

# 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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The ACADIAN JOB DEPARTMENT is constantly receiving new type and material, and will continue to guarantee satisfaction on all work turned out.

Newly communications from all parts of the county, or articles upon the topics of the day are cordially solicited. The name of the party writing for the ACADIAN must invariably accompany the communication, although the name may be written over a fictitious signature.

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Wolfville, N. S.

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## The Master of the Mine.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Continued.

"That will do. You may stand down."

Still carefully averting his eyes from mine, my uncle left the box. All that could be said was said in my defense. My witnesses to character included John Budd and other local worthies; but all this testimony would have been of little avail without that which followed. To my intense sur- prise, Madeline herself entered the box as a witness on my side; and though what she had to say was prac- tically irrelevant, though it concerned chiefly my saving of her life from ship- wreck, it worked wonders for me. Never shall I forget the thrill of joy that went through me as she said, in answer to a question:

"No one who knows the prisoner believes him capable of this or any crime. He is the bravest and truest man I have ever met."

lieve me guilty; or, indeed, what be- came of my life. I was justified in her sight, that was enough.

After a trial which lasted only the greater part of one day, the judge summed up—sternly enough, I thought—and the jury retired to con- sider their verdict. Now, for the first time during the proceedings, I realized my position. My life hung in the balance, and a few minutes would de- cide whether I was to live or die.

The jury returned into the box, and the judge also reappeared in his place. The foreman stood up, and replied, in answer to the clerk of the court's question whether I was guilty or not guilty:

"We are agreed that there is not sufficient evidence to convict the prisoner."

"That is no verdict at all," cried the judge, sharply. "You must de- cide one way or another—guilty or not guilty."

For a moment the foreman seemed dubious, and, stooping to his compan- ions, spoke to them in a whisper. Then he said:

"Not guilty, my lord."

I was acquitted, but the manner of the acquittal was cruel enough, leaving it clear that the moral presumption was against me, though the evidence was inadequate. I did not quite realize this at the time, but I had bitter cause to remember it afterward.

A little later, I was standing, a free man, in the parlor of a small inn, whither I had been led by John Rudd, and where I found my aunt and uncle awaiting me. I cannot say that it was altogether a joyful meeting. The shadow of death seemed still upon us.

All John Rudd alone was jubilant, and insisted on drinking healths all round. My uncle, usually an abstemi- ous man, drank eagerly, but the drink, instead of cheering him, seemed to make him ploumier than ever.

It had been arranged that my aunt and uncle were to return in the wagon that evening with John Rudd, who had postponed the hour of his depart- ure in order to await the result of the trial, and they urged me eagerly to accompany them. I was in no hurry, however, to hasten back to St. Gur- lot's. My plans, as far as I was as yet able to shape them, were to leave England, perhaps working out my passage to the Colonies on some out- ward-bound vessel.

While we were sitting together, a waiting-girl beckoned me out; and fol- lowing her into another room, I found Madeline waiting to speak to me. Directly our eyes met, she held out both her hands, and I took them eagerly in mine. Then, for the first time, my emotion mastered me; and, fairly sobbing, I almost sank upon my knees before her.

"I was right, you see," she said, tenderly. "I knew they would never condemn you."

"I owe my life to you," I answered, in a voice choked with tears.

She smiled sweetly, and shook her head.

"Even if it were so, it is only doing as I have been done by; but no one ever doubted your innocence from the first. And now, tell me, what are you going to do? Of course, you are re- turning to St. Gurlot's?"

"I cannot tell. God help me, I can hardly realize it all yet! It will never be the same place to me again."

"A very great interest," replied Madeline, looking him calmly in the face.

"A tender interest, perhaps? Am I wrong in believing that there has been an engagement between you?"

I could have knocked the fellow down. Madeline went crimson, but re- covering herself in a moment, replied:

"That is not true. My engagement with Mr. Trelawney is one of gratitude to the man who saved my life at the risk of his own."

The counsel lost something by this passage of arms, and I gained much. Madeline's reply was greeted with the approval of the entire court. For myself, I felt all my being flooded with a great joy, which carried me along in a feat-as mood till the end of the proceedings. After my darling's tender proclamation of her belief in my innocence, I cared not what other man or woman in the world might be-

not speak to her again of my poverty, my want of foothold in the world. I could not remind her that all I cared for in England was her friendship and sweet companionship, which I knew, alas! could not long be mine. But as I looked into her face, and thought of the hopeless distance between us, there ran through my brain the words of the beautiful old song:

Altho' thou man never be mine,  
Altho' even hope is denied,  
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing  
'Than aught in the world beside!

After a little space she spoke again: "Whether you return there or not, at least you will let me help you."

"Help me? Have you not done so—ah, far more than I deserve?"

"But I am rich, while you are poor."

"Not so poor as that," I answered, eagerly, "not so poor that I would take money even from your hand. Ah—do not ask me! To deny you anything gives me pain, but let me keep my independence—all that my ill- fortune has left me in the world!"

"Promise me at least one thing."

"Yes."

"Not to depart from England with- out letting me know—without seeing me again."

"I'll promise that freely. Then you—you will permit me to see you once more?"

She smiled her answer. After a few more words, she held out her hand and said "Good-bye." I walked with her to the inn door.

"My cousin is waiting for me in the market-place," she said. "He is going to drive me back to Redruth House."

As she spoke, George Redruth him- self appeared, turning the corner of the street in a high dog-cart, driven by himself, and drawn by a pair of fine bays. He came up at a walk, and di- rectly his eyes fell upon us, his face grew black as thunder.

He pulled up, while the groom sprang down and went to the horses' heads.

"I couldn't think where you'd got to!" he cried. "I have been waiting for the last hour."

"I came to speak to Mr. Trelawney," replied Madeline, quietly, "and to con- gratulate him on his acquittal."

"So it seems. Well, we've a long drive before us, and it's time we were off."

He did not even look at me until just as I had assisted Madeline to her place by his side, when our eyes met, and I saw in his face an expression of meretricious jealousy and hate. I knew then that he was mad at my escape—that, in his cold dislike and distrust of me, he would gladly have witnessed my condemnation to a miserable death.

"Good-bye, Mr. Trelawney!" cried Madeline, grasping my hand again.

"Good-bye; and do not forget your promise."

A sharp out of the whip started off the horses, and I had to draw back hastily to avoid the carriage-wheels.

As they drove away, I saw her turn to her companion and address him—I fancied, reproachfully. I stood dazed, watching them until they disappeared.

An hour or so later, my uncle and my aunt went away in the wagon, under the escort of John Rudd. I promised to follow them home in a day or two, and in the meantime to look about for some kind of employment.

So I remained in Falmouth for several days.

What was I to do? The future was dark before me, and I was alto- gether at a loss how to act. My only practical knowledge, as a man of busi- ness, was connected with copper min- ing; beyond that, I knew nothing. However, I was fairly educated, and quite ready to turn my hand to any- thing. I searched the newspapers, finding a clerkship vacant in a mine somewhere in South Wales, I wrote in for it—only to find that my misfor- tune had preceded me, and that the owners refused to employ a man who had just been accused of murder. The same fate dogged me in every quarter. To my horror, I at last realized the fact that, although I was free, I had been acquitted under such circumstances as left undestroyed the black presumption of my guilt.

I saw no hope now, save in speedy departure from England. I would

cross the seas under an assumed name, and begin a new life in a new world. A new life? Alas! every fine fibre of my nature was bound to the old life and the old land. In quitting Eng- land, I must quit Madeline, I must part for ever with the only being who had made my wretched lot endurable, and whom I still dared to love with all the passion of my soul.

I was mooning one day on the sea- shore, close to the quay, when a hand was placed on my shoulder, and, look- ing up, I saw the kindly face of my old friend the carrier.

"Back again, John?" I said, taking his great hand in mine.

"Yes, measter, Hugh? I comed in late last night."

"How are all at home?"

"Middling, middling. The awld man be queer still, and folk say the trouble about Miss Annie ha' turned his head. But that's what I want to speak on. I ha' seen her—she be here in Falmouth, Measter Hugh."

"She? Do you mean my cousin Annie?"

"Sartinly. I saw her last night w' my awn two eyes, and I misdoubt she's in trouble."

Then the good fellow, with tears standing in his eyes, told me that late on the previous evening he had caught sight of my cousin in the poorest part of the town, close to the stables where he put up his horse. She was wretch- edly attired and looked worn—and ill, as if she had just risen from a bed of sickness. His first impulse was to speak to her; but finding that he was unseen and unrecognized, he chose rather to follow her; which he did, and tracked her to a poor lodging in a neighborhood of very doubtful repu- tation.

Remembering my last meeting with Annie, and how I had found her sur- rounded by all the indications of com- fort and even luxury, I was stupefied. What had happened, and why had she come to Falmouth? On these points John Rudd could give me no informa- tion. All he could say was that he had seen her, and was quite certain of her identity.

My mind was, of course, made up at once. I would see my poor cousin, and, if possible, persuade her to return home in my company. So I told John Rudd to lead the way, and we walked rapidly up the town till we found the neighborhood of which he had spoken.

It was miserable indeed—a place of dark and fishy dens clustering close to the wharves; the streets narrow and liberally ornamented with drying clothes, suspended on lines stretched from house to house; the inhabitants unclean and ragged waterside charac- ters of predatory habits.

It was one of a small row of houses in a lane facing the beach. John Rudd pointed it out, and I had hoped to approach unobserved; but as I neared the door, which stood wide open, I saw a white face gazing at me from the lower window, and I recognis- ed my cousin.

The moment she saw me she started back and disappeared; but, with her name upon my lips, I ran into the house, and entered the room where she was standing, pale and terrified, as if eager to escape.

"Annie!" I cried.

She uttered a low cry, and pressing her hand upon her heart, tottered as if about to fall; but, striding forward, I caught her in my arms.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Yes; it was Annie, though for a time I could scarcely believe the evi- dence of my own eyes. She was so white and thin, so poorly clad, and liv- ing in such a den. Truly her sun had set and, as I predicted, she was wend- ing her way home. She cried out at sight of me, and, instead of giving me a welcome, she hid her face and mon- eled. I felt no animosity toward her now; whatever she had done, she had been bitterly punished. I took her in my arms and tried to comfort her.

"Annie," I said, "my poor Annie, tell me what has happened to you, that I find you like this?"

But she could not answer me for crying. Then she fell back, half faint, in a chair.

We soon discovered the cause of her weakness—it was hunger. The poor thing had spent her last shilling, and

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had not eaten a crust since the morn- ing; and, had we not found her, she would have spent that night starving in the streets. It was the work of a few moments for John Budd to run out and return with some bread and wine. We dipped the bread in the wine, and forced her to eat; and after a few mouthfuls, she revived a bit. The color came into her cheeks, and her eyes grew a bit brighter. I now had leisure to observe her more closely, and I was horrified to see that the clothing she wore was of the poor, old; indeed, she was almost in rags, every available article having been pawned, as I soon learned, to keep her from absolute starvation.

When she came wholly to herself again, she looked at me fearfully—dreading lest I should question her again; and I thought it better to let my questions rest.

"Annie," I said, "do you feel strong enough to go now?"

"To go, Hugh?" she repeated.

"Yes; I must take you with me to my rooms. I can't leave you here!"

She was too ill to offer much resist- ance; so, after I had paid the few shillings that she was owing, we left that miserable den together—Annie still faint and very weak, leaning heavily upon me. After he had brought in the bread and wine, John Rudd had quietly kept in the back- ground, thinking that his presence might serve to further upset Annie. He now as unobtrusively took his de- parture, after having whispered in my ear that he would call for us in the morning. I took his hint, and deter- mined to act upon it.

The night was very cold, and as we left the houses and passed down the street, facing the chilly wind, I felt Annie tremble violently, so I hurried her along and we soon reached the house where I had taken my rooms. Had I not crept into each good odor through my acquaintance with honest John Rudd, I should have been almost afraid to take poor Annie into the house; as it was, I expected a cold greeting; but to my amazement we were received with open arms. I afterward discovered that John Budd had been before us, and had prepared the way for our coming. So when the door was opened the landlady, who was a good kind soul, came forward and almost took poor Annie in her arms, and led her, half-fainting, up to the little sitting-room.

I gave her my bed room that night, and, rolling myself in a rug, lay down on the sofa in my little sitting-room and tried to sleep; but it was impos- sible, and after a while I got up and began to walk about the room. Annie's room adjoined mine; so I could hear that she, too, was awake and crying bitterly. Once I thought of going in to her; then I refrained. It was better to let her ease her heart so; in the morning she would be more herself, and I could talk to her.

In the morning, however, matters were considerably worse; poor Annie was delirious. Her pale face was flushed, her eyes vacant, and she cried piteously on someone to come to her.

At ten o'clock, John Rudd's wagon stopped at the door; a few moments later honest John himself was before me. I took him to the bedside and showed him my poor cousin, and his eyes filled with tears as he looked at her. Then we both went back to the other room.

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