

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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and will continue to guarantee satisfaction
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of the county, or articles upon the topics
of the day are cordially solicited. The
name of the party writing for the ACADIAN
must invariably accompany the contribu-
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Address all communications to
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Wolfville, N. S.

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prayer-meeting on Tuesday evening at
7:45, and Church prayer-meeting on
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and the Woman's prayer-meeting on the
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all the services.—At Greenwich, preaching
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meeting at 7:30 p. m. on Wednesdays.

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at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m. Holy Communion
1st and 3d at 11 a. m.; 2d, 4th and 5th at
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REV. R. F. DIXON, Rector,
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every Monday evening in their Hall
at 8:30 o'clock.

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"THE BEST"
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The Master of the Mine.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

CHAPTER XXX.—Continued.

It would have been well for poor
Annie if she could have taken him at
his word; but alas! it was too late.

He had made her love him so passion-
ately, that sooner than lose him alto-
gether, she felt she would make any
sacrifice on earth.

Therefore she clung helplessly to
him, sobbing bitterly.

"No, do not go from me—I cannot
bear to lose you!"

He saw he had gained his point, and
grew soft again. He laid her head on
his shoulder, stroked her tear-stained
cheek, and kissed her.

"Oh, Annie, Annie," he said, "you
are a silly little thing. When you talk
as you did just now, you make me
think that you don't care for me at all,
and that your only reason in wishing to
marry me is the temptation to fill the
position I offer you as my wife. My
dear, if I did not love you so devotedly
I should doubt your love. They say
to love is to have implicit faith; you
have no faith in me!"

"Oh, yes, I have!"

"Then why not show it? Come,
tell me that! Why hesitate and cry
as if I am about to bring you to some
dire distress? Yet, after all, what
have I asked you to do? Only what
hundreds of girls have done before you
—to be married a creature instead of
openly, to conceal the fact of our mar-
riage for a few weeks only, and then to
come back with me, my honored
wife, to share my home."

Yes; the story was specious enough,
little wonder indeed that Annie was
bewildered, seeing that she loved him so.
Once more she promised implicit obedi-
ence to all his wishes, and left him.

It was the last night she was to
spend in the cottage, and during that
night she never closed her eyes; but
she lay awake, watching the moon-
beams as they crept in at the window,
thinking of all that was past and what
might possibly lay before her. If
George Redruth had spoken fairly—
and why, she asked herself, should she
doubt him?—she had really very little
to dread. If her father and mother
suffered pain at her sudden flight, it
would be for such a very little while;
and afterwards the great joy which her
return would bring them would make
amends for all. Still, Annie was not
satisfied; her training had been rigid,
and now her conscience troubled her
sorely; but it was too late to repent;
since that interview of the night before
she felt she dare not disobey her lover.

She rose early and came out of her
bed-room while my uncle and I were
preparing to pay our early visit to the
mine. We were both astonished to
see her up, but she said, as an excuse
for her excessive pale face, that she had
a bad headache and could not rest in
bed.

My uncle took her face between his
hands and kissed it fondly, murmuring,
"This won't do, we must have her
in these checks of yours. What
would I do without my little lass!"

Annie stifled a sob, and turned away
with her eyes full of tears. She put
on her hat and walked with us half the
way to the mine—a thing she had
never done before. She held my
uncle's hand all the way, I remember,
and asked him to kiss her when she
decided to go back and make things
ready for the day at home.

We got home rather earlier than
usual that evening, and when we
reached the cottage we found Annie
sitting out at the things for tea. It
had been baking day, and it seemed as
if she had been assisting at the work;
and her listless, tearful manner of the
morning had entirely disappeared. I
could not help noticing that her hands
trembled, that she seemed excessively
nervous, and was strangely eager to
anticipate my uncle's every wish. My
aunt rebuked her once or twice for
what she termed her light-headedness,
but Annie only put her arms round her
neck and kissed her.

"Don't scold, mother, don't scold,"
she said, "you wouldn't like it if I
wasn't here!"

We set up pretty late that night,
and Annie was among the last to retire,
and my uncle rose to go to bed,

Annie kissed him several times, and
my aunt rebuked her again for her
foolishness. Then Annie kissed her
again and again.

"You don't mean half you say,
mother," she murmured; "you know
you love me!"

When we had all retired, and Annie
found herself in her room alone, she sat
down and cried very bitterly. Her
last adieu had been said, the time for
her departure was near at hand, and
all her spirit seemed going. Again
she hesitated; and had she been left
to herself that night, that fatal step
would never have been taken.

Suddenly she started, a faint whistle
reached her from without. Hurriedly
drying her eyes, she opened the win-
dow. There was George Redruth
standing just outside.

"Are you ready, dearest?" he whis-
pered.

"Yes!" she replied.

"Is there anyone about?"

"No! they are all in bed; I think
they must be asleep. It is getting
late, isn't it?"

"It is close on midnight. Give me
out what things you are going to take
—I hope it isn't much—and then
come round and join me at the door."

Annie had collected a few necessar-
ies, and they were made up into a small
parcel. She lifted it, and as she did so
her tears began to flow afresh.
With the parcel in her hands, she re-
turned to the window.

"George!"

"Yes, darling?"

"Are you sure I am doing right?"

"Are you sure you will bring me back
very soon, so that I do not cease to
mourn?"

"Haven't I sworn to? and yet you
doubt me. If you are going to be fool-
ish again, you will drive me from you;
and Heaven knows what the conse-
quences may be. Come, we have not
time to lose; be brave, it is your only
chance."

"Very well, I will trust you," she
said, as she handed the little packet to
him, and closed the window. It was
the work of a moment to clothe herself
in her thickest cloak and darkest plain-
est bonnet; then she hurriedly disar-
ranged the bed, and left the room.
She was trembling violently, and cry-
ing like a child. She paused at the
door of the room where her mother and
father were sleeping; and, kneeling
there, prayed to God to forgive her for
what she was about to do. Even then,
she paused and hung back; but George
Redruth, growing impatient, entered the
kitchen and took her forcibly away.

It was midnight, and pitch dark;
there was not a soul abroad. Holding
the parcel with one hand, and clutched
the girl firmly with the other, George
Redruth hurried her off. Where they
went she could not tell, but they soon
came upon a dog cart and a high-stepp-
ing bay. Annie learned afterward
that this had been driven out from
Falmouth that evening by Johnson,
who stood there waiting for her new
George Redruth addressed him:

"Is all ready?"

"It is, sir."

"The horse fresh?"

"Very."

"That's all right. Remember my
instructions, and carry them out to the
letter."

He tossed up the little bundle; kiss-
ed Annie and lifted her in; then, be-
fore he could utter a syllable, Johnson
sprang in, and they were off, leaving
George Redruth behind them. Now
in all his conversations with Annie,
George Redruth had said nothing of
this plan of sending her away with
Johnson, fearing, no doubt, that if she
knew her lover was not to accompany
her, all her courage would go. When,
therefore, she found herself in this
 plight, poor Annie's distress increased,
and she asked some explanation of her
companion.

"It's all right," he answered, kindly
enough. "He can't come to night, but
he'll join us in London."

Meantime, the horse, a very fast
trooper, was speeding along like light-
ning, covering nine miles, and
plunging further and further into the
darkness.

About six o'clock in the morning
they drove late. Falmouth, and pulled
up the steaming horse before the door
of the best inn. The travellers were
evidently expected, for there was a
porter and a groom sitting up for

them; and while the groom took posses-
sion of the horse, Johnson himself con-
ducted Annie to her room and left her
at the door.

"You have only a few hours for
rest," he said; "we must catch the
eleven o'clock boat for Falmouth."

Left to herself, Annie threw off her
cloak and hat, and looked round the
room. It was a pretty chamber, much
grander than anything she had ever
before encountered. There
were dainty hangings to the bed, and
pretty dainty curtains to the windows.
Moreover, there was a cheerful fire
burning in the grate. Beside the
hearth there was a large, comfortable-
looking easy-chair, into which she
threw herself.

She had not closed her eyes for two
nights, and was utterly weary both in
mind and body; and as her head fell
back upon the soft cushions of the
chair, she fell into a sound sleep.

She was awakened by a loud knock-
ing at the door. She started up; it
was broad daylight, the fire was out
and the room looked cold and cheerless.
She opened the door, and found the
chambermaid standing outside with a
jug of hot water in her hand.

"It's ten o'clock, Miss," said the
girl. "The gentleman says you shall
have your breakfast here in a quarter
of an hour."

Dazed and half-stupefied, Annie
took the jug from the girl's hands, and,
closing the bed-room door again, began
to arrange herself for the day.

At the end of the fifteen minutes,
the chambermaid returned with the
breakfast temptingly arranged on a
tray; a few minutes later Johnson
made his appearance. Instead of
standing at the door as the chamber-
maid had done, he entered the room
and closed the door behind him.

"All ready?" he began cheerfully.
"That's all right!" Then his quick
eye fell upon the new and the breakfast,
and he gave a peculiar whistle.
"Come, this won't do," he said; "no
sleep and no food; you'll wear yourself
out, my dear!"

These words, spoken rather kindly,
touched Annie's heart, and she began
to cry.

"I can't go on, Mr. Johnson," she
said. "I know my coming away has
been a mistake. I should like to go
back again!"

After his first surprise was over,
Johnson pointed out to her the utter
improbability of any such attempt;
and, after a good deal more crying,
Annie saw the force of his argument
and yielded. Yes; the fatal step had
been taken—it was too late to think of
retourning now; the only thing to do
now was to make the best of matters
and go right on. So Annie again put
on her cloak and bonnet and announc-
ed herself ready to go.

"You had better put on a veil," said
the practical Johnson. "We may be
seen, and that would be awkward for
me. Haven't you got one? Well, upon
my word, you are a little simpleton;
but we must make the best of it, I sup-
pose. Here, take my arm and hang
your head a bit; we'll get on board as
quick as possible, and perhaps will
escape soon free."

They passed down the stairs, enter-
ed a closed cab which stood at the
door, and were rapidly driven away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

At seven o'clock that same evening
the two arrived in London, Johnson
tolerably contented with himself for the
cleanness and dispatch with which he
had managed the journey, little guess-
ing that he had been detected by the
keen eyes of John Radd. Arrived at
Enston, a four wheeler was summoned,
and the two got into it and were driven
away. Then Johnson turned to
Annie.

"My dear," he said, "I may as well
make you acquainted with our plans
now. The fact is, the master would
be able to join you for a week, and I
am going to stop and take care of you
till he comes. I have taken some
apartments for that week in a hotel;
and, in order to simplify matters, I
have given our names as Mr. and Miss
Johnson. Therefore, for the time be-
ing, you are my sister, Miss
Johnson. Do you understand?"

Annie nodded. She quite under-
stood; though she was beginning to
feel alarmed as well as puzzled at the
strangeness of the whole proceedings.

She was still more alarmed at the sub-
sequent manner in which Johnson con-
ducted himself. True, he had taken
rooms in the hotel, as he had said—
private rooms, which they occupied in
common. She was apparently allowed
to go and come at will; yet she soon
found that she was as much a prisoner
as if she had been inclosed by iron bars.
Whatever she did, Johnson knew of;
and once or twice, when she attempted
to write to her friends, he quietly but
firmly refused to allow any such thing.

"Look here," he said, "don't you
think this here game is to my taste at
all, 'cause you'd be wrong. I've done
a goodish many things in my time,
but running away with girls, and
keeping them caged up like birds,
ain't one of them; however, I gave
my word to young Redruth as I'd
keep ye square till he came, and I'm
agin' to keep my word; but precious
glad I shall be when these six days
are over."

In due time the six days came to an
end, and Annie received from Johnson
the glad intelligence that on the after-
noon of the sixth day her lover would
be with her. Trembling with excite-
ment and joy, she obeyed her woman's
instinct, and hastened to make herself
look her very best. She arrayed her-
self in the pretty grey dress which she
had brought with her from her home;
she put some flowers at her throat; so
that when, a few hours later, young
Redruth arrived, he clasped her to him
again and again, and locking into her
tear-dimmed eyes, said he had never
seen her looking so pretty in all her
life.

"And you will never go away from
me again," said Annie, as she clung
sobbing to him; "you will always stay
with me!"

"Always, my darling."

"And we—shall—be married—"

"This very night. Though I have
been away, I have not been unmindful
of my duty to you, my pet. I have
arranged for our marriage; I have
taken a house where we will live. We
will go straight from here after dinner,
and get the ceremony over. It will be
a quiet marriage, and, to you, a
strange one, I fear. It will not be
solemnised in a church, with all the
brightness and beauty that should
have surrounded my darling. We
shall go before a registrar and be mar-
ried quietly—this is another sacrifice
that my love demands."

But this was no sacrifice to Annie
so long as she was married, and knew
her love to be no sin—that was all she
asked; so she cried a little on his
shoulder; but it was for joy, not
sorrow.

Everything seemed changed now
the young master had come. A
charming little dinner was ordered and
served in the handsome sitting-room,
which during the past week had been
occupied by Johnson and Annie. The
little party of three sat down to it—
Redruth making the most convivial of
hosts; after the dinner was over, John-
son took his leave; and the lovers were
alone. There was no time just then
for billing and cooing; if anything was
to be done, it must be done quickly,
for the day was well-nigh spent,
George told Annie to get on her bonnet
and cloak; she did so, and the two got
into a hansom and were driven away.

How strange it all seemed to her—
to be speeding thus through the streets
of London with her future husband by
her side. She was on her way to be
married, dressed in an old bonnet and
cloak which she had often worn at St.
Gurjot's, with no wedding favors, no
joyful faces about her. Looking back
upon this episode in later years, she
saw in it the dreadful foreshadowing
of all that was to follow, the misery,
the degradation, the shame. But at
the time she saw nothing of all this;
the softness was illuminated to her
by the fact that she had beside her the
one man whom above all others she
loved—and who loved her.

The memory of that episode had
faded somewhat away. She remem-
bered only faintly that the hansom set
them down before the door of a dingy
office in some back slum of London,
that before two men the marriage cere-
mony was gone through, and that
when she re-entered the cab she wore a
wedding ring on the third finger of her
left hand, and firmly believed herself
to be Mrs. George Redruth.

The house which he had taken for

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her, and to which he conducted her
immediately after the ceremony, was
situated in a London suburb. It was
an elegant little mansion, furnished
and fitted in a style which completely
dazzled poor Annie. But in those
early days of their union he certainly
loved her as much as it was in his
power to love; and Annie was happy.
Besides, he was always with her; dur-
ing the day they drove together, and
in the evening they went to the theatre
or opera—Annie clad in silks and
satins like some great lady of the land.
But things could not be expected to
go on so forever; and after a while,
Redruth began to leave her; for short
periods at first, and afterward for longer
—and his manner, at first so ardent
and overflowing, gradually cooled, and
during his absences, cried bitterly in the
sorrow of her own room. Then she
brought reason to her aid, and ac-
knowledged to herself that it was the
lot of every happy bride to pass
through the experience which was
coming to her. After a man had be-
come a husband, it was impossible for
him to remain a lover—at least, she
had been told that was the common
belief, so she must try to be content.

But at times, try as she would, she
could not help grieving. Thus it was
that George Redruth found her very
sad one evening, when he returned to
her after an absence of several days.
He came in jovial enough, for he had
been dining at the club with some
friends. He took her in his arms
and kissed her; then he looked into
her eyes.

"Why, Annie, what's this?" he
said. "You've been crying?"

"Just a little, because I felt so lone-
ly. It is so dreary here when you
are away, and you are away so much
now."

"If I am, it is no fault of mine,
my pet; important business, which
you would not understand, compels
nearly all my time; affairs are get-
ting so complicated that, unless I do
something quickly, I shall be a
bigger. But come, its only for a little
while; when things are put straight,
as I hope they will be soon, we will go
abroad and be constantly together.
Now, dry your eyes, darling, and see
what I have brought you."

He produced a little packet, open-
ed it, and showed her a gold bracelet.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.
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