

upon Stephen as his ideal of a man—a little lax in religious observances perhaps, not quite such a zealous churchman as he could have wished, but a man whose word was his bond, whose name was a synonym for honour, whom every woman might trust and every man esteem.

The disillusion was more than he could bear.

As Stephen walked to the door the young priest sank upon the couch and hid his face.

"This is the most miserable day of my life," he said.

Constance was a good wife. She went to him and put her arm round his neck.

"Poor St John," she murmured. "Poor boy. I am so sorry. But we must bear up. As my father would say, it is God's will. And these crosses may only be given to remind us of our own weakness, as a caution to guard our own footsteps lest we stumble too. We must console ourselves by remembering how much worse it might have been! Suppose he had not warned us of what he contemplated! Suppose he had not warned us! We should never have been able to hold up our heads in the county again."

Rachel laughed. The unexpected sound startled everyone. They thought she must be hysterical. Perhaps they were right.

## CHAPTER LXI

### WAITING FOR THE DAWN

WHEN Garth was alone at last he ought to have broken down; it would have been the only natural, wholesome sequel to the nervous strain of the last few days. Unfortunately, he did not. His bloodshot eyes were dry, and he paced his bedroom thinking thoughts which were not good for any man.

He had never felt so much alone, even on the night she died. Sympathy he had neither expected nor demanded from his people, but he had asked for comprehension, which they seemed unable to give.