

The Planter's Daughter

OR FATE'S REVENGE

By MRS. ALICE P. CARRISTON

Author of "A Waif from the Sea," "Her Brightest Hope," "Wayward Winfred," etc.

CHAPTER I.

On a chill and dismal afternoon in the month of October, 1858, the country folk who lived within ear-shot of the bells of the little village of Vernon, were amazed at the sudden clanging that abruptly burst forth from the ivy-veiled tower of the old church and sent its reverberating echoes far over rice-field, plantation and grove. All the greater was the amazement of those who harkened to the merry peals, since only the day before those self-same brazen throats had raised their voices in a doleful knell for a departed soul.

Nevertheless, in spite of the stormy wind that raged and the fiftful gust of rain that beat upon their faces, women caught up their shawls and men their hats, and ran with their children into the village to find the place all agog, and every step hastening towards the church. The sunset hour was at hand, and all along the lower horizon, fiery gleams, blood-red, shone through the rifts in the driving clouds. There was mute inquiry upon every face, while mystery brooded over all.

The twinkling candles upon the altar, together with the eloquent perfume of massed roses and jasmynes, lying in great heaps within the chancel, attracted more than half the multitude within the sacred edifice; those who remained without looked up and down the road, and asked each other what joyous event was about to take place in such uncanny weather.

At last the bells abruptly ceased, the deep tones of the organ began to surge and swell upon the bated silence, the clock struck six. Simultaneously the rapid beat of horses' hoofs and the roll of carriage wheels smote the air, and from the direction of the magnolia-crested heights, a barouche was descried swiftly approaching the church. A cry was raised among the bystanders as the Rosemont livery was recognized, and heads were craned to catch the first glimpse of the occupants, while a shudder of horror passed through every heart, as it was recalled that only the day before the same equipage had stood before the church to bear away to her lonely home the only and beautiful daughter of the lamented Colonel Courmont.

The respected gentleman had met an untimely death by accident while hunting, and the scent of the flowers that clustered about his bier had scarcely evaporated from the dim aisles of the old church ere these fresh blossoms were brought in to form a festal decoration.

But the carriage was closed against the stress of weather and no glimpse of those within was afforded until it drew up beneath the porch, and the aged sexton stepped forward to open the door; whereupon, to the speechless amazement of the beholders, there alighted a handsome, stately young gentleman in full evening dress, who in turn assisted a lady swathed in mourning to alight. At sight of her, every hat was removed, for one and all recognized at a glance the beautiful Sylphide Courmont, sole heiress and mistress of Rosemont.

She was attired in a trailing costume of black tulle relieved by an enormous bouquet de corsage of snowy jasmynes that vied with the ghastly pallor that overpread her faultless neck and exquisite face; while in her jet-black hair clustered more of the spectral flowers, shaded by a veil of inky gauze. Had it not been for the flashing eyes and the triumphant curve of the haughty lip, one would have said that these were the trappings of the grave she wore—and she, the wraith of her former self.

The man at her side was flushed and nervous. Though a stranger at Vernon, they all recognized him as the guest from New York, who had been passing a few weeks at Rosemont, and had been the companion of Colonel Courmont when he met his fate. They remembered that it was he who had ridden over the country day after day with Sylphide, and had been the one to support her when she fainted beside her father's coffin in the church; but not one of those honest hearts so much as dreamed that he was so soon to become the husband of the mistress of Rosemont, nor would they have believed had they been told how this extraordinary alliance had been brought about.

The wedding ceremony began and continued until the solemn words were pronounced, "If any one present sees just cause why this man and woman should not be joined together in holy wedlock, let him stand forth and speak, or forever afterward hold his peace."

Thereupon ensued a breathless pause. A nervous shiver passed over the bride and with a hunted look in her great, dilated eyes, she turned and stared at the assembly. No one rose; no one breathed, although outside the church it was evident that a struggle of some sort was taking place, for voices were raised—one in particular—and through the open doors the swaying to and fro of the dense mass of humanity was visible.

Sylphide Courmont almost staggered, yet clinging to her lover's arm with a desperate attempt to be mistress over herself. Fixing her burning eyes upon the priest, she murmured:

"No, no! There is no one to speak. I am ill. Proceed!"

And then the deep toned benediction brought this weird ceremony to a close. The look of ineffable joy and triumph that illumined the fair bride's face as the last "Amen" was uttered, baffles description. She turned to her handsome young husband and whispered:

"I am yours, am I not, Lucian, yours forever?"

"Forever, my darling!" he answered in some surprise.

"I am too happy! Come, let us go. Time flies, and we must leave Rosemont to-night!"

Lucian Courmont gave his wife his arm, and side by side they passed down the aisle amid the wondering throng, apparently unconscious of the valley of curious glances bestowed upon them. When their backs were turned, amazement took voice.

"Unhappy the bride that the rain rains on," whispered one old dame.

"Married in black!" shuddered another; while a third shook her head, as she muttered: "Married in haste, repent at leisure!"

But all unconscious of ill-omen, Sylphide Courmont passed out of the porch to receive a spiteful dash of rain, like icy tears, upon her brow, and to be saluted by the muttering of distant thunder from the leaden heavens.

Meanwhile, the scene outside the church had been in startling contrast to the solemn, peaceful proceedings within. Soon after the bridal pair had entered, and the crowd had surged into the porch, filling every crack and crevice, a horseman had ridden up at break-neck speed, dismounted at the graveyard wall, and tethered his foaming steed to a sycamore that grew hard by. He was breathless, and covered with mud from hard riding, though his dark face was flushed and his deep-set black eyes fairly scintillated.

There is no denying the fact that he is a handsome man, handsome in a fierce, brutal way; a young man, too, scarcely thirty, but bearing the traces of premature age, which dissipation ever sets upon the countenances of its votaries.

They all knew him there, knew that he



"NO, NO! THERE IS NO ONE TO SPEAK. PROCEED," SAID SYLPHIDE.

was the scapegrace nephew of the dead colonel; that his name was Oscar Courmont; that he lived down the river upon a neglected plantation, where he beat his slaves; and more than all, they knew that many a time he had sought the hand of his fair cousin, Sylphide, in marriage; not that he loved her—such a tender sentiment had never entered his heart—but because she was the only obstacle that intervened between him and his inheritance to Rosemont.

He could not kill her, therefore she must marry him. Thus he argued with himself, when the news of his uncle's death had reached him in New Orleans, whether he had gone to squander the money raised by the sale of the last of his slaves. It is needless to explain that he returned to Vernon post haste, but he arrived at Rosemont to learn that Sylphide was already gone to church to be united in wedlock to a stranger.

Without quitting his saddle, he put spurs to his jaded beast, and rode like a mad fury down into Vernon. He would forbid the bans, tear her from this interloper, even kill the priest ere he had time to give her forever to another.

At his infuriated approach, the negroes upon the outskirts of the crowd about the church door fell back in dismay at sight of his whip, but the whites stood firm. They feared him not; besides, they had come to see the show, and they were not to be cheated of their pleasure.

Courmont struggled and fought to no purpose. He was a powerfully built man, but he met his equals there in the crowd, and do what he would, they would not let him pass.

"I am her next of kin!" he roared. "I will see her married! Let me pass!"

"Don't you see that mass of heads?" retorted the burly blacksmith of the village; "you can't get in."

"I will! Stand back! This is a crime! Let me go in!"

"Hark! Stand aside! They're coming out!"

It was true; the wedding march had again burst forth, and Sylphide Courmont was standing there before him a bride, another's wife. As though his had been the only face in all that sea of faces, she saw him and recoiled a step. In the next moment, she recovered herself, and smiled and bowed to him, though her face was as pallid as the dead.

Oscar Courmont raised his hat and fixed his eyes upon the man at Sylphide's side with a look that paralyzed the beholders.

"Quick! Back to Rosemont, and keep the horses harnessed!" whispered the bride to the coachman, as she entered the carriage, followed by Courmont. Once fairly on the road, she fell with a hysterical sob into her lover's arms. Suddenly she started up with a terrified gasp.

"Hark," she said, "do you not hear the beat of horses behind us?"

Courmont lowered the glass and looked back into the rainy night.

"I see nothing," he said, "and hear nothing."

(To be continued.)

RARE COINS SOLD IN STREET.

Business Profitable Among the Clerks Employed in New York Offices.

The latest and most singular acquisition to New York's army of curbstone vendors is the old-coin man, as he is called, who did business in a lower Broadway store until two months ago, and who is known by collectors from Saratoga to Florida.

My theory is that a man who makes a living should be content. I never made more than a living when I had my store, but I made a good one and had time for a little fun. I am still making a living out of this," waving his hand to his stock in trade, "and, although

it is not such a good one, I am satisfied."

"This," as he called it, was a piece of olecloth spread over an iron grating in front of an empty store. It was covered with all sorts of coins, of every denomination in value, made in every country where metal is used as currency. The cheapest coin for sale was 10 cents—a piece of Austrian copper; the most expensive was \$20, a Russian copper coin of a date that none but collectors would appreciate. A number of persons have stopped to look at it since he began the curbstone business, but no purchaser has put his hand into his pocket.

Another object of public curiosity, is a bit of metal covered with verdigris, which the old coin man has labeled "the widow's mite." The price of that depends on the bargain one can make with him, but he says it is high. The majority of coins he has for sale cost from 50 cents to \$1.

"I am right here in the middle of a lot of restaurants, where clerks come from the brokers' offices and exchanges," said the old-coin man. "I have found that the collecting of coins and postage stamps is just as popular as it ever was among boys and young men, and that many of them will invest a quarter with me for a good specimen when they never would think of going to a coin shop."

"This outdoor trade has its disadvantages in the chilly spring weather, but then I am only here four hours a day. I roam around town and get rare coins on commission for collectors who have money to spend. Where do I get them? Why, young man, I have hustled around New York for thirty years learning my trade."

Continuous Farewells.

"Well," remarked the spectator at Mrs. Oldstars' farewell performance, "she certainly was deeply affected."

"It looked that way," replied Crittick.

"Of course it's natural to be affected under the circumstances."

"Yes, that's why she got into the habit of affecting to be natural."—Philadelphia Press.

LITTLE BOBBY BUMPKIN.

Little Bobby Bumpkin Wouldn't mind they say, Told his ma a whopper One February day.

Naughty Bobby Bumpkin Should have known forsooth, All about the month in which We celebrate the truth.

But, on the twenty-second,

His father told with pride About the good George Washington, The boy who never lied.

Of little Georgie Washington Who chopped the cherry tree, Then said, "I cannot tell a lie, O daddy, it was me!"

This made a deep impression On Bobby Bumpkin's mind.

Who, now, to chop a cherry tree Was very much inclined.

So getting out the hatchet, Sharpened well and bright, Bobby Bumpkin started out

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took Washington's draft and the Madison paper and consulted Jay, with the result that a third paper was drawn, merely suggesting changes and amendments in Washington's original draft. All these papers were then forwarded to Washington, who, after comparing and studying them, decided that he preferred Hamilton's first or original draft. This he returned to the writer, wishing one or two paragraphs on education to be added, and it was carefully revised by Hamilton. When Washington received this back he made a copy of it, and this was the farewell address as given to the world. The accepted conclusion now is that the thoughts and ideas are Washington's, but that the language, the literary form and the method of statement are Hamilton's.

Washington and Hamilton.

Martha Littlefield Phillips contributes to the Century "Recollections of Washington and His Friends." The grandmother of the writer was the youngest daughter of Gen. Greene, and these recollections are taken down from her lips. Speaking of her visit to Washington at Philadelphia, Gen. Greene's daughter says:

"Everything in America, in the way of men who had made its history, passed by me as I sat in my room upon the day when they came into transient, and a few into permanent, relations with me. Chief of them all, the personality graven deepest on my recollection is that of Alexander Hamilton. He was then in the meridian of his young manhood, intellectually as well as physically, and was not only a model of manly beauty, but distinguished by a refinement of thought and bearing which made him easily the most attractive man in the social life of his day.

"His marvelous genius for finance had just completed the miracle which Mr. Webster afterward happily described when he said: 'Hamilton touched the

dead corpse of the national credit, and it sprang to its feet.' Washington looked at him with a tenderness of manner which Hamilton almost paternal. He loved and trusted the young fellow who had stood so loyally by him on many hard-fought fields, and had given him so many proofs of his fidelity, insight and genius; and that one of the strong desires of his life was to see Hamilton at some future time President of the United States he made no effort to disguise. Years afterward, when Hamilton was struck down by the hand of Aaron Burr, the whole land was oppressed with a sense of personal bereavement, and I was but one of those thousands who wept over his untimely fate."

George Washington's Horses.

Washington never lost his liking for a good horse, and he knew what a good horse was. He had a servant who had been Gen. Braddock's servant, and had been with Washington ever since the battle of the Monongahela. Bishop, as he was named, was a terrible disciplinarian, and devoted to his master's interests. At sunrise every day he would go to the stables where the boys had been at work since dawn grooming the general's horses. Woe to them if they had been careless! Bishop marched in with a muslin handkerchief in his hand and passed it over the coats of the horses; if a single stain appeared on the muslin, the boy who groomed the horse had to take a thrashing.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

His Farewell Address to His Countrymen Had an Interesting History.

George Washington's farewell address to his countrymen, which ranks among the three or four greatest of American state papers, has an interesting history. After the death of Hamilton two copies of the address in Hamilton's handwriting were found among his papers. This at once gave rise to the surmise that Hamilton was the author of it, and a great controversy arose. It was known, of course, that when Hamilton was in the cabinet he prepared and wrote out many of Washington's communications and speeches to Congress, but after his retirement it was not supposed that he did more than occasionally advise with the President on certain public questions. John Jay took part in the controversy and undertook to prove that Hamilton was not the author of the address, stating that the original address had been written by Washington and then submitted to himself and Hamilton for suggestions and amendments. For a number of years the authorship was left in doubt, but the facts, as time has developed them, seem to be these: At the close of his first term Washington contemplated retirement, and in May, 1792, addressed a letter to Madison stating that he intended to retire from public life; that he wished to make a farewell declaration to the country, and asked Madison to prepare for him an address or a letter of that description. Madison prepared the paper, consulting Jefferson about it, but they, with others, finally prevailed upon Washington to accept another term, so the Madison paper was not used. At the close of his second term Washington retired, and preparatory to that sent the Madison paper, with additional matter of his own, to Hamilton, with the request that the latter "re-dress" it. These formed the main theme and idea of the paper. Adhering to these lines, Hamilton rewrote the paper. He then

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