# Under the Lilacs.

CHAPTER IV.

The words were ever before me in letters of fire—"Gone away—left no address!" Both by night and by day they beat upon my brains. Christmas passed; bright lovely spring was coming. What was I to do?

Mark had gone away and left no address. No letter no prayer from me could reach him. In all the wide world I did not know where to look for him. He seemed as lost to me as though he had gone into another sphere.

What could I do? In the July of this year he was to come home and marry me; I was waiting for him. I had no other future; no other home, nothing else to which I could look forward. Where was he—my handsome brave young lover who had loved me so dearly, and had worshipped me so entirely? Was he living or dead? Hope, health, strength, everything failed me except my faith; that was undimmed and untouched. If he was lying ill, unable to write, I knew he was thinking of me longing for me; if he had been suddenly sent to some distant place on business, from which perhaps he was unable to send news to me, he would be miserable as I was. Even if he was lying dead in the depths of the sea, his last thought had been mine. Every hour of the day and night this one question met me—What must I do? There were times when the impulse was strong upon me to go out into the wide world and search for him. Then faith and patience came to my aid. They said, "Wait here for him. He will come with the lilies and roses; wait in home and patience."

The spring came and went. I avoided looking at the lilacs. Their perfume filled the air—I could not help breathing it—but I avoided looking at them. My heart was sick, half dead with pain and the sight of them would almost have killed me. Then June came with its roses. My little store of money was all gone, and I knew that I could not remain many weeks longer at the cottage. Mark would come in July, if he were living; and if he did not come, I should know that he was dead. So in desolation and anguish of heart I counted the days. I dreaded at times to look in the mirror; I was so afraid that my hair had grown gray. The color had left my face, and the light had died from my eyes; but July was coming.

Ah, me, can I ever forget the slow torture of that month? Every day I went to the group of trees where we had parted, to wait as I had promised. One by one the sultry days went by, and then I felt sure that he was dead. He would have come to me had he been living. My handsome, brave, true young lover was dead.

I would only pray to Heaven with weeping eyes that I might die too. During these long months of suspense I had lived through the suffering of a lifetime.

When the month of August came I saw that part of my life was ended. I put on mourning for my lover. The sun of my life had set; I would mourn for Mark as wives sorrow for a beloved husband. I never thought of another lover, or of future comfort, or hope, or happiness. Wherever he lay dead, there my heart was buried with him. The realities of life came upon me, and I believe saved me from going mad. I sold all my furniture, and books, everything I possessed; I gave liberally to Dorothy, and bade farewell to my lovely old home. I was twenty-one when I went to London to seek my fortune. The first post I obtained was that of teacher of English in a boarding school in France. I did not like it, and through the influence of one of the elder pupils I obtained an engagement in England—not as governess this time, but as companion to Lady Yorke, who lived at a grand old place called Westwood, in Kent. I was glad enough to return to England. Before going to Westwood I went to Gracedieu with perhaps a forlorn hope that I might hear some news of Mark—of how he had died.

I went the old round—from the rector to the lawyer, and from him to Mark's acquaintances. No one had heard one word. He was dead—Mark, my darling,—dead, and I was alone. There was but one thing before me—to live my life and pray that I might join him in heaven.

It was whispered from one to another that my lover was dead; and then to those who cared most for me there came a gleam of pity for one who had no earthly ties.

It was in the month of July that I went to Westwood. Lady Yorke was very candid with me. She told me that the one complaint she suffered from was ennui. She was lonely; she wanted amusement; she needed a cheerful companion. She would require me to spend the greater part of my time with her. I must read to her, answer her letters, send out her invitations. She would expect me to spend my evenings in the drawing-room, to sing when needed, take a hand at whist. She wrote most unreservedly to me. The life would be tedious, she owned, but then I would have a large salary and a comfortable home.

On the second of July—I shall never forget the date—I found myself at the pretty station of Woodheaton, the nearest town to Westwood. A luxurious carriage awaited me, and I enjoyed the drive. Every one knows how the sea washes the fair Kentish coast. Even amid the odor of the flowers, the scent of the rich clover meadows and the fragrance of the rose-covered hedges I distinguished the sea breeze. The park was a beautiful undulating expanse, full of fine old trees of every variety of form, and carpeted with wild flowers. The house was a grand old mansion that had been built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The sunlight fell on the great gables and the large windows. My courage almost failed me when I saw what a magnificent home mine was to be. I felt some little curiosity as to what Lady Yorke was like. I pictured her an invalid—pale, delicate, quiet. Before long I was in her presence, and I perceived my mistake. I saw at once that her chief malady was due to having had all she wanted all her life. She had never known trouble or care. She was a slender woman, with dark eyes and dark hair.

An expression of languid discontent marred the beauty of her face. There was a line across her white brow that betokened temper, and something else in the expression of her lips told the same story. The room was beautifully furnished and decorated. The lady herself, was lying on a couch, doing nothing, neither reading nor working. She looked up with a glance of relief as I entered.

"Miss Chester," she exclaimed, with something of surprise, "I am glad to see you! I was just feeling as though I did not know what to do with myself. Pray sit down."

Lady Yorke did not look like a person who was easily amused. I took a seat as requested.

"I was greatly pleased with your references, Miss Chester. Madame de Deffand tells me that you are devoute. Is it true?" She did not wait for an answer. "I am glad you have come," she continued; "time hangs heavily on my hands. May I ask for whom you are in mourning?"

Oh, Mark, how little that mourning expressed my true sorrows for you! I felt my lips tremble when I answered:

"For the gentleman to whom I was engaged, Lady Yorke."

"How very sad!" she said, just in the same tone in which she would have cried, "How very pleasant!"

Then she looked at me with a smile. "You did not tell me that you were a beauty, Miss Chester."

"I did not know it," I replied.

The only voice that had ever called me beautiful was hushed forever.

"People of your way of thinking do not value the gift of personal beauty, I suppose," she remarked.

It was my turn to smile.

"What do you mean by my way of thinking, Lady Yorke?"

"Madame tells me that your thoughts are more in heaven than on earth," she replied.

"The man I loved is in heaven," I said. "Where else could my thoughts be?"

"People are not often true to a dead love," said Lady Yorke calmly. "For my part, I do not see much use in it."

"Truth to the dead and truth to the living are one and the same thing," I said, with the rash presumption of one ignorant and inexperienced. I had known only one love and one faith—how could I judge of others?

"I hope you will like your rooms," said Lady Yorke. "I told Masham the housekeeper, to give you the two most cheerful. They are in what we call the 'Queen's Wing.' I hope you will be very comfortable, Miss Chester. I think you told me you had no relatives?"

"No," I replied; "I am quite alone in the world."

"Ah, then," said Lady Yorke, with a pleasant smile, "you will be the better able to devote all your time, thought and attention to me!"

CHAPTER V.

In a few days I was quite at home at Westwood and understood my duties. They were certainly heavy. Fortunately for me, with my great love of early rising and fresh air, they did not commence until ten in the morning. Lady Yorke did not care to be disturbed before that hour. I do not think she had ever seen the sun rise or the dew lying like diamonds on the grass. So the fresh sweet hours were all my own. I rose almost with the sun, thinking often that if people knew how lovely the early morning was they would never waste much time in sleep, and went out into the park.

It seemed to me always that I spent those early morning hours with Mark; the only difference lay in this that he was on one side of the blue sky and I on the other. And I was possessed with the idea that he could hear and see me. Ah, my love, how I loved you!

When I went back to the house after those hours of peace and rest, my mind was braced for the day. If I had not seen Mark I had looked long and lovingly at the blue heaven where he was. I had not spoken to him but the whisper of the wind, the ripple of the leaves the song of the birds, all seemed so many messages from him. After ten o'clock I had never another moment to call my own. Then Lady Yorke was in her boudoir, and every morning she had a thousand new wants. It was a puzzle to me how she invented them. There were letters to answer, invitations to send out. She liked to hear me read. Every day brought its papers, periodicals, magazines, new novels, all of which must be read to her. Then we walked or drove. At luncheon Lord Yorke joined us, and then her ladyship rested. We had another drive in the afternoon dinner at seven and in the evening Lady Yorke requested me to sing. I liked that time best, for I sung every sweet love-song that I knew, and I sung always to Mark. Oh, my love, how I loved you!

Lord Yorke was a kindly generous man, quite fifteen years older than his beautiful languid young wife. He worshipped her, and she in her helpless way was fond of him. They were very rich. They owned this fine estate at Westwood, and they had a magnificent house in London and a villa in Florence. That was Lady Yorke's whim. When the winter was too cold and the spring too wet, she went to Mentone, where she could bask in the sunshine the whole day long. They had numerous visitors and friends. It was to fill the interval between the departure of one set of visitors and the coming of the next that I was wanted. Lady Yorke could not endure to be alone, she must be constantly amused. They had no children; and that was the one drawback. I liked Lord Yorke; he was always kind and courteous to me. He was not much interested in politics; the care and well-being of his estate occupied his whole time. He would not have a land agent or a steward; he did everything himself—kept his accounts, received his rents, saw his tenants overlooked the home estate. Hardly a weed was pulled up without his orders. He was just as industrious as his young wife was the reverse. We were always excellent friends. At times he asked me to help him, and his thanks always pleased me.

Poor Lady Yorke! Young, beautiful wealthy, she was yet one of the most discontented and miserable of women. She had not a useful interest in the world. She had servants who waited upon her hand and foot; she had a husband who indulged her and granted every wish that she expressed; she was never called upon to make any exertion either of body or mind. She was never compelled to think; Lord Yorke and Mrs. Masham thought for her. If twenty visitors were coming, it made no difference to her. Before I had been many days there I had read her character accurately. She was ill from indolence.

Watching her for a whole day, seeing her study nothing but herself, her wants, her wishes, her whims, and her caprices, ordering things because she fancied, and not because she wanted them, spending money profusely without looking at what was purchased—seeing her send away the most delicate fruits, the most recherche of dishes, the most costly of wines, under some pretext or other too absurd to mention—I thought of the many poor women dying for want of food, of the many children perishing from hunger, and have wondered. She did not seem to know anything of the hard side of life. She ate from silver plate; she drank from the rarest of Bohemian glass; tea was served to her in the finest of Dresden china. She wore the finest of linen, of lace, silk velvet, and satin; she had jewels of priceless value; in all her life she had never wished for one thing that had not been granted to her. She perhaps had read the words "hunger," "cold," "privation," "starvation," but she did not understand their meaning. How could she when she had never felt either cold or hunger in her life? Her life had been a Sybarite's life of pleasure, and the result was that beyond herself she had not a care or thought in the world. It seemed to me that if I could awaken this sleeping soul I should not have lived in vain.

I remember the first time that she seemed to wake to a consciousness of suffering. She had never been ill herself, and she had never seen any one in pain. We were crossing the park when suddenly above our heads we heard a discordant cry of birds. Suddenly a little bird fell fluttering and dying at our feet. It had been attacked and wounded by some bird larger than itself. I shall never forget the look in the dark eyes, the faint fluttering of the little wings ere it died. I had raised it in my hand and it died there.

"Poor little thing!" I said. "It has had a short life, but a merry one, I hope, in these great green boughs."

"Is it really dead?" Lady Yorke, asked, drawing near with a pale face. "I do not think I have ever seen anything dead."

"Is that true, Lady Yorke?" I asked, looking at her in wonder.

"Yes, quite true."

"Have you ever wondered what death is like?" I inquired.

"I do not think so. I have never thought of death at all."

"Have you never lost any friends?" I asked again. "Has no one whom you loved died?"

"No—no one whom I loved. People I have known have died; but then they always seemed to me quite apart from the rest of us."

I looked in wonder at the beautiful face.

"Have you ever thought that you yourself must die?"

"I suppose I shall die some time," she replied; "but I am young now——I need not begin to think about it yet."

"Have you ever heard of young people dying, Lady Yorke?" I asked.

"Yes, but that does not often happen, I should think. Age and death naturally go together."

"My Mark was young," I said, "and strong, he never had a day's illness and he died."

"Where did he die?" asked Lady Yorke, and suddenly I remembered that I did not know. That which seemed so certain to me might be very uncertain to others. "I try never to think of such disagreeable things," continued Lady Yorke. "It does no good, and makes one's life miserable."

"No life can be really happy that is not ruled by such thoughts," I replied. "We ought to live for the next world and not for this."

"Madame Deffand said you were very serious. For my part I could not give my mind to such ideas. The very sight of that dead bird has made me feel ill and miserable."

"Yet, everything living in this world has to die sooner or later," I said.

She made no remark, but I saw that the indolent, selfish soul, was roused from its long sleep. The first thought of death and pain had come to her, never to be forgotten.

(To Be Continued.)

## SWORDS MADE FOR INDIA.

### HOW THE BEST SWORDS ARE MANUFACTURED AND TESTED.

**The Strongest Man in England — He Does His Best to Break the Polished Steel—Is a Great Favourite of the Queen.**

The recent fighting in India has so alarmed Lord Salisbury that he has prevailed upon the Queen to send a supply of fine Birmingham swords to the English troops in India, writes a correspondent of the Cleveland Leader Fighting at close range the English have been driven back from their strongholds through the impotence of their bayonets which crumbled under a thrust, and the delicacy of their swords that snapped when in use. The troops of India, on the other hand, armed with native dirks and swords, made steady advances, and the result was defeat rather than advance.

The Queen has opposed the use of swords, but now consents to their use, and, proud of her work, she has for the first time in the history of Great Britain thrown open to the public the royal small arms factory at Sparkbrock near Birmingham.

SWORD MAKING.

Hitherto the Queen has carefully guarded the making of her rifles and swords, and those who were in the secret, have like Hiram Maxim with his gun, kept to themselves the process by which small arms are made. But in these days of war talk it is not a bad thing to know how these pieces of steel are turned out.

In the first place England does not pretend to use all the arms that she manufactures, but she goes on making them and storing them away in the big storehouses for use some day if need be.

The process by which the rifles are made is not greatly different from that of other countries but the swords have a process of their own which is truly remarkable.

The writer had the pleasure of going through the small arms factory near Birmingham a few days ago and of seeing the swords turned out. The bars of crude steel are brought in loads to the factory ready to be made into swords. The building in which they are made is a long, low one, and each workman is impressed with the importance of his position. In Her Majesty's workshops there is no such thing as slighting a piece of work. The men are paid large sums, even in these days of English low wages, and each understands that he has an important part of the work resting on his shoulders.

The workmen in the first open shops were at work upon bars of rolled steel which they were heating and turning into different shapes, ready to be carried red-hot out of the furnace, and deposited into a massive machine. Here the steel was elongated and cut off at the right length. It was then placed under a steam hammer, which shaped it in approximately the shape that it finally bears, the rifles being rounded and the sword steel flattened.

It was then put through a bewildering mass of machinery, going from one machine to another, until it has passed through one hundred processes, and been carried by twelve miles of leather belting. It was afterwards carried into another building, where final work was put upon it, and, finally, into the third building, where it was to be tested by machinery.

THE BIG MAN.

The most interesting thing of all is the final testing of the swords. This is done by one man, the most powerful workman in the United Kingdom. He weighs nearly three hundred pounds and is as muscular as he is heavy. He is a giant, and could take a place in any dime museum in the world. He is an athlete as well as a giant, and keeps up his strength by constant exercise.

This man's work is to test the swords. He has before him an immense elm block, round and hard, without the smallest defect in it. It is absolutely smooth, and there is no chance for a groove or flaw.

As the swords are turned out they are placed in great piles near this huge workman, and the giant takes them one by one and tries them upon the elm block. He takes his sword in his right hand, and with all his force strikes the block with the blade. If it proves equal to the test and does not snap, he turns it over and strikes the block with the back of the sword. He stands alone in a big, open space, so that no one can be hurt by a defective piece as it flies off. If it passes this test it is a pretty good sword, and needs only the final trial of the bridge.

The "bridge" trial consists in bending the sword over a machine until it describes a beautiful curve. It is then quickly released and must snap back to its former position. It is a fact that one out of five swords break beneath the big man's blows, and at each broken one the big man laughs and rubs his hands gleefully, for he has accomplished his mission—that of finding

A DEFECT IN THE STEEL.

To watch him at work you would think he were a demon to destroy the weapon which is the pride and hope of the British army.

There has never been an armor scandal in Victoria's works, and perhaps it is to show how elegantly her royal arms are made that she has thrown open her factory for public inspection. In another part she has a very [illegible] department where weapons are repaired. Here sword handles are removed from defective swords and good swords put upon them.

A rifle goes through one hundred and fifty processes before it is finally hardened. This hardening is done by dipping when red-hot into a vessel containing oil. The same process is carried on with a sword only the steel is made much finer and the hardening processes are repeated many times.

The Queen is very proud of her big man who tests her royal arms, and once when he was taken ill, she was so fearful of his life that she sent the royal physician down to Birmingham to treat him free of charge.

Swords are now being rapidly shipped to India, and English soldiers can fight at a short range without the crumbling of their weapons.

## GRINNING SKULLS.

**That Inclosed Timepieces in Early Days of France.**

Some timepieces have come within the reach of every one, and watches are made large enough for bicycle bars and small enough for a lady's ring, it is curiously interesting to recall some of the old-fashioned ones that served our ancestors so well generations ago. Even to-day some of us have caught a glimpse of the portly old gentleman whom Dickens loved to picture with his ornate seals wide guard and enormous watch that filled to bursting the capacious fob that was its resting place but like many other cumbersome fashions these respectable timepieces are interesting now only as curios.

Long before our time or that of our grandfathers watches were made in such fantastic fashion that it is a marvel that their owners managed to carry them about.

No one seems to know the exact date of the first timepiece, but the middle of the fifteenth century seems to have been the period when "portable clocks" began to appear. In the different collections of antiquaries there are a few specimens of the "Nuremburg eggs," or watches made in oval shapes and coming from the town after which they were named.

In the possession of Lady Fitzgerald, of England, there was one watch which was

SHAPED LIKE AN EAGLE,

which had a small boy on its back. This odd ornament was made to hint at the story of Jupiter and Ganymede. The breast of the bird opened to show the dial beneath it, and the works were most elaborately ornamented. When the fair owner of this treasure did not wish to wear it on her girdle she could stand it on her table.

Gold and silver smiths seem to have let their fancy run riot, during the sixteenth century, and watches made in the form of ducks, acorns, of cockle shells and of all possible things made their appearance. Most of them struck the hour, and one notable invention fired a diminutive pistol at certain intervals.

When Henry II. of France, fell in love with Diana of Poitiers, about 1547, she was a widow and wore mourning. Of course that offered an opportunity to the extravagant courtiers of the day, and the result was that all the ornaments at court were fashioned after such gruesome ideas that the ridiculous was close upon the sublime, to say the least. Rings were formed liked skeletons, tiny coffins of gold were worn as ornaments, and they contained enameled figures of death, but the most striking products of the hour were the watches, which dangled from fair ladies' belts and which represented grinning skulls, the tops of which lifted to disclose the dial plate. Of course, the eyes were brilliant jewels and small fortunes were spent in the elaborate ornamentation of these funeral trinkets. But the watches, the trinkets and the people who wore them have all passed away, and since 1620, or thereabouts, the flat, oval or round timepiece has been the general favorite.

Time does not go so fantastically with us as it did with those untutored geniuses of earlier times and perhaps our plain substantial watches tell as much of our character as did those bizarre inventions of earlier days about the men and women who wore them.

## THE VEGETABLE WORLD.

**It Accounts For the Year Being Twelve Months Long.**

It is all owing to the vegetable world that the year is 12 months long. It might have been shorter or longer, had Nature arranged affairs differently, as things are now, however, a little reflection will show that any other arrangement is out of the question.

In an interval of 12 months, according to Dr. Whewell, "the cycle of most of the external influences which operate upon plants is completed." If the earth were moved by one eighth of its distance nearer the sun the year would be a month shorter.

In the course of a year the fruit trees, as an example, have precisely enough time to fulfil their duties; if the year were twice its length they would be unable to bring forth two crops of fruit, for the reason that they would not have the winter season for rest. The ascendency of the sap, the putting forth of the leaves, the flowering and the fruit bearing, are all timed precisely according to the seasons. For this reason they cannot be altered, and the year is 12 months long.

It has been calculated that there are at least 10,000 kinds of "vegetable watches," of all kinds, which are timed as accurately as mechanical watches to fulfil their duties in the course of a solar year.