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## ARMINE

BY CHRISTIAN REID.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was like a terrible evil dream to Egerton—that fearful scene through which he had passed—when he found himself again in Paris, shattered, bruised, and with a broken arm which it was necessary to submit to a surgeon at once. But this was not his first duty; his first was to dictate a few lines to D'Antignac and send them by his servant.

"I do not know," he said, after stating briefly all that had occurred, "where Mlle. Duchesne is to be found; but I would suggest that Mlle. d'Antignac should, if possible, go to her, since I am sure there are no lips from which she could better receive this sad and shocking news. I will see her as soon as she is able to receive me. If Mlle. d'Antignac sees her, may I beg that she will say this?"

But some time elapsed before Mlle. d'Antignac was able to see Armine. In the first place, it proved difficult to discover her whereabouts. At the apartment in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs no one was to be found. The concierge reported that even Madelon was gone and he did not know her address. Was she with Mlle. Duchesne? He shook his head; he did not know, but thought not. Madeleine went away one day with her father; Madelon did not leave until a day or two later, and although it was true that she might have gone to join mademoiselle, he did not think so.

"What am I to do?" said Helene when she went back to her brother.

"How am I to find this poor child?"

D'Antignac answered: "You can only wait. Sooner or later she will be heard of in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, and if you told the concierge to let you know whenever he had any tidings of her or of Madelon—"

"I told him that, of course, and emphasized it with the promise of reward for such tidings."

"Then nothing else remains to be done. You can only wait with such patience as you are able to command."

"Which is none at all when I think of her," said Helene in a tone full of distress. "What must she be suffering, alone—or worse than alone—my poor Armine!"

"She is suffering a great deal, no doubt," said D'Antignac; "but not even your presence and your sympathy could relieve her grief now. Let that be your comfort for not finding her. In the first agony of such a shock consolation is so impossible that it really matters little what influences surround the sufferer."

Helene shook her head. "I cannot think that," she said. "However much they are absorbed in grief, we must be conscious of sympathetic or unsympathetic surroundings. And, unfortunately, though we cannot tell what her present surroundings are, we may fear that they are very far from sympathetic."

"Perhaps, then, this fact may lessen her grief for the father who placed her in them."

"Ah!" said Helene, "it seems to me that, on the contrary, it would make it more bitter. How proudly, until the last time that she was here, she always dwelt upon her father's integrity of purpose! How often she spoke of his unselfishness and unvarying kindness to herself! And now—I do not see a ray of consolation to which she can turn."

"Of earthly consolation there is none for her," said D'Antignac sadly. "But her faith is strong. We must pray much for her."

Days passed without bringing them any tidings. The journals every morning were full of the fearful accident which had occurred, the additional particulars that each succeeding day brought to light, and the progress of the investigation into the cause of the disaster. Duchesne's death was undoubtedly the greatest sensation connected with the event. The radical press had columns upon columns of panegyric and lamentation for him; a grand civil funeral was decreed, by which his late associates strove at once to do honor to his memory and excite popular feeling in their own behalf; while the meeting to attend which he was on his way when the awful catastrophe happened was adjourned over for two days, and most of the brother delegates of the dead revolutionist

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stood around the grave in *Pere la Chaise* to which his mangled remains were consigned with mingled eulogy of the life and labors thus so mournfully and prematurely cut short, and mad denunciations of the existing order of things.

"But this is horrible!" said D'Antignac, dropping one of the papers he had been reading to the couch on which he lay. "Poor child! how will she endure all that she is compelled, I fear, to see and know of this madness?"

"It is indeed terrible for her," said Helene, turning, with mixed sensations of disgust and heart-sick sympathy for Armine, from the furious and blasphemous diatribes pronounced over the body of Duchesne, at which she, too, had been gazing. Looking up as she spoke, she saw that her brother's face, usually so serene, wore a more perturbed expression than she had seen on it before for years. She was almost startled to perceive how seriously disquieted he evidently was; and, rising at once, she said with decision:

"I will go again and see if I can hear anything about her. I think the concierge would surely have kept his word and informed me if he had learned her whereabouts; still, it will do no harm to try and gain some intelligence."

"Inquire of the concierge where Madelon might be heard of," said D'Antignac. "Even if she is not with Armine, and does not know where the poor child is, she may be useful in tracing her."

"Yes," said Helene quickly. "I remember now that Madelon has a sister, or some relative, whom she used to visit frequently. I will endeavor to find out where this person lives."

When she was gone D'Antignac put his hand under his pillow, and, drawing out his rosary, began to tell the beads, his countenance as he did so regaining its wonted peaceful look, though there was still sadness in the thoughtful gaze which wandered from its near surroundings to rest on the blue depths of sky far away. But this sadness did not last long. When, after comparatively speaking, a brief absence his sister returned disappointed from her quest, he looked up to her troubled and sorrowful countenance with a quiet, almost cheerful smile.

"We must be patient," he said. "Poor child! it is hard for her; but she is in the hands of God, and therefore safe."

"Yes," said Helene; "and yet, though I blame myself for it, I cannot but feel afraid for her. She is so young—so utterly alone! And where can she have been taken? Perhaps out of Paris? It seems that she left some days before her father started on his fatal journey, and that her luggage was carried with her."

"I am not afraid for her," said D'Antignac. "I have been thinking it all over while you were away. As for Duchesne himself, God have mercy on his soul; but so far as Armine is concerned, his death is the best thing that could possibly have happened for her. It has delivered her not only from outside dangers, the tyranny and persecution to which she would doubtless have been subjected—which, indeed, had already begun—but from the worse danger of interior strife; the constant battle between nature and conscience; the exquisite pain of being obliged to elect between antagonism to her father and unfaithfulness to God. The suffering is sharp now; but time will assuage that, and whatever her future life may prove, it is scarcely likely that it will be so painful as the past."

At this point in the conversation, and before Helene had time to reply, the door opened and a servant informed her that Mlle. Duchesne's maid wished to speak to her.

"Bring her into the *salon* at once, Cecile," Mlle. d'Antignac said eagerly, and hurried out to meet the welcome visitor. She remained away but a moment.

"I see that Madelon has brought good news," said D'Antignac, as she approached with the smile which her brilliant eyes and white teeth made so flashing.

"News that satisfies me, for the present at least," she answered. "The poor child has just returned to the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, and Madelon entreats me to go to her."

"Go, by all means, and at once, *ma sœur*," he said. "You will bring her back with you?"

"Of course, if I can. But I fear that it may not be easy to persuade her to come."

"Why?" he asked with some surprise.

"Madelon is, you know, a dull, uncommunicative creature, who has neither the will nor the power to express herself clearly, and I can only gather from the little she says that she is very uneasy about Armine."

"Mademoiselle is changed—mademoiselle is changed," was almost all that I could extract from her."

"Naturally such a blow as this, succeeding as it did great trouble of mind, must affect her sensibly," he said. "But I agree with you: I am satisfied for the present to know that she is safe and in Paris."

Mlle. d'Antignac had never been in the apartment in the Rue des Petits Champs before, and when Madelon opened the door of the small *salon* and ushered her in she almost shivered, so dreary and uninhabited did the place look; for now there was no cheerful fire burning, no fragrance of violets on the air, nothing of the atmosphere of home-life and refinement of taste, which had so pleased Egerton's fastidious

eye on the night when he first made the acquaintance of the Socialist and his daughter. Dismantled of all the graceful prettiness with which Armine had surrounded herself when its inmate, it was merely in appearance "an apartment to let," and Madelon, without pausing, crossed the floor, lifted the *portiere* which draped the entrance to what had been Duchesne's study, and motioned Mlle. d'Antignac to pass in.

There was something inexpressibly sad to Helene in the aspect of this room. It was evident that it remained just as its late owner had left it. Chairs were sitting about, the table wore that air of orderly disorder so characteristic of an intellectual worker; and at one side of this table, just opposite an empty arm chair that looked as if its occupant had risen from it but the moment before, sat Armine.

As Helene's eye fell on the girl she was struck with a sense of surprise. She had, even before Madelon's advent and report, naturally expected that Armine would be much affected by the terrible calamity which had befallen her—had expected, indeed, that she would be overwhelmed by grief. And Madelon had said that she was "changed, changed." But at a first glance there seemed no change at all to be observed. The girl was sitting in shadow, it is true, so that her face could be seen imperfectly only; but her attitude and air, were so natural and familiar, as she leaned back in her chair with hands clasped before her and eyes fixed in quiet thought, apparently, on the table, that Helene stood still gazing at her in momentarily increasing amazement.

Suddenly becoming conscious of the gaze, Armine lifted her eyes, and, perceiving the presence of her visitor, rose quietly to receive her.

"It is very good of you to come to me, dear Mlle. d'Antignac," she said, advancing; and after her usual affectionate greeting she led the way into the *salon*, seated Helene on a couch beside an open window, and stood before her while asking after D'Antignac.

Helene replied mechanically to the inquiry, for the broad light that now fell over the girl showed that Madelon had spoken truth. Armine was changed; that homely and familiar phrase, which is so expressive, rose to Helene's mind: "She does not look like herself."

Yet the alteration was so subtle, so intangible, that it was some little time before Mlle. d'Antignac could define in what it consisted. It was not that the always pale face was now absolutely bloodless, nor that the delicate features had that sharp chiselling in all their lines, but especially about the nostril, which the touch of suffering alone can give; such signs of grief as these are too ordinary to excite surprise. Voice and manner seemed thoroughly natural—quiet and subdued, but not more so than usual, Helene thought.

"Perhaps," she said to herself, "it is the absence of the emotion which is naturally to be expected that gives so strange an impression; but the instant afterwards she knew this could not be so. Of emotion actively expressed there was no trace whatever; yet it was impossible to look at Armine without feeling that the iron had entered her soul and was piercing it to the core."

After the question about D'Antignac's health had been asked and answered there was a momentary pause. Helene hesitated to allude to the death of Duchesne, and Armine sat silent, thought-absorbed apparently. But at length the former said carelessly: "You will come home with me, my child, will you not? Raoul and myself both wish it."

As Armine looked up to reply Helene saw where it was that the change lay. It was in the eyes and mouth.

"Thank you," she answered. "Yes, I will gladly come, since you are so kind as to let me; but not yet. I have to stay here for a while."

"But cannot you come with me now and return to-morrow? Raoul will be disappointed if I do not bring you back with me," said Helene persuasively.

"I wish I could go," the girl answered. "But I must remain here now; there is business to be attended to before I leave."

She pointed toward the room they had left, and went on in the same calm manner which seemed so unnatural under the circumstances.

"Dear Mlle. d'Antignac, I see that you are surprised at me. I am surprised at myself. I do not know what is the matter with me. I thought at first that I was stunned, and that that was the reason of my feeling so strangely. But there has been time for sensation to return, and it does not come. My heart seems dead. It has no sensation. I cannot even think steadily of what has happened. My thoughts wander off on trifles. I feel utterly indifferent about everything."

"You are stunned," said Helene. "It is with our hearts as with our bodies—a sudden and terrible shock paralyzes for a time." Then, as a neighboring clock struck the hour, which was later than she had been aware, she rose to go. As she took the girl's hand to say adieu a sudden rush of pity caused her to clasp the slender form in her arms and say warmly: "O my dear! I grieve that I can do nothing to comfort you. But Raoul—he surely can!"

Armine shook her head. "Even he can do nothing for me," she said. "Yet I would go to him, if I could. But there are people—men—to be here to-night. I must see them. And this—"

She touched her dress, and Helene for the first time noticed that this dress

was not black and said: "I should have thought of that. Let me go and see to it at once."

"You are very good," said Armine; "but it is needless. Madelon is attending to it."

"Then, my dear Armine, God be with you! I will see you again to-morrow, and will pray for you."

"Yes, pray for me," said Armine. "I cannot even pray for myself."

D'Antignac listened silently as his sister described her visit, nor did he speak for some minutes after she had concluded the narrative. Then he said with a sigh:

"She is in very deep waters. There is a terrible passage of suffering before her, and it may last long. But she has an heroic spirit, a pure heart—above all, a single intention. The last will sustain her against the despair that threatens to overwhelm her."

"Her impassiveness gives me a strange feeling of terror," said Helene. "But it is so unnatural. It is impossible that that a reaction must come. Looking at her face, I should not have been surprised to see her burst at any moment into convulsive raving."

Raoul shook his head. "That is not the danger I apprehend," he said. "I am afraid that her physical strength may become exhausted, and that she may sink into a low fever or congestion of the brain. By the way, did you tell her that Egerton wishes to know when she can see him?"

"Oh! I quite forgot his request. But it does not seem to me that it would be well to put any additional strain upon her just now. Don't you think Mr. Egerton ought to wait until she is better able to bear it?"

"No; that would only be to re-open the wound when it was beginning to close. A little more or less in the way of endurance does not matter much at present, while the capability of suffering is almost paralyzed. She ought to be told now everything connected with the accident which she is ever to know. And this message of her father's she must, of course, hear. Egerton called during your absence, and at my request promised to return this evening if he finds himself well enough to make the exertion. I hoped that she would be here, and that he might thus discharge himself of a duty which he evidently feels to be very oppressive, and at the same time get the interview over for her. Of course it must be a very painful one on both sides."

"How is his arm to-day?"

"The surgeon considers it to be going on favorably; but he says that his whole body is one huge bruise, which makes movement difficult and excessively painful."

Glancing up to Helene's face as he ceased speaking, D'Antignac read a thought in her eyes which brought a slight smile to his own. But he said seriously:

"How do we know that what appeared an idle whim, his tampering with Socialism and its exponents, may not prove to have been, if not providential, yet useful in its results? Useful as regards Armine's interests, at least; for I judge, from a few words which he dropped, that her father entrusted a message of great importance in connection with her future life to him. Now, if he had not accompanied Duchesne on this wild expedition, probably Duchesne would of died without having the opportunity of speaking. He survived the accident only about an hour, and all was confusion around. There was no one else near him in whom he could have reposed confidence."

"I hope," said Helene a little dryly, "that this message may not prove to be an attempt to exercise a posthumous tyranny over poor Armine."

TO BE CONTINUED.

### A Secular View.

From the New York Sun.

We are asked by a "Roman Catholic Old Fellow" whether he is compelled to leave the order of Old Fellows under the recent decree of the Pope against it. As an American citizen he can take his choice between the order and the Church; but as a Roman Catholic, he has not any choice. The decree of the Holy Office is of supreme authority, and he must cease to be an Old Fellow if he would remain in the Church. It is his "imperative duty to withdraw from that order, under penalty of being denied the sacraments." He cannot conceal his membership, or escape the judgment pronounced against it, or offer any plea in favor of retaining it. Rome has spoken in words that are irrevocable, and the voice of Rome is the fundamental law of Catholicity, the world over.

There are three societies condemned in the new decree—the Old Fellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Sons of Temperance—as other secret societies had been condemned in previous decrees.

This does not involve any limitation of the political, civil or natural rights of our "Roman Catholic Old Fellow" correspondent. It is purely a matter of religion, and of ecclesiastical discipline. The Church establishes the terms of Church membership, and these terms are inflexible.

Our correspondent's rights of American citizenship are in no way interfered with by the Papal decree. As a citizen he may join any society he pleases, but not as a Roman Catholic.

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## MARGARET OF ORLEANS.

The Story of a Daughter of Erin Beautifully Told.

"I wonder if it idealizes her?" We stand beside the statue of this famous woman, Margaret of New Orleans, and, after the manner of strangers, conjecture on what we for the first time see.

"Not at all," a voice answers in the soft southern tongue. "It looks just like her."

"Ah, thank you. You live here?" "I was born here; this is my home."

"You were here during the war and yellow fever and everything? and was Ben Butler so dreadful? and have you seen Cable?"

A nod answers each one of my young companion's impetuous queries.

"How delightful!" concludes my friend, but the lady shakes her head and taps her fan lightly on the girl's soft cheek and says musingly: "It did not seem as if I would live through it, but I have, and now comes one who calls my trials 'delightful.' How cruel!"

"Ah, pardon! But I was thinking of that charming man who wrote the delicious 'Mme. Delphine.' I was thinking how perfectly lovely it must be to live here and know him—and then to live in a city that has had such a history—it is so romantic. And can you tell us anything about Margaret?"

"This little space—'Margaret Place,' it is called—it is a pleasant spot to rest in."

With this invitation, given more in looks than in words, we seated ourselves near our new acquaintance on the settees in the little park. The perfume of March roses overhangs the city; we forget in its deliciousness the signs of decay that in portions of that quaint old town impart a penitence melancholy to its beauty. Near by us in the green grass is a pool set about with a low border of cactus; a mimic fort, with all its bristling thorn guns out and its blossoms floating from the ramparts, which are guarding from such fierceness only a lazy fleet of water lilies, under the shade of which there is a whirl of goldfish. A stone footbridge crosses the pool and spans the river of cactuses. It is a very odd and tasteful device, this pool; and the little park in which it is placed is unique in its way. There is nothing overdone, neither neglected. It is a well kept, refreshing, simple setting for the statue itself.

"She was a working woman—a servant here. When I first remember her I was living near here, and she was taking care of the cows in a stable that stood almost on the very spot where her statue stands now. She was working then for the Sisters of the asylum. She fed and milked their cows and sold milk in a cart about the city. She was a strange looking person—remarkable in her appearance. I think now as I recall her she had a broad forehead, serious eyes, a pleasant smile, a rather stout, stout figure. I do not suppose she ever in her life wore any dress better than a Guinea blue calico; she always wore heavy shoes; and a black straw bonnet trimmed with a neat band of black over the top. From my residence I could see her many times a day while she was at her stable work, or coming back and forth with her milk cans."

"What was her name? Her name was Margaret Haughey; she had been married, and at that time was a widow. Her husband and little child died just after she came to New Orleans; so we learned after she became famous. She was alone and poor in a strange country, and went to work in the stables for a living. Somehow, everybody liked Margaret; her smile was sweet and her words shrewd. The children called her Margaret, and she knew their names and answered their salutations along the street as she drove by in the milk cart."

"After some years Margaret had saved enough to buy a bit of ground that had on it a small bakery. The place was sold for a trifle, but now Margaret was in royal trim—a landowner and a manufacturer; for she opened the shop and began bread and pie-making for the neighbors. Presently there was a large bakery built; soon bread carts were running over the city bearing the words, 'Margaret's Bakery.' It became the fashion to buy at Margaret's place. During war, pestilence and disaster Margaret's fires were never out, and the delicious rolls kept up their weight and quality, no matter what else in life failed. Then she began running her free bread carts during the fever panic. No one went hungry who was within sound of her cart wheels. From that time on no one need go hungry in New Orleans—those too poor to buy were given a loaf fresh and white as the best, and it was given heartily with a 'God bring thee better times.' There was no distinction in Margaret's favors. She gave to white and black, of any church or none. 'Are you hungry?' that is all that was necessary. 'Here is bread; take it with God's blessing.' There have been in this city bread days which seemed as if God and everybody had failed us but Margaret—days when she almost literally fed the city. During the yellow fever panic Margaret began her noble work of taking the children from the homes of death and putting them into a house under good care, supporting them herself in every particular. Soon the orphan asylum grew into many; the dozens of her little charges, numbered by hundreds—and at the time of her death thousands. At the gate of every orphan asylum in the city Margaret's bread cart, with its smoking rolls, was seen daily; at