

# MY LADY OF THE NORTH

The Love Story of a Gray Jacket  
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## SYNOPSIS.

The story opens in a Confederate tent at a critical stage of the Civil War. Gen. Lee imparts to Capt. Wayne an important message to Longstreet. Accompanied by Mrs. Brennan, an old army scout, Wayne starts on his mission. They get within the lines of the enemy and in the darkness Wayne is taken for a Federal officer and a young lady on horseback is given in his charge. She is a northern girl and attempts to escape. One of the horses succumbs and Craig goes through with the dispatches, while Wayne and Myrtle of the North are left alone. They seek shelter in a hut and entering it in the dark a huge mastiff attacks Wayne. The girl shoots the brute just in time. The owner of the hut, Jed Bungay, and his wife appear and soon a party of soldiers approach. They are led by a man claiming to be Red Lowe, but who proves to be Maj. Brennan, a Federal officer whom the Union girl recognizes. He orders the arrest of Wayne as a spy and he is brought before Sheridan, who threatens him with death unless he reveals the secret message. Wayne believes Edith Brennan to be the wife of Maj. Brennan. He is rescued by Jed Bungay, who starts to reach Gen. Lee, while Wayne in disguise penetrates to the ballroom, beneath which he had been imprisoned.

## CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

For a moment, as I responded to the hearty cordiality of his welcome, I was enabled to take my first glance at the ballroom, and found it to my unaccustomed soldier eyes an inspiring spectacle. The room was magnificently large—a surprising apartment. Indeed, even in so superb a Southern home as this had evidently been, and its proportions were magnified by numerous mirrors extending from floor to ceiling, causing the more distant dancers to appear circling in space. Brilliantly illumined by means of hanging chandeliers that oscillated slightly to the merry feet; decorated lavishly everywhere with festooned flags and tastefully arranged munitions of war; gay with the dress uniforms of the men and the handsome gowns of the women, it composed a scene so different from any I had looked upon in years as to hold me fascinated. The constant clatter of tongues, the merry laughter, the flashing of bright eyes, and the gleam of snowy shoulders, the good-humored repartees caught as the various couples circle swiftly past, the quick, musical gliding of flying feet over the waxen floor, the continuous whirl of the intoxicating waltz, and over all the inspiring strains of Strauss, caused my heart to bound, and brought with it an insane desire to participate.

Yet gazing, entranced, upon the animated scene, and feeling deeply the intoxication of the moment, my eyes were eagerly searching that happy throng for sight of one fair woman's face. Strange as it must seem to others, in spite of the fact that to meet her might mean betrayal and death—ay! might even result in the destruction of an army—in my weakness I secretly longed for just such a happening; felt, indeed, that I must again see her, have speech with her, before I went forth alone into the manifold dangers of the night. It was foolishness,—insanity in very truth,—yet such was the secret yearning of my heart. If I could only once know from her own truthful lips, that she already belonged to another, I could, I believe, tear her image from my memory; but while I yet doubted (and in spite of all I had heard I doubted still), no desperate case should ever prevent my seeking her with all the mad ardor of love, no faintness of heart should intervene between us. That she was present I knew from those chance words overheard in the chimney, and my one deep hope ever since I donned that Federal uniform and ventured down the stairs (a hope most oddly mingled with dread) was that we might in some manner be brought together. I was yet vainly seeking a glimpse of her among the many who circled past, when I was suddenly recalled to the extreme delicacy of my situation by the deep voice of the Major asking me a direct question:

"Do you ever dance, Colonel?"

Exactly what I may have replied I know not, but it was evidently translated as an affirmative, for in another moment I was being piloted down the side of the long room, while he gossiped in my rather inattentive ear.

"As you have doubtless remarked, Colonel, we are extremely fortunate in our ladies tonight. By Jove, they would grace an inauguration ball at Washington. So many officers' wives have joined us lately, supposing we would make permanent camp here, and besides there are more loyal families in this neighborhood than we find usually. At least their loyalty is quite apparent while we remain. Then the General Hospital nurses are not especially busy,—no battle lately, you know,—and there are some deuced pretty girls among them. Ballroom looks nice, don't you think?"

"Extremely well; the decorations are in most excellent taste."

"Entirely the work of the staff. Great pity so many were compelled to be absent, but a soldier can never tell here upon special duty, Colonel?"

"I brought despatches from the President to General Sheridan."

"Wish you might remain with us permanently. Your command, I be-

lieve, is not connected with our Eastern army?"

"No, with Thomas in the Cumberland."

"Ah, yes; had some very pretty fighting out there, I understand—oh, pardon me, Miss Minor, permit me to present to you Colonel Curran, of General Halleck's staff. The Colonel, I believe, is as able a dancer as he is a soldier, and no higher compliment to his abilities could possibly be paid. Miss Minor, Colonel, is a native Virginian, who is present under protest, hoping doubtless to capture some young officer, and thus weaken the enemy."

I bowed pleasantly to the bright-eyed young woman facing me, and not sorry to escape the Major's inquisitiveness, at once begged for the remainder of the waltz. The request was laughingly granted, and in another moment we were threading our way amid the numerous couples upon the floor. She proved so delightful a dancer that I simply yielded myself up to full enjoyment of the measure, and conversation lapsed, until a sudden cessation of the music left us stranded so close to the fireplace that the very sight of it brought a vivid realization of my perilous position. If it had not, my companion's chance remark most assuredly would.

"How easily you waltz!" she said enthusiastically, her sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks testifying to her keen enjoyment. "So many find me difficult to keep step with that I have become fearful of venturing upon the floor with a stranger. However, I shall always be glad to give you a character to any of my friends."

"I sincerely thank you," I returned in the same spirit, "and I can certainly return the compliment most heartily. It is so long since I was privileged to dance with a lady that I confess to having felt decidedly awkward at the start, but your step proved so accommodating that I became at once at home, and enjoyed the waltz immensely. I fail to discover any seats in the room, or I should endeavor to find one vacant for you."

"Oh, I am not in the least tired." She was looking at me with so deep an expression of interest in her eyes that I dimly wondered at it.

"Did I understand rightly," she asked, playing idly with her fan, "that Major Monsoon introduced you to me as Colonel Curran of General Halleck's staff?"

What the deuce am I up against now? I thought, and my heart beat quickly. Yet retreat was impossible, and I answered with assumed carelessness:

"I am, most assuredly, Colonel Curran."

"From Ohio?"

This was certainly coming after me with a vengeance, and I stole one quick glance at the girl's face. It was devoid of suspicion, merely evincing a polite interest.

"I have the honor of commanding the Sixth Artillery Regiment from that State."

"You must pardon me, Colonel, for my seeming inquisitiveness," and her eyes sparkled with demure mischief. "Yet I cannot quite understand. I was at school in Connecticut with a Miss Curran whose father was an officer of artillery from Ohio, and, naturally, I at once thought of her when the Major pronounced your name; yet it certainly cannot be you—you are altogether too young, for Myrtle must be eighteen."

I laughed, decidedly relieved from what I feared might prove a most awkward situation.

"Well, yes, Miss Minor, I am indeed somewhat youthful to be Myrtle's father," I said at a venture, "but I might serve as her brother, you know, and not stretch the point of age over-much."

She clasped her hands on my arm with a gesture of delight.

"Oh, I am so glad; I knew Myrtle had a brother, but never heard he also was in the army. Did you know, Colonel, she was intending to come down here with me when I returned South, at the close of our school year, but from some cause was disappointed. How delighted she would have been to meet you! I shall certainly write and tell her what a splendidly romantic time we had together. You look so much like Myrtle I wonder I failed to recognize you at once."

She was rattling on without affording me the slightest opportunity to slip in a word explanatory, when her glance chanced to fall upon some one who was approaching us through the throng.

"Oh, by the way, Colonel, there is another of Myrtle's old schoolmates present to-night—a most intimate friend, indeed, who would never forgive me if I permitted you to go without meeting her."

She drew me back hastily.

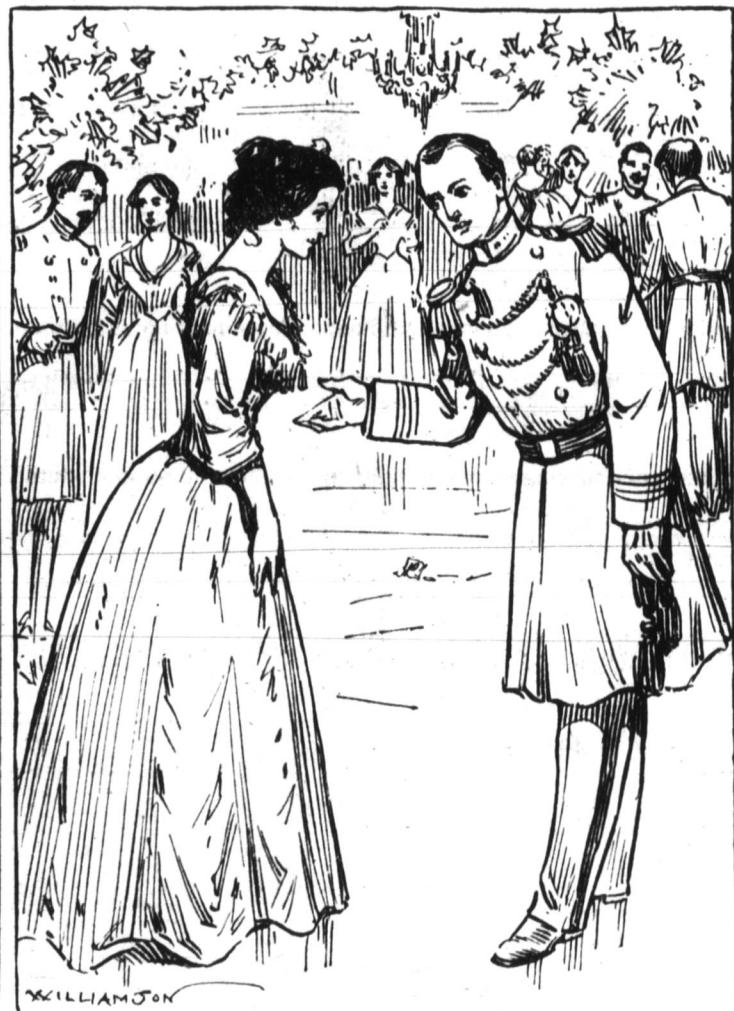
"Edith," she said, touching the sleeve of a young woman who was slowly passing. "Edith, wait just a moment, dear; this is Colonel Curran—Myrtle Curran's brother, you know. Colonel Curran, Mrs. Brennan."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### The Woman I Loved.

The crucial moment had arrived, and I think my heart actually stopped beating as I stood gazing helplessly into her face. I saw her eyes open wide in astonished recognition, and then a deep flush swept over throat and cheek. For the instant I believed she would not speak, or that she would give way to her excitement and betray everything. I durst give no signal of warning, for there existed no tie between us to warrant my expecting any consideration from her. It was an instant so tense that her silence seemed like a blow. Yet it was only an instant. Then her eyes smiled into mine most frankly, and her hand was extended.

"I am more than delighted to meet you, Colonel Curran," she said calmly, although I could feel her lips tremble to the words, while the fingers I held were like ice. "Myrtle was one of my dearest friends, and she chanced to be in my mind even as we met."



"I Am, Most Assuredly, Colonel Curran."

That was why," she added, turning toward Miss Minor, as though she felt her momentary agitation had not passed unobserved, "I was so surprised when you first presented Colonel Curran."

"I confess to having felt strangely myself," returned the other, archly, "although I believe I concealed my feelings far better than you did, Edith. Really, I thought you were going to faint. It must be that Colonel Curran exercises some strange occult influence over the weaker sex. Perhaps he is the seventh son of a seventh son; are you, Colonel? However, dear, I am safe for the present from his mysterious spell, and you will be compelled to face the danger alone, as here comes Lieutenant Hammersmith to claim the dance I've promised him."

Before Mrs. Brennan could interfere, the laughing girl had placed her hand on the Lieutenant's blue sleeve, and, with a mocking good-bye flung backward over her shoulder, vanished in the crowd, leaving us standing there alone.

The lady waited in much apparent indifference, gently tapping the floor with her neatly shod foot.

"Would you be exceedingly angry if I were to ask you to dance?" I questioned, stealing surreptitiously a glance at her proudly averted face.

"Angry? Most assuredly not," in apparent surprise. "Let I trust you will not ask me. I have been upon the floor only once to-night. I am not at all in the mood."

"If there were chairs here I should venture to ask even a greater favor—that you would consent to sit out this set with me."

She turned slightly, lifted her eyes inquiringly to mine, and her face lightened.

"No doubt we might discover seats without difficulty in the anteroom," she answered, indicating the direction by a glance. "There do not appear to be many 'sitters' at this ball, and the few who do are not crowded."

The apartment contained, as she prophesied, but few occupants, and I conducted her to the farther end of it, where we found a comfortable divan and no troublesome neighbors.

As I glanced at her now, I marked a distinct change in her face. The

old indifference, so well assumed while we were in the presence of others, had utterly vanished as by magic, and she sat looking at me in anxious yet impetuous questioning.

"Captain Wayne," she exclaimed, her eyes never once leaving my face, "what does this mean? this masquerade? this wearing of the Federal uniform? this taking of another's name? this being here at all?"

"If I should say that I came hoping to see you again," I answered, scarce knowing how best to proceed or how far to put confidence in her, "what would you think?"

"If that is true, that you were extremely foolish to take such a risk for so small a reward," she returned calmly. "Nor, under these circumstances, would I remain here so much as a moment to encourage you. But it is not true. This is no light act; your very life must lie in the balance, or you could never assume such risk."

"I would trust you gladly with my life or my honor," I replied soberly. "If I had less faith in you I should not be here now. I understand that I am condemned to be shot as a spy at daybreak."

"Shot? On what authority? Who told you?"

"On the order of General Sheridan. My informant was Lieutenant Canon, of his staff."

"Shot? As a spy? Why, it surely cannot be! Frank said—Captain Wayne, believe me, I knew absolutely nothing of all this. Do you think I should ever have rested if I had dreamed that you were held under so false a charge? I promised you I would see General Sheridan on your behalf. Frank—" she bit her lip im-

patiently—"I was told, that is, I was led to believe that you were—had been sent North as a prisoner of war late last night. Otherwise I should have insisted upon seeing you—on pleading your cause with the General himself. The major and I breakfasted with him this morning, but your name was not mentioned, for I believed you safe."

She did not appear to realize, so deep was her present indignation and regret, that my hand had found a resting place upon her own.

"You must believe me, Captain Wayne; I could not bear to have you feel that I could prove such an ingrate."

"You need never suppose I should think that," I replied, with an earnestness of manner that caused her to glance at me in surprise. "I confidently expected to hear from you all day, and finally when no word came I became convinced some such misconception as you have mentioned must have occurred. Then it became my turn to act upon my own behalf if I would preserve my life; yet never for one moment have I doubted you or the sincerity of your pledge to me."

She waited quietly while a couple passed us and sought seats nearer the door.

"Tell me the entire story," she said gently.

As quickly as possible I reviewed the salient events which had occurred since our last meeting. Without denying the presence of Major Brennan during my stormy meeting with General Sheridan, I did not dwell upon it, nor mention the personal affair that had occurred between us. Even had I not supposed the man to be her husband I should never have taken advantage of his treachery to advance my own cause. As I concluded there was a tear glistening on her long lashes, but she seemed unconscious of it, and made no attempt to dash it away.

"You have not told me all," she commented quietly. "But I can understand and appreciate the reason for your silence. I know Frank's impetuosity, and you are very kind, Captain Wayne, to spare my feelings, but you must not remain here; every moment of delay increases your danger. Sheridan and those of his staff who would surely recognize you were expected back before this, and may appear at any moment—yet how can you get away? how is it possible for me to assist you?"

There was an eager anxiety in her face that pierced me. Like most lovers I chose to give it a wrong interpretation.

"You are anxious to be rid of me?" I asked, ashamed of the words even as I uttered them.

"That remark is unworthy of you," and she arose to her feet almost haughtily. "My sole thought in this is the terrible risk you incur in remaining here."

"Your interest then is personal to me, may I believe?"

"I am a loyal woman," proudly, "and would do nothing whatever to imperil the cause of my country; but your condemnation is unjust, and I am, in a measure, responsible for it. I assist you, Captain Wayne, for your own sake, and in response to my individual sense of honor."

"Have you formulated any plan?" she asked quickly, and her rising color made me feel that she had deciphered my struggle in my eyes.

"Only to walk out under protection of this uniform, and when once safe in the open to trust that some good fortune which has thus far befriended me."

She shook her head doubtfully, and stood a moment in silence, looking thoughtfully at the moving figures in the room beyond.

"I fear it cannot be done without arousing suspicion," she said at last, slowly. "I chance to know there are unusual precautions being taken to-night, and the entire camp is doubly patrolled. Even this house has a cordon of guards about it, but for what reason I have not learned. No," she spoke decisively, "there is no other way. Captain Wayne, I am going to try to save you tonight, but in doing so I must trust my reputation in your keeping."

"I will protect it with my life."

"Protect it with your silence, rather. I know you to be a gentleman, or I should never attempt to carry out the only means of escape which seems at all feasible. Discovery would place me in an extremely embarrassing position, and I must rely upon you to protect me from such a possibility."

"I beg you," I began, "do not compromise yourself in any way for my sake."

"But I am myself already deeply involved in this," she interrupted, "and I could retain no peace of mind were I to do otherwise. Now listen. Make your way back to the ballroom, and in fifteen minutes from now be engaged in conversation with General Carlton near the main entrance. I shall join you there, and you will take your cue from me. You understand?"

"Perfectly, but—"

"There is no 'but,' Captain Wayne, only do not fail me."

Our eyes met for an instant; what she read in mine God knows—in hers was determination, with a daring strange to woman. The next moment she had vanished through a side door, and I was alone.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Through the Camp of the Enemy.

A glance at my watch told me that it was already within a few moments of midnight. There was, however, no diminution in the festivities, and I waited in silence until I heard the sentries calling the hour, and then pressed my way back into the noisy, crowded ballroom. I was stopped twice by well-meaning officers whom I had met earlier in the evening, but breaking away from them after the exchange of a sentence or two, I urged my course as directly as possible toward where the spectacled brigadier yet held his post as master of ceremonies.

We had been conversing pleasantly for several minutes when Mrs. Brennan appeared. Standing so as to face the stairs, I saw her first coming down, and noted that she wore her hat, and had a light walking-cloak thrown over her shoulders. My heart beat faster as I realized for the first time that she intended to be my companion.

"Oh, General, I am exceedingly glad to find you yet here, she exclaimed as she came up, and extended a neatly gloved hand to him. "I have a favor to ask which I am told you alone have the authority to grant."

He bowed gallantly.

"I am very sure," he returned smilingly, "that Mrs. Brennan will never request anything which I would not gladly yield."

She flashed her eyes brightly into his face.

"Most assuredly not. The fact is, General, Colonel Curran, with whom I see you are already acquainted, was to pass the night at the Major's quarters, and as he has not yet returned, the duty has naturally devolved upon me to see our great safely deposited. We are at the Mitchell House, you remember, which is beyond the inner lines; and while, of course, I have been furnished with a pass," she held up the paper for his inspection, "and have been also instructed as to the countersign, I fear this will scarcely suffice for the safe passage of the Colonel."

The General laughed good-humoredly, evidently pleased with her assumption of military knowledge.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Passing a Good Thing Along.

Bessie—Harry's gold watch must be a sort of a family watch.

Jessie—Why?

Bessie—First 's has it, and then his uncle has it.

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of being a subscriber to this paper is that you and your family become attached to it. The paper becomes a member of the family and its coming each week will be as welcome as the arrival of anyone that's dear. It will keep you informed on the progress of the community and the progress of the merchants regularly advertised will enable you to save many times the cost of the subscription.

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## Therefore

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## Do YOU know of anyone who is old enough to read, who has not seen that sign at a railroad crossing?

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