



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

CHAPTER XI.

"I hope I may have the honor soon," he returned. "They say that when a man marries, his wife always hates his most intimate friend. I hope it won't be so with your wife, Blair, I must confess."

"Margaret is incapable of hating any one," said Blair. "She is an angel, and angels can't hate if they try! Austin, old fellow, you will admit that I have some reason in my madness when you see the girl I love."

"I dare say," said Ambrose. "Well, good-bye! Come and tell me how it all goes."

"Of course," said Blair, getting his hat and stick.

"By the way," said Ambrose indolently; "this is quite a secret at present, isn't it? You have not told any one but me that you have ever seen this young lady?"

"It is quite a secret if you like to call it so," said Blair. "I have told no one."

"I can't help thinking you were right," said Ambrose. "If I were you I would not open my lips to any one."

Lord Blair nodded, but his face grew overcast.

"I do hate all this mystery," he said; "but I suppose you are right. What I want to do is to take her hand and stand before the world and say, 'Look here, what a prize I have got!'"

"Yes; very nice of you," said Austin Ambrose, "but as we concluded that it is your duty and policy to keep the world in the dark for the present, the best thing you can do is to say nothing to anybody."

"Yes," said Blair; "very well," and he strode out of the room.

Austin Ambrose sat and listened to the firm decided step as it died away on the stairs, then he rose and paced the room with slow and measured tread, his hard, cold face set like stone.

"It's risky!" he muttered at last. "It may fail, and then—But it will not fail! Blair is easy enough to manage, and the girl—well, she is like the rest, I suppose, and Heaven knows, they are easy enough to deceive! I'll chance it!"

He sat down and remained in thought for another quarter of an hour, then he rose, and putting a light overcoat over his dress clothes, he took his hat and went out.

Passing up one of the small streets, he reached a short row of houses, quiet, miniature-boxes of residences, called Angelsea Terrace, and knocking at No. 9, inquired if Miss Belvoir were at home.

Before the maid-servant could reply, a feminine voice called out through the open door in the narrow passage:

"Yes, she is. Is that you, Mr. Ambrose? Come in," and Austin Ambrose, passing through the little passage, which was lined with large photographs of Miss Belvoir in various costumes, entered the room from which the voice proceeded.

The room was a very small one—far too small to permit of that mentioned performance—swinging a cat—and it was rather shabbily, though gaudily furnished. The furniture was old and palpably rickety, the carpet was threadbare, but there was a brilliant wall paper, and a pair of gay-colored cushions. An opera cloak, lined with scarlet, lay on one of the chairs, and on the sofa were a hat and a pair of sixteen-button kid gloves.

The owner of the hat, opera cloak and gloves, sat at the table "discussing," as the old authors say, a lobster and a bottle of stout.

She was a girl of about two-and-twenty, neither pretty nor plain, but with a sharp, intelligent face—the sort of face one sees among the London street boys—and a pair of dark and wide-awake eyes, which were by far her best features. She wore a light-blue dressing gown—rather frayed at the sleeves, by the way, and trimmed with a cheap and—by no means slightly—dirty lace. But for all its sharpness and the vulgarity of its surroundings, it was not altogether a bad face.

This was Miss Lottie Belvoir. She was an actress. Not a famous one, by any means—only a fifth-rate one at present; but she was waiting for a favorable opportunity to become a first-rate one. Perhaps the opportunity might come, perhaps it might not; meanwhile, Lottie Belvoir was content to work hard and wait. Some day, perchance, she would "fetch" the town, and then she would exchange the grimy back room in Angelsea Terrace for a house at St. John's Wood, the old satin dressing-gown for a costume of Worth, and the lobster and stout for pate de foie gras and champagne. Until that happy time arrived, she was perfectly content with minor parts in the burlesques at the Frivolity Theatre.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" she said, without rising or stopping at the manipulation of one of the lobster claws; "I thought I recognized your voice. Who was it said that he never forgot a voice or a face? Some great man. Well, I'm like him. You have come just in time. Have some lobster?"

"No, thank you, Lottie," said Austin Ambrose; "I have only just dined."

"Of course, you swells dine later than ever, now, and that's why you can't turn up at the theatre until we have got half through the piece. Well, sit down. Make yourself at home. Take care!" she exclaimed, as he sank into an arm-chair; "that chair's got a castor off. Here, take

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she, and she kicked and pushed another one toward him. "Don't put your cigar out; I'm just going to have a cigarette. Have some stout? No? Too heavy. I suppose? Well, here's some whisky. And how's the world treating you? You look very flourishing; but you always do."

"I might return the compliment," he said. "You are still on the Frivolity, Lottie?"

"Still at the Friv.," she asserted, lighting a cigarette and throwing herself not ungracefully on the sofa.

"Why don't you drop in some evening and give me a hand? You are too busy at your club with another kind of hand—a hand at cards, I suppose?" she added with charming candor.

He smiled.

"I'll look in some night," he said; "but I suppose they will soon be going on tour."

"Yes, in another fortnight," she said with a yawn, "and precious glad I shall be. London's getting too warm even for this child."

"And yet I want you to stay in London," he said quietly.

She looked across at him and blew out a ring of smoke scientifically.

"You do, do you? What for? Are you going to take a theatre and engage me as leading lady?"

"Do I look like it?" he retorted with a smile.

"Well, not much," she said, surveying him critically. "People might take you for a good many things, Mr. Ambrose, but they wouldn't take you for a fool, or if they did they would be taken in."

"Thanks, Lottie," he said. "That is something like a compliment."

"No, I don't think you are such an idiot as to take a theatre," she said, "but what do you want me to stay in London for?"

"To assist me in a little business I'm engaged in," he said.

moment Lottie turned crimson and then white, and her eyes blazed; then the actress asserted herself over the mere woman, and taking up another cigarette she lit it before she gave vent to a cool—

"Oh, really!"

But Austin Ambrose had seen the deep red and the quick flash of the eyes and was not taken in by the nonchalant "Oh, really!"

"Yes," he said; "but it is a profound secret at present."

"And so you want me to tell everybody! I understand."

"No," he said. "I do not want you to tell anyone this time. I want it to be really kept quiet. You will see why directly."

"And the happy young lady is Miss Violet Graham, I suppose," said Lottie, after a moment's pause. "What a funny thing it is that Fortune showers all her gifts on some persons and bestows only slaps on the face on others. Now, there's Miss Graham, the richest woman in England, and Fortune goes and gives her the nicest and handsomest young man for a husband, while I, poor Lottie Belvoir, have to struggle and struggle, and work like a nigger, and all I get is some small part in a frivolity burlesque. It is funny, isn't it?"

"Very funny," assented Austin Ambrose; "but you are a little wrong in your guess. It is not Miss Graham."

"Not Miss Graham! Who then?"

Austin Ambrose did not hesitate a moment. He had well calculated his plans, and he knew that if he meant to tell anything to the sharp Miss Lottie he must tell all. Half confidences could be of no use.

"Look here, Lottie," he said, "I am going to confide in you because I know that you are unlike most women, inasmuch as you can, if you like, hold your tongue."

"Thanks," she said, watching him closely; "that's a compliment for me. I really think you do mean business, you are so very polite."

"I told you I wanted you to help me, and you can't help me unless you know all I know. Blair is not going to marry Miss Graham, but a young woman whom I have not seen, whom I have never heard of—nor any one else. She is, I believe, a kind of servant."

Lottie sat up, open-eyed.

"What!" she exclaimed, and the color came into her face again. If Lord Blair had been going to marry Miss Graham, she would have regarded it as a matter of course, but that he should be going to throw himself away upon a "kind of servant" was more than she could bear with equanimity.

"It is true," said Austin Ambrose. "Blair—Blair, of all people!—going to make such a fool of himself as that! Why, he must be out of his mind!"

Austin Ambrose shrugged his shoulders.

(To be Continued.)

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The proprietor of one of the best known multiple shopping systems is credited with saying, "Give me any old shop, in any old street, and I'll guarantee to make it in twelve months the most widely known and best frequented shop in the district." He was asked to explain. Holding up three fingers he said, "I believe in the trinity of LIGHT, WARMTH, COMFORT. I should dazzle the moths until the candle drew them, I should bring them into a warm, comfortable shop, filled with a soft, pleasing radiance, and the rest is—well, mere child's play."

Mixed metaphors, perhaps, but expressive. Now we can more than imagine the kind of shop this well-known individual would open, for we pass it in almost every town—always a landmark to the street. No one fails to notice it. There is an indefinable air of welcome and invitation as one stands for a moment on the pathway and lets one's gaze travel inside it. The subdued, restful lighting effect that so charms because of its very unobtrusiveness, the absence of dark corners, the intangible feeling that if one would step inside one would be sure of experiencing a delicious sense of warmth and comfort and cheerfulness—all these are part of its appeal. Truly a shop with an individuality.

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War News
Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

OFFICIAL.
LONDON, March 27. (Official.) The Governor, Newfoundland; attacks, west of the Meuse, the day occupied Avocourt wood, near Hucourt Hill. Recently there had been no infantry attacks, and on British front nothing special.

There is considerable fighting on the whole of the Russian front, especially west of Dvinsk and near Naroch. The Russians have captured enemy positions at various points, taking many prisoners.

British seaplanes, escorted by cruisers, attacked German air sheds at Schleswig-Holstein on Monday. The weather was stormy. Three seaplanes are missing. The destroyer Medusa is believed to have sunk through collision. Our destroyers sank two enemy patrol vessels and one torpedo boat.

In a fight in the North Sea on 25th, between an armed enemy raider and the British merchant cruiser carina, both were sunk. Of the raider's crew of three hundred, 120 were rescued.

The cross-channel steamer Sussex torpedoed, had reached port. A hundred lives were lost.

The Atlantic transport liner Southampton has been torpedoed and sunk. Eleven lives were lost.

General Smuts has achieved further important success, driving the enemy from positions on the East River. BONAR LAW.

ST. PIERRE BULLETIN.
PARIS, March 27. (Official.) In Argonne mine fighting in favor of Hill Morte, bomb-blasts in Courtes Chaussees section. West of the Meuse, it is expected that the fighting will be interrupted by the Douaumont-Vaux front. In West, violent bombardment, especially in Mourville and Chailion roads. No infantry action on rest of front. Calm night.

THE SUBMARINE SITUATION.
WASHINGTON, March 27. (Official.) View of the submarine situation taking on aspects of much gravity. The possibility of breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany again being discussed as one of the eventualities which is expected to follow, if it is shown that the steamships Sussex and Englishman are victims of submarines.

STEAMERS SUNK.
LONDON, March 27. (Official.) The French steamship Hebe, 1,000 tons, the British steamship Khartoum, 1,000 tons, the Hebe and Cerne have been sunk, and two members of the crew of the Khartoum have been saved. It is feared that the remaining crew members have been drowned. The British steamship Cecilia, the sinking of which was announced yesterday, was blown up by a mine. She had a general cargo from Portland, Maine.

SOLDIERS ARRIVE AT HALIFAX.
HALIFAX, N.S., March 27. (Official.) Nine officers, one warrant officer and 96 non-commissioned officers and men, returned wounded or invalided arrived here today from Liverpool. Among them was Clinton Amundson, Elmstead, who has been wounded several times. He belonged to a Calgary battalion. These men will be taken to Quebec.

NOT A TURKISH SUBMARINE.
WASHINGTON, March 27. (Official.) Turkey today informed the United States that it was not a submarine of the Ottoman Government which sunk the liner Persia in the Mediterranean last winter, with the loss of an American life. The Turkish note, in reply to repeated inquiries from the U.S., declares that all Ottoman submarines are under instructions to fly the national flag, and that none was in the vicinity when the Persia was sunk. Both Germany and Austria denied that their submarines destroyed the ship.

LIVES LOST ON THE 'ENGLISH MAN.'
WASHINGTON, March 27. (Official.) Advice to the State Department today from Bristol, England, says that one American, T. Backley, a hotel man, was apparently lost by the sinking of the British ship Englishman and that the total loss of life was

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