

HER HUMBLE LOVER

"Well, Sir Frederic wishes you to go over to lunch," replies the rector. "I'll order the carriage to be ready in an hour, if you like; he expressly asks you to go early. You'll admire the park grounds, my dear," to Signa.

"Yes," Mrs. Podswell says, with great interest, "and the house; it's quite a show place. Sir Frederic is very proud of it."

"So it appears," says Signa, smiling, as she remembers the baronet's remarks about "his place" and "people." "I think I will go and look after Archie," she adds.

The rector looks after her with his chin on his hand, musingly.

"Sir Frederic's very, ahem, attentive, Amelia," he says, suggestively.

"Yes," assents Mrs. Podswell, significantly. "He must have been struck by her; certainly the girl looked striking last night. It was a mistake, her not dining with us."

"I think I said so," said the rector, meekly.

Mrs. Podswell sniffs.

"Who was to know that they would have taken so much notice of her? I'm sure Lady Rockwell made herself quite ridiculous; however, they have taken to her, and that's an end of it. I wonder whether Sir Frederic's really smitten?"

The rector coughs.

"If it should be, it would be a great thing for the girl, Amelia. I think it is our duty to give her every assistance. It would be rather advantageous to have a niece of ours the future Lady Blyte, of Blyte Park; and really such strange things happen;—and he coughs and shakes his head thoughtfully. "I wish we had let her sit down to dinner."

"Well, that can't be helped now," reports Mrs. Podswell, sharply; "and, after all, there was no harm done. I'll go and get ready now. Have plenty of cushions put in the carriage. I'm sure I'm willing to do my duty by the girl, whatever it may cost me."

"Quite so, my dear," murmured the rector, meekly; and he falls into a brown study, in which he sees Signa, his niece, reigning at the Park, and himself an honored guest there.

Meanwhile, Signa had made straight for the garden, where she knows that she will find Archie perched on the back of a rustic seat, overlooking the road to the Grange. As she approaches this spot she hears a man's voice, mingled with the boy's, and she knows that it is Hector Warren's.

For a moment she stops, half inclined—why, she knows not—to go back; but ashamed of her folly, as she designates it, she goes on.

Archie is seated on the very top of the rustic seat, looking down upon Hector Warren, who leans over the fence, and Signa is in time to hear the child say:

"Well, if Signa says it's all right, I'll forgive you."

"Thanks," says Hector Warren.

Then, as he sees Signa, he lifts his weather-stained deer-stalker and stands upright.

"Good-morning, Miss Grenville. I have just been making my peace with Archie. I only need your advocacy to gain forgiveness."

She gives him her hand, feeling that the tell-tale color has mounted to her face, and smiles.

"I explained it all to Archie this morning," she says. "But he is a hard judge."

"So I find," he says, his eyes fixed on her face—not pale now, but lovely as a blush rose at sunrise. "Are you tired this morning after last night's dissipation?"

"No," she says. "Were you coming to the Rectory?"

He shakes his head.

"Not yet. I shouldn't dare to present myself before the regulation time, 12 o'clock. No, I was going to the Grange; but I saw Archie, and stopped to win forgiveness."

There is silence for a moment; his eyes are fixed upon her face—hers fixed upon the ground.

Archie regards them with his shrewd scrutiny for a moment, then he says—"Signa is a great lady now, Mr. Warren."

"Indeed!" he says.

Archie nods.

"Yes, since last night. It was all last night. I heard papa and mamma talking about it. Mamma said that she had no idea Signa would look so well, or that Sir Frederic and Lady Rockwell—that's the old lady with the teeth—would take so much notice of her."

"Archie!" exclaims Signa, laughing. "But he goes on undaunted. "And this morning mamma kissed her, and papa made over so much fuss of her. Ain't it funny? And what do you think? Sir Frederic sent one of his pooks to ask her to go over and lunch at the Park. I saw him in the kitchen, where he was drinking beer."

Hector Warren looks at Signa with a strange glance of inquiry, and for the life of her Signa cannot help the traitorous color flooding her cheek.

"Are you going to Sir Frederic's?" he asks, quietly.

"Yes," says Signa, trying to speak indifferently.

He is silent for a moment, then he says: "Sir Frederic is a great man, and Blyte Park must be worth seeing. I hope you will have a pleasant day."

"Thanks," she says.

"And what are you going to do?" asks Archie, bluntly.

"I?" he answers, absently. "Oh, I am going to the Grange, to explore the library, Archie."

"Oh," says Archie, thoughtfully; then his eyes wander over the distinguished figure ruminatingly for a moment, and he says, with the suddenness of his age:

"I say, why do you wear such old clothes?"

"My dear Archie!" expostulates Signa, with a smile; but Hector Warren laughs easily.

"Why do I wear old clothes, Archie? because new ones are expensive—not to say uncomfortable—and perhaps I am poor and cannot afford better."

"I see," says Archie. "I'm sorry you are poor."

"So am I," retorts Hector Warren, promptly.

"Because," continues Archie, shrewdly, "poor people are always wicked; it is poor people who steal things and poach. Do you poach? I wish you were as rich as Sir Frederic."

"It would be very nice," says Hector Warren, his eyes fixed on Signa's face with a smiling watchfulness.

"Archie has found out the value of riches at an early age," says Signa, with a laugh. "Archie is fearfully wise. Money isn't everything, Archie."

"Isn't it?" he asks, shrewdly. "Don't you wish you were rich, Signa?"

Hector Warren waits for the answer as well as Archie, and the dark eyes, with their grave smile, rest upon hers questioningly.

"I don't know that I do," says Signa, lightly. "Money is not everything," she repeats; "one can be happy without it, Archie."

The child shakes his head.

"If I were rich I'd buy a pony," he says, and this seems to bring her argument to so practical a conclusion that he opens the gate and trots out.

"Can I tempt you to walk a little way?" says Hector Warren. "It is so beautiful a morning, the very edges are fragrant. Will you not come to the end of the lane? Archie is already there;" and the grave, musical voice throws pleading.

Signa looks over the fence wistfully, then, with a faint smile, passes through the gate he opens for her. The sun is shining with all its summer splendor; up above their heads, in its old oak, a thrush is pouring out its after-breakfast song; the hedges, as he says, are fragrant with the breath of the wild flowers; and as Signa hears the gate click behind her she sighs half happily, half regretfully, thinking vaguely how much nicer it would be to wander along the lanes, or saunter over the deserted Grange, than pay the proposed visit to Blyte Park.

Perhaps he is thinking the same, for he looks up at the sky and then at the beautiful face at his side, and says:

"You will have a fine day for your trip. I hope you will enjoy it. I will think of you as I sit amongst the dusty books. Yes, Sir Frederic is a great man. It is rather surprising that he is not married," and he looks straight before him.

"Is it?" says Signa, laughing softly.

"Perhaps Sir Frederic experiences some difficulty in finding a lady good enough for him."

He smiles, thoughtfully. Signa fancies that he is graver than usual this morning—fancies also that the handsome face is somewhat paler and more haggard. She cannot guess that he has spent the night pacing his small room instead of sleeping.

"Perhaps so," he assents. "I should think Sir Frederic would be rather hard to please. The lady whom he honors with his choice will be a great lady in the land. After all, there is wisdom in Archie's opinion; one can buy things more precious even than a pony when one is rich."

"One cannot buy everything," says Signa, quietly, and he looks at her wistfully, his dark eyes seeming to penetrate to her very thoughts.

"And did you enjoy yourself last night?" he asks, suddenly changing the subject.

"Very much," she answers, looking up at him with the smile in her eyes which turns them from grey to violet.

"It was very pleasant. I think everybody enjoyed themselves. Even Lady Rockwell."

He nods, and as a swift shadow passes over his face Signa knows that he is thinking of the story which her ladyship had told so dramatically. She longs to ask him plainly if he has heard it before, and whether it is true, but it is scarcely a subject that he can refer to, and he remains silent, walking with his hands behind his back and his head lowered, for a few moments, then he raises his head, and with a slight gesture, as if dispelling a troublesome thought, he says, lightly:

"Do you know that I had a wild idea of asking you to let me show you a walk I have discovered? I half hoped to see you as I passed this morning."

"Had you? What walk?" says Signa, more than ever regretting Sir Frederic's invitation.

He turns and points to the view

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below them.

"Look there," he says. "Do you see where the river opens to the sea? There is a little bay there—there where the fishermen's cottages are. You have no idea how pretty the spot looks when one stands opposite to it on this side of the river. It makes a perfect little picture. I thought, perhaps, I might tempt you and Archie to accompany me—but you are going to Blyte Park!"

Signa sighs.

"Yes!"

"Never mind," he says. "The tide will not wash the picture out. Will you come to-morrow?"

"I should like to go very much," she says, shading her eyes and looking wistfully toward the sea, "and Archie will be delighted."

"Would you? Will you meet me to-morrow, at this time, at the end of the lane leading to the beach? It is a great deal to ask, I know," and his dark eyes rest on hers gravely.

Signa looks down and hesitates. She longs to say "Yes," but she wonders what the rector and his wife will say.

"A very great deal to ask," he repeats. "Too much. Never mind."

"But I do mind!" she says, with a low laugh. "I want to go very much, indeed. I do not know why I should not. It will not matter—I mean it will be of no consequence to any one."

"Excepting Archie and me," he puts in, quietly.

Signa is silent for a moment; then she looks up.

"Yes, I will come. At the end of the lane?"

"It is a promise," he says, and his eyes brighten.

"Yes, but," and she colors faintly, "are you sure you can spare the time; my uncle said that he heard you say you were going to leave here soon?"

He is silent for a moment, looking down at the ground, then he says:

"I did say so. I do not know. I am a wanderer on the face of the earth, without a tie, objectless, purposeless."

There is something in his voice, though it is not intentionally sad, that touches Signa.

"Are you so quite alone?" she says, gently.

"Quite," he says, with a grave laugh, as if he were ashamed of having moved her pity. "I have absolutely no one to study. You know that line of Byron's—'Lord of himself, that heritage of woe.' It is very hackneyed, but fearfully true. I have been lord of myself ever since I was a boy, and I am rather tired of my heritage."

Signa looks at the handsome face with deep interest. He has spoken almost to himself, and quite unconsciously to the effect his words have produced. "Chance, mere chance directed my footsteps here; I was curious to see the place I had heard so much of, and I came, intending to stop a few hours only, and to drift away again as purposeless as when I came; but there is a charm—" He breaks off, and seems to suddenly recollect that he is not alone.

"The Grange is rather fascinating," he goes on, with a curious smile. "I am fond of old books, and I shall stay a little longer to pore over Delamere's."

Signa cannot speak. Already she seems to hear him say, "Good-bye," and to feel that he has gone.

Fortunately for her, Archie comes running up with his hands full of wild flowers.

"Look here," he says. "I've picked these for you, Signa. Come and sit down and look at them."

And he drops on to the bank.

Signa obeys, and Hector Warren stands looking down at them, wondering whether in all his surroundings he has seen a more beautiful picture than this, which the lovely girl makes as she bends over the flowers and lifts her face, lit with a loving smile, to the boy's eager one.

"Aren't they beautiful?" says Archie. "Do you know their names?"

"Not of half of them," says Signa, shaking her head.

Hector Warren throws himself down at her feet, and holds out his hand.

"Give them to me," he says, pleadingly. "I think I can satisfy Archie's curiosity."

And he takes the flowers and names them one by one.

"How clever you are, Mr. Warren! Do you know everything?"

"Not everything, Archie," he replies, smiling. "But I'm fond of flowers, you see. There's one that grows in Italy and Switzerland. You want a spray of pine to make your bouquet complete."

Archie follows his gaze to a tall pine growing opposite them and shakes his head.

"I can't get that," he says, decidedly. "Could you?"

"I think so," he replies.

"There's a nice piece there," says Archie, pointing almost to the top-most bough. "It would make such a nice finish for Signa's posy; but you couldn't get it, I'm sure."

"I can try," said Hector Warren, rising.

"Please do not," says Signa, quickly and emphatically. "You surely do not mean to climb that tree?" And her face flushes.

He looks round at her with a quiet smile.

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"Why not?" he says. "Sir Frederic will no doubt pick you a grand bouquet from his hot-houses—will you not let me offer you a modest spray of it?"

And as he speaks, he takes off his coat and begins to climb.

"Pray do not!" exclaims Signa, eyeing the tall, gaunt pine ahead.

"Archie was only in fun, and—ah, do not!"

She breaks off with genuine alarm in her voice, for with the ease of a practiced athlete he sets his foot on the rough, scathed bark, and grasping a bough, pulls himself up to it.

"Do not be alarmed," he says, and his voice sounds light and cheerful, as if he enjoyed the task. "There is no danger, or I would not distress you by risking it. You shall have your spray of pine, Archie."

"Isn't it splendid?" whispers Archie, excitedly. "Fancy climbing that tree, and all for a bit of leaf, Signa!"

And he stands with his eager face upturned to the graceful figure that is slowly but surely ascending the tree.

"Is this it?" comes Hector Warren's voice downward.

"Higher still," says Archie.

"No!" cries Signa. "Please do not! Archie, I am very angry with you! Oh!—for a rotten branch gives way beneath the climber's weight, and comes crashing down amongst the leaves with an ominous sound; but Hector Warren is too practiced an athlete to trust himself to a bough unless he has tried it, and Signa, with bated breath, sees him swaying still higher, until he is lost amidst the thick branches of the tall pine.

"Oh, Archie, Archie!" murmurs Signa, reproachfully. "See what your idle words have done!"

"He is all right, Signa," says Archie, confidently. "Don't you be frightened. See, here he comes! And he has got the very spray."

Carefully, for all his apparently careless speed, Hector Warren comes down, and in another moment is standing with the spray in his hand before them.

"There you are," he says, with a smile.

But there is no smile on Signa's face—indeed, it is rather pale and anxious still.

"I am not at all pleased," she says, gravely. "It was not worth risking a broken limb for!"

He laughs, and wipes his hands, scratched and torn by the rough bark and sharp pine needles.

"There was no risk, I assure you. Please believe me. Won't you accept it, for Archie's sake?" and he holds out the dark-green spray.

Signa takes it with downcast eyes, and without even a "Thank you"—her heart beating too fast, perhaps, to allow of words, but Archie dances with delighted admiration.

"I didn't think you could climb like that," he says, confidentially. "I thought you couldn't do anything but read books."

"Did you?" retorts Hector Warren, good-naturedly. "Well, it isn't much after all. I'll teach you to mount a tree some day, perhaps. Now let me arrange the bouquet, may I? Then you can present it to Miss Grenville," and he seats himself on the bank and spreads out the wild flowers. Signa watches him, fascinated by the quiet, masterful manner which sits upon him as easily in his coatless state as it did last night, when in evening dress he overawed even the great Sir Frederic.

(To be continued.)

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Can a German Bullet Send a Canadian Soldier to Hell?

The Christmas Pastoral, 1914, of Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, Belgium, was as follows:

"If I am asked what I think of the eternal salvation of a brave man who has consciously given his life in defence of his country's honor, and in vindication of violated justice, I shall not hesitate to reply that without any doubt whatever Christ crowns his military valor, and that death, accepted in this Christian spirit, assures the safety of that man's soul. Greater love hath no man than this, said our Saviour, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And the soldier who dies to save his brothers, and to defend the hearths and altars of his country, reaches this highest of all degrees of

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IS THE WAR MAKING YOU RICHER OR POORER?

A Question That Suggests an Answer That Every Citizen Should Make.

Said a clergyman in a pulpit in one of the eastern townships of Quebec, a year ago: "The Canadian who comes out of this war richer than he went into it, will have cause to be ashamed of himself."

The speaker had more in his mind than army contractors and their profits. He was thinking of the sacrifices—financial as well as personal—that are inevitably imposed in time of war on every good citizen.

In the time of such a world cataclysm to the real patriot nothing can be normal. He must view every act as it will help or hinder the winning of the war, and he is bound to spare no effort, to save no money, if thereby the cause is advanced. When nearly four hundred thousand Canadians are so impressed by the gravity of the call that comes to them that they have offered to risk the loss of limbs, of health, of life itself, what good citizen can hesitate to meet all righteous demands made in the same cause on

his pocket-book? Let us confess that these demands are heavy; yet if Canadians were to give only their surplus earnings over and above what they were earning in, say, 1913, these demands would be more than satisfied.

Of all these calls, none is more important than that of the Canadian Patriotic Fund. This is the Fund that guarantees to the mothers, wives and children of our soldiers freedom from all danger of privation while their breadwinner is away. To make this provision for the dependents of Ontario's soldiers in 1917 will cost at least six million dollars, of which four millions must be raised by personal contributions of patriotic citizens. Let every man whose profits or income have been increased since August 4th, 1914, consider well if he will not have reason to be ashamed of himself if this great Fund is unable to fulfill its mission, and he at the same time is able to count himself the richer for the war?

Anonymous Shakespeare.

Margaret Anglin had been playing Viola, Katharine and other Shakespearean heroines in the great theatre at Melbourne, Australia, which had been crowded to the roof at every performance. But the time came to move on to a smaller city with a less sophisticated population, and her manager was assailed by doubts. He did not think Shakespeare would do. He proposed confining the repertory to modern plays. When she remonstrated he explained:

"Then why not 'The Taming of the Shrew'?" Miss Anglin suggested.

He hesitated. Despair had him, but finally he replied, "Oh, well, we'll try it, but we mustn't let them know who wrote it."

"I had forgotten this incredible remark," says Miss Anglin, "until I arrived in the city to play, and there, to my horror, everywhere advertising was displayed announcing blithely that Miss Anglin would appear in a comedy, 'The Taming of the Shrew,' by Immortal Bard."

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(Exchange)

Visitor in court-room—What is this lawsuit about?
Stranger—The creditors of George Bump, bankrupt, are suing his trustee in bankruptcy.
Visitor in court-room—Are you interested in the case?
Stranger—Not in the slightest. I'm George Bump.

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Muggins—Here's a remarkable poem in this magazine called "Youth Has Fassed Me By." Muggins—What is so remarkable about it. Muggins—in spite of its title, it is signed by a woman.

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