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ARMINI.

BY CHRISTIAN REID CHAPTER XL.

"Well," said Miss Dorrance when she next met her friend, "I hear from mamma that you and Mr. Egerton went amicably together to Notre Dame, after all. I hope that you enjoyed yourselves."

"That depends upon your definition of enjoyment," answered Miss Bertram. "We heard a good sermon—which was what we went for."

"A good sermon!" Miss Dorrance lifted her eyes to heaven. "What an idea—to spend a beautiful, bright Sunday afternoon in hearing a sermon!"

"It was certainly more appropriate to spend it in the Bois," said Sibyl, with a laugh. "Well we went afterwards to M. d'Antignac's."

"Where you found the usual 'foaf of reason and flow of soul,' of course."

"That is a very hackneyed quotation," said Miss Bertram, "but it describes exactly what we found—what is usually to be found in the D'Antignac salon. I date an era in my life from the day I first entered that salon."

"An era of what kind?" asked her friend curiously.

"Of enlarged ideas, for one thing," was the reply. Miss Dorrance made a slight but very expressive grimace. "I think your ideas were quite large enough before," she observed; "a little too large for convenience, in fact. One should consult convenience in one's ideas, as in everything else, in my opinion. One might as well wear clothes too large for one as to have ideas ridiculously unsuited to one's circumstances and surroundings."

"If some of us fitted our ideas to our circumstances and surroundings they would certainly be small enough," said Sibyl. "I cannot flatter you that metaphors is your forte, my dear Laura. The narrowest circumstances need not prevent our entering on that heritage of great ideas which is—thank God!—open to us all."

Miss Dorrance glanced round the artistic, luxurious room in which they were sitting. To her the phrase used had but one significance. "Your circumstances are certainly very narrow," she said drily.

"They are not very wide in the material sense—which is probably what you mean," answered Sibyl—"but in the spiritual and mental sense they have been narrow indeed."

"You are flattering to your friends."

"To my friends?" said the other, with a slight smile. "Oh! no. I was not speaking of my friends, who are few—as one's friends must always be—but of the large number of indifferent people who form one's acquaintance and make one's social atmosphere. And what has my atmosphere been? Simply that of a society bent on frivolous pleasure, measuring everything by a material standard, and not even redeemed from inanity by intellectual activity. Is it any wonder that when I entered another atmosphere, where people are not weighed by the amount of money or the number of fashionable acquaintances they possess, where all that is best in one is quickened and all that is noblest brought forth, that I felt as if I had passed into another world?"

In her energy—speaking, as she was, from her heart—the speaker probably forgot who was her listener. Laura Dorrance's eyes opened wider and wider, until it was evident that only lady-like decorum prevented her from expressing her feelings by a whistle; and at Miss Bertram's last words she shrugged her shoulders with a gesture of one who gives up a hopeless matter.

"Egalite is no word for you, my dear," she said. "You have soared far beyond any region where I can follow. Poor Cousin Duke! What will he do? The clouds are not a congenial region to him either."

Despite her vexation Sibyl could not restrain a laugh. "From your tone one would think you had been delivering such warnings for half a century," she said. "But of all people who could possibly be in need of them, I should like Mr. Talford to be the last. It is absurd even to utter the word 'love' in connection with him."

"He is not enthusiastic or romantic," Laura admitted, "but I really think you do him injustice in believing that he is not capable of being in love. He certainly is in love with you."

To which Miss Bertram replied, "Nonsense!" and, rising, walked across the room, saying: "If you want me to go shopping with you I will go, on condition that you do not allude to this subject again."

It was a condition Miss Dorrance was willing enough to accept for the sake of having the benefit of her friend's taste in the shopping which is the apparently inexhaustible occupation of American women in Paris. But Sibyl soon found that it is not possible to thrust a subject aside because one person's lips have been sealed upon it. When she returned home after several hours spent among magasins and modes, who should she find in the drawing-room, quietly talking to her mother and evidently awaiting her arrival, but Mr. Talford.

She was too much a woman of the world to make any change in her usual manner of greeting him; but this greeting over, she did not bestow much attention on him. "I am tired to death!" she said, sitting down with an air of exhaustion. "I do not know that shopping has ever been reckoned among the most fatiguing things of life; but in my experience there is nothing to compare with it for tiresomeness. After two or three hours spent among chiffons of all descriptions and in deciding between innumerable varieties of styles, I feel absolutely overcome with mental as well as physical fatigue."

"One may perhaps be permitted to say that you do not look so," observed Mr. Talford, with a smile.

"It is only a proof, then, of how far looks may belie feelings," she replied, not very well pleased—"for surely, when I say that I am tired he ought to take leave!" she thought.

On this, as on many other subjects, however, Mr. Talford differed from her. When a young lady with the most charming color imaginable and every appearance of vigor declares herself tired to death from that which is generally held to be the most fascinating amusement of her sex, few men would feel bound to very strict credulity, and credulity was not this gentleman's failing. He only answered, with a smile: "Then I should recommend you to refresh yourself at once with a cup of tea—which may be an interested suggestion on my part, since Mrs. Bertram has promised me one."

"And I have only been waiting for Sibyl's arrival to order it," said Mrs. Bertram, ringing the bell.

Tea was brought in, and Sibyl resigned herself to make the best of Mr. Talford, since it was very plain that he had no intention of departure. And, as a means to this end, she dismissed Laura's assertion with regard to him from her mind, saying to herself that a man of so little sentiment and so much sense had no doubt long since understood her manner and accepted the conclusion rising from it. Moreover, her mother's presence was a shield; so, with an agreeable consciousness of safety, she forgot her fatigue and was talking easily and pleasantly when a ring of the door-bell was followed by the appearance of a servant summoning Mrs. Bertram from the room.

Sibyl longed to telegraph with her eyes. "Come back immediately!" but the fear of betraying any sense of danger deterred her. And, after all, she said to herself, what was there to fear? She had been alone with Mr. Talford often before without his indicating the least intention of falling at her feet or committing any equivalent absurdity. Why should she suspect him of any such intention now? Laura's nonsense had infected her, she thought, and so, leaning back carelessly in her chair, a lovely picture in her becoming out-door costume, with her tea cup in her hand, she went on talking lightly of the many topics which, like notes in the sunshine, fly about Paris.

But presently she began to observe that Mr. Talford was somewhat absent-minded and replied a little at random—which was not remarkable, since he was in fact saying to himself, "Shall I or shall I not? Is it worth while? or is it not?" Perceiving his falling attention, Sibyl's power of talk also failed, and, finishing rather disconnectedly a story that she was telling, she began to cast about in her mind for an excuse to end the *tele a tele*. But it was too late.

"I wonder," said Mr. Talford, looking up as she paused, "if you will forgive my wandering attention when I tell you that it was because I was thinking of you that I did not listen to you."

"The wandering attention does not matter in the least," she replied, with heightened color. "Raconteurs are born, not made, and the birthright was not mine; but I thought that story of Gambetta so good, when I heard it the other day at M. d'Antignac's, that I was led to attempt to repeat it. Eh bien, let us talk of something else. Who is the favorite for the Grand Prix?"

"I am not even aware whether there is a favorite for the Grand Prix," replied Mr. Talford. "My thoughts just now are set upon quite another

prize. My dear Miss Bertram"—he paused slightly—"I think that you must know what I feel for you."

The thing was inevitable. Sibyl recognized it and resigned herself. "If he will force the matter I can only give over it as soon as possible!" she thought. Aloud she answered with sufficient self-possession: "Why should you think so? Does one often know with any certainty what others feel or think regarding one? And, indeed, (hastily,) it is much better not to know, but simply to take it for granted that one is moderately liked and appreciated."

"Moderately liked and appreciated you could not possibly be," said the man, who had gone too far to draw back now under any discouragement. "You are made to inspire strong feeling. You certainly must be aware of that, at least."

"I do not think I can plead guilty of being aware even of that," she answered. "And I cannot say that I like the idea. Moderate appreciation is as much as I desire. But"—with a last effort to escape—"persons' discussions are always unpleasant. Pray let us change the subject."

Mr. Talford grew a little pale—his first sign of emotion. "This," he said quietly, "is mere fencing. You know what I wish to say to you. You know that I love you."

The words were uttered. But it is safe to say that their effect astonished Sibyl as much as himself. She had intended to refuse his offer in whatever form it might be couched, courteously though decidedly; and she was not prepared for the sudden impulse which made her answer, with something akin to scorn: "No, Mr. Talford, I neither know nor believe anything of the kind. You may wish to marry me, but I am quite sure that you do not love me."

The unexpected nature of the reply and the quick flash in her eyes so much astonished Mr. Talford that he had at the moment no thought for resentment. "And may I ask," he said after an instant's pause, "how you can possibly be sure of such a thing?"

"How can I be sure of it?" she repeated, with the same ringing tone of faintly-veiled scorn. "Because, Mr. Talford, I know you; because throughout our whole acquaintance you have been revealing yourself to me—you have been revealing your absolute want of faith in all that elevates human nature and makes love possible. You have been declaring, even with a sort of pride, that you have no belief in honor, or nobleness, or virtue. Neither heroism nor holiness exists for you—neither the soul of man nor the majesty of God. You hold yourself to be simply an animal, and you hold all men and women to be like you. Am I not right, then, in saying that it is impossible love should exist for you?"

"For love means all that you decide—it means honor, and faith, and respect, and a share in the immortality of the soul in which it is born. These things are empty names to you? Well, so is your love to me."

She had not known how far the force of suddenly-aroused feeling would carry her until she reached this point, and, with the last words, paused—her eyes glowing, and her whole face full of eloquent expression. If Mr. Talford had not been a man who kept himself well in hand and was not easily thrown off his guard by sudden surprise, this most unexpected arraignment would certainly have confounded him. As it was, after a moment of absolute astonishment he answered with sufficient quietness: "If I understand rightly, you mean to assert that you do not believe in love for you because I do not believe certain fancies that have captivated your imagination. But does it not strike you that the one fact has no connection with the other fact? If I have no faith, for example, in the existence of the soul—which no man has ever been able to prove—what has that to do with the positive fact that I love you, whom I see and know? Let us put such questions aside. They are only of importance to fanatics, and I am sure that you are not one of those."

"I am certainly not a fanatic," she answered, "but one need not be a fanatic to perceive that to deny the existence of the soul is to deprive love of all its dignity. I know," she went on, "that many men are inconsistent enough to combine with such denial a belief in the spiritual side of our nature. But you, Mr. Talford, do not. You glory in your materialism, and in your own mind you have dragged all creation down to the level on which you live—that dreary level of universal scepticism which refuses to acknowledge the existence of anything noble or elevated. Do you comprehend, then, what I mean when I say that the word love on your lips has no meaning to me, or else a meaning which I disdain?"

"I fear that I do not comprehend," he answered, after another short pause of astonishment; "but that is no doubt owing to the grossness of my materialism and my lack of spiritual conceptions. My dear Miss Bertram, all this, if you will pardon me, is folly! Pray let us talk like sensible and practical people. Let me beg you to consider my offer on some other ground than that of unreal sentiment."

The scorn came again into her eyes as she looked at him, and into her voice when she spoke.

"Shall we consider it on the ground of your income, of the establishment you could afford, or the jewels you could give?" she asked. "There are women—you will find them in num-

bers—who can be bought by such things; but if you imagine that I am one of them, I can only say that you have never made a greater mistake in your life."

"I have been very far from imagining it," he answered; "but in what I did imagine I find that I have made even a greater mistake. I thought you a woman of the world, whereas it seems that you are—"

"A visionary?" she said, as he stopped. "Yes to you no doubt I am. I have always been aware of the visionary element in your character," he went on, "but I thought your practical sense was strong enough to keep it under control. And I still think it would do so but for associations which have unfortunately surrounded you of late."

"Those associations have saved me from much," she said—"from hopeless dreams or despairing scepticism; but they have not saved me from accepting you, Mr. Talford, for that I could never have done. You may believe this; and I should be glad if you would believe also that I am sorry to cause you even a transient disappointment."

She rose as she spoke, with an air of ending the interview, and he rose also; but he did not go. Despite her last words he could not believe that he had indeed offered himself in vain. And it was human nature—or at least masculine nature—that her refusal should have roused him to keener interest than he had thought possible before. So, standing face to face with her he said:

"It is not a transient disappointment which you inflict. Whatever else you refuse to credit, believe that. And if you would give me leave to prove the love in which you have so little faith, I think I might convince you that it is worth as much as the love of any dreamer might be."

His evident earnestness touched her a little. She had not given him credit for any genuine feeling; but it seemed that it was genuine feeling which spoke now in his tone and glance.

"If it is not a transient disappointment I am sorry," she said; "but you must carry away no mistaken impression. I can never think of marrying you. But it may console you to know that, if I were capable of such a thing, I should no more please you than you could satisfy me. You have been attracted by me because you think that I would make a brilliant woman of the world and be a credit to your taste. You have judged me, as you judge all things else, on the surface; and consequently your judgment is mistaken. Unless I killed the better half of my nature I could never make what you desire—and indeed, it is doubtful if I could make it then. I might forget spiritual things, but I could never be content with material ones. I should eat out my heart with impatience and scorn if I were condemned to such a life as you would wish your wife to lead. Life to me is worth nothing if it has not some noble purpose. That sounds to you like idle folly, and I only speak of it in order that you may understand how far apart our natures and our lives lie."

Her voice had lost all its accent of disdain, and was only grave and gentle as she uttered these words; but both voice and manner expressed a remoteness which the man before her had a fine enough perception to realize. She spoke to him as to one on another plane of existence altogether; and, feeling this, he also felt that farther effort was vain. His suit was hopeless; there only remained for him to escape with what dignity he might.

"If this be your final decision I can only bow to it," he said. "It is useless to speak of my regret—regret for you as well as for myself, since I am quite sure that you will obtain nothing of value from the visionaries to whom you have surrendered yourself. But their only remains for me to bid you adieu."

He bowed with all his usual composure, and left the room without giving Sibyl time to utter a word had she been inclined to do so. But she only stood quiet still where he left her, until the sound of the outer door closing told her that he was gone.

TO BE CONTINUED.

May go to Oxford. The Congregation of Propaganda has unanimously agreed to withdraw the prohibition which this same Congregation had formerly put upon the going of Catholics to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, England. This was done at the solicitation of Cardinal Vaughan and the leading English layty. It was the Bishop of Salford, now Cardinal Vaughan, acting by the counsel of Cardinal Manning, that had this prohibition put on such young Catholics. But times have changed since then; and the Protestantism of the English universities is not now by any means so dangerous as it was before. Besides, special precautions will be taken now to keep young Catholic students together, and to form them, by-and-by, into a college affiliated to the university. A petition from five hundred distinguished Catholics in England, sent to the Pope, has, in all probability, hastened this result.

Do not delay in getting relief for the little folks. Mother Graves' Worm Expeller is a pleasant and sure cure. If you love your child why do you let it suffer when a remedy is so near at hand?

Mr. Thomas Ballard, Syracuse, N. Y., writes: "I have been afflicted for nearly a year with that most-to-be-dreaded disease Dyspepsia, and at times worn out with pain and want of sleep, and after trying almost everything recommended, I tried one box of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. I am now nearly well, and believe they will cure me. I would not be without them for any money."

Minard's Liniment relieves Neuralgia. The young priest looked thoughtful as he replied slowly: "I do not know, colonel. I will see about it. You may be sure I would like to oblige you. I will let you know to-morrow."

THE CONQUERING BANNER.

Mary M. F. Nixon in Donahoe's Magazine. "Will you do it, Father?" said the colonel.

The young priest looked thoughtful as he replied slowly: "I do not know, colonel. I will see about it. You may be sure I would like to oblige you. I will let you know to-morrow."

"You see, Father, no one can sing like you can. There's not a man in town with such a voice, and everybody will be at the celebration. It's our Confederate Decoration Day, and I have all the arrangements to make. The old soldiers march to the graveyard, there is a salute fired, the graves are decorated, and then they march back to town to the meeting. The Town Hall will be crowded, and if you will only sing 'The Conquering Banner,' everything will be complete."

"I would like to do it for you," said Father Desmond; "but you see, colonel, I am a priest, and I might be criticised."

"Nonsense," replied the colonel in his bluff way. "That's one reason I want you to do it. There will be scores of Protestants there, and I want them to see one priest who 'knows more than his prayers.' They have the insane idea that our clergy are a set of uncultured autocrats whom we Catholics are bound to obey; willy, nilly."

"Well, Colonel Delatte, I'll ask Father O'Donnell's advice, and let you know in plenty of time to find some one else. There are other people who could do it better than I, if you would but think so."

"No, no, there is no one but you, Father; good-by, if you must go," said the colonel, and the priest shook him warmly by the hand and went down the broad gallery steps toward the lawn.

He was a magnificent specimen of youth and health, very tall with the figure of an athlete. His eyes were very dark and almost piercing, and there was about him something which reminded one of an eagle, poised for flight; but it was an imprisoned eagle, for, though his eyes could flash with anger at injustice or sin, it was a controlled wrath, and in his manner there was always a peculiar gentleness.

He was doing a great work in the little Mission to which he had come. It was a small Southern town, with only a handful of Catholics in it, and the surrounding country was full of negroes and "po' white trash." They all loved Father Desmond passionately, and his friend, the old priest, said to him at times: "You have a special talent for this mission work, my son. You always collect a crowd of negroes in five minutes with your singing."

"Instantaneous choir-master. Negro choirs made while you wait," said Father Desmond, laughing. As he walked down the broad road leading to Clairefontaine, the deep shadows of the soft May twilight lay in long lines upon the grass.

Fireflies flitted here and there, and in the far distance was heard the croaking note of a frog. Overhead, in the dreamy mistiness of the sky, a few stars flickered, and the moon, a slender bow, rose slowly over the cypress trees. Long festoons of gray moss hung from the branches, and a gentle breeze waved the tendrils like ghostly fingers.

Father Desmond walked slowly onward. His was a busy, hurried life, full of petty, almost sordid details, and a little solitude was to him a pleasant variety. The old cemetery was a favorite spot with him, and thither he turned his steps. He seated himself upon the stone wall, overgrown with moss and vines, and sat thoughtfully looking at the city of the dead.

It was a rambling place, with no neatly bordered paths or well trimmed trees; but the gracious nature of the South had treated it with loving care, and shed abroad in God's acre a wealth of flowers which cast fragrances on the summer air.

Father Desmond sat lost in thought. His was a strange nature, with a depth of emotion which few understood, since a natural reticence made him hide his real self; but those who really knew him, felt that his heart was filled with a burning love of souls, and an endless longing to help the sorrowful and influence for good those about him.

As he was thinking of his work and wishing for more power among the people where his lot was cast, a stifled sound met his ear, and quickly looking through the gloom, he saw the figure of a woman, kneeling by a grave, and weeping bitterly. In a moment she rose, and kissing the cross at the head of the grave, moved swiftly toward the priest. As she passed, seized by a pitiful impulse, he spoke: "Can I help you, Madam?"

"No one can help me, thank you," she answered almost mechanically, as she glanced at him with a face in which despair was written, and passed out of sight. She was a woman of about forty years of age, with black hair heavily streaked with gray. Even in the uncertain light, her face was beautiful although lined with sorrow. A great trial always leaves indelible traces, and whether suffering has sweetened or embittered a nature shows plainly in the face. Father Desmond sighed heavily and turned to leave the cemetery, when a little shadow sprang toward him, and a voice said:—"Please, Sah! de baby am dyin' an' mammy says won't you please come an' 'tise it?" "Yes, my boy," he replied, and turning his steps toward the negro-quarter, he disappeared into the gathering darkness.