

Under the Lilac Tree.

CHAPTER XIV (Continued.)

When the visitors retired, I remained to give Lady Yorke a report of all that she had left for me to arrange, and then I told her of the unearthly noise that I had heard coming from Lady Severne's room.

She looked at me with a strange expression on her face.

"Did you really hear this yourself, Miss Chester?" she asked.

"Certainly, just as I have told you, Lady Yorke."

"Had any one been in those rooms would they have heard it in the same fashion?" she asked.

"They must," I replied.

"Then," she said, speaking to herself rather than to me, "it must be seen at once. Poor Mark."

I did not like to say any more, but I went to my room more unhappy than ever about Mark, more puzzled than ever about the mystery surrounding his wife.

I looked forward with some curiosity to seeing her the next day; but at breakfast table came the apology—Lady Severne did not feel well enough to come downstairs. Mark's face was a study, yet no one seemed to notice it but myself. The knowledge that there was a mystery in the house was painful to me. Lady Yorke too seemed distressed—not merely anxious, but distressed, I saw tears in her eyes, and when we were alone she sighed frequently and deeply, as though she had something on her mind.

In the evening, just before the dressing bell rang, to my astonishment Martha Glyde rapped at the door of Lady Yorke's boudoir.

She wanted "to speak to her ladyship most particularly," but she would not keep her long. I went away and left them together.

During dinner I saw that Lady Yorke was quite unlike herself, nervous, agitated, unequal to the occasion, and more than once she glanced impudently at Lord Severne.

Dinner over, I was not much surprised when a servant came to say that Lady Yorke wished to see me in her boudoir at once. I went. I had never seen the mistress of Westwood look so sad or so distressed before.

"Just turn the key in the door, Miss Chester," she said. "I want a few minutes' conversation with you without interruption."

I did as she wished, and then stood before her, wondering at her agitation, her pale face, the sorrow expressed in her whole demeanor. She wrung her hands, began to speak, and then hesitated.

"The fact is," she said. "I am at a loss what to say or how to begin. I feel the shame and the disgrace keenly as though they were my own. I must tell you, but I do not know how."

"Is it—of Lady Severne?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied. "Thank you for breaking the ice thus far. It is of her I want to speak. You asked me if anything were wrong with her, and I told you Yes, the canker was always at the heart of the fairest rose; the worm always destroys the sweetest bud."

"I remember, but I did not understand in the least," I said.

"Probably not. Lady Severne is beautiful, charming, she has many admirable qualities, she is very popular; but there is one fatal drawback, so fatal that all the other gifts are neutralized by it."

"What is it, Lady Yorke?" I asked, anxiously.

"I am ashamed to tell you. They are almost the most horrible words that can be said of a woman, but they are unhappily true, Miss Chester. The fact is, Lady Severne drinks."

I recoiled as though she had struck me a terrible blow; but Lady Yorke looked relieved at having told her horrible secret at last.

"It is true, she drinks."

"But," I cried, agitated with horror, "she is a lady; it cannot be possible!"

"It is quite true, Miss Chester."

"Drinks?"

Such a solution of the mystery had never occurred to me for a moment. If Lady Yorke had said, "She cheats at cards, she would rob her neighbor, she has committed murder"—even then I should not have felt so surprised. It was horrible to think that this beautiful woman, Mark's wife, should be guilty of so degrading a vice.

"But how is such a thing possible?" I cried, eagerly. "Surely she could avoid it if she would?"

"I cannot tell. She says it is a disease that seizes her and holds her fast in its clutches. At times, for weeks together, she is all that can be desired—most agreeable, charming, fascinating woman; then for a few days she appears absolutely to lose all control over herself."

"But why do they let her have intoxicating liquors? Why not keep them from her?" I asked.

"They cannot. You may be sure that Lord Severne has tried everything, so has that faithful maid of hers, Martha Glyde. It is easier to soothe the paroxysms of the insane than to appease such a craving as hers. I have heard Martha say that when this horrible craving of hers is on her she will stoop to anything to get what she wants."

"How terrible!" I cried. "Oh, Lady Yorke, I wish I had not known it!"

"I am obliged to tell you," she said; "you may be sure that it is an unavoi-

able necessity. It is impossible that Lady Severne can remain in the western tower. Up to this present time no one in the house knows her secret except her husband, Lord Yorke, Martha Glyde, you and myself, but if she remains in the western tower, every one must guess it. Martha Glyde told me that she has never been so bad as she is now, and she begged me to remove her where she could be neither seen nor heard. Every one thinks that she is ill, and it will occasion no remark if I say that she has asked for a quieter, warmer room. I thought," continued Lady Yorke, "if you were willing I would give her the room next to yours in the 'Queen's Wing.' There she will be quite safe, and you are so kind, Miss Chester, you are so gentle and good, that this pitiful case must touch your heart. Will you see her sometimes? You did me good; you might do her good. You reclaimed me from a life of idle self-indulgence; you might reclaim her."

"I will do anything you wish, Lady Yorke—anything."

"It will be a great relief to me if you will help Martha Glyde to remove the unhappy woman. I do not want Masham or any of the servants to know it. I must return to my visitors. I shall trust entirely to you."

She hastened away, leaving me horror-stricken and bewildered. Oh, Mark, my dear lost love, it would have been better had you died.

CHAPTER XV.

That was the solution of the mystery. That was the cause of Mark's watchfulness and misery, and of Lady Severne's peculiarities. From that originated the cold metallic light in the eyes that should have been so tender and lustrous. That was the cause of the hectic color that so often took the place of the dainty bloom. That was why a pretty bright young maid would have been quite useless—why the elderly woman kept watch and ward over her mistress. Of all the horrible fates that could have overtaken my poor Mark, surely none could have been more terrible than this! All the anger died in my heart; there was nothing left but profound compassion. Now I could understand why he would not say anything to me about his wife. He might well look so worn and haggard. I forgot that he had deceived me, blighted my life, and my heart went out to him, not with the old love, but with a great pity and yearning. I would have given my life to save his wife and help him.

I will not dwell on the terrible scene that was enacted when Lady Severne was taken to her new rooms. I hope that I may never see such a sight again—such a leering smile, drooping, heavy head, sullen eyes and reeling figure.

"I am glad you know about it, Miss Chester," said Martha. "It is a heavy secret to carry all by one's self. At times I can hardly bear it. I told Lady Yorke you would be the right one to trust."

Partly from her and partly from Lady Yorke I heard the whole sad story. I am no advocate for total abstinence, although I have a horror of excessive drinking. I simply tell this sad story as it was told to me, and record the incidents I saw.

There is no need to go far back in Lady Severne's life. She was well born, well bred, married when she was very young, and went with her husband, Captain Nugent, to India. When this horrible vice first took hold of her no one knew. There was some little rumor of it in India; but she was so young and so beautiful that no one believed it. It was not until she became Lady Severne that it attracted any attention. She said afterward that she took no more than other ladies—two or three glasses of wine at luncheon—perhaps a little champagne if she felt tired or "low," a little more wine at dinner, and during the evening champagne at one party, sherry at another, and always brandy at night. She liked it; she was careless, and never thought about the consequences. More than once Lord Severne, seeing her glass filled and refilled, would say, "Be careful, Lurline, that wine is strong." She would answer laughingly, "I do not mind how strong it is if it sparkles."

More than once he was distressed at finding bottles of brandy hidden away in her room. A bad habit grows quickly. The terrible day came when Lord Severne, returning home earlier than usual, found her—Ah, well, I cannot write the word! From that time all semblance of happiness ceased between them. They had been married only six weeks when he made the discovery. He decided at once what to do. They could never live at Severne Court; the grand inheritance that had come to him was useless. He dared not make her mistress of the household; she was too far gone in her downward course for that. He could never make his home in England, where his misfortune must be known at once. He could never know when or how the shame and disgrace might fall upon him. He took her to Italy, hoping by travel, novelty, and constant care to wean her from her weakness.

At first there was some slight improvement, and it was while that improvement lasted that they had met Lord and Lady Yorke. But Lady Severne was not cured, and there were irregularities in her manner which made them think strangely of her, and prevented her from being a favorite with them. They liked Lord Severne exceedingly, they were attracted by his melancholy, which at first they did not understand. Lady Yorke exacted from Lord Severne a promise that when they came to England they would visit Westwood, and when business matters compelled Mark to return he kept his promise, but it was in fear and trembling. Lurline had assured her husband, as she had often done before, that she would keep a strict guard over herself, but again and again

she had relapsed into her old habits. For during those long months when she had plenty of money at her command, Lady Severne had gone from bad to worse. Her husband was at last compelled to have the assistance of Martha Glyde. In spite of all the care lavished on her, in spite of all precautions, when these terrible fits came upon Lady Severne, she always managed to get that for which her heart craved. Nothing was of any avail—prayers, tears, advice, anger, all were useless. The beautiful and admired Lady Severne was a secret drinker, a woman who had delivered herself to the bondage of an evil spirit. She bribed servants, she did things that in her better days she would have recoiled from doing. Yet so faithful was Martha Glyde, so loyal and thoughtful was her husband, that her terrible secret was hardly known. When Martha saw that a fit was inevitable, she locked her in her room, and gave out to the world that she was ill. At those times Lord Severne went almost mad with mortification and annoyance. There had been some terrible scenes on one or twice, when Martha was off her guard, and Lady Severne made her escape.

Lady Yorke, who had suspected in Italy what was wrong, now saw it plainly, and for the sake of the household Lord Severne had been compelled to tell her. She was distressed and grieved, but nothing could be done. Until Lady Severne came to her senses again she could not be removed. The only thing was to maintain the fiction of illness and keep her secluded in her room. It was now three days since Martha Glyde, going one evening to put away her jewels, found her insensible and knew what had happened.

"We shall have a week of it," she said to me; "I know that."

"Surely not, if we keep everything from her?"

"That we cannot do. I have been sharp and diligent as a detective; so has my lord. You may tattle, the cunning of a rogue or a thief, but never the cunning of a drunkard. His lordship was very unwilling to come here," Martha continued; "but Lady Severne promised faithfully to give no trouble in this way. She is fond of Lady Yorke and she said it was so long since she had really enjoyed herself. The third day we were here his lordship said to me, 'Martha, I had better have died than have brought her here.' He talked to her, oh, so kindly! She cried and made all sorts of promises, but it was all in vain. Look at her now."

Lady Yorke told me much the same story, adding that Lord Severne's distress when he was compelled to tell her the truth was terrible.

"I am sorry for her," said Lady Yorke; "but for him my pity knows no bounds. He cannot go into society. If he takes her with him; he lives in constant fear; if he leaves her at home alone, his fear is greater still. His whole career is spoiled, his whole life blighted; he is miserably unhappy, and I see no hope for him. It is a millstone tied round his neck."

Her words were so many blows to me. The very novelty of the discovery made me only the more miserable. I could not help asking:

"If you knew of this, Lady Yorke, why did you ask her here?"

Yet the thought came to me that, if they had never come, I should always have believed Mark to be dead.

"I was not quite sure of it in Italy, and I never thought I could never have dreamed—that it had reached this point. Honestly, much as I like and pity Lord Severne, if I had known the whole truth, I should not have invited them, nor would Lord Yorke have done so. I cannot tell you how unpleasant it is. Every moment of the day I am in anxious suspense and misery. What an expose it would be if any of the other guests should get to know it! And in any case, how could I do it? It is almost impossible to keep such a secret."

"It is very difficult," I replied.

"You will do your best, I know, Miss Chester," said Lady Yorke, to whom anxieties of any kind were quite new. "Lord Severne has promised me that he will take his wife away as soon as she recovers, and I shall be glad."

"Where will they go?" I asked.

She looked just a little surprised at the question, believing them to be strangers to me.

"Somewhere on the continent," she answered. "He will never be able to live at that beautiful home of his."

"But why does he not send her away?"

"I suppose that he would do it if she were always a like, but you see there are many weeks together when she is herself, charming and beautiful."

"Does he love her?" I asked, abruptly.

"I think he did love her. My opinion is that he was carried away by her beauty and married her in a sudden fit of impulse. I do not think she in the woman he would have chosen originally. I do not think he loves her now. No man could love a woman addicted to that vice. He is very anxious, very unhappy; he smarts under the disgrace; he is always nervous and apprehensive; but I do not think he loves her."

Was it so much, the better, or so much the worse?

Lady Yorke hastened away, and I was left to my own thoughts. Granted that it was, Nemesis, granted that Mark had done wrong, it was a terrible punishment. It rendered all the gifts of fortune useless to him. I could sympathize with his difficulties. If he tried to put her away from him, it would only draw public attention to that which he was most anxious to conceal. It seemed to me that some noble motive actuated him. He had taken the hapless woman for better, for worse, and he was trying his best. He gave her the shield, the protection of his name and his home.

I hope I shall never have another such terrible experience. It was too terrible. Watching and caring for a madwoman must be had enough; this was worse. Strange to say, the hapless lady took a fancy to me. Looking at her, so changed, so repellent, I could not believe that she would ever be the same attractive woman again. But

Martha said "Yes" in a day or two she would recover herself, and no one on seeing her would have the least suspicion. This was the worst and longest fit she had ever had.

There were times when she knew me, and times when she did not.

"You are Miss Chester," she said to me. "I like Miss Chester—a sweet face and a beautiful voice. Have they told you about me?"

"They have told me that you are very ill, and I am here to help you to get better."

"I shall never get better," she said, and that was the most sober and sensible interval she had.

At times she would cling to me wildly, crying out that I must get something for her; that they were keeping her here in prison, trying to starve her, horrible paroxysms!

Poor Mark! This was the end of all his honors, happiness and ambition! How I thought of him! How I pitied him! How I longed to comfort him! It seemed to me that never had a life been so cursed.

Lady Severne did not improve. The visitors were beginning to feel anxious. Lady Yorke was beset with inquiries. Was she really so ill that she could see no one? Why not have a doctor? A feverish cold did not last all this time. Was Lady Yorke sure there was nothing infectious—quite sure? It was a strange thing, Lady Yorke was at a loss how to parry such inquiries.

"I wish they would go," she said to me; "I am quite sure it will be found out."

Yet she, as well as I, saw how impossible it was to remove Lady Severne just at present.

One night I was very tired and had gone earlier than usual to my room. It was fatigue that made me forget to fasten the door. Worn out with sorrow and dismay—grief about Lady Severne, distress for Lady Yorke, and sorrow inexpressible for Mark—I fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

I was awakened by the consciousness that some one had stealthily entered my room, and was trying to find me. I am courageous by nature. If a thief had disturbed me I should have felt no fear, but this was no thief. A thick muffled, hoarse voice whispered, "Miss Chester." Then I felt the heat of a fevered breath on my face, and I knew that Lady Severne was there.

I rose hastily and turned up my lamp. A crouching, horrible figure was clinging to me. I could hardly believe that this was the beautiful Lady Severne, who held all men enthralled by her charms.

(To be Continued.)

A Neighbor's Advice.

THE MEANS OF RESTORING A LITTLE GIRL TO HEALTH.

She Was Gradually Fading Away and Her Parents Doubted Her Recovery to Health.

From the Examiner, Charlottetown.

Perhaps the most remarkable cure that has ever been recorded is that of little Minnie Woodside, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Woodside, of Baltimore, P.E.I., and Mrs. Woodside are members of the Princeton Presbyterian church, and are well and favorably known in the settlement where they reside. Mr. Woodside does an extensive business in oysters. A newspaper correspondent hearing of the remarkable recovery of this little girl called on Mr. Woodside and ascertained the exact facts of the case. The following is substantially the result of the interview:—"About a year ago last June I first noticed that my little daughter was not as bright as usual and that she complained at times of pains in her head and chest. Up to that time she had regularly attended school and was remarkably clever for a child of her age. She did nothing except attend school and although I never supposed it would do her much injury, I allowed her to study too sedulously. Thinking that she was only a little run down I kept her from school for a few weeks and expected that she would be all right again. By the end of that time I was badly disappointed in my expectations, however, as she rapidly grew weaker and lost flesh every day. I was alarmed about her condition when she complained of a soreness in her lungs and began to cough. I was just preparing to take her to a doctor when a neighbor called to see her and advised us to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. She assured me that Pink Pills had restored her own daughter to health after several doctors had failed to do her any good. I therefore resolved to give them a trial and purchased a couple of boxes that very day. I began giving my little daughter those pills being very careful to follow the directions. At the end of a month I noticed a decided improvement in her health and thus encouraged I continued using the pills three months more. Her health was quite restored by that time and she was able to attend school again. I regard my daughter's cure as almost marvellous and accord all the credit to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. For little girls and boys of delicate constitutions no better remedy could possibly be prescribed. What was done for my little girl could certainly be done for other children.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves. Avoid imitations by insisting that every box purchase is enclosed in a wrapping bearing the full trade mark, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People.

EXPERIENCED.

Recruiting Officer—I'm afraid you are not heavy enough for a cavalryman. We want men who can ride right over everything, if necessary.

Applicant—That's all right, sir. I've been a cab driver for seven years.

IT BELTS THE UNIVERSE

SOMETHING ABOUT THE GREAT MILITARY HIGHWAY.

In the U. S. Senate the West Virginia Representative Tells What He Knows of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

During the consideration of the Alaska right of way bill, in the United States Senate, Senator Elkins, of West Virginia, discussed Canadian Pacific matters in relation to section 13, the bonding section of the pending bill.

Mr. Elkins cited some interesting statistics concerning the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The road extends from Halifax to Vancouver, with connections, 7,129 miles, nearly 2,000 miles of which are in the United States. Its connections in this country extend as far south as Baltimore and St. Louis.

It forms the greatest military, commercial and political highway in the world. It could with its sea connections transport 50,000 troops from England to Canada in ten days. For its ship line now being built to run between Southampton and Halifax it will receive a subsidy of \$750,000 from England and Canada; for its steamship line from Vancouver to the Orient it receives \$300,000, and from Vancouver to Australia, a subsidy of \$250,000. The Pacific line for carrying more mail receives from the United States only \$14,820.

ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE.

The Canadian Pacific forms the land connections of a commercial and military highway that spans the globe. The Canadian Pacific receives \$1,300,000 per annum in aid of its support. Since its establishment it has received from Great Britain in subsidies, gifts and concessions, \$215,000,000, an equivalent of \$10,000,000 a year. By aid of these immense concessions it is enabled to take trade from American roads, and does it openly and defiantly.

Mr. Elkins cited the fact that in 1891 the American railroads gave the Canadian Pacific a bonus of \$500,000 to keep out of American territory. Subsequently the Canadian Pacific refused to take this sum, and has since been waging a war upon our railroads. It was now actually carrying passengers

FROM NEW YORK TO VANCOUVER a distance of 3,000 miles, for \$38. He said if the Canadian Pacific was permitted to proceed on these lines it would shortly monopolize the through business from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific, and all the business to and from the Orient, leaving to American roads only local business, and making only one trans-continental line on this continent.

Mr. Elkins said that the amount of business taken from American roads annually by the Canadian Pacific aggregated nearly \$50,000,000. "This sum should be saved to the United States," said he, "to give employment to our people, and as trustees of the republic we should see that it is saved."

HE CALLS IT HUMILIATION.

"We pay \$300,000,000 per annum, or \$1,000,000 for every working day in the year," Mr. Elkins said, "to foreign ships to haul what we sell or buy, our exports and imports, England getting 60 per cent. of this vast sum. Ninety per cent. of this should be saved to Americans. We once had 92 per cent. of our foreign trade carried in American ships, and now have only about 12 per cent. To make this humiliation more moral and emphatic, England and Canada seem determined to make the Canadian Pacific railway, the only trans-continental line and to monopolize the carrying by rail of a large share of our trans-continental line commerce and all of our trade to and from the Orient."

THE BONDING PRIVILEGES.

As a remedy for the existing evils, Mr. Elkins said that he would first abolish the bonding privileges and consular seals at Vancouver. The effect of this would be to divert trade from the Orient to San Francisco. Secondly, he would compel obedience to inter-State commerce statutes by all lines connecting with the Canadian Pacific. Thirdly he would enforce section 22 of the present tariff law in accordance with its meaning and as it reads. He read opinions of ex-President Cleveland, ex-President Harrison, the late Secretary Windom, ex-Secretary Charles Foster, and former Attorney General Miller, in support of his position. He maintained that it was not a party question and could not in any way be constructed as such.

SECTION 22.

Referring to section 22 of the tariff law, Senator Elkins says—Section 22 of the present tariff law affords a complete remedy to the existing evils, but it alarmed New England, Minnesota and Michigan and after long consideration the attorney general decided that it could not be enforced. If we had enforced section 22 just as it stands on the statute books we could have had Canada today at our feet suing for terms to save Canadian Pacific interests in our country, instead of suggesting what policy should govern us touching Canadian matters and asking for a reduction of tariff rates as a condition precedent to the stopping of killing seals. Canada has not only destroyed our seals worth \$1,000,000 per annum, but continues through the Canadian Pacific aggressions to take away from United States railroads \$50,000,000 per year of legitimate business.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE.

Don't you think that in time all nations of the world will own part of China?

Yes, unless it be China herself.