

“ I understand that your brother was a brave fellow,” he said, with emotion. “ I am very proud to call him cousin.”

“ Oh, thank you, thank you,” cried Jeanne. No words could have been more grateful to her aching heart. She laid the letter reverently away in the shabby desk ; and the Duke closed the lid that she might lock it.

Their hands met.

“ Jeanne, oh, Jeanne, is it—too soon ? Must I wait yet a little while longer ? ”

“ Will time make any difference to such sorrow as mine ? ” she said, passionately.

The Duke knew that it would make a difference ; for though he was no older than Jeanne, he was as wise for his years as she was childish for hers ; but he did not stop to think of this now.

“ Oh, Jeanne ! If my love could comfort you—if my love could bring you the happiness of which he writes ! ”

“ Love is love,” she quoted, in a whisper, “ and we could not help its mastery even if we would.”

“ Would you if you could ? ” said the Duke, tenderly ; and, as he took her into his arms she knew, tired and heart-broken as she was, that the intolerable heaviness of her sorrow was lifted ; and that in the midst of grief she had found the happiness—the joy in life—which her dead hero had bidden her take with thankfulness whenever it should come her way.

And that this comfort had come to little Jeanne now—at the moment when she so sorely needed it—she owed, though she never knew it, to Anne-Marie.

*(To be continued.)*