

HER HUMBLE LOVER

Though the ladies dined alone, the table was bright with the old family plate, and the dinner elaborately planned and served, with a footman behind each of their chairs, and the majestic butler presiding with as much solemnity as if it were a state affair.

Once or twice in a pause of the conversation—for Lady Blyte tried her utmost to make herself agreeable, and succeeded—Signa found herself unconsciously thinking "All this was offered to me last night, and I refused it"; but there was no regret in the thought, only a vague wonder how she, so insignificant and poor, could have had the courage to refuse.

"Good night, my dear," said the old lady, as they took their candlesticks. "Remember you are your own mistress. If you would like to have breakfast in your own room—"

"Oh, no, no!" said Signa, with a smile. "You shall do just as you like, my dear," and once more she kissed her. Not once had Sir Frederic's name been mentioned.

On the morning Signa found that her ladyship had meant what she had said in the most literal manner, for the butler came to inform her that the head groom had come to receive her orders, and on Signa looking toward Lady Blyte, the old lady said, quietly:

"If you would wish to ride or drive, my dear, tell him so. I will go with you if you like."

The orders were given, and they went for a long drive round the estate, stopping now and then at some outlying farm; Lady Blyte pointing out in an indirect way the beauty and richness of the place, and impressing Signa with the value of all she had refused.

In the evening she asked Signa if she would sing to her, and praised Signa's voice with such earnest approval and admiration that Signa's heart warmed still further toward the proud old patrician.

So three days passed in the pleasant, easy fashion with which the rich can make their past; sometimes the two drove together, sometimes Signa took her book and wandered through the park. During one of these rambles she came upon the ruined tower which Sir Frederic had shown her.

It stood somewhat lonely in a corner of the park, and was kept by an old man as deaf as a post. Signa got him to unlock the iron gate at the top of the steps; and he would sit at the bottom while she coiled herself up in a shady nook on the round platform at the top, and read or mused. It was more often the latter than the former, the book would lie on her lap unopened, and her thoughts would go back to the deserted Grange and Hector Warren.

From where she sat she could see the lake on which they had been driven, and where they had sheltered in the cave. How gentle and how thoughtful he had been that day! How full of meaning she had looked at his every word and look! And yet he had gone without a word of good-bye even. In all her life she had never met a man who came more near to her beau-ideal of what a man should be, she thought. And she found herself wondering if she should ever see him again; her heart ached with a strange pain as she told herself that they might perhaps never meet while life lasted, that she had heard his voice for the last time.

On the third evening, as they sat in the drawing-room after dinner, Lady Blyte leaning back on a couch, Signa mending some old lace which she had begged to be allowed to do, Lady Blyte gently approached the subject which was always in her heart and mind.

"Do you know, my dear," she said, "I am rather uneasy to-night?"

"Yes?" says Signa, looking up from her lace.

Lady Blyte nodded, and moved the screen so that the light fell on the beautiful face opposite her.

She asked, for the sake of something to say.

"Of course, my dear. He never goes away from me without writing. I suppose I ought not to say it, but Sir Frederic is a model son."

"I don't know why you should not say so," said Signa, gently.

"Well, my dear, every mother is supposed to think that her goose is a swan. I don't know about Frederic; being a swan, but he is a very good goose, at any rate."

And she smiled and sighed. Signa was silent. It was dangerous ground they were approaching.

"You don't know much of him as yet, my dear," said her ladyship, softly. "If you did, I think you would admit that he is a good son. They say that a good son makes a good husband, and I think it is true. But Frederic is more than that. You know, my dear, how well the estate is managed; I don't suppose any place is so well looked after, that anybody's people—I mean the farmers and the tenants—

are so comfortable and satisfied. There is not one of them but would give Frederic a good character as a landlord and master."

"I murmured something inaudibly," said Signa, almost inaudibly, and she rose and came and stood beside her, and put her hand hesitatingly on the satin-clad shoulder.

"No, I will not say any more," repeated the old lady. "But I am glad I have opened my heart to you, my dear. If—if it had been you whom Frederic had chosen, I could say what I have said with even greater earnestness; and she turned and put her hand in Signa's.

Signa looked down at her—at the proud face so humble and almost pleading, and her heart ached! If she could but have knelt beside her and whispered, "He has chosen, Lady Blyte, and I will be your daughter if you will have me!" But she could not. There seemed to be a hand upon her heart keeping her back.

With a little nervous gasp she turned away and left the room. A footman stood at the door ready to receive any commands. Her maid waited for her in her own room. The whole place seemed devoted to her. If she could but say "Yes," and take it all!

With a sense of spiritual and mental bewilderment and indecision she went upstairs and got her hat from her maid, and wandered out on the terrace.

At that moment she almost thought that she would try and forget Hector Warren, who had gone without a word of farewell, and strive to give herself to Sir Frederic.

The evening seemed stifling—the young moon sailing in the blue heavens seemed to eye her with impatient scorn for her weakness in thinking of a man who had, by this time, no doubt, a clean forgotten her.

With a sigh she wandered across the lawn, and aimlessly absent, found herself in the path leading to the Tower. With a longing to be quite alone, and away from the great big place, she hailed the sight of the round, ivy-grown turret with a welcome sigh, and hurried on.

The old man who kept the key was sitting at the door of his cottage smoking a short pipe and half asleep, but he rose and unlocked his pad mechanically, and drew the key from his pocket.



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There were tears in the proud eyes, and Signa felt her own grow dim.

"Forgive me, my dear, for boring you," said Lady Blyte, gently. "I did not mean to speak of it, but out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks and my heart is very full of Frederic's welfare. I cannot tell you how anxious I am to see him settled and happy; but I can tell you this, that whomever he may bring to me, I will receive as a daughter and love as a very dear daughter of my own. I will not say any more, dear; not a word."

"Do not," said Signa, almost inaudibly, and she rose and came and stood beside her, and put her hand hesitatingly on the satin-clad shoulder.

"No, I will not say any more," repeated the old lady. "But I am glad I have opened my heart to you, my dear. If—if it had been you whom Frederic had chosen, I could say what I have said with even greater earnestness; and she turned and put her hand in Signa's.

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Signa nodded, and he crawled up the stairs and unlocked the gate at the top—looked round aimlessly with the manner of all keepers of snow sights, and crawled down again, leaving Signa seated on the rustic chair on the platform.

With a gesture of relief she took off her hat to let the cool air fan her forehead, and gave herself up to deep and troubled thoughts. Could she bring herself to be Lady Blyte, of Elyte Park?

Signa murmured something, and glanced at the gate. A vague feeling of uneasiness and alarm possessed her, though she strove to dispel it by mental self-ridicule.

"Have you been to the park?" she asked. "I suppose they told you I was here? I hope I have not alarmed Lady Blyte. I ought to have said that I was going out for a stroll."

He shook his head. "No, I have not been home. I knew you were here, because I saw you—because I watched you."

Signa colored. "Watched me, Sir Frederic?" He nodded.

"Yes," he said, huskily. "I have been watching you ever since you came here. That is the truth. I do not know what you will think of me."

"Then—then," said Signa, astonished and troubled, "you have not been to London, Sir Frederic?"

"No," he replied. "I intended going. I took a ticket, and travelled half way; then I found I could not go, and I came back by the next train. I could not leave you, knowing that you were here!"

"Sir Frederic!" He shook his head. "It is of no use. Call it madness, what you will. I could not tear myself away from the spot where you might be. Do not be angry with me."

"I ought to be very angry," said Signa, coldly. "Lady Blyte assured me that you had gone to London, or

deed, more like a man bereft of his senses than a rational being.

"I feel that I ought to be angry," said Signa, trembling, and attempting to pacify and soothe him, "and I am sure that Lady Blyte will be very sorry and annoyed; but let me go, please," and she made a movement toward the gate, between which and her he stood.

"Stay for a few minutes," he pleaded. "I cannot go to the Park to-night. I could not face my mother. Will you not stay with me for a few minutes? I will see that you reach the house safely."

"I cannot stay," said Signa. "It is getting late, and Lady Blyte will be uneasy."

"Are you afraid to trust yourself with me?" he asked, half angry, half punitively. "You need not be. Signa, I love you as deeply and passionately as a man can love a woman."

"Sir Frederic, I cannot, I will not listen."

"Why should you be so hard to me?" he pleaded, almost with a sob. "What is there in me that should make you hate me so?"

"I don't hate you!" she said, trembling and troubled, her eyes fixed on the gate, before which he stood fixed and immovable.

"Then why cannot you promise to try and love me? Why will you not, at least, permit me to love you? I will wait—wait for years, if you will but say the word. I am not fearful of the result; I can and will be patient. Signa, for Heaven's sake listen to me!"

"I have listened too long, Sir Frederic," she said, flushing with indignation. "Is this a time to—to press your suit? It is almost an insult to talk to me like this!"

"I insult you!" he exclaimed—"I who worship and revere the ground you walk on. Ah, you would not say this if Hector Warren had spoken as I have spoken."

Signa turned pale, and confronted him with all her maidenly pride blazing in her eyes.

"What right have you to speak of me of him?" she demanded. "Mr. Warren is no more to me than any other man—"

Then she stopped, for something—the very falseness of the retort—choked her.

"Let me pass, please," she demanded, tremblingly.

But he did not move.

"Will you tell me plainly and distinctly, that you do not care for him?" he said, hoarsely.

"I will tell you nothing—I will not answer such a question," she replied, looking him full in the face.

"This it is true," he groaned, biting his lip. "But for him—this operation, this adventure, coming from no one knows where—you would have learned to love me!"

(To be continued.)

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Third: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for this were lese-majeste.

Fourth: Remember that thou keep holy the Lustration Day, when I triumphed over my wicked enemies, and cast them and their wives and little ones into the deep.

Fifth: Honor thy father and thy mother, unless I bid thee kill them, when thou shalt do so, that thy days may be long in the land.

Sixth: Thou shalt do all murders that I command thee to do.

Seventh: Thou shalt commit any kind of crime against mine enemies.

Eighth: Thou shalt steal all that is possible from countries that I have invaded, and what thou canst not carry away thou shalt destroy.

Ninth: Thou shalt bear false witness against thy neighbor, and shalt continue to bear it, and shalt affirm it with many oaths and outcries of innocence.

Tenth: Thou shalt covet thy neighbor's land, his home, his wife, his ox, his ass, and everything that is his, and thou shalt hate thy neighbor.

And to each and every commandment the obedient German people answers "Amen!"—Western British-American, Chicago.

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WORKED WRONG WAY.

His Efforts to Be Famed for Courtesy Met With a Check.

"You read in the papers now and then," said the sad faced street car conductor as a deeper shade of sadness crossed his face, "that some rich person had left a policeman or a conductor a fine legacy for being courteous to them. After I had read two or three of such things I made up my mind to put on an extra touch of courtesy in cases of old women and old men. I too, had a chance offered me. A fine old lady took my car, and I helped her to find a seat and answered all the questions about how to reach Mercy street. She had to change from my car to another, and I tenderly helped her off the platform and gave her the most minute directions. For the next two days I felt that I would be named in her will, but then something happened that made me believe that I would not."

"And what happened?" was asked.

"It was called to head quarters on a complaint made by that very old woman I had used so nicely. She had entered a complaint of negligence against me, and I was called up to explain."

"But what cause had she?"

"It was that I did not raise my cap to her when turning to get on my car after directing her. I have given up all hope of a legacy and no more. I guess all the grateful old women die off before I took the job."—Baltimore American.

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I should not have come to the Park after what had passed between us. You must know that, Sir Frederic.

"I know it," he said, almost guiltily. "I offer no excuse. I have found out that I cannot bear to be away from you. Signa—"

"I think you had better call me by a more formal name, Sir Frederic," she said, gravely, and with an appearance of calmness, which belied her trembling frame and beating heart.

"Do not be angry," he pleaded. "Let me call you by the name by which I think and dream of you, night and day, unceasingly; it can do you no harm. Signa, you will think me mad to plead in this way, and I think that I am almost mad; but it is for love of you. You asked me to forget you, and I tried, but I cannot. Signa, if you still refuse to accept my love, I am a ruined man, utterly ruined and undone! Think how madly I must love you when I can forget honor and self-respect as I have done. I have crept about my own place like a poacher on a chief, just to get a glance at you, just to hear your voice, though only at a distance; that was all. I did not mean to approach you, to speak to you. It was sufficient for me to know that I was near you, watching over you."

"Sir Frederic!" He put up his hand, and Signa saw that it trembled against the moonlight.

"Hear me out. I say I did not intend to approach you, but to-night, as I paced under the trees within sight of the house, afraid of my own keepers. I saw you come from the house; I saw that you were unhappy and troubled, and I could not resist the temptation. I followed you here, even at the risk of arousing your anger and scorn." He paused for want of breath and stood staring at her, in-

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