

# Every Woman Knows

how necessary it is to use good flour in order to obtain the best results in baking. It is no more costly to use the best flour than it is to use one of inferior grade—and the results are not to be compared. Flours are usually milled for bread making or pastry making, not for both, and that is where the housewife is put to unnecessary inconvenience and expense.

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## THE FAIR IMPOSTOR.

### CHAPTER V.

"My Name is Lillian Leigh."  
(Concluded.)

THE station keeper watched him for a few minutes curiously, then went into the hut.

"What's the game?" he asked, addressing the guides, and jerking his thumb towards the door. "What he after—is he police?"

"Don't know," said one of the men, suspending a piece of bread half-way to his mouth. "Don't know nothing about it. Me and the mates was hired to run the route with him, and run it we have up to this, at the deuce's own pace. Would 'a gone further if the horses had held out. There's no thing him. Didn't think a Britisher had so much go in him, eh, Jack?" and he turned to one of his comrades, who grunted an assent.

"But what's he after? Is it this little affair on the last stage, eh?" inquired the station keeper.

"Not knowing, can't say," replied the guide, indifferently. "Strikes me he's a little mad; most Britishers are. I've heard—mind, I don't know—that he's after some one, man or woman; fancy, too, that they traveled by the last stage."

The station keeper groaned. "Then you can all o' you go back!" he said, significantly. "It's my opinion that all the passengers by the last stage require is decent burial! Bill—that's my mate at the next station—had full warning, and cut it before the stage came up, and that's what I'm going to do. This route is too lively for a peace-loving man, who counts his life above victuals and drink, and this 'ere chap, this Britisher, who is he?"

"Don't know, and don't care!" replied the guide, with a yawn. "His pay's right; that's enough for me. I bet we'll turn in."

"You'll find some clean straw yonder," said the station keeper, jerking his thumb toward the inner room. "I suppose the Englishman's going to roam about awhile."

Five minutes after, however, the Englishman entered the hut, and finding the room deserted, and, judging from the snoring that proceeded from the inner room that his companion had gone to their well-earned rest, he wrapped his traveling rug round him and stretched himself upon the ground.

It is one thing to feel tired, but quite another thing to be able to rest. The Englishman rolled from one side to another, ranged and rearranged his rug a dozen times, yawned, stretched—did everything but go to sleep; and at last, wearied and disgusted at his efforts to woo the wayward goddess, sat upright, and leaning against a door, gave himself up to thought. He might have lain there some twenty minutes, when suddenly there fell upon his wearied senses the sound of something knocking at the door.

He turned and stared drowsily, wondering if his wearied brain had misled him. Divided from him by a slight wooden partition, his mesnored persistently, outside the moon shone brightly, piercing the tolerably large cracks in the plank door, and tracing faint patterns on the floor.

With a grim smile he shifted his arm incredulously.

"I must have been asleep," he muttered, "and dreaming that they had brought the shaving water."

But suddenly the noise came again; this time he heard unmistakably some one trying the lock of the outer room.

He sprang to his feet and grasping his revolver stood and listened.

The first sound was repeated; some one was outside there in the still night, and knocking for admittance.

He glanced toward the inner room, with his lips apart, ready to give the alarm; but now an impulse, a vague indefinite instinct kept him silent.

Revolver in hand, he went on tiptoe to the door, and noiselessly opening it, threw it back.

For the moment, seeing nothing but the wide expanse stretching monotonously to the horizon, he thought that his overstrained brain had played him false, but, looking downward, he started back with astonishment, for there, at his feet, crouched the figure of a woman.

Without a word he stooped and bent over her; without a word she grasped his arm and rose, painfully and slowly, and the two looked at each other.

To Harold Woodleigh it seemed that the beautiful apparition had dropped from the skies, and he stared from her to the dreary, silent waste with amazed bewilderment. Hilda herself gazed at the handsome, stal-

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wart Englishman with vague astonishment struggling with her exhaustion for she had expected to see the rough, uncouth station master.

Harold's embarrassment lasted only for a moment.

Putting his arm round her he drew her inside the hut, and shut and barred the door. Then he drew the settee forward and led her to it, and taking some brandy from his travelling flask, silently gave it to her.

Hilda, trembling like a leaf, took a little of the spirit, drew a long sigh, and speaking for the first time, said in a low voice:

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"Thank you."

Harold took the cup from her hand. "Are you better now?" he asked in a voice that, for all his effort to be calm, trembled a little.

"Yes," she replied, "I—I am all right now," and she shuddered.

"Where am I?"

"At one of the stations—Five Forks," said Harold gently.

"Oh, yes, I remember," she said, passing her hand over her white forehead.

As she did so Harold started. The shapely hand was stained with blood.

"I remember."

Then she looked round with vague alarm.

"Are we alone here?"

"No; there are others in the next room."

From instinctive delicacy he did not say men.

Hilda looked up with a sudden eagerness.

"Is the stage in there?" she asked.

"No," said Harold. "We came here on horseback. The stage is not due until to-morrow—to day rather, for it is past midnight."

"What is to-day?" she asked, knitting her dark brows with the effort to recall her numbed mental faculties.

"Friday," said Harold; then he drew an empty meal tub opposite her and sat down. "Are you too tired to answer a few questions which I ought to put in your own interest?"

"No," she said, shaking her head. "Are you alone?" he asked.

With an almost imperceptible shudder she inclined her head.

Harold started.

"Alone," he echoed; "at this time and in this awful place! How did you come here—how—stop! Perhaps you are hurt—"

Hilda raised her beautiful eyes languidly.

"Hurt? No."

"I—I thought," said Harold, diffidently, "I thought I noticed that your hand was bleeding."

She held out both hands, and then shrank away from them, with a look of wild horror; but it was gone in an instant, as she said:

"No, I am not hurt. It is from some scratches—I fell in the bush as I came—I suppose."

"You are sure you are not hurt?" said Harold, anxiously.

She shook her head, with a sigh. "Quite sure."

Harold drew a breath of intense relief.

"Thank heaven!" he said. "I feared that it might be otherwise. Now you will not want to talk any longer to-night. I will make up an apology for a couch, and you shall rest, and he quietly took down her travelling cloak from a hook. "I will get some straw from the stable," he said.

"No—no!" said Hilda, laying her hand on his arm; "do not leave me! I could not rest—not here. Do not leave me, I implore of you!"

"Certainly I will not," he said, instantly; "but you must let me make you as comfortable as I can, and he arranged the cloak across the high back of the settee, so that she might lean back.

"Thanks, thanks!" she said; "you are very kind. I did not expect to meet with such sucoor—"

"Then you have been here before?" he said, his curiosity getting the better of him.

"Yes," she replied. "I came by the last stage."

"What!" exclaimed Harold. "The stage that was stopped?"

She inclined her head, and, twisting her long, white hands together, started, at the floor moodily.

"Great heaven!" he ejaculated; "and you—a lady—escaped! How?"

With an effort she raised her head.

"I slipped away in the darkness—smoochow," she replied. "I cannot explain—I scarcely know."

Harold mopped his forehead in intense excitement.

"No, I cannot understand that! And you made your way here, alone and on foot?"

"Yes," she said. "I came here alone."

"Great heaven! it is almost incredible! Perhaps, he went on, in great excitement, "some of the others are wandering about at this present moment."

She looked up quickly.

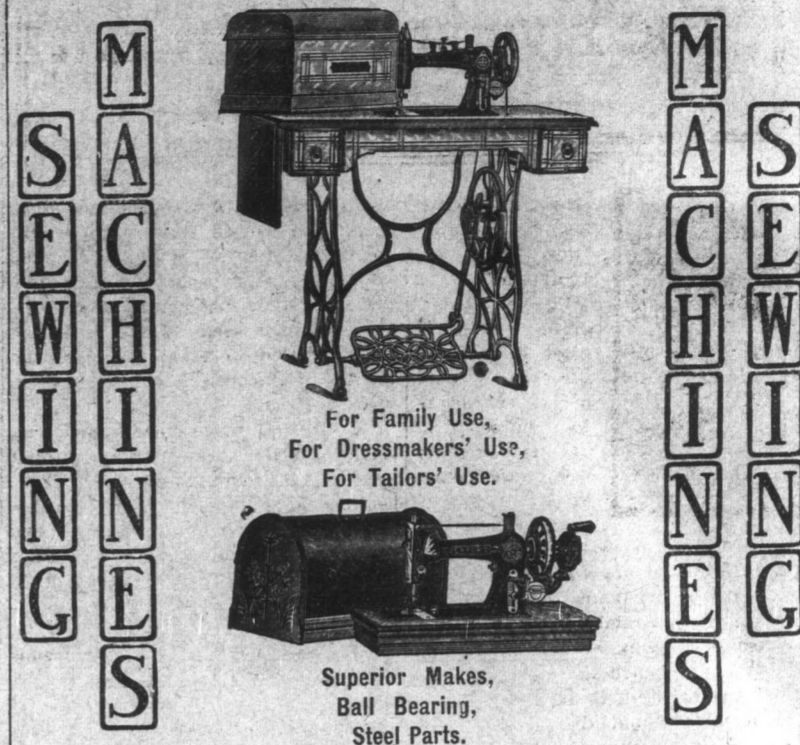
"No; I was the only person left. The coach drove away after a time; I heard it and saw it, but I was too far off. I was afraid to come out."

"I understand," he said. "Drink a little more of this—do, I beg of you!"

And he held the cup to her lips. She put up her hand to take it, and their eyes met. She felt glad of the pity and admiration that poured from his.

To be continued.

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