you. Adieu until noon, my lord."

He was holding her hand all this time. He stooped abruptly, pressed it to his lips, and so hurried out into the dawnlight with his mother on his arm.

* * * * * *

It was six by all the clocks in Arleigh Towers, and Joyce, waiting to disrobe her young charge, lay sleeping soundly in her chair, when something rustled past her and threw itself on the couch with a hard, dry sob.

Roused by the voice, Joyce sprung up and hastened forward.

There lay Isabel, face downward, her costly robe crushed beneath her, her jewels torn off and flung aside, her red flushed cheeks buried in the pillows, weeping as though her heart would break.

"My lady, my lady! what is it?" gasped Joyce, dropping down on her knees beside her. "Lady Isabel, are you ill—are you suffering?"

Isabel flung her off and sprung to her feet.

"I'm a fool, that's all!" she said, gulping down a sob. "I wish papa had never brought me to Arleigh Towers—I wish he had taken me to London with him yesterday—I wish I were dead—I wish—Undress me Joyce, I am so tired—so tired!"

"Oh, my lady, what is it? Tell me—please tell me!"—pleaded Joyce, earnestly. "Your eyes are glassy, your face is flushed, and your hands—oh, Lady Isabel, they are like flame!"

"And my heart is like flame also, blazed Isabel, turning away with a sob. "Oh, I wish it had been any other man. I could have crushed another, but to trifle with him, I—Joyce, Joyce—swinging round suddenly—"Joyce, make me positively beautiful this noon. Dress me like a queen, make me as radiant as a star, and—and—oh, Joyce, Joyce, I am so unhappy. I am the wickedest girl alive."

"Oh, my lady, please tell me what it all means," reiterated the bewildered Joyce. "Are you really so miserable that you wish to fly away? Your father will return in two days; but perhaps I had better tell him to come this evening; and—"

"No, no, no," broke out Isabel, hysterically. "It is too late now—too late, too late. There, there, don't stop to undress me, Joyce, but leave me, leave me."

"But my lady—"

"Go, Joyce, go. I want to be alone," gasped Isabel, dropping down in a chair and burying her face in her hands.

Joyce made a low bow and quietly quitted the room. Isabel was worn and excited over her first ball, she thought, as she stepped out into the landing, for she could not know that her beautiful charge was playing with fire, and in the sport getting burned herself.

Tired and worn out herself, Joyce sought her couch and slept readily; but Isabel, crouched in her chair, never made an effort to disrobe.

Far into the day she sat there sobbing and alone—hating herself, hating that proud, imperious mother who had stung her to the quick, and hating all the world save—him!

Hate him she never would, never could. She remembered that moonlight night, and her task seemed doubly hard when that splendid blonde face would rise before her every moment; but there never came to her a realization that this pain in her heart was the dawn of love, or that, fight as she might against it, Lord Lionel Beresford was the loadstar of her life, and henceforth and to eternity, their destinies must be inseparable—that she had gone blindly forth to meet her doom, and the days of perfect peace were slipping rapidly by.

CHAPTER X.

LAYING THE SNARE.

"Sir Francis Levison!"

For a full minute after she had gasped those three brief words, Lady Rosamond Mount Severn stood dumb, rigid, petrified, under the shining light of the August moon, and looked with wide, wild eyes on the figure that glided out of the shadowy palms, and confronted her.

The throbbing of the music in the ball-room floated about her with a dim, far-away sound; the stars looking down through the crystal dome of the conservatory, seemed to flit about and jar each other through a haze of impalpable silver; the perfumed fountains, the odorous jasmines, and the breath of tangled roses filled her senses with a suffocating sweetness—she reeled and clung to the great blossom-crowned vase with trembling, ice-cold hands; and so, all glimmering with satin and sparkling with diamonds, she leaned and looked until she was strong enough to speak again.

"Wait—wait a moment," she gasped, as the man came toward her with a cunning, crafty smile on his smoothly shaven face. "Oh, Heaven, such a marvellous likeness. Where did you come from? Who—who are you? Do you hear me? Who are you?"

He paused in the centre of the marble tiled floor, and made a low, cringing bow.

"I am my lady's most devoted slave," he said, softly. "She has called out for some one to aid her in a task of vengeance, and I have offered her my services."

"But your name," gasped Lady Mount Severn, tottering forward and laying her gloved hand on the fellow's shoulder. "Just Heaven, is it possible such a likeness can exist without a tie of blood? Answer me, man. What is your name? Who were your parents? Your future may depend upon your words."

He made another bow—cringing, low, leering.

"My name is Pierre Blonshar, my lady; I am valet to the Earl of Beresford," he answered in a whining voice. "The rest of your question I cannot answer for the very best of reasons—I do not know. That I have, or *had* parents, is certain,—nature owes one that debt you know,—but who or what they were, fate has seen fit to keep from me. I only know that I owe even the poor name I bear to the charity of the good Sisters of the Hospital of the Sacre Cœur at Cammere, and they were as ignorant of my parentage as I."

My lady made one great gasp for breath and staggered from him with both hands clutched at her beautiful slender throat.

"The Sacre Cœur at Cammere!" she cried out suddenly, a wild, lurid light breaking over her blanched face. "Speak—tell me—how came you there? Answer me,—Oh, Heaven, answer me, and tell me that Satan has sent me the power to crush my foe. Do you hear me? How came you at the Sacre Cœur in Cammere?"

Pierre smiled and drew a trifle nearer.

"I was left there—abandoned by my mother," he replied. "I never knew that until one short year ago, when the surgeon of the Sacre Cœur thrust me out into the world because the valuables of a patient were missing, and suspicion pointed to me. I went straight to the Sister Superior and told her what had happened. She wanted to pray with me before I departed, but I was in no mood for that, and I should have left the Sacre Cœur in perfect ignorance but for one thing. 'Mayhap you may find your parents and be happy if you are good, Pierre,' said she. 'The saints are ever kind to those who struggle to do right, and who knows but your mother may be glad to claim you.'

"At that I stopped, my lady, and asked her what she meant. I had always been called Pierre Blonshar—the records of the hospital bore the name of Scipio Blonshar among its founders. I had never asked, but I took it on simple faith that he was my father. The good Sister, however, undeceived me. I had been left there by my mother, she said—left for dead—and Scipio Blonshar had given me his name because they knew nothing of my own. My mother was an English *valiant*, who had been travelling from Paris to Calais on a train that had been wrecked at Cammere one evening in the autumn. Some years ago there were two remarkably pretty girls on a visit and the captain paid them great attention. One evening he proposed to both of them and was promptly refused. Next morning the captain was last down to breakfast and one of the girls told of her experience with the gallant. "Why," said the other, "he said exactly the same thing to me!" Just then the captain entered the room and there was an audible titter. He asked the reason of a friend, who remarkably quietly: "Look here, old man, the least dine you try to mash two girls in one evening take care they are not particular chums."—London Hour.

When they *did* remember her, they went to the doctors of the main ward, but my mother had gone. Who she was or what she was not one of them knew. From her dress and her accent they judged her to be an English *miladi*, but no friend her joy over my death, they believed I bore the bar sinister, and would not be reclaimed.

"If my mother *was* English, I fancied I should find her in her native land, and quitting France, I came to England and so entered Lord Beresford's service. One night, his lordship spoke some hasty words. I had