WHITE WINGS:

YACHTING ROMANCE

BY WILLIAM BLACK.

An there of "A Princess of Thule;" "A Daughter of Reth;" "In Silk Attire;" "The Strange Adventures of a Phoeton;" "Kilmeny;" "The Monorch of Minering Lane;" "Madeap Violet;" "The Three Feathers;" "The Marriage of Moira Fergus, and The Made of Killeena;" "Maclevil of Dare; "Lady Silverdale's Sweetheart ?" ele.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE QUAY.

A murmur runs through the crowd; the various idlers grow alert; all eyes are suddenly turned to the south. And there, for away, over the green beadland, a small tuft of brown smoke appears, tising into the golden glow of the afternoon, and we knew that by and by we shall see the great steamer with her scarlet funnels come sailing round the point. The Laird of Denny-mains assumes an air of still further importance; he pulls his frock-coat tight at the waist; he adjusts his black satin neck-tie : his tall, white, stiff collar seems more rigid and white than ever. He has heard of the wonderful stranger; and he knows that now she is drawing near.

Heard of her! He has heard of nothing else since ever be come to us in these northern wilds. For the mistress of this household-with all her domineering ways and her fits of mojestic temper-has a love for her intimate girl-friends far passing the love of men; especially when the young ladies are obedient, and gentle, and ready to pay to her mationly dignity the compliment respectful awe. And this particular friend who is now coming to us; what has not the Laird heard about her during these past few days -of her high courage, her resolute unselfishness, her splendid cheerfulness! "A singing-bird in the house," that was one of the phrases used, "in wet weather or fine." And then the enthusiastic friend muddled ber metaphors somehow, and gave the puzzled Laird to understand that the presence of this young lady in a house was like having sweet-brier about the No wender he put on his highest and stiffest collar before he marched grandly down with us to the quay.

And does she not deserve a long holiday, sir?" says the Laird's hostess to him, as together they watch for the steamer coming round the point. "Just fancy! Two months atten-dance on that old woman, who was her mother's Two months in a sick room, without a soul to break the monotony of it. And the girl living in a strange town all by herself!"

Av : and in such a town as Edinburgh." remarks the Laird, with great compassion. His

own property lies just outside Glasgow.
"Dear me," says he, "what must a young English leidy have thought of our Scotch way of speech when she heard they poor Edinburgh bodies and their yaumering sing-song? Not that I quarrel with any people for having an accept in their way of speaking; they have that in all parts of England as well as in Scotland-in Yorkshire and Somerset-hire, and what not; and even in London itself there is a way of speech that is quite recogn zable to a stranger. But I have often thought that there was less trace of accent about Glesca and the west of Scotland than in any other part; in fact, ah have often been taken for an Englishman maself."

"Indeed!" says this gentle creature standing by him; and her upturned eyes are full of auiunocent belief. You would swear she was meditating on summoning instantly her boys from Epsour College that they might acquire a pure accent-or get rid of all accent-on the banks of the Clyde

"Yes," says the Laird, with a decision almost amounting to enthusiasm, "it is a grand language. Ay; it is so.'

The innocent eyes express such profound interest that the Laird of Denny-mains almost forgets about the coming steamer, so anxious is he

to crush us with a display of his erudition.
"It is just remarkable," he says, "that your dictionaries should put down as obsolete words that are in common use all over the south of Scotland, where, as I say, the old Northumbrian English is preserved in its purity; and that ye should have learned people hunting up in Chancer or Gower for the very speech that they might hear among the bits o' weans running about the Gallowgate or the Broomielaw. What acht ye I' you say to one of them; and you think you are talking Scotch. No, no; acht is only the old English for possession; isn't "Wha's acht ye? shorter and pithier than 'To whom do you belong!"
"Oh, certainly!" says the meek disciple:

the recall of the boys from Surrey is obviously decided on

"And speir for inquire; and ferly for wonderful; and tyne for lose; and fey for about to die; and reck for smoke; and menseful for be-coming; and belvre, and fere, and biggan, and

such words. Ye call them Scotch? Oh. no. ma'am; they are English; ye find them in all the old English writers; and they are the best of English too; a great deal better than the Free-claimed stuff that your southern English has become.

Not for worlds would the Laird have wounded the patriotic sensitiveness of this gentle friend of his from the South; but, indeed, she had surely nothing to complain of in his insisting to an Englishwoman on the value of thorough

"I thought," says she, demurely, "that the Scotch had a good many French words in it.

The Laird pretends not to hear; he is so dreply interested in the steamer which is now coming over the smooth waters of the bay. But. having announced that there are a great many

people on board, he returns to his discourse.
"Ah'm sure of this, too," says he, "that in
the matter of pronunciation the Lowland Scotch have preserved the best English-you can see that faither and twelmouth and two, and such words are nearer the original Angla-Saxon-

His hearers had been taught to shudder at the shrase Anglo-Saxon -without exactly knowing But who could withstand the anthority of the Laird? Moreover, we see relief drawing near; the steamer's paddles are throbbing in the still afternoon.

"If ye turn to Piers the Ploneman," continues the indefarigable Denny mains, "ve will find Langdale writing-

And a fewe Cruides and Crayme."

Why, it is the familiar phrase of our Scotch children !- Do ye think they would say curds ! And then fewe. I am not sure, but I imagine we Scotch are only making use of old English when we make certain forms of food plural. say 'a few broth;' we speak of porridge as 'they.' Perhaps that is a survival, too, eh!"

"Oh, yes, certainly. But please mind the ropes, sir." observes his humble pupil, careful of her master's physical safety. For at this of her master's physical sefety. moment the steamer is slowing into the quay; and the men have the ropes ready to thing

"Not," remarks the Laird, prudently backing away from the edge of the pier, "that I would say anything of these matters to your young English friend; certainly not. No doubt she prefers the southern English she has been accustomed to. But, bless me! just to think that she should jurge of our Scotch tongue by the way they Edinburgh bodies speak!"
"It is sad, is it not?" remarks his companion

-but all her attention is now fixed on the crowd

of people swarming to the side of the steamer.

"And, indeed," the Laird exclaims, to close the subject, "it is only a hobby of mine—only a hobby. Ye may have noticed that I do not use these words in my own speech, though I value them. No, I will not force any Scotch on the young leddy. As ah say, ah have often been taken for an Englishman maself, both at home and abroad."

And now -- and now -- the great steamer is in at the quay; the gangways are run over; there is a thronging up the public-boxes; and eager faces on shore scan equally eager faces on board -each pair of eyeslooking for that other pair of eyes to flash a glad recognition. And where is inheritance that we in the south of Scotland are sho—the flower of womankind—the possessor of preserving for you English people; and you all virtue and grace and courage—the wonder know little of it. You do not know that we are of the world! The Laird shares in our excitepreserving the English language for you as it ment. He, ton, scans the crowd eagerly. He was spoken centuries ago, and as you find it in | submits to be hustled by the porters; he hears your oldest writings. Scottleisms! Why, if nothing of the rearing of the steam; for is she ye were to read the prose of Mandeville or not coming ashore at last! And we know—or But in her heart of hearts the schemer knew Wyclif, or the poetry of Robert of Brunne or Guess—that he is looking out for some splendid better. She knew that the romance-chapter in Langdale, ye would find that our Scotticisms creature—some Boadicea with stately tread and the Lairl's life—and a hitter chapter it was were the very pith and marrow of the English imperious mice—some Jephtha's daughter, with had been inshed and glosed and put a way many face and hid. And we know that the master who has been lecturing us for half an hour on our disgraceful neglect of pure English will not beautiful and courtly strains, in tones such as E-linburgh never knew. Where is the queen of womankind, amid all this commonplace, hurrying, loquacious crowd?

Forthwith the Laird, with a quick amazement in his eyes, sees a small and insignificant person -he only catches a glimpse of a black dress and a white face-suddenly clasped round in the warm embrace of her friend. He stares for a second; and then he exclaims -apparently to

"Dear me! What a shilpit bit thing!"

Pale-slight-delicate-tiny! surely such a master of idiomatic English cannot have forgotten the existence of these words. But this iwall he cries to himself, in his surprise and wonder.
"Dear me! What a shilpit bit thing!"

CHAPTER II.

MARY AVON.

The bright, frank laugh of her face !-- the friendly, unbesitating, affectionate look in those soft black eyes! He forgot all about Rosamoud and Boadicea when he was presented to this "shilpit" person. And when, instead of the usual ceremony of introduction, she bravely put her hand in his, and said she had often heard of him from their common friend, he did not notice that she was rather plain. He did not even step to consider in what degree her Southern accent might be improved by residence amongst the preservers of pure English. He was anxious to know if she was not greatly tired. He hoped the sea had been smooth as the steamer came past Easdale. And her luggage-should he look after her luggage for her!

But Miss Avon was an expert traveller, and quite competent to look after her own luggage. Even as he spoke, it was being hoisted on to the wagonette.

"You will let me drive?" says she, eyeing critically the two shaggy, farm-looking animals. "Indeed I shall do nothing of the kind," says

her hostess, promptly.

But there was no disappointment at all on her face as we drove away through the golden even-ing - by the side of the murmuring shore, past the overhanging fir-wood, up and across the high land commanding a view of the wide western There was instead a look of such intense delight that we knew, however silent the lips might be, that the bird-soul was singing within. Everything charmed her-the cool, sweet air, the scent of the sea-weed, the glow on the mountains out there in the west. And as she chattered her delight to us-like a bird escaped from its prison and glad to get into the suplight and free air again -the Laird sat mute and listened. He watched the trank, bright, expressive face. He followed and responded to her every mood-with a sort of four paternal indulgence that almost prompted him to take her hand. When she smiled, he laughed. When she talked seriously, he looked concerned. He was entirely forgetting that she was a "shilpit bit thing;" and he would have admitted that the Southern way of speaking English -although, no doubt, the Lairl's own and obvious rajayment t fallen away from the traditions of the Northumbrian dialect—had, after all, a certain music in would cry; and then the bare memory of the brian dialect - had, after all, a certain music in it that made it pleasant to the ear.

Up the hill, then, with a flourish for the last -the dust rolling away in clouds behind us the view over the Atlantic widening as we ascend. And here is Castle Osprey, as we have dubbsel the place, with its wide open door, and its walls half-hidden with tree fuchsias, and its great resp-garden. Had Fair Resamond herself come to Cistle Ospery that evening, she could not have been waited on with greater solicitude than the Laurd showed in assisting this "shilpit but thing" to alight sthough, indeed, there was a slight stamble, of which no one took any notice at the time. He busied himself with her luggage quite unnecessarily. He suggested a cup of tea, though it wanted but fifteen minutes to dinner time. He assured her that the glass was rising—which was not the case. And when she was being hurried off to her own room to prepere for dinner- by one who rules her household with a rod of iron-he had the effrentery to tell her to take her own time; dinner could. He went on with his good ones. The mythical wait. The man actually proposed to keep din- Homosh and his photic adventures became porner waiting -in Castle Osprev.

That this was love at first sight, who could doubt! And perhaps the nimble brain of one who was at this moment hurriedly dressing in her own room - and whom nature has constitute ed an indefatigable match maker-may have been considering whether this rich old bachelor might not marry, after all. And if he were to marry, why should not be marry the young luly white; and she was almost falling away from in whom he seemed to have taken so sudden and her chair when her hostess, who happened to in whom he seemed to have taken so somen and, or a loss of the feet first, caught her, not held her, warm an interest? As for her -Mary Avon was pring to her feet first, caught her, not held her, now come river or three-and-twenty; she was not pand called, for water. What could it mean? likely to prove attractive to young men; her Mary Avon was not of the sighing and familing small fortune was scarcely worth considering; fraternity. she was almost alone in the world. Older men she was almost alone in the world. Wester men had married younger women. The Land had faintly making apologies, would go from the no immediate relative to inherit Denny-mains room. It was her aukle, she murmured—with no immediate relative to inherit Denny-mains and his very substantial fortune. And would they not see plenty of each other on board the

proud death in her eyes—some Rosamond of our and many a year ago. She knew how the great one might almost imagine there are tears in her modern days, with a glory of loveliness on her disappointment of his life had failed to sour eyes. "Can you fancy such a thing! She him; how he was ready to share among friends twists her ankle in getting down from the wag. and companions the large and generous heart onette-brings back the old sprain perhaps our disgreeful neglect of pure English will not that had been for a time and at the text of a wounds necessarion are easily and in the sensitive Southern ear by any harsh jidt; how his keen and active interest, that pain, sits here laughing and joking, so that she makent of the North; but will address her in might have been confined to his children and may not spoil our first evening together. Did that had been for a time laid at the feet of a his children's children, was now devoted to a bundred things -- the planting at Denny-mains, the great heresy case, the patronage of young artists, even the preservation of pure English, and what not. And that fortunate young gentleman-ostensibly his nephew-whom he had sent to Harrow and to Cambridge, who was now living a very easy life in the Middle Temple, and who would no doubt come in for Denny. mains? Well, we knew a little about that young man, too. We knew why the Laird, when he found that both the boy's father and mother were dend, adopted him, and educated him, and got him to call him uncle. He had taken under his care the son of the woman who had jilted him five and thirty years ago; the lad had his mother's eyes.

And now we are assembled in the drawing-room—all except the new guest; and the glow

of the sunset is shining in at the open windows. The Laird is eagerly proving to us that the change from the cold cast winds of Edinburgh to the warm westerly winds of the Highlands must make an immediate change in the young lady's face-and declaring that she ought to go on board the yacht at once-and asserting that the ladies' cabin on board the White Dove is the most beautiful little cabin he ever saw when

When, behold ! at the open door-meeting the glow of the sunshine-appears a figure dressed all in black velvet, plain and unadorned but for a broad belt of gold fringe that comes round the neck and crosses the bosom. And above that again is a lot of white muslin stuff, on which the small, shapely, smooth-dressed head seems gently to rest. The plain black relvet dress gives a certain importance and substantiality to the otherwise slight figure; the broad fringe of gold glints and gleams as she moves toward us; but who can even think of these things when he meets the brave glance of Mary Avon's eyes ! She was humming, as she came down the stair-

O think na lang, lassin, though I gang awa. For I'll come and see ye, in spite o' them a'

-we might have known it was the bird-soul come among us.

Now the manner in which the Lard of Denteymains set about capturing the affections of this innocent young thing as he sat opposite her at dinner-would have merited severe reproof in one of less mature age ; and might, indeed, have been followed by serious consequences but for the very decided manner in which Miss Avon showed that she could take care of herself. Whoever heard Mary Aven laugh would have been assured. And she did laugh a good deal; for the Laird, determined to amuse relating a series of anecdotes which he called good ones," and which seemed to have afforded great rejoyment to the people of the south of Scotland during the last century or so. There was in especial a Highland steward of a steamer about when a rust number of these stories was told ; and if the point was at times rather diffi cult to eatch, who could fail to be tickled by great facetrousness of the anecdote would break out into such half-suppressed guiffaws as alter gether to stop the current of the parrative. Mes-Avon laughed -we could not quite tell whether it was at the Highland steward or the Lorduntil the tears ran down her checks. However was scarrely thought of. It was a disgraceful exhibition.

"There was another good one about Homesh," said the Laird, vainly endeavouring to suppress his laughter. "He came up on deck one enermously hot day, and looked ashore, and saw

Of course we all laughed heartily, and Mary Avon more than any of us; but if she had gone down on her knies and sworn that she knew what the point of the story was, we should not have believed her. But the Laird was delighted tentions. The very servants could scarcely carry the disher string hit.

But in the midst of it all the Laird anddenly let his knife and fork drop on his plate, and stated. Then he quickly exclaime! Bless me! lassis!

We saw in a second what had occasioned his alarm. The girl's face had become ghastly

And presently she came to herself and the face still white from pain. But when she tried to rise she fell back again; the agony was too great. And so we had to carry her,

About ten minutes thereafter the mistress of the house came back to the Laird, who had been

sitting by himself, in great concern.
"That girl! that girl!" she exclaims and "Can you faucy such a thing! She you ever hear of such a thing! Sitting here laughing, with her ankle swelled so that I had to cut the boot off!"

"Gracious me " says the Laird; " is it as bad

as that " ... " And if she should become permanently lame - why - why ---

But was she going to make an appeal direct to the owner of Denny-mains? If the younger men were not likely to marry a lame little white-faced girl, that was none of his business. The Laird's marrying-days had departed fiveand thirty years before.

However, we had to finish our dinner, somehow, in consideration to our elder guest. And then the surgeon came, and bound up the ankle hard and fast; and Miss Avon, with a thousand meck apologies for being so stupid, declared again and again that her foot would be all right