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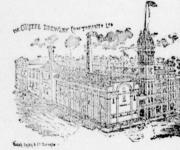
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ARMINE.

CHRISTIAN REID

CHAPTER XXXI. When the news of Egerton's escape, and of the injuries which he had received in the railway accident, be came known to his friends in Paris he naturally received many congratula-tions and condolences. Among these came a note from Mrs. Bertram expressing all things cordial in the way f concern, and ending with a few lines which made the young man smile:
"Sibyl hopes with me that you will soon be able to come to see us. She is anxious to hear an account of your escape and of the sad fate of the peron you were accompanying, in whom she is much interested.

"Much more than in me," said Egerton to himself, with the little sore feeling which Miss Bertram was al ways successful in exciting. It oc-curred to him to consider whether, had he been one of the victims of the ac cident, she would have been interested in his fate, and he decided that she would have said that " he died as he had lived, in the pursuit of a caprice. And it did not lesson the sting of this hypothetical judgment to feel that it would have been at least partially true. He had at this time, however, things

nore serious to think of than Miss Bertram's opinion, depreciating or otherwise. M. de Marigny came to see him and treated the matter of Duchesne's claim in a spirit which pleased Egerton. "It is my affair now," he said, "to ascertain whether "It is my affair proof of the marriage really exists; and, if it does exist, to secure to Mile. Duchesne whatever rights may be hers. That is my right and duty as the head of the family; but I do no mean to interfere with your right of friendship, M. Egerton, and if you care o go down into Brittany with me shall be happy to offer you the hospi tality of the chateau. You are exceedingly kind," said

Egerton; "but my position is a little embarrassing, and I hardly feel that I have any right to interfere in the matter farther. From M. Duchesne I had only the charge to tell his daugh ter of what he believed to be certain facts. And when I told her, so far from requesting me to verify thos facts, she requested me most positively to take no steps in the affair.

M. d'Antignac's advice coinciding with my own opinion, I felt bound to take at least the step of finding whether there was any proof of the civil marriage, and, in case there was, of informing you — the person most nearly concerned—of the fact. Since you, however, have been informed, and since you mean to take the in vestigation into your hands, I do not feel that any obligation rests upon me

to go into the matter farther."
"An obligation — no," said the "There is certainly not the vicomte. least obligation resting upon you. But nevertheless I think it would be best if we made these investigations together. As I am supposed to repre sent my own interest, there should be some one to represent Mile. Duchesne's: and since you are the person to whom her father made the disclosure-

'That was only an accident," in-

terposed Egerton.
"Granted; but still an accident which puts you in the position of being the only person sufficiently well-informed to act for his daughter.' "Who most decidedly declined to

allow me to act for her." "Granted again; but remember that she was not probably in a state of mind or feeling to decide properly on any question. Over her father's grave seemed to her, no doubt, very useess to consider whether he had ever a right to call himself by another name. she overlooked altogether her own in terest in the matter; but we must not overlook it."

"I suggested her own interest," said Egerton, "and she refused to consider it at all."

The vicomte made a little gesture signifying that this did not matter "She is a woman," he said, a "young woman, and in deep grief. We must act for her. Or rather, I shall find out, on abstract grounds, what is the true state of the case; and then it will be me enough to think of acting. Meanwhile there is no special reason or haste. I have just heard that she has gone into a convent for a retreatwhich will last for a fortnight at leastand, therefore, if by delaying my de-

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parture for a few days I can induce | ing," said Egerton. you to go with me down into Brittany, I shall willingly do so. You must feel very much shattered now, and I doubt if you find the prospect of a railroad journey desirable.

"I confess," said Egerton, "that I shrink from the thought of it: and yet I confess also that I should like to see the end of this matter, since the beginning of it has been forced upon my knowl edge. But I hesitate to let you delay your journey on my account. think that you would be in haste to know-the best, or worst.

On the contrary," said the vicomte, 'I feel no impatience and very little oncern. It is difficult to tell what is best and what is worst in any tem poral affair of life; but it can neve be other than well that truth should be known and justice done. I desire simply to know the one and to accomplish the other.

"Then, if you really do not object to delaying your journey for a few days, I should like very much to accompany you."
"With the prospect of your compan

ionship, I shall be happy to delay it, M. de Marigny replied, with true French courtesy. "We will go, then, next week. The day can be hereafter "We will go, then, appointed, for I shall do myself the pleasure of calling again to see how you improve." This improvement was rapid, since

Egerton's injuries, with the exception of his arm, were not serious. He was looking very pale, however, and quite like a man who had passed through a trying experience of one kind or another, when he finally made his appearance in Mrs. Bertram's drawingroom. It was not her reception-dayhe had taken care to avoid that-bu nevertheless he found a group en gaged in drinking tea, who all ros eagerly at sight of him. He had a swift impression of familiar faces Miss Dorrance's and Mr. Talford's among the number-even while he was shaking hands with Mrs. Bertran and receiving her cordial welcome Then there was a hubbub of congratu lations and inquiries for several min utes; and then, missing one person, he looked around

Sibyl was standing quite near, but a little behind him, leaning one arm on the back of a tall chair and observing with a smile the scene of which he wa the centre. As his eye met hers she at once held out her hand.

"I have only been waiting an opportunity to add my congratulations to the rest," she said. "But will y not sit down? I think you look " But will you little tired. Pray take this chair, and I will bring you a cup of tea."

Egerton took the chair, and, som

what to his surprise, Miss Bertram brought him a cup of tea with her own hand, wheeled quickly and deftly a little table forward for the cup to rest upon, and then sat down by him, "to be near in case you need assistance, she said, smiling.
"You are very kind," he answered

but I have already begun to be toler ably independent of assistance. It is, of course, awkward to have only one hand available; but my arm is getting on very well, and when I consider-"Yes," she said as he paused, "I

should think that when you conside you would feel yourself to be most for tunate. "I feel it so keenly," he said, "that

I am oppressed by the consciousness. Why should I have been spared, and not only spared in the preservation of my life, but comparatively uninjured when others—it is something I can hardly dwell upon! Yet the question constantly recurring to me: why should it have been I, and not theu? There was a moment's silence. Miss

Bertram seemed unable to suggest any answer to the question ; but she looked at the young man keenly, and pres ently said:

"But I do not think that you escaped glanced at his helpless arm—"you give me the idea of ered. You are greatly changed since I saw you last.

"The shock was terrible," he said, 'and the nervous suffering afterward very great. But the change may b owing to something besides physical causes. A man could scarcely pass hrough such an ordeal-could hardly feel himself face to face with the most errible form of death-and be quite the same afterward. Some men could, I think."

"A very shallow nature might, perhaps. But I"-he smiled a littlethough I make no pretensions to great depth, am not, at least, so shal-

ow as that."
"I hope you do not imagine that I thought so," she said quickly. seems to me that it would -that it must -make a lasting impression. And then to see your companion killed by your side—but forgive me! Perhaps ought not to force you to talk on such subject.

Egerton would have been glad if she had chosen another; but he remem bered Mrs. Bertram's note, and wha had been said therein of Sibyl's interest in the fate of Duchesne, so he felt n a manner bound to gratify that in

"It is a subject which I find it diffi cult to banish from my mind," he returns to me. The death of Duchesne was indeed most terrible; yet I can give you no idea of the iron nerve and fortitude of the man. He talked to me f matters concerning worldly affair almost up to the moment of dissolu ion.

"And at the moment," said Siby 'It is that I have been curious about have wondered if his faith in human ty had power to sustain him then."
"He did not seem to need sustain

" And, since he died with the words Vive l'humanite on his lips, you may imagine that his faith in it, or at least his devotion to it, was as strong in death as in life.

"But, under the circumstances, did not that seem unnecessary and-and almost theatrical?" she asked. he had been about to be shot there would have been some reason for proclaiming his faith in that manner. But why should he have done so, dving as he did ?"

Egerton hesitated. All around them vas a ripple of gay talk and light laughter; tea-spoons clinked agains china cups, silk dresses delicate rustled, sunshine streamed over it allhow could be speak here of that solemn moment, charged with the issues of eternity, when he had recalled the thought of God to the dying Socialist and evoked the defiance of which he had spoken? His hesitation was only momentary, for before he decided what to say Sibyl spoke quickly.
"Do not answer, Mr. Egerton," she

cried. "I see that you are reluctant o do so, and it is inexcusable of me to question you in such a manner. My apology must be that you told me so much of M. Duchesne's devotion to his ideal that I have wondered how it stood the test of death.

"It stood the test triumphantly, se far as his sincerity was concerned," Egerton answered. "I never doubted but that it would. There was no leaven of hypocrisy or self seeking in the man. He was an honest and passionate enthusiast."

Miss Bertram was silent for moment, then she said slowly: "I wonder how much of an excuse for error such sincerity of conviction is, granting that there is a life to come and that we need excuse in it?" Egerton shook his head.

question is rather too deep for me," he replied. "Suppose you ask M. d'Antignac? He will give you a precise -I have never known him to fail in that-and a precise answer is something so rare that it is refreshing to hear it. whether one accepts it or "One generally feels constrained to

ccept M. d'Antignac's answers," said Sibvl.

Egerton was about to ask how much of D'Antignac's answers on some sub jects she had been constrained to accept, when the conversation was interrupted by the approach of Miss Dorrance, who came and sat down on his other side.

"I cannot let Sibyl monopolize you, Mr. Egerton, when we have all been so interested and so anxious about you," she began. "I wonder if you have any idea what a visitation you escaped? When we first heard of your having been injured in the accident we were so concerned that we talkedmamma and I, and Mrs. Bertram, and several more of your friends-of going to pay you a visit to condole with and entertain vou. But Cousin Duke threw cold water on our project-said you would not care at all to see as; that it would be a 'nuisance' to a man who had been cut to pieces, and battered and bruised, for a set of women to descend upon him; and so we gave it

up."
"Mr. Talford must have been filled with jealousy at the thought of seeing me so distinguished," said Egerton. "I cannot imagine any other reason for his giving such an opinion. assure you that I should bave been de lighted to see you, and flattered beyond

bad, then, of Cousin Duke to inter fere," said she. "And Sibyl agreed with him, too. "I agreed that Mr. Egerton would

probably regard such a visit in the light of a nuisance," said Sibyl; "and I still think so." "I don't know how to prove that

you are wrong," said Egerton, "except by retiring to my rooms, feigning a severe relapse, and sending to beg that you will all take pity on me."

"Ah!" said the young lady, smil ing, "but the feigned relapse would oe the point of difference. A visit of the kind might be pleasant enough under those circumstances: but to a man who really had been 'cut to pieces, and battered and bruised,' as Laura says, I am sure that receiv ing half a dozen women could not be agreeable. 'I am not so modest," said Miss

"It never occurred to me that Mr. Egerton would not be charmed o see us; and another time I mean to carry out my idea."

Pray do!" said Egerton. "If should have the misfortune to be the victim and survivor of another railroad catastrophe I shall certainly look for a visit from vou.'

"It would be a very high price to pay for such a pleasure," said Miss Bertram. "Let us hope that your Bertram. She rose as she spoke and walked away and while Egerton looked after he tall, graceful figure Miss Dorrance said in a confidential tone :

"It was really Sibyl's fault that we did not go. We should not have ninded Cousin Duke's opinion, but she endorsed it so strongly that both Mrs. Bertram and mamma gave the matter ip; and then you know what could I

" We might have passed it off as an American custom, if you had come to ee me alone," said Egerton, laughing.
At least I feel very much defrauded, and I shall certainly have the matter out with Talford at the first opportun Meanwhile I am glad to hear that your mother has recovered sufficiently even to take into coasideration a visit f the kind

"Oh! mamma is vastly improved and, since she was not allowed to go to Minard's Listment Cures Colds, etc.

will come to see her.

"I shall certainly give myself that pleasure. My first visit when I return to Paris shall be paid to her."

"When you return to Paris!" re-peated Laura, with surprise. "Are

you going away?"
"Only for a short distance and a short time," he auswered. "And if by thus tempting fate I am blown up again I shall certainly expect you to fulfil your promise of coming to see

Miss Dorrance regarded him for noment with a very curious scrutiny Then she said frankly: "I confess am interested in you, Mr. Egerton. think you must be engaged in some thing very romantie and mysterious Sudden journeys, terrible accidents, dark and desperate companions -. think Cousin Duke must be right in his idea that you have become a deeply-dyed Socialist, full of plans to blow up emperors and what not."
"It is very kind of Mr. Talford to

destroy my reputation for good sensenot to speak of good morals-in that way," said Egerton, half amused, half annoyed. "But I assure you that if no emperor is blown up until I have a hand in his assassination, they will all die peaceably in their beds. As for the journey I am about to make, it is of a most inoffensive private charac-

"But your last journey-you were going to attend a Socialist meeting then, were you not?" persisted the young lady.

"As a mere matter of curiosity and amusement-yes," answered Egerton, who began to regret the publicity which he had given to his vague, socialistic sympathies. "But I think that I have been quite sufficiently punished," he added, glancing down t his arm. Miss Dorrance probably agreed with

him, for she did not pursue the sub-ject, and he was able before long to effect his escape. But it met him again when he went up to Miss Bertram to make his adieux.

"I have been thinking a good deal," the latter said in a low tone, "of the young girl-Mlle Duchesneof whom I have heard you speak several times. How terrible the shock of her father's death must have been to

"It was," answered Egerton. can judge of that by the change it has made in her."
"You have seen her, then?" said

Miss Bertram, with a quick glance at him. "Necessarily." he replied. "I was not only with her father when he died, but I received his dying wishes to

transmit to her.' "But I judged, from something which I heard Mlle. d'Antignac say that there was some doubt or mystery

about her whereabouts."
"There was for a time a little doubt, but no mystery. Her father, in order to remove her from all religious influences, had placed her with some friends of his, and the D'Antignacs did not for some time know her address. But after the news of her father's death these people made no effort to detain her, and when I saw her she had returned

to her usual place of residence. "If matters had reached such a point between father and daughter as that," said Sibyl, after a moment's pause, "perhaps it was as well he was killed."

measure by such an attention." Egerton could not repress a smile at "Would you, indeed? It was too her tone of reflective consideration." 'I was very sorry for poor Duchesne he said, "but I fear that no friend of his daughter could resist arriving at

such a conclusion." "And now that she is free, what does she mean to do-become a Catho-

"At once, I believe. She is in a convent now, to prepare for the step."
"Ah!" said Miss Bertram. "But! am sure you will not allow her to re-

main there." "I have nothing whatever to do with it," said Egerton, with some surprise.

"Have you not?" She gave him another quick glance. "I thought perhaps you had been invested with some rights of guardianship. At all events, I shall depend upon you to obtain for me a glimpse of this interesting young lady sooner or later."

After taking his departure Egerton

pondered a little on these words, which, he decided, could have only one mean ing-that Miss Bertram supposed him to be in love with Armine. It was not a new idea to him that he might be as we are aware, it had occurred to his mind before, and not only occurred to it, but been entertained and agreeably dwelt upon. Yet it had not occurred to him that any one else would suspect a sentiment of the existence of which he was by no means sure himself; and therefore Miss Bertram's penetration sur prised him, and, for some curious eason, did not please him. Certainly if he had ever been accused of being in love with Sibyl Bertram, he would have repudiated the idea; yet he had always been conscious of a strong attraction toward her, of hovering, as it were, on the brink of a fancy into which a little graciousness on her part might have precipiated him. But, instead of being gracious, she had always repelled him - in a very subtle fashion. is true, but a fashion which he clearly appreciated, and which was peculiarly trying to his self-love. had long been aware that the sore feeling which her depreciation excited was a proof of her power to move him, and he never approached her without acknowledging the charm of her strongly-marked and interesting character; yet he had not suspected him-

see you, she will be delighted if you count for the mental twinge which it ost him to realize that she had in imagination coolly handed him over to Armine "Surely one is a mystery to one's self!" he thought. And then, more sensibly. "Surely I am a fool!" TO BE CONTINUED.

A GOLDEN DEED.

How Old Mis' Lane Was Kept Out of

BY ELLA HIGGINSON

"Well, I guess I might's well string them beans fer dinner before I clean up," said Mrs. Bridges.

She took a large milkpan full of beans from the table and sat down by the window. "Isaphene," she said, presently,

'what do you say to an organ an' a horse an' buggy-a horse with some style about him, that you could ride or drive, an' that 'u'd always be up when you wanted to go to town ? "What do I say?" Isaphene was making a cake, and beating the mix-

ture with a long-handled tin-spoon She turned and looked at her mother as if she feared one of them had lost her senses; then she returned to the cake beating with an air of goodnatured disdain.

"Oh, you can smile and turn your head on one side, but you'll whistle another tune before long, or I'll miss my guess. Isaphene, I've been savin' up chicken and butter money ever since we come to Puget Sound; then I've always got the money for the strawberry crop, an' for the geese an' turkeys, an' the calves, an' so on."
Mrs. Bridges stopped, and lowering her voice to a mysterious whisper,

Somebody's comin'," she exclaimed. Isaphene stooped, and peered cautiously through the wild cucumber vines that climbed over the kitchen window.

Oh, it's Mis' Hanna!"

"My goodness! An' the way this house looks! You'll have to bring her out here in the kitchen, too. I s'p'ose she's come to spen' the day—she's got her bag, ain't she? There! She's knockin'! Open the door, can't you! Isaphene went to the front door, re-

turning presently, followed by a tall, thin lady.
"Here's Mis' Hanna, maw," she

said, with the air of one who had made a pleasant discovery. Mrs. Bridges got up, very much surprised to find who her visitor was, with exaggerated delight. who her visitor was, and shook hands

"Well, I'll declare! It's really you, is it? At last? Well, set right down an' take off your things. Isa-phene, take Mis' Hanna's things. My! ain't it warm, walkin'?"

"It is so." The visitor gave her bonnet to Isaphene, dropping her black mitts into it after rolling them carefully together. "But it's inice and cool in your kitchen." eyes wandered about with a look of unabashed curiosity that took in everything. "I brought my crochet with

me."
"I'm glad you did. You'll have to excuse the looks o' thing. news?

"None perticular." Mrs. Hanna began to crochet, holding the work close to her face. "Ain't it too bad

about poor old Mis' Lane?"
"What about her?" Mrs. Bridges snapped a bean into three pieces, and looked at her visitor with a kind of Egerton could not repress a smile at pleased expectancy, as if almost any per tone of reflective consideration.

existence. "Is she dead?" "No, she ain't dead ; but the poor old creature'd better be. She's got to go to the poor-farm, after all."

There was silence in the kitchen. save for the click of the crochet-needle and the snapping of the beans. A soft wind came in the window and drummed with the lightest of touches on Mrs. Bridges' temple. It brought all the sweets of the old-fashioned flower-garden with it - the mingled oreaths of mignonette, stock, sweet lavender, sweet peas and clove pinks. The whole kitchen was filled with the fragrance. And what a big, cheerful kitchen it was! Mrs. Bridges contrasted it unconsciously with the poorfarm kitchen, and almost shivered,

warm though the day was. "Ain't my flowers doin' well though, Mis' Hanna?"

"They are that. When I come up the walk I couldn't help thinkin' of poor old Mis' Lane."
"What's that got to do with her?"

There was resentment bristling in Mrs. Bridges' tone and glance. Mrs. Hanna stopped crocheting, but held her hands stationary in the air, and looked over them in surprise at

her questioner.
"Why, she ust to live here, you

"She did! In this house?" "Why, yes. Didn't you know that? Oh, they ust to be right well off'n her husband's time. I visited here con-sid'rable. My! the good things she always had to eat! It makes my

mouth water to think of them." "Hunh! I'm sorry I can't give you as good as she did," said Mrs. Bridges,

stiffly "Well, as if you dinn't! You set a beautiful table, Mis' Bridges, an' what's more, that's your reputation all over. Everybody says that about

Mrs. Bridges smiled deprecatingly,

with a faint blush of pleasure.
"They do, Mis' Bridges. I just told you about Mis' Lane because you'd never think it now of the poor old creature. An' such flowers 's she ust to have on both sides that walk! Larkspurs an' sweet-williams an self of any sentiment which could ac- bachelor's buttons an' pumgranates an'