



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

CHAPTER I.

The prince looked older than when we saw him last, but as he took Margaret's hand in his and pressed it warmly, he was able to meet her clear, pure eyes without a trace of embarrassment or reserve. Good blood has many advantages over the ignoble sort, and not the least is the power to conquer self. In the twelve months that had passed since he stood opposite Blair, and sought to take his life, Prince Rivani had fought a sterner fight even than that memorable one at Naples; the fight with a passion which had threatened to absorb his life, and he had conquered so completely that he could return the gentle pressure of Margaret's hand with one of brotherly affection.

"If I cannot have her for lover and wife," he had sworn to himself, "at least, I will have her for friend!"

It was a noble and unselfish vow, and he fought for strength until he had accomplished it.

"And now, when you can tear yourself apart, you two," said Blair, with a smile, addressing the two ladies, who displayed a great disposition to linger under the trees, and talk for the remainder of their lives, "perhaps we'd better go to the house."

"And what a lovely place it is!" exclaimed the princess. "I always thought the Villa Capri the beautiful house in the world, but it is a hovel compared to this. Oh, how happy you must be, dear!" she added in a whisper.

"Yes," said Margaret, with her quiet smile; "yes I am very fond of the court, but I think I am happy because I am the wife of its master!"

Florence glanced at Blair as he strode along beside the prince in earnest conversation.

"What a splendid fellow he is, dear," she said in a low voice, not altogether free from awe. "Do you know, if I weren't so fond of him—you aren't jealous?—I think I should be a little afraid of him. The stories we are always hearing about him since we came to England! It is always how Lord Blair—they always call him Blair!—rode in such and such a race, and how he swam such and such a

river, and fought such and such a man, and what a magnificent place Leyton Court is, and how lovely and famous the Countess of Ferrers had become! Why, when some people heard we were coming to stay with you they looked at us as if we were going down to Windsor Castle!"

Margaret laughed with all her old light-heartedness.

"You always were a terrible flatterer, Florence!" she said.

"Now, that's a shame, for it prevents me saying what I was going to remark; but I'll say it all the same. Margaret, do you know that I should scarcely have known either of you?"

"Really? We have grown so gray!"

"You have both grown so ridiculously young!" retorted the princess emphatically. "I don't mean that you ever looked old, that's absurd of course; but you were so grave and quiet and sad. Don't you remember the first day I saw you I said you reminded me of mamma? That you were so—so—what is the word you English are so fond of?—so sober! That's it! And now you speak and laugh like a young girl again!"

And Margaret answered her almost as she had answered Blair.

"Do I, dear? It must be because I am so happy!"

And indeed it was a very happy little party in the small dining-room that night. Blair was like the old Blair, full of stories of his wild youth, ready with the old light laughter; just the same Blair who used to win the hearts of old and young in the time before Austin Ambrose had commenced to set his snares.

They were so merry in a wise fashion, so light-hearted, that they had forgotten the past entirely; and it was not until the two ladies had left the room—the princess beseeching the two gentlemen not to leave them alone in the drawing-room too long, in case they should quarrel—that Blair suddenly grew quiet.

"I can't tell you how I have looked forward to this visit, Rivani," he said. "I have been looking forward to it since that day in Florence when we shook hands at parting, and you promised to come and stay with us."

"I am very glad to come," said the prince, with sincere earnestness. "Gladder still to see you so well—and the countess."

"You think she looks well?" said Blair, his face lighting up at once.

"She looks the picture of youth and health and happiness," said the prince quietly, "and more beautiful—you will pardon me—than ever in my eyes."

"And in mine, old fellow!" said Blair, holding out his hand.

There was silence after that significant meeting of the palms, then Blair said: "Any news?"

"The prince was silent a moment.

"No, not much," he answered, after a pause. "All you wished done I have had carried out."

He referred to two graves in the cemetery at Naples which he had undertaken to keep in order—two graves covered with huge slabs of black marble, one bearing the initials "A. A.," and the other "V. G."

Blair nodded, and his face grew cloudy for a moment.

"And Lottie?"

"Lottie doesn't need your generous assistance any longer," said the prince, with a smile. "She is now one of the most famous young ladies in Italy. I forgot to send you the paper containing an account of her great success in the new spectacular play"—he had not forgotten, but had re-

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membered with some consideration that the paper would only recall the past and its old bitterness—"she took them by storm, I assure you, and for weeks our volatile people were raving about her; for that matter they are raving still," and he laughed.

(To be Continued.)

**"KYRA,"**  
OR,  
The Ward of the Earl of Vering.

CHAPTER I.

Report said that there was a taint of the Vering wildness in his blood; but Percy's wild oats were limited to that lavishness of the coin of the realm, and that recklessness of life and limb, which he inherited from his progenitors. Of the other vices he was as innocent as a woman; more so perhaps, for it had been whispered that he was more careful of them than they were of themselves. No woman's hand would be raised against him on the day of reckoning with the words "Behold my ruin!"

For him there was a divinity about the meanest and poorest of the weaker sex which rendered them sacred in his eyes. Self-respect may have also gone far toward his puritanism in that respect; the old Vering pride had taken a new and a better turn in his case, and given to the word honor a meaning wide and significant.

"Here is a paragon!" exclaimed the reader, incredulously.

Alas, no! the perfect, godlike, immaculate hero no longer exists, thank Heaven! But it is as well, as Percy is our hero, to enlarge upon his good qualities, and allow the readers to find his bad qualities for themselves.

See him as he sits at his breakfast table on a spring morning, so bright and clear and vernal that one might feel tempted to imagine that the trees outside were great monarchs, instead of one of the ornamental properties of a London park.

That Percy Chester is no ascetic may be gathered from the appearance of the table, which is eloquent of a good appetite and a refined taste. Pate de foie gras, deviled kidneys, plovers' eggs, Chateau Margaux claret, Vienna rolls, not to mention a dozen other dainties, served on choice china and antique plate, and made pleasant to the eye by a bouquet of hothouse flowers, is not bad evidence of a man's epicureanism. If we add to this a slight idea of the room, with its hangings of stone gray and crimson, its ten or twelve choice examples of the modern masters, and a perfect armory of weapons of the chase, together with furniture costly and rare, one may also give the owner some credit for artistic taste.

As a matter of fact, Percy Chester was no mean judge of wine, pictures, or women; and his opinion was gradually acquiring a weight in the fashionable world as the dicta of a man who had good grounds for his decision, and knew his own mind.

Look at him as he leans back in his chair of Venetian ebony, poised in a claret glass in one hand and idly turning over a small pile of letters with the other.

Tall, stalwart—yet graceful as a Lord Vering should be, with eyes of gray, dark enough to be often mistaken for brown, with a handsome, clear-cut face, tinged by a touch of

the before-mentioned pride, and marked by that calm repose which birth and breeding can alone bestow. The mouth is hidden or nearly so by a thick, tawny mustache, but one can see by the delicate lines of the lower part of the face, that his lips are clean cut and delicate, and that the touch of hauteur is atoned for by the expression of almost womanly sensitiveness which plays in the curve of the lower lip.

The hands are long and thin, not over small, but as shapely as some of those Vandeyck loved to limn; the chest broad and hinting at great strength and power of endurance. Not an unworthy successor, as far as personal appearance goes, to the old earl himself, who had been reckoned one of the handsomest men of his day.

One by one he opened his letters, some from tradesmen inclosing bills, more often soliciting the honor of his custom, some written on daintily tinted paper and inclosed in miniature envelopes; one, signed La Valeria, beseeching him in the most charming of periods to take a box for her benefit, and join her little *petit souper*; one from his groom giving a bulletin of one of the hunters, and one from Messrs. Coutts, informing him that five hundred pounds, his quarterly allowance, had been placed to his credit by the Earl of Vering.

While he was glancing at this most satisfactory announcement, a light footstep was heard ascending the stairs, and the next moment the door was flung back rather than opened, and a boy of sixteen or thereabouts entered the room.

At a glance one could see that the lad was not only a gentleman, but of high birth; at another glance one would have detected the likeness between the two. But both that nameless air of *noli me tangere* which distinguished the Verings, and about the boy in the bargain, a youthful audacity and ignorance of fear or constraint that was prepossessing at first sight.

This was Charlie Merivale, a relation of Percy Chester's, and his most devoted admirer. Between the boy and the man there was a bond of affection which had existed since the day Percy Chester had discovered his little kinsman's mother in shabby-genteel poverty in some out-of-the-way suburb. With his usual quiet practical generosity he had raised the poor lady in comfort, and maintained her while she lived, and when she died charged himself with the guardianship of the lad, and had done it all with such strict, though unconscious obedience to the whole command of keeping the good deeds of the right hand secret from the left, that the lad himself had no suspicion; that he owed his preservation from the streets, his education, his whole existence to this handsome beau-ideal of a cousin. Percy Chester had told him, or led him to believe, that he possessed means of his own, so that the love the boy bore for him should be untaunted by interest or constrained by gratitude or humiliation.

Now, as the lad entered, dressed after the Eton fashion, straight of limb, and every inch a gentleman. Percy Chester looked up and felt for the hundredth time that he had done right in deceiving him.

"Hallo, Percy, old fellow!" exclaimed the boy, charging round to his kinsman to the imminent danger of a stand of bric-a-brac in his path; "here you are! Not finished breakfast yet? Why, I've been up and round the park on the chestnut. Oh! and I say, isn't she a beauty! can't she go! You know the Achilles? Well, I ran her from there to the round corner in seven minutes and a half—that was fast, wasn't it? And I say—but I beg your pardon! you haven't finished your letters. All good news, I hope?"

"Yes, thanks, Charles, I've quite finished them; and so you were up early this morning, after your night's dissipation too! Did you enjoy yourself?"

"Oh, rather!" answered the boy, his handsome face all aglow with eagerness. "It was awfully jolly! You know it was the first affair of the kind I had ever been to—not counting the evening party at the doctor's, and I never would have believed it could have been so jolly!—and I say, Percy, old fellow, why didn't you come? I looked for you every five minutes."

(To be Continued.)

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**War News**

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**UNIONIST ELECTED.**

LONDON, May 17.—The coalition government has had a sweeping victory in an election today. W. F. Hicks Beach, Secretary of the War Office, was elected from Tewkesbury by a majority of 5,689 over William

**DEBATE ON AERIAL SERVICE.**

LONDON, May 17.—In the course of a debate on the Aerial Service, T. Tennant, Secretary of the War Office, said that Britain has two types of aircraft faster than any possessed by many, and two other types of the Fokker. It was far from saying that Germany had surpassed the air, he continued.

trary, Britain had, in a measure, the supremacy. A majority of combats her wings the winners. Tennant said that Zepplin raids were no longer and that there had been improvements in regard to the guns. Tennant announced that the Government has accepted an Aerial Board to advise the Army and War Office in regard to services, and the designs of Earl Curzon has accepted the presidency of the Board, which Sydenham will be a member. Baird will represent the House of Commons. Other members of the army and navy officers.

**ASQUITH TO BE MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE.**

LONDON, May 17.—The Dublin correspondent of the Exchange Telegraph Co. says that Asquith is to be sworn in as a member of the Irish Executive. This possibly the first step of the present aids, towards re-establisment of civil administration in Ireland.

**AMERICANS IN IRELAND.**

WASHINGTON, May 17.—Senator Kern, of Indiana, introduced a resolution to-day in the Senate to inquire as to the safety and well-being of American citizens in the districts affected by the recent revolution, and to see that will safeguard their property. At the request of Stone, the resolution was referred to the Foreign Relations Committee.

**ST. PIERRE BULLIERS.**

PARIS, May 17.—Artillery duels on different fronts, especially in the Meuse and Mortier. In the Mortier, a mining struggle advantage. On the left bank

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