

YOLANDE.

By WILLIAM BLACK,
AUTHOR OF "SHANON BELLS," "MACROD OF
DARK," "WHITE WINGS," "SUNDRIES," ETC.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XLII.

A LAST INTERVIEW.

It has already been said of Mrs. Graham, as of her brother, that she was not altogether mercenary. She had a certain share of sentiment in her composition. It is true, she had summarily stamped out the Master's words with regard to Janet Stewart; but then on the other hand (when the danger to the estates of Lynn was warded off), she could afford to cherish those verses to Shama Van that sneaking fondness. Nay, more than that, she said them to the compliments of imitation—unknown to her husband and everybody else; and it may be worth while to print this, her sole and only literary effort, if only to show that, just as some men imagine the highest social circles to be the realm of true romance, and like to be told of the woes and joys of high-born ladies, so this pretty Mrs. Graham, being the only daughter of a gentleman, when casting about for a proper sentimental situation, must needs get right down to the bottom of the social ladder, and think it fine to speak of herself as a sailor's lass. One small touch of reality remained—the name of Shama Van. But here are the verses to speak for themselves:—

"I care not a fig for your brag, you girls
And dames of high degree,
Or for all your silks and satins and pearls,
As fine as silk may be;
For I'll be as rich as dimes and cents
When my Jim comes home from sea."

"It's in Portsmouth town that I know a lass,
And a small house built of free,
That's sheltered well from the rain and the rain,
And as snug as snug can be;
And it's there that I'll be waiting again
When my Jim comes home from sea."

"'Twas a fine brave sight when the yard was
manned,
Though my eyes could scarcely see
It's a long, long sail to the Red Grand,
And a long, long waiting for me;
But I'll wait any one in the Red,
When my Jim comes home from sea."

"So here to your health, you high-born girls
And ladies of high degree,
And I hope you'll all be married to carls
As good as gold to me;
But I wouldn't give fourpence for all your years
When my Jim comes home from sea."

"Of course she carefully concealed these verses—especially from her husband, who would have led her a sad life if he had found them and discovered the authorship; and they never attained to the dignity of type in the *Evening Couriers*, where the lines to Shama Van had appeared; but all the same, pretty Mrs. Graham regarded them with a certain pleasure, and rather approved of the independence of the Portsmouth young lady, although she had a vague impression that she might not be quite the proper sort of guest to ask to Inverstry.

Now her anger and dismay over the public breaking down of the scheme which she had so carefully formed, attended were due to various causes, and did not simply arise from a wish that the Master of Lynn should marry a rich wife. It was her project, for one thing, and she had a certain sentimental fondness in regarding it. Had she not wrought for it, too, and striven for it? Was it for nothing that she had braved through the dust of the Mermaid tugs, and fought with cockroaches in her cabin, and gazed with the Egyptian heath all those sweltering afternoons? She began to consider herself ill-treated, and did not know which to complain of the more—her brother's indifference or her father's obstinacy. There she could get no sort of sympathy from her husband. He only laughed, and went away to look after his pheasants. Moreover, she knew very well that this present condition of affairs could not last. The Master of Lynn would increase rather than abate. Yolande would grow accustomed to his neglect of her. Perhaps Mr. Winterbourne would interfere, and finally put an end to that pretty dream of hers, and about as they went sailing down the Mediterranean.

Accordingly she determined to make one more effort. If she should not be able to coax Lord Lynn into a more complaisant frame of mind, at least she should go to All-nam-ba and make matters as pleasant as possible with Mr. Winterbourne before he left. The former part of her endeavor, indeed, she speedily found to be a failure. She had no sooner arrived at the Towers than she sought out her father and begged him to be less obdurate; but when she was putting forward Corrie as her chief argument, she was rebuffed by her father's smiling, "Corrie, or rather Corrie's wife, is a solitary and emphatic word—a word that was entirely out of place, too, as applied to a sanctuary—she knew it all over. Lord Lynn would never use that language, for he was a hot-tempered man, not of language of that sort; and when she heard him utter that dreadful wish about such a sacred thing as the sanctuary of a sanctuary, she felt it was needless to continue farther."

"Very well, papa," said she, "I have done my best. It is not my affair. Only everything might not have been so pleasant for us all."

"Yes, and for the Slagpool Radicals," her father said, contemptuously. "I suppose they would land at Foyers with banners, and have picnics in the forest."

"At all events, you must remember this, papa," said Mrs. Graham, with some sharpness, "that Archie is a gentleman. He is pledged to marry Miss Winterbourne, and marry her he will." "Let him, and welcome," said this short, stout, thick person with the bushy eyebrows and angry eyes. "He may marry the dairy-maid if he likes. I suppose the young gentleman has a right to his own tastes. But I say he shall not bring his low acquaintances about this house while I am alive."

Mrs. Graham herself had a touch of the family temper, and for a second or two her face turned quite pale with anger, and when she spoke it was in a kind of forced and breathless way.

"I don't know what you mean. Who are low acquaintances? Yolande Winterbourne is my friend. She is fit to marry any one in the land, I care not what his rank is, and—and I will not have such things said of her as are fit to be said of a low acquaintance. If it comes to that, I was I who introduced Archie to Mr. Winterbourne; and—and this is what I know about them, that if they are not fit to be received at Lynn, then neither am I."

And with that she walked calmly (but still with her face rather pale) out of the room, and shut the door behind her; and then went away and sought out her own dressing-room of former days, and looked herself in the glass, and had a good cry. She did feel injured. She was doing her best, and this was what she got for it. But she was a courageous little woman, and presently she had dried her eyes and arranged her dress for going out; and then she sent a message to the stables to get the dog-cart ready, for that she wanted to drive to All-nam-ba.

By-and-by she was driving along by the side of the pretty lake under the green hills; and she was comforting herself with more cheerful reflections.

"It is no matter," she was saying to herself. "If only Mr. Winterbourne remains in good humor, everything will be right. When Archie comes, he will be rich enough to have a home where he pleases. I suppose Jim wouldn't have them always with us;—though it would be nice to have Yolande in the house, especially in the long winter months. But Archie could build a house for himself, and sell it when he no longer wanted it. The country about Loch Eil would please Yolande. I wonder if Archie could get a piece of land anywhere near Fasie-

fern? That would be handy for having a yacht, too, and of course they would have a yacht. Or why shouldn't he merely rent a house—one of those up Glen Urquhart, if only the shooting was a little better; or over Glen Spean, if Lochaber isn't a little too wild for Yolande? Or perhaps they might get a place in Glen Gary, for Yolande is so fond of wandering through the woods. No doubt Archie exaggerated that affair about Yolande's mother; in any case it could easily be arranged; other families have done so, and everything goes on as usual. Then if they had a town house they might all go to the Capital, and she and Archie would look so well in the kilt, and Yolande might go as Flora MacDonald."

She drove quickly along the loch-side, but moderated her pace when she reached the rough mountain-road leading up the glen, for she knew she would not mend matters by letting down one of her father's horses. And as she approached All-nam-ba a chill struck her heart—those preparations for departure were so ominous. Duncan was in front of the body, giving the rifles and guns their last rub with oil before putting them into the cases; boxes of empty soda-water bottles had been hauled out by the women-folk for the men to screw up; a cart with its shafts resting on the ground stood outside the coach-house; and various figures went hurrying this way and that. And no sooner had Mrs. Graham driven up and got down from the dog-cart than her quick eye espied a tall black-bearded man, who from natural shyness—or perhaps he wanted to have a look at Duncan's gun-rack—had retreated into the bush; and she quickly followed him into the wide, low-roofed apartment, which smelled considerably of tobacco-smoke.

"Isn't your name Angus?" said she. "Yes, ma'am," said he, with a very large smile that showed he recognized her.

"I suppose Mr. Macpherson has sent you about the inventory?"

"Yes, ma'am," said he. "Have you been over the house yet?" "No, ma'am; I have just come out with the empty cart from Inverfarguing."

"Well, then, Angus, you need not go over the house. Don't want the gentlemen bothered. Go back and tell Mr. Macpherson I said so."

"There was 57 of breakages with the last tenant, ma'am," said he, very respectfully.

"Never mind," said she; and she took out her purse and got hold of a sovereign. "Go back at once; and if you have to sleep at Whitebridge that will pay the cost; or you may get a horse, if you like. My brother is in Inverness, isn't he?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then you can go to him, and tell him I said there was to be no going over the inventory. This tenant is a friend of mine. You go to my brother when you go to Inverness, and he will explain to Mr. Macpherson. Now good-by, Angus; and she shook hands with him, as is the custom in that part of the country, and he went off.

The arrival of a stranger at All-nam-ba was such an unusual circumstance that when she went up to the door of the lodge she found both Mr. Winterbourne and John Shortlands awaiting her, they having seen her drive up the glen; and she explained that she had been leaving a message with one of the men.

"I heard you were leaving, Mr. Winterbourne," said she, with one of her most charming smiles, when they had got into the drawing-room, "and I could not let you go away without coming to say good-by. Both my husband and I expected to have seen you here, but you have been so busy that you can see for yourself what it is in the Highlands—every household is so wrapped up in its own affairs that there is scarcely any time for visiting. If Inverstry had come to All-nam-ba, Iverstry would have found All-nam-ba away shooting on the hill, and vice versa; and I suppose that is why old-fashioned people like my father have been so much of the tradition of visiting. When do you go?"

"Well, if we are all packed and ready I suppose this afternoon; then we can pass the night at Foyers, and go on to Inverness in the morning. And on to Inverness, I had hoped I could have brought some of the people from the Towers to help you. My father would have been delighted."

"Do you think Mrs. Bell would suffer any interference?" said John Shortlands, with a laugh. "I can tell you, my dear Mrs. Graham, that she rules us with a rod of iron—though we're not supposed to know it."

Mrs. Graham.

"She is very well," Yolande's father said, instantly lowering his eyes, and becoming nervous and fidgety.

"I heard something of what had called her away to the south—at least I presumed that was the reason," said Mrs. Graham, forcing herself to attack this dangerous topic in order to show that in her estimation, at least, nothing too important had occurred.

"Of course one sympathizes with her. I hope you have had good news from her?"

"Oh yes," said he, hastily. "Oh yes, I had a letter last night. Yolande is very well."

"Archie," continued Mrs. Graham, thinking enough had been said on that point, "is at Inverness. I declare the way those lawyers fight over trifles is perfectly absurd. And I confess, she added, with a demure smile, "that the owners of deer forests are not much better. Of course they always tell me I don't know that it is my ignorance; but to the people quarrelling about the line the march would not give grazing for a sheep—seems stupid enough. Well, now, Mr. Winterbourne, may I venture to ask how you found the shooting?"

"Oh, excellent—excellent," said he, brightly, for he also was glad to get away from that other topic. "We have not found as many deer coming about as we expected; but otherwise the place has turned out everything that could be wished."

"I am glad of that," said she, "for I know Archie had qualms about inducing you to take the shooting. I remember very well, when he told me, that he thought it was a risky thing. Supposing the place had not turned out well, then you might have felt that—that—"

"No, my dear Mrs. Graham," said he, with a smile. "I cannot employ. I knew I was taking the place with the usual attending risks; I should not have blamed your brother if he had had a bad year."

"And as to the point of asking him whether he liked All-nam-ba well, I knew that Yolande's marked uneasiness, and she seemed to me so prudent to go on talking of general subjects, in her light and cheerful way, and always on the assumption that the two families were on friendly terms, and that Yolande's future home would be in the Highlands. At length she said she must be going."

"I would ask you to stay to lunch," said Mr. Winterbourne, "but I dare say you have a long drive home on the day of leaving a shooting-box."

"Dear me," said she, in tones of vexation. "Why did they not think of that at the Towers? They might have saved you a great deal of bother that way; but then they got into an old-fashioned groove there."

"At the same time, my dear Mrs. Graham," said Mr. Winterbourne, "if you like to take the risk, I dare say Mr. Bell can find you

something; and we have not often the chance of entertaining any one at All-nam-ba. Will you take pity on us? Will you sit in Yolande's place? The house has been rather empty since she left."

"I should like it of all things," said pretty Mrs. Graham, taking off her hat and gloves and putting them on the sofa, "for I feel that I haven't given you half the messages I wish you to take to dear Yolande. And you must not mind me having her address, so that Jim can send her a hunch of venison at Christmas."

"I am afraid that would not be of much use, thank you," said he; "for I hope by that time, if all goes well, that Yolande will be away in the south of Europe."

"Archie is going south also," said Mrs. Graham, pleasantly. "There is little doing here at present. After he has made all the arrangements with papa's agents in Inverness, then he will be off to the south too. Where is Yolande likely to be?"

"Well, I don't exactly know," said Mr. Winterbourne, with a kind of evasive evasion. "But she will write to you. Oh yes, I will tell her to write to you. She is much occupied at present—and—and perhaps she has not much time. But Yolande does not forget her friends."

"She shall not forget me, for I won't let her," said Mrs. Graham, blithely. "If she should try, I will come and fetch her, and give her a proper scolding. But I don't think it will be needed."

The luncheon, frugal as it was, proved to be a very pleasant affair, for the two men-folk were glad to have the table brightened by the merriment and vivacity of a lady guest, who was, moreover, very pretty and talkative and cheerful; while, on the other hand, Mrs. Graham, having all her wits about her, was very specially assured herself that Yolande's father was leaving All-nam-ba in no dudded whatever; and also that, although he seemed to consider Yolande as at present set apart for some special duty, and not to be interfered with by any one, she was a very merry and agreeable luncheon party. Before she finally rose to go she had got Yolande's address, and had undertaken to write to her.

And then she pleased Mr. Winterbourne very much by asking to see Mrs. Bell, and she equally pleased Mrs. Bell by some cleverly turned compliments, and by repeating what the other lady had said about her own relations to her. In good truth Mrs. Bell needed some such comfort. She was sadly broken down. When Mrs. Graham asked her about Mr. Melville, she was so overcome by the old dame's eyes, and she had furtively wiped them away with her handkerchief while pretending to look out of the window.

"He has written two or three times to the young lad Dalrymple," said she with just one suppressed sob. "I have heard about the brats of bairns, as if he was in mair consideration in people's minds than a when useless lads and lassies. And only a message or two to me, about the old dame's eyes, and she had furtively wiped them away with her handkerchief while pretending to look out of the window."

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Geo. Roe & Co. *

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me. I was breaking him, he kicked over the

cross bar and got fast, and from one of his

hind legs all to pieces. I employed the best far-

riers, but they all said he was spoiled. He had

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entirely out, and he was off to work for \$100 (old

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cure, and it has always cured completely and left

the leg smooth.

It is a splendid medicine for rheumatism. I have

recommended it to a good many, and they all say

it does the work. I was in Wetherington & Ken-

nedy's store, in Adams, the other day and saw a

very fine picture you sent me. I tried to buy

it, but I could not find it. I would write to you

that you would send me the good book, and I

will do you all the good I can.

Very respectfully, E. S. LYMAN.

From the Akron Commercial,

Ohio, of Nov. 25th, 1882.

Readers of the Commercial can not fail to

recall that a large space has for years been taken up

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