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ONE MOMENT.

BY FATHER RYAN.

We borrow,
In our sorrow,
From the sun of some to-morrow
Half the light that glids to-day;
And the splendor
Flashes tender
O'er hope's footsteps to defend her
From the fears that haunt the way.

We never
Ere can sever
Any now from the forever
Intertwining near and far!
For each minute
Holds within it
All the hours of the infinite,
As the sky holds every star.

THE AMULET.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER III.

THE PALACE OF SIMON TURCHI, AND WHAT
OCCURRED THERE.

"No, I have not time."
"You must take the time. You shall
not leave here until you have heard my
adventures of last night."

"It is always the same story over again.
If I believed you, I would suppose that
the cemeteries were too small to contain
the bodies of all whom you have slain.
Open the door, Julio, and let me go, I
beg you."

The other took his hand, and dragging
him by force into the house, said: "I am
here alone all day, with no one to whom
I can speak one word; it is enough to
paralyze my tongue. You shall listen to
my adventures whether you wish it or
not. Judge, Bernardo, by the recital of
my great deeds what an honor it is to
you to be the comrade of so intrepid a
man. Be not ill-humored; you know it
is useless to resist me. Don't laugh;
were I to try it, I could toss you about
like a ball; but you are my friend, and
besides, you are too weak to contend with
me. Therefore, fear nothing."

They reached the house and entered a
kind of parlor, where Julio threw upon
the table the spring he held in his hand,
and seating himself, he said to his com-
panion:

"Take a chair, Bernardo. You are
about to hear some strange adventures.
Do you know the ruffian Bufferio! He is
a jolly fellow, who cares as little for the
life of a man as for that of a fly. There
is not a man in the parish of Saint An-
drew who does not tremble at the sight
of him. In a by-street there is a tavern
in a large cellar, where one can hear the
rattling of dice all night long, and they
play for piles of gold—where it comes
from, the devil only knows. Late yester-
day evening I was passing through this
street, when the noise of the dice fell
upon my ear. You must know, Bernardo,
that this sound is as enchanting music
attracting me; it overpowers my will. I
descended into the tavern and called for
a glass of beer. I seated myself among
the players, and challenged any of them
to play against me. I won and lost; but
at last good luck was on my side, and my
pockets were so full that they could hardly
bear the weight of the florins. To console
the losers, I ordered the hostess to
bring a pint of wine to each of them;
but in spite of my generosity the villains
looked at me angrily, and seemed to ex-
cite each other to take revenge upon me.
They strove to pick a quarrel. They were
like a band of thieves and assassins; but
the rascals saw with whom they had to
deal. My defiant look, my bold words,
my intrepid countenance, kept them at
a respectful distance from me. Suddenly
the dreaded Bufferio entered the cellar.
He had no sooner learned from his com-
rades how fortune had favored me than
he challenged me to play with him. It
was just what I wanted. I don't know
how it happened, but I lost every game.
Each time we doubled the stakes; a cold
sweat bathed my brow as I saw florin af-
ter florin quietly put in the pocket of my
adversary, until I had only one farthing
left. This time fortune favored me; but
Bufferio insisted that the dice had not
been fairly thrown, and he swept the table
of all the money staked. I sprang to
my feet and called him a cheat. He in-
stantly dealt me a heavy blow. Furious
and thirsting for vengeance, I drew my
dagger. Immediately twenty daggers
glittered above my head. Perhaps, Ber-
nardo, you think that I trembled! You
do not know me; when I am thus in the
midst of danger, an entire army could
not terrify me; for in whatever other

qualities I may be deficient, I do not lack
courage and intrepidity. When I saw the
villains about to rush upon me, I darted
forward like a lion, and I cut about on
every side so furiously with my dagger,
that all, even to the gigantic Bufferio, fled
from the cellar. I pursued them into the
street; there the combat recommenced;
but my adversaries fared badly. In a
few moments Bufferio lay dead upon the
ground between two of his comrades;
the others, being badly wounded, had
taken flight. I stood alone upon the field
of battle, a triumphant conqueror! I
remained in the same spot for a quarter
of an hour, to see if any other enemies
would present themselves, but the wret-
ches had had enough for one night."

Bernardo listened to this recital with
an incredulous smile. When it was con-
cluded, he silently shook his head.

"Well! what have you to say of this
adventure!" asked Julio. "Might it not
be narrated in the chronicles as an heroic
adventure?"

"Certainly; in your place many others
would have died of fright. But this
morning I saw this Bufferio, whom you
declare to be dead, walking alive in the
public square."

"Impossible; you are mistaken."

"Perhaps so; but I know the ruffian
well, for I have twice seen him in the
pillory."

"If he is not dead, he will certainly
not be able to make his appearance in
the streets for six months to come."

"Of course, you took your money from
Bufferio."

"How could I?"

"Since he lay lifeless at your feet, why
did you not recover the money he had
stolen from you?"

The red-haired man was at a loss for an
answer; but after awhile he stammered
out: "You are right. In the hurry of the
struggle I did not think of it; and
then I had not the time: the watchmen
ran on hearing the noise of the affray,
and you may imagine that I did not care
to fall into the hands of the bailiff."

"I do not understand you; it seems
to me you mentioned having remained a
quarter of an hour upon the spot," said
Bernardo, with a slight smile. "I sup-
pose, Julio, there was much blood shed."

"It flowed in torrents."

Bernardo eyed his companion from
head to foot in great surprise.

"I would like to ask you something,
but you might not understand the joke,
and you would be angry with me," he said.

"Say candidly what you think," re-
plied his companion.

"I am extremely surprised, Julio, that
there is not the smallest drop of blood,
not the least spot, upon your clothes.
With your permission, I will say you
dreamed all that!"

Julio sprang from his seat, gnashed his
teeth, and looked at his companion as if
ready to devour him.

"What! you dare to laugh at me!
Are you then tired of life! Fool! were I
only to lay my hand upon you, you
would be crushed to atoms."

Bernardo arose also, and said, in a tone
half-ironical and half supplicating: "Pardon
me, Julio; I believe all you told me,
and I never doubted your marvellous
courage. If sometimes I laugh at serious
things, do not be offended; this kind of
joking is usual with men."

"If you were not so feeble and power-
less a being, I would have already laid
you at my feet," said Julio; "as it is, I
long to plunge my dagger in your breast."

"Leave it in its scabbard, Julio, and I
will go to buy you a stoop of Hamburg
beer."

"Ah, hypocrite!" exclaimed Julio,
"then you have money. I will renew my
friendship for you, if you will do me a
favor. I am in absolute want of money;
lend me a few shillings, and the first one
who insults you, I promise you, shall be
a dead man."

"But, Julio, were I to give them to you,
you would gamble with them at once."

"No, you are wrong this time; I would
pay for some things our master ordered
me to buy yesterday."

Bernardo drew a small purse from his
doublet, and handed to his companion its
scanty contents.

"Here is all I possess," he said. "I
fear they will go like the others."
Julio thrust the shillings into his

pocket, and muttered: "I do not deny
that I may go this evening to the parish
of Saint Andrew, to see if any one would
dare play against me."

"Julio, Julio, I pity you!" said Ber-
nardo, sadly. "I do not wish to lecture
you; but you have an unfortunate and
aged mother who requires your aid. You
are always talking of sending her assist-
ance, and for six months past every far-
thing has been lost at play. Perhaps in
the meantime your mother has suffered
for want of food."

This reproach seemed to affect Julio
deeply. He looked down abashed, and
then said, dejectedly: "Bernardo, never
speak to me again of my mother. You
touch the only sensitive spot in my heart.
And yet you are right; I am a monster!
Oh! this miserable play! I will do better
in future. Go away now, and let me con-
tinue my work."

"What are you making?" asked Ber-
nardo. "This is the third spring you have
ordered, and each time from a different
locksmith."

"It is a secret known only to my mas-
ter and myself."

"A secret?" said Bernardo. "Springs,
a secret! What can it mean?"

"Come with me, and I will show you.
The signor may be angry if he chooses, I
don't care. But, Bernardo, you must be
as silent as one deaf and dumb."

He conducted his companion to a room,
and throwing open the door showed him
a large arm-chair, which in form was like
the other chairs around, excepting that
from each arm extended two bent springs.

"This is what I have worked at, with-
out stopping, for four days. I wish the
bewitched chair to the devil! I have
already exhausted myself; but the new
spring is good, and in a few minutes I
will have finished."

Bernardo examined attentively the un-
finished chair, and looked frightened.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "a chair
for a trap! Do you entrap men here?"

Julio nodded his head affirmatively.

Pale from anxiety, Bernardo muttered:
"May God preserve me! What crime is
in contemplation? Does our master
know anything of this terrible piece of
furniture?"

"Was it not from him that you re-
ceived the order to bring me the springs?"

The humpbacked man made the sign
of the cross, and muttered a few indis-
tinct words.

Suddenly Julio laughed immoderately,
and slapping him on the shoulder ex-
claimed: "Foolish boy! he already sees
a victim in this chair, and the blood flow-
ing as freely as in some old woman's
story. Be at ease, Bernardo; this is done
only to satisfy a caprice of our master.
He intends to clean the garden and re-
pair the fountain. He will place this
armchair in an arbor near the fountain;
the guest who seats himself in it will be
caught, and the salamanders may throw
the water upon him as long as they
please. It is a mania of our master."

"What a coward I am!" said Bernardo,
laughing at his own fears. "Open the
door now, Julio; I should have been at
the factory long ago."

They both left the house talking to-
gether, and they turned their steps to-
wards the exterior door.

The red-haired man soon returned
alone. He removed the spring from the
parlor-table, and took it with him to the
room where he had terrified his com-
panion by the revelation of his master's se-
cret. He seated himself on the ground
near the chair, and taking some tools he
began to arrange the spring, and to try if
it would produce the effect intended.
Whilst thus occupied he laughed aloud,
and said:

"The stupid humpback! One could
make him believe that cats laid eggs!
He believed all I told him of Bufferio and
his comrades as though they were gospel
truths. The coward! To empty his
pocket of its last farthing, it is only ne-
cessary to frighten him. I have two
shillings. Night is coming on, and it is
growing dark. Presently I will go to the
tavern of the 'Silver Dice.' I will play
at first with a few farthings, then for white
pieces, at last for florins and even crowns!
This time I will stop playing as soon as
my pocket is full of money. Then at least
I will send something to my poor mother.
In what condition is she now? Perhaps

she no longer lives on earth; that would
be better for her. Poor and blind, and
her only dependence a son who must
conceal his true name in order to escape
the gallows; a gambler, drunkard—in a
word, a real jail bird! Yes, if fortune
favors me, I will send her something.
The signor promised me to have it con-
veyed to Lucca. Ah! the spring is fixed.
Let me see if the machine does its duty."

He rose, placed his hand on the arm
of the chair as if about to take his seat
in it; suddenly he sprang aside, exclaim-
ing: "Fool that you are, you were about
to do a fine thing! I would have been
caught by my own trap; and if the sig-
nor had forgotten to come this evening,
I would have remained clasped in that
traitorous chair. But don't I hear some
one coming? A key grating in the lock
of the garden gate? Yes, it is the Signor
Turchi!"

Seating himself on the ground before
the arm-chair, with his back turned to
the door, Julio began to work with ap-
parent eagerness; and in order to assume
a greater air of indifference, he sang
snatches of a well-known song.

The door opened, and Signor Turchi
stood upon the threshold. He remained
for an instant motionless, contemplating
in silence his servant, who continued his
song as though unconscious of the pres-
ence of his master.

Simon slowly approached him and laid
his hand upon his shoulder; but before
he could say a word, Julio drew his dag-
ger from its scabbard, and springing to
his feet, made a motion as if to stab his
master.

"O cielo, e voi signor? Is it you, sig-
nor?" cried Julio. "You slip through
the garden like a thief. It is almost
dark; an accident might have happened."

"Stop your foolish jesting, Julio. A
man does not kill another without find-
ing out with whom he is dealing."

"Do you think so, signor? Why, if
five or six men were to take me by sur-
prise, not one would be left alive."

"You speak as if the life of a man were
of no more value than that of a bird."

"Less, signor; it is not worth a farthing."

"We will have proof of this," said Si-
mon, in a peculiar tone, as he turned to-
wards the door. "For years I have heard
you boasting; this evening I will disco-
ver what you are—a brave man or a
coward."

Julio drew himself to his full height,
put his arms akimbo, and was about to
speak, but his master prevented him.

"No useless words!" said Simon, im-
periously. "Light the lamp, and come
to my bed-room."

He left the room without making any
inquiry in regard to the chair, and ascen-
ded a winding staircase. Opening the
door of a large room, he threw himself
upon a chair, and rubbed his brow with
his hands like a man tormented by pain-
ful thoughts.

After awhile his hands fell upon his
knees, and his eyes wandering in feverish
agitation through the dim twilight, he
muttered:

"At last it is decided! the murder of
a friend! He my friend? He is my
mortal enemy. Has he not deprived me
of Mary's love? Has he not destroyed
all my hopes? Has he not devoted me
to eternal infamy? His uncle has con-
sented: he will become his partner, the
proprietor of an immense fortune, the
husband of Mary—of Mary, who was des-
tined by her father to be my wife. He
will be powerful, rich, and happy; he
will be surrounded by every luxury; he
will astonish the world by the magnif-
icence of his style of living, and from the
pinnacle of his grandeur he will cast an
eye of lawful pride upon Turchi disho-
nored and ruined. Miserable dog that I
am. Deodati will discover that I owe him
ten thousand crowns. He will appeal to
the courts of justice, and I will be con-
demned as a rogue; and I will discover
that I have spent more than I possessed.
Outraged, despised, mocked, shall I fall
forever into the abyss of misery and in-
famy? No, no; let him die. His death
alone can save me. If he perishes as I
have planned, I no longer owe him the
ten thousand crowns; Mary becomes my
wife, and I am master of her dowry. In
that case I am still the powerful, honored
chief of the house of Buonvisi. But time
presses; to-morrow it may be too late. I
hear Julio coming. Upon him rests all
my hope."

TO BE CONTINUED.