

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

BY J. HARRISON

Kind Hearts are more than Coronets. And simple faith than Norman Blood.

"That I'll be home for Monday's breakfast, God willing," he said. "Don't my cousin—"

"Oh, you must go by all means—I'm only a foolish woman to say such things," she answered, with a loving look that he returned in kind, for well they understood each other.

"God help poor Harry's mother, and comfort her to-day. May He, in His mercy, keep me from parting so with any of my children."

"Agatha had said no further word. Now, however, when her mother left the room, she ran her knife through the prongs of her fork one by one, in and out, looking at them meditatively.

"It means a good deal to you—this death," she said, in an earnest tone. "Are you thinking of all it does mean, Hugh?"

"Well, sister?" he asked, quietly. "Harry Lindsay is dead, and Uncle Eric is such a crazy old—no, I don't mean that—he is so erratic rather, you are the next one according to his ideas."

"Hugh's upper lip curled a trifle, and his blue eyes flashed. The past came before him very vividly just then, and the picture was not a pleasant one.

"We won't speak of such a terrible contingency," he said, with some bitterness. "Terrible!" She opened her eyes at him in honest wonder.

"Hugh?" The fact remains that Harry Lindsay dead means much to Hugh Lindsay living."

"You forgot that there is one other who has prior claim to Uncle Eric," said Hugh.

"Which one? Oh, Laurence!" the corner of Agatha's mouth curled upwards in a slight smile. "You know that his name is blotted out for ever and ever from the annals of Lindsay Manor."

"Can you say so with certainty? In my opinion, he was the dearest beloved—and one cannot forget so easily. If Uncle Eric has been hard towards him, it is because he is struggling against his own betrayed love.

"At any rate we will waive this question, supposition, probability—anything you care to call it—right here and now, Agatha, and for good. Aunt Estelle would rather endow a home for indigent canary birds with her money than let it go to the Catholic branch—while Uncle Eric is a stout, able-bodied, country-bred man of sixty-five years, hale and hearty—and will live to be a hundred, I sincerely hope. I pray thee, my dear, let such talk rest between me and thee!"

"He spoke jestingly now, but there was a deeper undercurrent to his tones, which told that he was altogether in earnest. Agatha realized this, but she had not yet learned enough wisdom to drop a subject when the pursuing of it would only antagonize the listener.

"I don't care," she began stubbornly. "You know Uncle Eric can't live for ever, and you also know—"

"Mrs. Lindsay entered just then. She caught the last words, and glancing from one to the other, read the look in Hugh's eyes. She understood at once what they had been talking of. Perhaps, in the fondness of her heart, a smile, in thought had found place for a moment. Only for a moment, however, as quickly gone as it came, for well she knew the obstacles in the way, obstacles almost impossible to surmount.

"Tut, tut," she said, somewhat testily. "Do not let us hanker after dead men's shoes, daughter. Weren't you speaking of Uncle Eric? I thought as much. I can tell by the disgusted expression on Hugh's face that he—"

"I wasn't disgusted, mother," said Hugh, cheerfully. "Agatha was just figuring—perhaps in a way that a fond sister may be permitted to figure. Don't do it any more. I ask you, dear—no even to yourself. Predict me a better fate than watching the breath of one old man."

"Nothing could exceed the kindness in his voice. Probably, had John Perry not been present Agatha would have smiled and changed the conversation. But under existing circumstances she rose from her chair and went to the window.

CHAPTER II.

The Lindsay of Lindsay.

In the great ballroom, which was opened only on the occasion of a marriage or a public festivity—not since was laid on the occasion of a death—was the room of Harold Eric Lindsay, deceased nephew and adopted son of Eric Lindsay, of Lindsay Manor.

There were candles at his head and at his feet, and the room was shrouded in gloomy black, and the scent of flowers was mingled, overpowering with their heavy breath, spilling over their fragrance upon the shut-in air until exhausted. And, dying, the blossoms were replaced by fresh ones, and, sputtering, the candles were taken out, and new ones put within the sockets of the tall candelabra.

Young Harold Lindsay, careless—more than careless, perhaps, as the circumstances of his death proved—had been none too great a favorite in Lindsay Manor, nor had there been much affection given him in all his life. He had taken his

brother's place, and his brother had loved indeed. Outside the Lindsay precincts he was hailed as a good comrade and a fine fellow. He lived the life of a man of leisure, an indolent, Southern gentleman, with nothing to do, and all his days to do it in. He had been what women called "gay," and what the world called "sporty," but of that Eric Lindsay had known nothing until now. Alone he died, and alone he lay here, in royal state, for the moment when custom and decency demanded that he be placed to rest with his fathers. Alone! And above all things, in all his pleasure-loving life, Harold Eric Lindsay could never hear to the altar!

There were strange and curious tales of the "young master" and his escapades, which accorded but ill with the actions of the rather reserved nephew with whom his Uncle Eric had come in contact. These stories got, God knew but how, to the old man's ears, and he had fallen into a passion like to be the death of him. But he was shrewd, nevertheless, and he could put two and two together, for all his erratic ways, and his two and two did not argue much in the dead man's favor. There were gambling debts and racing debts—and bills and bills—all rushing in one upon the other. The old man's character rose to such a pitch that he scarcely respected the presence of the dead in the quiet house—for Eric Lindsay had not much self-containment. Through his lawyer he made arrangements to pay all and everything—to clear the dead man's name and keep whole the dead man's honor. And though it would cost him a steep and pretty sum, he remarked, sagaciously, that it was a cheap ride of such an heir.

Which was a cruel thing to say of a dead man. There were those who thought so—for Uncle Eric had womenfolk about him—and womenfolk are kind at heart—especially towards the dead, whatever faults they find with one, while alive. But only one had the courage to look the old man in the face and tell him so. We are coming to her—perhaps I am over-anxious to best of you—

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granted to the Lindsay line, and in the light of the new America its war seemed eclipsed. During the Civil War the great estate had fallen into pitiable condition—neglected and miserable weed-grown and unprofitable. But the dogged feudal strain still ran in the Lindsay veins. It was a tradition that the eldest-born of the house held his name and reckoning higher than life itself. Every eldest son so far, in the New World as in the Old, clung to the house of his birth with passionate devotion—so much so as to excite the derision of those who profited by bartering land and trading in merchandise in this continent of traffic.

Old traditions clung like leeches to Eric Lindsay of Lindsay Manor, in South Carolina—so that one could scarcely believe him an American, born of American parentage.

He was the oldest of three brothers. They had grown to manhood with the mutterings of war in their ears, for the great conflict was brewing then that parted North and South. They looked at the grim old mansion, with its falling turrets and gables, its leaking roof, and its moth-eaten, and scores of lazy, shiftless negro dependents, for their father had been as indolent as he was proud, and had made no effort to better himself or to acquire aught above the necessities of life. The fire of American restlessness stirred in their veins, so the two younger men left the manor to the eldest son—who, indeed, owned the inheritance every stick and stone of it—and went out into the world beyond the Carolina States to seek their fortune, leaving the elder with the ruined house, the profitless acres—with one roof of which he refused to part—and all the old-time traditions of Lindsay huddled close to his bosom—the traditions that had been the pride and bane of all their lives.

The youngest, Gerald, thoughtless and careless, being but twenty-one, did not wander far, but took to himself a wife and settled in the neighboring State of Georgia. When war did break out in earnest, his fever moved him, and leaving his wife and son, Laurence, to his brother, Eric's care, he bravely marched away to stamp a Yankee bullet.

Eric, however, and his second son, Harold Eric Lindsay, was born after his hero-father's death.

Hugh Lindsay, the second brother, fared farther and more to his own welfare. He took part in the war also—that war which turned brother against brother—but he fought with the North, and came through unscathed. Then he, too, married, and settled down in a comfortable, if not wealthy home—he and his wife Margaret, and, as they came, their four children, of whom the Hugh we have met was the eldest.

Eric Lindsay, left alone, cast eyes about him as to how he could better his condition. Some time since wandering through the Southern States, there had strayed a thrifty Hollander, with a pack upon his back, and a tongue as smooth as a well-oiled machine. He made his way north, where craft and industry abounded, but ever and always came back to the South again, and to Carolina—for it had first welcomed him, and he liked it. His eyes were bright and his cheeks rosy, and he stood upon his sturdy feet with all the strength of his sturdy peasant blood.

He threw well in his bartering, for maid, wife, or widow a woman may be, but she had done worse, in his eyes, than faring into the world heedless of old traditions—worse even than fighting against the State that bore him. He had married a Catholic—and the Lindsays, since the time of that wonderful "Reformation," had ever been staunchest Church of England! Nor was that all of it!—His children, his boys—the horror of it!—were reared in the Catholic Faith. Nor did his debasement end here. He himself, returned to the Church of his fathers.

There was the picture of a Lindsay in the gallery who had been a holy Bishop, a man who, if not a saint, had been the most reverend of his age. There was another picture, too, of a splendid, noble-browed cavalier, and there was a story about him in one of the yellowed parchment volumes, kept as sacred in the Lindsay treasure vault. He was Gerard Lindsay, who had given his life for that priceless gift—his Faith. Nay, more, he had seen his little children slaughtered—the three of one poor hunted Irish priest, who, fleeing, bore within his breast the Body of Christ. That was in the time of Father Persons and Father Campian, the noble Jesuits who came from Rome to say Mass in London, in the time of Lord Grey, the cruel Lord-Lieutenant, the tyrant of Ireland, the time when even his noble birth could not outweigh the fact that this Lindsay was Catholic. For it said even more in these parchment volumes. It told how this same Gerard Lindsay stood with arms folded across his breast singing the "Te Deum," while the soldiers took aim and fired, and wounded him in many places, trying to see how they could injure before they killed him. And reading such stories as these occasionally, Uncle Eric's hot blood stirred within him, and he did not feel, for the moment, so bitterly towards his brother Hugh.

Aunt Estelle was different. She had no such toleration in her veins. With pure peasant toughness she held fast to her hatred of the Babylonian tower, and all her pomps and works and followers, as she had been taught in her rigidly Methodist childhood. And once when Hugh Lindsay came home to the manor on a visit, she said some things to him about this Faith which she had never understood. He did not answer her, because she was a woman. But he spoke to his brother when he found him alone, and he said enough to put him into a passion. And Uncle Eric, in a passion, was none too careful of others. He retorted hot and furiously. The consequences were that Hugh Lindsay's wife fell terminally abruptly, and there had been no further communication between the two families—not even when the younger brother died—until now.

(To be Continued.)

Time tries all things, and as Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup has stood the test of years it now ranks as a leading specific in the treatment of all ailments of the throat and lungs. It will soften and subdue the most stubborn cough by affecting the organs and restore the affected to their normal condition. Use will show its value. Try it and be convinced of its efficacy.

the old pedler's death, and that of his good-wife, which occurred some years after his marriage, this wealth increased enormously. They had no one to leave it to but their daughter Estelle, and their niece, Mildred, who was them but a boy, and who received from them her portion. Just in all things, they gave the little girl all to which she was entitled.

On the whole, the Lindsays got along remarkably well. Estelle Deikmann, despite her great fondness for birth and breeding, or because of it, I should say, made Eric Lindsay a good wife. They were childless, which was their only regret. Mildred Powell had grown up into a tall and stately girl. Lindsay Manor had been her home from early childhood, and she had acquired some of its pride from constant association. If Estelle Deikmann ever remembered that it was her wealth brought by the prospect of glorious breeding, she looked at the result with deep content. She was the wife of the most respected man in the county, of the man in whose veins ran the blood of ancestors, who could point back to ancestors that had really lived and moved and had their being, and whose pictures, hanging in the long gallery, filled her with awe. Especially when she came to her own portrait at the end of the line, and gazed at the somewhat too fresh-faced young woman who, did she live in England, might be Countess Lindsay. She rolled her tongue over and over under her tongue—it was, a toothsome morsel, and without a shadow of dissatisfaction in its sound. For Eric Lindsay paid her such honor and respect as she could not have had from one in her own station, and she deferred to him with an awe of his authority that she certainly would never have received had he married in his station. She had faults, indeed, and much she lacked in many things, but after almost thirty years of married life these little slips of tongue and deportment no longer made her husband wince as in the earlier days.

He had taken Gerard Lindsay's eldest boy, Laurence, as his own, and fully intended making him his heir. He loved him in his way, and gave him full liberty. It was an unwise liberty—the boy was spoiled, encouraged, petted. And when he grew up to manhood his will crossed his Uncle Eric's in many things. But to what to blame, and what is the ick? Inevitable. There were such bickerings and such quarrels as made the manor a veritable babel often. There were little murmurings all the time and mighty storms of anger, for Laurence Lindsay was a heedless, merry, graveless scamp, who spent money with fingers wide apart, and his ways threatened ill for the future of the house. It ended one day as all had predicted it must end, Laurence Lindsay left his home for ever, and the old lord of it, cursing him, packed bag and baggage after him. And he took young Harold Eric then, who was wiser than Laurence, had been in that he kept his spendthrift ways to himself—nor did Eric Lindsay hear of them until his sudden ending, when all was revealed, and the old man had another bitter hour.

He bethought him then of the widowed Margaret and her children—who had never come near him to beg or to borrow, and, acting on sudden impulse, he sent the telegram to Hugh. There had been estrangement between old Eric and that dead brother, but he had done worse, in his eyes, than faring into the world heedless of old traditions—worse even than fighting against the State that bore him. He had married a Catholic—and the Lindsays, since the time of that wonderful "Reformation," had ever been staunchest Church of England! Nor was that all of it!—His children, his boys—the horror of it!—were reared in the Catholic Faith. Nor did his debasement end here. He himself, returned to the Church of his fathers.

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