

LADY NORA WIDOW

BY BERTHA M. OLAY.

(Continued from last week.)

An Opera night, a "Patt" ordered street is densely packed with cabs, carriages and the cab in which she sits, speechless, almost in anxiety and suspense, she looks again and again, and she must get out and

she is dreadful!" she says at last, "madam," agrees with much nervous sympathy; "I wonder we don't hear of accidents than we do, ma-

is thinking of her honest" matters to herself con-

the cab gets free of the block, and whirrs on citywards, she watches with strained eyes the fading evening glow of the Baltimore Hotel.

while she is gazing through the window, the Baltimore Hotel is passing the other, and the cab is getting out with a jolt, and she is looking at the man inside the cab— that man inside the paneled entrance doors.

That is not he. That other man, madam," agrees with much nervous sympathy; "I wonder we don't hear of accidents than we do, ma-

porter asks with a stiff bow, "her dress—the long, hand-

the head waiter asks, "is not staying in the ho-

dark eyes fill with alarm and embarrassment, and the stiff waiter and several fast looking

beginning to look at the young lady, and Mrs. Brett, with her hard fea-

drawings in the ladies' draw-

ing in the hotel, madam?" the waiter asks, following suit. "If

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"won't you—won't you" she mutters, in choking, half audible tones, with an agony of entreaty, an agony of gladness and grief in her fair, tear-wet, quivering face. And Dallas Glynn— Can this be Dallas Glynn— this pallid, haggard, stern looking man in well worn office suit, his hair thin and turning gray on his temples? He looks ten years older than when she saw him last, little more than a year ago—the elegant young aristocrat—an Army "beauty man."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Yolande has often pictured this meeting to herself, and imagined a scene in which she and haughty handsome Dallas were face to face, and how she uttered faultlessly worded tender reproaches, and how he—cold and distant at first—at last began to yield a little, and to say kind things and pleasant things, and how he had grieved at leaving the country without seeing her, and so on, until she has wept and laughed to herself at the visions her imagination conjured up.

But the reality is this. Dallas enters the room gravely and deliberately, and she hurries forward and takes his hand again, and sobbing and smiling, and behaving altogether absurdly, says— "Oh, how are you? Are you quite well?"

"Quite well, thank you, Yolande," Dallas replies, with a slight smile, courteously, but very coldly. "How did you find me here, may I ask? I thought no one but my employer was aware of my real name. And are you quite well? I need scarcely ask, though; you are looking extremely well. And you are taller, I think— with a faint amused smile; but his eyes are resting on her with a warm light of pleasure and admiration in them which makes her heart throb wildly with glad excitement.

"I am very well, thank you—quite well indeed," Yolande repeats vaguely, feeling that they are both copying Mr. Toots most ridiculously, but unable for her life to utter anything else coherently. "And you are quite well, Dallas?" she goes on, stammering shyly. "I found you—that is, Lady Pentreath gave me your address."

His pallid handsome face, grown so prematurely aged and haggard, darkens with a flush of anger. "Lady Pentreath and her husband? I thought I had rid myself of them for life! Pray how did the noble Earl find me out?"

"I don't know about the Earl," Yolande answers timidly. "But mademoiselle— she lives with Lady Pentreath, you know—I believe she learned where you were."

"Oh, mademoiselle the spy!" Dallas says, with a curt hard laugh. "What an interest that young woman does take in my affairs! It seems to continue also. Love may be forgetful, but hatred—never!"

"I have never been forgetful of you," Yolande says, in low unsteady tones— "never—I wish I could have been— since the day you told me and would not even say goodbye."

"That was not quite right or courteous, I confess," Dallas acknowledges coldly and carelessly. "I regretted it afterwards, but at the time I did not see the use of distressing you with a leave-taking which I meant to be final."

"You meant never to come back any more?" Yolande questions, her voice clear and hard now, her eyes fearless and glittering. "Then I was right in my first belief, that you had deserted me forever!"

"I don't think 'desertion' is quite the correct term," Dallas says, frowning, while a slight color rises in his face. "You were rich, prosperous, comfortable, surrounded by loving friends and relatives in your own home. I was almost penniless when my debts were paid; my prospects were blighted—I was without fortune, position, home, or friends. I was quite sure then, and I am quite sure now, that the only honest and manly course to pursue was to leave you as free as I could, and undo as far as lay in my power the wrong I had done you in marrying you."

"And did you think— did you really believe in your heart," Yolande asks— and Dallas Glynn's eyes fall before the passion and the accusation in hers— "that you were not inflicting a cruel wrong on me, and blighting my life by leaving me alone, desolate, for the rest of my days, before I was much more than twenty years of age? Did you?"

in revenge for that?" Yolande asks, with her hands up to her throat to check the suffocating feeling that is oppressing her. "There is no question of revenge in the matter," he answers impatiently. "You needn't think quite so vilely of me. We began wrongly, and we went on worse, and I thought the best thing to do was to untie the Gordian knot of miseries and misunderstandings at once."

"The best for yourself, you mean," Yolande says frigidly. "Well, is there no more to be said, as you say?"

"I don't think there is," Dallas replies gloomily, but looking at her with a fire in his sombre eyes, and slowly dragging his moustache through his fingers— "except that I hope you will forgive me, or try to forget me, and find your unintentional wrong I have done you."

"Never, until you atone for it!" Yolande says curtly and bitterly. "How can I atone for it?" Dallas asks, in a low tone, moving some books and papers restlessly about on the table.

"If you cannot tell, neither can I!" Yolande retorts sharply. "Even you must admit that I have humbled myself sufficiently. I have followed you uninvited, and found you unwelcomed, and— and showed you, in spite of all slights, neglect, coldness, cruelty, how I felt—"

"I don't think it will do me any harm to earn my bread honestly," Yolande says, with an unsteady laugh. "I could not live in useless idleness, and I have left the army, and I wasn't fit for anything else. This isn't a very bad berth. I've been in much worse," he adds, laughing and shaking his head.

"I see," Yolande rejoins, making a fierce effort to be cool and calm and steady, and to smile in the careless manner in which he is smiling. "I am glad you are so comfortable. You have your liberty—that is the chief thing. Will you be offended if I— without telling anyone else— send you some money from myself? It won't hurt you, and it will please me. Will you? May I?"

"I would rather you did not— thank you all the same for your generosity, Yolande," he replies looking down at the carpet. "If I were in a different position, I should not mind, but as it is—"

"I see," Yolande interrupts. "If you were rich, my generosity, as you call it, would not be so unpleasant. Well, I had better go now. I have done no good either to you or myself— only intruded on you and taken up your time."

"No, no! Don't say that!" Dallas says irresolutely. "There can't be any question of intrusion between us— husband and wife. I was going to say; but we are not that. You must know that I am glad to see you; and I thank you for your kindness."

"You thank me for my kindness," Yolande cries, flaming with anger and passionate reproach—"your own wife! for I am that until you divorce me!"

Dallas laughs faintly, and his face flushes, and his lips tremble under his heavy moustache. "I shan't divorce you," he says huskily, laying his fingers lightly and caressingly on her soft white arm, where it peeps out exquisitely fair above her long tan glove. "And you are tempting me—very hard you are tempting me. I know I owe you atonement. I begin to believe I could make it to you."

His hand clasps her arm tenderly and warmly, and he comes close to her side. "Do you know," he half whispers, "I believe you are almost the only one in the world who has been faithful—"

"He stops abruptly, and, after a pause, asks in a slightly constrained voice, "When you said (or did you say? I forget) that you did not know where I was until you got my address from Lady Pentreath, you did not mean that you thought I was in America— you knew I was in London?"

"I knew it this evening— of course not before," Yolande answers briefly. "I heard from Lady Pentreath that you had returned quite a long time since. I knew nothing of it— how could I? Neither your mother nor I heard anything since that letter you wrote to me from New York twelve months ago. If Lady Nora had heard anything of you she would have told me at once, of course; she knew how I felt."

Her husband's grasp has tightened on her arm while she has been speaking, but he has averted his head. At the last trembling words he turns round quickly, and, seizing her in his arms, strains her to his breast. "Kiss me, Yolande!" he says hoarsely and passionately. "My dear girl! My poor girl, it would have been well for you if you had never seen me nor heard my name."

"Oh, no, no!" Yolande whispers, clinging to him in unspoken joy, and pressing her sweet lips to his face. "If— if you cared for me only a little, I should be the happiest girl in the world! I love you so much!"

"Do you?" he says, clasping her closer and caressing her head, with his coils of soft brown hair, which is pressed to him, her hat being flung aside somewhere. "Then be the happiest girl in the world, darling— take care for you very much— more than care for any one else in the world!" Dallas says earnestly. She clings more closely to him, and with her face hidden and her cheek close to his, whispers again— "But there was some one you loved, you know."

mits. "But you needn't be jealous, Yolande! I know I made rather a fool of myself in the past; but it is in the past, I swear to you! And my future is yours, my dear girl, and I will atone to you for the past, if you will trust me. Will you, darling?"

"Yes, yes— indeed I will," she cries, gasping in glad eagerness. "And you are coming back to me again? Oh, Dallas! Oh, dearest, dearest!"

"Yes, I will come back to you, Yolande, dear, since you are willing to take me," Dallas answers humbly, ashamed of himself for having so doubted and wronged this true unswerving love. "And we will begin again, dear— shall we— have a proper honeymoon, you know. The first was a beeswax, gall-and-vinegar moon— there wasn't an atom of honey in it. Eh, my little wife— shall we?"

"Yes, love," the girl murmurs, wondering in her vague dreamy happiness if this is not all some delicious vision of her own fond imagination.

"We will go to Switzerland, darling, and find some nice out-of-the-way place up in the mountains, where I believe one does subsist a good deal on honey, and rolls and coffee, and pastoral fare of that kind— eh, Yolande?— spend the long hot days in the pine woods, you doing crewel-embroidery— or pretending to do it— and I lying on the moss at your feet, reading poetry to you— Tennyson, Rossetti, Jean Ingelow, Gerald Massey. I know how it's done! I've watched honeymooning couples ever so often; and Captain Glynn laughs heartily as he kisses his young girl's wife again and again, and his spirits rise at the thought of the pleasant prospect so near, so sure, for him and for her."

But Yolande does not laugh; the weight of her happiness oppresses her— or something does. A chill hopeless feeling, as in stepping into cold shadow out of warmth and sunlight, seems to fall over her.

"Whatever you please, whatever you please, so that I am with you, so that we shall not be parted ever again!" she mutters, pressing his hands against her heart. "You are too fond of me, child!" he remonstrates half sadly, half laughingly; and then he moves restlessly and looks at the door, and Yolande drops her arms, which have been clasped around his neck.

"This isn't your own room, dear?" she asks timidly. "No, dear; it's the manager's," Dallas answers hurriedly, in a low voice; "and I would rather he did not see you. He is a cad of a fellow."

"Then had I better go away?" she asks meekly, but with a sudden pang as she realizes that Dallas is anxious for her to go. "And when am I to expect you?" she asks, after waiting several moments for an assurance on this point. "Late, dear, I suppose? Poor fellow!"

"Late?" he repeats, staring. "What do you mean? To-night, my dear girl? I cannot leave her tonight! I sleep in the hotel you know!"

"Well, when?" she asks, biting her lip nervously and flushing. "I thought I understood—"

"My dear, I cannot leave my situation at a minute's notice in that manner!" Dallas exclaims rather sharply, for the necessity he is under annoys him just at the moment. "I must give formal notice, and wait until my successor is appointed."

"How long?" she asks, feeling the dark, chill shadow growing colder and deeper each moment. "A week?"

"A month, dear!" Dallas replies, in the same sharp, hurried manner. "Now you must go, Yolande; I hear that fellow Davison's voice. Hang it, here he is!"

The door is opened roughly and unceremoniously, and a tall, showy, "flashy" looking man with huge black, glossy moustache and bold, Glympish eyes enters the room and crosses over to a writing table.

"A thousand pardons, Dallas!" he says, with a smile at Yolande—a smile which is a leer—and a hasty bow. "Just a little matter of business— gone in a moment— sorry to intrude, I'm sure; and he glances keenly and appreciatively over the top of the paper in his hand at the young girl's face and form, the shy eyes and flushed cheeks.

"It is I who should apologize for the intrusion, Mr. Davison," Dallas says icily. "I took the liberty of bringing Mrs. Glynn— my wife— in here for a few minutes' conversation, as this room was the only one unoccupied."

"Mrs. Glynn!" the manager repeats, bowing and smiling, and curling the ends of his moustache. "Never knew you were married before— never knew your name was Glynn," he says curtly; "knew it wasn't Dallas from something Daville said."



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to two horizontal furrows which bring his thick, black, oily hair down near his eyebrows.

"That stuck-up beggar with his dashed airs!" he mutters, savagely. "Hanged if I don't think my lord Dallas thought I wasn't good enough to be introduced to his wife! Hanged if I think she's his wife at all! She doesn't look a bit like it, hanged if she does! Engaged to him maybe— some swell girl that's foolish enough to run after him now when he's down on his luck— stuck-up beggar! A dashed sight better off than he deserves!"

"The fellow's not worth his salt; but I'll make him earn it if he gets to stay here. Told Daville so, Daville knows what I am, I guess!"

"My dear, you must not come here again on any account," Dallas says gravely, as he holds her hand at the cab door; "I cannot have you run the risk of meeting that infernal snob again! We will write to each other, and arrange a place of meeting some day."

"Very well," Yolande responds quickly, "some day" sinking down like a weight on her heart, so glad and warm with hope a few minutes since.

"Good-bye, dear, now," he adds, with a hasty, backward glance. "Those fellows are all staring at us; they haven't seen me taking a tender adieu of a pretty girl before!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

The dull presentment of a boding trouble that has suddenly fallen upon Yolande hangs about her and follows her every step of the way home to the house in Rutland Gardens. Nay, it gets out of the four-wheeled cab with her and stands close to her side as she waits a moment for the door to be opened.

There is rather an unusual delay in this being done, as if "the liveried menial" whose principal duties consist in reading the daily papers and opening the hall door were so deeply absorbed in the one duty as to be oblivious of the summons to attend to the other; and Yolande notices that a few persons seem loitering on the pavement near the house and over the way and watching her with glances of interest. But the moment the door is opened by the younger footman presentments are merged in reality.

"What is the matter?" Yolande asks, involuntarily stopping short on the great square mat. "Master's not very well, ma'am," the young footman replies, with eyes wide open in dismay—that says much more than his mild phrases. "He— he was brought home— Mr. Sarjent came home with him, ma'am—in a cab, and the doctor's just come—"

"An accident! Oh, poor uncle!" Yolande cries, her conscience reproaching her as she thinks how little she has known or even thought of her poor old uncle's whereabouts or his welfare all this evening, absorbed as she has been in her own heart troubles.

"No, ma'am," the footman answers; "it's not exactly an accident; but he didn't seem quite himself, Mr. Sarjent said. Mrs. Sarjent here too, ma'am; and just as they were bringing him in—"

"He was took with a fit on the very spot where you are standing, ma'am," the butler interposes, taking the cream of the story from his hand— which act of high-subordinate aggression the footman renews bitterly for the rest of the evening. "It's a haploplectic seizure, ma'am, Doctor Corrier says," the butler goes on. "Mr. Sarjent

himself ran for Doctor Corrier, ma'am; and now a nurse is sent for as the doctor can't say how it will turn out, ma'am!"

Yolande is weeping, and Mrs. Brett is pale with alarm, but pleased to think what an important story she will have to tell Lady Pentreath and her fellow-servants in Harley street presently; and the butler grows benign and imbued with a paternal dignity, as he sees himself suddenly at the head of the household.

"One minute, ma'am, and I'll send your maid," he says, opening the dining room door. "It's a terrible shock to you, ma'am, and her ladyship not at home either; but we are all doing what we can, ma'am. Shall I acquaint Mrs. Sarjent with your return, ma'am?"

"Mrs. Sarjent?" Yolande repeats dazedly. "Yes. And where is Lady Nora? Oh, I know! Oh, dear! She is at the fancy ball!"

"Her ladyship wasn't above ten minutes gone when the poor master was brought home, ma'am," the butler says confidentially. "The carriage is to go for her at two, ma'am," as her ladyship said she shouldn't by any manner of means stay late.

"Oh, dear me!" poor Yolande means, wringing her hands. "Lady Nora gone for hours, and aunt Keren seventy miles away, and— and— nobody to help me!"

A wild thought, but blissful in its very wildness and boldness, flashes across her mind. She will send for Dallas! Surely at this late hour his duties must be nearly over, and the sight of his face, the sound of his voice, will help her to bear anything and everything. Surely he cannot be angry with her—a wife claiming her husband's society and assistance! Surely his honorable business scruples will not induce him to consider his employer's interests, or any loss for which he can easily repay him, before her welfare, now that she really needs him!

Her heart throbs fast in eager hope; she is ashamed of herself for the thrill of passionate, selfish joy that runs through her at the thought that this domestic trouble may be the happy means of uniting them all in the bonds of pleasant family affection— Dallas, her lover and husband, and poor, dear aunt Keren, and uncle Silas—

"Mrs. Glynn is in the dining-room, ma'am," she hears the butler say as he opens the door.

And then come heavy footsteps, and the tones of a coarse voice, and the sound of a big, rustling, heavy-moving body, and all Yolande's hopes and wishes and ideas take flight.

"Oh, you have returned, Yolande," Mrs. Sarjent says severely, with a loud sigh, as she enters. "I am thankful that there is one member of the family at home at last! I don't know what I did not think when I came into this house under such terrible circumstances and found no one—not a soul but the servants—to give orders, or do anything that should be done! We have been obliged to take it on ourselves, Yolande," the good lady adds, with stiff humility. "Wilmot and I have been obliged to send for doctors and nurses on our own responsibility."

"Oh, aunt, do tell me how uncle is!" Yolande exclaims sharply and impatiently. "Of course, you have done everything that was right and kind, and I am very grateful to you. I was dining with Lady Pentreath, and Lady Nora has gone out."

"Yes," Mrs. Sarjent rejoins, in a hollow voice, pressing her lips together as if she never meant to open