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## ARMINE.

CHRISTIAN REID

CHAPTER XLIV.

It was indeed a terrible ordeal of

was at hand. But his strong vitality did not pause to think as she spoke still resisted the approach of dissolu- hurriedly: tion; and after days of agony he came slowly back to a knowledge of the things of life, wan, exhausted, shattered from understood; you have never made a the onslaught of pain, which like a sullen foe retreated slowly, in preparation for some fiercer attack which the resist.

During these days no one shared more constantly the vigil by his bed-side than the Vicomte de Marigny, and in this way he was thrown into frequent contact with Armine. It was a contact which both avoided at first, but in the sharp tension of anxiety as D'Antignac's danger increased they forgot all save this anxiety which they owned in common, and when the worst was over it was as familiar friends that they congratulated each other.

"And now," said De Marigny as they talked softly in the salon, while deep quiet reigned in the chamber adjoining, where Helene kept watch by him who lay wrapped in the bliss of respite from agony, "you should also think of resting. So much watch-ing and anxiety has told upon you." "Has it?" she said. "But relief "you should

ems rest enough - and it is such great relief !' Yes," he said a little sadly, "to us; but to him it is only a fresh lease of suffering. One cannot forget that.

"No, one cannot forget it," said mine, "but who can say what it Armine, enables him to merit-for others as well as for himself? I am sure there s comfort in that for him, and so there should be for us.'

"You have learned something of his way of looking at things," said the vicomte, with a smile. "Everything that I know of good I

have learned from him," she answered simply. There was a moment's silence. It was late afternoon, and through the open windows floods of long sunshine came, together with the subdued sound of the city's life—the beating, as it were, of its great heart. The soft air was full of refreshment, but it brought no touch of color to Armine's pale cheeks. Watching and anxiety had told upon her, as M. de Marigny said, but it had not lessened the charm of the sensitive, poetic face with its deep, beautiful eyes. Those eyes were gazing out of the window at the depths of blue sky when she spoke next, as if unconsciously uttering a

thought aloud : eave him after this. The vicomte started. "To leave

he repeated involuntarily. Are you going—away?"
She, too, started a little; and now a aint tinge of color came into her It was evident that she had

spoken unconsciously.

"Oh! yes," she said, a little hurriedly.

"I thought you knew. I go
—soon to join the Sisters of Charity."

The vicomte did not answer imnediately. Indeed, it was plain that cost him a strong effort when he

said presently:

what order-"There could be no question with me," she said. "I want a place in the ranks of those whose lives are given to the service of the suffering and of the poor. And where should I find that save with the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul ?",

St. Vincent de Paul ?,
She paused after the question, and
M. de Marigny forced himself to say omething about the merit of such a

choice "I do not think that I can claim much merit," she answered quietly, for it is less a deliberate choice be ween the higher things of God and the lower things of the world than a passion which impels me. I could not rest in ease and happiness. misery of which the world is full, and which I know so well, would pursue I could not forget it. For others such forgetfulness may be possible. It would not be for me. The poor call My place is with them and my

work is among them." She looked at him, as she spoke, with eyes full of wistful entreaty. Her voice, though very low, seemed with every sentence to deepen in feeling. He could not resist the impression that she was pleading with him to understand her now, as he had understood her before. Again the thought of the churchyard of Marigny came to him, and of the letter which he had read on the terrace of the chateaufull of the same entreaty. It was impossible to withhold the expression of

his comprehension and sympathy.
"I understand you," he said in a low tone. "The passion of which you speak is that with which God fills the ouls which He destines for noble deeds. Before it all human passions must vei their heads. And you have this great happiness," he added in a tone that, despite himself, was sad, "that you offer to God a heart and a life that will

No one could even desire to take it from you.

Comprehension was not on his side D Antignac went on: She understood the sadness alone. under the self-forgetful words, and a suffering through which D'Antignac longing filled her to say somethingwas passing, and those around him anything—to lesson the pain of which father laid upon you? We deci thought more than once that the end she was instinctively conscious. She

"Such words are like all that I have mistake; you have been kind and generous from the first. know what it is to be placed in a worn forces of life could no longer difficult position and to meet one who divines all that you feel without the need of speech, and who never fails in sympathy? That is what I have always found you. Do not think that I have not felt it—that I do not feel it in my heart." She paused for an instant, then went on in another tone -that tone, at once proud and pathetic, which he had heard from her once before-"I told you once that it mattered little what name one bore. Where I am going it matters nothing -for there alone the Socialists' dream of equality is realized, so I may for once acknowledge the tie of kindred blood, and say that in leaving the world I shall take with me no happier nemory than that I leave such a noble kinsman fighting in a cause for which

I can only pray."
Words failed him with which to answer her. She seemed already to speak from a height which no prayer or his could reach, had he desired to make any. But he had not forgotten the hour when he resigned his heart's lesire to the will of God; and now that he was face to face with Armine, that he heard her words, saw her spirit, as it were, unveiled, he felt, as D'Antignac had felt before him, that her resolve was based on no impulsive fancy, but on the clear and positive heard now as of old by many a faithful soul-"Leave all and follow

"What can I say to you?" he asked presently in a low tone. "You know what is in my heart, but you have sealed my lips.

"Have we not understood each other almost without words from the first?" she answered gently, rising as she spoke and standing before him, a slender figure in the slanting sunset glow. "Believe me, all is better so and you—in a little while you will feel it. For this is God's will—I am sure of it-and He makes no mistakes. See !"-she clasped her hands with the old familiar gesture-" after what I have known could I turn my back upon humanity which suffers, and upon God who calls, to be merely happy? Ah!no. You must feelsay that you feel I could not !"

He, too, rose, answering with every faculty of his being to the sudden passion of that demand upon him.
"I feel it now," he said, "if I have

not felt it before. All that I have offered is worthless compared to what you choose. How could a man dare to make himself the rival of God? not dare. Go, in God's name! Leave happiness to those who have no higher

"But is there not happiness in the higher good?" she said. may not know it, but you know that To work, to endure, to there is. spend and be spent in God's service and the service of the poor, in lessenaid presently:

"I have heard that you thought of ing for a few the misery that drives the religious life, but I did not know them to despair—what is the happiness to this? It is wonderful that God should have called me to this happiness : but since He has-oh ! if hereafter you ever think of me, let it be to thank Him for me !"

She turned and went away before he could utter a word ; but, left alone, he said to himself that he should ever after remember her chiefly as she had stood before him then-her eyes full of infinite radiance, and her figure touched by a light that left the room

As D'Antignac grew better one of the first visitors admitted to his pres ence was Egerton. The young man had been solicitous in his inquiries, but he had not seen D'Antignac unti this occasion, when Helene admitted him to the familiar chamber, warning him to the familiar chamber, him, however, not to remain long. For

It was an unnecessary caution. Egerton was so shocked when he saw he face that lay motionless on its pil ows-as white and thin again as whe ne saw it last-that he would fain have escaped almost immediately, fearing o exhaust the little strength which th sick man still possessed, had not D'An-

tignac detained him.
"Nay, do not go," he said, when, after his inquiries were over, the young man made a movement to de-part. "I have not seen you for what seems to me a long time—whether it be long or short in reality I do not know-and I have something to tell

"I only fear to tire you—or to suf-fer you to tire yourself," said Eger-ton, hesitating. "Mlle. D'Antignac warned me-

"Never mind Helene," said D'An "I don't allow her to play tyrant over me a moment longer than am able to assert myself. Restez want to speak to you of Armine.

He made a slight motion with his hand-a hand as thin and pale as the face-which Egerton obeyed by resum ing his seat, wondering as he did so man for forgetting himself in others. Egerton rose to his feet, glancing burn me to ashes!"

He had dismissed the subject of his around quickly. Then he smiled.

Another guest, over the marvellous faculty of this own suffering-that absorbing subject !

be His supremely-a heart that has not to most invalids-in the fewest posbeen wearied by the world, a life that sible words. But he was ready to has not been soiled in its service, talk of Armine, to throw himself into You have chosen 'the better part,' the interests of another life. It was so wonderful to Egerton that he did not speak, and after a brief pause

" Do you remember—but of course you remember-our conversation one day about the last charge which her father laid upon you? We decided necessity arose. You will be glad to know that it has not arisen, and that it will never arise.

"I am glad-very glad-to know t," said Egerton, much surprised; but pardon me if I ask how can you

sure that it will never arise?"
"Because," answered D'Antignac " we agreed that she need not be told unless there was a probability of her marrying M. de Marigny. There is

no such probability."
"But there may be," said Egerton

little obstinately.
"No," said D'Antignac, with smile in his dark, serene eyes, "there will never be. For those who enter will never be. For those who enter the religious life there is no more question of marriage than there is for the dead : and Armine will soon enter that life. "What! she will become a nun

cried Egerton, startled beyond control. ' Not exactly a nun-that is, not a cloistered nun," answered D'Antig-nac calmly. "She will become a Sister of Charity, to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, to nurse His sick and tend His poor. If you will think a moment you will perceive that it is the only fitting end for Armine."

Egerton did not answer; he sat still

and thought for more than a moment. And he said to himself at length that it was indeed the only fitting end for the girl whose youth had been passed amid the terrible sounds of the social revolution, who had heard the divine counsels of perfection perverted into war-cries of communism and robbery, who had seen face to face the misery that leads to revolt and the spiritual ignorance that leads to crime. could she, with her passionate soul and clear mind, do but join the great army of those whose mission it is to carry light and comfort into the dark place of earth? Dimly the young man felt as she had said — that happi-

ness, mere commonplace, earthly happiness, was not for her. It was beneath the exalted soul that could not do less for God than her own father had done for humanity. By flash of inspiration Egerton saw and understood it all. Even before the light of faith had shone upon him he, too, had felt, as noble souls must feel, the divine necessity of sacrifice; and though he could not yet in his ignor ance fathom that mystery (which must be ever a mystery to the carnal mind of prayer and intercession for a guilty world which the cloister hides, he had often bowed before those heroines of divine charity who carry through hospital wards and scenes of wretchedness the habit of St. Vincent de Paul. It was truly a fitting end for the Socialist's daughter that should wear this habit of the devoted servants of the poor, and that she whose father had denied God with his dying lips, should go through life holding the crucifix before dying eyes.

"I understand now why it was that I could never feel as if any worldly "The world destiny within my power to imagine would suit her," said the young man at length abruptly. once, she always seemed above the off by those whom He loved; despised, possibility of love from me. That was poor and rejected; yet with a wondernot remarkable; but even when I thought of her in connection with M as of One who had come to do the perease and content and natural love de Marigny, I might feel that it would fancy her merely a happy wife like other women. She seemed made for some higher destiny-to be a heroine, a genius, or perhaps a saint."

"She may be all three yet," said D'Antignac, smiling. "Saints are the geniuses of the supernatural order; and, indeed, in the natural order I have always thought that there was a touch of genius in Armine. But then, you know, I have always been an en-

thusiast about her. "Every one who knows her must be,"

said Egerton. "Oh! no," D'Antignac answered. To the commonplace all thing are ommonplace - and all persons also. Γο appreciate even a genius or a saint one must have a little, at least, of that fine quality called sympathy. I do not flatter you, mon ami, when I say that you possess more than a little of it. 'It proves a misleading quality

ometime," said Egerton. "Without doubt. What is there of good which cannot be turned to evil? But surely by this time you have learned—or, if you have not, you will learn-that a man must have some cer

tain guide to distinguish between the good and the evil of this life, where evil so often wears the guise of good. "I have learned it," answered Eger-on. "I have learned it by the bewilderment with which I have listened to the different voices that tried to solve the riddle of life and only added to its mystery and its sadness. When to its mystery and its sadness.

one is young and rich, and the sun shines, this is a delightful world-provided one does not drink, and that one cares for nothing beyond the surface of existence. But if one does think, and if one begins to question, then there is no longer peace until one has followed principles to their ultimate end, and reached either the dreariness of absolute scepticism or the satisfac-tion of absolute faith."

"And you have reached -- ?" said D'Antignac eagerly. The door opened at that instant, and

"I thought it was Mile. D'Antignac the wine cup at his lips, flung aside city.

is Mile. Armine. She never appeared sobbed; others fainted; one even drew at a better moment. Come, mademoiselle, and hear the answer to a question which M. d'Antignac has just asked. I think it will interest you a little.

Armine advanced, and, laying her hand in that which he held out, said, with the exquisite smile and voice that charmed him first: "Whatever concerns you, M. Egerton, must interest

Egerton did not release her hand at once, but, holding it, stood looking from herself to D'Antignac for an instant. Then he lifted his glance to the crucifix that hung over D'Antignac's

" After God," he said reverently, "1 owe it to you two that I am able to say to day, 'Credo in unam, sanctam, to day, Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE FACE OF CHRIST.

BY KATHARINE PEARSON WOODS. All of us have heard the story of the artist who sold his soul to the devil for the power of painting to the life whatever subject he chose; but not all of us know the whole story of the bargain, how it was broken and what happened

thereafter, as it is told herein. His name was Camillo, and there were scenes in his life which he did not care to remember, and which, consequently, he painted over with others even less comforting. At the age of fifty his memory was a charnel-house of dead recollections; his wife had left, his children quarrelled with him; most of his friends he had wronged or been wronged by; and he had made a large fortune and a great name for himself. It was not strange, therefore, that at this very period he should be notified by the devil of the termination of their contract, and the conse quent immediate foreclosure of the

mortgage upon his soul.

The mere idea of such a thing brought out the sweat upon Camillo's forehead; but, having a month allowed him to settle his worldly affairs, he spent one night in tossing sleeplessly between his silken sheets or restlessly pacing the floor of his luxurious champer, and another in still wilder wan derings over the hills around his villa; the third morning he sent for Padre Antonio, the priest of his native vil-

The Father had now grown to be an old, old man; but he came at once at the summons of Camillo. The counsel which he gave is a part of the old, well-known legend: that the artist should use the skill his contract still insured to him in painting the Face of Christ.

It was perhaps in virtue of his trained esthetic taste, perhaps of his ambition, that Camillo decided to paint, not the dying or sorrowful Saviour, which so many artists have attempted and failed, but something still more difficult-the Christ of every day life. By his contract with the devil he was able to reproduce his subject to the very life. It was a wonderful picture. Just what form the features wore, or the color of the hair and beard, I am not able to describe, for, in fact, no one who saw it could ever

remember any of these particulars. What they did see, and could never forget, was the face of a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; cast off by those whom He loved ; despised, ous glad lightsomeness in every line, fect will of God. The lips were parted be an ideal marriage, yet I could not in a half smile; the eyes were wonder ful - full of light, too pure to behold iniquity, searching to the very ground of the heart, tender with infinite tender-

> Camillo could not stand before those eyes; he cast himself on his face upon the floor, weeping bitterly, and thus he lay when the devil came to claim him But the painter knew not even that the fated hour had struck; he heard nothing of the clamor raised by the who saw that his prey had fiend, escaped him.

When at last, too blind with weeping ven to read the hour upon his horooge, the artist rose to his feet, there on the floor lay the hellish contract, signed with his own blood, and he knew Kimself delivered.

For an hour he was in an ecstasy then he bethought him of his custom, upon the completion of each picture, of giving a supper to his artist friends, reading their envy in their faces, and receiving their congratulations. On this occasion there could be no wild orgies such as had been known to occur at other times; but a sober and decorous banquet. Camillo could see no reason against it. The picture was urely the best he had ever painted. The guests were curious and amused

at their host's altered mood, but followed his lead with well-bred readiness until the cloth had been removed and wine set on the table. Then Camillo arose and took away the veil from the Face of Christ. There was for a moment a wonder-

ous silence.

Then with a great cry, a woman, painted and decked with jewels, the gifts of many lovers, a woman who had sat beside the host and been sorely vexed-or professed to be-by the decorum of the feast-this woman sprang to her feet, and, with blanched face and wild white arms beating in the air, fought her way blindly toward the

door. "Let me go," she cried, "ere it slav me!" Let me away before His eyes

Another guest, a young man with

coming to eject me." he said, "but it the ruby poison, fell on his knees an his sword upon the artist, calling him a devil who could so torment them ; one by one all departed from the banquet

hall, and Camillo was left alone. He was very pale, and his hand trembled as he again let fall the veil

over the Face of Christ. With the earliest dawn of the next day Camillo was on horseback and away to visit Padre Antonio, for he did not on this occasion send for the Father to come to him.

Arrived at the priest's house, he made a general confession of all his sins that he could remember.

"None," said Padre Antonio : "none, unless it be the Face of Christ." 'Aye!" returned Camillo, "I am a free agent; and as such, in gratitude to God who has broken my bargain with Satan, I vow henceforth to forsake my ill ways and evil companions, and to live righteously from this day for-

ward. 'The Lord give thee grace to so do,

said Father Antonio. "But at the same time, my Father, pursued the painter, "you must admit that there are some excuses for me. I inherited evil tendencies; I was badly brought up ; my friends have betraved me ; my own wife was false to me, and my children are rebellious and unduti-

ful."
"That is most true," said Padre An-

tonio "But I forgive them ; I forgive them all, freely," said Camillo. "I cannot, of course, take them back to my heart and home, for they are undeserving ; but I have no hard thoughts of them, Father.

"I trust not, my son Camillo," replied the Father.

"And in truth, though I am a grievous sinner, other men have done worse." continued the artist. "See continued the artist. worse, what I have made of myself. member me when I was a ragged little artist's model ; look at me now ! And I have never - though under a compact with Satan-committed aught that men call crime. I have lived a life of pleasure, but have I harmed any

man? "Thou shouldst know," said the

holy man. I do know," returned Camillo. "Well, give me my penance, absolu-tion, and thy blessing, Father, and let ne return home with a clean heart and a quiet conscience.

"There is a veil upon the face of thy picture?" asked the Father. The artist assented, with a troubled

glance. "Then be thy penance this," said Father Antonio; "to place the picture in the room of thine house thou dost nost frequent, and to remove the veil. And when those eyes have read so deeply in thine heart that thou seest thyself as they see thee, then come hither - if thou wilt - for absolution and the blessing of peace. Now God

be with thee. Farewell. Camillo went, his way homeward

with a heavy heart.
"And but now I was so happy and so blest," quoth he to himself. "Was it well done of the Father to disturb my peace?" he asked. neglect to perform his penance.

A week later he sought the priest

"My Father," said he, "I am a far worse man than I dreamed. How dared I ask for absolution? For when I had hung in my studio the picture you wot of, lo! I looked around the walls, and-ask me not, I cannot tell Alas that I should have wrought evil to so many souls! Think you that I can ever atone?"

uldst know. "Return, and look once more priest. on the Face of Christ. So Camillo returned.

And the next day he rose early and went his way to the house of that woman who had risen up and fled from the face of his picture. "Thou and I," said the artist,

have done much evil together; shall we now do much good ?" And the woman agreed. So she sold her jewels and her fine raiment and what precious things she had, and Camillo did the like; and they found other women known to them both, and gathered them into one house, and persuaded them to live a godly and virtuous life. Then Camillo went away to his own house, expecting

to look without fear into the Face of Christ. For, indeed, there was noth-

ing frightful there, but looks of tender love and eyes of searching purity. But the next morning he went to the chief picture dealer in the city and ordered him to go here and there and buy up again every inch of canvas which bore the name of Camillo. Now Camillo was, as has been said, a great painter, and the surface of his pic tures might have been covered with gold coins without reaching their price; so when this had been there was left of all his fortune only a tiny cottage, into which he moved with his one sole treasure, the only relic of his great fame-the Face of Christs. For all those evil and lewd

pictures had been burned with fire. "Now do I indeed repent; now may I be absolved," quoth Camillo: and with a happy and peaceful heart he went his way to the home of Padre Antonio.

"God give you peace, my son ; you have done well," said the priest. "Thou hast a poor home, but a wealthy heart; where is she who should be partner of

"My wife?" cried Camillo, springing to his feet; "why, Padre, thou

knowest she was false to me!" "And thou?" cried Father Antonio. Camillo went his way back to the

"It was ill done of the Padre to

