

**MY LADY NOBODY,
A NOVEL, IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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My Lady Nobody, a novel, In two volumes. Vol. II by Maarten Maartens

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MAARTEN MAARTENS

**MY LADY NOBODY,
A NOVEL, IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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VOL. 3067.

MY LADY NOBODY. BY MAARTEN MAARTENS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

MY LADY NOBODY

A NOVEL

BY

MAARTEN MAARTENS, *pseud.* of

AUTHOR OF

"THE SIN OF JOOST AVELINGH," "GOD'S FOOL," ETC.

Jozua Marius Willem van der Boorten Schwartz

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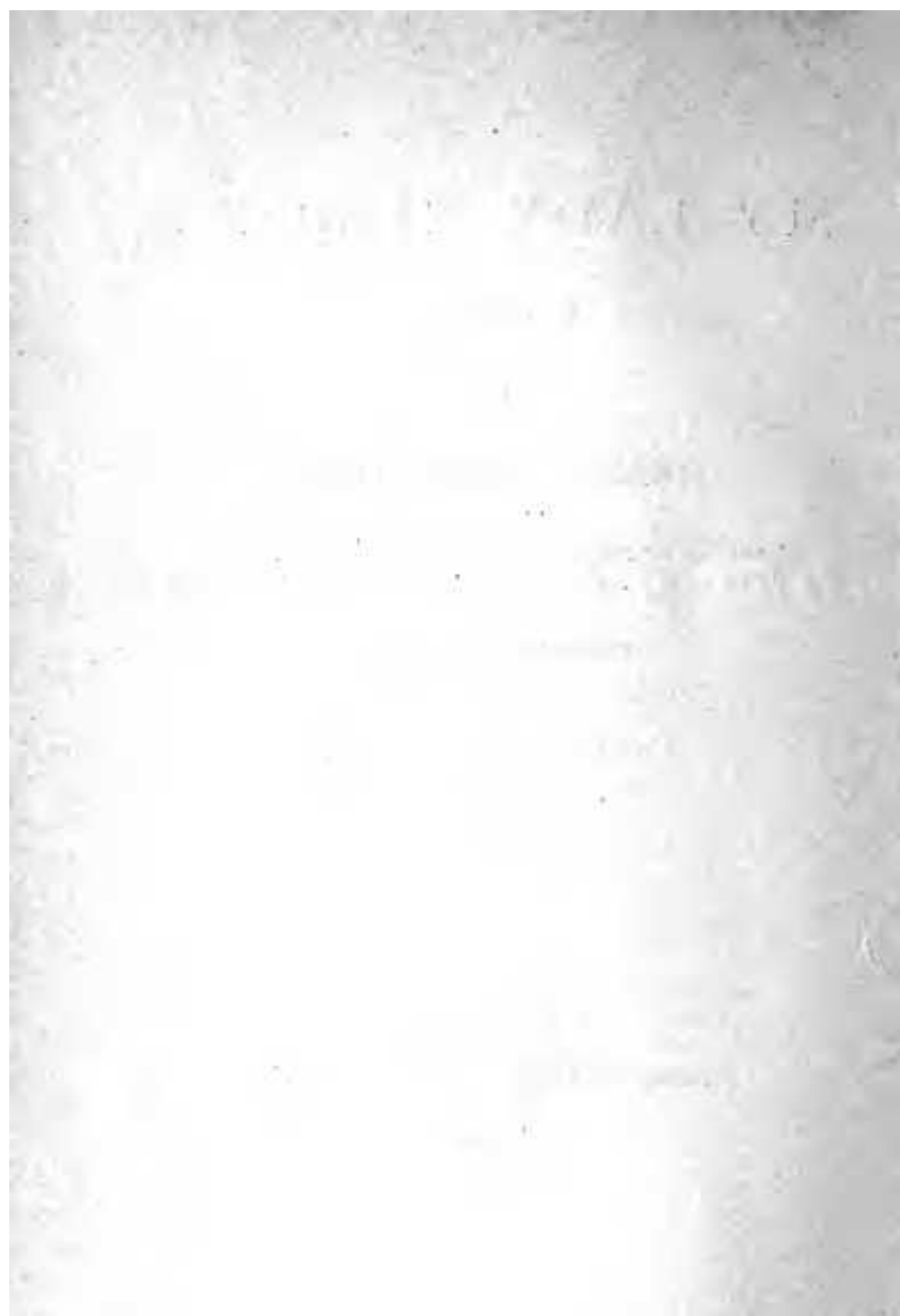
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1895.



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MY LADY NOBODY.

PART II.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER XXV.

CORONETS AND CROSSES.

MEANWHILE, untouched by the bustle and slush of the market town, or the still greater turmoil and filth of its more distant metropolis, the little village and wide demesne of Horstwyk lay serene under their mantle of unsullied snow. Surely each additional myriad of inhabitants deepens the vulgarity of their place of abode, as when ink-drops fall measured into a glass of pure water. The country has its full share of vices—every anchorite's cave has that. The country has snobbishness, perhaps, more than the town. But it has not vulgarity.

Snobbishness, be it observed, is by no means a marked characteristic of the Dutch. There was little of that element in the heart-felt and healthy veneration which the surrounding country side offered as natural tribute to the lord of the manor. The lord was a legi-

timate and very actual centre of interest for miles around, radiating wisely diversified influence to all parts of the horizon. Can any thoughtful man dispute that God had willed it so? The pursuit of rank is one thing. Of that the Horstwykers knew very little. The perception of proportion is another: it is still existent, though moribund, because the masses confuse it with humility, or, still more blunderingly, with humiliation. The Horstwykers were not humble—the Dutch peasant is not—but they were self-respecting. It is the man who dearly loves a lord, and can't get near enough, that wants to see him hung up on a lantern-post.

To many hundreds of simple souls the reigning Baron van Helmont was the one visible manifestation of human greatness.

The Divine is intangible and, at any rate, non-comparable. The gleam of the Horst through its ancestral trees, was a daily reminder of Rule.

The change, therefore, in the King one feels—whom we all have, even Emperors—convulsed the whole community, at first, with much more than curiosity. The old Baron had lolled on the throne for so many easy years. The old Baron had never lifted his sceptre. All his influence—great as it was—had been automatic.

Everybody liked him, for he had never, by doing anything, given cause for offence. And everybody liked Gerard, destined, by the very *insouciance* of his open-handed condescension, to conquer all simple hearts. The new lord was an unknown quantity. Men lifted their heads, expectant, not decided as yet, in what direction to shake them.

Ursula, of course, they all knew from her infancy,