



ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By
MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER VI.

Most of the guests had left Hazell Court; and only Lord Harold Erskine and Mr. Le Marchant remained. It was the fourth day after the ball, and Mr. Hastings was alone that evening. At seven o'clock he strolled toward the woods. He told himself he hoped he should not meet Miss Eyre; it would be so awkward, so unpleasant; and yet he went in the direction that she always took on her return from the cottage, and at the very hour he knew she should pass. When Errol saw Winifred coming along slowly and sadly through the woods he could no longer conceal from himself the delight he experienced at seeing her again.

Winifred appeared unconscious of him until she came close to the gate, and then she looked up with an air of cool indifference that might have befitted the best-dressed woman in Europe. Errol did not open the gate, but put his hand across to her. She affected not to see it. "Miss Eyre," he said, "will you not even take my hand?"

"No, I thank you," answered Winifred, coldly; "I do not choose to be known one day and unnoticed the next."

"What do you mean, Miss Eyre? I do not understand you."

"I mean this, Mr. Hastings; I have met several times, and I was foolish enough to imagine that it was on equal terms until you reminded me by passing me unnoticed with your high-born friends, that you were the lord of the manor, and I only a farmer's daughter."

"Miss Eyre," he said, quickly, "it is impossible you should attribute motives so false and mean to me."

"Why impossible?" Winifred asked. "I know nothing of you, Mr. Hastings."

Her self-command in this speech was wonderful, for her heart was fluttering tumultuously, as a woman's heart always does when she is saying a bitter thing to the man she loves. There was silence for a moment, and then she said quietly:

"Will you let me pass, Mr. Hastings?"

"No," he cried suddenly and passionately, "you shall not pass until you have recalled those words."

"Then I must retrace my steps," Winifred said, looking at his defiantly.

He seized her hand.

"You shall not go until you tell me why you are so bitter and angry with me to-day."

"I am not angry or bitter," she quickly replied, forcing back the rebellious tears.

"Only—"

"Only what?"

"Do not torture me, Mr. Hastings," exclaimed Winifred. "It is cruel, unmanly of you. Let me go! I will not tell you."

"But you shall tell me!" he said, still keeping hold of her hand, and there was a dangerous light in his eyes that made her half afraid of him.

"I do not wish to tell you—you force me to it!" she cried.

"I will not stir from here except you tell me."

Winifred's voice was half choked with excitement as she answered: "Then hear it. I hate you! You have been cruel, inconsiderate, unjust to me."

"I?" said Errol.

"Yes, you. You tried to make a simple, inexperienced, country girl care for you, with your refinement and fascinations; and when you succeeded you despised her for her folly, and turned away from her contemptible simplicity to the woman who, from her birth and station, was worthy of your real love."

"Winifred! Miss Eyre!" exclaimed Errol, "how can you have mistaken me so? Do you imagine there is anyone in the world but yourself for whom I care?"

"Yes, for your betrothed, Miss Champion, Mr. Hastings."

"I am never betrothed to Miss Champion nor yet to any other woman," he exclaimed, quickly.

"Do not attempt to deceive me any further," Winifred said, with a flush of anger. "Your relations with Miss Champion can scarcely be doubtful, after your opening the ball with her before all your grand friends."

"Miss Eyre," he said, gravely, "will you accept my solemn assurance that I have not asked Miss Champion to be my wife, and that I have no intention of doing so? There is only one woman in the world that I love, and I love her with all the passion of my soul. Because she is so dear to me, I am going to leave my country, and the home for which I have longed, and I am going to be a wanderer again on the face of the earth."

"You are going away?" cried Winifred, in a tremulous voice.

"Yes, I am going away from country, home and friends, because, being near her, I cannot control my passionate longing for her; I cannot let my thoughts from her, or bring myself to look with love or admiration on any other woman."

The gate was open now, and Mr. Hastings had taken Winifred in his arms.

"My darling," he whispered, "do you know who that woman is?"

Winifred was confused, surprised, ashamed, and yet with a tumultuous joy overshadowed her whole being. Then this fairy tale was true, after all, and this splendid, gallant knight was at her feet in all truth and sincerity.

"Winifred," he said, passionately, "look into my eyes, and tell me that you love me."

She raised her beautiful, shy brown

eyes to his, and he bent down and kissed her so fondly, so tenderly, that she could no longer doubt his truth. And then there was a silence, a long silence, for the spell of the day dream seemed too sweet to be broken by words.

"Miss Eyre!" he said finally, "I cannot marry you. I dare not ask your forgiveness, but you must listen to me for one moment. The first time I saw you I loved you, and every time that we have met since I have loved you more and more, until at last I almost felt as if existence without you was impossible. I resolved to leave England—to go abroad, somewhere where I should be removed from the temptation of seeing or hearing of you. But to-day, when I saw you coming toward me, all my strength failed me. Do you know that for centuries back my race have suffered for one rash vow? Time after time they have sacrificed their love, their hopes to it, and I dared not be the first to break it by marrying one who, though my equal, nay, my superior in all else, was beneath me in rank. I must go away. I must forget you."

"Beneath you?" cried Winifred, with flashing, indignant eyes—"beneath you, Mr. Hastings? You deemed Flora Champion a worthy bride, and am I not equally the granddaughter of Sir Howard?"

"The granddaughter of Sir Howard Champion!" Mr. Hastings said, scarcely believing he heard aright.

"My mother was his daughter!" and with a proud, passionate gesture, Winifred said, "He felt as if brain, heart and limb were paralyzed by what he had just heard."

Sir Howard's granddaughter! Then that accounted for the breeding which had so puzzled him, and there was in truth no reason why he should not make her his wife. If he could only have known that before. And Flora Champion and Reginald? They knew it, and concealed it from him all the while. Lady Grace Farquhar must have known it—all his servants, and everyone who lived in the neighborhood; and yet some strange fatality had conspired to keep him in ignorance of a fact it would have sealed his happiness to know. It was too late now. He knew her pride; he knew that if he had the crowns and the wealth of India to offer her, she would reject him in scorn.

And yet he loved her dearly, he knew that, or she would never have suffered his kisses on her lips, or looked lovingly into his face with those sweet brown eyes. He felt maddened by his thoughts, by the recollection of what was, and what might have been. And he turned his steps homeward, not lingeringly, not hopefully, as he had come, but swiftly, half mad with crushing despair.

CHAPTER VII.

The next evening just as Errol Hastings and his friends had finished dinner a servant brought in a note to the master. It was from Winifred Eyre, and read as follows:

"You will perhaps guess that only very urgent need induces me to hold communication with you after—after what passed last night. Your words were overheard by Mr. Fenner, an intentional spy, whom a short time since I refused to marry. He came to me this afternoon, and threatens that if I still persist in my refusal to become his wife he will publish the story to the neighborhood. I ask of you to find some means of action that will insure the silence of this man, and protect me from a marriage which I dread more than death. Mr. Fenner insists on my answer being given in three days. If you have one impulse of generosity left, you will help me."

As Errol read the note an imprecation burst from his lips that made both his friends look up suddenly.

"Why, Errol!" exclaimed Mr. Le Marchant, "what is the matter?"

Mr. Hastings recovered himself in a moment.

"I beg your pardon," he said, smiling; "I was rather annoyed at the moment. A letter from a refractory tenant."

"Ah!" said Arthur Le Marchant, with a smiling glance at the envelope which lay on the table; "lady tenants are always the most troublesome."

All the evening Mr. Hastings seemed absent and unusually silent, and when the two other men went out for a stroll on the terrace he did not join them.

"Excuse me for half an hour," he said. "I have some business to transact, and will follow you."

When they were gone he rang the bell. "Send Letsom to me at once," and a minute afterward the old servant came hurrying.

"Letsome," said Mr. Hastings, "do you know anyone of the name of Fenner hereabouts?"

"Yes, sir," answered Letsome. "There's a farmer of that name lives two miles from here, up at Chalk Farm."

"What do you know about him?"

"Well, sir, I can't say as I know much, but I have heard more lately being in conjunction with Miss Eyre. It was Hawkins as told me; he was that angry one night because he heard as Fenner was a-courting Miss Eyre. 'I'll spoil his sport, if I hear any more,' says he; 'but I'm not afraid that a lady like Miss Eyre 'ud demean herself to such as him.'"

"What did Hawkins mean when he said he'd spoil Fenner's sport if he wanted

to marry Miss Eyre?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir; but he seemed quite mad about it, and talked like as if he knew something bad about Fenner. I thought perhaps it was only talk, though, because he sets such a deal on Miss Eyre."

"Send Hawkins to my room at ten o'clock to-morrow," said Mr. Hastings; "I want to ask him about the partridges;" and Mr. Hastings rose and went to join his friends on the terrace.

The following morning there was a low tap at the door, and Hawkins, the gamekeeper, entered Mr. Hastings' room. A long conversation followed, as a result of which Mr. Hastings sent the following note to Fenner:

"Sir—Be good enough to call upon me this afternoon, at three o'clock. I have to speak to you on important business. "ERROL HASTINGS."

"Hazell Court."

At half-past three Mr. Fenner rang at the door of Hazell Court. It was opened immediately, and he was escorted through the grand hall, along a corridor, and up some steps into Mr. Hastings' private room. Errol was sitting at his writing table when Fenner entered. He merely looked up and continued his letter. Tom Fenner felt very savage; he would have liked to throw himself with a swagger into one of the chairs, but he did not dare. There was something in Errol's look, and something in his own servile fear of rank, that made him afraid to take a liberty.

Presently Mr. Hastings looked up and said:

"I have sent for you to tell you that I object to the way in which you have annoyed Miss Eyre lately, and to request that you will discontinue it."

Tom Fenner felt he was getting very savage.

"And suppose," he remarked, insolently, "that I say I shan't, what then?"

"Very well," said Mr. Hastings, quietly, "then I will order my horse, and go round to Mr. Lennox, and tell him you are the scoundrel who shot Tom White, the gamekeeper, three years ago in the Holton woods."

Fenner started convulsively, he turned ashen white and trembled in every limb. "Oh, sir!" he cried, in agony of fear, as soon as he could speak, "don't do that!"

And then all of a sudden he recovered himself, and looked at the man who had confronted him with an air of dogged defiance.

"I didn't know what you meant at the minute," he said, pale to the lips; "I thought it was something else. I don't know anything about Tom White's affair—that was the poachers' doing."

Mr. Hastings did not answer for the moment; but his eyes were fixed on Fenner's face. The miserable coward took courage from his opponent's silence, and tried to force a sneer.

"I suppose you thought to trump up some lie against me," he continued; "but a fine gentleman's word isn't quite enough in these days to transport an honest man."

"No," acquiesced Errol, quietly; "it wants proof."

"Yes," echoed Fenner, "it wants proof."

"Shall I give it first to you or the magistrates?" asked Mr. Hastings, coolly.

"I know nothing about it; it's a trumped-up lie. I defy you!" cried the farmer, savagely.

Mr. Hastings kept his temper admirably; he did not even raise his voice.

"Stop a moment," he said, "I have something to tell you; if any of my details are wrong, you can correct me. The gamekeeper, White, had a very pretty sister called Sophy, who was a seamstress, and worked for your mother."

Fenner started uneasily.

"You promised to marry her," proceeded Errol, coldly. "She appealed to you to keep your word, and you laughed in her face. She turned in her misery to her brother, and he met you and thrashed you in the lanes. Is it not so?"

Fenner's teeth chattered, but he did not speak.

"You told me one of your meetings," Errol went on, "but you remained in bed, and said you had an attack of rheumatism. One day when you knew White would pass alone through the Holton woods, you hid yourself, with your gun, and waited for him."

The wretch was brought to bay at last, through the information which Hawkins had imparted to Errol.

"Have mercy on me, sir!" he gasped, almost inarticulately. "I'll do anything you tell me."

"Sit down on that chair, then," said Mr. Hastings, sternly, "and copy what is on that piece of paper."

Fenner walked trembling to the table, and sat down. His hand shook so that he could scarcely hold the pen that was thrust into it. He leaned back for a moment, wiped the cold sweat from his brow, and began:

"I apologize to you, Miss Eyre, for the anxiety and annoyance I have caused you, and I solemnly swear never again from this time to molest or injure you in any way, either by word or deed."

"THOMAS FENNER."

"I have just one word of caution to give you before you go," said Errol, in a quick, rasping tone of contempt. "The wisest thing you can do is to be off from these parts as soon as you can settle your affairs. I am not the only person who knows the cowardly assassin of poor White, and as long as any trace of you is left you are at his mercy and mine. And now, you spying, murderous hound, begone, while I still have power to restrain myself from kicking you out of the house!"

(To be continued.)

Near Enough.

Teacher—Now, Susie, you may construct a sentence in which the word "literary" occurs.

Susie (after much thought)—Little Willie's hands were literary black with dirt.—Philadelphia Press.

KILL HARTS' PLAN

GOVERNMENT ENGINEERS HAVE NEW CELLO SCHEME.

They Favor a Ship Canal—Submerged Dam Is Held to Be Impracticable—Work Will Now Be Held Up Until 1904—Major Langfitt Ordered to Make Surveys.

Washington, June 10.—The Board of Army Engineers that recently visited the obstructions in the Columbia River between The Dalles and Celilo, has decided to abandon the Harts plan for opening of the river at that point, and in lieu thereof will prepare plans and estimates for a continuous ship canal from the foot of the Dalles rapids to the head of Celilo Falls. The Harts plan, as has been heretofore explained, contemplated the construction of a submerged dam in the Columbia, with a view to draining out Five Mile Rapids. The river was then to be opened around other obstructions by means of two or three short canals.

The engineers, on their recent trip to Oregon, visited the scene of the proposed improvement, and, after studying the natural conditions and surroundings, concluded, by unanimous vote, that the dam proposition was altogether impracticable. In the first place, while Captain Harts proposed constructing this dam at a point where the river is but 200 feet wide, he supposed its depth was only 40 or 50 feet, and so based the calculations. Major Langfitt determined, after careful soundings, that the depth was over 150 feet, and the velocity of the current so great that it would be practically impossible to place in position the material for the dam. The members of the board concluded that a stream of sufficient volume and great enough current to cut a gorge 200 feet wide, and of nearly the same depth through solid rock, could not be dammed artificially for anything short of an unwarrented sum, and they entertain grave doubts whether a dam could ever be successfully built there at any cost.

When they found that the keystone of Harts' plan could not be considered, and determined that even a modification of the Harts plan on a practical basis, could not be carried out for the amount that has been authorized for this improvement, the board determined to prepare rough plans and estimates for the construction of a continuous canal, extending around all the obstructions between The Dalles and Celilo.

In accordance with this determination, the board requested authority for the making of necessary surveys for such a canal, and authority has been granted, the work to be carried out under direction of Major Langfitt. At this time the board will venture no rough estimate of the cost of a continuous canal, although an estimate made by an old board placed the figure at \$10,000,000, whereas the Harts project was estimated to cost approximately \$4,000,000. It is by no means assured that the new estimates will be as high as the former figure, as the board, before reporting, will have a comprehensive survey upon which to base its estimates, and a fairly accurate estimate of the cost of the improvements is expected.

The board has not reported to the Chief of Engineers, and probably will not do so until it has completed the estimate for a continuous canal. This delay means that no work will be done looking to the opening of the river during the present season. Should the War Department approve the board's report in favor of a continuous canal, and this will unquestionably be done, since there has always been doubt as to the thorough practicability of the Harts plan, no work can be undertaken until Congress has authorized the new project. The last river and harbor bill authorized the work, provided it could be done within the estimate on the Harts project, but not otherwise.

KANSAS LOSSES ESTIMATED.

Over Two Hundred Towns Have Suffered From High Water.

Kansas City, Mo., June 10.—Kansas has suffered as a result of the recent floods more than any other state. No exact figures of the loss sustained can, of course, be given, but the damage done in the principal cities and towns is estimated as follows:

North Topeka, \$500,000; Lawrence, \$250,000; Salina, \$200,000; Manhattan, \$150,000; Junction City, \$100,000; Solomon, \$50,000; Abilene, \$250,000; Lindsay, \$100,000; Hutchinson, \$100,000; Minneapolis, \$100,000; Emporia, \$65,000; Florence, \$50,000; Lincoln Center, \$50,000; Atchison, \$100,000; Argentine, \$2,000,000; Kansas City, Kan., and suburbs, \$8,000,000. Nearly 200 smaller towns were affected by the flood.

The lowest estimate that can be made of the loss to crops is \$5,000,000.

Water Spout Strikes Car.

New York, June 10.—Rushing in from the sea, a waterspout, traveling at great speed, struck a train on the Brooklyn elevated road, bound cityward from Rockaway beach. The motorman saw the spout just as the train reached a trestle over Broad Channel, Jamaica Bay. He threw on full power in an effort to get past, but the flood of water struck between the third and fourth cars. The platforms were crowded with persons unable to get into the cars. These were almost swept off into the bay, but managed to hold fast to the railings.

TURKS AWFUL DEED.

Entire Population of Village is Massacred by Soldiers.

Monastir, European Turkey, June 6.

Horrible details are arriving here of the slaughter of the inhabitants of the village of Smerdash, south of Lake Presba, May 21, by Bashi Bazuks. It appears that on the arrival of the Bashi Bazuks, Chakalooeff's band of insurgents withdrew to the mountains without sustaining any loss. As no rebels were left in the village, the inhabitants experienced no anxiety until suddenly at sunset the Turks, who had completely surrounded the place, commenced a regular bombardment, whereupon all the villagers assembled in the streets. Though the artillery ceased firing during part of the night, the Turkish infantry fired all night long. The artillery bombardment was recommenced at daybreak, but as it was ineffective the Turks set fire to the village on all sides and commenced a general massacre. About 300 houses were burned and upward of 200 persons, mostly women and children, were killed. The women and girls were murdered while resisting outrage. Whole households were slain. Not a living soul was left in the village. The survivors, many of them half burned or otherwise injured, fled. Some of the fleeing villagers were captured, and had their ears and noses cut off before they were butchered.

The report adds that 1400 villagers were in the mountains without food or clothing. One band of these, consisting of 40 women and children, were caught by soldiers in a ravine and were killed after horrible treatment.

RUSSIA WILL SOON FIGHT JAPAN.

Officers Have Advised Chinese to Leave Manchuria.

Victoria, B. C., June 6.—The steamer Riojun Maru, which arrived today from the Orient, brings additional news regarding the crisis. The North China Daily News tells of the adoption of Russian tactics by Japan, which power is gathering forces into Corea in the guise of settlers.

The Shanghai papers say, that while the opinion of the best-informed men is that there will be no war this spring between Japan and Russia, there is not that feeling of certainty, which is indispensable if commerce is to be uninterrupted. In Japan and Manchuria the most inflammable materials are piled up ready for conflagration, and no one can be sure that some accidental spark will not start a fire whose extent it is impossible to foresee. The North China Daily News says also:

Reliable news has been received by local mandarins of the great increase of Russian soldiery in Manchuria. Port Arthur is one succession of large camps, bristling with field artillery and armed men. Russians state in answer to Chinese inquiries without hesitation that they expect war with Japan, whose troops would be likely to try to enter Manchuria through the Western coast of Liaotung. Russian officers friendly with Chinese have earnestly advised them to remove their families and return to China, and not come back until after the war, on the ground that the whole of Liaotung and Southern Manchuria will soon be one great battlefield."

TRAINS MEET HEAD ON.

Disregard of Orders Caused Fatal Collision in Kansas.

Topeka, Kan., June 6.—A disastrous collision between Santa Fe passenger trains at Stilwell, this afternoon, killed nine people and seriously injured six. Train No. 1 was going west at full speed and crashed into the Chicago section of No. 8, east-bound.

The trains were routed on the Missouri Pacific tracks on account of the floods which washed out the Santa Fe tracks. Orders were sent out by the train dispatcher today for both trains to meet at Stilwell. It is charged at the Santa Fe office here tonight that the crew on the Chicago train disregarded this injunction, and ran a mile or more past the meeting place. No. 1 did not stop at Stilwell, but on running slowly by the engineer saw no other train, and as he had a clear track according to his orders he rushed ahead. No. 8 whistled before the east-bound train had proceeded far, but too late to avoid a collision.

One Thousand Men Fighting Fire.

Burlington, Vt., June 6.—At least 1000 men are fighting forest fires in Vermont, yet thousands of acres of valuable timber land have been burned over, and there is little prospect that the fire can be checked until rain shall fall. At Hardwick two residences were destroyed. The most serious situation is on Worcester Mountain, near the towns of Worcester and Elmore. The fire there has burned over 1400 acres of heavy timber land, valued at \$50 an acre, and is rapidly spreading. The smoke in that locality is so dense objects a block away cannot be seen.

The Fastest Battleship Afloat.

Vienna, June 6.—The speed trials of the Austrian second-class battleship Arpad at Pola proves her to be the fastest battleship in the world. Her maximum speed is 20.12 knots in a six-hour run. She was constructed by the Trieste Shipbuilding Company.