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Pictorial Lives of the Saints

MARCELLA GRACE.

By ROSA MULHOLLAND.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS.

As Father Daly turned back when a few perches up the path, and saw her waving her hand to him, he remarked within himself that he had never seen her look so fair and sweet as on this particular morning.

Marcella went on her way with no abatement of her unusually good spirits. The effort to reassure Father Daly had reacted upon herself and all realization of danger had left her.

At this point her way left the road and struck out over a piece of vividly colored moorland skirted by black bog on the side where it swept across to the mountains.

Just before coming to this pool by the edge of which her path was to lead her, she suddenly stood still, fancying she saw a figure lurking behind one of the short dark bushes.

In an instant she remembered the waiting car, the threats of her mid-night visitor, and concluded that her daring had ruined her.

"I am going to nurse this patient myself," she said. "It is an interesting case. The doctor says that nothing but the greatest care can save him.

After midnight the patient opened his eyes and began to rave, and Marcella fell on her knees and listened to every word as if life or death were to be decided by his delirious outpourings.

He stared at her again still more strangely and gave a look up the road by which she had come. Then he stood a few moments irresolute, and finally took his horse by the head and began leading it over the rough moorland where there was no way for a car, only a footpath.

appeared so bewildered that Marcella feared that he taken fright of the fever, and was going to run away.

"I implore you, for God's sake," she said, "to do this act of charity. The man will die if he is neglected longer. He has been ill with the fever for many hours. And it is not so contagious as you suppose."

The man with the car swore a great oath which scorned the dread of contagion, and ended in a muttering about this being an extraordinary business.

Nobody had any knowledge of the patient whom "Herself" had picked up on the roadside. His features were strange to every one.

When a few hours later, Father Daly had come to the hospital to look for her, to assure himself that she had not suffered from his necessary desertion of her in the morning, he looked at the sick man with pitying interest, and remarked that his face was entirely unknown to him.

While he talked she was asking herself whether she would dare to tell him of her overwhelming discovery. Her heart was beating so fast that she drew her breath in long inspirations occasionally; her hands were trembling, and it was only by walking about that she could hold the inclination to laugh, to cry, to weep.

"Yes, I know, I know; but the doctor thinks this man may die without being able to speak."

"No, I will not tell, so long as there is a hope for his life. Now go, Father Daly. But you will come back. You will be here?"

The scourge had been abating for some time past, and all the other cases now in the hospital were convalescent. The present patient had been put in a shed by himself, and his nurse was alone as she watched through that night by his bed.

A red gold beam from the sunset fell on her as she sat with some needlework in her hands. Her face was a little pale, but fair and cheerful under her nurse's cap, her fingers did not tremble as she played the mtsein frills of the apron she was making for one of her

strong man always in attendance, to control physically the frenzy of the patient which she was powerless to soothe; and fled out on the moor in the breaking dawn to wrestle with her impatience, to cry aloud to heaven for a light to guide her in this cruel emergency.

If he should die in her hands with out one sane word? Never had her faith and courage been so tried as now. How was she to remain quiet and trustful in God's Providence through all the hours that were to decide whether her new-sprung hope was a beacon light, or only a wandering fire that would flicker maddeningly and go out?

The people around began to wonder at her exceptional interest in this particular case of the sickness. Seeing the surprise in their eyes she tried to account for it, saying that this was a stranger, that no one knew his friends, that it would be especially sad were he to die without giving some clue to them.

Father Daly exhorted, commanded, marvelled. It seemed to him she had neglected her duties at home, her care of Mrs. Kilmartin, her own health, forgotten even Bryan himself in her extravagant solicitude for the life of this ill-looking stranger whom chance had dropped into her hands.

And yet such sudden unreasoning terror coming so quickly upon her former almost reckless daring perplexed him. A fear grew within him that the long strain upon her was telling terribly fast, and that her mind was becoming a little astray.

"You will not be out of the way when the crisis is near? I am anxious about this man's confession."

"Yes, I know, I know; but the doctor thinks this man may die without being able to speak."

"No, I will not tell, so long as there is a hope for his life. Now go, Father Daly. But you will come back. You will be here?"

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girls. There was a strange sweetness on her downcast eyelids, the after-gleam of much prayer, the sign of a faith that can live while waiting upon hope. So the patient saw her when he first unclosed his eyes and looked around him.

After a while she was conscious that he was awake and watching her, but by no sign did she betray that she was aware of his narrow eyes he took note of the expressions flitting across her face, so pure and still under its snow-white head-dress, the patient movement of her hands, the dainty touch with which she adjusted the niceties of her work with her fine finger-tips.

Not until the next morning did he admit that he was conscious of what was going on around him, and in the meantime he watched, and took note of everything with the wariness of a detective.

A Marcella came and went, hovering near with all that was needed for his comfort, bringing him nourishment with her own hands, placing a few late flowers where his eyes could see them, shading the light and hushing every sound that could disturb him, she was all the time nervously aware that she had been placed upon her trial, that she was undergoing a searching examination, and that presently, not by looks only, but by words, difficult perhaps to answer, would she be called upon to betray herself and to confess her recognition of the identity of this enemy who had been so strangely delivered into her hands.

"You are very good to me," he said, "and I want to know why? I have been wondering how I came to be here."

"You were found ill and unconscious on the moor. You had caught the fever. Of course we brought you here."

"I found you on the way here one morning. I saw that you were a stranger overtaken on your journey by the sickness. We have had a great deal of the sickness in this part of the country. You have had it very badly."

"Yes, I am a stranger here," he said. "I was walking this part of the country, for my holiday. I am employed in Dublin as a clerk, and I do not often get a holiday. I had got a shooting license, and I had my gun. What has become of my gun?"

"You are not the same as the others. You look like a lady."

He turned his head away impatiently, as if annoyed at being joked with, and Marcella arranged his pillows without another word and went and sat down at a little distance with her work. She was afraid to look up, or almost to breathe for some time after, fearful of betraying her satisfaction. In this first encounter she knew she had got the advantage. He believed she had not recognized him, that he was as yet safe and unsuspected, and might remain where he was to get well without fear of detection. Let her now encourage his feeling of security. She must not for one moment relax the effort to hide the terror, disgust, and impatience with which the sight of him inspired her, but rather try to subdue and ignore those feelings so as to do the work she had appointed to herself in a Christian spirit. The meaning of the words "do good to

those that hate you," came to her for the first time with clearness and force in all its difficulty. She would give him her charity, striving to forget what he was. This was the utmost she could attain to.

Meanwhile the enemy did not hate her. He felt himself secure for the time, quite unknown to and unrecognized by her. After all, why should he have been afraid of detection? In her excitement and trouble during the trial she had probably not been observant; besides he had then been shaven and close cropped; now his hair was long, and his beard had grown, and in this place it was not likely that any attempt would be made to interfere with either. On the night when he had gone to frighten her in her home his face had been disguised beyond all possibility of identification. It was evident at all events that she had no distrust of him. With all her pluck, and she was a brave one, she could not have concealed some sign of such a feeling, had it existed in her mind; neither could she by any possibility have behaved as she was behaving. The police would have been at his bedside, the magistrates would have been watching him, but now it seemed nobody was taking any heed of him but herself. Was it only that she was consoling her sad heart with deeds of charity, as the people said of her? He had heard there were women in the world of that order, who, when their own hearts were broken, could only get along by serving, tending, saving others who were in pain.

He was not altogether an ignorant man, and only for certain misfortunes, ill taken, in his youth, might never have been a criminal; yet these thoughts surprised him, coming to him with each long, stealthy look at Marcella's face, as ideas came to a reader of the printed page of a book. He began to feel a distinct pleasure to see her sitting near him, a pleasure such as he had never felt since the days long ago, in another life perhaps, when he might have been, when he probably was, good. He was too callous to hate because he had done her harm, neither had he any fear of her because of a power she might possibly possess to harm him. He had run a risk of that, but it was over now. He would soon be strong enough to rise up at any moment he pleased and disappear from this place. There was nothing to stay him but the resistance which might be made by those beautiful womanly hands, no one to oppose him but a creature whom he could in a moment feel with a blow; and it pleased him to think he would rather not injure her, that possibly he might never have to do so now.

No, he would not go away just yet. He would prolong the pleasure of getting well in such hands. Even for his own security and that of those who employed him, it was desirable that he should not move too soon. He asked her to read to him, for the luxury of hearing her voice. He would exact every attention that his sickness entitled him to receive. He could never in his life have such a chance again, and he would enjoy it now, to the utmost. He paid little heed to the sense of what she read, only lay seeing dim visions of what good men's lives might be who had women like this to love them and care for them.

Marcella, fulfilling her tasks and seeing him get stronger every day, began to grow sick with fear of the hour when he might be strong enough to defy her. Her dream of touching his heart and conscience began to fade. Could she expect a man like this to turn round and denounce himself, to betray the organization of which he was the tool, unless life were, in any case, over for him, nothing to be looked for but death? Was he really going to get completely well, and had the doctor been deceived? Should she have to entrap and betray him herself into the hands of justice, after saving, and serving and cherishing him? She began to suffer from an intolerable fear that she had been wrong from the first in this affair, that she ought to have declared her knowledge of his identity while he lay too ill to struggle, ought to have stationed the police at once round his sick bed. In that case he might, on recovering, have avenged himself on her by still withholding the confession that would redeem Bryan, but at least her evidence of his attack upon herself would go far to prove that the secret society had really been Kilmartin's enemy, and that her husband was, as he had protested, the victim of a plot. If this was the utmost she could hope to obtain by his arrest now, how cruel she had been to herself, how needlessly she had aggravated her own sufferings in the matter. She began to watch him with a new anxiety, dread of his too speedy recovery, and to ask herself how soon she ought to call on Father Daly to share her secret and her responsibility, to give her his countenance and advice.

Yet the convalescent was certainly gaining less strength than might have been expected as a result of the abundant care that had been bestowed upon him. He did not appear to have got cold; and yet he coughed incessantly. Of this, however, he did not himself take any heed, was quite satisfied with his own progress, felt that he should only too soon be able to rise up and depart out of this place, in which thoughts had come to him which would have to be banished as soon as he had power to turn his back upon the comfortable walls that had sheltered him.

At last one night, a sort of scarco came over him, a fear that some fatal supernatural change had been wrought in him by the gentleness of this woman, a change ruinous to his own interests and to the interests of the society to

which he belonged

He got up in the self, easily took up his own, and of the place. As he remained in the hospital, he passed unnoticed. The ingrate in this disguise "thank you" to other patients and all agreed that it changed him to a foot travel to night, nobody cared. There was every such sudden ex- cause of his im- eyes, they would "Herself" comm- but the ungrate- nothing to dese- such a fuss about troublesome life.

Marcella had would be able and as she wen in the chill misty she must have b- madness during unhappy madn- chance which he- turn to her. T- tion with wanc- been idle, wanc- ought to have- personal ministr- under the wat- he would die w- While her m- perplexity and with passiona- thoughts were of a group of slowly out of drew nearer, a- up in her. He- returning, and- was it merely- patient, or wa- die? And ye- at the last he- He was broug- laid again in- hastily summo- restored to c- broken a blood- but he was n- perhaps week- who had foun- upon the way- "You have s- self, my mar- the patient- "Why were- and bring on- "I thought- and that his- trouble once- going to en- the matter w- "I am so- have been i- past. Is it- know it? I- you have do- end."

The patient- tes and then- "You are- the truth?" "Certain- before, only- chance. I- the matter c- not now liv- —though it- When the- over and he- the patient- "Look h- all as it o- I'm bound- to say ag- or two litt- straight. I- send me- portant on- the public- thing fair- can pick u-

Marcella- the bed w- doctor, p- steadily a- spoken, c- brought s- had been- "Ah, I- to do it fo- to me, th- my life I- body."

Why not- who have- in Hood's- You can- come. T- bottle of- all kind- with it s- One tri- minor s- equal as- and see- Closures- quick in- death in- aware th- not del- Try a do- Corral- It acts- fails to- Differ- ular in- THOMAS- known, c- concurre- pain, c- excellent- compl-

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