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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POETRY.

Tangled Threads.

The tangled and broken threads of my life,
How many, how many they be;
The cherished plans that came to naught,
The words unspoken, the songs forgot,
The friends who are lost to me.

We began a song one springtime morn,
Full sweetly and blithely it rung;
But one voice broke with a sob and a moan,
And I had no heart to sing it alone,
So the song remained unsung.

I had a friend when the days were bright,
And our friendship was strong, I ween;
But somehow our pathway drifted apart,
I watched them divide with a heavy heart,
And the years stepped in between.

The tangled and broken threads of my life,
How many, Heart, they be;
But I place them all in my Father's hand,
For He in love all my life hath planned,
And He will straighten the threads for me:

—*Faith Farleigh.*

SELECT STORY.

A Life for a Love.

BY L. T. MEADE.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Yes," said Augusta Wyndham, "if there is a young man who suits me all round it's Mr Carr. Yes," she said, standing very upright in her short skirts, with her hair in a tight pig-tail hanging down her back, and her determined, wide open, bright eyes fixed upon an admiring audience of younger sisters. "He suits me exactly. He's a kind of hail-fellow-well-met; he has no nonsensical languishing airs about him; he preaches nice short sermons, and never bothers you to remember what they are about afterwards; he's not bad at tennis or cricket, and he really can cannon quite decently at billiards; but for all that, if *you* think, you young 'uns, that he's going to get inside of Gerry, or that he's going to try to pretend to know better than Gerry what I can or can't do, why you're all finely mistaken, so there!"

Augusta turned on her heel, pirouetted a step or two, whistled in a loud, free, unrestrained fashion, and once more faced her audience.

"Gerry said that I *could* give out the library books. Now is it likely that Mr Carr knows more of my capacities after six months' study than Gerry found out after fifteen years?"

"But Mr Carr doesn't study *you*, Gus. It's Lilias he's always looking at," interrupted little Rosie.

"You're not pretty, are you, Gus?" asked Betty. "Your cheeks are too red, aren't they? And nurse says your eyes are as round as an owl's!"

"Pretty!" answered Augusta, in a lofty voice. "Who cares for being pretty? Who cares for being simply pink and white? I'm for intellect. I'm for the march of mind. Gerry believes in me. Hurrah for Gerry! Now, girls, off with your caps, throw them in the air, and shout hurrah for Gerry three times, as loud as you can!"

"What an extraordinary noise the children are making on the lawn," said Lilias to Marjory. "I hear Gerald's name. What can they be saying about Gerald? One would almost think he was coming down the avenue to see the state of excitement they are in! Do look, Meg, do."

"It's only one of Gussie's storms in a tea-cup," responded Marjory, cheerfully. "I am so glad, Lil, that you found Gerald and Val hitting it off so nicely. You consider them quite a model pair for affection and all that, don't you, pet?"

"Quite," said Lilias. "My mind is absolutely at rest. One night Val puzzled me a little. Oh, nothing to speak off—nothing came of it, I mean. Yes, my mind is absolutely at rest, thank God! What are all the children doing, Maggie? They are flying in a body to the house. What can it mean?"

"We'll know in less than no time," responded Marjory, calmly. And they did.

Four little girls, all out of breath, all dressed alike, all looking alike, dashed into the drawing-room, and in one breath poured out the direful intelligence that Augusta had mutinied.

"Mr Carr forbade her to give away the library books," they said, "and she has gone up now to the school-room in spite of him. She's off; she said Gerry said she might do it, long ago. Isn't it awful of her? She says beauty's nothing, and she's only going to obey Gerry," continued Betty. "What shall we do? She'll give all the books away wrong, and Mr Carr will be angry."

They all paused for want of breath. Rosie went up and laid her fat red hand on Lilias' knee.

"I said it was you he stared at," she remarked. "*You* wouldn't like him to be vexed, would you?"

The words had scarcely passed her lips before the door was opened, and the object of the children's universal commiseration entered. A deep and awful silence took possession of them. Lilias clutched Rosie's hand, and felt an inane desire to rush from the room with her.

Too late. The terrible infant flew to Adrian Carr, and clasping her arms around his legs, looked up into his face.

"Never mind," she said, "it is wrong of Gussie, but it isn't Lilias' fault. She wouldn't like to vex you, 'cause you stare so at her."

"Nursie says that you admire Lilias; do you?" asked Betty.

"Oh, poor Gussie!" exclaimed the others, their interest in Lilias and Carr being after all but a very secondary matter. "We all do hope you won't do anything dreadful to her. You can, you know. You can excommunicate her, can't you?"

"But what has Augusta done?" exclaimed Carr, turning a somewhat flushed face in the direction not of Lilias, but of Marjory. "What a frightful confusion—and what does it mean?"

Marjory explained as well as she was able. Carr had lately taken upon himself to overhaul the books of the lending library. He believed in literature as a very elevating lever, but he thought that books should not only be carefully selected in the mass, but in lending should be given with a special view to the needs of the individual who borrowed. Before Gerald's marriage Marjory had given away the books, but since then, for various reasons, they had drifted into Augusta's hands, and through their means this rather spirited and daring young lady had been able to inflict a small succession of mild tyrannies. For instance, poor Miss Yates, the weak-eyed and weak-spirited village dressmaker, was dosed with a series of profound and dull theology; and Macallister, the sexton and shoemaker, a canny Scot, who looked upon all fiction as the "work of the de'il," was put into a weekly passion with the novels of Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins.

These were extreme cases, but Augusta certainly had the knack of giving the wrong book to the wrong person. Carr heard mutterings and grumbling. The yearly subscriptions of a shilling a piece diminished, and he thought it full time to take the matter in hand. He himself would distribute the village literature every Saturday, at twelve o'clock.

The day and the hour arrived, and behold Miss Augusta Wyndhom had forestalled him, and was probably at this very moment putting "The Woman in White" into the enraged Macallister's hand. Carr's temper was not altogether immaculate; he detached the children's clinging hands from his person, and said he would pursue the truant, publicly take the reins of authority from her, and send her home humiliated. He left the rectory, walking fast, and letting his annoyance rather increase than diminish, for few young men care to be placed in a ridiculous situation, and he could not but feel that such was his in the present instance.

The school-house was nearly half a mile from the rectory, along a straight and dusty piece of road; very dusty it was to-day, and a cutting March east wind blew in Carr's face and stung it. He approached the school-house—no, what a relief—the patient aspirants after literature were most of them waiting outside. Augusta, then, could not have gone into the school-room.

"Has Miss Augusta Wyndham gone upstairs?" he asked of a rosy-cheeked girl who adored the "Sunday At Home."

"No, please, sir. Mr Gerald's come please, Mr Carr, sir," raising two eyes which nearly blazed with excitement. "He shook 'ands with me, he did, and with Old Ben, there; and Miss Augusta, she give a sort of a whoop, and she had her arms round his neck, and was a-hugging of him before us all, and they has gone down through the fields to the rectory."

"About the books," said Carr; "has Miss Augusta given you the books?"

"Bless your 'eart, sir," here interrupted Old Ben, "we ain't of a mind for books to-day. Mr Gerald said he'd come up this evening to the Club, and have a chat with us all, and Sue and me, we was waiting here to tell the news. Litteratoor ain't in our line today, thank you, sir."

"Here's Mr Macallister," said Sue. "Mr Macallister, Mr Gerald's back. He is, truly. I seen him, and so did Old Ben."

"And he'll be at the Club to-night," said Ben, turning his wrinkled face upwards towards the elongated visage of the canny Scot.

"The Lord be praised for a' His mercies," pronounced Macallister, slowly, with an upward wave of his hand, as if he were returning thanks for a satisfying meal. "Na, na, Mr Carr, na books the day."

Finding that his services were really useless, Carr went away. The villagers were slowly collecting from different quarters, and all faces were broadening into smiles, and all the somewhat indifferent sleepy tones becoming perceptibly brighter, and Gerald Wyndham's name was passed from lip to lip. Old Miss Bates wiped her tearful eyes, as she hurried home to put on her best cap. Widow Simpkins determined to make up a good fire in her cottage, and not to spare the coals; the festive air was unmistakeable. Carr felt smitten with a kind of envy. What wonders could not Wyndham have effected in this place, he commented, as he walked slowly back to his lodgings. Later in the day he called at the rectory to find the hero surrounded by his adering family, and bearing his honors gracefully.

Gerald was talking rather more than his wont; for some reason or other his face had more color than usual, his eyes were bright, he smiled, and even laughed. Lilias ceased to watch him anxiously, a sense of jubilation filled the breast of every worshipping sister, and no one thought of parting or sorrow.

Perhaps even Gerald himself forgot the bitterness which lay before him just then; perhaps his efforts were not all efforts, and that he really felt some of the old home peace and rest with its sustaining power.

You can know a thing and yet not always realize it. Gerald knew that he should never spend another Saturday in the old rectory at Jewsbury on the Wold. That Lilias' bright head and Lilias' tender, steadfast earnest eyes would be in future only a memory. He could never hope again to touch that hair, or answer back the smile on that beloved and happy face. The others, too—but Lilias, after his wife, was most dear of all living creatures to Gerald. Well, he must not think; he resolved to take all the sweetness, if possible, out of this Saturday and Sunday. He resolved not to tell any of his people of the coming parting until just before he left.

The small sisters squatted in a semi-circle on the floor round their hero; Augusta, as usual, stood behind him, keeping religious guard of the back of his head.

"If there is a thing I simply adore," that vigorous young lady was often heard to say, "it's the back of Gerry's head."

Lilias sat at his feet, her slim hand and arm lying across his knee; Marjory flitted about, too restless and happy to be quiet, and the tall rector stood on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire.

"It is good to be home again," said Gerald. Whereupon a sigh of content echoed from all the other throats, and it was at this moment that Carr came into the room.

"Come in, Carr, come in," said the rector. "There's a place for you, too. You're quite like one of the family, you know. Oh, of course you are, my dear fellow, of course you are. We have got my son back, unexpectedly. Gerald, you know Carr, don't you."

Gerald stood up, gave Carr's hand a hearty grip, and offered him his chair.

"Oh, not that seat, Gerry," greaned Augusta, "it's the only one in the room I can stand at comfortably. I can't fiddle with your curls if I stand at the back of any other chair."

Gerald patted her cheek.

"Then perhaps, Carr, you'll oblige Augusta by occupying another chair. I am sorry that I am obliged to withhold the most comfortably from you."

Carr was very much at home with the Wyndhams by now. He pulled forward a cane chair, shook his head at Augusta, and glanced almost timidly at Lilias. He feared the eight sharp eyes of the younger children if he did more than look very furtively, but she made such a sweet picture just then that his eyes sought hers by a sort of fascination. For the first time, too, he noticed that she had a look of Gerald. Her face lacked the almost spiritualized expression of his, but undoubtedly there was a likeness.

The voices, interrupted for a moment by the curate's entrance, soon resumed their vigorous flow.

"Why didn't you bring my dear little sister Valentine down, Gerald?" It was Lilias who spoke.

He rewarded her loving speech by a flash, half of pleasure, half of pain in his eyes. Aloud he said:—

"We thought it sparely worth while for both of us to come. I must go away again on Monday."

A sepulchral groan from Augusta. Rosie, Betty and Joan exclaimed almost in a breath:—

"And we like you much better by yourself."

"Oh, hush, children," said Marjory. "We are all very fond of Val."

"You have brought a great deal of delight into the village, Wyndham," said Carr, and he related the little scene which had taken place around the school-house. "I'd give a great deal to be even half as popular," he said with a sigh.

"You might give all you possessed in all the world, and you wouldn't succeed," snapped Gussie.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

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