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A WOMAN OF FORTUNE

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

CHAPTER III. AN OCEAN ACQUAINTANCE.

"Now," said Cecil, "is not this delightful? And do you not feel better already?" She spoke to a lady who leaned on her arm as they stepped together on the deck of the great ocean steamer, which, with wings spread to the favoring breeze, was cleaving her way through the outspread liquid plain toward the Old World.

"Oh," she said, "I really cannot stand it! You must let me go down again." "No, no," said Cecil, inflexibly. "Now that you are here, you must stay. I will make you very comfortable, and you need not look at the waves if you don't like."

"Can I be of any assistance?" he asked, courteously. "Thanks, yes—if you will be so kind," Cecil replied. "Please look among those deck chairs—pointing to a row folded up, standing on end—for one that has 'Marriott' or 'Lorimer' written on the back, and place it for this young lady."

"My dear Cecil, I can never stay!" remonstrated the latter. "Oh, yes, you can!" Cecil answered, with a cheerful positiveness. "That is one of our chairs," she added as the gentleman who had volunteered his services drew one from the ranks.

"Now I am sure that in a little while you will feel better," said Cecil, covering her up. "If you do not, of course we must submit to let you be miserable in your own way; but even for misery I think this is better than that close state room."

"We are very much obliged," she said, graciously. "You have been very kind."

"I am happy to have been of use," he answered, lifting his hat. As he walked away, he smiled a little—a smile that was for Miss Lorimer's princess-like tone. It was neither naught nor patronizing, but simply that of one who condescended a little in addressing her fellow-creatures—a tone that might have been offensive had it not been so evidently unconscious.

"So Grace, you are out at last, are you?" he said as he came up. "I hope you are feeling better? I knew you would once you were on deck. You ought to have let me bring you up yesterday."

"Yesterday was too rough," said Cecil. "She would not have enjoyed it. But I am sure she is better for being out to-day."

"You brought her up, did you?" said Mr. Marriott, regarding the speaker with an admiring smile. "I would have been on hand if I had known; but I fancy you were the best person, after all. You were made to carry everything before you, Miss Cecil."

"So Grace has just been telling me," said Cecil. "But I looked for you when we came on deck. I wanted you to arrange the chair and settle her comfortably. I could not leave her to do it, and Maria has not got her sea legs at all."

"I should think not," said Mr. Marriott, with a laugh—for Maria (Miss Lorimer's maid) had been so far from speaking helplessly. "I went to the smoking-room, and I stayed a little longer than I intended," he added; "but of course you had no difficulty in finding somebody to arrange things for you."

"Oh, not the least!" said Cecil carelessly. "There is always a man to do such things; but one prefers not to accept services from strangers."

"That depends on the stranger," observed Grace. "This one was very kind, and evidently a gentleman."

"Without doubt," said Cecil; "but one prefers an acquaintance. Now, Mr. Marriott, what do you think of a turn up and down the deck?"

Mr. Marriott replied that he would be delighted, having the usual restlessness of masculine humanity on board ship, and being not at all averse to the pleasure of such a companion. So, after enquiring if there was anything Grace wanted, or was likely to want, and having received an assurance in the negative, Miss Lorimer walked away with him.

"It is so strange to see you lying there pale and indifferent," she said to her friend. "This air acts upon me like a divine nectar and tonic. I do not feel as if pain could exist in the world."

"Do you not?" observed her listener, languidly. "Then I only wish I could give you my sensations for a time."

"Poor Grace! I wish I could take them," was the quick answer. "If I only could, you would be on your feet in five minutes, enjoying all this glorious day and scene."

"And you would be lying here? I cannot fancy that. I am sure your will would be strong enough to overcome even a rebellious stomach."

Cecil laughed. "You are getting better," she said. "Until I brought you up on deck you had not energy enough to be sarcastic. But indeed I always felt great sympathy with the character in one of the eerie stories of Poe, with which I used to curdle my blood when I was a child, who declared that 'man does not yield himself to death save through the weakness of his own feeble will.'"

"Then I shall expect you to be a female Wandering Jew," said Cecil. "Am I so very strong in will? Every one accuses me of it; but it is not an amiable or a desirable characteristic."

"It is not unamiable—in you," said Grace Marriott. "Most wilful people are very selfish, but I do not think you would insist upon having your own way if it would injure any one else."

"I hope not," said Cecil, seriously. "But one cannot be sure. One is always liable to be betrayed by the defects of one's qualities. I suppose I ought to cultivate humility and deference to the opinions of others, but nature is very strong in me."

"Nature is strong in most of us," said Grace; "but perhaps—with a glance at the spirited profile beside her—'stronger in you than in most people. If it is true that we can gain happiness and peace only by subduing nature, I am sorry for the struggle that is before you.'"

Cecil glanced at her with a slightly startled look. "The struggle!" she repeated. "Is there a struggle before me? I am not sure that I care to subdue my natural impulses. So long as they do no harm to others, why should I?"

"The answer to that would lead us very far," said her companion, "and I am hardly in condition either to argue or expound. You remind me of an untired soldier, my dear Cecil—all bravery, ardor, and self-confidence. I am afraid the last, at least, must be a little shaken. But here comes John—in time to put a stop to my prophecies."

There was a great contrast between the pale, delicate speaker and the stout, good-looking man on the sunny side of middle-age, with his general air of prosperity and satisfaction with life, who now came up. But they were brother and sister, nevertheless, though with a wide gulf of years between them—one being the eldest and the other the youngest of a large family—and a wider gulf of different tastes and sympathies. Sensitive, intellectual, artistic to her fingertips, Grace Marriott was now on her way to Europe to complete her studies in art, while her brother was crossing over to visit his family—his wife finding it more entertaining to live abroad than in America, and having an excellent excuse in the education of the children; while Mr. Marriott was himself one of the obliging husbands who spend their days in the accumulation of means to support an establishment in Paris or Dresden, where they are received as guests once or twice a year.

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upon her with uncomfortable brightness. She looked around when she became conscious of this, but neither her brother nor Cecil was in sight. Then she pulled a veil over her face, but the glare was still disagreeable. To rise, however, was impossible: she could not have trusted herself on her feet for an instant without support, apart from the fact that she was wrapped like a mummy in folds from which she could not have disengaged herself without assistance. She closed her eyes, therefore, and resigned herself to the position—but only to be startled the next moment by a pleasantly-modulated voice saying over her head:

"Pardon me, but I think you are uncomfortable. Shall I not move your chair?"

She looked up to see the same dark, clear but face that bent over her before. Its kindness and courtesy were alike unmistakable.

"You are very good," she said. "I do find the glare disagreeable; but it is so troublesome to rise, and my friends will be here in a short time."

"There is no reason why you should rise," said the gentleman. "I can draw your chair into the shade without disturbing you."

He laid his hand on the back as he spoke, and drew it, evidently with ease, a few feet towards the shaded part of the deck.

"Not at all," answered Miss Marriott, smiling. "This is vastly more pleasant. Thank you very much. How kind of you to have observed that the sun had found me out!"

"Oh, I felt myself responsible for your position since I had arranged it." Then, after a brief pause, and encouraged by her pleasant manner, "I hope you are feeling better?"

"Yes," she replied. "I must acknowledge that being on deck has helped me. I fought against coming, but my friend brought me up whether I would or no."

The stranger smiled a little, as he had smiled at Cecil's tone in thanking him. He was not surprised by this report of her arbitrary proceedings, but he made no comment—only remarked that it was always best in case of sea sickness to remain on deck as much as possible. "Especially when the weather is fine," he added; "for in what sailors call 'dirty weather,' ladies at least, must stay below."

"I hope we shall have no such weather," said Miss Marriott, anxiously. "Oh, the Atlantic is certain to give us at least one rough tossing before it lets us go," he answered. "At this season we are certain of nothing but uncertain weather, you know."

"And icebergs. All our friends had something cheering to say about them before we started."

"It is too early for any serious danger from ice, I think. The bergs have hardly set out on their travels from the Arctic regions yet."

"Apart from the danger, I should like to see some of them," said Grace, with the artist shining in her eyes.

"They are really not much worth seeing," answered her companion, "except in extraordinary cases. If you ask our captain, I am sure he will tell you that there is nothing he would not rather see."

"Oh, of course!" she replied, with a laugh. "By such easy and commonplace steps these two were advancing toward acquaintance, when Cecil and Mr. Marriott returned. They were astonished to find that Grace's chair had shifted its position, until they perceived the young man who stood talking to her. As they approached, Grace said:

"Are you surprised to see that a mummy can move? But the sun invaded my corner, and this gentleman came to my assistance a second time, and drew me into the shade."

"Very kind of you," said Mr. Marriott, turning to the stranger, who on his part bowed and walked away. He did not wish these people to fancy that he desired to make their acquaintance. But Mr. Marriott followed him. "My sister has been twice indebted to you," he said. "Then he opened a passenger-list in his hands. 'When people are shut up on shipboard together they should be sociable,' he added. 'This is as good an exchange of cards. Here is my name; will you point out yours?'"

It was impossible to resist this frank friendliness, and indeed the other had no wish to do so. He indicated his name, and Mr. Marriott read it aloud. "Tyronnell. Ah, yes! A fine name—historical association and all that. Proves Irish descent."

"Naturally," was the reply. "I am an Irishman."

"Ah, yes!" said Mr. Marriott again. "Curious this thing of national types," he went on the next moment. "I see now that you could not be anything else."

When he rejoined his sister and Cecil, he explained his meaning more fully. "Any one who is at all cosmopolitan in his knowledge, can generally tell nationality at a glance," he said. "I have observed that man several times—there's a remarkable distinction about him—and I could not quite decide what he was. He has a foreign look, but I saw that he did not belong to the Continent, and he has too much grace and fire about him for an Englishman. But the matter is plain now—he is an Irishman, and every one knows that there is no finer type of gentleman in Europe than the Irish gentleman."

Mr. Marriott cultivated his new acquaintance after this, and when Cecil came on deck in the afternoon, for a promenade before dinner, he had

further information respecting him to give. "I advise you to talk to that man," he said. "I think he would interest you. He is very cultivated, and has seen a great deal of the world; he is on his way from Australia to Ireland now."

"Then our voyage is only the end of a long journey for him," observed Cecil. "But one cannot talk to a man who does not give one the opportunity to do so."

"I'll provide the opportunity," said Mr. Marriott.

Not many minutes later he perceived the man of whom they spoke standing by the taffrail, looking westward, where the sun was going down in the tossing waves with a good deal of sunset pomp, and the long track of foam which the vessel left behind her was gilded with its parting rays. He started a little when Mr. Marriott, with Cecil on his arm, suddenly drew up near him.

"Promise of many more charming days in that," said the former, with an easy nod toward the sunset.

"I am not sure of it," answered the other, lifting his hat to the young lady. "It is not exactly a sky that sailors like, and I observe that the breeze is freshening in the northeast. I fear we shall have bad weather soon."

"You seem to be something of a sailor yourself," said Cecil, looking at him.

"Oh, no," he replied. "I have only the familiarity with the sea of one who has been on it a good deal."

"I have never been on it for a long voyage before," she said; "and I do not feel now as if I could ever again be content to be away from it. In fact, I want to take the longest voyage practicable—to go around the world."

"Very easily done in these days," said Mr. Marriott.

"But hardly worth doing unless with sufficient time," remarked their new acquaintance. "One should take two or three years for such a journey as that."

"Two or three years!" repeated Mr. Marriott. "Well, if you wanted to take out naturalization papers in every country on your route, perhaps so. But I could do the thing—"

"In eighty days?" asked Cecil, smiling.

"I should not care to attempt that, but in ten months with ease."

"I suppose it would be very easy to put a girdle around the earth in ten months," she said. "But, you see, my delight would be in the voyage, not in the end of it; so I would like to prolong it as much as possible. I wish there was some way to prolong this voyage! Why are people so anxious to reach the shore, where all their cares lie in wait for them? I should think that every one would be glad of the respite of being at sea, and would like to prolong such a period of rest."

"You forget that some of us have people on the shore whom we are very anxious to see," said Mr. Marriott; "and the rest are in a fever to take up again those cares of which you talk, as if you could know anything about them!"

Cecil lifted her head with the haughtiness which was always a natural impulse with her. What did this man know of her, that he should venture to take such an easy and familiar tone?

"I should be a very extraordinary person," she said, coldly. "But here come the sailors to shift the sails. It is all a mystery to me, but I like to watch it."

While she watched it, the man leaning against the side of the ship watched her—the changing expressions of the beautiful, noble face—and wondered a little what the cares could be which she was anxious to prolong her voyage to escape.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LEGENDS AND STORIES OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.

Il Santo Bambino Dell' Ara Cecil.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. (Mark x, 14.)

In the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome is a figure of our blessed Redeemer as a little helpless Child, which is held in great veneration by all devout Christians. For numerous favors have been obtained through invoking our blessed Lord in this holy spot, especially among the sick and infirm, and among the dear children of Him who had not whereon to lay His head—the poor.

Every year at Christmas tide Il Santo Bambino dell' Ara Cecil is honored by processions, devotions, and vociferous offerings; and inasmuch as He called the little children unto Him and blessed them in honor of His childhood, little children sing to Him and speak His praises at this festive season before the Santo Bambino.

For miles around the Eternal City, the people in the villages love and honor this devotion, and at Christmas-tide flock to Rome to obtain grace and blessing from their Infant Redeemer.

In a little village several miles from Rome, called Sant' Antonio dell' Alhermonte, lived a little boy with his grandmother. He was a good little boy, gentle and pious, and most unselfish—poor little Toto. Many and many a time he gave up his play-time to run messages for his grandmother, to go out into the woods and pick up sticks for the fire, or to fetch water, or to run messages for the richer neighbors to gain a few soldi for his Nonna. He never went to school without having heard Mass and paid a visit to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and his

sweetness and modesty of demeanor won the love of all hearts for il piccolo Toto.

One winter, however, when he was nine years old, Toto fell very ill, and his grandmother was obliged to put him to bed and call in the doctor. The child was shivering, and yet burning hot. He could hardly breathe, and a racking cough gave him no rest. The doctor gave him some medicine and the grandmother did all she could to keep him quiet and help him to get well; but on Christmas Eve, Toto lying still as a mouse, the grandmother and the doctor thought he was asleep, and Toto heard the doctor tell the poor old woman that he would not be able to save her darling; that he could not last many days longer. The old woman cried and begged the holy Child Jesus to spare her little grandson, but as the hours went by there was no change for the better, and she could not believe there was the least hope of Toto's recovery.

Now Toto lay in bed thinking, and he was very sad. He loved his grandmother very dearly. He had meant to work very hard for her when he grew up, and had decided that when he grew rich she should have a pretty house, nice clothes, and rest all the time and amuse herself while he worked for her.

"Nonna," he called gently to her as she came near the bedside, "why are you crying? Is it true I am so ill?"

"Ah, Gesu! Maria!" she cried, the tears running down her cheeks. "The doctor says you are indeed ill, most ill, my Toto."

"Nonna," he said, after a long fit of coughing, "will not the good Gesu hear our prayers, and let me get well? Did you not tell me about the Santo Bambino dell' Ara Cecil? Tell me it again, Nonna mia."

"Ah, Il Santo Bambino," cried the grandmother. "Ah, truly, if we could go to Rome. And now since the wicked woman to whom it was carried when she was ill stole it, Il Santo Bambino is no more carried to the sick at their own homes."

"Perhaps if we prayed He would come to us," said little Toto, his eyes full of tears. "Dear Nonna, He loves us, so we will pray with all our hearts, and who knows?"

The old woman cried bitterly. Little Toto was her all. She had had one daughter only, who, dying, had left her the little dark-eyed baby to comfort her, and the old woman loved the sweet little grandson better than aught else in the world. Now she was going to lose him; and the thought of her lonely life pierced her heart like a sharp sword. Her little Toto, with his winning ways, his loving thoughtfulness, was he going to leave her? Must she see him carried out to the cemetery and laid in the ground, and drag out the remainder of her life in solitude? But it was Christmas Eve, and she must now go to confession to prepare for the great feast day, and drying her eyes she put little Toto comfortable, and promising to hurry back from church, she went out into the cold night air.

As soon as she was gone, Toto sat up in bed, breathed a prayer from the depth of his heart, and at last slipped out of bed. Then with a great deal of coughing and gasping for breath, he dressed himself, put his little bed tidy, making a heap in the middle to protect that he was lying in bed covered with his clothes, and wrapping a sheepskin cloak around him, he opened the door of the little cottage and looked out.

It had been snowing, and the ground was white and dazzling in the bright moonlight; many golden stars were twinkling in the deep blue sky. They smiled upon him as the angels of God, poor Toto thought. The cold night air brought on a terrible fit of coughing which nearly cost him his life, and for a moment he stood deliberating on the doorstep, thinking he could not carry out his heroic plan.

But down in the village he saw the lights of the church shining through the colored windows, and he remembered the picture on the window over the altar of Jesus blessing little children. The thought of his grandmother armed him with supernatural courage, and he stepped out into the cold night to trudge to Rome to visit the Bambino dell' Ara Cecil.

The snow was not very deep: it was crisp and hard, but very slippery: in some places it was smooth as glass, for it was a very hard frost. Toto knew the way perfectly well, for in the summer he came very often to sell flowers or fruit from his grandmother's garden in the city, and his gentle manners and pretty face with its large wistful eyes brought him many customers.

But it was very different trudging along the hard, slippery snow, the north wind blowing against him and making him cough at almost every step, to running along in the bright summer mornings, now and then riding in the cart of one of the market gardeners, now walking in company with other boys when the air was cool and fragrant, and the sun was just beginning to dry the dew on the grass by the wayside.

"O Gesu," cried little Toto, "Thou wast a poor child also. Dear Gesu, bring me safe home to the Nonna, my own Gesu, I beg of Thee."

Toto had to sit down many times by the wayside, until a fit of coughing had left him. But after two or three hours' walking he found that his strength was beginning to fail him, and when at last he came in sight of the great city, and the twinkling lights seemed to mock at him for his weakness, he sank down on the ground and in an agony of grief and pain sobbed:

"Ah, Gesu! must I die and leave the Nonna all alone? Maria! by the love loved each other, help me! He crawled on his hands for a little while, and forward on his face, uttering a cry, his eyes closed, a chill over him. He had a feeling that this was death. "Thy will be done, Lord Gesu, red Gentle arms raised sweet fragrance revived. He was able to look at his deliverer.

"Ah, dear Gesu," he had heard my prayer, thank thee with all my heart. For he was in the full angel with robes of glory, on whose countenance smile of celestial sympathy which comforted. Swiftly and noiselessly passed on through the great city. The bells for midnight Mass rang through the windows of the faithful were hurried with joy and thanksgiving the Saviour of the world passed on with his Church of Santa Maria entering, he laid the in the place of heaven right before the Divine.

With the deepest Toto thanked the heard his prayer, and made quite well for sake.

Oh, marvel of strength was infused aching little body. Toto stood up—ye strong; he could not creckings in his breath, his poor, to ache, the fever now his veins.

Then as he knelt his ardent prayer of our compassionate took his hand, led him the little boy of deliverance, while he as a witness of the And the priest bade holy table, at the Mass, and as he knelt altar and the priest the most holy Communion the little boy as if rounded by throngs his heart almost burst and love.

And when he had into his soul he was vine love, and he knelt to heart with Jesus and joy.

But as the day be the voice of the joy heaven, calling an brate the birth of thought him of his he left the church a homeward. He w heart so light and reached home as his out of the six o'clock not missed him; a heap in the center she had fancied it and the doctor had long, refreshing sleep for the sick, him come dancing street, she cried out the ground.

"Ah, Toto," she want to kill these thou dance, thou ter even?"

"Nonna mia," singing for very joy the Santo Bambino cured—I am cured! The neighbors of Toto told them of had borne him in and laid him at the Bambino in Santa

"Ah, Gesu!" mother—she was is the little child that Thou dost love. Amid cries and tions Toto was born to tell the Fra Arimican monk, w boys of the village. "And," said T estness, clasping cifix in his hand, First Communion yes, I promised you, I grow up I teach other little trust in Him, the Toto kept his Christmas Day he was not working in study or pro generosity, he that pleased him neighbor. He priest, and obta superiors to begi at his heart since day. He took a established a ret most ignorant boy they spent three their First Comm same time some he was obliged to make room for sought among th to apprentice the never lost sight once been under father and the f little boys who word of kindness the cares and ha old age and wa saint by all w and many a hol into the influ Poveri," as he

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