

**THE MAN WHO
WAS GOOD: A
NOVEL. VOL II.**

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The Man Who Was Good: A Novel. Vol II. by Leonard Merrick

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THE MAN WHO WAS GOOD

A Novel

BY

LEONARD MERRICK

AUTHOR OF 'VIOLET MOSES,' 'MR. BAZALGETTE'S AGENCY,'
ETC.



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THE MAN WHO WAS GOOD

CHAPTER VIII.

SLOWLY there stole into Kincaid's life a new interest. He began to be more eager to visit the Lodge, was sometimes sensible of an odd reluctance to rise and go—even found the picture of the little drawing-room, with its ease and lamplight, lingering with him after the front door had closed. He was conscious in the atmosphere of an added charm, a grace whose lack he had scarcely noted, but which discovered the deficiency it supplied. A colour had been diffused over the baldness of the home-comings, quickening their somewhat elementary colloquies, the accustomed questions, the renewed

inadequate to create, and for whose birth love must co-operate with comprehension.

Personally Kincaid credited the full measure of the cheerier order of affairs to Miss Brettan's account, and regarded her engagement as a capital day's work. But between esteeming her responsible for the cheerfulness he found invigorating, and detecting it was she whose society invigorated him, lay a distance he did not immediately accomplish.

Summer had deepened into autumn, and winter was at hand, before he had plainly admitted to himself he liked to go to see Miss Brettan, and felt a sentiment of friendship for her. He had not readily separated the person from the surroundings in which he saw her. The cosiness of the room, with two women smiling at him when he entered—always with a little surprise, for the time of his coming was uncertain—and getting tea for him, and being sorry when he had to leave them, had pleased his fancy, and it had been a process to remember her as an individual instead of as an

element of the scene. It was by degrees he realized how many of his expressions of opinion were in reality directed to her, how many of the opinions would never have been expressed without her, and, grown cognizant of it, a flavour was imparted to his existence which had been wanting. His one friendship had been for Corri, and Corri was not here. It is scarcely too much to pronounce the months following, when his cordial liking for Miss Brettan was clear to him, and possessed of a fascination due very largely to its unexpectedness, the happiest Kincaid had known.

The development was less serene, but it was fortunately slow. Friendship does not trouble itself with questions; it debates neither its wisdom nor its return. It is only the warmer stage of interest that wants to know so much, and insists on the *quid pro quo* in feeling. When he advanced to the higher temperature Kincaid first tasted uneasiness.

It commenced oddly. He had gone to the house earlier than was his habit, and the women were

preparing for a walk. Mary stood by the mantel-piece. There was something they had meant to do; she said she would go alone to do it. He lay back in the depths of an armchair, and watched her while she spoke to his mother, watched the play of her features and the quick turn of her cheek. Then—it was the least significant of trivialities—she plucked a hairpin from her hair, and began to button her glove. It was revealed to him as he contemplated her that she was eminently lovable. His eyes dwelt on the tender curve of her figure, displayed by the flexion of her arm; he remarked the bend of the head, and the delicate modelling of her ear and neck. These things were quite new to him. He was stirred abruptly with the magic of her sex. The admiration did not last ten seconds, and before he saw her again he only recollected it once, quite suddenly. But the development had begun.

In his next visit he looked to see these beauties, *and found them*. This time, being voluntary, the