



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

CHAPTER II.

The size and grandeur of the place awed her, and she stood uncertain which direction to take, when a maid servant, with a pleasant face and a shy smile, came hurriedly through a wicket set in the closely-cut box hedge and said:

"Are you Miss Margaret, please?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Mrs. Hale sent me to meet you, miss. This way please." And with a smile of welcome, the girl led her through a narrow alley of greenery, into a near courtyard which seemed to belong to a wing of the great house. An old fountain plashed in the center of the court, and all around were beds of bright flowers, which filled the air with color and perfume. Up the old red walls also climbed blue starred clematis and honeysuckle, through which the windows glistened like diamonds.

Margaret looked round and drew her breath with that excess of pleasure which is almost pain.

"Oh, what a lovely place!" she murmured involuntarily.

The servant looked pleased.

"It is pretty, isn't it, miss?" she asked. "Of course it isn't the grand part of the Court, but I think that it's as beautiful as any part of the terrace or the Italian gardens."

"Nothing could be more lovely than this!" said Margaret.

Then she uttered a low cry of loving greeting, and running forward, threw her arms round an old lady, who hearing her voice, had come to the open doorway.

"Why, Margaret—Madge!" said the old lady tremulously, as she pressed the girl to her bosom, and then held her at arm's length that she might look into her face, "Why, my dear—my dear! Why, how you've grown. Is this little Margaret?—my little pale-faced Madge who was no taller than the table, and all legs and wings?" and leading the girl into a bright little parlor, she sank into a chair, and holding her by the hands, looked her over with that loving admiration of which only a mother or a grandmother can be capable; and the old lady was justified, for the girl, as she stood, slightly leaning forward with a flush on her face and her eyes glowing with affection and emotion, presented a picture beautiful enough to melt the heart of an anchorite.

"Yes, it's I, grandma," she said, half laughing, half crying. "And you think I've grown?"

"Grown! My dear, when I saw you last you were a child; you are a wo-

man now, and a very—"beautiful" she was going to say, but stopped short—"a very passable young woman, too! I can scarcely believe my eyes! My little madcap Madge!"

"Oh, not madcap any longer, grandma, dear," said the girl, sinking on her knees and taking off her hat, that she might lean her head comfortably on the old lady's bosom, "not wild madcap now, you know. I am Miss Margaret Hale, of the School of Art, and a silver medalist," and she laughed with sparkling eyes, which rather indicated that there was something of the wildness left notwithstanding her dignity.

"Dear, dear me!" murmured the old lady. "Such a grand young lady! You must tell me all about it. But there, what am I thinking of? You must be tired—how did you come from the station, dear?"

"I walked," said the girl.

"Walked! Why didn't you take a fly, child?"

The girl colored slightly.

"Oh, it was a lovely evening and I was tired of sitting so long, and—fls are for rich people, you know, grandmamma," laughingly. "and although I am a silver medalist, I am not a millionaire yet! But indeed—" she added quickly—"I enjoyed the walk amazingly, it is such a lovely country, and my things are coming up by the carrier. And now I'll go and wash some of the dust and smuts away, and come back and tell you—oh, everything."

The old lady called the maid, and the girl, still shyly, led Margaret to a dainty little room which overlooked the flowered court, which filled it with the odors of the clematis and honeysuckle and sweetbrier.

Margaret went to the window, and leaning over, drew in a long breath of the perfumed air.

"Oh, beautiful! beautiful!" she murmured. "Ah! you should have lived in London for five years to appreciate this lovely place. Mary—is your name Mary?"

The maid blushed.

"Why, yes, miss! Did you guess it?" she replied, almost awed by the cleverness of this tall, lovely young creature from London.

Margaret laughed.

"Most nice girls are called Mary," she said; "and I am sure you are nice."

The girl blushed again, but, rendered speechless with pleasure, could only stare at her shyly, and run from the room.

When Margaret came down it seemed to the old lady that she was more beautiful than before, with her bright, soft hair brushed down from her oval face, and her slim, undulating figure revealed by the absence of the traveling jacket. Tea was on the table and a huge bowl of Gloire roses, and the whole room looked the picture of comfort and elegance.

"Now tell me all about it," said Mrs. Hale, when the girl had seated herself in a low chair beside the window, with her teacup and bread and butter. "And you are quite a famous personage, Margaret, are you?"

The girl laughed, a soft, low laugh of innocent happiness.

"Not famous, dear," she said, "a very long way from the top of the tree; but I've been lucky in getting one of my pictures into the Academy and gaining the silver medal, and what is better than all, my picture is sold."

That I know Mr. Geo. E. Compton and believe his statement to be true and correct."

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and she stretched out her long, white, shapely hand—the artist's hand—so that the old lady could take it and fondle it.

"Yes, my dear," she said. "And I can't tell you how glad I am to have you. It seems ages instead of five years since we parted in London and I came down here as housekeeper to the earl—ages! And the change will do you good; I think you want a little country air; you're looking a trifle pale, now that you have settled down a bit."

"It's only the London color," said the girl, smiling. "Nobody carries many roses on his cheeks in London. What lovely ones those are on the table, grandma, and what cream! How the girls would stare if they saw and tasted it. You know we drink chalk and water in London, grandma!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the old lady.

"They carry it round in cans and call it milk, but it is chalk and water all the same," she said, laughingly. "And now, dear, you must tell me all about yourself—why, we have done nothing but talk about foolish me since I came! Are you quite happy, grandma, and do you like being housekeeper to a grand earl?"

"Very much, my dear," said the old lady, with a touch of dignity. "It is a most important and responsible post, and she stroked the smooth white hand she still held.

"I should think so," said Margaret, with quick sympathy. "Keeping any kind of house must be a tremendous affair, but keeping such an enormous place as this—why, grandma, it is like a town, there seems no end to it!"

The old lady nodded proudly.

"Yes, Leyton Court is a very grand place, my dear," she assented. "I suppose it's one of the grandest, if not the grandest, in the country. You shall go over it some day when the earl is away."

"The earl, yes," said Margaret. "It was very kind of him to let me come."

Mrs. Hale tossed her head.

"Oh, my dear, he knows nothing about it!" she said. "Bless me, the earl is too great a person to know anything about the goings on of such humble individuals as you and me. I am my own mistress in my own apartments, my dear, and am quite at liberty to have my own granddaughter stay with me."

"Of course," said the girl, quickly. "And is he nice?—the earl, I mean."

"Nice!" repeated the old lady, as if there were something disrespectful in the word. "Well, 'nice' is scarcely the word—I've only seen him half a dozen times since I came, so I can't say what he's like; but he was very pleasant then—in his way, my dear."

This seemed to surprise the unsophisticated old lady more than all the rest.

"Dear, dear me!" she mused. "Who ever would have thought that little wild Madge would become an artist and paint pictures—"

"And sell them, too," laughed the girl.

"How proud your poor father would have been if he had lived," added Mrs. Hale, with a sigh.

A swift shadow crossed the girl's lovely face, and there was silence for a moment.

"And you are quite happy, Madge? The life suits you?"

"Yes, quite, dear; oh, quite. Of course it is hard work. I paint all day while there is light enough, and I read books on art—I was going to say all night," and she smiled. "Then there are the schools and lectures—oh! it is a very pleasant life when one is so fond of art as I am."

"And you don't feel lonely with no kin nor kin near you?"

"No," she said. "Three of us girls lodge together a little way from the schools, and so it is not lonely, and the lady who looks after the house—and us, of course—is pleasant and lady-like. Oh, no, it is not lonely, but—" her eyes softened—"but I am glad to come down and see you, grandma—I can't tell you how glad!"

Margaret opened her eyes.

"Not half-a-dozen times in five years? Then he doesn't live here always?"

"Not always. He is in Spain or Ireland some parts of the year, but he lives at the Court during most of the summer. You see, my dear, great folks like the Earl of Ferrers keep to themselves more than humble people. The earl has his own apartments—you can see them from the drive; they run along the terrace—and his own particular servants. Excepting Mr. Stibbins, the butler, and Mr. Larkhall, his valet, and the footmen, none of us see anything of his lordship."

"He is quite like a king, then?" said the girl musingly.

"Quite," assented the old lady approvingly; "quite like a king, as you say; and everybody in Leyton Ferrers regards him as one. Why, the queen herself couldn't be more looked up to or feared!"

The girl pondered over this. You don't meet many earls and dukes in the National Art Schools, and this one possessed an atmosphere of novelty for Margaret.

"And does he live here all alone?" she asked.

"All alone; yes."

"In this great place? How lonely he must be!"

"No, my dear," said the old lady. "Great people are never lonely; they are quite—quite different to us humble folks."

Margaret smiled to herself at the naive assertion.

"I thought he would have had some relations to live with him. Hasn't he any sons—children?"

Mrs. Hale shook her head.

"No, no children! There was a son but he died. There is a nephew, Lord Blair Leyton, but he and the earl don't agree, and he has never been here, though, of course, he will come into the property, when the earl dies, which won't be for many a long year. I hope."

"Blair Leyton! and he's a lord too—"

"A viscount," said the old lady. "I don't like to speak ill of a gentleman, especially one I don't know, but I am afraid his young lordship is—is"—she looked round for a word—"is a very wicked young man, my dear."

"How do you know?" asked Margaret, nestling into the comfortable chair to listen at her ease.

(To be Continued.)

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Wedding Bells.

SOUTHMOTT—NAPIER.

A very interesting wedding was celebrated at the Church of St. Andrew, last Thursday evening, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m., by the Rev. Father Lillian, in the presence of a large gathering of friends and guests. The bride, Miss Lillian Roscoe, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Roscoe, 1722, 13th Avenue E., was accompanied by her father, Mr. William Roscoe, and her mother, Mrs. Lillian Roscoe. The groom, Mr. Napier, of Ayr, Scotland. The ceremony of the church leaning on the altar of her father while the choir sang the hymn "The Voice of the Bride" was of white satin with a train of white lace with white and red flowers and pearls, and carriage bouquet of white roses and white carnations. She was attended by her bridesmaid, Miss Lillian Roscoe, and her maid of honor, Miss Lillian Roscoe. The bride and groom left at 10.15 p.m. for their honeymoon. The ceremony was held at the residence of the bride's parents, the health of the bride and groom left at 10.15 p.m. for their honeymoon. The ceremony was held at the residence of the bride's parents, the health of the bride and groom left at 10.15 p.m. for their honeymoon.

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Boy Scout Notes.

SECOND ST. JOHN'S TROOP.

A large muster is desired at the weekly meeting at 7.30 this evening. Those present will be organized into three definite patrol work will be commenced.

There will be a continuation of the talks, subject for the evening, "The Machines in the War," and the boys will then engage in Semaphore signalling practice.

It is advisable for all desirous of joining the 2nd St. John's Troop to do so at once, as when the patrols are organized, no new members will be accepted for a considerable time.

The attention of the troop is drawn to the concert, arranged by Scoutmaster G. Christian, in aid of the equipment fund of the 1st troop. The concert takes place on March 12th, and the 2nd troop should act the true scout part and help to make it successful. Tickets can be obtained tonight.—H. E. G., S.W.

S.S. Sagona and Petrel Arrive.

The S. S. Sagona previously reported by us as being damaged, by ice coming from Louisburg to St. John's, reached port last evening in company with the S. S. Petrel, covering the distance from the latter port in 48 hours. Surveyors will examine the ship to-day and at the first opportunity she will go on dock.

WHY SHOULD I WORK WHEN IVE GOT A GENIUS IN HIS LINE FOR MAKING THAT BOY'S COMPLETED SWEATER SO FAR THIS MONTH AND STARTED



BUT THIS IS HOW

