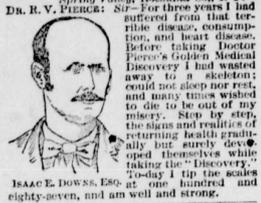


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ARMINIE.

BY CHRISTIAN REID. CHAPTER XXIV.

Left alone - after Arminie had walked away with Madelon - Egerton sank back on the seat and began in his accustomed fashion to consider the interview just past. Characteristically, his mind dwelt most on the personality of Arminie, which had been revealed to him in a clearer light than ever before.

He rose, and leaving the fountain, walked slowly along the allee which led to the broad terrace with its stately flights of steps descending to the parterre before the palace. Again he thought of Arminie in her childhood and girlhood, of the poetic face and wondrous hair, alone amid the bourgeois crowd, bearing already the penalty of isolation which all must bear whose mind or spirit elevates them above the multitude that surrounds them.

While thinking in this manner he had been walking toward one of the gates of the garden, and he now passed through into the Boulevard St. Michel, having before him the narrow streets and the steep hill of the Quartier Latin, when a hand fell on his shoulder, and as once before in the same neighborhood, he was accosted by the man whom he had crossed the Seine to seek.

"I thought I should find you." "How did you know that I was to be found?" asked Egerton, turning. "Oh! the concierge, chez moi, told me that 'un monsieur bien distingue' had been inquiring for me. So, judging it to be you, and judging also that, having nothing to occupy your time, you would be likely to stroll into the Luxembourg Garden - that is the benefit of having a palace for near neighbor - I decided to take a turn in search of you. Et voila!"

He uttered the last words in a tone of satisfaction which Egerton felt unable to echo. His meeting with Arminie had thrown him so entirely out of accord with Winter that it was only by an effort he could recall himself to the plane of the latter or remember why he had sought him. He had too much of the social faculty to suffer this to be apparent, however, and when Winter presently inquired concerning his immediate intentions he said:

"I was on my way home; but now that we have met, the best thing to do would be to breakfast together. I presume that you know a good cafe in the neighborhood." "I know half a dozen where you can get a better breakfast than in your gilded haunts on the Boulevard des Capucines," said Winter. "If you want to fare well in foreign towns, you should avoid all places where strangers congregate. Their presence has always two effects - to increase prices and to deteriorate quality."

"Unhappily true," said Egerton; "so I put myself in your hands. Take me where our degrading influence is unknown." Winter laughed, but proceeded to guide him to one of those cafes where students, artists, and journalists congregate, where the foreigner, unless he belongs to the Bohemian ranks, is unknown, and where one finds few mirrors and little gilding, but good service and distinctively French cooking.

The two men sat down at a small table, and after they had ordered breakfast, Egerton looked around. "It strikes me," he said, "that I have been here before. Is not this the cafe where you found the man who so obligingly went with me to the meeting in Montmartre where I first saw Duchesne?" "The same," Winter answered. "It is a great resort of Leroux's. I should not be surprised if he dropped in at any moment. If he did he might give us news of Duchesne, who has been out of Paris lately."

He is back in Paris now, however," said Egerton involuntarily. "Indeed! Have you seen him?" inquired Winter. "No," replied Egerton, slightly vexed with his own thoughtlessness and determined not to mention Arminie. "I have only heard of his arrival."

to me the vestibule to Notre Dame. And now, coming in very ill-dressed to see Winter, who first roused my curiosity with regard to Duchesne, I find a slyly with a message. Shall I ever heed it? God only knows. And yet if there be a God there can certainly be no duty higher than the duty of acknowledging Him."

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you must confess that up to this time stability has not been your most striking characteristic. "I have laid no claim to it," said Egerton. "I have thought more of finding truth - if truth were to be found - than of preserving a character for consistency; which, after all, often simply means that a man is not accessible to new ideas."

"If you have been in search of truth I retract all my criticisms," said Winter, "for my opinion has been that you were simply in search of novelty. Eh bien, you have discovered what you sought, then, in the principles of Socialism as expounded by Duchesne?"

"By no means," Egerton answered. "Principles which would reconstruct the world on a basis of communal tyranny are not to my fancy. That part of Socialism which dwells upon the wrongs and the miseries of the poor is true; but when it comes to a question of remedies it is impossible to follow men who, if they had the power, would proclaim to morrow a crusade of wholesale robbery."

"Who by one violent revolution would set right the wrongs of centuries and demolish social conditions which nothing short of revolution can overturn," said Winter. "It is natural that you do not welcome such a prospect, since you are one of the class to be dispossessed; but it proves that I was right in believing that you were only amusing yourself with Socialism, as with other things."

Now, Egerton was amiable almost to a fault, but the scarcely veiled contempt of the other's tone was too much even for his amiability. He looked up with a spark of fire in his glance as he said: "You are entirely mistaken. I have not been amusing myself with Socialism. It is rather a grim subject for amusement. But I was attracted by the ideal which it presented; and in order to judge it fairly I heard its claims presented and its aims declared not by outsiders but by its warmest supporters and advocates. Consequently I have a right to say that I have weighed Socialism in the balance and found it wanting. It may convulse the world and destroy society - I grant you it has power enough for that; but it has no power to construct another society. The basis on which it rests is too unsound."

"Do you mean," said Winter, "the basis of the equal rights of man?" "Yes," answered Egerton, "the basis of the equal rights of man. For how can you prove that man has any rights? It is an assertion without a shadow of proof. In the pagan world there was but one recognized right - that of force. The Christianity which you despise, in declaring that man has an immortal soul, gave him the charter of all the rights he possesses. But in destroying and denying Christianity you throw yourselves back upon Nature; and neither you nor any other man can prove that naturally - that is, according to the nature revealed to us by positive science - man has any rights above those of the horse and dog."

There was a moment's silence after this bold challenge - a challenge which no positivist can answer, and which was perhaps for the first time presented to Winter. It evidently startled him a little, and probably he was not sorry for conversation to be interrupted by breakfast, which the garcon just then placed on the table before them. But as he poured out a glass of red wine a minute later he recovered himself sufficiently to say, with the sneer which always comes readily in default of argument:

"Oh! if you have gone back to the fables of religion there is nothing more to be said. It is very natural in that case that you should turn your back on the rights of man." "It would be so far from natural," said Egerton, "that I repeat and insist upon the assertion that it is religion which first introduced into the world the doctrine that man had any rights at all; and without religion - that is, without some form of theistic belief, however vague - you cannot prove the existence of a single right to which he may logically lay claim. All the high-sounding declarations of the French Revolution merely asserted in a political sense what the Catholic Church had for eighteen centuries asserted in a spiritual sense - that all men are equal before God. But to obliterate the idea of God, and where is your equality? Science absolutely denies it. Nature - as has been well said - abhors it, all experience disproves it. And since neither Nature nor science gives man his charter of equal rights, where do you find it? Only in Catholic theology. Your leaders have stolen it thence, but the fire of heaven in their hands can only kindle conflagration on earth."

"By Jove!" said Winter, with a stare. "Well as I thought I knew you, this is a change for which I was hardly prepared!" From liberalism to Catholic theology, from positive science to the dogmas of the Church, would prove a very long step for any one but yourself. You seem to have taken it, however, with wonderful agility; and but for the fact that your conversions never last long, I should expect to hear of you soon as 'received' at the Madeleine."

glorious past behind her, pointing to the great fabric of Christian civilization as her work, and clothed in that mantle of infallibility without which she would have no right to speak - for what is a fallible Church but a human society a little more absurd than any other, inasmuch as it attempts to teach great truths which avowedly it has no certainty? - and liberalism with its creed of human progress, which the future alone can prove, the choice is to be made. These two forces divide the world. One or the other must win the victory - the kingdom of God or what your new thinkers call the kingdom of man."

Winter looked up with the defiance which is the characteristic attitude of his school. "The human mind has outgrown the fables of the Church of which you speak," he said. "The kingdom of God, which it invented, has passed away, and the kingdom of man has come."

"Has it?" said Egerton. "Then God help - but how if there is no God? Can we call upon matter to help man thus left at the mercy of the blind forces of nature and the blinder passions of his fellow-man, for whom justice, mercy, and right must soon become mere idle words signifying nothing, since deriving authority from nothing? But let me tell you this: that as I am never so near being a Catholic as when I talk to a positivist, so there will be nothing so likely to drive men to the kingdom of God as the founding of your kingdom of man."

CHAPTER XXV. It was about this time that Miss Dorrance said to her cousin one day: "Does it strike you that Sibiyl is the victim of a special passion?" Mr. Talford looked a little startled. "No," he replied. "I confess that it has not struck me. Whom do you take to be the object of the passion?" "Not yourself," said Laura, with a laugh, "nor yet any one whom you know. But you have heard of M. d'Antignac?"

"Heard of him - I should think so, indeed!" answered Mr. Talford. "Miss Bertram has entertained me on several occasions with rhapsodies about him. But what has that to do with the matter?" "Only that he is the object of the passion," Mr. Talford stared for a moment; then he looked disgusted. "Women have strange ideas," he said. "There seems to me something equally absurd and revolting in the suggestion that a young, beautiful creature like Miss Bertram could find any attraction in the man of whom you speak - a hopeless invalid who, from what I hear of him, can only be said to be half alive."

"He is not much more, as far as his body is concerned," Laura replied; "but men have strange ideas if they imagine that what attracts a woman like Sibiyl Bertram has anything to do with the body. It is the spirit; and certainly there is enough of that in M. d'Antignac." "Is there?" said her cousin, with a slight laugh. "I confess to not knowing much about spirits, either in the flesh or out of it. But I should not take them to be formidable rivals - that is, if one were sufficiently in earnest to fear a rival."

"Of course you are the best judge on that point," said Laura. "I mean about being sufficiently in earnest; but as for what constitutes a formidable rival - well, that, I should say, depends on the woman concerned. With some women it would be a million of dollars, with others a handsome face. But you ought to know whether or not Sibiyl is like such women." "Miss Bertram is very ideal," said Mr. Talford, "but I do her justice to believe that she distinguishes clearly between what is ideal and what is practical, and that no one is less likely to confound the one with the other. Her fancy for M. d'Antignac is very natural; but it will not interfere with anything else."

"Will it not?" said Laura, with a glance of amusement. "Well, we shall see. I thought it only kind to give you a warning." "A warning is justified by its need," said her cousin; "but in this case I fail to perceive the need." Nevertheless, lightly as he had received it, the warning was not without its effect upon him, inasmuch as he began to ask himself if the time had really come when he must definitely bid farewell to the pleasant liberty of his life and take upon himself the fetters of matrimony. They were not fetters for which he was in the least eager, and he had more than once asked himself why he should think of assuming them. But these doubts had a fashion of vanishing under the influence of Sibiyl Bertram; and in the magic of her presence it seemed to him that he could do nothing better than to secure a companion so well calculated at once to stimulate interest and reflect credit on his taste. And it was characteristic of the man that he felt not the least fear of being refused. He was one of a class who are so steeped in materialism that they are honestly unable to conceive a different standard in the mind of any one else. He knew his own advantages well, and to suppose Miss Bertram ignorant of or indifferent to them would simply, in his opinion, have been to convict her of want of sense. But there was no reason for such a suspicion. The peculiarity of her manner, which struck Egerton so forcibly, had not been lost on him, and he had, as we are aware, drawn his own conclusions from it. A more acute man might, indeed, have been deceived, not having the *mot de Veniame* in a sufficient

knowledge of the character of this girl.

TO BE CONTINUED.

MY BETTY.

A Charming Story by the Author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy."

I am Betty's kitten - at least I was Betty's kitten once. That was more than a year ago. I am not a kitten now, I am a little cat, and I have grown serious, and think a great deal as I sit on the hearth rug looking at the fire and blinking my eyes. I have so much to think about that I even stop to ponder things over when I am lapping my milk or washing my face. I am very careful about lapping my milk. I never upset the saucer. Betty told me I must not. She used to talk to me about it when she gave me my dinner. She said that only untidy kittens were careless. She liked to see me wash my face, too, so I am particular about that. It is always Betty I am thinking about when I sit on the rug and blink at the fire. Sometimes I feel so puzzled and so anxious that if her mamma or papa are sitting near I look up to them and say: "Mee-aw? Mee-aw?"

But they do not seem to understand me as Betty did. Perhaps that is because they are grown up people and she was a little girl. But one day her mamma said: "It sounds almost as if she were asking a question." "I was asking a question. I was asking about Betty. I wanted to know when she was coming back."

I know where she came from, but I do not know where she is gone or why she went. She usually told me things, but she did not tell me that. I never knew her to go away before. I wish she had taken me with her. I would have kept my face and paws very clean, and never have upset my milk. I said I knew where she came from. She came from behind the white rose bush before it began to bloom, and I was lying close to my mother in our bed under the porch that was around the house. It was a nice porch, with vines climbing over it, and I had been comfortable there, but my mother was afraid of people. She was afraid lest they might come and look at us.

She said I was so pretty they would admire me and take me away. That had happened to two or three of my brothers and sisters before their eyes had opened, and it had made my mother nervous. She said the same thing had happened before when she had had families quite as promising, and many of her lady friends had told her that it continually happened to themselves. They said that people coming and looking at you when you had kittens was a sort of epidemic. It always ended in your losing children.

She talked to me a great deal about it. She said she felt rather less nervous after my eyes were opened because she did not seem to want you so much after your eyes were opened. There were fewer disappearances in families after the first nine days. But she told me she preferred that I should not be intimate with people who looked under the porch, and she was very glad when I could use my legs and get farther under the house, when any one bent down and said, "Pussy! pussy!" She said I must not get silly and flattered and intimate even when they said, "Pretty pussy, poo! little kitty pussy!" She said it might end in trouble.

So I was very cautious indeed when I first saw Betty. I did not intend to be caught, but I was not so much afraid as I should have been if she had not been so very little and so pretty. Not very long before she went away she said to me one day when we were in the swing together: "Kitty, I am nearly 5 o'clock!" So when she came from behind the white rose bush perhaps she was 4 o'clock.

I shall never forget that morning. It was such a beautiful morning. It was in the early spring, and all the world seemed to be beginning to break into buds and blossoms. There were pink and white flowers on the trees, and there was such a delicious smell when one sniffed a little. Birds were chirping and singing and every now and then darting across the garden. Flowers were coming out of the ground too; they were blooming in the garden beds and among the grass, and it seemed quite natural to see a new kind of flower bloom out on the rose bush, which had no flowers on it then, because the season was too early. I was such a young kitten that I thought the little face peeping round the green bush was a flower. But it was Betty, and she was peeping at me! She had such a pink bud of a mouth and such pink soft cheeks and such large eyes, just like the velvet of a pansy blossom. She had a tiny pink frock and a tiny white apron with frills and a pretty white muslin hat, like a frilled daisy, and the soft wind made the curly soft hair fall over her shoulder as she bent forward away as the vines sway.

"Mother," I whispered, "what kind of a flower is that? I never saw one before." She looked and began to be quite nervous. "Ah, dear! ah, dear!" she said; "it is not a flower at all; it is a person and she is looking at you." "Ah, mother!" I said, how can it be a person, when it is not half as high as the rose bush. And it is such pretty colors. To look again." "It is a child-person," she said, "and I have heard they are sometimes the worst of all - though I don't believe they take so many away at a

JANUA... time." The li... round the gre... looked prettie... pink frock and... show themselves... "Got behind... and I began to... Ah, how of... since why I d... that it was... seemed so stra... it without be... seemed to gr... and her eyes... deny she g... began to clap... "Ah," she s... It is surely a... "Oh, my... mother!" "fifteen!" "I could not... rather rude... frightened." But Betty... all. Down... knees in the... down to peep... her cheek t... and her hear... tercups and... "Oh, you... "Pretty puss... kitty! Poo... you!" She made... going to pu... stroke me, b... and I heard... "Betty, ma... manst'n put... her cross an... Don't try to... She turne... her shoulde... "I her. She... Come and lo... "Fitless... "More co... time!" "I don't... I said. "T... one." "You ki... my mother... But they do... were as gr... kittens in the... and bent... looked at u... which ever... talked in o... "You so... the mother... been livin... just what... catching th... now she... stollen from... tect this o... Betty. "I... and don't... some milk... she get u... come out... while?" "Perh... "Pussy!" She said... that I qu... began to s... sweet and... I could... nearer to... "Me... And fr... day ever... never thi... with us. I... morning... child voi... face. So d... delightfu... a day. I... not to f... call to y... kitty pu... and then... milk nes... rose bu... and pea... We t... back to... saucer... when w... less afra... hid beh... us thro... pink ch... one day... "W... person... beginn... harm." I w... lapped... beginn... A fe... saucer... solely... rose b... And st... so swe... was a c... confid... Abou... would... better... shiny... so suc... see h... bent... her c... shoul... them... was an... be any... so "... come... say... who