

ONE NIGHT'S HISTORY.

BY DORA HASTINGS. It was a very old love-story, indeed. One hardly expects a love-story to last through five years of silence and separation.

This is the way of it: I was visiting my friend Nannie Reynolds, when I, Valerie Westlake, was a school-girl of seventeen,—tall, gauche, silent and shy, with a plain and unbecoming wardrobe, and no style to speak of, yet Nannie's brother Jack fell in love with me.

Well, it only lasted, the engagement, that is, for a very few months. We were entirely too poor to think of marrying, and so it ended by us sending back two bundles of letters, and offering to "be friends" in future.

That was five years ago. I am Nannie's guest once more,—Nannie Bernard now, and at present I am engaged in the pleasing task of arraying myself "in gloss of satin and shimmer of pearls" for the Kimball German.

At this moment, though I have not yet seen him, Jack Reynolds is in the house. He came just after dinner, and he is going to the Kimball's with us to-night.

"I wonder, oh, I wonder!" say I to myself, as I regard the reflection in my mirror, "what will he think of me?" "I am changed—yes, but I fancy most people would think it a change for the better. I was an awkward little school-girl in those days, now—thanks to Uncle Middleton's money—I am a well-dressed, passably good-looking, and self-possessed woman."

As I step back, and crane my neck over my shoulder to observe the set of my pale green train, that glitters, Undine-like, for a yard or more behind me, Nannie comes in.

"How lovely you look, Val!" she says, with hearty admiration. "I think there is a surprise in store for Jack."

"He knows I am here," say I with well-simulated indifference.

"No, I haven't told him, Valerie," with a sudden unbidden gleam in her dark eyes. "If you don't read that young man a lesson you don't deserve to be called a woman."

"The play isn't worth the candle," I remark, with a laugh. "Aren't those of those flowers for me? I want some white roses."

"I thought them for that purpose," said she, helping to fasten them in my hair, and making up the great flower-garden that fashion insists upon planting on one's left shoulder.

"I'm ready now, I think. Let us go down."

The two gentlemen look up, hearing the soft rustle of silken trains as we enter, and I see Jack turn towards his sister in evident expectation of the introduction which does not follow.

For a moment I pause in half-malicious enjoyment of his embarrassment, then I smile as I offer my hand.

"Is it really too of sight, out of mind, Mr. Reynolds?"

Then a sudden flash of recognition comes to him. "Pardon me," he says, your voice at least is unchanged. There was no room for improvement left in that."

The compliment is delicately veiled, and is acceptable, of course.

He places my wrap upon my shoulders, possesses himself of a loose white rose bud from my flower-garden as he does so, and we follow Nannie and her liege-lord down to the carriage.

Somewhat to my surprise, he fails to avail himself of the first dance, which by courtesy falls to his share. I feel a little piqued, but since I am not "left" it makes but little difference.

Nevertheless, as dance follows dance in rapid succession, and he still avoids me, I cannot help a realization of the preacher's meaning when he insists that "all is vanity."

Just after supper little Clarence Minor decoys me out into the conservatory and blunders through a proposal. Heaven knows what he wants to marry me for, unless it is that my yearly income needs five figures to count it.

With that uncomplimentary feeling in my heart, I dismiss him with very little ceremony; and am sitting a rather limp and dejected figure for all my finery, under a big oleander-tree that is the pride of Mrs. Kimball's heart.

"Valerie!" says a voice behind me, "isn't it my turn now?"

"For what? I ask, making no welcoming movement.

But he seats himself beside me without waiting for any invitation.

I feel foolish, and devote myself to smoothing out the wrinkles in the glove that lies in my lap.

"Well, for a waltz, perhaps." Answering my question, "Five years ago you didn't waltz."

"My card," displaying it, "was open to you as to others, at the beginning of the evening. It is full now, you see."

this, wondering probably how I will regard such off-hand treatment. "It is a long walk for anyone who is tired," I remark carelessly.

"He went with Mr. Minor, in his dog cart."

"Whereas I say, 'Oh!' unmeaningly, and long before they have finished the next figure the pleasures of the evening have become apples of Sodom to my palate.

"Are you tired?" asks Nannie. And when I murmur "Yes," she takes pity upon me and orders the carriage at once. That shelter reached, I take refuge in silence, nor does the burden of conversation fall heavily upon Nannie and her husband.

"What did possess me to act so?" I ask the question of my own heart miserably enough; knowing, as I have known through all these five long years, that I love him as I never can love any other man.

"It is all this horrid money!" I think. "If it were not for that he would never have had the chance to say I loved him. Now I suppose he believes that I have forgotten all the old times—or, worse than that—and my cheeks burn hotly at the mere thought," he may think I have grown proud-puffed."

There is a commotion in front of the house as we drive up. The door stands wide open, and a brilliant stream of light comes through.

"Is he dead?" we hear a woman ask.

Tom springs from the carriage waiting to hear more; and Nannie follows him, with one single cry, "It is Jack!"

For my part, I sit still, stunned and helpless, watching with fascinated eyes the long, dark burden that they are slowly bearing up the steps.

"Sure his own sweetheart wouldn't know him now." The words reach me through the open door of the carriage.

"It was the other carriage that ran into them, you see," some man was explaining to the crowd. "The driver was drunk, and he didn't know where he was going; and this man tried to hold his horse in, but the brute reared and kicked. That upset the dog cart, and he fell, somehow—under the horse's hoofs. I helped to pick him up—"

The voice broke, strong man though it was. "If they don't take the law on that driver—"

But I can stand no more. I must get into the house, though it seems a more terrible undertaking to me than the crossing of the Red Sea.

The crowd gives way silently, as I pass through their midst. They had not known there was anyone else in the carriage.

"He is dying, or dead, perhaps," I say to myself with a dull wonder that I, knowing it, can still be alive, "and they have carried him up-stairs, but I have no right to be there—he didn't know that I loved him!—And then I suppose a merciful unconsciousness comes over me, from which I am only aroused by a voice that seems like a voice from heaven calling "Valerie!"

"Yes," I answer stupidly, but seem to have no power to rise up from the floor where I have fallen.

"Valerie!" he calls again, "feeling his way uncertainly in the dark, 'where are you?' And in another moment I am lifted in two strong arms, and see, bending above me, the face that I love best in the world—and wonder of wonders, without a scar or a blemish!"

"I thought you were dead," I cry, passionately, and then he understands, "You loved me then?" he whispers, softly, and I am too foolishly, heart-brokenly happy to do other than sob out all my love, and all the misery of the evening; while his two arms are around me, and my head rests upon the heart that I now know beats for me, and for me alone.

"But they said you were dead," I came back to the dominant thought persistently, "and the blood—"

"It was Minor, poor fellow!" he says, gravely, "but he is neither dead nor dying. In fact, the doctor thinks his injuries not very serious. We thought it was much worse when we picked him up—the horse kicked him in the face—that made it look like a much more terrible thing than it really is."

I am silent with a pity I hardly dare express, remembering the scene in the conservatory that night. It all seems so dreadful, and yet there is one thing I am distinctly realize, and that is, that Jack has brought my old happiness back to me.

"Look up, Val," he says now, "tomorrow you may be a 'ministering angel' to poor Minor, but just now I want you to tell me again that you love me."

"What can I do but obey? And so the tragedy of this one night's history ends in comedy after all."

[N. Y. Herald.] Conspiring to Murder.

A MYSTERIOUS PRISONER AND A STARTLING STORY.—SUSPECTS FOR HIRE.—SQUATTING FOR BRAVOS TO DE SPATCH A YOUNG WIFE.—BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

Boston, Oct. 26, 1885.—The past ten days the criminal reporters of Boston have known that Chief of Police Hanson, Inspectors Gerraughty and Houghton and half a dozen detectives were at work in a most mysterious manner on some very important case. The reporters were informed that when the story was told, if that time should ever come, the whole country would be startled at its developments. But beyond this they would say nothing. The reporters labored day and night for a "leak" but there was none.

THE MYSTERIOUS PRISONER. Saturday afternoon a hack was driven up to Police Headquarters. Two officers alighted and assisted from the carriage a young woman, who appeared very nervous. She was taken into the room of the Chief, where a long consultation was held. The mysterious woman passed the night in the building under close guard, and in the morning was taken away, carefully guarded by detectives.

OFFICIALS WHO "LEAK." In spite of efforts to keep the matter quiet some of it "leak," and to-night the papers print a meagre story which promises to be largely added to in the morning. The names of the parties connected with this strange conspiracy to murder, for such the case proves to be, are not given at present, because the evidence does not sufficiently connect the names which the police have with the people who were to take part in what would have proved one of the most sensational tragedies of modern times.

SLEEPING A BRAYO.

The woman under arrest is the wife of a Boston policeman. The story of the would-be-crime, as it has leaked out, is this:—On October 9 a young woman called on the keeper of a notorious North End dive and informed him that she wished to see him privately. The dive keeper asked the woman her mission. She whispered her story. She wanted a man who would be willing to play the part of a crook and kill a certain woman, and she offered to pay well for the work.

A MESSALANCE. She said a young Irish girl had entered the service of a wealthy Baltimore family several years before. The only son of the house, then a minor, fell in love with her and secretly married her. A child was born to them and the secret was revealed. The parents went nearly wild, but the young man avowed that his love for his young wife was so strong that he would not give her up. The parents offered every inducement to effect a separation, but without avail. The narrator of this story said that the girl was a handsome young thing, and the parents, finding that they could not control their son, had determined to have the woman put out of the way, but on no condition must the child be harmed.

A COLD-BLOODED PROPOSITION. The woman said her mission to Boston was to see the person with whom she was talking and to employ him to either kill this woman's husband or get some one to do it. The dive keeper, whose place had recently been raided by the police, at first thought that a trap was being set to catch him, but he informed his visitor that he knew a man who would be willing to commit the crime for the price named. The next day the woman again visited the man to whom she made the proposition to commit murder. The one spoken of as a proper person to assist was present. She related the same story and made the same proposition to the latter.

INFO RMING THE POLICE. When she had gone she told his friend that he was determined to find out about the case. After a rather conference it was decided to make the case known at headquarters, and they went to the Police Inspector's office and saw Chief Hanson, who informed the Superintendent, the Commissioner and the District Attorney. They all advised the greatest secrecy. Several interviews were had between these men and the woman, at which several detectives were present, but unseen. At one of the interviews the woman produced two letters from the father-in-law, who figures in the case, but before she showed them she took the precaution to hide the signature in each. In one of these letters he said he would arrive in Boston the following Thursday or Friday, a week ago last Thursday or Friday. He did not arrive until Saturday morning.

DEVELOPING THE MONEY. The woman then had an interview with the man who had consented to commit the crime. She gave him \$50 and told him to go the clerk of the Revere House and ask for a package. He was to receipt for it in his own name. In this package he would find \$1,000—ten one hundred dollar bills. He did so. This interview was overheard by two police inspectors and they followed the man to the Revere House, where he was seen to open the package, count the money and then seal it up again.

MEETING THE FATHER-IN-LAW. Last Monday night this man went to Baltimore and was accompanied by two police inspectors. He saw the man who wanted the crime committed and the woman whom he desired to have murdered. He returned to Boston Friday morning and had an interview with the woman, and arranged to return to Baltimore last evening for the purpose of fulfilling his part of the contract. He had an interview with her Saturday afternoon and also Saturday evening.

IN THE TOLL. She went to a telegraph office to send a despatch to Baltimore. She wrote a despatch and handed it to the receiver, Chief Inspector Hanson stood beside her and wrote a despatch also, which he handed to the receiver. That gentleman pretended that he could not read a part of it and made a pretence of handing it back to him, but instead of so doing handed him the woman's despatch. The result of this little scene was the immediate arrest of her ladyship and a ride in a hack to Police Headquarters, as described above.

BREAKING DOWNS. When confronted with the detectives, the dive keeper and the would-be murderer whom he had recommended, she broke down, it is claimed, and confessed and said that she had twice personally attempted to poison the young wife and had very nearly succeeded in killing her both times.

Last night the man who had visited Baltimore, together with several police inspectors, left this city for that place and are now in consultation with officers in that city.

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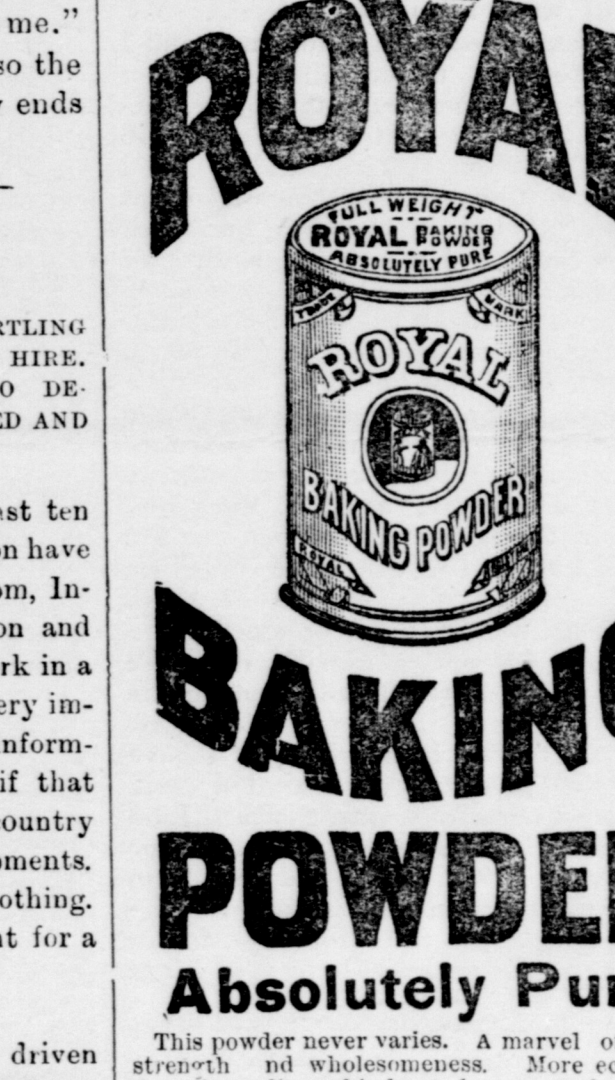
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