

THE NATIVITY, 1877.
The glorious night,
When first the light was shed
From the plains of distant East...

THE MYSTERY OF FULTON VALENCE.

By Mrs. Beatrice McGowan.

CHAPTER I.—MISS CARLETON.

Beneath the leafless oaks and maples in
Valence Park, a young lady saunters
leisurely. Every now and then her gaze...

A girl of scarcely nineteen, one would
think, looking at her. With a bright,
piquant, sparkling face; not pretty, not...

She walks through numerous paths, un-
til coming into a broad gravelled carriage
drive, brings her again in full view of the...

Alice and Lady Valence had been from
home all day, and Sir Reginald had been
cuddled with his dog in the luncheon...

I had been a year at Fulton Valence as
nominal governess to the only daughter
of the house—or such I presumed she was...

Lady Valence gazed anxiously—but kind
withal. Her son, Sir Reginald, and
Alice's dark, smiling, laughing child of eight...

Miss Warwick, it grieves me, but I am
compelled to say that you have been
guilty of most unbecoming selfishness.

"In what way, sir?" I asked, surprised.
"By depriving us of your society of course.
What business had you to come...

"Then, my dear Rex, don't you see that
under the circumstances you are credit-
ing Miss Warwick with an impossibility.
She doubts it is only your lazy people...

"I thought—or was it only fancy—for the
week that had been spoken in a light,
jesting tone—but I thought that Sir Regi-
nald looked annoyed. However, he said...

"We have been looking for you," turning
to me, "knowing that you have been
left to your own resources pretty much
all day, I am sure to have compassion on...

"Florence!" exclaimed the Baronet,
sharply.
She raised her head and looked at him.
"Where's the lark?" she said; "I never...

"My dear Florence, you make a pretty
philosopher, but hardly a practical one.
Speaking of Cranmer Castle, Miss Warwick...

"But I wish to go to-day, and Sir Regi-
nald never objects to anything I very
much wish to do. Do you, Rex?" I asked...

"I waited anxiously for his answer.
Would he give in to me now, when he had
refused so stoutly before? It was his...

"I would you really so determined Florry?"
he asked, only—as I thought—to gain
time.

"Yes, yes. Can't you see that I am,
Rex, with all the perturbation of a spoiled
child."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said,
looking at her, and speaking very gravely;
"if you would wait until I have had a...

"I could hear her singing gaily as she
ran along the hall and ascended to her
own rooms in the east wing."

"I have another favor to ask of you,
Miss Warwick, beside, begging a holiday
for the child. Sir Reginald said hurriedly...

"You must have seen—without understand-
ing its cause—the mystery there is in this
house, and you may guess the exception...

"I do congratulate you, sir," I cried,
greeting strangely faint and dizzy, but
looking up at him bravely, "and I trust it...

"As to that," he was beginning,
when I interrupted him. "The second piece
of rudeness of which I had been guilty with...

When I had gained the little dressing
room appointed to my own use—for my
life at Fulton Valence differed essentially...

"I am sorry, but—"
"Sir Reginald wishes it, Diane. Do you
not understand?"

I was startled from my reverie by a
hasty tap on the door. I had been sitting
with my back to it, but rose at once.

"If you please, Miss, Sir Reginald and
Miss Florence are waiting for you. My
young lady bade me tell you that they had...

"Help me to dress, Marjory, like a
good girl. I had forgotten all about it."
The maid looked at me in unfeigned...

"Miss Florence wanted to go on, but
the master wouldn't hear of it, she ratted
on me as she brought me my habit."

"I looked at Sir Reginald. He was
worn white to the lips, and if ever I saw
a man look so ill, it was on his face."

"The sight saddened me. He was so
foolishly anxious over her. So utterly
regarding to my own pleasure or comfort...

"By no means, my dear, I said for my-
self, but I am afraid that 'Gipsy'
would not be equal to it," he said...

"On the contrary, I answered, laughing;
"my dear Miss Carleton, anxious to
know you have not ridden her lately,
Florence."

"I might have said, 'I have not ridden
her lately, because she is so much better
now, and I could not bear to ride her
till she was quite well again.'"

"I could feel the hot blood burning under
her. Her manner was often intolerable, but
turning to me, a quivering smile in her...

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ontage, the bloody hand—and motioned
the coachman to drive on.
We rode on in a conversative silence.

"Why did you break faith with me,
Diane?" he asked, as he lifted me from
the saddle. "Was the promise so hard...

"I did keep my word," I answered. "You
said nothing to prohibit my according to
any request that Miss Carleton might make."

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