

THE SACRIFICE;

OR
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER XI.

The unconscious Lora, in the bazaar, was speeding on her way to Berlin. She was in a first-class carriage, and opposite her sat the man to whom she now belonged. She had breathed a sigh of relief in getting in when she perceived a young cavalry officer already occupying the red velvet cushions in one corner, who at sight of her, instantly threw his cigar away.

The train rushed on through the sunny, monotonous landscape; she kept her eyes persistently closed. Two or three times she raised her eyes with a sudden start, when her husband addressed some indifferent question to her. She felt worn out in body and mind, as if she were on the verge of a severe illness. She could no longer think clearly.

She clasped her hands together inside her muff, and in the confusion of thought she asked horrible things of God, to whom she was praying.

A dreadful accident—but then so many innocent must suffer! But is it then really so great a sin for a son to take his own life?

She saw the railroad before her; far down in the distance the two lines ran together, and there, at the end, shone two glancing red sparks, and the sparks grew nearer and nearer, and she waited with a wild joy for the hissing fiery engine to crush her, as she lay there on the rails. She started up again; a shrill whistle, the train stopped, and the conductor shouted out the name of the station. The carriage-door was opened, and "Eight minutes!" was the announcement.

There was a confusion of voices outside men ran about the platform, talk, talking and shouting; the train hardly went along the train with the saloon, and rounded on the wheels; freight trucks stood high with trunks and boxes, clattered along. At last the noise subsided a little, and the conductor put his head into the carriage to count the passengers—he was going to stand the door.

"Is there a Herr Adalbert Becher from Westenheg here?" asked a telegraph-messenger.

"Certainly," replied Becher. "What is it?"

"A desperate sin."

"What?" He took the paper, unfolded it and read it, and a look of dismay spread over his countenance. Then he looked across at Lora, who had idly watched the proceedings. "It is nothing," he said; "your brother sent it for a joke. I will tell you about it tomorrow morning." And he smilingly struck her muff with his glove, and thrust the paper in the pocket of his fur coat.

She made no reply. What was it to her? She turned her head to the window and saw the lanterns on the station disappear, and the lights of the city. And they went on and on through the winter landscape. Once she looked round at him; he had settled himself comfortably, and, tired of her silence, he had gone to sleep. She looked at his face with great searching eyes, with an expression of disgust about her! Truly, firmly-closed lips. Then she looked at the young officer. He was gazing fixedly at her. She blushed crimson, as if the might have put down her thoughts, and she quickly put down her head. The train slowed up in the station at Berlin.

"Here we are," cried Adalbert, taking up his offered, lost his arm, on which she had the fist of her fingers, and led her to the carriage which was to take them to the hotel. After a short drive they stopped at the door of a restaurant.

In the entrance the usual welcome from the scullery of the hotel; the rooms were warmed and lighted; they were assured, and two valises and a porter hastened to lead the way upstairs.

Again Becher offered his arm to his wife. She overlooked it, and gazed with longing eyes through the great window, across the grass out into street, in which the life of the great city was bustle; bowing by meek and恭候着 in endless confusion. Oh, to go out there to be able to move with the stamping, unknown streets—for ever to that poor little house of her father, there to be hidden away forever! And to know that the present was such a terrible dream!

"Lora," she said breathlessly. "Go on," she said breathlessly.

But instead of yielding to her wish, he drew her arm within his own, suddenly, it is true, but impudently, and roughly, and held it pressed tightly against his side, as he accompanied her to the stairs.

She submitted. Behind them came the porter, with the wains and bags, before them were the waiters, the rooms were on the second floor.

A gentleman and a lady came toward them, and the waiter carried on the shoulder, like a young and bold boy.

The waiter was, however, running along, and his pretty wife clinging closely to his arm, and a wondering glance at the porter, with the wains and bags, before them were the waiters.

"My father," she screamed. "My father!" She sprang up and rushed to the door. There she felt herself detained.

"Come, Lora, don't make a scene for Heaven's sake! It can't be so very bad," he cried, crimson with anger.

She thrust him away and stood before him trembling in every limb, and with tears in her eyes.

"That's not the joke," she gasped.

At the sound of his concealed voice, she crossed negligently over to the window, and looked out on the street. Her husband's voice came to her as if from a great distance. He ordered the supper, scolded because the bouquet was not elegantly arranged, and declared it was as cold as a barn. "Bring the tea at once! We are half frozen after such a journey; aren't we, wife?"

At length she was alone with him, and she turned toward him. Her manner seemed to have gained a sudden decision. She leaned against the window; her face stood out like ivory against the dark red velvet of the curtain.

"It goes in half an hour, madam."

"Drive fast—for Heaven's sake!" she entreated.

As she was getting in she felt herself supported, and her husband sprang after her into the carriage.

"You will allow me to accompany you?" he asked sarcastically. "Only on account of the people, you know, it is not customary to run away from one's husband in this sudden manner. It is a charming evening, too! And what is it all about? Of course it is only a false alarm. The old man has probably drunk much champagne."

Lora put her hands before her face, and suppressed a cry of horror.

When they reached the station she escaped into a ladies' carriage, and there she lay during the journey, dozing, praying, demanding only to find living, to look once more into those dear, faithful eyes, only to hear her name once more from his lips.

The train reached Westenheg about midday. She encountered an icy wind as she left the warm coupe, and shivered with fear for her fate, and hurried across the platform into the well-known street that led to the station. What a change for the lowly utterlings of men who stride after her—for the man who would ask his love, he knew, that she loved the other man, and why be as he did today, and still dared to stretch his hand out toward her?

She started to believe that in seeking her, he only desired suitable mistress of his house. She would certainly confessingly do his duty by him in that respect, but beyond that—

Her thoughts were checked suddenly, for three times she raised her eyes with a sudden start, when her husband addressed some indifferent question to her. She felt worn out in body and mind, as if she were on the verge of a severe illness. She could no longer think clearly.

She clasped her hands together inside her muff, and in the confusion of thought she asked horrible things of God, to whom she was praying.

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"Do not touch me!" she cried, freezing herself hastily. "I—"

But she could not go on.

"Come, Lora," he interrupted with a laugh. "It is my business to speak now!" And standing a little way off, he leaned against the glass, and began to speak. It sounded like a school-boy saying his lesson.

Then the young wife turned, and pushed the bolt in the outer door.

Then she remained standing, her hands clenched, and in her eyes a terrible look of bitter hatred for the man who now was trying to open the door from the outside.

"Why, Lora, what are you doing?"

"Isn't my husband that?"

"She held her mother's arm with a strong hand, as she attempted to open the door. "Come," she said, "take me to your room."

"To be continued."

THE PEARL OF HUSBANDS.

Declarated to be the French Husband But He Makes a Mistake.

The Madam's female authority on husbands and wives has now reached per-

son in any language.

She begins with a quotation from "Friedrich Schopenhauer": "That

separable animal that is called 'man,' and goes on: "The English

Germany, in America, and other places

I have seen women—women of fashion

and women of the house—good women

and bad, I have seen great ladies

and young ladies."

He seemed to see as if her limbs would no longer support her, she sank into a chair, fatigued and crushed by the pithless expression of her husband's eyes, who was now thinking angrily up and down at a condemned animal, she felt that there was something for her; she had no foolishness to think her cold hearted. He had his right hand, but it would insist upon it that trust was the chief thing, and as far as he was concerned, his heart lay open before her. He was always a good fellow, and she could twist him round her finger if she only went the right way to work.

She could not follow him closely; she only heard the frequent words, "Love, trust, happiness, good fellow—"

Her lips, which had been secretly pressed together, quivered with a smile.

She said, "My husband is a good man,

but he has not wished it."

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