

A MISSION FULFILLED

CHAPTER IV.

"I Love You, Margherita!"

The next morning Margherita's mother had to remind her daughter twice that it was her day for the Hotel. The first time the girl seemed not to hear the words; the second time she answered, "Si, madre mia," but still delayed; and it was considerably later than usual before at length she placed her basket upon her head, and made her way slowly and unwillingly toward the scene of her duties. She had a strange repugnance, like a presentiment of evil, against going; but once there, she stationed herself quietly at her usual post and began to lay out her corals.

Before five minutes had elapsed a door above opened, and Ronaldson came down the stairs. She did not raise her head as he descended, only answering his greeting by a soft "Buon giorno, signor."

"Why did she not look up and show those glorious eyes?" thought Keith; and he felt annoyed.

"Don't you want me to buy anything from you today, Margherita?" he asked, pausing beside her.

"Ah, no, signor! The signor bought so much two days ago."

"But I should like something more, Margherita."

The girl looked troubled. No one was better pleased than she to make a good sale of her corals, even to young Englishmen who had bought them chiefly for the sake of her beaux yeux; but there was a repugnance in her heart to take any more of Ronaldson's money. She made no answer, and he came nearer to her.

"Why will you not look up, Margherita? Are you afraid of me? Why do you not answer me?"

"Ah, signor, what have I to say?" She glanced up for a moment, and caught his glowing eyes fixed upon her; then she looked down more troubled than ever, her face dyed crimson.

It was not often that Margherita was self-conscious; but she could not

meet this man's gaze, and she trembled. He put his hand into the basket and took out a chain worth two or three francs.

"I will have this—in remembrance of you, Margherita," he said, half absent-mindedly; and as he spoke he put a gold napoleon in the place.

But she pushed the coin away.

"Take it back, signor," she said, with a touch of pretty pride. "I am an honest girl; I do not want your gold. As for the chain, you have no need of it—give it to me again."

He was astonished to find himself obeying her. With a flush upon his cheek he replaced the trinket, and slowly re-pocketed his napoleon. There was a pause; but he could not make up his mind to go.

"Are you angry with me, Margherita?" he asked, at length, gently.

She lifted her dovelike eyes for a moment to his.

"Angry? Ah, signor, how could a poor girl like me be angry with such a you? You mock me!"

"I could not mock you, Margherita. Say you forgive me."

He was, perhaps, unconscious of the earnestness of his eyes; but her head looked up at his, and she saw the light in his eyes. His face was close to hers. And in another moment his lips had lightly touched the smooth cheek.

"Forgive me, Margherita," he repeated. "Child! he exclaimed, suddenly, carried beyond himself, 'I love you!'"

She turned away her glowing face, but she did not resist or reproach him; only the little brown hand which rested on the window-sill trembled visibly. Ah! he had been ready enough to pay her ten times over for her pretty trinkets; but he was robbing her now of something far more precious than a coral necklace. Suddenly he started and moved away. Two persons came running down the stairs; and, as they passed beside the coral girl, he turned and slowly descended. The newcomers were two young and lively Americans; and as he passed on he heard one mutter to the other in English, "My, what a beauty!"

They were turning over her wares as he reached the bottom of the stairs, and he paused a minute to listen to the soft replies that alternated with their stumbling Italian queries. Then he made his way outside. When he was turned in half an hour the girl was gone. Why had she left so quickly? Was it those chattering Americans who had frightened her away? But, in his heart, he knew that it was not the chattering Americans; he dimly guessed that it was a feeling which in his own rank would have been called forsworn respect, which forbade the coral girl to stand on the hotel staircase to await a repetition of his cruel flattery.

"Cruel! why was it cruel? How could he help himself? What was he to do? Must he go away? No, that he could not—he would not do. What was the use of looking forward? It was wasted. He would not injure the girl—no, by all that was sacred he would not!"

He walked out again upon the green hillside, flinging himself down moodily upon a sunny, cistus-scented slope. All that day he wandered about aimlessly, and the next. He had never felt so before! Good heavens! was he to break his heart over a capricious girl? The day after he was morning for coming to the hotel; and all the morning he sat waiting in the courtyard, watching for the slim, upright young figure, with basket on its head, to enter; but she never came. He grew restless and angry. Was it because of him that she would not come? Did the girl fear him? Or was she perhaps ill or in trouble?

With a sudden impulse, he flung away his cigar, and stroled down toward the shore. Mounting the little wooden ladder, he knocked at the low doorway, and was answered by the voice of Lucia Rucchi, the girl's mother. Half hesitating, he opened, and stepped inside. Lucia, engaged in some mysterious process of cooking, stood before the little stove; the bimbo lay sprawling at her feet, while Margherita leaned in her favorite attitude, busily knitting, against the open window. For a moment Ronaldson had doubt as to his reception, but they were set at rest by the friendly smile with which the Capriote housewife greeted him, and he explained his errand. He wished to go out boating after dinner to-night; would Stefano have the punt ready by eight o'clock, beside the pier? It was but a short message, yet when it was delivered he turned round to speak to Margherita, but she had already vanished, her bare feet having glided noiselessly along the wooden floor.

In another minute he had left the cottage, and was strolling slowly along the shore, his eyes searching both upward path and level strand. The girl was not to be seen anywhere. He did not go up toward the village she must have been in sight; had she been on the shingle she would have been visible; she must have been in some neighborly house to escape him. He felt wroth—with himself or her?—as he moved moodily along the strand, out of harmony with the green earth and dancing sea and cloudless sky. Suddenly he paused, as his eye caught sight of a streak of color lying within one of the little alcoves of the shore. The next moment he went quickly forward, and stood beside Margherita. Her knitting was still in her hands, and she was making a pretense of using the needles, as she leaned back in the shadow of the rock; but Ronaldson could see that her fingers trembled as he approached. She was not a girl to show cowardice, however; and, as he came on, she drew herself up and moved a little forward, as if to disdain the appearance of having hidden from him.

"Why do you run away from me?" he asked, hotly.

She paused. She was too honest to deny that she had run away from him, and too proud to acknowledge it.

"Do you hate me, Margherita? Why did you not come to the hotel this morning?"

Still she was silent; but, after a moment, she raised dark eyes full of an eloquent reproach toward his face.

"Don't you believe me, Margherita? I tell you it is true! I love you better than I have ever loved any woman in my life before."

Half in his own tongue, half in hers, for, even at this moment, it struck the young man how much more easily his usually halting Italian lent itself to this theme than any other—the protestation leaped from his lips, and needed no translation to a woman's heart.

She turned away her head, still making no reply; and he went on more eagerly.

"Margherita!" he said, "I cannot do without you. You are the sweetest, loveliest woman I ever saw. Say you believe me, Margherita!"

Then at last she turned toward him, her eyes swimming in tears.

"Ah, signor, why do you pursue a poor girl like this? Are you not ashamed?" But as he attempted to draw her toward him, she drew back firmly.

"No, no, signor; no more kisses. Ah, you are cruel!" And suddenly she dropped her knitting and hid her face in her hands, to hide the pleading, handsome face so close to hers.

"Margherita! Margherita! listen to me. I would not injure you—"

"Ah, signor, do you not injure me by words like this? Ah, Dio! do you think a poor girl has no heart?" And for a moment she wept silently; then with a strong effort she drew herself together. James Spencer need not have been afraid. Margherita Rucchi was not of a race to allow passion to dominate over self-respect.

"Go, signor," she said, pointing toward the village, "go, and leave me in peace. As for me, I have been foolish ever to listen to you."

Her voice was gentle as ever, but there was a dignity about the action which might have been envied by many a well-taught woman of the world.

But Ronaldson caught her hand in his.

"Listen to me, Margherita," he cried, his features full of agitation, "you misunderstand me—you do me wrong. I love you too well to insult you—Margherita, I wish to marry you. Now, will you not say you love me?"

A quick glow spread from neck to brow on the smooth olive face, and the girl's lips parted in a little gasp. Was he in earnest—this bright, gay, handsome young Englishman? Ah, Dio! did she love him or not? She had no time for further thought, as Keith caught her in his arms and kissed her passionately. She did not resist him now. Only, after a moment or two, she struggled out of his arms, and raised her clear glance to his. It was a glance that, as Keith felt, would have drawn the truth out of a stone.

"You mean it, signor?" she asked, quickly. "You are not playing with me?"

"My darling," said the young man—and Keith Ronaldson had never looked handsomer than he did at that moment, with the glow of what he felt to be a pure and righteous resolution in his face—"I swear to you, I mean it, Margherita," he added, softly, as he feasted his eyes on the sweet, proud, young face, with that touch of reverence which is the sign of real feeling. "I could never dare to love you in any other way." And it was true. There was something about this barefooted coral girl—an instinctive shrinking from familiarity, a maidenly modesty, a touch of inherent pride and dignity—that would have made the same impression on one much more hardened and dissolute than Keith Ronaldson.

"Do you love me?" he asked, again, searching the eyes which had been cast down by his reply, satisfied by its earnestness.

"Ah, signor, I do not know—I cannot say!"

"Say it now, sweet little Margherita; say 'tamo, amico mio!'"

"Amico mio," she began, smiling and blushing, then broke off. "Ah, signor, I am puzzled—I know not what to do! What will the madre say?"

"You must not let the madre, little girl—not just yet. I too have much to think of and to arrange before I can settle things. But you will trust me, Rita?"

"Si, signor," she whispered softly, "I will trust."

"And some day—soon—you will be my sposa—my darling little wife. You must think of that, cara mia."

"Ah, signor, how can I be your wife—a girl like me? You will be ashamed of me. Ah, Dio mio! it would have been better had we never met. Go away and forget me, signor; it is best so," she exclaimed, passionately.

The tears were in her soft brown eyes, but she meant her words; and it took some minutes of talk and caresses from her lover to turn her from the point.

"Margherita," he said, tenderly, "I will never go away and leave you. When I go, you shall go with me."

At the end of the ten minutes or so the two separated, Ronaldson wandering further along the shore; Margherita, after waiting awhile, to speed homeward, her knitting still in her hand, her face full of the tender glow of a new emotion that touched and glorified each lovely feature into a startling radiance of beauty. It was as if the sun had shined upon her. Ronaldson reflected, more in the girl's account, he said to his credit, than on his own. He was himself too deeply in love just now to care much for the comments of the whole world; but it was well for her, as yet, till matters were more settled, to keep free from the gossip of the village. He did not let her go, however, till he had extracted from her a half-promise that she would keep a watch for his return with Stefano that evening, and, if possible, meet him afterward for a few moments. So soon as this was settled, the coral girl escaped, shyly, willingly, as it seemed to Keith. But then even he, accustomed to the society and attentions of women as he was, had not as yet learned all the little graceful fancies of a timid girl.

Both congratulated themselves that they had separated unnoticed; that no curious eyes had been near; but they were wrong. As Margherita's bare feet ran lightly over the shingle, a blue-shirted figure, lying beneath the shade of one of the boats, raised itself on one elbow unobserved, to glance after her, and then remained gazing in the opposite direction, till the outline of the Englishman emerged from the shadow of the rocks at some little distance, and commenced slowly moving onward. Then the recumbent form raised itself and Geronimo—for it was he—uttered a low curse between his teeth. He was the handsomest young fellow in all the Island of Capri; but at that moment his face was not pleasant to look upon, and he might have stood for a model of Lucifer at the moment of being turned out of heaven.

To be Continued.

HAVE YOU TRIED Holloway's Corn Cure? It has no equal for removing those troublesome excrescences, as many have testified who have tried it.

THROUGH THE CANADIAN NORTH

Vastness of the Grand Trunk Pacific Project.

THROUGH VIRGIN TERRITORY

No Other Country to Build So Many Miles of Railway as Canada During Next Five Years.

Montreal, Aug. 28.—The best place to begin a tale is at the beginning. The proper state of mind for a traveler adventuring into a new country is that of the engagingly youthful short-story writer who "discovered" Paris. Granted these two premises, this is the story of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the largest and most important railway project now afoot on this continent, and one destined to have a large influence, not only in Canada, but in the United States. No other country in the world with a population of only 6,000,000 will build so many miles of railway as will be constructed in Canada within the next five years.

The 3,600 miles of main line of the Grand Trunk Pacific will be the big job. In addition there will be constructed several feeders, or branch lines, including one stretching southerly about 220 miles to Fort William and Port Arthur on Lake Superior, for the purpose of reaching navigation on the Great Lakes. Another will run from the main line southerly, for about 250 miles, to North Bay, Ontario, to make connections with the lines of the Grand Trunk. Another branch will run south to Montreal. Feed lines to suck up the eastbound grain are proposed to Brandon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Calgary, and to Dawson, in the Yukon Territory. The terminals of the main line will be Moncton, New Brunswick, in the east, and the new town of Prince Rupert, 25 miles south of Fort Simpson, on the Pacific Coast. Winnipeg, 1,800 miles from Moncton, lies exactly midway between the two terminal ports, and will be the half-way house of the new line.

Canadian Government's Part.

The Canadian Government is to build the eastern half of the line, and the railway company the western half. It is well worth while setting forth the agreement between the two parties. It is of a two-fold character, which will combine a transportation line, constructed at the expense of the Government, with the lines of a private corporation, under the entire control, management, and operation of the Grand Trunk Pacific Company. The company was chartered in 1903, with a capital stock of \$45,000,000, of which \$20,000,000 may be issued as preferred stock. The railway company is to acquire all the common stock, and must retain a majority holding during the term of the agreements with the Government.

From Winnipeg east the line will be built at the cost of the Canadian Government, the supervision of four commissioners and leased to the railway company for a period of 50 years. The rental for this eastern division has been fixed as follows: For the first seven years the company shall operate it, subject only to payment of "working expenditure," for the next succeeding 43 years the company is to pay an annual rental of a sum equal to 3 per cent per annum upon the cost of construction, provided that if, in any one or more of the first three years of the period of 43 years, the net earnings over and above working expenditure shall not amount to 3 per cent of the cost of construction, the difference between the net earnings and the rental shall not be payable by the company, but shall be capitalized and form part of the cost of construction, upon the whole amount of which rental is required to be paid at the rate of 3 per cent after the first 10 years of the lease and during the remainder of its full term.

At the expiration of 50 years the company has the privilege of an extension of the lease for another 50 years, unless the Government shall determine in the meantime to undertake construction of the road. But should the Government take over the line they must grant to the railway company, for another period of 50 years, running rights which may be necessary to the successful operation of the entire system from coast to coast. The time fixed for the completion of the entire line is Dec. 31, 1911.

The section of the line west of Winnipeg, to be built by the railway company, will have the backing of the Government in this way: The Dominion Government guarantees the company's first mortgage bonds, principals and interest, for 50 years to the amount of \$13,000 per mile on the prairie section from Winnipeg to the foot of the Rockies, and also 75 per cent up to the sum of \$30,000 per mile on the mountain section, which extends from the prairies to Prince Rupert on the Pacific Coast, in Northern British Columbia.

New Line in Virgin Territory.

When the Canadian Pacific was built the most southerly route possible was chosen, and the line runs closely along the northern boundary of the United States. The new line breaks through the virgin territory of the almost unknown north. Five years ago the idea of a railway as far north as the Grand Trunk Pacific was scarcely dreamed of. When the Union Pacific was built railroad men shook their heads and predicted that 97 per cent of its revenues would come from through business, and

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It's a bad stomach, a stomach that cannot properly perform its functions. Among its symptoms are distress after eating, nausea between meals, heartburn, belching, vomiting, flatulence and nervous headaches.

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Cloth is special value. Splendid quality, thoroughly waterproof. Fawn, navy, black and gray. Better secure material for the new raincoat while such value as this can be had. \$1.00

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A large and beautiful assortment just placed in stock. Cream, black, pale blue, old rose, nile green, pearl gray, mauve and champagne. A splendid quality. 75c

A better quality—very handsome material. Reseda, old rose, raspberry, pale blue, mauve, pearl gray, champagne, light navy, cream and black. \$1.00

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For 75c we've a line of tweeds that regularly sold for a dollar a yard. Shadow checks, in three shades of gray. See them sure. 34 inches wide. 75c

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In black and white. Four sizes to select from. These fabrics are going to be very popular for Autumn suits. Very reasonable at 50c

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Hardly believe such value was possible—unless the goods were right under your eyes. All wool materials. Both light and dark shades. Very latest patterns. 50c

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5 per cent from local traffic; in less than half a century these figures were exactly reversed. "And that is what will happen to the Grand Trunk Pacific," says the engineer of the new line.

The prime object of the new road is to relieve the grain congestion at Winnipeg and to move the wheat from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta to the east and to Europe as rapidly as possible. From 36,000,000 to 17,000,000 bushels of "overflow" wheat at Lake Huron ports, was the portion of the Grand Trunk five years ago. The railway got 30,000,000 bushels last year. It was just this sort of business that made them eager for an inlet to the west where fields more than once last year the daily receipts of wheat at Winnipeg exceeded the total received at Duluth, Minneapolis and Chicago combined. That may help to explain to you why Winnipeg is growing like a green bay tree. The Grand Trunk Pacific people are working like beavers to participate in the transportation of the crop of 1907.

Hugh D. Lumsden, chief engineer of the Government section of the new road, points out: "In order to haul wheat at a profit 2,000 miles from the wheat field to the Atlantic, it is absolutely necessary that the road be as free as may be from heavy grades and excessive curves. While the entire line is not yet definitely located, enough field work has been done to demonstrate beyond a doubt that the transcontinental, as far as grades go, will be one of the best-grade lines across this continent. From the great wheat fields of the west to tidewater on the Atlantic the grades going east will, in all probability, not exceed 0.4 of a foot per hundred feet. This will mean that a modern locomotive will handle 42 cars between Winnipeg and Moncton."

Advantages of New Route.

The Grand Trunk Pacific will cross the Rockies over a pass that will not exceed 2,500 feet. The Santa Fe goes over the Rockies at an altitude of 7,000 feet. The Rio Grande and the Colorado Midland at about 10,000; the Union Pacific at 8,247; the Northern Pacific at 5,567; the Great Northern at 5,292; and the Canadian Pacific at 5,299. The new road will shorten the distance from Liverpool to Yokohama by 500 miles, a full day's run.

One naturally thinks of Northern Canada as a cold, wintry, inhospitable country. On the contrary, the engineers of the new line when they had got over the height of land, found the climate milder and milder as they traveled northwest.

Dr. Robert Bell, with

Eat What You Like

Don't Starve or Diet. But Use Mio-na, and Cure Your Stomach Troubles.

The average treatment of stomach troubles consists of a rigid diet, which often has the effect of paralyzing the digestive system. Of course it would be foolish for anyone who knows that some foods are positively harmful and poisonous to continue eating them, even while following the Mi-o-na treatment, but in ordinary cases of stomach troubles it is not necessary to starve or diet if Mi-o-na is faithfully used, a tablet before each meal.

This scientific remedy for the cure of stomach troubles, acts upon the whole digestive system, and strengthens the organs so that they are able to digest any food that is eaten without fear of distress. If you suffer from loss of appetite, belching of gases, sour taste in the mouth, furrowed tongue, severe pains in the region of the stomach, depression of spirits, bad dreams, lack of energy, headaches, backaches, loss of strength and weight, you can be assured that these troubles are all due to imperfect digestion.

Strengthen the stomach by taking a Mi-o-na tablet before each meal, and soon you will gain in weight, strength will return, and your food will give nourishment, so that the rich red blood will carry good health to every part of your system. Mi-o-na costs but 50 cents a box. If you cannot obtain Mi-o-na of your druggist, it will be sent by mail, post-paid, on receipt of price. Write us for advice on your case from a leading stomach specialist which will be sent free. The R. T. Booth Company, Ithaca, N. Y.