

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 XV.—(Continued.)

"Oh, I must know!" she murmured desperately; "why do I suffer so each time I take that potion; why does a consuming fire leap up within me every time the beverage passes my lips? What does it mean? Can it be poison?—Alas, poor Claire, it is poison. My life is an obstacle in the path of Lucian's happiness. Unless I die, I shall upset their project, their plans for the future. And it is he—Lucian—oh, no, no, no! I will not be the capable of soiling his soul with a believe it! He no longer loves me; he hates me, longs for my death—and yet, crime?—Impossible!—still, the fact remains; there is poison in that potion!"

Her lips compressed into a rigid line as she concluded. Gresham strode into the shadow of the beeches and paused beside her chair.

"Did you send for me?" he asked in his breezy way.

"Yes," she answered, compelling herself to glance up at him with her accustomed calmness. "Doctor, how do you find me this morning?"

"Stronger and better than you were yesterday; altogether a different woman to what you were a week ago."

"Perhaps it is my imagination," she murmured; then added, quickly, looking up with a forced smile, "if I am troubled by vapors, it is your duty as my physician to divert my mind. You promised to teach me something of botany when we got into the country—have you forgotten?"

"Not I!" returned Gresham, good-naturedly.

"Then, too, it would be useful to me to know something of chemistry. Naturally in our study of botany we shall meet with poisons—"

"And you should know how to combat with them," rejoined the doctor, falling innocently into the clever trap while he sought only to humor her.

"Yes, and how to decompose them," continued Claire; "for instance, I am likely to meet with the poisonous ivy. Do you know of an antidote against its power?"

Little dreaming what he did, Gresham thrust his hand into his inner pocket, drew forth a case, and from it took a small phial of colorless liquid.

"There is a substance," he said, placing the phial in Claire's hand as she rose to receive it, "which is not exactly an antidote, but which will serve to amuse you by detecting inherent poison in any plant we may discover. If a leaf, blossom or decoction of the same should be noxious, a single drop of this fluid will produce a startling change."

Standing erect beside the little table, Claire watched him as he crossed the sunny lawn, saw him pass between the veil of vines that screened the piazza; then she bent her gaze upon the glittering phial in her hand.

"At last I shall know!" she breathed, and straightway fell to trembling until she was forced to catch at the back of her chair to prevent her from falling.

"Oh, how my heart beats," she panted; "I scarcely dare subject myself to the test, and yet I must—must know the truth!"

With these words she uncorked the phial and held it above the potion which was destined for her.

"If there is poison here," she faltered, "a single drop of this liquid will alter the appearance of the contents of the glass. How my hand trembles! ah, senseless fluid, it is upon thee that all my happiness, my life depends."

An involuntary spasm rent her frame, dislodging a single drop of the fluid; it fell, meeting the surface of the potion and slowly sank, sank, sank to the bottom of the glass drawing in its wake a milky trail that told the baleful story. Out of the nerveless fingers, down upon the grasses fell the phial, while from her blanched lips escaped the words with strident horror.

"Yes, it is poison, poison! Oh, he seeks my death!"

She tottered faintly to the chair and sank into its depths, covering her eyes from the light of day with her hands. She failed to note the approach of hurrying footsteps, she scarcely heeded the voice of Lucian Courtlandt when he reached her side, exclaiming:

"Claire—in tears! what is the matter? You do not answer!" cried Courtlandt; "Claire, speak! are you ill?"

"No, I am not ill. Do you not know," she faltered, "that invalids have moments of weakness that they are powerless to control?"

"But of what were you thinking, Claire?"

"I was thinking of the epoch of our marriage, of the time when I was chosen to countenance your child. I was thinking how unfortunate it is that my very existence should be a wrong to another."

"I conjure you," he supplicated, "banish this horrible thought! all the world beseeches you to live! Claire, think only of your welfare!"

"In order to do that, I must follow the doctor's directions, must I not?" she asked bending a glance of fire upon his bowed head.

"Of course you must!" he replied.

"And must I take that potion, which has been—prepared for me?"

"Certainly you must, my darling."

"Pitying heaven, how she misjudged him then!"

"Then hand me it with your own hands," she said firmly; and as he rose and passed her the deadly draught, she murmured brokenly, "I am so young, Lucian—and oh! I should so liked to have lived a little longer!"

And then, with her eyes fixed upon his face, she drained the potion to the dregs, and flung the glass from her.

She sank upon her knees, gasping:

"Now it is done!"

As the lightning's shaft falls out of a clear heaven an inkling of the fearful truth dawned upon Lucian Courtlandt. He halted to the lips and cried wildly:

"Claire, what does this mean?"

He bent above her, striving to raise her, but she shrank away with horror at his touch, as a cry of anguish burst from his lips.

"Oh, heavenly Father, have pity upon my suffering and let me depart in peace!"

Then unconsciousness seized upon her, and she fell forward prostrate at his feet.

Within an hour a telegram winged its flight to Sylphide Couramont in New York. The message, cleverly veiled, ran as follows:

"Your commands have been executed. Expect me shortly to consult as to the location of the farm. CAMILLE."

CHAPTER XVI.

While we have been absorbed in the events recorded in the preceding chapters, the fate of our deplorable Civil War has been decided, and the glorious day of salvation for the slaves has dawned; the martyr President has issued his immortal proclamation declaring freedom in the States and parts of States then in rebellion, and there is not a foot that presses the soil of our great republic whose owner need ever again hide his head as he frames that humiliating query: "Am I not a man and a brother?"

The glad news had found Sylphide Couramont out in her seclusion in the great city; she received it calmly, triumphantly; indeed, the tidings of the death of her cousin, Oscar Couramont, shed down while skirmishing as a guerilla, apparently afforded her more joy; but the receipt of her hireling's telegram upon the same memorable day filled her with a wild, savage delight that she was powerless to control.

She paced her room, knotting her fingers in her long black tresses, emitting sharp cries and brief laughs that would have impressed an observer with the belief that she had taken leave of her senses.

Then she abruptly smote the bell upon her table a ringing peal. To the faithful Diana, who promptly answered the summons in person, she said:

"Pack up two or three of my hand-homest costumes, lay out my traveling dress, and order a cab to be at the door at five o'clock this afternoon."

"Are you going away?"

"Yes, for a few days."

"Where, Miss Sylph?"

"To Newport."

In the foggy dawn of the following day, Camille, the serving man, flitted like a shadow down Bellevue avenue and skulked in at the gates of the Courtlandt villa.

With a swift, fearful glance at the closed blinds of the house, he plunged in amongst some shrubbery and so made his way to the stables, cautiously raised an unlocked window at the back of the building and vanished.

His unnecessary display of stealth was ample evidence of the guilty frame of mind under which he labored, since at that early hour no one was astir, and had he possessed the fortitude to glance about him he would have perceived that his path was clear of any prying eye. But the wicked fee when no man pursued, and Camille was flying before the scourge of a craven conscience.

With Lucian Courtlandt's frantic cries for help ringing in his ears, he had left the villa on the preceding day, unperceived in the general excitement attendant upon poor Claire's fall.

Once safely in the stable, he quietly closed the window, and hearing a deep sigh of relief, flung himself into the hay, hoping to secure the advantage of an hour's sleep.

Hours passed; if he closed his lids over his burning eyes, they would fly wide, staring open as if worked by irresistible springs over which he had no control. No sleep for him, and he could only lie there—listening and waiting for he knew not what. Presently the voice of the coachman, as he called to rouse the sleeping groom, sent every drop of his cowardly blood to his heart, leaving his limbs frozen and inert.

Hours passed; a lance of the risen sun flashed in at a cob-webbed window above him, and rested warmly upon the dead clover tops and serene timothy heads which formed his couch. At last a bell rang and the coachman and groom left the stable for the villa kitchen to breakfast. By this means Camille was made aware that it must be ten o'clock or after.

His suspense became unbearable; the heat of the hay stifled him, and with a groan he crawled to the edge of his ambush and sprang lightly down upon the floor. Two minutes in the harness room, where the brushes and water served to make him presentable, and then he tiptoed to the open stable door and peeped out upon the sunlit scene. The glimpse was reassuring; no living being was in sight. Now was his chance to learn the consequences of his deed.

He crossed the driveway, skirted the lawn and was about to direct his steps in the direction of an unopened entrance to the villa, when in the shadowy path he suddenly found himself confronted by Martha Dunn.

"Oh!" exclaimed the faithful serving woman, recoiling a step, "how you scared me!"

"Excuse me, Mrs. Dunn; I didn't mean to," was the unsteady reply. "After what happened yesterday, you know," he said, insinuatingly, "I went away. I wasn't asked for, was I?"

"Not as I know of. Where did you go?"

"To look for a new place."

"Humph! You seem in a dreadful hurry."

"Well, my job is up here, and I've got to look out for myself. You don't seem to believe me."

"You're a fool! And a lunatic into the bargain," she added, as she saw the man's face change to a gray, unearthly pallor, his haggard eyes dilate and his mouth drop open; after which inexplicable performance, he turned with a stifled cry of dismay and fled away from her

into the shrubbery as though pursued by ten thousand fiends.

Good Martha Dunn might have ceased to wonder as to the cause of the panic which had assailed the man had she remembered that he had but just returned to the villa, and had she turned to see the apparition which Camille had seen standing at an uncurtained window—an apparition well calculated to put to flight the remnant of his courage!

But Martha Dunn had something better to do in life than to study the vagaries of a man whom she had instinctively despised from the first moment that she set eyes upon him; besides, a carriage had at that moment driven rapidly up to the entrance, from which alighted Philip Burgess in a state of no slight excitement. Step as fast as she would, Martha did not succeed in reaching the steps ere Dr. Gresham came forth to meet the new arrival.

"Speak, doctor!" cried Claire's father, in anguished accents, "my daughter—my child—"

"Calm yourself, Mr. Burgess."

"Calm myself—after the message you sent me last night? Oh, tell me, is Claire dead?"

"No."

"Heaven be praised!"

The grateful words were uttered with touching fervor, as the old gentleman sank upon a bench and clasped his hands in fervent thanksgiving. Seizing his opportunity, Gresham turned to Martha:

"Go and prepare your mistress to see her father," he said, and Martha quickly vanished into the house.

"Gresham," the old man said when they were alone, "tell me the worst; what is likely to happen?"

"Nothing. I have saved her, but she has been poisoned."

"Poisoned! How?"

"By the administration of arsenic."

"By whom?"

"I do not know. Silence! Here comes your daughter."

It was true. Upon the threshold Claire already stood with outstretched hands, her exquisite, flower-like face as pallid as the snowy gown that flowed about her. At sight of her, Philip Burgess struggled to his feet, with a cry, and Claire tottered into his embrace, and lay there as weakly as a stricken lily. Nothing to Gresham to leave them together, the old man murmured, "Claire, darling child, let us thank heaven that you are safe! Never again while I live will I leave you."

"My own dear father!"

"Oh, let me look at you and hold you close, my darling! To think that they wanted to kill you! Oh, I know all; Gresham has told me. But I am here now, and I will unearn the villain!"

"Father!"

"Or better, I will take you away from here. We will go at once. Do you fancy I will leave you longer the prey of people who hate you? To whom your life is a burden? No, no; we will go to-day. When I have placed you in safety, then I will undertake to discover the wretch, to force him to expiate his crime!"

She was trembling pitifully now, and her great eyes were fixed distractedly upon his livid face.

"But I ought not—I do not want to go," she wailed, "without the consent of my husband."

"Your husband?" cried Philip Burgess with withering contempt, "your husband who has failed to defend you!"

"Oh, in heaven's name, hush, hush! Accuse no one. It was I—I alone who wished to die!"

He recoiled from her in horror, and stood looking at her incredulously for a moment ere he panted:

"To die—you, you!"

"Yes," Claire replied with a fortitude born of her unreasoning woman's love, "I sought death by my own hand. I tried to commit suicide, but they would not let me die. Would they had!"

"And you did not think of your mother and me, who would have expired of grief, had we found you dead?" he cried, with a trenchant reproach.

"Pardon me, father, pardon!" she wailed.

And then came the terrible, the inevitable query, the closing of the trap which she had set for herself.

"But who forced you to commit so terrible a crime?"

(To be continued.)

Czar Will Change the Law.

It is reported that the Czar intends, should his next child be a daughter, to publish a new law of succession, under which, on a failure of sons, the eldest daughter of the reigning sovereign would, as in England, succeed to the throne. The decree will, it is said, greatly irritate the princes of the imperial house, who will thus be pushed back or superseded, but there can be no doubt that it is within the prerogative of the Czars, who have repeatedly decreed rules of succession.

The new scheme is, moreover, in full accordance with the history of Russia, where women have so often reigned, and there is no reason to believe that it would be unpopular. The arrangement seems to Englishmen the one most in accordance with the principle of hereditary monarchy, the Salic law involving the risk that a dynasty may perish. Male heirs have never been wanting in France, but they failed in Austria when Maria Theresa mounted the throne, and they have failed entirely in our own time in Holland. It is quite possible that the consent of the next heir has been obtained, as he is in ill health and his chance of surviving his brother is but a doubtful one.—London Spectator.

Romance vs. Realism.

Sentimental Maid—Of course, one must be inspired before he can write poetry.

Practical Poet—Sure thing. He must be inspired by a realization of the fact that he needs the money.

An Insinuation.

Mrs. Noctor—Do you believe our new neighbor is a man of character?

Noctor—Well, he has a character all right—such as it is.

Golf's a nice, foolish game, and there ain't no harm in it, so far as I know, except for the balls—the stiff balls at the beginning, the lost balls in the middle and the high balls at the end of the game.—George H. Lorimer, in "Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to His Son."

VICE PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE BECOME PRESIDENTS



JOHN TYLER.
ANDREW JOHNSON.

MILLARD FILLMORE.
CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

Inasmuch as the presidential campaign of 1904 is drawing near, with President Roosevelt mentioned as the probable candidate of the Republican party, it is of interest to note that his nomination would mark the exorcising of the seeming "hoodoo" that has in the past militated against those of our chief executives who became President by the death of the elected head of the nation. Prior to President Roosevelt there have been four Vice Presidents elevated to the presidential chair by the demise of its incumbents, the four being John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson and Chester A. Arthur.

Mr. Tyler was elected Vice President in 1840 on the celebrated "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" ticket and became President within little more than a month after the inauguration of General William Henry Harrison, who died in April, 1841.

The Whigs again came into power with the elections of 1848, General Zachary Taylor, of Indian and Mexican war fame, being elected Vice President. In July, 1850, President Taylor died, and Vice President Fillmore was at once sworn into office, forming a new cabinet, with Daniel Webster as Secretary of State.

The third accidental President was Andrew Johnson, who attained the presidency in 1865 when the assassin's bullet killed Abraham Lincoln. President Johnson's tenure of office was marked by a succession of disputes between the Chief Executive and Congress, the apex of dissension being reached when he was impeached for the removal from office of Secretary of War Stanton, etc. The break between the President and Congress hinged on the method to be followed in reconstructing the American Union.

Chester A. Arthur, who in 1880 was elected Vice President on the Republican ticket headed by James A. Garfield, took the oath of office as President of the United States Sept. 20, 1881, the day after Mr. Garfield died at Elberon, N. J., victim of Guitteau's pistol. Mr. Arthur's administration was not marked by any event of momentous importance, but was characterized by his opposition to extravagance in appropriations, his views on this matter leading him to veto the river and harbor bills of 1882.

RUSSIAN TROOPS AT MUKDEN.



One of the chief causes of the Russo-Japanese war was the refusal of the Czar's Government to withdraw the Muscovite soldiery from Manchuria and especially from Mukden, the capital of that province. Instead of taking these troops away, however, more have been constantly shipped in and added to the forces already present. At one time Russia did make a bluff at withdrawal, it is true, but eyewitnesses reported that the armies which marched out a day or two later marched in at another gate. At frequent intervals a few Slav regiments sally forth from their quarters in Mukden and parade through the streets to overawe the natives. Our illustration shows one of these processions and also gives a graphic idea of the appearance of Ivan in uniform.

A TRANSPORTATION EXPERT.

William Barclay Parsons, of the Panama Commission.

The most distinguished engineer on the Panama Commission is William Barclay Parsons. He won his spurs in railroad work in China for a syndicate of which the late Senator Calvin S. Brice was the head, but is best known as the designer of the subway in New York city for the Rapid Transit Commission, of which he has for several years been the chief engineer. His work in connection with the transportation problem in New York—to-day the most difficult and complicated transportation problem in the world—has been marked by a high order of ability and zeal. He may not have shown much originality, but it was not a field in which pioneering was desired. He is now recognized as one of the foremost transportation experts in the world, as is witnessed by the fact that he has been chosen an advisory member of the royal (English) commission which is to investigate and report upon the passenger traffic problem of London. Mr. Parsons is young and energetic, and on the Isthmus will find a field for original and constructive work of a higher and more interesting type than he has as yet had to deal with.



WM. B. PARSONS.

The Very Latest News.

"Your wife," began the reporter, "and the man with whom she eloped have just been caught in New York, where they lost their money and were stranded just as they were starting for Europe. We thought you'd want to hear the news, and—"

"That isn't the news," replied the man. "The news is that I've sent them enough money to see them through."—Philadelphia Press.

Then He Shows Himself.

Kwoter—You can never judge a man by his clothes.

Newitt—Unless he's clothed in a little brief authority. It's easy to size him up then.—Philadelphia Press.

Big Tunnel Progressing.

Nearly two-thirds of the twelve miles of the Simpson tunnel are now completed.

Ayer's

Your doctor will tell you that thin, pale, weak, nervous children become strong and well by taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla. Small doses, for a few days.

Sarsaparilla

The change is very prompt and very marked. Ask your doctor why it is. He has our formula and will explain.

"When 12 years old, for many months no one thought I could live because of thin blood. But in a few weeks, Ayer's Sarsaparilla completely restored me to health."
MRS. E. BUCKMINSTER, Vineland, N. J.

25¢ a bottle. All druggists. J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.

for The Children

Biliousness, constipation prevent recovery. Cure these with Ayer's Pills.

Her Big Feet.

A respectable old gentleman, somewhat tight, on entering an omnibus, got his feet entangled in a lady's dress and fell headlong. He staggered to his feet, and looking round, indignantly demanded who struck him. A gentleman present remarked sotto voce: "You fell over that lady's feet; nobody struck you."

The indignant citizen turned round and surveyed the cause of the accident a moment, and then, as if by no means satisfied with the cause of his mishap, said:

"Madame, you have got the biggest feet I ever saw!"

"Sir!" responded the lady, flushing with anger.

"Pray, don't apologize; it ain't your fault, but take my advice, sit sideways in the future, and give them the full range of the bus."

Rheumatism in Utah.

Frisco, Utah, May 2nd.—There is a great deal of rheumatism in this and neighboring states and this painful disease has crippled many a strong man and woman among an otherwise healthy people.

Recently, however, there has been introduced into Utah a remedy for Rheumatism which bids fair to stamp out this awfully painful complaint. The name of this new remedy is Dodd's Kidney Pills, and it has already wrought some wonderful cures. Right here in Frisco there is a case of a Mr. Grace who had Rheumatism so bad in his feet that he could hardly walk. He tried many remedies in vain but Dodd's Kidney Pills cured him.

His wife says:—"We both had Kidney Trouble and my husband had the Rheumatism so bad that he could hardly walk. We used Dodd's Kidney Pills with much benefit. We have tried many remedies, but none have done us so much good as Dodd's Kidney Pills."

Similar reports come from all over the state and it would seem as if Rheumatism had at last been conquered.

Uncle Sam's Coffee Bill.

It is estimated that the people of the United States drink 1,500,000,000 gallons of coffee in the course of a year, at a cost of about 10 cents per gallon. The importing cost of the requisite quantity of coffee berries for this supply at 7 cents a pound, is about \$75,000,000. From this it appears that preparation, package, distribution and dealers' profits make the prices to the consumer about double the importing cost.

Their Very Best.

Real Estate Agent—You really ought to buy the house. Now, if you and your wife will only discuss the matter thoroughly—

Peckham—Oh, that's out of the question. We never discuss things. The most we can ever do is dispute about them.—Philadelphia Press.

ABSOLUTE SECURITY.

Genuine

Carter's Little Liver Pills.

Must Bear Signature of

Wm. Wood

See Fac-Simile Wrapper Below.

Very small and so easy to take as sugar.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

FOR HEADACHE. FOR DIZZINESS. FOR BILIOUSNESS. FOR TORPID LIVER. FOR CONSTIPATION. FOR SALLOW SKIN. FOR THE COMPLEXION.

Price 25 Cents. GENUINELY PREPARED BY WOOD'S GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE.

CURE SICK HEADACHE.

PISO'S CURE FOR

GENUINELY PREPARED BY WOOD'S GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE.

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