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A WOMAN OF FORTUNE

By CHRISTIAN REID. Author of "Armine," "Philip's Rostin," "The Child of Mary," "Heart of Steel," "The Land of the Sun," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV

A COLLISION AT SEA.

It is almost unnecessary to say that Miss Lymner's slight impulse of laughter had given a wrong impression, and that she was not anxious to prolong the voyage in order to escape her cares, of which Mr. Marriott was right in supposing that she had had enough.

The prophesied rough weather arrived before morning. By midnight the gale was upon them, and the rolling and pitching of the ship rendered sleep difficult to all but the accustomed sailors.

She was silent for a minute. Indeed the noise of the wind and sea made conversation difficult. But presently there was a slight lull, and since he was still standing, holding the opposite side of the door to her own, she answered his last speech:

"I wonder if there are many things that cannot be cured? I have not much sympathy with resignation. I always feel as if there must be a means to cure anything, if one had but energy enough to apply it."

He smiled again as he looked at her. Her sentiments were so entirely in keeping with her appearance—with the high courage, the self-confidence, and the ignorance of the stern side of life which everything about her indicated.

"Delighted to see you!" he said. "I hardly thought that even your pluck would be equal to an appearance this morning."

"It is rather hard to keep one's feet," said Cecil, laughing. "But I could not endure to remain in the state-room. Poor Grace! She is prostrate in her berth again."

"She has plenty of companions in misery to-day," answered Mr. Marriott. "You see how empty the saloon is."

Cecil glanced around, encountered a pair of dark eyes, and after an instant's hesitation bowed to her acquaintance of the previous evening.

"Yonder is the man who prophesied this horrid weather," she said; "and he looks as if he were enjoying it."

"He's a good sailor, I fancy," observed Mr. Marriott. "He has been pretty much all over the world. We were talking in the smoking room last night, and he was telling me a good deal about Borneo."

"What has taken him such places? Love of adventure or amusement?"

"He did not say, but I infer that his object was to make money. He spoke of the possibilities of fortune in those countries, but said that a man must give the best years of his life to make it."

And he apparently has not given the best years of his life—with another glance at the face opposite. "It seems a very pitiful thing to do—to give one's best years just to accumulate money," she added after a moment.

"I'm not sure," said Mr. Marriott. "It is very easy to despise money if one is so lucky as to have it; but if one has not got it, then one has no choice but to give one's life to making it."

"Don't think I am so foolish as to despise money," said Cecil. "What I mean is that it seems a pitiful thing to make that the supreme end, if one does not feel that the money is worth the trouble."

"Intellectual capacities without means behind them are generally a snare and a delusion," replied Mr. Marriott.

"Perhaps so," said Cecil, who perceived the fallacy of argument. "But tell me, what are the prospects for to-day? Is there no hope of getting on deck?"

"None for you, I'm afraid. It may be possible for you to get to the top of the companion and put your head out—that is all."

So much as this was accomplished after breakfast, and Cecil was standing at the top of the companion with her head out of the door, surveying rather disconsolately the scene of wet decks, gray wild sea, and driving rain.

be endured, and I never could see the use of wasting one's strength in complaint."

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saloon to his feet, pale and breathless. Then came a fearful grinding, crushing noise, as if every screw and plank were being torn apart; and through it all the trampling rush of many feet on the deck above was heard even over the noise of the storm.

"We have had a collision!" "We are going to the bottom!" were exclamations uttered on all sides, mingled with cries of terror and dismay. None of these, however, came from Cecil's lips. She, too, had risen to her feet, but she stood pale and silent, clutching the table to steady herself, with a vision before her eyes of the wild, stormy sea outside. Were they, indeed, going down into those terrible waters? She saw them so vividly that she hardly saw anything else, until a voice spoke to her, and she looked up into a pair of dark eyes that had already grown familiar.

"Keep quiet," said their possessor, in a calm tone. "I am going to find out what is the matter, and I will return as soon as possible to let you know."

There was something in his face which filled her with a sense of confidence in his courage and coolness. She extended her hand suddenly with a gesture of appeal.

"If you find that it is serious," she said—"if we are likely to go down—will you come and help me to the deck? I could not bear to stay here, and Mr. Marriott will have his sister to care for."

"I promise," he answered, in a tone which said more than the words. "Do not fear. Trust in God—and pray."

The next instant he was gone in the general movement toward the deck, while Cecil sat down again and waited, apparently unmoved by all the babel of panic-stricken voices around her. She knew that he would return, and she had been calmed by his voice as by the touch of a strong hand. His words were still ringing in her ears.

"Trust in God—and pray," he had said, like one who utters involuntarily the deepest thought of his soul; and she found herself repeating the words, "Trust in God." Here—now—face to face with death, did she trust in Him? She hardly knew. Her belief in Him had been so conventional, her trust in Him so vague, that she felt like one who in direct need tries to convert a shadow into a reality, and her soul was too candid for her to deceive herself into fancying that she could do so.

Pray? Well, she had offered a lip homage all her life—set forms of words with or less sense of reverence attached; but none of them came to her now, or seemed worthy of remembrance in this crisis of peril, when life was perhaps measured by moments. She put her hands over her eyes, while her inarticulate thoughts tried to frame themselves into an appeal to the God who to her, as to the Athenians of old, was truly "unknown."

Presently she was roused by a voice, and, looking up, she saw one of the ship's officers endeavoring to make himself heard. He was trying to quiet the tumult and reassure the terror-stricken passengers. "Owing to a collision with an iceberg, and the ship is somewhat injured, but not dangerously. We have just made an examination which assures us of this. At present we are in no danger."

Then he escaped from the storm of questions ready to be poured upon him, and the relieved yet still apprehensive passengers had no recourse but to talk to one another, and to assail with their inquiries the chief steward, who now made his appearance.

But Cecil sat perfectly quiet, as if obeying a command. Now that it was in a manner over, she felt that the shock had not been less to her than to the ship. Although her courage and her self-control had not failed, she had tasted, as it were, the bitterness of death in those wild, dark waters raging without; for the first time in her life she had realized the awfulness of what lay beyond the portals of mortality, and she felt herself shaken in every fibre. She remained, therefore, quite still and very pale, with her eyes cast down, so that she did not observe the man who again approached her, until he spoke.

"I am glad to tell you, Miss Lymner," he said, "that, as far as can be ascertained, we are not in danger. You have heard, no doubt, that we have had a collision with an iceberg. The ship is much injured, but, thanks to her water-tight compartments, is not dangerously disabled."

She looked up at him with calmness, but he saw in her eyes how deeply she had been moved.

"I am grateful," she said after a moment. "It has been a narrow escape, has it not?"

"Very narrow. Had not our speed been slackened, from the captain's knowledge of danger, the ship would have driven against the berg with much greater force, and would have been so seriously damaged that she must have gone down."

"But since she is disabled in a degree, is there no probability, with this sea, of our going down yet?"

"The officers think not. Of course, if the gale increased, our situation would be rendered more perilous by the accident. But it is subsiding."

They were silent for a moment, then Cecil said: "You were kind to return so soon to tell me this. I hope you understand why I made that appeal. It seemed so terrible to die here! I felt that I would rather face any fate on deck."

"I had already decided what I should do for you if the ship were going down here," she said. "One values one's own life at such times only for the use one can make of it for others. And I confess I feared the worst."

Despite herself, Cecil shuddered. "It would have been terrible," she said, "to go down into that black abyss of raging water. I never before realized how awful death might be. I have always fancied that I should be brave—that I should not fear it."

"Courage does not mean insensibility to danger," he answered. "If the worst had come, I am sure you would have been brave in meeting it. But the soul that did not quail before the face—the unexpected and terrible face—of death would hardly be a soul at all."

Something in his tone and manner impressed her deeply. She looked up into two dark, grave eyes that seemed accustomed to regard dangers.

"I suppose," she said, abruptly, "that when you told me to trust in God, you felt that trust yourself?"

"Surely yes," he answered. "Does that seem to you strange? Do you not think that,

"If it has not cried on Him at other times, would there be much avail in crying then?" she asked. "And it seems not only a presumptuous but almost a contemptible thing to fly to God in the hour of danger, after having forgotten and ignored Him when we felt no need of help."

He smiled at her tone. "We are all more or less guilty of such forgetfulness," he answered. "But our best hope is that God will not think us presumptuous for calling on Him in our need. Where else can we turn?"

Cecil did not answer for a moment; then she said, gravely: "I should not think much of a friend who forgot me in his prosperity, and came to me only in his need. I might be glad to relieve the need, but I should respect him very little. So God, I am sure, can respect very little those who cry to Him only when danger comes."

"He will certainly not reward them as He will more generous souls," said Tyrcroft. "But our weakness is our best excuse."

"I am afraid it is not an excuse that I like to plead," she said. "But I must thank you for making me think of these things, as well as for your kindness. Will you add to the last now by taking me to poor Grace?"

MAKING AN ORANGMAN.

The severe initiation that is given to idiots who desire to become Orangemen, was described in the Middlesex Superior Court at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on November 30 when Frank A. Preble sued the officers of a Waltham lodge for assault.

On the stand, the complainant testified under oath that in an ante-room to the hall of the Orangemen he was compelled to disrobe until he had on nothing but his undergarments and his shoes.

Then he approached the entrance to the hall. At the door he was forced to kneel and say the Lord's Prayer, during the recital of which his shoes were taken off. He was blindfolded and marched around the hall in a circle.

His drawers had been rolled up to his knees, leaving his legs and feet bare, and during the walk around the hall he continually felt the strings of what he thought was a whip on his bare legs.

He testified that a bag of stones weighing forty pounds was then put on his shoulders and that he was pulled to the floor, while some one sat on him and jabbed him "with pins or an ice pick." He was not quite sure which it was, but he thought that it was pins.

Preble then was made to go up a step-ladder. From this he fell into a sheet and he was tossed into the air several times. He crawled out of the sheet and stood in front of the "altar," and Graham read something to him, but he did not know what it was, as he was rather dazed by the lively initiation. Then two men held him and a red-hot iron was brought up against his breast. He struggled to get away, but the two men held him while he was branded.

While he was about to undergo this torture, some one said: "Hold up your hands and see if you can find a serpent." Preble said that he was severely burned and injured. Any demented person, still willing to become an Orangeman, now knows the barbarous tomfoolery to which he will be subjected. He must add to a couple of oaths swearing away his liberty, promising to obey the unknown commands of unknown superiors, vowing loyalty to Protestantism and pledging his friendship to other Orangemen and brethren. It is a noble order for the insane and the bigoted.—Catholic Review.

A Warning.

That was a fine lesson on the evils of secret societies which was given the other day before the Pennsylvania Senate investigating committee in this city when a witness refused to give evidence because of his being under a Masonic obligation.

And the worst of it was that he considered this "a solemn obligation as binding as anything he would hold sacred," and that if he at all answered the question he should lie! "A pretty fix to be in by reason of his being a Freemason! Who, then, will say that Freemasonry is not an enemy of the public weal?—Catholic Standard and Times.

Dr. Shields, an eminent physician of Tennessee, says: "I regard Ayer's Sarsaparilla as the best blood medicine on earth, and I know of many wonderful cures effected by its use." Physicians all over the land have made similar statements.

ST. BENEDICT'S WARNING.

G. L. DE CIDONCHA.

PART I—THE INSULT.

Previous to the union of Aragon and Castile, under the "Catholic King," there dwelt in the former province a family whose many generations of ancestors had made their name highly honored, by deeds of valor in time of war, and enterprising improvement of their lands in time of peace.

On the eve of his coming of age, Hugo, the elder son of this illustrious house, paced one of the terraces, wrapt in profound meditation. The young Aragonese was not dreaming of his proud pedigree, nor of the glory it reflected upon himself, nor even of the honors the morrow would bring to him. He was picturing to himself a face blushing in fairest maidenliness, whose owner was to crown his gladdest natal day with her love.

The clank of spurs resounding on the flagged walk aroused him from his reverie. He looked up to greet the new comer, but his welcoming words were frozen on his lips, as he beheld his younger brother, his countenance in a convulsion of anger.

"What is the matter, my Giraldo?" he inquired anxiously.

The youth shook off the hand laid affectionately on his shoulder, and replied holly,—

"What is the matter! And thou askest! Thou!"

Hugo's dark faced flushed with indignation, but he restrained himself, for he had never been indulgent to the moods and vagaries of his young brother, and he perceived that the boy's ungovernable spirit was chafing beneath some fancied injury. Before he could urge Giraldo's confidence, it found vent in a torrent of recriminations. "Yes, because thou art the elder, because thou art the favorite, and I but an insignificant ensign, a nobody, with nothing to call my own in all this knavish world—nothing but her—thou must needs wrest her from me, so that absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing be left me!"

The last words were almost a shriek in their vehemence, but the outburst was checked by a torrent of angry tears, that effectually impeded further utterance of the bitter emotions swelling the boy's heart.

A horrible suspicion entered Hugo's head, but he spoke calmly,—

"Whom meanest thou by 'her'?"

"As if there were anybody to mean but Adelaide!" retorted the youth in a new blaze of fury.

A brief pause of unfeigned astonishment on Hugo's part, was followed by a ringing laugh, and at the same time an expression of relief that did not escape Giraldo's notice, and did more to convince him of his error than arguments could have done.

"Adelaide! Adelaide!" repeated Hugo mirthfully. "Didst thou then think me a butterfly to be ensnared by that forward coquette?"

"Hold! or thou shalt eat thy words, with a taste of my blade!"

Realizing that it was indeed no laughing matter to the fiery young ensign, Hugo looked sober.

"Thou dost not really mean to seek Adelaide in marriage? Art thou mad, Giraldo? My dear brother, that my motives are wholly disinterested in begging thee to think seriously before staking thy happiness on this suit, thou canst readily believe, when I tell thee that Margarita hath long been the cherished object of my affections, and I wait but the morrow—the day on which our parents can refuse me naught—to ask their blessing on our betrothal."

"Is it then so?" stammered Giraldo. "Is it Margarita whom thou lovest? I am truly glad for thee, Hugo, for she is a sweet, modest child, and I have ever looked on her as a dear sister, though I forswore not I would indeed be so one day. But," hesitatingly, "what will our parents' say? Albert educated and a lady, and beloved of our mother, she is but a poor orphan, and knowest thou our parents have long anticipated a brilliant match for thee?"

"Our parents are just," was Hugo's grave reply, "and they know Margarita's worth; and then," he added in a lighter strain and with an air of assurance, "I have said on the morrow they can refuse me naught."

But Giraldo's brow was still clouded, and he said, with a renewal of distrust,—

"But—but—Adelaide favoereth thee. She hath only mocking words and jests for me, while to thee she is all honey and winsomeness."

"Wiles and coquetry, thou shouldst rather say," contemptuously replied Hugo. "It doth, indeed, grieve me, my brother, to see thee so blind to the truth. I like not to name her in the same breath with Margarita, but it behooveth thee to know that if Margarita be poor, then is Adelaide still poorer, for she lacketh not only fortune, but also the graces of true womanly dignity. She and her vain mother live upon their friends, making a ceaseless round of visits, forsooth, in a pertinaacious endeavor to entangle some unwary eldest son into an alliance with the girl. Trust her not, dear Giraldo. Thou art good to look upon to eyes that love thee, and, doubt not, all I have is thine to use as freely as I do make use of it myself; but to the world thou art merely a second son, well-nigh portionless, and Adelaide doth but use thee as a stepping-stone to ingratiate herself with our parents, verily aspiring to wed with me. I speak plainly, but it is better so. She loves me not, but I am one of many on whom she placeth hope. I tell thee,