

UNDER THE LILAC TREE.

CHAPTER VI.

One morning when several visitors were at Westwood the conversation turned upon the Indian famine. We were all seated at luncheon. Some of the gentlemen remarked that a charitable country ours was—what large sums of money were forthcoming when any great disaster occurred.

Lord Yorke agreed.

"But," he said, "I do not think we realize what the word 'famine' means. In our happy land we have seen women and children dying by the roadside, plucking the dry roots and the grass in the pangs of hunger."

"I have seen something like it," said Mr. Devine. "I was in Ireland during the 'potato famine,' and I saw there scenes that will haunt me to my dying day—gaunt hungry men in whose eyes was a wolfish gleam, pale, patient women dying without complaint, children like spectres with famine written in their faces. I have seen mother and children lying dead together—and it takes a long time for hunger to kill."

"Did you really witness all this?" asked Lady Yorke.

"I did," replied Mr. Devine.

"I did not know," said Lady Yorke, with a slight shudder, "that people died of hunger. I do not suppose that I quite understood the meaning of the word 'famine.'"

"Your life has been a happy one, Louise," said Lord Yorke. "You have seen only the rose-colored side of existence."

"That must be true," she allowed, more gravely than I had expected.

The next morning I had to drive with Lady Yorke to Woodheaton; she wanted to make some purchases. The morning was lovely, but her mind was evidently still disturbed by the conversation of the previous day.

"Miss Chester," she said, suddenly, "have you ever seen people who were really ill from want of food?"

"Yes, very often, when I was at home with my mother. She, out of her limited means, made a point of relieving some poor person or other every day."

"And I," said Lady Yorke, "have never, so far as I remember, relieved a poor person in my life. We send money to various charities, but I have never personally given any away. I have seen so few poor people."

I saw that her mind was awakened. We talked on the same subject during the whole of our drive. I told her what I had seen among the poor at Gracedieu—their patience, their industry, the pathos and beauty of their lives.

"The true heroes and heroines of this world," I said, "are the uncomplaining poor."

"Heroes and heroines!" she repeated. "Why, Miss Chester, what can there be heroic in poverty?"

"Poverty bravely borne is true heroism," I said. "It is easy to be happy and contented when everything goes well, when one has plenty of money, plenty of food, and everything one can desire. What can be more heroic than the endurance of hunger and cold without complaint? I have read of what the world calls heroines—Joan of Arc, who won a throne for her king; Charlotte Coray who slew the enemy of France; but to my way of thinking, the real heroine is the wife and mother whose life is one continual struggle, who denies herself that her husband and children may have enough, who works without ceasing, never complains, comforts her husband, brings up her children well, and practices heroic virtues unseen by any one, unknown even to herself. That woman is one of heaven's own heroines."

Lady Yorke was silent and thoughtful during the rest of the day, but in the evening she relaxed into the old lachrymose mood.

A few days afterward I asked her if she would go to Woodheaton again, if she would go to Woodheaton again, and having no other engagement she consented. Just what I longed for happened. When we reached the shop of the principal stationer the wife of the rector was there. She knew Lady Yorke in a distant fashion.

Mrs. Durrant was an active, energetic woman, whose life was filled with good deeds, the very reverse of beautiful, luxury-loving Lady Yorke. To my great delight, she began to talk to me of the people. I shall never forget Lady Yorke about the badness of the times, the want of work, the poverty Mrs. Durrant's face when Lady Yorke languidly took out her well-filled purse.

"Would money be of any use?" she said.

"Heaven bless me!" cried the rector's wife, startled out of all propriety. "Why, Lady Yorke, it is only money that we want! Money will purchase food, coal, clothes, shoes, and everything else."

I heard the rustle of banknotes, and Lady Yorke said gently:

"Will you distribute this among your poor?"

The eyes of the rector's wife filled with tears. She saw in the gift relief for many from utter misery.

"If you would see poverty in all its desolation, Lady Yorke," she said earnestly, "you should go to a place that is called Sandy Fields."

After the rector's wife had departed, I turned to Lady Yorke.

"Will you go?" I asked her.

"I do not know, Miss Chester," she said, drawing her rich silks and laces tightly around her. "I have never seen anything of this kind."

"When you die," I remarked, "you will like to have some good deed to remember. You will like to think that you have lessened the burden of one human heart."

"You frighten me," she said. "Yes, I will go."

Half an hour afterward fashionable self-indulgent Lady Yorke stood in the poorest cottage in Sandy Fields, looking round her in horror and dismay. Only a starving woman and a starving child were there; there was no fire, no food, no table, no chair, no bed. It was a most hopeless case.

"A contrast to Westwood," I whispered to her.

At first the woman was sullen and would not speak—her misery was too great. Then she cried out:

"No, you can do nothing for me. My husband died six weeks ago; and this is all I have in the world. Now she is dying. Heaven itself cannot help me." She looked at Lady Yorke, "You mean well," she said, "but the money that bought that silk gown would have kept my husband alive. He died hungry. Do you think I shall ever forget that? He moaned all night before he died from hunger—not pain, but hunger. I loved him with all my heart and I had to sit and listen until I could have rushed out of the house to slay and rob the first person I met. He died hungry, while in your house good food is wasted. Ah, my lady, your dogs and horses are better off than we are!"

I saw Lady Yorke's face grow very pale, and her eyes sought mine with a frightened look.

"He moaned all night," continued the woman, "and I had nothing to give him but water. He was not one to complain, but when death came on him in the morning he said to me, 'Ah, lassie, the rich have it in this world; we shall have it in the next.' I went out and sold the last thing that belonged to me—my wedding ring—that morning and I bought tea and bread. I have gone past it," he said, "it is all over, lassie. It has come too late. Seven years ago when we were married he was tall and straight and handsome. He took me to a pretty home, and he worked hard for me; but trouble came and he died hungry. My poor lad! My poor, poor lad!"

I knew that in her heart Lady Yorke was thinking of the dainties, that, sent away in capricious discontent, would have saved this poor man's life.

"Annie is dying the woman went on, in the same hopeless, helpless way with a wild gleam in her eyes. 'A few weeks ago food might have saved her; now it is too late. Last night I went everywhere to get one penny to buy her an orange with. She had been craving all day for an orange, and every time she fell asleep she dreamed that she held the orange in her hands, and that it fell to the ground. I would have done anything for one penny, but I could not get it.'"

For the first time I saw tears in Lady Yorke's eyes.

"Would you like very much to keep Annie with you?" she asked, and I hardly knew her voice. It had lost its languor, and was clear and sweet.

"Would I, ah, my lady, Annie is the very heart that beats in my breast!" she cried. "When she is gone all is gone. I shall not try to live; I shall lie down and die by her side. How long is it since you tasted food?" I asked her.

"Two whole days," she replied.

Her white, quivering face and trembling hands bore testimony to the truth of her words. Lady Yorke looked at me.

"We must help them," she said, and as she uttered the words it seemed to me that a new soul shone in her eyes.

We left the house and went to the nearest shops.

"Tell me what to buy, Miss Chester," she said, and a basket of food, including some fine ripe oranges, was ordered to be taken to the woman's house.

The poor creature never thought of herself. I shall never forget the cry with which she seized an orange and gave it to the child; it was one of delicious delight.

"I shall do all I can for you," said Lady Yorke, as she came away. "If we can save little Annie, she shall be saved."

And again I saw tears in the blue eyes which until now had never looked out on others' woes.

CHAPTER VII.

The next morning Lady Yorke was downstairs, alert and energetic, before nine. Her husband looked up in surprise as he entered the breakfast room. This happened to be one of the rare days when we were alone.

"A revolution!" he cried. "The most luxurious woman in England down at the early hour of nine! I cannot understand it."

"Do not laugh at me, Stanley," she said. "I am very much in earnest this morning. I want to talk to you."

When she had sought him before it had generally been to ask either for new jewels, or a check for some heavy bill—always something for herself, never anything for any one else; and I am sure that he expected the same thing now.

"I want to talk to you, Stanley," she continued. "Do you know what the world is like outside our park gates? Here we have safety and shelter, warmth and luxury—the roses of life without the thorns. Do you know what it is outside?"

"I know something of it," he replied half sadly.

"Ah, such a world, Stanley!" she said. "There is sickness, sorrow, poverty, hunger. Hunger seems the hardest to bear," she continued, thinking no doubt of those tragical words, "He

died hungry; and I have heard such words, but I never knew what they meant. I knew only the sound not the sense, until yesterday."

Here she paused.

"And then?" said Lord Yorke. "What happened then?"

She told him all that had occurred.

"I am glad, Louise," he said. "I have always thought that, if you understood more of what was going on in the world around you, you would try to help others. And now about this poor woman—Mrs. Clinton, did you say? What do you want to do for her?"

"Everything," was the comprehensive reply. She must have a nice clean cottage in the fresh air, plenty of food and clothes—all that is wanted to make her daughter well."

"She shall have it," Lord Yorke said smiling. "You could not employ your time or your money better than in relieving the poor. But all charity must be governed by discretion. While the woman and child are ill, keep them; but afterward, although you can go on helping her, let her work for herself. It will be greater charity to place the means of gaining her livelihood in her hands than to give her money enough to live upon."

"I see that," she replied, gravely. "Oh, Stanley! If I had only thought before now how many people I might have saved! It must be a terrible thing to die of hunger!"

He laid his hand lightly on her beautiful head.

"It is never too late to mend," he said. "I have often wished that you could give a little of your time and attention to charity."

"Why did you not tell me so?" she asked, eagerly.

"My dear Louise, there comes a time when everyone wakes to the realities of life. Your time had not come."

"I shall never be so careless again. I feel as though through all these years I had truly been asleep," said Lady Yorke.

Then they discussed what was best to be done. Lord Yorke suggested that one of the pretty cottages built on modern principles which stood just outside Woodheaton should be given to the poor woman rent free until she was better. Lady Yorke was to allow so much each week until she could earn money governing herself.

"You must remember, one thing, Louise," said his lordship, "that you will meet with many cases quite as pitiful as this, and that it will not do to give all to one."

The next time he met me he took my hand and held it for a moment in his. He looked at my black dress.

"From your own sorrows," he said, "you have learned to feel for others. Heaven bless you!"

Then I knew that he was well pleased. I had tried to draw his beautiful young wife from her self-worship and interest her in others.

So life passed on at Westwood, and no great change came until the spring. To me every birthday, every Christmas day, were as milestones on the way to heaven. As I passed each, I was nearer to Mark.

Again the lilacs were in bloom. They were not so plentiful or so beautiful as at Gracedieu, but the sight and fragrance of them brought back forcibly the remembrance of my lover's name. No words can tell the sharp pain that pierced my heart when I saw the nodding plumes. Lady Yorke was fond of lilacs. While they lasted she would have them in the rooms. I never told her what the sight of them cost me.

The keeper of the west lodge having found a better situation, Mrs. Clinton, with her little daughter, through Lord Yorke's kindness, went to live there. By Lady Yorke's wish I visited them almost every day, the lilacs grew all round the west lodge—all fine trees, with a wealth of fragrant blossoms. Mrs. Clinton, who could never do enough for me, had gathered some of the finest sprays and one morning when I went to see her, she held the bunches of lilac bloom close to my face.

"See, miss," she said, "how fresh they are!"

If I had seen one risen from the dead I could not have grown more sick at under the lilacs.

I went home sad and weary. Here was the world waking up again to the beauty and glory of spring, and my heart was sinking, my hope was dead. My lover, to whom my love, my truth, my faith was pledged, was dead. What could spring, sunshine or bloom of flowers say to me?

I walked home and saw the yellow primroses shining like stars in the grass and the buds were coming out. I sobbed aloud. I felt so tired of waiting. If some angel hand would but draw me up to heaven and place me by Mark's side. Oh, my love, how I loved you! All the beauty of earth, the fairness of spring, the brightness of life, were as naught to me, because you were no longer with me!

As I entered the house I met Lady Yorke in the hall.

"Will you come to the library, Miss Chester?" she said. "I have some letters I must answer and some for you to write."

When we were seated there, and she had made those inquiries about the sick child which she never omitted, she showed me a bundle of letters.

"We shall have a large party here soon," she said. "This morning I had a letter from Lord Severne. We met him and his wife last year in Italy, and I made him promise that ours should be the first house in England that they would visit. Lord Severne is a great favorite of mine. You have heard of the Severnes of Mount Severne?"

"No," I replied.

The name was quite strange to me. It was a very old title, Lady Yorke told me, but the present possessor had come quite unexpectedly into it.

"I must say," continued her ladyship, "that I have been a most indifferent member of society. No one has ever seemed to interest me, but I certainly did like Lord Severne. He is very handsome, but terribly melancholy. He never smiles like any one else."

Finding that it pleased Lady Yorke to speak of her friends, I listened with interest. I finished the lilacs and

Mark from my mind; they were of time past.

"We met the Severnes in Florence," Lady Yorke went on, "and both my husband and myself liked Lord Severne, but we were not so agreeably impressed by his wife. We were very intimate with them, and went with them every day. Lady Severne is quite unlike her husband. He is earnest, grave with a strange veil of melancholy always over him; she is the most animated, the gayest and most brilliant woman I have ever met. She tired me in an hour, and I am sure she talked quietly with me. He is the only man," she continued, "who has ever really roused my curiosity."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because he appears too good a man to have done any great wrong, and yet he looks like a man with some heavy trouble on his mind. I am sure you will like him, Miss Chester, but I am not sure whether you will like his wife. She has such a strange name too."

"What is it?" I asked. I had never heard Lady Yorke say so much about any living creature. "Lurline," she replied. "Now can you fancy any sensible woman with a name like that?"

"Her name is her misfortune, not her fault," I said. "I like it, Lady Yorke. It is fanciful and uncommon."

"It is like herself," declared her ladyship. "Well, Miss Chester, we must have a party to meet them. Lord Severne himself does not care about society, but Lady Severne lives for it only. We must have plenty of visitors, and plenty of gaiety to amuse her."

"She is a troublesome visitor," I said, with a laugh.

"Yes, but she is a power in herself. She is one of those women who sweep all before them. Lord Yorke could only compare her to a whirlwind. Yet I cannot imagine how she has persuaded her husband to return to England. When we were in Florence, she said nothing would induce her to live in this climate. We will ask Lady Mary Avon and her brother, Sir Charles, to meet them. Lady Severne is more than a match in conversation for any six gentlemen at once."

"Is she a flirt?" I asked.

"To tell you the truth, Miss Chester, I could never make out exactly what she was. I only know that we liked her husband, and for his sake we endured her, as we shall endure her again. They will be here next Tuesday, so we must hasten to send out invitations."

And as I wrote them I wondered much what Lady Severne could be like.

(To be Continued.)

PURELY CANADIAN NEWS.

INTERESTING ITEMS ABOUT OUR OWN COUNTRY.

Gathered from Various Points from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

There are fifteen children in the Berlin Orphanage.

Brantford is experiencing an epidemic of burglaries.

Trolley cars will be running in St. Thomas by Dominion Day.

British Columbia canneries packed over 1,000,000 cases last year.

A new steel bridge will be built over the St. Francis at Sherbrooke.

Six boats for use on the Stickeen River are being built at Victoria.

J. Piggot & Sons, of Chatham, are doubling the capacity of their mill.

Charles W. McAnn, Kaslo's new mayor, claims to be the youngest Q. C. in Canada.

A Guelph syndicate are sending John and Andrew McRea to the Klondike to look for gold.

Senator Reid, of Cariboo, will, with his family, take up a permanent residence in Vancouver.

An English syndicate has bought the Whiteman mine, in the Slokan. It's a dividend payer.

A Vancouver grocer is advertising fresh butter from New Zealand. This looks like a case of coals.

W. Paterson & Son, biscuit manufacturers, of Brantford, are said to be looking for another location.

The St. Thomas Gas Company has subscribed \$200 toward the reduction of the debt on Alma College.

Over forty passengers on one train that passed through Winnipeg last week were bound for the Klondike.

The Government cartridge factory at Quebec, that closed down a few days ago, has resumed operations.

New Denver, B. C., has a fat men's club, that is furnishing itself and the neighborhood with amusement.

Sioux Indians met in Brandon and entered a general kick against the agent on the reserve near Griswold.

Rev. W. J. Clark, of the First Presbyterian church, London, has declined an increase of \$300 a year in his salary.

British Columbia criminal history shows that only 7 out of 19 convicted murderers suffered the death penalty.

Stratford citizens in a public meeting adopted a resolution in favor of the purchase of the water-works by the city.

Grand Forks citizens are asking the Dominion Government to grant a charter to the Kettle River Railway Company.

The people of Slokan City, in mass meeting assembled, decided that toll roads were not wanted in that vicinity.

Engineer Lumsden, of the Crow's Nest Pass railway, will survey the C. P. R. line from Telegraph Creek to Lake Teslin.

Nelson, B. C. Council have taken time by the forelock and secured a block in the centre of the town for a recreation ground.

New Brunswick is trying to encourage Scandinavians to come over and settle on Crown lands. Special inducements are being offered.

Mrs. J. C. Woods, of London, tripped over a toy cart and fell, bursting two blood vessels in her nose and cracking a bone in her hand.

R. J. Stewart, of Tweed, has the contract for the new C. P. R. bridge over the Rideau. He has commenced work on the apra a bes.

The band and cricket team of the Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) will tour Canada next summer, according to a Halifax report.

The arch tect employed to inspect Ingersoll town hall has condemned it for all gatherings when the audience is unseated, such as dances, etc.

Two men named Evans and Dumars have been sentenced to three years each at Nelson, B. C. for robbing the Hudson's Bay Company's store.

Temperance people in Hamilton have succeeded in preventing the transference of a liquor license from the Massasa House to Woodland Park.

Brantford water commissioners are considering the expediency of reducing the water rates to baths, private residences and the smaller tenements.

A Brockville tramp who was introduced to the woodpile disappeared, leaving a note which read: "Just tell them that you saw me, but you didn't see me saw."

For the ten years ending 1896 there were 239 murder trials in the Dominion, the death sentence was passed in 69 cases, and the sentence commuted in 29 cases.

Whiskey is to be raised to ten cents a glass in Montreal, and lower town vendors are afraid it will drive their trade to dives, where the liquid will be sold at the old figure.

Peterboro' Town Council is considering a proposition for an electric road to Bridgewater and Lakefield, and the placing of four steamers on the back lakes for the summer trade.

W. A. Meyers, the Rossland newspaper man who disappeared some time ago, is believed by his wife, who has returned from the east, to have gone to Klondike. He left no debts.

FIRST CHURCH IN THE KLONDIKE.

Difficulties Experienced by the Two Missionaries.

When the pastor of the first church in the Klondike asks for an unusually liberal collection the miners simply put more gold dust into the plate. They have no cash. Everything is so expensive in the Klondike that the cost of erecting and maintaining this church against discouraging odds would have ruined a fairly well-to-do city congregation. The Rev. S. Hall Young and Dr. W. A. McEwen started for the Klondike last August. (The two missionaries reached Klondike City just before the winter set in and before all means of travelling had been closed. On their journey they had been robbed of the greater part of their provisions. Their first step was to rent a hall in which to hold services. They leased a small house for seven months for \$850, payable in advance. The upper floor was divided into six 8x10 rooms, which were let very readily for \$20 a month in advance. After the first service had been held, however, one of the lodgers came home drunk and set fire to the building. The house was totally destroyed. The loss was a great blow to the church, as much of the material burned could not be replaced at any cost.

Services were next held in the "Opera-House," which is the largest room in the city. The missionaries spent all their money in fitting up the new church, but when their cash was gone they found the miners very WILLING TO GIVE CREDIT.

The rudest furniture that could be found cost the church \$200. Each window sash cost one-half ounce of gold, or about \$10. Twelve joints of stove-pipe cost \$1.50 each. The pews were made of rough, unplanned boards, supported by rough logs. The missionaries borrowed sixteen rough boards to be used for seats.

This lumber is so valuable that none of it is for sale. The last lumber sold which was of the roughest sort, brought \$400 per thousand feet. The music which was used to cover these pews cost 35 cents a yard and the tacks used to fasten it down cost 50 cents a paper. An ordinary door-hasp which is sold here for 10 cents, cost \$2 at the Klondike.

The church is always kept warm and comfortable in spite of the arctic cold, to provide a meeting place for the miners away from the saloons. The reading-rooms have already become very popular. The miners have taken great interest in collecting reading matter. The library consists of about 1,500 books, magazines and pamphlets.

The labor bureau, which has been running for some time, has also done much good in relieving those unable to find profitable employment—for the Klondike has its unemployed poor. A number of women from the surrounding country have taken an active interest in the church work and a regular chapter of the Christian Endeavor Society has been formed. (One of the most important acquisitions of the church is a piano. The missionaries have recently bought 300 pounds of flour at \$1 a pound, besides 200 pounds of other provisions. They expect to spend the winter in comparative luxury.