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ARMINE.

BY CHRISTIAN REID.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was quite true that Egerton, in a spirit of adventure and curiosity, had accepted Duchesne's invitation to accompany him to Brussels. "Of course," the latter had said in giving it, "you will not hear anything of the business of the meeting; but you will see many of the most famous leaders of this great movement, and you cannot fail to be impressed by personal contact with them."

Egerton, who understood thoroughly the object of the invitation, had himself no doubt of being impressed, but considerable doubt whether this impression would take the form Duchesne desired. Nevertheless it was an opportunity, an experience, which he could not let slip, though he hoped the intelligence of it might not come to Armine's ears. "For she would not understand," he said to himself; and then he was suddenly struck as with the force of a new sensation by the thought: "Why should she take so much interest—why should she care so much — whether or not I yield to her father's influence?"

It was a question which it had not occurred to him to ask before, so entirely had he accepted Armine's interest as a part of Armine's self — as something which did not conform to ordinary rules, but was the more simple and charming for that. And it has been already said that he had not much of the vanity of his sex, so that he was not inclined to interpret that interest as a man of coarser nature might have interpreted it. It had been so directly expressed, it had (he felt) so little to do with him personally, that he had accepted it simply as the manifestation of the girl's strong feeling on the subject which had most deeply colored her life. Yet now, in his hope that this Brussels journey might not come to her knowledge, he was startled into asking himself whether such interest was indeed entirely impersonal—if he was merely a brand which she wished to snatch from the socialistic burning, or one who had been fortunate enough to excite in her something of more than ordinary interest.

However that might be, he felt quite sure of the interest which she had excited in *him*—an interest deeper (he said to himself) than any he had ever known before. "Falling in love," in the conventional sense, seemed commonplace and poor compared to this emotion blent of so many subtle elements—admiration, interest, pity and a sense as if she could give something of which he stood in need, some spiritual light or moral strength. But he knew too much of the human heart in general and of his own in particular to be certain that this sentiment, fine and delicate as it was, possessed either endurance or strength. "I was delighted to see her," he thought, recalling the day when he had suddenly come upon her graceful presence by the fountain in the old palace garden, "but was it not as I might have been glad to open again a book that had fascinated me, or an interesting study that I had not exhausted? And have not the days always come when I have exhausted every such study? Yes, they are right—Winter and Miss Bertram, and D'Antignac too, no doubt, if he spoke what he thought—when they declare that I have no strength or conviction of feeling. The enthusiasm to espouse a cause, and the passion to love a woman, seem alike lacking in me!"

Notwithstanding this conclusion, however, it was interest in Armine — the recollection of their conversion in the Luxembourg Garden, and the desire to know more that was going on in her mind and soul — which moved him to seek her father again, else he would probably have suffered that enthusiastic Socialist to pass out of his life. He called at the apartment in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, saw Duchesne and received the invitation to accompany him to Brussels, but did *not* see Armine. There was no mention of her beyond Duchesne's brief reply to his hope that she was well: he was not asked to enter the *salon*, and some instinct that all was not well between father and daughter prevented him from begging to do so.

It was an instinct well founded, for in truth father and daughter had never in their lives been so far apart in feeling and sympathy as they were at this time. Armine's foreboding of some deeply seated change in her father was more than realized. Since the day at Marigny he had never been "like himself," and instead of the kind and indulgent father she had known all her life he was now suspicious, harsh, and severe. She had reluctantly spoken of this change to the D'Antignacs; but it was greater than she was willing to acknowledge, and had become more marked since she parted from them. For when, after much mental struggle and debate, she had taken D'Antignac's note to the priest to whom it was addressed, she found all that he had promised of instruction, comfort, and encouragement; but she was told that before she could be received into the Church she must acquaint her father with her intention. The girl knew what she would bring upon herself, but it was not in her to quail from anything in the form of a duty. She told her father of her resolution. And then the storm burst

It was a storm such as she had never known before, such as she had hardly conceived possible. She had been aware that Duchesne regarded the Church with animosity, but she had not classed him with those who are so virulent in their hatred that there is only one explanation possible of the spirit which animates them. She had supposed that he condemned and disliked that which was the chief bulwark against the spread of ideas to which he had devoted his life, but she could not have dreamed that he was capable of that unreason of blind rage which French atheism betrays whenever it touches upon the question of religion. It was quite true that she had not lived so long among the professed disciples of freedom of thought without learning what freedom of thought means from their point of view—to wit, freedom for themselves and intolerance for every one else—but the loyality of the girl's nature had asserted itself in this, as in all else where her father was concerned. She had refused to believe that he could be so narrow in the name of liberty, so tyrannical in the name of freedom, as others were around him.

But incredulity was no longer possible. The proud faith in which she had lived—faith in his reasonableness and nobleness, however mistaken it might be—lay shattered at her feet; and it is not too much to say that a great part of her life lay shattered with it. For this faith had sustained the affection for her father which was the strong centre of her existence. To spare him pain she had been almost ready to deny her God—at least by such passive form of denial as lies in not acknowledging—and now she felt as if it were sharpest punishment that with his own hand he demolished the ideal she had loved.

For that ideal had little in common with the man who in violent words forbade her ever to approach a priest again, who spoke of religion in terms of bitter hatred, and told her that henceforth she could be trusted no longer, but would be placed under strict surveillance. "For I find that you have had too much freedom," he said. "I forgot too easily that folly and deception make up the character of woman. But I will take care that you see no more of those who have taught you to array yourself against me, and to betray, as far as lies in your power, that cause of freedom which is dearer to me than my heart's blood. We shall leave Paris soon; until then I will place you with the wife of one of my friends, requesting that she will exercise over you the closest watchfulness."

This meant, Armine felt sure, a species of imprisonment; and she was not mistaken. Even more violent and intolerant (if such a thing were possible) than the men are the women who array themselves under the banner of free-thought. And such a woman was the one with whom her father placed her—a woman against whom every instinct of nature and her taste revolted. But she could do nothing save submit. Even appeal, she felt, would be useless, and she made no attempt to change or soften her father's resolution. She was only able before leaving his house to send a little note to the priest, which the latter took to D'Antignac—a few pathetic words saying that she had followed his counsel, and that the result was what she had feared: her father, deeply incensed, had forbidden her to see him again, and to enforce his command had removed her to stricter guardianship.

"My poor Armine!" said D'Antignac when he read these lines. "My heart aches for her. I know well what she is suffering."

"It is a great privilege to have something to suffer for God," said the priest quietly. "This trial will do her no harm, but much good, if she is made of the stuff I fancy her to be."

"It would be difficult to fancy better stuff than she is made of," said D'Antignac. "If occasion tries her you will find that her soul is heroic in its temper."

"I was very much impressed with her," said the priest. "Even without your letter I think I should have been. One who sees much of human nature must—unless very unobservant—learn to judge character by apparently trifling signs. One of the things which struck me in Mlle. Duchesne was that she said no more than was necessary of herself. But in all that she did say she showed remarkably clear intellect and very fine feeling."

"I suppose I am something of an enthusiast about Armine," said D'Antignac, smiling. "But I am sure that no one in the world knows her better than I do—indeed, I doubt if any one knows her so well—and my opinion is that she belongs to the highest and finest type of character, to that order of great souls for whom God has special uses."

Then a gentleman who was looking over a paper at a window glanced up and said: "What do you take those uses to be?"

"Ah!" said D'Antignac, "that I do not pretend to be able to tell. If I did I should probably make a great mistake. But you, Gaston will agree with me that Armine Duchesne is no ordinary person."

The Vicomte de Marigny—for it was no other than he—laid down his paper and came forward before answering. Then he said quietly:

"My acquaintance with Mlle. Duchesne is very slight, but I certainly think she is no ordinary person. You know"—he hesitated for an instant—"I saw her down in Brittany. Did she tell you that?"

"Yes," D'Antignac replied. "She mentioned it as one reason—or a least one apparent reason—for a great change in her father. It seems that he was never the same to her after he saw her speaking to you at Marigny."

"Poor girl!" said the Vicomte. "I am sorry, then, that I addressed her. I only did so in order to show her that I did not identify her with her father. It is perhaps necessary to explain, M. l'Abbe," he added, turning to the priest, "that her father—the well-known Socialist Duchesne—was in Brittany for the purpose of defeating my election, if possible."

"If one may judge by the maiority which returned you, M. le Vicomte, he might have spared himself the trouble," said the priest, smiling.

"Brittany is always faithful," said the vicomte.

"Yet even in faithful Brittany was there not an attempt upon your life made?" asked the other.

The vicomte shrugged his shoulders.

"A trifling affair," he said. "I am quite sure that the perpetrators were not Bretons. A clumsy affair, too. It was the night after the election, and I was sitting in my study writing, when I heard stealthy steps beneath my window. Thanks to a friendly warning, I had a weapon near me, and I quietly laid my hand on it. The next moment something like a bomb was thrown through the open window and fell at my feet. It was instinct rather than thought which made me snatch it up and hurl it out again. It exploded when it touched the ground, as it had been meant to explode when it first landed at my feet; and it is needless to say that if it had done so I should not be talking to you now. The moment that the detonation was over I rushed to the window and fired at the figure of a man whom I could plainly see making off with great haste. But I presume that my shot did not strike him, since no one was found when the servants, who hastily gathered, searched the grounds. *Voila tout!*"

"Was no further attempt made?" asked the priest.

"None, although I remained at Marigny for several days after. I had no business to detain me, but was simply determined that the instigators of the attempt should not fancy that they had frightened me."

"Whom do you suppose the instigators to have been?"

"Oh! the secret societies that I have so oftened denounced; there can be no doubt of that. They do me honor by esteeming me a dangerous opponent."

Then the conversation was diverted to the political situation, and it was not until the priest had taken his departure that D'Antignac said to his companion:

"You spoke of a friendly warning, Gaston; may I ask who gave it?"

The Vicomte did not answer. Instead he put out his hand and took up Armine's note, which had fallen on the couch and been left there by the abbe, to whom it was addressed. He opened it and read it over silently—a proceeding excusable on the ground that he had already heard its contents read aloud and discussed. Then he drew from his pocket another note, which he placed beside it and offered to D'Antignac.

There was some difference in the writing of the two—a difference due to the nervous haste and agitation with which the first had been produced—but even with this difference it was sufficiently evident that the same hand had written both. D'Antignac, at least, felt not an instant's doubt. He started and said in a tone of deep feeling:

"It was like her; but what it must have cost her, my poor, brave Armine!"

"I never doubted that it came from her," said the vicomte; "yet my certainty had no proof until now. I had, of course, never seen a line of her writing before."

But D'Antignac, with his eyes still on the note, could only repeat again what was so often on his lips, "My poor Armine!" Then after a pause he looked at the vicomte. "If you knew her as well as I do," he said, "every word of this would be eloquent for you. You would understand the struggle which it must have cost her to write it."

"I think I understand," said the other. "I cannot possibly know her as you do, but I know her—somewhat. How could one look in her eyes and not know her somewhat? And this note"—he held out his hand for it—"brought me another message than that which it bears on its face: a message of a gentle heart, of a brave soul, of a nature that could not stand by and see wrong done unmoved, but that, even at the cost of bringing blame where blame was not due, felt bound to send a warning that might save a life"

"She is all that," said D'Antignac, looking at him a little keenly; "but it is strange that you should have learned so much of her on so slight an acquaintance."

"It *is* strange," said the vicomte, as if he were answering his own thought as well as the words of the other, "but it is a curious fact that one learns more of some people at a glance than one learns of others from the acquaintance of a lifetime. Mlle. Duchesne's character is very sympathetic. But what first probably excited my interest in her was the consciousness in my mind of the unacknowledged tie of blood between us."

"How did you discover that?" asked D'Antignac

"I have always known that my granduncle left a son who called himself Duchesne, and who gave the family some annoyance by asserting that he was the legitimate heir, though he could not prove the marriage of his parents. I might not, however, have been aware that the Socialist leader was *his* son but for the fact that the latter was at Marigny once—several years ago—to see a man, the son of my granduncle's confidential servant, from whom he hoped, no doubt, to obtain information."

"And failed?"

"*Cela va sans dire.* What could not be proved at the time was hardly likely to be susceptible of proof at this late date."

"And this fact," said D'Antignac, "the cloud upon his father's birth, has do doubt not only embittered him against the order to which he does *not* belong, but also against you, who hold what he believes to be his inheritance."

"He cannot possibly believe that," said the vicomte, "since there is not a shred of proof that his grandparents were married."

"He may not believe it, but none the less he feels injured, you may be sure. It is almost invariably the attitude of those who have suffered in this way. It also accounts for his harshness to his daughter when he saw her speak to you."

"Did she know or suspect the cause of his harshness?"

"No. She spoke of it with simple wonder, unable to account for what seemed to her an extent of prejudice simply incomprehensible."

"Then I suppose that I must never speak to her again, unless I meet her here."

"You are not likely to meet her," said D'Antignac. "Her father has forbidden her to see us—chiefly, if not altogether, because she first met you here."

The vicomte looked startled. "I am sorry—I am very sorry," he said. "But I have nothing with which to blame myself."

"Nor have I anything with which to blame you," said the other, "except, perhaps, a little want of thought. Knowing the father to be what he is, I do not think that, in your place, I would have spoken to her at Marigny—or, at least, I should have been content with a mere salutation."

"It was hardly more," said the vicomte, in the tone of one who feels called upon to justify himself. "And her father was not with her. She was standing at the church door, and I had just left the presbytere. What was more natural than that I should have exchanged a few words with her, partly from courtesy, and partly, I confess, because she has always attracted me?"

D'Antignac smiled. "The last reason," he said, "is a strong one—especially since you are not very easily attracted."

"Far from it," said De Marigny. "It is my misfortune, or perhaps my good fortune, to be insensible to many charms which other men feel. But a face so sensitive and so poetic as Mlle. Duchesne's I have seldom seen, and as seldom have I heard a voice so like a chord of music."

"It may be as well that you are not likely to hear it again," said D'Antignac with some significance. "There can hardly be two people in the world placed farther apart than you and the daughter of Duchesne the Socialist."

TO BE CONTINUED.

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The *Delineator* for March is the great spring number, and in our opinion is the finest issue of this popular magazine that has yet been published. All the departments are unusually well filled, and the fashions have an increased value through being the first authoritative pronouncement for the spring models. The chief feature of the literary matter is a most comprehensive chapter on Cards; their Uses and Etiquette, by Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, this being the first of a series entitled the Social Code. There is also a very interesting first article on the Experiences of Life at a Training School for Nurses, with an Introduction by Mrs. Frederic Rhinelander Jones. Woman as a Musician is the subject of a "Conversation" between Edith M. Thomas and Dr. S. R. Elliott, to which is appended a delightful bit of verse by Miss Thomas. Mrs. Carrie M. Dearborn, ex Principal of the Boston Cooking School, writes of the Teaching of Cookery as an Employment for Women, and Josephine Adams Rathbone of A Girl's Life and work at the University at Michigan. Mrs. Longstree has an instructive paper on the Care of the Hands and Feet. Mrs. Maude C. Murray contributes another chapter to her interesting series on the Relations of Mother and Son, and Mrs. Witherspoon continues her entertaining gossip in Around the Tea Table. Pleasurable and profitable employment is found in Burnt Work—H. K. Forbes, Venetian Iron Work—J. Harry Adams, and Crepe and Tissue Papers — Tillie Roome Littell. The housewife will find much of value in the care of Silver, Cookery for the month and hints on serving Lemons, and the fancy worker will appreciate the new designs in Knitting, Netting, Tatting, etc.

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A LEGEND OF BOHEMIA.

The Midnight Mass in the Weird Castle of Kunzenburg.

BY F. P. KOPTA.

It had been one of those beautiful days that we sometimes have in Bohemia in September. The sky had been dark blue all day, and the sunlight had all the brilliancy of summer, but the air, when it fanned our cheeks, brought with it the peculiar chill of autumn, and I had been reminding my young companion of the vanity of earthly joys, and how soon we, too, would be like the withered leaves that we crushed under our feet.

It was near sunset, and the western sky was all ablaze with red and yellow clouds when I first saw the ruins of the castle Kunzenburg, near the town of the same name. It stood on a hill, as most of the castles of Bohemia do, surrounded by almost impenetrable forests. We had been wandering all day, soliciting alms for our convent with little success, and were worn out with climbing mountains, and losing ourselves in the dense forests, to receive at the end a few coppers from some poor charcoal burner or lonely shepherd, whom I pray God will reward. Wearily my young companion (it was his first journey and he was a mere youth) and I trod the rough mountain path tnat led to the small town. We were footsore and faint with hunger, having eaten nothing since morning, and the people stared at us strangely; perhaps they had never seen any Minorites before, but they showed us gladly where the mayor of the town lived.

He was a pious man—God give him Paradise! When he caught sight of our white habits he bade us welcome in the name of the Lord, and placed black rye bread, with eggs and cheese—the best he had in the house—before us. As we sat at the table and feasted, we spoke of many things, and among others I asked if the lords of the castle were charitable, and if it was likely they would look upon us with favor; that our convent was exceedingly poor, and the prior had been forced to send us to solicit alms from the faithful.

"O Reverend Father," said our host, crossing himself devoutly, "the castle yonder has not been inhabited for half a century. Neither do the lords of the manor reside with us. Outwardly it looks stately enough, but within it is desolation."

"And why do they not repair it, my son? It seems a noble building; are the lords so wealthy as to let such a castle fall into ruins, or is it the other way, and poverty prevents their repairing it?"

"Neither, Reverend Father; it is haunted."

"Haunted!" said I, crossing myself. "And who haunts it?"

"That is the trouble; no one can find out; many a holy man has exercised the castle, but no one has succeeded in bringing peace."

"This is most strange," said I. "The evil one be far from us! And how is it haunted?"

"Strange noises are heard, as though armed men were carousing in the halls; and when one goes to see, behold, there is nothing! Then there are lights, and some of the villagers, stealing wood, or laying traps in the forest, have told me they heard shrieks, and some would even have it that they had heard strange forms flying through the air, leaving a blue path behind them, and a smell of sulphur. Thou knowest, Reverend Father, people always make more of what they see or hear than is necessary; but things must be bad enough without all this, for the lords could not live in the castle—had to remove elsewhere, and every time that they had nearly sold it to some nobleman, something turned up to prevent them; sometimes it was this, sometimes that; but the long and the short of it was that they could not sell it, and there it stands a warning to Christians till to-day."

"Ah!" said the mayor's wife, as she cleared the table. "What a loss it is to the town, your reverence. How many fat geese and ducks I could have sold in the castle for good money, let alone the brave weddings and christenings! Many a holy man has the town besought to try to deliver the castle, but none were equal to the task."

"Friends," I said, rising from the table, "I will go to that castle, even now, and deliver those tormented souls or die in the undertaking. My son," I said, turning to the youth at my side, "you will accompany me in so laudable a work?"

Great was the astonishment of the mayor and his wife. At first they tried to dissuade me, pointing out the mishaps of the way, and the danger that might beset me; but I was determined to rescue those precious souls from the evil one, and would not be persuaded. When the mayor and his wife saw that it was useless to speak further with me they set about getting the necessary things for saying Mass; they were stored in their house for safety, as the priest came over from another town, and the church was old and in bad repair.

When everything was ready they called their servants to accompany us and help carry the things; but these flatly refused to move a step. And when the mayor abused them for cowardly knaves, they said they had been hired out to serve people, Christians like themselves, but not to run into the clutches of the evil one, and perhaps lose their souls. The mayor cursed, and the good wife scolded, but I said:

"Peace, peace! I and the youth will go alone. Not many things are necessary, nor are they heavy. Com-