

The Planter's Daughter

OR FATE'S REVENGE

By MRS. ALICE P. CARRISTON

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

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

It simply seemed incredible that it was the haughty, high-spirited Sylphide Courmont who obeyed the nonchalant command with the submission of a lamb. What power did this rude fellow exert over this defiant girl? Had she met her master in him?

He pointed to the easy chair which she had left but a minute before, as she sank into it, he carelessly tossed his dripping hat upon a dainty sofa covered with pale blue satin embroidered with apple blossoms, and braced himself against the toilet table, the muslin drapery of which became crushed and soiled by contact with his muddy boots.

"First of all," he began, sneeringly, "your tragedy airs are out of place. So long as you do not bring us face to face I do not care a pin to meet him; what is more, I no more want to kill him than I want to marry you—for love."

He paused abruptly, and little by little she raised her great, dilated eyes to his face like two burning stars.

"It may touch your vanity in a vulnerable spot," he continued, sitting down upon the edge of the table and crossing one foot over the other, "but I don't love you a speck and never did; so you may as well know, first as last, that if you hadn't been worth your weight in gold, I wouldn't have looked twice at you. You're not my style. I'm hot-tempered enough myself, and bringing a fire-brand into my camp wouldn't have helped matters."

While he spoke the defiant look had been creeping back into Sylphide's face, brightening her eyes and curing her red lips.

"So you sought to marry me for my money?" she murmured, looking him steadily in the eye.

"Most assuredly; for no other reason." "You have lost me and my money, too?" she cried, springing to her feet.

"You, yes; but not the money. Your father left a will, did he not?" "No."

It is doubtful whether, had a bomb exploded at his feet, Oscar Courmont would have started more violently.

"Left no will?" he cried.

"I tell you, no," Sylphide replied with a steady, level glance.

Courmont shrugged his shoulders and resented himself upon the edge of the table.

"In that case," he rejoined, "all the property comes to you. Well, so be it—I must change my tactics. You must hand over to me the half of the estate, which by right your father ought to have left me."

The indignant reply that quivered for utterance upon Sylphide's lips was checked by a sudden knocking at the locked door which communicated with the corridor.

"Miss Sylph, Miss Sylph!" called a woman's voice from the other side of the door.

With a wicked glance in her eyes, Sylphide turned upon Courmont.

"It is Diana, my maid," she said; "she will secure my release!"

"Bah!" growled the rascal, "tell her to go away; I'm not half through talking to you. Do as I bid you; it is worth your while!"

Taking a step toward that thin partition that separated her from deliverance, Sylphide raising her voice, said:

"I do not need you, Diana. Continue with the packing." Then, with the darling gleam again shining in her eyes, she supplemented, "and if in half an hour I am not down stairs, ask Mr. Courmont to come up for me!"

"Fool!" sneered Courmont; "well, a woman always will have the last word, so I suppose I ought not to blame you for what you can't help. All is, we shall have to talk fast, as I see no occasion to soil my hands with this fellow's blood. So, by packing up, you intend to leave Rosemont?"

"I do."

"Then we will proceed to business and settle everything up before you go—Sylphide, I want my share of the estate, and I want it now—to-night!"

"How dare you?" she demanded, turning upon him, imperiously; "your share? What do you mean?"

"Just what I say—I want my share."

"There is no share for you; I doubt if my poor father ever thought to leave you so much as one cent."

"That is quite possible," retorted Courmont with his imperturbable smile; "the old man never loved me, but he feared me. And I intend that you shall atone for his lack of common sense and your want of forethought in marrying this interloper."

As he spoke he advanced upon her where she stood in the center of the chamber, and drew from an inner pocket a slip of paper.

"I am not stupid enough to suppose that you have a sum of money upon you to-night sufficient to satisfy my demands. Therefore, this letter, addressed to your executor, and stating that in accordance with an expressed wish of your father that his estate be equally divided between us two, his only heirs, you will sign."

"Never!"

He drew back a step and gazed upon her so balefully that she recoiled and caught at a chair for support.

"Do you refuse to sign this paper?" he asked, steadily; "be warned in time! I know the secret of your life, a secret which can crush you forever, even invalidate your marriage!"

"What do you mean?"

"Sign this paper, or I inform your husband that your mother was a slave."

not believe it. With hands cramped like the talons of a bird of prey, she sprang at her tormentor, uttering shriek after shriek of rage, horror and dismay.

"It is a lie, a lie, a lie!" she panted; "out of my sight! You—you—I—"

She staggered, beat the air for a moment with her arms, then with a low moan of fathomless agony, fell, face downwards, with a dull crash, like one stricken with death.

Too late Oscar Courmont discovered that he had over-reached himself. Sylphide was now incapable of signing the instrument which would make a wealthy man of him; besides, her cries had aroused the household, hurrying feet were mounting the stairs, already they were knocking at the door, and a man's voice in excited accents was calling upon her to open. In less than half a minute the barrier would be broken down!

Snatching up his hat and revolver, Courmont sprang to the window.

"We shall meet again, my lady, never fear!" he hissed, menacingly; "we shall meet again, when my grip upon you shall be stronger than it is now!"

CHAPTER IV.

Four years have elapsed since the events narrated in the preceding chapter, and the flight of Courmont and his bride has ceased to excite comment and gossip long since.

Already the year 1862 is pregnant with its greatest day, Sept. 22, when the martyr President issued his immortal proclamation declaring the freedom of all slaves in the States and parts of States then in rebellion.

Since that memorable night of darkness and storm, in October, 1858, the face of the mistress of Rosemont has never once been seen upon her hereditary estate. Having been left in competent hands, the plantation has yielded its accustomed income, all of which has been transmitted through the bankers at Mobile to Lucian Courmont in whatever part of the world he chanced to be.

For a year the young lawyer and his beautiful wife traveled from place to place in the Old World, following the fashionable season from London to St. Petersburg, returning along the shores of the romantic Mediterranean.

It had been a term of unalloyed delight to Sylphide, and when, at the close of the year, a lovely baby boy came to join their party at Nice, the young wife trembled at her happiness. The horror of her wedding night with its appalling revelation now seemed so far away that she often wondered whether it had been really indeed, and not the delirium of a fevered dream. In the peace and joy of her maternity she persuaded herself that cruel Fate had forgotten her, and that henceforth she was destined to live in the auspicious light of favoring Fortune.

Oscar Courmont had given no sign of life; perhaps he had repented; perhaps he was dead. Sylphide could afford now to wish him no evil, since his baleful shadow had not crossed her sun-lit path.

Of course an explanation of her insensible condition when found in her chamber at Rosemont on that fatal night was inevitable; she owed it to her husband, and she gave it him according as she thought best.

"You see, I scarcely know how it was," she murmured as she lay in his arms upon her recovery to consciousness, "but when I entered my own room for the last time and glanced about me upon the familiar objects, it seemed as if father came back to me from the grave, his face white and pallid, his two eyes burning like coals of fire. I was terrified, and, falling upon my knees, I besought him to tell me in what I had offended him, but he only shook his head and slowly vanished; and then I shrieked and fell fainting."

Lucian Courmont smiled a trifle uneasily as he replied:

"I don't believe in visions myself; yours, however, must have been somewhat out of the ordinary run of omid ghosts. Were you aware that your airy visitor wore muddy boots and a wet hat?"

"Lucian?"

"It is a fact. The print of his hat has left an indelible stain upon your sofa, and the muslin drapery of your toilet table is soiled and torn."

With ready tact, Sylphide glanced up, terror-stricken into her husband's face.

"Then burglars must have entered my room while we were at church?" she cried.

"Do you have burglars in this part of the country, Sylphide?" asked Courmont with an amused smile.

"Well—if not actual burglars," was the innocent reply, "thieves at least, and plenty of them."

"Ah! But it strikes me as a little strange that you did not notice these signs of disorder when you entered your chamber."

"Now, Lucian, what an idea!" she exclaimed; "is it likely that, in the dim candle light and considering the excitement I was laboring under, I should be struck by the sight of a few rain drops and a smouch of mud? How absurd! Why should the damage not have been done by and often come up to my room."

"Dogs do not climb veranda posts to second-story windows, my dear; and your doors were locked."

"But I found your window open!"

"Upon hearing my approach, the dog might have escaped by that means!"

"You say the dogs are fond of you, and dogs in general are too intelligent to risk any such jump as that. No, my love, it was no quadruped that entered your chamber to-night. It was a man!"

He felt her weight grow heavier in his arms, but she managed to preserve consciousness enough to say:

"What makes you think so?"

"I have instituted a search of the place, and have made certain discoveries."

Her hands set like a vise upon his arm.

"Discoveries!" she gasped, "what discoveries?"

"That some one climbed the pillar of the veranda nearest your window by means of the vines, and that the print of a horse's hoofs is fresh in the soil of the lime-tree walk that leads up to that side of the house. Which facts incline me to your belief, that thieves have entered the house."

"Lucian, I told you so," she cried wildly; "it is true. There must have been a plot to rob us while we were at church. Don't you see?"

Lucian Courmont pressed his lips upon the damp, pallid brow, and gently depositing the graceful form upon the cushions of the sofa, he rose with the words:

"You are over-excited and tired, poor child. You had better rest here to-night. We will leave Rosemont at daybreak. Nay, lie still; I will send Diana to you."

She dared not remonstrate for fear of arousing the suspicions which she had lulled into oblivion. So she closed her eyes with well-forged weariness, and Courmont left her to summon her maid.

No sooner had the door shut his manly figure from view when Sylphide started up upon her elbow, her dilated eyes burning with that deep red fire that one sees in a hungry wolf's. She held her breath and counted his retreating footsteps, till they fell away into silence at the extremity of the long hall. Then she sprang to her feet, her pallid face aflame with animation, every nerve vibrating like the rudely swept strings of a harp.

"Saved!" she panted triumphantly; "saved! But what a narrow escape. I have bridged the abyss with a straw, and passed safely over. I shall be on my guard in future; it can never happen again. Were I to meet Oscar Courmont a hundred times, I should never be such a fool again."

The exultant soliloquy was cut short by the abrupt opening of the door, and a young mulatto girl, with a remarkably pretty, keen face, entered. She paused at sight of her mistress pacing to and fro so excitedly, and Sylphide paused also, fixing a sharp, questioning glance upon her maid.

"What is it, Diana?" she demanded, swiftly; "you have heard something; I see it in your face."

"I haven't heard anything, Miss Sylph," replied the girl, "but I've seen something—Miss Oscar."

Diana did not draw a breath for a minute after that unwelcome announcement, for Sylphide's small hand was set upon her lips like a seal.

"Hush!" she breathed, "do not dare to slip his name until we are gone. My husband does not know of his existence, and must never know, if we can help it. Where was my cousin?"

"In the lime-tree walk, Missy—mounting his horse."

"Thank heaven, he's gone, then, for the night! Are the trunks ready packed, Diana?"

"Yes, Missy, packed and strapped."

"See that they are loaded on the wagon to-night; we start at daybreak, and you go with me. I may have need of you in more ways than one."

Scarcely had the eastern horizon begun to flush with the promise of day, when the family coach, followed by the baggage wagon, rolled swiftly down the road that led into the river valley; and two hours later Mr. Oscar Courmont rode into the court yard at Rosemont, to be informed that, if he had come to breakfast, his meal must be a solitary one.

(To be continued.)

Two Famous Negro Women.

The old head-handkerchief negro is the aristocrat of her race. Aunt Dicey belongs to this type. She is a product of the eighteenth century, and recently celebrated her one hundred and seventh birthday. Aunt Dicey lives in a little cabin standing among pine trees on a spur of the ragged mountains of Virginia. In slavery days she belonged to a relative of Thomas Jefferson.

Aunt Dicey is a constant smoker, and has been one from her youth up. Her cabin walls are covered with magazine pictures and scriptural verses, many of them tacked wrong side up.

In the days of her youth she was a seamstress, and her neat sewing is the wonder of her many visitors. The finest needle is not too much for her wonderful eyesight.

The fame of "Aunt Jinny" has gone far beyond the borders of Mississippi. Aunt Jinny enjoys the distinction of being the only negro woman depot master in the country. Aunt Jinny has been a railroad employe for thirty-six years. She belonged before the war to some people down in Alabama, and was with them throughout the struggle. She says she warned them more than once of the approach of the "enemy."

Apt to Be Charitable.

"The impromptu speaker may be all right in his way," said Deacon Jones, "but as for me, give me the minister who writes his sermons every time."

"Why?" asked Deacon Smith.

"He is more likely to realize, their length," was the significant reply.

As Others See Us.

"You always say the wrong thing at the right time, Henry!" said Mrs. Packem. "Now, I always think twice before I speak."

"Yes, my dear," replied the meek and lowly Henry, "but you are one of those rapid-fire thinkers."

As It Should Be.

"I suppose," said the visitor to police headquarters, "that every officer knows a rogue when he sees him."

"Sure," replied the desk sergeant; "but every officer doesn't seize a rogue when he knows him."

Ample Excuse.

Josh—I s'pose Silas is mad at the feller that sold him the horse.

Hiram—I dunno why he should be. If yer look at the horse yer won't blame anybody fer sellin' him.

The man who originated the motto "Live and Let Live" didn't take the undertaker into consideration, but fell into his hands just the same.



Ice and Cold Storage House.

While many farmers consider an ice house a luxury that is not for them, a building such as is shown in the cut may be erected at small cost, and if the ice can be had for the cutting and drawing it will be found profitable.

Even in sections where ice is scarce such a structure would be worth all it cost to a fruit grower who desired to hold back his products in cold storage.

To make the house cheap build it of any lumber obtainable, the essential thing being to have it with an in-



SIMPLE ICE HOUSE.

ner wall a foot from the outer wall and this space filled in hard with sawdust, straw, leaves or any similar material. Then pack on the bottom of the floor a foot of straw or hay or sawdust and on this lay the cakes of ice, filling in between them cracked ice, and, if the weather is freezing, pouring water over each layer as it is filled in. Divide off a portion of the space for a cold storage room, as shown in the lower part of the illustration and one has a place where fruit, milk and butter may be kept in good condition during the warmest days of summer.

Try an ice house, even though it be but a small one, and you will be surprised to see how little it will cost and how useful it is.

Advantages of Farm Life.

It is the farmers' boys who are most likely to succeed, whether in business or in professional life. Spending most of their time under the open sky, breathing fresh air, and eating simple food, they are more likely to have vigorous health and strong constitutions than are their city-cousins. Brought into constant contact with nature, they absorb a great deal of useful knowledge, and acquire habits of observation. Then, too, the regular farm work, the "chores" and numberless other little things keep them well occupied and enable them to feel that they are earning their way, thus giving to them a sense of independence and cultivating a spirit of self-reliance and manliness. The performance of a deal of drudgery is an indispensable preparation for all real success in life, whatever the occupation. A boy who is afraid of work or of soiling his hands need not expect to accomplish much in the world. Country boys have their full share of fun, but there are many disagreeable duties on a farm which farmers' boys learn to accept as a matter of course. Edward Eggleston, speaking of the value of his farm training when a boy, once said to me: "I learned one thing of great value, and that was to do disagreeable things cheerfully."—Josiah Strong, in Success.

Half-boiling the Sled.

Soles made of poles are almost a thing of the past since the sawed ones have come into use. There are still some who do not use the sawed soles because of not knowing how to put them on, after they have become dry, without breaking or splitting them.

The illustration shows how the trick is done. A teakettle full of boiling water, poured on very gradually while the sole is being sprung, is all that is necessary in almost every instance. The stream should be no larger than a lead pencil, and poured on continually. Any one who has never tried this method will be surprised how

quickly the sole will bend down into its place.—R. A. Gallifer, in Farm and Home.

The Milkman's Steady Job. A veteran New York State dairyman who has been in the business over half a century says that commencing in 1876 he was away from home but one night in about twenty-two years. He always used to do his own milking. His average for many years was not less than twenty cows night and morning. He milked one cow nineteen years and about ten months in the year. In the year 1879 twenty cows gave him 160,000 pounds of milk, which netted him from the cheese factory \$1,000, besides having his whey to feed to the hogs and calves.

Winter Fruit Tree Pruning.

While the early spring pruning and the summer pinching back of the small shoots covers the main pruning of the fruit trees, much good work may be

done during the open days of winter which will, at least, save time in the spring. Broken limbs may be removed and many of the inside limbs which are overlapping the fruiting twigs can be cut off during the winter as well as in the spring. The work of pruning should always be done with a saw on limbs too large to cut with a sharp knife; in pruning saw from the under side of the limb first, sawing up a quarter or a half through and finishing from the top. This will result in a clean cut and there will be no splintering, as would be the case if a heavy limb was cut through from the top. In the winter pruning of orchards keep your eyes open and note the condition of the tree, so that at the proper time any remedy for any trouble found may be applied.

Cost of Raising Corn.

The present low price of corn and the enormous quantity which is piled up in bins and warehouses everywhere in this country is the most emphatic evidence that corn can be produced at a very low cost, and it is plain from the experience of hundreds of corn raisers that there is a profit in producing corn on a large scale, even at the present low prices, for many thousands of farmers have made a good living and laid some profit by from their corn lands.

It is perfectly true that the man with a small farm, devoted exclusively to corn raising, can get only a very precarious living out of corn when the price is under 25 cents on the farm. But even the small farmer can assure himself of a substantial surplus with the prospect of a substantial surplus, some years, if he devotes a part of his land to raising the products which he needs for his family, and raises corn, well cultivated and carefully cared for, on the rest of it.

It must not be forgotten that the present low price of corn is due to two years of very extraordinary yields, and though this year's crop is moderate, by comparison with those years, the surplus in the country, added to what was produced this year, makes the supply in the country about as large as it was ever known to be, and the cost of production of the corn which most farmers have on hand at the present time, must be figured on the basis of large yields, so that, even at present low prices, the great bulk of the corn in the country represents a good deal more than what it has cost the farmer to produce it.

For Fitting Hens.

Mrs. Amanda Wilson writes to the Iowa Homestead: "I have been very much annoyed at times with persistent sitting hens. I have tried several methods of preventing them from becoming broody, and have at last hit upon a simple coop about two feet square and two feet high made of lath, and attached to a rope, as shown in the illustration. Place

the hen inside the coop and let it swing about eighteen inches from the ground. The excitement of the curious chickens which stand around on the outside will quickly dispel the hatching idea from the most persistent sitting hen. Feed and water should be given the same as usual."

Grooming Is Valuable. The proper and frequent grooming of work horses is too little done by farmers who do not appreciate the importance of the work. It may appeal to you when we assert, without fear of contradiction, that a well-groomed horse works better and requires less food than a horse kept in a filthy condition. Proper grooming means proper circulation of the blood and opens the pores of the skin. Where circulation has become impeded, and the pores of the skin are blocked up with the filth, the animal is out of sorts and cannot work with normal vigor, nor can it derive the due amount of nutriment from its food; hence it is tempted to eat more than other horses.

Indiscriminate Feeding. On some farms all kinds of poultry are fed together, old and young, and geese, ducks, turkeys and chickens. There are always downy young individuals in all barnyards, hence it will be an advantage to separate the older from the younger stock when feeding. The natural consequence of promiscuous commingling of fowls is that the largest and strongest take their choice and leave the refuse to be eaten by the weaker, whereas the best should be given to the poorest in order to help them to a condition of thrift and growth. It is also more economical to make some distinction when feeding, especially when a profit is desired.

Relation of Size to Age.

There is no fixed relation between size and longevity in breeds of live stock, though it is a well established fact that, generally, small or medium sized animals live longer than very small ones. Also breeds that have a marked tendency to take on fat are shorter lived than the leaner breeds. These facts are recognized by live stock insurance companies, for they refuse to insure the heavy and fat producing breeds to as great age as others.

Brood Hens.

If broody hens are properly treated nine out of ten will begin to lay again within two weeks after being removed from the nest. But if they are half-drowned, starved a week, or bruised and abused, it is more than likely they will get even with their owners by declining to lay a single egg until they have fully recovered from their ill-treatment and acquired their customary tranquillity.

GREAT LUMP OF IRON ORE.

Weights 600,000,000 Tons and Is Worth an Immense Fortune.

One of the greatest natural curiosities in Mexico is a big hill consisting of a solid mass of iron ore. It stands beside the railroad track, near the station, in the city of Durango, in the central part of the republic.

Nothing just like it is known elsewhere except in North Sweden, where there is another hill of iron ore, which the miners are beginning to tear down to feed the smelters that have just been built around it.

The Durango hill is simply a tremendous lump of iron ore about a mile in length, nearly 2,000 feet wide and rising above the rock-strewn plain around it from 400 to 650 feet.

When Humboldt visited Mexico in 1803 he did not see the hill, but samples of the iron mass were shown to him, and from them he deduced the erroneous conclusion that the pieces came from a colossal aerolite, the largest on record.

Geologists say that some time or other a big opening was made in the earth's crust, and that this enormous mass of ore was thrust up through the rift and piled high above the surrounding plain. That is to say, the iron hill is one of the dikes that are supposed to be the result of earthquake action. Cracks or fissures have opened from the surface deep into the earth, and through these fissures molten matter has been forced to the outer air, where it has been hardened into rock.

So the Durango hill was formed by the same process that made the Palisades along the Hudson. The ore is hematite and one of the richest iron ores in the world. The best ores in England contain 57 per cent iron, Lake Superior ores contain from 59 to 65 per cent iron and the Durango hill is from 60 to 67 per cent pure iron, more than three-fifths of this mass, which is calculated to weigh over 600,000,000 tons, being iron of the best steel-making quality.

This is the only part of the mass that appears above the surface. No one knows how deep it may penetrate into the earth.—New York Sun.

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., 47 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Motion Overruled.

"I say," said the captain of bachelors' hall in the boarding school, "let's be swell and call our dormitory the Latin quarter."

"No! No!" shrieked the rest of the crowd.

"Because," ventured one of the protesting mob, "all the other fellows will be coming here trying to borrow the quarter."

And so it was that the dormitory went nameless.—Baltimore American.

For coughs and colds there is no better medicine than Pisco's Cure for Consumption. Price 25 cents.

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.

Practical Application.

He sought a job in a restaurant. When in financial straits; For he'd been told that everything Comes to the man who waits.

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

Valuable Life-Saving Service.

So effective is the life-saving service of the United States that from disasters to 246 documented vessels on the coast during the year, having 3,802 persons on board, only twenty lives were lost, and of the \$9,000,000 worth of property put in jeopardy, but a little more than \$1,000,000 was lost.

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