

# THE ACADIAN

## AND KING'S CO. TIMES.

HONEST, INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS—DEVOTED TO LOCAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

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### THE ACADIAN.

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### The Master of the Mine.

BY ROBERT EUGENIAN.

CHAPTER XXXV.—Continued.

"It is well for you," I said, "that John Pedrago did not know what I know. Had he done so, perhaps he would have left you to the mercy of the sea."

"What do you mean?" cried Rodru, turning pale as death.

"Ask your own heart. God has spared you, and taken a better man. Had you met with your deserts, you would be lying in his place."

"Take care, Trelawney! I owe you my life, as I said, but—"

"You owe me nothing," I returned. "I helped you, as I would have helped my bitterest enemy, at such a moment. But now that it is done, I almost wish it were undone; and you know why!"

With an impatient exclamation, he turned away.

"Come, mother! Come, Madeline! You see how this fellow hates me. I would gladly owe my debt to him, but it is useless. Perhaps, when he is cooler, he will permit me to be of service to him. If not—why, I cannot help it! Come!"

Mother and son walked slowly away, but Madeline did not stir. She remained where she had been, with her gentle eyes fixed on me.

George Rodru turned and saw her. "Come, Madeline," he cried; "we are not wanted here."

"I think I am wanted," she replied. "Mr. Trelawney, shall I go?"

And as she spoke she held out both her hands to me with a loving gesture. I looked at her in wonder. Then suddenly the whole meaning of her attitude dawned upon me, and taking her hands with a joyful cry, I drew her to my bosom.

Pale and trembling, George Rodru returned and confronted us.

"Madeline, what does this mean?"

"It means that I have found my love where you found your life—in the arms of this brave man!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was the supreme moment of my life; and, standing there before my darling, dazed and joyfully bewildered with her beautiful face turned, radiant with love, on mine, well might I have echoed the ecstatic cry of the lover of lovers:

If it were now to die,  
'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute,  
That not another comfort like to this  
Success is in unknown fate!

But the words which were bliss to me were gall and wormwood to the soul of George Rodru. Livid with pain, he looked at her who uttered them; then, glancing round at the wild group surrounding us, he said:

"You must be mad to speak like that, Trelawney, a word which you shall be an end to this once and forever; come apart, and let us speak together!"

He walked a short distance along the cliffs, I following, with Madeline by my side. When we were out of earshot of any soul, he turned and faced us. His self-control was now remarkable; a stranger looking at him and observing his manner would never have gathered that he was a prey to the acutest suffering of mortified pride and passion.

"I might have guessed this from the first," he said, in a low voice. "You Trelawney, always hated me—and God knows I have returned the compliment! I can see now why you saved my life. To crush and humiliate me before my cousin, over whose mind you have obtained some malignant influence."

I looked at him, but made no reply. He continued, with apparent calmness, addressing Madeline:

"I am not understood, then, that our engagement is at an end?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Very well. You know as well as I what that means to me—ruth perhaps disagree; but I am not going to whine over the inevitable. Trelawney, I congratulate you," he added, with a curious smile; "you have won the game!"

He turned as if to go, but Madeline, with an impulsive cry, interposed.

"George, do not talk like that!" she cried. "There is a chance yet of re-

turning the past, and if you do so, I shall still be your friend. It was not fated that I should ever be your wife; only one woman living has a right to that title, and to your atonement. Let me go to her! Let me tell her that you will make amends!"

"I fail to understand you," he said coldly. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Annie Pedrago, the poor girl whose heart you have nearly broken! You see I know everything, George—for my sake—"

His whole face darkened, while his lips twitched convulsively.

"How kind you are, how solicitous for my moral welfare! It is very good of you to acknowledge, to offer to provide me with a helpmate, but I must politely decline your kind offices. Annie Pedrago is nothing to me. I am a gentleman, I believe; she is—"

"Take care!" I cried. "Utter one word against her at your peril! I do not ask you now to acknowledge her, it is too late for that; and even if it could be, I think she is better so she is, than she could ever become, more closely united to a man like you. But she is sacred, and I forbid you even to utter her name!"

"You mistake my meaning," he returned, still retaining his self-possession. "All I was going to say was that we are not equals. I deeply regret what has occurred—I acknowledge my own folly—my own guilt, if you like it better; but from this time forth we are nothing to each other."

"George, George," cried my darling in despair. "Have you no heart?"

"I suppose so, but blame yourself if it is somewhat laden on the present occasion. I am not used to humiliation, you see, and though I take my punishment as calmly as possible, I still feel it."

I could have strangled him, he was so utterly coldblooded.

"If there is justice," I cried, "God will punish you! You have not only wrecked one life, but you have destroyed two others. Do you know that my uncle, God help him! confessed with his last breath that he had killed your accomplice, the man Johnson? That man's death, as well as John Pedrago's, lies at your door!"

He started in surprise, but conquered himself in a moment.

"I had my suspicions," he said; "but I was silent, for his daughter's sake! I fall to see, however, that I am responsible for the mad act of a murderer!"

"You are the murderer, not he," I cried.

"Nonsense!" he answered; and still mastering himself, he walked away.

I turned and looked at Madeline. She was gazing after him, with a face pale as death.

"Madeline," I said, "do not think I am fallen so low as to presume upon the hearty words you spoke just now. I know that when this sorrowful day is over, you will forget them—you must forget them, in duty to yourself. It will be happiness enough for me to know that, when I most needed it, I had your sympathy; that if I had been other than I am, I might have had your love. And now, shall we say good-bye?"

I held out my hand to her; she gazed at me as if in wonder.

"Then you did not understand?" she said, gently. "Or perhaps—you did understand, and I was mistaken in thinking that you cared for me—so much?"

"Care for you?" I repeated, passionately. "Ever since I can remember my heart, my whole life, has been yours. It is not that. My love, strong as it is, and ever has been, is not precious enough to purchase yours. Do not think that I am so lost, so selfish, as to think that the distance between us can be bridged over by your heavenly pity. I am a poor man; you are a rich lady. I know that that means; I have known it from the beginning."

As I spoke, my heart was so stirred that I had to turn my face aside, to hide the gathering tears. But the soft touch of her hand upon my arm.

"Do not blame you for thinking that," she said. "A little while ago I thought so too; but Hugh, dear—may I call you so? God has opened my eyes. I think I have always loved you but never so much as to-day."

"Don't speak of it! It can't be! Oh Madeline, let me say farewell!"

"Hugh, dear Hugh, listen! You must listen! Ah, do not be unkind!"

"Unkind—to you!" I murmured. "God knows I would die for you!"

"Had you died down in the mine, I should still have been faithful to you; I should never have loved another man. May I tell you the whole truth? I will, and you will understand. When I saw you going to your death—going to your great grief and noble courage to save your enemy's life at the peril of your own—I knew for the first time that all my heart was yours. I did not utter you, but I prayed for God for you, and as I prayed, I swore before my God that, if He restored you to me, I would lay my heart bare to you, and ask you to make me your wife. God was good; you came back, as from the grave. And now, will you turn away from me? Will you refuse me the one thing remaining that can make life sweet and sacred to me—your forgiveness, and your love?"

It was too much. The spell of the old passion came upon me, as sobbing and trembling, I took my darling to my heart.

Thus it came to pass that I, Hugh Trelawney, a man of the people, became the accepted lover of Madeline Graham. Looking back at it all now, after a lapse of so many years, it still seems an incredible thing, surreal and visionary; but raising my eyes from the paper on which these lines are written, I see beside me the sweet assurance that it is true. When I began the story of my life, I said that it was also the story of my love. It has lasted so long; it will last, God willing, till death and after death.

"Is it not so, my darling?" She smiles, and bends over me, to kiss her answer. She watches the pen as it moves over the paper, and she waits for the last word, blowing my tale in almost due.

Love is by nature selfish; and in the first flush of my new joy I almost forgot the sorrow in my poor home. But when I quitted my darling, and joined the little procession which followed my poor uncle across the heath, I reproached myself for having felt so happy.

The miners had procured a rude stretcher, often used when accidents took place in the mine, and the dead body was laid upon it, with a cloth thrown lightly over it, to hide the piteous disfigured face set in its sad gray hair; but one hand hung uncovered, and this hand Annie held, as we walked slowly homeward, four of the men carrying the load. I followed, helping my aunt who was simply heartbroken.

They bore him to the cottage, and women came to do the last sad offices. While they were thus occupied I spoke to Annie, trying to console her. White as marble, and now quite tearless, she seemed like one whose reason had been left her, under the weight of some violent physical blow. But when we went up stairs together, and saw my uncle lying as if asleep, his white hair decently arranged, his face composed, his thin hands folded on his breast, his whole expression one of mysterious peace, she knelt beside him and kissed his cold brow, and her tears again flowed freely. My aunt stood beside her weeping and looking on.

"God has taken him!" I said solemnly. "He is happy now."

"Ay, happy—'t God," sobbed my aunt. "Forty years we had dwelt together in this house, and he never gave me angry look or cross word. He by gaw, where I'll soon gang too. Wait for me, my bonnie man, wait for me—wait for her that loves he, and is coming to see soon!"

"Why should I linger over this scene of sorrow, why should I turn to other scenes which followed it? Time and Dox has healed all these wounds; to speak of them, is to open them again."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A year after the flooding of the mine and the death of John Pedrago, I married Madeline Graham. The ceremony took place quietly in London, and when we had gone together, and when it was over, we spent a brief honeymoon abroad. One spring morning, as I sat with my bride in an hotel by the lake of Geneva, I read in the Times an announcement that filled my

heart with surprise and pain. It was an advertisement of the approaching sale by auction of Rodru House, St. Gerliot's Corwall.

A short time before this the mining company had passed into liquidation, and I knew that George Rodru was a ruined man. Little or no communication had passed between the cousins, but, when the crash came, Madeline, with my full consent and sympathy, had written to her aunt, offering her a considerable portion of her fortune for George Rodru's use and benefit. This offer had been refused. The next thing that we had heard was that mother and son were living together in London, and closely following on that had come the news of the mother's death, an event which filled my darling with no little distress. To the last Mrs. Rodru had refused to forgive her niece, whom she unjustly held responsible for all the misfortunes which had fallen upon her son.

I showed my darling the newspaper, and she forthwith determined to journey down to Cornwall. Thus it happened that, about a week later, we arrived in St. Gerliot's, where we found Annie and my aunt ready to receive us at the old cottage. I then ascertained that George Rodru had left England for America where he intended to remain. Annie, who was my infirmant, told me that before leaving the village he had sought her out to say farewell.

"And oh, Hugh," she cried, "be asked for my forgiveness and I forgave him, with all my heart. I think, if I had wished it, he would have taken me with him as his wife."

"You did not wish it?"

She shook her head sadly.

"No, Hugh. After what has happened, it was impossible, and I know it was more in despair and pity, than in love, that he spoke. I scarcely knew him; no one would know him—he was like the ghost of his old self; so worn, so broken, with the trouble and shame which have come upon him, that my heart bled for him."

"He is justly punished," I said sadly. "Annie, you did well. I am glad that he is penitent, but never in this world could you two have come together."

The reader already knows that through my darling's goodness, I was a rich man. Now of all men living, perhaps, I best know the capabilities of the St. Gerliot's Mine. Reckless, neglectful and ignorant had wrecked it, and it was still to some extent, at the mercy of the sea; but I had my own theory that more than one fortune was yet to be discovered there. I spoke to Madeline about it; we went into the matter now and then, and the result was an offer was made by me for the old claim to the official liquidator of the company. Things looked despairing and as my offer was a liberal one, it was accepted. Within another year a fresh company was formed with Hugh Trelawney, Esq., as projector, vendor, and chief owner; large sums were expended in the improvements which, if carried out, would long before have saved the concern; the sea was gently persuaded to yield up possession; and before long the old mine was flourishing prosperously, a source of property to all concerned in it and of blessing to the whole population.

Another fact remains to be chronicled. We bought Redru House, and it became our home. There my aunt and Annie joined us, dwelling happily with us, till, in due season, my aunt died. Annie lived on, and still lives, a generous, gracious woman, full of one overshadowing memory, and devoted to our children. The last time she heard of George Rodru, he was a well-to-do merchant, living in the far-away West.

Thus, through the goodness of God I remained in the old home, able to help those who in time of need had helped me. St. Gerliot's is now a happy, thriving place; my dear wife is idolized by the simple people; and I, in the fulness of my fortunate days, am the Master of the Mine.

THE END.

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The Saunterer happened to be in a prominent bank, where he saw an identification effected in the most unique way yet heard of. A young railroad man came hurrying with a check to cash. He was not known in

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the bank except by one man, and he, of course, was out.

"Well, here's my railroad pass," said he, producing the transportation card made out in his name. "Will this do?"

The cashier took it and compared the indorsement on the back with the writing on the pass.

"That won't do you any good," said the owner. "All our passes are made out before we get them."

"I guess it's all right," said the cashier, hesitatingly. "Haven't you something else?"

"Well," was the answer after a moment's thought, "I've got an itemised dentist's bill in my pocket, and you can compare it with the fillings in my teeth," and he displayed the latter in a broad grin which secured for him the money.

But One Answer.

If a man uses the contents of his pocketbook wholly to replenish his stock of tools, to build fine, convenient barns, leaving his unhandsy, patched up house for his wife to furnish and ornament with rag carpets of her own manufacture, broken furniture glued together and upholstered by her overburdened hands, can he expect her to keep in touch with the inventions and improvements of modern times? Can she be well versed in current literature, or even have time for the pleasant greeting or friendly chat that helps

him to forget his labors and overcome the anxieties of his daily toil? If he appropriates the daily paper and reads to himself alone, while his tired wife clears away and washes the supper dishes, and piles her needles till the wee small hours in trying to relieve her overburdened work basket of its worn-out garments that require patch upon patch to render them wearable, does it conduce to make that cheerful atmosphere that should surround a home and enliven the household? If he refuses to go to the social gatherings of his neighbors in company with his wife and characterize them who go to any place of amusement as idlers, while he and his wife stay at home and grow rusty for lack of social friction how can they acquire the culture and discipline that comes from contact with the many-sided world?

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