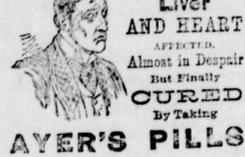


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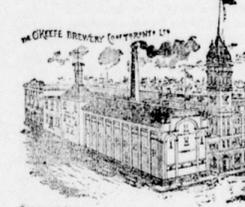
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ARMINIE.

BY CHRISTIAN REID. CHAPTER XXVII.

And so it came to pass that Egerton saw nothing of Arminie before he started with Duchesne to Brussels.

The Socialist looked pleased to see him, and held out his hand, saying, with that peculiar charm of manner which Egerton had felt from the first of their acquaintance.

They took their tickets, took also their places in a first class carriage, which they had happily to themselves, and so rolled out of Paris in the soft grey mist of early morning.

How well Egerton remembered afterwards the appearance of everything—the suburbs through which they passed, the eminence of Montmartre, crowned by the great unfinished Church of the Sacred Heart, which the Republicans are so anxious to demolish, and then the open country with its fields and poplars!

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On the well regulated railways of France accidents do not often occur; but no human foresight can guard against all chances, prevent all carelessness.

There was a shock that threw both men off their feet, a convulsion, as it were, of every atom of matter in the long line of swaying carriages, then a crash and a scene of wild terror, confusion, and horror baffling description.

There was another pause, which Egerton did not break. He feared by a word to exhaust the little strength which Duchesne possessed, and which he now perceived was necessary for some essential statement.

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had no idea, it was with a sense of physical pain such as he had never known before in his life.

Then he found that he had never removed a little from the debris of the wrecked train, and that he was lying on a stretch of green turf, with some one—probably a surgeon—bending over him.

"Ah! that is where you are hurt," the former said quickly, as the young man opened his eyes.

"Poor fellow!" said Egerton, with a pang of sympathy to which these commonplace words gave but scant expression.

That it was Duchesne—that this shattered, mutilated wreck of humanity could be the stately man he had last seen—Egerton for a moment could not realize.

"So you are safe!" Duchesne said feebly. "Forgive me for having brought you into this."

"There is nothing to forgive," answered Egerton quickly. "Who could foretell anything so fearful? And I have fared better than others—far better, my friend, than you, to whom I would gladly give my safety."

"No," said Duchesne; and if he spoke grimly it was because it was only by a terrible effort that he could subdue his pain sufficiently to speak at all.

"It is—of—Arminie," he gasped faintly. Here Egerton, thinking to spare him, interposed with an assurance that he would charge himself with the future welfare of Mile. Duchesne; but the words had scarcely passed his lips when the dying Socialist answered with a tone of pride:

"My daughter is not dependent on the kindness of strangers. If she needed charity the comrades of her father would gladly care for her. But she has an inheritance which is hers by right, and this she must claim."

There was another pause, which Egerton did not break. He feared by a word to exhaust the little strength which Duchesne possessed, and which he now perceived was necessary for some essential statement.

daughter of the people. She concealed him in one of the sea-caves on the Breton coast, supplied him with food, finally arranged for his escape to England, and fled with him.

Again he paused, and it seemed almost impossible that he could continue save by a superhuman effort. Yet, as Egerton thought—forgetting his own suffering in the sharp tension of the moment—if he did not continue, where was there any point in this narrative on which to found a claim?

"It was at Marigny—when I was there a few weeks ago—that at last I found the proof. The son of the servant of the vicomte my grandfather is living there.

"But why have you left this for her to do? Why did you not claim it when you learned the truth?" asked Egerton.

"I am a Socialist!" said Duchesne, with a chord of inexpressible pride vibrating through the tones of his voice.

"What do you fear?" asked Egerton, as the failing voice ceased. "If it is anything in which I can be of service to you, I promise to execute your wishes to the utmost extent of my power."

"Never mind about me," said Egerton almost impatiently. "Speak of yourself. Tell me what it is that you fear, what I can do for you."

"I fear for Arminie, in whose hands this great trust will be placed," said Duchesne. "Will she use it as I wish? I doubt, for she has fallen of late under fatal influences.

Duchesne did not answer for a moment. Then he said, faintly and with great difficulty: "It is not possible; I can only leave it to her. But you may tell her that it is my dying wish, my dying command, that she will not marry the Vicomte de Marigny."

"Egerton felt his heart give a bound—probably of surprise—at those words. Then he said involuntarily: "Does she think of it?"

"No," Duchesne answered, "but I suspect that he does—at least I am sure that he will when he knows. But even from my grave I forbid it. Remember that."

A BACKWOODS HERO.

Upon the northern shore of Lake Superior smuggled in between sun-tipped hills, is a small village, known best for its lumbering and shipping industries.

On this neck of land are scattered a few houses, all inhabited by lovers of the sea and nature's work, and surrounded by dense groves of growing pines.

She walked slowly towards a small dock that floated unsteadily out of the bay. A flat-bottomed boat, with a splinter like mast and no bowsprit, bumped against the dock now and then with a soft rubbing and nudging that was as soothing as a mother's evening lullaby.

"It looks pretty threatening, seems to me," the girl murmured to herself. "This here bay is always ready to cut up its monkeyshines just when folks want it to behave itself."

"The next moment she was joined by a stalwart young man with the wholesome appearance of a combination farmer and sailor.

"I say, Meg," began Jim, as they plunged through the towers of foam and rocked and swayed in the billows, "don't you think you're mighty hard on a fellow? Three years is a long time, and time does change folks and things so."

"I suppose my reasons are silly," Meg answered slowly and with irritating deliberation. "But you see, that year at Miss Banker's spoiled me. Even if I was nothing but a parlour-maid I got some ideas in my head that stick like so many burrs."

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two were being toyed with and tossed around like helpless straws.

"Come here with me," Jim cried hoarsely, as he reached for the shivering bundle with the flying hair and frightened eyes.

The boat was careering like a live creature maddened with pain. The water dashed over the little dory that was scudding to the shore at an unprecedented speed.

He folded his strong arms around the small girl and he pressed her hands fondly, and whispered words of hope and courage.

"Tell me just once that you do care for me just a little bit and that you won't back out of marrying me at the end of three years," he said.

"I can't promise for sure, Jim. I can't even now. I'm so frightened, I know we're both going to die. The waves never scared me before."

Like a crowd of stupid, senseless beings, they gazed and wrung their hands. Then they saw a tall form raise itself up in the stern of the boat.

Then he sank and was seen no more until the next day, when his crushed and mangled body floated gently on the now restful waves, which finally deposited his remains at the foot of the little dock where the dory had always tugged and pulled at its anchor ropes.

And this is the reason of a woman, considered clever and gifted by the world's critic, is always sad and heart-sick when she hears the moaning of the winds, or the roaring of beating, restless water. Fame and fortune have come to her.

She is no longer a crude, uncultured creature with flying black hair and rough fingers. The world bows down in reverence to her, for her stories are read by thousands and her pictures received most favorably by all.

At these times her friends depart and murmur soft words of pitying tenderness among themselves.

At these times her friends depart and murmur soft words of pitying tenderness among themselves.

The February Devotion.

The present month, which Catholic piety consecrates to the veneration of the Holy Family, annually introduces a devotion that ought to commend itself warmly to and obtain a ready observance in every Christian home.

Our familiar relations ought to constitute the chiefest of our joys and pleasures. Home should be for all the dearest and happiest place on earth; and while, fortunately, it is that for the generality of mankind, there are unhappily too many homes of which no such assertion can be truthfully made.

There would be none such though, if the February devotion to the Holy Family obtained the universal observance which should be accorded to it. More than that, the joy of the happiest home upon earth is capable of being vastly enhanced by the practice of this beautiful piety.

Put that declaration to the test by practicing this month a greater devotion to the Holy Family, and see if such practice will not sensibly increase the charms and joys of our own homes.

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