



ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By
MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

Within a few weeks of the close of the season a very beautiful Frenchwoman came to London, and was received at once into the best society. Her story was a strange one, and one that excited a great deal of interest. She had been married at fifteen to a Russian prince, many years older than herself, and of dissolute character. At first he had loved her passionately; then, as he found it impossible to overcome her coldness and indifference, he had come to dislike and treat her with harshness. He had taken her away to Russia very young, very friendless, and intensely unhappy. There he had neglected her. She had two children—boys; and all her love seemed bound up in them. Then they died; the cold of Russia killed them, and she almost died of the grief.

The physician at St. Petersburg insisted that she should return at once to Paris. "It is the only way to save her life," he said to her husband. So after three years' weary absence, she returned to her birthplace, and there, after a time, she recovered. At the French court she was greatly admired and sought for. A young man of high rank conceived a wild passion for her. He was so handsome, so distinguished, no one believed she could resist the devotion he constantly and so openly offered her. It could scarcely be affirmed that she was utterly unmoved by his passion, but all the world said that she never gave him any undue encouragement. Still, Prince Zelikoff became jealous. One evening the princess dropped her bouquet; Monsieur de Ligny picked it up, bowed over it, and returned it to her. Prince Zelikoff chose to imagine the accident was prearranged, and that De Ligny had taken the opportunity of concealing a note among the flowers. He snatched the bouquet violently from his wife's hands. In her surprise she made some resistance; he grasped her arm and pressed the sharp-pointed diamond bracelet unintentionally into the flesh. A little jet of blood spurted forth. The enraged De Ligny beheld it, and in a moment Prince Zelikoff lay stunned and bleeding on the ground. A crowd closed round them at once; with some difficulty the angry men were separated, but, of course, only blood could wipe out such a stain. A meeting was arranged; the seconds made the customary formal attempts at a reconciliation without success.

Valerie de Zelikoff knew well enough what the end of such a quarrel must naturally be. She knew her husband's fierce, indomitable temper, and she guessed the rage that had filled De Ligny's heart at seeing her treated with violence and indignity. Her heart was torn—in very truth she cared more for the handsome accomplished man who loved her so desperately, than for her dissolute, gray-haired, indifferent husband. But her religion had taught her faithfully the duty of sacrificing everything to right.

The morning of the duel arrived, no one was on the ground but the seconds, a doctor and his assistant. The doctor stood near De Ligny. Prince Zelikoff was known as a deadly shot. One, two, three, two flashes, two reports, a wild shriek, and a fall. And yet neither of the duelists was harmed or scathed. At the moment of firing the doctor's assistant had flung himself in front of the prince, had turned up the hand which held his pistol, and received De Ligny's shot through his shoulder. De Ligny, the seconds, and the doctor rushed toward him; the prince had already raised his head, and recognized Valerie de Zelikoff, his wife. The doctor explained it. He was an old friend of the family; she had gone to him and besought him to allow her to be present at the duel, urging that she believed herself able to prevent it, and after much hesitation he had yielded. The wound was not a serious one; many a woman would have been glad to purchase the reputation for heroism that came undesired to Valerie de Zelikoff at so small a price of pain.

The action was thoroughly French, and as such intensely appreciated by all Paris. It was a crown of glory to her husband, and scattered his vanity to a degree that made him love her again as in the olden days. Great as the triumph was to Zelikoff, was the defeat to De Ligny. His amour-propre could not recover from such a terrible blow; he had been prepared to risk his life to a well-known deadly shot to avenge an insult on the woman he loved, and she had received his bullet in her own tender flesh to save the husband who had so grossly wronged her. He went away until the affair had blown over, and then returned to Paris with a very young, fair wife, who had been taken from a convent to marry him. She adored him; he was cold and indifferent to her; nay, he almost hated her, when, six months later, Prince Zelikoff died of a fever, and the beautiful Valerie was left a widow at twenty-two. She passed a year in seclusion, then she again went into society, and, as has been said, came to London a few weeks before the close of the season. She was staying in the house of Lady Dora Annesly, Mr. Hastings' cousin, and her greatest friend.

Mr. Hastings saw a great deal of the beautiful Frenchwoman, and admired her exceedingly. She was not like any Frenchwoman he had met before—she did not talk much, or gesticulate, or seem

to desire admiration. She was pale, large-eyed, essentially spirituelle. The chief fascination she possessed for him was the low, musical tone of her voice.

"I wish you would come more often to us, Errol," his cousin said; "we see so little of you. I am so anxious that Madame Zelikoff's visit to us should be a pleasant one, and she always seems happier, brighter, when you are there."

"You do me too much honor," Mr. Hastings said, mockingly. "It is no empty compliment, indeed, Errol," returned Lady Dora. "I am sure she likes you much better than any one else who comes here. You ought to feel flattered; the Princess de Zelikoff's coldness and indifference to men's attention has almost become a proverb in Paris. I am surprised you do not prefer a high-bred, graceful woman of the world, to an uninformed, simple country girl like that Miss Eyre. You see I have discovered your secret."

"Some men are foolish enough to prefer innocence in women to a knowledge of the world, Dora," Mr. Hastings answered coldly. "Some men are foolish enough for anything," retorted Lady Dora, pettishly.

CHAPTER XVI.

More than once Sir Howard Champion had met his granddaughter, Winifred Eyre, in society. He had spoken very little; and the result of his quiet scrutiny was that he felt unfeignedly pleased with her. She was graceful, natural and ladylike, and possessed a certain frankness of manner which could not fail to win for her liking and admiration.

One day he called on Lady Grace Farquhar. She and Winifred were sitting alone together in the drawing room. "My dear," he said to Winifred, "we must not be strangers any longer. My other granddaughters are coming to stay with me in Hurstshire after the season is over, and I want Lady Grace to spare you. You will not refuse?"

"I think you would like to go, dear, would you not?" Lady Grace said, quickly. Winifred answered a little hesitatingly in the affirmative. She would rather not have gone; but she could not bear to seem stubborn, or as if she bore malice.

The London season was over, the park deserted, the handsome carriages gone from the streets. Winifred was staying at Hurst Manor with all her cousins—Flora and Reginald Champion, and Laura and Ada Fordyce, Lady Valanton's daughters. She had met the two latter constantly in town, and been on speaking terms with them; but nothing more. The elder was rather plain, but aristocratic looking, and very proud. Ada, the younger, was pretty, good-tempered and unaffected. She took to Winifred at once, and soon became very fond of her; but her sister joined with Flora in being disdainful and cold to the farmer's daughter. There were two or three young men, friends of Reginald's, staying in the house, and Mr. Maxwell, to whom Miss Champion was now formally engaged.

"I have news for you, Laura," said Reginald one day, entering the room in which were his sisters and cousins; "indeed, news for you all. Hastings is not going to Norway in his yacht, but is coming down to the Court, and has invited several people with him, so we shall all be enlivened a little, I hope, in this dull hole. Lady Dora Annesly is to play hostess, so there is sure to be plenty of fun."

Some days after Lady Dora Annesly arrived at the Court with her husband, a young, good-tempered man, very fond of her, and not in the least inclined to be jealous. There had been a very decided flirtation between Mr. Hastings and Lady Dora some years ago, before she was married or engaged; they sometimes revived it even now. He let her have her own wayward will in the matter of coming to stay at the Court and inviting guests and turning the old house upside down for private theatricals, and in return she was very bright and kind to him and consulted his pleasure in every possible way.

Lady Dora made all her plans and Errol carried them out. He called on Mrs. Champion, gave her some hints about the tableaux and a desire for her co-operation. She responded immediately by calling on Lady Dora, and two days afterward Dora appeared at Hurst Manor. The ladies, especially the young ones, were charmed with her, she was so bright, so fascinating.

There were a great many calls, conversations, hints, proposals and suggestions, and finally everything was arranged precisely as the mistress of the ceremonies had intended it should be. Then, of course, there were rehearsals at the Court; lunches, dinner parties, all manner of pretexts for getting the young people together to perfect their parts. Scenery and dresses came down from London. Mr. Hastings spared neither trouble nor expense, and the Court ball-room was transformed into an elegant theater. All the country round was invited; there were to be two hundred guests.

Winifred's heart beat fast for the first time she visited Hazell Court. She remembered how in the olden days that stately gray mansion into which she had never hoped to enter had been invested

in her childlike dreams with all the romance which she had read of or fancied. Afterward it had been dearer still as the home of the man who had been to her a hero, a demigod. The time came to her when she had been the simple farmer's daughter, so proud, so happy to be noticed by the handsome master of Hazell Court. How her heart had sunk within her as she saw him paying court to the beautiful, aristocratic women who seemed then so far above her; and how little she had dreamed of the advent of a time when she should be a more honored, more longed-for guest than they?

Mr. Hastings came out to meet the party of ladies who had ridden over to the Court. He went up to Winifred first, and took her in his strong arms and lifted her from the saddle.

"Welcome!" he whispered; "this is a time I have often longed for." One day she had ridden over to the Court to rehearse with Lady Dora. Mr. Hastings came in from a drive and found his cousin alone in the morning room.

"Pray, don't come in, Errol," she exclaimed; "I must not be interrupted, or Winifred will be ready first." "Is Miss Eyre here, then?" he asked. "Yes—in the picture gallery, I think. She said she could study her part best there."

Mr. Hastings left the room and turned his steps in the direction of the picture gallery. It was an intensely hot afternoon, and all the doors were thrown wide open. He looked into the long, uncarpeted room, and saw there a new picture in a new frame. He stood and gazed at it longer and with deeper feelings than he had ever gazed at any other picture there; it was the only one that was not his—it was the only one he cared for or desired ardently. Framed in the dark oak of the window setting was a lithe, graceful figure, half reclined, and a fair, upturned face. Errol half feared to break the spell that he stood watching. Presently impatience overcame the fascination. He went toward her, and the noise of his footsteps aroused her.

"Were you studying or thinking, Miss Eyre?" he asked. "I hardly know, Mr. Hastings. Thinking, perhaps."

"It is too warm to study or think, either. Have you ever seen the Hazell portrait gallery?" "Never."

"Should you like to see it?" "I should, indeed."

"Come with me and I will show it to you. Wait a moment, though; I must get the key; I always keep that room locked." She waited, looking out of the window into the rose garden. In a minute he returned. She followed him and heard the echo as he turned the massive key in the lock. He stood aside a moment for her to pass, and then she heard the heavy door close behind them. A feeling half of fear crept into her heart. She dared not turn; a dim consciousness of what was passing in his mind seemed to overshadow her. One by one she gazed at the portraits on the wall, at the beautiful, gracious-looking women and the stalwart men, to some of whom the present Mr. Hastings bore such a striking likeness.

Presently she dropped her eyes from the wall and turned to him. She began a sentence and then paused abruptly blood-red with confusion at the intensity of his gaze. He put his hand on hers and essayed to draw her toward him, but she turned sharply away, trembling and frightened.

"My love, my darling!" he cried, in a deep, strong voice, "do not let us misunderstand each other any longer. You loved me once; you do love me still, a little, I believe. Why should there be mistrust and constraint between us?"

His words were very sweet in her ears, but the false pride that had tormented her so long would not let her be happy even now, at the crisis of her life. She drew herself away.

"You have seen the wives that all the former Hastings have chosen—some noble, all fair. I swear before heaven none of them have been loved and revered as you shall be if you will be the last of the race! O, my darling! do not let a false pride make all our lives one long bitterness."

Tears came into her eyes—large tears that gathered and brimmed over, running down the fair face and making it sad. "I loved you once," she half sobbed—"loved you with all my heart, as I could never love again. I was only a poor, little country girl then; you were a hero and a god to me, something different from any one I had seen before, and because I was simple and ignorant, and—loving, you despised me, and you treated Miss Champion with honor and courtesy because she was a fine lady, and—and you thought I was only a farmer's daughter."

And Winifred sobbed with passionate indignation at the remembrance of her wrongs. Mr. Hastings was fairly angry. Her tears moved him to impatience.

"Will you never cease upbraiding me?" he exclaimed. "Have I not atoned to you enough? Have I not humbled myself before you as I believe in truth none of our race ever humbled himself before? Once for all, Winifred, will you take the love I offer you or do you reject me now and forever?"

"I reject you!" He was gone even before the better impulse, surging quickly into her heart, moved her to call him back, crying: "I did not mean it!" She felt then she had thrown away her own life, her own happiness, and she crouched down by the window uttering great, gasping sobs of remorse and anguish.

From that time Mr. Hastings' manner to her was changed. He was courteous but in no wise different in his behavior to her than to the other ladies who visited the Court. And when she thought he no longer cared for her, her love for him revived ten-fold and she almost broke her heart for him.

(To be continued.)

The keenest critic of any age or country was Voltaire.

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

NEW LAND LAW DEFECTIVE.

State Board Believes Old Act Still in Operation.

Application has been made to the state land board for the purchase of a tract of school land located within the boundaries of one of the proposed forest reserves in Eastern Oregon. This land has been withdrawn from sale by the state land board for the reason that if the reserve should be created the land would probably be more valuable for "base" than for sale as school land. The applicant in this case contends, however, that the board has no right to refuse to sell any school land when the legal price, \$2.50 per acre, has been tendered.

The state land board, in considering the question, has discovered that there is a defect in the title of the act of the last legislature which makes it doubtful whether the legislature raised the price of school land to \$2.50 per acre and required the board to sell at that price. The title of the act refers only to indemnity land, while the act itself applies to both, indemnity and school land. The board is inclined to the opinion that so much of the act as applies to school land is inoperative, and that the old law is still in force on that subject. The old law authorized the board to sell school land at any price not less than \$1.25 per acre. Under that law the board could withdraw the land from sale, or could fix the price at \$2.50, which was intended by the legislature.

If the land should be placed in a forest reserve, and could be used as a base, it would be worth \$5 an acre. For that reason purchasers are anxious to get it, and the state land board is desirous of holding it. The question of law involved will be submitted to the attorney-general for his opinion.

Work Begins on Expensive Barn.

Work has commenced on the new and modern \$7000 barn to be erected on the grounds of the Eastern Oregon experiment station at Union. The first story will be constructed of cut stone, and the superstructure of wood. Twelve men are now employed laying the foundation. The building is located on the southern part of the 620-acre farm owned by the state, and not far from the main line of the O. R. & N. where it rounds Hutchinson Point. The building will have cement floors and will be of a very pleasing architectural design, and will be used for experimenting in the development of thoroughbred livestock.

Crops in Lane County.

While there has been much complaint about unfavorable weather and many farmers have expressed the belief that crops of all kinds would be light, there is now a change to the altruistic view of the situation in Lane county. Conditions are turning out a much better than anybody believed a few weeks ago. Probably the most elated of all the producers are those who have orchards. Conditions for years past have been more or less discouraging to the horticulturist and only the strong hearted have been able to bear up against the repeated failures of prune crops especially.

Smoky Pail Reappears.

The pall of smoke which annually visits the Southern Oregon mountains, screening the pine-covered ranges from view and shadowing the entire Southern Oregon country, is making its appearance. A few minor fires have already been observed in the surrounding mountains, though none of them have occurred in the heavily timbered districts. A stricter vigilance will be kept this year than usual, and it is not likely that the dreadful fires of last summer will be repeated.

Coming Events.

Ninth annual regatta, Astoria, August 19-21. State Fair, Salem, September 14-19. Second Southern Oregon district fair, Eugene, September, 29-October 3. Summer Association of the Northwest Indian agencies, Newport, August 17-27. Lane county teachers' institute, Eugene, August 4-5.

Watermelons Late.

From all indications Josephine county will maintain its widespread reputation of being a great watermelon section. The melon season will be some later there this year than usual, but the growers say the luscious fruit will be as much in evidence this summer as ever before. Melons are grown in the bottom lands below Grants Pass by the 60 and 80-acre fields.

Assistant Postmaster Blamed.

Postmaster Moomaw, of Baker City, has received an order from the post-office department at Washington, directing him to dismiss Assistant Postmaster George H. Tracy. This is the sequel to the loss of two registered letters sent through the Baker City office on March 17 last, which were not received by the people to whom they were addressed.

Flax Will Have to Be Cut.

After having tried for more than two weeks to secure men to pull flax, Eugene Boase, proprietor of the Salem flax plant, has been compelled to abandon the effort to gather the crop in that manner, and much of it will be cut with mowing machines.

APPROPRIATION SHORT.

Money to Pay Indian War Veterans Has Been Exhausted.

The appropriation of \$100,000 made by the last legislature for the payment of the Indian War veterans will all be exhausted by the payment of claims already filed, and over 300 claimants must wait until the next legislature appropriates money before they can get their pay. The unpaid claims will aggregate some \$50,000, so that the total amount paid out on this account will be \$150,000. As it had become apparent in the last few days that the appropriation would soon be exhausted, Secretary of State Dunbar asked the attorney-general for advice as to the course he should pursue with regard to the claims that come in after the \$100,000 has been expended.

Attorney-General Crawford has rendered an opinion in which he held that the secretary of state has no authority to audit the claims or issue warrants after the appropriation is exhausted. This means that until the legislature makes another appropriation, those whose claims are not already on file in the office of the secretary of state will have no legal claim against the state.

Section 2398 of the code provides that the secretary of state shall not issue a warrant except when an appropriation is available for the payment of the same. It also provides that where a claim has been incurred in pursuance of authority of law, but no appropriation has been made, or, is made, has been exhausted, the secretary shall audit the claim and issue a certificate as evidence that the claim has been allowed. The attorney-general holds that the Indian war claims do not come under any of these classes and that, therefore, the secretary has no power to issue warrants or even certificates. He can do nothing but receive the claims and keep them on file until the next legislature meets, when he will report them to that body for their consideration.

The Indian War veterans' claims were not incurred in pursuance of any law of the state of Oregon, but were incurred under the territorial government. The United States government assumed all the liabilities of the territory when the state was admitted, and for that reason the veterans had no legal claim against the state. The appropriation is held, therefore, to be the measure of the amount for which the secretary may audit claims.

New Mine for Galice Creek.

Galice creek, which has already become noted as a rich placer mining region and producer of placer gold through the Old Channel mines of that district, is to have another great hydraulic placer mine. This new mine will be one of the largest and best equipped hydraulic placers in the West. The new hydraulic mine is being equipped by the Galice Creek Hydraulic Mining Company. This company has had a large crew of men at work for the past six months preparing the placer fields to be operated upon, for the installation of an extensive hydraulic plant.

Sawmill Burned.

The Liembaugh sawmill, six miles from Cottage Grove, on Mosby creek, caught fire while the crew was at dinner. The entire plant was destroyed. The valuation was not given. There was no insurance.

Collected by Fish Commissioners.

Fish Commissioner H. G. Van Dusen has deposited in the state treasury \$3303.85, which sum was collected by him during the month of June.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 77@78c; valley, 80c.
Barley—Feed, \$19.00 per ton; brewing, \$20.
Flour—Best grades, \$4.10 @ 5.50; graham \$3.35 @ 3.75.
Millstuffs—Bran, \$23 per ton; middlings, \$27; shorts, \$23; chop, \$18.
Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.07 @ 1.07½; gray, \$1.05 per cental.
Hay—Timothy, \$19@20; clover, nominal; chest, \$15@16 per ton.
Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 70@75c per sack; ordinary, 35@45c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3 @ 3.50 per cental.
Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 16@17½c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 10@12c; dressed, 14@15c; ducks, 14.00@15.00 per dozen; geese, \$6.00 @ 6.50.
Cheese—Full cream, twins, 15½@16c; Young America, 15½@16c; factory prices, 1@1½c less.
Butter—Fancy creamery, 20@22½c per pound; extras, 22c; dairy, 20@22½c; store, 16c@17.
Eggs—20@21c per dozen.
Hops—Choice, 17@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, 7½c.
Veal—7½@8c.
Mutton—Gross, 3c per pound; dressed, 5½@6c.
Lamb—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7c.
Hogs—Gross, 6@6½c per pound dressed, 6½@7c.