

UNDER THE LILAC TREE.

CHAPTER XII.

"Lurline is my wife now and I will not say one word against her. I will not even say that I could do so. She was certainly the most beautiful, the most fascinating woman I had ever seen. She looked so young that it was almost impossible to believe that she had been a wife and was a widow; but I knew afterward that she was at least ten years older than we thought her. I will not describe her to you; you will see her and judge for yourself. "Nellie," continued Mark, "there is as great a difference between you and Lurline as between a simple natural lily of the valley and as gaudy artificial camelia. I saw it afterward; but at first she took my senses captive, and held them in thrall. I remember how she puzzled me, how I watched her. One of the first things that struck me was the subtle odor of sweet violets that seemed to envelop her. Everything belonging to her—her sables, shawls, books, fans, gloves—everything had the same sweet odor of fresh violets. That charmed me. Oh, Nellie, I was a rash, foolish coward, but I never thought of loving her, and I never dreamed of marrying any one but you! Every man on board was in love with her, but she favored me and I was weak enough, young and foolish enough, to be flattered by this preference; to feel proud and delighted when the little court of admirers had to make way for me; when she turned from them all with a smile for me; when she laid that white-gloved hand of hers on my arm, dismissing the rest with a little nod of the head, saying, 'I will accompany you, Lord Severne. I should like a quiet promenade.' "I pleased me to mark how angry jealousy in other men's eyes; it pleased me to note how they envied every mark of preference which this beautiful woman showered on me. Still, Nellie, I never dreamed of being false to you. "At first I was attracted by her great beauty, her fascination, her low, sweet voice, her nameless charm of dress and manner, then by her decided preference for me, shown at all times, and in all places. "I never thought that rank, title, or money had anything to do with it; I believed it was myself alone that she cared for. Ah, Nellie, perhaps even a stronger man than myself might have succumbed. I shall never forget the nights on the ocean, with the stars like golden meteors in the sky, the sea dark, silent, mysterious, and solemn. Such nights as they were—the sea and sky so calm, and that beautiful face looking into mine! Ah, Nellie, you taught me love, and it will never die; she taught me passion and it is dead. "I began to forget you my darling. I must tell you the whole truth. The memory of the sweet true face under the lilacs grew fainter; the passionate beautiful face of the woman who showed me preference for me a time. "There can be no excuse for me, Nellie—I offer none. But remember that for the first time in my life I was flattered by all the subtle flatteries that a clever and beautiful woman could use. The balance of my reason was gone. She had aroused passion that yet was not love in my heart. I was driven onward by the anger of those whom she slighted for me, and one night—on a fatal night, when the moon was shining brilliantly, and the sea was calm as a lake, we stood together at the end of the vessel. Her fair white hands stole into mine; her beautiful face was raised to mine, pale with emotion, her eyes glistening with tears. I forgot you, Nellie, I forgot honor, truth and loyalty. I bent down to kiss her, and—well, I cannot tell you how it happened. I am speaking the truth, Nellie. I would not hide one thought from you. I feel sure that when I bent my head to kiss her I had no thought of asking her to be my wife; but before another half hour had passed I had promised to marry her, and—Nellie, love, listen—from that moment to this I have never had one single happy moment—not one. There could be no drawing back—no hesitation even. For I found the next day that the whole of the passengers knew that Lord Severne and the beautiful Mrs. Nugent were engaged. "Weak, cowardly, disloyal—ah, yes, I know I was all that! But I have suffered horribly. From that hour to this I have been a miserable man. For I found out that it was you I had loved after all, and that the love of the lady was better than the passion of the man. There were times when I resolved on telling her, but it would have been useless. She had decided on marrying me, and I knew that my intentions were quite secondary to hers. When it was too late, my heart went back to its first allegiance. I found my engagement to this woman of the world a very business-like matter. There was no nonsense, no delay. We were married three weeks after the 'Queen of the Seas' reached London. "Ah, Nellie, you have suffered, but my pain has been greater. My conscience gave me no rest. Night and day your image was with me, night and day my folly and cowardice were ever before me. I longed, yet dreaded to see you. If I had known that your mother was dead, and that you were waiting for me in the old home alone I should have gone to you, no matter what had happened, but your letter did not reach me." "I was returned to me," I inter-

posed. "As soon as my affairs were settled," he continued, "I went abroad. Lurline preferred it. She said she never cared to live in England, and in truth I was indifferent on the subject, knowing that no place could ever be the same to me again. At Mentone we met the Yorkes, and I liked them very much. I was a miserable, haunted, gloomy man. My wealth brought me no happiness, because I had lost you. I found rest in talking to Lady Yorke. She seemed to think that I had some great sorrow in my life. I do not suppose I should have returned to England at least for some years had not imperative business compelled me to go to Severne Court a few weeks ago. Oh, Nellie, there are some disappointments too bitter, too great for words! I shall return to Italy; I cannot live in England." "Why?" I asked. His face clouded, an angry gleam came into the eyes which had been full of pain and despair. "I cannot tell you why, Nellie, but my life is blighted. I cannot stay anywhere for long." "Shall you ever live at Severne Court?" I asked. "Never," was the gloomy reply. "The punishment of my folly is that I shall be a wanderer on the face of the earth." "But why, Mark—why?" I cried, beginning to forget my own trouble in his. "There are some things that a man cannot speak of," he replied, "cannot even think of or lay bare to his own heart. This sorrow of mine is one of them." "Then, Mark," I could not help saying as I looked sadly at him, "you have ruined all the happiness of my life without securing your own." "That is just what I have done, Nellie. Between the remorse I feel at the loss of you and the sorrow of my secret, I am the most miserable man in the world." "Ah, Mark, my lover, I read in your face that your folly had cost you dear! We sat in silence for some time, the wind stirring the lilac branches and bearing to us sweet gusts of perfume. We had not been there an hour, and already it seemed to me an eternity. I knew that we must part. Time was the full force of my misery rushed over me like a lava tide. How could I ever take up the duties of life again? My heart and soul had no strength, no life. Where should I turn for help or comfort? For, alas! I had given my whole heart to a man who had married another and had forgotten me!" "Mark, what shall I do with the rest of my life?" I asked, wearily. "I cannot die just because I wish to die. I am like a ship without a rudder. Love of you, whether living or dead, has hitherto filled my life. What am I to do?" "I cannot tell, Nellie," he replied. "Are you happy here with Lady Yorke?" "Yes—as happy as I could be anywhere without you," I replied. "Then do not go away. We will do that, not you. We will remain for a few days; then I shall say that I am summoned to the Court on business. Nellie, forgive me for what I am going to say. All I have in the world ought to have been yours—and I have such abundant wealth; let me give you what will keep you in comfort and affluence." "I could not be angry; his eyes were full of tears and his lips quivered." "No," I replied, gently, "you must not do that, Mark. I do not care for money. I would rather have had one true word of love from your lips than all the money you possess." "I should be so much happier, Nellie, if you would let me do this. Let me buy for you a pretty little home. In the midst of my misery, let me have the one gleam of comfort that you have no worldly cares." "No!" I cried, with quick, impatient scorn. "Gather, you not understand that I would rather—a thousand times rather—die of hunger by the roadside than accept even one crumb of bread from your hands?" "Will you ever forgive me?" he said. "In the years to come, when you remember that I am—ah, a thousand times!—more unhappy than you, and when you remember that I can find no comfort because it is my fault, will you not try to forgive me? Think of me as you did; forget this interval of folly and falsehood. Think of me only as Mark, with his honest hair's love; forget Mark, the man who failed you—will you, Nellie?" "I could not help it—doubtless it was very undignified, but when I saw the pain on the honest face, the humble sorrow in the dear eyes, when I saw Mark distressed, grieved with the misery of a lifetime on his face, I forgot my wounded love for one short moment. How could I refuse him anything to whom I had never said 'no'?" How could I refuse his pardon when he asked it with tears in his eyes? He had married my life, ruined my happiness, made every hope bankrupt, but I loved him still. I held my hands to him; I tried to smile, although the raining tears blinded me. "I will forgive you, Mark," I said. "Ah, my dear, I could not, if I would, be angry with you! We must never meet again, Mark. The wide world must ever be between us two who were once to be always together; a deep grave lies between us, and in it I must bury my love, but I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven." He held my hand in his for one moment, and then he said with tears that did not shame his manhood: "My dear lost love, farewell!" "I knew what he meant. It would be better for him, better for me, that we should meet as strangers. He would be leaving in a few days, and we should see each other no more. Better so!" Trembling, fainting, dazed by my own misery, I dared not go back to the house just then lest one meeting

should ask what ailed me. I had a strange, vague idea that I had changed my own identity, and that the sorrow-stricken woman walking by herself under the summer trees could not be Nellie Chester.

CHAPTER XIII.

That evening Lady Yorke came to my room. She was always kind and considerate to me. "You have not been well to-day, Miss Chester. Masham tells me that you have had one of your bad headaches. Are you better? You look very pale and changed in some way. I came to ask you if you would bring your music to the drawing-room this evening. It would be a great help to me." I thought for a few moments before I answered her. I could crush down my own pain and anguish, for I had plenty of self-control; and I longed to see Mark's wife. How the words pierced my heart—"Mark's wife!" I kissed the white jeweled hand laid so kindly on my shoulder, and said what was true—that I would do anything to please Lady Yorke. "If you feel tired," she said, "do not join us for a little while; come later on. And Miss Chester, make yourself look nice. We must not let Lady Severne think herself the handsomest woman in the world. Bring some of your best songs. Lord Severne is very fond of music." I knew that had I not sung to him a hundred times by the river and in the woods? That evening it seemed to me that I was about to rival Mark's wife. Was it foolish or wicked that I went to my box for the long plain blue silk dress that Mark liked, and that I made the most of my golden hair, that I found some white roses for it, and that I tried to look bright and happy while my heart was dead? I need not speak of the other guests. My story deals only with Mark and Mark's wife, Lady Yorke introduced me to all her visitors. I had gone to the drawing-room before the gentlemen had left the dining-room. I could not have entered with Mark looking at me. I remember no names, no faces; my whole soul seemed waiting until we reached Mark's wife—the most beautiful, brilliant, dazzling woman I had ever beheld. She had the vivid bloom of a carnation, a face of exquisite Grecian type, a wide low brow, straight dark eyes, a broad, lovely mouth, though the lines and curves were rather proud than tender, a beautiful chin with a delicious dimple. As I thought of Mark kissing those lovely lips, the pain in my heart was more bitter than death. A superb woman, with dark blue eyes and dark hair, was dressed in white velvet, relieved by a rich bordering of purple heart's ease, a diamond necklace clasped the white firm throat, a diamond cross lay on her white breast, and the very moment I stood before her I noticed the sweet odor of violets. Mark's wife! She looked at me with a kindly smile; and then she noticed that there was something peculiar in her face. I did not like it, beautiful, brilliant, as it was. There was a vagueness, inexplicable something—a metallic brightness in the eyes, a hard peculiar color on her cheeks. Love for Mark, interest quickened by affection, made me wonder, and as I looked at her, so beautiful, so brilliant, I asked myself, What was his sorrow? What was the secret that clouded his life? What was the mystery that sapped all the pleasure, the happiness of his existence? What could it be? Lady Severne drew aside the folds of her velvet dress, and asked me to take a seat by her side. "Lady Yorke tells me that you have a beautiful voice, Miss Chester," she said. "I hope you will sing for us. Lord Severne is fond of music." Long before her fair face had wiled Mark from me I knew that. What would she say if she knew that I was Mark's first love, that—Ah, what nonsense! Was I mad? Mark was no longer for me. She talked to me kindly enough for a few minutes. I felt, rather than knew, that there was something strange about her, but I could not define it. The gentlemen came in. My only hope lay in not looking at Mark. I was keenly, painfully conscious of his presence. I knew where he went; when he spoke I heard no other sound. But my eyes never sought him. Even when Lady Yorke introduced me to him I never saw him; but five minutes afterward when I went to the piano, the music fell from my nerveless hands. Ah, was was me! The first song I found was this—"Remember and Forget." "I sat beside the streamlet; I watched the waters flow; As we together watched it One little year ago. The soft rain pattered on the leaves, The April grass was wet— Ah, folly to remember! 'Tis wisest to forget. "The nightingales made musical June's palaces paved with gold; I watched the rose you gave me Its warm red heart unfold, But sight of rose and song of bird Were fraught with wild regret— 'Tis madness to remember; 'Twere wisdom to forget. "I stood among the gold corn— Alas, no more I knew! To gather gleaner's measure Of the love that fell from you, For me no gracious harvest. Would God we never had met! For, cruel as remembrance is, 'Tis harder to forget. "The streamlet now is frozen, The nightingales are fled, The corn-fields are deserted, And every rose is dead. I sit beside my lonely fire, And pray for wisdom yet, For calmness to remember, or For courage to forget." There was no sound in the room as the last notes died away. I knew they had gone straight to Mark's heart, for he left the group of ladies with whom

he had been talking, and went to one of the great bay windows. The May sun had set, and the light was dead in the sky. Lady Yorke's voice broke the spell. She was asking for her favorite, and the words came readily to me—Virginia Gabriel's beautiful song, "Ruby" To be Continued.

WORLD'S DRINK STATISTICS.

English Are Greater Beer Drinkers Than the Germans. The country owes thanks to Sir Courtenay Boyle, says the Pall Mall Gazette. Most blue-books are dry, and but few of us care to master their contents. Sir Courtenay Boyle has succeeded, however, in producing one that might almost be described as fascinating—the drink statistics of the civilized world, or, to give it its official and rather long-winded title, "The Production and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages," wine, beer, spirits. A study of the paper leads to one conclusion, namely—that not only will people drink as long as they can afford to pay for it, but that they will drink. France produces ten times as much wine as Germany; it also exports ten times as much, and yet more German wine is imported into the United States than French wine. The answer is obvious: There are in the states many successful German settlers and they, having the money, will have the hook of the fatherland, no matter what they pay for it. Thus also in prosperous Belgium people put scarcely any limit on themselves in the matter of drink, and whether it be beer or spirits, Belgium stands head in the matter of consumption per head, while even as regards wine, although it is not a wine-producing country, the inhabitants consume as much as do the Germans, whose country is wine producing. One point that is brought out very clearly in these tables is the fact that the drink trade is almost everywhere a HOME INDUSTRY, i.e., that by far the greater proportion of the drink consumed is made in the country consuming it. We in England import so much wine and brandy from the continent that we are perhaps not altogether in a position to realize the fact, and yet even in England by far the greater portion of the drink consumed is home-made. This is proved by the relative proportions of the customs receipts from imported and the excise receipts from home-made liquors. The customs receipts amount to five and a half millions sterling, and the excise receipts to twenty-seven millions, or in the proportion of 17 per cent. to 83 per cent. in favor of the home-made. Perhaps very few realize to how great an extent France is the great wine-producing and also the great wine-consuming country of the world. The statement that the quantity of wine annually drunk in the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States, which taken together, have a population of 150,000,000 souls barely exceeds a tenth part of what is consumed in France with its 38,000,000 of inhabitants enables us more fully to recognize the fact. Many, moreover, will be surprised to find that the consumption per head of beer in this country exceeds that of Germany, for while the German drinks twenty-five gallons per annum, the Englishman drinks thirty gallons. In both countries the consumption of beer is distinctly on the increase. The following is an interesting fact taken at hazard. Seventy-seven gallons of beer are consumed in this country for every gallon of wine that is drunk; could any clearer proof be wanting that it is the masses who drink not the classes? Scarcely the seventh part of a bottle of champagne per head is drunk per annum by the inhabitants of this country; in the United States scarcely the twentieth part.

THE SWAN AND THE PIKE.

The following accident was described to me by a friend who heard it from the lips of a man who saw it, says a writer in London Spectator. My friend's informant, a laboring man, passed on his way to work every morning a pond on which were swans. One morning he saw a swan with its head under water—no unusual thing, so he thought nothing of it. The next morning it was in exactly the same place and position. Still, that was not remarkable, and he passed on. On the third morning, seeing the swan in precisely the same position, he called the attention of the keeper to it. The keeper proceeded to examine, and found that the swan's head had been swallowed by a large pike. Both, of course were dead.

IN A SLEEPING BAG.

Peter Carroll, of Pictou, N.S., who is the possessor of a Klondike sleeping bag, boasted of his ability to spend the night on the ice in the harbor, and the talk resulted in a wager as to the utility of the bag in an emergency. To make the test Carroll travelled out on the ice some distance, and, tying the bag about him lay down to sleep. He was not seen again till daylight next morning, when he turned up at the hotel so hoarse that he was barely able to ask for something to warm him up. In the meantime the commercial man with whom he made the bet had taken the early train out of town, and as no money had been put up the laugh was very much on Carroll.

THE PAY OF PARLIAMENTS.

Boers Get Largest Salaries, but Our Senators Have Valuable Perquisites. So far as payments in hard cash go, the brawny burghers of the transvaal are decidedly the best off. Quite recently the boer parliament increased the salary of its members to \$6,000 a year for each individual, as they can easily afford to do, when one remembers the big tax rolls which the unfranchised Ulanders are compelled to pay. But in actual emoluments the United States senator probably receives a better reward. He gets mileage and numerous minor fees and privileges, which swell his annual income materially over its nominal \$5,000. Great Britain, as every student knows, gives her members of parliament no salaries, although government officials for the time being are royally paid. The first lord of the treasury receives \$25,000, as also do the foreign, home, colonial, Indian and war secretaries. The lord chancellor receives \$50,000 per annum. But for the M. P. who does not hold office there is naught save honor. Even the old privilege of not being liable to arrest for debt while an M.P. has been abolished. The British colonies, however, do not follow the example of the Mother country. New South Wales and Victoria allow their M.P.'s \$1,500 per annum, Canada and South Australia \$1,000, with an additional mileage rate for the former, and Queensland \$750, with mileage. New Zealand representatives get \$1,200. France gives its senators and deputies \$1,800, but there is a "string" to this salary which might be tried elsewhere, in Vienna, for instance, with good effect. Any member who is twice called to order during a sitting forfeits half his salary for two weeks. Cases exist where certain FIERY FRENCH DEPUTIES have lost their entire year's allowances in this manner. Belgium grants members of the representatives' chamber \$800 a year and passes on the railroads, but, curiously enough, makes its senators work for nothing and pay their own travelling expenses. In the realms of the little Queen of Holland, members of the upper house are paid a sum equal to about \$4.18 per diem for each session, but since they meet only on thirty or thirty-two days in the year they cannot be said to clear much. In the second chamber \$830 per annum, with a travelling grant of 27 cents for every hour spent on the railroad are the allowances. Absentee Dutch lawgivers forfeit their salaries whether their absence be caused by illness or not. The new Japanese parliamentary constitution compels each member of the national parliament to draw annually from the treasury about \$665. Any member of the aristocratic classes refusing to accept this salary, through pride or other reasons, is subject to fine and dismissal, by the parliamentary rules of 1890. Portugal is niggardly with its representatives, giving them only \$329, and Norway pays members from \$350 to \$400, according to the length of the session. In Sweden members of the upper house serve absolutely for patriotism and the lower chamber members get only \$335. Moreover, \$2.75 per diem is deducted for non-attendance. Even the unpaid upper house is fined for absenteeism, although its members get nothing, not even train fares. The Greek lawgiver is a \$360 per annum man, with additions for overtime work (such as in the recent war). It was suggested recently that these salaries should be "docked" slightly, so as to help pay the Turkish indemnity, but the idea was condemned promptly. Switzerland gives her councillors something less than \$5 a week, with 6 cents a day for travelling expenses.

SHE LIKED SAILING.

The following true tale is a most curious instance of living well on nothing a year without breaking the laws of the land. About twenty years ago a steam packet company of Liverpool wished to buy a piece of land which was owned by a "stay-at-home spinster," as her neighbors described her. She sold her land at a very low price, but insisted upon a clause being inserted in the agreement giving her the right, at any time during her life, to travel with a companion in any of the company's vessels. When the agreement was closed she sold her furniture and went on board the first out-going ship belonging to the packet company. For years this wise spinster lived nearly all the time upon one ship or another, frequently accompanied by a companion, according to the agreement. This was always a person who otherwise would have been a regular passenger, but who purchased her ticket at reduced rates by paying the spinster instead of the packet company. The company offered her more than twice the value of the land if she would give up her privileges; but this she would not do. Her reply was, "You got the land cheap, and I like sailing; so we ought both to be satisfied."

APPRECIATIVE LISTENER.

I enjoyed your lecture last night on 'The Operatic Anthology of the Year' very much, said the fussy little man, with enthusiasm. By the way, professor, he asked, what is the meaning of the term operatic anthology? AN EASIER WAY. You don't mean to say, Bumply, that you paid \$150 for that suit. Well, I should say not. I had it charged.