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FLORABEL'S LOVER

By LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "When Lovely Maiden Stoops to Folly," "A Broken Betrothal," "Parted by Fate," "Parted at the Altar," etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS.

Florabel was a dependent of her step-father, Squire Pemberton. His daughters hate Florabel, and when the Squire dies, order her out of the old home. Max Forrester a rich young man marries her and introduces her into his family the members of which disapprove of his marriage, as they wanted him to marry Miss Clavering, an heiress.

CHAPTER XIV—(Continued.)

Oh, God! the world was so big, so cold, so desolate, where should she go? Which way should she turn?

As she walked along in the intense cold she thought of the story of poor Gretchen, who had crept up between the gray, cold walls, and died there, on just such a bitter night. There they had found her the next morning, frozen cold and dead, her young face upturned to the morning light, the white snow on her long, dark hair, and enfolding her like a shroud. How often in her childhood, which seemed so far back, she had wept over the story of poor Gretchen. Would her own fate be the same?

Suddenly she became aware that she was followed; footsteps which had kept pace with her own were close beside her.

The next instant a familiar voice whispered in her ear:

"Well, my dear Miss Dean, haven't you had enough of this?"

Drawing back with a start, she found herself face to face with Charles Whitney.

A wild, bitter cry broke from her lips; she turned to fly, but he caught her arm in a firm grasp.

"Listen to me, my dear," he cried. "I'm not an ogre, am I?"

The stifled cry had reached the ears of a gentleman passing. Wheeling about abruptly, he saw by the flickering gaslight the slender figure struggling in a man's grasp.

In an instant he had sprung to the rescue.

"You villain!" he cried, "release that unprotected girl."

"Move on and attend to your own affairs. I'm attending to mine," cried Whitney, angrily.

Before he could gather his senses together he found himself measuring his full length in the deep snow on the pavement.

"You may go your way in peace, madam," said Max Forrester (for it was he), raising his hat respectfully to the shrinking figure cowering back amid the shadows. "I will see that this fellow does not molest you further. He shall move on in the opposite direction, or I will have him taken care of."

He heard a low sound, like a smothered imprecation. A little white hand was thrust out toward him.



"A woman's rank lies in the fullness of her womanhood." A sick woman, a nervous woman, a fretful woman, a woman who suffers from weakness and disease of the delicate and important organs that constitute womanhood, a woman doomed to childlessness, is not a real woman. The most glorious duty and privilege of womanhood is motherhood. The childless woman cannot be a happy woman. A woman whose first-born's fingers, cannot know the full measure of happiness possible to a woman. There are thousands of unhappy women who go through life without knowing the supreme happiness of motherhood, who go each day through a faithful but weary round of work, and live almost loveless and usually pain-racked lives, because they neglect to take care of themselves in a womanly way. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the most wonderful of all medicines for ailing women. It acts directly on the delicate and important organs that make maternity possible. It makes them well and strong. It fits for wifehood and motherhood. It banishes the dangers of maternity. It does away with the discomforts of the period of anticipation and makes baby's coming easy and almost painless. It insures the new comer's health and an ample supply of nourishment. Thousands of homes that only lacked a baby as a final binding tie, now bless this marvelous remedy for the ring of childish laughter. It soothes pain, tones the nerves and makes a woman's work easy. All medicine dealers sell it.

who never knows the caressing touch of a first-born's fingers, cannot know the full measure of happiness possible to a woman.

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"I miscarried four times," writes Mrs. Florence Hunter, of Corley, Logan Co., Ark. "Then, after taking four bottles of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription I made my husband a present of a fine, healthy girl."

Tiny, sugar-coated granules that always cure biliousness and constipation—Doctor Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. They regulate

max, believing it to be a mute pleading for alms, threw back his heavy fur overcoat, and drawing a bill from his vest pocket thrust it into the outstretched hand.

"Take that, my poor creature, and secure a good night's lodging for yourself and a warm supper," he said, kindly. "It's a wild night for human beings to be out unless they have urgent business."

While he had been speaking, Whitney, fearing arrest and the expose which would surely cost him his position in the large dry goods house of which he was manager, made good his escape. Better lose track of the perverse little beauty, Miss Dean, altogether than anything like that should occur.

Florabel had recognized Max's voice instantly. Faint and dizzy, she fell covering back against the flickering gas lamp, drawing her veil down closer over her face.

"Max," she whispered, "my darling, my love, don't you know me?"

But the whisper died away on her lips, making no sound. Then she had reached out her fluttering hand to him.

Oh, how she tried to call him as she saw him turn away; but Heaven seemed to have taken her voice away from her—stricken her dumb.

Lifting his hat pleasantly again, Max Forrester walked hastily down the street, and in a single moment was lost to sight in the impenetrable darkness beyond.

With eyes blinded by tears Florabel raised the bill to her lips, covering it with passionate kisses. She would have died rather than have parted with it, because he had given it to her.

Ah, how kind he was to every one—even a passing stranger on the street—this handsome young husband who had been so cruel to her.

She had meant to tell him of the life and death of that little one—of whom he had never heard the existence—on whose grave the snow was falling to-night. Would he take her back to his heart, to the shelter of his arms, for that little baby's sake?

Max Forrester had passed on with a strange, unaccountable sensation at his heart.

The impulse was strong within him to turn back, and conduct her from out the storm to a place of shelter. But when he turned and retraced his footsteps to put his thought into execution, she was nowhere in sight. She had fled down the street; and thus, two lives, so incomplete without each other, drifted apart again.

Winter was over at last, and once more the early spring flowers dotted the hills and vales, and it happened that business brought Max Forrester once more to Boston.

The beauty of the morning tempted him beyond his hotel, to take an early ride through the suburbs.

"What place is that?" he asked the driver, indicating a tall, red brick building, the dome of which was just visible over the tall cedars.

"That, sir," responded the man, "is the Orphan Asylum. If you like we can drive through the grounds. It's an interesting sight to many to see the little waifs at play."

Max signified his intention of wishing to go through the grounds—he could never have told why.

It was just after the breakfast hour, and most of the children were out in the grounds.

Max looked pityingly at the poor little creatures, who knew not the blessings of a home—knew not what it was to be fondled and caressed like other children in loving parents' arms.

One little waif attracted Max's attention particularly. She was a sweet little creature, with great, wistful brown eyes, and crinkled golden curls framing one of the prettiest of dimpled faces.

The little one could not be much more than two summers. It carried in its hand a little painted toy balloon.

The nurse sprang down the path after it, crying, shrilly and angrily: "Floy! Floy! I say, you must not fly your balloon; you will frighten the gentleman's horses."

"Ess, I will," pouted the child, "me doin' to fly my b'loom—me is."

"I'll learn you to obey and not be so contrary," cried the angry woman, snatching the toy from the child's hand, and administering a

check, which caused the child to fall back with a cry of pain.

Max Forrester, who was riding past, saw and heard all, and it seemed to him that blow had struck him like a dagger's thrust through the heart, hurting him worse than it had the little one.

With a face white as death, he sprang from his carriage, and raised the child from the grass, where it had fallen face downward.

A yearning impulse prompted him to bend his head, and passionately kiss the lovely little face. As if by magic, the wild sobbings, and the little one's beautiful eyes sought his. Oh, God! the pity of it—he was clasping close to his heart his own child, yet, by the cruel mockery of fate, he was destined not to know it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"How dared you do such a thing?" cried Max Forrester, pale with fury. "Is this the way you treat the little ones placed under your charge? I shall report this matter without delay."

"Oh, sir, if you only knew how tiresome it is watching these children, you wouldn't wonder that I get out of patience sometimes."

Too indignant to reply to her, and bidding the driver wait there for him, he strode on to the house, bearing the little one in his arms.

The kind hearted matron heard his story with deep concern.

"We try to have the kindest of nurses for the little ones," she said; "but they all need constant watching. Come, Floy, my little pet; come to me, dear. The gentleman was very kind to bring you to me."

(To be continued.)

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- Orchestra.....
- 1. Physical Culture—Emerson Exercises to Musical Accompaniment.....
Gentlemen: Messrs R C Macpherson, G R Macmillan, J E F Cahill.
Ladies: Misses Edith Stewart, Eva Hyde, Fannie Macmillan.
Director: Miss Isobel Macmillan.
Piano: Miss Smallwood.
Cornet: Miss Gwendoline Welsh.
- 2. Reading—"How Do I Hear the Messiah".....
Miss Flo Mackenzie.
- 3. Violin Solo (selected).....
Prof. Vinnicombe.
- 4. Reading—"In a Sleeping Car".....
(a farce).....
Howells
Miss Josie Stentiford.
- 5. Vocal Solo—"Odi Tu".....
Mattei
Mr F J Stanley.
- 6. Reading—"Scene from Quo Vadis—
"Rescue of Lygia".....
Miss Ruby Rattray.

PART II.

- Orchestra.....
- 7. Reading—"The Last Shot".....
Mr Kenneth Macpherson.
- 8. Piano Trio.....
- 9. Amateur Ladies' Drama—"The Champion of Her Sex" (cast).....
Mrs Duplex, a widow with money and a Mission, Isobel Macmillan.
Mrs Deborah Hartshorn, her Mother, Ruby Rattray.
Florence Duplex, her Daughter, Eva Hyde.
Carolina Duplex, her Step-daughter, Bessie Burke.
Rhoda Dendron } Friends.....
Pollie Nay }
Miss Flo Mackenzie.
Katie O'Neill } Maids.....
Maggie Donovan }
Edith Stewart and Josie Stentiford
- 10. Vocal Solo (selected).....
Miss Florrie Earle
- 11. Reading—(a) "Shandon Bells".....
(b) "The Bells".....
E A Poe
Mr J J Macgowan.

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Cheap Solid Gold Frames of a poor quality not kept in stock, as a good Gold Filled Frame is in every way preferable, but for 10 days we will give 25 per cent off all our good Solid Gold Spectacles and Eye Glasses.
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