

"She claimed it, and if it had not been for Mr. Marshall I don't think she would have gone."

With a swift, impulsive movement Mrs. Carlingford drew the girl to her breast, and kissed the fair pale cheek. "Mrs. Gascoigne will have to reckon with me now," she said.

"She is a horrid woman," said Margaret, yielding to the embrace, "and I can't say what my father may have signed."

"She can have no possible claim on you," answered Mrs. Carlingford, decisively, smoothing the girl's soft wavy hair gently, while Margaret rested with closed eyes. It was so sweet, so restful to have someone of her own sex to whom she could turn, in whom she could confide. She murmured an inquiry as to the time.

"Mr. Marshall ought to be here soon," she said, sitting up. "I am very anxious. I shall be until he comes."

"Anxious?" Mrs. Carlingford showed frank astonishment.

Margaret nodded. "You are so kind," she breathed, "I am sure I can trust you. I did not tell you what really was the cause of my father's death."

HE rose and went over to a cabinet in one corner of the room, and took out the photograph of the church.

"He is looking for that church for me," she said, "for there last night a murder was committed—"

Mrs. Carlingford's eyes dilated as she stared at the picture and at the cruel words scrawled across it. She hardly seemed to have heard Margaret's last words. The girl, absorbed in her recital, did not notice her perturbation.

"What's that you say?" ejaculated Mrs. Carlingford at last, dropping the photograph and starting up. "A murder—a woman in a yellow dress—in that tower?"

"Yes," cried Margaret. "I saw it; it has haunted me."

"Oh, impossible!" Mrs. Carlingford sank back onto the couch.

"No—I saw it," repeated the girl, firmly, "through the telescope."

Mrs. Carlingford sat silent, listening eagerly, while Margaret walked restlessly to and fro. The gates of reserve were broken down, and the girl poured out all the misery, all the horror of the past twenty-four hours. When at last she had finished she stood in front of the listener and looked down into eyes that seemed to her to show incredulity. She flung herself on her knees beside the silent woman. "Oh! you do believe me, don't you?" she cried, clasping Mrs. Carlingford's arm and gazing into her face. Her vehement appeal seemed to rouse the elder woman as from a trance.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Carlingford, brokenly. "Oh, no, it can't be true! To think that you—"

"Mr. Marshall believes it," broke in Margaret. "That church, he says, must be somewhere near the Crystal Palace. He went to look for it to-day—he promised to let me know to-night—" She looked impatiently at her watch. "He is late—" she said breathlessly.

Mrs. Carlingford drew Margaret to her side. "If you are not quieter," she said gently, "you can't see him when he comes; I must forbid it." And then a long silence fell between them. Margaret's thoughts were with Percy Marshall. She wondered, feared; what news would he bring her? Mrs. Carlingford sat staring before her, her fingers still interlaced in those of the girl, her mind absorbed with the singular story she had heard.

"That woman has a double murder on her soul," cried Margaret at last; "she killed my father too."

Mrs. Carlingford gave a little shiver. "My dear," she cried, "you will make yourself ill if you think any more of this. Put it aside, at any rate until he comes. I've a few minutes before dinner. I have forgotten one or two things necessary for the night. I'll run out and get them; I've just got time. I'll be back in fifteen minutes. Shall you mind being left?"

"Can't we send?"

"No—trifles for the toilet; I must choose them myself. I am faddy." So saying, smiling with white lips, she stroked Margaret's hair in a caress, and went away.

While she was absent Margaret directed that a bed be prepared for her, and ordered dinner to be laid for three. If Percy Marshall came, he

would dine with them, he must not go away hungry.

Her hospitable thought was wasted, for he did not come; instead, as she and Mrs. Carlingford were sitting down to the table, there came a telegram. Margaret stretched out an impatient hand, but the wire was addressed to Mrs. Carlingford.

"Oh, my dear, I am so sorry; I must go at once. One of my old servants is very ill. I must not wait a moment. Oh dear—poor old soul!"

"To Horsham?" asked Margaret, as she followed Mrs. Carlingford into her room.

"Horsham? Oh, yes. I'll come to-morrow morning the first thing. This is too bad, Miss Lee, to desert you like this. Look here, why won't you come with me? Oh, do."

"You forget, dear Mrs. Carlingford, Mr. Marshall. I must be here when he comes."

She held up Mrs. Carlingford's cloak as she spoke, and gave deft aid in that lady's hurried preparations.

"Leave a message—let him follow. I can't bear the thought of your staying here all alone. Come!"

But Margaret shook her head. "He has gone on my errand," she said, "and I must wait for him here."

"You are too considerate—but I admire you for it. I'll come first thing in the morning. Good night, dear."

A hurried affectionate embrace. Margaret was alone.

CHAPTER VII.

"I am sorry, dear, I could not come before. I have been up nearly all night with poor Janet. She is nearly seventy, and nursed me when I was a baby."

The speaker was Mrs. Carlingford, and the time was eleven o'clock on the succeeding morning.

"Ought you to be here now?" asked Margaret. "Your nurse has the first claim."

"I have arranged everything, so I can give you the day with a clear conscience. I would not think of leaving you alone again. I may feel that I must return to Horsham to-night, but the day is yours. You have not slept well, you look so tired."

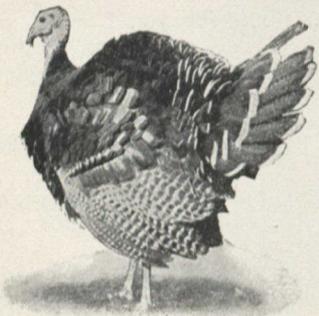
TO BE CONTINUED.

AN EXPERIMENT IN FICTION

Proving again that Truth is the Safest Refuge

By ARTHUR E. McFARLANE,

Drawings by R. Johnston



"WELL, we've got eleven francs left, haven't we? Eleven francs!—About two dollars and a quarter!—Morton!"

"Yes, and eleven francs have grub-staked two people for a week many times before now, Gwendolyn, you can bank on that!"

"But I tell you the Winstons are here!"

"How do we know it's the Winstons'?"

"Who else could it be? They said they were going to surprise us. And they're our only friends, too, that the *concierge** knows. You'll see they'll call again to-night or to-morrow morning, sure!"

"And supposing they do?"

"Supposing they do! After their entertaining us in Boston for ten days, and then taking us all over London—to have them catch us like this!"

"Let me cable, then. The coin will be here the day after to-morrow."

"And when you told your father the last time that never under any circumstances would we overdraw again! Besides," she added, with a milder emphasis, "it would take almost every copper we've got on hand to cable."

The situation was partly novel and partly not. For the last two months of the first half year of their married life they had been occupying a tiny furnished apartment in the respectable southerly end of the Latin Quarter. And although their fortune, as represented in capital under the eyes of their elders at home, was wholly sufficient for their needs, for the fourth time since they had left Indianapolis they had reached the fag end of their monthly stipend several days before the next draft was due.

There was this to note, indeed. Young Mr.

*The woman door keeper who has a kind of office at the entrance of French apartment-houses.

Morton Carter was in literature. He was even now gathering material for that great romance of historical intrigue which was to reach its height in the fall of the Bastille, and the Reign of Terror. But that great romance was still to get to printer's ink, and it had no predecessors. Literature was, therefore, not a source of wealth upon which Mr. Carter and his bride could reckon for immediate dividends.

"Then I'll have to put in my watch."

"Put in your watch—with my picture in the back of it, and everything."

"But I tell you the *mont de piété* is a regular government institution. It'd be just like getting the money from a bank. Besides, with nobody knowing us here, we haven't any blame need to worry about whether it's respectable or not."

She sniffed.

"Oh, you mean by *that*,"—his sarcasm was withering—"that I'm to cable after all?"

"No you're not!"

"Very well, dearie, very well! I'm going out to get my stuff about the Faubourg St. Antoine. It'll be up to you!"

"Oh, yes, it's easy enough to leave it all to me!"

At that he stood nailed upon the threshold. But he could think up no rejoinder which he had not used so often already that his literary conscience absolutely ruled it out. And under a bursting head of steam he started for the Faubourg.

CHAPTER II.

Whatever Mr. Morton Carter may have lacked, beyond any doubt he had the artistic imagination. Three hours later he came back with a realisation of exactly how the Bastille was taken, which made his eyes glitter and his breath come in long exhalations that partook almost of solemnity. There would be one chapter at any rate in "By Right of

Blood" which would make Hugo himself seem picayune!

The *concierge* stopped him at her little wicket and gave him a card. He was still holding it when he mounted to his own door and let himself in.

The hall opened upon their dining and sitting room. From it again, opened the dressing, and then the bedroom.

"Is that you, Morton?" Gwendolyn called from that inner chamber, and then showed a flower-like head which was still hatted.

"Where have you been?" he asked, astonished.

She laid a hundred franc note and some big five-franc cartwheels upon the table. "I've been to your old *mont de piété*, that's where I've been! And now we've enough to make some sort of show on, anyway."

"But what—what did you take out?—I don't see. At least he began to feel,—and it was like a large ice pressing upon his diaphragm.

"Why, there was that tankard thing, and the tray with the sugar and creamer, that we've never used. And, at the last, I made up my mind we could get on without the tea-urn, too; we can make that green one do. And when I'd put in the Sevres bowl and the Gouda-ware vases, and—"

"But Great Cæsar! Those things are all Miss Pastonbury's!"

"Well, we'd rented them, hadn't we? We'd rented the apartment furnished. And when she took her whole four months' in advance—!"

"Rented them!—Snakes, Gwendolyn! Don't you—Didn't you—Why, we rented them to use!"

"Well, that's using them, I guess! As long as we're willing to go without them in the meantime—"

"Yes—and if Miss Pastonbury should come back in the meantime! To say nothing of the honour of it! Where's the ticket they gave you?"

She produced it. "Oh, start lecturing now, do! You'd—you'd think to hear you,"—she gulped—"that it was a pleasure for me to go pawning! And when we know very well she's safe over in Exeter."

The ticket was not in itself a terrifying document. It looked much like a receipt for a registered