

**THE MAN WHO
WAS GOOD: A
NOVEL, VOL. I**

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

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VOL. I.

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THE MAN WHO WAS GOOD

A Novel

BY

LEONARD MERRICK

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



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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1892

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'That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true ;
Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.
If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you.'

James Lee's Wife.

THE MAN WHO WAS GOOD

CHAPTER I.

THERE were three women in the dressing-room. Little Miss Macy, who played an ensign, was pulling her uniform off, and the 'Duchess'—divested of velvet—stood brushing the powder out of her hair. The third woman was doing nothing. In a chair by the travelling-basket labelled 'Miss Olive Westland's Tour: "The Foibles of Fashion" Co.,' she sat regarding the others, her gloved hands lying idle in her lap. She was scarcely what is termed 'beautiful,' much less was she what ought to be called 'pretty'; perhaps 'womanly' came nearer to suggesting her than either. Her eyes were not large, but they were so pensive; her mouth was

not small, but it curved so tenderly ; the face was not regular, but it looked so deliciously soft. Somebody had once said it always made him feel the utter hopelessness of trying to conceive humanity's features arranged on any other plan than the one God drew for them. And if the same might be said of every face, it was the more natural that it had been said of hers. It seemed, in watching her, such a perfect thing there should be a low white brow, and hair to shade it ; it seemed such an excellent and inevitable thing there should be lips just where the Maker put lips, and a chin just where the chin is modelled. Her age might have been twenty-seven, also it might have been thirty. The wise man does not question the nice woman's age, he just thanks Heaven she lives ; and she in the chair by the basket was decidedly nice. Other women said so.

'Have you been "in front," Mrs. Carew?' asked the 'Duchess.'

She answered that she had.

'I came round at the end. It was a very good house ; the business is improving.'

'I should think,' remarked the ensign, reaching for her skirt, 'you ought to know every line of the piece the times you've seen it! But, of course, you've nothing else to do.'

'No,' Mrs. Carew assented; 'it isn't lively sitting alone all the evening in lodgings. And it's more comfortable in the circle than "behind." How you people manage to get dressed in some of the theatres puzzles me; I look at you from the front, remembering where your things were put on, and marvel. If I were in the profession, my salary wouldn't keep me in the frocks I ruined.'

'I wonder Carew hasn't ever wanted you to enter it.'

The nice woman laughed.

'Enter the profession!' she exclaimed—'I? Good gracious! what an idea! No; Tony has a very flattering opinion of his wife's abilities, but I don't think even he goes the length of fancying I could act.'

'You'd be as good as a certain leading lady we know of, at any rate. Nobody could be much worse than our respected manageress, I'll take my oath!'