

YOLANDE.

By WILLIAM BLACK.

Author of "SHILOH BELL," "MACROD OF DARE," "WHITE WISDOM," "SERIES," ETC.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER IX.

CLOUDS.

Next morning, quite unconscious that she had dealt any deadly injury to any one, Yolande was seated all by herself on the hurricane-deck, idly and carelessly and happily drinking in fresh clear air, and looking away over the wastes of golden sand to a strip of intense dark blue that was soon to reveal itself as the waters of a lake.

Nor was she aware that at this precise moment her future was being acceptedly arranged for her in one of the cabins below. "I confess I don't see where there can be the least objection," Mrs. Graham was saying to her husband.

"I hope I have not been," said he, somewhat stiffly. "You treated her as an absolute stranger at lunch. Not that I suppose she cares. But for your own sake you might show better manners."

"I think you mistake the situation," said he, with apparent indifference. "Do as you're done by; is a very good rule. It is for her to say whether we are to be friends, acquaintances, and strangers, and if she chooses to treat you on the least-favored nation scale, I suppose you've got to accept that! It is for her to choose. It is a free country."

"Dear Yolande, how well you are looking!" she exclaimed, (meaning that her brother should hear, but he had walked away). "Disipation does not harm you a bit. But indeed a dance on the deck of a ship is not like a dance in town."

"Oh, she's well enough," said the stout soldier, carelessly. This was a subsidiary point. What his mind clearly grasped was the importance of having Corrievreck made the sanctuaries of the deer forest.

"Oh, I see what you're driving at," her husband said, with just a touch of contempt. "Don't be alarmed; I dare say Archie isn't anxious to marry a tragedy queen. I don't see why Miss Winterbourne should be put to any one or other gets tired of quarrelling, and refuses; and if they only have a tidy little house about Bruton Street or Conduit Street and a good cook, it will be very convenient for us. Now I wish to goodness you'd clear out, and let me get dressed."

"Where is Miss Winterbourne?" she said, inadvertently, and without reflecting that the question was odd. "On the hurricane-deck," said he. "A dare you will find half the officers of the ship round her."

"There was something in his tone which caused his sister, with considerable sharpness, to ask him what he meant; and then out came the story of his wrongs. Now Mrs. Graham had not been too well pleased when her husband and everybody else sang the praises of Yolande to her; but no sooner was the girl attacked in this way than she instantly, and with a good deal of warmth, flew to her defense.

"I'm sure," she said, "I said nothing of the kind! I said that the preposterous innocence that you discovered in her was more like the innocence of a confirmed flirt. But that only shows me that you know nothing at all about her. To imagine that she should have kept all her dances for you—"

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But after breakfast, as it turned out, the Master of Lynn was nowhere to be found. Yolande wondered that he did not as usual come up to the hurricane-deck to play "Bill," or have a promenade with her; but thought he was perhaps writing letters in the saloon, to be posted that night at Suez. She did not like to ask; she waited. She played "Bill" with her father, and gaily beaten. She had a smart promenade with Colonel Graham, who told her some jungle stories; but she was thinking of the Highlands all the time. She began to be impatient and set to work to devise letters, couched in such business phraseology as she knew, requesting a firm of ivory-stable keepers to state their terms for the hire of a dog-cart and horse for three months, and the wages of a groom included.

"There was no need to hurry. There had been some block in the canal, and the huge bulk of the ship was now lying idly in the midst of the Great Bitter Lake. All around them was the wide plain of dazzling blue-green water abed beyond that the muddy brown strip of the desert overland in the furnace-like heat; and while overboard shone the pale clear sky, cloudless and breathless."

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with all their strange features of East-Indic—the main and the villages among the palms; heris of buffaloes coming down to wallow in the river, except tramping out the corn in the open; came slowly pacing along in Indian file, or here and there tethered to a miserable breadth of yellow grain. And of course, when they reached Cairo, that wonderful city was still more bewildering to European eyes—the picturesque forms and brilliant costumes; the gaily caparisoned donkeys, ridden by veiled women, whose black eyes gleamed as they passed; the bare-legged runner with his long wand blacking the way for his master on horse-back; the swartly Arab leading their noisy caravan; and the crowd of Moorish houses, the French-looking cafes and shops, to say nothing of the French-looking public gardens, with their European serfants and children listening to tinkling music from the latest Parisian comic opera.

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