

IN MEMORIAM.

JOHN McELROY, died, Wednesday, October 30, 1878; aged five years and eleven months; only and beloved son of James McElroy.

DORA.

By JULIA KAVENAGH, Author of 'Naahie,' 'Adela,' 'Queen Mob,' &c.

CHAPTER I.—CONTINUED.

After awhile he felt that he could not bear this any longer. He left the bridge and struck into that long avenue of trees which follows the course of the river. It was a green wilderness in the days when Anne of Austria was gay and young, and for her sake it is still called Cours la Reine. He went again over the evening's dreary story, and the resemblance between Dora and the photograph seemed to fade away at the thought of it. Was not Nanette's enamel like Dora? Did not the young actress recall her? What was there in that likeness, after all, that he should go through such agony? Hope grew stronger as calmness returned to his mind, bringing with it the greatest sense of relief he had experienced since his weary search began. It seemed as if by passing through this terrible doubt he had gained all that he had not actually lost.

Templemore walked home under the arcade of the Rue de Rivoli; strange thoughts walked with him. It was no longer the great question, was Dora dead or living—but was Dora false, or true? "Is this a conspiracy of that young man against me?" thought Mr. Templemore, as he went up to his room, "and is Dora in it? Will they go away together somewhere, and, deceiving me and the world with a feigned tale of death, get married, and be lost forever?" For a moment jealousy and wrath overpowered every other feeling. Reason was wrecked, and Mr. Templemore could only think, with impotent fury, of the hateful story he had conjured up. Dora, his wife, forsaking and betraying him thus! But suddenly his wrath fell, and was followed by a great calmness. How or why he thought of this he knew not; but he remembered how, entering his wife's room one morning at Deenah, he had found her praying. Her kneeling attitude, her bent face and clasped hands, came back to him, and softened him in a moment. She, Dora, his young, pious, and innocent wife, perjury herself to commit bigamy with John Luan!

How could he think it, and yet remember how bitterly John Luan had failed, and how completely he had succeeded with Dora? There is a strange sweetness in triumph; the wisest and the best are not insensible to it. Mr. Templemore felt moved and softened as the thought of the past came back to him. Yes, he had prevailed, with scarcely an effort, whilst John Luan, after patient years, had been balked. He had won the prize for which another had toiled; and she had been his; all his; too much his, for if he had thought he could lose her, he would never have left her. She had been so easily won, that he had felt secure, too secure by far, and now he paid for his past folly by the tormenting doubts of the present.

Brother-in-law's, and it is your husband's; and it is quite absurd that I should never have seen it, and more than absurd that we should be paying rent here, whilst there is a beautiful house doing nothing and waiting for us." "Well, mamma, when Mr. Templemore comes and looks for us, we will go to Deenah." "But Mr. Templemore is not coming, and he does not write, and you do not write to him," said Mrs. Courtenay, rocking herself to and fro in indignation and wonder. "I never heard anything like it—never, Dora," she added, with as much severity (and it was very little) as she could infuse in the words, "you have behaved very badly to your husband." Dora seemed much amused, and shook her bright head, looking all the time like a merry girl who has been working some piece of mischief, and who enjoys it; but there was a strange, nervous twitching about her lips, even whilst she laughed.

Oh! it was she whom he was to have married, you know; 'oh he committed a mistake, and took his daughter's governess to church, instead of poor Flo.—I shall box your ears, Gussy!" They now came forward and stood in front of Dora: two specimens of the English feminine traveller and sight-seer, carrying a little stock of scandal with them, as the ancient journeyer carried his gods wherever he went. "And is he married yet?" asked one of the pair. The owner of Gussy smiled, and whilst that smile passed across her face, Dora felt as if her heart had ceased to beat. "Not yet," she answered, "he went off suddenly in his wild way a few days back, and poor Flo is distracted. Miss Moore took scolding, and the child took it from her. She thinks he went for the diamonds." The rest of the party joined them; they all moved on. They went talking and laughing all the way, and leaving a wrecked happiness behind them!

The grays of twilight was stealing over the road when Dora reached the gates of Les Roches. She had alighted and sent away the carriage that brought her at a little distance from the house; but short though that distance was, Dora felt as if her limbs could scarcely bear her thus far, and she had to pause and recover her breath, and compose herself before she went in. The gates were open; the porter was not even in the lodge. No one was visible, but looking up, Dora saw lights in Eva's room, and in Miss Moore's. She went up the flight of steps and entered the house without meeting any one; but as she reached the door that led to the suite of rooms she and Eva had occupied before her marriage, it opened, and one of the maids came out with a light in her hand. At first the girl only saw Dora's figure in the gloomy passage. "Who's that?" she asked, sharply. Without waiting for a reply, she raised her candle. The light flashed across Dora's pale face. The girl saw and recognized her; a moment's terror held her mute, then, uttering a faint scream, she dropped the candlestick and fled down the staircase. Her cry roused Jacques, who was in the room she had just left. He came out as Dora, composedly picking up the candlestick, was going to enter her old apartment. Jacques' nerves were naturally strong, and had just then been strengthened by a cordial of which he and the doctor had been partaking before Dora's unexpected appearance. On seeing his late mistress he looked bewildered and confused, and uttered a deep "Oh!" but when Dora addressed him, and said calmly, "How is Miss Eva?" Jacques was able to reply, though still with a wild stare at this dead woman who had so unexpectedly come back to life. "Mademoiselle Eva is very well—I had heard she was."

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The light of a pale autumn sunbeam fell exactly on Mrs. Courtenay's face, and it showed very plainly that Mrs. Courtenay was frowning. A frown was a very unusual thing indeed on that lady's smooth forehead, and it required so ominous a fact as three successive failures of her favorite patience, to bring anything like it there. But nothing was incredible or impossible after such a catalogue of her failures. Mrs. Courtenay was frowning. She threw the cards down pettishly, and murmured with ill-repressed indignation as she looked around the room. "It is all Dora's fault!" The room was not a gay one, certainly. It was dull, meanly furnished, and it looked out on a bleak, bare field, with a lowering autumn sky above it. A pretty change, indeed, from the grave old splendors of Les Roches!

But she must come in to tea," thought Mrs. Courtenay; "I must tell her so." But Dora did not give her mother the opportunity. She slipped down-stairs unheeded, and bade Mrs. Courtenay adieu by tapping at the parlor window as she passed it on her way out. Mrs. Courtenay, indeed, opened the window, and called her daughter back—in vain. Dora had already turned the corner of the house, and did not, or would not, hear the summons.

What ailed her? Alas! this much: that life was impetuous and exacting, that love would not be denied, and that both were too strong for anger or pride. Still she strove against them. If she were not his wife, if he had but married Florence, she thought she would not care. But we cannot lie to our own hearts. From the depths of her being rose a reply: "Do not say so; you know that it is better to have been loved a few days, than not to have been loved at all. You know that it would have been the bitterness of death to have seen him married to Mrs. Logan, even as there is something of the sweetness of Paradise in being linked to him. You know that if he has wronged you, his nature is too great and too generous not to do you justice—and will there not be a foretaste of heaven in your forgiveness and that reunion? Think of what his repentance will be, and remember these days of love which he gave you—few, but perfect. (Can anything annihilate them? Are they not a portion of your life, the truest and the best? What though years should pass thus, in vain hope and expectation? A moment will yet come that shall crown all your sorrow, and conquer it, a time when you too can say to grief, 'Where is thy victory—where is thy sting?'" Her eyes were dim with tears, but they were tears full of softness. She looked around her. The perennial charm of Eden seemed through the dusty garden. The noisy children, the servant girls, the gloomy mass of Saint Owen, all vanished, and if they were seen it was with the thought—

This was her epitaph. No date of birth or death, for one was shameful; no record of marriage, for it had been ill-fated; nothing but that name which was hers no longer, and yet was the only one by which John Luan would remember her. For it was he who had had that "Dora Courtenay" inscribed—he, and not Mr. Templemore, who had outlived her loss, as he had survived that of Florence, and had gone to get the diamonds for his third nuptials!

There was something in the flash of her eye, something in the quiet gesture of her hand, which Jacques, accustomed as he was to obey and to recognize empire, could not disregard. Yet he struggled against the very feeling that made him step aside and give way to Dora, and with something like reconstructive sullenness in his tone, he said— "Madam Logan is there."

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