

# The Planter's Daughter OR FATE'S REVENGE

By MRS. ALICE P. GARRISTON

Author of "A Walk from the Sea," "Her Brightest Hope,"  
"Wayward Winnifred," etc.

"Quick! Back to Rosemont, and keep the horses harnessed!" whispered the bride to the coachman, as she entered the carriage, followed by Courtlandt. 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 horse hooves behind us?"

Courtlandt 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. Until last winter he has, he says, gone to St. Augustine for one month every year, and has sold enough coins to make his trips profitable, says the New York Times. Every summer he has sold old coins to guests in the Saratoga hotels. He says he expects to go again this summer, because his curbstone business has been so good.

"Luck began to change with me since they began to pull down my store at 301 Broadway to make room for a sky-scraper," said the old-coin man. "I am gradually getting deaf. As you see, my customers must write on a pad what they want to say to me. 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

# The Planter's Daughter OR FATE'S REVENGE

By MRS. ALICE P. GARRISTON

Author of "A Walk from the Sea," "Her Brightest Hope,"  
"Wayward Winnifred," etc.

## CHAPTER II.

Summer was already upon the wane when Lucian Courtlandt arrived at Rosemont with letters of introduction to Col. Couramont. Being a rising young lawyer of promise, he had been intrusted with sundry important claims of Northern capitalists. Much of the property he was in search of lay along the shores of the Alabama river, and what more natural than that he should be well supplied with letters of introduction to the leading planters and gentlemen of influence in the vicinity?

Foremost and most influential among these persons stood Col. Couramont, the descendant of an illustrious French family, who, twenty years previous to the opening of our nation, had come from Louisiana with his year-old motherless daughter in his arms, and had purchased and had settled upon the grand estate of Rosemont.

He was reputed to be fabulously wealthy, and certainly his course of life bore evidence that the supposition was correct. He held high state at the Hall, his beautiful daughter was educated by resident masters of ability, and was always attired in imported costumes. The colonel owned a colony of slaves to whom he was a kind and considerate master, was the very soul of hospitality to the occasional guests that sought the shelter of his roof, and was accounted a happy man.

His love for his beautiful daughter was the one absorbing passion of his life; he loved and watched over her with a jealous, almost fearful pride, which did not escape the comment of the humblest of his neighbors.

To the outward world he was a proud and happy man, though it would have been evident to a close observer that his mind, for some mysterious reason, was not at peace. It was evident that he dreaded to be left a moment alone, while the light that invariably burned in his chamber at night had become a landmark to all belated wayfarers. Was he walking, thinking or reading, during those lonely night watches?

In point of fact, Francois Couramont was not a happy man; he bore up bravely for his daughter's sake, but as the years were added upon his brow, and too often the morning sun shone into haggard eyes. From this it may be inferred that some secret sorrow or dread gnawed, day and night, at his heart—that Francois Couramont was a haunted man.

Paradoxical as it may appear, Col. Couramont rather encouraged the advances of his scapegrace nephew, Oscar. The young man's dissipated habits were no secret to him, and yet he repeatedly assisted him when embarrassed, and took special pains to throw him into his daughter's company. Sylphide hated Oscar Couramont from the first, and did everything in her power to shun him when at Rosemont.

"You seem to forget that Oscar is your cousin," the colonel gently remonstrated upon one occasion.

"I am trying to forget it as fast as I can," was the impulsive rejoinder.

"And yet I would be glad to see you friends," urged the father. "Your influence might reform—might save him. Could you love him?"

Sylphide cut him short with an imperious gesture. She had drawn herself up to her full height, her black eyes flashed fire, and her supple frame fairly quivered with the passion that at times was ungovernable.

"Love him?" she cried, furiously. "I hate him, hate him, do you hear? And if you love me, you will never again mention his infamous name in my presence. If you think so much of him, bequeath him your entire property, but leave me my liberty!"

And she swept out of the room like an outraged queen. The colonel bent his head, and scolding tears blinded his sight, so he stretched his arms heavenward, crying:

"How am I punished! This fatal pride will prove my ruin. Some day she will love with all the strength of her passionate nature, and then—and then—oh, what a coward I am! I ought to tell her of the cloud which overshadows her life, but I cannot. I love her so, how can I see her wilt at my feet like some frost-blighted flower, crushed forever by the words of my own lips. Oh, no, no, I cannot!"

The touch of a soft, warm arm about his neck recalled him with a start to himself. It was Sylphide, come back to him, repentant. Her anger had passed like an April shower, and she was all contrite affection and tenderness.

"Father, darling," she whispered, dropping upon her knees at his side and gently drawing his hands from his tear-wet face, "do not forget that I have inherited the hot Spanish blood of my mother. That mother whom I have never known, but whom I love as a saint in heaven!"

"Yes, yes," he panted, feverishly, "love her, reverse her memory, for she was pure and good—pure as the angels! Oh, Sylphide, when that you will never lend an ear to the tongue of evil gossip. Your mother was too beautiful, too perfect, to escape the malice of rivals. But I charge you, by her memory, by your hope of heaven, never listen to aught that lying tongues might say against her."

"Father!"

"You know nothing as yet of the world's villainy, but I swear to you, here and now, as though I were upon my death-bed, your mother was pure and good in the sight of heaven, in my sight, her husband, and I beseech you so to love her that she may watch over you and bring you home to her bosom in God's own time."

One brief month later Francois Couramont lay speechless upon his death-bed, and it was only in the moments of disorientation, when he lay in his daughter's arms, that his parting breath framed the words:

## Continuous Farewells.

"Well," remarked the spectator at Mrs. Oldsters' 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.

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-fields, 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 brass throats had raised their voices in a doleful knell for a departed soul.

Nevertheless, in spite of the stormy wind that raged and the fitful 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 unbecoming 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 Couramont.

The respected gentleman had met an untimely death by accident while hunting, and the scent of the flowers that clustered about his face 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 Couramont, sole heiress and mistress of Rosemont.

She was attired in a trailing costume of black tulle relieved by an enormous bouquet of corsage of snowy jasmynes that tied with the ghastly pallor that overspread her faultless neck and exquisite face; while in her jet-black hair clustered more of the spectral flowers, shaded by a veil of lily 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 Couramont 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 Couramont almost staggered, yet clung 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 Courtlandt gave his wife his arm, and side by side they passed down the aisle amid the wondering throng, apparently unconscious of the volleys 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 Courtlandt 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 Couramont; 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, whither 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 banns, 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.

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

The parchment was there, safe and sound; the ring was upon her finger; she was fairly married—yet what meant this distressing doubt that assailed her? She flung herself into an easy chair before the toilet table and fell into a dispirited reverie. She wondered whether her mother had any such strange, inexplicable misgivings upon her wedding night; if she had, she pitied her. This was not the happiness she had dreamed of, sleeping; and fondly cherished, waking!

A passing step in the corridor smote her ear; she sprang to her feet and darted to the door. Outside she found a servant hurrying along.

"Where is Diana? Why is she not here to assist me?" she demanded, impatiently; "send her to me at once!"

She closed the door and paused without turning—spell-bound, as it were. Her woman's instinct warned her that she was no longer the sole occupant of the chamber; another presence beside her own was there! The door that communicated with her dressing room, and by which her maid might have entered, had not been opened; the flickering of the candles upon the toilet table betrayed the secret. The window upon the veranda had been opened and had afforded entrance to a man!

Yes, a man; and what is more, she knew who it was without turning her head. Her hands knotted convulsively as a single word escaped her tightly compressed lips.

"You!"

"Yes—I," came the prompt, defiant response in a low, harsh tone.

"How dare you force an entrance into my chamber?" she cried.

Oscar Couramont smiled coldly as he replied: "Softly—I have forced no entrance here; the window was not even locked. Besides, I have been at liberty to come and go in this house as I saw fit."

"During my father's life, yes; but I am a mistress here now!"

"I do not see that that fact alters the case so far as I am concerned."

"My husband shall answer that point!" she cried, indignantly, and turned towards the door, when a word of command arrested her.

"Stop! Where are you going?"

"To summon my husband."

"Does he carry his firearms about him?"

With a thrill of horror, Sylphide recalled the fact that, contrary to the custom of the time in the South, Lucian went unarmed and persisted in doing so, in spite of all remonstrance.

"I infer from your hesitation," continued Couramont, coolly, "that the man you call husband does not carry a revolver. But I do. Look at that!" And with a smart rap he placed a revolver on the corner of the toilet table.

Sylphide stared in bluish fascination at the shining toy.

"What would you do?" she gasped.

"Blow his brains out if he sets foot in this room. I'm a dead shot, as you know. Lock both those doors, and sit down there and listen to what I have to say to you."

(To be continued.)

## Requirements of Swedish School Law

The school law in operation in Sweden dates from Dec. 10, 1897. There must exist one elementary school in each parish, the school age for children being from 7 years to 14. The scholars who have not passed through all of the required classes when they are 14 must continue in school; on the other hand, those who have obtained the required knowledge before the fixed time can quit school. According to the law of 1900 concerning the employment of women and children in manufactories, minor children must not be employed unless they are 12 years of age and are in possession of their school certificate, certifying to the fact that they have completed the required course of study, says C. G. Bergman, in the Revue Pédagogique. Children under 13 years of age must not be employed more than six hours per day, nor before 6 a. m., nor after 7 p. m., and employers are compelled to provide for children under 15 years of age necessary and sufficient time for study. If parents and guardians persist in ignoring the legal requirements for schooling, they are warned by the president of the school council, and if these warnings are ignored the child is taken from such parents or guardians and given to other persons, or placed in a home provided for this purpose.

The maintenance of the child is at the expense of the parent or guardian, in certain places, as in Stockholm, for example, there are private board places wherein these neglected children are placed. The one at Stockholm contains usually about twenty children, whereas there are nearly 27,000 children in the primary schools. The children are kept in these public detention homes for from six to twelve months, after which period they are returned to their parents or guardians, but only on condition that they attend school regularly.

Instruction is entirely gratuitous in the primary schools, and the poorer children receive free the school necessities. Each school must remain open at least eight months, the length of the school day must not be more than six hours, the classes must be interrupted by regular recreation, and sufficient rest must be given the scholars between classes. The number of persons knowing how to read and write is an indication of the development of primary instruction; according to the figures of the Minister of War, there were in Sweden in 1900 out of 29,814 conscripts of the first year but twenty-three young men, that is .08 per cent, who could not read, and seventy-three, that is .24 per cent, who could not write, and the greater number of these were Finns of the most northerly part of the country.

Some of Solomon J. Solomon's most attractive pictures have been painted by gas-light. He has accustomed himself to artificial light.