

# 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 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 curiously commanded her maid to order dinner in their private parlor.

When the cheery gait 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, hurried 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."

"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 out 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 raised 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. "Miss Sylph, Miss 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 right face before her, striving vainly to fathom her intense surprise. At last speech re-

turned 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 right 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 you are! 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 piteous eloquence.

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

"Adopt Leon."

A spasm of intense 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, I can answer, 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.)

### Working for Success.

Charles Warren Stoddard, in his "Recollections of Bret Harte" in the New York Times, says that to Harte's interest and criticism he owes all that is best in his literary efforts. Fastidious to a degree, Harte could not overlook a lack of finish in the manuscript offered to him.

He was not afraid to speak his mind, remarks Mr. Stoddard, and I know well enough what occasion I gave him, yet he did not judge me more severely than he judged himself. His humor and his fancy were not frightened away even when he was in his severest critical mood. Once, when I had sent him some verses for approval, he wrote:

"The Albatross is better, but not best—which is what I wanted. And then, you know, Coleridge has prior claim on the bird; but I'll use him unless you send me something else. You can, if you like, take this as a threat."

He had a special taste in the choice of titles, and I have known him to alter the name of an article two or three times in order to make the table of contents handsome and harmonious.

One day I found him pacing the floor of his office, knitting his brows and staring at vacancy. I wondered why. He was watching and waiting for a word, the one word to fit into a line of recently written prose. I suggested one; it would not answer. It must be a word of two syllables or the natural rhythm of the sentence would suffer. Thus he perfected his prose.

Once when he had taken me to task for a bit of careless work, then under his critical eye, and complained of a false number, I thought to turn away his wrath by a soft answer. I told him I had just met a man who had wept over a certain passage in one of his sketches.

"Well," said Hart, "I wept when I wrote it."

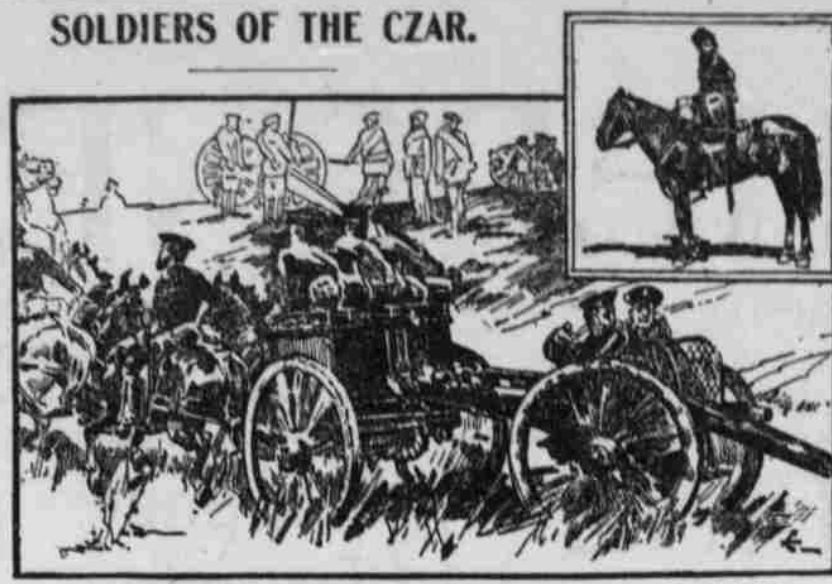
### Suspicious.

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.

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.

### SOLDIERS OF THE CZAR.



RUSSIAN FIELD BATTERY.

A COSSACK.

### Topics of the Times

Fish are unusually scarce in Lake Erie.

Porcelain is being used for water pipes.

American fashion plates are used in German tailor shops.

The United States sold Korea about \$400,000 worth of goods last year.

A portrait of Marconi is to be engraved on one of a new issue of Italian stamps.

California produces more oranges and lemons than any other State in the Union.

The United States mint at San Francisco is the largest institution of the kind in the world.

Iowa pays women school teachers less than any other State, the average salary being \$30.91 a month.

The port of New Chwang, at the mouth of the Liado River, is the greatest bean market in the world.

The secret of the art of writing is to have somewhat to say, and to say just that and no other.—Richard Grant White.

A London firm of tea dealers has been fined for including in the weight of packages of tea sold the weight of the paper wrapper.

The Russian officials are considering projects for dredging the mouth of the Petschora, in order to utilize the stream to better advantage.

The American automobile made its debut at Odessa for the first time during the last year, and five machines were sold which have given great satisfaction.

The city of Grenoble, France, installed its new system of electric lighting from a water power source twenty-seven miles distant, in the valley of the Romanche.

The shark has returned to European waters. In the Baltic, where sharks had been unknown since 1759, they have made their appearance in considerable numbers.

Special district technical schools for improving the artistic education of the working girls and designers are about to be opened in certain centers in St. Etienne, France.

A concession has been granted to a civil engineer, Mr. Eugenio de Andrade, for the building of an electric railway between Rio de Janeiro and Petropolis. Work must be begun within two years.

The frequent discovery of new diamond mines in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony is resulting in important orders being placed with British manufacturers for diamond washing machinery.

The island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean, will have a railroad. It is reported that an amount of 5,000,000 francs has been appropriated for the construction of a narrow gauge railroad line across the island.

The Sungari River emptying into the Amur is the waterway for the northern part of Manchuria and drains a district twice the size of the Liaw watershed, but having little, if any more, first-class agricultural country tributary to it.

American stationery is being more and more appreciated in Europe. Austria exports a large quantity of paper, but really good letter paper is exceedingly scarce there. Pens, pencils and erasers of Austrian manufacture are likewise inferior.

The whole import of live geese to Germany amounted to 6,229,055 in 1900, 6,431,247 in 1901, and 7,264,145 (valued at \$5,513,492) in 1902, a steady increase which is typical of most food imports which supply the great middle classes of the German people.

The French Minister of Finance has just published his report of the receipts from the tax on bicycles for the year 1903, the total sum collected on 979,750 bicycles being 6,921,238 francs (\$1,384,247.69). The number has increased from 229,816 in 1896 to the above figures in 1903.

### FLORIDA PINEAPPLE GROVE.

Woman Meeting with Great Success in Raising Fruit.

From a hard-working life behind the footlights to a calm and peaceful existence among the pines of sunny Florida is as great a change as could well be imagined, but this is what has just happened to Miss Jessie Mae Hall of New York, who for a mere song became the owner of a pine-apple grove of 244 acres in southern Florida.

There is no more profitable investment than a pineapple farm in good condition, according to the New York Trib-

une, one acre of such land in cultivation being equal in value to 100 acres of grain, and Miss Hall's farm has fifteen acres of pines, with five of bananas and 204 uncultivated acres. There is also no easier or more pleasant work, particularly for a woman, than pine farming. All she has to do is to order her slips, select her land, hire her help and superintend the planting. Then she can rest for a year or two, leaving nature to do its work. In twenty-four months or less the fruit will be ready for the market. It is not all play, but there is seldom any worry as to the successful marketing of the crop; for the pineapple, coming, as it does, when strawberries are pretty well over and the peach crop not yet at its height, is always heartily welcomed.

The expense of putting the land under cultivation is comparatively small, amounting to about \$800 for the first year, while each succeeding year brings the cost down. If no help has to be hired the expense can be reduced to about \$50 an acre, with an expenditure of about \$20 more before the first crop is produced. The returns in the case of Miss Hall's farm last year were \$1,000 an acre.

The cultivation of the land after the crop has been set out is a matter which requires almost no attention. The only danger is from the droughts to which the pineapple district of Florida is liable and which occur between the time of blooming and the time of ripening. Sometimes these droughts are of a month's or six weeks' duration, with a total rainfall of an inch, and the effects are serious. The pineapple leaf, however, makes it resistant to drought, unless it is broken, which happens very early and causes the plant to lose its moisture. Special care must be taken, therefore, in all operations in the groves not to break the leaves.

The harvesting of the pines requires skill and care. In the first place, the gatherers must know just when to pick the fruit. The crates going by freight by summer must be filled with fruit that is just turning. Those going earlier in the season, or to a shorter distance, may hold fruit quite well colored. The gatherers wear leggings which reach to the knees and canvas mittens. They stand in rows, and as they break off the fruit by a dexterous twist they toss it to the "second helpers, who stand in the pathway between the rows of pines. These "seconds," as they are called, stack the fruit up carefully in pyramid rows, after which it is gathered and put in field crates and baskets, to be taken to the packing sheds. Here long tables cover the four sides of the room, and the workers sort and wrap the pines according to size and grade. There is no way of measuring the fruit; it has to be done by guess, but in a few weeks a man becomes so skilled in selecting pines of uniform size that the packers have no trouble in filling the crates.

It is in the groves that most care must be taken, for a fine specimen can be ruined by being carelessly broken. The gatherers are the most skilled of the laborers on a pineapple plantation and they receive the largest salaries.

The Judge Who "Cared."

By the retirement of Justice Mayer, who the other day presided for the last time at the children's court, the city loses a useful public servant. Fitting testimony to this loss was rendered in court by the representatives of charitable societies. But the best word was spoken by Meyer Cohen, a "probation boy," when he said, a little hoarsely:

"I was one of the first boys to come under you. You've been the best friend I ever had. You seemed to care whether I was square or not, and I wish that you wasn't going away from here."

Perhaps Justice Mayer was a trifle hoarse also—the weather has been so treacherous—when he replied that he should always take an interest in his young friend, and that "there are lots of you here in New York who don't have half a chance."

It is because "half a chance" is more than some poor boys get, and because if they were put with hardened criminals for slight offenses they might thereafter have no chance at all, that the children's court was opened. May it always have a man on the bench who "cares."—New York World.

High-Priced Advertising.

An advertiser paid \$5,000 for the privilege of painting the name of his product on a big chimney in lower New York where it could be seen from the North River ferries.

Among the Girls.

Lulu—She says her face is her fortune.

Flora—H'm! Well, I suppose there's such a thing as a fortune in brass.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

# Ayer's

One dose of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral at bedtime prevents night coughs of children. No croup. No bronchitis. A

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doctor's medicine for all affections of the throat, bronchial tubes, and lungs. Sold for over 60 years.

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