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ARMINE

CHRISTIAN REID

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Nevertheless Egerton was right in his instinct. Armine had been the topic of conversation between M de Marigny and D'Antignae, though the former, in his slight hesitation, had felt no inclination to allude to the fact. Nothing, indeed, could have been farther from his intention; yet when he spoke of the hour spent alone with his friend it was impossible not to pause for an instant over the recollection of the discussion which had for its subject the person to whom he spoke, and the nature of which would so greatly have amazed that person. For he had greeted D'Antignac by

"I have come because I hoped to find you alone, and because I wish to tell you of a decision at which I have arrived.

"A decision relating to yourself? D'Antignac asked, full of interest at

"To myself — yes," the vicomte "And also relating to another in whom your interest is as great as in myself - to Mile. Du-

D'Antignac looked at him silently for an instant. Than he said in a grave tone: "You are thinking of narrying her, is it not so?"

Yes," the other answered quietly. 'I have been thinking of it for som time, but I have now passed that point. I have resolved upon it-that is, have resolved upon offering myself, unless you believe that there is no hope for me."
"My dear friend," said D'Antignac,

'I not only believe, I know, that there s no hope for you, and I wish that I ad spoken sooner to tell you so."

The calm positiveness of his tone startled the vicomte. "How can you know?" he asked. By a very simple means." D'An-

ignac answered. Egerton told me ome time ago that Duchesne had ignac answered. given him an embarrassing and pain ful charge-that with his last breath bade him tell Armine that she should on no account marry you."

The blood sprang to De Marigny's

face, and he lifted his head with a gesture of unconscious haughtiness. · How could he have dreamed of such a thing?" he said quickly.

By his knowledge of her possible claim upon Marigny," D'Antignac answered, "and by his belief that such plan would suggest itself to you as a mode of compromise. It was a natural onclusion-on his part.'

"On his part, perhaps so; but on ine-can any one imagine that it ninewould be natural on mine?"

"There are many people who would eadily imagine it, answered D'Anignac; "but not any one who knew ou well, even if he did not know the position Armine has taken, which renders compromise wholly unnecessary

"There is no question of it at all, said the vicomte. "And howeve "And however anxious I might be that she should accept whatever is rightfully hers, I should certainly not think of endeavoring to bestow it upon her in this manner. There can be no doubt that in the majority of cases our French ode of marriage serves its purpose admirably; but it has never commend to me personally. I have alwaysfeltthatif I married I must know much more of, and feel much more for the woman I marry than the majority of Frenchmen think at all necessary long ago I had my dreams of what that woman should be, but as I grew older I perceived that such dreams were not likely to be realized." He paused a moment, then in a somewhat altered tone went on: "And yet I have found them realized, for I do not hink I ever dreamed of an ideal more sympathetic, more gentle, or more brave than this girl who has so strangely come into my life."
"So strangely indeed," said D'An-

ignae, " so against all ordinary rules of probability, that it seems as if you and been brought together for some more than ordinary purpose. Considering this, and considering, too, how entirely she is fitted to fulfil all your freams, I am tempted to think that ossible of which you have spoken

and yet I know that it is not possible. "Why not?" asked the other. "Or account of Duchesne's prohibition? do not regard that as of any import-

"You may not; it is natural that you should not," D'Antignac answered. But I am sure that Armine will re ard it as of very great importance.

'Has she been told of it?" "Not yet. Egerton came to me in great perplexity, and I advised him to lefer telling her. It seemed unneces sary; and I knew that it would make intercourse with you more painful to

her."
"If she had been told it might ex plain her reluctance to hold such interourse," said the vicomte thoughtfully have always felt that it was no n herself that the motive of reluctance lay, but in some influence strong

ough to dictate her conduct. "The motive lay in her father's con mand. When they were at Marigny he forbade her ever speaking to you again. Her feeling is so strong on his point that even if she did not hear of his dying charge I do not think she

of marrying you. You ought to know her better than

I," said the vicomte. "And yet-" He paused. At that moment there came to him the recollection of Armine as he had seen her last, and the touch of the hand which in answer to his apeal had been laid in his own. membered how that appeal had influenced her, how he had been able to strike a chord to which all the deep feeling and all the sweet reasonable ness of her nature responded; and he could not doubt that he might do so again, that again he might point ou that the first duty which she owed to her father was the duty of not perpet uating hatred by allowing it to exer cise any influence over her conduct and that again the delicate hand might be laid in his -but with another mean ing. It could not be said that these houghts were written on his face, yet D'Antignac, regarding him, saw that he was not discouraged, and that there St. Arnaud. I am glad of an opporwas even something of a smile in the deep, dark eyes.

"You do not agree with me," he said. "You have hope?"
"I may be mistaken," M. de Marigny answered, "but, yes, I have hope. I am never with her that I do not feel as if I understood all that she is feeling, so complete is the sympathy between us ; and therefore I believe that I can in duce her to regard this command of her father's in its true light."

And do you think that it alone would influence her to refuse to marry you ?'

Again the blood mounted to the vicomte's face. "No," he said quickly Do not understand me as meaning to imply anything so presumptuous. I only mean that if she bases a refusal on this, which you seem to consider the chief obstacle. I should hope to be able to overcome it. She may refuse on other grounds altogether. I cannot ell, and certainly I have no great reason for hope."

There was silence for a minute or

wo. D'Antignac was evidently re lecting, and when he spoke it was t say meditatively: "If you have no great reason for hope I have very little yet I believe that such a marriage would be for the happiness of you both and therefore I am anxious that no effort should be spared to make it pos sible. So it is a question with me whether it would not be well for you to learn what Armine-herself, uninfluenced-thinks of it, and how she feels toward you, before she hears of her father's prohibition.

"What would be gained by that? "This: that if she considers your proposal favorably, and above all if she entertains any regard for yourself, you will have a powerful advantage in combating her feeling about her father.

"That is true," said the vicomte " but would I not also bring upon her a worse struggle than if she knew of the prohibition from the first? I fear Think, mon ami, of the nature which we both know so well-though you far better than I-of its deep feelng, its capacity for suffering, and its oyalty of instinct! Think, then, of he result if she should conquer the influence of what she already knows to have been her father's feeling sufficiently to entertain my suit, and to yield the heart without which consent would be to me valueless, only to hear then of this command from the grave! You know what she would suffer : and I cannot be in any degree accountable for such suffering, even if I might so gain my end."

You are right," said D'Antignac "And I—in my eagerness for the happiness of you both—was wrong. But I warn you that if she hears of the prohibition before she hears of your

suit the latter will be hopeless."
"Then,"said M. de Marigny, "since we are agreed that it will not be right to wait until afterwards, there is but one alternative-that she hears of both at the same time; and you, my dear D'Antignac, are the person best fitted to inform her, if you will undertake the office for the sake of our old friend ship

I know of nothing within my power which I would not undertake for the sake of our old friendship, "D'Antignac answered; "but you are, after all, following the conventional custom of French marriages in not pleading

your own cause."
"I shall not be backward in pleading my cause when the time to plead it comes," said the vicomte; "but I have two reasons for asking you to under take this duty-first, because I do not wish to omit the least respect due to the woman I desire to marry; and, secondly, because only in this way car she hear of my suit and of her father's prohibition together; while at the same time she will learn, from one whose pinion has the utmost weight with her, how far that prohibition has, or ought to have, binding force on her

conscience or conduct. D'Antignac shook his head. "You overrate my influence," he said. "On hat point she will listen to her own eeling rather than to my voice, even though we may consider it the voice of You could ask nothing of me that I would refuse, however, so I shall undertake the duty; but I earnestly arge you not to hope for a successful

result. "I am willing to leave the result to od," said the vicomte quietly. Nothing happens by chance. So when one has prayed and has put one's ffairs in the hands of a friend whom ne can trust in the fullest sense, one hould be resigned to failure, if failure That does not sound like an ardent lover, perhaps. Yet, if not an ardent, I think that I should prove a tender one. And a man who cannot Minard's Liniment Cures Dandruff.

could be persuaded to consider the idea | trust God seems to me hardly deserving of trust himself.'

"It should be easy to trust Him for everything," said the man whom He had so heavily smitten. "And I will try not to set my heart too much on the hope of earthly happiness for two who are worthy of it.

There was little more to be said after this, and the conversation was soon ended by the entrance of other habitues, until the circle grew to that which was found by the party returning from Notre Dame. Nor did the arrivals cease then. While the vicomte was still talking to Armine at the tea-table the door opened, and a lady, with that appearance of exquisite elegance only to be seen in Frenchwomen of high rank, entered, followed by an elderly, rotund gentleman. Mlle. d'Antignac went forward quickly to meet them, and M. de Marigny, turning to Armine,

tunity to make you known to each other You will allow me to do so?' "Oh! no," said Armine, shrinking involuntarily. "Pray do not think of it! Madame de St. Arnaud is a great lady; what has she to do with me, or I

"That is my sister-Mme. de

"She, at least, has something to do with you," the vicomte replied, with a smile. "She has heard the story of the kinswoman who has lately been added to our house."

with her?"

The quick, pained look which the girl gave almost startled him. "Can it be possible you have told her that?" she said, "Oh! I am sorry-I am very sorry !

"Why should you be sorry?" he asked, struck by the genuine distress of her tone.

"Because it was so useless," she an swered; "because, I hoped that the matter might rest as if it had never been known to any one, or as if Mr. Egerton had regarded my wishes. But I thought that you promised!" she added in a different tone - a tone of unconscious trust and reproach which went straight

to the heart of her listener.
"Whatever I promised," he said gently, "I have certainly intended to fulfil. But I do not think that secrecy was included in the bond. And in telling my sister I had a reason, which you will know later. And, since she is anxious to know you, surely you will not refuse to know her? Believe me, she is not in the least formidable. "She may not be," said Armine

glancing across the room at the grace ful, high-bed woman talking to D'Antignac with a charming air of affectionate deference, " yet she and I can have nothing in common, so I beg you to excuse me."
"You told me once that you and I

had nothing in common," said the vicomte, "but I hope I convinced you that we have much in common. same is true of my sister. I think I may safely promise that you will find

her very sympathetic."
"I do not doubt it," said the girl, "but there may be reasons why one should not even seek sympathy from those whose lives lie far apart from our own. No " - as she saw the vicomte about to interpose - "do not speak again of what we discussed and settled the other day. Nothing can be differ ent from what it is, and nothing could be more painful to me than to be presented to the Comtesse de St Arnaud as an intruder into her ancient house.

"It was in a totally different character that I wished to present you,' said M. de Marigny in a tone full of restrained feeling.
"I am sure of that," she said quick-

"Do not misunderstand me or think I am not grateful for the honor you wish to do me. But I hope you will forgive me if-in order that there nay be no question of it -I leave you She rose as she spoke, with the evi-

dent intention of retreating through a door behind her, but paused as if reluctant to go without a word of assent from him He smiled a little and held out his

"I doubt," he said, "if you hand could do anything which I would not forgive. I will press nothing that is painful to you. My sister must wait or another opportunity to know you and I reluctantly bid you good-even ing, if it is your pleasure to leave us.

"You are always kind," she said in a tone which robbed the words of their conventional meaning and gave them a deeper significance. "It is merely a deeper significance. an accident that I am here - I have never been present before on one of the occasions when M. and Mlle. d'Antignac receive their friends-and it is not the place for me. I should have retired earlier but for this "—she indi-cated the tea equipage — "but now I am at liberty to say adieu.'

Her eyes gave emphasis to the gentle Then she lifted the por salutation. tiere behind her and disappeared.

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A CHILD OF THE BASILICA.

" For God and for Rome !" she cried enthusiastically as she pinned a tiny cross on the breast of a tall, stalwart youth who looked to the best advantage in the uniform of volunteer.

"For God, for Rome, and the Popeking!" she added in that sweet Tuscan tongue which rang over the piazza like the chimes of a silver bell. Hundreds of the Pope's soldiers, some of whom were veterans, whose faces had been bronzed by the hot Southern sun and prematurely furrowed by the toils and privations of many a forced march and the brunt and anxiety of many a battle, were gathered in the piazza of St. Peter's, Rome, awaiting orders to fall into line for the defense of the

eity.
"Pray, who is that enthusiastic little girl?" asked a Zouave of one of the Pope's guards. "How handsome she If she were in France she would make an excellent cantiniere.'

"Everybody here knows her," exclaimed the guard, looking at the girl with evident admiration. "Her name Ever since she was is Paola Rudini. a child in bib and tucker, she has lived in this locality, and is a favorite with everybody - she is so amiable and

"And who is the cavalier to whom she is speaking?"

"Well, he is a certain Giovanni Bavalloti, a young artist by profession, to whom she is betrothed. Paola is proud of him. You can see it in her face that she is-can you not? Other women parting from lovers who are going to the battle-field and whom they may never see again, blubber and whine a good deal. They sometimes whine a good deal. even become hysterical; but Paola is made of sterner stuff, I can tell you. She is a brave and intrepid little girlis Paola. And with all that, there is no more womanly heart in Rome than

hers. Ecce! "Fall into line! Present arms! shouted the commander's voice, and all the soldiers formed at once into one complete batallion, on whose serried ranks the autumn sun shone brilliant. ly down, reflecting its gold rays on their burnished helmets and gleaming scabbards.

As they marched with military pre cision in the direction of the old fortifications, raising herself to her full height in the crowd of spectators. Paola nodded farewell to her lover, who smiled a cordial acknowledgmen

Meanwhile the groups of civilians. mostly aged men, who could be of no use in the present crisis, waved their hats in the air, and cheered the depart

ing soldiers.
"May the Madonna guard your banners!" exclaimed one. "Long banners!" exclaimed one. "Long live the Pope-king!" shouted another. Down with Victor Emmanuel !" ejac ulated a third.

And the cries were taken up and died; and he afterwa repeated till the square in front of the church rang with their echoes, as the multitude swayed hither and thither around the fountain, and at the base of the big Egyptian obelisk that looked down on the scene with a mute grandeur peculiarly its own. Women wearing variegated headgears, and hold-ing Rosary beads in their hands stood under the colonnades invoking the benediction of heaven on the defenders

of their homes.

When the soldiers had disappeared on the other side of the castle of St. Angelo, the crowd had dispersed. Paola entered the cathedral and knelt for some time in prayer before the altar in one of the side chapels.

A solemn silence reigned through the aisle and transept, contrasting flowers to the base of the statue of the vividly with the clamor of the excited Madonna in one of the neighboring crowd that a few moments previous made the welkin ring on the square outside with its enthusiastic plaudits.

In front of the high altar, which

gleamed rich with gold and lapis lazuli, the sacred lamps lay burning around the marble ballustrade, beneath which was situated the tomb of the apostles The massive roof of stucco overhead seemed to the maiden, as she gazed upward, a vision of perfect loveliness : while the statues of the saints looking from their niches on the walls, seemed to her to be sentinels who kept watch and ward over the Holy of Holies. She glided noiselessly from the chapel up the aisle and having knelt for moment in front of the bronze figure of St. Peter, she left the basilica, and penetrated into one of the quaint narrow streets that are to be found in the vicinity of the Vatican.

Her step was as light and graceful as that of a fawn. There were no traces of tears on the lashes of those dark eyes, large, round and liquid, but they shone with the light of innocence, full of candor and hallowed with a certain mystic gleam that spoke the innate holiness of her heart. Her jet black resses were half covered with a striped red kerchief, her sun-brown features were ruddy with the hue of health, and her neat, trim figure was a model of perfection.

On one of the side walls of the narrow street into which she penetrated was a niche containing a statue of the Ma donna holding in her arms the Child The figures were, from an artistic point of view, unpretentious and ordinary. The clay was rough and uneven, and the rain, and Tramontana winds that swept down from the Alban hills in the winter and early spring-time had given it a weather peaten appearance, but it was all the more dear to Paola on that account, of his legs than any of the others of his who, out of her own little earnings as companions, and who spoke in thick, a seamstress, purchased regularly, gutteral accents. "See you that monweek after week, the oil that fed the | ument of superstition yonder? lamp which was perpetually burning at the Virgin's feet. Every morning, statue shivering into atoms to the

a fervent Ave Maria as she bowed to the statue, and the same reverence was paid it by her on her return in the evening. She lived close by in an attic on the sixth floor of a tenement.

Paola had at this time neither father nor mother. Her earliest recoll went back to a picturesque little ham let on the banks of the Arno, where the turquoise sky of Tuscany shimmered over her head and sward of the richest emerald lay at her feet. She remembered how, when a mere child, she used to pass the hours away, gazing dreamily on the wide canopy of heaven; creating in imagination so many battalions of armed knights out of the occasional fleecy clouds that used to assume very fantastic shapes on the Western horizon, particularly at sunset; seeing the glitter of angels wings in the golden sunshine, hearing the mystic voices of cherubs in the low, sweet zephyrs that played as on an Aeolian harp through the blossoming mulberry groves; listening with rapt and infinite wonder to the the vine leaves on the hillside, and the swish of the rushing river as it half dived its way along the valley, under the wild flowers that bloomed in profusion on its banks. The piping of the shepherd's reed in the dim twilight broke betimes on her ears, like the shrill cry of a heavenly choir. The roses that grew in such beauty by her old home. stead, the ivy that sheltered its walls, the balmy fragrance of the air. impressed her with a keen sense of pleasure and delight. A child of nature, she actually reveled in nature's choice est treasures.

There was, however, a rude awakening from the Juliet day dream. Some what hazily, she remembered her mother, a fragile, delicate woman, the widow of Carlo Rudini, who had died a month or so before little Paola was born. After her husband's death, Paola's mother did her best Fortune living out of the vineyard favored her the first year, b to her want of practical knowledge of vine dressing, the second year's crop was a failure. A laborer, formerly in the employ of Carlo Rudini, came along about this time, and after some weeks easily induced her to become his wife, for the poor woman was quite helpless to look after her property, and Ricardo Rienzi-such was the name of her second husbandwas a skilled hand in taking care of vines. That was, however, his only good quality. When he had become the master of what was once Rudini farmstead, he showed himself in his true colors. He was a big, brawny brute. His features were red and blotched, due to the co i us libations in which he used to indulge; and his manners were as uncouldenizen of the city sin its, purlieus of which he had snent the

early years of his life

He maltreated his d liceto wife to ened and turned his rage on his stepdaugh vao, however, being of quite perament to that of belled against him. fled from the Tuscan nevard, and walked on foot to Ror he journey took her two months to complish, and d good, plain food at the various he

route. She was twelve year A good and charitable la av. a cousin of her mother, took char and taught her a tr e-that of a seamstress-in which s a livelihood at the time this story opens All Paola's spare time since she arrived in Rome was spent in the basilica of St. Peter's, or in bringing oil and streets, she soon became so well known to the sacristan and the other officials of the church that at the former's suggestion they, by unani-mous consent, called her a "Child of

II.

the Basilica.

Those were dark days for Pius IX., and the government of the Church. The French garrison, which had been the only bulwark of the temporal power and intrigues of King Victor Emmanuel, was withdrawn from Rome. The Papal authorities had, owing to the perfidious conduct of Bonapart, to fall back on their own resources, which, of course, proved utterly inadequate to cope with the overwhelming forces commanded by the usurping Piedmontese. The conflict was brief, but sharp. Despite the daring attitude and brave, intrepid conduct of the Pope's troops, Rome was captured by Victor Emmanuel's soldiers, and thus the capitol of Christianity was handed over to the men who had no respect for religion of any kind, and who immediately commenced to put their theories into practice by exercising a fierce despotism over the Catholics of the city, and by leveling to the ground many of its proudest

Christian memorials. On the evening after the entry of Victor Emmanuel's troops into Rome, Paola, sad at heart, left St. Peter's and subsequently gathered a bouquet of roses to lay at the feet of the Madonna. She had just twined the flowers round the pedestal in the niche, and was about to offer her usual evening prayer to Our Lady, when she saw a group men staggering down the laneway in

her direction. "Contadini!" shouted one of the group who seemed to have less control of his legs than any of the others of his statue shivering into atoms to the going to her work, she would murmur ground! Vivva il re! We are all

