

YOLANDE

BY WILLIAM BLACK

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"She was very indignant," said young Leslie, laughing, "when you wouldn't have your name put on the tablet in the school house."

"What tablet?" said Yolande.
"Oh, a tablet saying that Mr. Melville had built the school and presented it to the people of Gress."
"And I never contributed a farthing!" he said. "She did the whole thing. Well, now, that shows how artificial the position is; and, necessarily, it won't last. We have for so long been hypocrites for the public good—let us say it was for the public good; but there must come an end."

It was really a most enjoyable, confidential, pleasant evening; but it had come to an end; and when the two young men left, both Yolande and her father accompanied them to the door. The moon was risen now; and the long, wide glen looked beautiful enough.

"Well, now, Mr. Melville," said Winterbourne, as they were going away, "whenever you have an idle evening, I hope you will remember us and take pity on us."

"You may see too much of me."
"That is impossible," said Yolande, quickly; and then she added, very prettily: "You know, Mr. Melville, if you come often enough you will find it quite natural that Duncan should play for you Melville's Welcome Home."

He stood for a moment uncertain; it was the first sign of embarrassment he had shown that night.
"Well," said he, "that is the most friendly thing that has been said to me for many a day. Who could resist such an invitation? Good night—good night!"

CHAPTER IX.

One evening John Shortlands and Jack Melville were together standing at the door of the lodge, looking down the glen. The big, burly M. P. looked vexed, perturbed, impatient.

"Mr. Melville," he said, abruptly, in his broad Northumbrian intonation, "will



NOT ONE OF THEM APPEARS TO SEE WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE.

you walk down the glen for a bit?"

"Yes; but we should fetch Miss Winterbourne to show her the skies on fire."
"No; it's about her I want to speak to you. Or, rather," said his companion, when they had got as far as the bridge, "about her father. Winterbourne is an old friend of mine; but the way he is going on at present, shilly-shallying, frightened to say this, frightened to say that, is enough to worry a stronger man than he is into his grave. Well, if he won't speak I will. I have mystery! My motto is—out with it! And he would never have got into this precious mess if he had taken my advice all through."
Melville was surprised; but he did not interrupt. John Shortlands seemed a trifle angry.

"The immediate trouble with him is this: Ought he, or ought he not, to confide certain matters to you as a friend of young Leslie? Well, I am going to take that into my own hand. I am going to tell you the whole story—and a miserable business it is."

"Do you think that is wise?" the younger man said, calmly. "If there is anything disagreeable, shouldn't the knowledge of it be kept to a few people as possible? I would rather have my illusions left. The Winterbournes have been kind to me since they came here; and it has been delightful to me to look at these two—the spectacle of father and daughter—"

"Oh, but I have nothing to say against either of them. I suppose you know that your friend Leslie and Yolande are engaged?"

"I have understood as much."
"But did he not tell ye?" said Shortlands, with a stare.

"Well, yes," the other said, in rather a cold way. "But we did not have much talk about it. Archie Leslie is a very fine fellow; but he and I don't always agree in our ways of looking at things."

"Then, at all events, in order to disagree you must know what his way of looking at things is; and that is just the point I'm coming to," said Shortlands, in his blunt, dogmatic way. "Yolande Winterbourne has been brought up all her life to believe that her mother died when she was a child; whereas the mother is not dead, but very much alive—worse luck; and the point is whether he

ought to be told, whether he would consent to keep this knowledge back from Yolande, who would only be shocked and horrified by it. Do ye understand?"

"But, surely," exclaimed Melville, with wide-open eyes, "surely the best thing—the natural thing would be to tell the girl herself, first of all!"

"Man alive, Winterbourne would rather cut his throat! Don't you see that his affection for the girl is quite extraordinary? It is the sole passion of his life; a needle-scratch on Yolande's finger is like a knife to his heart. I assure you the misery he has endured in keeping this secret is beyond anything I can tell you; and I do believe he would go through the whole thing again just that Yolande's mind should be free, happy, careless. When he goes about with her he forgets all worry—thank goodness for that; and certainly she is high-spirited enough for anything; you would think she had never known a care or a trouble in all her existence; and I suppose that's about the truth."

"I suppose there is no necessity that I should know why the girl has been kept in ignorance of her mother's existence?"

"Oh, I will tell you the story—miserable as it is. You cannot imagine a pleasanter creature than that was when Winterbourne married her. He was older than she was; but not much. It was neuralgia that began it; she suffered horribly. Then some idiot advised her to drink port wine—I suppose the very worst thing she could have tried, for if it had for gone, it must be bad for rheumatism and neuralgia, and such things. However, it soothed her at first, I suppose; and no doubt she took refuge in it whenever a bad attack came on. But, mind you, it was not that that played the mischief with her. She herself became aware that she was being tempted to take too much; for quite suddenly she went to her husband, told him frankly that the habit was growing on her, and declared her resolution to break the thing off at once."

"Now, look here, Winterbourne," John Shortlands said, in his plain-spoken way. "If I were you, before I would say a word of this story to Yolande, I would make sure that that would be sufficient for Leslie. He says that Yolande must be told; but will that suffice? Is that all he wants? If I were in your place I would have a clear understanding. Do you know, I can't help thinking there is something behind all this that hasn't come out. If this young fellow is really in earnest about Yolande—if he is really fond of her—I don't think he would put this stumbling block in the way—I don't think he would exact this sacrifice from you—unless there was some other reason. Yesterday afternoon Melville said as little as he could. He didn't like the job. But he hinted something about the disagreement between young Leslie and his family over this marriage."

"I guessed as much," said Winterbourne. "Yes, I have suspected it for some time. Otherwise I suppose his father and aunt would have called on Yolande. They knew each other. Yolande stayed a night at the Towers when Mrs. Graham first brought her here—until the lodge was got ready."

"Of course, if the fellow has any pluck, he won't let that stand in his way. In the meantime, a domestic row isn't pleasant; and I dare say he is impatient and angry. Why should he revenge himself on Yolande, one might ask? But that is not the fair way of putting it. I can see one explanation. I didn't see it yesterday; and the fact was I got pretty wild when I learned how matters stood; and my own impression was that kicking was a sight too good for him. I have been thinking over it since, though; the rain last night kept me awake. And now I can understand his saying, 'Well, I mean to marry in spite of them; but I will take care, before I marry, to guard against any risk of their being able to taunt me afterward.'"

"When I took this shooting," Winterbourne said, absently, "when the place was described to me, on the voyage out, I thought to myself that surely there Yolande and I would be safe from all anxiety and trouble. And then again, up the Nile, day after day I used to think of her being married and settled in this remote place, and used to say to myself that then, at least, everything would be right. And here we are, face to face with more trouble than ever! And who is to tell her? The shock will be terrible—it may kill her."

"Nonsense—nonsense! Whoever is to tell her, it must not be you. It will turn out all right. And you, for one, should be very glad that the Master, as you call him, now knows the whole story; for after the marriage, whatever happens, he cannot come back on you and say you had deceived him."

"After the marriage! And what sort of a happy life is Yolande likely to lead when his relatives object to her already?"

"There you are off again! Why, man, these things must be taken as they come. You don't know that they object—and I don't believe they can object to her, though the old gentleman mayn't quite like the color of her politics. But supposing they do, what's the odds? They can't interfere. You will settle enough on Yolande to let the young couple live comfortably enough. I don't see any difficulty about it."

(To be continued.)

Good humor is the clear blue sky of the soul, highly favorable to the discoveries and progress of genius.—Shaftesbury.

COLLEGE HONORS—THE FINAL AWARD.



Can you guess who will get it?—Chicago Tribune.

GREAT RUSSIAN WATERWAY.

Czar's Government Planning for Baltic-Black Sea Ship Canal.

The recent appointment of a commission to examine the question of constructing a canal to unite the Baltic and Black Seas revives interest in this tremendous project, which is no less than digging a canal equal in length to most of the so-called canals on Mars. It is by all odds the greatest canal scheme of modern times, and while it presents difficulties, such as passing the Cataracts of the Dnieper River, which have a total fall of 107 feet, it is not considered by any means impracticable.

While the canal is primarily a strategic work, for Russia has a large fleet in the Black Sea which is rusting from inertia, it is just as important commercially, for, as no other agency



ROUTE OF PROPOSED CANAL.

could, it will open up trade in the interior of the Tsar's European domains, and by its tolls be not only self-supporting but source of revenue to the government.

Longest Canal in World.

From Riga, on the Baltic, to Kherson, at the entrance to the Black Sea, is only 800 miles in a straight line, but the canal, as mapped by Mr. Ruckteschell, who, it is said, will possibly be entrusted with its building, will be almost twice as long, or between 1,410 and 1,468 miles, according to the route selected. When completed it will be the longest canal in the world, but in spite of these superlatives, its cost will, comparatively speaking, not be great. An American syndicate has offered to construct the work for \$315,000,000, or for about three-fifths the bid made by a Russian syndicate.



BLACK SEA AND SURROUNDING TERRITORY.

These bids were made a year ago on the favorite route mentioned. Since then, however, a scheme has been prepared by a Belgian engineer, Comte Gustave Defosse, in which J. King & Co., of London, are interested. The details of this proposal have not yet been made public, but they are said to apply to a waterway about 400 miles shorter and having a uniform depth of 28 feet and a breadth on the surface of 208 feet, and at bottom of 114 feet. If this plan is followed, the engineer states the canal can be com-

pleted in about six years. With a speed of eight knots, the passage would occupy about five days.

The original plan, which, in view of the rapidly increasing size of vessels, is more accommodating, was for a waterway 31½ feet deep, 140 feet wide at bottom and 266 feet wide at surface. Included in this plan is a broad, well-paved roadway, built at the side of the canal for its whole length. As Russia is not famed for its good roads, this improvement will be of almost as much importance as the canal itself.

Apart from the extensive works to be built at the cataracts and the actual digging of only twelve miles through a country presenting no great difficulty to the operation, the canal building will very largely be the simple work of dredging a deep channel in the rivers and the existing canal and the widening of the latter.

No one familiar with Russia's humiliating position on the Black Sea need be told that the subject is an old one and a recognized necessity, for while the Tsar has been permitted to build a powerful fleet of warships on the Black Sea, treaties and conventions extending back almost a century, or since 1809, have closed the gates of the Dardanelles upon them.

The Black Sea fleet, which consists of about 150 ships, has been "locked" in the Black Sea principally through British action, although Russia is a party to most of the treaties, recognizing the fact that it is some consolation to know that no other force, not even a British fleet, may pass through the straits, "the key to the Tsar's home," as Napoleon described it.

During the last year, however, Russia has felt the need of her caged fleet, which, if it could have been dispatched to the Far East at an opportune time, might have changed the history of the war. At present the Black Sea fleet can only be used to menace the "stork man of the East," whom most of the powers do not desire disturbed, for fear of the awful contention for it "remains" if the Turk were driven out of Europe.

While Great Britain is distributing her fleets has always made due allowance for the ineffective character of the Black Sea fleet, and consequently has been able to control the size of

her Mediterranean squadron, there is a general impression that Russia would by means characteristic be able to send her Black Sea fleet past the Dardanelles if a European war were forced upon her and made such a coup desirable.

The canal from the Baltic to the Black Sea would bring St. Petersburg 3,000 miles nearer the Far East, and what is more to the point, would bring it so much nearer Egypt and India. It is no secret that notwithstanding the disastrous outcome of the war in the Far East, Russia will strike for an outlet on the Indian Ocean.

Some men go to war and bleed for their country and some others stay at home and bleed their country.