

YOLANDE

BY WILLIAM BLACK

CHAPTER XXIII.

Yolande was a strict and faithful guardian; and Mr. Romford, no doubt finding it impossible to get speech of her mother alone, had probably left the place, for they saw no more of him. Indeed, they were thinking of other matters. Yolande was anxious to get away to the south, and yet afraid to risk the fatigue of traveling on a system obviously so frail as her mother's was. She kept lingering on and on in the hope of seeing some improvement taking place, but her mother, though much more cheerful in spirits, did not seem to gain in strength; indeed, she seemed physically so weak that again and again Yolande postponed their departure. This also had its drawbacks, for the weather was becoming more and more wintry, and out-of-door exercise was being restricted. It was too cold for driving; Yolande had sent back the pony carriage. Then she dared not expose her mother to northerly or easterly winds. Frequently now she had to go out for her morning walk by herself, a brisk promenade once or twice up and down the pier being enough to send her home with pink cheeks. At last she said to her mother, with some timidity: "I have been thinking, mother, that we might take some one's advice as to whether you are strong enough to bear the journey."

"I think I could go," the mother said. "Oh, yes, I should like to try, Yolande, for you seem so anxious about it, and of course Worthing must be dull for you."

The girl went and stood by her mother's side, and put her hand gently on her shoulder.

"Mother, my father is fretting that he can be of no service to us."

"Oh, no, no, no, Yolande," the other

under a sheet of dazzling snow! That is to say, as much of the world as was visible—the pavement, and the street, and the promenade, and the beach; beyond that the wind-ruffled bosom of the sea was dark and sullen in comparison with this brilliant white wonder lying all around. And still the northerly gale blew hard; and one after another strangely dark clouds were blown across the sky, until, as they got far enough to the south, the sun would shine through them with a strange coppery luster, and then would disappear altogether, and the dark sea would become almost black. And then again the fierce wind would hurry on the smoke-colored pall to the horizon; and there would be glimpses of a pale blue sky flecked with streaks of white; and the brilliant sunlight would be all around them once more on the boats and the shingle and railings and the snow-whitened streets.

Now Yolande's mother was strangely excited by the scene, for it confirmed her in a curious fancy she had formed that during all the time she had been under the influence of those drugs she had been living in a dream, and that she was now making the acquaintance again of the familiar features of the world as she once had known them.

"It seems years and years since I saw the snow," she said, looking on the shining white world in a mild entrancement of delight. "Oh, Yolande, I should like to see the falling snow—I should like to feel it on my hands."

"You are likely to see it soon enough, mother," said the girl, who had noticed how from time to time the thick clouds going over shrouded everything in an ominous gloom. "In the meantime I shall

this bewilderment of snow and sunlight. It was a kind of fairy thing as yet, and wonderful and beautiful; but she knew very well that as soon as the clouds had drifted over far enough to obscure the sun, it would look much less wonderful and supernatural, and she would merely be making her way through an ordinary and somewhat heavy fall of snow.

But when she got near to the house something caught her eyes there that filled her with a sudden dismay. Her mother was standing in the balcony, and she had her hands outstretched as if she were taking a childish delight in feeling the flakes fall on her fingers, and when she saw Yolande she waved a pleasant recognition to her. Yolande—sick at heart with dread—hurried to the door, ran upstairs when she got in, and rushed to the balcony. She was breathless, she could not speak, she could only seize her mother by the arm and drag her into the room.

"Why, what is it, Yolande?" the mother said. "I saw you coming through the snow. Isn't it beautiful—beautiful! It looks like dreams and pictures of long ago—I have not felt snow on my hands and my hair for so many and many years."

"How could you be so imprudent, mother?" the girl said, when she had got breath. "And without a shawl! Where was Jane? To stand out in the snow?"

"It was only for a minute, Yolande," said she, while the girl was dusting the snow from her mother's shoulders and arms with her pocket handkerchief. "It was only a minute—and it was so strange to see snow again."

"But why do you go out? why did you go out?" the girl repeated. "On a bitterly cold morning like this, and bare-headed and bare-necked?"

"Well, yes, it is cold outside," she said, with an involuntary shiver. "I did not think it would be so cold. There, that will do, Yolande; I will sit down by the fire and get warm again."

During that evening Yolande's mother seemed somewhat depressed, and also a little bit feverish and uncomfortable.

"I should not wonder if you were going to have a very bad cold, mother," girl said. "I should not wonder if you had caught a chill by going out on the balcony."

"Nonsense, nonsense, child; it was only for a minute or so. But I am a little tired. I think I will go to bed now; and perhaps Jane could ask for an extra blanket for me. You need not be alarmed. If I have caught a slight cold—well, you say we ought not to start in such weather in any case."

"Shall I come and read to you, mother?"

"No, no; why should you trouble? Most likely I shall go to sleep. No, I will leave you to your novel; and you must draw in your chair to the fire; and soon you will have forgotten that there is such a thing as snow."

And so they bade good night to each other, and Yolande was not seriously disturbed.

(To be continued.)

AS TO KITCHEN PERQUISITES.

Cooks and Stewards Who Get Commissions on Purchases.

Perquisites for the head of the kitchen are matters to be mentioned with bated breath. They are something that neither the cook, chef nor market man will allow, yet it is a well-known fact that in most large households the steward of the establishment, whoever that may be, makes a comfortable income in commissions. It was the dealer, undoubtedly, who began this, but the custom has developed as it has grown, and demands for commissions have multiplied and occasionally a little information crops out through some one who feels aggrieved.

"It was all right," groaned the market man the other day, "when I allowed them 5 or 10 per cent on the bills, but when they begin to demand 15 and 20 it looks serious."

At some of the bureaux where high-priced domestics register they will not take one whom they know exacts commissions. There are few who are refused on that account, however, for, as stated, it is not a subject that is usually mentioned. One high-priced cook, however, has waited for several months for a position because she refused to take one where a housekeeper was employed, and she was conscientiously kept from others on the ground that she was looking for perquisites.

One family in New York absolutely refuses to allow any one in its employ to receive commissions on household supplies purchased. They look into the matter carefully and none is given. However, if the shopman is so minded or the cook sends a letter saying that times are hard and money scarce and he then sends out a little present of \$20 or \$25 who can object? That is a simple way to get around the matter and no one is the wiser.

There may be an understanding with the family that a commission is to be received and the subject is then on as legitimate a basis as that of any other business. As a rule, however, it is generally understood, and the mistress of the house, though she may have objections, closes her eyes and puts the whole thing comfortably out of mind. If she doesn't, it makes no difference; she can do little to prevent it.

"I know my house employes receive commissions," said the mistress of one wealthy family the other day, "but what can one do? If I should allow myself to be worried by such things I should be perfectly miserable and if I watched the domestics all the time I could do nothing else."

EAST REVOLUTIONARY WIDOW



Near the head of Black River Valley, in Windsor County, Vermont, ten miles from the nearest railway station at Ludlow, lies the hamlet of Plymouth Union. What the population lives on is a question difficult to answer. Fortunately, it costs very little to live there. A majority of the population are in one way or another supported by Civil War pensions. A tidal wave of patriotism must have swept through this section of Vermont in the early sixties.

The most interesting inhabitant of Plymouth Union is "Aunt Esther" Damon, the last on the roll of Federal pensioners as widow of a soldier of the Revolution. "Aunt Esther" was born in Plymouth township, not far from her present home, on the first day of August, 1814. She was one of a family of eight or nine, born to a heritage of poverty. Her father is remembered as a "stirring" man, who began life with nothing, married prematurely, and worked hard to provide for his family. In cutting timber to build them a house he was killed by the fall of a tree. His widow was left without resources and found it impossible to hold her family together. One by one they were "bound out" to service, and were never reunited. At a tender age Esther was thus put to work and remembers this period chiefly as one of neglect and ill-treatment.

By one kind of work or another, mostly domestic service, she made shift to live, and finally drifted to Tyson, which then had a charcoal blast furnace and was something of a center of activity. She is said to have taught a district school for one or two terms. Her own education had been very limited, and teaching could not have offered her a successful career. By thus doing whatever came in her way, she managed to support herself until she was 21 years old, when she married.

Her choice of a husband was not well considered. Noah Damon, whom she wedded after a brief courtship, was a widower 75 or 76 years old, with adult children and a record of good service as a soldier of the Revolution in sundry Massachusetts commands. He is traditionally remembered as an easy-going, honest, improvident man, and not inclined to be industrious. It is said that Esther Sumner was misled as to his ability and willingness to support her, and thought he had some property, whereas he had none. Perhaps he was an optimist by temperament. Their marriage was celebrated on the 6th of September, 1835.

The young wife soon discovered that, for her, the marriage relation meant not only supporting herself by

continued hard work for small wages, but supporting her husband as well. He was quite willing to entertain her with stories of the war, but these did not seem to compensate for the added burden she had unwittingly assumed. She insisted that Damon's children should make some provision for him. This led to misunderstandings and family quarrels. And they finally took the old man to a farm in New Hampshire, to which the young wife refused to go.

No separation other than that described was sought or desired. Damon never ceased to crave his wife's companionship; she, in turn, while unwilling to be a dependent upon the Damon family, spared enough of her meager earnings to keep him clothed, and in other ways to provide for his comfort. In some way Damon got money to make a trip to Boston to visit some friends, and from this outing he never returned. He died on the journey, which was probably too much for his failing strength, but whether in going to or coming from Boston is not clear.

After the death of her husband, which in the circumstances cannot have been a very keen bereavement, Mrs. Damon realized that she had other duties than self-interest alone suggested. Her mother was then old and poor and friendless. Esther took her and cared for her to the end of her life. To enable her to do this she leased a little farm near Reading, Vt., and worked it as well as she could with the help of a hired man.

After her mother's death she did not feel equal to continuing this profligate and unsatisfactory enterprise, and returned to Plymouth Union to take up her residence with an old resident of that place, a Mrs. Snow, who had a house, but no income. In that house she has lived for the past sixteen years, and there she hopes and expects to remain for the rest of her life. During a period of many years she has been in receipt of a Federal pension of \$8 per month, and this meager provision had to suffice in a large degree for the needs of both old women. The pension has lately been increased to \$24 per month.

With the exception of a slight deafness, Mrs. Damon retains her faculties remarkably.

HOW THE WAR CHANGED THE MAP.



BEFORE.



AFTER.

Russian territory shown in black. Japanese territory or sphere of influence in white or shaded.

LETTERS SHE NEVER SENDS.

Woman Writes Many Just to Get Things Off Her Mind.

"I write lots of letters that I never mail," said a Kansas City woman to a friend recently. "What do I do with them? I tear them up. I write them simply to get things I want to say off my mind. For instance, if the butcher has sent me a mediocre steak and I am mad about it I don't call him up and scold him. I send the steak back and then sit down and write a letter giving him the very mischief for his carelessness. When I have written it I read it over. I have the rebuke out of me and I feel better. Next I tear the letter up. The butcher gets his steak back and knows he was careless. He sends another one and is more careful next time. He didn't need the calling down, but I needed to get rid of it."

Every once in a while I sit down and write notes to people telling them exactly what I think of them. When I get the things I want to say off my mind the notes are destroyed and I am relieved. That is the way I keep people liking me. I say what I think of them and have the satisfaction that comes from saying it, but it never reaches them or anybody else."—Kansas City Times.

Discouraging.
"Here is another example of the irony of fate."
"What's that?"
"Why when eggs are cheap and plentiful all the bad actors are taking a rest."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

It is only after some people are planted under six feet of earth that they cease to say "I told you so."



HER MOTHER WAS STANDING IN THE BALCONY.

cried, with a sudden terror. "Don't think of it, Yolande—it would kill me—he will never forgive me."

"There is no forgiveness needed, mother; all that is over and forgotten. Mother—"

But the mere mention of this proposal seemed to have driven the poor woman into a kind of frenzy. She clung to her daughter's arm, and said in a wild sort of way:

"If I saw him, Yolande, I should think he was coming to take you away from me—to take you away from me! It would be the old days come back again—and—and the lawyers—"

She was all trembling now, and clinging to the girl's arm.

"Stay with me, Yolande—stay with me. I know I have done great harm and injury, and I cannot ask him to forgive me; but you, I have not harmed you. I can look into your face without reproach."

"I will stay with you, mother, don't be afraid. Now pray calm yourself; I won't speak of that again if it troubles you; we shall be just by our two selves for as long as ever you like, and as for lawyers, and doctors, or anybody else, why, you shall not be allowed to know that they exist."

So she gradually got her mother calmed again; and by and by, when she got the opportunity, she sat down and wrote to her father, saying that at present it was impossible he should come and see them, for that the mere suggestion of such a thing had violently alarmed and excited her mother, and that excitement of any kind did her most serious mischief. She added that she feared she would have to take the responsibility of deciding whether they should attempt the journey; that most likely they would proceed by short stages, and that, in that case, she would write to him again for directions as to where they should go on arriving in Paris.

They had fixed definitely the day of their departure, when on the very night before, the varying northerly winds that had been blowing with more or less bitterness for some time, culminated in a gale. It was an unusual quarter—most of the gales on that part of the coast coming from the south and the southwest; but all the same the wind during the night blew with the force of a hurricane, and the whole house shook and trembled. Then, in the morning, what was their astonishment to find the sunlight pouring in at the parlor windows; and outside, the world white and hushed

go round after breakfast and tell Mr. Watherston not to send the carriage; we can't start in a snowstorm."

"But why not send Jane, Yolande? It will be bitterly cold outside."

"I suppose it would be no colder for me than for her," Yolande said. And then she added, with a smile of confession, "besides, I want to see what everything looks like."

"Will you let me go with you? May I?" said the mother, wistfully. "You?" said Yolande, laughing. "Yes, that is likely—that is very likely! You are in good condition to face a gale from the northeast, and walk through snow at the same time."

When Yolande went out she found it was bitterly cold, even though the terrace houses sheltered her from the northeast wind. She walked quickly—and even with a kind of exhilaration, for this new thing in the world was a kind of excitement; and when she had gone and delivered her message, she thought she would have a turn or two up and down the pier, for there the snow had been in a measure swept from the planks, and there was freer walking. Moreover, she had the whole promenade to herself; and when she got to the end she could turn to find before her the spectacle of the long line of coast and the hills inland all whitened with the snow, while around her the sullen-hued sea seemed to shiver under the gusts of wind that swept down on it. Walking back was not so comfortable as walking out; nevertheless, she took another turn or two, for she knew that if the snow began to fall she might be imprisoned for the day; and she enjoyed all the natural delight of a sound constitution in brisk exercise. She had to walk smartly to withstand the cold, and the fight against the wind was something; altogether, she remained on the pier longer than she had intended.

Then something touched her cheek, and stung her, as it were. She turned and looked; soft white flakes—a few of them only, but they were large—were coming fluttering along and past her; and here and there one alighted on her dress like a moth, and hung there. It was strange, for the sunlight was shining all around her, and there were no very threatening clouds visible over the land. But they grew more and more frequent; they lit on her hair, and she took them off; they lit on her eyelashes, and melted moist and cold into her eyes; at length they had given a fairly white coating to the front of her dress, and so she made up her mind to make for home, through