KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

J. HARRISON

Kind Hearts are more than Coronets,

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CHAPTER XV .- Continued.

"Are you there, Mildred?" called unt Estelle from the doorway. "You can come back to Leigh immediately. Julie has just finished my new lace fichu, and I don't like it at all. Come, and show her how to

arrange it properly."
"You will find the portrait here, in the alcove. It is not heavy—take it out yourself and look at it," said

Mildred, hastily. "Aunt Estelle won't keep me long—I'll hurry."
"No need," said Leigh, graciously. Whether there was need or not Mildred could not have hurried, for Aunt Estelle was in one of her most whimsical moods and kept her fully half an hour. When the fichu was finally arranged and draped to suit her, Mildred thought of Miss Fenton -whose presence in the picture gallery had totally escaped her memory. She glanced in on her way downstairs to see if, by any chance, the girl still remained there. What was her surprise to notice that she was estanding absolutely motionless bestanding absolutely motionless before the picture in the gold frame.
Her arms were folded tightly across
the description of the picture in the gold frame.
Her arms were folded tightly across the description of the picture in the gold frame.

"I wish you'd go over to Matthew's this afternoon, Hugh, and do her breast. Mildred, approaching her with an apology on her lips, broke off "What is the matter?" she asked.

"You are dreadfully pale."
"Am I?" Leigh unlocked her arms almost painfully and pushed the hair from her forehead. "No-I think you imagine it—the light, perhaps. And this is the famous Laurence!" she said, as if continuing a conversation. "Does it resemble him?"

'Resemble him!" echoed Mildred, dreamily. "So much so that standing here I can scarcely believe those lips cannot move with the speech they were meant to frame. Sometimes I think— But I am foolish."
"The eyes," said Leigh, in a strange "What eyes they are!"

"Beautiful—even more beautiful in reality. But let us go downstairs. Uncle Eric might not like it—he is so

Leigh turned from the picture, it seemed to Mildred, almost reluctantly, and walked with her slowly down the long room. Suddenly she paus-ed in front of a cavalier in sweeping, plumed hat.

"Wasn't he a musician?" "Who? William Lindsay? I don't know. I think-"I mean Laurence," said Leigh, im-

patiently.
"Yes—he loved music." "What is this—still discussing the unfortunate Laurence?"

cheery voice from the hall without. Why, Leigh, I should be jealous, only that it would be absurd to be jealous of the dead. What did you think of the picture?"

"It is wonderful." There was strange expression on her face, and she shrank from Hugh as he approached her. "Oh, how could anyone dislike him?" she asked, almost

"He was his own worst enemy," "Under different consaid Hugh. ditions- But how white you are,

Leigh—are you tired?"
"White? Tired? No. Let us go
out of doors, though, if you will perhaps I have been too long with Laurence Lindsay's picture— and ghosts are frightening."

Mildred stood looking after them. Then she shook her head. "Poor Hugh!" she murmured

CHAPTER XVI.

"Heimweh."

As they walked through the great hall out on to the terrace they came face to face with Aunt Estelle. Leigh's hand dropped from Hugh's arm as his aunt approached them, and she turned away with an indiffer-

"I'm afraid I can't stand much of her this morning," she said in a low voice. "I will go to the chest-nut walk. You can follow me there is you care to, or have the time." Hugh understood at once that she

preferred being alone. It did not bother him that she should feel so, for his own home they respected each other's privacy as sacred, and would as soon have intruded on a stranger as on one another. As for Aunt Estelle, when she saw Leigh Fenton move quickly away from young man and turn down the side path, her face, which had been anxous and worried, cleared at once.

"Oh, Hugh," she said confidentially. "I am so very glad Miss Fenton has gone away—for I want to speak to you on a family matter."
"What is it?" asked Hugh, gently.
He might flave reminded her that

family matters were Leigh's concern now-but he did not. He always tried to imagine that he was talking to his mother when Aunt Estelle adsed him, but sometimes he had to stretch his imagination very far. "It is about Eric," she said. "When

he got up this morning I really thought he was going to have a spasm or convulsion or something. He turned blue and his eyes rolled. I was awfully frightened, Hugh. He got angry at me when I asked to send for a decrease but I can't let send for a doctor—but I can't it go on. I must tell some one."
"Of course, Aunt Estelle. Is

Oh, no-he was well enough come down to breakfast, No one noticed that there was anything the matter. But nothing like this ever happened to him before, and I don't know what to do."

"Leave it to me, aunt—he won't be ngry that you told me. He must ot neglect himself. It probably was a slight congestion that can be easily cured if he submits to treat-ment. Don't worry above all things and don't let him see that it dis-

"You are such a comfort, Hugh," the said, looking at him affectionate-

were visible—that the stout form was a little bent, and that he looked careworn and tired. But his manner was just the same as ever, and he

gave no indication of weakness.
"I hear Matthew Horton has a visitor," he announced. "Senator Hilliard and I were coming through the southern park when we met John Phillips, and he told us. It must be rather inconvenient for the poor old chap-he's been on the sick list for three days. Poor Matthew! We are

breaking down together."
The words had double significance to his wife and to his nephew. Ger-trude glanced at him with an affectionate smile. She had known for some time that Uncle Eric had been suffering, and she had helped to fur-ther his earnest desire that it be kept from the other members of his family—at least until the visitors

were gone. "You'll get well together, Uncle Eric," she said, in a low voice.
"I hope so," he returned in the same tone. Aloud, he addressed

you, Estelle, send him some wine and jelly. And in order not to let him know that you called principally to find out how he was, ask him if that man Scantley has done anything about the pine land of which we spoke last week."

Hugh acquiesced in silence. Mildred had glanced around the table quickly when her uncle announced that Matthew had a visitor. Was it Fraser and the honor that should be he his heart was sour. I let you at last? Her lips grew cold and stowed upon it—but she found old —and you came back to me. at last? Her lips grew cold, and she felt as if she were about to faint. She was glad no one spoke to her. Now she could explain to him in person-now all difficulties in the path of her cherished plan were smoothed away.

"Who can it be?" asked Mrs. Lindsay, curiously. "I didn't know Mat-thew had any friends—he lives the life of a hermit."

"I tell you just what I heard," said Uncle Eric. "Some uninteresting relative," interposed Leigh. "That kind or peo-ple really do have relatives, I pre-

No one paid any attention to her remark, and for some time longer the important questions of Mat-thew's illness and the identity of his how tired Leigh Fenton seemed of the old a man by surprise—he must be be good until I saw how good peotures and suppositions that drew out the topic all during lunch hour. At last Hugh rose with the expressed and Hugh waited for them, smiling. intention of fulfilling his uncle's wish at once. He turned to Leigh with a

pleasant smile. "Will you come?" he asked. "It is a delightful walk, and not far at

"Thank you, no," said Leigh. "I have had quite enough of old Mat-thew, as you call him. Besides, I must see Uncle Lewis-I am particularly anxious to have a five minutes' conversation with him alone. Will you come out with me, uncle, while Hugh departs on his errand of mercy?"

In the little home that had been Matthew Horton's for over fifty years, Hugh fully expected to find the old man unable to be about. He was much surprised, then, when the niece who had kept house for him since the death of his wife ten years before, informed Hugh that he would find him in the sitting-room.

"We had such a fright last evenjust going to bed when-"To whom are you talking, Eliza-

beth?" called out old Matthew.

Hugh, as he entered, it seemed that fied once more. he was laboring under great excitement. His hands were trembling, and his eves feverishly bright. "Uncle Eric sent me over." said

he has heard you were not quite well. He wishes you to take the best of care of yourself for a while, until you feel all right again. And have you and Scantley come to any definite arrangement about the pine land?"

"You will find all the papers there ton the desk," said Matthew, in a thin voice. "I wish you'd take them, Mr. Hugh—the thing will be off my mind then. How is the master?" "He seemed very well to me when I left him," said Hugh, going over to the desk and taking up the neat pile of papers Matthew had indicated. 'You are nervous, Matthew-what is the matter? And what was the fright you had last evening?"

fri 't at all. Women are apt to ex- and went on."
aggerate things, Mr. Hugh."

"About fifty! "Well, I am glad you had the joy. and that Elizabeth misunderstood," said Hugh, courteously. "It is the visit of a relative, I presume?'

"A friend, a dear, dear friend, whom I have not seen for years." "One of your old companions!" laughed Hugh, pushing back his chair. It seemed to him that the old man's manner was almost anta-gonistic, and he did not wish to intrude on his personal affairs.

Mr. Eric the old man ain't dead yet —ain't dead yet, by no means." His tone was so strange that again Hugh wondered. In the hall he met Elizabeth, who had not considered that the look on his face and dropped her, eyes.

Uncle Eric stared from him to the girl. A sudden light dawned on him.

in her tones.

"Feverish, perhaps," said Hugh, ndly. "He is too old now to neglect himself. If he is not better to-morrow, send someone up to the

frightened-that he is happy-" white as snow and his eyes almost start out of his head for happiness? he would have fallen. I don't want at her.
any such happiness!"

Hugh laughed, and went on his way
said.

Hugh laughed, and went on his way to the manor. Arrived there he gave the papers to his uncle, and told him what he had learned of Matthew's visitor—not because he felt inclined to gossip, but because he knew that Uncle Eric was deeply interested.

"Williams! Williams! I never heard that name before! And you say he frightened him? How strange! I shall call myself to-mortisit to Hugh's mother last year," he

row, if he isn't better."

ference between her words and her deeds distressed him sorely. Over music, pictures, or poetry she could talk herself and others into a romantic ecstasy. She found really wonlor. She spoke touchingly of age and the honor that should be heto brighten it into heavenly seem- you what it was."

this in full, he was beginning to suspect it. forth.

Strange that old people grow so careless of each other. "I judged him to be a man of fifty and she did not see it. of thereabouts," said Hugh. "Not so old, aunt." "Did vou see him?" asked Mildred,

"A visitor at a servant's, and the house is by the ears!" cried Leigh to Bayard Cameron. He smiled in a half-hearted fashion, for Gertrude a half-hearted fashion, for Gertrude blue ribbons, were waving in the had been very cold to him all day— breeze. And in one corner of the and when she was cold he was miser-

"We are simple people, and appreciate the fidelity of those who serve us," said Uncle Eric, shortly. "Perhaps that is why we are interested in so small a thing.

Lindsay's face.

"I do not mean to be unkind," she tial manner, for his pleasant interest attracted everyone. "We were just going to bed when—" said, with a frank manner she knew huskily. "My poor little hungry-hearted lonely child!" hearted lonely child!" For her dreamy voice had stirred ed, and it is only right that you should do your best for one so faithful when he is ill. So please do not misunderstand me."

"To Mr. Hugh, uncle," she said, She spoke so gently that Hugh's opening the door. The old man was eyes met hers with a tender expres- saw how this girl could love-woke lying on the sofa, very pale, and to sion in their depths. He was satis- with a force and a bound that sent

"My poor Matthew really gives me that home had been to her, when its great concern," said Uncle Eric to slightest details were so imprinted Hugh, pleasantly, "and, by the way, "He has just been here, looking like a ghost, and assured me that he was feeling perfectly well again. When his knees, and put her head upon I said to him that visitors must be his breast with her arms about him. more or less of a burden just now, he smiled, and let the subject drop without answering me in any way. That is very unlike my old Mat-

"He is much older than you are, uncle. Perhaps it is just the crankiness of age. In his own good time he'll be willing to tell you all about this strange visitor of his. By the way, I have met this Williams face to face. I was walking through the woods an hour ago, when I stumbled across him. He is a tall man with the matter? And what was the fright you had last evening?"

"Fright? Fright? Who said I had a fright, Mr. Hugh?"

"Elizabeth was telling me—"

"Elizabeth is mistaken," said Matthew, querulously. "I have had a great joy—perhaps that is the reason I appear nervous. But no him. I bade him the time of day by, when she took me to her great intervals across him. He is a tall man with broad shoulders and grey hair. About fifty years old, I should judge, as I told you vesterday." He did not notice that Mildred was staring at him, anxious not to lose a word. She never interrupted me—only let me talk away, looking at me with sad eyes—eyes that soon silenced me by their very graveness. By and by, when she took me to her great

"About fifty!" said Mildred now, in a disappointed tone. She knew that the Allan Fraser ex-Senator Hilliard spoken of was young. thought he was younger than that. Hugh glanced at her half smilingly. "How could you know," he asked lightly, "how old or young he was?"

"And what does it really matter if he's eighty?" put in Leigh. "Let us all go out on a still hunt for Horton's visitor," exclaimed Ro-"Are you with us. Cameron. The first one discovers

He was glad, then, he had been genthe was glad, then, he had never met you, but
the said sid she had never met you, but
the said she had never here
the said she had never here
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wondered. In the hall he met Elizabeth, who had just carried a tray into the dining-room. Hugh caught sight of a grey-haired man seated at the table. He had laid his book aside to turn to the tray of food. Elizabeth went to the hall door, opened it, and followed the young man out on the porch.

"Do you think Uncle Matthew very ill?" she asked, with real solicitude in her tones.

"But the table and the would be a good thing for Mildred to marry such a well-born man—poor Uncle Eric, how that phrase, "well-born" haunted him! Of course, he was much older than she—but Mildred was not a child any longer now. If that little witch Gertrude would but make up her mind to have Bayard Cameron he could die content, he thought. He must speak to her, and see what she Well, it would be a good thing for

must speak to her, and see what she really meant to do. It was a subject which, despite their late intimacy, had never risen between them for dis cussion. His eyes had been trou-blesome and painful this last few manor."

"I think a stranger has no right to pop into a house without a word," she said in an aggrieved tone. "He left the dining-room together, and only one looked after them wistfully."

"Your uncle says that he was not rightened—that he is happy—"
"Happy! Humph! Does one turn white as snow and his eyes almost white as snow and for happiness?

The old man did not take the usual papers from his desk this morning as his young amanuensis seated herself beside him. Instead he leaned back in the revolving chair, swung the land sat in silence looking Mr. Williams had to hold him up or round it, and sat in silence looking

"Come nearer" to me, child," he said. "Come where I can see your face. The old fellow is not so keen-

visit to Hugh's mother last year,' Leigh made no inquiries and Hugh sall abruptly, "you are a changed volunteered no information. The dif-

"Am I, uncle?" "Yes. I let my baby girl go away from me—oh, what a wilful, prickly little girl she was! I let her go because I saw she was unhappy in derful words to express the noblest this great house, surrounded by peofeelings, but to do the things she ple she would not try to understand, feelings, but to do the things she ple she would not try to understand, spoke of was a horse of another co- with one old man who loved her but could not show his affection because his heart was sour. I let you go people tiresome and had no patience with their idiosyncrasies. She spoke thing happened — something that of children as angels loaned to earth changed your whole life. Now I ask

ing — but children, in her private opinion, were ugly, meddlesome little nuisances, too fond of asking ques-She hesitated, and her fingers tight-

tions. And if Hugh did not realize "I can tell you a part of it," she his in full, he was beginning to sus-ect it.

Said, slowly. "I was unhappy dread-fully unhappy last year. And when At dinner Mrs. Lindsay once more Hugh came and pictured his home, started the tiresome subject. She with his mother and his sisters, knew well Matthew did not care for with the common things of every day her at all—in fact disliked her. But glorified by love, my heart almost she respected him for his honest broke. One day—the day I had that service and his faithfulness to the Lindsays. Mildred dared not question though her heart was acking the tried to comfort me, and I told him I would apologize to her if he with the words she longed to pour would take me to his mother just for Hugh laughingly mentioned a little while. I wanted to see a thew's illness and the identity of his visitor were discussed. Indeed, Gertrude, who was but human, noticing how tired Leigh Fenton seemed of the

> Uncle Eric smiled a little at the inference, but her eyes were downcast,

"So I went to Hugh's—as you know. Oh, uncle!" Her breath know. came quickly now, her bosom heav-ed. "Such a little, little house it eagerly,
"Just a glimpse," answered Hugh.
"How long will he remain?" she
asked again. "Has Matthew said?"
"Nothing—I did not ask. I hope
"Nothing—I did not ask. I hope
two big lilac bushes at the front
gate, and a long arbour, covered with
gate, and a long arbour, covered with
the green leaves of the grape running down to the yard, as they called it. The windows were all open, and the white curtains, tied with parlor was the smallest, littlest, cutest cottage piano! And there were two funny china dogs, one on each side of the mantel, and I used to lay down on the rug and call naps that is why we are interested them Gyp and Marty, and France and I used to play with them—Oh, Uncle Eric, Uncle Eric—you're not crying, Uncle Eric?"

"My poor little child!" he said,

all his life before. The coldness of years, melted at its sound. The splendid Southern chivalry lying dormant in his breast woke, as he the blood in great quivering gushes through his frame. He saw how dear Hugh the next morning at breakfast. on her heart. The girl's brown eyes were soft but not tearful now. She crept nearer to him, slipped between his knees, and put her head upon Then her little hand sought his face, his tear-wet eyes, and wiped

them dry. "That -that was long ago, Uncle Eric," she went on, softly. very, very long ago—it is no use feeling badly about it now. There was a soul in that house, Uncle Eric -a goble, beautiful soul. Hugh's mother came to me. I shall bever forget the first sight of her face, with its mild eyes, when she saw opened her arms to me, kissed and welcomed me. Ah, well! can't describe Hugh's mother to you. sad eyes—eyes that soon silenced me by their very graveness. By and by, when she took me to her great heart, and I grew to know her, I tried to be like her. Oh, how I love her, Uncle Eric! My own mother must have been like that."

He did not answer her. She wait ed-but no words came. "I did not want to come back I told her I would be her servant, her child, anything, so that she kept me and loved me and let me be near her. Hugh came, too, to make me go, but I'd never, never go for him. then she asked me to listen to her. She told me a story. Shall I repeat trude on his personal affairs. He rose and held his hand out, but when Matthew gave him his in return, the heat of the thin fingers made him to give the view halloa—we can then the submits to treat-hot Don't worry above all things and don't let him see that it disturbs you."

"You are such a comfort, Hugh," he said, looking at him affectionate him affectionate beth cannot wait on you as she was glad, then, he had been gen-him to give the view halloa—we can then inspect him at our leisure."

Thank you, aunt," he returned.

"Thank you, aunt," he returned. Companies

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that your life was lonely pitiful, in spite of all your wealth.

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