Under the Lilac Tree.

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 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 overlooekd 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. Mashem 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 those 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.)

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The original family tree was of the apple variety.

The deadly parallel is too much for the average love letter.

Pleasures are the commas used to punctuate life's sad story.

It is better to have loved and wed than never to have loved at all.

Newspaper articles climb the ladder of popularity by going the rounds.

A woman may pretend to be convinced against her will, but she never is.

The knife grinder is happiest when things are dull in his line of business.

The smaller the calibre the bigger the bore. This applies to men, not firearms.

Some men prefer the joys they are after here, to the prospective joys of the hereafter.

WANTED A REST.

Won't you take a seat? said the gentleman in the car, rising and lifting his hat.

No, thank you, said the girl with the skates over her arm. I've been skating and I'm tired of sitting down

ROUND THE WHOLE WORLD.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE.

Old and New World Events of Interest Chronicled Briefly—Interesting Happenings of Recent Date.

Last year's statistical record of Monte Carlo is 35 suicides.

The Chinese dress in white at funerals and in black at weddings.

The King and Queen of Denmark are now both in their 81st year.

Few natives of India eat more than twice a day, and thousands only once.

Viscount Pollington eldest son of the Earl of Mexborough, has openly professed Buddhism.

Widespread drought, the most disastrous known for generations, is ravaging Cape Colony.

A derelict steamship boiler floating in the English channel was recently picked up by a London tug.

Some of the wooden churches of Norway are fully 700 years old, and are still in an excellent state of preservation.

Mark Twain, like the late Cristoforo Colombo, now has a bust. It is the work of the Viennese sculptor, Hegenbarth.

Berlin has female commercial travellers who go their rounds on tricycles, to which are attached their boxes of samples.

When the Simplon tunnel is completed the distance between London and Brindisi will be diminished 122 kilometres.

Sumatra kerosene is competing with the Russian oil in the markets of the far east. The supply seems to be inexhaustible.

An extraordinary increase in the Japanese navy is imminent, no fewer than 33 war vessels being now in course of construction.

An unexpected result of the English cricketers' visit to Australia is the engagement of Mr. A. C. MacLaren to a Melbourne young lady.

Laird Brothers, of Birkenhead, have been obliged to refuse orders for six fast torpedo boats for foreign Governments on account of the engineers' strike.

Lady birds are being imported into Egypt from New South Wales in order to protect fruit from parasitic insects. They may prove as bad a curse as the sparrows.

There are 31,110 students matriculated at German universities this winter semester, an increase of 1,000 over last year. The largest increase is, as usual, in the law faculty.

Joseph Arch, the laborer member of Parliament, left memoirs which the Countess of Warwick, the Lady Brooke of the Tranby Croft baccarat scandal, has edited, and will publish soon.

France is hastening to make of Jiboutil, on the Red Sea, the best port for Abyssinian trade to counterbalance the effect of the Italian transfer of Kassala to the English in Egypt.

The British Grenadiers now possess the tallest soldier in the army. He is six feet and three-quarter inches in his stocking feet, and, as he is only 23 years of age, may grow yet. He is an Irishman.

Berlin University, owing to the large number of foreign students frequenting it, has established an instructorship in elementary German to enable them to learn the language in which the lectures are delivered.

The most elaborate pipes are those of the Turks and Persians. The bowls are large and heavy, not intended to be carried about, and the stems are several feet long and flexible. Some of these pipes cost £200 each.

Commander Henry James, retired, the oldest officer on the British navy list, has just died at the age of 99 years. He entered the service in 1812, but had no luck in promotion, and was retired for age as a lieutenant fifty-six years ago.

A big fossil bog oak weighing forty tons, which geologists assert to be ten thousand years old, has been dug up at Stockport, England, in excavating to lay down a sewer. The corporation of the town want to blow it up with dynamite, in spite of protests from scientific men throughout England.

Natal has been enlarged by the annexation of Zululand and Amatongaland under letters patent issued by the Crown. That the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State are not also annexed is due to a little miscalculation made two years ago.

"Pinafore" discipline seems to rule on the Italian ironclad Lepanto. When in a Spanish port some time ago every one on board, from the Admiral down, chipped in to buy a ticket in a Spanish Government lottery. The ticket drew a prize of $200,000, which has been divided among the officers and crew.

Even Spain is waking up to the uses of the bicycle. A retired lieutenant-colonel was walking in his orange garden one day recently when four well-dressed men entered, who, after bargaining with the old gentleman for his crop, bound and gagged him, breakfasted at leisure in his presence, then broke open his furniture and walked off with $7,000 he had in the house. They were pursued by a bicyclist, however, who caught up with them and secured their arrest.

A business woman in Arkansas, who evidently knows more about running a hotel than she knows about the English language, thus advertises: "This hotel will be kept by the widow of the former landlord, Mr. Brown, who died last summer on a new and improved plan."

A secret society, the members of which are bachelor girls, has been organized at Ponca City, Oklahoma. The members are pledged to remain single, to disclose in secret meeting the names of every person who asks them to marry, and describe just how each proposal was made, etc.

A young married couple, from Northampton, Mass., had an exasperating experience in New York. They came to the metropolis on their honeymoon trip, and in the crowded streets lost each other. After each had vainly spent several hours in seeking the other, they returned home separately.

Hard luck was the fate of a preacher in a Georgia town. Although his congregation had agreed to pay him six dollars a week, he couldn't collect a sixth of this sum. He resigned, and in his farewell sermon, said: "You were in favor of free salvation, and the manner in which you have treated me is proof that you got it."

A young man's prospective mother-in-law, in Boston, insisted on kissing him every time he called to see his girl. He didn't hanker after her kisses, and fearing that he might be expected to continue the custom after he married her daughter, he broke off the match. Now the girl has begun suit for breach of promise ,laying her damages at $50,000.

The screams of little Dennis Woodruff, of St. Louis, Mo., aroused his mother from her slumbers, and he complained of a severe pain in the head. A doctor discovered that the pain was caused by a cockroach in his ear. At daylight similar pains brought racking agony to the mother, and it was found that a live cockroach had made its way into her ear.

A remarkable dream disturbed John Howard, of Bostwick, Ga. On Monday, although in seemingly good health, he dreamed that he would die on Sunday. On Tuesday the same dream was repeated, and for the third time on Wednesday. On Sunday he bade his relatives and friends good-by, and died that night, between eleven and twelve o'clock.

Twenty-six persons comprise the family of Aaron Quail, a colored man, of Bridgeville, Worcester County, Md. They are husband and wife and twenty-four children. One child is by the present wife, the other twenty-three are by Mr. Quail's first spouse, who died two years ago. They eat at two tables; and to avoid the unlucky thirteen, twelve sit at one table and fourteen at another.

An item of religious intelligence and a cooking recipe became mixed in a London paper, with this result: "The Catholic missionaries in Central Africa are accustomed to begin their work by buying heathen children and educating them. The easiest and best way to prepare them is to first wipe them with a clean towel, then place them in dripping-pans and bake them until they are tender. After which cut them in slices and cook for several hours."

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.

HE HAD.

Have you any visible means of support? asked the judge.

O, yes, your honor, replied the prisoner.

After fumbling in his pocket for a few seconds he laid before the magistrate a card on which was printed in bold type the words: There's a sucker born every minute.

Sash and Door Factory.

Having Completed our New Factory we are now prepared to FILL ALL ORDERS PROMPTLY.

We keep in Stock a large quantity of Sash, Doors, Mouldings, Flooring and the different Kinds of Dressed Lumber for outside sheeting.

Our Stock of DRY LUMRE is very Large so that all orders can be filled.

Lumber, Shingles and Lath always In Stock.

N. G. & J. McKECHNIE

CRIME ON THE DECREASE.

ANNUAL REPORT OF ONTARIO'S INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

Facts and Figures which Show that Drunkenness is Becoming Less Common — Costs of Maintaining the Central.

Some interesting facts are contained in the annual report of the Ontario Inspector of Prisons and Reformatories. Before figures are gone into, it is stated that the majority of the jails in the province are poor, both from a sanitary point of view and also for the classification of prisoners Hopes are entertained that the coming year will see some improvements in this respect.

During the past year there has been a desire on the part of counties to establish county houses. This the department think is a step in the right direction, as it will relieve the jails from overcrowding.

Another thing that was plainly shown by the figures was that drunkenness was on the decrease. There had been 1,716 committals during the past twelve months, and that was a decrease of 191 from the previous year. In the last fifteen years there had been a noticeable falling off in inebriates. In 1882 there were 4,777 committals for drunkenness. This, the report says, shows the result of legislation and the work done by the temperance people in the jails.

598 COMMITTALS

The number of committals to the Central Prison were 598, which, with 380 in custody on October 1st, makes the total number incarcerated during the year 978. This is two less than the previous twelve months. Only once in five years were the committals so few, while the average population, 398, is the highest known to the prison. This is accounted for by the fact that during the history of the prison, down to 1896, the average sentence had been six months and 22 days, while in 1897 the average was increased to nine months, showing that long sentences have a beneficial effect. The falling off of committals has been most marked, and the indications seem to point to a diminution of crime in the province. The number of vagrants this year is much below the number of previous years. The average for the past three years has been 56, compared with 125 for the three years previous to 1894. The cost per capita maintenance of prisoners has been 39.1 cents per day, against 48.8 cents of 1896, or a decrease of 5.7 cents.

COST OF THE CENTRAL

The total outlay at the Central was $56,806.24, as against $63,777.77 in '96. The net earnings of industries amounted to $24,690.59, reducing the cost of maintenance to 22 cents per prisoner. The total net costs for the year were $82,115.63.

In the Central there are a number of cells that are inadequate. In the hospital there is no provision for the separation of the patients. The schoolroom was too small and inadequately equipped.

There has been a great falling off in the number committed to the Ontario Reformatory for Boys. There were only 37 commitments in the last twelve months, as compared with 55 the previous year. The average population has gone down from 209, in 1890, to 132, and the number in residence, 123, is the smallest on record.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The report recommends that the inmates of the Mercer Reformatory be given more systematic employment. Last year there were 93 committals, or six less than the year before. To the Refuge there were sent 22, against 24 in 1896.

The total number of commitments was 8,884, as compared with 9,058 for 1896, showing a decrease of 174. Of this number, 444 were committed for crimes against the person, while 176 were sent to jail for crimes against public morals and decency.

CULTURED INSTINCTS.

Our cook is so refined!

Is she?

Yes; she has never broken anything but our most expensive and artistic china.

HIS ESPECIAL CHARM.

She—All the girls think your friend a charming conversationalist.

He—Yes; Dick is a fellow of very few words.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION.

What do you think of my story? asked Whipples of the critic.

I think you were wise to make it your last.

ONTARIO ARCHIVES
TORONTO