

ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER XIV.

After a ten days' visit to Mrs. Clayton, Winifred returned to her home. "I would gladly let you remain longer," wrote Lady Grace, "but you remember, my dear, that our original plan was to leave for London on the 25th, and Mr. Clayton never likes his plans interfered with."

On the 25th of April Winifred returned to Eaton Vale, very sorry to leave her friend, but with almost a sense of relief at being freed from the obnoxious society of Mr. Clayton. Everyone welcomed her with open arms; the house had not seemed the same without her. It lacked the sunshine, as the old French lady said.

On the day appointed Sir Clayton and Lady Grace Farquhar and Miss Eyre arrived at Eaton Square and were duly announced in the fashionable chronicles. A new life suddenly opened on the girl who had spent all her young years in such quiet, not to say monotonous, life. She found it very pleasant, although not altogether what it had been in her dreams two years before.

Her debut was to take place at the house of Miss Douglas, Lord Harold Erskine's aunt, a lady occupying a very decided position in the fashionable world, and the entire to whose entertainments was very generally desired. Lady Grace was anxious that her protegee should look her best.

When Winifred appeared, dressed, on the night of the ball, Lady Grace had no reason to regret having allowed her to exercise her own taste. Her dress was of a marvelous whiteness and softness, almost like snow clouds, and here and there over it were the softest white feathers, that might have been flakes of fallen snow.

Very late in the evening Mr. Hastings appeared. As he entered the ballroom he caught sight of Winifred talking in a very animated manner to Lord Harold in an interval of waiting. He stood and watched her intently; until tonight he had never thought her beautiful. He had loved her for her grace, for her pride, for her innocence; but as she looked and smiled now, he felt she had a greater claim to general admiration than he had ever dreamed of.

"And she might have been my wife now," he thought. "How I should have loved her—how proud I should have been of her! I wonder if she really cares for that fellow Erskine?"

At this moment a voice said close to his ear, "Will it be a match, do you think?"

"He turned with an angry start, and met the mocking gaze of Flora Champlain.

"You mean Gray and Miss Wentworth? I think it very probable," Mr. Hastings answered, curtly.

"Oh, no, that is beyond a doubt. I meant Lord Harold Erskine and—and his partner."

"I cannot form the slightest surmise," Mr. Hastings said, "but you speak the word pointedly—'your cousin is very beautiful, and may even do better.'"

"Perhaps he chosen by the descendant of all the Hastings?" she asked, with a scornful laugh.

"Your penetration seems unusually at fault to-night," Miss Champlain said, turning, coldly, "but pardon me, the dance is over. I am going to seek a partner for the next; your card is full, I see," and he moved off before Flora had time to intimate her willingness to exchange his name on her program with that of a less eligible aspirant. She bit her lip angrily as she saw him cross straight over to where her cousin stood, and bend to speak with her. She could not but remark the tender deference of his bearing toward the country girl whom she despised, and whom she well remembered ignoring to him as only a farmer's daughter. She turned to the quiet, middle-aged man on whose arm she leaned, and began to talk to him with some of her old brightness and vivacity. He listened with admiring attention, but had very little to say in reply. Flora felt inexplicably bored.

"This man is a dolt," she said to herself, angrily; "the idea even of all his money scarcely reconciles me to the horrible tedium of spending so much time in his company."

Mr. Maxwell was an excessively interesting, rich bachelor of two-and-forty. He gave out an impression of weakness and yielding that made it a matter of surprise he had been allowed to remain so long in the unbelieved estate of bachelorhood. He had met Flora Champlain several times and had admired her.

"He is rich," she said to herself; "he is as weak as water, and he is greedy;—three admirable qualities for a husband whom you do not want to care about! Why should I not marry him?"

Meanwhile Mr. Hastings had crossed over to where Winifred was standing, engaged in laughing conversation with Lord Harold, and bright smiles on her lips and apparently very happy. She did not see Errol until he came up to her, and then she stepped in a sentence and changed color. She felt a quick thrill of pleasure when she saw his handsome face bent on her with only an impression of surprise. "My life is a torment to me," she said, "I could be miserable if I married him—are you glad your words have come true?"

"Mrs. Clayton, what do you take me for?" he cried, moved to passion, "I glad—glad that you, whom I love with heart, soul and strength, are destined to a bride who scarcely knows what I say."

"I am engaged for every dance, thank you."

"May I come and call in Eaton Square?"

"I dare say Lady Grace will be pleased to see you, but I feel a little unwell."

"But you?"

"It is my duty to be pleased to see any and all of Lady Farquhar's guests."

"You are not natural, Miss Eyre—you are strangely altered from the generous, large-hearted, true Winifred I knew two years ago."

"Is it well for ignorant country girls to be trusted?" she asked, with a quick scorn. "If they are generous, do they always meet with like generosity from those whose minds are more enlarged, or should be, from their birth and station?"

"Is your enemy to be lifelong, then?"

"No doubt it will wear out in time, as every other feeling does," was the quick response.

As Mr. Hastings walked away, he asked himself how it was possible that a man whose inherent fault was intense pride could voluntarily expose himself to

LET US ALL LAUGH.

JOKES FROM THE PENS OF VARIOUS HUMORISTS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that You Will Enjoy.

"I've refused George twice," she said, "but it's no use."

"No use?"

"Not a bit. He believes in predestination."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Why, he thinks I'm predestined to be his wife, and of course, if that is so, I'll simply have to give in, no matter what papa says. He can't expect me to defy fate."

Pay Day in Sight.

Miles—Shorten married an heiress last week and he declares she is all the world to him.

Giles—So he's getting ready to collect the debt, eh?

Miles—What debt?

Giles—Why, the one his wife owes him. I heard him say one time that the world owed him a living.

Passing Amusements.

Growler—Hi! Hi! Can't yer look out wher yer a-counin'!

Omnibus—Garol! Shut up, Jack-in-the-Box!

Most of the Stories True.

A story is told of a New England minister who often speaks in behalf of a charity in which he is interested. At the close of one meeting at which he had spoken with great effect and a large gain for the charity had been the direct result a little old woman approached the minister. "Oh," she said earnestly, "I've been so interested in hearing about those poor dear children! And I suppose a great many of those stories you told are really true, aren't they?"

A Fading Investment.

"Was it worth while to send your four daughters to that fashionable school?"

"Sure. One eloped while she was there and the others came home engaged."—New York Times.

Must Take His Turn.

Enraged Reader—I have come in to horsewhip the editor.

Office Boy—You'll have to wait, sir; there are two others ahead of you.—Life.

How He Cured Him.

Mother—You say your husband no longer spends his evenings at the club?

Daughter—I soon broke him of that.

"How did you manage?"

"Before going to bed I put two essay chairs close together by the parlor fire, and then held a match to a cigar until the room got a faint odor of smoke?"—New York Weekly.

Why Not, Indeed?

N. An.—Willie, I forgot to wind my watch this morning. Will you bring it down to me?

Willie—Why don't you let it run down?—New York Sun.

Growing Like a Weed.

"Why, Tommy, how you do grow!"

"Yes, Auntie, I think they water me too much. Why, I'm bathed night and morning."

Facts and Fancies.

"Does it cost much to live in the city?" asked the rural youth.

"About the same as it costs to live in the country," replied the village sage, "but it costs like fury to keep up appearances."

Her Preference.

"Shall I administer gas before extracting your tooth?" asked the dentist.

"Well," answered the fair patient from a back township, "if it doesn't cost any more I'd rather you'd give me electric light."

No Trouble in House-Hunting.

Hicks—I understand that you and Jenkins have both found desirable new tenements.

Wicks—Yes, Jenkins moved into his and I moved into his.—Somerville Journal.

Told the Truth.

Edyth—Aunt Margaret used to say she wouldn't marry the best man on earth.

Mayme—And did she keep her word?

Edyth—Yes; but she got married just the same.

Case and Effect.

"Women evidently have no sense of humor," remarked the bald-headed philosopher.

"Why do you think thus?" asked the youth with the ingrowing mustache.

"If they had," replied the philosophy dispenser, "they would never get past the love, honor and obey part of the marriage ceremony without an audible giggle."

MISLEAF NOTION OF STRATEGEM.

An officer once asked an Irishman if he knew what a stratagem was. "Yes, of course I do," "Then," said the officer, "please explain one to me." Pat (after five minutes' pause): "Suppose you were bring at the enemy and you run short of ammunition and you don't want the enemy to know, why all you have to do is to keep on firing."

Correcting Misapprehension.

"And this," exclaimed the traveler from the old world, emerging from his state room and gazing dreamily at the shore line ahead of him, "is free America!"

"No," said the bored looking passenger in the steamer chair. "That is New York City."

Made a Mistake.

"You don't mean to say, doctor, that you can tell people's ages by their teeth, the same as if they were horses, do you?"

"Certainly, madam."

"Which explains why this particular patient never went again to that particular dentist."

Neatness.

"I say," said the man who has to board out, "I've found the ideal place at last."

"What is the advantage?" asked the man who has married.

"The neatness of the place. The landlady keeps all the left-over crumbs separate and labeled, so that each man gets his own bread back in the bread pudding."—London Tit-Bits.

She Was a Treasure.

Towne—That was a brave act of Urban's—rushing into the water to save a woman from drowning.

Suburb—Brave fiddlers! It was merely an act of selfishness on his part.

Towne—Why, how can you say that?

Suburb—The woman he rescued was a cat that had been with him for six months.—Chicago News.

How He Proposed.

Miss Charmer—How did Fred propose?

Miss Milyun—He said he didn't know what he would do unless he got some money right away.—Baltimore American.

A Slight Difference.

Haggard Looking Room Hunter—Little girl, does your mamma keep boarders?

Honest Little Girl—No, sir; she takes boarders, but she don't keep 'em.—New York Herald.

Opportunity.

She—Yes, papa is suffering terribly from gout—he can hardly move his foot.

He—Bah you, Miss Galdie, something seems to tell me to speak to him about our engagement to-day—Bah Jove.

As to the Quaillops.

"It's a shame the way those Quaillop children are growing up, without any parental restraint whatever."

"Yes; when their mother joined the woman's literary society and began attending all the meetings Mr. Quaillop got sort of reckless and joined a don't worry club."—Chicago Tribune.

A Human Cried.

"Some men are awfully slow, aren't they?"

Yes—Yes, and they're so aggravating. There was one sat alongside of me coming down in the car this morning.

Tess—You weren't trying to flirt with him?

Jess—Gracious! no; but he was reading a novel, and he was never ready to turn the page when I was.—Philadelphia Press.

Wasn't Superstitious.

Giles—Robinson Crusoe must have been a queer sort of chap.

Miles—Because why?

Giles—Because it was Friday every day in the week with him.

Something Wrong.

Meeker—There's straps on the door over the way. Old man Jones must be dead.

Mrs. Meeker—I haven't seen the doctor there for over a week.

Deafened.

"A souvenir," said the thoughtful man, thoughtfully, "is something that we consider to be worth a whole lot more than its value."—Chicago Evening Post.

Neither Spinster Nor Old Maid.

"She's a spinster, isn't she?"

"Certainly not. Why, she'd have a fit if you called her a spinster."

"When was she married, then?"

"She isn't married."

"Widow, perhaps?"

"Oh, no."

"Then she must be a spinster."

"Not at all. She keeps house with two other girls in a cosy little flat."

"What difference does that make?"

"Well, of course, it's possible for a girl to be a bachelor maid without that, but it's that that makes it absolutely certain. You never heard of a spinster doing anything like that?"

"When a bachelor maid isn't a spinster?"

"Oh, at the present time she may be one technically, for there's been hardly time to change the dictionary, but she doesn't admit it."

"Suppose the public refused to accept her chosen designation and insisted upon calling her spinster and later old maid—what then?"

"Why, why, then, I suppose she would marry almost the first man who came along. Bachelor maid is so delightfully up-to-date and spinster is so frightfully old-fashioned."

ALL ON A SUMMER DAY

It was unquestionably a hot day. Perhaps if Burnham had known that the next morning's papers would send it down into history as the hottest day in years he would have remained in the comparatively cool solitude of his mother's dining-room for the sake of his reputation. As it was he found the uptown streets in a state of desertion which made him wonder irritably if the city had retired for a season.

Burnham thought regretfully of a certain dusky corner under a Persian canopy where there were many pillows and much lemonade, and, incidentally, a girl's face, cool and sweet above the fan she held. Yesterday the face had been so temptingly near—too near. And to-day it was so hopelessly remote.

He acknowledged to himself the shameful motive of his pilgrimage. He had come—he had seen the house which had been open to him yesterday to-day closed to him forever. And the face in the dusky corner—suppose she were looking at him now from behind the heavy curtains. The wonderful eyes, hiding their merciless laughter under their drooping lashes! Burnham lifted his gloomy young face haughtily and looked severely at the house across the way.

But he did not pass on. Instead, he stopped with a whistle of surprise as he might have taken for a broken parcel of laundry on the stone steps resolved itself into a little lady with peewee skirts and exceedingly long black legs, who shot up from her coil and shook a mop of moist and disheveled hair away from a tear disfigured face.

"Why, Topsy!" exclaimed Burnham amazedly. It was impossible to go on and leave Topsy crying on the hot steps. He dropped on one knee beside her and tilted up the little face.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?"

"Well—the tears came flooding back into the blue eyes—'Aunt Dale wouldn't take me to the park, and I wanted to see the new polar bear. They say he just sits round on ice all the time—and then they're scared he'll die.'"

Topsy's curls whipped into Burnham's eyes smartly as she buried her agitated countenance in his freshly starched bosom and wailed.

"Oh, hush, Topsy, dear! Do, for heaven's sake hush!" Burnham looked anxiously toward the house, whence at any moment Topsy's howls of newly stirred injury might fetch Topsy's mamma, who would invite him in, or—Topsy's aunt, who wouldn't look at him.

"See here! Stop crying! Listen! Is that your sunbonnet on the walk?—desperately—'put it on quick, and we'll go to see the polar bear!'"

Topsy's piercing shout of rapture was more dangerous than her weeping, and Burnham hurried her off down the street, comforting himself with the reflection that all children were more or less salamanders, and that they would take the first carriage they found striding.

"Don't you think Aunt Dale's birthday?" demanded Topsy, revengefully, as she clasped Burnham's hand moodily and affectionately, and trotted beside him in soiled contentment.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered hesitatingly. "It's a pretty atrocious word—but I guess it's satisfactory," he added ungalantly.

"Did she promise to take you to the zoo?"

"Well, no-o," said Topsy, honestly. "Not exactly. But I thought she would, and when I went to her to-day—and it's such a nice, sunny day (as if the previous twenty-eight days of August had passed in Arctic gloom) 'she—she told me to go away and not bother her. And—and next time I asked her to come she shook me!'"

"Don't cry now, young 'un," Burnham implored. "I didn't cry when she shook me."

Topsy stared at him with very round eyes from the depths of a limp sunbonnet. "When did she ever shake you?" she asked, whisperingly, surveying her stalwart friend with awe.

"Yesterday," said Burnham, gloomily.

"Did it make you feel bad?" The clear child eyes had seen the pain under the smile.

"Yes, I'm afraid it did."

Topsy slipped her other hand into Burnham's, dropping along beside him like a comforting little bear-hug.

"I'm awful sorry," she said, earnestly; and then, after a pause: "Was Aunt Dale crying yesterday when she was mean to you?"

"No," said Burnham, grimly; "she wasn't. I think she laughed."

"That's funny. To-day she was crying. She said it was so hot it made her head ache. But I think she was just crying because there was so much naughty in her. I do sometimes—and they lick me," said Topsy, evidently pondering on the injustice of things.

Burnham's clasp tightened on the little fingers.

"Was she crying much?" he asked, carelessly.

"You bet she was. Mamma's green pillow was all wet. And the picture she was looking at was all over speckles."

"What—what picture was it, Topsy?" Burnham saw the long, deserted street in a blur of yellow.

"I dunno," answered Topsy, carelessly. "He was horrid ugly, like a poodle, with a big X on the front of him. Say, do you think the polar bear might die while we look at him?"

"I don't know," said Burnham, absently, in his turn. There had been an ultra-modern young fool once who had given that football picture to a girl who had laughed at it frankly and to his mortification. But now Topsy's description did not trouble him. The latter, speculating morbidly on the chances of being the happy spectator of a tragedy, trotted in silence by her escort. Suddenly Burnham halted.

"Topsy," he said feebly, and then



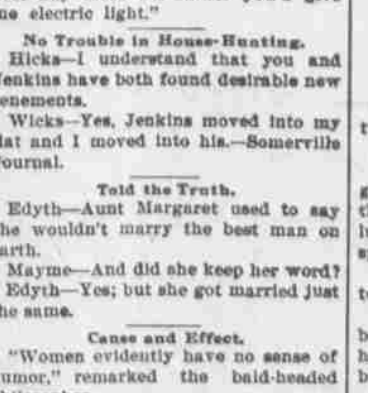
Growler—Hi! Hi! Can't yer look out wher yer a-counin'!



She—Yes, papa is suffering terribly from gout—he can hardly move his foot.



"Why, Tommy, how you do grow!"



"Women evidently have no sense of humor," remarked the bald-headed philosopher.