



'Margaret,' The GIRL ARTIST, OR, The Countess of Ferrers Court.

CHAPTER IX.

For the last two days, since he had left Margaret, overwhelmed by his passionate outburst, he had been living after his wildest and most reckless fashion, and two days of such dissipation and sleeplessness, added to passion, tell even upon such perfect physical specimens of humanity as Blair Leyton.

"Lord Leyton!" she said, at last. He picked up her sketch-block, but held it, still looking at her.

"I've frightened you," he said, remorsefully; "I—I am a brute. I did not know you were here until I jumped upon that stone, when I was close upon you."

Margaret tried to smile. "It does not matter," she said. "Give me my block, please," and she held out her hand.

He drew a little nearer, and gave her the block. "You are sketching?" he said, his eyes fixed on her face with a wistful eagerness.

She inclined her head. "Yes; I am painting a picture for the Earl."

"For the Earl?" he repeated dully, as if her voice, and not the words she said, were of importance to him.

"Yes; if you wish to see him, you will find him at home; he has just left me."

"Just left you?" he repeated as before. "No; I don't want to see him." Margaret raised her eyes and looked at him.

"You have not come down to see him?" she said with faint surprise.

"No!" he responded. "He wouldn't see me if I had. But I didn't come to see him; I came—" then he stopped for a second. "Miss Margaret, I am afraid to tell you why I came."

"Then don't tell me," said Margaret, trying to force a smile. "It sounds as if you had come for no good purpose, my lord."

He stood silent for a second, then he flung himself at her feet, and leaning on his elbow, looked up at her with the same eager wistfulness in his handsome eyes.

"Yes, I will tell you," he said; "I came to see you!"

"To see me?" said Margaret, flushing. Then the straight brows came together. "Lord Leyton, you should not have said that!"

"Why should I not?" he demanded. "If it's true—and it is true! Miss Margaret, I have been the wretchedest man in London these last two days."

"I doubt that," said Margaret, quietly, and going on with her sketch.

"It's the truth. If there was a man condemned to be hanged, I'll wager he wasn't more wretched than I have been."

"Wicked people are always wretched—or should be, my lord," said Margaret, coolly.

"And I am wicked. Yes, I know," he said; "I am the vilest of the vile, in your eyes. But it isn't for what I've done in the past that I'm so miserable, it is for what I said to you in the picture gallery the other morning. Miss Margaret, I behaved like a brute!"

"I—I—said words that—that have made me wish I were dead—" said Margaret, interrupting him. "If you are sorry there need be no more said excepting that I forgive you, and will forget them. I knew that you did not mean them at the time."

His face crimsoned and his eyes grew almost fierce.

"Stop!" he said; "I don't say that. I won't. I'm sorry I was rough; I'm sorry I behaved like a bear and blarneyed, and shouted, but I did mean what I said, and mean it still."

"I don't care whether you meant it or not, it is not of the least consequence, Lord Leyton," said Margaret, and she put her pencil in its case, and closed her sketch-block.

"Wait—do wait!" he exclaimed.

"Don't go yet. I have so much to say to you, so much, and I don't know how to say it! Miss Margaret, I came down on the chance of seeing you, and all the way down I prepared a speech, but the sight of you so suddenly has driven it all out of my head, and I can think of nothing but three words of it, and—those I dare not say."

"I must go, my lord," said Margaret, trying to speak calmly and indifferently, but feeling her heart beginning to throb and quiver under the sound of his voice and the passionate regard of his dark eyes.

"Wait—wait five minutes," he implored. "Miss Margaret, don't send me back to London feeling that you despise me. Don't do that! I'm bad enough as it is, but I shall be worse if you do that."

Margaret sank down on the stones again, and listened with her eyes guarded by their long lashes; but she still could see his face.

He drew himself a little nearer. "Miss Margaret, are you a witch?"

"A witch?" she faltered.

"Yes," he said. "I think you must be one, for you have bewitched me."

"Lord Leyton—"

"Am I not bewitched?" he said, holding out his hands appealingly; "isn't a man bewitched when he can only think of one thing, day and night, and can get no rest or sleep from thinking of it? And that is how it is with me; I can think of nothing but you."

Margaret made a motion to get up, but he laid his hand on the edge of her skirt imploringly.

"That is how it is with me," he went on. "I tell you the simple truth. I—I have never felt like it before. None of the women I ever met made me feel like this. What is it you have done to me to steal the heart out of my body? for I feel that it is gone—gone!" and he touched his breast with his finger.

Margaret tried to smile, but there is a tragedy in real passion which, however wild the language, forbids laughter, and Lord Leyton's passion was real.

"I see your face all day, I hear your voice. I go over every word you said to me—and some of them were hard words!—and—and to-day I felt that I must get near to you, that I must come down to Leyton if I died for it. Do you believe what I say?"

"I know that I should not listen to you, my lord," she said, in a low voice.

"Why not?" he said. "It is true, Miss Margaret, you have stolen my heart; what is there left to me?"

He had drawn himself still closer, so that his face almost touched the lace of her sleeves, and she could see the quiver of his lips under the thick mustache.

He waited a moment, then his head drooped.

"All right," he said; "don't speak. I see how it is. No, I'd rather you didn't speak. I might have known that you wouldn't listen to me, that you wouldn't give me any kind of hope. Good Lord, why should you? Well, I'll take myself off; I'll get out of your sight."

He had raised himself, but Margaret's hand stole out and fell, light as a feather, on his arm.

He seized it as a man dying of thirst in the desert, seizes the cup of water that will save him, and covered it with hot passionate kisses.

"No, no!" she breathed, trying to draw it away. "You—you have unnerved me, Lord Leyton!"

"Go on!" he said. "I can bear it better if you will let me keep your hand!" and he pressed it to his lips again. "What are you going to say, Margaret? Don't be hard upon me."

"Hard!—how can I be hard?" she faltered, and the tears came thickly into her sweet eyes. "How could anybody be hard, after such—such things as you have said? But—but—oh, my lord—isn't it all a mistake? You—you cannot love—it is impossible!"

"Just what I told myself!" he exclaimed almost triumphantly. "I said it was impossible! But a starving man won't persuade himself that he isn't hungry by telling himself that he had something to eat a week ago. Margaret, I love you—I do love you!" and he pressed her hand against his heart, which throbbed passionately under her fingers like an imprisoned bird. "You know that it is true—do you not?"

"I—I think it is true!" she faltered in all modesty, in all honesty, but with a strange look in her face; "I do not know! No one has ever spoken to me as you have spoken; no one—no one!"

"Thank God for it!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't bear to think that any other man had been before me, Margaret! And will you try—oh, my dear, be good to me!—will you try and love me—"

She turned her eyes upon him with a grave, touching appeal which rendered her face angelic in its perfect maidenly innocence and trustfulness.

"I—I will try," she murmured in so low a voice that it was wonderful that he should have heard it.

(To be Continued.)

Slip a thimble on the end of the curtain rod when putting it through the curtain.

WONDERFUL TALE OF AN ACTRESS

Struggled with Sickness and Discouragement; How Relieved.

Dayville, Killingly, Conn.—"I shall be glad to have every woman know or even get around myself."

after using Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Although I am only 24 years old, I have suffered for the past eight years. I hated the doctors, for a doctor told me to give up the stage, where I was playing with my husband.

I had bearing down pains, my health failed me, and I could not work on the stage, and wasn't able to tend my baby or even get around myself. I was always downhearted and discontented with the world, and only lived for the sake of my little girl. The doctor said to move to some quiet little town away from the noisy city, and I might be able to live and feel well, so I went to Dayville in November. At that time I was so sick I could not walk around, and my husband kept house and I stayed in bed.

One day in January I read your advertisement in a newspaper, and I sent for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and started taking it. Within two weeks time I was a different woman, could get around, and felt so good that it was a pleasure to do my household work. I felt contented and happy, and now am the picture of health, and am tempted to return to the stage. We appreciate my health as the most precious thing on earth."—Mrs. H. L. KLEIN, Box 85, Killingly, Conn.

heart; what is there left to me? I have come because I must, and now I am here I am no better for I feel that I must tell you more, all that there is to tell, even if you send me away. But don't do that if you can help it, for Heaven's sake don't do that!" and she saw that his lips were quivering. "Margaret, you know what I would say," he went on, in the low, thrilling tones of a young and strong man's passion. "I love you!"

Margaret did not start, but a red flush rose and covered her face, then left it pale even to whiteness, and she sat as if turned to stone.

"I love you! Dear, I love you!" he murmured. "Do you—will you not believe me?"

She opened her lips, but he put up his hand.

"No, don't speak—not yet. I know what you were going to say. You were going to say that it is impossible, that we only met a few days ago, that we are strangers. Yes, I know that is what you would say. But it is of no use to say that. Do you think people can get to love by knowing each other a certain number of months—years? Margaret, I think I loved you when I saw you in the village the first time; I know I loved you when you sat by my side in the garden and let me put the rose in your dress! Only a few days ago! Why, it seems years to me—it is years! Oh, Margaret, don't be hard and cruel, and you can be so hard, so cruel! See here: I lay all my life at your feet! It's a bad lot, I know! Why, I told you so, didn't I? But—but I'll change all that! You shall see! Let me go on loving you; let me hope that, some day, you'll try and love me a little in return, and I'll turn over a new leaf! I can never be worthy of you. Oh, I know that. Why, where is there a man in all the world who could be worthy to touch the edge of your dress?" and as he spoke he raised her skirt to his lips, and far from touching herself as his lips were, she seemed to feel them. "But every day, every hour, if you will let me love you, I'll tell myself that I'm of some consequence to someone in the world, and that will keep me straight! Margaret—" he paused and crept a little nearer—"Margaret, you are an angel, and I am a—well, just the other thing; but I ask you to be my guardian angel! Dear, if you knew how I love you! I cannot get your face from before my eyes; every word you have uttered sings in my heart! I am bewitched, bewitched! And—and all I can say is, let me love you all my life, and try and love me a little!"

Pale, trembling, Margaret listened, her eyes downcast, her hands clasped tightly in her lap.

It was all so new, so strange, so unexpected that her heart throbbed and her brain whirled. His words, in their passionate assertion and entreaty, seemed to penetrate to her soul, and with it all a sense of ineffable joy and delight suffused her

whole being and ran through every vein.

"You won't speak to me?" he said, with a quick sigh that was almost like a sob. "I see how it is! I am not fit; yes, I know! And I have offended you worse than I did the other morning. I—I am a fool, and I have destroyed my only chance! I meant to be so quiet and—and gentle with you, but I can't teach myself to keep quiet and soft-spoken when my heart is all on fire, and I long to clasp you in my arms and hear you tell me that you love me! Margaret, my good angel! Margaret, won't you say one little word to me? Not to send me away, but to tell me that, had as I am, you will—well, think a little kindly of me!"

He had drawn himself still closer, so that his face almost touched the lace of her sleeves, and she could see the quiver of his lips under the thick mustache.

He waited a moment, then his head drooped.

"All right," he said; "don't speak. I see how it is. No, I'd rather you didn't speak. I might have known that you wouldn't listen to me, that you wouldn't give me any kind of hope. Good Lord, why should you? Well, I'll take myself off; I'll get out of your sight."

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No.

Size.

Address in full:—

Name.

1645—This pretty model is nice for lawn, dimity, nainsook, crepe mull or flanellette. It is made in square outline at the neck and with a bell-shaped sleeve slashed prettily over the arm. The gown may be made in loose kimono effect, or shirred at Empire waistline.

The Pattern is cut in 3 sizes: Small, Medium and Large. It requires 5½ yards of 36-inch material for a Medium size.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

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Evening Telegram Fashion Plates.

The Home Dressmaker should keep a Catalogue Scrap Book of our Fashion Plates. These will be found very useful to refer to from time to time.

1628 — LADIES' CORSET COVER AND DRAWERS.

A popular easily and quickly made corset cover is here shown, which combines nicely with the comfortable and equally simple style of drawers. The models are good for lawn, batiste, all-over embroidery, dimity, crepe and silk. The drawers are cut without fullness at the waistline, and are lengthened by a ruffle that may be of lace or embroidery or of the same material as the body portions.

The Pattern for these two desirable models is cut in 3 sizes: Small, Medium and Large. It requires 3½ yards for a Medium size, in 36-inch material. A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

A Dainty Night Dress.

1645—This pretty model is nice for lawn, dimity, nainsook, crepe mull or flanellette. It is made in square outline at the neck and with a bell-shaped sleeve slashed prettily over the arm. The gown may be made in loose kimono effect, or shirred at Empire waistline.

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