



Only a Beggar;
—BUT—
A Queen Among Women

CHAPTER VIII.
She could not help thinking of him.

He was so unlike other young men she had met. That air of his, serene conviction that the world had been made for him; the perfectly self-possessed manner in which he took it for granted that every one was in the best of humor with him; that life was a case of "roses, roses all the way," impressed her. It had been more than pleasant to listen to his deep, musical voice, to look at his handsome face, to note the unconscious ease and grace which marked his every movement. Even the admission of his faults, the candor which took it for granted that every one knew he was good for nothing, told in his favor; for Diana, young and inexperienced as she was, knew that most men are given to putting their best goods in the front window. But Lord Dalesford seemed to say: "Here I am—no good. But, all the same, you've got to like me, you know."

And how much and generally he was liked! It was evident that Lady Mabel adored him; that Bertie regarded him as the model of manliness; that even Lady Selina was fond and proud of him. What a pity it was, thought Diana, that he should waste his days in the dissipation to which smaller men were given!

As for Dalesford's reflections, they shall not be set down. Indeed, he himself would have found it difficult to do so; but he paced up and down the terrace long after the others had gone to their rooms, and, smoking hard, recalled the beautiful face, the violet eyes, that had met his so modestly; the voice that recalled the night he had first heard it; and when, at last, he turned into the house, he murmured: "She is peerless; there is no one like her, no one!"

"I'm going to row down to Rivermead," he said to Mabel, the following afternoon. "You can come, if you like."

"Mabel had far better employ her time hemming these handkerchiefs," Lady Selina remarked severely. But Mabel knew that this was not to be taken as a command, and she was down at the boat quite as soon as Dalesford.

He pulled down stream almost silently, only half listening to Mabel's chatter. "Oh, they're paying tennis!" she said, as they came in sight of Rivermead lawn. "And, of course, that Selby boy is there," she added, with the tolerant contempt with which a girl regards the seniority of a lad who is only a year or two older than herself.

"Tennis! I'm glad I told them to put our shoes in. Here we are, Miss Bourne! We can make a foursome, can't we?"

"Might one suggest that it would be as well to wait until you are asked?" said Dalesford, as he fastened the boat, and took Diana's hand. She came toward them, with a smile, and without, she fervently hoped, a blush; but the blush was there, and it heightened her loveliness in Dalesford's eyes. He had thought she must surely have looked her best last night, in her "war-paint and feathers," as Mabel had put it; but he questioned whether she did not look still more beautiful in her plain white dress and simple hat, which accentuated her slight figure and sweet, girlish loveliness. And there was a hint of shyness in her greeting which was too subtly delicious for expression, like the fragrance of the flowers amid which she moved.

"None the worse for last night's dissipation, I trust!" he said, holding her hand a moment or two longer than was necessary. "Slides?" to Bertie. "Oh, I'll play with Miss Bourne, if she'll accept me for a partner."

"What nonsense!" Mabel began to reprove, but, catching Dalesford's eye, she added hastily: "All right! But you'll have to play your best, Mr. Selby—if you've got a best. From what I saw of your play as I came down the river—"

"Now, you two!" Dalesford broke in laughingly. "If you are going to squabble, we shall beat you easily." Dalesford was, of course, a good player; as Bertie had said, he was good at most games; but he played very badly that afternoon, for his heart was all a-quiver with the proximity of the slight figure that moved so swiftly, so easily, with the sound of the laughing voice that contended over the score. Diana was absorbed in the game, and yet she was conscious of a novel sense of enjoyment; surely, the sun shone more brightly, the birds sang more sweetly, the perfume of the flowers was sweeter than it had been half an hour ago!

They played until Aunt Mary came out, followed by a couple of maids, with the tea; then the girls sank, breathless, into rustic chairs, and Dalesford dropped onto the grass at their feet, leaving Bertie to hand the cups and bread and butter. Strangely enough, no one of them proposed to renew the game; and, presently, Bertie and Mabel wandered across to the fruit garden, Aunt Mary went back to the house, and Diana and Dalesford were left alone. "It's just the right time for the river," he said. "Shall we go?"

Diana looked round for the other two. "I'll call them," she said. But, before she could do so, he remarked: "Oh, let them alone. They'll be much happier with the peaches!" And, after a moment's hesitation, Diana rose, and they went down to the boat.

She leaned back in the soft-cushioned seat, and Dalesford let the boat slowly drift with the stream, now and again taking a pull at the sculls, sitting half sideways, but only half, so that he could see the lovely face opposite him. The mystic beauty of the water and sky wooed them to silence, and for some minutes they drifted without speaking; but presently, with the skill of the man of the world, he led her into talking, and got her to tell him of her travels, of the famous places she had seen, and then, he made a comment, or asked a question which drew her on; and, as he listened, he felt as if she were all unconsciously revealing her

sweet, unstained nature, as if he were looking at a vision of the "pure womanhood" of whose existence he had been hitherto skeptical. With the admiration that stirred his senses was a reverence which thrilled him with an aching of the heart for his own unworthiness. With an almost audible sigh, he turned the boat round. "I feel as if I had been with you on your travels," he said. "Strange, I've been all over the same ground, but I didn't see so much in it. And now you are going to settle down? I'm glad. Must I begin to pull?" he asked regretfully, as Diana looked at her watch. "The time has passed very quickly. I wonder whether you would join us in a picnic to-morrow?"

"Not to-morrow," she said, a trifle wistfully. "I am going to read to Mrs. Baker's little girl; she has been ill, and declares that a fairy-story, a real fairy-story, does her more good than beef-tea and Jellies."

"Oh," he said casually. "And who may Mrs. Baker be?" "She lives in the cottage with the green shutters, at the end of South Lane," replied Diana unsuspectingly. And she was still unsuspecting that they had met by anything more than chance when she saw him sauntering up the lane next afternoon. "Let me carry your basket," he said, after they had exchanged greetings. "But you were going the other way," she reminded him. "Was I?" he said. "All ways are the same to me. That's the great advantage of being a lazy man, with no object in life. Now's the time to read me a lesson on the wickedness of sheer indolence."

cent child greeted her with affectionate eagerness. "Why, Mary, what beautiful grapes!" Diana exclaimed, casting an eye on a basketful on the table. Mary flushed, and pursed her lips, with an air of great secrecy. "Yes, miss, aren't they lovely? But I mustn't tell you who gave them to me. I promised!"

"Promises are sacred, Mary, and I won't even try and guess. But, really, I'm almost ashamed to put my poor peaches beside them. Never mind! Here they are!" She took out the contents of her basket, and read her fairy-story; and, having tucked up the child cozily, went down-stairs, where the mother was waiting to express her gratitude. "And it do seem, miss, as if your goodness to Mary, was catching, for another of the gentry has been to see her, and he brought her the loveliest bunch of grapes—There, now! Tut! tut! she broke off penitently. "And I promised not to tell! I can't think how it slipped out, miss—that I can't."

"I don't suppose it is of much consequence, Mrs. Baker," said Diana, with a tone of shy pleasure in her voice, and she was still smiling as she left the cottage; but the smile was driven off as she came to the figure lying on the bank. He sprang up to meet her, and flung the cigarette away. "You said twenty minutes," he remarked, with an air of long-suffering patience. "You have been gone two hours and a quarter."

"Exactly five-and-twenty minutes," corrected Diana, looking at her watch. "Did you cut the grapes yourself, Lord Dalesford?" He glanced at her shame-facedly, then laughed. "So Mrs. Butcher—Baker betrayed me!" he said. "Well, it's not the first good action I've been guilty of, and I'll try and not do it again—if you'll let me off with the option of a fine."

"Yes, I will," she said, her eyes beaming on him. "There is an old man, an old woodman, in the next cottage but one. His great and crying need is tobacco—" Dalesford groaned. "Oh, I say! Well, I'll send him some cigars."

"No," said Diana, in a matter-of-fact way; "cigars are no good. I tried him with some, and he said that he couldn't taste them. It must be tobacco—that very black stuff, like old rope. And you mustn't send it; you must take it, because he likes to hear some one talk."

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HEAVY GUN FIRE
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Heavy gun-firing was heard from the Yorkshire Coast this morning.
THAT NAVAL ENGAGEMENT
SANTIAGO, CHILE.
No further news has been received here concerning the naval engagement off the coast of Chile, in which German warships participated. It is believed that the British cruiser Melburn was sunk here to any children were rescued. The only information is from the British Legation here. German sources.

LATEST FROM VALPARAISO
It is learned that the British ship the Yorkshire was captured and escaped after the engagement with Germans off the coast on Sunday. Wireless messages from the Glasgow call British cruiser Good Hope intercepted. The latter is believed to have been captured. It is believed that the British cruiser Melburn was sunk here to any children were rescued. The only information is from the British Legation here. German sources.

FURTHER RECEIVED
MONTREAL.
Orders were received this morning from Militia Department at Ottawa to recruit for of Field Artillery and on balance. This means a force of 284 men and 192 horses in the division.

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