



ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By
MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

The morning after Mr. Hastings' visit, a letter came to Mr. Clayton, announcing that one of his bailiffs was supposed to have robbed him to a considerable extent. The man himself had no idea that he was suspected. Francis Clayton was beside himself; he vowed vengeance against the delinquent—he would convict him—he would get him transported—his wife and children should be reduced to shame and beggary!

"I find I shall have to go back to England," he told his wife. "I shall leave you here, and return for you in a week or ten days."

"Oh, do take me with you, Francis," said the little hypocrite, pretending to look disappointed.

"Pshaw! I tell you it is not convenient."

"But what am I to do if you go? I cannot go to all these balls and dinners we are engaged to, alone."

"Nonsense. Madame de St. Geran will chaperon you if you still want a chaperon," added the agreeable husband, with a sneer. "She knows every friend and acquaintance we have in Paris."

Madame de St. Geran was an old friend and friend of Francis Clayton's, and she had for some reason tolerated what she called "her English bear." Francis Clayton, assuming the privileges of an old friend, paid her a most unfashionably early visit, and she received him in a demi-toilet of elegant simplicity in her own boudoir, and was most graciously pleased to accede to his request.

"Tell madame, your wife," she said, in parting, "that at nine o'clock this evening I shall have the honor to call for her to take her to the opera and afterward to the ball given by the Duchess de Beaucour."

And Francis Clayton bent over her hand and kissed it in a manner that might have edified and astonished madame, his wife. Then he returned to the hotel, delivered the message to Fee, bade her good-by, and kissing her coldly, jumped into his brougham, which was in attendance to convey him to the station.

Madame de St. Geran called for Mrs. Clayton at the appointed time, and they spent two hours very pleasantly at the opera, during which several gentlemen of their acquaintance dropped in to see them, and paid their court to either lady, as taste or diplomacy suggested. Once or twice the Frenchwoman looked curiously at her lovely companion, who for once was as bright and sparkling as in the olden days.

"How is it possible," she thought, "for a man to be indifferent to a creature so divine!"

They had seen enough of the opera, and their carriage being called, they drove off to the ball. In the first room Mrs. Clayton met with Mr. Hastings. "She took his arm, and they joined the dancers. "My husband is away," she whispered, "and I shall dance to-night to my heart's content. If he were here he would not let me."

The dance was over, and they were wandering together through the magnificent conservatories that led from the ballroom. Suddenly Mr. Hastings felt his companion's hand tremble violently on his arm, and he looked down quickly into her face. It was crimson with blushes. The words, "Are you ill?" were on his lips, but at that moment he caught sight of Col. d'Agullar advancing, and was discreetly silent. A quick glance, an undecided bow, passed between them, and they both moved on. When Mrs. Clayton returned to find Madame de St. Geran, Col. d'Agullar formed one of the knot of men who stood talking with her. They were obliged to speak then; and against her better judgment, against her own resolve, she went back to the ballroom on his arm. They were perfectly discreet, their conversation was simply such that the merest acquaintances might have held; the danger was in the fascination the presence of each had for the other. She did not dance with him any more than she did with Mr. Hastings; but when she went home she reproached herself bitterly for the time she had spent in his society, while she never gave a single thought to Errol Hastings.

It was three weeks before Mr. Clayton returned to Paris for his wife, and during that time she met Col. d'Agullar almost every day.

Fee wanted to do her duty—wanted with all her might. If Francis Clayton had been a little kind and forbearing to her, she would never have suffered a thought even to be false to him. But he was cruel, tyrannical and suspicious and—and well! she almost hated him. Now and then she would make a great effort, and strive to be good and patient and keep from quarrelling with him, but he was so bearish and ill-tempered that her design always failed. She was making fresh resolves as she sat looking pensively into the fire, on this particular morning, but all of a sudden her thoughts were most unexpectedly put to flight by the abrupt entrance of her husband.

"Francis!" she exclaimed, rising and kissing him.

"Yes. I suppose you did not expect me. What a wretched fire! I am almost frozen, and the room is as cold as death. Ring the bell and order me some lunch."

A terrible fear seized on Fee. If he was angry and jealous about Mr. Hastings, what would he say when he knew that during his absence she had been

constantly in the society of Col. d'Agullar? She had never fully realized her imprudence until this moment. What could she do? If she told him, he was certain to be very violent; if she concealed it, and he became aware of it, the consequences might be terrible. "It is better to get it off my mind at once," she determined.

"Mr. Hastings was here this morning, dear. He came to wish me good-by."

"In anticipation of my return, I suppose."

"Really, Francis, I have scarcely common patience with you. What a poor opinion you must have of yourself to be so suspicious! Mr. Hastings is going to England on business, and Col. d'Agullar is going with him."

"D'Agullar!" cried Francis Clayton, starting, "has he been here?"

"Yes."

"And you have met him?"

"Yes."

"And spoken to him?"

"Yes."

"And danced with him?"

"I plead guilty to that also," answered Fee, trying to speak gayly. She was accustomed to violent outbursts from her husband, but the passionate violence he gave way to on this occasion surpassed anything she had ever witnessed.

He said such terrible things to her, that, trembling, frightened, as she was, her indignation was greater. She walked straight up to him.

"How dare you use such words to me!" she cried. "How dare you utter your base-minded suspicions before me! I would not lower myself so much in my own eyes as to attempt to justify my conduct. You are a poor, miserable tyrant, with whom it is impossible for a woman to live and retain her self-respect. I will not stop under the same roof with you another hour. From this moment I leave you," and she swept toward the door. But he was there before her, and stood with his back against it, to prevent her egress.

"I forbid you to leave this house!"

"Henceforward you have no authority over my actions," his wife replied, coldly.

"I leave Paris to-night."

"Then you go without servants or clothes."

"Be it so! I care not how, but go I will."

He was afraid of her. He tried to justify himself—to make up the quarrel; she would not hear a word. Then he apologized, humbly, abjectly; and at last she consented to receive his amende. Their misery was sealed from that hour. How could a man with a mind like Clayton's ever pardon a woman who had so humiliated him?

The Champions were perhaps not the most united family in the world. Mr. Champion was proverbially indifferent to his wife; Sir Howard and his grandchildren had perpetual altercations; and, latterly, Mrs. Champion and her daughter seemed far less attached to each other than formerly. Flora Champion was unhappy and discontented. Her aim in life was to make a brilliant marriage, and she failed.

Scenes between her and Sir Howard were of frequent occurrence. She quarrelled constantly with her brother, and the last and crowning part of her mortification was that he had fallen desperately in love with Winifred Eyre. When Mr. Eyre died, Sir Howard had gone to the Farm and offered to take Winifred to the Manor. But she refused—not bitterly, not angrily, but firmly. "Thank you," she said, "I am sure you mean kindly. You despised and slighted my dear, dear father when he was alive, and I will not accept anything at your hands now." And Sir Howard, instead of being displeased and offended, was rather gratified by an independence of spirit which he considered due to the blue blood she inherited from the Champions.

Meantime Winifred very gratefully accepted another offer that was made to her. The moment kind Lady Grace heard of her young friend's trouble she came to her and wanted to take her away to Endon Vale at once. But no persuasion could induce Winifred to leave the Farm until after the funeral, and even then she clung to her old friend, Madame de Montolieu, and could not bear the thought of leaving her. But Lady Grace was bent on having the girl, whom she had come to care for very dearly. So she finally persuaded Madame de Montolieu to give up her cottage and go with Winifred to Endon Vale.

To return to Flora Champion. The retribution which her conduct toward Mr. Vane deserved had overtaken her. He was Lord Lancing now; his father had been dead six months, and he was as indifferent to her as she had formerly been to him. And, worse than all, their positions were reversed, and she was in love with him, to her own bitterness and mortification. She tried first to win him back, and when that failed, she strove, with all her strength of will, to master her unrequited attachment. Lord Lancing never slighted her—he was far too generous minded for that; he paid her the same attention in public that he had always done. But he never, as long as he lived, uttered another word of love to her. He was kind and tender to her, for the sake of olden times, but a brave, generous heart like his could never again love

a woman who had been capable of coldness and cruelty.

"I will marry!" Flora vowed to herself, "and marry well. I shall never love any one but Evelyn, and he does not care for me now. If a man as old as my grandfather asks me to be his wife, and he has rank and wealth, I will take him. Surely I have still beauty enough to buy love!" and Flora Champion looked proudly into the long mirror before which she was standing.

CHAPTER XII.

Winifred was no longer unhappy. She had not forgotten the old tie that had been snapped so rudely, but others had wound themselves round her. She had two mothers now—her dear old madame and kind Lady Grace; each seemed to vie with the other in tenderness and care for her.

It was a bright, treacherous morning in early April, and she had just come in from her round of visits to the conservatory and hothouses, laden with choice flowers. She laid them carefully on the long table by the window, and proceeded to make selections. She was bending over a cut crystal vase, her hands filled with delicate ferns, when the door was thrown open and a servant announced "Mr. Hastings." He was in the room before she had time to turn. A quick thrill of pleasure danced through her veins, then she drew herself up into haughty coldness—memory and pride had come to her aid. Mr. Hastings was certainly neither bashful nor nervous, but on finding himself thus alone with the girl whom he had loved, he felt a very pardonable awkwardness. He chose to face it bravely, though. He went quickly toward her, uttering her name in a low voice. She drew back a step or two, and looked at him with proud coldness. He stopped suddenly, looked at her, and turned away deeply mortified.

"I will tell Lady Grace," Winifred said, quietly, and would have left the room, but Mr. Hastings confronted her.

"Do not go yet," he exclaimed, "listen to me for a moment first. Will you never forgive me?—will you not let me atone to you?"

"I will never forgive you," she cried, the passionate tears welling into her eyes, and she swept past him and left the room.

Mr. Hastings stamped with futile anger on the ground.

"How could I be such a fool?" he muttered between his teeth. "I have lost all hope of this girl, whom I would rather have for my wife than the proudest princess in Europe."

His reflections were all cut short by the entrance of Lady Grace. She was very glad to see him; asked him why he had not been over before, and a thousand questions about his travels. They had been talking some twenty minutes when the door opened, and to his surprise Miss Eyre entered, with an air of perfect unconcern. Lady Grace, evidently not knowing they had seen each other that day, introduced them. They bowed coldly.

"Though I think you have met before?" her ladyship remarked, interrogatively.

"Mr. Hastings called once at the Farm to see my father about something. He did not meet as equals," and she gave him a defiant flash of her proud eyes.

Her ladyship pressed Mr. Hastings to dine and stay the night at Endon Vale, but he pleaded an engagement at home. She insisted, however, on his taking lunch before departing, and to that he consented. During lunch his hostess discussed her projects for the coming season.

"I am about to appear in a new role," she said, with a kind glance at Winifred; "that of chaperon. I am going to bring out my adopted daughter, and I trust she will not disappoint my expectations."

"Miss Eyre will, I doubt not, more than realize the fondest anticipations," said Mr. Hastings.

"Sir Clayton has taken a house in Eaton Square for the season," she continued; "we propose to commence occupying it in a fortnight. I hope we shall see you constantly, Mr. Hastings."

"I shall be very glad," assented Errol. "I propose to be in town a good deal, and have taken a set of rooms in Piccadilly."

Sir Clayton's voice made itself heard at this juncture, almost for the first time. "Are you going back to the Court this afternoon, Hastings?"

Errol answered in the affirmative.

"Then Miss Eyre and I will bear you company part of the way. We have ordered the horses for three o'clock."

Winifred bit her lip with vexation; and Mr. Hastings saw it, and would have excused himself had it been possible. The horses came round; he offered to mount her.

"No, thank you," she said, coldly; "I like to be put up by some one whose skill I have tested."

She seemed to delight in wounding him. She kept persistently on the other side of Sir Clayton, and scarcely spoke. Presently they came to a gate, from which the two top railings had been broken.

"Come, Winifred," said Sir Clayton, "there is a capital piece of practice for you." The groom had gone up to unfasten it. "Don't open it, Mason!" shouted the baronet. "Miss Eyre is going to leap it."

And Winifred immediately put her horse at it, and was over in a moment.

"Does she sit well?" Sir Clayton asked, triumphantly, turning to his companion. "Harold Erskine taught her to ride."

Errol's reply was less enthusiastic than it would have been if the last sentence had been unspoken. But, nevertheless, he admired the graceful figure before him very ardently and genuinely. When they parted, Sir Clayton pressed him to dine there the following week. Before he answered, he looked at Winifred, whose gaze was fixed blankly in the distance.

"I will make her love me!" he vowed, impatiently, and he accepted the invitation.

(To be continued.)

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

WHERE ARE THE GUIDE BOARDS?

Law Says Road Supervisors Shall Place Them.

There is on section of the road law which is more imperative in its requirements and which is more disregarded than that which makes it a duty of road supervisors to erect guide boards at the forks of every highway. If the law were strictly followed no supervisor could draw his salary until he had erected guideboards wherever roads unite or cross, yet it is remarked by everyone who travels in the country that there are very few such boards in evidence. Newcomers in particular notice the absence of signboards. The law on the subject is section 30 of the latest edition of Oregon road laws and reads as follows:

Every supervisor shall erect and keep up at the forks of every highway and every crossing of public roads within his road district a guide or finger-board, containing an inscription in legible letters directing the way and specifying the distance to the next town or public place situated on each road respectively; provided, that the road supervisors shall not be paid after submitting their report to the county court until they have shown to the satisfaction of the court that the provisions of this section have been complied with.

HARVEST PROSPECTS EXCELLENT.

Linn County Crops Have Been Helped by the Showers.

Linn county farmers are elated over the excellent prospects for good crops. The damage done by the few days of hot weather early in June has been overcome by the cool weather and rains of the past week and the indications are that almost a full crop will be harvested.

Just now the rain is doing some damage to hay. A considerable amount of clover hay has been cut and will be injured some by the rain. A week's good weather would see a large portion of the hay crop safely harvested.

The fruit outlook is excellent, although the crop of apples and pears will be light, there will be an extraordinary yield of prunes, which constitute by far the greater portion of most orchards. The prune trees in this section will be loaded with all the fruit they can possibly bear. In some instances a part of the fruit will have to be shaken off to save the trees.

Lands in a Tangle.

A large stack of disapprovals of lieu land selections which lay on the desk of the state land agent a few days ago shows the wholesale manner in which the general land office and the department of the interior are turning down Oregon lieu lands. Thousands of acres which have been selected by the state and sold after approval by local land offices have been rejected recently by the general land office, and the end is not yet. Appeals are being taken to the secretary of the interior, but if that official adheres to his present policy there is small chance of a change in the decisions. Beyond question the state land department is involved in the worst tangle ever known in its history, and it will be a long time before the kinks are straightened out.

Scarcity in Brick and Masons.

The state board of capitol building Commissioners has recently let contracts for three new brick buildings, an addition to the prison, a new industrial building at the reform school and a closed cottage at the asylum. As a consequence, there is immediate demand for a large quantity of brick and the prison brickyard will be kept working at its full capacity for nearly two months to supply them. The contractors all wish to begin work at once, and hence each wants brick first.

Coyote Scalps Were Costly.

When the next legislature has appropriated \$35,805 to pay off deficiency claims, Oregon's experience with coyote scalp bounty laws will be ended. That amount will be required to pay the claims that have accrued under the laws which were repealed by the last session of the legislature. When this deficiency is paid Oregon will have expended for bounties some \$212,000. The amount would be \$250,000 but for the fact that when the appropriation was exhausted early in 1902 a number of the counties ceased to allow bounty.

Articles of Incorporation Filed.

Only two new companies filed articles of incorporation in the office of the secretary of state last week. They were: Davis Lake Irrigation company, Roseburg, \$25,000; Suito Lumber company, Linnton, \$25,000.

Baker Will Pay the Taxes.

Sheriff Colbath, of Marion county, has been notified that ex-State Printer Frank Baker will pay the taxes due on the state printing plant. The sheriff had advertised the sale of the property to take place this week.

ARID LAND NOT IN DEMAND.

Department of the Interior Approved Two Applications for Reclamation.

The rush which was made a year ago for land under the arid land law is not in evidence this year. Only a very few applications for arid land contracts have been received in the last six months, and all of these are for small tracts which will be occupied, reclaimed and cultivated by the applicants. Only two of the applications for large tracts have been approved by the department of the interior. One of these is the application of the Portland company, organized by W. E. Burke, which company has a contract for the reclamation of about 8,000 acres northeast of Malheur lake. This tract is entirely included within the region recently withdrawn from entry by the department with a view to examining it to ascertain whether a suitable site exists for the construction of large irrigation works by the government.

The other application approved is that of the Pilot Butte development company, which has secured some 87,000 acres near the headwaters of the Deschutes, from which stream the water for irrigating the land will be taken. This is the company organized by A. M. Drake. Among the applications pending are those of the Oregon development company for 78,000 acres near the headwaters of the Deschutes; the Three Sisters company, for 27,600 acres between the Deschutes and the Cascade mountains, and the Harney valley improvement company, for 69,999 acres near Malheur lake, in Harney county. A part of the application of the Oregon development company has been rejected on the ground that the land is timbered and cannot be properly classed as arid land.

Mrs. Geer Made President.

The Oregon federation of women's clubs completed a most successful three days' session at Astoria last week by the election of the following officers to serve during the ensuing year: President, Mrs. T. T. Geer, Salem; first vice president, Mrs. Samuel Elmore, Astoria; second vice president, Mrs. A. Bernstein, Portland; recording secretary, Mrs. Hattie Young, Grants Pass; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Samuel White, Baker City; treasurer, Miss Olive Slater, La Grande; auditor, Mrs. Florence Sheldon, Eugene. The federation will meet at Baker City next year.

Horses Sent to Canada.

A shipment of 23 cars of horses of all sizes and kinds went from La Grande last week. They will go via Spokane to Cut Bank, Mont., and be driven from there to McLeod, Alberta. There are about 700 horses, and the purchase price is about \$21,000, of which \$17,000 was paid to the horse growers of Eastern Oregon. With freight and 20 per cent duty, the purchasers will be in about \$30,000, and will sell out to the local dealers of their section, and come again, should the venture pay. Prices ranged from \$10 to \$125 dollars.

Christian Convention a Success.

The convention of the Christian churches of Oregon, held at Turner last week, was a great success. There were nearly 40 ministers in attendance and over 200 delegates and very many visitors.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 70@74c; valley, 77c.
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; chop, \$18.
Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.10 @ 1.15; gray, \$1.05 per cental.
Hay—Timothy, \$20@21; clover, nominal; chest, \$15@16 per ton.
Potatoes—Best Burpans, 50@55c per sack; ordinary, 35@45c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3 @ 3.50 per cental.
Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 10@11c; young, 13@14c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 16@17c; dressed, 20@22c; ducks, \$7.00@7.50 per dozen; geese, \$6.00 @ 6.50.
Cheese—Full cream, twins, 15½ @ 16c; Young America, 15@15½c; factory prices, 1@1½c less.
Butter—Fancy creamery, 20@22½c per pound; extras, 22c; dairy, 20 @ 22½c; store, 16c@18.
Eggs—17@20c per dozen.
Hops—Choice, 18@20c per pound.
Wool—Valley, 12½@17c; Eastern Oregon, 8@14c; mohair, 35@37½c.
Beef—Gross, cows, 3½@4c, per pound; steers, 5@5½c; dressed, 8½c.
Veal—7½@8c.
Mutton—Gross, \$3.50 per pound; dressed, 6@6½c.
Lamb—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7½c.
Hogs—Gross, 6@6½c per pound; dressed, 7@8c.