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'Margaret,'

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

CHAPTER XXI.

The sun poured its generous warmth over the Villa Capri, laying the white stone front of the graceful house with its bright rays, and tinting the statues on the terraces, which, in Italian fashion, rose in three tiers from the smooth lawn to the salon and dining-room windows. On the highest of the three terraces, lying back in a hammock chair of velvet tapestry, was an old lady with a face of aristocratic beauty set in snow-white hair. At a little distance, pacing up and down, were two young ladies, the younger of the two with her arm round the waist of her companion, and her beautiful young face turned up with that air of pure devotion and affection which only exists in the heart of one woman for another.

The old lady was the Princess Rivani, the mother of Florence and Ferdinand; and the two girls were Margaret and Florence. It had come to pass that Margaret was an honored inmate of the Villa Capri.

The Princess Florence had fallen in love with Margaret's lovely face, and its sad, gentle smile, and still more with her sweet voice, and had taken a fancy that Margaret's presence in the villa was necessary to her existence; and as princesses' whims are born but to be gratified, Margaret was here.

The mother, who made a rule never to deny her darling child any innocent and harmless desire, welcomed Margaret with the gentle sweetness of a patrician, combined with the frank candor of an old lady.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Leslie," she had said. "You have won my daughter's heart, and your presence seems necessary to her happiness. I trust you will not let her be a burden to you. Please consider the villa your home while it seems good to you to remain with us, and I hope that will be for a long period."

That was all; but as the signora—as the elder princess was called—always said what she meant, and never more than she meant, it was a good deal. She had scanned Margaret's face when she had been presented to her, and had listened to her voice, and was convinced that Margaret was a lady, and a fit companion for the princess, and she had said so in a sentence to her daughter.

"I like your friend, Florence, and I can understand the charm she exerts over you. It is a very lovely face, is it?"

"Is it not, mamma?" exclaimed Florence enthusiastically.

"But it is a very sad one. I am afraid Miss Leslie has had some great trouble, one of those sorrows which set their mark upon the heart, as a fell disease brands the face."

All this had occurred on the first

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day of her arrival; since then the studio had been furnished and she had been made to feel as if she were part and parcel of the Rivani family. Just before Margaret's arrival, the prince had been called away by his duties to the Italian Court, and the three ladies were left alone, so that Margaret had as yet had no opportunity of thanking him for his kindness, of which she was reminded every time she entered the luxurious studio he had furnished for her.

Margaret's lines had indeed fallen in pleasant places, and if the possession of good and true friends and the comforts of a luxury brought to the highest state of perfection, could have brought happiness, she would have been happy. But the sadness which wrapped her as in a veil through which she smiled, and sometimes laughed, never left her, and she spent hours in her studio, with the brush lying untouched, and her dark eyes fixed dreamily upon the hills which rose before her windows. She could not prevent her thoughts from traveling back toward the past, that past with which she had done forever, and often in the gloaming of the late summer evenings she would see Blair's face rise before her, and hear his voice as she had heard it during those few happy weeks when she had believed him to be her lover and husband.

There was only one way of escape from these thoughts, this flitting back of her heart which brought her so keen an anguish, and that was in work.

She had come to the villa on the understanding that she should give lessons in painting to the princess, but Florence soon showed the futility of such an arrangement.

"Dear, you will never make me an artist," she said, "never, do what you will! I can learn to paint a barn or a village pump, so that I needn't write 'this is a barn,' or 'this is a pump,' underneath them, but that is all. Don't waste your valuable time upon an impracticable—aren't that a splendid English word?—subject, but do your own work. I'll bring you my dreadful daubs, and you shall tell me where I am wrong, but you shan't work and drudge like an ordinary drawing-mistress. I daren't let you, for the last words Ferdie said were, 'Don't abuse Miss Leslie's good nature, and bore her! Remember that she is an artist, and she's somebody to the world that you must not rob it of!' and Ferdie said wisely."

"I think he spoke too generously, and thought only of the stranger within his gates," said Margaret.

"But mamma thinks the same," said the princess. "She has set her heart upon your painting a great picture while you are at the villa. You know that mamma and Ferdie are devoted to art, I think that either of them would rather be an artist—a true artist—than Ruler of Italy, and if you want to do them an honor, why paint a grand picture, exhibit it at the Salon, and date it from the Villa Capri."

Life at the villa, Margaret found, was one of routine—pleasant, easy routine—but still carefully measured out and planned.

At eight the great bell in the campanile rang for rising; at nine the household gathered in the hall for prayers; at half-past breakfast was served. At one o'clock the luncheon bell rang, and at seven the major domo, in his solemn suit of black, stood at the drawing-room door to announce dinner.

There was an army of servants, male and female, and the three ladies were attended with as much state as if the king were present.

Between breakfast and dinner Margaret worked.

Art is a jealous mistress; she will not share her shrine with any other god, though it be Cupid himself. If Margaret had remained the happy wife of Lord Blair, it is a question whether any more pictures of worth would have left her easel, but now, with her great sorrow ever present with her, she felt that her work alone would bring her partial forgetfulness.

And she did work. At first she thought she would paint a view of Florence from the hills, and she made a very fair sketch; but, about a week after her arrival at the villa she was sitting before a fresh canvas, and her thoughts flying back to the past, she, all unwittingly, took up the charcoal and began to draw the outline of the

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Long Rock at Appleford. It was not until she had sketched in the whole of the scene that she became conscious of what she was doing; and when she had so become conscious, she took up her brush to wipe the marks out. Then she hesitated. A desire to paint the scene took possession of her, and she went on with it.

She painted the rock, with the sea raging round it, and the sky threatening it from above; and, as she painted, the whole scene came back to her, just as a scene which a novelist has witnessed with his own eyes comes back to him.

As and the picture grew, it exerted a fascination for her which she could not resist.

On this she worked day after day, carefully locking up, the unfinished picture in the mahogany case which the prince had supplied with the rest of the furniture of the studio.

She felt that she could do nothing until it was finished. One day the princess knocked at the door, and Margaret, before she opened it, hurriedly inclosed the canvas in its mahogany case.

"Why, you have shut your picture up," said the princess in a tone of disappointment.

"I will show it to you, if you wish," said Margaret, laying her hand upon the key; but the princess stopped her.

"No, no," she said. "Do not, I think I understand. It is your great picture, is it not? And you do not want any one to see it until it is finished."

(To be Continued.)

WOMAN GIVEN TWO DAYS To Make Up Her Mind for Surgical Operation. She Refused; Cured by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Philadelphia, Pa.—"One year ago I was very sick and I suffered with pains in my side and back until I nearly went crazy. I went to different doctors and they all said I had female trouble and would not get any relief until I would be operated on. I had suffered for four years before this time, but I kept getting worse the more I tried. Every month since I was a young girl I had suffered with cramps in my sides at periods and was never regular. I saw your advertisement in the newspaper and the picture of a woman who had been saved from an operation and this picture was impressed on my mind. The doctor had given me only two more days to make up my mind so I sent my husband to the drug store at once for a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and believe me, I only took four doses before I felt a change and when I had finished the third bottle I was cured and never felt better. I grant you the privilege to publish my letter and am only too glad to let other women know of my cure."—Mrs. THOS. MCGONIGAL, 3422 Hartville Street, Phila., Pa.

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War News.

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

AGREEMENT REACHED.
LONDON, April 20.—An agreement was reached upon the proposals which the Ministers will make to Parliament on the subject of recruiting. Their proposals will be submitted at a secret session of the House of Parliament on Tuesday. The foregoing was announced in an official statement, issued this afternoon.

COALITION CANDIDATE ELECTED.
LONDON, April 20.—Sir Stuart Coats, Coalition candidate, has been elected member of Parliament from Wiltledon, Surrey, over Kennedy Jones, Independent, with a majority of 811.

RUSSIANS IN FRANCE.
PARIS, April 20.—A strong force of Russian troops disembarked at Marseilles to-day. The Russians are to fight beside the Allied soldiers in France. Joffre welcomed the Russians in an order of the day, saying their arrival was another striking proof of the devotion of Russia to the common cause.

RUSSIANS WELCOMED IN FRANCE.
MARSEILLES, April 20.—The Russian National Anthem was sung as the first transport La Touche Treville drew up. The Russian officers and sailors were lined up along the decks and on the bridges of the transports. Russian bands played the Marseillaise as the disembarkation began, and cheers went up from the Russians on the transports. General Lockwood, commander of the Russian forces, was received with military honors by General Menassier, the Governor of Marseilles and General Gervie, representing General Joffre. A notable gathering of Russian and French officials joined in the exchange of salutations and the Russian and French soldiers were let loose amid salvos of cheers, while cannon roared in exchange of salutes.

The coming of the Russian troops to the Western front has been talked of by military people for two or three months. The reason, as now explained, is that it is easier for Russia to supply fighting material to the Russian troops on the western front than on the eastern. In Russia there are still many hundreds of thousands more men under training than she can use on her fighting lines, because the Russian problem continues to be not how to get men, but munitions. The Allies can provide complete equipment for the Russians more easily in France than by shipping to Russia. Possibly a quarter of a million men will be sent into France this spring.

ARCHANGEL CLOSED.
NEW YORK, April 20.—The Russian Government's decision closing Archangel to all ship's cargoes, except those exclusively for use by the Government has been broadened.



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