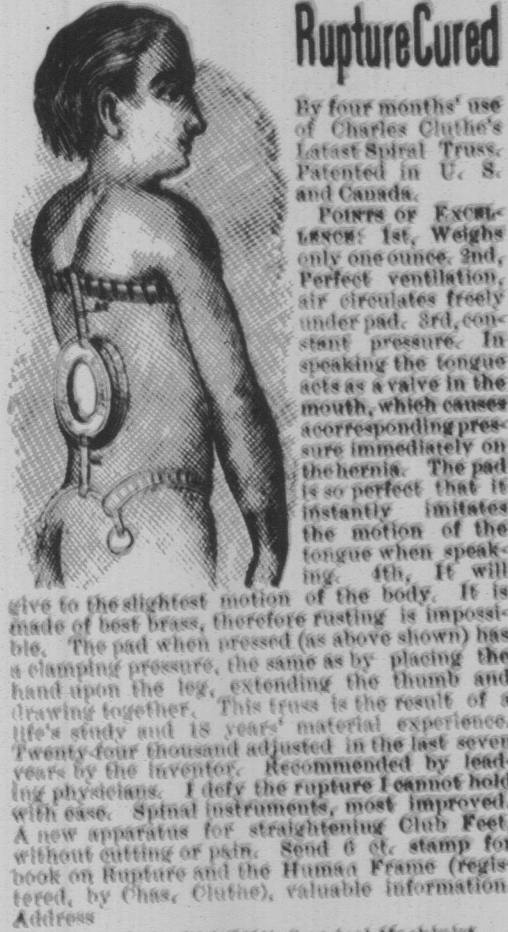


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JANE SINCLAIR;
OR, THE FAWN OF SPRINGDALE.
(Continued from last week.)
PART III.

"I don't like death—it took away my baby—if they would give me back my baby I would not care—except John—I would hide from him."
"William married to another and lying, so that you may become a queen of sorrow too—would you like that—sorrow is a sweet thing."
"How could he marry another, and be promised to me?"
"Is your heart cold?" inquired Jane.
"No," replied the other smiling, "indeed I am to be married to-morrow!"
"Let me see you early in the morning," said Jane; "if you do, perhaps I may give you this," showing the letter. "Your heart cannot cold if you keep it—carry it here," said she, putting her hand to her bosom—"but I need not, for mine will be warm enough soon."
"Mine's warm enough too," said the other.
"If William comes, you will find poison on his lips," said Jane, "and that will kill you—the poison of polluted lips would kill a thousand faithful hearts—it would—and there is nothing for treachery but sorrow. Be sorrowful—be sorrowful it is the only thing to ease a deserted heart—it eases mine."
"But then they say you're crossed with love."
"No, no—with sorrow; but listen, never violate truth—never be guilty of falsehood; if you do, you will become unhappy; and if you do not, the light of God's countenance will shine upon you."
"Indeed it is no lie, for as sure as you stand there to-morrow is the day."
"I think I love you," said the gentle and affectionate Jane. "Will you kiss me? My sister Agnes does when I ask her."
"Why should I, my bonnie, bonnie lady? Why should I? Oh! indeed, but you are bonnie, and yet be cruel with love! Well, well, he will never comb a gray head that deserted the bonnie Fawn of Springdale."
Jane, who was much the taller, stooped, and with a smile of melancholy, but unconscious sympathy, kissed the forlorn creature's lips, and after beckoning Agnes to follow her, passed on.
"That embrace! Who could describe its character? Oh! man, man, and woman, we man, think of this!"
Agnes, after Jane and she had returned home, found that a search had been instigated during their absence for the letter which Charles had written to his father, Mr. Sinclair, anxious to return it, had missed it from among his papers, and felt sorely concerned at its disappearance.
"I only got it to read to the family," said he, "and what am I to say, or what can I say, when Mr. Osborne asks me, as he will, to return it? Agnes, do you know anything of it?"
Agnes, who, from the interview between Jane and the unsettled Fanny Morgan, saw at once that it had got, by some means unknown to the family, into her sister's hands, knew not exactly in what terms to reply. She saw too, that Jane looked upon the possession of the letter as a secret, and in her presence she felt that considering her sister's view of the matter, and her state of mind, she could not, without pressing too severely on the gentle creature's sorrow, inform her father of the truth.
"Papa," said the admirable and considerate girl, "the letter I have no doubt will be found. I beg of you, papa, I beg of you not to be uneasy about it; it will be found."
"This she said in a tone as significant as possible, with a hope that her father might infer from her manner that Jane had the letter in question."
The old man looked at Agnes, and appeared as if striving to collect the meaning of what she said, but he was not long permitted to remain any doubt upon the subject.
Jane approached him slowly, and putting her hand to her bosom, took out the letter and placed it upon the table before him.
"It came from him," said she, "and that was the reason why I put it next my heart. You know, papa, he is dying, and this letter is a message of death. I thought that such a message was more proper from him to me than to any one else. I have carried it next my heart, and you may take it now, papa. The message has been delivered, and I feel that death is here—for that is all that he and it did left me. I am the star of sorrow—pale and mournful in the lonely sky; yet she asked as she did on another occasion, 'we shall not all die, but we shall be changed.'"
"My sweet child," said Mr. Sinclair, "I am not angry with you about the letter; I only wish you to keep your spirits up, and not be depressed so much as you are." She appeared quite exhausted, and replied not for some time; at

length she said:
"Papa, mamma, have I done anything wrong? If I have tell me. Oh, Agnes—Agnes, but my heart is heavy."
"As sure as heaven is above us, Henry," whispered her mother to Mr. Sinclair, "she is upon the point of being restored to her senses."
"Alas, my dear," he replied, "who can tell! It may happen as you say. Oh how I shall bless God if it does! But still, what will it be but, as Dr. McCormick said, the light before death? The child is dying, and she will be taken from us for ever, for ever!"
Jane, whilst they spoke, looked earnestly and with a struggling eye into the countenances of those who were about her; but again she smiled pensively, and said:
"I am—I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springdale is no more—I am now nothing but sorrow. I was the queen, but now I am the star of sorrow. Oh! how I long to set in heaven!"
She was then removed to bed, where with her mother and her two sisters beside her—she lay quiet as a child, repeating to herself—"I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky; but now I know that I will soon set in heaven. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springdale is no more. No! I am not the star of sorrow!" The melancholy beauty of the sentiment seemed to soothe her, for she continued to repeat these words, sometimes aloud and sometimes in a sweet voice, until she fell gently asleep.
"She is asleep," said Agnes, locking upon her still beautiful but mournful features, now, indeed composed into an expression of rapt sorrow. They all stood over the bed, and looked upon her for many minutes. At length Agnes clasped her hands, and with a suffocating voice, as if her heart would break, exclaimed, "Oh mother, mother," and rushed from the room that she might weep aloud without awakening the afflicted one who slept.
Another week made a rapid change upon her for the worse, and it was considered necessary to send for Dr. McCormick, as from her feebleness and depression they feared that her dissolution was by no means distant, especially as she had for the last three days been confined to her bed. The moment she saw her, his opinion confirmed their suspicions.
"Deal gently with her now," said he; "a fit or a paroxysm of any kind would be fatal to her. The dear girl's unhappy race is run—her sands are all but numbered. This moment the thread of life is not stronger than a gossamer." Ere his departure on that occasion, he brought Mr. Sinclair aside and thus addressed him:
"Are you aware, sir, that Mr. Osborne's son has returned?"
"Not that he has actually returned," replied Mr. Sinclair, "but I know that he is daily expected."
"He reached his father's house," continued the doctor, "early yesterday, and such a pitiable instance of remorse as I have never seen, and I hope never shall. His cry is to see your daughter, that he may hear his forgiveness from her own lips. He says he cannot die in hope or in happiness, unless she pardons him. This, however, must not be—I mean an interview between them—for it would most assuredly prove fatal to himself; and should she see him only for a moment, that moment would be her last."
"I will visit the unhappy young man myself," said his father; "as for an interview it cannot be thought of—even if they could bear it, Charles forgets that he is the husband of another woman, and that, consequently, Jane is nothing to him—and that such a meeting would be highly—grossly improper."
"Your motives, though perfectly just, are different from mine," said the doctor. "I speak merely as a medical man. He wants not this to bury him into the grave—he will be there soon enough."
"Let him feel repentance towards God," said the old man heavily—"towards my child is now unavailing. It is my duty, as it shall be my endeavor, to fix this principle in his heart."
The doctor then departed, having promised to see Jane on the next day but one. This gentleman's opinion, however, with respect to his beautiful patient, was not literally correct; still, although she lingered longer than could naturally be anticipated from her excessive weakness, yet he was right in saying that her thread of life resembled that of the gossamer.
In the course of the same evening, she gave the first symptom of a lucid interval; still in point of fact her mind was never wholly restored to sanity. She had slept long and soundly, and after awaking rang the bell for some one to come to her. This was unusual, and in a moment she was attended by Agnes and her mother.
"I am very weak, my dear mamma," said she, "and although I cannot say that I feel any particular complaint—I speak of a bodily one—yet I feel that my strength is gone, and that you will not be troubled with your poor Jane much longer."
"Do not think so, dear love; do not think so," replied her mother; "bear up, my darling, bear up, and all may yet be well."
"Agnes," said she, "come to me. I know not—perhaps—dear Agnes."
She could utter no more. Agnes flew to her, and they wept in each other's arms for many minutes.
"I would be glad to see my papa," she said, "and my dear Maria and William. Oh mamma, mamma, I suspect that I have occasioned you all much sorrow."
"No, no, no—but more joy now, my heart's own treasure, a thousand times more joy than you ever occasioned us of sorrow. Do not think it, oh, do not think it."
Her father, who had just returned from visiting Charles Osborne, now entered her bed-room, accompanied by William and his two daughters—for Agnes had flown to inform them of her happy turn which had taken place in Jane's malady. When he entered, she put her white but wasted hand out and raised her head to kiss him.
"My dear papa," said she, "it is so long, I think, since I have seen you; and Maria, too. Oh, dear Maria, come to me—but you must not weep, dear sister. Alas, Maria,"—for the poor girl wept bitterly—"Oh, my sister, but your heart is good and loving. William"—she kissed him, and looking tenderly into his face, said:
"Why, oh, why are you all in tears? Imitate my papa, dear William. I am so glad to see you! Papa, I have been—I fear I have been—but, indeed, I remember when I dreamed as much. My heart is heavy when I think of all the grief and affliction I must have occasioned you; but you will all forgive your poor Jane, for you know she would not do as if she could avoid it. Papa, how pale and careworn you look! as, in-

deed, you all do. Oh, God help me. I see, I see—I read on your sorrowful faces the history of all you have suffered on my account."
They all cherished, and petted, and soothed the sweet creature; and, indeed, rejoiced over her as if she had been restored to them over the dead.
"Papa, would you get me the Bible," she continued. "I wish if possible to console you and the rest; and mamma, you will think when I am gone of that which I am about to show you; think of it all of you, for indeed an early death is sometimes a great blessing to those who are taken away. Alas! who can say when it is not!"
They assisted her to sit up in the bed, and after turning over the leaves of the Bible, she read in a voice of low impressive melody the first verse of the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah.
"The righteous perisheth, and no man taketh it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace."
"Oh! many a death," she continued, "is wept for and lamented by friends and relatives, who consider not that those for whom they weep may be taken away from the evil to come. I feel that I am unable to speak much, but it is your Jane's request, that the consolation to be found, not only in this passage, but in this book, may be applied to your hearts when I am gone."
This effort, slight as it was, enfeebled her much, and she lay silent for some time; and was their anxiety, neither to excite nor disturb her, that although their hearts were overflowing they restrained themselves, so far as to permit no startling symptoms of grief to be either seen or heard. After a little time, however, she spoke again:
"My poor bird," said she, "I fear I have neglected it. Dear Agnes would you let me see it—I long to see it." Agnes in a few minutes returned and placed the bird in her bosom. She carried it for a short time, and then looking at it earnestly said:
"Is it possible, that you too, my Ariel, are a-roosting?"
This indeed was true. The bird had been for some time past as feeble and delicate as if its fate were bound up with that of its unhappy mistress—whether it was that the sight of it revived some recollection that disturbed her, or whether this brief interval of reason was as much as exhausted nature could afford on one occasion, it is difficult to say; but the fact is, that after looking at it for some time she put her hand to her bosom, and asked, "Where, where is the letter?"
"What letter, my darling?" said her father.
"It is not Charles unhappy and dying?" she said.
"He is ill, my love," said her father, "but not dying, we trust."
"It is not here," she said, searching her bosom, "it is not here—but it matters nothing now—it was a message of death, and the message has been delivered. Sorrow—sorrow—sorrow—how beautiful is that word—there is but one other in the language that surpasses it, and that is mourn. Oh! how beautiful is that too—low, delicately expressive. Weep is violent; but mourn, the gradual but tearful grief that wastes gently—that disquiets death, for we die not but only cease to be. I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky—well, that is one consolation—when I set I shall set in heaven."
TO BE CONTINUED.

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