

The Fireside.

"GREATER LOVE."

The old man, who had been well-known to Dr. Richard Landels, as to all book-lovers, lay dead, and the girl who had been like his own child to him, but was only his grand-daughter, was alone. Dr. Landels felt sorry for the poor child. Una Cohen was her name; her grandfather's had been Joseph Cohen.

When all was over, and the old book-seller decently interred, Landels went to see the girl. She was about eighteen, small and slim, dark in hair and eyes, and with almost perfect features.

"What are you going to do?" he asked. "Will you trust me, Miss Cohen? Have you anything left you?"

She told him how much. It was very little. And then, a little hesitatingly, she told him of her dream. She wished to become a singer.

"I am no judge of singing," said Richard Landels, smiling, "but I have a friend who is. May I bring her to see you? Very well, I will bring her tomorrow. And, Miss Cohen, if I can in any way help you, you will let me, won't you?—for the sake of your grandfather, whom I honored and respected, and for—your own?"

He held her hand closely in his for a moment in parting, and then walked away along the little street in which the old bookseller and his grand-daughter had lived. Una looked for a moment or two curiously at the hand she held; then, with a swift sudden motion, she put it close to her face, and, while her creamy-tinted neck and cheek were covered by a vivid glow of crimson, pressed it to her lips.

Richard Landels walked on unknowing and unguessing. How could he know? He was a man high in his profession, "twice her years," had known her since she was a child, and had no other thought but that of kindly interest in her. The pity of it!

One thing almost shut Una out from the great world around. Her grandfather had been a Jew, and Una had been brought up in his faith. Dr. Landels had never alluded to that. The fact was, he thought little about it. He was not exactly a religious man, and he had few prejudices.

He called next day.

"I have brought my friend to see if she can help in any way, Miss Cohen. Miss Clare, let me introduce Miss Una Cohen."

Madolin Clare held out a soft, uncovered hand. She was like a tall, graceful white lily in her summer gown of creamy voile, her golden hair surrounding her fair, violet-eyed face like a halo. Landels glanced from one girl to the other with a half-smile. What a contrast between the stately Saxon maiden, tall and dignified and gracious, and the small Jewish girl, with her pale, sad face and wistful eyes—those eyes which seemed to carry the load of her people's humiliation and centuries-old sorrow!

"Let me hear you sing," said Madolin sweetly. "I feel as if I should so like to help you in some way,

Miss Cohen—if you will allow me."

Dr. Landels stood a little aside. There was an old-fashioned piano in the room. Madolin sat down to it; and Una, standing beside the piano with clasped hands, suddenly opened her lips, and broke into melody.

"O trust in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He will bring strength unto thy heart."

It was wonderful. The depth and sweetness of the voice thrilled Richard Landels, and when Madolin stood up, there were tears in her sweet eyes. She caught Una's hand impulsively.

"My dear, you have a wonderful voice; you will set the world ringing one day. I think we can put you in the way of being trained, uncle and I. But first—Dr. Landels"—she turned to him—"I wish to persuade Miss Cohen to come and spend a week with me at Rayrigg Hall. She needs a rest before she starts her training."

Landels smiled, well pleased. Madolin Clare had taken a fancy to Una; the girl's future was made. For Madolin lived alone with her great-uncle at the fine old family place called Rayrigg Hall, in Essex, and she would be her uncle's heiress; meantime the old man idolized her.

"Will you go?" he said to Una.

Una's dark eyes dwelt on Madolin's face for a moment; then they rose to Landels's.

"It is very good of—Miss Clare. I will go if you think I should, Dr. Landels."

"I am sure you should," he said heartily. He bent close to Madolin Clare, and for a moment they stood apart. The dark eyes of the Jewish girl were turned from them.

"I am going to stay and have a talk with you as to what you would like to do. Dr. Landels will have to go away, but he will tell the cab to wait for me."

Dr. Landels bade them both good-bye, Madolin last. Una stood aside; but somehow she could not keep her eyes from Richard Landel's face. And as he bent down towards Madolin Clare, Una saw a look in his eyes—a look that those who have themselves loved can never mistake.

Richard Landels loved Madolin Clare with the love that comes to a man only once in a lifetime.

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Madolin took Una to her home. It was a lovely old place, and Madolin knew every tree, every stone about it. She pointed it all out to Una.

"We love it with all our hearts, uncle and I. I think it would almost kill me if I thought I should ever have to give up Rayrigg. There is uncle, Una—may I call you Una?—dear old uncle! Isn't he perfect?"

She introduced Una to the slender upright, noble-looking old man, with the abundant white hair and soldierly moustache, who came to meet her and greet her.

"Uncle, this is my new friend, Una, this is my dear uncle, Sir Henry Norman, who is going to be your friend also."

Neither of them noticed the sudden start that Una gave, nor the strange look that came into her eyes.

Madolin led her upstairs to Una's room, a dainty, pretty one. On the bed lay a black net dinner dress. Madolin had thought of everything.

It was a pleasant evening. Madolin had not mentioned Una's other name to her great-uncle—the truth was, Madolin imagined Sir Henry had a prejudice against Jews, and Cohen was too certainly Jewish—and he only addressed her as "Miss Una." Una looked at him with pathetic eyes and a strange, long, lingering look.

She remained at Rayrigg for a week. During that time Richard Landels came twice to the Hall, and Una's dark, sad eyes read the truth more and more clearly every day. But there was no jealousy in the girl's heart. She loved Madolin with all her soul.

One night, just past midnight, Madolin awoke her in terrible agitation. Her great-uncle had been seized with a fit of apoplexy. By the morning all was over.

Madolin was like one stunned. Only when Landels came to see her did Una see her break down. The Jewish girl saw them standing together; Landels, his dark head bent very near the golden one, said in a low voice:

"Let me do everything for you; it will be my greatest pleasure. And you—will be happy by-and-by; your old home is still yours."

"Yes," Madolin whispered, with quivering lips. "Next to losing my dear old uncle, the agony of losing Rayrigg would be greatest."

Una turned away with lips set in a strange firmness that yet had nothing stern in it.

When Sir Henry Norman was committed to the earth, with the last sad rites, his will was read. During that sad time Madolin would not let Una go. She clung to her as if she had known her all her life, and the Jewish girl pointed the Christian one to the only true Fountain of all consolation, the great Father Almighty Himself.

The will was a shock to all. Sir Henry had had an only son; twenty-one years ago that son had disobeyed him by marrying against his will. Sir Henry had never seen his son again, and Robert had died fifteen years ago. But there was a child, as he believed, and to this child, if she could be found, Sir Henry left Rayrigg and the greater part of his property—on one condition. Otherwise everything was to go to Madolin.

The condition was that the girl—for the grandchild was a girl—should become a Christian. She was a Jewess, and that had been the objection Sir Henry had had to the marriage.

And the name of the woman Robert had married was Rachel Cohen. A strange, terrible silence fell on the room, and Madolin, white as death, looked first towards Richard Landels, then towards Una Cohen. The Jewish girl rose, and, advancing into the centre of the room, spoke calmly and quietly.

"I am Una Norman. That is my right name, and I am Sir Henry's grandchild. My grandfather, Joseph Cohen, told me all before he died, and gave all certificates into my hands. But I can never fulfil Sir Henry's condition, and here and now I renounce all claim I might have on his property forever. I am a Jewess: I shall never become a Christian."



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There was another intense silence; then Madolin, bursting into tears, went to the girl's side, and put her arm around her. Together, and in silence, the two girls left the room.

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Five years later the world was ringing with the name of Una Cohen, the greatest contralto singer Eng-

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