



ONLY A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By
MRS. FORRESTER.

CHAPTER XVII.

A week before the theatricals the Princess Zelikoff, Lady Dora's old-time friend, arrived at the Court. Lady Dora was charmed to have her friend with her again.

Coming every day to rehearse with Lady Dora, Winifred saw, with the terrible instinct of jealousy, that the pale, beautiful, languid French woman loved the master of Hazell Court. She watched them narrowly, not seeming to see them, and yet painfully conscious of every word that passed between them. She fancied, and perhaps it was not only fancy, that the old tenderness Mr. Hastings had shown for her was creeping into his manner to the Princess Zelikoff. He was always at her side now—when she rode, when she sang or when she sat apart from the rest of the company. Sometimes Winifred, stung with jealousy, would try the power of her old fascinations upon him. She spoke to him in the low, soft voice he would have given half he possessed to hear in the time that was past; she looked with pleading eyes into his face and sang the songs he loved, and yet she could not keep him by her side.

The agitation and excitement of the last few days before the Court ball were almost too much for Winifred. She had no sleep at night, she could scarcely be induced to touch food, and Mrs. Champion really felt a little anxious at seeing her so hollow-eyed.

Every one was charmed with the entertainment. It had not been too long. The tableaux were lovely and as for the play, "Cross Purposes," it was charming. Not very much plot in it, perhaps, but so wonderfully acted. It was so rare to see gentlemen and ladies play thoroughly well; and they had all been so handsome, so graceful.

Miss Champion and Lady Laura may have suffered some pangs of jealousy at the admiration Miss Eyre excited, but the Princess Zelikoff was in a torment of jealous pain. She, the unsusceptible, the pale, impassible Diana, as she had been called, was at last in love, and with Mr. Hastings. She did not know if he cared for her; nay, when she saw his passionate look at Winifred at the end of the play, a terrible fear seized her that his affections were centered on the graceful English girl. She must love him, too; the most finished actress could not have thrown such expression into her eyes, had not some deep emotion been working in her heart.

Two weeks later the marriage of Flora Champion to Mr. Maxwell took place. It was a grand and stately affair, yet it was a relief to every one when the breakfast was over and the bridal pair had started on their journey. As she drove off in the barouche, drawn by four magnificent bay horses, Flora Maxwell looked like a queen. Perhaps she felt like one as she bowed right and left to the crowd of country people who stood on either side of the Manor gates to see her pass.

Mr. Hastings and Winifred danced together at the ball in the evening; but there was an unpleasant kind of stiffness and reserve between them. She fancied he wished to avoid her; he thought the same of her, and danced more than usual with the Princess Zelikoff.

"How glad I shall be to get away from this!" poor Winifred said to herself, with exceeding bitterness. "I think I should die if I were forced to stop and see him love another woman. Perhaps when I am back at Endon Vale I shall forget him."

She was delighted when the day came for her to leave Hurst Manor. Her only regret was in parting with her grandfather, who had been very kind to her, and to whom she had really become attached.

Lady Grace was expecting a party of guests at Endon Vale, and invited Lady Ada Fordyce to accompany Winifred home, as Lady Valanton and her eldest daughter were going to visit in the north. All the household were glad to have her among them again; and as for Sir Clayton, he had such long arrears of copying and references for her to make up, that Lady Grace was obliged to interfere and rescue her from her musty labor.

Lord Harold, who was at the house again, complained bitterly of her frequent and prolonged absence; but after a time he grew more tolerant, and seemed to find some consolation in the company of Lady Ada Fordyce. He was still very much in love with Winifred, but he began now to reflect sagely that it was folly for him to be pining and sighing after her if she had really made up her mind that she would not marry him.

Some one gave out the intelligence at dinner at Endon Vale that Mr. Hastings had gone on a yachting expedition, and that Lady Dora and the Russian princess accompanied him. Mrs. Clayton looked from underneath her lashes at Winifred, and noted the sudden sickly whiteness which came into her face. "Ah! how I wish I could help her!" she thought, pitifully. "A real friend might often be able to save a girl years of unhappiness and regret. If she would only tell me!"

Lady Grace had devoted a pretty, bay-windowed sitting room to Mrs. Clayton's use, and there she and Winifred often sat for hours together undisturbed. They were very fond of each other, very sympathetic and caressing, yet neither men-

tioned the subject that was nearest her heart.

At last Mrs. Clayton resolved to dissipate the reserve. She knew that to gain confidence you must be prepared to give it, and strengthened herself to the task.

They were sitting together as usual, one each side of the window, sometimes speaking, oftener silent. The day had been sultry, and the windows were thrown wide open to let in the little air that was stirring. Mrs. Clayton had been watching her for some time. At last she spoke:

"My dear Winifred, you will go on reading and dreaming about Oenone until you have completely identified yourself with that forlorn maiden."

Winifred turned her eyes dreamily to the speaker. "I was not even thinking of Oenone," and then her hand closed the book which had been open at her favorite poem.

"Confess now—you are jealous of the attention Lord Harold pays your cousin?" Winifred laughed gayly.

"O, Fee, you are a bad diviner of secrets. I am waiting in daily hope that he will propose to her. I could not fancy two people better suited."

"I could."

"Who, Fee?"

"Yourself and Errol Hastings."

"O, Fee!" cried Winifred, with impatient pain, "why do you speak of him? You know all is over between us!"

"I should like to speak just this once, dear; and if you will hear me, I will be silent in future. I know that Errol loved you very dearly; I cannot but believe you cared for him. Do not let some foolish trifle, some false pride, mar the happiness of all your life!"

Mrs. Clayton spoke with intense earnestness, and when she finished, tears of passionate regret stood in Winifred's eyes.

"It is too late, Fee! You do not understand. Your words only make me more miserable."

"Why too late?"

"Because I behaved wickedly to him; because he must despise me, and because he will go and marry that French woman, who loves him and lets him see it."

"Did you refuse him, then?"

"Don't ask me, Fee. I think my pride blinded me. If I could atone for it now I think I would ask him on my knees to marry me. I can't tell you the true story. I know you love me and would not willingly pain me. I have sealed my fate with my own folly. Do not ever speak about it again."

It was nearly the end of September when Mr. Hastings called one afternoon at Endon Vale. As he rode up the avenue he met Mrs. Clayton sauntering down it.

"Mr. Hastings!" she cried, with real pleasure in her voice; "I have wanted to see you such a long time."

He dismounted and walked along by her side, leading his splendid bay horse.

"There is nobody at home but me—they are all gone to a picnic, and I should have been with them but for one of my bad headaches."

"It is better now, I trust. You do not look ill."

"No; I am getting quite strong here. Lady Grace is so good to me, and Winifred," she added, looking sidelong at him—"I think I never knew any one so sweet and thoughtful."

She noted the slightest quiver of his lip, but he said nothing—merely bent his head as though in polite acquiescence.

"Will you not come into the house?" she asked.

"Not unless you are going." And they went together into what was called the lawn garden.

"Am I to congratulate you?" she said, looking up at him suddenly.

"Congratulations, Mrs. Clayton?" he repeated after her. "On what?"

"I heard you were going to marry the Princess Zelikoff."

"Then some one has been taking an unwarrantable liberty with the Princess Zelikoff's name."

"Not altogether unwarrantable, Mr. Hastings."

"Surely, yes. I am quite certain that she never gave the slightest foundation for such a report."

"Come, confess now that it looks rather suspicious when a gentleman takes a lady a cruise in his yacht."

"My dear Mrs. Clayton, what do you mean?"

"Did not your cousin and the princess accompany you on your yachting expedition?"

"Most certainly not. No one went with me but Le Marchant and Ashburton."

Mrs. Clayton looked rather blank, but felt secretly pleased.

"Then we have all been misinformed," she said, laughing. "And, forgive my pertinacity; but, seriously, you are not engaged to the princess?"

"I am not. I feel greatly vexed that there should have even been a discussion about the matter."

Mrs. Clayton sat down on a garden bench; she was silent for a moment, and then, looking up in her companion's face, said, with some hesitation:

"We are old friends, Errol—are we not?"

"We are, indeed," he returned, smiling, with some surprise.

"May I take an old friend's liberty?"

she asked again, with still more hesitation.

"You may do anything that you wish or please," he answered.

"And you promise not to be offended?"

"I promise sacredly."

"Thank you. Then, Errol, I am going to say something exceedingly distasteful to myself and perhaps painful to you, for which some one else would, I think, never forgive me. I am bold—am I not?"

"You are enigmatical," Mr. Hastings replied, still smiling.

"I like you very sincerely; I love her," Mrs. Clayton went on, hastily, "and I want you both to be happy; therefore I am about to perform a Quixotic action, which may be the means of losing me your friendship and her love. I see you frown! perhaps you guess of whom I am speaking."

"I would rather have a certainty than a surmise," he said, gravely; "tell me, if you please."

"I speak of Winifred Eyre. My task is all the more difficult because I do not, in truth, know, nor can I guess at the circumstance which has caused your estrangement. Do not be angry with me, Errol, I must ask you one question—do you love her?"

"I love her," he said, seeming to force the words from unwilling lips, "but I am trying to forget her."

"But, Errol, if you thought she cared for you, would you still try to forget her?"

"I cannot answer you," he said, speaking abruptly, after a pause. "Miss Eyre is not what I thought her. I believed her to be sweet, and gracious, and womanly; and I have found her hard, and proud, and cold!"

"Oh, Errol, you mistake—she is neither."

"She is to me," he said, sternly.

Mrs. Clayton waited for some moments.

"If I might only tell you," she said, in great perplexity. "She broke down once when we were speaking of you. She condemned her own false pride bitterly; she said you must hate her; that she—"

And Mrs. Clayton stopped suddenly in her rapid utterance, feeling a terrible fear that she had committed an unwarrantable breach of trust.

A sudden thrill of pleasure came into Errol's heart, but the expression of his face remained unchanged.

"Mrs. Clayton," he said, with some passion, "I asked Miss Eyre twice, nay, three times, to be my wife. I made myself her slave because—well, the reason matters little—suffice it that I humbled my pride into the dust for her sake. She treated me with scorn, and yet I bore it, for I believed in my heart she loved me. When I asked her the last time, her refusal was couched in such terms that I felt the utter impossibility of a thought of love coming between us again."

"She has forgiven you now from the depths of her heart. And she suffers, Errol—suffers; and at night, when she is alone, she cries bitter tears. I went one night to her room, and I heard her sobbing as though her heart would break, and went away again."

Mr. Hastings felt a sudden choking in his throat, and turned away. The groom was just bringing his horse round. He rose.

"Thank you a thousand times for your kindness," he said, in a low voice; "I shall not forget it. Good by;" and he took her little white hand in his and kissed it. Then he rode thoughtfully away.

For days and days after his conversation with Mrs. Clayton, Mr. Hastings mused upon her words. So many doubts divided his mind, and kept him from deciding on what course he should pursue. "Could he in truth rely upon her words?—did Winifred really love him, and regret her harshness and pride to him, or was it a kindly though mistaken attempt on Mrs. Clayton's part to bring them once more together?" If he sought her again, and she gave him the same answer, his pride would never recover such a terrible humiliation.

A whole month of restless uneasiness passed away before he could make up his mind to visit Endon Vale again. Then one morning he plucked up courage suddenly and went.

At first Mrs. Clayton had anticipated the happiest results from her talk with Mr. Hastings; but as day after day wore on, and he did not return, she fell into despair, and wished with some bitterness of heart that she had forborne to interfere. One thing was fortunate—she had not breathed a word to Winifred of what had passed between them.

(To be continued.)

True to Her Charge.

Every now and then we hear a story of a man or a woman who has never ridden on a railroad train, though living for a generation within sound of the locomotive's whistle. Similarly, the telephone is still an uncanny mystery to numbers, even in our big cities. In one of the residence sections of Philadelphia a gentleman had a telephone installed in his house the same day on which his wife had engaged a new servant. The first time the girl heard the telephone bell ring she went to the front door, found no one there and returned puzzled. Then she heard her mistress's voice upstairs. Thinking that she was being called she went up to the room. There she saw the telephone in use for the first time in her life. She could think of but one explanation. "Oh, the poor thing gone crazy. Don't worry, darlin', I'll stand by," she cried, and was immediately ordered out by her indignant mistress. "Never," was the reply. "Never will it be said of me that I left my poor lady talking into a wall, and her with three little children."

England's Horticultural Show. Shrewsbury, England, with a population of but 30,000, boasts one of the largest horticultural shows in the world.

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

GREAT FRUIT YIELD.

Rogue River Valley Trees Promise Choice Product.

From the viewpoint of the grain-raiser dame nature is in a state of revolt this year in Southern Oregon, the drouth prevailing for the past few months having woefully reduced the average in all small grains. It appears as if nature, indeed, rebelled at man's persistent perversion of soil and climate conditions intended to produce nectar for the gods, to the baser uses of growing provender for kine or grain for human kind or other cattle.

The orchards and alfalfa meadows, however, are yielding up such stores of wealth as only those realize who are familiar with existing conditions. Apples and pears, promise fancy figures again this year. In fact growers look for record-breaking prices, owing to partial failure of fruit of ordinary quality in the east. Of course the fancy fruit for which this section is distinguished is not exactly in competition with ordinary barrel stock, but scarcity of the latter article always enhances prices all round. Growers are carefully thinning and applying the summer spray at present, and favoring weather conditions are giving promise of quality surpassing, perhaps, any former year in the history of the local trade.

FIX PRICE OF PRUNES.

Willamette Valley Growers' Association Says 2% Cent Basis.

The Willamette Valley Prune Association held an important meeting at Salem last week. Delegates were in attendance from Douglas, Lane, Linn, Polk, Benton and Clackamas counties, and from Vancouver, Wash., and was the most representative gathering of the fruitgrowers of the Northwest ever held in that city. Organizations are already formed in Linn, Benton, Douglas, Marion and Yamhill counties, and at Vancouver, Wash., and associations will be formed all over the state and the northwest in the near future. The plan under discussion at the meeting was to have all the associations in the Northwest under one secretary, so that it will be impossible for one organization to undersell another in the market, thus creating uniform scale of prices for all fruits on the coast. The plan met with the approval of all present and an effort will be made to bring the condition about.

The price of prunes this year is fixed on a 2% cent basis.

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.
Klamath county fair, Klamath Falls, October 6-9.
Good roads convention, Jacksonville, August 15.
Fruitgrowers' convention, Jacksonville, August 15.
Teachers' institute, Tillamook, July 29-31.
Old Folks' celebration, La Grande, August 1.
Hoo Hoo contention, Portland, August 1.
Knights of Pythias convention, Astoria, August 20-21.
Teachers' institute, La Grande, August 17-21.

Smiling Fields of Polk County.

Excellent samples of hay and grain have been brought to Independence this week. Early oats and spring wheat have commenced to change color, and the heads of each are well filled. Some early hops have been exhibited in town, which are three-fourths grown. Hay harvest is being pushed rapidly forward, and there is a larger acreage in Polk county this year than has ever been planted before. The fruit season for cherries and berries has practically passed, but the plums, prunes and apples are just commencing to ripen.

Huckleberry Season Here.

Huckleberries are beginning to ripen in the foothills of the Blue mountains. Never before was there promise of such a bountiful crop there as is now presented. The season has been an ideal one for their growth. There were no early frosts, and as a consequence none were blighted. Every bush is loaded, and already parties are being formed to go out and gather the luscious fruit.

Collecting Mining Data.

George E. Boos, of the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., is at Baker City, and will make a complete report of mining in Eastern Oregon, showing production, cost of operation, wages, etc. By act of congress mineowners are compelled to furnish information under penalty.

Ready for Steel Bridge.

The approaches and center pier for the Lewis and Clark draw bridge near Astoria have been completed and are ready for the steel draw when it arrives from the east. It has been on the road for several weeks and is expected within a few days.

JUNE OUTPUT SPLENDID.

Sumpter District Mines Cleaned Up All of \$350,000.

Estimates based on the production of ore in the Sumpter mining district for the past month give much greater returns than heretofore. The deep sinking operations carried on in most of the leading properties have resulted in opening up a larger area of mining territory and consequently an increased production has resulted.

According to the estimates that are at hand from the best sources obtainable, the Bonanza is said to have cleared up during June \$50,000; the North Pole, \$80,000; the Columbia, \$45,000; Golconda, \$35,000; the Badger, \$30,000; total, \$240,000. The production of the Red Boy is variously stated to be from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and therefore should be added to the total production.

There are many other properties that are constantly shipping ores away for treatment at smelters. It is impossible to get any figures as to the value of these ores, as no returns are given from the smelters receiving them, except to the owners, and the latter as a rule are opposed to making public these figures. It would be safe in fixing the total at \$350,000 for the month. This total includes the cleanup from many claims in the district that are not ranking with the big producers. This also includes the output of the placers as far as can be learned.

Oregon King Looking Up.

The Oregon King mine, which has been shut down for several years on account of litigation, is again hoisting ore. The management is looking for more miners and preparing to make heavy shipments. To give history of this mine would be to repeat that of other properties accidentally discovered, abandoned, relocated and developed sufficiently to make a trial shipment, which was found to give surprising returns. Shipments followed, which, after deducting charges for a 60-mile wagon haul to the then terminus of the Columbia Southern railway, which was being extended southward, and freight from there to the smelter at Tocama, netted over \$105 per ton.

Not Enough Water.

The voters of the proposed Little Walla Walla river irrigation district near Frewater turned down the proposition to form an irrigation district by 59 to 52, the voters living at the upper end of the district killing the proposition on the ground that the river does not give enough water when at low ebb for those holding riparian rights, whereas if an irrigation district were formed including both themselves and those below them, they would have to divide what water was with those below them. A three-fifths vote of the residents was required to carry the establishment.

Hot Contest for Land.

A contest of more than usual importance was begun in the Oregon City Land Office a few days ago. Important is the contest because an entire section of heavily timbered land located near Corvallis, Benton county, is involved. It is estimated that the section contains 16,000,000 feet of fine timber. There are four entry men, each having filed upon a quarter section, and there are as many contestants on the ground that the entrymen abandoned and did not prove up properly on the land.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 77@78c; valley, 79c.
Barley—Feed, \$19.90 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; cheat, \$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, \$4.00@5.00 per dozen; geese, \$6.00@6.50.
Cheese—Fall 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, 15@16c per pound.
Wool—Valley, 17@18c; Eastern Oregon, 12@15c; 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.