THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOEIC CHRONICLE.

CHARLIE STUART AND HIS SISTER! BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING. PART II.

CHAPTER XIX CONTINUED. She hurried upstairs and disappeared Neither of the two spoke. Lindy Helena's face was still hidden. He knew that she was crying-silent, miserable tears-tears that were for him. He stood pale, composed, ex-pectant-waiting for the end

"Come up," Miss Catheron's soft voice at the head of the stairs called. Once more he gave his aunt his arm, once more in silence they went in together.

A breathless hush seemed to lie upon the house and all within it. Not a sound was to be heard except the soft rustle of the trees, the soft, ceaseless patter of the summer rain. In that silence they entered the chamber where the dying man lay. To the hour of his own death, that moment and all he saw was photographed indelibly upon Sir Victor Catheron's mind. The dim gray light of the room, the great white bed in the centre, and the awfully corpse-like face of the man lying among the pillows, and gazing at him with hollow, spectral eyes. His father-at last!

He advanced to the bedside as though under a spell. The spectral blue eyes were fixed upon him steadfastly, the pallid lips slowly opened and spoke.

"Like me--as I was--like me. Ethel's 80n."

"My father."

He was on his knees---a great awe upon him. It was the first time in his young life he had ever been in the presence of death. And the dying was his father, and his father whom he had never seen before.

"Like me," the faint lips repeated; "my face, my height, my name, my age. Like me. O God 1 will his end be like mine ?"

A thrill of horror ran through all his hearers. His son strove to take his hand ; it was withdrawn. A trown wrinkled the pallid brow. "Wait," he said plaintively; "don't touch

me; don't speak to me. Wait. Sit down; don't kneel there. You don't know what you are about to hear. Inez, tell him now.

She closed the door-still with that changeless face--and locked it. It seemed as though, having suffered so much, nothing had power to move her outwardly now. She placed a chair for Lady Helena away from the bed.--Lady Helena, who had stood aloof and not spoken to the dying man yet. She placed a chair for Sir Victor, and motioned him to seat himself, then drew another close to the bedside, stooped, and kissed the dying man. Then in a voice that never faltered, never failed, she began the story she had to tell.

. . Half an hour had passed. The story was told, and silence reigned in the darkened room. Lady Helena sat, with averted face, in her distant seat, not moving, not looking up. The dying man still lay gazing weirdly upon his son, death every second drawing nearer and more near. Inez sat holding his hand,

her pale, sad face, her dark, pitying eyes turned also upon his son. That son had risen. He stood up in the centre of the room. with a white, stunned face. What was this he had heard ? Was he asleep and dreaming ?-was it all a horrible, ghastly delusion ?-were they mocking him? or-O gracious God was it true?

Let me out !' They were his first words "I can't breathe-I am choking in this room ! I shall go mad if you keep me here !" He staggered forward, as a drunken man or a blind man might stagger to the door. He unlocked it, opened it, passed out into the passage, and down the stairs. His sunt followed him, her eyes streaming, her hands out-

stretched. Victor-for the love of neaver, But he only made a gesture for her to stand back, and went on.

place was to be Kensal Green, not the Ca theron waults ; that the secret of his-life and death was still to be kept inviolate; and that ly earnest) their marriage was not to be post-poned. On the third of October, as all had and eat the sumptuous breakfast-then off poned. On the third of October, as an had and ear the sumptuous preasnast-then on been arranged it was still to take place. No and away to the pretty town in North Wales. other note followed. If Miss Darrell had That was the programme. "When to-mor-been in love with ber future husband, this row comes," Edith thinks, as she wanders profound silence must have wounded, surprised, grieved her. But she was not in love. He must be very much occupied, she carelessly thought, since he could not find time to drop her a daily bulletin---then dismissed the matter indifferently from her mind. Late in the evening of the sixth day Sir

Victor and Lady Helena returned home. Edith stood alone awaiting them, dressed in black silk, and with sof white lace and

ruby ornaments, and looking very hand some. Her lover rushed in and caught her in his

arms with a sort of rapturous, breathless delight.

" My love! my life!" hecried, "every hour has been an age since I said good-bye !".

She drew herself from him. Sir Victor in the calm, courteous character of a perfectly undemonstrative suitor, she tolerated. Sir Victor in the role of Romeo was excessively distasteful to her. She drew herself out of his arms coldly and decisively.

"Iam glad to see you back Sir Victor. But the stereotyped words of welcome fell chill on his ears. "You are not looking well. I am afraid you have been very much harassed

since you left." Surely he was not looking well. In those six days he had grown more than six years older. He had lost flesh and color; there was an indescribable something in his face and expression she had never seen before. More had happened than the death of the father he had never known, to alter him like this. She looked at him curiously. Would he tell her?

He did not. Not looking at her, with his eyes fixed moodly on the wood fire smouldering on the hearth, he repeated what his letter had already said. His father had died the morning of their arrival in London ; they had buried him quietly and unobtrasively, by his request, in Kensal Green Cemetery; no one was to be told, and the wedding was not to be postponed.. All this he said as a man repeats a lesson learned by rote-his eyes never ince meeting hers.

She stood silently by, looking at him, listening to him.

Something lay behind, then, that she was not to know. Well, it made them quits-she didn't care for the Catheron family secrets; if it were something unpleasant, as well not known. If Sir Victor told her, very well; if not, very well also. She cared little either way.

"Miss Catheron remains at St. John's Wood, I suppose ?" she inquired indifferently. feeling in the pause that ensued she must say

something. "She remains-yes-with her two old serrants for the present. I believe her ultimate

intention is to go abroad." "She will not return to Cheshire ?"

A spasm of pain crossed his face; there was momentary contraction of the muscles of his mouth.

"She will not return to Cheshire. All her ife she will lie under the ban of murder." "And she is innocent ?"

He looked up at her-a strange, hunted, tortured sort of look. "She is innocent."

As he made the answer he turned abruptly away. Edith asked no more questions. The secret of his mother's murder was a secret she was not to hear.

Lady Helena did not make her appearance at all in the lower rooms that night. Next day at luncheon she came down, and Edith was honestly shocked at the change in her. "Victor-my boy-my son-my darling! From a hale, handsome, stately, upright, elderly lady, she had become a feeble old woman in the past week. Her step had

o'clock; the place, Ohesholm church. The bridesmaids would arrive at ten- the Earl of the quiet bride. She was pale, nervous, Wroatmore, the father of the Ladies G wendol- agitated beyond anything the girl had ever (in this part of the note he grew impassioned- ine and Laura Drexel, was to give the bride

> about the house " will it be carried out ?" It chanced that on the bridal eve Miss Darrell was attacked with headache and sore throat. She had lingered heedlessly out in the rain the day before (one of her old bad

> habits to escape from Sir Victor, if the truth must be told), and paid the natural penalty next day. It would never do to be hoarse as a raven on one's wedding-day, so Lady Helena insisted on a wet napkin round the throat warm bath, gruel, and early to bed. Wil ingly enough the girl obeyed-too glad to this last evening alone. Immediately after dinner she bade her adieux to her bridegroom-elect, and went away to her own

room. The short October day had long ago darkened down, the curtains were drawn, a fire burned, the candles were lit. She took the bath, the gruel, the wet napkin, and let herself be tucked up in bed. "Romantic," she thought, with a laugh at

herself, " for a bride."

Lady Helena-was it a presentiment of what was so near?-lingered by her side long that evening, and, at parting, for the first time took her in her arms and kissed her.

"Good-night, my child," the tender, trepulous tones said. "I pray you may make him happy-I pray that he may make you." She lingered yet a little longer-her neart seemed dull, her eyes were shining through tears. Words seemed trembling on her lips -words she had not courage to say. For Edith. surprised and moved, she put her arms round the kind old neck, and laid her face for

a moment on the genial old bosom. "I will try," she whispered, "dear, kind Lady Helena-indeed 1 will try to be a good and faithful wife."

One last kiss, then they parted; the door closed behind her, and Edith was alone.

She lay as usual, high up among the billowy pillows, her hands clasped above her her dark, dreaming eyes fixed on the head. fire. She looked as though she were thinking, but she was not. Her mind was simply a blank. She was vaguely and idly watching the flickering shadows cast by the firelight on the wall, the gleam of yellow moonlight shimmering through the curtains ; listening to the faint sighing of the night wind, the ticking of the little funciful clock, to the protty plaintive tunes it played before it struck the hour. Nine, ten, eleven-she heard them all, as she lay there, broad awake, neither thinking nor stirring.

Her maid came in for her last orders ; she bade the girl good-night, and told her to go to bed-she wanted nothing more. Then again she was alone. But now a restlessness, as little to be understood as her former listless apathy, took hold of her. She could not lie there and sleep ; she could not lie there awake. As the clock chimed twelve, she started up in bed in a sudden panic. Twelve ! A new day-her wedding-day !

Impossible to lie there quiet any longer. She sprang up, locked her door, and began, in her long, white night-robe, pacing up and down. So another hour passed. One! One from the little Swiss musical clock; one, solemn and sombre, from the big clock up in the tower. Then she stopped-stopped in thought; then she walked to one of her boxes, and took out a writing-case, always kept locked. With a key attached to her neck she opened it, seated herself before a table, and drew forth a package of letters and a picture. The picture was the handsome photographed face of Charlie Stuart ; the letters, the letters he had written her to Sandypoint.

She began with the first, and read it slowly through-then the next, and so on to the end. There were over a dozen in all, and tolerably lengthy. As she finished and folded up the last, she took up the picture and gazed at it long and earnestly, with a strangely dark, intent look. How handsome he was! how well he photographed! that was her thought. She had seen him so often, with just this expression, looking at her. His pleasant, lazy, half-sarcastic voice was in her ear, saying something coolly impertinent-his gray, halfsmiling, half-cynical eyes were looking life like up at her. What was he doing now? Sleeping calmly, no doubt-she forgotten as she deserved to be. When to-morrow came, would he by any chance remember it was her wedding day, and would the remembrance cost him a pang! She laughed at herself for a pang for her, or any other earthly woman? No, he was immersed in business, no doubt, head and ears, soul and body ; absorbed in dollars and cents, and retrieving in some way his fallen fortune-Edith Darrell dismissed contemptuously, as a cold-blooded jilr. from his memory. Well, so she had willed it-she had no right to complain. With a steady, hand she tied up the letters and replaced them in the desk. The picture followed. "Good-bye, Charlie," she said, with a sort of smile. She could no more have destroyed those souvenirs of the past than she could have cut off her right hand. Wrong you say, and shake your head. Wrong, of course; but when has Edith Darrell done right-when have I pictured her to you in any very favorable light? As long as she lived, and was Sir Victor's wife, she would never look at them again, but destroy them-no, she could

sun, certainly looked much more like it than landscape, steeped in the amber glitter of the 800n.

"How had Edith slept? How was her cold? How did she feel?" "Never better," Miss Darrell responded are quite gone, and I am ready to do justice. brought.

She sat down to it-chocolate, rolls, an melette and a savory little bird, with ex after this gruesome wedding day? cellent and unromantic appetite. Then the service was cleared away, and the real busi-redly over mountains and sea. The carriage ness of the day began. She was under the is awaiting them ; she enters, and lies back hands of her maid, deep in the mysteries of wearily with closed eyes. She is dead tired the wedding toilette.

bevy, in sweeping trains, walking visions of is glad when the Carnarvon cottage is reached. sil, tulle, lace, performe, and flowers. At Sir Victor's man, my lady's maid, and two half past ten Miss Darrell, "queen rose of the Welsh servante came forth to meet them; rose bud garden of girls," stood in their midst and on Sir Victor's arm she enters the house. ready for the altar.

She looked beautiful. It is an understood thing that all brides, whatever their appear. ance on the orninary occasions of life, look beautiful on this day of days. Edith Darrell had never looked so stately, so queenly, so handsome in her life. Just a thought pale, not not unbecomingly so-the rich, glistening while he says it, and she is alone. white silk sweeping far behind her, set off well the fine figure, which fitted without flaw. The dark, proud face shone like a star from the misty folds of the bridal veil: the legendary orarge blossoms crowned the rich, dark hair; on neck, ears, and arms glimmered a priceless parure of pearls, the gift, like the dress and veil, of Lady Helena.

A fragrant bouquet of spotless white had been sent up by the bridegroom. At a quarter to eleven she entered the carriage and was driven to the church.

As she lay back, and looked dreamily out. the mellow October sunshine lighting the scene, the joy-bells clashing, the listless apathy of the past few days took her again. She took note of the trifles about her-her mind rejected all else. How yellow were the birds singing in the branches, not a human fields of stubble-how picturesque, gilded in the sunshine, the village of Chesholm looked. How glowing and rosy the faces of the people who flocked in their holiday best to gaze at the bridal pageant. Was it health and happiness, or soap and water only ? wondered the bride. These were her wandering thoughts

-these alone. They reached the little church. All the way from the curriage to the stone porch the charity children strewed her path with flowers, and sang (ont of tune) a bridal anthem. She smiled down upon their vulgar, admiring little faces as she went by on the Eurl of Wroatmore's arm. The church was filled. Was seeing her married worth all this trouble to these good people, she wondered, as she walked up the aisle, still on the arm of the

Right Honorable the Earl of Wroatmore. There was of course, a large throng of invited guests. Lady Helena was there in pale, flowing silks, the bridesmaids, a billowy crowd of white-plumaged birds, and the bride

groom, with a face whiter than the white waistcoat, standing waiting for his bride. And there, in surplice, book in hand, stood the rector of Chesholm and his curate, ready to tie the unticable knot.

A low, hushed mumur ran through the church at sight of the silver-shining figure of the bride. How handsome, how stately, how perfectly self-possessed and calm. Truly, if beauty and high-bred repose of manner be any palliation of low birth and obscurity, this American young lady had it.

An instant passes-she is kneeling by Sir Victor Catheron's side. "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" says the urbane tones of the rector of Chesholm, and the Right Honorable the Earl of Wroatmore comes forward on two rickety old legs and gives her away. "If any one here present knows any just cause or impediment why this man should not be married to this woman, I

the sentimental question-Charlie Stuart feel | ing face. It is a curious fancy, but, if it were

October afternoon sun. -She-looks scross at the man she has mar ried-did ever mortal man before on his wedding day wear such a stony face as that? And yet he has married her for love-for love alone. Was ever another bridal journey per smillingly. "The sore throat and headache formed like this-in profound gravity and silence on both sides? she wonders, half in to the nice breakfast which I see Emily has clined to laugh. She looks down at her shining wedding ring-is it a circlet that means nothing? How is her life to go on

They reach Wales. The sun is setting and depressed ; she is beginning to feel the At ten came the bridesmaids, a brilliant want of last night's sleep, and in a weary way

She goes at once to her dressing room, to rest, to bathe her face, and remove her wraps, performing those duties herself, and dismissing her maid. As she and Sir Victor separate, he mutters some half incoherent wordshe will take a walk and smoke a cigar before dinner, while she is resting. He is gone even

She removes her gloves, hat, and jacket bathes her face, and descends to the little cottage drawing room. It is quite deserted -sleepy silence everywhere reigns. She throws herself into an easy chair beside the open window, and looks listlessly out. Ruby, and purple, and golden, the sun is setting in a radiant sky-the yellow sea creeps up on silver sands-old Carnarvon Castle gleams and glows in the rainbow light, like a fairy palace. It is unutterably beautiful, unutter-

ably drowsy and dull. And, while she thinks it, her heavy eyelids swav and fall, her head sinks back, and Edith falls fast asleep.

Fast asleep; and a mile away, Sir Victor Catheron paces up and down a strip of tawny sand the ses lapping softly at his feet, the soul far or near.

He is not smoking that before-dinner cigar -he is striding up and down more like an es-caped Bedlamite than anything else. His hat is drawn over his eyes, his brows are knit, his lips set tight, his hands are clenched. Presently he pauses, leans against a tree, and looks, with eyes full of som haggard horrible despair, out over the red light on sea and sky. And, as he looks, he falls down suddenly, as though some inspiration had seized him, upon his kness, and lifts his clasped hands to that radiant sky. A prayer, that seems frenzied in its agonized intensity, bursts from his lips-the sleeping sea, the twittering birds, the rustling leaves, and He who made them. alone are to hear. Then he falls forward on

his face, and lies like a stone. Is he mad? Surely no sane man ever acted, or looked, or spoke like this. He lies so -prostrate, motionless-for upward of an hour, then slowly and heavily he rises. His face is calmer now; it is the face of a man who has fought some desperate fight, and gained some desperate victory-one of those

victories more cruel than death. He turns and goes hence. He crushes through the tall, dewy grass, his white face set in a look of iron resolution. He is ghastly beyond all telling; dead and in his coffin he will hardly look more death-like. He reaches the cottage, and the first sight upon which his eyes rest is his bride, peacefully asleep in the chair by the still open window. She looks lovely in her slumber, and peaceful as a little child—no very terrible sight surely. But as his eyes fall upon her, he recoils in some great horror, as a man may who has received a blinding blow.

"Asleep," his pale lips whisper; "asleepso she was !"

He stands spell-bound for a moment-then he breaks away headlong. He makes his way to the dining-room. The table, all bright stands spread for dinner. He takes from his pocket a note-book and pencil, and still standing, writes rapidly down one page. Without reading, he folds and seals the sheet. and slowly and with dragging steps returns to the room where Edith sleeps. On the threshold he lingers-he seems atraid-atraid to approach. But he does approach at last. He places the note he has written on a table, he draws near his sleeping bride, he kneels down and kisses her hands, her dress, her hair. His haggard eyes burn on her face, their mesmeric light disturbs her. She murmurs and moves restlessly in her sleep. In an instant he is on his feet; in another, he is out of the room and the house; the deepening twilight takes him, and he is gone. A train an hour later passes through Carnarvon on its way to London. One passenger alone awaits it at the station-one passenger who enters an empty first-class compartment and disappears. Then it goes shrieking on its way, bearing with it to London the bridegroom, Sir Victor Catheron.

"Sir Victor, my lady___I__thought Sir Vic tor was here, my lady."

August 24, '81,

"Sir Victor has not been here since half an hour after our arrival."He went out for a walk, as you very well know. I ask you if he has returned. "Sir Victorgreturned more, than an hour

ago, my lady, I saw him myself. You were asleep, my lady, at the window as he came up. He went into the dining room and wrote a letter ; I saw it in his hand And then, my lady, he came in here."

the room. Edith listened in growing sur prise.

"I thought he was here still, my lady 50 did Hemily, or we would have taken the liber. ty of hentering and closing the window. We were sure he was here. He certainly He certainly hentered with the letter in his 'and. It's odd.

Again there was a pause Again Mr. Jam. ison

" If your ladyship will hallow, I will light the candles here, and then go and hascertain whether Sir Victor is in hany of the hother rooms."

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She made an affirmative gesture, and returned to the window. The man lit the candles; a second after, an exclamation startled her.

"The note, my lady! Here it is."

It lay upon the table; she walked over and took it up. In Sir Victor's hand, and address. ed to herself! What did this mean? She stood looking at it a moment-then she turn. ed to Jamisor.

"That will do," she said, briefly; "if I want you I will ring."

The man bowed and left the room. She stood still, holding the unopened note, strangely reluctant to break the seal. What did Sir Victor mean by absenting himself and writing her a note? With an effort she Broused herself at last, and tore it open. It was strangely scrawled, the writing half illegible ; slowly and with difficulty she made it out. This was what she read :

"For Heaven's sake, pity me-for Heaven's sake, pardon me. We shall never meet more! O beloved ! believe that I love you. believe that I never loved you half so well as now, when I leave you for ever. If I loved you less I might dare to stay. But I dare not, I can tell you no more-a promise to the living and the dead binds me. A dreadful secret of sin, and shame, and guilt, is involved. Go to Lady Helena. My love-my bride --my heart is breaking as I write the wordthe cruel word that must be written .-- farewell. I have but one prayer in my heartbut one wish in my soul-that my life may he a short one.

" VICTOR."

No more. So, in short, incoherent, disconnected sentences, this incomprehensible letter began and ended. She stood stunned, bewildered, dazed, holding it, gazing at it blank-Was she asleep? Was this a dream? ly. Was Sir Victor all of a sudden gone wholly and entirely mad?

She shrank from the last thought-but the dim possibility that it might be true calmed her. She sat down, hardly knowing what she was doing, and read the letter again. Yes, surely, surely she was right. Sir Victor had gone mad! Madness was hereditary in the family-had it come to him on his wedding-day of all days? On his wedding-day the last remnant of reason had deserted him, and he had deserted her. She sat quite still, -the light of the candles falling upon her, upon the fatal letter,-trying to steady her-self, trying to think. She read again and again; surely no same man ever wrote such a letter as this. "A dreadful secret of sin, and shame, and guilt, is involved." Did that dreadful secret mean the secret of his mother's death? But why should that cause him to leave her? She knew all about it already. What frightful revelation had been made to him on his father's dying bed? He had never been the same man since. An idea flashed with damask, silver, crystal and cut flowers, across her brain-dreadful and upnatural enough in all conscience-but why should even that, supposing her suspicions to be true. cause him to leave her? "If I loved you less, I might dare to stay with you. What rhodomontade was this? Men prove their love by living with the women they marry. not by deserting them. Oh, he was mad, mad. mad-not a doubt of that could remain. Her thoughts went back over the past two weeks-to the change in him ever since his father's death. There had been times when he had visibly shrunk from her, when he had seemed absolutely afraid of her. She had doubted it then-she knew it now. It was the dawning of his insanity-the family taint breaking forth. His father's delusion had been to shut himself up, to give out that he was dead-the son's was to desert his bride on their bridal day for ever. For ever! the letter said so. Again, and still again, she read it. Very strangely she looked, the warlights flickering on her pale, rigid young face, her compressed lips set in one tight line-on her soft pearl gray silk, with its point lace collar and diamond star. A bride, alone, forsaken, on her wedding day! How strange it all was! The thought came to her; was it retributive justice pur-suing her for having bartered herself for rank. And yet girls as good and better than she, did it every day. She rose and began pacing up and down the floor. What should she do? "Go back to Lady Helena," said the letter. Go back | cast off, deserted--she, who only at neon to-day had left them a radiant bride! As she thought it, a feeling of absolute hatred for the man she had married came into her heart. Sane or mad, she would hate him now all the rest of her life. The hours were creeping on--two had passed since she had sent Jamison out of her room. What were they thinking of her these keen-sighted, gossiping servants ? what would they think and say when she told them Sir Victor would return no more ?--- that she was going back to Cheshire alone to-morrow morning? There was no help for it. There was resolute blood in the girls veing; she walked over to the bell, rang it, her head erect, ber eyes bright, only her lips still set in that tight unpleasant line.

"Keep away from me!" he said, in a stifled voice; "let me think | Leave me alone !-- I can't speak to you yet !"

He went forward out into the wet day-light. His head was bare; his overcoat was off; the rain beat unheaded upon him. What was this -what was this he had heard ?

He paced up and down under the trees. The moments passed. An hour went; he neither knew nor cared. He was stunned-stunned body and soul-too stunned even to think. His mind even was chaos, an awful horror had fallen upon him; he must wait before thought would come. Whilst he still paced there, as a stricken animal might, a great cry reached him. Then a woman's flying figure came down the path. It was his aunt.

"Come-come-come!" she cried; "he is dying !" She drew him with her by main force into

the house-up the stairs-into the chamber of death. But death had been there before them. A dead man lay upon the bed now, rigid and white. A second cry arose-a cry of almost more than woman's woe. And with it Inez Catheron clasped the dead man in her arms, and covered his face with her raining tears.

The son stood beside her like a figure of sione, gazing down at that marble face. For the first time in his life he was Slr Victor Catheron.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE WEDDING-DAY BEGAN.

Six days later, Sir Victor Catheron and his aunt came home. These six days had passed very quietly, very pleasanily, to Edith. She was not in the least lonely; the same sense of relief in her lover's absence was upon her as she had felt at Torquay. It seemed to her she breathed freer when a few score miles lay between them. She had her pet books and music, and she read and played a great deal ; she had her long, solitary rambles through the leafy lanes and quiet roads, her long drives in the little pony phaeton her future husband had given her. Sometimes Lady Gwendoline was her companion; oftener she was quite alone. She was not at all unhappy now ; she was just drifting passively on to the end. She had chosen, and was quietly abiding by her choice; that was all. She caught herself thinking sometimes, that since she felt so much happier and freer in Sir Victor's absence, how was she going to endure all the Fears that must be passed at his side? No doubt she would grow used to him after a while, as we grow used and reconciled to

overything earthly. One circumstance rather surprised her; during those six days of absence she had received but one note from her lover. She had counted at least upon the post fetching her one or two per day, as when at Torquay, but this time he wrote her but once. An odd, incoherent, hurried sort of note, too---very brief and unsatisfactory, if she had had much curiosity on the subject of what was going on at Bt. John's Wood. But she had not. Whether his father lived or died, so that he never Interfered with her claim to the title of Lady Catheron in the future, Miss Darrell cared very little. This hurried note briefly told her his father had died on the day of their arrival; that by his own request the burial

grown uncertain; her hands trembled; deep lines of trouble were scored on her pale face; her eyes rarely wandered long from her nephew's face. Her voice took a softer, tenderer tone, when she addressed him-she had always loved him dearly, but never so dearly, t would seem, as now.

The change in Sir Victor was more in manner than in look. A feverish impatience and restlessness appeared to have taken possession of him; he wandered about the house and in and out like some restless ghost. From Powyss-place to Catheron Royals from Catheron Royals to Powyss-place, he vibrated like a human pendulum. It set Edith's uerves on edge only to watch him. At other periods a moody gloom would fall upon him, then for hours he sat brooding, with knitted brows and downcast eyes, lost in his own dark, secret thoughts. Anon his spirits would rise to fever height, and he would laugh and talk in a wild, excited way that fixed Edith's dark, wondering eyes solemnly on his flushed face.

With it all, in whatever wood, he could not bear her out of his sight. He haunted her like her shadow, until it grew almost intoler-able. He sat for hours, while she worked, or played, or read, not speaking, not stirringhis eyes fixed upon her, and she, who had never been nervous, grew horribly nervous under this ordeal. Was Sir Victor losing his wits? Now that his insane father was dead and buried, did he feel it incumbent upon him to keep up the family reputation and follow in that father's footsteps ?

And the days wore on, and the first of Octo ber came.

The change in the young baronet grew more marked with each day. He lost the power to eat or sleep; far into the night he walked his room, as though some horrible Nemesis were pursuing him. He failed to the very shadow of himself ; yet when Lady Helena, in fear and trembling, laid her hands upon his arm, and falteringly begged him to see a physician, he shook her off with an angry irritability quite foreign to his usual gentle temper, and bade her, imperiously, to leave him alone.

The second of October came; to-morrow would be the wedding-day.

The old feeling of vagueness and unreality had come back to Edith. Something would happen-that was the burden of her thoughts. To-morrow was the wedding-day, but the wedding would never take place. She walk-ed through the glowing, beautiful rooms of Catheron Reyals, through grounds and gardens, bright with gay autumnal flowers-a home luxurious enough for a young duchese and still that feeling of unreality was there A grand place, a noble home, but she would

never reign its mistress. The cottage at Carnarvon had been weeks ago engaged, Sir Victor's confidential servant already established there, awaiting the coming of the bridal pair : but she felt she would never see it. Up stairs, in all their snowy, shining splendor, the bridal robe and veil lay; when to-morrow came would she ever put them on, she vaguely wondered. And still she was not unhap-py. A sort of apathy had taken possession of her; she drifted on calmly to the end What was written; was written; what would be, would be. Time enough to wake from her dream when the time of waking came. . The hour fixed for the ceremony was eleven

not do that. Six! As she closed and locked the write ting-case the hour struck; a broad, bright sunburst flashed in and filled the room with yellow glory. The sun had risen cloudless and brilliant at last on her wedding-day.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW THE WEDDING-DAY ENDED.

She replaced the desk in the trunk, and walked to the window drew back the curtain and looked out. Over emerald lawn and conpice, tall trees and brilliant flowers, the Octoher sun shone gloriously. No fairer day ever smiled upon all the earth. She stood for an instant-then turned slowly away and walked over to a mirror-had her night's vigil made her look wan and sallow? she wondered. No-she looked much as usual-a thought paler perhaps, but it is appropriate for brides to look pale. No use thinking o a morning nap under the circumstances-she would sit down by the window and wait for them to come. She could hear the household astir already-she could even see Sir Victor, away in the distance, taking his morning walk. How singularly haggard and wan he looked, like anything you please except a happy bridegroom about to marry the lady he loves above all on earth. She watched him with a gravely thoughtful face, until at last he disappeared from view among the trees. Seven o'clock! Eight o'clock! Edith's respite was ended, her solitude invaded at last. There was a tap at the door, and Lady Helena followed by Miss Darrell's maid, en tered.

charge him," etc. : but no one knows. The solemn words go on. "Wilt thou take Edith Darrell to be thy wedded wife ?" "1 will," Sir Victor Catheron responde, but in broken, inarticulate tones. It is the bride's turn. "I will !" The clear, firm voice is perfectly audible in the almost painfully intense stillness. The ring slips over her finger; she watches it curiously. " I pronounce ye man and wife," says the rector. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." It is all over; she is Lady Catheron, and

nothing has happened. They enter the vestry, they sign their names in the register, their friends flock round to shake hands, and kiss, and congratulate. And Edith smiles through it all, and Sir Victor keeps that white, haggard, unsmilnot so utterly absurd, Edith would think he looked at her though he were afraid of her.

On her husband's arm-ber husband's !she walks down the aisle and out of the church. They enter the carriages, and are driven back to Powyss-place. They sit down to breakfast-every face looks happy and bright, except the face that should look happiest and brightest of all-the bridegroom's. He seems to make a great effort to be cheerful and at ease ; it is a failure. He tries to return thanks in a speech; it is a greater failure still. An awkward silence and constraint creep over the party. What is the matter with Sir Victor? All eves are fixed curiously upon him. Surely not repenting his mesaillance so speedily. It is a relief to everybody when the breakfast ends, and the bride goes upstairs to change her dress.

The young baronet has engaged a special train to take them into Wales. The new-made Lady Catheron changes her shining bridal robes for a charming travelling costume of palest gray, with a gossamer veil of the same shade. She looks as handsome in it as in the other, and her cool calm is a marvel to all beholders. She shakes hands gaily with their friends and guests; a smile is in her face as she takes her bridegroom's arm and enters the waiting carriage. Old shoes in a shower are flung after them; ladies wave their handkerchlefs, gentlemen call goodbye. She leans forward and waves her gravgloved hand in return-the cloudless smile on her beautiful face to the last. So they see her-as not one of all who stand there

will ever see her on earth again. The house, the wedding-guests are out of ight-the carriage rolls through the gates of Powyss-place. She falls back and looks out. They are flying along Chesholm highstreet; the tenantry shont lustily; the joybells still clash forth. Now they are at the station-ten minutes more, and, as fast as steam can convey them, they are whirling into Wales. And all this time bride and bride groom have not exchanged a word !

That curious fancy of Edith's has come back-surely Sir Victor is afraid of her. How strangely he looks-how strangoly he keeps aloof-how strangely he is silent-how fixed ly he gazes out of the railway carriage window-anywhere but at her! Has his brain turned? she wonders; is Sir Victor going mad?

She makes no attempt to arouse him : let him be silent if he will; she rather prefers it, Had they all kept vigil? Her ladyship, in indeed. She sits and looks sociably out of room. Mr. Jamison's wooden countenance the pitiless, searching glare of the morning' the opposite window at the bright, flying looked stolid surprise.

CHAPTER XXII. THE DAY AFTER.

The last red ray of the sunset had faded the silver stars were out, the yellow moon shone serenely over land and sea, before Edith awoke-awoke with a smile on her lips from a dream of Charlie.

" Do go away--don't tease," she was murmuring half petulantly-the words she had spoken to him a hundred times. She was back in Sandypoint, he beside her, living over the old days gone for ever. She awoke to see the tawny moonshine streaming in, to hear the soft whispers of the night wind, the solt sleep lap of the sea on the sands, and to realize, with a thrill and shock, she was Sir

Victor Catheron's wife. His wife! This was her wedding-day. Even in dreams Charlie must come to her no more.

She rose up, slightly chilled from sleeping in the evening air, and shivering partly with that chill, partly with a feeling she did not care to define. The dream of her life's ambition was realized in its fullest; she, Edith Darrell, was "my lady-a baronet's bride the vists of her life spread before her in glit. tering splendor; and yet her heart lay like lead in her bosom. In this hour she was afraid of herself, afraid of him.

But where was be?

She looked round the room, half in shadow, half in brilliant moonlight. No, he was not there. Had he returned from his stroll ? She took out her watch. A quarter of seven-of course he had. He was awaiting her, no doubt, impatient for his dinner, in the diningroom. She would make some change in her dress and join him there. She went up to her dressing-room and lit the can'lles herself. She smoothed her ruffied hair, added a ribbon and a jewel or two, and then went to the drawing-room. All unnoticed, in the shadows, the letter for her lay on the 'able. She sat down and rang the bell. Jamison, the confidential servant appeared.

"Has Sir Victor returned from his walk, Jamison? Is he in the dining-room ?" 'Mr. Jamison's well-bred eyes looked in as-

tonishment at the speaker, then around the

Mr. Jamison, grave and respectful, his burning curiosity diplomatically hidden, answered.

"Jamison," the young lady said, her tones clear and caim, looking the man straight in the eyes, "your master has been obliged to leave Wales suddenly, and will not return. You may spend the night in packing up To-morrow; by the earliest train, I return to Cheshire."

"Yes, me lady." Not a muscle of Jamison's face moved-

not a vestige of surprise or any other earthly emotion was visible in his smooth shaven face. If she had said, "To-morrow by the earliest train I shall take a trip to the moon, Mr. Jamison would have bowed and said. "Yes me lady," in precisely the same tone.

"Is dinner served ?" his young mistrets asked, looking at her watch. "If not serve it immediately. I shall be there in two minntes."

She kept her word. With that light in her eyer, that pale composure on her face she swept into the dining-room, and took her place at the glittering table. Jamison walt-

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