

THE MODERN COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

They met amid the hall-room's gale, And only this had either noted, That he was dark and she was fair, When breathlessly in the walls they floated.

To him her spirit seemed divine, Though still she talked but common-places; Her accents breathed the careful Nine, Her face and figure all the Graces.

So when they danced it seemed to each Their bliss had brimmed its fullest measure; When they sat in tender speech, Life held for them no equal pleasure.

He brought her bouillon on the stair, He brought her sandwiches and salad, With here a hint of deep despair, And there a snatch of mad ballad.

He squeezed her hand, she blushed and sighed, Her lips said "Fie!" but not her glances; He told her lovers had died, Or cruel maids in old romances;

And he was Frank and she was Mary, Fifteen delicious minutes passed; Love's star had reached its culmination, Twin souls they knew themselves at last, Born for each other from creation.

Ah, sweet, coy maiden shame! No more Than this the modest Muse discovers— They parted at her pillaged door, Earth's fondest pair of pilgrims lovers;

DORA.

By JULIA KAVANAUGH.

Author of "Nathalie," "Adele," "Queen Mab," &c.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

"I wonder if the book is a dear one?" she thought. She hesitated a while, then ventured into the shop with the volume in her hand.

The dealer was not alone. There was a customer with him, a slender, dark man, for whom he held a candle in a dingy iron candlestick.

"What book, mademoiselle, if you please?" "Epictetus," she answered. The customer who was gazing intently at an old engraving, now looked up as he heard this girlish voice uttering the name of the stoic philosopher, and there was just a touch of perplexity in his glance as he saw Dora.

"I did not think it was so expensive," she said, apologetically. He saw her embarrassment, and replied, good-naturedly, that the edition was a rare one.

"No," and he shook his head, "he had not; and what was more, Epictetus was rather a scarce book. Few people cared about it."

"Whenever an out-of-the-way book is asked of me," he said, turning to his customer, "it is by your country-folk, Doctor Richard, and especially by your countrywomen. To think of a little chicken like that wanting to peck at Epictetus!"

"Who is she?" asked Doctor Richard; and he made good his claim to be Dora's countryman by a moderate yet unmistakable accent.

"I do not know her name, but I often see her about Notre Dame. A pretty girl, eh, Doctor Richard?"

"Not very pretty," dryly replied Doctor Richard, "but very bright. She lit up your shop, Monsieur Merand."

"Come, you shall have another candle," said Monsieur Merand, taking the hint. "You must see that engraving well in order to appreciate it."

He entered the dark parlor behind his shop. Doctor Richard remained alone, and he wondered.

"Where can I have seen this girl, who wants to buy Epictetus with that joyous face? It was she who was giving milk and eggs to the cross old witch on the staircase, but I knew then that I had already seen her. When and where was it?"

Doctor Richard's memory was one tenacious of faces, and it never deceived him. Yes, he had certainly seen and been struck with that bright face, "with eyes so fair," like Collins's Hope, before this day. Suddenly the remembrance flashed across his mind. He had seen her at a concert six months ago, a bright, happy, and admired girl. He remembered her looks, and her smiles, and her bouquet of rare roses on her lip—rare for the season of the year. He remembered, too, some unknown lady's comment, "Miss Courtenay is a most extravagant girl. Now, these roses cost a guinea, at least." And now Epictetus was too dear at ten francs. And the milk and eggs, moreover, suggested a strange contrast between the present and the past. The story of her losses Doctor Richard had also heard, and thinking over it, he fell into a fit of musing, whence Monsieur Merand, returning at length with the candle, roused him. But the engraving, on being seen more closely, proved what Doctor Richard was pleased to call "an impostor." He put it down with a great show of contempt, and looked for his hat.

"Well, then, have Epictetus," said Monsieur Merand, thrusting the book toward him. "Good-night," curtly replied Doctor Richard. "Not-night, Monsieur Merand; you must keep better wares if you want my custom."

"He will come for it to-morrow," said Monsieur Merand, composedly, putting the engraving aside; "and I dare say he will take Epictetus as well. I saw him looking at it."

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. Courtenay was getting restless when her daughter came home.

"My dear, how long you were out," she said, with a sigh of relief. "But the cheese is

perfect, and—" here Dora paused in dismay. The cheese might be a first-rate one, and was so, no doubt, but it was no longer in her possession. She had probably left it at the bric-a-brac shop.

"I looked at a book-stall near Notre Dame," she said, feeling Mrs. Luan's reproving eye upon her, "and I must have forgotten it there. I shall go back for it at once. Pray don't wait tea for me."

She was gone before Mrs. Courtenay could remonstrate. Within a few minutes Dora had reached Monsieur Merand's shop. She entered it after first casting a look at the book-stall, and ascertaining that neither Epictetus nor the cheese was there.

"You come for Epictetus?" he said, recognizing her at once. "No, sir, I come for a parcel which I forgot."

"There is no parcel. Take Epictetus for nine francs, eh?" "It is still too dear at that price," thank you. I am sure I left my parcel here."

She looked for it, but without assisting her Monsieur Merand went out. "Let us make an exchange, mademoiselle. Have you got an old engraving? I am very fond of an old engraving. Look, here is a stock of them!"

He opened a portfolio, so that Dora could not help seeing its contents. "These are not engravings," she said; "these are crayon drawings—and very bad ones too," she added, shutting up the portfolio, and again looking for her missing cheese.

"Bad!" exclaimed Monsieur Merand, throwing the portfolio open once more—"you call these bad! Then, mademoiselle," he added, taking off his hat to her with a mock politeness, "which was not impertinent, 'I will make you a present of Epictetus if you can do me a head like this.'"

Dora smiled a little scornfully. She drew tolerably well, and she knew it; but not choosing to enter into an argument with Monsieur Merand, she quietly remarked that as she had not got her parcel she would trouble him no longer.

"Is this your parcel?" he asked, taking it from the chair on which it had lain concealed all the time; "why," he added, smelling it and looking at her, "it is cheese!"

Dora began to think that this Monsieur Merand was a very odd man; but he looked both good-humored and good-natured spite his oddity, and she could not help laughing.

"Is cheese," she said; "but pray give it to me, sir, I am in a hurry."

"This is particularly good cheese," he continued in a positive tone. "Now," he added, giving it up to her and putting his hands behind his back, "it is a pity you cannot draw; I would have let you have Epictetus for a crayon sketch like this; and he took and finished one before her eyes."

"I wonder if the man is jesting, or if he would really buy my drawings?" thought Dora, suddenly flattered at the golden vision thus opened to her.

"I suppose, sir, you are in earnest?" she remarked doubtfully. "Do be sure I am; but can you draw?"

He already seemed to hesitate and draw back. "I have one or two things by me," said Dora, still doubting his sincerity; "shall I show them to you to-morrow?"

"Perhaps you had better not," kindly replied Monsieur Merand. "I am a severe critic, and—and we all know how young ladies draw."

"I care nothing about criticism," emphatically declared Dora; "besides, I can keep to my own opinion, you know, which is, that I can produce something much better than this."

Monsieur Merand's breath seemed gone at the audacious confession; but Dora, without waiting for him to recover and utter some other discouraging speech, bade him a good-evening, took up her cheese, and walked out of the shop.

Mrs. Luan noticed how bright and excited Dora looked when she came back. "Did you get it?" cried Mrs. Courtenay. "Here it is," replied Dora, gayly, "and what is more," she added, tossing off her bonnet and shaking her bright head, "I think I am going to own cheese by the dozen!"

She laughed at their amazed looks, and related to them what had passed, adding sweetly, "And my drawings are a great deal better than his. It would not take me more than two days to draw such a head as he showed me. Now, suppose he gave me ten francs a head, that would be a hundred and fifty francs a month, or eighteen hundred francs a year. Nay, as to that, I could produce a drawing a day, which would make three thousand francs a year!"

Dora looked bewildered at this unexpected calculation, then she remarked in a much more sober tone, "Well, I suppose Monsieur Merand would scarcely take a drawing a day. No, nor yet one every other day. But then, he may give me more than ten francs a drawing, you see. I shall certainly try him to-morrow," she added, sitting down to take her tea with the composure of an old woman of business.

They were all three there elated at this unexpected prospect. Epictetus, who had led to this, could afford to despise money, live in a garret, sleep on a straw mattress, and never look his door; but Dora had not yet reached these sublime heights of philosophy. Money was much to her. Money meant a little of that pleasure and relaxation which was the grievous want of her new life; money, too, in this case meant exertion, and a motive for it; no wonder then that Dora looked once more as bright as sunshine, and spent a restless, hopeful night, full of projects and dreams, some sleeping and some waking.

Nevertheless, Miss Courtenay felt in no great hurry to try her fortune when the next day came round. She took out her portfolio, selected the best drawing in it, and looked at it in doubt. Was it, after all, so good as she had thought it to be? Mrs. Courtenay, who felt very impatient to know Monsieur Merand's opinion of her daughter's production, urged her to go to his shop early; but Dora prudently said, "It would not be dignified," and she lingered until she suddenly discovered that if she did not go at once, it would be too late to go at all. So she slipped her portfolio under her arm, and went out alone, though Mrs. Courtenay first, then Mrs. Luan afterward, offered to accompany her.

"No," decisively said Dora; "I will not undertake Monsieur Merand in company!"

She went, and her mother, and even her aunt, looked out of the window after her. Dora saw them, and nodded and smiled and looked very brave, though her heart beat a little. She walked briskly whilst she was within view, but slackened her pace, when once she had turned the corner of the street. To wonder what takes me to that Monsieur Merand," she thought; "I could do without Epictetus, and live without that old man's money. Perhaps he was only laughing at me, yesterday, and that I shall have had a sleepless night and a useless walk for my pains."

"The milk and eggs were very good, mademoiselle," said a cracked voice; "very good; and the cup is beautiful!"

Dora raised her eyes, which were bent on

the earth, and saw the little old woman whose distress she had relieved the day before. "I am glad of it," she replied, with a smile. "And what is your name, mademoiselle?"

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Nanette's door was open, so Dora had no trouble in finding her. Nanette lived in a room which was about the size of a large cupboard, but which was exquisitely clean and neat, and Nanette being as small and as neat and as clean as her room, looked more than ever like a fairy, in Dora's opinion. A cross fairy she was just then, scolding a charcoal fire, which would not kindle.

"Ah! you will not, eh?" she said, angrily, and vainly using a bellows beyond her strength—"you know I am old, you do!"

"Let me try," said Dora, looking in. She took the bellows from Nanette's hand, and lo! in a trice the fire was bright.

"Yes, you are young," said Nanette, with a wistful look, "and you can work. I cannot!—I cannot! I am seventy-three, and I cannot work, and have to live on charity," she added, with an angry flash in her brown eye.

Dora tried to soothe her, but Nanette would admit of no consolation. Her temper was roused again. Dora wanted her to have more milk and eggs, but Nanette scorned the offer. "She took charity, but she was not a beggar," she said, loftily. "An accident was an accident, but she did not want milk and eggs daily."

Dora suggested bacon, but greatly imperilled her power of fascination by doing so. Nanette's brown eye burned like a live coal. It turned out that bacon was her particular aversion.

"Yes, you are a cross fairy," thought Dora, "but for all that, I shall prevail over you one more." So she made no further offers, but gently drew out Nanette. She learned how Nanette had been rich—quite rich. She had earned as much as seventy francs in one month by lace-mending, but now her eyesight was gone, and her hand was unsteady, and there were days when Nanette could not get up, she was so weak, and then she lay sleepless all night. "When the moon shone in at her window, and lit up her room, it was well and good; but when the night was dark, and the room was black, it was very dreary, you see."

Dora's bright eye flashed with triumph. "I shall give you a pound of candles," she said.

Nanette was fairly conquered. Candles were the secret desire of her heart. Even pride and ill-temper could not reject such a boon. She put her withered hand on Dora's and looked up in her face.

"I shall show it to you," she said. "Doctor Richards wants it, but I would not let him see it—not I; but you shall see it!"

She unlocked a square box on the floor, fumbled in it, then drew out a velvet case, which she opened, but jealously kept in her hand. Dora might look, but by no means touch. This treasure, which was a treasure indeed, was an ancient and exquisite enamel portrait. It showed Dora a young girl in all the bloom and radiance of youth, and with hair of a golden brown.

"Yes," said Nanette, as Dora gave a little start, "it is like you; you have the same hair—saw that at once. And she was a great, great lady, and my great-great-grandmother, too," added Nanette, "and no one shall have it!" she angrily continued, shutting up the case, and putting away the portrait hurriedly; "and he shall not even see it!" she said, with a sort of secret meant for Doctor Richard.

"My poor old lady," thought Dora, as she left Nanette, and went down the staircase, "I fear your luck is all for me, and that you can keep none for yourself. Are you indeed the descendant of that bright-looking lady in rich blue velvet? You may have metted the exquisite point your great-great-grandmother, as you call her, wore round her white neck, and been paid for your labor by the great-great-granddaughter of her chambermaid. And that lady's face and mine are not unlike. I never was so pretty, but still there is a sort of national likeness. Who knows but the original who was the daughter of some Irish Jacobite who came over with James Stuart? I may be Nanette's seventeenth cousin, for all I can tell. And Nanette shall have milk, and eggs, and butter, since bacon will not do, and candies, by all means, for the sake of the grand relation we all have in Father Adam."

She sent in her gifts at once, and that same evening looking up to Nanette's window, she saw a light burning in it. The night was black and sultry; neither moon nor stars were out, but it did Dora good to see that light, and to know that the lonely old woman need not fret her poor heart away in the darkness. When she turned back from the window, the smile on her face was so bright, that it puzzled Mrs. Courtenay.

"My dear, you look very happy," she said. "Yes, I am happy," replied Dora; "but she said nothing about Nanette and the candles. She would have told her mother, if Mrs. Courtenay could have kept a secret from Mrs. Luan, but that was impossible. And as it would have been cruel to make poor Mrs. Luan wretched by letting her know Dora's extravagance, her niece kept her own counsel."

"And you look happy, too, mamma," continued Dora, approaching the table, and looking over her shoulder at the cards spread upon it. "So successful!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay; "all the cards came out. And as I loakily did it for a wish, I am quite sure you will get on with Monsieur Merand."

Dora laughed, and said there could be no doubt about it. Having procured the requisite permission, Dora began her task the next day. The music was a quiet place—two or three old gentlemen who had been painting there for the last twenty years, were her only companions. They looked as antique, and they were as silent as the pictures they copied; but for the bright sun shining in the place below, and the sound of carriages rolling on its stones, Dora might have fancied herself in some exalted palace. She liked this tranquility. She liked her task too; and so it progressed, and she felt that she was successful, she loved it. With a cheerful heart she left home in the morning; with a sense of happiness she went up the stone staircase and entered the rooms where her silent friends and companions, the pictures, were waiting for her. With a fatigue which was welcome, for it meant labor, success and money, she put by her drawing when the day was over, and the keeper gave out the summons to depart. Happy are the women who have to toil for their bread in some loved vocation. The curse of labor is lightened for them, and sweetened into a blessing. Happy they before whom the fair fields of art lie open. Small though the harvest may be—not unto all are plenteous crops given—it is pure wheat, pure and good. Happy, therefore, was now Dora Courtenay. Monsieur Merand praised the first samples of her skill, and Dora's taste and judgment confirmed his approval. The results of her labor were satisfactory in every sense. Ere long she was in the receipt of an income varying from ten to fifteen pounds a month. Thanks to this unexpected piece of good fortune, comfort under many shapes crept into their home. Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan had their promised silk dresses; and then a carriage drove up at Madame Bertrand's door, and took her, Dora, and the day in the lovely environs of Rozen, and every evening the sounds of piano stole out of Dora's window, and filled the dull old street with brilliant music. The change made her very happy.

It was not merely the money, though that was welcome, it was also and especially the sense of leading a useful and active life, which charmed her. She had been poor, and she had been, if not rich, at least in easy circumstances, but never before this time had she earned money; never had she felt independent, and one of the great science of social life. It was a delightful feeling, and the more delightful that habit and time had not yet deadened its enjoyments, and destroyed its freshness. And thus the happy summer stole away.

On a bright afternoon in September, Dora, on leaving the picture-gallery, went to the house of a poor girl out of work, from whom she had ordered a frame a month back for a drawing she had undertaken on her own account. A series of misfortunes had prevented Dubois from keeping his promise. Dora had been patient and forbearing, and generous even, but now her patience was out, and she entered the dark lane at the end of which Dubois lived, prepared to bestow nothing upon him save a severe scolding. "I shall not be at all good-natured," she thought; "but very firm and dignified." As she came to this austere resolve, Dora reached the girl's door, but when a