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ARMINIE.

BY CHRISTIAN REID.

CHAPTER XXV. (CONTINUED).

It was, therefore, without any of the fears which beset a timid lover that Mr. Talford weighed the pros and cons of freedom and matrimony. The first was the good of many years—proved, enjoyed, tested and prized; the other an untried experiment, promising something to one desiring novelty, but also threatening much to one desiring change.

It was unoccupied; and while his card was taken to Miss Bertram, he walked about the room, observing idly the variety of articles which filled it. But suddenly he paused to look at a picture that he had never seen before. It was the photograph of a singularly handsome man, who wore a uniform which struck him at first as entirely unfamiliar, but which he presently recognized as that of the Papal army.

He turned, they shook hands, and after the first commonplaces of greeting were over it was natural that she should say, with a smile:

"What do you think of the picture you were examining when I came in?"

"It is the likeness of a handsome man," he answered carelessly. "The original, I presume, is the M. d'Antignac of whom I have had the pleasure of hearing a good deal."

"Yes; a photograph taken when he was in Rome. His sister gave it to me, and I consider it a treasure; though I would rather have one of him as he is now."

"But I have been under the impression that there is very little left of him—not enough to photograph."

"Do you remember the story of the lady who, hearing that her lover had been shot to pieces in battle, said that she would marry him if there was enough of him left to hold his soul?" asked Miss Bertram.

"Your story," said Mr. Talford, with a smile, "reminds me that I heard it suggested only yesterday that you are the victim of a grande passion for this interesting gentleman."

"I suppose Laura made the suggestion," observed Miss Bertram quietly.

"So I presume," said the gentleman; "and I confess I should like very much to know what your idea is."

"Should you?" said Miss Bertram, smiling a little. "Pardon me if I say I think you are mistaken. I don't think you would care for my opinion or that of any one else on such a subject—the last I can imagine of interest to you."

"This was not very encouraging; but a man of the world is not easily discouraged, and after a moment Talford said:

"Why have you conceived such an opinion of my insensibility?" "Do you consider that insensibility?" she asked. "I thought you would consider it simply good sense."

"I certainly consider it good sense not to fall too readily into grand passions, which, generally speaking, are grand follies," he replied; "but nevertheless I should like to hear your definition of such a passion."

"I am afraid that I do not know enough, nor have even thought enough of it, to venture on such a definition," she answered; "and probably I could not improve on yours—a grand folly! All feeling is folly—to those who do not share it."

Mr. Talford did not care to confess how nearly this was his own opinion. He felt that such an admission would not be a very auspicious opening for a suit in which the heart is supposed to play a prominent part. So he observed:

"And yet feeling is necessary." Sibyl looked at him with the smile still shining in her eyes. "You have discovered that?" she said. "Yes, I think we may not only say that feeling is necessary, but that the degree of feeling of which a man is capable is generally the measure of his worth."

"We live by admiration, hope and love."

"Do we?" said Talford, unable to

repress the scepticism of his tone. "It strikes me that we live by much more material means, and that, though admiration, hope and love are very good things in their place, they are not at all essential to our existence."

"I should say that depended upon whether you consider our existence to be animal or spiritual," replied Miss Bertram; "or, rather, since it is both, on which you consider the most important of the two."

"Rather a difficult question, inasmuch as no one has yet proved where the animal ends and the spiritual begins," answered Talford, not unwilling to evade more direct reply. "But I beg that you will not misunderstand me. If admiration, hope and love are not essential to our existence, they certainly enrich and give it value."

"As luxuries that are desirable, but can be dispensed with," said Miss Bertram. "I don't think I can admit that. On the contrary, I believe that they are vital elements in our life. I can answer for myself that if I find nothing to admire—that is, nothing to look up to—I feel life to be not only empty and worthless, but disgusting. Think of being doomed to believe that the meanness and littleness of which we are conscious in ourselves are simply duplicated all around us, that no one rises higher, and that there is nothing whatever above us! Why, it is the most horrible of all mental nightmares! Yet there are people in the world who not only accept but who cultivate such a belief."

This being the belief on which her listless whole life was based, it may be imagined that he felt inclined to reply as Talleyrand did to Madame de Remusat: "Ah! what a very woman you are, and how very young." But he contented himself with smiling as he said:

"I am quite sure that you will never cultivate such a belief, and I should be sorry to see it forced on you."

"I have felt sometimes as if it were forced on me," she said; "and it is from that my knowledge of M. d'Antignac has delivered me."

"Do you mean," he asked, "that you have found so much to admire in M. d'Antignac?"

"I have not only found so much to admire in him," she answered, "but he has raised me from the level on which I was sitting, to believe again in possibilities of nobleness. I was trying to believe in such possibilities when I met him, but it was a desperate and failing effort. She paused a moment, then added quickly: "I had begun to feel as if your philosophy of life, Mr. Talford, might be the true one after all. But it was like the taste of dust and ashes in its bitterness. If I felt as you do—that is, if I felt as you talk—I should be the most miserable of creatures."

"The presumption is, therefore, that I should find myself the most miserable of creatures," Talford answered quietly; "but, on the contrary, I fancy that there are few people who derive more satisfaction from existence than I do. My aspirations are limited to things within the range of my senses, and I expect nothing more from life than I am certain that it is able to men."

"I have never in my life seen any one who gave me less the idea of a dreamer than M. d'Antignac," she said. "If you saw him you would never apply such a term to him."

"The only reason why I could possibly desire to see M. d'Antignac would be to discover what you find so attractive in him," said Talford, who began to feel that Laura's warning had not been so preposterous as he imagined.

"In that case you might discover nothing," said Sibyl. "For, as I remarked a little while ago, whatever we are not in sympathy with seems to us folly."

There was a moment's pause. Then Talford said quietly, but with a tone and manner not to be misunderstood: "I should like so to be in sympathy with you on all points."

The young lady flushed a little, but answered lightly: "You are very kind, but before you could attain such sympathy I fear that one or the other of us would have to be made over again; and I cannot think that it would be a pleasant process, that of being made over. Happily there is no need to try it. We can be very good friends as friends go, with sympathy on some points and toleration on all."

"I have always thought moderation a virtue," said Talford, "and have flattered myself that when I could not obtain what I wanted I was able to content myself with what I could get; but I am not sure that my philosophy will stand the test you propose. Very good friends as friends go—I am afraid, Miss Bertram, that will not satisfy me."

"Very good friends, then, without the clause," said she. "I think you will be unreasonable if you are not satisfied with that. At least, going on quickly, 'it is all I can offer; and since you have been good enough to compliment me on being a woman of the world, let me suggest that our conversation has wandered into a region where people of the world can hardly

feel at home. Let us leave sympathies and sentiments and talk of more practical things—horses, pictures, music, or what they are saying on the boulevards. And here"—as the door opened—"comes mamma to offer the needed inspiration—a cup of tea."

But instead of Mrs. Bertram the opening door disclosed the white capstrings of Valentine, the maid, who announced "M. Egerton," and then drew back to admit that gentleman.

It is probable that Sibyl had never before welcomed him with such sincere cordiality, and it is also probable that Talford was not sorry to see him, since his entrance relieved what might have been in another moment an awkward situation. For how can a man, having gone so far, not proceed farther? And yet Miss Bertram's manner certainly had not encouraged that proceeding, nor inspired confidence of a favorable issue. Talford's experience of feminine nature was, however, large; and he knew that the resources of that evasion which it is hardly fair to call coquetry sometimes render it difficult to foretell the nature of an answer up to the instant of receiving it. His vanity had, therefore, a loophole of escape; and he was not sorry to have provided.

"Though who can tell that I shall ever be so near the point again?" he thought, with genuine regret and genuine doubt of himself.

"You have come in time to share the offer of a cup of tea which I was just making to Mr. Talford," said Miss Bertram, after she had greeted Egerton with unusual warmth. "We will have it without waiting for mamma, who has been out since breakfast indulging in the delights of shopping with some American friends. There is an 'occasion' at the Bon Marche, and no feminine mind can resist the fascination of a bargain."

"You have apparently resisted it, since I have the pleasure of finding you at home," said Egerton.

"Oh! but I know that mamma will find all the bargains and bring them to me without my undergoing the purgatory of crushing which is the penalty of the great shops. I confess that I have a most undemocratic dislike to coming into close contact with my fellow-beings. I am never in such a crowd that I do not think I should like to be an archduchess, in order to have room always made for me."

"An archduchess with socialistic sympathies would be something very piquant," said Egerton, smiling.

"But it is unfortunately true that democratic theories and democratic practice are very different things."

"And the impossibility of the last proves the unsoundness of the first, only your visionaries will not see it," observed Talford.

"Am I a visionary?" said Egerton. "I hardly think so, though I should be rather proud of belonging to that much-reproached class; for it is surely better to see visions of higher things, even if they are not altogether practicable, than to limit one's eyes to the dusty road of actual life."

"I have noticed that those who see such visions are rather prone to stumble on the road," said Talford.

"But what would the road be without the visions to brighten it?" said Sibyl.

Talford elevated his eyebrows. "And why," he asked, "should visions of a future democracy be more attractive than a present democracy as typified in the bourgeois crowd of the Bon Marche?"

"I was not thinking of democracy," she answered. "I confess that I have never had much more fancy for that in the future than in the present. I have been touched by dreams for relieving the suffering of humanity, but I have never relished the thought of enforced equality."

"Yet that is what your friends the Socialists would insist upon," said Talford.

"It is hardly fair to call them my friends, since I have not an acquaintance among them, and M. d'Antignac has nearly cured me of admiring them," said she, smiling. "If they have a friend present it must be Mr. Egerton."

"I don't know that I have a right to call myself a friend," said Egerton. "My interest in them has sprung chiefly from curiosity, and some sympathy with their aims—or, at least, their professions. No one who walks through the world with open eyes," continued the young man quickly, "can avoid being struck and saddened by the misery of human life, the hopeless misery that encompasses the vast majority of the human race from their cradles to their graves. One feels absolutely paralyzed in the presence of it. What is to be done? Where is any help, any hope of making the lives of all these millions better for them? Now, we must admit that, with all its follies, Socialism tries to give some sort of an answer to that question."

"But what sort of an answer?" said Talford, while Sibyl looked intently at Egerton, as if some new idea with regard to him was dawning on her mind. "It is the answer of a man who would burn down your house because it is defective in construction."

"Oh! I grant that the answer is not very wise," said Egerton; "but I think there can be no doubt that it is an answer which the world will have forced upon it, unless some change comes over the spirit of society as we know it, unless it becomes less grossly material in its ends and less merciless in the methods by which it seeks those ends. But I don't mean to inflict my opinions upon you," he broke off with a laugh. "The attraction which I have found in Socialism—at least in the

representative Socialist whom I know—is that he feels so intensely on this subject."

"I suppose you mean M. Duchesne," said Miss Bertram.

"Yes, Duchesne, of whom you have so often heard me speak. He is so sincere an enthusiast, so ardent a visionary, that it is impossible not to be swayed by his personal influence when one is near him. In proof of which I am going with him to-morrow to Brussels."

"You!" said Miss Bertram in a tone of surprise. "For what purpose, if I may ask?"

"To attend a meeting of delegates from various countries who wish to secure amity of aim among the different revolutionary societies—in short, to revive the International. Duchesne promises that I shall see all the most prominent leaders."

"You must have become a revolutionist in earnest," said Talford.

"By no means," answered Egerton. "I am bound to nothing—Duchesne fully understands that. Very likely he thinks that I shall join him eventually, but I have never told him so. I represent myself simply as what I am—actuated by curiosity. Of course I shall not be allowed to see or know anything that would compromise them."

"I should not be too sure of that," said Talford. "You might come to know enough to compromise your own safety if you refused to join them at last. I do not think that, if I were you, I would go to Brussels. Here, at least, you are known and have friends."

"And, therefore, could not be disposed of by dagger or dynamite without exciting some inquiry," said Egerton, smiling. "I have not the least fear of the kind."

"But the absence of fear is not always an argument against the need of fear," said Sibyl. "And if you have really no motive but curiosity—"

"I assure you I have no other," said Egerton, meeting her eyes and thinking them kinder than he had ever seen them before. "But that is sometimes a tolerably strong motive."

"It might not be to strong enough to induce a man to run a grave risk."

"But there is positively no risk at all," said he. "Talford is simply indulging in a jest at my expense. I shall have great pleasure in giving you the points of the coming revolution when I return. Meanwhile, you spoke once of desiring to know Mlle. Duchesne. I may be permitted to say that you have now the opportunity of making her acquaintance. She is again in Paris."

"But this was a little too much for Talford. He frowned, and, while Sibyl hesitated for an instant, said curtly: "Upon my word, Egerton, I think you forget that Miss Bertram's curiosity is probably less developed than your own, and that she can hardly care to make the acquaintance of socialistic madmen—or madwomen, who are even worse."

"I should never dream of proposing such an acquaintance to Miss Bertram," answered Egerton. "Mlle. Duchesne—of whom I spoke—is indeed the daughter of a Socialist, but she is herself neither a Socialist nor a madwoman, but a very charming person and a great friend of the D'Antignacs, whom Miss Bertram knows well."

"I have heard them speak of her with high praise," said Sibyl. "If she has returned to Paris I shall probably meet her in their salon."

"It is likely that you may," said Egerton, who did not know of the decree which had gone forth, separating Armine from her friends.

"So it seems," said Talford, "that the remarkable M. d'Antignac is picturesquely eclectic in his acquaintance."

"Above all people whom I have ever met," said Sibyl, "he gives me the idea of basing his regard entirely upon what a person is, not at all upon what his or her outward circumstances or position may be. By the side of his couch one takes rank simply according to one's merit."

"But how if one should chance to have no merit?" asked the gentleman sceptically.

"In that case one must rely upon a charity which is broad enough to cover a multitude of follies," answered the young lady, smiling. "But I am sure that you are by this time tired of hearing Aristides called the Just, so happily here comes Valentine with the tea; and here, also, is mamma to tell us all about her bargains!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Irish Cause.

The Irish National Federation of America is behind the English Liberal and the Irish Nationalist in the anti-Lords campaign, which begins in good earnest in the impending session of Parliament. All the branches of the New York City Council I. N. F., have been instructed to hold meetings as soon as possible, in order to be ready to give effective aid in levelling the Tories' "last ditch" (and Ireland's unrelenting enemy), the House of Lords. One thousand dollars was sent from New York, last week, to Justin McCarthy, M. P., chairman of the Irish party, and \$1,000 more goes this week.

The Municipal Council I. N. F., of Philadelphia, has just sent \$1,000 expressly for the anti-Lords campaign. We may add that this renewal of vigorous action of the Irish party against factionists and vituperators; \$2,500 having been sent from Philadelphia alone, since the memorable meeting in Dublin last November.—Boston Pilot.

A Story of Sunda Gunge.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

On the 1st of July, 1857, the Indian Mutiny was at its height. For ten days the little station at Sunda Gunge had been besieged by the Sepoys.

The town was situated at the foot of a range of hills, and from one particular point upon the slopes outside the walls the well in the middle of the square was visible. This the Sepoys had at length discovered. Their single piece of cannon was at once pointed at this point, and brought to bear exactly on the well within the town.

The result of this proceeding is self-evident. If one of the garrison should now venture into the square for the purpose of fetching water, he would run an imminent risk of being blown to atoms by a volley of grape shot.

The group of spectators looked in silence at the well. The same thought occupied the minds of all. There were women in the garrison—delicate ladies, girls and children, and within the room set apart for the purpose of a hospital, wounded men were moaning for water. Water, at all costs, must be had—even in the face of a vigilant enemy and a loaded cannon. But how?

"This is an awkward business," Vane, remarked Colonel Dundas, the officer in charge of the garrison, to Lieutenant St. George Vane. The Colonel was a tall, gray man, grave, stern and martial. The Lieutenant was not more than five or six and twenty, with blue eyes, fair moustache, and careless, handsome features, much bronzed by exposure to the sun.

"True," said Vane, reflecting, "yet—stay! one of us must go out alone and try to bring in water. If they hit him, as they most likely will, three or four others can be ready to rush out, and may bring him in and the water as well, before he has time to load again."

inquiringly at the Colonel's face, eager to learn what he thought of the proposal.

"The cannon is not the only danger," said the Colonel. "They have rifles there as well."

"But a rifle at that range would most likely miss—a shower of grape is different."

The Colonel hesitated. No commander likes to send brave men on desperate ventures. But he could see no other scheme which would not involve much greater risk of life with still less prospects of success. And they must reach the well in some way—the necessity was vital. If once their supply of water were cut off their chance was gone. They could not last twelve hours.

Vane had kept his eyes fixed upon the Colonel's face.

"Let me try," he said eagerly. "Give me a few men—a score will volunteer."

The Colonel hesitated—but only for a moment. There was no man in the garrison whom he valued and trusted more than St. George Vane. He knew well the danger of the proposed adventure, and he knew well, also, that Vane if he were allowed to undertake it, would never rest until his task succeeded, or he himself was killed in the attempt. But in warfare, private feelings must give way to the general good. After a moment the Colonel laid his hand on the young man's shoulder and said, briefly:

"Try!"

An hour or two later Vane entered his own room.

It was a large apartment, situated at the back of the walled inclosure, which, on account of its size, had come to be used by the officers as a common room. Its windows opened on a wide veranda, which extended the whole length of the building, having the windows of other rooms also opening upon it. The largest of these had been set apart for the use of the ladies of the garrison, and as the veranda was cool, shady and retired, they were often accustomed to sit there, in preference to breathing the close heat of the room within.

At the moment when Vane entered two figures were sitting on the veranda, not far from his window—two girls. One of these was a tall, slight girl, pale and light haired—not handsome, nor even remarkable, except for her eyes, which were large, gray, serious, and, when at rest, deep rather than bright. Her companion, on the other hand, was a girl of singular beauty—with dark hair, dark eyes, rather full red lips, and skin of soft and flower-like bloom. The name of the pale girl was Mary Sulland; that of the beautiful one was Lenora Dundas. The latter was the Colonel's daughter; Mary Sulland was his ward. Before the mutiny they had lived together with an old English servant, Mrs. Jessop, in the Colonel's bungalow, outside the fortified inclosure.

The characters of these two girls we will leave to reveal themselves as we proceed, only recording the relative positions in which they stood to St. George Vane, who had known them both since they were children.

Like all men of her acquaintance, Vane admired Lenora, greatly, and sometimes half believed himself in love with her, and whether he were really so or not, he had been accustomed for years to call himself her worshipper. On the other hand, though he liked Mary Sulland very warmly, and would have done anything in his power to give her pleasure, he never told himself that he was in love with her, nor even thought about it.

Both the girls on their side regarded Vane with feelings far different from those of ordinary interest. But it is