## THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

for he said, hastily .--- "

"Never mind answering me now.

shall write to you in proper form, and you

A few days after this I received a givil

note from Miss Darrell, pressing me to spend

I made the rather lame excuse that I was

particulars about the wedding. "Miss Jocelyn is to be bridesmaid, then,"

describing a circle with his stick in the dust.

close. They have got a match for her.

"I think I shall be in London on the four-

teenth. I thought, Miss Garston, that there

"Yes; but Sara laughs at the idea, and Colonel Ferguson says it is all nonsense. I

I wished he would not call then. What

would soon die a natural death, if he would

only be wise. Poor Mr. Tudor ! I began to

be afraid that he was very much in earnest.

after all: there was a grave expression on

was a prejudice to weddings in May."

until the wedding is over."

bridesmaids."

800n."

"Yes. Poor Sara is afraid that she will

## UNCLE. MAX.

CHAPTER XXVIII,-Continued.

2

But I resolved to watch : no eyes should be so vigilant as mine. I was determined that nothing should escape my scrutiny ; at least I was in possession of certain facts that would help me in finding the clus I wanted. I knew now that Max loved Gladys and had tried to win her : that he had nearly done so brilliant successes really dazzled her fancy and blinded her to Max's quiet unobtrusive virtues ! Did she really and truly prefer her | cousin ? This was what I had to find out, and here Max could not help me.

There was one thing I was glad to know,-that Mr. Hamilton favored Max's suit. At least I should not be working against him. I do not know why, but the thought of doing so would have pained me: I no longer wished to array myself for war against Mr. Hamilton ; my enmity had died a natural death for want of fuel.

I felt grateful to him for his kindness to Max : no doubt he had a fellow-feeling with him. That dear old gossip, Mrs. Maberley, had told me something about Mr. Hamilton on my second visit that had made me feel sorry for him. Max knew about it, of course; he had said a word to me once on the subject, but it was not Max's way to gossip about his neighbors; he once said, laughing, that he left all the choice bits of scandal to his good old friend at Maplehurst.

It was from Mrs. Maberley that I heard all about Mr. Hamilton's disappointment, and why he had not married. When he was about eight-and-twenty he had been engaged to a young widow. "She was a beautiful creature, my dear,"

observed the old lady; "the colonel said he had never seen a handsomer woman. She was an Irish beauty, and had those wonderful gray eyes and dark eyelashes that make you wonder what color they are, and she had the sweetest smile possible; any man would have been bewitched by it. I never saw a young man more in love than Giles : when he came here he could talk of nothing but Mrs. Carrick : her name was Ella, 1 remember. Well, it went on for some months, and he was preparing for the wedding, -there was to be a nursery got ready, for she had one little toy, and Giles already doted on the child,-when all at once there came a letter from his lady-love ; and a very pretty letter it was. Giles must forgive her, it said, she was utterly wretched at the thought of the pain she was giving him, but she was mistaken in the strength of her attachment. She had come to the conclusion that they would not be happy together, that in fact she preferred some one else.

She did not mention that this other lover wis richer than Giles and had a title, but of course he found out that this was the case. The fickle Irish beauty had caught the fancy of an elderly English nobloman with a large family of grown-up sons and daughters. My dear, it was a very heartless piece of work : it charged Giles completely. He never spoke about it to any one, but if ever a man was heart broken, Giles was : he was never the same after that; it made him hard and bitter; he is always railing against women, or saying sour of heauty. I had often heard him dedisagreeable home-truths about them. And of course Mrs. Carrick, or rather Lady Howe, is to blame for that. Oh, my dear, she may deck herself with diamonds, as they say she dose, and call herself happy,--which she is not, with a gouty, ill-tempered old husband who is jealous of her,-but I'll be bound she thinks of Giles sometimes with regret, and scorns herself for her folly."

Poor Mr. Hamilton ! And this had all happened about six or seven years ago. No wonder he looked stern and said bitter things. He was not naturally sweet-tempered, like Max; such a misfortane would sour him.

Ah, well," I said to myself, as I went up to bed, "it is perfectly true what Longfellow 'Into each life some rain must fall, says, some days must be dark and dreary; but it Darrell called her. is strange that they both have suffered. It is Rut when I next

day's charing, rinsing out the children's bits of things, and ironing them too, how is a poor tired body like me to get religion ? I would say sometimes when I was fairly moithered

with it all. But, Miss Garston, my dear, 1'm glad, as I lie here, to know that I never neglected the children God had given me; and so he took care of all that; he knew when I was too tired to put up a prayer that it was not for the want of loving him. "No, indeed; Elspeth. I often think we

ought not to be too hard on poor people." tried to win her: that had wrought that was also evident. What had wrought that suddon chauge? Had Captain Hamilton's "He is no severe takmaster demanding bricks out of stubble; he knows poor laboring people are often tired and out of heart. I used to say to my master sometimes, 'Ah, well, we must leave all that for heaven ; we sball have a fine rest there, and plenty of

time to sing our hymns and talk to the Lord Jesus. He was a laboring man too, and he will know all about it.' I often comforted my master like that." Elspeth's quaint talk interested me greatly

I grew to love her dearly, and I liked to feel that she was tond of me in return. I could have sat by her contentedly for hours, hold-ing her hard work-worn hand and listening to her gentle flow of talk with its Scriptural phrases and simple realistic thoughts. It was like washing some pilgrim's feet at a

feast to listen to Elspeth. One evening she told me that she had been

thinking of me. "I wanted to know what you were like, my bairn," she said, with her pretty Scotch accent; "and the doctor came in as I was turning it over in my mind, so I made bold to ask him to describe you. I thought he was a long time answering, and at last he said, 'What put that into your head, granny ?' as if he were a little bit taken aback by the question.

" Vell, doctor,' I returned, 'we all of us like to see the faces of those we love; and I am all in the dark. That dear young lady is doing the Lord's work with all her might, and she has a voice that makes me think of heaven, and the choirs of angels, and the golden harps, and maybe her face is as beautiful as her voice.'

"'Oh, no,' he says quite sharply to that, 'she is not beautiful at all : indeed, I am not sure that most people would not think her plain.'

"I suppose I was an old ninny, but I did not like to hear him say this, my bairn, for I knew it could not be the truth; but he went on after a minute,---

'It is not easy to describe the face of a person one knows so well. I find it difficult to answer your question. Miss Garston has such a true face, one seems to trust it in a minute : it is the face of an honest kindly woman who will never do you any harm and then I saw what he meant. Why, bairn, the angels have this sort of beauty, and it lasts the longest; that is the sort of face they have there.'

I heard all this silently, and was thankful that Elspeth's blind eyes could not see the burning flush of mortification that rose to my face. The dear garrulcus old body, how could she have put such a question to Mr. Hamilton ? and yet how kindly he had answered ! A sudden recollection of Irish dark-gray eyes with black lashes came to my mind; I knew Mr. Homilton was a connois. scribe people, and point out their physical defects with the keenest criticism; he was singularly fastidious on this point ; but, in spite of my humiliation, I was glad to know that he had spoken so gently. He hal told the truth simply, that was all : at least he had owned I was true; I must content myself with this tribute to my honesty.

But it was some days before 1 could recall Elspeth's words without a sensation of prickly heat: it is strange how painfully these little pin-pricks to our vanity affect us. I was angry with myself for remembering them, yet they rankied, in spite of Elepeth's and quaint and homely consolation. Alas ! I was not better than my fellows: Ursuls Garaton was not the strong-minded woman that Miss But when I next met Mr. Hamilton I had other thoughts to engross me, for Elspeth was dying, and we were standing together by her bedside. I had not sent for Mr. Hamilton, for I knew that he could do nothing more for her; but he had met one of the children in the village, and on hearing the end was approaching had come at once to render me any help in his power. Perhaps he thought I should like to have him there. Elspeth's pinched wrinkled face brightened as she heard his voice. "Ay, doctor, I am glad to know you are there; you have been naught but kind to me all these years, and now, thanks to this bairn, I am dying like a lady. The Lord bless you both ! and he will,-he will !" with feeble earnestness. I bent down and kissed her cold cheek. "Never mind us, Elspeth : only tell us that all is well with you. You are not afraid, dear graany !" "What's to fear, my bairn, with the Lord holding my hand ?-and he will not let go; ah, no, he will never let go! Ay, I have come to the dark river, but it will not do more than wet my feet. I'll be carried over, for I sm old and weak, -old and weak, my These were her last words, and dearie." half an hour afterwards the change came, and Elspeth's sightless eyes were opened to the light of immortality. That night I took up a little worn copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress" that I had had from childhood, and opened it at a favorite passage, where Christian and his companion are talking with the shining ones as they went up towards the Celestial city, and I thought of Elspeth as I read it. "You are going now," said they, "to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the Tree of Life, and eat of the never-failing fruit thereof; and when you come there you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower regions, upon the earth, to wit, sorrow, sick-ness, and death, for the former things are passed away. "And the men asked, 'What must we do in that holy place?' To whom it was answered, 'You must then receive the comfort of your toil, and have joy for all your sor-I thought of Elspeth's last words, TOW "Old and weak, --old and weak, my dearie." Surely they had come true: those aged feet had barely touched the cold water. Gently and tenderly she had been carried across to the green pastures and still waters in the paradise of God.

There was a charming description of a trip they had taken, with little graceful touches of humor here and there.

I handed the letter silently to Max when he called the next day. I thought that it would be no harm to show it to him. He took it to the window, and was so busy read-ing it that I had half finished a letter 1 was writing to Jill before he at last laid it down on my desk.

"Thank you for letting me see it," he said, quietly: "it has been a great pleasure. Somehow, as I read it, it seemed as though the old Gladys Hamilton had written it, not the one we know now. Indeed, she seems much better."

"Yes, and we must make up our minds to "Yes, and we must make up on a sigh. do without her," I answered, with a sigh.

"And we shall do so most willingly, returned, with a sort of tacit rebuke to my selfishness, "if we know the change is bene-fiting her." And then, with a change of "What a beautiful handwriting hers tone, is, Ursula I-so firm and clear, so characteristic of the writer. Does she often write you such long, interesting letters? You are much to be envied, my dear. Well, well, the day's work is waiting for me." And with that he went off, without saying another word.

bring my prettiest songs. My next visitor was Mr. Hamilton. He came to tell me of an accident case. A young laborer had fallen off a scaffolding, and a compound fracture of the right arm had been 'ast evening before I was to leave for London. Mr. Hamilton met me a few hours afterwards. the result. He was also badly shaken and and asked me rather dryly what my numerbruised, and was altogether in a miserable ous engagements could be. plight.

I promised, of course, to go with him at once; but he told me that there was no immediato hurry ; he had attended to the arm and left him very comfortable, and he would do well for the next hour or two; and, as Mr. Hamilton seemed inclined to linger for a

little chat, 1 could not refuse to oblige him. "It is just as well that this piece of work has come to me," I said, presently, "for I was feeling terribly idle. Since Elspeth's desth I have not had a single case, and have employed my leisure in writing long letters to my relations and taking country rambles with Tinker "

"That is right," he returned, heartily. "I am sure we worked you far too hard at one time.'

"It did not hurt me, and I should not care to be idle for long.—Yes, I have heard from Gladys," for his eyes fell on the open letter that lav beside us. "I am rather disappointed that I shall not see her before I go away."

"Are you going away, then ?" he asked, very quickly, and I thought the news did not seem to please him.

"Not for three weeks. I hope my patient will be getting on by that time, ard will be able to spare me: at any rate, I can give his mother a lesson or two You know my cousin is to be married, and I have promised to help Aunt Philippa."

"How long do you think you will be away?" he demanded, with a touch of his old abruptness.

"For a form ight. I could not arrange for "A whole fortaight ! I am afreid you are less.

terribly idle, after all, Miss Garston. You Bre growing tired of this humdrum place. You are yearning for ' the leeks and cucumbers of Egypt,'" with a grim smile.

"You are wrong," I returned, with more earnestness than the occasion warranted. 'I feel a strange reluctance to re-enter Vanity Fair. The aplendors of a gay wed-ding are 1.0; to my taste. Sara tells me that her reception after the ceremony will be attended by about two hundred guests. To me the idea is simply harborous. I expect I shall be heartily glid to get back to Heathfield."

I was surprised to see how pleased Mr. Hamilton looked at this speech. I had been thinking of my work and my quiet little rarlor, not of Gladwyn, when I spoke ; but he stemed to accept it as a personal compliment.

"I assure you that we shall welcome you back most glaily," he returned. "The place will not seem like itself without our buy far more admired than her sister : that the village nurse. Well, you have worked hard enough for six months: you deserve a holiday. I should like to see you in your hutterfly garn, Miss Garston. I fancy, however, that I should recognize you."

ten in a more cheerful mood than usual. Gladys would have valued a few kind words alone all the afternoon : Etta never site with from him far more than the check; but per me now. How I wish Gladys would come haps he had written to her as well. But he back ! I have no one to speak to, and I miss beened rather surprised when I asked him her borribly." the question, "Poor Lady Betty !" the unestion.

Etta

"You would say so, if you knew how "Oh, no; I never write to my sisters: horrid it all was - Just now, as I was sitting spoke to her, for it was getting late, she they would not care for a letter from me. Etta offered to enclose it in a letter she had Etts offered to enclose it in a letter she had just finished to Gladys, so that saved all trouble. By the bye, Miss Garston, I hope you will come up to Gladwyn one evening before you leave Heathfield. I do not see why we are to be deserted in this fashion." Neither did I, if he put it in shis way: re-Neither did I, if he put it in shis way: re-

luctant as I was to spend an evening there in question !" she returned, pertishly. "You Gladys's absence, it certainly was not quite had better ask Witch Etta. Now you prekind either to him or to Lady Betty to refuse tend to look surprised. She won't let me He seemed to subicipate a refusel, however, come-there !"

" My dear child, surely you need not consult your cousin."

" Of course not," wrinkling her foreheadshall write to you in proper form, and you shall fix your own evening. Now I have hindered you sufficiently, so I will take my leave,"--which he did, but I heard him some time afterwards talking to Nathaniel in the time afterwards talking to Nathaniel in the the White Cottage ; Mr. Cunliffe and Mr. Indor are always there, and it is not proper. She is always hinting that I want to meet a long evening with them, and begging me to Mr. Judor, and it is no good telling her that I never think of such a thing." Lady Betty was half crying. A more innocent, harmless much engaged with my new patient, and little soul never breathed ; she had not a on the brink of some discovery that would fixed the latest day that I could, -the very spice of coquetry in her nature. I felt indig- overwhelm and alarm me. I could not under nant at such an accusation.

"It is all nonsense, Lady Betty," I returned, sharply. "Mr. Tudor has not called at the cottage more than once since Jill left "You are the most unsociable of your me, and then Uncle Mass sent him. When I sex," he added, when I had no answer to first came to Heathfield, he was very kind in make to this. "I shall take care that you doing me little services, and he dropped in are properly punished, for neither Canliffe two or three times when Jill was with me; nor Tudor shall be asked to meet you. Etta but indeed he has never been a constant was sure you would like one or both to come, visitor. When we meet it is at the vioarage, but 1 put my veto on it at once." or in the street."

"Then you were very disagreeable," I re-"You would never convince Etts of that," turned, laughingly. "I wanted Uncle Max replied Lady Betty, disconsolately. "She very much." But he only shock his head at has even told Giles how often Mr. Tudor me good humoredly, and scolded me for my goes to the cottage, and she has got it into ears. What had she meant by her want of amiability. want of amiability. I determined, when the evening came, that him there. It is such an odious idea, only he should not find fault with me in any way. worthy of Etta herself !" went on the little I was rather in a holiday mood; my patient girl, indignantly. "If I could only make

was going on well, and his mother was a neat, capable body, and might be trusted to look after him. No other cases had come to you, dear. No one who knows you would me, and I might leave Heathfield with a clear believe it. Such an idea would never occur conscience. Uncle Max would miss me, but to Mr. Tudor : he is an hones 5 simple young an old college friend was coming to stay at fellow, who is not ashamed to respect women the vicarage, so I could be better spared. I in the good old-fashioned way."

"Oh, yes, I like him, and so does Jill had seen a great deal of Mr. Tudor lately. 1 often met him in the village, and he always but I wish he were a thousand miles off, and turned back and walked with me: he met then Etta would give me a little peace. but I wish he were a thousand miles off, and me on this occasion, and walked to the gates How angry Gladys would be if she knew it of Gladwyn. Indeed, he detained me for But I don't mean to trouble her about my some minutes in the road, trying to extract small worries, poor darling."

I had never heard Lady Betty speak with such womanly dignity. She was so often childish and whimsical that one never expected her to be grave and responsible like be quite overshadowed by Jill's bigness; she other people. She kissed me presently, and has made her promise not to stand quite said I had done her good, and would I always believe in her in spite of Etta, for she was Grace Underley is as tall as Jill, and very not the giddy little creature that Etta made fair. Sara calls them her night and morning her out to be; she was sure Giles would thick more of her but for Etta's mischief making.

Mr. Hamilton came in after this, and sat down ry us, hut Miss Darrell did not make her appearance until the gong sounded, and then she hurried in with a breathless apology did not know you were coming to town so I do not know what made me watch her so clozely all dinner-time. She took very little "Some of my people will be up then," he said, absently. "Perhaps I shall have a peep at you all; but of course"--rather part in the conversation, seemed absent and thoughtful, and started nervously when Mr. Hamilton spoke to her. He told her once hastily-" I shall not call at Hyde Park Gate that she looked pale and tired; and she said then that the evening was close, and that her head ached. I wondered then if the headwas the good of feeding his boyish fancy? it sche had made her eyes so heavy, or if she had been crying.

Mr. Hamilton was a little quiet, too, through dinner, but listened with great interest when Lady Betty and I talked about his face as he turned away. Perhaps he the approaching welding. I had to satisfy knew, as I did, that our big awkward Jill her curiosity on many points,—the bride's would develop into a splendid woman; that and bridesmaids' dresses, and the programme one of these days Jocelyn Garston would be | for the day.

did not seem to bore Tne de

"Yes," was my scarcely audible answer, but he was satisfied with that monoryllable, He walked away after that, and joined Lady Betty. Miss Darrell had not moved; ale still lay back on the cuahions, and I thought her face looked drawn and old. When ]

"pore to her, for it was gooing rate, she roused herself with difficulty. "My head is very bad, and I shall have to go to bed, after all," she said, giving me her go to bed, alter all, sho said, giving me her hand. "I am afraid your heantiful singing has been thrown away on me, for I was half asleep. If thought I heard you and Gilts

asleep. The thought 1 month you and Gilts talking by the plane, but I was not sure." Mr. Hamilton walked home with me. He had resumed his asual manner; he told me he had had a lettor that day that would oblige him to go to Edinburgh for a week or 80

I think I shall take the night mail tomorrow evening, though it will give me a busy day : so, after all, I shall not miss you, Miss Garaton." And after a little more talk about the business that had summoned him, we reached the White Cottage, and he bade me good by.

"I hope you will have a pleasant holiday. Take care of yourself, for all our sakes." And with that he left me.

It was long before I slept that night. I felt confused and feverish, as though I were overwhelm and alarm me. I could not under. stand myself or Mr. Hamilton. His words presented an enigma. I felt troubled by them, and yet not unhappy.

Had Miss Darrell overheard him? I won. dered, I felt, if she had done so, her manner have been different. She seemed would jealous of her cousin, and always monopolized his words and looks. He had never spoken to me a dozen words in her presence that she had not tried to interrupt us. Bad she really been asleep ? These doubts kept recurring to me. Just before I fell asleep a remembrance of Leah's sullen face came between me and my dreams. Her insolent voice rang in my Why had Miss Darrell submitted to her im. pertinence? Was she afraid of Lesh, as Gladys said? I began to feel weary of all these mysteries.

CHAPTER XXX. WITH TIMBRELS AND DANCES.

Aunt Philippa and Sara came to meet me at Victoria. They both seemed unfeignedly glad to see me.

Aunt Philippa was certainly a kind-hearted woman. Her faults were those that were en. gendered by too much prosperity. Over much ease and luxury had made her lym. phatic and indolent. Except for Ralph's death, she had never known sorrow. Care had not yet traced a single line on her smooth forehead; it looked as open and unfurrowed as a child's. Contentment and a confortable self-complacency were written on her comely face. Just now it beamed with motherly welcom 3. Somehow, I never felt so fond of Aunt Philippa as I'did at that moment when she leaned over the carriage with outstretched hands.

"My dear, how well you are locking! Five years younger. - Does she not look well. Sara ?"

Sara nodded and smiled, and made room for me to pass her, and then gave orders that my luggage should be intrusted to the maid, who would convey it in a cab to Hyde Park Gate.

"If you do not mind, Ursula, we are going round the Park for a little," observed Sars, with a pretty blush.

Her mother laughed : "Colonel Fergusm is riding in the Row, and will be looking on for us. He is coming this evening, as usual, but Sara thinks four-and-twenty hours teo long to wait."

" Oh, mother, how can you talk so?" re turned Sara, bashfully. "You know Donald asked me to meet him, and he would be so disappointed. And it is such a lovely after-

noon.-if Ursula.does not mind." "On the contrary, I shall like it very much," I returned, moved by curiosity to see Colonel Fergo.on sgain. I had never seen him by daylight, and, though we hal often met at the evening reception, we had be exchanged a dezen words. I thought Sara was looking prottier than ever. A sort of radiance seemed to surround her. Youth and beauty, perfect health, a light heart, and satisfied affectious,-these were the gifts of the rods that had been showered upon har. Would those bright, smiling eyes ever shed tears? I wondered. Would any sorrow drive away that light, careless gayety ?: I hoped not. It was pleasant to see any one to bappy. And then I thought of Lesbis and Gladys, and sighed, "You do not lock at all tired, Ursie," ob served Sara, affectionately, laying her little gloved hand on mine. "She looks quite nice and fresh :: does she not, mother ?-- I was so sfraid that you would have come up in your nurse's livery, as Jocelyn calls it, -black serge, and a horrid dowdy honnet.' "Oh, no! L knew better than that," I re turned, with a complacent glance at my handsome black silk, ore of Uncle Brian's presents. L had the comfortable conviction that even Sars could not find fault with my bonnet and mantle. I had made a careful toilet purposely, for I knew what importance they attached to such things. Sara's little peech rewarded me, as well as Aunt Philippa's spproving lock. "It has not done her any harm," I head her observe, sotto voce. " She certainly looks vounger.' 1 took advantage of a pause in Same's chatter to ask after Jill. Aunt Philippa an-swored me, for Sara was bowing towards a passing carriage. "Oh, poor child, she wanted to come with us to meet yon, but it was Professor Huge's afternoon. He teaches her German lifer ture, you know. I was anxious for her bot to miss his lesson, and she was very good about it. She is coming down to afternoon tes, and of course we shall see her in the evening." "Poor dear Jocelyn ! she was longing to come, I know. You and Miss Gillespie are terribly severe," observed Sara, with a light laugh. She was so free and gay herself that she rather pitied her young sister, condemned to the daily grind of lessons and hard work. "Nonsense, Sara?" returned her mother sharply. "We are not severe at all. Jocelyn knows that it is all for her good if Miss Gillespie keeps her to her task, My dear Ursula we are all charmed with Miss Gillespis,even Sara, though she pretends to call her strict and old fashioned. She is a most amiable, ladylike woman, and Jocelyn is perfectly happy with her. "I am very pleased with Jocelyn," the went on. "You have done her good, Ursula, and both her father and I are very grateful to you. She is not nearly so wayward and self-willed. She takes great pains with her lessons, and is most industrious. She is not so awkward, either, and Miss Gillespie thinks it will be a good plan if I take her out with me driving sometimes when Sara is married. I shall only have Jocelyn then," finished Aunt Philippa, with a regretful look at her daughter. I was much interested in all they had to tell me, but I was not sorry when we entered the Park and the stream of talk died away.

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a good thing, perhaps, that such an experience is never likely to happen to me. There is some consolution to be deduced even from my want of beauty : no man will fall in love with me and then play false." And with that a curious feeling came over me, a sudden inexplicable sonse of want and loneliness, something I could not define, that took no definite shape and had no similitude, and yet haunted me with a sense of ill ; but the next moment I was struggling fiercely with the inknown and unwelcome guest.

"For shame !" I said to myself ; "this is weakness and pure selfishness, mere sent nental feverishness; this is not like the strong-minded young person Miss Darrell palls me. What if loneliness be appointed me ?-we must each have our cross. Perhaps, as life goes on and I grow older, it may be a little hard 10 bear at times, but my lone. liness would be better than the sort of pain Mr. Hamilton and Max have endured." And as I thought this, a sudden conviction came to me that I could not have borne a like fate, a dim instinct that told me that I should suffer keenly and long,-that it would be better, far better, that the deepest instincts of my woman's nature should never be roused than be kindled only to die away into ashes, as many women's affectious have been suffered to die. "Anything but that," I said to my-self, with a sudden thrill of pain that sur-

prised me with its intensity. All this time through the long cold weeks Elspeth had been slowly dying. Quietly and gradually the blind woman's strength had ebbed and lessened, until early in March we knew she could not last much longer.

She suffered no pain, and uttered no complaint. She lay peacefully propped up with pillows on the bed where Mary Marshall had breathed her last, and her pala wrinkled face grew almost as white as the cap border that encircled it.

At the commencement of her illness I was unable to be much with her. Susan aad Phabe Locke had thoroughly engrossed me. and a hurried visit morning and evening to give Peggy orders was all that was roasible under the circumstances ; but I saw that she was-well cared for and comfortable, and Peggy was very good to her and kept the children out of the 100m.

"Ah, my bairn, I am dying like a lady," she said to me one day, "and it is good to be here on poor Mary's bed. See the fine clean sheets that Peggy has put me on, and the grand quilt that keeps my feet warm ! Sometimes I could cry with the comfort of all ; and there is the broth and the jelly always ready; and what can a poor old body want more ?

When Susan was convalescent I spent more ime with Elspeth. I knew she loved to have ne beside her, and to listen to the chapters ind psalms I read to her. She would ask me to sing sometimes, and often we would sit ind talk of the days that seemed so "few ind evil" in the light of advancing immor-.ality.

"Ay, dearie," she would say, "it is not much to look back upon except in an angel's sight,-a poor old woman's life, who worked and straggled to keep her master and children from clemming. I used to think it hard sometimes that I could not get to church on Sunday morning,—for I was ay a woman for church,—but I had to stand at my wash-tub often until late on Saturday night. 'After a It was a long letter, and seemed to be writ. I them nothing. But all the same I knew I thought Etta would keep you. I have been stooping over me.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

MISS DARRELL HAS A HEADACHE. I began to feel that Gladys had been away a long time, and to wish for her return. I was much disappointed, then, on receiving a letter from her about a fortnight after Elspeth's death, telling me that Colonel Maberley had made up his mind to spend Easter in Paris, and that she had promised

to accompany them. "I shall be sorry to be so long without be sorry to be wrote. "I miss your companionship," she wrote. "I miss you more than I can say; but I am sure that it is far better for me to remain away as long as possible: the change is certainly doing me good. I am quite strong and well: they spoil me dreadfully, but I think this sort of treatment suits me best."

With a sudden rang I remembered Elspeth's worde. He does not think that such home attire will become me. I thought he preferred me in my usual nun's garb of black strge.

"Oh." I said, petulantly and foolishly, "I must own that I shall look rather like a crow dressed up in peacock's feathers in the grand gown Sara has chosen for me;" but I was a little taken aback, and felt inclined to laugh, when he asked me, with an air of interest, what it was like in color and material. "Sara wished it to be red plush," I re-

plied, demurely ; "but I refused to wear it ; so sho has waived that in favor of a dark green velvet. I think it is absolutely wicked to make Uncle Brian pay for such a dress; but it seems that Sara will get her own way, so I must put up with all they choose to give me.

"That is hardly spoken graciously. If our uncle be rich, why should he not please himself in buying you a velvet gown! I think the fair bride-elect has good taste. You will look very well in dark-green velvet: light tints would not suit you at all! red would be too gay !"

He spoke with such gravity and decision that I thought it best not to contradict him. even repressed my inclination to laugh : if he liked to be dogmatic on the subject of my dress, I would not hinder him. The next moment, however, he dismissed the matter.

"I agree with you in disliking gay weddings. The idea is sugurary to the second and a me. Broause two people elect to join hands The idea is singularly repugnant to for the journey of life, is there any adequate reason why all their idle acquaintances should accompany them with cymbals and prancings and all sorts of fooleries just at the most solemn moment of their life ?"

"I suppose they wish to express their

sympathy," I returned. "Sympathy should wear a quieter garb. These folks come to church to show their fine feathers and make a fuss; they do not care a jot for the solemnity of the service; and yet to me it is as awful in its way as the burial service. 'Till death us do part,'--cau any one, man or woman, say these words lightly and not bring down a doom upon himself?" He spoke with suppressed excitement, walking up and down the room : one could see how strongly he telt his words. Was he thinking of Mrs. Carrick? I wondered. He gave a slight shudder, as though some unwelcome thought obtruded itself, and then he turned to me with a forced smile.

"I am boring you, I am afraid. I get hor-ribly excited over the shams of conventionality. What were we talking about? Oh, I remember: Gladya's letter. Yes, she has writton to Lady Betty, but not such a volume as that," glancing at the closely written sheets. "You are her chief correspondent, I believe; but she told us her plans. For my part, I am glad that she should enjoy this trip to Paris. Really, the Maberleys are most kind. I sent her a check to add to her amusements, for of course all girls like shop-

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ugly duckling would soon change into a swan. There were times even now when Jill looked positively handsome, if only her short black looks would grow, and if she would leave off hunching her shoulders.

"I should like Lawrence Tudor to have my Jill, if he were only rich ; but there is no hope for him now, poor fellow!" I said to myself, as I walked up the gravel walk tcwards the house. Gladwyn looked its best this evening. The

shady little lawns that surrounded the house looked cool and inviting; the birds were singing merrily from the avenue of young oaks; the air was sweet with the scent of May-blossoms and wall-flowers: great bunches of them were placed in the hall.

Thornton, who admitted me, said that Leah would be waiting for me in the blue room, as M'ss Darrell's room was called : so I went up st once.

I was passing through the dressing-room, when I saw the bedroom door was half opened, and a voice-I scarcely recognized it as Miss Darrell's, it was ac different from her usual low, toneless voice—exclaimed, augrily, 'You forget yourself strangely, Leah ! one would think you were the mistress and I the maid, to hear you speaking to me."

"I can't help that, Miss Etta," returned the woman, insolently. "If you are not more punctual in your payments. I will go to the master myself and tell him." But here I

knocked sharply at the door to warn them of my presence, and Leah ceased abruptly, while Miss Darrell bade me enter. She tried to meet me as usual, but her face

was flushed, and she looked at me unensily, as though she feared that I had overhea Leah's speech. I thought Leah looked sullen and stolid as she waited upon me. It was a most forbidding face. I was glad when Miss Darrell dismissed her on some slight pretext. "Lesh is in a bad temper this evening," she observed, examining the clasp of a hand some bracelet as she spoke. I noticed then that she had brautiful arms, as well as finelyshaped hands, and the emerald syed snake showed to advantage. "She is a most in valuable person, but she can take liberties sometimes. Perhaps you heard me scolding

her; but I consider she was decidedly in the wrong. "She does not look very good tempered,' was my reply.

Miss Darrell still looked flushed and perturbed; but she took up her fan and vinai grette, and proposed that we should join Lady Betty in the drawing-room. Leah was in the hail. As we passed her, she addressed Miss Darrell.

"If you can spare me a moment, ma'am. should like to speak to you," she said, quite civilly; but I thought her manner a little menacing.

"Will not another time do, Leah?" returned her mistress, in a worried tone; but the next moment she begged me to go in without her.

Lady Betty was sitting by the open win-dow, with Nap beside her. I thought the poor little girl looked dull and lonely. She gave an exclamation of pleasure at seeing me, and ran towards me with outstretched hands. She looked like a ohild in her little white, gown and blue ribbons, with her short curly

Hamilton. His face never once wore its cynical expression; but when we returned to the drawing-room, and Lady Betty wanted to continue the subject, n- took her quietly by the shoulders and marched her off to Miss Darrell,

"Make the child hold her tongue, Etta," he said, good-humoredly. "I want to cox Miss Garston to sing to us." And then he came to me with the smile I liked best to see on his face, and held out his hand.

I was quite willing to oblige him, and he kept me hard at work for n arly an hour, first asking me if I were tired, and then begging for one more song ; and sometimes I thought of Gladys as I sang, and sometimes of Max, and once of Mrs. Carrick, with her wonderful gray eyes, and her false fair face. When I had finished Lsaw Mr. Hamilton looking at me rather strange by. "Why do you sing such sad songs?" he

asked, in a low voice, as though he did not wish to be overheard; but he need not have been afraid: Miss Darrel) was evidently taking no notice of any one just then. She was lying back in her chair with her eyes closed, and I noticed afterwards that her forehead was lined like an old woman's.

"I like melancholy tongs," was my reply, and I fingered the notes a little nervously, for his look was rather too keen just then, and I had been thinking of Mrs. Carrick.

"But you are not melancholy," he per-sisted. "There is no weak sentimentality in your nature. Just now there was a raision in your voice that startled me, as though you were drawing from some secret well." He raused, and then went on, halt playfully,---

"If I were like the Hebrew steward, ้อยสั asked you to let down your pitcher and give me a draught, I wonder what you would snswer ?"

"That would depend on circumstances. You would find it difficult to persuade me that you were thirsty, or needed anything that I could give."

"Would it be so difficult as all that ?" he retarned, thoughtfully. "I thought we were be r friends; that you had penetrated beneath the upper crust; that in spite of my faults you trusted me a little."

His earnestness troubled me. I hardly knew what he meant.

"Of course we are friends," I answered, hastily. "I can trust you more than a little." And I would have risen from my seat, but he put his hand gently on my eleeve. "Wait a moment. You are going away.

and I may not have another opportunity. I want to tell you comething. You have done me good ; you have taught me that women can be trusted, after all. I thank you most heartily for that lesson."

"I do not know what you mean," I faltered ; but I felt a singular pleasure at these words. "I have done nothing. It is you that have been good to me." "Pabaw !" impatiently. "I thought you

more sensible than to say that. Now, 1 want you," his voice softening again, "to try and think better of me; not to judge by appearances, or to take other people's judgments, but to be as true and charitable to me as you are to others. Promise me this before. you go. Miss Garaton."

I do not know why the tears started to my eyes I could hardly answer him,

Will you try to do this !" he persisted,

I almost felt as though I were in a dream as the moving kaleidoscope of horses and car-riages and foot-passengers passed before my eyen

(To be continued.)