

How She Paid Her Debt.

From Happy Hours.

CHAPTER II.

So favorably did Lillias Wayland regard this idea, broached in her sore extremity, that in two days from the day in which she had bidden good-by to her handsome, reckless brother, she stopped from the cars at the New York depot, dressed in a sober brown suit, that made her look like a shrinking little mouse, with her carpet bag in her hands.

A little inquiry sufficed to bring her to the street where Mr. Glencross resided—a stately avenue, lined on either side with elegant palaces, the like of which Lily had never seen in the plainer city where she had been born and bred. Her heart sank within her, as she stood on the brownstone steps leading up to the carved rosewood door, on which a silver plate bore the name of "Glencross" in old English letters.

Then, coloring deeply at her own cowardly tremulousness and utter lack of resolution and enterprise, she rang the bell, to settle the question at once and definitely.

"Is Mr. Glencross at home?" she asked of the colored servant who answered the summons.

Yes, Mr. Glencross was at home; would the young lady enter? And Lillias was shown into an apartment curtained with heavy folds of purple satin, and carpeted with velvet of the same rich color—an apartment whose dusky splendor made her think of all the stories she had read of enchanted palaces in the realms of fairy-land.

As Lillias sat on the silken sofa, waiting with a throbbing heart for the appearance of her unknown cousin, the thought stole into her mind that he was not so much of a "miser" after all and then came a sick sort of misgiving that her mission was all in vain.

"For surely," she thought, glancing tremulously round the elegant apartment, "he will not want anyone to make bread, or look after the kitchen expenditures! I wish—oh, I wish that I was safe at home again!"

The thought had scarcely framed itself in her mind, when a door at the farther end of the room opened, and a tall, handsome man, scarcely thirty years of age entered.

"I—I beg your pardon, sir," faltered Lillias, all in a flutter, "but I wish to see Mr. Glencross."

"I am Mr. Glencross!"

"You!" Lily rose up and sat down again, coloring vivid scarlet. This, then, was their far off cousin, and how widely different from their dreams and fancies! Apparently saw and pitied her painful confession, for he said, politely:

"May I ask in what manner I can be useful to you?"

"I am Lillias Wayland!" she answered, in a tone that was scarcely audible.

"Wayland!" A shadow, faint, yet distinctly perceptible, overspread his face at that word, and Lillias saw it with a failing heart. She forgot the labored speech of palliation and excuse that he was no silver-haired patriarch, but a handsome young man, surrounded with all the adjuncts of wealth and luxury. She remembered only poor Charley and her own sickening idea of debt, disgrace and ruin; and sinking on her knees at his

feet, she sobbed out her pitiful story.

"He is so young," she wailed, "so young, surely you will not refuse to give him another chance for name and fame! I will work and toil for you until the five hundred dollars are every cent paid. I will be a servant, a seamstress—what you please, only promise me that you will not visit him with the penalties of the law!"

Her voice died into quivering silence, but her eyes still appealed.

"Rise, Miss Wayland," said the young man, after a moment, gravely, yet with a certain gleam of amusement in the corners of his mouth at the idea of that pretty, slender creature rendering up to him the equivalent of the five hundred dollars. "And now, cousin Lillias—for I believe we may claim relationship, although it is somewhat distant—I shall insist upon you as my guest for a while. Let me ring and send for my mother!"

Mrs. Glencross, a stately old lady in black silk and Valenciennes lace, welcomed Lillias Wayland with a smiling hospitality which belonged to the ancient regime, and almost before she knew it the girl found herself chatting innocently away to her hostess, as if she had lived all her life in the sunshine of that pleasant smile; while Paulus Glencross, busied among some papers at a table beyond, watched the sweet changing countenance with a new interest.

"I never saw such a lovely face in my life," he thought. "The profile is as purely Grecian as the face of Hero on my mother's cameo, and the eyes are as full of shifting lights as a diamond! Upon my word, this little new cousin is an acquisition!"

When Lillias wrote her happy letter home that night, Mr. Glencross added a pleasant postscript, and Charley Wayland knew that his season of peril was over.

Lily had been nearly a month the guest of the stately old lady in black silk and Valenciennes lace, when one day Paulus, coming suddenly into the purple twilight of the drawing rooms, found her sitting all alone with tear drops glittering on her peach cheeks.

"Why, Lily, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, Paulus,"—they had grown to be good friends by this time—"only I have been dreaming very pleasantly, and the time of wakidg has come at last."

"You mysterious little sphinx, what on earth do you mean?"

She colored and cast down her eyes.

"The five hundred dollars, Paulus—they are yet to be paid. No—don't interrupt me. I cannot consent to indulge your generous impulses. I must pay you; and there is no other way for me than to seek a situation as governess or instructor in some seminary. So, Paulus, I have written an advertisement, and if you will be so kind as to take it down to the office of some one of the daily papers—"

"Give it to me!" he interrupted.

She placed it confidently in his hand; he tore it deliberately in strips.

"Paulus!" she cried, in amazement.

"Lily, this is all nonsense. If you want to pay me you can."

"But, Paulus, you know I have nothing in all the world!"

"You have yourself—to me the

most precious gift the aforesaid world contains."

"I don't understand you."

"Must I speak plainer? Well, then, Lily, give me yourself. I love you, darling, and would fain make you my wife. Are you content to pay me in this coin?"

"Oh, Paulus!" she faltered. "I never dreamed of so much happiness."

And so Lillias Wayland's indebtedness was settled most satisfactorily.

The Widow's Arrival.

CHAPTER I.

It was "steamer day" at Sitka, and amid all the joyous air and excitement that the monthly boat brought was one forlorn, unhappy man. Tom Douglas watched his friends as they eagerly opened their letters and listened with assumed interest to the bits of news they were anxious to share, for at Sitka the population throngs to the wharf when the steamer's whistle is heard and waits the coming of the ship and the distribution of the mails. The people crowd into the tiny post office on the dock and watch impatiently for the longed-for home letters.

But Tom's home letter was not a comfort to him. "Well, she is really coming," he said, "a month from today, if the steamer is on time. I will be a married man, worse luck, How can I ever tell Natalia, dear little girl! I wouldn't willingly hurt her feelings for a million dollars, as hard up as I am," and Tom whistled ruefully.

Tom Douglas was a naval officer and before being stationed at Sitka he had been on duty a winter in Washington, where he plunged into society with that gay abandon that only a sailor knows, for after three years at sea a young fellow is quite ready for the rush and whirl of the gay capital. All houses were open to the handsome lieutenant, but there was one where he was especially welcome. The hostess was a pretty widow of some twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age. Her husband, who had died soon after their marriage, seemed not to have laid a very strong hold on her affections, for after mourning him dourously for a year she blossomed into the gayest of the gay and her house became a centre for the young officers who had been the friends of her husband.

It was there that Tom spent most of his time. He dropped in during the morning and discussed the newest gossip or the latest magazines and came in for a cup of tea in the afternoon and remained till her cozy parlor was empty save for herself and him.

"Are you going to the assembly tonight?" he would ask.

"Will you be there, Tom?" Mrs. Deering had such a good-fellowship way of using her friend's first names.

"Yes, I presume so."

"Well, then, I am going," the little widow would reply.

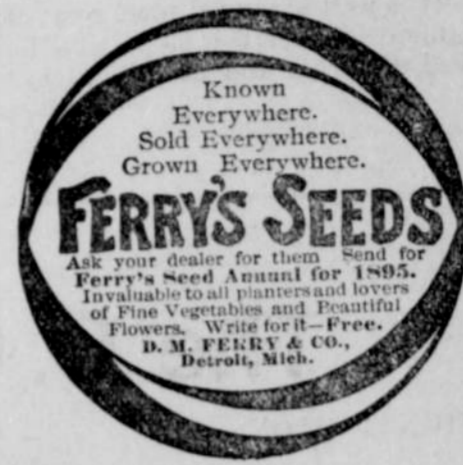
And that was the way the winter passed, Tom running in at all hours, privileged to smoke or read, to talk or listen, the most indulged of all her callers. When his orders came for his immediate removal to Alaska, he put the document in his pocket and went as usual to the cheery home of Mrs. Deering. He

told her the news and was really surprised and flattered by her reception of it. She took both his hands in hers and the tears gathered in her bright eyes.

"Oh, Tom," she said. "I hate to see you go."

Now, it never had occurred to Lieut. Douglas before, but at this moment the idea did come to him that he was in love with the widow. He drew her to him and kissed away the tears and, before he knew it, he was engaged to Alice Deering.

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