

# A Cruel Revenge

BY LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "A Broken Betrothal," "Parted at the Altar,"  
"The Heiress of Cameron Hall," Etc., Etc.

(CONTINUED)

"You had better listen to reason," he said, angrily, "and not irritate me, or it will be the worse for you. Because I was unfortunate you deserted me and I with the wealthy young banker," he said, sneeringly. "But how long do you think he would stand by you if he knew you had at this moment another husband?"

"Let me pass!" exclaimed Rosebud. "I certainly declare that I am not, nor was I ever wife of yours. How dare you detain me, sir? I will call my husband!"

"Do so, my charming wife," retorted Fielding, fairly livid with suppressed rage. "I am desirous of making that gentleman's acquaintance, and politely requesting him to restore me my wife, who has the cool effrontery to repudiate my prior claims. One word from me and the honorable Raymond Leslie will spurn you from him. I am quite confident you have never told him you were a convict's bride before you wedded him. Do not turn love to hate, Rosebud. Come, fly with me now, and I will forgive you for your cruel desertion. We will go far away where the past shall never be discovered and begin life anew. What do you say?"

"Leave me, you vile wretch!" cried the poor, tortured young creature, turning upon him as a stag at bay turns on the hounds that goad it on to death and destruction. "I defy you! I am the wife of the noblest man who ever lived, whom I worship almost to madness. I am not your wife, and I repeat I never was your wife. No, no, I am not your wife. My husband would have little mercy upon you if you dared breathe such a false story to him, and the whole world would laugh you to scorn."

"The consequence of your own folly rests upon your own head. You defy me to the last—well, we shall see. What would you say if I were to send for Maud Aiden and your step-mother, and for the justice of the peace who married us, and the two witnesses, his wife and daughter, who saw the ceremony performed? In the face of all this evidence would you dare deny that you are Rosebud Fielding, my wife? Ha! you would not dare deny my claim then."

"While my breath lasts I shall have but one answer!" she cried, brave and dauntless to the bitter end. "I am not your wife."

"We shall soon see," he declared, turning on his heel with a diabolical laugh.

## CHAPTER XXX.

"Why does Heaven not strike me dead?" wailed poor Little Rosebud, piteously, sinking down upon her knees in the long grass and burying her terrified face in the sweet, pitying roses. "I have nothing to live for! He will go to Raymond and tell him all, and he will never forgive me for deceiving him so. Was

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my folly so great that I should be so sorely tried?"

Poor Little Rosebud! she was paying a bitter price—and all for love's sake.

"I am hunted down!" cried the wretched girl. "Ruin lies on all sides of me! His love tempted me so," she sobbed, "and if I had not married him my life would have been a blank."

No idle sophistries came in this bitter hour to ease her conscience or take away the sting of her sorrow.

Rosebud no longer excused herself or saw things through a false medium. She stood face to face with the full extent of her folly—with no veil of illusion hiding the cruel reality from her.

"Was I mad to do it?" she cried out wildly. "Would not a child have been wiser and more prudent?"

She had braved all to win Raymond Leslie's love. She had won it, and now her sin was finding her out.

"It has all been wrong," she cried, "from beginning to end, and nothing could undo it!"

Yet she felt the pitiful truth, if all the love in the world were compressed into one heart it would offer no excuse to handsome, honorable Raymond Leslie for what she had done. She realized dimly:

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart."

"Tis woman's whole existence."

"I might have been so happy here," she wailed, "if my enemy had not tracked me down!"

But, through all her sorrow, how strange it was she did not for one moment repent for what she had done! Her agonizing cry was, "Why could it not have lasted forever—I was so happy here?"

He would not see Raymond to-day, she told herself; he would perfect his plan of revenge to-day, and to-morrow the dreaded blow would fall.

"I shall have a few hours more of happiness!" she cried, springing quickly to her feet. "Why am I wasting the golden moments?"

A sudden hope sprang up in her heart. All was not yet lost. She could only persuade Raymond to leave for New York that very night, the calamity might be averted, and the sword which hung above her head might not fall yet.

"He loves me now," she cried out, wildly, "why not persuade him, with that love, to fly from here at once—go to New York—to Europe—travel ceaselessly—anywhere—anywhere to escape Percy Fielding and the detection that may one day overtake me? All I ask from Heaven, in this world is Raymond's love!" she cried, beseechingly, raising her white hands up to the blue sky. "Why should it be denied me? I can not lose the only blessing life holds for me! Let Heaven ask any other sacrifice than that, and I will not murmur; but I can not give up Raymond's love—my heart and very soul would wither without the sunshine of his love! I will not lose heart," she said—"not even yet. I will succeed, or I will die!"

Through the branches of the trees she saw Raymond approaching in search of her, and she saw by his careless, buoyant step and happy, smiling face he had not seen Percy Fielding yet.

"Why, what is the matter, darling?" cried Raymond. "How ill you look! What is it?"

"I think the heat made me feel faint for half a minute," she replied, tremulously, trembling like a leaf against the strong arm thrown so protectingly about her slender waist.

"Take me into the house, Raymond; I feel tired and weary."

"The heat!" cried her young husband, anxiously gazing into her white face. "Why, my darling, you are actually shivering, and those tiny little hands are as cold as ice! You are surely ill—and on the eve of our journey, too; for I had just come to tell you, if you were so very anxious to go, I possibly might arrange matters to start to-morrow."

To his dying day Raymond Leslie never forgot the glorious light that broke over Rosebud's face, her happiness was so intense. She cried out aloud:

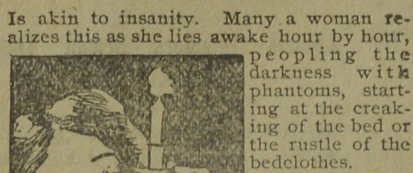
"Oh, my darling, God has heard my prayer at last!" then threw up her little hands and fell fainting at his feet.

When she awoke to consciousness she found her husband and the family physician bending over her.

"I had intended going to-night," she heard her husband say, "but, of course, my wife's illness prevents it. I think I shall take your advice, doctor, and remain here for the present."

"Her nerves seem to have had a

## Sleeplessness



Is akin to insanity. Many a woman realizes this as she lies awake hour by hour, peopling the darkness with phantoms, starting at the creaking of the bed or the rustle of the bedclothes. Such symptoms in general point to disease of the delicate womanly organs, and a constant drain of the vital and nervous forces. This condition cannot be overcome by sleeping powders. The diseased condition must be cured before the consequences of disease are removed.

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Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets should be used with "Favorite Prescription" whenever a laxative is required.

severe shock," returned the physician, "still, not necessarily dangerous; all she needs is complete rest and quiet, and home, above all other places in the world, is the only place to find rest."

The moment the door closed on the retreating physician poor Little Rosebud sprang up from among the soft, lace pillows with a heartrending sob that brought her anxious young husband to her side.

"Oh, Raymond, don't listen to him!" she sobbed. "Indeed, he does not know. I must get away from here to-night—this very hour—or my heart will break! If you love me, Raymond, you will listen to my prayer."

"Of course I love you, my darling," he replied, bending tenderly over her; "that is just the reason I intend to be so careful of you; and as to attempting such a long journey, weak as you are, it is simply not to be thought of."

"For the sake of our love, Raymond, do not refuse me," she pleaded. "There are times when the doctors are all wrong. You would see, darling, that it was for the best. If you refused me I would die, and when you looked upon my face, cold in death, you would remember, love, how hard I pleaded with you to take me away at once."

It was hard to refuse his young wife anything she asked for, and he could not find it in his heart to refuse her eloquent prayer now, and in spite of his better judgment and against the physician's express orders, he reluctantly consented to continue the preparations he had commenced for starting that night.

He never forgot the delight on Rosebud's face.

"My whole life shall repay you for it," she cried, gratefully, gazing up into his face with her eloquent blue eyes fairly glowing in a transport of joy.

In an instant all traces of illness seemed to leave her, and she flitted about like a robin, helping her deft little maid arrange the trunks.

Raymond was certainly puzzled. His little bride was as happy as a child. He laughed amusedly as he watched her. The promise of starting that night certainly worked wonders, he told himself.

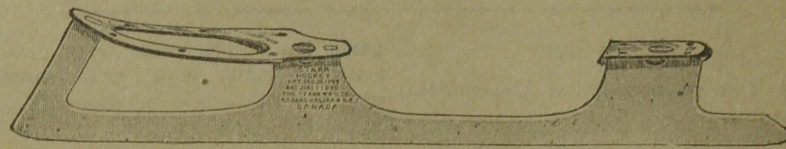
[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## The Best Remedy for Croup.

(From the [Atchison, Kan., Daily Globe])

This is the season when the woman who knows the best remedies for croup is in demand in every neighborhood. One of the most terrible things in the world is to be awakened in the middle of the night by a whoop from one of the children. The croup remedies are almost as sure to be lost, in case of croup, as a revolver is sure to be lost in case of burglars. There used to be an old-fashioned remedy for croup, known as hive syrup, but some modern mothers say that Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is better, and does not cost so much. It cures the patient to "throw up the phlegm" quicker, and gives relief in a shorter time. Give this remedy as soon as the croupy cough appears and it will prevent the attack. It never fails and is pleasant and safe to take. For sale by all druggists.

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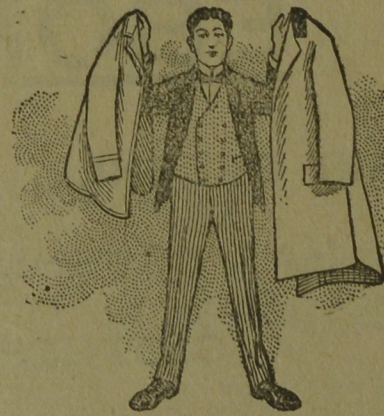
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