



ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By
MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER I.

Marie Antoinette de Montolieu was a true scion of the old French noblesse, with fine features and clear, pale complexion. There had been vivacity and brightness, too, in those brown eyes, but the luster was gone now, and there was left only the calm expression of resignation which follows a life of troubles nobly borne. She had lived sixty-four years in the world.

Her father and mother, the Marquis and Marquise de Montolieu, had been in high favor at the court of Louis the Sixteenth. They were proud, handsome aristocrats, and when the Revolution came with its fearful horrors, they were forced to fly for their lives. When they reached England they were penniless and compelled to earn their bread.

The marquis gave lessons in singing, and the marquise made a little money by selling her paintings. A kind-hearted nobleman, who had known them in former days, allowed them fifty pounds a year; and with this, and the fruit of their own exertions, they managed to exist. Three years later a daughter was born to them, whom they named Marie Antoinette, in affectionate and reverential memory of their martyred queen. From her earliest infancy she was deeply imbued with the sad spirit of the time; and the unvarying melancholy of her parents produced a strong effect upon her. She was naturally bright and vivacious, but the atmosphere of constant sadness was infectious.

When she was seventeen years old her beloved father died, and from that time all her energies were strained to provide for her heart-broken and widowed mother. Five years later the marquise died also, and Marie was thrown on the world, literally penniless and friendless. Then all at once the nobleman who had befriended her parents came forward and offered her a home in his house, in spite of the remonstrances of his wife, who was keenly alive to the imprudence of bringing a beautiful young girl under the same roof with her grown-up sons.

For a time Marie Antoinette was happy, and then came the most bitter trial of her life. She went out again as a governess, and traveled abroad. At the age of thirty-five she went into Sir Howard Champion's family, to educate his daughters, and remained with them twelve years. The elder daughter made a brilliant match, and the younger eloped with a gentleman farmer. There being thus no further occasion for her services, she was dismissed; but Sir Howard, being a liberal although arrogant and despotic man, settled an annuity of a hundred pounds on her for life. On this, and the interest of what she had saved during her long years of teaching, she lived; and small as was her income, she gave away much. Hers was a grand life of love, of charity and of self-abnegation. Unsoured by her troubles, unimpaired by her loneliness, she was the true picture of a gentle, sympathizing and patient woman.

Sir Howard cursed his younger daughter solemnly on the Bible—from which he erased her name, and commanded that it might never be uttered in his presence again. The whole household were awestricken, and crept about silently and fearfully. Madame de Montolieu was heart-broken.

Winifred bitterly regretted her false step. She loved the world and the fashion, and so the comparatively humble life she now led was gall and wormwood to her. Her husband was fond of her, but he chafed under her constant fretful regrets; she quarreled with his family, refused to notice them, and made him bitter, contemptuous little speeches, which drove him in anger from her presence! The only link left to her between the present and the past was Madame de Montolieu, who came to live in a small cottage near her, and was with her constantly. But poor Winifred fretted night and day at her loss of caste, and became thin and ill; and when her little girl was born she died.

For some years little Winifred was brought up and taken care of by her father's sister; but when she was eight years old Miss Eyre married, and her father was somewhat perplexed what to do with her. Madame de Montolieu offered to educate her, and Mr. Eyre gladly accepted the offer.

She received a complete education from Madame de Montolieu, who loved her as a daughter, and had brought her up with tender care and watchfulness. She spoke French perfectly, was a good musician and sang as sweetly as a nightingale. Madame de Montolieu had devoted great time and care to perfecting her accomplishments, hoping that, when she grew up, Sir Howard might relent and give her an opportunity of entering into society, for which she was eminently fitted. But the baronet and his whole family sternly persisted in ignoring her, and it was a very bitter grief and humiliation to poor Winifred.

It seemed so cruelly unjust. Why should Flora Champion her cousin, and flattered, and received everywhere, while she, who longed so ardently for the same advantage, was compelled to live unnoticed in a farm house? Her father had given her a pretty little pony and carriage, in which she took great pleasure. She would have liked to ride as well, but her father could not afford, he said, to keep

two horses for her, and had given her a chance of riding or driving; she preferred the former, but chose the latter, remembering that it was a pleasure which her dear madame could share.

Mr. Eyre was very fond of his daughter, and, moreover, exceedingly proud of her. He desired intensely for her the advantages of wealth and station, personally indifferent though he was to them. His greatest trouble, his most bitter mortification in life, was that her grandfather would not acknowledge her. For himself he did not care, he had no wish to rise from the position with which his forefathers had been contented. Once, at his instigation, Madame de Montolieu had mentioned Winifred to Sir Howard. An angry flush darkened his brow as he said, sternly:

"Madame, I feel no interest in hearing of Miss Eyre, and I beg in future you will spare me all allusion to the issue of a disgraceful connection."

The gentle old Frenchwoman had conveyed the result of her attempt to Mr. Eyre with characteristic delicacy, but he felt the insult of the refusal keenly. It was his only hope for Winifred, for his own relations were not in position to be of use to her. Always in the evening she sang, played or read to him; and sometimes, when he had watched her with a proud delight mixed with some refined accomplishment, he would sigh and say:

"Ah! my child, you were born for something better than a poor farmer's daughter."

But if Winifred at times chafed because she was the unnoticed daughter of a poor farmer, she never looked down on or blamed her father. She had no wish to be elevated from her present position without him; she sought no advantage from which he was excluded. She even strove to conceal her regrets from him; but the eyes of love are discerning, and although Mr. Eyre never allowed her to see that her longings were known to him, he was painfully alive to them.

Miss Eyre left the town one day and walked on for about half a mile, until she came to a small white cottage standing back from the road in a pleasant garden, well shaded by old-fashioned fruit trees. Winifred did not stand on the ceremony of knocking, but raised the latch and entered the drawing room, where Madame de Montolieu was sitting before her embroidery frame. She looked up with a glad smile, and, rising, kissed the young girl on both cheeks.

"Ah! my rosebud," she exclaimed, "you have come at last."

"Yes, dear madame," Winifred replied, "but I have not been wholly successful in executing your commissions. See!" she added, "this green wool is a shade lighter than the pattern, but I thought it would scarcely matter, as your other greens are so much deeper. The red is the right color, but it seems to me a little faded lying in the shop. It is impossible to get exactly what you want in these little country towns."

"Both will do excellently well, my child. I thank you," returned Madame de Montolieu, putting on her spectacles. Then she looked fondly at Winifred's face; but something she saw there brought an increased gravity over her placid features.

"My love!" she said, gently, "has anything happened to distress you?"

The quick tears sprang to Winifred's eyes, but for a moment she was silent. Then she essayed to smile, answering: "It is my pride, for which you so often chide me, that has been hurt, dear madame. I shall make you laugh when I tell how small a thing has provoked me."

But the kind old lady did not laugh—she was full of pitiful tenderness for the feelings of youth, and sympathized keenly with the wounds of a sensitive nature like Winifred's. She heard how Winifred's cousin, Miss Champion, had passed her on the road that morning, ignoring her.

"Madame," said Winifred, suddenly, after a pause, "who do you think the gentleman with Miss Champion could be?"

"I cannot tell, my love; probably a visitor at the Manor. Stay, my love, may it not have been Mr. Hastings? I hear he has just returned from abroad, and you know his father and Sir Howard were great friends. Perhaps he at last feels a desire to see the beautiful home of his fathers, which he has neglected so long. Can you describe him at all?"

"I only saw him a moment," returned Winifred, blushing, "but his face seemed rather bronzed with travel; from what I remember, I fancy he had dark blue eyes and fair hair."

"I think, then," remarked Madame de Montolieu, "that my surmise is correct, for dark blue eyes and golden hair are the family characteristics."

Winifred turned homeward with a lighter heart. She had almost forgotten the affront that had been put upon her; but she could not forget the eager look of admiration that had crossed the handsome stranger's face as he turned to look at her. Without doubt he was Mr. Hastings, the owner of all the property about of the very wood through which she was even then passing on her way to the farm. And a very bright smile came on her lips as she thought how near he lived, and that she might perhaps see him sometimes in her walks. It would

be some relief to the monotony of her life, only to be able now and then to gaze on a handsome face like his.

One evening Winifred went out for a stroll in the woods with her little Scotch terrier as her only companion, and, choosing a picturesque spot, sat down to rest and to dream of the many women no fairer than she, who had become famous.

Her speculations were suddenly cut short by a yap from her terrier, and turning sharply round, she beheld her little companion rolling over and over down the bank under the sudden and unprovoked assault of a huge mastiff. She uttered a little cry of fright, and sprang to the rescue, when she heard a crashing of the branches at her side, a sharp, "To heel, Rollo!" from a man's voice. A sudden recognition, a hasty apology, and he stood looking at her, hat in hand, with the same expression of admiration in his eyes that she had seen there before. There was a pause, during which the startled Winifred blushed, and felt painfully confused.

"I fear my dog has alarmed you," said the stranger, at last; "he is rather wont to be aggressive to his species, particularly in this wood, of which he is accustomed to consider himself sole monarch."

"Then I fear we are trespassers," Winifred found courage to answer; "but we have always been allowed to walk here, and—"

"I shall indeed be sorry if our rudeness and inhospitality should drive you away," laughed the stranger. "I beg you will always, both for yourself and friends, consider you are entitled to a free right of way over any and every part of my possessions."

Winifred thanked him and would have turned away, but he lingered; and there was such a charm to her in the presence of this refined, aristocratic looking man, that she felt no inclination to break rudely away from him.

"You are Mr. Hastings, then?" she said, interrogatively.

"Yes," he replied. "I have come back at last to enjoy the delights of home after my long absence."

"It must be very pleasant to see so much of the outer world," Winifred said timidly; "it must give one such broad views of things and people, and stamp out one's petty, intolerant thoughts and narrow prejudices."

Mr. Hastings was surprised by this last remark of his companion's, but he was far too well bred to allow his thoughts to appear. He remarked quietly:

"You seem to have considered these things more than young ladies are apt to do."

"I must be going," she uttered, hastily; "it is getting late."

He turned to accompany her, but she bowed with an air of decision, saying:

"My path leads away from Hazell Court."

"I hope," he said, lingering a moment, "that my presence to-night will not tend to frighten you away from these woods for the future. May I rely on your making use of them as usual?"

She thanked him again, and, bowing, turned away. He stood, hat in hand, before her as he might have done to a princess; and as she went on her way home, he gazed after her slight, graceful form with a look of tender admiration such as might have befitted a man who watched the woman he loved.

CHAPTER II.

In a very elegant drawing room, with French windows to the ground, leading on to a velvet sward gemmed with flowers, sat Mrs. Champion and her daughter. The mother was employed on an elaborate piece of woodwork, while Miss Champion half reclined upon her silken couch, reading. She looked up from it to answer her mother's interrogatory.

"Do you think Mr. Hastings will be here this afternoon, Flora?"

"I cannot tell, mamma; Reginald has gone over to the Court to lunch, and look at some new horses, and he said he should probably bring Mr. Hastings back to dinner."

"He is very handsome," remarked Mrs. Champion. "Indisputably the best match in the county."

"Except Evelyn Vane," remarked Flora.

"Evelyn Vane?" echoed her mother—"Evelyn Vane has nothing until his father dies; and even when he becomes Lord Lancing, his income will not be much more than half that of Mr. Hastings."

"But there is the title," said Miss Champion; "Lord Lancing cannot last much longer, and I would rather have a title, even if I were obliged to sacrifice half the income."

Which was not true, for Flora Champion was rather in love with Errol Hastings, and utterly indifferent to the Honorable Evelyn Vane. She and her mother were much attached to each other—at least as much as was possible for two such selfish and indifferent natures to be—and they were wont to indulge in mutual confidences. At this moment Reginald Champion, the only son and brother, entered the room.

"Have you just returned from the Court?" inquired his mother.

"Yes; Hastings left me at the door not five minutes ago."

"I thought he was going to dine here."

"I thought so, too; but I suppose he changed his mind, for when he arrived here, and I pressed him to come in, he declared he had a previous engagement. It was all a lie, though, I could see; but I think I know what the counter attraction was."

"Indeed!" said Flora, disdainfully, "and may we inquire the result of your penetration?"

"It is nothing that will please you, Flo, I can tell you."

"Don't be provoking, Reginald!" uttered his mother, sharply; "tell us at once what you mean."

(To be continued.)

Though familiarity may not breed contempt, it takes off the edge of admiration.—Hazell.

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

FRUIT PROSPECTS IN LINN.

Prunes Will Yield big, but Peaches and Pears are Blighted.

Fruit men report that the prune yield in Linn county this year will exceed that of any previous season. The numerous large orchards around Albany have been covered with blossoms, and now the fruit has set successfully. The weather has been just the kind needed, and nothing but a freeze could now destroy it. The young fruit is too far advanced to be injured by frosts, unless they were very heavy and continued for some time.

There will be no peaches around here. Of the fruits which may be considered a crop the yield in pears will probably be the lightest. The pear trees seem to be blighted. Early in the season the trees were covered with blossoms, but just about the time for the fruit to set the blossoms withered and died. It does not look like the work of frost, but is pronounced blight by orchardists.

Nothing but prolonged cold weather can prevent the largest fruit yield in the history of Linn county.

HEADED TOWARDS BURNS.

Surveyors for Electric Road Start Out from Baker City.

A surveying party of 12 people under Chief Engineer Howe started from Baker city recently to survey a route for an electric railway from that place to the John Day valley and Prairie city. Major J. W. Bonta is having the survey made in the interest of the Oregon Wonder mine. The promoters say that the road will eventually penetrate Harney county as far as Burns.

Smallpox Under Control.

For some time past the board of health of the county of Crook and city of Prineville have been issuing bulletins daily giving the facts in regard to the persons affected with smallpox in that city. Now all those having it are practically well of the disease. It has been concluded by the board that no necessity exists for the further issuance of the bulletins. The board fully believes that the town is now entirely free from the disease, having had no new cases since April 27, although there are now several cases in quarantine who were exposed prior to that time, and a few of them may yet be stricken down.

Farm Hands Wanted.

Farm hands in Eastern Oregon are scarce and farmers are applying to employment agencies at Portland for men. There will be steady employment throughout the wheat and fruit belt for a great many more men than are there now, until after the crops are garnered.

Marion Crops Look Well.

A heavy shower of warm rain fell in Marion county last Saturday and great good will result to all growing crops. Farmers report crops generally in an excellent condition.

Dredges for Oregon Rivers.

The war department has awarded to the Featherstone foundry and machine company, of Chicago, a contract for building two dredges for use in Oregon rivers. They will build one dredge for the Upper Willamette and Yamhill rivers for \$25,000, and another for the Upper Columbia and Snake to cost \$22,500. Both dredges are to be ready for use within six months.

Preparing for Log-Rolling.

The Woodmen of the World are preparing to have a big log rolling in La Grande May 18 and 19. One hundred and twenty-five candidates will be initiated into the order at that time. The program comprises a parade of fraternal societies, competitive drill for a trophy, log chopping and sawing contest. Reduced rates have been secured on the railroads.

Brick Yard at Weston Rushed.

The Weston brickyard is working its full capacity, turning out 40,000 brick per day, with more orders than it can fill this summer and fall. Lumber and all kinds of building material is short in this section on account of the unusual number of new houses being built at Walla Walla, Pendleton and towns in this section of Umatilla county.

Union Depot Exhibit.

The board of trade of Dallas has taken steps to collect material for an exhibit to be forwarded to the Oregon information bureau at the Union depot in Portland. The board has contributed a good sum of money for the purpose, and the county court has contributed \$50 for the purpose of acting in concert with the board of trade.

Offers Fine Library Building.

The ladies of the Grants Pass woman's club have succeeded in getting Mr. Carnegie to change the amount of his proposed donation for a library in that city from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The citizens felt that they would rather erect a creditable building, even though the cost of maintaining the library is greater.

CROP PROSPECTS GOOD.

Eastern Oregon Grain Growers and Fruit Raisers are Jubilant.

So far the fruit and grain prospects for this season's crop are exceedingly good in the eastern part of the state. The backward season has kept the fruit back, so that the late frosts have not done any serious damage. Grain, especially wheat, is looking fine, save for the need of rain, which would be greatly appreciated by the dry land farmers just now.

Fruit growers have late frosts to fear always, in the immediate vicinity of Baker City, but in Pine and Eagle valleys the season is from two to four weeks ahead of the former neighborhood and late frosts, owing to the lower altitude, are not so much to be feared.

Farmers and fruitgrowers, who are prepared to irrigate, are in clover this season, because there never was such an abundance of snow in the mountains as there is this year.

LANE COUNTY'S ROADS.

Much Labor and Money Has Made Them Finest in the State.

The matter of improvement of roads has received more attention in Lane county than in any other county in the state, and the interest which is now manifest in other counties is to a large extent attributable to the results that have attended the efforts in Lane county for years past. Observing visitors have remarked repeatedly about the condition of the Lane county roads as compared with roads in other places, and these remarks have resulted in others taking up with the work that has proven so successful.

Clean-Up on Hydraulic Placers.

Some \$700 in gold dust and nuggets, the regular monthly clean-up of the St. Helens & Galice hydraulic placer mines, of the Galice district, was brought into Grants Pass a few days ago. These placers have enjoyed a fine run this season, and have yet several weeks of work ahead of them before their water gives out. They are building a huge reservoir and enlarging their ditches, with the intention of deriving a water supply whereby their giants can be operated the whole year through.

Wood Supply is Short.

There is a very serious shortage in the supply of firewood in Salem, and prices are certain to be high this summer and next winter. There is a possibility of what may almost be a wood famine, for the amount of wood that has been cut is far short of the quantity that will be needed for home use. As a consequence of this condition of affairs there will be good money in the wood business for farmers who have timber they can cut.

Eastern Oregon Normal Graduates.

The graduating class of the Weston state normal school next month will consist of 12 young ladies and gentlemen. Extensive preparations are being made for the commencement exercises. The Weston college is one of the largest, most imposing and complete school plants in the state. President French will spend his vacation campaigning for an increased scholarship for next term.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 70@71c; valley, 74c.

Barley—Feed, \$20.00 per ton; brewing, \$21.

Flour—Best grades, \$3.95@4.30; Graham, \$3.45@3.85.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$23 per ton; middlings, \$27; shorts, \$23.00; chop, \$18.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.10@1.15; gray, \$1.05 per cental.

Hay—Timothy, \$20@21; clover, \$10@11; cheat, \$15@16 per ton.

Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 50c per sack; ordinary, 25@40c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3@3.50 per cental.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 13@14c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 16@17c; dressed, 20@22c; ducks, \$7.00@7.50 per dozen; geese, \$6@6.50.

Cheese—Full cream, twins, 16@17c; Young America, 17@17½c; factory prices, 1@1½c; less.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 20@22c per pound; extras, 21c; dairy, 20@22½c; store, 16@18c.

Eggs—16@17c per dozen.

Hops—Choice, 18@20c per pound.

Wool—Valley 12½@15; Eastern Oregon, 8@14; mohair, 35@36c.

Beef—Gross, cows, 3¼@4c per pound; steers, 4¼@5c; dressed, 7¾c.

Veal—8@8½c.

Mutton—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@9c.

Lambs—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7½c.

Hogs—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@8½c.