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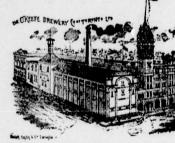
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## ARMINE

CHRISTIAN REID.

CHAPTER XVII.

Sibyl Bertram was right in saying that she had a capacity for hero-wor ship which only needed the appearance of the hero in order to declare itself but she had also too fine a sense of the essential characteristics of heroism to be deceived by any ordinary counterfeit. And since heroes do not abound

in life, especially in the conventional order of life in which her lot was cast, she had fallen into a state of scepticism by no means extraordinary in a nature so ideal in its tendencies and so

fastidious in its tastes.

And to this mood Mr. Talford played the part of a well bred Mephistopheles. His quiet but absolute disbelief in any thing exalted; his positive conviction that selfishness, pure and simple, dictated the conduct of every human being who was not a madman; his easy cynicism and creed of worldly materialism, which he made no attempt to conceal and which a wide experience of life seemed to justify—these things were not without their effect upon Sibyl, though it was an effect which Egerton failed to understand. was not inconsistently tolerating this ing herself with certain high ideals by which other people were uncompromis-ingly tried, but was rather deliberately asking herself whether this cynicism was not, after all, the true philosophy of life, and her ideals mere baseless

For it must be remembered that the enthusiasm of which she was capable, the aspirations which she felt towards noble ends had absolutely nothing to feed upon. The life of a young lady in commonplace society affords perhaps as little scope for anything of an exalted nature as can possibly be imagined, unless the great force of religion enters this life and by its wondrous alchemy transmutes the performance of ordinary duties into great deeds. But in the society in which Sibyl moved this force had no existence. It is a society which keeps up a bowing acquaintance with God, and which goes to church (in new tiolette) on Sunday with a comfortable sense of performing a vague hour or so in an agreeable manner. hearing some good music and probably some novel doctrine, which can afterwards be discussed with much individual freedom of opinion; but to religion in any vital sense its very air is fatal. For its standards are not only of the world, but of the most trivial interests of the world-its fash ions, amusements, and scandals. To dine, to dress, to drive, to cultivate distinguished acquaintances and know the last items of fashionable gossipthese are its supreme ends; and where in them is there food to satisfy an eager mind or an immortal soul? Surrounded by these trivialities, Sibyl had sought refuge in a literature which fascinated her by the high ideal of human conduct which it presented, by the teaching of an altruistic ben evolence and of the possible ultimate perfection of humanity. This ideal fired her imagination and seemed to

ing for some supreme and noble end, the pursuit of which she felt to be necessary if life was to be of value. But when she looked around for the disciples who practised these teachings of enthusiastic masters, whose quence and genius have for a time blinded many to the baselessness of their hopes, she found that instead of placing their happiness in the happiness of others, and of directing every effort to the elevation of the race, men and women were going their old accus

tomed ways and only accepting that

part of the teaching which relieved

offer satisfaction to all the craving of

which she had been conscious-crav

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them of responsibility to a higher power. Then came the tempter, in the form of Marmaduke Talford, to declare with a tone of assurance and authority: "You and all like you are dreamers, who know nothing of the actual conditions of life. Self interest is, always has been, and always will be the basis of men's deeds; and to fancy that any motive for conduct can vised strong enough to supplant self-interest is to fancy what all past history and present experience belie. Accept, then, the plain fact that the material goods of life are the only things of which we can be certain, and its material pleasures the only objects

worth our pursuit.

Now, it may readily be conceived that this was not a doctrine likely to please one whose nature yearned trongly and passionately toward ideal good, unless in the recoil of disappointment to which such a nature is subment to which such a nature is subject. And it was a recoil which had set in strongly with Sibyl, as the impatient scorn which puzzled Egerton abundantly testified. "Why do you rifle away existence so ignobly? Why do not you, who are free as only a man can be free, find some high task worthy of a man's doing?" was the meaning that underlay all her contemptuous speeches. And it followed of necessity, had Egerton been able to perceive it, that she would not have been inclined to manifest this con-tempt to one whom she had felt to be incapable either of realizing or followng the high intangible ideal that was in her thoughts. With Talford she showed none of it, because she was too With Talford she keen an observer not to understand that he must be taken on a lower plane, as that which he defined himself to be—a man of the world, worldly, and a materialist of the most pronounced type. No good to chide him with lack of ideals and aims at which he only smiled. And so it came to pass that Sibyl began to question whether this man, whose knowledge of life was so wide and varied, might not have grasped its true meaning, and if it might not be the part of wisdom to put away from her for ever dreams and hopes destined apparently never to be realized. For there is no com-promise possible with a nature like hers. It either believes and hopes all or it believes and hopes nothing; and and the influence which was acting on complished its end had not that which we call chance led har within the judged." we call chance led her within the different influence of one whose heroism and whose sincerity she could not

Something of this she said to her nother, though not a great deal; for she was never expansive, unless sure of sympathy, and although there was much affection there was not much sympathy between mother and daugh-"I feel," she said as they sat at breakfast together the morning after her visit to the D'Antignacs', "as if I had received a mental stimulant and spiritual refreshment. I have had the sensation lately of one half-starved, both mentally and spiritually; but I was fed and strengthened last night, and I am able again to make an act of faith in the possibility of human noble-

"My dear Sibyl!" said her mother in mild remonstrance. "'Half-starved, mentally and spiritually, and only able since last night to make an act of faith in human nobleness!' How very unflattering to all your friends and acquaintances

Sibyl laughed. "You see I was not freshment came. And such relief! Mamma, you must go to see M. d'Antignac. I have never known any one in the least like him. He is so strong and so simple, so patient and so gentle! He seems to look one gentle! He seems to look one through; but one does not mind it at all, there is so much comprehension and sympathy in the penetration."

"I don't know that I should about being looked through," said Mrs. Bertram; "but he must be a very interesting person, and I am glad that you like him so much.

"He is much more than an interesting person," said Sibyl. "I know what interesting people are. They please and amuse one for a time by their cleverness or their wit or their originality. I have been interested by a great many such people; but when one gets to the end of them, when one knows all that one has to expect, there is an end of interest.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bertram, whe knew - or thought she knew - her daughter on this point, "and when you get to the end of M. d'Antignac there will be an end of interest in him

"If you saw him you would not think so," answered Sibyl. "I can hardly express the manner in which he impresses me, but it is as if the interest he awakens does not depend so much on his personal qualities — charming on his personal quanties—chaining though they are—as on certain great truths and principles of life which he seems to have grasped most fully and to be able to draw upon with a wonderful simplicity and directness. Absolutely there does not seem to be any self-consciousness about him. when one feels one's self to be bristling with that very objectionable quality, one appreciates all the repose and strength that is the result of its ab-

You are certainly very enthusiastic about M. d'Antignac, and not very complimentary to yourself," said Mrs. Bertram, smiling. Bertram, smiling. "Are you brist-ling with self consciousnes?" I don't think any one would find it out."

"I find it out," said Sibyl, with smile and a sigh.

She did not pursue the subject farther, but a few days later her surprise and pleasure were great at receiving a visit from Mlle. d'Antignac, who had told her that, though always glad to receive her friends, she seldom paid visits. Remembering this, Sibyl, as she greeted her, said quickly and cordially:

"I am flattered that you have thought of me enough to come to see

me."
"I am sure that you are well used to being thought of sufficiently for that or any other purpose," said Mile. d'An-tignac, with a smile. "But I must be quite frank and tell you that it is as much my brother's thought as my own that has brought me. 'Go to see Miss Bertram, and ask her to come and see me again,' he said. And I assure you that such a request from Raoul is flattering.

"I feel it so," answered Sibyl. must be simply his kindness. He must know how much I wish to see him

again. "Perhaps he does know it : some times I think that there are few things which he does not know or divine," said Mile. d'Antignac. "But, however that may be, his interest in you and his desire to see you again are most undoubted. I foretold that it would be so," she said, with another smile. "I thought that you would please him, though I was not prepared for the determination he evinces not to lose sight of you.

"I must think better of myself since I am able to please M. d'Antignac,' said Sibyl. "It seems to me incred ible, for while I was talking to him I had a feeling as if he were looking me through and thinking what a poor, crude creature I was. But I did not mind the judgment. It seemed to be exercised with the compassion and gentleness of an angel. Then she suddenly flushed. "Perhaps this sounds to you extravagant," she said. it is really what I felt; and although my friends will tell you that I am prone to sudden enthusiasms, I tell you that these enthusiasms have been for things rather than persons. Clever and original people have often inter-ested me, but I was never before conscious of the least inclination to bow down as before something higher than myself. Indeed, it is I who have always judged. I never before felt

"It is good for us that we should bow down occasionally, even in the most human point of view," said Mlle. d'Antignac, looking kindly at the brilliant young face, "else we are apt to become spiritually and intellectually arrogant. And it is good, too, that we should be judged now and then by some one more impartial and less intolerant than ourselves. For to judge himself justly is impossible to man-or woman either. One is either too lenient or too severe with one's self. Do not infer from this, however, that I think Raoul was really judging you. He was only 'taking the measure' of your mind, with a penetration which he possesses in singular degree; and the result is that he wishes to see you again. I think that speaks for itself.

'Almost too flatteringly," answered yl, smiling. "But I need hardly Sibyl, smiling. "But I need hardly say that I shall be delighted to respond to his wish and to gratify my own desire. May I ask when he receives

"Any and every afternoon when he is well enough. But I must warn you that very often his most intimate friends come and he cannot see them; thinking of all my friends and acquaitances, but only of the truth," she said. "I did not know how nearly starved I was until the relief of rehim best know that they have always the risk to run, but they do not mind it. They come, and if he cannot see them they go away, to come again.

"Surely a disappointment is little for them to bear when he is bearing so "And is there no much," said Sibyl. hope of cure, of alleviation? Can he never be better?'

"Never-here. He does not hope or dream of it. All his hopes are set in eternity, where alone he can know again the sense of existence without

"It must make him wish to hasten there," said Sibyl in a low tone.
"You would think so, and no doubt he

does long for it in a manner we cannot understand; but I have yet to hear the first murmur of impatience from his lips. And more than once he has said deliberately that, notwithstanding his suffering, he is more than willing to remain here as long as God has the smallest work for him to do."

"It seems to me that his is a great work—to aid, to counsel, to influence so many," said Sibyl. "I can judge so many," said Sibyl. "I can judg what his influence must be by the effect which he has had upon me. And when one thinks that a man who is a prisoner, tied to his bed and racked with suffering, can do so much to make the burden of life lighter for others, what shame should we not feel who spend our days in talking of great deeds, yet do not the least !

"The least is often the greatest," said Mile. d'Antignac, understanding the ring of self-contempt in her voice. 'There is nothing more useful for us to remember than that. And when we see the number of those who, in undertaking to set the world right, are only setting it wrong, we may be glad to be prevented from trying our hand at the same business, with probably the same result. But "-she rose-" these reflections are likely to lead one far afield, and I must not stay longer. shall hope to see you soon, and I echo Raoul's wish as well as my own in saying I trust you may like us well enough to make one of our inner circle of familiar and habitual visitors.

Ask for Minard's and take no other.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Far down in Brittany stands the old Chateau de Marigny in the midst of a wide domain. Terraces and gardens and green woods intersected by long, grassy avenues, surround it, while be yond a great extent of moorland stretches toward the sea, which beats yond ' ever against the scarred and riven face of the cliffs that surround this stormy coast. Across the wide uplands breezes fresh with the briny freshness of the great deep blow and carry the thunder of the waves over the leafy tree tops to the chateau, as it stands above its formal terraces with their time stained marble balustrades and broad flights of steps leading down to the gardens below.

Near the chateau is the village of Marigny, filled chiefly with the simple and devout fisher-folk of the Breton coast, among whom revolution makes scant progress; but a few miles distant is a large town, and here a sufficient number of the discontented class are to be found to serve as a basis for the work of the political agitator. In this, as the most important place of the district, Duchesne established himself when he came down to conduct the campaign against the Vicomte de Marigny; and here all the elements of opposition centred around him.

It may be thought that in loyal Brit-

tany these elements would not count for much; but in France, above all other places on the earth, extremes of good and evil confront each other. Who, for instance, that enters the crowded churches of Paris, with their devout throngs of men and women. but finds it difficult to realize that he is in the midst of that great capital where blasphemy and vice walk hand-inhand along the glittering streets? And in Lyons and Marseilles - hotbeds of revolution as they are—who does not know that one has not far to seek to find Christians with the virtues of the apostolic age, true confessors of the faith and spiritual children of the martyrs? While regarding the immense hosts of pilgrims to the shrine of Notre Dame de Lourdes, with their passionate appeals to the Mother of God to save France, it is hard to under-stand that the same France which produced these pious souls could also produce the maddened hordes of the Revolution and the Commune. And so even in Christian Brittany the evil watchwords of an evil time are heard, and men are seduced by the old promises of the tempter and intoxicated by the specious arguments and appeals of

Duchesne, therefore, found material enough to work upon to secure the defeat of the Vicomte de Marigny. To effect this end, however, he spared no effort either publicly or secretly-for there were secret meetings of societies but which, with many stern resolutions, pledged themselves to oppose the Vicomte de Marigny by any and all means. "For this is no ordinary man," the speakers said, "with no ordinary power to retard and injure the great cause of humanity. He is no mere obstructionist whom the flood will sweep over, but no one who defies and gives battle, who leads and sways men. Therefore he is to be crushed at any cost." And the assembly with one voice cried, "Ecrasez le!" as, given a little more power, they would cried, "A la guillotine And so it was determined that M. de Marigny should be crushed-by fair means if possible; but, these failing, by any such as were justified by the need of advancing the cause of revolution. Meanwhile the days passed pleasant

ly and not without some gleams of pleasure to Armine. She saw little of her father and knew little of what he was doing; but ignorance is welcome to one who shrinks from the weight of knowledge. She tried to forget for what purpose she had come, and to interest herself in the quaint customs and architecture of the old Breton town. She never tired of wandering through the picturesque medæval streets, the sunshiny squares, the curious old courts and many churches. In some respects it was like other places in which she had been before, yet there was a difference, a flavor of distinct nationality which attracted and pleased her. Then the piety of the people was so deep, their devotion so earnest and spontaneous! As she often knelt in the corner of some crowded churchtaking care always to shelter berself behind a great pillar, for it did not seem to her as if her father's daughter had a right to be there-she felt thrilled in every fibre by the chant which rose from the depths of those Celtic hearts, by the intensity of the faith which breathed in every act and word of the worshippers. And it was then that she began to realize that her father's passionate devotion to his ideal was only the religious instinct of the Breton turned into another channel. He might disown the God of his fathers, but he could not divest himself of the earnestness which was his inheritance from them, or the instinct of faith which, having lost the heavenly, now sought an earthly end. For no light scoffing or lighter indifference is possible to the Breton soul. Loyalty and enthusiasm are inbred in it, and, in its passionate tenacity, it is the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made. But these tranquil and uneventful

days did not last long. One morning Duchesne said suddenly: "You must be growing tired of this dull life, petite. It was hardly worth while to exchange Paris for it. But you shall little while? It would surely be good have a little diversion, or at least a little change, to day. It is necessary that I should go to the village of Marigny, and I will take you with me."
"To Marigny!" said Armine. Despite her efforts she shrank visibly.

am very well satisfied here, mon pere,

I think I would rather not go."
"Why not?" asked her father, with some surprise and a glance which expressed a shade of suspicion. "What do you know of Marigny? Why should you not wish to go?"

"I know nothing of Marigny," she answered. "But I like this place, and

answered. "But I like this bere." am quite content to remain here." "I am not content to leave you here, bowavar." said her father. "There is no reason why you should not enjoy a visit to Marigny. You seemed anxious to see something of Brittany, and that is a typical Breton village. Besides, you will have a glimpse of the coast It is only a drive of a few miles.

must go."
"How soon shall we start?" she less with no better reason than she had to give.

"In an hour," her father answered

and we shall return this evening. In an hour they were driving along the road to Marigny, and Armine acknowledged that the motion and the air of the balmy day were as charming as the view of the country outspread in all its spring beauty under the golden sunshine. A soft breeze rippled the growing grain in the fields as they passed; lark after lark poured forth its song above them in the blue depths of the sky; cool and deep on the hillsides lay the shadow of the immemorial woods of Brittany, and the earth seemed carpeted by flowers that grew and rioted in every available space of ground. As they advanced the breeze which blew steadily in their faces grew more and more laden with the salt freshness of the sea; and at length a wide, green heath opened before them, golden with the flowers of the broom, while afar on the distant horizon was a blue flashing ine of restless water.

Along one side of their way, how ever, the shade till extended. Bu suddenly the road turned; they passed some iron gates ; the coachman ing with his wip, said, " Voila le chateau!" and there was a glimpse up a long, straight avenue of a stately house standing with many-windowed facade above a flight of terraces. Neither Armine nor her father spoke. latter did not turn his head; but she. following with her eyes the direction of the pointing whip, saw the chateau, with its steep roof and iron balconies, and the broad steps leading down from the terrace to the shady avenue, framed like a picture at the end of the green vista. It was but a momentary view. They passed on, and a few minutes later came in sight of the parish church, situated on the outskirts of the village on the side toward the chateau. It was an old and picturesque edifice, built of the red granite of the coast, the ruddy hue of which contrasted effectively with the green moss that clung about its tower and tiled root. Around it was the graveyard, with the sunshine falling softly on the stone crosses of the graves and over a large Calvary which dominated the enclosure and sanctified death.

The village itself was situated farther beyond, and its long, straggling street led toward a cliff, down the face of which a steep path went by rudelycut and somewhat dangerous steps to the beach where the fishing boats lay. Armine uttered a cry of delight when, standing on the edge of this precip itous steep, she beheld the great plain of heaving, flashing sapphire at her feet, the creamy line of surf breaking far below, the blue outlines of distant capes, and the majestic cliffs, stormrent and torn into fantastic shapes by r ceasing warfare of the sea stretching for miles on each side.

But it was not until they had taken their dejeuner at the inn that she went out with her father and saw this sight, the grandeur of which thrilled and fas cinated her. She knew the charm of southern shores, all the loveliness of earth and sea and sky which makes the coasts of Italy for ever enchanted. But what was it to the wild beauty of this Breton coast-to this gigantic bulwark of towering heights, which, washed and worn into stupendous forms of arches, pinnacles and spires, stood like the remnants of a titanic world and breasted for ever the rage of There was, however, no the sea? suggestion of rage or tempest in the scene now calm and peaceful as a dream of heaven. The waves were rippling gently on the yellow sands and around the base of the mighty monoliths and columns of crimson granite; the great crags rose like aerial battlenents bathed in sunlight; on the blue liquid expanse that melted afar into the sky white sails stole along and the great wings of gulls darted and flashed.
"It is more than beautiful—it is so

grand that it fills one with awe," said Armine. "I should like to stay here for days, long enough to take it all in!

"If I had time," said her father, "we would stay for a few days at any rate; you would enjoy it even more than you think. I knew the coast well once. It is wild and picturesque, and terrible to a degree you can hardly imagine. But there is a wonderful fascination about it. Many of these cliffs are honey combed with caves, which the sea enters at high tide, where one may float in a boat and look up at walls hundreds of feet high, carved into strange architectural semblances and gleaming with color.'

for you to take a short rest - you who work so hard !"

"There is need to work," said her

father. "Rest is not for one who hears the cries of multitudes in his ears, who "I labors for the great cause of humanity.

I have come here to formation which he and me alone. And that I have not mor present. I must ta inn while I attend t 'Can I not go dow asked Armine, poin beach below. He shook his he

DECEMBER

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is as good a place will join you ther of an hour. And so Armine ing back alone, h reluctance, having

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