

The Planter's Daughter OR FATE'S REVENGE

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Author of "A Wail from the Sea," "Her Brightest Hope,"
"Wayward Winnefred," etc.

CHAPTER IV—(Continued.)

And now nearly four years had passed since the troublesome events, and the Courtlandt family, accompanied by Lucian's widowed mother, were on their way back to their native land.

Sylphide had opposed this step as long as she dared, and had only given in at last through fear of arousing her husband's suspicions.

Between the two ladies no sympathy and no confidence had existed from the first of their acquaintance; by tacit agreement they seemed to be antagonists from the day they met. The haughty old lady regarded her beautiful daughter-in-law with a suspicious eye, nor was Sylphide for an instant unconscious of the espionage. When the child was born, the elder Mrs. Courtlandt appeared to claim it as her own; for some reason, which she was powerless to explain, she always shuddered whenever she saw the handsome boy in his mother's arms.

"She'd like to rob me of him," Sylphide often thought, bitterly; "proud, old creature, I hate her more than she hates me!"

Under the circumstances, it was useless to attempt to induce Sylphide to go to Mrs. Courtlandt's home upon the Hudson, when they arrived in New York. She was resolute upon that point. She would go to a hotel with her husband and child until a suitable home was secured for them; she would not be the guest of Mrs. Courtlandt!

So it was arranged that Mrs. Courtlandt should go at once to her country seat, accompanied by her son, while Sylphide, with her 3-year-old Leon, and Diana, went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel to await her husband's return. A handsome suite of rooms was engaged, and the party were made as comfortable as wealth could make them.

The only actual cloud upon Sylphide's arrival in America was the fact that the first night would have to be passed without her husband.

As the twilight hour began to approach she grew more and more lonely and restless. Gazing into the busy Square failed to amuse her, and when Diana suggested that she should go down to the public dining room for dinner as a diversion, Sylphide felt the cold perspiration of apprehension start out at every pore, and she curtly commanded her maid to order dinner in their private parlor.

When the cheery gaslight dispelled the gloom, the young wife and mother became more cheerful, and taking her boy upon her knee, she sang him a sprightly Creole song, that she had not thought of in four long years, until the child laughed and clapped his tiny hands in glee.

Suddenly Sylphide paused, with a song upon her lips, as an authoritative knock sounded upon the door. Obeying a sudden impulse, she sprang to her feet, handed the child to Diana, and answered the summons herself.

A hall boy stood before her in the lighted hall with a visiting card upon a silver salver. Sylphide did not hear him ask whether she were Mrs. Lucian Courtlandt; she picked up the card and glanced at the name inscribed thereon.

In an instant every drop of blood in her body fled with a sickening rush to her heart; but, though she turned as pallid as the dead, she uttered no cry, and did not stagger.

"Ask the person to wait in the public parlor," she said, with a supreme effort; and closing the door, she passed swiftly into her dressing room.

CHAPTER V.

The name inscribed upon the card, which Sylphide tore into little bits and cast into the open grate the moment she had escaped the curious eyes of Diana, was the name of Oscar Couramont. Had she been alone, she might have quailed. But she had a secret to conceal even from the mulatto, faithful as she was. Therefore, when Diana called to her to know what had happened, Sylphide answered with enforced calmness:

"Only a messenger from my husband. I am going to him in a moment."

Meanwhile she was touching her pallid, haggard cheeks with rouge. Thanks to this and the tiger heart in her bosom, there was no pallor and no sign of terror upon her beautiful face, as she swept slowly down the grand staircase, crossed the spacious hall and entered the splendid suite of parlors. A hand raised the silken drapery that hung in the archway before which Sylphide stood, and like a flash her antagonist stood before her.

At sight of him she recoiled, and uttered a stifled cry. Was this revolting wretch before her her cousin, the handsome Oscar Couramont? Was it possible that four years could have worked such an appalling change in any human being?

It was a wonder that the attendants below stairs had permitted such a disreputable object to mount the stairs and run the risk of terrifying the ladies he might chance to meet.

Sylphide, in all her pride and beauty, was horror-stricken, and stood speechless. Couramont was the first to speak. With a mocking obsequiousness and a remnant of the old, sarcastic smile, he said:

"I see you recognize me in spite of the change in me. Since it is your work, how do you like it? You have brought me to the verge of poverty and starvation."

"If?"

"Yes, you! Had you remained abroad another month, I should have worked my passage out and come to you to demand my rights. I'm tired of this sort of thing. You are my debtor for keeping mum about that secret of your birth, and I want the matter settled up."

A grayish pallor, which the rouge but served to accentuate, settled upon the young wife's face, as she faltered, with a violent struggle at self-command:

"What do you demand?"

"What I demanded four years ago, come next October; and I want to have the thing arranged here and now, for in six months every cent of your property is likely to be wiped out by this war that is going on."

"You still seek one-half of my property?"

"I want my half!" was the dogged retort.

"It is no longer in my power to part with it."

"Why not?"

"I have a son and heir."

"You have a son?" he sneered; "so I've been told. Well, for his sake, then, you had better comply with my wishes."

"I refuse!"

"So be it! Bear in mind that it is you who have declared war. Whatever happens, you are alone responsible. I'm a desperate man, Sylphide Couramont, and I'm sick of your trifling."

The cutting manner in which he pronounced her maiden name struck Sylphide more powerfully than all his moods. She was dazed, wondering what he could mean, dreading to seek an explanation. When she came to herself she found that a group of ladies and gentlemen had entered the apartment, and that Oscar Couramont had vanished. She braced herself, and then sped wildly into the brilliantly illuminated corridor.

All about her the guests of the hotel were leaving the dining hall, laughing and chatting gaily. Into every face she encountered she stared, as though bereft of her senses. She even descended the remaining flight of stairs to the rotunda, only to be driven back in very shame by the crowd of men she met.

Her only thought was that she had lost him, lost her only hope of salvation. Too late she became convinced that he was desperate, as he had said, and would do—heaven only knew what. She dared not think.

With lagging steps, clinging to the stair rail for support, she dragged her weary way up to her rooms. Outside the door she paused a moment to summon up a glimmer of courage and a wan mockery of a smile. Then she cautiously turned the knob and opened the door.

The lights had been turned low. Little Leon had been laid among the pillows upon the bed, and Diana slept the sleep of the just and weary, in her chair before the fire. With a low wail, that seemed wrung from a bleeding heart, the wretched woman flung herself upon her knees beside the bed, clasped the sleeping child in her arms, and rained passionate kisses upon his soft, flaxen curls.

"Oh, my boy, my boy, my boy!" she sobbed, "thank heaven, you are not old enough to guess your mother's woe!"

"Oh, mother in heaven, darling mother, bear me! strengthen and comfort me! I have not listened to the tongue of evil gossip, yet the cross is heavy to bear. Shield me, guard me, for I am alone and in danger. Save me the love of husband and child; 'tis all I ask!"

In the chill gray of early dawn, Diana came to her and touched her shoulder. "Missy Sylph, Missy Sylph!" cried the faithful creature, "get up and go to bed!"

Sylphide rose slowly and painfully. Pressing her hands upon her aching eyes, she said:

"I must have slept, Diana; I need no more. See, 'tis morning! I had better dress for the day."

At ten o'clock a telegram was handed her from her husband. Eagerly she opened it and read its cheery contents:

"Have heard of a lovely residence near Yonkers. Shall go to see it before returning to you. Love to you and kisses for the boy."

Heavens, how she kissed that scrap of senseless paper! To the poor, agonized soul it seemed like a ray of vivifying sunlight let in upon her dungeon keep. From the moment of its receipt she brightened up. She fancied she felt a strong arm encircling her and supporting her.

Diana asked permission to take little Leon for a stroll in the square, and was readily permitted to do so. When left alone, poor Sylphide went to her trunks, drew forth their contents and made selection of the costume which had been most praised by her husband in the happy days beyond the sea. It was a wonderful and beautiful confection of delicate violet silk and rich old ivory-tinted laces that set off her marvelous brunette beauty to perfection. She added a spray of lovely pink roses to her bosom, and the faultless toilette was complete.

With just the slightest bit of coquetry she glanced at her enchanting reflection in the mirror when all was complete, and seated herself in the embrasure of a window that overlooked the square to watch for her child and await the arrival of her husband.

Suddenly she heard the door of the room open and close. She sprang to her feet with parted lips, and outstretched hands, a glad, expectant smile quivering upon every feature. The smile vanished instantly as she saw, standing in the center of the apartment, not her child, not her husband, but the proud, stately woman whom the world regarded as her mother-in-law.

Attired in rich, trailing garments of uncompromising black, the elder Mrs. Courtlandt formed a startling contrast to the younger. She bowed coldly in acknowledging the chair which Sylphide advanced, and seated herself.

"You are doubtless surprised to see me here," she said, stiffly.

Sylphide bowed, and said in answer: "May I know to what I owe the honor of this visit?"

"To a painful duty," was the curt response. "Shall I speak plainly?"

"If you please."

Then came the blighting words more cruel than death:

"I have come for my son's child!"

CHAPTER VI.

Had a thunderbolt fallen out of the clear heaven, Sylphide could not have been more amazed. For a moment or two she stared blankly at the rigid face before her, striving vainly to fathom her intense surprise. At last speech returned to her, and advancing a step, she said:

"I beg your pardon, I must have misunderstood you. You seem to have left my interest in the boy out of the question, madam."

"I said advisedly—my son's child!" came the rigid response. "Naturally you are his mother, I suppose, but so, unfortunately, any claims you may lay upon him will be vastly to his detriment. I must persist in calling him my son's child and entirely ignore you in the matter."

"Madam!"

Had the haughty old lady possessed the merest taint of cowardice in her heart she must have been appalled by the silent exhibition of desperate, quivering wrath that was presented to her view. Feeling that the ominous silence that ensued was valuable time lost, Mrs. Courtlandt said:

"I am not in the least surprised at your display of impotent rage at finding yourself baffled at last; I anticipated it and have come prepared to parry it."

"Stop—where are you! Can you be so obtuse as not to learn that you are both insulting a wife and outraging a mother?"

"And can you be so witless as to flatter yourself that, sooner or later, your destiny would not find you out and hunt you down?"

"My destiny, madam! What do you mean?"

"That tainted blood flows in your veins, that you are a slave, that you have juggled my son into believing that he was marrying his equal in station, and have borne him an innocent child to a heritage of woe!"

She rose as she spoke, and, as if crushed by this avalanche of horror, Sylphide recoiled to a sofa and sank upon it, covering her face with her hands. Making the most of the advantage she had gained, Mrs. Courtlandt continued:

"I do not blame you for wishing to marry and be a mother, indeed, I feel some pity for you, but I can never forgive you for having trapped a free-born, reputable family in your scheme."

She paused, and, without raising her head, poor Sylphide murmured:

"Who told you of this thing?"

"I know not. I received an anonymous communication this morning, stating the facts and inclosing proofs that your father, Col. Couramont, married a slave girl in Louisiana, and that you are the offspring of that union. Whether your father had married this half-breed in good faith, or whether he had been tricked, as my son has been, the papers do not show, and I know not."

"Have you those proofs with you?" Sylphide demanded, in a tone out of which all courage, all hope had departed.

"No; they are at home, but shall be at your disposal whenever you desire to examine them."

Sylphide shook her head sadly and clasped her hands in her lap with a gesture of pitiful eloquence.

"Well," she faltered, brokenly, "what do you propose to do?"

"Adopt Leon."

A spasm of intensest agony passed over Sylphide's pallid face, but she commanded herself, even granting that her indomitable spirit were not utterly crushed.

"And must I part with my child?"

"For his sake, yes."

"And what is to become of me?"

"You can live like an honorable woman, as no doubt you are, barring your culpable deception of my son."

"And am I to be forever separated from my boy?"

"Since you oblige me to say it," she answered, firmly, "yes—forever."

"And never see him again?"

Mrs. Courtlandt hesitated. Perhaps her mother's heart was troubled by the piteous appeal.

(To be continued.)

Suspicious.
Mr. Hiram Offen—I don't see why you should suspect the new servant girl of gossiping among the neighbors. She seems rather close-mouthed.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—But I've discovered that she's also close-eared—close to the keyhole.—Philadelphia Press.

Rather Caustic.
"That dramatic critic was very serious," said the actor in the long duster. "What did he say?" asked his partner of the footlights.

"Why, he said in our version of Hamlet the skull was not the only dead one."—Chicago News.

The Emperor Charles V. lived in voluntary exile during the last years of his life. His chief occupation in his retirement was devising new viands to tempt his gluttonous appetite.

Spring Medicine

There is no other season when good medicine is so much needed as in the Spring.

The blood is impure, weak and impoverished—a condition indicated by pimples and other eruptions on the face and body, by deficient vitality, loss of appetite, lack of strength, and want of animation.

Hood's Sarsaparilla and Pills

Make the blood pure, vigorous and rich, create appetite, give vitality, strength and animation, and cure all eruptions. Have the whole family begin to take them today.

"Hood's Sarsaparilla has been used in our family for some time, and always with good results. Last spring I was all run down and got a bottle of it, and as usual received great benefit." Miss BEULAH BOYCE, Stowe, Vt.

Hood's Sarsaparilla promises to cure and keeps the promise.

Iowa pays lady school teachers less than any other State, the average salary being \$36.91 per month.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children the teething season.

Frugality and sobriety form the best elixir of longevity.

To Break in New Shoes.

Always shake in Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder. It cures hot, sweating, itching, swollen feet. Cures corns, ingrowing nails and bunions. At all druggists and shoe stores, 25c. Don't accept any substitute. Sample mailed FREE. Address Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

Somewhat Different.

"Is that dog of yours a pointer?" asked the ticket agent at the village station.

"No," replied the weary hunter who was returning to the city with an empty game bag, "he's a disappointment."

FITS Permanently Cured. No fits or nervousness after first day's use of Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for Free \$2 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 937 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Deserted in Summer.

The villages near the north Italian lakes are in summer inhabited almost entirely by women, who till the fields, which do not yield much. The men go to Switzerland and bring back their earnings in winter.

For forty years' Piso's Cure for Consumption has cured coughs and colds. At druggists. Price 25 cents.

An Ingenious Plan.

"Yes, my husband has almost given up smoking."

"Indeed! It must have been a hard struggle."

"It was. But every time the craving grew too strong for him I let him have one of those bargain cigars I bought for him Christmas and he promptly swore off again."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Perrin's Pile Specific

The INTERNAL REMEDY
No Case Exists it Will Not Cure

WINTER IS COMING BRINGING CATARRH

Every Catarrh sufferer dreads the coming of winter, for with the first breath of the "ice-king" this miserable disease is fanned into life and all the disgusting symptoms return. The nostrils are stopped up and the throat can be kept clear of mucous secretions only by continual hawking and spitting. Catarrh is a nuisance and source of annoyance, not only to the one who has it, but everybody else. The thick, yellow discharge from the head produces a feeling of personal defilement, and the odor of the breath is almost intolerable.

The catarrhal poison brings on stomach troubles and affects the Kidneys and Bladder. It attacks the soft bones and tissues of the head and throat, causing total or partial deafness, the loss of smell, and giving to the voice a rasping, nasal twang. No part of the body is secure from its ravages. Catarrh makes you sick all over, for it is a disease of the blood, and circulates all through the system, and for this reason, sprays, washes, inhalers, powders and salves have proven failures.

The way to cure Catarrh thoroughly and permanently is to cleanse the blood of the unhealthy secretions that keep the membranes of the body inflamed, and nothing does this so surely and promptly as S. S. S. As long as the blood is poisoned with Catarrhal matter the discharge of mucus and other disgusting symptoms of the miserable disease will continue. S. S. S. goes to the fountain source of the trouble and purifies and enriches the blood, and so invigorates and tones up the system that catching cold and contracting Catarrh is not so likely to occur. Keep the blood in order and winter's coming brings none of the discomforts of Catarrh.

Write us particulars of your case, and let our physicians help you get rid of this blood-tainting and stubborn disease. We make no charge whatever for medical advice.

SSS
THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.

Not a Flying-Fish.

It was "a beautiful fish," the butcher said so, and Mrs. Wilcox was a beautiful woman; a clever one, too, and the first in her class at college for "thinking out things." Therefore, when her maid of all work went to her cousin's wedding, Mrs. Wilcox was quite sure that she could prepare the fish dinner for which Mr. Wilcox had asked. What he thought about it is no part of the story as the Chicago News prints it.

At four o'clock precisely Mrs. Wilcox put on one of her trousseau aprons and began to think. She thought out the gastronomic trimmings first, but when she had made some hollandaise sauce, and put it where it could not possibly keep hot, although that was not her intention, she began to consider the fish.

To her intense annoyance, the butcher had neglected to clean it and make it ready for cooking.

Very well, she would do it herself. So it came about that when Mr. Wilcox got home he found his wife with worried brow and flushed cheeks standing over the sink, the fish in one hand and the teakettle in the other.

"There is something wrong with this fish," she announced. "It is most peculiar. I have poured gallons of boiling water over it,—just as I remember grandmother used to treat newly killed chickens before she could pick the feathers off,—and the horrid scales stick just as tightly as ever!"

"Why don't you try singeing it?" Wilcox managed to ask before he exploded.

Beware of Ointments for Catarrh That Contain Mercury.

As mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescriptions from reputable physicians, as the damage they will do is ten fold as the good you can possibly derive from them. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally, and made in Toledo, Ohio, by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free. Sold by Druggists, price 75c. per bottle. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

To Sterilize Drinking Water.

Here is the latest receipt for sterilizing drinking water and killing off the typhoid germ: Put four drops of tincture of iodine in half a gallon of water and permit it to stand at least half an hour. By the end of that time it will be as harmless as distilled water. Many persons have not the facilities for making distilled water. Boiling it also entails a certain amount of trouble. Is either case the water is flat and unpleasant to the taste. The few drops of iodine impart practically no taste to the amount of water they sterilize, and at the same time they answer every medicinal purpose.

Milk and Water.

Boston leads the big cities of the country in the use of milk, the daily average being 1.171 pints per capita. She likewise leads in water consumption but this does not imply that there is any mixing of the two.—Boston Advertiser.

The record for a sailing vessel is 323 miles in a day; that of a steamer 500 miles.

COULD NOT HEAR THE TICK OF A CLOCK.

Watsontown, Pa., July 13, 1903.

Dear Sirs: I have used S. S. S. for Catarrh of the inner ear, and have found it an excellent remedy for same. I had been troubled with this disease for years and tried many things in an effort to get relief, but nothing did me any permanent good until I began S. S. S. I had a discharge from my ear and my hearing was so badly affected that I could not hear the tick of a clock. I was in a bad shape when I began your medicine. S. S. S. has done away with the discharge and my hearing has been wonderfully improved; so much so that I can now carry on a conversation in an ordinary tone, whereas a year ago this was impossible. Your medicine has done me a world of good and I do not hesitate to give it the credit it deserves.

W. F. KRUMHINE.

NO SIGN OF CATARRH IN THIRTEEN YEARS.

Krebs, Ind. Tor., Aug. 1, 1903.

Dear Sirs: About thirteen years ago I used your remedy for Catarrh. I had been troubled with it for about nine years, but since taking S. S. S. have never been worried with it. I feel able to recommend S. S. S. as a sure cure for Catarrh.

T. MILLWER.