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FOR THE BLOOMFIELD TIMES.

A STRANGE FRAUD!

—OR—

A Mystery of New York City.

BY F. DELACY.

LILLIAN WALDRON at the time our story begins was seventeen, and was budding into lovely womanhood.—Ever since she could remember she had lived at Green Point, in sight of New York and although she had often entreated her father's permission, he had always refused his consent for her to visit that city.

This refusal only made her desire the stronger, and so one fine June day, meeting a young friend who was on her way there, she accepted the invitation to accompany her.

A short, pleasant sail brought them to the New York shore, and they soon were in such a rushing crowd, as can only be found at a New York ferry.

Lillian, was soon separated by the pressure from her companion and drifted helplessly along with the multitude until reaching Broadway, when the continuous roar of the omnibuses and the fast hurrying crowd, made her pause, amazed and bewildered.

She could see nothing of her friend, and shrinking behind an apple-stand, she tried to collect her thoughts and remember her way back to the ferry.—The apple-vendor—a pale, pleasant faced woman, with the appearance of having seen better days, observed the beautiful but perplexed face of the young girl with evident curiosity, while her features seemed to work as though Lillian's appearance had aroused some painful thoughts.

At last she asked:
"Have you lost yourself?" while her voice, though pleasant, had a slight accent, which betrayed Irish descent.

"Yes, please," answered Lillian, irresistibly drawn towards the kind motherly voice and the sad, pale face.

"Where do you live?" asked the woman, with heightened interest.

"Over at Green Point," answered Lillian. "Though I have lived there all my life, strange to say, I have never visited New York before this day. I came over with a companion; we got separated in the crowd, and I really do not know which way to turn to reach the ferry again."

"O, you are not far out of your way," cried the woman, pleasantly. "Walk straight down this street and it will bring you to the ferry."

"It is so singular," said the woman, absently.

"What is so singular?" asked Lillian, in surprise.

"Your face," answered the woman, gazing at her with a long, yearning look.

"In what way?" asked Lillian, curiously.

"The resemblance—so like something I have seen, I can scarcely say where. It is one of the faint memories of my early life, when times were different.—Ah! yes—my little one, my Lily, as we used to call her—with her blue eyes and golden hair."

"Lily!" exclaimed her hearer; "why, that is my name. Did you have a little girl called Lillian?"

"No, not Lillian—Lily; we never called her anything else."

"Did she die?" asked Lillian quietly.

"We never knew what became of her," answered the woman, mournfully, "that was the worst of it. She wandered out in the streets one day when

she was three years old, and we never seen her afterwards. We lived near the water then, and we think she must have got down on the pier, fell overboard and was swept away by the tide. Poor John, it was a sad blow to him—he took to drink, and went from back to worse till he got badly hurt unloading a vessel, one day. He was taken to the hospital, and died there. You see what I've come to in order get a living. I often think it would have been different if our Lily had lived."

"You think she is dead, then?" said Lillian.

"Oh, yes; or we would have heard something of her before now. Had she lived and grown up she would have been the very image of you, only she would have been much plainer dressed, and without the genteel air that you have. Ah! she would have been a beauty—just like you!"

Lillian blushed at the woman's homely compliment; she knew it was honest and outspoken, and such words are not unpleasant to hear.

"Tell me your name," continued the woman, earnestly.

"Lillian Waldron," answered the girl, readily. "My father is John Waldron, and he has an office somewhere on Wall Street."

"O, yes, I know where it is," said the woman; "do you want to go to his office?"

"O, no," answered Lillian, quickly.

"Very well, then go straight down the street till you come to the water, and then any one can point out the ferry to you."

Lillian thanked her and then committed herself once more to the human tide. As she came in view of the water and was looking about for the ferry, a man in the garb of a sailor, suddenly accosted her.

"Why, holla, Nance!" he cried, extending his huge hand in a very friendly manner. "How are you? Give us your hand."

"Sir!" cried Lillian, in bewilderment, "I don't know you—nor is my name Nance."

"No, by jingo!" he returned, evily astonished himself; "you can't be her, for she must be forty by this time, and you are not twenty. I was forgetting how time has slipped away, but you are the very image of what she was when she married John Burke."

"That was the worst out I ever had—it drove me to sea and a wandering life. Why, I've been round the world in these last ten years. O," he continued, with a sudden thought, "you're her daughter—the one that was lost—and she found you again?"

Lillian was very much embarrassed by this persistent recollection of the uncouth stranger.

"I do not know what you mean," she exclaimed, hastily; "I am not the person you take me for—my name is Lillian Waldron, my father is a broker on Wall Street—we live at Green Point."

A young gentleman coming down the street, observing the annoyance and alarm depicted upon her face, approached her and said:

"If I can be of any assistance to you, pray command me."

The one shy glance that Lillian cast into the frank, manly face was enough to assure her of the character of its owner.

"O," she cried, "if you would be so kind as to show me the way to the Green Point ferry."

"With pleasure," returned the gentleman. "This way, if you please."

He offered his arm, she accepted it with a glad sense of protection, and they passed on together. Thus began Lillian Waldron's acquaintance with Sidney Gray. We shall see what that acquaintance led to. Upon such trifles does a life's destiny turn.

The sailor touched his hat with a mumbled "beg pardon, miss, if I offended you," and watched them until they were out of sight, talking to himself all the while.

"A queer reckoning this," so his first words ran; "first day in port, after a five-years' cruise. I was just thinking of hunting up Nance, seeing if they still lived, when across my very bows comes this trim cutter with Nance's figure-head, just as she looked twenty years ago. How I loved that woman! and she preferred that snip of a John Burke

to me—because he was honest, she said, and she was afraid I wasn't; but what's the odds. I had the most money, and that made things slide easy, no matter how you come by it. What did the gal say her name was? O—Lillian Waldron—lives at Green Point."

"Let me see—I remember something odd that happened at Green Point going on fourteen years now. I remember what I found buried there, on that gentleman's grounds. He don't know it; though—thought I might turn it to account some day—I wonder who he was? I had to cut and run just then, and couldn't stop to find out. I've been intending to look it up for some time—there may be money in it. I've been gone so long that there can't be anybody on the lookout for me now. I will fix up a bit and then take soundings."

All this indistinctly to himself, as he proceeded on his way.

Sidney Gray and Lillian Waldron were not long in becoming intimate.—She was as ingenuous and simple as a child of six, instead of seventeen, and what could he do but return her confidence. There was a charm in this very simplicity that attracted him towards her, for though but twenty-two, Gray, from his position in life, being the only son of a wealthy merchant, had seen much of the world's society. He was a student of Yale, home for the vacation. His residence was in Brooklyn.

He not only escorted Lillian to the ferry, but accompanied her on the boat and bore her company to her very door, leaving her there with a reluctance he could not conquer. He declined to enter, as he had promised to be home at dinner to meet some relatives, but a glance at the handsome mansion and grounds showed that Lillian's father possessed wealth and position. Promising to call on the next day and be introduced to Mr. Waldron, he tore himself away from those blue eyes and sunny tresses.

"My time's come," he confessed to himself, as he strode buoyantly away. "I'll marry that girl—if she'll only have me."

A safe reservation; but do you think he had doubt of it?

When Mr. Waldron came home to dinner, Lillian, much as she dreaded his displeasure, could not refrain from recounting her day's adventure. The circumstance of the two strange recognitions had much perplexed her mind. The resemblance which had been recognized by two persons so dissimilar puzzled her much. But if it had surprised her, the effect of her narration upon her father was still more surprising; he actually grew livid at her words. Never had she seen him in such an excited state, for he had ever been grave, sedate and gentle in his manner towards her. He reprimanded her almost fiercely, for her indiscretion, as he termed it.

"Why, child," he exclaimed, passionately, "this act, trifling as it may appear to you, might have caused my ruin!"

He paused abruptly, conscious that his emotion had made him utter incoherent words.

"How caused your ruin, father?" she asked, terrified by his words, which seemed to hint at some unknown and hidden danger. "How can that be possible?"

"No matter—you are too young to comprehend," was the unsatisfactory reply.

He was silent for a few moments, and then suddenly began to question her eagerly about the apple-woman—what she said, how she looked, her dress, her manner, extracting every item that Lillian could give him in way of information with the ardor and keenness of a cross-examining lawyer. Having gleaned that subject threadbare, he commenced upon the man in exactly the same manner, until the poor girl's mind was quite bewildered, and she almost began to fancy that she had, unconsciously, committed some great crime.

"I can understand about the woman," he said, musingly, and unconsciously uttering his thoughts in an audible tone of voice; "but the man is beyond my comprehension."

"They are both beyond my comprehension," remarked Lillian; "but the fright they have occasioned me has taught me a lesson, and I shall never

venture into New York again without a proper escort, I can assure you."

This simple assurance seemed to gratify Mr. Waldron greatly, and the cloud of care began to slowly fade from his face.

"Right, my child," he cried, pleasantly. "After all, it was but a stupid affair. A poor woman, who lost a child years ago, fancies she traces a resemblance to her lost darling in your face, because, possibly your eyes and hair are same color. History has many records of strange results therefrom. Do not let these circumstances bewilder your mind; remember you are my daughter, Lillian Waldron: that your mother, daughter of Judge Farrell, died when you were but three years."

"Who doubts it, father?" Lillian asked, surprised at his earnestness.

"My child, there are people in the world who are silly enough to doubt anything and everything, even the existence of the Supreme Ruler of the universe."

There the conversation dropped, and John Waldron never referred to the subject again with his daughter.

The day after this conversation a man neatly dressed paused in front of the Waldron mansion, and took a careful survey of the premises. You would scarcely have recognized in this clean-shaven and respectable looking person the sailor who had so frightened Lillian the day before. A broad grin flushed his swarthy features as his glance followed the fence down to the water's edge.

"The very place, by jingo!" he chuckled and then indulged in a low whistle of satisfaction. "I begin to understand the resemblance now—but why, why? That's what beats me. I'd like to inquire into the early history of Mr. John Waldron. There was a grocery store at the corner; perhaps the man man have kept here for years—let's try him."

He sauntered on leisurely to the corner and went in. His keen eye selected the proprietor at once, a little plump Englishman.

Our cosmopolitan detected the accent at once, as he asked for a good cigar, and the groceryman replied that he could sell him as good a one as he could get in New York. The sailor lit it and pulled away leisurely.

"A real Havana," he said.

"Ah! you know a good cigar when you get one," cried the shopman.

"O! I've smoked the real article in Havana itself!"

"Ah! you have been there—thought you had a kind of seafaring look."

"You're an Englishman. I've been there, too."

"I'm proud to say I am. Can't disguise the fact, you know, though I've been twenty years in this country; naturalized and got my papers."

It was a warm, dull afternoon, and the shopman was disposed to be sociable. The sailor, leaning against the counter lazily smoking his cigar, commenced to extract the information he sought.

"Kept this shop long?"

"About five years."

The sailor shifted from one leg to the other; he began to fear, as he would have expressed it, that he was on the "wrong tack."

"Ah! thought you'd been here some time."

"So I have," answered the other, "but not in this shop. I kept one nearer the ferry, thirteen years, until I moved here."

"Know about everybody in the place, eh?"

"Yes."

The sailor became quite absorbed in his cigar for a few moments.

"Nice place that above here—beautiful house and grounds."

"O, yes; you mean the Farrell estate?"

The sailor took his cigar out of his mouth, and knocked the white ashes off the end.

"No," he said, "I don't mean that, I mean where Mr. John Waldron lives."

"Why, bless you! that is the Farrell estate."

"Ah, indeed!" ejaculated the sailor absently.

"O, yes. It belonged to old Judge Farrell; Mr. Waldron married his only daughter, and so came into the estate. That is to say, it belongs to Miss Lillian,

who inherited it from her mother, her father being her guardian."

"By jingo!" cried the sailor, "I've got soundings now."

"Eh?" asked the shopman, in surprise. "Oh, I see how it is," he continued, "you've heard something of this before—or, may be, you've been away a long time at sea, and don't know what has happened while you've been gone."

"Just so," answered the sailor, anxious to wipe away the impression of the unguarded exclamation into which he had been betrayed.

"It's quite a little romance," continued the shopman, who was only too anxious to tell all he knew. "Judge Farrell, you must know, was one of our richest men; in fact, that very estate had been in his family since the first settlement of the country—or rather since we came over and conquered the Dutchmen, who had it first, you know—and he was very proud of it. They say he took it much to heart when his two sons died, one after the other, leaving only a puny girl to inherit the family acres. She was the apple of the Judge's eye—he fairly doted on her, and spoiled her, as it always happens in such cases. She was a beauty—Miss Lillian is not a bit like her, strange to say—it has often been remarked—though she is as handsome as her mother was; but then it is a different style of beauty. Lillian Farrell—mother and daughter both named alike, you see—was quietly, proud and haughty, with gray eyes and dark brown hair, while Lillian Waldron is—"

"I've seen her," interpolated the sailor.

"Ah! then I needn't tell you what she is like. Lillian Farrell had suitors in abundance—wealthy ones, too—but with the capriciousness of her nature, and contrary to her father's wishes, she passed them all to bestow her hand upon John Waldron, who was then only a poor clerk in a broker's office—but he was a splendid looking fellow, a fine looking man to this day, sir, and she loved him, and wouldn't have anybody else, and so the old Judge was at last obliged to give his consent; he couldn't refuse her anything; but it went very much against his grain, though, and he did it very reluctantly. He always had the idea, and he never got over it to his dying day, sir, that Waldron had taken advantage of his good looks to win his daughter's heart, not for herself, but for her money; but I think the old Judge wronged him there, for there never was a more devoted or better husband than he made."

"The old Judge made his will and settled the estate upon Lillian and her children, and tied it up in such a way that Waldron could never get hold of it, even if his wife wished to pass it over to him; but for all his doubts, he set him up in business and took him home, for he could not bear the idea of being separated from his daughter. They had a happy household, and the old man must have seen that his daughter never regretted her choice; but he was quite old going on to seventy—and only two years after the marriage—just long enough to fondle his grandchild a little."

"They do say, but I will not vouch for the truth of this, that when he was sinking fast, he called Mr. Waldron to his bedside and thus addressed him:

"It may be, John, that I have wronged you—I am going now where all will be made clear to me. Wealth is a great temptation; men will do most anything for money. Treat her well, for without her you will have nothing. It all goes to Lillian and her children."

"So the old man died with his prejudice against Waldron unchanged."—Concluded next week.

A Singular Case.

A singular case of endurance by a horse is reported from Montgomery, Ala. A man from the country came to the city and bought a horse and buggy, but on going home the horse threw him out and ran and could not be found again. After a search, which was vigorously prosecuted for ten days, the horse and buggy were found in a swamp, so wedged in among the trees that the animal could not stir. Here the unfortunate beast had stood during all that period, without food or water, but, though emaciated and feeble, he was driven home without being taken from the buggy.