

work which often left her weary and heart sick, yet she was glad that her round of duties left little time for thought. She dared not allow herself to dream of St. Reuna's and of the man who would go there expecting to find her and come away miserably misunderstanding.

Mrs. Carmichael, always indolent, had accepted the 'role' of invalidism without reservation. She only left her room to be carried to a couch in the parlor, from which she poured out a ceaseless stream of complaint and repining which sometimes drove Margot to the verge of distraction. Happily, the two little girls, pretty, delicate children, responded readily to Miss Brown's gentle advances, and the Professor seemed a new man since the arrival of his daughter.

'You musn't leave us again, Margot,' he said, one day. 'The house isn't the same place, and I'm sure poor Jessie is glad to have you. It was a mistake to let you go; we are vastly more comfortable with you and that good Miss Brown to keep things straight.'

Margot laughed, though the laugh ended in a sigh. 'I'll stay, dear, as long as you need me,' she said, gently.

As autumn slipped into winter, and winter gave place to spring, Margot found that the new life left less and less time for the pursuits and ambitions which had meant so much to her at St. Reuna's. The management of the big house, the constant demands which her stepmother made upon her, the work she did for her father, filled every moment. If she had hoped to win a name in the world of letters, that hope must be for the present put aside. She was called to make another of those renunciations which look so easy to others, yet are so hard to make, but are, after all, the steps by which we climb to higher planes of inward grace.

When March was drawing to its close an epidemic swept over the little Shropshire village, and among its first victims it claimed the Professor's two little girls. For days the watchers fought for the fragile little lives, scarcely daring to hope; even Mrs. Carmichael forgot her own invalidism in an upspringing of mother-love, which came as a surprise to those who had only known her as weak, indolent, and self-indulgent.

There came a day when the village doctor, who had nursed the children through their many childish ailments, said sadly that he could do no more; all that human skill could do had been done.

'I will send for Fax; if anyone can save my children he will,' Mrs. Carmichael said, passionately. 'He is in England again, thank God; he will come if I send for him.'

If there was one person on earth Jessie Carmichael loved more than herself it was the half-brother. He had been her hero in her girlhood, and he was her hero still. He had been abroad for years, and had only lately settled in a parish in the north of Scotland, so far north that the Professor pointed out dismally to his wife that the case of the children would doubtless be settled before he could reach Frant.

'Let me have someone of my own kin with me in my trouble, even if it is only a half-brother,' Mrs. Carmichael replied, drearly. 'He will understand me. You and Margot have always been too clever.'

Margot looked at her with a sharp pang of self-reproach.

'He shall come, dear. I'll go and send a telegram at once,' she said warmly, as she stopped to kiss the worn little face.

But Mrs. Carmichael would let no one send the telegram but herself, and Margot watched her as she set out, battling against the rough spring wind, which swept along the riverside road. The girl reproached herself, perhaps a little needlessly, for the estrangement which had kept her and her stepmother apart so long. Perhaps if she had tried to understand the limited nature of her frivolous young stepmother, she thought there might have been points of union as well as of discord.

'I didn't give her credit for caring for anyone but herself, or for feeling lonely and "out of it" amongst us,' Margot said, regretfully. 'How easy it is to misjudge others and to lay the blame where it does not really belong.'

Next day, when Mrs. Carmichael's brother arrived, Margaret was in the sick-room. She heard the sound of wheels on the gravel, and her stepmother's high, shrill voice in tones of affectionate welcome. Margot herself expected few good results from his coming. It was not likely he would succeed where Dr. Lamb, who understood the constitutions of the little patients, owned himself beaten. She was, indeed, so slightly interested in the stranger that she had not inquired his name, and even felt inclined to resent the presence of a stranger in the house at such a time. Yet if his coming was a relief to her stepmother she was wrong to indulge such a thought; she remembered how often, in the first days of her life at the Hotel des Anglais, she had longed for one of her own kith and kin, and shed bitter tears at the thought that she and they were miles apart.

Presently the door opened and the two came in—Mrs. Carmichael and her half-brother. Margot rose noiselessly to greet them, and then stopped and stared with beating heart and rising color. Who could have guessed that the 'Fax' of whom Mrs. Carmichael had spoken so warmly in rare moments of confidence was Allister Fairfax, her own friend of the previous summer? Ah! she had done well to trust her future in the hands of Providence, she told herself, and she held out her hand and smiled into the eyes which looked into hers with surprise and pleasure.

The course of events, after all, justified Mrs. Carmichael's confidence in Dr. Fairfax, though he and Dr. Lamb declared that nature and good nursing were to be thanked for the fact that the little girls crept slowly back to life. When the warm days of early summer came they were well enough to be taken into the sunshiny, old-fashioned garden, and now and then 'Uncle Fax' and Margot would carry them up the steep ascent to the Edge and let them breathe the cool, clear air which swept across the valley from the Welsh hills. Sometimes Mrs. Carmichael would join in these expeditions, for, somehow, in the stress of anxiety for her children the shackles of invalidism had fallen away, and she seemed in no hurry to fasten them on again. Though still fragile and easily wearied, she seemed resolved to take her old place again in the home, though with a new gentleness and consideration for those about her.

For the most part, therefore, Allister Fairfax and Margot went alone with the children, and whilst Una and Lucie played together the love story begun at St. Reuna's was continued to its happy ending.

There came a day when Dr. Fairfax put the question which had trembled on his lip when they parted at the Hotel des Anglais.

'I have not wealth to offer you, Margot, I've chosen a road which doesn't lead to great fortune,' he said, gravely. 'I made up my mind long ago to give what skill I have to the poor and suffering, and I felt that I had found my place when I happened on a poverty-stricken town in the north where medical skill was wanted and the poor folks suffered terribly. Think before you answer, Margot, it is no "soft life" I am offering you. There will be love, the deepest, truest love of my heart, but scant promise of this world's goods.'

Margot looked up with misty eyes. 'I don't want a soft life,' she said, with sweet frankness, 'and as for this world's goods, I've enough for us both. I don't want time to think, Allister, for I have needed love so much in my lonely life. Love me always, dear, and our life together shall make the world a better place for those who are less blessed.'

Queen Victoria's Favorite Text.

Lord Ronald Gower was honored with the friendship of Queen Victoria, and his reminiscences, just published by Mr. Murray, contain this record of the late Queen: 'I sent to the Marquis of Lorne a little pocket Bible that I had had some time, and asked him to beg the Queen to write in it her favorite text. (I knew the Queen's favorite hymn was "Lead, kindly light," and was curious to know what her favorite text or chapter might be.) In a short time I got the little book back, with a letter from Lorne, dated Osborne, August 2; in it he writes: "I asked the Queen before church to put something in your book, and she said what she liked best was the text about "Charity" or "Love"; this was just as we were walking towards the church. The Bishop of Ripon (Boyd Carpenter) preached, and, lo and behold, the text was exactly that of which the Queen had just spoken. The coincidence was very odd, and she was much struck by it." So that the Queen's writing on the fly-leaf of this little Bible must have been written on the afternoon of August 2, my birthday. "Love suffereth long and is kind," "Love faileth not." "V.R.I., 1891," and above these words: "1 Corinthians xiii., 4 and 8." The Queen's substitution of "Love" for "Charity" is a decidedly better rendering of the Greek word translated "charity."

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