

UNDER THE LILAC TREE.

CHAPTER XVI.

"You must get up," she said. "You are the only person in this house who is kind to me. You must get up and fetch me a bottle of brandy. I must have it."

"It would be better, I thought, to take her a bottle of poison."

"I must have it," she continued. "I mean to have it. I know what is going on, although I am shut up. I know proud, refined Lady Yorke would not like her household raised during the dead of night by one of her guests calling for something to drink. She would not like it; but if you do not give me what I want I will beat the doors down, I will stand in the hall and scream until the whole house is raised."

A pretty dilemma. A nice visitor! I thought to myself; but I did not let her see my dismay.

"Where is Martha?" I asked, wondering how she had escaped, and thankful beyond words that she was here with me in the "Queen's wing," rather than in the western tower with the visitors.

Lady Severne laughed—and I think that laugh was the most horrible sound I ever heard in my life.

"Poor old Martha!" she said. "She is off her guard. She fell asleep, and I took the key. What will she say when she wakes? Now, Miss Chester, am I to raise the roof from the house, or will you get what I want?"

"Neither," I said. "I am stronger than you. If you attempt to scream or to make a noise, I shall prevent it, even if I hurt you. You will go back to your own room and remain there in quiet."

I was quite uncertain how my experiment would succeed. I was prepared to see her spring at my throat as she had at Martha's a few days since, to see her beat the doors with horrible cries, as she had on the previous day, when Martha was compelled to send for Lord Severne.

I looked at her steadily and calmly. Gradually the wild eyes fell before mine. I knew that if I could assert and maintain my authority over her then, I should keep it—and I did so. I took her back to her room, and the prayer that rose to my lips every moment was "Heaven help Mark!"

If this was his life, if these were the scenes to which he was accustomed, this creature, hardly human now, the companion of his life, then indeed had he need of Heaven's help and pity.

I contrived to get her back safely to her room, and to wake Martha who was horrified at her carelessness, but as she told me with tears in her eyes she was worn out. Never can I forget the night that followed. I could not describe it. To me it had the horror of an Inferno. I cannot tell what would have happened if Martha had not consented, at last, to give her some brandy.

The next night Martha was so worn out that I persuaded her to go to bed. Nothing else could restore her, and I promised not to leave her unhappy mistress for a moment.

"You will have a terrible night, Miss Chester," said the grim woman. "I shall not mind that, Martha, if you have a good one," I answered.

I found Lady Severne inclined to be quiet and talk rationally. There was something of sullen defiance about her at first, but it died away when I had been some little time with her. I tried to interest her and to make her forget the horrible craving for stimulant that was destroying her. She became more like herself.

It was about four in the morning—a lovely June morning, bright with sunshine, and with dew, fragrant with the odor of lily and rose. During her fits Lady Severne never went to rest like a rational being. That made her so difficult to manage. She would sit up all night and sleep in the day. A sudden gleam of gold shooting into the room showed me that the sun was rising. I drew aside the hangings and opened the window, letting in the sweetness and freshness of the morning air.

"Dear Lady Severne, do come here for one moment," I said.

She came and stood in silence by my side. I saw her look at the brilliant, beautiful tints of the morning sky, at the fresh tender beauty of the green trees, and then her eyes wandered round the room. The glasses, the confusion and disorder, how they contrasted with the bright, pure heavens and the clear light of day! I knew that the contrast had touched her. I felt that the peaceful influence of the morning had reached her. The wind, which was like the breath of the roses, seemed to change her face as it swept over it. She put her arms round me. "I am so tired," she said.

I took her in my arms and laid her head upon my breast—a lost, unhappy woman. I knew, but still Mark's wife. The warm tears were falling then from her eyes.

"How kind you are to me!" she said. "I am so tired that I could sleep forever, I think. Tell me something. Say to me some of the beautiful words that you sing."

There came into my mind one of those poems that my mother had loved—one she had often repeated to me—one which, when she was dying, she had asked me to say once again for her. I shall never forget my surroundings

as Lady Severne preferred her request—the blue sky flushed with rosy light, the green earth waking up to summer life, the dark background of the room that had been like a prison, the beautiful, yet haggard face that lay upon my breast, and the tears that fell like rain. I told her that what I was about to repeat was my mother's favorite, and that it was called "An Angel's Song."

"You have the face of an angel," she said, looking up at me, "with that golden light upon it," and she listened to every word.

"I know I have heard them sing, child, and I know that they spoke to me, with my mother's arms around me, while I sat on my mother's knee, and she told me of love that saved us, and a Father we had on high, and the grave that we need not fear, child."

And the soul that can never die.

"Again, when I walked with the loved one—

You remember this loved one, dear, and the smile that has gone from among us,

And the voice we no longer hear?—

The voice was so tender and earnest that joy was too deep for mirth, and the heart was too full for speech, child,

And heaven came down on earth—

"Not a drop in the cup seemed wanting, the thirst of a life to fill, and further and fainter the song died out."

But I heard the angels still.

I think it will not be long, child; they are bidding me home at last, to the place where the joy of the future,

Shall be linked on the love of the past, where the houseless shall seek a shelter."

The lonely shall find a friend—

There the heart's desire shall be granted.

That hath trusted and loved to the end."

Tears are the dew of heaven, the poet tells us. Tears fell from Lady Severne's eyes upon my dress and hands. She was clinging to me wildly, crying out that she wished she had been a better woman, that she loathed her sin, that she loathed herself. Would I show her the way to that heaven where the angels sing? What could she do to atone to Mark? What could she do to regain her lost youth and goodness? She clutched my arm as she cried out:

"A demon holds me in his grasp— take me from him!"

Then with tears of regret and repentance, utterly exhausted and fell into a deep sleep with her head upon my breast.

And I! Well, I knew so little of the hold this terrible vice takes of its victims that as I held her closely clasped in my arms in the light of the morning sun, I thought she was saved, and tears of gratitude filled my eyes. I thought the sweet influences of the fair summer morn had spoken to her heart, that grace from heaven had fallen like dew upon her soul.

I let her sleep as long as she could, and then Martha came back. We laid her down, pale and exhausted, on her bed. I whispered my hope to the old nurse. She said:

"Please Heaven! but I have seen her ladyship repent before now, and found her worse than ever a few hours afterward."

Despite these words, I had a hope.

"Further and fainter the song died out, but I heard the angels still."

CHAPTER XVII.

My hope was vain. A few days afterwards Lady Severne was, to use the nurse's phrase, worse than ever. The blow that Lady Yorke had feared fell; the terrible expose which she had dreaded came. For a day or two Lady Severne had been better. She came down to dinner, and was careful what she drank. There was relief on Mark's face and on Lady Yorke's. On the third day an awful occurrence happened. Whether Martha was tired, off her guard, or in ignorance of what was going on, I know not. Perhaps Lady Severne had deceived her. I only know the results. Martha dressed her ladyship for dinner, and Lady Severne asked for a favorite dress of hers, a handsome white and gold brocade satin. Martha was delighted that she should take so great an interest in her appearance; that was always a good sign. She evidently did not perceive anything wrong in Lady Severne, or possibly the mischief was done after she left her. We were all in the drawing room waiting for the dinner bell. Lord Severne was talking to Captain Forrester, more at ease and less anxious than I had seen him for many days, and Lady Yorke looked as though a great load had been taken from her mind. Some one had just inquired if we should have the pleasure of seeing Lady Severne at dinner, and Lady Yorke had answered with a bright smile, that she was much better and would certainly join them, when the door opened and we saw her standing on the threshold, saw the gleam of white and gold, saw the light in the diamonds, the graceful figure, the white jeweled hands. Alas, alas, how shall I tell it! In one moment I saw what was the matter—so did Mark and Lady Yorke, and we all three hastened toward her. Her face was ghastly, her eyes were wild, and a leering smile hovered on her lips. Half conscious herself that she was not able to move, yet with a mad defiance of her own feelings, she tried to walk with a dignified step into the room and before one of us could reach her, could put out a hand to save her, she had fallen upon her face, to the dismay and distress of every one present. In less than a minute, Lord Severne had raised his wife in his arms and borne her away.

Lady Yorke, with a presence of mind I have never seen equalled, but with a face, white as death, turned to her guests.

"Lady Severne has fallen over her train," she said, quietly. "I wish those long sweeping trains were out of fashion; they are very dangerous."

There was a polite murmur of regret, but no one spoke. Whether any of those assembled there knew the truth had really seen and understood her condition, I cannot tell. No one mentioned her name or spoke of her after that.

That same evening Mark, with an effort for which I admired him, returned to the drawing-room and spoke of his wife. His visit to Westwood, he said, had been a pleasant one, but he was afraid the air did not suit Lady Severne. She had not been well since her arrival, and he thought it would be better for them to go.

I believe every heart in the room ached for him; he looked so anxious and so sad. There were a few words of regret from the visitors, a kindly expressed hope that Lady Severne would soon recover. Not one word of suspicion was breathed; but there was a strange quiet. No one talked much; we had no music, no singing. One or two spoke of leaving Westwood, and there was over all an indefinable shadow and gloom. Later on, Mark, addressing me almost for the first time, said:

"Nellie, see—there are several people out on the terrace enjoying the moonlight. I want to say good-by to you. I shall never see you again. Will you come?"

I went. My heart was filled with anguish and despair, a horrible restlessness. He was going away—Mark who had been my lover—in distress and sorrow, and we were never to meet again.

We stood together, as we had so many times before, in the bright moonlight, and Mark raised his haggard face to mine.

"You know my secret now, Nellie!" he said.

"Heaven help you, Mark!" I answered, with tears.

"You have been very good to my unhappy wife; you have been your own self—generous, noble, forgiving, I believe; Nellie, that if any one could do her good, it would be you. She loves you, she seems to have a certain faith and trust in you." He looked at me wistfully. "I dare not ask you—you would not, of course—you could not in any way take charge of her—travel with us! Ah, no—I am mad to think of such a thing!"

Yet to refuse him was the hardest thing I had ever had to do in my life.

"No, I could not do that. The wide world must lie between us, Mark, forevermore. I will think of you, pray for you, but see you again—never!"

You are right, Nellie, and I have no reason to complain. It is all my own fault. I have paid a bitter price for my weakness and folly—only Heaven knows how bitter; man can never tell. I deserve to suffer!"

"What shall you do?" I asked, looking with loving, longing eyes at the dark handsome face, so humble and so sad.

"I shall do my best, Nellie. After tonight, I have done with the world. I will never visit nor receive visitors again; I have finished with society. I cannot bear the disgrace, but I shall do my best for my hapless wife. I broke one vow; I will not break another. It was 'for better, for worse,' and it is for the worse. I shall take her away from England, find some place where there are few temptations, and take the greatest care of her. There is no hope, I fear, but I will do my best until the very end. I fastened the yoke around my own neck; I must bear it with patience and courage. I say good-by to all that is bright in life to-night, Nellie. I would rather die a thousand deaths than risk such a scene again. I am going from light to darkness. There is one thing only that can make me less sad and less sorrowful."

"What is it, Mark?" I asked, with fast-falling tears.

"It is this, Nellie—that before I go will you say that you forgive me. The burden of my life is a heavy one, and the heaviest part of it is the sorrow that my mad folly has brought upon you. Let me take into my dreary exile that knowledge, and it will bring me a gleam of happiness, the only one that can reach me after my cowardice, my weakness, my folly, my betrayal

of your faith and trust. Oh, lost love of my youth, oh, true love of my heart, forgive me, forgive me!"

He was kneeling at my feet. Was it wrong, when I saw his white face so full of anguish, his eyes so full of pain—was it wrong to bend over him, to put my face for one minute near his, to kiss him with my whole soul on my lips, while I said—"I forgive you, oh, dearest love! Good-by!"

The last sound I remember was the terrible, passionate sobbing of a strong man, and then came to me a merciful oblivion.

They left Westwood early the next morning. How the removal was managed I never heard, and I was too sick at heart to inquire.

I spent the next two years with Lady Yorke as happy as I could ever be in this world, helping her in all her good deeds and works of charity, thinking always with a sorely aching heart of Mark.

We heard nothing of him. He never wrote. He had kept his word; he had cut himself adrift from every social tie and from the world.

I asked Lady Yorke if she had received any letter from him. The answer was always "No," but we often spoke when we were quite alone, of the beautiful, hapless woman who was worse than dead.

One morning Lord Yorke looked up from his paper.

"Louise," he said, here is news. Listen. "At Nice, the 18th inst., after a long and lingering illness, Lurline, Lady Severne, aged twenty-seven."

"How young to die!" said Lady Yorke.

And I wondered if the long and lingering illness had been sent to help purify that poor sinful soul, in which, after all, there had been a yearning for good. Had she gone:

"Where the houseless shall seek a shelter,

The lonely shall find a friend—

Where the heart's desire shall be granted,

That hath trusted and loved to the end?"

I never in all the after years asked how she died. The only thing told to me was, "She died in peace!" and I know how great is the mercy of Heaven, how perfect this pardon for sin.

Mark came back to me, not then but two years afterwards, and asked me again to be his wife.

"I know, Nellie," he said, "that some women of a nature lower than yours would punish me now, would take their revenge, would send me away broken hearted and wretched, would give me back pain for pain, would delight in heaping scorn and contempt on me. You might do so, Nellie; I am at your mercy. If you send me away, I cannot complain, but as there is mercy in heaven there should be mercy on earth. Love, my love, take me; help me to be a better man; help me to be noble and strong! My life is in your hands, Nellie; will you say me nay?"

How could I, when I had loved him, and him only, all my life? How could I, when every glance, every word, of his was dear to me. How could I, when my heart, my love, were his, as they had always been? I did not say him nay. Mark knows best what I said.

I am Lady Severne now, with fair children growing round me, and I love my husband just as much as I did when we met and parted under the lilac trees. I love him as well and so dearly that I pray I may die looking on his face.

The only reference to the past that Mark ever made was one day when he took me in his arms and said:

"Nellie, my love for you was never 'Love for a day.'"

THE END.

A WISE PRECAUTION.

Little Bessie—Can't I have a birthday party next week, mamma? Mother—Why, Bessie, your birthday isn't till next summer. Little Bessie—I know, but Uncle Jack says ladies don't have any birthdays after they are 25 years old, so I want to have lots of them before it is too late.

HAIRPIN IN A COW.

A post-mortem examination of a cow which died at Sheerness, England, showed that a lady's hairpin, six inches in length, was embedded in the animal's heart.

A Crippled Shadow.

THE REMARKABLE STATEMENT OF JAS. DAVIS, OF VICTORIA.

Stricken With Rheumatism He Wanted to a Pain Stricken Shadow—Doctors and Hospital Treatment Failed to Help Him—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Restore Health and Strength.

Proof upon proof accumulates that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is the greatest medical discovery of the 19th century, and the following story told in the grateful patient's own words again substantiates the claim that they cure when other medicines fail.

"Knowing that I am a living monument of the wonderful curing properties of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, I deem it my duty as a grateful man to give my testimony for the aid of such as are afflicted as I was. I am a resident of the village of Vittoria, Ont., and have lived in the town or neighborhood all my life and am therefore well known and what I say can be easily proved. Three years ago I was stricken with and partially paralyzed by rheumatism, and after being under the care of two physicians, I was given up to die. I wanted to a human skeleton; nothing more than a crippled shadow. I lost the use of my limbs entirely and food was given me by a spoon. Life was not worth living and such an existence was indeed miserable. Thus I awaited the end to come—an end of human suffering too awful to depict. As a last resort I was persuaded by my friends to try medical treatment in the General Hospital in Toronto, and after spending several weeks there came home disheartened and even worse than before. While writhing in the pangs of pain, discouraged and ready to die, I heard of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and of the marvellous cures they effected. While doubting that they would cure me I was prevailed upon to take them. The effect was marvellous. For two long years I had not enjoyed a single night's rest and I then slept a sweet sleep which seemed like heaven to me. I revived, could eat and gradually grew stronger and as I gained strength my hope of living increased. I have taken forty-one boxes, which may seem a large quantity to some, but be it remembered, I had taken many times their value in other medicines and had been declared incurable by doctors. The result is I am now able to undergo hard physical exercise. All my large circle of friends and acquaintances welcomed me back in their midst and life seems real again. The fact is beyond all question that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills as a last and only medicine proved successful in reaching the germs of my disease and saved me from a life of misery and pain. Again I say as a grateful man that I cannot too strongly recommend this remarkable medicine to all fellow beings who are afflicted with this terrible malady.

JAMES DAVIS.

The above testimony is signed in presence of

EARNEST WEBSTER MAYBEE,

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Many a poor man has lost his life in trying to sound the depths of a woman's love.

A man's will goes into effect after death but a woman's will is in effect during life.

The number of things a man knows about women is about 1 per cent of what he thinks he knows.

A man will give up \$1 for a 50-cent article he wants, and a woman will give up 49 cents for a 50-cent article, she doesn't want.

The still-house worm destroys more corn than the cut-worm does.

Girls admire a drooping mustache, especially when it droops their way.

Some people get so tired doing nothing that they are never able to do anything else.

Overworked.—I think I shall have to discharge my office-boy. What's the matter with him? All there is for him to do at the office is to tear off the sheets once a month from the calendars hanging on the wall, and when he tore them off on the first day of March, he kicked because February was such a short month.

THE FIRST CANADIAN AUTOCAR.

Through the enterprise of Mr. A. H. St. Germain, of North Toronto, the citizens of Toronto and the County of York are to be privileged to have running in their midst in the early summer, the first autocar in Canada. Mr. St. Germain has closed a contract with the Canadian Motor Syndicate of Toronto, of which Mr. Thomas Bengough, Court Stenographer, is President, and Mr. W. J. Still is Mechanical Engineer, which calls for the first car to be finished at once, to be equipped with motors exerting 20 horsepower, and capable of ascending grades equal to 1 foot in 3, so that there will be no trouble with the heavy grades between Toronto and Richmond Hill up Yonge St., where the line of autocars will run. The car is of handsome design, and the upholstery, electric lighting, painting, etc., will be in keeping with the beauty of the lines as shown in the engraving. The first car will be a passenger and parcels van, seating 25 passengers, and carrying luggage within the raised space on the roof. Electric buttons for use of passengers and a motorman will warn the motorman when to turn to right or left boulevard for passengers, or to stop suddenly in case of danger. An automatic indicator in front of the motorman will give him full directions. The van will be furnished with strong, effective brakes of two separate designs. The entire work will be done by Canadian experts. Mr. St. Germain has purchased an interest in the Syndicate, and has already deposited several thousands of dollars to their credit to secure the immediate prosecution of the work. Mr. St. Germain to show his good faith and confidence in the enterprise, has also on deposit in cash and securities the sum of \$100,000 available for the building and



equipment of a full line of handsome, commodious and rapid autocars. The motors which will be fitted in these autocars are the invention of Mr. W. J. Still, and the Canadian Motor Syndicate control the rights for the Dominion for their use in bicycles, tricycles, invalid chairs, road vehicles of all kinds, street cars and locomotives, as well as for stationary engines. The enterprise promises to be large and lucrative. Mr. St. Germain is to be congratulated on his pluck and persistence in pushing forward his agitation for the new line of autocars, which will be the first in Canada if not on this continent.