

Annan Water.

A Thrilling Story
Of Love and
Adventure

BY ROBERT
BUCHANAN.

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How do you know that there is such a person?"

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"Your wife or your mistress, it is all the same. You know whom I mean, Monsieur."

"She is better, then."

"And the little garcon?"

"Quite well," answered Cassidore, passing out into the street.

Leaving Mouche d'Or behind him, and passing along the banks of the Seine, Cassidore crossed the river and reached the neighborhood of the Palais Royal. From time to time he exchanged a nod or a greeting with some passer-by, generally a person much more shabbily attired than himself. Lingerer among the arches, he purchased one or two journals from the itinerant vendors, and then passed slowly on till he reached a narrow back street, before one of the doors of which he paused and rang a bell. The door being opened by a man in his shirt sleeves, who greeted him with a "bon soir," he passed up a dingy flight of wooden stairs till he gained the second floor, which consisted of three rooms, a small salon, a bedroom, and a smaller bedroom adjoining.

In the salon, which was gayly decorated with mirrors on the walls, a young woman was seated sewing, and playing near to her was a child about a year and a half old. Both mother and child were very pale and delicate, but both had the same soft features, gentle blue eyes and golden hair.

The woman was Marjorie Annan—Marjorie with all the lightness and happiness gone out of her face, which had grown sad and very pale. As Cassidore entered, she looked up eagerly and greeted him by his Christian name. The child panted timidly in his play.

"You are late, Leon," said Marjorie, in French. "I have waited in all day, expecting you to return."

"I was busy and couldn't come," was the reply. "Any letters?"

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"The old woman had better take care," he cried. "Nearly a week has now passed and she has not replied to my note—that is, to you, and we want money internally, as you know."

Marjorie signed, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Why are you crying?" demanded her husband, sharply. "Because you have an unnatural mother, who would rather see you starve than share her wealth with you, or with the child?"

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"I shall not return at all," answered Cassidore; "or rather, I shall be late, as I dine with a little party of friends. Do not sit up for me."

And with another blow blown airily to his offspring he was off.

Marjorie did not cry or show any sign that this conduct distressed her. She was too used to it for that. She turned in tender despair to her only comfort—the child. They sat alone together, the little one perched on his mother's knee, listening open-mouthed as she talked to him of her old home. She told him of Miss Hetherington, about the manse, and Mr. Lorraine, who lay quietly asleep in the little kirkyard. How strange it would be, she thought, to take the little one there. How Miss Hetherington would love him; how old Solomon would stare and call it "uncanny" to hear him prattling so prettily in French! Ah! but would the day ever come when she could take him there instead?

Long after the child had gone to bed, Marjorie sat by the fire thinking of those happy days; she wrote to Miss Hetherington, concealing as well as she could the dark spots in her life, speaking cheerfully and happily of her little boy, and still bringing him to the hope of one day bringing him to her old home.

Then she sat down to wait for her husband.

Cassidore was late, and when he appeared Marjorie saw at a glance that all his good humor had left him. He was angry at finding her up; accused her of wishing to time his going and coming, and peremptorily ordered her to bed. Without a word Marjorie obeyed; she saw that he was rather the worse for liquor, and that anything she might say would provoke him.

The next morning she rose early, according to her usual custom. To her amazement, just as she was about to give the child his breakfast, Cassidore came down.

He had dressed with unusual care; he took his breakfast silently, and when it was over he went up stairs again to add a few more touches to his already carefully made toilet; then he reappeared, nodded to the boy and to Marjorie—he was too well dressed to touch either—and left the house.

Though he had said nothing, Marjorie was certain from his dress and mysterious manner that it was no ordinary work that had called him away that morning, and as she thought of the strange, cold way he had left her, her eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Hastily brushing away her tears, Marjorie cried "Enter," and the door opened, admitting a woman, none other than Adele of the Mouche d'Or.

Of all the women of Cassidore's acquaintance, this was the one whom Marjorie most wished to avoid. She was half afraid of Adele, since she had on one occasion been staying one of her sons in a cafe crowded with men. Marjorie's strict Scotch training made her shrink from communion with such a woman. When she saw Adele's face, therefore, she felt troubled, and demanded rather coldly what she sought.

"Is he at home?" returned Adele.

"No," returned Marjorie, quietly, "he has gone out."

She thought this answer was conclusive and expected to see Adele disappear, but she was disappointed. She came in, closing the door behind her, walked over to little Leon, and patted him on the head.

Leon gazed up and smiled; he had no fear of her; but Marjorie made a movement as if to protect him from her touch.

As Marjorie came forward, Adele looked up at the boy's curly head, and asked, almost roughly:

"Where is Cassidore, did you say?"

"I do not know," returned Marjorie, drawing the boy toward her; "he did not tell me."

"He seems to tell you very little, about himself, Madame," said Adele, fixing her eyes strangely upon her companion's face; then she added, suddenly, "Why do you draw the boy away from me?"

Marjorie did not answer, so, with a short, hard laugh, the girl continued:

"I suppose you think, Madame, that I am not fit to touch him? Well, perhaps you are right."

"I did not mean that," returned Marjorie, gently.

"If I kissed the little one, would you be angry?" cried Adele, with a curious change of manner. "Ah, Madame, I am bad enough, but not quite so bad as you think me. I love little children. I once had a little boy like this of my own."

"A little boy! Then you are married; you have a husband?"

"When my child was only a baby, before he could walk or speak," continued Adele, not heeding the question, "I-I lost him. I do not even know if he is alive or dead."

And she little Leon in her arms, and kissed him wildly.

Marjorie's gentle heart was touched. "You lost your child?" she cried, full of sympathy.

"He was taken from me, Madame. I—too poor to keep him, and one day—one cold winter night—he father placed him in the hands of the Foundling. I have never seen him since—never!"

"How wicked of you; how cruel! To desert your child!"

"You do not understand. In France it is the custom when folk are poor."

"Be he continued."

"Be sure you are right, then go about the same you get Hood's Balm, and not some cheap and worthless substitutes."

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Leaving Mouche d'Or behind him, and passing along the banks of the Seine, Cassidore crossed the river and reached the neighborhood of the Palais Royal. From time to time he exchanged a nod or a greeting with some passer-by, generally a person much more shabbily attired than himself. Lingerer among the arches, he purchased one or two journals from the itinerant vendors, and then passed slowly on till he reached a narrow back street, before one of the doors of which he paused and rang a bell. The door being opened by a man in his shirt sleeves, who greeted him with a "bon soir," he passed up a dingy flight of wooden stairs till he gained the second floor, which consisted of three rooms, a small salon, a bedroom, and a smaller bedroom adjoining.

In the salon, which was gayly decorated with mirrors on the walls, a young woman was seated sewing, and playing near to her was a child about a year and a half old. Both mother and child were very pale and delicate, but both had the same soft features, gentle blue eyes and golden hair.

The woman was Marjorie Annan—Marjorie with all the lightness and happiness gone out of her face, which had grown sad and very pale. As Cassidore entered, she looked up eagerly and greeted him by his Christian name. The child panted timidly in his play.

"You are late, Leon," said Marjorie, in French. "I have waited in all day, expecting you to return."

"I was busy and couldn't come," was the reply. "Any letters?"

"No, Leon."

Cassidore uttered an angry exclamation, and threw himself into an armchair.

"The old woman had better take care," he cried. "Nearly a week has now passed and she has not replied to my note—that is, to you, and we want money internally, as you know."

Marjorie signed, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Why are you crying?" demanded her husband, sharply. "Because you have an unnatural mother, who would rather see you starve than share her wealth with you, or with the child?"

"No, it is not that," answered Marjorie. "Miss Hetherington has been very good. She has given us a great deal already; but we require so much, and I am sure she is not so rich as you suppose."

"She is a miser, I tell you," returned Cassidore. "What she has sent you is not sufficient for an ordinary seamstress' wage. She had better take care! If she offends me, look you, I could bring her to shame before all the world."

At this moment there was a knock at the room door, and the man who had admitted Cassidore entered with a letter.

"A letter for Madame," he said.

Marjorie took the letter, and, while the man retired, opened it with trembling hands. Her husband watched her gloomily, but his eyes glittered as he saw her draw forth a bank order.

"Well," he said.

"It is from Miss Hetherington—from my mother! Oh, is she not good! Look, Leon! An order upon the bank for thirty pounds."

"Let me look at it," said Cassidore, rising and taking it from his wife's hand. "Thirty pounds! It is not much. Well, what does the old woman say?"

"I have not read the letter."

"Let me read it," he said, taking it from her and pulling the action to the words.

It was a lengthy communication. Cassidore read it slowly, and his face darkened, especially when he came to the following words:

"If you are unhappy, come back to me. Remember your home is always here. Oh, Marjorie! my heart never forgets that! It is a mother's heart that yearns and waits for you! Come

DO...
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...FIT

BY ROBERT
BUCHANAN.

way down the narrow stairs, and found himself in the sandal entrance of the cabaret.

Several men in blouses sat at the table drinking, waited upon by Adele. As Cassidore crossed the room the girl followed him to the door and touched him on the shoulder.

"How is Madame?" she asked, in a low voice. "I trust much better."

Cassidore gazed at the questioner with no very amiable expression.

"Do you say Madame Cassidore?"

How do you know that there is such a person?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"Your wife or your mistress, it is all the same. You know whom I mean, Monsieur."

"She is better, then."

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